POST-WAGNERIAN CONCEPTS IN FRENCH VOCAL MUSIC AND POETRY:

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MALLARME AND DEBUSSY.

by

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Tu te lèves.

Tu te lèves l'eau se déplie
Tu te couches l'eau s'épanouit
Tu es l'eau détournée de ses abîmes
Tu es la terre qui prend racine
Et sur laquelle tout s'établit

Tu fais des bulles de silence dans le désert des bruits
Tu chantes des hymnes nocturnes sur les cordes de l'arc-en-ciel
Tu es partout tu abolis toutes les routes

Tu sacrifies le temps
A l'éternelle jeunesse de la flamme exacte
Qui voile la nature en la reproduisant
Femme tu mets au monde un corps toujours pareil

Le tien
Tu es la ressemblance

Paul Eluard

from "Facile" 1935.

ABSTRACT

Post-Wagnerian tendencies in French music and poetry; with special reference to Mallarme and Debussy.

Fundamentally, the thesis concerns itself with late nineteenth and early twentieth century concepts of poetry and song in France, resulting from the upheaval of Wagnerianism, in which the Teutonic composer assumes the role of an allegorically significant mandrake figure. With the ubiquitous Tristan theme as the background ideal, English Aestheticism and Pre-Raphaelitism are discussed, and the paradox of mock-Mediaevalism pitted against new clean linear importances emerges. A discussion of five early post-Wagnerian songs by Chausson, Chabrier and Duparc precedes comment on Mallarme's 'poetique', and the approach, through magic and symbols in Yeats and overall simultanism, to Sartre's eventual existentialism. "L'Apres-Midi d'un Faune" is treated fully both from symbolic and analytical premisses and involves a brief discussion on the growth and relevance of sonata form, which is itself applied to the poetic analysis. Man's instinctive awareness of the duality of things is exemplified in this poem. Six of Faure's many songs are analysed and discussed both in relation to their innate musicality and technical brilliance, and also briefly in relation to Debussy's later songs, several of which share, with Faure, the poetic art of Verlaine. Maeterlinck's general aims and ideals (illustrated in "Pelleas et Melisande") are discussed with emphasis upon his almost hypnotic use of words. Through his narrative depiction of human loneliness and the need for silence we are made aware of the inevitable evolutionary processes from which indeterminacy must develop. The play "Pelleas et Melisande" is related more directly to its Pre-Raphaelite ambience and is analysed technically and associatively. Four songs by Debussy illustrate the varying stages of his creative life and his sensitivity towards the sound of words. The conclusion includes artistic commentary by Debussy and announces, through three poems by Apollinaire and Char, the Twentieth Century Essence.

Josephine Rayner
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PREFACE.

Despite the obvious musical and possibly philosophical associations of the title, I believe the basic premiss of the entire thesis to be that of man's concern with time in art. It may be the time-scale of his own accountable life and its happenings, or that of Man as a rational collective being, whose existence is partly maintained and justified by the pursuit of beauty, perfection, or merely a less exalted self-satisfaction through the terms and media of art. After Wagner, man's amazingly varied and free artistic approaches to time in art move from the novels of Joyce and Mann, Schönberg's "Gurrelieder", and Picasso's large early experiments in colour to the post First World War period of cynicism and disillusionment; from the facility of Cocteau to Beckett's "Malone Dies" and the rise of Anti-Art, all of which, in some way or another, relate to the problems of time, its passing and our use of it.

Such a concept shows a strong divergence, in fact rather a complete change of spiritual mood, from my original scheme of work. This was simply to present a wide selection of analyses and comments of French song from Chabrier and Chausson to Messiaen. Although this has in part been retained, the series of analyses I have finally presented is hardly more important to the work as a whole than is the orientating purpose of the opening chapter on Pre-Raphaelitism or the break-down of Maeterlinck's play "Pelléas et Mélisande". This is to say that no one section should predominate over the others, with the possible exception, merely because of its size, of the group of chapters on Mallarmé's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune". What I hope is that the reader will see the overall scheme as

following that of a number of individual mosaics, inter-related yet adequate as independent elements, which are placed three-dimensionally in a vacuum, thus eliminating the danger of any one preconceived and associative focus occurring in our minds as a result of our instinctive selective powers. This almost visual view of the thesis imbues it with an air of freedom, almost amounting to curiosity, which I find to be of potentially great value in a study of this kind, and which may provide for musicians a useful work through which they could relate their musical experience of the period covered to the surrounding contemporary developments in other art forms. I hope too, that because of the many associated secondary ideas intentionally placed within the basic context of each chapter, the reader will be stirred to dwell on the very great importance of the concept of artistic simultanism and its extreme relevance to the understanding of twentieth century art. Such philosophical entanglement should not, however, lead to academic speculation or sterility without a more constructive end in view, and it is precisely this that I have tried to avoid; I trust at least a little successfully! During the days of first reading and absorbing the background to my early plan of song analysis, I was frequently disillusioned by what seemed to be worthless excursions into artistic facts which lacked a real appreciation of the value of genius and the creative artist - a view confirmed most passionately if a little extravagantly in the following quotation:

"To my mind, the enthusiasm of a circle spoils an artist, for I dread his becoming eventually the mere expression of his circle.....Take counsel of no man but of the passing wind, that tells us the story of the world.....Could there be anything more wonderful to contemplate than that a man should have remained unknown throughout the centuries, until his secret is at last discovered by chance.....Oh...to have been such a man! ..... this is the only kind of glory worthwhile." [1]

After such an affirmation, what more can I do than hope that my ideas or rather their expression, will not be in the slightest degree detrimental to the contemporary and posthumous freedom and uniqueness due to genius, but that they rather may stimulate thought in future directions instead of merely restraining us to the past or even the present?

I should like to conclude this preface by saying that however inadequate the thesis may be in its own right, it has been completed with affection for and sincerity towards the aesthetic and emotional climate of its subject, which, one hopes, will never be stripped of its essential mystery by destructive and opinionated, albeit well-intentioned commentary.

"Nous naviguons, ô mes divers
Amis, moi déjà sur la poupe
Vous l'avant fastueux qui coupe
Le flot de foudres et d'hivers". [2]

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INTRODUCTION.

One moment now can give us more

Than years of toiling reason ...

Wordsworth.

"The content of the word I use differs from what I perceive, through my senses, even though it seems to give it a name, for my words are only a reflection of the moment whereas true sense perception leaves no room for impression, nor, in consequence, for speech." Brice Parain.[1]

The generative idea behind the choosing of the music and poetry which I have both discussed and in some cases fully analysed, is one prompted largely by a desire to discover the fullest meaning of the words perception and simultanism. Although rarely applied to a technical appreciation of music I feel that they are pertinent for a complete understanding of the music (and poetry) under review, in the sense that probably the cultivation of the fine arts in France from about 1870 onwards necessitated a wider knowledge of the craft and interacting aesthetics of each art form than had ever been apparent before in any Western epoch of artistic growth and resolution. The quotation on the previous page is a simple expression of what I mean by both perception and simultanism. It embodies neatly and more than adequately a kind of super-verbal grasp of the implications of the words and, more important still, makes clear the necessity for a dual approach to the problems of analysis, which in itself should always be the means to an end, rather than the end itself. By this I mean that the essential duality must make itself felt insofar as one must of course exercise self-discipline towards a technical knowledge and application of one's subject, but it is of equal though differently focused importance, to allow for the unexpected phenomenon of a grasp of meaning which usually comes unprompted and yet which can so often contain a great deal of

intuitive wisdom, or to allow for the solution of the problem which had previously raised only imposed technical barriers instead of artistic clearsightedness. This is obvious but it never loses by appropriate restatement.

Keeping the date 1870 in mind as an approximate starting point for these comments and analyses, I should like to use an analogy as a basic concept which will run through the thesis as a leit-motif. In terms of the nineteenth century it may seem strange to consider Wagner, the begetter of French Symbolism/Impressionism, as a Mephistophelian figure, but I would go much further than that to regard him as a MANDRAKE symbol. Unrelated as this may seem to be, it is possible that this same aspect of the use of the symbol lends it a sense of added impact through transference of time and ideology. Wagner certainly squealed in no uncertain terms through his arrogance, sense of importance and his placing in an artistically crucial area at an equally crucial period of musical history whose precise meaning still appears to be the subject of much musical and verbal debate. There seems to be a fairly obvious visual justification for the analogy in some of the works of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England, whose aesthetics in some ways almost ruled the artistic microcosm of the time. It is easy to see that the painters of this school were preoccupied with the depiction of natural objects seen through often seemingly unnatural or distorted eyes. For example, if one looks at a late drawing or painting by Frank Brangwyn, an artist deeply influenced by Pre-Raphaelite tendencies, one can see just how near to perversity or freakishness his concept of simple leaves or petal formations was, as were the purely natural aspects

(stripped of theology for the moment) of the Renaissance Hieronymus Bosch. This fondness for a conscious and enjoyed distortion of nature, not that all art does not in some way or another distort nature, would easily allow of my analogy therefore, and I feel quite justified in using it. The implications which evolve and demand further exposition are more obviously thought of in terms of the Renaissance context, but are not inapposite in what may be regarded (for the sake of easy historical and visual associations) as super-imposed Victorian terms.

The strong and not always consistently fair contrasts of thought and behaviour which existed in this fascinating era were able to reconcile apparent domestic prudery and literary and artistic anomalies concerning moral questions with a terrible and dangerous ease. Such a society could surely support the many-faceted consequences of a 'mandrake', and certainly in the case of Wagner, the consequences turned out to be concerned not primarily with the evolution of music, at least not immediately, but with that of poetry. A further qualification would say, moreover, that the type of poetry which was given its primary impetus by the effect of a very wide interest in Wagner's aesthetic rather than entirely musical beliefs was in itself of remarkable integrity and imagination. It was also responsible in no small measure for a great many new musical ideas, and it would not be too fanciful to say that had it not been for poets like Léconte de L'Isle, Mallarmé, Verlaine, and the exotic rarified imagination of Pierre Lӧuys, most of the innovatory experiments in French music could not have come about. This substantiates even further the idea of the mandrake in that the disturbing influence of such a phenomenon must give rise to some

new aspect of human thought, and in this case there was certainly enough formal development coupled with a great surging of poetry in the fullest sense of the word, to qualify the momentous rise of Wagner.

It is interesting to look for a moment at the writings of Schopenhauer on music. Like Nietzsche, he was frequently associated with Wagner, and it may well be that his ideas have more pertinence now to the questions involved in the meaning of music than do those embodied in "Oper und Drama". Schopenhauer's ideas on music and its functions as efforts of will (as opposed to being more or less generated by the impulses of emotion which he would see as adventing the other arts), are as valid today as they were a century ago, although possibly nowadays there is more fierce will and less genuine artistic emotion involved in the practice of most avant-garde art, whatever the medium. His ideas also excellently comment on music's innate ability to realise, through its everchanging and accessible forms and patterns, the spiritual evolutionary processes of the human mind which I sometimes think are nothing more than a clumsy though vitally necessary expression of man's inner and more finely-directed, and often not fully-realised, propensity towards art and the ever-present need for artistic creation. In his study of Schopenhauer, Patrick Gardiner says,

"He maintained that while music cannot without absurdity be supposed to treat directly of the visible tangible phenomena constituting the world of sense perception or the ideas which underlie them, it is not for this reason to be regarded as standing entirely on its own, unrelated to anything else that falls within the compass of human consciousness. On the contrary, in music, the 'inner side' of man, and also of the world in general, finds

its most profound and complete artistic expression. And here, Schopenhauer holds, we have the answer to our question of why we respond to music in the manner we do, of why we feel that it embodies a 'truth', which we can however, explain by treating musical works as striving to represent or otherwise signify particular elements in our perceptual experience. For what music actually gives us is nothing more nor less than the "secret history of our will", and in melody itself we find the extracted quintessence of the innumerable strivings and emotions that make up and colour the inner life of each one of us; the very character of melody - the constant digressions to and from the keynote - reflect the eternal nature of the human will, which strives, is satisfied and ever strives anew". [2]

Although this may seem full of obvious truisms, I think it suffices to show the backcloth of philosophical thought which existed in Germany, and which was, via the necessary pro - and anti - Wagnerian reactions in France, to colour the future conditions under which Gallic art was to develop. The importance of a close consideration of the inner soul of man is more than adequately stressed in Schopenhauer, but this very insistence on the point he wishes to make is proof that there was a need for such emphasis, and as will be seen later in my examples of poetic comment and analysis, the nebulousness of symbolist and impressionist poetry and painting, taken to represent the contemporary spirit of man, was certainly placed in the limelight of post-Wagnerian art in France. Germany was naturally much under the influence of this master who could express such widely differing ideals as the workings of the mind of Parsifal, the fool made wise, and of the growing, neo-Mediaeval concept of German superiority, made accessible to political grandeur through the

"Heilige Deutsche Kunst" of Die Meistersinger, and, as the musical abstractions of the Beethoven symphony were later extended into the varied aspects of French and German musical art, so on a more diffuse level Wagner's influence in France and then in England related most intimately to the development of the use of words in symbolist poetry.

One poetic abstraction which should be mentioned here is the concept of the LINE. This is not the same as the linear aspect of Wagner's musical construction or in its strictest accepted form, of the contrapuntal aspect of Bach's work which combine an almost equally intense and therefore indivisible form/content structure. In French symbolist poetry and by a later extension, progressive French contemporary music, the idea of the line was something which took upon itself elements of near mystical intensity, insofar as the overall structure could be seen in terms of multi-dimensional levels, any one of which could predominate and lead the others at any given time. This was as necessary a part of the overall elegance and shape of a work of art as it was of the inner texture and melodic contours. This has more recently become virtually an avant-garde instinct of composition, and now Pierre Boulez asserts in terms approaching dogmatic rigidity that the line is of paramount importance. A translated article to this effect appears in "Die Reihe" and it is interesting to note that he has named the article after a work by Klee "At the ends of fruitful land ...",[3] as surely Klee, of all major artists of the first part of the century, most rigorously and imaginatively adhered to the idea of the line as his most pertinent element of expression in the sense that he doesn't use clear lines merely to indicate the technical scaffolding of a work, but rather to impress on us the many depths of physical texture

which may be observed if one exercises the intuitive perception of which we are all capable. Taken to the furthest extreme it is easy to understand how an artist like Satie, whose musical forms so apparently often discarded one's usual understanding of the requirements of formal musical balance, could rather employ the valid fundamental impetus given by the natural demands of a thread-like and stabilising line to mould his ideas into musical shape.

In most studies of Symbolism, and especially those concerning poetry, it is more or less inevitable that one will find quoted, as frequently as is the 'Tristan chord' in musical textbooks, the Baudelaire sonnet "Correspondances". I feel, however, that his sonnet "La Beauté" serves equally well to present much of the imagery that is part of the symbolist pattern in France - the essential self-love, here not spoilt by a weary self-denigration; the insistence on the necessity of love; a hint of the world of dreams, and most important, an overall feeling that the poet, speaking through beauty to mere mortals, is assuming some kind of mastery over us. This aspect of thought immediately brings to mind the arrogance of Wagner seen in his new role of unique plant form which can create fear and awe on almost a devilish scale.

Je suis belle, ô mortels ! comme un rêve de pierre,
Et mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,
Est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour
Eternel et muet ainsi que la matière.

Je trône dans l'azure comme un sphinx incompris;
J'unis un coeur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes;
Je haïs le mouvement qui déplace les lignes;
Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.

Les poètes, devant mes grandes attitudes,
Que j'ai l'air d'emprunter aux plus fiers monuments,
Consumeront leurs jours en d'austères études.

Car j'ai, pour fasciner ces dociles amants,
De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles:
Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés éternelles!

Here the idea of the line is contained in the transference and progression of images from the human, or even super-human speaker, through a stone endowed with an animal quality, then conversely, through love which adopts the inanimate quality of silent and timeless matter. (This suggests to me the implications behind the title of Bergson's book "Matière et Mémoire". In fact very few, if any, of the words of the sonnet are superfluous in the slightest, and it is well worth while tracing every stage of thought throughout the entire poem. For the moment, it is imperative that there should be a clear understanding of the concept of DENSITY, which has a direct bearing on the already mentioned problems incurred by the relationships set up by fundamental and functional lines of varying dimensional implications. To illustrate the importance of the different aspects and effects of the most skilful development of this idea, it is clear today that as Schönberg took it upon himself (not forgetting Hauer and other progressive antecedents) to transform one aspect of Western music, so

Debussy created an equally important if at first less apparent transformation of sound order by virtually redesigning the effects of tonal progression largely in terms of new associations of sound colour and density.

Before one can begin to make a closer investigation of musical and poetic colour and form, it is imperative that one should attempt to understand the workings and meaning of the medium. The crux of the matter really concerns the assessment of the validity of song. Baudelaire said, "La verité n'a rien à faire avec des chansons", and it is not difficult to find countless more examples of similarly meaningless aphorisms pertaining to this same question. In fact, ever since people abandoned the relative simplicity of modal dance songs and began to instill an increasing sophistication into music in the shape of operatic growth and development there have been many treatises dealing with the relationship between words and music. It is impossible to place French post-Romantic song into any accepted category as the words in the first instance, to say nothing of the music, were probably more carefully written with a consciousness of sound colour, beauty and variation of rhythm than had ever been felt necessary before. Again there is a close connection between the two art forms; the symbolist movement gave rise to a new sinosity of language approximating quite closely, in certain formal aspects to the visual artistic innovations of a movement which was in essence a logical extension of the Pre-Raphaelite school; that is, the emergence of Art Nouveau as it was practised mainly in England and enjoyed in France.

It could be said that as song is man's oldest expression and achievement in art in his quest for self-preservation, it is a form which

always reflects more clearly than any other musical situation (except for the more intellectually exploited and refined medium of chamber music, which has a less wide general appeal), man's state of mind, and from this, his grasp of contemporary situations and their growing complexity. There is also always much commentary about the physical effects of music on one's intellect and emotions. There effects are obviously multiplied and rendered more complete by the addition of words to music and by a close analysis of several representative and varied songs I hope to illustrate without too much recourse to the sterile terms of textbooks how, in this most fruitful period of vocal art, a relationship was achieved between words and music of a closeness and consciousness of everyday life which had probably not existed so strongly since the days of the Troubadours and Trouveres.

At this point I should like to remind us of the implications of the second quotation with which I headed this introduction. Although not written within a musical context, (and in fact being almost a good reason for not writing songs!), it seemed to me an admirable comment demonstrating, in powerful and concise terms, the always present inadequacy of total communication between human beings, through any medium existing. I suppose that it was a widely felt frustration with this same inadequacy that led to the work of such a highly important figure as Bergson, who, in a kind of metaphysical conjunction with the Freudian experiments into the meaning of dreams, saw a personal freedom only in discovering the workings of one's psychical life in relation to the problem of time.

Again we see a further interaction of ideas in that he saw time as ruling and bringing together in a necessary unity, all the metaphysical and actual elements of our mental life. He saw one's personal life as

> "a process of change in which none of the parts are external to one another but interpenetrating, where there is a perpetual creation of what is new". [4]

It can be argued that this is nothing more than the normal happenings of what history would show to be an expected evolutionary process, but of course, the importance here lies in the fact that at last there was a recognition that art, philosophy and metaphysics could relate to one another and could combine with the physical realities of sound and its shaping by the fallibilities of the human brain. He further relates all these elements in a new dimension; that of seeing the events of the world as all having direct bearing to one another regardless of the time in which they happened to have their first appearance. Therefore we can only conclude that there is a natural sequence of growth which will come about with each rise and fall of accepted moral metamorphosis in art. The fact that they are couched in different forms and expressions of media does not matter in the least; Bergson said, "the past has not ceased to exist and past psychical states have the same sort of independent survival as the material world".[5] Rather than, at this stage, exposing my ideas about musical and poetic forms, as I should prefer these to unfold later in direct context with the works, I found it useful to compile a short list of concepts which express not only the literary and philosophical ideologies which are important as related facets of one complex process of thought, but also

inevitably synthesise the idea of duality into a unity of expression which forms a fundamental aspect of my thesis, possibly as a result of investigating the implications and components of time in almost any humanly executed context.

<u>TIME - at the breakdown of Romanticism</u>

(areas of understanding traversed by a series of logical temporal progressions)

Consciousness (wit, emotion etc.) Unconsciousness (dreams etc.)

Material surrealism (using known matter)
Duchamp?

Symbolism (with spiritual elements)

Realistic Passion

Romantic Love (c.f. amour courtois)

Good Evil
Evil Good

MAN

Socially accepted religions.
Western aesthetics and morals.
Reliance on a deity.

MAGIC

External influences; artistic,
Oriental (passivity and acceptance)
Baudelaire - drugtaking -

Flesh Spirit
Spirit Flesh

Cocteau
organisation of "Jeux".
Apollinaire's Calligrammes.

<u>SIMULTANISM</u>

It should not be necessary to add corrolaries to these fragmented ideas, but I should like to stress their importance, especially in relation to the pre-1914 era, as all were then of validity in relation to experiments in the visual arts, literature and music.

There is one other aspect of formal change after Wagner which I think it necessary to mention here. The philosophical cataclysm reached by Wagner from which there could be no turning back, created a revised standard of artistic scaling of design. There was a move towards the use of miniature forms, (but not in the sense that Schumann and Chopin frequently composed in extended miniature forms), a use which was furthered through necessity, both practical and aesthetic (c.f. the reasons for the emergence of Stravinsky's "L'Histoire d'un soldat" and Schönberg's early experimental piano pieces). I suppose that even such strange art forms and expressions as those given to us by Aubrey Beardsley owe a great deal of their sinuous fascination and charm to the fact that the basic elements he used are usually expressed on a fairly small scale. Natural objects were often seen in miniature forms as they seemed to lend themselves admirably to eventual artistic satisfaction at the time.

For the moment I shall leave a full discussion of poetic symbolism to a later stage, but it is interesting to consider the relative speeds of evolution between two (or more) near contemporary expressions of a similar idea but produced in different media. I am thinking of the obvious case of Mallarmé's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" and Debussy's musical evocation of the poem. I have never felt that Debussy approached the emotional climate or the technical tensions of Mallarmé's work (this is not a

critical comment, merely one which tries to relate equivalent works of art to the same criterion) and now that we have Boulez's "Improvisations sur Mallarmé", it is possible that these approximate more nearly to the far-seeing ideals of the poet than did Debussy's work. Here, of course, there is a tremendous difference in time scale and mode of expression, but I think the comment is valid. If I reiterate the words Simultanism ..... Perception ..... Duality ..... Synthesis ....., then I think that the most important points to consider throughout the following analyses and discussions will be absorbed as succinctly as possible. Finally, one must never forget the influence of visual art upon the poetry and music of France after Wagner especially (and in fact until the present day to a certain extent), but the major aspect to keep in mind is that all the works dealt with relate in some way or another to the perennial fascination of the Tristan theme, which, like the Faust theme, can never fail to interest us, because it <u>is</u> us, and so we cling to its virtues and vices, being fallible and self-loving.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRE-RAPHAELITE EXISTENCE

Hymne à la beauté - by Charles Baudelaire

Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu de l'abîme,
O Beauté ? Ton regard, infernal et divin,
Verse confusément le bienfait et le crime,
Et l'on peut pour cela te comparer au vin.

Tu contiens dans ton oeil le couchant et l'aurore;
Tu répands des parfums comme un soir orageux;
Tes baisers sont un philtre et ta bouche une amphore
Qui font le hèros lache et l'enfant courageux.

Sors-tu du gouffre noir ou descends-tu des astres ?
Le Destin charmé suit tes jupons comme un chien;
Tu sèmes au hasard la joie et les desastres,
Et tu gouvernes tout et ne réponds de rien.

Tu marches sur des morts, Beauté, dont tu te moques,
De tes bijoux l'Horreur n'est pas le moins charmant,
Et le Meurtre, parmi tes plus chères bréloques,
Sur ton ventre orgueilleux danse amoureusement.

L'ephemère ébloui vole vers toi, chandelle,
Crépite, flambe et dit: Bénissons ce flambeau !
L'amoureux pantelant incliné sur sa belle
A l'air d'un moribond caressant son tombeau.

Que tu viennes du ciel où de l'enfer, qu'importe,
O Beauté ! monstre énorme, éffrayant, ingénu !
Si ton oeil, ton souris, ton pied, m'ouvrent la porte
D'un Infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu ?

De Satan ou de Dieu, qu'importe ? Ange ou Sirène,
Qu'importe, si tu rends, ----- fee aux yeux de velours,
Rhythmé, parfum, lueur, ô mon unique reine ! ----
L'univers moins hideux et les instants moins lourds ?

Here, in essence, is possibly one of the most perfect and all-embracing expositions of the aims and results of the abstractions and aesthetics of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in England and France, even though this particular poem existed some little time before the original English "Brotherhood" established itself as an influential force in the world of art and literature, and at least twenty years before Wagner finally produced the result of his excursions into Celtic mysticism, the germinal "Tristan und Isolde." Musically this may or may not have been a generative work; the questions which have been asked countless times since 1874 are still not happily resolved; nor, I think, will they ever be so, because great as Wagner's influence and musical worth unmistakably was, there are critics and thinkers who are not so charitable as was Debussy, when he described Wagner as "a beautiful sunset that was mistaken for a dawn".[1] My use of the word germinal was applied, therefore to a wider than purely musical connotation. "Tristan" was without question the original seed from which sprang an amazingly vigorous literary movement, but amongst whose own roots was already growing the establishment of Baudelaire as one of the great poets.

I have now quoted twice from Baudelaire to illustrate my themes; and as in the earlier "La Beauté", the idea of the latter poem provides a synthesis of the focus of the cult of Pre-Raphaelitism. In the "Hymne à la beauté", beauty is treated as an object external to the poet, and as such is susceptible to the more conscious poetic devices such as the metaphor in the first stanza which compares beauty with wine, yet the comparison is not really quite so straightforward as would appear from the implications of the poem's final line. Instead, beauty is wine, or rather wine is the

spreading influence of beauty which can dispense good or evil like the contents of Pandora's box. Here, of course, we come across the nineteenth century approach to the problem of chance, which was to inspire and instill into the minds of artists and philosophers a little later on, 'new' theories concerning not only the perennial preoccupations with artistic form, but also with the problems of universal instincts and events, and their ordered systems of existence.

On a less exalted plane, the Victorian/Pre-Raphaelite/Franco-Gothic fondness for gloomy or even morbid narrative subjects comes to light here in the final two lines of stanzas four and five;

4) "Et le Meurtre, parmi tes plus chères bréloques,
Sur ton ventre orgueilleux danse amoureusement".

5) "L'amoureux pantelant incliné sur sa belle
A l'air d'un moribond caressant son tombeau".

The influence of E.A.Poe seems very obvious here, as it was to remain for many years, even permeating the later thoughts of Debussy who was constantly intrigued by the "Fall of the house of Usher".

Here space prevents me from making a fuller analysis of the poem, but I would urge the interested reader to study it closely, as it does contain not only such an abundantly colourful and perceptive microcosm of Pre-Raphaelitism, but also, in the last stanza especially, elements of those poetic devices which were to become the mark of Mallarmé's excursions into the uses and sounds of words as ends in themselves.

Although Baudelaire imbued this and many other similar poems with such a full and self-reliant sense of universality, he believed that there could be no directly moral end in poetry. It could only be enjoyed for its immediate meanings and merits without leading the reader to find hidden or

abstruse connotations beyond the symbolism which he intended to be taken as its most obvious. This leads me to consider him, in the terms of Yeats's analysis of poetic intent, as much an allegorist as a symbolist, although at times the distinction is so fine that any attempt to verify the matter becomes mere word-play:

> "..... (that) symbolism said things which could not be said so perfectly in any other way, and needed but a right instinct for its understanding; while allegory said things which could be said as well, or better, in another way, and needed a right knowledge for its understanding ..... (but later, talking of Blake, Yeats said) ..... and he would not put even a lily, or a rose, or a poppy into a picture to express purity, or love, or sleep, because he thought such emblems were allegorical, and had their meaning by a traditional and not by a natural right. I said that the rose, and the lily, and the poppy were so married, by their colour and their odour and their use, to love and purity and sleep, or to other symbols of love and purity and sleep, and had been so long a part of the imagination of the world, that a symbolist might use them to help out his meaning without becoming an allegorist".[2]

Whether or not an art form creates its own morality through its purpose and effect is altogether too great a question to be detailed here, but in regard to Baudelaire the fact remains that of all the great symbolist poets, he probably more than most others, constantly filled his poems with so varied and penetrating a view of life, albeit a view of somewhat biased focus and expression, that an awareness of morality evinces itself sooner or later upon the reader's intellectual sympathies. This type of awareness comes to mind in an assessment of Wagner also; he and Baudelaire were both great artists in whose work this innate morality procedes to exercise the necessary

moral values and restrictions on future works of art; the real interest or value of such a moral code arises when there is an apparent resisting of its consequences as maybe happened in the case of Satie and possibly Hindemith. It is still too soon after Wagner however, to comment adequately on such artists, who were not anti-progressive, but who simply progressed in their own individual and non-evolutionary (in the sense of creating precedents of evolutionary and historic importance) ways of thought and creativity.

There is one highly interesting and important aspect of Pre-Raphaelitism which can be approached through a consideration of the meanings of symbolic art. C.M.Bowra has likened the essence of symbolism to the constant search for the beautiful,[3] from which we may infer that beauty (in a hedonistic sense) is the only real goal for any self-respecting artist, and that therefore Baudelaire was one of the greatest searchers in art, if merely by virtue of his tireless struggle to find this elusive 'elixir de vie'. His realism confined itself to a poetic expression which was so intimate and so full of self, a vigorously active Ego, although all the anguish he felt is displayed in relation to the outside world, the immense and unfeeling macrocosm of which he was so tiny a part. This realism, being so very inward-looking, led him quite early in life, to a wide and extremely well-integrated use of symbols. Whether he employed simple analogies, symbols in the accepted sense, or a skilful system of allegory, his perception unfailingly resulted, both for him and for his readers, in the representation of a new plane or level of understanding which, through either intellectual or emotional explanation, could endow one word or object with quite a different meaning, yet on an equally intense level. In the "Hymne à la

Beauté," for example, I cannot feel that the word beauty is used merely as an analogy in any sense of the term, or even as a static and partially inanimate object, because its use is so wide and indeed so integral a part of the poem, that it gradually becomes isolated and re-identifies itself as a group of letters signifying a new aspect of our poetic understanding.

Beauty could mean many things in this poem; in fact all the meanings rest on varied planes of intensity and interest. It may refer to a specific beauty, almost in the classical Augustan sense of poetic dedication; that is, a woman of Baudelaire's acquaintance, or maybe an ideal woman figure. She could be the 'Vénus Noir', celebrated in "A Une Dame Créole". Beauty could also represent a new approach to religion, a religion which fully understood the necessity, because of its inevitability, of an appreciation of the fatalism which exists in the world order. This is not to say that it must be the weary fatalism which collapses under oppression, but the type which recognises the essential 'Istigheit' of everything that exists, be it animate or inanimate. I do not want it to be thought at this point that I am indulging in philosophical or metaphysical thought for its own sake, away from the main-stream of my thesis arguments; I am simply using such lines of thought to lead up to the Pre-Raphaelite preoccupation with a world beyond conventional artistic morality and which I am convinced Debussy entered. The by-passing of conventional religion for interest in the occult is part of this world, and it is well-known that Debussy (and Satie) was fascinated by its potential in an intellectual context, but the chief aspect which I should like to illustrate now is that world which is reached through the administration of (relatively harmless) drugs, whereby a heightened sense of one's own life and the environmental 'Isness' of

universal life can be attained. Coleridge and De Quincy were interesting experimenters in this field, but I should prefer to quote some of the experiences of Aldous Huxley, not only because of the contemporary interest in his means of escape, mescalin, opium being rather out of fashion for this kind of exercise, but also because he exhibits an amazing lack of moral conscience or self-denigration of the type which would be more apparent in the writings of a true romantic. It may be useful to consider, as two differing yet pertinent aspects of Pre-Raphaelite experience at this point, the writings of W.B.Yeats on magic and Celtic other-worldliness, and the visual and emotional experiences and effects of Isadora Duncan's revolutionary style of dancing.

Huxley shows this tremendous awareness of the uncommitted 'Isness' of created or natural things in the description of his drug-taking. Having absorbed a certain amount of the drug into his system, he begins to watch a flower, in complete stillness and silence, without any impulsive self-propulsion or consciousness of the passage of time, a highly important aspect of the entry into a new mental world and its sequence of events, whether real or apparent, once this world is a true part of one's intellectual grasp.

" 'Is it agreeable?' somebody asked .....

'Neither agreeable nor disagreeable', I answered. 'It just <u>is</u>'.

'<u>Isness</u>'. The Being of Platonic philosophy - except that Plato seems to have made the enormous, the grotesque mistake of separating Being from becoming, and identifying it with the mathematical abstraction of the Idea. He could never, poor fellow, ... have perceived that what rose and iris and carnation so intensely signified was nothing more and nothing less

than what they were - a transience that was yet eternal life ..... a bundle of minute unique particulars in which ..... was to be seen the divine source of all existence."[4]

A further important qualification of the essence of things is touched upon a little later when Huxley is looking at some books and is asked the following question, " 'What about spatial relationships ?' " At this he apparently felt that ..... "Place and distance cease to be of much interest. The mind does its perceiving in terms of intensity of existence, profundity of significance, relationships within a pattern .... Not of course that the category of space had been abolished. When I got up and walked about, I could do so quite normally, without misjudging the whereabouts of objects. Space was still there; but it had lost its predominance. The mind was primarily concerned, not with measures and locations, but with being and meaning." [5]

I make no apology for the inclusion of this quotation in a chapter basically involved in the determining of the influence of a Victorian school of thinking through the terms of visual art, as I believe that the ideas contained within Huxley's experience, if some of their immediate subjectivity is removed, correspond perfectly with the "ambience" of musical and poetic evolution that I wish to instil into the core of all my ideas and arguments. There is, still in connection with the sensations produced by the taking of mescalin, another quotation which raises a vital question relating to man's view of himself in a swiftly changing and increasingly tremulous world.
In his book, "Mysticism sacred and profane", R.C.Zaehner promulgates several replies (and admonitions!) to Huxley, and expounds the following idea (not that in essence it is new, it is merely its expression, interpretation and

location by which it fascinates us) .....

> "If mescalin can produce the Beatific Vision here on earth .... the Christian emphasis is not only all wrong, but also a little naive". [6]

Translated into terms of art alone without any directly philosophical connotations, this could hint to us of a world in which men were consciously searching for a replacement of all their previously held and respected values and were wishing, (pace Christina Rossetti) to identify themselves with all the great achievements of the world. I spoke earlier of the large outside macrocosm which man wished to overcome by swelling his own potential in order to encompass the whole world of material things. G.P.Fraser well expounded what has possibly come to be recognised as the most pertinent manner in which small man identifies himself with a very big world; yet because of the delicate human elements involved there is always a present danger of mental or material self-destruction:

> "One of the most alarming aspects of dreams is the ability of the dreamer to identify himself in turn with everybody he is dreaming about ..... a kind of phantasmagoric shifting of roles and merging of sympathies ....." [7]

This kind of shifting of the balance of responsibility is very necessary, because a prolonged concentration of religion (in its widest meaning) on such a highly tensed intellectual level as this would be very difficult to maintain. That is, to focus one's mind on an almost exclusively meta-physical plane is difficult at any time, but especially so during the artistically prolific period of Anglo/French Pre-Raphaelitism, and some kind of substitute had to be found which would supply the needs of all types of minds. Helmut Hatzfeld, in his extremely interesting and

perspicacious "Literature through Art; a new approach to French Literature", terms the solution or at least the outcome of this need (how worthy it was is debatable, and I think its illusion was not a little fostered by the Oxford Movement) the emergence of Religiosity without Religion.[8] This seems very accurately to epitomise the Pre-Raphaelite attitude towards religious expression, and by extension also, the attitude of composers towards the musical representation of subjects either directly or indirectly religious in purpose or appeal. An obvious example of this which may possibly fault both its combined art forms is the setting by Debussy of Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel". It does not seem to me that the mock-Mediaevalism of expression which abounded in Pre-Raphaelite work managed in the slightest degree to alleviate the heavy desperation of this manifestation which in its primary and purest forms should be a matter of joy ! To see this in direct relation to French song, the very title of Chabrier's "Credo d'amour" alone shows a tendency to use religion as a framework in order to promote man's self-glorification (much more personally and egoistically than the Mediaeval poets and musicians effected a close link between earthly love and the Marian cult) rather than to see it as a distant point towards which man must aspire. Hatzfeld sees Christian symbols being corrupted in the Victorian era; filled with "modern doubt, sentimentalism, despair, and political propaganda",[9] all of which make their appearance at some time or another in the work of William Morris, and to a lesser extent in the work of John Millais, Holman Hunt and Ford Madox Brown. In France the almost inevitable, if occasionally sentimental linking of Christian austerity and the sensuality of human passion, coupled, after Gautier, with a highly developed sense of art for art's sake, (and consider how later this becomes

in Cocteau, Picasso, René Char, Boulez and Messiaen etc. almost a striving for a sense of life for life's sake) is expressed in the possibly incestuous implications of Baudelaire's "L'Invitation au voyage". There is an overall pantheism too, which is far more real and pertinent to future developments than ever were the humanity/earth symbols of the Anglo/Continental Mediaeval 'amour courtois', or the 'nature' poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

As I have placed Debussy at the apex of my thesis it may appear a little strange that I am dwelling upon the aesthetics of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in approaching a consideration of the basis of Debussy's art and his historical place in time, but it seems clear that these criteria were nearer to his ideals than were the more usually associated ones of the Impressionist school of painting, and were indeed, because of chronological accident, a more fundamental influence in the early years of his training. In any case I think it would be true to say that Debussy was too much of a realist ever to be satisfied completely with the achieving of an 'impression'. This is not to say that he disregarded Impressionist techniques, and so much of his music can well be described as creating impressions of things or moods, although the ever-present problem of describing music in verbal terms limits one's desire for a full personal expression, and has caused much unnecessary critical confusion as to many writers' true intentions. I do feel, however, that the calm but profoundly felt realism and self-awareness of such a poem as Verlaine's "Il pleure dans mon coeur" is rather more relevant to Debussy's personal aesthetic than would have been any influence or inspiration he could have gained from a close study of the paintings of say, Renoir or Degas, with their comparatively sunny harmlessness. Debussy would have shied

away from such attempts to express one's deepest emotions; maybe Cézanne's abstraction with the break-down and rebuilding of plastic forms, always keeping in mind the fact that a move was being made to equate content with form, so that the 'inner man' of Schopenhauer's aphorism must never be hidden by the external mechanics of formal usage and habit, was a visible and direct affirmation of all that Debussy was trying to achieve, especially in his last chamber works, although I can see more of the formal abstractionist and the creative imaginative genius in the earlier "Jeux", and in the songs which redesign for us the ideas of Mallarmé and Pierre Lŏuys. Rather does he discard redundant or outworn conventions and build new traditions, which in any art form, depend for their greatest and most 'clairvoyant' worth and accessibility upon the measure of genius of the practitioner. This kind of process is brilliantly analysed and discussed in the chapter entitled "The Weakening of Shape" in Leonard B. Meyer's more than merely instructive book, "Emotion and meaning in music",[10] which I think is one of the most enlightened exercises in a rational appreciation of the causes and effects of musical logic and aesthetics ever produced.

The most central and self-propagating element of formal evolution is that of rhythm, whether specifically musical or poetic, or even the rhythm of a great painting or piece of sculpture. W.B.Yeats has much to say about rhythm, both in purely artistic terms and in terms of the rhythm of things and people, which interacting throughout the centuries, produces a process of growth and awareness. In relation to French song (that is, the music and the poetry considered together and separately) his statements are particularly useful because of the overall shapes of the music and

poetry and their internal and very characteristic elements of repetition both in meaning and structure.

> "The purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols." [11]

Hatzfeld puts forward another concept which is of the greatest importance to the understanding of rhythmic experiment in French music, and above all in vocal music. Referring to the immediately post-Wagnerian era (and incidentally in strong contrast to the initial rhythmic stagnation of Teutonic music at this time), he speaks of the growing enthusiasm for MOVEMENT, which was to further the cause of the increasing interest in ballet, the popularity of the circus and the music-hall.[12] In these contexts it is worth considering the colour and movement expressed by Toulouse-Lautrec and other artists, amongst whom Degas not only painted exquisite studies of dancers, but also wrote a delightful sonnet about the bodily and material images they produce, in which he speaks of the "ruban de ses pas", a most imaginative and beautiful metaphor. It is this sort of image which links human and inanimate movement so skilfully and appropriately without any sense of anomaly whatsoever. Again, we are faced with the problem of the importance of the line, as the physical aspects of dancing, together with the customary appendages of clothes and decor, and their individual traditional meanings, all form, like the arm and leg movements of a perfect arabesque, one continuous and satisfying line.

There is no value at all in considering such necessities and qualifications for perfection if the intellect takes over to the extent of unconsciously preventing any further advance in a purely imaginative art form such as ballet, which is basically imaginative and creative in its formal outline, however symbolic or traditional its roots may be. There must always be an active experience rather than a merely objective non-applicable aesthetic approach. On these very grounds F.L.Lucas condemns Christina Rossetti for her inwardness which he feels will never progress sensibly forward either in her mind, or in the minds of her readers.[13] On the other hand, the later manifestations of Pre-Raphaelitism in William Morris are to be praised for maintaining the opposite effect so admirably. He was looking for an ideal which would satisfy the needs of others without being too materialistically intrusive.

I should like to conclude this chapter with a few remarks about the strangely ubiquitous obsession with fleshliness and sensuality, whether in poetry, the visual arts, or less easily defineably in music. The refined eroticism of Beardsley, the horrific plant forms of Frank Brangwyn, Baudelaire's image of "les chairs d'enfants", in "Correspondances"; all these exhibit this tendency, which to me is one of the strongest hall-marks of the period. A somewhat perverse twist of mind leads me to quote Sir Herbert Read in one of his Cocteauesque moods ..... "Art in its widest sense is an extension of the personality, a host of artificial limbs".[14] No doubt this is on Sir Herbert's part complete coincidence, but it is possible that here is a case of the essential universality of ideas being equally well applied automatically to two very different facets of human

exertion, those of creative imagination and dispassionate criticism: there is also an analogy with some of the grotesque manifestations of surrealist art.

Before I embark upon formal analyses of French songs, I should like to instance one final type of imagery which is frequently relevant to Debussy although it is couched itself on basically personal terms. This is the classically influenced imagery so fundamental to certain parts of Verlaine's 'poètique', involving the Watteauesque landscapes peopled by characters from the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, to which it owes a great deal of its terminology. This instancing is merely stated to emphasise a further unity of expressions of universals as Verlaine created "l'amoureuse féerie des fêtes galantes", wherein "les recueils chrétiens et les recueils dionysiaques alternent".[15] Allowing for the necessary but not drastic change of ambience from eighteenth century France (seen through the romantically distorted eyes of the nineteenth) to an almost mythical Mediaeval location, this seems to be a perfect description of the ethos and the 'alpha' of Pre-Raphaelitism, although the many forms of 'omega' may have perverted the original intentions.

CHAPTER TWO.

> "I have had to search for the inner meaning of things, go beneath the surface, save the feeling of the object, vigorously affirm its character; colour only comes later. In this way, a deeper understanding of the universe has led me to modify my palette. Personal drama and personal means make up one whole. Once our canvasses used to merge into one another. Now there is a Lautrec, Degas, and Rouault form of expression that in no way illustrates an inter-relationship."
>
> Maurice Vlaminck.

Five song analyses of the French Wagnerian period, numbers one, four and five being more musically and aesthetically detailed than numbers two and three.

1) "Oraison", by Ernest Chausson; the final song of the cycle "Serres Chaudes", five settings from a series of prose poems by Maurice Maeterlinck.

2) "Credo d'amour", by Emmanuel Chabrier, to words by the Parnassian poet Armand Silvestre.

3) "Chanson pour Jeanne", by Emmanuel Chabrier, to words by the writer and literary aesthete, Catulle-Mendés.

4) "L'Invitation au voyage", by Henri Duparc. One of the best known of his brief output of songs, setting an equally well-known poem by Charles Baudelaire, from "Les Fleurs du Mal".

5) "Extase", by Henri Duparc. Possibly his most sensuous song, to equally sensuous words by the minor poet Jean Lahor.

The complete songs will be found in Appendix One.

Oraison - by Ernest Chausson - words by Maurice Maeterlinck.

1896

The emotive powers of Pre-Raphaelitism produced an element of self-love which disregarded the feelings of others and preferred to enjoy the doubtful pleasures of one's own largely self-instilled sufferings. This 'inwardness' is excellently brought out both in the literary and the musical aspects of this song. Before attempting to evaluate Maeterlinck's short yet highly imaginative poem, it is rewarding to read what Mario Praz has to say about Baudelaire's "Les Fleurs du Mal", in themselves a kind of rudimentary synthesis of Pre-Raphaelite ideas:

> "Baudelaire merely sowed the seed of the tropical flora of fleshly, putrescent, monstrous plants which were destined to spring up in the hot-houses of the fin-de-siècle, but of these 'flowers of evil', there now remains among many withered orchids, nothing more than, here and there, a magnificent thorny rose - a rose of the kind that will always smell sweet." [1]

The hot-house metaphor, used even by Debussy in one of his own poems of the "Proses Lyriques" song-cycle, and as the overall title of Maeterlinck's lengthy series of prose poems from which "Oraison" is taken, is particularly effective as an aesthetic descriptive, and gains much from Mario Praz's qualified implication of a productive period leading only to decadence, despite the occasional 'thorny rose'. Even the most consciously utilitarian designs and colours of William Morris's craftsmen reflect strongly the stifling atmosphere of a hot-house, as does the verbal assonance and suffocating slowness of speech in many of Maeterlinck's poems.

He is ostensibly concerned with the depiction of a religious state, although it appears to be a state which is very much in the physical world of sensuous realities and their influences upon the frailty of humanity. This state in itself is, one eventually realises, merely a cloak for the underlying idea which is relevant at any time of man's experience; it exists merely, as Brice Parain says, "to denote (in any given or random image) the character of the present". [2] (My parentheses).

Vous savez, Seigneur, ma misère !
Voyez ce que je vous apporte
Des fleurs mauvaises de la terre
Et du soleil sur une morte.

Voyez aussi ma lassitude,
La lune éteinte et l'aube noire,
Et fécondez ma solitude -
En l'arrosant de votre gloire.

Ouvrez-moi, Seigneur, votre voie -
Eclairez mon âme lasse
Car la tristesse de ma joie
Semble de l'herbe sous la glace.

There is an inherent religiosity here which seems to lay down its own conditions for the practice of a religious ideal. Not altogether without a sense of convention within ritual habits, it does tend somewhat to exalt the simpler pantheism of Coleridge;

So shall I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be.

This very English and almost complacent attitude undergoes a drastic metamorphosis in Maeterlinck. He appeals immediately on behalf of the

'misère', which may be interpreted not only as being his spiritual state of mind, but also his heightened consciousness of his position in life. He is not content merely to present God with his own personal troubles, but takes upon himself the responsibility for bringing the 'evil flowers of the earth' to Him. This is far more powerfully expressive, because it contains the idea that the poet is unable to rid himself of the influence of an earthly decadence which somehow always bears the imputation of sinfulness. The centre and meaning of the poem is suddenly thrown open to us thus:

... fécondez ma solitude
En l'arrosant de votre gloire.

This could have two equally valid yet violently contrasted meanings. Either the poet is a man of the greatest humility, willing to bear his troubles if only God will allow him a little grace with which to ease the desperation of his path; or else he is the supreme egoist, delighting in his state and demanding of God that He should proclaim His glory only for the aid of man. The final image of the poem is a further treatment of this same idea and its duality, within a seemingly simple frame: the actual poetic climax rests possibly, therefore, with the words

Eclairez mon âme lasse.

Towards the end of the last century the 'art' of tiredness was a valid and much practised state of mind within artistic circles. The apparent gaiety of certain walks of life as sometimes exemplified in the works of men like Toulouse-Lautrec was nothing more than a cynical facade; this was the era of post-Wagnerian weariness which could lead Oscar Wilde to say "All art is

useless", in bemoaning the decadence of London and Paris. The titles of the five poems which Chausson chose from the "Serres Chaudes" constitute the beginnings of a revolt against the late Wagnerian, Tristanesque school of thought, and look towards the frightening other-worldliness of some more recent trends in Western Anti-Art. "Serre chaude" and "Serre d'ennui" lead to "Fauves Las" (surely a highly prophetic title from a contemporary painter's point of view ?), preceded by "Lassitude" and followed by the conclusive "Oraison" with its almost arrogantly apologetic overtones. Three images taken quite at random from the complete cycle illustrate the Daliesque atmosphere which pervades the slightly unreal yet vividly forceful poems; an atmosphere, which like the unexpected deaths and afterdeath happenings in an Edgar Allan Poe story, almost approaches the neurotic fascinations of surrealist art.

O Serre au milieu des forets.
Les pensées d'une princesse qui a faim.
Une musique de cuivre aux fenêtres des incurables.

This concern with a possible reality or super-reality which lies outside our present comprehension of the world was further elaborated by Maeterlinck in his fascinating yet now dated book, "Le Trésor des Humbles." [3]

It has been said that his poetry suggests, like that of Charles Van Lerberghe,

"Une Impression profonde de mystère angoissant
et de terreur nerveuse - L'hallucination y règne
en maîtresse et les pressentiments s'y traduisent
en signes mystérieux." [4]

Furthermore it has been felt that in general, when reading and enjoying

Maeterlinck,

> "On est plus sensible à la profondeur de l'idée
> qu'a l'élan lyrique de la forme." 5

Here is possibly the crux not only of good symbolist writing, although Verlaine's lyric shapes are unsurpassable, but also of the tendencies of some of the present century's writers. In symbolism there is frequently a profound desire for the dominance of content over form or at least for the marrying of the two elements so that they result in a balanced and unified work. There is usually also a derivative realism which involves a progressively acute consciousness of the necessity for the communication of a higher, more spiritual experience;

> "Si l'école parnassiene se rattachait au realisme,
> si son art était une representation directe, le
> symbolisme s'y oppose comme étant une sorte
> d'évocation." 6

The actual poetic structure of "Oraison" is quite simple. Three four line stanzas are drawn in the rhyme scheme

a b a b ..... c d c d ..... e f e f

and the lines themselves are short. These are internally composed of fairly short words, so that the cumulative effect has at times some relation to the lay-out and style of an epigram. There is a well-defined use of colour which has a strong relationship with the favourite colour patterns of the most sensuous Pre-Raphaelite painters. The image of evil forest flowers suggests a deep rich purple, to which the sun's natural glow stands as a contrast, the whole being not a little evocative of a Holman Hunt painting or even a sinuous and imaginative abstract design by William Morris.

The poem's encompassing of the natures and desires of both God and man is fully realised at the words

Ouvrez-moi votre voie

which can represent man's wish to be shown the inscrutable designs and devices of God, the 'prime movere'. (Or the First Cause; the terminology is immaterial in such a context). It is not necessary to look far into the poem before it is apparent that here the religiosity could be the expression of a pantheism warped to such an extent that the natural goal of all animate and inanimate creation is man rather than God. Man's plea to God is only made because it is expected of him, whereas his real intent is the directing of all his supplications towards his own greater, though impermanent, glorification.

It may be that there is one possible weakness in the physical shape of the poem: it might have been more effective had the positions of the first and last stanzas been reversed as the resultant final line would, by its place in the poetic scheme, have obtained in one's memory the maximum force of meaning if only because of the strangely barren euphony of the words.

The work is musically interesting for its terse chromatic unity. It would be possible, and I think, quite feasible, to play the song as an instrumental piece, even omitting the vocal line altogether and treating the piece as an experiment in written out improvisation, rather than as a Wagnerian extravaganza of vocal superfluity, or as a merely imitative example of the "Wagnerian invasion in French music." [7] The problem raised

here is concerned with the root and development of all twentieth century music, the relationship of one musical element to any or all others in any given musical work. If I were dealing with German song, it would be a more straightforward task to exemplify the dominance of harmonic development over rhythmic possibilities, at least during the rudimentary stages of the present century, and to point out the development of the twelve tone system. The musical directions in France, however, raise rather more complex questions as the paths of movement were deflected from what might have been a decided anti-Wagnerian Neo-Classicism by the formal, tonal, and indeed aesthetic and spiritual upheaval created by Debussy. He was never a composer to be ultimately satisfied with an anti-movement, but always involved himself in the stirrings of a positive move towards newness and complete artistic integrity even in such relatively slight works as the "Danse sacrée et Danse profane", or the incidental music he was alleged to have written for a Rosicrucian play under the auspices of the mystical religious leader Sar Peladan. It would not be accurate to say of "Oraison", here is the movement towards serialism of any kind, but it may be as well to consider that in a very gradual and small-scale manner the tonal centre is being obscured, and as some of the wavering melodic lines of Debussy's later works may be so designated, here is perhaps the first move in the direction of indeterminacy.

The outstanding overall feature of the song's shape is the preponderance of three-bar rhythms which are insisted upon as being the norm throughout, and are due to, and sustained by the somewhat mechanical flow of the words, which in some ways is akin to the squareness of line and

verbal phrasing so often found in Schumann's songs. Harmonic elisions occur in the contraction of some of the material from the first stanza into the third, affording the work as a whole an apparent yet slightly varied symmetry. The important point, though, is not so much the fact that these elisions do exist, but that they make little or no difference to one's consciousness of the flow and shape of the piece. Could this possibly indicate that the harmonic clusters are so chromatically closely packed, that one or two chords, or even a single bar, or even, in some cases a unit of three bars of one phrase, may be taken to represent a single vertical move towards what are here relatively expected and straightforward cadential structures? This aspect would perhaps detract a little from the sense and appropriateness of the word setting, but then the words themselves are not much more than very competent exercises in the representation of a tiny idea, in this case one of a somewhat decadent turn of mind, in which case the musical and literary processes may be said to be exactly matched !

The concept of these methodical elisions could also give a sense of a sonata form, in which the various elements are first presented in their fullest forms and then are broken down, this process being unbalanced because of the lack of an equivalent recapitulation. Possibly the only section that is 'expected' is the 'coda' from bars 38-44, in which the harmony combines previous material in a tonal progression indicating the conventions of a normal coda. I suppose this song is an excellent example of what Leonard B. Meyer would call a process of architectural weakening, [9] but I feel that he would be mistaken in this, as would many other commentators of a similarly chronological outlook, in that their sense of 'weakness' would

only be valid in terms of previous tonal and formal experience, whereas surely the real essence of the recognition of shape or lack of it, lies also in the ability to look ahead and see where the composer is going, and not merely where he has come from. For example, despite the oppressive regularity and squareness of the melodic line, where the pattern of three-bar rhythms is broken, it is always to allow for the variants in the upper melodic line as in bars 10-13 where the more normal four-bar rhythm is obtained almost furtively by the sudden dramatic and declamatory nature of the long held stress on the word "morte". There is a sense of drama in the overall shape, almost in the manner of a highly exaggerated use of a modern "musica riservata", as the Mediaeval Jannequin might have employed the device more conservatively in his numerous chansons. Rising and falling motives (always the first bait for musical psychologists to discuss, as purveyors of emotional responses!) emphasise the tension and relaxation points of harmonic movement, but Chausson immediately cancels most of the effect of doing so by following the waywardness of the upper surface with a too neatly complementary bass line which enhances it obliquely when it is static, and shadowing it with a surprising strictness of consonant and prepared dissonant movement within its range of a minor tenth. This even applies to the musical and verbal climax at bars 30-34, yet here, at a point when one would expect a momentary cadence into the home dominant, the harmony jerks into an interrupted cadence and prepares the coda. It may be observed that a great deal of the effectiveness of the bass line obtains through the constant use of a contrast of steps with triadic implications with (usually) descending semitonal steps. A pattern of descending

semitonal lines dominates throughout in the middle texture of the accompaniment, and is only departed from during the central stanza where it is modified into a four-note, one-bar pattern almost in the manner of a sighing motive in Bach, except that here it is used statically. Although this is such a slight song, I feel that it merits a fairly close analysis if only to lay the groundwork for further analyses, in that it contains in kind, if to a different degree, much of the basic material that Debussy was later to avail himself of; the mosaic patterns and harmonic elisions; the use of the human voice in an almost anti-lyric manner, as usually understood, which allows of either the fullest harmonic and textural play or else of a more speech like declamation of the words, as was fulfilled so expressively in "Pelléas et Mélisande".

I should like to conclude this analysis by quoting in full the poem of the fourth song in the cycle, as it seems to me to emphasise very well indeed the 'fin-de-siècle' aspect of Chausson's work, the naturalist painting of the Douanier Rousseau, the weary philosophy of the time and to the idea and nomenclature of future surrealism, which was to treat of the absurd in terms of a violent use of colour and perspective.

O les passions en allées,
Et les rires et les sanglots !
Malades et les yeux mi-clos
Parmi les feuilles effeuillées,-
Les chiens jaunes de mes péchés
Les hyènes louches de mes haines
Et sur l'ennui pâle des haines
Les lions de l'amour couchés!
En l'impuissance de leur rêve
Et languides sous la langueur
De leur ciel morne et sans couleur
Elles regarderont sans trève
Les brebis des tentations
S'éloigner lentes une à une
En l'immobile clair de lune
Mes immobiles passions!

Credo d'amour - by Emmanuel Chabrier - words by Armand Silvestre.

1883

The title of Schonberg's book, "Style and Idea" may not be inapposite in providing us with a taut and pertinent analogy of concept applicable to the processes of musical thought and progress to be found in the two songs by Chabrier which I wish to analyse here. It implies the dichotomy and perpetual struggle between form and content, which, in the backwash of Wagnerianism in France, was especially active in artistic circles and has remained so ever since, to the extent that contemporary French poets, architects and musicians are noteworthy for their diversity of ideas and influences, frequently moving beyond the aesthetics of the West for their fundamental 'motifs'.

In Chabrier's songs the extreme chromaticisms of Wagnerianism are almost extinct, unlike the "Oraison" of Chausson, and it seems that he is making a very conscious effort to simplify his tonal framework and word-setting to an almost reactionary extent. This in itself would seem to be no more than an expected and necessary process after the impact and resultant effects of "Tristan", yet its affective manner is important in that during the later inter-war period of the French neo-Classicism of Les Six, and of the songs of Poulenc in particular, this penchant for an apparently guileless yet carefully mannered simplicity became one of the outstanding trademarks of French music. Such a self-conscious effort at gaining a pre-conceived result enters the war between content and form at a rather strange stage and although Chabrier chose to set the 'realism' of Silvestre's delightful Parnassian poem, his musical ideas were such as to

rob the words of much of their innate rhythmic beauty and effectiveness. The poem's very title suggests far more than the formal and intellectual boundaries of many love-poems, and does indeed carry us into a world in which the limbo-like innocent faith of childhood undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes an adult's ordered intellectual recognition and instinctive awareness of a world in which form and content should eventually combine to form a single essence.

I chose to study this song, not only because of its preoccupation with the problems of a love which is religion (or vice versa - either form of the statement is equally applicable) but also because its language, though undisturbed and ordered, seems to be a possible precursor for some of the symbolic and allegoric ideas in Mallarme, and later in such a surrealist poet as Rene Char.

Je crois aux choses éternelles
De la lumière et de l'amour !
Car la beauté comme le jour
Allume un feu dans tes prunelles !
Car les femmes portent en elles
L'ombre et la clarté tour à tour !
Je crois aux choses éternelles
De la lumière et de l'amour !

Je crois que tout vit sur la terre
Par le soleil et le baiser !
Car tous les deux savent briser
L'éffroi de la nuit solitaire !
Car la douleur, divin mystère,
Tous les deux savent l'apaiser !
Je crois que tout vit sur la terre
Par le soleil et le baiser !

Je crois que tout meurt et se presse
Vers l'ombre du dernier sommeil !
Hors l'éclat de l'astre vermeil
Et le pouvoir de la caresse;
Hors ce que nous versent d'ivresse
Ou le sourire ou le soleil !
Je crois que tout meurt et se presse
Vers l'ombre du dernier sommeil !

This is very much a religion of the imagination; almost a self-deceptive and self-constructed one like the self-induced idealism of the Wagnerian Nordic myths, the chief difference being that Silvestre's view of the spiritual life is reasonably sane and self-reliant. It is not so persistently intense or subjectively passionate as the heavier symbolism of Maeterlinck's "Serres Chaudes" poems, and its formal setting is carefully mannered, so much so as to discard almost the idea of spontaneous creation, and its obvious attempt at conveying a sense of 'verismo' has the paradoxical effect of destroying some of its intrinsic conviction.

The title contains a great deal of unsaid allegorical meaning about man's most pertinent and universally necessary ideologies, his instincts for a close communication with other human beings and his reaching out to something higher and less vulnerable than himself. This in turn leads to the symbolism of the poem, which is more allegorical than purely symbolic, in the associative Yeatsian sense. The nature imagery becomes doubly interesting because not only does it act as an analogy of human emotions and their progress, in a completely independent manner, but it also forms a separate and delightfully descriptive extension of these emotions. The abstract sentiments of the poem, that is, those aspects of it which are above the merely narrative and transient lines of thought contained in it, are oddly prophetic for the 1880's. The ubiquitous importance of death throughout, despite the idea of living beauty in such a line as

..... un feu dans tes prunelles!

could be said to foreshadow the morbidity of later French poetry, after the turn of the century, although its usual characteristic preoccupation with extra-human ideas and concepts, renders it less oppressive than does some

contemporary late-Romantic German poetry. There is also an ever-present sense of duality as one can see from the following two couplets:

Je crois aux choses éternelles
De la lumière et de l'amour.....

Car tous les deux savent briser
L'effroi de la nuit solitaire.....

The second couplet in fact belongs, as a corollary, to the first couplet of the second stanza, but because of the mosaic-like construction of the poem, there can be a valid and meaningful interaction and exchange of couplets within the overall framework. This in itself is a technical fact of no little importance as it tentatively approaches the freer, almost aleatoric construction of much later art-forms, especially those of the media of plastic arts, poetry and music. It needs very little further technical perusal to see that the entire poem depends constructively, artistically, logically and symmetrically upon the two words, "Je crois". There is also, I think, a further implicated meaning because of the two possible associations of the verb, 'croire'. Its most obvious meaning is that of knowledge or belief, but there is an implication of doubt or lack of self-assurance which in turn implies a move towards an intellectual approach, through art, to the problem of self-knowledge, and the existence of a God. Yeats put it so succinctly;

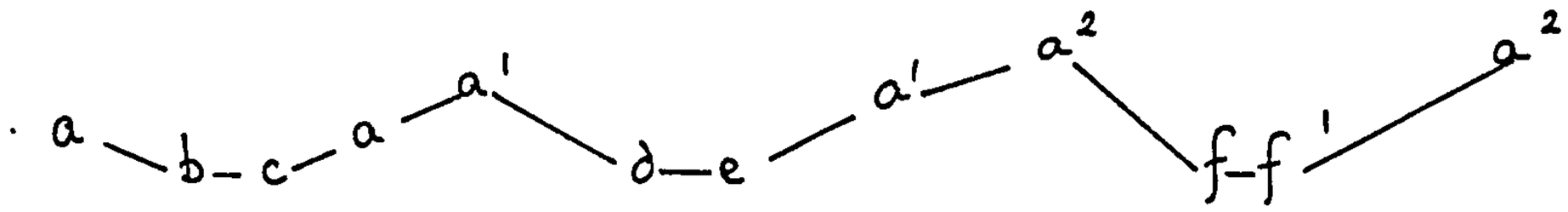
> "All art that is not mere story-telling or mere portraiture is symbolic and has the purpose of those symbolic talismans...for it entangles a part of the Divine Essence ....." [1]

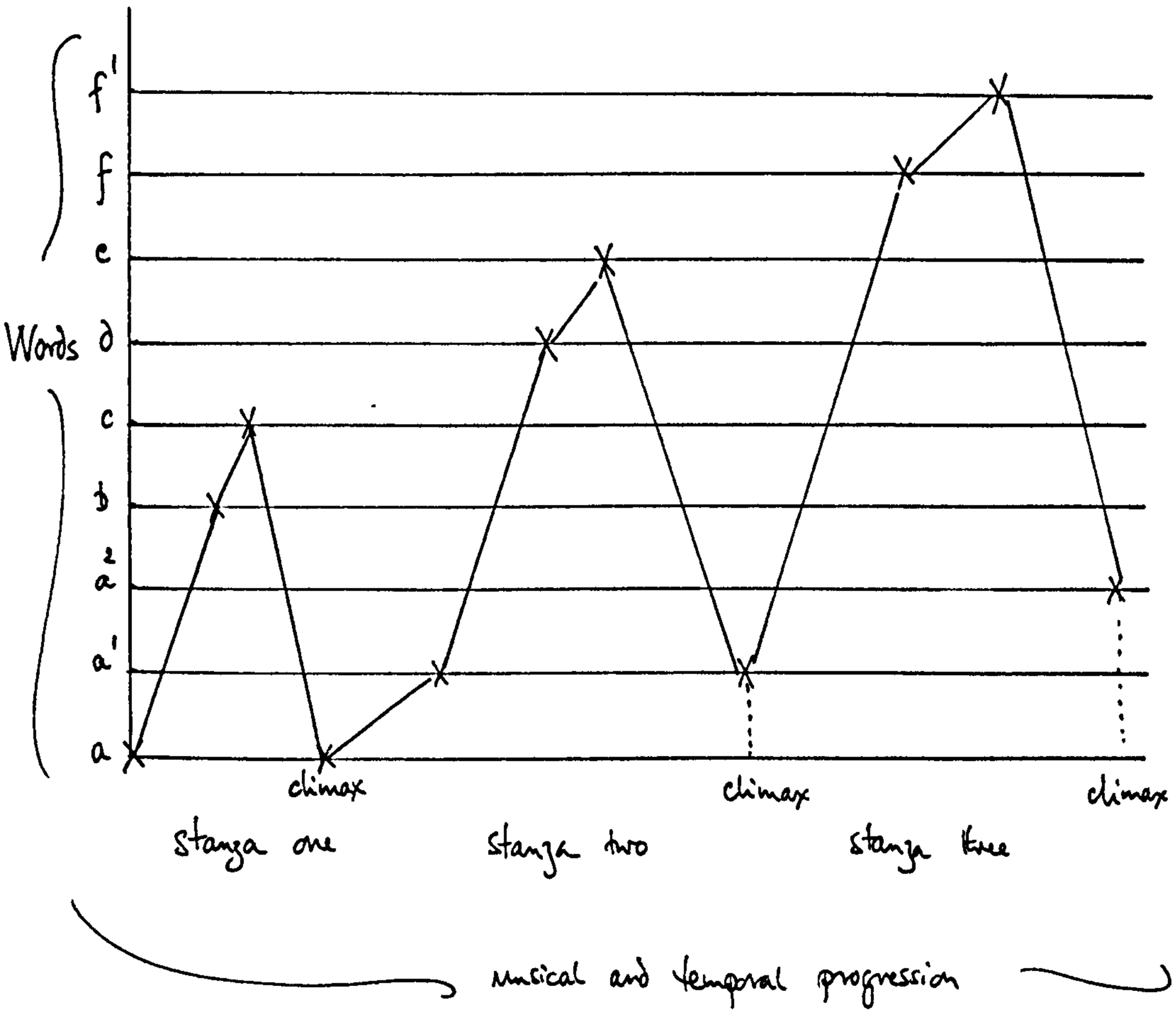
The first couplet of the second stanza admirably illustrates this overwhelming, almost Oriental concept of Divinity:

Je crois que tout vit sur la terre,
Par le soleil et le baiser.

This embraces a macrocosm of the uncontrollable and expansive heat of nature, and at the same time involves a more intimate microcosm of human emotions. It is a movement towards a spatial conception and ordering of life which later becomes all-important in the arts and therefore, ultimately, in man's conscious search for an ideal, be it human or divine.

A diagram can be made of the progress of the poem, emphasising the different paths taken by the initial "Je crois" in each stanza, followed in each case by the explanatory "car".





Unlike the vocal works of Debussy or Fauré, this song of Chabrier leaves one far more conscious of the music than of the words, to the extent that almost all the impact, such as it is, of the words is lost. The recurring motto "Je crois" is stated in neat but musically abstract and not particularly imaginative clichés. The composer here retreats from his more expected and usual methods of programmatic suggestion and instead tends to over-emphasise, rather heavily, the elegant, if rhythmically restrained Parnassian flavour of the poem.

At a first glance, it appears that the symmetry of the poem is accurately reflected in the music, but I feel that this close following is merely coincidental as a result of the "correctness" of Chabrier's harmonic and formal vision and the relative normality of Silvestre's poem. The climatic variations of textual stress do compensate somewhat for the harmonic sameness (although the slight variants in each stanza betray a sensitivity not fully realised throughout), but in fact, apart from the few places where the influence of Massenet and the sweeping melodies of French operatic tradition break through, the texture and atmosphere of much of the song, especially the opening few bars, is remarkably Elgarian in character. Any emotional climaxes induced through the power of the words and their progressive or explanatory roles, as in the second half of each stanza, are always marked musically by a modulation to the mediant key in its chromatic form of D Major not minor, although this is diverged from immediately in every case.

I do not think that in itself, this song merits any detailed study; the appearance of it in full in Appendix One should be enough to guide the

reader along its paths. It has none of the magical and breathless effect of the Duparc songs or even the sensuous atmospheric aura of the single Chausson example I have chosen, and I am not at all sure just how convincing it is, but it does show one line of musical thought existing so immediately after Wagner, and as I intimated earlier, it gives a useful and interesting example of the Neo-Classic approach so vital later on when Debussy's influence waned for a while before the passionate music of Messiaen and the valuable theoretical and creative genius of Pierre Boulez restored the balance of values to the musical progressions of Western Europe.

Chanson pour Jeanne - by Emmanuel Chabrier - words by Catulle-Mendés.

1886

Written at a time when so much upheaval was taking place in the artistic communes of France and even the respectability of the Conservatoire was being considerably upset by the music-dramas of Wagner, this song may seem very static and perhaps reactionary. It does serve to show, however, the very obvious influences of pre-Wagnerian French operatic forms and what may almost be called emotional 'conceits', so common are they in French music of both much earlier times and in the more restrained elegance of Fauré's songs, only vanishing through transformation and eventual extinction in Debussy. I use the word 'conceit' in relation to the emotional climaxes engendered by the always harmonically associative, but yet free and soaring vocal lines so typical of Gallic melodic construction and never achieved with quite the same ease and effect by any other country.

Chabrier was a popular composer, a man of real artistic delicacy and judgement who probably had a greater influence outside the world of opera than one might at first suppose. In writing songs he often felt unable to produce a musical equivalent to or compromise with, the great poets, and for "Chanson pour Jeanne", he relied upon a literary figure who could provide a poem of charming, though not over-fussy, sentiment. Catulle-Mendés, who pervaded the Parisian scene quietly, was a man of complex character. He was a designer, poet and writer for many dramatic and operatic ventures, as well as being the writer of many somewhat perverted and sadistic novels, this being a highly popular and no doubt very lucrative occupation at the time. He was, in his more creditable moments, a member

of the Parnassian school, and as such, worked towards its ideals of the refinement of the techniques of language and the expression of emotions, although this worthy movement soon lost itself in the torpid and sensuous atmosphere of the early symbolists. Catulle-Mendés mixed with a very wide variety of people; he knew the 'salon' worshippers of the "Chat-Noir", and the clowns Footit and Chocolat, and had therefore a natural and unconscious knowledge of the uniquely interesting social climate in which he lived. This was the age of an artistic spreading of wings, of excursions out of the symbolism of amour-propre into a realistic world of pathos and suffering, of the Clown who had not only to reconcile his soul with the hardness of city life, but also with the growing tendency towards artistic surfeit, which was, in the twentieth century, to lead to a frequent lack of real value judgement and even a lack of true appreciation, because of this surfeit of ideas, and more socially interesting, because of a surfeit of bad criticism and commentary on these ideas. The intense anguish and identification implied in Verlaine's much quoted yet always pertinent "Art Poétique" soon lost its individualist identity, and this leads me to think that the results of Wagnerianism produced one of the oddest paradoxes in musical and literary history. The idea of Wagnerianism was to present a unified art-form in a kind of communism of creative elements which had never before been achieved, or even desired in such a way. Inevitably, perhaps, the resultant progressions of art inclined towards the opposite extreme, so that the relatively microscopic vision of Debussy's textural system, Webern's brief output, or Messiaen's comparatively limited relationship with the musical and personal ritual of the East, all seem adequate

and right for their place and time. The paradox arises, though, from the fantastically prolific undercurrents of second-rate art which flourished in Western Europe after Wagner. He intended that art should compel its human participants (and I use the word advisedly, with the aim of supporting the idea of necessary active involvement in the practice of or simply the interested detached curiosity towards art-forms) to reach a greater understanding both of art and of themselves, yet because of increasingly competent techniques, easier methods of communication and above all, the emergent classlessness of art, the real progressives have for the large part, only fairly recently been recognised as such, because of this anti-progressive wave of surfeit in art which lacks the patient foresight of genius.

E.B.Hill sees Chabrier's place thus:

> "Music to him was primarily a means of subjective expression. Form and even style were of secondary importance, except as they helped him to attain his end". [1]

This may be stating the case a little too simply as no conscientious artist would ever relegate form to less than a major consideration in his overall work scheme and layout, yet to us today, these two songs by Chabrier appear to show a submission of his musical soul to the needs of his text, which in turn imposes a rigidity of form detracting somewhat from the earlier criticism I have quoted above. It is true to say, however, that his fusion of words and music, though slight in final purpose, is always convincing and satisfying.

The "Chanson pour Jeanne", unlike the calm assurance and individuality of Duparc's "L'Invitation au voyage", is cast in the same mould as many

songs by Gounod, Saint-Saens and Massenet; a light drawing-room ballade, carefully measured in terms of musical expression and human emotion. The poetic form is pleasantly epigrammatic; that is, it neatly and in an almost Mediaeval form, employing recurring short refrain-like phrases, some static and some varying, succeeds in conveying a short narrative which adheres to the unity of time and is more than a mere poetic fancy, being a careful comparison between human and inanimate nature and their ephemeral existences:

> Puisque la belle fleur est morte, morte l'oiselle
> Et Jeanne aussi.

This raises the always present question of associative symbolism between a woman and a rose, and, especially at the turn of the nineteenth century, the mystical "Isness" of woman, the pure untouchable being whose ethos cannot be reached or understood before a thorny path has been covered.

The poetic form is strict throughout the three stanzas. I shall quote the whole of stanza one, from which a comparison of its first couplet with that quoted above, the opening of the third stanza, will, I hope, show the transformation of the life of Jeanne as it progresses towards death.

> Puisque les roses sont jolies
> Et puisque Jeanne l'est aussi.
> Tout fleurit dans ce monde-ci
> Et c'est la pire des folies
> Que de mettre ailleurs son souci.
> Puisque les roses sont jolies
> Et puisque Jeanne l'est aussi.

This construction is followed carefully and is very effectively amplified by Chabrier's sensitive approach to the musical setting, a series of simple harmonic and rhythmic motives emphasised by sudden dynamic variants and

changes. The slight variations of timbre in the vocal line and the accompanying doubling of it are most effective and should be noted carefully. In stanza two, the vocal line is static at first, allowing the piano to enjoy a bar's length of solo freedom. The minor tonality of the last stanza is emphasised by the opening voice/piano doubling being opened out to encompass a wider range and the piano right hand part is raised an octave; all this to follow the words

Puisque la belle fleur est morte ....

An interesting feature of the song is that, although it is very much part of the drawing-room/soirée tradition, its use of harmonic sevenths and ninths in unprepared contexts and its fluid harmonic cadential structures leads it into the world of Debussyian construction. Many influences are evident in this song, even briefly, those of Tchaikowsky and Puccini as well as those masters of French opera already mentioned. The basic triple rhythm is constantly being upset by the stress on the third beat of the bar, which almost unbalances it as does the heavy middle beat of a Polonaise, and serves to create some sense of the instability inherent in the words.

The essential hopelessness of the poem, that however good or beatiful the woman is, she must die, is reflected in the vocal insistence on the note F sharp (F natural in the final stanza) in the middle couplet of each stanza, where the surrounding harmonies emphasise its isolation and lack of stability which is in fact, only resolved by another dissonance, although by now the feeling of dissonance is small and the soaring ninth at the end of the couplet paves the way for not only Debussy and Ravel, but also the clichés of the approaching jazz age.

As in the "Credo d'amour", I feel that further musical comment or analysis would be superfluous and I shall leave the reader to appreciate the song in his own way at its full appearance in the Appendix.

L'Invitation au voyage - by Henri Duparc - words by Baudelaire.

1870-71

This work provides a valuable poetic and musical contrast both to the cloying weariness of Chausson's Maeterlinck setting and the two lighter 'mélodie' style songs of Chabrier. In any consideration of Baudelaire's function and importance as a poet, a major factor to be taken into account must be his involvement in the immediacy of his physical environment and its artistic influences. His talent for a wide and sympathetic observation of human events was vital for the fullest expression of his particular poetic gifts within the framework of Wagnerian culture. In "L'Invitation au voyage", the intrinsic poetic feeling is strongly coloured by the tradition of Teutonic advances in art and philosophy, insofar as generally Baudelaire and other early symbolist poets drew a great deal of their impetus from the highly romanticized implications of the soi-disant unity of the music-drama. The 'Weltschmerz' of Wagnerianism was translated into the smaller-scale art of purely Gallic poetry by a brilliantly successful metamorphosis of ideal and ideologies seemingly never hindered by the problems of varying national temperament. It then became apparent, that whereas, to some extent, Wagner's music had relied upon the dependence of music on poetry, the emergent symbolist poetry lost the major part of its effect unless actively stimulated by a sense of musicality, which, in some cases, was more important than the verbal and associative meaning of the words themselves. Verlaine's "Art Poétique" is sufficient testimony to this idea, although it must be borne in mind that he is not advocating that music is the supreme art, but rather that the extreme beauty and abstraction

of music, its real essence, should influence the more ephemeral art-forms enjoyed by man:

> De la musique avant toute chose,
> Et pour cela préfère l'Impair
> Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air,
> Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.

A later stanza foreshadows Debussy's wish that the monochromatic effects of shades and the colours of night should predominate in a dramatic context where words and music are allied:

> Car nous voulons la Nuance encor,
> Pas la Couleur, rien que la nuance!
> Oh, la nuance seule fiance
> Le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor!

The clarity and objectivity of this poem are worthy of inclusion here, as both Duparc and Baudelaire were themselves always sufficiently concerned with universals as to avoid the extreme subjectivity which perhaps has led Maeterlinck to occupy a relatively low place in the poetic ranks of international favour.

Although not directly pantheistic, the imagery of the poem leads man, through his desire to merge into the countryside "qui te ressemble", into a better land, or else to a manifestation of the divine potential in man, expressed as follows in the flowing poetry of the recurring refrain:

> Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté;
> Luxe, calme et volupté.

The title alone can possibly carry the implication of a symbol. The poet may be speaking of his future life with his beloved, and if so, then there automatically enters into the meaning the idea of an act of will. This would naturally impart a sense of direction and even, depending upon one's outlook, a slight tinge of religiosity to one's approach to the poem.

The Catholicity of the strongly sensuous and evocative imagery is quite evident, but it is interesting to remember also that French poetry of this period and a little later, when not dealing specifically with single bastractions such as Spleen, Langueur, Solitude, etc., almost always locates its ideas in a natural setting, akin in certain respects to the sea-journey symbol of Christian life so frequently met with.

In "L'Invitation au voyage" Duparc set only the first and third stanzas, these two being placed in an idealistic and very imaginative out-doors setting. The second stanza stands as a vivid and effective contrast and for its high density of exquisitely expressed ideas merits comment. He used here the small-scale analogies of a richly-decorated interior full of sweet scents and spices, conveying much of the then popular influence of the East in the visual arts, especially in material and functional arts, to say nothing of Whistler's addiction to the delicate blue and white porcelain of the East:

> La splendeur orientale,
> Tant y parlerait
> A l'âme en secret
> Sa douce langue natale.

It is possible that Duparc omitted this section in order to retain a musical autonomy through the associative use of interlinked musical symbols, which he was of course able to do, as the stanzas he set are fairly closely related as regards images and unity of place and emotion. His fine sense of discrimination allowed him to make poetic cuts rather than to unbalance the unity of the piece by overloading the musical matter.

The form of each stanza follows the predetermined outline of the sonnet and is strictly classical in its adherence to elaborate internal

structure stemming from the Italian form of the plan and eventually being traced back to the complexities of the Mediaeval dance-song. Here is the scheme of the first stanza:

1	Mon enfant, ma soeur,	a
2	Songez à la douceur	a
3	D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!	b
4	Aimer à loisir	c
5	Aimer et mourir	c
6	Au pays qui te ressemble!	b
7	Les soleils mouillés	d
8	De ces ciels brouillés	d
9	Pour mon esprit ont les charmes	e
10	Si mystérieux	f
11	De tes traîtres yeux	f
12	Brillant à travers les larmes.	e
13	Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté;	g
14	Luxe, calme et volupté.	g

At first sight it would perhaps seem that only a technique resembling that of Schumann's use of applied and meticulously followed speech/melody patterns in a purely metric context would be adequate for the most apt setting of these words. The poetic stresses and rhythms are not only varied but contain several cleverly contrasted examples of assonance and alliteration which a lesser composer than Duparc, living at this time, might have been tempted to match exactly with a series of miniature leit-motif structures. It so happened, however, that Duparc was apparently able to perceive the real vision behind Baudelaire's words, and to match this with an all-embracing musical ambience which never interrupts the verbal flow, but, in acting almost as an interpreter of the words, enhances them and surrounds them with a musical structure which merely protracts the spirituality of the poetry into our understanding. I have not, incidentally, used the word vision in any fanciful sense whatsoever, as I feel that of all French

poets of the Wagnerian era and afterwards, until the second decade of the twentieth century, Baudelaire best realised the potential inner life which we can all achieve granted that first we are fully aware of and sympathetic to the natural instability of our everyday life. In order to illustrate further the awareness of artistic and human potential available to those who have the power and the patience to look for it, I should again like to quote from Aldous Huxley's "The Doors of Perception". The following passage seems to approach the 'poétique' of Debussy rather startlingly, and thus assumes a greater interest.

> "And here are El Greco's disquietingly visceral skirts and mantles; here are the sharp, twisting, flame-like folds in which Cosima Turo clothes his figures: in the first, traditional spirituality breaks down into a nameless physiological yearning; in the second, there writhes an agonised sense of the world's essential strangeness and hostility. Or consider Watteau; his men and women play lutes, get ready for balls and harlequinades, embark, on velvet lawns and under noble trees, for the Cythera of every lover's dream; their enormous melancholy and the flayed, excruciating sensibility of their creator find expression not in the actions recorded, not in the gestures and the faces portrayed, but in the relief and texture of their taffeta skirts, their satin capes and doublets. Not an inch of smooth surface here, not a moment of peace or confidence, only a silken wilderness of countless tiny pleats and wrinkles, with an incessant modulation - inner uncertainty rendered with the perfect assurance of a master hand - of tone into tone, of one indeterminate colour into another ....." [1]

It was probably a similar awareness of verbal expressiveness that allowed Baudelaire to say in this poem:

> Aimer à loisir
> Aimer et mourir
> Au pays qui te ressemble

and a little later:

> Les soleils mouillés
> De ces ciels brouillés
> Pour mon esprit ont des charmes.

The use of language is imaginative and extremely well-balanced, yet the flow of poetic impetus is never forced. There is always a logically focused urge towards the common refrain. The ideal country of the refrain is as warmly sensuous and evocative as the after-death country of Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird" is amazingly, and coldly, realistic. Baudelaire's orderly and beautiful land is far more advanced in terms of human thought, and implies that all suffering and disorder has merged into a single state which abandons human considerations and loses its original identity to gain a new one in a kind of Huxleyan paradise. As an interesting corollary to this refrain it is well worth looking again at Matisse's representation of "Luxe, calme et volupté", to see how far one's visual ideas of verbal suggestion are personal or more widely universal.

Despite the striving for eternal happiness the poet doubts that a perfect understanding can exist between himself and his 'child', as he must question her very status and title: is she child, sister, or a symbolic female figure who can be mother and wife as well? She in fact assumes an almost impersonal, fundamentally sexless relationship to him, and is possibly analogous to the personality of Ceres, the earth mother, or to the initiator of our destruction, Eve. The Ceres analogy may be pertinent in relation

to the line

Au pays qui te ressemble

which is the synthesis of a fruitful pantheism. In terms more contemporary to Baudelaire such a relationship between men and women underwent a drastic metamorphosis so that in the masculine-dominated city life of Paris woman was at best a popular yet pathetic Jane Avril figure, or at worst, the sad barmaid of the Folie Bergères as in Renoir's brilliant picture, once owned by Chabrier. The poet's doubts are extended in the final stanza where he speaks of her "traîtres yeux", as if to affirm that humanity cannot help but create much misunderstandings or such perceptual shortcomings. The pain of doubt here becomes openly symbolic almost to the point of allegory or complete transference of potential from one object to another differing in kind, not merely in degree. [2]

Vois sur ces canaux
Dormir ces vaisseaux
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;
C'est pour assouvir
Ton moindre désir
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.

The physical appearance of the poem, so typical in many ways of Baudelaire's more complex and highly organised poems, is a little reminiscent of the terse epigrammatic style favoured by another mystical yet less fleshly poet, St. John of the Cross. The difficulties of allegory in relation to this poem are perhaps eased by the comparison of the two poets insofar as both poets are trying to express something of super-human perfection. This may well be an example of an image which is common to all humanity and is inherent both objectively within our culture, and subjectively within the eternal and always applicable 'thought patterns' stored in the human brain

as a kind of blue-print of our collective existence, and which are merely transformed, not always added to, as we progress in knowledge and experience.

The splendid and orderly workmanship of the poem is representative of a strong early influence in Baudelaire's life, the neo-classic Parnassianism which flourished after Gautier in the work of Sully-Prudhomme, Léconte de Lisle, whom Fauré frequently set, and Pierre Lŏuys, although he was so distinctive as to stand apart, much as Debussy was both part of and yet aloof from the contemporary conditions of musical art into which he was born, and from which he soon rebelled most violently. Baudelaire initially despised the formal cerebral discipline of this 'Art for Art' school, yet at the same time he found in the search for smooth and polished expression (even reflected in the title of Gautier's "Emaux et Camées") a compelling satisfaction. He regarded the slight pretentiousness of this school as an intellectual opiate, as he would probably have seen religion in its most plebeian and demanding forms of popularity as "a series of revelations that have given ..... a common assurance of mystical affinity with the things of the spirit".[3]

There is a smoothness and polish in Duparc's music neatly apposite to the poetic flow. This comes about by a ubiquitous yet prevailingly unobtrusive use of pedals. Duparc as a song writer had a remarkable and always effective propensity for this device; in "Phidylé" especially the prolongation of repeated pedal notes has rather an hypnotic effect, so bemused does the listener become as a result of the steadily moving functional pedals. In "L'Invitation au voyage" the use of strong pedal notes is the main functional element throughout, but nowhere more so than in the first stanza inclusive of the refrain, or ritornello as it may be

more appropriately termed in a musical context. Its effect is enhanced by its being a double pedal, as the dominant note G is added to the tonic pedal C. This has a two-fold effect upon the song which is in C major/minor, with interesting modal fixations and exploitations. Firstly, if C alone were the constant element, then the upper harmonies, if moving away from a direct C major/minor movement, would attain a certain dissonance pleasant to the ear because of the logical certainty of their return to the home key gained through an instinctive sense of expectation. Such a dissonant contrast is heightened all the more by virtue of the dominant aspect of the double pedal point, as this note may be, and frequently is, placed in far greater opposition to the upper texture than is the basic C, because of the complexity of the additional harmonic implications. For instance; if over C, the harmony contains F sharp and A flat, as in the second bar, then a wholetone scale would seem to be indicated, but to this form of the scale the G is superfluous, yet it still remains, and almost with the pull of a gravitational exertion, forces the harmony back into a momentarily stable tonality. On the other hand, where, for a short period, he omits the pedals altogether as in the passage from "Si mystérieux....." - to - ".....larmes", he compensates for this by placing the vocal line and its doubling accompaniment around a well-defined and decorated G which now emerges as the climatic note at the end of the first stanza. Secondly, the tonic is doubly impressed because of the long traditions of association between these two notes. There is too, always a hint that, because of our unconscious following of traditional expectations, the G might suddenly act as a pivot note in its own right and allow a swing of harmonic tension

towards the dominant key, or even to <u>its</u> dominant, a not unheard of procedure!

For the ritornello, the metre changes without warning into a new compound triple movement, which acts as a contrast, and as a delayed informant as to the decisively duple nature of the opening $\frac{6}{8}$ which now takes on a greater, if past, importance. This discounts entirely any possible feeling that the $\frac{9}{8}$ is in any way a mere extension of the earlier rhythm. The change is far more emotional and radical than that, as the basic shape of the structure's proportions and the necessary stabilising of phrase lengths and harmonic sentences is altered. The almost horizontal feeling of the verse accompaniment is contracted into a series of vertical chords, one to a bar, which is of course in the same mathematical proportion as before, but which now assumes a completely different effect of balance. The vocal line assumes the same new linear intensity as does the accompaniment. The eight bars of this section, four of which centre round C and the remainder around G, are all that are needed to express the serenity of the poetic refrain. The rhythmic freedom within the new barring is quite dramatic, all the more so for being contrasted with the preceding gliding and essentially linear movement of short notes.

The contrast between the two stanzas is echoed in the musical variation between the two musical halves of the song. Ostensibly a repetition of stanza one, after ten bars the music soon moves into a new linearly shaped phrase. Musically one now feels that the 'coda' section is being entered, largely as a result of the extended and definite pedal note preparing for G major. The $\frac{9}{8}$ movement returns but it is now exemplified in a flowing triplet semiquaver movement from "les soleils

couchants". There is at this point an interesting and noteworthy harmonic metamorphosis. It is important too that as the melodic outline varies it does so to accommodate an equally varied and in fact reversed process. There are different levels of tonal intensity and a free use of motives within a relatively narrow tonal structure. A contrapuntal texture is built up which serves to unify the literary ideas as well as to bind all the elements which Duparc used as fundamental decorations and reinforcements in gentle subordination to the central key-note.

Apart from the many implications of tonal movement resulting from the tonic C, the song is based in a progressive harmonic sense on three notes, A, A flat and G, with F sharp of the initial whole-tone idea and the C sharp of the second stanza as essential pointers towards the dominants of C and G respectively. The dominant of G would be labelled by that master of musical documentation, Tovey, as the enhanced dominant; in this context a most propitious title. Such emphasising of pivot notes imparts a quasi-classical manner of tonal handling, in that so much of the movement is well prepared and avoids any over-taxing of our own musical expectation. The rhythmic variants of the piano epilogue have a quiet and fascinating sense of metamorphosis of their own. Besides providing the words with a calm abstract conclusion, they also foreshadow the experimentation of Boris Blacher and later composers of the present century who regard rhythmic complexities and their innate problems as one of the most vital bases of musical thought and aesthetic development.

This may not be Duparc's greatest song, but it is one which tends towards a freer use of notes connected to a definite framework, and of

rhythmic patterns contributing to a breakdown of Wagnerian tradition more apparent than in any of the preceding songs discussed. The well-disciplined approach to performance of this type of song which is so rarely attained is perhaps the best evidence one could produce for the essentially Gallic nature of the work, which is and should always sound so, far removed from the comparative squareness of any Teutonic equivalents it may have.

Extase - by Henri Duparc - words by Jean Lahor.

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Of the five analyses in this chapter this is perhaps the most suitable as a conclusion. The poetic fervour and the musical gracefulness which approaches the static yet always moving logic ascribed to a true and clear-sighted simultanism are part of both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. A great deal of the success of this song is accounted for by the close relationship felt between the words and the music throughout. This marrying of thought and its expression seems much greater here than it did in "L'Invitation au voyage", where the physical shape of Baudelaire's poem was echoed in the melodic patterns often to the possible detriment of the actual verbal meaning. This again raises the ever-pertinent question of the suitability of words for musical setting and even the necessity for feeling that certain words would gain by being given a musical ethos. This aesthetic problem is increasingly unanswerable at this period of the development of French song which, however unobtrusively, took under its wing all the philosophical, intellectual, and artistic idioms of the time. We need only consider Cocteau's intense interest in such wide-reaching pursuits as painting, poetry, and his role as aesthetician, novelist and film-maker, to realise that France was producing artists capable of producing far more than merely 'pretty' songs, paintings or whatever their instincts led them to do. Even more important is the realisation that while Wagner was earnestly trying to lay the foundations of a "Gesamkunst-werk" in Germany and the French Academicians just as earnestly but often

misguidedly tried to emulate him without taking adequate notice of the characteristics and demands of their nationality, other Frenchmen assimilated some of the Wagnerian influence into their own creative make-up and effected a synthesis which was at the time very necessary both for themselves and for the progress of music as a means of expression and inspiration throughout Western Europe. I do not wish to condemn Wagnerian principles as roughly as does Stravinsky, because I think that he is forgetting that art need not be particularly beautiful or even apparently sensible in its necessary evolutionary steps, but he is basically correct when he says

> "..... we passed without transition to the murky inanities of the Art-Religion, with its heroic hardware, its arsenal of warrior-mysticism, and its vocabulary seasoned with an adulterated religiosity..... It succeeded in getting a hearing from the cultured public thanks only to a misunderstanding which tended to turn drama into a hodge-podge of symbols, music itself into an object of philosophical speculation. That is how the speculative spirit came to lose its course and how it came to betray music while ostensibly trying to serve it better." [1]

The truths behind these words are apparent if we consider only the unwritten implications. From the first sentence therefore, we glean the idea that however misguided Wagner's concepts of artistic unity and his practical expression of them might have been, without his influence perhaps the flourishing phenomenon of Art Nouveau in France and England might never have taken place. However ritualistic this may have been in its peculiarly attractive and always disciplined expression, it was a necessary stepping-stone from Victorian Neo-Gothic art to the calmer, less ostentatious forms

which were to emerge after about 1910. The point that Stravinsky makes about music becoming an "object of philosophical speculation" raises a much more abstract and difficult question; namely, that whereas France has often tended to allow music to involve itself in extra-musical aesthetics, the heritage of German musical development seems averse from such diversions within the context of musical logic and its progress, and so he feels that the entire impetus behind Wagner's output was misdirected in terms of nationality if nothing else.

The fatalism and dream-like state of mind of the 'fin-de-siècle' is evident in Lahor's short poem. Despite its brevity, it is full of a complete involvement of a languorous 'lassitude d'âme' and illustrates perfectly the approach of what Shattuck so perceptively sees as a period of comparative artistic staticism. Within these few lines we find an expression of emotion couched in the most refined and technically exquisitely executed terms:

Sur un lys pale mon coeur dort
D'un sommeil doux comme la mort.
Mort exquise, mort parfumé
Du souffle de la bienaimée.
Sur ton sein pale mon coeur dort
D'un sommeil doux comme la mort.

The somewhat dubious religiosity of so many Pre-Raphaelite poems and the concern with a love tinged with a hint of incest is quite absent from this abstract miniature. The purity of the language with its rather 'homotheistic' terms and its careful regard for balance and sound enhances the single poetic idea contained in the six lines and creates a framework through which the imagery flows clearly and strongly. The almost

monotonous quality of the largely monosyllabic words induces in us a pleasant dream-like state in which there is apparent a real and very sensitive stillness. The accentual stresses of the poem lend it an excellent balance, as does the almost A B A form of the whole. The sound of

"ton sein pale" and "sommeil doux"

shows immediately the mood and speed of the poem as does the slow assonance of the two tri-syllabic words

"parfumé" and "bienaimée".

This pairing of words in certain rhythms and reading speeds has a profound effect upon what can be termed the time scale of the poem. Unlike the type of poetry found in the romantic German Lied or that rambling and self-consciously technical poetry which Wagner devised for the Music-Drama, this tiny French poem is indeed full of concern for the most satisfying techniques of its medium, yet never does this concern get out of hand to the extent of blurring the delightful and visual images with which this miniature is imbued. The dream state which we feel on reading it results in our believing that any possible reality which may be recorded in the poem is largely superfluous, a mere technical device on which is super-imposed the true super-real poetic ecstasy of the poet's love. The real core of the poem lies in the use and choice of words. This, therefore, is an approach to the 'poetic' of Mallarmé. He believed that poetry was composed of words rather than ideas, in the sense that any idea which may occur during the course of a poem was always subservient to the attention which must be forced on the words themselves, both as independent elements

and as part of the overall words-structure, whose beauty or value is seen in terms entirely of these words, without recourse to any other considerations whatsoever. There is obviously much to be said for arguing against this attitude. If it were a general poetic truism by which standards were made and poems judged, how much of this century's poetry would we lose, especially in present-day poems, whose frequent intense subjectivity overrides a concern with words qua words.

A subjective compulsion to over-refinement was Mallarmé's chief creative stumbling-block as is seen from his efforts to complete his ideal 'Book'. Such a work requires a tremendous amount of understanding of aesthetic and moral values, both from the artist and the onlooker, and is therefore rarely concluded or appreciated adequately at the time of its presentation. Lahor approaches this sense of excessive artistic discipline in "Extase" and even the title suggests a dreamy languorous indulgence in a colourful abstract Pre-Raphaelite ecstasy. There are none of the obviously jewelled words of Baudelaire here, or the intricate and long-drawn out fragments of Mallarmé, but instead we are presented with a single trance-like poetic expression made of short mosaic pieces which fit together to form an integrated and corporate whole. It is interesting to notice how Lahor has evolved, probably unconsciously, a perfect example of developing arch-form, aria, sonata, or whatever one wishes to term the ubiquitous structure which combines both the basic elements of a fundamental duality with a necessary and conclusive symmetry inherent in any kind of A B A balance. I have already mentioned the extreme necessity of such a balancing and juxtaposing of elements, and it will become clearer as art

and our analyses of its manifestations become gradually refined, that, far from being the prerogative of tonal evolution in music or the adherence to so-called classical traditions in literature, this tri-partite placing and resolution of material in some form or another is an integral part of any artistically creative act within the development of our culture.

The opening two lines of the poem create the effect of an epigram as a result of their neatness and terseness. Each line opens with a mono-syllabic word of approximately the same intensity and relative poetic importance. This equality of intensity tends to standardise the reading speed of each line as also there is a gradual slowing down of this same reading speed (and intensity of meaning, too) towards the close of each line if only because of the long vowel sound 'o', in the words 'dort' and 'mort'. There is the added qualification that these words by their very meaning and association would tend immediately to bring about a psychological slowing-down within our mental reactions to them. This is even more noticeable in the last two lines of the poem, in which a single word change involves a new orientation of meaning. Here 'lys' has become the differently associated word 'sein'. This involves more than a shifting of almost allegorical references as the human implications of the poem have become subjective and affective in relation to the poet's reaction to them. This is where the arch form comes into its own, as, apart from the single word change, the last couplet retains exactly the form of the first. A symmetry is obviously apparent, but more noticeable and hypnotic is the effect this has on our sense of the passage of time. Our powers of understanding and association inevitably link the first and last stanzas in our minds, and so

closely connected are they that we feel that no time at all has passed or that time has moved for an immeasureable length without our being aware of it. This phenomenon is usually more noticeable in music than in poetry and possibly illustrates Lahor's feeling for the overall formal musicality of a poem's potential shape.

There is an analogy between this poem and the symbolism of Greek mythology in which Daphne changes her human form to become a tree endowed with a sense of eternity and of all the knowledge which belongs to such a perceptive consciousness of being and matter. Ezra Pound's moving poem "The Tree" illustrates the use of modern symbolism to represent what was at one time a tangible reality of belief.

> I stood still and was a tree amid the wood
> Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
> Of Daphne and the laurel bow
> And that God-feasting couple old
> That grew elm-oak amid the wold.
> 'Twas not until the gods had been
> Kindly entreated, and been brought within
> Unto the hearth of their heart's home
> That they might do this wonder thing;
> Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
> And many a new thing understood
> That was rank folly to my head before. [2]

A further quality of meaning in the word change from 'lys' to 'sein' involves by extension, the attributes of good and evil found in women and the second (and last) line of the poem would imply that evil in the shape of mortality is woman's predominant characteristic:

> (Sur ton sein pale mon coeur dort)
> D'un sommeil doux comme la mort.

Duparc succeeds excellently in conveying the slight sense of movement displayed in the poem, possibly far better than he expressed the surging

movement of Baudelaire's "L'Invitation au voyage". Several factors of equal musical merit contribute to this success. The most obvious ones are the rhythmic patterns based on tiny fragments of melodic movement, the prominent use of varied and colourful pedal notes, and the overall A B A form, which through the short inconclusive-seeming coda bears the implication of a further B section reaching into an infinite number of stanza repetitions. The vocal tessitura is very carefully placed and melodically eases the potentially awkward key-changes with delicately flowing lines, especially in the central section where a most graceful climax based on the tonic minor chord glides above the angularities of a broadly spaced harmonic progression involving an expected yet still startling French sixth chord, at bar 24. This chord, so common a part of post-Beethoven harmonic structures, gains its somewhat stronger character in this context by being placed, texturally speaking, in rather oblique opposition to the smooth and free-flowing grace of the vocal line, on the word 'bienaimée', which forms the first and most emotionally attractive climax of the poem, although as I have said before, the real climax appears later in a more subtle poetic context.

The most salient feature of the actual harmonic constructions of the song seems to me to be the manner in which there is always a sense of some harmonic ambiguity, insofar as the creation and relaxation of tensions is brought about not by expected progressions or by a close dependence on the vocal line for the changing of harmonic meaning, but by a series of normally three bar phrases which act as mosaic elements, having both their own

internal unity and that, externally, of belonging to the overall tonal movement of the piece.

In performance, one is always struck by the physical presence of time, and of the fallibilities of the human element far more than in many less rarified and original songs. This is essentially a song for a voice of great sympathy and humanity. The rarely (and then often badly) used true mezza voce quality is absolutely necessary here as in occasional Schubert songs like "Nacht und Traum" where a similar atmosphere is evoked. In "Extase", a gentle mezza voce must compensate for the loss of the usual rubatos and dynamic variations of both singer and accompanist, as they are here quite superfluous to the static fluidity of the musical structure.

Finally, I can only say that "Extase" has an almost unique quality of beauty and mystery which needs an understanding performance inasmuch as the sensuous poems of Pierre Lŏuys, one of whose "Chansons de Bilitis" will be discussed in a later chapter, lose most of their meaning if not read by a mind attuned to all the circumstances of their aesthetic ambience.

CHAPTER THREE

MALLARME'S PLACE IN THE LITERARY ATMOSPHERE OF HIS TIME AND HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TECHNICAL AND SYMBOLIC USE OF WORDS.

"Peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit."

This self-assured expression of a young writer's personal and hard-won 'poetic' seems more than adequate to justify the concept of the linear importance of a work of art. It allows this to be regarded as the most fundamental and pliable element in a consideration both of the formal density and the sensory result or effect of the work upon the onlooker. It is interesting to realise that in recent years, and long since this subjective and basically aesthetic aphorism was written, Mallarmé's work has gained in importance and value to the analysts and aestheticians of music and literature, almost more than to the relatively ordinary lover of poetry. Written during the early stages of an artistically vital fifty years from approximately 1860-1910, it expresses, in very few yet sufficiently definitive words, the principles of literary progress which were to become part of a general move towards what may be termed artistic simultanism. This is emphatically not the same kind of movement as that promulgated by Wagner but is a more complete and satisfying contraction not only of theoretical Wagnerianism, but also of contemporary philosophical staticism involving human experience which would logically result in a complete eventual stoppage of communication. It seems most unlikely, however, that this state will ever arise under the forms of art as we know them today. Such an artistic progression in France was somewhat more optimistic than it would have been had it taken place in Germany, and thus

it mercifully lacked the tired 'Weltschmerz' which in Wagner especially, occasionally detracts from any purely musical or even literary value of the late music-dramas.

The quality and meaning of Mallarmé's self-expository definition gains in interest by the further realisation that it was written (and therefore available to a perceptive if small public) ten years before the appearance in the art-world of Monet's "Soleil Levant". Through this statement he wishes us to understand fully that he is creating a literary impression and is placing in our mind's eye not merely a poetically inspired object, but rather (i.e. in preference to) is willing us to uncover our entirely personal reactions both to the object and (therefore requiring some definite response) to the active placing of such an object before our probably dormant senses. This type of reaction entails a sudden contraction of time, a telescoping of the seconds between one's first perusal of the given object, whether it is expressed in word or paint, and one's later intellectually reasoned and considered appreciation of the object. This was undoubtedly a forward step in the history and development of poetic art in Western Europe and was to become an integral part of our personal reactions to and realisation of the meaning of art forms. As a result of the work, on very different levels of intention and achievement, of men like Cézanne, Dali, Duchamp, Bréton, Apollinaire and slightly later, Cocteau, at various stages of the less inhibited and class-conscious flowerings of art at the turn of the century, the listener, reader or viewer was to become the possessor of an increasingly powerful though not always praiseworthy propensity for an almost complete participation and involvement in either or both the cause and effect of artistic creation.

A more laudable result of the move towards artistic unity has already been mentioned in the concept of artistic simultanism. In his admirably useful study, "The Banquet Years", Roger Shattuck sees the movement thus;

> "The aspiration of simultanism is to grasp the moment in its total significance, or more ambitiously, to manufacture a moment which surpasses our usual perception of time and space. The history of the attitude that produced simultanism reaches as far back as human consciousness. Most religious experience expresses it." [1]

This type or 'genre' of experience is of course given different headings or names according to the situation or philosophy involved, or to the varying forms and sequences under which it is understood by mankind, but is nevertheless a basic facet of an existence in which the word metamorphosis is of the utmost pertinence in literally every thought or action resulting from human evolution.

Bearing this similitude of developments in mind, one can begin to see that in a tentative manner Mallarmé foreshadowed Sartre's idea of "L'Etre et le Néant" insofar as Being and Nothingness become indissoluble and so, to pun a la Cocteau, one could surmise that "L'Etre est le Néant", after which Mallarmé's dictum that "Le Rien, qui est la Verité" presents its own problems. Therefore the very fact of being, if indeed that in itself can be defined, is equivalent to truth, and so this beingness is a fulfilment of our position in the earthly state, all this resulting in a conclusively worked-out state of nothingness: from which the static essence of things becomes fundamental and we approach the threshold of existentialism.

Mallarmé's use of the verb 'peindre', rather than 'décrire',

'répresenter' or some other more commonly used word, is significant because by doing so he realised quite positively that, even if the realisation was unconscious, one could describe one art form in the terms of another. This was not a merely casual usage in the sense that it was simply a common analogy, but by linking it to the word 'effet' it gained meaning on two levels; firstly, as an independent idea which conjures up the concept of unity of emotive realisation which can and should exist between the artist's first conception and the onlooker's reaction to a work in the medium of visual art. The second meaning or implication of 'peindre' in this context is that it becomes a concept entirely dependant upon the corollary 'effet', each word interacting upon and stimulating the other and advancing one's normally passive approach to art into something not only alive in the sense of being susceptible to progress, but also having innate meaning and the ability to translate the consequences of such meaning into a new and understood experience. This very personal approach to art can of course be taken to extremes or even distorted, as in some works of Jean Cocteau, notably his essay on "Opium", of which it has been said that we learn an awful lot about Cocteau but little about either the causes or objective effects of the drug. The compulsion for involvement is necessary, for only then can the reader begin to appreciate to the fullest extent exactly what is being attempted. It is always extremely difficult to assess the worth of a work of art as one can judge so incompletely the effect it is going to have on the person who receives it either as a poem, a study in colour, an experiment in sound or anything else of that nature, and I can only hope that the works I have chosen to analyse will appeal not only because of their

intrinsic value but rather more pertinently because they together form some kind of pattern around a general scheme which is concerned, one might say, with the question of metamorphosis. The use of easily transferable descriptive terminology alone falls into this category and in fact the superficial narrative level of communication and the deeper meanings of what may be called a universal mythology, all of which are to be found in varying degrees in the works discussed, testify to this overall plan of change within a monocellular evolution of ideas. The German Günther Müller sees this phenomenon thus;

> "In poetry, metamorphosis is given with the genius of the language and with the sequence of words and sentences. It has a certain parallel in music and in this respect poetry and music are connected, as against painting and sculpture, which have no such metamorphosis. In poetry this connection is of a special order and strength, for here all the statements contribute towards the creation of a unified form, a form which arises and exists in a reality different from that of words and sentences....." [2]

This can be extended to include Müller's further statement that

> "Poetic form is a reality of language and of nature" [3]

...which, if we include musical form as well, is a definition actually embracing these two forms and no others, for the single reason that they along amongst all art forms define their own shapes in the matter of time and movement without any recourse whatsoever to the shapes imposed by nature; that is, there is no necessity for them merely to 'hold up a mirror to Nature'; they can instead use the media and materials of nature in a far greater way by creating new sequences of movement and meaning which

eventually pass well beyond the realms of imitation and in so doing incidentally create new and difficult problems of worth and validity. (The conflict between the Schönbergian 12 tone system, and that proposed by Hindemith on allegedly natural principles is an interesting though now a little dated case in point). It seems to me that unless one can absorb this possibility of a unity of purpose which allows of so many manifestations then the very existence of Mallarmé is somewhat wasted. Despite the flourishing of art in the forms of symbolist poetry at the end of the last century and the manifold symbols which evinced themselves in such a colourful fashion there is a curious atmosphere of sterility in much of the poetry and especially in that of Mallarmé. It is well known how preoccupied he became with his intensely abstruse thoughts to the extent that he was almost physically prevented from expressing his ideas fully; (maybe he was averse from any kind of exhibitionism and thus preserved a strong reserve upon the giving of himself through the medium of poetry). I think the idea of sterility may be more clearly seen in the context of Pre-Raphaelitism, and most helpfully so through the manifestation of the movement in England. Which in turn leads me back to the first impetus, Wagner; in this tracery of events I am upheld by Arthur Symons.....

> "Stephane Mallarmé was one of those who love literature too much to write it except by fragments; in whom the desire of perfection brings its own defeat. With either more or less ambition he would have done much more to achieve himself. He was always divided between an absolute aim and the absolute; that is, the unattainable, and a too logical disdain for the compromise by which, after all, literature is literature. Carry the theories

> of Mallarmé to a practical conclusion, multiply his powers in a direct ratio and you have Wagner"..... [4]

later he says..

> "start with an enigma and then withdraw the key of the enigma .... and the result is a "frozen impenetrability"..... [5]

that is, an artistic sterility in which there is no progression or development. A slight digression here might be of some general interest. I have rather tended to emphasise the importance of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England, and it certainly deserves great consideration both aesthetically and socially, yet it is a strange paradox that despite its extension into the single-mindedness and enthùsiasm of William Morris, such an earnest worker for the progressive cause of the ordinary man, it should also have existed on such a rarified plane as to produce eventually that peculiarly sterile almost bloodless art which emanated from Beardsley and Wilde.

This, however, is moving ahead too quickly, and it is purely as a symbolist that Mallarmé must emerge here. I have no intention of embarking upon any kind of conclusive definition of this many-sided movement except to say at the moment that a great deal of its fascination and beauty depends not only on the use of words for their euphony or fluidity, but because by their juxtaposition or apparent illogical relationships to one another they can produce unfamiliar or unexpected associations which attract even though they may startle. Symbolism must also take into account, albeit unconsciously, a realisation of two obvious and balanced levels of thought; Finite mortality with all its limitations must fuse or attempt to fuse with

an infinite spiritual consciousness of the reality beyond mortality;

> "..... the poet must become a seer and make it his task to prepare himself for this by systematically weaning his senses from their normal functions, by denaturalizing and dehumanising them." [6]

Thus the materialist sensuality of Expressionism is absorbed into the more worthwhile spirituality of symbolism. This could, however, be an over-simplification of the fact, as surely "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", perhaps the greatest example of its kind, is constantly filled with a warm and cloying, almost unhealthy sensuality. Perhaps it would be artistically safer and certainly more moral to forget about definitions in regard to this poem as such methods of categorising impose, of necessity, too many conditions which in themselves may tend to predominate over the subject to which they should be subservient.

It is possible, nevertheless, to analyse the poem on more than one technical level, without these aids or categories ever getting out of hand to the extent that we forget that their real purpose is only to enhance the meaning and understanding of the work without ever becoming somewhat dubious ends in themselves. It has already been seen that there is a considerable connection between music and poetry as opposed to music and any other fine art (although the early twentieth century novel may claim comparable artistic fluidity with the structures of Wagner and there is, on a slightly different plane, a link between classical drama and the highly developed forms of abstract symphonic music): so far this connection has tended to be expressed by relatively intellectual and aesthetic considerations, but it is equally valid and useful when taken through the very different

channels of formal musical analysis, a system which is quite happily employed as an analogous method of the break-down of meaning. We can assume that if a work of art is recognised as having overall merit then it must contain its own peculiar integrity; its several elements are put together in some kind of unity which allows internal pressures and tensions to combine with an external form in a uniformly and uniquely satisfying result, which has no need of rigidly imposed forms of analytical categorising. Leonard Meyer further elaborates this idea by implying that the terms and conditions under which a work of art is created should not be forgotten during analysis and that their artistic advancement or limitations should be the startpoint of the critical criteria imposed;

> "Uniformity arises when the several elements of musical organization - pitch progression, rhythm, harmony and timbre - combine to create equality, similarity and equiproximity of stimulation on the same architectonic level." 7

The importance of nationality should be a major factor in matters of formal assessment, especially at the time when the Germanic sonata form had so wide an influence that commentators tended to regard its aesthetic and formal considerations as being a norm from which all other musical variants were to be judged. Debussy, for example, was as French as Wagner was German, and similarly, Mallarmé must be judged basically within the formal and emotional bounds of French art. (This does not mean that extraneous influences must be discounted as they can often have direct bearing upon later manifestations of formal progress. For example, consider the strong influence of Russian monothematicism on French music; French phrasing and decorative harmony on the so-called English Renaissance and the works of

Delius, Warlock, Joseph Holbrooke etc.; the works of Turner on French Impressionism etc.) There is no room, therefore, for an attempted comparison of say, Heinrich Heine with Mallarmé, in regard to rhythmic likeness and variants, for the Teutonic romantic ideologies could have no bearing on critical values when taken in opposition to the delicate word play and meticulous stanza or sonnet constructions of the Gallic 'poesie' and its unmistakeable native ethos.

The very individuality of nationality is in itself responsible for a certain amount of content detail within an overall formal pattern, and as French symphonic music may seem to depart so radically from one's conditioned Germanic view of the symphony by its many internal experiments and variants, so the poetry of post-Wagnerian France, while fulfilling certain universal needs of presentation and resolution, may also be saturated with quirks of its own national singularity, as one cannot help but be aware when reading poetry of the symbolist period.

The idea of music and poetry having the common aim (already hinted at in increasingly romantic terms by Coleridge nearly a century previously), of moving towards a quasi-Blakean perfection, is brought to life by Mallarmé in an expectedly more abstract but still, if not more, pertinent manner in his famous though sometimes puzzling Oxford lecture, "La Musique et les Lettres":

> "la Musique et les Lettres sont la face alternative
> ici élargie vers l'obscur, scintillante là, avec
> certitude, d'un phénomène, le seul, je l'appelai,
> l'Idée." [8]

He adds that music causes us to

> "Ouir l'indiscutable rayon ..... où la musique
> rejoint au vers, pour former, depuis Wagner,
> la poésie." 9

The concept of an ideal 'poésie' or 'Idée' owes, in symbolist poetry, a great deal of its motivation to factors religious as well as secular, as it still does and did, under differing guises, in many other types of poetry, notably those of the Middle Ages. The symbolist poets themselves reacted on behalf of an ideal if somewhat humanistic world, disclaiming after much experimentation, the cold realism as they saw it of the Parnassian creed whose materialistic outlook was continued for quite some time in England through the work of William Morris. Mallarmé himself evolved much of his highly imaginative ritual from ecclesiastical ceremony, but in a rather more chaste and dignified way than did Baudelaire, who produced a slightly warped Christianity to fit his own black poetic imagination. In this context C.M.Bowra places the chief early symbolists admirably;

> "Baudelaire was the first to exalt the value of
> symbols; Verlaine used them instinctively and
> Mallarmé erected a metaphysic to explain and
> justify them." 10

For Mallarmé, poetry was in fact a new religion and in order to gain his final and apparently unattainable 'Idée' he employed the principles of 'Le Beau' and 'L'Idéale' as the sacramental graces through which the perfection and conclusiveness of a true religious meaning could be reached. Therefore, his poetic life, which was his life entirely, became filled with an absolute and single-minded integrity, deriving in part from the more prosaic but no less sincere English cult of Aestheticism as seen in

the works of Pater and Rossetti amongst others.

An outstanding feature of the imagery of symbolism is the strong predominance of flower representation, no doubt emanating from the emergence of a renewed interest in the Church and its ritualistic ornamentation. This also brings to mind the quasi-Mediaeval imagery of Art Nouveau, a late and highly stylised result of Pre-Raphaelitism in England, no less popular in France. In such art and its accompanying poetry the presence of flowers may suggest an untouchable perfection beyond the soi-disant iconoclastic creations of the human mind. This is a notable feature of many of Yeats' poems; for him, the rose signifies a virtual Divinity of beauty and superhuman compassion, although it is evident that where Yeats employs such ideas as mere symbols, Mallarmé translates them into more highly complex and independent elements of allegorical implication and distribution. Thus we return to Bowra again; he says the symbolists

> "attempted to convey a supernatural experience in the language of visible things and therefore almost every word is a symbol and is used not for its common purpose, but for the associations which it evokes of a common reality beyond the senses." [11]

It may be as well to remember the influence of Edgar Allan Poe upon the French poets of this period, although the more humanly involved Baudelaire was probably far better acquainted with his works than was Mallarmé. The influence of the "Tales of Mystery and Imagination" added the complexities of events physical and temporal which could not be explained by accepted considerations of reality, and it was this element which was to pervade such a poem as "Un Coup de Dés", whose actual technical lay-out and eventual

abstruseness foreshadowed not only Apollinaire but also possibly Joyce. For Mallarmé, poetic ideals could be contained within the bounds of absence, silence, and beauty and individuality of word use. This included the aesthetic propensities and qualities of musical construction, and it was probably his search for an 'oeuvre pur', which he may have seen in terms of an ideal musical expression, never to be reached, which caused his failure to conclude his life's work to his own satisfaction. This unproductive idealism is illustrated in the frequent poetic insistence on the varying integrity and even necessity of woman's existence, whose being contains a deceptive negative quality of evil, very dangerously influential to the actions of men. Mallarmé's own "Hérodiade", to say nothing of the women of Poe's experience and fantasy, concerns the remoteness of an ice-cold virgin, equally as powerful, though differently so, as Baudelaire's sensuous "Dame Créole".

An interesting way of illustrating Mallarmé's use of words in the pseudo-Greek context of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", which allows of such tremendous verbal luxury and poetic imagination, is first to expose Baudelaire's "Chanson d'Après Midi", a delightful poem employing several ideas and images later apparent in Mallarmé. It is fascinating and revealing to see how their methods of expression and presentation differ:

> Quoique tes sourcils méchants
> Te donnent un air étrange
> Qui n'est pas celui d'un ange
> Sorcière aux yeux allechants.
>
> Je t'adore, ô ma frivole,
> Ma terrible passion!
> Avec la devotion
> Du prêtre pour son idole.

Le désert et la forêt
Embaument tes tresses rudes:
Ta tête à les attitudes
De l'énigme et du secret;

Sur ta chair le parfum rode
Comme autour d'un encensoir;
Tu charmes comme le soir,
Nymphe ténèbreuse et chaude.

Ah! les philtres les plus forts
Ne valent pas ta caresse
Et tu connais la caresse
Qui fait revivre les morts!

Tes hanches sont amoureuses
De ton dos et de tes seins.
Et tu ravis les coussins
Par tes poses langoureuses.

Quelquefois pour apaiser
Ta rage mystérieuse,
Tu prodigues, sérieuse
La morsure et le baiser;

Tu me déchires, ma brune
Avec un rire moqueur
Et puis tu mets sur mon coeur
Ton oeil doux comme la lune.

Sous tes souliers de satin
Sous tes charmants pieds de soie,
Moi, je mets ma grande joie
Mon génie et mon destin,

Mon âme par toi guerrie,
Par toi, lumière et couleur!
Explosion de chaleur
Dans ma noire Siberie!

Possibly the best clue to the ethos of this and the Mallarmé version (or dare I say, in support of my earlier contention, metamorphosis?) lies in the second and fourth stanzas, in which the unashamedly ritualistic religion of the symbolist poets comes into prominence and allows the idea of human reality and ghostly unreality to be joined as one single substance.

At a first critical glance there seems to be a vast difference of presentation and expression between Mallarmé's and Baudelaire's conception of a hot, almost ethereal afternoon, but it is important to remember that there was a very definite dramatic concept of the poetic situation in Mallarmé's mind, to the extent that he saw the completed work, when given active vitality through human performance, as a kind of small-scale Gesamkunstwerk. He realised to the full, however, the difficulties inherent in any dramatic coming-together of ideas, and hoped, through a fusion of differing ideas, to produce a final result whose chief attribute would be its unity and freedom of expression. Mallarmé said of the composition of the poem:

> "Tu ne saurais comme il est difficile de s'acharner
> au vers que je veux très neuf et très beau, bien que
> dramatique (surtout plus rythmé encore que le vers
> lyrique parce qu'il doit ravir l'oreille au théâtre)
> ..... mais si tu savais que de nuits désésperées et
> de jours de rêverie il faut sacrificer pour arriver
> a faire des vers originaux (ce que je n'avais jamais
> fait jùsqu'ici) et dignes, dans leurs suprèmes
> mysteres, de rejouir l'âme d'un poète." [12]

Mallarme's creative abstruseness led to the concept of the importance of silence/absence as an essential part of his poetry. As an outgrowth of this the emergence of the apparently inevitable element of chance is all the more understandable as it appears in recent musical developments and aesthetics. Albert Thibaudet explains the difficulties of poetic expression further and more succinctly possibly than did Mallarmé:

"L'emancipation de musique et de ballet que le poète projeta d'en engager, notre lecture, au projet seul, suffit à l'exhaler, les visions et les ombres qui fuient de la flûte, de la plainte et de l'extase du faune realisent autour de l'oeuvre ces nuées renouvelées d'air limpide et d'or vivant." 13

It seems entirely inevitable that to any poet of the late nineteenth century in France especially, where the spirit of Wagner was bound to be of supreme importance wherever there was the idea of drama within poetry and indeed Mallarmé supplied us with the evidence of the Teutonic influence upon his mind, through the medium of a delightful and thoughtful poem which moreover is worthy of remembrance in that its language and imagery is peculiarly 'period' to the extent of now appearing very dated. This does, however, allow us to see more closely, if we can identify ourselves with the mood of the time, the customary and therefore unconscious and commonplace usages of language always an excellent guide to the mental climate of any age.

Hommage à Richard Wagner.

Le silence déjà funèbre d'une moire
Dispose plus qu'un pli seul sur le mobilier
Que doit un tassement du principal pillier
Precipiter avec le manque de mémoire.

Notre si vieil ebat triomphal de grimoire,
Hiéroglyphes dont s'exalte le millier
A propager de l'aile d'un frisson familier!
Enfouissez-le-moi plûtot dans une armoire.

Du souriant fracas originel haï
Entre elles de clartés maîtresses a jailli
Jusque vers un parvis né pour leur simulacre,

Trompettes tout haut d'or pâmé sur les vélins
Le dieu Richard Wagner irradiant un sacre
Mal tu par l'encre même en sanglots sibyllins.

Before I finally reach my full analysis of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", it may be interesting to read a little of Mallarmé's prosaic thoughts about Wagner in order that the full extent of his amazing influence to be realised, although from a technical angle it will be noticed that such a passage constitutes a 'poeme en prose', rather than merely a passage of casual critical prose. In the article "Richard Wagner; rêverie d'un poète français" he says,

> "...voilà pourquoi, Génie! moi, l'humble qu'une logique éternelle asservit, ô Wagner, je souffre et me reproche, aux minutes marquées par la lassitude de ne pas faire nombre avec ceux, qui, ennuyés de tout afin de trouver le salut definitif, vont droit à l'édifice de ton Art, pour eux de terme du chemin. Il ouvre, cet incontestable portique, en des temps de jubilité qui ne sont pour ancien peuple, une hospitalité contre l'insuffisance de soi et la médiocrité des patries; il exalte des ferventes jusqu'à la certitude; pour eux ce n'est pas l'étape la plus grande jamais ordonée par un signe humain, qu'ils parcourent avec toi comme conducteur, mais le voyage fini de l'humanité vers un Idéal. Au moins, voulant ma part du délice, me permettras-tu de goûter, dans son Temple, à mi-côte de la montagne sainte, dont le lever de veritées, le plus comprehensif encore, trompette la coupole et invite, à perte de vue du parvis, les gazons que le pas de tes élus foule, un repos; c'est comme l'isolement, pour l'esprit, de notre incohérence qui le pourchasse, autant qu'un abri contre la trop lucide hantise de cette cime menaçante d'absolu, devinée dans le départ des nuées là-haut, fulgurante une, seule; au-delà et que personne ne semble

> devoir atteindre. Personne!ce mot n'obsède pas d'un remords le passant en train de boire à la conviviale fontaine." [14]

One must consider also that a too great preoccupation with the extensive rarification of poetic art such as that practised faithfully, if at times despairingly, by Mallarmé, could be so easily susceptible to an extreme brevity of life and even of popularity. Cazamian sees the inherent weakness in this type of artistic pursuit, even if his fears, in relation to more recent literary and artistic events, seems a little naive:

> ".... the appeals of imagination.....soon cease to give pleasure, by causing fatigue and awakening the fear of excess; they call into play the instinct of sanity and the search for corrective actuality that are the fundamentals of realistic art." [15]

A final word concerns again the element of chance; this is a concept familiar to us all in the days of avid artistic analysis, but not so acceptably commonplace a hundred years ago. It involves time; not only its existence (such as that is) and its passing, but also the uses to which it is put and the terms of the order, if any, of these events. The recurrent idea of metamorphosis and all its possibilities within a regulated pattern of temporal passing, both human and superhuman, (or extra-human would be a better term) must be considered, as its ethos is imposed upon by the external superficialities of art which are inevitably fixed and to which we have no option but to adhere.

> "On the one hand, the instinctive, naive conception of music and literature as two regions of artistic activity separated by a glass partition makes

> Mallarmé's relevance difficult to understand in musical terms. On the other hand, any position which diverges from the customary idea of the relationship between poet and composer introduces a new difficulty...". [16]

This implies that the composer must now interest himself as far as possible in the 'ars poetica' of the poet whose work he wishes to set, and in the principles behind the formalities and technicalities of the poetic construction. Again, we approach the idea of an eventually unified metamorphosis whereby music and languages no longer remain as means in themselves but are directed towards a common purpose:

> "...certain designs could never be carried out without satisfying the material's demands; and conversely imitation of material that the ear cannot miss, or language crises, demand new conceptions. Perhaps this can be seen more clearly in the musical language than in the poetic language. Since the disintegration of tonality (whose other face, not noticed until recently, was the disintegration of classical metre as the first, negative expression of a changed conception of musical time), it has been in a permanent crisis." [17]

Such an artistic crisis was reflected in Mallarmé's work through the actual type of words he used. A propensity for monosyllabic and seemingly isolated words (in an associative sense) relates him clearly to Webern, in matters both of content and overall form, where his liking for closed poetic forms is equalled by Webern's usage of strict and self-reliant contrapuntal forms. Apollinaire's use of pauses, frequently found without expected formal

punctuation marks, may be considered at this point as the logical reaction to Mallarmé's work, although his was by no means the only outcome of "Un Coup de Dés", and may have been of only minor importance. I mention it here merely to lead the reader on to the Apollinaire poems quoted in the final chapter and to place Mallarmé in one aspect of his historical perspective.

CHAPTER FOUR.

PROBLEMS OF TIME, FORM AND MEANING IN "L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE."

"Oh, the luxury of lying in the fern night and
the grass night and the night of susurant
slumbrous voices weaving the dark together.....
And the voices chanted, drifted in moonlit
clouds of cigarette smoke while the moths, like
late appleblossoms come alive, tapped faintly
about the far street lights, and the voices
moved on into the coming years....."

There are two direct methods of analysing the passage of time in this poem. The most obvious one is that concerning an overall tripartite form analogous to musical sonata form and which will be seen at its fullest in Chapter Six. The one I should like to consider now is that based upon the use of present and past tenses. This aspect of the poem may seem to be far removed from the basic ABA form which appears to be the skeletal foundation of the work, yet it is no more than a highly organised and imaginative extension of the dramatic and potentially kaleidoscopic ethos of 'sonata form' (or of any similar extension of extended and balanced two-part form). The dramatic sense arises here on a very human level, because of the way in which the tenses are varied in order to illustrate the faun's changing state of mind.

The development of time can be shown simply in an analytic lay-out of the poem using the code explained here;

1) = the present. This is definitely a present of cold rationality couched in vivid and moving terms of such brilliance that we are more nearly thrust into the future; there is little or no feeling of what may be termed a logical and developing temporal progression.

11) = the past. The comparative simplicity and expectation of rationality gives way to the always tantalising emotional reflection of the past. The importance of the past here is that the events remembered are not stated in the present as merely pleasant memories. They are given an added innate strength (plus the inevitable and dramatic one of being contrasted with the straightforwardly present events) by being put, as it were, in parentheses, and emphasised further in a noticeably physical manner by the employment of italics. These devices serve to highlight the actual past reporting.

The juxtapositioning of these two technical elements creates, by its delicacy and almost unobtrusive nature, a paradoxical situation whereby my first introductory remarks concerning simultanism begin to make practical and logical sense. This arises because of a combination of ideas being so propounded and skilfully carried out that all normal sense of present and past time is forgotten eventually in the realisation (or instinctive comprehension) that the entire action and sequence of events dissolves into a single yet many-sided happening lasting for ever, or else for a minute space of time.

In the following table the left-hand side numbers refer to the line numbers and the brief comments following the indication of past or present state the condition of the faun's state of mind at each salient change of temporal direction.

1-8. 1) Concluding with the admonition...."Réfléchissons."

8½-22. 1) (in fact almost a joining of 1) and 11) here, because both seem to dissolve into a dream reminiscence involving past present and future which form a quasi-static state of reflection.

23-25. 1) Concluding with a further command, this time of a deliberate ambiguity.....does the syntax of "CONTEZ" refer to the "bords siciliens", or to himself, under the designation of a dual nature?

26-32. 11) The first appearance of Category 11) comes suitably during the progress of the 'second subject' in which some definite contrast of time, mood or event would be a reasonable expectation in order to create the necessary dramatic tension which arouses a further element or layer of interest within our appreciation of the poem.

32½-37. 1) Contains a climax point at 34-35;
"Alors m'éveillerai-je à la ferveur première", which follows the idiomatic and tantalising statement "de qui cherche le là". All this seems to be an abstraction of the wish for marriage which is in turn by implication raised to the higher power of becoming a wish for perfection.

38-51. 1) An interesting climax is contained within the physically static placing of this first development section. It is almost a climax in reverse, however, as the desire concerns not the search for perfection or the ultimate beauty in human terms, but a realisation that, in this context at least, and possibly through the means of allegory or transference of symbols in more general and usual cases, the abstract, intangible and rather mystical medium of music is more powerful, and overrides by its "sonore, vaine et monotone ligne", the transient pleasures of the flesh.

52-61. 1) A continuation of the present, prolonged and made more meaningful by the process of direct address to the almost animate flute which has seemed to gain in strength and magnitude throughout the entire progress of the poem.

62. 1) A brief climax at the start of the recapitulation. This line, like the first eight lines of the poem, is, as far as one can ever be precise in these matters, placed in the present tense and appears to belong in meaning and intent to the present, even though it concludes, like line 8, with a sudden return to the past, here under guise of the word "SOUVENIRS."

63-74. 11) A logical result of the previous line is that it is entirely a reminiscence of past events with two small climaxes. The first involves, through the transferred medium of the duality of the two girls, his own drastic realisation of the delicate and easily broken thread of human patterns that is called sex.

68½....."s'entrejoignent (meurtries
De la langeur goûtée à ce mal d'être deux)
Des dormeuses parmi leurs seuls bras hasardeux";

The next climax occurs at the end of this short section where he speaks of the shadow "Ou notre ébat au jour consumé soit pareil", at which point we begin to realise that the faun's life has been nothing more than a careless and hedonistic squandering of time, largely seen in the terms of an excessive indulgence in sexual and selfish pleasures.

75-81. 1) A return to the present, containing a climax which is no more than a fervent affirmation of his feelings of love.

> Je t'adore, couroux des vierges, ô délice
> Farouche du sacre fardeau nu qui se glisse
> Pour fuir ma lèvre en feu buvant, comme un éclair
> Tressaille!

But, as the language itself so eloquently and clearly states, even such a romantic state of mind gives way to a relaxation and abandonment seen both poetically and through sensual emotionalism which Mallarmé places before us on the condition that we have both the necessary sensitivity and the ability to conjure up the "shaping spirit of imagination".

82-92. 11) A further looking back to his dalliances with the girls and a climax of great expressiveness relating his sense of failure almost in terms of the strange fainting mood which overtakes him on so many occasions. This is a splendid example of the difference of appearance and reality upon which I made earlier comment.

"Cette proie, à jamais ingrate, se délivre
Sans pitié du sanglot dont j'étais encore ivre".

93-104a.1) A necessary return to the present as he now propounds his emotions in semi-Classical terms, in a further climax involving yet again his loss of reality at the moment of a possible consummation, whether of physical desire or allegorically, the attainment of some kind of mental stability.

'Etna! c'est parmi toi visité de Vénus
Sur ta lave posant ses talons ingénus,
Quand tonne un somme triste ou s'épuise la Flamme.
Je tiens la reine!

104b. 1) and 11). i.e. in this context, virtually timeless rather than involving any direct time either past or present. An isolated comment emphasising the complete lack of reality and at the same time realising the inevitability of punishment which must result within the bounds of a Christian morality.

104c-110. 1) and 11). The conjunction of the two time categories is less obviously apparent in terms of present or past speech or actions, but owes its power and existence to the clever and deliberately abstruse use of tenses and pluralities in possibly unexpected areas.

This analysis only explains one aspect of the poem's significance within its technical framework, as, for example, the climaxes of the poem, like those of a truly great piece of music, cannot be satisfactorily dissociated from any of their surrounding elements, and can only be adequately considered within the work as an entity. It is at this stage that one begins to realise just how monumentally impossible it is to communicate fully all one's ideas and thoughts on great works of art, if only because true mental liaison between human beings is generally an unreachable matter. I can only hope that my ideas may find sympathy with some people; for those who see no virtue in my approach, at least my thoughts may stimulate them, if only to new and perhaps better thoughts of their own !

The following short sections merely give the outlines of several trains of thought which may be useful in a close evaluation of the many complex internal details of the poem, and the possible outcomes of which will be found in the subsequent annotated version.

The Meaning.

One does not have to read much literature concerning the symbolist period in French poetry to realise that there is no one solution or single meaning to most of Mallarmé's work, if indeed he intended us to find any kind of a meaning at all, insofar as his poetry was compounded (and here let there be no doubt as to the role of prophet he played!) of far more abstract, almost mathematical elements than was ever then usual. Graham Hough speaks of the "elaborate mosaic-making"[1] of Mallarmé, and the fact that a leading article in one volume of "Die Reihe" could be devoted to the subject of "Mallarmé and Serialist Thought" is evidence of the position that this most meticulous and sensuous poet has now gained for himself in the world of scholarship, although I wonder if this could be merely another example of the intellectual paradox which arises so frequently nowadays where a deliberately and happily non-academic writer or artist is posthumously subjected to the closest theoretical scrutiny, frequently to his detriment. For this reason, mainly, I have decided to let the meaning resolve around the psychological state of the faun's mind and have abandoned any attempt to discover a true active and narrative meaning. Taking Mallarmé's own dictum that poetry is made with words and not ideas, I found quite unconsciously that many of the words as isolated entities created their own growing and atmospheric ideas much in the manner that an abstract or even a surrealist painting creates its own unexpected and pleasureable ambience.

Continuity.

This can be and is effected in many different ways. The major technical one of formal design and its achievements has already been dealt with, but the equally important if less immediately apparent ones of poetic motives and the continued if passive insistence upon the fundamental duality of the faun, which is further expressed and clarified by the almost illogically related duality formed by the two nymphs, is in evidence throughout. I say illogically advisedly because although it is now quite common to read of and be familiar with the incidence of schizophrenia and its harmful manifestations, in 1886 such a preoccupation, and especially as here, emphasised and transfigured by two separate and external figures, was probably in the way of being a considerable if not a shocking novelty. More than just that, the whole poem resolves round this virtually medical concept and yet amazing as it may seem, the ethos of its strange dream world and constant and unpredictable switchings from past to present which finally give it a quality of nightmarish timelessness, fits so easily into the calm yet taut intellectual and dramatic necessities of Sonata Form.

Poetic Symbols.

As for the use of recurring poetic motives, there are two distinct solutions, as it were, to the problem of motivic use and/or development. The simpler of the two, a continuous use of a direct symbol, adaptable to any situation and setting in the poem, appears as a concrete thing in the ubiquitous use throughout the poem, of fire and water.

I said this was a direct symbol; it is, insofar as the elemental contrast of the two is always the same and there is no really significant allegorical use of the two substances, other than that they represent a static opposition

of the basic parts of human life (as of course, a permanent duality). On the other hand, one could argue that this device is here far from direct or static in the internal role played by each element, as opposed to its external effect upon environment, because of the amazing metamorphoses undergone by both fire and water in the course of the poem's progress. In my annotated analysis of the poem following these introductory remarks, I shall label the incidences of fire and water y) and x) respectively. They may also represent water = life - contrasted with fire = death.

The more complex use of symbols is seen in the endless circle of metamorphosis which traces the passage of events from the cutting of the rushes which are obvious symbols of earthiness and its confining nature, through the formation of the pan-pipes to the eventual abstract of a monodic musical line, a symbol of the freedom gained through the most refined expressions of art, itself more representative of the heavenly nature which is accessible to man if he is prepared to strive for it. One could also possibly see many aspects of duality pertaining to the habits and fate of man in such an allegorical setting and I shall say no more about this particular element of the poem at this stage. It is far more worthwhile for the final answer to this enigmatic and exquisite work to result from a possible sudden realisation than from a too studied enquiry.

Literary Techniques.

I wish to make a comment on these techniques at this point because, as the reader will notice immediately, there are five major points involving continuity through the application of a simple but most effective device. I shall quote from the fourth of these, a passage of six lines so that the

fullest extent of the sense of drama, the change of mood and even tense, and the actual dynamism of the poem's forward movement may be seen, through the mere breaking of a line;

> ".....quand, sur l'or glauque de lointaines
> Verdures dédiant leur vigne à des fontaines,
> Ondoie une blancheur animale au repos:
> Et qu'au prélude lent ou naissent les pipeaux
> Ce vol de cygnes, non! de naïades se sauve
> Ou plonge..."
>
> Inerte, tout brûle dans l'heure fauve
> Sans marquer par quel art ensemble detala etc.

The Symbols.

I do not wish to go into any great detail as to the finer meanings of the separate symbols, but I should like to list them so that the reader may have some kind of background upon which to work when reading the poem closely.

a) nymphs...the consequences of their natures has already been touched upon.

b) dreams...Very important one, because of the deliberate confusion it causes as to relevance of tense usage, and also as a prophetic acceptance of the world beyond our normal waking sensibilities.

c) the night and the sky....used as basic factors, and suitable for a dream context.

d) roses and trees....it is interesting to compare these with their usage in Pound and Yeats.

e) wind.....as a natural element or 'humour' almost has the importance of an astrological catalyst (c.f. comment on the use of the circular recurring symbol of the poem).

f) Possibly the major symbol is Art. i.e. in this context = inspiration = creativity = artifice = perfection. (Note also hymen, a possible solution to the search for perfection). The wider and more spiritually

important symbol of art=$\begin{cases}\text{wind}\\\text{inspiration}\end{cases}$ = music = reeds = previous circular symbol. Therefore the sky and the earth are bound in a close and beautiful mandala.

g) eyes = virility, and sleep = the perpetual "ombre" of the poem, = the lessening of passion. The climaxes, already noted in the first analysis bring out the implications of these symbols.

The Possible Religious Connotations.

Again, I shall make only brief notes, as this possibility is very much a matter of personal feeling and concern.

There is however, a great deal of allusion, usually by indirect and symbolic reference, to the component parts of Christian hagiology. I find throughout that there is a sequence of events and characterisation which bears some relationship to the Christian Trinity/Marian connections and meanings. One could see the nymphs as being a Satanic counterpart to angelic beings, and the related feather imagery leaves the Mediaeval ideas of religion behind in favour of the soon-emergent Freudian manifestations.

The constant reference to the two levels of existence in the faun's confusing life could bear a little analogy to the present and after lives of Christian doctrine, especially as the former's lack of clarity in relation to the attainment of perfection leads automatically to the clear-sightedness of eternal good, although this analogy lends itself to more than one interpretation, owing to the two time states;

Mallarmé: past and present

Christianity: present and future.

The tree imagery possibly reminds one of the amount of good and bad poetry devoted to the instrument of Christ's death, especially during the era of Pre-Raphaelitism and just afterwards, in the Celtic nationalism of Yeats and others. Robert Creeley, the contemporary American poet sees this relevance of Christ's death to more prosaic and human desires;

"The Women."

What he holds to
is a cross
and by just that much
is his load increased

Yet the eyes
cannot die in a face
whereof the hands
are nailed in place

I wish I might grow
tall like a tree
to be cut down
to bear such beauty. [2]

An even closer animate metamorphosis is established in Ezra Pound's "A Girl".

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them. [3]

An important female reference appears in the strongly contrasted personalities of the two nymphs who at times in their conscious perversity pertain almost to the Christian examples of femininity seen in Martha and Mary, although of course their actions are no more than rather obvious illustrations that the best generally integrated persons are the most worthy of praise as rational human beings.

To return to the symbols of fire and water, I should like for a moment to replace these by wind and water, as here is yet another contrast of the psychological and emotive make-up of the two sexes. In "W.B. Yeats and tradition",[4] F.A.C. Lucas comments on the concept, also in terms of Christian symbolism, of one level of thought influencing another, as he speaks of the allegorical significance of the spirit (Wind....Masculine ?) moving over the waters (Water....Feminine ?). This is a concept which still retains the fundamental duality of the poem and broadens our perception of the oddly real and human natures of the participants.

In whatever symbolic framework one wishes to place the action and setting of the poem there are three stages of active progress which bind the entire work into a particularly formal unity, almost in a musical sense of logic and 'rightness'. It is possible throughout to trace these patterns as they move through the emotions engendered by a) fight b) surrender c) fear. These emotions are evinced through means of careful imagery, and the constant variations in time and reading speed. This latter aspect is one rarely accounted for, but which has in literature and music, especially today, a very strong influence upon one's reactions to meaning, progress, formal conception, or even sensual reaction evoked by a work of art. In Mallarme particularly, the sound effect of isolated words can have a very definite mental effect upon the reader or listener, and it is these qualities of poetic experience which I should like to instill here as a necessary preliminary to a final close analysis of the poem.

There is a direct and inevitable relationship between Mallarme and

contemporary developments in music, and in relation to the techniques involving broken lines, varied senses of time and the evoked silences, changing speeds and rhythms, and above all, the unexpected tensions which frequently release themselves in paradoxical disappointments of physical and psychological unfulfillment, the artistic reactions and counter-reactions of the last fifty years or so more than explain the visionary greatness of Mallarmé and his place in a confused yet alert post-Wagnerian France.

I would finally like to make it clear that there is some need for a refinement of receptivity to the moral tone of the poem. For an artist of the late nineteenth century there existed a responsibility for and a reaction to a sense of sin which largely (or at least apparently, gives the great changes of expression and emphasis of later artists) diminishes after Mallarmé, through Apollinaire, and is almost done away with by the time we reach the selfish and atheist pessimism of René Char.

CHAPTER FIVE.

POSSIBILITIES OF FORMAL DESIGN AND THEIR APPLICATION IN "L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE".

I have already stressed the need for formal clarity and comprehensibility within the context of the aesthetic considerations of fine art, and this need is all the more evident in the period of symbolist poetry, largely because of the frequently ambiguous or even illogical nature of so much of the subject matter with which it concerns itself, to say nothing of the expression of this subject matter. The basic shape is always, or nearly always, that of two balanced or opposed ideas, however cleverly they may be disguised under superimposed structures. In a musical context it is easily seen that the so-called ternary forms are little more, as Tovey and many later commentators have stated, than balanced extensions of binary form; this becomes clearer if one tries to analyse even the most complex of Mediaeval musical/poetic forms. They almost always divulge their structure as being some variant of a simple AB pattern, albeit heavily concealed by variation processes, either simple or complex.

A brief look at the development of major musical forms is sufficient to illustrate the growth of these ubiquitous patterns and their bearing upon the poetry of post-Romantic France.

<u>After C.P.E.Bach's and J.C.Bach's sonata experiments</u>.

<u>The Classical Symphony</u>.

This is basically an AB form. It can be also a varied synthesis of a single thematic idea A. (c.f. many of Haydn's early first movement forms, resulting from Baroque and earlier suites of all kinds; and the later prominence of Romantic Russian monothematicism, which in turn instilled a unity of movement and idea into so much then avant-garde French music in the late nineteenth century.) This AB section was followed by the tonally

purer recapitulatory element of A; this aspect involved also rondo form and the many types of variation form, and of course within the first appearance of A theme is the usual subdivision into first and second group which again may be, in the early stages, hardly more than a subtle metamorphosis of the first main thematic phrases.

Beethoven.

The construction is basically the same as before, but it now assumes a far greater subjectivity. The sense of tonality is broadened, and the use of small vital 'cell units' for motivic and concise expansion of form which becomes more and more apparent. There is a very great consciousness of form which is far more subjective than ever before. This meant that gradually the social obligations implicit in the expression of form, as in the movement arrangement and expositional repetition in Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven, were being submerged under an urgent and pertinent need for self-expression and a striving to express more than the innate intellectual symbolism behind the laws of musical progression and possibilities of note-placings and sequences.

Romantic Symphony. (Considered in Mahlerian terms rather than those of the Romantic classicists, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms.) Here we have a gradual extension of the use of cell-motives on a paradoxically large scale with a comparable and balancing extension of tonality and expression, even with the inclusion of an allied literary 'programme', although the aesthetics of this are sometimes rather doubtful. This is where we begin to meet difficulties of assessment and worth and a new slant on criticism, insofar as the material under consideration has not

only expanded, but differs greatly in kind as well as in degree. Hence, does one criticise for example, Liszt's "Orpheus" less stringently than "Mazeppa" because the programme is perhaps more worthwhile than because of purely musical reasons? This of course lays open the entire question of vocal music too, and especially that of solo and unaccompanied song. A further important point to notice is that with the era of freer structural patterns in music there is a sense of realism which pervades all the arts until it becomes either expressionism under the German connotation or else a very subjective and awkward approach to impressionism in the French style.

There were inevitable corresponding developments in poetry; after Hugo came "Emaux et Cammées", and the intensity of the 'L'Art pour l'Art' movement, followed by the reactionary strictness of Parnassianism. Even here a conscious classicism could lead to poetry of the most exquisite fantasy and verbal expression, as in the case of Löuys' "Chansons de Bilitis", albeit a hoax to attempt to restore a little humanity and beauty to the academic concepts of the Académie Française. For example the poem "Bilitis" from the set chosen by Debussy for declamation with instruments, is indeed classical, yet moving towards a great consciousness of language beauty, rather, as one might say, moving towards 'Beauté pour la Beauté'.

Une femme s'enveloppe de laine blanche.
Une autre se vêt de soie et d'or.
Moi, je ne saurais que nue.
Mes cheveux sont noirs de leur noir et mes lèvres rouges de leur rouge. Mes boucles flottent autour de moi libres et rondes comme des plumes.

It is always difficult to define an artistic movement in clear terms, but I feel that Arnold Hauser has provided much worthwhile material in his discussions on symbolism, even though he is occasionally over-dogmatic and has a tendency for self-contradiction as a result of his seemingly impetuous forcefulness. In the final volume of his "Social History of Art" he says;

> "Symbolism represents, on the one hand, the final result of the development which began with romanticism, that is, with the discovery of metaphor as the germ-cell of poetry and which led to the richness of impressionistic imagery, but it not only disowns impressionism on account of its materialistic world-view and the Parnasse on account of its formalism and rationalism, it also disowns romanticism on account of its emotionalism and the conventionality of its emotional language. In certain respects symbolism can be considered the reaction against the whole of earlier poetry; it discovers something that had never been known or ever been emphasised before; 'poésie pure' - the poetry that arises from the irrational, non-conceptual spirit of language which is opposed to all logical interpretation. For symbolism, poetry is nothing but the expression of those relationships and correspondences, which language, left to itself, creates between the concrete and the abstract, the material and the ideal, and between the different spheres of the senses." [1]

It can be realised from this just how much of the sense of 'correspondence' and its expression in one form or another, is traceable back to Wagner.

He was, possibly quite uniquely, the only person who has ever effected such a tremendously wide and varied wave of artistic and individual expansion and creative freedom. Yet again, a paradox is evident in that Wagner's attempts to fuse the arts were in many ways trying to effect the impossible, but so vital and intoxicating was the effect of his personality upon the artists of an impressionist Europe who followed him, that as is usual in such a case of artistic evolution, the faults in the system were not noticed until the damage had been done musically, and the better results of his work already long since translated into the terms of a literary medium. The musical heritage of Wagner is quite another matter, and it would be foolish to disregard his influence, but once the fin-de-siecle considerations are forgotten then the fusion into the soi-disant conclusive music drama becomes a sad result of the mandrake's power and his squeaking is lost beneath the upsurging moves of new ideas.

Some clarification of this complex state of affairs may be effected through an appreciation of the existence of an artistic metamorphosis, which can frequently reconcile apparently contrary movements and restore them to their fundamentally common roots. For example, more than one writer has stated that Debussy's few exercises in the writing of dramatic music were nothing more than the shadowy negatives whose positive side was the grandly extrovert Bayreuth stage of Wagner. I find this superficially true only, as Debussy had far more musical personality and intellectual integrity than to allow himself to emerge as a mere foil to Wagner. Possibly some of the truth lies in the element of nationality, coupled

with the inevitable and resultant phenomenon of technically sure artistic reaction to an overwhelming force.

It is a curious fact that even after the Wagnerian 'purge' as it may be termed, the basic requirements of sonata form remained fixed firmly as part of man's artistic instincts and may possibly reflect some of the basic symbolic elements of Western religious tradition with its emphasis on a three-fold unity. Even Mallarmé, who sought to express himself in terms freed from any outside associations (insofar as this can ever be possible and artistically worthwhile), found this instinct for and dependence upon triple forms and their resultant expected logicality too strong to overcome except by artistic stagnation and a turning inward of the self until a conclusive silence emerges: (soon the wheel turns full circle until even aesthetic comment and criticism leads to John Cage's "Silence".)

A close consideration of the poem itself allows of two directly formal connotations which interact one upon the other and should be regarded as being poetically, formally and creatively interdependent.

These are:

a) The aspects of the poem's overall structure which approximate quite amazingly closely to the components of musical sonata form.

b) The devices of using (implying a choice both of primary material and its subsequent arrangement) small individual motives, which, like the tracery of Wagnerian operatic construction, link each small cell-unit to the ones preceding and following it in an organically built-up design.

Section.		Content.
Introduction.	1	Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer.
		Si clair,
	2	Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air
	3	Assoupi de sommeils touffus.
		Aimai-je un rêve?
	4	Mon doute, amas de nuit ancienne, s'achève
	5	En maint rameau subtil, qui, demeuré les vrais
	6	Bois mêmes, prouve, hélas! que bien seul je m'offrais
	7	Pour triomphe la faute idéale de roses.
	8	Réfléchissons...
Exposition.		ou si les femmes dont tu gloses
First Group.	9	Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux!
	10	Faune, l'illusion s'échappe des yeux bleus
	11	Et froids, comme une source en pleurs, de la plus chaste:
	12	Mais, l'autre tout soupirs, dis-tu quelle contraste
	13	Comme brise du jour chaude dans ta toison?
	14	Que non! par l'immobile et lasse pâmoison
	15	Suffoquant de chaleurs le matin frais s'il lutte,
	16	Ne murmure point d'eau que ne verse ma flûte
	17	Au bosquet arrosé d'accords; et le seul vent
	18	Hors des deux tuyaux prompt à s'exhaler avant
	19	Qu'il disperse le son dans une pluie aride,
	20	C'est, à l'horizon pas remué d'une ride,
	21	Le visible et serein souffle artificiel
	22	De l'inspiration, qui regagne le ciel.
Second Group.	23	O bords siciliens d'un calme marecage
	24	Qu'à l'envi de soleils ma vanité saccage,
	25	Tacite sous les fleurs d'étincelles, CONTEZ
	26	"Que je coupais ici les creux roseaux domptés
	27	"Par le talent; quand, sur l'or glauque de lointaines
	28	"Verdures dédiant leur vigne à des fontaines,
	29	"Ondoie une blancheur animale au repos:
	30	"Et qu'au prélude lent où naissent les pipeaux
	31	"Ce vol de cygnes, non! de naïades se sauve
	32	"Ou plonge..."

Codetta. Inerte, tout brûle dans l'heure fauve
Sans marquer par quel art ensemble détala
Trop d'hymen souhaité de qui cherche le la:
Alors m'éveillerai-je à la ferveur première,
Droit et seul, sous un flot antique de lumière,
Lys! et l'un de vous tous pour l'ingénuité.

Development stage one.

Autre que ce doux rien par leur lèvre ébruité,
Le baiser, qui tout bas des perfides assure,
Mon sein, vierge de preuve, atteste une morsure
Mystérieuse, due à quelque auguste dent;
Mais, bast! arcane tel élut pour confident
Le jonc vaste et jumeau dont sous l'azur on joue:
Qui, détournent à soi le trouble de la joue,
Rêve, dans un solo long, que nous amusions
La beauté d'alentour par des confusions
Fausses entre elle-même et notre chant crédule;
Et de faire aussi haut que l'amour se module
Evanouir du songe ordinaire des dos
Ou de flanc pur suivis avec mes regards clos
Une sonore, vaine et monotone ligne.

Development stage two.

Tâche donc, instrument de fuites, ô maligne
Syrinx, de refleurir aux lacs où tu m'attends!
Moi, de ma rumeur fier, je vais parler longtemps
Des déesses; et par d'idolâtres peintures,
A leur ombre enlever encore des ceintures:
Ainsi, quand des raisins j'ai sucé la clarté,
Pour bannir un regret par ma feinte ecarté,
Rieur, j'élève au ciel d'été la grappe vide
Et soufflant dans ses peaux lumineuses, avide
D'ivresse, jusqu'au soir je regarde au travers.

Recapitulation.

O nymphes, regonflons des SOUVENIRS divers,
"Mon oeil, trouant les joncs, dardait chaque encolore
"Immortelle, qui noie en l'onde sa brûlure
"Avec un cri de rage au ciel de la forêt;

66 "Et le splendide bain de cheveux disparaît
67 "Dans les clartés et les frissons, ô pierreries,
68 "J'accours; quand à mes pieds, s'entrejoignent (meurtries
69 "De la langueur goûtée à ce mal d'être deux)
70 "Des dormeuses parmi leur seuls bras hasardeux;
71 "Je les ravis, sans les désenlacer, et vole
72 "A ce massif, haï par l'ombrage frivole,
73 "De roses tarissant tout parfum au soleil,
74 "Où notre ébat au jour consumé soit pareil".

Interlude.

75 Je t'adore, courroux des vierges, ô délice
76 Farouche du sacré fardeau nu qui se glisse
77 Pour fuir ma lèvre en feu buvant, comme un éclair
78 Tressaille! la frayeur secrète de la chair:
79 Des pieds de l'inhumaine au coeur de la timide
80 Que délaisse à la fois une innocence, humide
81 De larmes folles ou de moins tristes vapeurs.

Episode.

82 "Mon crime, c'est d'avoir, gai de vaincre ces peurs
83 "Traîtresses, divisé la touffe échevelée
84 "De baisers que les dieux gardaient si bien mêlée:
85 "Car, à peine j'allais cacher un rire ardent
86 "Sous les replis heureux d'une seule (gardant
87 "Par un doigt simple, afin que sa candeur de plume
88 "Se teignît à l'émoi de sa soeur qui s'allume,
89 "La petite, naïve et ne rougissant pas:)
90 "Que de mes bras, défaits par de vagues trépas,
91 "Cette proie, à jamais ingrate se delivre
92 "Sans pitié du sanglot dont j'étais encore ivre".

Coda.

93 Tant pis! vers le bonheur d'autres m'entraîneront
94 Par leur tresse nouée aux cornes de mon front:
95 Tu sais, ma passion, que, pourpre et déjà mure,
96 Chaque grenade éclate et d'abeilles murmure;
97 Et notre sang, épris de qui le va saisir,
98 Coule pour tout l'essaim éternel du désir.

A l'heure où ce bois d'or et de cendres se teinte
Une fête s'exalte en la feuilée éteinte:
Etna! c'est parmi toi visité de Vénus
Sur ta lave posant ses talons ingénus,
Quand tonne un somme triste ou s'épuise la flamme.
a) Je tiens la reine!
b) O sûr châtiment....
c) Non, mais l'ame
De paroles vacante et ce corps alourdi
Tard succombent au fier silence de midi:
Sans plus il faut dormir en l'oubli du blasphème,
Sur le sable altéré gisant et comme j'aime
Ouvrir ma bouche à l'astre efficace des vins!

Couple, adieu; je vais voir l'ombre que tu devins.

This skeletal analysis of the poem can now be usefully expanded into a larger and more sophisticated version couched in deliberately musical terms. This should make clear the idea of metamorphosis and its relevance in a practical application of its theoretical reality. It becomes increasingly obvious however, that words are sadly inadequate for the purposes of fully accurate exposition of one's thoughts. The dilemma can be stated thus;

> "The link between expressionism and truth is very fragile. "No one", says Nietzsche, "has ever declared 'This is', but some later and more precise generation discovers that the words have the sense only of 'This means.'" Nietzsche does not protest against this. It has its place in the natural development of expressionism. If we remember that in expressing the universe, we are acting as a refractive and not a transparent medium, we can no more rely on our propositions than if they were estimates, or mere opinions. It follows that nothing we say is true in the strict sense of the word, which implies that truth is universal, that is, that it is the same for everyone. What we say is no more than an interpretation of what exists by actors who do not know the beginning of the play they are performing, and can only conjecture from their emotions what its outcome will be." [2]

I have chosen to place this quotation here, as not only does it express the discrepancy which must exist between thought and its external expression, whatever the medium chosen, but it also, by a fortuitous coincidence, involves us yet again in the question of time in art; time momentary and unconscious, even uncontrolled by formal boundaries; time

progressive in the sense of being controlled by our arbitrariness. I feel in close sympathy with Parain when he says that the most real and morally valid perception or appreciation of natural elements cannot be fully expressed by words as words, but a realisation of the content of such words must be entirely accepted. It is thus, through the superimposition on my part, of musical forms and associations, that Mallarmé succeeds in conveying more than is usually transmitted to us by less inspired technical syntheses of the poetic word order.

(The numbers in brackets refer to the line numbers)

1-8) Introduction.

The basic material is here; and is stated in a slow, careful manner, as one would maybe find in the slow introduction of a Haydn symphony. The girls are placed in the position of immediate impact, but their number is not stated and the strange apparent lack of perception of the passage of time, (or maybe he tries to establish from the very beginning that time is really beyond the control of man anyway) is illustrated through the material of the poem becoming instantly diffuse and adopting a series of extremely visual images. These are concerned fundamentally with the abstract ideas of a) a dream, and b) perfection as it appears through the physical symbolism of the rose (c.f. the ubiquitous and powerful manifestation of this same symbol in Yeats).

8½-22) The Exposition Proper.

First Group: The reality and physical number of the girls is now stated in a series of sequential thoughts following on his admonition "Réfléchissons".... but even now he reverts to a less actual train of thought and through the

images of water and air elements, he arrives at the basic idea of the poem which may be regarded as its metaphysical "raison d'ê̂tre", the concept of music's being even able to replace the sound and function of water so that it becomes, via the movement of the wind, a soothing intermediary to reach the sky in the conscious artifice of creative inspiration. Thus all the fullness of Mallarmé's poetic thought in this context is complete, and in a sense the entire aesthetic question of nature versus art is presented as a most beautiful allegory. To see this first group in musical terms, one could say that the single idea of presenting the girls in their native and very real environment is used merely as one might use canonic or variation form to express an idea beyond the limitations of technique in music, so that here in an analogous manner, the idealistic and poetic background serves merely as a verbal skeleton which Mallarmé has clothed with his own valuable philosophy.

23-32) Second Group: He links the two subjects skilfully...The natural setting of the first group attains a greater sense of reality to act as a flashback vision of an ancient mythical land, but again notice the emphatic interaction, after the well-pronounced "CONTEZ", of the music which evolves from the reeds of the river, and the appearance upon the same river, of the swan-like Naides.

32½-37) Codetta.

This, as in a comparative musical passage, is a relatively static section, but is important in its summarising of the faun's state of mind, symbolised by the opening image of a stifling heat interrupted only by the devious "art" of music. The actual literary effect of the words used in this section will be made evident later.

The physical length of each section of the exposition bears no little relation to that of analogous sections of a Sonata Exposition, although it is important to consider that the effect of each section upon one's memory will vary greatly according to the overall physical time and the rhythmic time of each in relation to itself as well as to the sections on either side. The final line of the Codetta is a piece of exquisitely balanced writing, conclusive and musical in a way that few poets ever reach or seem capable of perceiving. In comparative contexts such a line would be well worthy of Shakespeare, Milton or Yeats, and my choice here is not merely random.

38-51) Development. First Phase.

There are two expositional subjects to be developed, although it seems that they differ in their treatment and appreciation of time in a kind of dream-world switching of present and past rather than in any great variation of subject matter. This inevitably swings one's realisation of time within a literary if not a musical context, to the creeds of surrealism in which not only are separate ideas belonging to a higher immaterial order of things acknowledged and valued but they are allowed to exist with our material world and its comprehensible components in a state of simultaneous co-existence which state of course is bound to lead to a certain amount of artistic confusion until we understand how they are to be handled in the most practical and clearsighted way. The first phase of the development concerns the somewhat brutal and cynical development of the idea of the nymph's sexuality. Their kiss merely transports some of their perfidious-ness to the faun, who remains aloof, indicated by the symbol of his breast,

a virgin proof of his innocent spotless state. The fact that we are still enticed to believe in this state demands a certain amount of development, if only to dispel such an illusion! The reality of the reed becomes all-important and its presence over-rules the beauty of the girls. The logical movement of this section, from the opening

ce doux rien par leur lèvre ébruité

to the final

sonore, vaine et monotone ligne

gradually places all the emphasis from known animate objects to the aura of mystery which surrounds the wordless expressiveness of music. It is interesting at this juncture to notice what Andre Bréton, the originator of the term surrealism, said in regard to the power of music as an expressive or emotive force. There are "spiritual realizations" which

> "permit me to grant plastic expression an importance which I shall always deny to musical expression, which is the most profoundly confusing of all. In fact, auditory images are inferior to visual images not only in clarity but in precision and, with all due respect to some megalomaniacs, they do not serve to strengthen the idea of human grandeur. So may night continue to fall on the orchestra, and may I, who am still seeking something from the world, be left to my silent contemplation, with eyes open or closed in broad daylight". [3]

For the moment it is enough to say that such concepts of music not only seem to strengthen Wagner's pleas for artistic unity, but furthermore cross the chasm of the approach to the Twentieth Century and lead us into an almost

impossible intellectual dreamworld of artistic consciousness, in which no one independent art form can possibly suffice to satisfy the intellectual needs of contemporary man, and in which there is rather a need for a careful abandoning of accepted artistic representation in favour of some mental creation of the future, relying alone on individual and silent contemplation, which brings me back to the first glance at Mallarmé, in whom it is possible to see strong evidence of sterility due to a lack of directly physical creative power. In this first part of the development section of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" this idea of sterility is almost apparent in that his first appraisal of the girls could so easily become a pertinent human situation, yet he prefers to turn the movement towards something less tangible, the unaccountable monody of Pan-pipes. Maybe unaccountable is the wrong word here; what I am trying to say is that the inevitably monodic aspect of this music is such as to create very naturally, a desire for completion or fulfilment in a purely musical manner, which not being satisfied, arouses unwarranted feelings of psychological discomfort (c.f. the development of Greek music and the different psychological states inherent in the "colours" and "humours" of the ancient modes). In Mallarmé, this thread of monody becomes the real yet also symbolic element of contact between the faun and the nymphs whom he is actually playing off one against the other and himself against them both. From such a situation we can see that the idea of the Line, already broached in this study, again assumes a fundamental and many sided importance in relation to the movement of the poem. It could be either the musical line emanating from the pipes or else the physical and sensuous line formed by the shape of the prostrate girls. The last four lines of this section show also that these two possible meanings are capable

of being unified almost in the Wagnerian sense of effecting a desire for a fusion of "dance, tone and poetry."[4]

> Et de faire aussi haut que l'amour se module
> Evanouir du songe ordinaire de dos
> Ou de flanc pur suivis avec mes regards clos
> Une sonore, vaine et monotone ligne.

It is interesting to notice the use, however casual, of musical terminology when he speaks of the modulations of love from sexual pleasures to a profounder realisation of the sensual qualities of music, itself, in such a dream world context, a subtle and intellectual metamorphosis of human passion. Edward Lockspieser sees this process and expresses it most succinctly in Volume I of his recent study of Debussy, in which the Mallarmé chapter is extremely clearsighted in respect of the ambience of French symbolism and its equivalent of the literary aura of Art Nouveau.

> "Mallarmé attempts to trace the process in
> which desire first vanishes into the dream
> and is then transformed into music" [5]

52-56) <u>Development</u>. <u>Second Phase</u>.

Instead of a dreamy tracery of thoughts about the nymphs, this section expands the static ideas of the first phase and several important factors of poetic development emerge. One feels the presence of a more definite personality here, and the concept of a first person gives this section of the poem a real forward impetus, which has the vital technical function of increasing our interest and therefore of seeming to speed up the action and environmental progress of the poem. There is, however, a simple yet effective device by which Mallarmé links the first and second phases of the section. The former ends with the "monotone ligne", a highly symbolic,

almost allegorical object which is no more than a projection of one image, the girls, into another, the intangible moving line of melody, by a most subtle and beautiful process of metamorphosis. The latter opens with a most decisive appeal to the flute, here termed "Syrinx", which somehow, to me, has a certain ritualistic, if not directly religious connotation. If I may add a purely personal comment here, I should like to say that when I first read this passage and made marginal notes, it seemed somehow difficult to realise that it had not been written by Debussy himself. I don't mean to imply either that the unconscious mistaking of character was brought about by any connection between Mallarmé's and Debussy's separate conception of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", nor really by any consideration of Debussy's "Syrinx", composed in fact, in original intention for Gabriel Mourey's play "Psyché", and first known by the title "Flûte de Pan", but rather through the peculiar all-embracing ambience of Pre-Raphaelitism which I have had cause to mention several times before. It is possibly an artificial and almost psychic sensation, yet characteristic of an age which could produce the similarly artificial yet none the less valid and very appealing poetic work of Pierre Lŏuys. This sensation, so nearly religious in the purest sense of the word, is evident in this short passage of development, if only through various examples of association of ideas. For example, I have already commented on the quasi-religious meaning behind the word Syrinx; this feeling is enhanced by Mallarmé's description of the girls as "des déesses". An automatic link with the world of art comes to mind too, at the lines,

> Tâche donc, instrument des fuites, ô maligne
> Syrinx, de refleurir aux lacs où tu m'attends!

This brings to mind the William Blake picture of Lucifer rising from the burning lake and all the dreadful implications of evil contained therein.

57-61) Development. Third Phase.

This is a final short episode which introduces the idea of the faun enjoying his hedonistic life to the point of a pleasureable intoxication. The visually sexual impression of this section is very strong, recalling directly as I have perhaps previously hinted, the erotic overtones of so much Art Nouveau line and colour and of the natural objects depicted so sensually by Frank Brangwyn. There is a tremendously broad sense of space at the end of this passage where he says,

> Rieur j'élève au ciel d'été la grappe vide
> Et, soufflant dans ses peaux lumineuses, avide
> D'ivresse jusqu'au soir je regarde au travers.

This state of drunkenness is a state far more positive than that of an unjustifiable dreaminess which previously had seemed to fill the faun's whole existence, and it is because of such a passage that I feel it not to be too much of an anomaly to discuss the flow of the poem in musical, i.e. relatively dramatic terms. This is naturally rather an inaccurate way of expressing the build up and movement of tension within either a poetic or a musical context, simply due to the fact that words are so inadequate a means of communicating one's ideas on abstract art forms. Nevertheless, there is ample and good evidence for seeing musical progress and meaning in the light of literary dramatic action and its presentation and therefore its raison d'etre, insofar as, leaving aside the numerous attempts to prove relationships between Greek drama and early opera, or Shakespearian drama and the romantic programme, or even non-programmatic symphony, etc, both media in some respects are merely striving to impose the disciplines of art

upon nature, and result in giving us greater understanding of the weakness and strengths of the human condition.

What I have termed the Recapitulation of the poem can be dealt with, at this stage, much more briefly. The ideas of formal structure already mentioned are enough to give the reader an idea of how I have likened the poem's lay-out to that of a hypothetical but neat and interesting sonata form, and as one would expect of a musical counterpart, the recapitulation here follows closely the relative paths of the exposition. I should like to make a comment here which is not out of place in view of my previous remarks concerning the dramatic potential and effect of music. It is too easy to say, as so many critics and teachers do, that such and such a part of musical recapitulation corresponds to a comparative part of the exposition. This, in all respects, seems to me to be an over-simplification because the word recapitulation embraces a great deal of aural and emotional experience, emanating from the events, and their temporal measurement, and resultant psychological changes in our appreciation, of the intervening development section. At the risk of offending several widely respected teachers of the new school in England at the present, and I here carefully exclude those whose coverage of musical history is consciously geared to one or two isolated items of musical evolution, I would say that to teach young people or even musically unsophisticated adults the close connection between modal (pre-harmonic or horizontal music) and the linear modern, not just contemporary music (post-Debussy and post-Webern) of the present century is foolishly narrowsighted unless one is prepared to admit the obvious influences of all the music of the intervening period. Fair enough, one may dislike the thought and shape of Beethoven (how rarely one

meets any opposition to Mozart despite his frequently formal adherence to the 'politesses' of a decadent society!), or loathe the 'amour-propre' of the great Romantics, but one can never simply say "I will not take them into consideration because I despise their aesthetic/literary leanings/use of form, or whatever it may be". (To paraphrase...It's fashionable, but is it art?.....)

62-110) Recapitulation.

This falls into four distinct processes, covering the lines 62-74; 75-81; 82-92; and the Coda 93-110.

62-74. This is nothing more than a narrative prolongation of his past reminiscences, in which the personal and sexual consequences of the duality of the nymphs is brought out much more sharply than before, if only because of the extended repetition of the physical state which owes its forœ here to the fact of being strengthened by one's memory and associative powers. The sexual climax, albeit one of fantasy and wishful thinking, to put it at its lowest level, is thwarted again, and it is this unfortunate consequence of the poem (seen as a unit) which partly led me in the first place to see the poem as a work one of whose primary themes was the existence of a frighteningly frustrating sterility in a world where there could be so much happy fruition, be it of ideological or emotional fulfilment.

75-81. This recapitulatory interlude, in which the stresses and dramatic involvements induced by the presence of the reed are completely forgotten, is concerned with a further comment on the female duality which haunts and upsets the faun. Here the accent is on the rest and calm following the

desired but only imagined climax of the previous section; the highly imaginative writing well lays before us the terrific sensual and physical strain he feels because of the heavy burden that this sexuality has come to signify to his tired mind:

...du sacre fardeau nu qui se glisse
Pour fuir ma lèvre en feu buvant....

Again, the final line of the section is very movingly phrased when he speaks of the two-fold innocence of the girls; to him it is an innocence,

.....humide
De larmes folles ou de moins tristes vapeurs.

82-92. An episode which largely summarises the meanings of the development section and is therefore in some respects, taking all the dramatic implications of sonata form into consideration, one of the apexes of the whole poem. His fear and realisation of his extreme sensuality has turned into the reality of sin and one feels that the structure of the poem is about to collapse just as the empty grape skins are first puffed up and then vanish into a nothingness that cannot be avoided. The entire desires of the faun are also here summarised and the philosophical importance of the duality of temperament arising from the foregoing arguments appears in almost Bergsonian terms, in the important contrast between the "rire ardent" and the "sanglot dont j'étais ivre".

93-110. Coda.

This is possibly the major part of the poem, not merely because it resolves and therefore relaxes all the physical and mental tension which has been steadily building up since the initial desire "Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer", and thus concludes and rather simply synthesises the past

events, but because of its intrinsic construction. There is yet a further disappointed climax of sexual desire; the vision of a boundless land expands the physical location, and the unexpected and strikingly effective self-admonition

..... O sûr châtiment .....

adds a dimension of foresight which makes the final sleep and casual farewell to the nymphs so completely inevitable and because this is such a great piece of writing, so desperately sad.

Couple, adieu; je vais voir l'ombre que tu devins.

How better to leave this and lead into a more poetic and detailed description both of the poem's amazing technical qualities and its universality than by recalling the momentous words of Prospero? (It is interesting to note that here Shakespeare was highly preoccupied with the ubiquity of the dream world in our mental life).

..... These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a wrack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

(Tempest. 4.1. 148-158.)

CHAPTER SIX.

MALLARME'S "L'APRES-MIDI D'UN FAUNE" WITH FULL COMMENTARY.

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

The underlined words are those which merit the chief comment in the following notes.

1-7 The reading time is slow and languorous, and is constantly enhanced by the beauty of the words.

1 Instead of "je veux les perpétuer", the word order is reversed to emphasise the importance of the nymphs, whose nature may be analogous to that of earth or water. The word "perpétuer" can signify either human physical unity or a spiritual defiance of God.

2-3 Well contrasted in speed, assonance and general effect with the cooler atmosphere of lines 4-5½. The dual implications of heat and the texture of feathers are both realised later. The tense of "Aimai-je" questions temporal reality and links it with the dream-world as a possible type of existence.

4-7 The idea is given of his subjective feelings having will and personality; this enhanced by the word "subtil" in line 5. Note the poet's genius in linking "Mon doute" with "nuit ancienne" to result in a reality of the ethos of trees.

6 Effective use made of a medial break, and the imperfect tense of "offrais" in comparison with the tense in line 3.

6-7 The structure is so varied as to sound almost like poetic prose. In "faute ideale" we are aware of a tremendous arrogance towards a perfection seen entirely in terms of the achievement of selfish desires. (c.f. the humility of Yeats' approach to the problem in the same terms in "The Secret Rose", and again the use of the symbol of the rose.)

8a) Réfléchissons...
b) ou si les femmes dont tu gloses
9 Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux!
10 Faune, l'illusion s'échappe des yeux bleus
11 Et froids, comme une source en pleurs, de la plus chaste:
12 Mais, l'autre, tout soupirs, dis-tu qu'elle contraste
13 Comme brise du jour chaude dans ta toison ?

8a This is one of the key words of the poem, and is important in constituting a reversal to "le temps perdu"; it is also one of the structural components which lend strength to the overall shape.

8b A calculated casualness between the poetic sections seems to be implied here, almost foreshadowing Apollinaire's practices, and here indicates a dream-like awareness of the levels of reality.

9-10 A growing awareness of a creative imagination is fostered by the words "souhait" (aptly translated by McIntyre as "itching" !) and "illusion", which speed up the reading time somewhat. Compare line 9 with line 35 which further the completely anti-intellectual mind of the faun.

10 His addressing of himself emphasises his own duality, soon to be given more concrete actuality through the analogy with the nymphs' dual natures.

10½-11 The euphony of the words is altered by the introduction of expressive sibilants, continued in lines 12 and 13.

11-12 Here is possibly the first appearance of a Martha/Mary opposition between the nymphs, which also further establishes the faun's own dual nature within the present context of an almost a-temporal, non-progressive static experience.

13 The word "brise" can have, according to F.A.C.Lucas, almost masculine connotations, and here contrasts with the word "source" in line 11.

14 Que non ! par l'immobile et lasse pâmoison
15 Suffoquant de chaleurs le matin frais s'il lutte,
16 Ne murmure point d'eau que ne verse ma flûte
17 Au bosquet arrosé d'accords; et le seul vent
18 Hors des deux tuyaux prompt à s'exhaler avant
19 Qu'il disperse le son dans une pluie aride,
20 C'est, à l'horizon pas remué d'une ride,
21 Le visible et serein souffle artificiel
22 De l'inspiration, qui regagne le ciel.

14-22 This epitomises the First Group, which resolves, as does the whole poem in some measure, round the final couplet, whose assonance and majesty is quite Shakespearean. The idea that perfection, because of its human conception, must involve itself in artificial elements, can be successfully translated into a musical analogy through the use of modality in Ravel and Debussy. The problem of the faun's existence resolves itself into a mandala structure around the nature/music symbolism of the poem, in which the Christian implications are found, and strongly questioned as to their relevance or even their truth.

14 After the rhythmic break, lines 14-17, emphasised by my parentheses, show the importance of sound for sound's sake, regardless of formal necessities, and initiated by the underlined key-words, which suggest fainting, or sterility due to unfulfilment and weakness.

15 Possible hint of the element of fight, and the consequences of this couched in beautiful and contrasted language, with the words "chaleurs" and "frais".

16-22 Note the propensity for short words at the beginning of each line which speed up the reading time further and focus our attention on the slightly slower and very graceful final two lines of the section.

18 The two reeds signify a duality again, here in the potential music which links both nature and eventually, the faun's creative imagination.

20 The use of the word "ride" suggests or prophecies a terrifyingly blank landscape reminiscent of the paintings of Dali?

23 O bords siciliens d'un calme marécage
24 Qu'à l'envi des soleils ma vanité saccage,
25 Tacite sous les fleurs d'étincelles, CONTEZ
26 "Que je coupais ici les creux roseaux domptés
27 "Par le talent; quand, sur l'or glauque de lointaines
28 "Verdures dédiant leur vigne à des fontaines,
29 "Ondoie une blancheur animale au repos:

23-24 A slightly more objective atmosphere is introduced with the sense of a new location, which could be compared with Christian ideas of newness implying unspoilt perfection. The careful phraseology is, however, comparable in some ways with that of René Char with its rather improbably expressed extension of the universe.

25 "Tacite" appears to be much stronger than would have been, for example, "Silent". "CONTEZ", heightened by being capitalised, spans the gulf between an isolated time-context and a definite sense of temporal passing, and acts as one of the chief architectonic elements of the poem. Like "Réfléchissons", it constitutes a flashback to recorded time.

26-27 "domptés/Par le talent" signifies further the faun's self-assurance and the emphasis on human capabilities.

28 This line is unusually full of excellent examples of alliteration and assonance, leading rather sensuously to the delicate fleshliness of the next line.

30 "Et qu'au prélude lent où naissent les pipeaux
31 "Ce vol de cygnes, non ! de naïades se sauve
32a) "Ou plonge..."
b) Inerte, tout brûle dans l'heure fauve
33 Sans marquer par quel art ensemble détala
34 Trop d'hymen souhaité de qui cherche le la :
35 Alors m'éveillerai-je à la ferveur première,
36 Droit et seul, sous un flot antique de lumière,
37 Lys! et l'un de vous tous pour l'ingénuité.

23-32a (see previous page) This section involves a strong contrast of the elements of fire and water which may represent the struggle between the sexes in this gradual unfolding of opposed personalities

30-32 This presents the idea that music alone can instil active intelligent life into the nymphs, who were formerly of merely animal quality, but conversely, there is also a need for this animality which may give impetus to the birth of the 'pan-pipes'. A circular pattern of symbols again thus emerges.

32b The imagery here is wonderfully heightened by the use of "Inerte", which forms a static climax, and reinforces the theory that to Mallarmé the culmination of sexuality could only be death, whether real, imagined or symbolic.

34 The marriage wish implies a search for perfection, even though erotically infused.

35-36 In Christian terms, this could be a "new Heaven and a new Earth".

37 The isolation of the word "lys" is, within this extremely French French poem, an event many times weighted with significance. It is idiomatic of greatness, as is the expression seen in line 34, "chercher le la." (This does not refer to the Aeolian mode although this is a superficial possibility). In both Christian and Gallic national terminology the lily implies the invincible strength of absolute purity.

38 Autre que ce doux rien par leur lèvre ebruité,
39 Le baiser, qui tout bas des perfides assure,
40 Mon sein, vierge de preuve, atteste une morsure
41 Mystérieuse, due à quelque auguste dent;
42 Mais, bast! arcane tel élut pour confident
43 Le jonc vaste et jumeau dont sous l'azure on joue:
44 Qui, détournant à soi le trouble de la joue
45 Rêve, dans un solo long, que nous amusions
46 La beauté d'alentour pas des confusions
47 Fausses entre elle-même et notre chant credule;

38-39 The differentiation between the two nymphs is forgotten here, as there is some doubt as to the quantative implication of "leur lèvre"; this raises the problem of the faun's nature as well as that of the nymphs'.

40 With our knowledge of the faun's sensuality, surely the word "vierge" is a strange paradox here?

41-42 Like Adam, the faun is tempted, but the symbolic bite is here much more of a personal physical revelation.

44 "Trouble" imparts quasi-human attributes of emotion to an unreasoning part of an animated object.

46-47 This is perhaps a deliberate attempt to deceive the nymphs.

47 The rhythm of "notre chant credule" has a Shakespearean tinge of nobility and grandeur.

48 Et de faire aussi haut que l'amour se module
49 Evanouir du songe ordinaire de dos
50 Ou de flanc pur suivis avec mes regards clos,
51 Une sonore, vaine, et monotone ligne.
52 Tache donc, instrument des fuites, ô maligne
53 Syrinx, de refleurir aux lacs où tu m'attends!

---

48 "Se module" could mean a musical modulation, in metaphorical terms, or a transmutation from sexual love to a sensual delight in music.

49 There is a strong contrast between "évanouir" and "ordinaire".

50-51 Most interestingly, "vaine" can mean "fruitless, ineffectual, empty, shadowy." (Cassell.) Here music and the female form are finally equated; thus, "music is the female, destined to bring forth." (Wagner.) The mood here seems to relate to that of Baudelaire:

> Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,
> Luxe, calme et volupté.

38-51 (See previous page) There is no real contrast at all here of fire and water.

52-53 The ethos of music becomes that of the flute. Compare the notes on this in Lockspieser's study and also in "The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy" by William Gaunt; also important is the relationship of the flute via the Shepherd in both "Tristan und Isolde" and "Pelléas et Mélisande".

54 Moi, de ma rumeur fier, je vais parler longtemps
55 Des déesses; et par d'idolâtres peintures,
56 A leur ombre enlever encore des ceintures:
57 Ainsi, quand des raisins j'ai sucé la clarté,
58 Pour bannir un regret par ma feint écarté,
59 Rieur, j'élève au ciel d'été la grappe vide
60 Et soufflant dans ces peaux lumineuses, avide
61 D'ivresse, jusqu'au soir je regarde au travers.

52-61 (See previous page) This episode concerns the unifying and at the same time self-perpetuatingly circular influence of music in the poem.

54 "Rumeur" is more effective than "bruit" would be. Instead of "je parlerai", he uses a tense which implies more power and resolution.

55 Here is the implication of pre-Christian, pagan, ritual and its effects.

56 This line contains an interesting sense of speed and stress resulting from the use of vowels at the beginning of words.

58 Another slow line, which itself almost constitutes a real break.

59-61 A sense of extreme eroticism and love of sensuality pervades these lines. The rhyme-scheme "vide/avide" and the following "D'ivresse" constantly pushes the pattern and meaning forward to the implication of approaching death. A strongly perceptive use of language seems to equate drunkenness and death rather subtly.

62 O nymphs, regonflons des SOUVENIRS divers.
63 "Mon oeil, trouant les joncs, dardait chaque encolore
64 "Immortelle, qui noie en l'onde sa brûlure
65 "Avec un cri de rage au ciel de la forêt;
66 "Et le splendide bain de cheveux disparaît
67 "Dans les clartés et les frissons, ô pierreries !
68 "J'accours; quand, à mes pieds, s'entrejoignent (meutries
69 "De la langueur goutée à ce mal d'être deux)
70 "Des dormeuses parmi leur seuls bras hasardeux;

62-64 The importance of memories is stressed; there is a metamorphosis of "maint rameau subtil" of the "nuit ancienne" into "un cri de rage au ciel de la forêt." There is a gradual relaxing and resolving of the earlier tensions, yet the basic 'mode', as it were, has not changed. The importance of the overall dream-aspect is more apparent.

62-67 The shorter words of this section amplify the bright pastoral, yet surrealist and refined imagery, which is rather Maeterlinckian in its exposition of a very physical physicality. In lines 65 and 66 the imagery is almost Freudian in its sexual overtones.

68-70 The faun's duality made more evident by the clear division of sexual acknowledgement and sensual consciousness existing, in a rather immoral manner (c.f. Lockspieser both on this poem and Debussy's "Jeux") between the nymphs. The imagery and thought behind Apollinaire's unrestful "Clair de lune" seems extremely close to the thought of Mallarme at this point.

71 "Je les ravis, sans les desenlacer, et vole
72 "A ce massif, haï par l'ombrage frivole,
73 "De roses tarissant tout parfum au soleil,
74 "Ou notre ébat au jour consumé soit pareil."
75 Je t'adore, courroux des vierges, ô délice
76 Farouche du sacre fardeau nu qui se glisse
77 Pour fuir ma lèvre en feu buvant, comme un éclair
78 Tressaille ! la frayeur secrète de la chair:

---

72 A seeming imputation (albeit artistically absurd) of life in something quite inorganic.

73-74 There is a conscious move forward and possibly the whole meaning and ethos of the poem is contained in line 74, in which the faun's entire achievement is laid out; a mere squandering of time, despite the image of the rose in line 73. (c.f. this usage in lines 7 and 24.) "Tarissant" is an important word when considered in relation to lines 14, 21, 29, 49, 51, 60, 61, 68 and 69.

75-78 The climax of the previous four lines gives way now to poetic and sensual relaxation and abandonment. There is a strong emphasis on the alliterative effect of the letters 'd' and 'f', resulting in a slow and dreamy sonority. The idea of flight is seen in the use of the word "lutter". The last line is a sudden climax to a mounting assurance, almost like the flash of love which he has, however, lost. "la frayeur secrète de la chair:", is a highly charged statement stressing the instability of humanity, almost as in the candidness of Baudelaire in "Correspondances", where he speaks so poignantly of "les chairs d'enfants." This type of expression could represent a fear of self-annihilation.

79 Des pieds de l'inhumaine au coeur de la timide
80 Que délaisses à la fois une innocence, humide
81 De larmes folles ou de moins tristes vapeurs.
82 "Mon crime, c'est d'avoir, gai de vaincre ces peurs
83 "Traîtresses, divise la touffe échevelée
84 "De baisers que les dieux gardaient si bien mêlée:
85 "Car, à la peine j'allais cacher un rire ardent
86 "Sous les replis heureux d'une seul (gardant
87 "Par un doigt simple, afin que sa candeur de plume

---

79 This seems to emphasise the Martha/Mary concept again.

80-81 The slow sibilants lead up to the sudden isolated word "humide", in which the two elements of fire and water are fused together, and then beautifully and provocatively extended.

82 "Gai" is more comprehensive a word here, as is the rather sarcastic use of the word "joli" in Apollinaire's "Les Colchiques" (c.f. Chapter Twelve.)

83 This line possibly reveals what the faun regards as the cause of his sin although the last two words remain firmly within the overall shadowy and therefore unreal context of the poem.

85-86 If he tries to distinguish between the girls his downfall will only be the quicker. "replis" can mean literally flesh, or, more abstrusely, the hiding places of the heart. Laughter is here almost Bergsonian, and approximates to its extreme form, hysteria, representing relief at the end of pain.

"Se teignît à l'émoi de sa soeur qui s'allume,
"La petite, naïve et ne rougissant pas:)
"Que de mes bras, défaits par de vagues trépas,
"Cette proie, à jamais ingrate se délivre
"Sans pitié du sanglot dont j'étais encore ivre."
Tant pis! vers le bonheur d'autres m'entraîneront
Par leur tresse nouée aux cornes de mon front:
Tu sais, ma passion, que, poupre et déjà mure,
Chaque grenade éclate et d'abeilles murmure:

---

88 "allume" is perhaps less strong than "brûler" would have been.

89-91 This synthesises the faun's complete annihilation into the dream-death of sensual satisfaction, or rather the idealistic search for it. His sin is his unreality, a moral progression from the earlier less profound escape from the illusion of a less thoughtful reality, as in lines 8½-12, here explained as the difference between appearance and reality.

93-94 After the break we are presented with the symbol of physical unity which is imagined to exist between the faun and the nymphs.

95 He addresses his other self, c.f. line 57.

96 The word "abeilles" has a certain soothing significance especially if regarded within a Christian context.

97 Et notre sang, épris de qui le va saisir,
98 Coule pour tout l'essaim éternel du désir.
99 A l'heure où ce bois d'or et de cendres se teinte
100 Une fête s'exalte en la feuillée éteinte:
101 Etna ! c'est parmi toi visité de Vénus
102 Sur ta lave posant ses talons ingénus,
103 Quand tonne un somme triste ou s'épuise la flamme.

97-98 A linking of impossibilities is here focused onto the hedonistic outlook and personality of the faun. After the imagery of line 96, the word "essaim" is especially propitious. The construction of the latter part of line 97 compares exactly with line 1 in its stresses caused by an inverted accentuation. The symbolism of these two lines could relate to an overall idea of fertility, and more specifically, is reminiscent of the idea of Pandora's box.

99-100 The careful use of language here results in the verbal opposition of line 100.

101 This line could represent the climax of the use of fire imagery in the poem. (c.f. also Baudelaire's preoccupation with Venus.)

102 Compare this image with that in line 38.

103 Like "lys", "flamme" is a word weighted with symbolisms, and could here almost approximate to the life-power meaning as is found in a writer like D.H.Lawrence.

104a) Je tiens la reine !
b) o sûr châtiment...
c) Non, mais l'âme
105 De paroles vacante et ce corps alourdi
106 Tard succombent au fier silence de midi:
107 Sans plus il faut dormir en l'oubli du blasphème,
108 Sur le sable alteré gisant et comme j'aime
109 Ouvrir ma bouche à l'astre efficace des vins !
110 Couple, adieu; je vais voir l'ombre que tu devins.

104b) This sudden and isolated sentiment or realisation is perhaps prophetic of the style of "Un Coup de Dés."

104c-106 Even at this stage the faun tries to convince himself that his punishment is undeserved. There is however, a more hopeful return to the light of day, after a night of self-hatred.

107 He now acknowledges his fault in consciously religious terms, even though he at the same time tries to banish his conscience in sleep.

108 Sand, in Christian terminology, represents an always unstable substance, and is here symbolically important for this reason.

109 The power of the word "efficace" represents the finality of the water imagery throughout the poem, in this vivid alliance of astrological and Bacchic ideas.

110 Here is the final reversal to immorality, at the same time preserving a sense of a future mental effort and consideration to effect a solution to his, (and all the world's) problems. The word "ombre" symbolises a neutrality of concept, as it is neither fire, water, nor music. The fragmentary reference to the opening effects a certain amount of overall symmetry, and allows for the development of the poem to change one's own 'harmonic' and patterned focus during the progress of the 110 lines involved.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

"Il semble donc que, avec l'art de Gabriel Fauré, le système tonal ait reçu ses suprèmes élargissements, et que les compositeurs venant après lui n'aient plus qu'à rompre avec ce système et chercher autre chose. Mais renoncer au support de ce grand "acte de cadence" - véritable "canevas" sur lequel ont été tramées toutes les oeuvres depuis plus de deux siècles - c'est remettre en question les bases mêmes du language musical et recréer celui-ci pièce par pièce! Tâche ardue et delicate, qui sera l'oeuvre de grands createurs au XX^e siecle et dans laquelle Claude Debussy jouera un rôle capital."

Françoise Gervais.

Six songs by Gabriel Fauré, showing the breadth of his musical imagination in setting words covering a wide range of emotion and poetic vision.

(1) "Mai" - to words by Victor Hugo.

(2) "A Clymène" - to words by Paul Verlaine.

(3) "Paradis" - the first song in the cycle "La Chanson d'Eve" - to words by Charles van Lerberghe.

(4) "Spleen" - to words by Paul Verlaine. Instanced as an interesting poetic contrast to Baudelaire's poems of this title, and as a musical contrast to Debussy's Verlaine setting in "Ariettes Oubliées", as is:

(5) "C'est L'extase" - to words by Paul Verlaine.

(6) "Clair de Lune" - to words by Paul Verlaine. One of the most famous and frequently set French poems of this period, and in itself a work of great beauty and evocative power.

Mai - by Gabriel Fauré - words by Victor Hugo .

1865

Before embarking upon any comment of Fauré's later songs, several of which are reasonably well known to the recital going public, or to the student of the history of song, I feel that a slight consideration of this early work might be unexpectedly fruitful in the light of the quotation which prefaces this chapter. Like the songs of Chabrier, this is still firmly rooted in the traditions of the nineteenth century drawing-room ballade style. The introverted anguish of the Pre-Raphaelites is missing from the poem, which is merely a delightful paean to Spring and the thoughts of love which it inspires, approaching in its implicit metaphor and its delicate use of sonorous language, the early poems of the Symbolist period.

The music looks deceptively simple, however, and in fact betrays this evolutionary break with tonality of which Françoise Gervais speaks. It will be apparent to anyone who has studied Fauré's songs at all closely, that he relies consistently upon very few basic musical pattersn for his word-setting, being even highly predictable as to the metric and notational shapes he favours for certain overall forms and moods, this latter quality being of very great importance in his work and always immediately related to the type of language, that is, to the technical effects and purposes of a poem, rather than to the "interieur" or purely subjective meaning of the words. The words throughout, therefore, are subjugated to the symmetrical demands of the music, although their smooth insistence on the subtlety of their vowel sounds is not ignored, and is indeed, given a most

thoughtful and expressive treatment. Take, for example, the first half of stanza one:

> Puisque Mai tout en fleurs dans les prés nous réclame,
> Viens, ne te lasse pas de mêler à ton âme.
> La campagne, les bois, les ombrages charmants,
> Les larges clairs de lune au bord des flots dormants.

How this is set can be seen in Example One, Appendix Two, where the initial rhythmic stress in each bar is carefully and gracefully offset by the form of the accompanying figure of the keyboard texture. It is at this stage of study that I feel that the difficulty of assigning this work to any particular basis of harmonic theory arises. Is the steadily moving bass the criterion for the harmonic implications of the upper surfaces of the song, or does the melody itself rule the progression of the harmonic movement resulting from its leadership? I think that the answer is to be found at two places. Firstly, the eight recapitulatory bars at the end of each stanza are evidence that Faure felt no compunction in altering in a basic and affective manner, the tonal centre of his opening bars whilst retaining a direct repetition of his melodic line (Example Two). Here the emotional result is the most important, because although the listener is aware of a fundamental divergence, caused through the differing timbres of the new tonality of E minor, as much as by the tonality itself, there is still a feeling of the strongest and most obvious logicality, which after all should be an outstanding qualification for the 'rightness' of a piece of art, whatever its medium. Incidentally, the one weakness of the song is maybe to be found here at the setting of the syllable "eux" of the word "joyeux", because although its primary function as a chromatic mediant in the key of E minor is effective here, all the more so as it follows the diatonic

version of itself without warning or preparation, the strength of the B flat is immediately weakened in the following bar where it reappears enharmonically as A sharp, the root of a leading-note seventh in B minor, after a strong A major chord with its seventh on the words "une levre" which at first seem to prepare for a cadence in D major.

The second example which seems to point out Faure's intentions as to the free, in fact almost tonally disconnected, although not non-functional in the Debussyian sense, use of harmonic implications within a relatively tight framework occurs in the central, or B section of each stanza, where the continuation of the melody is followed not by a B flat major chord, as one's contemporary experience would perhaps lead one to expect automatically, but instead by a tonic minor chord which heightens the tension and increases one's expectation of what might follow. A feeling of breadth and airiness is given to this section by the movement of the lowest part of the accompaniment (see Example Three), in which the whole bar-length pedal is reduced by half and the stepwise earlier movement of the bass is altogether forgotten at first, this part being allowed, (rather unacademically but most beautifully !) to rise a perfect fifth in imitation of the vocal line.

These are just a few of the points which make this song so unified and effective: more pertinently still, however, it is a fine example of the approach to Debussy's free-ranging contrapuntal concept of tonality and texture, of which a linear analysis absolves many of the difficulties raised through a purely vertical approach.

A Clymène - by Gabriel Fauré - words by Paul Verlaine.

1890

The transformation of spiritual mood from the early "Mai" to this opus 58 piece, which came after the thoughtful and precise statements of the opus 48 "Requiem," is quite startling. The differences between human and divine awareness and characteristics are becoming less and less in Fauré's mind, and he may well have chosen to set Verlaine's brilliantly conceived poem with this very almost ethical ideal before him. The euphony of the words is amazingly strong, and for Verlaine, is reminiscent of some of Mallarmé's imagery, although the brevity of the lines belongs entirely to Verlaine.

Mystique barcarolles -	a
Romance sans paroles -	a
Chère -	(b)
Puisque tes yeux	b
Couleur des cieux	b
Puisque ta voix etrange	c
Vision qui dérange -	c
Et trouble l'horizon	d
De ma raison -	d
Puisque l'arôme insigne	e
De ta pâleur de cygne	e
Et puisque la candeur	f
De ton odeur.	f
Ah ! pour que tout ton être	g
Musique qui penètre	g
Nimbes d'anges défunts	h
Tons et parfums	h
Asur d'almes cadences	i
En ses correspondances	i
Induit mon coeur subtil -	j
Ainsi soit-il !	j

These short couplets, like those of a Mediaeval poem, create the appearance of a considerable formality, which is soon dispelled, as in Mallarmé's "Igitur", where aural, if not visual, similarities of assonance and rhyming

patterns appear: "plus- plu;" "l'heure- le heurt" etc.[1] This conception of new sound patterns and relationships has some analogy with that of the "meta-language" of "Un Coup de Dés" of Mallarmé's maturity, and introduces us to a spatial recognition of sound values in language which is, of course, of pre-eminent importance in such a poem as "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune".

The evocative power of the poem is obtained largely though very simply through the three-fold repetition of the word "puisque", which, at each stage of its appearance, leads to a flowing and colourful series of images, whose associative linking of natural beauty with that of the poet's beloved rises easily to the climatic "Ah!" and the conclusive extremely imaginative symbolism, culminating in the final categorical and all-embracing "Ainsi soit-il !"

The musical solution to Verlaine's problem of expressing his faith is highly subtle. Again Fauré has chosen a particular pattern of melodic formation which is exactly right for the sound and speed of the words he is setting. His rocking melody, set out in a compound triple metre, creates a hypnotic motion which is certainly right in this context, and which seems so inevitable as if it were itself a musical expression of "Ainsi soit-il". It may be interesting and perhaps valid at this point to remember that in the Middle Ages the most perfect musical symbol was that which signified the circular and therefore unbroken or uninterrupted shape of perfection. The symbol for duple rhythm of some kind even today is C; that is, a broken circle implying imperfection or something which is inconclusive. Faure somewhat curiously uses this C metre in the central part of his song, although his four beats are each subdivided into three (triplet) quavers, which follow easily from the foregoing $\frac{9}{8}$ movement without any apparent

change of basic rhythmic flow. He seems to assume the guise of an illustrative philosopher here, because he sets

(Puisque ta) voix etrange
Vision qui dérange -
Et trouble l'hori(zon).....

in this C/$\frac{12}{8}$ metre, reverting to his original triple time for the words "ma raison".

The tonal centre of the song is sometimes so indeterminate as to appear to transcend its own environment, and even some of the implications of Debussy'd chordal structures. Modality would be a more appropriate term, as indeed is the case in many of Faure's songs, although the most obvious one of all, "Lydia", supposedly in the Lydian mode, has been refuted on this basis very forcibly by Jacques Chailly,[2] and surely the modulatory and chromatic implications of this song place it quite firmly within the bounds of modern tonality? In "A Clymène" the tonality/modality is basically of transposed Dorian, although one cannot be dogmatic about this as the primary centre soon makes way for harmonic excursions of surprising stress in relation to the central rhythms.

The long drawn-out vocal apex points are conceived in close relationship with the upper surface of the accompaniment, which sometimes (Example Four) form a continuous line with it, in the style of the Romantic Schumannesque Lied, and sometimes contrast sharply with it as regards timbre and tonality, although at such points (Example Five) the slow melisma-like form of the vocal line eventually rests at a tonal area with the accompaniment where the tensions are momentarily relaxed. The overall move away from direct line or couplet repetition is immediately apparent, and the comparative freedom of the progressive movement is enhanced by the previously

mentioned propensity for a spatial recognition of the different levels on which voice and piano must inevitably exist, although this is not always recognised even today. This differentiation of the two media is most obvious in a) their meeting at the syllables "voix" (at the end of Example Five) and "zon" of "horizon" at the Tempo 1 after the soi-disant $\frac{12}{8}$ section, because, in each case, of the surprising slackening of tension and one's realisation of why this is so; and b) the harmonic separation of voice and piano at Example Six, where the use of a prolonged enharmonic change gives rise to a clever and literally most artistic use of musical balance and contrast.

Throughout the song, the importance of the LINE is paramount insofar as the accompaniment alone can be considered as one linear unity; the approach to Debussy is closing rapidly in a purely technical sense, although I consider that nothing around him could ever match his wonderful vision and conception of the inner meaning of music, despite the miniature elegance and technical power of Fauré.

Paradis - by Gabriel Fauré - words by Charles van Lerberghe.

1907-10

This song is the first of a mature cycle "La Chanson d'Eve", whose ten poems most imaginatively celebrate the creation of the world in idealistic Christian terms. The ennui and lassitude of such a song as Chausson's "Oraison" is completely absent from this work, which presents forward-looking symbols of grace and joy, and is quite a remarkable example of extended poetry in a miniature, yet internally varied narrative form. The poem opens very simply, in a manner which seems not unrelated to the Bilitis prose poems by Löuys which Debussy set both as a short cycle of three songs, and as a longer work for small instrumental group and speaker:

C'est le premier matin du monde.
Comme une fleur confuse exhalée dans la nuit,
Au souffle nouveau qui se lève des ondes,
Un jardin bleu s'épanouit.

A little later van Lerberghe skilfully and I think, most convincingly, employs a style deliberately like that of the Gospels, at the same time extolling the mystic qualities of woman:

Or, Dieu lui dit - "Va, fille humaine,
Et donne à tous les êtres
Que j'ai crées, Une parole de tes lèvres
Un son pour les connaître'. Et Eve s'en alla douce à son seigneur.

He also parodies the literary form of the Christian Litanies thus:

... chose qui fuit,
chose qui souffle,
chose qui vole ... , as if this indefinable "chose" were almost a spiritual personage or a power able to control the happenings and

emotions of the world, with its created

> Glissements d'ailles,
> Sources qui sourdent,
> voix des airs,
> voix des eaux, these latter two characteristics being

possibly somewhat prophetic of the surrealist poetry of René Char?

The apotheosis of the poem presents an interesting allegorical view of the possible crisis of the world which could take place without the allegedly necessary crucifixion of Christ.

> La voix s'est tue, mais tout l'écoute encore -
> Tout demeure en l'attente
> Lorsqu'avec le lever de l'étoile du soir,
> Eve chante ...

Eve now assumes the role of the Virgin purity which is normally designated as the preserver of all that is untainted, and so Lerberghe's poem is given a strange and very unexpected strength, perfectly matched by Faure's extended arioso, almost like a short continuous cantata. The music is sectional insofar as the melodic outlines and their harmonically varied accompaniments may be classified as follows: a b a b a^1 b^1 a^1 b^2, but the work is conceived and heard as a single unbroken entity. The expansions and variants of different parts of the texture may be likened, not to that of symphonic construction, but rather to the way in which the motivs of a Renaissance fancy reveal different aspects of a single germinal idea. I do not propose to analyse the song in full, for that would merely expand in obvious terms the outline I have stated above, but I find that a close examination of the modal and sparsely expressed sections shows a Fauré of great musical and poetic insight into the power of suggestion rather than direct representation, and also into the potentialities of ambiguous musical

statement. By this I mean that the most vital and salient feature of the song is to be found in the four sections of the song, which in a true cantata, would correspond to recitative-like passages of simple explanatory monologue preceding any aria-like dialogues of narrative or dramatic significance (Examples Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten). Of these, Example Nine is harmonically the most interesting, although the four sections are all endowed with tremendous insight into the setting of poetry, and the appreciation of the power of individual words as well as of the meaning of any whole passage. This can be seen in Example Seven at the word "confuse", where the unprepared and oddly resolved seventh (two bars later at the word "nuit"), expresses the word so well. The harmonic likeness between Examples Seven, Eight and Ten, taking into account the occasional temporal and rhythmic elisions and the key transpositions, is close to that of such a "fin-de-siècle" work as Debussy's "La Damoiselle Elue", although its texture and variable expectation of resolution take it into the realm of twentieth century uncertainty and eventually to the concept of aleatoric music. The more intensely chromatic implications of Example Nine, where God is speaking to Eve, move right away from the accepted ideas of French musical tendencies, and seem to be hinting at the Teutonic atonality of the not very distant future. The use of motto-expansion echoes the musical transformations of Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande", and further enhances the subtleties of atmospheric change possible in music of this kind.

I feel that "Paradis", and indeed the whole of this wonderfully thought-out and constructed cycle which is so rarely heard today, must be regarded as a most important work. This is not because it may seem to follow in

the limited tradition of Beethoven's "Adelaide" or the longer songs of Brahms or Duparc, but because it showed that, apart from Debussy, a French song-writer was capable of creating a sonic world of exquisitely placed timbres of different kinds which raised his more generally accepted works well above the level of late-nineteenth century chromaticism and occasional dullness of imagination, into the new era of experiment and undreamt-of attainment in the use of sound and words, and their mating.

Spleen - by Gabriel Fauré - words by Paul Verlaine.

c.1889

The mood of pessimism evoked in this song is greatly enhanced by the title, which Faure himself placed at the head of the work, Verlaine having simply allowed the first line, "Il pleure dans mon coeur..." to act as title. This idea of letting the words and form of the poem speak for themselves without any prepared concept influencing the reader's approach was further reduced to absolute essentials by Debussy, who, in setting the poem as No.2 of his "Ariettes Oubliées" of 1888, left it without a title, merely prefacing it almost as an afterthought, with a brief quotation from Rimbaud:

Il pleure doucement sur la ville.

This was not enough for Fauré, who may have been trying to convey as much of the meaning as possible before his audience had experienced the fusion of words and music for themselves, and who would therefore be compelled to judge the worth of the song from a preconceived, and unbalanced viewpoint. The word spleen is doubtless an excellent title; the only doubt arising is whether a title is needed at all. Granted that we cannot ignore it now, maybe the most concise manner of appreciating all its connotations in relation to the individual and general "états d'ame" of the Paris-dwelling artists of the symbolist era, is to consult the Larousse definition;

> "Le symptome caracteristique du dépérissement d'une societé est cet immense ennui qui s'empare de toutes les classes, de tous les individus. Le spleen est l'ennui sans motif apparent." [1]

The final sentence is the most immediately important one, in the light of

my general concern for artistic developments arising from the (then) largely uncomprehended whirlwind caused by Wagner before Debussy's conscientious efforts to place the Wagnerian ethos in what seemed at the time to be its true perspective. The period in France preceding the real interest aroused by Debussy's orchestral "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" in 1894, was, as we see in retrospect, mainly one of musical stagnation, caused possibly by a dangerous artistic "ennui", stemming from lack of artistic vigour, foresight, and most of all, self-assuredness. This static musical scene, with the obvious exceptions of the great minds, (although no truly noteworthy musician appeared before Debussy during the Wagnerian reign of terror), provides a fine example of what I wish to convey by my analogy of Wagner as a mandrake symbol, insofar as his influence on many of the French painters, albeit quite unconscious, and on the writers of French and English novels, from Huysmans to Joyce, was more direct and of greater eventual practical value, than it ever was on the French composers, because even though Debussy's Baudelaire songs are tentatively Wagnerian, and many people see "Pelléas et Mélisande" as being no more than a French "Tristan" in musical as well as literary respects, I believe that the most valuable, evolutionary and in the final analysis, most aesthetically worthwhile French music of the post-Wagnerian era, was that of the mature Debussy, his opera included, and possibly, in a textural and chromatic sense rather than in any purely formal context, some of the works of Maurice Ravel; all of which resulted from what was first an intellectual and later an instinctive (as in the work of "Les Six") rejection of most Wagnerian principles.

The implicit irrationality of the poem contains elements of a fading Christianity in its acceptance of circumstances, although there is no

solution to the tribulations symbolised by the cold rain which has no apparent 'raison d'être';

C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi,
Sans amour et sans haine,
Mon coeur a tant de peine !"

The somewhat unexpected medial rhymes and the sudden interpolation of a 'b' line in the scheme a b a a illustrates well the poet's mental uncertainty.

Fauré's setting of this poem is much less immediately sensuous than Debussy's, yet if it lacks the supreme balance and drama of the latter setting, it makes up for this in great charm and delicacy. The melody seems nebulous and hardly matching the sonorous beauty of Verlaine's words, yet it is enhanced and invigorated by the careful doublings and counter-points of the accompaniment. The voice is treated with respect for human limitations and is not so instrumentally used as in Debussy's setting. It is throughout well supported by the highly evocative rain-drops of the accompaniment (Example Eleven). Four-bar phrases predominate in the song, although Fauré is not content with such a basic pattern and interrupts or rather appears to protract the effect of this rhythm by extending each final note of a phrase so that it overlaps gently and smoothly with the next. The pattern of the accompaniment changes with a new verbal accentuation and for the second stanza the rain becomes more persistent employing both a static bass pedal and momentary internal pedal points foreshadowing the chromatic slidings of certain areas of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", the Pavane from Ravel's "Ma Mere l'Oie" Suite, and similar passages in Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite", to name only three well-known examples of this kind. (Example Twelve).

The internal complexity of the song is furthered by a harmonic scheme so seemingly common to Fauré that it almost passes unnoticed, yet some of the brief progressions are not so far removed from the non-functionalism of Debussy and can be seen from Example Thirteen, in which only the steadily moving texture of the harmonic rhythm takes the song away from the world of Debussyian construction. Possibly however, the greatest difference between these two composers is implicit in their setting of the climax of the poem, where Debussy's daring and unrivalled freedom within the confines of a culture so wonderfully understood is a brilliant preface to a new century which was to see more overall artistic individuality and resultingly more variations of good and bad art than had possibly ever existed before. (Example Fourteen).

C'est L'extase - by Gabriel Fauré - words by Paul Verlaine.

1890

The surveys in this chapter are too brief for me to consider including a full-scale assessment of Fauré's setting of this exquisite Verlaine poem, and in fact I am simply placing it here in order to lead the reader into a subsequent perusal of Debussy's version as it appears in the "Ariettes Oubliées". At a first glance, both songs seem to have a surprising amount in common. Both are fifty-two bars long, in the unhurried but rather anxiously moving triple time which seems so frequently encountered in their songs, both employ roughly the same melodic means of creating atmosphere for the expression of new poetic ideas, even to a similarity of musical and poetic climax at the words

.....
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède de soir tout bas;

and both finally, involve a considerable amount of swift harmonic change relying on enharmonically pivoted notes in the vocal line. The use of small motives is constant throughout each version of the poem's musical settings. Fauré at first appears to be satisfied with a repetition of his opening four-bar phrase but this staticism is soon uprooted and the harmonic level rises quickly to create an ambience of extreme control and refinement. (Example Fifteen). This short yet immensely impressive work discards to a large extent the confines of its predecessors although I find that Faure has sacrificed much of the verbal euphony for the sake of musical and (especially in this song) pianistic dexterity. Debussy's setting seems to me much more successful, and I think that a comparison of two short

sections in each setting may be of interest and value to those who wish to discover the greatness, albeit an elusive quality, of Debussy. (Examples Sixteen (a) and Sixteen (b)). The logicality of the song relies entirely upon the progressive development of the initial texture, but this does not mean to say that the necessities of ternary construction are forgotten. Both Debussy and Faure end in the opening key, very quietly and decisively, so that, despite the excursions of melody, harmony, rhythm, metre, or even widely-separated differences in word setting, the essence and desire for an overall arch construction is always present, as has been seen more closely in the larger canvas of Mallarmé's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune".

The imagery of Mallarmé is recalled in Verlaine's poem quite strongly, and is so complete and self-contained that however beautiful and imaginative the two settings by Fauré and Debussy may seem to be, I am more and more convinced that Verlaine is meant to be read, either aloud or silently, as a poet of self-evident genius, and that he suffers in some measure from musical setting. This is not to say that a poet whose work can satisfactorily be set to music is in any way incomplete; one outstanding example of a liaison between a poet and a musician is of course Debussy's opera, in which the two mens' minds were so attuned that the resultant work seems miraculously right. In "C'est L'extase", however, Verlaine's imagery is of such an evocative and associative order and seems so close to the contemporary fascinations of visual art, whilst being extremely self-sufficient also, that I am loth to regard this as one of Fauré's better settings and would even go so far as to say that much of Debussy's "Ariettes Oubliées" was a miscalculation of perceptive musical and poetic judgement, although his approach to the cycle was much more personal and resultantly successful in an aesthetic sense than was Fauré's.

Clair de Lune - by Gabriel Fauré - words by Paul Verlaine.

1887

I have chosen to end my brief analyses of a few of Fauré's songs with what is probably the most widely popular one as far as the general public is concerned. This popularity was perhaps gained through its unceasing melodic simplicity and beauty which has an immediate attraction, whether or not one fully understands the meaning of the words. This unceasing problem of balance between words and music explains why I have placed this analysis at the end of this chapter, and consequently why I shall open my short comments on Debussy's songs with his two very different settings of the same poem.

Although it is true, as many commentators have said, that this poem is full of a self-conscious classicism, strongly redolent of the age of Watteau, there are two further elements in it which are very pertinent to the understanding not only of the Symbolist/Impressionist artistic world in general, but also to the ethos and psychology of Debussy in particular, which perhaps explains why this is not one of Fauré's better songs qua song in all the meanings of the word; his lack of full perception of Verlaine's words is best shown at his setting of the words "parmi les marbres", which is given an undeserved intensity, whereas the beautiful "Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau", passes casually amongst a hypnotic flow of melody seemingly unaware of the exquisite assonance and slow pulse of the words.

The two elements of poetic importance as regards our understanding of Debussy, are worthy of mention here, if only because they are so removed from the literary consciousness of Fauré and therefore their very presence,

calmly forceful as always in Verlaine, acts as a hindrance to the abstract musical flow of Fauré's genius. Firstly, an image beloved of literary critics of the period and poetically enhanced by W.B.Yeats; this is the concept of the Dancer image, linked with the Salome image, and through the visual representations by Beardsley, being a strange recapitulation of the decadence and artistic combinations promulgated by Wagner, whose mandragorian personality takes on a new sinister meaning in this context.

The idea of movement and the importance of fluidity of line have already been mentioned in this survey, and are indeed applicable in many contexts treating this period in aesthetic terms. Here, however, the Art Nouveau dancer, the sinuous Loïe Fuller in all her physical and representative manifestations of a sensuous nature are discarded in favour of a dancer whose disguising mask hides also the melancholy personality of a clown, the sad character, who, self-loving and selfish, is mocked even under the superficial appearance of Mallarmé's "Faune".

> Jouant du luth et dansant
> Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques.

The second element of relevance to Debussy is that of the concern with water imagery. This is a facet of Debussy which is dwelt upon at some length in the excellent French symposium "Debussy et l'evolution de la musique au XX^e siecle",[1] and also in Volume Two of Edward Lockspieser's wide-ranging study of Debussy.[2] The line,

> Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune

although not strictly an aspect of water imagery, is approaching the melifluous depiction of natural elements which Debussy translates so uniquely into musical terms, and which seems so far beyond the more urbane

ambience of Fauré. On the other hand, the poem takes a place in literature not unlike that of Fauré in music, in a historical and evolutionary sense. It is, within its limits and definitions, almost as much an "oeuvre a clef" as was to be Mallarmé's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" finally completed in 1876. It represents a midway-stage between Baudelaire (or Wagner, to continue the simultaneous analogy) and Mallarmé, (or Debussy, following the same train of thought), whose fragmented abstractions were such clear and beautiful preludes to the new century. The basic thought of the poem is really to be found in the opening line

Votre âme est un paysage choisi,

which to me synthesises all that is Wagnerian in the terms of a modernism based on a Jungian synchronicity and which as pure time was to rule many important aesthetic considerations of the contemporary artistic scene.

The deceptively simple time-signature of $\frac{3}{4}$ in Fauré's setting (as also in the two Debussy settings!) is prepared for us as regards interpretation to a certain extent, by the song's subtitle, for want of a better word, of "menuet", and although the harmonic twists are less complex than we often find in Fauré, the "unendliche" melody and resultant hypnotic flavour of the vocal and accompanying counterpoints which are skilfully interwoven during the course of melodic repetition in the long introduction to the first stanza, give rise to some rhythmic confusion or rather uncertainty of rhythmic stress, because of Fauré's habit, here not altered, of relying more on musical than poetic stress and thereby often reducing the emotional and intellectual effects of a poem. (Example Seventeen).

A salient point of musical translation of a specified mood, which gains in fascination later when the Debussy settings are commented upon, is the

harmonic progression illustrating the words

..... sur le mode mineur,

where a leading note seventh gives way to a sudden dominant chord in its chromatic, here major, form, thus disrupting somewhat the atmosphere of Verlaine's associative assonance.

The only area where a real tension is built up is that of the last stanza, where the A flat, submediant flavour, always potentially interesting because of its possible use as a Neapolitan chord, is given a sharpness through the insistence upon the D natural, diatonic of course to the home key of C minor, yet here adding the biting edge of the tritone relationship, always stimulating because of its many possible connotations as a pivot interval. (Example Eighteen).

I should like to leave this song with no further comment than to express the hope that the reader will be eager enough to look at the Debussy variants of "Clair de Lune" and to consider my thoughts that the very early Debussy song is maybe the best representation of the words, although his later setting is one of his most perfect musical conceptions, its texture appealing to me far more in relation to Verlaine's words than the sweetness of Faure's song, delightful though it undoubtedly is, and despite my comments in the previous analysis about other Verlaine/Debussy settings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MAETERLINCK'S PLACE IN THE LITERARY ATMOSPHERE OF HIS TIME WITH NOTES ON THE PLAY "PELLEAS ET MELLISANDE".

"The metaphysician, musician and poet are the three kinds of men most capable of visionary experience, and thus of cultivating the intellectual life and obtaining release from the cycle of material existence."

The intensely subjective approach or method of instilling one's ideas and moral beliefs into every thread of literary creation is the most outstanding and fundamental aspect of Maeterlinck's writings. It is obviously a major factor in the writing, or other creative expression, of any great man who is sufficiently integrated as regards his understanding of human potential and achievement, and even to mention Shakespeare as the most immediate example that comes to mind, is merely to state what we already know either by training or instinct. The late nineteenth century was however, a period of excessively subjective artistic expression, and the Anglo-French pursuance of art in all its forms was especially imbued with the necessity of transferring from artist to layman a deeply-felt sense of moral righteous ness. Maeterlinck's own place in the scheme of literary progress can be well emphasised as to his emotional/imaginative powers and his technical capabilities by this short quotation from William Morris, who was highly regarded as a firm believer in the cause of man's equality and his right to have freedom of opportunity in whatever walk of life he should choose.

> Dreamer of dreams, born out of due time,
> Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
> Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
> Beats with light heart against the ivory gate,
> Telling a tale not too importunate
> To those who in the sleepy region stay
> Lulled by the singer of an empty day. 1

If my basic premiss of metamorphosis is exercised here, this extract allows one to move into Max Jacob's realisation, given the almost inherent cynicism of the immediately pre- and post-First World War writers and artists in France, that to some thinkers and artists of great perceptive powers,

> "Personality is a persistent error." 2

This is no place to comment fully on Jacob's self-isolating, almost existentialist philosophy, as such an attitude has more pertinence in a consideration of the works quoted in the final chapter of this study, but even in the context of the play "Pelléas et Mélisande", one need not read very deeply to discover that this is, in a sense, nothing more than the sympathetic comprehension of human weaknesses which lends life and impetus to the clear-sighted character of Arkël.

An inward-looking propensity towards life and self is relevant to Maeterlinck's conception of drama. This may be illustrated usefully in terms of visual art, as in Roger Shattuck's wonderfully explicit penultimate chapter, entitled "The art of stillness.", where he says

> "The subject of a painting is not what it started with, but what it ends up with ....." [3]

In dramatic terms this could be paraphrased so that the idea of self-realisation through the medium of dramatic objectivity becomes extremely pertinent to the artistic/philosophical introversion of Maeterlinck's characters. This is in fact saying that for Maeterlinck, the drama <u>is</u> the subject and vice versa. Form becomes content and content form, and so the more personally committed the dramatist feels to putting his own moral standards and aspirations into his artistic and imaginative content, the more it will be magnified by reason of the great interaction of medium and imagination, depending on the genius of the dramatist involved. Shattuck now elaborates this in musical terms;

> "Music has always, more than the other arts, taken itself as its subject." [4]

This, to a musician, is an obvious (though perhaps simplified) aspect of

the ethos of music, but it is interesting and informative to hear it from a non-professional musician who is ostensibly highly involved in very different artistic matters. It is possibly fair to say that as artists realised the eventual (though not always exclusive) self-reliance of any one art form upon itself, with the obvious exception of the media-interdependence in choreography, and not forgetting the intermittent triumphs of song, opera, etc., they were inevitably led to a state of anti-Wagnerianism in that they opposed his rigorous adherence to an all-embracing symbol-system, and effected a bland, abstract simultanism which Apollinaire described with typical wit, as a "capacity to be autonomous." This created also a simultanism of philosophies (whether or not Wagner saw the embryonic stages of such a situation is debatable) and virtually by-passed the Mahlerian wish in another sphere that the logic and emotion of symphonic form should encompass the whole world. A practical reason for the wave of anti-Wagnerianism could maybe be found in the fact that the new desire for simultaneity allowed of no dependence upon what might be termed violable and transitory externals, and to the immediately post-Wagnerian generation, other than the faithful French scholars of the Paris Conservatoire, who propagated Wagnerianism to a dangerous degree, the practical difficulties, to say nothing of the torturing of finely aesthetic consciences afforded by lavish productions of the great Teutonic music-dramas, seemed not only out of place, but also physically unnecessary and disturbing, vital though they were later seen to be in an historical and evolutionary sense.

The attempts to form a unity and integrity of purpose in art caused a great conflict between what is often misleadingly (if not inaccurately)

termed art and reality. Shattuck illustrates this well by seeing it as a process in which art tries to release itself from its confining frames. There is a definite purpose in such a process; it is not a negative and fruitless destruction but a phoenix-like desire to break down in order to re-build with new insight and caution, and a realisation that the bounds of human instinct and custom are not always against the progresses of art. A new internal bond or frame is formed which lends a new dimension of reality and understanding to the art form in question. An excellent example of such a process is evident in the early abstract and cubist pictures of Braque and Picasso where actual newspaper cuttings were used in a scheme of purely imaginary picture building motivated, almost as 'musique concrete' was to emerge and flourish briefly later, by the inclusion of everyday reality and awareness, which broke through the traditionally accepted bounds of art, and consequently imposed a disturbing effect of non-expectation upon its listeners.

The juxtaposition of effects and objects therefore becomes more important than a unity which resolves on one angle or plane alone. Such awareness of the varied planes of art transcends the physically dependent planes of Wagner, passes into the world of a greater spiritual realisation and comprehension without being burdened by the formidable weighty weariness of 'fin-de-siècle' art in Germany and leads straight into the amazingly and fortuitously similar spiritual worlds of both Debussy and Maeterlinck. This fundamental sameness of thought possibly resolved from a basic intuition, which is itself the root of ultimate reality and which may arise coincidentally from the changing conditions of a certain amount of what may

be termed externally inspired faith: the perspective and expression of the conditions may change with each cycle of our evolution, but the resultant intuition remains constant. One could say, then, that it was intuition which first led Debussy to re-create in music the strange ethos of Maeterlinck which attracted him, and therefore to attain his ultimate reality of operatic construction and meaning. In the context of intuitive metamorphosis it would have been extremely interesting to have had Satie's proposed opera on Maeterlinck's "La Princesse Maleine" both from a musico/dramatic standpoint and from a consideration of the still-debated influence that the two composers may or may not have had upon each other. It seems to me, however, that although Wagner should have been able to create a true Gesamkunstwerk if will and ability can produce desirable artistic results, his personality and environmental influences were almost too unbalanced and Teutonically stubborn to yield to the maybe unexpected necessities of artistic forethought required by so tremendously concentrated, if not aesthetically impossible, a task. An interesting result of this comes to light now; that whereas it could be said, quite validly, that Wagner and his ideals sparked off not only a great genesis of literature and art, and possibly gave a strong impetus to Jung's theories of an artistic synchronisation which was to evolve into a closely argued system of simultanism, his initial major influence was upon the French poets of the Symbolist era. This, together with the powerful English visual arts, and William Morris's desire for a complete liberalism of the arts, could be said to have evolved into a complex 'idée' approximating to the Debussy/Maeterlinck metamorphosis. An example of the amazing closeness of

aesthetic and intellectual ideals which existed at this time may be seen in the underlying meaning of both Jung's concept of time and Debussy's operatic sense of time. Both processes deal very closely and unmistakably with the tenuous link between life and death. To illustrate this from a later writer who is of artistic importance equal to that of Dali and Stravinsky, I should like to refer to a few comments from the "Journals" of Jean Cocteau:

> "If I withdraw from my friends, I begin to look for their shadows ....." "I felt as close to them (the bodies of dead people) as the two sides of a coin which cannot know one another, but are separated only by the thickness of the metal ...."

And of death itself he said

> "She is an expert in mimicry - when she seems furthest from us, she is in our very joy of living. She is our youth, our growth, our loves." [5]

At this period of diffuse yet important and lively thought in relation to evolutionary and artistic development, it was natural that the processes of the use of language should undergo a certain amount of equally lively and imaginative change which can be partly illustrated from two examples. First, Helmut Hatzfeld talks about what he calls 'literary pointillism', which, in a sense, like the Bergsonian breakdown of time, results in a new focus or perspective of time and the speed of the passage of time. He cites the following process of word change to show what he means .....

l'arbre vert .....
le vert arbre ....
le vert de l'arbre .....
la verdure de l'arbre .... [6]

Here, quality of content rather than overall form is stressed, and it is this aspect of the technical changes in the construction of art which is applicable to Debussy. The other example I would like to give is part of Verlaine's poem "Chanson d'Automne" in which there is no pre-conceived form imposed upon the structure, and instead the highly individual nature of the very words themselves (remember Mallarmé's strictures at this point) is meaning, content, technique and finally, form. He opens the poem thus;

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
  De l'automne
Blessent mon coeur
D'une languer
  Monotone.

The almost limerick-like shape and rhyme-scheme of this has a hypnotic quality which is fascinating and beautifully moving yet there is nevertheless a strangely static air which is further emphasised in the last stanza;

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
  Qui m'emporte
Deça, delà,
Pareil à la
  Feuille morte.

Again, we see that quality and expression of thought rather than an obtrusive and exclusively introvert form is stressed. This is applicable to the emotional variants of motifs in "Pelléas et Mélisande", rather more so than in the transformations undergone by the Wagnerian processes of metamorphosis.

It can be said that Maeterlinck himself was essentially a mystic, insofar as he wholeheartedly imbibed the atmospheres and beliefs of his time, and transcribed his own very imaginative sense of expressing moral

values, even in his prose works, into the colourful and oddly appealing terms favoured by the writers and artists of his generation. If one can be allowed to make artistic parallels, it might clarify Maeterlinck's position by seeing him as the literary counterpart of César Franck, a comparison which I think is not a little valid. The quiet closeness of his thought and the subtle yet commanding effect of his work is very comparable to the calmness of Franck's sincerity and inwardness.

There is however, a link between Mallarmé and Maeterlinck in that both "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" and "Pelléas et Mélisande" contain a constant underlying idea of sterility. Maeterlinck said that the performance of great dramas is rarely satisfactory, even those of Shakespeare, and in his own work he sees Arkël as a contemplative old man thus:

> "Around the upright man there is drawn a wide circle of peace within which the arrows of evil soon cease to fall; nor have his fellows the power to inflict moral suffering upon him."

This largely echoes a further interesting statement from "Le Trésor des Humbles".

> "Speech is too often not ..... the art of concealing Thought, but of quite stifling and suspending Thought, so that there is none to conceal ..... but from the moment that we have something to say to each other, we are compelled to hold our peace ..... 'We have not yet dared to be silent together' ..... and each time that silence fell upon us, each time did we feel that our souls were craving mercy on their knees, were begging for a few more hours of innocent falsehood, a few hours of ignorance, a few hours of childhold." [7]

I have quoted from this at some length, not only because it amply illustrates the ever-present necessity for occasional mutually desired silence, but partly because it seems to be a wonderfully appropriate raison d'etre or apologia (albeit in complete innocence) for the remarkably effective and right calm which exists between Pelléas and Mélisande at the moments of their most complete intensity of love and its realisation. Also, the style and translation of the passage reflects perfectly the ethos of an almost cosily safe religion such as existed towards the end of the last century within certain strata of society freed from the strife and worry which daunted so much ambition, and which resulted to a large extent from the revolutionary flourishings of the industrialist era.

Like the pedagogic words of Mallarmé, Maeterlinck's own words express so adequately his approach to the perennial problems of human communication, as of course do in part most of the artistic preoccupations of serious twentieth century thinkers. Jan van Acker was conscious of the life/death complex although he possibly failed to realise the fullest dramatic meaning and importance which it also represented to the late romantic artists in their endless search for a solution to the problems of human existence both before and after death. In "Pelléas et Mélisande, ou la rencontre miraculeuse d'une poésie et d'une musique" he says,

> "Je rêve de poèmes qui ne me condamnent pas à perpétuer des actes longs, pésants; qui me fournissent des scenes mobiles, diverses par ces lieux et le caractère; où les personages ne discutent pas, mais subissent la vie et le sort- Dans la plupart des scènes de Pelléas les personages manifestent une absence quasi complete du sens de l'action....

> En somme, du point de vue classique ou purement scénique, ce drame est assez faible et, dans un certain sens, arbitraire. Il n'y a par exemple pas d'explication scenique plus ou moins precise pour la mort de Mélisande qui semble n'être qu'un dernier caprice du destin". [8]

From today's viewpoint and current knowledge of the trends in art at the beginning of the century we can now see that these statements foreshadow the present-day importance of the two vitally important constructional elements of CHANCE and SILENCE and if Mallarmé intended "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" to be a uniquely exquisite way of showing how music and poetry should be written and should evolve from an essentially natural respect for the potential powers and limits prescribed by humanity, then "Pelléas et Mélisande", weak and occasionally unaccountable as it may appear as drama, showed the way towards a necessary post-Wagnerian manifestation of human behaviour, a manifestation which was to be greatly enhanced by the unbelievably sympathetic music of Debussy.....

> "I do not know a more passionate love-scene than that scene in the wood besides the fountain, where Pelléas and Mélisande confess the strange burden which has come upon them. When the soul gives itself absolutely to love all the barriers of the world are burnt away, and all its wisdom and subtlety are as incense poured on a flame. Morality, too, is burnt away, no longer exists any more than it does for children or for God."
>
> "He has realised, after Wagner, that the art of the stage is the art of pictorial beauty, of the correspondence in rhythm between the speakers, their words and their surroundings". [9]

This final sentence is probably the most important one here, as it appears

to realise the idea of simultanism at its fullest and in fact uses several words, here distinguished by my additional underlinings, which have since been regarded as key words of our present appreciation of what constitutes aesthetic and practical requirements for the formation of valid and interesting works of art. To return to the scene contemporary with the period in which these sentences were written, one has only to think of the Beardsley "Tristan" drawings with their accompanying words of explanation to appreciate the almost visual drama inherent in them and the close relationships of designs to the equally decorative words and the scale of emotions involved in all facets of the designs, unusually distinctive though they were even for such a mono-schematic and self-conscious era.

Before I elaborate on the imagery and construction of the play, I should like to make a few final references to the dramatic and symbolist orientation of Maeterlinck's literary world.

He was a late Symbolist writer with a deep sensibility for the inherent human capacity for needless suffering. Within his own national environment he had, as far as one can safely make comparisons of this kind, certain affinities with writers like Yeats and the young Eliot, and it is thus easier to re-create within one's imagination the kind of symbolic dream-world in which he lived. He simply wished to uncover and illustrate through the means of consciously archaic and fashionable symbols the hitherto largely disregarded spiritual and super-physical realities of our existence. It requires very little thought here to equate his artistic thought processes with the medico/spiritualist or medico/ religious ones of Freud, and the Austrian birth of a movement which was to have unforeseen

influences later on.

Many people see Maeterlinck's play as a weak or even a failed one. Joseph Chiari makes sensible comments which are possibly pertinent to the understanding of Maeterlinck's aims. He says that art does not, as Sidney believed,

> "hold up a mirror to Nature, but an endless series of individual prisms" [10]

and that for a true representation of art, any artistic work must exist on several levels of our understanding. More important he says that

> "art is individual though of course not personal"...[11]

and if it were, then the artist would doubtless become insane. This does not mean that one should not be over-conscious about the process of artistic creativity, as Thomas Mann's Tonio Krüger categorically stated, but that one should stand a little aloof from one's creation in order to avoid losing sight of the world's reality.

Maeterlinck wished to write poetic drama through the medium of prose; he sought verbal beauty, followed by a self-searching contemplation which leads from the 'will-less' perception of Schopenhauer. He fails in that the separate elements of his drama are never perfectly fused into a corporate whole. He is a master of portraying isolated states of mind, possibly amongst others foreshadowing the novels of Françoise Sagan, yet he has not a proper control over progressive dramatic necessity and the means of achieving satisfaction. As one extension of this, I feel that critics like Chiari are guilty of a habit which I have earlier refuted as being frequently invalid and shortsighted; that is, of attempting to

evaluate something in terms of the forms and patterns laid down by previous custom and usage instead of seeing that anything really worthwhile will of course respect the past, but will at the same time strive constantly to move ahead, and should something unexpected or disturbing arise then we should be glad to look for its meaning and potential rather than merely to discard it because it is not the same as its forebears. Art must always try to move forward in some way and it is we who are at fault by condemning unfamiliarities, because we lack the sensitivity to see that we ourselves are so very unexclusive.

The following comment on Maeterlinck can be equally applied to Debussy's operatic and dramatic aesthetic and as a result provides a useful dual-purpose summary of the Maeterlinck/Debussy complex which resulted in the opera.

> "Maeterlinck's man is a living being whose sensuous life is only a concrete symbol of his infinite transcendental side; and, further, is only a link in an endless chain of innumerable existences, a link that remains in continual communication, in mutual union with all other links ..... In Maeterlinck's dramas the whole of nature vibrates with man, either warning him of coming catastrophes or taking on a mournful attitude after they have happened. He considers man to be a great fathomless mystery which one cannot determine precisely, at which one can only glance. ..... He consciously deprives nature of her passive role of a soulless accessory, he animates her.... orders her to speak mysteriously beside man and to man, to forecaste future events and catastrophes, in a word, to participate in all the actions of that fragment of human life which is called a drama." [12]

This passage reveals several aspects of both Maeterlinck's and Debussy's minds .... a Shakespearean preoccupation with humanity and its destiny and also a virtually religious, superhuman and almost existentialist outlook. This implies, too, a Debussy far removed from the more actual everyday world of "Fêtes" and the early songs, or even the formal consciousness of the String Quartet.. .... far from the nerveshattering cataclysms of Wagnerian self analysis, and thrust instead into a gentle resigned world of mental yet rather passive pessimism so intense as to approach almost the bounds of madness or witchcraft, in fact almost the strangely calm disassociative world of "The Blue Bird".

The word symbolism itself has been subjected to countless attempted definitions but it still remains one of the most difficult ideas to express and its active part in artistic form is sometimes confused with that of allegory. Arnold Hauser is not the clearest critic I have encountered in this field, but the following quotation from his final volume of a "Social History of Art" is useful here in that it refers briefly not only to Maeterlinck but also to French symbolist poetry, although here I feel that he has become a little confused by words.....

> "After 1890 the word 'décadence' loses its suggestive note and people begin to speak of symbolism as the leading artistic trend. Moréas introduces the term and defines it as the attempt to replace reality in poetry by the 'idea'. The new terminology is in accordance with Mallarmé's victory over Verlaine and the shift of emphasis from sensualistic impressionism to spiritualism. It is often very difficult to distinguish symbolism from impressionism; the two concepts are partly antithetical,

partly synonymous. There is a fairly sharp distinction between Verlaine's impressionism and Mallarmé's symbolism, but to find the proper stylistic category for a writer like Maeterlinck is by no means so simple. Symbolism, with its optical and acoustical effects, as well as the mixing and combining of the different sense data and the

> reciprocal action between the various art forms, above all what Mallarmé understood by the reconquest from music of the property of poetry, is 'impressionistic'." [13]

For Maeterlinck at least it is possible to place his particular brand of symbolism within a definite and easily-recognisable framework, for he also belongs, if somewhat vicariously, to the richly endowed yet often neglected mythological heritage of Celtic symbolism, which was itself yet a further aspect of the tremendous blossoming of ideas and images at the end of the last century. In "W.B.Yeats and Tradition", F.A.C.Wilson comments on Maeterlinck,

> "Maeterlinck's early dramas combine a facile and sometimes rather cloyingly pretty symbolism with a certain timidity in execution; they try to impose an archetypal imagery (c.f. Jung's terminology for the existence of race memory and images!) on a drama otherwise conventional, in pattern and in general tone."

He comments also on Platonic poetry

> "the tomb, the forest and the cave were all symbols of the material world", [14]

and further sees the animal symbols of sheep and goats as representing innocent youth and ancient wisdom; the former image here is interesting in the light of the scene in the play in which Yniold and the sheep who

merely complement his lonely unsureness, are seen as the unknowing ones who must eventually gain either the resigned and pessimistic wisdom of Arkel, or the ever-sanguine, active and undisciplined untempered knowledge of Golaud. The life/death cycle also occupied Wilson's attention.

> "In the previous cycles of civilisation ..... the world was an earthly paradise which resembled the intellectual condition; men seemed to live backwards in time even before their deaths ..... the bodies, likewise, of such as were in the bloom of youth returned to the nature of a child recently born ..... were assimilated to this nature, both in soul and body" ..... [15]

It requires very little imagination to see this final image as descriptive or explanatory of the very end of the play where Melisande's child, newly-born (and without such a symbolist definition), would normally appear dramatically somewhat superfluous. But place the child in a context of mystic relationships and without too great a concern for the break in consciousness between life and death, and Arkël's closing speech becomes clear and more relevant, in terms also of a metamorphosis which transcends mortality .....

> "She lies there as if she were her own child's big sister ..... I too shall understand nothing of it ..... Come; the child must not stay here in this room ..... It must live now in her stead ..... <u>The poor little one's turn has come</u>".

It is important to notice throughout the play many other symbols, which we today would, almost without realising it, place in a context of Freudian knowledge and application. For example, there are frequent references to

blindness or even natural darkness at night which always represent some aspect of unwisdom or unknowing. As a converse to this the gift of sight in a person or even the phenomenon of natural moonlight (and let us not forget the Western based idea which attributes qualities of the feminine sex to the moon), appears startlingly analogous to the instinctive human awareness that arises from emotional stability and clearsightedness.

Before I begin to comment on the technical and structural shapes and themes of the play I should like to mention the element of Celtic/Gallic folklore/superstition which can be regarded as being of some relevance here within the narrower and more subjective field of Neo-Platonism and its principles, leading in some ways to the incidence of Rosicrucianism. This interesting if a little eccentric movement was reasonably wide spread among certain groups in France and in a Maeterlinckian context provides a useful and pertinent link with Satie, who was himself very involved in its beliefs, and who somewhat mysteriously abandoned an attempt to write his opera on Maeterlinck's "La Princesse Maleine" despite his having encountered the literary world of the Belgian before Debussy became fascinated by the play of "Pelléas".

Finally, in order to try to impart to the reader some of the extra-ordinary self-awareness which pervaded the artist's attempts to make his beliefs and intentions clear it may be enlightening to consider (not only in regard to Maeterlinck, but also to the entire ambience of religion) the influence of the Wagnerian Gesamkunstwerk, the Parisian background and the concept of poetry being a term applicable both to humanity and the search for beauty in arts other than those of literature and its forms, and finally a statement

by A.E.Houseman that

"Poetry seems to me more physical than intellectual". [16]

CHAPTER NINE

THE PLAY "PELLEAS ET MELISANDE" BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK

"L'oeuvre de Maeterlinck avait été l'expression d'une philosophie personelle qui cherchait l'absolu au delà des apparences et qui est dominée par l'idée mystérieuse de la fatalité."

It should by now be apparent that "Pelléas and Mélisande" is not one of those plays whose existence and primary impetus is owed to any unusually great original thinking on the part of the dramatist, but rather that it falls into the category of works belonging by their very nature to an already well-established class whose main purpose is basically to transmit in some form or another, the chief traditional legends of the ubiquitous human mythology to which we all adhere. The Celtic twilight, as Yeats so poetically and yet cruelly called it, is in evidence because of unconscious association with the Wagnerian form of the Tristan theme, and because of the Irish/Pre-Raphaelite world which it so strongly suggests. This, to English readers would be immediately apparent, yet to a cultured Frenchman, the old Italian Paolo/Francesca theme may seem just as pertinent in any orientation of the play. Such use of readily accepted symbols is not particularly felicitous unless it can also include a certain amount of relatively abstract location or character symbolism. Maeterlinck did in fact fulfil such a condition; despite the strong central and western European flavour of the character backgrounds which seems at times to approach the realm of fairy tales in the best Grimm manner, he places the setting in a mythical country called Allemonde. No doubt he hoped by this to impart something of the unknown, but to present day readers all he seemed to do was to propagate even more of the fairy tale element, and perhaps even to recall the conscious ubiquity of the Mediaeval moralising plays in which "All - the - World" emerged as "Everyman" ! One can, however, possibly effect a further link between the playright and Mallarmé. If one thinks again of the significance of

the "bords siciliens" of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", then the concept of Allemonde, evalued from contemporary rather than earlier criteria, becomes relevant in several senses, rather like a precious stone known to men of all nations, to each of whom it has a different yet fundamentally similar meaning, varying according to ethnic and cultural traditions.

If the play seems too heavily endowed with a quasi-Mediaeval symbolism, it is worth while remembering the current artistic experiments taking place across the Channel. A brief passage from Mario Amaya's recent book on Art Nouveau may serve best to show how the craftsman movement of Morris in England, and Maeterlinck's Continental fantasies, especially his portrayal of Melisande in the tower scene where her hair is loosened and floats in the night air, are seen to be part of the same basic progress of design.

> "It is Morris's taste for the simple, the honest, the unaffected and the straightforward which inspired Art Nouveau at its beginning, and which was later to become a central objective when the style's more excessive themes had run themselves into the ground.
>
> On the other hand, certain symbolist-romantic ideas in Morris's theories actually led to some of those excesses; particularly that most over-worked of all Art Nouveau motifs, the willowy, dream-like lady of the lake (not unlike Morris's wife, whom Rossetti continuously drew and painted) with yearning looks and half-closed eyes, hair streaming out and garments flowing, as remote and distant as a half-remembered troubadour's 'villanelle'." [1]

There is throughout the play a consistent and skilful use of double symbols; that is, the employment of symbols which have relevance among themselves within the meaning of a certain setting but which can also refer equally if not more relevantly to the most pertinent attributes of the characters themselves. For example when Yniold, the innocent and therefore here wise unspoiled child, at a fairly late and tense stage of the action, attempts to lift the heavy stone, we understand that the idea lies easily in the context of that particular scene, which may seem possibly at first a little superfluous, until Yniold relates the being of the stone (which is after all, an object of universal symbolism, since Biblical days at least), to himself and to the whole 'raison d'etre' of the play, whose tenuous relationships are eclipsed by the solidity of the stone ....

"It is heavier than all the world .....";

which is actually "tout le monde", but could so easily have been translated into consciously quasi-Mediaeval terms, as Allemonde. Such double symbolism stems in part from the pantheist poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge in England and was continued by the French poets of a slightly later date as in this exquisite impression by Verlaine .....

Il pleure dans mon coeur
Comme il pleut sur la ville,
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon coeur ?

The analogy is further mooted by the third stanza in which the relentless actions of nature, to us so frequently inexplicable, are related to the more (apparently) rational actions of human nature, which suffer by having

to wait upon the mercy of our surrounding natural elements.

Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce coeur qui s'écoeure.
Quoi! nulle trahison ?
Ce deuil est sans raison.

Before I comment on the inner details of the play's structure, I should like to make fairly brief notes on the actual shape of the play in relation to location and the contrast of location. This, and a later process expanding the patterns of the play in more detail, is given not only to effect a familiarity with and understanding of the work of Maeterlinck but also to cause us to realise the points which Debussy has used as common pivot areas for allying his various musical motifs/symbols.

In a technical sense the physical shape of the play relies to a large extent upon the properties of montage technique, whose bases of well-defined physical actuality are so juxtaposed and symbolise so many varied meanings of character and progress that the whole eventually evolves into an almost a-physical build up of elements of dramatic construction. This montage unit involves a) a commonplace narrative action and b) a clear psychological excursus into the elaboration of a morality which uses characters not only as mouthpieces for Maeterlinck's own thoughts as Shakespeare frequently did, but, in an even more impersonal sense, almost as puppets who are manipulated by the unseen, and therefore apparently unsympathetic power of a superhuman mind. The characterisation protracts the montage system here in that each person has a very individual and isolated personality. One can always query even the reality of these characters and although various writers see one or another as hero or

chief pro/antagonist, as for instance, Joseph Kerman, who sees Golaud as the only purposefully active personage of the play, it is equally possible to say that there is in fact neither a hero nor an anti-hero. There are so many differing yet interacting planes of thought upon which the play is based that it would be shortsighted to say that any one person is or can possibly be responsible for the ultimate tragedy of the play's outcome. Arkël is the only stabilising factor throughout this essentially Christian play. On another level altogether one can perhaps see Mélisande as the triumphant element as she succeeds in the cause of femininity. This is important because of her failure to survive, which does I suppose make a paradox of the normal dramatic meaning of triumph, but it is just such a paradox which makes the play interesting and a little enigmatic. She dies relatively, because innocently, content, leaving a bitter Golaud, and even the setting of her death is virtually ritualistic. In Act One Scene Three, she and Geneviève walk in the gardens and comment on the gloomy atmosphere which surrounds them without respite.

Mélisande: "Il fait sombre dans les jardins. Et quelles forêts, quelles forêts tout autour des palais !...."

Geneviève: "Oui; cela m'étonnait aussi quand je suis arrive ici; et cela étonne <u>tout le monde</u>. Il y a des endroits ou l'on ne voit jamais le soleil. Mais l'on s'y fait si vite... Il y a longtemps ... il y a longtemps ... Il y a presque quarante ans que je suis ici. Regardez, de l'autre côte, Vous aurez la clarté <u>de la mer</u>".

In the final act Mélisande, now dying, asks of her beloved and understanding Arkël,

"Ouvrez la fenêtre ... ouvrez la fenêtre ...
..... la grande fenêtre ... c'est pour voir"..

Arkël: "Est-ce que l'air de la mer n'est pas trop froid ce soir?"

.....

Mélisande: "Est-ce le soleil qui se couche?"

Arkël: "Oui; c'est le soleil qui se couche sur la mer; il est tard. Comment te trouves-tu, Mélisande?"

Mélisande: "Bien, bien ....."

It is only when she finally sees the dying sun that the realisation of all the sadness and turbulence contained within the castle becomes clear to her and she can thus die knowing possibly a great deal of all that troubles the people around her. She must also die because without Pélleas she cannot live happily. After his death she says "Je n'ai pas de courage", and from then onwards we know that her death can be the only outcome. This is not only because of the resemblance between the denouement of this play and that of "Tristan und Isolde", but because of her now greatly magnified realisation of the essential sadness of human existence there is no longer any need to prolong the search for reality which constitutes our life and so she dies. This happens however without her being fully conscious of what is happening to her, and it seems that here is a simple prototype for the death (in a metaphorical sense) of the woman in Poulenc's "La Voix Humaine". This in itself would make the play, and therefore the operatic denouement, important as foreshadowing the concept of the cause of triumphant femininity, however tragic, debased, or pathetic the outcome of the action may be. For this reason if for no other, I would see this play and its grading or status placing of characters as being as important

as were Monteverdi's musical innovations in large forms or the musico/dramatic Romanticism of "Die Zauberflöte" were at the beginning of other key areas of musical and literary development. As a dubious generalisation, one could say of "Pelléas et Mélisande", that it represents either a sudden dream, vanished almost before it is fully realised, or else it is a minute part, in terms of a single man's imagination, of eternity and eternal values. The time-scale, that is here, the kind of time-passing that one is conscious of in the Wagnerian music drama, varies largely with one's instinctive reaction to the associative ideas of each location, and this effect is gained by Maeterlinck's skilful and always appropriate use of long and short speeds, hurried dialogue and his favourite device of repetition of short phrases or words.

Character development in the usual sense is almost forgotten here, and although it is apparent from the opening scene that Melisande is very much the tragic figure in the sense that she will doubtless live and die without finding much happiness or stability, her own intrinsic personality is hardly revealed at all, either through her own actions or as a result of the actions of others. Joseph Kerman and Laurence Gilman both see a certain amount of traditional characterisation in Golaud, but nevertheless all the characters seem to be far removed from the progress and expectations of a normal "conventional bourgeois" play and as static and horribly isolated people, (surely it is this isolation which accounts for the lack of understanding held towards and by Golaud? Only Arkël has the wisdom to see the inevitable loneliness of mankind and to benefit from any virtues which may arise from this state) they form excellent examples of

symbolic and Continental transliterations of the paradoxical stifling isolation of visual English Pre-Raphaelitism.

The use of personality placings here almost constitutes a reversal to Mozartian ideas, and more specifically those which relate to the concepts of human contrast adopted from the Commedia dell'Arte, as in for example, "Cosi fan Tutte". Here Mélisande represents the two usual female characters of the classical play as a single complex amalgam of differing traits and dramatic significances. She is all the more distraught and complex because not only is she greatly desired by both Golaud and Pelléas, but she stands in a pathetically insoluble situation of blood relationships to them both, a relationship which is far removed in expression and awareness from the earlier Italian devices of disguise, or is even far sadder in consequence at least, from the easily resolved purposeful cross-currents of mistaken identity in Fidelio. In Maeterlinck the sexual undertones which blossomed later in the new century with terrifying power are already consistently apparent and dangerous. The child Yniold is almost as tragic as the child that Melisande is to bear, and in his own scene which is incidentally full of a symbolism which I think is consciously unsubtle, he is a pathetic clown figure. Like Erik Satie, he wants to know so much but cannot organize or even come to agreeable terms with the material world in order to gain some kind of mental stability.

The words themselves, the very stuff of poetry, to paraphrase Mallarme, may be said to exist on three levels pertaining to the actual physical variants of the play. The castle, the external forest and the open sea,

the underground caverns, all call for very different verbal settings and imagery and Maeterlinck cleverly binds the whole work together by relating similarly placed scenes with recurring motivic words or associative ideas.

In order to illustrate the technical properties of the play as briefly as possible, I propose to give a precis of each scene by splitting these properties three ways; for each scene I shall comment in order, on the use of words, the symbolism and the dramatic action, in which is understood the relationship between speed and impact of action and the relative passage of time. To clarify the physical situations I should like to introduce first a brief plan of the actual movement sequences throughout the play.

1. A forest
   - 2), 5), 11), 12), 14) A room in the castle
   - 3), 10) A place in front of the castle
   - 4), 13) A fountain
   - 6 Before a cavern
   - 7 A castle tower
   - 8 The castle caverns
   - 9 A terrace before the caverns

The events of primary narrative importance all take place within the castle, despite the dramatically more interesting events of the outdoor scenes, with the possible exception of Yniold's monologue in Act Three, Scène Four.

CHAPTER TEN

AN ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY ON THE PLAY "PELLEAS ET MELISANDE" BY MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Act One Scene One

1. Use of Words

The intense subjectivity of Golaud is emphasised by the constant use of the personal pronoun and of words like "perdu" and "mal" and all the associative ideas connected with them; he frequently repeats also the phrase "Au bord de l'eau". The uncertainty of his speech to Mélisande is constantly noticeable; he says both "tu" and "vous" indiscriminately and she replies in short hastily repeated phrases, "Oh! Oh! perdue ici. Je ne suis pas d'ici. Je ne suis pas née là". Such lines serve also to indicate the general indeterminacy of the setting. This is also brought out when he asks her name, and because a definite sense of the establishment of acknowledged contact is thus assumed, the reality of their relationship becomes a little clearer, enhanced by the gracious and flowing device of echoed phrases passing from one person to another.

Mélisande: "Je reste ici".

Golaud: "Vous ne pouvez pas rester ici toute seule. Vous ne pouvez rester ici toute la nuit! ..... Comment vous nommez-vous?"

Mélisande: "Mélisande" .....

Golaud: "Vous ne pouvez pas rester ici, Mélisande. Venez avec moi".

Mélisande: "Je reste ici"...etc...

This scene is filled with a soft intimate dialogue which highlights both the gentleness of Mélisande and the frustrated uncertainty of Golaud, by which we begin to realise that Maeterlinck (and as a corollary, Debussy), was not so far removed from the essence of Wagnerian introspection wherein

outwardly physical dramatic action is nothing more than a convenient symbol of the workings of man's innermost soul and all the struggles he has with himself and others in his relationships with them.

2. Symbolism

Golaud says "Je ne pourrais plus sortir de cette forêt", and we are made aware from the outset that this is an Alice-like forest, covered by the kind of fear that Lewis Carrol created through the symbol of a huge raven. This brings a sense of catastrophe, and worse, of finality, as implied by the verbal symbols of death, wounds, and blood. Mélisande weeps by the waters of a well. Water can be a symbol, amongst many others, of boundlessness and the inevitability of fate, but here water is to become a frequent symbol of a dreadful yearning for the unknown. She is quite defenceless .... "Qui est-ce qui vous a fait du mal?" asks Golaud and she replies "Tous! Tous!". The lost crown possibly represents the former happiness she has known and now lost yet she will not allow Golaud to try to recover it for her; this imparts an aspect of unreality to the meaning and use of the symbol itself.

The important thing to keep in mind is that direct though this symbolism seems to be, it nevertheless represents something irrational and even almost unnecessary unless it is placed here to express Mélisande's idea of the futility of action. Again, Golaud says, "Vous ne fermez jamais les yeux", she replies automatically "Si, si, je les ferme la nuit". It is important to notice that both are lost in the forest entirely by chance. Neither chose this predicament, and their initial speech contains many disjointed dialogue phrases which emphasise this unreality and strange lack of co-

ordination existing between their present physical state, and (thus) their confused individual minds. He asks "Quel age avez-vous?" and she simply says as if in a different place or time, "Je commence à avoir froid".

3. Dramatic action

The opening is gloomy and has an air of imminent foreboding. The sense of drama results largely from the symbolic opposing of two varied characters. Golaud declares some kind of feeling for Mélisande but she is passive, and so a conflict is immediately set up. She is only curious about his age, and in fact it is only the associative ambience of the setting which presents any sense of drama, so that here is perhaps a case of form overriding content. This is exemplified by the fact that Mélisande's first words "ne me touchez pas" appear again almost at the end of the scene.

Act One Scene Two

1. Use of words

This opens with what in any other writer would be a device of intense weakness and slowness but which here adds to the charm of the gradual build-up of a system of montage scenes. The reported repetition of the opening of the play is given in extremely simple language which has its own charm and is compelling in that we want unconsciously to see how Maeterlinck can vary such a straightforward series of facts. He begins thus ..... "Un soir je l'ai trouvée tout en pleurs au bord d'une fontaine dans la forêt où je me suis perdu". The actual aural effect of real linguistic repetition is here the first intimation of Maeterlinck's attempts to fuse the normal progressions of dramatic movement into a

sphere of timelessness, and to avoid any superfluous distractions, he uses everyday conventional French speech. Arkël's first appearance in the play displays what is to become his 'trademark', a propensity for simple yet very decisive and dynamic repetition within a context of gentle firm moralising; "Cela peut vous paraître étrange, parce que nous ne voyons jamais que l'envers des destinées, l'envers même de la notre!" The words at the end of Pelléas' letter are decisive when he delivers his ultimatum concerning his return home ... "Si non j'irai plus loin et ne reviendra plus". The repetition is now becoming more developed in that it is placed to some purpose of meaning and movement.

Another similar verbal device now appears which is not strictly an echo of previous words but which has somewhat the same immediate effect upon the listener. Arkël is commenting on Golaud's letter and says, "Il ne pouvait pas rester seul, et depuis la mort de sa femme il était triste d'être seul"...This is followed by,

"Et ce mariage allait mettre fin à de longues guerres, à de vieilles haines....Il ne l'a pas voulu ainsi"...and later, "Il sait mieux que moi son avenir".....

There is a familiar and poetic reference to death. "Il dit qu'il sait exactement le jour ou la mort doit venir ... Il m'a dit que je puis arriver avant elle si je veux". This of course can be considered as part of the symbolic and dramatic action of this scene as well, as it implies an element of choice and creates a certain tension as a result of the implication of man's struggle against death.

2. Symbolism

The two letters, Golaud's read by Geneviève, and the one from Pelléas's friend Marcellus both involve travel and perhaps signify Maeterlinck's love of the mysticism/spiritualism cult then popular in England and France. The second letter complements the first and also enlarges upon the feelings of death which pervade the castle even though the news of Golaud's homecoming should be a matter for joy. Arkël is the only really stable and sensible character, yet he casually reaffirms the element of chance when he tells Pelléas to choose carefully between his father and his friend in the question of loyalty. Geneviève, whose name is itself an ancient symbol of mystery and possibly of witchcraft orders the lamp to be lit according to Golaud's instructions. This lighting of the lamp is a constant symbol throughout, and appears later when Pelléas and Golaud are in the castle caverns, and again when Golaud and Yniold are outside the room in which Pelléas and Mélisande are talking. The usual symbol of mental illumination or understanding which this would normally evoke is made all the more pertinent at each appearance by its being contrasted with the ubiquitous darkness and human blindness of the play. It is also a very Tristanesque symbol at this stage in the action and as such stands out like a central piercing figure. The visual image of a Gustave Moreau painting seems a strongly applicable analogy and one could almost conceive of the stage set in terms of this passionate and highly skilled artist. This image of the lamp, coupled with that of Pelléas's need to choose between father and friend is symptomatic of the unity greatly needed in this family of lonely individualists.

3. Dramatic Action

The reading of the letter provides the first real evidence of a unity of time and action which Maeterlinck so carefully sought. In fact, although this is a well-worn theatrical gambit, here it does not frustrate us because it is linked to the present by pertinent comment from the other persons, mainly by the wise Arkèl who fulfils an important role as father/God figure, or on a less exalted plane, the adviser figure of classical European drama and opera as we see in Mozart's Don Alfonso or Beethoven's less prominent Rocco. The dramatic resolution of these first two scenes culminates in a symbolic movement from darkness to the promised light of the lamp which is to be lit for the tragic Golaud's homecoming.

Act One Scene Three

1. Use of words

The words now are more drawn out by the use of lengthy syllables, and Geneviève's speech to Mélisande excellently conveys the atmosphere of the slow, dark, and tedious life of the castle and its surroundings. The brief snatches of repeated phrases appear again, however, to enhance the implication and innate beauty of the words as when she says, "cela m'étonnait ..... et cela étonne tout le monde ..." and later "Il y a longtemps, il y a longtemps". This entire scene is full of words searching for the clarity of knowledge as opposed to the darkness or uncertainty of unhappiness. Genevieve says, "Il y a des endroits ou l'on ne voit jamais le soleil" ..... and adds "Regardez, de l'autre côte, vous aurez la clarté de la mer". Pelléas gives a sense of location, both actual and symbolic,

to this search for light; "Je venais du côté de la mer" to which Geneviève explains, "Nous aussi, nous cherchons la clarté. Ici il fait un peu plus clair, et cependant la mer est sombre", and through the constant mist they all see the vanishing light of the ship which brought Mélisande to the castle.

2. Symbolism

The importance of the dark castle symbolises far more than the opposition of darkness with light, and acts as a static element which should for the moment dispense with any disturbing or unnecessary action either of actual movement or development of character progress. This is to empty one's mind of everything except the fact of the period of time which Genevieve has spent at the castle. As a contrast to this the sea is mentioned as exemplifying the salvation of an open and free mind, although its very uncertainty can cause disaster. After Geneviève's speech ending "la mer est sombre", Pelléas says "Nous aurons une tempête cette nuit. Il y en a toutes les nuits depuis quelque temps et cependant elle est si calme maintenant. On s'embarquerait sans le savoir et l'on ne reviendrait plus."

This has a strange echo of Golaud's statement earlier that if the welcoming lamp is not lit for him, then he will go far away, "et ne reviendra plus". It is interesting to note that in the opera Debussy omits a sentence of Geneviève's which appears in the play before she says "Il est temps de rentrer", Maeterlinck makes her say, "Is no-one going to speak any more?...Have you nothing more to say to one another?.." This causes her to appear in the light of a somewhat premature Dea ex Machina, and would

have supplied a useful and perspicacious comment for operatic inclusion, as it oddly foreshadows Yniold's comment at the end of his scene in Act Four, where he says, distractedly, "Je vais dire quelque chose à quelqu'un". As a whole it seems that this scene must be regarded almost as an allegory and not merely as a piece of extended symbolism. The dialogue, if taken at simply analogically or explicatively symbolic value, would be trite in the extreme and would contribute very little to the sense or progression of the plot, so that it is necessary to see all three characters as mouthpieces for Maeterlinck's ideas about the unexpected and chance elements that make up the intangible essence of being human.

3. Dramatic Action

The first meeting between Pelléas and Mélisande is deliberately calm and almost casual. Their conversation is unmemorable and the only highlight in a dramatic sense is Mélisande's dismay that Pelléas may leave the following day. There is too, a deliberate ambiguity here; we are not sure whether Pelléas is leaving because of Marcellus or because of any concealed feeling for Mélisande. This is a simple yet not very clear or convincing device at this point, although it may be a purposeful ambiguity to establish a position of physical and emotional uncertainty between the two people, which is evinced when he says "Descendons par ici ... Voulez-vous me donner la main?" and she replies, "Voyez, voyez, j'ai les mains pleines de fleurs", to which he says, "Je vous soutiendra par le bras".

Act Two Scene One

1. Use of words

A sharp contrast with Act One appears from the outset with the description of the heat of the day. Pelléas says "il fait trop chaud dans les jardins. On étouffe aujourd'hui, même à l'ombre des arbres". But the water image can never be far away and Mélisande provides a note of calm coolness; "Oh! l'eau est claire. Elle est fraîche comme l'hiver". The simple repetitive pattern intrudes again to introduce a further ubiquitous and innate symbolism, common throughout the play. When speaking of the fountain she says, "Elle ouvrait les yeux des aveugles. On l'appelle encore 'la fontaine des aveugles'". Then she comments on Arkël's state "Depuis que le roi est presque aveugle lui-meme". The euphony of the words "cheveux" and "chevelure" is expressed thus, "Oh! votre chevelure..... .....Vos cheveux ont plongé dans l'eau", which Mélisande elaborates by saying, "Oui, ils sont plus longs que mes bras. Ils sont plus longs que moi". The anguished repetition when the ring is lost is symptomatic of Maeterlinck's ability to create a feeling of tension and despair. They look in the well in vain; "ce n'est pas elle, ce n'est plus elle, Elle est perdue, perdue".

2. Symbolism

The changed atmosphere of this scene involves symbolism almost of a natural 'hot-house' kind, reminiscent of Maeterlinck's own "Serres Chaudes" series of poems.[1] There is a contrast of the heat felt, even in the shadows, with the coolness of the water and the implied coolness of the marble basin. Even this is symptomatic of the pseudo-Mediaevalism of the

setting. There is no expected rough stone in this fictitious world, but instead the death-like cold of marble as one would see it in a stylised Isolde sketch by Beardsley (except for the more tragic reality of Yniold's later scene). Mélisande's reference to her hands symbolises the apparently decadent and morbidly self-aware feeling held by such a typical fin-de-siècle quasi-Rossetti heroine. Pelléas says, "Je vais vous tenir par la main", but she says "Non, non, je voudrais y plonger mes deux mains ... On dirait que mes mains sont malades aujourd'hui". Then her hair dips into the water and we begin to realise that it is water that is always the cause of her unhappiness, from the time that she came to the castle over the water, to her death bed where she sees the sun set over water, not forgetting the ill-fated well in the forest and the blindman's well. Pelléas remembers that Golaud found Mélisande beside a well and his actual recalling of this, as well as being a point of dramatic interest which interrupts our passive acceptance of the events of the stage and causes us to reconsider the theatrical passage of time, symbolises the attempt to gain a sense of temporal unity for which Maeterlinck strove so hard and here (I feel) generally successfully. The losing of the ring could symbolise the death of her love for Golaud even though she is as yet unaware of this fact. A later comment by Golaud may serve to confirm this. It is fascinating to notice how Maeterlinck has utilised a concept stemming from the powers of magic when he makes the ring fall exactly at mid-day and the obvious terminology pertaining to this, such as the constant use of the word "briller" acts as a neat and obvious contrasting symbol to the mist and darkness of the earlier scenes. The idea of magic, here of course, white

and not black as would occur at the opposite pole of midnight, is enhanced by Mélisande's words extolling the apparent power of the universe and exhibits a little further the pantheistic ideas prevalent during the period of literature preceding Maeterlinck, especiall as evinced in England. "Je l'ai jetée trop haut du côté du ciel". The scene ends with words which although of undoubted symbolic importance throughout the play because of the tragically shortsighted innocence of both Pelléas, Golaud and Mélisande, really belong to an assessment of the dramatic exigencies of the scene; the two central figures have no deceit in them and resolve to tell Golaud about the loss of the ring, with "la verité, la verité".

3. Dramatic Action

The positioning of the scene, and I say that advisedly, with full consideration of the method of montage building by which Maeterlinck has created a mosaic of scenes, pursues the action well in every respect. It forms, to borrow a musical term, an intermediate cadence within the exposition, albeit an interrupted cadence of no little dramatic ferocity and disturbance. Great prominence is given to the well and its deep waters. She says, "Si quelque chose brillait au fond, on le verrait peut-être", as if she is trying to regain her lost love, that is, the love or the symbol of that love which she sought when Golaud first found her and when she refused to let him search for this unknown desire. Her hair is gradually taking on the role almost of a real stage-property and after her hair falls into the water, she again recalls the earlier atmosphere and says "Oh! Oh! J'ai vu passer quelque chose au fond de l'eau", in order to prevent Pelléas questioning her about Golaud. The final loss of Golaud's

ring is not so dramatic in itself as a present active happening, but as a single dream-like incident in a tracery of events which one feels from the outset can only lead to disaster.

Scene Two

1. Use of words

Golaud has a long, slow, narrative, which is given full effect by the use of very euphonious words and images of strength and attractiveness. ".... je croyais avoir toute la forêt sur ma poitrine. Je croyais que mon coeur était déchiré. Mais mon coeur est solide". The importance of the idea of illness, whether mental or physical is well brought out in Mélisande's reply, which is hasty and jumbled especially in her assertions that "je suis malade", and "Seigneur, je ne suis pas heureuse ici". Her speech becomes hurried when she tells Golaud that she thinks Pelléas is not very fond of her and when she adds that the ring has been lost. This section is extended if only because of the combination of short, partly repeated phrases, spoken between many irregular pauses, which because of the apparent realism of their placing, would possibly seem to be against all the conventional ideas of dramatic construction, especially given such a pre-conceived plot form and the limitations of the period.

Golaud: "Tiens, ou est l'anneau que je t'avais donné?"

Mélisande: "L'anneau?"

Golaud: "Oui; la bague de nos noces, ou est elle?"

Mélisande: "Je crois ... je crois qu'elle est tombée".

Golaud: "Tombée ... Ou est elle tombée? Tu ne l'as perdue?"

Mélisande: "Non, elle est tombée, elle doit être tombée. Mais je sais où elle est". ..... and so on.

TEXT CUT OFF IN ORIGINAL

It is easy to see from this extract how closely Maeterlinck mingles verbal usage, symbolism of a superficial yet effective kind, and the obtaining of dramatic purpose and result so that all become virtually inextricably part of a single process of composition and technical obedience to his very perceptive and rhythmic drawing of human character. Almost every short speech after Golaud's insistence that she must find the ring begins with a short repeated phrase, and the scene ends, appropriately enough with the unhappy Mélisande's cry, "Oh! Oh! je ne suis pas heureuse".

2. Symbolism

Here is the first real premonition of tragedy, both of dramatic incident and inherent (and therefore unavoidable) personality. The symbolism of the horse bolting is obvious in the light of European legend and superstition but Golaud is not yet perceptive enough to suspect anything. The mention of blood on Golaud's pillow is easily seen as a symbolic transference from Act One Scene One where he comments on the "traces du sang" of a wounded beast that he cannot find. Now he says, although hurt, "Je suis fait du fer et du sang", and adds "Je dormirai comme un enfant", which is no doubt prophetic of his later accusatory description of Mélisande and of course, of the final appearance of the pathetic baby whose debatable future concludes the play. Mélisande herself is unhappy and feels that death is not far away. Her slightly veiled comments about Pelléas somewhat refute the earlier desire for "la verité". The symbolism of lightness, human eyes and the perception of mental clarity is well evinced here. She must go to look for the ring "dans l'obscurité" and in order not to be afraid, Golaud tells her to take Pelléas with her. Her only reply is that "Il me

parle parfois. Il ne m'aime pas, je crois; je l'ai vu dans ces yeux". The symbolism and drama become one at the point where Golaud says of the lost ring, "tu ne sais pas ce que c'est; tu ne sais pas d'ou elle vient. J'aimerais mieux avoir perdu tout ce que j'ai plûtot que d'avoir perdu cette bague". The reason for this is never explained but it does impart a great strength and at the same time a weakness, because it is never resolved and in such a consciously quasi-Mediaeval play one would expect all the loose ends of incidental comment to be drawn naturally into the elements of the final denouement. I think that the following passage of simple description serves very well to orientate the play's pictorial setting as I see it within the background of a strong English literary and visual influence.

Golaud: "Fait-il trop triste ici? Il est vrai que ce château est très vieux et très sombre... Il est très froid et très profond. Et tous ceux qui l'habitent sont déjà vieux. Et la compagne peut sembler triste aussi, avec toutes ces forêts, toutes ses vieilles forêts sans lumière. Mais on peut égayer tout cela si l'on veut".

Here finally is Maeterlinck speaking surely, to reassure us as well as Mélisande, that life is made of many emotions and must be thus accepted.

"Et puis, la joie, la joie, on n'en a pas tous les jours".

3. Dramatic Action

The dramatic importance results almost entirely from the symbolism, as I have already implied. Mélisande's apparent illness, though more of the mind than the body, is a dramatic prelude to her confession about the ring. Despite her denial that Pelléas has upset her, which one would at first

conclude to be a deliberate attempt to mislead Golaud, I think that she is still unaware of all the implications of Pelléas's presence. If one discounts the properties and slightly oblique symbols of the dialogue in this scene, it would be a terribly banal piece of writing except possibly for the irony of this sentence in Golaud's last speech ... "Pelléas fera tout ce que tu lui demandes".

Scene Three

1. Use of words

Pelleas here has a euphonious and mellifluous speech. His description of the sea and the cave lit by the stars is one of the most imaginative and flowing passages in the play. "Il n'y a pas d'étoiles de ce côté. Attendons que la lune ait déchiré ce grand nuage; ..... Je n'ai pas songé à emporter une torche ou une lanterne. Mais je pense que la clarté du ciel nous suffira". Here the repetition and quickly moving rhythmic impetus of the words lends an air of prolonged unreality. "Il n'y a pas de danger. Nous nous arrêterons au moment où nous n'apercevrons plus la clarté de la mer". There is the idea of transference of 'humour' in the Renaissance sense, when Pelléas talks of the sea, "elle ne semble pas heuseuse ce soir".

2. Symbolism

Again the symbolism results from and partakes in the combined effects of all the three elements of each scene which I have separated throughout this precis. The beauty of the description gives another slant to the dramatic angle. The unexpected symbols of the three old men in the cave is open to many interpretations, but at its simplest, this symbol could

reflect the state of reality and ordinary life in Allemonde, away from the isolated introversion of the castle. The ideas of poverty and sleep imply a general impotence, but whether this is a sexual oddity or merely one reflecting the self-deceptive state of a country whose collective sensibility hides (metaphorically speaking) in caves and darkness rather than exposing itself to the open harshness and reality of the sun (or even the moon), it is perhaps impossible to establish. This type of symbolism is by no means new to literary expression. In "Samson Agonistes", Milton saw the same mentality seeking refuge from normality by the symbolic process, although his manner of expressing this was vastly different from the more diffuse, consciously free and sophisticated delicacy of the Impressionist world, whether then depicted in words, paint or sound.

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
'Let there be light, and light was over all',
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part, why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?

Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death
And buried; but O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave;

The lines I have underlined show in a manner more familiar to English readers the concept of a Biblically based philosophy which Maeterlinck in his different way tried to express. The end of the scene exhibits mainly Pelléas's natural and healthy interest in the beggars and all their implied sufferings, in strong contrast to Melisande's fear of everything she sees and feels.

3. Dramatic Action

This scene is not of great dramatic interest. It merely acts as an incidental interlude in the emotional progress of the two main characters who are now isolated for the first time (except for Act Two, Scene One, but there they are always conscious, through the loss of the ring, of Golaud's presence) although even given such a physically and dramatically apt opportunity, Maeterlinck does not allow Mélisande's character to display itself in any kind of progressive manner.

As I have said before I cannot regard this as an inherent or professionally acquired weakness in Maeterlinck, any more than it is sensible or valid to find weaknesses in Ravel or Debussy, as many people seem to do, simply because they did not adhere to traditional rules of thematic or motivic development of their ideas within a formally and arbitrarily designed mould. It is fascinating to note at this point, how the lovers entirely discard any mention of their former vows to disclose only "la verité" !

Act Three Scene One

1. Use of words

Mélisande's 'Tower Song' is full of the repetition which is becoming a trademark of the play's structure, although the operatic version of the song adds greatly to Maeterlinck's original two lines and omits a later song which seems a little out of place within the present progress of the drama. Even Pelléas announces his arrival after the lyricism of the song thus;

Pelléas: "Hola, hola ho!"

Mélisande: "qui est là?"

Pelléas: "Moi, moi et moi".

The conversational repetition seems slow here, despite the approaching emotional climax and romantic atmosphere of this passage and action;

Pelléas says: "Laisse-moi venir plus près de toi" and she replies,

"Je ne puis pas venir plus près de toi".

Then he says, "donne-moi du moins ta main" which although at first appearing slow and clumsy may well have been a deliberately heavy use of language on Maeterlinck's part. There is still much beauty in this section ...

"Toute ta chevelure, Mélisande, toute ta chevelure,
est tombée de la tour".

"Je les tiens dans les mains, je les tiens dans la bouche- je les tiens dans les bras- je les mets autour de mon cou".

This imagery becomes wider and full of a warm all-embracing sentiment which is never merely fanciful:

"Je ne te délivre pas cette nuit- Tu es ma prisonnière cette nuit, toute la nuit, toute la nuit!"

The direction and speed of the language changes at the arrival of Golaud, and his speech is hurried and divested of the gentle languor of the previous dreamy dialogue.

"Il est près de minuit. Ne jouez pas ainsi dans l'obscurité- Vous êtes des enfants!"

2. Symbolism

Mélisande's self-conscious and emphasised combing of her hair (always a potent force in a context even remotely touching upon magic or legendary superstition), is overlaid with an almost ritualistic significance by her invocation of the saints. The mention of the day and time of her birth ("Je suis née un dimanche à midi") is omitted in the play's translation and it would be interesting to know why Debussy felt inclined to insert such a statement at that point. There is what could nearly amount to a separate little 'play-within-a-play' in this part of the scene, as the symbolism is based on new materials and the action follows quick and well-defined steps of its own, as follows;

a) Pelléas enters and comments on her singing "comme un oiseau qui n'est pas d'ici".

b) She stages the drama by mentioning her hair.

c) He begs her not to lean far out of the window but

d) he is amazed by her beauty and climbs the tower asking her to take his hand as he tells her he must go away the following day.

e) She refuses to take his hand unless he promises to wait, which he does and

f) her fancy leads her to believe that "je vois une rose dans les ténèbres" which he can't see.

g) The climax comes when her hair falls around him, recalling her earlier

song which may or may not have been consciously prophetic on her part;

> "Mes longs cheveux descendent jusqu'au seuil de la tour.
> Mes cheveux vous attendent tout le long de la tour - et
> tout le long du jour, et tout le long du jour".

Now she says at this later stage,

> "Oh! Oh! mes cheveux descendent de la tour".

Pelléas is completely overhwlemed and again the symbolism resolves itself around a neat and poetic transference of 'humours'. Of her hair he says

> "Ils vivent comme des oiseaux dans mes mains. Et ils
> m'aiment, ils m'aiment plus que toi ...

to be followed soon after their mutual realisation of their love by .....

Mélisande: "Qu'est-ce qui vole autour de moi?"

Pelléas: "Ce sont les colombes qui sortent de la tour ... Je les ai effrayées".

It could well be that the flight of the doves represents the loss of Mélisande's innocence, transferred through the bird imagery of her hair to herself as she appears high before Pelléas in the tower. All the Mediaeval attributes of the wooing of a courtly lover are there, but tinged now with a mild yet definite sexuality. The symbol of the rose is also Mediaeval in origin in the context of human passion, yet it could so easily be related to the wonderfully imaginative and perceptive rose imagery of Yeats, whose poem "The Secret Rose" always creates for me more of the far-seeing mythological fin-de-siecle Anglo-French atmosphere than many other more obvious works.

And him who sold tillage, and house and goods,
And sought through lands and islands numberless years,
Until he found, with laughter and with tears,
A woman of so shining loveliness
That men threshed corn at midnight by a tress,
A little stolen tress. I too, await
The hour of thy great wind of love and hate.
When shall the stars be blown out of the sky,
Like the sparks blown out of a smithy, and die?
Surely thine hour has come, thy great wind blows,
Far-off, most secret, and inviolate Rose?

In this scene Golaud's entry is witch-like; he appears to these children in much the same light as any person of real authority would seem to the strange children of Cocteau's "Les Enfants Terribles".

3. Dramatic Action

Despite the climax of a warm and sudden emotionalism this scene is not as dramatically exciting as were the second and third scenes of Act Two, but rather it provides a necessary love-play interlude. I suppose that, by inversion, one could say that the lack of active drama at the end merely prolongs the gradual tense yet unresolved build-up without breaking its ambience at all. Golaud is still largely unaware, as are Pelleas and Melisande of what is happening to him.

Scene Two

1. Use of words

There is a quick nervosity of the repeated speech throughout this short scene. Golaud speaks to Pelléas:

"voici l'eau stagnante dont je vous parlais ...
Sentez-vous l'odeur de mort qui monte? Allons

jusqu'au bout de ce rocher qui surplombe et penchez
vous un peu. Elle viendra vous frapper au visage".

The hot-house atmosphere of the setting is very obvious and effective here and is best evinced at the end of the scene when Pelléas says on noticing the trembling of the lantern, "J'étouffe ici, sortons".

2. Symbolism

The setting in the underground caves beneath the castle simply manifests the dramatic build-up of tension through the medium of an elementary symbol. There is as yet no real danger, only the "smell of death" which is a ubiquitous symbol anyway.

3. Dramatic Action

Symbolism and drama become one here quite automatically as the scene leads to the next more actively dramatic one. The quivering of the lantern suggests the beginning of the collapse of the love-progress of Pelléas and Mélisande because of Golaud's suspicions, and more interesting at this period, because as the two lovers become more self-aware, their initial delight and innocence becomes tainted by the imperfections of external things and so loses much of its original splendour.

Scene Three

1. Use of words

The speech is freer now and the use of similes opens up a breadth of feeling after the enclosed subdued simplicity of the previous scene. "Il y a la un air humide et lourd comme une rosée de plomb, et des ténèbres épaisses comme une pâté empoisonée". Notice the alliteration and medial rhyming in the following, "tout l'air de toute la mer" ..... "...frais

comme une feuille qui vient de s'ouvrir sur les petites lames vertes". There is a conscious change of mood; "l'odeur de la verdure et des roses mouillées monte".

2. Symbolism

There is a conscious effort to place two symbols of progression side by side. First, Pelléas's obvious relief at being under the visible sight of the sun; he had felt ill at ease underground and now the sea breeze recalls for him the beauty of the gardens. There is again a mystic significance attached to the mention of 'midi' when he says "Il doit être près de midi; elles (the flowers) sont déjà dans l'ombre de la tour". Also Mélisande and Geneviève are seen at a castle window; "Elles se sont refugiées du côté de l'ombre". Mélisande's pregnancy may be little more than a movement towards an additional dramatic interest; as an element of symbolism it merely enhances the position of her womanhood and places an unmentioned barrier between herself and Pelléas.

3. Dramatic Action

Pelléas should be warned now, even though Golaud is still innocent of all that is taking place and seems to warn Pelléas out of a simple sense of duty rather than out of a feeling of real necessity; "Vous êtes plus âgé qu'elle, il suffira de vous l'avoir dit".

Scene Four

1. Use of words

The verbal element here is reduced to short conversational fragments, tending, however towards a well-integrated monody, as Yniold usually replies as he is expected to do.

Golaud: "Je ne te vois plus du tout depuis quelque temps. Tu m'abandonnes aussi; tu es toujours chez petite mère ..... elle est souvent avec ton oncle Pelléas, n'est-ce pas?..."

Yniold: "Oui, oui, toujours, petit père, quand vous n'êtes pas la".

Golaud: "Mais on m'a dit qu'ils ne s'aiment pas. Il paraît qu'ils se querellent souvent, non? Est-ce vrai?".

Golaud's agitation shows throughout in anguished questions or exclamations of great sorrow, usually in short hurried phrases.

2. Symbolism

From the front of the castle Golaud says to Yniold ... "nous verrons d'ici ce qui se passe dans la forêt." This sums up the situation perfectly in Golaud's pathetically hopeful terms, as he really should do no more than look at the situation from inside his own heart. When someone passes with a lantern in the garden we realise that this serves a dual purpose; that of diverting the flow of the conversation for a moment and more importantly, of reminding us once again of the ever-present symbol of the lantern which represents the light of perception and the contentment that can come from such inward illumination, although the position of the blind Arkël who is so wise, is a paradoxical affirmation that physical sight is not in itself the only adequate superficial symbol of inner clarity. There is deliberate confusion in the conversation concerning a door whose position and significance is uncertain, and a light in the castle which appears to have no definite physical reality: this almost approximates to the crazy confusion of the conversations of the mad people in such a recent artistic exercise as Fellini's film '8½'. Golaud's bribe to Yniold of a bow and arrows if he will tell him of Pelléas and Mélisande's private conversations

can be seen in the light of a pseudo-Mediaeval ambience or else, according to one's personal inclinations, as a facet of early Freudian psychology and its endless delight in man's dependence upon the powers and influences of his inherent sexual characteristics. The many verbal symbols of this scene seem to summarise the symbolic atmosphere of all the scenes, and through Golaud Maeterlinck shows that often it is true that "the child is father to the man", as here indeed, Yniold portrays far more calmness and acceptance of the situation between Pelléas and Mélisande than does Golaud. The conversation between the child and the man is cleverly woven so as to present a synthesis of the overall symbolic pattern and also to mould together the relationships between all the generations of this tragic family.

Golaud: "...de quoi parlent-ils?"

Yniold: "De moi; toujours de moi".

Golaud: "Et que disent-ils de toi?"

Yniold: "Ils disent que je serais très grand".

Golaud: "Ah! misère de ma vie! Je suis ici comme un aveugle qui cherche son trésor au fond de l'ocean! ... Je suis ici comme un nouveau né perdu dans la forêt et vous ... Mais voyons, Yniold ..... Ah! et que disent-ils de moi?"

Yniold: "Ils disent que je deviendrai aussi grand que vous".

.....

Golaud: "Ils ne te disent jamais d'aller jouer ailleurs?"

Yniold: "Non, petit père, ils ont peur quand je ne suis pas là".

Golaud: "Ils ont peur? ..... à quoi vois-tu qu'ils ont peur?"

Yniold: "Ils pleurent toujours dans l'obscurité".....

Golaud: ".....patience, mon Dieu, patience".

Yniold: "Quoi, petit père?"

Golaud: "Rien, rien, mon enfant. J'ai vu passer un loup dans la forêt."....

When Yniold shows Golaud how Pelléas and Mélisande embrace one another, he comments on the sharpness and colour of Golaud's beard; this recalls the first scene in which Mélisande commented in a similar fashion on the greyness of Golaud's beard.

The superficial symbolism between darkness and light is shown in the following piece of conversation; it also includes the ubiquitous lantern symbol and incidentally brings in a brief element of allegory to show that Golaud is becoming increasingly aware of the situation between the lovers.

Stage Direction. (La fenêtre sous laquelle ils sont assis s'éclaire en ce moment et sa clarté vient tomber sur eux).

Yniold: "Ah! Ah! petite mère allume sa lampe. Il fait clair, petit pere, il fait clair....."

Golaud: "Oui, il commence à faire clair". But nevertheless he says, "Restons dans l'ombre".

The final pertinent symbol of synthesis appears when Yniold says of Pelléas and Mélisande, "Ils ne ferment jamais les yeux", recalling the conversation between Golaud and Melisande in the first scene, and of course many other points of similar verbal contact throughout the play. The scene shows that whereas Golaud can only offer toys as a bribe, Yniold seems to feel the pain, in a mental sense, of an adult.

3. Dramatic Action

This provides a central area of action, which instead of showing yet another tableau of individual static presentation, gives a little more insight into the character of Golaud, and possibly presages by implication the action which we can guess he will take, owing to the nature he possesses (itself so well illustrated by being contrasted with that of Yniold).

Act Four Scene One

1. Use of words

The language here is normal conversational French with only a little repetition, but there is some well-balanced opposition of ideas between Pelléas and Mélisande which again lends an integrated and clearly explained air of monody to the entire conversation.

Pelléas: "Comme mon père l'a dit, tu ne me verras plus".

Mélisande: "Ne dis pas cela, Pelléas ... Je te verrai toujours; je te regarderai toujours".

Pelléas: "Tu auras beau regarder ... je serai si loin que tu ne pourras plus me voir".

There is a verbal balance at each end of the more intimate parts of the dialogue, as in the following example; Pelléas says, "Separons nous. J'entends parler derrière cette porte".

2. Symbolism

The symbolism is gradually becoming, as are all the other technical and aesthetic elements of the play's structure, more and more diffuse, as if Maeterlinck had exhausted his primary energetic depiction of these

elements in the first two acts. Now towards the end the structure seems to take on the appearance of the end of a huge arc, whose tail has lost much of its original density and fervour, and as Debussy was followed musically by a neo-Classic reaction (and I refer only to the position in France at this point) which affected to despise much of his fervent integrity and cultivated instead a conscious lighthearted sophistication under the influence of Satie and Jean Cocteau, so Maeterlinck foresaw by his own work the possible reaction to the kind of drama he was writing and developed his own dramatic structures well beyond the accepted norm at the time, so much so that significantly, his ideas matched with a rare sense of equality, the musical revolution instigated by Debussy. In this scene, there is little startling symbolism, except for the image of the door behind whose solidity the rest of the world lies concealed. Pelléas's further declaration of his intention to leave symbolises the concept of a journey of the spirit as well as of the body; that is, as a parallel to my previous remarks concerning a progressive forward view of dramatic structure this would be a journey into a new concept of man's mental capabilities in the new century. There is a real flashback to the symbolism of the very first scene again, where Pelléas and Mélisande arrange to meet at the 'Fountain of the Blind', with a note of foreboding;

Pelléas: "Dans le parc, près de la fontaine des aveugles?
Veux-tu? Viendras-tu? Ce sera le dernier soir;
je vais voyager comme mon père l'a dit. Tu ne
me verras plus".

3. Dramatic Action

The implications of their now understood mutual love are open to any possible outcome whether planned or coincidental. The tension concerning Pelléas's imminent departure robs the scene of its purely romantic climax, yet it adds a power and movement which is most effective. The really important dramatic aspect of the scene is that Pelléas realises, if he doesn't completely understand, that the most crucial period of his life is about to begin; this is emphasised by Pelléas's sick father, who is never seen on stage, yet he contributes this one extremely pertinent statement, which is strangely half echoed or paraphrased by Arkël when speaking of Mélisande in the next scene. Pelléas tells Mélisande of his father;

> "Il m'a pris la main et il m'a dit de cet air étrange qu'il a depuis qu'il est malade: 'Est-ce toi, Pelléas? Tiens, je ne l'avais jamais remarqué, mais tu as le visage grave et amical de ceux qui ne vivront pas longtemps ... Il faut voyager, il faut voyager'."

He follows this with a sad speech which is dramatically and symbolically interesting, in that it seems an imbalance that one person can have so much power to dispense or withold happiness from others, although one would have thought that Golaud and not Pelléas would have been the one so endowed with such power.

> "Ma mere l'écoutait et pleurait de joie. Tu ne t'en es pas aperçue? Toute la maison déjà revivre. On entend respirer, on entend marcher".

At this point one becomes aware of the almost magical, and therefore in everyday terms, the unreal powers and personalities of these puppet-like

people who are apparently helpless in the face of fate or destiny. This can also be seen in terms of accepted religious (i.e. Christian at this place and time) terms so that a quasi-Trinity is formed by Arkël, Pelléas's father and Pelléas himself.

Scene Two

1. Use of words

Arkël virtually repeats Pelléas's opening of the previous scene but so much more poetically. Pelléas had merely said "Mon père est sauvé", whereas Arkël elaborates this thus:

> "Maintenant que le père de Pelléas est sauvé, et que la maladie, la vieille servante de la morte a quitté le château, un peu de joie et un peu de soleil vont enfin rentrer dans la maison".

His entire monologue to Mélisande is poetic and verbally beautifully balanced, by virtue of the constant interchange of night and day imagery and all that can be implied by such interchange. He speaks of her appearance of sad expectation thus; "tu étais la, insouciante peut-être, mais avec l'air étrange et égaré de quelqu'un qui attendrait toujours un grand malheur au soleil dans un beau jardin."....."tu es trop jeune et trop belle pour vivre déjà jour et nuit sous l'haleine de la mort". Debussy here omits the following sentence, "You were perhaps of those that are unhappy without knowing it, and those are the most unhappy". The pace of the speech is quickened at the entrance of Golaud, and the short sharp words indicate his anger; "Ou est mon épée? Je venais chercher mon épée". The device of repetition is carried to what must surely be

its ultimate when Golaud sarcastically refutes Arkël's statement that Mélisande possesses "Une grande innocence", and repeats the phrase no less than seven times in all! His madness inclines him naturally to the kind of hurried phraseology in which Maeterlinck delights and it thus appears unforced and more automatic than ever in this scene: "Vous allez me suivre à genoux! A genoux devant moi! "

2. Symbolism

The atmosphere of death pervades this scene on two distinct levels and in two very different physical settings. At the calm opening of the scene one feels that even amongst the beauties of a garden the unhappiness of death is never far away. Arkël's speech symbolises the age gap between his generation and that of Mélisande and consequently their very different reactions to the problems around them. The blood imagery of Act One Scene One and Act Two Scene Two is recalled by Golaud's appearing with his forehead stained with blood. At this point it is possible to see Golaud as a replacement figure for Pelléas's father in the Trinity relationships and he would thus appear as a Christ-like figure. This of course would necessitate his being the moral victor in the mental struggle between himself and Mélisande and would place her and her protagonists in a very different light from what would be normally accepted. The scale of his anger is widened beyond the narrowness of subjectivity and he mentions the incidence of further famine in the land, implying a general barrenness and breakdown of society, as well as symbolically protracting Pelléas's much earlier comment to Mélisande concerning a famine; "On dirait qu'ils tiennent tous à mourir sous nos yeux". All of Golaud's speech is open to

several possible interpretations but I think maybe the best symbol of the scene is found in the final short speeches of the three people concerned.

Golaud: "Je suis trop vieux; et puis je ne suis pas un espion.
J'attendrai le hasard; et alors ... Oh! alors! ...
Simplement parce que c'est l'usage. Simplement parce
que c'est l'usage".

Arkël: "Qu'a t'il donc? Il est ivre?"

Mélisande: "Non, non, mais il ne m'aime plus ..... je ne suis pas
heureuse".

Arkël: "Si j'étais Dieu, j'aurais pitié du coeur des hommes".

3. Dramatic Action

This is the first unwarranted and expected crisis in the sense that we are totally unprepared for Golaud's outburst or even less for its outcome. His cruel treatment of Mélisande, when he swings her by her hair is probably the most dramatic action of the play, more so than his later killing of Pelléas or the elaborate build-up to Mélisande's death, as both these actions are in a sense expected. He regards her as a treacherous Absalom and shouts, "En avant! En arrière! Jusqu'à terre! ..... Je ris déjà comme un vieilard....". This hysterical laughter presages Pelléas's later similarly unsure laughter just before he is killed and it brings to mind the tragedy of laughter as it was seen by such a sympathetic and perceptive person as Henri Bergson, or the early and middle Impressionist painters who could instill the attitude of the utmost sadness into topically interesting characters like clowns, circus performers of all types, and the pathetic dancing girls of Paris, whose lives and professions demanded that they present a smiling face to the world at all times.

Scene Three

I find this in many ways the most fascinating and important scene of all. It is fairly short but is so skilfully written that it seems to bring out the loneliness not only of Yniold but of all the characters and, on a technical level, emphasises an aspect of the dramatic construction which is so obvious as to be overlooked through familiarity and a passive acceptance of the style. That is, the grouping of the people into very small units throughout, so that there is never a build-up to a real ensemble of any kind, except in the last Act, where the secondary characters are relatively superfluous anyway, and the central figure dies, leaving a painfully empty stage. There is so much verbal beauty, widely-varying symbolism (and notice that the word for stone appears in its feminine form) and dramatic implication in this scene, that I would prefer not to analyse it as I have done the previous ones but simply to quote the entire scene and allow the reader to make his own decisions about this most delicate and expressive piece of French Symbolist writing, which seems to bear out adequately Wallace Fowlie's assertion that

> "Ever since the rich period of symbolism, in fact, ever since the work of the two leading forerunners of Symbolism, Nerval and Baudelaire, French poetry has been obsessed with the idea of purity". [2]

The purity is sometimes sought in a rather sterile or perverted manner or in a consciously awkward approach towards the Christian idea of purity by negative means as we sometimes find in the amused harshness of Cocteau but in the case of Maeterlinck I think the assertion is a just and a clear-sighted one.

Scene 111. Une fontaine dans le parc.

On découvre le petit Yniold qui cherche à soulever un quartier de roc.

Yniold: "Oh! cette pierre est lourde...Elle est plus lourde que moi... Elle est plus lourde que tout le monde. Elle est plus lourde que tout...Je vois ma balle d'or entre le rocher et cette mechante pierre, Et je ne puis pas y atteindre...Mon petit bras n'est pas assez long. Et cette pierre ne veut pas être soulevée...On dirait qu'elle a des racines dans la terre... Oh! Oh! J'entends pleurer les moutons...Tiens! Il n'y a plus de soleil...Ils arrivent les petits moutons; ils arrivent...Il y en a! Il y en a! Ils ont peur du noir... Ils se serrent! Ils se serrent! Ils pleurent et ils vont vite! Il y en a qui voudraient prendre a droite...Ils voudraient tous aller a droite...Ils ne peuvent pas! ... Le Berger leur jette à la terre...Ah! Ah! Ils vont passer par ici...Je vais les voir de pres...Comme il y en a! ... Maitenant ils se taisent tous...Berger! pourquoi ne parlent-ils plus?"

Le Berger: "Parce que ce n'est pas le chemin de l'étable..."

Yniold: "Ou vont-ils? Berger? berger? ou vont-ils? Il ne m'entend plus. Ils sont déjà trop loin...Ils ne font plus de bruit... ce n'est pas le chemin de l'étable...Ou vont-ils dormir cette nuit? Oh! oh! il fait trop noir...Je vais dire quelque chose à quelqu'un"... Il Sort.

Scene Four

1. Use of words

As in Scene Two the action is split into two parts and the verbal arrangement and emphasis is bifurcated likewise. The extremely long love-

scene when Pelléas and Mélisande finally declare their passion too late is broken by the arrival and tumultuous actions of Golaud. The speed of speech gradually quickens throughout this long, diffuse scene, to effect a splendid sense of climax. The slowness at the beginning is placed to allow us to realise to the full Pelléas's awakening to the truth that he and Mélisande must now declare their love. "Qui est-ce qui m'a reveillé tout a coup?" But he is nevertheless afraid "Je vais lui dire que je vais fuir". There is a strange passage of poetry which is reminiscent in form and spirit of the second of Baudelaire's "Spleen" poems. Pelléas says "on dirait pas moment qu'il y a cent ans que je ne l'ai plus vue ..... (Il ne me reste rien si je m'en vais ainsi) ... Et tous ces souvenirs ..."

Baudelaire said it this way;

J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans .....
.....
-Dèsormais tu n'es plus, ô matière vivante!
Qu'un granit entouré d'une vague épouvante,
Assoupi dans le fond d'un Saharah brumeux!
Un vieux sphinx ignoré du monde insoucieux,
Oublié sur la carte, et dont l'humeur farouche
Ne chante qu'aux rayons du soleil qui se couche!

The blackness and whiteness, or rather the resultant greyness of the imagery of the scene when Pelléas and Mélisande first meet forms such a magically perfect shape of the setting in the reader's mind's eye that it is easy to see from this scene alone if from no other, how and why Debussy was so attracted to the play in the first place.

Pelléas: "Viens ici, ne reste pas au bord du clair de lune,
Viens ici, dans l'ombre du tilleul".

Mélisande: "Laissez-moi dans la clarté".

When he finally declares his love, he does so carefully, making this one of the most delicate and calm love scenes ever written.

Pelléas: "Tu ne sais pas ce que je vais te dire?"

Mélisande: "Mais non; mais non; je ne sais rien".

Pelléas: "Tu ne sais pas pourquoi il faut que je m'éloigne...
Tu ne sais pas que c'est parce que... Je t'aime".

Mélisande: "Je t'aime aussi".

Pelléas: "Oh! qu'as-tu dit, Mélisande! Je ne l'ai presque pas entendu! ... On a brise la glace avec des fers rougis! ... Tu dis cela d'une voix qui vient du bout du monde! ... Je ne t'ai presque pas entendue ... Tu m'aimes? tu m'aimes aussi? Depuis quand m'aimes-tu?"

Mélisande: "Depuis toujours.....Depuis que je t'ai vu".

Pelléas: "On dirait que ta voix a passé sur la mer au printemps! "

The language after this becomes increasingly ecstatic;

Pelléas: "J'étais inquiet, je cherchait partout dans la maison... Je cherchais partout dans la campagne, et je ne trouvais pas la beaute...Et maintenant je t'ai trouvée...Je l'ai trouvée. Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait sur la terre une femme plus belle! "

The delicate atmosphere of this scene, completely devoid of any sense of emotional or even sexual brashness is continued, despite the knowledge that they have eventually been followed by Golaud.

Pelléas: "Mon coeur bat comme un fou jusqu'au fond de ma gorge.....
il nous tuera".

Mélisande: "Tant mieux! "

Pelléas: "Il vient".

Mélisande: "Tant mieux! "

Pelléas: "Ta bouche! ta bouche! "

Mélisande: "Oui! oui! oui! "

Pelléas: "Oh! oh! toutes les étoiles tombent". etc.

2. Symbolism

I feel that the symbolism is here, as in earlier scenes, so closely bound up with the use of consciously meaningful words that the two are hard to separate, but there are certain aspects of this scene which do in fact carry on from the previous one and which dramatically speaking weld together different elements of the montage system of presentation, and prevent the overall technical situation from being in the least patchy or obscure. At the opening Pelléas says, reflecting Yniold's actions in speech, "J'ai joué comme un enfant autour d'une chose que je ne soupçonnais pas". I find the word "suspect" so much more appropriate and sympathetic than the mere effect of the verb "know" would ever have in such a circumstance. There is a symbolic recollection of the section commencing "SOUVENIRS" in Mallarmé's "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune" when he says "Et tous ces souvenirs...C'est comme si j'emportais un peu d'eau dans un sac de mousseline". The opposition of moonlight and the shadow of the lime-tree seems to be placed as symbolically as do Golaud's dream and Mélisande's torn dress. Scene Two is recalled also when Pelléas somewhat confusedly says to Mélisande, "Est-ce vrai ce que

tu dis? Tu ne me trompes pas? Tu ne mens pas un peu pour me faire sourir?" ..... and more pertinently, "Je ne ris pas; ou bien je ris de joie sans le savoir". I find this a painful reminder of Golaud's pathetically hysterical laughter in the earlier scene. The usual symbolism of light and dark, good and bad, is possibly reversed here when he at first wishes to be in the shade and she refuses, but afterwards he says that it is too dark and she now replies, "Je suis plus près de toi dans l'obscurité". This seems to reach a kind of almost metaphysically implied conclusion when he holds her close yet cannot feel her breathing. Maybe Maeterlinck intended the idea of perfection only being found after death, that is, when all mortal faculties had been abandoned. This need not sound too impossible as after all the resultant events have little real effect other than suggesting to us that death is the only solution to the search for happiness and the state of perfection.

3. Dramatic Action

This is simply and briefly, dealt with. The obvious crisis of the play occurs at the death of Pelléas, but only in an immediately active sense, as one reacts to the death of Tristan. The real crux of the drama up to this point is the possible fate of Mélisande. She runs away, and cries, very much in the style of a typical pre-Raphaelite heroine but also strangely previewing the heroine of Cocteau's "La Voix Humaine", "Je n'ai pas de courage; je n'ai pas de courage".

Act Five

As in Scene Three of Act Four I would like to leave separate and analytical comment out of any consideration of this poignant and excellently

conclusive act which Debussy rightly saw as the culmination of Maeterlinck's dramatic diffuseness and treated accordingly. It is not practicable, however, to quote the entire act, so I shall make the minimum comment on the individual aspects of it and hope that some of its beauty and wisdom may penetrate through what is of necessity a most inadequate medium of presentation; the carefully planned notes of an impassionate observer who can never, however well-intentioned, sufficiently encompass the thoughts of a creative and self-reliant writer who probably never dreamt of his work being discussed seventy years later in many academic environments.

1. Use of words

I intend to quote the final speech in full so will omit mention of that at the moment. The only really worthwhile passage to come under this heading is that in which Mélisande, on waking, says of her state of mind,

"Je n'ai jamais été mieux portant. Il me semble cependant que je sais quelque chose..."

Arkël: "Que dis-tu? Je ne te comprends pas".

Mélisande: "Je ne comprends pas non plus tout ce que je dis, Voyez-vous...Je ne sais pas ce que je dis...Je ne sais pas ce que je sais...Je ne dis plus ce que je veux".

This shows how far the emphasis of a main character has been lost, and now the relatively secondary persons are given the more poetic and flowing language, as in the following brief extract;

Arkël: "Regardez comme elle dort...lentement...lentement...on dirait que son âme a froid pour toujours".

Golaud: "J'ai tué sans raison! Est-ce que ce n'est pas à faire pleurer les pierres! "

2. Symbolism

There is a great deal of incidental symbolism throughout the act which could recall the atmospheric settings of "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune", the exotic romanticism of many of Baudelaire's love poems, the careful seascape of Debussy's "La Mer", the fairytale element of Ravel's "Ma Mere L'Oie" suite, or many of the stylised paintings of Gustave Moreau, Holman Hunt and other artists of the period. The most outstanding and clever use of a literary symbol is the one which I think Maeterlinck used rather in an allegorical manner. When Golaud questions Mélisande about the depth of her relationship with Pelléas it seems that the writer deliberately enjoyed the implied confusion which arose between the two as to the meaning and understanding of the word "aimer". This would signify to me the real raison d'être of the play; that even two people so ostensibly closely bound together as were Golaud and Mélisande, could reach a stage of such discord on a mental and physical level as to ruin both their lives as a result.

3. Dramatic Action

All I feel that is necessary here is to reproduce the final speech and allow the reader his own reactions, free from any superimposed comment or criticism. Mélisande dies with her new baby in her arms, having insisted on feeling better and being released from "des inquiétudes", although she says of her little daughter,

> "Elle ne rit pas...Elle est petite...Elle va pleurer aussi.
> J'ai pitié d'elle".

Arkël: ".....Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est que l'âme.....
Il ne faut plus l'inquieter...L'âme humaine est très silencieuse...L'âme humaine a s'en aller seule...Elle souffre si timidement. Mais la tristesse, Golaud....Mais la tristesse de tout ce que l'on voit...Oh! Oh! ....
Je n'ai rien entendu. Si vite...si vite...Elle s'en va sans rien dire...Ne restez pas ici, Golaud...Il lui faut le silence maintenant...Venez, venez, C'est terrible, mais ce n'est pas votre faute...C'était un petit etre si tranquille, si timide et si silencieux...C'était un pauvre petit être mystérieuse, comme tout le monde. Elle est la comme si elle était la grande soeur de son enfant...Venez...Il ne faut pas que l'enfant reste ici dans cette chambre...
Il faut qu'il vive, maintenant a sa place. C'est autour de la pauvre petite".

CHAPTER ELEVEN

In vain have I striven,
to teach my heart to bow;
In vain have I said to him
'There be many singers greater than thou'.

But his answer cometh, as winds and as lutany,
As a vague crying upon the night
That leaveth me no rest, saying ever,
'Song, a song'.

.....

For in the morn of my years there came a woman
As moonlight calling,
As the moon calleth the tides,
'Song, a song'.

.....

Ezra Pound, from "Praise of Ysolt".

"C'est dans la ligne de chant, même si elle est mélancolique
même si elle se trouve à la partie supérieure, que se trouvera
le lien dialectique qui permet la compréhension de l'ensemble".

Jacques Chailley.

Four songs by Claude Debussy, encompassing over thirty years of his creative life, and illustrating his remarkable sensitivity towards the setting of words of the highest quality.

1) "Clair de Lune" - to words by Paul Verlaine.

2) "Clair de Lune" - a later setting of the same words.

3) "La Chevelure" - to words from the "Chansons de Bilitis" by Pierre Löuys.

4) "Placet Futile" - to words by Stephane Mallarmé.

Clair de lune - by Claude Debussy - words by Paul Verlaine.

(First version - 1882)

Although I am discussing only four songs by Debussy in this chapter, and therefore there are inevitably a great many omissions which may be regarded as important according to the personal preferences of the reader, I felt it necessary to include one of the earliest songs at the risk of leaving out a more mature and probably better-known example of his uniquely attractive song writing. Before the Baudelaire song of 1887/9 Debussy wrote fourteen songs, to words by comparatively classical or at least Parnassian poets like de Musset, de Banville, and Paul Bourget, whose words he set several times, so well suited were they to the casual romantic elegance of his initial style. The four songs of 1882/4, "Pantomime" (Verlaine), "Pierrot" (Theodore de Banville), "Apparition" (Mallarme) and "Clair de lune" (Verlaine), form an important part of his early work and deserve to be more widely known and performed. All the songs, but especially "Pantomime", display strong harmonic and rhythmic fingerprints of the later Debussy, whilst his word-setting is already moving away from the largely syllabic and not always fully sympathetic approach of his predecessors. The piano writing of "Pantomime" is more than masterly, as it is in all four songs, but the vocal tessitura is placed rather too high and shows a slight uncertainty of technique in this medium, although his soaring melodies are always so inspired and constructed as to be tremendously rewarding in performance.

Even at this early stage, Debussy introduced an element of unity into

his grouping of songs. The melody of "Pierrot" is based in a perversely humorous way, upon the folk song "Au clair de la lune" much as the English National Anthem appears as a comic ground bass to one of his piano Preludes of 1910/1913, yet when he set Verlaine's poem there was no hint of the folk art influence in the work and it seems that he wished us to regard the unity here merely as an exercise in visual and associative terms. Musically, "Apparition" approximates more to the structure and conception of "Clair de lune", enhancing the chains of sevenths and ninths by a melodic line which rises suddenly in delightful arabesques, like those in the setting in "Ariettes Oubliées", of "Il pleüre dans mon coeur", the unexpected swoops in "Fantoches", from the first set of "Fêtes Galantes", or Pelléas's passionate aria-like passage in Act Four of "Pelléas et Mélisande" at pages 329/341 of the Durand miniature score.

From the outset this first setting of "Clair de lune" shows the freedom of Debussy's conception of harmonic and textural (here basically a strong overall vertical harmonic chordal structure resulting from a simple augmenting of contrapuntal lines), necessities as regards preparation and resolution of classically non-progressive movement. (Example One, Appendix Three). Melodically this song is already on the path towards the culmination of Debussy's vocal art, the three Mallarme songs and the opera which took ten years of revision and re-writing before the composer was finally satisfied with it. The stillness and sweetness of the melody, broken occasionally by verbally illustrative and, in effect, rather instrumental passages of widely moving smooth lines, approximates oddly at times to the extensive recitative areas of "Pelléas et Mélisande" in which diminished triads (either directly or by implication) are as commonly found

as are triadic melodies in Mozart. (Example Two). The semitonal sliding found at "Tout enchantant sur le mode mineur" (interestingly enough harmonised by what sounds like a whole-tone chordal structure, however else it may be explained as an incomplete seventh chord in its second inversion) suddenly bursts into the difficult but emotionally expressive setting of the words "la vie opportune" whose contrast with the previously less highly charged section gives it tremendous strength and the feeling of complete control over the temporal progression of the piece. This can arise through the singer's ability, if he is sufficiently sensitive and technically assured, to explain the composer's intentions and his own in a more personal and direct sense than had been thought necessary or possible before these lyrically controlled yet seemingly quite un-artificial musico-verbal art structures appeared. (Example Three). Debussy repeated some of the words in a brief Coda-like passage which echoed the melodic contour and harmonic basis of the final climatic section in which the euphonious quality of the word "svelte" was given far more personality and eminence than had been apparent in Fauré. (Example Four).

The fluidity of the voice in this song is probably the most outstanding feature of its overall charm and it is technically more rewarding than Fauré's version, despite Koechlin's assertion of "l'admirable, parfaite, unique inspiration de Gabriel Fauré".[1]

Even at this early stage I think that the label Impressionist is most misleading in relation to Debussy's art; he is more Symbolist in that, even allowing for the fairy-story element in "Pelléas et Mélisande", his perceptive qualities and striving for a super-reality which would bring about a perfect and potentially conclusive art-form, vastly different from

Wagner's ideologies, yet owing much to his fundamental impetus, were so attuned to the type of colouristic piquancy of imagination usually associated with the contemporary Symbolist poets. Similarly, an over-excited critic can cause us to reassess accepted propositions if only because we react against critical violence, and admirable as this following statement of Koechlin's is in its primary wish to establish Debussy's rightful place, it should not be taken too seriously; nor should it be disregarded entirely:

> "Et dire qu'on a traité, qu'on traite encore Debussy d'impressioniste! Quand donc en finira-t-on avec cette plaisanterie de mauvaise goût, que seuls prennent au sérieux les incompetents?" [2]

Clair de lune - by Claude Debussy - words by Paul Verlaine.

(Second version - 1892)

By 1892, ten years after the first version of Verlaine's "Clair de Lune", Debussy had matured considerably. The first sketches of "Pelléas et Mélisande" were begun, and amongst other projects, he returned to Paul Verlaine's "Fêtes Galantes" for stimulus for his next essays in song writing. His writing was now much more assured and realist in the sense that he allowed not only the basic meaning of a poem, but also its spiritual ethos, to permeate his musical approach. This is not to say that he abandoned the needs of musical form, and in fact the three songs in the first set of "Fêtes Galantes" are especially noteworthy for their tightness and logical adherence to the motivic units and their differing relationships to each song as a whole. The well-designed musical architecture of the songs is never lost through being swamped by the meaning of each poem, as Debussy's wish was to express the sonority and atmosphere of the words rather than elaborately to display their more realist narrative progressions. This awareness of the vivid impressions created by the verbal sonority of Verlaine's poems is perhaps more strongly apparent in these songs than in any of the other series of songs, except maybe for the "Chansons de Bilitis". The sonority and euphony of the second of the "Fêtes Galantes", Book 1, the delightful "Fantoches", is interesting for the wide joyful sweep of its vocal line (Example Five) which recalls the much earlier "Apparition" (Examples Six A and Six B). This same verbal awareness can be well illustrated from a comparison of two brief examples from Fauré and Debussy of the opening of each of their

settings of "En Sourdine". (Example Seven).

The grandeur and conviction of "Clair de Lune" increases with repeated hearings, far more so, to my mind, than does the Faure setting of the poem where the narrative unity of the poem is always well maintained within the musical logicality. The unity of Debussy's second setting (and the first to a less clearly defined extent) relies mostly on the emotional impact of the opening and ubiquitous motif (Example Eight), which, like the clear-cut memorability of the opening chords of "Pelléas et Mélisande", seems to fuse and consolidate all the emotions of the poem into one microcosmic entity. The vertical structures of the song's tonal attributes are given stress and impetus by virtue of the rhythmic definition and continuity which is one of the most outstanding features of this work. The relationship between modality and its rhythmic organisation has been excellently expounded in an article by Jacques Chailley, and generally elaborated by Edward Lockspieser in the second volume of his study on Debussy; that this aspect of his work should merit such investigation seems to me to imply that the present small-scale though intense return to Mediaevalism could owe as much to Debussy as fully-fledged serialism is indebted to the embryonic appearances of it in Schonberg, and should be thus acknowledged. The two following examples (Nine A and Nine B) show more than adequately how far French song writing and the conception of a spatial and temporal respect for the very different, if not sometimes irreconcilable technical processes involved in music and poetry, changed from the "mélodie" of Fauré to the forward looking experimentation of Debussy. The melodic line which sets the words

Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs deguisements fantasques.....

is already imbued with the counterpoint, tonal ambiguity and emotional level of "Pelléas et Mélisande", and reflects the type of melodic construction which was to find mature fulfilment in the three Mallarmé songs and eventually in the late chamber works composed during the stresses of the first world war. (Example Ten).

The harmonic effect of the song is seen to be greatly dependent upon a system of pivot notes which permeate the gentle arabesques of the delicate piano writing. For example, the first eight bars rely on pivot notes thus;

1-4 C sharp.

5 G sharp (if sometimes by implication of a whole-tone scale).

6 1/3 G sharp.

6 2/3 G natural or E natural.

7-8 G sharp, becoming A flat and the flat seventh of the temporary B flat major bar, in which B flat itself is later seen to have been regarded as A sharp, the dominant pivot note of the new temporary resting place of D sharp.

The overall impression of the song is one of an almost hypnotic surrealist dream-world, and it is this idea that Edward Lockspieser had expanded in Volume Two, Appendix F, of his Debussy study, in which he takes the theories of Gaston Bachelard's book, "L'Eau et les Rêves", as the basis for his argument, and which possibly provides one of the best 'explanations' (unsatisfactory as this word is in such a context), for the aesthetic and technical processes which led Debussy to the compositional glories of his later life.

The most important historical aspect of the song is the realisation that Wagnerian principles can no longer be held as the only musical or poetic criteria. The monothematicism of the Russian composers was having more than a passive influence upon Debussy, and the potentially twelve-note

isolation of any one semitone in relation to any of the other eleven, within our system, as seen in late Wagner, is not followed by Debussy, who, strangely like Berg, prefers to cluster groups of notes together and then to use them as a single unit within a fundamentally contrapuntal texture. The adherance to this is shown most vividly at Example Eleven where the flowing movement resolves itself into a momentary three beats of pure and very simple modality where the lowest notes of the accompaniment and the vocal line may be taken to represent two linear progressions which have for the moment halted and which sway gently around B flat major and C minor to express the poignancy of the words

(Et) sangloter d'extase les jets (d'eau).....

This musical purity, so well expressed by the wonderfully clear piano writing, possibly approaches the watery inconsistency of pure aleatoric sound, as exemplified today by certain avant-garde schools of thought.

La Chevelure - by Claude Debussy - words by Pierre Louys.

1897

The second quotation heading this chapter, for which I have once again borrowed from the French symposium on Debussy, explains the real musical impetus motivating this exquisitely flowing song. Modality, tonality, multi-linear counterpoint: all are subservient to and almost merely expansive of the constant inner flow. Although at first sight the opening of the song appears to be reminiscent of that of the orchestral "Nuages" in outline, the harmonic and rhythmic structure is far removed from the repetitive modal figures of the larger piece and depends entirely upon the freely moving and rather pathetically mournful "ligne de chant" which, appearing in either the piano part alone in internal dove-tailed octaves or else coupled with the voice at the same pitch, giving a resultant timbre of depth and richness, is a constant factor throughout the whole piece. (Example Twelve). Example Thirteen shows the freedom of the voice at the song's climax although even here there is still maintained a steadily moving melody, in fact there are two, placed in a widely spaced contrary movement which provides an excellently calculated sense of space and airiness here. It is interesting to remember that this song was written in 1897, almost exactly in the middle stages of the composition of "Pelléas et Mélisande", and is very much in the same mood and has strong architectural similarities with the opera. It would be easy to imagine this song in an orchestral arrangement, and I feel that if this were done, it would sound remarkably like parts of the love-scene of Act Four of "Pelléas et Mélisande" although this was actually written first about 1893-4, and the song's harmonically

simpler sections involve a vocal recitative writing very like that of Geneviève's letter reading scene in Act One or Golaud's less unhappy monologues in the early stages of the opera.

The brief varied recapitulation is reached through a subtle enharmonic change after the poet has reached the climax of his telling of a dream; (this climax is treated rather hurriedly in the music, the real musical climax appearing at the word 'bouche') (Example Fourteen).

The most operatic use of the "ligne de chant" is seen in the 'coda', where the voice is allowed a soaring freedom in which to give fullest expression and audibility to the words. The final vocal phrase accompanied by three simple yet quite stunningly effective chords is one of the greatest of Debussy's song conclusions. Its low vocal placing and almost 'blues-like' piano writing gives real meaning to the word "frisson" whose implications of reality, following the telling of a dream, impart a strange sensuality. (Example Fifteen).

I have purposely refrained from giving a lengthy and technical analysis as I feel that, like the opera, this song is so dependent on the meaning and atmosphere of the words and indeed all the aesthetic atmosphere and influence surrounding both Louys and Maeterlinck, that musical analysis alone would result in much less than a true representation of what inspired the "divine arabesques" both works.

The best way to conclude this then, would seem to be to quote the poem, reminding the reader to consider the consciously sensual importance of a woman's hair to the painters, poets and even the more Gebrauch artists like William Morris, in whose floral designs can often be seen the natural beauty of flowing quasi-Mediaeval robes and long silky hair.

Il m'a dit: 'Cette nuit, j'ai rêvé. J'avais ta chevelure autour de mon cou. J'avais tes cheveux comme un collier noir autour de ma nuque et sur ma poitrine.

'Je les caressais, et c'étaient les miens; et nous étions liés pour toujours ainsi, par la même chevelure; la bouche sur la bouche, ainsi que deux lauriers n'ont souvent q'une racine.

'Et peu à peu, il m'a semblé, tant nos membres étaient confondus, que je devenais toi-même ou que tu entrais en moi comme un songe'.

Quand il eut achevé ——————il mit doucement ses mains sur mes épaules, et il me regarda d'un regard si tendre, que je baisai ses yeux avec un frisson.

Placet futile - by Claude Debussy - words by Stephane Mallarmé.
1913

I have chosen this song, the second of the "Trois poemes de Stephane Mallarmé", written in the artistically prolific and important year of 1913, for three reasons. Firstly, it is one of Debussy's latest examples of solo song writing, and in style approaches the neo-classical purity and individuality of the last chamber works. It also allows the almost Grecian elegance and austerity of Mallarmé's poem to speak freely within a highly organised musical framework, and by its internal closeness of musical form tells us by implication that after "Pelléas" Debussy could not have embarked upon the writing of a further opera, as was his original intention, because of his non-dramatic preoccupation with the expression of small-scale musical and verbal sound (through the medium of a female human voice in this case). The evolutionary importance of Mallarmé; his use of language and its forms, his apparent abandonment of usual temporal progression, and his amazingly unfettered imagination are all shown in Debussy's music, to a much greater extent than were these poetic processes ever displayed in his early tone-poem "L'Après-midi d'un Faune" written in 1894. The final reason I had for placing this song last in the chapter is because of its musically forward look, on which I shall comment in discussing Example Eighteen.

The poem itself is an early one, but in mood is far removed from the languor of "Apparition", or even the later erotic dream-world of "L'Après-midi d'un Faune". The form of the poem decides that of the music so inevitably and seemingly perfectly that one is amazed (as in the

collaboration which produced "Pelléas" and the "Chansons de Bilitis") at the fusion of instincts which resulted in the three Mallarme songs, and especially this second one of the set. The varied modal motifs follow each stage and mood and resultant variation in speed and sound so inevitably that it is surprising that Debussy's setting of his own words, the "Proses Lyriques" was not more successful as a fusion of words and music, as surely this experiment should theoretically, at least, produce nothing less than perfection.

In quoting the poem, I shall underline the seven phrases which I have used to illustrate the musical setting of the words, and which appear in the Appendix as Examples Sixteen to Twenty-two.

"Princesse! à jalouser le destin d'une Hébé
Qui poind sur cette tasse au baiser de vos lèvres,
J'use mes feux mais n'ai rang discret que d'abbé
Et ne figurerai meme nu sur le Sèvres.

Comme je ne suis pas ton bichon embarbé,
Ni la pastille ni du rouge, ni jeux mièvres
Et que sur moi je sais ton regard clos tombé,
Blonde dont les coiffeurs divins sont des orfevres!

Nommez-nous ... toi de qui tant de ris framboises
Se joignent en troupeau d'agneaux apprivoises
Chez tous broutant les voeux et bélant aux délires,

Nommez-nous ... pour qu'Amour aile d'un eventail
M'y peigne flûte aux doigts endormant ce berçail,
Princesse, nommez-nous berger de vos sourires".

Here the prose-poem style and earthy ethos of Louys' synthetic Greek poems has been purified into a classical sonnet structure embracing many examples of human awareness and experience and yet taking us into a dream world of a most exquisite imagination almost bordering on the world of surrealism, with its sometimes neo-classical implications which are however, well entrenched

in the acceptances and manners of the twentieth century. This brings me to the essence of modernity which I said previously was present in the musical mannerism of the song.

The overall insistence on a calm contrapuntal modality is of course, symptomatic of certain schools of musical thought in the last fifty years or so, but Examples Eighteen and Twenty-two really seem to me to be moving rapidly towards the music of the French Six and the superficially gay but basically pessimistic introverted musical thought of Poulenc. In the first of these two examples, the harmonic movement of the left hand is simply that from C flat major through its dominant seventh via a chromatic supertonic seventh returning immediately to the home key. The right hand begins to dispel the basic tonality from the outset with its pair of semitonally-sliding grace notes in the first beat, and extended and expanded in the left hand in the second beat in a most attractive upward sliding movement. The voice enters on a high yet verbally mellow E flat which echoes the third of the home key chord in the accompaniment, but is in fact the major ninth of the supertonic chord, and remains there to become not the root of a mediant seventh, but simply the added sixth of the home dominant, falling to the third of the chord, and then unexpectedly falling a further third, but now a minor third; that is, falling to a G natural, over the G flat dominant key note! This is accentuated by the second inversion position of an E flat major chord in the right hand, over the seventh on G flat, and results in a poignant poly-tonality all the more enhanced by the arpeggio shape of the vocal line, which ensures that the tonality of E flat major is kept in the foreground of the listener's aural memory. This sounds extremely complicated and may well show why I have

chosen to avoid detailed technical analyses throughout my comments of all the songs in this attempt at post-Wagnerian exploration. The final example could be similarly closely analysed, but I should prefer the reader to play for himself the whole song and realise through personal experience the magical effect of the last 'tierce de Picardie' chord, with its accompaniment flattened seventh and its soaring and graceful vocal added sixth.

The attention paid to single notes, their placing, effect, sonority and relationships with other surrounding notes, as in Example Twenty-two where the piano and voice create a simple seventh chord, is dispelled suddenly and unexpectedly by a broad vocal movement breaking into the texture of the accompaniment. From this, one could say in conclusion that if the "Chansons de Bilitis" are parallel to the designs of the pre-Raphaelite craftsmen and painters, then this work looks forward to the innovations of a Klee or the three-dimensional fragility of Naum Gabo.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ESSENCE; NOT ANTI-HERO, BUT NON-HERO.

..... I will my heavy story tell
Till my own words, re-echoing, shall send
Their sadness through a hollow, pearly heart;
And my own tale again for me shall sing,
And my own whispering words be comforting,
And lo! my ancient burden may depart.
Then he sang softly nigh the pearly rim;
But the sad dweller by the sea-ways lone
Changed all he sang to inarticulate moan
Among her whildering whirls, forgetting him.

from The Sad Shepherd
W.B.Yeats

Soleil, je t'adore comme les sauvages,
à plat ventre sur le rivage.

Le nègre, dont brillent les dents
est noir dehors, rose dedans.

L'arbre a midi rempli de nuit
la répand le soir à côté de lui.

from Batterie (1920)
Jean Cocteau

In concluding this study I wish only to present a short series of twentieth century French poems without any directly analytical comment whatsoever. I had considered enlarging upon each in the same manner in which I treated Mallarmé's "L'Après-midi d'un Faune", but I feel that to go to such lengths at this stage would be superfluous and tedious. After a great deal of thought and consideration I have decided too, to abandon my original idea of analysing Debussy's music for "Pelléas et Mélisande", as this would be of far greater value as an isolated study for the musician who is of both an analytical and an aesthetic turn of mind. There is simply not enough room for such a comprehensive survey here, and even a complete analysis of the opera may not yield sufficiently satisfying material. This was so strongly brought home to me on reading a recent American study of the opera that I was further convinced that a project of this type requires years of thought, experience and listening before a true consolidation of ideas is possible. It is, of course, feasible to commit part of the opera's essence to an analysis, and as an example of what can and has been done, (the studies by Lawrance Gilman and Edward Lockspieser are of rather a different nature and require very different critiques) I should like to quote from the American thesis already referred to:

> "In the pursuance of this study it was found that the individual scenes and acts are constructed in well-recognised forms such as ABA, ABCBA, and ABA'CB'A2, (where C is a development section). An elaborate system of 32 leitmotifs, eleven of which are projected

in the first act, is used throughout all five acts, and the "Fate" motive alone undergoes approximately one hundred metamorphoses. The elements of form are shown to be closely related to the leitmotifs which, together with the cyclic recurrence of keys, create strong unifying factors throughout the entire work." [1]

A little later on in this Abstract the author says rather more pertinently, I feel:

> "The leitmotifs are employed solely in the orchestral accompaniment or in the entr'acte music, and they do not appear in the vocal line." [2]

The real interest of this lies for me in the final underlined phrase which I have purposely distinguished thus, as it seems to contain more that is intensely important from almost any artistic point of view one wishes to take than do a thousand times this quantity of purely (and dangerously) analytical writings. One begins to realise from this the tremendous innovatory power of this uniquely non-melodic opera (from the singer's point of view at least!) and how gradually the recitative creates association, and rests both on expected and dramatically arresting keys or tonal centres, as do of course similarly quasi-recitative sections in Debussy's songs. From the source itself comes a statement which on one hand affirms the necessity of hearing the flowing arabesque-like nature of the recitatives as pure colourful sound, and on the other tries to restrain, so prophetically, the analyses of critics and musicologists who appear to have forgotten that music is for listening to and is fundamentally to be enjoyed.

"This craze for pedantic mannerisms in musical circles, which Debussy never lost an opportunity of condemning, is no more admissible in so-called scholarly music than in folk-music. For art cannot be reduced to the level of a mere intellectual trick. It satisfies a human desire for oblivion and illusion." [3]

Debussy himself elaborated these statements:

> " 'Composers seek their ideas within themselves when they should look around for them. They combine, construct, imagine themes in which to express ideas. These are developed; they are modified when they encounter other themes representing other ideas. All this is metaphysics, it is not music. The latter should be spontaneously registered by the ear of the listener without his having to discover abstract ideas in the meanderings of a complicated development.' " [4]

The next quotation from Debussy's theories of music as a free art seems to be an admirable if unconscious recommendation for Auric's well-balanced nostalgic waltz "Le Moulin Rouge" !

> " 'There is but one music, and it exists of its own right, whether it assumes the rhythm of a cafe-concert waltz or the imposing setting of a symphony. Why not admit that of the two good taste is often on the side of the waltz, while the symphony conceals with difficulty the pompous mass of its mediocrity.' " [5]

It may be useful to recapitulate briefly some of the ideas contained within the previous chapters which further express the tremendous importance of Debussy not only as an individual creative musician but also as representing an aesthetic more typical of his time and influential upon certain extra-

musical aspects of ours than would appear to be fully and widely recognised. In this consider the fragmentation of poetic construction favoured today; the tracery of Klee, which, although perhaps analogous to the use of "Klangfarbenmelodie" in Webern, owes its primary impetus to the eventual unified arabesque (couched ideally in a kind of musical monochrome) beloved of Debussy; the modal/tonal classical spirituality and inspired simplicity of Poulenc's "La Figure Humaine"; all these artistic manifestations derived their real essence from the "musicien francais" who matched Wagner's apparent strength with his own incredibly sensitive progressiveness. Debussy's (and Mallarmé's) attitude to the idea of death as the only solution to life is exemplified throughout his work and writings and consequently later by the psychology of such a popular English work as Britten's "Peter Grimes" which stems from the anti-heroic qualities of "Pelléas et Mélisande", amongst other influences.

> "Almost alone with Debussy, Mallarmé responded to the philosophy of "Pelléas", accepting death, in the entangled rivalries of love, as the only certain factor, indeed the only certainty in life. Drawing a comparison between "Pelléas" and Maeterlinck's earlier poems, "Serres chaudes", set as a song-cycle by Chausson, W.D.Halls maintains that "Pelléas" brings to the surface an underlying streak of sadism. This, he says, 'expresses itself as a desire to inflict cruelty upon innocence.' And he goes on: 'Maeterlinck himself associates sadism with pity, and certainly the dramatic use of brutality to emphasise the wrong suffered by beauty and virginity heightens the effect of compassion. But this persecution of the innocent may be more than a mere literary device, and represent a

state of morbid pathology in the psychology of the poet, whose "Serres chaudes" had betrayed a mind at the end of its tether, and, in the wildness of its imaginings, near to dementia. If we bear in mind the fascination for Debussy of the tales of Poe, particularly "The Fall of the House of Usher", of Villiers de l'Isle Adam's "Axel", and of Wagner's "Parsifal" we see the immediate appeal which "Pelléas", illustrating in a similar manner the psychology of innocence and cruelty, was bound to make." [6]

It is possible from this to see the twentieth century as an era of a certain type of artistic death. Perhaps this chapter should be re-titled

TOWARDS A SIMULTANEITY OF INDETERMINACY

in which the idea of indeterminacy may be symbolised for certain critics and commentators as artistic annihilation resulting from its essential lack of anticipated or immediately orientated formal processes. Here though, the first few seconds of "Pelléas et Mélisande" provide many answers. Once the familiar Gallic device of a repeated two bar phrase (varied only to the slightest degree) has been announced in a gentle and consciously modal idiom, the seemingly intrusive appearance of a rhythmically new texture is heightened to an almost shocking and dramatically attractive extent by basing its harmonic construction entirely on the whole-tone scale, thus firmly reducing the norm of expectation from the outset of the work. Here, if ever, is the real embryonic essence of the twentieth century aesthetic of indeterminacy, and with these few bars, Debussy establishes himself already before 1900 as the true, vital, and healthy instigator of all that was to follow in a purely progressive sense. The element of silence, so consistently important in evolutionary sonic (and comparatively

in visual) art of the present century owes more to the ninth bar of the opening twentythree bar prelude of "Pelléas et Mélisande" than it ever could to the soi-disant prophetic bombast of Wagner.

After the Pre-Raphaelites and Impressionists had impinged their ideas upon a strongly receptive minority of artists, the First World War was probably the chief catalyst in concluding this exciting era of 'voyants' whose constant search for an indefinable 'extase' would have gradually led them to a decadent oblivion. The approach to surrealism was in evidence, and strict logicality and the interest in our subconscious mind became almost the main determining factors in the creation and production of a work of art. After people like Satie and Alfred Jarry, the new approach to art was rather a destructive and cynical one. Duchamp's 'ready-mades'; 'Dadaism' in which the Wagnerian concept was preserved facetiously in the assumed name of Tristan Zara; and a strangely perverse Catholicism, contrary to the well-defined paganism of Mallarmé and Debussy; all these were evidence of the new moves in artistic forms and concepts.

> "The systematic fight against the use of conventional means of expression and the consequent break up of the artistic tradition of the nineteenth century begins in 1916 with dadaism, a war-time phenomenon, a protest against the civilization that had led to the war, and therefore, a form of defeatism.
> ..... It demands entirely spontaneous expression, and thereby bases its theory of art on a contradiction. For how is one to make oneself understood - which at any rate surrealism intends to do - and at the same time deny and destroy all means of communication?" [7]

The author of these statements refers next to the critic Jean Paulhan;

> "He calls the language-destroyers, that is to say, the romantics, symbolists and surrealists, who want to eliminate the commonplace, conventional forms and ready-made cliches from language in pure, virginal, original inspiration, the 'terrorists'." [8]

The real answer to the current problems of artistic validity is possibly contained in the next quotation from Arnold Hauser;

> "The other camp, that is, the writers who know perfectly well that commonplaces and cliches are the price of mutual understanding and that literature is communication, that is to say, language, tradition, 'worn-out', and, precisely on that account, unproblematical, immediately intelligible form, he calls the 'rhetoricians', the oratorical artists. He regards their attitude as the only possible one, since the constant administration of the 'terror' in literature would mean absolute silence, that is, intellectual suicide, from which the surrealists can only save themselves by constant self-deception." [9]

Before this thesis concludes with examples of twentieth century French poems which I feel are greatly apposite to the foregoing chapters from a formal, logical and sequential point of view (not forgetting the Wagnerian 'Tristan' idea) the only musical comment I wish to make is that the reader should consider after Debussy the relative importance not only of the works of Messiaen and Boulez but also the traditional tangibility behind Poulenc's slight but moving "La Voix Humaine", in which the original tri-partite human aspects of Tristan reduce themselves conclusively to a basically isolated single entity, both physically and emotionally, and in whose

ethos and construction is clearly symbolised the twentieth century individual who, despite instantaneous communication, is nevertheless pathetically alone unless he can shed the environmental and structural influences of the nineteenth century.

Les Colchiques - by Guillaume Apollinaire

This poem should be considered in the light of the system under which "L'Après-midi d'un faune" was analysed. The same processes exactly can be applied to it with the result that night and day, reality and dreams, and all the other balancing dualities of life become one, and are thus absorbed into the unexpected simultaneity of modern art movements after Wagner, Debussy, Proust, Mann, Rousseau, and then artists like Braque, Joyce and the countless others whose individuality has transformed our age from Victorian complacency into a period of fierce loneliness and unrivalled interest.

Le pré est veneneux mais joli en automne
Les vaches y paissant
Lentement s'empoisonnent
Le colchique couleur de cerne et de lilas
Y fleurit tes yeux sont comme cette fleur-la
Violâtres comme leur cerne et comme cet automne
Et ma vie pour tes yeux lentement s'empoisonne

Les enfants de l'école viennent avec fracas
Vêtus de hoquetons et jouant de l'harmonica
Ils cueillent les colchiques qui sont comme des mères
Filles de leurs filles et sont couleur de tes paupières
Qui battent comme les fleurs battent au vent dement

Le gardien du troupeau chante tout doucement
Tandis que lentes et meuglent les vaches abandonnent
Pour toujours ce grand pré mal fleuri pas l'automne

Clair de lune - by Guillaume Apollinaire

Important in the light of Verlaine's earlier poem of the same name, and is visually perhaps analogous to the sensuous brooding night paintings of Soutine and Vlaminck. The cleverness of the poem lies in its organisation and, as in Les Colchiques, the late appearance of the subject, here the first person singular, there possibly 'tes yeux'. Bergson's ideas of creation continually re-creating itself in a self-perpetuating cycle are rather pertinent here, as are to a lesser extent, the obvious comparison with the earlier symbolist poem and the Watteauesque associations commonly assumed.

Lune mellifluente aux lèvres des déments
Les vergers et les bourgs cette nuit sont gourmands
Les astres assez bien figurent les abeilles
De ce miel lumineux qui dégoûtte des treilles
Car voici que tout doux et leur tombant du ciel
Chaque rayon de lune est un rayon de miel
Or caché je conçois la très douce aventure
J'ai peur du dard de feu de cette abeille Arcture
Qui posa dans mes mains des rayons decevants
Et prit son mile lunaire à la rose des vents

Sur une nuit sans ornement - by Rene Char

As in Apollinaire's Les Colchiques, there is here an overall formal and logical resemblance to the processes of "L'Après-midi d'un faune", but Char allows himself the utmost grammatical and syntactical freedom throughout. The creation of a real sense of chaos is a masterly poetic stroke and is sustained by the constant interchange of night and day, darkness and light. The physical lay-out of ideas here is rather reminiscent of Cocteau's critical "Le Coq et l'Arlequin" or even his epigrammatic approach to the problems, personal and moral, of "Opium". The intensely present attitude to time is also a strong feature of this poem, and follows largely upon that of Mallarmé, in much the same way that Messiaen's comparatively unique presentation of time within certain harmonic and technical boundaries follows upon the later work of Debussy.

Regarder la nuit battue à mort; continuer à nous suffrer en elle.

Dans la nuit, le poète, le drame et la nature ne font qu'un, mais
en montée et s'aspirant.

La nuit porte nourriture, le soleil affine la partie nourrie.

Dans la nuit se tiennent nos apprentissages en état de servir à d'autres,
après nous. Fertile est la fraîcheur de cette gardienne!

L'infini attaque mais un nuage sauve.

La nuit s'affilie à n'importe quelle instance de la vie disposée
à finir au printemps, à voler par tempête.

La nuit se colore de rouille quand elle consent à nous entr'ouvrir
les grilles de ses jardins.

Au regard de la nuit vivant, le rêve n'est parfois qu'un lichen spectral.

Il ne fallait pas embraser le coeur de la nuit. Il fallait que
l'obscur fut maître où se cisèle la rosée du matin.

La nuit ne succède qu'à elle. Le beffroi solaire n'est qu'une
tolérance intéressée de la nuit.

La reconduction de notre mystère, c'est la nuit qui en prend soin;
la toilette des élus, c'est la nuit qui l'execute.

La nuit deniaise notre passé d'homme, incline sa psyche devant le
present, met de l'indecision dans notre avenir.

Je m'emplirai d'une terre celeste.

Nuit première où le rêve malgracieux ne clignote plus, garde-moi
vivant ce que j'aime.

POSTSCRIPT

THREE SHORT POEMS BY RENE CHAR

1) Lyre.

2) Le Masque Funèbre.

3) Dans l'espace.

Lyre sans bornes des poussières
Surcroît de notre coeur.

Il était un homme, une fois, qui, n'ayant plus faim,
plus jamais faim, tant il avait devoré d'heritages,
englouti d'aliments, appauvri son prochain, trouva
sa table vide, son lit desert, sa femme grosse et la
terre mauvaise dans les champs de son coeur.

N'ayant pas du tombeau et se voulant en vie, n'ayant rien
à donner et moins à recevoir, les objets le fuyant, les
betes lui mentant, il vola la famine et s'en fit une assiette,
qui devint son miroir et sa propre déroute.

Le soleil volait bas, aussi bas que l'oiseau. La nuit les
éteignît tous deux, Je les aimais.

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Section B

The literary background.

Section C

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1. Claude Debussy, in Leon Vallas, The theories of Claude Debussy, translated by Maire O'Brien (London 1929), pp. 18-19.

2. "O my various friends, we are sailing with myself already on the poop, and you as the sumptuous prow cutting the tide of thunderbolts and winters." Prose translation of the third stanza of "Salut", by Mallarmé, in the Penguin Mallarmé, edited and translated by Anthony Hartley (Middlesex 1965), p. 7.

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1. The power of words, article translated by Elizabeth Beavan in Essays on Language and Literature, edited by J.L.Hevesi (London 1947), p. 214.

2. Harmondsworth 1963, p. 231.

3. Article in Die Reihe, Volume One, Electronic Music, translated by 'G'. (London 1962), pp. 19-29.

4. The Oxford Companion to French Literature, compiled and edited by Sir Paul Harvey and Janet Heseltine (London 1959), p. 61.

5. Ibid, p. 61.

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1. Leon Vallas, The theories of Claude Debussy, translated by Maire O'Brien (London 1929), p. 126.

2. Essays and Introductions (New York 1961), pp. 146-147.

3. "The essence of Symbolism is its insistence on a world of ideal beauty", in The heritage of symbolism (London 1943), p. 6, (Introduction).

4. The Doors of Perception (Harmondsworth 1961), p. 17.

5. Ibid. p. 19.

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7. Vision and Rhetoric (London 1959), p.

8. New York 1952, especially pp. 160-164.

9. Ibid. p. 160.

10. Chicago. 1962.

11. Essays and Introductions, p. 159.

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13. Literature and Psychology (London 1951), p.

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Notes to Chapter Two.

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2. The Power of Words, article translated by Elizabeth Beavan, in Essays on Language and Literature, edited by J.L.Hevesi (London 1947), p.227.

3. Translated by Alfred Sutro (London) 1915.

4. Litterature Francaise (Paris 1949) Volume Two p.473.

5. Ibid. p.474.

6. Ibid. p.

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8. Emotion and meaning in music, by Leonard B. Meyer (University of Chicago 1962) Chapter Five, Principles of pattern perception: the weakening of shape, pp.157-196.

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1. Modern French Music, by E.B.Hill, p.

L'Invitation au voyage

1. pp.28-29.

2. c.f. Yeats on allegory and symbol in Essays and Introductions.

3. A history of French literature, by L.Cazamian (London 1955). Many comments of this nature, especially in the section on Symbolism pp.378-417, and that on Transition pp.418-454.

Extase

1. The Poetics of Music (New York 1956) p.62.

2. Selected Poems. Edited and with an introduction by T.S.Eliot (London 1959) p.31.

Notes to Chapter Three.

1. London 1958. p. 266.

2. Morphological Poetics, article in Reflections on Art; a source book of writings by artists, critics and philosophers, edited by Susanne Langer. (New York 1961) p. 214.

3. Ibid. p. 223.

4. The Symbolist Movement in Literature (New York 1958) p. 62.

5. Ibid. p. 72.

6. The Social History of Art, by Arnold Hauser (London 1962) Volume Four p. 185.

7. Emotion and Meaning in music (Chicago 1962) p. 163.

8. "La Musique et les lettres", lecture in Oeuvres Complètes (Paris 1951) p. 649.

9. Ibid. p.

10. The Heritage of Symbolism (London 1943) p. 1 (Introduction).

11. Ibid. p. 5.

12. Oeuvres Completes p.

13. La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé; etude litteraire (Paris 1938) p. 393.

14. Oeuvres Complètes p. 546.

15. A history of French Literature (London 1955) p.

16. Mallarmé and Serialist thought, article by Hans Rudolf Zeller, translated by Margaret Shenfield in Die Reihe Volume Six, Speech and Music (London 1964) p. 5.

17. Ibid. p. 6.

Notes to Chapter Four.

1. The Last Romantics (London 1961) p. 211.

2. For Love, selected poems (New York 1962) p. 136.

3. Selected Poems, edited and with an introduction by T.S.Eliot (London 1959) p. 75.

4. London 1958.

Notes to Chapter Five.

1. London 1962. p. 183.

2. The Power of Words, article by Brice Parain, in Essays on Language and Literature (London 1947) p. 207.

3. Surrealism, by Patrick Walberg (London 1965) p. 81.

4. Wagner as Man and Artist, by Ernest Newman (London 1963) p. 221.

5. Debussy - his life and mind. (London 1966) Volume One p. 155.

Notes to Chapter Seven.

Mai

A Clymène

1. An interesting example of technically clever punning which may stand a comparison with the example from Mallarme if only to show how differently the aims of literature were focused in the minds of two great Frenchmen, is a passage from "Musee Secret" the third section of Cocteau's "Opera" of 1925.

> Athena: "Je suis née grècque. Je suis l'aînée. J'ai le nez grec, le nez d'Enée. Je suis le mur, l'art mûr, l'amour. Je suis la sève héritée. Je suis lasse et sévérité. Je suis la sévérité. Je suis la cruelle crue elle ..... Mes mensonges c'est verité. Sévérité même en songe."

Quoted in Cocteau, by Andre Fraigneau (London 1961) p. 55.

2. Apparences et realité dans le langage musical de Debussy, article by Jacques Chailley in Debussy et l'évolution de la musique au XX^{e} siecle (Paris 1965) p. 70.

Paradis

Spleen

C'est l'extase

Clair de lune

1. Especially the article Poétique musicale de Debussy, by Andre Souris, because of the discussion of Bachelard's theories and his book L'eau et lês reves pp. 133-139.

2. Debussy - his life and mind (London 1965) Volume Two Appendix F The Theories of Gaston Bachelard pp. 278-281.

Notes to Chapter Eight.

1. Literature and Psychology, by F.L.Lucas (London 1951) p.
2. The Banquet Years, by Roger Shattuck (London 1958) p. 32.
3. Ibid. p. 253.
4. Ibid. p. 254.
5. Translated by Wallace Fowlie (London 1957) p.
6. Literature through Art (New York 1952) p.
7. Translated by Alfred Sutro (London 1915) pp. 4-5 and 14.
8. Bruxelles 1952 pp. 198-199.
9. The Symbolist Movement in Literature, by Arthur Symons (New York 1958) pp. 87-88.
10. The Contemporary French Theatre (London 1958) p.
11. Ibid. p.
12. Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande, by Lawrence Gilman (New York 1907) p.
13. London 1962 pp. 182-183.
14. London 1958 p. 199.
15. Ibid. pp. 201-202.
16. The Heritage of Symbolism, by C.M.Bowra (London 1943) p. 32.

Notes to Chapter Nine.

1. London 1966 p. 31.

Notes to Chapter Ten.

1. Debussy - his life and mind Volume One. Lockspieser comments on the "streak of sadism" in "Pelléas et Mélisande" in a comparison between the play and the earlier "Serres Chaudes" poems, p. 190 (c.f. the discussion on "Oraison" in Chapter Two of this study).

2. Mid-Century French Poets - Introduction; The Legacy of Symbolism (New York 1955) p. 11.

Notes to Chapter Eleven.

Clair de Lune (1882)

1. Quelques anciennes mélodies inédites de Claude Debussy, article in La Jeunesse de Claude Debussy - numéro spéciale de La Revue Musicale May 1926 (Paris 1926) p. 128.

2. Ibid. p. 137.

Clair de Lune (1892)

La Chevelure

Placet Futile

Notes to Chapter Twelve.

1. Pelléas et Mélisande, by Mary Jeanne van Appledorn (Abstract).

2. Ibid.

3. The Theories of Claude Debussy, by Leon Vallas (London 1967) p. 12.

4. Ibid. p. 14.

5. Ibid. p. 16.

6. Debussy - his life and mind, by Edward Lockspieser. Volume One (London 1966) p. 190.

7. The Social History of Art, by Arnold Hauser. Volume Four (London 1962) pp. 218-219.

8. Ibid. p. 219.

9. Ibid. p. 220.