MHRA TEXTS AND DISSERTATIONS

VOLUME 27

Symbolist Landscapes

The Place of Painting in the Poetry and Criticism of Mallarmé and his Circle

JAMES KEARNS

THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

TEXTS AND DISSERTATIONS
(formerly Dissertation Series)

VOLUME 27

Editor
PETER FRANCE
(French: Modern)

SYMBOLIST LANDSCAPES

The Place of Painting in the Poetry and Criticism of Mallarmé and his Circle

SYMBOLIST LANDSCAPES

The Place of Painting in the Poetry and Criticism of Mallarmé and his Circle

by

JAMES KEARNS

LONDON

THE MODERN HUMANITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

1989

ISBN 978-1-83954-664-8
doi:10.59860/td.b8cfada

Published by

The Modern Humanities Research Association

Honorary Treasurer, MHRA

KING'S COLLEGE, STRAND
LONDON WC2R 2LS
ENGLAND

ISBN 0 947623 23 X

Printed in England by
W. S. MANEY & SON LIMITED
HUDSON ROAD LEEDS

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the first version of this thesis I received a Ph.D. from the University of Warwick in June 1976. At that time, I put the text to one side in order to write a detailed analysis of Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune*. This was in progress when a Leverhulme Visiting Lectureship in the British Institute in Paris led me to channel my interest in the relationships between French literature and the visual arts in the direction of representations of Paris between 1851 and 1889. Eight years had therefore passed when, in response to the kind invitation from the MHRA, I began revising my thesis for publication.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to Dr Christopher Thompson, Chairman of the French Department of Warwick University, for his meticulous and always constructive supervision of the initial text; to Professor Peter France, of the University of Edinburgh, for the care with which he has read and edited the revised text and for his expertise, consideration, and patience throughout; to my colleagues in Dundee, Dr Jennifer Birkett, Dr Stan Smith, and Professor R. W. Last for their kind help and encouragement and to the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland for their generous contribution to the cost of the illustrations.

University of Dundee, 1987 J.K.

FOREWORD

This study has two main aims. The first is to give information about approaches to painting among the poets and critics, who, during the years 1885–95, were associated with the French Symbolist movement. The second is to examine the relevance of the work of certain painters to the poetic theory and practice of Mallarmé, Kahn, and Jarry. The first aim may be called synchronic, for its focus is Albert Aurier's 1891 definition of Symbolism in painting, the needs to which it responded and the controversies to which it gave rise. These are the subject of Chapters 1 to 3. The second may be called diachronic, for the poetry and criticism of the three poets named are produced at three distinct moments in the history of the Symbolist movement: Mallarmé's break with the Parnassians in 1875, following their rejection of his *Improvisation d'un faune*; Kahn's involvement in the emergence of a recognized Symbolist movement from 1886 and particularly in discussions surrounding the *vers libre*; Jarry's deconstruction of Symbolist theories of poetic language in *Les Minutes de sable mémorial* of 1894. These are the subject of Chapters 4 to 6.

This arrangement reproduces the order in which the thesis was written. It began with Aurier's definition of pictorial Symbolism and worked outwards from the questions it raised. Why was it not accepted by those to whom it was addressed? When he nominated Gauguin as leader in painting of a movement parallel to that of Symbolism in literature and argued that this movement was to be understood as a fundamental break with Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism, why did he fail to carry his Symbolist public with him? Why for this public did the Impressionist Monet seem to be more of a Symbolist than Gauguin? Why was Aurier unable to impose the term 'symbolist' in the vocabulary of art criticism? These questions led me to study approaches to subject-matter and formal values in the art criticism of the literary Symbolists and, in particular, their tendency to assimilate visual values within verbal models of meaning as part of their search for a synthesis of the arts. It was against this background that three examples of relationships between poetry and painting stood out. Mallarmé, Kahn, and Jarry, to different degrees and for different reasons, seemed to me to relate a detailed knowledge of specific painting to their theory and practice of poetic language.

My definition of the subject in these terms is intended to make the rather obvious point that this study does not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of, or a single theoretical model for, relationships between literature and painting during the Symbolist period. Instead, a small number of specific

cases (Aurier–Gauguin, Mallarmé–Manet, Kahn–Seurat, Jarry–Gauguin) will, I hope, give a focus for more general comment on the wider context. For the main problem in studying relationships between different art forms within a recognized literary and historical context such as French Symbolism is that of describing broad developments without losing sight of the diversity and detail of individual responses. This inevitably involves making difficult choices of emphasis. For example, all of Baudelaire's work bears in one way or another on the Symbolists' hopes for a synthesis of the arts, but their efforts to define the new language of painting which this synthesis required led them in particular to adapt his interpretation of Wagner in ways which I study in Chapter 3. At the same time, other critical trends were undermining their aspiration to synthesis. One was a growing loss of confidence in the discourse of art criticism. Many factors contribute to this, but the publication in 1876 of Fromentin's *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* and of a new edition of Diderot's *Salons* seems to me to have had a more direct bearing than others. Or again, Mallarmé's involvement with painting obviously extended beyond the years 1873–76 covered in Chapter 4. But this period, when he discovered, studied, and defended Manet's open-air work was, I believe, not only very important for Mallarmé's own theory and practice of poetry. It also defined the terms in which the Symbolists would assimilate Impressionism (and, in the process, frustrate Aurier's efforts on Gauguin's behalf). Each case of a relationship between literature and painting during this period raises in a different form the question of how it relates to the historical situation of which it is a part and on what basis to make choices between the different types and degrees of relationship.

From this it will also be obvious that I have not attempted to provide a comprehensive definition of Symbolism which would account for the work of artists as diverse and as committed to their diversity as those encountered in the pages which follow. It was Paul Valéry who said that to resort in literary history to terms such as Classicism and Romanticism, one had to have lost all sense of intellectual rigour.[1] He was better placed than most to know that a single definition of Symbolism would either be too general to provide effective criteria with which to examine relationships between the arts during this period or would sacrifice the history of these relationships to its own precision. For this reason, definitions will be studied only in so far as they relate to the problems raised by the specific relationships between literature and painting discussed here.

In histories of literature, Symbolism has a well established identity, one which was summarized recently in terms of four concentric circles: 'the coterie in Paris in the eighteen-eighties and -nineties; the French movement from Baudelaire to Valéry; the international movement that spans the continents and includes all or almost all literatures between 1880 and 1920; and the

symbolism of all ages and places'.[2] Unless stated otherwise, I confine my use of it to the first of these circles. In art history, the situation is more complicated. During the summer of 1888, Paul Gauguin, in collaboration with Émile Bernard, developed a method of painting in which a new emphasis on the decorative element (a flatter picture-surface, rich colour and heavy outline) combined with simplification in the depiction of observed reality.[3] In October of that year, Gauguin's pupil, Paul Sérusier, introduced his method to the young painters in the Académie Julien in Paris, including Maurice Denis, Bonnard, Ranson, and Ibels. These decided to form a group and to call themselves the Nabis.[4] Aurier did his best to ensure that the painting associated with Gauguin and the Nabis would be known as Symbolist, but there was no shortage of alternative labels ('idéalisme', 'néo-traditionnisme', 'école de déformation', etc.). Subsequent art historians tended to prefer 'Synthetism' as it appeared to have more precise formal connotations than 'Symbolism' and to reserve the latter term for the art of Redon, Moreau, Puvis de Chavannes and those painters who exhibited in Péladan's Salons de la Rose + Croix.[5] If we extend to painting the analogy of the four concentric circles, all of these quite different types of Symbolist painting belong in the first, provided it is clear that the circle is a chronological and not a stylistic one.

This question of definitions has also been complicated by lines of demarcation between literature and painting which have always operated in academic teaching and research. It is true that these lines have been eroded to some extent by the impact on literary and art history of the semiological and psychoanalytical theories which during the last fifteen years have reinforced the trend towards interdisciplinary studies created in the 1960s. But for a long time, historians of literature thought of Symbolism as primarily a movement in poetry and the theatre. The lack of any serious academic study of art criticism as a literary genre only reinforced this perception. Reference to Aurier's retrospective extension of the concepts and stylistic practices of Symbolist literature to certain painters was, therefore, not considered essential to the history of the literary movement.[6] On the other hand, his theory of pictorial Symbolism required art historians to get to grips with a literary context for which their training in art history, dominated by the formalist approach to painting, left them ill-prepared. The formalist approach described late nineteenth-century changes in painting as an inevitable progress towards abstraction and, as a result, downgraded painting's relationships with literature, since these were considered to involve questions of subject-matter and were therefore not 'modern'.[7] It also led to a partial reading of Aurier's art criticism in which formalist elements were stressed at the expense of academic, Neoplatonist, decadent, and mystical ones.[8] A growing awareness of the inadequacy of this approach had, by the late 1960s, led to a revision of the status of Symbolist painting and, in particular, to a recognition of the need to

take account of its relationship to the literary movement.[9] In order to define this painting, it became necessary to decide whether this relationship was one of shared subjects and themes, or of analogous stylistic transformations of subject-matter. Not surprisingly, it has proved easier to identify the former than to analyse the latter.[10]

When I began work on the original thesis, there existed two important studies of the interdisciplinary aspects of late nineteenth-century art theory and practice, S. Loevgren's *The Genesis of Modernism: Seurat, Gauguin, Van Gogh and French Symbolism in the 1880s* and H. R. Rookmaaker's *Synthetist Art Theories: Genesis and Nature of the Ideas on Art of Gauguin and his Circle.* Both were published in 1959 and reappeared with only minor changes in the early 1970s.[11] Both were written by art historians working within the formalist tradition of modernism. Loevgren analysed in detail individual paintings by Seurat, Gauguin, and Van Gogh but made analogies between them and poems by Mallarmé, Verlaine, and Whitman respectively which were too general and superficial. Rookmaaker, as the 1972 title of his book makes clear, related Gauguin's theories to their wider nineteenth-century context but adopted a characteristic modernist approach of organizing this into 'precursors, kindred spirits and definitive formulations' by isolating what he called the 'iconic' element of Gauguin's theory and relating it to similar pronouncements by other painters and critics. The method is reductive and oversimplifies a complex piece of artistic and cultural history. As I shall try to show, it created problems for him when he came to assess Aurier's place in this history. The most important book published since 1976 is R. Goldwater's posthumous study, *Symbolism*, which appeared in 1979.[12] Goldwater used Aurier's definitions of Symbolist painting as the basis for the nomination of Gauguin, Seurat, and Van Gogh as the definitive Symbolists and for the exclusion of many of the minor painters rehabilitated in recent histories of Symbolist art but dismissed by Goldwater as not true Symbolists. He applied his concern for definitional purity in too exclusive a way but his precise and informed analysis of individual paintings effectively confirmed the extent to which the Symbolist reaction against Naturalism had developed out of stylistic trends contained within Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism. I made this point in 1976 and restate it here but whereas Goldwater was mainly concerned with problems of art history, my interest was then and remains the responses to Aurier's article within the Symbolist group. In 1984, R. Schiff, in the introduction to his analysis of *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism*, also argued that '*symbolism and impressionism, as understood around 1890, were not antithetical*' (p. 7, his emphasis) but the title of his book is sufficient to indicate a perspective quite different from my own.[13]

It is a strange fact that since 1976, as far as the subject of this thesis is concerned, so much and so little has changed. On the one hand, huge amounts

of research have transformed our knowledge of those involved in one way or another with the Symbolist movement. On the other, little of this research relates directly to the problems discussed here. For example, much has been written since 1976 about how and why Manet painted what he did,[14] but not why his open-air work of the early 1870s made such an impact on Mallarmé.[15] Kahn's art criticism has still not been studied in any detail despite the status he enjoyed within the Symbolist movement. The same is true of Jarry's involvement with the visual arts, as the Ubu cycle continues to monopolize work on the founder of pataphysics. The academic study of art criticism has grown considerably over the last ten years, particularly in the United States, but this has tended to focus on individual critics or on the reception of individual painters[16] rather than on the social and literary institution of art criticism whose history is so important for the production of and writing on art at the end of the nineteenth century in France.

The first chapter of the 1976 text of my thesis contained an overview of previous work on the subject, which, since it is now obviously out of date, has been omitted from the revised text. It has been replaced by an expanded study of Aurier's art criticism before his first important article on Gauguin. In Chapters 2 and 3, my revision has consisted of extending the analysis of the reception of Aurier's defence of Gauguin and in Chapters 4 to 6 the detailed study of poems in which the relationship to specific paintings seems to me important to establish. Throughout the thesis, I have tried to reconstitute, in so far as this is possible, the historical situations in which this poetry and art criticism were produced. In the case of Aurier for example, this has involved widening my original study by emphasizing, firstly, the extent to which this writing was polemic, part of a struggle for influence within an avant-garde so partisan and competitive that each review (there were dozens of them within the Symbolist movement alone) had its critic who promoted his chosen painter(s) against those of other tendencies and secondly, its contribution to arguments about the nature and status of art criticism as a literary genre, given that in 1890 it was widely believed that art criticism was in crisis. The history of this crisis has never been written but it plays its part in what Aurier wrote and how it was read. These revisions have extended but not fundamentally changed the original thesis, where I argued that Aurier's defence of Gauguin brought to the surface underlying tensions within the Symbolist avant-garde, that Manet's work during his Impressionist phase was of great importance for Mallarmé, that Kahn's support for Neo-Impressionism played its part in the discussions and practice of versification during the 1880s and that Jarry used the example of Gauguin's painting to take to their limits Symbolist theories of poetic language.

CHAPTER I

GAUGUIN, AURIER AND SYMBOLISM IN PAINTING

On Monday 23 March 1891, at a banquet in the Café Voltaire in Paris, Stéphane Mallarmé proposed the following toast:

> Messieurs, pour aller au plus pressé, buvons au retour de Paul Gauguin; mais non sans admirer cette conscience superbe qui, en l'éclat de son talent, l'exile, pour se retremper, vers les lointains et vers soi-même.[1]

Gauguin was about to leave for the South Seas and a group of painters, poets and critics had gathered to ensure that he left in style. There were toasts in prose and in verse, toasts to Gauguin and to the critics who had revealed his name to a wider public, toasts to Mallarmé who presided and who was as much the guest of honour as Gauguin himself. One speaker after another vowed to defend the cause of art during the painter's absence and heaped abuse on whichever representative of artistic or political inertia came to mind. The 'menu' on such occasions was a familiar one.

Yet this was not just a farewell get-together. The atmosphere on this particular evening was more solemn than that. One of the guests, Albert Aurier, had just published in the *Mercure de France* a resounding article proclaiming the existence in painting of a movement parallel to that of Symbolist poetry.[2] He had nominated Gauguin as its leader and his *Vision après le sermon. Lutte de Jacob avec l'Ange* (Pl. 5A) as its exemplary work. In doing so, Aurier had not only confirmed his own status as literary Symbolism's foremost spokesman on painting. He had also announced that a landmark in the development of the Symbolist movement had been achieved. This had long since had its leading poet in Mallarmé, its musician in Wagner. Now, at last, it had its painter too. The synthesis of the arts, the ambition to 'suggérer tout l'homme par tout l'art'[3] was, it must have seemed, no more than a volume of verse away.

The forty guests at the banquet included, for the poets, Jean Moréas, Adolphe Retté, and Saint-Pol-Roux; for the painters, Paul Sérusier, Odilon Redon, and Eugène Carrière; for the critics, Aurier, Charles Morice, Jean Dolent, and Julien Leclerq. Together, they formed a representative selection of the Parisian avant-garde of 1891. The reasons for which Gauguin was received among them with such ceremony will be examined in the pages which follow. For a small number of Symbolist poets and critics, the allegiance to the

painter would be permanent, for the majority it would be short-lived. As we shall see, attitudes to painting among the literary Symbolist group polarized around acceptance or rejection of Gauguin's work.

At the outset, the combination of factors which culminated in Gauguin's consecration by the literary Symbolists in March 1891 will be examined. Coming only a month after the successful public sale of his work, it represented the high point in acceptance of his art, one which would never be repeated during his lifetime.[4] It was the climax of a publicity campaign which he had begun over two years before. *Vision après le sermon*, though only one of a number of works painted in Brittany in the course of 1888 and the following year, became the key to the painter's self-promotion. How Gauguin and Aurier described the painting's achievement, how one description differs from the other and how much both leave unexplained will be the subject of this first chapter. For this, it will also be necessary to consider Aurier's art criticism prior to the Gauguin article to see how his tastes and talents in literature affect his interpretation of painting. The manner in which these relate to wider changes taking place within the Parisian avant-garde during these years was crucial to Gauguin's campaign on behalf of his own work.

One thing is very quickly obvious. The apparent consecration of Gauguin in the Café Voltaire is only one brief and partial image of the relationship between literature and painting in French Symbolism. Other, less idyllic accounts need to be set against it. In the course of long discussions on the synthesis of the arts in places like the Café Voltaire, Gauguin, according to contemporary witnesses like Stuart Merrill,[5] did not say very much. He was, we are told, content merely to smile approvingly whenever Verlaine, his patience exhausted by the discussions, exclaimed: 'Hé! zut! Ils m'embêtent les cymbalistes!'.[6] Gauguin, it seems, would reserve his own opinion until outside in the street:

> Mais lorsque Gauguin et Sérusier se retrouvèrent tous deux sur la place de l'Odéon, le premier aurait dit: 'Bon, nous voilà maintenant Symbolistes! Est-ce que vous avez compris un traître mot à ces doctrines?' — 'Rien du tout', aurait répondu Sérusier. — 'Ni moi non plus', aurait dit Gauguin, 'mais va pour le symbolisme'.[7]

Chassé was unable to vouch for Gauguin's remark, for his sources were second-hand. Personally, I do not doubt its authenticity. It is just the sort of thing Gauguin would say. No doubt he wanted to remind Sérusier, his pupil during the summer of 1888, that association with poets did not entail any subservience in his work to their literary theories. For the charge was not slow in coming. Only two months after Aurier's article in the *Mercure*, Félix Fénéon expressed the view that Gauguin was 'tout en ferveur littératurière', that he had become 'la proie des littérateurs'.[8] Aurier's praise and Fénéon's criticism are not, however, purely aesthetic judgements. The relationships between literature and painting during this period are inseparable from the personal,

professional, and ideological rivalries which characterized an intensely fractious Parisian avant-garde.

Whatever Gauguin might have felt about Symbolism in painting and its possible relationship to literature, his consecration in the *Mercure de France* was the result of a well-defined strategy on his part. Its terms were simple enough. In order to finance his return to the South Seas, he needed to sell his work. In order to sell his work, he needed to create a public willing to buy it. By 1889, the literary Symbolists represented his only chance of doing so. Not that he was especially interested in the possible affinities between his work and the intellectual climate of literary Symbolism even if, despite his disingenuous question to Sérusier, he was perfectly aware that such affinities existed. It was simply that by 1889 he had alienated practically everyone else and was, therefore, in no position to be difficult.[9] On the other hand, there existed, between the literary avant-garde of the *Mercure de France* and the wider public who read newspapers like *L'Echo de Paris* or *Le Figaro*, lines of communication which ignored the usual rhetoric of antagonism between avant-garde élite and philistine bourgeois society. Octave Mirbeau, for example, was a close friend of Mallarmé as well as a journalist of influence. He moved with ease between these two publics. Any painter able to put such communications to good use could hope for major financial gains. Aurier was the authority on painting in a literary movement which by 1891 appeared to have won the arguments within the avant-garde. He held the key to prestige among a literary élite. Mirbeau wrote art criticism for the two newspapers mentioned. He could open the door to a much wider art-purchasing public. So Gauguin turned to both for articles and, being Gauguin, he got them.[10]

* * *

Aurier, Fénéon, and Gauguin himself had, therefore, their own reasons for accepting the existence of a relationship between literary and pictorial Symbolism. Historically, there is no doubt that it existed. In Gauguin's case, this relationship took on new significance from early August 1888 when he was joined in Pont-Aven by Émile Bernard, a young painter who, unlike Gauguin, felt at ease with ideas and was in touch with the latest trends in Symbolist poetry and mystical philosophy. 'Très attentif à la littérature de cette époque, j'avais rêvé une peinture qui répondît aux poésies de Jean Moréas et de Mallarmé', he later wrote.[11] It is true that Bernard's many retrospective accounts of the Brittany period of 1888–89 must be treated with caution, for they were all written with a view to claiming a greater share of the credit for the achievements of the Pont-Aven school than was due to him.[12] Here, his assimilation of two poets of such different aims and achievements as Moréas and Mallarmé makes one wonder what he really understood of Symbolist poetry. Be that as it

may, he did bring Gauguin up to date with the latest Parisian ideas and forms. In 1888, these included the anti-naturalist, mystical trends of literary Symbolism and a pictorial experiment known as 'cloisonism'. Bernard's friend, Louis Anquetin, was the creator of this style, so-called because the technique of preparing a simplified drawing in closed lines and then filling in areas with flat, modulated colours resembled cloisonné enamels and stained-glass windows.[13] In March 1888, in the offices of the *Revue indépendante*, Anquetin exhibited *L'Avenue de Clichy, le soir* and *Le Faucheur*, two of the first works executed in the new style, thereby bringing it to the attention of the poets and critics grouped around the review which Dujardin edited. In his analysis of these works the same month, Dujardin defined the cloisonist technique as 'une conception symbolique de l'art'[14] in terms whose implications for his own art Gauguin, via Bernard, cannot have failed to grasp:

> Il faut prendre le trait essentiel, le reproduire, ou, pour mieux dire, le produire, une silhouette suffit à exprimer une physionomie; le peintre, négligeant toute photographie avec ou sans retouche, ne cherchera qu'à fixer, en le moindre nombre possible de lignes et de couleurs caractéristiques, la réalité intime, l'essence de l'objet qu'il s'impose. (p. 489)

The anti-naturalist aim and the simplified representation of reality's essential traits by which Dujardin defined cloisonism were directions in which Gauguin's work, prior to his meeting with Bernard, was already moving. Art historians have studied in some detail the roles played in this process by the painter's study of Cézanne, Pissarro, Puvis de Chavannes and Degas and by his own pottery and ceramics.[15] But Bernard provided the final piece in Gauguin's puzzle, a religious content and a pictorial manner with which to transform his vague and mystical sense of communion with Brittany into a distinctive and personal style. This would in turn enable him to propose a new programme for painting to an avant-garde in which the terms of debate were essentially those of the opposition between Monet's subjective and romantic Naturalism and the applied science of Seurat's Neo-Impressionism. He undoubtedly believed that public recognition of the validity of this project would enable him to break out once and for all from his increasingly desperate financial straits. Thus, when Dujardin in his review argued that Anquetin had now left behind his Impressionist manner in favour of 'une vérité sensationnelle se dégageant du romantisme de la fougue' (p. 489) — the latter phrase clearly refers to Monet — and that its rational, scientific method (what Dujardin called 'le voulu, le raisonné, la construction intellectuelle et systématique' (p. 489)) was directed towards a quite different theory of the picture surface from that of Neo-Impressionism, he was defining both an objective and a manner towards which, by 1888, Gauguin had been feeling his way for several years. The result was that when Bernard, on his arrival in Pont-Aven, used the cloisonist technique in *Bretonnes dans la prairie verte* (Pl. 5B), Gauguin had no choice but to re-assert

himself. He greatly admired Bernard's painting but this very admiration compelled him to respond immediately, to adopt the cloisonist technique to surpass Bernard's achievement and thereby make it his own. The result was *Vision après le sermon*, painted sometime between 16 September and the end of the same month.[16]

In this painting, Gauguin achieved that flattening of the picture-surface and use of large monochrome expanses defined by sharp outlines which have made the painting one of the founding works of twentieth-century art. Historically, Aurier, in his 1891 analysis of the painting, was the first publicly to define these innovations as a break with Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism. Whatever the value of such descriptions of the painting in formal terms, they do not help us very much with what the work means, why it shows what it does. The formalist approach which has prevailed in modernist art history this century has meant that discussion of the painting has concentrated upon how Gauguin drew upon different pictorial traditions and sources for his own purposes. The Japanese influence in the case of the wrestling figures and the tree, the role of Pissarro, Cézanne, and Degas in different features of Gauguin's technique, the part played by Medieval stained glass in the juxtaposition of the figures, the simplifications of Breton popular art,[17] these and other features have received particular attention as though their identification was an end in itself or explained why Gauguin used them in the way he did. Too often the search for pictorial influences and/or parallels serves to evade the sheer complexity of the work, the difficulties of interpretation which it creates.

Vision après le sermon is the first of Gauguin's Breton works to contain an explicitly religious subject. Bernard's arrival in Pont-Aven is almost certainly the reason for this and for the new religious content of Gauguin's correspondence from mid-August.[18] The choice of the struggle between Jacob and the Angel as the subject for the first painting in which he applied the cloisonist style corresponded, as we shall see, to specific elements in his situation in 1888. Equally, he could not have been unaware that the Biblical encounter had, in the recent past, also provided a theme for Delacroix, Moreau, and Bonnat, among others.[19] Implicit reference to these other works was presumably intended to underline the innovatory qualities of his own. Of these, the Delacroix murals for the Saint-Sulpice chapel would almost certainly have been the most familiar to him.[20] It also seems quite likely that he would have known Baudelaire's description of them and of the Biblical text which they illustrated and with which Baudelaire's article began.[21] Such sources do indeed confirm the extent to which Gauguin altered the visual and philosophical material which the legend provided. He gave the major roles in his painting not to Jacob and the Angel, who are actors in the vision, not to the priest, who is its instrument, but to two women, one a young girl in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture, the other an older women to the right immediately in front of

her. The girl's head is lowered, her eyes are closed and her hands raised. The older woman's head is raised, her eyes are open and her hands hidden. Their respective positions and attitudes imply that a relationship between the two women is an effective part of the work's meaning but one which it does not make explicit.

In a letter to Van Gogh written soon after finishing the painting, Gauguin described it in the following terms:

> Je viens de faire un tableau religieux très mal fait mais qui m'a intéressé à faire et qui me plaît — Je voulais le donner à l'église de Pont-Aven — Naturellement on n'en veut pas —
>
> Des Bretonnes groupées prient costumes noir très intense — Les bonnets blancs jaunes très lumineux. Les deux bonnets à droite sont comme des casques monstrueux — Un *pommier* traverse la toile violet sombre et le feuillage dessiné par masses comme des nuages vert *émeraude* avec les *interstises* vert jaune de soleil. Le terrain *vermillon pur*. A l'église il descend et devient brun rouge —
>
> L'ange est habillé de bleu outremer violent et Jacob vert bouteille. Les ailes de l'ange jaune de chrome 1 pur — Les cheveux de l'ange chrome 2 et les pieds chair orange — Je crois avoir atteint dans les figures une grande simplicité rustique et *superstitieuse* — Le tout très sévère — La vache sous l'arbre est toute petite par rapport à la vérité et se cabre — Pour moi dans ce tableau le paysage et la lutte n'existent que dans l'imagination des gens en prière par suite du sermon c'est pourquoi il y a contraste entre les gens nature et la lutte dans son paysage non nature et disproportionnée —[22]

This technical description of the painting's colour arrangement belongs in a triangular correspondence taking place at that time between Gauguin, Bernard, and Van Gogh and, through the latter, indirectly, with Theo Van Gogh, who was writing weekly letters to his brother and who was, in 1888, crucial to Gauguin's hopes for financial success.[23] The painter's stress on his non-naturalist use of colour and its contribution to an effect of 'grande simplicité rustique et superstitieuse' are directed at Van Gogh's own quite different approach to the relationship between colour and representation. Equally, Gauguin has Theo and, through him, the Paris avant-garde in mind, for this description stems in part at least from the need for Gauguin to prepare the ground in advance for such an innovative work before Bernard took it to Paris in the autumn. The subject is a vision called forth by prayer but, as Gauguin makes clear to Van Gogh, it is the mystery of the Biblical message for a group of Breton peasant women at the end of the nineteenth century which is the picture's main concern. Equally, the desire to convey a 'great rustic and superstitious simplicity' is a vision of Brittany inseparable from Gauguin's relationship to, and ambitions in, Paris. Emile Bernard's painting will illustrate this more clearly. In this sense, the subject of the painting is Gauguin himself, his aspirations as an artist.

If we consider the declared religious theme first, the work shows a vision provoked by prayer. As such, its effective units are the human eye, the window

of the soul, and the hands, joined together. The Breton peasant-woman second from the left in the foreground is experiencing divine revelation. She alone has her eyes open.[24] She alone looks towards the light of the sun which shines on her face. Her open eye is situated almost exactly in the centre of the painting. The direction of her gaze — upward and to the right — signifies infinity. In directing her gaze in this way, Gauguin was implementing a long-held interest in the symbolism of linear directions. The following extract is from a letter to Shuffenecker dated January 1885:

> Tous nos 5 sens arrivent *directement au cerveau* impressionnés par une infinité de choses et qu'aucune éducation ne peut détruire. — J'en conclus qu'il y a des lignes nobles, menteuses, etc . . . la ligne droite donne l'infini, la courbe limite la création, sans compter la fatalité dans les nombres — Les chiffres 3 et 7 ont-ils été assez discutés —[25]

By 1888 such questions were playing a prominent part in avant-garde discussion of painting. Seurat's attempts to establish a scientific basis for a symbolism of tones and linear directions competed with esoteric versions of the same traditions into which the Symbolist movement in literature was breathing new life.[26] In 1888, the year of the *Vision*, Papus (alias Dr Gérard Encausse) published his *Traité élémentaire de science occulte* with its mystical interpretation of the symbolism of colours and forms. Gauguin was probably aware of these developments, but Bernard could have told him about them had he not been.

Gauguin further emphasizes the role of the main female figure by establishing relationships between her and the other women in the painting. If we look from right to left at the three figures in the foreground who have their back to the spectator, each one appears to represent a different degree of spiritual ascension. The woman immediately to the left of the priest is wearing a bonnet in the centre of which faint but distinct elements of a head, part animal, part devil, can be seen. The flaps of her bonnet and that of the woman in front of her point earthwards in opposition to the upward movement of the angel's wings directly above. We remember that Gauguin described these bonnets to Van Gogh as 'des casques monstrueux'.[27] This first woman is further from the vision in both physical and spiritual terms than the second, whose bonnet contains a bow which forms two 'eyes'.[28] Though as yet sightless, they are set in soft blue and appear to represent a stage in that emergence towards Knowledge which the third woman will realize. The latter's eye is open: 'J'ai vu Dieu face à face et mon âme a été sauvée'.[29] This group derives added significance from its relationship to the two groups of women situated on the left-hand side of the picture. Starting from the top left-hand corner and moving downwards, the groups of women increase in size but the naturalist illusion of perspective which such a relationship might otherwise create cannot here be sustained outside of the frame which the women form to the rest of the painting. Since, as Gauguin

told Van Gogh, the meadow, cow, tree, and wrestling figures are purely imaginary, the size of the women denotes not physical distance in a realistic space but spiritual distance from the vision which the sermon has provoked. The group of women in the top left-hand corner are sitting, not kneeling; they are listening or watching, not praying. Their hands are lowered. They occupy their own separate space which given their sitting positions is that of the same Breton meadow as that which the cow occupies. The group of women in the centre are kneeling, their eyes are closed and their hands half raised in prayer for they are engaged in intense inner contemplation of the sermon's message. The girl in profile in the bottom left-hand corner has her hands raised. Her mouth and facial expression contrast with those of the women above her and suggest a greater closeness to the source of spiritual happiness. She occupies a symmetrical position to that of the priest in the opposite corner. (In each case, Gauguin uses the picture-frame to cut off the back of the head.) She is the priest's instrument and purpose, for she enables him to fulfil his role as intermediary between the human and divine realms. This in turn confirms the role of the main female figure, who illustrates the effect of prayer, the completed process of vision. Her eye is located at the apex of a triangle of which the eye of the girl and that of the priest occupy the lower corners. Thus, the women seem to represent different *stages* of the vision's action in the world. Just as Gauguin collapses space in order to place the events on a non-naturalist level, so he collapses the sequential narration of the vision in order to create instantaneous perception of its process and effect. Two years earlier, he had argued for the supremacy of painting over the other art forms and explained its superiority over music in just this way:

> En somme, l'oreille est un sens inférieur à celui de l'oeil. L'ouïe ne peut servir qu'à un seul son à la fois, tandis que la vue embrasse tout, en même temps qu'à son gré elle simplifie.[30]

As Gauguin himself indicated in the letter to Van Gogh quoted above, the painting testifies to the efficiency of the divine word's impact upon the naïve imagination. This incorporates into the vision elements of its own world (the tree, the cow) situated on the left-hand side of the painting and transforms according to its own scale elements of the Biblical legend on the right. The apple tree, feature of the Breton environment and symbol of the tree of Knowledge (and probably taken from Japanese prints),[31] offers a passage between the material and the spiritual worlds. On both sides, the unifying vermilion ground is the opposite of the naturalistic green of the Breton meadow and, in particular, of Bernard's Breton meadow. The legs of Jacob and the angel form a mirror-image of those of the cow and their feet strongly resemble animal's hooves. The cow's muzzle makes distant contact with the Angel's right foot via the tree's diagonal lines which both muzzle and foot

touch. In the tug-of-war effect which is thereby created, the cow appears to rear its head. As Gauguin said, 'la vache . . . se cabre'. Around the neck of the chosen woman a bow forms a circle which is repeated directly above her head by that formed by the branches of the tree. Cloisonism's abstraction in linear patterns and colour expanses, described in a letter the previous month as 'synthèse d'une forme et d'une couleur en ne considérant que la dominante',[32] is, therefore, the formal equivalent of the impact upon the naïve peasant mind of the mystery of the Biblical revelation. This mystery could not by definition be represented directly but its emotional equivalent could be created by releasing painting's expressive elements from subordination to a naturalistic illusion of reality.

It is because Gauguin asserts in the *Vision après le sermon* the continuing power of religious faith in Breton life at the end of the nineteenth century that Bernard's painting of Breton women in a meadow must have seemed so relevant to him. It has recently been argued that Bernard's work is a Breton version of Seurat's *Dimanche après-midi à la Grande Jatte* (Pl. 2A), that when Bernard portrayed a contemporary Breton scene, he showed the same mixture of social relationships as that which Seurat had analysed on the Ile de la Grande Jatte in Paris.[33] According to this view, the two women wearing smart town clothes who chat together in the top left-hand corner of the painting, the girl in the white dress and the *nouveau riche* peasants show the changes which had taken place in Pont-Aven's social structure in the course of the nineteenth century. Whether or not this reference to Seurat is correct (and I believe that it is), it is certainly the case that if a 'great rustic and superstitious simplicity' was what Gauguin was looking for, then he cannot have found it in Bernard's painting. Nor in Pont-Aven society. In fact, the following year, he cleared off to Le Pouldu to escape the tourists and the Parisian and foreign painters all wearing their 'pulls marins' and breathing in the primitive atmosphere.[34] The Brittany in which Gauguin wanted to believe no longer existed. Bernard was too Parisian to invent it, but Gauguin could not or would not give it up for it was too intimately related to his idea of himself, to his aspirations as an artist. It is possible that he was convinced (or chose to be so) by the Pont-Aven Pardon of 16 September that an earlier and more authentic Brittany had survived the social changes which Bernard's painting showed. In any event, in his *Vision après le sermon* he turned his back on contemporary social relationships and practice in order to portray a primitive community united in an intense and superstitious religious faith. His metaphor of the bonnets as monstrous helmets is a case in point. The cloisonist technique, with its reference to Medieval faith and an artisan, pre-industrial culture, the pre-Renaissance and non-Western formal procedures, were particularly relevant to this refusal of contemporary Brittany. In this respect, Bernard's painting served Gauguin 'a contrario'.

Gauguin certainly believed that his vision of a more naïve, devout and authentic world and of himself as the artist uniquely placed by his origins and

experience to bear witness to it would enable him to win over important elements of the Parisian avant-garde to his cause. As far away as Arles, Van Gogh could feel the strength of Gauguin's ambitions in this respect. In the context of his plan to invite Gauguin to join him in Arles, he returned to it frequently during this period in his letters to Theo. 'La nature le beau temps d'ici c'est l'avantage du Midi mais je crois que jamais Gauguin renoncera à la bataille parisienne il a cela trop au cœur et croit plus que moi à un succès durable'.[35] In a letter of 8 October to Schuffenecker in which he referred to the painting recently completed, Gauguin spoke of the research which it represented for him and the hopes he pinned upon it:

J'ai fait pour une église un tableau naturellement il a été refusé aussi je le renvoie à van Gogh. Inutile de vous le décrire vous le verrez. J'ai cette année tout sacrifié l'exécution la couleur pour le style voulant m'imposer autre chose que ce que je sais faire. C'est je crois une transformation qui n'a pas porté ses fruits mais qui les portera.[36]

This language of sacrifice, transformation and bearing fruit is all part of the painting for which Gauguin is using it. The struggle between Jacob and the Angel was a natural choice for Gauguin in the summer of 1888 when one remembers the way in which he had been thinking of his own predicament throughout this Pont-Aven period. In July, he told Schuffenecker that he had just painted 'une lutte de 2 gamins près de la rivière — tout à fait japonais par un sauvage de Pérou'.[37] Telling Van Gogh about the work later the same month, he added: 'J'ai comme un besoin de *lutte*; de tailler à coups de massue . . .'.[38] In the letter of 8 October just referred to, he described a self-portrait just completed, *Autoportrait 'Les Misérables'* as follows:

La couleur est une couleur assez loin de la nature; figurez-vous un vague souvenir de ma poterie tordue par le grand feu — Tous les rouges les violets rayés par des éclats de feu comme une fournaise rayonnant aux yeux siège des luttes de la pensée du peintre. (p. 249)

In this context, either or both of the two most common interpretations of the Jacob legend must have seemed relevant to Gauguin. The first of these saw the struggle as 'l'image de la vie du chrétien qui est une lutte perpétuelle où nous sommes parfois dominés, mais où, comme Jacob, nous finissons par vaincre'.[39] The second is described in the following way:

L'interprétation *romantique*, telle qu'elle s'exprime dans la fresque d'Eugène Delacroix à Saint-Sulpice, dépouille ce symbole de tout caractère religieux. Jacob devient ici l'image de l'homme de génie, de l'artiste qui doit étreindre la Nature corps à corps pour lui arracher ses secrets. L'Ange mystérieux, qui symbolise la Nature, n'ouvre pas sans combat la porte de l'Invisible: il cède seulement à ceux qui, pour se frayer un passage, ne craignent pas de se mesurer avec lui. (p. 501)

In Baudelaire's interpretation of what he called 'cette bizarre légende', the angel represented 'l'*homme* mystérieux envoyé par le Seigneur. L'homme

naturel et l'homme surnaturel luttent chacun selon sa nature . . .'.[40] It seems unlikely that Gauguin would have been very concerned about the details of the legend's interpretation. Rather, from the differing interpretations he would have retained the common themes of struggle, election and nomination: 'On ne vous nommera plus à l'avenir Jacob, mais Israël: car, si vous avez été fort contre Dieu, combien le serez-vous davantage contre les hommes?'[41] These were central to the image of himself which Gauguin wanted to project in 1888.

A further autobiographical element needs to be mentioned at this point. In the summer of 1888, Gauguin met and seems to have fallen in love with Madeleine Bernard, Émile's seventeen-year-old sister. As her brother later wrote', 'Gauguin qui la connut eut une véritable passion pour elle'.[42] The presence of the girl in *Vision après le sermon* and the formal elements which, as we have seen, link her to the priest take on added significance if we accept, as certain art historians have suggested, that the priest contains elements of a Gauguin self-portrait.[43] In a letter to Madeleine of October 1888, the painter told her:

> Ne craignez pas si vous avez besoin d'aide de vous adresser à nous en criant — Frère soutenez-moi! — Nous autres artistes nous avons besoin aussi de votre défense de votre aide et vous pouvez persuader. Ce serait donc bienfait pour bienfait, un échange de deux forces différentes.[44]

The painting suggests some such exchange. The priest leads the girl to the Biblical message. She, in hearing it, enables him to fulfil his function as intermediary between the human and the divine. The artist as priest was a cliché of Symbolist aesthetic theory. Furthermore, Gauguin in his letter urges Madeleine to rise above the needs of her nature in order to fully realize her potential for the divine:

> Premièrement il faut vous considérer comme androgine [sic] sans sexe; je veux dire par là que l'âme le cœur tout ce qui est divin enfin ne doit pas être *esclave* de la matière c'est-à-dire du corps — . . . *Toute chaîne* vient d'un ordre inférieur et c'est méconnaître les lois divines que de faire acte d'esclave. (p. 256, Gauguin's emphasis)

Even if this advice stemmed to some extent from Gauguin's need to sublimate his feelings for Madeleine, the message nevertheless is related in general terms to the lesson of the painting, to its themes of the struggle for self-knowledge and aspiration to the divine potential of human experience.

* * *

Gauguin was convinced that he had succeeded, in *Vision après le sermon*, in considerably enlarging the expressive potential of the cloisonist style taken

from Bernard and Anquetin. This as well as the offer from Theo Van Gogh to finance his stay in Arles prompted him to advise Schuffenecker:

> Faites-y bien attention il circule en ce moment parmi *les artistes* un vent favorable très prononcé *pour moi*; je le sais par quelques indiscrétions et soyez tranquille tout amoureux de moi que soit [Theo] Van Gogh il ne se lancerait pas à me nourrir dans le Midi pour mes beaux yeux . . . Tout optimiste que je sois, cette fois-ci c'est sur un terrain solide que je marche (p. 255).

This optimism was Gauguin's reply to what must have been the first warning from Schuffenecker that the new direction taken by Gauguin's painting and represented by his description of *Vision après le sermon* could only isolate him from the Parisian avant-garde.[45] Gauguin sent some of his Breton work to Theo Van Gogh in Paris in mid-October and Bernard took others, probably including *Vision après le sermon*, in the first half of the following month.[46] Theo's reaction was encouraging. On the 13th, he informed Gauguin that the Breton works exhibited on the mezzanine floor of his firm's gallery in the boulevard Montmartre were enjoying 'beaucoup de succès' and that two were already sold.[47] As his ambition returned, so did his desire to precipitate disagreements with the Neo-Impressionists. Any pretext would do. When Theo, in a letter to his brother, expressed little enthusiasm for some new work of Seurat and Signac, Gauguin told Bernard that this reaction could only have been the result of the animosity towards Gauguin which Theo must have encountered from Seurat, Signac and their allies, Fénéon, Dujardin and Kahn:

> Ils doivent commencer une campagne (ayant la *Revue Indépendante* comme siège de leur propagande) contre nous autres. On y représentera Degas, *Gauguin surtout* Bernard etc . . . pire que des diables dont il faut s'écarter comme des pestiférés —Voilà grosso modo ce qui se dit. . . .[48]

This so-called campaign did not prevent the review from offering Gauguin at the end of the year the use of the same offices in which Anquetin had exhibited his first cloisonist works some nine months earlier. Predictably, Gauguin declined.[49] Dujardin in particular would have been well placed to describe the filiations between the *Vision* and Anquetin's cloisonist work. Such reminders were the last thing Gauguin needed at that moment. Besides, a second, more important offer had arrived soon after the first. The invitation to show his work in the spring of 1889 in the 'Exposition des XX', an annual exhibition of the avant-garde in Brussels, gave an opportunity to take on the Neo-Impressionists away from Paris, thereby testing the extent to which the public was ready for his latest work.[50]

For the Brussels exhibition Gauguin placed an evaluation of 1,000 francs, the highest price he was asking, on *Vision après le sermon*. He was soon forced to abandon any hope of the painting achieving this figure. Octave Maus, one of the organizers of the Brussels exhibition, leaves us in no doubt on that score:

De tous les exposants, celui qui a le privilège d'exciter au plus haut degré le ricanement de la foule, c'est M. PAUL GAUGUN [sic]. C'est devant la douzaine de toiles qu'il aligne . . . l'incessant bourdonnement de la bêtise humaine montant, parfois, jusqu'aux éclats de rire. De ce qu'un paysage montre des troncs d'arbre bleus et un ciel jaune, on conclut que M. Gauguin ne possède pas les plus élémentaires notions de coloris, et l'on infère d'une 'Vision du sermon' symbolisée par le combat de Jacob et de l'Ange luttant sur un pré vermillon que l'artiste a voulu se moquer outrecuidamment des visiteurs.[51]

Worse still from Gauguin's point of view, this account appeared in a Parisian avant-garde literary review. This failure can only have convinced him that even without the complications created by Parisian avant-garde cliques, more time was needed to prepare the ground for public reception of his Brittany work. If so, this may explain why he did not include *Vision après le sermon* among his seventeen exhibits when, two months later, he and some of the painters who had been with him the previous year in Brittany had the opportunity to organize an exhibition of their work in the Café Volponi on the Champ de Mars (opposite the retrospective exhibition of French nineteenth-century painting held as part of the Universal Exhibition).[52] Gauguin's priorities in the Volponi exhibition are clearly set out in a letter of March 1889 in which he congratulated Schuffenecker on the success of his efforts to arrange the Volponi exhibition:

Seulement rappelez-vous que ce n'est pas une exposition pour les *autres*. En conséquence arrangeons-nous pour un petit groupe de copains et à ce point de vue je désire y être *représenté* le plus possible. Faites-la donc au mieux de mes intérêts selon la place qu'il y aura . . . Moi je refuse d'exposer avec les *autres*, Pissarro, Seurat, etc. . . .

C'est notre groupe![53]

Gauguin's objective was negated to some extent by the name which the Volponi exhibitors gave their group. By calling themselves the 'groupe impressionniste et synthétiste', they created confusion as to who was one, who the other and what the two terms meant anyway. The range of styles and trends included in the exhibition (Gauguin's seventeen paintings alone included Breton, Arles, and Martinique landscapes) made it difficult to discern anything as coherent as a movement and even more so to recognize a single member of the group as its leader. Even those who were not unsympathetic failed to provide Gauguin with the exclusive recognition that he sought. Jules Antoine's review in *Art et critique* is, in this respect, indicative. Though mystified by the term 'synthetist' — ' (je dis synthétiste parce que c'est le nom qu'ils prennent)'[54] — he nevertheless considered Anquetin's work to be the most synthetist of those on show. Gauguin, despite his 'talent indiscutable', was included among the 'vulgaires impressionnistes' (p. 370), which, not surprisingly, irritated him intensely.[55] The value of Fénéon's perceptive formal analysis was nullified from Gauguin's point of view when the critic went on to

say that 'la manière de M. Anquetin, contours infranchissables, teintes plates et intenses, n'a pas été sans influencer un peu M. Paul Gauguin'.[56] The strenuousness with which Gauguin denied Anquetin's influence showed the extent to which Fénéon had hit home.[57]

The negative public reaction to the work exhibited in Brussels and Paris was a severe enough setback in itself for Gauguin. In addition, however, it predisposed the same public against the new work which he produced on his return to Brittany in 1889. As he put it to Schuffenecker in July of that year: 'pour comble de malheur mes peintures, sculptures, de cette année terrifient tout le monde'.[58] By the end of the year, his position was desperate: 'Quant à moi, de tous mes efforts de cette année il ne reste que des hurlements de Paris qui viennent ici me décourager, au point que je n'ose plus faire de peinture. . . .'[59] The extent to which Paris was the driving force and objective of Gauguin's work could hardly be clearer. But of the Volponi exhibition only one critic had a good word to say and he was too young to have acquired the sort of authority which Gauguin needed to work on his behalf. But he was the editor of an avant-garde literary review such as it was. In 1889, Albert Aurier really did represent Gauguin's main chance of creating a public for his art.

* * *

The poetry, prose and art criticism of Albert Aurier make him a more complete representative than most of the literary trends which mark the period 1885–91. His first publication, 'Soleil couchant, nouvelle impressionniste' is a sign of things to come. It appeared in a very ephemeral decadent review which Aurier edited and which ran to only four issues.[60] On a cliff-top, the poet and his beloved are walking. Beneath the sky, 'flamboiement de pourpre et de diamant' (p. 4), his girl's bare thighs are 'dorées par les reflets du ciel en feu' (p. 3). An effort she is making 'se manifestait dans ses narines nacrées et par une imperceptible contraction de ses lèvres rouges comme la pétale d'une pivoine' (p. 4). In fact, the girl is relieving herself, so we can safely assume that this short story is a joke, that the girl, 'éblouissante comme une déesse dans un Olympe de lumière' (p. 3), but engrossed in her less than transcendent activity, has strayed off the pages of a minor naturalist novel. For his first literary venture, Aurier satirizes Naturalism's allegedly salacious interest in bodily functions and mocks 'l'écriture artiste' as an elegant but flimsy adornment of vulgarities.

This example alone shows Aurier at ease from the beginning with the decadent spirit and the year following its publication sees him contributing prose and poetry regularly to *Le Décadent*, edited by the sectarian and intolerant Alphonse Baju. His first contribution is a sonnet in homage to Mallarmé, whose poetry provides balm for exhausted souls tortured by the

search for the ideal.[61] It is an interesting variant on Huysmans's description of Mallarmé in *A Rebours*, but the perspective remains a decadent one. In subsequent issues, serious work, mainly extracts from a volume of verse, *Les Pourries*, which was never published in book form and which, as its title suggests, is a summary of decadent attitudes to women, alternates with the less serious, including a sonnet on having one's teeth pulled[62] and a gruesome homage to the rapidly-fading charms of a mistress.[63] Aurier's work during this period is an anthology of decadent themes, among which a disgust with the self and the world, perversion, scepticism and vulgar humour predominate. Aurier serves his literary apprenticeship with the most convenient tools to hand.

Other trends are, nevertheless, emerging in his writing by this time. A long poem, 'Les Décadences précoces', provides, in terms of content, more of the review's staple diet.[64] The title and the refrain — 'O le charme des fronts légèrement flétris' — give the general idea. In formal terms, however, it contributes in a modest way to an important theoretical debate taking place in 1886. Aurier prefaces the poem with an aim described as a 'rêve irréalisable': 'Ecrire en un mode obscurément rythmé qui ne serait pas les vers, mais qui déjà ne serait pas la prose.' In 1886, the dream was not new. Nearly thirty years before, Baudelaire's prose poetry had had the same ambition. But it was contemporary. The search for what would soon be called the 'vers libre' was about to take a decisive turn and Aurier was clearly aware of what was going on in literary circles other than those of *Le Décadent*. His own contribution in 'Les Décadences précoces' consists of a series of alexandrines whose theme and formal play might best be called 'du sous-Verlaine' but in which the effort to disrupt the verse line by allowing internal rhythm to predominate over rhyme and caesura confirms the direction that contemporary discussion of versification was taking.[65] By the end of the year he was distancing himself from the decadent movement. An article entitled 'Sensationnisme' concluded with the following criticism:

> La nouvelle école [of decadence] s'est posée en irréconciliable ennemie du réalisme. Elle a cru (de bonne foi, sans doute) faire œuvre de réaction contre les théories des naturalistes. Ne serait-elle pas, au contraire, tout simplement la continuation de ces théories?
>
> Les sauts brusques sont rares dans l'histoire de la pensée.
>
> 'Le but essential de notre art est d'objectiver le subjectif' a dit je ne sais où M. Kahn. Or, n'est-ce pas là le vrai réalisme? Le vrai, en effet, le positif, le réel, n'est-ce pas la pensée? L'idéal, n'est-ce pas la matière objective?[66]

Kahn's statement had appeared in an article entitled 'Réponse des Symbolistes'. The reply was to Moréas, with whose manifesto Kahn disagreed: 'Le but essentiel de notre art est d'objectiver le subjectif (l'extérioration de l'Idée) au lieu de subjectiver l'objectif (la nature vue à travers un tempérament)',[67] that is, Symbolism instead of Naturalism, Mallarmé instead of Zola. Kahn's

reply to Moréas was the parallel in literature to the distinction which Fénéon was in the process of making in *Les Impressionnistes en 1886* between the first generation, subjective Impressionists and the second generation, scientific Neo-Impressionists. In this sense, Symbolism was to Naturalism as Seurat was to Monet. Kahn proposed a comprehensive idealist philosophy of art in which Symbolist poetry, Neo-Impressionist painting and Wagnerian music would direct their parallel methods towards the realization of a modern, scientific art. We shall see in a later chapter how he sought to extend this general parallel between Symbolist poetry and Neo-Impressionism into a more precise formal one between free verse and Seurat's divisionist technique. For the moment it is sufficient to say that Aurier's sense that the decadent movement's cult of perverse or rarified sensations did not represent a break with Naturalism at the level of literary theory is a sign of changing trends in the literary debate and of Aurier's awareness of them. On the one hand, *A Rebours* seemed to have said most of what decadence had to say. On the other, Seurat was by late 1886 defining new terms for the discussion of painting within the avant-garde, and their ramifications extend into contemporary literary theory. At this point, Aurier was making contact, after decadence and the Neoplatonist tendencies implicit in Mallarmé's writings, with another of the major formative influences on the art criticism he would write at the height of his authority in Symbolist circles. As he moved on from one intellectual position to the next, he did not of course entirely discard the preceding ones. Decadent, scientific and Neoplatonist elements survived into his Symbolist writings. His attempt to reconcile them in his art criticism was to have important implications for his interpretation of Gauguin's art.

As for Aurier's interest in and knowledge of painting before 1888, little is known other than that he attended Lafenestre's lectures on art history in the École du Louvre, probably in 1886.[68] Here again, *Le Décadent* can have been of little use to him. It did not publish art criticism as such. Occasionally, paintings served as a pretext for its own brand of uninformed polemic. For example, the Neo-Impressionist work on show in the 'Exposition des Artistes indépendants' was ridiculed as 'les élucubrations issues de leurs cauchemars' and as the 'béate gaîté des idiots qui ne pensent pas'.[69] Such aggressive nonsense can only mean that it was now editorial policy to tear Seurat and his friends to pieces. If the aim was to maintain the review's own identity and space within the avant-garde, all it achieved was to confirm the polarization which was taking place around Seurat's painting and its own declining relevance to this trend. The disappearance of *Le Décadent* at the end of November 1886 was, therefore, no loss as far as art criticism was concerned. When it reappeared, twelve months later, Aurier became its art critic.

The Salon of 1888 was a useful place for him to begin.[70] He already had a good line in corrosive polemic and the annual Salon was a target too big to miss.

He described his method as 'le subtil dilettantisme d'un critique décadent' (part II, p. 8). It may be dilettante but it is certainly not subtle. Aurier can hardly be blamed for this. The format of the salon review discouraged subtlety.[71] Aurier therefore adopts the time-honoured practice of attacking the Salon as an institution and exempting from this criticism a small number of works by established salon painters: Raffaelli's portrait of J. de Goncourt, Roll's *Fermière*, Jules Breton's 'paysanneries', Jules Lefebvre's *Orpheline*, Maignan's *Voix du tocsin*, Darien's *Vue du quai Malaquais, après la pluie* in which 'on croit sentir l'asphalte mouillé, ce parfum caractéristique des fins d'averses parisiennes' (II, p. 11). Other than a general obligation on the painter to create pleasing visual sensations, no theory of painting is advanced with which to link such a disparate group of works. Presumably for *Le Décadent* this was not indispensable. Aurier's stylistic preferences, such as they are, include decorative painting (in this case, Flameng's work for the staircase of the Sorbonne) and the treatment of legend associated with Puvis de Chavannes, in which miracles are 'baignés dans une atmosphère de rêve, évoqués dans un monde légendaire, quasi-immatériel' (I, pp. 11–12). Little, in other words, to distinguish this writing from the mass of salon reviews of the period. The superficiality and facetiousness are inherent to the house style as well as the genre and Aurier is at ease with them. He writes: 'Mais j'oublie trop, je crois, mon rôle de salonnier pressé. L'heure de la fermeture approche, courons un peu' (II, p. 8).

This article was, therefore, little more than an exercise, a way for Aurier of keeping his hand in while his serious education went on elsewhere. By the time he wrote his review of the Salon of 1888, he had known Émile Bernard for almost a year.[72] It was Bernard who, from January 1888, began to encourage him to support Gauguin and those painters of whom Gauguin still approved, such as Pissarro, Guillaumin, and Degas. By the spring of the following year, he had completed his first novel, *Vieux*, and become the editor of a new literary weekly, *Le Moderniste illustré*. Like many literary reviews of this period, *Le Moderniste* enjoyed only a short life. By the end of the year, it had been harassed out of existence by the authorities for publishing too many drawings of scantily-dressed girls in suggestive poses. But it survived long enough for Aurier to make the name for himself as an art critic on which Gauguin's future hopes depended. And it gave the painter what he needed most, a modernist literary review which would provide a platform for discussion of his own work and ideas on art. Anything, even hostility, was better than silence. During its brief existence, the review published eight important articles on painting, five by Aurier, two by Gauguin, and one by Bernard. In addition, Aurier published two short notes under the pseudonymn of Luc le Flâneur.[73] All eight were concerned in one way or another with publicizing the work of Gauguin and those painters associated with him and cultivating an heroic legend of the avant-garde from which these painters would benefit.

The second issue of the review contains two items by Aurier. The first is one half of a surprisingly favourable review of the work of Henner, newly elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts; the second, signed by Luc le Flâneur, is a brief description of works which could be seen in the shop-windows of dealers known to be sympathetic to contemporary painting. Henner is praised in terms which make their first appearance in Aurier's art criticism:

> Ainsi que la plupart des vraiment poètes, Henner ne possédait point l'esprit d'analyse. Par nature il *voyait simple*, sans détails, sans complication de vaines minuties. Presque toujours les artistes ainsi nativement doués sont prédestinés aux grandes œuvres symboliques et décoratives, aux vastes compositions murales. Henner, au contraire, et cette anomalie est une des remarquables caractéristiques de son tempérament, avait une naturelle tendance au restreignement des conceptions, à la simplification des sujets, au resserrement du cadre. Ces deux natives prédispositions, dont l'union n'est guère commune, il s'efforça de les adroitement combiner, de les perfectionner, de les compléter. Le résultat fut ce qu'on sait . . . une multitude de vraiment belles œuvres remarquables surtout par la générale simplification de tous leurs éléments, des tableautins par la dimension, des fresques par l'esprit, par la synthèse du dessin, du concept et de la couleur. (p. 18)

In his repeated emphasis on simplification and integration of the picture surface, on the relevance of the decorative principles of mural painting and on a synthetic approach which by implication distinguishes Henner from both his academic colleagues and the Neo-Impressionists, Aurier takes Dujardin's analysis of Anquetin further in the direction of the break with Impressionism which Gauguin wished to see established publicly. Henner is praised in opposition to 'tel ou tel artiste strictement naturaliste, copiant servilement ses sensations et rien que ses sensations (la nature vue à travers un tempérament . . .') (p. 10). Henner, unlike Gauguin, has no place in modernist histories of Post-Impressionism, with the result that art historians have overlooked the extent to which the premisses of Aurier's article on Gauguin are already contained in this earlier review. The question which remains is: why Henner? Twelve months earlier, Aurier had dismissed two of his paintings with contempt.[74] Indeed, Henner was the epitome of the official, commercially successful painter most derided in avant-garde rhetoric. His paintings of nymphs and goddesses, in their refined eroticism not so much nude as undressed, fetched huge prices from the 1860s onwards.[75] In addition, as a native of Bernwiller who had chosen to remain French after the debacle of Sedan, he had become something of a 'peintre national' among the same revanchist establishment that Aurier was to ridicule in his July article, 'Concurrence'. If Aurier had the reservations about Henner's work that one feels he must have had, one can only assume that he preferred to silence them for the sake of linking the name of this establishment figure and conservative painter to the pictorial trends with which Gauguin and Bernard were from 1888 identified.

Aurier's second article, 'En quête des choses d'art', is a short advert for his new allegiances in painting. He urges his readers to visit Tanguy's shop in the rue Clauzel where they will find 'd'incomparables merveilles de Cézane [sic]', 'des toiles de Vincent, formidables de fougue, d'intensité, d'ensoleillement' and 'd'une synthèse de dessin, de composition et de couleur digne de tels maîtres primitifs, des vues de Bretagne d'Émile Bernard' (p. 14). In the boulevard Montmartre, 'chez Van Gog [sic]', they will find 'des toiles merveilleuses de ce grand poète, Gauguin; entre autres, un printanier *Paysage de Pont-Avesnes* [sic], d'un style tant pur, d'une si délicate harmonie, un *Presbytère* d'une délicieuse mélancholie et *Deux Bretonnes* en un pré qu'enclosent des murailles enfeuillagées' (p. 14). It is an interesting fact, in view of the prominence which Aurier gave in his 1891 article to the *Vision après le sermon*, that he does not mention it here despite the fact that the painting, like the presbytery scene to which Aurier does refer, had returned to Paris from Brussels by the third week of March.[76] No doubt he too was aware of the hostility which the *Vision* had aroused there. For these short notices certainly bear Gauguin's mark even if only indirectly, through the intermediary of Bernard. To begin with, there is the praise for the two painters from the original Impressionist group for whom Gauguin still had a kind word — Guillaumin, whom he considered to be his pupil and Degas, whom he considered to be his master. Then there is the attack on Neo-Impressionism implied in the praise for 'des scènes campagnardes de Pissaro [sic], ancienne manière', since 'cette ancienne manière nous paraît bien préférable à celle qu'il a depuis quelque temps adoptée, sous prétexte de coloration scientifique par décomposition et recomposition de la lumière' (p. 14).

These months were a period of intense activity on Aurier's part. On 15 April, another Symbolist review, *La Pléiade*, had reappeared with Aurier as one of its main contributors. In addition to his short story, *Aïeule*, and extracts from his long poem, 'L'Œuvre maudit', he published there two important pieces of art criticism, the first on the annual Salon, the second on the centenary retrospective.[77] In the first, he writes scathingly on the relationship between the pictorial styles which dominate salon painting and the rapidly-expanding art market. In the second, he warns those who invest in art that the lesson of the centenary retrospective of French painting is that investment in official painting is a sure way of losing money. Together the two articles formed a natural introduction for the proposed review of the Volponi exhibition, which was announced in *Le Moderniste* but never written.

In his first article, Aurier notes that developments in art instruction and investment during the second half of the nineteenth century have transformed attitudes to painting as a career among the middle and upper classes:

En effet, je ne crois pas qu'on ait jamais vu, à aucune époque, pareille profusion de peintres. Chaque jour des milliers de jeunes gens se découvrent l'irrésistible

vocation de la palette. Les parents, loin de protester, comme les parents légendaires d'artistes, encouragent. C'est que le public se persuade de plus en plus que la peinture est mieux qu'un art, une sorte de négoce pas fatigant . . . et incomparablement plus lucratif que la droguerie et la nouveauté . . . On se chuchote, dans les arrière-boutiques, les cotes fantastiques des petites épinaleries des Meissonier, et des grandes saloperies des Bouguereau. (pp. 59–60)

This is the sort of polemic in which Aurier excelled. Like all polemic, it offers simple explanations for complex social change. In fact, it was the teaching reforms made in 1863 at the École des Beaux-Arts which were responsible for the legitimization of the artistic profession to which Aurier refers.[78] These were themselves a response to the need to free artistic education in France from the conservative control of the Academy. British progress in the industrial arts was, by 1863, posing a serious threat to France's traditional supremacy in this area (and therefore to her exports) so the development of art instruction was seen as an economic necessity. Aurier would have known this, but for his Salon review history was not what he needed. Instead, a simplified, Aunt Sally concept of official art was necessary in order to create the confrontation with which to foster the heroic legend of the avant-garde. Besides, Aurier shared with the more conservative elements in the Academy the mistrust of what was believed to be the democratic spirit which lay behind the 1863 reforms. He concentrates on the way in which the growth industry of painting has made the consecration of an award in the annual Salon more important than ever to painters and their prospective customers. For this, the painter's submission to prevailing fashions in subject-matter and modes of representation was essential. The remainder of the first article analyses the stylistic consequences which this submission to economic factors entails.

The centenary retrospective, in which the work of Manet and Courbet hangs alongside that of Delacroix and Ingres, confirms the lessons of the Salon: 'Chaque jour amène la conversion de quelqu'un des détracteurs d'antan, et ces néophytes de la dernière heure ne sont pas les moins enthousiastes devant les chefs-d'œuvre qui les faisaient pouffer ou s'indigner, il y a vingt ans' (p. 103). Only a few weeks later, the sale of the Secrétan collection was enrolled to vindicate Aurier's interpretation of French nineteenth-century art history as the triumph of the avant-garde over official art. Millet's *Angelus*, for which the painter could not find a buyer during his lifetime, fetched a staggering 567,000 francs. *Le Moderniste*, far from maintaining Symbolism's allegedly ivory-tower detachment from such vulgar matters as the commercial value of art, published full details of the prices fetched by each painting.[79] Gauguin and Bernard, in their articles in *Le Moderniste*, returned to the same themes.

It only remained for Aurier to write an enthusiastic review of the Volponi exhibition. In the 27 June issue of *Le Moderniste*, he inserted the following note:

Quoi qu'il en soit, cette petite Exposition, que je me suis empressé d'aller visiter, m'a paru très curieuse. J'ai cru remarquer dans la plupart des œuvres exposées, et plus particulièrement dans celles de Gauguin, Émile Bernard, Anquetin, etc., une tendance marquée au synthétisme du dessin, de la composition et de la couleur, ainsi qu'une recherche de simplification des moyens qui m'a paru fort intéressante par ce temps d'habileté et de truquage à outrance.

Le Moderniste, d'ailleurs, reviendra, en un spécial et plus important article, sur cette courageuse tentative.

This second, more important article was never written despite the fact that in the confusion surrounding the Volponi exhibition it was badly needed. Though Gauguin had returned to Brittany in August, the exhibition continued until November. One must assume that Aurier was too involved in his other literary activities to find the time. It is also difficult to be sure just how well he and Gauguin knew each other at this stage. In August, he sent the painter one half of Bernard's article in *Le Moderniste* and received in reply Gauguin's article, 'Qui trompe-t-on ici?', which he published the following month.[80] Though Gauguin asked Aurier for a copy should the article be published, he had still not received it in November despite writing again to Aurier in October.[81] Aurier's silence over the next few months increasingly exasperated Gauguin. In June 1890, he complained to Bernard: 'A deux lettres Aurier ne *m'a pas répondu* telle une merde de chien le long d'un mur.'[82] Bernard (and Aurier) got the message, for in a letter to Bernard the following month, Gauguin offered a sarcastic 'Merci à Aurier pour sa bonne volonté'[83] which presumbably means that in the meantime Bernard had won from Aurier a promise to write the article which would appear in the *Mercure de France*. In September, Gauguin ended another letter to Bernard with: 'Et l'article d'Aurier?'.[84] The fact that during this period, Aurier published in the *Mercure de France* and the *Revue indépendante* articles on Van Gogh, Pissarro, Meissonier and Raffaelli can have done little for Gauguin's patience.

Aurier's article on Van Gogh inaugurated the art criticism of the *Mercure de France* and was the first of a series of studies which he wrote under the general title of 'Les Isolés'.[85] The ambition to achieve for painters the impact created for poetry by Verlaine's *Poètes maudits* of 1883 is transparent in the choice of title.[86] The article itself confirms this decadent lineage. It is the first element in the creation of the legend of Van Gogh as the crazed genius whose psychological and social alienation derived from and authenticated his unique vision.[87] It is also the first major example of what will be Aurier's characteristic critical method. If, for Gauguin, Seurat's art dictated the terms of avant-garde theory and practice, so, for Aurier, Fénéon's articles on Seurat and the Neo-Impressionists provided the model to be surpassed. An opening paragraph, part prose, part prose poem, in which Aurier attempts to create a verbal equivalent of the visual impact of the work discussed, draws on certain features of Fénéon's language and syntax.[88] The subsequent account of the painting's

historical relationship of the realist and the symbolist traditions in art is Aurier's attempt to surpass what he no doubt thought of as Fénéon's purely technical description of Seurat's scientific method.

In order to create in the opening paragraph a verbal equivalent of Van Gogh's painting, Aurier draws on literary models which were part of the Symbolist canon. The first is Baudelaire, ten lines of whose 'Rêve parisien' are quoted as an introduction to the text. Baudelaire's metallic and mineral vision of Parisian architecture vindicates in Aurier's eyes Van Gogh's imaginative transformation of 'la laide vie réelle'. In addition, the poem is dedicated to Constantin Guys. By placing at the head of his text this reminder of the role played in French nineteenth-century painting by the author of *Les Fleurs du mal*, Aurier is displaying both the source of his vocation and the justification of his method. As he said the following year in a review of Henry de Groux:

> . . . la meilleure critique picturale sera toujours celle faite par un poète. Ces ensembles d'idées . . . qui composent essentiellement l'œuvre vraiment d'art et que j'ai appelés le prolongement spirituel, il les précisera, lui, le poète, en les transposant en son langage propre, vers ou prose. . . .[89]

For his lurid description of the feverish, satanic intensity which seems to him to characterize Van Gogh's painting, Aurier turns to Huysmans's account in *A Rebours* of the art of Gustave Moreau.[90] Thus, Van Gogh's skies are 'taillés dans l'éblouissement des saphirs ou des turquoises' or resemble 'des coulées de métaux et de cristaux en fusion'. His atmospheres 'semblent s'exhaler de fantastiques fournaises où se volatiseraient des ors et des diaments et des gemmes singulières', his landscapes seem 'sculptés en d'inconnus minéraux, polis, miroitants, irisés, féeriques' and his flowers are 'de richissimes joailleries'. Van Gogh's art appears in Aurier's text after transiting through his literary admirations.

In formal terms, Aurier's verbal equivalent of what he considered to be Van Gogh's infernal vision consists of a single sentence of forty-one lines in which descriptive elements accumulate within, and are reinforced by, a syntactical structure based on the repetition of simple linguistic units. Four adverbial clauses — 'Sous des ciels . . . sous des ciels . . . sous l'incessant et formidable ruissellement . . . dans des atmosphères . . .' — in which Van Gogh's skies and atmospheres are charged with metaphors of violence, culminate in line ten in the dramatic '— c'est' which opens a sequence of eight main clauses. The following three, each of similar 6–8 line length, are introduced by 'ce sont', after which the 'c'est' construction returns four times in the last eight lines of the description as the incantation accelerates to its climax. Aurier uses the nominal construction associated with literary Impressionism, neologisms, postponed verbs, inversion of word-order and repetitions to reinforce his highly-charged metaphors.[91] In this way, their accumulated visual and aural energy is moulded by syntax into a rhythm whose role is to produce upon the

reader the same sort of assault on the senses as that created by the original paintings. The climax of his 'poem' will illustrate the general idea:

> . . . c'est l'universelle et folle et aveuglante coruscation des choses; c'est la matière, c'est la nature toute entière tordue frénétiquement, paroxysée, montée aux combles de l'exacerbation; c'est la forme devenant le cauchemar, la couleur devenant flammes, laves et pierreries, la lumière se faisant incendie, la vie, fièvre chaude.

Unlike Fénéon, in whose art criticism stylistic features are subordinated to the ambition to provide as precise and succinct a description of painting as the verbal medium will allow, Aurier attempts to create a poetic prose equivalent in its emotional intensity and formal sophistication to the painting which inspired it.

In his 'spiritual prolongation' of these images, Aurier faces up to the difficulty of defining the painter's place within the Dutch tradition. He argues that Van Gogh's art shares the realist ambition of Dutch painting but lacks its restraint, its decorum. Like the great Dutch masters of the past, Van Gogh seeks to render the natural world as truthfully as possible. 'Il a subi les inéluctables lois ataviques' (p. 26). But he is also 'une sorte de géant ivre', a 'cerveau en ébullition, déversant sa lave dans tous les ravins de l'art', a 'terrible et affolé génie' (p. 26). He is, therefore, 'un réaliste dans toute la force du terme' (p. 26) that is, a symbolist. In Van Gogh's work, therefore, Zola's Naturalism and Aurier's Symbolism are, in theory at least, reconciled. Aurier rewrites Zola's definition of 'la nature vue à travers un tempérament',[92] as 'ce moulage de l'objectif, toujours un, dans des subjectifs, toujours divers' (p. 26). The difference is that his objectively-existing reality is not that of Zola but of Platonic ideas. The forms of the material world are signs of the Idea which informs the world. Van Gogh's painting reveals 'la continuelle recherche du signe essentiel de chaque chose' (p. 26). The extreme sensitivity of this 'hyperesthésique, nettement symptômatisé' (p. 27) enables him to perceive the hidden meanings of lines, colours, and forms and to enter into contact with Platonic objectivity:

> Sans doute, comme tous les peintres de sa race, il est très conscient de la matière, de son importance et de sa beauté, mais aussi, le plus souvent, cette enchanteresse matière, il ne la considère que comme une sorte de merveilleux langage destiné à traduire l'Idée. C'est, presque toujours, un symboliste . . . Dans presque toutes ses toiles, sous cette enveloppe morphique, sous cette chair très chair, sous cette matière très matière, gît . . . une pensée, une Idée, et cette Idée, essentiel substratum de l'œuvre, en est, en même temps, la cause efficiente et finale. (p. 27)

Definitions of this objective world of Ideas prove elusive. On the only occasion that Aurier attempts to provide one, he resorts to a more banal explanation of the role of suns and sunflowers in Van Gogh's work in terms of 'quelque vague et glorieuse allégorie héliomythique' (p. 28). But Aurier's main

objective in the article is to confront realist and symbolist traditions in painting and to present the latter as the former's true destination. Once this philosophical position is established, Aurier's formal analysis of Van Gogh's painting is directed at gaining respectibility for the stylistic innovations defined in Pont-Aven by Gauguin and by Bernard. While preparing his article, he was able to draw on the latter's first-hand account and notes of the Brittany work and of Van Gogh's art.[93] Thus Aurier speaks of Van Gogh's 'souvent téméraire simplification des formes' (p. 26). His art stems from his wish to 'inventer une peinture très simple, populaire, quasiment enfantine' (p. 28). *La Berceuse* is 'cette gigantesque et géniale image d'Épinal' (p. 28), its creator a primitive. This painting is part of a wider 'tendance vers la simplification de l'art' (p. 28). These were all terms in which Gauguin spoke of his own achievement in his Brittany work of 1888–89.

Van Gogh thanked Aurier for the article but was clearly distressed by it.[94] He could have done without Aurier's insistence on his isolation and mental imbalance.[95] There was also the tone of the article, with its ritual abuse of rival artists, its factionalism so far removed from Van Gogh's own sensibility, particularly as one of the painters derided was Meissonier, for whom his genuine admiration is well-known.[96] More significant, however, was his sense that the realist commitment in his work had been sacrificed to Aurier's own decadent and Neoplatonist convictions. He tried as tactfully as he could to extricate himself from Aurier's interpretation. Of the article, he wrote: 'Je l'aime beaucoup comme œuvre d'art en soi, je trouve que vous faites de la couleur avec vos paroles; enfin dans votre article, je retrouve mes toiles, mais meilleures qu'elles ne sont en réalité, plus riches, plus significatives' (p. 265). The fact is that despite Aurier's reference to the painter's place in the Dutch realist tradition, the emphasis of his article is anti-realist. During the fateful Autumn of 1888 in Arles, Van Gogh and Gauguin had disagreed violently about the respective roles of naturalist and symbolist procedures in art. Van Gogh had also been dismayed by Gauguin's driving ambition to supplant the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists. The following remarks contain Van Gogh's discreet reproach that Aurier had used Gauguin's language rather than his own:

> Voyez-vous, il me semble si difficile de faire la séparation entre impressionnisme et autre chose; je ne vois pas l'utilité d'autant d'esprit sectaire que nous avons vu ces derniéres années. (p. 267)

Fifteen months later, Aurier would base his consecration of Gauguin on just this distinction which Van Gogh found difficult to maintain. Van Gogh's remark is the first resistance which Aurier's theory encountered. It would not be the last.

Two months after the Van Gogh article, Aurier published a review of the Pissarro exhibition held at the Boussod and Valadon galleries.[97] That it

appeared in the *Revue indépendante* confirms his rising reputation.[98] In 1885–86, Pissarro had rallied to Neo-Impressionism and in his review Aurier expresses his admiration for this willingness to question and renew his aims as an artist. But other elements are also present. He praises the artist but derides his method, 'ce procédé pointilliste qui m'apparaît . . . le plus compliqué et le plus difficile de tous les procédés possibles' (p. 508). In other words, Pissarro is excluded from criticism of Seurat and the Neo-Impressionists. The complexity of the pointillist technique violated 'ce péremptoire axiome de l' *actio minima*, qui est un des plus incontestables de l'esthétique: *Il faut obtenir le plus grand effet possible avec les moindres moyens possibles*' (p. 509). Aurier's praise adopts the by now familiar terms:

> Au reste ces qualités du rhythmisme [sic] des contours, cette connaissance de la *mystérieuse musique* linéaire, nous les retrouvons dans: *la Cueillette des pommes*, cet admirable tableautin qui, par sa simplicité, par la synthèse de son dessin, par la grandeur de sa composition fait songer aux primitifs florentins. (p. 512, Aurier's emphasis)

In *Les Faneuses*, the colours 's'unissent en un hymne profond de gaîté douce, religieuse et bien portante' (pp. 511–12). The socialist and anarchist Pissarro may have been surprised to discover religious elements in his work. Then again, perhaps not, since he would have known of Aurier's commitment to the religious theme in the work of Gauguin and Bernard. It is not a coincidence that Aurier's article should end with a footnote praising Gauguin's bas-relief *Soyez amoureuses et vous serez heureuses*, also on show in the exhibition. In 1886, Gauguin had broken off relations with Pissarro on account of his conversion to Neo-Impressionism. In the months which follow the publication of Aurier's article on Pissarro, however, we find him trying to mend fences with his former teacher as part of his plan to extract an article from Mirbeau on his forthcoming sale in the Hôtel Drouot.[99] Deliberately or otherwise, Aurier's article has its place in this context. In it, real admiration and short-term interests coincide.

In his article on Meissonier, Aurier returned superficially to the theme of the relationship between official art and ruling class ideology that he had discussed a year before in his review of the Universal Exhibition.[100] Early in 1890, Meissonier had led a revolt within the Société des Artistes Français, responsible for the organization of the annual Salon, and formed a rival Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.[101] Its first Salon was the pretext for more vintage Aurier abuse of the painter, his work, and his public. 'La foule respectueuse des adorateurs grouille à distance, les yeux écarquillés, les cous béatement tendus, béant d'admiration, bavant d'enthousiasme. La presse ne parle de Lui qu'avec vénération' (p. 324). He sustains it at this level for six pages. Again, the caricature strains to promote the belief that the question of painting in 1890 is to be raised solely in terms of a conflict between an élite, avant-garde force of

renewal and a debilitating academic realism of which Meissonier is the model. Again, the forced antagonism replaces analysis of the cultural origins and implications of Meissonier's gestures. The subject of the article is, therefore, Aurier himself and the confidence and authority with which he is assuming his role as Symbolism's foremost spokesman on painting. In this assault on such an eminent national figure as Meissonier, he is displaying his avant-garde credentials. In the article on Raffaelli, he writes with condescending tolerance of this honest, conscientious but superficial illustrator whom he calls 'le premier et peut-être l'unique *peintre anecdotier* de notre temps'.[102] Most noteworthy is the distinction he draws between Raffaelli, with his faithful but laborious rendering of external details, and Daumier, who captured what Aurier called the essence of reality:

> Daumier! Ici, point de vaine analyse! point de myopes microscopies de rides, de poils, de durillons! . . . Rien qu'une large synthèse de formes générales, du geste, de la silhouette, rien qu'une indication de la ligne d'ensemble pour cette magistrale fixation du caractère, rien que le strictement indispensable! C'est moins *exact*, peut-être, mais indiscutablement, c'est plus *vrai*. (p. 327, Aurier's emphasis)

* * *

There is a sense, therefore, in which Aurier had, in all of his art criticism since the creation of *Le Moderniste illustré*, been preparing himself to write the article on Gauguin. No doubt the painter's return to Paris from Brittany in the autumn of 1890 and in desperate financial straits helped to concentrate Aurier's mind. But for nearly two years, Gauguin and/or Bernard had been playing an important part, directly or indirectly, in his education into painting's means. Whether he took up Bernard's offer to make available Gauguin's notes and letters is not known, but they would hardly have been necessary.[103] Two of Gauguin's visiting cards containing notes on *Le Christ au Jardin des Oliviers* and *Calvaire breton* were found among Aurier's papers but, here again, he hardly needed to use them in his article.[104] When we remember that Gauguin had left on consignment with Boussod & Valadon no less than forty-one works,[105] Aurier's choice of *Vision après le sermon* as the focus of his article and the subject of the prose poem with which it begins confirms that he was aware of the importance which the painter attached to this particular painting as the talisman of the new style. It is with Aurier's 'spiritual prolongations' rather than his awareness of the formal premisses of Gauguin's painting, that the problems begin.

The article starts with an epigraph from Plato with which to define at the outset the philosophical dimension on to which, in Aurier's view, the painting leads. This is followed by a prose poem in which he attempts, as in the Van Gogh article, to create a literary equivalent of the painting.[106] Once this

transfer from image to discourse is accomplished, Aurier returns in the rest of the article to the philosophical analysis in which the painting's 'true' meaning is explained. The epigraph reminds us that man is a prisoner of the world of the senses and is unable to understand the revelation of the world situated beyond. The prose poem seeks to reproduce the 'rustic and superstitious simplicity' of the painting by employing several traditional features of the fairy tale, with its magical setting and its simple question and answer format. This in turn serves as intermediary between the epigraph and the philosophical interpretation.

The prose poem of approximately fifty lines is divided into three paragraphs. The first (lines 1–3) introduces the Biblical characters and the legendary theatre of their struggle. The second (4–32) has as its theme the disappearance of the material world, the third (32–52), the revelation of the spiritual world. The two main paragraphs take the form of question and reply. In paragraph two, Aurier's imaginary naive spectator/listener is invited on the basis of certain naturalistic details to interpret the painting via stereotypes of Brittany and its inhabitants. In paragraph three, the authoritative reply shows up the limits of this approach by explaining the painting in terms of a divine presence, suddenly and miraculously made visible.

The opening paragraph immediately transfers the image to a narrative mode appropriate to its subject, that of the fairy-tale. The scene is set 'far, far away, on a fabulous hill', absent from both painting and Biblical narration but present in many of the 'extraordinaires contes un peu fantastiques' which form, in Aurier's mind at least, the sole literary experience of these Breton peasant-women. But the first sentence is also very deliberately structured by three linguistic elements of almost identical length (prepositional phrase (itself composed of three progressively longer elements), relative clause, main clause). Each new linguistic unit places the peasant women at a greater distance from their vision so as to dramatize the appearance of the two Biblical figures.

The second paragraph narrates the representation of the Breton women. It has three main sections, each differentiated grammatically. The first consists of statements ('des femmes regardent' (6)), the third of questions ('Mais alors où' (24)) with the conditionals of the second ('On les dirait' (16)) forming a transition between the two. In the first section, the opening clause states from the outset the visual dilemma of the image with the identification of the figures of legend and the extraordinary reversal in their size. Once this context of miracle is established, three sentences each identify one important element of the scene in turn: peasant-women, Brittany and the narration of a story. The present tense is used throughout. The shift to the conditional in line 16 takes the narration into the enigma of the image. Each new piece of evidence heightens the mystery. As in the preceding section, the repetition of a small number of linguistic elements ('on les dirait' and 'tant' + adjective + 'est') increases the suspense for the imaginary child(-like) listener. The second

conditional phrase takes this process further. The silent and devoted attitude of the women evokes other associated images of the religious service (odour of incense, sound of the priest's voice). This metonymic generation quickly provides a complete context, that of the prevailing idea of Brittany, with its poor churches in tiny and impoverished communities and culminates in the apparent clarification of 'Oui, sans doute . . .'. Finally, in another standard device of the fairy-tale, this clarification is also revealed to be illusory and increases the dramatic impact on the naive imagination of the multiple questions which close the paragraph. The final question repeats that of the opening paragraph. It returns more mysterious for the intervening description and questions and with two important variants. The use of 'le surgissement de . . .' corresponds to no detail in the painting but is a verbal analogue to the extraordinary and sudden nature of the apparition. The inversion of 'rutilant vermillon' stresses the colour quality.

The third paragraph provides the authoritative reply. The 'Ah! c'est que . . .' (32) retains the simple story-telling tone in which the mystery is now finally resolved. Naturalistic details have ceased to exist, expelled by the literary talent of the village Bossuet whose Voice makes visible the Word of God and, with it, the painting's source and finality. The incantatory series of 'et c'est sa Voix' culminates in the past participle, 'surgie' (47), which itself completes the transfer from parable to revelation ('c'est la lutte biblique' (2), 'le surgissement de cette colline' (29)', 'et c'est sa Voix . . . surgie . . .') which the painting enacts.[107] In both image and prose poem, the efficacy of the sermon actuates the medium's appropriate eloquence, its 'lumineuse hypotypose' (38). Both take their source in and manifest the divine origin and potential of the Biblical word, what Aurier calls 'l'énigme du Poème'. His poem has none of the painting's force but it does show how familiar he was with Gauguin's own interpretation of *Vision après le sermon*.

The enigma begins the commentary which follows on immediately from the prose poem:

> Or, devant cette merveilleuse toile de Paul Gauguin, qui illumine vraiment l'énigme du Poème, aux paradisiaques heures de la primitive humanité; qui révèle les charmes ineffables du Rêve, du Mystère et des voiles symboliques que ne soulèvent qu'à demi les mains des simples; qui résout, pour le bon liseur, l'éternel problème psychologique de la possibilité des religions, des politiques et des sociologies; qui montre enfin la farouche bête primordiale domptée par les filtres enchanteurs de la Chimère; . . .

We have no way of knowing what Gauguin made of this mixture of interpretation and pure Symbolist rhetoric, of this vast and, after all, very flattering programme. As we have seen, the existence of Aurier's article mattered as much to him as its content. Yet if Aurier's prose poem on *Vision après le sermon* suggests an awareness of Gauguin's intentions in the painting, the

commentary which follows illustrates the problems which Aurier faced when the time came to pass from the painting to his own aesthetic theory. The four relative clauses in which he explains the meaning of the painting seem to bear on it to different degrees. The first is unproblematic, showing as it does Aurier's awareness of Gauguin's belief (or desire to believe) that a sympathetic study of the present-day Breton peasant-woman's simple faith could lead the artist back to the sources of his emotional and spiritual life. The second summarizes in period Symbolist terminology the election of the artist to an exemplary responsibility. The third transforms the painting's 'grande simplicité rustique et superstitieuse' into a vast lexicon containing 'pour le bon liseur' the key to the transcendent Idea which regulates the material order of things. The fourth offers for the Biblical struggle an explanation which is Aurier's own selection from an anthology of Symbolist themes. When exposed to the Biblical message through the sermon, the Breton peasant-women, thanks to their (supposed) geographical and moral remoteness from an effete and degenerate Parisian civilization, were able to re-enter into contact with the mysterious Text from which the world derived its meaning. Aurier's belief that his own Neoplatonism would provide this text leads him to impose on Gauguin's painting meanings extraneous to it. Its subject facilitated this operation, for both Biblical text and Neoplatonist theory contain a mystical approach to the symbol. But the two are not the same. It is true (as we shall see in Chapter 3) that Gauguin felt that Biblical language was in its very nature relevant to his theories of painting's expressive qualities, but he was no Neoplatonist. Aurier's disregard for this distinction would have serious implications.

In response to the toast by Mallarmé with which this chapter began, Gauguin rose to reply: 'Je vous aime tous'.[108] But he can have had few illusions about the quality of this harmony. I have tried to reconstruct the historical context to the relationship between Gauguin and Aurier and to the article with which the poet promoted the painter because this context is necessary if we are to understand why the harmony of March 1891 was to prove to be a fragile one. For Aurier's article would inflame rather than silence the controversies within the avant-garde surrounding Gauguin's painting, increase rather than diminish the painter's dependence on Aurier and the access to the readers of the *Mercure de France* which Aurier provided. And as far as this last point is concerned, Gauguin was to be ill served by fate. Within eighteen months of March 1891 Aurier was dead,[109] replaced at the *Mercure* by the unspeakable Camille Mauclair whose idea of Symbolism most certainly did not include the painting of Paul Gauguin. It is to the Neoplatonist framework which Aurier provided for Gauguin's work and the oppositions which this interpretation aroused within the avant-garde that we must now turn.

CHAPTER 2

AURIER AND GAUGUIN: CRITICAL RESPONSES

Modernist art history has generally accounted for the production of twentieth-century painting in terms of a one-dimensional and linear development of artistic styles. According to this account, what we think of as modern art began when 'Post-Impressionism' emerged as a response to, or reaction against, the 'crisis' of Impressionism, this crisis itself being usually diagnosed as an impasse encountered at the level of style.[1] Such a partial explanation of paintings as complex as those commonly but arbitrarily grouped under these labels has required the simplification or erasure of much historical evidence. The part played by Aurier's article on Gauguin in the standard histories of late nineteenth-century French painting is a case in point. There is of course no disputing the fact that, in his article, Aurier made what was chronologically the first major public statement of a break with Impressionism and that he saw this break as being what was modern about Gauguin's work. But as I tried to show in the previous chapter, there was a context to this statement, a context created among other things by Gauguin's ambition for his art and need for money, by Aurier's growing reputation within the literary avant-garde, by the many factions formed by painters and writers within this same avant-garde. Art history has generally underestimated this context and given Aurier's declaration a definitive status that it should not have. For it is a simple fact that within a year he had in effect retracted it. His loyalty to Gauguin's art was unchanged but he toned down the break with Impressionism with which, in March 1891, he had defined the painter's importance. We need now to examine the article's reception by its first public, by those painters and writers who felt most deeply involved with the issues it raised. This chapter will focus on four such responses in order to see why Aurier's interpretation of Gauguin's art was rejected by the majority of those at whom it was aimed. Having examined these responses, we shall then see how Aurier replied to them indirectly in a second major article on pictorial Symbolism. In this way, Aurier's writings will help to focus the debates taking place at that time around the nature and function of painting.

Before examining these questions, however, one further element needs to be taken into account. Aurier's article in the *Mercure de France* was only the second of two major public statements of support for Gauguin in the spring of 1891. The first was Octave Mirbeau's article in the *Echo de Paris* which was republished in a longer version in the *Figaro* and served as an introduction to

the catalogue of the Gauguin sale in the Hôtel Drouot.[2] This was aimed at a different public from that of the *Mercure de France* and used different arguments. It opens with a highly romanticized biography of the painter, incorporating those elements which best supported the myth of himself which Gauguin wished to project: ancestors through whose example of intellectual and political independence and martyrdom his fatal destiny was shaped;[3] a comfortable childhood dominated by the spiritual example of Fourierism which nourished his sense of the divine (pp. 4–5); adolescent wanderings in far-away places which filled his eye and mind with luxurious visions and beckoned him to seek out the mysterious origins of his race (p. 6); his career in the Bourse, 'puissament évocatrice du mystère humain' (p. 6), and which is oddly alleged to have deepened Gauguin's 'douloureux amour de Jésus' (pp. 6–7); the sudden and overwhelming revelation of his artistic calling which culminates in the spectacular renunciation of his career in favour of art (p. 8); the decisive period in Martinique with its 'mystère presque religieux', its 'abondance sacrée d'Eden' (p. 10). For each phase of Gauguin's life, Mirbeau adapts the theme, proposed by Mallarmé, of Gauguin 'ce transfuge de la civilisation',[4] embroidering his biography with the literary and cultural myth of the noble savage.

When he finally turns to Gauguin's art, Mirbeau, like Aurier, — and it is the one feature which the two articles share — eliminates reference to other painters from whose work Gauguin might have learnt, insisting instead on Gauguin's highly original fusion of conflicting cultural and spiritual aspirations:

> Il y a dans cette œuvre un mélange inquiétant et savoureux de splendeur barbare, de lithurgie [sic] catholique, de rêverie hindoue, d'imagerie gothique, de symbolisme obscur et subtil; il y a des réalités âpres et des vols éperdus de poésie par où Gauguin crée un art absolument personnel, et tout nouveau; art de peintre et de poëte, d'apôtre et de démon, et qui angoisse. (p. 10)

Where Aurier attempts to create for his literary public a poetic equivalent of a Gauguin painting, Mirbeau adopts the standard practice of nineteenth-century art journalism which consists of following a brief description of the painting's subject with the story contained implicitly in the artist's treatment of it. Thus, in *Le Christ jaune*, the Christ figure, whose emaciated body has, according to Mirbeau, 'comme des regrets de l'ancienne torture', seems to ask: 'Et pourtant, si mon martyre avait été inutile?' (p. 11). By describing the women at the foot of the cross as indifferent rather than contrite, and the Christ figure as melancholy rather than passive, Mirbeau largely misinterprets the painting, but this is neither here nor there. It is the approach which matters. The complexity of the picture's figurative and discursive elements is replaced by a simple and familiar moral tale of the anguish of the Christ/artist figure in a hostile environment. The success of the Gauguin sale confirms just how finely-attuned Mirbeau's sense of his readership really was.

Gauguin was pleased with the article and well he might be.[5] He had worked hard to get it and having spent ten years on the stock exchange, he recognized good publicity when he saw it. But though it guaranteed the success of his sale and created a myth of the painter's life which flattered his image of himself, it did not address the issues on which the avant-garde in 1891 was engaged. Which is where Aurier came in. For it is the complementarity of the two articles, of *L'Echo de Paris* and the *Mercure de France*, the hard sell of the one, the avant-garde credentials of the other, which showed how effective Gauguin could be in the pursuit of his own objectives — and which caused most irritation. Pissarro, whom Gauguin had used to reach Mirbeau, was disgusted.[6] We can be sure that he was not the only one. The same feeling is undoubtedly a factor in responses to Aurier's article.

Aurier followed his prose poem and commentary on the *Vision après le sermon* with an analysis of its implications for art history. According to Aurier, Gauguin had directed pictorial means towards the expression of Neoplatonic Ideas rather than to the representations of objects. He had made colour and line the signs of 'un immense alphabet . . . en se rappelant que le signe, pour indispensable qu'il soit, n'est rien en lui-même et que l'idée seule est tout'.[7] In the process, he had condemned the pictorial tradition of realism with its desire for ever greater fidelity in the representation of the natural world. The condemnation extended to even the most recent pictorial trends among the avant-garde. Fénéon's defence of Seurat is identified in the horrified response to Gauguin's work of 'même tel amateur, réputé intelligent et ami des juvéniles audaces au point d'admettre l'arlequinesque vision des pointillistes' (p. 156):

> —Ah! non, par exemple! . . . Celle-là est trop forte! . . . Des coiffes et des fichus de Ploermel, des Bretonnes, et de cette fin de siècle, dans un tableau qui s'intitule: *La Lutte de Jacob avec l'Ange!!* Sans doute, je ne suis pas réactionnaire, j'admets l'impressionnisme, je n'admets même que l'impressionnisme, mais . . .
>
> — Et qui donc vous a dit, mon cher monsieur, qu'il s'agissait là d'impressionnisme? (p. 156)

The outraged reaction of the intelligent amateur is that referred to earlier by Octave Maus (cf. *supra*, p. 13). It defines the basis of the painting's complexity: the mysterious relationship between the events of the Biblical legend and a group of peasant-women at the end of the nineteenth century. Aurier went on to explain this complexity in his own way by incorporating the painting's subject and formal innovations within his Neoplatonist theory of art and art history. The ten pages which follow his poetic transposition of *Vision après le sermon* culminate in his famous definition of symbolist painting. This would be:

> 1° *Idéiste*, puisque son idéal unique sera l'expression de l'Idée;
>
> 2° *Symboliste*, puisqu'elle exprimera cette Idée par des formes;
>
> 3° *Synthétique*, puisqu'elle écrira ces formes, ces signes, selon un mode de compréhension générale;

4° *Subjective*, puisque l'objet n'y sera jamais considéré en tant qu'objet, mais en tant que signe d'idée perçu par le sujet;

5° (C'est une conséquence) *décorative* — car la peinture décorative proprement dite, telle que l'ont comprise les Egyptiens, très probablement les Grecs et les Primitifs, n'est rien autre chose qu'une manifestation d'art à la fois subjectif, synthétique, symboliste et idéiste. (pp. 162–63)

The order in which the criteria are presented reflects Aurier's priorities. Expression of the Platonic Idea, the object of all art, came first. The definitions which follow all derive from it. The Idea was an essence, a universal truth whose actualization depended on the artist's mastery of a grammar of colour and form. This procedure, defined as symbolist, was also synthetist in so far as it involved the simplification of formal elements, the elimination of unnecessary naturalistic detail and the use of a formal grammar that was itself universal, in some way innate. This art was subjective for, as Aurier had said when adapting Zola's definition of Naturalism in order to apply it to Van Gogh (see above p. 23), all art was the 'moulage de l'objectif, toujours un, dans des subjectifs, toujours divers'. The fifth definition is a tautology and reflects reinterpretations of the art of the Middle Ages, of Greece and Egypt which were taking place during this period as part of a growing general interest in the decorative arts.[8]

Aurier's Neoplatonist theory was also art history for, on the basis of it, he divided painting into two historical tendencies, realism and 'idéisme' (so-called in order to distinguish it from the conventionally-idealized naturalism of academic art). In this history of art, realism, defined as 'la fidèle traduction sans nul au-delà d'une impression exclusivement sensorielle, d'une sensation' (p. 157), was necessarily inferior to 'idéisme', the material representation of Platonic Ideas. The realist painter merely reproduced the illusion of material forms which themselves lacked ontological status in the Platonic system. Impressionism was nothing other than the same error in a more sophisticated form. 'L'impressionnisme, c'est et ce ne peut être qu'une variété du réalisme, un réalisme affiné, spiritualisé, dilettantisé, mais toujours le réalisme' (p. 157). On two occasions, Aurier compares the realist and impressionist painters to prisoners in Plato's allegorical cave (p. 159, p. 160).

* * *

Aurier's proclamation of Gauguin as the leader of a pictorial movement different from and superior to Impressionism antagonized important sections of the Symbolist milieu. Maurice Denis, in his obituary article on Gauguin, described Aurier's text as 'la forme systématique et raffinée' of the painter's ideas on art.[9] It is a moot point which of these two adjectives concealed the greater unease as far as Denis was concerned: 'systématique', by which he

implied the misunderstanding of painting which resulted whenever it was forced to fit into a repressive conceptual framework, or 'raffinée', which is only a little more polite than his later reference to Aurier's Neoplatonism as 'tout le clinquant pseudo-mystique cher aux poètes'.[10] On another occasion, Denis stated that Aurier's definition 'n'a jamais été comprise des peintres'[11] but that, had they understood it, they would not have liked it since 'les formules platoniciennes d'Aurier ne convenaient pas exactement à des artistes trop amoureux de peinture, trop avide de sensation directe pour s'installer dans "le spirituel et l'intangible"'.[12] The final words of this last comment are in fact taken from Aurier's second article.[13] They summarize what Denis had retained years later of the impact of Aurier's theory of painting.

The reasons for Denis's dislike of Aurier's definitions of Symbolist painting will become clear when they are set against his own attempts in 1890 to define the lessons which might be learnt from Gauguin's work. In August of that year, he had written an important analysis of the new style. It was entitled 'Définition du néo-traditionnisme' in opposition to Seurat's Neo-Impressionism and began with a resounding formula which is always quoted as a starting-point for discussions of twentieth-century painting:

> Se rappeler qu'un tableau — avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue, ou une quelconque anecdote — est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées.[14]

Thus before Aurier defined a painting as an 'ensemble d'idées', Denis defined it as an 'ensemble de formes'. He intended his definition to be a restatement of the painter's priorities and not a call for abstract art nor for formalist criticism (even if it was interpreted retrospectively as having prepared the way for both). The rest of the article and Denis's subsequent painting and writings on art are sufficient proof that, in 1890, he could not have been envisaging such developments. It was a reminder that, as regards line and colour, the painter was not limited to a purely imitative relationship between his painting and the world. Five years later, in his preface to the catalogue of the exhibition of the 'peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes' held at the Barc de Boutteville galleries, Denis repeated the point in terms which but for one phrase are strikingly similar to those of his article. Speaking of the Pont-Aven group of painters, he wrote:

> Pour eux. . .un tableau avant d'être une représentation de quoi que ce soit, c'est une surface plane recouverte de couleurs, en un certain ordre assemblées et pour le plaisir des yeux.[15]

In the later definition, Denis replaced the phrase used in 1890, 'avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue, ou une quelconque anecdote', with 'avant d'être une représentation de quoi que ce soit'. The earlier definition refers to the subject-matter of the Salon painters with their military scenes, nudes and anecdotes, the latter to that of all types of painting, be it Salon, Impressionist or

Symbolist. By 1895, Denis must have felt that by restricting, in 1890, his attack on the narrative subject to the art of the Salon painters, he had failed to dispel the confusion prevalent among literary Symbolists as to the status of the subject in painting. Already in June 1892, in a review of an exhibition of Raffaelli's painting, he had attempted to set the record straight:

Nous nous étonnons que des critiques renseignés . . . se soient plu à confondre les tendances mystiques et allégoriques, c'est-à-dire la recherche de l'expression par le sujet, et les tendances symbolistes, c'est-à-dire la recherche de l'expression par l'œuvre d'art . . . Nous avons écrit jadis que la peinture de M. Raffaelli était un peu bien littéraire; ce qui voulait dire qu'elle emprunte au sujet beaucoup de son expression.[16]

Between January 1890 and September 1892, Aurier had published the most important series of articles on painting to emerge from the literary group. During the same period Péladan had created his Salons de la Rose+Croix.[17] As far as Denis was concerned, the two facts were related. Far from seeing in Aurier's defence of Gauguin the progress of Nabi ideas about the role in painting of flat colours and firm outlines which unify the picture surface, Denis accused those literary critics who had brought Aurier's idealist philosophy to their art criticism of having subverted the stylistic trends initiated by Gauguin and the Pont-Aven group of painters.[18] In March 1895, in a review of an exhibition of new works by Armand Séguin, a pupil of Gauguin in Le Pouldu in 1891, Denis underlined the point. Urging the public to rediscover what the 'peintres synthétistes ou symbolistes' had sought to achieve, he went on:

On ne le sait plus. De jeunes littéraires, des collégiens savants comme les appelle Gauguin, se sont mêlés de parler peinture. Ils ont brouillé toutes les notions . . . Ils ont contribué à faire verser dans la littérature, dans le trompe-l'œil idéaliste (un genre d'ailleurs vieillot) le bel effort d'art de cette École de Pont-Aven.[19]

Aurier had created the term 'idéiste' to distinguish the work of Gauguin and the Nabis from that of the 'idealist' allegories of the academic painters. Denis's point was that the distinction had not been effective, that, in response to literary definitions of pictorial Symbolism, the painters exhibiting in the Rose+Croix salons had merely replaced one type of subject-matter, that of academic art, with another taken from mystical and/or Wagnerian texts. It was Gauguin who wrote the preface for the catalogue of the Séguin exhibition and the remark which Denis quotes is contained there. 'Après la Bretagne, je revois avec plaisir, parmi ses œuvres, Séguin chez le Barc de Boutteville, dans un "petit monde" (ainsi les *Collégiens* savants désignent les lieux non officiels d'art)'.[20] Leaving aside Gauguin's sarcasm, Denis's reference to his remark in the context of an attack on literary painting was a natural one for this was a theme of Gauguin's preface:

Qu'il me suffise d'avertir le visiteur que Séguin est avant tout un cérébral — je ne dis pas, certes, 'un littéraire' — qu'il exprime non ce qu'il voit mais ce qu'il pense

par une originale harmonie de lignes, par un dessin curieusement compris dans l'arabesque. (p. 223)

That a painter should express not what he saw but what he thought was a common Gauguin criticism of the Impressionists. Elsewhere, he accused them of painting 'autour de l'œil et non au centre mystérieux de la pensée.'[21] These negative judgements of the Rose+Croix painters and of the Impressionists had in common a definition of literary painting in which the subject rather than the formal arrangement of lines and colours on a flat surface was the principal source of meaning. Denis undoubtedly felt that Aurier's writings had contributed to the failure of many of the literary Symbolists to keep this distinction clear. Aurier had interpreted *Vision après le sermon* as revealing a metaphysical Idea situated beyond the material world. His definition of 'symboliste' ('puisqu'elle exprimera cette Idée par des formes') was an attempt to reconcile his Neoplatonist premiss with the formal innovations of Gauguin's painting. This involved blurring the distinction between allegorical and symbolist procedures on which Denis's definition of literary painting was based. He did so by failing to define in any precise way the term 'formes', which would have meant one thing to a Nabi painter and something else to a writer of Neoplatonist sympathies. In the same way, Aurier's definitions of 'synthétique' and 'subjective' were designed to be broad enough to satisfy painter and writer alike. Years later, Charles Morice, in his study of Gauguin, made the same point:

Si en effet sont synthétiques toutes les œuvres d'art où les formes, les signes de l'idée sont écrites selon un mode de compréhension générale, il n'y a guère et il n'y a jamais eu que, bonnes ou mauvaises, des œuvres d'art synthétiques. Et puis, c'est au point de vue pictural seulement que nous devons nous placer ici, et il est clair que la définition d'Albert Aurier vise tous les genres et toutes les techniques d'art.[22]

For Morice as for Denis, the formal ambition of synthetism, its intensification and concentration of the natural impression by means of painting's decorative potential, had created problems for Aurier in his attempt to define pictorial symbolism in terms of a wider aspiration to the synthesis of the arts. How Aurier had arrived at his definition will be seen when it is compared to that of Maurice Denis:

Synthétiser, ce n'est pas nécessairement simplifier dans le sens de supprimer certaines parties de l'objet: c'est simplifier dans le sens de *rendre intelligible*. C'est en somme, hiérarchiser: soumettre chaque tableau à un seul rythme, à une dominante, sacrifier, subordonner, généraliser.[23]

This definition, written in 1907 with reference to Cézanne, is part of a retrospective discussion of the artistic situation in Paris in 1890. One has only to compare Denis's terms with those of Gauguin in two letters to Schuffenecker, written during the summer of 1888, to be sure of this.[24] A comparison between

Aurier's definition and that of Denis shows how Aurier skirted around the formal questions raised in the latter's second sentence in his desire to integrate pictorial synthetism within his own aesthetic system. As far as Denis was concerned, Aurier's statements that all in nature was an 'Idée signifiée', that, in a painting, 'l'objet n'y sera jamais considéré en tant qu'objet, mais en tant que signe' and that these signs would be 'written' 'selon un mode de compréhension générale' was to consolidate purely allegorical relationships between subject-matter and Platonic Idea among those less interested or less versed than Aurier in questions of pictorial form. Denis's disparaging remark about the 'trompe-l'œil idéaliste' was certainly directed at the paintings exhibited in Péladan's Salons.[25] He felt that this work was, from a formal point of view, retrograde and that its pseudo-mysticism would only drag into disrepute that movement for the renewal of religious art which Denis himself led. What is equally clear is that, in 1895, he felt that Aurier's definition of pictorial Symbolism had helped to make Rose+Croix painting philosophically respectable.

Like Denis, Pissarro felt that Aurier attached too much importance to abstract ideas and not enough to problems produced by and experienced through the medium itself. On 20 April 1891, he sent his son, Lucien, a copy of Aurier's article on Gauguin, complete with his own annotations. The accompanying letter was scathing:

> Tu verras combien ce littérateur raisonne sur une pointe d'aiguille. A l'écouter, à la rigueur il n'est pas nécessaire de dessiner ou peindre pour faire de l'art, les idées suffisent, indiquées par quelques signes — Mais il me semble que l'art n'est pas autre chose, seulement 'ces quelques signes' doivent être plus ou moins dessinées. Il est aussi nécessaire d'avoir un peu d'harmonie pour rendre ses idées — par conséquent il est bon d'avoir des sensations pour avoir des idées. Ce monsieur semble nous prendre pour des imbéciles![26]

The anger is unmistakeable for the threat was felt to be direct. In his article, Aurier had named Pissarro and Monet as the chief representatives of Impressionism so that it must have seemed to the painter that his very livelihood was threatened by Aurier's summary dismissal of Impressionism. Pissarro's annotations concentrate, therefore, on what for him was essential. He passes over Aurier's mystical definition of art and the artist and his definition of 'ideist' as opposed to 'idealist' painting but attacks on four occasions his distinction between an inferior realist art which aimed only at a servile reproduction of the sensations derived from the appearances of the natural world and a superior 'ideist' art in which the Platonic Idea informing all material reality was expressed. For the painter, this distinction was insulting and simplistic: insulting, since it implied that the realist or impressionist painter was incapable of having ideas; simplistic since sensations and ideas were interdependent anyway and this interdependence was what was artistic about art. 'Tout art est plus ou moins idéiste il n'y a pas art sans cela', he added in the margin to page 159.

Similarly, the primitive and Egyptian art which Aurier had seen as part of the synthetist tradition, was, for Pissarro, both realist and symbolist. Lucien made a similar point in an annotation of his own and in his reply to his father when he equated the sensation which Aurier derided with the emotivity which Aurier valued. In the margin to Aurier's article he asked: 'Quelle différence entre cette émotivité et la sensation rejetée tout à l'heure???' In the letter, he repeated the point:

Dans l'article d'Aurier, il y a un point que tu n'as pas noté et qui marque combien c'est vide: à un moment après avoir beaucoup aligné de mots (des mots rien que des mots) il avoue que tout ce qu'il vient de dire n'est rien si son artiste n'est pas doué du don d'ÉMOTIVITÉ, mais c'est là ce que nous appelons sensation, alors qu'a-t-il prouvé??[27]

Pissarro was furious at what he saw as a deliberate misrepresentation of Impressionism, all the more dishonest for coming only a year after he had himself been praised by the same Aurier for the religious quality of his realism (see above, p. 25). He dismissed the entire theoretical framework as no more than a restatement of commonplaces. Aurier's remark (p. 162) that the artist had the right to 'exaggerate', 'attenuate', or 'deform' lines and colours for his own purposes provoked the derisive comment: 'ceci n'est pas du Gaugin [sic] il y a beau temps que nous savons cela! c'est trop fort! Daumier *ne fait pas autre chose*' (Pissarro's emphasis). He had no doubt that Gauguin had put Aurier up to it all. Since such manifest sophistry could not be taken seriously as art history, some deeper conspiracy which transcended painting was clearly at work. His final annotation — 'mais l'heure n'a pas sonné pour cet art synthétique, il faut qu'il réponde aux idées sociales et non au retour du misticisme [sic]!' — makes it clear what Pissarro thought this conspiracy was. As an anarchist sympathizer, he saw Gauguin's religious subjects and Aurier's Neoplatonist defence of them as part of a vast ideological mystification on the part of those classes which felt threatened by the advance of socialism. He accused Gauguin of stealing the formal procedures of the *Vision* from Japanese and Byzantine art, criticized him for not directing his synthetism towards 'notre philosophie moderne qui est absolument sociale, anti-autoritaire et anti-mystique'[28] and described him and his Symbolism in the following terms:

C'est un retour en arrière. Gauguin n'est pas un voyant, c'est un malin qui a senti un retour de la bourgeoisie en arrière, par suite des grandes idées de solidarité qui germent dans le peuple . . . Les symbolistes sont dans le même cas! Qu'en penses-tu? Aussi il faut les combattre comme la peste. (pp. 234–35)

For Pissarro, the success of the Gauguin sale revealed the need of 'la bourgeoisie inquiète', to 'ramener les peuples aux croyances superstitieuses' (pp. 247–48). Impressionism was revolution, Symbolism counter-revolution. Impressionism was democracy in art, Symbolism was the attempt of a

frightened bourgeoisie to resist this democracy or at least to channel it in politically harmless directions. In his letters of 1891, Pissarro repeatedly returns to this theme:

Vois donc comme la bourgeoisie fait des mamours aux ouvriers. Tout le monde n'est-il pas socialiste, même le pape ne vient-il pas de se mettre en campagne? Réaction! Tout cela, mon cher, a pour but d'enrayer le mouvement qui s'accentue; il faut donc se défier de ceux qui sous prétexte de socialisme, d'art idéaliste, d'art pur, etc., etc., suivent en effet un mouvement, mais un mouvement faux, archi-faux . . . Paul Adam, Aurier et toute la jeune littérature sont dans cette contre-révolution'. (pp. 258–59)

Pissarro was certain that he personally was the victim of this counter-revolution. Lucien, however, does not seem to have been convinced by his father's explanation of the difficulties which he encountered in selling his work. In a letter of 19 April, he had offered a different explanation:

Ce que tu me dis à propos des jeunes et des tendances mystiques ne peut pas être la cause du peu de succès commercial de tes peintures, car cet art mystique pour se faire comprendre des masse [sic] prendra autant de temps que notre art . . . Je crois qu'au lieu du mot mystique qui ne peut s'appliquer qu'à quelques-uns le mot littéraire serait beaucoup plus juste — à mon point de vue les tendances de l'art nouveau sont vers une peinture plus littéraire. . . .[29]

Furthermore, Pissarro's art had, according to his son, already contributed to this trend towards what he called a more literary painting: 'Est-ce qu'en synthétisant tes personnages et tes paysages tu ne leur a pas donné un caractère moins épisodique plus général et par conséquent plus symbolique?' We shall look more closely at this concept of literary painting in the next chapter. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that Aurier had asked the same question of Pissarro's art the previous year but abandoned it in his article on Gauguin. That it continued to be a relevant question for the Symbolists only confirms that in April 1891, Lucien Pissarro was more in tune than Aurier with approaches to painting in important sections of the Symbolist movement in literature.

Here, Aurier's defence of Gauguin triggered off an immediate and hostile reaction. Within months, two rivals to the *Mercure de France* had put up their own candidate for the leadership of the pictorial movement. In *La Plume*, Alphonse Germain nominated Séon and his 'théorie du symbolisme des teintes'.[30] In *La Revue indépendante*, Mauclair promoted Albert Besnard's painting in terms of a theory he called 'symbolisme concret',[31] Both types of painting represented the compromise between Impressionism and Symbolist literary theories which Aurier had opposed on Gauguin's behalf. In both cases, this compromise was what Gauguin and Denis dismissed as literary painting. In both, the aesthetic attack on Gauguin was also a thinly-disguised substitute for a deeply-felt ideological hostility.

Séon was a pupil of Puvis de Chavannes and a close friend of Seurat. His painting reflects these two major influences. From the latter he derived his

theory of the symbolism of lines and colour and their relationship to subject-matter; to the former he owed commitment to the expression of ideas and spiritual states. One of the founders of the Salon de la Rose+Croix, Séon was, according to Germain, the first to assert 'doctrinalement la réaction contre les tendances néo-réalistes par le culte du Beau' (p. 171). Unlike Gauguin, Séon had discovered how to 'syncrétismer [sic] les découvertes récentes et les préceptes de la Tradition' (p. 171). His art manifested 'cette conciliation de l'idéal et du réel, du supraterrestre et de la science' (p. 172). In a mixture of neologisms, obscurities and verbal extravagance which makes Germain a period piece among Symbolist critics, he studied Séon's theory of the 'dégradation perspective du ton', the reduction in size of the brush stroke to denote spatial recession. The attack on Gauguin's theories came towards the end:

> Ainsi compris, le symbolisme est l'art ramenant tout aux grandes synthèses, non par une naïveté incompatible avec notre époque, mais au contraire par l'emploi raisonné des observations scientifiques. (p. 172)

This attack became the focus of a second article four months later.[32] In violating natural laws of beauty in which perspective gradations and relief were essential, Gauguin and the Nabis had created 'un art décoratif inférieur puisque sans rapports avec notre race et notre modernité' (p. 290). Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh possessed '[des] tempéraments intensifs, mais déséquilibrés et nullement latins' (p. 290). But Gauguin is the real target. He is 'halluciné de conceptions simplistes' (p. 290). He has 'l'âme d'un artiste, mais la cérébralité malade' (p. 290). This attack on Gauguin and the Nabis on behalf of the Western artistic tradition makes explicit some of the more extreme forms of the ideological conservatism inherent in the 'Classical reaction':

> Lorsque les Héllènes parallélisaient, dans certaines figures, la physionomie humaine et des formes d'animaux . . . leur déformation ne violait pas la Norme harmonique, parce qu'ils obéissaient aux lois de nature. En se donnant pour tâche une déformation anti-physique, nos Jeunes déformateurs semblent les interprètes d'une nature marcescente, les rôpographes d'une race dégénérée, agonisante; autant pourtraire des foetus ou illustrer des atlas tératologiques. (p. 290)

The violence of this language indicates how much seemed to Germain to be at stake in Gauguin's painting. Séon, trained in the Academy and taking his subject-matter from its repertoire, had, by adapting Seurat's chromo-luminarist theories, created a compromise between traditional and modern approaches to representation which would enable the Academy's figurative system to acquire a contemporary veneer. Séon's aims as defined by Germain were little more than a restatement of the Academy's definition of style as the expression of truth: 'la vérité agrandie, simplifiée, dégagée de tous les détails insignifiants, rendue à son essence originelle, à son aspect typique'.[33] Germain quoted this phrase from Charles Blanc, whose manuals on painting formed the

basis of Academic teaching.[34] Similarly, his definition of Séon's technique — 'Corporéiser, *par les lignes*, un symbole dans un type amplifié à l'archétype; homogénéiser ce symbole, *au moyen des teintes*, avec le caractère d'un être ou mieux son substratum'[35] — merely restates, behind a screen of verbal idiosyncracies, Dujardin's 1888 description of Anquetin's decorative technique. This recuperation of recent stylistic trends for the benefit of outmoded systems of representation was what Maurice Denis was complaining about in his comments on the Séguin exhibition quoted above. Germain's description of Gauguin's art in terms of racial inferiority and disease — 'Un œil occidental vraiment sain sentira toujours la nécessité des dégradations . . .'[36] — is the natural ideological framework for this aesthetic conservatism.

Twelve months after his first public promotion of Séon's work, Germain returned to it in the June 1892 issue of *La Plume*.[37] Here, he published a prose poem, 'Le Désespoir de la Chimère' (see Appendix C), which was his commentary on a Séon painting of the same name (Pl. 6) first shown at the 1891 exhibition of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and again four years later, in that fourth Salon de la Rose+Croix in 1895 which so irritated Denis.[38] Together, painting and prose poem illustrate attitudes to the visual image and its relationship to language that were widespread within the Symbolist milieu. In the painting, the strong vertical line down the edge of the cliff combines with the cold colours to create a general effect of melancholy. Germain then provides the programme for this mood in a text which is a catalogue of decadent and mystical themes. It consists of four paragraphs each introduced by a refrain — 'Languide, tabide [sic], dolente, elle se lamente la Chimère délaissée' — in which three feminine adjectives, each of two syllables, initiate a sound sequence based on the repetition of consonants /t/, /d/ and /l/ and of the nasal vowel [ã] in order to create a verbal equivalent of the sadness which is the painting's theme.

The subservience of image to text in Germain's approach is soon apparent. Each paragraph selects a feature of the image and develops its narrative potential: the rocks are 'menacing' and the mountain 'engulfed' beneath the waves; the Chimera, like Niobe beautiful in her despair, is abandoned by her erstwhile admirers, her lament receiving only its own echo for reply; as the setting sun, like a dying candle, announces the night with its attendant connotations of terror, suffering and death, she weeps for the poets exiled in the modern world, which has no place for their heroic and non-utilitarian calling; she weeps for what the world has become, for its scepticism and materialism; she is stranded and dethroned, an object of ridicule in the eyes of those who once adored her but who now pay hommage only to her modern rivals, the stock exchange and race-track. This climax, like much of that which leads up to it, collapses into cliché, its very banality underlining the effortless transparency to which Séon's image has been reduced. For Germain makes no

attempt to disguise the linguistic annexation. On the contrary, a whole range of procedures emphasize it: the sequence of questions and answers already seen in Aurier's poem on *Vision après le sermon*; the repeated exclamations whose punctuation and syntax amplify and specify details of the visual image; the long phrases whose elaborate syntax and use of repetition emphasize traditional features of verbal rhetoric; the role of tenses in verbs and other related forms which emphasize past and future in contrast to the present tense of the painting ('Enthousiasmes d'antan . . .', 'Et songeant au demain . . .'); the use of rare or archaic terms. At each stage, the poem openly displays its own virtuosity, its unwillingness to recognize that respect for the painting placed any limits on its own means. Yet this can hardly be construed as infidelity. It is more a question of returning to Caesar what is Caesar's. Germain's 'spiritual prolongation' is implicit in a form of painting which selects its subjects from well-established literary sources and its pictorial technique from a dictionary of visual signs in which each colour and linear direction corresponds to a different emotion. His description of Séon's *Jeanne d'Arc*, confirms the procedure:

> Ayant conçu une Jeanne d'arc archétype de la voyante en même temps que symbole de la pureté virginale, Séon lui a donné l'attitude d'une hypnotisée en extase (paupières en spasme, poings crispés) et l'a vêtue d'un blanc délicat, tel un lis.[39]

Chimeras in despair, virgins in rapture, they all had a language of expression and gesture, they all had attributes permitting recognition of their status as archetypes. Lilies, clenched fists and eyelids in spasm are three examples. The work on show in the Rose+Croix salons contained many others. Two or three elements from this esoteric arsenal were sufficient to initiate a mystical interpretation which could then be extended to account for the remaining details. The operation was perfectly circular, the production of meaning quite closed. Subject-matter and formal values were dictated by the choice of the archetypal Idea to be represented. There was nothing new about such painting nor about the discourse on it. The procedures involved in both had a long history in the Academy, were part of its tradition, which is why Germain defended Séon with such contrived eloquence and attacked Gauguin and the Nabis with such violence. The decadent rhetoric cannot disguise the essentially conservative discourse operating in both image and commentary. As Maurice Denis said: 'un genre d'ailleurs vieillot'.

Camille Mauclair began his attack on Gauguin in October 1891 in *La Revue indépendante*. His article on Albert Besnard was part of the campaign waged against the Symbolists in this review by the new editorial team which had taken over in July of that year and which included Mauclair. The takeover by supporters of Zola, Hennequin, and Rosny of what had been a prominent Symbolist review was a sign that retaliation against the Symbolists for their public successes of the first half of the year was in hand.[40] The title of the

opening article, 'Le Fiasco symboliste', set the tone for what followed.[41] Aurier was singled out for abuse:

Critique d'art, M. Albert Aurier nous inspire de sérieuses méfiances. Son enthousiasme à l'égard de M. Gauguin fut sincère, mais hélas! en disproportion singulière avec le très petit talent de M. Gauguin . . . Esthéticien, M. Aurier descend les degrés du pire, il tombe dans le ridicule et s'y noie. (p. 19)

As the review's art critic, Mauclair had the job of attacking Aurier's account of Gauguin's art and of the aesthetic theory of Symbolist painting. In an article on the mural art of Albert Besnard, he proposed an alternative definition, 'le symbolisme concret', which Besnard represented and which refuted Aurier's analogy between Symbolist literature and painting. For Mauclair, light was the 'soul' of nature, the revelation of her secret meaning. The painter's task was to 'concrétiser l'âme du silence lumineux' (p. 13). Light was also the 'soul' of painting, the means of unifying on the picture surface the visual sensations which were its subject. In this way, the pure idea which informed the world could be manifested in the painter's concrete symbol:

Ainsi pourra s'édifier, avec, pour complément, tout le complexe cortège des sensations convergées uniquement vers l'aspiration de la lumière, âme de la peinture, un *symbolisme concret* opposé, dans cet art de synthèse, à notre art, poètes, d'analyse *abstraite* et immatérielle. (p. 13, Mauclair's emphasis)

Besnard's decorations for the Mairie du Louvre and for the École de Pharmacie illustrate for Mauclair this receptivity to natural light whose hidden message then informs a natural scene. In the former, the triptych *Le Matin, Midi et le Soir de la Vie*, dawn, a 'gamme merveilleuse de délicatesses . . . faites réellement de lumière', is that of an ideal spring whose serenity is unknown, midday, 'une apothéose de la lumière', shines on 'de beaux types d'hommes et de femmes rustiques' and dusk is called by man 'la mort dans les paysages de son âme' (p. 14). As the element common to the natural world and the painter's materials, light was the means and end of Besnard's pictorial Symbolism. It completed the process begun by the Impressionists. But these descriptions of Besnard's work could have come straight out of the catalogue of the official Salon, for this 'concrete symbolism' is no more than academic allegory dressed up in a plein-air style. Which explains Mauclair's 'aversion pour le symbolisme qu'on prête à certains peintres comme M. Gauguin . . . dont le symbole m'apparaît beaucoup plus problématique que ne l'affirment des critiques comme M. Aurier, que j'apprécie peu . . .' (p. 17):

Je me refuserais certes à admettre comme symbolique *la lutte de Jacob avec l'Ange* dont l'idée est fausse, ou encore cette toile où le sol, puis un paysan, puis des boeufs, puis des femmes, puis au fond le clocher, nous symbolisent l'état d'âme qui président [sic] aux affections du paysan: c'est là un symbolisme qui ne nécessite pas grand génie et est d'un enfantillage trop naïf. (p. 17)

'Enfantillage' was a term of abuse much used during the 1870s against the Impressionists.[42] The decorative effects of the new pictorial style, however visually interesting in themselves, were an inferior, rudimentary form of expression when compared to the formal and narrative virtues of figure and line. Nearly twenty years later, Mauclair used the same term containing much the same connotations against the *Vision* and *La Fenaison*. Such works were crude, unsophisticated, to be relegated to the category of the applied, that is, minor, arts of pottery, wood-carving, and enamel work for which, as Mauclair conceded in his most patronizing tone, Gauguin had unusual talent. In addition, he repeated Fénéon's charge that Gauguin had fallen victim to poets:

> Il ne me paraît point que le peintre doive chercher dans des idées étrangères à son art des sujets transformables en formes et en couleurs; mais qu'il saisisse au contraire dans les aspects, qui sont vivants et infiniment modifiables, des attitudes plus ou moins évocatrices, là sera son véritable critérium esthétique. C'est ce qui fait que j'éprouve pour tout le pseudo-symbolisme de M. Gauguin une aversion marquée, et surtout pour les deux toiles que j'ai citées de lui, et qui me donnent l'impression d'une traduction de texte, mis à part la profondeur et l'intérêt discutables de son idée. (p. 18)

Mauclair's theory of aspects is derived, as we shall see in Chapter 4, from Mallarmé's interpretation of Manet. It is only one example of the way in which Mallarmé's work was used in the 1890s to reinforce conservative responses to new questions in art theory and practice. It is striking that Mauclair never makes clear what it was in Gauguin's subject-matter which irritated him so intensely, nor what was so dubious about the ideas and the text he thought Gauguin was illustrating. Such eloquent silence can be interpreted indirectly, through the other praise and blame which Mauclair distributes in that categorical tone of his. The blame is for Séon, whom he lumps together with Gauguin's pupil, Sérusier, for having committed an 'erreur fondamentale en déformant les *membres* de leurs personnages pour donner l'idée de tristesse et d'étiolement *moral* . . .' (p. 18, Mauclair's emphasis). Germain must have been surprised to read this since, as we have just seen, the alleged non-respect of established norms of figure painting was the reason for which he was promoting Séon's art as the true Symbolism against that of Gauguin and the Nabis. But in order to create a space for Besnard, Mauclair had to attack the theory and practice of synthetism and of Séon's variations on Seurat. To accuse Séon of being a synthetist was an economical way of doing so. Symbolist art criticism is full of these short cuts. What Mauclair and Germain had in common was the sense of threat which Gauguin's painting represented to tradition. In this respect, the rivalry between the two critics over the respective merits and failings of Séon and Besnard appears to be no more than superficial polemic, different labels for the same product.

Mauclair's praise is reserved for Monet, the only painter with whom Besnard can legitimately be compared. The latter's 'flambois lumineux' are so intense

that 'seul Claude Monet peut rivaliser avec eux' (p. 20). The intense luminosity of Monet's work, its pronounced decorative effects were, by 1891, no longer incompatible with the sort of profound intellectual content which was felt to characterize the French tradition and in terms of which his art had for over a decade been attacked as trivial.[43] Years after Monet's two paintings of Paris streets bedecked with flags,[44] Besnard too had painted a *14 Juillet*, 'cette merveille de bleuités et d'ors, où des femmes robustes en une barque au bord de la Seine personnifiaient Paris' (p. 19), where again the combination of traditional allegory and plein-air technique confirms that compromise between order and adventure in representation to which Mauclair was attached. He was, on the other hand, so unsympathetic to the intellectual content of Gauguin's art that he could refer to it only through the well-established equation of the decorative and the superficial. The passage of time would only harden his attitudes. Commenting later on the Tahiti paintings, he wrote:

> Ce sujet emprunté à la vie ou la nature et ne représentant rien de réel laisse rêveur. Ce que M. Gauguin définit là existait il y a quelque trois mille ans; c'est le tapis. Et en effet les tableaux de M. Gauguin feraient d'assez jolis tapis, criards mais amusants . . .[45]

Mauclair's sneering reference to Persian carpets was returned to him years later when Maurice Denis wrote that 'pour retrouver dans une œuvre d'art, aussi réelle que chez Gauguin, la présence du soleil, il faut remonter jusqu'à l'art du vitrail gothique, jusqu'aux tapis d'Orient'.[46] The same Denis also wrote of Cézanne that 'il assemble des couleurs et des formes en dehors de toute préoccupation littéraire: son effort est plus voisin de celui du tapissier persan que de celui de Delacroix'.[47] Gauguin himself had described the features of a self-portrait as 'comme des fleurs de tapis persans personnifiant ainsi le côté symbolique'.[48] When, a few months after dismissing Gauguin's works as carpets, Mauclair reviewed an exhibition of the Nabis, he again showed how little he had understood the new approach to the decorative element in painting that the art of Gauguin and the Nabis necessitated. He criticized Denis, Vuillard, and Bonnard for having committed 'l'erreur de mêler les principes de la décoration à ceux du tableau, qui en sont totalement différents'.[49] In 1891 Mauclair championed the art of Monet and Besnard with the help of the new approaches to painting's decorative element which had emerged during the 1870s and 1880s in response to the growing public acceptance of the Impressionists. But he still thought of these decorative qualities as being subordinated to the narrative qualities of the pictorial subject. The narration to which this subject was directed was that of the 'Idée pure', the platonic Idea which informed the material world, its essence or 'soul'. The narrative mode was, as Besnard's art showed, allegorical. Aurier and Mauclair were both Neoplatonists and Neoplatonism had underpinned the teaching of the Academy from the beginning.[50] They chose different painters to illustrate the theory, but

as far as Maurice Denis was concerned, it made both writers a threat to the development of Gauguin's and the Nabis' ideas on painting.

In 1891, therefore, Denis, Pissarro, Germain, and Mauclair formed, for their differing reasons, an unlikely but powerful front against Aurier's interpretation of Gauguin's art. Of the four, Denis alone stressed the extent to which a Neoplatonist philosophy was an approach unrelated to the problematics which Gauguin's painting addressed. He alone accepted Aurier's view that pictorial Symbolism represented a fundamental break with Impressionism. In the case of the other three, Symbolism and Impressionism were not considered to be necessarily incompatible. Indeed, for the writers and for the literary public whom they represented, the two were not only compatible in theory, they were already compatible in fact. And here lies the source of Aurier's failure to impose Gauguin. Within the literary Symbolist milieu, Symbolist interpretations of Impressionist painting were by 1891 the dominant trend in art criticism, one which Aurier's article on Gauguin was unable to change. An important element here is the reputation of Monet which grew significantly between 1889 and 1891, precisely, that is, during the period in which Gauguin was trying to establish himself as the leader of the avant-garde.

On 7 March, only days after Aurier's article appeared in the *Mercure de France*, Octave Mirbeau published a major article on the Impressionist painter.[51] In every respect it undermined the theoretical position from which Aurier had argued on Gauguin's behalf. Already in 1889, in his preface to the catalogue of the major Monet exhibition in the Georges Petit galleries, Mirbeau had praised Monet's work as the most advanced form of modern painting.[52] To compare Mirbeau's two articles is to see the difficulties which Gauguin and Aurier faced in 1891. In 1889, Mirbeau had defended Monet against Fénéon's charge of lyrical, unscientific subjectivity. In 1889, for Monet as for Gauguin, it was Seurat's painting which provided the terms of reference for avant-garde argument. Two years later, Mirbeau never refers to Neo-Impressionism, not even indirectly. Instead, he compares Monet to Mallarmé and to Puvis de Chavannes. The article was written as advance publicity for an exhibition of Monet's new *Haystack* series to go on show in May in the Durand-Ruel galleries which also financed the journal in which the article appeared. This series, a single motif painted at different times of the day and year, was completely in tune with Mirbeau's own pantheist view of nature but it also enabled him to present Monet's art in terms of the same essentialist tendencies on which Aurier's Neoplatonism was based. In this way, Monet's painting manifested the same reconciliation of opposites — present and eternal, changing and permanent, material and intangible, visible and hidden — as that to which Symbolism aspired. In Monet's art, the material world was the manifestation of the divine mystery of nature, what Mirbeau called 'le drame de la terre' (p. 184):

Ce qui enchante, en Claude Monet, c'est que, réaliste évidemment, il ne se borne pas à traduire la nature, et ses harmonies chromatiques et plastiques. Comme en un visage humain, on y voit, on y sent se succéder les émotions, les passions latentes, les secousses morales, les douleurs, tout ce qui s'agite en nous, par elle, de force animique, tout ce qui, au-dessus de nous, en elle s'immémorialise d'infini et d'éternité. (p. 184)

In a long descriptive sequence Mirbeau then analysed three paintings in terms which draw on images and themes central to literary Symbolism. The *Canot sur l'Epte* recounts the drama of 'toute une vie florale interlacustre' (p. 185) by means of a sequence of nine verbs of movement. In formal terms, they are Mirbeau's response to the challenge to language which Monet's painting created for art critics during this period. In thematic terms, Mirbeau's description evokes that by Huysmans in *A Rebours* of Odilon Redon's fantastic imagery, for Monet's 'extraordinaires végétations' are 'pareilles à d'étranges poissons, à de fantastiques tentacules de monstres marins' (p. 185). The female figures in *Femme à l'ombrelle* and in the third painting (which has since been lost) evoke Symbolist stereotypes of woman as myth. The former has, 'dans sa modernité, la grâce lointaine d'un rêve, le charme inattendu d'une aérienne apparition' and her movement is 'svelte, légère, impondérable' (p. 185). The latter is also related to her literary counterparts but in this case the kinship is more precise and more prestigious:

Elle est d'une beauté délicate et triste, triste infiniment. Énigmatique, les yeux vagues, un bras pendant, toute son attitude molle et charmante de nonchaloir, à quoi pense-t-elle? On ne sait pas. A-t-elle de l'ennui, de la douleur, du remords, quel est le secret de son âme? On ne sait pas . . . Involontairement, l'on songe à quelque Ligeia, fantomale et réelle, ou bien à quelqu'une de ces figures de femme, spectres d'âme comme en évoquent tels poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé. (p. 185)

This comparison with Mallarmé was the climax to Mirbeau's long description. For the literary Symbolists, it was of course the definitive compliment, authenticating even as far-fetched an analogy as this one. Mirbeau does not say to which poems or to whose Ligeia he is referring but such precision would have been contrary to his purpose. The art of Monet the Symbolist painter must, by definition, be imprecise. It must narrate nothing but suggest everything. And so it provides no answers to the series of questions which Mirbeau's typical spectator is directed to ask and makes of their irrelevance its virtue. Monet's female figure is enrolled among the ranks of mysterious women who nourished fin-de-siècle male fantasies. The Mona Lisa myth ('Énigmatique, les yeux vagues') was clearly capable of unexpected extensions during this period.[53] Monet's modernity is legitimized by this indirect reference to the heritage. Another comparison confirms this:

Et je pense que, devant de telles œuvres qui suggèrent à l'esprit, par l'unique plaisir des yeux, les plus nobles, les plus hautes, les plus lointaines idées, le critique doit

renoncer à ses menues, sèches et stériles analyses, et que le poète, seul, a le droit de parler et de chanter, car Claude Monet qui, dans ses compositions, n'apporte pas de préoccupations littéraires directes, est de tous les peintres, peut-être, avec Puvis de Chavannes, celui qui s'adresse, le plus directement, le plus éloquemment, aux poètes. (p. 184)

Mirbeau was the most important of the writers who associated in 1891 the art of Monet and Puvis de Chavannes but he was not the only one. Morice had done so the previous month, Mauclair did the same two months later.[54] In other words, Aurier attempted to promote Gauguin's Symbolism as a break with Impressionism at the very moment that Impressionism was being assimilated within modernist restatements of the idealist tradition.

When Aurier came to write his second article on pictorial Symbolism, he was, therefore, working with different objectives and within a different context from those of a year earlier. Since the conviction that Impressionism involved procedures and interpretations compatible with the aims of Symbolism was, by the end of 1891, firmly established and since there was no compelling need —such as Gauguin's immediate financial requirements — for Aurier to insist otherwise, his second definition of pictorial Symbolism differs notably from the first. The polemical tone is the same but the target has changed. The previous year, it had been directed against Impressionism as the latest manifestation of Naturalism in art. Now, his caricature of positivism and its aesthetic counterpart contains no reference to Impressionism. Instead, Naturalism is confined to the paintings on show in the official Salons. In this sense, the polemical content of the article is largely devoted to kicking down open doors.

As in 1891, Neoplatonism is the basis of Aurier's theory and history of Western art. Gauguin is still seen as having initiated the attempt to reunite painting with its true Neoplatonic source. But Aurier has taken Pissarro's point that the distinction drawn in the first article between symbolist and realist painting had no historical basis and turned it round for his own ends. The former's objection that all great art was both realist and 'ideist' has become the latter's assertion that all great art, including that with realist aims, was symbolist, 'qu'il n'y a point d'art véritable sans symbolisme' (p. 474). The exclusive credit given to Gauguin one year earlier is toned down and, in its place, we find a greater emphasis on the idea of a pictorial movement, with its related notions of leader, disciples and tradition. This implies small but telling changes in chronology. In 1891, pictorial Symbolism was described as an emanation of the literary movement; in 1892, as an 'évolution artistique que venaient corroborer, presque à la méme heure, des manifestations littéraires absolument du même ordre' (p. 474). Gauguin's importance does not now derive only from his own work but also from that of the younger painters who are following his example. Among them, those nominated by Germain and Mauclair are conspicuous by their absence. Séon's name is mentioned but no

more, Besnard's not even that. Two years earlier, Aurier had had a good word, albeit a qualified one, for this painter.[55]

In order to promote Gauguin as the leader and the Nabis as the disciples of a genuine movement, Aurier provides them with masters from the distant past and forerunners from within the previous generation:

> Puvis de Chavannes, Henner, Gustave Moreau, Carrière, Rodin, ont, de toute évidence, tâché de représenter autre chose que les réalités concrètes et immédiates . . . ils ont été symbolistes, non point, je crois, sans le savoir, mais sans nous le dire, à la façon dont l'avaient été les Angelico, les Mantegna, les Memling, les Dürer, les Rembrandt, les Vinci. (pp. 474–75)

This list is hardly controversial. The choice of past masters is representative of late nineteenth-century tastes in general and not merely of those of the Symbolists. The presence of Moreau, Rodin and Carrière among the élite is predictable. The continuing admiration for Henner is more surprising now than it was then. To place Puvis among the forerunners from the previous generation must have looked suspiciously like a demotion for this painter in 1892. Yet the most significant change is Aurier's recognition that Impressionism had played a part in this history:

> Peut-être même encore, pour être complet et juste, serait-il nécessaire de mentionner également les impressionnistes et néo-impressionnistes, dont les préoccupations d'écriture individualiste, subjective, instantanée, sensationniste, dont les recherches techniques ne furent certes point sans influence sur l'évolution d'art que nous étudions; peut-être conviendrait-il de parler de Manet, de Degas, de Cézanne, de Monet, de Sisley, de Pissarro, de Renoir et de leurs essais de synthèse expressive, du malheureux Seurat et de sa science, si stérile en soi, des décompositions de la lumière et des rythmes linéaires, d'Anquetin et de ses tentatives de japonisme, de cloisonnisme, de simplification de la couleur et du dessin. (p. 483)

The concession is made grudgingly and is carefully qualified so as to limit its impact, but it is made. Admittedly, Monet's status is undermined by his inclusion as one of a group of painters whose reputations in 1892 did not equal his. In the definition of Impressionist 'écriture', the four adjectives connote the same criticisms as those levelled against Impressionism the previous year. Its effort is limited to the realm of technique, its production amounts only to 'essais'. Seurat's science is still 'sterile' while Anquetin's contribution is weakened by the eclectic overtones of Aurier's list of pictorial styles and by the description of his work as 'tentatives'. Nevertheless, the statement of the previous year that Impressionism implied a programme which was 'directement contradictoire'[56] to that of Gauguin and his followers is, by implication at least, retracted. But it is when Aurier goes on to analyse the nature of pictorial expression that he reveals the extent to which his theory is founded on the same theoretical premisses as those contained in the Neo-Impressionism judged sterile in the case of Seurat.

We have seen that Alexandre Séon sought in his painting to incorporate Seurat's scientific symbolism of colours and linear directions within his philosophical idealism. He was not alone in being attracted by what appeared to be a means of reconciling the idealist and scientific theories which much nineteenth-century thought had separated. What has not hitherto been recognized is the extent to which this trend is present in the writings of Aurier. Although he attacked the 'sterility' of Seurat's system, he nevertheless saw it as confirmation of his own Neoplatonist philosophy of art. Referring to 'la capitale importance' of 'la symbolique des éléments abstraits du dessin', he added:

> Humbert de Superville semble l'avoir soupçonné lorsque, dans son *Essai sur les signes inconditionnels dans l'art*, il établit ses schémas expressifs de visage humain. De nos jours, Charles Henry, qu'on ne saurait suspecter d'attaches symbolistes, s'est préoccupé de ce problème et a écrit quelques notes intéressantes, bien que trop superficielles, sur la signification des directions linéaires et des combinaisons chromatiques. (p. 480)

By saying that Symbolist art theory was being confirmed by the discoveries of the psychological sciences, Aurier merely wanted to add a touch of historical necessity to the triumph of the Symbolist movement. But his attempt to play down the relevance of the work of Humbert de Superville and Charles Henry to his own theories is too forced. The reference to *signes inconditionnels* is a giveaway in this respect. Henry had described the essay, published in Leiden between 1827 and 1839, as 'rarissime'[57] and Aurier's mention of it confirms his acquaintance with the texts by Henry and Charles Blanc which contributed to the theoretical basis of Seurat's Neo-Impressionism. It was Blanc who had rescued Superville's essay from oblivion in his *Grammaire des arts du dessin*.[58] He reproduced the Dutch philosopher's famous three faces (the 'schémas expressifs du visage humain' to which Aurier refers) whose schematic lines symbolize his themes: upward for gaiety, horizontal for calmness, downward for sadness. Seurat, who had studied Blanc's *Grammaire* closely, made a sketch of Superville's three faces.[59] As for Aurier's remark that Henry could not be suspected of having 'symbolist ties', this was nonsense, as Aurier knew perfectly well. Henry's friendship with Kahn, Wyzéwa, Dujardin and the poets grouped around the *Revue indépendante* was common knowledge. In 1888, extracts of Henry's work had appeared in the review.[60] It was all very well Aurier saying that Superville 'appeared to have suspected' the importance of painting's signs and that Henry's 'notes' (in fact a series of long and closely-argued articles) were 'interesting but too superficial'. He was only trying to cover over the clear line which ran between Blanc, Henry, Seurat, Séon and himself, between Blanc's manuals of academic method and philosophy and his own manifesto of Symbolism in painting. For Aurier shared with Blanc a commitment to Neoplatonism, to unconditional pictorial signs, to the dictionary fallacy of verbal equivalents of these signs. He tried to escape from this by

saying that the artist was free to use these signs as he pleased. So he called Gauguin's painting 'du Platon plastiquement interpreté par un sauvage de génie' (p. 482). He was just facing both ways at once. Aurier's pictorial Symbolism is academic idealism dressed up in the new forms which Gauguin brought back from Brittany. Despite Aurier's avant-garde rhetoric, the heritage remains the measure of value in his discourse on painting.

Taken together, the different responses which we have seen to Aurier's defence of Gauguin bring to the surface important underlying tensions within the French avant-garde during these years. They confirm the extent to which his analyses served to orientate the debate on painting as it developed within Symbolist circles, but they also require us to question the standard assessments of Aurier's role in the history of modern art. In the promotion of a formalist account of modernism as the textured organization of surface by paint, certain features of Aurier's criticism have been taken out of context and the remainder neglected along with their context. But rather than repeat the uncritical praise of Aurier's pioneering role in the understanding of modern art, it is more relevant to ask why he was unable to impose his support for Gauguin on the Symbolist movement. In the very month which followed his second article on the painter, Rémy de Gourmont wrote (also in the *Mercure de France*) of the two 'schools' of Impressionism and Symbolism that 'pratiquement ils se joignent et se complètent, car il faut au symboliste un fond d'impressionnisme, et l'impressionniste qui ne chercherait qu'à emmener des nuances en captivité serait le plus vain des détrousseurs des paysages'.[61] The central problem for the literary Symbolists was how to assimilate Impressionism into their discourse on painting, not how to exclude it. Reviewing Ibsen's 1892 play, *The Master Builder*, Maeterlinck digressed to give some advice to contemporary painters:

> Un bon peintre ne peindra plus Marius vainqueur des Cimbres ou l'assassinat du duc de Guise, parce que la psychologie de la victoire ou du meurtre est élémentaire et exceptionnelle et que le vacarme inutile d'un art violent étouffe la voix plus profonde, mais hésitante et discrète, des êtres et des choses. Il représentera une maison perdue dans la campagne, une porte ouverte au bout d'un corridor, une visage ou des mains au repos et ces simples images pourront ajouter quelque chose à notre conscience de la vie.[62]

The victory of Marius and the assassination of the duc de Guise were examples of the historical subjects favoured by the academic painters of the annual Salon. Maeterlinck's preference for an art of the 'deep, hesitant and discreet voice of beings and things' is one example of the types of discourse which enabled the literary Symbolists to see Impressionist landscapes and the intimist work of Whistler, Vuillard and Bonnard as two forms of a shared commitment to interiority, to a subject's essence, ideal, or hidden meaning. Similarly, Mirbeau wrote of Monet that 'les grands drames de la nature, il les saisit, les rend, en leur expression la plus suggestive'[63] and Émile Michelet

remarked that, of the sea, Corot had painted 'la suggestion de paix', Whistler, 'l'attirance perfide' and Monet, 'la féerie décorative'.[64] The domain of timeless truths indirectly expressed was one with which the Symbolist prided himself on being familiar. He had a language for it, one which would enable him to overcome Impressionism's challenge to language and to that control over painting which language had always exercized. This is a wider context than that discussed so far, and Aurier's articles on Gauguin have their place there too.

CHAPTER 3

THE LITERATURE AND MUSIC OF PAINTING IN SYMBOLIST ART CRITICISM

During the summer of 1888, while Gauguin was in Brittany painting his *Vision après le sermon*, the Paris art world which he aimed to conquer was enthusing about a painting of a quite different kind. The gold medal in the Salon had been awarded to Édouard Detaille for *Le Rêve* (Pl. 8). To place this work beside the *Vision* is to see what Gauguin was up against. *Le Rêve* shows a group of soldiers asleep and dreaming of an army engaged in heroic combat. Georges Lafanestre, one of the most reputed of official critics (and whose lectures on art history in the Sorbonne, we remember, Aurier attended) praised the painting in the following terms:

> Le peintre ne . . . montre plus seulement le courage matériel, l'énergie corporelle de cette chère et noble armée dans laquelle chacun a une part de soi-même; il . . . montre encore la vaillance intime de nos petits soldats, cette résignation enthousiaste qui travaille encore leur âme, dans l'affaissement de leurs membres épuisés, et évoque devant eux, comme un encouragement aux sacrifices futures, les fantômes des ancêtres victorieux.[1]

It is not difficult to see why, in 1888, this painting should have provoked such enthusiastic comment. In a country still embittered by the military defeat of 1870 and increasingly drawn towards Boulanger's anti-parliamentarian themes, paintings which renewed the image of the army as the embodiment of the nation's collective virtues were warmly received and suitably rewarded. Detaille specialized in them and any anthology relating to the Dreyfus Affair might usefully include an example of his work. In 1889, Octave Mirbeau made it very clear what he thought of *Le Rêve*:

> Jusqu'ici, nous nous imaginions que les soldats, abrutis de disciplines imbéciles, écrasés de fatigues torturantes, rêvent . . . à de vagues vengeances contre l'adjudant et le sergent-major, qui les traitent comme des chiens . . . M. Detaille nous apprit . . . que le soldat français ne rêve qu'aux gloires du passé, et que, lorsqu'il dort, harassé, malheureux, défilent toujours, dans son sommeil, les splendeurs héroïques de la Grande Armée, Marengo, Austerlitz, Borodino et, parmi la fumée des canons et l'ivresse des drapeaux déchirés et conquis, Napoléon, vainqueur du monde et père du petit soldat. Il fallait bien s'incliner devant cette œuvre qu'on eût dit — selon un mot d'un juré — peinte par la Patrie elle-même.[2]

Mirbeau's outburst came too late to dissuade the French government from acquiring the painting on behalf of 'la patrie reconnaissante'. It was ideal material for the engravers who mass-produced such homilies to patriotism as visual aids for the classrooms of the Third Republic. No doubt the history lesson was entitled 'nos ancêtres glorieux', 'l'ivresse des drapeaux', 'la vaillance intime', or some other such allegory of that contract between private and public virtue with which the Third Republic extolled the army's role in national life. By and large, the contempt which Mirbeau felt for the painting has been shared by subsequent art historians and critics, though not for the same reasons. Whereas Mirbeau with his anarchist sympathies loathed the ideology which the work served and which excluded discussion of it in any other terms for him, twentieth-century art history, with its official version of the triumph of Impressionism, has condemned the very principle of ideological art and relegated works such as *Le Rêve* to a category of sub-art which one term has normally been used to describe. In a word, this painting is 'literary'.

In the history of art, most painting has attempted to create meaning by means other than the purely surface arrangements of lines and colours. These meanings, derived from painting's subject-matter, have generally been referred to as its literary content (or have coincided with a precisely definable literary content). By the time the Symbolists came to write art criticism, the term had become problematic. In the previous chapter, we saw how it kept cropping up in the context of responses to Aurier's analysis of Gauguin's Symbolism. For Gauguin, Séguin was not a literary painter, for Denis, Raffaelli was and he was irritated by the failure of writers to recognize this. Lucien Pissarro believed that the trend towards literary painting was responsible for the difficulties his father encountered in selling his work. Mirbeau thought that the art of Monet and Puvis de Chavannes was directed primarily at poets and Mauclair agreed with him. But Mauclair called Besnard a 'peintre littérateur', which was a compliment and Gauguin a 'littérateur peintre', which was not.[3] The distinction must have meant something to him. Nearly forty years later he was still using it.[4]

For Gauguin and the Nabis, literary painting in the late 1880s comprised two main types, Impressionism and academic art shown in the annual Salon. They described the former as literary in so far as in this work the visual perception seemed to them to be still directed towards the definition of a subject which retained its mimetic relationship to external reality. When levelled against the academic painters, the charge referred to works which sought either a strictly imitative or, as in the case of *Le Rêve*, a conventionally idealized relationship to observed reality and in which interest centred upon the story contained, implicitly or explicitly, in the subject. In the same way, art criticism was literary when, as in the example from Lafanestre just quoted, it focused upon the subject's narrative features or brought a particular moral or political

standpoint to bear on it. By and large, the Symbolist writers, with the exception of Aurier in his article on Gauguin, did not consider the Impressionists to be literary painters but reserved this term for academic artists. Mauclair, for example, described the former as 'en réaction violente contre la peinture littéraire et le sujet noble',[5] while Moréas, in a laughable martial metaphor, wrote that 'sous la victorieuse oriflamme d'Édouard Manet de hardis capitaines et sergents de bataille, parmi lesquels il faut citer au premier rang Camille Pissarro, Degas, Renoir et Claude Monet, mettaient en vastation l'antique domaine des Cabanal, Bouguereau, Benjamin Constant et autres mascareurs de toiles'.[6] Differences between Symbolist painters and writers concerning definitions of literary painting implied differences between them in their attitudes to the role of subject-matter and its relationship to the expressive potential of formal elements. According to T. Natanson writing in the Symbolist *Revue blanche*, the question which most urgently needed an answer was 'ce que nous pouvons entendre par ce mot de "sujet" qui revient si fréquemment dans les conversations qui ont trait aux tableaux'.[7] But asserting the expressive potential of formal elements soon led Maurice Denis, for example, to challenge the authority of the writer in matters of painting. The period was, he said, 'littéraire jusqu'aux moelles: raffinant sur des minuties, avide de complexités':[8]

> Analysons: l'hémicycle de Chavannes à la Sorbonne, qui nécessite pour le vulgaire une explication écrite, est-il littéraire? Certes, non: car cette explication est fausse: les examinateurs de Baccalauréat peuvent savoir que telle belle forme d'éphèbe qui s'alanguit vers un semblant d'eau, symbolise la jeunesse studieuse. C'est une belle forme, esthètes! n'est-ce pas? Et la profondeur de notre émotion vient de la suffisance de ces lignes et de ces couleurs à s'expliquer elles-mêmes, comme seulement belles et divines de beauté. (p. 9)

On the other hand, art criticism in France was, after all, a literary genre, and many writers were in 1891 less willing than ever to abdicate what they saw as their responsibilities in this area. And so they discussed at great length questions like: what are and/or should be the relationships between literature and painting? when and how was painting literary? if allegorical painting was literary, what made Symbolist painting non-literary? could a writer's understanding of painting ever be the same as/equivalent of, that of a painter? They discussed them because important issues concerning the nature and function of writing itself appeared to them to depend on the answers they received.

It is well known that the Symbolist movement in literature was determined to establish and exercise its rights to legislate for the non-verbal arts. Discussing poetry's relationship to the other arts, Léo d'Orfer wrote:

> Elle les résume tous, la musique par le rythme et la cadence, la peinture par la description vive et colorée, la sculpture par la taille du marbre des poèmes, l'architecture par la composition monumentale des œuvres. . . .[9]

Albert Mockel remarked of 'musique, philosophie, peinture et dessin' that poetry was 'en même temps *tout cela*, car elle se nourrit de tous les arts et de toute la pensée, comme elle les pénètre elle-même de son vivant effluve'.[10] Equally, Gauguin and the Nabis felt that painting was Symbolist in so far as it resisted this sort of verbal imperialism. And so he compared his painting to music:

> C'est de la musique si vous voulez! J'obtiens par des arrangements de lignes et de couleurs, avec le prétexte d'un sujet quelconque emprunté à la vie ou à la nature, des symphonies, des harmonies . . . mais qui doivent faire penser comme la musique fait penser, sans le secours des idées ou des images, simplement par des affinités mystérieuses qui sont entre nos cerveaux, et tels arrangements de couleurs et de lignes.[11]

But, as the remarks by d'Orfer and Mockel have already shown, the literary Symbolists were not deterred by this analogy between painting and music. Quite the opposite. Mauclair said that in Monet, 'le réalisme, la contemplation minutieuse de la réalité, touche à l'idéalisme et au rêve lyrique par la splendeur du thème choisi, par l'orchestration des frissons de la clarté, par le parti pris symphonique des couleurs'.[12] Wyzéwa specialized in the musical analogy, which is no more than you would expect from the inventor of Wagnerian painting. Rubens, we read, 'édifia les plus intenses symphonies de la couleur' and Watteau 'dédia l'adorable tiédeur de ses dessins à des Andantes légers et doux, qui rappelleraient un idéal Mozart' but 'la peinture émotionnelle symphonique doit reconnaître aujourd'hui pour maître M. Puvis de Chavannes'.[13] Occasionally, this sort of comment led Gauguin to make the same claims for his medium that d'Orfer and Mockel made for theirs. And so he described painting as the most complete art form on the grounds that perception involved instantaneous synthesis: 'L'ouïe ne peut servir qu'un seul son à la fois, tandis que la vue embrasse tout, en même temps qu'à son gré elle simplifie.'[14] There was of course nothing new about these claims and counter-claims. They have, on the contrary, a long history in art theory. The argument that art forms are autonomous because of differences in the material conditions in which they are produced and received provokes the reply that if the same act of logical abstraction is at the basis of our perception of time and space, comparisons can be made between the different arts in terms of their structuring procedures.[15] But for a literary movement which was committed to the synthesis of the arts, these arguments about the literature and music of painting took on great importance. All the more so since they took place in the context of a crisis of confidence in the contemporary discourse on painting. Not only the competence of the writer to legislate in matters of painting but also the status of art criticism as a genre were being called into question within the Symbolist group. The increasingly problematic role of the subject in painting, the differences between painters and poets about what constituted 'literary' and 'musical'

painting derive from changes in the discourse on painting during the forty years preceding Aurier's consecration of Gauguin. The elements which feed into these changes are varied and complex. They include the rise of Impressionism, the expansion of the art market and press, the critical fortune of Diderot's *Salons*, the art and music criticism of Baudelaire and the impact of Rimbaud's famous sonnet, 'Voyelles'. These and related areas will need to be covered now if we are to appreciate the terms in which the literary Symbolists approached the visual arts.

* * *

In the previous chapter, we saw that, as far as Aurier was concerned, the question of competence did not arise. The defence of Delacroix by Baudelaire and that of Manet by Mallarmé made further credentials superfluous. They had brought distinction to a genre founded by one writer and developed by others. In doing so, they had exemplified the writer's contribution to painting, not merely its effectiveness but its necessity. Baudelaire had shown that the interrelationship of the arts was 'un des diagnostiques de l'état spirituel de notre siècle'.[16] His analysis of Delacroix had established the poet's rights over the sister art:

> Une autre qualité, très-grande, très vaste, du talent de M. Delacroix, et qui fait de lui le peintre aimé des poètes, c'est qu'il est essentiellement littéraire. Non seulement sa peinture a parcouru, toujours avec succès, le champ des hautes littératures, non seulement elle a traduit, elle a fréquenté Arioste, Byron, Dante, Walter Scott, Shakespeare, mais elle sait révéler des idées d'un ordre plus élevé, plus fines, plus profondes que la plupart des peintres modernes.[17]

Just as Mirbeau argued that, in the case of Monet's painting, 'le poète, seul, a le droit de parler et de chanter' (cf. *supra*, p. 48), so Gustave Kahn praised the art criticism of Roger Marx for the way in which it helped painters 'en leur permettant de comparer leur art plastique aux arts littéraires'.[18] But Aurier's claim that painting's meaning, or 'spiritual prolongation' as he called it, existed only in and through language, that painting depended on the poet's word to actualize its otherwise purely potential wholeness of meaning was made against a background of increasing insecurity among writers about their role as art critics. 'Quel vilain métier que celui de critique d'art, n'est-ce pas? Ce métier a été déshonoré par tant d'ignorants et les artistes ont bien souvent raison de nous mépriser.' This remark by Laforgue was made in a letter of June 1883 and published posthumously in the Symbolist review, *La Cravache*, in September 1888. In the second of the four letters published on this occasion, Laforgue enlarged on his scorn for what he considered to be a discredited profession. Referring to the catalogue of the 1884 Raffaelli exhibition for which the painter

himself had written an *Étude du Beau caractériste*, he expressed his disappointment with the painter's text but nevertheless felt that it was a good sign, 'l'annonce d'un temps où enfin les artistes se décideront à se raconter eux-mêmes, à s'expliquer la plume à la main, et chasser des journaux toute la clique des faux critiques d'art'. His hopes that the example of Raffaelli would be followed by others soon found support. At the end of the same year, Mallarmé published his translation of Whistler's *Ten o'Clock* lecture. Here too, one theme was the need to drive out painting's middleman, 'l'écrivain sans attaches au beau', the journalist and dilettante, who had, in Whistler's view, taken over art criticism. 'La poésie du peintre lui-même . . . est tout à fait perdue pour cet homme — la suprenante invention qui aura fondu couleur et forme dans une si parfaite harmonie, il demeure sans les comprendre.'[19] A few months later, in April 1889, the founding of *Le Moderniste illustré* provided Gauguin and Bernard with the outlet they needed for their own art criticism. In the same year, Huysmans, in the opening section of *Certains* entitled 'Du dilettantisme', agreed with Whistler that art criticism was plagued by failed writers. 'De même que le critique littéraire qui en fait métier, le critique d'art est généralement un homme de lettres qui n'a pu produire de son propre cru une véritable œuvre.'[20] Presumably he did not believe that Whistler's derogatory remarks about writers meddling in painting could apply to him, but Gauguin, giving his reaction to *Certains*, gave a firm hint that when it came to dilettantism, Huysmans knew what he was talking about.[21] Gauguin was sure that Huysmans would have preferred to have been a painter and that the thwarted career had encroached upon the chosen one with harmful consequences for his art criticism. Gauguin retained a strong mistrust of the 'littérateur qu'on aime à lire, à admirer quelquefois: mille fois plus dangereux par conséquent qu'un Albert Wolff sur lequel on avait le droit de saliver avec dégoût'.[22] It had been with him from the early stages of his career when it was already directed at Huysmans.[23] And Huysmans was certainly one of the writers to whom the painter was referring when he asked:

> Comment dire à un littérateur de talent, estimé de tout le monde: 'Monsieur, vous avez tort quoiqu'instruit, honnête et convaincu. Vous êtes dangereux car vous avez une galerie d'élite qui a confiance en votre jugement, en votre érudition — et puis qu'en termes galants vous dites de ces choses . . .'.[24]

Lucien Muhlfeld, editor of the *Revue blanche*, was quite frank about his own scepticism. 'Nos appréciations de la couleur, du dessin, de la perspective et de la pâte ont l'insolence naïve des graveurs, musiciens ou droguistes discutant la technique du vers moderne.'[25] In the *Revue bleue*, Fernard Vandérem made the same point more gracefully:

> Musique, peinture, littérature — cela me fait l'effet de trois compartiments d'un même wagon de train de banlieue, le dimanche. On part ensemble; on sait qu'on va au même endroit. On se regarde par la lucarne intermédiaire avec des sourires

sympathiques. Mais ce que disent ces lèvres qui s'agitent, ce que signifient ces contractions de visage aperçues à travers la glace, on le devine à peine. Il n'y a guère qu'aux stations qu'on communique.[26]

Gauguin, we can be sure, would have appreciated these remarks and the ironic tone of what followed. 'Il est vrai, pour activer la fusion entre profanes, pour combler les distances, nous avons la critique d'art' which Vandérem defined as 'un "Salon" généralement écrit par un écrivain qui prend provisoirement le titre de maître' (p. 609). For both Muhlfeld and Vandérem, writers had to recognize that enthusiasm and literary virtuosity were a poor basis for passing from one art to the other. Few paid attention, for the tradition of writers reviewing exhibitions flattered, as Muhlfeld knew well, one of their dearest pretensions. 'Il n'y a pas un littérateur que ne chatouille le désir de composer un Salon' (p. 453). But as far as the value of this writing was concerned, his cynicism was deep-rooted. His praise of Huysmans, Mirbeau and Gustave Geffroy, for example, was, to say the least, back-handed:

Ces écrivains pratiquent la bonne méthode; avec un minimum de préjugés, ou avec des préjugés qui me plaisent, ils disent le sentiment qui devant tel tableau les retint; leur dire vaut par la délicatesse de leur tact, et la grâce de leurs racontars; les plus philosophiques intercalent quelques théories d'ensemble, intéressantes puisqu'ils sont intelligents. Et il suffit. Cela fait toujours passer une heure ou deux. (p. 454)

Muhlfeld was only repeating what everyone knew anyway. Most art criticism was subjective, anecdotal, whimsical, superficial and more or less venal. He did not give any explanations but Laforgue had suggested one in his desire to see painters 'chasser des journaux toute la clique des faux critiques d'art'. The same point was made in June 1889 in the newly-founded avant-garde review, *Art et critique*, where one Natalis (alias, presumably, Jules Antoine who directed the review and wrote much of its art criticism) began his editorial entitled 'La Critique d'art' in the following way:

Depuis quelques années, la Critique d'art est bien malade. Les causes de cette décrépitude sont nombreuses et diverses: l'intrusion dans la critique de Brocanteurs honoraires, les coteries organisées en vue de la défense quand même du petit groupe, le quémandage féroce de la moindre réclame, et, par-dessus tout, la transformation du journal contemporain dont le besoin d'information rapide force les mieux intentionnés à ne faire qu'effleurer des sujets qu'avec plus de temps ils eussent approfondis. (p. 17)

The history of this crisis has never been written. There exists no detailed account of the place of art criticism in the Paris art world of the late nineteenth century, no systematic study of the critics themselves, of how and why they took up art criticism.[27] It is clear that in the majority of cases this work was a sideline to their main journalistic activity but more needs to be known about their formal education in painting (or lack of it, as seems to have been more

usually the case), about their apprenticeship in the literary genre of art criticism, about the nature of their relationship to the owners and editors of the newspapers or reviews for which they wrote, to painters, dealers and the public, whose growing desire to invest in painting was transforming the material conditions of its production. For the editorialist of *Art et critique*, this unwritten history evidently contained the explanations for the fact that by the end of the 1880s, the discourse on painting, like painting itself, was increasingly fragmented by the changing economic system within which it operated. The factors to which he drew attention (the growing numbers of non-specialists, the role of advertising and, above all, the transformation of the French press which had taken place during the Second Empire and been reinforced by Jules Ferry's laws on press freedom in 1881) were all involved in one way or another in the changes which had occured in the art market during this period.

The emphasis by the editorialist of *Art et critique* on the role of the press was an understandable one since publicity for painting had always been art criticism's main function. Diderot's criticism had given painting the benefit of the prestige which a distinguished writer had at his disposal at a time when State and Church patronage of art was less significant than it had been in earlier periods. But the economic and technological changes which were taking place in the French press during the Second Empire were only one of the factors transforming the conditions in which painting was taught, produced, publicized and sold in France. The art market expanded considerably after 1851 as those making their fortunes in the country's economic transformation invested in the dominant culture's luxury goods in order to legitimize their new wealth and status. The number of painters increased dramatically during the Second Empire to meet these new demands and painting became an acceptable middle-class career.[28] Haussmann's transformation of Paris had a significant impact on these trends, as Gautier noted.[29] The growing cosmopolitanism of the Paris art market and, in particular, the arrival of American buyers, was of major importance for everyone involved in the production and sale of painting.[30] The academic or official painter whose choice and treatment of subjects responded to the tastes and aspirations of this new public could achieve unprecedented financial rewards. Bouguereau, one of the most successful of these, was quite frank about his reasons for abandoning the 'noble' subjects taken from religion, history or Graeco-Roman mythology in favour of genre painting.[31] To understand the latter did not require an extensive Classical or religious education. Its extension throughout the Second Empire testified to its greater relevance to contemporary sensibility, as, again, Gautier saw clearly.[32] The prospect of large profits from the sale of painting also encouraged the emergence of the professional art dealer in whose activities art criticism had an important role to play.[33] The teaching reforms of 1863 extended the new environment in which painting and art criticism found itself.[34] In the second

half of the nineteenth century, therefore, art criticism was, like everything else, transformed by mass production, its content and format was determined by the art market which it served and the newspapers and journals in which it appeared.

That this new situation was public knowledge by the 1880s is clear from its caricature in literature. In Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*, Monsieur Walter, owner, founder, and director of *La Vie française*, has created his newspaper in response, as Madame Walter puts it, 'à un besoin nouveau'.[35] Naturally, this 'new need' is that of Walter himself. He is 'un homme d'argent à qui la presse et la députation avaient servi de leviers' (p. 186). His paper, 'tarte à la crême et boutique à treize' (p. 92), exists solely in order to 'soutenir ses opérations de bourse et ses entreprises de toute sorte' (p. 92). Two well-known writers are recruited to give the paper 'une allure littéraire et parisienne' (p. 189) with which to gloss over this main function. The status of its art criticism is clear: 'Puis on s'était procuré, à bas prix, des critiques d'art, de peinture, de musique, de théâtre, un rédacteur criminaliste et un rédacteur hippique, parmi la grande tribu mercenaire des écrivains à tout faire' (p. 189).[36] The paper is situated at that intersection of politics, finance and public opinion at which Walter's talent for speculation can be most effective. Painting and art criticism serve his financial and social ambitions. His art collection contains works by the official painters of the period but he has also bought works by a few 'jeunes peintres' as an investment. After a very lucrative piece of speculation, he pays a fortune for the most talked-about painting of the day for the sole purpose of inviting influential Parisians to contemplate it 'éclairée à la lumière électrique' (p. 479) in his new residence in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Art critics, invited for the purpose and suitably 'enthousiasmés', declare this picture of *Jésus marchant sur les flots* to be 'le plus magnifique chef-d'œuvre du siècle' (p. 478). Madame Walter kneels before it not out of devotion but because Jesus resembles her lover, Duroy, whose only response to the painting is to declare: 'C'est chic de pouvoir se payer ces bibelots-là' (p. 491). Walter's comments on his own collection convey the trivial, anecdotal responses of the culturally illiterate parvenu. For example, his description of Lambert's *Un Sauvetage*:

> Au milieu d'une table desservie, un jeune chat, assis sur son derrière, examinait avec étonnement et perplexité une mouche se noyant dans un verre d'eau. Il avait une patte levée, prête à cueillir l'insecte d'un coup rapide. Mais il n'était point décidé. Il hésitait. Que ferait-il? (p. 198)

Théophile Thoré, one of the most important art critics of the 1860s, returned frequently in his Salon reviews to this theme of the subservience of the painter to the narrative discourse of the critic and his public:

> Comme les écrivains ne sont pas libres en France . . . il n'y a presque plus en France qu'une critique superficielle et descriptive . . . Mais les sujets simples ne prêtent pas à la critique descriptive, et c'est elle qui favorise et entretient une sorte

de peinture *littéraire*, traduisible en phrases abondantes, magnifiques, ou capricieuses. Tout tableau sur lequel un littérateur de talent peut écrire plusieurs belles pages est assuré de sa réputation.[37]

Thoré correctly saw that the length of much of this writing was related to the way it worked. The critic displayed the full range of his talents, the power of his language over a non-verbal form; the painter's merit lay in providing an adequate stage for this literary performance. But length was a false exhaustivity, a conjuring trick designed to divert attention away from all that the critic did not discuss. His literary talent disguised the fact that art criticism dealt with certain features of the image but not others, that it selected those elements in the painting which lent themselves to narration and ignored those which did not. The critic either knew in advance or could see immediately what the subject was and he was usually good at describing it. But he had no language for the places in the painting where a story was not being told, where contours disappeared, where half-tones mutually reinforced one another, where colours overstepped the boundaries of their subjects and line no longer organized the space into distinct sequential units.[38] By giving new emphasis to these and other formal elements, the Impressionists challenged the narrative aims of official painting and of the art criticism which supported it. In the context of a pictorial tradition in which familiar texts such as *Enfin seuls*, *Un Sauvetage*, and *Jésus marchant sur les flots* combined with the Academy's formal procedures to ensure a self-contained, domesticated narrative system, an Impressionist landscape, in which no obvious story was being told, could only be seen as an unfinished sketch.[39] At the end of the previous chapter, we saw how the literary Symbolists made a virtue of this apparent defect by assimilating the Impressionist subject's apparent lack of explicit narration within their commitment to indirect rather than direct forms of expression. In order to see how this and related critical trends developed on the aesthetic level within the Symbolist movement, we need to return to Baudelaire.

* * *

Thoré's comments on art journalism are an early sign of the growing dissatisfaction with the emphasis placed on the narrative subject in the writing on painting.[40] There seem to me to be two main ways in which Baudelaire's art criticism reinforced his theme. The first is indirect and has to do with the way in which the authority of Baudelaire's art criticism was strengthened by the re-evaluation of Diderot's *Salons* which took place during the 1870s. The second is direct and stems from Baudelaire's theory of correspondences and of the role of colour in painting. We have already seen that he described Delacroix as a literary painter in the sense that his painting seemed to him to

engage the most profound ideas. But Baudelaire always understood this engagement to derive from the painter's mastery of the expressive potential of colour and form. The relationship of ideas to form in painting is the main issue at stake in the assessments made of Diderot's *Salons* during this period.

The impact on Baudelaire of Diderot's art criticism is well known.[41] The poet had always been alert to Diderot's awareness of formal values and to the subtlety and precision with which he analysed them. From the 1850s onwards, however, these features were increasingly disregarded and the significance of the *Salons* limited to Diderot's defence of Greuze. The re-evaluation began in earnest in 1852, when Sainte-Beuve, in an otherwise appreciative article, nevertheless acknowledged that the *Salons* revealed more about Diderot's literary talents than about his understanding of painting.[42] The following year, Clément de Ris said much the same thing.[43] Thoré's attitude in this respect is significant. In 1836 he wrote that Diderot 'a fondé la critique moderne', in 1863, that the same Diderot, 'si perspicace, a fait bien des hérésies, à cause de son incessante préoccupation philosophique'.[44] Five years later, he found the paintings in the annual salon so boring as to be the despair of reviewers but added: 'A moins de faire, comme Diderot, des imaginations originales, à propos des images vulgaires qui tapissent le Salon.'[45] In 1866, L. Asseline had tried to defend Diderot's interest in and mastery of technical aspects but he was by then clearly swimming against the tide.[46]

In 1876, the year of *L'Après-midi d'un faune* and Mallarmé's major article on Manet, this trend was sharply focused by two publications. The first was Fromentin's study of Flemish and Dutch painting, *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*, extracts of which began appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in January of that year. The second was Diderot's *Salons*, published in three volumes as part of a new edition of his complete writings.[47] In the course of his book, Fromentin attacked Diderot's defence of Greuze which he considered to be responsible for the narrative procedures of genre painting in France:

> En France, toute toile qui n'a pas son titre et qui par conséquent ne contient pas un sujet risque fort de ne pas être comptée pour une œuvre ni conçue ni sérieuse. Et cela n'est pas d'aujourd'hui; il y a cent ans que ça dure. Depuis le jour où Greuze imagina la peinture sentimentale, et, aux grands applaudissements de Diderot conçut un tableau comme on conçoit une scène de théâtre et mit en peinture les drames bourgeois de la famille, à partir de ce jour-là, que voyons-nous? La peinture de genre a-t-elle fait autre chose en France qu'inventer des scènes, compulser l'histoire, illustrer les littératures, peindre le passé, un peu le présent, fort peu la France contemporaine, beaucoup les curiosités des mœurs ou des climats étrangers? (p. 674)

To limit the significance of Diderot's *Salons* to the defence of Greuze was not new by 1876 but Fromentin's attack on Diderot did not stop there. His critical approach in *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* was intended to be and was seen as a

rejection of Diderot's.[48] Even if some of Fromentin's judgements on the painters he studied aroused strong opposition, support for his critical method soon became a commonplace assimilated in one form or another into the literature on Diderot. P. Burty, in an otherwise sympathetic review of the *Salons*, diagnosed what he saw as Diderot's ignorance of technical questions as the result of a taste for literary transposition so compulsive as to amount to a sort of nervous disorder: 'Son grand défaut de critique est dans son tic, dans sa manie de refaire les compositions qu'il a sous les yeux, de les concevoir absolument autres, de se substituer à l'artiste.'[49] The naturalist novelist, Édouard Scherer, attributed the same defects to an alleged lack of 'l'intuition pittoresque et plastique', 'la naïveté de l'impression', and 'la sensation immédiate et en quelque sorte physique que produit l'œuvre d'art sur l'organisation de l'artiste. La conséquence en est que sa critique des *Salons* est au fond de la littérature'.[50] Both Burty and Scherer were, unlike Fromentin, sympathetic to the Impressionists. Opposition to Diderot's art criticism was, by the late 1870s, uniting conservatives and modernists alike.

This opposition reached a new peak in May 1880 with a violent outburst by Brunetière in the same review in which extracts from *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* had first appeared.[51] For Brunetière, Diderot 'parle donc de peinture en pur littérateur qu'il est. Il n'a pas seulement juxtaposé le domaine des deux arts, il les a superposés et il a trouvé que la coïncidence était parfaite' (p. 463). The point is not so much that remarks like these are, in any literal sense, untrue, if not actually meaningless. It is more that, in 1880, Brunetière should have felt compelled to publish such an aggressive and partial reading of Diderot's *Salons*. He took over Fromentin's theme that Diderot 'n'a pu que faire insensiblement dévier la critique d'art de la route qu'elle aurait dû suivre' (p. 469). But he had his own reasons for doing so. To a greater degree than even Fromentin, Brunetière believed in the Academy and in its role as the guardian of traditional values. The road which art criticism had been prevented from following by Diderot was the one on which the Academy had set out over 100 years before the *Salons*:

> On s'en va répétant que la critique d'art en France date seulement de Diderot, et beaucoup de gens professent qu'en même temps que le premier exemple, les *Salons* du philosophe nous en auraient légué l'inimitable modèle. Il n'en est rien. Mais ce qu'il faut dire, c'est que les *Salons* de Diderot ont jeté la critique d'art dans une voie fausse, tandis que cent ans avant lui les Conférences de l'Académie l'avaient dirigée dans la bonne, dans la vraie, dans la seule.[52]

For Brunetière, Diderot's art criticism, more than any other of his writings, undermined Classicism's canon of ideal beauty, its laws of artistic creation and merit, its theory of generic purity and, by extension, the conservative ideology which these values served in 1880. Its range and versatility exasperated him, for they appeared to promote anarchy at the expense of intellectual discipline.[53]

For Brunetière, art was governed by two types of laws. There were the universal, *a priori* laws, such as the subordination of details to a single, organizing perspective. These laws had raised Classical painting and theatre to the summits of artistic achievement and the implication is that not even Diderot could have been ignorant of them. But there were also historical, material, *a posteriori* laws which, in Brunetière's view, governed technique in the different art forms and to which Diderot's art criticism refused to submit:

> Mais en dehors de ces lois générales . . . il y a des lois particulières, qui ne dépendent plus ou qui dépendent bien moins de la constitution de l'esprit humain que de la nature des moyens d'expression propres et exclusifs à chacune des grandes formes de l'art; lois spéciales, lois techniques, lois enfin qui ne sont plus données *a priori*, mais qui se créent elles-mêmes et d'elles-mêmes *a posteriori*, c'est-à-dire à mesure du progrès de l'art. (p. 461)

What mattered to Brunetière was that these two types of law be synchronized, that change in art be reconciled with its eternal laws. As far as he was concerned, Diderot undermined this obligation through his technical incompetence, his exclusive interest in subject-matter and his corruption of academic teaching. Since, by 1880, the status of the subject was increasingly challenged by the 'motif', 'effect', and 'impression' in landscape painting from Corot onwards, Brunetière attacks Diderot's alleged obsession with the subject as a deviation from the lesson of Poussin who, in this rewritten version of art history and contrary to popular belief, was not a painter of mythological or historical subjects at all but of works without subjects:

> Certainement cette peinture psychologique, ou, comme on l'a nommée, philosophique, suppose les plus rares qualités d'esprit et de réflexion, de composition et de science. Et pourtant si Poussin n'était pas le peintre de ses *Bacchanales*, de ses grands paysages, de tant de toiles enfin sans *sujet*, serait-il notre Poussin? (p. 465)

Similarly, in a footnote on 'notre école moderne' in which he comes closest to acknowledging the contemporary discussions which form the content to his attack on the *Salons*, Brunetière argues that 'l'absence du *sujet* a fait la supériorité du paysage et du portrait sur presque tous les autres genres' (p. 464). It is a paraphrase of Fromentin, from whose discussion of the lack of subjects in Dutch painting Brunetière quotes.[54] His attack on Diderot's art criticism as mere literature, his reiteration of Fromentin's general attack on the literature of the pictorial subject, his definition of painting as a series of formal procedures governed by internal laws were designed to renew the prestige of the Academy by demonstrating the continuing relevance of its teaching and practice to contemporary debates.

This negative assessment of the *Salons* had become a commonplace in the Diderot literature by the time of the centenary of his death in 1884. Among the many articles written to mark the centenary was one in the newly-founded

Revue indépendante, in which general homage to Diderot's achievements contained the following reservations:

Critique d'art, Diderot reconstitue en son action, ses préliminaires et ses développements, la scène peinte. Son encre traduit tous les effets de la couleur . . . Son commentaire de Chardin dénote un sens profond de l'intimisme. Mais — son exubérance d'idées envahissant tout — il abuse de l'anti-scientifique procédé qui consiste à porter des jugements, à donner des conseils, à faire des admonestations, à reconstruire de toutes pièces l'œuvre qu'on examine, au lieu de la scruter, de la démonter, d'en exposer le mécanisme.[55]

The article was anonymous but its author was almost certainly Fénéon. The reference to unscientific practices, to the need to understand a painting's formal mechanism, the review in which these comments are made all suggest this. They confirm that by the mid-1880s and in response to changes in attitudes to the role of subject-matter in painting, certain features of Diderot's art criticism had been singled out for discredit and others ignored. Barbey d'Aurevilly's parting comment on the *Salons* — 'Que dirait Baudelaire, s'il revenait?'[56] — summarizes the way in which the art criticism of Diderot and Baudelaire were now seen as antagonistic models, the one consigned to the past, the other bearing the future. Fromentin proposed a different model again but it lacked the intellectual ambition of the two others and required technical competence of the kind that only a long and direct experience of painting could provide. These factors alone would have enhanced the impact of Baudelaire's defence of Delacroix and Wagner on the literary avant-garde. But there were other artistic and cultural trends too for which Baudelaire's writing proved to be a catalyst.

* * *

Faced with the relative discredit into which Diderot's alleged approach to the pictorial subject had fallen, lacking real mastery of technical questions but anxious to retain that subordination of painting to the language of the writer which Diderot had bequeathed to the nineteenth century, many Symbolist poets turned uncritically to a theory of pictorial language in which formal elements each had independant verbal equivalents. This theory had the advantage of appearing modern by claiming to be substantiated by the latest scientific research into sense perception. It also left the basic tenets of academic theory intact, which was another advantage, however much, as good avant-gardists should, they protested their scorn for the Academy. In terms of aesthetic theory, they inherited from the post-Kantian Romantic philosophers misty speculations on art as the actualization of the Universal Soul/Mind/Spirit. They also developed in a narrow way the problem of the referentiality of music

as they interpreted it in Baudelaire. The one encouraged only a limited understanding of the role of the medium in art. The other led to the unshakeable belief that Baudelaire had demonstrated the relevance of the verbal model of meaning to non-verbal art forms. The two trends had come together in the poet's famous discussion of Wagner and were reinforced to varying degrees among the Symbolist poets by the semantic theory on which Neo-Impressionism was based and/or the Platonic theory of the relationship of Idea to sign. By the mid-1880s, these different strands were well interwoven and few of the Symbolists writers had the time, inclination, or discipline to unravel them.

It is well known that in the course of the 1870s, translation into French of Schopenhauer's writings provided opponents of the materialism of Comte and Taine with an alternative description of the world. His brand of pessimistic idealism reinforced the sense of cultural crisis which resulted from traumatic military defeat by Germany and from a civil war which had sharply focused the divisions in French society. In Schopenhauer's theory of the world as Will and Representation, the hierarchy of the arts had as its premiss the idea that art permitted temporary escape from the tyranny of the Will.[57] From subjection to this cosmic force, man passed, through aesthetic contemplation, to disinterested observance of it. Each art was assigned a position on the scale according to that stage of the Will's objectification which it revealed. Of all arts, however, music stood alone. While other arts expressed ideas, the objectification of the Will, only music expressed Will itself, directly and intuitively. In this respect, he extended the theory of the metaphysical nature of music which can be traced back in German Romantic thought, through Herder and Wackenroder, to the beginning of the century, and in French to Rousseau's essay on the origins of language.[58] Wagner challenged Schopenhauer's uncompromising belief in the supremacy of music with his theory of total art.[59] This theory was introduced to the French Symbolists primarily via Baudelaire's famous 1861 essay on Wagner. Here, Baudelaire analysed the relationship in Wagner between music and text, between sound and verbal definitions.[60]

The 'meaning of music' is a dangerous phrase. It suggests an intellectual content divorced from or hidden behind the sound which merely carries it.[61] It is difficult for non-musicians to think about music in any other way and the Symbolist poets were no more and no less ignorant of music than poets usually are. But Wagner's theory of total art, that the definitive art-form would be that which united the different arts at the point at which their individual limits touched, gave shape to their ambition to define a synthesis of the arts which would provide an alternative form of knowledge of the world. In most cases, however, their experience of Wagner's music was mediated by that of Baudelaire, whose brochure on *Tannhäuser* made two quite different

approaches to Wagner possible. Baudelaire analysed the relationship between the music's descriptive role, for which verbal equivalents (what he called translations) were justified, and its emotive energy which went beyond language. Broadly speaking, we can say that variations in the Wagner cult among the Symbolists tended to depend on which of these two features was stressed.

According to Baudelaire, 'Wagner n'avait jamais cessé de répéter que la musique (dramatique) devait *parler* le sentiment, s'adapter au sentiment avec la même exactitude que la parole, mais évidemment d'une autre manière, c'est-à-dire exprimer la partie indéfinie du sentiment que la parole, trop positive, ne peut pas rendre . . .' (*OC*, II, 786). He illustrates this by comparing three descriptions of the musical experience produced by the overture to *Lohengrin*. The similarity of the terms contained in Wagner's own programme text, in Liszt's commentary and in the poet's own experience of the music demonstrates 'que la véritable musique suggère des idées analogues dans des cerveaux différents' (p. 784). These similarities were not surprising since they are a distant echo of that 'complexe et indivisible totalité' (p. 784) which is the world's divine origin and destination and which 'true' art reveals:

> Dans les trois traductions nous trouvons la sensation de la *béatitude spirituelle et physique*; de *l'isolement*; de la contemplation de *quelque chose infiniment grand et infiniment beau*; d'une *lumière intense* qui réjouit *les yeux et l'âme jusqu'à la pâmoison*; et enfin la sensation de *l'espace étendu jusqu'aux dernières limites concevables*. (p. 785, Baudelaire's emphasis)

Such states were what the music meant. The relationship between the aural impact of organized sound and the emotional state it provoked, between material signifier and emotional signified, was as precise as that which characterized the linguistic sign. Even if the emotion aroused was imprecise (Baudelaire described his 'rêverie' provoked by the overture as 'vague' and 'abstraite') the means Wagner adopted to arouse it were as intimately linked to their objective as words to their meaning. Wyzéwa will draw on this theory for his definition of emotional signs in painting. But Wagner's use of the leitmotif, the recurring musical phrase or theme, to denote a particular character and emotional content created another, more precise relationship between musical and verbal signs. This was no longer the analogy between two modes of operation, but the coincidence of word and sound. Baudelaire, quoting Liszt, described these melodies as 'des personnifications d'idées' (p. 802). This second relationship was not thought of as being different from the first, for the return of these melodies 'annonce celui des sentiments que les paroles qu'on prononce n'indiquent point explicitement' (p. 802). But the definition of music as the personification of ideas made respectable the annexation of musical sound by verbal definition. Baudelaire himself noted that because of Wagner's stated aim to make musical material as precise a form of feeling as its verbal counterpart, 'une foule de gens . . . s'imaginèrent que le maître attribuait à la

musique la puissance d'exprimer la forme positive des choses, c'est-à-dire qu'il intervertissait les rôles et les fonctions' (p. 786). It was just such an inversion which René Ghil undertook in the 1880s.

The brawls which concluded Wagner's attempt to impose his work on the Parisian public of 1861 have taken their place in the legend of the modernist movement. The French defeat at Sedan and the anti-German feeling which resulted delayed the penetration of Wagnerism into France which enthusiastic articles by Baudelaire, Mendès, and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam might, in other circumstances, have accelerated. Another decade was needed to bring together the different elements whose convergence enabled the Wagnerian combination of mysticism, eroticism and legend to galvanize the emerging decadent movement.[62] But an important stage in Wagner's reception in France came with the publication in 1875 of Schuré's two-volume study, *Le Drame musical*, of which an enlarged edition appeared in 1886. In a footnote, Schuré restated the distinction between music and painting made by Schopenhauer and Wagner, describing the former's theory of music in the following way:

> Les autres arts agissent sur nous par l'intermédiaire de la réflexion et de l'imagination; la musique par contre agit sans le secours de l'idée de *causalité* et nous touche tout droit dans le fond de notre être. Le philosophe en tire la conclusion que si les arts plastiques représentent les types éternels des choses, les *idées* de Platon, en qui l'âme du monde se condense et s'individualise, la musique exprime cette âme elle-même, ou, si l'on veut, la *chose en soi*. Elle nous donne la quintessence de la vie sans ses formes apparentes, les passions sans les motifs qui n'en sont que l'occasion, la nature sans l'enveloppe. (I, 210, Schuré's emphasis)

Schuré's theory of the subordination of the visual sign and misinterpretations of Baudelaire's description of musical and verbal analogues in Wagner came together in February 1888 on the front cover of the review, *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*. It shows a child sitting on the floor colouring the vowels in the letter-blocks with which the children of the Third Republic learned to read. But this was no tribute to the Republic's education policy for the child was Rimbaud and the last thing his coloured vowels were designed to do was comfort the Third Republic, which he loathed. In 1888, his sonnet, 'Voyelles', was important for the way Symbolist writers approached painting for it appeared to justify their ambition to annex the non-verbal art forms within a theory of total art in which poetry enjoyed a privileged status. It was all very well Verlaine saying: 'Moi, qui ai connu Rimbaud, je sais qu'il se foutait pas mal de savoir si A était rouge ou vert. Il le voyait comme ça, mais c'est tout.'[63] In 1888, few of those who can have heard Verlaine can have been listening to him.

Notoriety of the kind achieved in the 1880s by Rimbaud's poem always implies a multiplicity of levels on which it operates, of problems to which it appears to respond. Esoteric interpretations of experience, synaesthestic

accounts of sensations, metaphysical theories of art, 'Voyelles', like the Wagner cult to which it was thought to be related, was fair game for all of them. Since it appeared to validate Baudelaire's theory of correspondences, it was made to support retroactively the metaphysical premisses on which this theory was based. Since Wagnerian total art and Baudelairean correspondences were for many Symbolists the same thing, Rimbaud's sonnet became part of the repertory of Wagnerian gestures by which history was transformed into myth.

In 'Alchimie du verbe', Rimbaud gave his own account of the sonnet:

> J'inventai la couleur des voyelles! — *A* noir, *E* blanc, *I* rouge, *O* bleu, *U* vert. —Je réglai la forme et le mouvement de chaque consonne, et, avec des rythmes instinctifs, je me flattai d'inventer un verbe poétique accessible, un jour ou l'autre, à tous les sens. Je réservais la traduction.[64]

Thus, for the poet in 1873, the sonnet was a part of the story/history of 'une de mes folies', a landmark in his descent into the 'saison en enfer'. Two years earlier, this search for a new poetic language accessible, one day, to all the senses had been part of his response to the events of May 1871. The famous letter to Paul Demeny on the fifteenth of that month underlines the relationship between the sonnet and contemporary history.[65] In 'Alchimie du verbe', he had reserved the rights to the translation of this poetic language but his boast was a Symbolist ambition, his political project a Symbolist anxiety.

Undoubtedly the best-known element in the history of the sonnet's impact on the Symbolist movement is that of René Ghil's verbal instrumentism. In 1885, Ghil published in a Brussels review a series of articles entitled 'Sous mon cachet' in which he outlined his theory. Invoking contemporary scientific research into the phenomenon of 'audition colorée', Ghil explained the equivalence of phonetic and musical timbre and their relationship to colours:

> Avec moi que l'on veuille retenir ceci; LES SONS SONT VUS: Or, si le son peut être traduit en couleur, LA COULEUR PEUT SE TRADUIRE EN SON, ET AUSSITOT EN TIMBRE d'instrument. Tout le mystère est là, gisant.[66]

In this way, the brass instruments were red, the harp white, the violin blue, the flute yellow. With black, things became more complicated and a fine turn of metaphor was needed to attribute this colour to the organ: 'et, profondeur de la Terre et des Chairs, synthèse simplement des seuls instruments simples, les orgues toutes noires plangorent' (p. 379). Ghil acknowledged the role played by Hugo, Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé in the elaboration of his theory but only in order to underline his own originality. The last three named had played isolated melodies on particular instruments. Hugo's symphonies, on the other hand, were so vast that they drowned out the instruments. None of the four poets had succeeded in playing in full orchestra all of the instruments perceived separately, for their work was intuitive and lacked the rigour of his own scientific method. It was at this point that Rimbaud's sonnet provided the

missing element for Ghil's already too systematic system. It was, he said, a development of Verlaine's practice of the nuance. Rimbaud had understood 'que l'on pouvait plus loin pénétrer en l'arcane, et ces couleurs si délicatement peintes, les faire chanter en ces merveilleux instruments multipliables, les lettres!' (p. 379). The relationship between Rimbaud's sonnet and Verlaine's theory of the nuance was, to say the least, remote and the 'delicately painted colours' and 'wonderful instruments' were lifeless metaphors, but the main aim was to point out that Rimbaud's version was fatally flawed:

> Et d'ARTHUR RIMBAUD la vision doit être revue: ne serait-ce que pour cette impardonnable faute d'avoir, sous une Voyelle simple, l'U, mis une couleur composée, le VERT.
>
> Très regardées, il semble que les Voyelles se colorent ainsi: A NOIR, E BLANC, I BLEU, O ROUGE, U JAUNE, dans la simplesse très belle de cinq fleurs incueillies, s'épanouissant aux champs ensoleillés: mais l'A étrange; en qui semble des quatre autres s'étouffer la propre floraison.
>
> Maintenant, rappelant que plus haut j'ai donné la couleur des Instruments nécessaires, selon la logique apparaît la conclusion voulue, disant: A LES ORGUES, E LA HARPE, I LES VIOLONS, O LES CUIVRES, U LES FLÛTES. . . . (p. 379)

All that was then required was for the poet to select those words 'où le plus souvent se nombre la Voyelle maîtresse demandée, que l'immatérielle sensation vibrera de l'Instrument au Timbre qui sied'. (p. 379)

The five vowels formed the infrastructure of the instrumentist edifice. Trapped in the logic of his own scientific pretensions, Ghil was forced to make his system increasingly comprehensive by attributing colours and instruments to complex vowels, diphthongs and consonants. By the time he came to republish the articles in book form the following year, the systematization had become quite euphoric and was supported by the references to Helmholtz with which Ghil prefaced his purely abstract construction. But a claim to scientific status as extravagant as this one is a response to an urgent need. Perhaps because the alternative was to have to think through the corrosive anarchy of Rimbaud's coloured vowels. In 1885, Ghil turned to the same scientific authorities as Seurat in search of the same defence against subjectivity. The filiation is clear in the preface which Ghil wrote that year to *Légendes d'âmes et de sangs*.[67] Impressionism had discredited conservative theories of art and Ghil's scientific instrumentism was a way of reasserting control over the sense-impressions which provided the raw material of art.

By claiming that the physiological vibrations produced in speech-acts were analogous to those present in particular sense-impressions, emotions and their linguistic equivalents, the poet had at his disposal a complete and self-contained system with which to domesticate experience and expression, an equivalent of Wagner's music whose aim, said Ghil, was to 'unir et ordonner infiniment soumises et affinées toutes les formes artistiques'.[68] Submission and

purification are the terms which matter. Ghil's aim, which he claimed was also Wagner's, was 'en une poésie instrumentale où sont des mots les notes unir et perdre les Poésies éloquente, plastique, picturale, et musicale au hasard' (p. 411). In his ambition to abolish chance, Ghil was His Master's Voice but the contingency to which he refers is not that of Mallarmé. He is more concerned with those elements in each art form which resist federation within his system of equivalences. Mallarmé's famous preface to the *Traité du verbe* provided a safe conduct which protected Ghil and his system until April 1888, when he publicly dissociated himself from his master. From then on, his poetry and verbal instrumentism were torn to pieces by the Symbolist movement despite the fact that his poetry was no worse than a lot of that written by other adherents and that the theory did not have much to do with it.

The inflexibility of Ghil's system and the intense personal ambition with which he advanced it soon isolated him within the Symbolist movement. Furthermore, from 1885 onwards, the latter had at its disposal another, more attractive theory of inter-arts relationships. The *Revue Wagnérienne*, founded in 1885, did not take long to turn its attention to painting. Wagner had known and said little about the visual arts. There was, therefore, a large gap to fill without having to leave Paris to fill it. Wyzéwa, who wrote the articles on painting for the review, did not, unlike Ghil, provide hostages to fortune by attempting to construct an ambitious system of inter-arts relationships in great detail. On the contrary, his adaptation of Wagnerism to painting consisted largely of putting to new use a series of commonplaces already well assimilated into French art criticism.

His first definition of Wagnerian painting came in his review of the Salon of 1885.[69] Here, he adapted to painting the distinction between prose and poetry to which Mallarmé referred as the 'double état de la parole'. He divided painting into two traditions, the first of which he called prose, the second, poetry. Just as the writer could use language for either its discursive or its emotional properties, 'ainsi peuvent les peintres, par le même moyen dés procédés plastiques, traduire, immédiatement, leur vision du monde objectif, — ou bien, aussi, négligeant, presque, le sens habituel des figures, avec le seul agencement des lignes et des teintes, évoquer en nous, réelles, précises, des émotions . . .' (p. 154). The first type was the equivalent of literary Naturalism as defined by Zola in his phrase 'la nature vue à travers un tempérament'. The echo is obvious in Wyzéwa's reference to 'la peinture dite réaliste, donnant l'exacte image des choses, vues par la vision spéciale du peintre' (p. 154). The second type exploited the emotional impact of lines and colours, the relationship of pictorial signs to one another rather than their role in a strategy of illusionist representation. The distinction between the two types of painting is an artificial one, its contrived neatness glossed over by means of the surreptitious 'presque'. Wyzéwa was not yet thinking through the implications of this

second type of visual sign. Instead, the emphasis is on the parallel with literature, on a supposedly Wagnerian law of dual development — prose/poetry — which both arts share and on the work of the contemporary painter in whom this duality is resolved. Dismissing the painting shown in the official Salon as totally non-Wagnerian, Wyzéwa goes on to say:

> M. Fantin-Latour nous a consolé de cette misère: celui-là, d'abord, est un Wagnériste conscient, connaît, admire, célèbre le Maître, mais il a, surtout, cette extrême gloire, que seul, aujourd'hui, il a résolument compris la double tâche possible au peintre: il a, dans de grands tableaux, dont chacun montre une victoire nouvelle, reproduit, plus exactement que tous et plus entièrement, la vie objective, réelle, totale des formes: et il a, en d'adorables dessins, écrit le poème de l'émotion plastique, communiquant aux âmes des émotions étrangement douces et tièdes, par une combinaison fantaisiste des lignes et des teintes. (p. 155)

By 1885, Fantin-Latour had been producing works on Wagnerian themes for over twenty years.[70] Hardly a surprising choice therefore for the role which Wyzéwa attributed to him. The analysis has little to do with Fantin-Latour or with painting. The aim is to show that the alleged contradiction between two historical traditions is resolved by a higher principle: 'deux peintures sont, toutes deux également légitimes et sacrées, formes diverses d'un Réalisme supérieur' (p. 155). The purpose of modern painting is to complete tradition, to realize its potential synthesis. 'Un pastel nouveau de M. Degas, le dominateur prodigieux de la vie plastique; un tableau de M. G. Moreau, le symphoniste des émotions affinées, ou quelque dessin épouvantant de M. Redon, ou cette exposition des vieux Maîtres ouverte au Louvre . . . sont des faits Wagnériens . . .' (p. 155). The tradition which anticipates modernity is a familiar manœuvre in modernist criticism. It redefines the art of the past so as to more easily categorize the art of the present. The generalities with which Wyzéwa summarizes the work of Degas, Moreau, and Redon point to this evasion. For Wagnerian as for academic painting, elevation to the dignity of art follows a well-worn path.

In 1885, the *Revue Wagnérienne* was attempting to establish itself by defining a 'new' programme and selecting a leader in whom this programme was embodied. The following year, Wyzéwa went much further.[71] In articles on Wagnerism in painting, literature and music, he described this movement as the culmination of a vast historical process. For Wyzéwa, the human soul, a microcosm of the World Soul, possessed three distinct modes of feeling: sensation, thought and emotion; to each corresponded an art form, painting, literature and music respectively. The triadic system was also historical since the three modes/art forms had followed on from each other in an evolutionary process. A new historical phase had been reached with Wagner's synthesis of the arts. In the Wagnerian art experience was contained the total life of the universe. Wyzéwa extended this pseudo-historical model into art history

proper by identifying five painters as Wagnerians 'avant la lettre', all of whom had already been nominated by Baudelaire in 'Les Phares', namely Leonardo, Rubens, Rembrandt, Watteau and Delacroix. To these he added the moderns, the idealist Puvis, the realist Degas and Besnard who was a little of both. They were all Wagnerians in the sense that they had extended the boundaries of their art form until it had reached another's mode of feeling. They had brought the emotional dimension of music to an art form normally confined to recreating the sensations produced by imitation of the visual forms of the natural world. They had done so by freeing the expressive potential of line and colour, 'devenues comme les syllabes de la poésie, comme les notes de la musique, des signes émotionnels' (p. 106), by using colours and lines 'dans un pur agencement symphonique, insoucieux d'un sujet visuel à peindre directement' (p. 106). That is, Wyzéwa assimilated into the Wagnerian cult the terms of several contemporary debates on painting which overlap — the emotional symbolism of colour and line, the problematic status of subject-matter, definitions of painting as decorative space, the growing interest in the applied arts, the attribution to the raw material of paint of a spiritual dimension with which to aestheticize the decline of the craftsman brought about by new methods of mass production. In this way, Wagnerian painting was presented as addressing contemporary problems which were in turn placed in what was claimed to be their true historical perspective.

* * *

So far, I have tried to show the wider context of which the arguments about literary and musical values in painting were a part. We have seen that in response to factors within and outwith art history proper, attitudes to the function of the subject in painting were changing and that these changes created problems for the art critic, whose discourse was organized around meanings derived from the subject but was not equipped to deal with less explicitly narrative or non-narrative features of images. Baudelaire's writings on Delacroix and Wagner focused on these questions but were read by the next generation of the avant-garde according to the new terms in which the debate on art was being conducted by the mid-1880s and in which reassessments of Diderot, Rimbaud, and Wagner, among others, play a prominent part. Wyzéwa's Wagnerian painting and Ghil's verbal instrumentism were the two most public (mis)interpretations of Baudelaire. Within the literary avant-garde, these theories were influential in so far as they appeared to provide a modern system of criteria with which to replace what were thought of as the shortcomings of Diderot's old-fashioned and unsystematic approach. We need now to see what the Symbolist painters thought of these alternative languages

of painting. The short answer is: not very much. They retained the parameters of literary and musical values in painting but within them proposed their own variations. In the remaining part of this chapter, I shall focus on two of them, the 'metaphors' of Odilon Redon and the 'parables' of Gauguin.

Among the artists received into Wyzéwa's Wagnerian pantheon, Redon raised the problem of the relationship between visual and verbal expression in a very direct way. In 1882, in the offices of *Le Gaulois*, he had shown his first album of lithographs, *Dans le rêve*, which was followed soon afterwards by the publication of the second, *A Edgar Poe*. Huysmans described both as 'une véritable transposition' of the writings of Poe and Baudelaire.[72] In fact, the transposition was that made by Huysmans himself in his 1882 article and in *A Rebours* two years later. At first, Redon appears to have been a willing accomplice.[73] He had devised the titles for the albums and the captions for the lithographs with a view to taking advantage of contemporary literary tastes but in Huysmans he got more than he bargained for and soon came to regret his own part in encouraging the interpretations of his work which Huysmans established in the public mind. For Huysmans described *Dans le rêve* exclusively in terms of its fantastic subject-matter and, in his comments on *A Edgar Poe*, reversed the relationship between the images and the Poe-like captions which Redon had written for them by describing them as 'interprétant des membres de phrases' and implying that these were taken from Poe. He singled out *A l'horizon, l'Ange des certitudes, et, dans le ciel sombre, un regard interrogateur* (Pl. 3), the fourth of the six lithographs in the Poe album, describing it in the following way:

> Un œil blanc roule dans un pan de ténèbres, tandis qu'émerge d'une eau souterraine et glaciale, un être bizarre, un amour vieilli de Prud'hon, un foetus du Corrège macéré dans un bain d'alcool, lequel nous regarde, en levant le doigt, et plisse sa bouche en un mystérieux et enfantin sourire. (p. 300)

By identifying the Angel and the nature of the gaze, Redon's text provides the spectator with information without which the effort to understand the image and its relationship to those before and after it in the series would be quite undirected. But the information only goes so far. As Redon himself put it later: 'Le titre n'est justifié que lorsqu'il est vague, indéterminé, et visant même confusément à l'équivoque.'[74] Here, it maintains linguistically, via the simple conjunction 'et', the ambiguity which, in the lithograph, derives from the unclear relationship of the space occupied by the eye to that occupied by the angel. Each segment of the image is ambiguous, both internally and in its relationship to others. The angel's face is both child-like and old; its fingers resemble claws but it wears a laurel. The sphere is both face and moon. Its eye suggests a relationship with others in the image (those of the angel and of the animal-like head created by the cloud) but not one which the opposition

between certainty and doubt contained in the title can explicate. The triangle and circle in which they are set engage in spatial relationships which contradict rather than reinforce each other, so that interpretation is continually destabilized. Huysmans notices some of these features (the sky which seems to form a wall behind the angel figure, his aged face which reverses conventional cherubic attributes, his ambiguous expression) and his syntax (the opposition/simultaneity of 'tandis que . . .') respects the image's main spatial relationship. But in his focus on the angel figure, he indulges in the favourite decadent strategy of promoting as an alternative tradition that which in standard art histories is relegated to the marginal or scandalous. In this case, the black and white drawings are heir to visual forms which return via Prud'hon (the taste of diagonal compositions, lunar light effects and blurred contours) to his two principal masters, Correggio (a minor aspect of whose art is here given new status), and Leonardo (connoted indirectly but unmistakeably by the reference to the 'mysterious smile') and their shared practice of *sfumato*. The historical references make a claim of erudition for what is subjective fantasy, one which domesticates Redon's images by reducing the ambiguity of their relationships to the texts Redon provided for them. Huysmans saw Redon's visual forms as the servant of what he assumed were Poe's texts instead of seeing visual and verbal forms as complementary explorations of the mysteries which survived positivist accounts of the world. In 1883, Redon published his third album, *Les Origines*, without the captions he had written for it, but if he did so to free his work from the interpretations which Huysmans was creating for it, the publication of *A Rebours* in 1884 ensured that this would not succeed. In Huysmans, the procedures of art criticism and fiction were indistinguishable and Redon's lithographs were diverted to serve the nightmares of des Esseintes's fear of the world and stunted emotional life.

By *Certains*, five years later, Huysmans's approach to Redon's work was well practised. In his comments on the lithograph of 1888, *Et toutes sortes de bêtes effroyables surgissent* (Pl. 4), he again began by quoting the caption and then describing Redon's image-as-narrated-by-Huysmans as a 'translation' of it (p. 135).[75] Gauguin, in his notes on *Certains*, dismissed the idea that Redon had merely illustrated Flaubert's text, saying that 'le peintre ne peut *illustrer* un livre et vice-versa. Il peut décorer son livre, oui, y ajouter d'autres sensations qui s'y rattachent'.[76] In so far as Gauguin thought of Redon's literary sources at all, he saw in his art the invention of a visual analogue with its own internal structure: 'Les rêves chez lui deviennent une réalité par la vraisemblance qu'il leur donne.' But the idea that Redon's art was a translation of the literary became so established that it defined the terms in which the first-generation Redon public saw his work.

The response of Jules Destrée, a young Belgian critic, was typical in showing how lithograph and caption were drawn into a false antagonism. Either the

literary text lacked quality, in which case the captions weakened the lithograph — so Redon's 1887 illustrations for Edmond Picard's *Le Juré*, were 'diminuées par ces commentaires précis qui, déterminant d'une façon positive leur signification, arrêtent l'essor vagabond de l'esprit'[77] — or its literary quality overwhelmed the lithograph, as in the case of the first Flaubert album, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*:

Mais quel triomphe, quand même, pour l'Écriture! Comme l'insuffisance et la pauvreté de l'art plastique est ici manifeste! Comme la supériorité du verbe s'atteste indiscutablement! (p. 67)

Reaction to what was essentially a false problem came in 1894 when, for the first time, Redon exhibited paintings alongside his work in black-and-white.[78] The one made necessary a re-evaluation of the other. Some found it easier to ignore this fact and stayed with the Huysmans version of Redon the deranged poet who revelled in horrific subject-matter. Jean Lorrain still found in the early work 'la vérité rendue tangible de la folie, mère de l'extase'[79] and Edmond Pilon went on reading there Gilles de Retz, Faust and Edgar Poe.[80] Others, like Mauclair, sensed that a revision of these commonplaces was necessary but had no idea of how to go about it. Reconciling the creator of the *Dans le rêve* album with that of the oil paintings on show was something for which he had no categories.[81] In the *Revue blanche*, however, T. Natanson had those of the Nabis and his short review of the exhibition amounts to a Nabi manifesto. He attacked the idea that Redon's art was 'de littérature dessinée' and argued that the oil paintings were merely showing what would have been obvious from the lithography a decade earlier had it not been for Huysmans. The mystery which others had located in Redon's strange subjects was, he stated, entirely the result of his use of formal elements:

L'imprécision à qui le rêve doit le plus sûr de son charme, comment peut-elle s'arrêter aux limites nécessaires d'une expression plastique? A la condition, ici réalisée, que, si loin que le rêve entraîne l'artiste . . . toujours il lui précise des formes dont la seule matière — couleurs ou lignes et leur composition — fait le sens.[82]

As the spokesman here for the Nabis, Natanson's remarks are also aimed at the critical approach exemplified by Aurier, who in his second article on pictorial Symbolism had referred to Redon's work as an 'œuvre de poète et de philosophe, œuvre angoissante, non seulement de drame et d'épouvante mais encore de négation métaphysique et de désespoir . . .' and compared him to Pascal.[83] Natanson therefore extended the criticism made by Denis against Aurier's interpretation of Gauguin. As a result, interpretation of Redon's work veered from one extreme to the other, from a transposition of literature to an autonomous figural system.

The new definition was as misrepresentative and partial as the old but it carried with it the shifts taking place in other reputations during this period. In

1884, *A Rebours* had created a public association between the work of Redon and Moreau which, thanks to Natanson and the painters for whom he spoke, was superseded ten years later by that of Redon and Cézanne. By 1900, this new pairing was secure enough for it to be the subject of Denis's *Hommage à Cézanne*, which is also a homage to Redon, standing to the left of the Cézanne landscape and receiving the tributes of the Nabis. Writing in 1907 of the situation fifteen years before, Denis commented:

> Les anciens de ce temps-là, Gauguin tout le premier, avaient une admiration sans bornes pour Cézanne. J'ajoute qu'ils avaient parallèlelement la plus grande estime pour Odilon Redon. Odilon Redon avait cherché lui aussi en dehors de la nature copiée et de la sensation, les équivalents plastiques de ses émotions et de ses rêves . . . Oui, Redon est à l'origine du symbolisme, en tant qu'expression *plastique* de l'idéal . . .[84]

Natanson's article contains no analysis of particular works. What we have is the transfer to Redon of Nabi principles which in 1894 could be supported neither by the painting of Cézanne nor by that of Gauguin: Cézanne, because of the bulk of his work was still not available in Paris, Gauguin, because the hostility aroused by the exhibition six months before of his first Tahiti paintings had made his art indefensible. Redon's work in colour could be made to fill the gap on condition that the charge of being, to quote Gustave Kahn, a 'littérateur dévoyé dans les moyens graphiques'[85] was laid to rest. Natanson's article, therefore, has little to do with art history and Denis's comparison between Cézanne and Redon in their use of colour as a formal equivalent or symbol of their experience of nature is no more than their work's lowest common denominator. Huysmans's analysis and Natanson's rejection of it were the two poles between which this work was tossed during the first ten years of Redon's public reputation. Both prevented any real understanding of the complex relationship in Redon's work between the visual signs and the texts which accompanied them.

Redon himself had been struggling with this problem years before either Huysmans or Natanson gave their own version of it. In a diary entry for 5 August 1879, he tried to understand why 'Rubens parle une langue que je ne comprends pas':

> Il a, sans doute, toutes les cordes suprêmes de la lyre éternelle sur laquelle les grands hommes ont fait entendre les angoisses de notre destinée; il a tout cela et n'a pas une ombre, un soupçon de représentation plastique — il n'a ni la ligne, ni le plan, ni la simplicité, ni rien de ce qui est pour la sage et claire et simple présentation des choses. (*ASM*, pp. 80–81)

In Rembrandt's *Angel Gabriel*, however, formal qualities alone were adequate to the expression of meaning. True, the old man and the adolescent might represent the different ages of man and the young woman at prayer the fear of

the unknown and 'ces nuances, assurément, sont du domaine de la littérature . . .' (p. 82). But they were not what the painting meant. They were present only 'à titre d'accessoire' to 'l'unique accent de cette composition sublime', the 'lumière surnaturelle qui illumine et qui dore le messager divin' (p. 77):

Là, dans la nature pure et simple du ton et dans les délicatesses du clair-obscur est le secret de l'œuvre tout entière, invention toute pittoresque, qui incarne l'idée et lui donne, pour ainsi parler, de la chair et du sang. Cela n'a rien à démêler avec l'anecdote. (p. 82)

The opposition between Rubens and Rembrandt was at the centre of *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*. Redon's preference for Rembrandt is his reply to the praise of Rubens and reservations about Rembrandt which Fromentin had expressed there. Redon's private involvement in the controversy aroused by Fromentin's preferences naturally led him to reflect on what was a central concern of *Les Maîtres d'autrefois*:

Où est la limite de l'idée littéraire en peinture?
On s'entend. Il y a idée littéraire toutes les fois qu'il n'y a pas invention plastique.
Cela n'exclut pas de l'invention, ni une idée quelconque que pourront exprimer les mots, mais alors elle est subordonnée à l'impression produite par les tâches purement pittoresques, et n'y paraît qu'à titre d'accessoire et, en quelque sorte, de superflu . . .
Dans une composition littéraire, nulle impression produite. L'effet réside uniquement dans les idées qu'elle fait naître et qui se produisent surtout par le souvenir. Il n'y a pas alors d'œuvre d'art réelle; un récit vaut mieux; c'est de la pure anecdote. (pp. 78–79)

For Redon, any meaning in a painting which did not derive from its purely material substance was incidental and it was just this relationship in Redon's work between a strong material substance and the expression of mystery which so impressed the Nabis. The desire to play down the significance of the subject-matter of his art, particularly in the case of his illustrations of literary texts, is an over-reaction to the dominant mode of reading the image at this time, in which the spectator expected a unilateral relationship between the visual subject and an idea selected from a culturally-determined set of possible interpretations.[86] Redon preferred instead the mind's play with visual analogies produced by the non-referential elements of form:

Cet art suggestif est tout entier dans l'art excitateur de la musique . . . Toutes les erreurs de la critique commises à mon égard, à mes débuts, furent qu'elle ne vit pas qu'il ne fallait rien définir, rien comprendre, rien limiter, rien préciser . . . Mes dessins *inspirent* et ne se définissent pas. Ils ne déterminent rien. Ils nous placent, ainsi que la musique, dans le monde ambigu de l'indéterminé.
Ils sont une sorte de *métaphore*, a dit Rémy de Gourmont, en les situant à part, loin de tout art géométrique. Il y voit une logique imaginative. Je crois que cet

écrivain a dit en quelques lignes plus que tout ce qui fut écrit autrefois sur mes premiers travaux. (pp. 26–27)

By the analogy with music, Redon meant that in his work form and representation were interdependent. The internal and external directions of the artistic sign were fused. On other occasions, he felt that this constituted the superiority of the visual over the musical sign. Fantin-Latour, for example, had, according to Redon, worn himself out on 'des essais d'interprétation de la musique par la peinture, oubliant encore que nulle couleur ne peut traduire le monde musical, qui est uniquement et seulement interne et sans nul appui dans la nature réelle' (p. 157). It was in creating artistic signs which were both autonomous and representational, internal and supported by external reality, containing both aspects of what Mallarmé called the 'double état de la parole' that Redon believed his originality to lie:

Imaginez des arabesques ou méandres variés, se déroulant, non sur un plan, mais dans l'espace, avec tout ce que fourniront pour l'esprit les marges profondes et indéterminées du ciel; imaginez le jeu de leurs lignes projetées et combinées avec les éléments les plus divers, y compris celui d'un visage humain; si ce visage a les particularités de celui que nous apercevons quotidiennement dans la rue, avec sa vérité fortuite immédiate toute réelle, vous aurez, là, la combinaison ordinaire de beaucoup de mes dessins. (p. 27)

Redon therefore saw himself as having separated the different components of representation (plane, line, depth, and their combination with representational elements) which he then reassembled for a purpose other than that of creating an illusion of external reality. This is what he believed de Gourmont had meant by the reference to his 'metaphors'. In fact, what de Gourmont said was that in order to illustrate Flaubert's metaphors in *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, an imaginative (rather than logical) system of representation, such as that present in Redon's work, was required.[87] Literal illustration, appropriate for narrative successivity, could not deal with the associative function of language foregrounded in metaphor. As it happens, the extracts from Flaubert's text which Redon illustrated are almost entirely without metaphor but for de Gourmont the point was that Redon's imaginative logic promoted the formal elements of figuration to a status equal to that hitherto enjoyed by the representational and that this promotion was analogous to the way in which metaphor validated 'la confusion, visuellement absurde et artistiquement admirable, d'une sensation double et trouble' (p. 89).

Like Redon, Gauguin compared his painting to music, but where Redon accepted de Gourmont's description of his work as visual metaphors, Gauguin thought of his own as parables. In the January 1885 letter to Schuffenecker already mentioned, Gauguin referred to Cézanne's painting in the following way:

Comme Virgile qui a plusieurs sens et que l'on peut interpréter à volonté, la littérature de ses tableaux a un sens parabolique à deux fins; ses fonds sont aussi imaginatifs que réels . . . Plus je vais plus j'abonde dans ce sens de traductions de la pensée pour tout autre chose qu'une littérature . . .'[88]

In another letter to Schuffenecker nearly four years later, he repeated this opposition between parable and literature, saying that in painting he preferred 'la parabole' to 'un roman peint . . .'.[89] The theory found a natural development in the Biblical subjects of the Breton paintings of 1888–89 but remained central to the way in which Gauguin interpreted his work of the 1890s. It reappeared in his manuscript, *Diverses Choses*, written in 1896–97. In the Symbolist work of art, as in the Bible, 'sous la forme littérale, superficielle, figurative des paraboles, affectant le *surnaturalisme* énigmatique, irrationnel, il faut chercher le *sens figuré, fondamental*, rationnel . . .'[90] Gauguin repeated the terms in a letter of 1899.[91] The parable's literal, superficial text was what he called painting's literary content. The hidden meaning was the assimilation of this content within non-representational form, painting's musical element, since 'toutes les fois que les textes méconnaissent en apparence les lois de la nature, il y a paraboles à coup sûr'.[92]

This association of the literary and musical in terms of a parabolic mode of meaning was repeated in his *Cahier pour Aline*, where he ended a long account of *Manao tupapau*, painted in the Spring of 1892, in the following way:

Récapitulons — Partie musicale — Lignes horizontales ondulentes — accords d'orange et de bleu reliés par des jaunes et des violets leurs dérivés — éclairés par étincelles verdâtres — Partie littéraire — L'esprit d'une vivante lié à l'esprit des Morts — La nuit et le jour.

The description was entitled 'Genèse d'un tableau'. The reference to Poe's *Philosophy of Composition* is obvious and is confirmed elsewhere in the *Cahier*.[93] It was written for those 'qui veulent toujours savoir les *pourquoi*, les *parce que*' (Gauguin's emphasis) but, as a letter to his wife makes clear, Gauguin had the Paris art market chiefly in mind.[94] It is the same procedure as that adopted in the case of *Vision après le sermon*. The painting he considered to be the most representative of his latest manner is selected and elaborate explanations provided in advance to those whose task was to act as intermediaries between Gauguin and his potential public. The object was not to dispel incomprehension but to maintain it at an acceptable threshold. A degree of incomprehension was necessary to the analogy with the parable. Writing to André Fontainas, Gauguin recalled an incident involving Puvis de Chavannes, who asked in response to one attack on *Le Pauvre Pêcheur* (Pl. 12A): 'Mais qu'ont-ils donc à ne pas comprendre?'. Gauguin replied: 'Et pour les autres il leur sera parlé en paraboles afin que voyant ils ne voient pas et entendant ils n'entendent pas.'[95]

The analogy therefore satisfied Gauguin on several levels: as self-definition as a modern Christ crucified by public hostility, as a model for the religious content of his painting, in which the mysterious origins of being and thought were enacted, as a means of replacing discredited literary approaches to painting with one which would be truer to his work but which would also flatter the avant-garde literary public which monopolized the discourse on the other arts. For the Bible was an exemplary Symbolist text, simple but mysterious, universal but accessible to the few. Aurier and Mirbeau had shown Gauguin that in the right hands the analogy could be a powerful one.

It also fitted nicely into theories of the superiority of the symbol over allegory, a question to which the Symbolist writers returned frequently. Fontainas is a case in point. In a generally sympathetic article on Gauguin, he described *D'où venons-nous? que sommes-nous? où allons-nous?* as a 'deplorable error' since abstract ideas were communicable in images only in so far as they had taken shape 'en quelque matérielle allégorie qui, vivante, les signifie':[96]

> C'est la valeur du haut exemple que nous donne par son art Puvis de Chavannes. Pour figurer un idéal philosophique, il concevait d'harmonieux groupements dont les attitudes nous savaient imposer un rêve analogue au sien. Dans le large panneau que M. Gauguin expose, rien . . . ne nous révélerait le sens de l'allégorie s'il n'avait pris soin d'écrire dans un coin au haut de la toile: 'D'où venons-nous? qui sommes-nous? où allons-nous?' (p. 238)

The work discussed here (Pl. 2B) is generally felt to be Gauguin's spiritual testament.[97] Of its genesis, he left four accounts, in which he explained how he attempted to achieve 'un ouvrage philosophique sur ce thème comparé à l'Évangile'.[98] He organized a frieze-like arrangement of arabesques in planes parallel to the surface and a sombre colour harmony of blue, Veronese green and orange. He invested this with figures and objects taken from religious mythology, Tahitian and Christian. The central figure is a Tahitian Adam, raising his arms to take fruit from a tree, thereby setting in motion the drama which is the painting's subject. They form a central axis on which the other lines turn, a circularity designed to reinforce the timeless nature of the symbol.

By comparing him unfavourably with Puvis, Fontainas touched on Gauguin's highly-developed sense of his own genius at one of its most sensitive points. Again, he had to respond:

> Puvis explique son idée, oui, mais il ne la peint pas. Il est grec tandis que moi je suis un sauvage . . . Puvis intitulera un tableau *Pureté* et pour l'expliquer peindra une jeune vierge avec un lys à la main — Symbole connu; donc on comprend. Gauguin au titre *Pureté* peindra un paysage aux eaux limpides; aucune souillure de l'homme civilisé, peut-être un personnage.
>
> Sans entrer dans des détails il y a tout un monde entre Puvis et moi.[99]

Of Puvis, Denis later wrote that 'on ne dira jamais assez quelle fut l'énorme influence à la fin du XIXe siècle'.[100] Gustave Kahn confirmed this as regards

the literary Symbolists: 'Puvis était le grand peintre qui nous divisait le moins.'[101] For these, *Le Pauvre Pêcheur* was one of the major realizations of pictorial Symbolism, a timeless image of desolate, impoverished humanity. The Nabis found in Puvis formal aims which corresponded to theirs, particularly in his tendency to simplification, in decorative effects created by his arrangement of human forms and his use of pale colour harmonies. With the aid of this formal system, Puvis sought to renew traditional allegories by playing down over-explicit rhetorical attributes and by enveloping them in a delicate emotional veil. The allegory would enable the spectator to recognize and read the image. Its formal values would ensure an emotional content whose interaction with the allegory would eliminate the dangers of facility and familiarity inherent in the use of an allegorical mode. The interplay of subject and form would create a determined but expressive suggestivity. Traditional allegory was dismissed by the Symbolists (in theory, at least) as a didactic scheme restricting the activity of the imagination. Puvis's symbols were seen as an intuitive perception of a universal meaning hidden within and informing all human experience. In this sense, Symbolist claims for the superiority of symbol over allegory were part of their wider retreat into irrationalism.

Gauguin considered Puvis's attempts to rejuvenate traditional allegory as doomed to failure, for the advantages gained from a thematic mood evoked by line and colour could not compensate for what he saw as Puvis's retention of a familiar and lifeless figurative language established in advance of composition. The fact that Fontainas could praise Puvis because the abstract idea was present, *a priori*, in the choice and the treatment of the subject only confirmed for Gauguin his lack of originality. Fontainas evidently took the point for in a letter written in reply to his article, Gauguin expressed his pleasure at Fontainas's admission that he had '*cru* à *tort* que mes compositions, comme celles de Puvis de Chavannes partaient d'une idée, à priori, abstraite que je cherchais à vivifier par une représentation plastique . . .'.[102] In the earlier letter, Gauguin had explained the genesis of the painting which Fontainas had been unable to understand:

L'idole est là non comme une explication littéraire, mais comme une statue . . . faisant corps dans mon rêve avec la nature entière, régnant en *notre âme primitive*, consolation imaginaire de nos souffrances en ce qu'elles comportent de vague et d'incompris devant le mystère de notre origine et notre avenir.

Et tout cela chante douloureusement en mon âme et mon décor, en peignant et rêvant tout à la fois, sans allégorie saisissable à ma portée — manque d'éducation littéraire peut-être.

Au réveil, mon œuvre terminée, *je me dis*, *je dis*: d'où venons-nous? que sommes-nous? où allons-nous? Réflexion qui ne fait plus partie de la toile, mais alors en langage parlé tout à fait à part sur la muraille qui encadre, non un titre mais une signature.

Voyez-vous j'ai beau comprendre la valeur des mots — abstraits ou concrets — dans le dictionnaire, je ne les saisis plus en peinture. J'ai essayé dans un décor

suggestif de traduire mon rêve sans recours à des moyens littéraires, avec toute la simplicité du métier . . .[103]

For Gauguin, the painting was created out of a movement between his world and the forms distilled from it, between people and objects in the world and their links to the source of his emotional and spiritual life. The idea contained in the title was the outcome of this process and not its point of departure. We have already seen that Redon posed in similar terms the relationship between image and text. But Gauguin's comments are not only a retrospective description of a particular work. In fact, in a real sense they are not retrospective at all since many of them and of those in the letter of which they form part were taken verbatim from an article published in February 1894 by a minor Symbolist poet and critic, Achille Delaroche. The article greatly surprised Gauguin at the time since it was one of the very few favourable responses to the exhibition in November 1893 of the work produced during his first stay in Tahiti. He copied it into his diary. What evidently pleased Gauguin was Delaroche's understanding of what he called 'the intimate correlation of theme and form', of the Tahiti landscape as a 'suggestive décor' for the painter's search for his past, of his use of 'musical' qualities of colour:

Toutes ces toiles . . . dénotent la corrélation intime du thème et de la forme. Mais l'harmonisation savante de couleurs, surtout, y est significative et parachève le symbole. Les tons se fondent ou s'opposent en dégradations qui chantent comme une symphonie aux chœurs multiples et variés et jouent leur rôle vraiment orchestral.

Traitée ainsi, la couleur, qui est vibration, de même que la musique, atteint ce qu'il y a de plus général et, partant, de plus vague dans la nature: sa force intérieure.[104]

Delaroche saw Gauguin's use of colour as an attempt to free the narrative content of his paintings from 'des modes discursifs de la pensée discrédités' (p. 39). He compared it to intuition in Schelling's theory of an unconscious activity out of which nature and human consciousness emerge. Gauguin's painting was the 'trait d'union du conscient et de l'inconscient' (p. 39), resolving the antagonism between sensuous and intellectual modes of perception.

Delaroche's description of Gauguin's 'musical' colour as the orphic explanation of his art and the world, as the hidden second term of his parable of life and art, enabled Gauguin to hope that in spite of the complete failure of his 1893 Paris exhibition, he might still remain in contact with the mainstream of the literary movement, where musicality was a key concept. For painters since Delacroix and poets since Baudelaire, it was a metaphor for the non-representational function of art.[105] There were no serious attempts to go beyond the metaphor to see whether its frequency was the sign of a real basis for comparisons between the arts, to see, for example, whether the way in

which a musician might vary melodic themes by stating them in different keys and chord progressions was related to the way in which a painter might treat the same linear motif in different colour combinations. True, Neo-Impressionism gave new impetus to these questions but hardly enough to have many painters working on precise analogies between arabesque in painting and music or straining over ratios between light- and sound-waves, however intuitively convinced they may have been that such phenomena had a scientific basis. Wagnerism enveloped these issues in synaesthetic obscurities but even to the Symbolists, it was obvious that Wagnerism was one thing to musicians, another to poets and something else again to the wider public:

Je sais bien que la situation est difficile entre les Wagnériens qui, forts de leur principe que l'œuvre de Wagner est scénique, le veulent voir au théâtre ou pas du tout, entre les poètes et les écrivains qui en veulent à tout prix, n'importe comment et n'importe où et l'accepteraient réduit pour n'importe quel instrument, et le public qui, fort peu soucieux d'art intégral, voudrait trouver aux actes dépecés la sensation qu'il éprouverait à des auditions d'un Meyerbeer plus neuf.[106]

Anything at all was what the poets wanted and, according to Wyzéwa, anything at all was precisely what they were getting. Congratulating the eminent Wagner specialist, H. S. Chamberlain, for a particularly scathing review of one French translation of *Die Walküre*, Wyzéwa wrote:

Il y a parfaitement démontré, et presque vers par vers, l'inanité de cette prétendue traduction, qui fausse le sens des paroles, fausse le rapport des paroles à la musique et stupéfait encore par des formules d'une syntaxe et d'une poésie tout folichonnes. Mais je sais gré surtout à M. Chamberlain d'avoir dit combien il est désastreux, contraire à l'intention de Wagner, et contraire à la raison, de nous donner, comme on le fait dans les concerts, des fragments de drames wagnériens.[107]

Wyzéwa's complaints force us to have reservations, at least as far as the first generation of Symbolists is concerned, about the extent to which Wagner's impact derived from an understanding of the consequences for their own art of the emotional and psychological power of the music, rather than the esoteric or erotic elements and the treatment of legend. Mallarmé and Valéry came to see it as a rival rather than an ally to poetry. But if, for a complex set of historical reasons, Wagner became a major focus of the period's aspiration to the condition of music, this was because this aspiration was already leading poets and painters to conceptualize and legitimize the trends in their own art forms which were leading away from representation of the external world as a goal for art.

In the history of literary Symbolism, the status of music in general and the Wagner cult in particular has resulted in one important misconception. It would be true to say that one of the most firmly-established elements of this history is that whereas the Romantics and Parnassians wrote poetry which can be called 'pictorial' or 'plastic', the Symbolist poets found their sister art in

music. Brunetière was the first historian to see in this distinction the theoretical basis of the new poetry:

> Nous sommes aujourd'hui à la veille d'une transformation nouvelle et l'on dirait qu'après s'être approprié les moyens de la peinture, jusqu'à les posséder aussi bien ou mieux que les peintres eux-mêmes, la littérature veuille s'emparer maintenant de ceux de la musique.[108]

Mauclair made a similar distinction when he remarked that with the Symbolists, 'la poèsie, qui inclinait vers l'éloquence oratoire avec les romantiques, vers les arts plastiques du Parnasse, s'est ressouvenue qu'elle était aussi et avant tout un chant'.[109] The distinction is a false one for there is no reason why even a strong attraction to music should entail a corresponding disaffection for painting. On the contrary, the one may deepen the other. It certainly did for Wyzéwa for example, whatever one may think of Wagnerian painting. The Symbolist poets not surprisingly brought the same approach to both music and painting. Those whose love of Wagner's music centred upon its emotional impact would have one approach, those who were attentive to the coagulation of musical fragments into verbal references through the leitmotif another, those who preferred the manipulation of allegory another still. They turned to both arts for answers to the same questions, just as painters extended the tradition of literary and musical reference and analogy as a way of examining the premisses of their own art.

Despite this, Brunetière's version of events soon became part of the definition of modernism, one of the conceptual categories which its histories take for granted. The musicality of Symbolist poetry followed on from the plasticity of Romantic and Parnassian poetry in the apparently natural sequence in which, according to these accounts, artistic styles define themselves. But sequence here is pseudo-history, an artificial extrapolation of two categories from their involvement in the essential problem which the literary Symbolists had to face: how to define a language for a non-verbal art form just when this art, in response to and in association with economic and cultural change, was asserting its ambition to free itself from the discursive modes with which to that point it was thought to be related. I have tried to show the main forms this problem took and responses it provoked during this period. But three relationships between painting and poetry stand out within the Symbolist movement. They span its historical development and its range of responses. In each case, a poet and a painter, in each case, an important moment in the development of their own art form: Mallarmé and Manet in 1876, Kahn and Seurat in 1886, Jarry and Gauguin in 1893. Through them we shall study three responses to the process which Impressionism had set in motion, in poetry as well as painting, what Mallarmé called 'the beginning and end of the question'.

CHAPTER 4

NEW ASPECTS: MALLARMÉ AND MANET IN 1876

> Open air: — that is the beginning and end of the question we are now studying.[1]

On 22 September 1888, one Joseph Delima published in the avant-garde review, *La Cravache*, an open letter to Mallarmé. It does not appear in Professor Austin's edition of the poet's correspondence but, as will soon be clear, its absence should not worry us too much. In this letter, Delima explained to Mallarmé how he would set about writing a poem entitled *L'Enterrement*:

> . . . je commencerai par décrire le cimetière, en faisant ressortir les tons prédominants qui donnent la première impression. Ce serait alors le blanc légèrement grisâtre des tombes que je traduirai au moyen de sons clairs, de 'aa' et de 'oo', dont je comblerai mes épithètes, mes verbes et mes substantifs. . . . Ensuite, avec une expression forte je détacherai des premiers vers un petit groupe d'autres pleins de 'ouou', de couleurs sombres qui montreront les invités, habillés en deuil en trouvant la tombe du mort.

One can only be thankful that the poem, with its accumulated onomatopoeia of ghostly wailings, was, to my knowledge at least, never written. The would-be author of this less-than-masterpiece went on in his letter to explain that his choice of different colours for each vowel from those contained in Rimbaud's sonnet was due to the fact that he was a Portuguese-speaking South American. His name, de Lima, gives the game away and though we shall probably never know the real identity of the fictitious Joseph of Peru, an informed guess would suggest Fénéon or Kahn, who were frequent contributors to *La Cravache*. Leaving aside the letter's playful aspect, it is not without significance that it was sent to Mallarmé instead of to Ghil, whose theory of verbal instrumentism it was obviously intended to ridicule. Delima's conclusion to the description of his poem provides a possible explanation:

> Une poésie ainsi conçue ne peut qu'être un tableau impressionniste, rapidement ébauché en de larges coups de pinceau. Ensuite le sens des mots et des phrases, qui jouera un role secondaire, peut et doit néanmoins aider de sa force l'expression générale fournie par la forme.

This description of an Impressionist painting, though unserious in its context, is nevertheless based, as its author(s) knew well enough, on an interpretation of

Impressionism which by 1888 had gained credibility in Symbolist circles and for which Mallarmé was considered to be the authority. From this point of view, Ghil's systematic and all-embracing instrumentist theories were seen as closing down avenues which might be opened to poetry by an understanding of the formal systems used by the new painting and of poetry's relationship to them. Mallarmé was the central figure here from 1876 onwards, for in that year he had published *L'Après-midi d'un faune* as well as one of the most important articles on Manet ever written. The relationship of one to the other will be the subject of this chapter.

* * *

Around the life and work of Mallarmé there are anecdotes which have taken on down the years a note of allegory. One of the best-known of these recounts a conversation between the poet and Degas one evening at the home of Berthe Morisot. Degas, besides being the Impressionist painter whom we know, also wrote sonnets and, like many artists who try their hand at a second art form, he took his sonnets very seriously. During dinner, he complained to Mallarmé about the difficulty of writing poetry, a problem about which Mallarmé, after all, knew more than most:

> Quel métier! . . . j'ai perdu toute ma journée sur un sacré sonnet sans avancer d'un pas . . . Et cependant, ce ne sont pas les idées qui me manquent . . . J'en suis plein . . . J'en ai trop . . .

to which Mallarmé is said to have gently replied: 'Mais, Degas, ce n'est point avec des idées que l'on fait des vers . . . *C'est avec des mots*' (Mallarmé's emphasis).

We are indebted for this anecdote to Paul Valéry, who recounts it in *Degas, danse, dessin.*[2] It is a pity that he does not tell us what Degas actually made of Mallarmé's reply. Probably not very much. Perhaps he thought that the enigmatic poet was just having his little joke and, if so, he may well have been right. Yet Degas should have understood, for had Mallarmé applied his remarks to painting, saying for example: 'Mais, Degas, ce n'est point avec des idées que l'on fait des tableaux. C'est avec des couleurs . . .', Degas would have seen immediately what he was getting at. It would, I think, be unwise to take Mallarmé's remark at face value and to transform what was probably no more than repartee into a definitive statement of poetic theory. The poet knew well enough how complex was the relationship between words and ideas in poetry and between colours and ideas in painting. Between 1865 and 1876, he wrote at least four versions of the poem which only in 1876 he entitled *L'Après-midi d'un faune.*[3] A comparison of the three versions at present available confirms that ideas alone are insufficient to create poetry, for those contained in the 1876

version are present from the first draft onwards. Equally, the same comparison confirms that words alone are insufficient, for a lexical comparison of the three texts shows that the words common to all three greatly outnumber those present in one or two versions only.[4] In 1865 therefore, much of the poem's lexical and semantic content was already firmly established. It is the relationship of one to the other which changes during the years which follow. In this respect, the poet's discovery of Manet's plein-air painting is a factor which needs to be examined.[5]

Though the exact date and circumstances of Mallarmé's first meeting with Manet are as yet unknown, existing evidence suggests that it was in April or May of 1873 that the poet paid the first of the almost-daily visits to Manet's studio which were to become a feature of his life until the painter's death in 1883.[6] Regular visitors to Mallarmé's 'mardis' confirmed the extent to which Manet, years after his death, remained in the poet's memory and conversation. Thadée Natanson, for example, remarked that though he was too young to have known the painter personally, 'il m'a semblé presque vivre avec, tant j'en ai entendu parler par Mallarmé'.[7] The poet's interest in and knowledge of Manet's work may have preceded their first meeting by as much as ten years, though here too, precise documentary evidence is lacking.[8] In any event, Manet's impact upon a poet of whom we know of no major previous interest in painting cannot be explained purely in terms of the quality, albeit exceptional, of their human relationship. As Mallarmé re-emerged to the outside world after a lonely and, at times, quite desperate search into the origins and nature of poetry, he discovered the work of a painter who appeared to him to have already achieved in painting something similar to the ambitious project on which he had himself embarked in poetry. In Manet's studio he was able to see for himself the means by which the painter had, for Mallarmé, summarized in his work the history of painting itself. His study of and writing on Manet's art fall precisely during that period when he was recopying the *Monologue d'un faune* for Burty and then reworking the text for publication. I believe that Manet's work provided Mallarmé with confirmation of the direction his poetry was taking and, as such, contributed to the changes which Mallarmé made to the *Faune* poem between versions A and C.

The poem's elaboration spanned a decade of intense research by Mallarmé into the means and ends of poetry. Begun in the summer of 1865 as a sort of accompaniment to, as well as respite from, *Hérodiade*, it presents in what, initially at least, can be called a minor key many of that poem's themes. The two nymphs for whom the faun lusts enact the polarities of Hérodiade's 'horreur d'être vierge' (*OCP*, p. 231) and her secret desire for Saint John. The faun's attempted rape of the nymphs is presented as a violation of just such a union of contradictories ('"Mon crime, c'est d'avoir . . ./. . . divisé . . ."' C 82–83). In faun and saint, the male's transfixing, penetrating stare anticipates

possession. In both poems, the rose and lily form the floral counterpart to this dialectic of love and sublimation. It is not surprising to find these (and other) thematic relationships between two works begun at the same stage of his emotional development. Soon they also share the same ambition to take his apprenticeship of poetry beyond imitation of the language of others and to search for 'le trésor profond des correspondances, l'accord intime des couleurs, le souvenir du rythme antérieur, et la science mystérieuse du Verbe . . .' (*OC*, p. 262). The mysterious science of poetic language placed whoever mastered it in contact with the source and history of human experience and in *Hérodiade* Mallarmé embarked on his search for it. As we know, it plunged him into the metaphysical crisis of 1866–68. As he explained to Cazalis: 'Malheureusement, en creusant le vers à ce point, j'ai rencontré . . . le Néant' (*DSM*, VI, 308).

In his correspondence during these years Mallarmé refers frequently to Hérodiade and to the *Faune*. His remarks are dominated by this theme of the search for a new poetic language. In October 1864, we have the most famous of them:

> J'ai enfin commencé mon *Hérodiade*. Avec terreur, car j'invente une langue qui doit nécessairement jaillir d'une poétique très nouvelle, que je pourrais définir en ces deux mots: *Peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit.*
>
> Le vers ne doit donc pas, là, se composer de mots, mais d'intentions, et toutes les paroles s'effacer devant la sensation. (*DSM*, VI, 238–39, Mallarmé's emphasis.)

In terms of theory, Mallarmé's ambition was not quite as new as he made out. The part played in its formulation by his reading of Edgar Allen Poe is well-known.[9] Equally, in art criticism ten years before the official birth of Impressionism, the desire to depict effects rather than objects was already a commonplace,[10] as Mallarmé could have known from Henri Régnault. To apply the theory to the practice of verse was another matter. On 15 January 1865, in another letter to Cazalis, he reported the difficulties encountered and the progress made. Describing the subject of *Hérodiade* as 'effrayant', he went on:

> Et mon Vers, il fait mal par instants et blesse comme du fer! J'ai, du reste, là trouvé une façon intime et singulière de peindre et de noter les impressions très fugitives. Ajoute, pour plus de terreur, que toutes ces *impressions* se suivent comme dans une symphonie, et que je suis souvent des journées entières, à me demander si celle-ci peut accompagner celle-là, quelle est leur parenté et leur effet . . . Tu juges que je fais peu de vers en une semaine. (*DSM*, VI, 249, Mallarmé's emphasis)

The difficulty of integrating this new language of fugitive and emphemeral impressions within structuring procedures generated by the French system of versification was such that, early in 1865, Mallarmé put the poem temporarily to one side in order to, in his own words, 'rhyme a heroic interlude' (*DSM*, VI, 280). Almost immediately, however, the same problem of reconciling

'effects' and verse structures re-appeared. Again, Cazalis was the first to learn of it. We have reached June 1865:

> Ce poème renferme une très haute et très belle idée, mais les vers sont terriblement difficiles à faire, car je le fais absolument scénique, non *possible au théâtre*, mais *exigeant le théâtre*. Et cependant, je veux conserver toute la poésie de mes œuvres lyriques, mon vers même, que j'adapte au drame. Quand tu viendras, je crois que tu seras heureux: l'idée de la dernière scène me fait sangloter, la conception est vaste et le vers très travaillé. (*DSM*, VI, 280–81, Mallarmé's emphasis)

Only weeks later, in a letter to Lefébure, Mallarmé discussed the difficulties in more detail: 'A force d'étude, je crois même avoir trouvé un vers dramatique nouveau, en ce que les coupes sont servilement calquées sur le geste, sans exclure une poésie de masse et d'effets, peu connue, elle-même' (*Corr.*, I, 169). A further letter to Cazalis, the following month, returns once more to this theme:

> Tu ne saurais croire comme il est difficile de s'acharner au vers, que je veux très neuf et très beau, bien que dramatique (surtout plus rythmé encore que le vers lyrique parce qu'il doit ravir l'oreille au théâtre). . . . Mais si tu savais que de nuits désespérées et de jours de rêverie il faut sacrifier pour arriver à faire des vers originaux, (ce que je n'avais jamais fait jusqu'ici) et dignes, dans leurs suprêmes mystères, de réjouir l'âme d'un poète! Quelle étude du son et de la couleur des mots, musique et peinture par lesquelles devra passer ta pensée, tant belle soit-elle, pour être poétique! (*DSM*, VI, 285–86)

These quotations will all be familiar to readers of Mallarmé. So familiar in fact that we need to rediscover them. For it must be said that, in general, the 'étude du son et de la couleur des mots, musique et peinture' described here has not received the attention it deserves in Mallarmé scholarship. In the face of his art of being difficult, the challenge of reducing the difficulty has usually proved more attractive than that of studying the art, with the result that scholarship has mainly sought to restore the world of objects and meanings which Mallarmé worked so hard to displace. It is true that an assessment of Mallarmé's efforts during the 1860s to 'creuser le vers' has been hindered by our very fragmentary knowledge of the manuscripts for this period. As far as the *Faune* is concerned, the survival of little of the first summer's work on the poem prevents any real assessment of Mallarmé's developing practice. Of the three scenes which made up the original text ('monologue d'un faune', 'dialogue des nymphes' and 'réveil du faune'), little more than eighty lines of what may have totalled, or was at least intended to total, nearly 400 if Mallarmé's remark to Lefébure (*Corr.*, I, 169) is to be taken at face value, have as yet come down to us. In spite of these difficulties, certain tentative suggestions may be made. Consider the following extract from the nymphs' dialogue (lines 18–24):

IANE

Oui
Je me demandais si dans le parc enfoui,
De musique et de nuit la cascade rêveuse
N'était que les sanglots blancs de cette buveuse
De l'encens endormi sur les tiges, ou si
La lueur argentant le feuillage adouci
Émanait à la fois du rossignol qui pleure!

(*OCP*, p. 181)

The manuscript of this fragment reveals an earlier version of these lines:

Et même je songeais dans le parc enfoui,
De musique et d'oiseaux la rêveuse avalanche
N'est-ce que les sanglots de cette lune, blanche
De dormir sur l'encens blanc des roses, ou si
La lueur argentant le feuillage adouci
Émanerait plutôt du rossignol qui pleure!

This extract offers a good example of a process which occurs many times as Mallarmé condenses the original three scenes of 1865 into the eclogue of 1876. Though the dialogue of the nymphs disappears from the definitive version, Iane's uncertainty about the evidence of her senses survives into the faun's questions as to whether his impressions of sound and colour were created by the nymphs or by the natural environment. In both cases, an alternative explanation for a natural impression is offered and its syntactical trigger ('ou si') placed at one of the strategic points of the alexandrine (line 8, syllables 11 and 12 in 1865, 5 and 6 in 1876) as the culmination of a sequence of *enjambements*. Most striking in 1865, however, is what the variations contained in these lines reveal of Mallarmé's efforts to make his 'vers lyrique' and 'vers dramatique' coalesce in a new form which would retain the advantages of both. The demands of a theatrical performance required the rhythm of the alexandrine to be reinforced by making the sound structure correspond closely to the nymph's gestures and the development of her thoughts. The linguistic structure of the six-line sequence remains the same. The two verbs, 'N'était' and 'Émanait', symmetrically placed at the head of lines 3 and 6, each introduce an interpretation of a sense impression. They provide for the sequence a structure which makes more conspicuous Mallarmé's extended use, by comparison with the earlier draft, of enjambement in lines 3 and 4 to denote the way in which Iane's thoughts meander beyond her control of them. Within this settled linguistic scheme, however, Mallarmé now directs one sound pattern, based on the repetition of /i/ and /m/, to the content of Iane's doubt and another, based on that of /l/ and /ɑ̃/ to her interpretation of it. Thus, in the first eighteen breath-spaces, the introduction at the caesura of /si/ in the first line and of /nɥi/ in the second heightens the aural and intellectual impact of /myzik/ and creates

a new and suggestive coupling of 'musique' and 'nuit' which replaces that of the more trite 'musique' and 'oiseaux'. In line 4, the same vowel is introduced at the caesura and at the subsidiary stress while the repetition of /m/ to reinforce those of /myzik/ and /mədəmãdɛ/ and the use, in 'endormi', of the same three-syllable past participle unit as is found in 'enfoui' and 'adouci' relate the whole network of sounds more closely to the questions which are the subject of the lines. In the same way, Mallarmé alters the sound structure of line 3 so as to introduce into the feminine rhymes of lines 2, 3 and 6 the same /œ/ vowel which is then echoed in /fœjaʒ/ and to create a cluster of /ã/ sounds on each side of the caesura which are in turn echoed in /ãsã/. As a result, broad sequences of sound are established which correspond to, but at the same time enrich, the major syntactical and intellectual divisions within the lines. Also, even at this stage of his apprenticeship, Mallarmé's touch is sure enough for these procedures not to become mechanical. Subtle echoes of sound between the major divisions discreetly remind us of the way in which Iane's sense impressions interpenetrate. The effect is one of a more dense relationship between the different elements which make up the lines. It is one to which Mallarmé's description in the letter to Lefébure quoted above, of an original 'poésie de masse et d'effets' corresponds well. Nor is this an isolated case. A detailed analysis of the alterations made, for example, to the last ten lines of the 'réveil du faune' would give similar results to those which I have described.

These earliest fragments of the 'intermède héroïque' reveal on Mallarmé's part a level of research into verse technique whose sophistication already went beyond the requirements and tastes of the lyric drama public of the 1860s. In September 1865, he read his text to Banville and Coquelin in the hope of having it performed at the Théâtre Français. 'Les vers de mon *Faune* ont plu infiniment, mais de Banville et Coquelin n'y ont pas rencontré l'anecdote nécessaire que demande le public et m'ont affirmé que cela n'intéresserait que les poètes' (*Corr.*, I, 174). Given the flimsiness of the 'anecdote' in Banville's *Diane au bois*, which was performed there in the summer of 1864 and which may have been one of Mallarmé's sources for the *Faune*,[11] this verdict ought not to have taken Mallarmé by surprise. The setback led him back to *Hérodiade*, 'non plus tragédie mais poème . . .' (*Corr.*, I, 174).

The twelve months which follow this abortive attempt to stage the *Faune* represent the decisive period of Mallarmé's research and are punctuated by cryptic revelations to friends about his discovery of the function of poetry and of his own historic duty to embody this discovery in a great Work. During this period, he completed the first draft of the *Ouverture d'Hérodiade* and may also have written the *Monologue d'un faune* (A) or, at least, a version of it similar to that copied for Burty seven or eight years later. As far as the composition (between December 1865 and April 1866) of the *Ouverture* is concerned, the

one account we have is that given to Mendès in February of the famous 'phrase de vingt-deux vers, tournant sur un seul verbe, et encore très effacé la seule fois qu'il se présente' (*Corr.*, I, 213). Its completion, though still 'presqu'encore à l'état d'ébauche' is announced to Cazalis in euphoric terms at the end of April (*DSM*, VI, 307). Not only had Mallarmé broken through the difficulties encountered in the conception and elaboration of his poem. He had also discovered, in Hegel's writings, what he felt was the true dimension of his new poetic practice.[12] He had spent the week from 29 March to 6 April with Lefébure, an informed and committed Hegelian, who can only have encouraged Mallarmé's readiness to find a relationship between the study of poetic language carried out in the course of writing the 'Ouverture' and Hegel's account of the manifestation of the Idea through art.

The history of the crisis into which the effort of writing *Hérodiade* and the *Faune* and the study of Hegel led Mallarmé is sufficiently well known for it to be unnecessary to repeat it here. In May 1866, he told Cazalis of his plans for the summer months: 'Dans cette solitude, je finirai probablement le *Faune* et continuerai mes études esthétiques qui me mèneront au plus grand livre qui ait été fait sur la *Poésie*' (*DSM*, VI, 318). The solitude was to be that of a month spent taking the waters at Allevard but the holiday never materialized and there is no evidence that Mallarmé returned to the *Faune* poem again before the request came from Burty for a copy of the *Monologue*. Instead, the summer was spent, as he told Cazalis on 13 July, 'dans les plus purs glaciers de l'Esthétique' (*DSM*, VI, 321). The dialectical function of negation in Hegel's account of the Idea's progress towards self-realization enabled Mallarmé to pass from his discovery of the Void to that of Beauty recounted in his letter to Cazalis (*DSM*, VI, 321). With this further discovery came fuller understanding of the true significance of the difficulties encountered in the writing of *Hérodiade* 'où je m'étais mis tout entier sans le savoir . . .' (*DSM*, VI, 321) and confirmation of his own role in the progressive revelation of the Idea in art. The elimination of the object in favour of its effects was supplemented, by means of the Hegelian cancelled negation, by the destruction of the subject experiencing these effects. Only three days after the letter to Cazalais, Mallarmé announced to Aubanel (*Corr.*, I, 222) the death of his subjective, historical personality and the resuscitation in its place of a pure spirit, an impersonal instrument for organizing the sensations by which the spiritual universe would manifest itself. In the letters of 14 and 17 May 1867, to Cazalis and Lefébure respectively, when Mallarmé looked back over the experience of the previous twelve months, the terms used are explicitly Hegelian: pure conception, the absolute as self-reflecting thought, the individual finite spirit as an instrument of the infinite's realization, the hour of synthesis, the correlative phases of Beauty's actualization through art (of which, in Mallarmé's variation on Hegel's scheme, the Venus of Milo was the first, the Mona Lisa the second and his own

projected Work the third). But the theory was one thing, its consequences for French verse another. What remained to be understood and implemented was the third and most difficult phase of Mallarmé's ambitious project, that which consisted of applying the same cancelled negation to poetic language itself. It seems on the face of it unlikely that Mallarmé in 1866 would have considered the *Monologue d'un faune* to be the right material upon which to experiment with his new theories. I believe that it was after his discovery of Manet's open-air painting that he saw the full implications for his developing poetic practice of a text embarked upon in a fairly unserious way as a respite from *Hérodiade*.

The poetic project which emerged from this period of crisis was historical in character. Its subject was, as he told Cazalis in a letter of April 1866, 'toutes les divines impressions . . . qui se sont amassées en nous depuis les premiers âges' (*DSM*, VI, 308). Nearly three years later, he told Cazalis that he would need several years to relive within himself this process of the spirit's self-revelation in history: 'Cela durera quelques années pendant lesquelles j'ai à revivre la vie de l'humanité depuis son enfance et prenant conscience d'elle-même' (*DSM*, VI, 421). The present gave access to this return to sources, via the poet himself, whose impressions from within and outwith the self united him with human history,[13] via the medium of poetry, foregrounding its traditions in each act of writing and via the forms of modern life, manifesting their sources in the past and anticipation of the future.

For Mallarmé, certain practical consequences followed from his understanding of this project. He had reached the end of the first phase of his ambitious undertaking. The next required him to end his isolation in the provinces, to immerse himself in the contemporary artistic and social life of Paris, to achieve a *modus vivendi* between his situation in the world and the workings of his pure mind. In this new phase, less demanding literary work (such as *Les Dieux antiques*, *Vathek*, *Les Mots anglais*), the study of linguistics (in order to acquire a university qualification) and literary, artistic and fashion journalism (to make money and to create a public *persona*) need not necessarily be separate from or irrelevant to the *Œuvre*.[14] On the contrary, they might participate in it by adding to the store of impressions which revealed the historical law of the spirit's development and for which the poet acted as the impersonal instrument.

The theme of the present as revelation of historical process returns in all of Mallarmé's circumstantial writing of the 1870s. Commissioned to review the Universal Exhibitions of 1871 and 1872 in London, his comments on the fusion of art and industry went beyond what was necessary to meet the expectations of editor and readers.[15] This fusion, this 'réciproque devoir', was 'vraiment celle de l'âge moderne tout entier' (p. 666) for it summarized tradition in order to project it towards the future:

l'Industrie, qui est la préoccupation visible de ce temps, son but, actif et généreux, sera la multiplication populaire de ces merveilles, célèbres ou uniques, enfouies longtemps dans quelques résidences héréditaires. Tout est rétrospectif. . . . (pp. 683–84)

The same theme reappeared in November 1872, in his first major public statement on poetry since the crisis of the 1860s. The occasion was that of a review article, ostensibly devoted to the poetry of Léon Dierx but clearly autobiographical. In order to 'disparaître totalement devant l'impression générale' of this poetry (p. 689), Mallarmé conceded the initiative to an anonymous, impersonal voice, which resumed not Dierx's but his own quest for the source of poetry.

'. . . une Âme a, pour ainsi dire, tranché simplement le lien du Présent et défait son humanité en l'Histoire; et ce qui reste, en la Nature. Mais ce sera comme il plaît aux songes, la Légende entière et passée et future de l'Homme . . . Souvenirs et prophétie! toute la Vision! . . .'. (p. 690)

Though Dierx's verse occasionally submitted to the temptation of facility, 'c'est en tant qu'un séculaire et granitique orgueil, inaccessible à la ruine que se condense, au contraire, le sentiment quotidien de la vie' (p. 690). Even as ephemeral an art form as fashion manifests this relationship between the present and duration. So 'Marguerite de Ponty' tells readers of *La Dernière Mode* that the review will be concerned not only with 'ces touches nécessaires à compléter une harmonie nouvelle . . . mais aussi d'où celle-ci vient et où elle nous mènera, son origine, ses résultats et surtout les transitions qui l'ont accompagnée' (p. 831). We should not be surprised by the pictorial analogy of 'touches', for *La Dernière Mode* brings us to 1874, in this particular case to December of that year, and Mallarmé's first article on Manet had appeared eight months earlier. Fashion and the visual impression demonstrated the same significant contemporaneity:

À un recueil qui veut étudier la Mode comme un art, il ne suffit pas, non! de s'écrier: telle chose se porte; mais il faut dire: En voilà la cause, et: Nous le prévoyions! Rien de brusque et d'immédiat dans le goût: en retard, non; c'est en avance que j'étais. . . . (p. 831)

Fashion, the decorative arts, contemporary poetry, they all displayed the same law of spiritual development outlined in the letters to Cazalis. Its terms are also repeated in the homage to Gautier in *Toast funèbre*, which, like the article on Dierx, is a homage to the poet and to his exemplary function. They therefore provide the context to the three major events of the next twelve months: the writing of *Toast funèbre*, the return to the *Faune* poem following Burty's request for a copy of the *Monologue* and the discovery of Manet, who, during this period, was putting into practice his own new commitment to nature with his decision to paint out of doors. The manner in which these different

elements feed into one another is seen in the information on *Toast funèbre* with which Mallarmé supplied Coppée at the beginning of 1873:

> Commençant par: *O toi qui* . . . et finissant par un vers masculin, je veux chanter, en rimes plates probablement, une des qualités glorieuses de Gautier:
> le don mystérieux de voir avec les yeux.
> (Otez: mystérieux.) Je chanterai le *voyant* qui, placé dans ce monde, l'a regardé, ce que l'on ne fait pas. (*Corr.*, XI, 25, Mallarmé's emphasis)

This homage to Gautier's powers of visual evocation anticipates the impact on Mallarmé of Manet's Impressionist vision. It is one example of the way in which his apparently varied interests during this period are linked by shared themes. One of the most important of these in *Toast funèbre* is that of the relationship between poet and public. For Mallarmé, this problem was, like all the others, transformed by his crisis of the 1860s. By the time he emerged from it, he was reconsidering this relationship in a more mature way than in his 1862 article 'L'Art pour tous' (*OC*, pp. 257–61), with its facile elitism and adolescent hostility to the public. It seems likely that he would have read Banville's 1869 article, 'L'Art et le peuple', but if so, his belief in an inevitable and necessary divorce between artist and public cannot have been changed by it for he repeated his theory in his remarks to Cazalis on the Paris Commune.[16] Nevertheless, by this time he was planning to write a series of popular works for the theatre, including 'un petit drame, s'adaptant aux curiosités les plus variées de la foule'.[17] He had no illusions about how much time would be required for his *Œuvre* to compel public recognition, but a popular theatre clearly seemed to him to be an acceptable, provisional means of reconstituting the pact between himself and the public which the *Œuvre* would celebrate.[18] His various literary activities of the early 1870s interfered with this scheme but it resurfaced in the correspondence at the same time as, and as an accompaniment to, his defence of Manet, whose work raised the problem of the relationship between artist and public in such an acute form. But it resurfaced with one significant difference. In response to what he saw as the lessons of Manet's painting and the relationship of these to contemporary political events, he abandoned his belief in the necessary divorce between art and politics. When, in the middle years of the decade, he resumed his efforts to create a popular drama, he did so in terms of a new commitment to the relationship between political and artistic renewal.

* * *

The two articles which Mallarmé devoted to Manet in the mid-1870s are quite different in length, content and scope for they respond to two different moments in Manet's fractious relationship with the authorities responsible for

the administration of French painting. The first, 'Le Jury de peinture pour 1874 et Monsieur Manet'[19] is a response to their decision to reject two of the three paintings which Manet had submitted that year for inclusion in the annual Salon.[20] Mallarmé challenges the right which the authorities had enjoyed for over two centuries to decide which works were worthy enough to be entrusted to the public gaze and argues that Manet's art has shown the anachronism of this pretension. The second article, 'The Impressionists and Edouard Manet', is a comprehensive study of what Mallarmé thought to be Manet's exemplary role in art history. In scale and intensity, the uproar created by *Le Linge* equalled that of *Olympia* eleven years before and signalled for Mallarmé the final divorce between the old painting and the new and the wider cultural crisis of which this divorce was the sign.

The impact of Manet's art on Mallarmé may well have been deepened by what the poet could have seen as parallels between the painter's experience and his own: 1865, the *Olympia* scandal and the failure by Banville and Coquelin to find in the first version of the *Faune* poem 'l'anecdote nécessaire'; 1874–76, the rejection of Manet by the Salon juries and of Mallarmé by the committee of the *Parnasse contemporain*. And, above all, there was the presence for both of Baudelaire. But the latter did not dedicate to Manet his defence of the 'peintre de la vie moderne'. Mallarmé assumed this obligation. In art criticism and in poetry it is the same ambition — to surpass the precedessor from whom the sense of his own vocation was derived.

His first article in defence of Manet is primarily polemic. It pours scorn on the inconsistency and lack of courage of a jury which rejects two out of three works rather than all or none. It rubbishes the familiar charges brought against the painter in order to justify such intellectual dishonesty: that he was a bad influence on younger painters, who might be led astray by his allegedly slapdash technique; that his choice of modern subjects would corrupt the public's taste for painting's ideal beauty: 'Si le moderne allait nuire à l'Éternel!' (p. 696). But the polemic does not obscure the wider issues which the article raises. For Mallarmé, the jury's role is an anachronism, ridiculous in its pretension to legislate for public taste. By refusing Manet, the jury 'a préféré se donner ce ridicule de faire croire, pendant quelques jours encore, qu'il avait charge d'âmes' (p. 700). Those entrusted, 'pendant quelques jours encore', with the social institutions of painting have not understood the implications for the art of its changing public. Manet's work is, according to Mallarmé, in advance of this new public's aspirations to which the theory and practice of official art can bring no response:

> La foule à qui l'on ne cèle rien, vu que tout émane d'elle, se reconnaîtra, une autre fois, dans l'œuvre accumulée et survivante: et son détachement des choses passées n'en sera cette fois, que plus absolu. Gagner quelques années sur M. Manet: triste politique!' (p. 700)

PLATE 1. E. Manet, *Le Linge*, 1875, The Barnes Foundation, Merion Station, Pennsylvania

PLATE 2A. G. Seurat, *Un Dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte*, 1884–86, The Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, 1926.224

(© 1988 The Art Institute of Chicago. All Rights Reserved)

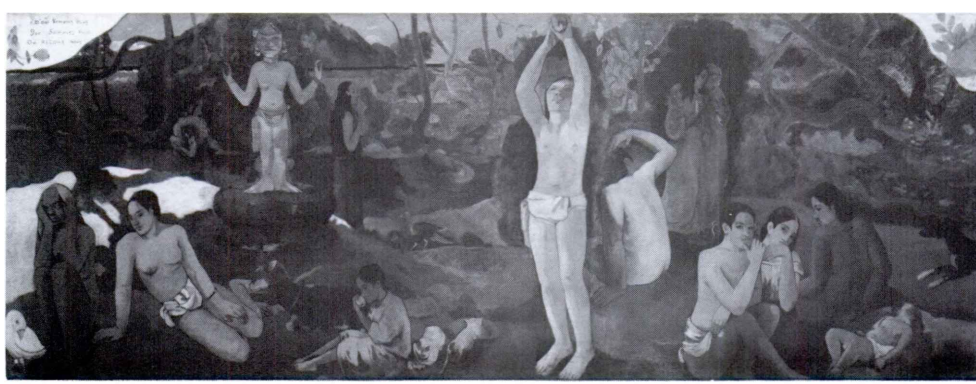


PLATE 2B. P. Gauguin, *D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* 1897, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Tompkins Collection

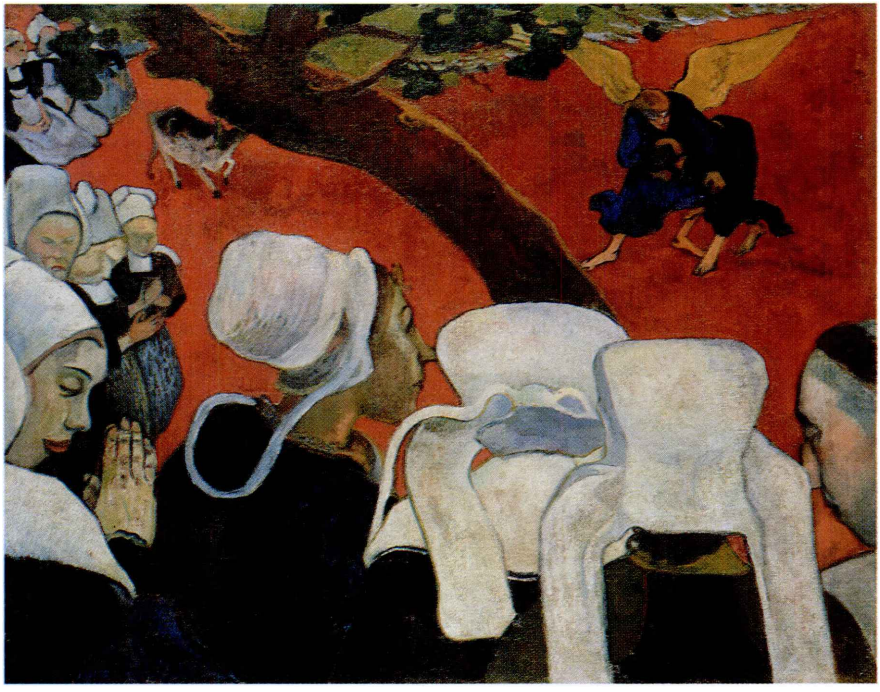
(Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Photograph Copyright 1988. All Rights Reserved. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

PLATE 3. O. Redon, *A l'horizon, l'Ange des certitudes, et, dans le ciel sombre, un regard interrogateur*, 1882 (*A Edgar Allen Poe*, n°. 4), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
(Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

PLATE 4. O. Redon, *Et toutes sortes de bêtes effroyables surgissent*, 1888 (*Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, first series, n°. 8), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
(Photo: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

PLATE 5A (Opposite above). P. Gauguin, *Vision après le sermon. Lutte de Jacob avec l'Ange*, 1888, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

PLATE 5B (Opposite below). E. Bernard, *Bretonnes dans la prairie verte*, 1888, Private Collection, Saint-Germain-en-Laye
(Photo: Giraudon, Paris)



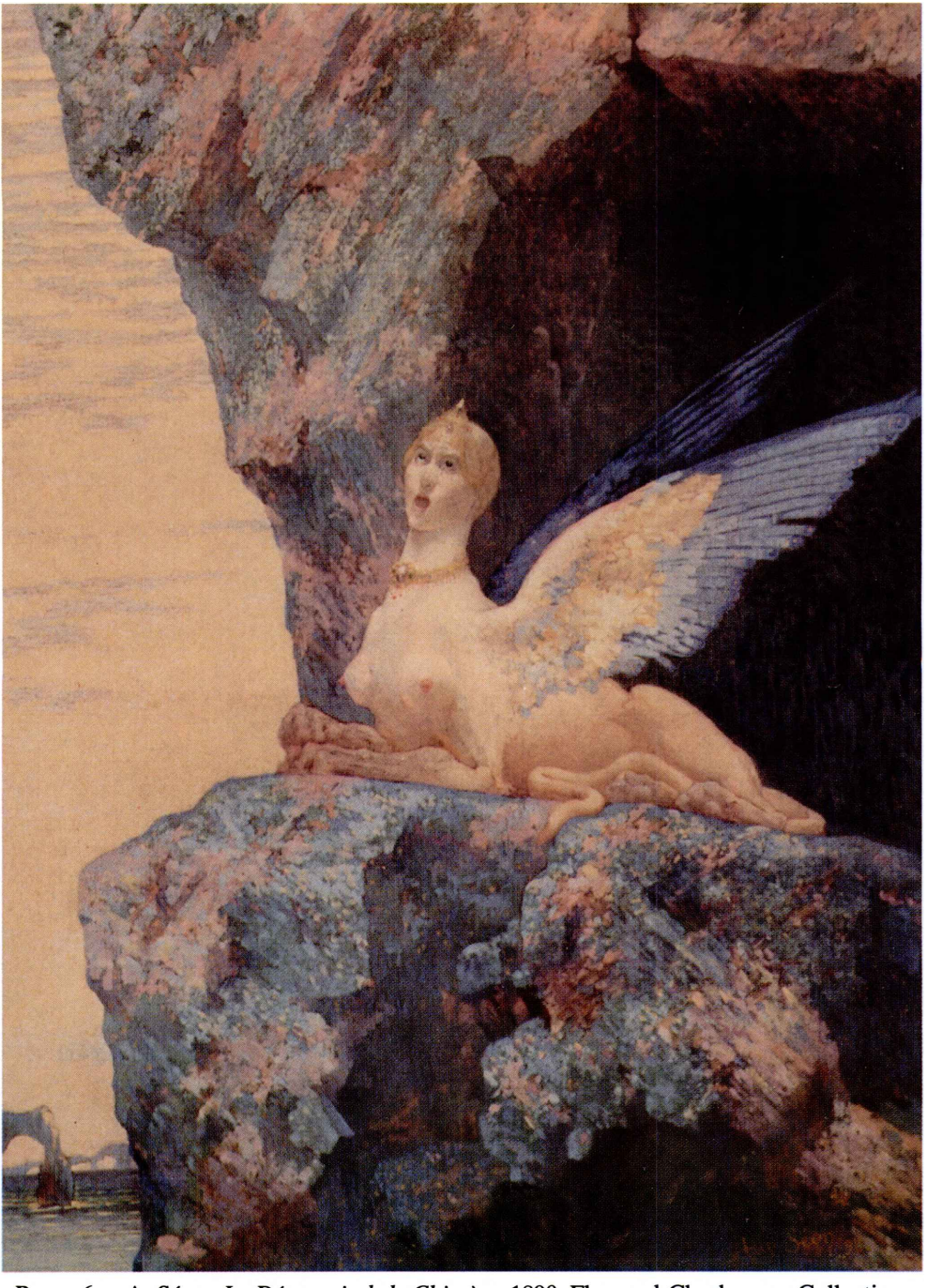


PLATE 6. A. Séon, *Le Désespoir de la Chimère*, 1890, Flamand-Charbonner Collection, Paris

(Photo: R. Turnbull, Fontainebleau)

PLATE 7. P. Gauguin, *L'Homme à la hache*, 1891, Private Collection, New York
(Photo: The Bridgeman Art Library, London)

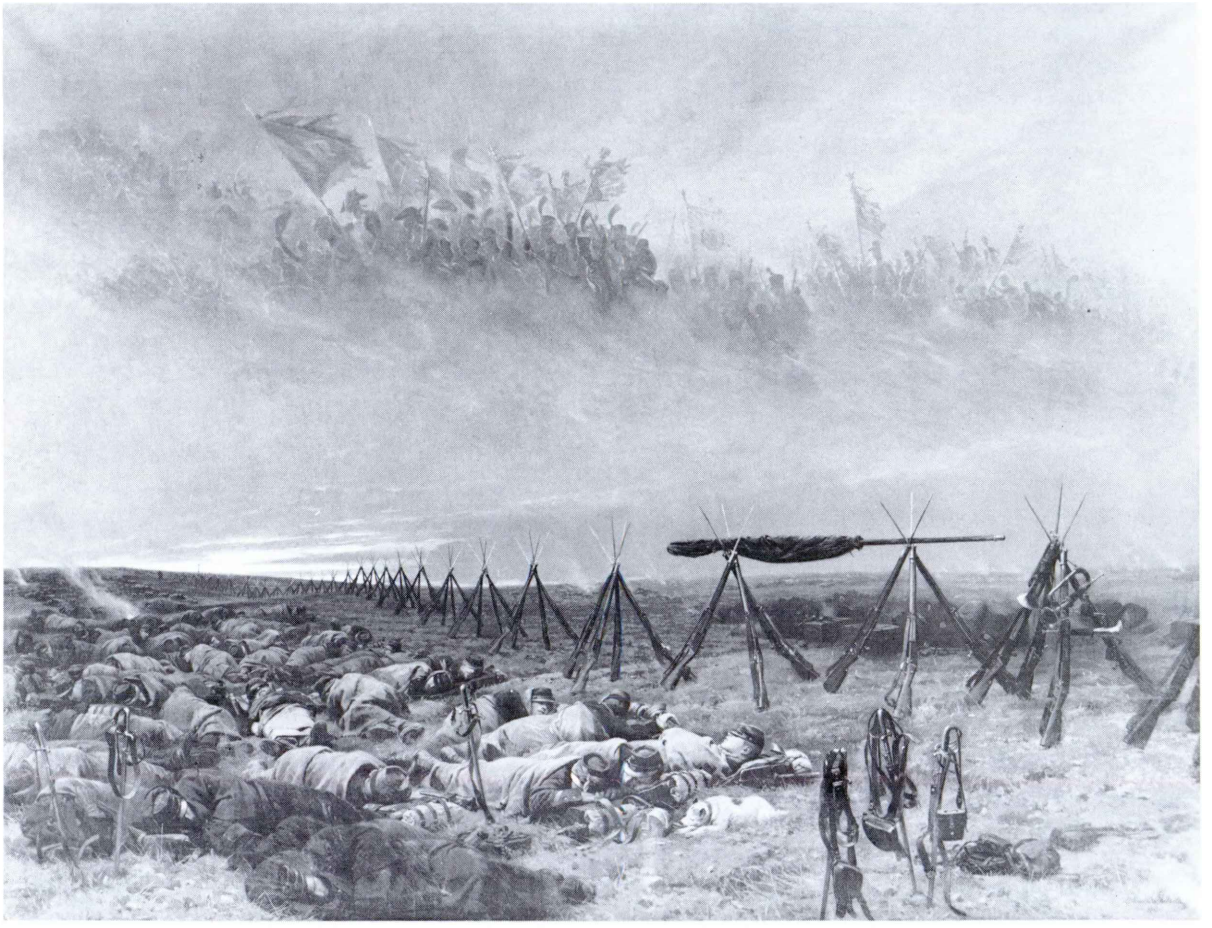


PLATE 8. E. Detaille, *Le Rêve*, 1888, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
(© Musées Nationaux)

PLATE 9A. E. Manet, *Bal masqué à l'Opéra*, 1873–74, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
(Gift of Mrs Horace Havemeyer in memory of her mother-in-law, Louisine W. Havemeyer)

PLATE 9B. E. Manet, *En Bateau*, 1874, Metropolitan Musuem of Art, New York, Bequest of Mrs H. O. Havemeyer, 1929.
The H. O. Havemeyer Collection (29.100.115)
(Photo: All Rights Reserved. The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

PLATE 10. G. Moreau, *Jeune fille à la tête d'Orphée*, 1865, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

(© Musées Nationaux)

PLATE 11. G. Moreau, *Jason et Médée*, 1865, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
(© Musées Nationaux)

PLATE 12A. P. Puvis de Chavannes, *Le Pauvre Pêcheur*, 1881, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
(© Musées Nationaux)

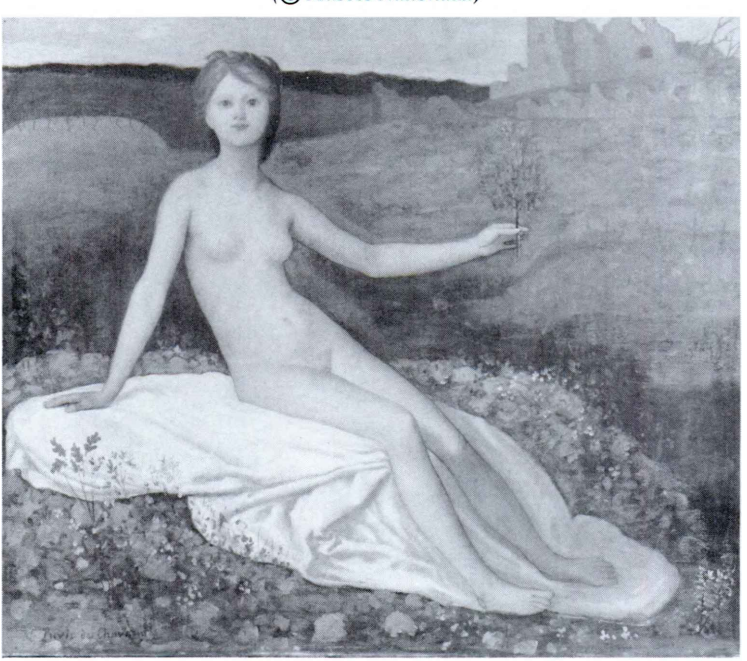


PLATE 12B. P. Puvis de Chavannes, *L'Espérance*, 1872, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
(© Musées Nationaux)

The jury and the institutions it represents are thus living on borrowed time, fighting a losing rearguard action on behalf of values condemned by social and political change. Though, as we have seen from the 1871 letters to Cazalis, it is not strictly correct to assert, as Jean-Pierre Richard has done, that 'déjà l'amitié de Manet et l'aventure impressionniste avaient appris à Mallarmé l'importance toute neuve du public',[21] it is clear that the hostile official reception of Manet's work led Mallarmé, by now engrossed in his plans for a new form of popular theatre, to think further about the changing social conditions of art's production and performance. He expressed in the following terms the question of principle that the rejection of Manet's painting raised:

> La question qu'il s'agissait de résoudre une fois de plus, et avec la même inutilité que toujours, tient tout entière dans ces mots: quel est, dans le double jugement rendu et par le jury et par le public sur la peinture de l'année, la tâche qui incombe au jury et celle qui relève de la foule? (p. 699)

Mallarmé's answer to his own question was that the jury's role was largely superfluous since decisions as to the value of a painting belonged henceforth exclusively to the public: 'Il est le maître à ce point, et peut exiger de voir *tout ce qu'il y a*' (p. 699, Mallarmé's emphasis). In the second article on Manet two years later, he returned to this theme in order to make explicit the wider political implications of the public's new role in art.[22]

Since the exhibition in 1863 of *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Manet had repeatedly been singled out by conservative critics as the most dangerous member of a campaign to discredit painting's official values and means.[23] In 1874, Mallarmé turns this isolation against those responsible for it by using it as proof of Manet's exceptional role in art history as 'le seul homme qui ait tenté de s'ouvrir à lui et à la peinture une voie nouvelle' (pp. 699–700). As one would expect from a Mallarméan artist, Manet has found this 'new path' in a return to the sources of his medium, in a re-evaluation of its principles, for the Academy's crime has been precisely to 'voiler l'origine de cet art fait d'onguents et de couleurs' (p. 696). Equally, Manet brings to his representation of the world an essential Mallarméan virtue, that of the gaze which simplifies and summarizes the diversity of experience, producing synthesis from its multiform data. Manet, like Gautier, brings to his art the 'simplification apportée par un regard de voyant, tant il est positif! à certains procédés de la peinture' (p. 696). The public's relationship to this renewed virginity of vision and to the artist responsible for it is the theme of *Toast funèbre* and the lesson of Manet's art.

Since, in 1874, Mallarmé's deeper understanding of plein-air painting is still to come, it is the *Bal masqué à l'Opéra* (Pl. 9A) which, of the three paintings submitted to the jury, is analysed in most detail. Though he describes the work as 'capital dans l'œuvre du peintre et y marquant comme un point culminant d'où l'on résume mainte tentative ancienne' (p. 697), suggesting that he is aware of the links between this work and, for example, the *Musique aux*

Tuileries of 1862, he does not discuss the subject of the painting. Presumably not because its implications can have escaped him. Quite apart from the fact that by the time he came to write about the painting, he enjoyed privileged access to Manet's aims, other reviews of the work had appeared in the press which alluded freely to the sexual, social, and financial transactions arranged in this foyer between the men who were creating and enjoying the new Paris and the actresses and 'pierreuses' who were trying to survive and even prosper in its demi-monde.[24] Instead, Mallarmé replies to Manet's opponents in their own terms. In response to their charge that his work lacked organization and a unifying focus and made a radical use of the picture frame, he draws attention to the way in which the painter has overcome the difficulties created by the predominant black tones of the suits and dresses and created a strong decorative effect through the interaction of the verticals of the standing figures and the horizontals of the top hats and balcony:

> Irréprochable est l'esthétique et, quant à la facture de ce morceau que les exigences de l'uniforme contemporain rendaient si parfaitement difficile, je ne crois pas qu'il y ait lieu de faire autre chose que de s'étonner de la gamme délicieuse trouvée dans les noirs: fracs et dominos, chapeaux et loups, velours, drap, satin et soie . . . Rien donc de désordonné et de scandaleux quant à la peinture, et qui veuille comme sortir de la toile: mais au contraire, la noble tentative d'y faire tenir, par de purs moyens demandés à cet art, toute vision du monde contemporain. (pp. 697–98).

In his comments on *Les Hirondelles*, the second work rejected by the jury, Mallarmé considers for the first time some of the compositional implications of outdoor painting. He describes the female figures as no more than 'accessoires dans la composition, comme il sied que les perçoive dans un si grand espace l'œil du peintre, arrêté à la seule harmonie de leurs étoffes grises et d'une après-midi de septembre' (p. 698). This internal harmony between colour and atmosphere nullifies the official theory of a completed work which has served as the pretext for the exclusion of this painting from the Salon: 'Qu'est-ce qu'une œuvre "pas assez poussée" alors qu'il y a entre tous ses éléments un accord par quoi elle se tient et possède un charme facile à rompre par une touche ajoutée?' (p. 698). Two years later, this theme would become a focus of the second article.

On 19 July 1876, George Robinson, editor of the London review, *The Art Monthly*, gave Mallarmé the opportunity to write a longer, more general assessment of Manet's part in the latest developments in French painting. Presumably Robinson was responding to the storm of controversy aroused by *Le Linge* (Pl. 1) which was unusual even by Manet's standards. With this painting, he seemed to have burnt his boats as far as public acceptance of his work was concerned. In a letter of 10 April 1876, Mallarmé remarked on the fact: '. . . quant à la guerre définitivement et publiquement ouverte contre Manet, est-ce assez inepte?' (*Corr.*, II, 113). As far as the London art world was

concerned, a Manet scandal of these proportions was well-timed since two of his latest open-air works had recently been on show there.[25] Dealers like Durand-Ruel who supported the Impressionists were hoping that the London art establishment would prove less hostile to his painters than their Parisian counterparts and Mallarmé's defence of Manet is part of this campaign.[26]

The title of the article indicates its main theme: the relationship of Manet to the Impressionist movement. Its context is his critical reputation in France. In 1876, this question figured prominently in discussions of the painter, firstly because Manet had that year again refused, as in 1874, to show his work in the Impressionist exhibition and, secondly, because two important publications, Fromentin's *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* and Duranty's *La Nouvelle Peinture*, had discussed the relationship between the younger generation of Impressionists and the painters of the preceding generations from whom they were felt to derive. Fromentin was hostile to the new movement and though Manet is not mentioned by name, it is clear that he is held responsible for the decline in standards which Fromentin found there.[27] Duranty supported the new painting and his text opens with an attack on Fromentin. But though he too does not identify painters by name, the works to which he refers make it clear that he considered Degas to be the most important example for the younger generation of painters to follow.[28] He praises Manet for his courage but qualifies this with the usual comments about him lacking the technical ability to give pictorial form to his vision.[29] Manet's intentions were as misunderstood by supporters as they were by opponents of the new painting and in this sense, Mallarmé's article is an attempt to set the record straight.

On 19 September 1875, Mallarmé, on holiday near Boulogne, heard from Manet the first reference to *Le Linge*:

> J'ai de grands projets dont je vous ferai part à votre retour. Le temps me favorise et je travaille le matin sans relâche, espérant du beau temps jusqu'à la fin de septembre. Mme Lecouvé y met beaucoup de bonne volonté.[30]

Madame Lecouvé was the model for the painting. The garden which we see there was situated literally across the street from the poet's home in the Rue de Rome, for the painter, Alphonse Hirsch, who lived at number 58, had placed his small garden at Manet's disposal for the work. It was well advanced by the first week of October when Manet left for Venice.[31] Mallarmé returned to Paris a few days later and must have seen the painting very soon afterwards for he described it briefly in an Artistic Gossip of 21 November.[32] Four months later, in a second Gossip he referred to it as 'l'une des dates les plus décisives de l'Art contemporain' (p. 70) and in the *Art Monthly* article as 'a work which marks a date in a life-time perhaps, but certainly one in the history of art' (p. 72). For Mallarmé, the painting demonstrated Manet's exemplary role as catalyst of the crisis in contemporary culture.

Mallarmé begins his article by trying to set the context for this 'unexpected crisis' (p. 68). We are told that 'about 1860 a sudden and a lasting light shone forth when Courbet began to exhibit his works' (p. 66).[33] The realist movement had generalized in painting and literature the need to represent the modern world, but Manet's contemporary subjects proved from the outset to be unreadable in terms of the pictorial language which, in the 1860s, this obligation implied. Baudelaire and Zola had sensed his importance but the poet had died too soon and the novelist was then too young to understand the implications of Manet's art. The year 1867 had marked the turning-point. Manet's decision to exhibit his own work, excluded from the Universal Exhibition of that year, had created a focus for a group of younger painters united in their opposition to official art. It 'gave to the then nameless school of recent painting which thus grew up, the semblance of a party' (p. 68). The first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 had brought the crisis out into the open.

This version of events is designed to privilege Manet's role. When, for example, Mallarmé describes his emancipation from the methods of his teacher — 'Wearied by the technicalities of the school in which, under Couture, he studied, Manet, when he recognized the inanity of all he was taught, determined either not to paint at all or to paint entirely from without himself' (p. 69) — he is clearly oversimplifying the facts of Manet's apprenticeship.[34] Nevertheless, he knew well where, historically, Manet's importance lay. Realism, Naturalism, Impressionism were all contemporary movements which Manet had inspired or enlarged but none contained him or exhausted his contribution to painting. Similarly, in his approach to the art of the past, he had selected certain features and adapted them to his purposes:

> Velasquez, and the painters of the Flemish school, particularly impressed themselves upon him, and the wonderful atmosphere which enshrouds the composition of the grand old Spaniard, and the brilliant tones which glow from the canvasses of his northern compeers, won the student's admiration, thus presenting to him two art aspects which he has since made himself the master of, and can mingle as he pleases. (pp. 69–70)

Mallarmé understood the purpose which this technical mastery served. Manet's painting experimented, it moved from one position to another and repeatedly called into question its own solutions. Referring obliquely to the fact that Pissarro, Sisley and Monet had painted out of doors before Manet, Mallarmé remarked: 'It is not rare for one of these three to steal a march on Manet, who suddenly perceiving their anticipated or explained tendency, sums up all their ideas in one powerful and masterly work' (p. 80). His contemporaries had various negative interpretations for Manet's eclectic borrowing from others. He lacked originality, did not know how to construct a painting, could not resist a good visual joke. Mallarmé understood that such criticisms had no relevance whatever to Manet's analysis of the system of representation

on which the French tradition was based, to his ambition to remedy 'the evils of his country and his time' (p. 70).

Mallarmé's perception of this early period of Manet's work is heightened by the parallels which he finds between it and his own apprenticeship of poetry. There is the same sense of apprehension at exploring the mysterious origins of art, the same need for impersonality, the same search for general types in which details are sacrificed in order to preserve essential characteristics.[35] Like Mallarmé, Manet has acquired through this search a certainty on which to found his existence. The kinship is identified:

> Such a result as this cannot be attained all at once. To reach it, the master must pass through many phases ere this self-isolation can be acquired, and this new evolution of art be learnt; and I, who have occupied myself a good deal in its study, can count but two who have gained it. (p. 69)

Mallarmé's analysis of Manet's work prior to *Le Linge* is designed to show why this painting marks the culmination of the research begun over a decade earlier. In *Le Linge*, the cultural and intellectual implications of Manet's painting and the formal system of Impressionism come together to bring to each their true dimension. So *Le Linge* is 'a complete and final repertory of all current ideas and the means of their execution' (p. 74). Ideas and execution together take Impressionism beyond the reproduction of external reality. The effect of Manet's painting is not 'to make a momentary escapade or sensation, but by steadily endeavouring to impress upon his work a natural and a general law, to seek out a type rather than a personality, and to flood it with light and air . . .' (p. 72).

Mallarmé's description of *Le Linge* is here much longer than the two which he had already written, also for a British public, for publication in the *Athenaeum*. The first was a four-line affair, indicating as briefly as possible the painting's subject and adoption of the open-air method. The second, written as the painting left Manet's studio for the Salon, contained Mallarmé's first reference to his theory of the *aspect*:

> Le corps de la jeune femme est entierèment baigné et comme absorbé par la lumière qui ne laisse d'elle qu'un *aspect* à la fois solide et vaporeux, ainsi que le veut le *plein air* à quoi tout le monde vise aujourd'hui en France: ce phénomène se produit principalement à l'égard des chairs, taches roses et mobiles fondues dans l'espace ambiant'. (*Gossips*, p. 70, Mallarmé's emphasis)

This theory of the aspect takes on its full significance only in the third description, contained in the *Art Monthly* article:

> It is deluged with air. Everywhere the luminous and transparent atmosphere struggles with the figures, the dresses, and the foliage, and seems to take to itself some of their substance and solidity; whilst their contours, consumed by the hidden sun and wasted by space, tremble, melt and evaporate into the surrounding atmosphere, which plunders reality from the figures, yet seems to do so in order to

preserve their truthful aspect. Air reigns supreme and real, as if it held an enchanted life conferred by the witchery of art; a life neither personal nor sentient but itself subjected to the phenomena thus called up by science and shown to our astonished eyes, with its perpetual metamorphosis and its invisible action rendered visible. And how? By this fusion or by this struggle ever continued between surface and space, between colour and air. Open air: — that is the beginning and end of the question we are now studying. (pp. 74–75)

In 1876, the representation of aspects was a common way of describing the aims of open-air painting. Duranty, for example, in *La Nouvelle Peinture*, wrote that there was 'toute une logique de coloration et de dessin qui découle d'un aspect, selon qu'il est pris à telle heure, en telle saison, en tel endroit' (p. 26) and that since colour photography did not exist, it was the painter's powers of observation which had to 'conserver intact le souvenir des aspects' (p. 27).[36] But Mallarmé's aspect is not this literal transcription of the visual. It is the pure idea's sensible form, the 'aspect nécessaire, évident, simple, qui serve de type' which the narrator of 'Un Spectacle interrompu', written during this period, was seeking (*OC*, p. 276).[37] Manet's open-air aspects place the spectator before painting's founding oppositions, between illusionist depth and picture surface, between gesture and visual sign. They are the confirmation in this most material art form of the validity of the Hegelian account of pure idea. Matter and air struggle against and thereby engender one another. Matter is penetrated by the immateriality of air, which is in turn made visible on the picture-surface. In the exchange between the two, painting's formal elements fulfill their true function as the means by which the natural law of perpetual metamorphosis is given visible form. The impression is 'that which perpetually lives yet dies each moment' (p. 86). Manet embodies the critical spirit of the modern era for 'in extremely civilised epochs . . . art and thought are obliged to retrace their own footsteps and return to their ideal source . . .' (p. 85) but just as Mallarmé had located in poetry and in his biography the correlative phases of history, so Manet, by returning to the source of painting's visual language and by submitting to nature's aspects, had inaugurated a new phase of discovery with which to overcome the uncreativity which was thought to characterize the modern critical consciousness.[38] The final paragraph of the article makes clear Manet's relationship to the anonymous 'Âme' of the article on Dierx:

'. . . I content myself with reflecting on the clear and durable mirror of painting, that which perpetually lives yet dies every moment, which only exists by the will of Idea, yet constitutes in my domain the only authentic and certain merit of nature — the Aspect. It is through her that when rudely thrown at the close of an epoch of dreams in the front of reality, I have taken from it only that which properly belongs to my art, an original and exact perception which distinguishes for itself the things it perceives with the steadfast gaze of a vision restored to its simplest perfection' (p. 86).

As in the article on Dierx, the quotation marks, though ostensibly denoting the words of the impersonal modern artist, express Mallarmé's own definition of poetry to such an extent that when, eight years later, he was asked by Léo d'Orfer to provide one, his reply repeats closely the terms of his 1876 statement of the painter's art: 'La Poésie est l'expression, par le langage humain ramené à son rythme essentiel, du sens mystérieux des aspects de l'existence. . . .' (*Corr.*, II, 266).[39]

The relationship between the principles of painting and the crisis which Mallarmé discerned in contemporary culture is the subject of the article's closing paragraphs:

> At a time when the romantic tradition of the first half of the century only lingers among a few surviving masters of that time, the transition from the old imaginative artist and dreamer to the energetic modern worker is found in Impressionism.
>
> The participation of a hitherto ignored people in the political life of France is a social fact that will honour the whole of the close of the nineteenth century. A parallel is found in artistic matters, the way being prepared by an evolution which the public with rare prescience dubbed, from its first appearance Intransigeant, which in political language means radical and democratic . . .
>
> At that critical hour for the human race when nature desires to work for herself, she requires certain lovers of hers — new and impersonal men placed directly in communion with the sentiment of their time — to loose the restraint of education, to let hand and eye do what they will, and thus through them, reveal herself.
>
> For the mere pleasure of doing so? Certainly not, but to express herself, calm, naked, habitual, to those newcomers of to-morrow, of which each one will consent to be an unknown unit in the mighty numbers of an universal suffrage, and to place in their power a newer and more succinct means of observing her.
>
> Such, to those who can see in this the representative art of a period which cannot isolate itself from the equally characteristic politics and industry, must seem the meaning of the manner of painting which we have discussed here, and which although marking a general phase of art has manifested itself particularly in France. (pp. 84–85)

This is not the sort of language you expect from Mallarmé. He is supposed to be the leading spokesman of the ivory-tower school of poetry. This image has come between his work and his readers from the beginning and to some extent the poet himself ensured that this would be so. The result is that these paragraphs have hardly figured in the Mallarmé literature at all. When mentioned, they have been dismissed as a digression despite the fact that Mallarmé described 'the relation of the present crisis . . . to the actual principles of painting' as 'a point of great importance' (p. 85).[40] It is possible of course to explain them away, to say, for example, that this is the sort of thing an English public would expect to read about French art. It is perfectly true that the association in the public mind between artistic and political radicalism was a cliché.[41] But Mallarmé's commitment to new and democratic art forms and his

attack on art for art's sake are confirmed by his efforts during these years to create a new form of popular theatre 'qui éblouisse le peuple souverain' and 'which shall be intensely realistic'.[42] Manet's political sympathies may be an additional element here[43] but the major one is the date. In political terms, 1876 was a crucial year in the progress of the Republican coalition toward victory over those forces still committed to a monarchist restoration. Republican institutions were being put in place to meet the most important political need of the 1870s: that is, to efface the memory of the Commune, to eliminate the class struggle enacted there by winning to the Republic via instruction and the franchise the 'hitherto ignored people'.[44] The organization of workers into authorized unions was part of this process and in 1876 an important stage was reached and reported in the press.[45] Mallarmé's reference to universal suffrage is a sign of his involvement in this issue. The link he finds between Impressionism and political radicalism can, therefore, be taken to mean that, in the mid-1870s, a series of factors — his own intellectual development, his research into verse theory and practice, the impact on both of his discovery of Manet's open-air painting, whose modern subjects and formal innovations implied the rejection of a hierarchical and authoritarian canon of representation and the 'participation of a hitherto ignored people' in the experience of art, the political context in which these developments were taking place — combined to convince him that the pact between artist and public might be reconstituted in the new phase of human history of which Impressionism was the sign.[46] The fact that Mallarmé's optimism was not borne out by subsequent events does not lessen its relevance to him in 1876.

Manet's invitation to the press and public to judge for themselves the two paintings refused by the jury ensured that the response would be well documented. Most of the best-known art journalists accepted his invitation and reported their findings. Certain questions occur repeatedly. Why refuse the *Portrait de M. Desboutin*? *Le Linge* was obviously beyond the pale but what was wrong with the other painting? And why refuse even *Le Linge*, since it was no better and no worse than other paintings which in previous years had been accepted? The same question was implied by these and others: why in 1876 did it seem so urgent to put a stop to Manet's nonsense? There were some obvious answers. By 1876, he had had more than ten years to mend his ways but had refused to do so.[47] By 1876, his example was becoming contagious, as the Impressionist exhibitions proved.[48] These answers too had a common theme. Manet's technique was the negation of everything the Academy stood for:

> Passons au *Linge*. L'esquisse ici est encore plus vague. Rien d'écrit, rien de terminé; l'enfant est un poupard sans tournure ni dessin. La mère est habillée d'une façon grotesque . . . tout cela est peint d'une touche bavocheuse, effilochée, sans précision et sans effet. Les ombres et les demi-teintes, assez lumineuses néanmoins, ne sont pas posées à leur place et ne donnent aucune saillie aux formes.[49]

Such works, the same journalist went on, were no more than 'des esquisses vagues . . . lâchées comme de simples pochades'. Others noticed the same things as Mallarmé but were mystified by them:

> Quelles formes! Quelles couleurs! Quelles carnations! Les arbres ont la couleur de la chair, la figure ressemble à la robe, le linge a la solidité du corps et le corps la minceur et l'inconsistance du linge. Si sincère, ridicule; si voulu, odieux![50]

The same points come up repeatedly: the cursive treatment of physiognomy, the overstepping of contours, the display of pigment itself. As Zola remarked: 'Jamais certains critiques hargneux ne pardonneront à Manet d'avoir à peine indiqué les détails de la physionomie de sa laveuse. Les yeux sont représentés par deux plaques noires; le nez, les lèvres, sont réduits à de simples lignes roses.'[51] But why 'odious'? Was this another example of alleged formal defects being a substitute for criticisms of subject-matter which could not be made openly?[52] If Mallarmé was correct in saying (and presumably he was quoting Manet) that 'that in which the painter declares most his views is the choice and treatment of his subjects' (p. 70), we are led to wonder whether the choice and treatment of the subject of *Le Linge* might have had offensive implications in 1876.

The washerwoman was in fact a very common subject in the French visual arts of the second half of the nineteenth century.[53] By 1875, the idealization of domestic labour common in earlier representations of washerwomen was no longer tenable. These now tended to be sexually titillating rather than to depict the hard and underpaid labour which was the washerwoman's real world.[54] We can be quite sure that Manet would have been familiar with these past and present images of washerwomen but it is possible to suggest more precise reasons, visual and literary, which might have led him to confront these representations in *Le Linge*. In 1874, Degas had shown several works on this theme in the first Impressionist exhibition. He did so again two years later.[55] In 1875, Manet's sister-in-law, Berthe Morisot, painted *Un Percher de blanchisseuses*.[56] In August that year, one month before Manet told Mallarmé of his 'grands projets' for the autumn, Zola began work on *L'Assommoir*.[57]

These works have at least one thing in common. They all try to modernize the washerwomen theme by providing a contemporary context from which her work might derive its meaning. Degas and Zola show working-class girls exploited in their class and sex.[58] Morisot's peasant-women hang up their washing in fields which are no longer in the countryside but are not yet in the city.[59] How does Manet's washerwoman relate to these others? She is certainly not working-class but seeing her hard at work strongly identified in the visual arts with the working classes and associated.with promiscuity may in 1876 have touched on repressed fears about class relationships. Sexuality does not seem to be involved but, again, the sight of her hand twisting a towel unmistakeably

phallic in form may have created some unwelcome reminders of the scandal aroused by the hand which Olympia had casually draped over her sex a decade before.[60] These overtones (if that is what they are) are not incompatible with the more obviously offensive elements in the work: the very summary treatment of the woman's and child's face and body, which must have seemed as great an affront to the family as to the academic tradition, the wildness of the garden and its insistent materiality. We cannot hope to reconstruct completely the context from which this reception of Manet's painting was derived but the elements I have mentioned must be part of it. We remember what Manet himself said of this work:

> Si au lieu de peindre Jeanne Lorgnon nettoyant ses hardes, j'avais fait l'Impératrice Joséphine lavant son linge sale, quel succès mes enfants! Il n'y aurait pas eu assez de graveurs pour répandre cette œuvre magistrale, pas assez de critiques pour la louer. Mais voilà moi, je n'ai pas connu l'Impératrice Joséphine. Meissonier lui, l'a connue; il a connu aussi Napoléon Ier.[61]

Le Linge suggested therefore, however indirectly, that modern history required new images of class, work, and women. Certainly Mallarmé in 1876 believed that this was what Manet's adoption of open-air painting meant.

* * *

In the light of what has been said about Mallarmé's approach to Manet's painting, it hardly seems coincidental that at the same time he should have returned to the poem in which from 1865 onwards similar issues had been at stake. We have no information as to why Burty asked to have a copy of the *Monologue* (whether, for example, his friendship with Manet was involved in it) but whatever it was, it appears to have encouraged Mallarmé to rework the poem in the light of his new theories about the role of art in the modern world. Given that the revision of version A took place firmly within the period of Mallarmé's discovery of Manet's painting and that he considered this painting's subject-matter and formal innovations to be the sign of a deep cultural crisis, it was natural that he should rework from this point of view a poem in which the problematical nature of sense impressions was the starting-point for the representation of a similar crisis at an earlier period of history. Referring in the Manet article to the painter's choice of subjects he remarked: 'Literature often departs from its current path to seek for the aspirations of an epoch of the past, and to modernise them for its own purpose . . .' (p. 70). This is what the *Faune* poem is about. The faun represents mankind at a critical moment in human history and Mallarmé, in order to enact this crisis, chose, like Manet, to return to the sources of his art. Already in 1865, he had said to Lefébure: 'Mon sujet est antique, et un symbole' (*Corr.*, I, 169).

Two of the most obvious and yet least observed features of *L'Après-midi d'un faune* are its title and its generic definition as an eclogue. In a sense, the two are complementary. Reference to the time of day was a convention of the traditional eclogue.[62] But neither appear before version C.[63] They therefore provide a sign of what the poem had come to mean for Mallarmé by 1876. In the afternoon, the faun is reflecting on erotic visions/events whose climax has coincided with the burning heat of midday.[64] The generic definition demonstrates the return to the source of verse with which the faun may retain his vanishing visions. The poem is set in Sicily, where pastoral verse originated in the eclogues of Theocritus. But its action is also set at the foot of Mount Etna, visited each evening by Venus. Topography embodies the tensions within the faun between the sexual drive (and the visions this creates) and the relationship between this desire and art. He is torn between his physical and spiritual needs, as Mallarmé himself was during his late adolescence, when physical and emotional development came into conflict with the lessons of his Christian education. Mallarmé's reading of Hegel had convinced him that this personal phase corresponded to that period of human history which began at the Renaissance, when the religious and cultural systems relating to Medieval feudalism were giving way to those of the Renaissance which asserted, *inter alia*, the importance for European civilization of the values of Antiquity.[65]

In his letter to Lefébure of 17 May 1867, Mallarmé identified Leonardo's Mona Lisa as the representative of this new historical phase (*Corr.*, I, 246). It has not before been recognized, however, that in *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, the work of another artist of the Renaissance fulfills the same function. I am referring to the lines which contain the poem's central image:

> Ainsi, quand des raisins j'ai sucé la clarté,
> Pour bannir un regret par ma feinte écarté,
> Rieur, j'élève au ciel d'été la grappe vide
> Et, soufflant dans ses peaux lumineuses, avide
> D'ivresse, jusqu'au soir je regarde au travers.
>
> (C 57–61)

This image is 'central' literally and metaphorically. Literally because it occurs almost exactly in the middle of the poem and we can be sure that this position is deliberate. Metaphorically because it was, almost without modification, present from version A onwards.[66] It is, I believe, a reference to the painting of Titian:

> Personne mieux que lui [Rubens] n'a compris le précepte d'unité attribué au Titien de considérer l'ensemble d'un tableau comme une grappe de raisin. Ses plus fortes ombres, ses plus grandes lumières ne sont jamais disséminées, mais elles sont constamment réunies dans les endroits les plus propres à donner à ses groupes un grand relief et beaucoup de saillie aux différentes parties de détail.[67]

The reference to Titian is not surprising in itself. His painting contains some of the most important Renaissance representations of the pastoral theme present in *L'Après-midi d'un faune*.[68] But I am not suggesting that Mallarmé must have found this reference in the treatise on painting from which I have taken it. There were other sources available to him, Littré for example, or Henri Régnault.[69] The grapeskin allegory of Titian's technique of chiaroscuro would have been familiar to cultivated people with an informed interest in painting and not merely to practising painters. It also appears in what I believe was an important text as far as Mallarmé was concerned, Charles Blanc's *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, published in book form in 1867 but in articles from 1860 onwards in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, which Blanc had himself founded in 1859. The following extract appeared in the issue of 1 March 1866:

> Titien comparait avec justesse . . . le clair-obscur d'un tableau bien éclairé par le peintre à l'effet d'une grappe de raisin dont chaque grain en particulier offre du côté du jour son clair, son ombre et son reflet, tandis que tous les grains pris ensemble ne présentent qu'une seule large masse de lumière soutenue par une large masse d'ombre. Cette comparaison nous conduit au principe qui domine la théorie du clair-obscur. Ce principe, c'est l'unité, qui veut dire l'harmonie du spectacle pour la vue et l'harmonie de l'expression par la pensée, et de plus, l'accord voulu par le sentiment entre ces deux harmonies. (p. 583)

Coming when it does in the poem, this allusion to Titian is ironic, for the faun has just turned his back on his obligations as an artist by throwing his flute into the lake. Rather than immortalize the vanished nymphs in art, he will find in wine from the grapes consolation for their absence. The visions induced in this way will be 'd'idolâtres peintures'. But the relevance to Mallarmé of the Titian reference does not end here. In nineteenth-century art history, the development of chiaroscuro was described as painting's expression of the emergence of the modern world from the ancient. As such, Titian's example would have confirmed the importance of Leonardo da Vinci in Mallarmé's Hegelian interpretation of human history. Charles Blanc, for example, in his book on Leonardo, repeated the standard account of his practice of chiaroscuro as the source of modern, that is, post-Medieval, art in terms whose relevance to Mallarmé's own theories during the 1860s is striking:

> Après les longues tristesses du christianisme, l'humanité devait se réveiller un jour avec des sentiments inconnus à l'antiquité, la mélancolie, la tendresse, l'inquiétude, toutes les ombres du cœur. Lorsque la Grèce ressucita en Italie, lorsqu' Athènes s'appella Florence, la lumière antique reparut, mais à travers les voiles sombres du moyen-âge. C'est ainsi que le premier des grands génies modernes apporta dans les arts une lueur nouvelle, ce clair-obscur par lequel nous pouvons exprimer aujourd'hui les profondeurs de la réalité comme celle de la rêverie, tous les reliefs du corps et toutes les émotions de l'âme.[70]

Blanc's book on Leonardo appeared in 1876 but this extract had already been published almost word for word in the *Grammaire*, in the paragraph

preceding that which contained the description of Titian which I have quoted. The image of the grapeskin therefore enabled Mallarmé to summarize on several levels the faun's representative modernity and his failure as an artist. In order to see how these questions are worked out in the poem itself, I shall first propose what might be called a naive reading of the text were this not Mallarmé. I shall then select two extracts for more detailed analysis.

* * *

In the early afternoon, a faun wakes up and tries, in a half-lucid, half-somnolent state, to recall the events of the morning. His narration is divided into three main parts. In the first (ll. 1–22), the faun expresses his desire to retain the presence and/or memory of two nymphs, the doubts which confound him and his initial conclusion that the female forms were an illusion of the senses. In the second (ll. 23–92), he addresses the decor (ll. 22–61) and the nymphs (ll. 62–92) for a narration of his experience which will confirm his possession of them.[71] In the third (ll. 93–110), aroused by these narrations, he forms the blasphemous ambition to rape the Goddess of Love herself. His blasphemy provokes an immediate fear of divine retribution which, not exacted, is followed by his return to sleep. This tripartite structure is confirmed formally by typography and by rhyme. Lines 22 and 92 are the only points in the poem at which a completed rhyme is followed by a space and version C is the only one in which this is so.[72]

The first movement (ll. 1–22) is itself composed of four parts (ll. 1, 1–3, 3–7, 8–22). This development, an almost mathematical progression in terms of length and syntactical complexity, shows the faun's desire, the difficulty of its realization, his efforts to explain its origin and his conclusion that this explanation cannot be correct. His desire to prolong the presence or vision of two nymphs is intense (l. 1) but sustained only by an impression of delicate colour floating in the soporific heat (ll. 1–3). When he asks himself whether they existed in reality or only in his dream, he is met with silence, denoted by the typographical space which surrounds his question (l. 3). He therefore concludes that the impression of flesh-coloured pink floating in the atmosphere was created not by the bodies of nymphs as they fled but by the roses in the surrounding landscape (ll.4–7). In the fourth part of this opening sequence, he attempts to refine this relationship between sense-impression and landscape. If the cold, blue water of a nearby stream has created the illusion of the tears of a chaste nymph who weeps for her threatened purity (ll. 10–11), is it possible that a warm breeze might have created the illusion of the second, sexually aroused nymph (ll. 12–13)? But this suggested conflation of complementary natural and sexual archetypes (water/wind, touch/sound, purity/arousal) is immediately

denied (l. 14). There is no nearby stream and the air is still. In the stifling heat, the only stream present is that of the notes showering on to the surrounding grove, the only air that from his musical instrument (ll. 14–19). Artistic inspiration returning to its divine source appears to put an end to the possibility of a vision created by the faun's desire (ll. 20–22).

This inspiration, visible, serene and artificial, does not correspond to the force of the faun's desire for the nymphs.[73] He therefore calls on the decor to end its silence by narrating the events in a way compatible with his emotional and physical needs (ll. 23–25). In this account, the faun broke reeds to make a musical instrument but, in the distance, his first notes startled the nymphs who fled or dived into the water (ll. 26–32). The landscape, silent, still and dulled by the heat, refuses to confirm the faun's erotic vision (ll. 32–34). He is forced to abandon it and resolves to return to his original inspiration in music, thereby remaining as pure as the lilies in the landscape (ll. 35–37).[74] But his decision is expressed in language which betrays his nostalgia for the erotic, for it contains a series of sexual allusions. The faun seeks 'le *la*' (l. 34) where '*la*' is musical note and female gender. 'S'éveiller' and 'ferveur' maintain the ambiguity while the adjectives, 'droit' and 'seul' and the isolation of 'Lys!' by *rejet* and punctuation contain a clear allusion to masturbation, as the degenerate Des Esseintes knew perfectly well:[75]

> Ce vers qui avec le monosyllabe lys! en rejet, évoquait l'image de quelque chose de rigide, d'élancé, de blanc, sur le sens duquel appuyait encore le substantif ingénuité mis à la rime, exprimait allégoriquement, en un seul terme, la passion, l'effervescence, l'état momantané du faune vierge, affolé de rut par la vue des nymphes.[76]

This survival of the sexual drive in the very language which announces its abandonment shows that the faun's decision does not signal the end of his search. The sequence which follows undermines his resolution. On his breast, otherwise 'vierge de preuve' (l. 40), he finds a mysterious bite which cannot have been caused by Apollo, God of music, as he first suggests (l. 41) since the flute is Apollo's means of confiding in the faun (ll. 42–43). Furthermore, the bite contradicts the *sublimation* which is the flute's mode of operation (l. 44). The flute dreams of transforming sensual visions into music (ll. 45–51) but as in the earlier sequence (ll. 14–22) which these lines echo, the faun resists sublimation for it denies his experience of sensuality. The melodic line which results from sublimated experience is described as 'sonore, vaine et monotone' (l. 51). These three attributes are a more negative version of those referred to in line 21, 'visible', 'serein', and 'artificiel'. It is because the faun rejects propositions which deny his experience of desire that he throws the flute, the instrument of the nymphs' flight (l. 52), back into the lake (ll. 52–53).[77]

The faun, therefore, rejects Apollo in favour of Dionysus. Confident in the creative potential of his own imagination (l. 54), he decides to transform his experience (real or imaginary) of the nymphs not by sublimation but by

drink-induced hyperbole. In this new development, the nymphs will be goddesses (l. 55) and the faun's encounter with them an episode from a Bacchic orgy. His desire to possess them (l. 56) makes this section of the poem an (un-)dress rehearsal for his final, climactic ambition to rape the Goddess of Love herself. For this reason, these lines are situated precisely in the middle of the poem. This inflated ambition takes the form of a synthesis of the three arts of music, painting and poetry ('rumeur', 'parler', 'peintures' (ll. 54–55)) to confirm his preference for his new form of celebration over the sublimation proposed by the single art of music. Hence the appropriateness of the grapeskin image, which through its source in Titian combined the Bacchic theme with that of artistic creation. It brought together in one image the faun's appetite for sensual experience, his pagan reversal of Catholic liturgy[78] and his celebration of the power of language to respond to the escalating demands of his desire in a way impossible for music, which, lacking language's representational element, could only propose the sublimation of desire already rejected by the faun in the preceding section.

The memory sequence which follows repeats in three distinct phases (before, during, and after) the events described earlier (ll. 26–32) but with increased violence and urgency. The faun rages (l. 65), his gaze penetrates and burns (ll. 63–64). The object of his lust was 'une blancheur animale' (l. 29) but is now 'chaque encolure immortelle' (ll. 63–64). The change of noun shows the faun's vision sharpened by desire. The change of adjective confirms the substitution of 'déesses' for 'nymphes'. The 'brûlure', which earlier (l. 32) was a metaphor for the day's intense heat, is now that of the faun's ocular rape (l. 64). He rushes towards 'le splendide bain des cheveux' (l. 66), discovers at his feet two nymphs lying asleep in each other's arms (l. 70) and carries them off to a bank of roses without shade from the sun and where his passion will be as torrid as the heat which consumes the landscape (ll. 71–75).

This reconstructed memory, real or imagined, of the nymphs' embrace and their fear of the male is so powerful that it brings the faun's desire to the point of no return. The excited shout, 'Je t'adore', ushers in the final stage of arousal. In B, lines 75–81 marked the middle phase of the faun's 'souvenirs divers'. In C, they break this sequence to show the faun overcome in the present by these erotic memories. The resistance of one nymph is real, that of the other is feigned. It is the same explosive mixture of innocence and provocation as that represented earlier (ll. 10–13) by the two nymphs whose existence was momentarily suggested to the faun by putative elements in the landscape. But here, the desire stimulated by the preceding erotic description is so strong that it brings ejaculation. Its uncontrollable spasm is graphically marked by 'Tressaille!', isolated at the head of the line by the strongest form of enjambement (subject/verb) and by the exclamation mark. Position and punctuation repeat those of 'Lys!' (l. 37) to confirm the opposition expressed there between the

faun's drives for purity and for sensuality. The nostalgia for sensual experience betrayed by the language of lines 34–37 is confirmed as the erotic vision overwhelms the aspiration to purity.

Sexual climax is followed by temporary impotence ('vagues trépas' (l. 90)) and sense of *guilt* ('Mon crime . . .' (l. 82)). With climax past, the faun reverts to the memory sequence to recount his failure. In separating the nymphs from one another in order to possess each in turn, he has allowed both to slip from his grasp.[79] The attempt to have the best of both worlds has left him master of neither. The nymphs' escape is the price he pays for his divided self. Unable to reconcile the needs of the senses with those of the spirit, the faun has lost that original and divine integrity which characterized the ancient world and whose loss Mallarmé described in the 1867 letter to Lefébure as the Renaissance's legacy to the modern world.[80] The second section of the poem ends on the faun's frustration and failure.

Each frustration, however, merely increases the faun's ambition. Each failure to satisfy his thirst for sensual experience leads him to raise the stakes. The defiance expressed by his gesture of throwing his flute into the lake (l. 52) takes its most audacious form in the final section of the poem. The reversal from disappointment to defiance is emphasized by the repetition in 'Tant pis! . . . of the same phonetic sequence /ɑ̃pi/ which opens the preceding line and by the stress on 'd'autres . . .', which follows the caesura (l. 93). Earlier, nature had failed to confirm his experience of the nymphs. Now, to his frenzied imagination, all of nature echoes his excitement (ll. 95–96), whose violence and depth is expressed by the placing of 'éclate' and 'murmure' in symmetrical positions in the two hemistichs of line 96. Remembering that he is at the foot of Mount Etna where Venus walks in the evening, he dares to imagine the supreme rape (ll. 99–104). As in lines 37 and 78, the sudden concentration of the faun's desire (l. 101) and the shout of anticipated fulfillment (l. 104) are isolated by exclamation marks at the head of the line. Venus is the supreme prize for she combines the sensuality and innocence whose separate representation in the two nymphs has, throughout the poem, been the source of his desire and confusion. By possessing her, he can repair his 'crime' of line 82.

The enormity of the blasphemy suddenly brings the faun to his senses. Typography and punctuation show his agonized wait for the inevitable thunderbolt to strike him down (l. 104). Nothing happens but, exhausted by his emotional turmoil and by the heat, he sinks to his knees. The creation of erotic fictions ('je vais parler longtemps . . .' (l. 54)) gives way to silence ('De paroles vacante . . .' (l. 105)) and the need to sleep. He takes leave of the nymphs in order to pursue in his dreams their shadow which, as in line 56, is his elusive vision of them and his nostalgia for sexual conquest.

* * *

In order to see how the changes made to the *Faune* poem from versions A to C are related to Mallarmé's understanding of the formal premisses and innovations of Manet's open-air painting, we can best begin with *Crise de vers*. This was written ten years after the 1876 article on Manet but in some ways it applies to poetry the problems raised in the earlier text. Consider, for example, the following:

> Le vers qui de plusieurs vocables refait un mot total, neuf, étranger à la langue et comme incantatoire, achève cet isolement de la parole: niant, d'un trait souverain, le hasard demeuré aux termes malgré l'artifice de leur retrempe alternée en le sens et la sonorité, et vous cause cette surprise de n'avoir ouï jamais tel fragment ordinaire d'élocution, en même temps que la réminiscence de l'objet nommé baigne dans une neuve atmosphère. (*OC*, p. 368)

This description of poetic language as a counterpoise of sound and sense clearly parallels that of Manet's art as the theatre of a struggle between the opposing demands of surface and depth, air and colour, gesture and representation. In its final clauses we find paraphrased his description of Manet's 'artistic perspective which we learn from the extreme East', which gives 'a new delight at the recovery of a long obliterated truth' (p. 77) and makes us understand 'when looking at the most accustomed objects the delight that we should experience could we but see them for the first time' (p. 83). Manet's art has its verbal analogy in the relationships Mallarmé creates within and between the 'double état de la parole', those to which he referred (with a metaphor taken, not coincidentally, from painting) as 'je ne sais quel miroitement, en dessous, peu séparable de la surface concédée à la rétine' (*OC*, p. 382).

In terms of the technical consequences of Manet's adoption of open-air painting, Mallarmé drew particular attention to four elements. The first was the painter's simplification of value areas, his suppression of the academic use of half-tones between lighted and shaded parts of the painting. This was a direction in Manet's work which Velasquez's example had initially encouraged, as Mallarmé pointed out in his reference to 'the wonderful atmosphere which enshrouds the compositions of the grand old Spaniard' (p. 69). The second was Manet's use of Japanese perspective, with its high horizon line which appears to oppose depth by flattening the receding spatial plane and at the same time to assert depth through the presence on this plane of forms in smaller scale. The result is that foreground and background can appear to overlap in places.[81] The third was his use of pure colour to create the equivalence of the transparency of air and thereby make visible that most Mallarméan quality, invisibility. 'As no artist has on his palette a transparent and neutral colour answering to open air, the desired effect can only be obtained by lightness or heaviness of touch, or by the regulation of tone' (p. 75). The fourth was his brush-stroke, the system of traces by which was enacted the complex relationship between the material surface and modern

forms of representation. Mallarmé's attention to these features was heightened by their relevance to his own developing poetic practice in 1875.

Two extracts will illustrate how I believe this analogy with Manet's painting to have worked for Mallarmé in 1875. The first is the poem's opening sequence:

> Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer.
>
> Si clair,
> Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air
> Assoupi de sommeils touffus.
>
> Aimai-je un rêve?
>
> Mon doute, amas de nuit ancienne, s'achève
> En maint rameau subtil, qui, demeuré les vrais
> Bois mêmes, prouve, hélas! que bien seul je m'offrais
> Pour triomphe la faute idéale de roses.
>
> (C 1–7)

For the faun, the moment of awakening is one of urgent need and sharp loss, of affirmation met by silence. His first utterance is direct, emotionally and syntactically. The prepositive 'les' is not unusual in Classical poetry but its effect is to place the modal 'veux' at the caesura. In this way, the momentary tension between the caesura and its enjambement by the infinitive is used to suggest the division within the faun between his physical need for the nymphs and his desire to recreate their presence through memory.[82] Small but significant changes made to the punctuation in C create a finer balance than in B between the two sorts of desire.

The typographical space which breaks the line denotes the silence the faun's ambition encounters. As he emerges from sleep, his vision evaporates and his awareness of the landscape grows. All that remains of his initial assertion is an impression of delicate colour floating in the soporific heat. In B, Mallarmé had written:

> Si clair,
> Leur naïf incarnat, qu'il flotte dans tout l'air
> Encombré de sommeil touffu.

The faun's assertion in line 1 is concise and syntactically minimal (1 phrase, 10 breath spaces). His uncertainty in lines 1–3 requires length in which to unfold (3 clauses, 22 breath spaces). The contrast is expressed metrically as the unorthodox rhythms of line 1 (3 + 7 + 2 overlapped with 3 + 3/4 + 2) are resolved into the classical 4 + 2/4 + 2 hemistichs of line 2. The insubstantiality of the faun's colour impression is conveyed by the three adjectives and by the syntactical and formal relationship between 'Ces nymphes, . . .' and 'Si clair, . . .' (the opposition plural/singular, the shared inversion of subject and predicate and the identical punctuation and initial /s/). The replacement of

'naïf' with 'léger' and of 'flotte' with 'voltige' (with, as a result, the omission of the redundant 'tout') not only tightens the phonetic pattern. It also introduces two words rich in connotations of sexual infidelity appropriate to the context. Phonetic and semantic changes reinforce each other as the faun hesitates between the positive and negative, internal and external, evidence.

In line 3, the faun, nature and the air share the same drowsy heaviness. Hence the use of the plural in 'sommeils touffus', singular in B. In the earlier version, observer and observed were distinct but open-air painting was showing that the distinction was artificial. The heaviness contrasts with the ethereal lightness of the faun's sense-impression and is therefore the signal for a new sound pattern in which the dominant /l/ and /i/ of lines 1–2 give way to /s/ and /u/.[83] The superiority of 'assoupi' over 'encombré' is obvious and would require no further comment were it not for the fact that Mallarmé reached C via A, where we read 'et je bois les soupirs' /eʒbwalesupiʀ/. The transitive verb and direct object of A are replaced by a past participle in which we find reshuffled those phonetic features which reinforce the changes made in line 2 of C. In A, the faun's sense of the nymphs' reality is uncomplicated, and the syntax in which it is expressed equally so. In C, the instability of the impression, its fusion of self and world, create new obligations for language in which primary semantic elements, such as transitive verbs, are demoted and minimal formal elements, such as phonemes, given new status in the creation of meaning. In Manet's struggle between surface and depth, colour and air, Mallarmé found enacted the same challenge to the hierarchy which prior to Manet's plein-airism had organized painting's representational elements.

The fragility of the faun's sense impression leads to the question of line 3. Again, it is important to see how question and answer emerged from B:

'Baisais-je un songe?'
Mon doute, loin ici de finir, se prolonge
En de mornes rameaux; qui, demeurés ces vrais
Massifs noirs, font qu'hélas! tout à l'heure j'ouvrais
Les yeux à la pudeur ordinaire de roses.
(B 3–7)

To make the different stages of the faun's uncertainty more coherent (desire — doubt — question — resolution of doubt), Mallarmé had to remove the verb 'se prolonge' since the idea it expressed was contradicted in the lines which followed. The use of its opposite, 's'achève', had other implications, however. Its rhyme word 'rêve' enabled Mallarmé to reinforce the thematic opposition of dream and reality with the 'rêve'/'vrais' polarity at the rhymes of lines 3 and 5. The fact that phonetically the two words are anagrams (/rɛv/vrɛ/) can only have made the change even more compelling. For the change of verb in line 3, we must again look to Mallarmé's new promotion of sound patterns as vehicles of meaning since the insertion of 'aimai' accompanies that of 'amas' in line 4 and

'*ma*int' in line 5 to organize aurally the thematic relationships between desire, doubt and the external world. The noun phrase, '*amas* de *nuit*', is itself derived acoustically, from '*Mass*ifs *n*oirs'. In line 4, as in line 3, it is a verbal phrase, 'loin ici de finir', which is sacrificed. Placed at the same point in the following line (syllables 3–6), 'r*am*eau subt*il*' repeats some of the vocalic and consonantal features of '*am*as de nu*it*' but the choice of 'subtil' in place of the banal 'mornes' is again the result of a return to A, where, in the same line, the faun had exclaimed: 'Rends-les-moi par Avr*il* qui gonfla tes rameaux/Nub*il*es . . .'. The strong internal rhymes needed in the theatrical performance for which the *Monologue* was intended are toned down in C in favour of a more sophisticated interplay of sound and meaning.

The decisive moment in the faun's first attempt to reconcile his dream and waking states comes in 'qui, demeuré les vrais/Bois mêmes, prouve, hélas! . . .'. It is here that he concludes that the nymphs were only a dream. These twelve syllables contain the central clause in a symmetrical sequence of three (18 + 12 + 18 syllables) through which the faun passes from doubt to certainty. All the resources of metre are engaged in this elimination of doubt. One of the most powerful forms of enjambement (adjective/noun) places the adjective in the rhyme position of line 5 and the one-syllable noun at the head of line 6. The completion of the noun phrase and the comma add emphasis to 'mêmes', a second comma does the same for the verb, while the caesura and exclamation mark accentuate the faun's cry of disappointment.

In the final clause of this opening section, Mallarmé makes two important changes between B and C. The first significantly alters the faun's relationship to his experience, for the change of verb denotes how, passive in B ('j'ouvrais/Les yeux à'),[84] he becomes active in C ('je m'offrais'). Perception is a function of desire. The second demonstrates Mallarmé's developing practice of ellipsis, in which multiple meaning and tight phonetic patterns support one another. The new complement ('faute idéale' in place of 'pudeur ordinaire') is ambiguous. On the one hand, it means 'la faute des roses d'avoir créé l'idée'. On the other, it is a paraphrase of 'pudeur ordinaire' and means 'le défaut d'idéalité dans ces roses qui sont réelles'.[85] But 'faute idéale' also contributes to the sound structure of the four-line sequence in ways impossible for 'pudeur ordinaire'. Firstly because it is symmetrical grammatically and metrically with 'nuit ancienne' of line 4. In both cases a feminine singular one-syllable noun is qualified by an adjective of four syllables (the last of which is the mute 'e'). They are also placed in identical positions in the line (the noun is at the caesura). The formal symmetry derived from these grammatical, phonetic and metrical relationships supports their thematic oppositions. Secondly, the noun 'faute' makes an important contribution to its own immediate phonetic environment, the final clause of the sequence. To denote formally the key role the roses play in dispelling the faun's doubt, Mallarmé delays their appearance

until the very end of the four-line sequence. As aural support for this role, he introduces a new vocalic pattern whose purpose is to lead up to and culminate in 'roses'. The /ɔ/ of '*o*ffrais', the /ɔ̃/ of 'tri*o*mphe' and the internal rhyme of 'faute' at the caesura all support the main function of 'roses', which is to break the sequence of rhymes in /ɛ/, the only vowel used at the rhyme position up to this point. This foregrounding of formal elements whose semantic function had hitherto been a secondary one and the disruption of the conventional linguistic hierarchies which organized meaning parallel Manet's promotion of the painterly trace within a system of representation in which ambiguity cannot be resolved.

A second sequence will illustrate further aspects of the relevance of Manet's example to Mallarmé's developing practice. The lines 38–51 contain thematic developments absent from A, where only the initial element (the trace of a kiss on the faun's body) was present. They consist of a single phrase, the longest in the poem, and lead from the faun's decision to abandon the nymphs and return to his music (ll. 32–37) to the opposite decision in lines 52–53 to abandon music in favour of pursuing the nymphs in his memory. The sequence is divided into two parts (ll. 38–43 and 44–51) and the division is clearly marked by the colon at the end of line 43. The first part contains six lines and narrates the faun's discovery of a mysterious bite on his body, his explanation for it (his election by Apollo, God of music), and his rejection of this explanation. The second contains eight lines in which he defines music as the sublimation of desire. Both are sub-divided, the first into 4 + 2, the second into 4 + 4 and both sub-divisions are marked in the same way, by the semi-colons which close lines 41 and 47.

The changes made in these lines to version B illustrate the range of formal innovations which Manet's painting encouraged in Mallarmé. Syntax is the dominant feature of these as far as the opening section is concerned. Here, it is the relationship of the first two lines to one another and to the following line which is unusual and exclusive to C. The nominative 'rien' (l. 38) qualifies 'baiser' (l. 39) and both are dependent on 'vierge de preuve' (l. 40). The effect of this double inverted apposition is limited in B by the straightforward syntax of the conditional in line 39 and of the 'A défaut du baiser j'invoque . . .' in line 40. The lexemes, 'preuve' and 'sein', present in A but omitted from B, are reinstated in C but within a new syntactic environment, no longer components of a simple interrogative ('car les preuves/D'une femme, où faut-il, mon sein, . . .?') but nodal points in a sequence of four lines in which the linear, discursive syntax is disrupted. Within this new environment, they can then reinforce Mallarmé's very deliberate metrical and phonetic organization of the lines. Phonetic repetitions ('rien'/'sein', 'lèvre'/'vierge'/'preuve') take their place in a metrical structure in which the insistent triple negatives, 'doux rien', 'tout bas' and 'vierge de preuve', all culminate at the caesuras of successive

lines (ll. 38–40) so as to dramatize still further the revelation of 'morsure/ Mystérieuse due . . .', in which *rejet* of the five-syllable adjective places the complement 'due' at the caesura of line 41. This is then reinforced by its phonetic reprise in 'aug*u*ste *d*ent'. Syntactical, metrical and phonetic systems enter into creative collaboration/opposition with one another in ways directly related to the 'struggle ever continued between surface and space, between colour and air'.

The revelation is no sooner made than retracted by the faun's emphatic 'bast!'. In B, Mallarmé had written: 'Mais non! Car son angoisse élut pour confident . . .'. Though the abstract noun might appear to be an odd choice as the subject of 'élut', there is no problem of meaning. In C, however, the noun is replaced by the pronominal 'tel', preceded by an unusual adjective. The causal relationship denoted in B by 'Car' is omitted. Mallarmé retains in 'bast!' the second phoneme of /ãgwas/ and reshuffles all but one of those present in 'non. Car . . .' to produce 'arcane'. Both can then add their phonetic presence to that of 'bas', 'atteste', 'auguste' and 'vaste' which surround it.

A specific example from a Manet work of 1874 which Mallarmé knew well will help to show how these procedures relate to his experience of Manet's painting. X-rays of *En Bateau* (Pl. 9B) show that the man, holding the rudder in his left hand, initially held the rope in his right. By altering the direction of the rope, Manet altered the spectator's interpretation of perspective in the painting. Held in the man's right hand, the rope would have sustained a more traditional use of perspective by leading the eye inwards to the picture's visual centre. Manet's modification has the effect of flattening the image, of increasing the role of the surface within the picture space.[86] Mallarmé's 1876 article on the painter shows his awareness of the importance of this sort of experimentation with the materials of painting and changes in the *Faune* poem such as that which produces 'arcane' from 'Non car' show the same type of experimentation applied to the poet's own art form.

In the eight-line sequence opened by the relative of line 44, the lexical changes made to B are designed to prepare in a more coherent way than in the earlier version for the faun's rejection of art in lines 52–53. In B, the verb 'rêve' had already indicated the illusory nature of art's sublimation of experience (cf. (C3): 'Aimai-je un rêve?') but in C, the faun's rejection of music is made to sound more scornful by the replacement of 'un duo' by 'un solo long', whose 'inanité sonore' resembles that of the 'bibelot aboli' of the sonnet in -yx. To the same end, Mallarmé inverts the nouns of lines 47–48 with the result that 'amour crédule' and 'l'écho se module' in B become 'chant crédule' and 'l'amour se module' in C. It is no longer love but art which is credulous. In B, lines 49–51 are based on the opposition between the powerful erotic presence of the nymphs (their arms, flanks and breasts) and the pure and suave musical form derived from them. In C, Mallarmé reinstates together 'songe' and 'ordinaire',

which are present separately in B (in lines 3 and 7 respectively), where the adjective qualified the 'pudeur' of the roses and signified their lack of ideality. He replaces 'pure' and 'suave' with 'sonore' and 'vaine' to create a sequence of no less than six /n/ sounds in one line which the faun intends to sound 'monotone'.[87] Finally, he transfers purity from music in B to the bodies of the nymphs in C to denote the clarity of the faun's vision of them. The faun accepts that his vision was a dream but rather than sublimate it by way of the 'divine transposition [qui] va du fait à l'idéal' (*OC*, p. 522), he prefers to breathe new life into it with the help of the erotic memories described in the sequences which follow.[88]

In these lines, Mallarmé accepts the obligation to transpose which the faun rejects. The analogy between the evanescent vision of the nymphs and the melodic line is enacted by Mallarmé in the very words with which it is dismissed by the faun. It is enacted by syntactical changes designed to disrupt customary procedures of reading. We have already seen the example of line 42, but the last four lines of this sequence also display syntactically the way in which a material vision is volatilized, existing in a precarious equilibrium between presence and absence. The armature of the sentence ('Rêve . . . de faire évanouir . . . une ligne') is strained by elements which distance its components from each other: the semi-colon and change in the form of the substantive of 'Rêve' (from 'que' + subjunctive to 'et de' + infinitive); the subjunctive clause between 'faire' and 'évanouir', the distance between this infinitive and its object; the return to the singular personal pronoun after the plurals of lines 45 and 47 and the 'on' of line 43; the ellipsis of lines 49–50 which conflates relationships of origin and causality to the minimal forms of the preposition ('du . . . de . . . de . . .'); the juxtaposition of singular 'pur' and plural 'suivis'. It is not therefore surprising that when, years later, Claudel tried to describe procedures such as these in Mallarmé's writing, he compared them to the pictorial form which had proved so important to Manet and which Mallarmé had singled out in 1876:

> Votre phrase où dans l'aérien contre-poids des ablatifs absolus et des incidentes, la proposition principale n'existe plus que du fait de son absence, se maintient dans une sorte d'équilibre instable et me rappelle ces dessins japonais où la figure n'est dessinée que par son blanc, et n'est que le geste résumé qu'elle trace.[89]

As Claudel recognized, Mallarmé's verbal and Manet's visual language show contours 'wasted by space' which 'tremble, melt, and evaporate into the surrounding atmosphere' (pp. 74–75). Essential to this process in the art of both was economy of means. Manet's painting contained types of visual shorthand which could not fail to interest a poet whose own commitment to concision was by 1875 repeatedly frowned on by those who knew his work.[90] Compare, for example, Manet's criticism of his teacher, Couture, for using half-tones which the eye could not see in nature — 'Manet soutint que pour lui

la lumière se présentait avec une telle unité qu'un seul ton suffisait pour la rendre'[91] — with Mallarmé's opinion expressed in the context of a discussion of Banville: 'Une ligne, quelque vibration, sommaires et tout s'indique' (*OC*, p. 522).[92]

The type of changes which we have seen Mallarmé make to the different versions of the *Faune* poem are of course also taking place at the same time in the syntax of his prose writings.[93] Together, they show why the Mallarmé–Manet relationship is such an exemplary one in the history of those between French painting and literature. For almost a decade and without reservation, the poet watched the painter work and listened to his explanations of the theory and practice of that work. In fact, it would be true to say that Mallarmé's sense of Manet's importance prevented him from seriously studying the work of any other painter. For Mallarmé, Manet *was* painting, his work summarized its history and means. It displaced conventional narrative systems of painting and within the representational framework of a natural scene, experimented with alternative structures of meaning which foregrounded the materials and gestures of his art. In the same way, Mallarmé promoted what he called the suggestive rather than the narrative function of poetic language in search of the same lost origins of artistic expression. In 1876, Manet's modernity, his 'aspect' 'which perpetually lives yet dies every moment, which only exists by the will of Idea' (p. 86), his painterly trace in which representation vied with display, signalled a crisis in culture which Mallarmé had experienced within himself and his poetry and which 'la foule', whose impersonality the modern artist represented, was experiencing in the political upheavals of the 1870s. Manet's work was politically more democratic and philosophically more relevant. Politically, though it made greater demands on the spectator than the passive acceptance required for academic art, it offered in return far greater potential for participation in the experience of painting. Philosophically, it brought to the surface the dialectical relationship in which its materials were engaged and this relationship was that which informed all spheres of modern life. In his open-air painting, Manet had displayed his own 'explication orphique de la Terre'. Years later, in 'Magie', Mallarmé wrote that 'il n'existe d'ouvert à la recherche mentale que deux voies, en tout, . . . à savoir l'esthétique d'une part et aussi l'économie politique' (*OC*, p. 399). In 1876, he saw Manet's art as an historic conjunction of these two forms of research. It was, in the fullest sense, the sign of a new era, one for which Mallarmé in his own thought and work was ready.

CHAPTER 5

THE SCIENCE OF FREE VERSE: KAHN AND SEURAT IN 1886

We discovered in the previous chapter an unfamiliar side to Mallarmé. We saw him expressing the hope that in Manet's painting and his own projected verse drama, art would find new forms with which to assimilate harmoniously the new realities created by a modern, democratic age. Hegel's philosophy and Manet's art were two stages on a journey which had begun with a study of versification. The transition from metaphysics to ideology which they represented had brought him in 1876 to the firm belief that the value of the new art would be recognized by those new political forces which in the not-too-distant future would take political power. His conviction that open-air painting was the expression in art of radical and democratic politics was widely held in the 1870s, particularly among conservative elements.[1] In the years which followed the 1876 article, the hopes expressed there proved to be naive. Manet died in 1883 and Mallarmé's references to the verse drama in which he invested his own ambition in the 1870s had disappeared from his correspondence long before then.[2] As the Impressionist cause gained ground, the aim of the cultural establishment and avant-garde alike (not to mention the painters themselves) was to defuse the conjunction of political and artistic change which Mallarmé had found in Manet's open-air work.

This aim takes various forms in avant-garde art criticism published during the second half of the 1880s but one of the most important is its approach to Impressionism and Neo-Impressionism from 1886. We have already seen some examples of the ways in which the Symbolists assimilated Impressionism within an idealist approach to art. In 1886, Seurat's *Un Dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte* set the same problem again, for Seurat was just the sort of painter Mallarmé had described ten years before in his article on Manet. To quote Meyer Schapiro, 'Seurat identified the "progress" of art with technical invention, rationalized labour, and a democratic or popular content'.[3] He evolved new formal procedures with which to achieve this progress but the discussions which they aroused diverted attention from the representation of contemporary social experience they were designed to support. Among the literary Symbolists, they became involved in the arguments concerning versification and, in particular, the development of what has become known as the *vers libre*.

The focus for what follows will, therefore, be provided by Gustave Kahn, who has rightly been described as 'entre tous les symbolistes . . . peut-être la figure la plus significative et la plus complète'.[4] Certainly this is true of his involvement with painting in the second half of the 1880s. During this period, when he was working closely with Fénéon on *La Vogue* and *La Revue indépendante*, he became an authority among the literary Symbolist group on the parallel modernity of idealist and Impressionist painting. As we see how he does this, we shall encounter other writers/art critics, most notably Laforgue and Huysmans, for they contribute significantly to the terms in which Kahn wrote art criticism.

Chronology requires that we begin with Laforgue, who, though almost permanently absent from Paris between late 1881 (when he became French reader to Empress Augusta of Germany) and his death in 1887, played, through his contacts and intellectual interests, an important part in the discussion on painting which we shall be following. His ambition to apply Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* to aesthetic theory seems to have been derived from Paul Bourget, with whom he was friends from 1879 and who also acquainted him with his interpretation of decadence.[5] Through his friendship with Charles Henry, whom he met in the winter of 1880–81, and through the writings of Helmholtz to which Henry led him, he discovered the aesthetic theories which would form the basis of Seurat's scientific approach to painting. In 1881, he became secretary to Charles Ephrussi, who was preparing a major study of Dürer's drawings and who published art criticism in the influential *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* which he would later direct. Ephrussi also had an important collection of Impressionist works so that Laforgue was well placed to study the new painting and the world of professional writing on art. His friendship with Kahn, whom he met in 1880 and with whom he corresponded throughout what remained of his short life, helped to ensure for these different intellectual trends a powerful place in interpretations of painting within the literary Symbolist group. Finally, in some of the poems in *Les Complaintes*, published in 1885, we find him applying to poetry his understanding of the theory and practice of Impressionism.

In a well-known letter to Ephrussi, Laforgue announced his 'principes métaphysiques de l'Esthétique nouvelle, une esthétique qui s'accorde avec l'Inconscient de Hartmann, le transformisme de Darwin, les travaux de Helmholtz'.[6] The theory involved a belief in the evolution towards consciousness of a universal, mystical principle of the Unconscious.[7] Art naturally had a role to play in this evolutionary process. Impressionist painting represented a new stage for it stimulated the development in the artist and public of an acute visual sensitivity 'à force de vivre et de voir franchement et primitivement dans les spectacles lumineux en plein air'.[8] This 'natural eye' had been lost through centuries of academic teaching but the truth of what it revealed about the world

and our place in it was confirmed by the latest scientific research into perception in which Helmholtz and others were engaged:

Il arrive à voir la réalité dans l'atmosphère vivante des formes, décomposée, réfractée, réfléchie par les êtres et les choses, en incessantes variations. Telle est cette première caractéristique de l'œil impressionniste. (p. 136)

Laforgue's 'œil naturel' was the same 'vision restored to its simplest perfection' which Mallarmé had described as the basis of Manet's achievement (*DSM*, I, 86). His description of the Impressionist style as one in which spectator and spectacle were 'irrémédiablement mouvants, insaisissables et insaisissants' (p. 141) repeats Mallarmé's comment on Manet's treatment of the subject 'which being composed of a harmony of reflected and ever-changing lights, cannot be supposed always to look the same, but palpitates with movement, light and life' (p. 76). For Laforgue as for Mallarmé, such painting would inevitably mean the end of the institutions which had perpetuated false representations of the world. It is quite possible that Laforgue had heard via Kahn of Mallarmé's 1876 article on Manet.[9] But where Mallarmé sought to explain the relevance of this pictorial style to contemporary socio-political realities, Laforgue, for whom art had nothing to do with such matters,[10] proposed a different purpose for the 'mille touches menues dansantes en tout sens comme des pailles de couleurs — en concurrence vitale pour l'impression d'ensemble' (p. 137):

Plus de mélodie isolée, le tout est une symphonie qui est la vie vivante et variante, comme 'les voix de la forêt' des théories de Wagner en concurrence vitale pour la grande voix de la forêt, comme l'Inconscient, loi du monde, est la grande loi mélodique, résultante de la symphonie des consciences de races et d'individus. Tel est le principe de l'école du plein-air impressionniste. (pp. 137–38)

For Laforgue, Impressionist painting (by which he meant the work of Monet, Pissarro, and Sisley) reproduced in its structure the system of relationships which linked human consciousness to the Unconscious. It was a material equivalent of the teleological force which informed the world. This approach to Impressionism leads directly to an essential feature of the Symbolist project, for its aim is to reconcile scientific and mystical approaches to art. In the opening sentence of his introduction to *Les Grands Initiés* of 1889, Schuré located the main cause of fin-de-siècle pessimism in the divorce between the two: 'Le plus grand mal de notre temps est que la Science et la Religion y apparaissent comme deux forces ennemies et irréductibles' (p. vii). Support for Schuré's diagnosis was widespread among the Symbolists for it had the advantage of freeing science from the network of materialist connotations to which they were opposed and providing for their spiritualist commitments a more credible contemporary basis. So also in 1889, two of literary Symbolism's brightest young hopes, Charles Morice and Paul Adam, both confidently

announced that reconcilation was no more than a volume of poetry away. For Morice, 'l'art touchera du pied la Science pour prendre en elle l'assurance d'un fondement solide et d'un élan la franchira sur les Ailes de l'Intuition'.[11] Adam was equally optimistic:

L'Époque à venir sera mystique. Et le plus étonnant du miracle c'est que la science elle-même, cette fameuse science positive et matérialiste qui renia l'orthodoxie, cette science elle-même viendra humblement annoncer la découverte du principe divin . . . Intuitive déjà, elle se lève lumineuse et repentante, appelant l'expérimentation pour constater la splendeur de ses théories.[12]

Six years earlier, Impressionism had already challenged Laforgue to achieve this programme in poetry and contributed to his search for a new type of poetic language with which to replace the philosophical verse he had written in *Le Sanglot de la terre*. In this respect, there were precedents to encourage him. Having defined what he saw as the principle of open-air painting and its relationship to the work of Wagner and to his own theory of the Unconscious, he went on to say:

Et l'œil du maître sera celui qui discernera et rendra les dégradations, les décompositions les plus sensibles, cela sur une simple toile plane. Ce principe a été, non systématiquement, mais par génie appliqué en poésie et dans le roman chez nous. (p. 138)

It is a pity that he does not identify the poets and novelists in question. Whether by impressionist poetry he was referring primarily to Verlaine or to Mallarmé (or even to himself) and by impressionist prose to the Goncourts or to Zola[13] would indicate more clearly than these remarks do what he understood by an impressionist style in poetry. It is generally agreed that his poetry can be described in this way in so far as it attempts to convey an intense, direct apprehension of the external world and the relative and ephemeral nature of modern experience.[14] When a more specific formal analogy is suggested, it usually involves a reference to procedures of fragmentation of verse line and/or strophic structures.[15] Yet Laforgue's comments are at once more precise and more elusive than this. Impressionism for him meant the development of the eye's power to respond to vibrations of light. The great Impressionist painter reproduced on the picture plane the 'thousand small touches dancing off in all directions' and whose gradations of colour created form and depth. But the fragmentation that this procedure involved was only the first stage. Laforgue's approach to open-air painting had in Helmholtz and Darwin quite different references from those of Mallarmé but, like Mallarmé, he analysed such painting as the theatre of a struggle between depth and surface from which the painter's representation of the world drew its structure. The Darwinist metaphor with which he described the individual brush-strokes 'struggling for survival in the overall impression' related the Impressionist achievement to the

universal law by which the Unconscious evolved towards consciousness. In 1883, therefore, Laforgue thought of his poems of that year as impressionist not because they were fragmented but because they embodied in their form the opposing principles of fragmentation and organization. It is Mallarmé's project as defined in the article of 1876 but based on different philosophical commitments.

This relationship between modern experience as fragmentation and its resolution in the formal organization of poetry can best be seen by looking at one of the poems written during the period in which Laforgue was working on the article on Impressionism. In 'Complainte des pianos qu'on entend dans les quartiers aisés', the Chopin waltz, endlessly repeated, symbolizes the stagnation and snobbery of the middle-class life in which the young girls are imprisoned.[16] The poet, who has no place in this society, imagines their banal aspirations and trivial reality in a tone in which both detachment and sympathy are presented in Laforgue's familiar ironic mode. The poem consists of sixty lines which form five sequences of twelve. In each, a quatrain of alexandrines is followed by two couplets, the first of eight, the second of four, syllables. These are in turn followed by the refrain, consisting of four seven-syllable lines written to the rhythm of the popular song, 'Tu t'en vas et tu nous laisses'. The degressive series of twelve, eight, and four syllables provides the basic frame for the theme. Each line length has a suitable voice: four alexandrines for the poet's graver reflections and questions on the girls' condition; the eight-syllable couplet for his more direct and familiar language; the four-syllable couplet for the child(-like) utterances. The refrain serves as a transition between adult and child voices. The inverted commas continue those of the preceding couplet to denote the child's song. But only the first two lines contain its words. In the third and fourth, the child voice repeats moods and themes contained in the preceding quatrain and/or introduces those of the following one.

Within this basic framework in which a distinctive voice is assigned to each strophic type and line length, Laforgue is able to create for each a distinctive rhythm and sound structure which echoes across the poem. In the alexandrines this has to do with the erosion or reinforcement of the medial caesura according to the needs of the theme, in the octosyllabic couplets with the use of the same feminine rhyme in /ɛl/. Here, the pattern of echoes is reinforced by the use of 'ritournelles' in the rhyme position of couplets 1, 3, and 5, and by the symmetry of the rhyme (interrogative '-elles' and feminine plural noun) in 2 and 4. In the same way, in the refrain, Laforgue alternates the rhyme in /ɛs/ with that in /it/ ('laisses' in 1, 3, and 5, 'quittes' in 2 and 4). It is because the poem has this firm framework that the abrupt movements in tone and rhythm within and between stanzas can so effectively communicate that interplay of lucidity, self-pity and derision which is the poet's view of the world. The way in which feelings contrast and fuse in the poem is related to the way in which Laforgue looked at

Impressionist painting, in which objects, unlike those in academic art, were not chromatically autonomous but participated in the luminosity of those around them. Impressionism led Laforgue to think about ways in which the the visual and emotional fractures of modern experience might be organized to reveal a glimpse of the hidden law (of the Unconscious) which lay behind the ceaseless movement of subject and object.

Laforgue's example is important in the context of definitions of literary Impressionism current in the early 1880s, when the term still had largely negative connotations associated with the dissolution of form. Paul Bourget, whom Laforgue described as his 'Lord Bouddha' and whose influence on the younger poet is well-known,[17] gave a definition of decadence in literary style in terms whose relationship to pictorial Impressionism was obvious to contemporaries, as Émile Porcheron's scandalized comments on Manet's 'poésie nègre' have already shown:

> Un style de décadence est celui où l'unité du livre se décompose pour laisser la place à l'indépendance de la page, où la page se décompose, pour laisser la place à l'indépendance de la phrase, et la phrase pour laisser la place à l'indépendance du mot. Les exemples foisonnent dans la littérature actuelle qui démontrent cette féconde vérité.[18]

Though this remark was made in the context of a discussion on Baudelaire, it was by the mid-1880s a standard interpretation of the literary Impressionism of the Goncourts. Paul Adam, though an admirer, wrote of their novels in the following way:

> Leurs livres traduisirent strictement des contemplations fragmentaires de paysages, d'intérieurs, de personnes, sans que leur art reliât ces fragments par l'étude des rapports occultes qui les vivifiaient.[19]

Bourget and Ghil had already expressed similar reservations. For the former, the Goncourts were 'des artistes éperdument amoureux du pittoresque, et par suite, quand ils écrivent, leur besoin est de faire passer dans les mots des sensations de pittoresque'.[20] For the latter, 'cet impressionnisme est dans les Goncourt: mais ce qui leur demande une page, devra se resserrer en cinq ou six lignes, sous peine de longueurs'.[21] It is worth noting here that, as a model for what he described as a new, synthetic literary Impressionism, Ghil proposed *L'Après-midi d'un faune*. The criticisms levelled against the Goncourts reflected their role in the creation of a stylistic trend towards the translation of the visual sensation into language. The trend was reinforced in the 1870s by the controversies surrounding pictorial Impressionism and was responsible for the minor current of 'impressionist' poetry which can be found in many of the small literary reviews of that period.[22] But as the immediate data of visual sensation offered an impracticable terrain for language, this literary Impressionism soon became an object of irony.[23] Laforgue helped to make available for the

Symbolists a way out of the stylistic impasse which the literary methods of the Goncourts appeared to them to have created. I have tried to suggest that he did this directly, by the example of his own poetry. But he also did so at one remove, by the way in which his example was assimilated by Gustave Kahn.

* * *

In 1886, Gustave Kahn was a very busy man. In *La Vogue*, which he directed, he was publishing extracts of Rimbaud's manuscript of *Les Illuminations* and of Laforgue's poetry. He was developing the *vers libre* in the poems whose publication the following year, in *Les Palais nomades*, would confirm his prominence within the literary Symbolist group. He was also actively pursuing his interest in painting and in 1886 these different activities seemed to him to be merging into one project. Referring later to his formative years, he remembered the role which painting had played then:

> La peinture, c'étaient les impressionnistes exposant des merveilles dans des appartements vacants pour trois mois. C'était, à l'exposition de 1878, un merveilleux panneau de Gustave Moreau, ouvrant sur la légende une porte niéllée et damasquinée et orfévrée, c'était Manet, Monet, Renoir, de la grâce, de l'élégance, du soleil, de la vérité.[24]

By the second half of the 1880s, there were significant additions to this list. In a review of Lemonnier's *Les Peintres de la vie* in which the author praised the work of Courbet and Stevens, Kahn dismissed their realist approach: 'L'impressionnisme de MM. Degas et Pissarro et Seurat, et l'idéalisme de MM. Gustave Moreau et Puvis de Chavannes ont singulièrement déplacé la question'.[25] The addition of Seurat and Puvis de Chavannes summarizes the influence which Fénéon exerted on literary Symbolism's response to painting. He and Kahn shared the art criticism for the *Revue indépendante*, and, in Kahn, Laforgue's reconciliation of scientific and idealist approaches and Fénéon's defence of Neo-Impressionism came together, for the two shared the theories of perception formulated by Henry and Helmholtz. Once Fénéon had underlined the stylistic affinities between Puvis and Seurat, the main elements of the Symbolist gallery were in place. We shall therefore look at Kahn's interest in painting so as to assess its impact on his theories of poetic form as elaborated in the *vers libre* experimentation in *Les Palais nomades*.

On his return to Paris after four years of military service in Africa, Kahn set about establishing his literary career. His correspondence with Laforgue shows how quickly he progressed, and by January 1886 he had become co-editor of the newly-founded *La Vogue*. Seurat had begun *Un Dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte* in the autumn of 1884, worked on it until March the following year, resumed it in October and completed it in time for the eighth Impressionist exhibition, held in May-June 1886. We cannot be sure exactly when

Kahn met Seurat or at what stage he first saw *La Grande Jatte* but, as we shall see, it is clear that by the time he began writing the poetry of *Les Palais nomades*, he was already familiar with the scientific aspirations and formal procedures of Seurat's method.[26] In his first published piece of art criticism, which appeared in April 1886, his use of Henry's chromatic circle to analyse Cros's experimentation with molten coloured glass confirms that he was familiar with the discussions taking place within Seurat's circle.[27] His reservations about the achievements of Impressionism have the same source:

> Quelque puissant que soit l'art des maîtres impressionnistes, arrivent-ils à la réalité vivace? Après la lutte acharnée du peintre contre la lumière, et le moment triomphal du dernier coup de pinceau, commencent les vicissitudes de la toile. Ce sera désormais le travail du temps de faire de la chose exacte une fantaisie ni dans le rêve ni dans la vie. (p. 65)

In *La Grande Jatte*, Seurat demonstrated his theory that the painter's intellectual and emotional response to a natural scene could be conveyed in abstract terms through combinations of line, colour, and value which were measurable scientifically. The theory and practice were effortlessly assimilated within the apparently inevitable progression from figurative to non-figurative art on which so much twentieth-century art history was until recently based. As the ideological nature of this account of art history has become clearer, attention has turned to the relationship in Seurat's painting between formal structure and the expression of contemporary social experience.[28] In 1886, however, Fénéon's technical expertise gave his criticism a prestige which ensured that the formalist approach dominated critical reception of the painting within the literary avant-garde. In a letter to Signac, Seurat described Fénéon's pamphlet, *Les Impressionnistes en 1886*, as the most accurate account of his ideas on painting.[29] In the course of it, Fénéon analysed *La Grande Jatte* in the following way:

> Le sujet: par un ciel caniculaire, à quatre heures, l'île, de filantes barques au flanc, mouvante d'une dominicale et fortuite population en joie de grand air, parmi des arbres; et ces quelque quarante personnages sont investis d'un dessin hiératique et sommaire, traités rigoureusement ou de dos ou de face ou de profil, assis à angle droit, allongés horizontalement, dressés rigides: comme d'un Puvis modernisant. (p. 37)

Seurat's crowd may have been dominical but it was certainly not fortuitous. With this sleight of hand Fénéon evacuated Seurat's study of the new social relationships present in this Sunday afternoon gathering. His main point, however, was contained in the closing words of this extract, in the reference to Puvis de Chavannes. Seurat's admiration for Puvis was well known for, as early as 1882, he had made a copy of *Le Pauvre Pêcheur*.[30] Kahn confirmed this critical trend:

Actuellement le néo-impressionnisme scrute les variations de la couleur, note les jeux de la couleur locale, et cherche, en une synthèse des lignes des tableaux un complet hiératisme.

Ne sont-ce pas les mêmes mots qui caractérisent le mieux l'essence de M. Puvis de Chavannes. — Hiératisme, pureté de tons, limpidité, harmonie fournie par les lignes nobles et durables. Un des jeunes novateurs impressionnistes me définissait ainsi ses visions d'art. — 'Les Panathénées de Phidias étaient une procession. — Je veux faire ambuler ainsi que sur ces frises les modernes, en ce qu'ils ont d'essentiel, les placer dans des toiles arrangées en harmonies de couleurs, par les directions des tons en harmonie des lignes, par la direction des lignes, la ligne et la couleur disposées l'une pour l'autre.'[31]

The 'young Impressionist innovator' was, of course, Seurat. The remark which Kahn quotes has echoes of Baudelaire's comments at the end of his *Salon de 1845* about the epic quality of modern life but Kahn does nothing with it here. He relates the figures in *La Grande Jatte* to formal practices enjoying the prestige of tradition and evades the question of their social comment despite the fact that he was aware of Seurat's commitments in this area and that the relationship between formal innovation and social analysis was what others among the work's first public were trying to grasp.[32] Three months later, he repeated by implication the comparison between Seurat and Puvis when he remarked that in Seurat's drawings 'un hiératisme simple anime les modèles et leur donne de la simplicité et de la majesté de l'art antique'.[33] In the same review, he also found that Signac, 'arrive à la valeur d'une peinture essentiellement suggestive, et donne au paysage de mer, de roc et de voiles, comme une vie mystique' (p. 161). For Kahn, Seurat's colour symbolism and contemporary subjects and Puvis's linear symbolism and timeless subjects were two aspects of the same ambition, that of translating human experience in terms of essential, ideal forms.

In the second half of the 1880s, admiration for Puvis de Chavannes frequently also involved a response, whether hostile or favourable, to the painting of Gustave Moreau. The reason for this is Huysmans, who greatly admired Moreau's work but who frequently used it as a stick with which to beat Puvis. We saw earlier that when Kahn was looking back over his first interest in painting, he referred to the Impressionists and to the role of legend in the work of Gustave Moreau. Among the painters who occupied a privileged position among the Symbolist poets, Gustave Moreau is the most elusive. He was, as Mauclair put it, 'presque ignoré et pourtant célèbre'.[34] His rare public exhibitions, and the interest which they aroused, created around him and his work a mystique which gave a free rein to literary talents such as that of Huysmans. His reappearance, after an absence of seven years, in the Salon of 1876 aroused considerable interest, which was confirmed two years later by his paintings on show in the Universal Exhibition.[35] 1880 saw his final but much-publicized Salon appearance,[36] followed only by the exhibition of the water-colours

produced as illustrations for La Fontaine's fables, ten of which were shown in 1881, twenty-five in 1882 and the full series of sixty-five only at the beginning of 1886, just when Kahn was working on *Les Palais nomades*.[37] He reviewed the exhibition and incorporated some of its images into this poetry.

In his description of the impact of Moreau's 1878 exhibition, Kahn referred to (but without naming) a particular painting as 'une porte niéllée et damasquinée et orfévrée' which opened onto legend. There are two points to be made here. The first is that Laforgue in 1886 had also described a Moreau painting in the same terms:

> Technique s'arrêtant au respect de la toile ou même du panneau de bois. Composition moins hiératique qu'immortellement inébranlable dans la dignité de sa tenue. Ton de Léonard et sa suprême distinction par un pinceau du temps d'Ingres, mais modelé d'amour et en décor d'émail stagnant et corsé d'ailleurs par tous les tons décoratifs, figés (niéllés, historiés, damasquinés) en une dureté autorisée des chers Primitifs.[38]

The second is that this description refers to a painting which was certainly not on show in the Universal Exhibition of 1878. Laforgue was in fact describing *Jeune fille à la tête d'Orphée* (Pl. 10), which had been one of the major successes of the Salon of 1866 and was bought by the State the following year. Laforgue referred to it after a visit in 1886 to the Musée du Luxembourg, where it had been on display since 1867. It was one of Moreau's works on show in the Universal Exhibition of 1889, in a review of which Kahn described it as 'si charmant en son décor à la Vinci, précieux par la qualité comme vierge de ses chairs, et ce métier d'émailleur, de nielleur, de damasquineur, qui est une des originalités de M. Moreau'.[39] It is not surprising that, writing many years after the event, Kahn confused one Moreau painting and one Universal Exhibition with another. The work exhibited in 1878 to which he was referring was in fact *Le Sphinx deviné* (Mathieu, no. 173), painted that year but as a sequel to *Œdipe et la Sphinx* (no. 64) which had made such an impact in the Salon of 1864. The emphasis which Kahn and Laforgue placed on both the stylistic originality and the debt to Leonardo in Moreau's work of the 1860s must be seen as a response to the public image of Moreau which Huysmans had been creating since 1880.

The association of the names of Huysmans and Moreau is usually thought to have been brought about by the publication in 1884 of *A Rebours*. In fact, already in 1880, Huysmans's public defence of the painter is based on the same commitments as those of four years later; Moreau's eclectic style, his portrayal of women, his place in the French tradition of history painting. We cannot be sure about how much of Moreau's work he had seen other than that on show in 1876, 1878, and 1880, nor about how much of the literature on Moreau he had read. He may well have known of Gautier's enthusiastic response to the painter years before, since his own shares Gautier's themes and language.[40] More certain is his knowledge of Zola's review of the Salon of 1878 in which the latter

expressed the mixture of attraction and repulsion which Moreau's work aroused in him.[41] In 1880, Huysmans's defence of the painter is an early sign of the divorce with Zola and the Naturalists which the publication of *A Rebours* would consummate.

Of Moreau's two works shown in the Salon of 1888, Huysmans makes three main points, relating in turn to style, content and Moreau's position in the French school of history painting. He begins by sacralizing the painter's studio, which he transforms into a 'cell' or a 'cloister'.[42] Here, Moreau apparently lives 'abîmé dans l'extase' (p. 152). In this state, he communicates with history's privileged moments, its romance and death, 'les féeriques visions, les sanglantes apothéoses des autres âges' (p. 152). This mystification extends to Moreau's biography, and, in particular, to his apprenticeship as a painter. Here, Huysmans redistributes those elements of the heritage which were known to have been important for Moreau in such a way as to confirm his theory of art as alienation. Mantegna, only one of the Italian painters from whom Moreau borrowed, is singled out as a predecessor who 'haunts' him (p. 152).[43] Among the da Vinci landscapes which Moreau used in the background of some of his mythological paintings, Huysmans retains the 'mystérieux paysages noirs et bleus' in which 'les troublantes princesses passent' (p. 152). The painter has also been stimulated by what he calls Delacroix's 'fièvres de couleurs' (p. 152). In Moreau's painting, the Western tradition summarized by the 'haunting' Mantagna, the 'mysterious' Leonardo and the 'feverish' Delacroix joins forces with the religious art and 'barbaric' watercolours of the East. To these must be added the procedures of archaeology, ceramics, primitive engraving, mosaics, embroidery, and jewellery also present in Moreau's art. To the Romantic belief in the holy text is added the positivist taste for the encyclopaedia. Significantly, as if to prepare for his own impending change of literary direction, Huysmans goes on to say that contemporary literature is still waiting for an achievement equivalent to Moreau's:

> S'il était possible de s'imaginer l'admirable et définitive *Tentation* de Gustave Flaubert, écrite par les auteurs de *Manette Salomon*, peut-être aurait-on l'exacte similitude de l'art si délicieusement raffiné de M. Moreau. (pp. 153–54)

Once he has established the stylistic originality of Moreau in these terms, Huysmans discusses the content of the two works on show. Here, he finds a portrayal of woman which feeds his own disgust with relationships between the sexes in a democratic and materialistic age. In *Hélène*, woman is indifferent to the evil and death she provokes, in *Galatée* to the desire she arouses. Helen is 'semblable à une divinité malfaisante qui empoisonne, sans même qu'elle en ait conscience, tout ce qui l'approche ou tout ce qu'elle regarde et touche' (p. 154). Galatea's body is an 'inimitable et radieux bijou' (p. 155), the grotto where she sleeps safe from the clutches of the Cyclops is an extraordinary casket. Both

works are 'féeries écloses dans le cerveau d'un mangeur d'opium' (p. 155), a foretaste, in other words, of the perverse but vulnerable Salomé of *A Rebours*.[44] The more sensational elements of Moreau-as-narrated-by-Huysmans became anthology pieces for the decadent movement. Jean Lorrain, in one of many forgettable poems inspired by Moreau's work, wrote of 'la chaude odeur de chair, de rut et de massacre' in Moreau's *Salomé*.[45] But, in 1880, Huysmans was still enough of a Naturalist to see this portrayal of woman as directly related to her degrading economic subservience in modern society. It was this which in his view related Moreau's art to that of Degas.[46]

It also assured Moreau's domination of the French school of history painting. In 1880, Moreau 'domine aujourd'hui, de toute la tête, la banale cohue des peintres d'histoire' (p. 155). Among these, he singles out Puvis de Chavannes who 'se dispense de chercher le ton juste, ne donne à ses personnages et aux milieux . . . aucune apparence de vérité et de vie, et cela devient pour la critique de la naïveté de primitif, de la fresque, de la machine décorative, du grand art, du sublime . . .' (p. 156). Huysmans was only repeating here a criticism which had been levelled from the 1860s onwards against Puvis's use of pale colour expanses and flat surfaces, but his attacks, coming just as the critical response to Puvis was changing among the literary avant-garde, helped to weaken the credit his art criticism enjoyed in the eyes of the Symbolists.[47]

In a short review of Moreau's 1886 exhibition in the Goupil galleries, Kahn proposed a different approach to Moreau's work from that of Huysmans. To some extent this is the result of the medium used by Moreau for these works. The series of watercolours produced to illustrate La Fontaine's fables had enabled Moreau to develop with increasing freedom his interest in the expressive value of colour and the results went on show at a time when Kahn, like Seurat and Fénéon, was studying Charles Henry's colour theories. Kahn briefly describes the subject of each of the six watercolours exhibited alongside the illustrations of La Fontaine but places the emphasis on Moreau's use of colour. The following description of *Salomé au jardin* is typical:

> Une Hérodiade d'ébène et d'ambre et de bleu sombre et d'émeraude contemple le chef du Saint, tandis que fuit du bosquet de verdure dans une envolée le bourreau dont flottent les écarlates.[48]

Where other commentators (including Moreau himself, it must be said[49]) discuss at length the meaning of Salomé's expression or of the executioner's horrified flight, Kahn directs the reader's attention to the colour arrangement: 'Et dans ces grands rêves, ces évocations des légendes surannées, toujours l'orfèvrerie si intense du maître, les lapis, les violets et les pourpres, féeries à l'œil' (p. 100). In his comments on the illustrations for La Fontaine, he also draws attention to dramatic effects in colour and composition and their relationship to the emblematic narratives:

La Guerre des vautours: dans un paysage enflammé aux nuages de carnage, du sang tombe sur un étrange Sphinx, tout peint de sang coagulé, les yeux d'un bleu phosphorescent. (p. 101)[50]

In his long article on the French painting on show in the Universal Exhibition of 1889, in which Moreau was represented by three works (Mathieu, nos. 67, 170, 195), Kahn named the painter as one of four modern masters, the others being Puvis, Degas, and Pissarro. One of the paintings on show was *Galatée*. Here, Kahn ignored the confrontation between the sexes which had enthralled Huysmans and concentrated instead on the relationship between the frame, Galatea's body and the marine flora as a system of abstract forms. In this respect, he brings to Moreau's painting the sort of theoretical questions about art as harmony, and about the role of the frame in the general decorative effect on which Seurat and his circle was engaged:

La *Galathée* [sic] contient très poussée ces qualités de joaillerie; ce tableau est considéré comme une harmonie partant d'une bordure décorative formant cadre intérieur, construite de volutes de pierres précieuses, d'enroulements, de plantes imaginées, striée de monochromes corps de nymphes ne valant que par la ligne au milieu des riches colorations de l'ornementation végétale. En émerge un corps féminin parsemé, aux parties inférieures, de joailleries florales. . . . (p. 128)

In addition, the retrospective nature of the 1889 exhibition encouraged Kahn to search for a wider context in which to place contemporary painting. He therefore discusses relationships between the two major modern tendencies: on the one hand, 'MM. Puvis de Chavannes et Moreau, protagonistes d'un art où le symbole se traduit par des extériorités de sujet, par l'emploi de thèmes suggestifs, par le titre, le groupement des figures, l'ornementation du décor'; on the other, 'MM. Degas et Pissarro érigeant le symbole par l'horizon qu'ils savent mettre autour d'une figure ou d'un paysage, soit par la suggestion que fournit fatalement l'exécution aussi parfaite d'un phénomène contemporain' (p. 126). The oppositions and similarities may be forced, but their terms are less important than what motivates them, the desire to unite behind a single Symbolist banner four painters who were recognized by large sections of the literary avant-garde as leaders of new developments in painting. The presence of both Degas and Puvis in the Symbolist galaxy was legitimized by the parallel in literature: 'On ne peut que constater que le courant de rêve et de réalité qui différencie un Baudelaire d'un Balzac existe en peinture sous ses espèces de différences entre un Puvis et un Degas' (p. 130). The great Realists were in fact Symbolists and the Symbolists were Realists at a deeper level. The tautology was difficult to gloss over but Kahn's use of it to reconcile apparently contradictory pictorial trends was central to literary Symbolism's theory of modernism.

When he attempted to relate to his own poetry developments taking place in painting, Kahn, like Laforgue, began with the implications of Impressionism

for human psychology. This painting showed landscapes in which objects were enveloped in atmosphere. How much more readily the elements of the poet's emotional life lent themselves to the same treatment:

Or, si un paysage est donc à toute minute modifiable en toutes les impressions qu'il suggère par ses conditions mêmes d'existence, que plus complèxe, plus modifiable encore est un phénomène humain, un phénomène psychique, dont nous ne pouvons guère percevoir le heurt que lorsqu'il s'est produit et va s'effaçant.[51]

In poetry, it was not merely the visual sensation of the Impressionist instant but the whole of the poet's inner life, past and present, which was subject to what Kahn called 'l'heure du rêve' (p. 346). As a result, what was needed was 'une poésie extrêmement personnelle, cursive et notante' (p. 348). Which is where the example of Seurat came in. The following is taken from Kahn's reply to Moréas in *L'Événement* of 28 September 1886:

Pour la matière des œuvres, las du quotidien, du coudoyé et de l'obligatoire contemporain, nous voulons pouvoir placer en quelque époque ou même en plein rêve (le rêve étant indistinct de la vie) le développement du symbole. Nous voulons substituer à la lutte des individualités la lutte des sensations et des idées et pour milieu d'action, au lieu du ressassé décor de carrefours et de rues, totalité ou partie d'un cerveau. Le but essentiel de notre art est d'objectiver le subjectif (l'extériorisation de l'Idée) au lieu de subjectiver l'objectif (la nature à travers un tempérament).

Des réflexions analogues ont créé le ton multitonique de Wagner et la dernière technique des Impressionnistes. C'est une adhésion de la littérature aux théories scientifiques construites . . . par l'expérimentation de M. Charles Henry, énoncées dans une introduction aux principes d'esthétique mathématique et expérimentale. Ces théories sont fondées sur ce principe philosophique purement idéaliste qui nous fait repousser toute réalité de la matière et n'admet l'existence du monde que comme représentation.

Puvis, Seurat, Wagner, Schopenhauer, and Kahn's own *vers libre*, they are all there. The immediate purpose of this vast programme was to counter Moréas, who was telling anyone who would listen that Kahn had cheated him out of his invention of the *vers libre* by not publishing in *La Vogue* poems which Moréas had sent him.[52] But there was also the attempt to define the content and technical innovations of Symbolism in such a way as to draw Neo-Impressionism and the scientific theories of perception which lay behind it into the Symbolists' philosophical idealism and cult for Wagner. Three years later, Fénéon confirmed that this had been the case: 'Alors, tels écrivains, M. Gustave Kahn, M. Paul Adam, appliqués à transposer le quotidien dans un rêve logique, inquiets de rythmes plus complèxes, soucieux de moyens d'expression précis et efficaces, virent aux œuvres néo-impressionnistes les analogues de leurs propres recherches'.[53] Kahn, writing years later and, as usual, anxious to establish his own priority, presented events the other way round, saying that Seurat was 'un peu inquiet du point de contact que sa technique

picturale avait avec la technique vers-libriste'.[54] His comments published in 1928 in a preface to Seurat's drawings were probably closer to the mark:

Nous étions sensibles à la mathématique de son art. Il n'est point certain que le feu de la jeunesse n'ait pas suscité en nous de quasi-certitudes que ses recherches sur la ligne et la couleur offraient des points précis de similitude avec nos théories sur le vers et la phrase. La théorie du discontinu pouvait bien avoir quelque parenté avec celle du mélange optique. Peintres et poètes étaient enchantés mutuellement d'incliner à y croire.[55]

Verhaeren confirmed that Seurat had been interested in the relationship between his own theories and those of Wagner and, in particular, between his use of white frames for his paintings and the role of lighting in Wagnerian stage practice.[56] Kahn's poetry in *Les Palais nomades* had this sort of discussion as its context.

These relationships between Neo-Impressionism and Kahn's study of verse technique are, it is true, of a very general kind: the mathematical precision and rigour of Seurat's method, its 'scientific' basis in Henry's theories. Nevertheless, they are sufficient to indicate that a genuine filiation between the two art forms may have existed. Furthermore, more precise analogies can be inferred from Kahn's own accounts of his free verse. The aesthetic theory of Neo-Impressionism involved three fundamental propositions: firstly, that the aesthetic value of a work of art lay in an internal harmony of simple elements; secondly, that this internal harmony might be made explicit by an analytic aesthetic; thirdly, that this explicit harmony might be achieved by the application of a scientific technique.[57] Kahn's reply to Moréas bears a close relationship to these three propositions. In it, we find the internal harmony of simple elements ('faire concorder la multiplicité et l'entrelacement des rythmes avec la mesure de l'Idée'), the analytical model ('pousser l'analyse du moi à l'extrême') and the scientific instrument of free verse ('diviser le rythme . . . donner dans le graphique d'une strophe le schéma d'une sensation'). Kahn's use of the verb 'diviser' is no coincidence for it was Seurat's practice of divisionism that most interested Kahn. In his 1926 essay he suggested as much in his analogy between what he called his 'théorie du discontinu' and Seurat's 'mélange optique'. By this he was referring to the way in which distinct units, whether of colour in a Seurat painting, or of verse in a poem consisting in free verse, combined in the sensibility of the spectator/reader. For Kahn and for other contemporary exponents, the two essential features of free verse were its *grammatical* unit of rhythm and its disregard for the syllabic count. His description of these features reflects the analogy with Neo-Impressionist painting:

L'unité vraie n'est pas le *nombre* conventionnel du vers, mais un arrêt simultané du sens et de la phrase sur toute fraction organique du vers et de la pensée. Cette unité consiste en un nombre ou rythme de voyelles et de consonnes qui sont cellule organique et indépendante . . .

L'unité du vers peut se définir encore: un fragment le plus court possible figurant un arrêt de voix et un arrêt de sens.[58]

Like the Neo-Impressionist dot of paint, each unit of free verse was an 'organic and independent cell', a fragment of rhythm and meaning. In a poem in free verse, as in a Seurat painting, the decisive factor was the way in which these fragments were interlocked to create the larger units of painting or of stanza/poem. Kahn considered his analysis of these structuring procedures to be what distinguished his own verse from that of other claimants to the title of inventor of free verse, notably Laforgue. Kahn's efforts, in his own words, 'porteront surtout sur la construction de la strophe, et Laforgue s'en écartait délibérément' (p. 17).[59] To this construction of the stanza, Neo-Impressionism's 'mélange optique' was relevant:

Pour assembler ces unités et leur donner la cohésion de façon qu'elles forment un vers il les faut apparenter. Les parentés s'appellent allitérations, soit union de consonnes parentes ou assonances par des voyelles similaires . . . Comment l'apparenter à d'autres vers? par la construction logique de la strophe se constituant d'après les mesures intérieures du vers qui dans cette strophe contient la pensée principale ou le point essentiel de la pensée (p. 27).[60]

Internal rhyme, alliteration and assonance were the equivalents in verse of the adjacent colours on the chromatic circle which Seurat used for his palette. Their use and operation stemmed from their relationships to the line (or part of line) which contained the stanza's principal idea, grammatical unit and stress (what Kahn called its 'accent d'impulsion') which together provided its rhythmic organization. These relationships were logical, that is, based on the 'scientific' laws of aesthetic response which Henry was seeking to codify:

Cet *accent d'impulsion* dirige l'harmonie du vers principal de la strophe, ou d'un vers initial qui donne le mouvement, et les autres vers, à moins qu'on ne recherche un effet de contraste, se doivent modeler sur les valeurs de ce vers telles que les a fixées l'accent d'impulsion (p. 30).

However approximate these analogies between Kahn's theory of free verse and Seurat's scientific Neo-Impressionism may now seem, there can be little doubt that at the time Kahn was writing the free verse of *Les Palais nomades*, he took them seriously. In doing so, he was only playing to his strengths for he was a much better theoretician than a poet and inter-arts relationships of this kind were one of the main ways in which the Symbolist poets thought about their art. When we turn to the sort of free verse which Kahn wrote, we see that he applied his theory in a mechanical way. The following poem is Kahn's first published piece of free verse:

Timbres oubliés, Timbres morts perdus,
Pas d'une autre glissant à la rue,
Chansons d'amour et vols de grues
Dans d'improbables firmaments,

Les futurs sont à vous, puisque le vent emporte
Vers des cieux, et des lunes, et des flores
Vos petits frissons que nul ne peut clore
Votre âme a glissé sous les lourdes portes

Vers d'imaginaires Lahores.

Timbres oubliés des charmants jardins,
Timbres argentins des Thulés lointains,
Timbres violets des voix consolantes
Épandant graves les bénédictions,
Timbres bleus des péris aux féeries,
Timbres d'or des mongoles orfèvreries
Et vieil or des vieilles nations! . . .

(pp. 54–55)

This is the fourth poem of the section entitled 'Intermède' and was first published in *La Vogue* in June 1886.[61] In retrospect, the innovation in these lines still appears cautious. We shall see, for example, ways in which the syllable count, though no longer a metrical obligation, continues to function as an element in the rhythmical organization of the poem. Nevertheless, the essential features of free verse are present. Verse, stanza and rhyme are freed from the obligation of metric regularity. The number of syllables per line, though always between eight and twelve, varies according to the idea expressed and the rhythm required. Alliteration and assonance play a significant role. The opening two sections of the volume, 'Thème et variations' and 'Mélopées', have provided the poet with initial insight into the illusory quality of all experience and, in particular, of love. In 'Intermède', escape into the past seems to offer a sense of duration lacking in the present. The fourth poem evokes memories which, though associated with experiences which are long since past, nevertheless continue to echo in the present and are promised a future through their participation in legend.

The first stanza consists of a lament to lost time. Of all experience, nothing remains, not even its most distinctive and intimate tone. In this case, the experience is of love and sexual pleasure. The repetition of 'timbres' and the balanced sequence of past participles introduce an appropriately solemn rhythm. This effect is strengthened in line 2 by the relationship between 'Timbres' and 'Pas d'une autre' (shared initial stress and final /rə/ cluster, doubling of length). The line's second unit maintains this rhythm by repeating the four syllables of its first and in doing so, heightens the impact of the present participle, which with its new phonetic cluster and tense contrasts sharply with line 1. The reference to the woman as 'une autre' compounds the poet's sense of the inevitable failure of relationships. In line 3, the octosyllabic line again splits to form two units of equal length but the rhythmic opposition (2 × 2 followed by 4 × 1) supports the ironic deflation of 'chansons d'amour' in 'vols

de grues' (where 'grues' is a slang term for whore and rhymes with 'rue', where she makes her living) and in the unlikely heavens to which she leads him in line 4. The minimal syntax of the two noun phrases leaves unresolved the question of where the feelings for 'une autre' belong between the two types of experience. The first three lines form a series of noun phrases in apposition, each one a fragment of experience juxtaposed to and modifying those which have gone before. The initial preposition of line 4 breaks this series while the final nasal vowel of 'firmaments' ends that of the rhymes in /y/ (reinforced by the /R/ present in all three). The syntactic, rhythmic and phonetic variations introduced in line 4 suggest a broader emotional development in which the fragments of experience described in lines 1–3 may resonate.

The first stanza moves towards its melancholy conclusion only for the comma to suspend resolution. The pause between stanzas makes more dramatic the unexpected reversal of the theme. The experiences which appeared lost for ever have a future. Their tone colour is part of other faint but certain echoes. For this assertion of the survival of experience, Kahn returns to verse lines which occupy a privileged place in the national memory, the alexandrine with its medial caesura reinforced by punctuation in line 5, the decasyllabic line in lines 6–8. To evoke this ideal world of sources to which all experience returns, Kahn uses rich embraced rhymes, all feminine, reinforced by the strong internal assonance of 'cieux' (l. 6), 'frissons' (l. 7) and 'glissé' (l. 8). The change of tense between 'glissant' (l. 2) and 'a glissé' (l. 8) underlines the return of experience to its source in the past. A single detached octosyllabic line (l. 9) identifies this ideal world in a structure which echoes that of line 4 in order to emphasize the thematic opposition between 'improbables' and 'imaginaires'.

The forgotten timbres of line 1 are therefore heard again in the third stanza, this time in their universal context. Here, Kahn draws heavily on the Symbolist arsenal of elected places and epochs, including Shetland, Medieval Europe courtesy of Wagner, sixteenth-century Hindustan and late seventeenth-century Arabo-Persia. The individual's memories described in the first stanza are now linked to those of his race. The earlier melancholy tone gives way to one of incantation created by the repetition of the key word, 'timbres', and by the very deliberate line structures which it introduces. In lines 10–11, this structure is identical: two hemistichs each of five syllables, a three-syllable adjective qualifying 'timbres', a flat rhyme which is also grammatical and which is reinforced by the internal rhyme of 'argentins'. The first hemistich of line 12 follows the pattern of lines 10 and 11 but the second adds a syllable and introduces a new syntactical development (l. 13) whose different stress distribution within the same 5 + 6 arrangement of line 12 is designed to show that each timbre has its own rhythm and to prevent the incantation from becoming too mechanical.[62] Alliteration and assonance again figure prominently in the sound structure of these lines. In lines 14–15 the syntactical pattern of lines

10–12 is reinstated but the single-syllable adjective imparts a quite different rhythm in which internal and end rhyme add to the solemnity and exotic richness of the evocation. In what must be a reference to Rimbaud, each timbre has its own colour but that which dominates is the gold associated with Moreau's treatment of legend. The description of his art as 'orfèvrerie' was a commonplace to which Kahn subscribed and in lines 15–16 the evocation of legendary places culminates in the three-fold repetition of the same /ɔʀ/ sound which provides the rhymes of stanza two.

The three stanzas are therefore designed to provide the structure of a feeling, that of a sense of lost experience and the desire for some source of permanence. Each combination of grammatical and metrical unit creates a fragment of this feeling and from the juxtaposition of these fragments the sensation is organized. The next step is to apply the same principle to the section and, from there, to the whole volume. Hence Kahn's careful arrangement of the order in which the poems appear in *Les Palais nomades*[63] and his comments to Huret about the structure of stanza, poem and collection.

If Neo-Impressionist theory and Seurat's practice were significant elements in Kahn's study of verse form, Moreau's work interested him largely for its treatment of legend and for the richness of its imagery, with which Kahn, with his Semitic background, his African travels and his passion for erudition, felt affinities. If we return, for example, to the third stanza of the poem which we have just seen, we shall find a source of line 14 in one of the Moreau watercolours on show in the 1886 exhibition which Kahn reviewed:

> D'un lac ceinturé de collines bleues un hiératique éléphant caparaçonné d'orfèvreries, ses puissantes pattes bracelettées de fleurs, la trompe balançant une fleur, au pourpre palanquin s'est assise une péri . . . (p. 100)

The watercolour here is *L'Éléphant sacré* (Mathieu, no. 325). At this point in the volume, Kahn retains the fairy from Arab-Persian mythology, the watercolour's atmosphere of mystery and its dominant blue. In a later section of *Les Palais nomades*, the borrowing from the same work is more detailed and precise:

> Et la conquête dans les pourpres et les oriflammes
> l'ascension latente à lointains paradis
> les éléphants caparaçonnées des escarboucles du jadis
> et les caravelles aux joyeuses flammes
> Ah morne découverte aux blessures entr'ouvertes
> en détresse.
>
> (p. 158)

Here, the richness of colour serves to emphasize by opposition the despair which follows unfulfilled hope. On other occasions, a particular legend to which Moreau had given a particular interpretation may provide Kahn with a thematic source. This was the case with the Jason legend which, with its theme

of quest, was a natural subject for *Les Palais nomades*. Moreau's 1865 painting, *Jason et Médée* (Pl. 11), was owned by Kahn's friend, Ephrussi, (for whom he had found a secretary in Laforgue) and there can be little doubt that Kahn took advantage of the easy access to the painting which friendship with Ephrussi provided. In the work, now in the Louvre, Moreau depicts a youthful Jason, ambitious and triumphant, brandishing the Golden Bough. Yet Medea is at his shoulder and a faintly effeminate, langorous quality in his bearing appears to foreshadow the weakening of will which undermines success. In the same way, Kahn, in the first poem of *Les Palais nomades*, sets against the positive, masculine principle of the 'ambre des toisons d'or', 'le bleu de ses azurs' and 'l'asile de son geste affirmateur' (p. 11), the negative, female 'murs que sa parole lente [that which Medea whispers in Jason's ear] bâtit . . . autour des volontés de gravir les destins' and concludes upon a note of self-doubt which is close to the theme of Moreau's painting:

> Verrai-je, sous ses pieds, blancs ainsi crépuscules,
> S'enfuir les cauchemars des lourdes canicules?
>
> (p. 11)

The same theme is repeated in the fifth poem of the section 'Voix au parc', where the focus of interest is no longer Jason but Medea and where Kahn symbolizes the weakening of Jason's will through the image of the loosely-hanging belts worn by both figures in the painting.

A more systematic study of *Les Palais nomades* would certainly uncover other borrowings from Moreau's work. It provided Kahn with a store of images on which he drew in different ways, according to the requirements of particular themes in his verse. But its relevance to him was greatest in 1886, when he was writing *Les Palais nomades* and when the Moreau watercolours were accessible. Thereafter, Seurat's work is the single, most important element in Kahn's interest in and knowledge of painting. Initially, Henry and Fénéon directed his awareness towards the formal questions raised by Seurat's method. The analogies which Fénéon discovered between Seurat's art and that of Puvis de Chavannes encouraged the reconciliation between realist and idealist directions in art which facilitated for Kahn, as for many literary Symbolists, a retreat from contemporary social experience. By 1891, however, his approach to Seurat's work was changing. In his 1891 obituary article on the painter, he repeated his 1888 reference to Greek friezes and Phidias but related them to the modernity of Seurat's subjects, his preoccupation with 'le Paris moderne et la rue moderne', his 'évocation de la scène contemporaine'.[64] In poetry, too, Kahn was moving gradually towards a theory of social art, eventually asserting in 1895 that free verse might encourage a revival of 'la chanson populaire'.[65]

Mallarmé's reaction to *Les Palais nomades* was, on the face of it, flattering for Kahn. In a letter of 7 June 1887, he wrote:

Vous devez être, ma foi, fier! c'est la première fois, dans notre littérature et dans aucune, je crois, qu'un Monsieur, en face du rythme officiel de la langue, notre vieux Vers, s'en crée un à lui seul, parfait ou à la fois exact et doué d'enchantement: il y a là une aventure inouïe! (*Corr.*, III, 120).

But, this social, as much as literary, obligation honoured, Mallarmé distanced himself from the innovation of free verse: 'car notez bien que je ne vous considère pas comme ayant mis le doigt sur une forme nouvelle devant quoi s'effacera l'ancienne: cette dernière restera, impersonnelle, à tous et quiconque voudra s'isoler différement, libre à lui.' Free verse was the 'exquise crise, fondamentale' of *Crise de vers*, written the previous year (*OC*, p. 360). As I said when discussing 'The Impressionists and Eduoard Manet', Mallarmé continued in the later text with reference to poetry the study of crisis begun in the earlier text with reference to painting. But the two crises did not have the same implications for him.[66] With the development of *vers libre*, coinciding historically, as Mallarmé points out (p. 360), with the death of Hugo, poetic language 's'évade' (p. 361). But whereas Manet's revolution condemned official painting to oblivion, free verse would extend and renew the alexandrine, not replace it. Mallarmé returned repeatedly to the inviolability of the 'vers officiel':

Pour moi, le vers classique — je l'appellerais le *vers officiel* — est la grande *nef* de cette basilique 'la Poésie française'; le vers libre, lui, édifie les bas-côtés pleins d'attirances, de mystères, de somptuosités rares. Le vers officiel doit demeurer, car il est né de l'âme populaire, il jaillit du sol d'autrefois. . . . (*OCP*, p. 433, Mallarmé's emphasis)

These remarks made in 1895 confirm how consistent Mallarmé's thinking on the question of art forms was. The official verse line would emerge strengthened by the challenge of free verse because it was, to repeat the term used in the 1887 letter to Kahn, 'impersonal'. Free verse was a reaction to the 'mécanisme rigide et puéril de sa mesure' (*OC*, p. 362) which the alexandrine had become through familiarity, not to Mallarmé's ideal and essential alexandrine, born with the nation and hidden deep in its subconscious. Mallarmé believed he had reached its mysteries long before the innovations of *Les Palais nomades* and that Manet had led a generation of 'new and impersonal men' *DSM*, I, 84) back to the obscured language of painting. Just as in Manet's art, colours and brushstrokes participated in a dynamic relationship with those around them and with the painting as a whole, so for Mallarmé, the individual word was enriched by its relationship to the others in the line.[67] The existence of the official verse structure was essential for these relationships to operate, so much so that when Mallarmé attempted in *Un Coup de dés* to create a new synthesis of literary, pictorial and musical forms, he employed the resources of free verse and prose poetry within a textual space rigorously organized around the number twelve.[68] Free verse could not destroy what he thought of as the

ideal qualities of the alexandrine without, in the process, destroying poetry itself, something which for Mallarmé was literally inconceivable. In 1887, he was confident that Kahn's free verse posed no such threat. The prestige of Henry's scientific theories and of Seurat's Neo-Impressionist achievement helped to ensure this, for in French nineteenth-century versification, the alexandrine still provided the surest parameters within which to search for a 'science' of verse.

CHAPTER 6

WIELDING THE AXE: JARRY AND GAUGUIN IN 1893

On 11 February 1893, writing from Tahiti to Daniel de Monfried, Gauguin complained: 'Ce pauvre Aurier est mort. Nous avons décidément de la déveine. Van Gogh puis Aurier, le seul critique qui nous comprenait bien et qui un jour nous aurait été très utile.'[1] Aurier's death in October of the previous year was a serious blow to Gauguin. It is clear from what he says that he would miss Aurier the art critic more than the Symbolist poet and that he was referring to Theo Van Gogh, not Vincent, the art dealer, not the painter. His isolation in Tahiti had not lessened his need to win the Parisian public over to his work nor deprived him of his aggressive business sense. No sooner had he decided to leave Tahiti than he began preparing the ground for what he hoped would be a triumphant exhibition in Paris in the autumn of that year. He sent eight works on ahead of him and wrote letters explaining them to his wife and friends.[2] All to no avail. 'Que ma fuite soit une défaite, mon retour sera une victoire', he apparently said to Charles Morice on his arrival in France in August.[3] But as Morice added: 'Et le retour aggravait la défaite du départ, irrémissiblement'. Aurier's death helped to ensure that this would be so.

The Gauguin exhibition of November 1893 brought to an end any hopes the painter might have had of reconciliation with literary Symbolism. In the *Mercure de France*, Mauclair took up again his campaign of systematic denigration of Gauguin and his ideas. Soon others joined in. In a letter applauding Mauclair's attack on Gauguin's 'art criard et sans goût',[4] Adolphe Retté denounced the 'stupéfiantes prétentions', the 'tapageuse ignorance' of artists 'naguère étiquetés déformateurs, aujourd'hui symbolistes'.[5] No insult was too strong:

> Il [i.e. Mauclair] est dans le vrai lorsqu'il affirme l'insignifiance absolue de ces peintres à prétentions exorbitantes qui ne révèlent que fautes de dessin sous prétexte de naïveté, méconnaissance des lois les plus naturelles — laideur effroyable. Ces peintres sont gâtés de littérature, boursouflés de vanité; leurs audaces on doit les dénoncer: *truquages* de paresseux. Je n'ai pas été à Tahiti, cependant je crois avoir le droit de dire que les toiles de Gauguin me semblent hideuses. (Retté's emphasis)

Retté, we remember, had been present at the Gauguin banquet of March 1891. He had also participated actively in literary developments within the

Symbolist movement.[6] But this hysterical attack on Gauguin was followed soon after by his noisy desertion of Mallarmé.[7] Critical response to Gauguin's 1893 exhibition was, therefore, closely involved with what was happening within the Symbolist movement in literature. In fact, there is a sense in which the exhibition was literary Symbolism's point of no return, the sign that insofar as it had formed a recognized avant-garde grouping, this was now breaking up. In a further compliment to Mauclair, Retté gave an idea of what he thought was at stake:

> Je ne saurais dire à quel point je fus heureux de constater enfin chez lui les prodromes d'une réaction que nous sommes quelques-uns à désirer de tout notre cœur. (p. 390)

Gauguin had been away from Paris for over two years and, as the French say, 'les absents ont toujours tort'. In his absence and particularly after Aurier's death, his art could not retain the prominence it had briefly enjoyed in the Parisian avant-garde, where presence was so important. It was replaced by that of Puvis de Chavannes, for Symbolist painters and writers alike. For those who would later call themselves the Nabis, Gauguin's Breton work had, in 1888, been a revelation.[8] But one of its effects was to reinforce the impact on them of Puvis's work. Later, Denis wrote that the discovery of Puvis's art enabled the Nabis to complete 'l'enseignement rudimentaire de Gauguin, en substituant à son idée simpliste des couleurs pures, celle des belles harmonies, infiniment variées comme la nature'.[9] One has only to compare Denis's painting of 1889, *La Montée au Calvaire*, with *Avril* of 1892 to see what he meant.[10] As far as the literary Symbolists were concerned and for the reasons we have seen, the bridge they established between Impressionism and the art of Puvis satisfied their aesthetic and intellectual commitments.

Among contemporary painters, Puvis was certainly the greatest beneficiary of the growing clamour for a return to the classical tradition in the arts and in society in general.[11] Retté's spiteful outburst was one of its more extreme forms and confirms how readily certain members of the Symbolist movement espoused the values they claimed to despise. He could have been quoting from Nordau's theories of degeneration, which had appeared in French a few months earlier.[12] Other Symbolists were more restrained but in 1894, an exhibition of Puvis's work showed that the appeal of the classical revival was broadly based and that his art was perfectly placed to take advantage of it. Wyzéwa's response was typical:

> Une soif nous a pris de rêve, d'émotion et de poésie. Saturés d'une lumière trop vive et trop crue, nous avons aspiré au brouillard. Et c'est alors que nous sommes passionnément attachés à l'art poétique et brumeux de M. de Chavannes . . . [Il] a ainsi été pour nous comme une guérison; nous nous sommes attachés à lui comme des malades à un traitement nouveau.[13]

For Wyzéwa and those for whom he spoke, France was sick from and of Naturalism and decadence. Zola's portrayal of a brutalized and exploited working class, des Esseintes's frantic and weary self-indulgence expressed in different ways the same divided and bankrupt culture. From 1890, Puvis criticism is dominated by the aspiration for stasis and rest from conflict, by the desire to draw a veil over a century during which France's political and social cohesion had been shattered. As Mauclair put it:

> Les cieux sulfureux et verdâtres et sanglants mêlés de fumées et de nuées, au seuil du siècle, par le furieux héroïsme de Delacroix, s'apaisent en Puvis de Chavannes et meurent, en une langueur d'or pâle et de roses et de violettes, sur les figures idylliques et virgiliennes enviées d'une époque sans paix intérieure.[14]

Mauclair's pessimistic vision of a society at war with itself had its own motivations and in the final years of the nineteenth century, there was no shortage of political crises and financial scandals to justify it.[15] But more specifically, Gauguin's 1893 exhibition took place in the context of the bloodiest phase of anarchist activity throughout the Third Republic. In the course of the twelve months prior to Retté's outburst against Gauguin, Auguste Vaillant threw his bomb into the Chambre des Députés (9 December 1893), Emile Henry threw his into the café Terminus of the Saint-Lazare railway station (12 February 1894) and Santo Caserio assassinated President Carnot in Lyon (24 June 1894). These and other less spectacular examples of anarchist activity at this time panicked the House into voting the 'lois scélérates' (17 and 27 July). The Symbolist milieu was, generally speaking, sympathetic to the anarchist movement.[16] Rémy de Gourmont defined Symbolism as anarchism in literature and it was a short step to see the *vers libre* as its equivalent in poetry.[17] The flirtation was, however, brief for it was superficial. In some cases, it was no more than a pose, a literary fashion. In others, it stemmed from an elitist and highly authoritarian aestheticism which, once political reaction to the anarchists gained ground (particularly after the assassination of Carnot) reverted without great effort to its more traditional ideological forms. Retté played his part in this reaction as far as the arts were concerned. He identified Gauguin as painting's arch-anarchist and his Tahiti work as a threat to French culture from a foreign agitator and so gave back to the painter his own image of himself at a time when it was increasingly out of step with the aspirations of the wider public at whom it was directed. Writing later from a more sympathetic, less controversial art historical position, Denis underlined the relationship between the critical reception of Gauguin's Tahiti work and the political reaction under way at that time: 'Sans l'anarchisme destructeur et négateur de Gauguin et de Van Gogh, l'exemple de Cézanne, avec tout ce qu'il comporte de tradition, de mesure et d'ordre, n'aurait pas été compris.'[18]

If anarchism was one element in the context of the critical response to Gauguin's 1893 exhibition, colonialism was another. We have already seen that in 1891 Alphonse Germain had attacked the formal innovations of Gauguin's Breton work in terms of the superiority of Western traditions of representation. How much more the Tahiti paintings two years later were exposed to the same line of attack. Even supporters like Kahn felt compelled to apologize for Gauguin's strange subject-matter and the Maori titles which the painter gave his work: 'on ne comprenait pas ses légendes maories'.[19] Merrill compared him to a Red Indian and described in racial terms the sense of exclusion provoked by the 1893 exhibition:

> Il n'était pas de terme commun entre son art et celui de nos peintres, même les plus révolutionnaires. Paul Gauguin reste, dans le sens le pire et le meilleur du terme, un monstre. Même van Gogh, ce fou de génie, peut se classer dans des catégories connues: il a des ancêtres et aura sans doute une postérité. Il est, en d'autres mots, de notre race. Gauguin, parmi nous, était véritablement solitaire.[20]

Gauguin's vision of Tahiti, its people and life, ran counter to the prevailing colonialist ideology of inferior races.[21] It contained none of the facile exoticism or zoological representation of natives common in the imagery of such peoples. On the simplest level, its celebration of freer forms of sexuality, of indigenous 'joie de vivre', was repellent to the effete Parisian coteries in which much fin-de-siècle literary life was conducted.

In 1893, support for the painter among the poets is quickly counted. Kahn has been mentioned but his support was qualified and written from a safe distance in time. We have no account of his immediate response. There was still Morice, as loyal as ever, despite Gauguin's suspicions to the contrary.[22] Unfortunately for the painter, Morice's influence within the Symbolist movement had reached its height in 1888 with the publication of *La Littérature de tout à l'heure*. Since then it had declined and his unswerving loyalty to Gauguin merely accelerated the process. Mirbeau again tried hard but in terms too general to overcome the difficulties created by the strangeness of the painter's Tahitian imagery.[23] In the course of his visit to the exhibition, Mallarmé apparently commented: 'Il est extraordinaire qu'on puisse mettre tant de mystère dans tant d'éclat' but when Morice suggested that he publish in the press a short defence of the painter, there was, this time, no response.[24] As Julien Leclercq, one of Gauguin's few remaining supporters in literary circles, put it: 'Camille Mauclair et la plupart des poètes passent à côté d'un Gauguin sans y rien apercevoir'.[25] In art criticism, only Delaroche and Leclercq took the hint which Mallarmé's allusive association of mystery and colour contained. In poetry, only Jarry responded in an appropriately colourful and mysterious way.

The essay which Morice wrote for the catalogue of Gauguin's exhibition was the beginning of their work together on *Noa Noa*, in which the painter's

account of his experience in Tahiti was to be rewritten in collobaration with the critic.[26] The work was obviously intended to make Gauguin's art more accessible to its Parisian public but he, typically, also saw it as a clash of civilizations — noble savage versus decadent civilization — from which primitive culture (in this case, his own art) would emerge victorious. From this point of view, the inequality of the participants made it a no-contest, for Morice's attempts to recreate in poetry the mystery and colour of the paintings led to verse worthy at times of Jacques Delima's 'Enterrement'.[27] Of greater significance was the response of Jarry, who, after seeing the exhibition, wrote three poems 'd'après et pour Paul Gauguin'. He included one of them, based on Gauguin's painting, *L'Homme à la hache* (Pl. 7), in *Les Minutes de sable mémorial*, published the following year.[28] Poem and painting will provide a focus for our discussion of Gauguin's situation in relation to the literary Symbolist milieu following the exhibition of November 1893.

* * *

On his arrival in Tahiti, Gauguin found what he had already discovered in Brittany, that the unspoilt, pre-capitalist culture of which he had dreamed no longer existed. The country, and, in particular, the capital, Papeete, had been 'civilized' by French colonial administration: 'Arriverai-je à retrouver une trace de ce passé si loin, si mystérieux; et le présent ne me disait rien qui vaille. Retrouver l'ancien foyer, raviver le feu au milieu de toutes ces cendres.'[29] Initiation into what Morice called 'la bonne Sauvagerie' (1901, p. 53) seems to have occupied at least the first six months of his stay. Establishing a relationship with his new environment was not easy. As an ageing and physically degenerate European, he was unable to perform simple tasks like fishing, hunting, and climbing which were second nature to the local inhabitants.[30] He needed time to adjust to the forms and colours of the landscape, to its light and atmosphere, time to come to terms with the pictorial problems which these created. 'Tout m'aveuglait, m'éblouissait dans le paysage. Venant de l'Europe, j'étais toujours incertain d'une couleur, cherchant midi à quatorze heures' (1893, p. 24). This early period is, therefore, one of 'an enormous will to completely re-explore the meanings and stylistic ingredients of his art.'[31] His efforts to penetrate the mysteries of the island's mythology were made much easier by his discovery of Moerenhout's two-volume *Voyages aux Îles du Grand Océan* (1837), large extracts of which he copied into his own notebook, *Ancien Culte Maori*.[32] Gradually, in the course of these first months, this patchwork of reading, personal experience and pre-conceived ideas of Maori civilization took pictorial forms. *L'Homme à la hache*, painted, it is believed, in November 1891, was one of the most important early results of this process.

Gauguin's draft manuscript contains a description closely related to this work:

L'homme presque nu levait de ses deux bras une pesante hache laissant en haut son empreinte bleue sur le ciel argenté, en bas son incision sur l'arbre mort qui tout à l'heure revivrait un instant de flammes — chaleurs séculaires accumulées chaque jour. Sur le sol pourpre de longues feuilles serpentines d'un jaune de métal, tout un vocabulaire oriental — lettres (il me semblait) d'une langue inconnue mystérieuse. Il me semblait voir ce mot originaire d'Océanie: Atua. Dieu — Taäta ou Takata, celui-ci arrivant jusqu'à l'Inde se retrouve partout ou dans tout . . .

Une femme rangeait dans la pirogue quelques filets et l'horizon de la mer était souvent interrompu par le vert de la crête des lames sur les brisants de corail. (pp. 21–22)

This text in fact provides only one half of the commentary to this painting. Further on in his narrative, Gauguin describes an excursion into the mountains which he made in the company of a young friend, Jotefa, in search of rosewood for carving. As he walked behind his guide, he was struck by the boy's animal-like grace and androgynity. In the margin alongside this passage, Gauguin made the following notes:

1. Le côté androgyne du sauvage, le peu de différence de sexe chez les animaux.
2. La pureté qu'entraîne la vue du nu et les mœurs faciles entre les deux sexes.

L'inconnu du vice chez les sauvages.
Désir d'être un instant faible, femme. (p. 116)

This revelation of a more natural, undifferentiated sexuality produces in Gauguin momentary temptation:

De toute cette jeunesse, de cette parfaite harmonie avec la nature qui nous entourait il se dégageait une beauté, un parfum (noa-noa) qui enchantaient mon âme d'artiste. De cette amitié si bien cimentée par attraction mutuelle du simple au composé, l'amour en moi prenait éclosion.

Et nous étions seulement tous deux.

J'eus comme un pressentiment de crime, le désir d'inconnu, le réveil du mal. Puis la lassitude du rôle du mâle qui doit toujours être fort, protecteur; de lourdes épaules à supporter. Être une minute l'être faible qui aime et obéit.

Je m'approchai, sans peur des lois, le trouble aux tempes. (p. 28)

At this point, the boy turns round. 'L'androgyne avait disparu: ce fut bien un jeune homme . . . Le calme rentra soudain dans mon âme'. The danger of temptation past, Gauguin dives into the nearby stream, as if to wash away the 'fardeau d'une mauvaise pensée, toute une civilization [qui] m'avait devancé dans le mal et m'avait éduqué' (p. 29). Immediately after this episode, the two arrive at the trees which will provide Gauguin with his rosewood. 'Tous deux, sauvages, nous attaquâmes à la hache un magnifique arbre. . . . Je frappai avec rage et les mains ensanglantées je coupais avec le plaisir d'une brutalité assouvie, d'une destruction de je ne sais quoi' (p. 29). Lower down the page of his manuscript, Gauguin added the following note:

Avec la cadence du bruit de la hache, je chantais:

Coupe par le pied la forêt tout entière (des désirs)
Coupe en toi l'amour de toi-même comme avec la main en automne on couperait le Lotus.

Bien détruit en effet tout mon vieux stock de civilisé. Je revins tranquille, me sentant désormais un autre homme, un Maorie. Tout deux nous portions gaiment notre lourd fardeau, et je pus admirer encore devant moi les formes gracieuses de mon jeune ami, et cela tranquille — formes robustes comme l'arbre que nous portions. L'arbre sentait la rose, noa noa . . .

Je n'ai pas donné un seul coup de ciseau dans ce morceau de bois sans avoir des souvenirs d'une douce quiétude, d'un parfum, d'une victoire et d'un rajeunissement. (p. 29)

What are we to make of these texts and of their relationship to *L'homme à la hache*? It is easy to dismiss them, to say that this account of Gauguin exorcizing his Western personality in favour of a Tahitian one was written for a Parisian audience. What, after all, could be more *fin-de-siècle* than the androgyne? Besides, there is a sense in which Gauguin *had* to achieve the initiation he describes in *Noa Noa* if only to have an answer for the Rettés and Mauclairs of the Paris art world, only too ready to say that his whole Tahiti venture was a fraud, just another publicity stunt which did not come off. On a different level, the painting does not seem to need the texts. The simplicity of its subject matter and formal organization does not appear to lend itself to complex symbolism. Field, for example, says that it 'has the virtue of containing very little abstruse symbolism — in spite of the embellished account of the scene in *Noa Noa*' (p. 53) and that its 'simplicity reflects its early position in the Tahitian œuvre, a time before Gauguin had either artistically or intellectually assimilated his new subject matter' (pp. 53–54). Teilhet-Fisk agrees: 'Based on his writing, this painting marks Gauguin's first symbolist work in Tahiti, but without the writing the painting is only a powerful rendering of Tahitian work patterns' (p. 36). She feels that 'this is one of the rare if not the only instance where Gauguin retrospectively gave his work a significance that was not originally intended' (p. 36). But in itself, this does not sound convincing. If Gauguin was not in the habit of giving retrospective meaning to his work, why would he do so in this case? The question of chronology is not cleared up by the retrospective date of the manuscript of *Noa Noa* since the texts which allude to *L'Homme à la hache*, like the work itself, re-utilize elements present in Gauguin's theory and practice before he left for Tahiti. It is these which enable his narrative version of the painting to take the form it does.

They have long since been familiar to art historians. It is well known, for example, that the pose of the male figure was not (only) directly observed but was taken, in reverse, from a figure on the west frieze of the Parthenon and that the flowing lines of the leaves in the foreground recall Japanese prints.[33] These and other borrowings were convenient for the painter but they also ensured

that his painting brought together different visual and philosophical traditions at that stage of his stay in Tahiti when he saw himself as in transit between Western and Polynesian cultures. The serpentine leaves are a case in point. Gauguin describes them as elements of an Oriental hieroglyph but they are a fusion of Buddhist, Oceanic, and Christian themes. As he himself hints, they are serpents, scurrying away from the felled tree. That this was his intention is clear from the lines which Morice wrote on the painting:

> Éblouis du plein jour la foule ténébreuse
> Des démons accroupis dans la carcasse creuse!
> Ils jetteront sur toi des cris horribles: ris,
> Car un Dieu est dans ta main droite, de leurs cris! (p. 101)

Snakes had been present in Gauguin's painting before Tahiti and always in their customary role as angels of darkness.[34] *L'homme à la hache* shows a Maori legend according to which evil spirits which lived in trees were blinded by the sun when the tree was felled. As the man with the axe fells the evil spirits, so the painter overcomes the vestiges of his European education. His spiritual rebirth is confirmed in the wood-cutting episode with Jotefa.

The nakedness and less differentiated sexuality of Polynesian civilization, the relationship between human and natural forms, the positive moral value of this relationship inform the work's figurative elements. The male figure has nipples and vestigial breasts and his facial features are softened to resemble those of a young girl. His pose and gesture reproduce the immobility, the statuary solidity which he shares with Polynesian nature. He is, in Morice's words, 'la Forêt elle-même, la Forêt vivante, sans sexe' (p. 86). He manifests 'toute cette splendeur végétale dont nous étions investis' (p. 86). The female figure bends forward, her arms resembling the front legs of an animal and branches falling behind her an animal's tail. In the paragraph immediately preceding Gauguin's description of the painting, he compared a diseased coconut-palm to a huge parrot 'laissant tomber sa queue dorée' (1893, p. 21). The branches at the top of the painting reproduce the shape of the woman's breasts. Gauguin's interest in the conjunction of the sexes and its relationship to the forms of the natural world is, therefore, quite different from the vogue for androgynity which, in Paris during this period, Péladan was relentlessly promoting.[35] In Gauguin's case, biographical factors such as his strong sense of affinity with his grandmother, Flora Tristan, and his mother, and antagonism with his wife over male/female roles were assimilated within his broader attack on the decadence of European culture.[36]

* * *

Proof of Jarry's acquaintance with Gauguin is contained in a letter to Alfred Vallette: 'je suis parti en touriste pour la Bretagne, avec Pont-Aven pour

centre. J'y suis (hôtel Gloanec) avec Gauguin, retenu par son accident'.[37] The painter had broken his ankle in a brawl with a group of sailors and was passing the time of his enforced rest by working on his manuscript of *Noa Noa*. We cannot be sure when Jarry first discovered Gauguin's work but it may have been as much as two years earlier, through his friendship with Sérusier and Filiger, two of the painter's pupils at Pont-Aven. In June 1893, six months before Gauguin's return to France, Jarry had published a prose poem, 'L'Incube', derived from *Manao tupapau*, one of the works sent on ahead to prepare the Parisian public for the November exhibition.[38] For *Les Minutes de sable mémorial*, he wrote poems based on three of the paintings he had seen there, *L'Homme à la hache*, *Ia Orana Maria*, and *Manoa tupapau*, but retained only the first for publication.[39] His work on the collection therefore coincides with his discovery of the painter's Tahiti production. The preface, 'Linteau', is dated 11 August 1894, six weeks after his stay with Gauguin in the Hôtel Gloanec.

However strange the association of Gauguin and Jarry may appear, they had in common a love of Brittany's desolate landscapes, strewn with calvaries, and of primitive mythologies with their themes of sexuality and death and their remoteness from late nineteenth-century Parisian experience. Gauguin's commitment to the mysterious language of colour and forms corresponded to Jarry's own to the power of poetic language. These affinities inform the sonnet derived from Gauguin's painting:

L'Homme à la hache
D'après et pour P. Gauguin.

A l'horizon, par les brouillards,
Les tintamarres des hasards,
Vagues, nous armons nos démons
Dans l'entre-deux sournois des monts.

Au rivage que nous fermons
Dome un géant sur les limons.
Nous rampons à ses pieds, lézards.
Lui, sur son char tel un César

Ou sur un piédestal de marbre,
Taille une barque en un tronc d'arbre,
Pour debout dessus nous poursuivre

Jusqu'à la fin verte des lieues.
Du rivage ses bras de cuivre
Lèvent au ciel la hache bleue. (p. 210)

As Jarry's dedication tells us, the poem is derived from and written for Gauguin. The painter is its source and destination. As far as the source is concerned, Jarry's aim is not commentary but improvisation subjected to the constraints of the French sonnet form. He adopts the painting because its

subject and formal originality relate it to themes and problems on which he was working in his theatre and which he now explores within a quite different generic system. Fidelity to Gauguin's painting is, therefore, not relevant to Jarry's objectives. Superficial resemblences are sufficient to link the painting and what it represents in Gauguin's vision to Jarry's demonstration of the laws of pataphysics of which Ubu and the Antichrist are the principal characters. The first quatrain refers (l. 4) to the stretch of water between the breakers and the shore where in the painting a boat is passing. The second introduces the male figure (l. 6) and the serpentine forms at his feet (l. 7). The first tercet describes the object of his activity (l. 10), the second its moment (ll. 13–14). The description of him as 'sur son char tel un César' (l. 8) suggests that Jarry knew about Gauguin's source in the Parthenon frieze. Similarly, in *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll*, when the doctor and his faithful Bosse-de-Nage visit the 'fragrant isle' (Tahiti), its king (Gauguin) is described as 'drapé en outre de ciel et de verdure comme la course en char d'un César, et roux comme sur un piédestal' (p. 683). In the painting, the flat decorative effect of the green of the land and the blue of the sea above the male figure's shoulders create the effect of the gladiatorial mantle appropriate to the Greek source. These visual references are the framework for Jarry's exploration of his own literary interests.

'Il n'y a que la lettre qui soit littérature'.[40] Jarry's well-known formula is enacted in the painting's title for 'homme' begins with a silent /h/ and 'hache' with the letter with which it is homophonous. In *Faustroll*, Ibicrate explained to Mathetès that H in pataphysical science is the linguistic representation of the union of opposites, the geometrical symbol of the marriage between Eastern and Western culture which Gauguin had achieved in his painting and of the union of the sexes which was its subject:

> Les poètes grecs, ô Mathetès, encorbellèrent le front d'Eros d'une bandelette horizontale, qui est la bande ou fasce du blason et le signe *Moins* des hommes qui étudient en la mathématique. Et Eros étant fils d'Aphrodite, ses armes héréditaires furent ostentatrices de la femme. Et contradictoirement l'Egypte érigea ses stèles et obélisques perpendiculaires à l'horizon crucifère et se distinguant par le signe *Plus*, qui est mâle. La juxtaposition des deux signes, du binaire et du ternaire, donne la figure de la lettre H, qui est Chronos, père du Temps ou de la Vie, et ainsi comprennent les hommes . . . Et de la dispute du signe Plus et du signe Moins, le R.P. Ubu, de la C^ie^ de Jésus, ancien roi de Pologne, a fait un grand livre qui a pour titre *César-Antéchrist*, où se trouve la seule démonstration pratique, par l'engin mécanique dit *bâton à physique*, de l'identité des contraires. (pp. 729–30)

This pataphysical geometry and the cosmology it informs projects 'L'Homme à la hache' and the volume to which it belongs into the orbit of *Faustroll*, *César-Antéchrist* and the *Ubu* cycle. This intertextuality operates within *Les Minutes* and beyond them. In a section entitled 'Tapisseries', we read (p. 203):

Les limaces, cendre d'un âtre
Pétri de boue et de limons,
Ont levé leurs fronts de démons
Vers la triomphante marâtre.

La Princesse reste debout
Comme un arbre où la sève bout, . . .

and in the 'Repaire des Géants', the following poem of the same section, there are six giants 'sur des piédestaux de marbres' (p. 203). In an earlier section entitled 'Guignol', we see Ubu carrying his conscience in a suitcase and accompanied by his faithful Palotins, while a later section, 'Les Prolégomènes de César-Antéchrist', consists of two chapters, 'Prose (Saint Pierre parle)' and 'Ubu parle'. The main focus of interest in 'L'Homme à la hache' is, therefore, the relationship between three distinct sources of meaning: Gauguin's painting, Jarry's explicit intertextuality and the autonomous sound patterns created by his use of the French sonnet form.

The promotion of the sonnet's aural structure to a status equal to and independant of that of its intertextual function is immediately obvous in its rhyme scheme. Jarry abandons the traditional arrangement (*abba abba ccd ede* or *ccd eed*) by using only masculine rhymes in the quatrains and only feminine rhymes in the tercets. In the tercets he adopts a conventional rhyme sequence, but the octet contains four flat rhymes in the ab/ba sequence traditionally found in each quatrain. In this way, the vowels at the rhyme position in the quatrains receive unusual emphasis which is reinforced by strong internal rhyming. The /aʀ/ of the first rhyme reappears internally in lines 1–3, the /ɔ̃/ of the second rhyme is the first stressed vowel of the poem (/lɔʀizɔ̃/) and appears at the caesura of line 3. Repeated use of nasal vowels and of the /a/, /ʀ/ and /d/ sounds reinforces the dominant phonetic organization which rhyme always creates in the French sonnet. The first quatrain is not based on any element of Gauguin's painting. It is more a case of Rimbaud's 'Bateau ivre' ('les tintamarres des hasards') coming aground on the shore of Jarry's theatre of the absurd sign.

Referring in a later article to 'l'acte héraldique' of *César-Antéchrist*, Jarry outlined his theory of theatrical décor: 'Nous avons essayé des décors *héraldiques*, c'est-à-dire désignant d'une teinte unie et uniforme toute une scène ou un acte, les personnages passant harmoniques sur ce champ de blason' (p. 407). Play and poem were contemporaneous. The 'acte héraldique' was published in the *Mercure de France* in March 1895, less than a year after the completion of the 'acte prologal' which opens *César-Antéchrist* and which appeared for the first time in August 1894 as part of *Les Minutes*. The first quatrain can, therefore, be read as an heraldic décor to the events described in the poem and the whole poem puts to verse elements of 'l'acte héraldique'. So, the verb 'armons' (l. 3) also means to provide with a coat of arms and 'tintamarres' connotes phonetically 'teinte amarre/à mar/mer' and heraldic azur.[41] 'A

l'horizon' refers to Fascia, the horizontal line of the male herald with the feminine name who in the 'acte héraldique' announces the Antichrist and to the minus sign which the male figure's upright position (l. 9) will convert into the plus sign and pataphysical H. The demons (l. 3) and lizards (l. 7) are the beasts of the heraldic world who in the 'acte héraldique' lay the Antichrist on his side in preparation for his metamorphosis into the spherical Ubu. In the play, these forms are assumed by the 'bâton à physique', blazon of the Antichrist and appendage of Ubu. This is a horizontal bar which divides the escutcheon in two but also rotates within it. By occupying alternately horizontal and vertical positions, it reconciles plus and minus while its rotations reconcile linear and spherical forms.[42] In the poem, the giant is either 'sur son char' (l. 8) or 'sur un piédestal de marbre (l. 9), either in motion or motionless. As we have seen, in *Faustroll*, the king of the island is described as 'roux comme sur un piédestal' (p. 683). The adjective denotes the colour referred to in the poem by 'bras de cuivre' (l. 13) but is also homophonous with 'roue', Ubu's spherical shape. In the poem, the homophony and the spherical form which it evokes are present at one remove in the phonetic enjambement between second quatrain and first tercet (sezaʀ/*u*). The giant is carving a boat in order to pursue the heraldic demons 'jusqu'à la fin verte des lieues'. In the play, the arrival of the new God, that is, Ubu, 'chasse les bêtes du monde héraldique' (p. 288).

In Jarry's poem, therefore, pataphysical cosmology encounters a theory of poetic language in which sound structures meaning: 'Les allitérations, les rimes, les assonances et les rythmes révèlent des parentés profondes entre les mots. Où, dans plusieurs mots, il y a une même syllabe, il y a un point commun.'[43] We have already seen how the rhyme scheme of the quatrains is designed to maximize this generation of meaning by patterns of sound. Its impact is not confined to the quatrains since the /aʀ/ element of the first masculine rhyme reoccurs in the /aʀbʀ/ sequence of the first feminine rhyme of the tercets. The second feminine rhyme contains the same post-vocalic /ʀ/ as 'marbre' and 'arbre'. All of these rhymes are themselves rich but they are also reinforced internally, 'César' by 'char' in line 8, 'arbre' by 'barque' in line 10 and 'bras' of line 13, while 'pied' of line 7 and 'tel' of line 8 are echoed in 'piédestal' of line 9 and 'taille' of line 10 to create a network of sound binding quatrains and tercets together across the strophic divide traditionally created in the French sonnet at the end of line 8. The use of 'sur' in lines 6, 8, and 9, reinforced by the vowel of 'une' (l. 10) and 'dessus' (l. 11), has the same effect. Similarly, the consonant and semi-consonant of 'lieues' in line 12 provide the internal rhyme 'ciel' of line 14, whose final /l/ occurs no less than four times in the last line of the poem. In line 10, Jarry rearranges elements of external and internal rhymes (/baʀ/, /aʀb/) to create a sort of phonetic mirror effect. In line 11, the whole line is based on this symmetry of sound for here the phonetic

sequence contained in the first half reoccurs in the second after turning on the central axis of 'dessus' (/puʀ dəbu dəsu nu puʀsɥivʀ/).

The poetic theory at work in this poem is outlined in the foreword which Jarry wrote for *Les Minutes* and which he entitled 'Linteau': 'Suggérer au lieu de dire, faire dans la route des phrases un carrefour de tous les mots' (p. 171). The reference to Mallarmé is obvious enough but in poems such as 'L'Homme à la hache', Jarry has taken further than Mallarmé the practice of surrendering the initiative to words alone. For Jarry, they form intersections, each one opening paths perpendicular to its own horizontal, creating a network of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships. This multiplication of meaning characterizes bad literature as well as good. In the former, it generates obscurity and confusion, in the latter, a concentrated simplicity:

> Mais voici le critère pour distinguer cette obscurité, chaos facile, de l'Autre, simplicité condensée, diamant du charbon, œuvre unique faite de toutes les œuvres possibles offertes à tous les yeux encerclant le phare argus de la périphérie de notre crâne sphérique: en celle-ci, *le rapport de la phrase verbale à tout sens qu'on y puisse trouver est constant*; en celle-là, indéfiniment varié. (p. 172, Jarry's emphasis)

In a footnote to 'simplicité', Jarry recognized the relevance of Gauguin's synthetism to his own theory: 'La simplicité n'a pas besoin d'être simple, mais du complexe resserré et synthétisé (cf. *Pataph.*)' (p. 172).[44] Mallarmé's theory of the 'double état de la parole' and Gauguin's belief in the mysterious sources of a simple language of visual forms come together in Jarry's poem to create a text in which meaning is simultaneously given and removed in a verbal play in which all meanings are equally valid, directed and deferred. The language refers to an objective source in Gauguin's painting, itself a landscape of the artist's complex relationship to Tahiti and his own being, but at the same time is an autonomous, self-generating verbal form, a contest without conclusion between referential and non-referential signs.

The strophic and rhyme system of the French sonnet form predisposes it to the 'complexe resserré' of Jarry's poetic theory in *Les Minutes*. The syntactic and rhythmic minimalism of 'L'Homme à la hache' is a verbal equivalent of the formal and narrative simplicity of Gauguin's painting. In both the transparency of meaning is deceptive, undermined by the place the work has in the context of those chronologically and/or thematically related to it. The similarities between the procedures of Gauguin and Jarry end there. Gauguin's aim was to abstract pictorial form sufficiently to attain the decorative effect of the primitive mural. In this way, an everyday scene would narrate the renewed contact between the artist and distant, pre-capitalist forms of culture and social organization in which he had his sources and his sense of himself. The Symbolist milieu could sympathize with the ambition but make nothing of the means. Jarry on the other hand took Symbolist practice to lengths which undermined it. The ambiguity and the musicality of his poetic language led to

no descent within the self, no correspondence between the sensible and the ideal but to a self-contained play of signifiers which symbolized nothing the Symbolists would have recognized. As the Templar, in 'l'acte héraldique' said: 'le signe seul existe . . . provisoire' (p. 292). As a result, the Symbolist milieu was as unprepared for the poem as it was for the painting. 'La meule des *Minutes* est étrangement perfectionnée, et même trop, chantent des murmures', commented the tolerant but baffled Rémy de Gourmont.[45]

* * *

Jarry's homage to Gauguin in *Les Minutes* did nothing for the painter's reputation in literary circles. Little more than a year after the close of his Paris exhibition he was off again, this time never to return. Before leaving he attended, on 16 January 1895, another of the banquets of which the Parisian art world was so fond and since this study began with a banquet, it is appropriate that it should end with one. This one, however, was not held in honour of Gauguin. To begin with, there were nearly 600 guests and by January 1895, a homage to him would have attracted no more than a fraction of that number. It was held to honour the seventieth birthday of Puvis de Chavannes. The size of the public and the diversity of its artistic and political commitments show on one level the extent to which Puvis had achieved around his name the reconciliation to which, according to Wyzéwa, Mauclair, and others, the age aspired and, by implication, the extent to which Gauguin had failed to do so. More important, however, is what this achievement means. The Puvis banquet signalled the end of Symbolism's initial phase. It marked an important stage in the public assimilation of the Symbolist effort within the broader continuity of French nineteenth-century art history. Everyone was there, academic, Impressionist, Neo-Impressionist, and Symbolist painters alike, Gervex and Monet, Roll and Signac, Brunetière and Mirbeau, Zola and Mallarmé, Jules Lemaître and Sully-Prudhomme. And M. Leygues, 'ministre de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts', representing the government, spoke of the obligation to salute 'avec respect et reconnaissance ceux qui, comme Puvis de Chavannes, ont porté haut le nom de la France et ont fait la patrie plus glorieuse et plus grande'.[46]

At the invitation of the Symbolist *La Plume*, ninety-seven poets and critics, including the great and not-so-great of the Symbolist movement, each wrote a homage to the painter. As an anthology of the literary production of the 1890s and, in particular, of attitudes to painting within the literary Symbolist movement, the album in which these texts were collected would be difficult to equal. H. Rebell summarized the relevance of Puvis's art to Symbolist aspirations:

Puvis de Chavannes, c'est le Paradis entrevu aux soirs d'été, le jardin aux fraîches fontaines, la pensée devant une mer tranquille, une Beauté nouvelle et qu'on sent fille, par la grâce et la noblesse, de la Beauté antique.[47]

The subdued colours, the still composition, the restrained poses, the rhythmic outlines confirmed trends towards the decorative in ways that painters as diverse as Pissarro and Gauguin, Degas and Seurat would find of use.[48] For the poets, the same images were clear but unconfined, profound but accessible. They were modern but they reasserted the value of the tradition of which they were part. They were the compromise between order and adventure which, behind the rhetoric of avant-gardism, was one of the Symbolist movement's deepest aspirations. Among the texts published in *La Plume*, only Mallarmé's sonnet ignores these themes. In what J.-P. Richard has rightly called the most optimistic of his homage poems,[49] Mallarmé returns to the theme prominent in his defence of Manet, that of the artist reunited with his public:

Hommage

Toute Aurore même gourde
A crisper un poing obscur
Contre des clairons d'azur
Embouchés par cette sourde

A le pâtre avec la gourde
Joint au bâton frappant dur
Le long de son pas futur
Tant que la source ample sourde

Par avance ainsi tu vis
O solitaire Puvis
De Chavannes

jamais seul

De conduire le temps boire
A la nymphe sans linceul
Que lui découvre ta gloire

(p. 426)

The quatrains outline a distinctive Puvis landscape and figure but the 'nymph without shroud' of the second tercet seems, given this poem's theme, to be a more precise allusion to the nude figure of *L'Espérance*, painted in 1872 in response to the traumatic events which France had just experienced (Pl. 12B).[50] In painting and poem, hope survives death (the ruins of the battlefield in the painting, the bugles and funeral shroud in the poem) and contains the promise of a new dawn, 'même gourde' in the poem and 'si frêle' according to the painting's first public.[51] In painting and poem, the theme is developed allegorically. By 1895, the painting was not generally included among Puvis's most important works. Mallarmé's allusion to it appears therefore all the more

deliberate. It may be that its theme and the historical context of the early 1870s which gave rise to it took the poet back twenty years to the lesson of Manet's art. The metaphor of the shepherd leading his flock to the stream was appropriate to the strong religious connotations present in Puvis's work but it also reaffirmed Mallarmé's own belief in the reunion of artist and public which great art promoted and which that of Manet had in 1876 exemplified.

In terms of French sonnet theory at the end of the the nineteenth century, Mallarmé's homage to Puvis brings together traditional and modern elements. It is traditional in the way in which the poem's theme is developed. Each stanza marks a distinct phase in this development and its most significant stage coincides with the passage from quatrains to tercets. In the quatrains Mallarmé evokes the painter's visual world, in the tercets he addresses him directly. The first quatrain contains the subject and related clauses, the second the object and related clauses. The verb itself is placed at the head of the second quatrain to maximize this grammatical symmetry. The enjambement of 'Toute Aurore . . ./A le pâtre . . .' binds together the two quatrains within the wider framework of the octet. The first tercet names the painter and defines his relationship to his time, the second describes his obligation and his honour. Thematic and syntactic organization of this sort is characteristic of the traditional sonnet. But as a poem on a pictorial theme, an example of that sub-genre known as 'transposition d'art' poems, this sonnet is also involved in theories of the spatial legibility of verse which in the course of the nineteenth century increasingly interested poets, particularly writers of sonnets.[52] This is most obvious in the way Mallarmé fractures line 11, detaching the poem's key thematic element, 'jamais seul', from the rest of the line without at the same time preventing the reader's perception of the line as the eleventh of a sonnet, with all that this implied in the fixed form's generic system. It is the sort of interaction between spatial, temporal and generic legibility which *Un Coup de dés* will, a few years later, take much further.

Another familiar element of sonnet tradition prominent in this poem is the use of grammatical and visual symmetries and oppositions to reinforce those at work between the meanings of the words placed at the rhyme. The first quatrain forms an equivalent in verse of the circular shape of the bugle for 'cette sourde' at the rhyme of line 4 refers back to 'Toute Aurore' at the head of line 1. The phonetic relationships between the three syllables which culminate in the masculine rhyme of the second quatrain (*ʃʀapɑ̃dy/pafyty*) evoke the repeated tapping of the shepherd's stick. The feminine rhymes are identical in both quatrains but their grammatical features change ('gourde' is a feminine singular adjective in line 1, a noun in line 5, 'sourde' is a feminine singular adjectival noun in line 4, a verb in line 8). The masculine rhymes all have masculine singular forms and are adjectives in form or function. These visual relationships between the rhymes are strengthened by the post-vocalic /ʀ/

present in all eight rhymes in the quatrains. Once again, however, a traditional feature operates within and against a modern one, in this poem the creation of sound patterns to stimulate parallel structures of meaning. It is an example of Mallarmé's belief that words 'comptent également par leur son et pour leur signification d'après tout ce que nous savons sur les origines du langage . . .'.[53] The effect of this promotion of sound patterns is increased by a corresponding paring down of syntax to first principles for, with the exception of line 11 to which we shall return, each line contains a self-contained unit of syntax whose relationship to those which precede and follow is unambiguous. The sound patterns pay tribute to Puvis's promotion of painting's means, the trimmed syntax to the formal simplification for which his art was famous. Together, they reassert that return to the source of art for which Mallarmé had praised Puvis twenty years before in his article on Manet (*DSM*, I, 84).

The promotion of sound pattern as a source of structure parallel to meaning is asserted in the opening line. The first three words all contain a central vowel surrounded by a repeated consonant (*tut*/ɔʀɔʀə/*mɛm*). The result is to heighten the effect of fracture when the sequence is broken in 'gourde' by the harsh /g/ and /d/ surrounding the /u/ and /ʀ/ repeated from 'toute' and 'aurore'. The negative connotations which these consonants introduce are confirmed in lines 2 and 3 by the phonetic inversion of /*k*ʀi*spe*/ and /ɔ*psky*ʀ/, by the sequence of four /k/ and three /p/ sounds in which they participate and by the four nasal vowels whose dark tones oppose the initial brightness of 'Toute Aurore'. The final 'cette sourde' re-utilizes, from 'clairons d'azur', identical (/ɛ/, /d/, /ʀ/) and related (z/s, y/u) elements to add to the effect of derision created by the repeated initial /s/. This is in turn denied by the symmetrically-placed '*s*ource . . . *s*ourde' of line 8).

In the second quatrain, the phonetic content of the initial noun, 'pâtre', combines with a proliferation of nasal vowels to dominate the sound structure. In four lines we find four examples of /p/, five of /t/ and three of /ɑ/. This vowel is reinforced by five examples of /a/ and three of its nasal counterpart. There are seven examples of nasal vowels in the quatrain. In *Les Mots anglais*, Mallarmé had described the /a/ vowel as the flattest in the English vocalic system and his own poetry suggests that he considered this description to be applicable to French too.[54] As such, it was a natural choice as a phonetic equivalent for the flatness of Puvis's decorative style. Placed at the head of lines 2, 5, and 13, it occurs no less than eighteen times in the poem and is reinforced by the three cases of /ɑ/ in lines 5–7. The happy coincidence that it appears twice in 'Chavannes' may well have clinched its extended use in the poem. The positive connotations of the shepherd oppose the negativity of 'gourde', 'obscur', and 'sourde' in the previous quatrain. The nasal vowels, linked to negative elements in the first quatrain, have by the end of the second connected with the theme of hope. Thus, 'ample' completes the sound pattern dominant in the

quatrain and is in turn echoed, at the beginning of the first tercet, by 'avance'. This new key element is then repeated aurally and visually in 'Chavannes' so that theme, sound, and spatial organization step over the sonnet's major strophic boundary between quatrains and tercets to bring together landscape and lesson. The lack of punctuation at the end of line 8 obviously contributes to this effect.

The third line of the first tercet is traditionally a major point of focus for the sonnet's theme as it progresses towards resolution. Here, the enjambement of 'Puvis/De Chavannes' and the detachment of 'jamais seul' make it thematically and visually the most striking line of the poem. Its minimal syntax parallels the stasis inherent in many Puvis images. Enjambement dramatizes the naming of the painter, the break in the line his condition as an artist. In the case of 'jamais seul', semantic content and visual impact go together for the words 'never alone' are alone in their own space and create the powerful 'solitaire . . . jamais seul' opposition. Secondary elements work towards the same end. One small change which Mallarmé made to line 9 is revealing in this respect. He had originally written: 'Par avance tel tu vis'. His fondness for 'tel' is well known but its replacement here by 'ainsi' adds to the impact of 'vis' at the rhyme, creates another nasal vowel and adds a further 's' to the series with which this consonant spills out visually and aurally from its source in 'source' to flood over the tercet ('avance', 'ainsi', 'vis', 'solitaire', 'Puvis', 'Chavannes') to culminate in 'jamais seul'. The paradox 'solitaire . . . jamais seul' was the history of Puvis's reputation and of Mallarmé's too. Both had studied in isolation the meaning of their art form and seen a new generation recognize itself in their work. Both had known rejection followed by consecration.

Line 11, therefore, marks a climax in the poem's development. Disruption of the fixed form's spatial arrangement is followed by a pause and a return in the second tercet to standard typography. This return is appropriate, for the theme of the poet's reunion with his period is expressed in traditional imagery of nymphs and shepherds and with a time-honoured eloquence. The poem culminates in 'gloire', which reinstates the /a/ vowel and the post-vocalic /ʀ/ of the rhymes in the quatrains and which closes the poem's thematic and phonetic organization on an appropriately elevated note.

Mallarmé's homage to Puvis is, therefore, more than a circumstantial poem. It demonstrates formally its theme of the artist and his situation by promoting the potential of the sonnet form for creating aural and visual patterns of meaning just as Puvis, with his commitment to contour, flatness and muted colour, had renewed painting's contact with its decorative sources and their role in emotional life. The lesson in 1895 is unchanged from that twenty years earlier. The art of Puvis is a parallel to that of Manet's Impressionism. In contrast, the other homages published in *La Plume* are typical circumstantial pieces. Morice's sonnet could, like Mallarmé's, just as easily have been

dedicated to one of the Impressionist heroes of literary Symbolism but in Morice's case, the sonnet's formal system is maintained in a secondary, subordinate role and, as such, is entirely inexpressive:

A Puvis de Chavannes

Tu consacres en les signant de ton nom clair,
Maître ingénu, Maître savant, Peintre et Poète,
Les panthéons que ta pensée ordonne en fête,
Doux génie exilé dans ce siècle de fer:

Hors des jours, dans l'espace ouvert comme la mer
Aux seules vastes essors de calme et de tempête
Où l'Infini se rythme et vibre et se reflète
Au vol pur des oiseaux qui nuancent l'éther,

Tout un monde enchanté de grâce et de noblesse,
Tout un monde apparaît sous ta main qui soulève
Le pli lourd dont l'instant opprime l'éternel,

La Foule et le Héros, la Sainte et la Déesse,
Tout un monde divin, tout un monde réel
De la réalité divine de ton rêve.

(p. 58)

Little would be gained by examining in detail this poem's all too predictable imagery and mechanisms. I include it because its predictability makes it so representative and because it supports my earlier comments about the illustrative quality of Morice's poetry in *Noa Noa*. It is another hymn to reconciliation. Puvis's art is 'ingénu' and 'savant', 'divin' and 'réel'. It reconnects instant and eternity in timeless rhythms in which the spectator may find rest from a 'siècle de fer'. As we saw in an earlier chapter, interpretations of Monet were also dominated by these themes. The homages to Puvis by Mallarmé and Morice represent the two poles of the Symbolists' response to Impressionism: the one experimenting with form and language to express new relationships between these elements, memory and sense impressions; the other emasculating the initial Impressionist effort by recourse to an insistent theme of escape to a landscape of the soul which was located outside of history and where one might more easily disguise the refusal to engage with the present. These internal landscapes made Gauguin's Tahiti painting incomprehensible. When, in his poem based on *L'Homme à la hache*, Jarry took the theories of Gauguin and Mallarmé to their limits and drew aside the veil of his short, descriptive notations just enough to release poetic language into the inverted rationality of pataphysics, he was only confirming the prejudices with which Gauguin's art was, by 1893, confronted. Without Aurier to maintain the contact between him and the mainstream avant-garde, Gauguin's cause was lost and his letter of 11 February 1893 to de Monfried shows that he knew it.

CONCLUSION

During the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the relationships between French literature and the visual arts were diverse, eclectic and indiscriminate. To attend exhibitions, publish art criticism and produce work derived from or containing specific pictorial reference and analogy was by then a well-established French literary tradition, with all that this implied in terms of institutional and generic practices and constraints. As far as the Symbolists were concerned, Mallarmé and the young poets and critics grouped around him had direct and frequent access to the painters, dealers, curators and historians whose activity and contacts determined the production and circulation of art. The art history and criticism written by those involved in the Symbolist movement complemented rather than opposed their well-known claim that art was to aspire to the condition of music and helped to ensure that, at the end of the nineteenth century, the visual arts in France continued to be as much read as seen.

It has been possible in the previous pages to give only a very partial account of these relationships. Quite apart from the need for the sort of history of French art criticism to which I referred in Chapter 3, a lot of detailed work needs to be done on a range of questions before it will be possible to assess the contribution made by the French literary Symbolists to the discourse on painting.[1] For example, to what extent did they reinterpret the old masters or redistribute the order of merit in which these masters were classed? Did they significantly extend or alter the use of colour reference in their poetry?[2] Did they write more 'transposition d'art' poetry than their predecessors, was it of a different type and how, if at all, was it related to their new approach to versification? Which changes in pictorial subject-matter and categories of art criticism might be described as specifically Symbolist? To what extent by 1891 did 'literary Impressionism' imply an analogy with painting rather than a well-established literary practice? How important were theatre décor and book illustration to such developments? This sort of detailed work is needed in order to see how the art history and criticism of the literary Symbolists are related to the wider philosophical and cultural issues with which French painting and literature were by this time engaged: new theories of representation, knowledge and creative imagination; changing attitudes to the city, to nature and to the role of the reader and spectator; changes taking place in the public of art and in the institutions through which the relationship between artist and public was conducted.

For a Symbolist poet as for any other writer, engagement with the visual arts may be central or peripheral to his literary production and achievement. Within the same writer it may be one or the other at different stages of his career and least profound when it is most explicit. It is clear that for some poets, visual reference and analogy was by the end of the nineteenth century no more than a conventional way of writing about certain types of subject-matter. When Jean Lorrain wrote his sonnet, 'Devant un Fragonard', he put a painting to words by means of at least five well-defined systems of language (listed not in order of importance): (1) the Fragonard literature in which certain features of the work in question had already been isolated and verbalized in advance of Lorrain's use of them; (2) the review in which the poem appeared (*Le Décadent* of 9 October 1886), with the approaches to painting which this implied; (3) the French sonnet's strophic conventions and rhyme scheme which provided a formal system with which to identify, organize, and narrate selected features of the image (Lorrain's poem is in this sense very conventional; the quatrains sketch in the décor (Q1) and describe the action (Q2), the tercets interrogate and interpret the image); (4) Lorrain's own literary experience and choices (Baudelaire and Verlaine are the two most important); (5) the conventions of 'transposition d'art' poetry with its repertoire of language on pictorial themes (the background in Fragonard's painting is described as 'vaporeux de songe' (l. 2) and its light is emotional rather than visual — 'L'heure est encore plus tendre et douce, que galante' (l. 11)). The sonnet narrates a scene in ways which reaffirm the poet's assumed hegemony over painting.

If Lorrain's poetry and art criticism forms part of what may be called the local colour of Symbolist writing, those of Aurier, Mallarmé, Kahn, and Jarry have raised questions which are more specific and at the same time more far-reaching. Why did Aurier's definition of pictorial Symbolism in March 1891 take the form it did and what did its reception by the Symbolist movement mean? Why was Manet's open-air work so important to Mallarmé in 1875? Why in 1886 did Seurat's Neo-Impressionism seem to Kahn to be a relevant and viable resource in his effort to (be the first to) create 'free verse'? What could there be in common between the work of Jarry and Gauguin? These seem to me to have been the most powerful of the relationships between literature and painting during the period in question in the sense that painting provided these writers with models (or with forms of interrogation) which were relevant to their own situation in nineteenth-century French poetry and that these models (or forms of interrogation) in turn intervened in significant developments taking place in poetry.

They also represent a reversal in the relationship between literature and the visual arts in France, a relationship in which for historical reasons the writer had long been considered (or considered himself) the major partner. As the most material of the art forms, painting had always relied for its status as a fine

art on its illustration of texts but in the nineteenth century, the expansion of the art market and of the art press which served this market strengthened the writer's control over the criteria of value which operated in painting. Impressionism challenged his authority in two main ways. Firstly, it rejected the academic hierarchy of subjects which privileged historical, mythological and religious themes of which the written text was both source and guardian. Secondly, it promoted colour, non-discursive and sensual, at the expense of line, narrative and intellectual. The changes initiated by Manet and the Impressionists brought to the surface of the painting contradictions between image and language which the literature of art usually elided or failed to recognize — space versus time, silence versus discourse, surface versus depth. picture plane versus window on the world. The Symbolists were the first to have to come to terms with this situation but their idealist philosophies had more in common with the teaching of the Academy than with Impressionism. Like the students of the École des Beaux-Arts, they knew their *grammaire des arts du dessin*. By reading an idealist dimension into Impressionism's modern, non-academic subject-matter and stress on the materiality of colour, they reconciled the new painting with more traditional criteria of value and in the same process responded to the crisis in art criticism created by its challenge to language. So they described ideal landscapes to which the Impressionist scene gave access or Impressionist symphonies in colour equivalent to those a poem might create and which opened on to the essential unity of a world beyond appearances. Their texts form an idealized narrative of the reception of the new painting, the first stage of its assimilation within the mainstream of modern art history.

Of Impressionism's initial challenge to the institution of painting, Mallarmé's 1876 article on Manet is the clearest and most informed account. He saw the new painting as a crisis in the narrativity of pictorial representation and related this crisis to his own efforts to define the 'double état de la parole' and its implications for poetry. The elections of February–March 1876 appeared to him to give these developments their true dimension. Just as Manet's *Le Linge* defined the painting of the future for 'those newcomers of tomorrow of which each one will consent to be an unknown unit in the mighty numbers of an universal suffrage' (*DSM*, I, 84–85), so Gambetta believed that the Republican victory heralded the emergence of what he had a few years before called 'un nouveau personnel du suffrage universel'.[3] In 1876 it seemed clear to Mallarmé that this new personnel was that of 'a hitherto ignored people' but by 1886 it was also clear that a new *petite bourgeoisie* had emerged from the working class and was changing the conditions in which art was produced and received.[4] In his painting of the Sunday visitors to the Grande Jatte, Seurat portrayed these new relationships by means of new and, as he liked to think, more scientific forms of picture surface and structure. Fénéon and Kahn saw Seurat's formal

experimentation as the equivalent in painting of the *vers libre* but in *Les Palais nomades*, Kahn's free verse was designed to reproduce the rhythms of internalized landscapes of legend, in which history was transcended and the individual re-united with the universal. Aurier had priviliged access to the formal researches of Bernard and Gauguin but what he saw was filtered through what he read in Huysmans, Mallarmé, Blanc, and the German Idealists. His attempt to promote Gauguin's art in the terms of his own literary projects was not accepted by the Symbolist public of 1891, for whom a conjunction of Impressionism and the art of Puvis de Chavannes was a more urgent aesthetic and ideological programme. Gauguin's Polynesian Symbolism was as much rooted in a search for the source of art as was Mallarmé's response to Manet, but the poetry Jarry wrote on the basis of it showed how a Symbolist painter's commitment to ideal and essential forms might lead to the sort of experimentation with the language of poetry which in 1894 was no longer Symbolist. Gauguin painted *L'Homme à la hache* to illustrate the text of his own Romanticized autobiography. In his sonnet of the same name, Jarry re-enacted the problem which Mallarmé had analysed in Manet's work: the new relationship in painting between narration, representation and rehabilitation of pictorial form. He used poetic language and the sonnet's form to deny the narrative role of the image in the very words used to assert it. Mallarmé, Kahn, Aurier and Jarry studied different painting at different moments in French verse and history. They had in common the ambition to relate the rehabilitation of pictorial form to their own practice in literature and pursued this ambition in the context of major changes in society, culture, and epistemology.

Assuming that the importance of this relationship between project and context is accepted, more detailed research into the relationships between literature and the visual arts during the Symbolist period should lead to an art history which is no longer that of modernism as portrayed in the conventional accounts of twentieth-century art's heroic journey from representation to abstraction, nor that of the 'alternative modernisms' about which there was much talk in the early 1970s as it became clear that the explanatory force of the official history was fading.[5] This alternative version was the same story with different characters, and though the rehabilitation of painters whose work had been more or less neglected by the official histories of modern art was long overdue, it would be interesting to study, for 1975 as for 1875, the relationship between the workings of the art market and definitions of the modern. The history of modernity and the critical categories which it involves is part of the history of art, of art criticism and of the literary and social representations of reality from which these histories are derived. Here, the Mallarmé–Manet relationship is, to misquote the poet himself, not the end but certainly the beginning of the question.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

G.-A. AURIER, 'LES ISOLÉS. VINCENT VAN GOGH'

Et voilà que, tout à coup, dès la rentrée dans l'ignoble tohubohu boueux de la rue sale et de la laide vie réelle, éparpillées, chantèrent, malgré moi, ces bribes de vers en ma mémoire:

L'enivrante monotonie
Du métal, du marbre et de l'eau. . . .
Et tout, même la couleur noire,
Semblait fourbi, clair, irisé;
Le liquide enchâssait sa gloire
Dans le rayon cristallisé. . . .
Et des cataractes pesantes
Comme des rideaux de cristal
Se suspendaient, éblouissantes,
A des murailles de métal . . .

Sous des ciels, tantôt taillés dans l'éblouissement des saphirs ou des turquoises, tantôt pétris de je ne sais quels soufres infernaux, chauds, délétères et aveuglants; sous des ciels pareils à des coulées de métaux et de cristaux en fusion, où, parfois, s'étalent, irradiés, de torrides disques solaires; sous l'incessant et formidable ruissellement de toutes les lumières possibles; dans des atmosphères lourdes, flambantes, cuisantes, qui semblent s'exhaler de fantastiques fournaises où se volatiliseraient des ors et des diamants et des gemmes singulières — c'est l'étalement inquiétant, troubleur, d'une étrange nature, à la fois vraiment vraie et quasiment supranaturelle, d'une nature excessive où tout, êtres et choses, ombres et lumières, formes et couleurs, se cabre, se dresse en une volonté rageuse de hurler son essentielle et propre chanson, sur le timbre le plus intense, le plus farouchement suraigu; ce sont des arbres, tordus ainsi que des géants en bataille, proclamant du geste de leurs noueux bras qui menacent et du tragique envolement de leurs vertes crinières, leur puissance indomptable, l'orgueil de leur musculature, leur sève chaude comme du sang, leur éternel défi à l'ouragan, à la foudre, à la nature méchante; ce sont des cyprès dressant leurs cauchemardantes silhouettes de flammes, qui seraient noires; des montagnes arquant des dos de mammouths ou de rhinocéros; des vergers blancs et roses et blonds, comme d'idéaux rêves de vierges; des maisons

accroupies, se contorsionnant passionnément ainsi que des êtres qui jouissent, qui souffrent, qui pensent; des pierres, des terrains, des broussailles, des gazons, des jardins, des rivières qu'on dirait sculptés en d'inconnus minéraux, polis, miroitants, irisés, féeriques; ce sont de flamboyants paysages qui paraissent l'ébullition de multicolores émaux dans quelque diabolique creuset d'alchimiste, des frondaisons qu'on dirait de bronze antique, de cuivre neuf, de verre filé; des parterres de fleurs qui sont moins des fleurs que de richissimes joailleries faites de rubis, d'agates, d'onyx, d'émeraudes, de corindons, de chrysobérils, d'améthistes et de calcédoines; c'est l'universelle et folle et aveuglante coruscation des choses; c'est la matière, c'est la nature tout entière tordue frénétiquement, paroxysée, montée aux combles de l'exacerbation; c'est la forme devenant le cauchemar, la couleur devenant flammes, laves et pierreries, la lumière se faisant incendie, la vie, fièvre chaude. . . .

Mercure de France, 1 (January 1890), 24–29 (pp. 24–25).

APPENDIX B
G.-A. AURIER, 'LE SYMBOLISME EN PEINTURE: PAUL GAUGUIN'

Loin, très loin, sur une fabuleuse colline, dont le sol apparaît de vermillon rutilant, c'est la lutte biblique de Jacob avec l'Ange.

Tandis que ces deux géants de légende, que l'éloignement transforme en pygmées, combattent leur formidable combat, des femmes regardent, intéressées et naïves, ne comprenant point trop, sans doute, ce qui se passe là-bas, sur cette fabuleuse colline empourprée. Ce sont des paysannes. Et à l'envergure de leurs coiffes blanches éployées commes des ailes de goëland, et aux typiques bigarrures de leurs fichus, et aux formes de leurs robes et de leurs caracos, on les devine originaires de la Bretagne. Elles ont les attitudes respectueuses et les faces écarquillées des créatures simples écoutant d'extraordinaires contes un peu fantastiques affirmés par quelque bouche incontestable et révérée. On les dirait dans une église, tant silencieuse est leur attention, tant recueilli, tant agenouillé, tant dévot est leur maintien; on les dirait dans une église et qu'une vague odeur d'encens et de prière volette parmi les ailes blanches de leurs coiffes et qu'une voix respectée de vieux prêtre plane sur leurs têtes . . . Oui, sans doute, dans une église, dans quelque pauvre église de quelque pauvre petit bourg breton . . . Mais alors où sont les piliers moisis et verdis? où les murs laiteux avec l'infime chemin de croix chromolithographique? où la chaire de sapin? où le vieux curé qui prêche et dont l'on entend, certes, dont l'on entend la voix marmonnante? Où tout cela? Et pourquoi, là-bas, loin, très loin, le

surgissement de cette colline fabuleuse, dont le sol apparaît de rutilant vermillon?. . . .

Ah! c'est que les piliers moisis et verdis et les murs laiteux et le petit chemin de croix chromolithographique et la chaire de sapin et le vieux curé qui prêche se sont, depuis bien des minutes, anéantis, n'existent plus pour les yeux et pour les âmes des bonnes paysannes bretonnes! . . . Quel accent merveilleusement touchant, quelle lumineuse hypotypose, étrangement appropriés aux frustes oreilles de son balourd auditoire, a recontrés ce Bossuet de village qui ânonne? Toutes les ambiantes matérialités se sont dissipées en vapeurs, ont disparu; lui-même, l'évocateur, s'est effacé, et c'est maintenant sa Voix, sa pauvre vieille pitoyable Voix bredouillante, qui est devenue visible, impérieusement visible, et c'est sa Voix que contemplent, avec cette attention naïve et dévote, ces paysannes à coiffe blanche, et c'est sa Voix, cette vision villageoisement fantastique, surgie, là-bas, loin, très loin, sa Voix, cette colline fabuleuse, dont le sol est couleur de vermillon, ce pays de rêve enfantin, où les deux géants bibliques, transformés en pygmées par l'éloignement, combattent leur dur et formidable combat! . . . .

Mercure de France, 2 (March 1891), 155–65 (pp. 155–56).

APPENDIX C

A. GERMAIN, 'LE DÉSESPOIR DE LA CHIMÈRE'

Pour Alexandre Séon.

Languide, tabide, dolente, elle se lamente la Chimère délaissée.

Au fond d'une anse gardée par des rocs menaçants, — crénelure de quelque mont sous les flots englouti, — seule, sur son pic abrupt, elle brame, belle autant que Niobé dans sa désespérance. Elle voit s'amoindrir un peu plus chaque jour le chœur de ses adorateurs. De rares, très rares dévots, en ses trépieds brûlent encore un oliban pieux, seuls, ils tentent encore d'escalader son antre, seuls, pour Elle ils s'abnégatisent. L'écho jadis lui répétait les hosannas d'un peuple de fidèles. Où êtes-vous, fidèles, où êtes-vous? Mais où est Galaor, mais où est Amadis? Enthousiasmes d'antan! hélas! sans lendemains! à leur ramentevoir ses yeux pleurent des perles. Elle brame. L'écho ne redit que sa plainte.

Languide, tabide, dolente, elle se lamente la Chimère délaissée.

Et à sa douleur prend part la matière, et la nature même en est affectée, ces blocs étranges de feldspath alvéolant des améthystes, il semble qu'un sanglot les ait tuméfiés. Et mélancolisant ce décor déjà triste, un ciel qui n'est plus fluorine et n'est pas encore hyalin, ciel d'arrière-saison propre à la dysthimie, et

un soleil, oh! ce soleil, — tel un cierge qui meurt, — dans une mer déjà dormante, mirant son déclin, ce soleil. Déjà l'ombreuse nuit paraît qui chape l'âme de terreur, et son cortège de silences versant du feu sur les souffrances. Oh! combien seule alors! combien seule en sa solitude, — pas même le vol d'un oiseau! — Combien seule en sa solitude. Et songeant au demain pareil, . . .

languide, tabide, dolente, elle se lamente la Chimère délaissée.

Elle pleure . . .

Sur la passion des fils de l'Idéalité, — lis crûs parmi les ronces, — livrés pour l'amour d'elle aux outrages du sens commun. Affolés du Mystère, amoureux des Étoiles fanatiques de l'Absolu, et vous qui courtisez Maïa, conquistadors des glorieux mirages, et vous qui madrigalisez les Fleurs, et vous qui travaillez au bonheur des humains! Elle pleure sur vous exilés ici-bas où tout est pour vous meurtrir, vous inermes, vous expiant . . . Oh! quelles fautes passionnelles commises en des vies antérieures? Elle pleure, car sont profanés les rêves sur fond or et le chevaleresque. Elle pleure, car sont proscrits l'embarquement pour l'Irréel et le culte de l'Inutile. Quel Icare à présent fendrait les airs pour Elle! Et deux fois égoïste, car femme et car félin,

languide, tabide, dolente, elle se lamente la Chimère délaissée.

Elle pleure, . . .

le féal pactise avec le mécréant, une jeunesse sénescente se distrait à briser les ailes de l'Idéal. Elle pleure, car Calibran-roi ne souffre point qu'on se dévoue pour les Absurdités sublimes ni qu'on s'évade des laideurs. Condamné à la reptation, il jalouse qui ascensionne et, dans sa fange empouacrée, il défend qu'on soupire après l'Inattingible.

Elle pleure . . . le vent du scepticisme a soufflé en tempête et voilà presque aphylle l'arbre des saintes Illusions, et le gel du prosaïsme menace de tuer sa sève. Elle pleure . . . les muses bafouées, les auréoles piétinées, la Beauté traitée comme femelle, les autels de l'amour renversés par le rut. Elle pleure . . . sur l'*esprit* nouveau, ses attraits sont sans séduction, idole démodée, souveraine sans trône, objet de risée désormais. Et tandis que ses sujets briguent la faveur d'indignes rivales dont les Temples sont Bourse et Turf,

languide, tabide, dolente, elle se lamente, la Chimère delaissée.

La Plume, 2 (1 June 1892), 244.

NOTES

The place of publication is Paris unless otherwise stated.

FOREWORD

1. P. Valéry, 'Situation de Baudelaire', in *Œuvres*, edited by J. Hytier, 2 vols (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1957–60), I, 600.
2. R. Wellek, 'What is Symbolism?', in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of the European Languages*, edited by A. Balakian (Budapest, 1982), pp. 17–28 (p. 28). This volume also contains important articles on Symbolist art by D. Ashton, L. Forestier, L. Németh, and E. Roditi.
3. For the history of what has become known as the Pont-Aven school of painting, see W. Jaworska, *Gauguin et l'école de Pont-Aven* (Neuchâtel, 1971).
4. On the Nabis, see G. L. Mauner, *The Nabis: Their History and their Art, 1888–1896* (New York and London, 1978).
5. For a concise but informative history of the problems of defining Symbolism in painting, see S. Hirsch's editorial statement on 'Symbolist Art and Literature', *Art Journal*, 45 (Summer 1985), 95–97 and, in the same issue, R. Heller, 'Concerning Symbolism and the Structure of Surface', pp. 146–53. The standard history of the Salons de la Rose + Croix is R. Pincus-Witten's *Occult Symbolism in France. Joséphin Péladan and the Salons de la Rose+Croix* (New York and London, 1976).
6. To give a few examples from the best-known histories of Symbolism, A. Barre, in *Le Symbolisme. Essai historique sur le mouvement poétique en France de 1885 à 1900* (1912), gave two pages out of 414 to 'la réaction idéaliste en peinture' (pp. 8–10) by which he meant Puvis de Chavannes not Gauguin. G. Michaud, in his monumental *Message poétique du symbolisme* (1947), maintained this ratio with four pages out of 820 (pp. 391–94). P. Martino, in *Parnasse et symbolisme*, eighth edition (1950), refers in passing to the Impressionists and Puvis (p. 142) but omits Aurier, Gauguin and the Nabis. H. Peyre, in *Qu'est-ce que le symbolisme?* (1974) devotes a chapter to 'le symbolisme, la peinture et la musique', in itself a sign of change, but his one reference to connections between literature and painting does not go far. Of Gauguin, he tells us that, 'comme certains des symbolistes en littérature, il avait recherché l'Unité derrière le multiple et tenté des formes synthétiques' (p. 183).
7. Roger Fry, Clive Bell, and Clement Greenberg were the leading authorities of modernism, the formalist theory of modern art in which 'significant form', the 'self-referential autonomy' of the picture-surface and 'plastic harmony' became the criteria of value. In this ahistorical art historiography, Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh were the heroic triumvirate responsible for leading painters away from a concern with subject-matter towards the celebration of the picture surface that 'culminated' in abstraction. One result was that for over fifty years, there was little place in this history for Puvis, Redon, Moreau, or the lesser-known Symbolists of the Rose + Croix group. For a recent analysis of this modernist tradition of art history, see V. Burgin, *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (London, 1986).
8. The first full-length study of Aurier's art criticism, by P. T. Mathews, *Aurier's Symbolist Art Criticism and Theory* (Ann Arbor, 1986), appeared after I had revised Chapters 2 to 3 in which I analyse his role. My main disagreements are: (1) Mathews seems to me to overstate the coherence and significance of Aurier's aesthetic and critical system. This was still developing when he died (at the age of only 27), and his simultaneous attack on Impressionism and praise of Monet, Renoir, and Pissarro underline its ambiguities; (2) to underestimate the importance of the connections between Aurier's theories and the teaching of the Academy; (3) to see Aurier's art criticism only as the practical application of his system (and in only one chapter), not as an aspect of his literary practice nor in its immediate, local context. I have added specific examples of these disagreements to relevant footnotes in Chapters 1 to 3. Despite them, this is an important study containing previously unpublished material from the Aurier archives.

9. Impetus for this revision was provided by the 1969 exhibition in Turin and Toronto, *The Sacred and Profane in Symbolist Art* in which Symbolism was presented as a broad anti-Naturalist front involving writers and painters. The model was adopted in many other exhibitions of the 1970s and 80s.
10. This is the case in, for example, P. Jullian, *Esthètes et magiciens. L'art fin de siècle* (1969), J. Milner, *Symbolists and Decadents* (London, 1971), E. Lucie-Smith, *Symbolist Art* (London, 1972), and R. L. Delevoy, *Le Symbolisme* (Geneva, 1977).
11. Rookmaaker's text re-appeared with a new title, *Gauguin and 19th-Century Art Theory*.
12. Elements of this work had appeared well before then, most notably his 'Symbolic Form, Symbolic Content', in *The Reaction against Impressionism in the 1880s: its Nature and Causes* (Princeton, 1963).
13. Part 1 of Schiff's book is an expanded version of his essay, 'The End of Impressionism: A Study in Theories of Artistic Expression', *Art Quarterly*, 1 (Autumn 1978), 338–78.
14. The major Manet retrospective held in 1983 in Paris and New York gave new impetus to research on the painter. Its catalogue is indispensable. Those of related exhibitions, *Bonjour Monsieur Manet* (Centre Georges Pompidou, June–October 1983), *Manet at Work* (London, The National Gallery, August–October 1983) and *The Hidden Face of Manet* (London, The Courtauld Institute Galleries, April–June 1986) also contain essential information on Manet's procedures. Undoubtedly the single most important publication on the painter since 1983 is T. J. Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London, 1985). See also the Spring 1985 issue of the *Art Journal*, which is devoted to Manet.
15. My revision of the chapter on Mallarmé was completed before the publication of P. Florence's *Mallarmé, Manet and Redon: Visual and Aural Signs and The Generation of Meaning* (Cambridge, 1986). My review of this important book whose approach is quite different from my own is forthcoming in the *Modern Language Review*.
16. Two of the most effective recent examples of these approaches are S. Z. Levine, *Monet and His Critics* (New York and London 1976) and J. U. Halperin, *Félix Fénéon and the Language of Art Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1980).

CHAPTER 1

1. *Mercure de France*, 2 (May 1891), 318.
2. G.-A. Aurier, 'Le Symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, 2 (March 1891), 155–65.
3. C. Morice, *Demain. Questions d'esthétique* (1888), p. 26.
4. The sale, held on 23 February in the Hôtel Drouot in Paris, raised over 9,000 francs. For full details see J. Rewald, *Post-Impressionism from Van Gogh to Gauguin*, second edition (New York, 1962), pp. 474–76.
5. S. Merrill, 'Souvenirs sur le symbolisme', *La Plume*, 17 (1 February 1904), 107.
6. C. Chassé, *Gauguin et son temps* (1955), p. 126.
7. Chassé, p. 125. Of this incident, C. Boyle-Turner may well be right in suggesting that Sérusier was 'merely placating the less esoteric Gaugin or trying to avoid an argument after many hours of debate and beer-drinking' (*Paul Sérusier*, Ann Arbor, 1983, p. 45).
8. F. Fénéon, 'Gauguin. Dujardin', *Le Chat noir* (23 May 1891), p. 1752. A few months later, he repeated the charge: 'Aujourd'hui les peintres naissants donnent dans l'aventure de Gauguin. C'est l'impressionnisme à tendances littéraires qui les séduit' ('Quelques peintres idéistes', *Le Chat noir* (19 September 1891), p. 1820). The two reviews are contained in F. Fénéon, *Œuvres plus que complètes*, edited by J. U. Halperin (Paris and Geneva, 1970) I, 192–93 and 200–02 respectively. All subsequent references to Fénéon's writings are to this edition.
9. The history of Gauguin's quarrels with the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists is well documented. See Rewald, pp. 41–42.
10. Gauguin reached Mirbeau by two different routes. The first was via Mallarmé, contacted through Morice (cf. Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, edited by H. Mondor and L. J. Austin, vol. IV, 1 (1973), 176, 183, 197, and 201); the second via Pissarro (cf. B. Thomson, 'Camille Pissarro and Symbolism: Some Thoughts Prompted by the Recent Discovery of an Annotated Article', *The Burlington Magazine*, 124 (January 1982), 14–23). I shall return to the impact of the Mirbeau article in Chapter 2.
11. 'Notes inédites d'Émile Bernard sur le symbolisme', in *Émile Bernard, 1868–1941, peintures, dessins, gravures* (Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, April–June 1967). pp. 7–8.
12. Aurier, perhaps encouraged by Gauguin, omitted to mention Bernard in his article in the *Mercure de France*. Bernard spent the rest of his life trying to stake his own claim to

leadership of pictorial Symbolism. See his 'Lettre ouverte à M. Camille Mauclair', *Mercure de France*, 14 (June 1895), 332–39; 'Notes sur l'école dite de "Pont-Aven"', *Mercure de France*, 48 (December 1903), 675–82 and *Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste peintre Paul Gauguin et ses compagnons, lors de leur séjour à Pont-Aven et au Pouldu* (Lorient, 1941).

13. See Rewald, p. 194; W. Jaworska, *Gauguin et l'école de Pont-Aven*, p. 14; B. Welsh-Ovcharov, *Vincent Van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 19–41.
14. E. Dujardin, 'Aux XX et aux Indépendants: Le cloisonnisme', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (March 1888), 487–92 (p. 489).
15. See Rewald, p. 185; Welsh-Ovcharov, pp. 38–39; M. Roskill, *Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle* (London, 1970), pp. 236–45; M. Bodelsen, *Gauguin's Ceramics* (London, 1964), pp. 165–96. See also the catalogues of the following exhibitions: *Gauguin and the Pont-Aven Group* (London, Arts Council, 1966); *Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European Painting* (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1979–80) and *Le Chemin de Gauguin: genèse et rayonnement* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée Départemental du Prieuré, 1985–86).
16. See *Correspondance de Paul Gauguin*, edited by V. Merlhès, 3 vols (1984–), I, 230 (henceforth *Correspondance*). Only the first volume has appeared to date.
17. M. Herbin III (*The Art Bulletin*, 59 (September 1977), 415–20) suggested that the painting records a service at the Chapel of St Nicodemus in Saint Nicolas-des-Eaux on the fourth and fifth of August 1888 which he thinks Gauguin saw. For Jirat-Wasiutynski's refutal of this idea and Herbin's reply, see *The Art Bulletin*, 60 (June 1978), 397–98.

    Since the late 1960s, various intellectual contexts to the *Vision* have also been proposed, but often without explaining in a precise way the relationship between context and what the painting shows. D. H. Fraser, in *Gauguin's 'Vision after the Sermon'* (London, 1969) overstates in my view the impact of esoteric ideas on the painter. W. Andersen, in *Gauguin's Paradise Lost* (London, 1972), sees it as 'a vehicle to illustrate Gauguin's active male-passive female polarity' (p. 61); V. Jirat-Wasiutynski, in *Paul Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (New York and London, 1978) relates an effective study of the work's form to 'Gauguin's adoption of Bernard's ideas about working from memory', which he sees as its 'major new departure' (p. 92). M. A. Cheetham, in 'Mystical Memories: Gauguin's Neoplatonism and "Abstraction" in Late-Nineteenth-Century Painting', (*Art Journal*, 46, 1 (Spring 1987), 15–21) seems to me to repeat Fraser's error in seeing this view of memory as part of a thorough-going Neoplatonism in Gauguin but his analysis concerns the *Auto-portrait 'Les Misérables'* rather than the *Vision*. None of the above-mentioned interpret as I do the arrangement of the female figures in terms of the presentation in a single image of the different stages of the vision.

    It is interesting in this respect to read Gustave Kahn's review of the Puvis de Chavannes exhibition held in the Durand-Ruel galleries from 20 November to 20 December 1887. Of *Femmes au bord de la mer*, he wrote: 'Et n'y peut-on voir, en ces trois femmes toutes trois semblables et néanmoins d'attitudes diverses, la même femme sous trois aspects physiques . . . la même à trois moments, à trois actes de sa vie . . . Et cet art de la peinture qui expose ainsi pour perpétuellement ces trois instants du même être par ce fait qu'à toute minute on le reverra ainsi donner l'idée que cette minute est éternelle' (*La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1888), 144). Gauguin was in Paris from mid-November 1887 to the end of January 1888. Given his admiration for Puvis and his contacts with and designs on the literary avant-garde, there is at least a strong possibility that he saw the exhibition and read Kahn's review of it.
18. In a letter to Schuffenecker of 14 August announcing among other things Bernard's arrival in Pont-Aven, Gauguin wrote: 'L'art est une abstraction; tirez-la de la nature en rêvant devant et pensez plus à la création qu'au résultat c'est le seul moyen de monter vers Dieu en faisant comme notre divin maître créer . . . Allons bon courage que Dieu vous prenne en sa sainte garde en couronnant /sic/ dans vos efforts' (*Correspondance*, I, 210–11). The religious tone clearly took Schuffenecker by surprise. He must have commented on it for in a letter of 16 October, Gauguin typically scoffed at his own earlier attitude: 'Que me parlez-vous de mon mysticisme *terrible*. Soyez impressionniste jusqu'au bout et ne vous effrayez de rien' (p. 255, Gauguin's emphasis).
19. Delacroix chose it for his 1861 mural in the Chapelle des Anges in the Saint-Sulpice church in Paris. Bonnat's *Jacob et l'Ange* was shown in the Salon of 1876. It is now in the Bonnat Museum in Bayonne. Moreau's *Jacob et l'Ange* of 1878 is now in the Fogg Art Museum, Havard University.
20. With reference to Moreau's choice of the subject, J. Kaplan wrote: 'The subject was rare before Delacroix's use of it in his St Sulpice mural in 1861, but from then on no Parisian artist could ignore it' (*The Art of Gustave Moreau: Theory, Style and Content* (Ann Arbor, 1982),

pp. 69–70). It is not known whether Gauguin knew Moreau's version before painting his own. Certainly it set a precedent for Gauguin's transfer of the subject from the narrative to the symbolic level but in every other respect the two paintings are quite different. Moreau's version was on show in the Universal Exhibition of 1889 and may, therefore, have been an element in the negative critical response to Gauguin's painting. Jirat-Wasiutynski suggests (p. 220) that certain features of Gauguin's *Jeunes Lutteurs*, also of 1888, were derived from Delacroix's Saint-Sulpice composition.

21. Baudelaire, 'Peintres murales d'Eugène Delacroix à Saint-Sulpice' in *Œuvres complètes*, edited by C. Pichois, 2 vols (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1976), II, 729–31.
22. *Correspondance*, I, 230–32.
23. Merlhès's edition of Gauguin's letters has the advantage of reconstituting this four-way correspondence in so far as it relates to Gauguin himself.
24. Fraser on the other hand argues (p. 23) that it is the girl in the foreground who is experiencing the vision. He does so on the basis of a thematics of the closed eye. While this theme undoubtedly plays an important part in the work, it is odd that Fraser should ignore the role of the woman positioned in front of her and who alone has her eye open. Here, the closed eye represents interiority, the open eye the vision which follows it. On the theme of the closed eye in other Gauguin works of the same period, see Cheetham, pp. 16–17.
25. *Correspondance*, I, 88.
26. See A. Mercier, *Les Sources ésotériques et occultes de la poésie symboliste (1870–1914). I. Le Symbolisme français* (1969).
27. Andersen (p. 61) explains the opposition in phallic terms. The wings of the angel are described as 'erect'.
28. Fraser (p. 23) is alone in having drawn attention to the role of these sightless 'eyes', though, as I said above (note 24) with reference to the girl in the foreground, without appreciating their place in the painting's presentation of the vision's stages.
29. Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, II, 729.
30. 'Notes synthétiques', *Vers et prose*, 22 (July–September 1910), 51–52.
31. See Fraser, p. 28 and Jirat-Wasiutynski, p. 90.
32. *Correspondance*, I, 210.
33. F. Orton and G. Pollock, 'Les Données bretonnantes: la prairie de représentation', *Art History*, 3 (1980), 314–44 (p. 334) and T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, pp. 261–67.
34. See Jirat-Wasiutynski, p. 214.
35. *Correspondance*, I, 209.
36. *Correspondance*, I, 248–49.
37. *Correspondance*, I, 198.
38. *Correspondance*, I, 201. (Gauguin's emphasis)
39. L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 3 vols (1955), II, 1, 151–52. Quoted in *Correspondance*, I, 501.
40. *Œuvres complètes*, II, 730.
41. *Œuvres complètes*, II, 729.
42. E. Bernard, 'Confidences', *La Vie*, 43 (14 December 1912), 219–21 (p. 221). Again, however, Bernard's statements must be treated with caution. On the importance of Madeleine Bernard for Gauguin, see Jirat-Wasiutynski, pp. 141–54.
43. Fraser, p. 23. Jirat-Wasiutynski, in his chapter on Gauguin's 'imagery of women' (pp. 128–207), does not consider those of the *Vision*, nor, when discussing Madeleine Bernard, the presence of the young girl in the painting.
44. *Correspondance*, I, 256.
45. Gauguin's comments in the same letter: 'Évidemment cette voie symbolique est pleine d'écueils . . .' and 'Je sais bien que l'on me comprendra de *moins en moins* . . .' (his emphasis) give us an idea of what Schuffenecker must have said in his letter.
46. In the letter of 8 October, Gauguin told Schuffenecker that he was sending the *Vision* to Theo Van Gogh. On 27 October, he wrote to Theo: 'Je compte que vous serez content des tableaux de Pont-Aven, le plus important viendra avec Bernard' (p. 266). Bernard left for Paris about 10 November. The phrase, 'le plus important', is of course ambiguous.
47. *Correspondance*, I, 280. Cf. also: 'Gauguin est très heureux de ce que tu aimes son envoi de Bretagne et que d'autres qui l'ont vu l'ont aimé aussi.' (Letter from Vincent to Theo Van Gogh, *c.* 5 November 1888, p. 271).
48. *Correspondance*, I, 274 (letter of 9–12 November, Gauguin's emphasis).
49. For Gauguin's refusal, see *Correspondance*, I, 295.
50. Gauguin told Schuffenecker that the invitation would enable him to organize 'une exposition sérieuse en opposition avec le petit point' (*Correspondance*, I, 290).
51. O. Maus, 'Le Salon des XX à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 419 (2 March 1889).

52. I first suggested this in the original version of my thesis as I was puzzled by the fact that no art historian had given an explanation of the painting's absence from the Volponi exhibition. Since then, B. Welch-Ovcharov (*Vincent Van Gogh*, p. 43) has made the same suggestion. As I have said above (note 20), the most important single factor in Gauguin's decision may have been the presence a few hundred yards away, in the Universal Exhibition, of Moreau's version of the same subject. Comparisons between the two paintings would not have helped Gauguin's cause. In November 1888, when he sent Theo Van Gogh two works from Arles to exhibit alongside others in the firm's offices, he told him: 'Si elles devaient effrayer l'amateur ne craignez pas de les mettre de côté . . .' (*Correspondance*, I, 288). In *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism*, R. Schiff asserts (p. 6) without giving supporting evidence that the *Vision* was shown at the Volponi exhibition.
53. *Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis*, edited by M. Malingue (1946), pp. 152–53 (Gauguin's emphasis; hereafter Malingue). The editor's dating of this letter, 'Arles, décembre 1888', is certainly incorrect.
54. J. Antoine, 'Impressionnistes et synthétistes', *Art et critique*, 24 (9 November 1889), 369.
55. 'Quel idiotisme que cet article! Du reste la bêtise a cela de bon qu'elle ne froisse pas'. See *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Émile Bernard, 1888–91* (Geneva, 1954), p. 106.
56. F. Fénéon, 'Autre Groupe impressionniste', *La Cravache*, 437 (6 July 1889) in *Œuvres plus que complètes*, I, 157–58.
57. 'Fénéon a bien écrit que j'imitais *Anquetin* que je ne connais pas' (Gauguin to Bernard in *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 106, Gauguin's emphasis).
58. Malingue, p. 161. See in this respect J. Rewald, 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 81 (January–February 1973), 1–108 (p. 48).
59. *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 83.
60. *Le Faucon noir*, 4 (10 May 1885), 3–4.
61. 'A Mallarmé', *Le Décadent*, 3 (24 April 1886). Aurier sent a copy of the poem to Mallarmé. P. T. Mathews, in *Aurier's Symbolist Art Criticism and Theory*, wrongly states (p. 147, note 7) that Mallarmé's letter of 20 December 1889 referred to this poem. See Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, III, 373.
62. 'L'Opération', *Le Décadent*, 7 (22 May 1886). The poem was presumably inspired, if that is the word, by the description of Des Esseintes's visit to the dentist in *A Rebours*.
63. 'La Poitrinaire', *Le Décadent*, 34 (27 November 1886).
64. *Le Décadent*, 10 (12 June 1886).
65. By way of example, lines 2–5: 'J'ai longtemps, longtemps aimé (stupide folie)/Les belles fillettes fraîches, les belles fil/Lettes fraîches très jeunes et très roses dont/Les chairs fermes et dures comme du marbre sont/ . . .'
66. A. d'Escorailles (Aurier), 'Sensationnisme', *Le Décadent*, 32 (13 November 1886). Mathews (p. 10) does not recognize the significance of the reference to Kahn (and, through him, to Moréas) and therefore interprets Aurier's statement as a decadent critique of Naturalism rather than as an early sign of his move away from the Decadents towards the Symbolists. See also M. Decaudin, 'Albert Aurier: De l'esprit décadent à l'esprit symboliste', *Bulletin de la Société Toulousaine d'Études Classiques*, 136 (February–March 1962), 1–4.
67. Moréas's article, 'Le Symbolisme, un manifeste littéraire', appeared in the literary supplement of *Le Figaro* on 18 September, Kahn's reply in *L'Événement* ten days later.
68. S. Rusic, 'Biographie d'Albert Aurier', *Dossiers acénonètes du Collège de Pataphysique*, 15 (1961), 50. For additional information on Aurier's own practice of painting and watercolour, see Mathews, p. 11.
69. L.-P. de Brinn'Gaubast, 'Exposition des artistes indépendants', *Le Décadent*, 24 (18 September 1886).
70. M. d'Escaurailles (Aurier), 'Le Salon de 1888', *Le Décadent*, 11 (15–31 May 1888), 9–14; 12 (1–15 June 1888), 8–12.
71. Aurier gave the following account of how the review came to be written: 'Mon cher collabo, la Revue est en danger! Vous seul pouvez la sauver. Il est midi. Le Salon ne ferme qu'à cinq heures. Vous avez donc au moins 300 minutes pour examiner, analyser, comparer, juger . . . les 5523 objets, prétendus d'art, exhibés cette année, aux halles des Champs-Elysées. Envoyez votre copie aujourd'hui même, avant minuit' (I, 10). Making allowance for Aurier's tone, this sort of scenario must have been enacted many times in the Symbolist journals and any history of their art criticism would have to bear it in mind. Matthews does not discuss this article.
72. See Welsh-Ovcharov, pp. 53–54 and Mathews, p. 10.
73. Aurier, 'J-F. Henner', 2 (13 April), 10 and 3 (20 April 1889), 18; 'Salon de 1889', 8 (25 May), 63; 'Concurrence', 10 (27 June), 74; 'Revanche', 14 (27 July), 106–07; 'Chronique d'art', 18

(24 August), 138–39; Luc le Flâneur, 'En Quête de choses d'art', 2 (13 April), 14 and 7 (18 May), 55; Gauguin, 'Notes sur l'art à l'Exposition Universelle', 11 (4 July), 84–86 and 12 (13 July) 90; 'Qui trompe-t-on ici?', 22 (21 September), 170–71; Bernard, 'Au Palais des Beaux-Arts', 14 (27 July), 108–10. Aurier also published an important study of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam ('Chronique', 19 (31 August), 146–47) and extracts of his own prose and verse.

74. 'Ah! oui, c'est le *St. Sébastien* d'Henner . . . Alors passons. Ah! oui, *Portrait de femme* par Henner. Nous l'avons déjà vu votre portrait de femme, M. Henner — seulement, vous avez dû le retoucher, car il est plus mauvais que les autres années! Fuyons!' ('Le Salon de 1888', I, 12). Unlike previous historians, Mathews, in *Aurier's Symbolist Art Criticism and Theory*, recognizes the importance of the article on Henner as an initial statement of his theory of Symbolist painting, but she can only explain his defence of Henner in 1889 as a 'lapse in judgement', a 'blunder . . . on a par with Baudelaire's championing the illustrator Constantin Guys', to be 'excused on the basis of Aurier's youth and inexperience at the time . . .' (p. 119). Yet she also admits that whatever his 'inexperience' in 1889, Aurier still had a good word for Henner as late as July 1892, fifteen months after the article on Gauguin. She does not consider the possibility that tactical considerations and/or potentially conservative elements in his theory may have entered into his assessment.
75. On Henner, see J. Crespelle, *Les Maîtres de la Belle Epoque* (1966), pp. 102–08.
76. The Octave Maus archives in Brussels contain a letter to Maus from Theo Van Gogh (Musée d'Art Moderne, Fonds XX, Inv. 5226). Dated 22 March 1889, it says of Gauguin's work shown in Brussels: 'Les tableaux adressés à M. Petit sont arrivés en bon ordre.'
77. 'Salon de 1889', *La Pléiade* (1889), pp. 57–63 and 'La Peinture à l'Exposition', pp. 102–04. The second is the same article as that published in *Le Moderniste* under the title 'Chronique d'art' (24 August 1889). Mathews summarizes some of what Aurier says in these articles (p. 104) but without analysing what his version of recent art history implies.
78. See A. Boime, 'The Teaching Reforms of 1863 and the Origins of Modernism in France', *Art Quarterly*, 1 (1977), 1–39.
79. 'Vente Secrétan', *Le Moderniste*, 12 (13 July 1889), 91–92.
80. See *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 110 for the first letter and Malingue, p. 164 for the second. The 'cher Monsieur' of Gauguin's letter to Aurier suggests that at this stage their relationship is still being conducted via Bernard rather than directly.
81. Malingue, p. 168 and *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 88. His increasing irritation at Aurier's failure to reply to his notes is clear from what he wrote to Schuffenecker on 16 November: 'Si vous voyez Bernard, dites-lui que je voudrais: 1° Qu'il *demande à Aurier* du *Moderniste* ce qu'est devenu un long article que j'ai fait . . .' (Malingue, p. 177, Gauguin's emphasis). He returned to the same theme in a letter a few weeks later to Bernard (*Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 91) and in December tried another letter to Aurier (Malingue, p. 180).
82. *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 101 (Gauguin's emphasis).
83. *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 110.
84. *Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 133.
85. *Mercure de France*, 1 (January 1890), 24–29. In the posthumous edition of Aurier's complete works edited in 1893 by Rémy de Gourmont, 'Les Isolés' formed the sixth section of the third book, *Les Affranchis*, and included, in addition to the Van Gogh article, studies of Henry de Groux, Carrière and Henner.
86. In 1889, Aurier published his long poem, *L'Œuvre maudit*, dedicated to Caravaggio. Its theme is that of the artist as outcast.
87. On Aurier's analysis of Van Gogh, see Mathews, pp. 121–23, her article, 'Aurier and Van Gogh: Criticism and Response', *The Art Bulletin*, 68 (March 1986), 94–104 and C. M. Zemel, *The Formation of a Legend: Van Gogh Criticism, 1890–1920* (Ann Arbor, 1980), pp. 62–68. Strangely, Mathews does not seem to be aware of Zemel's work.
88. For the text of this opening section, see Appendix A.
89. *Mercure de France*, 3 (October 1891), 225.
90. *Œuvres complètes*, 18 vols (1928–34), VII, 80–90.
91. For a discussion of these features in Fénéon's criticism, see J. U. Halperin, *Félix Fénéon and the Language of Art Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1980), pp. 125–48. Mathews refers in her article to 'several literary techniques with which the Symbolists were experimenting at the time' (p. 97) but gives as an example only an 'incantatory rhythmic repetition' through which Aurier hoped to achieve 'a hypnotic effect'. She relates the poetic description of Van Gogh's art not to Huysmans on Moreau (obvious nevertheless in the references to the 'jewellery' of Van Gogh's art, for Moreau was widely referred to as the 'jeweller' in art criticism of the period) but to Aurier's (and the Symbolists') interest in alchemy. This interest is certainly relevant here and reinforces the more precise literary connections between Aurier's text and commentaries on Moreau by Huysmans, Lorrain and others of the decadent movement (of

which I say more in Chapter 5). Both Mathews and Zemel effectively relate Aurier's interpretation of Van Gogh's work to his wider Symbolist definitions of art and the artist.

92. Zola, *Mon Salon* (1866) in *Œuvres complètes*, edited by H. Mitterand, 16 vols (1969), XII, 810.
93. See Zemel, p. 62 and Mathews, p. 12 and note 38, pp. 149–50.
94. Van Gogh's reply was published in Aurier's *Œuvres posthumes* (pp. 265–68).
95. See Zemel, p. 66 and Mathews, 'Aurier and Van Gogh', pp. 102–04.
96. In his letter to Aurier (*Œuvres posthumes*, p. 267), Van Gogh spoke of an 'admiration sans bornes aucunes' for Meissonier.
97. 'Camille Pissaro' [sic], *La Revue indépendante*, 14 (March 1890), 503–15. I shall return in Chapter 2 to the implications of Aurier's admiration for Pissarro for his own theory of Symbolist art.
98. When Bernard wrote to Aurier to remind him of his promise to write an article on Gauguin, he remarked: '. . . si vous pouvez publier cela pour le *prochain Mercure* ce sera à point ou mieux encore à la *Revue Indépendante* qui est un organe d'art plus connu' (Malingue, p. 330, Bernard's emphasis).
99. For the history of Gauguin's relations with Pissarro, see B. Thomson, 'Camille Pissarro and Symbolism', pp. 14–15. Relevant here is one typically graceful remark of September 1890: 'Sale Pissarro! Mais quand nous serons à Tahiti, je me fous de Pissarro et consorts' (*Lettres . . . à Émile Bernard*, p. 132).
100. *La Revue indépendante*, 15 (June 1890), 324–29.
101. On Meissonier's creation of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, see Rewald, *Post-Impressionism*, p. 462.
102. *Mercure de France*, 1 (September 1890), 324–29 (p. 327). Raffaelli defended his work against Aurier's criticisms in an unpublished letter to him. See Mathews, pp. 109–10. She argues that Aurier's very qualified praise of Raffaelli is consistent with his theory of pictorial Symbolism on the grounds that his work 'has the qualities of subjectivity and symbolism (on the level of expressing his temperament through his works)' (p. 110). But these qualities are not specifically Symbolist at all, as Mathews recognizes when she says that that Rafaëlli is 'consciously aligned with the Naturalists and even the Positivists' (p. 109). It is one example of the way in which Aurier adapts his theory when he is interested in an art practice to which it is unsuited. We shall see other examples in Chapter 2.
103. See Malingue, p. 330 and Mathews, pp. 149–50, note 38.
104. Malingue, pp. 330–31.
105. For the complete list, see J. Rewald, 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', (p. 49).
106. For the text of this opening section, see Appendix B.
107. While preparing his article, Aurier may have read Maurice Denis's description of Rodin's *Saint Jean-Baptiste prêchant* as 'l'apparition de la Voix qui marche', published in August 1890 in his article 'Définition du néo-traditionnisme', seen at the time as the programme of the Nabis. See his *Théories (1890–1910): du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (1912), pp. 1–13 (p. 12). Mathews refers to Aurier's poetic preface to his article as 'hypnotic suggestion and incantation' (p. 123).
108. See note 1 above.
109. Aurier died of typhoid on 5 October 1892, aged only 27.

CHAPTER TWO

1. The label was invented by Roger Fry: 'Oh, let's just call them post-impressionists; at any rate, they came after the impressionists' (quoted by A. Bowness in his introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition *Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European Painting*, London, Royal Academy of Arts 1979–80, p. 9). Though it is now widely recognized that the term 'Post-Impressionism', as a description of a pictorial style, corresponds to no historical reality, art historians still seem resigned to having to use it as though it did. The introduction by Bowness is a case in point.
2. See above, p. 3 and note 10. Quotations are from the text of the sale catalogue. Mirbeau's article was followed by Jules Huret's interview of Gauguin which appeared in the *Echo de Paris* on the very morning of the sale in the Hôtel Drouot.
3. His Republican father died at sea in 1852, on the way to exile. His grandmother was the feminist and socialist Flora Tristan. In Mirbeau's imagination, this became: 'Gauguin eut donc, dès le berceau, l'exemple de ces deux forces morales où se forment et se trempent les esprits supérieurs: la lutte et le rêve' (pp. 4–5).

4. Mallarmé, *Correspondance*, IV, 1, 177. In the interview with Huret, Gauguin projected the same image. Significantly, the journalist closed the interview by quoting an unidentified 'amateur connu': 'Voyez-vous, ces tableaux-là? Eh bien, dans vingt ans, ça vaudra vingt mille francs comme un sou!'
5. See Jirat-Wasiutynski, *Paul Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism*, pp. 361–62.
6. In a letter to his son, Pissarro wrote: 'Nous nous débattons contre des hommes de génie effroyablement ambitieux et ne désirant qu'écraser tout ce qui se trouve sur leur passage. C'est écœurant. Si tu savais avec quelle platitude Gauguin a agi pour se faire élire (c'est le mot) homme de génie, et cela fort adroitement!' (C. Pissarro, *Lettres à son fils Lucien*, edited by J. Rewald (1950), p. 246).
7. Aurier, 'Le Symbolisme en peinture', p. 160.
8. Charles Blanc's important *Grammaire des arts décoratifs* had been published in 1882. Mathews states that Aurier's five-point definition 'emphasizes the universal at the expense of the subjective nature of the artwork' (p. 64) for 'he refers only to the objective Idea rather than to the synthesis of subjective and objective Ideas so important to the creative process' (p. 175, note 27). She argues that this omission is remedied in other writings by Aurier and that, from these, a coherent theory of a four-stage creative process can be deduced. My point is that the omission has implications for the way in which Aurier's definition was received and that these are more important than the question of his theory's formal coherence or lack of it.
9. M. Denis, 'L'Influence de Paul Gauguin', *L'Occident* (October 1903) in *Théories*, p. 168.
10. 'L'Époque du symbolisme', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (March 1934), p. 178.
11. 'De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme', *L'Occident* (May 1909) in *Théories*, p. 267, note 2. Mathews, however, states that 'Maurice Denis . . . relied heavily on Aurier's ideas' (p. 140). Her translation of 'raffinée' as 'polished' (p. 192, note 31) confirms that she misinterpreted the tone of Denis's remark.
12. 'L'Époque du symbolisme', p. 176.
13. For Aurier, Gauguin was one of the first to claim for the artist the right to 'se préoccuper du spirituel et de l'intangible.' ('Les Symbolistes', *La Revue encyclopédique*, 1 (1 April 1892), 482. A longer version of the text, entitled 'Les Peintres symbolistes', appeared in Aurier's *Œuvres posthumes*, pp. 293–309.
14. M. Denis, *Théories*, p. 1.
15. 'Préface de la IXe exposition des peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes', in *Théories*, p. 26.
16. P. L. Maud (pseud. M. Denis), 'Notes d'art et d'esthétique', *La Revue blanche*, 2 (June 1892), 364–65.
17. On the history of the Rose+Croix salons see R. Pincus-Witten, *Occult Symbolism in France*.
18. In 'L'Époque du symbolisme', Denis explicitly made this connection: 'Les écrivains, de leur côté, comme Charles Morice ou Albert Aurier, accentuaient le point de vue mystico-littéraire . . . L'élément fragile du symbolisme fut celui que le symbolisme littéraire affichait indiscrètement, l'abus des métaphores bizarres, des poncifs moyenâgeux, de l'obscurité, toute le clinquant pseudo-mystique cher aux poètes, cher à la Rose+Croix . . .' (pp. 176–78).
19. 'A propos de l'exposition d'A. Séguin, chez le barc de Boutteville', *La Plume*, 6 (March 1895), 118. L. Dumur's 'paraphrase' of Aurier is the sort of thing Denis must have had in mind: 'Tout objet fût-ce le plus infime . . . peut être considéré de deux façons: en tant que chose réelle, ayant sa valeur en soi, ou en tant que représentation d'une pensée . . . n'ayant de valeur que comme image, comme symbole, comme signe' ('G.-Albert Aurier et l'évolution idéaliste', *Mercure de France*, 8 (August 1893), 292).
20. 'Armand Séguin', *Mercure de France*, 13 (February 1895), 222–24 (p. 222, Gauguin's emphasis).
21. Quoted by M. Denis in 'De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme' in *Théories*, p. 268.
22. *Paul Gauguin* (1920), p. 178.
23. 'Cézanne', *L'Occident* (September 1907) in *Théories*, p. 260. Of Aurier's definition of 'symboliste', Rookmaaker remarked that 'strictly speaking, the art theory proper that he bases on Plotinus, is not the foundation of this thought. For he does not say how it is that lines and colours can represent the idea' (*Gauguin and 19th-Century Art Theory*, pp. 166–67). The contradiction is only apparent since in Aurier's theory, lines and colours had an ideal content accessible to the true artist, form and content were linked in what Mathews calls a 'symbiotic relationship' (p. 64). But Rookmaaker's remark is appropriate to the way in which Aurier's article on Gauguin was read by many literary Symbolists, untrained for the most part in the 'universal grammar of colour and line'. The temptation was to look for symbolism in the content alone, as Denis realized.

Rookmaaker, though he describes Aurier's statement as one of the 'definitive formulations' of pictorial Symbolism, accounts for the definition of 'synthétique' as follows: 'It is as if Aurier suddenly realizes that he has not yet used this term which was so often employed by Gauguin and his fellow-artists in particular, and therefore Aurier just jots it down here. His short digression probably means that this art speaks clearly and is not esoterically strange and only intelligible to the initiated' (p. 159). It seems odd to suggest that a 'short digression' just 'jotted down' could have the status which Rookmaaker wishes to give it. His description of this 'digression' is the opposite of what a Symbolist would expect of art. Goldwater noted the same problem and asked why painters wishing to 'simplifier dans le sens de rendre intelligible' 'should have had any contact at all with poets who were following the opposite course' (*Symbolism*, p. 72). Aurier's definitions gave rise to just this sort of confusion within the Symbolist milieu.

24. *Correspondance*, I, 210 and 249.
25. In 'L'Époque du symbolisme', Denis spoke of the Rose+Croix group 'dont nous ne fréquentions les manifestations qu'avec méfiance' (p. 178).
26. *Lettres à son fils*, pp. 233–34. The copy of Aurier's article sent to Lucien Pissarro is now in the Ashmolean Museum.
27. *Lettres à son fils*, p. 245. On this distinction between 'émotivité' and 'sensation', see Mathews, 'Aurier and Van Gogh', p. 94, note 3.
28. *Lettres à son fils*, p. 234.
29. Letter first published by B. Thomson in 'Camille Pissarro and Symbolism', p. 19. What Pissarro thought of his son's explanation is not recorded but it cannot have diminished his belief that Aurier's distinctions between realist and ideist art were spurious. Mathews tries to defend them with the aid of Aurier's own terminology but with unconvincing results: 'Camille Pissarro is perhaps the greatest of the "chercheurs". He is finally even admitted into the ranks of the "trouveurs", because, in the face of critical disdain and incomprehension, he dared to change' (p. 113).

    The attack on Aurier is also clear in Mirbeau's article on Pissarro in *Le Figaro* of 1 February 1892: 'Oh! je le sais. On a dit de M. Camille Pissarro, comme de M. Claude Monet, qu'ils ne rendaient que les aspects sommaires de la nature et que cela n'était vraiment pas suffisant. Le reproche est plaisant, qui s'adresse aux hommes lesquels précisément ont poussé plus loin la recherche de l'expression, non seulement dans le domaine du visible, mais dans le domaine impalpable, ce que n'avait fait, avant eux, aucun artiste européen.' For Mirbeau, Pissarro's art was the 'synthèse des expressions plastiques et des expressions intellectuelles, c'est-à-dire, la forme la plus haute et la plus parfaite de l'œuvre d'art' (*Des Artistes*, I, 151–52).
30. 'Sur un tableau refusé: Théorie du symbolisme des teintes', *La Plume* 2 (15 May 1891), 171–72.
31. 'Albert Besnard et le symbolisme concret', *La Revue indepéndante*, 21 (October 1891), 7–30.
32. 'Théorie des déformateurs: exposé et réfutation', *La Plume*, 2 (1 September 1891), 289–90.
33. 'Sur un tableau refusé', p. 171.
34. On Blanc, see M. Song, 'Art Theories of Charles Blanc' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1981). Blanc's *Grammaire des arts du dessin* had appeared in 1867 and been republished five times by 1887. Its section on painting appeared as a separate volume in 1886. Its impact on Seurat is well-known and is examined in Song, pp. 129–48, W. I. Homer, *Seurat and the Science of Painting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 29–36 and R. Herbert's chapter, 'Seurat's Theories' in *The Neo-Impressionists*, edited by J. Sutter (London, 1970), pp. 23–42. Song is alone in referring to its impact on the Symbolist milieu (pp. 102–13) but she limits her comments to Denis's *Théories* and does not refer to the art criticism of Symbolist writers. Séon and, as we shall see, Aurier show that this impact was important.
35. 'Sur un tableau refusé", p. 171.
36. 'Théorie des déformateurs', p. 290.
37. 'Le Désespoir de la Chimère', *La Plume*, 3 (1 June 1892), 244.
38. The painting was exhibit n°. 322 at the Arts Council exhibition, *French Symbolist Painters*, of 1972.
39. 'Le Symbolisme des teintes', *Moniteur des Arts* (1 April 1892), p. 124.
40. The Moréas banquet of 2 February was followed by Anatole France's articles in *Le Temps* in which he rallied to the Symbolist cause. The Gauguin sale took place the same month while in March, Aurier's article in the *Mercure* was followed by the publication in the *Echo de Paris* of the interviews with Huret for his *Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire*. By the end of April, Symbolism's victory seemed secure.

41. G. and J. Couturat (G. Moreilhon and G. Bonnamour), 'Le Fiasco symboliste', *La Revue indépendante*, 20 (July 1891), 1–28.
42. See S. Z. Levine, *Monet and his Critics*, p. 14.
43. See Levine, particularly chapters 1 and 2.
44. Monet's *La Rue Montorgueil. Fête du 30 juin 1878* is now in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris; *La Rue Saint-Denis. Fête du 30 juin 1878* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen.
45. 'Choses d'art', *Mercure de France*, 14 (June 1895), 359.
46. 'Chronique de peinture', *L'Ermitage*, 2 (15 December 1906), 325.
47. 'Cézanne' in *Théories*, p. 252.
48. *Correspondance*, I, 249 (letter to Schuffenecker, 8 October 1888).
49. 'Choses d'art', *Mercure de France*, 17 (March 1896), 418.
50. In the *Mercure de France* of September 1892, Mauclair wrote: 'les objets sont les caractères hiéroglyphiques où s'inscrit complèxement l'idée pure' ('Notes sur l'idée pure', p. 44), precisely the terms which Aurier used to define Gauguin's painting. On the Academy's Neoplatonism, see E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, third edition (London, 1968), pp. 133–34. Blanc was twice Directeur des Beaux-Arts and a member of the Institut and the Académie Française. On his eclectic fusion of elements of the idealist tradition, see Song, pp. 29–50.
51. 'Claude Monet', *L'Art dans les deux mondes*, 16 (7 March 1891), pp. 183–85.
52. 'Claude Monet', *Le Figaro* (10 March 1889). For the catalogue of the exhibition, Mirbeau almost doubled the length of the original article. See Levine, pp. 98–112.
53. See J.-P. Guillerm, *Tombeau de Léonard de Vinci. Le peintre et ses tableaux dans l'écriture symboliste et décadente* (Lille, 1981).
54. C. Morice, 'Le Symbolisme', *Le Gaulois* (13 February 1891); C. Mauclair, 'L'Exposition Claude Monet', *La Revue indépendante*, 19 (May 1891), 267–69. The most striking example of this new trend in Monet criticism is, however, Aurier himself. In April 1892, the very month in which he published his second article on Symbolist painting, he praised Monet in an article in the *Mercure de France* (4, pp. 302–05). See in this respect Levine, pp. 146–48. Levine also makes the point, very relevant here, that Aurier's reservations about Monet's art were those of the 'academic opponents of Monet from the 1870s' (p. 148).
55. 'La Peinture à l'Exposition', p. 103.
56. 'Le Symbolisme en peinture', p. 158.
57. *Introduction à une esthétique scientifique* (1885), p. 5.
58. See A. Chastel, 'Une Source oubliée de Seurat', *Archives de l'art français* (Mélanges Brière), 22 (1950–57), 400–07. On Humbert de Superville, see also B. M. Stafford, *Symbol and Myth. Humbert de Superville's Essay on Absolute Signs in Art* (New Jersey, 1979) and Song, pp. 145–48. In none of these studies is there any reference to Aurier. Mathews refers to Humbert de Superville in passing but only to say that Aurier 'mentions briefly psycho-physical studies such as those of Charles Henry and Humbert de Superville, supporting (with reservations) their researches into the connections between physical and mental processes' (pp. 40–41).
59. See Herbert, p. 34 and Song, p. 146.
60. 'Rapporteur esthétique et sensation de forme', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (April 1888), 73–90; 'Cercle chromatique et sensation de couleur' (May 1888), 238–89; 'Harmonies de couleurs' (June 1888), 458–78.
61. 'Les premiers salons', *Mercure de France*, 5 (May 1892), 61.
62. 'A propos du *Solness le constructeur*', *Le Figaro* (2 April 1894).
63. 'Claude Monet', *Le Figaro* (10 March 1889).
64. 'L'Exposition de Maxime Maufra', *Essais d'art libre*, IV (January 1894), 285.

CHAPTER THREE

1. 'Le Salon de 1888', *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, 87 (1 June 1888), 666.
2. 'Les Peintres primés', *L'Echo de Paris* (25 July 1889) in *Des Artistes*, I, 103–09 (pp. 107–08).
3. 'Albert Besnard ou le symbolisme concret', pp. 18–19.
4. 'Il me semble bien qu'à force d'exclure la 'peinture d'idées' en la confondant avec la 'peinture littéraire', qui est du mauvais académisme, l'art risque de devenir terriblement vide et bête' ('Sur le peinture dite littéraire', *L'Eventail*, Brussels, 18 December 1927, p. 5). On the question of the relationship between image and discourse as it applies to the eighteenth century in France, see N. Bryson, *Word and Image. French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, 1981).
5. *Mallarmé chez lui* (1935), p. 73.

6. 'Peintures', *Le Symboliste*, 3 (22–29 October 1886).
7. 'Un groupe de peintres', *La Revue blanche*, 5 (November 1893), 339–40.
8. 'Définition du néo-traditionnisme' in *Théories*, pp. 8–9.
9. 'La Grande Marotte', *Le Scapin*, 2e série, 3 (16 October 1886), 91.
10. *Propos de littérature* (1894), p. 59 (Mockel's emphasis).
11. In an interview in *L'Echo de Paris* of 13 May 1895.
12. *L'Impressionnisme, son histoire, son esthétique, ses maîtres* (1904), p. 74.
13. 'Notes sur la peinture wagnérienne et le Salon de 1886', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 2 (8 May 1886), 107,110.
14. 'Notes synthétiques', p. 52. On the previous page, he described painting as an 'art complet qui résume tous les autres et les complète'.
15. For the history of these arguments, see T. Munro, *The Arts and their Interrelations*, second edition (Cleveland, 1967) and B. Lamblin, *Peinture et temps* (1983).
16. 'L'Œuvre et la vie d'Eugène Delacroix', *Œuvres complètes*, II, 744.
17. 'Exposition Universelle (1855). III. Eugène Delacroix' in *Œuvres complètes*, II, 596.
18. 'Roger Marx', *Mercure de France*, 28 (October 1898), 45.
19. 'Le *Ten O'Clock* de M. Whistler' in *Œuvres complètes*, edited by H. Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1945), pp. 569–83 (p. 576).
20. *Œuvres complètes*, X, 11.
21. Gauguin wrote that Huysmans 'voudrait être peintre, il aime la peinture' and that 'Huysmans critiquant ce tableau [by Bianchi, pp. 198–99] a fait du Huysmans'. (Notes first published by J. Loize in 'Un Inédit de Gauguin', *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 7 May 1953).
22. *Racontars de rapin* (1951), p. 31. Albert Wolff was the art critic of *Le Figaro* who had distinguished himself throughout the 1860s and 70s by his opposition to Manet and the Impressionists.
23. In a letter to Pissarro of May 1883, he wrote that, in *L'Art moderne*, Huysmans 'se trompe d'un bout à l'autre et met en avant les impressionnistes sans comprendre du tout en quoi ils sont modernes. Il le prend du côté de la littérature . . . au fond c'est le naturalisme qui le flatte.

    Il n'a pas compris une seule minute Manet et vous qu'il cite il ne vous comprend pas' (*Correspondance*, I, 48).
24. *Racontars de rapin*, p. 26.
25. 'A propos de peintures', *La Revue blanche*, 4 (June 1893), 453.
26. 'Vernissages', *La Revue bleue*, 19 (13 May 1893), 608.
27. The best introduction to these questions remains H. and C. White's *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (New York, 1965). See also R. Moulin, *Le Marché de peinture en France* (1967) and M. Rheims, *Les Collectionneurs* (1981). D. H. T. Scott, in 'La Structure spatiale du poème en prose d'Aloysius Bertrand à Rimbaud' (*Poétique*, 59 (September 1984), 295–308), makes an important related point that links between nineteenth-century French poetry and the visual arts were facilitated by the development of the illustrated press and of reviews 'telles que *L'Artiste* et *le Magasin pittoresque*, qui souvent juxtaposaient textes et images, parfois liés par des analogies thématiques' (p. 299).
28. 'Le livret du Salon de 1861 enregistre 3,146 numéros pour la peinture . . . Au Salon de 1847, il n'y avait que 2,000 tableaux, et au Salon de 1846 que 1,800. Cette statistique rétrospective est effrayante: en quinze ans, la fabrication de toiles peintes a presque doublé!' (T. Thoré, *Salons, 1861 à 1868*, 2 vols (1872), I, 4). See also H. and C. White, pp. 83–90.
29. 'En outre, les formes de la vie ont changé . . . L'hôtel s'est métamorphosé en niche et l'appartement en alvéole. La loi sur les héritages ne permet guère de conserver, au delà d'un certain nombre d'années, la maison que de père en fils habitaient nos aïeux. Le foyer paternel n'existe que pour une génération à peine, et encore, grâce à la fréquence des déménagements bien peu de gens meurent où ils sont nés. Or personne, en eût-il la place, ne se soucie d'orner de peintures murales un logis qu'il sait devoir quitter bientôt, et où ses enfants, certes, ne demeureront pas; il faut compter aussi les risques de démolition qu'un tracé imprévu, faisant sa trouée à travers la ville, peut faire courir. Les tableaux de petite dimension qui se détachent du mur et qu'on emporte comme un meuble sont donc préférables'. ('Le Salon de 1869' in *Tableaux à la plume* (1880), p. 268).
30. See A. Boime, 'America's Purchasing Power and the Evolution of European Art in the Late Nineteenth Century', in *Saloni, gallerie, musei e loro influenza sullo sviluppo dell'arte dei secoli 19 e 20* (Bologna, 1981), pp. 123–39.
31. See L. d'Argencourt, 'Bouguereau et le marché de l'art en France' and R. Isaacson, 'Les Collectionneurs de Bouguereau en Angleterre et en Amérique', both in the catalogue of the 1984 Bouguereau exhibition at the Petit-Palais in Paris (pp. 95–103 and 104–13).

32. So, genre painting, 'qui est comme le roman de la peinture, a pris de nos jours une singulière extension, et il n'est guère de sujets qu'il n'englobe dans ses cadres restreints. Il touche à tout: aux scènes de mœurs actuelles, aux résurrections des siècles passés, à la légende, à la chronique, à l'histoire même' ('Le Salon de 1869' in *Tableaux à la plume*, p. 277).
33. The following complaint was frequent during this period: 'Je ne vous apprendrai rien en disant que les neuf dixièmes de la critique sont vendus. Une partie est intéressée dans des institutions officielles ou dans le commerce. Une autre se compromet avec MM. les artistes, faussant le plus possible le goût du bon public en emplissant — visée à peu près générale — ses galeries personnelles de toiles plus ou moins cotées.' (L. Cardon, *Les Salons de 1892* (1892), p. 6). See also H. and C. White on the 'dealer-critic system', pp. 94–98.
34. See A. Boime, 'The Teaching Reforms of 1863'.
35. Maupassant, *Œuvres complètes*, 29 vols (1908–10), XIII.
36. This theme was already present in the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon* of 1867.
37. *Salons*, II, 13–14.
38. For an authoritative nineteenth-century account of the discursive role of line in academic painting, see Blanc's *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, pp. 23–26.
39. Which is why Gauguin believed that Huysmans's preference for Degas among the Impressionists was due to the fact that he painted figures rather than landscapes. In the 1883 letter to Pissarro quoted above in note 23, Gauguin wrote that Huysmans 'ne voit que par Degas Raffaeli [sic] Bartholomé et Cie parce que ceux-ci font la figure'.
40. To their own questions: 'La peinture est-elle un livre? La peinture est-elle une idée?', the Goncourts replied that, on the contrary, it was 'un art matérialiste, vivifiant la forme par la couleur . . .' See *La Peinture à l'Exposition de 1855* (1855) in *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle et autres textes sur l'art*, edited by J.-P. Bouillon (1967), pp. 211–28 (p. 211). In their art history, however, the Goncourts often used paintings as a 'pretext for verbal extravaganza' (Bryson, p. 64).
41. See G. May, *Diderot et Baudelaire, critiques d'art* (1957); E. M. Bukdahl, *Diderot critique d'art*, 2 vols (Copenhagen, 1980–82), I 18–19); G. Paschoud and P. Junod, 'Diderot critique d'art', *Études de lettres*, 8 (January–March 1975), 3–35 and J. Chouillet, 'Du langage pictural au langage littéraire' in the exhibition catalogue, *Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David. Les Salons 1759–1781* (1984), pp. 41–54.
42. *Causeries du lundi*, second edition, III (1852), 234.
43. *Portraits à la plume*, p. 204.
44. *Études sur la sculpture française depuis la Renaissance* (1836), quoted in P. Grate, *Deux Critiques d'art de l'époque romantique* (Stockholm, 1959), p. 153; *Salons*, I, 373.
45. *Salons*, II, 461.
46. *Diderot et le dix-neuvième siècle* (1866), pp. 27–28.
47. Page references to *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* will be to the text published in Fromentin, *Œuvres complètes*, edited by G. Sagnes (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1984), pp. 565–804. Diderot's writings on art were volumes 10–13 of the 20-volume 1876 edition by J. Assézat and M. Tourneux.
48. See L. Gonse, *Eugène Fromentin, peintre et écrivain* (1881), p. 199 and E. Michel, *Nouvelles Études sur l'histoire de l'art* (1908), pp. 35–39. On Fromentin's art criticism, see M. Schapiro, 'Fromentin as a Critic', *Partisan Review*, 1949, pp. 25–51; B. Wright, 'La Langue de la critique d'art dans *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* d'Eugène Fromentin', in *Colloque Eugène Fromentin* (Lille, 1979), pp. 11–31; A.-M. Christin, 'Fromentin critique d'art ou la rhétorique du vide', *C.A.I.E.F.*, 37 (1985), 193–212.
49. 'Les Salons de Diderot' in *Maîtres et petits maîtres* (1877), pp. 380–81.
50. *Diderot* (1880), p. 206.
51. 'Les Salons de Diderot', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 39 (15 May 1880), 457–69.
52. 'La Critique d'art au XVIe siècle', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 58 (1 July 1883), 207–20 (p. 209).
53. Bruntière's ideological hostility to Diderot was very deep and kept surfacing in his article on the *Salons*. So, these contained 'toutes les figures de la pire des rhétoriques au service, pour le plus souvent, de la pire des doctrines' (p. 459). It was based on the belief, widely-held by conservatives at the time and since, that the *philosophes* were responsible for the 'excesses' of the Revolution. This was an important question in the early aftermath of the Commune and one which had been revived two years before by the celebrations for the centenary of the death of Voltaire and Rousseau. See in this respect J.-M. Goulemot and E. Walter, 'Les Centenaires de Voltaire et de Rousseau' in *Les Lieux de mémoire I. La République*, edited by P. Nora (1984), pp. 381–420.
54. 'Les Salons de Diderot', p. 465. Brunetière advised readers to consult *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* to see the shortcomings of the *Salons*. Cf. also: 'Le sujet, c'est ce qui le préoccupe. Juger des sujets, c'est sa partie . . .' (p. 463).

55. Anon., 'Sur Diderot', *La Revue indépendante*, 1 (May–October 1884), 278–92 (pp. 290–91). The same year, des Esseintes 'se souciait fort peu de Voltaire, voire même de Diderot, dont les *Salons* tant vantés lui paraissaient singulièrement remplis de fadaises morales et d'aspirations jobardes' (*A Rebours*, p. 219). In 1875, in a commentary on Greuze's *La Cruche cassée*, Huysmans had already attacked 'cette esthétique déplorable dont Diderot s'était fait le porte-voix: la régénération de la société par l'art' (*Musée des Deux-Mondes* (1 October 1875), p. 88). On Huysmans and the visual arts, see C. Maignon, *L'Univers artistique de J.-K. Huysmans* (1977).
56. *Goethe et Diderot* (1880), p. 214.
57. On the impact of German Idealism on the French Symbolists, see L. Furst, *Counterparts: The Dynamics of Franco-German Literary Relationships* (London, 1977), particularly Chapter 4. On that of Schopenhauer see J. M. Stein, *Richard Wagner and the Synthesis of the Arts* (Detroit, 1960); A. W. Raitt, *Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et le mouvement symboliste* (1965); E. Sans, *Wagner et la pensée schopenhauerienne* (1969).
58. See E. Lockspeiser, *Music and Painting: A Study in Comparative Ideas from Turner to Schoenberg* (London, 1973); L. Guichard, *La Musique et les lettres en France au temps du wagnérisme* (1963); D. Hillery, *Music and Poetry in France from Baudelaire to Mallarmé* (Bern, 1980).
59. He did so particularly in the 1870 essay on Beethoven. See Sans, pp. 134–41 and Stein, pp. 113–17.
60. Baudelaire's interpretation of Wagner is informed by wider theoretical preoccupations whose relevance to Symbolism was summarized by Maurice Denis: 'L'Art . . . est une création de notre esprit dont la nature n'est que l'occasion. Au lieu de "travailler autour de l'œil, nous cherchions au centre mystérieux de la pensée", comme disait Gauguin. L'imagination redevient ainsi, selon de vœu de Baudelaire, la reine des facultés' ('De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au classicisme' in *Théories*, p. 268). On Baudelaire and Wagner, see R. Furness, *Wagner and Literature* (Manchester, 1982), pp. 32–38.
61. See D. Cooke, *The Language of Music* (Oxford, 1959) and Bryson's comments on the musical analogy in the Watteau literature in *Word and Image*, pp. 69–70.
62. See Furness, particularly Chapter 2 and J. Birkett, *Sins of the Fathers* (London, 1986), pp. 50–57.
63. The comment is quoted by S. Bernard in her Garnier edition of Rimbaud's work, published in 1960 (p. 405).
64. 'Délires II. Alchimie du verbe', *Œuvres complètes*, edited by A. Adam (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1972), p. 106.
65. *Œuvres complètes*, pp. 249–54.
66. *La Basoche*, 1 (13 September 1885), 378 (Ghil's capitals).
67. Here, we read that 'au lieu du *Mot qui narre*, le *Mot qui impressionne* s'indiquait' (p. 9, Ghil's emphasis). The Goncourts had been the first to try to create 'le frémissement de la Vie rendu sur le papier' (p. 9) but the length of their descriptions frustrated this objective. Mallarmé's poetic style had two great advantages over that of the Goncourts. Firstly, its concision was more faithful to the brevity and fragility of the sense-impression; secondly, these impressions formed the basis, as in *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, of an idealist theory of art since they expressed 'le sang de ses veines et le souvenir de la Terre' (p. 11). What the Goncourts and Mallarmé lacked, however, was Ghil's *science*. We shall see in Chapter 5 the same scientific aspiration at work in Gustave Kahn's theory of free verse.
68. *La Basoche*, 1 (13 October 1885), 410. In the text which appeared the following year, 'affinées' was changed to 'épurées'.
69. 'Peinture wagnérienne: Le Salon de 1885', *La Revue Wagnérienne*, 1 (8 June 1885), 154–56.
70. See the catalogue of the exhibition, *Fantin-Latour*, held in the Grand Palais in Paris in 1982–83, pp. 275–309.
71. 'Notes sur la peinture wagnérienne et le Salon de 1886', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 2 (8 May 1886), 100–13.
72. In *L'Art Moderne* (*Œuvres complètes*, VI, 300). This idea that Redon's art was a 'transposition' of literature was strengthened later by Maurice Denis's reference to Redon as 'très exactement le Mallarmé de la peinture' (in 'L'Époque du symbolisme', p. 174). The remark was taken out of context, for it is clear that the comparison was between the impact on young artists of two similar personalities, not that between their respective arts. On Redon and Huysmans, see R. Hobbs, *Odilon Redon* (London, 1977), particularly pp. 29–42; J. Seznec, 'Odilon Redon and Literature' in *French 19th Century Painting and Literature*, edited by U. Finke (Manchester, 1972), pp. 280–98 and Goldwater, pp. 115–27.
73. On 25 August 1882, Redon wrote: 'je suis singulièrement content et fier du chapitre que me consacre Huysmans' in *Lettres de Gauguin, Gide, Huysmans, Jammes, Mallarmé,*

Verhaeren . . . à Odilon Redon, edited by Arï Redon (1960), p. 98. Twenty years later, in the margin of his copy of an article on himself by Émile Bernard, Redon wrote: 'Huysmans ne me comprit qu'incomplètement. Je crois avoir aidé à son évolution, mais je suis resté sur le sol. Et mes ouvrages sont vrais quoi qu'on en dise.' Redon's annotations were first published by R. Bacou in her book, *Odilon Redon*, 2 vols (1956), I, 275–84.

74. *A soi-même*, second edition (1961), p. 26 (henceforth *ASM*).
75. *Œuvres complètes*, X, 135. The lithograph was the eighth in Redon's 1888 album of illustrations based on Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint-Antoine*. See also Hobbs, p. 42.
76. See Loize, 'Un Inédit de Gauguin', p. 1. Two years before, Kahn had said of Redon: 'Les écrivains aiment en lui l'âpre virginité de ses concepts, les artistes rendent justice à la puissance de son exécution, accord assez rare' ('La Vie artistique', *La Vie moderne*, 15 (9 April 1887), 231). His comments confirm how far apart writers and artists were in their shared admiration for Redon.
77. 'Odilon Redon', *La Société nouvelle*, 53 (January 1891), 61–62.
78. For further details on the exhibition, see Hobbs, pp. 78–82.
79. 'Un Étrange Jongleur', *L'Echo de Paris* (10 April 1894).
80. 'Œuvres d'Odilon Redon (chez Durand-Ruel)', *La Plume*, 5 (1 May 1894), 171.
81. His theory of colour as symbol of meaning did not help him with Redon's work: 'Mais je comprends peu la relation des tons au dessin et au sujet: pourquoi des bleus ici et des ors là?' ('Exposition Odilon Redon', *Mercure de France*, 11 (May 1894), 94–95).
82. 'Exposition Odilon Redon', *La Revue blanche*, 6 (May 1894), 470–73 (p. 471)
83. 'Les Symbolistes', p. 483.
84. 'Cézanne', in *Théories*, pp. 253–54. On Symbolist approaches to Cézanne, see J. Wechsler, *The Interpretation of Cézanne* (Ann Arbor, 1981), pp. 8–25. Wechsler does not, however, mention Redon in this context.
85. 'L'Exposition des 33', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1888), 151.
86. This expectation was summed up in a light-hearted way by Mirbeau, who wrote that commentators of Redon's *La Fleur du marécage*, the second of the six lithographs which composed his 1885 album *Hommage à Goya*, could not decide whether the eye in the image represented Consciousness, Universal Suffering, Doubt, a sunset, or a pin for a necktie ('L'Art et la nature', *Le Gaulois* (26 April 1886)). See Seznec, p. 290.
87. *Le Problème du style* (1902), pp. 89–90. Redon enlarged on what he understood by de Gourmont's term: 'Toute mon originalité consiste donc à faire vivre humainement des êtres invraisemblables selon les lois du vraisemblable, en mettant, autant que possible, la logique du visible au service de l'invisible.' (*ASM*, p. 28)
88. *Correspondance*, I, 88.
89. *Correspondance*, I, 306.
90. *Diverses Choses*, pp. 5–6, inserted between pp. 266–67 of the 1894–95 manuscript of *Noa-Noa* at present in the Louvre's Cabinet des dessins.
91. In the August 1899 letter to André Fontainas. See Malingue, p. 293.
92. *Diverses Choses*, p. 5.
93. See in the *Cahier pour Aline* Gauguin's 'Notes d'Edgar Poe'.
94. Malingue, pp. 235–38 (letter of December 1892).
95. Malingue, p. 293.
96. 'Art moderne', *Mercure de France*, 29 (January 1899), 235–38 (p. 238).
97. See Andersen, *Gauguin's Paradise Lost*, pp. 244–46 and pp. 262–63; Rookmaaker, *Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory*, pp. 230–37; J. Teilhet-Fisk, *Paradise Revisited. An Interpretation of Gauguin's Polynesian Symbolism* (Ann Arbor, 1983), pp. 126–28.
98. See Malingue, pp. 288–89, p. 293 and pp. 301–02 and *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Georges Daniel de Monfried* (1930), pp. 91–92.
99. In a letter to Charles Morice of July 1901 in Malingue, pp. 300–01.
100. 'L'Époque du symbolisme', p. 166.
101. *Silhouettes littéraires* (1925), p. 112.
102. Malingue, p. 293.
103. Malingue, pp. 288–89.
104. 'D'un point de vue esthétique à propos du peintre Paul Gauguin', *L'Ermitage*, 8 (January 1894), 35–39. Gauguin copied the article into his diary, *Avant et après* (1923), pp. 33–42.
105. See Lockspeiser, pp. 30–31 and 41–42; G. P. Mras, *Delacroix's Theory of Art* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 37–43; G. Vaughan, 'Maurice Denis and the Sense of Music', *The Oxford Art Journal*, 7 (1984), 38–48.
106. G. Kahn, 'Chronique', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1988), 139.
107. 'Les Livres', *La Revue indépendante*, 5 (December 1887), 324.
108. 'Symbolistes et décadents', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 90 (1 November 1888), 220.
109. *L'Art en silence* (1901), p. 195.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. 'The Impressionists and Edouard Manet', *The Art Monthly Review* (London, 30 September 1876) in *Documents Stéphane Mallarmé*, 7 vols (1968–80), I, 66–86 (henceforth *DSM*). The French original of this article has never been found. An abridged re-translation into French was published by M. Barthelme in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (1 August 1959), pp. 375–84, the first complete re-translation by P. Verdier in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (November 1975), pp. 147–56 and a double retranslation in two parts by M. Ronat and B. Keseljevic in *Change*, 26–27 (February 1976), 178–91 and 29 (December 1976), 58–75.
2. *Œuvres*, II, 1163–1240 (p. 1208).
3. For the details of the poem's evolution, see Mallarmé, *Œuvres complètes 1. Poésies*, edited by C. P. Barbier and C. G. Millan (1983), pp. 180–90, 252–71 (henceforth *OCP*); C. P. Barber, 'La Documentation mallarméenne' in *Colloque Mallarmé* (1975), pp. 37–55; H. Mondor, *Histoire d'un Faune* (1948). In June 1865, Mallarmé completed the first version of the poem for a performance at the Théâtre Français which never took place. The original manuscript of this text has never been found. We only have fragments (*OCP*, pp. 180–90) whose relationship to this original text remains problematic. Years later, probably in late 1873 or early 1874, Mallarmé wrote a copy of the *Monologue d'un faune* (*OCP*, pp. 252–57, henceforth version A) for Phillipe Burty, who was one of the first to defend Manet's painting and who may have been responsible for the first meeting between poet and painter. In 1875, Mallarmé wrote another version entitled *Improvisation d'un faune* (*OCP*, pp. 258–62, version B) for publication in the *Parnasse contemporain*. Following its rejection in July of that year by the committee, he reworked this text into *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (*OCP*, pp. 264–71, version C), published by Derenne in 1876.
4. See L. J. Austin, '*L'Après-midi d'un faune* de Stéphane Mallarmé: lexique comparé des trois états du poème' in *Studi in onore di Carlo Pellegrini* (Turin, 1963), pp. 733–38.
5. It is a surprising fact of Mallarmé scholarship that no detailed study of this relationship exists. J.-P. Richard (*L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* (1961), pp. 469–85 and 503–08) showed the relevance of the work of Manet and the Impressionists to Mallarmé's imagination and sensibility but not to his poetry. C. Harris ('A Little-Known Essay on Manet by Stéphane Mallarmé', *The Art Bulletin* (December 1964), pp. 559–63), limited the scope of the 1876 article by describing it as a theory of 'modernité', derived from Baudelaire's analysis of Guys. K. Berger ('Mallarmé and the Visual Arts' in *Les Mardis — Stéphane Mallarmé and the Artists of his Circle* (University of Kansas Museum of Art, 1965), pp. 51–58) comments in general terms on the poet's friendship with painters but concludes that any influence of painting upon Mallarmé is out of the question because of 'the basic differences between the arts of language and painting' (p. 55). W. Fowlie ('Mallarmé and the Painters of his Age', *The Southern Review* (Summer 1966), pp. 542–58) repeats the analogy between the poet and Cézanne made by D. Kahnweiler ('Mallarmé et la peinture', *Les Lettres* (1948), pp. 63–68). A. Bowness ('Manet and Mallarmé', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, 62 (1967), 213–21) shares this belief in Mallarmé's influence on Cubism but argues that Manet influenced Mallarmé's 'drive towards an abstract art in which the subject matter was of no account' (p. 219) and helped him to understand 'the related idea of coming to terms with the fortuitous, with chance and randomness' (p. 221). G. Inboden (*Mallarmé und Gauguin. Absolute Kunste als Utopie* (Stuttgart, 1978)) compares the two artists in terms of nineteenth-century theories of the absolute with particular reference to *Igitur* and *D'où venons-nous?* C. L. Ragghianti ('Manet e Mallarmé', *Critica d'Arte*, 44 (July–December 1979), 57–68), adds nothing new. Only M. Ronat (see above, note 1) has recognized that 'pour Mallarmé, la syntaxe serait à la langue ce que l'air est à la vision, ce grand transparent' (p. 172) but her important, Chomskyian analysis of the rules of Mallarmé's syntax is confined to his prose ('Rythme et syntaxe en prose mallarméenne', *Change*, 29, 15–37) and does not take her own analogy with Manet's open-air work any further. On the biographical and social relationships between Mallarmé and painters, the most informative articles remain those of L. J. Austin ('Mallarmé and the Visual Arts' in Finke, *French 19th Century Painting and Literature*, pp. 232–57 and 'Mallarmé critique d'art', in *The Artist and the Writer in France*, edited by F. Haskell, A. Levi and R. Shackleton (Oxford, 1974), pp. 153–62). P. Florence (*Mallarmé, Manet and Redon*) relates Mallarmé's poetry and criticism to the work of Manet and Redon but her analysis concerns mainly *Crise de vers* and *Un Coup de dés* rather than the Faune poems. See my review in *Modern Language Review*, forthcoming.
6. As he wrote to Verlaine in 1885: 'J'ai, dix ans, vu tous les jours, mon cher Manet, dont l'absence aujourd'hui me paraît invraisemblable!' (p. 664)
7. 'Édouard Manet d'après Mallarmé' in *Peints à leur tour* (1948), pp. 94–109 (p. 94). On the same page we read that 'Edouard Manet est, pour Mallarmé, le peintre. Entendez celui auquel nul autre ne se peut comparer'.

8. On 14 September 1862 Baudelaire published his first study of Manet's work in *Le Boulevard*, the same review from which Mallarmé, in January that year, had copied seven of Baudelaire's poems.
9. See H. Mondor, *Vie de Mallarmé* (1941), pp. 39–40.
10. 'Au lieu de chercher les contours, ce que l'Académie appelle le dessin, au lieu de s'acharner au détail, ce que les amateurs appellent le fini, on aspire à rendre l'effet dans son unité frappante, sans souci de la correction des lignes ni de la minutie des accessoires' (Thoré-Burger, 'Le Salon de 1861' in *Salons*, I, 414).
11. See Mondor, *Histoire d'un faune*, pp. 84–85.
12. On the importance of Hegel for Mallarmé see particularly L. J. Austin, 'Mallarmé et le rêve du "Livre"', *Mercure de France*, 317 (1 January 1953), 81–108; G. Davies, *Vers une explication rationnelle du 'Coup de dés'* (1953) pp. 32–39; J.-P. Richard, *L'Univers imaginaire*, pp. 229–33 and A. Gill's review of Volume III of the *Correspondance* in *MLR*, 67 (July 1972), 647–55.
13. See Gill's review article, p. 653.
14. In a letter of February 1869 to Cazalis (*DSM*, VI, 421), Mallarmé spoke of 'associating' his research for the *Œuvre* with a 'but pratique'.
15. Mallarmé's reviews are examples of the new awareness of the commercial significance for France of English progress in the decorative arts. See Boime, 'The Teaching Reforms of 1863', p. 5. R. B. Gordon, in 'Aboli Bibelot? The Influence of the Decorative Arts on Stéphane Mallarmé and Gustave Moreau' (*Art Journal*, 45 (Summer 1985), 105–12), argues for the relevance of the decorative arts to the aims of Symbolism. The parallels she draws between Mallarmé and Moreau in their response to the decorative arts tell us more about the painting than about the poetry but the questions her article raises would be well worth more detailed study.
16. 'J'assiste aux malheurs de ces jours, l'esprit impartial, mais, oh! le cœur navré' (letter to Cazalis of 9 April 1871 in *DSM*, VI, 461) and 'il n'y a pas de mal que la politique veuille se passer de la Littérature et se régler à coups de fusil' (letter to the same, p. 467). Mallarmé's mixture of detachment and compassion for the victims ('je plains les victimes', p. 465) is in sharp contrast to the hysterical violence with which most writers denounced the communards (See P. Lidsky, *Les Écrivains contre la Commune*, 1970). This understanding will in turn make it easier for him to recognize and formulate the political dimension of Impressionism. On Banville's article, see A. Gill, *The Early Mallarmé, Vol. II: Youth and Early Manhood* (Oxford, 1986), p. 142.
17. See his letter of 8 or 9 May 1871 to Cazalis (*DSM*, VI, 473). The previous month, he had told Cazalis that he was working on 'un Drame ou un Vaudeville, discréditant aux yeux d'un Public attentif l'Art et la Science pour un nombre possible d'années' (*DSM*, VI, 467). Years later, the same ambition remained: 'Je crois que la Littérature, reprise à sa source qui est l'Art et la Science, nous fournira un Théâtre, dont les représentations seront le vrai culte moderne' (*OC*, p. 875).
18. See in this respect P. Bénichou, 'Mallarmé et le public' in his book, *L'Écrivain et ses travaux* (1967), pp. 69–88 and J.-L. Steinmetz, *Le Champ d'écoute* (1985), pp. 205–06. On the poet's later attitude to 'la foule', see P. Dayan, *Mallarmé's 'Divine Transposition'. Real and Apparent Sources of Literary Value* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 47–94.
19. *La Renaissance artistique et littéraire* (12 April 1874).
20. The jury accepted *Le Chemin de fer* and refused *Bal masqué à l'Opéra* and *Les Hirondelles* (nos. 207, 216, and 190 of the two-volume *catalogue raisonné* of Manet's paintings edited by D. Rouart and D. Wildenstein (Geneva, 1975), henceforth RW).
21. *L'Univers imaginaire*, p. 350.
22. In a letter to Popelin of 19 May 1872, Mallarmé wrote: 'Je crois préférable, d'ici à cette époque moins distraite et moins assombrie, de préparer, très-doucement, le public et même de me créer des lecteurs spéciaux dans un grand journal politique' (*Corr.*, IV, 2, 373).
23. See in this respect G. H. Hamilton, *Manet and his Critics* (New Haven, 1954). Strangely, Hamilton ignores Mallarmé's 1876 article.
24. See F. Cachin's commentary and bibliography of the painting in the catalogue of the 1983 Manet exhibition in Paris (pp. 349–52). Steinmetz, in *Le Champ d'écoute*, describes the painter's use of black in *Bal masqué* as a 'marque essentielle de la modernité . . . mais aussi matériau même de la castration, la ligne noire du japonisme' (p. 204). This, combined with 'une sécheresse, une rigidité des attitudes' (of the male figures in the painting), is the sign in Manet of 'une passion de la mort' (p. 205). The explanation is too brief and too exclusive. Given what we know of Manet's extensive use of popular imagery in his work, it seems quite possible that such imagery provided sources for his use and arrangement of black in the *Bal masqué*. The Carnavalet Museum in Paris, for example, has a print of an advert for the *Figaro*

which shows a line of men wearing top hats in an arrangement strikingly similar to that of Manet's painting. The print, 'Demandez *Le Figaro* extraordinaire du dimanche 6 juin. Illustrations humoristiques des courses de Longchamp, Grand Prix de Paris' is from 1873, contemporaneous, therefore, with the *Bal masqué* (Carnavalet, Histoire 83, Chemise A, 1872–73).

25. These were *Le Grand Canal à Venise* (RW, 230), on show in Autumn 1875 in James Tissot's studio in London (cf. *Les Gossips de Mallarmé*, edited by H. Mondor and L. J. Austin (1962), p. 42) and *Argenteuil* (RW, 221), shown at the 1876 Society of French Artists exhibition (cf. *Gossips*, p. 70).
26. It was perhaps with this in mind that in his November 1875 Fine-Art Gossip, Mallarmé referred to *Le Linge* as 'une des notes très britanniques' of Manet (*Gossips*, p. 42). On Durand-Ruel's London support for the Impressionists during this period, see H. and C. White, *Canvases and Careers*, p. 125.
27. See Fromentin, *Œuvres complètes*, pp. 568, 695, 717, 731.
28. Duranty, pp. 27–28 and T. Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind* (London, 1976), p. 9.
29. Duranty, p. 17.
30. Quoted in A. Tabarant, *Manet et ses œuvres* (1947), p. 272.
31. Tabarant, p. 272.
32. *Gossips*, p. 42.
33. Mallarmé must have been aware that Courbet began exhibiting his work well before 1860. His best-known painting, *Un Enterrement à Ornans*, was shown at the Salon of 1851. It may just be a misprint for 1850 but Mallarmé also referred to Dierx as one of the poets whom 'il faut attribuer à la quatrième génération littéraire de ce siècle, celle qui débuta vers 1860 . . .' (*Œuvres complètes*, pp. 688–89).
34. See in particular A. Boime, *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic* Vision (New Haven and London, 1980), pp. 458–472.
35. 'The Impressionists and Edouard Manet', p. 69.
36. Similarly, Philippe Burty had written of Manet's effort in *Argenteuil* to 'transporter sur une toile l'aspect réel des colorations et des effets' (quoted in Tabarant, p. 264).
37. Cf. also: 'Semblable occupation suffit, comparer les aspects et leur nombre tel qu'il frôle notre négligence . . .' (*OC*, p. 647) and Richard, p. 413.
38. See Richard, p. 233. In *La Nouvelle peinture*, Duranty had described Fromentin's painting as 'la vraie peinture trouble d'une époque de critique . . .' (p. 4).
39. Mallarmé wrote this in June 1884. The Manet retrospective held in the École des Beaux-Arts in January of that year may have served to remind him of the lesson of his painting. In March, he had written to Léon Hennique: 'Comme tous vos personnages sont mobiles, le type de chacun distribué à travers toutes les pages du livre, une touche ici, une là, ainsi qu'on se voit en réalité jour à jour! Il n'est pas jusqu'à vos natures mortes, qui, visitées par tous les états différents de la lumière, meubles, toilettes, ne soient comme les visages, *bien dans l'air* (car il faut toujours en revenir là). J'ai un très-beau Manet que vous ne connaissez pas . . .' (*Corr*, II, 257, Mallarmé's emphasis).
40. C. P. Barbier refers to Mallarmé's 'digression politique' in *DSM*, I, 90.
41. See the example quoted by Barbier (*DSM*, I, 90); G. Rivière, 'Les Intransigeants de la peinture', *L'Esprit moderne*, 18 (13 April 1876), 7–8; Duranty, pp. 9–10.
42. *Corr.*, II, 159 and C. Mendès (?), 'The Impressionists: A New School in France', *New York Tribune* (28 April 1877). For further references by Mallarmé to his project for a new popular theatre, see *DSM*, VI, 473 and *Corr.*, II, 101, 103, 144, 151, and 154.
43. Manet's Republican sympathies are well known. See Farwell, 'Manet et Manebit', *Art Journal*, 44 (Spring 1985), 8; in the same issue, J. Baas, 'Edouard Manet and *Civil War*', pp. 36–42 and T. Reff, *Manet and Modern Paris* (Chicago and London, 1982), pp. 200–15. On Manet's colour lithograph, *Polichinelle*, as a caricature of MacMahon, see M. R. Brown, 'Manet, Nodier and *Polichinelle*', *Art Journal*, 44 (Spring 1985), 43–48 and Reff, p. 124.
44. See R. Magraw, *France 1815–1914. The Bourgeois Century* (London, 1983), pp. 194–95 and section 8, 'Integrating the Workers?', pp. 285–95.
45. The Republican victory in the 1876 elections gave impetus to working-class organization. The first Congrès National Ouvrier was held in Paris in October.
46. J. Kristeva, in *La Révolution du langage poétique* (1974), is sceptical about Mallarmé's interest in the political context of this period: 'Il traverse ces îlots sociaux sans s'y attarder, persuadé de leur "inanité sonore", juste utiles à servir de support au passage de ce procès qui emporte le langage, le sujet et toute formation historique' (p. 410). She does not refer to the 1876 article. B. Keseljevic, in 'L'Air, l'ère, l'aire' (*Change*, 29 (December 1976), 76–79) considers Mallarmé's position in the article to be 'en accord avec sa position de classe petite-bourgeoise' (p. 79) and that his call for the participation of the people in the political

life of France is 'une sorte de réclamation lancée par la petite bourgeoisie à la bourgeoisie par le truchement de [sa] peinture' [of Manet]. (p. 79). Nothing in the text seems to me to justify this view.

47. Anon., 'L'Histoire du jury et de M. Manet', *Le Bien public* (6 April 1876).
48. A. Sylvestre, 'Les Deux Tableaux de M. Manet', *L'Opinion* (23 April 1876).
49. Bertall, 'L'Exposition de M. Manet', *Paris-Journal* (30 April 1876).
50. Bernadille, 'Les Tableaux de M. Manet', *Le Français* (21 April 1876).
51. 'Le Salon de 1876' in *Œuvres complètes*, XII, 967.
52. See T. J. Clark's analysis of the *Olympia* scandal of 1865 in *The Painting of Modern Life*, pp. 79–146.
53. See E. Lipton, 'The Laundress in Late Nineteenth-Century Culture: Imagery, Ideology and Edgar Degas', *Art History*, 3 (September 1980), 295–313.
54. Lipton, pp. 301–02.
55. See T. Reff, *Degas: The Artist's Mind*, p. 166 and Lipton, p. 304.
56. The painting is now in the Mellon Collection, Virginia.
57. See *Œuvres complètes*, III, 945–48.
58. On the relationship between the treatment of the laundress theme in Zola and Degas, see T. Reff, pp. 166–70 and Lipton, pp. 295–97.
59. See Clark, pp. 161–62.
60. See Clark, pp. 135–36. In a drawing published in *Change* as an introduction to the re-translation referred to in note 1, G. Fromanger made explicit this phallic connotation. J.-P. Faye described it as 'la brusque flamme du fantasme, éclatée dans l'inconscient visible du tableau et refusée' (p. 175).
61. Quoted in *Manet raconté par lui-même est ses amis* (1945), p. 28. Jeanne Lorgnon had been the original model for the woman in the painting. See Tabarant, p. 272.
62. On the conventions of the eclogue, see A. Hulubei, *L'Églogue en France au XVIe siècle* (1938), particularly Chapter 19. On the importance of reading the poem as an eclogue, see R. Poggioli, '"L'Heure du Berger": Mallarmé's Grand Eclogue' in *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 283–311 and S. F. Walker, 'Mallarmé's Symbolist Eclogue: The "Faune" as Pastoral', *PMLA*, 93 (January 1978), 106–17.
63. For comparisons between the three versions of the poem, see Austin, '"L'Après-midi d'une faune" de Stéphane Mallarmé: lexique comparé'; E. Noulet, *L'Œuvre poétique de Stéphane Mallarmé* (1940), pp. 228–47; S. Verdin, *Stéphane Mallarmé le presque contradictoire* (1975), pp. 129–52; L. de Nardis, *Stéphane Mallarmé: "L'Après-midi d'une faune"* (Rome, 1976). None of these relate the changes made from versions A to C to Mallarmé's discovery of Manet's open-air work. For more general studies of the poem, see the bibliography in *OCP*, p. 271, to which may be added T. Munro, '"The Afternoon of a Faun" and the Interrelation of the Arts', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 10 (December 1951), pp. 95–111; A. Gill, 'Mallarmé et l'antiquité: "L'Après-midi d'un faune"', *C.A.I.E.F.*, 10 (1958), pp. 158–73 and 'Mallarmé's Use of Christian Imagery for Post-Christian Concepts' in *Order and Adventure in Post-Romantic French Poetry. Essays presented to C. A. Hackett*, edited by E. M. Beaumont, J. M. Cocking and J. Cruickshank (Oxford, 1973) pp. 72–88; A. Sonnenfeld, 'Eros and Poetry: Mallarmé's Disappearing Visions' in *Order and Adventure*, pp. 89–98; R. G. Cohn, *Toward the Poems of Mallarmé*, expanded edition (California, 1980), pp. 13–32; L. Bersani, *The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 80–83; G. van Slyke, 'A la recherche du langage: "L'Après-midi d'un faune"', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (Fall–Winter 1983–84), 168–84.
64. As J.-P. Richard put it in the context of a discussion of Mallarmé and Impressionism (but not with reference to the *Faune* poem): 'Extase culminante de midi, nouveau solstice sans retombée, qui rejoint, cette fois, "la vibration de tout"' (*L'Univers imaginaire*, p. 484).
65. See the two articles by A. Gill referred to above, note 63.
66. L. J. Austin pointed this out in his 1963 article, 'Lexique comparé . . .', and went on to say that the image was 'inspirée peut-être par une source plastique qui reste à préciser . . .' (p. 738).
67. J. F. L. Mérimée, *De la Peinture à l'huile* (1830), p. 297.
68. See H. E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian. III. The Mythological and Historical Paintings* (London, 1975) and E. T. Buckley, *Poesia Muta: Allegory and Pastoral in the Early Paintings of Titian* (Ann Arbor, 1978).
69. In the Littré, for 'grappe', we read: '3° Terme de peinture. Grappe de raisin, terme employé par le Titien, et devenu technique, pour exprimer la dégradation des lumières, des ombres, des reflets dans une grappe de raisin exposée à la lumière. Connaître, étudier la grappe de raisin.' An art student such as Régnault would certainly have known this and Titian was one

of the painters Régnault was copying in the Louvre in the summer of 1865. See *Correspondance de Henri Régnault annotée et recueillie par A. Duparc, suivie du catalogue complet de l'œuvre* (1872), p. 24. This visual source in no way precludes others. For example, E. Souffrin-Le Breton, in 'The Young Mallarmé and the Boucher Revival' (*Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry. New Essays in Honour of Lloyd Austin*, edited by M. Bowie, A. Fairlie and A. Finch (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 283–313), convincingly vindicated Austin's belief that Boucher's *Pan et Syrinx* was one possible visual source for Mallarmé's poem (pp. 305–08).

70. *Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles. École florentine* (1876), p. 36. Titian was considered the second great master of chiaroscuro. If, as I believe, Mallarmé knew of Blanc's work on Titian by 1866, É. Montégut's comments on Leonardo in his article, 'Les Romans de Victor Cherbuliez', which Mallarmé read in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 15 May 1867 (*Corr.*, I, 245) will have reinforced in the poet an already firm theory of the historical development of Renaissance art.

    A related point to be noted here is that Blanc's lavishly illustrated histories were visual source books for painters in the second half of the nineteenth century, notably Manet. See T. Reff, 'Manet and Blanc's "Histoire des Peintres"', *Burlington Magazine*, 112 (1970), 456–58.

71. See Hulubei, particularly pp. 729–30.
72. In B, this formal organization is less rigorous. Line 62 is detached from those which preceed and follow; the sequence of the faun's 'souvenirs divers' (line 63 to line 92) is divided into three parts. In C, the elimination of typographical spaces makes more dramatic the interruption of the memory sequence by the desire in the present which it creates and for which Mallarmé reverts to Roman characters (ll. 75–81).
73. In B, Mallarmé had written: 'L'*in*visible et serein souffle'. In 1876, he wrote that in Manet's open-air work, light's 'invisible action' was 'rendered visible' (p. 75).
74. See L. J. Austin, '"L'Après-midi d'un faune: essai d'explication', *Synthèses*, 22 (December 1967–January 1968), 24–35 (p. 27). Unlike Austin, however, who shares E. Noulet's interpretation of these lines as 'l'apothéose de l'être incorruptible et glorieux qu'est le Faune-poète', I see the faun as unwilling to renounce sensual pleasure for art, an interpretation already advanced in differing forms by Walker and Sonnenfeld.
75. A. R. Chisholm, in *"L'Après-midi d'un faune": exégèse et étude critique* (Brussels, 1974), argues, wrongly, I believe, that though Mallarmé removed from C the question mark which closed B (l. 37), these lines remain interrogative.
76. *Œuvres complètes*, VII, 299. Verlaine called the *Faune* 'l'adorable poème cochon'. See Sonnenfeld, p. 91.
77. Austin, however, sees the faun's gesture as 'au niveau métaphorique, la fuite des impulsions de l'instinct vers leur transposition artistique' (p. 28). The 'donc' which follows the verb in line 52 weakens this interpretation.
78. For other interpretations of this image, see Cohn, pp. 23–24 and Austin, p. 29.
79. As Austin has already remarked (p. 34, note 34), the faun's failure is parodied in a circumstantial quatrain:

> Satyre aux baisers inexperts
> Qui pourchasse outre la brune
> La fauve Nymphe, tu les perds
> Il n'est d'extase qu'avec une. (*OCP*, p. 565)

    The parody in no sense lessens the significance for Mallarmé in 1876 of the faun's revelation of his divided self.
80. *Corr.*, I, 244–50.
81. See A. C. Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition*, second edition (New Haven and London, 1979), pp. 185–92.
82. This effect is clear by opposition with A, where the faun's exclamation, 'Je les veux!' (l. 8), expresses only physical desire. In B, Mallarmé wrote: 'Je les veux émerveiller' (l. 1) but the infinitive is much less successful than 'perpétuer' in creating the tension between physical and spiritual needs achieved in C.
83. See Mallarmé's own comments on these vowels in English in *Les Mots anglais* (*OC.*, p. 983) and Cohn's discussion of this sound symbolism as it relates to Mallarmé poetry (pp. 265–80). The impact of 'touffus' is strengthened by its place in the line and its phonetic relationship with 'doute' at the head of line 4. Cf. also 'divisé la touffe . . .' (l. 83).
84. Characteristically, however, the initial vowel of 'ouvrais', is reinstated in 'prouve'.
85. Austin (p. 24) considers only the first of these meanings.
86. See C. Moffett's analysis of this painting in the catalogue of the exhibition, *Centenaire de l'impressionnisme*, held in the Grand Palais (pp. 124–26).

87. See in this respect Walker's comment (p. 114) on Mallarmé's ironic use of etymology in this line to underline the faun's failure as an artist.
88. Again, in his use of 'vaine', Mallarmé has returned to A for an element omitted in B. In A, the faun had exclaimed:

> Comme je sais aussi brouter sa verte pousse
> A la vigne alanguie et demain sur la mousse
> Vaine!
> Mais dédaignons de vils traîtres! (47–49).

. The repeated consonant (here /v/ occurs four times) shows him as a figure of fun. In C, Mallarmé uses the same device for the same ends, but in a more complex way.
89. *Cahiers Paul Claudel*, I (1959), 49–50. Valéry also used the pictorial analogy to describe Mallarmé's practice: 'Mallarmé commençait certains de ses poèmes en jetant des mots sur le papier, deçà, delà, comme le peintre jette des touches sur la toile, et s'occupait seulement ensuite de les relier pour en faire des phrases ou des poèmes, suivant les règles de la composition les plus rigoureuses' (quoted in J. Scherer, *L'Expression littéraire dans l'œuvre de Mallarmé* (Geneva, 1947), p. 78).

One É. Porcheron, exasperated by Manet's procedures in *Le Linge*, began his review article of the two works on show in the painter's studio in 1876 by quoting the opening five lines of Musset's poem, 'Nuit de mai' and added: 'Si Alfred de Musset, lorsqu'il commence ainsi la 'Nuit de mai', avait voulu employer en poésie les procédés dont M. Manet se sert pour faire ses tableaux, voici certainment ce qu'il aurait écrit:

> Poète, prend luth . . . donne baiser . . .
> Fleur églantier va éclore . . .
> Printemps ce soir . . . vent embrasser . . .
> Bergeronnette . . . à l'aurore . . .
> Buisson vert . . . va poser . . . .

Le lecteur par des tours de force vraiment abracadabrants aurait été chargé d'ajouter par la pensée ce que cette poésie nègre aurait laissé deviner à son imagination' ('Promenades d'un flâneur: l'exposition de M. Manet', *Le Soleil*, 20 April 1876). Some hostility is more informed than others.
90. Lefébure, in a much quoted letter, had commented on this concision as early as April 1864 (*Corr.* I, 112).
91. Quoted in Hanson, p. 159.
92. The context of this phrase is even more striking: 'observez que les instruments [i.e. of Banville's 'music'] détachent, selon un sortilège aisé à surprendre, la cime, pour ainsi voir, de naturels paysages; les évapore et les renoue, flottants, dans un état supérieur. Voici qu'à exprimer la forêt, fondue en le vert horizon crépusculaire, suffit tel accord dénué presque d'une réminiscence de chasse; ou le pré, avec sa pastorale fluidité d'une après-midi écoulée, se mire et fuit dans des rappels de ruisseau. Une ligne, quelque vibration et tout s'indique.' The homage to Banville unites the terms of Mallarmé's 1876 article on Manet with an evocation of *L'Après-midi d'un faune*.
93. Scherer, for example, wrote that 1874 was a decisive year for Mallarmé. 'Brusquement, cette année-là, il s'élance vers les régions inexplorées de la syntaxe française, et trouve presque d'emblée un bon nombre de ses hardiesses' (p. 255). He attributed this to *La Dernière Mode* which 'revêt une importance capitale pour la fixation des tendances de Mallarmé devant le langage' (p. 226), but also hinted that 'il n'est pas impossible que les idées de Mallarmé sur la structure de la phrase . . . aient été renforcées par l'épanouissement de l'école impressionniste de peinture' (p. 169), without taking this possibility any further. N. Paxton saw *Igitur* as the source of these developments but that it was 'in the *Préface à Vathek* composed in 1875 that we first get the flavour of the mature style of Mallarmé' (*Development of Mallarmé's Prose Style* (Geneva, 1968), p. 52). J. Kravis argued that the prose poem of 1875, 'Un Spectacle interrompu', 'shows quite clearly the development of those elements of Mallarmé's language that it is necessary to read, rather than simply to associate with reality' (*The Prose of Mallarmé* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 55). U. Franklin also recognized that this prose poem 'occupies an intermediate position' in the development of Mallarmé's style (*An Anatomy of Poesis: The Prose Poems of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Chapel Hill, 1976), p. 95). There is no question of denying the role of these other texts in the poet's developing practice. On the contrary, they make it all the more unfortunate that he did not (as far as we know) write a French version of his 1876 article for publication in France. Had he done so, the importance of his analysis of Manet's work for his theories of poetic language would have been studied in greater detail much earlier.

Mallarmé's response to Manet's art does not exhaust the problem of the relationships between his poetry and the work of other painters. D. Kelley, for example, in 'Degas: Naturalist Novelist or Symbolist Poet? (*French Studies*, 38 (July 1984), 306–18) shows that Degas in the *Billiard Room* of 1893 and Mallarmé in his sonnet in -yx pose in parallel ways the problem of the referential nature of artistic language. Such relationships derive from and complement those in the mid-1870s between his work and that of Manet. As Natansan said (see above, note 7), 'Edouard Manet, est, pour Mallarmé, le peintre. Entendez celui auquel nul autre ne se peut comparer'.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Cf. the comments by C. P. Barbier in *DSM*, I, 90.
2. It is not possible from present Mallarméan documentation to know for certain what became of this project.
3. 'Seurat and *La Grande Jatte*', *The Columbia Review*, 17 (November 1935), 15.
4. B. Crémieux, 'L'Œuvre de Gustave Kahn', *Le Monde nouveau*, IV (15 July 1923), 101. Despite the role he played in the Symbolist movement, Kahn has largely been ignored by historians. The exception is J. C. Ireson whose invaluable work, *L'Œuvre poétique de Gustave Kahn*, was published in 1962. There exists no study of Kahn's art criticism.
5. See M. Hannoosh, 'The Poet as Art Critic: Laforgue's Aesthetic Theory', *Modern Language Review*, 79 (July 1984), 664–69.
6. *Œuvres complètes de Jules Laforgue*, edited by G. Jean-Aubry (1925), V, 60.
7. See Hannoosh, p. 556.
8. *Mélanges posthumes*, edited by C. Mauclair (1903), p. 133. As for the problems created by Mauclair's editing, see Hannoosh, p. 554, note 4.
9. In 1879, Kahn was, as he liked later to remind everyone, the first of Mallarmé's Tuesday evening visitors. In *Silhouettes littéraires* of 1925, he wrote: '"Vous fûtes mon premier visiteur", me disait Stéphane Mallarmé . . .' (p. 11). In December 1880, he also encouraged Laforgue to study Manet. In a letter of January 1881 Laforgue wrote: 'Comme vous dites, je mettrai Manet dans mon livre, mais il me faudra voir une collection de Manets' (*Lettres à un ami*, edited by G. Jean-Aubry (1941), p. 25).
10. *Mélanges posthumes*, p. 11.
11. *La Littérature de tout à l'heure* (1889), p. 203.
12. 'L'Art symboliste', *La Cravache*, 422 (23 March 1889).
13. For an analysis of different types of 'impressionist' verse and prose, see A. W. G. Kingma-Eijgendaal, 'Quelques effets impressionnistes', *Neophilologus*, 67 (July 1983), 353–67.
14. See, for example, J. A. Hiddleston's introduction to his edition of Laforgue's poetry (Oxford, 1975), p. 13 and M. Collie's introduction to his edition of *Les Complaintes* (London, 1977), pp. 17–18.
15. See Collie, p. 17.
16. Piano-playing has the same connotations in 'Complainte de la lune en province' (*Les Complaintes*) and 'L'Hiver qui vient' (*Derniers vers*).
17. See Hannoosh, p. 557, note 9. Laforgue's reference to 'Lord Boudha' comes in a letter to Kahn of 29 November 1883 (*Lettres à un ami*, p. 49).
18. *Nouvelle Revue*, 13 (15 November 1881), 413.
19. 'Les Frères de Goncourt', *La Cravache*, 408 (15 December 1888).
20. *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (1885), p. 175.
21. *Légendes d'âmes et de sangs* (1885), p. 9.
22. A sample from *Le Chat noir* would include L. le Cardonnel, 'Impressions de pluie', (2 December 1882); J. Moréas, 'Épode' (16 December 1882); J. Ajalbert, 'Pointe sèche' (17 January 1885) and 'Neige à minuit' (28 February 1885).
23. In, for example F. Champsaur's novel, *Dinah Samuel* (1882), where 'la chanson de la petite pluie' (p. 270) begins as follows:

    Flic, Floc,
    Floc, Flic,

    See M. Decaudin, 'Sur l'impressionnisme de Verlaine' in *La Petite Musique de Verlaine: 'Romances sans paroles, Sagesse'* (1982), p. 47.
24. *Symbolistes et décadents* (1902), p. 337.
25. 'Chronique de littérature et d'art', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (May 1888), 362.

26. For the chronology of *La Grande Jatte*, see Homer, *Seurat and the Science of Painting*, pp. 115–64. That the work was seen in Seurat's studio by painters and writers well before the 1886 exhibition was confirmed by Jules Christophe in *La Cravache*, 395 (15 September 1888).
27. 'De l'esthétique du verre polychrome', *La Vogue*, 1 (18 April 1886), 54–65.
28. Thanks initially to Shapiro's 1935 article referred to above (note 3). See also T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*. pp. 261–67.
29. The letter was first published by J. Rewald in his book, *Georges Seurat* (1948), p. 115.
30. See Homer, p. 17 and R. L. Herbert, 'Seurat and Puvis de Chavannes', *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, 25 (October 1959), 23–29.
31. 'Exposition Puvis de Chavannes', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1888), 142.
32. See Clark, pp. 264–66.
33. 'Exposition des Indépendants', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (April 1888), 161.
34. *L'Art en silence* (1901), p. 173.
35. In 1876, Moreau exhibited *Salomé dansant devant Hérode* (no. 157 in the catalogue of Moreau's work compiled by P.–L. Mathieu in his *Gustave Moreau: sa vie, son œuvre*, 1977), *Hercule et l'hydre de Lerne* (no. 152), *Saint Sebastien baptisé martyr* (no. 165) and the watercolour, *L'Apparition* (no. 159). Two years later, he showed the same four works plus *Le Sphinx deviné* (no. 173), *David méditant* (no. 171), *Jacob et l'Ange* (no. 170), *Moïse exposé sur le Nil* (no. 172) and four watercolours, *La Péri* (no. 81), *Phaéton* (no. 175), *Salomé au jardin* (no. 176), *Le Massier* (no. 178).
36. Here, he exhibited *Galatée* (no. 195) and *Hélène* (no. 199).
37. Mathieu, nos. 201–64.
38. *Mélanges posthumes*, p. 188.
39. 'L'Art français à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, 2 (1889), 117–49 (p. 128).
40. For Gautier on Moreau, see the comments by J. Pierre in J. Paladilhe and J. Pierre, *Gustave Moreau* (1971), p. 90.
41. See Zola, *Œuvres complètes*, XII, 997–98.
42. *Œuvres complètes*, VI, 152.
43. On the importance of Mantegna for Moreau, see Mathieu, pp. 128, 145, 176.
44. Œuvres complètes, VII, 83–89.
45. 'Salomé', *La Cravache*, 382 (16 June 1888).
46. Moreau's and Huysmans's common facination with the Salomé theme is, therefore, not simply the result, as J. Meyers suggests, of 'their fear of women and their homosexual proclivities' ('Huysmans and Gustave Moreau', *Apollo*, 99 (January 1974), 39–44 (pp. 39–40)). For an analysis of this fear in Des Esseintes, see A. Nuccitelli, '*A Rebours's* Symbol of the "Femme-Fleur": A Key to Des Esseintes's Obsession', *Symposium*, 27 (Winter 1974), 336–44.
47. Huysmans's attitude to Puvis never changed even when the painter's impact on the literary avant-garde was at its height. In *Certains*, he wrote: 'Comparer M. Puvis de Chavannes et M. Gustave Moreau . . . les confondre en une botte d'admiration unique, c'est commettre vraiment une des plus obséquieuses hérésies qui se puissent voir' (*Œuvres complètes*, X, 15).
48. 'Chronique d'art', *La Vogue*, 1 (1886), 100–02 (p. 100). See Mathieu no. 176. Kaplan, in *The Art of Gustave Moreau*, says that *Salomé in Prison* was the watercolour exhibited in 1886 but that no illustration or location for it has been found (p. 192, note 100). Kahn's description confirms that the work on show was *Salomé au jardin*. The others (in addition to the illustrations of La Fontaine) were *Les Plaintes du poète* (no. 290), *Les Péris et l'éléphant sacré* (no. 325), *Bethsabée* (no. 340), *Enlèvement de Ganymède* (no. 342) and *Le Poète arabe* (no. 345).
49. For Moreau's own commentary see R. Von Holten, *L'Art fantastique de Gustave Moreau* (1960), p. 18. P. Leprieur's questions are typical: 'A quoi pense-t-elle? Est-ce la haine, est-ce déjà le remords qui la tient ainsi arrêtée?' (*Gustave Moreau et son œuvre* (1889), p. 33).
50. The correct title of this watercolour is *Les Vautours et les pigeons*. See Mathieu, no. 231.
51. In a review of Verlaine's *Amour* in *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (May 1888), 347.
52. See Ireson, p. 82.
53. In his review of Huysmans's *Certains*. See *Œuvres plus que complètes*, I, 171–73 (p. 172). A. Fontainas confirmed that Henry's theories were 'fort en faveur auprès des littérateurs jeunes' (*Mes souvenirs du Symbolisme* (1928), p. 140).
54. 'Au temps du pointillisme', *Mercure de France*, 171 (April 1924), 5–22 (p. 15).
55. *Les Dessins de Seurat* (1928), n.p. In 1887, Kahn said that the relationship between Neo-Impressionism and free verse was an example of 'ces rencontres fondamentales de vues entre progressistes d'art différents [qui] sont pour tous une preuve de vérité de la recherche, par leur similitude, et le même chemin entrevu dans l'unique esthétique possible' ('La Vie artistique', *La Vie moderne* (9 April 1887), p. 229.

56. 'Georges Seurat', *La Société nouvelle*, 76 (30 April 1891), 429–38 (p. 433). Jules Christophe referred to Seurat as a 'chromatiste wagnérien' (*Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*, 368 (1890), n.p.).
57. See Homer, Chapter 3 and C. E. Gauss, *The Aesthetic Theories of French Artists from Realism to Surrealism*, second edition (Baltimore, 1970), pp. 23–34.
58. *Premiers Poèmes* (1897), p. 26. E. Dujardin confirmed Kahn's description: 'Gustave Kahn a fort bien dit que le vers devait être "un fragment le plus court possible figurant un arrêt de la voix et un arrêt du sens", ce qui revient à concevoir le vers comme une sorte de pied rythmique supérieur' ('Les Premiers Poètes du vers libre', *Mercure de France*, 146 (15 March 1921), 582). For Kahn's role in the development of free verse see Ireson, particularly pp. 79–96 and 147–62 and C. Scott, *French Verse Art* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 196–98. Scott's chapter on free verse in *French Verse Art* is the best introduction to the question. See also H. Morier, *Le Vers libre symboliste étudié chez Verhaeren, Henri de Régnier, Vielé-Griffin*, second edition (Geneva, 1977) and P. M. Jones: 'The First Theory of the "vers libre"' in his book, *The Background of Modern French Poetry* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 120–35.
59. Already in the 1886 article in *L'Événement*, Kahn had written that 'nous posons en principe fondamental la fléxion perpétuelle du vers ou mieux de la strophe déclarée seule unité.'
60. Kahn's reply to Huret's *Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire* made the same points in terms which repeat the pictorial analogy: 'Qu'est-ce qu'un vers? C'est un arrêt simultané de la pensée et de la forme de la pensée. Qu'est-ce qu'une strophe? C'est le développement par une phrase en vers d'un point complet de l'idée. Qu'est-ce qu'un poème? C'est la mise en situation par ces facettes prismatiques, qui sont les strophes, de l'idée tout entière qu'on a voulu évoquer.
    Un livre de vers, c'est-à-dire le poème le plus long et le plus complet qu'on puisse se figurer, doit donc présenter un tout homogène éclairant de toutes ses facettes de strophes un courant de sensations poétiques conçu dans une unité' (p. 395).
61. As Ireson says (p. 81): 'Au sens de Dujardin, les premiers vers libres publiés par Kahn se trouveraient dans la pièce n° IV d'"Intermède', ce qui nous paraît exact.' It is not possible to know exactly when they were written. Ireson believes that the collection was written 'au cours de 1885 et des premiers mois de 1886' (p. 41) and the circumstantial evidence supports this. Dujardin, for example, said that, on the basis of a letter received from Ghil, 'Gustave Kahn, à la fin de l'année 1885, n'a pas montré et vraisemblablement n'avait pas de vers libres qu'il pût montrer à René Ghil' (p. 610). In May 1886, Laforgue, on receipt of the April issue of *La Vogue*, containing 11 poems of Kahn under the general title of 'Thème et variations' (pp. 77–83), remarked: 'Quant aux vers eux-mêmes je n'en connaissais qu'un court fragment et ça m'a été, si tu permets, toute une révélation. Il y a là un tas de rythmes inédits et je ne te connaissais pas ces préoccupations' (*Lettres à un ami*, p. 182).
62. In line 13, scansion of two syllables in 'graves' and diaeresis in '-tions' is suggested but not required by the 5 + 6 context. For Kahn, counting syllables and conventional line lengths were to be replaced by the rhythms of the poet's internal music arranged in stanzas. Henry's experiments and Seurat's painting had shown that such arrangements were subject to scientific laws.
63. See Ireson, p. 49.
64. 'Seurat', *L'Art moderne*, 11 (5 April 1891), 107–10 (p. 109).
65. See A. de Croze, 'Les Confessions littéraires: le vers libre et les poètes', *Le Figaro* (3 August 1895). This interview (and Kahn's review of 9 April 1887 in *La Vie moderne* referred to above in note 55) are two of the rare items not included in Ireson's excellent bibliography.
66. On *Crise de vers* see particularly J. Roubaud, *La Vieillesse d'Alexandre* (1978), pp. 37–59.
67. As J.-P. Richard put it in *L'Univers imaginaire*: 'Chaque mot influe donc sur le sens du vers, mais ce sens reflue aussi sur la signification de chaque terme, qu'il pénètre en profondeur, modifie de sa nuance et enrichit de sa vertu. L'imagination mallarméenne reconnaît ainsi avec joie dans le vers régulier un nouveau type de structure active; le rapport de la partie au tout, ici du mot au vers, y reste le même que dans la relation qui unissait les objets à l'esprit, ou encore que dans le contact théâtral du moi avec un autrui multiple' (pp. 536–37).
68. This has been shown by M. Ronat in her postscript to the 1980 *Change* edition of *Un Coup de dés*.

CHAPTER SIX

1. *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Georges Daniel de Monfried* (1930), p. 21 (henceforth Monfried).
2. See his letters of 8 December 1892 in Malingue, pp. 236–38 and in Monfried, pp. 15–17.

3. C. Morice, *Paul Gauguin*, p. 31.
4. C. Mauclair, 'Choses d'art', *Mercure de France*, 12 (November 1894), 285.
5. For Retté's letter (to Alfred Vallette), see 'Echos divers et communications', *Mercure de France*, 12 (December 1894), 390.
6. See W. K. Cornell, *Adolphe Retté*, 1863–1930 (New Haven, 1942). Retté was one of the few to compliment Gauguin on his Volponi exhibition of 1889. See his comments in 'Bars et brasseries à l'exposition', *La Vogue*, 2 (1889), 150–56 (p. 155).
7. See Cornell, particularly pp. 86–98.
8. M. Denis, 'L'Influence de Paul Gauguin' in *Théories*, p. 167.
9. 'L'Influence de Paul Gauguin', p. 169.
10. Both paintings were on show at the Hayward Gallery in the 1972 exhibition, *French Symbolist Painters* (exhibits 35 and 37), and are reproduced in the catalogue (*Avril* in colour). The same opposition could also be made between Gauguin's *Vision après le sermon* and Denis's 1893 version of the same subject. On the lessons of Puvis's art for his own and subsequent generations of painters, see R. T. Wattenmaker, *Puvis de Chavannes and The Modern Tradition* (Ontario, 1975), pp. 1–31.
11. See R. Goldwater, 'Puvis de Chavannes: Some Reasons for a Reputation', *The Art Bulletin* (March 1946), pp. 33–43. On the movement in general see R. M. Griffiths, *The Reactionary Revolution: The Catholic Revival in French Literature, 1870–1914* (London, 1966).
12. *Dégénerescence* (1894). The German original was published in 1892. On Nordau, see J. Birkett, *The Sins of the Fathers*, pp. 6–10.
13. 'Une exposition d'œuvres de Puvis de Chavannes (1894)' in *Peintres de jadis et d'aujourd'hui* (1903), pp. 364–70 (p. 369).
14. *L'Art en silence* (1901), pp. 279–80.
15. See J.-M. Mayeur, *Les Débuts de la IIIe République 1871–1898* (1973), pp. 205–07.
16. See R. Carr, *Anarchism in France: The Case of Octave Mirbeau* (Manchester, 1977).
17. In *L'Idéalisme* of 1893, Rémy de Gourmont claimed that 'l'idéaliste ne saurait donc admettre qu'un seul type de gouvernement, l'an-archie' [sic] (p. 14) and that Symbolism 'se traduit littéralement par le mot Liberté, et pour les violents, par le mot Anarchie' (p. 23).
18. 'De Gauguin et de Van Gogh . . .', *Théories*, p. 266.
19. 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Art et les artistes*, 12 (November 1925), 37–64 (p. 61).
20. 'Souvenirs sur le symbolisme', *La Plume*, 17 (1 February 1904), 107–15 (p. 108).
21. See Magraw, *France 1815–1914*, pp. 238–39.
22. Gauguin was convinced that Morice had pocketed some of the proceeds of his 1891 sale. See the letter of May 1892 to de Monfried (Monfried, p. 8) and that of July 1892 to his wife (Malingue, p. 288).
23. Mirbeau wrote that 'ce qu'il cherchait en Bretagne, il l'a définitivement trouvé à Tahiti: la simplification de la ligne et de la couleur, et leurs harmonies correspondantes, dans le décor.' Gauguin cut out Mirbeau's article, 'Retour de Tahiti', and inserted it along with other reviews of his 1893 exhibition in his *Cahier pour Aline*.
24. This was the version of Mallarmé's comment which Gauguin quoted to A. Fontainas (Malingue, p. 288, letter of March 1899). In 1923, P. N. Roinard gave a different one: 'Je n'ai jamais vu tant de mystère dans autant de joie!' See L. J. Austin, 'Mallarmé critique d'art', p. 155. Morice, however, writing much closer to the event than Roinard, confirmed Gauguin's version: 'A l'exposition des œuvres que Gauguin, de retour de Tahiti, avait, l'an dernier, réunies chez Durand-Ruel . . . Stéphane Mallarmé disait: "Il est extraordinaire de mettre tant de mystère dans tant d'éclat". Voilà formulée pour toujours l'exacte synthèse de l'art de Gauguin ('Les Passants: Paul Gauguin', *Le Soir*, 23 November 1894). On Mallarmé's failure to respond to Morice's request see *Correspondance*, VI, 184.
25. 'La lutte pour les peintres', *Mercure de France*, 12 (November 1894), 254–71 (p. 264).
26. *Exposition d'œuvres récentes de Paul Gauguin*, Galeries Durand-Ruel, November 1893. For the history of the collaboration between Gauguin and Morice on *Noa Noa* and of the different versions of the text, see *Noa Noa. Gauguin's Tahiti*, edited and introduced by N. Wadley (London, 1985) particularly pp. 85–107. The Gauguin text to which I refer in what follows is that of his 1893 draft manuscript (first published in French by J. Loize in 1966 and in English by Wadley in 1985). References to Morice's commentaries and verse are to the text of *Noa Noa* published by the Éditions de la Plume in 1901.
27. Morice was aware of Gauguin's intention. In his book on the painter, he commented 'qu'il ait dit avoir "imaginé et ordonné cette collaboration pour montrer la supériorité du sauvage naïf et brutal sur le civilisé pourri", cela n'a point d'importance. Les mots, du reste, que j'inscris entre guillemets, sont employés dans un sens général: Gauguin confronta la civilisation et la sauvagerie, et non pas le poète et le peintre' (p. 188). It was in Morice's interests to make the distinction. The theme of the spirits of the dead is the subject of one of Gauguin's most

important paintings, *Manao tupapau* (1892), but took the following form in Morice's 1901 text:

> Mortes affamées
> D'être aimées
> Qui laissent les garçons pâmés
>
> Ouh ouh ouh
> Les Tupapaus.
>
> (p. 67)

28. See Jarry, *Œuvres complètes*, edited by M. Arrivé (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1972), I, 210. Unless otherwise stated, all subsequent references to Jarry's writings are to this edition.
29. Gauguin, pp. 19–20.
30. Gauguin, p. 23.
31. R. S. Field, *Paul Gauguin. The Paintings of the First Voyage to Tahiti* (New York and London, 1977), p. 25.
32. See in this respect J. Teilhet-Fisk, *Paradise Revisited*, pp. 41–42.
33. See Field, pp. 50–54 and Teilhet-Fisk, pp. 35–36.
34. See in particular Andersen, *Gauguin's Paradise Lost*, pp. 11–12, 84–87, and 109–14. Morice, characteristically, adapted Gauguin's theme to meet the needs of a Parisian public in pages of dismal illustrative verse:

> Mais moi, pénétrant dans ta pourriture,
> Je délivrerai l'homme et la nature
> De l'Arbre stérile et des vils esprits
> La mort et le mal sont en toi: péris!
>
> Afin que l'espoir dans les cœurs renaisse!
> Afin qu'il y ait une autre jeunesse,
> De nouvelles fleurs, encore un été,
> Et que l'Amour règne avec la Beauté!
>
> Périsse la Mort et vive la vie!
> Je frappe et je suis sourde. Pleure, crie,
> L'œuvre est faite! L'aube a vaincu la nuit
> Et l'Arbre de la Science est détruit.
>
> (p. 110)

35. See Birkett, *The Sins of the Fathers*, pp. 131–58.
36. See Wadley's discussion of this in the notes to his edition of Gauguin's manuscript, p. 74, note 42.
37. *Œuvres complètes*, p. 1039. On his return to Tahiti, Gauguin kept in touch with Jarry's progress via reviews and press cuttings sent out to him from Paris. In his own newspaper, *Le Sourire*, he wrote a brief note on 'Ubu vu de Tahiti'. See T. Foule, 'Trois textes peu connus relatifs à *Ubu*', *Europe*, 623–24 (March–April 1981), 140.
38. *Œuvres complètes*, pp. 176–77.
39. *Œuvres complètes*, pp. 252–55.
40. 'L'Aiguillage du chameau', *La Chandelle verte* (1969), p. 230. Jarry's poem has not been studied at any length. D. Compère in his article, 'L'Homme à la hache' does not, despite its title, discuss the poem of that name but looks at Jarry's theory of the letter as 'intermédiaire entre le dessin et la littérature' (in *Jarry*, Colloque de Cerisy (1985), pp. 73–84). The best introduction to Jarry's work is K. Beaumont's, *Alfred Jarry, A Critical and Biographical Study* (Leicester, 1984). See also M. Arrivé, *Les Langages de Jarry* (1972). On Jarry and the visual arts, see Arrivé, *Peintures, gravures et dessins d'Alfred Jarry* (1968); H. Béhar, 'Jarry, Rousseau et le populaire' in *Le Douanier Rousseau* (catalogue of the exhibition held in the Grand Palais, Paris, September 1984–January 1985), pp. 25–29 and J. Pierre, 'Alfred Jarry, André Breton et la peinture' in the Cerisy colloquium, pp. 111–26.
41. In Chapter 17 of *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien*, Faustroll and his monkey, Bosse-de-Nage, arrive at the Fragrant Isle: 'L'amarre de l'as fut enroulé autour d'un grand arbre balancé au vent comme un perroquet bascule dans le soleil' (*Œuvres complètes*, p. 682). The first syllable of 'hasards' combines the 'as' with the 'ha-ha' of Bosse-de-Nage's solitary utterance. Jarry's tree-parrot metaphor is taken from Gauguin, who described the coconut tree of *L'Homme à la hache* as 'un immense perroquet laissant tomber sa queue dorée' (*Noa-Noa*, p. 21).
42. See M. Arrivé's introduction to his edition of the *Œuvres complètes*, pp. xix–xx.
43. 'Ceux pour qui il n'y eut point de Babel', *La Chandelle verte*, p. 301.

44. Cf. Mirbeau's January 1891 letter to Monet telling him that Gauguin was 'très tourmenté de savoir ce que vous pensez de son évolution, vers la complication de l'idée dans la simplification de la forme' (in *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*, 9 (1922), 172).
45. 'Les Minutes de sable mémorial', *Mercure de France*, 12 (October 1894), 177.
46. *La Plume*, 6 (15 January 1895), 47.
47. *La Plume*, 6 (15 January 1895), 58.
48. See Wattenmaker, pp. 11–14.
49. *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*, p. 268.
50. See J. Foucart, 'Les deux versions de *l'Espérance*' in the catalogue of the Puvis de Chavannes exhibition held in the Grand Palais, Paris, November 1976–February 1977, pp. 114–17. In February 1895, the *Mercure de France* published its own homage to Puvis in the form of Gauguin's drawing of *L'Espérance*. It was accompanied by the Morice sonnet to which I refer later in the chapter.
51. The phrase is that of F. Coppée. See Foucart, p. 114.
52. See D. H. T. Scott, 'Pour une prosodie de l'espace: le sonnet et les arts visuels' in *Ecritures II*, edited by A.-M. Cristin (1985), pp. 227–54. On this sonnet, Scott's otherwise very informative article says only that the strophic structure threatens to collapse (in lines 11–12) 'sous la pression de la page qui envahit et, en quelque sorte, disloque l'articulation du vers' (p. 252). The reference to the 'pressure of the page' is unclear (and is not made any clearer by his printer's failure to respect Mallarmé's typography). The fracture of line 11 is surely more related to the content of the line than to a supposed 'pressure' of the page.
53. Quoted by Mauclair in *L'Art en silence*, p. 93. See R. G. Cohn, *Toward the Poems of Mallarmé*, p. 265.
54. *Les Mots anglais* in *Œuvres complètes*, p. 921. See the other examples of Mallarmé's use of this vowel quoted by Cohn, pp. 265–66.

CONCLUSION

1. L. Venturi's 1936 *History of Art Criticism* is a history of theories of painting from Antiquity to the twentieth century and, as such, is of little help here.
2. See in this respect W. Steiner, *The Colors of Rhetoric. Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting* (Chicago and London, 1982) and F. Meltzer, 'Color as Cognition in Symbolist Verse', *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (Winter 1978), 253–73.
3. *Discours et plaidoyers politiques*, edited by J. Reinach, 11 vols (1880–85), III (1881), 101, quoted by R. Kasl in her article, 'Edouard Manet's *Rue Mosnier*: "Le pauvre a-t-il une patrie?"', *Art Journal*, 44 (Spring 1985), 49–58 (p. 58). On connections between Manet and Gambetta, see Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition*, pp. 124–26.
4. This is an important theme in T. J. Clark's *The Painting of Modern Life*.
5. See A. Bowness, 'An Alternative Tradition?' in the catalogue of the 1972 Hayward Gallery exhibition, *French Symbolist Painters* (pp. 14–20).

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The place of exhibition or publication is Paris unless otherwise stated.

A. *Primary Sources*

Adam, P., 'L'Art symboliste', *La Cravache*, 422 (23 March 1889).
—— 'Les Frères de Goncourt', *La Cravache*, 408 (15 December 1888).
—— 'Les Impressionnistes à l'exposition des indépendants', *La Vie moderne*, 10 (15 April 1888), 228–29.
—— 'Peintres impressionnistes', *La Revue contemporaine*, IV (April 1888), 541–51.
—— 'La Presse et le symbolisme', *Le Symboliste*, 1 (7–14 October 1886).
Ajalbert, J., *Sur le vif, vers impressionnistes* (1886).
—— 'Neige à minuit', *Le Chat noir* (28 February 1885).
—— 'Pointe sèche', *Le Chat noir* (17 January 1885).
—— 'Le Salon des impressionnistes', *Revue moderne*, III (20 June 1886), 385–93.
Anon., 'L'Histoire du jury et de M. Manet', *Le Bien public* (6 April 1876).
—— 'Sur Diderot', *La Revue indépendante*, 1 (May–October 1884), 278–92.
—— 'Vente Secrétan', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 12 (13 July 1889), 91–92.
Antoine, J., 'Georges Seurat', *La Revue indépendante*, 19 (April 1891), 89–93.
—— 'Impressionnistes et synthétistes', *Art et critique*, 24 (9 November 1889), 369–71.
Asseline, L., *Diderot et le dix-neuvième siècle* (1866).
Aurier, G.-A., *L'Œuvre maudit* (1889).
—— *Œuvres posthumes*, ed. by R. de Gourmont (1893).
—— 'A Mallarmé', *Le Décadent*, 3 (24 April 1886).
—— 'Camille Pissarro', *La Revue indépendante*, 14 (March 1890), 503–15.
—— 'Chronique', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 19 (31 August 1889), 146–47.
—— 'Chronique d'art', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 18 (24 August 1889), 138–39.
—— 'Claude Monet', *Mercure de France*, 4 (April 1892), 302–05.
—— 'Concurrence', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 10 (27 June 1889), 74.
—— 'Les Décadences précoces', *Le Décadent*, 10 (12 June 1886).
—— 'Deux expositions: Berthe Morisot, deuxième exposition des peintres impressionnistes et symbolistes', *Mercure de France*, 5 (July 1892), 259–63.
—— 'Eugène Carrière', *Mercure de France*, 2 (June 1891), 332–35.
—— 'Exposition Pissarro', *Mercure de France*, 4 (March 1892), 283.
—— 'Henry de Groux', *Mercure de France*, 3 (October 1891), 223–29.
—— 'Les Isolés: Vincent Van Gogh', *Mercure de France*, 1 (January 1890), 24–29.
—— 'J.-F. Henner', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 2 (13 April 1889), 10; 3 (20 April 1889), 18.
—— 'Meissonier', *La Revue indépendante*, 15 (June 1890), 324–29.
—— 'Monticelli, Paul Gauguin', *La Revue indépendante*, 18 (March 1891), 418–22.
—— 'L'Opération', *Le Décadent*, 7 (22 May 1886).
—— 'La Peinture à l'Exposition', *La Pléiade*, II (August 1889), 102–04.
—— 'La Poitrinaire', *Le Décadent*, 34 (27 November 1886).

—— 'Préface pour un livre de critique d'art', *Mercure de France*, 6 (December 1892), 309–32.
—— 'Raffaelli', *Mercure de France*, 1 (September 1890), 324–29.
—— 'Ratiocinations familières, et d'ailleurs vaines, à propos des trois salons de 1891', *Mercure de France*, 3 (July 1891), 30–39.
—— 'Renoir', *Mercure de France*, 3 (August 1891), 103–06.
—— 'Revanche', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 14 (27 July 1889), 106–07.
—— 'Salon de 1889', *La Pléiade*, II (15 May 1889), 57–63; (August 1889), 102–04.
—— 'Soleil couchant, nouvelle impressionniste', *Le Faucon noir*, 4 (10 May 1885), 3–4.
—— 'Le Symbolisme en peinture: Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, 2 (March 1891), 155–65.
—— 'Les Symbolistes', *La Revue encyclopédique*, 1 (1 April 1892), 475–87.
Barbey d'Aurevilly, J., *Goethe et Diderot* (1880).
Baudelaire, C., *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by C. Pichois, 2 vols (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1976).
Bernadille, 'Les Tableaux de M. Manet', *Le Français* (21 April 1876).
Bernard, E., *Souvenirs inédits sur l'artiste peintre Paul Gauguin et ses compagnons* (Lorient, 1941).
—— 'Confidences', *La Vie*, 43 (14 December 1912), 219–21.
—— 'Lettre ouverte à Camille Mauclair', *Mercure de France*, 14 (June 1895), 332–39.
—— 'Au Palais des Beaux-Arts. Notes sur la peinture', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 14 (27 July 1889), 108–10.
—— 'Paul Cézanne', *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*, 8, 387 (1890).
—— 'Vincent Van Gogh', *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*, 8, 390 (1890).
—— 'Vincent Van Gogh', *Mercure de France*, 7 (April 1893), 324–31.
Bertall, 'L'Exposition de M. Manet', *Paris-Journal* (30 April 1876).
Blanc, C., *Grammaire des arts décoratifs* (1882).
—— *Grammaire des arts du dessin* (1867).
—— *Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles. Ecole florentine* (1876).
Bourget, P., *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* (1885).
—— 'Psychologie contemporaine. Notes et portraits. Charles Baudelaire', *Nouvelle revue*, 13 (15 November 1881), 398–416.
Bouyer, R., 'Le paysage contemporain. III. L'influence de Manet (1860–1883). Claude Monet et le paysage impressionniste', *Revue d'histoire contemporaine*, IV (2 May 1891), 727–36.
Brunetière, F., 'La Critique d'art au XVIe siècle', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 58 (1 July 1883), 207–20.
—— 'Les Salons de Diderot', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 39 (15 May 1880), 457–69.
—— 'Symbolistes et décadents', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 90 (1 November 1888), 213–26.
Burty, P., *Maîtres et petits maîtres* (1877).
Cardon, L., *Les Salons de 1892* (1892).
Cazalis, H., *Henri Régnault, sa vie, son œuvre* (1872).
Champsaur, F., *Dinah Samuel* (1882).
Chennevières, P. de, *Souvenirs d'un Directeur des Beaux-Arts*, 5 vols (1883–89).
Christophe, J., 'Georges Seurat', *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*, 8, 368 (1890).
Couturat, G. and J. (G. Moreilhon and G. Bonnamour), 'Le Fiasco symboliste', *La Revue indépendante*, 20 (July 1891), 1–28.

—— 'M. René Ghil', *La Revue indépendante*, 20 (August 1891), 178–251.
—— 'Petites Polémiques mensuelles. Feu M. G.-Albert Aurier', *La Revue indépendante*, 26 (February 1893), 45–66.
Croze, A. de, 'Les Confessions littéraires: le vers libre et les poètes', *Le Figaro* (3 August 1895).
Delaroche, A., 'Les Annales du symbolisme', *La Plume*, 2 (1 January 1891), 14–20.
—— 'D'un point de vue esthétique: à propos du peintre Paul Gauguin', *L'Ermitage*, 8 (January 1894), 35–39.
Delima, J., 'A. M. Stéphane Mallarmé', *La Cravache*, 396 (22 September 1888).
Demolder, E., 'J.-K. Huysmans, critique d'art', *Société nouvelle*, 2 (October 1889), 421–41.
Denis, M., *Théories 1890–1910. Du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (1912).
—— 'A propos de l'exposition d'A. Séguin chez le barc de Boutteville' *La Plume*, 6 (1 March 1895), 118–19.
—— 'L'Époque du symbolisme', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (March 1934), 165–79.
Deschamps, G., 'La Peinture contemporaine et l'antiquité', *Revue bleue*, 48 (1 August 1891), 134–37.
Destrée, J., *L'Œuvre lithographique d'Odilon Redon* (Brussels, 1891).
—— 'Odilon Redon', *La Société nouvelle*, 52 (December 1890), 639–59; 53 (January 1891), 51–77; 54 (February 1891), 185–206.
Diderot, D., *Salons*, ed. by J. Seznec and J. Adhémar, 4 vols (Oxford, 1957–67).
Dolent, J., *Amoureux d'art* (1888).
Dujardin, E., 'Considérations sur l'art wagnérien', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 3 (July–August 1887), 153–88.
—— 'Les Premiers Poètes du vers libre', *Mercure de France*, 146 (15 March 1921), 577–621.
—— 'Au XX et aux Indépendants: Le cloisonnisme', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (March 1888), 487–92.
Dumur, L., 'G.-Albert Aurier et l'évolution idéaliste', *Mercure de France*, 8 (August 1893), 289–97.
Duranty, E., *La Nouvelle Peinture* (1876).
Duret, T., *Critique d'avant-garde* (1885).
—— *Histoire d'Édouard Manet et de son œuvre* (1902).
—— *Les Peintres impressionnistes* (1878).
Ernst, A., *Richard Wagner et le drame contemporain* (1887).
Escaurailles, M. d' (G.-A. Aurier), 'La Critique sans phrases', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 10 (27 June 1889).
—— 'Le Salon de 1888', *Le Décadent*, 2e série, 11 (15–31 May 1888), 9–14; 12 (1–15 June 1888), 8–12.
Escorailles, A. d' (G.-A. Aurier), 'Sensationnisme', *Le Décadent*, 32 (13 November 1886).
Fénéon, F., *Œuvres plus que complètes*, 2 vols (Paris and Geneva, 1970).
Fontainas, A., *Mes Souvenirs du symbolisme* (1928).
—— 'Art moderne', *Mercure de France*, 29 (January 1899), 235–42.
France, A., *La Vie littéraire*, 4 vols (1889–92).
Fromentin, E., *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by G. Sagnes (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1984).

Gambetta, L.-M., *Discours et plaidoyers politiques*, ed. by J. Reinach, 11 vols (1880–85).
Gauguin, P., *Ancien Culte maori*, ed. by R. Huyghe (1951).
—— *Avant et après* (1923).
—— *Cahier pour Aline*, ed. by S. Damiron (1963).
—— *Correspondance*, ed. by V. Merlhès, 3 vols (1984–), I (1984).
—— *Diverses Choses*, MSS, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des dessins.
—— *Lettres à André Fontainas* (1921).
—— *Lettres de Gauguin à sa femme et à ses amis*, ed. by M. Malingue (1946).
—— *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Émile Bernard 1888–1891* (Geneva, 1954).
—— *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Georges Daniel de Monfried* (1930).
—— *Noa Noa*, ed. by J. Loize (1966).
—— *Noa Noa. Gauguin's Tahiti*, ed. by N. Wadley (London, (1985).
—— *Oviri. Écrits d'un sauvage*, ed. by M. Guérin (1974).
—— *45 lettres à Vincent, Theo et Jo van Gogh*, ed. by D. Cooper (Lausanne, 1983).
—— *Racontars de rapin* (1951).
—— 'Armand Séguin', *Mercure de France*, 13 (February 1895), 222–24.
—— 'Exposition de la libre esthétique', *Essais d'art libre*, V (February 1894), 30–32.
—— 'Natures mortes', *Essais d'art libre*, IV (January 1894), 273–75.
—— 'Notes sur l'art à l'Exposition Universelle', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 11 (4 July 1889), 84–86; 12 (11 July 1889), 90–91.
—— 'Notes synthétiques', *Vers et prose*, 22 (July–September 1910), 51–55.
—— 'Les Peintres français à Berlin', *Le Soir* (1 May 1895).
—— 'Qui trompe-t-on ici?', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 22 (21 September 1889), 170–71.
—— 'Sous deux latitudes', *Essais d'art libre*, V (February 1894), 75–80.
—— and C. Morice, *Noa Noa* (1901).
—— and C. Morice, 'Noa Noa', *La Revue blanche*, 14 (15 October 1897), 81–103; (1 November 1897); 166–90.
Gautier, T., *Tableaux à la plume* (1880).
Geffroy, G., *La Vie artistique*, 8 vols (1892–1903).
Germain, A., 'De la critique en art figuratif', *Essais d'art libre*, II (Janary 1893), 66–76.
—— 'Le Désespoir de la Chimère', *La Plume*, 2 (1 June 1892), 244.
—— 'L'Exposition des indépendants: les néo-impressionnistes et leur théorie', *Art et critique*, 16 (15 September 1889), 250–52.
—— 'Idéalisme et modernisme', *Moniteur des arts* (29 January 1892), pp. 32–33.
—— 'Les Mal Connus. Alexandre Séon', *La Plume*, 4 (1 August 1893), 336–40.
—— 'Pour le beau', *Essais d'art libre*, III (February–March 1893), 1–120.
—— 'Puvis de Chavannes et son esthétique', *L'Ermitage*, 2 (March 1891), 140–44.
—— 'Sur un tableau refusé: théorie du symbolisme des teintes', *La Plume*, 2 (15 May 1891), 171–72.
—— 'Du symbolisme', *Art et critique*, 19 (5 October 1889), 289–92.
—— 'Théorie des déformateurs: exposé et réfutation', *La Plume*, 2 (1 September 1891), 289–90.
—— 'Un Peintre idéaliste-idéiste, Alexandre Séon (symbolisme des teintes)', *L'Art et l'idée*, 2 (February 1892), 107–12.
Ghil, R., *Légendes d'âmes et de sangs* (1885).
—— *Traité du verbe* (1886).

—— 'Sous mon cachet', *La Basoche* (1885). I. 'Une Musique de vers' (13 June), 281–82; II. 'Le Symbole' (13 July), 325–26; III. 'L'Unité' (13 August), 355–56; IV. 'L'Instrumentation' (13 September), 378–81; V. 'Wagnerisme. L'Œuvre' (13 October), 410–13.
Goncourt, E. and J. de, *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle et autres textes sur l'art*, ed. by J.-P. Bouillon (1967).
—— *Manette Salomon* (1867).
Gourmont, R. de, *Esthétique de la langue française* (1899).
—— *L'Idéalisme* (1893).
—— *Le Livre des masques, portraits symbolistes*, 2 vols (1896–98).
—— *Le Problème du style* (1902).
—— 'Les Goncourt critiques d'art', *Mercure de France*, 8 (June 1893), 176–78.
—— '"Les Minutes de sable mémorial"', *Mercure de France*, 12 (October 1894), 177–78.
—— 'Notes sur G.-Albert Aurier', *Mercure de France*, 6 (December 1892), 289–303.
—— 'Le Symbolisme', *La Revue blanche*, 2 (June 1892), 321–25.
Hennequin, E., *La Critique scientifique* (1888).
—— 'Notes d'art: exposition des artistes indépendants', *La Vie moderne*, 8 (11 Septembre 1886), 581–82.
Henry, C., *Cercle chromatique* (1888).
—— *Étude sur le triangle harmonique* (1881).
—— *Harmonies de formes et des couleurs* (1891).
—— *Introduction à une esthétique scientifique* (1885).
—— *Le Rapporteur esthétique* (1888).
—— 'Rapporteur esthétique et sensation de forme', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (April 1888), 73–90; 'Cercle chromatique et sensation de couleur' (May 1888), 238–89; 'Harmonies de couleurs' (June 1888), 458–78.
Hirsch, C. H., 'Notes sur l'impressionnisme et le symbolisme des peintres', *La Revue blanche*, 2 (February 1892), 103–08.
Humbert de Superville, D. P. G., *Essai sur les signes inconditionnels dans l'art* (Leiden, 1827).
Huret, J., *Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire* (1891).
—— 'Paul Gauguin devant ses tableaux', *L'Echo de Paris* (23 February 1891).
Huysmans, J.-K., *Œuvres complètes*, 18 vols (1928–34).
—— '*La Cruche cassée*, d'après Greuze', *Musée des Deux-Mondes*, 5–6 (1 October 1875), 88.
Jarry, A., *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by M. Arrivé (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1972).
—— *La Chandelle verte* (1969).
—— *Peintures, gravures et dessins d'Alfred Jarry*, ed. by M. Arrivé (1968).
Kahn, G., *Les Dessins de Seurat* (1928).
—— *Les Palais nomades* (1887).
—— *Premiers poèmes, avec une préface sur le vers libre* (1897).
—— *Silhouettes littéraires* (1925).
—— *Symbolistes et décadents* (1902).
—— '"Amour"', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (May 1888), 344–51.
—— 'L'Art français à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, II (1889), 117–40.
—— 'Chronique d'art', *La Vogue*, I (25 April 1886), 100–02.
—— 'De l'esthétique du verre polychrome', *La Vogue*, I (18 April 1886), 54–65.
—— 'Exposition des impressionnistes', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (June 1888), 544–46.

—— 'Exposition des indépendants', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (April 1888), 160–64.
—— 'L'Exposition des 33', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1888), 146–51.
—— 'L'Exposition Luce', *La Revue indépendante*, 8 (August 1888), 315–16.
—— 'Exposition Puvis de Chavannes', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1888), 142–46.
—— 'Musique', *La Revue indépendante*, 6 (January 1888), 138–42.
—— 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Art et les artistes*, 12 (November 1925), 37–64.
—— 'Les Peintres de la vie', *La Revue indépendante*, 7 (May 1888), 362.
—— 'Les Peintures étrangers à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, II (1889), 213–31.
—— 'Réponse des symbolistes', *L'Événement* (28 September 1886).
—— 'Roger Marx', *Mercure de France*, 28 (October 1898), 43–52.
—— 'Seurat', *L'Art moderne* (Brussels, 15 April 1891), 107–10.
—— 'Au temps du pointillisme', *Mercure de France*, 171 (1 April 1924), 5–22.
—— 'Toiles annuelles', *La Vogue*, I (13 June 1886), 276–81.
—— 'La Vie artistique', *L'Art moderne* (Brussels, 9 April 1887), 229–31.
Lafenestre, G., 'Le Salon de 1888', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 87 (1 June 1888), 640–73.
Laforgue, J., *Œuvres complètes de Jules Laforgue*, ed. by G. Jean-Aubry, 5 vols (1925).
—— *Les Complaintes*, ed. by M. Collie (London, 1977).
—— *Lettres à un ami*, ed. by G. Jean-Aubry (1941).
—— *Mélanges posthumes*, ed. by C. Mauclair (1903).
—— *Poems*, ed. by J. A. Hiddleston (Oxford, 1975).
—— 'A propos de toiles, ça et là', *Le Symboliste*, 1 (30 October–6 November 1886).
—— 'Quatre lettres inédites de Laforgue', *La Cravache*, 394 (8 September 1888).
Le Cardonnel, L., 'Impressions de pluie', *Le Chat noir* (2 December 1882).
Leclercq, J., 'Albert Aurier', *Essais d'art libre*, II (November 1892), 201–08.
—— 'Exposition Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, 13 (January 1895), 121–22.
—— 'La Lutte pour les peintres', *Mercure de France*, 12 (November 1894), 254–71.
Lecomte, G., *L'Art impressionniste* (1892).
—— 'L'Art contemporain', *Le Revue indépendante*, 23 (April 1892), 1–29.
—— 'L'Art symboliste', *La Cravache*, 428 (3 May 1889).
—— 'Les Goncourt critiques d'art', *Revue de Paris*, 1 (1 July 1894), 201–24.
—— 'L'Impressionnisme', *Revue de l'évolution*, 2 (1 April 1892), 213–17.
Leprieur, P., *Gustave Moreau et son œuvre* (1889).
Leygues, M., (Homage to Puvis de Chavannes), *La Plume*, 6 (15 January 1895), 47.
Lorrain, J., 'Devant un Fragonard', *Le Décadent*, 27 (9 October 1886).
—— 'Salomé', *Le Chat noir* (29 November 1884), 396; *La Cravache*, 382 (16 June 1888).
—— 'Un Étrange Jongleur', *L'Echo de Paris* (10 April 1894).
Luc le Flâneur (G.-A. Aurier), 'En quête des choses d'art', *Le Moderniste illustré*, 2 (13 April 1889), 14; 7 (18 May 1889), 55.
Maeterlinck, M., 'A propos de *Solness le constructeur*', *Le Figaro* (2 April 1894).
Magnard, A., 'La Synthèse des arts', *La Revue de Paris*, 1 (15 September 1894), 424–42.
Mallarmé, S., *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by H. Mondor and G. Jean-Aubry (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1945).

—— Œuvres complètes. I. Poésies, ed. by C. P. Barbier and C. G. Millan (1983).
—— *Correspondance*, ed. by H. Mondor and J.-P. Richard (I, 1959), H. Mondor and L. J. Austin (II, 1965), L. J. Austin (III to XI, 1969–85); 'La Correspondance de Stéphane Mallarmé: compléments et suppléments', ed. by L. J. Austin, *French Studies*, 40 (January 1986), 13–25; 41 (April 1987), 155–180.
—— *Documents Stéphane Mallarmé*, ed. by C. P. Barbier, 7 vols (1968–80).
—— *Les "Gossips" de Mallarmé*, ed. by H. Mondor and L. J. Austin (1962).
—— *Propos sur la poésie*, ed. by H. Mondor (Monaco, 1953).
—— *Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, ed. by M. Ronat (Change errant/d'atelier, 1980).
—— 'The Impressionists and Edouard Manet', *The Art Monthly Review* (London, 30 September 1876) in *DSM*, I (1968), 66–86 (retranslated into French by M. Barthelme, *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 14 (1 August 1959), 375–84; P. Verdier, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (November 1975), 147–56; B. Keseljevic and M. Ronat, *Change*, 26–27 (February 1976), 178–91 and 29 (December 1976), 58–75.
—— 'Le Jury de peinture pour 1874 et M. Manet', *La Renaissance artistique et littéraire* (12 April 1874) in *Œuvres complètes*, 695–700.
—— (Toast to Gauguin), *Mercure de France*, 2 (May 1891), 318.
Marx, R., *Maîtres d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, second edition (1914).
—— 'L'Art décoratif et les "symbolistes"', *Le Voltaire* (23 August 1892).
—— 'Paul Gauguin', *Le Voltaire* (20 February 1891).
Mauclair, C., *L'Art en silence* (1901).
—— *L'Impressionnisme, son histoire, son esthétique, ses maîtres* (1903).
—— *Mallarmé chez lui* (1935).
—— 'Albert Besnard et le symbolisme concret', *La Revue indépendante*, 21 (October 1891), 7–30.
—— 'Choses d'art', *Mercure de France*, 12 (November 1894), 284–86; 13 (January 1895), 118–21; 14 (June 1895), 357–59; 17 (January 1896), 130; 17 (March 1896), 418–20; 18 (May 1896), 315–16.
—— 'Exposition Camille Pissarro chez Durand-Ruel', *Mercure de France*, 10 (April 1894), 377–79.
—— 'L'Exposition Claude Monet', *La Revue indépendante*, 19 (May 1891), 267–69.
—— 'Exposition Odilon Redon', *Mercure de France*, 11 (May 1894), 94–95.
—— 'Lettre sur la peinture (à Monsieur Raymond Bouyer, critique d'art à *L'Ermitage*', *Mercure de France*, 11 (July 1894), 270–75.
—— 'Notes sur l'idée pure', *Mercure de France*, 6 (September 1892), 42–46.
—— 'Réponse à M. Émile Bernard', *Mercure de France*, 15 (July 1895), 91–96.
—— 'Sur la peinture dite littéraire', *L'Éventail* (Brussels, 18 December 1927), 5.
Maud, P. (M. Denis), 'Notes d'art et d'esthétique', *La Revue blanche*, 2 (June 1892), 360–66.
Maupassant, G. de, *Œuvres complètes*, 29 vols (1908–10).
Maus, O., *Trente années de lutte pour l'art, 1884–1914* (Brussels, 1926).
—— 'Le Salon des XX à Bruxelles', *La Cravache*, 419 (2 March 1889).
Mellerio, A., *Le Mouvement idéaliste en peinture* (1896).
—— *Odilon Redon* (1913).
Mendès, C. (?), 'The Impressionists: A New School in France', *New York Tribune* (28 April 1877).
Mérimée, J. F. L., *De la peinture à l'huile* (1830).
Merki, C., 'Apologie pour la peinture', *Mercure de France*, 8 (June 1893), 139–53.

Merrill, S., 'Souvenirs sur le symbolisme', *La Plume*, 16 (15 December 1903), 613–24; 17 (1 January 1904), 2–11; (1 February 1904), 107–15.
Michel, A., *Notes sur l'art moderne* (1896).
Michelet, E., *De l'ésotérisme dans l'art* (1890).
—— 'L'Exposition de Maxime Maufra', *Essais d'art libre*, IV (January 1894), 282–86.
Mirbeau, O., *Des artistes*, 2 vols (1922–24).
—— Preface, *Catalogue d'une vente de 30 tableaux de Paul Gauguin* (1891).
—— 'L'Art et la nature', *Le Gaulois* (26 April 1886).
—— 'Lettres à Claude Monet', *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*, 9 (1922), 161–76.
—— 'Paul Gauguin', *L'Echo de Paris* (16 February 1891).
Mockel, A., *Esthétique du symbolisme* (1962).
—— Propos de littérature (1894).
Moerenhoust, J. A., *Voyage aux îles du Grand Océan*, 2 vols (1837).
Montégut, E., 'La Nouvelle Littérature française. Les romans de Victor Cherbuliez', *Revue des Deux Mondes* (15 May 1867), 482–501.
Moréas, J., *Les Premières Armes du symbolisme* (1889).
—— 'Épode', *Le Chat noir* (16 December 1882).
—— 'Peintures', *Le Symboliste*, 3 (22–29 October 1886).
—— 'Le Symbolisme. Un manifeste littéraire', *Le Figaro* (18 September 1886).
Moreau, G., *L'Assembleur de rêves. Écrits complets de Gustave Moreau*, ed. by P.-L. Mathieu (Fontfroide, 1984).
Morice, C., *Demain. Questions d'esthétique* (1888).
—— *Exposition d'œuvres récentes de Paul Gauguin* (1893).
—— *La Littérature de tout à l'heure* (1889).
—— *Paul Gauguin*, (1920).
—— 'A Puvis de Chavannes', *Mercure de France*, 13 (February 1895), facing page 129.
—— 'L'Atelier de Paul Gauguin', *Le Soir* (4 December 1894).
—— 'Le Départ de Paul Gauguin', *Le Soir* (28 June 1895).
—— 'Les Passants. Paul Gauguin', *Le Soir* (23 November 1894).
—— 'Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, 9 (December 1893), 289–300.
—— 'Paul Gauguin', *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui*, 9, 440 (1896).
—— 'Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, 48 (October 1903), 100–35.
—— 'Quelques Opinions sur Paul Gauguin', *Mercure de France*, 48 (November 1903), 413–33.
Muhlfeld, L., 'A propos de peintures', *La Revue blanche*, 4 (June 1893), 453–60.
Natalis, 'La Critique d'art', *Art et critique*, 2 (8 June 1889), 17–18.
Natanson, T., *Peints à leur tour* (1948).
—— 'Exposition Odilon Redon', *La Revue blanche*, 6 (May 1894), 470–73.
—— 'Œuvres récentes de Paul Gauguin', *La Revue blanche*, 5 (December 1893), 418–22.
—— 'Un Groupe de peintres', *La Revue blanche*, 5 (November 1893), 336–41.
Nordau, M., *Dégénerescence* (1894).
Orfer, L. d', 'La Grande Marotte', *Le Scapin*, 3 (16 October 1886), 88–94.
Papus (Encausse, G.), *Traité élémentaire de science occulte* (1888).
Péladan, J., *Salon de la Rose+Croix. Règles et monitoires* (1891).
—— 'Gustave Moreau', *L'Ermitage*, 10 (January 1895), 29–34.
—— 'Le Procédé de Manet d'après l'exposition faite à l'École des Beaux-Arts', *L'Artiste* (February 1884), 101–02.

Pilate de Brinn'Gaubast, L., 'Exposition des artistes indépendants', *Le Décadent*, 24 (18 September 1886).
Pilon, E., 'Gustave Kahn', *L'Ermitage*, 12 (February 1896), 72–86.
—— 'Œuvres d'Odilon Redon (chez Durand-Ruel)', *La Plume*, 5 (1 May 1894), 171–72.
Pissarro, C., *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, ed. by J. Bailly-Herzberg, 2 vols (1980–86)
—— *Lettres à son fils Lucien*, ed. by J. Rewald (1950).
Porcheron, E., 'Promenades d'un flâneur: l'exposition de M. Manet', *Le Soleil* (20 April 1876).
Ramiro, E., *Catalogue descriptif et analytique de l'œuvre gravé de Félicien Rops* (1887).
Rebell, H., (Homage to Puvis de Chavannes), *La Plume*, 6 (15 January 1895), 58.
Redon, A., ed., *Lettres de Gauguin, Gide, Huysmans, Jammes, Mallarmé, Verhaeren . . . à Odilon Redon* (1960).
Redon, O., *A soi-même*, second edition (1961).
—— *Lettres d'Odilon Redon, 1878–1916* (1923).
Régnault, H., *Correspondance de Henri Régnault*, ed. by A. Duparc (1872).
Régnier, H. de, 'Puvis de Chavannes. Panneau pour le Musée de Rouen', *Entretiens politiques et littéraires*, 1 (1 June 1890), 87–89.
Renan, A., 'Puvis de Chavannes d'après un livre récent', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (January 1896), 79–85.
Retté, A., *Promenades subversives* (1896).
—— *Le Symbolisme. Anecdotes et souvenirs* (1903).
—— 'Bars et brasseries à l'Exposition', *La Vogue*, II (1889), 150–56.
—— 'Septième Exposition des artistes indépendants', *L'Ermitage*, 2 (May 1891), 293–301.
—— (Letter to Alfred Vallette), *Mercure de France*, 12 (December 1894), 390–91.
Rimbaud, A., *Œuvres*, ed. by S. Bernard (Garnier, 1960).
—— *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by A. Adam (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1972).
Riotor, L., *L'Art et l'idée. Essai sur Puvis de Chavannes* (1896).
Ris, C. de, *Portraits à la plume* (1853).
Rivière, G., 'Les Intransigeants de la peinture', *L'Esprit moderne*, 18 (13 April 1876), 7–8.
Sabbrin, C., 'La Science et la philosophie en art (l'impressionnisme)', *La Vogue*, II (4 October 1886), 410–18.
Sainte-Beuve, C.-A., *Causeries du lundi*, second edition, 7 vols (1852–54).
Saunier, C., 'L'Art nouveau. I. Camille Pissarro. II. Les Indépendants', *La Revue indépendante*, 23 (April 1892), 30–48.,
Scherer, J., *Diderot* (1880).
Schuré, E., *Le Drame musical*, 2 vols (1875).
—— *Les Grands Initiés* (1889).
—— 'La Peinture psychique et le symbolisme transcendant' in *Précurseurs et révoltés* (1904), 325–77.
Séailles, G., 'Peintres contemporains: Puvis de Chavannes', *Revue bleue*, 41 (4 February 1888), 140–44; (11 February 1888), 179–85.
Ségalen, V., 'Les Synesthésies et l'école symboliste', *Mercure de France*, 42 (April 1902), 57–90.
Sérusier, P., *ABC de la peinture, suivi d'une correspondance inédite*, ed. by H. Boutaric (1950).

Signac, P., *D'Eugène Delacroix au néo-impressionnisme* (1899).
Sizeranne, R de la, 'Rose+Croix, préraphaélites et esthètes', *Le Correspondant*, 130 (25 March 1892), 1127–40.
Souriau, P., 'Le Symbolisme des couleurs', *La Revue de Paris*, 2 (15 April 1895), 849–70.
Sylvestre, A., 'Les Deux Tableaux de M. Manet', *L'Opinion* (23 April 1876).
Tardieu, E., 'La Peinture et les peintres: M. Puvis de Chavannes, M. Paul Gauguin', *L'Echo de Paris* (13 May 1895).
Thoré, T., *Salons de W. Bürger*, 2 vols (1872).
Vachon, M., *Puvis de Chavannes* (1895).
Valéry, P., *Œuvres*, ed. by J. Hytier, 2 vols (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1957–60).
Vallette, A., 'Les Symbolistes', *Le Scapin*, 3 (16 October 1886), 73–81.
Vandérem, F., 'Vernissages', *La Revue bleue*, 19 (15 May 1893), 607–09.
Van Gogh, V., *Correspondance complète*, trans. by M. Beerblock and L. Roëlandt, 3 vols (1960).
Vanor, G., *L'Art symboliste* (1889).
Verhaeren, E., 'Georges Seurat', *La Société nouvelle*, 76 (30 April 1891).
Verlaine, P., *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. by Y.-G. Le Dantec (Bibliothéque de la Pléiade, 1962).
Viélé-Griffin, F., 'A propos du vers libre', *Entretiens politiques et littéraires*, 1 (1 March 1890), 3–11.
Wyzéwa, T. de, *Nos maîtres* (1895).
—— *Peintres de jadis et d'aujourd'hui* (1903).
—— 'Les Lithographies de M. Fantin Latour', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 3 (February 1887), 25–26.
—— 'Les livres', *La Revue indépendante*, 5 (December 1887), 321–43.
—— 'M. Mallarmé', *La Vogue*, I (5 July 1886), 361–75; (12 July 1886), 414–24.
—— 'Notes sur la littérature wagnérienne et les livres en 1885–1886', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 2 (8 June 1886), 150–71.
—— 'Notes sur la peinture wagnérienne et le Salon de 1886', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 2 (8 May 1886), 100–13.
—— 'Le Nouveau Salon du Champ-de-Mars', *L'Art dans les deux mondes*, 30 (13 June 1891), 39–41.
—— 'Peinture wagnérienne: Le Salon de 1885', *La Revue wagnérienne*, 1 (8 June 1885), 154–56.
—— 'Pierre-Auguste Renoir', *L'Art dans les deux mondes*, 3 (6 December 1890), 27–28.
Zola, E., *Œuvres complètes*, ed. by H. Mitterand, 15 vols (1966–69).

B. *Secondary Sources*

1. *Exhibition Catalogues*

L'Art en France sous le Second Empire, Grand Palais, May–August 1979.
Autour de Lévy–Dhurmer. Visionnaires et intimistes en 1900, Grand Palais, March–April 1973.
Bonjour Monsieur Manet, Centre Georges Pompidou, June–October 1983.
Centenaire de l'impressionnisme, Grand Palais, September–November 1974.
Le Chemin de Gauguin, Saint-German-en-Laye, Musée Départemental du Prieuré, October 1985–March 1986.

The Crisis of Impressionism 1878–1882, University of Michigan Museum of Art, November 1979–January 1980.
Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David. Les Salons: 1759–1781, Hôtel de la Monnaie, October 1984–January 1985.
Le Douanier Rousseau, Grand Palais, September 1984–January 1985.
Émile Bernard, 1868–1941, peintures, dessins, gravures, Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, April–June 1967.
Fantin-Latour, Grand Palais, November 1982–February 1983.
Félicien Rops, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, June–July 1985.
French Symbolist Painters, London, Hayward Gallery, June–July 1972.
The Hidden Face of Manet, London, The Courtauld Institute Galleries, April–June 1986.
Hommage à Claude Monet, Grand Palais, February–May 1980.
L'Impressionnisme et le paysage français, Grand Palais, February–April 1985.
Manet 1832–1883, Grand Palais, April–August 1983.
Manet at Work, London, The National Gallery, August–October 1983.
Le Musée du Luxembourg en 1874, Grand Palais, May–November 1974.
Peintres de l'imaginaire. Symbolistes et surréalistes belges, Grand Palais, February–April 1972.
Pissarro, Grand Palais, January–April 1981.
Post-Impressionism: Cross-Currents in European Painting, London, Royal Academy of Arts, November 1979–March 1980.
Puvis de Chavannes, Grand Palais, November 1976–February 1977.
Puvis de Chavannes and the Modern Tradition, Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, October–November 1975.
The Sacred and Profane in Symbolist Art, Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario, October–November 1969.
Le Symbolisme en Europe, Grand Palais, May–July 1976.
Wagner et la France, Théâtre National de l'Opéra de Paris, October 1983–January 1984.
William Bouguereau, Petit Palais, February–May 1984.

2. *Bibliography, Criticism and Theory*

Andersen, W., *Gauguin's Paradise Lost* (London, 1971).
Anderson, D. L., *Symbolism: A Bibliography of Symbolism as an International and Multi-Disciplinary Movement* (New York, 1975).
Argencourt, L. d', 'Bouguereau et le marché de l'art en France' in *William Bouguereau* (see section 1), pp. 95–103.
Arguelles, J. A., *Charles Henry and the Formation of a Psycho-Physical Aesthetic* (Chicago, 1972).
Arnaud, N., *Alfred Jarry* (1974).
Arrivé, M., *Les Langages de Jarry* (1972).
Ashton, D., 'The Other Symbolist Inheritance in Painting' in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of the European Languages*, ed. by A. Balakian (Budapest, 1982), pp. 519–27.
Austin, L. J., '"L'Après-midi d'un faune" de Stéphane Mallarmé: lexique comparé des trois états du poème' in *Studi in onore di Carlo Pellegrini* (Turin, 1963), pp. 733–38.

—— '"L'Après-midi d'un faune", essai d'explication', *Synthèses* (December 1967–January 1968), 24–35.
—— 'Mallarmé and the Visual Arts' in *French Nineteenth Century Painting and Literature*, ed. by U. Finke (Manchester, 1972), pp. 232–57.
—— 'Mallarmé critique d'art' in *The Artist and the Writer in France*, ed. by F. Haskell, A. Levi and R. Shackleton (Oxford, 1974), pp. 153–62.
—— 'Mallarmé et le rêve du "Livre"', *Mercure de France*, 317 (1 January 1953), 81–108.
Baas, J., 'Edouard Manet and *Civil War*', *Art Journal*, 44 (Spring 1985), 36–42.
Bacou, R., *Odilon Redon*, 2 vols (1956).
Baldwin, M., C. Harrison, and M. Ramsden, 'Art History, Art Criticism and Explanation', *Art History*, 4 (December 1981), 432–56.
Barbier, C. P., 'La Documentation mallarméenne' in *Colloque Mallarmé* (1975), pp. 37–55.
Barre, A., *Le Symbolisme. Essai historique sur le mouvement poétique en France de 1885 à 1900* (1912).
Barrière, J., 'Les "Voyelles" telles quelles', *RHLF* (March–April 1974), 214–22.
Barthes, R., *L'Empire des signes* (1970).
—— *L'Obvie et l'obtus* (1982).
—— 'La lutte avec l'ange: analyse textuelle de *Genèse* 32. 23–33' in *Analyse structurale et exégèse biblique* (Neufchatel, 1971), pp. 27–39.
—— 'La Peinture est-elle un langage?' *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 68 (1 March 1969), 16 (repr. in *L'Obvie et l'obtus*, pp. 139–41).
—— 'La Peinture et l'écriture des signes', *Coloquio artes*, 16 (December 1974), 23–38.
—— 'Rhétorique de l'image', *Communications*, 4 (1964), 40–51.
Beaumont, K., *Alfred Jarry. A Critical and Biographical Study* (Leicester, 1984).
Béhar, H., 'Jarry, Rousseau et le populaire' in *Le Douanier Rousseau* (see section 1), pp. 25–29.
Bénichou, P., *L'Écrivain et ses travaux* (1967).
Berger, K., 'Mallarmé and the Visual Arts' in *Les Mardis — Stéphane Mallarmé and the Artists of his Circle* (University of Kansas Museum of Art, 1965), 51–58.
Bernard, S., *Mallarmé et la musique* (1959).
Bersani, L., *The Death of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Cambridge, 1982).
Birkett, J., *The Sins of the Fathers. Decadence in France 1870–1914* (London, 1986).
Bodelsen, M., *Gauguin's Ceramics* (London, 1964).
Boime, A., *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970).
—— *Thomas Couture and the Eclectic Vision* (New Haven and London, 1980).
—— 'America's Purchasing Power and the Evolution of European Art in the Late Nineteenth Century' in *Saloni, gallerie, musei e loro influenza sullo sviloppo dell'arte dei secoli 19 e 20* (Bologna, 1981), pp. 123–39.
—— 'The Second Empire's Official Realism' in *The European Realist Tradition*, ed. by G. P. Weisberg (Bloomington, 1982), pp. 31–123.
—— 'The Teaching Reforms of 1863 and the Origins of Modernism in France', *Art Quarterly*, 1 (1977), 1–39.
Borowitz, H. O., *The Impact of Art on French Literature. From De Scudéry to Proust* (London and Toronto, 1985).

Bowie, M., *Mallarmé and the Art of Being Difficult* (Cambridge, 1978).
Bowness, A., 'An Alternative Tradition?' in *French Symbolist Painters* (see section 1), pp.14–20.
—— 'Manet and Mallarmé', *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, 62 (1967), 213–21.
Boyle-Turner, C., *Paul Sérusier* (Ann Arbor, 1983).
Breton, A., 'Alfred Jarry, initiateur et éclaireur: son rôle dans les arts plastiques', *Arts*, 331 (2 November 1951), 1, 10.
Brookner, A., *The Genius of the Future. Studies in French Art Criticism* (London, 1971).
Bryson, N., *Word and Image. French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge, 1981).
Buckley, E. T., *Poesia Muta: Allegory and Pastoral in the Early Painting of Titian* (Ann Arbor, UMI, 1978).
Bukdahl, E. M., *Diderot critique d'art*, 2 vols (Copenhagen, 1980–82).
Burgin, V., *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (London, 1986).
Cachin, F., *Gauguin* (1968).
—— 'Monsieur Vénus et l'ange de Sodome: l'androgyne au temps de Gustave Moreau', *Nouvelle Revue de psychanalyse*, 7 (Spring 1973), 63–69.
—— 'Some Notes on Pissarro and Symbolism' in *Studies on Camille Pissarro*, ed. by C. Lloyd (London and New York, 1986), pp. 95–98.
Callen, A., *Techniques of the Impressionists* (London, 1982).
Caramaschi, E., *Arts visuels et littérature. De Stendhal à l'impressionnisme* (Fasano, 1985).
Carr, R., *Anarchism in France: The Case of Octave Mirbeau* (Manchester, 1977).
Caws, M. A., *The Eye in the Text. Essays on Perception, Mannerist and Modern* (Princeton, 1981).
Celebonovic, A., *Peinture kitsch ou réalisme bourgeois* (1974).
Chassé, C., *Gauguin et son temps* (1955).
Chastel, A., 'Une Source oubliée de Seurat', *Archives de l'art français* (Mélanges Brière), 22 (1950–57), 400–07.
Cheetham, M. A., 'Mystical Memories: Gauguin's Neoplatonism and "Abstraction" in Late-Nineteenth-Century Painting', *Art Journal*, 46 (Spring 1987), 15–21.
Chelap, P., 'Bibliography: Symbolist Art, 1974–1984', *Art Journal*, 45 (Summer 1985), 171–80.
Chisholm, A. R., *"L'Après-midi d'un faune": exégèse et étude critique* (Brussels, 1974).
Christin, A.-M., 'L'Écrit et le visible: le dix-neuvième siècle français' in *L'Espace et la lettre: écritures, typographies* (1977), pp. 163–92.
—— 'Fromentin critique d'art ou la rhétorique du vide', *C.A.I.E.F.*, 37 (1985), 193–212.
Chouillet, J., 'Du langage pictural au langage littéraire' in *Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David* (see section 1), pp. 41–54.
Clark, T. J., *The Painting of Modern Life. Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London, 1985).
Clay, J., 'Onguents, fards, pollens', in *Bonjour Monsieur Manet* (see section 1), pp. 6–24.
Cohn, R. G., *Toward the Poems of Mallarmé*, second edition (California, 1980).
Compère, D., 'L'Homme à la hache' in *Jarry* (Colloque de Cerisy, 1985), pp. 73–83.

Contini, G., 'Sulla trasformazione dell' "Après-midi d'un faune"', *L'Immagine*, 9–10 (August–December 1948), 502–13.
Cooke, D., *The Language of Music* (Oxford, 1959).
Cornell, W. K., *Adolphe Retté, 1863–1930* (New Haven, 1942).
Coulon, M., *Une Minute de l'heure symboliste: Albert Aurier* (1921).
Crémieux, B., 'L'Œuvre de Gustave Kahn', *Le Monde nouveau*, IV (15 July 1923), 101–20.
Crespelle, J., *Les Maîtres de la Belle Époque* (1966).
Crowley, R., 'Toward the Poetics of Juxtaposition: *L'Après-midi d'un faune*', *Yale French Studies*, 54 (1977), 33–44.
Danielsson, B., *Gauguin in the South Seas* (London, 1965).
—— 'Gauguin's Tahiti Titles', *Burlington Magazine*, 109 (April 1967), 228–33.
Davies, G., *Mallarmé et le rêve d'Hérodiade* (1978).
—— *Vers une explication rationnelle du "Coup de dés"*, (1953).
—— 'Divagations on Mallarmé Research', *French Studies*, 40 (January 1986), 1–12.
Dayan, P., *Mallarmé's 'Divine Transposition'. Real and Apparent Sources of Literary Value* (Oxford, 1986).
Decaudin, M., 'Albert Aurier: de l'esprit décadent à l'esprit symboliste', *Bulletin de la Société Toulousaine d'Études Classiques*, 136 (February–March 1962), 1–4.
—— 'Aurier l'ignoré', Dossiers acénonètes du Collège de Pataphysique, 15 (October 1961), 41–46.
—— 'Un mythe "fin de siècle": Salomé', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 4 (March–June 1967), 109–17.
—— 'Poésie impressionniste et poésie symboliste', *C.A.I.E.F.*, 12 (June 1960), 133–42.
—— 'Sur l'impressionnisme de Verlaine' in *La Petite Musique de Verlaine: Romances sans paroles. Sagesse* (1982).
Delevoy, R. L., *Le Symbolisme* (Geneva, 1977).
Delsemme, P., *Téodor de Wyzéwa et le cosmopolitanisme littéraire en France à l'époque du symbolisme*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1967).
Derrida, J., *La Dissémination* (1972).
—— *La Vérité en peinture* (1978).
Dombi Erzsebet, P., 'Synaesthesia and Poetry', *Poetics*, 11 (1974), 23–44.
Dorra, H., 'Extraits de la correspondance d'Émile Bernard des débuts à la Rose+Croix (1876–1892)', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (December 1980), 235–42.
—— and J. Rewald, *Seurat. L'Œuvre peint. Biographie et catalogue critique* (1959).
Dufwa, J., *Winds from the East. A Study in the art of Manet, Degas, Monet and Whistler* (Stockholm and New Jersey, 1981).
Etiemble, R., *Le Sonnet des voyelles. De l'audition colorée à la vision érotique* (1968).
Field, R. S., *Paul Gauguin. The Paintings of the First Voyage to Tahiti* (New York and London, 1977).
—— 'Gauguin's *Noa-Noa* Suite', *Burlington Magazine*, 110 (September 1968), 500–11.
Finke, U., ed., *French 19th Century Painting and Literature* (Manchester, 1972).
Florence, P., *Mallarmé, Manet and Redon. Visual and Aural Signs and the Generation of Meaning* (Cambridge, 1986).

Forestier, L., 'Gustave Moreau et le symbolisme', *Les Cahiers de Varsovie* (1973), 15–26.
—— 'Symbolist Imagery' in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of the European Languages*, ed. by A. Balakian (Budapest, 1982), pp. 101–18.
Foucart, J., 'Les Deux Versions de l'*Espérance*', in *Puvis de Chavannes* (see section 1), pp. 114–17.
F(oule), T., 'Trois Textes peu connus relatifs à *Ubu*', *Europe*, 623–24 (March–April 1981), 140–42.
Foulkes, J., 'Stéphane Mallarmé — Some Neglected Publications', *French Studies*, 35 (July 1981), 278–95.
Frappier-Mazur, L., 'Narcisse travesti: poétique et idéologie dans *La Dernière Mode* de Mallarmé', *French Forum*, 11 (January 1986), 41–57.
Fowlie, W., 'Mallarmé and the Painters of his Age', *The Southern Review* (Summer 1966), 542–48.
Fraenkel, E., *Les Dessins trans-conscients de Stéphane Mallarmé* (1960).
Francastel, P., *Peinture et société* (1951).
Franklin, U., *An Anatomy of Poesis: The Prose Poems of Stéphane Mallarmé* (Chapel Hill, 1976).
Fraser, D. H., *Gauguin's 'Vision after the Sermon'* (London, 1969).
Furness, R., *Wagner and Literature* (Manchester, 1982).
Furst, L., *Counterparts. The Dynamics of Franco-German Literary Relationships* (London, 1977).
Gill, A., *The Early Mallarmé*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1979–86).
—— 'Mallarmé et l'antiquité: "L'Après-midi d'un faune"', *C.A.I.E.F.*, 10 (1958), 158–73.
—— 'Mallarmé's Use of Christian Imagery for Post-Christian Concepts' in *Order and Adventure in Post-Romantic French Poetry. Essays presented to C. A. Hackett*, ed. by E. M. Beaumont, J. M. Cocking, and J. Cruickshank (Oxford, 1973), pp. 72–88.
—— (Review of Mallarmé, *Correspondance III*), *MLR*, 67 (July 1972), 647–55.
Goldthorpe, R., 'Mallarmé: Sartre's Committed Poet' in *Baudelaire Mallarmé Valéry. New Essays in Honour of Lloyd Austin*, ed. by M. Bowie, A. Fairlie, and A. Finch (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 222–41.
Goldwater, R., *Symbolism* (London, 1979).
—— 'Puvis de Chavannes: Some Reasons for a Reputation', *The Art Bulletin* (March 1946), 33–43.
Gombrich, E., *Art and Illusion*, third edition (London, 1968).
Goodman, N., *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis, 1976).
Gordon, R. B., 'Aboli Bibelot? The Influence of the Decorative Arts on Stéphane Mallarmé and Gustave Moreau', *Art Journal*, 45 (Summer 1985), 105–12.
Goulemot, J.-M. and E. Walter, 'Les centenaires de Voltaire et de Rousseau' in *Les Lieux de mémoire. I. La République*, ed. by P. Nora (1984), pp. 381–420.
Graham, J., '"Ut Pictura Poesis": A Bibliography', *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 29 (January–March 1972), 13–15, 18.
Grate, P., *Deux Critiques d'art de l'époque romantique* (Stockholm, 1959).
Griffiths, R. M., *The Reactionary Revolution. The Catholic Revival in French Literature, 1870–1914* (London, 1966).
Guérin D., 'Gauguin et les jeunes Maoris', *Arcadie*, 20 (February 1973), 57–65.
Guillerm, J.-P., *Tombeau de Léonard de Vinci. Le Peintre et ses tableaux dans l'écriture symboliste et décadente* (Lille, 1981).

—— 'Matières et musiques. La peinture ancienne et le texte critique à la fin du XIXe siècle' in *Des Mots et des couleurs. Études sur le rapport de la littérature et de la peinture (XIXe et XXe siècles)*, ed. by P. Bonnefis and P. Reboul (Lille, 1981), pp. 1–47.
Halperin, J. U., *Félix Fénéon and the Language of Art Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1980).
Hamilton, G. H., *Manet and his Critics* (New Haven, 1954).
Hannoosh, M., 'The Poet as Art Critic: Laforgue's Aesthetic Theory', *MLR*, 79 (July 1984), 553–69.
Hanson, A. C., *Manet and the Modern Tradition*, second edition (New Haven and London, 1979).
Harris, C., 'A Little-Known Essay on Manet by Stéphane Mallarmé', *The Art Bulletin*, 46 (December 1964), 559–63.
Harrison, S. R., *The Etchings of Odilon Redon. Catalogue raisonné* (New York, 1986).
Hartmann, E., 'Mallarmé and Whistler: An Aesthetic Alliance', *Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, 22 (1975), 543–60.
Hauser, A., *The Social History of Art. IV. Naturalism, Impressionism, the Film Age* (London, 1962).
Heller, R., 'Concerning Symbolism and the Structure of Surface', *Art Journal*, 45 (Summer 1985), 146–53.
Herbert, E. W., *The Artist and Social Reform. France and Belgium*, 1885–98 (New Haven, 1961).
Herbert, R. L., 'Seurat and Puvis de Chavannes', *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, 25 (October 1959), 23–29.
—— 'Seurat's Theories' in *The Neo-Impressionists*, ed. by J. Sutter (London, 1970), pp. 23–42.
Herbin III, M., 'The Origin of Paul Gauguin's "Vision After the Sermon: Jacob Wrestling with the Angel (1888)"', *The Art Bulletin*, 59 (September 1977), 415–20.
Higgins, I., 'Towards a Poetic Theatre: Poetry and the Plastic Arts in Verhaeren's Aesthetics', in *Literature and the Plastic Arts 1880–1930*, ed. by I. Higgins (Edinburgh and London, 1973), pp. 1–23.
Hillery, D., *Music and Poetry in France from Baudelaire to Mallarmé* (Berne, 1980).
Hirsch, H., 'Symbolist Art and Literature', *Art Journal*, 45 (Summer 1985), 95–97.
Hobbs, R., *Odilon Redon* (London, 1977).
Hofstatter, H. H., 'L'Iconographie de la peinture symboliste' in *Le Symbolisme en Europe* (see section 1), pp. 11–16.
Holten, R. von, *L'Art fantastique de Gustave Moreau* (1960).
Homer, W. I., *Seurat and the Science of Painting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964).
House, J., 'Meaning in Seurat's Figure Paintings', *Art History*, 3 (September 1980), 345–56.
Hulubei, A., *L'Églogue en France au XVI siècle* (1938).
Inboden, G., *Mallarmé und Gauguin. Absolute Kunst als Utopie* (Stuttgart, 1978).
Ireson, J. C., *L'Œuvre poétique de Gustave Kahn (1859–1936)* (1962).
Isaacson, R., 'Les collectionneurs de Bouguereau en Angleterre et en Amérique' in *William Bouguereau* (see section 1), pp. 104–13.
Ishikawa, J., 'Moderne malgré lui. The Phenomenon of Puvis de Chavannes', *Art Journal*, 27 (Summer 1968), 381–86.

Jaworska, W., *Gauguin et l'École de Pont-Aven* (Neufchatel, 1971).
Jirat-Wasiutynski, V., *Paul Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism* (New York and London, 1978).
—— (Reply to M. Herbin III), *The Art Bulletin*, 60 (June 1978), 397–98.
Johnson, J. T. Jr, 'Literary Impressionism in France. A Survey of Criticism', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 13 (Winter 1973), 271–97.
Jones, P. M., *The Background of Modern French Poetry* (Cambridge, 1951).
Jullian, P., *Esthètes et magiciens. L'Art fin de siècle* (1969).
Kahnweiler, D., 'Mallarmé et la peinture', *Les Lettres* (1948), 63–68.
Kaplan, J., *The Art of Gustave Moreau: Theory, Style and Content* (Ann Arbor, 1982).
Kasl, R., 'Edouard Manet's Rue Mosnier: "le pauvre a-t-il une patrie?"', *Art Journal*, 44 (Spring 1985), 49–58.
Kelley, D., 'Degas: Naturalist Novelist or Symbolist Poet?', *French Studies*, 38 (July 1984), 306–18.
Keseljevic, B., 'L'Air, l'ère, l'aire', *Change*, 29 (December 1976), 76–79.
Kingma-Eijgendaal, A. W. G., 'Quelques effets impressionnistes', *Neophilologus*, 67 (July 1983), 353–67.
Kravis, J., *The Prose of Mallarmé* (Cambridge, 1976).
Kristeva, J., *La Révolution du langage poétique* (1974).
—— 'L'Espace Giotto', *Peinture, cahiers théoriques*, 2/3 (January 1972), 35–51.
Lamblin, P., *Peinture et temps* (1983).
Lehmann, A. G., *The Symbolist Aesthetic in France 1885–1895*, second edition (Oxford, 1968).
—— 'Un Aspect de la critique symboliste: signification et ambiguïté dans les beaux-arts', *C.A.I.E.F.*, 12 (June 1960), 161–74.
Leiris, A. de, 'Charles Morice and his Times', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 4 (December 1967), 371–95.
Le Paul, C.-G., *L'Impressionnisme dans l'École de Pont-Aven* (Paris and Lausanne, 1983).
Levine, S. Z., *Monet and his Critics* (New York and London, 1976).
Lewis, P. G., *The Aesthetics of Stéphane Mallarmé in Relation to his Public* (Rutherford, 1976).
Lewis, R., *On Reading French Verse* (Oxford, 1982).
Lidsky, P., *Les Écrivains contre la Commune* (1970).
Lipton, E., 'The Laundress in Late Nineteenth-Century Culture: Imagery, Ideology and Edgar Degas', *Art History*, 3 (September 1980), 295–313.
Lloyd, R., *Mallarmé: Poésies* (London, 1984).
Lockspeiser, E., *Music and Painting. A Study in Comparative Ideas from Turner to Schoenberg* (London, 1973).
Loevgren, S., *The Genesis of Modernism. Seurat, Gauguin, Van Gogh and French Symbolism in the 1880s*, second edition (Bloomington, 1971).
Loize, J., 'Un Inédit de Gauguin', *Les Nouvelles littéraires* (7 May 1953).
Lucie-Smith, E., *Symbolist Art* (London, 1972).
Lyotard, J.-F., *Discours, figure* (1971)
Magraw, R., *France 1815–1914. The Bourgeois Century* (London, 1983).
Maignon, C., *L'Univers artistique de J.-K. Huysmans* (1977).
Manet raconté par lui-même et par ses amis (1945).
Marin, L., *Études sémiologiques. Écritures, peintures* (1971).
Martino, P., *Parnasse et symbolisme*, eighth edition (1950).

Mateescu, C. A., 'Toward a Structural Approach to the Pictorial Language', *Poetics*, 11 (1974), 45–62.
Mathews, P. T., *Aurier's Symbolist Art Criticism and Theory* (Ann Arbor, 1986).
—— 'Aurier and Van Gogh: Criticism and Response', *The Art Bulletin*, 68 (March 1986), 94–104.
Mathieu, P.-L., *Gustave Moreau: sa vie, son œuvre* (1977).
Mauner, G., *The Nabis: Their History and Their Art,1888–1896* (New York and London, 1978).
Mauron, C., *Introduction à la psychanalyse de Mallarmé*, second edition (Neufchatel, 1968).
May, G., *Diderot et Baudelaire critiques d'art* (Geneva, 1967)
Mayeur, J.-M., *Les Débuts de la IIIe République 1871–1898* (1973).
Meltzer, F., 'Color as Cognition in Symbolist Verse', *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (Winter 1978), 253–73.
Mercier, A., *Les Sources ésotériques et occulte de la poésie symboliste (1870–1914). I. Le Symbolisme français* (1969).
—— 'Charles Henry et l'esthétique symboliste', *Revue des sciences humaines*, 35 (April–June 1970), 251–72.
Meyers, J., 'Huysmans and Gustave Moreau', *Apollo*, 99 (January 1974), 39–44.
Michaud, G., *Message poétique du symbolisme* (1947).
Milner, J., *Symbolists and Decadents* (London, 1971).
Moffet, C. S., *The New Painting. Impressionism, 1874–1886* (Oxford, 1986).
Mondor, H., *Eugène Lefébure, sa vie, ses lettres à Mallarmé* (1951).
—— *Histoire d'un faune* (1948).
—— *Vie de Mallarmé* (1941).
Morier, H., *Le Vers libre symboliste étudié chez Verhaeren, Henri de Régnier, Viélé-Griffin*, second edition (Geneva, 1977).
Mossop, D. J., *Pure Poetry. Studies in French Poetic Theory and Practice 1746–1945* (Oxford, 1971).
Moulin, R., *Le Marché de peinture en France* (1967).
Mras, G. P., *Delacroix's Theory of Art* (Princeton, 1966).
Munro, T., *The Arts and their Interrelations*, second edition (Cleveland, 1967).
—— '"The Afternoon of a Faun" and the Interrelation of the Arts', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 10 (December 1951), 95–111.
Nardis, L. de, *Stéphane Mallarmé: L'Après-midi d'un faune*, (Rome, 1976).
Németh, L., 'Contribution to a Typology of Symbolist Painting', in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of the European Languages*, ed. by A. Balakian (Budapest, 1982), pp. 437–53.
Nochlin, L., 'A Thoroughly Modern Masked Ball', *Art in America*, 71 (November 1983), 188–201.
Noulet, E., *L'Œuvre poétique de Stéphane Mallarmé*, second edition (Brussels, 1974).
Nuccitelli, A., '*A Rebours*'s Symbol of the "Femme-Fleur": A Key to Des Esseintes's Obsession', *Symposium*, 27 (Winter 1974), 336–44.
Orton F., and G. Pollock, 'Les Données bretonnantes: la prairie de représentation', *Art History*, 3 (September 1980), 314–44.
Paladilhe, J. and J. Pierre, *Gustave Moreau* (1971).
Parsons, C. and M. Ward, *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Second Empire Paris* (Cambridge, 1986).

Paschoud, G. and P. Junod, 'Diderot critique d'art', *Études de lettres*, 8 (January–March 1975), 3–35.
Passeron, R., 'Sur l'apport de la poïétique à la sémiologie du pictural' in *Peindre (Revue d'esthétique*, 1976, 1), 48–73.
Paxton, N., *The Development of Mallarmé's Prose Style* (Geneva, 1968).
Peyre, H., *Qu'est-ce que le symbolisme?* (1974).
Pierre, J., 'Alfred Jarry, André Breton et la peinture' in *Jarry* (Colloque de Cerisy, 1985), pp. 111–25.
Pierrot, J., *L'Imaginaire décadent* (1977).
Pincus-Witten, R., *Occult Symbolism in France. Joséphin Péladan and the Salons de la Rose+Croix* (New York and London, 1976).
Poggioli, R., *The Oaten Flute: Essays on Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975).
Poulet, G., *Études sur le temps humain. II. La Distance intérieure* (1952).
Praz, M., *Memosyne. The Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts* (Oxford and Princeton, 1970).
Prendergast, C., 'Blurred Identities: The Painting of Modern Life', *French Studies*, 40 (October 1986), 401–12.
Ragghianti, C. L., 'Mallarmé e Manet', *Critica d'Arte*, 44 (July–December 1979), 57–68.
Raitt, A. M., *Villiers de l'Isle-Adam et le mouvement symboliste* (1965).
Raymond, M., *De Baudelaire au surréalisme*, second edition (1963).
Réau, L., *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 3 vols (1955).
Reff, T., *Degas: The Artist's Mind* (London, 1976).
—— *Manet and Modern Paris* (Chicago and London, 1982).
—— ed., *Modern Art in Paris. Two Hundred Catalogues of the Major Exhibitions Reproduced in Facsimile in Forty-Seven Volumes* (1981).
—— 'Manet and Blanc's "Histoire des Peintres"', *Burlington Magazine*, 112 (1970), 456–58
Reverseau, J. P., 'Pour une étude du thème de la tête coupée dans la littérature et la peinture dans la seconde partie du XIXe siècle', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, (September 1972), 173–84.
Rewald, J., *The History of Impressionism* (New York, 1946).
—— *Georges Seurat* (1948).
—— *Post-Impressionism from Van Gogh to Gauguin*, second edition (New York, 1962).
—— *Studies in Post-Impressionism* (London, 1986).
—— 'Theo Van Gogh, Goupil and the Impressionists', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (January–February 1973), 1–108.
Rheims, M., *Les Collectionneurs* (1981).
Richard, J.-P., *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé* (1961).
Roberts-Jones, P., 'Symbolisme narratif et symbolisme plastique', *L'Œil*, 251 (June 1976), 24–29.
Roditi, E., 'The Spread and Evolution of Symbolist Ideals in Art', in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of the European Languages*, ed. by A. Balakian (Budapest, 1982), pp. 499–518.
Ronat, M., 'Mallarmé, visible syntaxe', *Change*, 26–27 (February 1976), 171–74.
—— 'Rythme et syntaxe en prose mallarméenne', *Change*, 29 (December 1976), 15–37.

Rookmaaker, H. R., *Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory*, second edition (Amsterdam, 1972).
Rosenberg, P., 'Diderot et la peinture' in *Diderot et l'art de Boucher à David* (see section 1), pp. 97–100.
Roskill, M., *Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle* (London, 1970).
Rouart, D. and D. Wildenstein, *Edouard Manet, catalogue raisonné*, 2 vols (Geneva, 1975).
Roubaud, J., *La Vieillesse d'Alexandre* (1978).
Rusic, S., 'Biographie d'Albert Aurier', *Dossiers acénonètes du Collège de Pataphysique*, 15 (1961), 47–51.
Sala, C. and C. Garraud, *La Peinture symboliste*, 2 vols (1981).
Sandstrom, S., *Le Monde imaginaire d'Odilon Redon* (Lund, 1955).
Sans, E., *Wagner et la pensée schopenhauerienne* (1969).
Schapiro, M., *Words and Pictures* (The Hague, 1973).
—— 'Fromentin as a Critic', *Partisan Review* (1949), 25–51.
—— 'Seurat and *La Grande Jatte*', *The Columbia Review*, 17 (November 1935), 9–16.
Schefer, J.-L., *Scénographie d'un tableau* (1969).
Scherer, J., *L'Expression littéraire dans l'œuvre de Mallarmé* (Geneva, 1947).
—— *Grammaire de Mallarmé* (1977).
—— *Le 'Livre' de Mallarmé*, second edition (1977).
Scott, C., *A Question of Syllables. Essays in Nineteenth-Century French Verse* (Cambridge, 1986).
—— *French Verse Art* (Cambridge, 1980).
—— 'Symbolism, Decadence and Impressionism' in *Modernism, 1890–1930*, ed. by M. Bradbury and J. McFarlane (London and New Jersey, 1978), pp. 206–27.
Scott, D. H. T., 'Pour une prosodie de l'espace: le sonnet et les arts visuels' in *Ecritures II*, ed. by A.-M. Christin (1985), pp. 227–54.
—— 'La structure spatiale du poème en prose d'Aloysius Bertrand à Rimbaud', *Poétique*, 59 (September 1984), 295–308.
Seiberling, G., *Monet's Series* (New York and London, 1981).
Secnec, J., 'Odilon Redon and Literature' in *French 19th Century Painting and Literature*, ed. by U. Finke (Manchester, 1972), pp. 280–98.
Shiff, R., *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism* (Chicago and London, 1984).
Slyke, G van, 'A la recherche du langage: "L'Après-midi d'un faune"', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 12 (Fall–Winter 1983–84), 168–84.
Smith, H. J., 'Mallarmé's Faun: Hero or Anti-Hero', *Romanic Review*, 64 (March 1973), 111–24.
Song, M., *Art Theories of Charles Blanc* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1981).
Sonnenfeld, A., 'Eros and Poetry: Mallarmé's Disappearing Visions', in *Order and Adventure in Post-Romantic French Poetry. Essays presented to C. A. Hackett*, ed. by E. M. Beaumont, J. M. Cocking and J. Cruickshank (Oxford, 1973), pp. 89–98.
Souffrin-Le Breton, E., 'The Young Mallarmé and the Boucher Revival', in *Baudelaire Mallarmé Valery. New Essays in Honour of Lloyd Austin*, ed. by M. Bowie, A. Fairlie and A. Finch (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 283–313.
Stafford, B. M., *Symbol and Myth. Humbert de Superville's Essay on Absolute Signs in Art* (New Jersey, 1979).

Stein, J. M., *Richard Wagner and the Synthesis of the Arts* (Detroit, 1960).
Steiner, W., *The Colors of Rhetoric. Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting* (Chicago and London, 1982).
Steinmetz, J., *Le Champ d'écoute* (1985).
Stuckey, C. F., 'Manet Revised: Whodunit?', *Art in America*, 71 (November 1983), 158–78.
Stumpel, J., '"The Grande-Jatte", that Patient Tapestry', *Simiolus*, 14 (1984), 209–24.
Sutton, D., *Degas. Life and Work* (London, 1986).
'Symposium on Literary Impressionism', *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 17 (1968), 40–68.
Sypher, W., *Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature* (New York, 1960).
Tabarant, A., *Manet et ses œuvres* (1947).
Teilhet-Fisk, J., *Paradise Revisited. An Interpretation of Gauguin's Polynesian Symbolism* (Ann Arbor, 1983).
Thibaudet, A., *La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé, étude littéraire* (1912).
Thomson, B., *The Post-Impressionists* (London, 1982).
—— 'Camille Pissarro and Symbolism: Some Thoughts prompted by the Recent Discovery of an Annotated Article', *Burlington Magazine*, 124 (January 1982), 14–23.
Thomson, R., *Seurat* (London, 1985).
Upensky, B. A., 'Structural Isomorphism of Verbal and Visual Arts', *Poetics*, 5 (1972), 5–39
Vaughan, G., 'Maurice Denis and the Sense of Music', *The Oxford Art Journal*, 7 (1984), 38–48.
Venturi, L., *Les Archives de l'impressionnisme*, 2 vols (1939).
—— *History of Art Criticism* (New York, 1936).
Verdin, S., *Stéphane Mallarmé le presque contradictoire* (1975).
Wadley, N., *Gauguin* (London, 1978).
Wais, K., 'Banville, Chateaubriand, Keats und Mallarmés Faun', *Zeitschrift für Französiche Sprache und Literatur*, 62 (1938), 178–93.
Walker, S. F., 'Mallarmé's Symbolist Eclogue: The "Faune" as Pastoral', *PMLA*, 93 (January 1978), 106–17.
Wattenmaker, R. J., *Puvis de Chavannes and the Modern Tradition* (see section 1).
Wechsler, J., *The Interpretation of Cézanne* (Ann Arbor, 1981).
Weisstein, U., 'Literature and the Visual Arts' in *Interrelations of Literature*, ed. by J.-P. Barricelli and J. Gibaldi (New York, 1982), pp. 251–77.
Wellek, R., 'What is Symbolism?' in *The Symbolist Movement in the Literature of the European Languages* ed. by A. Balakian (Budapest, 1982), pp. 17–28.
Welsh-Ovcharov, B., *Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Birth of Cloisonism* (Toronto, 1981).
Wethey, H. E., *The Paintings of Titian*, 3 vols (London, 1975).
White, H. and C., *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (New York, 1965).
Wildenstein, D., *Claude Monet, biographie et catalogue raisonné*, 3 vols (1974–79).
Wildenstein, G., *Gauguin, catalogue raisonné* (1964).
Wright, B., 'La Langue de la critique d'art dans *Les Maîtres d'autrefois* d'Eugène Fromentin' in *Colloque Eugène Fromentin* (Lille, 1981), pp. 11–31.
Zemel, C. M., *The Formation of a Legend: Van Gogh Criticism, 1890–1920* (Ann Arbor, 1980).
Zurowski, M., 'Les Rapports de la poésie et de la peinture à l'époque du symbolisme: questions de méthode', *Les Cahiers de Varsovie* (1973), 71–87.