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A Citadel Behind Walls?

The House of the *Amateur* in Late Nineteenth-Century France

By

Valerie Mendelson

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

A CITADEL BEHIND WALLS? THE HOUSE OF THE *AMATEUR*
IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

By

Valerie Mendelson

Adviser: Professor Jane Roos

Of the various types of people found in the nineteenth-century city of Paris, critical attention has yet to be focused on the *amateur* as lover of art. The word did not then connote dilettante in the way it now does, but rather was closer to its derivation from the Latin *Amor*. The *amateur* was a passionate collector of art, who often also made art as well. His collections were gathered according to his personal taste and were arranged in harmonious ensembles in the long-standing tradition of the private collector rather than in the newly chronologically-ordered installation of the museum.

In the Third Republic, when collecting art was becoming more and more popular, the *amateur* stood out as a self-consciously traditional figure. Rather than participating in the cult of the bibelot or the scholarly study of art, he maintained a very personal attachment to art. This love of art was couched in gender-specific language such that the *amateur* was always considered to be male, even in a time in which collecting by women was becoming more common.

The *amateurs* installed their collections such that the prevailing logic was one of dialogue in which the artwork was seen as changeable and interactive. The *amateur* was very close to the *flâneur* as a type and can be understood as a kind of indoor *flâneur*, strolling amongst his artworks as amongst so many acquaintances, interacting with them as friends, or indeed as lovers.

This study will examine both the typology of the *amateur* and the display of art within the house of the *amateur* by means of a close examination of texts and images from the period, including sales catalogues and a photographic collection of portraits by the photographer known only as Dornac. Among the themes discussed are the social standing of the *amateur*, the discourse of taste and love with regard to the identity of the *amateur*, the practice of book collection as it relates to the divide between *amateur* and *connoisseur* and two case studies of spaces of collection: the *cabinet de travail* and the billiards room.

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A CITADEL BEHIND WALLS?

THE HOUSE OF THE *AMATEUR* IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

While these days an *amateur* is considered a dabbler, someone not professional and lacking in commitment, in late nineteenth-century France the meaning of the term was closer to its derivation from the Latin *Amor*. The *amateur* was a passionate collector of art, who often also made art as well. His collections were gathered according to his personal taste and were arranged in harmonious ensembles in the long-standing tradition of the private collector rather than in the newly chronologically ordered installation of the museum.

In the Third Republic, when collecting art was becoming more and more popular, with a growing number of private galleries and a preoccupation with home decoration, the *amateur* stood out as a self-consciously traditional figure. Rather than participating in the cult of the bibelot or the scholarly study of art, he maintained the very personal attachment to art that had long been characteristic of the private collector. This love of art was couched in gender-specific language such that the *amateur* was always considered to be male, even in a time in which collecting by women was becoming more common.

As defined in the 1865 edition of Larousse's *Grand dictionnaire universel*, the *amateur* was singled out for his taste and his love.¹ Praised in many articles on collecting and in sales catalogues of his collections for his refined taste and passionate love of art, the *amateur* lived a life that was organized around his pursuit of the beautiful. His day was typically divided between contemplation of his art collection, pursuit of new acquisitions, production of his own art and some other kind of activity, be it business

¹ Pierre Larousse, *Grand dictionnaire universel de XIXe siècle* (Paris: Administration du grand dictionnaire universel, 1865), s.v. "amateur."

affairs or writing. It is significant that a great many of the *amateurs* serious painters themselves. This mélange of activity was mirrored by the extremely varied collections that typically surrounded this *amateur*. It is perhaps surprising that at a time of increased preoccupation with efficiency and rationalization of time, not to mention the increased attention to scholarly and historical understanding of art, this type of person should be so highly regarded. Yet over and again in articles in the press, in books on art and in sales catalogues, this kind of eclectic lifestyle and collecting practice was applauded and celebrated. Philippe de Chennevières, Director of Fine Arts in the Third Republic, praised these collectors for their generous and tranquil dignity of spirit and for their passion for art. He even called into question the possibility of collecting without this passion which he argued was necessary for the cult of beautiful things.²

This study will examine both the typology of the *amateur* and the display of art within the house of the *amateur* by means of a close examination of texts and images from the period. The *amateur* as such has not been analyzed in recent art historical literature and I argue that reconsideration is called for.³

The *amateur* stood at a nexus of love, money and art, where love became a trope for the embrace of a spontaneity impossible within the burgeoning standardization typical of capitalism. The Third Republic was a period in which the attitude towards art was at a crossroads. The museum, the Louvre, which had been conceived as a didactic institution in which art should be displayed in chronologically ordered installations, had finally largely achieved that goal. At the same time, the centralized dominance of the

² Philippe de Chennevières, *Souvenirs d'un directeur des beaux-arts* (Paris:Arthena, 1979), 119.

³ Considerably more attention has been paid to the *amateur* within the criticism of photography where notions of career and oeuvre have been carefully reexamined in the light of the significant contributions by *amateurs* such as William Henry Fox Talbot and Julia Margaret Cameron; see in particular Grace Seiberling, *Amateurs, Photography and the Victorian Imagination*, International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986). Also Carol Armstrong, *Scenes in a Library. Reading the Photograph in the Book, 1843-1875* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998): "To be an amateur at this moment was not necessarily a derogated position, nor did it undermine one's scientific credentials; quite the contrary. Talbot's amateur was an *amateur* in the sense of lover in the old French usage: a passionate, but disinterested devotee, whose amateurism confirms his privilege and classes his endeavor as distinct from entrepreneurial self-interest and tradesmanly practice." (455-56)

government in the display and sale of art through the institution of the *salon* had receded, leaving room for a growing number of private galleries, and a concomitant rise in the number of private collectors. Some of these collectors had a scholarly impulse and organized their collections much like a museum. Others, simply purchased fashionable art works as part of their purchase of numerous *objets d'art* or bibelots. Those that form the focus of this discussion, the *amateurs*, adopted an identity heavily inflected with aristocratic ideals, and they installed their collections according to the centuries-old traditions of harmony and balance. But even more than harmony, the prevailing logic was one of dialogue. Paintings were seen as “speaking” to each other as they hung in the same room, and indeed “speaking” to the *amateur* himself as in the 1862 Daumier print: “Good lord!....Dazzling!....Ye gods! Superb....it speaks!...” (Figure 1). The positivist idea of art reflecting a period or a country’s culture that was enacted in the museum, was countered in the home of the *amateur* by a notion of the artwork as changeable and interactive, helpful in living one’s life and part of one’s work and sociability. Further, the flexible and relational organizational structure of the *amateur*’s private collection implied a synchronic conception of painting rather a diachronic one. That is, the paintings and other art works displayed were viewed as interrelated in the viewer’s present, rather than as sequential in some historical understanding of the past.

The *amateur* was very close to the *flâneur* as a type and can be understood as a kind of indoor *flâneur*, strolling amongst his artworks as amongst so many acquaintances, interacting with them as friends, or indeed as lovers. And the discourse of the *amateur*, as might be expected from the derivation of the name, is heavy with the perfume of sexuality. The *amateur* was always cast as male, in search of pleasure and conquest; paintings are referred to as mistresses, as beloved ones, and their material beauty is coveted and jealously guarded once captured. This gender divide is made all the clearer by the consideration of the discourse surrounding several women collectors of the time. Rather than being described as *amateurs* in the sense of lovers, they are seen as passively

absorbed into their natural environment where they become just one more beautiful artwork or object in the collection.

My analysis of the *amateur* and his collection reveals a more complicated relationship between the public and private realms in late nineteenth-century France than is commonly understood. For the *amateur*, the home functioned as a public space, neither a refuge from work nor a solely domestic sphere dominated by women. Not only did guests drop in at many times during the day, but also public work took place in the *cabinet de travail* at home, rather than in a separate office. The art that decorated this space is described in texts of the period as being integral to the work being done. Furthermore, many of the important private collections were listed in guides to Paris and were described in the texts as being available to visitors. The public space of the museum on the other hand, was importantly influenced by these private *amateurs*, both by donations and by the presence of *amateurs* within all levels of the administration of the museum.

Certainly some private collectors were more interested in either a museum-like or a princely collection. The important Pourtales collection, for example, was arranged in a sky-lit gallery much like a museum set aside for the contemplation of art. Similarly, the collections of such aristocrats as the Prince Roland stressed opulence and grandeur, rather than sociability. But the large majority of texts devoted to the private collectors included in my sample refer to the collector as an *amateur* whose collections were amassed through personal taste and love and with which they lived in an everyday intimate and changing relationship.

This study will be divided roughly into two halves. The first will consider the *amateur* as a type and will focus in particular on his use of time, and the second half of the study will consider the space of his collection. While the *amateur* as a type is remarkable stable throughout the nineteenth century, I have chosen to focus in particular on the Third Republic in France and most particularly the last decade of the century for a

variety of reasons. Importantly, this period experienced a self-conscious awareness of the *amateur* as a disappearing type and thus worthy of comment. A series of articles in the *Gazette des beaux-arts* as well as a series of notable sales occasioned a careful look at this type of collector. Sales catalogues of this period for this first time contained long discussions of the *amateur* as type. Similarly, for the first time, photographs were taken of the interior spaces of the *amateur* allowing us to understand better their arrangement. Concurrently with the re-evaluation of the *amateur* as social type at the end of the nineteenth-century were other developments that are closely linked to the interest in this private collector. The preoccupation of both institutions and artists with the decoration of interior spaces⁴, the realization of the historically chronological display of art within the French national museum⁵, and the concurrent development of several private gallery spaces whose décor very deliberately echoed the space of the private collector⁶ were each in their own way intertwined with the historical reevaluation of the *amateur* in the Third Republic. The interest in the *amateur* at this time was part of the fashionable anti-Republican and pro-ancien régime sentiments of the Third Republic that have been

⁴ Debora Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France. Politics, Psychology and Style* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Silverman identifies this period as one in which the modern style of Art Nouveau became associated with a “retreat to the interior”. She discusses the “centrality of the rococo as privileged national tradition” that linked “the notion of modernity with the notion of privacy and interiority”(9). She points to the political realignment of the Third Republic “including its reconciliation with aristocratic elites and the search for an antisocialist national solidarity” (11) and the “economic reorientation of the governing elites from advanced industrial technology to luxury crafts as the presumed source of French market preeminence” (11). While my discussion does not deal with Art Nouveau in particular, I am interested as well in examining the interior, particularly of the *amateur*. Her analysis of the political and institutional realignments of this period is important in contextualizing these interiors.

⁵ See Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals. Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1994); *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, ed. Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 113-122; Daniel Sherman, *Worthy Monuments. Art Museums and the Politics of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre. Art Politics and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁶ See in particular Martha Ward, “Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions,” *Art Bulletin* 73,4 (December 1991): 599-622. On interior décor I have relied on Rémy Saisselin, *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984) and Jannell Watson, *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

remarked on by many scholars.⁷ But rather than dismissing the *amateur* as backward looking, I want to call attention to the integral importance of *amateur* culture to the avant garde at this time. That is, the Impressionist circle, the first artist group to self-consciously seek out and profit from the emerging private gallery system, included amidst its own group important collectors such as Henri Rouart, Gustave Caillebotte, Edgar Degas and Paul Gauguin. Also important is the role of the *amateur* in the newly developing field of art history. I will end my study by looking at the work of an important *amateur*, Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, whose three-part career as artist, collector and art historian was central to *amateur* culture and whose art history enacts textually the dialogic visuality of the private collection. His series of books on artists, entitled *Raconté par lui même*, included significant portions of text written by the artists themselves, often in the form of letters. The letters within are textual dialogues between the artist and his friends that in their back and forth quality are mirrored by the alternation between historical interpretation and documentary text that is like a conversation between Moreau-Nélaton and the artists he is discussing.

The initial impulse for this investigation came from seeing the Metropolitan Museum exhibition of Degas's private collection in 1997.⁸ In homage to Degas, I take my title from his description of his own collection: "This collection, you can't expect to see it. It is closed, a citadel behind walls."⁹

However the polarity between the public museum and the private collection implied by this title, and crucial to the discussion that follow, is hardly simple. For between the private and the public was the market which inserted itself into the practice and the discourse surrounding both the museum and the private collection. There was a

⁷ See Carol Armstrong, *Odd Man Out. Readings of the Work and Reputation of Edgar Degas* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1991) and Emilien Carassus, *Le snobisme et les lettres françaises de Paul Bourget à Marcel Proust 1884-1914* (Paris, 1966).

⁸ Ann Dumas et al, *The Private Collection of Edgar Degas*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, exh. cat (New York: Abrams, 1997).

⁹ Arsène Alexandre, "Le Marché aux toiles," *Le Figaro* (12 October, 1901), 1. Quoted in Ann Dumas, "Degas and the Collecting Milieu" in Dumas et al, 132.

palpable anxiety about the relationship between artistic production and commodity exchange that colored most writing about collecting, particularly towards the end of the century. Furthermore, I realized that the clearest documentations of the private collection were the sales catalogues produced at the very moment that the private collection entered the stream of commodity exchange. The photographic evidence of the arrangement of these collections was also inflected by the paradox of the public exposure of a private place. The fact that the prefaces to the sales catalogues were written by major critics, government officials and museum curators of the day, who also wrote articles with many of the same concerns in major journals, reassured the public of the time (and to some degree can reassure us too) that these prefaces were not solely promotional sales documents, although they are that too. Arsène Alexandre, Gustave Geoffroy, Roger Marx, Philippe de Chennevières, Charles Blanc and André Michel are some of the better known of these writers, who in turn were often *amateurs* themselves.

I chose sales catalogues as my primary documentary source for several reasons. First because they document the collections that were kept private (as opposed to being donated to the Louvre), and also because these texts provided a record of the collection and information about the collector. While the sales catalogue was a necessary feature of all sales during the nineteenth-century, the development of the deluxe well-illustrated catalogue with scholarly preface developed only with the sales' increasing profitability in the later part of the century. The sales catalogues had in common the fact that they themselves were books. They included perforce a seemingly straightforward inventory of objects within the collection. They often included a preface that described the collector as well as his collection. And finally they sometimes contained illustrations of certain selected works, or sometimes even photographs of the collection installed in the space of the collector.

The sales catalogue as form invites different kinds of discussion. As a book, and specifically as a book recording of a collection, we are lead quite naturally to investigate

book collecting. As an inventory of collection, we are asked to consider aesthetic categories, and inventory practice. As documentation of a specific collection, we can consider the sales catalogue as a kind of memorial. But as a sales catalogue, it is primarily a work of seduction. It aims to attract buyers, and it flatters the collector, so as to flatter the prospective buyer. It describes the objects in their best light. The sales catalogue participates, through its very function, in the seductivity of art that it proposes as motivating the *amateurs* it describes. Thus while ascribing non-market ideals to the *amateurs*, it is itself fully implicated in the workings of the upscale art market.

Apart from the sales catalogues, I studied the little-known collection of photographs entitled *Nos Contemporains chez eux* done in the 1890s by a photographer who is known only as Dornac. One of these books, held at the Bibliothèque Nationale, was in fact owned by Paul Blondel, and another by Moreau-Nélaton, both important collectors in their own right. They feature portraits of notables, particularly intellectuals, many of whom are shown in their *cabinet de travail* in which is displayed the collection of the subject. This formed an important visual record of the way in which a collection was displayed, as well as being a collection in its own right of collectors which was in turn collected by these same collectors. These portraits, in the tradition of Nadar's and Disderi's gallery of notables are distinguished by the emphasis that they place on the surroundings and the home décor of the photographic subject.

The chapters that follow are each almost independent the one from the other. They each pursue the discussion of the *amateur* from a slightly different angle, each with the idea that some kind of sample will elucidate the greater whole. Since the discussion is geared in particular towards the *amateur*, this is not a comprehensive history of private collecting in general. Those collections assembled following the criteria of historical significance or decorative ostentation were different than those of the *amateur*, and I discuss them only by way of contrast. Similarly, in discussing the spaces of display, I chose to focus on two spaces in particular, the *cabinet de travail* and the *billiards room*;

specifically male interior spaces of work and leisure, respectively. I believe, however, that the principles of display found in those two rooms apply elsewhere as well.

The first chapter of this study considers the social standing of the *amateur*. The sales catalogues of the time single out a group of collectors notable for their diverse positions in society including a mix of aristocratic, commercial, scholarly and intellectual figures. The common factor that I found was a commitment to organize one's time in a non-scheduled, quasi-aristocratic manner; that is, to live a life in which many pursuits were followed and in which art played a significant role. Aristocrats, industrialists, artists, merchants and writers all had interesting and important collections of both paintings and books. These collections, as they are described in the prefaces of the sales catalogues, formed an integral part of the life of the collector. Rather than simply serving to "decorate" their interior space, they served as a sign of the intense preoccupation with art that often manifested itself in production as well as consumption of paintings and drawings. That is, the collections intruded into the fabric of these people's lives and were integrally linked with their identities such that the artist, rather than the aristocrat, can be understood as the model for their practice. A collection became a work of art in its own right, a whole such that each item was related to the rest. Count Doria is described as having created a work of art with his collection: "A great collector ...can be in his own way a great artist. He makes a work of art with works of art and the ensemble of this complex work of art is an image of his spirit, of his tastes and even of his passions."¹⁰

Thus this chapter will first present an overview of the various collectors surveyed with anecdotal excerpts from several to illustrate the pervasiveness of the eclectic life style I argue was typical for the *amateur*. Then case studies of a few collectors will delve a bit more deeply into the use of time and the construction of identity through collecting. These will be contrasted with collectors whose lives cannot be described in this way, and

¹⁰ *Collection Armand Doria* (Paris: Georges Petit, 1899), n.p.

whose goals were either purely scholarly or aristocratic.

The second chapter will discuss the discourse of taste and love that were the defining characteristics of the *amateur*. Brief histories of these terms in France will be set against the use of these same terms within the prefaces of the sales catalogues. I argue that the *amateurs'* relation to his collection was at once set in opposition to the more common quest to simply accumulate objects, the mania for the bibelot, and at the same time opposed to the more scholarly pursuit of the *connoisseur*. Over and again the choices the *amateur* made were described as being personal, not dictated by either fashion or dollar value, and eclectic, rather than informed by a conceptual project.

The prefaces to their sales catalogues often dwell on the biographies of the collectors rather than simply describing the collection itself. The function of these biographies was usually not simply to honor the memory of the often recently deceased collector, but also to serve as a kind of enticement to buy: the purchaser, by acquiring these objects one would in some sense also acquire part of the identity of the former owner. The seductive role of the sales catalogue preface became particularly blatant when a woman's collection was for sale. Whereas the collection of a male *amateur* was viewed as an object of his desire and a symptom of his good taste, a woman's collection was viewed as part of her arsenal of weapons for seduction. Each finely crafted painting was seen as an advertisement for the finely-crafted woman who lived with that painting.

A woman's identity was viewed, at this time, as self-consciously constructed to appeal to a man. The make-up, the clothes, and the décor of a woman's apartment were viewed as props for the central action of appealing to a man. The readiness to understand the theatricality of identity in the collections of women throws into relief an equivalent strategy in all collections of the time. Thus discussion of the collections of several women of the theater, including Sarah Bernhardt and Réjane, will highlight the discourse of theatricality common to the collections of this period. The case of Jacques Doucet will serve to illustrate the equivalent strategies for the male *amateur*. It is important to make

clear, however, that the *amateur* was considered to be male. Women were not referred to as *amateurs*, but were represented as being objects of collection themselves.

As made clear by the lengthy Larousse definition, the *amateur* was distinguished by his taste and love, rather than his knowledge, and in this regard was different from the *connoisseur*. The *amateur's* commitment to art was not half-hearted in the manner now often associated with the term, but rather, following the word's derivation of "lover," quite passionate. The *amateur*, as lover, is figured by contemporary sources such as Edmond de Goncourt and Charles Blanc as male, in love with art, while art in turn is rendered female. This cultural construction is confirmed by the representation of the woman collector. In particular the collections of the courtesans Valtesse de la Bigne and Méry Laurent, illustrate the way that the women were made to seem part of their very own collections, rather than owners and collectors.

Because the book, specifically the sales catalogue, is so central to my research, my third chapter concerns book collecting. I review book collectors' catalogues (from the 1870's to 1900) not only to perform a kind of self-reflexive examination, but also to see if I could compare the *amateur* with the *connoisseur* in the context of fin-^{de}-siècle France. The collecting of books, I will show, often participates in the discourse of the *amateur*, rather than providing an alternative vision. We are in some ways faced with the case of the disappearing *connoisseur*, who nonetheless shows up amongst this group of book collectors. What also emerges from analysis of the book-collecting prefaces is the way that physical manipulation of the books collected, through rebinding and adding of illustrations, and filing of letters and drawings, complicated the logic of collection.

The fourth chapter turns to the *cabinet de travail* as a space of collection. Dornac's innovative preoccupation with setting the individual within the space of his home at first seems to conform to the positivist ideas of milieu as formulated by Hippolyte Taine that form one justification for the scholarly museum's periodicity. However, the straightforward deduction of character from the surrounding apartment as

proposed by Edmond Duranty is complicated by the proliferation of an eclectic assortment of art works within the photographs. Rather than reflecting a natural personality, these spaces seem to point to the artificiality of milieu and décor that is constructive rather than reflective. Similarly, the close relationship between the art works and their owners seen in these photographs makes visual the dialogic quality between collection and collector seen in the sales-catalogue prefaces. This atmosphere of sociability is the subject of a series of photographs taken by Degas at the home of his friend Ludovic Halévy.

The chapter will then turn to the *cabinet de travail* of another important *amateur* of this period, Edmond de Goncourt. Here his extreme self-consciousness about the decoration of his space of work makes explicit the artificiality of the interior and at the same time, of the self as artist. It becomes evident that this space was organized so as to facilitate comparisons between objects of the collection irrespective of chronology or national schools. It is a type of organization that was discussed in manuals of home design, where the operating principle was to create a harmonious and interesting interior in which the architecture, furniture and objects of art were to be carefully coordinated. It was a color-based logic rather than the linear logic of the chronological display. Home design manuals such as Henri Havard's 1884 *L'Art dans la Maison: Grammaire d'ameublement* instruct the reader in harmony and good taste, and Havard contrasted the seventeenth-century *amateur's* cabinet with the bad taste of his own day. The coloristic relational order that he privileged is quite different from the linearity of museological teleology as will be discussed further in the following chapter. Importantly, it is a difference that was gendered in late nineteenth-century France. While line, according to leading theorist Charles Blanc, was clearly gendered male, color, following Blanc as well as Baudelaire, was gendered female. Its femininity stemmed, according to Blanc, from its decorative quality, its materiality, and also its relational logic. Similarly, for the *amateur*, and Goncourt is explicit about this, the art of his collection functioned as a

specifically female presence within his male domain. Thus both the arrangement of the *amateurs'* collection and the art itself share a perceived femininity.

The fifth and final chapter will continue the consideration of the space of display within the house of the *amateur*, taking as case study the billiard room. An analysis of Degas's *Billiard Room at Menil Hubert* (1892), which is a painting of a private collection, will serve to elaborate the logic of comparative viewing that was introduced in the context of color and the Goncourts. Degas's painting stresses the interrelationships between the paintings of the collection, and a back and forth movement between them that I will be calling a zigzag path. This is a mode of viewing theorized by Roger de Piles and enacted in the Luxembourg in the mid-eighteenth-century that was continued in the home of the *amateur*.¹¹

The chapter will compare this painting to another by Degas, his *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre* (1880), so as to contrast the linearity of the museum with the zigzag of the private collection. A short discussion of the development of the didactic function of the French National Museum as well as an examination of contemporary guides to the museum will be contrasted to the literature of the zigzag path. Interestingly, in these images, the public space is the setting for the woman artist and her sister, while the private space is identified with the predominantly male pastime of billiards. The private male space of late nineteenth-century France has not been much discussed in recent criticism. The separation of private from the public in nineteenth-century France has been more commonly viewed as a socially mandated separation between female secluded space and male public space. Visual representations of these private male realms all reveal a concern for the world of the *amateur* and his seemingly jumbled display of objects.

¹¹ See McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*. McClellan also uses the term zigzag in his discussion of the Luxembourg exhibition catalogue of royal paintings between 1750 and 1779: "Matching catalogue with configuration of pictures, the numerical sequence leads the eye in a zigzag path across the wall entailed comparison of works by different artists." (39)

I hope that this re-examination of the *amateur* can open the possibility of understanding his role as cultural critic rather than simply regressive elitist. The *amateur* offered a discursive alternative to the increasingly compartmentalized institutional structures of artistic production and consumption at the turn of the century in France. I hope that such important questions as the historical link between modernist Impressionist artists and *amateur* anti-institutionalism as well as the more general positive aspects of doing more than one thing at a time can begin to be addressed.

CHAPTER 1

THE *AMATEUR*: LA VIE ANIMÉE

The 1865 Larousse definition of the *amateur* as someone with a pronounced taste, a particular predilection for something, who often collects art, singles out the *amateur* for his character, his taste and his love, as well as for his practice, without obvious reference to his social standing. However, class slips into this definition in two ways: first, most obviously, buying art demands a certain amount of cash and secondly the quality of “taste” is often used as a social marker.¹ This backdoor appearance of social standing in the definition of the *amateur* is emblematic of his shifting and uncertain relationship to the changing world of nineteenth-century Paris. In this first chapter on defining the *amateur* I will discuss the social standing of the *amateur* before turning in the following chapters to the discourse of taste and love that were considered his defining characteristics.

This is a complicated task because the category of *amateur* was more of a typology of personality than an easily distinguishable social group based on class such as, for example, aristocrats. Neither was it a group solely distinguished by practice, as for example artists. And yet the *amateur* was tied to each of these other groups, artists and aristocrats.² The self-consciousness of the *amateur*’s identity can be understood by

¹ As I will discuss in the following chapter, taste, since at least the time of Thorstein Veblen, has been considered a social indicator. Recently, Pierre Bourdieu, *La Distinction. Critique Sociale du Jugement* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1979) and James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture Twentieth Century Ethnology, Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) have elaborated on this idea. The issue of exactly what kind of social indicator is complicated, especially so in the case of the *amateur*, whose taste is so self-consciously developed.

² In her book *Aristocrat as Art*, Domna Stanton argues that the aristocrat and the artist are very much linked by way of leisure. They are both “meritocratic minorities engaged in sublimated warfare against unworthy, vulgar, meritless majorities.” This holds true for the *amateur* as well. Domna Stanton, *The Aristocrat as Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 7.

analogy with another social type of the time: the dandy.³ Also a sharply self-aware persona, this type was allied in many ways with the aristocracy in flagrant opposition to the bourgeois niceties of hard work and thrift.⁴ I find this holds as well in the typology of the *amateur*, which was also, I will show, a highly constructed artificial identity. Both of these types, in their respective ways, performed their social roles according to an idealized self image. In socially situating the *amateur*, therefore, I will look at the case of actual collectors of the late nineteenth-century, but from the point of view of the discourse surrounding them, primarily in sales catalogue prefaces and in articles and books of the time, and I will also look at some fictional accounts.⁵

As is the case with the dandy, many of the qualities associated with the *amateur* also belong to the definition of the aristocrat. There is however, a difference. And that is rather than being associated with an attitude of ennui or detachment, the *amateur* was construed in terms of passion and desire. Furthermore, this desire translated into action – the action of creating a collection that was self-consciously assimilated into the practice of the artist: creating something of beauty.

³ See in particular, Emilien Carassus, *Le Mythe du Dandy* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1971) and Rhonda Garelick, *Rising Star. Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

⁴ Rosalind Williams identifies the dandy with an elitist type of consumer. She points out that the fantasy of elegance “must be materialized in exterior signs” and that “this is expensive.” It is through this necessity of consuming that the dandy becomes “tainted by commercialism” The same holds true for the *amateur* who also can be seen as an elitist consumer. Rosalind Williams. *Dream Worlds. Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 119.

⁵ For Stanton, these types operate in a semiotic system in which their identity operates as a sign. The type of *amateur*, like that of aristocrat, is as Stanton puts it, a fictive ideal “which could never be fully incarnated” and it is as such that “the typology achieves its completeness and greatest depth.” In her book defining the aristocrat she therefore describes not only actual aristocrats, but also fictive examples, because both the actual and the imagined contribute to the construction and the understanding of the typology. (Stanton, 10). Carassus also deals with both the historical dandy (early examples such as Beau Brummell, Byron, Count de Mornay, Barby d’Aurevilly, and later ones like Paul Bourget, Edmond de Goncourt, Baudelaire and Montesquiou) as well as the myth itself which is established in literature, in texts by Balzac, Baudelaire and Huysmans (themselves dandys). Of these examples most were also *amateurs* and Bourget, Goncourt and Huysmans will be discussed in greater detail below.

Placing the *Amateur* in the Social Scene

• There were many developments in nineteenth-century French society that affected the practice of collecting art.⁶ While tracing this relationship is beyond the scope of this study, it is helpful to at least outline the major aspects of these changes.

Before the nineteenth-century, collecting was primarily identified with either the crown or the aristocracy. After the revolution of 1789 the bourgeoisie became important in collecting art.⁷ The royal collections were made public after the revolution and, along with much art that belonged to the church, became the basis of the newly established Louvre museum.⁸ Of the private collections of the aristocracy, some were appropriated by the state and became part of the Louvre; others were dispersed and flooded the newly burgeoning marketplace. Collectors were able to buy beautiful things at prices they could afford. The legendary collections of Louis La Caze (1798-1869), François Marcille (1790-1856) and Alexandre-Charles Sauvageot (1781-1860)⁹ were born at this time. The

⁶ Some of the important sources I have relied on for the relationship between social changes and collecting are: Charles Blanc, *Le Trésor de la curiosité, tire des catalogues de vente de tableaux, dessins, estampes, livres, marbres, bronzes, ivoires, terres cuites, bitraux, médailles, armes, porcelains, meubles, émaux; laques et autres objets d'art, avec diverses notes et notices historiques et biographiques*, with a preface by Adolphe Thibaudau, 2 vols, (Paris: Vve J. Renouard, 1857-8); Albert Boime, "Entrepreneurial Patronage" in: *Enterprise and Entrepreneurs in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Edward Carter, Robert Forster and Joseph Moody (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976): 137-207; Nicholas Green, "Circuits of Production, Circuits of Consumption: The Case of Mid-Nineteenth-century French Art Dealing," *Art Journal*, 48, 1(Spring 1989): 29-44; Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon. Art and State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Linda Whiteley, "Art et commerce en France avant l'époque impressionniste," *Romanticisme* 40 (1983): 65-75; and Ann Dumas, "Degas and the Collecting Milieu" in Dumas et al, 109-136.

⁷ Many scholars, for example, associate the July Monarchy and the *Juste Milieu* with a rise in mid-size pictures associated with bourgeois interior decoration, as opposed to the history paintings that had been privileged in earlier salons. See Mainardi, *End of the Salon*.

⁸ In the section concerning the museum that follows I discuss in greater detail the evolution of the Louvre and its relationship to the collector, which is complicated. Private collectors donated much to the Louvre and also worked at the Louvre. Each of the principal museum directors of the nineteenth-century was in his own right *amateurs* who collected art and also made art.

⁹ *Les Donateurs du Louvre*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1989). See also *Musée Impérial du Louvre, Collection Sauvageot* (Paris: Noble et Baudry, 1863).

collection of Balzac's *Cousin Pons*, which Balzac based on the collections of Sauvageot as well as his own, was made possible through the availability of treasures in small shops.¹⁰ Ernest Bosc, writing in 1883, described the break-up of the châteaux earlier in the century, which enabled the bourgeois classes to furnish their country houses with relics from the aristocracy.¹¹ The increasing number of venues in the 1820s and 1830s for buying art produced, in turn, ever-greater numbers of collectors. In 1821 there were 37 picture dealers in Paris, and by 1850 there were 67.¹² The establishment of the Drouot auction house in 1853 signaled the vigor of the art market.¹³ The public sales at this auction house were felt at the time to have profoundly changed the market for art in Paris.

Philippe Burty, writing in 1860, remarked on this in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*:

The sales, by their multiplicity, by the conveniences they offer to all the amateurs, by the activity that they stamp on the tastes and passions of the crowd, have profoundly changed the commerce of all artwork. Paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, coins, antiquities, rarities of all countries, and of all kinds, of every period, appear one after the other and develop the need for the beautiful.¹⁴

What Burty stresses is the multiplicity of art objects arriving on the scene from all different countries and time periods, to tempt the *amateur*. The 1860s also saw the

¹⁰ Honoré de Balzac, *Cousin Pons*, trans. Herbert Hunt, (London: Penguin, 1968). This novel is a critical one in any discussion of the discourse of collection in the nineteenth-century. See in particular: Watson, *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust*, and Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories. History, Technology, Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). In the pages that follow, I also discuss this important text. Donald Adamson compares in detail the three collections in his *The Genesis of Le Cousin Pons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 107-108, 119-126.

¹¹ Ernest Bosc, *Dictionnaire de l'art, de la curiosité et du bibelot* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1883) "un bon bourgeois de Paris n'acheta-t-il pas il y a vingt-huit ans environ, des cheminées d'Arnay-le-Duc pour en meubler sa maison de campagne?" "didn't a good bourgeois of Paris buy, about 28 years ago, the mantelpieces of d'Arnay-le-Duc to furnish his country house?"

¹² Green, 30.

¹³ Green, 29-32.

¹⁴ Philippe Burty, "Critique d'annuaire des artistes et des amateurs- Paris: Jules Renouard, 1860," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 6 (1860): 319. "Les ventes, par leur multiplicité, par les facilités qu'elles offrent à tous les amateurs, par l'activité qu'elles impriment aux goûts et aux passions de la foule, ont profondément modifié le commerce de tous les objets d'art. Tableaux, statues, estampes, dessins, monnaies, antiquités, raretés de tous les pays, de tous genres, de toutes époques, se succèdent chaque jour et développent le besoin du beau."

appearance of new journals devoted to the arts in general, such as the *Gazette des beaux-arts* itself, and a short-lived periodical in the 1860s edited by Eugène Piot called *Le Cabinet de l'amateur*. According to Piot, never had research in art been conducted with such ardor, nor had there ever been so many *amateurs*. He proposed to give news, bulletins of public sale and book reviews that would appeal in particular to the rising class of *amateurs*.¹⁵

The proliferation of art objects mirrored the same multiplicity of commodities available in shops, on department store shelves, and in industrial exhibitions.¹⁶ This unprecedented abundance of consumer goods was described in Zola's novel *Au Bonheur des dames*, which recounts the effect of the massive availability of things to buy on the sensibility of the *parisienne* and on the small neighborhood shop that suffers as a result.¹⁷ Zola links the department store to a factory, and stresses not only the profusion of goods, but the crowds that responded, thus describing both the forces of mass production and mass consumption that were so altering the city of Paris:

Denise felt she was watching a machine working at high pressure; its dynamism seemed to reach to the display windows themselves...A crowd was looking at them, groups of women were crushing each other in front of them, a real mob, made brutal by covetousness. And these passions in the street were giving life to the materials: the lace shivered, then drooped again...But the furnace-like heat with which the shop was ablaze came above all from the selling, from the bustle at the counters...And it was all regulated and organized with the remorselessness of a machine: the vast horde of women were as if caught in the wheels of an

¹⁵ Eugène Piot, *Le Cabinet de l'amateur*, Journal 1861-63 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1863).

¹⁶ Walter Benjamin writes in his Arcades Project: "There are relations between department store and museum... The amassing of artworks in the museum brings them into communication with commodities." Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 415. For the discussion of department stores and consumer goods see Williams, *Dream Worlds*; Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869-1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Whitney Walton, *France at the Crystal Palace* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Patricia Mainardi, *End of the Salon*.

¹⁷ Emile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, trans. Brian Nelson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). See also *Le "cahier" Zola et autour d'une oeuvre: Au Bonheur des dames*, exh. cat. (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 2003).

inevitable force.¹⁸

This new consumerism changed the meaning of buying art works. Because buying inexpensive objets d'art and so-called bibelots became immensely popular, the choosing of artworks in general was in danger of being assimilated into this consumerist frenzy. This was particularly the case when works of art were themselves for sale within the shops. Manet's *Nana*, for example, was exhibited at Giroux's.¹⁹ The discourse of the *amateur* whose taste and love for art is specifically said to be unrelated to fashion developed partly to single out and justify the practice of art-buying as more worthy than simple consumerism.

Linked to the expansion of the art market, with an increase in the number of art dealers and auction sales, there was a great increase in middle class collections. This increase in collectors was noted, as we saw, by Eugène Piot in the 1860s and was the rationale for starting his new journal *Le Cabinet de l'amateur*. By the 1880s this growth trend became the object of satire. In a text entitled *L'Iconophile*, Henry Nogresseau makes fun of the new breed of collectors:

The office workers who make 300 francs a month love the arts like the *Fermiers Généraux* of the old days. The grocer who found his income in his brown sugar or his sardine cans is as enlightened – more, without doubt! – than the important nobles of the *ancien régime* and they prove it to themselves by paying a lot for some bibelots and some prints; it can even happen, for this new-Mycenae, that he arranges his hallway as a painting gallery.²⁰

¹⁸ Zola, 16.

¹⁹ Armstrong, Manet/Manette, 228-236. Armstrong comments on *Nana* as a study in commodification: "Displayed in a vitrine, she is a self-advertising object for sale who is at the same time, like a bathing beauty on the hood of a car, an advertisement for a whole array of other objects for sale, for her sexual come-on is also a solicitation to shop, inciting the shopper's desire by throwing a dose of titillation into the account." 229.

²⁰ Henry Nogresseau, *L'Iconophile*. (Paris, 1882) 182 "Les commis à trois cents francs par mois aiment les arts tout comme les Fermiers Généraux du vieux temps. L'épicier qui a trouvé ses rentes dans sa cassonade et ses boîtes de sardines est tout aussi éclairé, -- plus, sans doute ! -- que les grands seigneurs de l'ancien régime ; et il se le prouve en payant cher quelques bibelots et quelques gravures : il lui arrive même, à ce néo-Mécène, d'ériger son vestibule en galerie de tableaux !"

Everyone, that is, had his own gallery of paintings, a situation as ridiculous as it was infuriating for these authors.

In the later half of the nineteenth-century, the increase in numbers of collectors brought about a concomitant rise in prices. While early collectors such as Sauvageot were able, with quite modest means, to assemble wonderful collections, it cost more and more money in the later years. Charles Blanc, in a preface to the print and drawing collection of Ambrose Firmin Didot, lamented this state of affairs:

Ah! When in our youth we bought an etching by Rembrandt, an engraving by Behem, a woodcut by Albrecht Durer, a little scene by Eisen or Gravelot, one of these little marvels was still affordable. We could still get them, we obscure collectors, simple writers, by some small privation, by resigning ourselves without hesitation to some sacrifice, but now the value of these art works goes still higher...the financiers war above our heads.²¹

Blanc, calling himself an obscure collector, and a simple writer, contrasts the small privations he endured in the past to acquire small treasures with the current war fought by high-flying financiers. Similarly, Degas, according to the Goncourts, was dismayed:

At an allusion to the Duret sale, he let escape a little nervous movement and with a dry voice said that the amateurs are second-hand furniture dealers, badly disguising his great fear at sales where the high figures that are attached to paintings today could weaken tomorrow.²²

The rising prices privileged the role of money and class in gathering a collection. The fear that this inflation of prices would destroy the culture of the *amateur* inspired the

²¹ *Bibliothèque Firmin-Didot*, preface by Charles Blanc (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1877), ii. "Ah! Lorsque dans notre jeunesse nous achetions une eau-forte de Rembrandt, une gravure de Beham, un bois d'Albert Durer, une vignette d'Eisen ou de Gravelot, quelques-unes de ces petites merveilles étaient encore d'un prix abordable. Nous pouvions encore nous les procurer, nous autres collectionneurs obscurs, simples écrivains, en nous imposant une privation, en nous résignant sans hésitation à un sacrifice; mais aujourd'hui la valeur des choses d'art va toujours croissant...les financiers se font la guerre par-dessus nos têtes."

²² *Goncourt Journal*, 16 Mars 1894, (Paris), 536. "A une allusion sur la vente Duret, il laisse échapper un petit mouvement nerveux d'humeur et d'une voix sèche, dit que les amateurs sont des brocanteurs en chambre, dissimulant mal son effroi de ventes où le haut chiffre où sont collés ses tableaux aujourd'hui peut faiblir demain."

large number of articles and sales catalogues celebrating the *amateur*.²³ These articles, coming at a time when collecting was more and more expensive, sought to define the *amateur* apart from his increasingly firm link to the upper classes. This happened at the same time that the government was increasingly touting the artisanal production of luxury goods as a national goal, and the private collector, therefore, needed to be seen as part of the national identity rather than as an exclusive group. Thus while indeed many of the *amateurs*, necessarily, were wealthy, with exclusive tastes, this aspect was underplayed. It was the sensitivity, creativity and even artistry of the *amateur* that was celebrated. This discourse tapped into, and was complicated by, a longstanding discourse that sought to distinguish the *amateur* from more ordinary consumerism, and which also stressed the authenticity and creativity of the *amateur*.

The role of money and class in collecting has been at the forefront of most discussions of the subject. Recent scholarship on collecting in this period has followed Walter Benjamin in focusing on the way private collections mirrored the economic and social changes of the capitalist city of Paris. Benjamin considered the collecting practice of the bourgeoisie of the nineteenth-century to be a reaction to capitalist social organization in so far as it produces the separation of public and private domains and the proliferation of commodities.²⁴ For him, the bourgeois collector of the nineteenth-century was struggling against the marketplace and the commodification of objects. With work increasingly separate from and unrelated to private life, objects as well became

²³ See Dumas, 110. "The disappearance of the *amateur* is a theme that cropped up repeatedly: in a series of articles on collectors published in the 1890s in the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, for example, or in introductory essays for the lavish catalogues of collections sales written by well-known critics." There were other reasons for the appearance of these articles and sales catalogue-prefaces which this thesis explores in various ways. The increasing interest in the private collector mirrors, most importantly, the end of the government run salon and the rise in private galleries.

²⁴ Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1978). See in particular "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth-century," 146-162.

alienated or commodified. Devoid of the inherent relationship that they once had with personal work, objects lost their meaning. Similarly living space was emptied of its productivity with work confined to office or factory: "For the private person, living space becomes, for the first time, antithetical to the place of work. The former is constituted by the interior; the office is its complement."²⁵ Furthermore, the identity of the person becomes intimately linked with the interior, which is alienated from his working life. The decoration of this interior is an aim to express the persona of its inhabitant. For Benjamin, "the collector is a true intimate of the interior."²⁶ He dreams of "obliterating the commodity-like character of things through his ownership of them."²⁷ However, he is unable to escape the socio-economic system in which he lives, and thus transfers what Benjamin calls "connoisseur value" rather than "intrinsic value" to the works he collects. In Benjamin's view then, the interior is a space of respite, defined by its negative relationship to the marketplace. What I find interesting, however, about many of the *amateurs* that I have studied, is their desire to integrate their interiors into their working lives. That is, for them, the public and the private are not as separate as Benjamin argues. Also striking is the way that the workspace, the "cabinet de travail" is a principal space of collection.

Much current scholarship on collecting is concentrated on the action of the market. Some scholars have argued that collecting as a practice was identified with the aristocracy, which the bourgeois class adopts in order to claim a higher social status.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid., 154.

²⁶ Ibid., 155.

²⁷ Ibid., 156.

²⁸ Albert Boime argues that the rich industrialists of France aimed to validate their rising status and solidify their newly upper-class identity by assimilating the collecting practice of the aristocracy. He argues that "their initial quest for art objects was rooted in the self-conscious need for respectability and elegance along the lines of the landed aristocracy" Boime, 147. He names, in particular, Jean Dollfus, director of a

Others link the pursuit of collecting to the rise of commodities available for purchase and the increasing importance of the private space, which needed to be decorated.²⁹ What becomes evident in these discussions is that collecting per se is incompletely distinguished from the collecting of fine art. The analyses of these scholars address the collector in general, making little distinction between accumulating objects such as bibelots almost haphazardly, collecting a series of objects related to each other by category (such as stamps), and carefully selecting those objects, and particularly

textile factory, Eugène Schneider, manager of ironworks at Le Creusot, Isaac and Emile Péreire, railway magnates, Thomy-Théry, sugar refiner, Delesserts, banker, Isaac de Camondo, banker, Archille Seillière, Banker and Adolphe Thibaudau, railroad magnate. While these collectors share a common social background, they do not always share a common attitude towards collecting. Boime does not take into account the reshaping of their identities by means of the practice and collecting of art of some of these collectors. Rather than simply searching for elegance and respectability, such *amateurs* as Dollfus and Camondo, I argue, show a degree of involvement in art that takes as model the artist rather than the aristocrat. The construction of their identity, that is, was inextricable from their daily practice and thought, rather than being a veneer for public consumption. They appropriated a way of living, a life of leisure, which privileged sentiment and judgment.

²⁹ Saisselin, Silverman and Watson each delve into and develop different aspects of Benjamin's discussions. Silverman's *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France* expands on the idea of the interior reflecting the persona of the inhabitant first proposed by Benjamin. She argues that the convergence of a revival of the rococo (linked to a nationalistic sponsorship of luxury goods production) and the new psychology of Charcot, together produced Art Nouveau. Here the collector aimed to create an interior that is an "organic ensemble" expressive of the self. She quotes Geffroy's description of the Goncourt house, for example, where he points out that they gave their house "a particular and signifying physiognomy, resembling their own intellectual and artistic individuality" (219). The self that is being expressed in this view exists apart from and prior to the creation of the interior that reflects it. I agree with the link between the self and the interior collection, but I view it rather more performatively: that the persona of the collector develops alongside of and at the same time as the collection. Saisselin, in his *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot* considers the fashion for collecting amongst the middle classes. He points to what he calls the "democratization of collecting" (28). He argues that the commodification of Paris meant an end to the predominance of aristocratic collection spaces of palace, hotel and chateau and their replacement by department stores and arcades. The objects arranged in these new emporiums were bought by large numbers to decorate the newly important private apartment. According to him "Art came to be reserved for the private domain, the intimate interior, the private world of the bourgeois" (29). He argues further that his private world, "cluttered with objects from distant places and distant pasts" was a space for "private fantasy." Clearly both of Saisselin's points are very much linked to the Benjamin idea of public versus private and the unreality of the private realm. Also clearly at issue is the bibelot, rather than the painting. Watson also discusses the phenomenon of the collection of bibelots in the nineteenth-century. She argues that "collecting is recuperated from its relatively marginal status to become a mainstream practice because it fills a need for a familiar cultural model for both the cognitive and the spatial organization of mass quantities of objects" (Watson, 5). She identifies a need to respond to the accumulation of superfluous consumer goods which is present for the collector of paintings as well as "objets d'art." She explains that many of these collectors viewed themselves as recuperating the value of their beloved paintings from the brutality of the market and themselves as reinvesting love and meaning into paintings that otherwise would be seen only as interchangeable commodity goods, a view that is clearly inspired by Benjamin.

paintings, that correspond to the taste, or the exercise of the aesthetic judgement, of the collector. Furthermore, little scholarly attention is given to the *amateur* as social type as distinct from the collector.

This thesis focuses on those collectors who specifically thought of themselves, or were identified by others, as *amateurs*. As contemporary texts make clear, there is a distinction to be made between those who were seduced by the profusion of commodities to accumulate bibelots and others who chose their collections carefully and with love. However, the socio-political analysis of collecting in general is crucial to understanding aspects of the *amateur*. The importance of decorating the interior, the newly privileged government sponsorship of luxury production, and the great wealth of the new industrialists all contributed to the interest in the *amateur* in the fin-de-siècle.

Against the background of these broad social changes, the *amateur* as constructed identity can best be understood as an approach to living rather than to buying. That is, rather than being defined by the economics of collection, the discourse of the *amateur* calls for an analysis of the representation of the collecting mentality. Adopting at the same time the ideal of leisure and the productivity of the artist, this kind of collector exemplified his life by the beautiful things with which he surrounded himself. Rather than simply being born to an elevated social rank, as in the aristocratic system, the *amateur* appropriated, by means of his passion, the courtly identity; he assumed a performative role.

The Amateur as Described in the Late Nineteenth-Century

Part of the positivist, categorizing impulse of the nineteenth-century was to examine the typology of the citizens of Paris. Throughout the century there were many series of books, etchings, magazine articles and so on that endeavored to describe “Les Types de Paris.”³⁰ One recurring type was the *Amateur*.

The most elaborated French literary description of the difficult social position of the *amateur* is found in Balzac’s *Cousin Pons* (1847).³¹ He is an uneasily liminal figure within a Paris that was increasingly divided between the professional and commercial bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Disengaged from the pursuit of profit, set aside from the world of the crowd, the “true amateur’s”³² complicated relationship with the commodified marketplace is one subject of the book.³³ Here a poor relation of one of the grand bourgeois families of Paris was shunned, and his lovingly assembled collection mocked until its great monetary value became the center of intrigue. Pons, like Balzac himself, had been able, by means of discerning eye rather than a large pocketbook to

³⁰ Some of these anthologies include: *Paris: ou le livre des cent-et-un*, 11 volumes (Paris: Chez L’Avocat 1831-2); *L’Epoque sans nom, Esquisses de Paris 1830-1833* (Paris: Alexandre Mesnier, 1833); *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, 9 vols (Paris: L. Curmer, 1840-42); Louis Huart, *Muséum Parisien* (Paris: Beaucher et Cie, 1841); *Physiologies parisiennes. Bibliothèque pour rire* (Paris: Albert et Cie., 1850); and *Badauderies parisiennes. Les Rassemblements. Physiologies de la rue*, ed. Octave Uzanne, illustrated by Félix Vallatton, published for Les Bibliophiles indépendants (Paris: Floury, 1896). For a discussion of the idea of the “type” in these anthologies see Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy. Physiognomy and Caricature in Nineteenth-century Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). She points out that the *Physiologies* series, edited by Philipon, began in the 1830s peaked in the 1840’s and subsided in the 1850’s. According to her, half a million copies were bought during the first few years of their vogue (34). See also Christel Hollevoet, *The Flâneur: Genealogy of a Modernist Icon*, PhD Dissertation (City University of New York, 2001).

³¹ Balzac’s *Comédie Humaine* can be seen as a project of describing the Physiognomies of France, as Wechsler argues, with his *Physiologie du mariage* of 1830 being one of the first such texts.

³² Balzac. *Cousin Pons*, 27.

³³ Jane Nicholson, “Discourse, Power, and Necessity: Contextualizing *Le Cousin Pons*” (in *Symposium* 42(Spring 1988)46-61) Nicholson believes that “Pons can be reconstructed as a novel of incipient class warfare” (53)

accumulate a legendary collection.³⁴ However, once its great value became known, Pons' family and many of the people who know him conspire to acquire it, not out of love but purely out of greed.

Pons himself is not untouched by greed, but his is not greed for money. His natural sense of "taste" applies to both his collecting of art, and the love of fine dining, which are both challenged by his limited funds. On the one hand he is a ridiculous figure, wearing long-outdated clothes, sycophantically praising his relatives so as to be invited to their elegant dinners. On the other, his great love of art as well as his moving friendship with his fellow-musician Schmuke combine to create a character of dignity. Through his love of art and his fundamental indifference to the monetary value of his collection he comes to be seen as a truly honorable person. Whereas his relatives have self-consciously gone after the trappings of aristocracy, buying a château in Normandy, and adding the *de Marville* to their Camusot name, they are motivated by the greed associated with the commercialism of the bourgeoisie. Pons, on the other hand, is presented more honorably. It is his character than seems exceptional and comes closer to the old ideology of the *honnête homme* than is the case for his ambitious family.³⁵ As Pierre Barbéris argues, the activity of collecting is, for Pons, a spiritual vision, the materialization of a non-bourgeois life, opposed to the values of the marketplace.³⁶

³⁴ *Les Donateurs du Louvre* op cit. 14-20. Cited here is also the admiration of the Goncourts: "ce petit vieillard dîne modestement à cinquante sous, après avoir donné, donné pour rien – car ces héroïsmes sans bruit et sans réclame sont invraisemblables – donné à la France une collection de plusieurs millions" Ibid,p.20. (This little old man dines modestly for fifty cents, after having given, given for nothing, a collection worth many millions).

³⁵ Littré defines "honnête homme" both as virtuous and as having the qualities that render one agreeable in the best society. Littré, E. *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Hachette, 1876), 2039. It is an important concept in defining a courtier. Thus the aristocratic qualities in this book are transferred to the amateur rather than the ambitiously striving and greedy family.

³⁶ Pierre Barbéris. *Mythes Balzaciens*. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972), 259-60. Pierre-Marc Biais complicates this point of view by demonstrating the openness with which buying and bargaining and marketplace

The opposition of motivations for acquiring art that Balzac set out here, greed and social pretension versus love, is found in much of the discourse surrounding the *amateur*. The association of beautiful things and the aristocracy remained a strong undercurrent throughout the century. But, in the manner of Balzac, many of the writers linked the *amateur* to the idealized character of the aristocrat rather than to his ostentatious display of wealth.

There are several outward signs of the worthiness of Pons' character. Most obvious is his appearance. His clothing is specifically outdated, and unfashionable. This shows his disregard for mere fashion and highlights his obsession with beauty. This tattered appearance is repeatedly seen in the discourse of the *amateur*.

Secondly, there is the importance of his "eye." He sees what others don't. This again is a recurring feature of the character of the *amateur*. It is notable as well that he is such a gourmand. Taste, of course, which is one of the defining characteristics of the *amateur*, has both a bodily and metaphoric meaning. These two physical aspects (the eye and the sense of taste) are signs of the authenticity of the *amateur*.

Finally, one of the most salient signs of Pons's authentic love of art is his profession of musician. Not only is he a gatherer of beauty, but he produces it as well. There are many passages in which the beauty of music is seen as expressing both the love of the characters for each other and for higher goals. For example, as Pons is dying, Schmucke plays the piano for his friend: "Unwearying as the nightingale, lofty as the heavens under which it sings, rich in variations like the leafy forest it floods with its

transactions are treated in the novel. The complicated negotiation between living a spiritual life and playing the market is central, I believe, to understanding the situation of the *amateur* in nineteenth-century France. Pierre-Marc de Biasi, "La Collection Pons comme figure du problématique," in Françoise van Rossum-Guyon and Michiel van Mrederode eds., *Balzac et les Parents Pauvres* (Paris: Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1981), 61.

warblings, he played as never before and plunged the listening musician into such ecstasy as Raphael depicts in the Saint Cecilia painting at Bologna.”³⁷ It is striking that often the “true” *amateur* is represented as an artist of some sort, be it musician, painter or writer who creates as well as accumulates, things of beauty.

The authenticity of character and love as distinguishing characteristics of the *amateur* are also stressed in non-fictional accounts of the social types of Paris. It is argued that this passion disassociated the *amateur* from consumerism. *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1843), one of the typologies of the characters of France, devoted one chapter to “Les Collectionneurs.”³⁸ Here three sorts of collectors are described: those who are badly dressed and who buy for the love of it; those who are in the business of buying and selling; and those who buy from a sense of fashion. The *amateur* was the first sort and his love for art was made clear by evident unconcern for his own clothes. His poor appearance served two functions: it set him apart from any sense of fashion or participation in the competition of the marketplace and it emphasized his obsessive concentration on his collection. In *Les Français peints par eux mêmes* these lovers of art are monomaniacal in their pursuit of art: “all the *amateurs* who push their love of one single thing to a passion for collecting can be classified with the madmen, as monomaniacs, since they are fixed on only one idea.”³⁹ The passion for collecting was an obsession that neglected all else. The *amateur* dressed badly, ate poorly, and had no friends. He spent all his time in the auction houses and the galleries. When these were closed he remained closeted with his collection, dusting, admiring, and even talking to it.

³⁷ Balzac, *Cousin Pons*, 265.

³⁸ *Les Français Peints par eux-mêmes*. Tome I, 218 – 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 125. “tous les amateurs qui poussent leur amour d’une seule chose jusqu’à la passion de la collection, peuvent être classés parmi les fous, section des monomanes: car ils se sont attelés à une seule idée.”

It is a description that fits the character of Pons in Balzac's novel. On the other hand, the collector in the business of collecting, while acting the part of the true *amateur*, was in it for the money, and the fashionable collector had no character or passion and was simply a product of fashion.⁴⁰

These same sets of concerns are addressed by Adolphe Thibaut in his 1857 preface to Charles Blanc's *Le Trésor de la Curiosité*.⁴¹ With the increasing popularity of collecting, it became necessary to invent new terminology to single out the collector who was passionate about beautiful things. Thibaut maintains that the word *amateur* was a relatively recent word that replaced *curieux*, which had come to mean simply an accumulator of bric-à-brac.⁴² Here the *amateur* is set apart from the lower middle class rather than from the social climbing upper classes of *Cousin Pons*. Again, it is the pure passion of the *amateur*, his authentic feelings, that provided the justification for separating him from the *curieux* so as to maintain class boundaries. For Thibaut, the upper level activity of collecting should not be tainted by the bric-à-brac mania of more ordinary people.

Thus the *amateur* was placed by these texts somewhat insecurely in the social structure of Paris. Neither *petit* nor *grand* bourgeois, neither fashionable nor ordinary, the *amateur* could escape these limits only by virtue of his exceptional love of art, like an artist. This discourse of the *amateur* was firmly established by mid-century with *Cousin Pons* and the various physiognomies such as *Les français peints par eux-mêmes*; it remained relatively stable into the fin-de-siècle, our primary focus. In the later period

⁴⁰ Ibid., 128. This last category of collector is participating in the mania for the bibelot that Watson and Saiselin discuss at length.

⁴¹ Charles Blanc. *Le Trésor de la Curiosité*.

⁴² Ibid. 111.

there was an increasing anxiety about the disappearance of this social type, and an increasing discomfort about the role of money, as prices escalated and private collecting became more and more prevalent. Towards the end of the century, the discourse remained very much structured around the difference in motivation between commercialism and a sense of the beautiful. What is clear is that the *amateur* was often given qualities associated with the ideology of the aristocracy. Sometimes this reflects a regressive nostalgia, but it more generally accords with the new interest in the private collector that arose with growth of the private gallery and the government sponsorship of luxury production. Three texts, from a minister of fine arts, and two writers on collecting, are representative of the kinds of concerns in evidence at this time.⁴³

Philippe de Chennevières, for example, the Director of Fine Arts from 1873 to 1878, himself both a painter and a collector, characterized the *amateur* as someone possessing a kind of *gentillesse de courtoisie* that was the ideal of the courtier.⁴⁴ This staunchly anti-democratic official emphasized the aristocratic ties of the *amateur* over against any more public role he might play. For him the *amateur* stood apart from the marketplace. Those whose concern was buying and selling were identified as *collectionneurs* and to be distinguished from the *amateur* whose love for art, like the aristocrat was separated from the commerce of art:

He is truly a rare kind of man, of an origin altogether superior to that of the collector. There are none that I have not known among those who have been the honor of our times, and I can say that they have all been models of goodness, of

⁴³ Apart from these three, one can consult the series of articles on the *amateur* in the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, as well as Eugene Piot, Henri Rochefort, Paul Eudel and others, who discuss the practice of collecting at the end of the century with a keen sense of the difference between fashionable collecting and self-motivated choices.

⁴⁴ Chennevières, IV, 119. On Chennevières, see: Jane Roos, "Aristocracy in the Arts: Philippe de Chennevières and the Salons of the mid 1870s," *Art Journal* 48, 1 (Spring 1989): 53-62.

courtesy, of gentleness, of urbanity, of nobility of an elevated spirit of generosity and of a tranquility of soul and of dignity in life.⁴⁵

Chennevières believed that without this aristocratic elevation there could exist no more true love of art. He pointed to the rise of the public collection, the museum, as standing in opposition to the private love of art.⁴⁶ He believed, however, that rather than transforming the public into real *amateurs*, the public collection would instead have the effect of killing the real love of art:

[In the 20th Century] the public will have become the only amateur. But it is rare that the public have the passion for beautiful things. And without this passion, collecting does not exist; curiosity will be dead, the cult of beautiful things as well.⁴⁷

This position, strange for a promoter of the state role in art, argues for the persistence of an alternative, private mode of art collection based on passion rather than any didactic function.⁴⁸ It is the cult of beautiful objects, rather than the knowledge of stylistic progression or national schools that Chennevières saw as motivating collecting. This raises a problem for the museum, of course. If the goal of the museum is to educate, and does this through the installation of a didactic, chronologically ordered progression, (the goal which it pursued ever more effectively throughout the nineteenth-century), it instills perhaps knowledge, but not passion. Passion may require possession, reserved for the privileged few. Thus a class differentiation is clearly enunciated. The private

⁴⁵ Chennevières, IV, 119. "C'est vraiment une rare espèce d'hommes, et d'une graine tout à fait supérieure, que celle des collectionneurs. Il n'en est guères que je n'aie connus parmi ceux qui ont été l'honneur de notre temps et je puis dire que tous ont été des modèles de bonhomie, de courtoisie, de douceur, d'urbanité, de noblesse, d'élévation d'esprit de générosité et de tranquillité d'âme, de dignité dans la vie."

⁴⁶ And this comes from a man who served as curator of public collections for many years.

⁴⁷ Ibid., IV 119-120. "[au 20^{ème} siècle] le public sera devenu le seul amateur. Mais il est rare que le public ait la passion des belles choses. Or sans passion la collection n'existe pas; la curiosité sera morte, la culte des belles choses aussi."

⁴⁸ In fact this anti-democratic stance lost him his post as Director of Fine Arts in 1878. See Roos.

collection is associated with the closed circle of the aristocracy and the public museum with the untutored and undiscerning masses.⁴⁹

Ernest Bosc's *Dictionnaire de l'art* (1883) also underlines a contrast between love of art and other motives, but uses historical rather than class-based examples. He uses the example of the collecting practices of the Greeks and the Romans. According to him, the innate Greek feeling for beautiful works stands in stark contrast to Roman ostentation and vanity:

The former [the Greeks] collected out of the love of art and from an innate feeling for owning beautiful artworks in order to develop and to refine more and more their taste. On the other hand, the Romans collected only out of pure ostentation and to satisfy their vanity.⁵⁰

Both vanity and ostentation express the collector's sense of his own social standing, his power vis-à-vis the other. In this way, both of these qualities are linked to the idea of fashion, which is a collective kind of desire in contrast to the individualized and personalized taste of the collector, and which is linked to consumerism in a way that collecting for love quite self-consciously is not. He uses the word *curieux* in the old (according to Thibaudeau, outdated) sense, to describe the collector of art. He also links him to a life of leisure:

The *curieux* is necessarily a man of riches and of pleasure, that is to say a *gentleman* who loves to see, to wander, to touch, to feel, to travel without worries; the chatter amongst friends or colleagues, that is his life; recounting tales of good bargains, good opportunities, half-laughs, and even smiling about a brainless young man or a *curieux* who is as ignorant as rich, that is his business; but to work assiduously, with persistence, this is different; this is his smallest vice.⁵¹

⁴⁹ This separation of public and private in relation to the museum will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

⁵⁰ Ernest Bosc, *Dictionnaire de l'art, de la curiosité et du bibelot* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1883), i. "Les premiers [les Grecs] collectionnaient par amour de l'art et par un sentiment inné de posséder de belles oeuvres, afin de se former et s'épurer de plus en plus le goût. Les Romains, au contraire, n'avaient des collections que par ostentation pure et pour satisfaire leur vanité."

⁵¹ Ibid., xiv-xv. "Le curieux est nécessairement un homme riche et de loisir, c'est-à-dire un *gentleman* qui aime beaucoup à voir, à flâner, à toucher, à palper, à voyager sans soucis d'aucune sorte; la causerie entre amis, entre confrères, voilà son fait; raconter les bonnes aubaines, les belles occasions, rire à demi et même

Here the specific terms of Balzac's *vie élégante*, which I discuss below, are associated with the *curieux*, who is likened to a gentleman: a rich man, with plenty of leisure. It also strongly evokes the Baudelairian *flâneur* of the "Painter of Modern Life," whose non-regimented life reads as a description of the *amateur*. Bosc's description of the *curieux* brings to the fore many interrelated aspects that I discuss at greater length below. The leisure available to the *curieux* is expressed in his freedom of access and experience: seeing, strolling, touching, feeling, traveling without any worry and with conversation. This is a seemingly random grouping of activities which in fact enacts in its casualness the non-programmatic schedule and mode of life of the *amateur*. Each item in the list features importantly in the discourse of the *amateur*, as we will see. "To see" is of course crucial to a collector of art, as is "touch" and even "feel (*palper*)" which evokes the sensuality of the relationship between the *amateur* and his collection. Equally important are "flâner" and "voyage without worries" which provide not only the plan of their lives but also of their collections. At the same time he needed to be rich to allow for a life that revolved around the sociability of chatting with his friends, searching for art bargains and good deals and laughing at those who aren't as savvy as he is. His leisure and his sociability remain his most important attributes. This mix of bargains and "gentlemanlyness" is a bit uneasy in this text, hovering quite close to the satiric.

sourire des achats d'un jeune étourneau ou d'un curieux aussi riche qu'ignorant, voilà son affaire: mais travailler assidûment, avec acharnement, c'est autre chose; le travail chez le curieux ...c'est là son moindre défaut." This last phrase makes allusion to the *Fables* of La Fontaine (The Cicada and the Ant) which contrasts the laziness of the cicada which sang all summer, and the work of the ant, who put away supplies for winter.

The preoccupation with the disturbing role of the marketplace and the changing economy is also important to the 1884 book of Spire Blondel.⁵² He, like Chennevières, is also concerned with the transformation of collecting from an art of tasteful selection, to the simple amassing of great quantities of objects:

But if a few amateurs, exceptionally gifted, have a refined sense of observation and a delicacy of feeling sufficient to appreciate all these objects and taste as a sybarite the intellectual pleasure that their possession offers, others less subtle...show...embarrassment in choosing them, in grouping them, and in fusing them, so to speak, around them in a harmonious and knowledgeable ensemble.⁵³

The difference between those who can really appreciate art and those who are unable to is a matter of “refinement,” a code word for the aristocracy. Qualities such as delicacy of feeling and finesse of observation point to the courtier as model. It is important that in his discussion of collecting, leisure plays an important role. However, while the leisure of the aristocrat is linked to an entire life of not having to “work,” leisure in the writing of Blondel refers to the free time after work: “Today...anyone, whatever rank he belongs to, seeks, in the calm of his home, to rest after his work.”⁵⁴ Note that Blondel here includes all social groups, except women, in this need for respite from work.

These two types of leisure, one which corresponds to a freedom of schedule that belonged to the aristocracy, and the other which follows work, are fundamentally different and entail two opposing concepts of collecting and the *amateur*. *Amateur* was

⁵² Spire Blondel, *L'art intime et le goût en France (Grammaire de la curiosité)*, (Paris: Rouveyre et Blond, 1884).

⁵³ Ibid., 1-2 “Mais si quelques amateurs, exceptionnellement bien doués, possèdent une finesse d’observation et une délicatesse de sentiment suffisantes pour apprécier sainement tous ces objets et goûter en sybarites le plaisir intellectuel que procure leur possession, d’autres moins raffinés...éprouvent...un embarras à les choisir, à les grouper et à les fusionner, pour ainsi dire, autour d’eux dans un ensemble harmonieux et savant.”

⁵⁴ Ibid, 1. “Aujourd’hui ...chacun, à quelque rang qu’il appartienne, cherche, dans le calme du foyer, à se reposer des fatigues du travail.”

then associated with a kind of life that included many kinds of activity, allowing not only for art collecting, but also art practice, and business.

As Alain Corbin explains, at the end of the eighteenth century people began to move away from a spontaneous use of time to a scheduled use of time:

the time that was relatively slow, supple, malleable, filled with often undefined activities was little by little replaced by scheduled, foreseen, ordered time, precipitated by the efficiency of production⁵⁵

The way one used one's time, Corbin explains, came to be identified as a sign of social status: "A relative independence regarding work...constitutes a determining factor of social status."⁵⁶ This leisure is the kind of free-floating time conducive to looking at paintings and talking and strolling.

From this quick survey of texts on the *amateur* it is clear that the aristocratic ideals of refined taste and leisure were crucial to his identity. From Chennevières's *courtoisie* and *noblesse*, to the refinement of Spire Blondel, to the gentleman of Bosc, each of these texts is concerned with elevating the *amateur* above the market by means of evoking a pre-capitalist code of honor. These texts, however, suggest more than a simple refusal to accept a new social order, more than a snobbish disdain for the working classes, more than an *arriviste* preening, although certainly these aspects play important roles, especially in the case of the elitist Chennevières. There is also, in the use of "gentleman" as an English word, a suggestion of new possibilities for a refined life. The

⁵⁵ Alain Corbin, *L'Avènement des loisirs, 1850-1960* (Paris: Aubier, 1995), 10. "ce temps de relative lenteur, souple, malleable, occupé par des activités souvent mal déterminées a été peu à peu remplacé par le temps calculé, prévu, ordonné, précipité de l'efficacité de la production."

⁵⁶ Ibid., 55. "Une relative indépendance à l'égard du travail imposé...constitue un élément déterminant du statut social." Corbin finds leisure to be very important to nineteenth-century culture: "On peut se demander si bien loin d'être obsédé par le profit, comme on le répète trop souvent, la société bourgeoise du XIX^e siècle n'aspirait pas d'abord à être une "société de loisir." (59) "One can ask oneself whether rather than being obsessed with profit, as is too often repeated, the bourgeois society of the 19th century did not aspire above all to be "a society of leisure." This stress on the way the bourgeoisie lived its life rather than what it bought is crucial in the discourse of the *amateur*.

leisure of Blondel and Bosc suggest an ideal of living that adapts to modern life but preserves the calm and the intellectual passion of earlier times or other cultures, be it early Greece or England. The refined life of leisure and sensitivity in a capitalist world is discussed by Balzac, in another important text, his *Traité de la vie élégante*.

The Amateur as Artist: La Vie Élégante

Balzac's *Traité de la vie élégante* helps to explain the *amateur* as a way of life, a specifically elegant life. Taken by some scholars as a text describing the dandy, I would propose it fits the *amateur* as well. The *Treatise* which first appeared in installments in the right-wing journal *La Mode* in 1830, distinguishes three types of people: those who work, those who think, and those who do nothing.⁵⁷ The first leads “une vie occupée;” the second “la vie d’artiste;” and the third “la vie élégante.” The elegant life is the art of animating rest. Thus, for Balzac, the man habituated to work cannot understand the elegant life.⁵⁸ The life of an artist is a great exception, because his work itself, his creations, concern animating rest. His idleness, or rather his lack of full-time work within the capitalist economy, allows him to think and to create. Thus for Balzac, the only other category of person who knows how to use his free time, aside from the leisured aristocracy, is the artist. Neither a laborer nor a consumer, the artist is involved with creating out of nothing; he requires leisure, which is primary, rather than secondary

⁵⁷ Honoré de Balzac, *Traité de la Vie Elegante* (Paris, 1853) [1830]. This text is discussed by Garelick in her *Rising Star. Dandyism, Gender, and Performance in the Fin de Siècle*, 14-18, as well as by Williams in *Dream Worlds*. Whereas they both situate this work as explicating the dandy, I highlight the transitional role of the artist as important to the culture of the *amateur*. See also Anne Martin-Fugier, *La vie élégante ou la formation du Tout-Paris 1815-1848*. 22-25. She argues as well that Balzac's text works to erase the boundary between “vie élégante” and “vie d’artiste” She criticizes him for neglecting that membership in the elite is concretely determined by birth or fortune. (24)

⁵⁸ Balzac, 12.

to his identity.

The rules for an elegant life form the greatest part of this work, with maxims that are at once tongue-in-cheek and quasi-serious. A political work intended for a royalist audience, it justifies the separation of classes, arguing that while the ruled are materialist, the rulers are idealist. For him, the “vie occupée” concerns the exploitation of matter by man or of man by man, while the artist’s life, or the elegant life is driven by ideas.⁵⁹

Amongst the various rules for living an elegant, leisured life is to surround oneself with beautiful objects. This passage reads almost as a formula for becoming an *amateur*:

To give one’s life distinction by way of elegance, it is no longer enough to be noble or to win the prize in one of the human lotteries, but we must also have been given this indefinable faculty that always leads us to choose really beautiful or good things the ensemble of which fits our own physiognomy and our own destiny.⁶⁰

Here the old class system has been superseded by a new order in which one can acquire an elegant life through choice. No longer is it necessary, Balzac argues, to be noble or even to have lots of money. If one has some indefinable quality which allows one to choose beautiful things, those things will in turn, reflect one’s elegant destiny. Balzac maintains that a gift of some kind of innate ability or faculty allows this future to be revealed, a future that in turn reflects one’s own physiognomy.

It is a strange idea, one in which choice reveals necessity (destiny), in which freedom from the old class boundaries depends on some kind of physiological ability (a gift of a certain faculty). It seems far removed from the keen-eyed novels in which money and class operate so forcefully, but provides a kind of image of artist as aristocrat that

⁵⁹ Ibid., Note, 30.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 32-33. “Pour distinguer notre vie par de l’élégance, il ne suffit donc plus aujourd’hui d’être noble ou de gagner un quaterne à l’une des loteries humaines, il faut encore avoir été doué de cette indéfinissable faculté...qui nous porte toujours à choisir les choses vraiment belles ou bonnes, les choses dont l’ensemble concorde avec notre physionomie, avec notre destinée.”

seems to beckon to many of the collectors of the time. In this view, the possession of beautiful things can be seen to confirm the possession of a special gift, of a privileged destiny and physiognomy, rather than simply the possession of cash or fancy family connections. In reading the literature on specific collectors, it is striking how intertwined are the identity of the collector and the pursuit of an elegant life. But it is not an elegant life of lunches and lawn parties. Rather, it is an elegant life characterized by the pursuit of creating the work of art that is a collection.

Sales Catalogues of the Late Nineteenth-Century

There is no easy way to categorize the *amateurs* of the late nineteenth-century socially. Of the two hundred or so collectors whose sales catalogues I studied, some were industrialists, some were professionals, some were artists, and some were leisured aristocrats. This range of social types is certainly a shift from earlier centuries in which collectors were primarily aristocrats. On the other hand, this variety corresponds, in part, to an analysis of the “notable” class of the nineteenth-century in France, in which the bourgeoisie played an ever-greater role. Particular to the *amateurs*, as opposed to the notable class in general (as defined by A.J. Tudesq), was a greater number of artists, and art dealers.⁶¹ Of the catalogues I studied there is much more emphasis on the character, taste and love of art amongst the collectors discussed than their social standing, but it is possible to piece together certain general information.

I have compiled a table of collectors with their names and professions, in as

⁶¹ A.J. Tudesq, *Les Grands notables en France* (Paris, 1964) and A.J. Tudesq, *L'Etude des notables inventaire des sources et projets d'enquête* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1956).

much as that information was available. Table A (in Appendix A) summarizes most of the painting collections I examined. I have omitted from this list some catalogues in which the collectors remain anonymous (such as collection of M. X***) or for whom I was unable to find biographical information. Table B (in appendix B) includes the prints, drawing and book collections.⁶²

As can be seen from Table A, the bourgeois collectors ranged from winemakers, to picture dealers, to administrators. Other collectors were aristocrats, while still others were writers, artists, or printmakers. Each of these shared, at least in the discourse of the time, the same qualities of love for their collections and an equally exigent standard for choice irrespective of their social standing.

Rather than discussing each collector in detail, I include several examples below to give the flavor of the range of occupations and motivations behind collecting as described in the prefaces. While I analyze the defining characteristics of taste and love in the chapter that follows, and discuss the arrangement of the collections in chapters four and five, I focus on the emphasis placed on the centrality of collecting in the lives of these people. Rather than a pastime or a hobby, collecting is described as very important in these people's lives. This is true to the extent that rather than finding a rupture between public professions and private collecting, there is very much an attempt made to establish continuity between these two. The collection is central, that is, to their elegant lives.

An obvious example of a continuity between life and collection is the case of Aimé Diot, who was a picture dealer who sold mainly paintings from the Barbizon

⁶² Most of the biographical information comes from the sales catalogues themselves, although I have also consulted several other sources, principally the *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, ed. M. Prevost and Roman D'Amat, and the *Archives biographiques françaises*, ed. Susan Bradley.

school.⁶³ His collection included both recognized masters and less well-known painters. These less-known painters are described as being a “precious resource” for “les amateurs modestes,” which speaks to the growing ranks of bourgeois collectors. Diot’s profession was to buy and sell pictures so that his own collection was clearly continuous with his professional life. But Diot was also friendly with many of the artists, so that his collection was intimately linked with his affective life as well.

Another bourgeois collector, M de Beriot, was a violinist and professor of the conservatory, who often gave musical soirées at his house. His collection centered on three painters: Boudin, Jongkind, and Harpignies. In an article in the *New York Herald* (Paris Edition) of 6 February 1901 Beriot explained how it was that he came to collect these three painters: apparently his laundress asked him to buy a small picture that one of her customers had given her to settle his bill. It turned out to be by Boudin, and Beriot went on to buy many more of that artist’s watercolors. He met Harpignies at the musical soirées in Beriot’s home as the painter was also an amateur cellist. This friendship sparked the collector’s admiration for Harpignies’ landscape paintings. Beriot’s connection to Jongkind is not explained beyond his admiration for the painter. The collection was more than a simple amassing of objects; rather it evolved out of friendships gained over the course of Beriot’s professional and personal life.

Professional involvement in art and personal friendships with artists were important motivations for collecting. So too, was a more general sense that works of art evoked the pleasures of one’s life. Both friendship the pleasure of the landscape inspired Philippe George, a winemaker from Champagne, whose collection L. Roger-Milès described on the occasion of its sale in 1892. George was hardworking and attached to his

⁶³ *Collection Aimé Diot*, (Paris: Drouôt, 1897).

vines, producing only wines “capable of rejuvenating the senses.”⁶⁴ According to the preface, George did not spend all his time in his vineyard but volunteered for the National Guard in both 1848 and 1870. It was in the years of his retirement that he became a collector. The friendships he had made during his life led him to the pleasures of collecting : “Philippe George had gained, through contact with his artist friends, a love for art, and in the security of his well earned fortune, he allowed himself the charming, but expensive luxury of being a collector.”⁶⁵ Here an unusual emphasis is placed on the cost and luxury of collecting, but it is linked as well with the sociability he had established with artists. His collection grew big enough that he built a gallery in which it could be properly seen. Even after his progressive blindness towards the end of his life diminished his pleasure, he nonetheless enjoyed his collection to the extent of being able to hear the bird songs of the Corot landscapes, feel the earth tremble from the bloody battles of Detaille, and feel the humid breath of the cows of Troyon.⁶⁶ This conflation of experience and looking at paintings is central to the discourse of the *amateur*.

Even without being friends with the painters, collectors are described as having a kind of friendship with the paintings of the collection. Indeed as Gustave Geoffroy describes the collection of Eugène Blot, any viewer of these paintings comes into a friendly relationship with the paintings: “The landscape, the figure, flowers, fruit, all the objects shown by the painter who first knew how to see them, become for us, on our walls, the interlocutors of every instant.”⁶⁷ The key word here is “interlocutor” which

⁶⁴ *Collection Philippe George*, 6. “capables de rajeunir les sens.”

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. “Philippe George avait gagné, au contact d’artistes amis, l’amour de la peinture, et, dans la sécurité de sa fortune bien acquise, il se laissa aller au luxe charmant, mais coûteux, d’être collectionneur.”

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8

⁶⁷ *Collection M.E. Blot*, preface by Gustave Geffroy (Paris, Drouôt, 1900), 5. “Le paysage, la figure, les fleurs, les fruits, tous les objets montrés par le peintre qui a su tout d’abord les voir, nous deviennent, sur nos murailles, des interlocuteurs de tous les instants.”

highlights the dialogic quality between painting and viewer. Also important is the emphasis on “every instant” in which the whole life of this man is passed in dialogue with the collection. This is quite a contrast with the idea of “visiting” a museum. Blot himself became an art dealer, like Diot, as a result of his involvement with his collection.⁶⁸

Hubert Debrousse, whose profession is not described by L. Roger-Milès beyond the vague “heavy administrative and financial responsibilities,” had a large and varied collection of paintings chosen for the strong emotion, the joy that they offered him.⁶⁹ Similarly, Cocquelin Cadet, whose collection was sold in 1909, was an actor who loved his paintings as he loved his friends, with “with an endearing tenderness.”⁷⁰

Alfred Feydeau is described as an architect, who chose his collection with enlightened care.⁷¹ He kept his paintings in his office (*cabinet de travail*) as a distraction from his work. As I discuss below, the *cabinet de travail* was a very important space of collection, particularly for male collectors. As a space, it argued forcefully against the full separation of public work and private leisure.

Collector-writers whose collections were sold at the end of the century include Arsène Alexandre, Adolphe Tavernier, and Jules Claretie. Georges Feydeau was a well known playwright, author of *La Dame chez Maxim* among other satires, and son-in-law of the painter Carolus Duran. He sold off some of his collection in 1911, mostly landscapes that he had collected since the 1890s. A part-time painter himself, as so many

⁶⁸ Anne Distel *Impressionism: the First Collectors*, trans. Barbara Perroud-Benson (New York: Abrams, 1990), 51.

⁶⁹ *La Collection Hubert Debrousse*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris: Georges Petit, 1900). “*Lourdes occupations administratives et financiers.*”

⁷⁰ *Collection Coquelin Cadet*, preface by Jules Claretie (Paris: Hôtel Drouot, 1909). “*une tendresse attendrissante*”

⁷¹ *Collection Alfred Feydeau*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris: Drouot, 1902), 6.

amateurs were, his collection itself was described by Henry Fouquier in his preface to the sales catalogue, as a work of art, “a sort of personal work of art.”⁷² His own paintings, which were mainly landscapes, trained his eye and helped him, according to Fouquier, in composing his collection, which was itself built around landscapes.

Aristocrats, while no longer alone in the field of *amateurs*, also continued to collect throughout the nineteenth-century. The lives of figures such as Count Armand Doria and Count de Demandolx-Dedons, are discussed as fully intertwined with their collecting practice. In each case, the rhythm of the day involved contemplation of painting and other activities.

One group of collectors not mentioned in the above list is women. Most of the catalogues of women’s collections that I came across were those of widows who were selling the collections that they had inherited. This is true, for example, of Mme Lefébure and Mme Pétrus Martin. Another category of woman collector, however, comprises actresses and courtesans, whose collections I discuss in greater detail in the next chapter. The collections of such women of the theater as Réjane, Bernhardt, and Rachel and of such courtesans as Valtresse de la Bigne and Méry Laurent seemed as intertwined with their lives and their identities as those of their male counterparts.

This glance at a sample of collectors makes quickly evident that no one group, such as big industrialists, can be singled out as the period’s principal collectors. On the other hand, irrespective of social origin, the *amateurs* were described in the same way – motivated by a love for paintings that stems from their daily lives be it through friendship with artists, or identification with the subjects of the paintings, or business connections.

⁷² *Collection Georges Feydeau*, preface by Henry Fouquier (Paris: Drouot, 1901), 11. “une sorte d’oeuvre personnelle.”

Likewise, for all groups emphasis is placed on the way the practice of collecting is interwoven into their lives. The prefaces were generally at pains to emphasize the role of love and taste as opposed to cash in determining the value of the collection. It can clearly be argued that this emphasis on taste rather than money as primary motivation can be seen as itself a complicated marketing strategy: a denial of commercialism and a strategy of seduction. On the other hand the committed involvement of many of these collectors in the arts, including not only collection but very often production as well, argues for a convincing enactment of the social typology of the *amateur* on the part of many collectors. Thus if it was a marketing ploy, it was one that these *amateurs* had already bought into.

The social model for this group of collectors, as I have argued, was not simply the aristocrat, but more particularly the artist. These collectors were often described as creating an artwork of their collections, which were said to reflect their owner's creative vision. Their art collections functioned constructively, serving to produce the persona of the *amateur*. In this model of identity, it is not that the psychological interiority of the collector was reflected in the collection. Rather, his or her identity was created through the selection of a collection according to the personal taste of the *amateur*. The interior, that is, was not a metaphor for the psyche so much as it was a canvas, which in its completion served to create the artist that is the *amateur*. It is significant that a surprising number of *amateurs* were artists or writers as well, if only part time.

The Amateur as Artist: A Few Examples

Quite a few of the collectors defied typology in the way they actively pursued collecting, painting and some third profession all at once.⁷³ The link between collecting and artistic endeavor can be found in the eighteenth-century as well. One such earlier example is Aignan-Thomas Desfriches (1715-1800). He came from a family of businessmen and studied painting as a young man with several painters, including Natoire.⁷⁴ He founded a drawing school for *amateurs* and beginning artists with Vien and Hubert Robert as teachers. While he went on to take up business, he continued to paint. He was best known for a work entitled *Vue de la ville d'Orléans*. His collection included some sixty paintings by such painters as Chardin, Boucher, Rigaud and Peronneau, as well as painters in the "Dutch School." He also collected about 1,300 drawings. The author of Defriche's biography praised this *amateur* for consulting his own natural taste in his acquisitions without letting himself be influenced by either reputation or prices. Here, a man from a wealthy family of commerce combined collecting and painting with business and so confounds easy identification with any one social group. His full and varied use of his time was echoed by the way he assembled his collection, apart from either reputation or prices--that is to say, he was neither led by historical ideas (reputation) nor market choices. He relied instead on his own taste, which allowed him to combine French eighteenth-century painters with Dutch painters.

All of the great collectors whose names come up in accounts of collecting history

⁷³ This is slightly different from, although related to the phenomenon of the non-career-track bourgeois pointed to by Elizabeth Anne McCauley. As she writes: "Disdéri's life, from merchant, to actor to painter to daguerreotypist follows a pattern that was typical of nineteenth-century photographers and of many unskilled, self-educated bourgeois citizens in the early industrial age. Balzac's vivid portrayals of the range of opportunities available to a young man of insignificant means and secondary school education in the Parisian melting pot have not been statistically verified but are consistent with the careers of numerous journalists, graphic artists, caricaturists, playwrights and photographers." *A.A.E. Disdéri and the Carte de visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 6.

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correspond to this model. Le Caze, Marcille, Sauvageot—and up into the latter part of the century the Goncourt brothers, Henri Rouart, Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, Jean Dollfus, Jacques Doucet and Sarah Bernhardt—are at once artists of one sort or another and collectors and business people. Jacques Doucet and Sarah Bernhardt will be discussed in relationship to the theatricality of the collection in Chapter Two. The Goncourt brothers are discussed in the chapter on the space of *cabinet de travail*, and Etienne Moreau-Nélaton is discussed in terms of his art-historical writing. Henri Rouart and Jean Dollfus are good examples of the artist-amateur whose life and collection showed a disregard for rigid categories.

Jean Dollfus

An important *amateur* whose life exemplified the intermingling of art and collecting was Jean Dollfus (1823-1912).⁷⁵ Primarily a textile manufacturer and industrialist, he took a passionate and personal interest in art-- surrounding himself with art, and, after being forced to move following the loss of his home in the Franco-Prussian War, he constructed a house in Paris specifically designed for his collection. Samuel Rocheblave refers to this house on the Rue Pierre-Charron as a little museum.⁷⁶ A friend of the Swiss educator Pestalozzi, Dollfus adored nature and long walks in which he followed a wandering path. His travels took him to the United States, to Cuba, Germany, and Italy. As a painter he studied with Clément Faller who had been a student of Delacroix, and according to Rocheblave, while he drew badly, he had the natural

⁷⁵ Anne Distel devotes a chapter to him in her *Impressionism: The First Collectors*, 151-155.

⁷⁶ Samuel Rocheblave, *Un Grand Collectionneur Alsacien. Jean Dollfus (1823-1911)* (Strasbourg: Revue Alsacienne Illustrée, 1912), 2

temperament of a colorist.⁷⁷ His collection, like most of the *amateurs* that I discuss, was eclectic and included Corot, Renoir and Crivelli. His goal in collecting was not to complete a series, but rather to surround himself with light and color: “His goal was to have everything around him shine with the brilliance of life, movement and light and the most brilliant, the most varied, the most fantasmagoric of all, the drama of color which fills the history of the last century of painting.”⁷⁸ These criteria; light, movement, color; are far from the impulse to catalogue by period or style.

The photograph of his ‘galerie’ in the rue Pierre Charron (Figure 2) shows an extremely crowded arrangement in which paintings, sculptures, objets d’art, and antique furniture are in proximity, forcing the viewer to experience them in relation to one another. Rows of little boxes on the table echo rows of paintings as well as the repeating flower patterns on the rug below. The same boxes seem to bring the crowded forms of Carpeaux’s bas-relief sculpture *Flore* behind them into the room for the viewer to pick up and handle. It is an ensemble in which patterns, forms, and textures are repeated with careful orchestration. Frames of paintings, for example, are sculptural elements that echo the forms of the chairs and table while the sculptures stand in front of the paintings, seemingly embodying their forms. A Northern Renaissance Madonna is displayed on an easel immediately in front of the wall covered with paintings, seeming to move out from the wall into the space of the viewer. Immediately beneath is a chair in which we could sit at the feet of this Madonna. Categories of art are intermixed, as are different periods. A Buddha presides above a sixteenth-century portrait; a set of late Gothic altarpieces are

⁷⁷ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 28. “Son plan...était de faire briller autour de lui tout ce qui rappelait la vie, le mouvement, la lumière, le drame des couleurs dont s’emplit l’histoire de ce dernier siècle de la peinture, le plus brillant, le plus varié, le plus fantasmagorique de tous.”

juxtaposed to a nineteenth-century relief; and an embroidered Louis XV chair is next to a Renaissance chest and an Islamic carpet. The chair faces the viewer inviting one to join the assembled personages that are grouped on the floor, depictions of a serious woman, a courtier, and another seventeenth century woman beneath Carpeaux's relief. These personages seem to address each other, form a kind of conversation with each other and with any possible visitor to the room. The preface to the catalogue stresses this intermixing of categories: "the paintings, the bibelots, the lacquers of Japan, the miniatures, the drawings, the enamels pile up and overflow the galleries and the salons into the bedrooms and even into the stairs."⁷⁹ The piling up of artworks and furniture implied in this passage, however, seems much more organized when looking at the photograph, where all kinds of artworks are juxtaposed, but with a kind of organization that invites comparison between the works.

Looking at the photograph, we are aware of different levels of display: shelves into which small objects are hiding, layers of paintings stacked against the wall, a chest covered with a cloth and with many small closed boxes itself surely hides some kind of treasure. Similarly the room is not a simple rectilinear shape, but has an oblique wall, and the paintings are sometimes tilted off the plane of the wall. It is a collection in which the art encroaches into the center of the room with the portraits on the floor almost moving into the space as real personages. In his preface to the sales catalogue, André Michel, who was himself a curator at the Louvre, in charge of sculpture, wrote that "The Flora of Carpeaux sparkled in the midst of an assembly of primitives that seemed to be already accustomed to her unexpected presence and had made room for her in their soft and

⁷⁹ *Collection Jean Dollfus*, préface by André Michel (Paris: Georges Petit, 1912), 5-6. "les tableaux, les bibelots, les laques du Japon, les miniatures, les dessins, les émaux s'y entassaient, débordant des galeries et des salons dans les chambres et jusque dans l'escalier."

shining collection without appearing offended.”⁸⁰ Here art is regarded as alive and what’s more as living in an ensemble of harmony. Michel further emphasizes the total harmony among “this confusion” such that the eye, which at first is overwhelmed, comes to a sense of repose as a result.

This mixing of art objects in the interior of the house echoed the mixing of occupations of Dollfus himself. In a way characteristic of the *amateur*, his life foregrounded choice and freedom, and his collection does as well. Rather than mirroring the accumulation of things in the commodified marketplace, Dollfus imposes an order which self-reflexively comments on choice.

Henri Rouart

The importance of reconsidering the *amateur* is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the case of Henri Rouart (1833-1912). A participant in all but one of the Impressionist group exhibitions, he is rarely credited for more than being “the friend of Degas.”⁸¹ This neglect is common to the literature so that Rouart’s sustained and serious artistic production is almost unknown. The *amateur*, as a category of collector/practitioner who self-consciously operated in opposition to institutional categories, coincided in many ways with the independent goals of the Impressionists as a whole. It is no accident, I believe, that even among the acknowledged “serious” artists of the group, both Degas and Cailllebotte had major collections of artwork and Cassatt was

⁸⁰ Ibid., 5. “la Flore de Carpeaux pétillait au milieu d’une assemblée de primitifs qui semblaient habitués déjà à sa présence inattendue et lui avaient fait place sans que leur doux et rayonnant recueillent en parût offusqué.”

⁸¹ In John Rewald’s *History of Impressionism*, 4th ed. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973) that designation is used almost as a Homeric tag, affixed to Rouart’s name at every mention.

highly involved in the collection of Louisa Havemeyer. The very heterogeneity of the group, with its variety of styles, its inconsistency, its unwillingness to fit in with the public mission of the academy and the salon, is perhaps exemplified in the persona of the *amateur*.

Henri Rouart's life and living space exhibit the self-conscious construction of an individual identity characterized by a plethora of activities and accumulation of varied types of art, unfettered by the constraints "professionalism" or "sustained scholarship." This *amateur* way of life takes as its model the artist's selection of the beautiful. Rouart was an engineer and also a collector, a painter and a financial backer of the other Impressionist artists. He can be understood as a man for whom the categories of professional practice and class expression mattered less than the ideal of an artistic vision. Not simply the "manifestation of the conservatism and deep-rooted nationalism of the Parisian grande-bourgeoisie to which he belonged," that Ann Dumas described, he must be seen within the context of the *amateur*.⁸²

Just as his life was a blend of different activities, so was his collection. Through its eclecticism it became, in the discourse of the time, a portrait in its own right of the man himself, a portrait not of his psyche, but of his artistic ambition and achievement. As Alexandre wrote in the preface to the sales collection, there is a self-reflexive connection between the collection and Rouart; the collection explaining and even creating the collector himself: "The collection will explain the man and compose an intellectual portrait of him of which we are not afraid to say in advance, is full of nobility

⁸² Dumas, "Degas and the Collecting Milieu," 113-114.

and seduction. But it is the details of the man, first of all, that will animate the collection as an artwork really given life.”⁸³

From sales catalogues, Rouart’s paintings, and photographs of his collection, it is possible to determine the playing out of themes common to many of the *amateurs* of the day. From his *goût*, to his eclecticism, to the sense of ensemble, to the non-linear, coloristic manner in which he organized the space of collection, he occupied a place far from the streamlined efficiency of the marketplace or the careerism of the Academy. As Paul Valéry has written about Rouart: “His research as a metallurgist, a mechanical engineer and a creator of thermal machines coexisted with an ardent passion for painting; he knew it as an artist and even practiced it as a real painter. But his modesty meant that his personal body of work, curiously precise, has remained almost unknown and the possession only of his children.”⁸⁴ What Valéry attributes to modesty, may in fact have been a disregard for the marketplace. For Rouart was not loathe to exhibit, as is made clear by his involvement with the Impressionist exhibitions, as well as his earlier participation in the Salon.

Born in 1833, he knew Degas from his days at the Lycée Louis le Grand and became his closest friend.⁸⁵ From the Ecole polytechnique, he went to the Ecole d’artillerie de Metz, but did not continue in the military. Instead he turned to industry,

⁸³ *La Collection Henri Rouart*, preface by Arsène Alexandre (Paris: Goupil, 1912), 2. “La collection expliquera l’homme et composera de lui un portrait intellectuel dont nous ne craignons pas de dire, d’avance, des plus grandes, la noblesse et la séduction.. Mais des détails sur l’homme, tout d’abord, feront s’animer la collection comme une oeuvre réellement donnée de vie.”

⁸⁴ Paul Valéry, preface to *Peintures et aquarelles par Henri Rouart, 1833-1912* (Paris, 1933). Quoted in Rey, 94. “Ses recherches de métallurgiste, de mécanicien et de créateur de machines thermiques s’accommodaient en lui avec une ardente passion pour la peinture; il s’y connaissait en artiste, et même la pratiquait en vrai peintre. Mais sa modestie a fait que son oeuvre personnelle, curieusement précise, est demeurée presque inconnue et le bien de ses seuls enfants.”

⁸⁵ Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*, 254, note 15.

where he became both a factory owner and inventor.⁸⁶ He is credited with inventing the “pneumatique” of Paris as well as the refrigeration of the morgue.⁸⁷ He had always been interested in painting and worked with both Corot and Millet in the forests of Barbizon. He also began collecting from an early age. His was a milieu that can be described as haut bourgeois.⁸⁸ But more particularly, the combination of privacy, painting and collecting places him in the category of *amateur*.

His collection included many Impressionist works (Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Jongkind and Degas) as well as paintings by El Greco, Breugel, Poussin, Chardin, Velasquez and Goya.⁸⁹

The multifaceted nature of Rouart is evident from the portraits that Degas made of him and his family. The most celebrated is the one in which he stands in front of his factory, painted in 1875 (Figure 3).⁹⁰ Here the railroad lines that lead to the factory double as lines of sight emerging from his fierce gaze. Rouart is dark against the bright orange roof of the factory and chimney. Here Degas depicts him as an industrialist at the forefront of modern economic development. He stands alone, in the modern man’s top hat, and his vision and intelligence are defining.

Another portrait, *Henri Rouart et sa fille Hélène* (c.1877) (Figure 4) is much more tender. Hatless and somewhat disheveled, he holds his little red-headed daughter on his

⁸⁶ For discussion of his life, in particular from a technological perspective see Annette Gelinet, “Henri Rouart, industriel et peintre,” *La revue. Musée des arts et métiers*, 38 (June 2003): 16-25.

⁸⁷ While Jean-Marie Rouart describes visiting his great grandfather’s inventions at le Musée des arts et métiers, now, following the reorganization of the museum, the pneumatic system, known to us as the delivery system of choice for love letters up until the 1970’s (see Truffault’s *Stolen Kisses*, for example) is nowhere evident. See his *Une famille dans l’impressionisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 27.

⁸⁸ Armstrong, 23 and Dumas, 113.

⁸⁹ See Jean-Dominique Rey, “Paul Valéry et Henri Rouart,” in *Paul Valéry et les Arts* (Paris: Musée Paul-Valéry, 1995), 19.

⁹⁰ According to Distel this building might be either his factory at Monluçon (Mignon and Rouart, specializing in metal tubes) or else a chimney stack near the machine shop in Paris on 137 Boulevard Voltaire. Distel, 177.

lap. Behind them, and framing them both, is a landscape painting that is thought to be one of Rouart's own.⁹¹ The brushy handling of the landscape painting is echoed in the treatment of the figures. In this painting, the warm tones are found in the figures rather than the background, in the hair, lips and dress of Hélène, and the cheeks and ear of her father. The light is brilliant on the gold frame behind Rouart and catches as well his clenched hand whose fingers are made up of brushstrokes that echo the brushiness of the sky in his own painting. The warmth of affection between father and daughter is embraced and celebrated by the painting behind, which seems to participate in this familial warmth.⁹²

Whereas these two paintings by Degas focus on Rouart as industrialist and painter, a painting of Hélène now grown takes as its subject his collection. In this painting, *Hélène dans l'atelier de son père* (1886) (Figure 5), Rouart's daughter leans on her father's empty chair surrounded by artworks from his collection. On the table are Egyptian antiquities in a glass case (enlarged somewhat from their actual scale), and behind hangs a Chinese wall hanging, a Corot landscape, *Bay of Naples with the Castel dell'Ovo*, and a Millet drawing, *Little Peasant Girl Sitting Against a Haystack*.⁹³ The chair was made by Jacob, an ébeniste ancestor of Rouart. Their heteroclite ensemble is a kind of family portrait in an atmosphere of coloristic harmony. The warm red/orange of Hélène's hair and the blue of her dress set up a warm/cool dialogue that ricochets around the painting. The closeness between the objects of the collection and Hélène is

⁹¹ Jean Sutherland Boggs, *Portraits by Degas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 45.

⁹² Boggs in particular points to the tenderness between father and daughter. She places this portrait within a group of three concerned with the father-daughter relationship (including also the *Place de la Concorde* (1876) with Vicomte Lepic and his daughters, and *Henri De Gas and his Niece Lucy* (1876)) Here the momentary unhappiness of Hélène is balanced by the firm clasp of their hands.

⁹³ Distel, 178. Also see Gordon Dillian, "Edgar Degas: *Hélène Rouart in her Father's Study*," exh. cat. (London: National Gallery, 1984)

emblemized by her prominent hands, which almost caress the empty chair. Several studies of these hands attest, as does their central placement within the composition, to their importance in the painting, and underline the tactile as well as the optical relationship to the space. The thematics of collection as friend and even as family, crucial to the discourse of the *amateur*, is here made visually evident.⁹⁴

So, if Rouart was Degas's friend, it is clear that he was a friend in many ways, public and private. Each aspect of his *amateur's* life finds a place with the group of eight portraits that Degas made of his friend.. Turning to the work and working space of Rouart himself, the intermeshing of life and collection is quite evident. Three images frame our discussion of his living space: a photograph of his atelier c. 1900, a photograph from the same period in which Rouart himself is painting and finally, a painting, one of at least two, that Rouart painted of this space of collection and artistic work.

The photograph of the atelier shows an enormous space filled with artworks, mainly paintings, but also sculptures including some ancient Egyptian antiquities encased in a glass vitrine (Figure 6). Prominent is Renoir's *Cavaliers au bois de Boulogne* (1873) currently in the Kunsthalle in Hambourg. Three chairs are pushed to the side on the right side of the photograph. Their multiplicity points to the possibility of receiving guests in this space. On the left of the photograph we see Rouart's easel and paint box. The easel holds an unfinished, unframed painting of a female figure in an interior. Here practice and collecting are clearly assimilated.

This is made even more explicit in a photograph of Rouart at the easel in which we see him at work on a landscape painting (Figure 7). The painting is turned on its side

⁹⁴ For a much different reading of this portrait of Hélène, as unmarried daughter, defined by her father rather than allowed her own character, see Anthea Callen, *The Spectacular Body. Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 202-208.

and he is using his mahl stick to steady his hand as he works. A smaller study, perhaps done from the motif, is attached to the larger work. This use of a study in the comfort of his studio is contrary to the plein air practice of many of his own paintings, for which Degas teased him in several letters.⁹⁵ In one, Degas asks Rouart, who is in Venice, to come out of the humidity and away from the nature which he loves so much so as to look at the Tiepolo frescos: “You love the nature as much as the humidity. Give me the pleasure any way of leaving for a moment your two friends to enter, in the dryness, the Labia palace, to see half for yourself, and half for me, the frescos of Tiepolo”⁹⁶ In Rouart’s atelier, the hazards of outdoor painting are even hinted at by the small statuette of a shivering woman, pulling her shawl around her. Many frames surround Rouart, the frames of a cabinet, the frames of a door behind him, and most impressively the frames of many paintings (at least twenty are visible in this closely framed photograph alone) which frame and comment on his practice.

Two similar paintings that Rouart made of his atelier, “Intérieur de l’atelier de l’hôtel due la rue de Lisbonne,” c. 1880. (Figure 8) and “Salon-atelier de la rue de Lisbonne,” c. 1880 (Figure 9) show the space of his studio with a plethora of objects, paintings and sculptures. In the first these artworks surround the central figure who is leafing through a portfolio of prints, and in the second a woman is shown seated and

⁹⁵ Two landscape paintings of his, and two watercolors that I was able to see first hand at the Musée Marmottan in Paris, as well as the others that I saw in a private collection,, attest to a subtlety of handling, particularly in the oil paintings, that, in its consciousness of the surface of the canvas, and its matte color shares much with certain Degas paintings. The *Paysage*, for example, that shows a bridge over a river, has a structural affinity with Corot, with whom Rouart worked in the forests of Barbizon, and whose paintings he collected in great numbers, and an importance of drawing and consciousness of thick and thin paint that is related to Degas. Paintings of Rouart will be exhibited at Le Musée de la vie romantique in Spring of 2004 as part of an exhibition devoted to the Rouart family as a whole and in 2005 at the Musée de la Vicomté de Melun

⁹⁶Degas letter to Rouart, 1883, quoted in Rouart, 29-30. “Vous aimez la nature, autant que l’humidité. Faites-moi tout de même le plaisir de quitter un instant vos deux amies pour entrer, au sec, au palais Labia, voir à moitié pour vous, à moitié pour moi, les fresques de Tiepolo.”

reading a book. In both works the depicted paintings are hung so that they touch, but obviously the manner of hanging corresponds to a certain symmetry and rhythm. For example on the left in Figure 8, two small arched panels hanging above a larger rectangular painting, flank a little statuette behind which hangs a dish that forms a halo behind its head. Likewise, on the mantelpiece, sculptural busts alternate with vases and objets d'art to form a kind of up and down rhythm repeated below by three fireplace screens. Different kinds of art correspond to different kinds of knowledge and different kinds of experience and allow for different modes of viewing. The distant look in which harmonious patterns are seen from afar, and also the necessary stepping closer, the picking up and touching of art objects, is emblemized by the woman at the center, flipping through prints, picking them up, bringing them closer. Two kinds of light are also present: the light of the window and the light of the central circular painting, which gleams mirror-like above the mantel. There are different angles of hanging as well: some paintings bent downward to avoid glare, others not. All this allows for the experience of being surrounded by art as well as immersed in it. The compositional paths in Rouart's painting of his studio are at once direct, centered on the round painting and the figure, and elusive, leading the eye here and there.

These paintings of a space of collection by the collector is a kind of self-reflexive act that proposes a non-institutional consumption of art. The non-linear ensemble of his collection is different from the scholarly chronology of the museum, just as the exhibition of his paintings in the Impressionist group is different from the academic practice, just as his melding of engineering and collecting and painting is different from the professional painter. This mixing of categories is not, I argue, random, but significant and constitutes

an oppositional stand to the public, didactic and marketplace functions of art of the nineteenth century.

The Aristocratic Collection

It is important to stress that this artistically centered arrangement differs both from the aristocratic model of ostentatious collecting and the museum-like amassing of a scholarly collection. The Parisian hotel of Prince Constantin Radziwell (on boulevard La Tour Maubourg, VIIe arrondissement) photographed by Paul Nadar in 1884, shows a concern with grandeur quite unlike the crowded spaces of Dollfus or Rouart.⁹⁷ For example, a view of a salon shows a large room with elaborately decorated moldings whose walls, canapé, and fauteuil are all covered with the same flowered silk damask that hangs on either side of a tall doorway (Figure 10). Above the Louis XV canapé, and flanked by two fluted pedestals, one holding an ornate rococo vase and the other a woman's bust, is a full-length portrait of an aristocratic woman standing outdoors. The bust and the portrait are the only artworks visible in the photograph. Other photographs, of the bedroom and the dining room, also convey a sense of grandeur, rather than a love of art.

This is true as well of the house of Prince Roland photographed in 1900. An article by Jean Syrval from the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale shows three views of a very ordered space that includes artworks such as portraits and small sculpture, but which is most striking for the spare and impressive grand elegance of the décor.⁹⁸ The

⁹⁷ See Marc Le Coeur, "A la ville et à la campagne. Chez le prince Radziwell en 1884," *Monuments Historiques*, 195(March 1995): 46-52. This article reproduces photographs of his country chateau in the Oise valley as well. Of these views, a petit salon is decorated in a "japonais" style that resembles the clutter of Dollfus's collection.

⁹⁸ *Archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale*, Estampes, H86440, Va316, t10, Paris xvieme arrondissement.

library, the salon and the grand salon emphasize the large scale and expensive furnishings.

The Scholarly Collection

The collections of Rouart and Dollfus, as *amateurs*, differ as well from the museum-like collection of M. Osiris and others like him.⁹⁹ In a photograph by Dornac of Osiris in his *hôtel particulier* on the rue Labruyère, we see numerous sculptures arranged in a sky-lit space which is clearly designed explicitly as an exhibition space (Figure 11). While there are some plants and some small garden chairs, the overall organizational plan is to arrange the sculptures for optimum viewing. There are no paintings or other artworks crowding the walls and it is expected that one would move linearly from one sculpture to the next without considering the ensemble of the room.

In the cases of the *amateur*, on the other hand, as we have seen from Rouart and Dollfus in particular, the blurring of roles within the practice of their lives is similarly evident in a grouping of their collection that allows for many alternative paths through the collection and many different relationships to the objects of the collecting, be it looking, touching, leafing through, or holding. Painter, collector, industrialist, each form part of a life, that as Balzac puts it, “animates rest.” In this social model there is not the divide between public and private posited by Benjamin, nor the search after the trappings of elegance theorized by Boime, nor the pursuit of amassing things for the sake of having

⁹⁹ *Archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale*, Estampes, H67059, H67060, H67061, Va283, t.4 Paris, ixeme arrondissement. As described in an unidentified article which accompanies these images in the archive collection, M. Osiris, Jewish, made his fortune in the financial industry. He devoted his wealth not only to collecting but also to philanthropy. He commissioned a sculpture of Alfred de Musset for the Théâtre Français, restored Malmaison as a museum as a gift to the state, and donated all of his various houses and art collections to the state.

many things discussed by Watson. The typology here is one of the artist- someone whose surroundings are indeed produced by his activity. This model of the collector whose collecting forms part of his artistic endeavors does not entail a model of identity in which the collection “reflects” the collector. This reflective idea of “expressing” the personality of the collector, while very much part of the nineteenth-century discourse of taste, as we shall see in the next chapter, does not adequately describe the powerful way in which the collection in turn creates the collector. Just as the artist becomes an artist in so far as he/she produces art, the collector is created by his collection.

CHAPTER 2:

TASTE AND LOVE: THEATER AND SEDUCTION

From a semiotic point of view it is clear that two qualities were regarded as distinguishing *amateurs* from other types of collectors: their taste and their love. Both characteristics bring to the fore the problematics of gender in discussing the *amateur*. While the discourse of collecting addressed both male and female collectors, the *amateur*, as type, was assumed to be male. The male *amateur* was uniformly praised for his innate sensitivity and discernment, while a woman collector was seen as creating a backdrop or setting for the performance of her femininity. The gender roles were split into active and passive: the male *amateur* was seen as creating his collection as an act of will, discernment and taste where as for women, the collection was seen as creating them. Likewise, while men were seen as adoring the art that surrounds them, women were seen as adorning themselves for the benefit of the male visitor. At the same time the overtness of the theatricality of taste and the seductivity of art in the discourse surrounding the woman collector makes obvious the same principles in the case of male *amateur*.

An Appetizer of Theory: The Philosophy of Taste

The identity of the *amateur*, as defined in dictionaries, sales catalogues and magazine articles of the time, was closely bound, in these texts, with his taste¹. Littré's

¹ Most scholars today follow the idea of Veblen that taste is inextricably linked with one's socioeconomic position and serves as a marker of that position. In his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Modern Library, 1934 [1899]) he argues that the highest levels of society have always distinguished themselves from the lower levels by the amount of leisure time available to them. As we have seen, leisure is of great

1876 definition of *amateur* emphasized the role of taste: “he who has a vivid taste for something.”² This taste for art, mentioned in almost every sales catalogue preface, was described as being a personal quality resulting in an unexpected collection of artworks. This idea of taste was quite separate from the kind of scholarly connoisseurship that would be useful for a museum curator and from monetary or investment value. Its purely personal quality was linked closely with the strong feelings of attachment or love that the collector felt for the objects of his collection.

The recent emphasis on the socio-economic grounding of taste differs from the philosophical tradition of taste both in France and elsewhere in Europe.³ Both the idealist

importance in the discourse of the *amateur*. Leisure time, for him, “does not connote indolence or quiescence”(43). Rather, time is consumed “non-productively,” in occupations unrelated to making things that are related to the principle economic market of the society. Manners, games, sports and acquisition of “dead languages” all are aspects of non-productive uses of time. Notice that this is not a list that includes art, which distinguishes Veblen’s leisure from Balzac’s *Vie Élegante*. Taste, within this schema, is a “canon of honorific waste”(126). The pleasure that one receives from beauty, is, according to this view, simply the appreciation of what is expensive: “The superior gratification derived from the use and contemplation of costly and supposedly beautiful products is, commonly, in great measure a gratification of our sense of costliness masquerading under the name of beauty”(126-7). While this reductionist view is considerably complicated in more recent accounts, taste has retained its elitist aura.

Pierre Bourdieu’s work extremely influential work examines taste from a sociological standpoint and also finds a close parallel between so-called good taste and high social standing (Bourdieu, *La Distinction*). Enjoyment of a work of art presupposes a cultural knowledge that depends on the education and background available, he argues, only to the upper class. The many tables in the book correlate, to name only one example, the taste for Bach vs. Petula Clark with socio-economic level. As in Veblen, the taste for Bach is for Bourdieu, primarily a class indicator, pleasurable in that it distinguishes one from people of a lower social level. Neither of these views credits beauty as a quality distinct from socio-economic relations. This point of view has colored recent accounts of collecting which has primarily been viewed as a means of expressing one’s power.

² E. Littré. *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, s.v. “amateur.” “Celui qui a un goût vif pour une chose.”

³ The development and history of taste in nineteenth-century France has been discussed by recent art historical scholars such as Patricia Mainardi, Whitney Walton and Leora Auslander from the point of view of institutional structures from a variety of viewpoints. The government, the salon, and the department store, among other institutions are seen as structuring the development of taste in France. Mainardi’s discussion of late nineteenth-century French taste distinguishes between taste that is defined from above and that which is indistinguishable from fashion. Mainardi maintains that choices made by governmental institutions such as the jury of the salon, or the officially sanctioned writers on art created and defined bourgeois taste before the 1870’s but that following this period, popular trends supplanted the official taste. Her book, *The End of the Salon*, is at least in part written, “to show the process whereby the rule of popular taste was substituted for the authority of Government and Academy;” Mainardi, *The End of the Salon*, 3. Walton’s history of the development of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth-century argues that taste is a defining marker of class: “This study proposes to define the bourgeoisie in terms of its consumer tastes and practices.” Walton, *France at the Crystal Palace*, 5. She argues that bourgeois taste was specifically driven

and the empirical traditions defined taste as an individual rather than social attribute. This emphasis on the individual was crucial for the *amateur* whose collections were central to their identity.

In the idealist work of Kant, while taste allows us to recognize the beautiful through a feeling of pleasure, and would therefore seem to be a personal reaction, the beautiful is nonetheless defined as a universally recognized quality of harmony. Each individual, who is paying attention, feels similar feelings faced with the same beauty. The universality of individual taste is in harmony with Kant's structural account of the mind which aimed to define the formal conditions for knowledge--moral, scientific and aesthetic--rather than the content of that knowledge. Taste, within this framework is defined as one aspect of judgment, a separate faculty of the mind, intermediate between pure reason and practical reason. Kant defined judgment as "the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal."⁴ The problem, as he explained it, is how we are able to make a "connected experience out of given perceptions of a nature containing at all events an infinite variety of empirical laws."⁵ The experience of unity is related to the "purposiveness of nature in its variety" which he called a transcendental experience. There is both aesthetic and teleological judgment. The pleasure in formal

by comfort. This was evident in the production of commodities in which comfort as opposed to luxury was emphasized. Walton argues that the success of French small-scale manufacturing was credited in the nineteenth-century to the "good taste" of French consumers, and from this point on "the issue of taste in consumption and production...became an important part of the discourse in France over national economic policy and industrial development"(5). Auslander, in her book *Taste and Power*, traces the bourgeois drive towards comfort in furniture; Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power. Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). She shows how in the ancien régime kings legislated style and controlled production so as to control the style. In the nineteenth-century and the rise of the bourgeoisie as emblemized, she argues, by the citizen king Louis-Philippe styles became equalized. The *Juste Milieu* allowed the consumer to chose among the wide variety of royal styles, from Francois I to Louis XVIII and including the Regency and empire styles. In this system, no one royal style was privileged so that the bourgeois could take control and could pick and choose.

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951), 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

purpose is aesthetic, the understanding of “real” purpose is teleological. Thus recognizing the unifying structural qualities of a work of art is an aesthetic judgement, while seeing the way in which disparate elements combine to produce a goal is teleological. As for taste, it is the way of judging by means of the pleasure we feel in the presence of things whose form is beautiful or sublime. It is important to be clear that for Kant the beautiful is a universal standard, and so as to uphold this universality, as Michael Ann Holly points out, taste must be “devoid of all interest, devoid of any concepts that might subsume it, devoid of any purpose or end outside itself and devoid of disagreement.”⁶

There are two important aspects of taste in this formulation. It is at once a form of subjective self-reflexivity that is an affirmation of the freedom and discernment of the individual and the one branch of Kant’s philosophy in which pleasure is allowed a role, albeit pleasure of the mind. Both of these aspects are important in the writings on the *amateur*. The one-on-one relationship between a work of art and a viewer who submits each work to a judgment system was privileged in the discussion of the *amateur* as was the feeling of pleasure. Sensibility and not sense operated most forcefully in the *amateur*’s selection of a collection.

The French writer who seems closest to Kant in his ideas of the absolute truth of beauty is Charles Blanc. As Claire Barbillon argued in her introduction to the *Grammaire des arts du dessin* “the principles of the Kantian aesthetics infuse all the pages of the *Grammaire* that treat the sublime.”⁷ Blanc was very much opposed to the oft-

⁶ Michael Ann Holly, “Mourning and Method,” *Art Bulletin*, 84, 4 (December 2002): 660-668, 666.

⁷ Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, with an introduction by Claire Barbillon, (Paris: Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux arts, 2000[1867]), 21. “les principes de l’esthétique kantienne imprègnent toutes les pages de la *Grammaire* consacrées au sublime.”

repeated dictum “one cannot argue about taste,” and he surprisingly invoked Brillat-Savarin in defense of a standard of taste.⁸ For Blanc, like Kant, the sense of beauty is innate. “In the same way that we have within us an innate sentiment of justice, which is the conscience, so we are born with a secret intuition of the beautiful which is the ideal.”⁹ Blanc found taste to be a specifically human appreciation (unlike the sublime) based on order and proportion. Rather than being based solely on pleasure, the judgment of beauty (taste) is based on reason. He then explained the differing principles of beauty for each art form, architecture, sculpture and painting with the idea that there are universal standards of beauty for each. On the other hand, he distinguished beauty from personal taste. In his *Trésorie de la curiosité* he wrote that it is lucky that not every collector has the same taste. Even more: “to respond to the infinite variety of artworks, there is an infinite variety of collectors.”¹⁰ However he did not mean that each person responds equally to this infinite variety, or even that each person is the same. Rather, he described some collectors being drawn to “*les anciens*” of one country or another and other collectors being drawn to “*les modernes*.” He also noted that taste changes even for each collector. Following the tradition of linking paintings to lovers, he made a parallel here as well: “Divorce should be permitted, even for marriages of inclination. Eh! How many people would marry a cabinet picture when this painting had tired the enthusiasm of the amateur who had discovered it one day and put it under his arm with transports of

⁸ Surprising because for Brillat-Savarin, the body comes first. His first aphorism, which of course is on the humorous side, is “L’Univers n’est rien que pour la vie, et tout ce qui vit se nourrit.” “The Universe is for nothing if not life, and all that lives, eats.” Brillat-Savarin, *Physiologie du goût* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982 [1826])

⁹ Ibid., 41. “De même que nous avons en nous un sentiment inné du juste, qui est la conscience, de même nous apportons en naissant une secrète intuition du beau, qui est l’idéal.”

¹⁰ Blanc, *Le Trésor de la curiosité*, 513. “pour répondre à l’infinie variété des productions de l’art, il y a une infinie variété de curieux.”

admiration”¹¹ There is thus a rupture between the appreciation of beauty in the abstract and in the particular case which is the unbridgeable rupture of Kantian philosophy between the ideally rational being and the flesh and blood person.

The empirical tradition proceeds from the individual person towards an understanding of beauty and taste, rather than from any privileging of the universality of beauty. In this reading, taste, or goût, is closely allied with the body. Littré’s dictionary stresses the immediacy of taste:

Spontaneous faculty that precedes thought that every person possesses, but that is different for each person, and which makes us appreciate the beauties and faults of works of the spirit and in artistic production, like taste makes us appreciate good and bad flavors.¹²

Here a break is made between thinking and feeling, taste being something that precedes rational thought, and which, it is important to note, is regarded as different for everyone. Individuality here is associated not with the autonomy of the rational being, but with the differences of bodily reactions.¹³

The late nineteenth-century link between good and bad flavors and the spontaneous faculty of appreciating beauty derived less from Kant than from the skeptical and empirical French philosophical tradition that includes Voltaire and Montesquieu. Voltaire, for example, in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, linked the primary meaning of

¹¹ Ibid., 513. “le divorce doit être permis, même pour les mariages d’inclination. Eh! Combien de gens épouseraient avec passion un tableau de cabinet, alors que ce tableau a fatigué l’enthousiasme de l’amateur qui le découvrit un jour, et le mit sous son bras avec des transports d’admiration!”

¹² Littré, s.v. “goût” “Faculté toute spontanée, qui précède la réflexion, que tout le monde possède, mais qui est différente chez chacun, et qui fait apprécier les beautés et les défauts dans les ouvrages d’esprit et dans les productions des arts, comme le goût fait apprécier les saveurs bonnes et mauvaises.”

¹³ Similarly Flaubert’s satiric *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* has this to say: “Ce qui est simple est toujours de bon goût. Doit toujours se dire à une femme qui s’excuse de la modestie de sa toilette.” Gustave Flaubert, *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* (Paris: Mille et Une Nuits, 2000, [1911]), 47 “That which is simple is always in good taste. It should always be said to a woman who apologizes for the modesty of her attire.” This immediately places taste within the sensual realm and specifically within the social and erotic world as well.

the word taste with the sense of tasting food “Taste, this sense, this gift of distinguishing our food.”¹⁴ It was only secondarily and metaphorically applied to the appreciation of beauty in the arts.

Montesquieu also placed his emphasis on pleasure. Rather than locating beauty, goodness and perfection in the world as things to discover, he argued that we decide these things. And taste, for him, is the measure of pleasure we find in things: “Taste is none other than the advantage of discovering with finesse and promptness the measure of pleasure that each thing should give to men.”¹⁵ There are pleasures of the soul, independently of the senses as well as the more obvious sensuous pleasures. More than this, Montesquieu argued that there is no such thing as an idea without some kind of feeling. As soon as we come into contact with something, we have some kind of feeling about it.

The idealist and the empirical philosophical traditions are in agreement about one important aspect: that sentiment has some important role to play in taste, and that is born out by the writings of taste of the *amateur*. As we shall see, the fin-de-siècle writings on the *amateur* and his taste are closer to Voltaire and Montesquieu than to Kant, although the aspect of choice as an affirmation of the self’s freedom and identity has Kantian overtones. Rather than a disinterested taste that finds a universality of beauty, we are confronted with a highly particularized faculty that is closely allied with love.

¹⁴ Quoted in Jean-Bertrand Barrère, *L’idée de goût de Pascal à Valéry* (Paris: Kinckleck, 1972), 18. “Le goût, ce sens ce don de discerner nos aliments, a produit dans toutes les langues connues, la métaphore qui exprime, par le mot goût, le sentiment des beautés et des défauts dans tous les arts. C’est un discernement prompt, comme celui de la langue et du palais et qui prévient comme lui la réflexion.” “Taste, this sense, this gift of distinguishing our food, produced in all known languages, the metaphor which expresses, with the word taste, the feeling for the beauties and faults in all the arts. It is a quick judgment, like that of the tongue and of the palace that predicts in this way reflection.”

¹⁵ Montesquieu, *Essai sur le goût* (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1993,[1757]), 10. “le goût, qui n’est autre chose que l’avantage de découvrir avec finesse et avec promptitude la mesure du plaisir que chaque chose doit donner aux hommes.”

In an important text for the understanding of the *amateur*, Baudelaire's *Painter of Modern Life* separates beauty into two aspects: a universal and unchanging part, "the eternal and immutable," and a particularity that varies with the times, "the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent."¹⁶

This transitory, fugitive element, whose metamorphoses are so rapid, must on no account be despised or dispensed with. By neglecting it, you cannot fail to tumble into the abyss of an abstract and indeterminate beauty, like that of the first woman before the fall of man. If for the necessary and inevitable costume of the age you substitute another, you will be guilty of a mistranslation only to be excused in the case of a masquerade prescribed by fashion.¹⁷

His discussion of beauty intermingles the consideration of artworks and women's beauty in a way that finds a close parallel in the discourse of the *amateur*. For Baudelaire the ephemeral aspect of beauty corresponds to the changeability of fashion and his examples of painting are drawn from depictions of women:

The draperies of Rubens or Veronese will in no way teach you to depict *moiré antique*, *satin à la reine* or any other fabric of modern manufacture, which we see supported and hung over crinoline or starched muslin petticoat. In texture and weave these are quite different from the fabrics of ancient Venice or those worn at the court of Catherine. Furthermore the cut of skirt and bodice is by no means similar; the pleats are arranged according to a new system. Finally the gesture and the bearing of the woman of today give to her dress a life and a special character which are not those of the woman of the past. In short, for any 'modernity' to be worthy of one day taking its place as 'antiquity', it is necessary for the mysterious beauty which human life accidentally puts into it to be distilled from it.¹⁸

The close association of women and painting, of taste for fashion and beauty seen in the above passage is echoed in the interweaving of taste and love in the discourse of the *amateur*.

¹⁶ Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison, eds. *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982): 23-27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

The Amateur's Palette: The Sales Catalogue and Taste

How the *amateur* chooses what to buy was often commented on by the prefaces to the sales collections of these *amateurs*. The very act of buying and choosing was part of the activity of the auction sales themselves and the role of the sales catalogues in promoting the sale rendered them far from disinterested documents. The lavishness of these catalogues was a fairly recent phenomenon beginning in the 1880s. For while earlier sales had been accompanied by listings of items for sale, the prefaces were a new addition beginning around the 1880s. These prefaces, written by important critics, such as Gustave Geoffroy; historians, such as Arsène Alexandre; officials in the art world, like Roger Marx; or museum curators such as André Michel, underlined both the importance of the art for sale, and the collectors who had brought that art together. These prefaces served at one and the same time to raise the value of the sale, by the very prestige of these writers, and to deny the power of the market as a principle in the collection of the art. Over and again, these writers point to the taste and discernment of the collectors in bringing together a diverse and high quality collection, over and against their concern with monetary gain; and yet in the paradoxical inescapability of the market, their very words, of course, served that market. It should be pointed out, however, that the auction house functioned slightly differently from the department stores that had become the emblems of the spectacular consumerist society. Certainly there was a huge array of items for sale displayed in the exhibitions preceding the sales, but the fact that the transfer of goods was being made from one person to another (albeit with the auction house in the middle), rather than from an impersonal store to an individual, retained

something of the pre-capitalist system of barter and exchange. This personal quality is something that these sales prefaces were at pains to emphasize, particularly in the way that they spoke of the biography of the collector and in the way that they emphasized the individualized qualities of taste and love.

The inherent seductivity of the sales catalogue prefaces was nonetheless similar, in its very stress on desire, to the glittering and enticing dream worlds of the shop windows. Within the texts, this seduction of buying in general is elided with falling in love with the particular artwork. Emphasis is placed on the very individual taste that the collectors relied on in selecting their collections.

These texts elucidate the delicate sensibility at work in selecting art, and in so doing, of course, they flatter the prospective buyer for his own enlightened taste. It is worth underlining that the buyer at the auctions was assumed to be male, unlike the women customers of the big department stores. It is important to stress, however, that the important status of the writers of these prefaces (as critics of art, government or museum officials) placed certain limits on how cynical their sales pitch could be. The texts had to be in harmony with other writing by the authors, and not praise artworks that had not merited it elsewhere. This is similar to the predicament of art critics today who get paid by individual artists and galleries to write prefaces for exhibition catalogues and must weave their way between salesmanship (promoting the exhibition) and thoughtfulness (honest appraisal of the work) with their reputations on the line.

According to these texts, the *amateur* was guided by a sense of pleasure and by his refined taste. This kind of individualized choice admitted no absolutes. It was in opposition to the kind of scholarly project of bringing together a preconceived series.

The blind will of scholarship was in fact contrasted to the informed taste for the beautiful—a specifically visual kind of taste.

Collector after collector was identified as an *amateur* by virtue of his taste. Philippe George, a vineyard owner, was labeled “this man of taste.”¹⁹ Lefebvre, who lived in Roubaix and collected mainly in the 1860’s, was called “an amateur of taste.”²⁰ Antoine Marmotel, the pianist, composer and teacher of Bizet, was praised for his “rare aesthetic intuition, his enlightened taste.”²¹ The collection of Jules Roederer, violinist, landscape painter and President of the *Tribunal de commerce* in Havre, was formed, wrote Paul Mantz, with “with so much taste by a passionate amateur.”²² Le comte de Demandolx-Dedons, Henri Rouart, le comte Daupias, Delessert, Henri Garnier, Jules Strauss and M. Cottier are among many others who were singled out in the catalogues as having discerning and fine taste.

It is important that these *amateurs* were seen to have chosen their paintings according to their own taste and rarely was it said that the collector had relied on the advice of “experts.” Rather, a personal taste whose artistic and individual quality was often stressed was said to be responsible for guiding the buying of the *amateur*. Even when someone like René Descamps-Scrive, for example, is described as having relied on experts, it is emphasized both that he chose those experts with discernment and that he himself was “an amateur with refined taste.”²³

¹⁹ *Collection Philippe George*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris: Georges Petit, 1900), 5. “cet homme de goût.”

²⁰ *Collection Lefebvre de Roubaix*, (Paris: Georges Petit, 1896), 5.

²¹ *Collection Marmotel*, preface by Camille le Senne (Paris, 1898), 5. “rare intuition esthétique, son goût éclairé.”

²² *Collection Roederer*, preface by Paul Mantz (Paris: Georges Petit, 1891), 5. “tant de goût par un amateur passionné.”

²³ *Bibliothèque Descamps-Scrive*, preface by Léopold Carteret (Paris: Léopold Carteret, 1925). “un amateur d’un goût raffiné.”

The choosing of a collection was regarded as an art in itself. Writing about Louis Schoengrun, Roger-Milès stated:

There is no art more difficult for the amateur than knowing how to chose because this art demands of he who possesses it a reasoned taste, a patience that it is not too slow, decisiveness without there being something like a school for this art.²⁴

Choice, then, is an art rather than a discipline, based above all on feeling, “*sensibilité*.” It is an exigent art, demanding reasoned taste and patience, and requiring innate ability. Choice of paintings is how taste is revealed. Often the *amateur* was praised for his choices. Roger-Miles wrote that without this ability to chose one couldn’t be an *amateur*:

There are those that pile up paintings in their houses – one in particular who filled his house from basement to attic and who had more than eighteen thousand- and who nevertheless will never be considered amateurs. There are others that, with an extremely restrained choice- can hope for this title: I would be even tempted to include here the paradox of a knowledgeable collector who maintained that for him to own even one good painting would constitute a collection.²⁵

Thus it was not the possession of artworks that alone was the sign of the *amateur*; it was the possession of good art. Being able to judge what is good art, of course, is where taste comes in. Here the above discussion of Kant and Veblen comes into play. Does good taste mean that which is expensive as Veblen would have it, or, on the contrary, does good art have some intrinsic quality that corresponds to a faculty of judgment that is independent of fashion, following Kant and Charles Blanc?

²⁴ *Collection Louis Schoengrun*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris, 1901), 5. “Il n’y a pas d’art plus difficile pour l’amateur que celui de savoir choisir parce que cet art-là exige de celui qui le possède un goût raisonné, une patience sans lenteur, de la décision sans rien qui puisse ressembler à l’entraînement de sensibilité.”

²⁵ *Collection de Alfred Feydeau*, 5. “Il y a des gens qui entassent chez eux les tableaux – tel ce particulier qui en avait rempli sa maison de la cave au grenier et en possédait plus de dix-huit mille – et qui, cependant, ne seront jamais considérés comme des amateurs; il y en a d’autres qui, avec un choix extrêmement restreint, peuvent aspirer à cette qualification: je serais même tenté de rééditer ici le paradoxe d’un connaisseur avisé, qui prétendait qu’à lui seul un bon tableau constitue une collection.”

Within the discourse of the *amateur*, choices were said to be made following pleasure, such that love and taste were inextricably bound together. Alfred Feydeau, for example, gathered his paintings together with “enlightened care” and “he kept them near him with a jealous tenderness: they represented that which his taste told him to love and he did not look at them without an emotion that mixed with an aesthetic joy.”²⁶ His taste told him what to love. This formulation didn’t always hold, it was equally common for the *amateur* to have his love tell him what to choose. Colonel Merlin’s taste was a natural instinct that led him to ignore fashion and choose what he loved: “Little concerned with the caprices of fashion in the fine arts, he loved and admired paintings exclusively for themselves, going only towards those to which he felt personally drawn. Also, once admitted into his collection, he considered them and treated them as his friends.”²⁷ Treating one’s collection as one’s friends was, as we will see when we look at the discourse of love and the *amateur*, an extremely common formulation.

The Eclectic Collection

This very particular ability to choose was made evident by the resulting eclecticism of the collection. Indeed, the formulation of individual taste was almost inseparable from the ideology of “eclecticism” in these sales catalogues. As enunciated by Victor Cousin in his *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, eclecticism conceded that each

²⁶ Ibid., 5. “il les avait gardées par devers lui avec une tendresse jalouse: elles représentaient ce que son goût de l’art lui disait d’aimer, et il ne les regardait pas sans une émotion où se mêlait à une jouissance esthétique.”

²⁷ *Collection Merlin* (Paris: Droûot, 1900), 5. “Peu soucieux des caprices de la mode en matière de beaux-arts, il aimait et admirait les tableaux exclusivement pour eux-mêmes, allant seulement à ceux vers qui il se sentait personnellement attiré. Aussi une fois admis dans sa collection les considérait-il et les traitait-il comme des amis.”

school contains within itself some aspect of the beautiful.²⁸ The collections of the fin-de-siècle were overwhelmingly “eclectic,” as is evident from the artists included in the collections that I have studied. This acceptance of a plurality of acceptable artists in fact privileged the person choosing the artists, that is the collector. The collection became, in its very heterogeneity, a celebration of the individuality of the collector in so far as he himself became the arbiter of what is good and what is beautiful. What made this kind of heterogeneous collection distinctive in its unity, rather than just random, was the way in which the group functioned as a harmonious ensemble.

In catalogue after catalogue the collector was praised for his taste and the resulting eclecticism of his collection. Marmontel’s eclectic collection, for example was linked to his taste: “.His rare aesthetic intuition, his enlightened taste for all kinds of products, his reasoned eclecticism put him in the first tier of collectors”²⁹ It was “aesthetic intuition” and “enlightened taste” rather than any other principle that elevated Marmontel. Writing in the catalogue for Emile Adam, mayor of Nancy, Pascal Forthuny distinguished Adam’s collection from what he saw as the more common collection of one sort of thing:

Usually the collector stakes out more clearly his predilections. In the catalogue of his gallery he avows a taste for a particular period, a particular artist, a particular genre. One must admit, that specializing like this, he is often ferocious, and at least unjust, towards other genres, artists or periods. He does not easily understand that one can feel an equivalent love for the drawings of Ingres and the sketches of Manet.³⁰

²⁸ Victor Cousin. *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, deuxième édition (Paris: 1854), 206. As Mainardi argues in her *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*, the acceptance of the eclectic philosophy went along with the decreasing ability of the government to legislate taste and the increasing commercialization of artistic consumption evident in the rise of private galleries and the concomitant increase in private collections.

²⁹ *Collection Merlin*, 5. “sa rare intuition esthétique, son goût éclairé pour toutes les formes de la production, son éclectisme raisonné l’avait mis au premier rang des grands collectionneurs.”

³⁰ *Collection E. Adam*, preface by Pascal Forthuny (Paris: Drouot, 1900), n.p. “D’ordinaire, le collectionneur marque plus nettement ses prédilections. Par le catalogue de sa galerie, il avoue son goût de tel époque, de tel artiste, de tel genre. Il faut dire qu’ainsi spécialisé, il est souvent féroce, au moins injuste,

It is interesting that while Adam was described as apart from the mainstream practice of having a marked predilection, or collecting according to a preconceived idea rather than from gut reactions to individual artworks, there are only a few prefaces that I have seen that celebrated the non-eclectic collection. Adam was praised for his eclectic and ingenious spirit, for being able to understand the relationship between such different kinds of artistic production as an Ingres drawing and a Manet sketch. This same theme of taste and reasoned eclecticism is evident in Roger-Milès's description of the Bellino collection: "M. Bellino professed, in the formation of his collection, an eclecticism of which the primordial law was to satisfy his taste for beautiful things."³¹ The words *primordial* and *satisfaction* link taste very clearly to desire. Desire, rather than knowledge; primordial law rather than fashionable whim; beautiful, rather than important, fashionable or interesting things: all these aspects are included in the word "taste," and are embodied in the resulting eclecticism of the grouping. The collection was, then, like a very select dish, seasoned with an eclecticism that revealed the cultivated artistry of the collector and the delicacy of his sensibility.

A mixing of major and minor artists, as well as a juxtaposition of works from differing time periods and nationalities characterized the eclectic collection. Philippe George's collection, as described by Roger-Milès, is a good example:

There were, in effect, a bit of every era in these collections, dispersed on all the floors, in all the rooms, anywhere there was an empty 25 centimeter square space.

pour les autres genres, artistes ou époques. Il ne comprend pas aisément qu'on puisse professer un amour égal pour des dessins d'Ingres et des croquis de Manet."

³¹ *Collection Bellino*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris: Georges Petit, 1892), 10-11. "M. Bellino a professé, dans la formation de sa collection, un éclectisme dont la loi primordiale était de satisfaire son goût pour les belles choses."

But the eclecticism that reigned in this assemblage was not an ignorant eclecticism; one could see different notes rather than disparate things ;³²

It is important to note that the language of the harmony of the different elements (a bit of every era) was stated in coloristic or musical terms, “different notes.” The resulting ensemble was harmonious, linked together by way of the collector’s sensibility. Note that the collection was not confined to one room designated as a “gallery;” rather, every room, every bare patch of wall, was covered with art. The art was gathered together not in an “ignorant” way, but so as to form an ensemble.³³ Knowledge (here the opposite of ignorance) was not the scholarly art historical sort, but the painterly knowledge of creating a harmony—taking different colors, different “notes,” and making of them a unity. This harmony was held together by the taste and personality of the collector which it expressed, and also by a set of personal relationships established between things.

The Ensemble: The Collection as Artwork

The *ensemble* is a term that turns up as often as *taste* or *love*. It was an integral part of the discourse that described the collector. Difficult to separate from the eclecticism and tasteful choice of the collector discussed in chapter two, the ensemble was distinguished by the relationship amongst the artworks chosen. The collection of Adolphe Tavernier, *agent de change*, for example, was praised as much for its “ensemble” as for its quality:

Full of passion for things of art, having a refined sense of aesthetic beauty, and

³² *Collection Philippe George*, 9. “Il y avait, en effet, un peu de toutes les époques, dans ces collections, dispersées à tous les étages, dans toutes les pièces, là où se trouvait vacant un carré de vingt-cinq centimètres. Mais l’éclectisme qui régnait dans cet assemblage n’était pas un éclectisme ignorant; on y voyait des notes différentes et non des choses disparates;”

³³ *Ensemble*, as a term, is discussed further in Chapter 5. Its implied unity of sociability, painting and musical harmony is very important to the organization of the private collection within the space of the *amateur*.

avowing an informed eclecticism which guided his choice, he formed a collection in which one is stunned almost as much by the ensemble as by the quality.³⁴

This striking group was made possible, according to Roger-Milès, by Tavernier's informed eclecticism and refined aesthetic sense.

The harmony of the ensemble was thus described as coming from the particular qualities and character of the collector. Roger-Milès began the description of the collection of Hubert Debrousse, the financier son of a railroad entrepreneur, by describing the man. What is striking is the way that the description of his character is linked to his collection in its harmony. "Everything works together in them, everything is the same tonality. This harmony allows them to judge things wisely and to form true ideas."³⁵ This same unity and accord was found in his collection in which the moderns and the old masters were mixed together throughout the space of his salons. The element in common amongst the works, Roger-Milès was careful to point out, was not a doctrinal point of view, but rather a feeling: "paintings that gave him an emotion, that offered him joy, and it is in this way that around his gallery and in his living rooms one saw the modern artists and the old masters."³⁶ He also showed these paintings which gave him so much pleasure to his friends. But it is important that these friends are described as those who were intimate with him.³⁷ Thus it was a small circle of friends who came to share the contemplation of the art which was quite different than the public crowding in front of paintings in such public spaces as the salon or the museum.

³⁴ *Collection d'un Amateur [Adolphe Tavernier]*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris, 1894), 5. "Tout épris des choses de l'art, ayant le sens affiné du beau esthétique, et professant d'ailleurs un éclectisme renseigné, qui savait guider son choix, il a formé une collection dont l'ensemble étonne presque autant que la qualité."

³⁵ *Collection Hubert Debrousse*, preface by Roger-Milès (Paris, 1900), iii. "de tableaux qui lui donnaient une émotion, qui lui offraient une joie, et c'est ainsi qu'autour de sa galerie et dans ses salons on voyait des modernes et des anciens."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, iv. "Tout agit de concert en eux, tout y est du même ton. Cet accord les fait juger sainement des objets et leur en forme une idée véritable."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, iv. "ceux qui avaient une place en son intimité."

Lazare Weiler's collection was also described as an ensemble.³⁸ Writer, industrialist, inventor of a mirrored drum for the electronic transmission of images and Deputy in the National Assembly during the First World War, he lived in the Chateau d'Osny which had once belonged to Richelieu. Weiler began collecting the Old Masters, including Rubens and Nattier, and according to Forthuny, he thought of his chateau as a fitting frame for these paintings along with the décor and the accessories that made a "perfect ensemble." He wanted living artists as well, and he bought Puvis, Pissarro, Monet, and Sisley, among others. Weiler was obliged to sell some paintings because he moved to smaller quarters and in the preface Pascal Forthuny reassures Weiler: "Sir, -- this is a prediction--you will soon make us a new bouquet."³⁹ Thus the grouping of paintings is compared with a bouquet of flowers, that trope for color used, as we saw, by Baudelaire for the palette of Delacroix.

The way that paintings in a collection form a harmony was celebrated by Roger-Milès in the preface to the collection of M. Z Here each painting is seen as a "note" which together form a "symphony" of nature and of color:

Between *la Colline*, a note of Corot, of a delicious softness, and *le Réveil*, this masterpiece, admirable for its health and its force, of Courbet, this duet of blond and brunette flesh that sings in the folds of the draperies; between *la Toilette*, where the woman, such as Chaplin dreamed of her, is all grace and coquetry, and *le Buveur* of Roybet of such a male pride, it is an extraordinary symphony of nature and of color in which Ziem, Monticelli, Ch. Jacque, Isabey and Jongkind are the principal players.⁴⁰

The idea of a symphony is played out in the use of such terms as "note," "sing," "duet,"

³⁸ *Collection Lazare Weiler*, preface by Pascal Forthuny (Paris, 1901), II.

³⁹ Ibid., III. "Monsieur—ceci est une prophésie,—vous nous composerez bientôt un nouveau bouquet."

⁴⁰ *Collection M. Z...*, preface by L. Roger-Milès (Paris, 1901), 5. "Entre *la Colline*, une note de Corot, d'une délicieuse douceur, et *le Réveil*, cette page maîtresse, admirable de santé et de force, de Courbet, ce duo de chairs blonde et brune qui chante dans le chiffonné des draperies ; entre *la Toilette*, où la femme, telle que l'a rêvée Chaplin, est toute grâce et coquetterie, et *le Buveur*, de Roybet, d'une si mâle crânerie, c'est une extraordinaire symphonie de nature et de couleur, dont Ziem, Monticelli, Ch. Jacque, Isabey et Jongkind sont les chefs de pupitre."

and “chief players.” The symphony is, as Roger-Milès stated, one of nature and color, but in this case, it is particularly a symphony of a collection, described later as a “beautiful ensemble”⁴¹ in which the paintings are the musicians.

Even in a collection in which the painters were less diverse than in most, the grouping was considered an ensemble in which the musical metaphor is usually acknowledged. Thus the collection Mathias, which was made up mainly of Barbizon painters, “the school of 1830,” is called “a homogenous ensemble” by M. Horteloup in his preface to the sales catalogue.⁴² It is significant that Horteloup considered that *La Joueuse de Mandoline* by Corot presided over the ensemble. The metaphor is carried into the last paragraph in which the each canvas is described as a note in an ensemble.⁴³

The collection of Marmontel, himself a composer of music, is likened not to music, but to an album. Camille le Senne wrote in the preface to the sales catalogue that it was a “beautiful ensemble,” this “magisterial” collection, “the magnificent album of art that does not contain either a page of doubtful origin nor a leaf of mediocre writing.”⁴⁴ A musical ensemble evokes a social gathering, and an album also conjures up the image of guests leafing through its pages. This sociability of the ensemble was also described in the preface. Marmontel’s gatherings of friends in his weekly salons was compared with the ensemble of his collection, which included Rubens, Rembrandt and Van Dyke. As for many of the other collectors the ensemble of the collection formed the setting for the ensemble of his friends, “all the regulars of this house on rue de Calais where he received his old friends and newcomers with the same affability, the same ever-present

⁴¹ Ibid., 9.

⁴² *Collection Mathias*, preface by M Horteloup (Paris, 1903), 3.

⁴³ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁴ *Collection Antoine Marmontel*, preface by Camille Le Senne (Paris, 1898), 7. “ce magnifique album d’art qui ne contient ni une page d’origine douteuse ni un feuillet d’écriture mediocre.”

welcome.”⁴⁵ The preface made explicit the link between his hospitality and his collection, noting that Marmontel did not collect with an egotistical pleasure but that his gallery was “a museum open to all enlightened admirers.”⁴⁶

The violinist Beriot’s collection was also praised with the musical metaphor of harmony. Pascal Forthuny used words like “scale,” “harmony,” and “virtuosity” to describe the collection:

It would be an injustice to not pay tribute, in concluding, to the wisdom and to the impeccable taste of a collector, who, with his fine abilities, was able to achieve, by the knowledgeable choices that are within the scale of his talents, harmony that is so successful, a tuning so perfect. We know that such virtuosity is customary for him elsewhere, but I would be unable to restrain myself from thanking M. de Bériot for the occasion to applaud him publicly in these few words of the preface.⁴⁷

The collection becomes a piece of music that is played by a virtuoso, and we, the audience must applaud.

While music was a dominant metaphor for the description of the ensemble of the collection, other images such as books and paintings were used as well to convey the way the various elements of the collection were harmoniously combined. The collection of Paul Baudry (a businessman and not the painter of the same name) was, for instance, likened to a book. His complicated life, in which business and art are mingled, is cited in the same paragraph as the comparison of his collection with a book, which reminds us of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 5. “tous les habitués de cette maison de la rue de Calais où il recevait les anciens amis et les nouveaux venus avec la même affabilité, la même bienveillance toujours en éveil.”

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5 “un musée ouvert à toutes les admirations éclairées.” This use of the word museum to apply to a private collection should be noted. It refers to the broad notion of a place in which the public can view paintings rather than to the scholarly and nationalistic institution of the Louvre.

⁴⁷ *Collection M. de Bériot*, preface by Pascal Forthuny (Paris: Drouot, 1901), n.p. “Il y aurait injustice à ne pas rendre hommage, en terminant, à la sagacité et au goût impeccable d’un collectionneur, qui, selon un doigté si sûr, put réaliser, par un choix savant dans la gamme des talents, des harmonies aussi heureuses, un accord aussi parfait. On sait qu’une telle virtuosité d’ailleurs lui est coutumière, mais je ne saurais personnellement me retenir de remercier M. de Bériot pour l’occasion qui m’échut d’y applaudir publiquement, en ces quelques paroles d’avant-propos.”

the importance of mixed categories in the libraries of the *amateur*:

Once more, we can only, as far as we are concerned, applaud the success of M. Baudry, business man, and be pleased with the result of this success, evident in the apartment of M. Baudry, amateur of paintings, where the real amateurs will be able to benefit from his wonderful findings. We will soon see that this admirable book that is his collection even without several pages, there rest still more, and not the least since they have acquired the patina of time.⁴⁸

The passage continues to describe the multitude of activities of Baudry, who was constantly creating new goals for himself.

The collection, described in the above passage as a book, is then further described as a painting in its own right. Baudry did not go to the auctions, but, like a landscape painter, waited for the right light to make his own canvas of a collection:

In the way of those painters, who, in front of nature, wait long hours for the sun to light to their satisfaction the tops of the trees or the mirror of the water, he also waited to be able to make the painting made of many paintings juxtaposed, for the right moment and the right light. He wanted his light to be explosive, rare and magnificent. Ziem showed it to him more than all others. And Ziem reigns here. But as contrast is most likely one of the most certain laws of beauty, M. Baudry understood that within the ensemble he needed to orchestrate that. That is why, next to orient skies and Adriatic sparklings, we find, precious contrast, some silver greys of Corot, a bit of the fauve palette of Henner, the frank clarity of Veyrassat, the enchantment of the beautiful shadows of Tivot and even the child's smile signed Chaplin.⁴⁹

Here the language of juxtaposition, contrast and color suggests the relational dialogue.

⁴⁸ *Collection Paul Baudry*, vii. "Encore une fois, nous ne pouvons, en ce qui nous concerne, qu'applaudir aux succès de M. Baudry, homme d'affaires, et nous féliciter de ce qu'ils aient eu, chez M. Baudry, amateur de tableaux, un aussi magnifique contre-coup, d'autant plus que par la vente qu'il fait, les vrais amateurs pourront bénéficier demain de ses heureuses recherches. Nous verrons tout à l'heure que, de cet admirable livre qu'est sa collection, s'il détache quelques feuillets, il en reste encore quelques-uns, et non des moindres ceux-là, puisqu'ils sont anoblis par la patine des temps."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ix. "A la manière de ces peintres qui, devant la nature, attendent de longues heures que le soleil éclaire à leur gré la cime des arbres ou le miroir de l'eau, il attendit, lui aussi, pour parfaire ce tableau fait de plusieurs toiles juxtaposées, que l'occasion fût propice et la lumière convenable. Cette lumière, il la voulait éclatante, rare, magnifique. Ziem la lui révéla plus que tout autre. Aussi bien Ziem trône-t-il ici. Mais comme l'antithèse est fort probablement l'une des lois les plus certaines de la beauté, M. Baudry comprit qu'il en fallait dans l'ensemble ménager quelques-unes. C'est pourquoi, aux côtés des ciels orientaux, des scintillements d'Adriatiques, nous retrouvons, précieux contrastes, quelques gris d'argent de Corot, un peu de la palette fauve de Henner, des franches clartés de Veyrassat, un échantillon des belles ténèbres de Ribot."

Each painting is a note of color, which, combined, creates the work of art that is the collection. The collector has become an artist in his own right.

This vocabulary of color is found as well in Arsène Alexandre's description of the collection of Jules Strauss. He first describes the "ensemble" of the collection, which he finds homogeneous. It includes Daumier, Manet, Jongkind, Corot, Ricard, Whistler, Boudin, Cézanne, Lépine, Morisot, and Carrière, so, homogeneity is perhaps not the most obvious description. He explains further:

All these paintings coming from different temperaments, but each one of a great intensity, hold together admirably one with the other. When a collection as homogeneous as this is put on sale, it is a lesson that is being broken up.⁵⁰

Here again, holding one painting up against another is a comparative mode of viewing that was particularly important within the space of the private collector. The choice that allowed for this enlightening group was made possible by the excellent and sure taste of Strauss. Even when collecting various works by a single painter, the *amateur* was making a new ensemble. Alexandre used the language of painting, color, and harmony to describe the selection of paintings by Sisley that Strauss made: "The owner of this collection brought together many particularly delicate notes, exquisitely fine and soft harmonies. Marvelous skies, corners of villages, transparent waters..."⁵¹ There is a slight elision in this passage, a confusion between the collector and the painter, such that it is not entirely clear whether it is Sisley or Strauss who made these exquisite harmonies. This privileging of the creative power of the collector is most strongly stated when the collection is explicitly called a work of art in its own right, as in the case of Paul Baudry,

⁵⁰ *Collection Jules Strauss*, preface by Arsène Alexandre (Paris, 1902), iv. "Toutes ces peintures émanées de tempéraments divers, mais chacun d'une grande intensité, se tiennent admirablement les unes avec les autres. Quand une collection aussi homogène est mise en vente, c'est un enseignement qui s'éparpille."

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, III. "Le possesseur de cette collection a réuni nombre de notes particulièrement délicates, des harmonies exquises de finesse et de douceur. Ciel merveilleux, coins de villages, eaux transparentes."

above.

Ensemble is a term used in these prefaces to describe paintings themselves. For example, Gustave Geoffroy, writing on the collection of Eugene Blot and describing in particular the Impressionist paintings that made up a large part of this collection, compared them to the largeness of nature: "It is nature itself, not detailed and hardened, but seen in its ensemble, such as it displays itself in front of our eyes with its skies, its waters, its foliage, its human silhouettes, its encountered faces."⁵² Notice how nature becomes linked with the people within it so that nature is not distinct from human presence. This is important because later in the essay the paintings themselves, landscapes (nature in its ensemble), become part of an ensemble that is the collection, and each painting speaks to the viewer from the walls of the modern apartment:

This is the character of this reunion [of paintings]. Each piece indicates a preference, takes its place in the intimate museum that a modern apartment can be. Everywhere that they hang, the paintings will speak to him who asks, this language, so particular and so deep, of painting. The landscape, the figure, flowers, fruit, every object shown by the painter who knew first to see them, become for us, on our walls, the interlocutors of every instant.⁵³

Thus nature, seen by the painter, became as a painting, itself a kind of personage, "an interlocutor," with which to confer and to speak. Each painting was part of an ensemble, not only of a spatial grouping within the modern apartment, but also of moments of one's life. The collection was a metonym for one's experience and a companion for that same experience at one and the same time. It is, in and of itself, an artwork.

⁵² *Collection Eugène Blot*, preface by Gustave Geoffroy (Paris, 1900), 2-3. "C'est la nature même, non pas détaillée et durcie, mais vue dans son ensemble, telle qu'elle se déploie devant nos yeux avec ses ciels, ses eaux, ses feuillages, ses silhouettes humaines, ses visages rencontrés."

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 5. "C'est dire le caractère de cette réunion. Chaque pièce indique une préférence, prend place dans le musée intime que peut être un appartement moderne. Partout où ils sont, les tableaux parleront à celui qui les interrogera ce langage si discret, si pénétrant, de la peinture. Le paysage, la figure, les fleurs, les fruits, tous les objets montrés par le peintre qui a su tout d'abord les voir, nous deviennent, sur nos murailles, des interlocuteurs de tous les instants."

The collection of Arsène Alexandre is “like a painting.” Like all the other *amateurs* discussed, he is described as having chosen his collection neither from a whim nor from a wish to be fashionable, and certainly not as a financial speculation, but rather as part of a life passionately involved in the art of his time. In the case of Alexandre, the “tableau” that is his collection is not only a painting in the sense of an assemblage of color and contrast, but also a reflection of the art of his time:

As M. Arsène Alexandre has been closely and ardently involved in the artistic movement of the past twenty years, his collection is, at the same time, like a painting of a whole aspect of art during the period that just passed, and like a summary of the struggles in which criticism has taken part.⁵⁴

Similarly, Baudry is described as having assembled his collection in much the same way that a landscape painter would paint. In this case, each painting is compared to a note of color which gives the tonality of the finished artwork.

Table B in Appendix B lists the collectors who were discussed in the previous chapter and the painters that were included in their collections. As is obvious, it was much rarer for a collector to concentrate on one particular artist or school than it was for him to mix different types of art, although certain collectors, such as Aimé Diot, art dealer, included mainly Barbizon artists.

From examining this table, it is evident that “academic” and “avant garde” artists were readily mixed together; known and unknown, Realist and Impressionist, and French and non-French artists also were often found together. Lazarre Weiler collected the Impressionists such as Monet, Renoir and Cassatt, but also much more conventional artists such as Beraud, Besnard and Daignan-Bouveret. Mme. Vivert Lloyd, actress in

⁵⁴ *Collection Arsène Alexandre*, unsigned preface. (Paris), 6. “Comme M Arsène Alexandre a été mêlé de très près et très ardemment au mouvement artistique de ces vingt dernières années, sa collection est, en même temps, comme un tableau de tout un aspect de l’art pendant la période qui vient de s’écouler, et comme un résumé des luttes auxquelles le critique a pris part.”

the Comédie Française, had both Cranach and Carolus Duran. The Secretan collection included Boucher, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Tiepolo, Meissonier, Corot and Courbet. Rouart had Morisot and Ribera as well as Gauguin and Tiepolo. This mix occurred over and over again such that it is a surprise to find a collection limited to realists or academic painters. It should be pointed out that most collections were of European paintings (French, Dutch and Italian primarily), and that American paintings, for example, were extremely rare. Eastman Johnson stands out in the collection of Thorne, but he mainly collected English artists, being himself English. A mix like that of Alfred Sensier-- Delacroix, Diaz, Breughel, Poussin and Velasquez (among others)--was more usual.

The prefaces stressed that the sensitive taste of the *amateur* chose each work individually in relation to his own particular affinities. It is rare to have any historical awareness stressed, although it does appear, particularly in relation to the collections that included Impressionist artists. Gustave Geoffroy described taking up the pen once more in defense of the Impressionists in the preface to the collection of Eugène Blot; the Cannonne collection, which was sold quite a bit later, was described as embodying a history of art that validated the Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists.⁵⁵

The idea of a collection as “expressing” the personality of the collector was very much part of the discourse of taste in these sales catalogue prefaces. The very sensitive and refined collector was seen to respond to certain aspects of works of art because of his personality, and the resulting group of artworks in turn was seen to reflect the sensibility of the collector. Certainly this can be seen as a powerful sales strategy on the part of the

⁵⁵ *Collection E. Blot*, preface by Gustave Geoffroy (Paris: Drouot, 1910). *Collection Cannonne*, preface by Arsène Alexandre (Paris: Bernheim Jeune, 1930).

sales catalogue prefaces. By privileging individual insight, the potential buyer is flattered for his perspicacity in selecting these paintings at this sale.

While surely effective as a sales strategy, however, this emphasis on individual taste and choice downplayed the reciprocal effect that the collection in fact had in creating the collector's persona. The way that the "clothes make the man" would not have been as flattering a sales pitch, but surprisingly this necessary relationship between the collection and the collector is sometimes alluded to, most openly in the case of women collectors.

In the case of Georges Feydeau, for example, the playwright was described as constructing a stage setting. The preface to the sales catalogue, written by Henri Fouquier, reveals many themes that are repeated throughout this discourse, but he particularly underlined the artificial quality of the collection. He begins his discussion, for example, by citing Balzac's Cousin Pons who, like all collectors, had a "soul of a conqueror and discoverer of a country, insatiable in his ambition and wanting to possess everything."⁵⁶ He also asserts a link between the collector and Don Juan, so as to make clear the erotic component of collecting. He stresses the link between Feydeau's own painting (which was discussed in the previous chapter) and argues that the collection itself is like a work of art. This preface is followed by an Avant-propos by Pascal Forthuny where the link with the stage is explicitly made:

Why not, in effect, admit that M. Georges Feydeau, so expert at discerning the virtues or the mediocrities of individuals, so attentive to deciphering, to finding just the right word, always exactly right, the typical originality of the characters of his plays, why, I ask, not admit a completely logical extension of his observational talents when it comes to determining the real merit of a painting, or of measuring, within the harmony of values, within the charm of the interior,

⁵⁶ *Collection Georges Feydeau*, preface by Henri Fouquier and avant propos by Pascal Forthuny, (Paris: Droûot, 1901).

within the power of expression, the correct amount of emotion and sensibility that the artist transposes with the tip of his brush? Without any doubt, it is like this that M. Feydeau imagined his collection from the first instant, and during long acquisitions, gave it this aspect of rational beauty with which we see it adorned today. These are the same means, at the theater as on the gallery walls, that serve him so faithfully. In the same way that he pencils in his heroes and traces them with little essential details, so his sharp analytic sense operates in front of a landscape or interior scene. And in the same way we can expect to witness an insightful discourse on Parisian psychology in one of his plays, so we can expect, on confronting his collection, to encounter there only the most eminently expressive works of the best talents of each artist.⁵⁷

This long excerpt not only shows the kind of florid prose popular in these exhibition catalogues, but also makes clear the analogy with the theater that is particularly important. Many themes play out in this passage – including the equivalence of paintings and characters and the link between the theater and the collection wall. Each painting is viewed as a character whose psychology has been well judged by this playwright. The expressiveness of a painting is like the expressiveness of one of Feydeau's heroes. Here not only the theatricality, the stage-director aspect of interior decorating, but also the sociability of a collection in which different paintings speak different parts, the dialogue of collecting, is emphasized. Another aspect of the theatricality of the collection, the way in which it can change and reflect a different aspect of personality is seen in the two collections of the couturier, Jacques Doucet.

⁵⁷ Ibid., x. "Pourquoi, en effet, ne pas admettre que M. Georges Feydeau, si expert à discerner les vertus ou les médiocrités des individus, si attentif à déchiffrer, à mettre en pleine valeur, d'un mot toujours exactement heureux, l'originalité typique des personnages de son théâtre, pourquoi, dis-je, ne pas admettre une toute logique extension de ses facultés observatrices lorsqu'il s'agit de déterminer le vrai mérite d'une œuvre peinte, ou de mesurer, à l'harmonie des valeurs, au charme du décor, à la puissance de l'expression, la juste somme d'émotion et de sensibilité qu'y transposa l'artiste à la pointe de son pinceau ? Sans nul doute, c'est bien ainsi que M. Feydeau imagina sa collection dès le premier instant, et, à lentes acquisitions, lui donna cet aspect de beauté rationnelle dont nous la voyons aujourd'hui. Ce sont bien les mêmes moyens qui, au théâtre, comme sur ses cimaises, si fidèlement le servent. De même qu'il crayonne ses héros et les campe par petits détails essentiels, de même son sens aigu de l'analyse s'exerce à coup sûr devant tel paysage ou telle scène d'intérieur. Et de même encore qu'on peut être d'avance persuadé, en entendant une pièce de lui, d'assister à un cours de savante psychologie parisienne, de même peut-on, en abordant sa collection, se flatter de n'y rencontrer que des œuvres éminemment expressives du plus beau talent de l'artiste qui les signa."

Decoration in Two Acts: Jacques Doucet and the Theatrics of Space

The collections of Jacques Doucet (1853-1929) made explicit the constructedness and artificiality of the collection by putting together two completely different collections, one centered on the eighteenth-century and one modern. These seem to posit two distinct personalities. Neither collection corresponded to the eclectic norm prevalent amongst *amateurs* at this time. However, despite an overwhelming predominance of the eclectic collection chosen by way of a personal and idiosyncratic taste, there were also some collectors who concentrated on particular aspects or periods of art--as for example Edmond de Goncourt's collection of Japanese and Rococo art and Jacques Doucet's and Isaac Camondo's collections of eighteenth-century art. These collections, despite not being eclectic, were still related to the culture of the *amateur* that we have been addressing; they were built on a continuity of life and art, they were self-conscious products of desire and they corresponded to a projection of self that was common to these *amateurs*. This invitation to live within the space of collection is not true of all period-specific collections of the time. The Cernuschi collection of Far Eastern art, for example, was displayed in an imposing array of shelves in a specifically designated "Salle du Boudha" (Figure 12). A large statue of a meditating Buddha presided over an impressive collection of vases and carvings. The seating was mainly on small, modern, bentwood chairs that were visually insignificant in comparison with the art of the collection. This arrangement emphasized the importance of the collection and de-emphasized the everyday life of the collector. Likewise, the Osiris collection of sculptures that was

discussed above, was displayed in a museum-like setting in which the artworks dominated the space rather than blending harmoniously into an ensemble.

The case of Jacques Doucet is important from the point of view of a constructed identity for several reasons. First, his *métier* as dress designer directly concerned the construction of the self through the acquisition of beautiful things. Interestingly for us, he was the couturier of choice for Réjane, whose collection is discussed below. She apparently chose his gowns to accentuate her soft desirability and to contrast with the high drama of Sarah Bernhardt.⁵⁸ Secondly, he constructed two distinct collections: one eighteenth-century and the other modernist (he was the first owner of Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*). Each of these collections was installed in a house chosen expressly for it so that the collection and its *mise-en-scène* created a total environment. Finally the collections were so related to his erotic life that Doucet sold his first collection following the death of his beloved.⁵⁹

Like the eclectic collections that were discussed above, Doucet's eighteenth-century collection was conceived as an *ensemble*. As François Chapon traced, Doucet was willing to sacrifice certain of his acquisitions when he found they did not harmonize with the rest of the collection. Coming to the market after the time that the vogue for the rococo, promoted by the Goncourt brothers, was well underway, he was not one to be able to pick up terrific bargains. As Maurice Tournaux wrote: "Leaving to others the joy of accumulating, M. Doucet reserved for himself that pleasure of choosing, and in this

⁵⁸ See François Baudot, *Réjane. La Reine du Boulevard* (Paris: Editions 7L, 2001).

⁵⁹ François Chapon, *Mystères et splendeurs de Jacques Doucet 1853-1929* (Paris: Jean Claude Lattès, 1984). According to Chapon, Doucet had long been in love with a married woman whom he never identified. She had finally agreed to live with him and his home on the Rue Spontini was prepared for her. However, she died suddenly, and as a result of his grief, he sold the collection as well as the house in 1912. See pp. 83-85.

way, little by little, he built up an ensemble were everything had been acquired by an immutable will that was sure of itself.”⁶⁰ His sense of the ensemble, however, was not ahistorical, and in fact he began a collection of sales catalogues to document the provenance of his collection, which became the basis of the current Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet d’art et d’archéologie installed at the rue Richelieu branch of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Chapon stressed the importance of this documentary interest, which he believed established the collection as a “modern” and “scientific” exemplar of the new discipline of “art history.”⁶¹

This tension between the private and the public already discussed in connection with the women of the theater is made central in Chapon’s book. He speculated about why Doucet sold his collection only a few years after installing it in the home on rue Spontini which he had bought specifically as a showcase for his collection. One theory is that, while the “intimacy of his former house on la rue de la Ville-l’Eveque where the art works formed a natural décor for their owner, such that it didn’t require much imagination to believe oneself at the home of a *fermier général* or a rich *amateur* of the eighteenth-century, the sumptuousness of the rue Spontini felt like a museum.”⁶² For Joubin this transformation of the collection into a “museum,” in turn changed Doucet into a man of today. In Joubin’s view, the setting no longer allowed the collection to act as a backdrop for an eighteenth-century life. Rather it became modern by virtue of its museum-like arrangement.

⁶⁰ Quoted in Chapon, 78. “Laissant à d’autres la joie d’accumuler, M. Doucet s’est réservé celle de choisir, et c’est ainsi qu’il a, peu à peu, constitué un ensemble où tout a été acquis en vertu d’une volonté nettement arrêtée et sûre d’elle-même.”

⁶¹ Ibid., 80.

⁶² Ibid., 83. “la rue de la Ville-l’Eveque où les oeuvres formaient comme un décor naturel à la vie de leur propriétaire, de sorte qu’il ne fallait pas un grand effort d’imagination pour se croire introcuit chez un *fermier general* ou un riche *amateur* du XVIIIe siècle, la somptueuse ordance de la Spontinie sentait le musée.” André Joubin, in Chapon.

The photographs of this collection as it was installed in the rue Spontini show a combination of media, forms and textures carefully calibrated to work as an ensemble. (Figure 13) Thus, while less overwhelmingly cluttered and certainly less eclectic than the collections of Dollfus or Rouart discussed above, it is far from the linear museum display one sees in many views of the interior of the Louvre.⁶³ One notices the way a patterned upholstery relates to a painted boiserie, whose swirls in turn seem harmonious with the irregularities of the marble table, whose smoothness and sheen plays off the mirror, which in turn reflects and is surrounded by the vegetal abundance of the small salon. Everywhere one looks, from the walls to the light fixtures to the decorative vases to the flowers to the doors or the overdoor carvings, there is a play and counterplay of decoration which, if it suggests a museum, it is more a museum of a way of life than of any one art form or artist.⁶⁴ The focus of the installation is the way in which the objects are combined and arranged, rather than on each individual object. Despite the period specificity, the ensemble calls for certain way of behavior, it conjures a personality who might live here. It is quite spectacularly theatrical. The photographs highlight how strongly one imagines who might live here, more so than the jumbled assortment of

⁶³ For the perspectival space of the museum, see below, in Chapter 5. For a collection of various depictions of the Louvre see Marquet de Vasselot, *Répertoire des vues des salles du Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1946)

⁶⁴ This is true as well of the Musée Camondo in Paris as it is installed today. As one walks through the rooms, which are arranged as they were in Camondo's time, one feels like one has been transported back to the eighteenth century. This must have been the case for him as well in 1900. The arrangement of tapestries, furniture, draperies and paintings corresponds to the kind of ensemble that is true of the discourse of the *amateur*. One sees a particular attention paid to texture and pattern, with, for example, the theme of flowers recurring in the inlaid wood furniture, the long curtains, the upholstery of the chairs, the dishes and the paintings. Thus while we are not so much directed to the discerning eye of the collector, which is emphasized much more clearly in an eclectic collection, and which was more evident in Camondo's extensive collection of modern paintings which he gave to the Louvre, it is none the less a way of life, rather than a serial, scholarly collection that has been created. The pleasure is akin to that expressed by Edmond de Goncourt in being able to sleep in the bed of Mme de Pompadour. (Goncourt's collection is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4).

objects and furnishings in the house of Rouart or Dollfus, where we are referred to a particular taste, a particular sensibility rather than a character defined by period.

The photographs of the sales catalogue of luxurious rooms missing their protagonists operate strongly as inducements to desire. They seem to say: “Come inhabit a space like this. Make yourself into an eighteenth-century aristocrat” “Seat yourself at this desk, or in this fauteuil, and imagine yourself in conversation with the white-wigged elegant ladies and gentlemen whose portraits adorn the brocaded walls.” This mixture of taste and desire so apparent in the collection of Jacques Doucet is evident, as we have seen, throughout the discourse on the *amateur*. In the section that follows I will discuss this inescapable intermingling.

Love and the Amateur

Literally and figuratively, love is at the heart of the *amateur*. Throughout nineteenth-century literature, we find this aspect of the collector emphasized above all others in the discourse of the *amateur*, whose etymological derivation, after all, is from *amour*. Over and again in the sales catalogues of the fin-de-siècle, we find reference to the love that these *amateurs* had for their collections. The sales catalogue itself, as discussed above, acts to serve and promote this love. It aims to attract buyers, flattering the collector, so as to flatter the prospective buyer. It describes the objects in their best light.

Paul Eudel, writing on the sales at the Hôtel Drouôt in 1882, mocked the language of the sales catalogue.

In the catalogue, we see only *beautiful* and *rich collections*. Nothing but magical words, blinding, delicious! *Transparency – warm tonality – skilled craftsmanship – golden color – exceptionally fine – remarkable quality – gracious composition – force and richness of coloring – stunning delicacy of touch in the modeling of flesh*. These experts make me laugh.⁶⁵

The point of all this heightened language, of course, was to entice and seduce the buyer. Eudel himself, in his own supposedly journalistic account of the history of the Hôtel Drouot, employed the same sort of seductive language, presumably to keep the reader from putting down the book.⁶⁶ So the identity of the sales catalogue was as much bound up with seduction as the identity of the *amateur* himself.

The enunciation of the centrality of love to the *amateur* was made throughout the history of discussion of the *amateur*. It is crucial, for example, that Balzac's Cousin Pons loves his collection in the way that "a man might love a beautiful mistress."⁶⁷ In a household occupied by two men, Schmucke and Pons, best friends, the collection functions as the feminine presence, which is, however, the exclusive province of Pons. The novel stresses Pons' love and desire for the paintings and objects of his collection rather than his acquisitiveness or possessiveness. Unlike Magus, the other collector character in the book, Pons has no idea of the monetary value of his collection. Value does matter for him, in that he will buy only a bargain, but what this means for him is that he alone is the one to recognize the object as desirable, that only he can uncover the true

⁶⁵ Paul Eudel, *L'Hôtel Drouot et la Curiosité en 1882* (Paris: Charpentier, 1883), 85. "Sur le livret, on ne voit que de *belles et riches collections*. Rien que des mots magiques, éblouissants, délicieux ! *Transparence – ton chaud – main habile – couleur dorée – finesse exceptionnelle – remarquable qualité – gracieuse composition – force et richesse du coloris – étonnante morbidesse des chairs*. Ces experts me font rire."

⁶⁶ Ibid., 87. His description of lace, for example, which is one of the items of a sale he writes: "La dentelle est la poésie de la femme. Elle vit avec elle, accompagne les battements de son Coeur ou cache tout ce que nous voudrions voir. Elle a toujours, lorsqu'on la touché, un odore della femina qui nous grise. La dentelle donne des ailes à la toilette." "Lace is the poetry of woman. It lives with her, accompanies the beatings of her heart or hides all that we would like to see. It always has, once one touches it, the *odore della femina* which excites us. Lace gives wings to la toilette."

⁶⁷ Balzac, *Cousin Pons*, 27.

beauty of this object. Still using the vocabulary of sexual desire, Balzac describes *objets d'art* as not only having intelligence, but also the ability to recognize real collectors:

“They beckon to them. They make eyes at them.”⁶⁸ It is only to the real *amateur* that they make themselves known, so the finding of a bargain (and here Balzac is explicit; “an object had to be worth 3,000 F before he would pay 50 Francs.”) is a validation of Pons’s identity, his ability to discern. So that while Pons and Magus share a secretive attitude towards their collection, and while they are both described as relating to the femininity of the collection, one is a lover and the other is more of a visitor to a brothel. On this last point, Balzac writes: “Magus had never hoped for a chance of getting inside so well-guarded a harem!”⁶⁹ Thus themes of love, desire, possession, privacy, obsession, join with taste, connoisseurship, and choice to give a very full picture of the discourse of the *amateur*, which centers on love.

Even if the collection started out as a fashionable luxury, it is described as becoming beloved to the collector. In his preface to the Secrétan collection, Albert Wolff described this process:

I have known amateurs, who, at starting, made collections more in order to follow the fashion than from instinct. They were hanging up those works which their wealth had procured them, as a necessary or enviable luxury. And then, by dint of contemplating the Masters, the profane became initiated, the works which they had before their eyes not only shed upon them the radiance of their glory, but they also formed their taste. Now they look at them, not merely with their eyes, but with their very souls. What originally only was a millionaire’s fancy, becomes a passion for the beautiful. The beauty of these works being unraveled to them, they not only appreciate, but also love them. Soon the paintings become the companions of all their life, and they could not do any more without them. Their removal not only would leave a void on their walls, but also in their hearts.⁷⁰

This is a story of falling in love, an affair that lasts and turns to marriage. The rather

⁶⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 147.

⁷⁰ *Collection Secrétan*, preface by Albert Wolff (Paris: Sedelmeyer, 1889), II-III. (English in original)

frank discussion of the initial role of money is unusual however. Much more frequent, is the way in which *amateurs* are praised for the way they ignore fashion, buy what they love, and then live with their collection as friends. Typical in this is Colonel Merlin whose collection sold in 1900. He is described in the preface by “A.D.” as unconcerned with fashion:

Little concerned with the caprices of fashion in the fine arts, he loved and admired paintings exclusively for themselves, going only to those towards which he felt personally drawn. Also, once admitted into his collection, he considered them and treated them as his friends.⁷¹

Here the initial choice as well as the extended relationship to his collection was based on feeling, a feeling that transformed the paintings into sentient beings, friends. This is akin to the description of Hubert Debrousse’s collection, according to which his independent taste led him to surround himself with paintings that gave him an emotion, “that offered him a joy.”⁷² The insistence on the emotion that a work of art gave the collector, rather than its interest, or importance, or artistic merit was often repeated. In the catalogue of Victor Desfossés, who had bought Courbet’s *Atelier of a Painter*, Georges LaFenestre insisted that the motivation of Desfossés in collecting was not some kind of doctrinaire adherence to artistic principle, but emotion:

M. Desfossés...was not, as much as necessary, as one can understand from the other paintings in his gallery, a fanatic of realism. What he loved above all, what he searched for, was the frank and strong expression of a direct and personal feeling, a colored and luminous expression wherever it came from. Given equivalent talents, he preferred the poet to the prose writer.⁷³

⁷¹ *Collection Merlin*, (Paris: Drouot, 1900), 5. “Peu soucieux des caprices de la mode en matière de beaux arts, il aimait et admirait les tableaux exclusivement pour eux-mêmes, allant seulement à ceux vers qui il se sentait personnellement attiré. Aussi, une fois admis dans sa collection, les considérait-il et les traitait-il comme des amis.”

⁷² *Collection M. Hubert Debrousse*, preface by L.Roger-Milès (Paris: Georges Petit, 1900), iv. “qui lui offraient une joie.”

⁷³ *Collection M. Victor Desfossés*, preface by Georges LaFenestre (Paris, 1899), vi. “M. Desfossés...n’était point, tant s’en faut, comme on peut le voir par les autres tableaux de sa galerie, un fanatique de réalisme. Ce qui’il aimait avant tout, ce qui’il recherchait, c’était l’expression franche et forte d’une sensation directe

Again, the paintings seem to be personalities, which give direct and personal sensations. The subtle elision of the artist in the shift from the paintings with their “frank expressions” to the talent of a poet invests the paintings themselves with their own poetic talents.

The preference for poetry over prose is akin to the preference for sentiment over historical interest. There is a kind of rhapsodic quality to the way pleasure is presented in the prefaces for the sales catalogues:

The count Daupias did not obey the objectives of a methodical historian; he wanted above all to satisfy his need for elevated pleasure; he wanted to make everything around him explode with the joy of seeing.⁷⁴

This sense of pleasure and enjoyment was typical of the attitude towards the collection of the *amateur*. Joy, pleasure, desire along with jealousy are the sentiments Roger-Milès ascribed to Alfred Feydeau’s attitude towards his collection, which was chosen with enlightened care [soin éclairé]:

He had kept them near him with a tender jealousy: they represented what his taste for art told him to love, and he never looked at them without an emotion in which was mixed an aesthetic joy which included never jaded memories of the great battle of the school of 1830 in which he had taken part.⁷⁵

In Feydeau’s case, his emotions formed part of his personal experience, so that his aesthetic taste and his own life joined together. The closeness of taste, love and life was sometimes expressed as specifically romantic if not sexual. Both friendly as well as

et personnelle, une expression colorée et lumineuse, d’où qu’elle vint. A talent égal, il préférerait le poète au prosateur.”

⁷⁴ *Collection M le Cte Daupias* (Paris: Georges Petit, 1892), 5. “Le comte Daupias n’obéissait pas à un devoir d’historien méthodique; il voulait surtout satisfaire son besoin de plaisir élevé; il voulait faire éclater autour de lui comme la joie des yeux.”

⁷⁵ *Collection Alfred Feydeau*, 5. “Il les gardées par dévotion lui avec une tendresse jalouse: elles représentaient ce que son goût de l’art lui disait d’aimer, et il ne les regardaient pas sans une émotion où se mêlait à une jouissance esthétique jamais blasée le souvenir de la grande bataille de l’école de 1830 à laquelle il avait pris part.”

more passionate relationships are described between *amateurs* and their collections.

Auguste Rousseau is described by Roger-Milès as having had an intensely private relationship with his collection:

He knew the adorable joy of resting his eyes on the works that he loved and which only he has the right to love. ...he created his own voluptuousness, jealous and silent: every day he came back to his little wonders of which he is the guardian, full of solicitude, and each day, for forty years, he found qualities that he not suspected that day before, insights that had hitherto escaped him, subtle illuminations of which his eye had not yet guessed the caress.⁷⁶

This language here of voluptuousness and jealousy was often repeated in connection with the *amateur*. As we have seen, the idea that works of art were friends often became explicitly erotic; the discourse of desire which is crucial to the description of the *amateur* was spelled out in fairy tales of pursuit and conquest. In the 1886 sale of the collection of de Lafaulotte, Charles Pillet compared the collection to Sleeping Beauty:

Only a privileged few know her and can say how loveable she is, made to charm and to awaken desire. She made herself invisible during long years. Give thanks to the prudent fairy who, in disrobing her to the greed of the past, has chosen you to be present at her awakening and who permits you, today, to make her your conquest.⁷⁷

Pillet even names La Belle au Bois-Dormant in the paragraph that follows so that we are sure to understand his allusion. The collection becomes the beautiful and desirable princess and the sale is the opportunity for conquest.

The prints, drawings and book collector Alphonse Firmin-Didot is also described as having this passionate connection to his collection, in this case specifically figured as

⁷⁶ *Collection Auguste Rousseau*, 6. "Il connaît l'adorable joie de reposer ses yeux sur des œuvres qu'il aime, et que seul il a le droit d'aimer.... Il s'est créé une volupté à lui, jalouse, silencieuse ; chaque jour il est revenu à ces petits merveilles, dont il est le gardien plein de sollicitude et chaque jour, depuis quarante ans, il a découvert en elles des qualités insoupçonnées la veille."

⁷⁷ *Collection de Lafaulotte*, preface by Charles Pillet (Paris: Drouot, 1886), xi. "Quelques privilégiés seuls la connaissent et peuvent dire combien elle est aimable, faite pour charmer le regard et éveiller le désir. Elle s'est faite invisible pendant de longues années. Rendez grâce à la fée prudente qui, en la dérobant aux convoitises du passé, vous a choisis pour assister à son réveil et vous permet d'en faire, aujourd'hui, la conquête."

feminine. His passion, is comparable to one “inspired by an adored mistress” such that upon having found a particularly sought after book, he was reputed to have slept with it under his pillow:

When...he became the happy owner of one of his rare volumes that he had long coveted, he did not separate himself from it neither day nor night. A place was found for it under his pillow....a new rival arriving was in turn welcomed with the same tender effusion.⁷⁸

This assimilation of collecting practice to erotic desire becomes doubly evident in the case of women collectors. Within the texts that describe the woman collector, she is described as an object of desire herself, rather than as the pursuer of her own desires. This dynamic is evident in the case of the courtesan and of the actress.

Valtesse de la Bigne and Méry Laurent

. The difference between the discourse of male and female collectors was fundamental to the structure of collecting at this time. The way in which two women collectors, Méry Laurent (1849-1900) and Valtesse de la Bigne (1848-1910), are presented in this period, elucidates in its difference the male-dominated practice of collecting. Their respective demimondaine identities, furthermore, foreground the discourse of desire and seduction so central to collecting in this period. As we saw above, the *amateur* in late nineteenth-century France was figured in *Cousin Pons* and in the sales catalogues of the 1890s as primarily male and was represented as loving, in an almost sexual way, the art that he collected, which was in turn figured as female. By contrast, the

⁷⁸ *Collection de M. Ambrose Firmin-Didot*, introduction by Charles Blanc (Paris: Drouot, 1878), vii. “Quand...il était devenu l’heureux possesseur d’un des rares volumes qu’il avait longtemps couvé des yeux, il ne s’en séparait ni le jour ni la nuit. Une place lui était ménagée sous son oreiller a l’arrivée d’un nouveau rival,[il était] à son tour accueilli avec la même effusion de tendresse.”

women collectors I discuss, although possessing impressive collections of their own, were not represented as participating in this passion for art, but rather as themselves being objects of beauty to be coveted by the male *amateur*.

While both of these women began their lives in conditions of relative hardship, working their way into the attention of men through an initial stint in the theater, and changing their names to promote their newly self-invented identities, their situation in the 1890's was rather different.⁷⁹ Unlike Méry Laurent, who was supported largely by an American dentist, Dr. Evans, Valtresse achieved her great financial independence through her business acumen in relation to many different men.⁸⁰ Both women were at the center of artistic circles that intersected most enduringly in their respective portraits by Manet (Figures 14 & 15). Whereas Méry Laurent, however, was part of the circle of Mallarmé and Manet and often served as model for Manet, Valtresse commissioned her portrait herself. Amusingly, she expected him to come to her house to do her portrait and in this way missed her first appointment. Once they arranged things and the portrait was made, Valtresse was most enchanted, and wrote gratefully to Manet: "Cher Maître, I cannot tell you how happy I am to have had my portrait done by you or how much it pleases me. Thank you with all my heart. One could not be nicer or more gallant (I say gallant, because you have flattered your model). In short I am very proud to have posed for a master such as you."⁸¹ The correspondence between Méry Laurent and Manet is much

⁷⁹ For Valtresse see: Yolaine de la Bigne, *Valtesse de la Bigne ou Le pouvoir de la volupté* (Paris: Perrin, 1999). For Méry Laurent see Melissa de Madeiros, "Le Paon – Méry Laurent and Mallarmé," in *A Painter's Poet: Stéphane Mallarmé and His Impressionist Circle*, exh. cat., (New York: Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, 1999), 75-76.

⁸⁰ Gerald Carsen, *The Dentist and the Empress* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983).

⁸¹ Quoted in Yolaine de la Bigne, 171-2. "Cher Maître, je ne puis vous dire combien je suis heureuse d'avoir mon portrait fait par vous et combien il me plaît. Merci de tout coeur. On n'est pas plus aimable ni plus gallant,--je dis plus gallant parce que vous avez flatté votre modèle -- enfin, je suis très fière d'avoir posé devant un maître tel que vous. Bien à vous les deux mains."

more intimate, with Manet sending Méry letters embellished with watercolor flowers.⁸²

The circle of Valtesse revolved more around Eduard Detaille, a military painter, and Henri Gervex, both of whose paintings hung in her salon. Both men were her lovers. She was very interested in and supportive of painters more generally, however, and was known as the “L’Union des Peintres” for the care she took of them and the vivacity and importance of her salons for them.

Like the male *amateur*, who wished to shield himself from the commercialism of the consumer city by accumulating precious art works that created an idealized image of himself, Valtesse, in assuming an aristocratic identity (her original name was Louise Delabigne) sought to shield her persona from the commercialism of her profession. Her sumptuous interior was a far cry from the cramped quarters of her washer woman mother. Likewise, Laurent lived in a style that would have been unrecognizable to her family. But whereas the male *amateur*’s interior was seen as a natural extension of his inner preoccupations and predilections, rather than any kind of defensive strategy, the artificiality and constructedness of the women collector’s interior was celebrated.

Examining two documents in particular, the sales catalogue to the 1902 sale of the collection of Valtesse de la Bigne, and the Dornac photograph of the salon of Méry Laurent, can help clarify and expand not only our understanding of the differences between how male and female collectors were viewed, but some of the underlying similarities as well. The gender divide between desire and seduction, personal taste and theatricality will become clear as will the consistently eclectic style of collection and display across genders.

⁸² Manet. *Les Natures Mortes* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2000), Catalogue n. 61, *Lettre à Méry Laurent, ornée d’une rose*. Vers 1880. 134.

The preface to the collection of Valtresse de la Bigne, unlike similar prefaces for male collectors of the period such as Henri Rouart or Georges Feydeau, for example, stresses not her personal taste, but rather, the effect that her collection will have on the *amateurs* who come to buy. In fact, the language of love and flirtation is used throughout. The following excerpt is worth quoting at length:

It will be such a curious auction, and Mme Valtresse de La Bigne will not be the last parisienne to derive great pleasure from it. In the very fact of this auction there is a sort of mathematical consultation on the taste of the contemporary amateur that cannot but be infinitely flattering to the seller. The charm of objects operating on the audience of amateurs, and then the suspense of bidding on each of them are like many delightful touches on an artist's soul.

If things were different, nobody would ever separate themselves from their paintings or furniture: there would be more sorrow than profit to dare such a dangerous experience (*épreuve*). But rises the rustling, soft like a caress, from the admiring crowd facing such slowly gathered wonders.⁸³

Here the collection is viewed in terms of the charm will exert on other *amateurs*, who will appreciate Valtresse's "slowly gathered wonders" with a rising rustling. The admiration of these *amateurs* is called "doux comme une caresse"; the sale itself couched in terms of "une épreuve" much like a mistress makes of her lover. Each minute of the sale is delicious, the battle and the competition to gain possession of the desired objects full of pleasure. The last extravagant sentence places us in front of the seductive Valtresse herself: "But rising the rustling, soft like a caress, from the admiring crowd facing such slowly gathered wonders."

⁸³ *Collection Mme Valtresse de la Bigne* (Paris, 1902), II. "Ce sera une vente curieuse que celle-là, et Mme Valtresse de la Bigne n'est peut-être pas la parisienne qui y prendra le moins de plaisir ; il y a, dans cet acte d'une vente aux enchères, une sorte de consultation mathématique du goût contemporain qui ne va pas sans être infiniment flatteuse pour le vendeur ; l'attrait des objets sur le public des amateurs, puis la bataille des enchères autour de ces objets sont autant de minutes délicieuses pour une âme artiste.

S'il en était autrement, personne ne se séparerait bénévolement de ses tableaux et de ses meubles : il y aurait plus de tristesse que de profit à tenter une épreuve si dangereuse ; mais il y a le bruissement, doux comme une caresse, de l'admiration d'autrui, devant les merveilles lentement rassemblées."

The seduction of the sale is in direct relationship to the appeal of Valtresse herself. Valtresse de la Bigne, as is made clear in the book by Yolaine de la Bigne, was an extremely successful courtesan. Her salon, as can be seen from the photographs in her sales catalogue, was sumptuous and splendid (Figure 16). Decorated in a somewhat rococo style, with paintings hung on the walls, it spoke of luxury and sensuous indulgence. Many of the paintings listed in the catalogue are by either Gervex or Detaille, but she also owned works by many other artists including Courbet, Ingres, Forain, Raffaelli and Roybet. Prominently displayed in the salon was the full-length portrait of her by Gervex. However, what the catalogue deals with rather more than her fine art collection is the apartment itself as a luxurious setting for the objects within:

The amateurs who come on the exhibition days at the hotel of Boulevard Malesherbes, will have lots to satisfy their curiosity: paintings, jewelry and silver, objets d'art, furniture, tapestries, carved wooden seats covered in tapestry, cushions, fabric, rugs, cars, who knows? It is an infinity of artworks and of things of high taste that offer themselves in a luxurious setting, where the hand the most adept at elegance, pleased itself in bringing them together, in grouping them, in harmonizing them, if I can express myself in this way, for the pleasure of the eye.⁸⁴

Even here, in the introduction to the “wonders” to be found in the home of Valtresse, it is her touch, her hand that is the most adept at elegance, that has grouped and arranged the collection. This is one of the few sales catalogues that included a photograph of the collection as it was arranged in the home, and here it is a double-spread in the middle of the section on furniture. The catalogue listings themselves stress such small items as jewelry, china and lace as well as furniture. Furthermore, the

⁸⁴ Ibid.,II. “Les amateurs qui viendront aux jours d'exposition à l'hôtel du boulevard Malesherbes, auront de quoi satisfaire leur curiosité :tableaux, bijoux et arenerie, objets d'art, meubles, tapisserie, sièges en bois culptés recouverts de tapisserie, coussins, tentures, étoffes, tapis, boitures, que sais-je ? C'est une infinité d'œuvres et de choses de haut goût qui s'offriront à eux dans le cadre luxueux, où la main, la plus experte aux élégances, s'était plu à les réunir, à les grouper, à les harmoniser, si je puis m'exprimer ainsi, pour le plaisir de l'œil.”

photographic reproductions of the catalogue single out, most sumptuously, an elaborate bed. By contrast, catalogues of similar collections of male *amateurs* tend to both reproduce as well as discuss paintings of the collection.

This bed, sumptuous, elaborate, a celebration of both the power and sensuality of Valtesse, is reproduced in the catalogue (Figure 17). It is described this way:

Large bed (lit de parade) in finely wrought bronze, filigreed and gilded, original work of Lièvre, inspired by the Renaissance. Surrounded by a balustrade with twisted columns isolated within linked frames. The semi-circular front is flanked on each side by two pilasters with escutcheons and ornaments that stand out against a plush pale blue. These pilasters are decorated with caryatids of cherubim and topped with incense burners with flames at the opening.⁸⁵

While usually thought of as a locus of privacy, the bedroom is here clearly a publicly directed presentation of the performative role of the courtesan. Furthermore, what is most obviously true of the bed extends to the collection as a whole, which beckons the potential bidder at the auction to imagine himself playing the role of lover in truth.

The seduction implicit in the sales catalogue is made even more explicit in the description of a similar sale in 1882 by Paul Eudel. In his discussion of the sales of the year of the Hôtel Drouôt, he turns his attention to a sale of the collection of a demimondaine, a woman who lived on the same street as Valtesse, Caroline Letessier. He describes her “ravishing hotel” where, for the first time, it was possible to visit “without paying.” Many of the same strategies evident in the Valtesse’s catalogue

⁸⁵ *Collection Mme Valtesse de la Bigne*, 106. “Grand lit de parade tout en bronze finement ciselé, repéré à jour et doré, oeuvre originale de Lièvre, inspirée de la Renaissance. Le tour en forme de balustrade offre une suite de thyrses fleuris isolés dans des encadrements se reliant entre eux. Le devant demicirculaire est flanqué de chaque côté de deux pilastres avec écussons et ornements à jour se détachant sur fond gainé de peluche bleue pâle. Ces pilastres sont accostés de cariatides de chérubins et surmontés de brûle-parfums avec flammes à l’orifice.”

(although somewhat understated because of the format of the text as inventory) are enacted in this narrative account:

Let us risk an indiscreet look at this forbidden paradise. Let us talk first of the bedroom, this theater of battle, or rather defeats, where one always succumbs so easily to these impure beauties. There is always a beautiful bed, the throne of love! Caroline Letessier's, placed in the middle of the room, was ravishing. Covered in black silk, with a canopy decorated with flowers and birds in high relief, and draped with a curtain of red satin with arabesques of embroidered gold and silver and multicolored silk; it was certainly an invitation to sin.⁸⁶

Eudel goes on to describe the rest of the bedroom, as well as lingering in the bathroom whose mirror "could reveal all the mysteries of the chaste Suzanne."⁸⁷ His discussion ends there. There is no mention whatsoever of the collection of art works, or furniture or objets d'art that were also for sale. Again the interior operates as an arena of performance, the performance of seduction. We have already seen the same dynamic of seduction at work in the sales catalogue of Sarah Bernhardt.

Valtesse herself, however, when describing the home of her heroine Isola, in what is regarded as an autobiographical novel, stresses not only the more intellectual side of the interior, but also what can be viewed as an alternative view of the interior as functioning as a reflection of the thoughts of the occupant. While certainly luxurious, the "luxe un peu brutal" of the dining room, for example, was "corrected" by four remarkable paintings. Also, the boudoir, the traditional site of feminine seduction, is dominated, in Valtesse's novel, by an immense bookcase filled with books of Montaigne, Rabelais,

⁸⁶ Paul Eudel, *L'Hôtel Drouôt et la Curiosité en 1882*, 117. "Risquons avec les belles mondaines un regard indiscret dans ce paradis défendu. Parlons d'abord de la chambre à coucher, ce champ de bataille ou plutôt de défaites où succombent toujours si facilement ces belles impures. Il y a toujours là un beau lit – le trône de l'amour ! Celui de Caroline Letessier, placé au milieu de la pièce, était ravissant. Recouvert de soie noire, surmonté d'un baldaquin orné de fleurs et d'oiseaux en haut relief étalant une couverture en satin rouge aux arabesques brodées d'or, d'argent et de soie multicolore ; - il invitait certainement au péché."

⁸⁷ Ibid., 118. "pouvant révéler tous les mystères de la chaste Suzanne." The story of Suzanna appears in the Book of Daniel. In one episode, her bath is observed by some voyeuristic elders. A frequent subject for painters of the female nude, including Rembrandt, Rubens and Tintoretto.

Merimée, Georges Sand, Dumas, Saint Simon, Voltaire, Shakespeare, Plutarch, Corneille, Baudelaire, Musset, Lamartine, Bible, Poe, Machiavelli and Balzac.⁸⁸ The contrast with descriptions such as that by Paul Eudel could hardly be greater. Whereas Eudel represents the space of the woman as site of her role as seductress, Isola's space is a site of reflection and action. In her novel, then, Valtresse presents the space of her female heroine much as the spaces of male *amateurs* are presented, rather than following the format of the feminine seductive interior so insistently presented in her sales catalogue.

These two different representations of the space of collection, as either setting for seduction, or site of personal achievement, are also found in the photographs of Dornac. Best known for his series of photographs of principally male, well-known literary and artistic figures posing in their own homes, *Nos Contemporains chez eux*, Dornac generally centered his subjects within the frame of the photograph, surrounded by the evidence of their intellectual and artistic life.⁸⁹ Often collections of books and paintings and objets d'art are evident to reveal a sense of his inner life. This presentation suggests the kind of relationship with the collection that the texts on the male *amateur* present: a discerning eye, a keen sense of taste, a passion for beautiful things. His photograph of Méry Laurent in her salon, however, presents her in so far as she is entertaining her male guests.

The series *Nos Contemporains chez eux* bears a certain resemblance to the realist ideas enunciated by Duranty in the *Nouvelle Peinture*—that an interior can reveal the

⁸⁸ Valtresse de la Bigne. *Isola*. (Paris: E. Denton, 1876) 87.

⁸⁹ Dornac, *Nos Contemporains chez eux* (Paris, 1896). I have seen three slightly different examples at the Bibliothèque Nationale as well as modern prints of the original glass plates at the Bridgman archives in Paris and will discuss these photographs in greater detail in Chapter 4.

kind of person that lives within it. For Duranty, “we will no longer separate the individual from his apartment or the street. Never in our existence does he appear to us against a neutral, empty vague background. Instead there are furnishings, chimneys, wall hangings around him, an interior which expresses his fortune his class, his métier....The language of the empty apartment will be precise enough so that one may deduce from it the character and the habits of him who inhabits it.”⁹⁰ In many a nineteenth-century novel, from Balzac to Zola, we find detailed descriptions of interiors aimed at elucidating the personality of the inhabitant, and some of Degas’s portraits have been seen in this light as well.⁹¹ The Dornac photographs of notable figures of the fin-de-siècle can also be seen as related to this text.

The representation of Méry Laurent by Dornac, however, varies considerably from these photographs of male literary figures (Figure 18). The photograph of Méry Laurent reveals itself easily to be a performance. Unlike the other photographs I have seen here there is a sociable gathering. Méry is seated at a piano, and partially obscured by it. At her side are Mallarmé (standing) and Henri Gervex. The room around is filled with a profusion of paintings and objets d’art that all participate in the cordiality of the occasion. It is a space that allows men to interact and be at ease. It is a photograph that in placing her at the piano with her visitors insists on her role as entertainer of men.

A textual description of this salon mirrors the lack of fit between inner life and surroundings proposed by the photograph of Dornac. As remembered by Henri de

⁹⁰ Quoted in Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*, 84. Her translation of Duranty “La Nouvelle Peinture,” 1876. “Nous ne séparerons plus le personnage du fond d’appartement ni du fond de rue. Il ne nous apparaît jamais dans l’existence sur des fonds neutres, vides et vagues. Mais autour de lui sont des meubles, des cheminées, des tentures de murailles, une paroi qui exprime sa fortune, sa classe, son métier.”

⁹¹ Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*.

Regnier in his much later memoirs, Laurent's apartment reflected not so much her own taste, as that of her time:

Her ceilings with pretentious moldings, her mirror framed so banally, her two windows with heavily draped curtains...a salon whose luxurious clutter showed no taste on the part of the mistress of the house who conformed to the taste of the day which allowed a room to be without either style or grace. To be honest, this salon of the rue de Rome was comfortable, but very ugly.⁹²

No mention is made of the quality of the art or of the fact that a sketch for Manet's *Execution of Maximilian*, hardly a conformist painting, hung prominently above the piano.⁹³ Furthermore, in discussing Méry as a person, Regnier treats her almost like an art work which produces "an effect": "A fairly tall person, slightly massive, one of those who can be called a "strong woman" and who, like is said 'makes an impression.'"

⁹⁴ He also stresses her muse-like effect on Mallarmé rather than any kind of interests of her own: "amiably cordial, simple and gay, smiling at the subtle gallantries and tender jokes of Mallarmé."⁹⁵

Just as the interior is seen as a site of seduction, a backdrop to the play of love, so the woman herself is seen as a kind of frame who embellishes the other. This framing interpretation of women's identity, specifically as it relates to the courtesan, is expressed by Proust in *Du Côté de Chez Swann*:

⁹² Henri de Regnier, *De Mon Temps* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1933), 75. "Son plafond aux moulures prétentieuses, sa glace banalement encadrée, ses deux fenêtres aux lourds rideaux drapés...un salon dont l'encombrement luxueux n'indiquait pas un goût très sûr de la part de la maîtresse de la maison qui s'était conformée à celui d'une époque où l'on ne craignait pas de s'entourer d'un mobilier sans style et sans grâce. Pour parler franc, le salon de la rue de Rome était cossu, mais fort laid."

⁹³ According to Beth Archer Brombert, *Edouard Manet. Rebel in a Frock Coat* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996) Méry Laurent was the only woman aside from his wife and mother towards whom Manet used the "tu." Also "he gave her the oil sketch of Maximilian..which says a lot about his respect for her intelligence and her taste, since *The Execution of Maximilian* was among the two or three paintings he valued most highly of his entire production." 377.

⁹⁴ Regnier, 73-74. "Une personne d'assez haute taille et d'aspect un peu massif, une de celles que l'on qualifie assez bien de 'forte femme' et qui, comme l'on dit 'font de l'effet.'"

⁹⁵ Ibid. 75 "aimablement cordiale, simple et gaie, souriant à propos aux subtiles galanteries et aux tenders malices que lui adressait Mallarmé."

It has since struck me as one of the most touching aspects of the part played in life by these idle painstaking women that they devote their generosity, their talent, a disposable dream of sentimental beauty (for, like artists, they never seek to realize the value of their dreams or seek to enclose them in the four-square frame of everyday life), and a wealth that counts for little, to the fashioning of a fine and precious setting for the rough, ill-polished lives of men.⁹⁶

That women should serve as a precious and finely worked frame to the lives of men is made materially evident in both the sales catalogue of Valtresse's collection as well as the photograph of Méry Laurent by Dornac.

An emphasis on framing is evident in a Dornac photograph of the painter Madeleine Lemaire, known primarily for her flower watercolors, who illustrated Proust's first book *Les Plaisirs et les jours*.⁹⁷ In that book, most of the illustrations are delicate drawings of flowers that punctuate, or frame, the chapters, with only a few images actually illustrating scenes from the book. Dornac's portrait accentuates her femininity (Figure 19). The painter is not shown at work, or in the studio. Instead she is like a flower herself, in a decorative dress, near a large arrangement of daisies. She is seated on a long divan, her feet resting on pillows on the floor, with her book temporarily posed at her side, but with her fingers still keeping her place. Behind her we can see the top of the wainscoting, the embroidered flower border of the wall covering, the bottom of a gilt-framed mirror and to the right the bottom of a framed painting.

The motif of framing also appears in images of men. Two Dornac photographs of the writer Henri Rochefort, which are unusually sensual among his images of men, also

⁹⁶ Marcel Proust, *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* (Paris:France Loisirs, 1999), 85. Translation from Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Montcrieff and Jerence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage, 1982), 84. "Il m'a semblé plus tard que c'était un des côtés touchants du rôle de ces femmes oisives et studieuses, qu'elles consacrent leur générosité, leur talent, un rêve disponible de beauté sentimentale – car, comme les artistes, elles ne le réalisent pas, ne le font pas entrer dans les cadres de l'existence commune – et un or qui leur coûte peu, à enrichir d'un sertissage précieux et fin la vie fruste et mal dégrossie des hommes."

⁹⁷ Marcel Proust, *Les Plaisirs et les jours*, illustrations by Madeleine Lemaire (Paris: Calman Levy, 1896). She is also connected to Manet through his late pastel portraits. Manet did a portrait of her daughter.

thematize framing. In one of four images of him, he lounges on his canapé in a dressing gown and little else (Figure 20). He is in some sort of salon, in which the divan and a chair in what seems to be a Louis XV style are arranged near a wall on which we can see five paintings hung with scarcely any room between them. The gold carved frames echo the woodwork on the canapé, each elegantly carved and scalloped on their edges. The frames protect and announce the paintings, and the sofa serves a similar function for Rochefort. Rochefort is relaxing, almost lying on the sofa, one arm on the armrest and one leg almost completely stretched out on the canapé. His dressing gown rests on this leg and forms a strong diagonal in this image leading to the face framed in white hair and beard. On a shelf (perhaps a mantel) just to Rochefort's right, are stacked some books just next to a figurine. The chair is piled with papers. It is clearly a space for receiving guests with its elegant décor and plentiful seating. The paintings, crowded on the walls and around the head of Rochefort increase the sensation of company and sociability.

Another of the photographs of Rochefort has him standing, leaning on his mantel, still in his dressing gown, this time clutching a book (Figure 21). He is again surrounded with art. Behind him is a framed print and on the mantel is a sculptural group. There is floral wallpaper, and the chair in front of the fireplace has floral tapestry on the back. There is a complicated interplay of framings, with mirrors (two- one over the mantel, and one attached to a small table to Rochefort's right), paintings, chairs. All these frames and rectangular shapes (of the space under the table, the firebox, the gap between the back and the seat of the chair, a door reflected in the mirror) serve to make an equivalence between the architecture of the room and the frame. This in turn, of course, turns Rochefort into a work of art himself, and theorizes as well the framing of the photograph.

Yet a third, for which I don't have a reproduction, shows him standing next to his bed, beneath which lies a lion skin. The architectonics of the image are fruitfully compared to a painting of a collector by Cézanne, his 1877 portrait of Victor Choquet.⁹⁸ In this painting, Choquet is seated in what Henri Loyrette describes as a typical setting for an amateur. His right eye, on the central axis of the painting, is noticeably darkened and enlarged. While the left eye is a small round shape, this more prominent eye assumes an oval shape in high contrast to the paleness of the face. This shape is picked up by the ovals of the wallpaper, certain patches on the red chair and in the rug, as well as by the lock on the desk behind Choquet. Choquet was Cézanne's first collector; the first whose vision corresponded with Cézanne's. There is a harmony of vision between painter and subject enacted by the dissemination of vision throughout the space. Also, Cézanne has positioned the frames so that the spaces between the paintings, and the insertion of the identity of the collector within those spaces speaks to an identity created through the relationship between paintings and interpretive understanding, a theory of the amateur very much operative in the Dornac photographs.

This embellishing interpretation of the identities of these collectors was not, to be sure, entirely consistent with their actual lives. Certainly it was the role, particularly of Valtesse, to be seductive. On the other hand, she was not, of course, only an object of desire. She herself was also, reputedly, in love, with the painters Gervex, and, later, with Detaille, but also with their paintings, and she was in possession of the necessary funds to purchase them. (Although, a certain number of them were gifts, which complicates the role of money and the marketplace considerably.) She was herself, therefore, an *amateur*

⁹⁸ Paul Cézanne, *Victor Choquet*, 1877, Cleveland Museum of Art. See Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Cézanne* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1996), 166-167.

and her collection is to some degree also a trace of her desire. The stage-like setting of the interior seen in the case of the courtesan is made even more evident in the case of the actress.

The Theatrical Interior: Women of the Stage

The active, constructive aspect of the collection is evident in the discourse that surrounds the interior spaces and art collections of three women performers of the late nineteenth-century in France: Yvette Guilbert, Réjane and Sarah Bernhardt. Here, the collection was openly presented as a stage setting that served to construct the identity of the collector. The performers known to us through the drawings, paintings and posters of Toulouse Lautrec and Muscha among others, in turn collected art. From the elaborate setting of Sarah Bernhardt, complete with hanging silk fabrics, decorated fans and masks, to the grandeur of the hotel of Yvette Gilbert, these women invested considerable sums in creating interiors that were both opulent and theatrical, and which were presented as such, rather than as any expression of their personal sensitivity. These highly decorated interior spaces served as backdrops for the theatrical personas of these women and point to the constructedness of their identities even within the “private” realm of their own houses.

The luxurious interiors of these three late nineteenth-century Parisian performers were prefigured by the stunning house of the first major star of the French nineteenth-century stage – Rachel. With the help of the playwright Victorien Sardou, whose own *cabinet de travail* is the subject of a portrait by Dornac that we will examine below,

Rachel had decorated her house in a mix of Moorish, neo-classic and renaissance styles that was widely celebrated.⁹⁹ The sales catalogue from the auction following her death in 1858 included paintings by Boucher, Diaz, Nattoire and Theodore Rousseau among others, as well as furniture; arms, bronzes, porcelain and Etruscan vases.¹⁰⁰

The interior spaces of these women's collections were the subject of newspaper articles, reviews, auction house sales catalogues and photographic books and thus were at the border between public and private. By carefully examining these documents it becomes evident how both the interiors themselves and their representation in these documents serve to create the public persona of these women collectors. That is, the interiors were not the reflection of the taste and personality of their occupants; nor were they a private refuge from the busy and harried world of industrializing Paris. Instead there was continuity between public and private such that the private served to reinforce the public image of the collector.

Such "private" places as the bedroom or the dressing room were photographed and published in journals. A photograph of Réjane at her dressing table, for example, published in 1901 in *Le Figaro*, shows her self-consciously referring to the eighteenth century salon with a portrait of Mme de Pompadour hung conspicuously near her mirror along with what looks like a portrait of Réjane herself¹⁰¹ (Figure 22). Decorated fans, miniatures, and elaborate lamps surround a play of reflections in which Réjane powders her face while looking in a hand-held mirror, being at the same time reflected in the mirror propped up on her dressing table. The theme of identity established in the

⁹⁹ H. Clouzot. "Rachel," *Bulletin de la société de l'histoire du théâtre* (Paris, 1908), 147. See also Rachel Brownstein, *Tragic Muse: Rachel of the Comédie Française* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

¹⁰⁰ *Catalogue du Mobilier, des Tableaux, des Objets d'Art et de Curiosité de Mlle Rachel* (Paris, 1857).

¹⁰¹ Alb. Bain. "Réjane" in *Représentations de Mme Réjane* (Paris, Figaro, 1901) FoL27F3532 Bibliothèque Nationale.

repetition of mirrors in the photograph is addressed by the text of the article, which promotes her appearance in the role of the *Parisienne* and describes her as an incarnation of the ideal *Parisienne*. An extravagant description, this passage confronts us with a personality never fixed, always surprising, and, above all, contradictory.

These clever eyes, this agitated mouth, trembling, pleated, pouting, this tongue of a gavroche this haughty way of talking reserved for a grande dame, this noble style and this slang, this off-color gesture, licentious, the supple neck of a swan, this thin or opulent waist, this delicate leg, aristocratic which floats above the ground, these doll-like silhouettes, this grace, this spirit, this hot spice, this softness, this lightness and this gravity, this tenderness and this indifference, this beauty without beauty, this immorality without vice, this nothing capable of everything, this is the woman of Paris.¹⁰²

This extreme changeability, this multiplicity of facets, comes from her attitude towards others, her social persona. Whether haughty or vulgar, seductive or repulsive, it is not her so-called inner character that we are presented with, but rather her public appearances, which, revolve around the perception of her body as a collection of parts (“neck of a swan, delicate leg etc.) Thus text and photograph together create the impression of the constructed identity that seems natural to an actress but which in this text is assimilated to the *Parisienne* herself.

Another article from the same year, this time in an English language journal called *The Lady's Realm*, also includes the same photograph of Réjane at her dressing table.¹⁰³ In this case, however, the focus is on the biography and career of the actress and it is illustrated with several other photographs of her apartment including her dining room

¹⁰² Ibid. “Ces yeux malins, cette bouche agitée, frémissante, plissée, retroussée, cette langue crue de gavroche, ce parler altier et réservé de la grande dame, ce style noble et cet argot, ce geste cassé, dévergondé, ce cou souple de cygne, cette taille mince ou opulente, cette jambe fine, aristocratique, qui ne touche pas à terre, ces allures de poupée, cette grâce, cet esprit, ce piment, cette douceur, cette légèreté et cette gravité, cette tendresse et cette indifférence, cette beauté sans beauté, cette immoralité sans vice, ce rien capable de tout – c’est la femme de Paris.” (gavroche is a Victor Hugo character from *Les Misérables* – a vulgar but kind child of the barricades).

¹⁰³ *The Lady's Realm*, (Paris, 1901), 1. Bibliothèque Nationale, Collection Laruelle. Ne63For, Tome 126, p. 59.

and bedroom. The photographs thus stand alone, serving in their opulence to validate her success. The luxuriantly canopied bed, surrounded by striped wall paper and flower-patterned rug serves on the one hand to underline the sensuality of this well known actress (Figure 23). On the other hand, however, the *mise-en-scène* of Mme Réjane *en famille* at the table set with crystal and accompanied by attentive governess and servant constructs a lady of wealth and respectability (Figure 24). In each photograph a new and different aspect of Réjane is highlighted, seeming to illustrate the very changeability stressed in the text of *Le Figaro*.

The interiors seen in the photographs of Réjane include luxury items such as ornate Louis XV sideboard, rococo clock, canopied bed, gilded mirrors, and prints and decorated fans. It could not be argued, however, that these constituted an elaborate collection of either furniture or art. Yvette Guilbert and Sarah Bernhardt, and earlier Rachel, on the other hand, amassed considerable groupings of furnishings and art that indicated a serious attention to their collections.

An article in *La Vie illustré* on Yvette Guilbert presents the “comeback” of the chanteuse after a serious illness.¹⁰⁴ The text and photographs contrast the earlier and the newer identities of Yvette Guilbert. Whereas before her illness she had been noted for her comic songs and provocative presence, she now presents herself through her house and her songs in a more serious light. The change of repertoire went with a change in clothes as well as home.¹⁰⁵ As she took up re-editing the old songs of France, she abandoned her tight dress and long black gloves. The link between clothes and way of

¹⁰⁴ Arsène Alexandre, “La Rentrée d’Yvette Guilbert,” *La Vie Illustré* (Paris, 1901) in BN Va318 t. 1 Paris, XVIIème arrondissement, 66ème quartier.

¹⁰⁵ There was quite a lot of press surrounding the construction of Guilbert’s new home. See also Edmond Frank, *L’Illustration*, 3021(10 Janvier 1901),13; A. Ragueret, *Monographies de bâtiments modernes* #177; Charles Saunier, *L’Art decorative* 29(1901).

life was remarked on by Guilbert herself: “One walks according to the dress one wears. I would say that one takes the soul of the clothes that one wears.”¹⁰⁶ Her newly constructed house and a concert in which she presented for the first time her rendition of some Baudelaire poems together form the dual subject of Arsène Alexandre’s discussion. The close link between house and Guilbert’s performative identity is made clear by two things.¹⁰⁷ First the house, Alexandre pointed out, was purchased with funds from her career. Secondly, Guilbert gave a small preview concert at her house for a select group of friends. The article, principally a review of her concert, is illustrated with photographs that focus on the profusion of sculptures, tapestries, antique furniture and paintings in her house, whose address is given. One photograph in particular shows Guilbert herself seated in front of the fireplace (Figure 25). She faces frontally on a large, almost regal chair, and is framed by the carved mantel, the sculptures above as well as a portrait of her wearing her signature black arm length gloves. Two symmetrically placed lamps on the mantel as well as gold-framed mirrors and paintings complete the royal feeling. Clearly her collection functions here as a sign of her public persona.

The house of Guilbert creates an atmosphere of stability and force, rather than sensuous luxury. This is quite similar to the new persona of Guilbert herself. Her forcefulness is described by Arsène Alexandre as the “new” Yvette: “a force, an amplitude, a sort of authority in her silhouette and in her allure that she hadn’t yet

¹⁰⁶ Yvette Guilbert, *L’art de chanter une chanson* (Paris: Grasset, 1928), 84. “On marche selon les robes que l’on porte. Je dirais que l’on prend l’âme du costume que l’on revêt.”

¹⁰⁷ The identification of house and singer is made evident by the fact that the architect, Xavier Schoelkopf, had sculpted a portrait of Guilbert above and slightly to the right of the entrance which seemed to welcome the visitor to the house. See Georges Vigne, “A l’hôtel du numéro ...23 bis” in *Yvette Guilbert Diseuse Fin-de-Siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1994), 49. Vigne himself stresses the link between her identity and her house crediting her with inventing a new public image. Her house was to reflect her success, express her modernity and also announce her triumphant return to the scene.

attained.”¹⁰⁸ And as if to underline the difference between old and new we see contrasted with this imposing woman seated on an armchair, the portrait of Guilbert above with her black gloves. The interior conveys something of the authority of the seated woman. For example, the dining room, with its huge scale, tapestry-covered walls, high-backed solemn chairs, and tall carved stone draped mantel is nothing less than royal (Figure 26). Similarly, the bedroom with its dark walls and heavy wooden bed is less seductive than imposing (Figure 27). The text that accompanies the article is equally imposing.

Alexandre stresses the importance of Guilbert’s career and the seriousness of her first concert after an illness. He writes that in an effort full of will and of talent Guilbert achieves a remarkable success in her reinterpretation of poems of Baudelaire set to the melodies of Rollinat. Both the house and the projected image of Guilbert form a sharp contrast to the sharp and comic career that made her fortune. The expensiveness of the furnishings, complete with antiques, tapestries and paintings, allow us to call her interior a space of collection. Moreover, the change of address and persona and the acquisition of the collection seem all to function together. That is, rather than the house and the collection functioning as a reflection of the taste and the character of the collector, it is the surroundings that help to establish the “character” or image of the collector. This is very much the reverse of the dominant discourse of the male collector as it was elaborated in sales catalogues and articles of the time. What is remarkable about the interiors of these two women of the stage is not just how theatrical they were, for clearly one can argue that the interiors of male collectors functioned theatrically as well, but

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. “une force, une ampleur, une sorte d’autorité dans sa silhouette et dans sa allure, qu’elle n’avait pas encore.”

how openly this was presented. That is, there is a very noticeable break or fissure between the discourses of the male and female spaces of collection.

The most famous of the theatrical interiors of actresses of late nineteenth-century Paris were the residences of Sarah Bernhardt. Two documents in particular give an idea of the role Bernhardt played as collector: the sales catalogue of the auction of her collection in 1913 and a small English language photographic book about her house.¹⁰⁹ The sales catalogue differs from others that I have looked at in several important ways. First, the frontispiece is a reproduction of her portrait by Clairin in which she is lounging on a divan covered with pillows with an elegant wolfhound at her feet (Figure 28). She stares seductively at the viewer, a feathered fan dangling from one hand, her body forming a light silky diagonal that recedes away from the viewer at the same time that her intense stare brings the viewer into the painting. The setting of the painting gives some idea of the luxury that can be expected from the sale at hand. Another particularity of the sale is that it featured not only paintings, but also sculptures that Bernhardt herself made, her theatrical jewelry, as well as the objets d'art and furnishings of her home. In the catalogue it is the jewelry that is listed first: forty-one rings, jeweled belts, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, pins, corsage decorations, and hair ornaments among them. The drawings, pastels, watercolors, prints and paintings listed are by artists such as: Burne-Jones, Mary Cassatt, Doré, Fantin Latour, and Victor Hugo. Of the images, a good many are of her, as was announced by the frontispiece illustration. This presentation of her collection effectively assimilates it with the persona of Sarah Bernhardt. Much as even

¹⁰⁹ *Catalogue des Tableaux Modernes de Sarah Bernhardt*. (Paris: Georges Petit, 1913). *The Home of Sarah Bernhardt in Paris*, nd. Bibliothèque Nationale, Fondation Smith-Lesouef Réserve 4237.

the catalogue for the collection of Jacqueline Kennedy's collection was a huge success in our day, the aura of Bernhardt extended to her possessions.

Of the furniture, most luxuriously described is her bed:

Large middle of the room bed, in waxed redwood and partially gilded with arcs of palms and ribbons and resting on the clawed feet, the back decorated with interlacing roses. The bed is dominated by a canopy cover decorated with mauve velvet partially gilded with metallic embroidery of leaves and flowers. Made by Jansen.¹¹⁰

Fabulous as it seems, this kind of description of a bed was common among many of the sales catalogues of women's collections of the time. Rachel's bed, for example, was prominently featured in her sales catalogue as well as being described by Clouzot in a 1908 article on the actress. The most private of places, the bed, is represented as a kind of stage setting. The death of Rachel, for example is described by Clouzot in this way: "In the half-light of an alcove that looks like a chapel is placed a bed of alabaster of strange design. One might say pipes of an organ on which are placed antique masks. it is on the bed, evoking in advance the coldness of the tomb's stone, that Phèdre fell asleep and never woke again."¹¹¹ Not only is the setting theatrical, but Clouzot sees in the death of actress the death of Racine's character.

The elaborate descriptions foreground the discourse of desire and seduction so central to collecting in this period. Most *amateurs*, or collectors, in late nineteenth-century France were figured, as we have seen, as male, and were represented as loving, in an almost sexual way, the art that they collected. One collector was

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 41. "Grand lit de milieu, en acajou ciré et partiellement doré, ceinturé de palmes, ruban et posant sur pieds griffes, le dossier orné de rosaies et entrelacs; il est dominé d'un baldaquin à ciel de lit le couvant tout entier et le tout est garni de velours mauve, partiellement orné de soutaches et d'applications de broderies métalliques offrant des dessins feuillagés et fleuris. Fabrication de Jansen."

¹¹¹ Clouzot, 147.

discussed as jealously attached to his collection, while another as sleeping with his newest acquisition by the bed. By contrast, women collectors, although possessing impressive collections of their own, were not represented as participating in this passion for art. Rather, the collections can be understood as projections, extensions of the woman's beauty. Sometimes one even gets the impression that the women collectors are represented as one more beautiful object available for the male auction buyer.¹¹² The emphasis on the bed assimilates metaphorically, for the presumably male client, the collection and the female collector. Certainly this dynamic is at work in the sales catalogue of Sarah Bernhardt, whose frontispiece features such a seductive portrait. Thus we are presented with the collection that functions to seduce, like Bernhardt's many jewels, rather than as marker of her taste and discernment.

The photographic tour of the house of Sarah Bernhardt also serves to present the theatrical setting for the beauty and allure of Bernhardt.¹¹³ This theatricality conflicts with the theory of the interior as reflection of the personality and psychology of the owner that is often stated in texts, of decoration in late nineteenth-century Paris. Debora Silverman, for example, argued that the modern decorated domestic interior of the turn of the century was predicated on the rise of the bourgeois individual and the emphasis on the psychological interiority of personhood.¹¹⁴ Similarly, in writings of the time, the function of the apartment as mirror of the personal taste of the apartment dweller was discussed time and again. If the interior of Sarah Bernhardt is not presented as a

¹¹² More on this in the following section of this chapter.

¹¹³ Bernhardt had two principal residences. She had a hotel built for her by Félix Escalier in 1875 on the rue Fortuny. She sold it in 1887 and bought number 56, Boulevard Pereire (which no longer exists). While this photographic book is undated and the address is not given, from other images of the interior from other dated sources, as well as from the painting on the cover, it seems that this book documents 56 Blvd Pereire.

¹¹⁴ Silverman, 9-11.

reflection of her psychological personality, neither does it seem to be a refuge from the busy world of Paris. Rather there is a seamlessness between the public and private in the specifically stage-like artificiality of this house, as seen particularly in the photographic book, which points to the artificiality of identity rather than its naturalness.¹¹⁵

The cover features a painting of Sarah Bernhardt by Théobald Chartran, adorned with flowers in her hair, holding a palm frond, and wearing a sumptuously embroidered dress and shawl. Arabesques of flowers and incense, from which rises the title, surround the portrait (Figure 29). This enchantingly decorated cover promises us a magical and intoxicating glimpse of the domain of this mistress of the stage. We open the book and are confronted with a photograph of the exterior of her *hôtel particulier* (Figure 30). Branches and leaves and shadows screen the somewhat severe façade whose black, arched and imposing door, is guarded by two male figures (the only people photographed in the entire book). One is dressed formally and seems almost like an official doorman, while the other leans casually against the building with something of a swagger. This doubled male presence serves to underline the subtext of seduction announced by the cover. Once inside the door we are given a photographic tour of the house with only captions for textual guide. However, rather than overall views of the various rooms, the camera focuses on still-life arrangements within the house, in particular in the studio. Groupings of Bernhardt's own sculptures vie with flowers, embroideries and paintings

¹¹⁵ Pierre Loti's comments in his journal on the identities one could derive from her home on rue Fortuny which was decorated in a similar manner to the *blvd Pereire* hotel. "Est-ce la tente luxueuse, bizarre, exotique d'une reine des pays lointains et sauvages? Est-ce l'atelier pittoresque, original, très fantaisiste d'une artiste hors cadre, hors pair? Est-ce le boudoir bien moderne, intime, coquet, troublant, d'une Parisienne élégante? Il y a de tout un peu." "Is it a luxurious, bizarre and exotic tent of a queen of countries far and savage? Is it the picturesque, original, very fantastic studio of an artist without limits, without equal? Is it the modern, intimate, coquettish troubling boudoir of an elegant Parisian woman? There is a bit of it all." Quoted in *Portrait(s) de Sarah Bernhardt*, ed. Noelle Guibert, (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 2000), 136.

done of her. One photograph “One Side of the Studio” shows us an embroidered Louis XV fauteuil in front of a table crowded with a Barye lion drawing, a bust of Bernhardt adorned with flowers, a bunch of hydrangeas, and another bunch of chrysanthemums in front of a full-length portrait of Bernhardt in a long embroidered dress gazing off into the distance (Figure 31). The plant motif is further emphasized by palm leaves both in the foreground and in the background of the photograph. Similarly another illustration shows a kind of altar to Bernhardt which is captioned “Jewels and Works of Art presented to Mme Sarah Bernhardt” (Figure 32). Here too, chrysanthemums, palm leaves, fuchsias and embroidered and painted flowers decorate the setting which is presided over by Chartran’s portrait. In “A Corner of Studio” a large Chinese vase stands in front of a painting of a steam boat puffing smoke across the sky, which is in turn next to a profusely carved mirror, which is behind a lamp with embroidered shade that almost caresses the cheek of a sculpted child who faces towards a large painting of Bernhardt adorned in furs and flanked by bunches of chrysanthemums (Figure 33). All this produces an effect on us. We breathe in the perfume of the flowers, we caress the sleek bodies of her figurines, we sink into the soft upholstery, we dream of voyages to distant places. Our senses are inundated with a plethora of sensations paralleled by dense accumulation of textures and the spectacle of money.

The closest literary parallel to this kind of interior is that of Des Esseintes in the novel of Huysmans.¹¹⁶ There is a shared emphasis on the appeal to the senses in both Bernhardt’s and Des Esseintes interiors. Modeled on Robert de Montesquiou, himself a famous *amateur*, Des Esseintes tries to escape the banality of modern Paris in an interior

¹¹⁶ Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature (À Rebours)*, trans. Margaret Mauldon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

of heightened artificiality, sensuality and refinement.¹¹⁷ He tries, in other words, to construct an interior world that would match his own desires. The failure of Des Esseintes' project is tied to its isolation from the social world, however grim that social world might be. The refinement and sensuality of the interior implodes upon itself because of its extreme isolation, and its extremity and perversity. Bernhardt's interior, however, as it is revealed in the above documents, was organized to present a particular personality of sensuality and glamour meant to be viewed and visited. The idea of being seen is found again and again in the portraits of Bernhardt all around the house. This self-consciousness of image is actually similar to the obsessions of Montesquiou, as made clear in the recent exhibition *Robert de Montesquiou ou l'art de paraître*.¹¹⁸ Among the photographs included in this exhibition was one of Bernhardt and Montesquiou together where they are both dressed as men. Their similarity of dress and hair style make them almost indistinguishable. Only the mustache allows us to be clear about the difference in gender (Figure 34).

In the interiors of these three female late nineteenth-century performers, Réjane, Yvette Guilbert and Sarah Bernhardt, as represented in texts of the time, we are presented neither with the calm refuge from a harried world, nor an evocation of a personal psychology, but rather a stage in which shifting identities come and go like the mutability of Réjane's *Parisienne*. Rather than some refined notion of "taste" operating to create a reflection of these women's personalities, it is clear that their interiors and their identities are both performed. This reversal, whereby the collection creates an

¹¹⁷ Montesquiou gave a party for Bernhardt in 1894 where Proust met her. Proust made Bernhardt one of the models for his character La Berma. Montesquiou also dedicated two poems to Bernhardt, *Les Hortensias Bleus* and *Les noces d'argent de la voix d'or* in *Portrait(s)*, 139.

¹¹⁸ Philippe Thiébaud., *Robert de Montesquiou où l'art de paraître*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999).

image of the person rather than personality determining the collection, can be seen to operate in the collections of the numerous male collectors as well.

However, while the respective identities of men and women are revealed to be an arena of fissure, a comparison of photographs and sales-catalogue prefaces of these two collectors and their male contemporaries reveals that beyond the rhetoric of gender, there is a shared manner of display within the collections. As I will discuss in greater detail in chapters Four and Five, this spatial grammar of organization, was characterized by a sense of the ensemble of the collection ordered along visually harmonic patterns. This relational organization was traditionally represented as feminine, and stands in contrast to the linear, chronological, didactic structure of museum display at the time. The organization of private display in the interiors of both genders was based on the historically “feminine” concept of visual relationality, metaphorically tied to the grammar of color rather than line.¹¹⁹ Its femininity stemmed, according to Blanc, from its decorative quality, its materiality, and also its relational logic. Blanc dismissed the associative and interactive grammar of color as disruptive to the clarity of linear organization, but another late nineteenth-century discourse, that of home design, places emphasis on just these qualities. The harmonious interior is one in which the architecture, furniture and objets d’art are carefully coordinated, such that one part of the room was considered in relation to another.¹²⁰

The collections of *amateurs* at the end of the nineteenth-century, mirror in their installation the relationality of sociability. I have begun to show this in the discussions of

¹¹⁹ See Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, 22. and Charles Baudelaire, *Curiosités Esthétiques* (Geneva: Milieu du Monde, nd).

¹²⁰ Manuals of home design will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. See for example Henri Havard *L’art dans la maison* (Paris: Rouveyre, 1885) and Spire Blondel *L’art intime et le goût en France* (Paris: Rouveyre, 1884).

the specific collections of Rouart, Dollfus, Bernhardt, Valtresse and Doucet and will continue to address the issue in case studies before turning to the discourse of arrangement in chapters Four and Five. That is, unlike museum installation, for example, which by the end of the nineteenth-century had achieved the chronological order theorized since the beginning of the century, these collections, as evident from photographs, maintained the earlier ideal of collectors installations and were installed in a visually pleasing way in which paintings were hung so as to relate to each other within the interior. Valtresse's paintings were hung in relation to the configuration of the architecture as well as to the seating arrangement, by size as well as by focal point. Her full-length portrait, for example, took pride of place towards the center of the room. This "feminine" grammar of display was the dominant mode of private installation for all collectors, not just women. Photographs of the collection of Jacques Doucet, as we have seen, show a very similar arrangement. Portraits are paired with portraits, landscapes with landscapes, paintings are coordinated with chairs beneath and the whole arrangement is related to the frame of the door. These gendered dynamics of private display are important, I believe, to fully understanding the role of the decorative in late nineteenth-century France.

Before turning to the arrangement of these collections, I want to consider one more class of collector, the book collector. There are three principal reasons that this is important. First, I want to differentiate the terms *amateur* and *connoisseur* by way of the material practice of those who seemingly collect knowledge: the book collector. Second, I wish to consider the organizational grammar of these bibliophiles. Finally, and perhaps

most importantly I want to pursue a self-reflexive meditation on the sales catalogue, a group of books that form the principal source of collecting information in this discussion.

CHAPTER 3: THE BIBLIOPHILE : *CONNOISSEUR* OR *AMATEUR* ?

According to the 1876 Littré, a collection was considered to be a gathering of objects of art or science.¹ This separation between art and science corresponds roughly to two kinds of collectors, the *amateur* and the *connoisseur*. The *amateur*, as we have seen, was described as choosing his collection based primarily on its beauty, rather than other criteria such as its price or its documentary value. The *connoisseur*, by contrast, must choose his collection based on rarity, curious character and scientific or documentary value. Each of these criteria requires a kind of learning and expertise rather than simply an affinity. Littré defined *connoisseur* in the first meaning as “he or she who knows something well.”² The second given meaning has specifically to do with art: “Term which was introduced in the fine arts to signify he who judges art with a perfect knowledge.”³ This perfect knowledge of the arts is quite different than the taste and love of the *amateur*, although many of the *amateurs* are also considered to be *connoisseurs*.

The distinction between the two kinds of collectors reflects the two kinds of knowledge that the French language distinguishes: *savoir* and *connaître*. The first of these, *savoir*, corresponds to the knowledge of the *connoisseur* (who is perhaps better characterized as a *savant*), which encompasses facts about things. The second, *connaître*, refers to knowledge of a person, and is much closer to the dialogic relationship of the *amateur* with his collection than the more scientific *savoir*.

¹ E. Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Hachette, 1876), s.v. “collection.”

² Ibid., s.v. “connoisseur.” “celui, celle qui se connaît à quelque chose.”

³ Ibid., “Terme qui s’est introduit dans les beaux-arts, pour signifier celui qui juge de leurs productions avec une connaissance parfaite.”

At first I had hoped to come to some understanding of the differences between these two categories of collector by studying book collectors, since books and learning are so closely tied to connoisseurship. However, surprisingly, the sales catalogues of the *bibliophile* reveal that it was the object nature of the book as much as its status as text that interested the *bibliophile*. Also, the *bibliophiles* are discussed as much in terms of their love and friendship with their books as the *amateur* is with his living with his paintings, his experience of them. Thus while some *bibliophiles* are praised for their erudition, this praise of their learning is almost always mixed with an appreciation for their passionate pursuit of their collection. For this reason, the *bibliophile* is hard to distinguish from the *amateur*, and the material practice of book collecting does not yield, I discovered, a distinct class of collectors we can call *connoisseurs*. However, *connoisseurship* remains within the discourse of book collectors much more prominently than with the painting collectors, and inflects the meaning of choice in an interesting way. Book collecting of the nineteenth century is also important to the discourse of the *amateur* because of the emphasis placed on choice of objects, the remaking of the object of collection, and the surprising variety of category of art works that are included in the *bibliophile's* library.

On one hand the *bibliophiles* of nineteenth-century France were like the other *amateurs* in their passionate love for their books both as texts and as objects. On the other hand they, more than the painting collector, problematize the very idea of collection: what is included and what is not. Choice, as we have seen, is at the heart of the discourse of the *amateur*. But paintings, as unique objects, are by their very nature different from one collection to another. Books, on the other hand, come in multiples and

thus two collections could presumably be identical. A *bibliophile*'s particularity thus seems to found less in his discerning eye which discovers the particularly well-wrought object as for a painting collector, but in his organizational thinking, which selects an important group of books. It is the collection itself, rather than the books within that take center stage in the discourse.

The sales catalogue as form reveals and indeed thematizes the idea that a book is very often a collection itself, in and of its own right. This is true for both aspects of a book: the book as object and the book as text. As regards the physical object of the book, the binding, the kind of paper, the typeface, the condition, the edition and indeed the additions that are often inserted into the book by its owner, all are part of the collection that is the book-object. As text, the kinds of thoughts, poems, arguments, recipes, etc. assembled together and conceived of as a grouping, inflect the kind of collection that the text becomes.

If Balzac's *Cousin Pons* is the nineteenth-century French text that best elucidates the character and situation of the *amateur*, then Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* can be said to profoundly inflect the questions surrounding the *connoisseur* and the encyclopedic urge that often accompanies the practice of the bibliophile.⁴ While the logic behind the collection of the *amateur* is desire and an individual "eye for beauty", that of the scholarly collection is a serial logic, which Flaubert undermines and discredits at every

⁴ Gustave Flaubert, *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, trans. A.J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin Books, 1976). There is much written, of course, on this book. As regards libraries, museums, and collections see in particular: Michel Foucault, "Fantasia of the Library" in *Gustave Flaubert*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1989): 45-61; Eugene Donato, "The Museum's Furnace: Notes Toward a Contextual Reading of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*," in *Critical Essays on Gustave Flaubert*, ed. Laurence Porter (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1986): 207-222; and Normand Lalonde, "La Collection Curieuse de *Bouvard et Pécuchet*," *Romantic Review* 83 (November 1992): 445-62.

turn.⁵ Whereas Pons collects out of love and desire, the motivation behind the collecting of Bouvard and Pécuchet seems to be a kind of detached knowledge. But while Balzac's book is humorous and affecting, Flaubert's is satirical.⁶ Aside from the very different nature of these two books, this difference in tone can perhaps also stem from the differing motivations of the characters. While love and desire are predicated on the individuality of the lover, for example Balzac's somewhat eccentric but likeable Pons, encyclopedic knowledge, on the other hand, is predicated on an abstracted, objectified, and, as Flaubert seems to argue, impossibly disinterested subject. The conflict between love and knowledge in the acquisition of a collection leads to a conflict of organizational principles. Whereas the motive of desire predicates a lover around whose pleasures a collection locates itself, the motive of knowledge leaves out the subjective to organize itself around such principles as chronology and influence. These two conflicting modes of organization led, in the visual arts, to the difference between the private collection and the museum.⁷

The pursuit of the objective universality of knowledge yields only the effacement of the individual within the copy. Flaubert's characters are not only copyists, at the beginning of the book and again at the end, but are also, in their very doubleness as two principal characters whose tastes and professions coincide, copies, in a way, of each other. Similarly, the logic--or one could say the plot-- of the collection is a simple

⁵ See Leo Bersani, "Flaubert's Encyclopedism," *Novel* 21 (Winter/Spring 1988): 140-6. "What we have is the appearance of an encyclopedic novel, an accumulation of facts and theories from the most diverse fields of knowledge in order to discredit the claims of art to any epistemological validity whatsoever" (143).

⁶ It is curious that while Bouvard and Pécuchet is Flaubert's last book, left in fact unfinished at his death, his first literary endeavor (at the age of 14) also concerned collecting, and specifically book collecting. The story "Bibliomanie" concerns an old Spanish monk who, despite reading very poorly, adores book collecting and is even willing to kill in order to obtain a manuscript for which he was outbid at an auction.

⁷ The difference in organization between the private collection and the museum will be specifically addressed in the Chapter Five.

assemblage that is circular in its structure, ending, as it began, with copying. Flaubert's book itself is very self-consciously a collection in its own right in which the logic of inclusion is copied or mimicked in order to be ridiculed. In fact the second, uncompleted part of the book, was to have been a raw assemblage or anthology of texts purporting to be those that Bouvard and Pécuchet copied.⁸

The bibliophile, insofar as he reads his books, can be considered from the point of view of *connoisseur*, or *savant*. He is someone who uses his books. Walter Benjamin remarked in his *Arcades* project, that the bibliophile is the "only type of collector who has not completely withdrawn his treasures from their functional context."⁹ The books function because the collector reads them, as they were meant to be read, as well as collects them. The books of Bouvard and Pécuchet (apart from the library with which they each begin) are carefully consulted to aid their various projects, including, of course, their project to be writers.

Bibliophiles in general were often said to possess the desire to know and learn widely, paralleling the laughable and self-annihilating project that Flaubert makes fun of in his book. For him, in the search to know, one is overwhelmed and destroyed by the massiveness of the past. This weight of the past was resolved in many of the book collectors by their remaking of the books they collected. They became in some way the creators of the books they collected. This strategy is akin to the painting collectors who

⁸ Lalonde, 453. Also Stathis Gourgouris, "Research, Essay, Failure (Flaubert's Itinerary)," *New Literary History* 26 (Spring 1995): 343-57. "Flaubert had collected nearly four hundred pages of quotations, which he planned to release as the book's second volume.... Flaubert's enormous research for *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (involving allegedly some 1500 volumes)... goes beyond research to the actual gathering and ordering—that is, *copying*—of the vast body of quotations that the two friends themselves were to spend the rest of their novelistic lives copying" (353). This can indeed remind us of Benjamin's *Arcades Project* which is structured around extensive excerpts accompanied by remarks, rather than a more "logical" argument. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Filand and Kevin McLaughlin, based on volume ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁹ Benjamin, 207.

ended up, as I argued in Chapter One, emulating the artist as a model of identity. They found a way to reinsert the self into a collection that may have been ostensibly based on historical logic. This was achieved in two ways. The first was by insisting on the idea that the collection was reflective of their identity, and the sales catalogues often repeated the cliché that one can know someone from his library. Secondly they remade their books, rebinding, commissioning illustrations and stamping the book with their own insignia or name.¹⁰

Further complicating the relationship between the *bibliophile* and the *amateur* was the role of the prints and drawings collectors. Prints and drawings, as paper arts, were traditionally stored within portfolios, or bound into sketchbooks or included as illustrations in books. Their status as “wall art” is rather ambiguous. In the same way that many photographs were often originally (in the nineteenth-century) kept within archives, so too prints and drawings were stored away in folders.¹¹ While their status as “art objects,” as opposed to “documents” was never in question, they problematize the practice of collection arrangement. The frequent practice of bibliophiles of either embellishing their books with commissioned prints or drawings on the one hand, or alternatively simply storing their various prints and drawings within related texts, provides a complicated and non-scholarly attitude towards prints and drawings and allows us to consider their collection within the chapter on book collecting.

¹⁰ It is important to note that in France at this time, all new books were purchased unbound and the collector was always obliged to have them bound. Thanks to Patricia Mainardi for this observation.

¹¹ See Rosalind Krauss, “Photography’s Discursive Spaces,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985); and Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Calypomania: The Gourmet Guide to Nineteenth-Century Photography,” in her *Photography at the Dock* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 4-27 for a discussion of photography’s place in the archive.

The library, furthermore, was a space that contained books as well as archives of different sorts of art and kinds of documents. In fact, aside from the walls and shelves, other furnishings were important. Theophile Thoré described the library of le Chevalier Camberlyn (1783-1861), with “its cases, its shelves, its drawers and its vast tables.”¹² When we look at photographs of the *cabinet de travail* we will find all these furnishings which imply an active involvement in the collection which is diverse in its many kinds of objects organized together, from books, to paintings, to sculpture, prints and drawings. Thus in this bibliophilic spirit of combining categories of art forms, I, too, will combine books and prints within the confines of this chapter.

Paul Eudel, in his book about auctions in 1882, commented on the way prints and drawings were not hung on the wall: “A collection of prints and drawings is certainly less talked about than a collection of paintings. One cannot display them pompously at home like an advertisement. They need to be stored in portfolios;”¹³ Not only were they stored in portfolios, but they also required, according to Eudel, greater knowledge, classification and connoisseurship than paintings: “In paintings, color guides and seduces. One learns quickly about them; with a little artistic slang, one can manage. For prints, it is necessary to know pretty much all the states, and for drawings, one must examine them with care, and usually guess the name of the artist.”¹⁴ Prints and drawings had less color, were therefore less sensual and thus they required more knowledge.

¹² *Collection de M Le Chevalier J. Camberlyn*, preface by W. Burger (Paris: Drouot, 1865), ii. “avec des casiers, des rayons, des tiroirs et de vastes tables.”

¹³ Eudel, *L'Hôtel Drouot et la curiosité*, 53. “Une collection d'estampes et de dessins fait certainement moins parler d'elle qu'une collection de tableaux. On ne peut pas l'étaler pompeusement chez soi comme une réclame. Il faut la classer dans ses portefeuilles;”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 53. “Dans les tableaux, la couleur guide et séduit. On apprend vite à s'y connaître ; avec un peu d'argot artistique, on s'en tire. Pour les gravures, il est nécessaire de savoir à peu près tous les états ; pour les dessins, il faut les examiner avec soin, et le plus souvent deviner le nom de l'auteur.”

The Bibliophile

Bibliophiles, like *amateurs*, were a recognizable type amongst the physiognomies of the city of Paris. They shared many of the same qualities: an obsession with collecting, a lack of concern for practical pursuits, and a love of the books that they collected. Like the *amateur*, the *bibliophile* was linked to the aristocratic tradition of a beautiful life surrounded by beautiful things. The duc de la Vallière, whose library was apparently one of the greatest of all book collections--it became the basis of the bibliothèque Arsenal de Paris--is an example of the courtly bibliophile.¹⁵ Beneath his engraved portrait in his sales catalogue is printed this poem:

Courtier, Philosopher, engaged, studious
He cultivates the arts, pleasure, wisdom
He entertains, teaches, pleases, interests
His spirit seduces you, his heart makes you happy.¹⁶

Pleasure, studiousness, interest and seduction all stand on equal footing in a character that privileges love over duty. This intermingling of qualities was characteristic of the model *honnête homme*, an aristocratic ideal, emulated as well, I have argued above, by *amateurs* of the late nineteenth-century. It is important that the minister of education from 1877 to 1879 announced publicly that the ideal that all educators should strive to teach was the *honnête homme* as the seventeenth-century understood the concept.¹⁷

¹⁵ Typed insert included in the Metropolitan Museum example of the catalogue with no further bibliographic information. E.P. Goldschmidt, & Co. Ltd: "La Vallière's was probably the greatest collection of books any private person brought together. This catalogue comprises all the manuscripts, early printed books, Romances of Chivalry, early poets and chronicles, etc. excellently described by De Bure. It was sold at auction and dispersed into all the great libraries of Europe. This première partie is the only section of the Library sold at auction. A second part published in 1788 was never auctioned but acquired "enbloc" and ultimately came to form the nucleus of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris."

¹⁶ *Bibliothèque M. le Duc de la Vallière* (Paris: Guillaume de Bure, 1783), ii. "Courtisan, Philosophe, enjoué, studieux/Il cultive les arts, les plaisirs, la sagesse/Il amuse, il instruit, il plaît, il intéresse Son esprit vous séduit, son cœur vous rends heureux."

¹⁷ In Theodore Zeldin, *Taste and Corruption in France 1848-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 59.

While the duc de la Vallière's collection was sold in 1783, much the same language was used throughout the nineteenth-century. In 1865 Thoré described M. le Chevalier Camberlyn as a gentleman behind whose brusque frankness lay "an exquisite feeling of loyalty, justice and indulgence."¹⁸ These were considered to be requisite qualities for an *honnête homme*, the word *exquisite* evoking the "rare," the "precious" and the "aristocratic."

Similarly, in 1937 Victor Mercier, bibliophile and president of La Société des amis des livres, as well as honorary president of the Court of Appeals, was described as extremely courteous:

his extreme *courtoisie* was legendary and faced with his exquisite affability many doors were opened wide that had not even partially opened for powerful material means.¹⁹

Here Mercier's *courtoisie* is explicitly contrasted with the capitalist "material means," linking Mercier with the tradition of the courtier and his exquisite manners. The link between pleasure and cultivation, seduction and intellectual interest evident in the collector of books was, as we saw in Chapter One, a trope for the cultivated *amateur* throughout the nineteenth-century and particularly in the last two decades that form my principal focus.

On the other hand, there was an equally strong type of the disheveled lover of books and prints, who disregarding all fashion sense was obsessed with his search through the auction houses and *bouquinists* on the quais. This type was scruffy, hunched over, with glasses, his eyesight strained from so much reading. He shows up in the

¹⁸ *Collection de M. le Chevalier J. Camberlyn*, preface by W. Burger (Paris: Drouot, 1865), i. "une brusque franchise recouvre un sentiment exquis de loyauté, de justice et de bienveillance."

¹⁹ *Bibliothèque Victor Mercier* (Paris: Drouot, 1937). "son extrême courtoisie était légendaire et devant son affabilité exquise bien des portes se sont ouvertes, toutes grandes que n'avaient pu même entr'ouvrir de puissants moyens matériels."

various dictionaries of social types prevalent in the nineteenth-century and is most familiar to us through the various prints of Daumier of print collectors. This type is like the *amateur* who is oblivious to proper attire that we encountered in Chapter One. For example, J. Sieurin, collector and seller of art, is described in this way in the preface of his collection:

Of small stature, he had graying hair and his features, slightly coarsened with age, revealed nonetheless a great finesse. His nose, a little bit curved, held a pair of glasses through which shined his clear and singularly lively eyes. When he was examining a scene or a portrait, his mouth, by some imperceptible movement, indicated the slightest fault of the print; but when this latter was perfect not a muscle of his face moved and his physiognomy remained serious. This man represented an original type, cutting through the monotony of vulgar attitudes.²⁰

Here his intelligence peeks out of the glasses, his small size, his frizzled gray hair together reveal his savvy appreciation of prints.

These two representations of the bibliophile are countered by the idea of the bibliophile as bibliomaniac. In 1831 Charles Nodier described the “monomania for Moroccan leather” and the “typhoid of the bibliomaniacs.”²¹ This idea of collecting as sickness is encountered in the discourse of the *amateur* as well, in which, as we saw, the sales-catalogue prefaces are often at pains to distinguish the *amateur* of the catalogue from some kind of obsessed man. Louis-Octave Uzanne (also known as Octave Uzanne)(1852-1931), author of *Le Miroir du monde* (1888) among other texts and one

²⁰ *Collection J. Sieurin* (Paris: Drouot, 1879), I. “De petite taille, il avait les cheveux grisonnants et ses traits, légèrement grossis par l’âge, révélaient néanmoins une grande finesse. Son nez un peu courbé supportait une paire de lunettes sous lesquelles brillaient des yeux clairs et singulièrement vifs. Lorsqu’il examinait une vignette ou un portrait, sa bouche, par un mouvement imperceptible, indiquait les moindres défauts de l’épreuve ; mais quand celle-ci était parfaite, pas un muscle du visage ne bougeait et la physiognomie restait grave. Cet homme représentait une figure originale, tranchant sur la monotonie des attitudes vulgaires.”

²¹ Charles Nodier, “Le Bibliomane,” in *Paris ou le Livre des Cent-et-Un* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1831), 85-108.

of the book collectors I will discuss below, edited a collection of essays on the *types de Paris* in which he distinguished the modern bibliophile from the bibliomaniac:

The contemporary amateur is no longer a rat of the library stinking of old books, the scholar nourished on dates, on footnotes, on titles of works or on varying editions. The old kind of Bibliomania has disappeared, its last specimens in agony. The modern Bibliophile is a dilettante in love with the aesthetic manifestations of his time.²²

This formulation tends towards erasing the differences between books and other artworks, devaluing the edition, the date and the contents of the book. The historical evolution of the book collector from bibliomaniac to bibliophile as described by Uzanne is not always reflected in the sales catalogues. The emphasis on the aesthetics of the book was present from the first part of the century and the interest in scholarship and editions persisted to the end. There was, however, a transformation of the book industry, which tended towards the end of the century to produce more and more luxury books aimed at the modern bibliophile described by Uzanne.

Book publishing went through as great a transformation during the century as did the art market. Whereas in 1789 there were about 2,000 titles published in France each year, by 1828 there were 6,000 titles, and by 1889 the figure had reached 15,000.

Similarly the number of books issued with each printing increased from 3,000 in 1860 to 5,000 in 1880.²³ This was a result of changing technologies, but also because of a great expansion of the reading public. By mid-century more and more people had libraries.

According to one study, 60% of the liberal professions, 50% of the bureaucrats, 37% of

²² *Baudauderies Parisiennes. Les Rassemblements physiologies de la rue*, ed Octave Uzanne, illustrations by Félix Vallotton, published for Les Bibliophiles Indépendants (Paris: Floury, 1896). "L'amateur contemporain n'est plus un rat de bibliothèque flairant l'odeur fauve des vieux bouquins, le savant nourri de dates, de notules, de titres d'ouvrages et de variantes d'éditions. Le type du vieux Bibliomania a disparu. Les derniers spécimens du genre agonisent. Le moderne Bibliophile est un dilettante amoureux des manifestations esthétiques de son temps."

²³ R. Chartier and H.J. Martin, eds., *Histoire de l'édition française: Le temps des éditeurs. Du romantisme à la belle époque: 1830-1900*. (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 6-21.

state employees, 35.5% of businessmen, 16% of employees and 6.3% of shop owners had libraries in 1848²⁴. Along with the increase in libraries across the social spectrum came an increase in the number of bibliophiles, and publishers began, for the first time, to issue editions specifically targeted to this audience, a bigger change than is obvious when you realize that the tradition was to sell books unbound.²⁵

Bibliophiles: The Sales Catalogue

To study the bibliophile, I examined a wide range of book and print sales catalogues from the nineteenth-century in France. My sample, of almost one hundred catalogues, ranged from the early part of the nineteenth-century into the early twentieth century. The twentieth-century catalogues refer to collections largely assembled in the late nineteenth-century. I have included a table of these bibliophiles whose professions and social origins vary as widely as the *amateurs* with the exception that rather than picture dealers and artists figuring largely, there are scholars, writers and book binders.²⁶

As can be seen from Table C in Appendix C, collectors of books, who are often grouped together with collectors of prints and drawings, come from as varied a social spectrum as collectors of paintings (and *objets d'art*). Aristocrats, writers, engravers, financiers, architects are all included, but, as one might expect, there is a much greater

²⁴ Adeline Daumard, "1815-1848: Bourgeois Parisiens," in R. Chartier and H.J. Martin, eds, *Histoire de l'édition française: Le temps des éditeurs. Du romantisme à la belle époque: 1830-1900* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 22-38.

²⁵ Ibid., 29. Daumard also notes that there were 35,000 scholarly libraries in Paris by 1887.

²⁶ I have excluded numerous collectors whose names were not identified (ie. Bibliophile Normand, sale 1803, or M. N** sale 1881, or those for whom I was unable to find information, such as Aubry, sale 1879, and Michelot de Brodeaux, sale 1881) and whose catalogues did not include prefaces. There are also bibliophiles with more than one sale, as for example Firmin-Didot who had sales in 1878, 1879, 1881, 1882, 1883 and 1884.

preponderance of writers than in the group of painting collectors, where, by contrast, there was a greater number of artists and art professionals.

Considered purely from the point of view of occupation and social class, this selection is much more heavily weighted towards the writer, publisher and scholar than that of the painting collectors. Nonetheless, it is apparent that others were also involved, from musicians like Charles Sauvageot (1781-1860), to Maximilien-Joseph Hurtault (1765-1824) and Hippolyte Destailleur (1822-1893) who were architects, to aristocrats like Louis Jean Gaignat (d. 1768) and the anonymous Baron M.D.C. and even a linguist like Alphonse Pinart (1852-1911) who went to Easter Island and Kodiak, Alaska. Many of the prefaces, like the prefaces of the painting collectors, stress the continuity of life and collection, something that seems particularly evident for the “men of letters.”

Living with Books

The lives of this group of book collectors were fully enmeshed with both the reading and collecting of their books. This was a passionate activity that was not simply relegated to “hobby” status. As we will see, over and over again, the writers and scholars among these collectors incorporated their reading into their work, and this made their books into an extension of their lives. This is like the practice of a Henri Rouart or an Etienne Moreau-Nélaton whose collections informed their own paintings and were sometimes their subject matter.

Other bibliophiles incorporated their discussions about books and book collecting into the routine of their lives. James de Rothschild (1844-1881), for example, had a set routine that involved books:

Every day, a little after three o'clock, the baron James left rue Laffitte and went to the passage des Panoramas. He came to sit in the bookstore of Morgand et Fatout, where his place was marked, and where many amateurs made a circle around him, desirous of hearing his opinion and of profiting from his advice.²⁷

He stayed in the bookshop about an hour and a half, worked on his correspondence in his office and then went to another bookstore where he met the same bibliophiles of earlier in the day. Similarly, the Chevalier J. Camberlyn is described by Thoré as spending every day in his library leafing through his precious works and writing his journal and also notes on the books of his collection.²⁸ This intermeshing of reading, writing and collecting of books was characteristic of the book collector, as is made visible in the photographs of Dornac discussed in the next chapter.

Sometimes the link between the life of the bibliophile and his books was expressed as a farewell parting, either in the words of the collector himself, or else written in the preface to the sales catalogue. Louis Ratisbonne stressed the importance of books to the life of Jules Janin (1804-1874), author of *Histoire de la littérature dramatique* (1853-56) among other texts, referring to his books as “the best and most constant witnesses of his studious life.”²⁹ Apart from being constant witnesses, they were intertwined with his very existence:

²⁷ *Bibliothèque James de Rothschild* (Paris: Damascène Morgand, 1884), xv. “Chaque jour, un peu après trois heures, le baron James quittait la rue Laffitte et se dirigeait vers le passage des Panoramas. Il venait s’asseoir dans la librairie de MM. Morgand et Fatout, où sa place était marquée, et où de nombreux amateurs faisaient cercle autour de lui, désireux d’entendre ses appréciations et de profiter de ses conseils.”

²⁸ *Collection J. Camberlyn*, ii.

²⁹ *Bibliothèque Jules Janin*, preface by Louis Ratisbonne (Paris: Adolphe Labitte, 1877), xi. “les meilleurs et les plus constants témoins de sa vie studieuse.”

Where will you go, beautiful books that murmured always the name of our friend, you who had smiled for so long, under his pleasant roof, at this studious existence, independent of any other constraint than work? He lived amongst you, one could say he lived in you, and you carry, many of you, the mark of his spirit and his taste, the trace of the goodness of his heart.³⁰

Janin's idea of having lived amidst his books, and of having his very existence rely on them, can remind us of the many collectors of paintings who took up painting in response to being surrounded by artworks, who lived a life that emulated the life of an artist. As for the *amateur*, both his taste and his heart were integral to the selection of his collection.

Perhaps the most extravagant adieu to his books is included in the preface that Octave Uzanne wrote for his own sales catalogue in 1894. Entitled "A Simple Declaration for Those Who Want to Know the Reason for Things," he sought to answer the question of why he was selling his books. He called himself a *bibliolâtre* (an idolater of books) who would have fought any number of battles for his beloved *enmarroquinés*. He said that he wanted to know where his books would live after their life with him. He called them his preferred ones, his elected ones, his "Benjamins" and he wants to be able to visit them in their new home like a "father-in-law." His adieu, like the preface as a whole, is unbridled in its sentimentality:

Go now, dear books, Friends of fifteen happy and laborious years, go the sellers, *Ite ad vententes!* The Bibliophile who welcomed you, clothed you, celebrated you, sees you leave, in this supreme moment, with sorrow and interest.... *And now, my dear children, I am at peace, I can die...if not begin again!*³¹

³⁰ Ibid., xi. "Où irez-vous, beaux livres qui murmurerez toujours le nom de notre ami, vous qui avez souri si longtemps, sous son toit paisible, à cette existence studieuse, indépendante de tout autre joug que le travail? Il a vécu au milieu de vous, il vous a habités par ainsi dire, et vous portez, beaucoup d'entre vous, avec la marque de son esprit et de son goût, la trace de la bonté de son cœur."

³¹ *Bibliothèque d'un Ecrivain et Bibliophile Parisien* (Paris: Drouot, 1894), xvi. "Allez maintenant, chers Livres, Amis de quinze années heureuses et laborieuses, allez aux vendeurs, *Ite ad vendentes!* Le Bibliophile qui vous accueillit, vout vêtit, vous fêta, vous voit partir, en ce moment suprême, avec douleur et intérêt ;*Et maintenant, mes chers enfants, je suis tranquille, je puis mourir...sinon recommencer!*"

This extremely mannered prose, characteristic of the 1890s, takes up the tropes of family and attachment that long formed part of the discourse of the *amateur*.

Sometimes the relationship between the library and the collector remained professional: that is, some collectors, notably those who concentrated on scholarly research, looked almost exclusively to the contents of their books. Their collections reflected a body of knowledge. Pierre Antoine de la Mésangère (1761-1831), the founder and editor of *Journal des dames et des modes*, collected principally books concerning fashion,³² M.L. R. de L.[Rebillot]³³ concentrated on the history of France, and Stanislaus Guyard (1846-1884), chair of Arab Language and Literature at the Collège de France collected books on the Middle East. The latter was the author of such articles as “Study of split plurals in arabic” and “Fragments on the Ismaélis.”³⁴ M. J. La Coste who was the “Honorary Advisor to the Royal Court at Lyon” undertook to collect books and documents of all kinds concerning the political, social and religious history of his city Lyon.³⁵ Even here there are surprises: the Rebillot collection of primarily books, for example, also included portraits and prints as historical documents, producing a mélange of art forms within the context of the library.³⁶

But it was more common that this professional interest was at least supplemented, if not superceded by an affective personal relation. Ambroise Firmin-Didot, for example,

³² *Catalogue des Livres de la Bibliothèque de Feu de la Mésangère* (Paris: Maison Silvestre, 1831), vi.

³³ *Catalogue d'une collection de livres & estampes concernant l'histoire de France et tout particulièrement l'histoire de Paris provenant du cabinet de M.L.R. de L...* (Paris: J. Techener, 1855).

³⁴ *Bibliothèque Stanislas Guyard* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1884), 2.

³⁵ *Bibliothèque M. J. La Coste* (Paris: Potier, 1854), v.

³⁶ *Catalogue du cabinet de M.L. R. de L.* “Ce n'est point seulement avec de l'argent qu'on pouvait assembler cette riche et curieuse collection de portraits, dont la plupart ont été graves dans le temps, et d'estampes, Presque toutes contemporaines des événements qu'elles représentent; il fallait encore la patience infatigable et les connaissances historiques de celui qui l'a formée.”v. “It is not with money alone that one could assemble this rich and interesting collection of portraits, of which most were made from life, and prints, almost all of which are contemporary with the events they represent; it required the infatigable patience and historical knowledge of him who assembled it.”

who was a noted publisher and printer (of the family that were the premier publishers of France), collected from both professional involvement and out of personal attraction. As Georges Duplessis wrote, Firmin-Didot began reading classic authors “in the correct and carefully annotated editions. From there to becoming a bibliophile, there is only one step.”³⁷ His love of books became a professional passion. In his desire to be a model publisher he traveled widely to learn his craft and collect beautiful examples.

Similarly, Antoine-Augustin Rénouard (b. 1765), who left his family manufacturing business to become a bookseller because of his passion for books, began collecting as a teenager. He was known for his elegant editions and his extensive library included 4,000 drawings. His love for his books lasted his whole life:

he never stopped loving books for their own sakes. This noble feeling did not abandon him for one moment, even in the middle of the stormiest and most critical periods that he had to traverse.³⁸

Nothing interfered with the pursuit, not even history. As can be seen from the above examples, one can be an *amateur* who develops into a *connoisseur*, or an *amateur* and a *connoisseur* at the same time.

Typical also is the example of Eugène von Wasserman (b. 1870), a Belgian who began collecting in 1888 at the age of eighteen. His love, wrote Georges Vicaire, grew and grew, becoming a “passion.” Despite a business career that took him on many trips to Germany, England and France, he found time to frequent bookstores and to be a founding member of the Société des bibliophiles et iconophiles de Belgique.³⁹

³⁷ *Collection de Ambroise Firmin-Didot*, with introductions by Charles Blanc and Georges Duplessis (Paris: Drouot, 1877), xix.

³⁸ *Bibliothèque Antoine-Augustin Rénouard* (Paris: Potier, 1854), ix. “Il ne cessa d’aimer les livres pour eux-mêmes. Ce noble sentiment ne l’abandonna pas un seul moment, même au milieu des époques les plus orageuses et les plus critiques qu’il eut à traverser.”

³⁹ *Les Livres composant le Cabinet de M. Eugène v. W**** (Brussels, 1913).

M. Albert de la Fizellière (1819-1878), “homme de letters,” founder of *Chronique des beaux-arts* in 1840 and author of *Histoire de la crinoline au temps passé* (1859) also collected books since his childhood. Traveling also figured in his life, but rather than collecting in spite of his travels he collected with his travels in mind. His procedure was not to buy large volumes which he could consult at the Bibliothèque Nationale, but rather to buy smaller books that were hard to find in the library and easy to carry to the country. This is a principle that related to his way of life rather than some other more didactic principle.⁴⁰

There were some *bibliophiles* whose erudition and knowledge was emphasized even if the collection itself did not reflect any professional scholarly interest, as in the case of Guyard or LaCoste. The collection of Baron Jerome Pichon (1812-1896), who lived in the Hôtel Lauzon and supported Baudelaire, among many other writers, for example, stemmed from his love of books and of the past, is particularly singled out, in the preface to his sales catalogue, for his devotion to scholarship and research. Not only taken with the beauty of a book, or an object, Pichon felt compelled to research its provenance and history:

As soon as he acquired a book with an unknown coat of arms, a medal, a ring, a miniature, his first concern was to research the origin and the provenance. His awakened curiosity wanted to know at any price who owned the book, who carved the medal, wore the ring, painted the miniature and what individual it represented. He began searching, he wrote, ferreted, dug around, and when anyone else would have given up, he held firm, continued to look and look and almost always ended by finding.⁴¹

⁴⁰ *Bibliothèque Albert de la Fizellière* (Paris: Aubry, 1878).

⁴¹ *Bibliothèque M le Baron Jérôme Pichon*, preface by Georges Vicaire (Paris: Techener, 1898), v.

“Venait-il d’acquérir un livre à armoiries inconnues, une médaille, une bague, une miniature, son premier soin était d’en rechercher l’origine et la provenance. Sa curiosité éveillée voulait savoir à tout prix à qui appartenu ce livre, qui avait gravé cette médaille, porté cette bague, peint cette miniature et quel personnage elle représentait. Il se mettait en quête, écrivait, furetait, fouillait, et là où tel autre, de guerre lasse, eût lâché prise, lui tenait ferme, cherchait, cherchait encore et finissait presque toujours par trouver.”

This search after origins and provenance defined the *connoisseur*. He wanted to know everything he could about the objects he collected and spent considerable effort in pursuit of this knowledge. It was crucial, however, that this pursuit of information was accompanied by love. Baron Pichon, a writer as well as president of La Société des Bibliophiles Français, had, according to Paul Eudel, riches without equal amongst his books even after a large sale of his holdings. He kept his favorites in an ebony armoire near his bed. He told Eudel that he wanted to die looking for one last time towards his beloved books.⁴² Pichon, whose letter to Georges Vicaire is included in the latter's preface to the catalogue, described his feelings about books as starting with simple adoration and proceeding to knowledge of bindings and provenance later:

Since my earliest youth I have loved, adored books and as all men who love, I loved everything about them, their form and their meaning. Later, I learned to appreciate their bindings and their provenance. What a pleasure to hold in ones hands an elegantly printed book, bound in a binding contemporary with its apparition, giving the proof, by some sort of sign, that it belonged to a famous or appealing individual, and in touching this volume that he touched, read, loved, one enters into a mysterious communication with him."⁴³

The search after origins is not simply for greater understanding. Here there is a community established with the writer of the book, and also with the former owner of the book, in a kind of time travel similar to that of the collector of paintings from different periods who imagined himself in the world not only of the subject of the painting, but in the period of the artist himself. Imagining oneself inside the painting is a strategy exemplified by the art criticism of Diderot whose descriptions of the paintings of Vernet

⁴² Eudel, *L'Hotel Drouot*, 95-96. "Bien souvent il m'a dit: "Je veux mourir en jetant un dernier regard vers mes livres bien-aimés."

⁴³ *Bibliothèque M. le Baron Jérôme Pichon*, ii. "Depuis ma plus tendre jeunesse...j'ai aimé, adoré les livres, et, comme tout homme qui aime, j'ai tout aimé d'eux, le fond et la forme. Plus tard, j'ai appris à apprécier leur reliure et leur provenance. Quel charme de tenir dans ses mains un livre élégamment imprimé, revêtu d'une reliure contemporaine de son apparition, donnant la preuve, par un signe quelconque, qu'il a appartenu à un personnage illustre ou sympathique, et de penser qu'en touchant ce volume qu'il a touché, lu, aimé, on entre avec lui dans une mystérieuse communion."

read as travel accounts.⁴⁴ There is a seeming continuity between the experience of Diderot looking at the painting, and the paths of the people within the painting. This would be similar to the idea of immersing oneself in the story of a book, forgetting for a moment its literary artificiality. Imagining oneself in the world of the first owner of the book is slightly different. Here the book as object is imbued with the past in which it was printed and written. It becomes almost a relic of the past worthy for its object-history more than its content. This aspect of book collecting is typified by the importance of the “first edition” rather than the reprint.

Necessarily all the book collectors included in this group of sales catalogues had books that were valuable as objects, since otherwise there would be no point to the sale. But this aspect tended to be played down in the prefaces in the same way that discussion of money was repressed in the painting sales catalogues. Each of them emphasized, in general, the love of the collector for his collection, rather than its monetary value.

One exception is the preface to the collection of the art critic Paul de Saint-Victor. The preface is explicit that the sales catalogue includes only a part of his collection, because it could only include books of monetary value:

This library numbered more than 12,000 volumes, most of which were in a mediocre condition having served the collector for his studies, and despite the interest that they could offer in this respect, did not merit special mention in a descriptive catalogue where each item should have a value capable of supporting the exorbitant costs of a public sale.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ In his salon of 1767, Diderot enacts a series of promenades through the paintings of Horace Vernet, whom he describes as being his knowledgeable companion. “My companion for these walks was thoroughly familiar with the lie of the land, and knew the best time to take in each rustic scene, and the places best viewed in the morning hours, which were most charming and interesting at sunrise and which at sunset...” Diderot, *Diderot on Art: II. The Salon of 1767*, trans. John Goodman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 87.

⁴⁵ *Bibliothèque Paul de Saint-Victor* (Paris: Porquet, 1882), v. “Cette Bibliothèque comptait plus de 12,000 volumes, la plupart dans une condition médiocre, ayant servi aux études du collecteur, et, malgré l’intérêt qu’ils pouvaient offrir à cet égard, ne méritant peut-être pas de mention spéciale dans un Catalogue

Paul de Saint-Victor is described as himself being opposed to the fetishism of the bibliophile who wants only books of an enormous price or else “little jewels of strange bibliography, isolated burlesques, comic plays, grotesqueries.” This criticism of the extremes of the bibliophilic passion is integral to the tradition itself of book collecting.

Aside from the texts of Flaubert, there are also jokes from within the ranks of the book sales, for example a sales catalogue that is a pure illusion. The archives of the Metropolitan Museum contain one catalogue that, in the tradition of the Flaubertian farce, perpetrated an elaborate hoax. The sales catalogue, “of a very rich but small collection from the collection of M. le comte de Fortsas” (1840) was invented for a purely fictive collection that was mailed out to known bibliophiles. It advertised a sale to be held at the home of the collector. Apparently quite a few prospective clients showed up, only to discover that they had been had. The catalogue advertised an impossibly demanding collector who had only bought books that had never before been read and which existed only in one exemplar: “M. le comte de Fortas only allowed works that were unknown to all bibliographers and cataloguers on his shelves.”⁴⁶ Inserted in the catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum was an unsigned note:

Perpetrated by René Chalons, an author, the catalogue lists 52 items, all unique, as it was stated that the Count would keep no book in his collection if he found it mentioned by any bibliographer. To carry out the latter impression there are gaps. On the day of the sale, collectors, librarians and agents assembled in Binche to learn that the Count was unknown in that normally quiet town. It is believed that there were about 60 copies printed of this bibliographical delicacy.

descriptif, où chaque article doit avoir une valeur capable de supporter les frais exorbitants d’une vente publique.”

⁴⁶ *Bibliothèque M. le Comte J.N.A. Fortas* (Mons, 1840). “M. le comte de Fortas n’admettait sur ses tablettes que des ouvrages inconnus à tous les bibliographes et les catalogistes. C’était sa règle invariable.”

Necessarily each and every one of the 52 books listed is an invention of René Chalons, in this case, the catalogue of a collection authored all by one man. Here each book is valued not for what is in it, since no one had read any of them, but for its extreme rarity-its collectable value alone. The books listed included old manuscripts, unknown works by known authors and so on. Since none of these books really existed, it is a catalogue without a collection, the idea of the group being its only reality.

The issue of collecting either for monetary value or inherent beauty is one that was constantly in view in Parisian commodity culture. While usually the sales-catalogue preface is too dangerous a place to voice such concerns in that it exists by virtue of the art market, there is a concern to distinguish the “true” *amateur* from the speculator, even here. For example, in his preface to Firmin-Didot’s collection, Charles Blanc explained that it is the beauty and freshness of a first state print that is valued rather than the rarity per se. Furthermore, even here, rather than being maniacs and egotists as La Bruyère depicts them, *amateurs* are “clear-sighted men whose souls are open to the feeling for beautiful things.”⁴⁷ Such denials, to be sure, have a market function too. Also, the aesthetic value of a print contributes strongly to the market value of this kind of luxury commodity.

The Book as Friend

For the most part, like the *amateur*, the *bibliophile* treated the works in his collection as his friends. The 1856 sales catalogue of A.A. Fée (1789-1874), professor of

⁴⁷ *Collection Ambroise Firmin-Didot*, viii. “des hommes éclairés dont l’âme est ouverte au sentiment des belles choses.”

botany and creator, in 1819, of the Société de l'Académie de médecine, is wide ranging and general. Fée also wrote a description of his collection entitled *Voyage autour de ma Bibliothèque* (1856). In this text, in which he discusses the authors that make up his collection of some 2500 volumes, he introduces the idea that these books are his relatives: "There are some toward which one feels attracted by such numerous sympathies that one is tempted to see in them relative worthy of all our respect and our love."⁴⁸ He continues this idea of family saying that this group, "a sort of family group", is one that one can turn to for advice and consolation. "Listen to them speak, some with gaiety and others with gravity: all will tell you, well, what you should do to be wise and happy."⁴⁹ This extreme closeness to the books is striking, but as we have seen from the *amateurs*, it was part of the discourse of collecting. Here, it is the texts of the books that "speak" to Fée, rather their "objectness."

The writer and art critic Jules Claretie (1840-1913) loved his books for their beauty as objects, and also for their qualities as friends. Writing his own preface for the sale of his books, he bemoaned the fact that while others will only disdain them, or idly leaf through their pages, he spends his life with them.⁵⁰ His books are his friends that

⁴⁸ A.L.Fée, *Voyage autour de ma Bibliothèque* (Paris: Veuve Berger-Levrault, 1856), 1. "Il en est vers lesquels on se sent attiré par les sympathies si nombreuses qu'on serait tenté de voir en eux des parents dignes de tout notre respect et de tout notre amour."

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1 "Ecouter-les parler, les uns avec enjouement, les autres avec gravité: tous vous diront, en bons termes, ce qu'il faudrait que vous fissiez pour être sage et heureux."

⁵⁰ *Bibliothèque Jules Claretie* (Paris: H. Manuel, 1918), v. "Mes pauvres livres, ces gens-là vous dédaigneraient ou, tout au plus, vous feuilletant d'une main distraite, perdraient une heure à peine à vous regarder, pour tuer le temps. Moi, j'ai passé ma vie avec vous." "My poor books, these people will disdain you, or at best, leafing through your pages distractedly, will lose an hour barely looking at you, to kill some time. I spent my life with you."

remain young, while he grows older.⁵¹ He loves them both for the secrets and consolations of their texts, but also for their physical presence:

I love books for themselves, like a collector of stones loves jewels for their brilliance and their color. I love them for their binding. It is my pleasure to handle them, to open them, to contemplate them. The book is sweet to caress. Cuvillier Fleury, having become blind, felt consoled by passing his hand over the well bound Cicero that was his prize for the big competition, this Cicero that he could no longer read, but that he caressed still like a lover.⁵²

Again, as for the *amateur*, we have entered the realm of erotic desire and tactile appreciation for the object of one's collection. This link with the *amateur* was made explicit by Claretie when he compared his love for books with the love one could have for paintings. "My library is my painting gallery, and my spirit and my eyes are equally gladdened and charmed by the spring green of Lafontaine, the tender blue of Lamartine, the flamboyant red of Michelet, the sovereign purple of Victor Hugo."⁵³ It is important that the writings themselves give us the colors of the texts, rather than the book as object. At the same time, his love is specifically one that he allies with the collecting of art "Those who do not love (and I mean wildly love) a painting, a statue, some piece of faience or of crystal, those who have never been taken by a beautiful passion for a mutilated marble, a fresco half erased, a manuscript that is three quarters crumbling, those people will never understand me."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid., v. "Mes livres! Ce sont aussi des amis qui m'ont laissé vieillir et qui sont demeurés jeunes." "My books! They are also my friends who have let me grow old and who have stayed young."

⁵² Ibid., vii. "J'aime les livres pour eux-mêmes, comme un collectionneur de pierreries aime les bijoux pour leur éclat et leur couleur. Je les aime pour leur reliure. Ce m'est un plaisir de les manier, de les ouvrir, de les contempler. Le livre est doux à caresser. Cuvillier Fleury, devenu aveugle, éprouvait une consolation à passer sa main sur le Cicéron en reliure pleine qui avait été son prix au grand Concours, ce Cicéron qu'il ne pouvait plus lire, mais qu'il caressait encore comme un amoureux."

⁵³ Ibid., viii "Ma bibliothèque c'est ma galerie de tableaux, et mon esprit et mes yeux sont également réjouis et charmés par le vert printanier de La Fontaine, le bleu tendre de Lamartine, le rouge flamboyant de Michelet, le pourpre souverain de Victor Hugo."

⁵⁴ Ibid., v. "Ceux qui n'aiment pas (j'entends à la folie) un tableau, une statue, quelque débris de faïence ou de cristal: ceux qui jamais ne se sont pris d'une belle passion pour un marbre mutilé, une fresque effacée à demi, un manuscrit aux trois quarts rongé, ceux-là ne me comprendront point."

A more literally painterly library was found in the collection of Paul de Saint-Victor, which also included photographic proofs and reproductions of paintings and drawings from different museums of Europe. A huge group of more than 12,000 books were sorted through to find examples fine enough to sell. He collected books because he “loved them.” He described himself as a “gourmand de livres,” however he was against the fetishism of those collectors who only wanted books that are sumptuously bound.⁵⁵ Similarly, as we saw, he was against odd and curious books. His collection was much less a collection of objects than of texts, and it is in this regard that he tended to be more of a savant and writer than an *amateur*. Paul Eudel described Saint-Victor as a cold and haughty man. Beyond this, however, he described the process by which Saint-Victor acquired his library: “Devoured by a strong desire to learn, Saint-Victor first bought his books greedily, but he quickly recognized that in everything excess is a vice. Stuffed with erudition, his taste became more selective.”⁵⁶

Another collector whose avidity for books was part of his more general love of art was le comte Octave de Behagne (1827-1879), who was described in an unsigned preface as a “distinguished amateur” looking for every manifestation of art:

[he] was sensitive, passionately taken with things of the past. He was not indifferent to any branch of collecting. Since his youth, M. Octave de Béhagne experienced the irresistible attraction of art; he looked for it in all its manifestations, in all its varieties. He pleased himself, to the last, by grouping around himself the relics of a time gone by. Without any exclusive preoccupation, gifted with a well mastered eclecticism, M. de Béhagne, loved all beautiful or truly interesting art but his preference was always for his library.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Bibliothèque Paul de Saint-Victor*, preface by P.L. Jacob (Paris: Porquet, 1882), vii.

⁵⁶ Eudel, 191. “Devoré par un vif désir de s’instruire, Saint-Victor acheta d’abord les livres en gourmand; mais il reconnut bien vite qu’en toutes choses l’excès est un vice. Bourré d’érudition, son goût s’épura.”

⁵⁷ *Bibliothèque de M. le Comte Octave de Béhagne* (Paris: Ch. Porquet, 1880), ix. “[il] était un délicat, passionnément épris des choses du passé. Aucune des branches de la curiosité ne lui était indifférente. Dès sa jeunesse, M. Octave de Béhagne avait subi l’attraction irrésistible de l’art ; il le recherchait dans toutes ses manifestations, dans tous ses caprices. Il s’est plu, jusqu’au dernier jour, à grouper autour de lui les reliques d’un temps qui n’est plus. Sans préoccupation exclusive, et doué d’un éclectisme bien entendu, M.

There is a unity between collecting art and collecting books in so far as both art and books are tied to the past. Béhagne sought “the relics of a time gone by” filtered through his delicacy and passion. The object of his search, interesting and beautiful art of the past, seems stereotypically feminine in its irresistible attractiveness and its capriciousness.

The Book as Beautiful Object

As we have seen, a book can be considered both as an object and as a text.⁵⁸ In a collection of books, it was often the object that was emphasized. Beautiful editions, fine bindings, rare examples, were important elements. The close relationship between the text and the book as object was remarked upon in the preface to the collection of Ambroise Firmin-Didot, one of the major book publishers of the nineteenth-century:

For all souls really gifted with literary curiosity it is a pleasure to read and to study one's own books: it is an even greater pleasure to own books in perfect condition, large margins, immaculate, bound by the hand of Le Gascon, Duseuil, Derome or Bauzonnet.⁵⁹

Here, the reading and the studying of the texts of the books is enhanced by the beauty of the book as object. This is certainly the case with the “illustrated” book which often formed a large part (including, of course, illuminated manuscripts) of these collections. Renouard's collection, for example, included precious manuscripts decorated with miniatures; vellum manuscripts; books printed with wood blocks; and others decorated

de Béhagne aimait dans les art tout ce qui est beau ou véritablement intéressant mais ses préférences se sont toujours reportées sur sa bibliothèque.”

⁵⁸ As Susan Stewart pointed out, “before mass production, form and content presented an illusion of wholeness.” Stewart, 34. According to her, the book collector is afflicted with a nostalgia for the unity of signifier and signified.

⁵⁹ *Catalogue illustré des Manuscrits et Imprimés. Firmin-Didot* (Paris, 1878), vii. “Pour tous les esprits vraiment doués de la curiosité littéraire, c'est un bonheur de lire et d'étudier dans ses propres livres : c'est un bonheur plus grand de posséder ces livres dans un état parfait de conservation, grands de marges, immaculés, reliés de la main d'un le Gascon, d'un Duseuil, d'un Derome ou d'un Bauzonnet.”

with drawings and prints by such artists as Saint-Aubin, Moreau and Prud'hon.⁶⁰ Eugène von Wassermann followed a specific goal in his collecting, which was to bring together the most interesting examples of illustrated books and bindings from the fifteenth-century to the first half of the nineteenth.⁶¹

One collection where the book was most self-consciously an “object” was that of M.F. Garde, who was the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *L’Imprimerie*. A professional in printing, he assembled his collection in order to gather together the best examples of his métier, as a kind of a monument. Not simply a practitioner of the craft, he was a man of love and taste (and thus an *amateur*), and the preface to his collection argues that it could have been assembled only by him:

None other than him would perhaps have been able [to unite this collection], since it required all at the same time special knowledge, taste in making choices, ardor and perseverance in research, and the advantage of a daily relationship with printers and editors.⁶²

This specificity of necessary talents, it should be noted, created an ensemble that reflected not his personality, but his art. It was an oeuvre in its own right that became, according to the preface, a veritable museum of graphic art. Interestingly, this so-called museum served a particular public – the practitioner:

This collection of out of print editions, for the most part impossible to find today, is a veritable museum of the graphic arts, in which the artist, the printer, the typesetter, the paper maker, the binder, all the artisans who work to make the book, can find the best models and the most fertile inspiration.⁶³

⁶⁰ *Bibliothèque Antoine-Augustin Renouard* (Paris: Potier, 1854), xi-xii.

⁶¹ *Les Livres Composant le Cabinet de M.Eugène W****, ii.

⁶² *Bibliothèque M.F. Garde* (Paris, 1801), vi. “Nul autre que lui n’y fût peut-être parvenu, car il fallait réunit, tout à la fois, les connaissances spéciales, le goût dans le choix, l’ardeur et la persévérance dans les recherches, et l’avantage des relations journalières avec les Imprimeurs et les Éditeurs.”

⁶³ *Ibid.*, viii “Cette collection d’éditions épuisées, et la plupart introuvable aujourd’hui, est un véritable musée des arts graphiques, où l’artiste, l’imprimeur, le fondeur en caractères, le fabricant de papiers, le relieur, tous les industriels qui concourent à la confection du livre, peuvent trouver les meilleurs modèles et les plus fécondes inspirations.”

Here it is a question of rare books whose form as well as content document the fashioning of a book. The rare book was a combination of these two aspects. Books, which after the advent of printing, were meant to be available to all who wished them, were in reality issued in limited numbers. When a book became old, fewer and fewer exemplars of that book were known to exist, and the book as object, as opposed to text, became more and more sought after. But, nonetheless, it was one of an identical series of texts. Insofar, however, as it was beautifully bound, or embellished in some other way, the book as object became unique, and in this way more like a painting.

The particularity of each book affords a pleasure to its owner. In describing how Sauvageot came to be a bibliophile as well as a great art collector, Le Roux de Lincy emphasized the pleasure of owning a book:

No one was more capable than him of appreciating the happiness that one feels in owning a beautiful book, in touching it at one's ease, in examining all its details, in appreciating its worth, and even, to put this in relief, its smallest faults.⁶⁴

Here touching, closely examining, getting to know the value and little flaws of the beautiful book is a process that very much resembles getting to know a new lover.

While the collection of M. Garde was sold at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, that of Loys Delteil, another professional in the field, was sold in 1928, more than a hundred years later. And yet, the preface by Charles Saunier touches on many of the same themes as the earlier catalogue. Delteil was an engraver, as well as the publisher of the standard reference works on prints and his collection came from his total

⁶⁴ *Bibliothèque de M. Charles Sauvageot*, with a biographical note by M le Roux de Lincy (Paris: Potier, 1860), xxvi. "Personne mieux que lui n'était capable d'apprécier le bonheur qu'on éprouve à posséder un beau livre, à le toucher à son aise, à l'examiner dans tous ses détails, à en apprécier la valeur et même à bien en connaître, pour les atténuer, les plus petits défauts."

immersion in his chosen field. The preface compares his attitude towards prints with other *amateurs* feelings towards paintings in the same heightened emotional tone:

Our friend profoundly loved printmaking. From having practiced this art himself when he was young, he knew every particular. He responded (trembled) in front of a beautiful print the way others were moved before a painting, or upon hearing a symphony or a noble poem.⁶⁵

The love that he felt for his *métier*, which he expressed partly through his collecting practice, was not something he kept to himself. In the same way that M. Garde opened up his collection to professionals fascinated by books, Delteil also shared his:

Loys Delteil did not enjoy it as an egotist. It was his pleasure to show it to initiates that he united two times a month, on Monday evenings, during the winter and spring seasons. The amateurs admired, researched a detail, a circumstance; the professionals, Leheutre, Pierre-Louis Moreau, Beurdeley, Dauchez, Chahire investigated the needle strokes, the way that the plate had been formed, the accuracy of an impression.⁶⁶

This receiving of people on particular evenings was a long established kind of salon tradition that was linked more to the private collection than with the public museum. As I will discuss in the following chapters, conversation, sociability and sharing in connection with a collection, be it of paintings, of books or of prints, is part of the very grammar of the organizational structure of these collections. That is, they were arranged so as to seem to converse amongst themselves as well as to be part of a sociable atmosphere, as opposed to the more formally didactic function of the public collection.

⁶⁵ *Catalogue des Estampes Modernes Loys Delteil* (Paris: Drouot, 1928), 1. "Notre ami aimait profondément la gravure. Pour avoir pratiqué lui-même cet art en ses années de jeunesse, il en connaissait toutes les particularités. Il vibrail devant une belle épreuve comme d'autres s'émeuvent devant un tableau, à l'audition d'une symphonie ou d'un noble poème."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* i. "Loys Delteil n'en jouissait pas en égoïste. C'était son plaisir de la montrer aux intimes qu'il réunissait deux fois par mois, le lundi soir, durant les saisons d'hiver et de printemps. Les amateurs admiraient, s'enquéraient d'un détail, une circonstance ; les professionnels, les Leheutre, les Pierre-Louis Moreau, les Beurdeley, les Dauchez, les Chahire recherchaient le coup d'outil, la manière dont la planche été établie, la franchise d'un triage."

It is true of many of these bibliophiles that they received friends to show them their books. Jérôme Pichon, for example, welcomed visitors who wished to consult his library, as well as actively helping them, serving, as Georges Vicaire observed, as a kind of tour guide who was useful for both the knowledgeable savant and the most humble of readers.⁶⁷

Bibliophile as Author : Remaking the Book

Collectors looked for beautiful editions and they also sought to embellish the very objects that they collected by commissioning drawings, decorating the covers with paintings and so on.⁶⁸ The books of these bibliophiles, that is, were not only collections of texts put together by the author or editor; they were made even more particular as a collection by the collector himself.

One of the primary signs of the appropriation of the book and the remaking thereof was the practice of stamping the book, and indeed the drawing or print, with the sign of the collector. This marking of the book is remarked upon in the preface to the collection of Paul de Saint Victor:

This ideal library, with which he surrounded himself in his fantastic imaginings of scholar, poet and artist, only exists as a beginning in the Library that he has left, but it will keep, at least, his memory, since all the books described in this

⁶⁷ *Bibliothèque Jérôme Pichon*, viii.

⁶⁸ Susan Stewart cites D'Israeli on the ornamentation of books: "A celebrated amateur was Grollier;...He embellished their exterior with taste and ingenuity. They are gilded and stamped with peculiar neatness; the compartments on the binding are drawn and painted, with different inventions of subjects, analogous to the works themselves; and they are further adorned by that amiable inscription, *Jl. Grollierii et amicorum!*—purporting that these literary treasures were collected for himself and for his friends." (Isaac D'Israeli, *Curiosities of Literature*, 2 Vols. (Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1835), I,5 in Stewart, 34.

Catalogue carry his *ex libris*, these two masks, which are, in some way, the emblem of his masterpiece as a writer.⁶⁹

The books thus became symptoms of his literary imaginings and will forever carry the mark of his imagination and identity by virtue of the stamp with which they are marked.

Even more explicitly and self-consciously intermeshed with his identity were the books of Octave Uzanne. In the preface that he wrote for his own sale he asserts that even if he wished to remain an anonymous seller his books would give him away. His catalogue is coquettishly called *Bibliothèque d'un écrivain et bibliophile parisien dont le nom n'est pas un mystère* but is decorated with his own *ex libris* which includes his name. He argues that each of the books bear the mark of his ownership by virtue of their dedications, their bindings or the letters inserted in them:

The books denounce him. There are not twenty out of one hundred who don't announce it [his identity], whether by their bindings, by their dedications, by the letters inserted in them, by the innumerable series of original drawings, of unique pieces, of prints and editions which are enriched by what he conceived, wrote and almost entirely executed for more than fifteen years.⁷⁰

This remaking of the book into one's own, which in the case of Octave Uzanne, was particularly pronounced, was common to many book collectors. Many of the *bibliophiles* sought to decorate their books. The Comte de la Bédoyère, for example, who was in many ways an exemplary *bibliophile*, added drawings and engravings to his books. He was an officer in the royal guard of Louis XVIII and Charles X and was very discerning

⁶⁹ *Bibliothèque Paul de Saint-Victor*, xiii. "Cette Bibliothèque idéale, dont il s'entourait dans ses fantasques imaginations de savant, de poète et d'artiste, existe donc à peine en germe dans la Bibliothèque qu'il a laissée, mais elle conservera du moins son souvenir, puisque tous les livres décrits dans le Catalogue portent son *ex libris*, ces deux masques, qui sont, en quelque sorte, l'emblème de son chef-d'œuvre d'écrivain."

⁷⁰ *Bibliothèque d'un écrivain et bibliophile parisien*, xi. "Ses livres le dénoncent. Il n'en est pas vingt sur cent qui ne l'affichent, soit par les reliures, soit par les dédicaces, soit par les lettres insérées, soit surtout par les innombrables séries de dessins originaux, de pièces uniques, d'épreuves et d'états de tirages dont se trouvent enrichis ceux qu'il a conçus, écrits et presque entièrement exécutés depuis plus de quinze années."

in his choice of books. He loved his books, so much so that his sales catalogue includes a formal adieu to them:

Goodbye to my books, my friends at each hour, my only and enchanting ambition, my task and my rest! Goodbye to my books, companions in my springtime, consolations in my winter, the intimate celebration under my domestic roof and the sunlight of my last days!...O my chaste and final loves, I take leave of you, I am going to die!⁷¹

This passionate relationship with the books is completely consistent with the culture of the *amateur* of paintings that we saw earlier. Clearly, this was not simply a scholarly approach to the text, for this collector sought to adorn his books, as perhaps he might other ‘amours’ of his life. “When his book was well chosen, well folded by being restored, he wanted to embellish it, and he spared no expense to ornament his precious volumes.”⁷² By “embellish”, we are to understand new linings as well as illustrations. “He only understood books enriched with engravings, prints, portraits, original drawings, colored drawings.”⁷³ Thus the book, for la Bédoyère, becomes a precious object, a beloved, amalgam of text, drawing, print and binding.

This idea of the book as artwork is evident in the collection of Arthur Meyer (1833-1924), the monarchist editor of *Gaulois*, whose books included some whose binding had been painted by nineteenth-century French artists:

Some painters, among them Gérôme, Roll, Roybet, etc., painted on the covers actual paintings, and one curious example of this series is the copy of Emile

⁷¹ *Bibliothèque de la Bédoyère* (Paris, 1837), viii. “Adieu mes livres, mes amis de toutes les heures, ma seule et charmante ambition, ma tâche et mon repos ! Adieu mes livres, compagnons de mes printemps, consolations de mes hivers, la fête intime de mon toit domestique et le rayon de mes derniers jours !....ô mes chastes et dernières amours, je prends congé de vous, je vais mourir ! ”

⁷² *Ibid.*, viii “Quand son livre était bien choisi, bien plié, alors par un nouveau travail, il cherchait à l’embellir, et rien ne lui coûtait pour l’ornement de ces précieux volumes..”

⁷³ *Ibid.*, viii. “Il ne comprenait que les livres enrichis de gravures, d’estampes, de portraits, de dessins originaux, de dessins coloriés.”

Zola's *The Earth* decorated on the covers with two compositions by the painter Claude Monet.⁷⁴

This was not the only such book in his collection. There was a French translation of Dante's *Inferno* with, according to the catalogue, original drawings of the engraved plates by Doré, an ink drawing of the *Gates of Hell* by Rodin, and a portrait of Dante by A.E. Lapi. Similarly a French translation of Goethe's *Faust* had inserted into it, the original illustrational drawings that Delacroix had done for the edition. According to the catalogue each book had at least one drawing. The plan of the collection was to choose "to choose beautiful editions of the most famous works, and make them exceptional by adding drawings or autographs which relate to the books."⁷⁵ Thus not only did each book become a collection in its own right but the collection of books, the library, became a place where looking and reading were intermeshed.

Organization of the Library: The Fictive Self

The library as a mélange of documents parallels the book as an amalgam. Considered part of the library of Octave Uzanne were also autograph letters and portraits of Baudelaire, Gautier, Alfred de Vigny, Delacroix, Hugo, Champfleury and so. He had sixteen watercolors by Felicien Rops that were done for *l'Album des cents croquis pour réjouir les honnêtes gens*.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Bibliothèque Arthur Meyer* (Paris: Hôtel des Commissaires-Priseurs, 1924) entry 532. "Quelques peintres, dont Gérôme, Roll, Roybet, etc. ont exécuté sur les plats de reliures, de véritables tableaux, et un des curieux morceau de cette série est l'exemplaire de Émile Zola, *La Terre* (n. 532), orné sur les plats, de deux compositions du peintre Claude Monet."

⁷⁵ Ibid, v. "les belles éditions des ouvrages les plus célèbres, en former des exemplaires exceptionnels en y ajoutant des dessins ou des autographs se rapportant à ces livres."

⁷⁶ *Quelques-Uns des livres contemporains... du cabinet d'un écrivain bibliophile parisien, Louis-Octave Uzanne* (Paris: Durel, 1894).

Another example (out of many) of a completely heterogeneous collection was that of the notary Eugène Lebigne who, as one might expect from his profession as notary, had books on math and law. However he also had books on the fine arts, print-making, portraiture, costumes, caricatures, collections of art, literature and history, the Greek, Latin and French classics, illustrated books of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, numerous groups of “vignettes” and original drawings, and beautifully bound books.⁷⁷

Similarly, the Baron Pichon had a widely varied group of books in his library, including, just to name a few that were highlighted in the preface, a twelfth century manuscript, *Occupation de l'âme pendant le saint sacrifice de la messe*; a folio manuscript, *Mémoire sur la réformation de la police de France* (1749), which belonged to Louis XV and was decorated with twenty-eight ink drawings by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin; and a *Discours sur la peinture*, dedicated to Mme la marquise de Pompadour. There were books on cooking, art collections, gymnastic exercises, falcon-raising, hunting, poetry, agriculture, history, geography. Each book was lovingly described, often with its beautiful leather binding and the various prominent heraldic signs that embellish it. Typical in this regard is *Les Horaie in laudem beatae Virginis Mariae*:

pretty manuscript on very fine vellum, which must have been written for Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre, of which the binding of olive colored leather, with insets of small medals of laurel leaves decorated with daisies, oeillets and sunflowers, etc. is altogether similar in its ornamentation to bindings attributed to the Queen Marguerite.⁷⁸

The provenance, the binding, the decoration, was as important as the book itself, which was a prayer book praising the Virgin Mary.

⁷⁷ *Bibliothèque M. Eugène Lebigne* (Paris: Labitte, 1889), frontispiece.

⁷⁸ *Bibliothèque Jérôme Pichon*, xii. “joli manuscrit sur vélin très fin, qui a dû être écrit pour Marguerite de Valois, Reine de Navarre, et dont la reliure en maroquin olive, portant sur le dos et sur les plats des petits médaillons de feuilles de laurier, ornés de marguerites, œillets, soleils, etc, est tout à fait semblable comme ornementation aux reliures attribuées à la Reine Marguerite.”

We are brought back to the idea of the library as space of art. Alexandre Dumas (1824-1895), who wrote the preface for the sale of his collection in 1892, made this very point:

the principal drawings of the collection are not on the walls, but in the books, there we will find many, of Cochin, Eisen, Gravelot, Moreau, Fragonard, Marilier, Monnet, Monsiau, Quverdo, etc.”⁷⁹

I will discuss this library further in the next chapter because there is an interesting photograph of Dumas by Dornac within his *cabinet de travail*.

One more example of a collection, sold as a “library,” in which books were joined by all kinds of different artistic production, was that of Philippe Burty. The sale, in 1891, highlighted in particular some manuscripts purported to be by Leonardo and twenty-five drawings by Eugène Fromentin. But there was much else:

Presented to the public by justifiably esteemed experts, his books, his prints, his paintings, his ivories, his albums, his bronzes, will find natural heirs ... which are like a big family, a bit at odds at times, but which comes together as a group once the hour of combat rings.⁸⁰

This surprisingly varied list of books and prints and paintings and ivories and albums and bronzes is visually evident in the photographs of Dornac, where in library after library we can see this mix of art forms. The preface to the catalogue, by Maurice Tournoux, sounds strongly the note of identity and the interrelationship of personality and collection, quoting the Goncourts’ opinion that the quality of things around a person is the measure of the quality of that person.⁸¹ Also of great interest to us is that, among his collected

⁷⁹ *Estampes et Livres Alexandre Dumas* (Paris: L. Conquet, 1892), 51. “Ce n’est point sur les murs que sont les principaux dessins de la collection, mais dans les livres; là nous en trouverons plusieurs certains, de Cochin, Eisen, Gravelot, Moreau, Fragonard, Marilier, Monnet, Monsiau, Queverdo, etc.”

⁸⁰ *Bibliothèque Philippe Burty* (Paris : Paul, Lituard et Guillemin, 1891), v. “Présentés aux public par des experts justement estimés, ses livres, ses estampes, ses tableaux, ses ivoires, ses albums, ses bronzes vont aller trouver les héritiers naturels... qui forment comme une grande famille, un peu divisée parfois, mais rassemblée au grand complet lorsque sonne l’heure du combat.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.* v.

books, there was a large collection of sales catalogues including the sales of Albert Goupil (1888), E. Hoschedé (1875), Sécretan (1889) and the duc d'Aumale (1862) just to name a few.

This manner of organizing a collection, in which categories of artistic production were not neatly separated out as in a museum, but intermingled, with drawings found within books and paintings decorating the outsides of books, is central to the notion of a library, or indeed any collection as a consciously constructed artifact. Rather than a scholarly archive displaying an objective body of knowledge, these libraries of nineteenth-century France embodied the constructedness of knowledge. That is, there was embodied in these libraries a recognition of the subjectivity of knowledge. Rather than being organized around some “objective” system, the books and drawings and prints of these collectors are arranged and indeed collected almost biographically. The very idiosyncrasies of the principles of organization are related to the keen sense of identification with their library that these collectors felt.⁸²

⁸² Stewart argues that the “principals of organization” of a collection reveal what a collection is about. See 154-166.

CHAPTER 4:

THE CABINET DE TRAVAIL: THE *AMATEUR* AT WORK

The *cabinet de travail*, the room in which book collectors most often kept their collections, was, in late nineteenth-century France, a specifically male interior space designed for both work and reception of visitors. The collection as it was represented within this space played a crucial role in an active life. This space of collection, that is, did not represent some kind of dream-like escape from the social realities of Paris, but was itself a social space that enacted sociability within its very organization, and which incorporated art within that idea of sociability and work.

Just as the *amateur* lived in opposition to the compartmentalization of time that modern life demanded, so, as we began to see in the previous chapter, did he confound other categories as well. The *cabinet de travail* was a specifically heterogeneous space that complicated the separation of work and leisure, private and public and also other categories. The collection of the *cabinet de travail* is best exemplified by the remade book, and as I shall further argue, the palette, and not, for example, the fashionable bibelot.

This chapter first discusses the literature on the *cabinet de travail* itself in home decoration manuals. Secondly it turns to the photographic representation of this space particularly in the work of Dornac, where the *amateur* was set in relationship to his collection.¹ I stress the interaction between collector and collection as it is seen in these photographs and suggest they proposed a specifically dialogic and sociable relationship between the art and the *amateur*. I briefly compare a Dornac photograph of Ludovic

¹ Dornac was the professional name of a photographer for whom no other name is known.

Halévy (1834-1908) with a group of photographs taken by Degas in the same period, which suggest an even more radical interpenetration of art and person. Finally, I turn to the photographic and textual discussion of one particular *cabinet de travail*, that of Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896), who was also the subject of several Dornac photographs. This space was represented in his journals, in his book *House of the Artist*, and photographically by several photographers. This discussion addresses the discourse of color as it arises in the texts of Goncourt. Color, as he used it within his home, and as it was generally discussed in home decoration manuals of the time, was considered a relational system. That is, one color was never considered simply on its own, but always in relation to other colors. The way that colors were viewed as “talking to one another” is strikingly similar to the way that art works within a collection were understood. This discourse of sociability forms the principal theme of the chapter.

Case Study of One Space of Collection: *The Cabinet de Travail*.

As defined in the 1876 Littré dictionary, *cabinet*’s first meaning is a small, enclosed room which serves various purposes. Its second meaning is linked to work: “Room to which one retires to work,”² and its sixth meaning is a place in which objects of study or curiosity are exhibited. In this sense, the *cabinet de travail* was very much linked to the *cabinet d’amateur*.

The cabinet d’amateur was the space in which art collections were displayed before the advent of museums. As it developed in the eighteenth century, it changed

² Littré, s.v. “cabinet.” “Pièce où l’on se retire pour travailler.”

from a small room or closet into a small reception room in which art was exhibited.³ As I discuss below, many of the relational ideas of organization of the fin-de-siècle *amateurs* originated in this aristocratic interior.⁴ It is important to note, however, that what was in the eighteenth century a space of retreat, became, in the houses of the late nineteenth-century, also a place of work.

The *cabinet de travail* was a space common in late nineteenth-century France. It was described in 1890 in a decorating guide by Ris-Paquot in this way:

It is there that the master of the house receives his intimate friends, there that he gives audience to his business visitors, that he takes care of the household expenses.

Whether one adopts one style or another, the furniture should always include a table or a desk, a bookcase, a secretary, a medal-holder, armchairs and sofa without forgetting a big rug. The draperies (or cloth wall-covering), door hanging, curtains, mirror, chimney decorations and paintings, terra cottas etc. complete it. A console with a marble top would fit very well⁵

Thus, it is clear that the *cabinet de travail* was a male space, that it was a space for receiving guests, and particularly male guests, that it was a space for working and that, importantly for us, it required objects of collection such as paintings and sculptures to complete it. Sometimes, in an apartment not large enough to include a separate room for this study, the “chamber de monsieur” had the characteristics of a *cabinet de travail* with the addition of a bed. This was the case in the home design manual by Emile Cardon

³ See Colin B. Bailey, “Conventions of the Eighteenth-Century Cabinet de Tableaux: Blondel d’Azincourt’s *La première idée de la curiosité*,” *The Art Bulletin* 69,3 (September 1987): 431–447.

⁴ For the transition from cabinet d’amateur display to museum installation see Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*.

⁵ Oscar Edmond Ris-Paquot, *L’Art de Batir, Meubler et Entretenir sa Maison* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1890), 210. “C’est là que le maître de la maison reçoit ses amis intimes, là qu’il donne audience aux visiteurs pour affaires, qu’il règle les comptes de la maison./Que l’on adopte l’un ou l’autre style, le mobilier se composera toujours d’une table ou d’un bureau, d’une bibliothèque, d’un secrétaire, d’un médaillier, de fauteuils et d’un canapé, sans oublier un grand tapis. Les tentures, portières, rideaux, glace garniture de cheminée et tableaux, terres cuites, etc. le compléteront. Une console avec dessus de marbre y trouve fort bien sa place.”

which noted that everything appropriate for a “little curiosity room” organized by an *amateur* would be perfect for the bedroom of a man.⁶ Thus a bookshelf, a worktable in waxed dark walnut, a fireplace with a Persian rug in front, as well as artworks such as portrait busts and prints and drawings were the recommended furnishings.

This space, in which the art of the past, collected heterogeneously around the room, fueled the production of literary work of the future through the persona of the artist or writer, was extensively documented in a series of photographs taken in the 1890s by Dornac.

Dornac: Photographer of *Nos Contemporains chez eux*

The *cabinet de travail* is the setting for a large number of photographs that Dornac took for his series *Nos Contemporains Chez Eux* which appeared in the 1890s in book form and separately, outside of the series, in issues of *Le Monde illustré* and *La Revue encyclopedique*. Portraits of such literary celebrities as Pierre Loti and Joris-Karl Huysmans, stage personalities including Sarah Bernhardt and Cocquelin Cadet as well as other notables of the day were photographed by Dornac at their homes. This group of portraits forms part of the rich tradition of photographic, pictorial and literary dictionaries of notable contemporary Parisians. Whereas earlier photographic attempts used pose, lighting and detail to create an impression of character, Dornac’s contribution was to place his subjects within their home settings. The theater of gesture was supplemented by the theatrics of the interior.

⁶ Emile Cardon, *L’Art au Foyer Domestique*, 98.

Photographic portraiture had become of central importance from the earliest practice of the medium. From the first, people were willing to endure being held in place because of the long exposure times in order to acquire a representation of themselves or their loved ones, and portrait photography became a more and more visible commercial enterprise. As documented by Elizabeth Anne McCauley, the number of photographic businesses in Paris rose from 56 in 1848 to 207 in 1860.⁷ She focused in particular on the practice of Disderi whose work was emblematic of both the pervasiveness of photographic portraiture and the burgeoning popularity of portraits of celebrities.⁸ Disderi was known for his invention of the *carte de visite*, which he patented in 1854. These small (6x9 cm) photographs were taken by the thousands and included both ordinary people and well-known subjects as well. The celebrity portraits were collected and traded and stored in albums that one's visitors could leaf through. Alongside this *carte-de-visite* phenomenon was the increasing interest in larger, cabinet photographs of notable personalities. The tradition of engraving contemporary eminent figures translated easily into photographic collections of "Les Contemporains." Disderi published his own *Galerie des contemporains* in 1857, and Nadar and Carjat also issued various such albums including one to which they both contributed in 1877.⁹ This collecting of portraits of celebrities is something that Alexandre Dumas complained about:

Formerly when people gave their portraits...they were so valuable...Now all that is past...All kinds of people, who are the most indifferent to you, include you in

⁷ Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *A.A.E. Disderi and the Carte de Visite Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁸ As Roger Cardinal notes in an article on Nadar, the ideology of celebrity evolved "out of a certain post-revolutionary conception of the singular being, nexus of thrilling propensities and dynamic impulses, which, fertilized by the ideas of Rousseau, heroically incarnated in Bonaparte and aesthetically nurtured by the *petits romantiques* of the 1830's was finally institutionalized within a journalism addicted to 'cultural gossip' and the ties between art and biography. "Nadar and the Photographic Portrait in Nineteenth-century France," in Graham Clarke, ed. *The Portrait in Photography* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992), 6-24. (6)

⁹ *Album de la galerie contemporaine: biographies et portraits* (Paris: Revue illustrée, 1876-1877).

their collections; you and your confreres, those of the art which you practice... You are arranged like a collection of butterflies or moths, only there is the difference that the beautiful butterflies of the Tropics, or specimens of rare and sacred beetles, may cost a hundred francs each, while the greatest contemporaneous men joined in collection are invariably sold at ten sous a piece. It is humiliating!¹⁰

An interesting group of concerns emerges from Dumas's statement not least of which is the mention of money. Value, for him, seems not to be tied to craft, or beauty, but specifically to monetary value; whereas before portraits were expensive, now they are a dime a dozen. Another worry was being collected by "all kinds of people" including those "who are the most indifferent to you." Finally, there was the recognition that in celebrity photographs, it was the outward trappings of identity, the "butterfly markings," rather than knowledge of personal feelings or history, that is on display. The portrait photographs of Dornac extend those markers of identity, the "butterfly markings" to the private interior.

The portrait photographs that Disderi, Nadar and Carjat included in their collections of contemporaries focused on the face and the figure of the subject.¹¹ Nadar in particular often covered or disguised the actual clothes of the sitter in favor of a more generalized drapery that could allow the viewer to focus on the lighting and expression of the face. Carjat also focused on the physiognomy of the sitter. Disderi sometimes included props in the background such as curtains or classical pedestals, but he too placed the subject at the center of a simplified space. Partly due to limitations of lighting, it was rare to see photographs of people within their own interior spaces. As McCauley stated

¹⁰ Alexandre Dumas père, "Alexandre Dumas on Photography," *The Photographic News*, August 10, 1866, 379—80. Quoted in McCauley, 82.

¹¹ Hambourg, Maria Morris, Françoise Heilbrun and Philippe Néagu, *Nadar* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995); *Etienne Carjat, 1828-1906, photographe*, exh. cat (Paris: Musées de la ville de Paris, 1982).

“logistical difficulties of lighting and transportation delayed and complicated production of ‘at home’ photographic portraits.”¹² By the 1890’s the practical problems had been resolved and it is possible to see many photographs taken within the interior.¹³

Some photographs were included within the sales catalogues themselves. The book sales catalogues that I studied at the Metropolitan Museum included three photographs--of Benjamin Delessert, Jules Claretie and James Rothschild--of which only one, of Claretie, is set in the *cabinet de travail*. Delessert (1817-1868) is shown holding a book and seated in an armchair near a table on which is propped a small painting (Figure 35). This photograph, taken sometime mid-century (although the sale was in 1912, Delessert himself died in 1868), has more in common with the formal studio portraits by Disderi with the ubiquitous curtain than the photographs of Dornac. The 1884 James Rothschild catalogue includes a portrait which shows only his face and torso, being framed by an engraved tondo which also displays the dates of his life (Figure 36). Finally, Jules Claretie is shown in his *cabinet de travail*, in front of a bookcase removing a volume (Figure 37). The bookcase has some shelves at its corner for displaying small sculptures and objets d’art, the top of the case is also crowded with sculptures, and three paintings (among which Courbet’s *Portrait of Jo, The Beautiful Irish Girl* (c. 1865) can be discerned) hang just above.

Amongst the sales catalogues of paintings, several of them included photographs. Interestingly, none of them includes the collector. Instead in catalogues like that for

¹² McCauley, 80. One exception to this rule in the 1860’s was a photographer named Bingham who took photographs of Meissonier in his studio, Ibid., 80. McCauley argues that these photographs of Meissonier “prefigure Dornac’s 1896 photographic *Nos Contemporains chex eux* in their ability to characterize an individual by the objects with which he surrounds himself,” 80.

¹³ There were, for example, several articles in the *Photo Gazette*, destined for hobbyists, on how to take a photograph indoors: “Du Portrait Dans Une Chambre Quelconque,” trans from Richard Penlake’s article in *Photographic Review. Photo Gazette*, 7 (December 1896): 54-56. Also “Les Intérieurs,” *Photo Gazette*, 8 (July 1897): 185-87.

Jacques Doucet or for Valtresse de la Bigne, it was the rooms, and particularly the “salons” that were photographed, although in general most of the images were reproductions of the works of art for sale, more than was the case for the book collectors, whose catalogues, nonetheless, did in general contain at least a few reproductions of beautifully bound books.

Photographs of people in their interiors do not always reveal spaces that participate in the discourse of collecting. In the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale are, for example, two 1896 photographs taken by M. Maitet of the apartment of M. de Cesti on the Place Malesherbes: one of a rather ornate salon (which has a bearskin rug, a crystal chandelier, several large Chinese vases but no paintings or drawings) and another of the *cabinet de travail*.¹⁴ There Cesti is shown at work in a very orderly, dark interior in which glass-fronted bookcases dominate (Figure 38). Here there are framed artworks on the walls as well as a small sculpture, although they seem more decorative notes than part of Cesti’s work. Cesti is not actively engaged with the collection which surrounds him. Neither does he engage the viewer with his gaze. There is a strong sense that the interior is a space that simply provides a setting, rather than a space that is part of his identity. He seems to be a bourgeois type who is simply sitting in the rooms that have

¹⁴ Another source for photographs of interiors of fin-de-siècle Paris can be found in insurance files made for records of people’s possessions. Nicolas Sainte Fare Garnot, “La Course aux trésors,” *Monuments Historiques Intérieurs Privés*, 195 (March 1995), 98. Atget’s photographs of Parisian interiors also date from this period. These photographs document interiors of all social levels. They were produced specifically as documents for artists, specifically architects, artists and woodworkers who might have a need to look at photographs of interiors. They almost never include the inhabitants of the interiors, nor do they indicate in their titles whose house they document, thus for our purpose of linking the *amateur* to his space, they are problematic. See Molly Nesbit, *Atget’s Seven Albums* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) and *Eugène Atget, 1857-1927: Intérieures Parisiennes, photographies, exh. cat.* (Paris: Musées de la ville de Paris, 1982).

been created for him. The space, that is, tells us little about him except that it conforms to the decorating principles of the time as explained by Havard, Ris and Cardon.¹⁵

What is striking about Dornac's photographs is the insistence on the relationship between his sitters and the artworks that surround them. They seem to be produced expressly for consideration of that relationship. A further advantage of the Dornac photographs is that they show individuals about whom much is known and who, by and large, can be confirmed to have possessed considerable and often valuable libraries or art collections that were in many cases the subject of a public sale. Furthermore, in his project to document prominent people within the spaces where they lived, Dornac emphasized in particular the *cabinet de travail*.¹⁶

Apart from the photographs themselves, their commercial use, in so far as I have been able to determine, highlights the uneasy relationship between public and private that this thesis addresses. There seem to have been two distinct outlets for Dornac. First he issued luxury albums of the photographs for consumption by the very individuals depicted in the portraits.¹⁷ And secondly he sold some of the photographs to such publications as *Le Monde illustré* and *La Revue encyclopedique* which printed them to illustrate articles on the people depicted. The first use is consistent with the closed inner circle of the well-to-do private collector with whom we are acquainted from the sales

¹⁵ The Third Republic styles of decorating are discussed in various recent histories of furnishings as well. See for example Charlotte Gere, *Nineteenth-century Decoration. The Art of the Interior* (New York: Abrams, 1989); Mario Praz, *An Illustrated History of Furnishing*, trans. W. Weaver (New York: Braziller, 1964); and Michel Vernes, "Divagation intérieure. Le décor fin de siècle," *Monuments Historiques. Intérieurs Privés*, 195(March 1995): 11-18.

¹⁶ Another similar series of architects at work within their cabinet de travail which Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte argues was done in the manner of Dornac is discussed in her "La Série 'Nos architectes' Les grands maîtres chez eux," in *Monuments Historiques. Intérieurs Privés*, 195(March 1995): 67-72.

¹⁷ One of the examples at the Bibliothèque Nationale, for example, came from the collection of Paul Blondel, another came from Etienne Moreau-Nélaton while the third was acquired by virtue of the Dépôt Legal.

catalogues. The second, however, participates in the greater Parisian social world. This second use underlines the degree to which the private setting, and in particular the private collection, formed part of a self-conscious presentation of self that went with the emerging celebrity culture of fin-de-siècle Paris. Of further importance is that, the subjects in these published photographs are often depicted at work, or at least within their work space which is located at home, so as to elide the difference between public and private.

There are two important aspects of this series of photographs that I wish to address. First their insistence on the setting leads naturally to a discussion of milieu, in the Tainian sense of natural milieu. I will argue that these photographs, which seem to be inspired by a positivist realist program, in fact undermine those ideas. Secondly, relatedly, I wish to examine the specifically social milieu and sociability as enacted in the spaces that are photographed, and in the collection of photographs themselves, which were collected as a group not by Dumas's feared unknowns, but by the very figures in the photographs.

Like many nineteenth-century photographers not much is known about Dornac, not even his given name.¹⁸ There is no mention of him in *Photo Gazette*, *Le Moniteur de la Photographie*, or the *Bulletin de la Société française de photographie* in the years 1893-1900 when he was known to have been active. He is known to have had three studios in Paris in the 1890: the first was at 63 rue des Saints Pères; the next at 10 rue Adam Mickiewicz; and the last at 34 rue Gassendi, which is the address at the bottom of

¹⁸ Les Archives Roger-Viollet has no record of him. The Metropolitan Museum has no more than this, nor does the Eastman house with which I corresponded by e-mail.

all his photographs that I have seen.¹⁹ His surviving glass plates were bought by Larousse more than fifty years ago and the rights to their reproduction are currently being marketed by the Bridgman (Giraudon) art archives in Paris.

The Bibliothèque Nationale, in its recent exhibition of important holdings of its nineteenth-century photographic collection, included two Dornac photographs of Verlaine. The biographical note is notable for its lack of information: “Photographer whose name does not appear in the Bottin (directory) at least under the expected name, who seems to have worked mainly between 1890 and 1900.”²⁰ Noted are the names of some of his subjects as well as his usual photographic technique of silver gelatin prints.

In these photographs Dornac added to the encyclopedic tradition already well in place by the nineteenth century. There were two tendencies within this tradition that we have already come across in our discussions of the *amateur* as a social type. They included the characterizing of the kinds of people living in Paris in general (*Les Types de Paris*) and more specifically the project of trying to give a comprehensive view of the celebrities of the time. Dornac’s contribution is to link together the environment of the person (his home) and his identity. They seem to posit a close link between an interior psychological state and a room, a link that was earlier elucidated by Duranty in his art writing.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Duranty’s project, as enunciated in “La Nouvelle Peinture,” was to articulate the modern individual “the modern individual in his clothing,

¹⁹ J.M. Voignier, *Répertoire des Photographes de France aux dix-neuvième siècle* (LePont de Pierre, 1993).

²⁰ *Regard sur la photographie 19e*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 2000).

“Photographe dont le nom ne figure pas dans le Bottin, du moins à la rubrique attendue, et qui semble avoir beaucoup travaillé entre 1890 et 1900.”

in the middle of his social habits, at home or in the street.”²¹ Dornac especially concentrates on “the intimacy of a man with his apartment.”²² In his article, Duranty even called for photography of the interior: “If one imagines, for example, that sometime we could take a colored photograph of an interior, we would have a perfect agreement, a typical and true expression.”²³ It is interesting that he felt that a color photograph was important. As I discuss below in connection with the Goncourt brothers, color formed a large part of the discourse of decorating and indeed collecting at this time. We saw already how Claretie considered his books to be different harmonious colors that created the painting that was his library. Notice here that Duranty uses the word “harmony” [accord] which is a metaphor from music, commonly applied to painting to mean truth to nature. To truly follow nature, according to Duranty, is to not separate the person from his apartment.

Of the possible settings in which to capture the individual, Duranty seems to point to the *cabinet de travail*: “He would sit in his armchair to reflect near his desk.”²⁴ Many of Dornac’s subjects are writers and are shown in their *cabinet de travail*. Carefully staged, these photographs principally show the writers seated at their worktable in some

²¹ Edmond Duranty, “La Nouvelle Peinture,” in Denis Riout, ed., *Les Ecrivains devant L'impressionisme*, (Paris: Macula, 1989): 108-134.

²² Ibid., 124. “dans son vêtement, au milieu des ses habitudes sociales, chez lui ou dans la rue ... l'intimité de l'homme avec son appartement.”

²³ Ibid., 125. “Si l'on suppose, par exemple, qu'à un moment donné on puisse prendre la photographie colorée d'un intérieur, on aura un accord parfait, une expression typique et vraie.” Duranty’s photographic ideas are a bit like the detective photographs of Bertillon, and the interior as he describes it is a kind of a “scene of the crime” evidence for the deduction of what kind of personality inhabits this particular apartment. The police did, in fact, develop a procedure on how to take photographs of interiors based on the recommendations of Bertillon. Here, different points of view are coordinated so as to eliminate the subjective view and floor plans are mapped out on graph paper to elucidate how many steps from the bed to the door, and other such important evidentiary details. See Isabelle Sauvé-Astruc, “Une existence en instantané. Le procédé Bertillon, *Monuments Historiques. Intérieurs Privés*, 195(March 1995): 73-76. Degas’ 1868 painting *Interior* which is often interpreted as inspired by Zola’s *Thérèse Raquin* reads as a kind of scene of the crime interior and recent criticism discusses the Realist associations, physiognomy and Duranty. See Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*, 93-100 and also Susan Sidauskas, *Body, Place and Self*.

²⁴ Duranty, 127. “il s’assieoir dans son fauteuil pour ruminer auprès de sa table de travail.”

kind of armchair or else posing in front of their mantelpiece. They are surrounded by their possessions, including books, desks and works of art. In general, several different art forms are mixed together within the room.

Duranty's other comment about photography is crucial to understanding Dornac's portraits: "his rest would not be a pause, nor a pose without purpose, without significance in front of the camera lens, his rest, like his actions, would be part of his life."²⁵ Duranty here places in opposition the photographs which he could have seen by 1876 (before interior photographs were common), to what he imagines the depiction of modern life should look like. In studio photographs of Duranty's time, the depicted pose of rest was in fact a kind of holding still or interruption of everyday life. Instead, he demands a rest that is part of the subject's life, which seems to resemble Dornac's results, in which the subject is shown in the midst of his life, in the middle of acting, all part of Duranty's insistence on capturing the work of modern day life.

The prevalence of art objects within this space of work complicates the immediate realist association. For Duranty, there was a positivist link between the surroundings and the individual that derived from the philosophy of Taine. The milieu was all-important for explaining the natural flowering of the individual. As Taine put it: "The products of the human spirit, like those of living nature, are not explained except by their environment."²⁶ Taine saw culture as utterly natural, springing from a particular climate like vegetation. He argued that different cultures, Italy and Holland, for example, could be explained by differing climates. The link of the biological and the social made by

²⁵ Ibid., 127. "Son repos ne sera pas une pause, ni une pose sans but, sans signification devant l'objectif du photographe, son repos sera dans la vie comme son action."

²⁶ Hippolyte Taine, *Philosophie de L'Art* (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1865), 17. "Les productions de l'esprit humain, comme celles de la nature vivante, ne s'expliquent que par leur milieu."

Taine pervaded the discourse of nineteenth-century France such that Littré's definition of *milieu* leaps from the biological term for the environment of organisms to "by extension" the ensemble of social conditions in the middle of which an individual is placed.²⁷ It is with these ideas in mind that Duranty formulated his ideas for the modern man.

The interiors of Dornac's photographs seem quite the opposite of natural. Filled with artworks, they are often quite theatrical. The milieu, rather than producing the man, is produced by him. But more than this, there is often a kind of studied staginess and self-conscious artfulness in these photographs that comments less on the personality of the man in the photograph than on his activity as artist. Furthermore, he seems to live in relationship to the artworks in his study. They seem not simply passive things in a room, but counterparts to the subject. They seem to be in dialogue with him.

Dornac as Journalist: The Portraits in the Newspapers

While it is the accumulative effect of looking at one after another, as they are collected in his album *Nos Contemporains chez eux* that produces this artificial effect most powerfully, one sees this effect as well when seeing them within the context of the illustrated newspaper, in particular *Le Monde illustré* and *La Revue encyclopedique*. Dornac's work appears earlier and more often in *La Revue*, and it is perhaps because of the association between *La Revue* and Larousse that Larousse ended up with his glass

²⁷ Littré, s.v. "milieu." "18 Terme de biologie le tout complexe représenté par les objets qui entourent les corps organisés//Par extension. Milieu social l'ensemble des conditions sociales au milieu des quelles un individu humain est placé. Plus la civilisation avance, plus le milieu social prend l'influence sur les individus." "Biological term, the whole complex represented by the objects that surround organized bodies//By extension. Social milieu. The ensemble of social conditions in the middle of which an individual is placed. The more civilization advances, the more the social milieu influences individuals."

plates.²⁸ It is somewhat hard to judge what their contemporaneous effect was, because they are so small in size and faded, so that a stunning photograph such as the portrait of Joris-Karl Huysmans (Figure 39) sitting near his mantel under a Degas pastel, is hard to make out. Nonetheless, the photographs appeared regularly in reviews of contemporary drama, music, and literature in particular. While there are fewer of Dornac's photographs in *Le Monde illustré*, they are reproduced in a larger format and given a greater importance in relationship to the text. It is the reverse in the more serious Larousse publication. In *Le Monde Illustré* they read somewhat more like "art" photographs, than as "documents," both goals, as we will see, to which he explicitly aspired.

The first Dornac photograph that I found in *Le Monde illustré*, of Edmond Rostand (1868-1918), addressed in particular the subject of celebrity: "This writer with a brilliant and quick starting career has crowned his already universal and justified celebrity with a series of works that count among the most interesting of modern theater."²⁹ This celebrity is underlined by the appearance of a large photograph of him at home, taking tea, on the eve of the appearance of Sarah Bernhardt (who is on the cover of the issue) in Rostand's own *L'Aiglon*. This is one of the few Dornac photographs in which the subject is not either in his *cabinet de travail* or his studio. Here the juxtaposition of the immense celebrity of being the playwright to Sarah Bernhardt and the intimate act of drinking of tea at home, seem to serve the voyeuristic desires of the public enacted in the publication on the home of Sarah Bernhardt discussed in Chapter

²⁸ In conversations with the staff at Bridgeman (formerly Giraudon, which acts as agent for the Larousse archives) in Paris, they told me that the history of the Larousse archives is in boxes in the attic of an old staff-member's house, and would take many hours to sift through. I have not yet been able to further pursue this lead.

²⁹ *Le Monde illustrée*, (March 17, 1900), 188. "Cet écrivain dont la carrière brillante autant que rapide a consacré la célébrité déjà universelle et justifiée par une série d'oeuvres qui compteront parmi les plus intéressantes du théâtre moderne."

Two. However, the other photographs published by this journal tend to underscore a continuity between the public world of work and the private workspace.

For example, M. Bouvard and M. Picard, both organizers of the 1900 Universal Exposition, are each shown in their respective *cabinets de travail* with an accompanying text that stresses their work:

We add to the series already long established in our columns, two very interesting physiognomies for our readers, at the moment where every day brings us closer to the Universal Exhibition. Despite the troubles that agitate the country, work proceeds with confidence under the able direction of the organizers, and everything allows us to expect that all will be ready to inaugurate gloriously the century that will begin. M. Bouvard, we know, is the director of construction for the Exhibition and M. Picard has the title of General Commissioner. The two eminent collaborators have long ago given proof of their respective merit. Despite the difficulties that arise, we can count on them to overcome them, and everything predicts that the prodigious success of the unforgettable 1889 exhibition will be surpassed, thanks to them, when the bell rings for the opening of the Exhibition of 1900.³⁰

This article seeks to reassure the public that work proceeds apace for the planning and realization of the upcoming Universal Exposition.³¹ That these two administrators, rather than having offices in some bureaucratic building (as would be the case today), are shown at work in their own *cabinets de travail*, emphasizes the public role of this private space.

It is not clear if the newspaper is referring specifically to the photographs of Dornac when it mentions its long established tradition of showing “physiognomies,” but

³⁰ *Le Monde illustré*, (n.d. 273) In the archives Estampes collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale Ad-5000. n.d. “Nous ajoutons à la série depuis longtemps déjà inaugurée dans nos colonnes, deux physionomies fort intéressantes pour nos lecteurs, au moment où chaque jour nous rapproche de L’Exposition Universelle. En dépit des troubles qui agitent le pays, le travail se poursuit avec confiance sous l’habile direction des organisateurs, et tout fait espérer que l’on sera prêt pour inaugurer glorieusement la date du siècle qui va s’ouvrir. M. Bouvard, on le sait, est le directeur des travaux de l’Exposition et M. Picard a le titre de commissaire générale. Les deux éminents collaborateurs ont, dès longtemps, fait leurs preuves et donné la mesure de leur mérites respectifs. Malgré les difficultés qui surgissent, on peut se reposer sur eux du soin de les vaincre et tout fait présager que le prodigieux succès de l’inoubliable Exposition de 1889 sera dépassé, grâce à eux, lorsque sonnera l’heure de l’ouverture de l’Exposition de 1900.”

³¹ To which *Le Monde illustré* devoted many illustrated pages.

it seems to be a more general description. In fact, leafing through the pages of *Le Monde illustré* from the years 1895 – 1900 I found only a six-month period in 1900 where Dornac is listed as one of the staff photographers. Within this period, I found only six of his photographs published in *Le Monde illustré*. Apart from the already mentioned Rostand, they include: Le r.p.Didon (1840-1900), a rabid anti-dreyfusard cleric who advocated armed revolt against the government and whose photograph was published on the occasion of his death; Paul Hervieu (1857-1915) and Emile Faguet (1847-1916) on the occasion of their election to the French Academy; Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), one of several photographs illustrating his membership of the Académie Goncourt; and finally another photograph of Picard, also as part of a group of photographs of planners of the Universal Exhibition. In both cases where the Dornac photograph is one of several portraits, it is placed at the center, and is the only photograph to include a background setting. Most of these six photographs are not included in the surviving glass plate images at Larousse, so clearly Dornac's oeuvre has been partly lost. Also interesting is that in the case of the Huysmans photograph, it is shown considerably cropped in comparison with the contemporary print taken from the original glass plate in the Larousse archive. Even so, its insistence on the importance of the background contrasts sharply with the surrounding photographs, calling into question the idea of this photograph being about "physiognomy."

The publication of Dornac's photographs served at one and the same time two somewhat contradictory roles. On the one hand, in the case of Rostand and perhaps Huysmans, they construct a celebrity identity whose private surroundings form part of that identity. Furthermore they depend on the understood division between public and

private to produce the voyeuristic pleasure of seeing into the private, at the same time that they, in fact, compromise that understood division by their very visibility. On the other hand, the photographs seem to announce a kind of seamless continuity between the public and the private such that manifestly public work is pursued within the confines of the private *cabinet de travail*.

In this group of photographs art and collecting play a somewhat minor role. The photographs of the cleric Didon and of Huysmans give the most prominent role to art. In the portrait of Didon, he is supposedly standing in his *cabinet de travail*, but it looks surprisingly impersonal, with a tablecloth covered oval table and dining chairs lined up against the wall. Didon is standing next to the table and directly behind him are several religious paintings. These paintings serve to identify him as a cleric, making a visual parallel between his priestly robes and the robe-clad religious figures in the paintings. Huysmans, on the other hand, sits comfortably askew on a small divan, his legs crossed, his hand resting on the rolled arm of the sofa in front of an arrangement of paintings, drawings, decorated plates and a carved kneeling virgin resting on an elaborate wall shelf and below a small carved mirror (Figure 39). He is seated between two glass-fronted bookcases filled with leather-bound volumes and one foot rests on a Persian carpet. Here the mixing of art forms as well as periods (the drawings are Northern, in the style of Cranach, the plates are rococo, the statue is gothic and the paintings are nineteenth-century) identifies Huysmans as an *amateur* of the arts. His repose and his gaze, which is directed outwards, have a curiously formal quality rather different from that of Rostand casually pouring tea near his fireplace. It is a photograph that does not seem voyeuristic; it is a public photograph in which his public persona includes his collection of art. Far

from being particular to Huysmans, who after all was a prominent avant-garde art critic as well as writer, this public presentation of a persona inseparable from his art collection is common to many of the photographs that are included in the series *Nos Contemporains chez eux*.

Nos Contemporains chez eux: The Published Collection

Dornac collected many of his photographs, which he published as *Nos Contemporains chez eux*. There are three copies of this publication at Bibliothèque Nationale, each of which is slightly different. One copy had three volumes, each with about 50 portraits, sometimes with more than one photograph of the same person. A short preface in Volume 3 advertises 110 different personalities (I saw only 82) “110 of the most notable personalities of our time.”³² This same preface also assures the reader of the truly artistic quality of the photographs:

The only judiciously chosen and with a character truly artistic and documentary. Also we must warn Amateurs against similar such productions inspired by our success but which are neither tasteful nor concerned with art or truth.³³

Artistic and documentary at the same time: that is the claim of Dornac for his work, uniting two major, often opposed roles for photography.³⁴ In terms of the subjects, they are overwhelmingly weighted towards the artistic, with some scientists but fewer than

³² Dornac, *Nos Contemporains chez eux*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Portraits Eo/88b, Vol. 3. “110 personnalités les plus marquantes parmi celles de l’époque.”

³³ Ibid. “La Galerie “Nos Contemporains chez eux” – la seule judicieusement établie et d’un caractère vraiment artistique et documentaire. Aussi croyons nous devoir mettre en garde les Amateurs contre les productions similaires faites sans goût ni souci d’art et de vérité que notre succès a suscitées.”

³⁴ The 1890s saw a proliferation of self-consciously artistic photographic societies and movements. These photo-secessionist groups, found in Europe and the US arose at a time in which photography had become available for a wide public with the development of the snapshot camera. For the most part they sought to stress the artistic as opposed to the documentary function of the photograph and it is interesting that Dornac hedges his bets and claims both roles.

literary or artistic figures.³⁵ The visual artists photographed include both the academic painter Gérôme, and the Impressionist Renoir. The writers include art critics, novelists and poets of all styles, among them Alphonse Daudet, Gustave Geoffroy, Edmond de Goncourt, Pierre Loti, and Stéphane Mallarmé. There are also actors, architects, musicians, scientists, and politicians. There are only three women in the group at the Bibliothèque Nationale: Sarah Bernhardt, La Gorderu, and Mme Séverine, who is shown in a garden. There are various other Dornac photographs, all identified as part of *Nos Contemporains chez eux*, which do not appear in the Bibliothèque Nationale grouping. The Metropolitan Museum for example, has a Dornac photograph of Whistler, the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet has a photograph of Méry Laurent and the Eastman house has one of Jules le Maistre, each identified as part of the *Contemporains* series but none of which appear in the Paris collection. Furthermore, more than a hundred other portraits are found in the Larousse archives.³⁶

Of the more than one hundred photographs collected in the three volumes at the Bibliothèque Nationale I can choose only a few to describe and discuss in detail.³⁷

Almost any one of them interestingly relates to how the people of the 1890s in France

³⁵ The visual artists photographed include Bartholomé, Braquemond, Jules Breton, Carolus Duran, Jules Cheret, Fantin-Latour, Gérôme, Laurens, Lhermitte, Henri Martin, Raffaelli, Renoir, Rodin, Stevens and Ziem. The writers include Paul Adam, Paul Bourget, Ferdinand Brunetière, Alphonse Daudet, Anatole France, Gustave Geoffroy, Edmond de Goncourt, Ludovic Halévy, J.K. Huysmans, Gustave Larroumet, Pierre Loti, Stéphane Mallarmé, Henri Meilhac, Octave Mirbeau, Georges Ohnet, Edouard Pailleran, Ernest Renan, Jean Richepin, Henri Rochefort, Edmond Rostand, Victorien Sarcey, Mme Severine, Sully Prudhomme, Paul Verlaine and Emile Zola. Actors include: Sarah Bernhardt, Coquelin Cadet, LaGorderu and Mounet-Sully. Architects include: Joseph Bouvard, Gustave Eiffel. Musicians include: François Coppée, Charles Gounod, Vincent d'Indy, Jules Massenet, and Ambroise Thomas. Scientific figures include Camille Flammarion, Gabriel Lippman, Milne-Edwards, Fridtjof Nansen, Louis Pasteur and Gaston Tissandier. Political figures include: Georges Clemenceau, Edouard Drumont, le comte Albert de Mun, and Henri d'Orleans, the duc D'Aumale.

³⁶ These include such notables as Henri Bergson, Albert Besnard, Gabriel Fauré, Madeleine Lemaire, Louise Michel, Anna de Noailles, Henri Poincaré, and Jules Simon.

³⁷ This Dornac collection however is of great interest and it is to be hoped that it is either exhibited or reissued as an extremely interesting and important document of this period.

arranged their collections of books and art works. In general these images tend to be different than the painted portraits with which we are familiar. First, there is an equal emphasis on the figure and the surrounding room, unlike the portrait tradition exemplified perhaps by the work of Ingres and his followers, where the subject largely dominates.³⁸ Secondly, across professions, there is the same sort of mix of artwork and books: That is, while a scientist may be shown with his scientific apparatus (Gabriel Lippman) or an artist shown in his studio (Whistler), these are the exceptions rather than the rule.³⁹ There is not, that is, a reliably consistent attempt to have the space be an “attribute” of the subject, explaining him as a military man, or a political man or an artist, although sometimes this exists as well. My selection is partly personal (photographs that appealed to me) and partly geared towards the *cabinet de travail*. I have chosen to discuss these photographs in the context of the bibliophile, and it is with that in mind that I selected the photographs.

The portraits I discuss include, among others, one whose painting collection catalogue is amongst my sample (Coquelin Cadet), and others whose book collection catalogues I discuss (Alexandre Dumas, Victorien Sardou, Sarah Bernhardt, Jules Simon, and Emile Zola). Almost all of the photographs are of men, but I have included two of the women for contrast. In each, there is an interesting visualization of the discourse of the *amateur* as living in relationship with art. The themes of love, of sociability, of

³⁸ This is true as well for portraits of the 1890's, from the more academic work of Carolus Duran, to Sargeant, and even Cézanne or Van Gogh. The Nabis is of course the artistic movement that gives pride of place to the setting, and their ideas of the total environment are very much in harmony with the culture of the *amateur* as I have been describing it. Sidlauskas discusses paintings of interiors with figures but for the most part these are not portraits.

³⁹ Although the photographs of artists such as Fantin-Latour and Jean Léon Gérôme which were part of the Bibliothèque Nationale albums, and others such as Albert Besnard, Paul Helleu, and James Whistler that were not, (from the Dornac archives of Larousse-Giraudon) take as their setting the studio rather than the *cabinet de travail*. See François Robichon, “De la mansarde au salon: Les ateliers d’artistes,” in *Monuments Historiques: Intérieures Privés*, 62-66.

theatricality, of non-categorical arrangement which we have seen discussed in the sales catalogues surface within this group of photographs, not only in the way that they are composed, but also in the fact that most of these people knew each other and were part of the same social circle.

The theatricality of identity is one theme that is very strong among the group. Certainly several portraits of theater professionals, writers, composers and actors announce this strongly, while at the same time giving pride of place to the artworks arranged within the space of the interior. A photograph of Victorien Sardou (1831-1908) shows him at work in his home at rue du Général Foy (Figure 40).⁴⁰ Seated at a large table in the center of a room, he appears absorbed in his work. One hand holds a pen while the other keeps the paper firmly in place. His head is at the center of the photograph which is divided almost equally between lit and shadowed areas. His forehead is bathed in the light that also illuminates the many papers and books strewn over his desk. Additional papers are evidently strewn on the divan in the background as well as in the wastebasket. The room appears to be quite grand. The wall that his table faces is curved. In front of a many-mullioned window is placed a sculpture of a kneeling angel holding what is perhaps a candlestick on top of a marble-topped Empire style cabinet. Immediately next to this cabinet is a pedestal topped with a double handled vase. Dividing this lit half of the room from the darker area is a curtain held back by a

⁴⁰ There are eight photographs of Sardou included in the Larousse archive. For an account of his life see Georges Mouly, *Vie prodigieuse de Victorien Sardou* (Paris: A. Michel, 1931). Sardou, the writer of such plays as "Let's Get Divorced" and librettos for the opera *Tosca*, had both an important library and a collection of prints. The sale of his library (1909) and his collection of prints (1909) came after his death in 1908. His prints, many of which dated from the 18th century, featured caricatures, costumes, portraits and historical vignettes.

tasseled cord. In the darker area of the room is a large framed painting of what appear to be ruins, the divan and a grandfather clock. The floor is decorated with a patterned rug.

Here setting and milieu are more important. The physiognomy is hard to read, and the photograph is a wide angle view, as opposed to close up. The subject is “at work” and not standing against a wall. Notable is the mix of art forms (ceramics, sculpture, and painting) in an aristocratic looking room. The emphasis on art is underlined by the theatricality of the lighting and the setting, complete with a curtain that highlights the profession of this playwright.⁴¹

His obviously artistic costume, complete with beret, contrasts with the elegant almost aristocratic setting and, yet his sense of being at home highlights the privileged role of the artist.. This photograph, in which art plays so important a role, does not indicate the kind of seriality or repetition that is the sign of a connoisseur. But the importance of the setting in creating the image of this personality points to the kind of theatricality not only of the setting, but of the person himself.

This is made even clearer in another photograph of Sardou in the same room taken from a different angle (Figure 41). Here Sardou is behind his desk on which a great many books and papers are piled. He sits directly in front of a bookcase with even more books, and in the corner we see a relief sculpture of two figures, three paintings or drawings on the wall and two hats posed on another pile of papers and books. Thus three hats, the beret that Sardou is wearing, a black top hat and a pale straw hat seem to symbolize the alternative aspects of Sardou. Furthermore, the sculpture in dialogue with the two hats directly above it, establishes a theme of sociability that is easily continued in

⁴¹ Perhaps it also is an allusion to the ubiquitous curtain of earlier photographers such as Disdéri. See McCauley, 46. Notice in particular the Marcelin engraving reproduced there “Un monsieur grave avec un rideau qui lui tombe du ciel,” 47.

the piles of books and papers and chairs in the room. Sardou's own writing points to the way furnishings seem to speak together:

Look at your study today. The chairs are not against the wall; the armchairs are in front of the fireplace to the left and to the right, here and there, there are poufs, and large armchairs, and low armchairs, stools, dispersed, scattered, looking at each other, turning their backs, forming, like people, groups that chat together.⁴²

In this photograph it is not so much the chairs, although there are three that are visible, but books, papers, and art that seem to chat together. Thus, in these two photographs we have a conjunction of theatricality, sociability and action that fully participates in the social world of Paris at that time, and which depends for its meaning on the books and artworks whose utility is emphasized.

Ernest Alexandre Honoré Coquelin, known as Coquelin Cadet (1848-1909), like Sardou, made his living in theater.⁴³ Rather than writing plays, he was one of the great actors of the day. In Dornac's photograph, he stands in front of his bookcase, leaning against it with one of the glass doors of the case open (Figure 42). He has in his hands a small volume in which he seems to be completely immersed. His head is just at a level with the top of the case which is cluttered with small sculptures, various objets d'art and some flowers. Behind the case are paintings of different sizes. Five are lined up right above the bookcase and two smaller ones are just above a chair that is placed next to the bookcase. That chair is one of three that are visible in the photograph, highlighting the sociability of the space. The grouping of art around the head of Coquelin Cadet, his obvious concentration on the book in his hands, combined with the many chairs,

⁴² Germaine Bapst, *Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre* (Paris : Hachette, 1893), 583. Sardou's words, quoted in Sidlauskas, 3. "Regardez votre cabinet, aujourd'hui. Les chaises ne sont pas au mur; les fauteuils sont devant la cheminée à droite et à gauche, de-ci et de-là, il y a des poufs, des bérgeries, des crapauds, des tabourets, éparpillés, disséminés, se regardant se tournant le dos, formant comme des groupes des personnages qui devissent entre eux."

⁴³ An actor with the Comédie Française, his collection of paintings was sold following his death in 1909.

reference the kind of conversational sociability praised in the sales catalogue prefaces of the bibliophiles. This is a man for whom art functions as companion and friend.

This attitude of friendship visible in the photograph was also commented on in Jules Claretie's preface to the sales catalogue of Cadet's collection: "Coquelin Cadet loved "his painters" like he loved his friends, with an charming tenderness."⁴⁴ His collection included many portraits of himself (as was also the case with Sarah Bernhardt, as we saw in Chapter Two) by such painters as Béraud, Gervex, Puvis de Chavannes, Madeleine Lemaire and Sorolla y Bastida. The other paintings were done by such stylistically diverse artists as Bonnard, Fantin-Latour, Boudin, Bonvin, Dagnan-Bouveret, Maurice Denis, Corot, Sargent, Sisley and Vuillard.

It is interesting to compare the restrained and absorbed quality of Coquelin Cadet to Dornac's openly seductive images of Bernhardt.⁴⁵ In the photograph in Figure 43, Bernhardt is shown leaning against a stand which holds a medieval manuscript open to a page with illuminated letters. Behind her, on a cabinet full of many drawers is a large assortment of small sculptures, busts, figurines, looking this way and that. So far the dialogue amongst the mixed range of artworks, which also includes a large painting, a smaller print, a tambourine, is consistent with the Coquelin and the Sardou portraits. However, the stance of Bernhardt is quite different. One hand rests on her hip, so that the gown is drawn tightly around her waist to accentuate her body, while the other hand cradles her face which gazes at the viewer seductively from beneath half closed eyes. This image of the actress participates in the same discourse of seduction and theatricality that we have seen in our earlier discussion. However, it is clear from the other Dornac

⁴⁴ *Collection Coquelin Cadet*, preface by Jules Claretie (Paris, Drouot, 1909), np. "Coquelin Cadet aimait "ses peintres" comme il aimait ses amis, avec une tendresse attendrissante."

⁴⁵ See also my discussion of Dornac's photograph of Méry Laurent in Chapter Two.

photographs that the idea of theatricality, if not open seduction, is operative in most of these portraits.

For example, also standing with his hand at his waist, Alexandre Dumas-*fils* cuts quite a dashing figure with his light shirt and pants tied with a sash at his waist (Figure 44).⁴⁶ He rests one hand on his hip and leans nonchalantly on his mantel, his glance towards the statuette besides him. He cuts an energetic figure as a seventeenth-century soldier holding his rifle while he strides forward, and thus enlivens an otherwise tranquil room in which a landscape of a calm river, a dark interior and a hard-to-make-out, seemingly mythological, painting hangs in front of a mirror above the mantel. There is a complex relationship of faces and figures around the mirror, as we see Dumas and his reflection along with the other art works of the room interacting in a kind of jumble of identities. This jumble is repeated only on the chest next to the mantel on which a profusion of papers and books are placed somewhat messily with one book held open upside down. The idea of a *mélange* of books and papers is specifically addressed in the preface that Dumas wrote to his own sales catalogue in 1892: “The principal drawings of the collection are not on the walls, but in the books.”⁴⁷ The collection of prints, according to Dumas, was divided into portraits, ways of life and “vignettes.” The sociable thematics of the collection are echoed in the dedication to his father “in memory of our joint research in the boxes of the print dealers.”⁴⁸ Dumas underlines the gaiety of collecting, which presumably he contrasts to a more scholarly pursuit: “we belong to this

⁴⁶ The author of many novels and plays including *La Dame aux Camélias* in which Bernhardt appeared many times, the sale of his drawings and prints took place in 1892 and the sale of his paintings and objets d’art took place in 1896.

⁴⁷ *Bibliothèque Alexandre Dumas* (Paris: Conquet, 1892), np. “Ce n’est point sur les murs que sont les principaux dessins de la collection, mais dans les livres.”

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, “en souvenir de nos communes recherches dans les cartons des marchands d’estampes.”

new school of amateurs, for whom collecting is something essentially light-hearted.”⁴⁹

The recurrent themes of identification with art, pleasant sociability and family ties, and a mixture of types of art (Persian rug, old carved chest, paintings, sculptures, books) are each important aspects of this *cabinet de travail*.

Dornac’s photograph of another literary man standing by the mantel of his bookish *cabinet de travail*, Paul Bourget (1852-1935), is more somber than that of Dumas (Figure 45). Here we see a pensive man who looks to our left, seemingly unaware of our gaze. He wears a dark overcoat, suit and bowtie, leans his weight on the mantle and clasps his hands loosely in front of him. The room shows an accumulation of photographs, grouped on the mantle and on a bookshelf, several sculptures, paintings and books. There is a melange of styles evident-- from the factuality of small portrait photographs, to the sweep of a dress in an elegant painting above the mantle (of which we see only a section), to a print or small paintings of what looks like a jousting match, a dreamy sculpture of a head, William Morris style patterning on the divan and a Chinese type bronze vessel. The mixture of art forms and profusion of shapes and patterns contrasts with the severity of his attire and gaze. Here we get the feeling of the home of an intellectual whose importance in the world seems to be confirmed by the inclusion of many photographs of other men, some signed, which signal that he forms part of a community. Here it is the play of photographs (between the Dornac photograph itself and the photographs that are seen within it) rather than game of reflections which seems to signal the self-consciousness of identity.

⁴⁹ Ibid., np. “nous appartenons à cette nouvelle école d’amateurs, pour lesquels le *collectionisme* est chose essentiellement gaie.”

Another Dornac photograph of Bourget emphasizes more forcefully his art collections (Figure 46). He is shown near a book stand, a bit like Sarah Bernhardt, although there is nothing seductive about his pose. Rather, hand in pocket, he is absorbed in looking at an open atlas, turned to the United States. To the left of the bookcases behind him are two framed and varnished paintings, one an oil of a head and the other a Byzantine-style panel of the Madonna and child surrounded by angels. On an ornate table or desk to his right are a sculpture of a bull and a small painting of what looks like Goethe seated in a landscape. In the distance behind this painting, we see another bookcase on top of which is a bust of a young man in a Renaissance style, and a panel painting of a horseman in an Italianate landscape.

Jules Lemaître (1853-1914), playwright and author, is shown looking up from his desk, which is piled high with papers (Figure 47). The carved edge of the desk echoes the relief panels visible on the wall on the right of the photograph, which depict women in classical poses. The panels, in their whiteness, their rectangularity and in their multiplicity repeat the many sheaves of paper piled on the desk. A small bust just in front of the bas-reliefs repeats the head of Lemaître who is positioned just left of center. The repeated sheets of paper are not the mechanized, industrialized products of mass production, but they are the result of purposive thought. Production, this photograph seems to tell us, is beautiful. As Delacroix noted in his journal, “what moves men of genius, or rather what inspires their work, is not new ideas, but their obsession with the idea that what has already been said is still not enough.”⁵⁰ The four classical reliefs are not repetitious, but beautiful each one in its own right. The prominent place of the clock

⁵⁰ Eugène Delacroix, *Journal*, May 15, 1824.

and also the wastebasket gives the limits of production. It must be done within one's allotted time, and it must be worth saving (and not throwing in the garbage.)

Another photograph of Lemaître shows him standing, one hand in his pocket and the other holding some folded papers, in front of a bookcase of paper-bound books (Figure 48). The books are in disarray with some leaning, others lying on top, some piled up, with several photographs tucked into the shelves. Above the shelves are a whole series of photographs and prints, a bust, a group of postcards, and behind a series of posters that might be by Jules Chéret. One can see at least two portraits of Lemaître within Dornac's photograph: a small one right behind his head which shows him with one hand in his pocket as in the Dornac image, and quite spectacularly, a Chinese silk scroll portrait of Lemaître dressed in Chinese garb. It is a tour de force of masquerade, where everywhere one looks one sees repetitions and reinforcements of alternative identities; not simply the most obvious French/Chinese alternatives, but also as one looks closer, courtier (the bust which repeats the angle of Lemaître's gaze) and ancien régime official (the postcard of man with hand in pocket that leans against the bust). This doubling is repeated in the two mismatched chairs; one light and delicate, the other lower and covered with velour with fringes. The theme of dressing up is indicated further by the way that Lemaître's coat is not fully buttoned and seems to have been rather hastily donned.

It is not only writers who are shown at their desks. Dornac's photograph of the composer Charles Gounod (1818-1893) in his *cabinet de travail* offers a view of a man at work (Figure 49), much like the photograph of Sardou. Here, however, it is a combination of many books with wood paneling that sets a somber tone. A portrait bust,

several framed images, many knick-knacks on the desk, a brass chandelier, complete the well-appointed room. Gounod, who holds a pen to paper, is pensive, leaning his head against his other hand and gazing upward obliquely to our right. The light of the photograph functions to illuminate his head and the books behind, leaving much of the room in shadow.

Another view of the same room shows it in a considerably grander aspect with elaborate wood mantel complete with larger than life-sized Corinthian columns, a sculptural frieze above the fire box crowned with a wooden lyre, above which reaches yet another sculptural frieze (Figure 50). Gounod himself leans against the mantle, clad in a velvet jacket and velvet beret looking back calmly at the camera.

The historian Ernest Lavis (1842-1922) is also pictured in his *cabinet de travail*, surrounded by a plethora of art objects (Figure 51).⁵¹ A large landscape painting amidst many smaller portrait paintings and bas-reliefs, a three-panel religious painting, several prints and a large seventeenth-century bust (in the middle of three or four small figurines) line the wall behind Lavis. His desk, which is in the center of the room, is piled with papers, books and small objets d'art. Under the desk are still more books and a large Renaissance bowl filled with small boxes and papers. He sits slightly back from his desk, his hand resting elegantly on the back of his chair, his cravat tied in a large bow, looking off to our right. The immediate impression of this man and his space is of a close working relationship between the objects and the man. The interplay in particular between the large bust on the mantel, with its elaborate curled wig and tied cravat

⁵¹ Lavis was a professor at the Sorbonne, Editor in chief of *La Revue de Paris*, was director of the Ecole Normale, member of the French Academy and was author of *Etude sur l'une des origines de la monarchie prussienne*(1888); *Etude sur le pouvoir royal au temps de Charles V*(1884), *La France sous Henri II and Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution*(1901), among others.

surrounding a middle aged face and Lavisse himself, seems to evoke the passage of time from the seventeenth to the nineteenth-centuries in the way that the Lemaître portraits evoke the distance and bridging of cultures across the world. The repetition of the portrait as theme gives us a sense of the aliveness of the past, with a carved medieval-looking wood face at the top, a tricorn hatted relief of a young boy and a plaster relief of a nineteenth-century girl, just three of the time-traveling personages in the room.

Jules Simon (1814-1896), man of action, politician, leader of the Commune, is also shown in his *cabinet de travail* (Figure 52).⁵² He too is surrounded by books, sculptures, paintings, photographs, and *objets d'art*. But what strikes one first is the massive, practically unbelievable pile of papers strewn about, discarded in a basket, overflowing from the basket, overtaking his desk. The whirlwind is embodied in a piece of furniture, carved in a Chinese style, that seems to serve as a kind of paper sorter. In any case, its compartments are filled with papers and seem to turn in every direction amidst the chaos of paper. The man himself, seated, pensive, his head on his hand, averts his gaze. The contrast between repose and implied activity is remarkable.

By contrast the photographs of the radical writer Caroline Rémy, known as Séverine (1855-1929) stress a dreamy femininity rather than her forceful, active prose (Figure 53).⁵³ She is seated at her desk, which is a small writing table rather than a larger bureau like that of Simon. She is shown on her side of the desk, so that her body is not cut off at the waist. Instead we can see the soft folds of her dress gathered around her

⁵² His library was sold in 1902: *Bibliothèque Jules Simon* (Paris: E. Paul et fils et Guillemin, 1902). His publications include, *Liberté* (1859); *La femme du vingtième siècle* (1892); *L'hygiène à Paris: l'habitation du pauvre*, (1892) *Les misères du siècle: cérébraux, névropathes, la criminalité chez les enfants alcooliques, amaurdiques et aveugles* and *La politique radicale* (1893).

⁵³ See *Séverine: Choix de Papiers*, annotated by Evelyne le Garrec (Paris: Tierce, 1982). Séverine was a journalist, she directed the *Cri du Peuple* following the death of Jules Vallès for several years. Initially an anti-Dreyfusard, she changed her mind and became a forceful advocate for him.

waist, which is emphasized by a silver belt. Her desk, which is pushed against a bookcase, is covered with small photographs and flowers. The ledge of the bookcase also has flowers and photographs in ornate frames, and peacock feathers and lamps with ruffles. There is one framed print on the bookcase, but otherwise not much art in this view. Another photograph taken near the mantel, however, shows Séverine, seated in the same dress, her chin on her raised hand looking out at us (Figure 54). On the cloth draped mantel behind is a small statue of a kneeling, nude woman whose pale color rhymes with the face and arms of Séverine as well as the peonies to her left. Thus while both Séverine and Jules Simon were political activists and writers of the left, Dornac's presentation of each are rather different. The difference seems to be based on gender rather than on occupation, or political views.

It is quite evident in most of Dornac's photographs that the rooms have been purposefully arranged, without, however, giving off a sense of having been "decorated." In other words, there is no obvious decorative "schema" or "theme." By contrast the *cabinet de travail* of Emile Zola (1840-1902) is self-consciously "artistic" and, indeed, "decorated."⁵⁴ He is shown seated in an enormous room which features a massive carved wood mantelpiece with an ironwork screen in front along with a plant on an iron stand (Figure 56). The ceiling is hung with a brocaded swag of fabric in front of some kind of heavy wall hanging. The massive wooden table at which Zola is working is also covered with a rug. Fringes abound. The armchair has a fringed skirt, the table covering has fringes as does the wall hanging. A brass chandelier seems dwarfed by the size of the room. There are at least three paintings visible, as well as two bookshelves, and

⁵⁴ The sale of his books, sculptures, furniture, modern and old master paintings took place in 1903. See *Collection Emile Zola* (Paris: Moreau, 1903).

numerous *objets d'art* clustered on the table, but in contrast to what is seen in the other photographs, the decoration of the room, rather than these books and paintings, dominates. Like many of the others photographs, however, there is a theatricality that speaks less to privacy than self-conscious presentation.

Another photograph has Zola standing in this same room, this time holding in his hands a tall narrow Renaissance panel (Figure 56). His arm is raised and the gleam of light on his hands leads one's eye upward towards Manet's large portrait of Zola, which hangs to the left of the mantel. Here the tactility of the relationship between art work and *amateur* enacts the close and sensual relationship described in the sales catalogue prefaces discussed above. Manet's portrait of Zola brings art, critical writing and friendship clearly into focus.

Sociability and Conversation: "Le Cercle"

Grouped together in these photographs are the ideas of collection, work, display of art, and sociability. I think that the collection of Dornac's photographs, *Nos Contemporains chez eux*, is a concrete presentation of a social circle that is meant principally to be circulated amongst the members of this same social circle. One reason for this supposition is their current rarity, and another reason is the relatively high cost of these luxury albums, which stand in contrast to the mass-produced cartes-de-visite. *Nos Contemporains* functioned, I believe, something like a social register, produced primarily for members of the social register to check on the status of those that they meet, whereas

the more readily available photographs in *Le Monde illustré*, were part of the cult of the celebrity.

The integral link between an interior space and conversation is embodied in the idea of the “salon.” Stemming from the tradition of the *ancien régime* in which the nobles gathered together in a salon for conversation, salons were at once a place and an event. The aristocratic privileging of conversation seen in the tradition of the eighteenth-century salons was preserved by the elites of Paris. From the Restoration, through the July Monarchy, into the Second Empire and the Third Republic the socially elevated classes persisted in gathering in salons and matching wits.⁵⁵ In her memoirs, Delphine de Girardin discussed the importance of conversation.⁵⁶ She very specifically linked the success of the conversation to the space in which it occurs: “the destiny of the conversation depends on three things: the quality of the speakers, the harmony of their spirits and the material arrangement of the salon.” She goes on to describe the recommended arrangement of the salon: “a salon should be like an English garden, apparently disordered; but this disorder is not the effect of chance but on the contrary is a supreme art.”⁵⁷ She was so convinced of this rule that she argued that an amusing conversation could never start in a salon where the furniture was arranged symmetrically. In the next chapter, I will discuss in greater depth the importance of a picturesque, rambling schema of space for the appreciation of the conversational quality of art. Here

⁵⁵ Anne Martin-Fugier, *La vie élégante ou la formation du Tout-Paris 1815-1848* (Paris: Fayard, 1993). See also Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*, which characterizes the social circle of Degas as one in which love of aphorism, the cult of male friendship and double edged badinage with women predominates.

⁵⁶ Delphine de Girardin, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1844), t.II 303. “Le destin de la conversation dépend de trois choses: de la qualité des causeurs, de l’harmonie des esprits, et de l’arrangement matériel du salon.”

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 303; “Un salon doit être comme un jardin anglais, apparemment désordonné mais ce désordre n’est pas un effet du hasard, c’est au contraire le suprême de l’art.”

what I simply want to stress is the crucial relationship between an interior space and conversation, as well as the importance of conversation.

There is a further point to be emphasized and that is the discourse of the “circle.” A spatial designation, it has also a related social role.⁵⁸ Littré, for example, gives the sixth meaning of this geometrical term as:

All disposition of people or objects arranged so as to form a sort of circumference of a circle...in particular, the gathering of princesses and duchesses seated circularly in the presence of the queen//by extension, society, assembly of men and of women united by the pleasure of conversation.⁵⁹

Thus a spatial term becomes a social term explicitly linked to conversation. One of the determining factors of the success of a conversation for Delphine de Girardin is “the quality of the speakers.” A social circle is a collection of people who share some attribute, most usually one of class.

The idea of the interior as the setting for modern life, in which ideas and conversation are exchanged amongst a circle of friends, was expressed by Stephane Mallarmé, one of the members of Dornac’s circle of contemporaries. In his 1876 defense of the Impressionist painters in the London-based *Art Monthly Review and Photographic Portfolio* he asked “Why is it needful to represent the open air of gardens, shore or street, when it must be owned that the chief part of modern existence is passed within doors?”⁶⁰ He singled out Degas among this group of painters as one who depicted the modern life of the interior. Degas, in turn, included Mallarmé in several of his photographs taken as

⁵⁸ See Maurice Agulhon, *Le Cercle dans la France bourgeoise 1810-1848* (Paris, 1977).

⁵⁹ Littré, 528-529. “toute disposition de personnes ou d’objets de façon a former une sorte de circonférence de cercle...Particulièrement, la reunion des princesses et des duchesses assises circulairement en présence de la reine//Par extension, société, assemblée d’hommes et de femmes réunis pour la plaisir de la conversation.”

⁶⁰ *The New Painting: Impressionism 1874-1886*, ed. Charles Moffett (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1986), 30.

part of evening gatherings of friends.⁶¹ Mallarmé's friendship with Degas involved, as did many of the friendships of Mallarmé (and indeed of Degas as well), the exchange of jeux de mots and witty remarks, as well as an exchange of their own art. Mallarmé asked Degas for an etching for his proposed collection of verse, *Le tiroir de laque*, and Degas asked Mallarmé for help in writing sonnets.⁶² This artistic exchange is the subject of Dornac's portraits of Mallarmé. In one photograph, which was used to illustrate an 1898 article by Charles Maurras in *La Revue encyclopedique*, Mallarmé is seated by the mantel on top of which rests a lacquer chest (Figure 57).⁶³ This piece of furniture was a Chinese chest of many drawers, the central doors of this piece of furniture are open to reveal more drawers (a lovely metaphor for the structure of poetry). In front of them lies a packet of letter-size papers on which rests an oval photographic portrait of what seems to be Baudelaire. Another small image behind, of a man seated in profile, I cannot identify. On the chair next to him is a stack of four books arrayed in a fan shape, seeming to wait for his attention. Once one knows that Mallarmé's proposed collection of poems was *Le tiroir de laque*, this chest conjures up a gathering of art and friends almost as much as an actual collection of art.

In another Dornac photograph Mallarmé is shown in the salon of his apartment on the rue de Rome (Figure 58). Near a closed-in fireplace whose small mantle features only some ordinary candlesticks, he is seated in a wooden rocker. The floor is bare and the ceiling is somewhat low. Situated prominently, right above his head, is the portrait

⁶¹ This famous photograph, taken at the home of Julie Manet in 1895, also features Renoir, and, in the space of the mirror, Degas himself, along with the wife and daughter of Mallarmé. See my "The Lacquered Box: Degas, Mallarmé and the Camera" in *A Painter's Poet* (New York: Leubsdorf Gallery, 1999): 80-84. Also Malcolm Daniel, *Edgar Degas, Photographer* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), Douglas Crimp, "Positive/Negative: A Note on Degas's Photographs," *October* 5 (Summer 1978): 89-100, and Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*.

⁶² Mendelson, 80.

⁶³ Charles Maurras, "Mallarmé" *La Revue Encyclopedique* (November 1898)964-966.

that Manet did of the poet almost twenty years earlier, which brings to mind Dornac's photograph of Zola holding Manet's painting. While Mallarmé is considerably grayer in the photograph than he appears in the painting, he is smoking in both. In Dornac's portrait, rather than the relaxed slouch found in the Manet painting, Mallarmé is sitting more formally in the small chair with his thick woolen coat and pants. However the conjunction of the continuity of activity (smoking) near a fireplace symbolizing home suggests a continued and important relationship with the painter Manet, long after his death. There is even an implied circle given by the curve of the rocking chair and the arch above the mantle, which encloses Manet and Mallarmé within a milieu of artistic and friendly exchange.

Edgar Degas: The Atmosphere of Art and Friendship

Another subject of Dornac's photographs is the writer and librettist Ludovic Halévy who was part of the artistic and intimate circle of Edgar Degas. What is striking is the relationship between Halévy, who is after all a writer of librettos and plays, not an artist or an art critic or museum official, and his artworks (Figure 59). In the Dornac photograph, Halévy sits in a fauteuil in a room that is stuffed with art and with chairs. One can see six chairs or little banquettes all placed one next to the other in just the corner of the room visible in the photograph. On the walls there is very little space without either a painting a drawing or a print, among them one of Degas's images of Halévy now in the Louvre, *Friends on the Stage* (L. Halévy and A. Cavé) (1876). Furthermore, we can see even more paintings reflected in the mirror, and there are at least

six sculptures resting on tables and pedestals. Halévy himself seems to have interrupted his reading (a finger holds his place in his book) and his feet are stretched beneath a little table holding another two books. Immediately behind him is an upright piano. The setting is certainly not one of opulence (there is a worn rug added to protect the larger rug beneath) but instead one of personal associations and friendly gatherings. There is a complicated interaction of gazes between various portraits and sculptures, and the chairs seem arranged so as to facilitate conversation.

These themes of sociability, conviviality, and discussion are also visible in a different series of photographs, this time by Edgar Degas, also taken in the home of Ludovic Halévy. Here the friends of Degas are intermeshed with their art. This group of photographs was much more private than the Dornac images, in that they were not made to be exhibited or sold. They make explicit the sociability of art in the circle of the *amateur*.⁶⁴ Set in a room hung with drawings, paintings, photographs and prints, with many books, Chinese vases, lace, embroideries, the *mise-en-scène* of these photographs closely resembles the *cabinet de travail* rather than some large receiving room such as the salon seen in the photographs of the collection of Jacques Doucet.

Degas had been a friend of the Halévys for a long time, and they became almost family for him during the period in which these photographs were taken.⁶⁵ While the curator Malcolm Daniel emphasizes the intimacy of the group, and the role of these photographs in preserving that friendship against the ravages of time, I think there is also an almost programmatic approach to living with art. As all writers on Degas's

⁶⁴ For a discussion of these photographs see Malcolm Daniel, *Edgar Degas, Photographer*, also Crimp.

⁶⁵ Daniel, *ibid.*, 26-34. See also Armstrong, *Odd Man Out*, 62-63. Here she specifically cites the social circle of the "aristophile society" to which Degas, Halévy and other *amateurs* belong, as well as their "exaggerated ancien régime politesses" and gallantry.

photography have noted, he required long poses from his sitters and was quite dictatorial as to how the composition should be arranged.⁶⁶ On these occasions he was an artist in full charge of his composition. Thus a photograph in which conversation is emphasized is not a mere snapshot accident. In one of his photographs at Louise and Daniel Halévy's house with Jacques Emile, Rose Blanche, Jules Taschereau and an unidentified woman, the two couples, women seated, men standing, are involved in animated conversation (Figure 60). The framed artwork on the walls gleams in the lamplight and forms the only other focal areas of the dark interior. Thus the play of light from one face to another is like the play of light between one framed artwork and other, and the frame of the photograph plays off the internal frames of the art work such that conversation and art are fully intertwined.

Another evening of social conviviality at the Halévy's house is also preserved in Degas's photographs. Here Ludovic, Louise, Élie, Daniel and Degas were joined by Jules Taschereau, his daughter Henriette, his sister Sophie Taschereau-Niaudet and Sophie's two children (Figures 61 and 62). They are shown in various combinations in two photographs. Degas apparently mistakenly exposed the plates twice so that two photographs are superimposed. The result, however, was printed several times and preserved in the photo album of the Halévys.⁶⁷ Here the theme of the intermingling of life and art becomes inescapable as first one portrait then a drawing come in and out of focus, and the frames of the art work serve also to frame the heads of this circle of

⁶⁶ Both Douglas Crimp and Malcolm Daniel cite Daniel Halévy on these sessions: "They returned together and from then on the pleasure part of the evening was over. Degas raised his voice, became dictatorial, gave orders that a lamp be brought into the little salon and that anyone who wasn't going to pose should leave. The duty part of the evening began. We had to obey Degas's fierce will, his artist's ferocity. At the moment all his friends speak of him with terror. If you invite him for the evening you know what to expect: two hours of military obedience." Daniel Halévy in his journal, Dec. 29, 1895. Daniel Halévy, *Degas Parle*. Revised edition, ed., Jean-Pierre Halévy (Paris, 1995): 147-48. Qtd in Daniel, 31.

⁶⁷ Daniel, 33.

friends. Here the ideas of milieu, “The fluid that surrounds the body”⁶⁸ is neither air, nor water, but the atmosphere of art.

Edmond de Goncourt

The atmosphere of art evident in Degas’s photographs at the Halévy house appears also in a Dornac photograph of Edmond de Goncourt in his dining room. This portrait reveals on the one hand Goncourt’s obsession with the rococo and a concurrent interest in Asian art, and on the other hand the theatricality of his decoration (Figure 63). Goncourt stands between a marble table supported by two putti and a mirror above a mantel. In front of the mantel stands a Japanese screen and above the table hangs an eighteenth century tapestry. Chinese vases and dishes are on the table and on the mantel and an eighteenth-century drawing hangs on the right. More than any other Dornac photograph I have seen, there is an insistence on light which is reflected in the mirror and screen and seems to surround Goncourt with a kind of aura. He himself is shown leaning on the table with his elbow which seems to be supported by one of the putti. Directly behind Goncourt, one of the figures of the tapestry dances, leaning in the opposite direction from Goncourt, seemingly in response to him. He seems to live in a world in which art is as alive as he is, and in which the light dissolves any difference between the man and his art. As in Degas’s photographs at the Halévy house, there is an atmosphere of art and artificiality.

⁶⁸ Littré, s.v. “milieu.” “le fluide qui environne le corps.”

In contrast to Degas's photographs, however, Goncourt is not in middle of a social gathering. He did, however, have many gatherings in his house, and specifically in his various work spaces (*the cabinet de travail* on the second floor and the attic which also served as study.) His visitors, however, tended to be male. The all-male gathering referred to in the manuals of home design with reference to the *cabinet de travail* can be seen in some photographs of a gathering at the Goncourt house in Auteuil. In his *Journal*, Edmond de Goncourt commented on the division of the sexes. For him women harmonized well with the interior, but everyone wished that they could come very late: "Women go really very well with the background and enter totally into the harmony of the furnishings, but the majority of my public demands that the women arrive late, late, late."⁶⁹ In the gatherings that he hosted in his *Grenier*, which functioned as *cabinet de travail*, his visitors were usually male. This is evident in a photograph taken by le comte Joseph Napoléon Primoli in 1894 (Figure 64). Crowded together in this room, lined up against the wall as the art works are lined up above them, a group of men all look at the camera to record this social circle. Goncourt wrote: "Today, Primoli came to the house to photograph the regulars of the *Grenier*, who numbered about twenty."⁷⁰ The *Grenier* for Edmond de Goncourt, was not only a space of work, of collection but of sociability as well. In discussing this space, I will argue that the important coloristic principles of decorating that he followed, tie in to the significance of this private collection.

⁶⁹ Goncourt, *Journal*, November 15, 1885, quoted in Elisabeth Launer, "De dernier grenier où l'on cause," in *Monuments Historiques. Intérieures Privées*, 195(March 1995): 30-34. "Les femmes font vraiment très bien sur les fonds et entrent tout à fait dans l'harmonie du mobilier mais la généralité de mon public demande toutefois que les femmes viennent tard, tard, tard."

⁷⁰ Goncourt, *Journal*, December 2, 1894, "Aujourd'hui, Primoli est venu photographier chez moi les habitués du Grenier, qui étaient au nombre d'une vingtaine."

The Goncourt brothers' self-conscious decoration of their house brings together many strands that are important in any discussion of the space of the *amateur*.

Discussion of their color-based decorating, their sense of the ensemble, and the central role of their working lives within this space, will locate them as participating in the self-conscious artistry of the *amateur*. Because they are so famous for their role in reviving the rococo, and because they collected so many eighteenth-century drawings and prints, they have been represented as opposing the eclecticism of their contemporaries. This is problematic for two reasons. First, their house, and in particular the *cabinet de travail*, in fact combined art of different periods and different cultures, and also combined different kinds of art (embroidery, prints, book illustration, painting etc.). Second, the eclecticism of the painting collector (as opposed to the bibelot gatherer) enacts the same synchronic understanding of art that is emblemized by the Goncourts' fetish for the rococo. That is, there is an understanding of paintings as living in the present (rather than being relegated to the past as an artifact of another period) that is shared by most of the *amateurs* that I have studied. In fact one could say that the positivist notion of "milieu" as reflecting the personality of its inhabitant (or vice versa) is, in the decoration of the house of the *amateur*, specifically contested. What is proposed is an atmosphere of art, rather than of climate. Rather than there being a "natural" relationship between the setting and the person as proposed by Taine such that Dutch painters produce the humidly toned paintings of their country, in the house of the amateur there is an intermingling of cause and effect between the rooms and the people. What is accepted is the artificiality of art, rather than its naturalness.

The text that most exhaustively documents the collecting of the Goncourt brothers is their *House of the Artist* published first in 1881. Here, inventory is autobiography. In both this description of their house and in their journal the Goncourts describe a similar amassing of objects or experiences, by which the meticulousness of their rendering in the respective texts invests both moments and objects with the imprint of the author of the record. The complicated collection of collections within the space of a library or *cabinet de travail* that we saw in the photographs of Dornac was exemplified in that of the Goncourt brothers. Their collection of drawings, prints, paintings was complemented by their books.⁷¹ The catalogue preface of the 1897 sale of their prints and drawings allies their collecting in all domains :

The ardor that these two brothers deployed on the track of a chalk drawing by Watteau, a goache of Baudouin, a sketch of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, was the same when they hoped to surprise a state of an etching of a little weathered in an old box of images; when in the 15 penny box along the quais, surged under their fingers a volume that was rare or in rare condition, when in a dusty bundle of old papers they unfolded an unpublished letter or an unknown document, previously scorned or else very rare.⁷²

The language here is evocative and literary, like the writing of the Goncourts themselves. What one notices above all is the activity of searching and the fortuitousness of the discovery. Furthermore its language is that of seduction and love, for example the book that *surgissait* beneath their fingers. The erotics of the search, of the discovery and of delicate touching is something that one finds over and again in the descriptions of the *amateur*. It is quite different from wanting something one needs and going to get it.

⁷¹See Élisabeth Launey, *Les Frères Goncourt Collectionneurs de dessins* (Paris: Athéna, 1991).

⁷² *Collection Goncourt* (Paris), x. "L'ardeur que les deux frères déployaient sur la piste d'une sanguine de Watteau, d'une goache de Baudouin, d'un croquis de Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, était la même quand ils espéraient surprendre dans un vieux carton d'images l'état d'eau forte un peu roussi d'une planche gravée ; quand, dans la boîte à quinze sous, le long des quais, surgissait sous leur doigts un volume rare où de condition rare : quand dans une liasse poudreuse de paperasses, ils déplaient une lettre inédite où un document inconnu, méprisé où rarissime."

There is a kind of vagueness of desire and openness to discovery, an almost passive need to be acted upon.

The Goncourts also collected books, remaking them as well. They decorated them and adorned them as objects of art. Paul Valéry complained about this in his *Aesthetics*: “After having the first editions of friends’ works bound in parchment, Edmond de Goncourt had their portraits painted on the covers by the artists he considered most appropriate to the sitters; for Daudet, Carrière, for Zola, Raffaelli etc (Figures 65 and 66). Since the books could not bear the slightest handling without damage, they were condemned to sit eternally in a glass case.”⁷³ While Valéry considers this treatment of the book as an object to be contrary to the purpose of a book, it was common, as we have seen, to the practice of many *bibliophiles*. Their collection is also introduced in the sales catalogue as being significant for the role it had played in the development of their œuvre. “This library differs from others: it gave life to a body of work, and this mysterious fecundity made it, for some visitors to Auteuil, a sort of Temple where they did not enter except with devotion.”⁷⁴ The texts themselves of the books are described as in some way producing the text that the Goncourts then wrote. There is in this way a double tie with the lives of the two brothers. On the one hand, the texts were so integrally bound up in their lives that they worked in some way to produce the brothers’ own texts and, on the other hand, the Goncourts transformed the books themselves, decorating them with portraits and so on. This integral relationship between life and collection was crucial to the dynamic of the *amateur*.

⁷³ Paul Valéry, *Aesthetics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Random House, 1964): 218-219.

⁷⁴ *Bibliothèque des Goncourt* (Paris: Drouot, 1897), ix. “Cette bibliothèque diffère des autres: elle a donné la vie à une œuvre, cette fécondation mystérieuse en faisant pour quelques visiteurs d’Auteuil, une sorte de Temple où ils n’entraient qu’avec recueillement.”

The Goncourts were writers and as such their collection of books was part of their *métier*, but as is indicated by their *Journal*, their writing not only described but in fact created their lives. The amount of time spent writing, observing, crafting their experiences worked to influence how they in turn experienced their lives. Their lives, that is, were inextricably linked with artistry and self-creation. This is true as well of the house that they decorated and filled with their collections. Socially, these two brothers, who were in fact only half aristocratic, openly expressed anger and resentment against the dissolute “mob” of the rising middle class in the Paris of their time. This is like the attitude of their friend Philippe de Chennevières, discussed in Chapter One. Their reaction against the erosion of boundaries between classes was expressed in an espousal of aristocratic ideals and their representation of their selves as aristocratic. In particular, they were at the forefront of the rococo revival of the mid-nineteenth-century with their art historical books on artists of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Like the other collectors we have discussed, their space functioned theatrically to create their personas. While they argued that they could tell who someone was by the way their house looked, by which one can understand the interior to be in some way a reflection of the self, it is clear that for the Goncourts, the fashioning of the house, of the collection and of the self went hand in hand.⁷⁶ They remade themselves in remaking their house. Describing his house, Edmond wrote :

⁷⁵ Debora Silverman’s discussion of the Goncourt brother’s collection brings together many of the themes evident in the other collectors. She stresses their love of art, as a substitute almost for women, their cult of the eighteenth century and most saliently, their artistry in putting together their various interiors. However, as we have seen, they were not at all alone in their erotic attachment to the object of their collections, nor is their understanding of an “ensemble” different than other amateurs. Their attachment to one era, the 18th century, as opposed to the eclectic mix of many other collectors is different in its emphasis, but similar in its studiously theatrical representation of the self.

⁷⁶ In the preface to the collection of Philippe Burty, Maurice Tournoux wrote: “Le catalogue...reflète toujours la personnalité de celui qui l’a formée. La distinction des choses autour d’un être, ont dit Edmond

I have rarely felt a joy equivalent to what I feel living in this sumptuous harmony, in this world of objects that are so unbourgeois, in this choice and this elevated fantasy of form and color. Work here, raising my nose in the air from time to time, seems to be work in an enchanted place and it is difficult to leave these things for the streets of Paris.⁷⁷

There are complicated ideas and feelings that are being expressed here. The house is a fantasy of form and color that creates an enchanted place in which to work. Living, working, dreaming, and collecting, these activities are harmonious, rather than being divided into separate categories.

A very important place in this house was the *cabinet de travail*, and in fact, in the house at Auteuil there were two spaces that functioned as such, one on the second floor and the other in the attic. These spaces housed considerable collections in which the kind of harmony described above was possible. It is in this way that Edmond described his second floor *cabinet de travail*:

These days my “cabinet de travail” has been finished, the books replaced on the shelves, the prints replaced in their boxes, the Persian rugs rehung on the walls, the bronzes, the platters, the vases rehung on the walls or perched on the entablature of the furniture.⁷⁸

Rugs, books, prints, bronzes and vases were all given equal weight in this workspace, which is described meticulously in various texts. The Goncourt’s house in Auteuil, which today is run down and a bit seedy, facing a railway line overgrown with hedges and

et Jules de Goncourt, est la mesure de la distinction de cet être.” “The catalogue always reflects the personality of the person that collected. The quality of the things surrounding a person, Edmond and Jules de Goncourt said, is the measure of the quality of that person.” *Bibliothèque Philippe Burty* (Paris : Paul, Littard et Guillemin, 1891), v.

⁷⁷ Edmond de Goncourt et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal, Mémoires de la vie littéraire*, 4 vols. (Paris: Fasquelle & Flammarion, 1956), 4 Novembre, 1875. “J’ai rarement éprouvé une jouissance pareille à celle que j’ai à vivre dans cette harmonie somptueuse, dans ce monde d’objets d’art si peu bourgeois, en ce choix et cette haute fantaisie de formes et de couleurs. Le travail ici enlevant de temps en temps le nez en l’air, me semble du travail en un lieu enchanté, et j’ai peine à quitter ces choses pour les rues de Paris.”

⁷⁸ Ibid. “Ces jours-ci, mon cabinet de travail a été fini, les livres remplacés sur les rayons, les gravures rentrées dans les cartons, les tapis persans retendus sur les murs, les bronzes, les plats, les vases raccrochés aux murs ou perchés sur les entablements des meubles.”

vines, has been extremely well documented not only in Goncourt's own *House of the Artist*, but by other recent scholars. Michel Beurdeley's *Edmond de Goncourt Chez Lui* makes use of *Les Archives Goncourt* which had only begun to be catalogued in 1990.⁷⁹ Beurdeley was able, using texts and photographs, to establish very clearly the disposition of the interior of the house. Following the 1881 edition of his *House of the Artist*, Goncourt commissioned Fernand Lochard to photograph the rooms of the house. Goncourt planned to issue a deluxe edition of his *House of the Artist* which would include photographs although he never did this. The two photographs of the second floor *cabinet de travail*, as well as other photographs of the *grenier*, combined with the textual descriptions in Goncourt's *House of the Artist* all make clear that this house was no pristine recreation of the eighteenth century.

One photograph shows a mantel flanked on both sides by bookcases, one floor-to-ceiling and built-in and the other glass-fronted and considerably shorter on which rest an assortment of Chinese vases and bowls (Figure 67). The mantel is adorned with two Japanese candlesticks, a rococo figurine as well as several vases. Miniature paintings (six on each side) hang just next to the mirror above the mantel. A large eighteenth-century portrait hangs above the bookcase and a decorative boiserie decorates the space above the mirror. The other photograph of the *cabinet de travail* focuses on a bookcase over which hangs a portrait of Edmond by Giuseppe de Nittis (1881) and on top of which are cluttered many far-eastern objects (Figure 68 and 69). The effect is far from a historically faithful recreation of one specific epoch. Certainly the rococo is a strong

⁷⁹ Michel Beurdeley, *Edmond de Goncourt chez lui* (Nancy: P.U.N., 1991). See also Elisabeth Launay, "Le dernier grenier où l'on cause. Chez Edmond de Goncourt à Auteuil," in *Monuments Historiques. Intérieurs Privés*, 195 (November 1995): 30-34. Launay explains that there are three archives for the photographs commissioned by Goncourt: one at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, one at le Musée Carnavalet and the last at the Fondation Custodia à Paris (Institut néerlandais), 33.

presence suggested in the porcelain figurine of a bather described in this way by Goncourt in his *House of the Artist*: “On a sculpted pedestal of wood, is found the *Bather* of Falconet, a thin and delicate porcelain, with hands, feet and little breasts lovingly modeled and whose white nudity is reflected from the back in the mirror.”⁸⁰ But this erotic vision of the rococo past is surrounded both by the two Japanese candlesticks, as well as recent portraits, including a Raffaelli portrait of Edmond and an Isabey portrait of Edmond’s grandmother. Right next to this grouping is a bookcase which holds not only the manuscript-in-progress of the *Journal*, but also other specially bound books, including a copy of *Manette Salomon* with an enamel by Popelin. In a list of proposed illustrations for *La Maison d’un Artiste* that Goncourt made and that Beurdeley reproduces, there is listed a mélange of types of art. Proposed illustrations of the artworks that were located in the study include photographs of the ceiling which was covered with an embroidered Japanese theatrical costume, a landscape by Fusi-Yama, a menu of a dinner that Louis XV had with Mme de Pompadour, as well as various rococo drawings including a woman writing at her secretary.⁸¹ I think the centrality of the portrait of Edmond by de Nettis, which hung at one point over the fireplace, and is shown in the photograph over a bookcase, is crucial to understanding the principle of collection within this extremely diverse grouping. This was not the only image of Edmond in the room; there was also the portrait by Rafaelli. These portraits served to underline the relationship between the space of the *cabinet de travail*, which is where, after all, the artist Goncourt created his works, and the identity of Goncourt himself. The portraits

⁸⁰ Edmond de Goncourt, *La Maison d’un Artiste* (Paris: Charpentier, 1881), 305. “Sur un socle de bois sculpté, se dresse la Baigneuse de Falconet, un biscuit à la longueur fluette, aux mains, aux pieds, aux petits seins amoureusement modelés et dont la nudité blanche se reflète de dos dans la glace.”

⁸¹ Beurdeley, op cit. 26.

were not alone as living presences. As is clear from the description of the figurine, she is alive in her sensuality, and Raffaelli's painting emphasizes the relationship between Edmond and this statue in his portrait. Her sinuous pose and draperies rhyme visually with the fall of his foulard as he stands near the mantel, his hand draped over a book case, light against the dark, serving to accentuate the tactile relationship between the two figures. Similarly, in this same painting, a relief panel hangs immediately above a double portrait of the Goncourt brothers in bringing the two images into conversation.

The dialogic quality between the paintings themselves, and between the artwork and the collector is central to the discourse of the *amateur*. The theme of conversation points to two important components of this space. One is the role of color, and the second is the function of the *cabinet de travail* (and the space of collection more generally) as a space of sociability. These two are related because color was understood at this time to be a relational (that is dialogic) system, in which color never stands alone, but is seen in so far as it is in harmony with another color in the room. One color, that is, "speaks" to another color in the same way that one artwork "speaks" to another artwork, and in the same way that two visitors speak to each other. This view of color turns up again and again throughout the nineteenth-century and is evident in the work of such specialists as Chevreuil, critics such as Baudelaire, artists such as Signac, art theorists such as Charles Blanc and even home-design consultants such as Henri Havard.⁸² Blanc

⁸² The literature on color in the nineteenth-century is, of course, huge. See M.E. Chevreuil, *De la Loi du contraste simultané des couleurs*, 2 vols, (Paris, 1839); Charles Baudelaire, *Curiosités Esthétiques* (Geneva: Milieu du Monde, n.d.); Paul Signac, *D'Eugène Delacroix au néo-impressionisme* (Paris: 1899); Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, ; Henry Havard, *L'Art dans la Maison. Grammaire de l'Ameublement* (Paris: Rouveyre, 1885).

states flatly, “Color is relative...Form is absolute.”⁸³ Signac described how this relativity works when he described Delacroix’s painting technique:

This knowledge of scientific color theory serves him first to harmonize or emphasize through use of the contrast of two adjacent colors, to regulate felicitous meetings of tints and tones through the tuning of analogous colors or the analogy of complementary colors.⁸⁴

Here the operation of one color on another (contrasts, harmonies, complementary and analogous colors) is seen to govern the way a painter paints. The relationality of color was recognized in home-design manuals as well. Henry Havard, who explicitly cites the *cabinet d’amateur* as an ideal for the home decorator, stresses the need to create a harmonious atmosphere in which the relativity of color is accounted for.⁸⁵

Goncourt had a similar attitude towards his decorating. First of all, as we saw with other *amateurs*, Goncourt thought of arranging his house as an artistic act:

One will never know the pleasure gained by an impassioned decorator as he composes panel walls of an apartment, on which materials and colors harmonize or contrast. It is like creating a great painting when he combines bronze, porcelain, lacquer, jade, and embroidery. This can satisfy one completely. It is a shame that when a panel is completely successful, that photography cannot fully capture the color and not just the form.⁸⁶

The materials he lists, bronze, porcelain, lacquer, jade and embroidery, are like different colors and they each conjure up completely distinct cultural traditions. This is a manifestation of the same tendency, the same fin-de-siècle taste for eclecticism seen in

⁸³ Blanc, 22. “La couleur est relatif...la forme est absolue.”

⁸⁴ Signac, 75. “Cette connaissance de la théorie scientifique de la couleur lui sert d’abord à harmoniser ou à exalter par le contraste deux teintes voisines, à régler d’heureuses rencontres de teintes et de tons, par l’accord des semblables ou l’analogie des contraires.”

⁸⁵ Havard, 12. Also see his discussion of the harmony of color as it was developed by painters and color theorists including Delacroix, and Chevreul, 46.

⁸⁶ Goncourt, *Journal*. January 23, 1884. quoted in Silverman, 34. “On ne sait pas, pour un passionné de mobilier, le bonheur qu’il y a à composer des panneaux d’appartements, sur lesquels les matières et les couleurs s’harmonisent ou contrastent, à créer des espèces de grands tableaux d’art, où l’on associe le bronze, la porcelaine, le laque, le jade, la broderie. On se doute peu du temps qu’il faut pour que ça vous satisfasse complètement, et les changements et les déplacements que cela demande. C’est bien dommage, quand un panneau est arrivé à la réussite complète, que la photographie n’en fasse pas survivre avec le dessin les colorations.”

the discourse of collecting discussed in Chapter Two. Furthermore, the self-consciously creative aspect of decorating is akin to the same impulse on the part of an *amateur* like the comte Doria, whom we discussed in Chapter One. But more particularly, Goncourt used the language of color (harmony and contrast) and specifically lamented the impossibility of preserving the coloristic arrangement in a photograph.

He was able, however, to describe the colors of his house in words. In particular he evoked the colors of the *cabinet de travail*, with its red and black color scheme relieved by blue green curtains. Goncourt described it as scintillating:

Everything brilliant, scintillating, glistening, laughing in the red of the room, under the ceiling of black velvet, where dragons battle in a field of pink peonies. The bouquet of poppies of the trumeau, over the mirror, explode under new gold like a bouquet of gilt ware.⁸⁷

The floral evocations-- peonies, poppies, and bouquets-- are part of a language of color very much at the center of the discourse of color of the nineteenth-century. Baudelaire, for example, described the palette of Delacroix as a bouquet of flowers.⁸⁸ It is important to note that color itself was viewed as specifically feminine, as for example by Charles Blanc who stated: "Drawing is the masculine sex of art, color is its feminine sex."⁸⁹ The link between floral arrangements and colors makes this point, but the tradition is even

⁸⁷ *Journal*, November 4, 1875. "Toutes les choses brillantes, scintillantes, chatoyantes riant dans le rouge de la pièce, sous ce plafond de velours noir, où des dragons se griffent dans un champ de pivoines roses. Le bouquet de pavots du trumeau, au-dessus de la glace, éclate sous de l'or neuf comme un bouquet d'orfèvrerie."

⁸⁸ Charles Baudelaire, "L'Oeuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix", in *Curiosités Esthétiques*, 487 "je n'ai jamais vu de palette aussi minutieusement et aussi délicatement préparée que celle de Delacroix. Cela ressemblait à un bouquet de fleurs savamment assorties." "I had never seen a palette as meticulously and delicately prepared as that of Delacroix. It was like a bouquet of flowers knowingly arranged."

⁸⁹ Blanc, *Grammaire*, 21. "dessin est le sexe masculine de l'art; la couleur en est le sexe féminin"

richer.⁹⁰ Linked with the materiality of the body, color, and concomitantly, paint, were both seen as feminine.

The femininity of the color and the floral bouquets is part of the erotics of collecting that is evident in Raffaelli's painting. The relational quality of color also forms part of the back-and-forth between art and spectator in the discourse of the *amateur* discussed in previous chapters. The intimate involvement of art in the lives and in the erotic fantasies of the collector is played out in the Goncourts' *cabinet de travail* in its grammar of display as well as of color. The artwork as friend or as lover forms part of a sociable conversation between art and collector. The importance of conversation as a metaphor for painting as well as for the social identity of the artist was theorized by Roger de Piles at the end of the seventeenth century and can be seen realized in the practice of Watteau, one of Goncourt's favorite artists. Mary Vidal describes how the conversational subject matter and casual painterliness of Watteau embodied the theories of de Piles. An artist of the spontaneous spoken word rather than the codified written word, his paintings show graceful aristocrats as well as improvisational *commedia dell'arte* actors conversing in dream-like, fluidly painted settings. His paintings reflect and participate in aristocratic notions of leisure and ease distinct from bourgeois professionalism or workmanlike craft. Vidal argues for a similarity between Watteau's impromptu approach to painting and "informal patterns of conversation as a social practice."⁹¹ Similarly the self-display of discourse, of aristocratic bearing and dress, and of artistic, specifically coloristic, mastery are linked in the elegant reveries as well as in that most self-conscious image of Watteau's production, *L'Enseigne de Gersaint*.

⁹⁰ See James Rubin *Manet's Silence and the Poetics of Bouquets*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁹¹ Mary Vidal, *Watteau's Painted Conversations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 63.

Color has always been, as Jacqueline Lichtenstein traces, at a disadvantage in the theorization of art.⁹² Allied with the body's materiality, it was long regarded as the least essential and least pure aspect of the visual arts. Since Plato banished painting from his ideal republic as a deceitful practice at three removes from the true essence of the world, theorists have struggled to recuperate and justify this practice. Those who, with Cicero, have claimed the physicality of the body as essential for the eloquence of discourse have provided the terms for the justification of color. Lichtenstein showed how Piles elaborates a "theory of representation that rejects the dichotomy between reason and pleasure."⁹³ He identifies color with sight, elevating it over drawing, here associated with touch. Further, he argues that drawing is the "grammar of painting whose true practice begins only with the art of *coloris*," linking painting with the Ciceronian ideals of rhetorical power.⁹⁴

Rather than serving to educate, painting must please the viewer, here constructed as an *amateur*, and not a diligent scholar. Thus the relationship between viewer and painting is primary for Piles: "The surprised viewer must go to it [the painting] as if to enter into conversation with the figures it represents."⁹⁵ This Pilesian notion of the open-ended conversational quality of the appreciation of art applies to the visuality and the structure of painting itself.⁹⁶

⁹² Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, trans. Emily McVarish (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 160. *Coloris* is a French term for the interrelationships of color rather than the specific hue of each object.

⁹⁵ Roger de Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes* (Paris: J. Estienne, 1708), 6. "le Spectateur surpris doit aller à elle comme pour entrer en conversation avec les figures qu'elle représente."

⁹⁶ Mary Vidal describes how the conversational subject matter and casual painterliness of Watteau embodies the theories of de Piles. An artist of the spontaneous spoken word rather than the codified written word, his paintings show graceful aristocrats as well as improvisational commedia dell'arte actors

For Goncourt, who very much admired and subscribed to the ideas of Piles, sociability of his *cabinet de travail* was both metaphorical in the manner of Piles, and also actual. The way one color plays off another, the way one portrait looks at another, the way Goncourt echoes his statue in his stance is important. But also important is that the *grenier* served as a setting for weekly Sunday gatherings such as we saw depicted in the photograph by Joseph-Napoléon Primoli. The Goncourts were at once *bibliophiles* and *amateurs*—they were writers whose very lives were lived as a kind of collection experience—lived for the journal in which they collected their experiences in as much as their journal was written within a space of collection.

conversing in dream-like, fluidly painted settings. His paintings reflect and participate in the aristocratic notions of leisure and ease distinct from bourgeois professionalism or workmanlike craft.

CHAPTER 5:

THE BILLIARD ROOM: THE *AMATEUR* AT PLAY

While in the house of the *amateur* art was displayed art in many rooms including the salon, the hallways, even rooms that were specifically called galleries, I have chosen to focus on two rooms that were specifically designated as male spaces, in keeping with the male identity of the *amateur*. The Billiard room, like the *cabinet de travail*, was a space of collection and also a specifically male interior space. But rather than being centered on work, it was designed for the reception and entertainment of visitors. This chapter will take the theme of the billiards room as an occasion to examine the conversational logic of the private collection as it posed an alternative to the more passively receptive logic of the museum.

By the end of the nineteenth century, billiards as a game had developed from an aristocratic diversion into a wildly popular pastime in the burgeoning cafés of Paris.¹ The billiards table was a consistent element of many cafés, and some cafés incorporated whole rooms devoted to the game. At the same time, it remained an part of elegant society, with the most well-appointed houses and hotels including a billiards room. Home-design manuals included guides for decorating this location for male sociability, and architects continued, even into the twentieth century, to design billiards rooms. If the *cabinet de travail* was a male space of collection in which work was central, the billiards room was devoted to play. It was a place where friends gathered to amuse

¹ Julia Csengeri, "Extension et mutation du loisir citadin Paris XIXe – début XXe siècle," in Alain Corbin, ed., *L'Avènement des loisirs 1850-1960* (Paris: Ambier, 1995): 121-168. By the end of 19th century there were 27,000 cafés in Paris. See also Richard Lablée, *Le Billard. Histoire et Règles du jeu* (Paris: Hatier, 1992). From 1790 on, every café had a billiard table. (27) Café de Paris had 50 billiard tables by end of the century. (54)

themselves and to talk. Conversation, with its back and forth banter, its ricochet interplay, works very much like the game of billiards itself, with the zigzag path of the balls across the green felt, and contemporary discussions of the game refer to this similarity. For example, A. Lalanne compares the long voyage of the billiard ball to the gay banter that accompanies it.² As a space of collection, the billiards room made visual the idea of the ensemble as well as the interaction amongst the members of the ensemble, be they friends, or artworks.

The prefaces of the sales catalogues, as we have seen, refer often to the notion of the ensemble. A term that unites the ideas of sociability, art and music, the ensemble relies on the idea of harmony: different people, or different colors or different instruments working as a group to produce a beautiful effect. The ensemble of the private collection is even referred to as a work of art in its own right. The ensemble was often used at this time as a term of decorating, in which the artists aimed to create a total environment. The ensemble as it was used in the discourse of the *amateur* was less a matter of a “total environment” and more like the notion of a circle of friends discussed in the last chapter.

Beyond even the idea of an ensemble, however, there were, in the prefaces, various proposals for paths within this grouping. As one painting relates to another by virtue of theme or color or paint-handling, an infinity of possible paths arises from one painting to another, much the way there is an infinity of possible color relationships or an infinity of paths across the billiard table. The frame of the collection, like the frame of the painting, is the limit of this series of relationships.

None of the sales-catalogue prefaces (although they do propose a kind of wandering and back and forth path linked to the structure of conversation, and different

² A. Lalanne, *Le Billard* (Paris: Aubry, 1866), 18.

in its nature from a logical progression from one painting to the next) specifically mention the billiard room. However, photographs of billiard rooms of this time show them to be spaces of collection, and I will discuss two paintings of this period that take as their subject the billiards room: Degas's *Interior at Menil-Hubert* (1892) and Caillebotte's *Billiard Room* (1875-76). Degas's painting (Figure 70), which depicts a room hung with many paintings in the Normandy country home of his friends the Valpinçons, enacts in its color and composition the conversational interrelatedness of the private collection. It is an artwork that exemplifies the idea that a collection becomes an artwork: each individual element is calculated in relation to the whole. Caillebotte's unfinished *Billiard Room* (Figure 77), shows his own space at Yerres in which the large windowed doors are open and propose a similarity between the green lawn beyond and the felt of the table. Indeed the language of wandering that the sales catalogue prefaces use is related to the language of the picturesque journey. Travelogues in this tradition often use the language of zigzag.

The meandering zigzag path of the private collection contrasts with the much more direct and straightforward path proposed in the public museum collection. Both museum guides and visual documents make clear these two alternatives. For example, when Degas's *Interior at Ménil Hubert* is contrasted with his painting *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre* (1880) (Figure 78), we can begin to see a visually clear contrast between the linearity of the museum and the back and forth wandering or even zigzag quality of the private collection. The private collection in late nineteenth-century France such as it appears in the billiard painting of Degas can be understood as presenting a kind of paradigm for a non-linear, synchronic appreciation of art. This model stands in

opposition to the linear chronology of the public museum collection which was proposed from the start of the Louvre museum in 1793 and which was finally achieved one hundred years later.

The chronological and scholarly relationship with art is different from the conversational back and forth discussed in the *amateurs'* collections. Instead, an assimilation of a body of knowledge, a kind of memorizing of a preconceived series is posited rather than the dialogue and emotional reaction of the private collection: that is, rather than constructing a new and original work of art out of an assemblage of paintings, as in the private collection, there is an effort to replicate in one's understanding the series established in the public museum. The museum catalogue being consulted by Mary Cassatt's sister at the Louvre exemplifies the atmosphere of learning evident in the museum. Furthermore, the tradition of the copy and the copyist, so ubiquitous in many representations of the museum space, should remind us of Flaubert's *Bouvard and Pécuchet* where, as we saw, the series is duplicated in an effort to reconstitute a body of knowledge.

The absolute separation between public and private collections is complicated, however, and inevitably imperfect. For example, most of the museum curators at the Louvre as well as many government art officials throughout the nineteenth century, beginning with Vivant-Denon and extending to Philippe de Chennevières and Gustave Larroumet, were themselves *amateurs* as we defined the term in Chapters One and Two. That is, they were not only museum curators or art officials, but also collectors and artists themselves who thought of their lives as inextricably linked with the practice as well as the love of art.

It is also important that since the beginning of the Louvre's history, its collections have been continually enriched by donations from private collectors, who themselves were *amateurs* in the full sense of the word. I will look in particular at Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, who donated his extensive collections to the Louvre. He was an accomplished and ambitious painter, whose art historical writings aimed to continue the practice of dialogue and banter established in the social gatherings around the billiard table and in the *cabinet de travail* with other men, or in the salon, with both men and women.

Degas' *Interior at Ménil-Hubert*: The Painted Collection

Degas's *Interior at Ménil-Hubert* (1892) in which the collection of the Valpinçon family is depicted within a painting (Figure 70) is a collection that has literally become a painting. The obliquely seen interior features a billiard table in the foreground, flanked on two sides by walls hung with paintings. A doorway at the left opens onto a room hung with more paintings so that the paintings and the billiard table are of competing importance. The painting itself is an assemblage of frames: the frames of the paintings, the frame of the doorway (which is topped by a site-specific over door panel) and, reaching with exaggerated perspective into the space of the viewer, the frame of the billiard table, all presenting alternative but related visual worlds. The very repetitiveness of the framing motif, including paintings, architecture and table, brings to the fore the interrelatedness of the various paintings, spatial elements and the billiard game.

The display of paintings in the billiard room of Paul Valpinçon was not an isolated phenomenon. Because it was a space for entertaining, the private billiard room

was traditionally decorated with an eye towards beauty. The elaborate decoration of the billiard room, which is evident as well in Degas's painting, is seen in many images of billiard rooms throughout the nineteenth century, such as a palatial billiard room from the 1840's decorated in a "Pompeii style" (Figure 71).³ Based on the newly excavated city of Pompeii, this room featured an elaborate architectural setting complete with painted ceiling, carved moldings and doors with "Pompeian" pediments, painted wainscoting, inlaid wood floors and wall paintings that evoked ancient decoration. This image reminds us of the aristocratic provenance of this game and its associated grand setting.

In accounts of the origins of the game, billiards was associated with the nobility or even royalty. John Thurston wrote in the introduction to Mingaud's *Noble Game of Billiards*: "in its infancy, it presented to the polite circles of Society an Amusement, which combined the interests of Hazard with the exercise of Skill and Address. It was speedily hailed, as a favorite Diversion, by the court of Henry III of France and was thence communicated to all the Courts of Modern Europe."⁴ The elaborate Royal Game room of 1682 had: "26 crystal chandeliers and 16 silver candlesticks supported by gilded stands lights ... a billiard table accompanied by 24 seats covered in green velvet with gold fringes." Marie Antoinette was known to be a passionate billiards player.⁵

In the Third Republic, the billiard room remained a space of decoration. Viollet le Duc included the billiard room as an important space of social gathering, about the size of a dining room or a salon, in his discussion of the ideal house in 1873.⁶ The 1884 photographs of the country home of the Prince Radziwell show his very grand salon, which included not only the billiard table but also a piano.⁷ In various guides to

³ Mario Praz, *Illustrated History of Furnishing* (New York: Braziller, 1964), 24.

⁴ M. Mingaud, *Noble Game of Billiards*, trans. John Thurston (London, 1831), 5.

⁵ William Hendricks, *William Hendricks' History of Billiards* (Roxana, Illinois, 1974), 8.

⁶ Viollet le Duc, *Histoire d'une maison* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1978)[1873].18-19.

⁷ Marc Le Coeur, "A la ville et à la campagne. Chez le prince Radziwell en 1884," *Monuments Historiques* 195 (March 1995): 46-52.

decorating, the billiard room was discussed as a place in which to display beautiful things. It was considered, for example, an appropriate site for the hanging of tapestries.⁸

While the billiard room existed in some very grand Parisian houses, it was particularly a feature of the country house, as, for example, the Valpinçon house in Ménil-Hubert and the house that Zola bought in Médan (purchased in 1878 and expanded in the next decade).⁹ Zola's favorite room apparently was his "salon billard" which he constructed in 1885-6. The floor was in mosaic tiles, the ceiling had decorated beams, and the windows were decorated with stained-glass scenes of birds and trees designed by Baboneau. Apart from the billiard table, the room originally held a piano, a harmonium, and various musical instruments including Zola's clarinet. The walls were lined with shelves filled with objets d'art: wood statues, church ornaments and arms. Zola had many visitors to this space, including Gustave Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet, Jules Vallès, Edmond de Goncourt, Paul Cézanne, and J.K. Huysmans among others. Other billiard rooms that one can still visit include those of Flaubert (in Croisset, near Rouen), and Victor Hugo (in Villequier, although the original décor of the latter is no longer in place).¹⁰

A billiard room from the turn of the century which was used as a space of collection is included in Henry-René D'Allemagne's *Maison d'un Vieux Collectionneur*.¹¹ While written in 1948, the book describes a collection assembled at the turn of the century. This room was an ensemble of an extraordinary assortment of objects (Figures 72 and 73). Elaborate furniture, sculptures, clocks, and miniatures were arranged in this immense oval room around a billiard table. Gathered in the room were jewelry from the First Empire, gold-embossed leather boxes, watches, knives and other small objects. The smaller objects were arranged in cases filled to brimming. One

⁸ *Un Mot sur la Peinture en Imitation de Tapisseries et D'Étoffes Anciennes* (Paris: Chaix, 1885), 4.

⁹ Dominique Camus, *Le guide des maisons d'artistes et d'écrivains en région parisienne* (Lyon:La Manufacture, 1995): 288-294.

¹⁰ Ibid., For Flaubert see 209-217 for Hugo see 229-233.

¹¹ Henry-René D'Allemagne, *La Maison d'un Vieux Collectionneur*, Vol I (Paris: Librairie Grond, 1948).

rounded case filled with diadems contrasted with a flat rectangular case bristling with knives, in a kind of duel of the genders.

Decoration of the billiard room at the turn of the century was often part of the decorative projects associated with the Nabis or Art Nouveau. For example, one room that Thadée and Misia Natanson decorated with paintings by Vuillard was their billiard room in Villeneuve-sur-Yonne (Figure 74).¹² An art nouveau decoration of a billiard room was described by Roger Marx in an article in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* in 1905.¹³ Here in a country house in a beautiful setting, the artists Jules Chéret, Félix Braquemond and Alexandre Charpentier collaborated to produce an “ensemble.” In this case, rather than hanging paintings in the room, the decoration was incorporated into the architecture. Chéret painted the walls, Braquemond designed the frame of the mirror and moldings, and Charpentier sculpted the table (Figure 75).¹⁴

The space of the billiards room as a site of collection is perhaps curious, but seems most clearly linked with its role as the locus of social gatherings.¹⁵ This role of the billiards room as a place of sociability was discussed by writers on the game itself. The back and forth of the balls across the felt was explicitly tied to the pleasant banter that accompanies the game. In his 1866 book on billiards, A. Lalanne not only celebrated the

¹² Gloria Groom, *Beyond the Easel. Decorative Painting by Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis and Roussel, 1890-1930*, exh. cat., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 131. Groom notes that the Vuillard paintings, including *Album* seen in the billiard room, were easily transported from the Natanson's Paris apartment to their country homes.

¹³ Roger Marx, “Essais de Rénovation Ornementale. La Salle de Billard D’Une Villa Moderne,” *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 27(1905): 411-424.

¹⁴ Marx, who was the writer for many of the sales catalogue prefaces that we have already discussed, was inspector general of provincial museums, member of the Central Union of the Decorative Arts and promoter of the unity of art and craft; see Silverman 135-135;183-184;219-242. His enthusiasm for this billiard room design should be understood in that context. Also important in this article is his praise for the private amateur's role in commissioning art. Whereas commissions of the state suffer from an excess of solemnity because of their public function, private initiatives remove such constraints allowing for a free flow of ideas. Also important for Marx is the interchange of ideas between private patron and artist, Marx, 411.

¹⁵ This role of the billiards room as space of collection is evident in Britain at this time as well. From the Turner interiors at Pentworth to the billiard room of Henry Tate at Park Hill, Streatham, billiards was important to male sociability; see Diana Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class. Money and the Making of Cultural Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 373.

game's elevated, aristocratic and specifically French quality, but also insisted on the light banter that necessarily accompanied the game:

Billiards
 this relaxation of which the use
 cigar in mouth, cue in hand
 in the middle of gay conversation, gains us a very long voyage
 on a straight and narrow path.¹⁶

Interwoven in this text are themes of the masculinity of the game-- "cigare au lèvres" (with the even more suggestive "queue en main"), the lively conversation that accompanies it and the specifically "*très-long voyage*" – that is to say – here and there and back and forth in a straight and short road. The back and forth of the ball echoes the back and forth of the *badinage*. Recalling Degas's image, we can also imagine the movements of the eye following the ball, looking to the different players in the game and viewing the different paintings around the room.

Thus sociability, conversation, back and forth and zigzag form a nexus of associations within this painting. All are united in the idea of a *cabinet d'amateur*, represented by Degas as surrounding the billiards table. Rather than simply an evocation of the room's owner, this painting participates, as I have shown, in an argument for the personal, active, conversational relationship with art that Degas himself maintained in his life, both as collector and artist.

The paintings displayed in the billiard room are related to each other within the room the way the sides of the billiard table are related to each other. Because we enter the space of the painting by way of this table, and also because the table seems to occupy almost all available floor space in the room, the green felt of the tabletop is proposed as a kind of substitute floor. The imagined zigzag of billiard balls across the table is, I propose, closely allied with the possible movements of the viewer of the paintings. That there are no billiard balls in view further opens this field for the viewer. The open

¹⁶ A. Lananne, *Le Billard*, 18. "Le Billard/Ce délassement dont l'usage/Cigare au lèvres, queue en main/Au milieu d'un gai badinage nous procure un très-long voyage/Dans un étroit et court chemin."

doorway to the left also invites the movement of the viewer. The walls are all at oblique angles to the picture plane so that there is effectively a compositional zigzag of angles. This compositional zigzag can be elucidated from the point of view of perspective as well. Sighting the possible path of the billiard ball is like sighting the lines of zigzag across a flat surface to create the illusion of space. Degas, in a letter to Bartholomé, described how, in making this painting, he tried over and over and over again to measure angles in space:

I thought that I knew a little perspective, I knew nothing and thought that one could replace it by the process of perpendiculars and horizontals, measuring the angles in space by means of good intentions. I worked over and over at it.¹⁷

Thus, in this painting he measured the angles in relation to horizontals and verticals (as carpenters do with a plumb line, for example) rather than constructing the space with vanishing points. But, as he describes it, his measurements were not necessarily made in relationship to the picture plane (that is, he does not think of angles as on a protractor), but in space, more like a sighting along a billiard cue. This idea of measuring angles in space, expresses the fact that the system of orthogonals of the painting is at once diagonals on the surface of the painting and movements in space between near and far. This visual back and forth allows us to imagine the type of movement of the billiard balls as they bounce off the sides of the table.

Billiards is a game of zigzag, played out over a flat surface, much like the game of perspective. While there are no “vanishing points”, or pockets, in the type of billiards played on Valpinçon’s table, the other two balls are effectively end points. In billiards, as in perspective, there is a tension between the actual materials at hand, and the ideal of the game. The history of the game is one of continual attempts at increasing geometrical

¹⁷ *Lettres Degas* 1945 no CLXXII p. 194 August 27, 1892. “Je croyais que je savais un peu de perspective, je n’en savais rien et crû qu’on pouvait la remplacer par des procédés de perpendiculaires et d’horizontales, mesurer des angles dans l’espace au moyen de la bonne volonté. Je me suis acharné.”

precision.¹⁸ Tables, which at first were made with boards of wood, came to be made with slate, marble or cement in the nineteenth century, so as to create the smoothest possible surface. Balls, which must be perfectly spherical, came to be made of ivory.¹⁹ The cue changed as well, especially as players came to use the spin of the ball to ever-greater advantage. In terms of the game itself, while the 1779 Hoyle edition lists twelve different varieties of billiard game, and an 1827 rules guide lists as many, in all the versions of the game, the cue hits the ball and sends it in a zigzag pattern across the table surface.²⁰ Diagrams published in Mingaud's 1827 *Noble Jeu de Billard* show the possible zigzag motions of the ball (Figure 76).²¹

As it was played at the end of the nineteenth century in France, billiards required that the player use his designated ball to touch successively the two other balls in play.²² Unlike American billiards, there are no pockets. The balls never disappear, they simply touch the other balls, the edges of the table, and form ever-new configurations. The player wins by being the first to accumulate the required number of points. Because expert players become so adept at controlling the zigzag calculations, additional rules requiring the ball to touch the edge of the table before hitting the other balls are sometimes added.

An 1827 pamphlet giving the rules of the game "adopted by the circle of the

¹⁸ Richard Lablée, *Le Billard. Histoire et Règles du Jeu* (Paris: Hatier, 1992); Georges Troffaes, *Le Billard et L'Histoire. Chroniques des Temps Passés* (Brussels: Merteus, 1974).

¹⁹ Lablée, 37. Some people still use the ivory balls, which had to be taken from older elephants to avoid cracking. They have to be kept at a constant temperature. Now billiard balls are made from synthetic materials.

²⁰ Hendricks, 26. Also *Règles du Jeu de Billard, Adoptées par le cercle du passage de choiseul, et suivies dans les premier billards de Paris* (Paris: Bréaté Fils/Boquet et Cie, 1827), and Desire Lemaire, *Manuel de Jeu de Billard* (Paris: Delarue, 1865).

²¹ M. Mingaud, *Noble Game of Billiards*. This manual, written by a former officer in Napoleon's army is mainly a series of diagrams with brief captioned instructions on making the best shot. This text is referred to again and again in later texts and is the clearest in showing the zigzag motion of the ball necessary to make a shot. (I used the English edition of 1831).

²² The distinctive three balls, two white (one with a dot) and one red can be seen in paintings and in prints throughout the nineteenth century. Daumier did at least two drawings of billiard tables with three balls. This form of billiards is still played in Paris, where I practiced at several billiard halls and was able to confirm at first hand the necessary zigzag motions of the ball.

passage de Choiseul and followed in the best billiards of Paris” states that “billiards has become an art for some and even a passion for many others.”²³ Billiards is specifically linked to the visual arts because, in both, the judgment of the eye and of the hand must be in perfect accord. Different kinds of games are proposed-- the *partie du commande*, *partie des cinq blouses*, *partie rousses*-- each game requiring differing numbers of points with varying numbers of balls and slightly differing rules. One, the *partie des quilles avec le casin* is particularly recommended because it requires the player to calculate ahead the path that the ball must follow:

This game is the most useful to play often because it unites all the difficulties; it obliges one to study the borders to get to know the tricks, that is to say the points of contact, and above all because it requires that the player calculate ahead of time the path that the ball must travel.²⁴

This difficult game, which requires such study, seems reminiscent of the repeated efforts to measure angles that Degas describes. We can imagine him making this connection as he played with his friend Paul Valpinçon at Ménil-Hubert or else at the Café Guerbois where, as described in an unpublished novel, “La Double Vie de Louis Seguin” (1869) by Edmond Duranty, there were no fewer than five billiard tables around which the artists who frequented the café were often crowded.²⁵ Duranty himself, a critic and close supporter of Degas, was a passionate billiards player.²⁶ He describes the billiards room in the novel as a kind of temple, mysterious in the half-light, and the tables as heavy

²³ *Regles du Jeu de Billard*, 48. “le biliard...est devenu un art chez quelques-uns, et même une passion chez beaucoup d’autres.”

²⁴ *Regles du Jeu de Billard*, 48. “Cette partie est la plus utile à jouer souvent, par ce qu’elle réunit toutes les difficultés; qu’elle oblige à étudier les bandes pour connaître les bricoles, c’est à dire les points d’incidence, et surtout par ce qu’elle oblige le joueur à calculer d’avance le chemin que la bille doit parcourir.”

²⁵ Marcel Crouzet, *Un Méconnu du Réalisme: Duranty* (Paris, 1964). The unpublished manuscript of *La Double Vie de Louis Seguin*, which I have not seen, is in the collection Lorenjoul of Marcel Bouteron. I refer to passages included in Crouzet. Duranty’s passion for billiards is also referred to in *Manet raconté par lui-même* (Geneva: Cailler, 1945), 45.

²⁶ Billiards became a more and more popular entertainment in the cafés of Paris. At first found in the Palais royal along with gambling houses, the big cafés like the Le Grand Café Parisien on the Blvd Saint Martin had more than 50 tables. See Lablée for a print of the café dating from 1855. The world championship contest of 1903 between Vignaud and Schaefer was played at the Grand Hôtel Paris and was enthusiastically cheered by a crowd of thousands.

baptismal fonts.²⁷

Valpinçon's billiard table is surrounded not by crowds of players, but by paintings. Although there is no one in the room, the paintings take on the role of participants. Their varying design, color, size gives them each a different character. They face the billiard table like players themselves, and they face each other in a kind of dialogue. As we have seen, in discussions of the *amateur*, the personal and emotional relationship that exists between the artworks and the collector is often stressed.

The private collection assembled by an *amateur* corresponding to his personal taste and feeling is the real subject of Degas's *Billiard Room*. Paul Valpinçon's father was famous for owning, among others, the Ingres *Bather* that is now in the Louvre. Degas is known for helping his idol Ingres to obtain the loan of that painting from the Valpinçon family for the Universal Exposition of 1855. Valpinçon, a childhood friend of Degas's, was a painter himself as were so many other *amateurs*. A student of Palizzi, he began showing at the Salon in 1870. He concentrated mainly on landscapes. He had also an extensive collection. The paintings crowded around the billiard table include Giuseppe Palizzi's *Animals at a Watering Place* 1865 and an eighteenth-century tapestry of *Esther Swooning before Ahasuerus*.²⁸

The interrelationships of the paintings in this space of display bring to the fore important issues in the critical response to painting in nineteenth-century France. Above all, these paintings are hung in a group that is not a group based on historical or stylistic taxonomy, but instead on affinities. They are related to each other by way of the taste of their collector, who bought them, as the prefaces argued, because he wanted to live with them. The grammar of their dialogue, the logic of the path amongst them is expressed by

²⁷ Crouzet, 239. "les deux salles en enfilade, ouvrant par une large vitre sur un petit jardin... la seconde, plus basse et plus obscure, sorte de "temple" dont cinq billards étaient comme les « lourds fonts-baptismaux." "the two rooms in succession, opening with a large window on a little garden..the second one lower and darker, sort of a temple, in which the five billiard tables were like baptismal fonts."

²⁸ Theodore Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind* (New York, 1976) 141. Reff's discussion of Degas's stay at the Valpinçon's includes other interiors that Degas painted at the same time. He also is very interested in repeating frames, and the picture within the picture.

“the path that the ball must follow.” It is a grammar of back and forth and unexpected turns; it is the logic of zigzag. It is a kind of logic like that of the billiard ball, which traces ever-new paths within a framed boundary. It requires repetition at the same time as it is potentially infinite.

The ZigZag Journey: Navigating the Collection

The private collection calls for a circuitous path. This is made explicit in Pascal Forthuny’s preface to Beriot’s collection, which consisted of many landscape paintings. Forthuny began his discussion by saying that he has lived with the collection for several hours and will recount his experience.²⁹ He likens his visit to a walk: “For the entire promenade, I was never tired nor constrained in any way, and from canvas to panel, rarely has a voyage been as agreeable nor as restful.”³⁰

He then described the quality of the walk, which becomes a sinuous, complicated path through the countryside:

And, nonetheless, what a complicated and sinuous route, what a vagabond path of poets it was necessary that I follow! What infinite variety in the aspects of nature, what different sites was I directed to follow, finally what comforting bath of fresh air, then fertile prairies, limpid rivers of a verdant Normandy, up to the grey environment of the flooded lowlands of Holland, and passing through the picturesque valleys of the Bourbon country, I stumbled on the harmonious talent of perhaps the most poetic of our painters of France!³¹

He finishes by explaining that it is a collection of landscape paintings, and that if one

²⁹ *Collection de Bériot*, preface by Pascal Forthuny (Paris:Drouot, 1901), n.p. “Je viens de vivre quelques heures au milieu de la collection de Bériot.” “I have just come from living for several hours in the middle of the Beriot collection.”

³⁰ Ibid., “tout au long de cette promenade, aucune fatigue, aucune contrainte ne me sont venues et que, de toile en panneau, rarement voyage ne me fut plus agréable et plus reposant..”

³¹ Ibid., “Et pourtant, quelle route sinueuse, compliquée, quel vagabond chemin de poètes ne me fallut-il pas suivre? Quels aspects de nature infiniment variés, quels sites changeants, me fut-il donné de traverser; enfin quel réconfortant bain de plein air, depuis les prairies fécondes, les limpides rivières d’une plantureuse Normandie, jusqu’aux décors gris des paysages, accroupis sous les basses nuées de Hollande, en passant par les vallées si grassement pittoresques du pays Bourbonnais où m’égarait l’harmonieux talent du plus poète peut-être de nos peintres de France!”

arrives “by chance” at a portrait, or a religious painting, it is rare.

As we saw above, the metaphor of collection as painting is made several times in the prefaces and again, it is not clear who is the painter in the passage above—it seems to be the collector who has assembled such a journey. It should remind us of the collection of Baudry, which was constructed like a landscape painting.

The trope of the journey within the confines of an interior can be seen as early as 1811 with Xavier de Maistre, who described how he lived within his room in his book *Voyages autour de ma chambre*.³² A book written while he was under house arrest, it describes how one’s imagination and thoughts can carry one far. His private promenade avoids the straight line: “When I travel in my room, I seldom keep to a straight line. From my table I go towards a picture which is placed in a corner: thence I set out in an oblique direction for the door; and then, although on starting I had intended to return to my table, yet, if I chance to fall in my armchair on the way, I at once, and most unceremoniously, take up my quarters there.”³³ This book remained popular throughout the century and was republished in 1877 with illustrations by Hedouin. This reprint was in fact found in the collection of M. L. Montgermont, one of the bibliophiles whose sales catalogue I examined.

Following Maistre’s was a whole series of books entitled “Voyage autour de” which recount a kind of metaphorical or imaginative journey. There are, for example, the already cited 1856 *Voyage autour de ma bibliothèque* by A. L. Fée (and there are many such voyages in a library, including one by Champfleury), the 1851 *Voyage autour de mon jardin* by Alphonse Karr and the 1896 *Voyage autour de sa chambre* by Octave Uzanne.³⁴ There are even jokes about this genre of literature with a *Voyage autour de ma*

³² Xavier de Maistre, *A Journey Round My Room*, trans. H. A. (New York, 1871)[1811].

³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁴ Alphonse Karr, *Voyage autour de mon jardin* (Paris: Curmer, 1851); Octave Uzanne, *Voyage autour de sa chambre* (Paris: H. Floury, 1896); Also Antoine Caillot, *Voyage autour de ma Bibliothèque* (Paris: Huassman et d’Hautel, 1809).

maitresse written by Gabriel Richard in 1851.³⁵

The kind of meandering or zigzag path described by Forthuny was part of a discourse of travel current throughout the nineteenth century. The picturesque journey, one in which one's itinerary is not planned, but in which one wanders from place to place is explicitly referred to in some travel guides as a zigzag path. From children's schoolbooks to travel guides and even to museum guides, the zigzag path is one that allows the pleasure of discovery. Thus, in *Nouveaux Voyages en Zigzag*, R. Topffer described a method of travel in which curiosity and poetry, wandering and accident dictate the path, rather than the most direct route.³⁶ Topffer, originally a painter, began travelling with his students, and according to the 1870 preface by Sainte-Beuve, "I was struck, from the first days, by the poetry of this type of voyage, a poetry of fatigue, of courage, of curiosity and of gaiety."³⁷ For Topffer it was a method that put one in direct contact with nature, with people, with life itself. He compared this method of traveling to leafing through books in a library rather than reading systematically, browsing rather than following a pre-ordained program.³⁸ His illustrations are structured around the zigzag path rather than being worked out one point perspective drawings.

Similarly, in an 1882 school book, *La France en Zigzag*, by Eudoxie Dupuis, a plethora of information is stumbled on, almost randomly, by two children wandering in search of their father.³⁹ Along the way they learn how to make linen, salt, porcelain, Aubusson tapestries; they learn about the assassination of the Duc de Guise and the martyrdom of Jeanne d'Arc; they enlarge their vocabulary and grasp the geography of France. The philosophy of this book is that experience and feeling enable a certain kind

³⁵ Gabriel Richard, *Voyage autour de ma maitresse* (Paris, 1851). The story, one of courtship, is told in chapters which encircle his lover Lucette, ie: Vue de Lucette, Lucette vue en biais, Lucette vue de profil, Lucette vue de face, Lucette vertueuse, Lucette a vol d'oiseau, with the last chapter entitled, Dernière perspective.

³⁶ R. Topffer, *Nouveaux Voyages en Zigzag à la grande Chartreuse, autour du Mont Blanc* (Paris, 1870).

³⁷ Ibid., viii. "saisit dès les premiers jours la poésie de ce genre de voyages, poésie de fatigue, de courage, de curiosité et d'allégresse."

³⁸ Ibid., 43.

³⁹ Eudoxie Dupuis, *La France en zigzag* (Paris: Delagrave, 1882).

of learning other than systematic lessons that follow chronology or subject matter.

Degas and Valpinçon themselves went on journeys together, and it is at Ménil-Hubert that Degas first did his most impressionist outdoor paintings, *Henri Valpinçon and Nurse* (1871-2) and *Carriage at the Races* (1871-2).⁴⁰ In these two paintings the carriage is set at an angle to the picture plane, other elements establish a kind of zigzag and the landscape around exudes a freshness and green that is distinctive in the oeuvre of Degas.

Dollfus was another collector who is described as being particularly fond of going for meandering walks “like in the *Voyages en zig-zag*.”⁴¹ In both the catalogue describing his collection and the article by Rocheblave, his love of the landscape and walking through it and his love of painting are linked.⁴²

Caillebotte’s unfinished *Le Billard* (1875-76) shows a man aiming a cue (which is, however, not painted) in a grand room that opens out onto a garden (Figure 77).⁴³ Two sources of light are evident in the painting as it stands. One is the light of the windows which form, as Kirk Varnedoe points out, a radical contre-jour.⁴⁴ The second source of light is the unpainted white of the canvas on the left side. The way the painting looks now, the very process of painting seems intimately related to the game of billiards itself.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the lure of leaving one’s room for a stroll outside is counterposed to

⁴⁰ See S. Barazetti, “Degas et ses amis Valpinçon,” *Beaux-Arts* (August 31, 1936). Also Boggs, *Portraits by Degas*, 35-37.

⁴¹ Rocheblave, 2.

⁴² The discourse of the wandering journey should remind us of the kind of aimless stroll of the flâneur in Paris, who proceeds from one attraction to another without any preconceived destination. As Louis Lurine describes it in his *Les rues de Paris*: “Nous marchons au hasard dans les rue mystérieuses de vieux Paris.” Louis Lurine, *Les rues de Paris* (Paris: Slatkine, 1982) [1844], vol 1, 11. “We walk by chance in the streets of Paris.” Of course the literature of the flâneur is very large. See Hallovoet.

⁴³ Caillebotte himself is an extremely important example of the artist/collector that is the *amateur*. I have concentrated on figures that are better known as collectors than as artists, but the cases of Caillebotte, Degas and also Gauguin argue powerfully for the intimate interrelationship between the two practices. Caillebotte’s *Self Portrait at the Easel* (c. 1879-80) in which he is painting in front of Renoir’s *Moulin de la Galette*, which he owned, makes this case very powerfully.

⁴⁴ Varnedoe, J. Kirk T. and Thomas P. Lee, *Gustave Caillebotte: A Retrospective Exhibition* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1976), 91.

⁴⁵ In his discussion of the painting, Varnedoe also discusses Caillebotte’s painting practice: “It is difficult to understand why Caillebotte did not finish this painting, as he had already completed the most difficult

the lure of the imagination. As Arsène Houssaye posed the question:

I will travel. Where will I go? Elsewhere, I don't know where, in truth.... One must ponder a bit. One way to make a beautiful voyage, a voyage of the spirit and of the heart, of memory and hope, a voyage around the world, around my own self, would be to simply open my window. This is the true path of the spirit...in the world where one cannot raise oneself except by means of that locomotive of fire that is called *imagination*.⁴⁶

This is not to argue, of course, that Caillebotte was thinking of Houssaye's remarks, who was after all, thinking about writing rather than painting. Rather I wish to point to the visual parallel made between the process of painting and the experience of nature, with the mediating figure being the dark billiard player. It is interesting that the garden at Yerres, which beckons through the windows and the open door, was conceived by the previous owner Pierre Frédéric Borrel according to the principles of Boitard and Audot.⁴⁷ In their *Traité de la composition et l'ornement des jardins*, published in 1818 and reissued several times up until 1869, they proposed to create surprising paths and unexpected journeys.⁴⁸ They are very concerned about paths for the eye, avoiding geometric forms. Their picturesque vistas were created by juxtaposing plants with artificial curiosities, such as, in the case of the garden of Caillebotte, a Swiss house, a bent wood bench, a semicircular area with sculpture and trellises and so on. While they

passages of radical contre-jour.... This little canvas is...an instruction in Caillebotte's working method, demonstrating his willingness to bring parts of the image to near-complete definition before even beginning others." 91. He also refers to Degas, as well as perspective: "the setting is probably the billiard-room of the family country house at Yerres, looking onto the garden that Caillebotte often painted. In coloring and mood, the picture evokes strong reminiscences of Degas, but the extraordinarily sharp perspective of the table and the alignment of its leading edge with the vertical of the wall-bay seem more personal" (91). Notice that Degas also discussed perspective with regard to this painting, and that landscape and perspective are inextricably linked.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Louis Lurine, *Les Rues de Paris*, 1-2. "Je vais voyager.—Ou irai-je? —Ailleurs, je ne sais pas où, en vérité; il faut y réfléchir un peu. Un moyen de faire un beau voyage, voyage d'esprit et de cœur, de souvenir et d'espérance, voyage autour du monde, voyage autour de moi-même, se serait d'ouvrir tout simplement ma fenêtre. C'est la vraie route de l'esprit... dans le monde où on ne s'élève que sur cette locomotive toute de flamme qui s'appelle *l'imagination*."

⁴⁷ Pierre Wittmer, *Caillebotte au jardin* (Saint-Rémy-en-l'Eau: Editions d'Art Monelle Hayot, 1990). Camus, *Le guide des maisons d'artistes et écrivains*, 21.

⁴⁸ Camus, 21. Today the park has changed, the paths no longer wander in the same way and the grounds are much smaller. These curved paths are in contrast to the long perspectives of the Haussmanian boulevards that form an important part of Caillebotte's cityscapes.

explicitly seek to avoid the quick back and forth that they call zigzag, they also want to avoid a straight line, recommending gentle curves that lead the eye onward rather than revealing the goal immediately.⁴⁹

Another important aspect of this painting is its depiction of a male pastime.⁵⁰ While the unfinished area works in opposition to the light of the garden, it was perhaps originally meant to be the place for the opposing player, as Varnedoe speculates.⁵¹ The player who has been painted is dressed elegantly in his morning coat and polished shoes. He is absorbed in his game in much the same way as the figures of the card players in Caillebotte's *La Partie de bésigues* (1880).

This logic of the stroll, the voyage around (*voyage autour de*), is the path proposed by Degas's painting of the billiard room. In that painting we are directed to look at one painting, then another, find visual links between the two, and then seeing a third, find something in common there as well but with something new that sends one's eye back to the first with a new perspective. Rather than a lack of order, the zigzag suggests a relational order: that is, rather than corresponding to a chronological linear ordering, paintings and objects within the private collection were organized and viewed comparatively, such that each art object was seen as acting on and acted on by other art objects.

This way of organizing a collection corresponds to the Pilesian program of a dialogic interaction with art discussed in the previous chapter. This program was installed in many of the eighteenth-century collections including the Luxembourg Gallery.⁵²

⁴⁹ Wittmer, 80-84.

⁵⁰ There has been recent research on the homosocial and homosexual aspects of the work of Caillebotte. I am arguing for the evaluation of the homosocial aspect. See Norma Broude, "Homosexuality and Homosocial Bonding in the Work of Caillebotte and Bazille," in Broude, ed. *Outing Impressionism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002): 117-174 and Fionna Barber, "Caillebotte, Masculinity and the Bourgeois Gaze," in Paul Wood, ed. *The Challenges of the Avant-Garde* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999): 137-155.

⁵¹ And, following the logic of the above remarks on painting, the lack of finish serves to make painting itself becomes a player, as well as a game.

⁵² See McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*. McClellan also uses the term zigzag in his discussion of the Luxembourg exhibition catalogue of royal paintings between 1750 and 1779: "Matching catalogue with

McClellan has described how the Luxembourg Gallery “encouraged a comparative mode of viewing that revealed strengths and weaknesses of chosen artists and the schools to which they belonged through calculated juxtapositions of different paintings. Highly formal in character, this way of seeing was indifferent to chronological sequence, to the “history of art” as we understand it today”⁵³. What becomes apparent through analysis of late nineteenth-century French *amateur* collections is that this Pilesean comparative mode was not superseded by the museum but remained in place as an alternative mode of display. This alternative mode of display promoted as well a different mode of art history, a taxonomy apart from the positivist system which served, as McClellan points out “to demonstrate historical evolution within national schools”.⁵⁴

This organization of the private collection used the same sort of logic that was discussed in late nineteenth-century manuals of home design, where the operating principle was to create a harmonious and interesting interior in which the architecture, furniture and objects of art were to be carefully coordinated. It was, as discussed in the previous chapter, a color-based logic rather than the linear logic of the chronological display. As we saw, home design manuals such as Henri Havard’s 1884 *L’Art dans la Maison: Grammaire d’ameublement*, instruct the reader in harmony and good taste in which the author stresses that each aspect of the decoration, and particularly color, can only be determined in its relationship with its surroundings. In other words, any given color necessarily changes in so far as it placed with differing colors.

The coloristic structure of Degas’s painting emphasizes the zigzag. The gold of the frames is echoed in the wood of the billiard table, the frames of the doors are the same color as the ceiling. And the paintings within the painting, while to some extent identifiable, operate within the painting primarily as framed patches of color. Color is

configuration of pictures, the numerical sequence leads the eye in a zigzag path across the wall entailed comparison of works by different artists.” 39

⁵³ Ibid., 3.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3.

thus presented to us, packaged as it were, for us to consider within the dialogics of the painting. Color as such, or more specifically patches of color, also operate in the free-floating, billiard-ball pattern of the rug that seems almost to trip us up, put us off balance.

The Scholarly Perspective: Museum Viewing

The comparative mode of viewing evident in *Interior at Ménil-Hubert* is quite different from the analytical, linear, chronological type of viewing mocked, I believe, in Degas's 1880 pastel of *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre* (Figure 78). In that pastel the straight line that continues off the page is emphasized rather than the zigzag evident in the Billiard painting. Cassatt leans on her umbrella in front of an alignment of paintings that disappear off to the left. The lines of the marble dado and the wood floor echo that perspectival movement. Set in the Louvre, this arrangement of paintings does not call for the kind of comparative, contemplative viewing thematized in the Billiard room. Rather, perspective here serves to lead the eye away from the space of the painting towards a vanishing point situated off the picture plane. This vanishing point, the ideal, infinite meeting of parallel lines emblemizes the teleological purpose of the march of art history. The frames of the paintings, while repetitive, are not repeated in the architectural elements or elsewhere in the image, as they were in the *Interior at Ménil-Hubert*. In this way Degas creates a distinction between the realm of the paintings and the realm of the spectator.

Degas told Walter Sickert that *A Visit to the Museum* was "to give the idea of that bored and respectfully crushed and impressed absence of all feeling that women experience in front of paintings" and thus the division between spectator and art can be read as a gender divide, although Degas very much respected Cassatt as a picture-

maker.⁵⁵ Certainly the detached mode of viewing is much different from the active, specifically male atmosphere of the Billiard room. In this pastel, as well as others in the group of images of Mary Cassatt, at least one figure is reading a book rather than looking. In fact, in the pastel, the seated woman has her nose in the book and her back to the paintings, thus underlining a distinction between book knowledge and looking. In the oil at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts the linear movement to the left is emphasized by the banquette on which one woman is seated, and the book that she is holding is parallel to and directly beneath the frame of one of the paintings (Figure 79). The figures themselves seem swept along with the movement off the page, the elbow of the standing figure lining up with the diagonal of the baseboard.

It is evident in these images that each painting in the space of the museum is meant to be considered on its own, or else as part of a series, rather than a set. The image itself, in fact, is part of a series of prints of *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre* that Degas undertook in conjunction with the proposed journal *Jour et Nuit* that never appeared.⁵⁶ Not only did he execute more than one image, but he also created many states and many proofs. Fully fifty nine impressions of the final state of *Mary Cassatt at the Louvre* were sold at his Atelier sale.⁵⁷

In a series, a preexisting rule exists for generating the next example in the series. The rules concern the generation of the next example in a potentially infinite progression. Chronology is, of course, one example of such a series. A set, on the other hand, is already given, and rules must be derived from the conjunction of that group. Even architecturally, the museum room presupposes the next museum room in which a new series or else a continuation of the series in the current room can be found. In an article in the *Gazette des beaux-arts* about the National Gallery, for example, Reiset described “a

⁵⁵ Degas's letter is quoted in Richard Thompson, *The Private Edgar Degas* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 80. For a reading of this painting as about the male gaze and the spectacular female body see Callen, 165-211.

⁵⁶ S. W. Reed and Barbara Stern Shapiro, *Edgar Degas: The Painter as Printmaker* (Boston, 1984) 51-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

series of rooms and galleries, one leading to the next.”⁵⁸ On the other hand, within a private collection, each room is its own subset of the total set of the collection, and each subset has its own relations to consider. It is no accident that museum rooms tend to be long hallways rather than individually square rooms, although there are notable exceptions such as the Salon Carré.

Paintings and engravings of the Louvre, from the images of Hubert Robert into the late nineteenth century, stress, as Degas does, the perspectival movement of the eye. In a collection of views of the rooms of the Louvre, it is possible to verify that image after image depicts this idea of series, in which the far room is related to the perspective of the vanishing point.⁵⁹ This is quite different from Degas’s billiard painting where the far room is set off to the side and is not implied by the logic of perspective.

The difference between the private ensemble and the public museum was well understood in this period. For example, in 1895, Gustave Larroumet, the Director of Beaux-Arts at the time, wrote about the role of the museum:

A museum is a reunion of art objects that have no necessary relationship amongst themselves, that are, frankly, disparate, but that have an intrinsic artistic or historical value, and are exhibited to please or to instruct the visitors. The ideal museum would be one in which each object marks a date and where one can follow the complete history of an art, or of an art of one country.⁶⁰

A museum, that is, is not an ensemble. Objects are not positioned for their visual relation to each other, as they are in a private collection, in a museum they are disparate or rather,

⁵⁸ Frédéric Reiset, “Une visite aux musées de Londres,” *Gazette des beaux-arts* 15(January 1877): 5-18. “une série de salles et de galleries...donnant les unes dans les autres.”⁹

⁵⁹ Marquis de Vasselot, *Répertoire des vues des salles du Musée du Louvre*, Archives de l’art Français (Paris: Amand Colin, 1946). This collection does not reproduce everything, by any means, but a sampling, including the 1796 de Wailly watercolor drawing of *La Salle des Cariatides*, the 1810 Bzix engraving of *Napoléon visitant la sale du Laocoon*, Isabey’s 1817 *Le Grand Escalier du Musée*, Eugène Lami’s 1844 *La Grande Galerie*, E. Toilliez’s 1859 *La galerie d’Apollon*, and Louis Béraud’s 1882 *Salon Carré* all emphasize a series of rooms, and a straight, long perspective.

⁶⁰ Gustave Larroumet, *L’art et l’État en France* (Paris: Hachette, 1895), 223-224. “Une musée, c’est une réunion d’objets d’art, sans rapports nécessaires les uns avec les autres, disparates, pour parler net, mais qui, ayant une valeur propre ou historique, sont exposés pour servir à l’agrément et à l’instruction des visiteurs. L’idéal d’un musée serait celui où chaque objet....marquerait une date et où l’on pourrait suivre l’histoire complète d’un art où de l’art dans un pays.”

a series of single statements—a monologue. They correspond to the linear passage of time.

The didactic role of the museum resulted in a progressive series of catalogues published about the museum's holdings as well as a number of re-hangings so as to make clearer the progression from one school of painting to another and one period to another. Non-official guides to the museum, which, as guide books, participated in the culture of tourism and thus might be expected to conform to the picturesque grammar of wandering, were in fact split in their advice to the museum visitor, and offer both the zigzag path and the straight line through the museum. In his book *Voyage autour du Salon Carré* (1891), F. A. Gruyer describes the Salon Carré in the Louvre hung with only important paintings that included examples from many periods—an exception to the rule: "Painting of the most beautiful periods of painting have been brought together there with their rarest masterpieces. Schools which are apparently the most disparate mix together without clashing and without confusion."⁶¹ This mixed hang allowed him to propose alternative routes for viewing of the museum collection, either the picturesque wandering or the scholarly chronological and linear approach. The first that he proposes corresponds to the zigzag path. Here, the simple pleasure of the eyes allows the viewer to wander and look by chance at picturesque combinations.⁶² For him, however, the pleasure of the spirit, of scientific research and erudition, required a chronological and historical viewing. This is the final "itinerary" that he proposed in his book, while at the same time maintaining that both of these different methods of seeing are worthwhile.

For Gruyer's *Voyage*, and other museum guides of the time, such as Théophile Gautier's *Guide to the Louvre*, or Edmond Duranty's "Promenades through the Louvre," the public museum collection requires scientific research and erudition and these authors

⁶¹ F.A. Gruyer, *Voyage autour du Salon Carré au Musée du Louvre* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1891), 1. "La peinture des plus belles époques y a réuni ses plus rares chefs d'oeuvres. Les écoles en apparence les plus disparates s'y mêlent sans se heurter ni se confondre."

⁶² Ibid., 2. "the naïve pleasure of sensation."

lead the reader through the Louvre in paths guided by national schools and historical development.⁶³ Apart from pausing at the Salon Carré in which the masterpieces of all the schools are united, Gautier's guide takes the visitor systematically from the Italian school in the Grande Galerie, through the German, Flemish and Dutch schools and finally the French School. Duranty's various "promenades" also remain within national schools, rather than wandering in the more picturesque way. One article is devoted to Egyptian art, for example, and another to Dutch. This chronological arrangement as well as reception on the part of these guides is attributable, as we have seen, both to the didactic and political function of the museum as an agent of the state following the revolution as well as to the reigning positivist art history of such writers as Taine and Fromentin.

A painting of the Salon Carré, the room described in these guides, shows how even an installation that mixes periods within the context of the museum had a very different effect from the private collection. In particular we see that the perspectival view, the mingling of people from different social classes, the intervention of the state in keeping order, the use of instructional guide books and the strong presence of the copyist within the museum are all stressed. Giuseppe Castiglione's painting *Salon Carré du Louvre* (1861), shown at the Salon in 1861 and bought by the state to hang in the apartments of the minister of fine arts, visualizes the public role of the museum (Figure 80). We are confronted with the grand scale of the room with its elaborately ornate ceiling, as well as its place in a series of rooms that make up the museum. The greatest light and dark contrast leads our eyes immediately through the far-off doorway to the Grand Galerie beyond, which is characterized by its successive archways. The Salon Carré is peopled by a very diverse group of spectators who are clearly strangers to each other. Here and there, several people converse, including a pair of Zouaves of the

⁶³ Théophile Gautier, *Guide de L'amateur au Musée du Louvre suivi de la vie et les oeuvres de quelques peintres* (Paris: Charpentier, 1882); Edmond Duranty, "Promenades au Louvre," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 17 (March 1878): 221-233; 15 (January 1877): 19-37.

imperial guard and two top-hatted gentlemen leaning on the red velvet balustrade. Others rest or read the museum catalogue on the round banquettes, and some are rapt in careful looking. It is not only is this a site of looking, for there are at least four copyists at work. A guard, recognizable by his red vest and distinctive hat, stands at attention. Depicted as it was hung in 1851, Van Dyck's *Charles the First*, Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*, Murillo's *Virgin* and Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* are recognizable.⁶⁴

The public and didactic function of the museum, seen here in the way different kinds of people are all united in learning from the institution of the state, was part of the very purpose of the Louvre. There are several strands that I wish to briefly draw out in considering the museum in contradistinction to the private collection. First the nationalistic project of the museum was to construct the identity of the nation by means of its art. Art in this setting acts on the individual in a different way from a private collection. In so far as it serves to enact the power of the state, it makes the viewer passive: that is, rather than being able to engage in dialogue, as in the private collection, a more passive assimilation, emblemized by the copy, takes place. Knowledge is assumed to be a replication of the given reality of the installation, rather than an active reconceptualization. And here I would stress that the copy was an important element in the discourse of the museum from its very inception.⁶⁵ This is evident not only in the images of the Louvre, in which we see the copyist appear throughout, from the paintings of Hubert Robert to the paintings of Jean Béraud, but also in the museum of copies promoted by Charles Blanc.⁶⁶ This cutting off of a dialogue is part of what prompted critics throughout the nineteenth century, from Quatremère de Quincy through the Goncourt brothers, to fault the museum for its deadening effect. Finally, and most

⁶⁴ *Le comte de Nieuwerkerke. Art et pouvoir sous Napoléon III* (Compiègne: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2000), 70.

⁶⁵ See Theodore Reff, "Copyists in the Louvre, 1850-1870," *The Art Bulletin* 46 (December 1964): 552-559.

⁶⁶ See Jane Roos, *Early Impressionism and the French State (1866-1874)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 182-183; Albert Boime, "Le Musées des copies," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser 6, 64 (October 1964): 237-47.

obviously, the chronological approach of the museum within the walls of the former palace of the king, served, as many art historians have pointed out, to enshrine the history of art and of France itself, as displayed within the museum. Rather than many alternative groupings, as evident in various private collections, the one privileged, State-sponsored group pointed to one history.

The Louvre and National Identity

The history of the Louvre museum is one that is closely tied, as many scholars have argued, with an agenda of national identity.⁶⁷ This link is multifaceted. Most important is the symbolism of the palace, identified since the thirteenth century with the monarchy in France, and after the revolution of 1789, with the new republic. The appropriation of the palace by the republic entailed also making the royal art collections public.⁶⁸ This transformation of royal palace into national museum began quickly with

⁶⁷ The literature on museums is enormous, with an emphasis most recently on the relationship between the bourgeois state and the museum. Carol Duncan's *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1994) was one of the first to analyze the relationship between the museum and the state. She argued that the museum is a "monument to the new bourgeois state as it was emerging in the age of democratic revolutions" (21). Chantal George, in her article "Museum as Metaphor in Nineteenth Century France," in *Museum Culture*, ed. Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1994): 113-122 discusses the "collective reappropriation" of national heritage in the encyclopedic museum. Daniel Sherman's *Worthy Monuments. Art Museums and the Politics of Culture* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1989) in visual arts as performing a legitimizing and self-glorifying role for the bourgeois state. Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum. History Theory Politics* (Routledge, London, 1995) taking as a starting point the work of Habermas, discusses the civic role of the museum.

⁶⁸ For the history of the Louvre I have relied on several important texts. Andrew McClellan *Inventing the Louvre* discusses the pre-revolutionary arguments for the public art museum as well discussing how that first played out in the early history of the museum. Geneviève Bresc, *Mémoires du Louvre* (Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 1989) provides a concise history of the palace and museum. Christine Aulanier's *Histoire du Palais et du Musée du Louvre*, 10 Vols (Paris, Réunion de Musées Nationaux, 1948-1971) is an exhaustive history.

A brief outline of the history of the palace based on the above texts can be orienting: The first reference to the Louvre as castle is in the first budget of the French monarch of 1202. With the reign of Charles V, which lasted until 1380, the austere palace becomes livable, with windows and decorations. The Louvre as we now know it began construction under Francois I in 1527. It became one of the principal residences of the Valois kings in the 16th century. The Grande Galerie was built by Henry IV to connect the Louvre (finished 1610) with the Tuileries place which had been built by Catherine de Medici (1572

the museum opening its doors to the public in 1793, only four years after the onset of the revolution. The history of the museum and the art within continued to more closely bind the public to the Louvre throughout the nineteenth century. There is, to name just a few examples from the early part of the century, the important role that art played in assuring the financial viability of the revolutionary government in France,⁶⁹ the very prominent installation of art from conquered territories in the Musée Napoleon, and that art's subsequent reappropriation following Napoleon's defeat. Each of these events more closely linked the nation to its art as displayed in its museum.

From the start the museum had a didactic function which was elucidated within the context of the Enlightenment rationality by D'Angiviller in the eighteenth century.⁷⁰ Associated with the style of neo-classicism, in which the best art is meant to carry a moral value, the museum itself is seen as a kind of "exemplum virtutis."⁷¹ Immediately following the fall of the Louis XVI, a commission was established to open the museum as a site of national identity. It opened at the same time, as McClellan pointed out, as the Festival of National Unity. As he put it:

Inside the museum, the feeling of Revolutionary conquest was unequivocal. The works of art on display had been prized from their pre- Revolutionary settings and returned to their "rightful" owners: the people...Seizing works of art in private

work finishes). The Louvre, at this time, becomes the site of vast collections including portraits of the kings and queens of France in the "Petite Galerie" as well as a collection of antiquities. Furthermore, artists themselves take up residence in the palace. Under Louis XIV the Louvre is further expanded, until he leaves Paris behind for Versailles. At this time, the Academy Francaise is installed in the Louvre and the Salon Carré becomes the site for annual or biennial art exhibitions. No further major building projects take place until after the revolution.

⁶⁹ Jean-Paul Bertaud, *Initiation a la Révolution Francaise* (Perrin, Paris, 1989), 88-92. He discusses the appropriation of church property and aristocratic property including artworks and the subsequent issuing of "assignats" that enabled the revolution to finance itself. It is on the basis of this enormous increase in the wealth of the government that the hugely expensive defensive war was able to be fought.

⁷⁰ McClellan, 49-90. McClellan devotes a chapter to this project by the king's director general of royal buildings. According to McClellan, "The museum was the crux of the director general's grand scheme to revitalize French art and to demonstrate to Europe and posterity the superiority of the French school and the magnificence of Louis XVI. The Louvre was to be a source of national pride as well as royal glory" (49).

⁷¹ McClellan points out that commissions of statues and paintings representing historical figures of France to be displayed in his projected reinstallation of the Grande Galerie were chosen on the basis of their being good examples of moral virtue. Gutenberg was rejected as a subject because he was inspired by self-interest rather than any more elevated moral purpose (83).

hands and reidentifying them as communal property brought together at the national museum paralleled the Revolutionary progression from liberty to unity dramatized by the festival of August 10; free admission and circulation at the museum echoed participation in the street celebration.⁷²

Private property is here set in opposition to communal property, and the communal being is identified with progress. This dynamic had its vicissitudes throughout the turbulent changes of the nineteenth century in which the state more often than not was either a monarchy or an empire.

The humiliating departure of the many works of art (although only half of what Napoleon had acquired) that had been so widely celebrated as crowning the empire of France, the loss of the Laocoon, the Apollo Belvedere, and so on, provided a stimulus to the nation to fill in these gaps throughout the nineteenth century.

It became a patriotic act to donate one's private collection to the public collection of the Louvre and the nineteenth century is filled with examples of such largesse. Any account of the Louvre as a public institution is complicated by its relationship with private collectors. A 1989 exhibition at the Louvre put the number of donors to the Louvre at that time at about 2,700, not including anonymous donors and participants in subscriptions.⁷³ The very first private donation came in 1798 with the gift by a young officer named Clauzel of Gérard Dou's *La Femme hydropique*. This same catalogue suggests many motifs for private donations including their generosity, civic spirit and love of France.⁷⁴ Several categories of donors are distinguished in this catalogue: Archaeologists, artists and their descendants, models and their descendants, art dealers, museum curators and members of groups such as La Société des Amis du Louvre.

⁷² Ibid., 98-99.

⁷³ *Les donateurs du Louvre* (Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1989), 9.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 9

Several collectors of the nineteenth century are particularly singled out: Sauvageot (the model for Balzac's Cousin Pons), whose immense collection of medieval and renaissance treasures was assembled carefully by a musician of modest means; Docteur La Caze, who was the most important donor of old master paintings; and finally Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, whom I will discuss below, who was, along with Isaac Camondo, the major private donor to the Louvre of the Third Republic.

The interrelationship between private collector and public institution was further complicated by the fact that the most important administrators of the museum throughout the nineteenth century were also *amateurs*, in the sense that they not only collected art but also produced it. Vivant-Denon, the first director of the Louvre, established this model.⁷⁵ As museum administrator he was in charge of commandeering large numbers of artworks from the countries conquered by Napoleon, as well as organizing them within the museum. He was an avaricious collector himself, amassing quantities of Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Oceanic, Native American and European artworks including a huge quantity of drawings. He himself had shown at the academy as a printmaker since the age of 30 (after having been received as a gentleman at court, served as ambassador to Russia and Switzerland and Naples and written the *Voyage pittoresque ou Description des royaumes de Naples et de Sicile* in 1777.)⁷⁶ The last part of his life was devoted to

⁷⁵ See the comprehensive catalogue: *Dominique-Vivant Denon. L'oeil de Napoléon* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1999) which discusses all aspects of his life: administrator, collector, scholar and artist.

⁷⁶ One of his etchings shows a trompe l'oeil arrangement of six prints on a flat surface, arranged so that they are not all straight, but some are tilted sideways, forming a kind of zigzag. They are copies of other prints, three of subjects such as interiors or animals and three self-portraits of the artists that made the first three. One of the three self-portraits (which are all in fact drawn by Denon) is of Denon himself. The other two are Rembrandt and Stefano della Bella. I think it is a wonderful conceit for what it is to be an *amateur*: to collect drawings so as to study them, in this case copy them, and then assimilate them into one's own work. The assemblage is across nationality (Italian, Dutch and French) and period (17th and 18th Centuries). It was made as a frontispiece presumably for a collection of prints either to be published or given someone. See Dominique-Vivant Denon, 100.

lithography as well as to writing a comprehensive history of art. The diversity of his activities seems to have set a precedent for succeeding professionals within the museum who show a similar range of ambitions.

The director of the Louvre during the second Empire, le comte Émilien de Nieuwerkerke, was also an artist, a sculptor, and a collector specializing particularly in armor.⁷⁷ He is best known, however, for his role as superintendent of the arts. From a royalist family and noble on the side of his mother, he began sculpting after his marriage at the age of twenty-one. He showed at the Salon ten years later with a marble bust of comte Charles de Ganay. By virtue of his liaison with the Princess Mathilde, he became Directeur général des musées nationaux in 1849. He continued to sculpt until 1861, attending to his expanded duties (as of 1852) as director of the Salon as well as the museum. He organized the 1855 Universal Exhibition. In 1863 he became superintendant of Fine Arts, the first since the ancien régime, and he kept the position until the end of the Second Empire in 1870.

He was extremely important in the evolution of the Louvre of the Second Empire. He presided over the expansion of the Louvre from 89 to 139 rooms between 1848 and 1868. These new spaces were lit from above, were hung “rationally” and included explanatory labels. The hours for visiting were expanded from only weekends to all week, except Monday, from 8-6 in the summertime and 9-4 in the winter. Also important was the emphasis Nieuwerkerke placed on the catalogues that he insisted the museum publish.

⁷⁷ The recent exhibition catalogue documents all these aspects of his life. *Le comte de Nieuwerkerke: Art et Pouvoir sous Napoléon III* (Compiègne: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2000).

Of further interest to us is his organization both of his own collection and of his workspace at the Louvre, which he decorated with museum-owned objects. His own collection clearly falls within the rubric of “connoisseurship” in that it was made up largely of armor, armaments and objets d’art from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.⁷⁸ Richard Wallace bought this collection from Nieuwerkerke virtually in its entirety in 1871. As for the *cabinet* which Nieuwerkerke used at the Louvre, where he lived, this is seen in Charles Giraud’s painting of 1859 and described as well by Théophile Gautier in 1858 (Figure 81). Sumptuous in decoration, it was characterized by a ceremonial feel. We see in the painting three large crystal chandeliers, a marble pilastered door, red-curtained window areas frame a grouping of art that includes a life size statue of *Psyche* by Célestin-Anatol Calmels, portraits of Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie as well as numerous other art objects.⁷⁹

This space, which was neither altogether public, nor private, decorated by objects owned by the state and used as a workspace by an administrator of the state, nonetheless combined works of many periods in a non-museum display. The political portraits--of the Emperor and his Empress as well as Nieuwerkerke’s predecessors, Vivant-Denon and the comte de Forbin--allow us to understand this grouping as a display of power. This room emphasizes his social position.

⁷⁸ The house that he commissioned for himself near the Parc Monceau included both a studio (never finished) and exhibition space. As is evident both in Pierre Tétar von Elvan’s interior and in the architectural renderings of Hector Lefuel for the hotel of 13 rue Murillo, the collection was conceived not so much as an extension of the home of the collector, but rather as an almost museum like space in which we are not so much expected to socialize as to admire. We see a long, somewhat narrow room, covered in red cloth and hung with all manner of armor. Glass cases line the walls. While there are two formal chairs against the far wall, there is otherwise no accommodation for sitting or spending extended periods of time. Similarly, the elevation plan of Hector Lefuel indicates a very formal exhibition space, made all the more public by the courtyard fountain and gallery on the lower floors. See *Le comte de Nieuwerkerke*, op cit., 124-125.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 88-89.

The social persona in his *cabinet de travail* is explicated as well in his Friday salons, held in the Louvre, where he lived. Unlike the traditional salon in which conversation and seduction are allied, this gathering was made exclusively of men.⁸⁰ The most prominent of the French intellectuals crowded into the room, are embraced, as it were, by the state. The elite that were gathered enacted the cultural magnificence of the state. Such diverse painters as Ingres and Delacroix, Horace Vernet and Hippolyte Flandrin came together in the same room with ministers of state surrounded by the cultural legacy of France's past in the building that most represented the continuity of the power of the French state—the Louvre.

Finally, the directors of fine arts in the Third Republic, from Charles Blanc to Philippe de Chennevières to Gustave Larroumet, continued this tradition of multifaceted involvement in the arts. Chennevières, for example, was a collector of drawings, an art historian and an artist in his own right. Thus while throughout the nineteenth century the museum adhered to an ever greater extent to the didactic program originally envisioned for it in the Enlightenment, the museum administrators at the same time participated privately within the alternative tradition of the *amateur*.

Another photograph by Dornac, of Gustave Larroumet, shows this museum administrator seated at home in his *cabinet de travail* (Figure 82). We can see how he participated in the cultural tradition of the *amateur* at the same time that in his public role he sponsored and promoted what he saw as the primary didactic role of the museum.

⁸⁰ A painting by Biard (1855) makes this clear. The room, adjacent to the one depicted by Giraud, is hung with tapestries, lit by a huge chandelier and dotted with sculpture including Nieuwerkerke's own busts of Napoleon III and the Empress. The personages evident include Nieuwerkerke, Eugène Giraud, Haussmann, Delacroix, Horace Vernet, Viollet le Duc, Ingres, Eugène Isabey, Prosper Mérimée, Alfred de Musset, and Hippolyte Flandrin as well as political figures such as Achille Fould, Jules Baroche and le comte Auguste de Morny. Their very crowdedness denies them their individual qualities and assimilates them into the state.

While in his book on art and the state he specifically opposed the linear arrangement of the museum to that of an “ensemble,” in this photograph we see him in the midst of the ensemble that is his private collection.⁸¹ His pose as well as a poem that was inscribed beneath this photograph in one of Bibliothèque Nationale prints, enacts the dialogic relationship with the art paradigmatic of the *amateur*. The *cabinet de travail* of Larroumet, the director of fine arts in 1889 as well as a writer on theater, exemplifies the mix of art forms. It is a work space that is at the same time a space of collection. There is a visual equivalence drawn between the books lining the wall opposite Larroumet and the crowded framed images on his right. There we can see paintings, drawings, prints, miniatures, dishes as well as books and objets d’art clustered together. Larroumet himself is not only at work, but there is a poem inscribed beneath the photo in one copy of the photograph. The poem emblemizes the urge to remake an artwork (in this case a photograph) into a new work that we have seen over and again in the practice of the bibliophile. His desk is in the middle of the room and holds not only his papers, but also a windswept figurine of Victory that is fairly large. Certainly it dominates the table, and placed as it is, directly in front of Larroumet, is, within this photograph, in dialogue with him.

To read and to dream beneath Victory
In obscure and patient labor
Takes the place of everything, even glory
And gives rhyme to happiness.⁸²

The poem, which begins “to read and dream beneath Victory” addresses this confrontation. The integral role of the statue in the work of this writer is here stressed, as

⁸¹ Larroumet, *L’art et l’État en France*, 223-224.

⁸² Penciled-in poem in Bibliothèque Nationale file Eo88b Dornac no. 551. “Lire et rêver sous la Victoire/ Dans l’obscur et patient labeur/Tient lieu de tout, même de gloire/Et donne la rime à bonheur.”

in the rest of the discourse surrounding the *amateur*. He is surrounded with objects and paintings and drawings and books that have been created, in a space which reaffirms his place within that tradition. He has assembled these artworks along principles that refer to his own private creativity and in which he does his own artwork (in this case writing) that is acted on by the surrounding space. He is in dialogue with the art that surrounds him and it with him.

The private collection then, at the end of the nineteenth century, stood as an alternative model for the appreciation and understanding of art, of which museum administrators were well aware. These *amateur* collections formed part of what Daniel Sherman calls the “anti-museum discourse.”⁸³ Its origins can be traced as far back as the beginnings of museum culture at the time of the French revolution of 1789. At the start of the nineteenth-century, for example, Quatremère de Quincy argued against the museum, stating that “to make of such a gathering [of monuments] a practical course in modern chronology: this is to constitute ourselves as a dead nation.”⁸⁴ By contrast, the collections I discuss, as we have seen, were not arranged chronologically and were often viewed as life-long companions of the collector. The metaphor of living and dead that Quatremère de Quincy introduced was continued in the latter part of the century. For example, Edmond de Goncourt refused to donate his collection to the state, not wanting “the things that have been the happiness of [my] life...[to] suffer the cold tomb of the museum, and the stupid gaze of the indifferent passerby.”⁸⁵

⁸³ Daniel Sherman, “Quatremère/Benjamin/Marx: Art Museums, Aura and Commodity Fetishism,” in Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds. *Museum Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994): 123-143.

⁸⁴ Quatremère de Quincy, *Considérations Morales* (Paris, 1815) 47

⁸⁵ *Collection des Goncourts* (Paris: Hôtel Drouot, 1897).

Certainly not all *amateurs* had this antagonistic attitude towards the museum, and as I discussed above many, including Sauvageot, Isaac Camondo and Etienne Moreau-Nélaton donated their collections to the Louvre.

CONCLUSION

MOREAU –NÉLATON : *AMATEUR* AS ART-HISTORIAN

Moreau-Nélaton, who participated in the disregard for categories that was typical of the *amateur*, not only collected art but also wrote many books on the artists of his time and was an accomplished painter in his own right. One way to read his life, in fact, is as a struggle with these categories. I conclude this examination of the *amateur* in late nineteenth-century France with a discussion of Moreau-Nélaton, and in particular of his art historical writings. For if the private collection proposed an alternative art history to the teleological approach of the museum, Moreau-Nélaton's art writing can give us certain clues about what this could look like in its specific emphasis on the words and letters of the writers he discusses. Neither is it unimportant that his first book should describe the work of his mother, whom he defended as a serious artist in both her painting and in her ceramic work. For while he was profoundly nationalistic, this nationalism can be seen to derive from the importance he placed on the circle of family, friends and painters whom he loved and with whom he lived.

Born in 1857, Moreau-Nélaton came from a family of collectors and *amateur* painters.⁸⁶ His life was a constant alteration between writing and painting. As a student at the Ecole Normale he wrote his thesis on the French court at the time of the last Valois, but immediately after graduation he joined the atelier of Albert Maignan and then Harpignies to paint seriously. Following a tragic fire at the Bazaar de la Charité in 1897, in which he lost his wife and his mother, he put together a huge three-volume monograph on the work of his mother and he began to collect art seriously. He very quickly amassed one of the great collections of French painting of the nineteenth-century which he donated to the Louvre beginning in 1906. Including Manet's *Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe* and Fantin Latour's *Hommage to Delacroix* (1864) as well as many other Barbizon and Impressionist works, he built his collection to complement and extend the extensive collection of his grandfather and with an eye to filling the gaps within the collection of the Louvre.⁸⁷ Following a second tragedy in his life, the loss of his only son in WWI, he took up art history, writing monographs on Clouet, Jongkind, Daubigny, Bonvin, Millet, Manet as well as the Cathedrals of France.

His three different careers were not undertaken lightly. His production of paintings was prodigious (more than 800 extant) and serious. They display a skill, tenderness and daring that advocate for greater renown. His collecting was equally intensely motivated, aimed, according to Anne Distel, at placing Impressionism within rather than at odds with the trajectory of the French tradition.⁸⁸ And finally, his art historical methodology placed great importance on documentation. Best known for a

⁸⁶ For a comprehensive account of his life see Vincent Pomerade, *Etienne Moreau-Nélaton: Un Collectionneur Peintre où un Peintre Collectionneur* (Paris: Prat/Europa, 1988).

⁸⁷ See Anne Distel, "Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, collectionneur de son temps," in *De Corot aux Impressionists, donations Moreau-Nélaton* (Paris: Réunions de Musées Nationaux, 1991), 1-6.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 3. See also Ann Dumas, "Degas and the Collecting Milieu," 114-127.

series of monographs, he amassed a huge cache of documents (more than 3000) which he left to the Bibliothèque Nationale at his death.

A painting of his mother reading in a corner by the fire (*Le coin du feu*, 1887) (Figure 83) in the Parisian house on Faubourg Saint Honoré in which Moreau-Nélaton lived his whole life, shows, much like the painting of his studio by Henri Rouart, the vital interconnectivity of the collection and the life. Different kinds of object, shapes of paintings, and types of activity interweave. We see the back of his mother, reading, the desk with an empty chair, and on the wall and the fireplace a profusion of paintings and objects. According to Pomerade, Delacroix's *Le Turc Assis* and Harpignies' *Camille Moreau Peignant* are both hung to the left of the desk.⁸⁹ Camille Moreau, the mother of Etienne, is visible here in three interrelated activities: as painter, in the painting on the wall; as reader, most centrally pictured; and as collector, surrounded by her paintings and objects which interweave seamlessly into her life. This same seamlessness is evident in Moreau-Nélaton's own life. As Pomerade put it: "Une telle homogénéité entre toutes ses activités laisse bien sûr présupposer que des courants, des liens existent entre le peintre et le collectionneur."⁹⁰

A related pastel only emphasizes this point. In his *Camille Moreau décorant des céramiques* (1887) we see his mother depicted, this time, from the front (Figure 84). She has paused in working on her ceramics to look at the viewer. The table at which she is seated is filled with ceramics, a vase, a jug, little bowls, and behind her is a wall covered with small paintings and sketches. The painting can be understood as a kind of illustration for the animated rest of Balzac's *vie élégante*. We see Camille Moreau

⁸⁹ Vincent Pomerade, "Le créateur" in *De Corot aux Impressionists, donations Moreau-Nélaton* (Paris: Réunions de Musées Nationaux, 1991), 309.

⁹⁰ Vincent Pomerade, *Etienne Moreau-Nélaton*, 239.

presented as an artist whose schedule corresponds to an inner timetable rather than some imposed agenda. Repose and elegance are emphasized by the pause in work, by the sleeping dog on the floor, by the space in the foreground of the picture, while the animation of that elegance is exemplified by the profusion of art around the figure.

Thus in his paintings he specifically took as his subject matter living with art and the artistic response to it, the dialogue between collection and creation. Similarly, his art writing was a response to the art that he lived with: specifically, to begin with, the art of his mother, who is the subject of the two paintings described above. His 1899 book reproduces a large number of her paintings and ceramic work, and also evokes the family circle of creativity from which that work arose:

Each year, the fine weather reunited the family in the country or at the sea, and around “Camille” gathered a whole phalanx passionate about painting: husband, sister, aunt, without even counting the friends; some doing watercolor, others oil painting, all full of the ardor of neophytes.⁹¹

Here the family and friends are all together celebrating the beautiful weather by painting with enthusiasm and ardor. Collecting was also a specifically sociable activity shared with the painters that Moreau-Nélaton’s father’s collected:

In the autumn evenings, the artists gathered in the hall of their friend Adolphe Moreau, exchanged remarks about their profession and got excited about ideas. Rich conversations that my mother adored.⁹²

Here the conversation about painting with painters that one collects, is crucial to the life of Camille Moreau, and one must assume, to Moreau-Nélaton as well. It is a conversation that he carries into his own collecting, and his own writing. It is as if,

⁹¹ Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, *Camille Moreau. Peintre et céramiste 1840-1897* (Paris: Floury, 1899), 8. “La belle saison réunissait chaque année la famille à la campagne ou à la mer, et autour de “Camille” se groupait toute une phalange passionnée de peinture: mari, soeur, tante, sans compter les amis ; les uns faisant de l’aquarelle, les autres de la peinture à l’huile, tous plein d’une ardeur de néophytes.”

⁹² Ibid., 8. “Dans les veillées de l’automne, des artistes réunis au foyer de leur ami Adolphe Moreau échangeaient des propos de métier et s’échauffaient sur les théories. Causeries fécondes où ma mère s’enflammait.”

having lost the intimate circle of family with which to converse, he wanted to extend his circle into the greater public; extend as well the emphasis on the back and forth conversations that formed part of his experience with painting.

Vincent Pomerade described what he calls Moreau-Nélaton's effacement of personal opinion in his art-historical work, which he characterizes as wanting to document "objectively" and "scientifically." I would argue, on the contrary, that the inclusion in each of his books of the words and letters of the painters he discusses preserves the dialogic quality emphasized by the *amateur* collection. Furthermore, one can understand him as acting to transform the institution of the museum by means of his gift rather than conforming to it. And while some have argued that the enshrinement of Impressionist art within the museum transformed that art into an art of the past, one could conversely argue that by including relatively contemporary art within the museum he was bringing the art of the past into dialogue with the art of the present.

If there is a difference between Moreau-Nélaton and the other *amateurs* that I discuss, it is in relation to loss. His art-historical interest centers on painters that he or his family collected, and his own work clearly shows the influence of the Impressionist painters that he bought, but with the loss of his private world he turned his focus outward. He took up collecting seriously following the death of his mother and wife in the fire at the Bazaar de la Charité and he concentrated on art history after he lost his only son in the war. His writing extended outward from his own experience, beginning with his book on his mother. His survey of churches begins with his own district of Fère-en-Tardenois, and his historical studies are presaged by a five-volume history of his own family (*Mémorial de famille*, 1918). His experience of the destruction of his private realm is

made achingly clear in his evocation of his country house that was destroyed and pillaged by the Germans:

The loss of these dear companions of my whole life saddens me. I go from one room to another, filling with my thoughts the empty frames, giving back to the billiard room its Philippe Rousseau, to the dining room its Balleroy still life....unhappily, a delicious Virgin, by Tassaert.... was forcibly taken from the house from which I myself had not decided to tear it away to shut up in a museum so much were her tender smile and black eyes dear to me, so much had I loved as companion of my sleep the divine little blond boy that she held against her maternal breast..⁹³

Moreau-Nélaton treated the art of his house like living companions, his memory of them vivid. His sorrow at the loss was deeply felt. But with the eradication of the private in his life, came an insistence on the ever more precise documentation of his art historical work.

In his case, then, art history as a métier stemmed from the experience of loss in the war. With the devastation of the private came an insistence on the public. Moreau-Nélaton assimilated his own grief into the larger loss of the country as a whole. For example, in his search for his son during the war, he traveled throughout France looking for him, and as he searched, he photographed. The most private and desperate search of a father for his son becomes transmuted into a careful documentation of the devastation of the country in the war. In his book on the cathedral of Reims loss takes center stage. Moreau-Nélaton begins with photographs of the devastating effects of the war on the

⁹³ "La perte de ces chers compagnons de toute ma vie me désole. Je vais d'une pièce à l'autre, remplissant par la pensée les cadres dépouillés, rendant à la salle de billard ses Philippe Rousseau, à la salle à manger la nature morte de Balleroy.....Malheureusement, une délicieuse Vierge de Tassaert, qui surmontait cette image, a quitté de vive force la maison d'où je ne m'étais pas décidé à l'arracher moi-même pour l'enfermer dans un musée, tant son tendre sourire et son oeil noir m'étaient chers, tant j'avais aimé comme compagnon de mon sommeil le divin petit blondin qu'elle serrait contre son sein maternel...."

cathedral, but proceeds, with the aid of photographs taken before the war to resurrect the cathedral into an almost timeless idea of itself.

Thanks to the informed and expert operators named Trompette, Rothier, Lajoie or Doucet, the voyage across so many invisible masterpieces was easily executed. The whole cathedral is found in the work of these able artists which is given an inestimable price by the ravages which we deplore today⁹⁴

In a way this visual rebuilding of the cathedral is emblematic of the work of art history as such. In a similar operation of renewal, he uses the letters and journals of the painters about whom he writes to revive their voices, let them speak again. He is quite explicit about this in his *Corot raconté par lui même*, in which he states that the addition of Corot's letters to his earlier book on Corot allows Corot to tell his own story. He goes on to describe the letters that Corot sent to his friend Abel Osmond as similar to a conversation, which, in the manner we have been discussing throughout, touches on one subject and quickly change to another:

The words come so quickly, often in disorder, that they free themselves of syntactic constraints that would impede less independent stylists; improvised on the fly like a free conversation, these letters touch every possible subject and change from one topic to another without transition.⁹⁵

It is a conversation that is disordered, defying the rules of syntax, improvised. All these terms could equally describe the way that the *amateur* navigates his collection, going from one subject to another, from one painting to another in a nonlinear, surprising and wonderfully alive way. Corot is quoted by Moreau-Nélaton as likening the exchange of

⁹⁴ Moreau-Nélaton, *Cathedral of Reims*, 27. "Grâce aux opérateurs avisés et experts qui se sont appelés Trompette, Rothier, Lajoie ou Doucet, le voyage à travers tant de chefs-d'oeuvre invisibles s'exécute avec aisance. La cathédrale tout entière se mire dans l'oeuvre de ces habiles artistes aux quels les ravages que nous déplorons aujourd'hui donnent un prix inestimable."

⁹⁵ Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, *Corot raconté par lui même* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1924), 126. "Les mots s'y précipitent même souvent dans un certain désordre, et s'y affranchissent volontiers de la tutelle imposée par la syntaxe à des plumes moins indépendantes ; improvisées comme une conversation à bâtons rompus, ces épîtres touchent à tout et passent sans transition d'un sujet à un autre"

letters to a conversation, a conversation which gives pleasure, and which will pass the time until a real conversation, in which they will chat arm in arm, will be possible :

I had forgotten all the pleasure that one tasted when receiving and writing letters; now I have changed, and I am disposed to write to you as often as I can. However it will always be in response to your letters. It is in this way that I count on arriving at the moment when, arm in arm, we can talk up a storm.⁹⁶

This pleasure of exchanging opinions is the same pleasure Moreau-Nélaton describes his mother feeling surrounded by the chatter of other painters and it is the same pleasure that he himself has felt in the presence of his paintings. It is the pleasure of dialogue in which the interlocutor is not frozen in the past, but speaks back. That paintings can speak back is the subtext of the discourse of the *amateur*. It is a message important for current art historical practice.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 131 “J’ignorais tout le plaisir que l’on goûtait à recevoir des lettres et à en écrire ; maintenant, j’ai changé, et je suis disposé à t’écrire le plus souvent que je pourrai. Cependant ce serait toujours en réponse aux tiennes. C’est ainsi que je compte arriver au moment où, bras-dessus bras-dessous nous en taillerons de fières bavettes.”

Appendix A
Table A
Painting Collectors Arranged Alphabetically

Name	Sale Date	Birth dates	Contents of Sale	Biographical Information
Adam, Emile	1900	1828-1899	Paintings	Officer Legion of Honor, Mayor of Nancy, Reorganized museum of painting and created Nancy sculpture museum.
Alexandre, Arsène	1902	1859-1937	Paintings	Writer and art critic. Wrote many of the prefaces of the sales catalogues. Books on Daumier and Monuments of France destroyed in WWI among others.
Aumale, Le Duc d'	1884	1822-1897	Paintings, Books,	Aristocrat, son of Louis Philippe, military career, after fall of Louis Philippe lived in England and became collector and bibliophile.
B *** , Mme	1901		Paintings, Drawings, Prints, Furniture, Tapestry, Billiards Table, Piano, jewels, rugs etc.	Unknown.
Barbedienne, Ferdinand	1892	1810-1892	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Son of farmers, founded wallpaper firm. Also a foundry that reproduced sculpture of antiquity.
Baudry , Paul	1902	1825-1909	Paintings	Writer, Son of Rouen merchant. Many posts in the Second Empire. Collector and bibliophile, published studies on Norman churches and monasteries; on museums and on art exhibitions.
Bériot, Charles de	1901	1802-1870	Paintings and Watercolors	Musician. Celebrated violinist. Composer. Also drew and sculpted, and made his own violin.
Beurnonville, M. le Baron Etienne-Martin de	1880	1789-1876	Paintings	Aristocrat Pair démissionnaire. Maréchal de camp, Grand-officier de la legion d'honneur.
Blanquet de Fulde, Baron	1900		Paintings	Aristocrat
Blot , Eugène	1900		Paintings	Art dealer

Boulard, Auguste	1900	b. 1804	Paintings	Painter. Student of Cogniet and Dupré , also engraver.
Camondo, Isaac de	1914	1851- 1911	Paintings and Sculptures	Banker, Gift of most of his collection to the Louvre, a museum of his 18 th Cent. Collections exists in his former house Parc Monceau. member, Société des Amis du Louvre, Composer whose <i>Le clown</i> was performed at the Opéra Comique 1910.
Castro, Mme la Baronne Olivera de	1896		Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Unknown
Charpentier, Georges	1906	1846- 1905	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Publisher of Flaubert, Zola, Goncourt brothers, Duranty, Daudet, Huysmans. 1879 Founded magazine: <i>La Vie Moderne</i> .
Chennevières, Philippe de		1820- 1899	Drawings and Paintings	Director of Fine Arts 1870-73 Administrator Louvre, 1846; organized salons 1852-69; 1861- 1868 conservateur Luxembourg, Artist, and collector.
Coquelin Cadet	1909	1848- 1909	Paintings	Actor with Comédie Française beginning 1868. Popular for his vivacity and changeability. Worked in Variétés beginning 1875.
Cottier , David	1892	1837- 1892	Paintings	Dealer, Glass and Furniture Artist, Art Critic Shop in London 8 Pall Mall; also shop on Fifth Avenue, NY
Daupias, Comte de Lisbonne	1892		Paintings	Aristocrat
Debrousse, Hubert	1900	1844- 1899	Paintings	Financier and Administrator, son of railroad entrepreneur, founded Hospice Debrousse for 200 elderly people
Demandolx-Dedons, Comte de	1901		Paintings, Watercolors Drawings	Aristocrat
Desfossés, Victor	1899		Paintings	Family of Wallpaper manufacturers(?)
Desfriches, Aignan-Thomas		1715- 1800	Paintings, Drawings	Draftsman and amateur

Diot, Aimé	1897		Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Art Dealer, 43 rue Laffite
Dollfus, Jean	1912	1823- 1912	Paintings	Textile Manufacturer, Painter. Family of Dollfus Mieg and Company, still extant. Student of Clément Fuller
Doria, Armand	1899	1824- 1896	Paintings	Aristocrat
Doucet, Jacques	1912	1853- 1929	Paintings and Sculptures	Haute couturier, amateur, mycène
Dumas, Alexandre	1896	1824- 1895	Paintings and Objets d'art	Writer. <i>La Dame aux Camélias</i> , 1848; <i>La Dame aux Pelis</i> , 1853 among many other books.
Ephrussi, Charles	1913	1849- 1905	Paintings, Furniture, Objets d'art Tapestry	Financier, art historian. Born Odessa, studied in Vienna. Wrote on Durer. Collaborated with Paul Baudry on <i>Gazette des Beaux Arts</i> , which he directed starting in 1894. Supporter of the impressionist artists.
Everard, P. L	1881		Paintings	Art Dealer
Feydeau, Alfred	1902		Paintings	Architect
Feydeau, Georges	1901		Paintings	Playwright. Author of <i>La Dame Chez Maxim</i> , <i>L'Hôtel du Libre Exchange</i> among many other satires. Son-in-law Carolus Duran.
George, Philippe	1891	1832- 1891	Paintings	Vineyard owner. Fought in 1848 and 1870
Goncourt, Edmond de	1897		Drawings and Prints and Paintings	Writer. <i>Manette Salomon</i> (1867); <i>L'Art du XVIIIe Siècle</i> , (1859); <i>Germanie Lacerteux</i> (1865) <i>The House of the Artist</i> (1881) among many other works.
Haro, Etienne- Francois	1892	1827- 1897	Paintings	Auction Expert, painter, restorer Student of Ingres and Delacroix, Portrait painter, Organized sale of Ingres paintings following his death in 1867, collection included the <i>Studio</i> , Courbet and the <i>Death of Sardonopolis</i> , Delacroix, He showed his portraits of Delacroix (1866) and Ingres (1868) in the Salon. Restorer at the Palais des Tuileries.

Lefebure, Mme Veuve E.	1899		Paintings and Sculpture	Widow of sculptor (<i>Malheurbe</i> , some other works found in the Bibliothèque of Caen)
Lefebvre	1896		Paintings	Lived in Roubaix, collected mainly in the 1860s
Marmontel, Antoine François	1898	1816-1898	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Pianist and composer Wrote music for piano- nocturnes, romances, sonatas. Teaches Bizet. Legion of Honor Wrote History of piano (1885)
Martin, Mme Pétrus	1902		Paintings, Drawings, Watercolors, Sculptures, Clocks, Furniture, Objets d'art	Widow of Jean-Francois Petrus-Martin, painter
Ménasce, Baron de	1894		Paintings	Aristocrat
Merlin, Colonel	1900		Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels, Drawings	Military
Moreau-Nélaton, Etienne		1859-1927	Paintings	Painter, Art Historian Studied with Harpignies, wrote on Manet, Delacroix, Daubigny . One of most important donations to the Louvre in 1906 and 1907
Mourre, M. le Baron	1892		Paintings and Sculpture	Aristocrat
Péire, Isaac	1872	1806-1880	Paintings	Railway magnate with his brother Emile. Founder Crédit Mobilier
Rey, (de Paris et Marseille)	1900		Paintings, Drawings, Watercolors, Tapestries	Businessman (Société Marseillaise)
Roederer, Jules	1891	1888	Paintings	President of Tribunal de commerce of Havre, violinist and landscape painter.
Rouart, Alexis	1911	1839-1911	Paintings and Sculptures	Engineer. Refrigeration. Involved in family business with his brother Henri
Rouart, Henri	1912	1833-1912	Paintings	Industrialist, Engineer, Painter Friend of Degas. Exhibitor at 7 Impressionist exhibitions.
Schoengrun, Louis	1901		Paintings	His sale is reported in the New York Herald—mainly Impressionist artists, Sisley in particular.

Secrétan, Pierre Eugène	1889	1836-1899	Paintings	Industrialist. Copper production, 6 factories employing 3,000 workers by 1876. Collected 200 tons of copper for the construction of the Statue of Liberty, New York.
Sensier, Alfred	1877	1815-1877	Paintings, Drawings, Prints, Medals	Art Critic
Strauss, Jules	1902	1861-1943	Paintings and Watercolors	Sale of first of several collections, mainly impressionist. Buys old frames for Louvre to replace Empire frames.
Tavernier, Adolphe	1900		Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings	Agent de Change
Thorne, M. T. P.	1897		Paintings	Unknown
Valtesse de la Bigne	1902	1848-1910	Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Lace, Jewels, Objets d'art	Courtisane, Author of <i>Isola</i> , novel. Painted by Manet, Detaille, Gervex
Vivert-Lloyd, Mme	1897		Paintings, Objets d'Art, Jewels, Lace, Costumes, Tapestries, Silver, Furniture	Actress Comédie Française
Weiller, Lazare	1901	1858-1928	Paintings	Writer, Industrialist. Inventor. Proposed a mirrored drum for electronic transmission of images important in history of television. Deputy in National Assembly from 1914-1919

Appendix B

Table B. Book Collectors (Arranged by Date of Sale)

Name	Date of Sale	Birth and Death Dates	Type of Sale	Profession of Collector
Abbé François-Hyacinthe Delan	1755	1672-1754	Books	Doctor of theology at la maison et société de Sorbonne
Louis Jean Gaignat	1769	d. 1768	Books	Ecuyer, Conseiller-Sécretaire du Roi Aristocrat
Le Duc de la Vallère	1783		Books	Aristocrat
Charles de Valois	1801		Prints	Aristocrat
M. I. Garde	1801		Books	Editor in chief of <i>L'Imprimerie</i>
Nicolas-Marie Ozanne	1811	1728-1811	Prints, Drawings and Paintings	Ship engineer. Marine draughtsman
Jacques-Joseph Coiny	1811	1761-	Prints, Drawing,	Draughtsman and Printmaker
Maximilien-Joseph Hurtault	1824	1765-1824	Books	Architect of the King. Restored la galerie de Diane, Fontainebleau, built the pavillon de l'Etang, Architect Chateau St. Cloud, inspecteur general du conseil des batiments civils, professeur a l'Ecole des Beaux Arts.
L.J. Gohier	1831	1746-1830	Books	Lawyer active in the Revolution, President at time of Napoleon. Also wrote for the theater, as well as his memoires.
Pierre Antoine Leboux de la Mésangère	1831	1761-1831	Books	Publisher <i>Journal des Dames et des Modes</i> (1797-1839)
Reynard	1846		Prints and Drawings in the Decorative Arts	Artist and Engraver
J La Coste	1854		Books	Conseiller honoraire, Cour royale de Lyon

Antoine-Augustin Renouard	1854	b. 1765	Books	Bookseller and collector. Member of Conseil general de la commune de Paris in 1793; also mayor of 11eme arrondissement in 1830. Known for elegant editions that he published and his library of which the catalogue came to 4 volumes and included 4000 drawings. Comes from family of manufacturers.
M. L. R de L (Rebillot)	1855		Books and Prints	Aristocrat
A.L.A.Fée	1856	1789-1874	Books	Professor of Botany. Created in 1819 Société de l'Academie de Médecine. Wrote <i>Voyage autour de ma Bibliothèque</i> , 1856.
Alexandre-Charles Sauvageot	1860	1781-1860	Books and Prints	Musician. Played second violin at Opera, gave his painting collection to Louvre in 1856
Comte de la Bédoyère (Henri Noel François)	1862	1782-1861	Prints	Aristocrat.
M. le Chevalier J. Camberlyn de Bruxelles	1865	1783-1861	Prints and Drawings	Aristocrat
Jacques-Charles Brunet	1868	1780-1867	Books	Writer. Son of a bookseller, Thomas Brunet. Gave up commerce for research in 1824. Interested in bindings and typography. Wrote: <i>Manuel de libraire et de l'amateur de livres</i> (1820)
Jules Janin	1877	1804-1874	Books	Writer. <i>L'âne mort et la Femme guillotinée</i> (1829), <i>La Normandie historique</i> (1843), <i>Histoire de la littérature dramatique</i> (1853-1856), <i>La Fin d'un monde et du neveu de Rameau</i> (1860)
Albert de la Fizelière	1878	1819-1878	Books	Man of letters. Founded <i>Chronique des Beaux Arts</i> in 1840. Collaborated on <i>L'Artiste</i> . Wrote: <i>Histoire de la Crinoline au temps passé</i> (1859) <i>Salon</i> 1850, 1861;
J. Sieurin	1879	1809-1875	Books and Prints	Print dealer. Wrote <i>Manuel de l'amateur d'illustrations</i> .
Comte Octave de Behagne	1880	1827-1879	Books and Prints	Aristocrat. Son of Amédée, landowner.
Baron M* D* C*	1881		Books	Aristocrat

Paul de Saint-Victor	1882	1827-1881	Books	Writer. Critic for <i>Pays</i> , in 1885 he succeeded Theophile Gautier on the <i>Presse</i> . In 1866 at <i>Liberti</i> , in 1869 joined the staff of the <i>Moniteur universel</i> . In 1870, during the last days of the second empire, he was made inspector-general of fine arts. Almost all Saint-Victor's work consists of articles, the best known being the collection entitled <i>Hommes et dieux</i> (1867).
Alphonse L. Pinart	1883	1852-1911	Books	Linguist Travelled to Easter Island. Wrote <i>Voyage à L'île de Pâques</i> . Traveled to Kodiak Alaska in 1871, collected masks.
Ambrose Firmin-Didot	1884 1883 1882 1881 1879 1878	1790-1876	Books	Publisher
Stanislas Guyard	1884	1846-1884	Books	Professor Collège de France Orientalist. Raised in Russia, comes to Paris at 15. Bibliothecaire de Societe asiatique, member of la Commision des orientalistes, Chair of Arab Language and Literature at the College de France
James de Rothschild	1884	1844-1881	Books	Financier, head of the French branch of the famous Rothschild family.
Champfleury	1890	1821-1889	Books	Writer, friends with Baudelaire, Courbet. Collaborated with Arsene Houssaye on <i>L'Artiste</i> . Realist novelist. <i>Le violon de faience</i> (1862). (DBF 8 322-324)
Philippe Burty	1891	1825-1909	Books and Drawings	Writer, Son of Rouen merchant. Many posts in the Second Empire. Collector and bibliophile, published studies on Norman churches and monasteries; on museums and on art exhibitions
Alexandre Dumas	1892	1824-1895	Books and Prints	Writer. <i>La Dame aux Camélias</i> (1848) Also collected art.

Emile Desmasieres	1892		Books	Administrator of Library and Archives of Tournai
Hippolyte Destailleur	1893	1822-1893	Prints and Drawings	Architect for the Government. Built the funerary chapel for Napoleon III as well as important hotels in Paris including for the d'Haussonville family on rue Saint-Dominique.
Louis Octave Uzanne	1894	1852-1931	Books, Watercolors, letters etc.	Writer. <i>La Chronique Scandaleuse</i> (1879); <i>Le Miroir du Monde</i> (1888)
Lortic	1894	1822-1892	Books	Bookbinder
Léon Techener	1897	1802-1873	Manuscripts and Books	Librarian and Bookseller. Wrote <i>Recherches sur des Bibliothèques des plus célèbres amateurs. (1861-1864)</i>
Jérôme Pichon	1897	1812-1896	Books	Aristocrat. Baron. Lived in Hôtel Lauzon. Supported Baudelaire, among others.
Guyot de Villeneuve	1900	1825-1899	Books, Prints, Manuscripts	Préfet. Diplomat, secrétaire de la legation a Washington President de la Societe des Bibliophiles, Wrote: <i>Notice sur un manuscrit du xiv s. Les Heures du marechal de Boucicaut, 1889.</i>
M.L. Montgermont	1911		Books and Drawings	Aristocrat
Benjamin Delessert	1912	1817-1868	Books and Prints	Banker
Jacques Doucet	1912	1853-1929	Books and Prints	Haute couturier, art collector.
Edouard Detaille	1913	1848-1912	Books	Painter. Studied with Meissonier. Painted military genre scenes, collected arms.
Paul Gavault	1913	1867-1951	Books	Born in Algeria, grew up there. Lawyer in Paris. Wrote plays. In 12 years he produced 175 acts including ones played by Sarah Bernhardt. Bibliophile et Collectionneur.
Eugène v. Wassermann	1913	1870-	Books	Businessman from Brussels
Anatole Claudin	1914	1833-1906	Books	Bibliophile. Known for History of printing in France. Helped the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Jules Claretie	1918	1840-1913	Books	Writer. <i>Le Dernier Baiser</i> (1863) <i>Un Assassin</i> (1866) <i>La Cigarette</i> 1890. Plays for theatre. Also history. And journalism. Academie francaise 1888
Edgar Degas	1918	1834-1917	Prints and Drawings	Artist, Collector
Alfred Beurdeley	1920	1847-1919	Books and Prints	Ebenist, bronzier, art dealer ; Portrait of him by Anders Zorn. Specialized in 18 th Century revival cabinet making and ormalu
Henry Meilhac	1922	1831-1897	Books	Member Académie Française. Wrote libretto of <i>Carmen</i> with Ludovic Halevy
M. de Kermaingant	1924		Books	Ancien Président de L'Histoire de France
Arthur Meyer	1924	1833-1924	Books and Drawings	Journalist. Editor; <i>Revue de Paris</i> . <i>Gaulois</i> (ed. From 1878) Monarchist and anti-dreyfusard.
Henri Beraldi	1927		18 th Century Prints	Publisher
Loys Delteil	1928		Prints	Printmaker and engraver. Wrote a catalogue raisonne of Delacroix prints
Henri Beraldi	1934	1849-1931	Books and Prints	Publisher. Was Minister of Colonies 1866-86. One of founders of Société des amis des livres
Lucien Gougy	1934		Books	Book publisher
Louis Barthou	1935	1862-1934	Books	Of Académie Française Editor in Chief of <i>L'indépendant des Basses-Pyrénées</i> . Minister off and on in several governments. Interested in Music, literature and theater.
Victor Mercier	1937		Books	Président Société des Amis des Livres

Appendix C
Table of Artists Included in the Painting Collections
(Listed Alphabetically by Collector)

Name	Sale Date	Place of Sale	Contents of Sale/General	Names of artists included in collection.
Adam, Emile	1900	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings	Boudin, Charlemont, Jongkind, Bayre, Desboutsins, Detaille, Forain, Gervex, Harpignies, Lhermitte, Raffaelli, Stevens, Billotte, Brown, Chaigneau, Courant, Dupray, Goupil, Guignard, Huguet, Heilboth, Jacomin, Laurent, Van Barcken, Pettenkoffern, Tassaert, Zuber
Alexandre, Arsène	1903	Georges Petit	Paintings, Drawings, Pastels, Watercolors and Sculptures	Anquetin, Besnard, Bonnard, Boudin, Cals, Colin, Cordey, Dannat, Daumier, Denis, Fantin, Forain, Goeneutte, Guillaumin, Helleu, Ingres, Lebouy, Lobre, Manfra, Maurin, Pissarro, Pointelin, Raffaelli, Renoir, Ribot, Seurat, Seyss, Signac, Thaulow, Toulouse-Lautrec, Vignon, Vuillard with watercolors by Besnard, Boudin, Daumier, Jongkind, Rivière, , Pastels by Billotte, Boudin, Chévet, Renoir, Drawings by Bail, Besnard, Cazin, Cals, Daumier, Fantin, Forain, Guys, Helleu, Jongkind, Legros, Puvis, Raffaelli, Toulouse Lautrec and Sculptures by Buffer, Bartholomé, Carabin, Dalou, Rodin, Bayre, Carriès.
Anderson (de Glasgow)	1898	Drouot	Paintings and Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings	Bonvin, Bonnington, Boudin, Cals, Corot, Constable, Courbet, Couture, Daubigny, Daumier, Degas, Fantin-Latour, Guillaumin, Hervier, Jongkind, Lépine, Monet, Mettling, Monticelli, Pissarro, Raffaelli, Ribot, Vignon, Vincelet, Vollon, Degas, Hervier, Jongkind, Millet, Turner.

B *** , Mme	1901	Drouot	Paintings, Drawings, Prints, Furniture, Tapestry, Billiards Table, Piano, jewels, rugs etc.	Baron, Bellayé, Bougereau, Devéria, Frère, Ch. Jacque, Longnet, Portaels, Roqueplan, Ary Scheffer. Bronzes by Barbedienne, salon en tapisserie d'Aubusson, piano à queue d'Erard, coffer-fort de Fichet, pendule Louis XIV en marqueterie. Etc.
Barbedienne, Ferdinand	1892	Durand-Ruel	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Bayre, Cogniet, Decamps, Delacroix, Dupré, Fortuny, Henner, Jacque, Millet, Pelouse, Th. Rousseau, Troyon, Couture.
Baudry , Paul	1902	Drouot	Paintings	Chaplin, Corot, Diaz, Henner, Ingres, Jacque, Jongkind, Muenier, Ribot, Rousseau, Roybet, Veyrassat, Vollon, Ziem, Cuyp, Ecole de Boucher.
Bellino	1892	Georges Petit	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels, Drawings	Belly, Bonvin, Corot, Daubigny, Daumier, Decamps, Degas, Delacroix, Diaz, Forain, Isabey, Jacque, Jongkind, Lami, Millet, Monnier, Munascy, de Nettis, Ribot, Rousseau, Ruysdael, Sisley, Troyon, Ziem.
Bériot, Charles de	1901	Drouot	Paintings and Watercolors	Jongkind, Boudin, Harpignies, Monet, Stevens, Tassaert, Courbet
Beurnonville, M. le Baron Etienne-Martin de	1880	Drouot	Paintings	Corot, Daubigny, Decamps, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Fichel, Fromentin, Gericault, Hamon, Isabey, Jacque, Jacquet, Meissonier, Millet, Pettenkofen, Ricard, Rousseau, Troyon
Blanquet de Fulde, Baron	1900	Drouot	Paintings	Avigdor, Baron, Berchère, Bernier, Camille, Blin, Billotte, Bonvin, Bouché, Boudin, Boulanger, Brillouin, Brown, Broos, Casanova y Estorach, Chevallard, Corot, Courbet, Daubigny, Delacroix, Delpy, Diaz, Dupré, Glaize, Gelhay, Guillemin, Harpignies, Isabey, Jacque, LaLyre, Lépine, Lhermitte, Louguet, Madrazo,

				Meissonier, Palizzi, Passan, Roybet, Sisley, Stevens, Veyrassat, Vollon, Walker, Ziem
Blot , Eugène	1900	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings	Gustave Albert, Arquetin, Berchère, Boudin, Bottini, Bonnard, Caillebotte, Cals, Carrière, Cézanne, Chaudet, Colin, Cheret, Conder, Corot, Cotter, Daumier, Degas, Delacroix, Denis, Desboutin, Dumoulin, Fantin-Latour, Forain, Gauguin, Giran-Max, Guillaumin, Guilloux ,Leheutre, Lepine, Loiseau, Luce, Mancini, Manet, Manfra, Monet, Morisot, Osbert, Petitjean, Pissarro, Quost, Renoir, Renouard, Ribot, Roussel, Sisley, Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh, Vignon, Vogler, Vuillard, Willette, Zandomeneghi.
Boulard, Auguste	1900	Drouot	Paintings	59 works by Boulard, Belot, Besson, Bonvin, Capelle, Champeaux, Corot, Cottin, Daumier, Defaux, Dupré, Elmerich, Fontaine, Froloff, Gagliardini, Géricault, Gosselin, Henner, Jacque, La Chèvre, La Rochenoire, Pezoax, Ribartz, Flemish school, Dutch School, French School
Boussaton, M	1891	Georges Petit	Paintings	Bail, Baschet, Béraud, Boldini, Bonnat, Bouguereau, Berne-Bellecour, Bonvin, Brown, Brozik, Butin, Cazin, Chartran, Chavet, Clairin, Curzon, Dagnan, Damoye, Desgoffe, Detaille, Duez, Dupray, Ferry, Fournier, Frère, Gérôme, Hébert, Héreau, Huguet, Jongkind, Jacque, Laurens, LeBlant, LeBourg, Lefebvre, Leloir, Madraziz, Monet, Meissonier, Merson, Neuville, Pasini, Penne, Pils, Ribartz, Vuillefroy, Yon

Cannone, Henri	1930		Paintings	Delacroix, Corot, Millet, Daumier, Monet, Renoir, Cézanne, Pissarro, Gauguin, Signac, Cross, Seurat, Vuillard, Roussel, Bonnard
Castro, Mme la Baronne Olivera de	1896	Georges Petit	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Allongé, Bakhuysen, Baron, Béraud, Berne-Bellecour, Bisson, Boudin, Brite, Bruck-Lajos, Brunet, Cabanel, Caille, Chagneau, Chelminski, Corot, Corpet, Delort, Denneulin, Desgoffes, Detaille, Diaz, Dupré, Fantin-Latour, Gilbert, Harpignies, Jacque, Jongkind, Lambert, Lesvel, Linder, Madrazo, Meyer, Meissonier, Charles Meissonier, Mélin, Munier, Neuville, Palmaroli, Pavy, Penne, Perret, Plassan, Raffaelli, Ribot, Richet, Rico, Rondel, Roybet, Saint-Jean, Schreiber, Schryver, Steinheil, Van Marcke, Verboeckhoven, Veyrassat, Vibert, Vollon, Worms, Ziem, Brascassat, Detaille, Flandrin, Mugnoz, Voillemot
Charpentier, Georges	1906	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings	Bouchor, Boudin, Cézanne, Damoye, Eliot, Fantin-Latour, Gervex, Gleize, Guiar, Henner, Jeanniot, Kaemmerer, Lebourg, Monet, Renoir, Rochegrosse, Roll, Rops, Stevens, Wilder, Works on paper: Bastien-Lpage, De Beaumont, Braquemond, Cazin, Chaplin, Degas, Desboutin, Daez, Fantin-Latour, Forain, Gautier, Biacomelli, Gonzales, Guiar, Haraucourt, Henner, Ibels, Jeanniot, Laurens, Léandre, Leloir, Lemaire, Manet, Meunier, Monet, Moreau, Pissarro, Puvis de Chavannes, Raffaelli, Renoir, Renouard, rochegrosse, Sargent, Sisley

Coquelin Cadet	1909	Drouot	Paintings	Béraud, Blanche, Bonnard, Bonvin, Boudin, Cazin, Cazin(Marie), Claus, Benjamin Constant, Corot, Dagnan- Bouveret, Denis, De Nittis, Duez, Duvent, Fantin-Latour, Ferrier, Gabriel, Friant, Gardiner, Gervex, Girardot, LeSidaner, Maillaud, Meunier, Petit Jean, Roll, Sargent, Sisley, Sorolla y Bastida, Thaulow, Van Beers, Vuillard, Zorn
Coquelin, C	1906	Georges Petit	Paintings and Pastels	Bastien Lepage, Berne Bellecour, Boldini, Bonvin, Cazin, Corot, Conder, Dagnan-Bouveret, Delasalle, Diaz, Edelfelt, Fantin- Latour, Friant, Girardot, Helleu, Kuhl, Lebourg, Le Sidanier, Luigi Loir, Muentner, DeNittis, Picard, Roll, Ph. Rousseau, Alma Tadema, Thaulow, Besnard, Béthune, Detaille, Forain, LaFarge, Lemaire, Morand, Renouard
Cottier , David	1892	Durand Ruel	Paintings	Artan, Artz, Bonvin, Bosboom, Brown, Chardin, Corot, Courbet, Couture, Daubigny, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Fantin-Latour, Fromentin, Goya, Guardi, Hervier, Isabey, Kalf, Lambert, Manzoni, Maris, Mauve, Mettling, Michel, Mierevelt, Millet, Monticelli, Nasmyth, Neuhuys, Orchardson, Paal, Ribot, Rousseau, Roybet, Stevens, Swan, Troyon, Villefroy
Daupias, Comte de Lisbonne	1892	Georges Petit	Paintings	Bachelier, Boilly, Boucher, Brekelenkamp, Charler, Coypel, Drouais, Fragonard, Greuze, Lampi, Lanen, Largillière, Lawrence, Lépicier, Lundens, Mabuse, marne, Mengs, Molenaer, Natier, Netscher, Oudry, Pannini, Pater, Pillement, Prud'hon, Reynolds, Ribera, Hubert Robert, Santerre, Steen,

				Stoop, Tiepolo, Tournieres, Troy, Vallin, Van Loo, Verkulie, Voiriot, Watteau, Wouwermans, Avendano, Baron, Bastien-Lepage, Baudry, Beaumont, Bellangé, Benjamin Constant, Boilvin, Boldini, Bonnat, Bouguereau, Brascassat, Brion, Brown, Brack-Lajos, Cermak, Cham, Chaplin, Charlemont, Chavet, Chelmonski, Coleman, Coninck, Corot, Couture, Daubigny, Descamps, Delacroix, Detaille, Detti, Diaz, Domingo, Dreux, Dupré, Escossura, Fromentin, Gabani, Garrido, Gegerfelt, Gerome, Heilbuth, Isabey, Jacque, Jacquet, Jourdan, Koller, Lambert, Laugée, Laurens, Le comte de Nouy, Leloir, Lemaire, Linder, Lévy, Leys, Mallari, Madrazo, Marchetti, Marilhat, Meissonier, Menzler, Michetti, Millet, Muller, Munkacsy, Nittis, Palmaroli, Papperitz, Pasini, Pelouse, Plassan, Richter, Robert Fleury, Rocesler, Rossi, Rouffio, Th. Rousseau, Roybet, Rozier, Sala, Salmon, Santoro, Ary Scheffer, Schreyer, Sicard, Simoni, Spiridon, Tassaert, Troyon, Van Marcke, Veyrassat, Villegas, Vollon, Wahlberg, Washington, Willems, Ziem
Debrousse, Hubert	1900	Georges Petit	Paintings	Bellini, Berchem, Bonifazio, Bosch, Boucher, Cuyp, Giordiano, Giorgione, Goya, Grimonx, Gryf, Lampi, Lancret, Lawrence, Lemoine, Maes, Meert, Mignard, Moroni, Oggino, Ommeganck, Ostade, pater, Potter, Primitico, Ecole de Raphael, Ecole de Rembrandt, Reni, Ribera, Rigaud, Rosa de Tivoli, Rubens, Ryckaert, Sarte,

				Ecole de Titian, VanLoo, Ecole de Veronese, Ecole de Vinci, Bail, Bonvin, Bugerru, Carier, Carlier, Carrier-Belleuse, Chabellard, Constantin, Conder, Courbet, Daubigny, Daumier, Dupré, Diuran, Erpiqueu, Groseillier, Harpignies, Jacque, Martin Kavel, Merlin, Muraton, Raoux, Ribot, Romani, Euphémie Rousseau, Roybet, Rozier, Serra, Stevens, Trouillebert, Troyon, Zandomeneghi.
Defoer	1886	Georges Petit	Paintings and Pastels	Corot, Daubigny, Decamps, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Fromentin, Géricault, Isabey, Marilhat, Meissonier, Millet, Prud'hon, Ricard, Th. Rousseau, Stevens, Troyon, Ziem
Delas de Marseille	1901	Drouot	Paintings	Monticelli (69 paintings), Garnier, Melin, Palizzi, Vegrassat, Xavier de Cock, Ziem
Demandolx-Dedons, Comte de	1901	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors Drawings	25 paintings by Ziem, Meissonier, Monticelli, Horace Vernet, Vollon
Desfossés, Victor	1899	Son Hôtel, 6 rue de Gallilée	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels, Drawings	Besnard, Boldini, Boudin, Carrière, Cazin, Corot, Courbet, Daubigny, Delacroix, Diaz, Duez, Dupré, Harpignies, Henner, Hervier, Isabey, Jongkind, Lebourg, Leleux, Leloir, Ménard, Millet, Monet, DeNittis, Pissarro, Raffaelli, Ranft, Renouard, Ribot, Rousseau, Simon, Sisley, Stevens, Tassaert, Thaulow, Troyon, Vibert.
Diot, Aimé	1897	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings, Bronzes	Boggs, Bonvin, Boudin, Corot, Daubigny, Daumier, Diaz, Dupré, Henner, Hervier, Jongkind, Isabey, Manet, Millet, Monet, Monticelli, Roybet, Sisley, Rousseau, Vollon, Ziem, Bayre, Rodin

Dollfus, Jean	1912	Georges Petit	Paintings	Bonington, Boudin, Constable, Corot, Courbet, Daubigny, Daumier, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Fortuny, Francais, Gericault, Ingres, Isabey, Jongkind, Michel, Millet, Monticelli, Pissarro, Renoir, Ribot, Ricard, Rousseau, Philippe Rousseau, Roybet, Sisley
Dollfus, Jean	1912	Drouot	Drawings, Watercolors, Prints, Bronzes	Bellanjé, Belly, Bertin, Bonvin, Brandon, Brown, Cabat, Charlet, Corot, Daubigny, Daumier, Decamps, Delacroix, Delplanche, Diaz dela Pena, Doré, Falguière, Faller, Flers, Forain, Géricault, Grandville, Hawkins, Hersent, Jongkind, Lami, Lhermitte, Manet, Meissonier, Michel, Millet, Monnier, Piette, Pols, Pissarro, Raffet, Regnault, Ribot, Roberts, Robert Fleury, Théodore Rousseau, Vollon, Feillet, LeRoux, Manet, Bayre, Cain, Carpeaux, Nègrèsse
Dubarbe	1892	Drouot	Paintings	Diaz, Dupré, Hébert, Jacque, Madou, Troyon
Dumas, Alexandre	1896	Georges Petit	Paintings and Objets d'art	Aublet, Baudry, Beaumont, Berton, Boulanger, Chaine, Chenu, Corot, Courant, Delacroix, Lucien Doucet, Dupré, Duran, Fortuny, Fromentin, Géricault, Jalabert, Jonghe, Lardelle, Lefebvre, Lévy, Masse, Raisan, Riesener, Roseter, Rossano, Philippe Rousseau, Sain, Tassaert, Trinquesse, Troyon, Vincent, Vollon.
Ephrussi, Charles	1913	Georges Petit	Paintings, Furniture, Objets d'art Tapestry	Drawings and Prints including Boucher, Louis Carmontelle Jacques Charlier, Jean-Baptiste Huet Paintings including Fragonard, Jean-Francois Garneray, Claudion sculptures, Italian bas-reliefs, Tapestries, Inlaid Furniture, Screens, Sevres porcelain, Saxon porcelain.

Feydeau, Alfred	1902	Drouot	Paintings	Clésinger, Ciceri, Corot, Diaz, Dupré, Isabey, Millet, Léon Richet, Th. Rousseau, Troyon, Edmond Yon, Verdier, and more.
Goldschmidt	1896	Georges Petit	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings and Objets d'art	Achenbach, Corot, Couture, Decamps, Detaille, Diaz, Dupré, Fortuny, Gérôme, Géricault, Hédouin, Heilbuth, Lambert, Lévy, Leys, Longuet, Millet, Muller, Pécrus, Th. Rousseau, Troyon, Tschaggeny, Verboeckoven, Veyrassat, Vollon, ZiemDuréz, Johennot, Menzel, Bellini, DeBoys, Brakenburg, Brueghel, Cima, Coques, Coxie, Cranach, Cuyp, Dow, Ferg, Flinck, Gend, Gérard, Goyen, VanderVelde, Hobbéma, Hoppner, Koffermans, Kominck, Lucas de Leyde, Ludger, Moni, Montagna, Neer, Netscher, Orley, Ostade, Poelenburg, Prins, Rubens, Ruysdael, Schalken, Slugelandt, Teniers, Veen, School of Fontainebleau, Dutch school
Goncourt, Edmond de	1897	Drouot	Drawings and Prints and Paintings	Besnard, Bracquemond, Buhot, Desboutin, Duez, Fortuny, Goeneuette, Seymour Haden, Helleu, Meissonier, Millet, Rodin, Rops, Rousseau, Whistler, Zorn, Jules de Goncourt, Boninton, Carrière, Daumier, Forain, Goya, Raffaelli, Redon, Gavarni.
Gunsburg, Mme la Baronne de	1892	Drouot	Paintings	Diaz, Théodore Rousseau, Isabey, Troyon, Ziem, Bonheur, Cabat, Chaplin, Escossura, Frère, Guillemin, Hugues, Merle, C.L. Muller, Palizzi, Robbe, Léopold Robert, C. Roqueplan, Voillemot
Haro, Etienne-Francois	1892		Paintings	Clouet, Fragonard, Ghirlandaio, Van Goyen, Greuze, Memling, Rembrandt, Rubens, Ruysdael, Téniers, Duran, Chaplin, Courbet, Daubigny, Decamps, Delacroix, Diaz, Domingo, Dupré, Henner, Ingres,

				Jacque, Regnault, Th. Rousseau,
Kauffman, Mme	1902	Drouot	Paintings	Asti, Bonheur, Boudin, Corot, Courbet, Delpy, Dupray, Dupré, Fantin-Latour, Mme. Fantin-Latour, Grolleron, Henner, Ch. Jacque, Jongkind, Lebourg, Lepine, Roybet, Vegrassat, Ziem
Ladre de Montauban	1899	Drouot	Paintings	Clairin, Damoye, Detaille, Fichel, Frappa, Garrido, Harpignies, Henner, Jacques, Laurens, Lépine, Luminais, Meissonier, De Neuville, Olive, Roybet, Vayson, Veyrassat, Ziem
Lefèbvre, Mme Veuve E.	1899	Georges Petit	Paintings and Sculpture Objets d'art, furnishings	Corot, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Isabey, Monet, Rodin.
Lippman, Maurice	1899	Drouot	Paintings	Aublet, Boulanger, Brown, Chaplin, Corot, Courbet, Delacroix, Detaille, Diaz, Dupré, Harpignies, Henner, Liphacrt, Meissonier, DeNeuville, Pelouse, Ribot, Roybet, Valin, Vollon, Ziem
Lyon, Eugène	1903	Georges Petit	Paintings	Boudin, Clays, Constable, Corot, Daubigny, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Fantin-Latour, Fromentin, Géricault, Gérôme, Goya, Guignet, Isabey, Madou, Regnault, Roybet, Rubens, Alf, Stevens, J. Stevens, Teniers, Troyon, Vilbert, Willems, Ziem
Martin	1892	Drouot	Paintings, Objets d'Art, Bijoux, Miniatures, Faïences	Courbet, Jongkind, Ribot, Bonvin, Boudin, Chintreuil, Corot, Daubigny, Diaz, Goeneutte, Héreau, Lapostolet, Monticelli, Raffaelli, Sisley, Troyon, Vollon.
Martin, Mme Pétrus	1902	Drouot	Paintings, Drawings, Watercolors, Sculptures, Clocks, Furniture, Objets d'art	Agrojo, Jules Breton, Cogniet, Courbet, Danloux, DeMarne, Leclerc des Gobelins, Lemoins, Natoire, Pater, Wouerman. Charles Jacque. Watercolors and Drawings by Emile Adam, Chaplin, Mme. Madeleine

				Lemaire, Detti, and objets d'art, miniatures etc.
Martinet, E.	1896	Drouot	Paintings	Boilly, Chardin, Desportes, Fabritus, Fragonard, Franck, Goya, Murillo, Hubert Robert, Jan Steen, Corot, Courbet, Detaille.
Ménasce, Baron de	1894	Georges Petit	Paintings	Béraud, Berne-Bellecour, Boudin, Brown, Cain, Duran, Chaplin, Corcos, Corot, Courbet, Desboutin, Deschamps, Diaz, Dupray, Gaisser, Gervex, Gilbert, Hagborg, Hébert, Henner, Innocenti, Isabey, Jacque, Jacquet, Jongkind, Lambert, Lefebvre, Lemaire, Lévy, Marie, Meissonier, Michel, Monticelli, De Munkascy de Neuville, Pasini, Roybet, Sala, Stevens, Tassaert, Tchoumakoff, Tofano, Trouillebert, Troyon, Van de Verdonck, Van Marcke, Veyrassat, Voillemot, Wahlberg, Wehle, Ziem.
Merlin, Colonel	1900	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels, Drawings, Sculptures	Bergeret, Bonnat, Chaplin, Corot, Daubigny, Detaille, Diaz, Harpignies, Isabey, Israels, Jacque, Lefebvre, Madeleine LeMaire, Madrazo, Mauve, Gust, Moreau, Pasini, Roqueplan, Ph. Rousseau, Stevens, Ziem, Barye, Rodin
Mourre, M. le Baron	1892	Drouot	Paintings and Sculpture	Courbet, Decamps, de Dreux, Diaz, Francais, Ingres, Jacque, Lami, Van Marcke, De Marne, de Neuville, Troyon, Vollon. Bronzes Barye
Oltet	1900	Drouot	Paintings and Tapestries	Courbet, Daubigny, Meissonier, Fromentin, Jacque, Roybet, Ziem, Stevens, Isabey, Corot, Millet, Th. Rousseau, Maes, Dutch School
Péire, Isaac	1872		Paintings	Bellel, Bénouville, Bida, Bracassat, Breton, Cabat, Castiglione, Cermack, Cassériau, Comte, Decamps, Delacroix,

				Delaroche, Diaz, Gerome, Girardet, Gudin, Heuvel, Ingres, Jacque, Koekkoek, Lami, Ladelle, Meissonier, Mélinz, Picon, Leopold Robert, Rousseau, Roux, Saint Jean, Scheffer, Van Schendel, Tissot, Verboickhoven, Waldmuller, Verveer, Boucher, Fragonard, Lorrain, Gruze, LaGrennée, Lancret, VanLoo, Mignaud, Pater, Poussin, Vernet as well as French school, Spanish school, Italian school, Dutch and Flemish school, and German school.
Raybaud, P (de Marseille)	1900	Drouot	Paintings	Chintreuil, Daubigny, Delpy, Diaz, Dupré, Gegerfelt, Isabey, Jacque, Martin, Monticelli, Pelouse, De Thoren, Vollon, Ziem
Rey, (de Paris et Marseille)	1900	Drouot	Paintings, Drawings, Watercolors, Tapestries	Berne-Bellecour, Brown, Chaplin, Chavet, Chintreuil, Corot, Courbet, Daubigny, Diaz, Fromentin, Gagliardini, Henner, Isabey, Jacque, Jongkind, Meissonier, Monticelli, Ribot, Roybet, Vollon, Vuillefroy, Willems, Ziem.
Rouart, Henri	1912	Galerie Manzi-Joyant	Paintings, Drawings and Pastels	Degas, Corot, Prud'hon, Millet, Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Goya, Delacroix, Greco, Chardin, Hubert Robert, Monet, Constance Mayer, Isabey, Courbet, Cals, Th. Rousseau, Dupré, Daumier, Colin, Tassaert, Renoir, Jongkind, Lepine, Cassatt, Fantin-Latour, Forain, Joachim Beuckelaer, Boilly, Bonito, Breughel, Bruyn, Carnicero, Cerezzo, Champagne, Dandré, Bardou, Danloux, David, Dumonstier, Duplessis, Bernard Stigel, Fragonard, Granet, Gros, Heemskerk, Herculaum, Jeaurat, Leal, Lépicie, Maas, Michel, Moor, Nonnate, Ottley, Pareja, Poussin, Puget, Ribera, Jean

				Scorel, Elizabeth Sirani, Teniers, Tiepolo, Troy, Velasquez, Vincent, Boudin, Brown, Cézanne, Couture, Dauzats, Decamps, Devéria, Diaz delaPena, Dupré, Gauguin, Harpignies, Heim, Ingres, Lami, Monticelli, Morisot, Pissarro, Ricard, Ph. Rousseau, Steuben, Tassaert, Toulouse-Lautrec, Troyon.
Schoengrun	1901	Drouot	Paintings	Boudin, Forain, Guillaumin, Isabey, Jongkind, Lebourg, Lépine, Lhermitte, Pissarro, Sisley, Stevens, Troyon, Ziem
Secrétan, E	1889	Charles Sedelmeyer	Paintings	Bonington, Corot, Courbet, Couture, Daubigny, Decamps, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Fortuny, Fromentin, Géricault, Ingres, Isabey, Meissonier, Millet, Morot, Prud'hon, Robert-Fleury, Th. Rousseau, Thirion, Troyon, Ziem, Bellini, Boucher, Canaletto, Lodde, Coypel, Cuyp, Dou, Drouais, Dyck, DaFabriano, Ferrari, Fragonard, Francia, Claude Lorrain, Greuze, Hals, Hooghe, Keyser, Lampi, Lancret, LeBrun, Loo, Matsys, Vermeer, Memling, Metsu, Moor, Moncheron, Nattier, Ostade, Pater, Potter, Rembrandt, Reynolds, Rubens, Ruysdael, Slingelandt, Steen, Teniers, Terburg, Tiepolo, Velasquez, Velde, Veronese, and various schools (Dutch, Flemish, Florentine, French, German, Italian, Venetian)
Seguy	1898	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Prints	.Berne-Bellecour, Boulanger, Boudin, Charlemont, Coquelin, Corot, Courbet, Daubigny, Decamps, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Erpiguem, Gelley, Goeneutte, Gowden, Goupil,

				Harpignies, Heilbuth, Henner, Jacque, Jongkind, Louza, Palizzi, Ribot, Ricci, Roybet, Sabatier, Stevens, Troyon, Vollon, Willems, Ziem.
Sensier, Alfred	1877	Drouot	Paintings, Drawings, Prints, Medals	Corot, Delacroix, Diaz, Dupré, Dutilleux, Guignet, Isabey, Jacque, Jeanron, Johannot, Lambinet, Michel, Millet, Richard, Th. Rousseau, Troyon, Breughel, Géricault, Heemskirk, Huysmans, Le Moine, Liotard, Poussin, Prud'hon, Reynolds, Velasquez, Watteau.
Strauss, Jules	1902	Drouot	Paintings and Watercolors	Bonvin, Boudin, Brown, Carrière, Cézanne, Corot, Daumier, Guillaumin, Hervier, Jongkind, Lami, Lebourg, Lépine, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir, Ribot, Ricard, Rops, Sisley, Whistler. Watercolors by boudin, Carrière, Degas, Detaille, Jongkind, Monet, Pissarro.
Tabourier	1898	Drouot	Paintings, Watercolors, Drawings, Tapestries, Objets d'Art, Sculptures	Bonington, Bonvin, Brunin, Charlemont, Charlet, Corot, Daubigny, Decamps, Delacroix, Diaz, Fortuny, Fromentin, Géricault, Gérôme, Gleize, Isabey, Jongkind, Meissonier, Millet, Reynaud, Ricard, Th. Rousseau, Roybet, Vollon, Boucher, Clouet, Fragonard, Claude Lorrain, Greuze, Lancret, Pater, Prud'hon, Vernet, Watteau.
Tavernier, Adolphe	1900	Georges Petit	Paintings, Watercolors, Pastels and Drawings	Bonvin, Boudin, Brown, Caillebotte, Cals, Cézanne, Corot, Daumier, Degas, Delacroix, d'Espagnat, Fantin-Latour, Gonzales, Guillaumet, Guillaumin, Helleu, Jongkind, Lépine, Loiseau, Manet, Monet, Monnier, Morisot, Pissarro, Puvis de Chavannes, Raffaelli, Redon, Renoir, Ribot, Saint Marcel, Sisley, Van Gogh, Vignon, Vollon, Vuillard, Zandomeneghi

Thorne, M. T. P.	1897	Drouot	Paintings	Ajduwiczky, Andreotti, Broughton, Clays, Mac-Cord, Daubigny, Denman, Friedbichler, Gallagos, Gouzzardi, Henner, Jakobides, Eastman Johnson, Kaemmerer, Ridgway-Knight, Lhermitte, Mauve, Millet, Neubert, Parton, Pasini, Penne, Perrier, Pflieger, Pokitonow, Schroeder, Marclus-Simons, Smith, Spring, Stevens, Weldon, Wyart.
Valtesse de la Bigne	1902	Son hotel, Blvd Malesherbes.	Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Lace, Jewels, and Objets d'art	Barillot, Berne-Bellecoeur, Boudin, J. Lewis Brown, Courbet, Dupray, Gervex, Jacque, Manet, de Neuville, Raffaelli, Vollon. Edward Detaille.
Vivert-Lloyd, Mme	1897	Drouot	Paintings, Objets d'Art, Jewels, Lace, Costumes, Tapestries, Silver, Furniture	VanGoyen, Merevelt, Maas, Cranach, Duran, Tassaert, Vibert
Weiller, Lazare	1901	Drouot	Paintings	Baud Bory, Béraud, Billotte, Besnard, Boudin, Caillebotte, Cals, Carrière, Cassatt, Cazin, Corot, Dagnan-Bouveret, Guillaumin, Henner, Jongkind, Lebourg, Lépine, Monet, Pissarro, Puvis, Renoir, Ribot, Rops, Sisley, Stevens, Thaulow, Thornely
Zygomala	1901	Georges Petit	Paintings	J. Breton, Chaplin, Corot, Courbet, Isabey, Ch. Jacque, Jongkind, Montidcelli, Ribot, Roybet, Vollon, Ziem

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