

CEZANNE AS A "DECORATIVE" PAINTER

by

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ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses on a significant, but neglected aspect of Cézanne's oeuvre: the relationship between Cézanne's paintings and the decorative aesthetic of the 1890s.

Since the meaning of the term "decorative" underwent significant changes during the last quarter of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century, particular attention is paid to problems of definition in Chapter I, Part 1. This section shows that the definition of what was "true" decoration, and the increasing emphasis on decoration, were related to the process of revitalization of the industrial and decorative arts in France.

Chapter I, Part 2 establishes that the general tendency of the avant-garde painting in the decade 1890-1900 was to be "decorative." The most innovative manifestation of this trend was the introduction of the aesthetics of "decoration" into easel painting. The transformation of painting from tableau into "decoration" was a reflection of an anti-Naturalist, anti-positivist trend.

The second chapter of the thesis is devoted to Cézanne's position vis-à-vis the "decorative trend." Chapter II, Part 1 analyses the criticism of Cézanne's contemporaries. Special

attention is given to the writer's particular positions on aesthetics, philosophy, religion, politics (whenever possible), as well as to changes in these positions.

Chapter II, Part 2 analyses Cézanne's letters (considered as the only authentic source of true quotations from the artist) and paintings.

The conclusion is that Cézanne not only belongs to the general tendency toward the "decorative," but that he can be considered among its initiators. Moreover, the present author proposes that Cézanne was part of the movement that introduced the aesthetic of "décoration" into easel painting. Qualities such as the interplay between two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality, the accent on contours, the general aspect of bas-relief, or even of tapestry (often noticed by his contemporaries, as well as by later critics), can be explained by Cézanne's intention to apply to his paintings a "decoration paradigm." Special attention is placed on the method of "colour modulation" and its possible relation to similar methods used in 18th century French tapestries, or those recommended for tapestries in theoretical works by 19th century French reformers of the decorative arts.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Key Issue of the Thesis

The present state of research on Cézanne shows a strong Cubist bias, which clearly emerged in the exhibition of his late work organized by the Museum of Modern Art in 1977. The purpose of this exhibition was to emphasize the "evolution" from the late Cézanne to Cubism and thence to the other major artistic movements of the 20th century.

Modern views of Cézanne tend to rely too heavily on those of the Cubist painters, at the expense of those of the artist's contemporaries. To sum up the situation roughly, on one hand we are presented with a current image of Cézanne that emphasizes the perceptual character of his approach (the Cubist view, reinforced by Merleau-Ponty's influential "Cézanne's Doubt" of 1948¹); on the other hand, we are confronted with the opinions of his contemporaries who applied a decorative conception to his paintings. They saw Cézanne's work in the light of the "decorative ideal" as it was understood at the end of the 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century. The emphasis put on "decorative painting" by avant-garde painters and critics was an important part of the strong reaction against realism and positivism that took place at the end of the last century. Cézanne developed his mature style in this period of reaction against Naturalism and was considered as "initiator" of the decorative tendencies in avant-garde painting.

Right from the beginning, the Cubists emphasized Cézanne's

role as their "forefather" in order to "legitimize" their painting. (Cézanne was already an idol of the avant-garde.) At the same time they gave a "death-blow" to the concept of painting-decoration, because they, and especially their dealer, Kahnweiler, were concerned with the status of painting. They felt that the status of painting had been eroded, lowered to the level of decoration. In 1912, in their Cubism, Gleizes and Metzinger stated this anti-decorative attitude very clearly:

Many consider that decorative preoccupation must govern the spirit of the new painters. ... Enough decorative plastic art and pictorial decoration, enough confusion and ambiguity.²

Referring to 1906, and to Braque, Derain and Matisse among others, the influential dealer in Cubist art, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, declared in 1915: "Painting threatened to debase itself to the level of ornamentation; it sought to be 'decorative,' to 'adorn' the wall."³ Because Kahnweiler considered the status of decoration inferior, he did not like the designation of Cubism as "Geometric Act." Reductions to simple geometrical forms such as cubes, spheres and cylinders were "seen" by "early spectators" of Cubist paintings he remarked, but according to Kahnweiler, Cubist painters did not proceed from such reductions which are commonplace in architecture and applied arts. Cubist painters reproduced objects he said, by means of synthesizing various images of the object, obtained from various viewpoints.⁴ In other words they were "conceptual realists." This representation of the object as it really is (as opposed to the way it appears to be when seen in linear perspective) was also commonplace in architecture and applied

arts curricula in the 19th century, under the name of dessin géométral (as opposed to dessin perspectif).⁵ Kahnweiler actually admits that there is "a certain resemblance" between the Cubist mode of representation of solid objects and this "geometrical drawing."⁶

Both Cubism and decoration - as the latter was understood in the second half of the 19th century - wanted to avoid illusionism and used similar methods to do so. The basic difference lays in intention. Cubism wanted to react against painting "debased" to the level of decoration, and thus labelled itself "Realism" (a "profound," or better, a "conceptual" one). Decoration avoided illusionism in order not to "pierce holes" in the walls, in order to respect their planar surface, in other words out of submission to architecture. Easel painting based on the principles of decoration reacted against the Realism connected with the positivist, empiricist method, which only reproduced "appearances." This painting did not aspire to a higher status than that of mural painting, of painting that had a specific destination.

When the Cubists gathered themselves under the banner of "Realism," they declared their works derived from Courbet's (whose realism they labelled "superficial realism") and Cézanne's ("profound realism").⁷ Of course, Cézanne was not considered as "conceptual" as themselves, because otherwise where would have been the innovation? Thus the main difference between the Cubists and Cézanne has traditionally been considered to reside in the much more conceptual (versus perceptual) character of Cubist art. Not long ago, however, William Rubin remarked that

a lot of Cézanne's art is also "conceptual." He turned this admission into an argument in favour of a closer relationship between Cézanne and the Cubists, suggesting that the difference between their respective methods "was as much one of degree as of kind."⁸ But if there are similarities in method, it does not necessarily mean there are also similarities in intentions, in motives. Cézanne's conceptualism could be rooted in the principles of decoration, which were applied to painting as a reaction against realism in the first place. This is my working hypothesis, which I hope to demonstrate by placing the painter in his own historical time.

During the 1890s and the first years of this century, the decorative aspects of Cézanne's work were considered "paramount and new," as George Heard Hamilton has pointed out.⁹ Apparently Hamilton is the only modern art historian who has considered this as significant. But even he separated the "decorative" from the "architectural," when in fact the two notions were not at all incompatible in the context of "decorative painting" at the time in France.¹⁰

The present author feels that a significant aspect of Cézanne has been neglected by modern scholarship: the relationship between Cézanne's painting and the decorative aesthetic of the 1890s and the first years of the 20th century. This is the key issue of the thesis.

2. Overview

In the first chapter I propose to establish that the new tendency of French avant-garde painting in the decade 1890 -

1900 was to be "decorative." This tendency (emphasized by the critics of the period) encompassed more than Symbolist painting. It included Neo-Impressionist painting, as well as new painting by the old "Impressionists."

In Chapter I, Part 1 I shall deal with problems of definition. A topic of utmost importance is, of course, the exact meaning of "decorative" at that time. Applied to painting it did not mean the same thing to everybody. For some avant-garde painters it meant the transformation of easel painting into "decoration," in other words it meant the abolition of the tableau. Impressionism reduced easel painting to the state of *ébauche* or sketch, but preserved the general characteristics of the tableau.¹¹ Impressionist painting was also "decorative" in the sense used in the 1870s, but it was not a true "decoration." "Decoration" is again a term that requires definition. Decoration, as it was understood at the time was subservient to architecture, the most important consequence being the preservation of the flatness of a wall. A tableau would simulate a "window" where the architect did not intend to place one. A "decorative painting" (painting-decoration" was not to make use either of chiaroscuro or perspective effects (linear or atmospheric). But this did not necessarily mean absolute flatness as in an ornamental design. Many "reformers" of the decorative arts in the second half of 19th century France wanted decorative painting to retain something of the "Western tradition."

But why did the avant-garde want at that particular time to transform easel painting into decoration? The "rebirth," the flourishing of decorative arts in the last decade of the

19th century does not automatically explain why the artists did not just limit themselves to the traditional "decorative arts." Most of the reformers of decorative arts active in the second half of the last century kept two separate sets of "laws": one for decoration, another for easel paintings, for tableaux. Only Viollet-le-Duc and other Gothic Revivalists or sympathisers would have preferred the "decadent," even "pagan" tableau abolished altogether. The avant-garde of the 1890s, as I will discuss in Chapter I, Part 2, turned to the set of principles recommended for decoration, motivated by ideological reasons.

I considered it necessary to stress the French sources of influence which contributed to the avant-garde's orientation toward decoration, because this aspect has been neglected by modern scholarship. It is for example customary to mention the influence of Ruskin or William Morris on the rebirth of decorative arts in France, or even on the Nabi group of painters, without a word about Viollet-le-Duc.¹²

After establishing in the first chapter what the general trend of the avant-garde painting was at the end of the 19th century and the very beginning of the 20th century, I will deal in the second chapter of the thesis with Cézanne's position vis-à-vis this trend.

Chapter II, Part 1 will indicate that the bulk of contemporary criticism emphasized the "decorative" features of Cézanne's paintings. According to their respective positions regarding what "decorative painting" should be (some were bothered by the flatness of decoration in easel painting, for ideological reasons) the critics can be divided in two main

groups: those who considered Cézanne's "distortions" as being voluntary, of a conceptual nature, and those who blamed them on faulty perception or skill. Both groups remarked though on similarities between Cézanne's paintings and various decorative arts such as ceramics, Oriental silks, mosaics, and especially tapestries.

Finally, Part 2 of the second chapter will attempt to determine if Cézanne's paintings and his own words (I consider as his "own words" only what he wrote in his letters) are compatible with a "decoration paradigm."

My conclusion is that there is a strong enough case for the "decoration paradigm" fitting Cézanne's paintings of his "mature" period (i.e. since the 1880s). Many of these paintings fit actually, in my opinion, into a "tapestry paradigm." I refer especially to the 18th century Rococo tapestries, among extant examples, as well as to hypothetical tapestries, as envisaged by the reformers of decorative arts in France in the last quarter of the 19th century. I shall place a special emphasis on the connection which can be made between Cézanne's method of "colour modulations" and similar methods recommended by the writings of Charles Blanc and Michel Eugène Chevreul, or employed in 18th century Beauvais tapestry.

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF DECORATION IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY
ART AND THE NEW TENDENCIES IN THE PAINTING OF THE 1890s

Introduction.

In the last few years art historians have begun to recognize the role played by the "lowly," "merely decorative" arts in the formation of "high" modern art.¹

Because the "decorative" is today associated with absolute flatness, Cézanne has been excluded from recent discussions on this topic.² Yet Cézanne was considered by many of his contemporaries as the "initiator" of the new decorative tendencies manifested in painting in the 1890s. In order to understand this it is necessary to clarify what "decoration" and "decorative" meant at the time when Cézanne worked, especially when he developed his mature style. One of the most important conclusions of Chapter I, Part 1 is the fact that when Cézanne developed his mature style, the term "decorative" was not equated with absolute flatness. According to most French theorists at the time, a strict two-dimensional flatness was not required, nor even considered desirable, neither in decorative painting nor in all the decorative arts, such as tapestry for example (only in carpets, wallpapers, pavements, stained-glass windows).

It is also important to understand the reasons behind the

apparently sudden interest of avant-garde artists in "decoration" and the "decorative" in the 1890s in France. The interest in decorative arts, expressed by artists practicing "high" art was not aroused suddenly in the 1890s. It was the avant-garde of the 1890s who applied decorative arts principles (which can be summarized as "flatness") to easel painting as well as to mural decorations. (As will be discussed in Chapter I, Part 2, this was related to the anti-naturalist, anti-positivist reaction that began in the 1880s.) Yet the principles of decoration, as well as a revival of interest in decoration were respectively formulated and initiated not by the avant-garde, but by "official" reformers of decorative arts. I will deal with these problems of a general nature in Part 1 of the first chapter.

Chapter I, Part 1

The Revitalization of the Industrial Arts in France
and its Role in Redefining the Concept of Decoration.

The revitalization of industrial and/or decorative arts³ was a constant preoccupation within various administrations in the second half of the 19th century in France. At first only the Government and private industry (not artists) strove toward this goal, since the ultimate motive behind the industrial arts revitalization was of an economic nature: France was afraid of losing the lead in this field, mainly because of English competition.

There was however a substratum of a non-economic nature underlying the reforms proposed: the "official" reformers were Gothic Revivalists (or sympathisers) who wanted to redefine the principles of decoration in such a way as to correspond to their particular viewpoint. They considered art since the Renaissance as "decadent" or even "pagan."⁴ Of course they knew that the Government would be very receptive to such reasons as an economic lag and the "prestige" of France. This tactic (substituting economic reasons for the ideological ones) worked first very well in England, where the Gothic Revival was a stronger movement than in France in the first half of the 19th century. The original motives behind this movement were of a religious nature (with ethical and sociological implications) as is evident in its most important propagandist, the architect and designer A.W.N. Pugin. He insisted on a return to "true" Christian art and virtues which he found in the Middle Ages.

He also found there a model of social structure, which he advocated. "Official" reformers, such as the civil servant Henry Cole (1808-1882) and his circle, argued for the necessity of establishing the "true" principles" of decoration, and started a campaign against "bad taste" (read illusionistic naturalism), based on Pugin's doctrines.⁵ The Great London Exhibition of 1851 (the World's Fair at the Crystal Palace) was seized upon by these reformers as a great opportunity to launch their successful campaign against realistic illusionism in decoration. The exhibits of Victorian England indeed provided an abundance of examples of what they considered "bad taste." In the formulation of the "true principles" a very influential personality was the architect, industrial designer, and interior decorator Owen Jones (1809-1874) who established what was "true" and what was "false" in the decorative arts.⁶ He considered it absolutely necessary that an ornament should preserve the unity of the object that it decorated. That implied respect for the plane surface of walls and floors. He objected to wallpaper patterns that were not perfectly flat, and to carpets with "perspective representations, and pierced full of holes."⁷ Flatness, which often meant a simple, abstract geometrical design, was very suitable for mechanical reproduction, for mass production. The "officials" I mentioned before were very much interested in the relationship between art and industry. Henry Cole and his circle (as opposed to William Morris and the later Arts and Crafts movement, which represented most artists' point of view) accepted wholeheartedly the role of the machine in the industrial arts and were interested in better designs for mass-

produced goods, especially wallpapers. In achieving this goal, education was of paramount importance. Cole created the famous "Schools of Design" attached to the South Kensington Museum, where the "true principles" of ornamental design were taught.⁸

The results of the official reformers' endeavours were seen in the English exhibits at the World's Fair of 1862. This time the French Gothic Revivalists and their supporters saw the opportunity to create "panic." They found a very susceptible listener in the person of the Emperor Napoleon III, who was extremely interested in the progress of the industrial arts. He looked upon the rivalry between France and England in this field as a "kind of war, which makes no victims" and held the opinion that the products of the industry "testify to our moral and political condition."⁹ Even before he became emperor, while still the President of France, Louis Napoleon had appointed a committee headed by the Comte Léon de Laborde (curator of medieval monuments at the Louvre) to study the Great London Exhibition of 1851 and the relationship between arts and industry. Not everybody in the government was prepared to take seriously Laborde's warnings concerning the necessity of reforms right then, since France received gold and silver medals at the first World's Fair, proof that there was no desperate need for improvement.¹⁰ However, in 1862, the success of England's exhibits gave more weight to the conclusion reached by another medievalist, Prosper Mérimée (novelist and medieval archaeologist, civil servant, friend of de Laborde and of Viollet-le-Duc - the best known Gothic Revivalist in France), who as a member of the French delegation at the Fair, described the situation as "serious,

even threatening."¹¹ The Government of Napoleon III became convinced that a revitalization of industrial arts was absolutely necessary. That meant a closer relationship between "high art" and industry, reforms in art education at all levels, as well as the education of manufacturers, merchants and the general public in order to improve their "taste," and make everybody aware of "the true principles of decoration."

This process of revitalization did not proceed smoothly, however, because of the conflicting interests of the various groups involved.

The Government, as I already pointed out, was interested in France's "prestige" and economic growth, and when convinced that there was a real threat to those areas, agreed to act. It was thus possible for Viollet-le-Duc (whose ideas on decoration, as we shall see, will be important for both Symbolist painters as well as Art Nouveau) to have his ideas on the reformation of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts accepted by the Emperor and his administrative body. Viollet-le-Duc was the driving force behind the "Decree of 1863" which placed the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under direct government control, undermining the authority of the Academy.¹² The importance of the Decree of 1863 from the point of view of stressing "originality" and its consequences for the development of independent artistic movements has been very well demonstrated by Albert Boime.¹³ I would like to place more emphasis on the other main issue raised by the Decree (also pointed out by Boime), namely the relationship between art and industry. One of the important achievements of the Decree, in accordance with Viollet-le-Duc's dream of uniting all the arts, was the

of preparatory workshops in painting, sculpture, architecture, as well as in engraving, medallions and jewelery, on the premises of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. This intrusion of the applied arts into that bastion of high art that was the Beaux-Arts (where strangely enough not even painting was previously taught), was suppose to attract the best artists into the field of industrial arts. In the Report of the Superintendent of Beaux-Arts (a text that was published together with the Decree in the Gazette des Beaux Arts), the Comte Alfred-Emilien Nieuwerkerke who held this official position, and who was also co-author of the Decree (with Viollet-le-Duc), declared that the reorganization of the Ecole "will insure our industry a superiority which is beginning to be contested."¹⁴

The "official" reformers (Nieuwerkerke, Viollet-le-Duc, de Laborde, Merimée, for example) in the desire to revitalize the industrial arts entered into conflict with the Academy, because they violated its sacred territory. The prototypical representative of the Academy was Ingres. He protested against mixing "art" and industry at the Ecole, which he considered a "true temple of Apollo."¹⁵ Ingres and his pupils succeeded in forcing the resignation of Viollet-le-Duc as professor of History of Art and Aesthetics, after only seven lectures. Thus his influence was greatly diminished.

Viollet-le-Duc can be considered as representing the "official" side of the above-mentioned conflict between the Academy on the one side, and the officials on the other. (This is a conflict that would continue for the rest of the 19th

century.¹⁶) He was the favourite architect of Napoleon III, who appointed him Inspector General of diocesan buildings soon after he proclaimed himself Emperor. Viollet-le-Duc was not trained at the Ecole (he was largely self-taught) and hated the Academy (a resentment shared by Napoleon III) and everything it stood for. Instead of classicism he praised the Gothic and the social system that produced it, in which the division of labor among artists, that would occur later in "decadent" societies, did not yet exist. He was against the emancipation of painting since the Renaissance, and advocated the unity of the three arts: architecture, sculpture and painting, since the breaking of the ties between them led to the "decadence of all of them." He praised primitive societies in which, he said, "There are not three visual arts, there is only one."¹⁷ Viollet-le-Duc deplored the split between "the beautiful" and "the useful," between the architect and engineer, between "high art" and industry. His ideas in the artistic realm were a curious mixture of old and new, so that his enemies and later detractors considered him merely a "Gothic imitator" (while in fact he opposed the plagiarism of older styles) and among his future admirers he would have such important figures of Art Nouveau as Horta, Guimard, Gaudi, and Serrurier-Bovy. A look at the decorations he did for the Château d'Eu, for example (especially the iron-work of the great staircase, the ceiling ornamental motifs with arabesques, the motifs inspired by organic, floral shapes that decorate the heat-conveying system) would tell why.¹⁸ Grasset, another well-known Art Nouveau personality (medievalist, student of Japanese art and insistent on using

ornamental motifs derived from nature) was Viollet-le-Duc's pupil, and so was V.P. Galland, who has only lately been recognized as an influence on the development of the Art Nouveau style in France.¹⁹ Galland was able to reintroduce Viollet-le-Duc's ideas into the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1873 (and after), when he was appointed to teach a course in decorative art.

Viollet-le-Duc gladly would have abolished the tableau (in the Academic sense of the word) altogether, since for him it embodied times of decadence, and he would have had mural painting resemble medieval manuscript illuminations. He represented one position on decoration in France in the second half of the 19th century. There was another, widespread position, which while it accepted that decoration should respect the flatness of the surface it decorated, wanted to retain in "decorative painting" something of the "Western Tradition," that is, some modelling of the individual objects represented, and especially of the human figure. (I will come back to this distinction in positions regarding decoration later on, when I will discuss the actual principles of decoration.) This will be the "official" position in the 1880s.

An extreme case of a representative of the "Western tradition" was Charles Blanc (1813-1882), Viollet-le-Duc's contemporary.²⁰ I considered him an "extreme case" in preserving the Occidental tradition, because in mural painting he did not make any concessions with respect to modelling of individual forms (only with respect to perspective and coloring, regarding the general "effect," as I shall discuss later). He was in the peculiar position of being both an "official" and an

Academician, and it is evident in his influential writings and activities, that he tried to reach a compromise between the two sides. He was a firm believer in hierarchy in art. The highest form of art according to him was an art that had the ability to instigate heroic sentiments in the viewer, that could serve (without admitting this as its purpose since "high art" was not supposed to have utilitarian ends) noble causes, moral ends. He favoured classicism, particularly that of the Renaissance. Thus he was in tune with the Academy.²¹ Blanc held the opinion that only the State should have the monopoly of "grand art," produced for the "greatest glory of French art." Murals were very appropriate for this kind of art in his view, since when decorating public edifices, they had wide exposure to numerous people who could thus benefit from those "noble ideas."²³ In "grand art" murals, Blanc would have never accepted figures rendered in the manner of the manuscript illuminations. He stated that "at the Salon and in front of the public one must exhibit figures and not shadows."²⁴ This comment was provoked by the camaieu painting Puvis de Chavannes exhibited at the Salon of 1866, whose figures, Blanc said, were "more dreamed than painted."

But Blanc had a double standard with respect to decoration: one regarding public art, and another one for privately owned art. The latter was supposed to transport the viewer "into the ideal world," to serve as a means of escaping reality. If he owned a private hotel, he said, he would have liked to decorate its walls with Puvis' panels. With regard to the decorative arts (in which he did not, as a rule, include

murals), destined mostly for the private enjoyment of an elite, he recommended the form and content of an Idealist art, as is evident in his Grammaire des arts décoratifs, the sequel to the Grammaire des arts du dessin.²⁵ Blanc was an adept of the Idealist aesthetic of Kant and Schiller, Hegel and Schelling, in the form propagated in France by Victor Cousin, which was quite close to the theory of "art for art's sake."²⁶ At the same time he was influenced by the writings of Lamennais, as well as by Proudhon. The last two personalities were poles apart in political and religious beliefs, but they both fought the concept of art for art's sake. The connection with Proudhon is easy to understand, since Louis Blanc, Charles' brother was an ardent believer in the social role of art. Like Proudhon, who said that "The artist whose work ... pleases the greatest number will be rated the greatest of all ...," Charles Blanc considered that the work of art "is ennobled by the number of spectators who enjoy it."²⁷ But unlike Proudhon, Blanc was against realism. He admired Lamennais, who was a Catholic Liberal, and who in 1830 and 1831 published together with Lacordaire and Montalembert the journal L'Avenir.²⁸ Lamennais said that "art is only the exterior shape of ideas, the expression of religious dogma, and of the dominant social principle in certain epochs."²⁹ He considered that "Art for art's sake is an absurdity." Like the Saint-Simonians, he saw in "industry" an activity that should enjoy the same dignity as the arts and the sciences. Thus, as Albert Cassagne pointed out in 1905 in his book La Théorie de l'art pour l'art, Lamennais reached conclusions similar to those of Louis Blanc, Proudhon

and the Saint-Simonians.³⁰

Whatever eclectic influences Blanc accepted, it is clear that he believed in the practical utility of art (as decoration of homes or objects) as long as it was not "grand art." As an active supporter of the revitalization of the industrial arts, he believed in a "rejuvenation of fine arts with the purpose of applying them to industry," and in "wedding the beautiful and the useful."³¹ Blanc shared Mérimée's, de Laborde's, and for that matter the Emperor's (who decorated Henry Cole in 1855) admiration for England's achievements, especially for the South Kensington system. In establishing the principles of decorative arts in his Grammaire des arts décoratifs (which will be discussed more in detail later), Blanc was in agreement with Owen Jones' general principles, faithful to the "official" line.³² But he did not deal mostly with ornamental abstract design, as Jones and Cole's circle did, and as I mentioned before, he did uphold the "Western tradition" expressed especially by his predilection for colour "gradation," as opposed to flat tints.

As concerns the question of "art for art's sake" (a key issue in this paper), even if Blanc avoids using this term which he half-dreaded, ultimately this is what he recommends for the decorative arts. Decorative arts such as the art of tapestry, involve scenes with figures, and they were not supposed to convey powerful emotions, to be eloquent, to serve any moralizing purpose. They simply had to transport the viewer into a world of dreams, into an ideal world, to please the eye and the "spirit." He required eloquence, as we have

already seen, only from the "grand art" which was supposed to inspire noble sentiments. As much as he wanted to preserve the Kantian autonomy of a work of art, he could not forsake his belief of a 1848 "revolutionary." These beliefs required art to have a mobilizing, example setting role (by portraying heroic acts) in society.

Blanc found himself at the threshold of changing concepts: the dichotomy of "pure art" versus "applied art" will soon become of less importance than the dichotomy of "art for art's sake" versus moral art and "literature" (literary art).

So far the discussion has been focussed on the conflict between "Academy" and the "Officials." The interests of two other important groups involved in the actual revitalization of the industrial arts, the industrialists and the artists, were in conflict with each other.

The Industrialists, the manufacturers of industrial arts, joined their efforts to form a private enterprise (which did, however, get support from the Government), the Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués a l'industrie; founded on July 1864, this was renamed Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs after unification with the Society of the Museum of Decorative Arts, in 1880. The purpose of the Union Centrale was to centralize the industrial and decorative arts, taking the South Kensington System as its model. It organized a museum of art objects of various periods, periodical exhibitions of decorative arts (retrospective and contemporary), public lectures and a library. The intention to create a Collège de beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie never quite materialized. Because of too zealous support on the part

of Ch. Blanc and E. Guillaume, the Union Centrale was infiltrated with academic tradition.³³ Instead of a simple form of instruction in flat ornamental design as most appropriate for wallpapers, like that offered in H. Cole's schools of design, the Union Centrale offered lectures in geometry and perspective, as well as in other sciences, and aesthetic theories such as in the lectures delivered by Ch. Blanc himself, containing excerpts from his yet unpublished book, Grammaire des arts du dessin.

Union Centrale did not fulfil one of the main purposes for which it was created, that is to attract artists involved in fine arts into the field of industrial arts, precisely because it was in the hands of "industrialists," and did not represent the artists' interests.³⁴

The Artists who specialized in "high art" were the product of a process of "division of labor" that gave them a very special status, which they wanted to maintain. Academic artists for a long time resisted the invasion of the decorative arts into the Salon, on an equal footing with the fine arts. As long as the status of decorative arts was generally considered "inferior" to that of "high art," the juste milieu artists or the avant-garde artists were not interested either.³⁵

To attract artists who did not already have the status of "decorator" into the field of industrial or decorative arts in order to "improve the standards", would have been possible only in one of the following two situations:

- 1) The artists are committed to the social role of art, to the fact that the "beautiful" and the "useful"

should be united, and are even prepared to design for industrial mass-production (thus accepting the role of "the machine" in order to reach more people, with cheaper products).

- 2) The difference in status between "high art" and "decorative art" is abolished, thus artists held back by scruples connected with "status," can now take advantage of another marketing outlet, without feeling they are "prostituting" themselves. It is even better if it is emphasized that the "decorative arts" are "elitist," "art for art's sake," as opposed to the so-called "fine art" exhibited at the Salon, that catered to the taste of the petit-bourgeois crowd. Thus the "decorative arts" could even be considered as superior to Salon art.

The first situation never quite materialized in France in the second half of the 19th century. At first, official propaganda, in the 1860s tried to attract artists with the slogan of "uniting the beautiful with the useful," along the lines of an outdated utopian Saint-Simonism. (The ideas of uniting art and industry originated in fact in the 1830s in France, prompted by such ideals.) Such propaganda was not very successful, especially when it was clear that the manufacturers, the "industrialists" were the ones reaping the profits. The artists-industrialists conflict became more acute in the later part of the century, when many artists, inspired by the example of William Morris and the British Arts and Crafts movement realized that by themselves producing "art objects" for

amateurs, a potential market was open to them. But there are significant differences between the revival of the decorative arts in England and Belgium on one hand, and in France on the other. Morris and his group, as well as the Belgian artists (such as Henri Van de Velde), believed in the social role of art. The fact that French artists became interested in Morris' achievements (and not in Henry Cole's, as the Government and the industrialists were) had nothing to do with Ruskin's "Gothic" humility" that Morris professed, which in fact implied the lowering of the special status the artist gained in the capitalist society. Ironically, the socialist Morris, largely because of his hatred of the machine or any post-medieval methods of production, produced "art objects" that only a wealthy elite could enjoy. It was this prospect of "artistic" versus industrial mass-production that appealed to the French artists, and not the virtues of the humble medieval artisan. Just the opposite, they seized the opportunity to raise the status of decorative arts to that of fine arts. The fact that during the 1890s there was a renewed association of the artistic (visual) avant-garde with the political avant-garde, with social radicalism in France, did not affect the artists' position with respect to the industrial arts. France did not produce a Henri van de Velde, Belgium did, even though there were in France loud voices that tried to mobilise artists to put their art in the service of the people, such as H. Nocq's:

J'attends avec impatience le retour des artistes à l'industrie. Grâce à la production mécanique leurs oeuvres seront mises à la portée du plus grand nombre et ainsi serviront au progrès social.³⁶

I do not intend to discuss Belgium here, but the closer relationship between the artists and the Worker's party in that country can throw a light on the differences between French and Belgian avant-gardes. (For the differences between the "collectivist" movements in France and Belgium, and their respective positions toward art, see Eugenia Herbert, The Artist and Social Reform, 1961.) Not only was the socialist movement weaker than the anarchist movement at the time in France, but also it did not give art sufficient thought. On the other hand, the anarchist movement made a special effort to attract artists, and its emphasis on "individualism" also appealed to French artists, most of them coming from bourgeois backgrounds.³⁷ Thus the Neo-Impressionists among painters were anarchist sympathisers. They believed that eventually, in the future, art should be integrated with the whole society, but for the time being, in their present society they did not consider this possible. Their art was produced essentially for an elite of amateurs, and as Eugenia and Robert Herbert have pointed out, paradoxically, it was precisely in the 1890s, when their collaboration with the anarchist movement became most militant, that the artists adopted a more pronounced "art for art's sake" position.³⁸ Signac, for example, was well aware of the discrepancy between his political convictions and the aesthetic ones, and tried at various occasions to justify it. For example, in June 1891, in the article "Impressionistes et Revolutionnaires," signed "an Impressionist Comrade," Signac said:

It would thus be an error, into which the best intentioned revolutionaries, like Proudhon, all too often have fallen, systematically to require a precise socialist tendency in works of art, for this tendency will be found much more powerful and eloquent in the pure aesthetes, revolutionaries by temperament, who, moving far off the beaten path, paint what they see as they feel it, and very often unconsciously give a hard blow of the pick-axe to the old social structure.³⁹

Camille Pissarro was another anarchist sympathiser, a member of the Club de l'Art Social, and professed hatred of the capitalist society. Yet his attitude was that of the French avant-garde in general, that is elitist. He was interested in educating only the artistic taste of an elite of "buyers," as opposed to Carrière (a "juste milieu" painter), or to the critic Gustave Geffroy (also not exactly an avant-garde writer), who wanted to educate the workers.⁴⁰

It is evident that, as Chesneau remarked, French artists had the tendency to aspire toward the loftier levels of art.⁴¹ As long as the industrial and decorative arts were considered as activities of a lesser status (an attitude supported by the Academy) the artists' response was less than enthusiastic. This fact was understood by the non-Academic officials and other parties interested in the revitalization of the decorative arts, and the campaign they launched since the late 1870s was based on the equalization in status. Involved in this campaign were Inspectors of Beaux-Arts, such as Roger Ballu and Henry Havard, Victor Champier, the director of the Revue des Arts Décoratifs (founded in 1880 as an organ of the Union Centrale) and official in the Beaux-Arts administration, and Roger Marx, who was a critic and editor of the Gazette des Beaux Arts. Marx

was also an exemplar of a new species: "the enlightened amateur of modern art," who formed that "elite" of connoisseurs, that special group of the bourgeoisie for whom the avant-garde was creating. He was well aware of the role of the "Writer" in influencing the destiny of the decorative arts in France in the 19th century, and while reminding his readers of the "movements of opinion" incited by Victor Hugo, Viollet-le-Duc or de Laborde, he carried on his own propaganda to bring fine arts and decorative arts to an equal status.⁴² This equalization in status did not mean the "debasing" of the fine arts, but just the opposite, raising the decorative arts to the higher level occupied by a statue, and especially by a tableau. Roger Marx contributed his organising skills to the opening of a section of decorative arts at the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, held at the Champ-de-Mars.⁴³ This was a second Salon, organized by a second "society of artists," that exhibited non-juried works, awarded no prizes, and promoted mainly the painters of the juste milieu. This second society (the first one being, of course, the academic oriented Société des Artistes Français that held Salons on the Champs-Elysées) was formed in 1890 at the initiative of Meissonier (as President) and Puvis de Chavannes (Vice-President).

The idea of a Salon of decorative arts was not new; it had been tried in 1882 by the Union Centrale, which had opened such a Salon, side by side and simultaneously with the regular Salon.⁴⁴ But Union Centrale was not popular with the artists. The artists-industrialists conflict was reflected in the artists' bitterness towards the Union Centrale (which was controlled by

the industrialists), whose periodical exhibitions at the Palais de l'industrie they considered "exclusively commercial" and as serious competition for the section of decorative arts at the Salon of the Champ-de-Mars. The artists felt that the Union Centrale did not deserve the financial help it received from the Government, especially when it represented a portion of the budget of the Beaux-Arts. This resentment was particularly strong in the early 1890s, when a conscious effort to create a new style in the decorative arts was hindered by the industrialists and merchants, who considered it more profitable to imitate older styles. The artists wanted more personal recognition, they wanted to sign their art object, they wanted status. This was especially important for the avant-garde artists. The French artistic avant-garde was elitist by definition, alienated from the culture of the dominating class - the bourgeoisie - as well as from mass culture. The avant-garde could have been attracted only by the prospect of producing an elitist art, an art which they could judge "superior" because it was not making any concessions to the vulgar "taste" of the crowd. For the avant-garde, "art for art's sake" became a "code of professional ethics."⁴⁵ If members of the French avant-garde painting were attracted into the field of decorative arts, it was not because they wanted to unite "the beautiful" and "the useful," but because they were attracted by the "art for art's sake" aspect of the decorative arts. In doing so, the "utilitarian" side of the decorative arts became secondary. This approach to decorative arts was emphasized during the 1880s and 1890s by anti-academic

writers such as Ernest Chesneau or Henry Havard, who also shared an antipathy for the British, and a belief in the superiority of French artistic genius.⁴⁶ As Chesneau put it, French art is above the "statistics concerning commercial export."⁴⁷ He was against the French Government's adopting British-type schools of industrial design, which of course were intended for the development of mass-produced industrial arts.⁴⁸ In France, "industrial art" became more and more a pejorative term in artistic circles, while "decorative art" was associated with "art for art's sake."⁴⁹ In the "decorative arts" the accent was on the formal elements (shapes, colours) disposed in such way as to give pleasure to the eye and "spirit."⁵⁰ Havard clearly stated that the artists practicing the Beaux-Arts were easily understood by the crowd (la foule), while those involved in the decorative arts "can be appreciated only by an elite of connoisseurs." He considered that the "false hierarchy established in the arts" comes from the fact that "in all times the ignorants were more numerous."⁵¹

To illustrate the avant-garde's involvement in the decorative arts I will mention Gauguin, Emile Bernard and the artists of the Nabi group. When Gauguin applied himself to ceramics (he worked with the famous ceramicist Chapelet) for example, he did not think in the first place of producing "useful objects," but "art objects." This is evident from a letter he wrote his wife in 1886:

I am engaged in making art pottery. Schuffenecker says they are masterpieces and so does the maker, but they are probably too artistic to be sold. However, he says that if this idea could ever be introduced into an exhibition of the industrial arts, it would have an amazing success.⁵²

Thus Gauguin was thinking in terms of "art pottery," "masterpieces." He also left no doubt as for whom he intended his work; answering an inquiry whose purpose was to probe the existence of a "Renaissance of the art-industries" and the eventual emergence of a "new style," Gauguin declared:

Ne cherchez pas la solution de votre problème dans la rue, près des monuments publics, dans les boutiques des marchands. Chez l'amateur seulement vous verrez ce qui a été fait. Et pour cela, nul besoin d'un grand nombre, du reste les chefs-d'oeuvre ne se remuent pas à la pelle.⁵³

His "masterpieces," decorative art objects produced in limited quantity, were destined for an elite of amateurs.

Of course, one should not neglect the economic reasons, the poor financial situation that led some avant-garde artists into the field of decorative arts. Emile Bernard, for example, even tried his hand at industrial design in 1890 (without much success) in order to earn a living.⁵⁴ He also took courses at the Ecole des Art Décoratifs before he entered Académie Cormon in 1885.⁵⁵ Bernard was one of the first avant-garde painters to be involved in the decorative arts: stained-glass windows, tapestry, embroidery, etc. But everything was done in the name of art for art's sake. In 1891 (as is evident from a letter to Schuffenecker), Bernard proposed in fact the foundation of a society with the slogan l'Art pour l'Art.⁵⁶ Tapestries and other decorative arts were on the list of the art objects to be produced by this society.

The Nabis' involvement with the decorative arts was extensive. Denis and Ranson even designed "artistic" wallpapers.⁵⁷ Most of the Nabis' work (except for church commissions) was destined for the decoration of the apartments

of well-to-do amateurs (such as Thadée Natanson for example), not of workers.⁵⁸

The propaganda aimed at bringing fine arts and decorative arts onto an equal footing in order to revive (and eventually to create a new style of) French decoration, thus attracted avant-garde artists, such as the members of Pont-Aven or Nabi groups. They exhibited their decorative art at the Indépendants, at the Salon of Champ-de-Mars, or at Bing's, and right from the start they had the support of Roger Marx, who as I indicated, had an important role in the campaign that raised the status of decorative arts.⁵⁹

In trying to conclude to what extent the desired revitalization (even a "Renaissance" as some called it) of French decoration was realized in practice, one can say that it was achieved in the decorative rather than in industrial arts per se, and that it reached its peak in the decade of the 1890s. The home-grown "Art Nouveau", that assimilated Japanese and Rococo influences into a new style inspired by natural, organic shapes, excelled especially in "art objects," one-of-a kind, or limited editions. This new, specifically French, decorative style should not be equated with the absolutely flat Art Nouveau style that first appeared in Belgium and became more or less an international style. The latter, while it drew from French sources, was intended for mass-production, and was also strongly influenced by English industrial design.

The revitalization of the decorative arts in France implied a redefinition of the principles of decoration, as it did in England. I shall focus the discussion for a while on

these "true" principles, since they were important not only for the conventional decorative arts, but also for the development of easel painting (as it will be evident in Chapter I, Part 2). I would also like to emphasize that the specific way the revitalization was proceeding in France, was reflected in the specific way decoration was defined.

Equating decoration with absolute flatness is correct only for the ornamental design of flat patterns, best suited for wallpapers, such as first taught in Cole's schools of design. In fact, in my opinion, here lies the origin of the misconception that "decorative" equals a flat linear design and smooth colour. In France, as in England, the respect for the integrity of the decorated object became the basic principle of decoration. Thus a decoration intended for a flat surface such as a wall or a floor had to avoid "piercing holes" in it with illusionistic devices. But it is important to underline that French reformers defined specific principles for each branch of decorative arts, allowing for various degrees of "flatness" among them. Wallpapers for example were suppose to have flat designs, but since the wallpaper industry was not the "national industry" there to the extent it was in England, this kind of design was not so prominently emphasized. In France tapestry weaving was considered the "national industry," and the reformers of decorative arts in this country were very much interested in a "renaissance" of the tapestry industry based on the true principles of decoration (instead of imitating illusionistic tableaux), and accorded special attention to this subject.

Before discussing the issue of "tapestry flatness" I would

like to mention a few words about the revival of interest in this decorative art. In the second half of the 19th century, especially in the late 1870s, the affluent French Bourgeoisie became interested in tapestries for home decoration. In his report on tapestry at the Universal Exhibition of 1878, Denuelle remarked that the use of tapestries in private homes had become quite widespread.⁶⁰ In the late 1870s - early 1880s, there was an "infatuation with the tapestries done after the cartoons of Boucher and Coypel" which led to a tremendous increase in their price.⁶¹ The Administration of the Gobelins realized there was a potential market for modern tapestry among the less wealthy amateurs who could not afford the antiques. Also various public buildings required contemporary tapestries. The problem was to find good models, that is cartoons painted in accordance with the principles of decoration.⁶² "Official" aestheticians, administrators, industrialists, showed considerable concern in this respect. In 1876 Union Centrale organized an exhibition of tapestries which, as the Marquis de Chennevières (Blanc's successor as director of the Beaux-Arts pointed out, "would become the starting point of so many studies and publications of the art, of which the origins and the laws were in the process of being established."⁶³ At the time of the exhibition the director of the Gobelins was Alfred Darcel, and he published in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts a series of articles entitled "Exposition de l'histoire de la tapisserie."⁶⁴ He looked at the exhibition as at a "lesson in decorative art through tapestry."⁶⁵ Darcel was in complete accord on this subject with Charles Blanc, from

whose article "Le Musée des tapisseries" (Le Temps, 4 September 1876) he actually quoted.⁶⁶

The principles advocated for the modern tapestry drew upon older periods, as long as those periods avoided the realistic trompe l'oeil and the "window" effect. The general consensus was that tapestry should not imitate tableaux. This criticism was especially directed against the tapestries weaved in the first half of the 19th century, which had tried to reproduce not "decorative tableaux," as the Rococo tapestries did (in fact at the time there was a revival of both Medieval and Rococo tapestries), but "expressive" tableaux such as The Pesthouse of Jaffa by Gros, with all its subtleties of modelling.⁶⁷

Charles Blanc's Grammaire des arts décoratifs (1882) is one of the best sources for understanding the specific differences in the rules established by most reformers for various decorative arts, such as: pavements, metal work, wallpaper, tapestries, carpets, furniture, glass-work, ceramics, etc. Carpets, for example, were to be flat and their design were to exclude the human figure. Wallpapers designs could include human figures, but rendered in flat tints and silhouetted. In the tapestries scenes with figures and landscapes were allowed. The general guiding principles recommended by Blanc for tapestry were the following: avoidance of the effects of linear and atmospheric perspective, and avoidance of chiaroscuro effect, which was to be replaced with a "decorative effect" that gave an impression of overall uniformity of value.⁶⁸ In order to avoid the perspective effect, one basic rule, according to

Blanc, was to choose a very high viewpoint, which would also avoid displaying too much "sky."⁶⁹ A good illustration of the difference between the perspective in a tapestry and the one in a tableau is given in Havard's La Décoration (c.1891, in which he repeated much of what Blanc said). He illustrated this distinction with two figures: one represented a 16th century Flemish tapestry, the other the same tapestry "mise en perspective."⁷⁰ Havard commented: "The first one gives the sensation of a tapestry, the second one pierces the wall and has the aspect of a tableau." ⁷¹ Avoiding the perspective "effect" refers to the scene as a whole, it means avoiding the illusion of depth, but it does not exclude representation of individual objects seen in perspective. Also, the "decorative effect" did not exclude modelling of individual volumes (albeit rudimentarily and not by subtle gradations as in painting), in other words did not exclude an effect of relief.⁷²

Even without an outlining of the contours, a tapestry gives the impression of outlining shapes with a lost-and-found contour, due to its slits. Blanc did not specifically require a firm outlining of shapes (he, as I will discuss later, still believed in the old academic prejudice about the irreconcilability of "line" and "colour," and believed colour should dominate in decoration), but most reformers required a clear definition of forms in decoration, tapestry included. In Denuelle's report of 1877, le trait de redessiné is considered to be "characteristic to all decorative arts deriving from architecture."⁷³ Darcel (who was director of the Gobelins between 1871 - 1885) also required "firmness in drawing," and Calmettes (a very thorough historian

of the art of tapestry in the 19th c.) would say a few years later that the most important rule in tapestry was the rendering of the purity of form, expressed by firm contours.⁷⁴ Edouard Didron (who for a couple of years ran the Annales archeologiques, described as "the most effective mouthpiece" for the Gothic Revival in France), also listed this requirement among the principles he formulated for tapestry.⁷⁵ Since his formulation (which he extended also to mosaics) summarizes quite well the prevailing theories concerning tapestries in the late 1870s, I will reproduce it in a slightly shortened version:

- 1) A composition that leaves very few spaces.
- 2) Simplicity of execution, in which the trait is predominant and the silhouettes are accentuated.
- 3) "A sober modelling of a true decorative character."
- 4) An almost complete lack of perspective.

It should be clear by now that "tapestry flatness" was not understood to be the same as "wallpaper flatness" (or as "stained glass window flatness") by those who were in the forefront of the decorative arts revival in France.

The tapestry-decoration versus tapestry-tableau conflict had a parallel in the distinction between "decorative painting" (in the sense of monumental painting or decoration) and tableau. In the first half of the 19th century painting had emancipated itself from architecture to such degree, that mural decorative paintings became nothing else but large scale tableaux. The only difference resided in the fact that being intended for a specific destination, the usual shape of a tableau was modified (and even this was not always necessary). But defining decoration only as a work with a specific destination was not good.

enough for the reformers of decorative arts. Viollet-le-Duc was unequivocal on this subject:

De ce que on peint sur un mur au lieu de peindre sur une toile, il ne s'ensuit pas que l'oeuvre soit une peinture monumentale, et presque toutes les peintures murales produites de notre temps, ne sont toujours, malgré la différence du procédé, que des tableaux;⁷⁶

Decorative painting, in order to be a "true" decoration (like any other decorative art) had to fulfill the "true" principles of decoration. Of course, there were specific requirements for painting as decoration, just as there were specific requirements for differentiating the various decorative arts.

The general consensus among reformers was that painting as decoration should be subordinated to architecture. Since most decorations were intended for flat walls, flatness was the most common requirement. But how flat? "Flatness" in decoration was originally advocated and introduced during the Gothic Revival and the Neo-Catholic movements, as a reaction against what was considered to be "paganism" and "decadence."⁷⁷ Since this flatness (which was absolute), and simplified design, were also very convenient for mechanical reproduction, it became widely accepted especially in the field of industrial design, and the initial ideological motivation forgotten. In the 1880s "flatness" in decoration was required as a "common sense law."⁷⁸ Of course, in the field of decorative painting there was no question of facilitating the process of reproduction, and the "common sense" did not dictate absolute flatness. This is why in this area the difference of opinions between the Gothic Revivalists and those whom I earlier called upholders of the "Western tradition" is most obvious.⁷⁹

In the first category belongs of course Viollet-le-Duc (Gothic Revivalist), who died in 1879. I will also include here Henry Havard, considered an authority in decoration in the 1880s and 1890s, who, like Viollet-le-Duc, believed in the "decadence" brought about in monumental art by the emancipation of painting since the Renaissance.⁸⁰ According to Viollet-le-Duc a monumental painting should always preserve "the aspect of a decorated plane surface" ("l'aspect d'une surface plane décorée").⁸¹ This was true not only for ornamental painting proper, that is, the painting of ornamental motifs that do not involve the human figure and a subject, but also for monumental painting of various scenes. Viollet-le-Duc declared: "Les peuples artistes n'ont vu dans la peinture monumentale qu'on dessin enluminé et très-légèrement modelé."⁸² He preferred to see the modelling reduced only to the linear modelling achieved by "more or less accentuated traits," and colour as nothing more than an "illumination." He considered that the apogee of medieval architectural painting was attained in the 12th century in France, when the influence of the hieratic Byzantine style was very pronounced.⁸³

Viollet-le-Duc, as has only lately been acknowledged, did not advocate a literal "imitation" of the Gothic style, but only the borrowing of certain general principles. Henry Havard, who was usually in agreement with Viollet-le-Duc, campaigned more openly for a modern style to fit the needs of the modern way of life. Like Viollet-le-Duc, Havard would have preferred a ban on modelling (which gives the impression of relief) as well as on the illusion of deep spatial recession. His opinion

was that in a decoration, not only "it is awkward to simulate holes and grooves where the demands of the construction forbid them," but it is just as incorrect "to simulate reliefs in a place where the wall should remain flat."⁸⁴ But even he, who of course banned any "idea of relief" in pavements and carpets, tolerated it eventually in mural decoration, because at least, he said, one can keep a distance from a wall, while walking over simulated reliefs is very unpleasant. Havard's desire for absolute flatness in decoration, even when he does not refer to painting, is not related to the problems of mass-production, which he actually deplored. He was against the "democratization of luxury," and as I mentioned before, he favored the elitist decorative arts. Havard shared Viollet-le-Duc's inclination toward austerity (he was also against bright, pure colours in decoration) and his position against painting being overly assertive in decoration.

There were others, though, who accepted as a "common sense" rule that in decoration painting had to be subordinated to architecture, but did not want to renounce the "Western" heritage (which favored modelling in the round) completely. As Alphonse Germain (La Plume, 1891) put it, "A truly sane Occidental eye will always feel the necessity of gradations."⁸⁵ (Germain, a reactionary critic, supporter of Péladan, criticised the flatness of Symbolist painting which did not respect the "form" in the name of the slogan "art is not reality," and which would thus reduce to a "magnificent aberration" all the masterpieces produced since the Renaissance.) The critic considered that the imitation of the imperfections of "barbarians"

(among whom he seems to include the Byzantines) would only lead to an "inferior decorative art, because it was without rapport with our race and our modernity." But it is significant that he accepted "archaisms" in book decorations for example (such as Denis' illustrations for *Sagesse* by Verlaine). This was so because at the time, in painting (which had a special status since Renaissance), flatness was still associated with an Idealist philosophy, with representing the "dream" and the l'au-dela.

I mentioned before that an extreme case of "Western traditionalism" can be found in Charles Blanc. He did prefer "gradations" (to flat tints) in decorations in general, but his "extremism" is manifested with respect to painted decoration. In fact he did not include painted decoration (except for painting on glass and miniature painting - such as were the enluminures of the 14th century-, which belonged according to him "rather to ornamentation than to the art of the painter") among the decorative arts, as did Havard and Viollet-le-Duc.⁸⁶ Blanc did accept for painted decoration the basic rule of "not simulating holes where the architect wanted to have solid structures," i.e. the respect for the character of the decorated surface.⁸⁷ But the concessions that painting should make to the flatness of the wall referred to the general effect, and not to the modelling of the individual objects and figures in the painting, with the exception that the modelling had to be done in colour. To understand better what were the differences between a decoration and a tableau in Blanc's view (as well as according to others), I will concentrate first on the definition of the tableau. Viollet-le-Duc answered the question "What is

a tableau?" with the following definition:

C'est une scène qu'on fait voir au spectateur à travers un cadre, une fenêtre ouverte. Unité de point de vue, unité de direction de la lumière, unité d'effect.⁸⁸

Similarly, Charles Blanc wrote in his Grammaire des arts du dessin (1867):

Maintenant, qu'est-ce qu'un tableau dans la peinture proprement dite? C'est la représentation d'une scène dont l'ensemble peut être embrassé d'un coup d'oeil.⁸⁹

This unit of effect (in other words the unity perceived in the painting at one glance) was achieved first of all in a tableau (understood since Alberti as a "window") by the observance of the rules of linear perspective, which required a unity of viewpoint. Another factor that allowed the scene represented in a tableau to be perceived at one glance was the distribution of light, which had to achieve what Blanc called "the unity of chiaroscuro." Chiaroscuro was used not only for the modelling of individual forms in a tableau, but also to "model the tableau," considered as a single entity. The unity of chiaroscuro refers to the latter, and it means that in a tableau there is one principal light and one dominant dark area. This unity of chiaroscuro induced an unity or "effect."⁹⁰

A decoration was not supposed to simulate "windows" in the wall, through which one could experience the illusion of depth. In order to avoid this, liberties taken with the rules of linear perspective were absolutely necessary.⁹¹ Since the chiaroscuro effect also "pierced" the wall, Blanc recommended its replacement with a polychrome effect, the unity of which is achieved by an even, light tonality. Blanc also associated

this kind of effect, consisting of a "diffused and generous light" obtained by such colorists as Veronese and Rubens, with the painting of scenes that take place in plein air.⁹² Unity in coloring was in fact the only way of achieving the "unity of effect" in decoration, and this unity was still a requirement in decoration also, only achieved by different means than in a tableau.

Other writers were satisfied with a more summary modelling of individual forms than Blanc was, and in fact such a view will be the predominant one in the 1880s and 1890s, with respect to painting-decoration. I will give as examples of such writers, Darcel and Champier. Alfred Darcel (1818-1893) had been associated at first with the Gothic Revival, and he was considered an authority on the archeology of the French Middle Ages, as well as of the Renaissance.⁹³ He was an official in the administration of the Beaux-Arts, director of the Gobelins, as I already mentioned, as well as of the Musée de Cluny, and he was a member of the Administrative Council of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs. He campaigned for the introduction of the decorative arts into the Salon as early as 1882, when the Union Centrale held its own Salon of decorative arts. On this occasion he wrote "Le Salon des Arts Décoratifs," an article in which he stated that a "decorative painting" (in the sense of decoration) should satisfy the following conditions:

Dans la composition une certaine eurythmie; dans le dessin une certaine abréviation, qui est une des conditions du style et qui n'exclut point la grâce elle-même; dans la couleur une certaine unité qui résulte souvent de la décoloration des lumières et une tenue qui provient de ce que chaque chose est simplement modelée par les différents tons d'une même nuance ...⁹⁴

I will come back later to Darcel's requirements for painting-decoration; for the moment I would like to point out that Darcel held the opinion that in such a painting everything should be at least summarily modelled. He contrasted this modelling with the evenly applied colour (les à-plat) of Japonisme, of which he did not approve. Like Blanc, Darcel did not want a modelling of the painting as a whole (chiaroscuro effect), but a unity in colouring ("which often is the result of the discolorations of light"), most importantly in value. Thus the aspect of a painted decoration was not to be as flat as a Japanese print, or as a manuscript illumination, but more like an evenly lit bas-relief. The illusion of a high relief was to be expected only in a tableau.

Darcel touched upon another distinction that was to be made between a decoration and a tableau, related to the problem of "finish." Decoration did not require the same amount of "finish" as a tableau.⁹⁵ But, on the other hand Darcel pointed out, the lack of finish alone, an ébauche, does not make a decoration, no more than the shape of the painting does:

Parce qu'en un panneau une des deux dimensions domine, ou parce que le peintre s'est contenté de broser une ébauche, il ne faudrait pas supposer que la forme du cadre, pas plus que l'inachevé, suffisent à donner le caractère de décoration à une peinture;⁹⁶

Of course, what gave a painting the character of a decoration, as should be clear by now, was a set of rules, all aiming to preserve more or less the two-dimensionality of the surface decorated. These rules were gathered together, in an even more organized fashion than in Darcel's article, by Victor

Champier, the director of the Revue des Arts Décoratifs, and also an official in the administration of the Beaux-Arts.⁹⁷

In the second part of his "M.P.-V. Galland et l'enseignement de l'art décoratif," (1888) Champier formulated "the principles of true decoration" for "decorative painting"-a necessary task, because as he put it, "in spite of common sense, reason and good taste," these principles were violated in practice. The most basic requirement was of course, "not to simulate openings" in the solidity of the construction, because this would "trouble" our eye, inducing it to "doubt" this solidity. In other words, a degree of flatness was absolutely necessary. Then he added the following "laws":

La franchise dans la colorations, une facture simple et large, presque jamais de tons neutres, des masses bien équilibrées, pas de trompe-l'oeil serrant de près la nature, ni de modelé précieux et délicat comme dans les tableaux, voilà quelles sont, pour cette forme d'art, les lois consacrées par l'expérience et le bon sens.⁹⁸

Champier tried to be above ideologies and presented these "laws" as deriving simply from "common sense." He considered them as "truths," "proclaimed by all aestheticians," and which could be found in his day "in most books."⁹⁹ He gave Viollet-le-Duc a special mention, but he combined in fact the architect's point of view with Blanc's, and praised medieval art as well as the decorations of Raphael and Michelangelo in the Vatican. His antipathy for the Academy was obvious, though, in his remarks about not wanting to sound "dogmatic" and establish a "program" like the "grammarians of art" (most likely an allusion to Blanc's two "grammars").¹⁰⁰ Champier wanted only to make it clear that "Decorative painting and easel painting are two totally distinct

genres, with separate laws and a different technique."¹⁰¹ This is in fact the most important conclusion to be retained so far. As I will indicate in the second part of this chapter, the most avant-garde trends in the painting of the 1890s would make use of these "laws" of decoration, but at the same time they would abolish the double standards which the "official" aestheticians of the second part of the 19th century maintained for decoration and tableau. By applying the "laws of decoration" even to the easel painting, they will in fact abolish the tableau.

Before discussing these new "decorative" tendencies in the painting of the 1890s, it is necessary, because of a confusing terminology, to define Decorative as opposed to Decoration. By the 1880s (and already quite often in the 1870s) the term "decorative painting" became interchangeable with "painting-decoration" (as is evident in Champier's article for example). Thus "decorative" became associated with "decoration," that is, with designing a work of art produced for a specific destination, which implied obeying specific rules. Generally speaking (not only with respect to painting) any decoration was the product of the "decorative arts," a standard definition of which was given in Havard's book La Decoration:

Bien que tous les arts plastiques concourent dans une mesure plus ou moins large a la décoration, on donne plus spécialement le nom d'arts décoratifs a ceux qui ont pour but, non pas la création d'une oeuvre d'art indépendante, mais l'ornementation d'un ensemble de construction, d'une pièce, d'une surface ou d'un objet préalablement existant.¹⁰²

Returning just to painting (because this is of immediate interest), since the surface for which it was intended was usually a flat wall, flatness (a formal element) was the most

important characteristic which defined painting-decoration. It was a consequence of its dependence on architecture. Thus decoration means first of all subordination to architecture. A tableau, which is "independent" of architecture, is not a decoration. Yet the term "decorative" was also used to qualify some tableaux. During the 1860s and 1870s the general consensus was that "decorative" art was an art appealing only to the senses, i.e. purely "external." During the 1880s and early 1890s it was said that it pleased the eye, but that it was also restful for the mind, or pleased the "spirit" as well. In any event, used in this sense, the adjective "decorative" did not refer to the fact that a particular work decorated a particular surface (even though it could be applied to a decoration as well as to a tableau) but to the enjoyment brought to the viewer, to the particular effect it had on him. This effect was such as not to involve him emotionally, but rather aesthetically. Chesneau for example gave the definition of "decorative" art (I will use the notation "decorative" art and "decorative art" to distinguish between the two meanings of "decorative"!) as it was commonly understood in the 1960s and 1970s: "I call work of decorative art any work made solely for the pleasure of the eyes, without any thought of emotion."¹⁰³ He also said that in the field of "plastic arts," "decorative" art is the same as "art for art's sake" (l'art pour l'art).¹⁰⁴ Thus decorative was synonymous with art for art's sake, because it emphasized not a subject matter that would induce in the viewer powerful emotions, but formal and technical aspects, the métier. There were "decorative" tableaux (which did not have to

renounce aerial perspective for example, since it did not matter if they gave the illusion of depth), as there were "decorative" decorations. Eventually, as I already indicated, in the "decorative arts" the "utilitarian" aspect was pushed aside, considered secondary, and their "art for art's sake" character (art without moral ends) emphasized.

During the 1860s and most of the 1870s, the term "decorative" painting had a pejorative connotation, because it was defined according to academic tradition, in opposition to "expressive" painting, the painting of "Style," capable of expressing "noble emotions" (religious in nature, or heroic, etc.), in other words contrasting with "grand" art. The Academy (leaning heavily toward Classicism), considered there to be a superior art, one which appeals to the intellect (which could include also murals), and an inferior one, which appeals to the senses, it is decorative (which could include "decorative" tableaux). Such classification perpetuated the old Poussinist/Rubenist, Classical/Romantic, drawing or line (related to "Style") /colour squabbles. The "decorative" painting thus defined had a "materialistic" connotation, because it was suppose to please only the senses (not the "spirit" or to involve the intellect) and to emphasize the "material" side of painting. Thus, in "decorative" painting the form is rendered by interior modelling (as opposed to contour, which displayed "the intelligent arabesque of the line," in the painting of "Style") and by "the movement of la pâte." The painters who produced this kind of painting were mostly "colorists" and painters of "temperament" (as opposed to painters of intellect

or esprit).¹⁰⁵ The personal "touch" (la touche), often in heavy impasto, was important in this "decorative" or "art for art's sake" painting. A Naturalist painting such as an Impressionist painting of the 1870s fits very well into this category of "decorative" painting. Charles Blanc in fact updated the set of contraries perpetuated by the Academy, mentioned above, by reducing them to the dichotomy of Style versus Naturalism.¹⁰⁶

As I indicated, in the late 1870s and especially in the 1880s, the term "decorative" was used more and more to designate a "decoration" (thus the expression "decorative painting" meant painting-decoration). This was done in the writings of those who wanted to raise the status of the decorative arts; they loosely used the expression "decorative painting" to indicate any mural, past or present (be it "decorative" in the traditional sense or not), because they wanted to be able to say that "decorative painting" was practiced by such giants as Michelangelo or Raphael. This terminology brought protests from Charles Blanc for example, who considered deplorable the description of the murals of Mantegna, Michelangelo or Raphael (all paintings of Style and inducing powerful emotions in the viewer) as "decorative painting."¹⁰⁷ Of course, one can hardly describe The Last Judgement of Michelangelo as "decorative," which in the traditional sense meant simply pleasing the eye. In fact such a decoration did not even fit the category "decorative painting" as defined by all reformers, because they forbade in decorations scenes expressing strong emotions. To resume, now (in the 1880s) "decorative painting" meant

"decorative" painting which was also "decoration" (that is first of all, quite "flat"). But the meaning of the term "decorative" (that meaning which relates to the effect the work has on the viewer) was changed. A "decorative" work of art was not addressed now only to the senses, but also to the mind, even to the "soul." Thus the "decorative" was not to be defined only in a materialistic framework, with the result that a Naturalist painting was not "decorative" by the new standards. Also, the term "decorative" did not have a pejorative connotation anymore. I will discuss briefly the last two points.

"Decoration" and the "decorative arts," were defined by the original reformers in an idealistic framework, both with respect to form and content. Formally, a realistic, illusionistic representation was forbidden. This could (as later became the norm) be justified by a "common sense law" of subordination to architecture, which required "flatness." Of course, this "law" does not necessarily imply a subject matter of idealist content, unless one believes there should be such correspondence between form and content. This is exactly what the original reformers had believed. Charles Blanc, for example, wanted to be transported by the decorative arts into "the enchanted gardens of the ideal world."¹⁰⁸ He wanted the forms and colours used in the decorative arts to invite the imagination to "dream," and even when imitating nature, to figure reality only as a "souvenir" ("à l'état de souvenir"). Emphasizing that he wanted to be "transported into the empire of dreams," he praised the Orientals, who, "counselled by poetry," produced such dream images, for which,

...le dessin est pris sur nature, tandis que la couleur en est imaginaire, de sorte que la vérité s'y mêle au mensonge, comme il arrive souvent dans nos rêves.¹⁰⁹

This way,

...le regard, lors même qu'il rencontre l'image des choses réelles, les voit revêtues de couleurs arbitraires et purement ornementales ou symboliques.¹¹⁰

Roger Ballu (an official in the Beaux-Arts administration), made it very clear in 1878 that a Naturalist painting would have no place in decorative art. He declared:

...le rendu d'un phénomène particulier n'est pas du domaine de l'art décoratif. Plus que tous les autres arts, celui-ci vit d'invention, de fiction même, et dans les lois qui lui sont propres, la vérité n'obtient qu'une place secondaire.¹¹¹

The same opinion was shared by Darcel, who in 1882 refused to classify as "decorative work" the painted decorations of Gervex for a city hall, mainly because they were paintings of "reality," and represented ordinary people in their everyday clothes (even unloading coal, or slaughter-house scenes).¹¹² In his book on decoration (La Decoration, published in the early 1890s), Havard maintained the Idealist character of decoration, and declared that the "fictions" of decorations have the role of "rendering in a concrete fashion, that is visible, somehow tangible, the thought, the idea, in a word the abstraction which is the object of their expression."¹¹³

The formalism of "decorative painting," apart from flatness (no illusionism), required also ordered composition (no empiricism), as well as clarity of linear contours, in order to synthesize the "character" of the subject, and even to achieve "Style" (therefore not rendering the particular, but the

general).¹¹⁴ "Decorative" painting, or "decorative" tableaux were also expected to fulfill these requirements, except for flatness.

"Decorative" had a pejorative connotation only when "colour" was supposed to be the dominant element in decorative art, to the detriment of "line" and "Style."¹¹⁵ Most reformers though, emphasized the importance of "line," even the necessity of firm contours for definition of form in decoration, regardless of their position on assertiveness of colour.¹¹⁶ These writers considered line to be either more important than colour in decoration, or at least on an equal footing. Thus, through the element "line," decorative art involved the intellect.¹¹⁷

In conclusion, it is important to retain that by the late 1880s, not only the concept of "decorative painting" was well defined according to the "true principles of decoration," but the meaning of "decorative" was in many respects the opposite to that in use in the 1860s and 1870s. In order to achieve this new effect on the viewer, an intellectual effort from the part of the artist was necessary. "Decorative" painting (either tableau or decoration) meant painting that was composed, had Style, was incompatible with unselective imitation (therefore with empiricism, but this did not necessarily mean it could not be inspired by nature), and appealed to the intellect, or at least not exclusively to the senses. Of course, scenes of strong emotions were still excluded. The effect of the work was to be "restful" for the spirit, and not strenuous for the intellect - just pleasing.¹¹⁸

Chapter I, Part 2

The "New Tendencies" in the Painting of the 1890s.

Introduction.

This section will deal mostly with the expansion of the principles of decoration into the field of easel painting. While this process began earlier, it can be considered to be the specific tendency of French avant-garde painting in the 1890s.

From this section it will be also evident that in the early 1890s there was a trend toward "decorative" painting which was quite general, and encompassed not only the young avant-garde painters, but also the older ones. It is important to remember, though, from the last section, that "decorative" painting did not have the same meaning as in the 1860s and 1870s (which was purely "materialistic"). Even when an easel painting remained attractive to the senses through its colourful effect, it had to be composed, it had to be a painting of Style (therefore featuring linear contours, since Style was considered to be embodied in "the correction of the line"), in order to be decorative."¹ In the late 1880s and early 1890s, a Naturalist painting, i.e. based on the positivist method of empirical observation, could not be qualified as "decorative" anymore. A decorative composition implied a process of selection and generalization or better, of synthesis, a process of reflection and reasoning. The spontaneity of visual "sensation" was replaced with a more conceptual process. Thus prototypes of "decorative" painting were now considered to be Poussin and the "architectural" Corot.²

The mid and late 1890s will be discussed separately, since

the notion of "decorative" takes again a new meaning.

The trend toward "decorative" painting had various manifestations, according to the artist's particular ideological position. The most innovative manifestation of this trend (expressed and professed for example by the Pont-Aven and Nabi groups - groups to which I will refer as "Symbolists-Synthetists," in order to distinguish them from other brands of Symbolism, such as advocated by Péladan), was that which transformed easel painting from tableau into a movable "decoration."

An attempt to clarify the reasons for the trend toward "decorative" painting will be made.

A. The new "decorative" tendency in the French avant-garde painting of the 1880s and early 1890s and the "Idealist Renaissance."

A "decorative" easel painting was not something new. Impressionist painting was also "decorative," but in the "materialistic" sense of the 1870s, i.e. was compatible with positivism. The new "decorative" tendency that reached its peak in the 1890s was the reflection of an "Idealist Renaissance," or at least of a strong anti-positivist reaction.³ Positivism was the number one enemy of Catholicism, and the roots of this reaction are to be found in the Catholic and the Right wing reaction against the forces of the Left (which had adopted a positivist philosophy). Since the Right lost the "political war" of 1879, it concentrated its energy on a "religious" or "ideological war" during the 1880s.⁴ Considering the success of various aspects of Symbolism, Idealism, mysticism even, at the beginning

of the 1890s decade, one might conclude that this "ideological war" was temporarily won by the Catholic-Right wing side. To this situation contributed some changes in the outlook of the dominant class, the bourgeoisie. The 1890s before the Drefus affair are characterized by "compromise." The Opportunist (or Moderate) Republicans then in power, being scared by the raising Socialist movement, preferred a realignment with the Catholic Right (which in turn was advised by the Pope toward a Ralliement).⁵ Camille Pissarro described the situation quite accurately:

It is a sign of the times, my dear. The bourgeoisie frightened, astonished by the immense clamor of the disinherited masses, by the insistent demands of the people, feels that it is necessary to restore to the people, their superstitious beliefs. Hence the bustling of religious symbolists, religious socialists, idealist art, occultism, Buddhism, etc., etc.⁶

The reasons as to why the intellectual artistic avant-garde actively took part in this "Idealist Renaissance" go far beyond this present thesis.⁷ They varied from individual to individual and from group to group, as well as in respect to the degree of "Idealism" accepted. The fact is that an anti-positivist attitude was a general tendency among avant-garde and juste-milieu artists at the time.⁸ It is perhaps an exaggeration on the part of the critic Mellerio to include in "The Idealist Movement in Painting" the mosaic of groups and individuals he assembled under the same umbrella.⁹ But in fact Mellerio did not refer to a philosophical idealism that rejects the objective existence of the material world, but specifically to Idealism (as opposed to Realism) in painting. Mellerio's "idealist" still takes Nature as a "starting point," that is he recognizes its objective existence, but the subject of his work of art is the "cerebral transformation"

of this Nature, the "pure concept," instead of the sensory perception.¹⁰ Mellerio opposed an art based only on a perceptual process, on the indiscriminate recording of observations according to the empiricist methodology advocated by positivists, to a conceptual art that makes choices, selects, through a voluntary, rational process.

The most encompassing description of the avant-garde art of the 1890s, which does not refer only to Idealist art proper (that is based on a philosophically Idealist substratum) is that of being "decorative," in an anti-positivist connotation of the term. In a wide sense it means an art that was not purely "perceptual," but allowed for a mixture of Realism and Idealism, and was concerned with "decorative beauty" not with "literature." In a stricter sense it was actually based on the principles of "decoration," and could take the form of a hieratic, Idealist art (such as Symbolism-Synthetism).

Symbolist-Synthetist art (Pont-Aven, Nabis), which had the support of the young Symbolist writer and critic Albert Aurier, an ardent Catholic, of Neo-Platonistic philosophical inclination, was "decorative" art or "art for art's sake" in a clear-cut idealistic acceptance of the term. It borrowed the formalism of absolutely flat "decoration" (of the type recommended by the Gothic Revivalists) for a perfect accord between form and content.¹¹ It is not a coincidence that such ardent Catholics as E. Bernard or M. Denis and other Nabis resuscitated Viollet-le-Duc. As Roger Marx pointed out, "Le procédé de M. Maurice Denis est celui même que Viollet-le-Duc recommande aux fresquistes: 'un dessin enluminé, à peine modelé'; de fait, une simple teinte

plate rehausse l'intervalle compris dans la cernée du contour;"¹² Marx explained that it was "the principle of their doctrine" which led the young Symbolists to the sources of "Medieval tradition," alluding to their religious faith.¹³ He noticed that "l'époque est venue de douter du doute, et un besoin impérieux de croire s'est emparé de l'âme moderne..."¹⁴ Roger Marx had already, in 1892, dedicated an article in Le Voltaire to the involvement of the Symbolists in the decorative arts, pointing out at the same time the similarity between the aesthetics of Oriental art and the art of the Middle Ages.¹⁵ Indeed, Symbolist art borrowed from the hieratic art of the past (when the tableau as such did not even exist), as well as from the Japanese prints and folk art, not only in decorations, but also in "independent" easel paintings. Symbolist artists did not believe in double standards: one for decorative arts, another for tableaux. According to their ideology, the tableau was "materialist" art, because of its realistic trompe-l'oeil effects, even when it was executed according to the academic "ideal." Maurice Denis (in accordance with Aurier's point of view) explained why they did not choose the academic "ideal":

Le mot idéal est trompeur: il date d'une époque d'art matérialiste. On ne stylise pas artificiellement, après coup, une copie stupide de la nature...Le point de vue symboliste veut que nous considérions l'oeuvre d'art comme l'équivalent d'une sensation reçue: la nature peut donc n'être, pour l'artiste, qu'un état de sa propre subjectivité, Et ce que nous appelons la déformation subjective, c'est pratiquement le style. 16

A very important characteristic of the Symbolist-Synthetist painting is the fact that it is a peinture de l'âme, a peinture intérieure, of inner feelings or emotions (mystical in nature or not), of dreams, of "Ideas." These Ideas and "states of the soul"

were not supposed to be expressed explicitly, through an "istoria" (in the Albertian sense) that would "move the soul of the spectator" by expressive gestures. Literary subject-matter (even an allegory if it were too explicit¹⁷) was discarded in the same way that Mallarmé discarded "prose," and replaced it by a subtle suggestion achieved solely through formal means.¹⁸ The "Idea" was expressed in Symbolist-Synthetist painting (which wanted to be "art for art's sake") by "line," by "Style," since as the critic Bouyer concisely put it, Style was a "voluntary convention tied itself to the Idea."¹⁹ Symbolism-Synthetism ultimately borrowed decorative art aesthetics (from practical sources and from the writings of the reformers, discussed in the first part of this chapter) as a means of reintroducing Style (le style, not necessarily "a style") into painting, without having to go back to the academic "ideal." The decorative arts, as envisaged by the original reformers, were also "art for art's sake" in an idealistic framework. Of course, in decoration per se, the Style is tied only to a concept of beauty, and expresses only the "character" of the motif (when taken from nature). In Symbolist painting, Style was also an expression of a subjective "state of soul" or of Ideas, and these were expressed by "distortions." In his Notes inédites, Emile Bernard explained how the formalism of decorative arts served to symbolize "l'idée des choses en dehors de ces choses":

A ne le considérer que du dehors, le symbolisme est un système décoratif analogue aux vitraux ou aux tapisseries. Le trait du contour y est apparent, les formes n'y sont que sommairement modelées ou ne le sont pas du tout, le clair-obscur en est banni, la touche n'y joue aucun rôle, il n'y a pas de relief. C'est une peinture plate assez analogue à celle des crépons japonais. Le coloris et le style en sont tout le fond: mais la couleur n'y est considérée que selon l'usage qu'on fait dans les

tapis orientaux ou les enluminures. Elle est appliquée pure ou avec le moins d'alterations possibles. Comme elle doit déterminer le sentiment ou l'état mental du tableau, elle est adaptée au sujet; c'est là son caractère de symbole. Quant au style, déformateur selon ce qu'il veut dire, il est engendré par le souvenir qu'a laissé l'objet, puisque jamais l'artiste ne doit copier celui-ci. 20

Thus Symbolist-Synthetist painting reconciled the formal elements Colour (n.b. associated with the "sentiment," and "symbolical," as envisaged by Ch. Blanc²¹), and Line (associated with Style, expression of the Idea). Since the ideas were expressed through line and form directly, not through the subject-matter, the Style was, as Bernard (and others) called it, déformateur.²² As Maurice Denis put it, the Symbolist practised two kinds of distortions: an "objective distortion," in accord with the laws of decoration, and a "subjective distortion" related to an expressive way of representing "the symbol of a sensation."²³ The formalism of Symbolist-Synthetist painting was dictated by an Idealist, even mystical content. It is not surprising then that it was borrowed from the formalism of the flat decoration, which in its turn was motivated originally by similar considerations. In his criticism, Alphonse Germain (upholder of the "Western tradition," as I already mentioned, and not sympathetic toward the Symbolist-Synthetist style as was Roger Marx) clearly pointed out the connection between "adapting to the tableau that which was created seemingly for stained glass windows or mosaics" and the belief that "art is not reality."²⁴ Considering the propaganda for the revitalization of the decorative arts, and the educational reforms that familiarized the art students with the "true principles" of decoration, that took place prior to the appearance of Symbolist painting, it is understandable that the artists

adapted these "ready-made formulas" to the easel painting. For Emile Bernard who took courses at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs (established as such in 1877 on the premises of the "Petit Ecole") before he entered the Académie Cormon (where he met Anquetin, Toulouse-Lautrec and Van Gogh), and who was one of the first young avant-garde artists to practise the decorative arts, it was quite natural to apply to easel painting a style derived from decoration.²⁵ This style, to be labelled "Cloisonism," was claimed by Bernard as his own invention. I do not propose to solve here the problem of the paternity of Cloisonism, but it is widely acknowledged that the initiative was Bernard's.²⁶ He emphasized he was a "Christian" (read: a "true" Christian) who was looking for a "hieratic style."²⁷ Gauguin developed a similar style working on his ceramics, before he met Bernard, but it seems he introduced this style into his paintings only after he felt encouraged by the example of the younger painter.²⁸ Gauguin was not religious, nor was he a Neo-Platonist, and before his friendship with Bernard he believed in different standards for decorative arts and easel painting. Gauguin's paintings were more in accord with the upholders of "Western tradition" in decorative painting.²⁹ His Synthetism, even in his "Cloisonist" period, was not a perfect imitation of cloisonnée, since the dark contours were not filled with absolutely flat, monochrome colour.³⁰ He never gave up the practice of "colour modulations" common to the Chinese vases that inspired Chapelet, with whom he worked, and he also used this technique in order to model form.³¹ Gauguin borrowed also Cézanne's method of colour modulations, developed in the

1880s (as for example in Farmhouse with Haystack of Autumn 1888, Cat. Welsh-Ovcharov, #54). He used his own method of "zebrée" painting which he developed earlier under the influence of Pissarro and Degas, not only in order to break the monotony of a flat monochrome surface, but also for modelling.³² While well aware of the fact that modelling was inappropriate in decoration, Gauguin did not represent figures as flat silhouettes, as Bernard and Denis did.³³ He was particularly careful in modelling the human face (except for that of Christ, to emphasize its spiritual character). In his paintings from Tahiti (after 1891), the human figure reveals a "classical" solidity.

Truly "flat" decorative styles, in accordance with the Gothic Revivalists precepts, such as the styles inspired by cloisonnée, medieval stained-glass windows or manuscript illuminations, were introduced in the late 1880s into easel painting by artists of Neo-Platonic and/or mystical orientation, and their close associates.³⁴ These styles were partly the result of the interaction between Symbolist writers and avant-garde painters. The former saw in the formalism of decoration a proper way to express the "Idea" in painting, by-passing "prose" literary substrate, the same way Symbolist poetry did, relying only on its formal elements.³⁵ (The way chosen to express idealism through the subject-matter, such as for example the mystical allegories required by Péladan, need not concern us here.) In the late 1880s flatness in painting was associated with idealism. This association no longer held for the decorative arts, for which separate "laws" were accepted now as "common sense." But giving an easel painting (or even an oil

panel) the aspect of a medieval stained glass window for example, was an idealist statement.³⁶

As I mentioned earlier, the reaction against positivism (translated in art as reaction against Naturalism) was evident not only in artists and critics of Idealist philosophical orientation, or partisans of reactionary politics. Many rejected positivism without rejecting the objective reality of the material world, and favored in art a mixture of "Realism" and "Idealism" (to use the terms employed at the time), a "compromise."³⁷ In the formalism of that avant-garde painting of the early 1890s which did not purposefully associate itself with the Idealist Symbolist movement (for a more detailed discussion see section "C"), this positivist rejection manifested itself especially in an orientation toward synthesis and a new emphasis on "line." It reflected an adherence to the redefined, less materialistic concept of "decorative." But even when the formalism actually borrowed the principles of "decoration" (as I believe is the case with Cézanne paintings), it did not borrow from the decorative arts that required absolute flatness, such as posters, wallpapers, or stained glass windows, or for that matter it did not borrow from Egyptian, Byzantine, or Gothic art, both the lack of depth as well as the lack of modelling of objects.

B. The new "decorative" tendency as defined by critics in the early 1890s: Aurier versus Lecomte.

Critics of various persuasions emphasized that the new tendencies in the painting of the 1890s were characterized by a preoccupation with the "decorative." The most eloquent

writers on this subject were G. Albert Aurier and Georges Lecomte. They were also representatives of the two main currents in the critique of the avant-garde in the early 1890s: partisans of an Idealist aesthetic (Aurier) and those who opted for a compromise between Realism and Idealism (Lecomte). In establishing the most avant-garde trend, that is the trend toward the "decorative," both critics fought to ensure priority for the painters they defended. But, because of their different ideological positions they had different views on what "decorative" in painting should be. Essentially, Lecomte advocated "decorative" painting as understood at the time, while Aurier wanted all painting to be "decorative painting," that is "decoration."³⁸

The young Symbolist writer Albert Aurier strongly reacted against "materialist" aesthetics (such as Taine's or Zola's). Not only was he against positivism, but he was actually a Neo-Platonist, adept of Plotinus and Plato, and also held the belief that "only mysticism can save our society from degradation, sensualism, and utilitarianism."³⁹ Like the Gothic Revivalists or Havard, he associated the development of the independent, "materialistic" tableau with decadent civilizations, and declared in his article in the Mercure de France of March 1891, "Le Symbolisme en peinture,"

La peinture n'a pu être créée que pour décorer de pensées, de rêves et d'idées les murales banalités des édifices humains. Le tableau de chevalet n'est qu'un illogique raffinement inventé pour satisfaire la fantaisie ou l'esprit commercial des civilisations décadentes.⁴⁰

Therefore he stated that "decorative painting" is in fact "the

true painting", but he made it clear that he meant the "decorative painting proper, as was understood by the Egyptians, very likely by the Greeks and the Primitives."⁴¹ In other words Aurier was not interested only in the ornamental function of painting (which could be performed by facsimiles of tableaux as it has been since the Renaissance), but in "true" decoration, as envisaged by the reformers of decorative arts. As in the case of the Gothic Revivalists, Aurier advocated the return to a particular formalism because it projected an idealist content. In fact to make sure it is understood that the substratum of this art was a true idealist philosophy, he used the term "Ideist." Thus, he distinguished the painting he was supporting from the academic "Idealist" painting, which was doing nothing more than modifying material objects according to particular norms or conventions.⁴² To see the difference, according to Aurier, one should not have a materialist conception of the world and should not "prefer Auguste Comte and Condillac to Plotinus and Plato."⁴³ Aurier stated that "decorative painting in the proper sense... is nothing else but the manifestation of an art at the same time subjective, synthetic, symbolist and ideist."⁴⁴ The critic considered Paul Gauguin as the head of the young "synthetists, ideists, symbolists," the "initiator of a new art"; or as he put it in the article, "Les Symbolistes," of 1892, Gauguin was the "incontestable" initiator of an "artistic movement" which one day might be considered a "Renaissance."⁴⁵ The character of "decoration" was the essential feature of this new art. Were they given the means, the artists of this new movement, Aurier

explains, would have arrived "at an art of decoration, an art of monumental frescoes, rather than at easel paintings."⁴⁶

The 1891 article, which makes a strong case for Gauguin (as well as for all the "Ideist" painters) as decorator, ends with a dramatic appeal: "...you have in your midst a decorator of genius: walls! walls! give him walls!"⁴⁷ As proof of Gauguin's potential ability to achieve great mural decorations, Aurier named the artist's easel paintings, which could easily be seen as "fragments of giant frescoes."

Aurier made it clear he was looking for the counterpart in the plastic arts of the reaction against Naturalism that took place in literature. In the previous year he had already described Van Gogh as "a Symbolist," but at the same time as a "realist", "very aware of matter."⁴⁸ True Symbolist art was based on idealist philosophy though, and in Van Gogh he detected only "idealist tendencies," while Gauguin was "Plato plastically interpreted by a genial savage."⁴⁹ According to Aurier, Gauguin's pictorial oeuvre was "marked by a profound and highly idealistic philosophy."⁵⁰ Idealism, not simply "subjectivism," was the main characteristic of Symbolism; this is why Aurier so clearly opposed Symbolism and Impressionism.⁵¹ In the article of 1891, Aurier admitted the "subjectivity" of Impressionist art, yet he dismissed Impressionism (actually naming Pissarro and Monet) as another "variety of Realism."⁵² He made it a point to clarify the distinction one should make within the "heterogeneous group of Independent painters" between the "Impressionists" on the one hand, and the "newly

arrived, headed by Gauguin," on the other. For the latter Aurier suggested the use of another "ists"-ending word, such as Synthetists, Ideists, or Symbolists. According to him they represented in painting a new tendency that paralleled the situation in literature: "the agony of Naturalism" and an "idealist, even mystic reaction."⁵³ Aurier was strongly opposed to the "official" philosophy of Impressionism (as crystallised in the 1870s) as a movement, but was among the first to welcome the changes he detected in the latest paintings of the old Impressionists, such as for example Pissarro's.⁵⁴ Of course Pissarro, even less than Van Gogh, was not a good candidate for embodying an idealist philosophy. Thus in his first article in which he wanted to define the Symbolism in painting, Aurier (probably under the influence of Gauguin and Bernard) decided to make a clear break with Impressionism and not to complicate the matter by bringing in the latest changes in the art of individual Impressionists. The Symbolist critic was kinder toward the Impressionists in 1892, possibly at the suggestion of Denis or Sérusier.⁵⁵ In "Les Symbolistes" of that year he admitted the influence of Degas, Cézanne, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro, as well as that of the Neo-Impressionists (especially Seurat) and of Anquetin (who was not in the Pont-Aven or Nabi groups) on the evolution of the Ideist painters.⁵⁶

Georges Lecomte, not a Symbolist himself, but connected with Symbolist circles, was well aware of the decline of naturalism and positivism and actually took an anti-positivist, anti-empiricist position.⁵⁷ He considered that Naturalism

neglected the spiritual side of life, the "internal life," but he did not subscribe to idealist philosophies, and was against Catholicism and mysticism. He found in the latest art of the older Impressionists the mixture of Realism and Idealism he favored, and credited them with switching from analysis to synthesis, with an intellectual process of abstraction from reality that replaced the "immediate copy of nature," prior to any such attempts among contemporary schools. Lecomte's lecture at the Salon des XX entitled "Des tendances de la peinture moderne," published as a series of three articles in L'Art Moderne of 1892, as well as the last chapter of his book L'Art Impressionniste of the same year, entitled "L'Art de demain," can be seen as a reply to Aurier's "Le Symbolisme en peinture" of March 1891.⁵⁸ Lecomte clearly identified the "new tendencies" (tendances nouvelles) in modern painting with a progressive search for decorative beauty.⁵⁹ He declared:

Et c'est précisément ce SOUCI DE BEAUTÉ DÉCORATIVE qui nous paraît, en dehors de toute préoccupation secondaire, devoir être la MARQUE DISTINCTIVE DE NOTRE EPOQUE DANS L'HISTOIRE GÉNÉRALE DE L'ART. 60

But Lecomte argued for Delacroix and the Impressionists (Pissarro, Cézanne, Renoir, Monet) as being the true originators of the new tendency of painting toward the decorative, and not the "Ideist." He used the term peintres idéistes introduced by Aurier, with the comment: "c'est ainsi que les classifia un très éloquent critique."⁶¹ Also, Lecomte pointed out, the effort made by the Impressionists "toward ornamental interpretations, both through colour and lines," had been "efficiently continued" by those whom Félix Fenéon had dubbed the

"Neo-Impressionists."⁶² Only after "these already conclusive attempts," Lecomte said, had new painters affirmed themselves as "protagonists of an art more exclusively mystic, symbolic and decorative."⁶³ In the chapter "L'Art de demain" of his book L'Art Impressionniste, Lecomte was even more categorical in denying the role of true innovators to those painters "Ideists," to whom he referred as the "newly arrived":

Les annonceurs de l'Art à venir, c'est-à dire de l'Art mystique, symbolique et décoratif exclusivement, innovent moins qu'ils ne le pensent. L'évolution dont ils se targuent a été depuis longtemps commencée par les premiers impressionnistes eux-mêmes. Les nouveaux venus ne font que la continuer systématiquement, selon une esthétique toute philosophique, avec une recherche très intentionnelle de Pensée et de Rêve. 64

Lecomte had strong ties with literary Symbolism, but while well aware of what he called "this idealist Renaissance," he made it clear that in art he favored (as did quite a few other critics at the time) a compromise, a blending of realism and idealism.⁶⁵ He admired those "beautiful evocations of nature going beyond reality," which are both "suggestive and representational" and stand for an art of intellectual character. From such works,

...se dégage la pensée, s'essore le rêve. Le grand mystère de la nature est par elles rendu. Cette peinture satisfait l'âme autant qu'elle enchante les yeux. 66

According to Lecomte such works had already been created by the Impressionists.⁶⁷ But, he added, in the idealized evocation of these material beauties, these painters did not sacrifice any of the "plastic qualities" that constitute the pictorial beauty. For Lecomte, "in painting, the decorative is acceptable only as an extension, a logical development of

the truth."⁶⁸ He criticised the Ideist painters for distorting the human figures and objects in an exaggerated manner, to the point of "lacking resemblance and being unrecognizable."

Lecomte, in a very systematic way, demolished the Ideists' claim to priority in giving contemporary painting what he saw as its most striking feature, namely its decorative character. But there is a fundamental difference in the meanings of the concept decorative painting as envisaged by Lecomte and Aurier respectively. Lecomte never elucidates the fact that Aurier calls for a return to painting as "decoration" of walls, as it used to be before the dreaded tableau led to its emancipation. What Lecomte understands by decorative painting is a decorative tableau that apart from the coloristic effet includes an ornamental use of the line, the arabesque.⁶⁹ In that sense, of course, one can build up a case for the "decorativeness" of the Impressionist paintings going back to the 1870s, and this is exactly what Lecomte is doing. He relates that in the beginning, the Impressionists' concern for decorative beauty was "instinctive" and restricted only to "decoration through colour."⁷⁰ They were "plein air" painters, concerned with rendering "the truth" about the natural colorations, the light, the atmosphere, the enveloppements de clartés, and with the "exact description of the effet" of particular sites.⁷¹ AS was shown in Part 1, a painting of "polychrome effect" (connected by Charles Blanc with plein air-ism) was a "decorative" painting by the standards of the 1870s.⁷² Critics of the 1870s saw Impressionist paintings in terms of both pochades or etudes

and of decorative works (to be distinguished from the expressive paintings of "Style").⁷³ But they were not "decorations" in the true sense, they were still independent paintings, "windows" open to nature, decorative tableaux (or decorative etudes if one is to be fastidious about the lack of finish). Even when they executed large scale paintings with a particular destination in mind (that is, intended to serve as decorations), the Impressionists of the 1870s did not fulfil the criteria of decoration established at the time by the official aestheticians. Their "decorations" were nothing but blown-up decorative tableaux, having in common with a true decoration only the fact that the unity of effect was achieved not through the unity of chiaroscuro, but by rendering the "envelope" of air and light, which translated into uniformity of value.⁷⁴ So far the Impressionist "decorative" painting did not go beyond the Naturalist, materialistic-positivist framework. The "effect" achieved in their paintings could be taken as decorative and at the same time as based on the empirical observation of the natural effect of light. Lecomte himself said that for a while "the concern for luminosity" seemed to define the "tendencies of modern art," and for a long time he thought this to be so.⁷⁵ But, he added, now (in 1892) he changed his opinion: it became clear to him that the period of "research of light" was only a first step in what he saw as a continuous process of evolution toward the decorative, namely the decoration by means of colour alone ("souci de décoration par la couleur").⁷⁶ "Gradually," Lecomte said, the Impressionists

"detached themselves from reality," deliberately modified "the external aspect of things," and actually "composed, away from nature." The natural site became "the essential leit-motiv, the pretext for a decorative interpretation," which now included the ornamental use of the line; and not only did the dessin become more summary, the colour also became simpler.⁷⁷ Lecomte makes it clear that the "decorative interpretation" is achieved through "synthetic elimination of the superfluous and the momentary" from the natural motif.⁷⁸ The word "synthetic," no doubt, was meant to serve as a reminder that the Impressionists were "Synthetists" before Gauguin and his followers. Lecomte implies they were also Symbolists, since from their paintings emanate the thought, the dream, the mystery of nature.⁷⁹ The Impressionists, however, were not guilty of exaggerated distortions of objects or beings, nor did they violate the "plasticity" of painting, or the concept of tableau. The Ideists were guilty of all those things. The drawing was distorted, not descriptive, the values (light to dark) ignored - therefore no modelling of objects, no "plasticity."⁸⁰ Also their paintings had no depth, no aerial perspective, everything seemed to be in the same plane; in other words they were not tableaux:

Sous prétexte de synthèse et de décoration, on couvre les toiles de teintes plates qui ne restituent point les lumineuses limpidités de l'atmosphère, ne donnent point l'enveloppement des choses, la profondeur, la perspective aérienne. Les valeurs sont si rapprochées (puissent-elles toujours être en de rigoureux accords) que tous les points d'un tableau semblent être dans un plan identique.⁸¹

Lecomte blamed the Ideists' distortions on their philosophical

idealism and mysticism, that sacrifices "the character of things" for an exclusive concern with "expressing ideas, realizing theories."⁸² He declared that nobody loved "intellectuality" and the expression of the ideal more than he did, but he believed that "in the representational arts, the idea should be subordinated to the pure plastic beauty."⁸³ He implied that otherwise, if ideas are allowed to be dominant, "Painting becomes literary and philosophical," and even feared that:

- nous arriverons à cette très bizarre esthétique, philosophique, religieuse, voir même politique, selon laquelle les oeuvres picturales se répartissent en deux classes: celles qui représentent des sujets nobles; celles qui restituent des vulgarités.⁸⁴

Thus Lecomte implied that the Ideists' painting was not "painting for painting's sake," which was in fact the utmost insult a critic could address to an avant-garde artist. Of course, Maurice Denis felt compelled to answer such an attack which would have placed the Symbolists-Synthetists in the same category with the adepts of Péladan.⁸⁵

Lecomte represented the point of view of artists who wanted their painting to be "decorative" in the sense accepted in the early 1890s (decorative composition, synthesis, style), but not "decoration." Who were the artists (aside from Symbolists-Synthetists) who actually introduced the principles of decoration into easel painting at the time when separate sets of laws were commonly accepted for tableaux and decorations and why? I will try to answer this question in the next section.

C. The artists who applied decorative arts principles to easel painting by the early 1890s.

I do not propose to give a complete list of these artists, but to point out the common general features, or rather goals, that bound otherwise quite distinct individualities. In my opinion, the artists who applied decorative arts principles (including the arts that did not require absolute flatness) were those who fulfilled three conditions:

1. Art for art's sake, understood only by an elite for the time being.
2. Anti-Naturalism (anti-materialism, anti positivism, anti-empiricism).⁸⁶
3. Acceptance of the status of "decorator," implicitly the lead of architecture; even desire to eliminate the tableau altogether.

I would like to emphasize that all three conditions had to be met. Thus for example old Impressionists who modified their art in the 1880s did not fulfil the third condition.⁸⁷ Of course I exclude from this discussion the academic artists, who would never dream to mix tableau and decorative arts. But even "juste-millieu" artists did not produce easel painting that was a "true" decoration, because theirs was not "art for art's sake;" and even after having modified the rigid academic rules, they still believed in tableau.⁸⁸ Each of these three conditions deserves of course a brief discussion, to the extent they can be discussed separately.

The first condition, the elitist "art for art's sake" requirement, indicates right away we are dealing with avant-garde

artists.⁸⁹ It is related to the fundamental question: for whom did these artists produce their art? As I indicated in Part 1 of this chapter, their art was intended mainly for "enlightened" amateurs, with the hope that in the future, a wider segment of a more just society would be able to appreciate it. As I also indicated in Part 1, "art for art's sake" was equivalent with "decorative." This "decorative" art was the one to adorn the walls of private houses and apartments of the amateurs, as opposed to the art destined for public buildings or exhibited at the Salon, "for the glory of France." Such was the official opinion in the 1860s, when those who would be known as the "Impressionists" arrived on the artistic scene.⁹⁰ Among the kind of art suitable for the ornamentation of private homes, Charles Blanc listed portraits and landscapes "which translate the painter's emotion in front of nature, these tableaux hollandais which our Frenchmen are doing so well."⁹¹ During the 1860s and 1870s, "decorative" tableaux were defined in a materialistic framework, aimed to please the eye through their coloristic effect and manipulation of the pâte.⁹² Thus Impressionist painting was considered by critics as "decorative." But in the 1880s and early 1890s the concept of "decorative" put forward by those in position to influence the amateur's market, as we have seen, changed to the point of excluding from this category a Naturalist painting like the Impressionist painting of the 1870s. This is why a critic like Lecomte, who had personal friendships with some of the old Impressionists and chose to be their defender, was so insistent in the early 1890s that they were not "realists" now, that they "composed"

their pictures, and that they used what was considered the "intelligent arabesque." Indeed, the old Impressionists' art did move away from the "Naturalist image" (for some artists more than for others) in the 1880s, thus not surprisingly losing Zola's support.⁹³

The second requirement, the "anti-Naturalism is interdependent on the first one, that is, ultimately, on the question: "for whom was this art intended."⁹⁴ Of course, personal, political and ideological inclinations played an important role. Pissarro's anti-positivist attitude never went as far as Renoir's (who underwent an "Ingresque" period) or Cézanne's. Also neither Pissarro nor Renoir embraced an idealist philosophy as did the Symbolists, thus neither of them introduced in painting the absolute flatness of a poster or stained glass window. Of course, not all avant-garde artists who introduced into painting principles borrowed from the decorative arts were mystics or adopted a Neo-Platonist philosophy. But then, they followed only general recommendations for decorations, regarding perspective, the level of the horizon, clarity or even emphasis of the contours, or borrowed from decorative arts such as tapestry, that allowed for a "bas-relief" kind of flatness, without aiming toward true flatness.⁹⁵ In any event, Symbolists or not, the artists who introduced principles of decoration into easel painting were those who wanted their paintings to be considered "decorations;" one not to be overlooked reason for this being the marketing possibilities. This economical reason was clearly expressed by Vincent Van Gogh in a letter of 1888 to his brother Theo:

Nothing would help us to sell our canvases more than if they could gain general acceptance as decorations for middle-class houses. The way it used to be in Holland.⁹⁶

The third condition, which again, is related to the first two (because decorative arts were defined both as "art for art's sake" and as being incompatible with naturalism) defines those artists who were willing to accept the status of "decorator" or even wanted to abolish the independent tableau altogether. Camille Pissarro for example was not one of them, and he made it clear he favored an art that was "decorative" but not "decoration."⁹⁷

On the other hand, a contemporary of the Impressionists but outside their circle (representative of the non-naturalist side of the non-academic current in the second half of the 19th c.), Puvis de Chavannes, became a true "decorator."⁹⁸ He also brought the aesthetic of decoration to easel painting.⁹⁹ Puvis applied to his easel paintings the same principles of decoration he followed in his murals resembling 14th and 15th c. Florentine frescoes, because he believed in returning to the original role of painting as wall decoration. The critic for the journal L'Artiste (which had then a strong "juste-milieu" orientation) expressed well in 1893 Puvis' goal: "...telle est sa distinctive originalité parmi les artistes modernes, - seul ou à peu près entre tous, il tenta de restituer à la peinture le caractère décoratif qui fut, aux origines de cet art, sa véritable raison d'être..."¹⁰⁰ It is not surprising then that Aurier linked Gauguin and Puvis together in his article of 1891, and that the latter was revered by all Synthetist-

Symbolist artists of the early 1890s.¹⁰¹

The Nabis, who became very much involved with apartment decoration and other forms of decorative art in the 1890s, were the most outspoken about their decorative intentions in painting. They publicly admitted these intentions early in 1891, as for example in the interview published in L'Echo de Paris by Jacques Daurelle.¹⁰² Maurice Denis declared:

Je pense qu'avant tout une peinture doit orner. Le choix des sujets et des scènes n'est rien. C'est par la surface colorée, par la valeur des tons, par l'harmonie des lignes que je prétends atteindre l'esprit, éveiller l'émotion. ¹⁰³

Denis, who was the theorist of the Nabis, strongly emphasized in the early 1890s the flatness of painting, thus its character of "true" decoration. The Symbolists, as I already indicated, wanted in fact to abolish the concept of tableau altogether. This goal is best expressed by one of the Nabis, Verkade:

Vers le début de 1890, un cri de guerre fut lancé d'un atelier à l'autre: Plus de tableau de chevalet! A bas les meubles inutiles! La peinture ne doit pas usurper une liberté qui l'isole des autres arts. Le travail du peintre commence où l'architecture considère le sien comme terminé. Le mur doit rester surface, ne doit pas être percé pour la représentation d'horizons infinis. Il n'y a pas de tableaux, il n'y a que des décorations. ¹⁰⁴

What is important to retain is that none of the artists who introduced the principles of decoration into painting tried to explain the formal aspect of their works by means of "perception." They did not say this was the way they "saw" things, just the opposite, they emphasized the conceptual character of their art. They brought back art "to the simplicity of its beginnings," as Maurice Denis said, because they wanted to react against Naturalism.¹⁰⁵ They also wanted to produce "art for art's sake."

D. The mid and late 1890s.

The last years of the 19th century witnessed a decline of literary Symbolism, reflected also in the field of painting. On the literary scene, Symbolism was defeated by two new movements which launched their systematic attacks starting in the early 1890s, namely the Romanic School and the Naturist movement. The first one was founded by none other than Jean Moréas (the author of the Symbolist "Manifesto" of 1886) as early as 1891, and its true leader became Charles Maurras, the reactionary critic and journalist who in 1898 was to found the Action Française in order to fight the Dreyfusards. This Romanic School wanted to restore the Greco-Latin heritage to the French letters and it eventually evolved into a Neo-classicist movement. Moréas accused "Romanticism and its Parnassian, Naturalist, and Symbolist descendants" of breaking "the continuity of the Gallic chain." Naturism was a movement that had tried to establish itself since 1892. It reacted against artificiality and the Narcissistic introspection of Symbolism, against idealist tendencies, in favor of Life and Nature. It appeared for a short while, especially in 1896 - 1897, that Naturism was to be the successor of Symbolism, the next general trend to which the new generation of poets would adhere. One reason it did not succeed seems to be the Dreyfus Affair that polarized artists and critics. In January 1898 Zola published his famous "J'accuse" in L'Aurore, and Maurice Le Blond, principal figure in the Naturist movement wrote a series of favorable articles on Zola in La Plume (February-May 1898),

calling him an heir to a democratic tradition. This was not the first time the main protagonists of Naturalism had expressed their sympathy for Zola. But in 1898 Zola was attacked just as much as Dreyfus himself, and many writers who would have become Naturalists, perhaps only to follow a fashion, realized (according to their political convictions) that they had to react in favor of the established order and French tradition.¹⁰⁶ One of the writers who initially was willing to associate himself with the Naturalists was André Gide. I focus on him because he was an important link between the literary and artistic avant-garde, especially as a good friend of Maurice Denis.¹⁰⁷

In any event, in the mid and late 1890s Symbolism came more and more under attack for its detachment from life and reality, from Nature. As Michel Décaudin said in his book La Crise des Valeurs Symbolistes,

De 1894 à 1898, les mots-clef ont changé; on parle moins de Rêve, d'Idéal, on proclame les beautés de la Nature, les splendeurs de la Vie; 108

How did this move away from idealism and dreams, toward nature and life affect Symbolist painting? The Symbolist painters in the mid-1890s were the Nabis. One of their defenders, Roger Marx, was in a hurry to declare in 1895 that they "do not profess the hatred of nature," as their accusers implied.¹⁰⁹

Maurice Denis, the theorist of the Nabis, also tried to counteract such accusations as those mentioned by Marx. Already in March 1895, Denis tried to persuade the readers of La Plume that Symbolism was not really an idealist art:

L'art symboliste n'est pas cet art de névrose et de folie qu'on croit généralement. Il ne faut pas se laisser de dire en quel sens cet art est idéaliste, et en quel sens il ne l'est absolument pas. 110

The following year, in L'Art et la Vie of October 1896, Denis was even more categorical in denying the idealism of pictorial Symbolism, declaring: "Certainly not, it was not an idealist theory."¹¹¹ Denis was eager to point out that this art was initiated not by the "painters of the soul," but by painters of landscape and still-life, and he exemplified: "influence of Cézanne on Gauguin, Bernard, etc." These initiators were impassioned for truth and "lived in communion with nature," and, Denis added, "I think without metaphysics."¹¹² Denis referred to Cézanne in his writings the first time in 1895, at a time when he wanted to prove that Symbolism-Synthetism was not based on idealist theories.¹¹³ In the same year he tried to justify himself and other "young Symbolists" for borrowing from "tradition" (that is the medieval tradition which brought upon them the accusations of "archaism") on the account that they had to react strongly against the "naturalist ambiance."¹¹⁴ He also expressed a belief in the possibility that one day they could be closer to Nature ("Peut-être un jour arriveront-ils à la Nature").¹¹⁵ No doubt Denis' friendship with André Gide had an influence on his new insistence on nature. Also Gide's declaration in his Nourritures Terrestres: "Entre toutes les joies des sens j'enviais celles du toucher" is in accord with Denis' un-Symbolist insistence on the matière of the painting.¹¹⁶ In the mid-1890s Denis' concept of painting became more hedonistic, he talked about the old dictum pulchra

esse quae visa placent and added to his definition of painting the purpose of it: "for the pleasure of the eye."¹¹⁷ It is this hedonistic twist in Denis' aesthetics (and for that matter in most of Nabis' painting), the new admission that the role of art is to please the senses through beautiful shapes, colours and matière, that shows an abandonment of Symbolism. The "Symbolist" tag was still attached to the Nabis in 1895-96 (and even in later years, since labels died hard). Yet while it is difficult to pinpoint exactly for each of them when they ceased to be Symbolists, the fact is that Vuillard (in particular), Bonnard, Ranson, even Denis, were then producing painting that was "decorative" in the materialistic sense of the word (as in the 1860s and 1870s).¹¹⁸ In the early 1890s colourful patterns of checks and dots and floral motifs, simply decorative in the sense they were pleasing to the eye just like the pattern of a carpet, had already been used by the Nabis. But by 1893, it is significant that the Symbolist-Cloisonist line disappeared almost completely from Vuillard's painting.¹¹⁹ In the mid-1890s he became more and more interested in textures, his paintings had pâte, the emphasis on matière was very pronounced, the "temperament" (visible in his patte) was running free.¹²⁰ His favorite subject-matter was scenes of domestic life.¹²¹ Bonnard was interested in 1895 in street scenes, and he also dropped the Symbolist line. While their pictures were still flat, they were more naturalistic.¹²² Ranson's paintings of the same period can be considered Art Nouveau, if this label can be applied to painting at all.¹²³ Denis' line also became more sinuous and sensuous than in the earlier

paintings, already in the early 1890s, especially when the subject was not overtly religious.¹²⁴ The relationship between Symbolist-Synthetist painting and Art Nouveau is quite complex. There are definite stylistic similarities between the two, and the influence the Nabi painting (together with that of Gauguin, Lautrec and Van Gogh) had on the elaboration of this international style considered to be born in 1893 in Belgium, is now recognized.¹²⁵ We have to keep in mind, though, the fundamental difference in philosophy between the two. The Symbolist-Synthetist painting belonged in a philosophically idealist framework. It represented the Idea, not the external, material world, and it was intended for spiritual delectation, not just for the pleasure of the eye. Art Nouveau was an "external" art, aimed only to please the eye, and it was a style developed for the decorative arts, not for painting, suitable for mass-production.¹²⁶ It did not express anything, it was only ornamental, and featured highly stylized lines and patterns enclosing flat tints. Art Nouveau evolved out of a conscious effort to create a modern style in decoration, to eliminate "historicism." In France, a fresh look at nature, at organic shapes, was strongly recommended as an inspiration for a new style, following a tradition that can be traced back to Viollet-le-Duc and V.P. Galland.¹²⁷ The pattern of leaves Denis used in his Sacred Wood of 1893 can be interpreted in this light. The Nabis became involved with various forms of decorative arts in the early 1890s, thus becoming preoccupied with the creation of a style (not to be confounded with Style) devoid of "archaisms." Together with Toulouse-Lautrec and

other artists outside their own Nabi group, they participated in the renaissance of decoration that took place in the last years of the 19th century, being among the first to exhibit at Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau.¹²⁸ The Nabis themselves participated in the process that incorporated Symbolism into a "decorative style" in which the idealist substratum was lost. The "line" lost its prestige as symbol of the Idea, became "sensual."

The Symbolists were the first to transform paintings into decorations and to openly acknowledge this fact, but by mid-1890s this trend became the general tendency of avant-garde painting, except these decorations were "decorative" in the materialistic sense of the word. The emphasis in this "painting for its own sake" (soon to be called usually "pure painting") was on textures, patterns, matière, colour. It retained the flatness of decoration, but this flatness was not to be interpreted any more in painting as "idealism," no more than in any decorative art. Its philosophy was akin to that of Art Nouveau, in the sense that intended only to be visually pleasing; but it emphasized painterly qualities, and the "temperament" of the artist. It was not intended for mechanical reproduction, and perhaps as a reaction against the vulgarization of the continuous linear contour by Art Nouveau, this "pure painting" made less and less use of the line. Vuillard's paintings with their textiles-like texture, or Signac's paintings resembling mosaics are among the best examples of this "painting for its own sake" that replaced the tableau. Camille

Mauclair criticised this new trend of the young avant-garde:

Leur art ne fait plus que charmer les yeux. Ils le sentent bien obscurément, puisque leur grand mot, leur constant desideratum, c'est le décoratif, c'est-à-dire un art fondé sur l'agrément de la couleur en elle-même, appliqué à des déformations d'êtres, fleurs, accessoires, selon le principe fondamental de l'ornementation. On n'entend que ce mot décoratif dans tous les ateliers. Cela, c'est l'art de la tapisserie, de l'arabesque et de la robe autant et plus que l'art pictural. Beaucoup ne veulent plus faire que cela, un grand nombre le veulent mêler à l'esthétique de la peinture et du paysage. Le courant de ces opinions est si caractérisé, qu'on cherche même à supprimer le tableau encadré. Cet objet parallélogrammatique que l'on suspend aux murs obsède les peintres. On harmonise la peinture aux appartements, on l'agence comme les tentures, on l'exécute à teintes plates, par juxtapositions de tons, on réduit ses tonalités à une gamme claire selon l'éclairage qu'elle recevra. 129

Mauclair considered that the Impressionists were the originators of this "decorative revolution," meaning by "decorative," as I already mentioned, exactly the same thing as the critics of the 1970s meant. Like many other ex-Symbolist writers, Mauclair did not approve the orientation of the avant-garde toward outright materialism. He held the opinion that there is a superior art, one which appeals to the intellect (that could include decoration, such as Puvis de Chavannes'), and an inferior one which appeals to the senses, it is decorative. He admired the Impressionists for the technical achievements, but placed their art in the second category, and put forward the idea that "Impressionism is above all a new essay in French decoration."¹³⁰ But, Mauclair remarked, "the older ones in the group, even now, did not renounce the tableau."¹³¹ The young avant-garde however actually abolished the tableau, a fact to which Mauclair was now strongly objecting. The critic was also outraged by this love of matière, which led to the

imitation of various materials and textures in painting, such as Oriental carpets, Japanese crépon, and various tissues. This imitation mania went so far as to imitate the specific aspects of one medium in another (such as imitating oil painting in watercolours and vice versa). Mauclair complained that the connoisseur's interest in this art works was not intended to be focused on "what they represent," but on "the way they are made."¹³² Thus Mauclair pointed out here the tendency of painting to become more "art for art's sake," in the sense that the subject-matter becomes even less important in comparison with the pure act of painting, the painting's matière, the decorative patterns and colours to be admired for their own sake. This materialistic art for art's sake can indeed be connected with the Impressionism of the 1870s as Mauclair said (in fact he made a better case than Lecomte for the Impressionists as originators of the decorative tendency, because he did not try to connect them with the idealistic tendency Aurier was promoting). Van Gogh's painting also strongly featured this "materialism," a fact which caused Aurier to have reserves in calling him a "Symbolist" outright.¹³³ The Neo-Impressionists tried to suppress the "material" side of their painting during the few years when the Symbolism was triumphant, but now they emphasized the mosaic-like character of their paintings by enlarging the "dots." This fact exasperated Pissarro, who, as Mauclair correctly remarked, did not want to transform paintings into decorations.¹³⁴ Signac, on the other hand, was proud to admit they did just that. He said

that even small Neo-Impressionist paintings are to be considered neither as "studies," nor as "easel paintings" (tableaux de chevalet), but as "decorations," specifying their kinship with Oriental carpets, mosaics, or tapestries:

...ces toiles qui restituent de la lumière aux murs de nos appartements modernes, qui enchâssent de pure couleurs dans des lignes rythmiques, qui participent du charme des tapis d'Orient, des mosaïques et des tapisseries, ne sont-elles pas des décorations aussi? 135

In concluding this section dealing with the defeat of Symbolism (therefore of Platonic idealism) by a return to the material world, to life and nature, I want to point out that this did not mean a return of the painting avant-garde to Naturalism, that is to an art that had to give the impression that it reflected only what the artist actually saw (even though the work was not always executed on the spot), an art of empirical observation. The materialist philosophy triumphed again, but not positivism. These "decorative" paintings were still "decorations," that is they featured conceptual, intentional alterations made by the artist in order to comply with the requirement of flatness in decoration.

Another observation is that there is no real correspondence between the Naturist movement in literature and the painting avant-garde, as had been the case with Mallarmean Symbolism, first of all because Naturism repudiated "art for art's sake." Naturism did proclaim however that the "return to nature" consisted in a "joyous acceptance of the world" (in contrast with the Symbolist introspection), and this is what the decorative "pure painting" of the turn of the century suggested. 136

But to Maurice Denis this painting was soon to suggest "anarchism" and "Dreyfussism." The Dreyfus Affair, which resulted in the Radical Republicans seizing the political power in 1899, polarized artists, and intellectuals in general. (For example among the old Impressionists: Degas and Renoir were anti-Drefusards, with Degas especially becoming strongly anti-semitic; Pissaro and Monet were Drefusards.) On artistic level this polarization is best illustrated in the work of Denis and Vuillard, and documented in Denis' writings and in the letters they exchanged. Vuillard became the Epitome of "pure painting," while Denis by 1898 joined the reactionary Neo-Classicist movement. Because of his allegiance to Catholicism he became a strong supporter of anti-Drefussism and nationalism, associating himself with the cause of Charles Maurras. He entertained a long friendship with Adrien Mithouard, and expressed his support for classicism and traditionalism in the latter's publications, Le Spectateur Catholique and especially in L'Occident.¹³⁷ For Denis classicism meant first of all "order," as opposed to the disorder he detected in "pure painting," which breded anarchy and Drefussism.¹³⁸ It meant rallying with that Greco-Latin and French tradition which favored an absolute ideal, against all modern manifestations of individualism. Such manifestations were evident in both Impressionism and Symbolism, which had forsaken the notion of an "absolute ideal beauty" and patient métier, in favor of individual expression (of temperament, or emotion), according to Denis.¹³⁹ As early as September 1897, and again in the fol-

lowing year, Denis had criticised Symbolist artists (himself included, but especially Vuillard) in a manner very similar to Charles Maurras', the leader of the Romanic School.¹⁴⁰ Yet only in 1895 Denis had defended Symbolist painting against accusations made from a classicist stand. Criticizing "some of today's literary men" (littérateurs d'aujourd'hui), Denis had pointed out that for them there is only distortion and ugliness outside of the absolute types of beauty, norms of harmony, proportions. Yet, Denis said, even "the glorious masters of the Renaissance" did not bother with exact research in matters of perspective, anatomy and archeology. In fact, implied Denis, they had views on art that were similar to those of the young Nabis, since among other things, "Art for them was the beauty of the decor, the joyfulness of beautiful forms and beautiful colours."¹⁴¹ Now, in February 1898, he tried to convert Vuillard to his new found classicism (found partly under the guidance of Gide), and opposed Raphael and the "theory of absolute ideal beauty" on one hand, to Thadée Natanson's "sensualism" and the "relativist" theories concerning beauty (to which the "Impressionist tendencies" belonged), on the other.¹⁴² Natanson (who was Jewish) was a partisan of the materialistic "pure painting," and a friend of Vuillard. As an influential critic and founder of the Revue Blanche (with his brothers in 1891), as well as in his role of wealthy amateur, patron of art, he undoubtedly had a role in the changes that took place already in the early 1890s in the art of Vuillard, Roussel and Bonnard, whom he favored among the Nabis. Denis was not involved with Natanson and La Revue Blanche as Vuillard was.¹⁴³

But he did modify his aesthetics in the direction of a more "materialistic" concept of "art for art's sake" in 1895. He was even prepared to "return to nature," not only in the sense that the subject-matter of his paintings was to be "external," extracted from life, from reality, but in the sense of a more naturalistic (but not "conventional") rendering.¹⁴⁴ Yet in 1901 he wrote: "On a trop parlé dans ces derniers temps de la nature, de la réalité et de la vie."¹⁴⁵ He was afraid that such "big words" were leading the academies and the Beaux-Arts toward mindless copies after nature (instead of using the classical method of composition, that is a rational conception).¹⁴⁶ Denis became also critical of Art Nouveau, and of the evolution of the avant-garde toward "pure painting," both being associated with the materialist philosophy, which was after all the philosophy of the Radical Republicans. (He embraced pictorial idealism once again, now in the form criticised by Symbolism, such as embodied in the art of Ingres.)¹⁴⁷ The main issue now is not so much though that of philosophical idealism, with which many progressive artists had identified in the late 1880s, together with Catholics and Right-wing, as a reaction to the crass materialism of the bourgeois society.

For the reactionary elements, concepts such as "order", "tradition", "nationalism" were the most important ones after the Dreyfus Affair. The kind of neo-Platonist idealism that turns the back to the real world, and allows for idiosyncratic expressions of oneself, could be just as well associated with "anarchy" as the "pure painting" was. In fact, many Symbolist

writers were anarchist sympathisers. This is why Denis was so critical of the "individuality" manifested in the Symbolism of the Nabis in 1898.

But if the most reactionary elements in artistic circles (such as Denis or Bernard) turned to classicism as a means of visible support for Right-wing politics, "pure painting" was not intended as a political statement (even though Denis or Bernard and other reactionary critics considered it as an incitement to anarchy), rather it expressed a desire for non-involvement in politics.¹⁴⁸

In concluding this chapter, I will emphasize a few salient points:

- The most important outcome of the revival of the decorative arts (a continuous process during the second half of the 19th century that reached its peak in the 1890s) concerning the field of painting was the renunciation of the tableau.
- While the old Impressionists changed their painting according to the new concept of "decorative" (which had classicist overtones), they still maintained double standards for the aesthetics of easel painting and that of the decorative arts in the early 1890s.
- The aesthetics of flat "decoration" (flat tints - lack of modelling, as well as lack of spatial recession) was first applied to painting in connection with the "Idealist Renaissance" by painters of neo-Platonist and mystical orientation who also believed in "art for art's sake." In

the early 1890s this painting will be known as "Symbolist painting," the artists and their supporting critics openly admitting its character of "decoration."

- By the late 1890s, the aesthetic of "decoration" is even more widespread and proclaimed as a desideratum by avant-garde painters; except following the decline of literary Symbolism this painting-decoration is "decorative" in the "materialistic" sense. This "pure painting" retained the flatness of "true" decoration (not necessarily absolute flatness) and emphasized textures, patterns, colour, the matière of the painting, the process of painting, the "temperament" of the artist (a concept used in "materialistic epochs" as Sérusier would say, and which Denis connected with "bestiality").¹⁴⁹
- Dissidents from the trend toward painting as "true" (therefore essentially flat) decoration such as Denis and Bernard, who became Neo-Classicists, reject flatness in painting, be it easel painting or mural decoration. Denis for example admires the decoration work of Ingres and his pupils, and instead of emphasizing the arabesque (as in his Symbolist period) he emphasizes "volumes." They are also very much against the "materialism" of "pure painting;" and give a pejorative connotation to the term "decorative" when used in the sense of "pleasing the eye" or the senses only. It is important to keep in mind Denis and Bernard's changes of opinion because their writings were very influential in forming the contemporary understanding of Cézanne.

CHAPTER II

CÉZANNE AND THE "DECORATIVE" TREND

Part 1. Cézanne Seen by His Contemporaries as a
"Decorative" Painter

Introduction.

In the 1890s, to use Maurice Denis' expression, the word "decorative" became the "tarte à la crème of the discussions among artists, and even among gens du monde."¹ From the last chapter it is evident that the tendency for painting to be "decorative" was a general characteristic of avant-garde painting of this period. Was Cézanne outside this general trend? And if not, did he paint only "decorative" tableaux (or perhaps, more appropriate, "decorative" sketches) as his Impressionist friends, or "decorations"?

The main protagonists of this "decorative" trend - the Symbolists of the early 1890s, and the partisans of "pure painting" - saw Cézanne as their initiator. The problem posed by the Cézanne criticism is that it is usually delayed with respect to the time when the paintings were created. Cézanne had his first major exhibition at Vollard's in 1895, and there he exhibited paintings done much earlier together with new ones (this will be the case in all his subsequent exhibitions). Before 1895 the only places where Cézanne's paintings could be seen were a few private collections, and especially Père Tanguy's shop. This being the case, it is of paramount

importance to pay attention to the time when the critique was written, because as it is evident from the previous chapter, concepts were volatile, often changing their meaning. Also it is important to be aware of the critic's position at the time, because this was shifting too in many cases (Bernard and Denis being notorious examples).

The discussion will proceed more or less in a chronological order, because this way it will be easier to keep track of all these changes. But I shall ask the reader to keep in mind a particular grouping of the critics. Those who wrote about Cézanne between 1891 and 1907 (the year of the Cézanne retrospective exhibition at the Salon d'Automne, one year after his death) can be divided into two main groups.

The first group, while recognizing "decorative" qualities in his paintings, considered his "distortions" of space and individual forms as involuntary, due to shortcoming of perception and/or technique.² These critics are described in Chapter I, Part 2 as "compromising" Realism and Idealism, maintaining an inclination toward realistic representation (not to be confounded with Realism as such), such as Lecomte and Geffroy. In this group we have to include also the "Classicists" and their supporters (Denis after 1898, Bernard in his "Souvenirs" of 1907, published in the Mercure de France, or the critic Monod in 1905, for example).

Naturalist critics proper (such as Thiébauld-Sisson) also considered Cézanne's distortions involuntary, since they considered him a sort of Realist manqué.³ In the period under discussion, Naturalism was only a weak current in the mainstream

artistic avant-garde, as was positivism, which still was a highly regarded doctrine among Radical Republican politicians (such as Clémenceau).

The second group of critics dealt with the distortion as voluntary alterations of conceptual nature. To this group belong the Synthetist-Symbolists of the early 1890s (for example Bernard of 1891) and the partisans of "pure painting" (Thadée Natanson, Pierre Hepp, Roger Marx) as well as those of "painting for painting's sake" in a less "materialistic" sense (Sérusier, Carlos de Castella). In 1907, in an article intended for a different audience than the Mercure, written in his Renovation Esthétique, Bernard also admitted Cézanne's distortions were voluntary, for the purpose of decoration, but he now meant it as a pejorative comment.

There were critics who, while admitting Cézanne's painting belonged in the category of "pure painting," were not in favor of it, because of its "materialistic" nature (Charles Morice, Denis and Bernard - concerning only some aspects of Cézanne's painting).

It is significant that both "fathers" of Cloisonism in painting, Emile Bernard and Louis Anquetin, when asked in an interview published in L'Echo de Paris of 1891: "which is the master you admire most?" named Cézanne as their first choice.⁴ Emile Bernard declared later that the true birth-place of the Pont-Aven school (that is of Cloisonism-Synthetism) was Julien Tanguy's shop and that "The so-called school of Pont-Aven would be more justly called the School of the Street Clauzel."⁵ He also wrote:

C'est dans l'école dite de Pont-Aven que je veux faire figurer Tanguy, parce que cette école se doit toute à la contemplation des toiles de Cézanne et que de Gauguin à Sérusier, il n'y a pas un seul symboliste qui n'ait fait son pèlerinage rue Clauzel. 6

In Tanguy's shop the future Symbolists became acquainted with early paintings of Cézanne, such as the large-scale Portrait of Achille Empeire (V.88, 1967-70) - which belonged to the collection of Père Tanguy, according to Venturi - featuring flat colour and well emphasized dark contours, a shallow space and a decorative floral pattern on the armchair, which seems to be of the same importance in the picture as the portrait itself.⁷ In the first article Bernard wrote on Cézanne, published in Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui at the beginning of 1891, he rated these earlier works higher than the ones of the "Impressionist" period.⁸ But at the time he wrote this article Bernard was more interested in Cézanne's later manner of painting (developed since the late 1870s). He especially praised one of very few paintings by Cézanne with a religious subject, one of his versions of the Temptation of Saint Anthony ("belonging to M. Murer," that is V.241, ascribed by Venturi to the period 1873-1877)-Fig. 4.⁹ Bernard described its drawing as being "as naive as possible, that only an ancestral popular image could give an idea of it."¹⁰ Popular images (Images d'Epinal) were one of the sources of inspiration acknowledged by all Synthetist-Symbolists. As early as 1889, Karl Madsen (whose ideas were influenced by Gauguin, and who organized in Copenhagen an exhibition of Gauguin's own paintings and other French paintings from his collection) had considered the

colour-scheme of Cézanne's Montagnes, L'Estaque (V.490, dated by Venturi 1886-90, but rightfully ascribed by Merete Bodelsen to the period 1882-1883) "exactly like that of an Image d'Epinal."¹¹ The connection with decoration was also made by Bernard in comparing the aspect of the Tentation with a "very old bas-relief," in which there is "no positive shadow," but uniform value of light.¹² Bernard emphasized the cerebral character of this work, which at a first superficial look could be classified as a "crôte grossière."

Before discussing Bernard's article of 1891 any further, I want to point out that this is the year when he begins his relationship with Péladan. We know for certain that Bernard was already acquainted with the Sâr in September of 1891 and that subsequently they had lengthy discussions.¹³ It is evident when we compare Bernard's letters with Péladan's program for Rose-Croix, that the persuasive Bernard had an influence on it. But when did actually Bernard (who became dissatisfied with Gauguin's "leadership," and probably sensed that Aurier appreciated him less than Gauguin, before the critic's article on "Symbolism in Painting" was published in March 1891), thought a rapprochement with Péladan with whom, after all, he had a lot in common?¹⁴ Already in the 1880s, Péladan advocated a revival of the Florentine Primitives.¹⁵ In October 1891, after discussing with Péladan "the plan" for Rose-Croix, Bernard wrote to Schuffenecker about the necessity to familiarize each member of the Rose-Croix with the not so well known Italian works, such as those of Giotto or Angelico.¹⁶ But at

the beginning of the year, Bernard already described some of Cézanne's canvases as "of a charming childishness," which "awaken the precise idea of a talented shepherd boy - like Giotto - who plays around with colours."¹⁷ Or describing one of Cézanne's portraits of his wife (identified by Linda Nochlin with V.229 of the period 1872-1877) - Fig. 5, he said:

Essentially hieratic and of a purity of the line known only to the pure primitive masters, this canvas seems to me like one of the greatest attempts of modern art in the direction of classical beauty. 18

This is again in tune with Péladan's call for revival of an art of Italian inspiration that emphasized a linear style (to replace the painterly vulgarities of French art),¹⁹ and with the Rose-Croix campaign for an art at the same time Christian, mystical, idealist, of Latin tradition and non-academic. The only landscape to be accepted by the Rose-Croix Salon was to be that in the manner of Poussin.²⁰ Bernard described Cézanne's "works in the latest manner" in terms of "architectural solemnity" and "ordinance of lines" and declared:

The last manner is scarcely more than a return to the first, but by way of the nascent colour theories and some very personal and unexpected insights into style. 21

The "classical" landscapes in the manner of Poussin, "architectural," featuring "Style," were the ones considered at the time as "decorative," as indicated above. They represented an elevated kind of "art for art's sake," compatible with idealism. In August 1891 Bernard would write to Schuffenecker:

...le paysage décoratif me semble le seul possible... Je ne conçois pas une peinture qui soit autre chose qu'elle-même, c'est à dire de la décoration pure. 22

Thus for Bernard, the "decorative landscape" was "painting for its own sake" (or "pure painting" in the idealist sense, but I reserve this term for the materialistic connotation, since it was commonly used as such) and at the same time "decoration."²³ In fact, for him this "painting for its own sake" is equivalent with "pure decoration." A few months before he had described Cézanne and his art thus:

Style. Tone. - A painter above all - although he is a thinker and a serious one - he opens for art that surprising door: painting for its own sake.²⁴

Cézanne was at the time Bernard's "Master" and this is reflected in his paintings, such as the "decorative landscape" Pont-Aven vu du Bois d'Amour of 1892 - Fig. 6.²⁵

The critic who most clearly associated Cézanne with the new decorative tendency was Georges Lecomte, in 1892.²⁶ But while Bernard tried to detach Cézanne from Impressionism, Lecomte did just the opposite, presenting him together with Pissarro as the initiators of this tendency. Lecomte's concept of "decorative" in painting, as was indicated in the previous chapter, took into account the new requirements of "synthesis," "composition," emphasis on line, but did not extend to accepting the character of "decoration."²⁷ In his lecture to Les XX, discussed before, Lecomte declared:

C'est surtout M. Cézanne qui fut l'une des premiers annonciateurs des tendances nouvelles et dont l'effort exerça une influence notable sur l'évolution impressionniste: son métier sobre, ses synthèses et ses simplifications de couleurs si surprenante à une époque où l'on était particulièrement épris de réalité et d'analyse, ses valeurs très rapprochées, très douces, dont le jeu savant crée de si subtiles et impeccables harmonies, contiennent et révèlent tout le mouvement contemporain; elles furent pour tous un profitable enseignement.²⁸

Earlier in the text Lecomte had described the way the Impressionists had "detached themselves from reality" in order to achieve a "decorative interpretation":

Peu à peu, ils s'abstrayent de la réalité. Ils s'en inspirent toujours scrupuleusement, mais sur les données exactes qu'ils en recueillent, ils edifient des compositions belles tout à la fois par le caractère et par la décoration: ils assemblent des lignes, règlent des gesticulations, accordent la direction des mouvements du sol avec celle des attitudes de l'être humain qui s'y agite; ils composent, loin de la nature, pour réaliser une harmonie totale. En même temps que le dessin devient plus large, plus sommaire et plus caractéristique, la couleur tend à se simplifier. Le rélatif du trait et du ton disparaît. Le peintre qui, le premier, avec M. Cézanne, s'émancipa d'une trop stricte communion avec la nature, notre maître et notre ami, M. Camille Pissarro... 29

Lecomte was well aware that the "ideists" claimed descent from Cézanne, and did not even try to deny that there was a basis for this. But he claimed they looked at the wrong pictures of Cézanne, the "incomplete" ones, which the painter himself considered as "inferior," not at the ones which are beautiful in their "logical ordinance" and "harmony of tones."³⁰ As I already mentioned, Lecomte accused the Symbolists-Synthetists of distortion, and of departures from the concept of tableau, especially since in their pictures every point seems to lie in the same plane.³¹ It is particularly on account of this flatness that Lecomte refutes their claims of descent from Cézanne. Cézanne, according to Lecomte, "most often" respected the succession of planes in perspective, and atmospheric perspective, even though he admitted Cézanne's "values" were too close to each other (a fact which of course, resulted in flatness).³² Lecomte could not abide to see Cézanne, the comrade of Pissarro

and of the other Impressionists, used to "legitimize" an art with mystical, Catholic tendencies. Therefore he concluded his discussion of Cézanne by saying:

Il faut que la réputation de M. Cézanne soit solidement assise pour résister à de si malencontreuses glorifications. Ce que nous devons retenir de son art sincère, si simplificateur, c'est la synthèse de lignes et de tons en vue de l'ornementation, son respect des valeurs, son dessin caractéristique. 33

Thus Lecomte considered that Cézanne's synthesis of lines and tones" were the result of his intentions to paint decorative pictures ("en vue de l'ornementation"). But he also considered his pictures that contained distortions similar to those to be found in the Symbolist paintings as "incomplete," since they did not have the degree of realistic representation, based on perception, he still expected in an easel painting.

Similar views were expressed by Lecomte's friend, Gustave Geffroy.³⁴ He also believed in a compromise between realism and idealism in art.³⁵

Geffroy could not accept in painting, even in painting destined to serve as decoration, the lack of depth, atmosphere, modelling. The "decorative sense," according to Geffroy is manifested by a "certain rythm of the lines" and in a "harmony of atmosphere."³⁶ The atheist Geffroy, like the anti-Catholic Lecomte, would not allow any hieratism in painting, the very thing Bernard thought he saw in Cézanne and praised.³⁷

In his article "Paul Cézanne" in La Vie artistique of 1894, Geffroy admitted:

Cézanne has become a kind of precursor to whom the symbolists have referred and it is quite certain, to stick to the facts, that there is a direct relation, a clearly established continuity, between the painting of Cézanne and that of Gauguin, Emile Bernard, etc. And likewise, with the art of Vincent Van Gogh. 38

Like Lecomte, Geffroy finds Cézanne "frequently incomplete" quoting similar faults:

There are absences of atmosphere, of the fluidity through which the planes must be separated and the farthest depths be placed at their proper distance. The forms become awkward at times, the objects are blended together, the proportions are not always established with sufficient rigor. 39

These are "faults" of an involuntary nature according to Geffroy, who compared Cézanne's efforts with "the touching efforts of the primitives" (without implying of course, that the painter wanted to imitate the primitives). He meant that the painter wanted to be more realistic, but "he has been unable to conquer the difficulty" of realization.⁴⁰ Geffroy who never hints that most features he criticised (which after all are in accordance with the principles of decoration) might be intentional, is relieved to assure the readers that "these remarks cannot be made before each canvas of Cézanne." He mentioned that there are paintings in which "he erects with a limpid atmosphere, his dear hill of Sainte-Victoire," or represents a "weighty inlet of the seal in a rocky bay where the landscape is crushed beneath an atmosphere of heat."⁴¹ In such paintings,

The arbitrary distribution of light and shade which might otherwise be surprising is no longer noticeable. One is in the presence of a unified painting which seems all of a piece and which is executed over a long period of time, in thin layers, which has ended up by becoming compact, dense, velvety... His painting then takes on the muted beauty of tapestry, arrays itself in a strong, harmonious weft. Or else, as in the Bathers, coagulated and luminous, it assumes the aspect of a piece of richly decorated faience. 42

Here we encounter for the first time (and as we shall see it will not be the last) the comparison between Cézanne's canvases and tapestries. The "arbitrary distribution of light and shade" which somehow bothers Geffroy in a painting was recommended in tapestry in order to achieve a unity of effect by overall uniformity of value.⁴³ What is actually praised by Geffroy is the texture of tapestry (such as in some landscapes - see for example Rocks at L'Estaque - Fig. 12, V404, 1882-1885) or the aspects of ceramics (in Bathers), that is the matière of the painting.⁴⁴ Cézanne's fruits in his still-lives were also compared with Chéret's ceramics by Huysmans.⁴⁵ Geffroy praised Cézanne's "famous apples," but was bothered by the fact that in his still-lives "the backgrounds sometimes come forward"; that is he objected precisely to one of the devices recommended for decoration in order not to "pierce the wall" with three-dimensional illusionism.⁴⁶

On the occasion of Cézanne's exhibition of 1895 at Vollard's Gallery, Geffroy again stressed the decorative quality of his paintings:

Les tableaux de fleurs et de fruits donnent la même preuve de la faculté décorative de Cézanne. Toute la gamme des tons, tout l'accord délicieux des valeurs... 47

Describing Cézanne's paintings of bathers (male and female) in the exhibition, Geffroy remarked on their stylization: "by the sorcery of a deliberate and stylized art" they gave the impression of "arrangements in an ideal park."⁴⁸ He did imply that the Bathers had qualities of grandes oeuvres, such as those of the great decorative works by Veronese, Rubens and Delacroix,

for which Cézanne had already proved his "comprehensive admiration" in earlier works such as the "large panel" The Orgy, also in the exhibition.⁴⁹ Geffroy sensed that Cézanne had the aptitude to be a grand-scale decorator, and somewhat paraphrasing Aurier's lament on a similar topic when he referred to Gauguin, said:

A n'en pas douter, par ces toiles... il affirme qu'il aurait pu entreprendre et réliser de grandes oeuvres, faire fleurir les murailles comme des jardins lumineux.

Le sort ne l'a pas foulu... Regrettons qu'il n'ait pas doté son pays et son temps de l'oeuvre grandiose qui était en lui. 50

But while Aurier preferred the great decorations of the past that had a hieratic style, Geffroy preferred the most naturalistic, post-Renaissance ones. In fact his attitude toward painted decorations represents a step backwards from the point of view of preserving the flatness of the wall to be decorated, even in comparison with Charles Blanc.⁵¹ Geffroy was not an avant-garde critic. His taste was rather conservative, probably because he thought a more naturalistic style would serve better the social role of art. His favorite artists were Raffaelli and Carrière.⁵² In the 1894 article on Cézanne Geffroy had been critical of the absence of atmosphere and depth, of background that came forward. In the review of the Vollard exhibition he cautioned the prospective visitor:

Vous qui lirez ces lignes et qui irez peut-être ensuite chercher cette beauté et cette grâce que j'affirme, ne vous arrêtez pas à telle gaucherie, à tel manque de perspective, d'équilibre, à tel spect inachevé. 53

The epithets "unfinished" and "incomplete" used by Geffroy (or Lecomte) were unacceptable to another reviewer of the

Vollard exhibition of 1895, Thadée Natanson, the chief editor and cofounder of the Revue Blanche, patron and defender of the Nabis.⁵⁴ These words did not have any meaning for Natanson, who did not try to prove that Cézanne was a veridique, but one who was not quite accomplished in this role, as Geffroy did. Natanson speaks from an "art for art's sake" position, and as Bernard before him (1891⁵⁵) appreciates Cézanne's "painting for its own sake," that which is "only painting."⁵⁶ Except, as opposed to Bernard, as I already mentioned in the last chapter, Natanson favors the materialistic "pure painting." The fact that "the objects are blended together" does not bother Natanson at all, as it bothered Geffroy⁵⁷; just the opposite, for him it has the advantage of emphasizing the formal elements and the decorative qualities of the painting:

La franchise et cette qualité si solidement établie des formes comme équerries, nuages qui s'enroulent sur le ciel bleu, toits des maisons, feuillages, cernures des fruits accentuant les ronds ou les angles, muscles sertis, cassures des lignes, ornements des étoffes, draperies raides, fait qu'aucun objet représenté n'a plus qu'une valeur de broderie, de feston ou d'arabesque dans l'émail qu'apparaît cette peinture. 58

Natanson emphasized that only a small number of people, an elite, could appreciate such pure painting, "the enamel-like quality of the matière, the role of arabesques which he assigns to forms," etc.⁵⁹ This "pure painting" praised by Natanson welcomes into the field of easel painting an invasion of characteristics of the decorative arts: the emphasis on shapes for their own sake, in particular on the arabesque, on pure colours, on the textural qualities of the matière, coupled with a nonchalant

disregard for the subject-matter. The purpose of this art is to please the senses, but of course not the senses of a vulgar crowd.

Like Bernard in 1891, Natanson compared Cézanne's painting with popular images:

... ce surprenant vase blanc à ornements bleus dont le gerbe fleurie est si joliment ouyragée et qu'on dit copiée d'une image populaire-...⁶⁰

Natanson admitted without reserve Cézanne's influence on the younger painters, "who perhaps have never seen him" (probably referring to the Nabis), and not only on "those who have been associated with him" (probably referring to Gauguin). The critic considered that Cézanne alone among his "illustrious contemporaries" had "the glory of having trained pupils and formed a school, in the best and most profound sense of these words."⁶¹

The following year (1896) the critic Andréé Mellerio (to whom Maurice Denis referred to as "an excellent critic" and whom he represented in his Hommage a Cézanne - Fig. 7) also stated that Cézanne, who as well as Vincent van Gogh was not very well known by the general public (as Puvis, Moreau, Redon and Gauguin were), was "much honored by the young generation."⁶² Mellerio referred to the young protagonists of the "Idealist Movement" in painting and of the trend toward decoration. Even though he quoted extensively from Aurier's article on Symbolism in painting, Mellerio's idealism was not neo-Platonic in nature.⁶³ By "idealism" in painting he meant a "cerebral," "conceptual" transformation of Nature. Such a conceptual transformation of Nature was Cézanne's "own vision" which lead to a "synthesis of colours and forms in their intrinsic beauty":

...il présente la nature d'après une vision à lui propre, où la juxtaposition des teintes, un certain agencement des lignes font de sa peinture si franche comme une synthèse des couleurs et des formes en leur beauté intrinsèque.⁶⁴

On both Cézanne and Van Gogh, Mellerio made the comment:

Tous deux éminemment peintres dans l'acception du mot, c'est-à-dire considérant le spectacle qui les entoure sous le presque unique point de vue du jeu des couleurs et des lignes - arrivant ainsi à d'étranges et imprévus effets.⁶⁵

Mellerio then, just as Natanson, emphasized Cézanne's "painting for painting's sake," which was equated with a decorative aim: to reveal the intrinsic beauty of colour and lines.

By the time Mellerio wrote his book, Symbolism, as I indicated in the previous chapter, was in decline. In fact he did not call any of the avant-garde young painters "Symbolists," and his views on the relationship between Art and Nature are quite in accord with those held by Denis in 1895.⁶⁶ Also like Denis, he traded Gauguin for Cézanne as Master and "initiator" of the "Synthetists."⁶⁷

In 1899 Cézanne exhibited forty paintings at Galerie Vollard. Like Natanson, the art critic for La Revue Blanche, Félicien Fagus, underlined Cézanne's concern with pure painting and matière:

Celui-là, c'est le peintre; l'amoureux de la couleur pour la couleur - ah! la pâte, la pâte qu'on pétrit comme une chair ... Que c'est bon! Comme on sent cet homme-là bienheureux d'étendre la belle matière sur la toile;⁶⁸

Fagus compared Cézanne with the "great Venetian decorators."

Speaking of Repas au bord de la mer, Fagus exclaimed:

Quel repas! vestige charnel, triomphal jeu de décoration perspective et flamboiement inoui d'étoffes et de nudités, cette toile exigüe distend la vastitude ensoleillée des grands décorateurs vénitiens;⁶⁹

Only the previous year Vuillard had remarked on similarities between Cézanne and Veronese, and he actually told Denis that Cézanne speaks of Verones with the greatest admiration.⁷⁰

The same exhibition at Vollard in 1899 prompted an article by Georges Lecomte in the Revue d'Art. It was not really a review of this exhibition; rather Lecomte repeated most of what he had to say in 1892. Of course, he did not forget to mention that he was among the first to write favorably on Cézanne, now that "the work of Cézanne is notorious" and much in demand with collectors. This time he emphasized even more strongly than in 1892 that he found Cézanne uneven and claimed that none of his gaucheries was voluntary. He was especially bothered by the painter's inability to render depth, by the flatness of his paintings.⁷¹ He blamed these faults on Cézanne's inability "to render everything he perceives." It was because of this lack of "means" his paintings gave the impression of "sumptuous tapestries that lack distance." Lecomte did not volunteer the hypothesis that maybe Cézanne wanted his paintings to look like tapestry, or to follow the general rules of decoration. The obvious reason he was not doing this was that he wanted to demonstrate that the school of "mystical Symbolism" was based on Cézanne's faults, the most serious one being, according to Lecomte, "the lack of depth."⁷²

As if to spite Lecomte, Denis' large painting Hommage à Cézanne - Fig. 7 - of 1900 hung at the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts in 1901, and also, at La Libre Esthétique in Brussels in the same year.⁷³

The painting grouped around Cézanne's Still Life with

Compotier (V.341, which Gauguin owned and also represented in one of his paintings, the portrait of Marie Derrien of 1890) - Fig. 8 - most of the Nabis: Vuillard, Denis, Sérusier, Ranson, Roussel, Bonnard, as well as Odilon Redon, Mellerio, Vollard (in whose gallery the group is assembled) and Denis' wife Marthe. Cézanne himself, whom Denis had not met yet, did not appear in the picture. He was touched by this homage, and wrote to Denis a few lines to express his "warmest gratitude," which he asked Denis "to pass on to the artists who have joined with you on this occasion." ⁷⁴ As we have seen in section "D" of the last chapter, Denis had never mentioned Cézanne before 1895 when he preferred to speak of "synthetism" rather than "Symbolism," of an art rooted in Nature, "without metaphysics." But since then he had spoken of Cézanne as of the "initiator" of the "movement of 1890." He continued to do so even after his full conversion to "classicism" (which after all was also an art based on Nature) in 1898, when he wanted to build a bridge between the pictorial Symbolism (or rather "Synthetism") and classicism. ⁷⁵ Soon Denis was to declare that Synthetism was a rational and traditional theory, that survived literary Symbolism which was always "suspect" to the painters, being too metaphysical. ⁷⁶

Like Denis, Emile Bernard turned to classicism and tradition, and for similar reasons (reactionary ideology, best served by this trend, in the new historical conditions). Bernard's evolution in this direction had begun already in 1891, at the time of his association with Péladan. ⁷⁷ After a long absence from France (during which he visited Italy, and lived in Cairo),

Bernard returned in 1904. In 1905 he founded the extremely reactionary revue La Rénovation Esthétique (with similar aims as L'Occident), which would live on until 1910.

Early in 1904 Emile Bernard visited Cézanne in Aix and wrote an article about the painter in L'Occident. Needless to say, this article, even though it was meant to reflect Cézanne's own opinions, has the imprint of Bernard's beliefs and peculiar theoretical speculations. It reflects the changes in Bernard's outlook which had occurred between 1891 (when he had written his previous article on Cézanne) and 1904. Bernard's "classicism" is not to be taken in the orthodox, or narrow sense, that is in opposition with Romanticism and its ancestors, but in the sense of "tradition."⁷⁸ This tradition however excluded "academism" (such as Ingres). His Masters are now not the Primitives, but Michelangelo, Vinci, Raphael, Giogione, Titian, Tintoretto, as well as Delacroix. He still believes in a "decorative conception", which for him is equivalent with "pure Art" or "painting for its own sake" (not to be confounded with the materialistic "pure painting" of the 1890s). Only he accommodates now in this definition Renaissance and post-Renaissance illusionistic art, which was actually not "art for art's sake" or "decorative", but "literary" painting, some of it expressing powerful emotions. Thus this "pure Art" has to be understood more in the sense of Charles Blanc's dichotomy, as "Art" versus Naturalism (which disregards a preestablished concept of beauty).⁷⁹ Bernard's "decorative conception" implies "freedom" and "exaltation" now, not a "hieratic" style. As opposed to Denis (eventually it seems he persuaded even Denis to change his mind) Bernard does

not appreciate Ingres and his emphasis on linear "contour" and rigid academic rules, which would interfere with his standards of "freedom." Thus it is hard to believe that Cézanne is the author of the following classification, as Bernard claimed in his article:

Paul Cézanne considère qu'il est deux plastiques, l'une sculpturale ou linéaire, l'autre décorative ou coloriste. Ce qu'il nomme la plastique sculpturale serait amplement signifié par le type de la Vénus de Milo. Ce qu'il nomme plastique décorative se rattache à Michel-Ange, à Rubens. L'une de ces plastiques, servile, l'autre, libre; l'une dans laquelle le contour l'emporte, l'autre dans laquelle domine la saillie, la couleur et la fougue. Ingres est de la première, Delacroix est de la seconde.⁸⁰

This classification looks superficially like the standard academic classification, to be found in Blanc's books for example, between the Florentine and Roman School on one hand (to which Michelangelo belonged and to which Blanc attached David and Ingres) and the "decorative" Venetian School on the other (represented by Veronese and Rubens—"this Venetian of the North"—and to which Delacroix was attached).⁸¹ That Cézanne considered Veronese and Rubens as "the great decorative Masters" we know from his letters.⁸² But a distinction between a "decorative" plastic art that included Michelangelo, and a "sculptural or linear" one that did not, could have been conceived only by Bernard. Bernard says about Cézanne: "His conclusion, in accordance with his meridional and expansive nature is decorative; that is, free and exalted."⁸³ According to Bernard, as is evident from other of his writings, classical art is "the freest art" because it takes from nature only its laws, and creates with the aid of these laws in a manner similar to the Creator's,

"who obeys not matter, but the spirit, that is to say his own thought."⁸⁴ The artist comes to know these laws of nature from theory and by countless studies from nature, but according to Bernard, when he executes his definitive work does not paint in front of nature or in front of a model. Such a freedom acquired from the knowledge of the "laws" of creation was manifested for example in Michelangelo (Bernard's idol).⁸⁵ And Bernard described Michelangelo's method: on one hand the constant study of reality, on the other "the freedom, the synthesis, the imposing grandeur."⁸⁶ In 1904 he described Cézanne's method similarly, in two steps: first the discovery of the "laws of nature" by studies, than a logical synthesis.⁸⁷ Or, in another variant, he described Cézanne's working method as such:

Telle est sa méthode de travail: d'abord une soumission complète au modèle; avec soin, l'établissement de la mise en place, la recherche des galbes, les relations de proportions; puis, à très méditatives séances, l'exaltation des sensations colorantes, l'élévation de la forme vers une conception décorative; de la couleur vers le plus chantant diapason. Ainsi plus l'artiste travaille, plus son ouvrage s'éloigne de l'objectif, plus il se distance de l'opacité du modèle lui servant de point de départ, plus il entre dans la peinture nue, sans autre but qu'elle-même; plus il abstrait son tableau, plus il simplifie avec ampleur, après l'avoir enfanté étroit, conforme, hésitant.⁸⁸

Thus, as in the article written in 1891, Bernard again emphasized Cézanne's "painting for its own sake". Even though, as will become clear later, Bernard did not approve of the materialistic concept of "pure painting," he had to admit that Cézanne's oeuvre was admired, because, among other things, of the "beauty of its matière."⁸⁹ Bernard insisted on the essential differences between Cézanne and Impressionism, mainly on reflection replacing

spontaneity, and achievement of new decorative syntheses, not forgetting to mention that he "derives" from Impressionism.⁹⁰ This description does not differ really from Lecomte's for example, and as a matter of fact the latter had applied it not only to Cézanne, but to Pissarro and other old Impressionists as well, in 1892.⁹¹ Bernard's own idea on the relationship between nature and art became such that he considered as "naturalism" any aesthetic based on expressing "visible things" using a model instead of working from memory (he meant especially memory of old art) and bypassing "invention."⁹² In a letter to his mother written at the time of his meeting with Cézanne, Bernard wrote that the painter "professes the theories of naturalism and Impressionism" and that he "speaks only of painting nature according to his personality and not according to art itself."⁹³ Yet in the published article Bernard declared that Cézanne was wrongly classified in the "deplorable school inaugurated by M. Zola," because he had a "mystical temperament" and had a "purely abstract and aesthetic vision of things."

Bernard added:

Là où d'autres se préoccupent, pour se traduire, de créer un sujet, lui se contente de quelques harmonies de lignes et de tonalités prises sur des objets quelconques, sans se soucier de ces objets en eux-mêmes; ...Cézanne est un mystique précisément par ce dédain de tout sujet, par l'absence de vision matérielle, par un goût qu'avouent ses paysages, ses natures mortes, ses portraits, le plus noble et le plus haut: le style.⁹⁴

This was not the last time Bernard's opinions on Cézanne varied according to the audience for which they were intended, as we shall see.

In this article Bernard tried to build an image of Cézanne

as "classicist." It is here that we encounter for the first time, as coming from Cézanne, the sentence: "One must become again classical by the way of nature," but with no mention of Poussin (who was not on the list of Bernard's favorites, but on Denis').⁹⁵ The Neo-classicists were against "flatness" in decoration, as well as in easel painting, especially emphasizing the three dimensional modelling of forms, the "volumes." This explains why Bernard switched the meaning of Cézanne's lecture on "the cylinder, the sphere, the cone" from a lesson in perspective, to one on modelling, and gave as one of the "opinions of Paul Cézanne," this:

Tout dans la nature se modèle selon la sphère,
le cône et le cylindre. Il faut s'apprendre à
peindre sur ces figures simples, on pourra ensuite
faire tout de qu'on voudra.⁹⁶

But Bernard was against linear modelling, he was against linear contours, since they interfered, as we have seen, with his concept of "freedom" and reminded him of the academicism of Ingres. He was also against any kind of linear "stylization," and also criticised Symbolism for that reason.⁹⁷ That "line does not exist" in Cézanne's paintings was a long lasting myth in the history of art, started by Bernard who apparently forgot that he once admired his "purity of line."⁹⁸ When Bernard says "line does not exist," and "Drawing and colour are not separate at all; one draws as one paints;" he almost seems to quote from Gauguin's Notes Synthétiques (written around 1885), before Bernard himself induced him into using the "line") than from Cézanne, in whose paintings lines certainly do exist.⁹⁹ That is, lines exist exactly in those paintings in which volumes are also

emphasized, and which interested Bernard. It so happens that in 1904, when he visited Cézanne, the older painter was closer to Impressionism than he had been in more than twenty years, and he was producing what in my opinion can be considered his best examples of "pure painting," his latest series of Sainte-Victoire canvases.¹⁰⁰ In such paintings Cézanne did not emphasize outlines, nor volumes, but rather the coloured "patch" (la tache).¹⁰¹ It seems that at the time Cézanne could have been outspoken against dark, emphasized outlines (line fell in disgrace among other painters that used to rely heavily on it, such as Vuillard or Bonnard), because this is evident in his letter of 23 October, 1905 to Bernard.¹⁰² But in the paintings Bernard admired most, in which volumes were clearly defined, the solid shapes were modelled both by linear contours (outlined usually in Prussian blue, not continuous, but of a "lost-and-found" type) and by contrasts between fairly large areas of different tonality, as well as by "colour modulations" (but this only as a refinement). The concept of "modulation" in Cézanne's painting was here introduced for the first time by Bernard, who claimed it was a substitute for "modelling." Thus Bernard could say Cézanne "modulated" the shapes while modulating the colour, without any help from lines. While this might be true for shapes that did not have much relief, such as foliage or slight accidents in the terrain, it does not hold for the "cylinder," the "sphere," or the "cone." That Cézanne modelled in colour and not in terms of black and white (chiaroscuro) is not a novelty, all Impressionists did it, all "colorists."¹⁰³ But I doubt very much

if Cézanne said "One should not say to model, one should say to modulate," unless he referred to the "modelling of the tableau," not of individual objects in painting.¹⁰⁴ The term "modulation" was used by Charles Blanc, in connection with Delacroix and Oriental tissues and ceramics, and it refers to making a flat and seemingly uniformly colored surface "vibrate."¹⁰⁵ Cézanne might have been used the term, since he certainly used the procedure, or Bernard might have remembered it from Gauguin or from his own readings.¹⁰⁶ But it is not correct to substitute it for modelling in general.

Toward the end of the year (1904) another article was published in L'Occident, in which Cézanne occupied a central place. It was written by Carlos de Castera (a friend of Maurice Denis) who signed it "Solrac" (which is "Carlos" spelled backwards), on the occasion of the Fall Salon (Salon D'Automne) where Cézanne had a whole room.¹⁰⁷ De Castera made an interesting comparison between Puvis de Chavannes and Cézanne, from the point of view of their "decorative conception." He compared Puvis' large-scale decorations with Cézanne's paintings and pointed out that in both cases there was concern for the preservation of the planar surface. Of course, Puvis' decorations had a precise destination, and therefore had to be in harmony with the surroundings:

L'un peint en vue d'une salle, d'un édifice; la composition décorative s'harmonise avec le milieu ainsi que les couleurs qui font corps avec le mur ou le plafond, le continue sans faire trou; autrement dit, Puvis situe sa peinture;¹⁰⁸

Cézanne did not paint with a precise destination in mind, but his painting fulfilled the same basic decoration requirement of

not making a "hole" in the wall. "Solrac" wrote:

-l'autre, Cézanne, au contraire, localise sa conception tout entière dans la limite de la toile, n'en dépasse pas le rectangle; elle obtient son maximum d'effet décoratif en vue du cadre qui la renferme. Elle ne dérange pas non plus le plan du tableau. Ce n'est pas que Cézanne ne perçoive les trois dimensions des objets dans la nature mais sa toile n'en possède que deux; conforme avec la logique de son idéal décoratif, il ne fait pas usage des "valeurs" pour en créer la surface plan et faire fuir un fond; sa vision est simple comme celle des premiers imagiers et chaque objet reste dans le plan du tableau, telle une décoration de Puvis reste dans le plan du mur; les objets du tableau ne prennent une signification que par l'exaltation de la peinture nue sans autre but qu'elle-même.¹⁰⁹

"Solrac" added that before achieving this phase of pure painting, Cézanne spends "numerous meditative séances in front of nature, a necessary crutch for his colored transpositions, for the rightfulness of the local tone and this large synthesis."¹¹⁰ This information he acknowledged he got from Bernard's article of the same year in L'Occident. "Solrac" described three of Cézanne's paintings in the exhibition; the still-life he mentioned can be identified with the one Denis represented (Symbolizing Cézanne) in his Hommage au Cézanne (Fig. 7), that is V.341. Calling it a "pure masterpiece," he emphasized again that its quality is wholly determined by it being a pure painting, without any concern for the subject matter:

Telle une marqueterie qui n'aurait pas de sens on peut la regarder indépendamment du sujet, debout, inclinée, couchée et les taches de bas en haut, de droite à gauche, s'équilibrent, se contre-balancent.¹¹¹

"Solrac" pointed out that Cézanne achieved a harmony within his canvas, that is in the milieu of the painting itself. This was to be distinguished from Puvis' harmonizing his decorative composition with the milieu for which it is destined to be a part.

We are dealing here with the emancipation of "pure painting," with a painting that while being decorative and based on the same principles as a mural decoration, strives toward "independence," self-sufficiency, since it is not dependent on a particular destination. ¹¹² After all that struggle for decoration to catch up in a status with painting, painting found a way to get ahead again!

In a characterization that reminds one of Geffroy's (minus the reserves about his gaucheries), Solrac declared that Cézanne "does not approach nature with a program," and added:

Pas de formule dans son oeuvre qui répond simplement à un idéal décoratif portant l'empreinte de sa grand personnalité.¹¹³

The critic then proceeds to discuss Cézanne's influence on the young generation and characterizes it as "a spiritual tie, rather than a direct influence." He refers to Maurice Denis (described as "the most complete," knowing how to blend "freshness" and "modernity" with a "sane tradition," and having an "insatiable decorative imagination" that brings every year "the most delicious surprises"), Vuillard, Roussel, and Bonnard. "Solrac" considered that all these painters who yesterday were isolated individualists, today form a "family," united by the recognition of nature as their only counsellor.¹¹⁴

Roger Marx's review of the same Fall Salon of 1904 included a discussion of Cézanne and the reproduction of one of his paintings, L'Aqueduc (V.477, 1885-87). The review was published in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts of which he was the editor. Marx, as it was mentioned already, was an "enlightened amateur" and supporter of the decorative arts.¹¹⁵ He was an early supporter

of the Nabis and of Emile Bernard. He supported the return to "faith" evident in Symbolist art, and defended the young avant-garde in 1895 declaring that neither the Nabis, nor the pupils of Gustave Moreau hated nature, they were simply against a photographic image of it.¹¹⁶ Now, in 1904, as is evident from this article, he is a supporter of French nationalism.¹¹⁷ He is insistent on pointing out the links with the past (the French past!) maintained in modern art production. In fact this is why the Salon d'Automne had special rooms (retrospective exhibitions) for Puvis, Redon, Cézanne, Renoir and Toulouse-Lautrec. As Marx puts it, the new generation of "inventors" and "revolutionaries" does not believe in "génération spontanée," that is believes in its evolution, in its descendance from "Masters."¹¹⁸ Marx established Cézanne's genealogy as a painter, quoting only French "ancestors": the French Primitives, Poussin, Corot, Courbet, Daumier. I would like to point out that this is the first time Cézanne was connected with Poussin.¹¹⁹ Thus Marx linked Cézanne with the "decorative" tradition of Poussin and Corot, as well as with Courbet and Daumier, who were appreciated then for their "pure painting" qualities (such as pâte and brushwork).¹²⁰ In linking him with Daumier, the critic referred to Cézanne's nude bathers (académies) and the deliberate exaggeration of the contours in "search of character."¹²¹ This contradicted Bernard's denial of contours. Also, unlike Bernard of 1904, Marx emphasized the flat colour (à-plats) in Cézanne's paintings, indicating he was not interested in "decomposition of tone" as the Impressionists were. There are indeed fairly large areas of "flat" colour in Cézanne's production of the 1890s and early

1900s, with the exception of most of the landscapes. Marx concluded his discussion on Cézanne by pointing out Cézanne's influence on the materialistic "pure painting," as well as on the group of painters (ex-pupils of Moreau) such as Marquet, Matisse, Camoin, who combined the method of applying large touches of flat colour with a tendency toward "Style."¹²² In the end he declared that "the revolutionary realized the oeuvre of a classic" and at the same time he "forcefully brought back the love for the beautiful matière."¹²³ Cézanne thanked Marx in a letter in which he flattered the "amator" in Marx by declaring he will "always be grateful to the public of intelligent amateurs who...have intuitively understood what I wanted to try in order to renew my art."¹²⁴

In May 1905 Denis published in L'Ermitage the article "La réaction nationaliste," dedicated to his friend Adrien Mithouard, "who had the boldness to found L'Occident during the full-fledged Dreyfusist crisis."¹²⁵ He mentioned that after the previous Salon d'automne Cézanne was "universally admired" and that "only he who is born out of the influence of these two masters (he referred to Puvis de Chavannes and Gustave Moreau) and out of the 'barbary' of Cézanne will survive."¹²⁶

In March 1905, reviewing the exhibition of Ch. Guérin (whose painting he classified as "pure painting") Denis wrote in L'Occident:

Même son étude d'après nature ne comporte rien de plus qu'une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées, selon l'exemple de Cézanne; et c'est Cézanne qu'il est redevable, comme tous les modernes, de la conception vraiment 'peintre' du tableau.¹²⁷

Denis referred here to the definition he gave painting in 1980, and which he previously claimed he learned from Gauguin.¹²⁸ Now he held Cézanne responsible for this concept, which meant essentially the transformation of tableau into flat decoration.

The critic for Art et Décoration, François Monod, in his review of the Salon d'Automne of 1905 was extremely critical of this influence of Cézanne with regard to the trend toward "pure painting." Monod was on the side of Neo-Classicism and associated "pure painting" with "anarchy." He was unhappy that "this group of colorists, curious and new, which made a reputation for themselves at the Salon des Indépendents, who did show some promise and who ruined themselves because they took improvisation and incoherence as a rule, refusing to condescend to anything that means order, sélection, diligence...", were the ones who "continued to give the tone at the Salon d'Automne."¹²⁹ Monod pointed out that Cézanne was responsible for this state of affairs:

A son corps défendant, M. Cézanne surtout est responsable de cette désorganisation du métier parmi quelque-uns des peintres qui se flattent d'avoir recueilli la succession de l'impressionnisme.¹³⁰

One of these painters was Vuillard, who admittedly, was "one of the best colorists of our time." But Monod thinks that,

Même réduite à un pur parti-pris de taches décoratives, la peinture n'a jamais pu, elle ne pourra jamais représenter des meubles, des figures, une perspective ou un assemblage d'objets solides à la manière d'une corbeille d'écheveaux. 131

Monod cannot accept easel painting being equated with decorative arts, that is with painting which is not only decorative, but is also a "true" decoration. He admits that Vuillard has this "magic vision that transposes the most vulgar spectacles in

exquisite and unexpected accords of tones," that his exhibited panels have the color harmony of the most rare "decorative tapestries." But Vuillard's paintings also had the fault that because of lack of "construction, of clarity, or firmness in lines and arabesques" they were nothing but "ébauches." Also they were like an Oriental rug at which one looks without thinking of anything:

Le monde extérieur, tentures, mobiliers, personnages, lignes de terrains, ciels, arbres et feuillages, lui apparaît comme un plan décoratif où toutes choses fourmillent et fleurissent à la façon d'un riche tapis d'Orient qu'on regarde sans penser à rien.¹³²

In Cézanne's paintings Monod found "good pieces of mosaic":

Il y a, dans ses tableaux, de ci, de là, de beaux morceaux de mosaïque; il a peint des pommes et des biscuits avec une certaine richesse ou avec une verdure pesante de touche et de ton;¹³³

But he detested the plaster-like quality of his matière, and his "inability" to draw and paint:

-Mais, du reste, quelle horrible rusticité! Quelle matière hideuse et plâtreuse! Quelle pitoyable, quelle irréparable impuissance à manier dessin et peinture!¹³⁴

Monod grudgingly conceded that one could detect some dormant "Grandeur of construction" in Cézanne's landscapes:

...ses paysages ont certains accords drus et opaques d'outremer, d'émeraude et de terre rouge, qui sont à force de contemplation naïve, d'y faire pressentir je ne sais quelle grandeur de construction qui y someille.¹³⁵

Monod failed to see constructive qualities in the manner of Poussin in Cézanne (he actually protested against having Cézanne placed among Poussin, Puvis and Watteau in the preface of the Salon Catalogue), but saw rather a decorative mosaic. It is true that while his classicist admirers were comparing him with Poussin,

Cézanne was painting his famous series of Mount Sainte-Victoire (such as for example V. 798-V.802) or Château Noir (especially V. 795 and V. 797) that even today draws comparisons with woven materials, such as tapestry.¹³⁶ Looking at the squarish patches of strokes that constitute the building bricks of the painting Château Noir now in the Louvre (V. 795), it is easy to see the comparison with a mosaic. Monod saw in Cézanne's paintings mostly the "decorative flatness" (that is the flatness of a carpet or a mosaic) that today is imputed to Gauguin and considered the main distinction between him and Cézanne.

On the other hand, in his review of the Salon d'Automne of 1905, Denis remarked that "...Cézanne paraît quelque vieux maître sévère, au style châtié, le Poussin de la nature-morte et du paysage vert".¹³⁷ This is the first time Denis compared Cézanne to Poussin, that is a year after Roger Marx.¹³⁸ No doubt Denis was influenced in his comparison with Poussin (who was at the time very much in favor with the nationalistic classicists) by the recent declaration made by Charles Camoin in Mercure de France, namely that "Cézanne often says that all he wanted was to vivify Poussin after nature."¹³⁹ That Denis very carefully read all the answers to the interviews of the Enquête published by Charles Morice in the Mercure is evident from this review of the Salon of 1905.¹⁴⁰ Among Denis' conclusions was the fact that "Impressionism was finished" (Morice specifically asked if this was the case), and that "Cézanne was very much discussed: it is evident that he is the subject of conversations in all studios" (again Morice asked specifically

for an opinion on Cézanne). Denis wanted to demonstrate now that there existed a smooth transition from Symbolism to Classicism.¹⁴¹ Thus he presented Gauguin as a "classicist," and of course also Cézanne (whose landscapes can be related after all to the Poussinesque concept of the "decorative" landscape favoured by critics of the early 1890s), "the initiator of Paul Gauguin," who Denis pointed out, "in turn became influential" only after Gauguin.¹⁴² Writing on Aristide Maillol (L'Occident, November 1905) Denis flatly declared:

...il a pris part au mouvement néo-classique dont il faut chercher l'origine récente autour de Cézanne et de Gauguin.¹⁴³

Paul Sérusier considered that the initiators of the "present movement" were not only Cézanne and Gauguin, but also Pissarro, except Sérusier was not a "classicist" in Denis' sense. He explained in Morice's Enquête that he favored the resurrection of "classical" works in the sense of being "very ancient." He referred especially to "anonymous" works of art, such as old tapestry, or Cambodian sculpture. Sérusier was not against "flatness" as the Neo-Classicists were, but for painting for painting's sake which had not only to "charm the eye" but also to "speak to the spirit!" (He never renounced Neo-Platonism, and he became an adept of the Beuron aesthetics.) Sérusier especially emphasized Cézanne's role in turning art from naturalistic imitation to this "decorative" (but not simply in the materialistic sense of "pure painting") art for art's sake:

Je dois toutefois reconnaître que Gauguin n'est pas l'initiateur de mouvement actuel. Ce mouvement, dirigé d'abord par Pissarro, fut rectifié ensuite par Cézanne, que Gauguin nous révéla.

Cézanne a su dépouiller l'art pictural de toutes les moisissures que le temps y avaient accumulées. Il a montré clairement que l'imitation n'est qu'un moyen, que le but unique est de disposer sur une surface donnée les lignes et les couleurs, de façon à charmer les yeux, à parler à l'esprit, à créer, enfin, par des moyens purement plastiques un langage, ou plutôt encore à retrouver le langage universel. ...Qu'une tradition naisse à notre époque, - ce que j'ose espérer, - c'est de Cézanne qu'elle naîtra.¹⁴⁴

To the distress of hard-line classicists and traditionalists such as Bernard, one of the conclusions emerging from Morice's inquiry of 1905 was the fact that most painters preferred contemporary masters to the Old Masters. Both La Rénovation Esthétique (the reactionary review of Bernard), as well as L'Occident complained about the "anarchy" and "incoherence" revealed by Morice's Enquête but only the Renovation complained that "Nobody dared to go to Michelangelo or Raphael. The summits are scary!" The Occident was actually interested in classicism as a "method," in a "modern classicism." Bernard was incensed that Pierre Hepp, the writer for the Occident compared Cézanne (who otherwise was "the remarkable painter whom we admire") to Michelangelo, "this lighthouse from which all clarity propagated for the last three centuries on all branches of Absolute Art."¹⁴⁵ Hepp explained that Raphael and Michelangelo were too perfect, did not leave much room for development and improvement for followers. He said:

Raphaël donne tout, ce qui est trop... Il a conjugué entièrement le verbe. Cézanne n'en a conjugué que deux ou trois temps à peine. Il nous laisse de la besogne et nous propose une discipline pour la mener à bonne fin.¹⁴⁶

Hepp found it "remarkable" that the painters interviewed by Morice ("most of them young") "unanimously rendered homage

to Cézanne.¹⁴⁷ He explained: "Cézanne is a Master, because he is a beginning. He prescribes a method." And Hepp made this statement, that as we shall see, enraged Bernard:

Pour l'oeil qui ne goûte point matériellement les qualités d'un ton, la plénitude d'un accord, l'ordonnance d'une surface colorée, en dehors de toute préoccupation objective, sa pure peinture demeure sans attrait et fournit un aliment inassimilable. Elle déjoue les commentateurs littéraires et ne sollicite point leur suffrage, ayant celui des vrais peintres qui trouvent en elle le point d'appui indispensable pour aller plus avant dans leurs recherches.¹⁴⁸

Bernard retorted with the article "De Michel Ange à Paul Cézanne," published in the Rénovation Esthétique under the name Francis Lepeseur (one of the pseudonyms he was using). He was outraged that a "traditionalistic and nationalistic revue which respects itself and accepts only a very small number of members with pure intentions" as L'Occident was, gave way, "like the most anarchistic ones," to the taste for paradox.¹⁴⁹ Bernard especially objected to the above quote from L'Occident (note 153) which he reproduced himself in the Rénovation, claiming "in its entirety," but omitting the important word "matériellement." According to Bernard, this principle of Hepp's excluded Raphael or Michelangelo from "Pure Painting," equating them with "literary geniuses," and dismissing the Sistine or Vatican frescoes as "objectivity" because

Il ne s'agit plus que de peindre, et de peindre n'importe quoi, pourvu que cela ne soit pas objectif, c'est-à-dire reconnaissable; il faut que notre surface n'étale plus que la qualité d'un ton, la plénitude d'un accord, l'ordonnance colorée, etc., bref que ce soit de la pure peinture, de la technie, utile seulement à ceux qui font des recherches.¹⁵⁰

What bothered Bernard really was the fact that this "pure

painting" was to be enjoyed on the material, not spiritual level; it did not stand for any Idea. After all, in 1891 he was the first to acclaim this "door" that Cézanne "opened."¹⁵¹ He had also imitated Cézanne quite literally, yet now he declared,

Quoique reconnaissant en Paul Cézanne un peintre de rare qualité, nous ne pouvons croire à la possibilité de son amplification par un autre que lui-même. Limité à une technique particulière, rendue étroite par ses procédés compliqués, inassimilable à de grands formats par suite de son extrême minutie et négatrice des grands effets réclamés par l'oeuvre d'imagination, Paul Cézanne n'essuiera qu'une imitation fâcheuse et maladroite.¹⁵²

The same year (June 1905), M. Denis also criticised this concept of "pure painting" that aims only for the "sensual pleasure of the eye" and neglects the soul;

Mais ne chercher dans la peinture, comme on tend à le faire de plus en plus, que le plaisir sensuel des yeux, ne la vouloir que décorative, c'est ignorer la part que prend l'âme humaine aux satisfactions esthétiques...¹⁵³

He noticed that at the Independents' exhibitions there are not many canvases with anecdotal or literary subjects, but "theoretical and technical research is in abundance: the effort in the direction of pure painting is considerable and remarkably varied." Yet, Denis asks a rhetorical question, "are the results any better?":

Est-ce à dire que les résultats soient meilleurs? Il ne suffit pas de vouloir n'être que peintre pour l'être supérieurement. L'exemple d'un Cézanne ou d'un Vuillard n'infirmes pas notre opinion. Car s'il est vrai qu'ils ne tirent que des ressources même de leur art les moyens par quoi ils nous émeuvent, il faut noter quel est l'apport de leur sensibilité d'hommes; avec quelle passion ils s'efforcent de chercher aux spectacles de la nature des équivalents exquis ou somptueux; avec quelle ferveur ils s'attachent à ne rendre de la nature que l'admirable reflet qu'ils en trouvent en eux-mêmes.¹⁵⁴

It is important to recall that here Denis admitted the similarity of intention between Cézanne and Vuillard (who did not subscribe to Denis' classicism), already noticed by other critics, as for example Monod.

In January-February 1906 Denis and Roussel visited Cézanne in Aix. This was the first time Denis had met Cézanne, and as he would admit years later, the main reason for this "pilgrimage" was "to hear from the old master's mouth a presentation of the ideas which I thought I had grounds to attribute to him:" And as an excuse he added:

Tel est Cézanne, complexe et divers, que chacun attend de lui la confirmation de son propre système; tant sa peinture et ses idées demandent à être interprétées.¹⁵⁵

Indeed, as is evident from Denis' Journal, he managed to extract from Cézanne a boundless admiration for the 17th century, and support for the "theory of equivalents." The entry in the Journal reads, as coming from Cézanne:

La lumière n'est pas une chose qui peut être reproduite, mais qui doit être représentée par autre chose, par des couleurs. J'ai été content, de moi lorsque j'ai trouvé ça. Je voudrais faire des paysages décoratifs comme Hugo d'Alési, oui, avec ma petite sensibilité.¹⁵⁶

The first sentence of this quote was used time and again by Denis, with suitable variations. He was able to affirm now that the Symbolist theory of colour "equivalents," practised by Gauguin (for whom "as in the case of Venetians the light became colour"), was initiated by Cézanne.¹⁵⁷

The Salon d'Automne of 1906, in which Cézanne was represented by ten paintings, had retrospectives of Carrière,

Gauguin and a smaller one of Courbet. According to Mauclair, "the attraction" of this Salon was Gauguin's exhibition.¹⁵⁸

It seems that this exhibition was important in the process that created a wide gap between Gauguin and Cézanne, since it stirred up partisan fights. This was the first time Gauguin's oeuvre was well represented in an exhibition, in good conditions.

There were rumors at the time that an "injurious cult" formed against Gauguin had a "commercial prejudice toward Cézanne."¹⁵⁹

Mauclair was definitely on the side of Gauguin. If there was any constant in his life, it was his lack of understanding and negative criticism of Cézanne. In the review he wrote for Art and Décoration he had at first intended to criticize him violently, but when the news of Cézanne's death arrived, he preferred to be silent.¹⁶⁰ He did mention though that Gauguin surpassed Cézanne "à hundred times."¹⁶¹

Toward the end of the next year, Charles Morice (who was the friend and loyal defender of Gauguin), protested against "the great Quarrel" in the world of art, that is Gauguin versus Cézanne:

C'est autour de deux maîtres récemment remis en honneur, au lendemain de la mort, que se produit, dans le monde des arts, la grande Querelle ... Les intransigeants partisans de Gauguin et de Cézanne et leurs détracteurs échangent des regards irrités. Plusieurs ont même entre les deux initiateurs fait un choix, et nient l'un, au bénéfice, croient-ils, de l'autre... La vérité certaine, c'est que Gauguin et Cézanne furent deux très grands artistes. Le premier a réalisé; le second a indiqué. Devant la haineuse fureur dont l'art officiel les poursuit encore, il ne faut pas que leurs continuateurs légitimes, les artistes sincères, se divisent.¹⁶²

Morice specifically complained about Maurice Denis, whose development would have been different without Gauguin, and

who was now passing on "with an ungrateful complicity the more or less authentic recriminations of Cézanne against Gauguin." He referred to the widely quoted by now, so-called complaint by Cézanne that Gauguin "had taken from him his little sensation, his little sensibility." Denis heard this from Octave Mirbeau and repeated it in his article on Cézanne published a few months earlier.¹⁶³ At least for Denis, Morice had otherwise high regards; he considered him a "true artist." This was not the case with his sentiments toward Emile Bernard, who had quarrelled with Gauguin back in 1891, and since then had been denigrating him and insisting that he was the true inventor of Cloisonism.¹⁶⁴ Morice wrote:

A quoi bon brouiller les morts? - et des morts comme ceux-ci, que devrait réunir, dans les Champs-Élysées de la mémoire humaine, la reconnaissance des générations! De tel propos sont de ceux qu'il convient de laisser à M. Emile Bernard, de qui les commérages, la critique et les oeuvres n'ont aucune importance.¹⁶⁵

In 1907 the Salon d'automne had a Cézanne retrospective, so in an interval of one year both artists (Cézanne and Gauguin) had a wide exposure. Charles Morice, who was the art critic for Mercure, had also taken the opportunity in November (the Salon took place in October-November) to bring Gauguin's and Cézanne's art closer to one another, declaring that "there is nothing essential that separates the conception of Cézanne from that of Gauguin."¹⁶⁶ He also noticed that Cézanne had "the sense of grandeur in expressing the most insignificant of the spectacles of nature," and remarked:

Mais remarquez comme ses paysages aux toits rouges s'agrandissent à la vaste proportion de la haute décoration; comme ses nus, lyriques de solidité,

de vérité, de naïveté, dépassent les cadres, appellent les étendues murales.¹⁶⁷

Already earlier in the year, on the occasion of Cézanne's death, Morice had published an article in Mercur, in which he had said that the painter had crossed Impressionism but had gone further. He went to nature, but he was not content only with an analytical procedure. He wanted the Synthesis, which permitted him "to add to the enjoyment of his eyes the enjoyment of the spirit," and to the splendors of nature "the decorative sense, the secret of which is in the thought of man."¹⁶⁸ Yet, while protesting against the quarrel around Gauguin and Cézanne, Morice was not at all impartial. He did consider Gauguin a greater painter.¹⁶⁹ As was already mentioned, according to him, Cézanne "indicated" and Gauguin "realized."¹⁷⁰ What he actually imputed to Cézanne was not being a Symbolist, of painting only the visible world, without thinking of expressing states of the soul (états d'âme), of being involved only in pure painting (peinture en soi was the expression used by Morice).¹⁷¹ But Morice found in Cézanne the merit of pointing out the necessity for a New Symbolism, based on the "interpretation of nature according to its own laws," even though he was not great enough to understand the necessity of a "Tendresse Raisonné" as well.¹⁷²

The article on Cézanne published by Maurice Denis in L'Occident of September 1907, does not leave any doubt as to why it was so important for him to build up an image of a "classicist" Cézanne. Denis wanted to have him on his side, because, as himself remarked, "Cézanne influenced a large

section of the younger artists."¹⁷³ This "classicism" has to be understood in a fairly wide sense, that is a return to a tradition (Greco-Latin, or even better, French) of "order." "Order" is the key word for Denis, who militates against an "age of disorder," against "anarchy" and against "Dreyfusism."¹⁷⁴ According to Denis, Classical art achieves a perfect balance between "Nature and Style," or between "the sense of Beauty and love of Reality."¹⁷⁵ Consequently the lack of modelling was unclassical, and a "hieratic" art, while it had Style, was departing too much from Nature. Denis is not against decoration per se (in fact he continued to practise it himself), but against flat decoration, that is against the principles of "true" decoration as first elaborated by the Gothic Revivalists. He is not so strict about the rules of linear perspective, but he required an emphasis on "volumes," the modelling of individual objects in the painting. He is against the "decorative" when understood as "only pleasing the eye" and flat. Denis was of course repentant for his contribution to the flat art, and found someone to blame for it: Gauguin, who as he put it concisely a couple of years later, "flattened Cézanne's modelling."¹⁷⁶ Cézanne, of course, undeniably preserved the "Western tradition" of modelling, even though in summary form (which as we have seen was recommended by many reformers of decoration).¹⁷⁷ In the article on Cézanne, Denis made a hypothetical comparison between two paintings "of the same family," for example two still-lives, one by Gauguin, one by Cézanne (Denis liked to talk in general terms, not about concrete examples). He found that Gauguin's revealed a "decorative,

even hieratic interpretation of nature," while in front of Cézanne's "we think only of painting; neither the object represented, nor the artist's subjectivity holds our attention. We cannot decide so quickly whether it is an imitation or an interpretation of nature."¹⁷⁸ Thus Cézanne art balanced Nature and Style, while Gauguin only achieved a decorative stylization. Denis added:

Nous sentons que cet art-là est plus près de Chardin que de Manet et de Gauguin. Et si, au premier aspect, nous disons: c'est un tableau, et un tableau classique, le mot commence à prendre un sens très net, celui d'un équilibre, d'une conciliation entre l'objectif et le subjectif.¹⁷⁹

Denis sees in Cézanne "the struggle for style and the passion for nature,"¹⁸⁰ which relate him to classicism. At the same time he sees him as a "naive artisan, a primitive."¹⁸¹ The concept of "Primitive" allows him to explain Cézanne's gaucheries, because it implies Cézanne renders the world through a "decorative synthesis" the same way a Primitive (but not "hieratic") painter did, that is,

... il accumule les observations, il en fait le total, et il en extrait cet équivalent caractéristique qui même à travers les synthèses les plus décoratives conserve un âpre goût d'analyse.¹⁸²

It was important at the time for Denis to say that not all of Cézanne's distortions were due to a decorative stylization, because only this way could he make the connection with classical art, according to his own definition. At the same time, Cézanne was far from the classical trompe-l'oeil. The most striking example is his perspective (in terms of both linear and atmospheric). There were only two alternatives left to explain Cézanne's spatial distortions: one was to say

(as Huysmans or Thiébauld-Sisson, when both on naturalist grounds had said) that Cézanne had a "diseased eye;"¹⁸³ the other was that he, as a Primitive, renders the world according to the way he knows it (after an "accumulation of observations"), not the way it appears to be.¹⁸⁴ Denis explained in his article on the gaucheries of the Primitives, that a Primitive represents everything in one plane, piling objects on top of each other instead of representing them in depth, because:

Il préfère la réalité à l'apparence de la réalité. Plutôt que de se résigner aux déformations de la perspective qui n'intéressent pas son oeil vierge, il conforme l'image des choses à la notion qu'il en a.¹⁸⁵

Of course, one cannot help noticing that Cézanne did not have a "virgin" eye, but a very educated one, and also that earlier paintings done, "during the heroic times of naturalism" (to use Lecomte's expression) did have depth according to linear perspective (as for example Rue des Saules, Montmartre of 1867-1869, V.45).¹⁸⁶ The notion that perspective, "being only a visual alteration, independent of the object" gives only the "appearance of reality" was a common notion in 19th century academic teaching of dessin perspectif and dessin géométral.¹⁸⁷ Geometry which teaches us the "real construction" of the objects, allows us to see them "as they actually are," it was said.¹⁸⁸ As I indicated in the first chapter (Part 1), the reformers of decorative arts (which included academicians such as Charles Blanc) in the second half of 19th century France recommended the avoidance of perspective effects in decoration.¹⁸⁹ The dessin géométral (in which all facets of an object are represented, while a dessin perspectif hides

some), was the basis of drawing instruction for architects and decorators.

Denis could very well have known that Cézanne's spatial representation and distortions could be explained by his application of the principles of decoration that he, Denis himself, had applied to painting in the 1890s (after all he called Cézanne "the initiator of the movement of 1890"). But for Denis, the "naivete" and "gaucherie" of Cézanne were now proof that he did not "stylize a study [meaning a study after nature] as Puvis de Chavannes in fact did," or "stylize an object as they say in the School of Grasset."¹⁹⁰ Denis is now outspoken against Art Nouveau, which he considers "snobbish," even though he contributed to the creation of its style.¹⁹¹ Instead of "arabesques," he is now interested in "volumes." He is against the Synthetism of Gauguin, Bernard and Anquetin (who he admits were "the first to love and imitate Cézanne"), because:

Leur système de synthèse admettrait seulement la teinte plate et un dur contour; de là vient toute une série d'oeuvres décoratives dont il ne m'appartient pas de médire; mais combien les synthèses de Cézanne étaient plus synoptiques, plus concrètes et plus vivantes!¹⁹²

Denis defines Cézanne's Synthetism only in terms of colour, not line. Together with Bernard, he contributed to the notion that in Cézanne's paintings line does not exist.¹⁹³ They were both against linear stylization now, and Denis relied in this article very much on Bernard's article on Cézanne, of 1904 (a fact which he acknowledged). Denis stated that Cézanne "did not understand drawing as being done by line and

contour."¹⁹⁴ He implied that Cézanne synthesized colour and "forms" at the same time, but not lines. Denis said, interpreting Cézanne: "Forms are for him volumes."¹⁹⁵ According to Denis, Cézanne synthesized the same way a "classic" did, not only when he painted, but also "when he looked around him."¹⁹⁶ In other words, the classical method by-passes analysis. At the same time a classic did not eliminate anything essential from an object, when he "synthesized" or "stylized": "for a painter such as Poussin, a tree does not lose its tree-like character to become under his brush a picturesque mass of simple form."¹⁹⁷ Denis considered that Cézanne possessed a "classical spontaneity" in his very "sensation" which he always tried to preserve, and this sensation implied "identity of color and form."¹⁹⁸ This is why, apparently, unlike Gauguin and the Cloisonists ("flat tints" and "firm outlines") or "the school of Grasset" ("which outlined thickly the external contour of some copy"), Cézanne did not separate colour from form. His "forms" are never flat says Denis (his "faculty of abstraction" allows him to distinguish "the sphere, the cone and the cylinder," but never "the circle, the triangle, the parallelogram").¹⁹⁹ Cézanne wants to preserve the "relief" of objects, as well as the sensation of depth in the painting, and that observes Denis, causes an "antinomy" with the "plane surface covered with colours arranged in a particular order."²⁰⁰ "Cézanne solved this antinomy," says Denis, "by chromatism, that is by the transposition of black and white values into values of color."²⁰¹ This "chromatism" as he called it was not a novelty, as Denis very well knew, since in 1897

he wrote in his Journal:

Values of light = tableau

Values of color = décoration 202²

Denis was also very well aware of the fact that the Impressionists had used these "values of color."²⁰³ Cézanne himself had acknowledged Pissarro's priority in this respect.²⁰⁴ The difference between Cézanne and Impressionists is that he preserved the "local colour" most of the time, instead of giving the impression of "envelope" of reflected light.²⁰⁵ Cézanne showed only limited usage of the "envelope," mostly in foliage.

For Denis (because of the "colour modulations"), Cézanne's paintings look like tapestries:

Toute la toile est une tapisserie où chaque couleur joue séparément et confond cependant sa sonorité dans l'ensemble. L'aspect caractéristique des tableaux de Cézanne vient de cette juxtaposition, de cette mosaïque des tons séparés et légèrement fondus l'un dans l'autre.²⁰⁶

According to Denis (who obviously had in mind 18th c. tapestry), Cézanne renewed Chardin's method described by Bachaumont in 1767:

Sa manière de peindre est singulière. Il place ses couleurs l'une après l'autre, sans presque les mêler de façon que son ouvrage ressemble un peu à de la mosaïque ou pièce de rapport comme la tapisserie à l'aiguille qu'on appelle point carré.²⁰⁷

Denis thinks that Cézanne's fruit, or the unfinished figures, offer the best example of this method. Denis, as well as Bernard, must have had in mind older paintings, which fit their theory of "volume modulations" better, because since the 1890s Cézanne's still-lives (such as V.730-V.732) were done in a different manner. Obviously influenced by Bernard, Denis said

that in Cézanne's paintings the "forms," the "volumes" are only "modulated" by a "series of touches" which "succeed one another by contrast or analogy according to whether the form is interrupted or continuous."²⁰⁸ Yet looking at the paintings one can see that Cézanne did not intend the "colour modulations" as a substitute for modelling, only as a refinement. In spite of Denis' and especially Bernard's efforts to demonstrate the contrary, Cézanne defined his volumes by drawing and often emphasized the contour in dark outlines (not continuous though).²⁰⁹ Denis in fact acknowledged this emphasis on contour, but plays down its role:

...le contour ne vient qu'à la fin, comme un accent rageur, un trait à l'essence, qui souligne et isole la forme déjà rendue sensible par le dégradé de la couleur.²¹⁰

Of course, he cannot explain these firm outlines on basis of "perception." They are an embarrassment to any interpretation of Cézanne that does not allow for an intent of stylization from his part.²¹¹ While this is not the general rule of defining volumes (such as cubes, cylindres, spheres) in Cézanne's oeuvre, there are a few instance in his landscapes of the early 1880s where the shapes of rocks, the accidents in terrains (reliefs, rather than truly three-dimensional forms, such as a house) are build up by sequences of small graded units, or simply by hatching. Such examples are Rocks at L'Estaque (V.404, 1882-5)-Fig. 12, or House in Provence (V. 397, 1882-5) -Fig. 13. This is a technique Bernard imitated in his landscape of Pont-Aven in 1892 - Fig. 6, mentioned above. The buildings though, in Cézanne's paintings

(such as the house in Fig. 13), preserve their geometrical forms. They are defined by drawing and reinforced outlines, and colored practically in flat tints. They are also seen in perspective. The cube of a house, the sphere of an apple, the cylinder of a bottle, are volumes that Cézanne did not want to dissolve in a polychrome "effect." As he tried to explain to Bernard in his letter, he wanted them "brought into proper perspective" (letter of 15 April 1904).²¹² He also wanted to make sure that despite the "effect" (achieved either by chiaroscuro - "light and shade," or by "colour sensations"), each such object is modelled, that is it shows a "culminating point" which is "closest to our eye:"

...dans une orange, une pomme, une boule, une tête, il y a un point culminant; et ce point est toujours - malgré le terrible effet: lumière ombre, sensations colorantes - le plus rapproché de notre oeil.²¹³

Denis' article had a double purpose. On one hand it proposed to establish that Cézanne was essentially a "classicist" in a general sense (which meant connecting him not only with Poussin, but also with other Old Masters).²¹⁴ On the other hand it was meant to emphasize that he was not as accomplished as the Old Masters, and many of his followers (the partisans of "pure painting") were only imitating his faults.²¹⁵ According to Denis he was a spontaneous or intuitive classic, mostly at the level of his "sensation," but not so much at the level of "realization."²¹⁶ Thus Cézanne's spatial relationships are similar to those of the Primitives, rather than to those encountered in a classical work. Cézanne obtained a "decorative effect" comparable with that of Venetian painting, which

similarly offers "this beautiful aspect of unity of plane," or to Chardin's; but Chardin and Veronese, Denis pointed out, obeyed "the laws of perspective and anatomy."²¹⁷ In fact, this "decorative effect," based not on chiaroscuro, but on color values, in which "the aerial perspective is sacrificed to the extreme," was according to Denis, "what most struck the first Symbolists, Gauguin, Bernard, Anquetin, those who were the first ones to love and imitate Cézanne."²¹⁸ But the present imitators, those who love "anarchy," "disorder," "paradox," take from Cézanne, Denis implies, not the voluntary simplifications, necessary in view of a decorative synthesis, but his "negligences and imperfections."²¹⁹ Denis arrives at the same conclusion as Bernard did: imitate Old Masters, not modern ones. After all Cézanne also, said Denis, "was subjected to the counter-attack of the disorder that characterizes our times."²²⁰

In his "Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne," published in the fall of 1907 in the Mercure de France, Emile Bernard, like Denis, emphasized that Cézanne's "colour modulations" can be related to tapestry procedures:

Je compris de suite que c'était une loi d'harmonie qui guidait son travail, et que toutes ces modulations avaient une direction fixée d'avance dans sa raison. Il procédait en somme comme ont dû l'observer les tapissiers anciens, faisant se suivre les couleurs apparentées jusqu'à ce qu'elles rencontrassent leur contraste dans l'opposition;²²¹

Even more strongly than Denis, Bernard criticised Cézanne from his classicist position. He criticised Cézanne for using the colour values instead of the old-fashioned tonal values, because this led to a weakness in defining "form."²²² In Bernard's

opinion, Cézanne "does not captivate us with his rendering of form."²²³ According to Bernard, Cézanne did not use the tonal values because of his faulty vision (explanation which brings to mind the "diseased eye" theory of Huysmans).²²⁴ Bernard claimed he thought at first Cézanne's "faults" were "voluntary negligences," but that Cézanne himself blamed them on his poor vision.²²⁵ But at least Cézanne tried to "become classical by way of nature."²²⁶ He achieved "relief" in his paintings, which is more than can be said about Gauguin. This is the conclusion that can be drawn from Bernard's "Souvenirs," in which he "quoted" Cézanne as pronouncing the famous sentence so often repeated since: "Gauguin was not a painter, he made only Chinese images."²²⁷ Bernard claimed Cézanne considered Gauguin's influence "disastrous" and that he always told him only bad things about this painter. He added:

Gauguin aimait beaucoup votre peinture, lui dis-je, et il vous a beaucoup imité. - Eh bien! il ne m'a pas compris, répondait-il furieusement; jamais je n'ai voulu, et je n'accepterai jamais le manque de modelé ou de graduation; c'est un non-sens.²²⁸

Later on, Bernard said:

Les plans! c'était sa continuelle préoccupation. "Voilà ce que Gauguin n'a jamais compris", insinuait-il. Je devais aussi pour beaucoup prendre ma part de ce reproche; car je sentais que Cézanne avait raison, il n'est pas de la belle peinture, si la surface plane reste plate, il faut que les objets tournent, s'éloignent, vivent. C'est là toute la magie de notre art.²²⁹

From his idealist (even Symbolist position, considering he thought of his classicism as a "Classical Symbolism"), Bernard like Charles Morice, criticized Cézanne for not rendering the spirit, the soul of things, but only their material aspect:

Puisqu'il ne s'attachait pas à rendre l'esprit des choses, mais leur charme coloriste, leur matière, il faut surtout le prendre dans la nature morte.²³⁰

The Salon d'Automne of 1907 held a Cézanne retrospective that reunited again older and newer paintings. Emile Bernard wrote in La Renovation Esthétique, "Réflexions à propos du Salon d'automne" in which he talked most about Cézanne. The attacks against him are more pronounced here than in the previous "Souvenirs." In fact the main accusations are the same ones he made about Gauguin: flatness, decorative color, linear stylization. Of course there is no question of the absolute flatness of which Gauguin was guilty in Bernard's opinion, but the fact that Cézanne did not make use of chiaroscuro, of black and white modelling, "killed the plans" and made impossible a proper modelling in the round (le tourné) of objects.²³¹ Thus Bernard seems to contradict here what he said in the "Souvenirs" of the same year (see the quote on p. 138, n. 229). But he was writing now for a different audience. He did realize that Cézanne's latest paintings did not fit the classicist image he was trying to build for the painter, and he did not even try any more to say that the "faults" were involuntary. Comparing the paintings of his early style exhibited at the Salon, with the more recent ones, Bernard declared:

...et nous le voyons, en la rétrospective du Salon d'automne, partant de ces premières et somptueuses peintures clair obscurées et solidement maçonnées à la Courbet, aboutir à une vision où le bleu, le jaune et le rouge dominant, en un chant plus décoratif que vrai et dans les linéaments stylisés d'une forme voulue simple, souvent naive.²³²

Thus the colour was "decorative," not "true," the simplicity

and naivety of forms was desired, and Cézanne used linear stylization. Later, in 1920, Bernard was to suggest that Cézanne's technique would be appropriate for practical applications, "in decoration, in tapestry, in tissues".²³³

In concluding this section I would like to emphasize that Cézanne's contemporaries did indeed see him as a "decorative" painter. Depending on their own position on art in general (not just on Cézanne), some were however prepared to accept only his "decorative effect" (related to colour) as deliberate, and not the liberties he took with linear perspective for example, or simplifications of form. Some critics switched positions during the last decade of the 19th c., and it is important to remember when and why. Thus, similar tactics used by Lecomte in the early 1890s against the Symbolists, were used by Denis in the 1900s in order to prove that the "anarchists" are borrowing from Cézanne only his "faults?": Denis' conclusion in 1907 was that Cézanne modelled, but not like an Old Master, more summarily. Only the coloristic effect (which helped to preserve the flatness of the picture) was similar to that obtained by Veronese or other "Venetian painting," yet more like that of tapestry. Also, Veronese mastered anatomy and the rules of linear perspective, which Cézanne did not. Cézanne's spatial relationships are not like those of a true classical Master, according to Denis, but more like those of a Primitive painter, who "prefers reality to the appearance of reality" (which "appearance" only, was given by the linear perspective). Still,

according to Denis, the relationship Art/Nature in Primitive painting is closer to that of a classical painter than in a "hieratic" painting which he now abhors, as he does also abhor flat decorative painting.

Bernard who held views similar to his fellow-classicist Denis, admitted though to his reactionary readers of the Rénovation Esthétique in 1907 that the Art/Nature relationship in Cézanne's painting included voluntary distortions for the purpose of being decorative.

I concentrated more on Denis and Bernard than on the other critics, because a process of "unnatural selection" of their writings on Cézanne (especially the so-called "quotes" from him), done by subsequent writers, has led to a present day interpretation of Cézanne that isolates him from the general trend of the avant-garde painting of his time, in order to make out of him a precursor of movements that took place after his death.

Chapter II, Part 2

Cézanne and the "Decoration Paradigm."

Introduction.

As is evident from Ch. II, Part I, the bulk of contemporary criticism is in agreement that Cézanne was actually part of the general anti-Naturalist tendency toward "decorative" painting. But not every commentator considered that Cézanne's intention was to apply the principles of "decoration" to easel painting, in other words his spatial "distortions" for example were considered by some as not voluntary. Of course, as is evident from Ch. II, Part I again, those critics had their subjective reasons for saying so. The writings of M. Denis and E. Bernard from their "Classicist" period are particularly suspicious. On one hand they wanted to demonstrate that Cézanne was a "Classicist," consequently on their side, on the other hand they wanted to prove he was an "imperfect" Classicist, and that his "faults" were exactly the features taken up by the adepts of "pure painting." Denis complained about this preference for the "incomplete," about the glorification of Cézanne's "negligences and imperfections" which he considered part of the conditions that "breed Dreyfusism."

The "Classicist connection" is not totally farfetched. But qualities such as "order," "clarity," "architectural," Poussin-like features, in other words the "good points" of Cézanne by the Neo-Classicist standards, could be accounted for by the concept of "decorative" painting as understood in the 1880s

and early 1890s. At the same time most of the "faults" can be also accounted for as voluntary distortions in order to achieve a degree of flatness required by "decorative painting" or decoration.

Since contemporary criticism (including "eye witness accounts"), as is to be expected, contains various biases, I will now discuss Cézanne's letters and paintings in their historical context, in order to reach a more definite conclusion.

In this section, the following two main questions will be considered:

- A. Did Cézanne fulfill the three conditions (indicated in Chapter I, Part 2) that led easel painters toward painting-decoration? The conditions were:
- 1) Art for art's sake, elitism.
 - 2) Anti-Naturalism (in the sense of anti-empiricism, but not being against using nature as "motif").
 - 3) Willingness to be a "decorator."
- B. Do Cézanne's paintings fit the "decoration paradigm"?

A discussion of specific paintings in chronological order reveals Cézanne as an initiator, as well as a follower of this trend in its various aspects.

A special emphasis will be placed on the connection I am suggesting, between his method of "color modulations" and the writings of Charles Blanc, Chevreul, as well as the practical example of Rococo tapestries (some of the best specimens of which are in Aix).

A. Did Cézanne fulfil the conditions that led easel painters toward painting-decoration?

1) Art for art's sake, elitism.

To "prove" this point in Cézanne's particular case is in fact redundant. It is really no more necessary than to prove that Cézanne was part of the avant-garde, since "art for art's sake" was the avant-garde's credo in the period that interests us here. As I mentioned before, "art for art's sake" was a "code of professional ethics," ever since the Salon became flooded with literary illustrations that stirred cheap emotions in the vulgar bourgeois public.¹ Nobody described more vividly this public, the crowd invading the Salon on Sunday to be amused, than Cézanne's boyhood friend Emile Zola.² It is well known that Zola, the "father" of literary Naturalism, considered Impressionism (in the late 1860s and 1870s) as the counterpart of Naturalism in painting. It is not often pointed out that Zola himself emphasized the "art for art's sake" qualities of Impressionist painting: it was painting before anything else, it was not subordinated to the subject-matter to the point of telling stories or illustrating a poem.³ Of course, this did not mean the choice of subject-matter was not important. For Zola the subject-matter had to be taken from reality, from modern life, he was against "dreamers and idealists."⁴

But looking at Cézanne's range of subject-matter, even in the period of triumphant Naturalism, we can see that many of his compositions (and they are compositions," a word that was taboo in the Naturalist vocabulary) fit rather into the "dream"

or at least figment of imagination category. Such are his Bathers (for example Five Women - V.264, 1873-1877, or Three Women - V.266, C. 1876), a topic of importance in Cézanne's oeuvre, or compositions like the Temptation of St. Anthony of which he painted three versions and did at least four drawings.⁵ All three versions exhibit the qualities of "pure painting" so much admired later on, and totally disregard human expression, the story-telling aspect. If the first version (V. 103, c.1870) continues the painterly art for art's sake tradition of the Romantic school, the third version (V.241, 1873-1877; 1875 according to Reff) - Fig. 4, is an example of a clearly non-naturalist work, where Cézanne applied his "Impressionist manner," and where his "deliberate" stroke can be already detected. This was the painting that Bernard compared in his article of 1891 with an old bas-relief.⁶ In such compositions in which Cézanne placed nude figures in plein-air, he emphasized not only colour, pâte, but also the outlines of his "academies." Thus Cézanne's "art for art's sake" concept included both colour and line at a time when line (which was considered as not actually "seen" in nature) was avoided by the Impressionists. His line rendered the "character" of the figures, which if they were dream apparitions, indicated Cézanne did not have the same kind of dreams the Symbolists had. His women are not phantoms, but erotic visions. Cézanne was never an Idealist, but he was not a Realist either. "Bathers," with their mythological character, represented a subject in perfect accordance with the recommendations given by the reformers of decorative arts.⁷ They would take the

viewer into a fantasy world, without subjecting him to powerful emotions. But by placing his sketchy nudes in an "Impressionistic landscape" Cézanne was substituting a "modern ideal" for a "classical ideal," not unlike what the influential non-academic critic, Ernest Chesneau had advocated already in 1862 in his book on French painting of the 19th century, Les Chefs d'école.⁸ As will be evident also from the next section, there are striking similarities between Chesneau's and Cézanne's opinions. Chesneau declared that in the field of plastic arts, "art for art's sake" (which was the doctrine of the Romantic School) was equivalent to "decorative" art.⁹ But he did not approve of an art for art's sake as understood in the 1860s and 1870s, that is in a purely materialistic framework, destined for the pleasure of the eye alone. He was in favor of a mixture of Realism and Idealism, for an art for art's sake which gives the "spectacle of life," in which "the subject is nothing, art is everything" and at the same time contains an "idea." His favored prototype for such an art (which of course, as he explained, was not understood by the vulgar crowd that frequented the Salon) was the painter Ribot, about whose still lifes he had this to say:

L'art de Ribot n'éveille pas seulement l'idée des objets qu'il met en scène, il n'en fait pas seulement un prétexte à colorations de profonde harmonie; il en donne la sensation exacte, non en trompe - l'oeil enfantin, mais à la façon du grand art qui choisit et interprète. Ici, la vie de ces choses inertes, de ces natures-mortes est prodigieuse;¹⁰

Chesneau praised Ribot because he did not make any concessions to "bourgeois popularity" ("Il n'a fait aucune avance à la popularité bourgeoise...").¹¹ Thus Still Life was another

ideal subject-matter for the "decorative" or "art for art's sake" easel paintings, and not only in the purely materialistic or imitative sense which was already amply exploited by then in this theme, but in the manner of "high art which makes choices and interprets." It is in this light that, in my opinion, we should regard Cézanne's still lifes.¹²

It is easy to understand why Chesneau would appeal to the avant-garde, when he not only supported art for art's sake, but warned his readers against what he considered "the bad side of art for art's sake," namely the danger of becoming only "more or less skilful workers" ("des manouvriers plus ou moins habiles"), not "artists."¹³ Chesneau considered skilfulness ("habileté du métier"), manual dexterity, "virtuosity," to be "the enemy of all that is sincere, naive and true," which for him meant to be against "all morality."¹⁴ In a letter to his mother (26 September 1874), Cézanne expressed similar thoughts concerning what was truly "artistic":

I have to work all the time, not to reach that final perfection which earns the admiration of imbeciles.- And this thing which is commonly appreciated so much is merely the effect of draftmanship and renders all work resulting from it inartistic and common.¹⁵

Chesneau praised "national genius" and individuality. He believed that the only way to regenerate art, which according to him was in decadence, was through Nature: "La seule, l'intermittente source...l'eau de régénération, c'est la nature."¹⁶ This was true for "high art" as well as for the "decorative arts," since they were both based on the same principle: "the sentiment of beauty or the interpretation of nature."¹⁷

Chesneau envisaged the artist as an educated person and a

thinker. He considered the contribution of literary men to the "language of art" as unfortunate. The writers, in their quality of art critics, used "vague" and "poorely defined terms," they constantly substituted "the literary idea for the plastic idea."¹⁸ Cézanne shares Chesneau's mistrust of mixing painting and literature, as well as his emphasis on Nature as the source of art:

He (the artist) must be aware of the literary spirit which so often causes the painter to deviate from his true path- the concrete study of nature - to lose himself too long in intangible speculation.¹⁹

Cézanne certainly fulfilled the first condition that led painters toward art for art's sake, namely the hatred for the bourgeois. In a letter to Bernard he declared: "It is sufficient to have a sense of art - and this is without doubt the horror of the bourgeois, this sense."²⁰ He particularly hated the materialistic bourgeoisie of his part of the country; in 1878 he wrote to Zola:

Marseille is France's oil capital, just as Paris is the butter capital; you have no idea of the presumptuousness of this fierce population, they have but one instinct, that for money; it is said that they earn a lot, but they are very ugly.²¹

Cézanne was of the opinion that "taste" is something "rare," and that "Art addresses itself only to an excessively limited number of individuals."²² He considered that "The work which brings about some progress in one's own craft is sufficient compensation for not being understood by the imbeciles."²³

But Cézanne did believe that painters should "produce pictures which will be an education," just as Mallarmé thought that art should be a form of education.²⁴ It was common for

the avant-garde to believe (and this includes Mallarmé as well as Cézanne) that the public somewhere in the future would be receptive to their work, but that in the present society it could be understood only by a small elite. Who was this elite? A small group of "intelligent amateurs" such as Roger Marx ("the most intelligent" of them if we are to believe Mauclair²⁵), to whom, as I mentioned in Chapter II, Part 1, Cézanne wrote to express his gratitude.²⁶

2) Anti-Naturalism.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that at the onset of the anti-positivist reaction and later, Cézanne's position in regard with the relationship Art/Nature was not that of a Naturalist. I remind the reader that I am referring to the Naturalist movement associated with the positivist philosophy, and do not mean by Naturalism representational art in general, a connotation often to be found in modern writings. Naturalism was based on the empirical method of observation of particular phenomena (emphasized the "accidental" versus the "permanent"), was analytical, did not accept generalizations, or "composition." It was based in the case of the Impressionism of the 1870s on the pure spontaneous visual sensation, it was not "conceptual," it was incompatible with an "ideal."²⁷ Subjectivity was allowed only as "temperament," which also had a physiological connotation.²⁸

Cézanne's language, as will be evident from his letters, was not that of an Idealist. He was not a Symbolist. His

language contains a mixture of Naturalist and anti-Naturalist, even Symbolist concepts. Words such as "temperament" (which was a term actually used prior to the Naturalist movement) and also in the context of "pure painting") and "artistic ideal" are used in the same sentence ("With a painter's temperament and an artistic ideal, that is to say a conception of nature...").²⁹ He often talks about expressing his "emotion" in front of nature (which has a Symbolist connotation, at least according to Denis, if not to Aurier) and of not having the desire to reproduce nature.³⁰ In 1878 Cézanne wondered if his opinion of "painting as a means of expressing feelings" was shared by Zola.³¹ A month later Cézanne wrote to Zola:

As you say, there are some very beautiful views here (at l'Estaque). The difficulty is to reproduce them, this isn't exactly my line. I began to see nature rather late, though this does not prevent it being full of interest for me.³²

Cézanne had connections in various intellectual circles. In the last year of his life he was reminiscing about his visits in 1877 to the house of Nina de Villard, who was a friend of Verlaine and Mallarmé, and who received many artists.³³ He was well informed not only on the latest developments in painting, literature, poetry, but also in music through his friends Morstatt and Cabaner. Cézanne had been a lover of Wagner's music since the mid-1860s and paid tribute to him in his three versions of Overture to Tannhauser, of which only the third version, of 1868, (or after) is extant-
Fig. 1.³⁴ If it seems that in some ways he can be connected with Symbolism, it is because he had affinities not only with the Naturalist school at its apogee, but also with the non-

positivist, anti-Naturalist, non-academic cultural milieu in which future Symbolist ideas fermented. Cézanne's choice of the Temptation of St. Anthony theme is the result of his affinities with the latter. This theme interested Baudelaire, as well as Verlaine.³⁵ Cézanne's involvement with this subject precedes that of Odilon Redon (a painter whom he "enormously" admired).³⁶ It is significant that the last version of the Temptation (Fig. 4) is one of the first paintings in which Cézanne exhibits the ordered, parallel brushstrokes that in the 1880s will cover the entire surface of all his paintings, regardless of the subject matter. The other pictures done about the same time in which this "hatching" appears are also fantasy compositions, as Reff remarked: La Lutte d'amour (V.379) and L'Eternel féminin (V. 247). In the last one, the regular strokes cover almost the entire surface of the painting. Reff pointed out that Cézanne developed this formal feature firstly in fantasy compositions, because it was only a formal device and not "an analytic device adapted to the observation of natural phenomena."³⁷ This new facture helped to achieve a unity of effect. The overall bluish tone of the Temptation (Fig. 4) worked to the same purpose.³⁸ The fact that he later introduced the same "formulas" into landscape painting only shows that his approach to nature was not at all empirical. He was selecting from nature only what he considered would make a good motif (a word that Chesneau used very often) and paid special attention to the "decorative effect." In 1883 he wrote to Zola:

I have here some beautiful views but they do not quite make motifs. - Nevertheless, climbing the hills as the sun goes down one has a glorious view of Marseille in the background and the islands, all enveloped towards evening to very decorative effect.³⁹

In the late 1870s and early 1880s there is a pronounced pre-occupation with "order" in Cézanne's paintings, especially in his brushwork (a preoccupation that was shared by Pissarro and constituted a source of inspiration for the Neo-Impressionists⁴⁰) and with "harmony" of colours from a scientific (theoretical not empirical!) point of view.⁴¹ In 1884 Cézanne wrote to Zola:

...art is changing terribly in its outer appearance... at the same time the ignorance of harmony reveals itself more and more through the discord of the colours and, what is even worse, the aphony of the tones.⁴²

The "science of harmony" was also a major concern of Gauguin at about the same time, as is evident from his manuscript of "Notes Synthétiques" of ca. 1884-1885.⁴³ Gauguin met Cézanne in 1881 in Pontoise where he was visiting Pissarro, and since then he had assiduously tried to obtain his "formula."⁴⁴ In a few years Gauguin fell under the spell of Bernard and became associated with the literary Symbolism, thus his painting became intentionally the reflection of an Idealist philosophy. As his former friend and master Pissarro put it, Gauguin "has sensed the tendency" toward Idealism, mysticism, occultism, religion.⁴⁵ Cézanne however, even though he was getting increasingly closer to the Catholic church, did not embrace philosophical idealism.⁴⁶ What he wanted to render was his "emotion in front of nature" as he repeated over and over again.⁴⁷ This was not the transcen-

dental emotion" Aurier thought he detected in Gauguin's paintings. Cézanne expressed in fact a pre-Symbolist notion which was quite common-place before the onset of Naturalism. That landscapes should translate "the emotion of a painter in front of nature" was considered the norm for Charles Blanc, who already in 1866 recommended such "Dutch paintings that our Frenchmen make so well," among the "works destined for the ornamentation of our houses."⁴⁹ Delacroix also held the opinion that a painter should express his "emotions before nature," as was known from a book on his life and work published in 1865 by Achille Piron.⁵⁰ Cézanne's long lasting interest in Delacroix is well known (even at the end of his life he was reading "the appreciation that Baudelaire has written about the work of Delacroix"⁵¹) so it is quite likely he was paraphrasing him. Baudelaire recalled that Delacroix "used continually to say": "I consider the impression transmitted to the artist by nature as the most important thing of all to translate."⁵² Cézanne wrote: "To succeed in formulating sufficiently the impression which we experience in contact with this beautiful nature - man, woman, still-life...that is my wish to all who are in sympathy with art."⁵³ But these are no more the words of a Naturalist than are Delacroix's. The latter wrote in 1860: "Realism should be described as the antipodes of art."⁵⁴ Like Delacroix, Cézanne was constantly preoccupied with the "means of expression" of the emotions he felt.⁵⁵ Also like Delacroix (most likely influenced by him as were the Neo-Impressionists, Van Gogh and Gauguin) he arrived at the logic of "harmony."⁵⁶ In his Journals Delacroix reminisced about asking Chopin to "explain what it is that gives the impression of logic in music." The

composer explained to the painter, complying to his request, "the meaning of harmony and counterpoint."⁵⁷ Cézanne as well as Gauguin were interested in 1884, as I already mentioned, in harmony of colour and musical harmony, and the correspondence between them.

If there are similarities between Cézanne's concept that painting should express feelings, and Symbolist views on art, it is because both parties used common sources: Baudelaire, who considered Romanticism a "mode of feeling,"⁵⁸ and Delacroix. Also, the similarity in the desire to order these sensations in a theoretical scientific way, which can be detected in Cézanne and the Neo-Impressionists has a common source: Delacroix. Cézanne held the opinion that "Everything, especially in art, is theory developed and applied in contact with nature."⁵⁹ Delacroix considered that "art itself" is "science," and "not what the vulgar believe it to be, a vague inspiration coming from nowhere..."⁶⁰

Cézanne's advice to others concerning both the relationship art/nature, as well as modern art/tradition is very similar to that given by Chesneau. Chesneau as we remember, recommended Nature as a source of rejuvenation for art. He pleaded for the "sincere" and "direct" observation of Nature, which according to him, the Masters which today are copies and imitated also practised. At the same time, he said, the Master's works of art were superior to Nature, because they left out the unnecessary details and extracted "the specific character, the expressive sign."⁶¹ Chesneau pointed out that the Masters "did not tell their successors":

"Faites ce que nous avons fait;" ils on dit: "Faites comme nous avons fait; attachez-vous à réaliser, d'après d'autres vérités connues de vous, ce que nous avons réaliser d'après celles qui nous étaient familières." 62

Cézanne declared in 1897:

Art is a harmony which runs parallel with nature - what is one to think of those imbeciles who say that the artist is always inferior to nature? 63

In a letter to Bernard of 1905, Cézanne touched upon most of the same issues Chesneau raised. He complained that the "official Salons remain so inferior" because they encourage only accepted methods, and offered this opinion:

It would be better to bring in more personal emotion, observation and character.

The Louvre is the book in which we learn to read. We must not, however, be satisfied with retaining the beautiful formulas of our illustrious predecessors. Let us go forth to study beautiful nature, let us try to free our minds from them, let us strive to express ourselves according to our personal temperament. 64

Three years earlier Cézanne advised the painter Charles Camoin:

Since you are now in Paris and the masters of the Louvre attract you, if it appeals to you, make some studies after the great decorative masters Veronese and Rubens, but as you would do from nature - a thing I myself was only able to do inadequately. 65

Cézanne was not interested in rendering a spontaneous visual sensation, but in "constructions after nature, based on method, sensations and developments suggested by the model."⁶⁶ He wanted to comprehend Nature "from the point of view of the picture." This comprehension was brought about by "time" and by "reflection," which "modify little by little our vision."⁶⁷

From Cézanne's letters we can deduce two apparently contradictory conclusions: first - he was not a Naturalist, second - he increasingly talks about Nature after 1896. This can be understood in the light of Cézanne's association with the

artistic movements blossoming in Provence, and especially in his own town, Aix-en-Provence.

In the 1890s, Aix was not at all the stereotype of a provincial town in which nothing ever happens, and therefore the place in which Cézanne isolated himself, presumably to create in peace, away from influences. This is a myth propagated by art dealers, beginning of course with Vollard. This kind of thinking is also related to the erroneous assumption that everything important in cultural movements is localized in the capital city, is "centralized." It so happened that at the time Provence, and particularly Aix, was the center of what was named "the Provincial Renaissance," which had close ties with both the "Classical Renaissance" and Naturism.⁶⁸ It was also part of the general picture of the "French Renaissance," the nationalistic outburst provoked by the Dreyfus Affair. As Décaudin has pointed out, the provinces had an increasing role during the Third Republic in France, and at the same time it was there that the reaction against the decadent and Symbolist movements, as well as against "foreign imports" was particularly strong. Especially in the South, this reaction "took the form of a reference to the Latin genius and Mediterranean light."⁶⁹

In 1896 Cézanne began a close friendship with Joachim Gasquet, a prominent figure in the revival of poetry in the South of France, who in the last few years of the 19th century attempted a synthesis between Classicism (represented by Charles Maurras and the Ecole Romane) and Naturism.⁷⁰ Gasquet was the son of one of Cézanne's old friends and they had many things in

common: Catholicism, love for Provence and for the Latin heritage and presumably anti-Dreyfusism.⁷¹ Cézanne's letters to Gasquet, or to other young friends of the latter, show clearly the painter's sympathy toward what he called "the renewal of Art which awakens in Provence."⁷² Also, the letter to Gasquet's father could not leave any doubt:

He [Gasquet], Madame Gasquet and his friends, have the future on their side. I associate myself with all my heart with the movement in the arts which they represent and to which they give its character.⁷³

The movement Gasquet represented was a right-wing movement, corresponding on the literary plane to the right-wing political reaction of Catholics and Monarchists. This was a reactionary movement developed under the triple banner of Catholicism, Latin tradition, and regionalism or decentralization. Like the Neo-Classicists, Gasquet and his circle believed in the necessity of social order reflected in an artistic production that would support that order. Gasquet's "classicism" has to be understood in a very wide sense, since it was encumbered by lyricism and romanticism. As Marcel Raymond pointed out, this Classicism meant an art doctrine, as well as an ethic, based on order and reason.⁷⁴ In the first issue of his Pays de France, Gasquet wrote in 1899 the following lines:

"Si je brise l'ordre des choses, le sang de Dieu coulera. Il y a une raison dans les choses. Je dois me conformer." He also added: "L'art qui s'inspire de ces principes a une portée sociale. Il rend visible la loi de la raison..." and: "Nous avons le culte de la Raison."⁷⁵ In the same piece of writing Gasquet also expressed his allegiance to Naturism:

L'art que nous voulons, celui que M. Viollis proposait d'appeler naturisme...celui qui exprime les désirs de toute une génération...cet art a su faire de la matière un être moral, dans l'univers il a su trouver les dieux.⁷⁶

Gasquet already praised Naturism in Les Mois Dorés, the magazine he published in Aix between 1896-1897. In January 1897 he published the essay "Notes pour servir à l'histoire de naturisme," in which he criticized the Symbolists, with the exception of Mallarmé for whom he had a high regard.⁷⁷

Cézanne's recommendation to learn from the "great masters" but to "vivify" this lesson "by the way of nature" has Naturist overtones.⁷⁸ Also, Gasquet's way of thinking when he says, "A sa place tout est beau. Il y a une hiérarchie dans le monde. L'art naturiste ne néglige rien. Là où je suis, de là je puis contempler l'univers," has resonances with Cézanne's lines:

Here on the bank of the river the motifs multiply, the same subject seen from a different angle offers subject for study of the most powerful interest and so varied that I think I could occupy myself for months without changing place, by turning now more to the right, now more to the left.⁷⁹

John Rewald, in my opinion, went out of his way to demonstrate how unimportant the relationship Cézanne-Gasquet was for the painter in his book Cézanne, Geffroy et Gasquet. Rewald is biased toward an interpretation of Cézanne, as Naturalist. While it is true that Gasquet is not a reliable witness (but who was?), nevertheless his friendship was important at the time for Cézanne, as is evident from his letters. Rewald thinks that Geffroy (who as we have seen considered Cézanne sort of a realist manqué) understood the painter much better than Gasquet, who among other things dwelt too much on Cézanne

revealing "the soul of Provence." Yet, while Cézanne was angered by Geffroy's article of 1895 on him and did not thank him, he had this to say to Gasquet who just mentioned Cézanne in one of his articles, in which he implied Cézanne rendered "the soul of Provence":

Having read the superb lines in which you exalt the Provençal blood, I cannot get myself to keep silent, as though I found myself in the presence of an unfortunate, a vulgar Geffroy.⁸⁰

In 1903 Gasquet published his Chants séculaires, with a preface by his "master" Louis Bertrand. This preface was described as a "manifesto in favour of a Mediterranean and Classical poetry."⁸¹ Cézanne seemed to agree with Bertrand, since he made this comment about his preface:

The artistic movement which Louis Bertrand characterizes so well in his fine preface, which precedes the "Chants Séculaires" is full of determination. March on and you will continue to open for the arts a new road leading to the Capitol.

Your devoted compatriot and admirer,

Paul Cézanne⁸²

Bertrand criticized both the Romantic and the Naturalist movements of the 19th century. He advocated the reconciliation of Art and Life within a Classical Ideal. He wanted to exclude from "the real" (le réel) everything that was not characterized by "order, harmony and beauty," everything that was "amorphic, inorganic, monstrous."⁸³ Bertrand considered that the role of art is to please and to instruct. (Compare with Cézanne's desire for "decorative effect," "decorative masters" and his opinion that pictures should be "an education.") He strongly emphasized the Latin tradition in general and the French one in particular (and appealed to the Latin world, as heir of

civilization, to fight the "new Barbarians," the Anglo-Germans). One of the errors of the Romantics was, according to Bertrand, the love for exoticism and admiration of foreign art. Gasquet himself, while guilty of Romantic effusion, shared many of Bertrand's points of view, such as the exclusive praise of the Latin tradition. This explains why he would later be so insistent in denying any influences that were not French or at least Latin in Cézanne's work. He specifically referred to Chinese or Japanese art (while admitting though that Cézanne had read Goncourt's books on Utamaro and Hokusai).⁸⁴

Considering the intellectual ambiance in which Cézanne lived and with which he interacted, it is understandable that he was already prepared, or prone to be receptive to some of the ideas of the Neo-Classicists Emile Bernard and Maurice Denis when he finally met them. On the other hand, if Cézanne supported with "all his heart" the renewal of art in his beloved Provence, this did not mean he agreed totally with the political views of Gasquet and his circle (their friendship actually cooled in the painter's later years); nor did it mean that he agreed with the political reasons behind the Neo-Classical movement of the early 1900s, and the retrograde aesthetics which were their result. Cézanne met Bernard in 1904 and Denis in 1906. With Bernard he corresponded until his death. But if they were in agreement on the old Masters they admired, it is obvious from Cézanne's letters that the Nature/Art relationship was the bone of contention between them. Cézanne felt compelled to emphasize over and over the direct contact with nature, because Bernard would not accept painting in front of a motif (even if it did not mean

a faithful copy), but painting nature through the eyes of the Masters he admired, or as he put it, according to the "laws" they "extracted" from nature.⁸⁵ Cézanne, who did not waste much time theorizing, and did not share Bernard's extremely reactionary ideology, exasperated, wrote to his son not long before his death:

I am sending you a letter that I have just received from Emilio Bernardinos, one of the most distinguished aesthetes. I am sorry not to have him under my thumb so as to instil into him the idea so sane, so comforting and the only correct one, of a development of art through contact with nature...in his drawings he produces nothing but old-fashioned rubbish which smacks of his artistic dreams, based not on the emotional experience of nature but on what he has been able to see in the museums, and more still on a philosophic attitude of mind which comes from his excessive knowledge of the masters he admires.⁸⁶

The fact that Cézanne talks so much about Nature toward the end of his life does not prove that he was a Naturalist. The return to Nature had been advocated since the mid-1890s by the anti-Symbolist reaction and it was the common ground for Naturists, Classicists, or any combination of the two movements, such as embodied in Gasquet. "Pure painting" was also an "external" art, rooted in the material world, even though it was "abstracting" this world (thus Denis was still referring to it as an art of "imitation").

Cézanne's letters only prove that he was very much in touch with the artistic movements of his own time, with the young generation. A week before his death Cézanne wrote: "I think the young painters are much more intelligent than the others, the old ones see in me only a disastrous rival."⁸⁷

3) Desire to be a decorator.

Cézanne manifested an interest in decoration at an early stage of his career. His first work is considered to be a screen representing an 18th century pastoral (V.3, 1858-60) - Fig. 10. The right part of the screen was based on a work by Lancret.⁸⁸ The back of the screen (V.1-2) - Fig.11 consists of "grotesque" decorations in the vein of Bérain (after whose models the Tapestry Museum in Aix has six Grotesques tapestries). I remind the reader that "grotesques" are "arabesques" which include in their design the human figure. It is not surprising that Cézanne was one of the first (as Lecomte noticed) to introduce the "arabesques" in his paintings. Cézanne "referred" to this screen in several later paintings, such as Peasant with a Blue Blouse (V.687, 1890-92) and various still lifes, the earlier one being The Plate of Apples (V. 207, c. 1876) - where he used as a decorative background a blown-up version of one of the motifs on the back of the 1858-60 screen, in which all the other objects in the picture are well integrated. (For the other pictures in which he refers to this screen see Th. Reff, "The Pictures Within Cézanne's Pictures").⁸⁹ As Reff remarked, this screen had a "unique significance" for Cézanne, because he had decorated it himself. I would add he wanted to illustrate the continuity in his decorative intentions. It is also interesting to note that the front part of the screen simulates a tapestry, with its border that, as Reff noticed, was probably inspired by the Flemish tapestry in the Cathedral of Aix. That particular tapestry is a 15th c. one, but Cézanne's screen looks like an 18th c. tapestry.

In the 1860s, Cézanne painted murals (wall-paintings later transferred to canvas) such as The Four Seasons (V.4-7) and the pair Christ in Limbo (V.84, after a reproduction of the painting in the Prado by Sebastiano del Piombo in one of Ch. Blanc's books, where it was attributed to Navarette) and Sorrow or Mary Magdalen (V. 86). Gasquet said later that Cézanne would have liked to "cover walls" with huge paintings, and quoting Emile Solari (the son of Cézanne's friend), he specified he would have liked "to decorate façades as a Venetian."⁹⁰ That his idols were "the great decorative masters Veronese and Rubens," and he admired the Venetians we know to be true.⁹¹ As opposed to his Impressionist colleagues, who as I indicated, wanted to be "decorative" but did not accept the status of "decorators," Cézanne did not mind renouncing the status of "tableau maker."⁹² The fact he did not paint large murals was probably due to the fact that nobody commissioned them, as Geffroy implied. Josse and Gaston Bernheim - Jeune, related that at the time when Garnier just finished the construction of the new Paris Opera, Pissarro tried to convince Halanzier, the director of the Opera, to commission Cézanne the pictorial decoration of the building.⁹³ The only commission to decorate that Cézanne received came from Chocquet, for whom he executed in 1890 the pair La barque et les baigneurs (V. 583) and La vasque au paon (V. 584), both 30 x 124 cm., probably as over-doors. The three large paintings of bathers (V.719 - 21) done in the last years of his life represent an attempt to fulfill a life long dream, the creation of monumental paintings with nudes, like the old decorative masters. It seems Cézanne

believed in a hierarchy among various branches of decoration, though, with painting occupying the first place.⁹⁴

B. Do Cézanne's Paintings Fit the "Decoration Paradigm"?

From Chapter I, Part 1, it is evident that in the late 1870s and all through the 1880s, most non-academic authorities in mural decoration (whether tapestry, mosaic, or decorative painting) advocated roughly the following rules: the absence of trompe-l'oeil, the lack (or almost complete lack) of linear and atmospheric perspective effect, summary modelling, a large and simple facture, unity in colouring (for a "decorative effect" instead of "chiaroscuro effect"), balanced masses, abbreviation in drawing and emphasis on the contours (which did not have to be necessarily uninterrupted) for clarity, rhythm in composition, as well as a composition that leaves very few free spaces. Of course "order" was considered "the sovereign law of the decorative arts," as Blanc said (pointing out that this "optical order" is missing in nature), allowing at the same time for a "decorative confusion."⁹⁵

In these kinds of mural decoration (I am not referring to wallpapers or posters), the writers of this period agreed upon preserving the "Western tradition" (Viollet-le-Duc died in 1879, and Havard grudgingly allowed some "relief"). The Japanese à-plat (of their ukiyo-e) was not recommended.

Cézanne's "mature paintings" obviously feature all the above-mentioned characteristics. The "Western tradition" is also present with respect to modelling, achieved often through colour gradations that included "passages," (from one scale to another) as Blanc for example recommended.⁹⁶ To say though,

as Gasquet did, that Cézanne was not at all influenced by Oriental arts is not correct. In fact, considering the time he lived and the circles of artists and collectors he was associated with, it would have been impossible not to be influenced. One of the best examples of "Japonisme" in Cézanne's work is Ouverture to Tannhauser - Fig. 1, already mentioned, painted probably in 1868. If it is true that later on he did not use flat tints, he certainly used solutions offered by the Oriental arts for avoiding linear perspective and for making colour "vibrate," as Ch. Blanc also recommended, and possibly a few "compositional tricks" which I will point out later. But with respect to modelling (individual objects, as well as the picture as a whole), in his mature work Cézanne is closer to French sources of inspiration. Instead of Japanese prints, the French "national" decorative art of tapestry, from the most French period - the Rococo, provided the best solution for a decorative painting that while it preserved the flatness of the wall, maintained a degree of modelling, of relief. The comparison with tapestry was often made by Cézanne's contemporaries (see Ch. II, Part 1). Denis and Bernard remarked precisely on the similarity between Cézanne's "color modulations" and their tapestry counterpart, and they did not mean this as flattery at the time. In his "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke" of 1962, Theodore Reff remarked that the "pattern of fine parallel strokes" that Cézanne introduced in the late 1870s-early 1880s, resembled the "weave in some costly tapestry."⁹⁷ In his chapter in the 1978 Catalog of the Cézanne exhibition Reff mentioned that this analogy already drawn by the painter's

contemporaries is a "familiar theme in the literature on Cézanne."⁹⁸ But he did not pursue the problem any further. I suggest this analogy is not simply a metaphor.

As is evident from the Chapter I, Part 1, there was a revival of interest in the tapestry in late 1870s and early 1880s. There was an interest in old Medieval tapestries as well as Rococo (the collectors were especially interested in the last kind because of their "decorative" qualities). At the same time, in the wake of the exhibition put up by the Union Centrale in 1876, many art publications devoted many pages to the history of tapestry and to the definition of its "laws" (as decoration). Also a new kind of "decorative painting" that imitates tapestry was proposed in 1877.⁹⁹ All this coincides in an uncanny way with Cézanne developing his new method.

There is no question of course of Cézanne actually copying tapestry (even when some of the best specimens of Beauvais tapestry were in Aix),¹⁰⁰ but rather of his extracting general methods. After all, as the Goncourt brothers pointed out (a fact brought up by Denis also in his article on Cézanne), Chardin's method could also be connected with tapestry or mosaic.¹⁰¹ Cézanne's interest both in the Goncourts and in Chardin is known from his letters.¹⁰²

In the framework of "Western tradition," mural painting as true decoration was related to tapestry-decoration rather than to Medieval manuscript illumination, as Viollet-le-Duc would have had it. Chesneau for example, clearly assigned mural painting a role "higher but similar" to that played by tapestry in the past, in the decoration of palaces.¹⁰³

Among extant tapestries, the Rococo ones provided a practical example close enough to the desired aspect of a "decorative painting," because of their decorative "tapestry effect." They were not imitations of tableaux with strong chiaroscuro effect, but of "decorative" tableaux, and even then "l'effet-peinture" was transposed in "effect-tapisserie," that is in a higher scale of tones.¹⁰⁴ But even in these the modelling was too subtle for the summary modelling now desired both in tapestry and in "decorative painting." The modelling by hatching, used in the Medieval tapestry was very much recommended in the late 1870s and in 1880s for tapestry cartoons.¹⁰⁵ (18th c. tapestries used still finer hatching, even though it was somewhat superfluous, due to their better colour techniques.)

The theoretical writings that laid out the rules for future tapestry cartoons, especially the writings of Chevreul and Charles Blanc, provided even better, modern solutions, than an extant tapestry.¹⁰⁶

Cézanne in introducing "hatching" in the late 1870s into his oil paintings (such as L'Eternel féminin, V.247 or the Still Life in Fig. 8, V.341, 1879-82, that belonged to Gauguin) parallels the advocacy of hatching in tapestry. In tapestry only the vertical direction is possible for hatching. The diagonal direction did probably come naturally to Cézanne, since he was used to the method of rapid diagonal hatching in drawings, as Reff suggested.¹⁰⁷ But why did he decide to use hatching as a modelling device in his oil painting precisely in the late 1870s - early 1880s? I do not think that at that particular time he wanted his painting to look like a tapestry

but that he was looking for solutions to such problems as: a summary modelling that at the same time allows for order, clarity, and harmony of color. As I mentioned before, in the early 1880s Pissarro was also looking for ways of introducing "order" into his paintings, as is evident from La Côte du Chou à Pontoise of 1882.¹⁰⁸ Pissarro developed his regular "comma strokes" and seemed interested in optical mixing of contrasting hues (red and green in this picture), for a more ordered "Impressionist effect" in fact, (which inspired the future Neo-Impressionists whom he would actually join later in the 1880s). Cézanne was interested obviously in an "effect" that while still "decorative," allowed a better way of clearly defining solid shapes, as required in an "architectural" decoration. This is evident in pictures attributed to the period 1882-1885, such as Rocks at L'Estaque (V.404) - Fig. 12 or House in Provence (V.397) - Fig. 13. We know from his letters that at the time he elaborated this patient, ordered method, based on individual units, of "modulating" reliefs in color, Cézanne was interested in the science of "harmony." There was no better French authority at the time in this field (as far as color was concerned) than the chemist M.E. Chevreul who worked for the Gobelins. His influence on Delacroix and Seurat is well known. It is quite likely Cézanne's interest both in Delacroix and in a scientific treatment of harmony of colors, brought him in contact with Chevreul's book De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs, first published in 1839. Even though he was often blamed for contributing to the execution of tapestry-tableau in the 19th century, it is not true that Chevreul supported this concept,

as Ch. Blanc also emphasized.¹⁰⁹ Chevreul proposed for paintings intended to serve as models for tapestry a more rudimentary method of modelling, an intermediate system between chiaroscuro, and flat tints (for which he gave as typical example "the windows of Gothic churches"). The subtle gradation of nuances was to be replaced by a succession of "monochromous single tinted parts, of a visible size."¹¹⁰ In other words a simplified modelling could be obtained by the "juxtaposition of colors distinctly separated," a quantified gradation. As I mentioned in Ch. II, Part 1, Bernard, who was very familiar with Cézanne's "color modulations" (see also his own version in the landscape of Pont-Aven of 1892 - Fig. 6), realized that he was guided by a "law of harmony," and that he proceeded as old tapestry weavers in his colour gradations and passages from one scale to another.¹¹¹ The transitions going through the whole range of tonal scales, from one end of the spectrum to another are actually quite rare in Cézanne's oeuvre. One of the best examples of a painting technique that consciously tries to illustrate the "rainbow" gradations, not in a continuous fashion, but using the method recommended by Chevreul, can be found in the above-mentioned Rocks at l'Estaque (V.404), Fig. 12. Among the older tapestries, the ones that present a striking similarity with Cézanne's paintings, are the 18th century French tapestries. The modelling of the reliefs of the terrain in the paintings done at Estaque in the early 1880s, is similar for example to that in Boucher's tapestry Chinese Fishing Party - Fig. 14 - woven in silk at Beauvais in 1758.¹¹² There is no optical mixing of contrasting tones

in Boucher, as we often find in Cézanne's parallel brushstrokes, since Boucher did not have the benefit of Chevreul's research and advice. Chevreul did recommend such a method which meant employing alternating thin bands of two hues in order to obtain (when seen from a distance) a third one.¹¹³ The method is also illustrated in Charles Blanc's Grammaire des arts du dessin, as an alternative to the pointillistic method of obtaining optical mixing of colours, which as we know was the solution adopted by Seurat.¹¹⁴ The fact that Cézanne's parallel, "constructive strokes" as they were called by Reff, follow a diagonal direction, instead of vertical as in tapestry is irrelevant.¹¹⁵ As a matter of fact later Cézanne abandoned this diagonal direction (it is seen in the painting of the 1890s mainly in foliage, and even then it does not have the same angle of inclination all-over) of brushstrokes that have the same inclination everywhere on the surface of the canvas. The earliest landscape that we know, in which the regular, one direction only, parallel brushstrokes cover the entire canvas practically is Le Château de Médan (V.325) of 1880.¹¹⁶ This painting used to be in the possession of Gauguin, and from its description it seems to be the one Gauguin compared later with "Oriental silks."¹¹⁷ This comparison is not just a figure of speech. Gauguin, like Seurat and his circle, was very much interested in the mid-1880s in what Signac called "the Oriental tradition" (coloristic tradition in tissues and ceramics) praised by Ch. Blanc.¹¹⁸ They all read Ch. Blanc's Grammaire des arts du dessin as far as we know, and probably his studies on Délaacroix, as well as the Grammaire des arts décoratifs.

(Gauguin especially, while working in Chapelet's ceramics workshop), in which he raved about the "instinctive" knowledge of the laws of colour evident in Oriental tissues and ceramics. Blanc specifically referred to optical mixing of colours, and to the ability to make even apparently uniform monochrome surfaces "vibrate" through "modulations" of tone.¹¹⁹ Cézanne must have read at least Blanc's writings on Delacroix, because of his interest in that painter, and probably the others too.¹²⁰

Eighteenth century French tapestry (from a period when Chinese silk tapestries and other tissues were very popular) also exhibits beautiful colour modulations, as is evident for example in a detail from Les amusements de la Campagne:

L'Abreuvoir by François Casanova (Beauvais, 1772) - Fig. 15.

Cézanne's paintings of the early 1880s can be considered as his most "synthetic" ones. They are the ones in which the parallel brushstrokes "units" cover the canvas almost entirely, regardless of the specific texture of the objects represented in it, and regardless of the type of subject-matter (landscape, still life, bather composition - such as for example Three Bathing Women now in Petit Palais, Paris, V.381, which Matisse owned). They look like close-ups of tapestry details in which the regular texture (unifying element) shows. This "Synthetism" of Cézanne, as Denis mentioned, influenced Gauguin and could be related to the "decorative" side of Symbolism. Cloisonism is after all only a form, a variant of Synthetism, and it is possible Gauguin would not even had tried that variant in painting if not for Bernard. Bernard himself was influenced in his Cloisonism by Cézanne's earlier paintings, as well as the ones

in the 1880s, as is evident from his Still-Life with Tobacco Pot of 1877 - Fig. 3. In any event, the Symbolists paid tribute to both Puvis and Cézanne, since as Charles Morice pointed out, both applied decoration principles to easel painting.¹²¹ The difference resides only with the specific decorative art they took as model: Puvis - pre-Renaissance fresco painting, Cézanne-tapestry, the Cloisonnists - cloisonnée work or stained glass windows.

As opposed to the Symbolists, even if Cézanne's paintings were "Synthetic," they were not completely artificial, not supernatural. Cézanne's colour is not "symbolic" (even when a painting is all bluish, he can justify this by the "feeling of air"), his landscapes are plausible, they look and have the colour of Provence. Later in the 1880s (around 1885) he might have been influenced by the idea that tapestry imitation in liquid colours can lead to a new kind of decorative painting. This idea has been expounded in a book by the painter-decorator Julien Godon, La Peinture sur toile et son application à la décoration intérieure.¹²² In paintings such as Aix, Rocky Landscape, in the National Gallery in London (V.491, c.1887), or Viaduct and Big Trees (V.452, 1885-87) in the Metropolitan, - Fig. 16, Cézanne began to use a technique similar to the one used in watercolours. His paint is diluted for this purpose. Instead of the commercial liquid colours, specially prepared for this kind of painting (such as the ones advertised by Lechertier, Barbe, & Co. in the 1879 English translation of Godon's book), Godon suggested also the use of the regular oil colours, mixed with essence of turpentine. It is known

that Cézanne used this procedure.¹²³ Godon specified that for those familiar with watercolour technique, "the use of liquid colours would be simply a game."¹²⁴ Cézanne mastered watercolour technique early in his career. There is a series of oil landscapes painted in this technique, which does not reveal so much the close-up texture of a tapestry as the earlier paintings, but give more the aspect of a tapestry seen from a distance, in its order and clarity. As in tapestry, this orderly aspect is largely due to the creation of "shadow-paths" along broken contours.¹²⁵ In tapestry the broken contours appear due to its specific method of fabrication. (Even without an outlining of the contours, a tapestry gives the impression of outlining shapes with a lost-and-found contour, due to its slits.)

In a painting like the Mount Sainte-Victoire with Viaduct and Big Trees - Fig. 16, Cézanne avoided the effect of linear perspective by using a "bird's eye view" as in Japanese prints. The use of Oriental perspective was recommended by Charles Blanc for tapestry in his Grammaire des arts décoratifs.

The "tapestry paradigm" continues to fit Cézanne's paintings all through the 1890s, especially in the landscapes. For other subject-matter it is more appropriate to speak of a "decoration paradigm" in general. The squarish patches and hatching, that can be connected with the look of tapestry, were too rigid and lifeless to render a fruit or human flesh. In the 1880s Cézanne did use the same technique, however, regardless of the subject-matter (compare for example Fig. 8 and Fig. 12). In the 1890s, as we have seen in Chapter I, Part 2 ("D"), there was a trend toward a return to "life." As early as 1893,

the prestigious journal L'Artiste (which was leaning toward the juste milieu), while welcoming the new preoccupation with "Style" (related to Corot and Poussin) was in tune with other anti-Symbolist reactions in considering the "ideist" painters too remote from life and nature. R. Bouyer declared:

...si le réalisme à outrance nous a donné la nostalgie du style, les paysagistes du décor symbolique auront sans doute à compter avec les brutales révoltes de la nature mortifiée. 126

Bouyer also pointed out that Nicolas Poussin, "...ce génie, bien méconnue en effet, loin de tyranniser l'art, a réhabilité la nature, vivifiant par le coeur la glaciale convention des Bolonais." ¹²⁷ The writer also mentioned Poussin's passionate interest of his youth in the "Venetian colorists."

Among the landscapes of the late 1890s, I shall choose for discussion the Baltimore Ste-Victoire seen from Bibemus, (V.766, c. 1898-1900; c.1837 according to Rewald) - Fig. 17. The tapestry effect is striking. It is due to an arbitrary distribution of light and shade that creates an even lightness. The whole painting appears to be coloured in a high key, since the broken tones are sparingly used and uniformly distributed on the painting's surface. The artificial light of the picture recalls the "inner light" of the Beauvais tapestries. ¹²⁸ The particular look of tapestry is enhanced by the squarish patches of a fairly large size, in related hues of reds or brown-reds that modulate the basic orange-ochre local colour of the quarry. Cézanne has reserved the method of hatching for the middle-ground foliage in particular, for a shimmering effect. As in the tapestry, the fine hatching lines help the passage

of colour, the transition necessary in gradations. Instead of relying so much on contrast of hues as on the Neo-Impressionists (or even as the Impressionists, in a less scientific way), Cézanne used gradations of hues that are close in the chromatic circle, and through intermediate transitions, or "passages," went from one tonal scale to another.¹²⁹ This is not to say he did not use complementary hues next to each other. In the *Bibemus* painting he used the contrast orange-blue intensively, but in large areas of flat colour as for example in the orange going all along the contour of the mountain (contour emphasized in Prussian blue) contrasting with the blue of the sky. The sky itself is "modulated" (according to Blanc's recommendations about making seemingly flat colour "vibrate") and there are orange touches in it. This "orange" is the basic hue of the quarry in which areas of blue are used for modelling, as well as to give "a feeling of air", and also because a repetition of the same hue all over the surface of the painting contributes to the unity of effect. The latter is a "trick" recommended by manuals on decoration.¹³⁰

Colour balance throughout the picture area was very important to Cézanne. Often whole pictures were built up on a basic colour note (blue, blue-green, reddish-brown ochre, etc.), a key note as in music, to which he added "modulations." A good example is Rocks in the Forest (V.673,c.1894) which has an overall and dull purple tonality, the same way an old Gobelin tapestry has a reddish tonality. Darcel's description of Cazin's landscapes in 1882 would also fit this painting. Talking about the "unity of coloration, which is already one of the

conditions required by ornamental painting," Darcel said about Cazin's paintings exhibited at the Salon of decorative arts that the Union Centrale organized that year:

Ce sont d'exquises symphonies dans le gris, comme certains morceaux de musique de chambre où Mozart se complait à entourer un thème discret de modulations charmantes; 131

In fact, Cézanne's landscapes correspond better with Darcel's concept of decorative painting, since they have the architectural structuring, which the critic regretfully noticed was missing in Cazin's works.¹³²

Returning to the Bibemus picture taken as prototype, it is evident that another feature contributing to the unity and clarity of the whole, is the outlining of the contours, which also works to abolish the effects of aerial perspective. For example, the mountain, even though its bluish coloring allows for a "feeling of air," is brought closer to the viewer by the dark blue outline. (it is also made to appear closer by a play on shapes: the mountain slope is symmetrical with the foliage profile in the right hand tree.) The contours in Cézanne's paintings are not uninterrupted, because he did not want his picture to be completely flat, but to have the aspect of a bas-relief. The broken contours (which as I already mentioned appear also in tapestry because of its specific method of fabrication) allow for "passages" between different planes. There is almost no depth in this picture, and without these passages allowed by the openings in the firm outlines, the planes would "fall on top of each other."¹³³

It seems that in this painting Cézanne followed a suggestion Ch. Blanc made for tapestry models, namely to avoid the

effect of linear perspective by using Chinese perspective (Blanc even reproduced a Chinese hanging in his book).¹³⁴ In Chinese paintings and tapestries, mountains are piled up in overlapping planes, the same way here Sainte-Victoire, raised higher than its natural position, is piled up on top of the cliff. Liliane Brion Guerry noticed in the 1940s that in this painting (as well as in V.663, in Moscow and V.666, in Cleveland, also painted in the 1890s), Cézanne used a spatial conception similar to that of Chinese painters, but she did not think of this as to be more than a coincidence, since she believed what Gasquet said.¹³⁵

As indicated in Chapter I, Part 2, the look of tapestry, carpets, the imitation of various textures and materials in painting was very much in fashion in the last years of the 19th century. It is possible that now Cézanne (who, as we know, was interested in what the young generation of painters was doing) was receiving feed-back. The fact is that his paintings of this period display a variety of decorative patterns and textures, all very colourful, marking a change from the more sober, more "classical" ones of the late 1880s and early 1890s. For instance, one can compare Still Life with Peppermint Bottle of about 1890-92 (V.625) - Fig. 18, with Still Life with Apples and Oranges of the period 1895-1900 (V.732) - Fig. 19. The first one, painted in a "cold" tonality displays simple, pure lines (including the arabesques on the cloth), more regular, geometrical shapes, more equilibrium. The second one appeals more to the senses. Also, its Oriental perspective, the tilted planes, are even more suitable for decoration.

Gauguin's comparison of Cézanne's paintings with "Oriental silks" can be best illustrated, perhaps, with another painting of this period, The Red Rock (V.776, 1895-1900) - Fig. 20. It looks like French imitation of Chinese silks - Taffetas Chinés, of the Rococo period, and it is a good illustration of the method of colour modulations Cézanne reserved now for foliage or for modulating slight reliefs of rocks or terrain. For backgrounds, figures, fruit and various objects he used the method similar to the one used in the flambé ceramics (by Chapelet for example, who was inspired by similar Chinese pottery).¹³⁶ In fact many of his figures, such as in Cardplayers, Smokers (V.684, c.1895 is a good example), Bathers, or fruit in his Still Lifes take the aspect of solid ceramics, a fact praised by his contemporary critics.

At the Salon d'Automne of 1904 "pure painting" set the tone and Cézanne, as we have seen, was praised or blamed, depending on the position of the critic, for the direction painting was taking. As if to respond to criticism, between 1904-1906 (the last years of his life) Cézanne painted a series of painting with Mont Sainte-Victoire, which are more "abstract" than anything he had painted before, and in which the preoccupation with texture is very pronounced. In some of them he reintroduced the heavy impasto of his much earlier paintings (which now were seen and appreciated largely because of this feature). I believe as Venturi did that this late series of Sainte-Victoire views were all painted in the last couple of years, even though lately some of them have been assigned to the period 1902-1906, for no obvious reason.¹³⁷ I am referring to the eight paintings

listed in Venturi catalog as: V.798-V.804 and V.1529, as well as to Mont Sainte-Victoire seen from Les Lauves in the Estate of Henry Pearlman, New York. These are the paintings for which Cézanne felt compelled to justify his "abstractions" to Bernard, blaming them on his old age vision.¹³⁸ The letter to Bernard was probably triggered by a previous enquiry from the part of the younger painter who was against this materialistic "pure painting," and who may also have felt that Cézanne was not practising what he was preaching in respect with the art/nature relationship. The fact is that a painting like the Sainte-Victoire now in a private collection in Switzerland (V.802) - Fig.21 is akin to Vuillard's paintings of about the same period, admired at the Salon d'Automne in 1904 for the "preciosity of the weft," for the aspect of expensive tissue, and which were considered as very suitable for the decoration of modern apartments.¹³⁹ No wonder that M. Denis, who saw one of the Sainte-Victoire paintings on Cézanne's easel in 1906 (the one which appears on the photograph he took and used for his painting Cézanne "on the Motif" - Fig.22; it is probably V.803), was forced to admit that Cézanne's work, just like Vuillard's, was "pure painting."¹⁴⁰ This particular painting (V.803, Mount Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves, c. 1906, Pushkin Mus., Moscow), while emphasizing texture (in impasto), does not have the structured, orderly, tapestry-like texture of other paintings of the same "motif," such as for example the one in Zurich - Fig.21. The painting in Zurich exhibits on a much larger surface of the painting the same pattern of squarish patches Cézanne used earlier in the middle ground

of the Metropolitan Sainte-Victoire - Fig. 16.

With the painting seen by Denis it would seem Cézanne became even more "anarchistic" (to use Denis' own language), no doubt to the younger painter's disappointment. In fact because of his painting, and previous friendship with Zola, Cézanne was even labelled as Dreyfussist in 1903.¹⁴¹ Cézanne did nothing to earn this label, as we already know. On the other hand if we find "classical" order in Cézanne's painting, it is not because of his allegiance to the reactionary Neo-Classical movement to which Denis belonged. In fact, with the exception of the Great Bathers in Philadelphia, V.719, Cézanne's paintings in his last decade exhibit far less classical order than the paintings of the 1880s. Cézanne was always on the side of the art for art's sake, without literature, without moral, without propagandistic ends. By the end of his life he was disillusioned with Catholic priests ("I think that to be a Catholic one must be devoid of all sense of justice, but have a good eye for one's interests"¹⁴²) as well as with the intellectuals of his region.¹⁴³ He even wrote to Bernard in 1905 that "the humble and colossal Pissarro finds himself justified in his anarchistic theories," when exasperated by Bernard's reminiscences of museums (which Pissarro would have liked to see burned down).¹⁴⁴ The classical order Cézanne introduced into his paintings was related to the concept of "decorative," or "art for art's sake" painting of the 1880s and early 1890s.

Conclusions.

It is evident that the avant-garde's orientation toward

the "decorative" (even toward "decoration"), that characterizes French painting from the 1860s until the appearance of Cubism, is related to the artists' desire to produce "art for art's sake." In this respect, Cézanne was no exception. In order to understand better Cézanne's position with respect to the avant-garde movements of his time: Impressionism (of the 1870s), Neo-Impressionism, Symbolism ("Symbolism-Synthetism"), "pure painting" (late 1890s - early 1900s), as well as to Neo-Classicism (which was not an avant-garde movement originally but, in my opinion, later influenced avant-garde painting), we have to be aware that there were essentially two parallel approaches toward the "decorative" or "art for art's sake," corresponding respectively to a Materialist or an Idealist philosophy. In a materialistic framework, "decorative" painting is "external" and its purpose is to give pleasure to the eye. In an idealistic system of reference, "decorative" painting, while still "art for art's sake" in the sense that it denies the importance of the subject-matter (even though this is always of significance), and especially because it does not "express" emotions through the subject-matter, does contain an "Idea." It is even "painting of the soul," and it borrows the formalism of "decoration" in order to project the idealist content. Symbolist painting is such "art for art's sake" defined in an idealist framework. Impressionism was "art for art's sake" defined solely within a philosophically materialist system. It was also "decorative" without being "decoration," again in the "materialistic" acceptance of the term "decorative." Both Impressionism (I emphasize again, I am referring only to the Impressionism of the

1870s, tied to Naturalism) and Symbolism were concerned with "expression." They did not express by means of subject-matter (i.e. moving stories, facial expression, gestures), but relied instead upon the formal elements of the painting. Impressionism allowed for the expression of personal "temperament" (which was a physiologically determined characteristic) through "touch," movement of the pâte. Symbolism used symbolic colour, expressive line, distortions of shapes, in order to express ideas, personal "dreams," the "soul." Such distortions were added to the necessary distortions required by the laws of decoration. (As Maurice Denis put it, they used "objective" and "subjective" deformations; this thesis is not concerned with the "subjective" distortions.)

Apart from such movements, clearly on the side of Materialism or Idealism, there were others, which took the real, external world as object of representation, but rejected a purely "materialistic" approach to painting. Such a movement was Neo-Impressionism which rejected the empiricism of Naturalism, used the theoretical side of science (as recommended by such Idealist aestheticians as Charles Blanc), and eventually adopted the formalism of decoration. Cézanne, in my opinion, fits roughly into the same category (taking into account of course the difference in technique reflecting Cézanne's concern with gradation of colour and preserving the local colour, rather than optical mixing and recomposing light). He also followed the same path as such old "Impressionists" as Renoir (or even Pissarro) in the 1880s, in his orientation toward composition and Style. Unlike him, however, they remained only "decorative" (using the new

meaning of the word, which at the time had "classicist" flavor). This thesis proposes that Cézanne reacted more strongly against Naturalism, adopting the principles of "decoration." In this respect, the present writer rallies with Cézanne's contemporaries who regarded him (together with Puvis de Chavannes) as an "initiator" in using the principles of decoration in easel painting.

Cézanne was not part of the reactionary Neo-Classicist movement (to which Emile Bernard and Maurice Denis belonged) at the turn of the century. The "Classicism" in his work dates from an earlier period, and reflects the concept of the "decorative" predominant in the 1880s and early 1890s. In the last years of his life, Cézanne was more affiliated with the "pure painting" tendency, which was based on the "materialistic" acceptance of "art for art's sake," and it was a "descendent" of Cézanne's own painting of the 1860s and early 1870s, as well as of Impressionism. The novelty was the connection of this painting with the decorative arts (flatness, imitation of textures, emphasis on patterns).

To conclude, if Cézanne is placed in his historical context, it is apparent to the present writer, that the painter of Aix was part of the movement that introduced the aesthetics of "decoration" into easel painting.

NOTES

Introduction

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," Sense and Non-Sense, tr Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus, Evanston Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1961, pp.9-25. (Translated from Sens et non-sens, Paris, 1948.) Merleau-Ponty considered that Cézanne's perspective is one we actually perceive, it is "the lived perspective." He relied heavily on Emile Bernard's fabricated "Conversation with Cézanne," published first in 1920.

² Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, Cubism, 1912, in Robert Herbert, ed., Modern Artists on Art, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965, p.5.

³ Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, The Rise of Cubism, in H.B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, Univ. of California Press, 1973, p.248.

In 1908 or 1909, Braque was still saying: "Nature is a mere pretext for a decorative composition, plus sentiment." (See Chipp, op. cit., p.260.)

⁴ See H.B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, pp.255-57.

⁵ See for example Richard A. Moore, "Academic Dessin Theory in France after the Reorganization of 1863," Journal of The Society of Architectural Historians, 56, 1977, p.156 and pp.160-1.

Both the dessin géométral and the dessin perspectif were part of the traditional dessin teaching, which, as Moore pointed out, imposed itself at all levels of art education, by late 1890s - early 1880s in France. The dessin géométral was important especially for architects, decorative artists, artisans, craftsmen. It enabled them to see the objects "as they actually were," with the help of the science of geometry. How can a draftsman give us the idea of a lamp or a hat, asked the influential aesthetician and art historian Charles Blanc if he does not know himself the "real construction" of those objects, that is their geometric form? He stated: "La géométrie fait connaître les objets tels qu'ils sont, et la perspective les fait voir tels qu'ils paraissent être." (My emphasis.) Blanc added:

Si la réalité n'est pas sue, l'apparence sera fausse. La perspective n'étant qu'une alteration visuelle, indépendante de l'objet lui-même, l'élève ne saura pas se rendre compte de cette altération et le faire sentir aux autres, s'il ne possède pas une idée précise de l'objet non altéré.

(Ch. Blanc, "L'Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l'industrie," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.1, Vol.19, 1965, p.211.)

⁶ See D.-H. Kahnweiler, in H.B. Chipp, Theories ..., p.255.

⁷ For this "genealogy" see Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, Cubism, in R. Herbert, Modern Artists on Art, pp.3-4.

⁸ William Rubin, "Cézannisme and the Beginnings of Cubism," Cézanne. The Late Work, M O M A, N.Y, 1977, pp.162-165.

⁹ George Heard Hamilton, "Cézanne and His Critics," Cézanne. The Late Work, p.147.

¹⁰ More than thirty years ago, Clement Greenberg remarked on Cézanne's preoccupation with a "decorative surface effect," but he, also, considered "plasticity" and "decoration" as totally opposed. (See Clement Greenberg, "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art," Partisan Review, May-June 1951, p.327.)

¹¹ By "Impressionism" I mean only the movement in the 1870s.

¹² A case in point is George L. Mauner, The Nabis: Their History and Their Art, 1888-1896, New York and London: Garland Publ. Inc., 1978.

Chapter I, Introduction

¹ See for example:

- John H. Neff, "Matisse and Decoration: an Introduction," Arts Magazine, May 1975, pp.59-61.
- Joseph Masheck, "The Carpet Paradigm: Critical Prolegomena to a Theory of Flatness," Arts Magazine, Vol.51, Sept.1976, pp.81-109.
- Norma Broude, "Miriam Schapiro and Femmage : Reflections on the Conflict Between Decoration and Abstraction in Twentieth - Century Art," Arts Magazine, Feb.1980, pp.83-87.
- Nancy J. Troy, "Abstraction, Decoration and Collage," Arts Magazine, June 1980, pp.154-57.
- Avigdor Arikha, "On Abstraction," Arts Magazine, Oct.1980, p.154.

² This is not the only reason why Cézanne was excluded from their discussion. One important reason is the viewing of Cézanne as "perceptual".

In the context of "flatness" the relationship between abstract art and decoration becomes straightforward. A "carpet paradigm" (see Masheck, in the above note) applied to the art of the Nabis, or even Gauguin is also an appropriate association. Of course, the tension between 2-D and 3-D in Cézanne's work does not fit this paradigm.

Chapter I, Part 1

³ At first there was no distinction between the terms "industrial arts" and "decorative arts," between mass-produced objects (by machines) and individually created objects (manually) by artisans or artists. (See also Pierre Vaisse, "La querelle de la Tapisserie au début de la III République," Revue de l'Art, No.22, 1973, p.74.)

In 1875, Ed. Didron talked for example of "Ces expressions spéciales du dessin que l'on est convenue d'appeler les arts industriels, la peinture sur verre, la mosaïque et la tapisserie, par exemple..." (Ed Didron, "Du rôle décoratif de la peinture en mosaïque," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.11, 1975, p.449.) In 1889, Victor Champier (director of the Revue des Arts Décoratifs) considered the use of the expression "industrial works" as deplorable when employed to works done by renowned painters and sculptors, themselves. (V. Champier, "Les Arts Décoratifs au Salon de 1889," Revue des Arts Décoratifs, Vol.9 1888/1889, p.348.)

⁴ See n.73.

⁵ See Nikolaus Pevsner, Pioneers of Modern Design, 1936; rpt. Penguin Books, 1979, pp.46-8.

⁶ See Nikolaus Pevsner, Academies of art, past and present, Cambridge (Engl.): The University Press; New York: Macmillan, 1940, pp.253-5.

⁷ Ibid., p.254.

⁸ See for example Robert Schmutzler, Art Nouveau, New York, 1978, p.33.

⁹ Quoted in Elisabeth Gilmore Holt, The Art of all Nations: 1850-73. The Emerging Role of Exhibition and Critics, Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1981, p.477.

¹⁰ See Martin Battersby, Art Nouveau, Middlesex, Paul Hamlyn Publ., 1969, p.7. For the 1851 exhibition see also E.G. Holt, The Art of all Nations..., pp.49-59.

¹¹ Quoted in Albert Boime, "The Teaching Reforms of 1863 and the Origins of Modernism in France," The Art Quarterly, New Series, Vol.1, No.1, Autumn 1977, p.32, n.79.

¹² See the text of the Decree in "DECRET concernant l'organisation de l'Ecole impériale et spéciale des Beaux-Arts," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.15, 1863, pp.569-72.

¹³ Albert Boime, "The Teaching Reforms..." Art Quarterly, Autumn 1977, pp.1-39.

¹⁴ Comte de Nieuwerkerke, "Rapport," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.15, 1863, p.565.

¹⁵ Quoted in A. Boime, 1977, p.19.

¹⁶ See also for the distinction to be made between "Official" and "Academic," Albert Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1971, pp.15 ff.

¹⁷ Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, "First Lecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 1864," Architectural Design, Vol.50, No.3/4, 1980, p.20. In this lecture Viollet-le-Duc dealt with the influence of religious ideals on Hindu and Greek art.

Viollet-le-Duc was born in 1814, the son of a civil servant, whose job connected with the royal palaces compelled the family to reside for a while in the Tuileries, until the abduction of Louis-Philippe. His mother was the sister of the critic Etienne Delécluze, who was anti-clerical, and who had a considerable influence on his nephew. E. Viollet-le-Duc himself was an agnostic and against the established church. His own political views brought him to the barricades of July 1830 (he built one) in his youth. In his mature life he was associated with Napoleon III's court, was condemned to death by the Communards, and in the first years of the Third Republic he was an ardent Republican, until his death in 1879.

18 See for example René Briat, "Viollet-le-Duc décorateur au Château d'Eu," Connaissances Artistiques, No.335, Jan.1980, pp.40-45.

19 For Eugène Grasset see also Ch.I, Part 2, n.127. For Galland see Victor Champier, "M.P.-V. Galland et l'enseignement de l'art décoratif," Part I in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.37, 1888, pp.105-17 and Part II in Gazette..., Vol.38, 1888, pp.5-20. See also A. Boime, "The Teaching Reforms..." Art Quarterly, Autumn 1977, p.34, n.114.

Galland was a painter-decorator who was also a member of the commission for perfecting the Sèvres manufactories and director of the Gobelins' schools and art works.

20 Charles Blanc (1813-1882), who held official functions, became also a free member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1868 and was elected member of the Académie française in 1876. His official functions were Director of Beaux-Arts in two governments: the provisional government of 1848, in which his brother, the socialist Louis Blanc was Minister of Labor, and again after the proclamation of the Third Republic on September 4, 1870 until Thiers' resignation on May 24, 1873. He did not approve of Thiers' politics (according to Louis Fiaoux, Charles Blanc, 3^d vol. in the series "Portraits Politiques Contemporains," Marpon & Flammarion ed, Paris, 1882) since he had a close relationship with his brother Louis Blanc and shared his views. It is said (op.cit., p.50) he declared: "Ils ont eu beau m'élire académicien, je n'en suis pas moins socialiste révolutionnaire!" After Thiers' fall Ch. Blanc became the prey of the reactionary press, and the new conservative government ordered him to resign. The Marquis de Chennevières took his place as Director of Beaux-Arts. During the Second Empire Ch. Blanc stayed away from any governmental positions, even though it has been suggested he could have easily held one, because of his good relations with Princess Mathilde Bonaparte and even with Louis Napoléon. These relations have been explained by the fact that the Princess intervened in favor of Blanc's wife who was arrested after the events of June 1849 when she could not hide her sympathies. But it was not just out of gratitude that the "socialist revolutionary" Blanc actually supported some of Napoleon III's policies, especially where industrial arts were concerned. He believed that history (social and artistic) is accomplished by "great men" and probably hoped the Emperor (who after all once was a "republican" and after 1859 adopted more liberal policies) was such a man. He believed in "grandeur of art" and once said:

Les seules formes de gouvernement qui aient été favorables à la grandeur de l'art ce sont les monarchies pures ou les démocraties vigoureuses, avec cette différence que les premières ont fait de l'art un esclave ou un flatteur, tandis que les autres lui ont fourni presque toujours une besogne héroïque.

(Quoted in L.Fiaoux, Charles Blanc, p.30)

Charles Blanc was an influential art historian and aesthetician. He was the author of the Grammaire des arts du dessin that was first published in 1867 and went through four editions by the

time of his death in 1882. He also published the sequel, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, as well as several volumes of the Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles. He published extensively in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts, which he founded.

Blanc is a paradoxical figure in the history of art. He was hated by his fellow-Academicians for his political views, and by the avant-garde for some of his "retrograde" views on art. Yet he indirectly influenced the development of modern art, because the avant-garde made use of his writings, which were up-to-date with respect to the latest scientific theories applicable to art, as well as other topics.

Blanc was an adept of Idealist philosophies. He was a "free-thinker" who was a "spiritualist," he used often the word "God" while saying "above all I don't want a priest at my death-bed" and had a funeral without one in 1882.

21 Blanc was also a propagandist of the Academic teaching methods of dessin, and in his second term as Director of Beaux-Arts he reintroduced the Prix-de-Rome competition abolished by the Decree of 1863.

22 See Charles Blanc, "Salon de 1866," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.1, Vol.20, 1866, p.500.

23 In the Grammaire des arts du dessin (1867, p.616) Blanc wrote:

Le peintre peut travailler pour les jouissances égoïstes d'un homme ou pour les plaisirs de tout un peuple. Mais, à mesure que son ouvrage s'ennoblit par le nombre, des spectateurs qui en jouiront, les surfaces où il doit exercer son génie deviennent plus vastes et plus solides...

La peinture murale, celle qui décore les grands édifices, est donc par elle-même la plus haute destination de l'artiste, car en lui promettant une longue durée, elle lui commande une oeuvre qui en soit digne.

24 Ch. Blanc, "Salon de 1866," p.512.

25 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs: Décoration intérieure de la maison, Paris: Renouard, 1882. Most chapters were published earlier (in the 1870s) in the Gazette des Beaux-Arts.

26 See Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, 4th ed., 1882, p.2. See also Albert Cassagne, La théorie de l'art pour l'art chez les derniers romantiques et les premiers réalistes, Paris: Lucien Dorbon, 1905, reprinted in 1959, pp.38-39 on Victor Cousin. Cousin wrote in the Revue des Deux Mondes in 1845: "Il faut comprendre et aimer la morale pour la morale, la religion pour la religion, l'art pour l'art." (Quoted in Cassagne, op. cit., p.38.)

27 For Proudhon see Monroe C. Beardsley, Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present, The Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977 (first in 1966), p.301. For Blanc see above, n.20.

28 Blanc mentioned Lammennais, together with Cousin, in Grammaire ... dessin, 1882, p.2. For more information on Lamennais, see A. Cassagne, La théorie de l'art pour l'art, pp.51-52.

29 Quoted in A. Cassagne, La théorie de l'art pour l'art, p.51.

30 Ibid., p.52.

31 See Ch. Blanc, "L'Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués à l'industrie," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.1, Vol.19, 1965, p.193 and p.201.

32 In the methods of teaching and the curriculum adopted in art schools of all levels in the 1870s and 1880s, even in the professional ones, the Academic tradition was however perpetuated (especially in the teaching of dessin), due to the influence of Ch. Blanc and another official-Academician, the sculptor Eugène Guillaume (1822-1905, director of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts after the reorganization of 1963 - therefore when under direct Government control - and later, director of the French Academy at Rome).

33 See previous note. Because of this strong academic influence, industrial art education was not practical enough in France, was encumbered with a lot of theory and historicism. In 1888, Marius Vachon, who just conducted at the request of the French Government an investigation of art education (especially industrial art education) in several European countries, concluded that the ideas of Viollet-le-Duc, de Laborde, Mérimée, were better applied in other countries, especially in Belgium. He declared: "... the organization of our artistic and industrial education is a work of national defense of the same importance as the organization of our Army." (Some Industrial Art Schools in Europe and their lesson for the U.S., Transl. F.N. Levy, Washington Govm. Printing Office, 1923, p.23.)

34 See also p.17 and pp.20-21.

35 For the characteristic tendency of French artists to aspire toward the loftier levels of art, see for example Ernest Chesneau, L'Education de l'artiste, Paris: Charavay Frères, 1881, p.245. Chesneau remarked that in his days, painters and sculptors condescended to work for industry only when forced by material necessity. See also n.37.

36 Henry Nocq, Tendances Nouvelles. Enquête sur l'évolution des industries d'art, Paris : Floury, 1896, p.196.

37 A special effort to attract writers and artists was made for example by France's leading anarchist-communist, Jean Grave and his La Révolte (1887-1894) or Les Temps Nouveaux (1895-1914). Pissarro, Signac, Cross, Angrand, Luce, contributed to the latter.

In 1893 L'Ermitage organized an inquiry, asking the following question: "quelle est la meilleure condition du Bien

social, une organisation libre et spontanée, ou bien une organisation disciplinée et méthodique? vers laquelle de ces conceptions sociales doivent aller les préférences de l'artiste?" The answer indicated a preference for anarchy, because it warranted the artist's freedom, and not for socialism - which meant too much organization and restrictions. (See Michel Décaudin, La Crise des Valeurs Symbolistes, Toulouse, 1960, p.21.)

38 Robert L. Herbert and Eugenia W. Herbert, "Artists and Anarchism: Unpublished Letters of Pissarro, Signac and others," Part I, Burlington Magazine, Vol.102, Nov.-Dec.1960, p.481.

39 Translated in L. Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Prentice-Hall, 1966, p.124.

40 Thus commenting on a brochure by Gustave Geffroy who was advocating creation of small neighborhood museums to educate the taste of the workers, Pissarro said,

This Geffroy is right, what is needed is a small scale Kensington Museum in each neighborhood. But I wonder whether this would be enough to educate the poor to a taste for art or love of it! As long as he has the capitalist and wretched wages to contend with, the worker will regard the beautiful with derision. ...It is the buyers we must educate.

(Camille Pissarro, Letters to His Son Lucien, ed. J. Rewald, N.Y., 1972, p.259.)

41 E. Chesneau, L'Education de l'artiste, p.425. Chesneau wrote:

Dieu merci, l'art français a de plus fières allures, il plane d'un vol plus haut et plus large au-dessus des statistiques de l'exploration commerciale. Voyez: il n'est si petit élève de l'Ecole nationale des arts décoratifs qui n'aspire à l'Ecole des beaux-arts, au prix de Rome.

42 See H. Nocq, Tendances Nouvelles, p.130.

43 In order to demonstrate that the difference in status between "decorative art" and "fine art" should not exist, Victor Champier argued that Raphael was not "a lesser artist when he executed the mural decoration in Vatican or tapestry compositions, than when he painted the Transfiguration." He considered that the decorative arts require the same amount of "cerebral" activity as high art, and protested "the adjective 'decorative' added to the word 'art'..." because it implied a hierarchy among arts was not justified. (See V. Champier, "M.P. -V. Galland...", Part I, 1888, pp.105-6.) See also n.3 above.

For the role of R. Marx in the creation of the section of decorative arts at the Salon held at Champ de Mars, see for example Camille Mauclair, "La réforme de l'art décoratif en France," La Nouvelle Revue, Vol.98, Jan.-Feb. 1896, p.737.

The prestigious journal L'Artiste supported the anti-

academic stand. Thus in reviewing sculpture and objets d'art at the Salon of Champ de Mars (L'Artiste, Vol.5, 1893, p.401) it criticized those established artists opposed to the new policy of exhibiting decorative arts: "Ou l'art finit-il? Ou l'industrie commence-t-elle? On dirait que pour eux, l'art dépend du procédé employé."

44 See Alfred Darcel, "Le Salon des arts décoratifs," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.2, Vol.25, 1882, pp.583-595.

45 I borrowed here an expression used by M.C. Beardsley in his Aesthetics, p.289. On the relationship between the avant-garde and the principle of "art for art's sake," see also Renato Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. G. Fitzgerald, Harvard Univ. Press, 1968, p.127.

46 Ernest Chesneau (1833-1890) was an art critic (he wrote for L'Artiste and the Constitutionnel) and art historian (see for example Les Chefs d'Ecole, 1862). He was concerned with the relations between art and society, art and nature - he was against historicism and traditional formulas, for a regeneration of art through direct observation of nature. He praised originality, individuality and nationalism and strongly protested against academic traditionalism and cosmopolitanism. (See his L'Education de l'artiste of 1881.) He was a protégé of the Comte de Nieuwerkerke, Superintendent of the Beaux-Arts (and Princess Mathilde's lover), thus to a great extent on the "official" side. See also E. Gilmore Holt, The Art of All Nations, 1981, pp.382-90, 486-90.

Henry Havard was an official of the Beaux-Arts administration, critic and authority on decoration, as well as art historian (l'Art hollandais).

47 See n.37. Chesneau feared that the commercial success of England will result in an imposition of the British "taste" in France, by Government decree. (See L'Education..., p.424.)

48 But Chesneau praised the "private initiative" which created the Union Centrale des Beaux-Arts appliqués a l'industrie and the Musée des Arts décoratifs. (L'Education..., pp.86-87 and 122.) He also advocated a reorganization of the general instruction in dessin.

49 In the early 1880s, even the complete title of Union Centrale was changed to Union Centrale des Arts décoratifs. (Compare to the title in the n.48.) See also n.3, above.

50 The decorative arts, as Chesneau related, did not try to express "an emotion of a moral order," but played with "combinations of the form and color for the pleasure of the eye." (See L'Education..., p.20.) This was the definition of "art for art's sake" in a materialist (philosophically speaking) framework only: an art addressing itself only to the senses. As I will indicate later, from an idealist stand, the formalism of "art for art's sake" addresses itself to the "spirit." During the 1880s and early 1890s, the most common slogan was that the decorative arts give pleasure to the eye and to the spirit.

- 51 Henry Havard, La Décoration, Paris: Charles Delagrave, n.d. (probably 1891 or 1892), p.6.
- 52 Paul Gauguin, letter to his wife, 26 Dec. 1886, Letters to his Wife and Friends, ed. M. Malingue, transl. H.J. Stenning, London: Saturn Press, 1948, pp.72-73.
- 53 "Lettre de Paul Gauguin," in H. Nocq, Tendancies Nouvelles, 1896, p.67.
- 54 See for example Henri Dorra, "Extraits de la correspondance d'Emile Bernard des débuts à la Rose-Croix (1876-1892)," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.6, Vol.96, pp.235-6.
- 55 See Charles Chassé, Les Nabis et leur temps, Lausanne - Paris: Bibl. des Arts, 1960, p.164. See also Post-Impressionism, London 1979-1980, p.31. Bernard took courses at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs before he entered Academy Cormon in 1885. Many artists considered this School of Decorative Arts as a stepping-stone on their way to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, or as Marius Vachon put it (see op.cit. in n.30, p.37), as "the hallway to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts."
- 56 See Henri Dorra, op.cit. (see n.54 above), p.238.
- 57 See George L. Mauner, The Nabis..., 1978, pp.161-162.
- 58 For a detailed account of the Nabis' decorations and of their patrons, see Roseline Bacau, "Décors d'appartements au temps des Nabis," Art de France, Vol.IV, 1964, pp.190-205. See also the chapter "Les Nabis et l'art décoratif" in Bonnard, Vuillard et les Nabis, Paris, June 8-Oct.2, 1955.
- 59 For this early support, see Roger Marx, "L'Art décoratif et les Symbolistes," Le Voltaire, 23 Aug. 1892, n.pag.
- 60 See P. Vaisse, "La querelle de la Tapisserie..." p.72. See also A. Darcel, "Les tapisseries décoratives," Revue des arts décoratifs, 2, 1881-82, p.12.
- 61 See P. Vaisse, "La querelle..." p.72.
- 62 Ibid., p.172 and pp.77-80.
- 63 My translation from the quote given by P. Vaisse, "La querelle..." p.72.
- 64 Alfred Darcel, "Exposition de l'histoire de la tapisserie," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.2, 14, 1876, pp.185-203; pp. 273-287; pp.414-437.
- 65 A. Darcel, "Exposition..." Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser. 2, Vol.14, 1876, p.185. My translation.
- 66 Ibid., p.420.

67 See for example Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, pp.106-112 and 94. See also A. Darcel, "Les tapisseries décoratives," p.12.

A. Darcel, in "Exposition de l'histoire de la tapisserie," 1876, p.432, talks about the public's and artists' admiration for the 18th century Rococo tapestries:

Certes, le public, comme les artistes, est séduit par la tonalité grise qui étend son harmonie sur toutes les tentures anciennes, surtout sur celles du XVIII^e siècle.

Darcel explains that "ce gris dont on parle tant aujourd'hui" could be obtained also using only bold colors, pure saturated hues, instead of using greyish tones (couleurs rabattues) and various nuances of gray. The procedure was based on the phenomenon of optical (additive) mixture of colors. It was the method developed by the tapissier Deyrolle around 1812, consisting of superposed wefts of complementary colors.

Pissarro and Cézanne expressed already in 1866 their interest in this grey tonality. (See P. Cézanne, letter to Pissarro, 23 Oct. 1866, Letters, N.Y. 1876, p.115.)

Edouard Gerspach, Darcel's successor at the administration of the Gobelins, between 1885-1893, made this comment about the "Don Quichotte" tapestry after the cartoons of Charles Coypel:

Voilà donc une tenture bien à nous; elle réunit toutes les séduisantes qualités de notre art décoratif dans sa plus aimable et plus délicate période.

(E. Gerspach, La Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins, Paris: Delagrave, 1892, p.43.)

Gerspach (loc. cit.) praised both the painters of that period for their models, and the tapissiers, who, ...ont compris le modèle à souhait, ils ont rendu le caractère sans se laisser entraîner dans des demi-teintes et des subtilités inutiles, ils se sont plus les lumières élargies; en un mot, ils ont, comme les peintres, fait oeuvre très française.

68 On the topic of "effect", see later, p. 40.

69 See Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des art décoratifs, pp.101, 103.

70 H. Havard, La Décoration, pp.10-11.

71 Ibid., p.10.

72 On the subject of modelling in tapestry, see also Ch.II, Part 2, n.105.

73 Quoted in P. Vaisse, "La querelle...", p.71. My translation.

74 For Darcel see A. Darcel, "Exposition...", 1876, p.426, and for Calmettes, see Fernand Calmettes, "La loi de la tapisserie," La Revue de l'art ancien et moderne, Vol.16, 1904, p.118.

75 The quote is from Georg German, Gothic Revival in Europe and Britain, Tr. G. Onn, 1972, p.135. For Didron's "principles," see Edouard Didron, "Du rôle décoratif de la peinture en mosaïque," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.11, 1875, p.450. Didron considered Raphael's tapestries as examples of "bad tapestries," because they were conceived as tableaux.

76 E. Viollet-le-Duc, Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française, xi^e-xvi^e siècles, 10 volumes, 1858-1868; rpt. Paris: Libr.- Imprim. Réunies, n.d., Vol.VII, p.58.

77 These movements were stronger in 1830s and 1840s. Similarly to Pugin, the Catholic Liberal politician Montalambert (1810-1870) said for example, that the artistic taste had been "false, ridiculous and pagan" ever since the Renaissance. (Quoted from Charles-René Forbes de Montalambert, OEuvres, VI: Mélanges d'art et de littérature, Paris, 1861, p.42, in G. German, Gothic Revival, p.79.) One of the most important early figures in the French Gothic Revival movement (the study of which, as German pointed out "is still in its infancy" - op. cit., p.78) was Alexandre (Louis-Joseph) de Laborde (1761-1839).

Even though Viollet-le-Duc advocated Gothic Revival more for nationalistic than religious reasons, he was in accordance with Lacordaire and his Dominican Revival (neo-Catholic) movement, especially with respect to rationalism and simplicity, even ascetism. (See Lucy MacClintock, "Monumentality versus suitability: Viollet-le-Duc's Saint Gimer at Carcassone," Journal of the Soc. Arch. Hist., XL, No.3, Oct.1981, 218-235.)

Michael Paul Driskel has written a book on the relation of the ideology of the neo-Catholic movement to the visual arts during the 1830s and 1840s, which is near completion.

78 See for example V. Champier, "M.P.-V. Galland...", Part II, 1888, p.10.

79 See Ch.I, Part 1, p.16.

80 For Havard, see Henry Havard, Histoire et philosophie des styles, Paris, 1900, pp.692-96. For Viollet-le-Duc, see his Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture..., Vol.VII, pp. 57-58. Later he wrote:

La peinture monumentale reprendra le rang qu'elle a occupé & qu'elle doit occuper dans l'architecture, lorsque les abus décoratifs de notre temps auront fatigué les yeux, lorsqu'en bien d'autres choses, - car tout se tient dans une société, - on en viendra à s'éprendre du vrai, du juste & du sensé, à mépriser le luxe impertinent comme un signe de décadence. (E. Viollet-le-Duc, in Peinture murales des chapelles de Notre Dame de Paris, Paris, 1876, p.14.)

By the "decorative abuses of our time" ("decorative" in a "materialist" sense) he meant the colorful, trompe-l'oeil decoration of Baroque-Romantic tradition. He declared that,

"les esprits ains éprouvent le besoin de revenir aux formes vraies, aux moyens simples, aux expressions nettes & définies." Viollet-le-Duc wanted a decoration in which "the idea detaches itself clearly."

81 E. Viollet-le-Duc, Dictionnaire..., Vol.VII, p.78. He also said (op.cit., p.62):

Ce n'était donc pas sans raison que les peintres du moyen age voyaient dans la peinture, soit qu'elle figurât des scènes, soit qu'elle ne se composât que d'ornements, une surface qui devait toujours paraître plane, solide, qui était destinée non à produire une illusion, mais une illusion, mais une harmonie.

82 E. Viollet-le-Duc, Dictionnaire..., Vol.VII, p.65.

83 Ibid. p.59. See also pp.63, 69, 70. He gives as best example the paintings in the Liget Chapel. Viollet-le-Duc's own mural painting in Notre Dame's chapels (Paris) is done according to these percepts.

84 H. Havard, L'Art dans la maison, Paris: Rouveyre et Blond, 1884, p.306.

85 Alphonse Germain, "Théorie des déformateurs. Exposé et réfutation," La Plume, No.57, Sept.1, 1891, p.290. My emphasis, and translation. See also Ch.I, Part 2, n.24 on Germain.

86 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1867, p.631 and 632. My translation.

See also H. Havard, La Décoration, p.3 and p.7, and Viollet-le-Duc, Dictionnaire..., Vol.VII, pp.62, 65.

87 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1882, p.66.

88 E. Viollet-le-Duc, Dictionnaire..., Vol.VII, p.61.

89 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1867, p.536.

90 On "effect" see also A. Boime, The Academy..., pp.27-30, 150-153, 166-173.

91 See Ch. Blanc, Grammaire...dessin, 1867, pp.543-44.

92 Ibid., p.590 and 586.

93 Alfred Darcel contributed to the Annales archéologiques (see p.27) and was a friend of the Gothic Revivalist architect Lassus. Roujon, the director of the Beaux-Arts, declared in his eulogy, at Darcel's death:

A l'exemple des Viollet-le-Duc, des Lassus, des Mérimée et des Quicherat, il contribua à remettre en honneur l'archéologie du moyen âge et de la Renaissance, et surtout notre

moyen âge français, si mal connu, si injustement dédaigné.

(See "La mort de M. Alfred Darcel," Revue des Arts Décoratifs, 13, 1892-1893, p.407.)

94 A. Darcel, "Le Salon des Arts Décoratifs," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Per.2, Vol.25, 1882, p.584. My emphasis.

95 Even for a tableau, by 1860s, apart from such orthodox academicians as Ingres, the question of finish was not a rigid criterion any more. It was strictly connected with "the touch" (la touche), which was considered a personal characteristic of the painter. There were no rigid rules of "finish," as they would interfere with the concept of "originality" (see A. Boime The Academy..., pp.172ff, and A. Boime, "The Teaching Reforms ...," pp.20-22). La touche, said Blanc, "c'est l'écriture du peintre, c'est la frappe de son esprit." (Grammaire...dessin, p.612.) As a very general rule, as a "loi du goût," he recommends "que la touch doit être large dans les grands ouvrages, et précieuse dans les petits" (op. cit., p.613). He cautions though that "Il n'est que les décorations de théâtre où la brosse puisse être maniée comme un balai." (Op. cit., p.614.) According to Blanc, in a small tableau, "Finir, c'est précisément dissimuler le fini, c'est l'animer par quelques touches expressives qui lui prêtent un air de franchise et de liberté." (Ibid.)

96 A. Darcel, "Le Salon...", 1882, p.584. My emphasis.

97 See also Ch.I, Part 1, n.3 and n.43.

98 V. Champier, "M. P.-V. Galland...", Part II, p.10.

99 Ibid., p.8.

100 Ibid., p.9.

101 Ibid. This did not mean it should be a difference in status.

102 H. Havard, La Décoration, p.3.

103 E. Chesneau, L'Education..., p.271. (This section of the book was written in 1872.) My emphasis.

104 Chesneau pointed out that "Art for art's sake was the doctrine of the Romantic School."

105 See E. Chesneau, L'Education..., pp.350-51. The materialistic connotation was translated in all these elements that, as Chesneau put it, "simulate life," such as:
...un adroit maniement de brosse, un habile tripotage de couleurs, les séduisants artifices de la palette, les harmonies du ton, les noirs profonds, les gris délicats, les vibrations alternées de la couleur dominante,

variée par mille rappels de notes émises dans la même tonalité, mais à différents degrés de l'échelle chromatique...

106 Ch. Blanc. "Salon de 1866," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.1, Vol.20, 1866, p.501. He said,
Les vieilles querelles du romantisme contre les classiques ne sont plus que de l'histoire, et s'il reste encore deux camps, celui du style et celui du réalisme, - on dit maintenant par euphonie naturalisme- les deux camps ont autant de voix l'un que l'autre dans le tribunal qui doit les juger...

My emphasis on "style." (The concept of "Style" will be discussed more later - Chapter I, Part 1, n.114.)

107 See Ch. Blanc. "Les fresques de Véronèse au Château de Masère pres de Trévisé," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.2, 1878, pp.396-98. Compare with V. Champier (see n.43), or Roger Ballu, "Les derniers travaux de peinture décorative à Paris," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.17, Jan.-June 1878, p.144.

108 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, p.118. He also said,

Si l'art n'était pas autre chose qu'une simple copie de la nature, il serait le plus souvent une tentative inutile, un pléonasme. C'est surtout dans l'art décoratif que cette vérité ce manifest.

(Op. cit, p.386.)

109 Ibid., p.386.

110 Ibid., p.387. For Blanc's discussion of colour symbolism, see "Grammaire des arts décoratifs," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.2, Vol.3, 1870, pp.524-528.

111 Roger Ballu, "Les derniers travaux de peinture décorative....," p.150.

112 A. Darcel, "Le Salon....," 1882, p.588. The contrary opinion was held by Antonin Proust, "Le Salon de 1882," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.25, 1882, p.534. A. Proust was for a short time minister of arts.

113 H. Havard, La Décoration, p.16.

114 "Style" (to be distinguished from "a style") was defined in Blanc's Grammaire as "typical truth":

Le style, c'est la vérité agrandie, simplifiée, dégagée de tous les détails insignifiants, rendue à son essence originelle, à son aspect typique.

(Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1882, p.532.)

Blanc clearly opposed "Style" to "imitation" (op.cit., pp.17-21). He considered realism an "imitation without selection" and he held the opinion that "where there is no selection

made, there is no art" (op.cit., p.18 and p.666, respectively). Academic painting used Style (le style) in order to "idealize" (see Grammaire, 1882, p.469). But this was the "idealizing" the Symbolist critic Aurier will criticise (see Ch.I, Part 2, Sec."B") as not being the expression of an idealist philosophy. Ch. Blanc (who actually expressed in many instances his idealist inclinations) presented in his book the Academic version of the "ideal." He declared that in painting, "far from being synonymous with the imaginary, the ideal is the concentration of truth, the essence of the real," and defined both "beauty" (le beau) and "style" (le style) as "the typical truth" (la vérité typique) - op.cit., p.65. In painting, "Style" meant a way of drawing that abbreviated and simplified in order to express the "character" of the subject (and Blanc emphasized that as opposed to sculpture, in painting expression is more important than beauty, and that allows even for expressing some ugliness - op.cit., p.66), usually in an idealized manner.

P.V. Galland, who advocated the use of motifs taken from Nature, long before the appearance of Art Nouveau, emphasized the importance of rendering the "character" in the decorative arts:

Le principe de l'art décoratif c'est la subordination à l'architecture. Nous n'avons pas à donner l'illusion de la vérité;...Mais il faut que l'interprétation que nous faisons subir à ces divers éléments soit toujours inspirée par la logique et guidée par le respect, l'amour de la nature. Remplaçons l'attait de la vérité dans le dessin, par le caractère de la silhouette et la largeur de la facture.

(Reproduced in V. Champier, "M.P.-V. Galland et l'enseignement de l'art décoratif," Part II, G.B.A., Vol.38, 1888, p.19.

Galland emphasized the necessity for "clarity" in decoration.)

In 1882, A. Darcel enumerated the "conditions of decorative painting" (meaning painting as "decoration") that included specific reference to "Style." (See Ch.I, Part 1, n.94.)

115 This was Ch. Blanc's position. He held the old academic theory about "line" being related to the intellect and "colour" to the heart (or as he put it, "The drawing is of masculine sex."- see Grammaire...dessin, 1867, p.22). He also believed in the irreconcilability of Style (related to Line) and Colour, which amounted to the belief that whenever the two elements are united, one of them is always dominant. (See Ch. Blanc, "Salon de 1866," G.B.A., Vol.20, 1866, pp.507, 508, 513.) Colour was supposed to be "the natural enemy of style, because it has the tendency to particularize that which the style wants to generalize." (Op.cit., p.507.) This was particularly true when bold, brilliant colours were used; colour had the tendency "to lessen" and "to materialize" that which was "elevated" and idealized by Style. (See op.cit., p.513.)

Of course, when Style is defined as "typical truth," with the understanding that this is extracted from the real,

external, world, there is no apparent reason why it should refer to drawing (line) only. In fact, later in the century, such prejudices will disappear. Already in 1893 critics such as R. Bouyer said: "C'est une erreur que de borner le style aux corrections de la ligne;" or vice versa, "La ligne n'est pas l'esclave du 'style noble' ." (Raymond Bouyer, "Le paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, July 1893, p.44.)

116 See Ch.I, Part 1, pp.34-35.

117 An abstract ornamental design, such as the "arabesque" for example, was addressed "to the spirit, to reason, without passing through the heart." (See Ch.I, Part 2, n.69.)

118 This is clearly expressed in H. Havard, La Décoration, p.19 :

Nous avons dit que le rôle d'une décoration bien comprise était, avant tout, de créer un plaisir pour les yeux en même temps qu'un repos pour l'esprit. Il faut, par conséquent, renoncer en principe à ces figurations qui simulent un effort persistant, et dont la contemplation ne manquerait pas de devenir fatigante à la longue.

Previously, Blanc wrote (Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, pp.96-98),

Si quelque part sont bien venues les fictions du poète et les personnages de convention et les couleurs de fantaisie, c'est assurément sur ces parois tissées qui doivent tout ensemble reposer la vue, intriguer l'imagination et, sans imposer aucune fatigue à l'esprit, le charmer par le vague même de leurs motifs et par l'indécision de leurs contours.

Chapter I, Part 2

¹ See Ch.I, Part 1, n.115, and also n.114 on Style.

² At the time also paintings, such as Corot's, were considered "decorative" because of their "architecture." Alfred Darcel, in "Le Salon des arts décoratifs," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.25, Per.2, 1882, p.591, said (when talking about Cazin's landscapes): "... mais elles n'ont point encore cette architecture des terrains et des plantes qui rendent si décoratives les moindres compositions de Corot." Raymond Bouyer ("Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, Aug.1893, p.119) also considered Corot "decorative," which for him meant in the same category with Poussin. See also n.75 below.

³ The expression "Idealist Renaissance" was used by the critic Georges Lecomte, "Salon des XX," L'Art Moderne, Vol.12, no.9, Feb. 1892, p.66.

⁴ In 1879 the Republicans achieved a majority in the French Senate. This year marks the end of the so called "Monarchist Republic," that is the defeat of the Right and the beginning of the "Republic of the Republicans."

⁵ See for example R.D. Anderson, France 1870-1914. Politics and Society, 1977, p.16, or Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times, 1974, pp.248-49.

⁶ C. Pissarro, letter of 13 May 1891, Letters to his Son Lucien, 1972, pp.170-71.

⁷ On the participation of the avant-garde in this "Idealist Renaissance" see for example Sven Loevgren, The Genesis of Modernism, 1971, Robert Goldwater, Symbolism, 1979, or H.R. Rookmaaker, Synthetist Art Theories, 1959.

The reasons of this participation varies from disgust with the materialism of the bourgeois society, to an affiliation with the Catholic Right because of personal conviction. One reason which should not be overlooked in the painters' case is what kind of art their patrons (the elite of amateurs) wanted, or they thought they wanted under the influence of "official" authorities in the field of aesthetics. The latter showed, as we have seen, a pronounced idealistic tendency.

⁸ After all, mysticism invaded the work of such "Salon Naturalists" as Bastien-Lepage and especially (since he lived longer) of his friend Dagnan-Bouveret. See for example Gabriel P. Weisberg, "P.A.J. Dagnan-Bouveret, Jules Bastien-Lepage, and the Naturalist Instinct," Arts Magazine, April 1982, p.76.

⁹ Mellerio included: the "Chromo-Luminarists" - by whom he meant the Neo-Impressionists, using their old names as well as the "Neo-Impressionists"- by whom he meant Schuffenecker, Toulouse-Lautrec, Ibels, Anquetin and Guillaumin, the "Synthetists"- "Sérusier, Vuillard, Bonnard, Ranson, Vallotton, as well as the "Mystics"- Denis, Bernard, Filiger. He added Puvis de Chavannes, Moreau, Redon, Gauguin, Cézanne and Van Gogh- as the artists from whom this Idealist Movement descended.

¹⁰ André Mellerio (Le Mouvement Idéaliste en Peinture, 1896, pp.9-10) gave the following definition of the "Idealist Movement" that took place in painting:

La tendance d'artistes cherchant à échapper à la contingence par l'inspiration et le mode d'expression.

En d'autre termes - tandis que le réaliste prend pour but final de reproduire la nature dans la sensation directe qu'elle fait éprouver - l'idéaliste ne veut y voir que le point de départ éloigné de son oeuvre. Tout réside pour lui dans la transformation cérébrale, entièrement subjective, que lui fait subir notre esprit. Il ne s'agit plus de sensation, c'est-à-dire de la chose perçue indépendamment de la volonté, mais de l'idée que nous en dégageons, pur concept que l'artiste cherchera à exprimer uniquement, sans se préoccuper des exactes objectivités qui en ont été la cause.

¹¹ There is a similarity with the neo-Catholic movement of the 1830 and 1840s with respect to the relationship between ideology and art. They demanded then, "mystical composition," "expression of a Symbol, not a material action," "interpretation of the idea and not the reproduction of a fact," and hieratic art. (See the quote from L'Artiste of 1841, in M.P. Driskel, "Icon and Narrative in the Art of Ingres," Arts Magazine, Dec. 1981, p.104.)

¹² Roger Marx, "Les Salons de 1895," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, 3^d Ser., Vol.14, 1895, p.24.

¹³ Ibid., pp. (22-23).

¹⁴ Ibid., p.23.

¹⁵ Roger Marx, "L'Art Décoratif et les 'Symbolistes,'" Le Voltaire, 23 Aug. 1892, n.p.

¹⁶ Maurice Denis, Theories, 1913, p.267, from his article "De Gauguin et de van Gogh au Classicisme," L'Occident, May 1909.

Denis at the time was interested in proving the continuity between Symbolism and Classicism, but he was not far from the truth. After all already in 1893 Bouyer called Puvis de Chavannes the "neo-Poussin of the fresco" (L'Artiste, Aug.1893, p.113) and talking about "the dreams noted down by Paul Gauguin," or about

...ces "peintres idéistes" qui ont les sympathies d'Alphonse Germain ou des Félix Fénéon, ces décorateurs larges et raffinés, comme alexandrins, qui font du Lac, de la Mer ou du Fleuve l'enveloppe d'un symbole.

he concluded:

C'est encore la synthèse qui réagit à son tour et à son heure contre le trompe-l'oeil; quand les toiles quelconques pullulent, le style redevient ce qu'il est: l'expression du choix, essence de l'Art.

Le souci du style dans le paysage rajeunira le paysage de style.

(L'Artiste, July 1893, pp.37-38.)

Bouyer also defined Style as "a voluntary convention related to the Idea" ("le Style, convention volontaire, s'attachant à l'Idée"). See L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, p.114.

17 See for example Gauguin's letter to Ch. Morice of July 1901 (Letters, pp.226-227) in which he describes the difference between himself and Puvis de Chavannes. Gauguin was still talking in 1901 in the Symbolist language of Mallarmé, who accepted only "allusion," "the image emanating from the dream which the objects excite," and who accepted only the "suggestion" of objects, since "to name an object is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem." (See the quote from J. Huret's Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire, 1891, p.60, in Post-Impressionism, London, 1979-1980, p.17.)

By comparison, the manuals of decoration such as Havard's La Décoration of 1892, while still talking about making concrete "the idea" and "the thought" (as opposed to an "external," superficial art of decoration that in a few years was to become the preponderant meaning of "the decorative"- see Mauclair's article of 1896 further on) banished all obscure allegories that could not be easily understood and required from the viewer an effort of the intelligence or a "tension of the spirit." (See Part 1, n. 118 and Havard, La Décoration, p. 16.)

18 In 1891 Mallarmé, said:

"...il n'y a pas de prose: il y a l'alphabet et puis des vers plus ou moins serrés: plus ou moins diffus."

(Stéphane Mallarmé, Oeuvres Complètes, Paris: 1945, p.867)

19 See n.16 above, and also Ch.1, Part 1, n.114, for "Style."

In his letter of 8 October 1888 to Schuffenecker, Gauguin wrote: "This year I have sacrificed all, execution and colouring, for Style, intending to compel myself to do something different from what I usually do." (M. Malingue ed., Paul Gauguin, Letters to his Wife and Friends, 1949, p.105.)

20 From "Notes inédites d'Emile Bernard sur le Symbolisme," in E. Bernard, 1868-1941. Peintures, Dessins, Gravures, Lille-Palais des Beaux-Arts, April 12 - June 12 1967, p.10. The no-

tes are not dated, but since he mentioned Denis' Theories, they are written after 1913.

21 See Ch.I, Part 1, p. and n.110.

22 Maurice Denis, beginning in 1890, stressed purely formalist means of expression, one of the most explicit instances being his article of 1895, "A propos de l'exposition d'A.Séguin," La Plume, March 1st (see Theories, p.22), where he said, referring to the painters "Synthetists or Symbolists":

Ils préféreraient l'expression par le décor, la forme, la couleur, la matière employée à l'expression par le sujet. Ce qu'ils exprimaient, c'était bien leur idéal, leur vision de la vie, leur émotion devant les choses; mais ils ne l'exprimaient que par des moyens pittoresques.

In his "Notes inédites" (see n.20, above) Bernard claimed to have pronounced at a much earlier time "the idealist sentence: see the style and not the object." He also claimed that in an interview in the Echo of 1892 (actually of the end of 1891) he said: "Je cherche un art qui serait l'expression de notre époque; un art qui emploierait la forme pour exprimer le style et la couleur pour déterminer les états." What he actually said then was:

Je rêverais de créer un style hiératique qui s'élèverait au-dessus de la modernité, au-dessus de l'actualité. Comme procédés et comme inspiration, il faut revenir aux Primitifs: être très bref au point de vue technique, ne se servir de la ligne que pour déterminer la forme et de la couleur que pour déterminer les états. Il faudrait, en un mot, créer un style qui serait celui de notre époque.

(Cf. Jacques Daurelle, "Chez les Jeunes Peintres," L'Echo de Paris, 28 Dec. 1891, n. pag.)

23 See M. Denis, Theories, pp.22-23 (written in 1895) and p.260 (written in 1909).

The "sensation" is not understood here as a purely sensory, visual one (as traditionally is believed to be the case for the Impressionism of the 1870s), but as a feeling, an emotion. This meaning of the "sensation" is the common one in Symbolist circles, and is also equivalent with that given to the word "impression" by such earlier non-positivist thinkers as Baudelaire and Delacroix, who actually did greatly influence the literary and artistic Symbolists. The words "sensation" and "impression" are interchangeable, except when talking about Impressionism, both its positivist defenders, as well as its non-positivist critics who denigrated it, equated those words with a visual, perceived sensation. In Symbolist circles, "sensation" is equivalent with "impression" (a word less used) and is equivalent with "emotion."

Perhaps it is worth mentioning that in 1881, Paul Bourget published his Essais sur la psychologie française, in which he argued for a literature based upon Imagination and

Feeling, against the naturalism and positivism of a Zola. It is likely that Gauguin, who expressed his strong belief in "feeling" in 1885 (see his letter to Schuffenecker of 14 January 1885, where he also made it clear he understood "sensation" as "emotion"), had knowledge of Bourget's Essais. At any rate, in the early 1880s, the ideas propagated in the circle of Bourget, Gustave Kahn, and their friend Jules Laforgue (who died in 1887 and was influenced in his studies in aesthetics by Hartman's Philosophy of the Unconscious) as well as Charles Henry's lectures on experimental psychology, contributed to a concept of "sensation" which was clearly distinct from a purely sensory one. Intuition, feeling, emotion, were its ingredients.

One problem which it seems to me is still not fully answered, is to what extent the Impressionists themselves thought of "sensation" as "emotion," and if they did, did they understand it as such only beginning with the 1880s? That in a letter addressed to his father Camille, in May 1891, Lucien Pissarro equated emotivity with sensation, does not solve the problem. Lucien wrote after reading Aurier's article on Gauguin, "Le Symbolisme en peinture" (see Pissarro, Letters, 1972, p.378).

And what a faker Gauguin is! Come now, seriously, do you think he has all that many ideas? We've talked with him and know there's not a chance that we'd be taken in! In Aurier's article there's a point you didn't notice and that shows how empty it is: at one point, after a long procession of words (words, nothing but words!), he admits that everything he has just means nothing if the artist isn't endowed with the gift of emotivity. But that's what we call sensation. So what did he prove?

When Lucien tells Camille that "there's a point you didn't notice," he refers to the copy of Aurier's article annotated by his father's hand. (See Belinda Thomson, "Camille Pissarro and Symbolism: some thoughts promoted by the recent discovery of an annotated article," Burlington Magazine, January 1892, p.19. I do not agree however with her conclusion, which brings Camille Pissarro's aims much too close to those of Aurier's.) The fact is this point about "emotivity" was missed by Pissarro (who otherwise made several comments). Why?

There were basic differences between Camille and Lucien (an adept of William Morris, collaborator of Ricketts and Shannon). Camille always insisted in his letters on preserving the "freshness" and "spontaneity" of "sensation" (see letters of Sept. 1888, May 13, 1891 for example) which he felt outdoors. This was actually the reason he gave up the "dots" of his short-lived Neo-Impressionist phase (see letter of May 29, 1891). Lucien was not concerned with preserving "spontaneity," he was involved in deliberate, decorative compositions, as is evident from the same letter of May 1891:

I am obliged to do things this way because it is very difficult to paint from nature when you live in the city. There are distances and changes of effects in a country where there aren't two days in a row that are alike. Besides, since my

idea is to paint emphasizing the decorative aspect, I have no other choice.

Aurier considered that Gauguin was endowed with a "transcendental emotivity," which meant not only that the painting objectified a "sensation" (emotion) instead of rendering a visual impression, but that emotion itself was felt not in contemplation of the real world, but of the world of abstractions, of "pure Ideas." But for Gauguin, as for other Symbolists-Synthetists, the real world remained a source of their sensations. Denis' "sensation" is definitely less idealist in nature than Aurier's "transcendental emotivity" in front of the "drama of the abstractions." (See A. Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture," Mercure de France, March 1891, p.164.) See also n.34 below.

²⁴ Alphonse Germain, "Théorie des déformateurs. Exposé et réfutation," La Plume, No.57, Sept.1 1891, p.290. Germain was a reactionary critic, supporter of the Latin tradition, and of Péladan and his Rose-Croix Salon. He wrote in L'Art et l'Idée.

²⁵ See also Ch.I, Part 1, p. 29.

²⁶ I am referring here especially to the second phase of Cloisonism, the "Cloisonist-Synthetist" phase in Welsh-Ovcharov's terminology (see Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, Vincent van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism, Art Gall. of Ontario, 1981, p.41), as illustrated for example in Bernard's Breton Women in the Meadow: Pardon at Pont-Aven, 1888 (Cat.No.104).

The first phase of Cloisonism was initiated by Emile Bernard and Louis Anquetin in 1887. The name "Cloisonism" was coined by the Symbolist writer and critic Edouard Dujardin, not by the artists themselves. He was a friend of Anquetin and attributed the style to him (friendships and loyalties were important in 19th c. art criticism) after the painter exhibited in 1888 with Les XX and with the Independents, among other things, Rue (Soir - 5 heures), or as is better known today, Avenue de Clichy: Five O'Clock in the Evening, painted late 1887, and which Anquetin listed as an "ébauche" (see Catalogue de la V^e Exposition des XX, Bruxelles, 1888, No.4 on Anquetin's list). Dujardin not only compared Anquetin's style with cloisonné enamels (which could have been French medieval, or Oriental cloisonné admired at the time- see for example Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, 1882, p.326), but also to Japanese prints and folk art ("images of Epinal") - see the quote from Dujardin's "Le Cloisonisme," La Revue Indépendante, March 1888, in Sven Loevgren, The Genesis of Modernism, 1971, p.132, or the translation (better than the one provided in Loevgren) in Welsh-Ovcharov, Vincent van Gogh..., p.23. Anquetin's Avenue de Clichy, as opposed to Cloisonist-Synthetist paintings, such as Bernard's Breton Women of 1888, preserves the "Western," post-Renaissance treatment of space. The flatness of the picture is due mainly to the unity of color (which was as is well known, Anquetin's main concern) and thick outlining of the shapes. Anquetin's priority in developing the first phase of Cloisonism is doubtful. This conclusion is not based only on what Bernard wrote later (he is not very reliable), or even on the fact that Van Gogh, after hearing about Dujardin's

article declared that "in the Japanese style young Bernard has perhaps gone father than Anquetin." (Quoted in J. Revald, Post-Impressionism, 1978, p.177; Rewald thinks that "the initiative seems to have been Bernard's"-op.cit., p.175.) The fact is that the earliest known "Cloisonist" painting by Anquetin is The Mower at Noon (Welsh - Ovcharov, cat.No.74), of summer 1887, while in the spring of the same year Bernard already painted Woman Tending Geese (cat.No.92) or Afternoon at St. Briac (cat.No.93), which are also more advanced in the direction of Cloisonism than Anquetin's Mower. During the winter 1886-87, Anquetin and Bernard worked in close collaboration. They were trying to provide an alternative to Seurat and Signac's Neo-Impressionist painting, remaining within the "mathematical aesthetics" and scientific theories. These theories were hailed by the Symbolist avant-garde critics such as G. Kahn, as "founded on this purely idealist philosophical principle that makes us reject the reality of matter and admits the existence of the world only as a representation." (My transl. from G. Kahn, "Réponse des Symbolistes," L'Événement, 28 Spet. 1886, reproduced in S. Loevgren, The Genesis of Modernism, 1971, p.84.) Anquetin was interested in a dominant color of light (warm yellow-orange in The Mower, cold blue-violet in Avenue de Clichy) justified by a particular time of the day. It is more likely he found his inspiration, not looking through a colored piece of glass as Bernard much later related (E. Bernard, "Louis Anquetin," Gaz. Beaux-Arts, Vol.11, 1934, p.114); but in Blanc's Grammaire des arts du dessin (see this thesis, Ch.II, Part 2, n.38) which at the time was very popular with the avant-garde circles. (Bernard later denigrated Blanc's writings - see Ch.II, Part 2, n.119; Anquetin's thorough knowledge of the Grammaire is evident in his personal notes - see Anquetin, De L'Art, edited by C. Versini, Paris, 1970; the Neo-Impressionist circle did not keep secret their use of the Grammaire. Seurat listed it as one of his sources - the influence of Blanc's Grammaire on Seurat is discussed in detail in W.I. Homer, Seurat and the Science of Painting, 1964 - and so did Signac in his D'Eugène Delacroix aux neo-impressionnisme, first published in 1898. On Gauguin's and van Gogh's acquaintance with the Grammaire (see Mark Roskill, Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle, 1970, pp.91, 94 and 267.) Anquetin's Mower has the aspect of an Impressionist painting seen through a yellow glass. In fact Pissarro already in 1880 in Chaponaval Landscape (Pissarro & Venturi, cat.No.509) or in the Apple Pickers (P&V No.545) of 1881 showed similar preoccupation with the dominant colored light, in his case blue. The artists interested in a more scientific approach to painting (a general tendency among avant-garde artists in the early 1880s) might have used the source used by Blanc himself, that is Chevreul's The Laws of Contrast of Colour. Chevreul formulated several principles of colour harmony, and grouped them in two kinds, harmonies of analogous colours, and harmonies of contrasts. Among the harmonies of analogous colours he listed the "harmony of a dominant colored light." Chevreul stressed that a painter may exaggerate the colours of nature, since if he copies them exactly, the results might not be harmonious. Pissarro acknowledged his acquaintance with Chevreul's book only in 1886, when

he joined Neo-Impressionism. (See L. Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, 1966, p.55.) Bernard's "scientific" interest focused on abstract, geometrical design, on what he called "synthèse géométrique," as is evident in his Afternoon at St. Briac (Welsh-Ovcharov, cat.No.93), The Ragpickers: Iron Bridges at Asnières (No.96), and View from the Pont d'Asnières (Welsh-Ovcharov, fig.115, p.276), all of 1887, starting in spring. He might have influenced Anquetin in outlining shapes with geometrical precision, especially the houses in the Mower, but the latter used very fine lines, probably not being ready to make a total break with Impressionism (which did not accept outlines, because "lines do not exist in nature"). The fine lines, as well as the fact that there are no compartments of various colours, hardly qualify this painting as an example of "Cloisonism." Bernard was the one that in the spring of 1887 covered his windows with imitation of Gothic stained glass (Welsh-Ovcharov, p.263) in St. Briac. As I already mentioned, about that time he painted his first Cloisonist paintings.

Bernard felt he suffered injustice twice, since Dujardin named Anquetin alone as inventor of Cloisonism, and later he was accused of plagiarizing Gauguin's Cloisonist-Synthetist style. Yet, he maintained all along, he produced Breton Women at Pardon (Welsh-Ovch. cat. No.104) before Gauguin's Vision after Sermon (both of 1888). Most art historians agree today on Bernard's priority and on the fact he influenced Gauguin. (The most convincing argument is provided - in my opinion - in V. Jirat-Wasiutinski, Paul Gauguin in the context of Symbolism, 1978, pp.83-96; see also M.A. Stevens, Post-Impressionism: Cross Currents in European Painting, Royal Acad. of Arts Catalogue, London, 1979, p.41, and F. Orton and G. Pollock, "Les Données Bretonnantes: La Prairie de Répresentation," Art History, Vol.3, No.3, 1980, p.337; Welsh-Ovcharov is non-committal on the issue of priority.) The important conclusion is that Bernard introduced in painting the flatness of the medieval tapestries or stained glass windows which he already imitated in his decorations. With respect to spacial relationships, his Breton Women was more "medieval" than Gauguin's Vision, or than his own paintings from the first Cloisonist phase. Bernard deliberately turned now to the art of the Middle Ages for inspiration, while his first Cloisonist phase, as well as Gauguin's Vision are heavily indebted to the perspective used in the Japanese prints. (Actually in Hokusai's prints for example- the most popular ones with the French avant-garde- the perspective is not the one Chinese and Japanese art adopted for generations, but it is influenced by Western perspective. On this Western influence see for example Ch. S. Terry, Hokusai's 36 Views of Mt. Fuji, Tokyo, 1959, p.13.)

²⁷ See this interview with Bernard published by Jacques Daurelle, "Chez les Jeunes Peintres," L'Echo de Paris, 28 Dec. 1891.

As Rookmaaker pointed out, Van Gogh's letters to Bernard written in the summer of 1888 indicated Bernard's involvement with "the abstract and mystical" medieval drawing and its "symbolical significance." (See H.R. Rookmaaker, Synthetist Art Theories, 1959, p.125.) Bernard claimed that Brittany made a Catholic out of him again, "capable of fighting for the Church," as well as transformed him into a "man of the Middle Ages"; he admired there (first time in 1886) "the ancient stained glass windows, the hieratic tapestries." (See the quote from

Bernard's "Récits d'un passager voyageant au bord de la vie" in Mary Anne Stevens, "Innovation and Consolidation in French Painting," Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, p.23.]

28 See Merete Bodelsen, Gauguin's Ceramics, 1964, p.184 and p.220 (n.130). Gauguin developed a Cloisonistic style in Chapelet's workshop in 1886-1887, inspired by Japanese cloisonné vase. See also Gauguin's description of the process of making Japanese cloisonné vases (from Avant et Après), in Paul Gauguin's Intimate Journals, transl. Van Wyck Brooks, 1949, pp. 63-67.

29 See for example Still Life with Profile of Laval (1886). For the "Western tradition" see Ch.I, Part 1, pp36-39, and p.16.

30 "Cloisonism" is only one form of "Synthetism," which is a more encompassing term. Gauguin was a Synthetist before and after being a "Cloisonist" (Cloisonist-Synthetist). It is possible that Gauguin first used the term "synthétique" inspired by Baudelaire, since his "Notes Synthétiques" of 1884-85 are in tune with the poet's theory of "correspondences." Gauguin considered for example that "harmonious colors correspond to the harmonies of sounds" and that in painting "all sensations are condensed." He envisaged painting as a synthesis of all other arts. (This interpretation of the title "Notes Synthétiques" is also given by Jirat-Wasiutinski, p.17 and p.19.) While Gauguin did not use the term "synthetic" in the text, it is evident he was thinking also in terms of "scientific synthetism" (using Goldwater's terminology) - this time referring to a specific method of painting - as was Seurat. Since Gauguin did not use the term "synthetic" in the text, it is not clear if he used it in the title in reference to the synthesis of all sensations - for which the equivalent one word "synaesthesia" exists - or he referred to the theory of "equivalents," that is recreating by synthetic (in the sense of artificially created) means in painting that which cannot be exactly imitated anyway (since as Gauguin said, "you have fewer means than nature"). The "Synthetism" proclaimed at the Volpini exhibition of 1889 (the term was not explained at the time) has to be understood in the latter sense. It means recreating images out of "synthetic color" and "synthetic lines," instead of imitating nature. At the same time, even if the color could be totally arbitrary and artificial (as Ch. Blanc recommended in decoration - see Ch.I, Part 1), the linear Style synthesized forms existant in the real world. All Symbolists writers used the term "synthetic" to indicate a method, a style, that achieved a "synthesis." (In my opinion one should make a slight distinction between "synthetism" and "synthesis," since the latter does not necessarily imply artificiality, but only simplification, generalization. A "synthesis" in painting preserves the character of the object it represents.) Baudelaire used the term "synthetic" (to qualify the art of C. Guys), in the sense of achieving a synthesis, that is generalizing and seeing things in the "effect of their ensemble" (see Ch. Baudelaire, Oeuvres complètes, 1954, p.1166, and M. Roskill, Van Gogh,

Gauguin and the Impressionist Circle, 1970, pp.95-96). Aurier understood by synthesis, "the aesthetical and logical simplifications of formes," as is done in decorations such as monumental frescoes (see the quote in n.46, from "Les Symbolistes"). Like Baudelaire, Aurier admired such "synthetic" art as that of ancient Egyptians, or primitive art.

In his book on Gauguin, Charles Morice (who also equated Synthetism with "synthesis") exclaimed: "should we reduce Synthetism to the use of flat tint only?" ("nous réduirions-nous à dire que le synthétisme se ramène tout entière à la teinte plate?". Gauguin, 1919, p.165.) Morice pointed out that Gauguin was an "ideist," but he remained "plastic."

31 As Bodelsen pointed out, Gauguin found in the technique of stoneware glazes an answer to a problem that had interested him for sometime, the problem of color harmony. (See Merete Bodelsen, Gauguin's Ceramics, 1964, pp.190-191.) Chinese ceramics (which inspired Chapelet) were very much admired at the time, as Roger Marx testified:

L'influence grandissante de l'extrême Orient a provoqué la recherche des couvertes chinoises, qui prennent, sous l'action d'un feu violent, des colorations riches, marbrées ou heurtées ainsi que des ondulations des flammes.

Chapelet, whom Braquemond called "an artist equal to the Chinese," tried to imitate Chinese ceramics, quite successfully as is evident also from R. Marx's description:

...voici pour procurer aux amateurs de flamés leurs plus troublantes émotions et d'exquises surprises, la vitrine où M. Chapelet triomphe sans contests. L'oeil est fasciné par ces métamorphoses de la porcelaine en matière précieuse, par la dissemblance des effets, dus à des combinaisons de cuisson, à des courants d'oxygène 'faisant passer le rouge de cuivre par le violet, par le bleu, le vert, le lilas, en de nuances chatoyantes, voltigeantes'.

(See R. Marx, "La décoration architecturale et les industries d'art a l'Exposition Universelle de 1889," Revue des Arts Décoratifs, Vol.11, 1890-1891, pp.35-36.)

Gauguin himself described the synthetic color he used in 1888 in painting in a similar manner:

The color is a color remote from nature; imagine a confused collection of pottery all twisted by furnaces! All the reds and violets streaked by flames, like a furnace burning fiercely, the seat of the painter's mental struggles.

(Gauguin, Letters to his Wife and Friends, 1948, p.105, letter of 8 Oct. 1888 to Schuffenecker.)

Charles Blanc also praised Oriental (especially Chinese) ceramists. He particularly admired and recommended their method of making the color "vibrate," in order to avoid the monotony of an uniformly applied monochrome tone. (See Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, p.390; in his Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1967, p.607, he referred to this procedure

as to "modulate the tone on itself," and in his article on Delacroix in Gaz. Beaux-Arts, 1864, p.144, as using the principle of "color modulation"- my emphasis.)

Color modulations inspired by the stoneware glasses are to be found in such "Cloisonist" paintings as The Breton Calvary: The Green Christ of 1889.

32 For Gauguin's "zébrée painting" see Ch. Chassée, Gauguin et son temp, 1955, pp.43-44. According to Signac, the expression "zébrer" was used by Charles Blanc in describing Delacroix's method of "optimal mixing" of color (green and pink) used in rendering women's flesh (see P. Signac, D'E. Delacroix..., p.76). The expression Blanc used was actually "sabrer" (Grammaire...dessin, 1867, p.604.) An example of painting in which Gauguin, as Delacroix, used this method of hatching to render the nuances, as well as to model a woman's body, is Undine: In the Waves of 1889 (color plate No.1 in Welsh-Ovcharov, Vincent van Gogh..., 1981).

33 On Gauguin's position regarding modelling in the decorative arts, see his letter to Daniel de Monfried of August 1892 (H.B. Chipp, Theories..., p.64). It is evident that Gauguin was still making the distinction between the flatness required in decorative arts (best to be stained glass window-like) and in easel painting.

Perhaps only in Women at Arles: The Mistral of 1888 (Welsh-Ovcharov, color plate No.24)- and even here, only in the two smaller figures- did Gauguin approach Bernard's faceless flat silhouettes of Three Breton Women at the Coast, May-June 1888 (Welsh-Ovcharov, No.99) or of The Seaweed Gatherers: Les Goemons (1888 or later, Welsh-Ovcharov, No.108), as well as of Denis' Way to Calvary of 1889 (Welsh-Ovcharov, No.140). Even in a still life, considered as one of the earliest "Cloisonist" paintings by Gauguin: Still Life Fête Gloanec of early Aug.1888 (Welsh-Ovcharov, color plate No.31) he extensively used Cézanne's method of colour modulations instead of the flat tint.

34 I refer in particular to Bernard, Denis, and Sérusier, who were the first to break completely with Western type of perspective (linear or central point, scientific perspective), and treated the surface of the painting as a truly two-dimensional one. In this respect medieval art (or for that matter traditional Oriental art) offered even better inspiration than the Japanese prints, as I already indicated. Bernard figures seem to "float" in paintings such as the well known Breton Women at Pardon (1888), or The Apple Harvest (1890, Welsh-Ovcharov, No.110). Leaving aside the question of Bernard having any justification to say this, it is significant that he claimed: "...it was this gothic Brittany which initiated me in art and God" (quoted in Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, p.41). In other words, he intentionally imitated Gothic art, because (even in laic scenes) this formalism allowed him to project the mysticism and the idealism he had chosen to project at that particular time. Both Bernard and Sérusier (the founder of the Nabi group) embraced neo-Platonist doctrines at the time, these doctrines being at the foundation of literary Symbolism,

the avant-garde which the painters wanted to parallel. As Denis wrote in the text accompanying Sérusier's book, Le Symbolisme était comme Sérusier lui-même, néo-platonicien. Ecrivains et peintres tombaient d'accord pour affirmer que les objets naturels sont les signes des idées; que le visible est la manifestation de l'invisible; (In P. Sérusier, A B C de la peinture, 1942, first publ. 1921, p.64.)

Denis claimed that Sérusier revealed to the Nabis, "as Gauguin's message," the concept of the painting as a "plane surface covered with colours in a certain assembled order" (which was the well-known definition of a painting Denis gave in his article "Definition of Neotraditionism," first published in Art et Critique, Aug. 1890) - see A B C..., p.43 and p.105. In fact the small panel Sérusier painted supposedly under Gauguin's guidance (which guidance referred only to the use of a dominant color, but synthetic, of an object), known as The Talisman or The Bois d'Amour, of October 1888, was flatter than any of Gauguin's paintings, and quite "abstract." For the sources that more likely inspired Denis' definition of a painting see n.103, below. In later years, when Denis turned against "flatness," he blamed Gauguin (and to a lesser extent Bernard's early work) for this trend in painting. Denis himself did not appear to be a neo-Platonist, only an ardent Catholic with mystic tendencies. Together with Sérusier, they were the leaders of the Nabi group, which in the early 1890s were considered the Symbolists (in painting). However, the intent of becoming a "Symbolist" (regardless of Denis' claiming for his article on "Neo-traditionism," the status of a "Symbolist Manifesto" in later years) manifested later for Sérusier and Denis than for Bernard. There is a delayed concern with "Style" (related to the "Idea") in the Nabis' work, but there is an evident concern with "dematerialization" (especially in such works by Denis as Sunlight on the Terrace of 1890- Welsh-Ovcharov No.142- which was indebted to Sérusier's Talisman), and anti-Naturalism (of the Salon variety, that is photographic, naturalistic representation, as taught at the Académie Julian; this is why Denis was not so outspoken against the Impressionists as Bernard and Gauguin were). Denis' article of 1890 was more a manifesto in favor of formalism and art for art's sake, for "decorative" art in an idealist frame-work. He wanted works that emanate spirituality, not through the subject-matter, not through "literature," but on the account of their formalism. During the late 1880s he thought he found answers in the hieratism of the Hindu, Assyrian, Egyptian, Byzantine, and Medieval art especially. He admired the Italian "Primitives" and Puvis de Chavannes (especially for his "decorative" qualities - see Denis' Journal, Vol.1, p.67) and in 1889 was favorably impressed by Gauguin's works at the Volpini exhibition. He was concerned with the reform of the religious art, which should avoid imitation of nature, "vulgar sensations," trompe-l'oeil. Denis' symbolism manifested itself in the use of an "icon" (sacred image), as is evident in his "Neo-traditionism": "What is great art ('what we call decorative', as Denis explained in the previous sentence) if not the disguise of

natural objects with their vulgar sensations by icons that are sacred, magical and commanding?" (Trl. in Chipp, p.100). He was actually known in his artistic circles as "the Nabi of the beautiful icons." His mystical Symbolism is evident in his Journal (entry for January 1889, Vol.I, p.73, trl. in Post-Impressionism, London, pp.65-66):

Lord, we are a group of young people, devotees of the symbol, misunderstood by a world which mocks us Mystics! Lord, I pray you, may our reign come! Remember also the glory of Paul Sérusier who has permitted me to progress toward the best Art;

When I said Denis was not really a "Symbolist" even in 1890, I meant the specific kind of Symbolism, "intellectual" in nature, associated with Mallarmé. This is the Symbolism ("Ideism") for which Aurier found a counterpart in the painting of Gauguin and his circle. (See H.R. Rookmaaker, Synthetist Art Theories, 1959, pp.70-72, for the distinction -adopted from G. Michaud, Message poétique III, 1947- to be made among the movements associated respectively with Rimbaud, Verlaine and Mallarmé.) Denis' initial "Symbolism" could be, in my opinion, associated with Verlaine's "poésie affective" and the movement that held him as "grandmaster." This group (in which Rookmaaker included G. Kahn) emphasized subjectivity to a higher degree, personal emotions, and used "idea" in Schopenhauer's sense. Denis (who illustrated Verlaine's Sagesse in 1889), as is evident from his 1890 article, considered emotions, "the states of soul," as the most important ingredients of a work of art therefore at the time he used intense, bright colours, yet vagueness in defining forms (just as Blanc recommended for the decorative arts, envisaged as capable of transporting the viewer into the ideal world). In accordance with the art theories still prevailing at the time (color appealing to the sentiment, line to the intellect), paintings such as the above mentioned Sunlight on the Terrace, or The Orange Christ (Welsh-Ovcharov, No.143), both of 1890, did not address themselves to the intellect. I would point out that Denis' well known definition of painting of the same year, did not mention "line" or "Style," only "colours" and flatness. If this kind of painting derived ultimately (through the intermediary of Sérusier's Talisman) from Gauguin's teaching, as Denis claimed (first time in 1903, conveniently after Gauguin's death), it could only mean that Gauguin was not initiating Sérusier into his latest style, because at the time he was deeply involved (sacrificing "everything," including "colour") with "Style," that is with the "intellectual" line. (See n.19, above). The use of "synthetic" colour could have been suggested by Gauguin in 1888, but when Sérusier was really under the influence of Gauguin, he painted for example Landscape at Le Pouldu (summer 1890, Welsh-Ovcharov, No.139) a tapestry-like painting, reflecting as Gauguin's pictures of 1889-90, a strong debt to Cézanne's method of color modulation. (For the strong spell cast by Cézanne on Gauguin in that particular period see for example, J. Rewald, Post-Impressionism, 1978, p.286.) In his Mouvement Idéaliste en Peinture of 1896, Mellerio, who did not consider the label "Symbolist" as having any more real significance than that of

"Impressionist," classified Denis, Bernard, and Filiger as "Mystics," and Sérusier among the "Synthetists." Mellerio related that according to Sérusier, the genesis of a work of art takes place in two steps: at first the spectacle of nature places us in an "involuntary state of soul" (un état d'âme involontaire), and then, in the mind the Idea is formed, which is "superior" because of its "logic and harmony" (op.cit., p.45). The Idea is best expressed by synthesis, by neglecting the details and retaining the "characteristics" according to Sérusier. A letter of Sérusier to Verkade, of 1892, is in accordance with what Mallerio said (see the quote in Rookmaaker, p.168). Sérusier insisted there on a "firm and simple drawing," without details, but with any line being "voluntary," having its "expressive and decorative role in the ensemble." The firm line was necessary in order to define form, the expression of the Idea, as Aurier indicated in his article "Le Symbolisme en peinture" of 1891. (He stated that the new "Ideist" art was "Symbolist, for it expresses this Idea by means of form." Aurier adopted the Plotinian theory according to which the Idea was identified with the "thought," was accessible only to "superior intelligences.") Denis, not only in 1890, but even later, did not talk about the "Idea," but only about "states of the soul," emotions, feelings. In fact, he never accepted Aurier's philosophy, and for him forms corresponded or were equivalents of "sensations" (feelings), even when well defined by lines, as in the style he later adopted. In the "Neo-traditionism" he declared: "Even a simple research in lines, as the Femme en rouge by Anquetin (at the Champ-de-Mars) has a feeling value." (Trl. in Chipp, p.99.) Later, in 1895 he will talk about "emotion felt in front of things," and in 1909 about the "expressive synthesis" as the "symbol of a sensation." (See also n.23.) His later writings do not give unfortunately reliable information on the exact nature of the earlier art (that is on the exact motives and intentions that generated that art) produced by him, or his group. In his writings over the years, Denis kept coming back to his beginnings, that is to "Symbolism," updating it and revising it according to the latest prevailing trend. He did not always want to be associated with idealism, and revised his position on the relationship art/nature. But in 1890 he did appear as a "painter of the soul." He considered that a "motif derived from nature" in itself, should not be the source of emotion induced in the viewer, but "the state of the artist's soul," the "emotion" that "emerges from the canvas itself, a plane surface covered with colours," should be that source. (See M. Denis, Theories, p.10.) Denis is in accord here with Gustave Kahn's brand of Symbolism and idealism, the essence of which was formulated by the latter in L'Événement of 1886.

What is important is not when and if these painters could be labelled "Symbolists" (which is not a well-defined term), but the fact that because of their commitment to idealism, mysticism, Catholicism, on one hand, and "art for art's sake" on the other, they introduced in painting the flatness until then accepted only in some decorative arts. Also, at the time, only artists of this particular orientation introduced into painting absolute flatness, that is both lack of relief for objects, as well as no attempt to simulate depth.

35 Even if in its first phase, "Cloisonism" was not a perfect imitation of the Medieval cloisonné, and most likely was not intended to be, Bernard's Cloisonism-Synthetism seems to be a conscious effort to fit Dujardin's label. Also, Bernard met Aurier as early as the spring of 1887 (not in 1888, as he said in the open letter to Mauclair; for this information, see Welsh-Ovcharov, p.53) and kept in touch with him ever since, no doubt being influenced by the young Symbolist poet toward Neo-Platonism, and a hieratic and spiritualized art, or at least reinforcing his own ideas through these contacts. Aurier's article of 1891, which described Gauguin's (and his group's) style as the Symbolism in painting, contributed also to consolidate the association between pictorial Symbolism and "true" decoration, as will be evident shortly.

36 The fact that Toulouse-Lautrec's posters were "Cloisonistic" did not have, for example, the same significance as it would have had in paintings (where he actually retained modelling). I do not think his At the Circus Fernando (color plate No.28 in Welsh-Ovcharov) can be considered an example of Cloisonism, as Welsh-Ovcharov regards it.

37 Realism or Naturalism were still supported by Zola's group (such as for example by Thiebault-Sisson), but they were in a minority. The prevailing opinion, even among ex-Naturalists, was that strict Realism completely neglected "inner life," or any human emotion.

38 For "decorative" versus "decoration," see the last section of Ch.I, Part 2.

39 Aurier's position is best expressed in his "Essai sur une nouvelle méthode de critique," Oeuvres Posthumes, ed. Mercure de France, 1893. The quote is from "Essai," p.201.

40 G.-Albert Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture," Mercure de France, March 1891, p.163.

41 Ibid: my translation. Compare to Denis' "Neo-traditionism" of 1890, section XXIV.

42 Aurier, "Le Symbolisme....," p.160

43 See Aurier, "Essai....," p.195.

44 Aurier, "Le Symbolisme....," p.163.

45 See Aurier, "Le Symbolisme....," pp.158-59, and Aurier, "Les Symbolistes," Revue Encyclopédique, No.23, April 5 1892, pp.483-85.

The young painters led by Gauguin, the "newly arrived" on the art scene were the group of Pont-Aven and the Nabis.

46 In "Les Symbolistes," 1892, p.484, Aurier said:
Avec, comme dogmes fondamentaux, le symbole et la synthèse, c'est-à-dire l'expression des idées

et la simplification esthétique et logique des formes, c'est à un art de décoration, à un art de fresques monumentales, plutôt qu'à la peinture de chevalet, que devaient, en effet, aboutir, s'ils en eussent eu la possibilité matérielle, les artistes de cette école.

47 Aurier, "Les Symbolistes...", 1891, p.165. In a letter to Daniel de Monfried, of August 1892, Gauguin wrote:

To think that I was born to do decorative art and that I have not been able to achieve it. Neither windows, nor furniture, nor ceramics, nor whatever...There lie my real aptitudes much more than in painting strictly speaking.

(Quoted in H.B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, 1973, p.64.)

Gauguin brought in Tahiti from Paris photographs of friezes from Egyptian tombs, which he used in fresco-like painting in tempera, The Market of 1892 (in Kunstmuseum, Basel), no doubt influenced by Aurier.

48 A. Aurier, "Vincent van Gogh," Ouvres Posthumes, pp.261-262.

49 Aurier, "Les Symbolistes," 1892, p.482.

50 Ibid

51 Richard Shiff, ("The End of Impressionism: A Study in Theories of Artistic Expression," Art Quarterly New Series, Vol. 1, no.4, Autumn 1978, pp.338-378), tried to close the gap between Impressionism and Symbolism, based mainly on the "subjectivism" of Impressionism. (He noticed that this subjectivism was not being taken into account by modern scholars, such as Rewald or Nochlin.) However, Shiff does not make enough distinction between the Impressionism of the 1870s (which in my opinion is the Impressionism proper, if this label is to be applied at all) and the art practiced by the old "Impressionists" in the 1880s and 1890s. One cannot really support an argument regarding the art and intention of the artists in the 1870s, either with the paintings, or with the comments made by the artists in the 1890s, when Symbolism was the avant-garde movement. At that time, the art of the old Impressionists had changed, depending on how much personal conviction allowed various individual artists to "keep up with the times." Also, "partizan" critics tried to demonstrate that the artists they supported were the true innovators (as Lecomte did for example). Shiff's attempt to erase essential differences between Impressionism "even in its purest original form" (op.cit., p.342) and Symbolism is somehow far-fetched.

In any event, what is important in defining a movement, is not what the artists (the Impressionists of 1870s in this case) really believed, or the methods they actually used, but the image they wanted to present, the banner under which they

gathered. What they really did and believed is something quite difficult to prove, because they purposely tried to maintain a "veil of mystery" (to use Pissarro's expression), since trends were changing rapidly and a firm commitment a way or another could have been regretted later. Thus Mallarmé was right in 1876, in implying that Manet's technique was a "skilled artifice calculated to give the appearance of spontaneity," as Shiff pointed out (op.cit., p.361). The fact remains (and Shiff admits it) that in the 1870s, the avant-garde (artists and critics) embraced a materialist philosophy, and in particular the positivism of Auguste Comte and his followers. Consequently, the artists did nothing in their art that would contravene the appearance of using the empirical method of direct observation. While subjective (due to the differences in "temperament" -see Ch.II, Part 2, p.149 and n.28 on the "materialistic," physiological definition of this term), Impressionism did not accept "idealism" or even "conceptualism." Because it was based on "temperament," this subjectivism was of an "involuntary" nature.

52 See Aurier, Mercure 1891, p.157. Aurier admits that Impressionism is more subjective than Courbet's realism, but as for Courbet, "Le substratum et le but dernier de leur art c'est la chose materielle, la chose reele." Impressionism, according to Aurier, translated an "exclusively sensorial impression." Therefore,

L'Impressionnisme, c'est et ce ne peut être qu'une variété du réalisme, un réalisme affiné, spiritualisé, dilettantisé, mais toujours réalisme. Le but visé, c'est encore l'imitation de la matière, non plus peut-être avec sa forme propre, sa couleur propre, mais avec sa forme perçue, avec sa couleur perçue, c'est la traduction de la sensation avec tous les imprévus d'une notation instantanée, avec toutes les déformations d'une rapide synthèse subjective.

Aurier was in fact one of the first to point out the subjectivism implied in Zola's definition of Naturalism, "nature seen through a temperament" (see Aurier, "Van Gogh," p.260), and that "a Symbolism" was "implicitly admitted by the naturalists" (see Aurier, "Les Symbolistes," p.480, as well as p.476).

It is not correct to say though, as Shiff did, that Aurier did not direct his criticism to Monet, Pissarro, or Renoir (see Shiff, "The End of Impressionism," p.340).

53 See Aurier, "Le Symbolisme...", p.158.

54 See Aurier's comments on Pissarro's exhibits at the Boussod et Valadon in 1890. (Aurier, "Camille Pissarro," Oeuvres Posthumes, pp.241, 242, 244; originally published in La Indépendante in 1890.)

55 Aurier was acquainted with both of them. Maurice Denis used in 1890 the term "Neo-traditionism" (which he later had declared to be equivalent with Cloisonnism, Synthetism, Symbolism or Ideism) in order to express a reaction against the photographic naturalism of the academies. He did

not strongly react at the time against Impressionism, as Bernard and Gauguin did. Aurier mentioned the term "Neo-Traditionism" in his 1892 article.

Sérusier was particularly appreciative of Pissarro. (See for example his declaration in 1905, Ch.II, Part 1, n.144.)

56 Aurier, "Les Symbolistes," 1892, p.483.

57 Georges Lecomte was a friend of Fénéon, and he had early ties with literary Symbolism as the editor of La Cravache in 1888. Like Fénéon, he was a defender of Neo-Impressionism, but especially of Impressionism, and Pissarro in particular.

For more information on G. Lecomte see Hector Talvart, Bibliographie des auteurs modernes de langue française, (1801-1953), Paris, 1954, ed. de la chronique des lettres françaises.

58 The lectures at the Salon des XX are published in: Georges Lecomte, "Des tendances de la peinture moderne," L'Art Moderne, Feb. 1892, Vol.12, No.7, pp.49-51; No.8, p.57-58; No.9, pp.65-67.

Belinda Thomson, "Camille Pissarro and Symbolism...," 1982, p.23, suggested also that Lecomte might have felt compelled to redress the "critical balance" (after Aurier's article on Gauguin in March) in his article "Camille Pissarro," La Plume, No.57, Sept. 1891, pp.301-302, "prompted by conversations with the infuriated Pissarro," "who we now know, did comment on Aurier's article. (See also n.23, this section.) In La Plume, p.302, Lecomte wrote:

Cet art, très intellectuel par l'au-delà qu'il suggère, l'est plus encore par son mode d'expression...Son talent n'est pas réaliste. L'imitation servile, irréfléchie ne le satisfait pas. Il choisit ses motifs ou les recrée personnellement, en vue d'un maximum décoratif. Il élague et synthétise; il compose, il interprète. Sensiblement il l'est l'homo additus naturae de Bacon.

59 Lecomte used the expression "tendances nouvelles" in L'Art Moderne, No.8, p.58.

60 Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.7, p.50.

61 Ibid., No.9, p.66.

62 Ibid., p.65. Fénéon was the chief spokesman for the Neo-Impressionists and he described for example the art of Signac in similar terms. Signac's paintings were,

"exemplary specimens of a highly developed decorative art, which sacrifices the anecdote to the arabesque, nomenclature to synthesis, the fugitive to the permanent, and confers on nature -weary at last of its precarious reality- an authentic reality." (From Fénéon, "Paul Signac," Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui, Vol.8, No.373, 1890, as translated in J. Rewald, Post-Impressionism, 3d ed., New York: MOMA, 1978, pp.124-125.)

Compare to what Signac himself said a few years later - Ch.I, Part 2, n.135.

63 Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.9, p.66.

64 Lecomte, L'Art impressionniste d'après la collection privée de M. Durand-Ruel, Paris, 1892, p.261.

65 See Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.9, p.66. Referring to the Ideist painters, Lecomte said:

L'examen attentif que nous avons fait de cette renaissance idéaliste me fait craindre que ces artistes, guidés par ce très haut souci de synthèse et de décoration, n'en viennent à annuler, pour l'atteindre, la réalité des apparences et le caractère.

66 Ibid.

67 See Lecomte, L'Art Impressionniste, p.260. Lecomte said:

Telle aurore de M. Pissarro, telle marine de M. Claude Monet nous semblent, en effet, aussi suggestives que représentatives. De leur chaudes harmonies se dégage la Pensée; le rêve s'en essore. Le grand mystère de la nature est par elle rendu.

68 Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.9, p.66.

69 On the definition of the arabesque see Henry Havard, Dictionnaire de l'ameublement et de la décoration, not dated, but in preparation in 1884 (listed as such in his L'art dans la maison of 1884), pp.116-117. Victor Champier, in his article on P.-V. Galland (Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1888, Vol.37, p.114) commented on the fact that the art of the ornament uses actually a fairly limited number of combinations of forms, the arabesque being one of them:

Les anciens nous ont laissé cette répétition de lignes brisées qu'on appelle une grecque; les Orientaux on emprunté leur inépuisable variété de décors à la géométrie ou à la flore naturelle. Les arabesques découvertes à Pompéi et réhabilitées par Raphaël sont aujourd'hui encore le répertoire usuel où vont puiser nos artistes soi-disant novateurs. En France, les Bérain, les Lepautre, les Audran, se sont illustrés rien que par la noblesse et l'harmonie d'un style auquel ils ont attaché leur nom. C'est donc que la chose est difficile. Cette sorte d'art qu'on appelle ornemental, n'ayant guère pour moyen d'expression que la représentation de choses inanimées, reste toujours abstrait. C'est un langage très vague, un peu froid, auquel rarement viennent s'ajouter une image ou une formule nouvelle, que l'on emploie malaisément et qui doit s'adresser à l'esprit, à la raison, sans passer par le cœur.

The ornamental line (as for example the arabesque) was thus able to relate to the intellect through its abstract stylization. The old academic theory about line being related to the intellect and color to the heart (or as Charles Blanc put it in the Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1867, p.22, "The drawing is of the masculine sex; color is of feminine sex."), was still widely held.

See also a discussion on the topic of the arabesque in art and music criticism and theory in the 19th century, in Joseph Masheck's article, "The Carpet Paradigm: Critical Prolegomena to a Theory of Flatness," Arts Magazine, 1976, Vol.51, pp.88-89.

Georges Lecomte himself connects the decorative tendency in painting with the one in music and also poetry. He said,

D'ailleurs toutes les oeuvres grandes, en dehors même des arts plastiques, n'apparaissent-elles pas revêtues d'une spéciale beauté, comme décorative? Les allitérations de syllabes dans un vers, les évolutions et les rappels de certains vers dans une strophe, pour compléter la pensée et le rythme, la répétition de strophes dans un poème, constituent des astragales et des dentelles qui dessinent leurs arabesques sur la trame colorée des mots, créent par leurs circuits d'un si gracieux dessin des harmonies d'ensemble et relient les divers aspects de l'idée.

.....

Mais c'est surtout en musique que l'arrangement décoratif est évident...

(Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.7, pp.50-51.)

Octave Mirbeau also saw "a great decorative poetry" in C. Pissarro's painting. (See Mirbeau's comments on Pissarro's 1892 exhibition at Durand-Ruel, quoted by Ralph E. Shikes and Paula Harper, Pissarro, His Life and Work, New York, Horizon Press, 1980, p.262.)

70 Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.8, p.58.

71 Ibid

72 See Ch.I, Part 1, pp. 40-41.

73 For example, describing Impressionist painting, the critic Armand Silvestre said, "C'est un effet d'impression qu'elle poursuit uniquement, laissant la recherche de l'expression aux passionnés de la ligne" ("L'Exposition des révoltés," L'Opinion Nationale, 22 Apr. 1874, quoted in Jaques Lethève, Impressionistes et Symbolistes devant la presse, Paris: Armand Colin, 1959, p.63), or "Peu soucieuse de la forme, elle est exclusivement décorative et coloriste" (L'Opinion Nationale, 2 Apr. 1876, quoted in Lionello Venturi, Les Archives de l'Impressionnisme, Paris-New York, 1939, Vol.II, p.286). Both quotations were also mentioned by Steven Z. Levine in his doctoral dissertation, Monet and his Critics, New York-London, Garland Publ.Inc., 1976, p.14. On p.29, Levine comments on the criticism of Impressionist paintings in general: "Whether

their paintings were most fruitfully to be seen as traditional tableaux or as a new kind of decorative art was a question that would become a crucial issue of criticism in the years ahead." Levine did extract from his dissertation the topic "Decor/ Decorative/Decoration in Claude Monet's Art," published in Arts Magazine, Vol.51, No.6, Feb. 1977, pp.136-142, but one wishes he had defined those terms (the title of the article would have required it), especially the difference between "decorative" and "decoration," at all times. He covered a long period of time, during which those concepts underwent various changes.

74 In fact some of Monet's "decorations" were blown-up versions of his tableaux (for example No.420- L'Etang à Montgeron in Daniel Wildenstein, Claude Monet, Lausanne-Paris, 1974, was painted after the smaller painting No.419) and even when they did not have a smaller counterpart, they were no different in principle from his easel paintings, admittedly, of a "decorative effect." His "decorations" could exhibit a pronounced illusion of depth (see for example Wildenstein No.433, La Chasse, one of the four decorations he did for Hoschedé), atmospheric perspective, in other words the "window" concept. Also, his or other Impressionists' paintings of the 1870s could not be seen as decorations even when intended as such, since they lacked an ordered composition and "Style" (associated with line). Compare with Darcel's definition of "decorative painting" (that is painting which is decoration), Part 1, p.41.

75 So did Octave Maus, as is evident from his Préambule for the Catalogue de la Ve Exposition des XX, Bruxelles, 1888, which he entitled "La recherche de la lumière dans la peinture."

The transition from the concern with light (associated with "truth" and color) to a concern with Style (associated with the décor, line) in French landscape painting was welcomed in 1893 by the critic Raymond Bouyer in L'Artiste, hardly an avant-garde journal. Bouyer, who saw in the history of landscape an antagonism between what he called le paysage rustique (best example to be found in the "veracity of the modern plein-air") and le paysage de style, or le paysage composé (exemplified by Nicolas Poussin), considered the new tendency toward the latter as a reaction against the former. It is in the sense of "landscape of Style," that he refers to the "decorative landscape" ("entrevu comme fond linéaire dans une fresque"), when he says,

On s'oriente de plus en plus vers le Paysage décoratif c'est-à dire vers la composition, pleine d'attirances, de noblesses, -et d'accueils.

Pittoresque et eurythmie se disputent désormais l'atelier du plein-air: deux volontés rivales. Après les effluves documentaires de l'optique impressionniste et du reportage naturaliste, l'art revient au style par lequel débuta Corot, précurseur des douces lumières amies des mélodieux songes.

(Raymond Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, p.113. For the dichotomy LIGHT/STYLE see especially Ibid., p.114 and L'Artiste, July 1893, p.37.)

As Lecomte, Bouyer advocates an art that balances the two poles (which were also representative of other dichotomies: color/line, truth/beauty, reality/dream, etc.),

"...et le miracle d'une peinture nouvelle ne serait-il pas d'être moderne en restant artiste, de sentir la lumière en dégageant le style?"

(Bouyer, L'Artiste, July 1893, p.46.)

Also, similar to Lecomte's comments are Bouyer's remarks on the decorative tendencies of the Impressionists. On Monet of 1890s he said:

Aussi discutée que la Série de Meules (1891), la Série de Peupliers (1892) d'une largeur plus sobre, vient de nous découvrir un réel plein de rêve, sinon de style, la variété dans l'unité, un milieu exact qui veut devenir un ambitieux décor;

On Camille Pissarro (referring to the recent exhibition at Durand-Ruel in February 1892), Renoir (Durand-Ruel, May 1892) and Degas (Durand-Ruel, November 1892), he said:

...cette suite historique d'impressions aériennes [Pissarro's], si logiquement progressive depuis les Sapins à Louveciennes (no.1, 1870) encore très homogènes et classique, procédant de Corot, jusqu'à l'harmonieuse audace d'un Soleil Couchant améthyste et or (no.40, 1891), - nous révélait, au déclin d'un siècle las, une sorte d'Old Crone précurseur renouant avec une laborieuse énergie rurale le passé d'un art à son double avenir. Après Diaz, après Whistler, les réalistes Renoir et Degas recherchent déjà l'harmonie, la synthèse, dans de simples oppositions "decoratives" de lignes et de teintes. Et si l'extériorité vibrante est déjà tempérée par la préoccupation de "l'arabesque ornementale,"- le nouveau style ou plutôt la velléité d'un nouveau style restaure la ligne en heritant de la lumière acquise...

Bouyer pointed out that the young artists found Impressionism deficient:

...les jeunes eux-mêmes accusent l'impressionnisme d'insuffisance. Le réel et le rêve livrent bataille sur son nom; la pensée déclare partout la guerre à toutes les banalités: le Beau redevient à la mode...

(See Bouyer, L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, pp.117-18.)

⁷⁶ See Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.7, 1892, p.50, where he said:

...ces recherches de lumière nous apparaissent, non comme un résultat définitif, non comme un sommet atteint, mais plutôt comme un moyen propice à la réalisation de plus incontestables tendances: permettant de restituer les complexes éléments des harmonies naturelles, elles permettent ainsi d'en mieux rendre la magnificence décorative.²⁷
See also L'Art Moderne No.8, p.58.

77 See Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.8, p.58. Lecomte describes such "beautiful compositions" (whose beauty was not only ornamental, but also due to the preservation of the "character" of things) in which his "friend and maître" Camille Pissarro uses line in an ornamental way:

...fit voguer dans ses ciels limpides des nuages gracieusement arabesqués, compléta par l'incurvation de la croupe des bêtes ou par l'inflexion du dos de ses paysannes la courbe décrite par le tronc d'un arbre, associa aux ondulations du sol les jolies volutes des ramures et des frondaisons.

Lecomte's comments on Pissarro's art were very similar in fact with Aurier's. The latter was favorably impressed by Pissarro's latest exhibits at Boussod et Valadon in 1890 (exhibition organized by Theo van Gogh), and remarked on the "rhythm of the contours" (to which he referred also as to "mysterious linear music"), giving also a description similar to Lecomte's. Aurier, also, considered the painting Berger sous une averse, "d'une synthèse de dessin si magistrale, est, à ce point de vue de simplification technique, un vrai chef-d'oeuvre." (Aurier, Oeuvres Posthumes, pp.242 and 244; see also n.54, above.)

78 Ibid. Lecomte exemplifies this with the art of Monet: ...qui plus longtemps se borna, mais avec quelle puissance d'évocation! à rendre en leur intensité fugace les rapides effets naturels, semble de plus abstraire des complexes apparences le caractère durable des choses, en accentuer, par un rendu plus synthétique et plus réfléchi, la signification et la beauté décorative.

At the time, line was supposed to render what is permanent (color what is fugitive). Monet is seen as using line to this purpose, as well as in an ornamental way, for its own sake. See also Ch.I, Part 2, n.58 for similar comments on Pissarro, in La Plume.

79 See also, p.

80 Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.9, p.66. Lecomte exclaimed: Ce ne sont plus des simplifications de formes, mais bien des ablations de formes. Or, de telles synthèses, destructives du vrai, de telles interprétations si distantes de la réalité, ne peuvent plus séduire plastiquement, même si elles aboutissent à des ensembles harmoniques. See also L'Art Moderne, No.9, p.67

81 Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.9, pp.66-67. Compare with the tapestry-tableau versus tapestry-decoration discussion (Part 1). The Ideists to whom Lecomte referred did nothing else but follow the principles of decoration to the letter.

82 L'Art Moderne, No.9, p.67.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 In the set of rules formulated by Joséphin (Sâr) Péladan on the occasion of the first Salon de la Rose-Croix in 1891, the subject-matter dealing with the "Catholic Ideal" and "Mysticism" occupied the place of honor, followed by "Legend, Myth, Allegory, the Dream, the Paraphrase of great poetry..." Péladan also preferred "work which has a mural-like character." (Quoted by Mary Anne Stevens in Post-Impressionism, Cross-Currents in European Painting, London, 1979-1980, p.24.)

Maurice Denis, the theoretician of the Nabis, protested against Lecomte's attack:

Nous nous étonnons que des critiques renseignés, comme M. Georges Lecomte (Georges Lecomte: L'Art impressionniste, -Revue del'Evolution, 15 Mars 1892) se soient plu a confondre les tendances mystiques et allegoriques, 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'oeuvre d'art.

(M. Denis, "Le Salon de Champ-de-Mars. L'Exposition de Renoir," Revue Blanche, 25 June 1892 (signed Pierre L. Maud), or M. Denis, Theories: 1890-1910, Paris: Bibliothèque de l'Occident, 1913, p.17.)

Denis insisted that it is irrelevant where the painters find their motifs, or if they express religious emotions instead of other emotions. But he acknowledges that there is a general infatuation with religious subjects at the time, a fad that actually enticed many artists to give a mystic pretext to their studies done from nature.

Lecomte might have been influenced by Pissarro, who was well aware of the mystic tendencies, "the bustling of religious symbolists, religious socialists, idealist art, occultism, Buddhism, etc., etc." claimed that "Gauguin has sensed the tendency." (Camille Pissarro, letter of 13 May 1891, Letters to his son Lucien, N.Y., 1972, p.171.) In an earlier letter (April 20, 1891), in which he criticized Aurier's article on Gauguin, he wrote:

Gauguin is not a seer, he is a schemer who has sensed that the bourgeoisie are moving to the right...- The symbolists also take this line! What do you think? They must be fought like the pest!

86 I want to point out that I do not understand by "Naturalism" simply naturalistic, trompe-l'oeil, photographic rendering, coupled with a realist subject-matter. This was the "Salon Naturalism." It goes without saying that such naturalism is incompatible with the principles of "true" decoration. I am not referring to Jules Antoine Castagnary's definition of naturalism, which was quite encompassing (included Velasquez, Zurbaran, Ribera, Titian, Veronese) and did not refer to any school in particular. (See J.A. Castagnary, "1868: Naturalism Further Defined," in L. Nochlin, Realism and Tradition in Art, 1848-1900, Prentice-Hall, 1966, pp.66-68.) In fact, in some respects, since Castagnary allowed for "invention" and "composition"

(provided that it was concealed), he was departing from the positivist, empirical method of direct observation. But this positivism and empiricism constituted the main ingredients of Zola's Naturalism (Zola was a follower of Taine), which did not allow for "composition," voluntary, conceptual, alterations of the observed reality. It was against this Naturalism (which was a movement) that critics like Aurier (who specifically referred to Zola and Taine) and the Symbolists in general reacted. This Naturalism did not even call for naturalistic representation, but its philosophy was also incompatible with decoration, and with the concept of "decorative" defined in an idealist framework.

87 Neither Monet nor Renoir were willing to give up the independent status of painting, yet like all Impressionists, from the start they intended their paintings to serve a dual purpose: as tableaux and as decorative paintings. (See also n.73 and later, n.143.) As tableaux, their paintings had a chance of being exhibited at the Salon. As decorative paintings they could decorate the homes of an elite of amateurs (mostly bourgeois) able to appreciate an art that shocked the crowds at the Salon. They were not however willing to accept the principles of "true decoration," even when they did not care much about preserving the "Naturalist image," because they were not willing to accept the lead of architecture. In the 1870s, Renoir had already expressed interest in monumental decoration, but he is the typical example of the painter who would rather see the architectural construction only as a container for his painted work. He thought that Delacroix' paintings in the chapel of Saint-Sulpice: "sont l'oeuvre capitale, la Chapelle n'est que le prétexte à faire de l'art." (Pierre Auguste Renoir, "L'Art décoratif et contemporain," L'Impressionniste, no.4, 28 April, 1877, reproduced in L. Venturi, Les Archives de L'Impressionniste, 1939, p.326.) While criticizing contemporary monumental decoration as being nothing else than large scale academic tableaux, nowhere did he mention the subservience of the painting to the surface that is supposed to decorate. Renoir was interested in the harmony of the ensemble only in terms of color and mood, and defined painted decoration only in terms of coloristic effect:

L'oeuvre peinte dans la décoration n'a de valeur que parce qu'elle est polychrome; plus les tons seront variés dans leur harmonie, plus une peinture sera décorative.

(Ibid)

Renoir expressed the opinion that the painters, not the architects, should be in charge of the monuments in construction. (Ibid., p.329) As I already pointed out, Monet's intended "decorations" were no different from his small scale decorative tableaux, and later he demonstrated that he shared Renoir's opinion on reversing the roles of architect and painter: an architectural structure was built for his monumental Nymphéas decorations, not the other way around. See also n.73 and n.74, above.

88 For example Carrière, an artist concerned with the social role of art, who was also reacting against Naturalism, did

not choose the same path as the Pont Aven or Nabi groups to express this reaction. He did not want his painting to be understood only by a few, therefore he did not eschew the narrative, the "literature" in painting as a means of expression. It is not that Carrière, who begun his artistic career as a lithographer, believed less than Aurier in the role of art to decorate our "banal walls" (he actually was one of the first to be pre-occupied with the ornamental role of line in painting), but he also believed in the special status of painting and in the tableau. Artists (like Carrière) and critics (like Geffroy) who were very much concerned with the role of art in society were well aware that only mass produced decorative arts could embellish the walls of ordinary people.

89 See also Ch.I, Part 1, n.45.

90 See also Ch.I, Part 1, pp.17-18 and Ch.II, Part 2, n.49.

91 Ch. Blanc, "Salon de 1866," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Ser.1, Vol.20, 1866, p.500.

92 See also Ch.1, Part 1, pp.46-47 and p. 50.

93 See for example Zola's "Salons" of 1879, 1880, and especially of 1896 (Emile Zola, Le bon combat. De Courbet aux Impressionistes, ed. J-P. Bouillon, Hermann, 1974, pp.205-6 and 264, in particular).

94 If the artists' patrons, the amateurs of art, thought that "art for art's sake" was supposed to emphasize now also line, style, composition, not only the "materialistic" aspects of painting (they were influenced in this by avant-garde as well as "official" critics, also often they were the critics), artists who did not comply with the latest trend, with what was considered "modernity" at the time, risked to lose their patrons and their dealers, as well as their status. The avant-garde "art for art's sake" of the early 1890s was anti-Naturalist.

95 Even artists like Bernard and Sérusier, adopted in the early 1890s the "tapestry-look," probably because they became sensitive to the criticism concerning the lack of "Western tradition" in their works (see for example A. Germain's criticism in La Plume of 1891). In fact, Bernard, as we shall see later, will join Péladan and his circle in 1891. In any event, the flat painting (lack of depth, as well as flat tints, lack of modelling) was to be interpreted as an idealist statement only until the mid-1890s, as I will discuss it in the next section.

96 Vincent van Gogh, letter no.512, to his brother Theo, The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh, Greenwich, Conn., 1959, Vol.II, p.617.

97 See C. Pissarro, letter of 14 May 1887, Letters to his son Lucien, p.107. In a letter of 20 October 1892 (op.cit.,

p.204, or in the French ed., Albin Michel, 1950, p.294), he flatly declared: "Le tableau - décoration est absurde."

98 A.M. Hammacher, in "The Changing Values of Light-Space-Form between 1876 and 1890," Problems of the 19th and 20th Centuries Studies in Western Art, Acts of the XX International Congress of the History of Art, IV, Princeton, 1963, p.105, stressed the existence of the two "non-academic" currents at the time. He pointed out that if one does not overstress the importance of Impressionism in the 19th c., "The idea of discontinuity in the development of art in the second half of the century disappears." So does the idea of a "reaction" against Impressionism, according to him.

According to Maurice Denis, Puvis' painting was "art for art's sake." Already in 1890 when he first formulated his well-known definition of a painting, Denis stressed the self-sufficiency of lines and colors, the formal elements. Talking about Puvis' Hémicycle at the Sorbonne, "which for the vulgar [my underlining] necessitates a written explanation," he said:

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.

(Denis, Théories, p.9.)

99 See Aimée Brown Price, "The Decorative Aesthetic in the Work of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes," in Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1977, pp.21-26.

Puvis did this at a time when easel painting and decorative painting (mural decorations) obeyed two separate sets of laws, as was shown in Part 1. Pissarro's reaction, as late as 1895, was that Puvis' paintings could not be considered as independent paintings: "On a great stone wall it is admirable... but it is not painting," therefore they should not be exhibited as such. (C. Pissarro, letter of 21 Nov. 1895, Letters, p.275.) Pissarro's reaction was similar to Ch. Blanc's almost thirty years earlier.

100 Paul Flat, "La peinture. Au Salon de Champ-de-Mars," L'Artiste, Vol.5, 1893, p.415.

101 See Aurier, "Le Symbolisme en peinture," 1891, p.165.

102 Jacques Daurelle, "Chez les jeunes peintres," L'Echo de Paris, 28 Dec. 1891.

103 Ibid. Only a year earlier Denis published his by now famous (used and misused) definition of a painting (in this general sense one should interpret his use of the word tableau):

Se rappeler qu'un tableau- avant d'être un
cheval de bataille, une femme nue, ou une quel-
quonque anecdote- est essentiellement une
surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un
certain ordre assemblées.

(Signed Pierre Louis, "Définition du Néo-Traditionnisme," Art

et critique, 23 Aug. 1890; reprinted in Theories, 1913, p.1.) This definition, together with the declaration from L'Echo, represent a hybrid of Charles Blanc's definition of painting (this connection was already made by H.B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, Univ. Calif., 1973, p.94. - he wrongly translated the crucial expression surface unie, as "single surface."), with idealist and formalist overtones, and Viollet-le-Duc's comments on Medieval painting (which was ornamental in its function). Ch. Blanc defined painting (Grammaire des arts du dessin, 4th ed., 1882, p.480):

La peinture est l'art d'exprimer toutes les conceptions de l'ame au moyen de toutes les réalités de la nature, représentées sur une surface unie dans leurs formes et dans leurs couleurs.

Viollet-le-Duc said (Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française, XI^e-XVI^e siècles, Vol.7, p.62),

Ce n'était donc pas sans raison que les peintres du moyen âge voyaient dans la peinture, soit qu'elle figurât des scènes, soit qu'elle ne se composât que d'ornements, une surface qui devait toujours paraître plane, solide, qui était destinée non à produire une illusion, mais une harmonie.

Pierre Bonnard expressed in L'Echo of 1891 an opinion similar to Denis':

La peinture, nous dit, d'ailleurs, M. Pierre Bonnard, doit être surtout decorative. Le talent se révélera dans la façon dont les lignes seront disposées

(Nota bene the emphasis on the lines.)

104 Dom W. Verkade, Le tourment de Dieu, étapes d'un moine peintre, Paris, 1923, p.94, quoted in Roseline Bacou, "Décors d'appartements au temps des Nabis," Art de France, Vol.IV, 1964, p.190.

105 See M. Denis, "A propos de l'exposition d'A.Séguin," Théories, p.23 (reprinted from La Plume, March 1, 1895). Denis wrote:

Et comme il fallait que la réaction fût violente contre l'ambiance naturaliste, ces jeunes peintres entreprirent de tout recommencer. Ils pensèrent ramener l'Art à la simplicité de son début, alors que sa destination decorative était encore incontestée.

As I mentioned before, Denis reacted especially against the academic naturalism, of the type he had to absorb at the Academie Julian.

106 Naturism was however in the peculiar position of having something to offer to both "enemy camps," thus attracting sympathisers among Dreyfusards, Radicals or even Socialists, as well as among Catholic reactionaries of the Right, such as Charles Maurras or Joachim Gasquet. The explanation resides probably in the fact that Naturism was not only an aesthetic movement per se. It was against the "art for art's sake"

dictum, as Le Blond made clear in his Essai sur le naturisme of 1896:

Dans l'étreinte universelle, nous voulons
rejeunir notre individu. Nous revenons vers
la Nature. Nous recherchons l'émotion saine
et divine. Nous nous moquons de l'art pour
l'art...

(Quoted in Marcel Raymond, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, new and revised ed., Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1966, p.66.) Saint-Georges de Bouhéliier (he and Le Blond were the main protagonists of Naturism) declared: "ce qu'on appelle le naturisme est bien plus une morale qu'une doctrine d'art." (Ibid., p.67.) Naturism was not only an aesthetic doctrine, but also a moral and social one. The Naturists believed that art has a social mission, but exactly what this mission was, was interpreted differently by writers and artists of the left and of the right. (See a resume of the main ideas of Le Blond and Bouhéliier in Michel Décaudin, La crise des valeurs symbolistes. Vingt ans de poésie française, 1895-1914, Toulouse: Privat Editeur, 1960, p.65. Décaudin discusses in detail the Naturist movement and its consequences in this book, but he has the tendency to downplay the importance of the Dreyfus Affair. This book is particularly illuminating in respect to relationship between Gide and the Naturists. Other books recommended for the topic of Naturism (and Romanic School) are the above mentioned one by M. Raymond, as well as Kenneth Cornell, The Symbolist Movement, New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1951, rpt. Archon Books, 1970.

107 Denis had a long lasting friendship with Gide, that began around the time he illustrated with twenty nine lithographs the writer's Voyage d'Urien in 1893.

Gide, who was a disciple of Mallarmé (as is evident in his Traité du Narcisse of 1891), in his Voyage d'Urien of 1893 ridiculed the exclusive preoccupation of Symbolists with the spiritual and metaphysics. During the winter 1894-1895 he worked at his book Les Nourritures Terrestres, fragments of which appeared in the fall of 1895 and beginning of 1896 in L'Art jeune and in L'Ermitage. The book was first published in 1897 by Mercure de France and "shook Symbolism in the name of Life" (see Auguste Anglès, André Gide et le premier groupe de la Nouvelle Revue Française, Paris: Gallimard, 1978, p.327). Gide was not actually a Naturist; even though he seriously courted them for a while, he did not want to be considered as one of the Naturists, especially after Bouhéliier's "manifesto" of the Naturist school was published in January 1897 in the Figaro with the help of Zola. Yet critics persisted in considering Gide a Naturist, as for example Leon Blum who wrote in his column "Les Livres" in La Revue Blanche:

Si le naturisme, comme je le crois, n'est
qu'une revendication du droit au lyrisme, un
retour aux conceptions les plus larges de la
nature et de la vie, et, par opposition aux
théories individualistes ou mystiques, l'affir-
mation d'un panthéisme romantique et concret,
les Nourritures terrestres sont bien un livre
naturiste, et, quand un jour on cherchera les

inspirateurs et les chefs de cette renaissance inattendue, il faudra nommer M. Gide.

(L. Blum, "Les Livres. André Gide: Les Nourritures Terrestres, La Revue Blanche, Vol.13, No.98, July 1, 1897, 0.78.)

In September 1898 in his Lettre à Angèle, Gide irritated by the so called "Jammes affaire" protested that "ill-informed critics" included him in the Naturist school.

For both Gide and M. Denis, 1898 marked the turning point in their orientation toward classicism. They were together in Rome that year, and Denis, by his own admission (letter to Vuillard, 22 Feb. 1898, Journal, I, p.138) found his conversations with Gide "very useful."

Gide was very much admired by representatives of the Meridional School, such as Emmanuel Signoret, Edmond Jaloux, or Joachim Gasquet.

108 See M. Décaudin, La Crise des Valeurs Symbolistes, p. 94.

109 Roger Marx, in "Les Salons de 1895," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 3d Ser., Vol.14, 1895, p.22, referred to the young Symbolists as "an active ferment of the contemporary art," and declared that they, "do not profess the hatred of nature, no more than the pupils of M. Gustave Moreau do;" (Marx mentioned before Moreau's pupils, such as for example Desvallières).

They simply refuse to be "fac-similistes," and, ...ils opposent à l'exactitude enfantine des images photographiques, les abréviations éloquentes des synthèses décoratives. ...mais, parce que le principe de leur doctrine les a conduits aux sources vives de la tradition médiévale, certains inclinent à les accuser d'archaïsme ou même d'ignorance.

(Ibid., pp.22-23.)

110 M. Denis, "A Propos de l'Exposition d'A. Séguin," Théories, p.22 (first published in La Plume, March 1st, 1895. At the beginning of 1895, even the main protagonists of Naturism were not completely free of idealism; they were even tempted to choose the name "ideo-realism" (already used by Mauclair and other critics), instead of "Naturism," name adapted only at the end of 1895.

111 M. Denis, Théories, p.33 (from "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," L'Art et la Vie, Oct. 1896). Denis said:

J'ai toujours attaché beaucoup d'importance à l'idée symboliste. C'était vraiment une lumière pour des esprits navrés de naturalisme, et en même temps trop épris de peinture pour donner dans les rêveries idéalistes. Une fois encore et quoi qu'il se fasse un peu tard, dans cette revue propice, j'insiste sur le caractère méconnu d'un mouvement célèbre.

Certes non ce n'était pas une théorie idéaliste.

112 Ibid.

113 See M. Denis, Théories, p.21 (from La Plume, March 1, 1895). Denis did not mention Cézanne in the interview in L'Echo of Dec.1891, in fact avoided then in giving a straight answer to the question about the most admired master. In fact Denis was not directly influenced by Cézanne in his Symbolist period, as Gauguin and Bernard were. There are no signs of such influence in his paintings, nor does he mention Cézanne in his Journal or other writings, in that period. He did mention Cézanne's name only together with Monet's, Degas', Pissarro's and Renoir's, when indicated they were imitated at the Salon de Champ-de-Mars by the young painters. (See Théories, p.15.)

114 See M. Denis, Théories, p.28 (from "Preface de la IX^e Exposition des Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes," at Le Barc de Bouteville, in 1895), and p.23 (see quote in n.105, above).

115 Théories, p.28.

116 See André Gide, Les Nourritures Terrestres, 97th ed., Librairie Gallimard, 1937, p.118.

117 After rejecting the concept that a painting is a "window open to nature" ("qu'un tableau est une fenêtre ouverte sur nature"), Denis gave this definition:

...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.

(M. Denis, Théories, p.26, from "Préface de la IX^e Exposition des Peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes," at Barc de Bouteville, 1895.) Compare this definition with the one given in 1890 (see n.103, above).

118 Mauner considered that in the year 1895 the Nabis re-examined their principles (Denis' writings providing a proof of this), and that after 1896 there is a definite break with Symbolism in their art. (See George L. Mauner, The Nabis: Their History and Their Art, 1888-1896, Garland Publ., 1978, Ch.VIII and Ch.IX.)

119 See Mary Anne Stevens, in Post-Impressionism..., Royal Acad. exh., London, 1979, p.147.

120 See for example Misia (Natanson) au Piano, c.1894, reproduced in A. Gold and R. Fizdale, Misia. The Life of Misia Sert, N.Y., 1981.

121 If there is symbolism in the paintings, it is expressed now in the subject-matter, not in the formal elements, as it was claimed to be in the Symbolist painting. It has been suggested (See M.A. Stevens, Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, p.148) that Vuillard's intimiste scenes have an affinity with Ibsen's and Maeterlink's plays.

122 See for example The Barrel Organ Grinder of 1895 (Cat. Post-Impr. No.32), which has some spatial recession. Madamme

Vuillard Sewing also of 1895 (No.237, color plate on p.110, op. cit.), or even better, Mother and Sister of the Artist (given as c.1892, No.236) by Vuillard, show that his space also, while shallow, is not completely two-dimensional (as it was for example in Little Girls Walking, c.1891.No.233).

123 P. Ranson was born in Limoges, attended the School of Decorative Arts there, then transferred to the one in Paris in 1886. He also attended Academie Julian like Denis and Sérusier. His painting Woman Standing Beside a Balustrade with a Poodle (cat. Post-Impr. No.164, c.1895) is very Art Nouveau in style. Mauner (The Nabis, p.202) considered him "the only genuine Art Nouveau painter in the group."

Art Nouveau (the international style that began in Belgium) was born from the desire to create a modern style (as opposed to imitation of older styles) in the decorative arts and architecture. As a fairly recent annotated bibliography of Art Nouveau states, "Painting has little to do with Art Nouveau. What is often called Art Nouveau painting is more accurately Symbolist painting." (see Richard Kempton, Art Nouveau, Los Angeles, 1977, p.xvii.)

124 Compare for example The Annunciation of 1890 (see Goldwater, Symbolism, fig.90) with The Sacred Wood of 1893 (Goldwater, fig.89). Compare also the last one with Procession Under the Trees of 1892 (Cat.Post-Impr.No.67, reproduced in color op. cit., p.109). In the Procession the leaves' shadows form an arabesque pattern, contrasting with the sober lines of the figures gathered in a religious procession. In the Sacred Wood (signed, and dated 1893) there is only a slight suggestion of something mysterious and sacred. Here the line becomes sensuous because it outlines and emphasized the sensuality of female bodies, materiality, not spirituality. Aurier would not have approved of this painting. This line also lost the awkwardness of the Symbolist expressive distortions.

125 Mauner (The Nabis, p.122) has suggested that Ranson's three paintings exhibited in 1893 at the Antwerp Association pour l'Art had a strong influence on the development of Art Nouveau in Belgium. M.A. Stevens also implied that the paintings exhibited by French artists (such as Denis) at the Libre Esthétique in Brussels, had a role to play in the emergence of Art Nouveau. (Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, p.66.)

The birthday of Art Nouveau (the international style which will be known also as "Jugendstil," "Style Liberty," "Modern Style," etc.) is considered to have occurred in 1893, in Belgium, with Victor Horta's Tassel House in Brussels. The novelty of this "decorative style" owes a great debt to French influences. First of all Horta was influenced by Viollet-le-Duc's work. Also, stylistic developments of the French avant-garde were assimilated into Art Nouveau, an important role in this process being played by the participation of French painters at the exhibitions held by Les XX and La Libre Esthétique. Art Nouveau (especially through Van de Velde) was also influenced by English design and William Morris.

126 See Robert Goldwater's discussion of the differences between Symbolism and Art Nouveau, in Symbolism, 1979, pp.17-24 and 69-70.

127 On V.P. Galland see Ch.I, Part 1, no.19.
Eugene Grasset (1841-1917) was a prominent figure in the development of Art Nouveau. He was influenced by Viollet-le-Duc, and declared that one should return to the Middle Ages, "pas pour le copier, mais pour reprendre le mouvement là où la Renaissance l'a interrompu." (Nocq, Tendances Nouvelles, 1896, p.14.) He also studied Japanese art, and was very insistent on using ornamental motifs derived from nature. Grasset said,

On trouvera dans la nature tous les
éléments de décoration qu'on pourra désirer.
La nature, voilà le livre d'art ornemental
qu'il faut consulter.

(Nocq, p.15)

In 1896 Camille Mauclair formulated this "principle of decorative art," on which the new "modern style, taken from the life that surrounds us," was supposed to be based:

...la déformation ornementale des objets et des êtres, l'emploi des formes et des couleurs à la composition d'une harmonie ne représentant rien, ne donnant pas d'émotion de pensée comme l'oeuvre d'art, mais simplement un plaisir d'aspect, un contentement et un accompagnement à l'esprit, toutes ces antiques notions du tapis, de la robe, de la tenture connues si génialement par les brodeuses arabes ou persanes, par les artisans de tapisserie de lice du moyen âge, renaissaient et s'apprêtaient pour la découverte d'un style moderne, tiré de la vie qui nous entoure, et tuant l'imitation des vieux styles dont se contenaient les magasins jusqu'alors.⁹⁰

(C. Mauclair, "L'art décoratif en France," La Nouvelle Revue, Vol.98, Jan.-Feb., 1896, p.736.) This "principle" makes an interesting comparison with Emile Bernard's formulation of Symbolism. (See p.56) It emphasizes only the "ornamental distortion" (that which Denis called "objective distortion"), and not the distortions according to what Idea was to be expressed ("selon ce qu'il veut dire," as Bernard said). In the same article, Mauclair emphasized clearly the meaning of this decorative art, which can be placed in 180 degrees opposition to Aurier's:

L'art décoratif, c'est un art où la conception intellectuelle de l'artiste, au lieu d'exprimer ou de susciter une émotion intérieure, doit tendre avant tout vers une expression visible, c'est-à-dire beaucoup plus semblable à celle des spectacles naturels qu'à celle qui naît de la pensée de l'homme.

(C. Mauclair, op.cit., p.726.)

128 Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau opened practically simultaneously with a museum of "new art" in Brussels, by the

society of Maison d'Art. (See C. Mauclair, "L'art décoratif en France," pp.740-42 on Bing's entreprise.) It held its first exhibition December 1895- January 1896, when Ranson exhibited tapestries, Denis a bedroom for a young girl, Vuillard panels, and Bonnard screens. Many Nabis made designs for stained glass, which were executed by Tiffany in the United States. (On the Nabis' involvement with Bing's Art nouveau see also Peter Selz ed., Art Nouveau, 1975, p.11, and Mauner, The Nabis, p.176.)

Henri van de Velde was also strongly involved with Bing's Maison.

130 C. Mauclair, "L'Art décoratif en France," 1896, p.730. Mauclair touched upon an important issue here, namely that the Impressionists intended their works to be seen as decorative paintings. As Levine pointed out, early critics of Impressionism, in the early 1870s, saw their paintings as decorative (see Ch.I, Part 2, n.73).

In the history of the "decorative revolution" that Mauclair considered as started by the Impressionists, he claimed that Degas did for line what Monet did for color:

M. Degas fit pour les lignes un travail documentaire analogue, en établissant des rapports d'une subtilité incroyable entre les lignes mouvantes d'un personnage et celles, immuables, du milieu où il se meut, ce qui est encore un principe décoratif.

(Mauclair, op.cit., p.732.)

131 Ibid., p.733. From what Pissarro said with regard to the distinction he wanted to maintain between "decorative" paintings and "decorations" (see Ch.I, Part 2, n.97), it appears that Mauclair was right.

The confusion in terminology of which we must be aware is evident in the dialogue between two generations of painters, represented by Camille and Lucien Pissarro. They also represented the difference between British and French concepts of decoration at the time. Lucien understood the "decorative" in the sense of "decoration," which in his case implied a stylization inspired by the Pre-Raphaelite group in which he was working. He understood the "decorative" the same way the Symbolists did (even though he admitted to not being "symbolic enough for the decadents" - letter of May 5, 1892, Letters, p.378). For Camille, in painting, "decorative" meant still a decorative, polychrome "effect," and "external" art, above all, in the sense Blanc, Chesneau, Silvestre, understood it. It is not surprising then that he welcomed the new twist in the meaning of "decorative" (used without a pejorative connotation by many influential critics now, as opposed to the 1870s) in the mid-1890s in France, and even became involved with Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau, to Lucien's despair. In January 1896, Lucien wrote to his father:

What are you doing in that beer-garden?

You shouldn't have shown there!!! Your art is neither decorative nor new...

Your presence makes it look as if you're running after "shocking" things in order

to get noticed...
On February 18, 1895 Lucian had written to Camille:
Abroad (in Germany, Holland, Belgium,
etc.) they are beginning to abandon the
influence of the Impressionists to line
up under the banner of English art,
especially because of its decorative
tendencies.

Camille did not exhibit at Bing's only to get attention; the Art Nouveau philosophy, with its call for inspiration in nature and conscious revolt against imitation of old styles appealed to him. At various occasions he expressed the dissatisfaction with Lucien's Gothic revival:

I do not doubt that Morris' books are as beautiful as Gothic art, but it must not be forgotten that the Gothic artists were inventors and that we have to perform, not better, which is impossible, but differently and following our own bent... With this in view you will have to disregard friend Ricketts, who is of course a charming man, but from the point of view of art seems to stray from the true direction, which is the return to nature.

(Letter of Aug.19, 1898, Letters, p.329. On May 23, 1895, C. Pissarro had declared that "nature is our only hope in order to arrive at an art at once real and decorative"- my translation from the French edition of Letters.)

Similarly, on April 26, 1900, C. Pissarro wrote:
According to you, salvation lies with the primitives, the Italians. According to me, this is incorrect. Salvation lies in nature, now more than ever.

On "Bing's enterprise" he had this to say:

While I was in Paris this last time, I had an opportunity to discuss decorative art with Vanderveelde several times. However one may criticize Bing's enterprise, it has a certain value as a point of departure.

(Letter of Jan.5, 1896, Letters, p.279)

132 C. Mauclair, "Critique de la peinture," 1895, p.320.
Mauclair wrote:

Le goût même qu'on a des diverses matières va jusqu'à désirer les confondre, les imiter les unes par les autres. On fait cet éloge d'un tableau: "C'est un joli ton de tapis d'Orient." On dit: "Voyez donc cette chose à l'huile, c'est charmant, on jurerait voir un crépon japonaise!" On imite le lainage par des empâtements repris avec des martes dures; on imite les tons des anciennes toiles anglaises, ivoirines et mordorées, en se servant de jaune de Naples au lieu de

blanc; on imite l'huile en peignant à l'aquarelle sur une toile sans enduits; on imite l'aquarelle avec les veines d'un panneau de bois special; on imite les sépias avec un lavis d'encre sur pierre lithographique; on imite la lithographie avec le pyrographe; on imite l'aquatinte avec le vernis mou, on mêle tous les moyens, on augmente journellement l'intrusion de la chimie et de l'industrie dans l'art. On tend de plus en plus, - et c'est encore un prodrome certain de décadence, - à rendre un envoi intéressant par le procédé. Tout sollicite le connaisseur par la façon dont c'est fait. Avant de regarder ce que cela représente, on regarde en quoi c'est, comment c'est obtenu.

133 See A. Aurier, "Vincent van Gogh," Oeuvres Posthumes, pp.260-262. In his letter to Aurier, Van Gogh expressed his interest in imitating the aspect of the "beautiful Scottish tissues" ("ces jolis tissages écossais carrelés vert, bleu, rouge, jaune, noir..." - letter reproduced in Oeuvres Posthumes, p.268). He did not however go as far as Bonnard and Vuillard in imitating a checkered pattern.

134 In the letter of January 4, 1895, Camille Pissarro wrote to Lucien, in connection with his Belgian friend, Théo van Rysselberghe:

I should really like to see Théo rid himself of these shackles that make his paintings cold and inanimate, when he has such real talent as a painter and draftsman ...But I am afraid that his friendship for Signac makes him light-headed; it is strange that the technique doesn't bother them! The method, as I told him, is good only for mosaics, and thus there would be no reason to strive for modeling, it would be a purely decorative art, with what beautiful matière!
(Letters, p.255.)

135 P. Signac, D'Eugène Delacroix..., 1964, pp.111-112.

136 See M. Décaudin, La Crise des Valeurs Symbolistes, p.65, for the quotations.

I want to emphasize that I will use the term "pure painting" only in reference to "painting for painting's sake" in the materialistic sense.

137 Denis congratulated himself that his friendship with Adrien Mithouard and Albert Chapon provided him with a long collaboration at L'Occident, "a revue that replaced the arts and the letters in the atmosphere of tradition." (See Théories, p.124, n.1). L'Occident was founded in December 1901 by A. Mithouard, who also had founded Le Spectateur Catholique in 1897. Like Denis, he used to be a Symbolist,

and his poetry was actually compared at the time with Denis' painting. Mithouard was a defender of Catholicism, and as Denis said, together with Barrès and Maurras he "counselled us to look for a rule in the past of our race" (see Theories, p.264). Mithouard himself did not restrict tradition strictly to a Greco-Latin classicism as Denis did now, as he was an ardent admirer of the Gothic cathedral. For him this cathedral was the embodiment of harmony and order. On the social plan, as in art, Mithouard distinguished two categories: the harmonious and the expressive. In the Dreyfus Affaire, the anti-Dreyfusards - the partisans of order were the "harmonious" ones, the Dreyfusards - obsessed with the injustice, were the "expressive" ones. (See Décaudin, La crise des valeurs symbolistes, p.147).

In May 1905, Denis published in L'Ermitage the article "La réaction nationaliste," dedicated to his friend Mithouard, "who had the boldness to found L'Occident during the full-fledged Dreyfusist crisis." (Denis, Theories, p.181.) In this article Denis reacted against Mauguier, who criticized Neo-Classicism and the "Nationalistic Peril," accusing their exponents of being reactionary and retrograde. Denis exclaimed:

Nationalistes, ceux qui veulent que cet enseignement s'appuie surtout sur le vieux fond national, développe les qualités françaises de goût, de clarté et de mesure, et nous fasse retrouver auprès des statues de Chartres ou des tableaux de Poussin, cette conciliation qui fut chez nous, à nos bonnes époques, instinctive entre la nature et l'idée.

(Theories, p.184.)

He also added (p.186):

Il est naturel que des peintres qui ont du goût de la beauté décorative et un certain idéal de perfection, en viennent à demander aux chefs-d'oeuvre du Louvre l'excitation que les spectacles de la vie ne leur donnent plus.

138 "Order" becomes a key word for Denis. (See for example Theories, p.191 and 258.) Commenting on the fact that the partisans of "pure painting," according to him, took from Cézanne, and "glorified" his "negligences and imperfections," he said (Theories, p.247):

Essayons d'échapper aux préjugés qu'engendrent le dreyfusisme et la neurasthénie; ne soyons pas dupes de l'esprit de paradoxe, de désordre et de subtilité. Le fait est qu'on juge avec mépris une oeuvre d'exécution patiente; on n'admire plus que les ébauches et celles-là surtout dont l'invention sommaire et la facture rapide impliquent une sorte de nihilisme d'art: c'est la superstition de l'inachevé.

The connection made by Denis between "pure painting" and "anarchy" was commonplace among the partisans of classicism.

(See for example Fr. Monod, "Le Salon d'Automne," Art et Décoration, Vol.18, 1905, pp.189-99.) Emile Bernard held similar views, as will be discussed later, in Ch.II, Part 1.

139 See Denis, letter to Vuillard, 22 Feb.1898, Journal, Vol.1, pp.139-140, and Denis, Théories, p.86 (from "Les élèves d'Ingres," L'Occident, 1902).

140 As Marcel Raymond relates (From Baudelaire to Surrealisme, transl. from the French, London, 1961, p.53), Charles Maurras criticized the writers for "tracing the contours of every tiny sensation," for renouncing "style," for not imposing "order" on their ideas. He emphasized "harmony, form, style." He criticized Romanticists and Symbolists alike, for being content only with "expressing themselves," but lacking the knowledge "how to compose works."

Denis also criticized Symbolists' preoccupation with the "expression of oneself," and lack of real knowledge of composition. He was even harsher then (letter to Vuillard, 1898, Journal, Vol.1, p.140) with the Symbolists than toward the Impressionists, because he thought their "stenography of daily sensations" was even more rapid than of the Impressionists. See also Théories, p.51 (from "Les Arts à Rome ou la Méthode Classique," Le Spectateur Catholique, Nos.22, 24, 1898, wrongly listed as 1896 in Théories) and Journal, Vol.1, p.120 (entry for Sept. 1897).

Later Denis will try to connect Symbolism with Classicism.

141 Denis, Théories, p.27. Denis did not actually name the litterateurs to whom he referred, neither did he name those who "are invoking the Laws of nature and the Norm of Harmony" (Théories, p.21). This was however the language used by Moréas now, as well as by Alphonse Germain (who did criticize the Nabis' distortions, and was a supporter of Rose-Croix and of classicist tradition - see the quotes in Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, pp.24 and 49). Germain was the one who advocated "to chose beautiful lines and beautiful forms according to the laws of nature," and to cover the walls with frescoes which featured "harmonious pattern of colour bounded by the knowledgeable lines of the masters!" Denis did not want to exhibit with Rose-Croix (as Bernard and Filiger did) in the early 1890s.

In some respect the attacks of the Naturists and of the Classicists on Symbolism were similar, because both groups wanted a closer relationship between Art and Nature, and condemned Symbolist "distortions."

142 See Denis' letter to Vuillard, of 22 Feb. 1898, Journal, Vol.1, p.139. Denis seemed to have forgotten that in 1895 he also favoured "sensualism."

143 Denis did write in June 1892 an article in the Revue Blanche, which he signed Pierre L. Maud (see Théories, pp.14-20) in which he protested Lecomte's criticism of the Symbolists.

144 Théories, p.28 (from "Preface de la IX^e exposition des peintres Impressionnistes et Symbolistes," 1895).

145 Denis, Théories, p.84 (1901).

146 Denis complained that at the Salon of the Société des Artistes Français he "met" Julian (of Academy Julian) instead of Ingres. The academies, according to Denis (who studied at Julian's), taught "Bastien-Lepage or the Empiricism." (See Théories, pp.83 and 86.)

Denis, unlike Gauguin, did talk about "Style" only after his conversion to Neo-Classicism, and criticized Nabis' Symbolism for lack of sufficient reflection and method. His criticism of the Nabis is illuminating, because it indicates that in many respects their Symbolism was similar to Impressionism: to record a fleeting sensation: only the nature of this sensation was different, due to different philosophies. Also, the main instrument in writing down these "emotive states," in the Nabis' case was the "line." Denis did admit later that Gauguin's Symbolism was more connected with Classicism, and less subjective. (See Théories, pp.166, 263, 258.)

147 Denis will write in 1905 in L'Ermitage: "Mais pourquoi l'idéalisme a-t-il cessé d'être positif, de s'appuyer sur des réalités?" (Théories, p.183.) In 1909 he wrote:

Langage de l'homme, signe de l'idée,
l'art ne peut pas ne pas être idéaliste.
Toute confusion sur ce point est, espérons-
le, définitivement écartée.

(Théories, p.268, from "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au Classicisme," L'Occident, May 1909.)

148 As it appears from his letters to Denis (see Denis, Journal, Vol.1, p.138, for example), Vuillard preferred uninvolvedness.

The avant-garde as a whole adopted an "art for art's sake" policy, which meant keeping art "pure," without involvement with moral or political issues, as well as without "literature." Even those artists concerned, with social issues, did not openly use their "Art," that is painting, as a means of fighting injustice. For example Pissarro did not paint his Turpitudes Sociales. Maximilien Luce might be considered an exception, but this is because he came from a working class background. At the most, they choose subject-matter such as "Stevedores" (as Vuillard did in the early 1890s), but without making any statement on the working conditions, or other problems. In Vuillard's painting the emphasis is on the Neo-Impressionist "dots" used in a more overtly decorative manner, human figures are flat and faceless (see the color plate in Post-Impressionism, London, 1879, p.109).

149 See Denis, Théories, p.261. On "temperament" and its physiological nature, see also Ch.II, Part 2, n.28. "Temperament" does not account for "voluntary," deliberate, conceptual aspects of painting, according to the idealist-oriented critics.

"Pure painting" upholds the "decorative tendency," but

eventually gains "independence" and self-sufficiency (concern with the surface of the painting, not of the wall, as we can see already in Carlos de Castera's comments on Cézanne in 1904 - see Ch.II, Part 1, p.114). Thus the status of "decoration" will be dropped.

Chapter II, Part 1.

¹ M. Denis, Théories, p. 165. Among the "gens du monde" we should count of course, the amateurs of art, the connoisseurs, the main patrons of the avant-garde artists.

The word "decorative" lost its pejorative connotation and gained respectability, when associated with classicism, reason, idealism. But even when reverted to its "materialistic," sensualistic, meaning by late 1890s, it was still a most desirable quality in a work of art, according to amateurs, critics, and avant-garde artists.

² For example, Alphonse Germain ("Théorie des Déformateurs," La Plume, 1 Sept. 1891, p. 290) declared that "Cézanne peina en dysphorien," and that Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh were "tempéraments intensifs, mais desiquilibrés et nullement latins." He reproached Emile Bernard and the Nabis their "distortions" inspired by these older artists, whom he considered as suffering from various maladies.

³ While a Naturalist belonging in Zola's group, Huysmans described the Impressionists as medical cases (see J.K. Huysmans, "L'Exposition des Indépendants en 1880," "L'Art Moderne," Paris: Charpentier, 1883, pp. 103-104.) In his letter to Pissarro in 1883 he specifically referred to Cézanne as an "eye case" and considered his works more appropriate for a medical museum than any other (see J. Rewald, History of Impressionism, 4th ed., New York: M.O.M.A., 1973, p. 474.) Even after his defection from the Naturalist camp, when he came to appreciate Cézanne, he still said the artist had "diseased retinas" (see J.K. Huysmans, "Paul Cézanne," La Plume, No. 57, 1 Sept. 1891, p. 301), but implied this defect led him to the discovery of a "new art." It is interesting to note that Huysmans compared the fruit in Cézanne's still lifes with the ceramic fruit exhibited by Chéret: "des fruits destinés aux vitrines des Chéret." (J.K. Huysmans, "Paul Cézanne," La Plume, No. 57, 1 Sept. 1891, p. 301.) J. Chéret, who was known especially for his posters, provided also models for ceramics made with new pastes and glazes at Sèvres. (See for example Ph. Garner ed., The Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts, 1890-1940, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Comp., 1978, p. 86.)

Huysman's article on Cézanne was published also in his Certains, but there Chéret's name was misspelled as "Chevet." (See for example J.K. Huysmans, Certains, 3^d ed., Paris: P.V. Stock, 1898.)

Thiébauld-Sisson (in Le Temps, Oct. 25 1906, quoted in Vollard, Cézanne, p. 124) declared: "It is not so much from

negligence or willfulness as is due to the conformation of his eye which will not permit him to push the most promising sketch to a conclusion," offering this as an explanation for Cézanne's paintings being arrested in the stage of "sketches."

In 1904 he did mention "the superb decorative feeling" of a still life exhibited by Cézanne at the Salon d'Automne. (See George Heard Hamilton, "Cézanne and His Critics," Cézanne. The Late Work, 1977, p. 147. I was unable to obtain the original article from Le Petit Temps.)

⁴ Jacques Daurelle, "Chez les Jeunes Peintres," L'Echo de Paris, 28 Dec. 1891. Anquetin, who declared he was not interested in such categories as Symbolism or Impressionism, also mentioned Renoir. Bernard added Redon.

Cézanne's paintings were actually named as a source of the Cloisonist style (that is to say, together with cloisonné enamels, stained-glass windows, Japanese prints, or popular woodblock prints known as Images d'Epinal) by Charles Chassé. In his books, Le Mouvement symboliste dans l'art du XIX^e siècle, Paris: Librairie Floury, 1947, p. 103, or Les Nabis et leur temps, Lausanne- Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1960, p. 104, he wrote on Emile Bernard: "... les cernés de Cézanne l'intéressèrent tout spécialement; avec Anquetin, il créa le cloisonnisme." Chassé had already in 1921 published a book on Gauguin and the Pont-Aven group, and another one in 1955. His research included discussions with many eye-witnesses, including artists such as Bernard, but he was well aware that such information could not be taken at face value. Chassé is at odds with the post-Cubism critics and art historians who persistently tried to build up a big gap between Cézanne and Gauguin. They emphasized Cézanne's "architectonical construction" versus Gauguin's "decorative flatness." Chassé emphasized their "common points" and the fact that Gauguin assimilated Cézanne's "synthetism." (See Le Mouvement symboliste, Ch. V: "Gauguin et Cézanne," or Les Nabis, Ch. III: "L'intervention de Gauguin et de Cézanne.")

Emile Bernard wrote in "La méthode de Paul Cézanne," Mercure de France, Vol.138, 15 Feb. 1920, p. 290:

Alors que Claude Monet, Renoir, etc., s'efforçaient de perdre les contours des objets et les soumettaient à l'air et à la lumière, Cézanne contournait d'un trait hardi, stylisé et volontaire les objets représentés, et s'attachait plus à leur localité qu'à l'air et à la lumière.

Chassé's suggestion that connects Cézanne's dark outlines with Cloisonism was more recently repeated by Mary Anne Stevens in the catalogue of the Royal Academy exhibition, Post-Impressionism, Cross-Currents in European Painting, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979, p. 21 and p. 31.

⁵ Quoted in Chassé, Le Mouvement symboliste, p. 121.

⁶ Ibid. Quoted by Chassé (p. 121) from E. Bernard,

"Julien Tanguy," Mercure de France, 16 Dec. 1908.

Gauguin first met Cézanne in the summer of 1881, when they all were in Pontoise with Pissarro.

⁷ See also M.A. Stevens, op. cit. in n.4. An even better example of Cézanne's "Cloisonism," is Ouverture to Tannhäuser (V.90, 1869-71) - Fig. 1. See also Ch. II, Part 2, n.34 on this painting.

Bernard's interest in Cézanne's early works is evident in his own paintings of the period on which Cloisonism was born, as for example in At the Cabaret (1887) - stylistically similar to Cézanne's The Orgy (1864-68, V.92), or in Still-life with cherries and figs (1887) - akin to earlier still-lives of Cézanne. Bernard's paintings mentioned here are reproduced in the Lille exhibition catalogue (E. Bernard, 1868-1941., April 12-June 12, 1967), listed as #5. Au Cabaret, #9. Nature morte aux cerises and figues. The author of the catalogue remarked upon the resemblance to Cézanne's paintings, but he continued to propagate the myth (to which, as will be shown here, Bernard's contribution was essential since 1904) that Cézanne does not outline forms, that his forms are brought about only by the "interplay of color" (see the catalogue's entry for #9).

Cézanne's pictures are indicated by their number in Venturi's catalogue, Lionello Venturi, Cézanne: son art-son oeuvre, Paris: Paul Rosenberg, 1936. Also Cézanne's portraits, spatially integrated with the design of the wallpaper backgrounds, no doubt influenced Bernard's Portrait of Père Tanguy (1887, Cat. Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, #13), and The Artist's Grandmother (1887, Cat. Lille, #6) - Fig. 2. In the period when Cloisonism was elaborated, Bernard imitated also Cézanne's style of his early 1880s, such as is evident in Still-life with a tobacco pot (1887, Cat. Lille #10) - Fig. 3. It is obvious from this painting that Bernard was more interested in Cézanne's outlines than in his "colour modulations."

⁸ Emile Bernard, "Paul Cézanne," Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui, Vol.8, No.387, 1981, n.pag. English translation in Linda Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism (1874-1904), 1966, pp. 100-102.

There was some confusion regarding the exact date of this article, because the year is not indicated on the publication (which has not been published with regularity). John Rewald (Post-Impressionism, 1978, p. 522) gives the year 1890 for this publication. More recently, Henri Dorra ("Extraits de la correspondance d'Emile Bernard des débuts à la Rose-Croix," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Ser.6, Vol.96, Dec. 1980, p. 238), on the basis of Bernard's letters, established that the article was already written in January 1891, and published in February-March 1891. Camille Pissarro mentioned the article in the letter of May 8, 1981 (see Letters, p. 167).

Bernard divided Cézanne's oeuvre into three categories: "early," "the light period" (l'époque claire) - which is the

"Impressionist" one, and considered by the younger painter as "Cézanne's most unsuccessful," and the "latest manner."

⁹ In fact this painting can be hardly included in the "latest manner." The ordered parallel strokes are not covering the whole picture, they are only incipient. The "Impressionist" manner is still evident. What attracted Bernard was the non-naturalist subject-matter.

¹⁰ L. Nochlin's translation, p. 102.

¹¹ Merete Bodelsen, "Gauguin's Cézannes," Burlington Magazine, Vol.104, 1962, p. 207. Bodelsen mentioned that Jean Leymarie suggested that this (V.490) is the painting Gauguin had in mind when wrote to Schuffenecker about Cézanne and his art. In this letter of 14 January 1885, Gauguin wrote:

Look at Cézanne, the misunderstood, an essentially mystic Eastern nature (he looks like an old man of the Levant). In his methods, he affects a mystery and the heavy tranquility of a dreamer; his colours are grave like the character of orientals; a man of the South, he spends whole days on the mountain top reading Virgil and looking at the sky. So his horizons are lofty, his blues most intense, and with him red has an amazing vibration. Virgil has more than one meaning and can be interpreted as one likes; the literature of his pictures has a parabolic meaning with two conclusions; his backgrounds are equally imaginative and realistic. To sum up: when we look at one of his pictures, we exclaim "Strange." But he is a mystic, even in drawing.

(P. Gauguin, Letters, op. cit., p. 34.)

Gauguin used Cézanne to exemplify his opinion that "lines and colors reveal also the more or less grand character of the artist," apart from other symbolic meanings. Gauguin was less interested than Bernard in Cézanne's lines, but more in his "vibrant" color, and his raised horizons. At the time Gauguin was interested in harmony of colors (making analogy with music) and saw drawing and coloring as one process ("Can you really make me believe that drawing does not derive from color, and vice-versa"), as is evident from his "Notes Synthétiques" written in 1884-1885 (see I, Part 2, n.65). Gauguin already understood Cézanne's "synthetism" of the 1880s, before Bernard. If he applied in 1888 to painting his Cloisonist style already developed in ceramics, it was under the influence of Bernard. Yet later Bernard will accuse Gauguin of "flatness" and of not understanding Cézanne.

¹² Bernard said: "Ici pas d'ombre positive, une clarté égale baigne, irise chaque chose; on dirait d'un bas-relief

très vieux,..."

¹³ See Henri Dorra, "Extraits de la corresp..." 1980, p. 239. Bernard exhibited in 1892 with Rose-Croix.

¹⁴ Aurier's article (which Bernard persuaded to write) is given by Rewald as the most likely cause of Bernard's break with Gauguin, and also as a probable cause, the Gauguin's auction in February 1891. In a letter to Schuffenecker, of August 1891, Bernard will criticise Aurier and the young Symbolists. (Cf. H. Dorra, 1980, p. 239.)

¹⁵ See Goldwater, Symbolism, p. 186.

¹⁶ See H. Dorra, 1980, p. 240. Rose-Croix had started a campaign for Latin tradition, parallel with L'Ecole Romane in literature.

¹⁷ L. Nochlin, Impress. and Post-Impress., p. 100.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁹ See Goldwater, Symbolism, p. 186.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 187.

²¹ L. Nochlin, p. 100. My emphasis on "style."
Bernard described Cézanne's last manner as a new kind of art:

D'une pâte solide, traitées par touches lentement frappées de droite à gauche, les oeuvres de la dernière manière affirment les recherches d'un art nouveau, étrange, inconnu. Des lumières pondérées glissent mystérieusement dans des pénombres transparemment solides; une gravité architecturale préside à l'ordonnance des lignes, parfois des empâtements incitent à des sculptures.

²² H. Dorra, letter to Schuffenecker, 16 Aug. 1891, p. 239.

²³ Rose-Croix also wanted works that were mural-like, or decorations. (See the quote from J. Péladan, Salon de la Rose-Croix: règle et monitoire, 1891, in Post-Impressionism, London, 1979, p. 24.)

²⁴ L. Nochlin, p. 100, or in French:
Style. Ton. - Peintre avant tout quoique

penseur, grave aussi, il ouvre à l'art cette
surprenante porte: la peinture pour elle-même.

The issue of "art for art's sake" and elitism was
central for Bernard, who significantly used as a motto at the
beginning of the article, this quotation from Hamlet:

Car, je m'en souviens, la pièce ne plaisait
pas à la multitude; c'était un mets qui
n'était pas du goût de tout le monde, mais
c'était une pièce excellente.

25 In September 1891 he wrote to Bongor: "...chacun a son
maître décidément, et s'y conforme au possible, moi j'ai
Cézanne." (H. Dorra, 1980, p. 239.)

26 See Ch. I, Part 2, pp. 64-70.

27 His use of "decorative" in easel painting is not
different from Bouyer's.

28 G. Lecomte, L'Art Moderne, No.8, 1892, p. 58.

29 Ibid. It is interesting to note that this correspond-
ence of shapes between various elements in landscape, as well
as between landscape shapes and human shapes, was also raised
to the status to Principle by both Puvis de Chavannes and
Eugène Carrière. Talking about Carrière's notion of
"arabesque," Ch. Chassé, (Les Nabis, p. 42) said it was close
to the Puvis' conception of decorative art,

...lequel non seulement harmonisait ses
fresques aux lignes du mouvement qu'elles
ornent mais qui établissait un équilibre
entre les contours de la ligne d'horizon
et les silhouettes humains ou animales
qu'il avait tracées.

Chassé also reported what Carrière told G. Séailles:

Dans la nature...les formes sont
sympathiques, d'une même famille, les
expressions d'une même idée qui peu à
peu s'affirme et se précise... j'admirais
l'ondulation des collines à laquelle se
mariait la courbe des feuillages;... et
dans cette bouche of a woman, comme
répété clairement, tout ce que je venais
de voir et d'admirer.

Cézanne's paintings of Ste. Victoire, of 1885-1887, such as V.
454 (London, Courtault) and V.455 (Washington D.C., Phillips
Coll.) are examples of such parallelism of shapes, here
between the branches of pines and the outline of the mountain.
These paintings, especially the Courtault one, are fine
examples of Cézanne's "arabesques" evident in the shapes of
the branches. Still-lives allowed Cézanne the pretext for
even more obvious play of arabesques, such as in Still-Life
with Peppermint Bottle (V.625, 1890-92, National Gallery of

Art, Washington) - Fig. 18.

- 30 Lecomte, L'Art Mod., No.9, p. 67. Lecomte wrote:
La constante invocation de ce nom tuté-
laire nous ferait croire volontiers que ce
qui les séduit dans l'oeuvre de Cézanne,
ce ne sont pas les toiles belles par la
logique ordonnance et la très saine harmonie
des tons, qui prouvent le rare instinct et
la vision si personnelle de ce grand peintre,
mais bien d'incomplètes compositions que
chacun s'accorde, avec l'assentiment de M.
Cézanne lui-même, à juger inférieures, en
raison de leur arrangement déséquilibré et
d'un coloris vraiment trop confus.
- 31 See Ch. I, Part 2, p. 69 and n.81.
- 32 Lecomte, L'Art Mod., No.9, p. 67. He wrote:
Les protagonistes de cet art un peu
déconcertant se réclament des interpréta-
tions synthétiques, expressives de M. Paul
Cézanne. Sans doute ses simplifications de
couleurs étaient extrêmes et ses valeurs
infiniment proches les unes des autres, mais
le plus souvent les perspectives et les
plans apparaissent dûment établis. Les
champs et les villes gardent leur caractère,
s'enveloppent des limpidités d'une atmosphère
immatérielle et se prolongent en des horizons
lointains d'une profondeur évidente. La
nature et l'homme, le ciel et l'eau sont
interprétés en douces harmonies d'ensemble,
mais tous les éléments de ces compositions
gardent leur authenticité essentielle.
Ces toiles, dénuées de beauté ornementale
et de caractère, qu'on prétend légitimer par
les réalisations de M. Cézanne, en apparaissent
comme l'incompréhensive caricature.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Gustave Geffroy (1855-1926) began his career as a
journalist. He collaborated at Georges Clemenceau's La
Justice since its foundation, in 1880. His friendship with
Clemenceau lasted forty years. As a writer, like Lecomte, he
can be characterized best as an independent. He was, like
Huysmans, described by André Fontainas (Mes souvenirs du
symbolisme, Paris: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique, 2nd
ed., 1928, p. 20) as a "dissident from Naturalism." However
it is more closely to this movement that he remains attached.
Between 1892-1903 he published the eight volumes of La Vie

artistique, which assembled his writings as an art critic, since 1883. Geffroy was a believer in social art, and in artistic education of the worker. In 1895 he published Musée de soir aux quartier ouvriers... with a cover by Carrière, inspired by the Kensington system. (See Pissarro's comment on it, Ch. I, Part 1, n.40). He advocated an alliance of art and industry and a revival of the decorative arts that would contribute to return to art its lost place in everyday life. Like Nocq (see Ch. I, Part 1, p. 23) for whose Tendances Nouvelles. Enquête sur l'évolution des industries d'art, of 1896 he wrote the preface, he did not believe in elitist decorative arts done for amateurs, but for the masses. He considered "the annexation of the usual objects by art" a question of life and death for the industrial arts" (La Vie artistique, Paris: Floury, Vol.V, 1897, p. 304). From 1905 until his death, Geffroy was the director of the Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins. Geffroy considered the work of art as one of the best means of propaganda, and he declared:

... que l'on songe aux masses profondes
qu'il est nécessaire d'appeler à la vie de
la pensée pour parfaire la conscience
universelle. Ce sont ces masses qu'il faut
violenter par l'action continue, qu'il faut
aller saisir jusque dans l'ombre où elles
subissent leur sort, où elles stagnent et
croupissent, et d'où elles sortent parfois
avec des fureurs soudaines.

(La Vie artistique, Vol.V, 1897, p. 34)

For general information on Geffroy, see Hector Talvart and Joseph Place, Bibliographie des auteurs modernes de langue française (1801-1936), Paris: ed. de la chronique des lettres françaises, Vol.VI, 1937, pp. 381-389, and the catalogue of the exhibition Gustave Geffroy et l'art moderne, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1957.

35 Geffroy said:

Les étiquettes, réellement, ne signifient
pas grand'chose, et vouloir enfermer l'art
dans un code quelconque, idéaliste,
romantique, impressionniste, symboliste,
est un jeu bien puéril, si l'on veut se
donner la peine d'observer dans le temps
et dans l'espace.

(La Vie artistique, Vol.V, p. 285.)

and also:

Il serait peut-être plus simple d'admettre
que réalisme et idéalisme se concilient,
chez les vraiment grands... qui est
simplement l'art, expression humaine de la
nature, de la vie.

(Ibid., p. 286.)

In his own literary work, Geffroy has been compared to the painter Eugène Carrière whom he highly praised, because "he mixes a sort of melancholy tenderness with the realist truth."

(Talvart and Place, Bibliographie, Vol.VI, p. 381.)

³⁶ See Geffroy's critique of Henri Martin's frieze for the Hôtel de Ville, La Vie artistique, Vol.V, p. 235.

In fact, like for Lecomte or Mauclair, painting had a higher status than the decorative arts for Geffroy as well. He accepted, even required in the "industrial arts" simplifications ("revenir aux formes simples, logiques, rendre à l'ouvrier l'amour de son métier" - La Vie artistique, Vol.V, p. 304), but these were realized by "simple artisans," only "aided by the artists." (Ibid., p. 306.) What Geffroy was advocating was advocated three decades before by Charles Blanc. (See Ch. I, Part 1.) Most avant-garde artists, as I indicated in Ch. I, Part 1, were not interested in "industrial arts," but in creating "art objects" for the amateurs. These objects were not intended for mass-production, they were one of a kind, just as a tableau or a statue, and not very "useful." In painting Geffroy did not favor "synthetic landscapes," for example. He complained:

On a abusé des paysages dits symthetiques [sic], faits de chic à l'atelier avec trois lignes et quatre couleurs, sous le prétexte qu'il était d'un étroit réalisme de peindre d'après nature.

(La Vie artistique, Vol.V, p. 387.)

Geffroy had not considered appropriate simplified forms and color even for tapestry, and expressed his admiration for Raphael's Parnasse that decorated the hallway of the Salon of Champs-Élysées. (Ibid., p. 327.) This explains why during his administration at the Gobelins, the practice of tapestry-tableau continued.

³⁷ See M. Denis, Theories, p. 18, where he protested Lecomte's criticism of the Symbolists' hieratism.

³⁸ G. Geffroy, "Paul Cézanne," La Vie artistique, Vol.III, Paris: Dentu, 1894, translated by L. Nochlin in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, p. 104.

³⁹ L. Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impr., p. 106.

⁴⁰ Ibid. In any event, according to Geffroy, Cézanne was "truthful" in the transposition of the "sensation of this intoxication" experienced by the painter in front of nature," or of the "dream that invades him before the splendor of nature." (See L. Nichlin, p. 104 and p. 107.)

The "sensation" of obviously understood here in the sense of "emotion," not as a purely visual one; together with the "dream," it infringed into Symbolist territory.

⁴¹ Nochlin, p. 106. As example of a painting resembling

tapestry, representing a rocky bay and the sea, one could give Rocks at l'Estaque (V.404, 1882-1885) - Fig. 12.

42 Ibid.

43 See Ch. I, Part 1, p. 33.

44 Compare with what was said In Ch. I, Part 2, pp. 81-83.

45 See Ch. II, Part 1, n.3.

46 Nochlin, p. 106. Even in "decorative painting" (he refers to murals), Geffroy did not accept such projections of planes forward. He wrote in La Vie artistique, Vol.V, p. 173:
Sous le radieux soleil comme dans l'ombre du soir, il y a une profondeur et des plans que la loi la plus élémentaire interdit de projeter en avant.

47 G. Geffroy, "Paul Cézanne" (16 Nov. 1895), La Vie artistique, Vol.VI, Paris: Dentu, 1900, p. 217.

48 Ibid., pp. 216-17.

49 The Orgy: V.92, ascribed by Venturi to the period 1864-1868, 130 x 81 cm. Geffroy described the painting without giving its name, but the description is quite straightforward. Venturi also mentioned that Geffroy commented on this painting.

50 La Vie artistique, Vol.VI, pp. 217-18. For Aurier see Ch. I, Part 2, p. 63.

51 Blanc required well-defined "forms," but allowed for concessions in regard to perspective, chiaroscuro, etc. (see Ch. I, Part 1, p. 39). Geffroy promoted the translation into the medium of tapestry of modern paintings, but with no regard whatsoever for the specificity of this medium and for the laws of decoration. Under Geffroy's administration, the literal copy of paintings "was at its apogee." (See Pierre Vaisse, "La querelle de la Tapisserie au début de la III^e République," Revue de l'Art, No.22, 1973, p. 81.) Geffroy requested exact copies of paintings by Monet, in all their subtleties, by Raffaelli, Flandrin, or used cartoons by Anquetin, done in his "Rubenesque" period. See also Guillaume's Janneau's chapter in French Tapestry, edited by André Lejard, (transl. from La Tapisserie, Paris: Ed. du Chêne, 1942), London: P. Elek Publ., 1946, p. 20.

52 He did praise his friend Monet (on whom he wrote a book), and considered himself to be a supporter of modern art (as critic and collector), but he was actually a "juste milieu critic."

53 Geffroy, La Vie artistique, Vol.VI, p. 219.

54 Thadée Natanson, "Paul Cézanne," Revue Blanche, Vol.9, No.60, 1 Dec. 1895, p. 497.

55 See Ch. II, Part 1, p. 96.

56 Natanson, p. 498.

In opposition with Natanson, was François Thiébauld-Sisson's comment, from a Naturalist (he was associated with Zola) position. He declared in Le Temps of 22 Dec. 1895 that Cézanne was "too incomplete" to realize fully his own discoveries. Zola himself, will refer to Cézanne in his last "Salon" of 1896, as a "great abortive painter":

J'avais grandi presque dans le même berceau,
avec mon ami, mon frère, Paul Cézanne, dont
s'avise seulement aujourd'hui de découvrir
les parties géniales de grand peintre avorté.

(Emile Zola, Le Bon Combat. De Courbet aux Impressionistes, Pref. G. Picon, ed. Paul Bouillon, Paris: Hermann, Collection Savoir, 1974, p. 260.)

Zola never considered that Cézanne realized himself as a painter. Leaving aside the question of his novel L'Oeuvre, since its main character was not modelled only after Cézanne, we might recall that in 1870 he told Th. Duret, "Wait until he has found himself" (Zola, p. 242, n.68), and in 1877: "Le jour ou M. Paul Cézanne se possedra tout entier, il produira des oeuvres tout a fait superieures." (Zola, p. 188.)

57 See Ch. II, Part 1, p. 100.

58 Natanson, p. 498.

59 Ibid.

60 Natanson, p. 499. This painting could have been V.179 or V.183.

61 Ibid., p. 500.

62 André Mellerio, Le Mouvement idealiste en peinture, Paris: Floury, 1896, p. 13. For the quote from Denis see Théories, p. 70.

63 Ch. I, Part 2, pp. 53-54. Mellerio is also very critical of Rose-Croix.

64 Mellerio, p. 26. Like Geffroy though, he adds Cézanne's preoccupation with "truth":

On dirait qu'a chaque objet il a voulu restituer intact, sans sa force primitive non aveulée par des pratiques d'art, son éclat vrai et essentiel.

65 Ibid., p. 27. Mellerio added:

Chez Cézanne, le vouloir de se remettre directement en rapport avec la nature, l'ardeur à s'en saisir pleinement avec un ingénuité maintenue jusqu'à la gaucherie.

66 Like Denis, he called most of the Nabis painters, "Synthetists."

67 See Mellerio, p. 25.

68 Félicien Fagus, "Quarante tableaux de Cézanne," La Revue Blanche, Vol.20, Sept.-Nov. 1899, p. 627.

69 Fagus, pp. 627-28.

I was not able to identify the small Picnic by the Sea about which Fagus was so enthusiastic, but it probably was a preliminary study to either one of the large Bathers: V.720 (Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pa.) or V.721 (National Gallery, London).

Fagus also mentioned the Maison lézardée (The House with Cracked Walls), V.657 (1892-94), which we know was listed as No.3 in the 1899 exhibition (see L. Venturi, Cézanne, Vol.I, p. 206) and a Jeune Baigneur. The latter, compared by Fagus with the cross in l'Enterrement d'Ornans by Courbet, because of the way this figure with stretched arms profiled itself against the sky, is probably V.549 (1885-87).

70 See Denis, Journal, Vol.I, p. 149 (Christmas 1898). I don't know how Vuillard arrived at this information (maybe through Vollard, or Cézanne's son), but we know that Cézanne admired "the great decorative masters Veronese and Rubens." (Cézanne, letter to Camoin, 3 Feb. 1902, Letters, 1976, p. 282.)

71 Georges Lecomte, "Paul Cézanne," Revue d'Art, Vol.1, Nov. 4, 1899, p. 86. He said:

Il en traduit l'intimité et la grandeur, mais il échoue dans l'art d'espacer les plans, de donner l'illusion de l'étendue.

Son maigre savoir le trahit. Cézanne n'a pas les moyens de rendre tout ce qu'il perçoit... Bien de fois il arrive que ses études de nature sont sans profondeur. Elles donnent l'impression d'une somptueuse tapisserie sans lointain. Ce sont des harmonies exquises, de valeurs très rapprochées, par tons plats très simples, qui augmentent l'impression de douceur et de charme. Mais les diverses lignes du paysage ne s'espacent point dans l'atmosphère.

72 Ibid. Lecomte wrote:

...au beaux jours - si vite révolus - du symbolisme mystique, on s'éprit surtout de cette absence de profondeur. Cela fit école. Comme il était de mode de recommencer, par système, les naïvetés des Primitifs, Cézanne fut salué comme un précurseur. On l'aima pour ses imperfections, que, de tout son effort, il cherche à éviter, comme s'il les avait délibérément consenties. Mais le symbolisme y trouvait sa propre justification.

73 See M. Denis. Orangeries, p. 56. The painting was bought by André Gide. (See Denis, Journal, I, pp. 168-69.)

74 P. Cézanne, Letters, p. 275. (Aix, June 5, 1901.) For Denis's answer, in which he expressed again his admiration for Cézanne (as well as the admiration of the entire "group of young people to which I belong and who can rightly call themselves your pupils"), see Ibid., pp. 275-76.

75 After the death of Gauguin, in 1903, Denis wrote for L'Occident an article, "The influence of Paul Gauguin." There he described Gauguin as "sort of Poussin without classical culture," because like Poussin, he loved simplicity, clarity, and for him "synthesis and style were almost synonymous." (Denis, Théories, p. 166.)

76 See Théories, p. 185, from "La Réaction Nationaliste," L'Ermitage, 15 May 1905.

77 See my discussion on Bernard's article of 1891.

78 See also n.226.

79 Blanc (Gramm. des arts du dessin, 1882, p. 666) did not consider the "imitation" of the particular, of the accidental (such as in Naturalism), as "art." He required from art to extract from reality the "typical" and the

"beauty." See also Ch. I, Part 1, n.106.

⁸⁰ Emile Bernard, "Paul Cézanne," L'Occident, No.32, July 1904, p. 23. A good part of this article is translated in English in Judy Wechsler ed., Cézanne in Perspective, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975, pp. 39-45. However, in the present paper, when the quotes are in English they are my translation.

⁸¹ See Ch. Blanc, Histoire des peintres des toutes les écoles: Ecole Vénitienne, Paris: Renouard, 1868, p. 16 and p. 12.

Bernard, even in his "classicist" period, was opposed to academism, and expressed the opinion that Blanc's books were "mediocre."

⁸² In the letter of February 3, 1902, Cézanne advised the young painter Charles Camoin:

Since you are now in Paris and the masters of the Louvre attract you, if it appeals to you, make some studies after the great decorative masters Veronese and Rubens, but as you would do after nature - a thing I myself was only able to do inadequately.

(Cézanne, Letters, p. 282)

Cézanne's opinion on Michelangelo was expressed also in a letter to Camoin:

...- what you must strive to achieve is a good method of construction. Drawing is merely the outline of what you see.

Michelangelo is a constructor, and Raphael an artist who, great as he may be, is always tied to the model. - When he tries to become a thinker he sinks below his great rival.

(Letter of 9 Dec. 1904, Letters, p. 309)

⁸³ Bernard, "P. Cézanne," 1904, p. 22.

⁸⁴ E. Bernard, "L'Erreur de Cézanne," Mercure de France, 1 May 1926, p. 513.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 522.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 525.

⁸⁷ Bernard ("P. Cézanne," 1904, p. 22) said:
Les synthèses expressives de Cézanne sont de minutieuses et soumises études. Prenant la nature comme point d'appui, il se conforme aux phénomènes et les transcrit lentement,

attentivement, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait découvert les lois qui les produisent. Alors, avec logique, il s'en empare, et achève son travail par une imposante et vivante synthèse. Sa conclusion, d'accord avec sa nature méridionale et expansive, est décorative; c'est-à-dire libre et exaltée.

88 Bernard, 1904, p. 21.

89 Ibid, pp. 29-30. Bernard said:

Quoique pense d'elle le maître, trop sévère pour lui-même, elle domine toute la production contemporaine, elle s'impose par la saveur et l'originalité de sa vision, la beauté de sa matière, la richesse de son coloris, son caractère sérieux et durable, son ampleur décorative.

It is possible Cézanne actually said:

Il faut être ouvrier dans son art. Savoir de bonne heure sa méthode de réalisation. Être peintre par les qualités mêmes de la peinture. Se servir de matériaux grossiers.

(Bernard, "P. Cézanne," 1904, p. 24.)

90 Ibid., p. 25. On Cézanne's relationship with Impressionism, Bernard wrote:

... Comme on le voit, il se différencie essentiellement de l'impressionnisme, dont il dérive, mais dans lequel il ne peut emprisonner sa nature. Loin d'être un spontané, Cézanne est un réfléchi, son génie est un éclair en profondeur. Il résulte donc que son tempérament très peintre l'a conduit à des créations décoratives nouvelles, à des synthèses inattendues; et ces synthèses ont été en vérité le plus grand progrès jailli des aperceptions modernes;...

91 See Ch. I, Part 2, "B," and Ch. II, Part 1, p. 96.

92 See for example Bernard, "La méthode de Paul Cézanne," Mercure de France, Vol.138, 1 March 1920, p. 291:

Quant à l'esthétique des impressionnistes et celle de Cézanne, on ne peut y reconnaître aucune différence: elles tendent toutes deux à l'expression des choses que nous voyons, au mépris de l'invention, par un style soumis

à la nature. C'est le naturalisme.

Bernard emphasized here, that while for the Impressionists the manner (la manière) of painting was of no importance, since they were not concerned with "the beauty of the means" (la beauté du moyen),

Cézanne's appliquait à trouver une manière de peindre qui fût vraiment picturale, et dans laquelle un délicat pourrait puiser la satisfaction de son goût pour la facture.

From Bernard's letter to his mother, 5 Feb. 1904 ("Un Extraordinaire Document sur Paul Cézanne," Arts-documents, Nov. 1954, p. 4), quoted in Richard Shiff, "Seeing Cézanne," Critical Inquiry, Vol.4, Summer 1978, p. 798. Shiff is right in pointing out that Bernard's "official" statement in L'Occident of 1904 did not quite match his personal opinion, and that Reff was inaccurate in this respect. But Shiff did not clarify what did Bernard mean by "naturalism." Bernard's definition was quite encompassing and in fact referred to any work that was painted in front of a "motif" instead of using one's imagination (helped by memories of "classical" art).

I do not intend to discuss Shiff's article, but I would like to point out that he looked at Cézanne only from the point of view of two possible alternatives: Symbolism or Impressionism; he arrived at the conclusion that the Impressionist point of view corresponds better with Cézanne's own intentions. Later Shiff wrote an article in which he demonstrated that Symbolism and Impressionism were not so antithetic after all in the 1890s, but he did not modify his views on Cézanne.

By painting nature "according to art itself," Bernard meant cultivating oneself in the museums, studying the works of the great classics (or of the great Masters to be correct, since he used the word "classic" more in that sense, including Rubens and the Venetians among them), extracting from them the "laws of nature," instead of painting directly from a model or motif. The Nature-Art relationship was in fact the bone of contention between Cézanne and Bernard, as is obvious in Cézanne's letters. (See also Ch. II, Part 2.) On May 26, after reading the article Bernard was to publish in L'Occident, Cézanne wrote to Bernard:

On the whole I approve of the ideas you are to expound in your next article for 'Occident'. But I must always come back to this: painters must devote themselves entirely to the study of nature...

(Cézanne, Letters, p. 303.)

94 E. Bernard, "Paul Cézanne," 1904, p. 26.

95 Ibid., p. 24. Bernard insisted on tradition, but not necessarily French tradition. He preferred Italian art. In 1926 he described Poussin as the most classical of the French, but without the "lyrism" of Michelangelo. (See E. Bernard, "L'Erreur de Cézanne," Mercure de France, May 1, 1926, pp. 518-19.) Cézanne's "error," according to Bernard, was in fact

the contradiction of terms implied in the well-popularized dictum "classical by the way of nature" (or also "Poussin redone from nature," as Bernard now claimed Cézanne also added). It meant leaving aside the best part of Poussin and leading him to realism, "that is to the furthest possible point away from classical art."

⁹⁶ Bernard, 1904, p. 24. Compare to Cézanne, Letters, p. 301. Venturi remarked in 1936:

Comme après la mort de Cézanne on a inventé le cubisme, on a cru trouver dans ce passage une justification du Cubisme par Cézanne. C'est une erreur évidente. Cézanne a voulu parler de l'accord en perspective de la composition comme en eût parlé un Italien de la Renaissance, et non pas un précurseur de cubisme.

(L. Venturi, Cézanne, 1936, p. 36.)

Bernard and Denis were though the ones that first over-emphasized and took out of context Cézanne's quote, and they were not trying to justify Cubism either. But they wanted to make propaganda for classicism, which required an emphasis on "volumes." Maybe this proves what Gustave Kahn noticed already in 1913, namely that even though Gleizes and Metzinger in their Cubisme presented Courbet and Cézanne as their ancestors, they were in fact influenced by the "classicists." (See G. Kahn, "L'exposition des Independents," Mercure de France, Vol.102, No.380, 16 Apr. 1913, pp. 864-865.)

Th. Reff also remarked that this particular quote was taken out of context, but he affirmed this happened only after Bernard published Cézanne's letter in 1907, in connection with the development of Cubism. In fact already in 1904, in his article in the Occident, Bernard himself used this quote and switched its meaning from a lesson in perspective to one in modelling. (See Th. Reff, Cézanne. The Late Work, pp. 46-48 and Th. Reff, "Cézanne on Solids and Spaces," Artforum, Vol.16, Oct. 1977, pp. 34-35.)

⁹⁷ See E. Bernard, "Note relative au symbolisme pictural," Letters à Emile Bernard, Brussels, 1942, pp. 253-57. Bernard was against decorative stylization (especially Gauguin's), as well as against "academism" (David, Ingres). The latter recommended the use of a model (and for Bernard this was equivalent with "realism") and only a subsequent linear correction ("la correction") of what amounts to a "copy." (See also "L'erreur de Cézanne," pp. 522-25.) Cézanne did not like Ingres (see Cézanne, Letters, p. 305) either, thus it is possible that the opinion "Ingres est un classique nuisible," (Bernard, 1904, p. 23) given by Bernard as coming from Cézanne was not far from authentic.

⁹⁸ For the rebuttal of the myth that in Cézanne's paintings "line does not exist," see Erle Loran, Cézanne's

Composition, Berkeley, 1963 (first ed. 1943), pp. 10-14, and also Th. Reff, Cézanne. The Late Work, p. 49.

For Bernard's opinion in 1891, see Ch. II, Part 1, p. 75. Bernard did remember sixteen years later though, that Cézanne outlined the objects represented with a strong, "stylised" contour. (See Ch. II, Part 1, n.4.)

99 See Bernard, 1904, pp. 23-24. Compare to P. Gauguin, "Notes Synthétiques," transl. H. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, p. 64. (N.B. the more accurate date for the manuscript is 1884-85.)

100 See also Ch. II, Part 2, p. 179.

101 This time the reason was different than the Impressionists' one; the "patch" was used to construct coloured patterns. It is my opinion that the emphasis on "the patch" (la tache) was a consequence of the popularity the 18th century painting (Rococo) was enjoying at the turn of the century in France. This painting was "French par excellence" and the interest in it coincides with the rise of French nationalism at the time. Marcel Nicolle wrote in "Les peintres français au XVIII^e siècle" (a review of the book with the same title by Lady Emilia F.S. Dilke, London, 1899), La Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne, Vol.7, 1900, p. 149:

L'école française de peinture du XVIII^e siècle jouit à l'heure actuelle auprès des amateurs d'une vogue remarquable; les noms des plus petits maîtres sont répétés à satiété, leurs oeuvres, même insignifiantes, se vendent aisément des prix élevés.

Fragonard is especially praised at the time because he knew the value of the "patch of color." (Ibid., p. 154.) Lady Dilke (p. 72) said that

Fragonard had, in common with others of the same school, a fine perception of the value of la tache and a strong feeling for what is called pattern in colour.

She also remarked that,

"La tache" in colour, fulfils precisely that office which an isolated ornament may perform in pattern;

Thus a decorative pattern could be obtained without the line, which was extensively used in the decorative arts (Arts Nouveau). The patch of color was after all better suited for "pure painting."

Cézanne's interest in the 18th c. French painters is well known, and in his letter to Bernard of 27 June 1904 (Letters, p. 304) he expressed his admiration for Chardin.

102 Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 23 Oct. 1905, Letters, pp. 316-17. To make sure there are no misunderstandings (the letter is not very clearly written) I will quote this letter

in French (Cézanne, Correspondance, Paris, 1937, p. 277):

Or vieux, soixante-dix ans environ, les sensations colorantes qui donnent la lumière sont cause d'abstractions qui ne me permettent pas de couvrir ma toile, ni de poursuivre la délimitation des objets quand les points de contact sont ténus, délicats; d'où il ressort que mon image ou tableau est incomplète. D'un autre côté les plans tombent les uns sur les autres, d'où est sorti le néo-impressionnisme qui circonscrit les contours d'un trait noir, défaut qu'il faut combattre à toute force. Or la nature consultée nous donne les moyens d'atteindre ce but.

I would like to point out that the reference to Neo-Impressionism, "which circumscribes the contours with a black line," that puzzled art historians of the 20th century, can be understood if we remember that at the time Feneon's classification was not yet widely accepted. Seurat and his group called themselves at first "Chromo-Luminarists," and in A. Mellerio's book Le Mouvement idéaliste en peinture of 1896, for example, they are listed under this name. Under the title of Neo-Impressionists were listed artists that, "tout en tenant à l'Impressionnisme par des liens étroits, ont paru incliner en quelque points vers la formule idéaliste." Such artists were considered to be: Schuffenecker, Toulouse-Lautrec, Ibels, Anquetin.

103 See Ernest Chesneau, Les Chefs d'Ecole, Paris: 1862, pp. 282-83. See also Cézanne's letter to Pissarro, of 24 June 1874 (Letters, p. 141), in which Cézanne acknowledged that Pissarro "replaced modelling by the study of tones."

104 E. Bernard, "Paul Cézanne," 1904, p. 24. There is no real proof that Cézanne used the word "modulate." If Cézanne did use the term "to modulate" as a substitute for "modelling," most likely he did not have in mind the modelling of individual "forms," but what was called the "modelling of the tableau." (See I, p. 81.) This is because the color modulations achieve a coloristic "effect" that replaces the chiaroscuro effect that constituted the "modelling of a tableau."

105 See Charles Blanc, "Eugène Delacroix," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, 1864, p. 114, where he said that Delacroix used the principle of "colour modulation," or his Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1867, p. 607, where he referred to this procedure as to "modulate the tone on itself," or the Grammaire des arts décoratifs, where he praised Oriental carpet makers and ceramists again, and recommended their method of making colour "vibrate" (see op. cit., p. 390). See also Grammaire des arts décoratifs, p. 407, where Blanc described how

Orientalists achieved harmony with very bright colours, by "passages" between contrasting hues.

Blanc's Grammaire des arts du dessin has been suggested as a source of the above mentioned quote from Cézanne, referring to the academic teaching of perspective using simple geometrical volumes. The suggestion was made by Christopher Gray (Cubist Aesthetic Theories, Baltimore, 1967, p. 49), who did not find any link between Blanc's text and Cézanne's "colour modulations," perhaps because he was looking for the meaning given by Bernard, that is, primarily a substitute for "modelling form." He said:

On the other hand, his conception that color modulates form appears to be his synthesis of the ideas of Impressionism with his interest in form.

106 In his "Méthode de P. Cézanne" (1920, p. 294) mentioned before, Bernard did say that Cézanne retained this principle from Delacroix: "Tout champ s'enrichit du nuancement de sa couleur propre."

107 Carlos de Castera (signed "Solrac"), "Réflexions sur le Salon d'Automne," L'Occident, Dec. 1904, pp. 303-311.

The Salon d'Automne was founded by a young generation of painters: Desvallières, Piot, Rouault, Jourdain. According to some sources (Die Nabis und ihre freunde, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Oct. 1963-Jan. 1964), Vuillard was one of the co-founders. At the Fall Salon of 1904 Cézanne had a room with 33 paintings. At the same Salon were exhibited 43 paintings by Puvis, as well as 33 by Renoir, 62 by Redon and 28 by Lautrec.

108 "Solrac," p. 305.

109 Ibid., pp. 305-06.

110 Ibid., p. 306. Compare to Bernard's article of 1904 (see p. 109 and n.88). "Solrac" did use Bernard's terminology, but his concept of "pure painting" is closer to the usual one. Except he did not consider this painting as being "only sensorial," as he considered Impressionist art was.

111 Ibid. Venturi did not mention this still-life as exhibited at this Salon, only at Libre Esthétique (where Cézanne sent nine paintings), the Spring 1904.

112 In fact Puvis did use the same principles borrowed from fresco painting in his easel paintings, which could be considered as decorations. Their colors were such that harmonized with any environment. Cézanne's original intentions were, in my opinion, similar to Puvis'.

"Pure painting" showed its emancipation by employing strong colors, for example.

113 "Solrac," p. 307.

114 Ibid. Of course, this was only whistfull thinking.

115 See Ch. I, Part 1, pp. 25-26.

116 See Roger Marx, "Les Salons de 1895," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Vol.14, 1895, p. 22. See also Ch. I, Part 2, p. 77.

117 See Roger Marx, "Le Salon d'Automne," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Vol.32, Dec. 1904, p. 462.

118 Ibid., p. 459.

119 Reff, "Cézanne and Poussin," p. 162, said that this connection was first made by M. Denis. R. Shiff in "Seeing Cézanne," even though he mentioned Marx' article, also missed this point and declared that Camoin was the first to connect Cézanne with Poussin. For Marx's characterization of Cézanne, see "Le Salon d'Automn," pp. 462-63.

120 For the "decorative" Poussin and Corot, see Ch. I, Part 2, n.2 and n.75.

In 1901 the Ecole des Beaux-Arts mounted a Daumier exhibition which was very successful and emphasized Daumier as a painter, not only as a caricaturist. As the critic for Revue Blanche put it, "le caricaturiste ne souffre pas du triomphe de peintre." (See Claude Anet, "L'Exposition Daumier," La Revue Blanche, v.25, May-Aug. 1901, p. 216.)

Reviewing the independants' exhibition of 1901, Thadée Natanson wrote:

...qu'à la fin prévaut l'importance de Daumier et de Cézanne chez qui les dernier venus ont tant à apprendre et tout admirer.

(Th. Natanson, "Les Artistes Indépendants. D'un peintre du xix^e français inconnu, et de quelques-uns qui inaugurent le xx^e," La Revue Blanche, Vol.25, May-Aug. 1901, p. 52.)

121 Roger Marx, 1904, p. 463. This is particularly true for Cézanne's Bathers done around 1900, such as for example V.387, or V.724. The latter (now in the Baltimore Museum of Art) was actually exhibited in Cézanne's retrospective of the 1904 Salon d'Automne.

122 R. Marx, 1904, p. 464.

- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Cézanne, Letters, p. 313.
- 125 Denis, Theories, p. 181. In this article Denis reacted against C. Mauclair who criticized Neo-Classicism and the "Nationalistic Peril," accusing their exponents of being reactionary and retrograde.
- 126 See Denis, Théories, p. 181 and p. 185.
- 127 M. Denis, Theories, p. 138 (from "A propos de l'exposition de Charles Guerin," L'Occident, March 1905). Guerin was another example of young painter considered (this time by Denis, Theories, p. 140) to be indebted to both Moreau and Cézanne.
- 128 See Denis, Théories, p. 1.
- 129 François Monod, "Le Salon d'Automne," Art et Décoration, July-Dec. 1905, Vol.18, p. 198.
- 130 Monod, "Le Salon d'Automne."
- 131 Monod, p. 200.
- 132 Ibid.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 See Th. Reff, Cézanne. The Late Work, p. 28.
- 137 M. Denis, Théories, p. 197 (from L'Ermitage, 15 Nov. 1905).
- 138 Denis did connect Cézanne with classicist tendencies earlier when for example he claimed Cézanne, like Ingres, was concerned with style. See Denis, Théories, p. 56 (from "Le Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts," La Dépêche de Toulouse, 1901).
- 139 Charles Camoin, "Equête sur les tendances actuelles

des arts plastiques," Mercure de France, Vol.56, 1 Aug. 1905, p. 353.

Camoin wrote:

Il est profondément classique, et il répète souvent qu'il n'a cherché qu'à vivifier Poussin sur nature. Il ne voit pas objectivement et par la tâche comme les impressionnistes; il déchiffre la nature lentement, par l'ombre et la lumière, qu'il exprime en des sensations de couleur. Cependant, il n'a pas d'autre but que celui de faire image .

Camoin proceeded then to give quotations from Cézanne's letters addressed to him, beginning with the advice: "Puisque vous voilà à Paris et que les Maîtres du Louvre vous attirent, faites d'après les grands maîtres décoratifs, Veronese et Rubens, des études comme vous feriez d'après nature, ce que je n'ai su faire qu'incomplètement." (See also Cézanne, letter of 3 Feb. 1902, Letters, p. 282.)

140 Denis, Théories, p. 196. Denis' own answer in the Mercure is just as evasive as the one in L'Echo of 1891.

141 Denis (Théories, p. 193) did not forget to remind the readers that he called the movement of 1890 "Neo-traditionism," and that in fact "no other movement was more clearly traditionalist."

142 See Théories, p. 192. In 1903, Denis called Gauguin a "Poussin without classical culture" (Théories, p. 166). In fact Gauguin was not "without classical culture," and expressed his admiration for Raphael. (See Gauguin's 1889 letter to E. Bernard in which he declared that as opposed to Van Gogh, he admired Ingres, Raphael and Degas: Lettres à Emile Bernard, 1942, p. 99.)

143 Denis, Théories, p. 227.

144 "Enquête...", Mercure de France, 15 Aug. 1905, p. 544.

145 E. Bernard (signed "Francis Lepeseur"), "De Michel Ange à Paul Cézanne," La Rénovation Esthétique, March 1906, p. 253.

146 Pierre Hepp, "Sur le choix des maîtres," L'Occident, Dec. 1905, p. 265.

147 Ibid., p. 264.

148 Ibid. The emphasis on matériellement is mine.

- 149 E. Bernard, "De Michel Ange...", p. 253.
- 150 Ibid., p. 257.
- 151 See Ch. II, Part 1, p. 96 and n.24.
- 152 Bernard, "De Michel Ange...", p. 258. In his article "La méthode de Paul Cézanne," Mercure de France, 1 March 1920, p. 314 he will complain about the "inutility" of the "painting for its own sake" or "pure painting."
Already in 1905, in a more obscure publication, Le Petit Dauphinois, Bernard expressed his dissatisfaction with Cézanne. (See Vollard, Paul Cézanne, p. 121.)
- 153 M. Denis, Théories, p. 203. ("Le renoncement de Carrière. La superstition du talent," L'Ermitage, 15 June 1906.) Denis explains that this concept appeared out of the necessity of not confusing painting with literature, and as a reaction against naturalism, but one should not emphasize only the material qualities of an work of art. (Théories, p. 207.)
- 154 Denis, Théories, p. 208.
- 155 M. Denis, "L'Influence de Cézanne," L'Amour de l'Art, Dec. 1920, reprinted in Nouvelles Théories, p. 118.
- 156 Hugo d'Alési (1849-1906) was a painter born in Romania, known especially for his color lithographs posted in the railway stations, representing picturesque sites from France or abroad. In 1901 he had a painting exhibition at the Galery Georges Petit, his small-scale mountain-lands-capes receiving favorable comments. (See the column "Exposition et Concours," Le Bulletin de l'Art Ancien et Moderne, Vol.3, No. 115, 23 Nov. 1901, pp. 276-77.)
- 157 See M. Denis, Théories: "Le Soleil" (first in L'Ermitage, 15 Dec. 1906), pp. 212-15. See also Théories, p. 154.
- 158 Camille Mauclair, "Le Salon d'Automne," Art et Décoration, Vol.19, Jan.-June 1906, p. 147.
- 159 See Gustave Kahn, "Lettre à un exposant" (Salon d'Automne), La Phalange, Nov. 1906, p. 369.
- 160 C. Mauclair, Art et Décoration, 1906, p. 144:

161 Mauclair, 1906, p. 150. Mauclair admitted that in his youth he was critical of Gauguin, but after all, he said, the Tahitian paintings were better than the ones in Brittany.

162 Charles Morice, "Art Moderne" (in "Revue de la quinzaine"), Mercure de France, Vol.70, Dec. 1907, p. 547.

163 See M. Denis, "Cézanne," Théories, p. 253 (first in L'Occident, Sept. 1907). Denis first mentioned this "quotation" in 1906, Journal, II, p. 46, Mirbeau himself embellished it even more in the preface of the volume put together by O. Mirbeau, Th. Duret, L. Werth and Fr. Jourdain, Cézanne, Paris: Bernheim-Jeune ed., 1914, p. 9. See also G. Geffroy, Monet, 1922, p. 198.

164 See also Ch. I, Part 2, n. 26.

165 Ch. Morice, Mercure, 1907, p. 547.

166 Ch. Morice, Mercure de France, Nov. 1, 1907, "Le ve Salon d'Automne," p. 165.

167 Ibid., p. 164. Charles Morice in his book Gauguin, Paris: Fleury, 1919, p. 166, made clear he considered Cézanne's synthetist method as belonging together with the general procedure used by all great decorators, which method Puvis de Chavannes, before him, and before Gauguin and his pupils, applied to easel painting.

168 Ch. Morice, "Paul Cézanne," Mercure de France, Vol. 65, p. 591, 15 Feb. 1907, or Ch. Morice, Quelques Maîtres Modernes, Paris: Société des Trente, Albert Messein ed., 1914, p. 115.

169 In the Avertissement of his 1914 book (see the above note), Morice declared that he considered Carrière, Gauguin and Rodin as the three essential "plastic initiators" since Puvis and Manet. Not far behind those three he placed Whistler, Pissarro, Fantin-Latour, Constantin Meunier, Cézanne, Redon, Degas, Monet, Renoir.

170 See Ch. II, Part 1, p. 126 and n.162.

171 See Morice, "P. Cézanne," Mercure, pp. 591-93.

172 Ibid., pp. 593-94. This Tendresse Raisonné was a somehow "fuzzy" concept, implying a "principle of humanity" (which he no doubt found in Carrière).

173 M. Denis, "Cézanne," Théories (first published in L'Occident, Sept. 1907), p. 238.

174 See the same article, Théories, p. 247. In the article written in L'Occident two years later (May 1909), "De Gauguin et de Van Gogh au Classicisme," Denis declared that since 1890 an evolution in favor of "order" took place in painting. (Théories, p. 258.) On the political-ideological level he mentioned the call for traditionalism launched by people from opposite camps, such as the monarchists of the Action Française (Maurras) and syndicalists republicans (Barrès). (See Théories, p. 259 and p. 264.) Denis' own brand of "classicism" is akin to Mithouard's, that is a "modern classicism" that only borrows general principles from the past (the sense of "order" being the most important one), without asking for classical "perfection." (See Théories, pp. 265-66.)

175 See Théories, p. 171 (1904) and p. 267 (1909). For "Style" see I, Part 1, n. 114. Denis' latest definition of Style was "order achieved by means of synthesis" ("le Style, c'est-à-dire l'ordre par la synthèse," Theories, p. 239).

176 See Théories, p. 262.

177 See Ch. I, Part 1, p. 16 and pp. 38-39; 41-43.

178 The translation is mine. I did not use R.E. Fry's translation (Burlington Magazine, Vol.16, 1910). It is interesting to note though that in his "Introductory Note," Roger Fry declared that the "new tendencies" in French art, "This new conception of art, in which the decorative elements preponderate at the expense of the representative," was actually "the direct outcome of the Impressionist movement." He added: "It was among Impressionists that it took its rise, and yet it implies the direct contrary of the Impressionist conception of art." Fry confirmed Denis' claim that Cézanne was the initiator of the 1890 movement:

It is generally admitted that the great and original genius, - for recent criticism has the courage to acclaim him as such - who really started this movement, the most promising and fruitful of modern times, was Cézanne.

(Burl. Mag., Vol.16, 1910, p. 207.)

Two years earlier, Fry ("Letters to the Editor: The Last Phase of Impressionism," The Burlington Magazine, March 1908, p. 375) talked about the "purely decorative elements of design" in Cézanne's work and did not see any significant difference between him and Gauguin. He said:

Two other artists, M. Cézanne and Paul

Gauguin, are not really Impressionists at all... They have already attained to the contour, and assert its value with keen emphasis. They fill the contour with wilfully simplified and unmodulated masses, and rely for their whole effect upon a well-considered co-ordination of the simplest elements.

Only much later was Fry to make the distinction between "the decorative painter whose main object is the organization of his design upon the surface" and "painters [such as Cézanne] to whom the plastic construction is all-important." (See R. Fry, Cézanne: A Study of his Development, New York: Hogarth Press, 1927, p. 50.)

179 M. Denis, Théories, p. 239.

180 Ibid., p. 246. See also pp. 266-67 (1909).

181 Ibid., p. 244.

182 Ibid., p. 170 (from "De la gaucherie des Primitifs," Les Arts de la Vie, July 1904). Denis referred to this article when he explained the "gaucheries" of Cézanne and his disciples and imitators (see Théories, p. 246). Denis distinguished between "hieratic" painters (Byzantine) and Primitives (Giotto).

183 See n.3, above.

184 See also Verkade's comments in Denis, Journal, II, 1907, p. 62.

185 Denis, Théories, p. 171.

186 It is true that even then, he did not want to "pierce the walls" with his paintings, since always avoided a look into the far distance. In V.45 for example, a house at the end of the street blocks the view.

In his article, Christopher Gray, "Cézanne's use of Perspective," College Art Journal, Vol.19. No.1, 1959, pp. 54-64, demonstrated Cézanne's use of perspective on a later painting: La Route Tournante à la Roche-Guyon, V.441, 1885. He pointed out that the liberties (from the point of view of linear perspective) that Cézanne took were licenced by contemporary manuals, one of them being Ch. Blanc's Grammaire des arts du dessin. Gray however did not point out that Blanc especially recommended such modifications for the purpose of decoration.

- 187 See "Introduction," n.5.
- 188 Ibid. In his "Conversation" with Cézanne, first published in 1920 (see Souvenirs...Une conversation avec Cézanne, Paris: Michel, 1926, pp. 94-95), E. Bernard while relating Cézanne's advice: "One should study first on geometrical figures: the cone, the cube, the cylinder, the sphere" intercalated his own knowledge on the subject of le géométrique, le géométral and le perspectif. Bernard implied that they formed the basis of instruction in the old days, but not at the time of his conversation with Cézanne.
- 189 See Ch. I, Part 1, p. 33.
- 190 See Denis, "Cézanne," Théories, p. 243 and p. 251.
- 191 See for example Théories, p. 165.
- 192 Théories, p. 251.
- 193 See Ch. II, Part 1, pp. 111-12.
- 194 Théories, p. 248.
- 195 Théories, p. 249 (not underlined in Denis' text).
- 196 Théories, p. 171. See also 182, above.
- 197 Théories, p. 171. Denis also said: "Le sculpteur de l'Ecole de Phidias n'esquive pas un modelé; en simplifiant il ne supprime rien..."
- 198 See Théories, p. 246 and 252.
- 199 Théories, p. 249.
- 200 Ibid. See also Denis' definition of a painting in 1890, Théories, p. 1.
- 201 Théories, p. 249. Denis claims Cézanne told him he wanted "to do with color what is done in black and white with the stump (tortillon)" and that he substituted "color" for "light." In a letter to Bernard (23 Dec. 1904, Letters, p. 310), Cézanne declared that "Light ... does not exist for the painter" and that "the planes represented by color sensations" can be classified as "light, half tone or quarter tone." Denis claimed though that Cézanne never used the word "values,"

because "his system" excluded "relations of values in the sense used in schools" (Théories, p. 250). Yet in a letter to Bernard (27 June 1904, Letters, p. 305) Cézanne used the word "values" while explaining to Bernard Chardin's method.

202 Denis, Journal, I, Sept. 1897, p. 121.

203 See Théories, pp. 205-06, n.1.

204 Cézanne, letter to C. Pissarro, 24 June 1874, Letters, p. 141.

205 I disagree with Richard Shiff ("Seeing Cézanne," Critical Inquiry, Summer 1978, pp. 769-808) who argued for an "Impressionist" Cézanne (as opposed to a "Symbolist" one) and considered that the flatness of his paintings is due to the atmospheric light effect. Cézanne did use this effect in the foliage only, but his method of ordered hatching is different from the Impressionist division of tone. To neglect the effect of reflected light in Cézanne's paintings altogether, though as Denis did (because he did not want to present Cézanne as reproducing "light" or being analytical as the Impressionists) is wrong. Cézanne himself, who wrote in one letter to Bernard that "light does not exist for the painter" (see n.201, above), wrote to him in another one: "Draw, but it is the reflection which envelops; light, through the general reflection, is the envelope." (Letters, p. 316.)

206 Denis, Théories, p. 250.

207 Ibid. This quotation was also used by de Goncourt brothers in their article on Chardin. See E. and J. de Goncourt, "Chardin," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.16, 1864, p. 166, as well as L'Art du XVIII^e siècle, second ed., 1873, Paris: Rappilly, Vol.I, pp. 173-74. Cézanne's special interest in Chardin, as well as his acquaintance with Goncourts' writings is evident from his letters.

208 Denis, (Théories, p. 250) said:

Le volume trouve donc chez Cézanne son expression dans une gamme de teints, dans une série de taches: ces taches se succèdent par contrastes ou analogies selon que la forme s'interrompt ou se continue. C'était ce qu'il lui plaisait d'appeler moduler plutôt que modeler.

209 See also my discussion of Bernard's article, on pp. 112-13.

210 Denis, Théories, p. 251.

211 In such a bind were for example the artists R.P. Rivière and J.F. Schnerb (the second one was also an art critic), who visited Cézanne in Aix in January 1905, and published an article on him in 1907. They believed that Cézanne's whole oeuvre is "analysis with a view to synthesis" and "observation directed to a purpose that is scientific rather than decorative." (R.P. Rivière and J.F. Schnerb, "L'Atelier de Cézanne," Grande Revue, Vol.46, 25 Dec. 1907, p. 816.) They also wrote (p. 813):

Cézanne ne cherchait pas à représenter les formes par une ligne. Le contour n'existait pour lui qu'en tant que lieu où une forme finit et où une autre forme commence...Les traits noirs qui cernent souvent ses peintures n'étaient pas pour Cézanne un élément destiné à s'ajouter à la couleur, mais simplement une manière de reprendre plus facilement l'ensemble d'une forme par le contour avant de la modeler par la couleur.

The emphasis on avant is mine. Denis said that Cézanne outlined "the form" after it was modelled by color gradations (see Théories, p. 251). In any event, Denis as well as Rivière and Schnerb wanted to minimize the significance of the dark outlines.

Recent art historians consider Rivière's and Schnerb's testimony as "unbiased." Th. Reff ("Cézanne and Poussin," p. 158) thinks that theirs is "the most reliable of all accounts" because they were "Unbiased by their own aesthetic programme, yet competent to discuss technical problems." But why would "impressionist print-makers," as Reff describes them, be less biased than others? Reff also remarked in a note: "Although familiar with Bernard's souvenirs, they insist upon their independence." Indeed they claimed (p. 812, n.1) to have already written three quarters of their article when E. Bernard's "Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne et lettres inédites" were published in Mercure de France (Vol.69, Sept.-Oct. 1907), but they also admitted having read Bernard's article of 1891, as well as the one in L'Occident of 1904. Rivière and Schnerb considered Bernard's judgement to be "increasingly clair-voyant." Indeed, there is no doubt from the article that they were influenced by Bernard, and also by Denis. They did have the language to discuss "technical problems," this is true, but in fact they repeated the same things Bernard and Denis said. At least they did not use the notion "modulation of volumes" as a substitute for all "modelling" in Cézanne's paintings, but only the expressions "modelling with color" or "relief in color." They used intensively Bernard's concept of the necessity for the painter to extract "the laws of nature," and also combined it with Bernard's saying about Cézanne ("Souvenirs," Mercure, 16 Oct. 1907, p. 395):

L'idée de beauté n'était pas en lui, il n'avait que celle de vérité. Il insistait sur la nécessité d'un optique et d'une logique.

Thus they arrived at the conclusion mentioned before (p. 816 of their article).

- 212 Cézanne, Letters, p. 351.
- 213 Cézanne, Correspondance, p. 265. See translation in Letters, p. 306. Cézanne insisted that each object had to be modelled, but not after a regular geometrical solid.
- 214 Denis described Cézanne as such (Théories, p. 252):
C'est le Poussin de l'impressionnisme.
Il a la finesse de perception d'un parisien et il est fastueux et abondant comme un décorateur italien. Il est ordonné comme un français et fiévreux comme un espagnol. C'est un Chardin de décadence, et parfois il dépasse Chardin. Il y a du Gréco en lui, et souvent il a la santé de Véronèse.
- 215 Denis, Théories, pp. 246-47.
- 216 Denis, Théories, p. 246.
- 217 Ibid, p. 251.
- 218 Ibid.
- 219 See Denis, Théories, pp. 246-47.
- 220 Denis (Théories, p. 247) said:
Les oeuvres des artistes d'autrefois restent pour nous un criterium certain: n'en cherchons pas d'autre. C'est parce que des critiques enthousiastes ont préféré Cézanne à Chardin et à Véronèse, qu'il convient de reconnaître en lui des lacunes, et d'avouer avec simplicité qu'il a subi le contre-coup du désordre du notre temps.
- 221 E. Bernard, "Souvenirs...", Mercure de France, 16 Oct. 1907, p. 396, or Souvenirs... Une Conversation..., Paris: Michel, 1926, p. 24.
- 222 "Tonal values" are the ones obtained by mixing various hues with black and white. "Color values" reside solely on the intrinsic differences in value between different colours.

223 E. Bernard, "Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne," Mercur de France, 16 Oct. 1907, p. 626 or Souvenirs..., 1926, p. 70.

224 "Souvenirs..." Mercur, p. 626 or Souvenirs..., p. 71.

225 Ibid. Bernard probably based his theory on Cézanne's letter of 23 Oct. 1905 (see Ch. II, Part 1, n.102). He also mentioned Cézanne's constant preoccupation to find a way to see the "values" better. In the letter of 27 June 1904, Cézanne was simply relating to him Chardin's method. (See Cézanne, Letters, p. 305.)

226 E. Bernard, "Souvenirs..." Mercur, p. 627 or Souvenirs..., p. 72. Bernard insisted on defining what "classical" meant since the word was used and abused at the time:

Classique signifie ici: qui est en rapport avec la tradition. Ainsi Cézanne disait: "Imaginex Poussin refait entièrement sur nature, voilà le classique que j'entends." Il ne s'agit pas en effet de terrasser les Romantiques, mais de retrouver ce que les Romantiques eux-mêmes avaient: les règles solides des grands maîtres.

227 E. Bernard, Souvenirs..., p. 31.

228 Ibid.

229 The fact that Masquet (Cézanne, p. 75) related that Cézanne spoke with sympathy of Gauguin and van Gogh probably does not carry much weight. But a look at Gauguin's paintings, especially those from Tahiti which were appreciated even by Geffroy (see "Paul Gauguin," L'Art Moderne, No.8, 21 Feb. 1895, p. 62) who could discern in them "the modelling of a form," reveals the plain truth that they were not all that "flat." Only a fairly small percentage of Gauguin's paintings were strictly Cloisonist, and they were done after all under the influence of Bernard himself, as the latter often previously said. Did he not claim for himself the title of inventor of Cloisonism?

230 E. Bernard, "Souvenirs..." Mercur, 1907, p. 626 or Souvenirs, p. 70.

231 E. Bernard, "Réflexions à propos du Salon d'Automne," La Rénovation Esthétique, Dec. 1907, p. 62.

232 Ibid., p. 60. Now Bernard uses the word "decorative" in a pejorative sense.

233 E. Bernard, "La Technique de Paul Cézanne," L'Amour de l'Art, Dec. 1920, p. 278. Thus Bernard arrived again at similar conclusions with the 1891 ones, only this time with a pejorative connotation.

Chapter II, Part 2

¹ See Ch. I, Part 1, p. 27 and n.45.

² See Emile Zola, Salons, ed. F.W.J. Hemmings and Robert J. Niess, Genève, Paris: Libr. Minard, 1959, pp. 148-49, and p. 123.

³ See for example Zola's comments on Pissarro in Emile Zola, "Mon Salon (1868)," reprinted in Le Bon Combat. De Courbet aux Impressionnistes, ed. Jean-Paul Bouillon, Paris: Hermann, 1974, p. 107.

⁴ Zola even considered that Corot's "foggy effects" brought him close to the "dreamers and idealists." See Le Bon Combat, p. 118.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of this theme in Cézanne's work see Th. Reff, "Cézanne, Flaubert, St. Anthony, and the Queen of Sheba," Art Bulletin, Vol.44, 1962, pp. 113-125.

⁶ See Ch. II, Part 1, p. 94.

⁷ For example Ch. Blanc recommended:

...les figures fabuleuses, héroïques ou romanesques, dont les actions ne sont pas bien définies, dont le costume est arbitraire, et qui habitent les contrées de la mythologie, le pays des aventures chimériques.

(Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, p. 96.)

⁸ Ernest Chesneau, Les Chefs d'école, Paris: Didier et c^e Libraires-Editeurs, 1862, especially pp. 164-65.

Chesneau did not approve of the complete elimination of the "ideal" in Realist painting. He considered that a dose of idealization was necessary for the aesthetic needs of the human soul, and declared:

Le réalisme, au contraire, tel qu'on essaye de l'imposer aujourd'hui, en rejetant formellement toute inspiration idéale, se condamne par cela seul à une paralysie partielle.

(E. Chesneau, Les Chefs, p. 307.)

⁹ See Ch. I, Part 1, p. 45 and n.104.

¹⁰ E. Chesneau, L'Education de l'artiste, 1881, p. 276. According to Chesneau, Théodule Ribot had both "temperament" and "ésprit."

¹¹ E. Chesneau, L'Education..., p. 273.

¹² Recently, M. Virginia B. Bettendorf ("Cézanne's Early Realism: 'Still Life with Bread and Eggs' Reexamined," Arts Magazine, Jan. 1982, pp. 138-141), also argued for Cézanne's Still Lifes connection with the "Realists" such as Ribot and Bonvin, as well as with the Chardin revival, emphasizing the lack of literary associations, the characteristics of "'pure' painting," and the "classical simplicity and geometry of Chardin" in all these paintings.

¹³ E. Chesneau, L'Education..., p. 283.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹⁵ P. Cézanne, Letters, p. 142.

¹⁶ E. Chesneau, L'Education..., p. 54.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 120-21. Chesneau is against traditionalist aesthetics (p. 73), against academic instruction at the Ecole, "where the antirealist theories were professed and even pushed to the extreme where beauty was concerned" (p. 223). At the same time, the critic, while stressing the importance of observation of reality, praised "imagination" (p. 226).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁹ Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 12 May 1904, Letters, p. 302. This was actually a warning to Bernard himself, who delighted in speculations and tried to handle both writing on art and painting. Cézanne's advice after he read Bernard's article on himself in L'Occident was: "Don't be an art critic, but paint, there lies salvation." (Letter to Bernard, 25 July 1904, Letters, p. 306).

²⁰ Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 25 July 1904, Letters, p. 306.

²¹ Cézanne, letter to Zola, 24 Sept. 1878, Letters, p. 168.

²² Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 12 May 1904, Letters, p. 302.

23 Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 26 May 1904, Letters, p. 303.

24 Ibid. For Mallarmé see Paula Gilbert Lewis, The Aesthetics of Stéphane Mallarmé in Relation to His Public, New Jersey, London: Associated Univ. Press, Inc., 1976, pp. 58-59.

Chesneau also deplored the separation between Art and people at the time; he did not believe that art should normally addressed only to an elite (see L'Education..., p. 8).

25 Camille Mauclair, "La Réforme de l'Art Décoratif en France," La Nouvelle Revue, Vol.98, Jan.-Feb., 1896, p. 737. Mauclair, pointing out that the opening of the section of decorative and industrial arts at the Salon at the Champ de Mars was due mainly to Roger Marx's efforts, described him as "the most perspicacious and the most intelligent of the amateurs of modern art."

26 See Ch. II, Part 1, p. 117 and n.124. In a letter to Bernard (27 June 1904, Letters, p. 304) he wrote: "...I ought to make ten good studies and sell them at a high price, as amateur collectors are speculating on them."

27 See also Chapter I, Part 2, especially Mellerio's comparison between a realist and an idealist painter (n.10). Charles Morice, referring to Impressionism, said that in this system that excludes the process of selection, the thought, the sentiment, "the artist renounces, by principle, the composition, decoration, expression, style." (Ch. Morice, Gauguin, Paris: H. Floury, 1919, p. 136.)

28 The subject of "temperament" is a thesis topic in itself (one such thesis was written by Eustathia Costopoulos at Univ. of Chicago - mentioned in R. Shiff, in "The End of Impressionism...", p. 376, n.64.)

The fact that the "temperament" was a concept used in a materialistic framework, and was physiologically determined, was expressed by Sérusier:

Aux époques matérialistes, on a attaché une grande importance aux causes physiologiques resumés dans le mot "temperament," qui devait tout expliquer, puisqu'on écartait systématiquement toute influence psychique.

(Paul Sérusier, A B C de la peinture, Paris: Floury, 1942, first published in 1921, written much earlier, p. 11.) Cézanne's definition of "temperament" was: "creative force" (see for example Cézanne, letter to Zola, 1878, Letters, p. 156).

29 P. Cézanne, letter to Roger Marx, 23 Jan. 1905, Letters, p. 313. The emphasis is mine.

30 For example, in a letter to Louis Aurenche (25 Jan. 1904), Cézanne wrote:

Because, if the strong feeling [sensation in the French original] for nature - and certainly I have that vividly - is the necessary basis for all artistic conception on which rests the grandeur and beauty of all future work, the knowledge of the means of expressing our emotion is no less essential, and is only to be acquired through very long experience.

(Cézanne, Letters, p. 299; my emphasis.)

See also n.47, below.

31 Cézanne, Letters, p. 172. Compare to Baudelaire's definition of Romanticism as "a mode of feeling." (See Ch. Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1847," translated in Elisabeth Gilmore Holt, From the Classicists to the Impressionists, New York, 1966, p. 175). As I will indicate later, Cézanne admired Baudelaire very much, especially as an art critic. Zola himself borrowed from Baudelaire selectively, discarding whatever was in contradiction with positivism.

32 Cézanne, Letters, pp. 173-74; my emphasis. See also Chapter II, Part 1, p. 125 and n.156, on M. Denis' insistence that Cézanne did not "reproduce," but "represented" light.

33 See Cézanne, letter to his son, 3 Aug. 1906, Letters, p. 321. See also Leo Larquier, Le Dimanche avec Paul Cézanne, Paris, 1925, p. 54 and pp. 59-61.

34 This painting, which is in Moscow, is V.90, dated by Venturi 1869-71. According to Dorival it could not have been painted before 1868; the other two earlier versions were painted in 1866 and 1867, respectively, as is evident in letters from Marion to Morstatt. (Bernard Dorival, Cézanne, Paris, 1948, p. 29.) The first version is mentioned also in Cézanne, Letters (Letter written by A. Guillemet with a Poscript by Cézanne, 2 Nov. 1866), p. 117. (Rewald wrongly identified this painting in the footnote as V.90.)

On Cézanne's love for Wagner see also Cézanne, Letters, p. 103 and p. 121.

35 See Theodore Reff, "Cézanne, Flaubert, St. Antony, and the Queen of Sheba," Art Bulletin, Vol.44, 1962, p. 115 and p. 123.

36 For Cézanne's admiration for Redon see Cézanne, letter to E. Bernard, 12 May 1904, p. 302. For Redon's litographs illustrating Flaubert's Temptation, see André Mellerio, Odilon Redon, Paris, 1913, reprinted by Da Capo Press, N.Y., 1968.

Mellerio also singled out Redon and Cézanne as two "solitary spirits," who did not belong to the Naturalist-Impressionist movement, yet exhibited with them and fought the academism.

37 Th. Reff, "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," The Art Quarterly, Vol.25, No.3, Autumn 1962, p. 219.

38 Reff ("Cézanne, Flaubert...", p. 122) commented on the fact that the coloring in this painting is "expressive," "freely invented." He pointed out that,

...in figure compositions done from the imagination - wither of Romantic subjects like the Temptation or of the bathers that gradually replace them - blue retains its primacy as an expression of pure fantasy divorced from the balanced distribution of colors in nature.

On Cézanne's blue, see also Kurt Badt, The Art of Cézanne, transl. Sheila Ann Agilvie, London: Faber and Faber, 1965, pp. 58-72.

Compare Cézanne's use of "imaginary" color in compositions such as the Temptation or the Bathers, with Ch. Blanc's recommendations. (See Chapter I, Part I, p. 49 and n.109.)

I would add that Cézanne's coloring is never as unnatural as Gauguin's for example. He always preserves a note of plausibility. For instance, in the case of all-over blue tone, which gives painting unity, which can be related with Symbolism, and the 18th century blue, there is also a "natural" explanation, to be found also in Blanc's writings. In the Grammaire des arts du dessin (1867, pp. 607-08), Blanc talks about the dominant color of the light, depending on climate, time of day, etc., such as for example a "cold blue light" and a "warm and orangy" one.

39 Cézanne, letter to Zola, 24 May 1883, L'Estaque, Letters, p. 209. The emphasis on "decorative effect" is mine.

40 See Paul Signac, D'Eugène Delacroix aux Neo-Impressionnisme, first published in La Revue Blanche in 1898, Paris, 1964, p. 95. For an example of Pissarro's painting that inspired the Neo-Impressionists, see La Côte du Chou à Pontoise in L.R. Pissarro and L. Venturi, Camille Pissarro: Son Art - Son Oeuvre, Paris: P. Rosenberg, 1939, cat. No.568.

With regard to Pissarro's concern for "order," I will quote from the letter he wrote January 9th, 1887 to his son Lucien (Letters to his son Lucien, 1972, p. 91): he disapproved of "the disorder which results from a type of romantic fantasy which despite the talent of the artist, is not in accord with the spirit of our time."

From May to October 1881, Pissarro and Cézanne worked together in Pontoise.

41 This topic will be discussed later in connection with his paintings, in section "B."

42 Cézanne, letter to Zola, 27 Nov. 1884, Letters, p. 213.

43 See H.B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, 1973, pp. 63-64. See also Chapter I, Part 2, n.30.

44 See for example Gauguin's letter to Pissarro, of the summer 1881, quoted in J. Rewald, The History of Impressionism, M.O.M.A., 1973, p. 458.

45 C. Pissarro, letter of May 13th, 1891, Letters to His Son Lucien, p. 171.

46 On Cézanne's religiosity see J. Rewald, Cézanne et Zola, Paris, 1936, pp. 100-01, or Charles Camoin, "Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne," L'Amour de l'Art, Jan. 1921, p. 25. According to Camoin, Cézanne considered religion as a "moral hygiene." See also Fig.9.

47 For Cézanne "emotion" was equivalent with "sensation" (as it was in Symbolist circles - see Chapter I, Part 2, n.23), as is evident for example from the letter to Louis Aurenche of 1904 (see n.30, above). It is important to retain this observation when reading Rewald's English translation of Cézanne's letters, because he sometimes translates "sensation" as "sense-perception" (see for example Letters, p. 304).

From the letter to Aurenche is also evident that Cézanne considered that the emotion felt in front of nature should be the most important factor in art. He criticized Emile Bernard for not basing his art on the "emotional experience of nature," considering he produced "nothing but old-fashioned rubbish." (See Letters, p. 328.) To Louis Leydet he wrote in the letter of 17 Jan. 1905:

Arriver à formuler suffisamment les sensations que nous éprouvons au contact de cette belle nature-homme, femme, nature morte - et que les circonstances vous soient favorables, c'est ce que je dois souhaiter à toute sympathie d'art.

(Quoted in Jean Royère, "Louis Leydet," L'Amour de l'Art, Vol.6, Nov. 1925, p. 444; the emphasis is mine.)

Rewald (Letters, p. 313) translated here sensation as "impression," which is correct, if we keep in mind again that we are not dealing with purely sensory impressions. When Cézanne referred to the latter, he specified this, such as for example, "colour sensations" (Letters, p. 310, or p. 316).

Another example of Cézanne's insistence on rendering personal "emotion" is the advice given to the young painter Charles Camoin. Cézanne advised him to not try to imitate any

"master," but to use his own "feeling for nature," and he added: "...believe me, as soon as you begin to feel vividly, your own emotion will always emerge and win its place in the sun,...." (Cézanne, Letters, p. 309; my emphasis.)

⁴⁸ See André Fontainas, Mes Souvenirs du Symbolisme, Paris, 1928, p. 34.

⁴⁹ See Ch. Blanc, "Salon de 1866," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Ser.1, Vol.20, 1866, p. 500. Blanc was referring to the kind of art (intended for private use, not the "grand art" which according to him was the monopoly of the State) that painters could exhibit in a second type of Salon, which should be established in order to "satisfy the material interests of the artists." He saw the usual Salon as an institution that had the purpose to show the "greatest glory of French art."

For Blanc, landscape was low in the hierarchy of subject-matter, but appropriate for the decoration of private homes. (Compare to Van Gogh's intentions for example - see Chapter I, Part 2, pp. 73-74.)

⁵⁰ Achille Piron, Eugène Delacroix: Sa vie et ses oeuvres, Paris: Imprimerie de Jules Claye, 1865, p. 421. Delacroix said:

Tout est sujet; le sujet c'est toi-même;
ce sont tes impressions, tes émotions
devant la nature. C'est en toi qu'il faut
regarder, et non autour de toi.

The advice Cézanne gave to Charles Camoin (13 Sept. 1903, Letters, p. 298) is quite similar: "...we must hasten out and by contact with nature revive within ourselves the instincts, the artistic sensations which live in us."

⁵¹ Cézanne, letter to his son, 28 Sept. 1906, Letters, p. 333.

For the relationship Cézanne-Delacroix, see also:
- Sara Lichtenstein, "Cézanne and Delacroix," Art Bulletin, Vol.46, 1964, pp. 55-67.
- Kurt Badt, The Art of Cézanne, pp. 278-296.

⁵² Charles Baudelaire, the obituary he wrote at Delacroix's death, in Lorenz Eitner, Neoclassicism and Romanticism, 1750-1850, Vol.II, Prentice-Hall, 1970, p. 128. (This article was reprinted in Baudelaire's Art Romantique.) See also Ch. I, Part 2, n.23 on "sensation," "emotion," and "impression."

⁵³ Cézanne, Letters, p. 313. See also n.47 for the French original.

⁵⁴ E. Delacroix, Journals, in Neoclassicism and

Romanticism, p. 121.

55 See n.30; my emphasis. See also Cézanne, Letters, p. 303, and p. 315. Baudelaire quoted Delacroix:

Since I consider the impression transmitted to the artist by nature as the most important thing of all to translate, is it not essential that he should be armed in advance with all the most rapid means of translation?

Then Baudelaire added: "...the day was never long enough for his study of the material means of expression." (See Neoclassicism and Romanticism, p. 128.)

56 Cézanne most likely read Delacroix's articles or Piron's book of 1865, where some of his articles, as well as excerpts from his Journals and letters were reproduced (the Journals were published in entirety in 1893), as well as writings on Delacroix by Baudelaire, Chesneau, Blanc, or Th. Silvestre.

57 See Neoclassicism and Romanticism, p. 109. Baudelaire also pointed out that "In colour are to be found harmony, melody, and counterpoint." (See Ch. Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1846," in Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, From the Classicists to the Impressionists, N.Y., 1966, p.178.)

58 For Baudelaire, see E. Holt, From the Classicists..., p. 175. On Baudelaire Cézanne wrote: "One of the strong is Baudelaire, his 'Art Romantique' is astounding, and he doesn't go wrong in the artists he admires." (See Cézanne, letter to his son, 13 Sept. 1906, Letters, p. 328.)

The Symbolists were indebted to Delacroix, among other things, for the concept of "equivalents," as Wasuitynski pointed out. (See V. Jirat-Wasuitynski, Paul Gauguin in the context of Symbolism, New York and London: Garland Publ., 1978, pp. 110-13.) Delacroix wrote:

Le but de l'artiste n'est pas de reproduire exactement les objets, il serait arrêté aussitôt par l'impossibilité de le faire. Il y a des effets très - communs qui échappent entièrement à la peinture et qui ne peuvent se traduire que par des équivalents: c'est à l'esprit qu'il faut arriver, et les équivalents suffisent pour cela.

(Piron, Eugène Delacroix..., 1865, pp. 405-06; my emphasis.)

As Jirat-Wasuitynski has shown, Gauguin had copied this fragment of Piron's book. Denis often talks, as we have seen, of this theory of equivalents, in similar terms. (See Chapter II, Part 1, p. 125 and n.157.)

- 59 Cézanne, letter to Ch. Camoin, 22 Feb. 1903, Letters, p. 294.
- 60 Neoclassicism and Romanticism, p. 109.
- 61 See E. Chesneau, L'Education..., pp. 54-59.
- 62 Ibid., p. 59.
- 63 Cézanne, letter to Gasquet, 26 Sept. 1897, p. 261: my emphasis. It is interesting to note that Puvis de Chavannes held similar concepts. He said, "painting is not merely an imitation of reality, but a parallel with nature." (Quoted in Arsène Alexandre's Introduction to Puvis de Chavannes, London, G. Newnes Ltd., 1905, p. xvii. Alexandre claimed to have used conversation and correspondence for his quotes, not anecdote.)
- 64 Cézanne, letter to E. Bernard, 1905, Letters, p. 315.
- 65 Cézanne, letter to Ch. Camoin, 3 Feb. 1902, Letters, p. 282; my emphasis.
- 66 Cézanne, letter to his son, 13 Oct. 1906, Letters, p. 335.
- 67 Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 1905, Letters, p. 315.
- 68 See Chapter I, Part 2, pp. 76-77, and n.106 on Naturism.
- 69 M. Décaudin, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, p. 128.
- 70 On the relationship Cézanne-Gasquet see J. Rewald, Cézanne, Geffroy et Gasquet, as well as the correspondence between the two in Cézanne, Letters. Rewald has the tendency to play down this relationship.
For information on the Romanic School, as well as on Gasquet and the "Provincial Renaissance," see the same books recommended in the note on Naturism (Chapter I, Part 2, n.106), that is Décaudin's, Raymond's and Cornell's.
- 71 On Cézanne being an anti-Dreyfusard see J. Rewald, Cézanne, sa vie - son oeuvre, son amitié pour Zola, Paris: Albin Michel, 1939, p. 365.
- 72 Cézanne, letter to J. Gasquet, 26 Sept. 1896, Letters, p. 254. Cézanne ends the letter to Gasquet of 30 January 1897

with "long live Provence" (Letters, p. 258).

73 Cézanne, letter to Henri Gasquet, 23 Dec. 1898, Letters, p. 267.

74 See Marcel Raymond, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, p. 94.

75 Quoted in Michel Décaudin, La Crise..., p. 133.
Cézanne was also praising "Reason, this clarity which permits us to penetrate the problems submitted to us," in the letter of 20 Nov. 1901 to the young writer Louis Aurenche (who met Cézanne through Gasquet), Letters, p. 278.

76 Décaudin, La Crise..., p. 133.

77 See Cornell, The Symbolist Movement, p. 178.

78 In the letter to the young painter Charles Camoin, of 13 Sept. 1903, Cézanne wrote:

Couture disait à ses élèves: "Ayez de bonne fréquentations," soit: "Allez au Louvre." Mais après avoir vu les grands maîtres qui y reposent, il faut se hâter d'en sortir et vivifier en soi, au contact de la nature, les instincts, les sensations d'art qui résident en nous.

(Cézanne, Correspondance, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1937, p. 255.)

A couple of years later, in 1905, Camoin declared that Cézanne often said he wanted to "vivify Poussin from nature" (vivifier Poussin sur nature) - see "Enquête sur les tendances actuelles des arts plastiques," Mercure de France, Aug. 1905, p. 353. We will never know for sure if Cézanne actually mentioned Poussin, or not (I do not want to reopen this discussion here; see Th. Reff, "Cézanne and Poussin," 1960). What is important is that Cézanne, while accepting the need to learn from the "great masters," recommended a "vivifying" by the way of nature.

79 Cézanne, letter to his son, 8 Sept. 1906, Letters, p. 327.

80 Cézanne, letter to Gasquet, 22 June 1898, Letters, p. 265. For Cézanne's reaction to Geffroy's article, see the letter he wrote to Gasquet on April 30, 1896, Letters, p. 245.

On Gasquet's claim that Cézanne rendered "the soul of Provence" see Rewald's translation from Les Mois Dorés of 1898 in Cézanne, Letters, pp. 264-65. Rewald admits he does not understand why Cézanne speaks "so slightly about Geffroy

whose article shows so much more understanding than Gasquet's effusion." He does suggest as a possible reason the political and religious differences between Geffroy and Gasquet, with Cézanne being in this respect on Gasquet's side. This is very plausible of course, but it is also true that Cézanne did not agree with Geffroy on artistic matters. It is obvious to me he called Geffroy "vulgar" because of his stand vis-à-vis "art for art's sake" and because he wrote for the general public. Cézanne was not pleased Geffroy attracted the public's attention on him, and obviously did not consider that the critic understood him.

81 M. Raymond, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, p. 94. On Louis Bertrand's preface to Gasquet's Chants séculaires see "La renaissance classique: Louis Bertrand" in M. Décaudin, La Crise des valeurs symbolistes, pp. 137-140.

82 Cézanne, letter to Gasquet, 25 June 1903, Letters, p. 296.

83 See Décaudin, La Crise..., p. 138.

84 Gasquet wrote:

Les assises de Cézanne furent toutes françaises et latines. Ce ne fut que par le Flamand Rubens, au fond si latin lui-même, que les Hollandais eurent quelque prise sur lui, et toute de surface.

(J. Gasquet, Cézanne, Paris, 1926, p. 70.)

85 See also Ch. II, Part 1, pp. 108-109.

86 Cézanne, letter to his son, 13 Sept. 1906, Letters, p. 328.

87 Cézanne, letter to his son, 15 Oct. 1906, Letters, p. 337.

88 See Th. Reff, Cézanne. The Late Work, p. 20.

89 Th. Reff, "The Pictures Within Cézanne's Pictures," Arts Magazine, June 1979, pp. 95-98, 100, 102.

90 J. Gasquet, Cézanne, p. 53.

91 See Ch. II, Part 2, p. 155 and n.65.

92 The term "decorator" is used in the true sense of the word, which implies the subservience of painting to architecture; whether the painting is done for a specific destination

or not is less relevant.

⁹³ J. and G. Bernheim-Jeune, "Notes des Editeurs," Cézanne, 1914, p. 14.

⁹⁴ Cézanne did try his hand at lithography, but his interest in this "lower" form of decorative art was minimal. See Douglas Druick, "Cézanne's Lithographs," in Cézanne. The Late Work, pp. 119-137.

⁹⁵ See Ch. Blanc, "Grammaire des arts décoratifs," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Sep.2, Vol.3, 1870, p. 315 and p. 298.

⁹⁶ Ch. Blanc, Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Vol.3, 1870, p. 325.

⁹⁷ Th. Reff, "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," p. 214. See also Chapter II, Part 2, p. 151.

⁹⁸ Th. Reff, "Painting and Theory in the Final Decade," Cézanne. The Late Work, p. 28.

⁹⁹ The decoration of the apartments with tapestry hangings became popular, but this form of decoration could not be afforded by many purses, since tapestries were very costly. A compromise solution materialized in the form of "painted tapestry," that is, canvases painted in liquid colours, imitating tapestry. In 1877 a book intended for the use of artists and "enlightened amateurs" was published, entitled La Peinture sur toile imitant les tapisseries et son application à la décoration intérieure: Lecons pratiques sur l'emploi des couleurs liquides. (Paris: Mary, ed.) The author was Julien Godon, a decorative painter who himself used this procedure highly recommended by Viollet-le-Duc, for example in the Galerie Mazaréne at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. (Jean-Joseph-Julien Godon was a painter of still life, and a decorative painter born in the same year as Cézanne, that is 1839. He made his debut at the Salon of 1868.) The book was translated into English two years later, under the title Painted Tapestry and its Application to Interior Decoration: Practical Lessons in Tapestry Painting with Liquid Colour. In his "Translator Note" the architect Bucknall (who also translated some of Viollet-le-Duc writings into English), quoted words of praise for painted tapestry from Viollet-le-Duc's book How to Build a House, in which economical advantages were clearly pointed out. For example Viollet-le-Duc said,

...it is clear that everybody could not have Flemish or Gobelin tapestry, any more than Cordova leather. Those things were very costly; whereas painted canvas hangings do not cost much more than wall papers...

(op. cit., p. vii.)

The painted tapestries were quite versatile. They were not only better, more "artistic" substitute for the mass-produced wallpapers, or cheaper substitute for tapestry, but fixed to the wall, or stretched on wood frames as panels, they were "decorative paintings." Godon saw in this new technique, "a new avenue which opens for the decorative painting" (op. cit., p. 2). The painted tapestries were painted on a special canvas, called canvas Binant. As Godon explains, Binant was one of the founders of the Union Centrale, and he exhibited his new product for the first time in 1861. Godon's book might have been prompted by the success of the painted tapestries at the exhibition organized in 1877 by the Union Centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie at the Palais de Champs-Élysées (mentioned by Godon on page 5 of the book).

100 Aix-en-Provence was (and still is) the place where some of the best preserved French (Beauvais) 18th century tapestries could be found. They are preserved in the Archbishop's Palace, which since 1910 became The Museum of Tapestry and Antique Furniture. See Inventaire Général des Richesses d'Art de la France, Paris: Plon, 1905, V.11, pp. 22-23 (entry by H. Gibert, 1891), Henry Algoud, Les Tapisseries du Musée de l'ancien Archevêché à Aix-en-Provence, Marseille: Detaille, n.d., as well as the reproductions in Michel-François Braive and J.-G. Martial, Aix-en-Provence, Paris: La Nef, 1955, pp. 91-97 and the cover.

Cézanne did some copying from tapestry cartoons, such as an oil painting (which was on the London art market in 1960) representing J.F. de Troy's cartoon of The Capture and Sentencing of Haman (Louvre) for the Story of Esther tapestries, or a drawing representing a figure from Giulio Romano's cartoon of The Capture of a City (Louvre) for the Fructus Belli tapestries. (See Th. Reff, "Gertrude Berthold, Cézanne und die alten Meister...", The Art Bulletin, Vol.42, June 1960, p. 149 and p. 148.)

101 See Chapter II, Part 1, p. 134 and n.207.

102 See Cézanne, Letters, p. 320 (for the Goncourts) and p. 305 (for Chardin).

103 Chesneau wrote:

La peinture murale n'a pas les mêmes lois que la peinture à l'huile. Elle est un ornement et ne doit pas provoquer l'illusion. Ce qu'on appelle le trompe-l'oeil n'est dans un tableau à l'huile qu'un solécisme grossier; dans la peinture murale, c'est un barbarisme sans excuse. Il faut que la surface reste et paraisse plane; la peinture murale joue un rôle plus élevé, mais analogue à celui qui était réservé autrefois

aux tapisseries de tenture, dans
l'ameublement des châteaux et des
palais royaux.²²⁹

(E. Chesneau, Les Chefs d'école, 1862, p. 359.)

104 See for example Calmettes' praise of the Rococo
tapestries, such as Boucher's Aminte et Sylvie, in Fernand
Calmettes, "La Loi de la Tapisserie," La Revue de l'Art Ancien
et Moderne, Vol.16, 1904, pp. 107-09.

105 See A. Darcel, "Exposition de l'histoire de la
tapisserie," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Ser.2, Vol.14, 1876,
pp. 428-29. See also P. Vaisse, "La querelle..." p. 75.

On modelling by hatching see Guillaume Janneau,
"Tapestry Technique," in André Lejard, ed., French Tapestry,
London, 1946, p. 13.

106 Such precepts were not actually followed in practice
at the Gobelins, partly due to the lack of "good" models, that
is painters' cooperation.

107 Th. Reff, "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," p. 223.

108 See n.40, above.

109 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, p. 113.

110 M.E. Chevreul, The Laws of Contrast of Colour...,
London, 1883, p. 103.

111 See Chapter II, Part 1, p. 137 and n.221.

112 Compare for example to House in Provence - Fig.13.

113 See M.E. Chevreul, The Laws of Contrast of Colour...,
Plate XI, for example.

114 See Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts du dessin, 1867,
p. 605. See also Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs,
pp. 385-86. Seurat's method is actually similar to Deyrolle's
procedure, developed for tapestry at the beginning of the 19th
century. (See Ch. I, Part 1, n.67.) P. Signac pointed out
that Cézanne, as well as the Impressionists and the Neo-
Impressionists, used the optical mixing of colour:

De même, la touche de Cézanne est le
trait d'union entre les modes d'exécution
des impressionnistes et des néo-
impressionnistes. Le principe - commun,
mais appliqué différemment - du mélange
optique unit ces trois générations de

coloristes...

(P. Signac, D'Eugène Delacroix au néo-impressionnisme, 1964, p. 106.)

115 In tapestry only the vertical direction is possible.

116 Even here there are some vertical strokes, especially in the poplars, horizontal in the water, and the houses are painted almost in flat tints. See also Th. Reff, "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," pp. 220-21.

117 See Paul Gauguin's Intimate Journals, tr. Van Wyck Brooks, New York: Liveright, 1949, p. 246. Gauguin could not have witnessed the actual painting of this picture, since he met Cézanne only in 1881 in Pontoise.

118 See P. Signac, D'Eugène Delacroix..., p. 97 and p. 116. This "Oriental tradition" does not refer to modelling, but to the coloring of a smooth surface, monochrome in appearance. See also Chapter I, Part 2, n.31, where I discussed Gauguin's involvement with flambé ceramics, inspired by Chinese vases, in Chapelet's workshop.

119 See also Signac's quotation from Blanc in D'Eugène Delacroix..., pp. 115-16. Rivière and Schnerb notices that Cézanne applied this method of color modulations also to "flat surfaces" ("L'Atelier de Cézanne" pp. 813-14), but they interpreted this as "modelling of plane surfaces" instead as a means of avoiding monochrome coloring and of making the color "vibrate." Yet when they wanted to be more technical in their explanation, they arrived to the right conclusion, which is the avoidance of monochromism:

Une surface ne nous semble unie de ton et de valeur que parce que notre oeil se meut pour la percevoir tout entière et si le peintre, pour la représenter, étend une couche monochrome sur sa toile, il la reproduira sans vérité.

Reff (Cézanne. The Late Work, p. 48) for example, took Rivière's and Schnerb's "modelling of flat surfaces" at face value, and declared that Cézanne saw "convexity" everywhere.

120 Both E. Bernard and J. Gasquet testify that Cézanne owned volumes by Charles Blanc, and both belittled the art historian's works. See E. Bernard, Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne. Une conversation avec Cézanne, Paris: R.G. Michel, éd., 1926, pp. 39, 107. (The "Souvenirs" first published in 1907 in Mercure de France.) Bernard said Cézanne owned volumes of Blanc's Histoire des peintres, which he assiduously consulted, but he made this comment: "Malheureusement cet ouvrage est médiocre, et les reproductions en sont plus que

mauvaises." Gasquet made similar comments and added: "...il n'y a pas à répondre à ceux qui croient ou prétendent que les médiocres volumes de Charles Blanc faisaient tout son bagage [Cézanne's]...." (Gasquet, Cézanne, pp. 109-10.) Gasquet also related that Cézanne often skimed through his collection of volumes by Ch. Blanc, that he read L'Histoire des peintres and sometimes even copied some reproduction from them.

(Gasquet, Cézanne, pp. 109-10.) We know that Cézanne indeed copied from the reproductions in Blanc books, for example the Christ in Limbo, attributed by Blanc to Navarette, in his L'Ecole Espagnole. (See G. Berthold, Cézanne und die alten Meister, Stuttgart, 1958, p. 130, #273.)

Unfortunately, as Th. Reff pointed out, almost all Cézanne's books were removed by his family. (Th. Reff. "Reproductions and Books in Cézanne's Studio," Gaz. Beaux-Arts, Vol.56, 1960, p. 303.) It is not possible thus to prove he owned the two Grammaires for example, but it is very likely.

121 Charles Morice, Gauguin, Paris: Floury, 1919, p. 166.

122 See n.99.

123 See for example E. Loran, Cézanne's Composition, p. 35, where he discusses "Cézanne's Materials and Method."

124 J. Godon, La Peinture sur toile imitant les tapisseries...., p. 85.

125 On the subject of Cézanne's "shadow-paths" see K. Badt, The Art of Cézanne, pp. 49-56. Badt (pp. 164-65) remarked also on the carpet-like character of Cézanne's paintings, on the unifying feature of their "facture," the "detached patches of colour frequently but not invariably applied in one direction," which resemble the texture of woven materials. He specifically referred to Gobelin tapestry effect (pp. 166-67).

126 Raymond Bouyer, "Le Paysage dans l'art," L'Artiste, July 1893, p. 39. See also Chapter I, Part 2, n.75 on Bouyer's articles.

On Cézanne's earlier connection with L'Artiste, see Guila Ballas, "Paul Cézanne et la revue 'L'Artiste'," Gaz. des Beaux-Arts, Ser.6, Vol.98, Dec. 1981, pp. 223-232. Considering the importance of Bouyer's articles for a landscape painter, it is not likely he would have missed them.

127 R. Bouyer, "Le Paysage....," L'Artiste, Aug. 1893, p. 123. My emphasis on vivifiant.

128 E. Loran, Cézanne's Composition, p. 29 remarked on

the "inner light" in Cézanne's paintings, "that emanates from the color relations in the picture itself, without regard for the mere copying of realistic effects of light and shade."

129 See also Ch. II, Part 1, p. 137, and Ch. II, Part 2, p. 169.

130 See for example Ch. Blanc, "Grammaire des arts décoratifs," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, Vol.3, 1870, p. 320: "Titien, Véronèse, Rubens, les grands colorists, ont fait consonner leurs tons par la répétition de leurs harmonies." He added:

Le coloris de Rubens, à y regarder bien, n'est si harmonieux, si vibrant, si entraînant que par l'habileté qu'il a mise à rappeler les couleurs chaudes parmi les tons froids, et les couleurs froides parmi les tons chauds.

Also, Blanc maintained,

S'il y faut un contraste, qu'on l'y mette, à la condition que le contraste soit toujours un moyen de rendre l'unité plus forte, plus brillante, plus saillante.

Si l'orange doit éclater dans une décoration, que le bleu s'y mêle, mais à petites doses,...

(Ibid., p. 321.)

On the importance of the unity of effect, see also H. Havard, La Décoration, pp. 28-29.

131 A. Darcel, "Le Salon des arts décoratifs," Gaz. Beaux-Arts, Ser.2, Vol.25, 1882, p. 591.

132 See also Chapter I, Part 2, n. 2.

133 This was something that Cézanne wanted to avoid - see letter to E. Bernard, 23 Oct. 1905, Letters, p. 317.

134 Ch. Blanc, Grammaire des arts décoratifs, pp. 104-05, and p. 101. Blanc (op. cit., p. 101) said that the Chinese "font voir dans le haut de leur décoration ce qu'un peintre mis dans le lointain de son tableau." As a general rule for avoiding the linear perspective effect, Blanc recommended using a high viewpoint, or in landscapes the avoidance of too much sky exposure (see Chapter I, Part 1, p. 26); such devices were extensively used by Cézanne. As Gauguin notices, "his horizons are lofty." (See P. Gauguin, letter to Schuffenecker, 14 Jan. 1885, Letters to his Wife and Friends, p. 34.)

135 Liliane Brion - Guerry, Cézanne et l'Expression de

l'Espace, Paris: Ed. Albin Michel, 1966 (first ed. 1950; written between 1943-45), pp. 152-160. Brion - Guerry was puzzled by the similarities with Chinese painting mostly because she believed Gasquet when he said Cézanne did not have knowledge of Japanese and Chinese art. (Op. cit., p. 254, n.115). Gasquet said:

On a parlé des Japonais et des Chinois. Quand j'amenais la conversation sur eux: "Je ne les connais pas, disait-il. Je n'en ai jamais vu." Il n'avait lu que les deux volumes de Goncourt sur Outamaro et Hokousai, mais dans l'intelligence créatrice d'un peintre cent pages de texte ne portent pas le témoignage d'un trait ou de deux coups de pinceau. S'il y eut rencontre, ce que je suis loin de suggérer, détestant tous ces rapprochements de hasard à l'usage des snobs, comme ces fameuses comparaisons entre les paysages de Cézanne et les paysages des tapisseries, s'il y eut rencontre, elle fut fortuite, et en tout cas purement cérébrale. Il n'y eut pas échange, influence virtuelle. Les assises de Cézanne furent toutes françaises et latines.

(J. Gasquet, Cézanne, p. 70.)

Gasquet dismissed here, in one sweep, both Oriental influences on Cézanne and the comparison of his landscapes with tapestry landscapes. He did not like the Oriental influences because he was against any influences that were not French or at least Latin. He did not like the comparison with tapestries because, as he put it, they were "for the use of snobs," that is those that favored "pure painting."

136 See R. Marx's description of Chapelet's ceramics in Chapter I, Part 2, n.31.

137 See the "Catalog" in Cézanne. The Late Work.

138 See Cézanne, letter to E. Bernard, 23 Oct. 1905, Letters, p. 317.

139 Carlos de Castera ("Solrac"), "Reflections sur le Salon d'Automne," L'Occident, Dec. 1904, p. 307:

Une salle, presque entière, est allouée aux envois de l'adorable coloriste M. Vuillard. Tous ses tableaux sont de dimensions restreintes et ont le charme de coupons d'étoffes précieuses que l'on regarde non seulement pour la beauté du ton mais aussi pour la préciosité de la trame; comme elles, ils contribuent à l'embellissement des appartements modernes.

140 Denis, Theories, p. 208.

141 See J. Gasquet, Cézanne, pp. 116-17, and J. Rewald, Cézanne et Zola, 1936, pp. 161-62.

142 Cézanne, letter to his son, 12 Aug. 1906, Letters, p. 3221.

143 Cézanne, letter to his son, 8 Sept. 1906, Letters, p. 326.

144 Cézanne, letter to Bernard, 1905, p. 316.

145 On the topic of Cézanne's concern with colour gradations, local colour, and theories of colour and light, see also Robert W. Ratcliffe, "Cézanne's Working Methods and Their Theoretical Background," Diss. Courtauld Inst. of Art, London, 1960, pp. 330-350. See especially the discussion on Cézanne's knowledge of the existence of the treatise: J.-D. Regnier, De la lumière et de la Couleur chez les grands maîtres anciens, Paris: Renouard, 1865, and the possibility that he used it.

Ratcliffe provides also a lengthy discussion on the relationship Baudelaire-Cézanne. (Op. cit. pp. 364-371.)

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

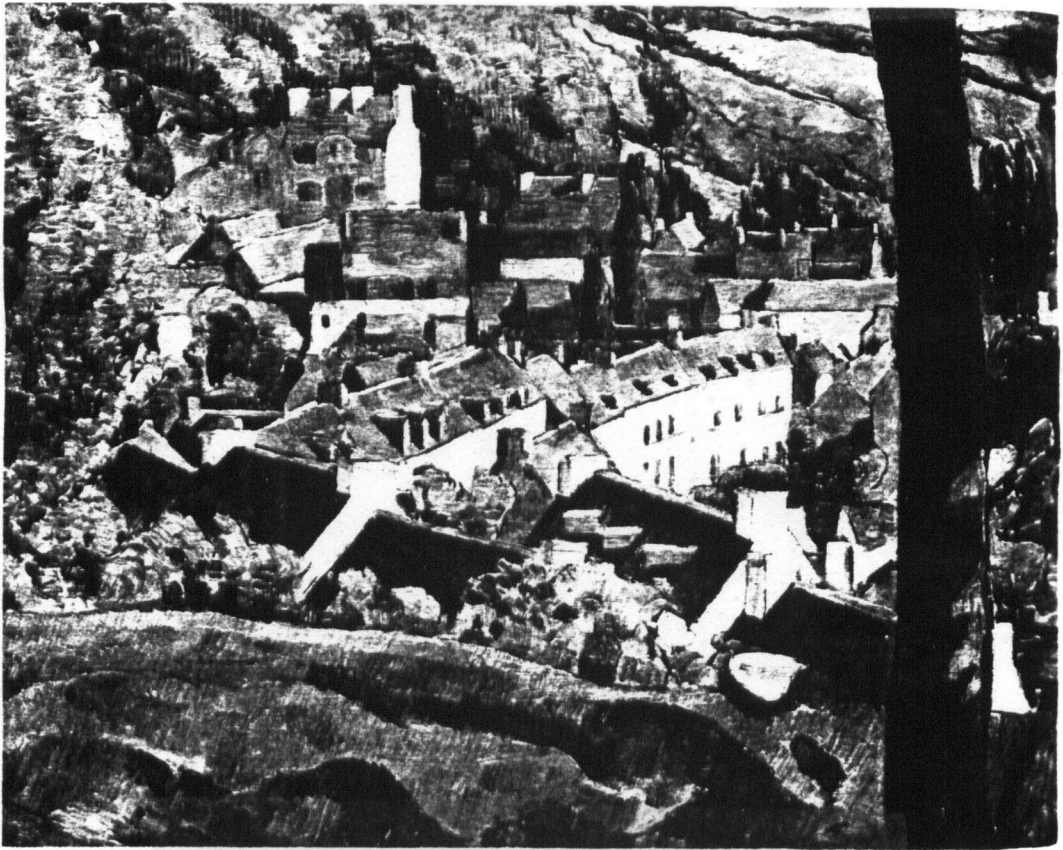


Fig. 6

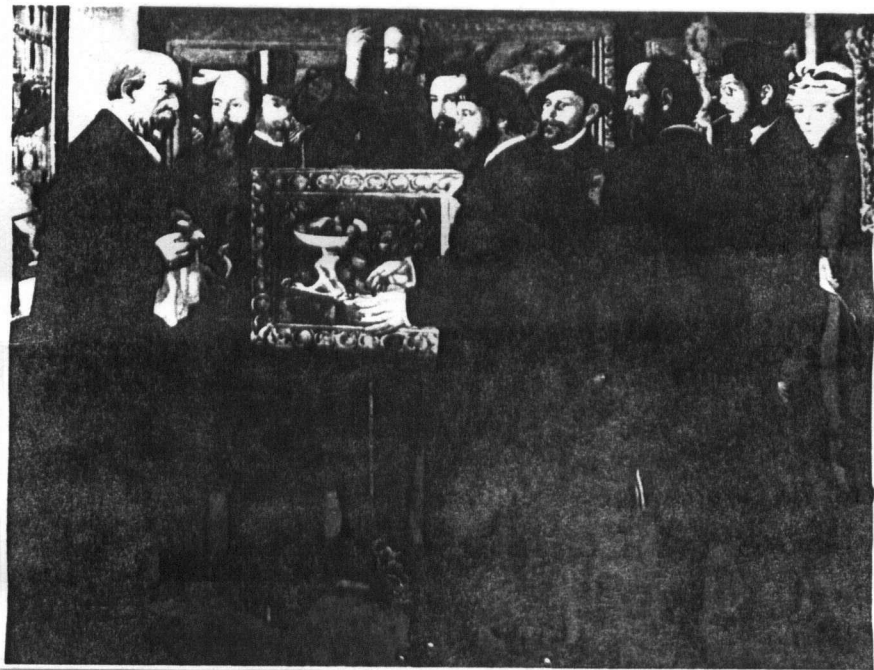


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

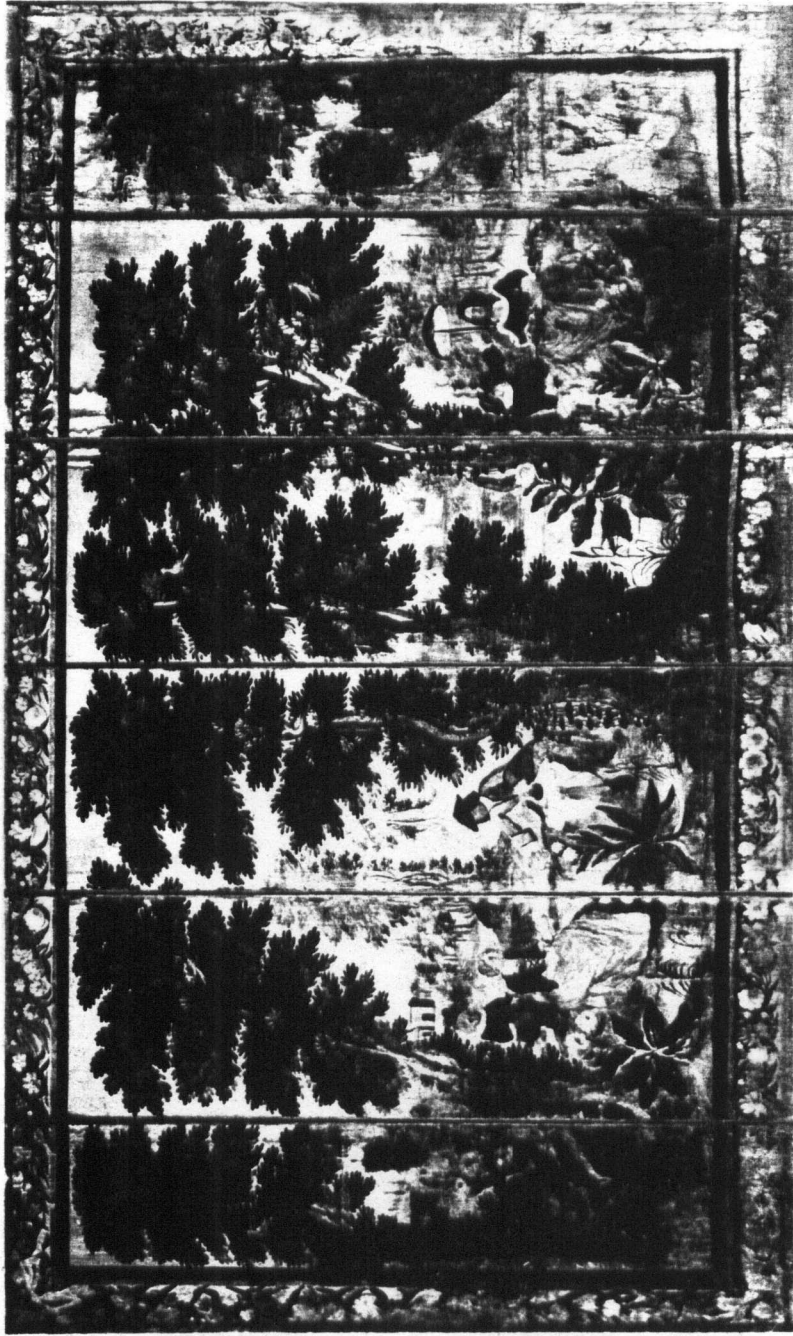


Fig. 10

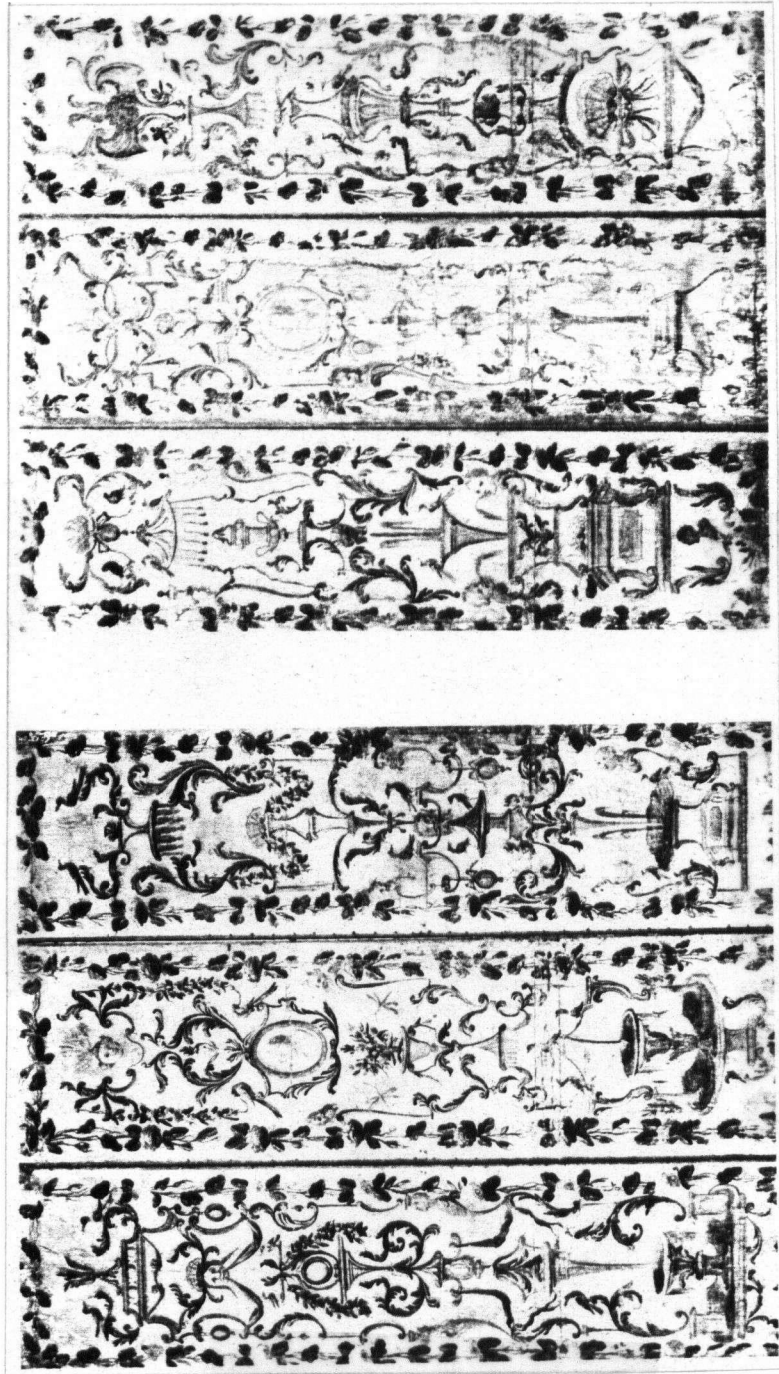


Fig. 11

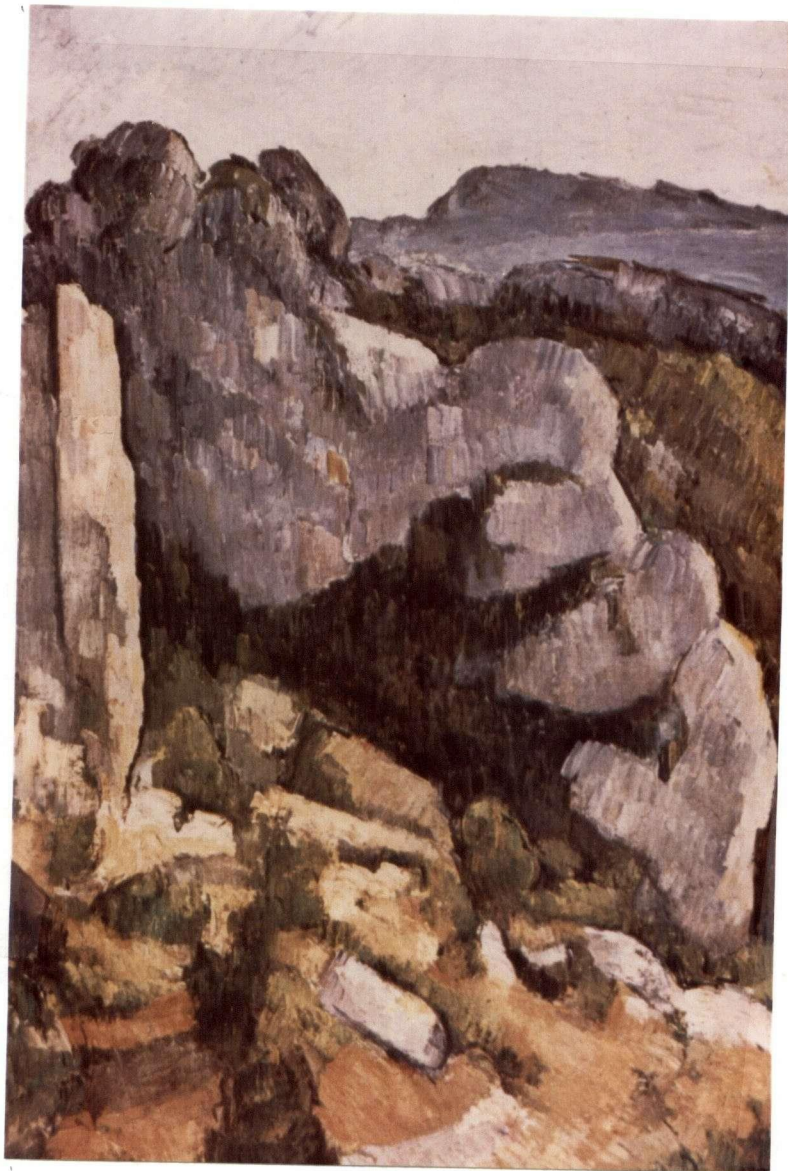


Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

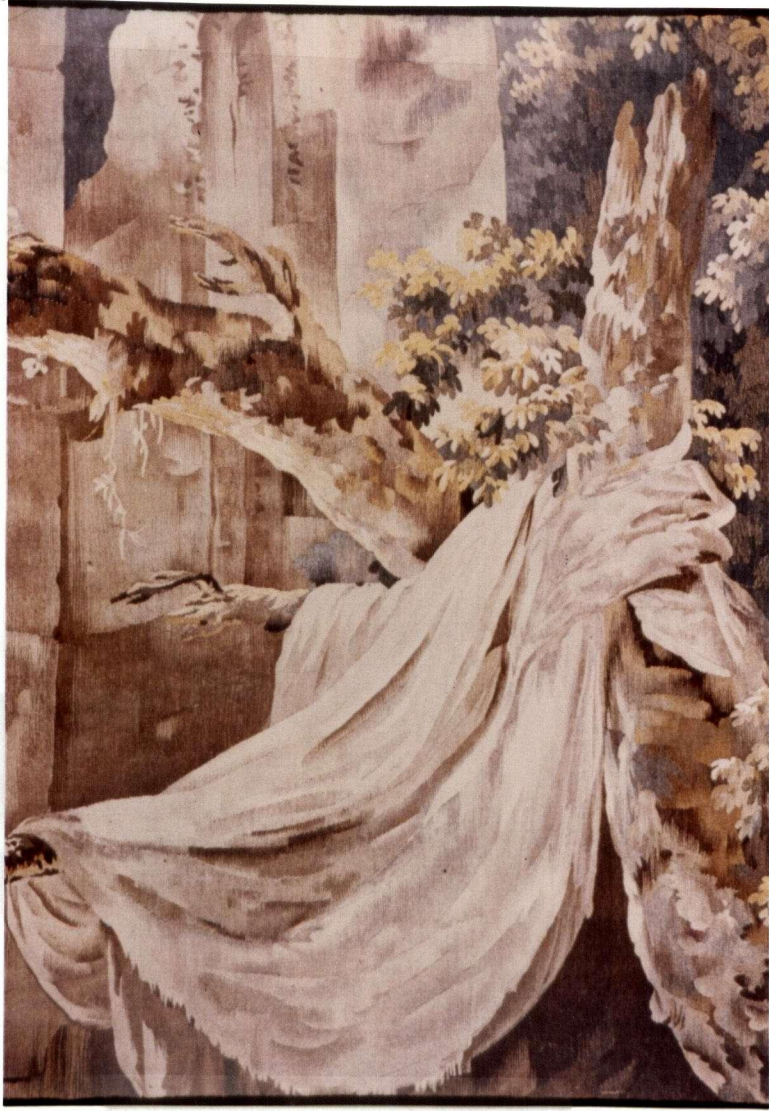


Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

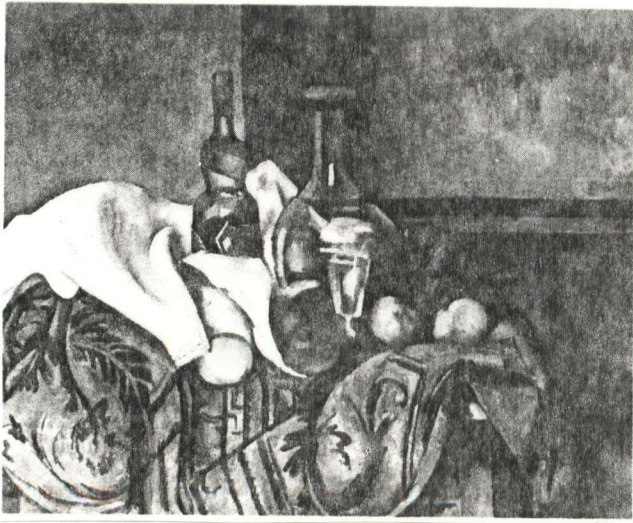


Fig. 18



Fig. 19

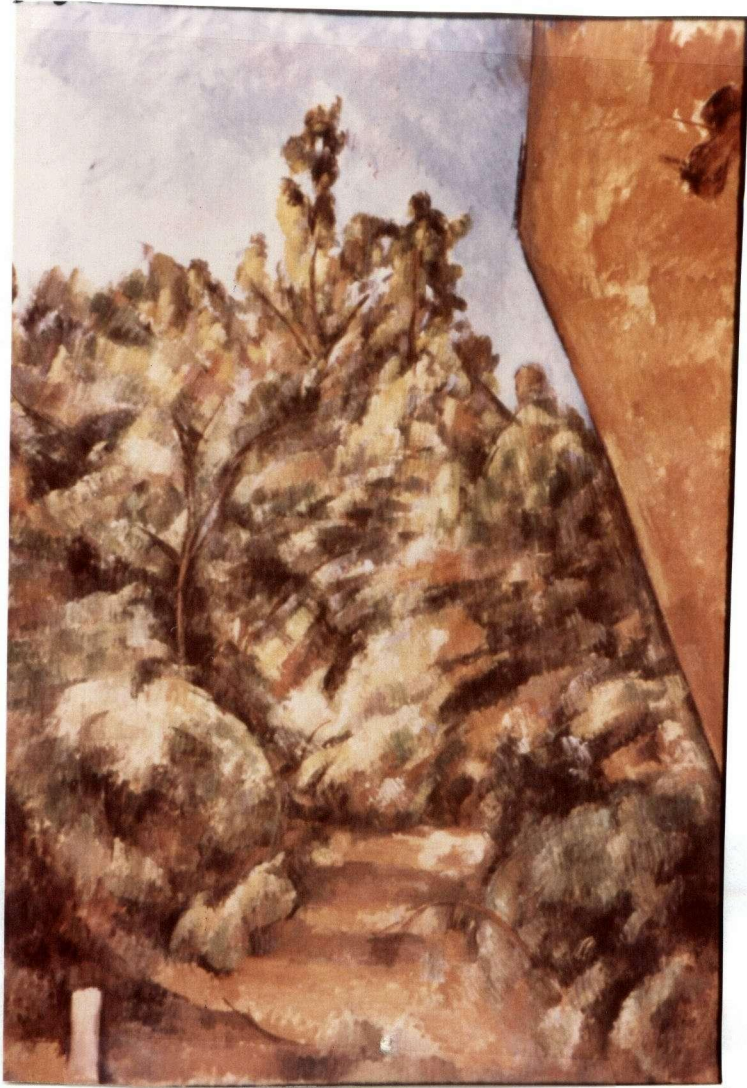


Fig. 20



Fig. 21

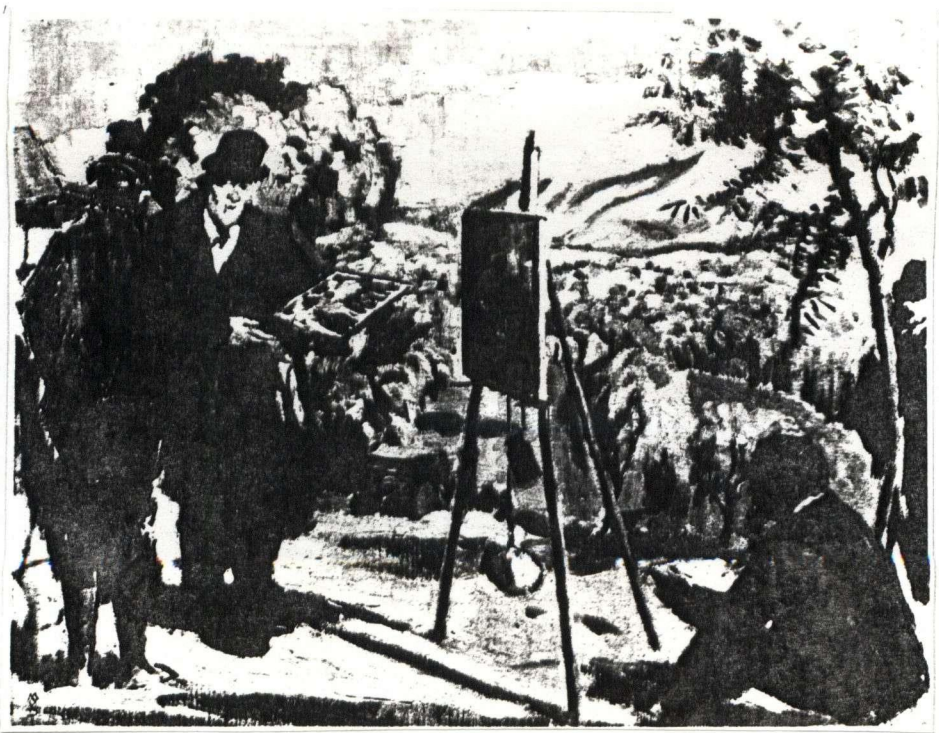


Fig. 22