

Fernand Khnopff and Ver Sacrum

by Geoffrey Simmins

Scholarship on Fernand Khnopff (1858-1921) has been enriched recently by a *catalogue raisonné* on the artist, the first retrospective exhibition devoted to his work, as well as numerous specialized studies, mostly concerned with iconography.[1] What may still be lacking in Fernand Khnopff studies, however, is an attempt to show how Khnopff's work was regarded by his contemporaries — how *they* saw it as 'Symbolist'. An excellent vehicle for such a study, thus far not singled out for intensive analysis in its own right, is provided by the special issue in December 1898 of the Viennese Secessionists' magazine *Ver Sacrum*, devoted to Khnopff.[2]

Ver Sacrum, the official voice of the Viennese Secession, was a high-quality publication devoted principally to the visual arts and contemporary literature. Its first issue appeared in January, 1898; it published regularly until 1903.[3] Its special issue on Khnopff contains numerous reproductions of paintings by Khnopff, as well as graphic illustrations and photographs of his sculptures; accompanying these illustrations are texts on Khnopff and his work, written by leading Viennese and Belgian writers. Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Khnopff's fellow Belgian, contributes a play which is sympathetic in tone to Khnopff's work, the puppet drama *La Mort de Tintagiles*. [4] Khnopff, a polished writer himself, contributes an article excerpted from previously published writing. This was the first issue of *Ver Sacrum* devoted entirely to the work of one artist.

Studying this ensemble of reproduced paintings, graphic illustrations and complementary texts provides an opportunity to look at Khnopff's work *in context*. The texts by and on Khnopff, interpreted in tandem with illustrations, make it possible to examine Khnopff's art as it would have been seen by the international audience which read *Ver Sacrum*. Because the texts which accompany the illustrations offer some critical commentary on Khnopff's art, the magazine becomes in effect a contemporary assessment of the artist's work — almost a retrospective exhibition of the artist's work to that date.

In addition to telling us a good deal about Khnopff, this issue of *Ver Sacrum* makes it possible to broach a number of themes relevant to the whole Symbolist period. For instance, because the critical assessment of Khnopff's work is given in a magazine, this underscores the importance of art publications during the late nineteenth century. Khnopff's graphic illustrations for the magazine are an excellent demonstration that many Symbolist artists were interested in sister arts to painting. The magazine also attests to the cosmopolitanism and internationalism of the period. This issue on the Belgian artist Khnopff is published in a Viennese publication accompanied by poetry and texts by French, Austrian and Belgian writers. This degree of internationalism is far from an anomaly: among many other similar instances are the Glasgow Four finding their most fertile ground in Turin and Vienna.

Accordingly, there are several overlapping reasons for studying this issue of *Ver Sacrum*: 1) the magazine provides a case study by which Khnopff's art can be interpreted as his contemporaries saw it; 2) it shows how important art periodicals such as *Ver Sacrum* were in fostering — and disseminating — a particular image of an artist; 3) it serves as a particularly rich documentary source, integrating art and literature. Only by examining Khnopff's work in the broader context of literature and the decorative arts is it possible to arrive at a reasoned answer to the question of how, precisely, Khnopff's art was viewed as Symbolist

We should first review the circumstances which led to Khnopff's participation in the Viennese Secessionist exhibitions. The Secessionists were from the first internationalist in outlook.[5] The Secessionist artist Josef Engelhart (1864-1941), who had contacts in many other countries, was delegated to contact foreign artists regarding their possible participation in the Secessionist's first exhibition early in 1898. Among those he contacted were Khnopff, Rodin, Eugène Carrière, Puvis de Chavannes and Whistler — all of them leading artists associated with the various movements against academic art which characterize the late nineteenth century. All

of them, including Khnopff, declared their support. Encouraged by the enthusiastic support from foreign artists, the Secessionists were spurred on in their efforts to hold an exhibition. They lacked a suitable exhibition space, however, and eventually had to rent a building from the Viennese Horticultural Society. Their inaugural exhibition, held 26 March to 15 June, took its name from the building where it was held: the Gebäude der Gartenbau Ausstellung. The Secessionists did not lack friends in high places; the Emperor Franz Josef attended the opening night ceremonies. Engelhart writes that the exhibition was "the first occasion on which anyone had been able to get some idea of the work of the best French, English, Belgian and German artists of the period."^[6] Among those who participated were the group recruited by Engelhart — including Whistler, Puvis de Chavannes and Walter Crane — and many others, including Frank Brangwyn, Arnold Böcklin, Rodin, Segantini, Klinger and Stuck. Khnopff exhibited twenty works, making him the single largest contributor.^[7] The exhibition was wildly successful, so much so that the Secessionists were able to hold another one later that year, this time held in the Society's new building, designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich (1867–1908). Khnopff sent nine works.^[8]

Part of the reason for the immense success of the first Secessionist exhibition was the popular acclaim accorded Khnopff's works. A whole room was reserved for him; his paintings were thronged by a curious and generally favorable impressed public. It was the kind of reception that caused his friend and first biographer, the poet Émile Verhaeren, back home in Brussels, to write that Khnopff had received "dans toute la presse viennoise, des éloges les plus flatteurs."^[9]

This popular success doubtless influenced *Ver Sacrum's* editorial board when it decided to award him the signal honor of a special issue devoted to his work. There were also other reasons which probably influenced the board in Khnopff's favor. In 1898 Khnopff was at the peak of his powers and was widely admired across Europe. He was just the sort of artist who could demonstrate the Secessionist's policy of internationalism in the arts. The year 1898 also marked Khnopff's thirtieth birthday and although nowhere in the magazine is there a reference to this, perhaps it was also in the minds of the Secessionist artists. Also, Emperor Franz Josef celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his reign 1898. This provides an additional reason for the special issue on Khnopff, as there had historically existed a close link between Austria and Belgium. (Khnopff also had ancestors on his mother's side who sprung

from aristocratic Austrian stock.)^[10] The Emperor, it will be remembered, attended the opening of the Gartenbau Ausstellung.

Before proceeding to a detailed description and analysis of the magazine's contents, however, I wish to sound a note of caution. We do not know with any precision what Khnopff's role was in putting together this issue of *Ver Sacrum*.^[11] We do not know when exactly he was invited to have his work shown in *Ver Sacrum*; what his relations were to the editors of the magazine has been impossible to determine. Khnopff's recent biographers write that he was responsible for the 'mise en page' of the magazine.^[12] I interpret this to mean that he was responsible for laying out the pages, perhaps in collaboration with the magazine's art director. Did he also have a hand in choosing the texts? We cannot say. It does not change matters to any great extent if he did not choose the texts, or even if he did not lay out the pages of the magazine; he certainly made a significant contribution in any case. But without documentary evidence showing exactly what work he performed for this issue, caution impels me to avoid calling the magazine 'his' work. Nevertheless, since tradition has it that he was responsible, I will still refer to the images and texts as if they had been selected by him.

Another methodological problem is raised by the *type* of illustrations which are included. A distinction needs to be made between the illustrations Khnopff executed especially for this issue of the magazine and those which reproduce works created in another context. The illustrations designed specifically for the magazine are restricted to the cover, two decorated initials and three illustrations for *La Mort de Tintagiles*. Since the illustrations designed specifically for the magazine present a closer melting of text and illustrations than those reproduced from other sources, should they be analyzed by different methods? The illustrations for *Tintagiles*, for example, are indissolubly linked to the text. In most other instances the link between text and illustration is at first glance more tenuous. Two examples will make this distinction clear. An illustration from *Tintagiles* (fig. xxx) may be compared to another page from the magazine (fig. xxx), where we see a decorated initial, a reproduction of a frontispiece, and a separate text. Not only were images and text executed at different times and for different clients, they seem singularly unrelated thematically. The initial, executed in 1887, was designed for a printer in Brussels. The frontispiece reproduces Khnopff's title page for the Belgian writer Grégoire Le Roy's book, *Mon coeur pleure d'Autrefois*, pub-

lished in 1889. The text is an excerpt from a speech Khnopff gave to Brussel's avant garde group Le Circle Artistique on the English pre-Raphaelite painter Walter Crane in 1894.

Yet by bringing text and images together in a new context, Khnopff imparts to each of them a new meaning — a *composite* meaning. Therefore they should be analysed using the same criteria as for those designed specifically for the magazine.

Leading logically from this premise is another question: if, as seems reasonable to infer, Khnopff has selected and laid out the illustrations beside particular texts, does he recombine them in a way which reflects some symbolic program? Visual evidence strongly suggests that the magazine as a whole has been carefully planned with an eye to making each illustration a complement to or a commentary on the text it accompanies. If this is the case, the tantalizing prospect is raised that Khnopff intended to execute an iconographic program extending to the smallest details. This raises one more question, perhaps the most crucial at stake here: is this issue of *Ver Sacrum* itself a Symbolist work of art?

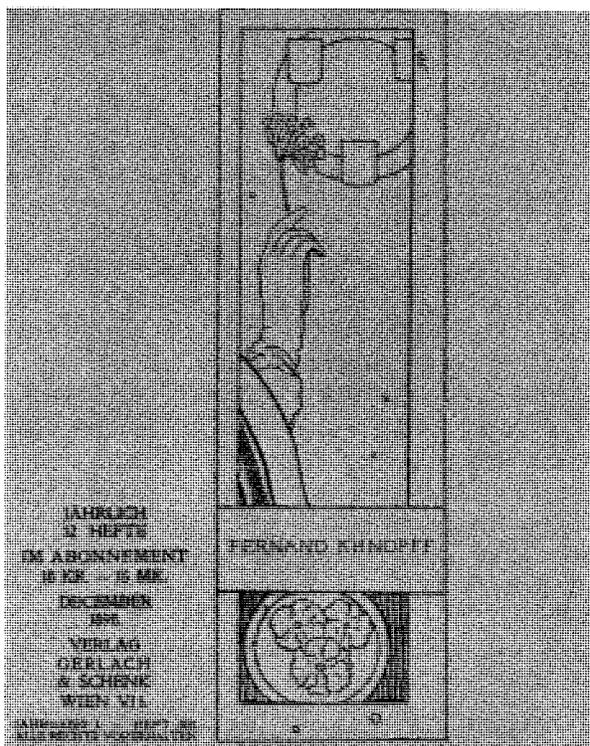


Figure 1: Cover for *Ver Sacrum*.

Khnopff's cover for the magazine (fig. 1, CD-OZ 307) sets the tone for what is to follow.[13] Restrained, elegant, linear, it is evocative rather than explanatory, mood-inducing rather than factual. It shows in emblematic fashion a gloved hand holding

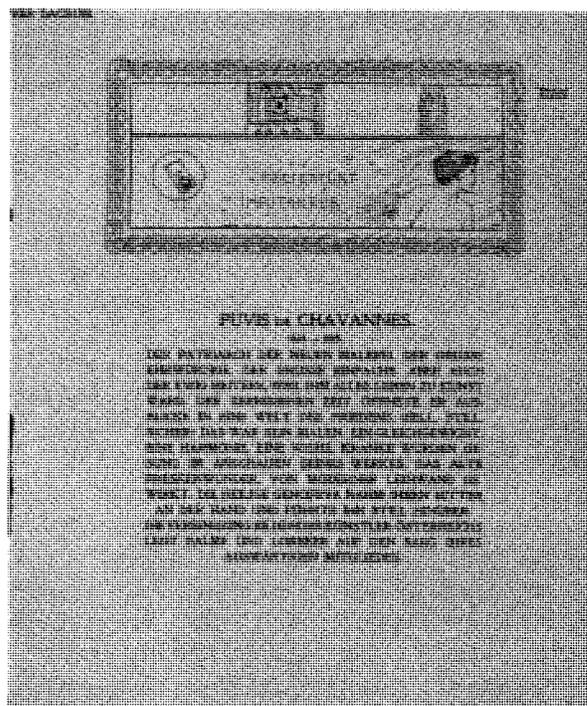


Figure 2: Puvis de Chavannes.

a stalk of flowers. The image is clearly related to a theme Khnopff had treated in his painting *L'Encens* (CD-OZ 308) of 1898, which showed a seated woman with a gloved hand raising her hands beside her face in a meditative pose. Here, however, in contrast to the rich treatment of draperies and materials in *L'Encens*, the rendering is without modelling of any kind. Yet despite the flat linear effect of the cover, Khnopff achieves an illusion of depth in this work by adding tiny circles on either side of the gloved hand. These circles look almost like bubbles; by the most economical means Khnopff provides an illusionistic backdrop against which the arm is placed. A crest in the upper right corner of the composition imparts to the image a heraldic quality and responds formally to a circle containing three flowers below the gloved hand. The heraldic effect of the composition is reinforced by the vertical proportions of the composition. Each of these elements — the truncated view; the heraldic allusions; the flat yet illusionistically rendered composition — contributes to an effect that is enigmatic in the extreme. With such a composition, Khnopff seems to indicate that the main themes of the magazine will be hinted at rather than stated outright.

The next page shows a panel with an inscription placed above a dedicatory passage honoring Puvis de Chavannes (fig. 2). The panel (CD-OZ 250) ex-

executed in 1894, exhibits the same linear style as the cover. The forms on this panel are also truncated as they were on the cover. The forms on the panel seem unconnected with one another compositionally but do appear connected thematically. Each alludes to time. There is a nearly-empty hourglass, a truncated view of the belltower of a church; below, to the right, a young figure looks away. When seen in context with all the other specific allusions to time, her youth alone is sufficient evocation of another allusion to time. As to the composition, Khnopff again uses the motif of circles to create an illusionistic effect of space. The figure seems to be juxtaposed against a swirling, underwater background. The effect of illusionism is similar to the cover, but more pronounced. The numerous allusions to time make it seem as if on the cover he alluded to his intentions — to hint at themes and never state them outright — and here he alludes to where his inspiration for these themes might be found — the Past.

The inscription on the panel reads, *'praeterunt et imputantur'* — roughly, 'they go before, and are charged' (as with a mission). When this passage is read along with the dedication to Puvis de Chavannes below it, it clearly is a reference to the forerunners of Symbolist art. Puvis de Chavannes died in 1898, and since he was a distinguished foreign member of the Secessionists, it was natural to commemorate his death. In August 1898 a similar passage was written on Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98), who was also a foreign member. In Khnopff's panel, however, there is a much greater integration between text and illustration than in the earlier dedication to Burne-Jones.

That there should be a dedication to Puvis de Chavannes in an issue devoted to Khnopff indicated the degree to which Symbolist painters were self-consciously historicizing, seeing themselves as stemming from a venerable tradition. And what the passage says about Puvis is also very revealing. It refers to him as the 'patriarch of modern painting', lauding him for his calm, luminous sane painting that opens the door from a disordered world into a world of peace. It praises him for rescuing the ancient technique of fresco painting — even claiming that the sick are made healthy in the presence of his painting. The passage terminates in a tribute of palms and laurels to a distinguished foreign member of the Secession.

The elevated tone of the passage makes it read like a dedicatory prayer; this alerts us that this is still part of the prologue, so to speak, the introduction that sets the tone for the rest of the magazine. Also, the passage is seeded with references to 'eternity', a

distant archaic past, a world of peace — all, by implication, infinitely superior to the modern world. This confers to it both a quality of nostalgia — for Puvis, the great master who could evoke in his painting these distant archaic realms, is no more — and an element of expectation — for Fernand Khnopff, by virtue of his juxtaposition with Puvis on the same page, may be seen by some as his successor.

The cover and the page with *'praeterunt et imputantur'* thus serve as an introduction to the magazine. The meaning to be read into these images is that Symbolist artists such as Khnopff derive inspiration from the distant past and from those modern masters such as Puvis who could evoke that past in their work; also that a Symbolist artist's work in non-anecdotal, but subtle and allusive. In essence, these few images are almost a programmatic demonstration of Böcklin's definition of a Symbolist painting, namely, that "un tableau doit raconter quelque chose, donner à penser au spectateur comme une poésie et lui laisser une impression comme un morceau de musique." [14] Like music, Khnopff's imagery is evocative yet hard to grasp.

The first image following the introduction is a reproduction of a very early Khnopff painting, dating from 1881, *La Crise* (CD-OZ 29). Khnopff shows the figure of a solitary young man in a craggy landscape. The man is perhaps meant to be Werther or Hamlet, but could equally be a self-conscious and literal allegory of the artist's dilemma, perhaps with a strong autobiographical element. [15] Placed as it is at the outset of the main body of the magazine's contents, *La Crise* is probably intended to summarize the period of Khnopff's early work. In an article which examines the 'symbolic states of mind' in Khnopff's paintings of the 1880s, Leslie Morrissey considers this work as typical of this period. [16] Paintings from this decade frequently show isolated figures coming to grips with a personal reality the viewer cannot share. Belgian art historian Francine Legrand, in a pioneering study of Khnopff's art published in English, remarks that Khnopff caused "quite a stir" with this picture when it was exhibited in Belgium in 1882, adding that in it, "nothing is stated: all is suggestion, solitude, despair and pride — the riddle of Fate." [17] The next page sees the first text: an analysis of Khnopff's work written by Hermann Bahr, the influential Viennese critic. [18] Beside Bahr's text — which starts with a Khnopff-designed decorated initial (CD-OZ 310) — is a reproduction of a watercolor titled *La Défiance* (Fig. 3, CD-OZ 288). Executed in 1897 and exhibited with the Rose + Croix in that year and at the Gartenbau Ausstellung in 1898, it is a much more mature and complex work

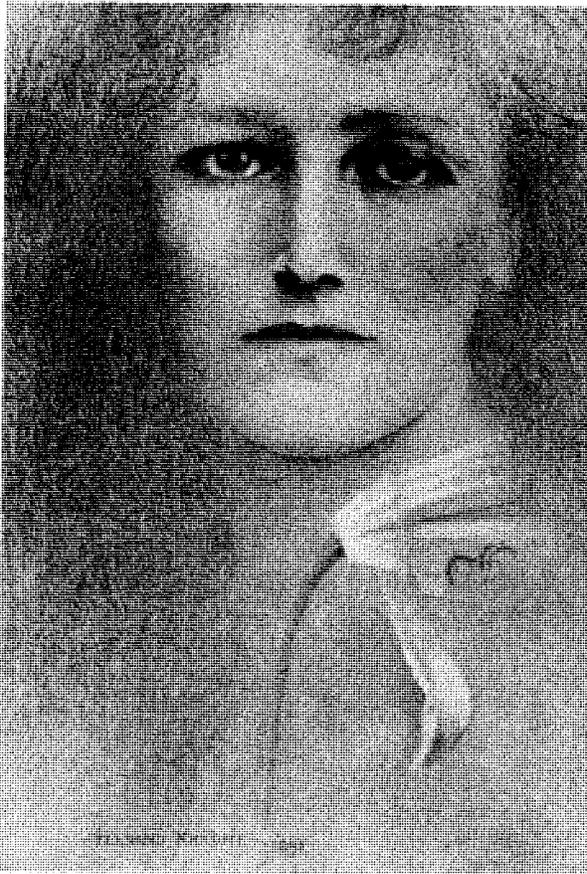


Figure 3: *La Défiance*, 29 x 29.8 cm.

than *La Crise*.^[19] In it Khnopff eliminates all landscape, bringing the image right to the picture plane. He eliminates all anecdotal elements. The composition is balanced, yet tight and economical. As he did on the magazine's cover, he employs a vertical format with tightly-cropped truncated forms. *La Crise* showed an ordinary man — possibly Khnopff himself — wrestling with a universal problem. By contrast, *La Défiance* shows a universal figure confronting the viewer with an unstated problem. Who is this archaic woman girded with a huge shield? What is she suspicious of? The ambiguity in this image, so total as to leave no doubt that it is deliberate, is a new element here. Yet such ambiguity is a constant element of Khnopff's mature style and much of the rest of the magazine will imply similarly arcane imagery.

Bahr's text concludes on the next page; the column of print is flanked by two more works in a vertical format. On the left is *La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé* (CD-OZ 205, 206, 255), executed in 1892, also known as *La Tendresse* and *En Écoutant des fleurs*. It was executed to accompany a Mallarmé sonnet titled "A la nue accablante tu;" the poem and

Khnopff's illustration appeared together in Berlin's influential journal *Pan* in April-May 1895. This is the first example in the magazine which shows Khnopff's direct inspiration by literature. Compositionally, the work surely recalls Burne-Jones, with its cascades of flowers, attenuated, diaphanously-draped female forms and meditative expressions.^[20]

On the other side of this page is a work titled *Un Masque* (CD-OZ 297-300), a composite work in ivory, bronze and enamel executed in 1897. This work, a version of which Khnopff kept all his life in a specially-constructed altar in his house, is an admixture of a classicizing column, a carefully posed mask and an exquisitely asymmetrical flower in a vase atop the column. The winged mask alludes to the god Hypnos; Khnopff's source for this was a classical statue in the British Museum.^[21] Khnopff revered Hypnos because he ruled over dreams. Khnopff, as did many other Symbolist artists, believed dreams were the source of creativity.

The column in *Un Masque* is complemented by a similar column in the illustration to Mallarmé's sonnet; so too does the single flower in *Un Masque* respond to the profusion of flowers in *La Tendresse*. The columns in the two illustrations flank the text, imparting to the page a structural solidity that is almost architectonic. The woman in *La Tendresse* inclines her head inward; the mask on the opposite side does likewise in a mirror image. The two works — executed for different clients and in totally different contexts — achieve a new monumentality and unity when seen together.

The way in which the two works complement and enhance each other is visually striking. This visual dialogue may in turn be enhanced by several layers of symbolic meaning underlying the juxtaposition of these images. For instance, we know that Khnopff was fascinated by mirror imagery — by the complex problems raised by considering art and illusion.^[22] Do we therefore read the mask as a mirror image of the woman? And is the mask therefore an image of art juxtaposed against an image of nature (the woman)? Do the flowers similarly represent an art versus nature equation, the elegant arrangement in *Un Masque* symbolic of artistic selection; the profusion of flowers in *La Tendresse* symbolizing nature *before* it has been filtered through an intellect? Furthermore, although the columns in both works are superficially similar — they are both illusionistic representations of reality, shown through a photograph — they are actually quite different. The column in *La Tendresse* is painted, then photographed (hence twice removed from reality); the column in *Un Masque* is a photograph of a real col-

umn, which was then photographed. It is therefore of a *different order of reality*.

Such aesthetic problems — especially the Chinese-box problem of the nature of illusionism and reality — are central to the Symbolist period; certainly Khnopff was aware of them. This juxtaposition of images may well be a complex argument about the nature of the artistic process itself. In the end it is not possible to answer unequivocally how many of these manifold layers of symbolism Khnopff intended to be read into these images; but it is important to realize that *the format of the magazine itself* makes it possible that the questions are asked.

The visual dialogue between these images — and their possible deeper symbolic meaning — is enriched by Bahr's text which accompanies them. Bahr, the literary editor of *Ver Sacrum* in 1898, was one of the leading intellectual apologists for new art in Vienna.[23] A sarcastic and ascerbic critic of academic painting, he was one of the founders of the independent journal *Die Zeit*. As early as 1893 he had referred to Khnopff as among a group of up-and-coming painters.[24] In 1898, in his review of the Gartenbau Ausstellung, he wrote perceptively about Khnopff's art, perceiving in it an analogy to the tragedy of modern life, accentuated by the eternal unsullyable beauty of Khnopff's figures.[25]

Bahr was a notable essayist. His writing typically has a professorial yet accessible tone. He directs his remarks to a middle-of-the-road public, not just the artists themselves — although we may imagine that artists could also read him with pleasure. In touch with intellectual streams everywhere in Europe, he helped to introduce to the Viennese public writers as diverse as Ibsen, Dostoyevsky and Maeterlinck. One of his important early essays, written in 1891, titled *Die Überwindung des Naturalismus*, starts in typically forceful Bahr fashion: "Die Herrschaft des Naturalismus ist vorüber, seine Rolle ist ausgespielt, sein Zauber ist gebrochen." [26] This sentiment is by 1891 no longer new provender. Its significance lies in the fact that Bahr was widely read and his views were influential. Bahr went on to develop his ideas much further than simply stating that the age of naturalism was finished. By 1894, in *Studien zur Kritik der Moderne*, he tackles the problem of defining Symbolism. He commences his essay once more in succinct and memorable fashion: "Die Kunst will jetzt aus dem Naturalismus fort und sucht Neues." He continues:

Niemand weiss noch, was er werden möchte; der Drang ist ungestalt und wirr; er tastet ohne Rath nach vielen Dingen and

findet sich nirgends. Nur fort, um jeden Preis fort aus der deutlichen Wirklichkeit, ins Dunkle, Fremde und Versteckte — das ist heute die eingestandene Lösung für zahlreiche Künstler.[27]

Further on in the same essay, he defines in a forceful fashion between rhetorical, realist and symbolist approaches to a given theme — how to show a father's grief at losing a child.

The rhetorical writer, Bahr states, would have the father wail and lament, 'ah, how wretched and alone and without consolation I am. Nothing can take away from my endless sorrow. The world is a dark and terrible place and becomes intolerable to me'. The realist, he writes, describes everything around the moment but the death itself: 'it was a cold morning, with frost and ice. The sled froze. We went behind the tiny coffin, the sobbing mother and I'. But the symbolist, he writes, would describe a forest in which a man cuts down a pine tree for Christmas, the whole event standing as a symbol of sorrow and estrangement.[28]

Bahr's schematic distinctions are oversimplified yet unforgettable. His comments of Khnopff's work have a similar vigor. His first sentence reintroduces the theme adumbrated in the panegyric on Puvis, namely that today's world is but a dim echo of an infinitely superior lost eternity. He writes, "Fernand Khnopff will im Malen das Tägliche, das Heutige vergessen und ruft tiefe Gefühle in seiner Seele, die Erinnerungen an das Ewige an." As Blake once said, writes Bahr, Khnopff believes "Ich bin nur der Secretär, die Autoren sind in der Ewigkeit." He compares Khnopff's art to the writings of Maeterlinck, and to Vienna's own Hugo von Hofmannsthal; all three, he writes, are inspired by 'distant sources'. [29] He draws a parallel between Khnopff's art and Maeterlinck's writings:

Wie diese dichter [Maeterlinck] ist er [Khnopff] ein Maler des inneren Lebens . . . Maeterlinck sagt gern, dass das, was wir reden oder thun, gar nicht wichtig ist; es ist nur ein Gleichnis, das Wichtige ist hinter unseren Worten und Thaten. Wir wissen es, wir wissen es besser, als wir beweisen können, ja wir leben nur davon, dass wir es wissen, aber wir möchten es aussprechen können. Diese Unaussprechliche malt Khnopff.[30]

In this belief that reality is but a mask, and art an inferior simulacrum of eternal truths, both Maeterlinck and Khnopff show an apparent dependency

on Schopenhauer's philosophy. This connection, at least so far as Khnopff is concerned, has not gone unremarked; Legrand, for instance, has written that Khnopff

... like Schopenhauer and most other Symbolists, held that the world we normally perceive is only a group of states of consciousness, a bundle of sensations — nothing but a painted screen, and not reality at all.[31]

Bahr's text thus evinces similar preoccupations as the images which it accompanies. Bahr writes about Khnopff's efforts to 'paint the ineffable'; Khnopff tries to represent some of the dizzyingly complex problems involved in sorting out nature from art, art from illusion. In fact, the text strikes so many sympathetic notes with the images that we are led into symphonic dimensions.

Exactly the same aesthetic problems are addressed by the juxtaposition of text and image on the next page, which combines a poem by Hugo von Hofmannsthal and a reproduction of a painting by Khnopff (CD-OZ 164b). Bahr's friend and protégé, von Hofmannsthal was by 1898 well-known in his own right as a critic and poet.[32] The poem reproduced here is titled *Weltgeheimnis* and was first published in Berlin's *Blätter für die Kunst* in March 1896.[33] Much of the poem's imagery and even its vocabulary will sound familiar. First of all, the title, 'Weltgeheimnis', expresses the same themes that Bahr did — themes of mystery and longing for a lost and perhaps never possessed Arcadian past. Von Hofmannsthal's imagery, too — especially the central image of 'der tiefe Brunnen' — evokes a distant Arcadian past. In the past, he writes, men were wise without knowing it; they drank freely from a well of knowledge. But time made them forget and now they can only recapture in dreams what was once their birthright. The man of today is an unworthy inheritor of that heritage.

We may interpret 'der tiefe Brunnen' as von Hofmannsthal himself. What is the Symbolist writer or artist after all if not a being sensitized to remember the past where others forget (or are unable to remember)? Von Hofmannsthal presents an image of the artist as an isolated, lonely figure distanced from the masses beneath him and sensitized by virtue of his calling. The poem is thus an analogue of the artist himself, at the same time as it is a comment on the nature of artistic inspiration.

To the right of the poem is a work entitled *Solitude* (Fig. 4), also known as *L'Isolement*. It was probably executed in 1890. The central panel of a



Figure 4: *Solitude*, 32 x 12.4 cm., 1891.

triptych also titled *Solitude*, the panel was exhibited alone with Brussel's *Les XX* in 1891. The left panel of the triptych was titled *Acrasia* (CD-OZ 164a); the right, titled *Britomart*, dates from 1894 (CD-OZ 164c). The three panels were only once exhibited together, at the *Gartenbau Ausstellung* in 1898. *Solitude* — especially if seen in the context of its two companion panels — is evidence that Khnopff, as so many Symbolist painters did, viewed women at least some of the time in terms of the *femme-fatale*/virgin dichotomy.[34] *Acrasia* and *Britomart* are mythological characters from Spencer's *Faerie Queen*. *Acrasia* was considered the personification of vice and debauchery; Spencer's hero, Sir Guyon, triumphs over her and wins the chaste *Britomart*, warrior virgin of noble blood. But *Solitude* — liter-

ally and symbolically — falls between these two extreme views of women. Instead, this is a curiously androgynous figure. She is certainly more chaste than lascivious; her stiff draperies, buttoned up to high on her neck, repel invitation rather than appeal to the senses.

What is the text's relationship to the illustration here? The principal theme of the poem is the lost artistic heritage — really a way of looking at the world — that modern man must struggle to regain. I have suggested that 'der tiefe Brunnen' is the artist himself; on a more literal level it is the wellspring of creativity from which modern man has alienated himself. The image of *Solitude* can also be interpreted as a representation of the modern artist. Just as the modern artist is surrounded by banality and lasciviousness, but can if he struggles keep his ideal in sight, the figure of Solitude is flanked by personifications of carnality and spirituality. This is a visual embodiment of the theme von Hofmannsthal writes about. Not only is it the contrast between the spiritual and the carnal, it also refers to the conflict between the active and the contemplative realms.

The meaning of the sword is not clear. In emblematic literature a standing female figure with a drawn sword symbolizes the figure of justice, her drawn sword "the rigor of justice, which does not hesitate to punish."^[35] Here, however, the word seems to signify vigilance. If, as seems likely, the figure of Solitude is intended to be an allegory of the artist, the sword may well represent artistic act — symbolic of cutting through the Gordian knot of choices that the artist faces.

Khnopff may also have wished to evoke another level of meaning. Since *Solitude* was exhibited at the Secessionists' first exhibition as part of a triptych, by showing only one wing from the triptych Khnopff evokes the memory of the others. Memory is one of the main themes of von Hofmannsthal's poem. We also know that Khnopff was fascinated by the theme of memory.^[36] His many depictions of the city of Bruges, for example, were executed solely from memory. Khnopff thus hits at the heart of how we view art: by representing only one panel of three here, he seems to be asking, is it by perception through our senses or memory through our intellects that we experience art? Do we perceive reality or reconstruct emotion in tranquility? Von Hofmannsthal presents a bleak view of the world in which man has lost his heritage; Khnopff shares von Hofmannsthal's precept that modern man has lost the ability to see, but seems to hold forth a way of looking at the world — through reconstructed reality and memory — that poses an artistic direction



Figure 5: *Un Masque de jeune femme Anglaise*, height 40.5 cm., 1891.

modern man could follow to regain his lost heritage.

Following this page is a representation of Khnopff's first sculpture, executed in 1891 (fig. 5). Titled *Un Masque de jeune femme Anglaise*, or *Masque* or *Masque de jeune anglaise* (CD-OZ 181-184), it was yet another part of Khnopff's remarkable contribution to the first Secessionist exhibition. The title is significant. First of all it is a mask, therefore a representation of reality. It therefore picks up the themes announced by the mask of Hypnos. The title also makes it clear that Khnopff's subject was English. It was after 1890 that Khnopff began to become closely allied with British artists. In 1890 Walter Shaw-Sparrow published a long article on Khnopff in the London-based *The Magazine of Art*.^[37] That year Khnopff exhibited in London with the Society of British Pastelists. The following year, he took the first of many annual sojourns to England, meeting and befriending Burne-Jones, Watts and Laughton. From 1894 to 1914 he was the Brussels correspondent for *The Studio*, writing

under the rubric 'Brussels: Studio Talk'.

Back in Brussels, he met the Marquet family, from Glasgow but resident in Brussels, whose three daughters are now considered to be the sources of his numerous depictions of red-haired women — not exclusively his sister Marguerite, as was formerly thought.[38] The mask may well be a portrait bust of one of the Marquet sisters. Aside from its biographical importance as an indication of Khnopff's growing Anglophilia, and its importance as its first sculpture, the mask is interesting because it reintroduces the Schopenhauerian theme of the mask of reality.

The next page is exquisitely laid out: asymmetrically balanced, it is an example of the high level *Ver Sacrum's* graphic design could attain with the simplest means. A decorated initial is balanced by a picture which steps above the plane of the text. The decorated initial (CD-OZ 104), Khnopff's design, shows an etiolated hand passing a staff to a more vigorous hand. The head of the staff is a sphinx. The quarter moon is waxing. The imagery — the young taking over the old; the quarter moon — is a further reference to the new generation's inheritance. The initial thus repeats the themes introduced in the panel dedicated to Puvis. The sphinx permits of numerous interpretations; here it probably refers again to the distant past, a different world from the everyday, a world which the artist must try and achieve contact with.

The text on this page is a fragment from an 1894 talk which Khnopff gave on Walter Crane to Brussel's Le Cercle Artistique; portions of the talk were then published in Brussel's *L'Art Moderne*. [39] Khnopff's text, elegantly written and luxuriantly descriptive, broaches the subject of the English Aesthetic Movement by discussing one of Crane's paintings. Khnopff observes that the Aesthetics lived in an artistic realm so rarified that it had to be artificial; this meant that while the original creators of the movement could create exquisite works, there were bound to be obtuse imitators and affectation. But he commends the original innovators for their efforts, which he feels were rewarded,

... si l'on a vécu, ne fût-ce qu'un instant,
l'espoir et la vision d'un charme prolongé
et d'une grâce infinie. [40]

When the final hour comes, he asks rhetorically — and the eschatological touch is not unexpected — what else will matter than that we strove for this 'infinite grace', even if it proved unattainable or evanescent? His text concludes on a melancholy and enigmatic note as he refers — in much the same way

that Bahr and von Hofmannsthal did — to ineffable mysterious realms of the Beyond, dreamed of worlds which it is art's duty to strive for.

The illustration beside this text reproduces Khnopff's frontispiece for the Belgian poet Grégoire Le Roy's *Mon Coeur pleure d'Autrefois*, published in 1889. Khnopff had been associated with members of Brussel's literary avant garde since 1881, when, on his return from studies in Paris, he helped found Brussel's first avant garde literary journal, *La Jeune Belgique*. It was here that he met Maeterlinck and Georges Rodenbach, another important Belgian Symbolist writer, and it was from this circle that he was introduced to Le Roy. [41]

Le Roy's book is a collection of poems in an exceedingly melancholic and morbid vein. The themes addressed in the poems are solitude, despair, isolation — and, once again, the theme of the lost world of which the present-day is such an unsatisfactory reflection. Almost any poem in this volume could serve as an example of Le Roy's melancholy bent, as witnessed by such titles as "Vers l'Oubli," "Le Passé qui File," "Misère," "Maison de Malheur," "A ma chère Morte," or "Les voix lointaines." Two citations from among this group will give an idea of Le Roy's style and his preoccupation with themes of dusk, darkness and destiny.

In "Les Voix Lointaines," he writes:

Ma vie en deuil, comme une femme/ Qui
pleure longtemps, s'est lassé/ Et mon
âme, discrète et pâle,/ N'est plus qu'une
chapelle close/ En un cimetière oublié./
[42]

In "A Ma Chère Morte," Death visits one who is too pure for this defiled world. He writes:

Cygne endormi sur le lac d'azur,/ Son
coeur, Seigneur! était bien trop pur,/
N'est-ce-pas? Est trop pur son âme?/

Such examples could be multiplied; but Khnopff's frontispiece is ample demonstration of the melancholy nature of the poems it evokes. Khnopff depicts a figure lost in reverie, reflected in a mirror. (Once more the mirror imagery!) A pencil drawing of the subject (CD-OZ 121) shows that Khnopff started with the image reflected in the mirror, then added an architectural setting later. Behind the figure is the city of Bruges. Visible is the famous medieval Béguinage of Bruges (its gate is eighteenth century), in front of which is the Minnewater. Béguines and nuns have long been associated with withdrawal from the world and with silence.

Bruges served as a potent symbol for both Belgian writers and artists during the nineteenth century.[43] The city's almost perfectly preserved medieval heritage was prized in and of itself; but also, perhaps paradoxically, the city was held up as a symbol of Belgium's growing nationalism. For Flemish writers and artists, it was above all the city's melancholy silence that inspired them. Le Roy, Maeterlinck and Rodenbach all believed in the inspirational quality of silence, and associated silence with artistic inspiration. Bruges, with its silent canals, became a symbol to them of the creative act, in addition to serving as a symbol of nationalist aspirations. Khnopff shared these feelings and for him Bruges assumed a talismanic character.

In an article on Khnopff and the 'iconography of silence', Susan Canning has discussed the association between silence and creativity, tracing the tradition through classical and emblematic examples through the nineteenth century.[44] She shows how silence was first associated with withdrawal from the world necessary to a contemplative person and traces how the idea of silence itself gradually came to be associated with artistic inspiration. In the nineteenth century the theme of silence as an inspiration to creativity became widespread. Canning traces the genesis of this way of thinking in the nineteenth century to the writings of Thomas Carlyle. For Carlyle, Canning writes, silence was a means of uniting with eternal values, distant from the evanescent day-to-day life. Carlyle's influence continued to be felt and Belgian writers were familiar with his approach. Maeterlinck, for example, cites Carlyle in his *Trésor des Humbles*, published in Paris in 1896.[45]

In the hands of the Belgian writers — and thence to Khnopff — silence takes on an additional dimension: that of melancholy and withdrawal. This is true of Le Roy. It is also true of Georges Rodenbach.[46] Khnopff was certainly familiar with his countrymen's association of silence with melancholy. Significantly, Khnopff illustrated the frontispiece of Rodenbach's most profoundly melancholy novel, *Bruges-la-Morte*, published in 1892, a novel in which Rodenbach makes silence serve as a mediator between animate and inanimate objects. Rodenbach imbues the idea of silence with Shopenhauerian pessimism; in his novel silence becomes an active force "comme un tyran qui règne impérieusement sur les villes mortes et impose son autorité, exerçant sa vengeance contre ceux qui sont trop heureux." [47]

For Khnopff, too, Bruges represented an impossible ideal — the peaceful silence of the Past — and a reproach to the modern world for defiling this perfection. In an article on Khnopff's many depictions

of Bruges, author Jeffery Howe writes that Khnopff saw in Bruges "a mystical counterpart to his own identity; a symbol of Belgian nationalism and its ancient heritage...; a token of a lost age of spirituality engulfed by modern materialism and thus a reproach to... the flaws of modern society." [48]

Just as Rodenbach's novel is an evocation of the immanent soul of Bruges, not its present circumstances, Khnopff makes a Bruges a symbol of timeless perfection. He saw the city through the purer truth of memory. Legend has it that once, obliged to go to Bruges to attend a function (he had left when he was only six years of age) he wore dark glasses to avoid seeing the city, which was impossibly blighted to his eyes. This almost obsessive concern with the shortcomings of modern life — shortcomings the artist could recognize but could do little to counteract — is the principal meaning to be read into his frontispiece for *Mon Coeur pleure d'Autrefois*. Just as he did in his illustration for Mallarmé's sonnet, Khnopff succeeds in evoking perfectly the *tenor* of the literary work he is illustrating. We sense a more embracing kinship here: just as the solitary figure in Khnopff's illustration sees herself reflected, Khnopff reflects perfectly Le Roy's profoundly pessimistic world view.

But if we regard the page as a whole the pessimism is diffused. For one thing, the decorated initial does show a strong hand taking over a staff from a weaker one; this implies that he sees some hope for the future. And his article on Crane does speak of the 'infinite grace' of art and lauds artists for making an effort to strive for this grace. Therefore Khnopff seems to be holding out some cautious hope for the future of art, as opposed to Le Roy's despairing outlook.

Khnopff's art was not always this mystical, nor inspired by themes this melancholic, as the exquisite portrait sketches on the next three pages amply attest (only one of the three is reproduced here). The first, a reproduction of a pastel of a young woman, is titled simply *Les Levres Rouges* (CD-OZ 294-296). Dating from 1897 and exhibited in the 1898 Gartenbau Ausstellung, it is a marvellously subtle portrait study. Its straightforward quality — there seems to be no underlying symbolic element here — is in marked contrast to the illustration just preceding it. Although the sitter has not been identified, she may be one of the Marquet sisters. The text beside it is a continuation of Khnopff's article on Walter Crane. Is this then Khnopff's subtle tribute to Crane's own beguiling and evocative portraits of women? This supposition is bolstered by the following two female portraits, which are also accompanied by his text on

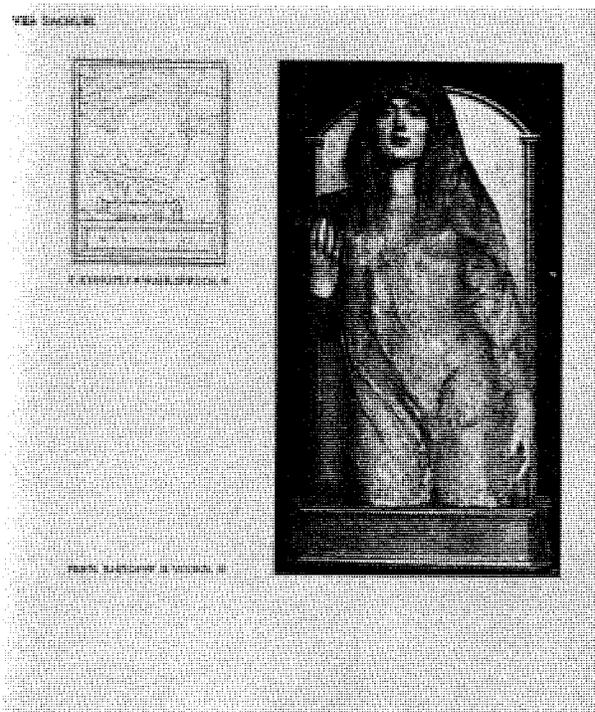


Figure 6: On n'a que soi, Vivien.

Crane (CD-OZ 226 and 317).

Following these female portraits is a page showing Khnopff's motto (fig. 6) 'On n'a que soi' (CD-OZ 297), a motto which he had represented above an altar in his home.[49] The bookplate, dating from 1892, shows an hourglass on its side with a profusion of flowers growing around and beside it. Beside it is a reproduction of a polychromed plaster statue titled *Vivien, Idylls of the King* (CD-OZ 281), or *Vivien*, executed in 1896 and exhibited in England that year. There is no text on this page. *Vivien* was then exhibited in the first Viennese Secessionist exhibition in 1898. It is inspired by pre-Raphaelite themes and is another example of Khnopff's predilection for English art. In this context, it is worth noting that in 1896 Khnopff sent Burne-Jones an inscribed drawing of a young woman's head, and that a drawing Burne-Jones sent him had an important place in Khnopff's sanctuary until his death.[50] In contrast to the close connection between the images and text in the examples already considered, the relationship between these images, if indeed there is one, is singularly difficult to discern.

The two landscapes on the next page are typical of many similar paintings Khnopff executed in a realist vein. Most of these were painted near Fosset, a small town in Belgium where the Khnopff family summered regularly.[51] The larger of the two is titled



Figure 7: l'Eau immobile, dans la Pluie.

l'Eau immobile (Fig. 7, CD-OZ 247), the smaller *A Fosset — de la Brume, or, Dans la Pluie* (CD-OZ 60). Of the two, *l'Eau immobile* was considered by contemporary critics to be the more important. Executed in 1894 and exhibited at the Salon of the Libre Esthétique in Brussels in 1895, it was also exhibited at the first Viennese secessionist exhibition in 1898. Peter Vergo, in his book *Art in Vienna*, has claimed that *l'Eau immobile* "may be singled out as having a direct relation to the style of Klimt's early landscapes." [52] He finds that "both artists embody in their works a certain transcendental melancholy which goes beyond both language and image".

Are these then Symbolist landscapes? Quite probably yes, if one defines the Symbolist element once more in Böcklin's terms, as a 'morceau de musique' which refers to elements beyond itself and succeeds in evoking a mood without being anecdotal. Even so it should be noted that *l'Eau immobile* is also a remarkably powerful realist landscape. Quite early in life, Khnopff showed a natural affinity for naturalistic modes of painting, in the tradition of the great Flemish masters such as Van Eyck and Memling.[53] There are more than a few traces of that approach here. Interestingly, it appears that Khnopff at some point consciously decided to abandon realism entirely; this leads to a curious contrast in many of his works. There is a constant subtle tension be-

tween the powerful evocative representation of the natural world of which he was apparently so effortlessly capable and the hermetic arcane world of the literary cognoscenti.

This pull between two poles in Khnopff's work was noted by a perceptive contemporary critic, Octave Maus, the secretary of the XX and of its successor, La Libre Esthétique. Maus recognized in Khnopff two distinct artistic personalities; in 1899 he wrote that he saw

deux hommes distincts: celui qui, livré sans réticence aux sensations vives qu'excite en lui le spectacle de la nature, transcrit fidèlement ses impressions ... L'autre Khnopff, c'est le créateur de rébus et d'enigmes, de femmes bizarres aux yeux de chat, de montres à tête humaine, de toute une zoologie hétéroclite hantée de reminiscences, surchargée de détails à la fois compliqués et puérils.[54]

Maus, it is clear from these remarks, preferred the unaffected Khnopff to the literary Khnopff; but if the 'natural' Khnopff is represented by the two Fosse landscapes and by the three portraits of women which precede them, then the 'literary' Khnopff is shown to perfection on the next page.

This work is a reproduction of the frontispiece Khnopff executed for the Sâr Péladan's *Le Vice Suprême* in 1885 (CD-OZ 78-79). It was variously known as *D'Après Joséphin Péladan, Le Vice Suprême, Vénus*, or *Vénus Renascens*. (The 'après' was Khnopff's way of signalling that an artist collaborated with an author; he had used the term in this way since 1883, when he painted what may be his first Symbolist painting, *D'Après Flaubert* (Fig. 8, CD-OZ 51.) Khnopff had met the Rosicrucian mystic in 1885, and the frontispiece for *Le Vice Suprême* was their first collaboration. The Sâr later became one of Khnopff's greatest apologists. In 1891 he called Khnopff 'this so intense and subtle one'; in 1893, the year of the second Rose + Croix exhibition, he dedicated the catalogue to Khnopff, who would exhibit in four of the seven Rose + Croix salons.[55]

The Sâr also asked Khnopff to illustrate a frontispiece for another of his many Symbolist books, *Istar*, published in 1888 (CD-OZ 109). Here, almost unique in Khnopff's oeuvre, is a voluptuous lascivious creature, clearly the representation of sensuality incarnate. Khnopff was unfamiliar with representing women in this manner and may have turned to the work of Félicien Rops (1833-98) as his inspiration.

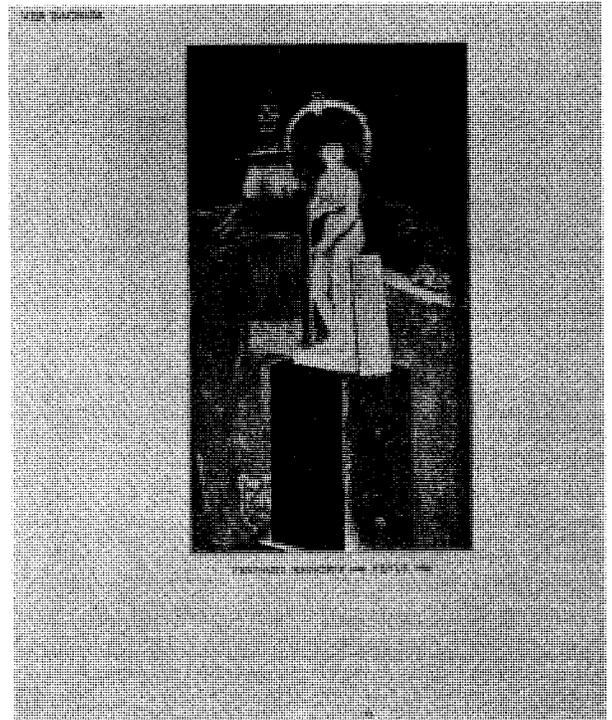


Figure 8: D'Après Flaubert.

The conflict between the carnal and spiritual realms was one of the most important themes in Péladan's writing, including *Istar*. [56] To Péladan, the artist's highest goal was to place himself above this mundane conflict, thereby asserting the primacy of the contemplative creative life. The way to do this, Péladan believed, was to bring one self as close as possible to the purity of the androgyne — defining 'purity' as being freed from the passions that afflict all others.

In his 1891 novel *L'Androgyne*, Péladan puts forth the androgyne as a superior being whose qualities artists would do well to emulate. The novel's protagonist is Samas, a sexless youth; his freedom from the passions leads to a contemplative state. This, writes Péladan, is 'the plastic ideal'. [57] Péladan has Samas declaim: "voir, c'est encore rêver; voir c'est déjà recevoir et posséder." Through self-abnegation and sexual continence, Péladan claims, Samas attains a level of 'auto-complémentarisme', a state above physical needs. And as a corollary of being freed from physical needs, Samas is able to create. Péladan concludes — in this and other works — that the artist is a kind of artist-hero.

Khnopff appears to have been influenced strongly by Péladan's concept of the androgyne. William Olander, for instance, has demonstrated convincingly that the androgyne in such famous Khnopff

paintings as *Art, or The Caresses* (CD-OZ 275) is directly influenced by Péladan.[58]

Péladan's view of the androgyne as a positive being, as an analogue of the artist, is very different from traditional views of the androgyne, expressed for example by Mario Praz in *The Romantic Agony*. [59] Olander observes that Praz's view of the androgyne — solely in relation to the femme-fatale theme, "usually a passive youth, obscure and inferior" — is inadequate to express Péladan's use of the term. [60] In Péladan, and hence in Khnopff, Olander writes, the androgyne has metamorphosed into a positive being, 'a plastic ideal'. In a Khnopff painting such as *Art, or the Caresses*, and others with a similar theme, the androgyne and the sphinx are perfect foils. One such androgyne is seen to the right of the frontispiece of *Istar*. Titled *Aved Verhaeren. Un Ange* (CD-OZ 122), the image is a startling contrast to *Istar*. The contrast is deliberate; the two images are meant to symbolize the conflict between the carnal and spiritual. *Istar* is the femme-fatale, the sphinx, the devourer; *Un Ange* is the chaste distant warrior, clad in the cuirass of inaccessibility to the senses. The images enhance and reinforce each other's meaning. Both pose pure 'neither-nor' equations: the androgyne, neither passionate nor susceptible to the lures of the senses; the sphinx neither human nor animal but possessed of the base characteristics of each. Or, as Olander puts it, "no-sex meets all-sex in a perfect fusion of extremes." [61]

How subtle is Khnopff's depiction of the sex or no-sex equation in his tribute to the Belgian poet Verhaeren! In contrast to the obvious banal depiction of sensuality in *Istar*, here the contrast between spirituality and sensuality is of a sublime order. The androgyne confronts sensuality, putting its hand on the sphinx's head, and remains unmoved. The struggle is crystalized, placed on an eternal plane, distanced from the viewer. The audience senses the *nature* of the struggle but is not asked to share in it or identify with it. The viewer's distance from the struggle is emphasized by compositional manipulations: the ledge or shelf which is parallel to the picture plane, for example; it and the background of a distant starry universe serve to separate the figures from the viewer. This is close to the apogee of Khnopff's art, which, like the artist himself, poses more question than it — or he — answers. [62] By juxtaposing the carnal with the pure Khnopff gives visual embodiment to the intellectual debate which was not only central to the period but to his personal philosophy of art.

The next pages show three final examples of the collaboration between artist and author — the illus-

trations Khnopff designed especially for *Ver Sacrum* to accompany Maeterlinck's *La Mort de Tintagiles* (Fig. 9). The play premiered in Paris in 1895,

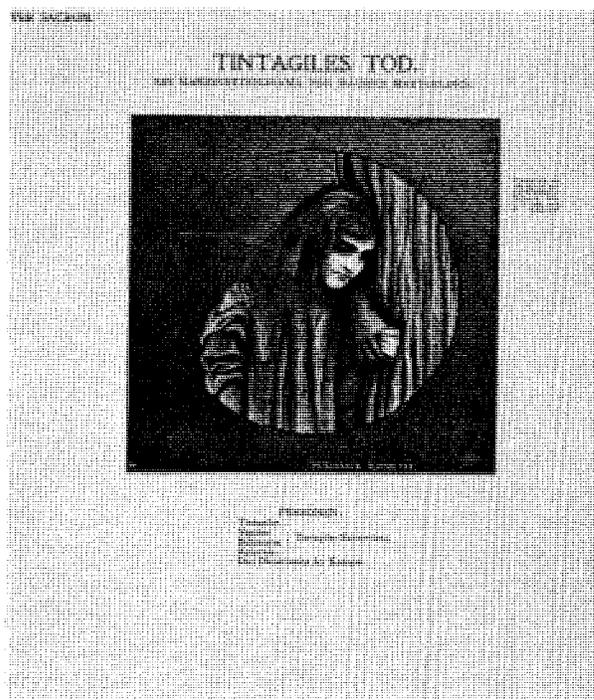


Figure 9: Tintagiles.

played in Brussels the following year and was translated into English as well as German before the turn of the century. [63] This marked Maeterlinck's first appearance in *Ver Sacrum*, an event of some importance, as witnessed by the ample space devoted to his text — nine of the magazine's twenty-four pages.

The marionette drama was viewed by some of Maeterlinck's contemporaries as one of his most important contributions to drama. Arthur Symons, the famous English critic, writes in an 1899 essay titled "Maeterlinck as a Mystic," "Maeterlinck, endeavouring to clothe mystical conceptions in concrete form, has invented a drama so precise, so curt, so arbitrary in its limits, that it can safely be confined to the masks and feigned voices of marionettes." [64]

Maeterlinck's moodily morose *Tintagiles* relates a story which reveals a profoundly pessimistic world view. *Tintagiles*, a young boy, is summoned from afar to a distant island where his two sisters, Ygraine and Bellangere, and an old servant, Alglonale, have for some time been held in virtual imprisonment by a distant queen who rules over a dark castle mired in a dank, airless valley. *Tintagiles* is wanted by the queen for her own dark reasons; despite his sis-

ters' pleading, he is spirited away from them by the queen's implacable mignons. The sisters are left behind to mourn inexorable Fate. One particularly poignant scene describes how the two sisters, lost in an enchanted trance, have nonetheless tried to protect Tintagiles by wrapping themselves around him with their arms and hair interlaced 'comme ceux de noyés'. To no avail: the queen's servants cut the sisters' hair and take Tintagiles with them. The play ends as Ygraine cries out in rage and despair, beating her fists against an impenetrable door.

Khnopff's three illustrations for the play help evoke a mood of melancholy and impotence. The first (CD-OZ 315a) serves as a frontispiece to the play. Khnopff shows the tiny Tintagiles with his hand engulfed by his sister's hand. His head bowed, Tintagiles seems resigned and without will. The viewer's gaze is riveted on the tiny child's sad face and imprisoned hand; the tondo composition serves to isolate the child, or rather, to juxtapose his form against the tree-like bulk of his sister Ygraine beside him. It is difficult to escape the impression that the child is a lamb being led to slaughter.

Khnopff's second illustration (CD-OZ 315b) shows Ygraine, awakened from her trance, rushing to the barred door which separates her from Tintagiles. Her arms outstretched against the door, she turns her despairing gaze to the viewer as if to invite him to share in her pain. The illustration transcends the specific narrative details of the story to stand as a generalized symbol of estrangement.

The third illustration (CD-OZ 315c) is placed at the conclusion of the text. It shows an extinguished lamp whose archaic design resembles a recumbent figure. Khnopff plays on the anthropomorphic appearance of the lamp by adding to it crossed arms in the manner of a medieval death effigy. Peace has come to the unhappy family — but is the all-consuming peace of forgetfulness and eternal rest.

At least in this instance, Khnopff's illustrations are entirely complementary to the text, whose message emphasizes themes of escape, of melancholy, of dissatisfaction with the real world, of despair and impotence. He gives visual embodiment to these themes by means of allusive images which symbolize the characters' plight.

Following the rage, resignation: Khnopff's three final images once more underline the themes of silence and melancholy but offer little in the way of solace save the balm of forgetfulness. *The Hour* — titled in English but also known as *L'Heure* or *La dernière Heure* (Fig. 10, CD-OZ 178-80) — was designed in 1891 and then published to accompany an 1894 article by Walter Shaw-Sparrow in *The Mag-*



Figure 10: Die Stunde, L'Heure.

azine of Art.[65] Titled "A Dissertation on Foreign Bells," the article reflects a widespread interest in bells and belltowers in the 1890s. For this article Khnopff also illustrated the belfry of Ghent (CD-OZ 244) and another illustration of a bell (CD-OZ 246). J.-K. Huysman's novel *Là-Bas*, for instance, published in 1891, had as one of its main characters the bell-ringer M. Carhaix; many of the more memorable scenes in the novel take place in his tower. Clearly, Huysman makes the bell and belltower symbols of a purer state. This theme is transparently expressed in such passages as "... at Carhaix's one was so far from Paris, so remote from the epoch..."[66] Bells are used in precisely the same symbolic manner by Rodenbach, in his 1897 novel *Le Carillonneur*. As he did in *Bruges-la-Morte*, he imparts to inanimate objects human attributes. In *Le Carillonneur*, the bell-tower serves as a symbol of the soul of the city, a tangible evocation of past glories and a reproach to the modern world.

Khnopff's illustration is doubtless informed by a knowledge of Huysman's *Là-Bas*. That Khnopff's friend and collaborator Rodenbach would write a novel with a similar theme several years later is yet another testament to the close affinities between Symbolist writers and artists.

Khnopff's illustration shows an elegant almost

mannered figure lightly grasping a cord which presumably leads to a bell. A nearly-empty hourglass stands in the right foreground. The illustration is more decorative and anecdotal than, for instance, the illustrations for *Tintagiles*, where Khnopff isolated one simplified form against a background of inky blackness. This is probably because of the earlier date for the bell-ringer illustration — even in the four years between the two illustrations Khnopff's illustrations are increasingly purged of anecdotal detail. The decorative quality of the illustration is belied by the inscription placed beneath the figure: '*vulnerant omnes, ultima necat*' — roughly, 'they all wound, and the last one kills'. 'One' here probably refers to 'hour'; thus the image should be read as a *memento mori* theme.

This illustration is faced on the same page by a decorative initial 'D' Khnopff executed for *Ver Sacrum* (Fig. 10, CD-OZ 309). Since the melancholy, introspective female figure as shown in one guise or another in many of the other illustrations in the magazine, her appearance here is like the repetition of a *leitmotif*.

The final image (fig. xxx, CD-OZ 196), isolated on one corner of the outside cover of the magazine, is a bookplate titled "Mihi." Reduced to silence and seemingly lost in reverie, the figure is distant aeons away from the viewer. She draws a mantle around her face, one finger crooked to bring the two sides together.

In similar fashion, the curtains remain drawn on Khnopff. He remains curiously in the background despite what we can glean about him thanks to the texts accompanying the illustrations and the visual evidence of the works of art themselves. We sense an artistic personality — ironic, diffident, set apart — but it is as deliberately veiled as are the illustrations or the texts which accompany them. This may have been exactly as he wanted it; for Khnopff, not to veil one self meant submitting to the coarse material world he abhorred. Subscribing as he did to Péladan's view of the artist as a kind of hero by virtue of his calling, he took pains to emphasize his differences from the crowd of humanity beneath him. This concern, more than any other, is the abiding theme running through the magazine, a theme summed up by a statement equally applicable to him personally as to his art. "The inaccessible 'absolute' of art," Khnopff once wrote, "will ever soar supreme." [67]

The magazine is extraordinarily thematically homogeneous. The principal theme running through it and uniting texts with illustrations is the belief that the artist's goal is to represent the secret

world behind appearances. (Perhaps 'represent is too concrete a word; 'adumbrate' might be better.) Khnopff's aim as an artist is understood by his contemporary Bahr to represent the 'inexpressable', to penetrate that which is merely semblance. Bahr considers Khnopff a Symbolist artist because his enigmatic art embodies this premise. It is clear that Bahr regards Khnopff as the visual embodiment of such Symbolist writers as Maeterlinck; he uses the same criteria to define both artist and writer. Bahr considers Khnopff's paintings Symbolist because they are subtle, intense, emblematic, allusive rather than illustrative — just as are the texts which they accompany and elucidate.

The magazine therefore demonstrates the extent to which Khnopff was inspired by and preoccupied with themes taken from contemporary writers, both his Belgian countrymen and French writers such as Péladan and Huysmans. To express these themes, often melancholic if not downright pessimistic, Khnopff has recourse again and again to the single contemplative female figure, turning for inspiration to the female figures of Burne-Jones. Often these figures in Khnopff's art have a strongly androgynous quality. This is because, adopting the idea of androgynes as idealized beings from the writings of Péladan, Khnopff uses the androgyne to represent a plane above the material world. Yet these androgynes are never entirely free from the day-to-day world and so pass their time dreaming of other lost times. They seem to imply with their world-weariness the necessity of solitude to regenerate their vitiated life forces.

If we accept that the magazine is thematically homogeneous and that there is a complementary relationship between texts and illustrations, this raises two separate but not unrelated questions. First, is this an innovation of the Symbolist period that an artist's work were meant to be viewed reproduced in a magazine, accompanied by explanatory texts which almost serve as essays on the artist and his antecedents? The paintings themselves were still intended primarily for exhibition and sale as part of the traditional art-viewing and sale experience. But because *Ver Sacrum* was international in scope, it exposed the reproductions of the paintings to a much broader audience than would otherwise have been able to see the artist's work in person. Those whose only exposure to Khnopff's art was through the magazine would regard it in a very different light than those who visited the exhibitions (where, in any case, none of his book illustrations or graphic arts illustrations were shown).

Ver Sacrum — and other similar publications —

may well represent a new way of looking at art; moreover, this is a particular development of the Symbolist period. Until the advent of the illustrated exhibition catalogue with critical essays, in fact, a vehicle such as *Ver Sacrum* represented one of the most important means of putting an artist's work into a critical perspective.

I posed the second question at the outset of this study, namely, is *Ver Sacrum* itself a Symbolist work of art? Is it something greater than the sum of its parts, in this case, a sort of super-literary Khnopff? There are a number of points that can be mustered in support of such an opinion. The magazine has its own internal coherence. It has a prologue, a body and a conclusion. It is thematically consistent. It includes a survey of Symbolism's important antecedent painters — Puvis de Chavannes and Walter Crane — and some of its leading literary spokesmen — Bahr, von Hofmannsthal, Mallarmé, Le Roy, Rodenbach, Maeterlinck, Huysmans and Khnopff himself. The sum effect is incontrovertibly successful in setting a melancholic mood, showing the artist as part literato, part mystic and part androgyne — and one who is wholly out of sorts with the day-to-day world.

Yet regardless of the pessimistic tone adopted by Khnopff and the writers by whom he was inspired, we may infer some positive insights by studying their work in tandem. It is possible to say that Khnopff was regarded as a Symbolist painter by his contemporaries by an application of the same criteria they applied to Symbolist writers. The interrelatedness between art and literature, an essential component of Symbolist art, is nowhere better demonstrated than in the illustrated art journals of the day, such as *Ver Sacrum*, which rarely achieved a greater thematic unity than in its special issue on Fernand Khnopff.

Notes:

[1] The *catalogue raisonné* of the artist, by Catherine de Croës and Gisèle Ollinger-Zinque, is titled *Fernand Khnopff: Catalogue de l'oeuvre*. Accompanied by a loosely thematic sketch of the artist by Robert Delevoy and with a very useful biography of the artist and extensive bibliography, the *catalogue raisonné* and essay appear together in *Fernand Khnopff* (Lausanne and Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1979). In the course of this study I will refer to the *catalogue raisonné* numbers of this publication, which I abbreviate to 'CD-OZ'. A critical review of this publication is given by Henri Dorra in "Fernand Khnopff — Catalogue de l'oeuvre," *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXIII, No. 937 (April 1981), 241-242.

The first major Khnopff retrospective exhibition was held in Paris in 1979. See *Fernand Khnopff, 1858-1921* (Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, 10 Oct. — 31 Dec. 1979). Among

the reviews: by Brooks Adams, *Arts Magazine* (this publication hereafter cited as *AM* LIV, No. 6 (Feb. 1980), 94-95; by René Micha, *Art International*, XXIII, No. 9 (Jan./Feb. 1980), 59-60; by Stuart Preston, *Apollo*, CXI, No. 215 n.s. (Jan. 1980), 64-65; by Peter Klaus Schuster, *Pantheon*, XXXVIII, No. 1 (Jan. — Mar. 1980), 26-28.

Recent critical literature on the artist, much of it very good, includes: Philippe Roberts-Jones, "Khnopff Revisited," *Bulletin de la classe des beaux-arts* [de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, Bruxelles], 5e série, LXII, No. 3 (1980-3), 42-56; Maria Teresa Benedetti, "Khnopff e Burne-Jones," *Storia dell'arte*, 43 (Sept. — Dec. 1981), pp. 263-270. Many articles have appeared in *Arts Magazine* (*AM*). These include: William Olander, "Fernand Khnopff's Art, or the Carresses," *AM*, LI, No. 10 (June 1977), 116-121; Leslie Morissey, "Isolation and the Imagination: Fernand Khnopff's I Lock My Door Upon Myself," *AM*, LIII, No. 4 (Dec. 1978, 94-97; the same author's "Exploration of symbolic states of mind in Fernand Khnopff's works of the 1880s," *AM*, LIII, No. 6 (Feb. 1979), 88-92; Susan Canning, "Fernand Khnopff and the Iconography of Silence," *AM*, LIV, No. 4 (Dec. 1979), 170-176; Jeffery Howe, "Mirror Symbolism in the work of Fernand Khnopff," *AM*, LIII, No. 1 (Sept. 1978), 112-118; the same author's "The Sphinx and other Egyptian Motifs in the work of Fernand Khnopff: the origins of *The Carresses*," *AM*, LIV, No. 4 Dec. 1979), 158-169; and the same author's "Fernand Khnopff's Depictions of Bruges: medievalism, mysticism and socialism," *AM*, LV, No. 4 (Dec. 1980), 126-131; and Sara Burns, "A Symbolist Soulscape: Fernand Khnopff's *I Lock My Door Upon Myself*," *AM*, LV, No. 5 (Jan. 1981), 80-89.

Such specialized articles may be usefully supplemented by more general studies, such as Francine-Claire Legrand, *Le Symbolisme en Belgique*, Belgique, art du temps (Bruxelles: Laconti, 1971); see also Philippe Roberts-Jones, *La Peinture Irréaliste au XIXe siècle* (Fribourg: Office du Livre, 1978). These two books, both by Belgian art historians, often cite important primary sources.

[2] See *Ver Sacrum*, I, No. 12 (Dec. 1898), 1-24, reproduced in facsimile in the 1979 Paris exhibition catalogue, pp. 235-262.

[3] For general studies on Vienna's art and culture during this period, see Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Random House Inc., 1961; Vintage Books Ed., 1971); see also Peter Vergo, *Art in Vienna 1898-1918: Klimt, Kokoschka Schiele and their Contemporaries* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1975). Two excellent publications which analyze *Ver Sacrum* itself in some detail are Christian M. Nebehay, *Ver Sacrum, 1898-1903* (Wien: Edition Tusch, 1975); and Robert Waissenberger, *Die Wiener Secession, Eine Dokumentation* (Wien and München: Jugend und Volk, 1971). An exhibition devoted to *Ver Sacrum* was recently held in Vienna. See *Ver Sacrum: Die Zeitschrift der Wiener Secession, 1898-1903* (Hermesvilla, Lainzer Tiergarten, Historisches Museum der Stadt, Wien, 3 April 1982 — 6 March 1983); for Khnopff's participation in the various *Ver Sacrum* exhibitions and publication in the society's journal, see pp. 27, 62-63 and 76.

[4] Properly speaking, this issue of *Ver Sacrum* could be called a Belgian issue, since it also marked the first time Maeterlinck's writing had appeared in the journal.

[5] The following chronology is taken from Josef Engelhart,

Ein Wiener Mahler Erzählt (Wien, 1943), pp. 79-80, as cited by Vergo, *Art in Vienna*, pp. 26-28.

[6] Vergo, *Art in Vienna*, p. 28, n. 13, citing Engelhart, *Ein Wiener Mahler*, pp. 80-81.

[7] Nebehay, *Ver Sacrum*, pp. 293 and 305, lists the *Ver Sacrum* exhibitions in which Khnopff participated; on p. 153 he lists which works Khnopff showed and on pp. 104-107 gives the general circumstances which led to Khnopff's participation in the *Ver Sacrum* exhibitions. On p. 105 he refers to the December 1898 issue of *Ver Sacrum* as a 'Sonderheft'. Khnopff exhibited with *Ver Sacrum* twice in 1898, sending 20 works to the first and 9 to the second (to the second he sent mainly landscapes). These were cats. no. 211-230 and 139-145. It should be noted, however, that Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 426, writes that Khnopff exhibited in Vienna three times in 1898, Listing *L'offrande* (CD-OZ 187) in the *Austellungs Heft* in Vienna in May. This exhibition is not listed by Nebehay so it was probably not connected with the Secessionists; however, they did illustrate *L'offrande* in their magazine (I, Nos. 5/6, p. 18); this marked the first appearance of Khnopff's work in *Ver Sacrum*. In 1899 Khnopff sent 8 works to the Secessionists' exhibition, cats. 523-529. In 1900 he exhibited twice; to the first he sent 4 works (cats. 131-134); to the second, 5 (cats. 420, 424, 246, 438, 442).

[8] The Secessionists' second exhibition opened 12 November 1898 and closed 28 December. See Nebehay, *Ver Sacrum*, pp. 293 and 305.

[9] Written in *L'Art Moderne*, Brussels, 12 June 1898, p. 192. Cited by Philippe Roberts-Jones, "Khnopff en Perspective," 1979 Paris ex. cat., p. 15, n. 6.

[10] Catherine de Croës, G. Ollinger-Zinque, Robert Delevoy, "Biographie," in *Fernand Khnopff*, pp. 415-433. p. 417. Unless otherwise noted, biographical data come from here. There is also an abbreviated but useful Khnopff biography in the 1979 Paris ex. cat., pp. 267-68.

[11] The recent Vienna exhibition of *Ver Sacrum* (cited in n. 3) does little to clarify matters. The catalogue entry for the issue on Khnopff (cat. 75) states: "Bildbeiträge; Khnopff," without offering further details. On p. 27 of the catalogue is noted: "Im 12. Heft des Jahrganges 1898 wurde dem Wiener Publikum die kongeniale Zusammenarbeit der beiden Hauptvertreter des belgischen Symbolismus vorgestellt. Das Heft enthält unter anderem das eigens für *Ver Sacrum* ins Deutsche übertragene Drama 'Tintagiles Tod' von Maurice Maeterlinck, in dem, wie auch in anderen Stücken dieses Dichters, die Personen an die Artussage anklingende Namen tragen und in einer höfischen, dekorativen und zugleich schicksalhaften Traumsphäre agieren. Dazu schuf Fernand Khnopff, ebenfalls eigens für die Ausgabe in *Ver Sacrum* Illustrationen, die mit dem Text eine untrennbare gedankliche Einheit bilden."

[12] 1979 Paris ex. cat., p. 268; Delevoy, *Khnopff*, writes (on p. 428): "La mise en page lui ist confiée."

[13] Because Khnopff frequently executed several replicas of the same work, one magazine illustration will sometimes be referred to by several *catalogue raisonné* numbers. Khnopff was also an avid photographer and frequently retouched his photographs with paint or pastel. The photographs are also assigned separate catalogue numbers. The illustrations specifically executed for *Ver Sacrum* are CD-OZ 307 (the

cover), 309-310 (two decorated initials and 315a-c (the illustrations for *Tintagiles*).

[14] Cited without reference to original source by Hans Hofstätter, "L'iconographie de la peinture symboliste," in *Le Symbolisme en Europe* (Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Jan. - Mar. 1976), 0. 11.

[15] Legrand, *Le Symbolisme en Belgique*, p. 69, speculates that the figure may be either Werther or Hamlet, but this is only an inference.

[16] Morrissey, "Khnopff's works of the 1880s," *AM*, (Feb. 1979), 88-92.

[17] Francine-Claire Legrand, "Fernand Khnopff: Perfect Symbolist," *Apollo*, LXXXV, No. 62, n.s. (April 1967), 278-287, p. 279. This is the first important reassessment of the artist's work in English, a reassessment started in Belgium some years earlier by Legrand and other writers, in, for instance, *Evocation des "XX" de la Libre Esthétique* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Musée Moderne, Brussels, 29 Apr. - 10 July 1966), and also *Le groupe des vingt et son temps* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels, 17 Feb. - 8 Apr. 1962), pp. 68-70.

[18] For a critical discussion of Bahr and his formative years, see Emile Chastel, *Hermann Bahr: Son Oeuvre et son temps de l'enfance à la maturité*, 2 vols. (Diss. Université de Paris IV, 1974; rpt. Lille: reproduction des Thèses, Université de Lille III, 1977). Bahr's important essays from this period are reprinted in *Zur Überwindung des Naturalismus, Theoretische Schriften 1887-1904*, ed. Gotthart Wunberg, Kunst und Literatur 46 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1968), and in *Kulturprofil der Jahrhundertwende: Essays von Hermann Bahr*, ed. Heinz Kindermann (Wien: H. Bauer Verlag, 1962).

[19] For Khnopff's participation in the salons of the Rose + Croix, see Robert Pincus-Witten, "Josephin Péladan and the Salons de la Rose + Croix," (Diss. University of Chicago, 1968), rpt. as *Occult Symbolism in France. Josephin Péladan and the Salons of the Rose + Croix* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1976). My references to this publication will be to the original thesis, not the Garland publication. See also the same author's *The Salons de la Rose + Croix, 1892-1897* (London: Piccadilly Gallery, 1968), and Maia Graziarnardini, "Les Salons de la Rose-Croix," *Storia dell'arte*, 26 (Jan. - Apr. 1976), pp. 93-105. At least one critic has claimed that this painting had a direct influence on the early works of Gustav Klimt. See Vergo, *Art in Vienna*, pp. 50-51, pl 45.

[20] For Khnopff's debts to Burne-Jones, see the article by Benedetti cited in n. 1.

[21] Legrand, *Le Symbolisme en Belgique*, p. 69, n. 66.

[22] See Jefferey Howe, "Mirror Symbolism," cited in n. 1. Roberts-Jones, "Khnopff Revisited," (also cited in n. 1), argues that Khnopff used mirror imagery to educe an artistic paradox.

[23] See Chastel, *Hermann Bahr*, for a discussion of his importance as a Viennese critic.

[24] Hermann Bahr, "Neue Zeichen," *Deutsche Zeitung*, 21 July 1893, cited in Chastel, *Hermann Bahr*, II, p. 565, n. 19. Bahr included Khnopff in a group of five painters; the others were Whistler, Carrière, Forain and Burne-Jones.

[25] Titled "Die Secession," the review appeared in *Die Zeit*,

2 April 1898, cited by Chastel, *Bahr*, II, p. 572, n. 39.

[26] Bahr, *Überwindung des Naturalismus*, ed. Kindermann, p. 150.

[27] Bahr, "Symbolisten," in *Studien zur Kritik der Moderne* (1894), rpt. in Wunberg, ed., *Zur Überwindung des Naturalismus*, p. 111, lines 10-15.

[28] Bahr, "Symbolisten," ed. Wunberg, pp. 112-113, lines 35-43; 1-10: "Einem Vater stirbt sein Kind. Dieser wilde Schmerz, die rathlose Verzweiflung sei das Thema. Der rhetorische Dichter wird jammern und klagen und stöhnen: 'Ach, wie elend und verlassen und ohne Trost ich bin! Nichts kann meinem Leiden gleichen. Die Welt ist dunkel und verhüllt für mich' — kurz, einen genauen und deutlichen Bericht seiner innern Thatsachen. Der realistische Dichter wird einfach erzählen: 'es war ein kalter Morgen, mit Frost und Nebel. Den Pfarrer fror. Wir gingen hinter dem kleinen Sarg, die schluchzende Mutter und ich' — kurz, einen genauen und deutlichen Bericht aller äusseren Thatsachen. Aber der symbolische Dichter wird von einer kleinen Tanne erzählen, wie sie gerade und stolz im Walde wuchs, die grossen Bäume freuten sich, weil niemals eine den jungen Gipfel verwegener nach dem Himmel gestreckt: 'Da kam ein hagerer, wilder Mann und hatte ein kaltes Beil und schnitt die kleine Tanne fort, weil es Weinachten war' — er wird ganz andere und entfernte Thatsachen berichten, aber welche fähig sind, das gleiche Gefühl, die nämliche Stimmung, den gleichen Zustand, wie in dem Vater der Tod des Kindes, zu wecken. Das ist der Unterschied, das ist das Neue."

[29] For van Hofmannsthal, see Carl Peter Braegger, *Das Visuelle und Das Plastische: Hugo von Hofmannsthal und die Bildende Kunst* (Bern and München: Francke Verlag, 1979). An important source for Maeterlinck is *Maurice Maeterlinck, Le Centenaire de sa naissance* (Bibliothèque Albert I, Brussels, 29 Sept. - 31 Dec. 1962).

[30] *Ver Sacrum's* Khnopff issue, p. 3, quoted and translated by Vergo, *Art in Vienna*, p. 30, n. 14.

[31] Legrand, "Perfect Symbolist," p. 286.

[32] See Helmut Fiechtner, ed., *Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Der Dichter im Spiegel der Freunde*, 2nd. ed. (Berlin and München, Francke Verlag, 1963). See also Karl Jacoby, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal Bibliographie* (Berlin: Maximilian-Gesellschaft, 1936).

[33] *Blätter für die Kunst*, III, No. 21 (March 1896), p. 40; see Jacoby, *Hofmannsthal Bibliographie*, p. 81.

[34] Legrand discusses this aspect of Khnopff's work in *Le Symbolisme*, p. 69; see also the article by Olander cited in n. 1; to this should be added an earlier article by the same author, "Fernand Khnopff's *Art or the Caresses: the artist as androgyne*," *Marsyas*, XVIII (1975-76), pp. 45-55.

[35] According to the tradition of Cesare Ripa, ed. Maser (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1971), p. 120, which reproduces the 1758-60 Hertel edition of Ripa's 'Iconologia'.

[36] See esp. Roberts-Jones, "Khnopff revisited."

[37] Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 422.

[38] Photographs of two of the Marquet sisters are reproduced in Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 423.

[39] Fernand Khnopff, "Conférence au Cercle Artistique sur

Walter Crane," published in *L'Art Moderne*, Brussels, 14, No. 52 (30 Dec. 1894), 412-13, cited in Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 441.

[40] *Ibid.*: this text is also cited in the 1979 Paris ex. cat., p. 197.

[41] According to Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 421, in December 1888 Le Roy still did not know Khnopff and asked their mutual friend Emile Verhaeren to introduce them.

[42] I used the following edition: Grégoire Le Roy, *La Chanson du Pauvre et Mon Coeur Pleure d'Autrefois, Poèmes* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, n.d. [1899], pp. 159-69 and 134.

[43] See Jeffery Howe's articles on Bruges and mirror symbolism cited in n. 1.

[44] Canning, "Khnopff and the Iconography of Silence," *AM* (Dec. 1979), 170-176.

[45] Maeterlinck ex., Bib. Albert I (cited in n. 29), cat. 146, pp. 71-72.

[46] For Georges Rodenbach, see Anny Bodson-Thomas, *L'Esthétique de Georges Rodenbach* (Liège: H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1942).

[47] Bodson-Thomas, *Rodenbach*, p. 124. Legrand, citing Bodson-Thomas ("Perfect Symbolist," p. 284, n. 22) claims that Rodenbach's first major work, *Du Silence*, of 1888, raises the theme of solitude to the level of a 'moral principle'. Several examples will show how pervasive the themes of silence and the interior life were among Belgian writers during these years. Maeterlinck's *Trésor des Humbles*, of 1896, contained poems with the self-explanatory titles "Le Silence," "La Bonté invisible," and "La Beauté intérieure." The book went through seven editions in the first year.

Similar attitudes are commonly ascribed to Khnopff; one often-cited quotation from Rodenbach is a case in point. It is so closely associated with Khnopff that it has been attributed to him. It reads, "Ainsi mon âme, seule, et que rien ne l'influence: Elle est comme en du verre, enclose en du silence. Toute vouée à son spectacle intérieur." This quotation, cited correctly by Howe, *AM* (Sept. 1978), p. 112, n. 1, is taken from Rodenbach's article titled "Aquarium Mentale," published in the *Mercure de France*, Vol. 17 (March 1896), p. 294. It is cited as an epigram without a source by Legrand, "Perfect Symbolist," p. 278, and cited incorrectly as a quotation by Khnopff himself by Olander, in *Marsyas* (1975-76), p. 46, n. 7, taken from Philippe Jullian, *The Symbolists*, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), p. 260, who also ascribes it to Khnopff.

[48] Howe, "Depictions of Bruges," *AM* (Dec. 1980), p. 131.

[49] Khnopff did not actually build this house until after 1901. Plans and photographs of it are reproduced in Delevoy. It is no longer extant. The altar is reproduced in Delevoy, p. 21. Delevoy also publishes contemporary photographs of the house, plans and numerous commentaries from Khnopff's contemporaries See pp. 46-60.

[50] This anecdote is discussed by Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 58, n. 35. The Burne-Jones drawing Khnopff owned is reproduced on p. 59. Delevoy writes that Burne-Jones gave Khnopff the drawing in 1894 (p. 425).

[51] Delevoy, *Khnopff*, p. 417. The Belgian landscape tradi-

tion was examined in a recent exhibition. See *Het Landschap in de Belgische Kunst 1830-1914* (Ghent Museum, 4 Oct. - 14 Dec. 1980), cat. by R. Hoozee and M. Tahon-Vanroose.

[52] Vergo, *Art in Vienna*, pp. 30-31, pls 20-21, compares Khnopff's *L'Eau immobile* with Gustav Klimt's *Still Pond*, c. 1899 (Vienna, private collection), writing that Khnopff's painting bore "an evident relation to the style of Klimt's early landscapes. This opinion was expressed several years earlier by Waissenberger, *Die Wiener Secession*, p. 41, n. 37, illus. p. 39.

[53] Comparable paintings in a realist vein are CD-OZ 26, 49, 55, 97, 143, 152, 165-70, 176.

[54] Octave Maus, "Les Peintres de Termonde," in *L'Art Moderne*, Brussels, 9 July 1899, p. 231, cited by Philippe Roberts-Jones, "Khnopff en Perspective," 1979 Paris ex. cat., p. 15, n. 5.

[55] Pincus-Witten, "Les Salons de la Rose + Croix," p. 86, n. 2; see also pp. 152-53.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[57] Olander, "Fernand Khnopff's *Art or The Caresses*," develops this thesis thoroughly.

[58] See Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 2nd. ed (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), esp. ch. v, "Byzantium," p. 287f. Cited and discussed by Olander, *Marsyas*, p. 47, n. 19.

[59] Olander, *Marsyas*, p. 50.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] "Lui, le serré, le froid, le britannique qui réfléchit plus qu'il ne parle, qui observe plus qu'il n'explique," "Silhouettes d'artistes, Fernand Khnopff," in *L'Art Moderne*, 5 September 1886, p. 282. Cited by Legrand, in *Le Symbolisme en Belgique*, p. 52, n. 65.

[63] Maeterlinck ex., Bib. Albert I, cat. 133, p. 67.

[64] Arthur Symons, "Maeterlinck as a Mystic," in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), pp. 153-54.

[65] CD-OZ 178, p. 265.

[66] J.-K. Huysmans, *Là-Bas (Down There)*, trans. Keene Wallace, 1928 (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1972), p. 57.

[67] The full quotation, the conclusion of an 1896 article written in English, reads: "So we, too, may comfort ourselves by reflecting that beyond the empty verbiage of certain too assertive critics, artistic and literary, and the repeated vagaries of too ignorant innovators, the inaccessible 'absolute' of art will ever soar supreme." From "Fashions in Art," *The Magazine of Art* (London, 1896-97), p. 242, cited by Roberts-Jones, "Khnopff en Perspective," 1979 Paris ex. cat., p. 16, n. 11.