

MARCEL SCHNOB AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

The thesis surveys the most important aspects of the work of Marcel Schwob (1867-1905) on English literature: the "imaginary lives" of Cyril Tourneur and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the talk on John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, the translations of Hamlet and Defoe's Moll Flanders, with their prefaces, and the essays on George Meredith and Robert Louis Stevenson. The first chapter gives an account of Schwob's contacts with living British authors, notably Oscar Wilde, W.E. Henley, Charles Whibley, Edmund Gosse and Arnold Bennett, his wide reading and his projects for further studies. The second places him in his literary background, seeking new modes of prose narrative and finding in English writers confirmation of his theories on the representation of reality in art, and illustration of the themes and techniques he practised in his creative work. There follows a series of chapters devoted to his treatment of individual authors, which trace the development of his interest and bring out, by comparison with prevailing critical attitudes and the preoccupations of his milieu, both the originality of his approach and its conformity to the trend of his times. They underline also the common traits of his studies: the perception of recurrent themes in the literatures of diverse civilisations, admiration at the change wrought by the artist on motifs from folk-art, awareness of the power of language to convey a particular vision of the world (a significant element

in his theory of translation), the illumination of a writer's work by relating its various features to his one central concern. The conclusion shows that these traits derive from his methods in creative writing, and sees in their application to criticism the reason for the impact of Schwob's work.

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Symbols

- CPC Collection Pierre Champion, Bibliothèque de l'Institut,
Paris.
- MSPL Pierre Champion, Marcel Schwob parmi ses Livres,
Paris, 1926.
- MST Pierre Champion, Marcel Schwob et son Temps, Paris,
1927.
- OC Les Oeuvres Complètes de Marcel Schwob, Paris, 1927-
1930, 10 vols.

Books with English titles are published in London, those
with French titles in Paris, unless otherwise stated in
references.

PREFACE

Marcel Schwob is known to the student of the symbolist movement in French literature for his collections of tales, Coeur Double, Le Roi au Masque d'Or, Mimes,¹ Le Livre de Monelle, and the Vies Imaginaires; for Spicilège, a volume of essays; and for his researches into esoteric fields of literature. His production, destined by its nature to appeal only to a restricted audience, and concentrated almost entirely into the last decade of the nineteenth century, is a compendium of his wide-ranging interests and has established his reputation as a master of prose style, a perceptive and original critic, and a profound erudite, perhaps without peer even in a generation which prided itself on the breadth of its culture and the rigour of its artistic standards. Schwob's achievements in his chosen fields are attested by the judicious praise of his contemporaries and by the delight with which successive critics have rediscovered "la jeunesse persistante de Schwob et la permanence de ses jugements esthétiques."² In 1967, the centenary year of his birth, his major works were still in print, displaying in all their subtle complexity the quaint imagination and lucid vision of the author. Yet,

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1. In the 1964 edition, the collection is followed by the Croisade des Enfants, L'Etoile de Bois, and Il Libro della mia Memoria.
 2. René Lacôte, 'Spicilège: Essais de Marcel Schwob', Les Lettres Françaises, 30th March 1960, p.3.

as faithfully as the tales and essays reflect the mind and personality of Schwob, no full understanding of the peculiar manifestations of his talents may be attained without reference to his life and background; and it is all the more regrettable, therefore, that the fundamental critical material, much of it eminently worthy of its subject, lies scattered in old books, defunct periodicals, and unpublished theses. Only one printed monograph has been devoted to Schwob. Twenty-two years after his death, in 1927, Pierre Champion, friend and pupil of Schwob, and continuator of his work on François Villon and other fifteenth-century French poets, brought out a biography entitled Marcel Schwob et son Temps.³ Reproached as partial and inaccurate, this book has nonetheless become the basis of subsequent studies of Schwob, and its image of the hero has passed almost unchallenged into posterity.

It is to the specialised field of academic dissertations that we must turn for a more balanced view of the man and writer. In this respect the first thesis, 'Marcel Schwob et les Ecrivains Anglo-Saxons',⁴ is invaluable, for Miss Dorothy Salmon was able to consult the papers of Pierre and Edouard Champion in Paris, and to obtain interviews with them and many other surviving friends of Schwob, on both sides of the

3. Champion had also brought out in 1926 a smaller work entitled Marcel Schwob parmi ses Livres based on the catalogue of Schwob's library and personal memories of his researches.

4. Leeds, M.A., 1927.

Channel. Her work is a most interesting record of Schwob's personal relations with eminent English men of letters - Stevenson, Wilde, Meredith, Henley, Whibley, Gosse, Bennett, and many more. Some twenty years later, in 1950, Dr. Wesley R. Goddard defended at the Sorbonne his 'Marcel Schwob (1867-1905), Conteur et Critique Littéraire' which, beside tracing many items omitted by Champion from his edition of the so-called complete works,⁵ provides a detailed study of the themes and influences illustrated in the successive volumes. This approach has been taken up in the three more recent American doctoral theses: 'The Literary Career of Marcel Schwob' by Dr. John A. Green, Washington, 1960; 'Marcel Schwob, Faussaire de la Nature' by Professor Georges Trembley, Yale, 1960; and 'Marcel Schwob, Biographer' by Dr. Gloria L. Hobbs, Austin, Texas, 1962.⁶

Schwob's creative writings, then, have been extensively examined, and from a variety of standpoints. There remain other important areas of his activity to be surveyed, of which his interest in English literature is the most obvious.⁷

5. Les Oeuvres Complètes de Marcel Schwob (1867-1905), ed. Pierre Champion, 1927-1930, 10 vols.

6. Schwob has been the subject of tesi di laurea at the University of Milan: Signorina Maria Grazia Raini has discussed his rôle as precursor of Surrealism, and Signorina Miriam Penuti his work as a journalist. This information was given to me by Signorina Penuti.

7. Mrs. A. Wynchank, of Somerville College, Oxford, began in 1963 a B.Litt. dissertation on Schwob and English and North American literature, which she has abandoned.

Champion intended to glance at the subject, and in his collection of papers at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut is the draft of a chapter on 'Marcel Schwob et l'Angleterre' which begins:

"Il y aurait une étude à écrire sur les rapports de Marcel Schwob avec les écrivains et les artistes de langue anglaise. Car c'est surtout cela qu'il a été pratiquement, une sorte d'agent de liaison intellectuelle entre la France et l'Angleterre."⁸

The subject is indeed vast, and the dimensions of the present work do not allow of an exhaustive discussion. I have attempted to treat a representative selection of topics: Schwob's utilisation of English sources in his fictional biographies of Cyril Tourneur and Dante Gabriel Rossetti; his interpretation of the Elizabethan theatre, and of the contemporary novelists George Meredith and Robert Louis Stevenson; his scholarship, as manifested in his prefaces to Hamlet and Defoe's Moll Flanders; and his theory and practice of translation in these two works.⁹ My first chapter gives some

8. Collection Pierre Champion, Bibliothèque de l'Institut, ms 5133.3, p.47.

9. I have ignored Schwob's translations of Whitman, Wilde, and De Quincey's Last Days of Emmanuel Kant, as they have not the same linguistic interest as the Hamlet. In the case of the de Quincey version, there are doubts of its authenticity. Champion, in his papers, remarked that the handwriting was not Schwob's, and assumed that it was a dictation - yet it must have been written at a time when Schwob was in no need of an amanuensis. In the margin there is a faintly pencilled query: "Je me demande s'il est bien de lui?" CPC 5136 p.43. The Macbeth, according to a note of Champion's, was partly translated by himself: a fact which he omitted

indication of the range of Schwob's readings,¹⁰ the number of his projects, and his relations with English writers; the second examines the influences of English literature on his creative work; then follow the separate studies of the topics mentioned above. The order of these chapters has been determined by a compromise between the succession of the authors in the history of literature, and the order in which Schwob wrote on them: thus Ford, Tourneur and Shakespeare, born in 1586, 1575 and 1564 respectively, have been treated in their present sequence to respect the chronology of Schwob's oeuvre. The absence of detailed reference to such key figures as Swinburne, Pater and Wilde is explained by the paucity of Schwob's allusions to them: they were of great importance in the formation of the intellectual climate of the fin-de-siècle, but their influence on Schwob himself may be deduced from more general studies of the period.¹¹ Similarly, the reader will have to turn to other sources for adequate information on the contribution of American literature to Schwob's writing. The names of Emerson, Poe, Whitman and Mark Twain

to mention in the Oeuvres Complètes and in the presentation of various extracts in the press at the time of publication. The loss of the manuscript in the bombing of the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt during the last war makes it impossible to determine Champion's contribution. See CPC 5133.4 p.11.

10. See also Appendix A for a partial list of works relating to English literature in Schwob's library.
11. See, for example, A.J. Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique et "Décadent" en Angleterre (1873-1900), 1931.

figured largely in his artistic education and in the elaboration of his ideas, and for that reason deserve more attention than can be given here.¹² The scope of this thesis has to be limited to the authors and works on which Schwob himself chose to write in some detail.

. . .

It remains for me to record some of the sources used in the compilation of this study. Miss Salmon's thesis is indispensable for its quantity of information not readily to be found elsewhere. Unpublished material has been used extensively: documents from the Pierre Champion Collection, manuscript letters from Schwob to Ferdinand Bruneti re and Gaston Paris in the Biblioth que Nationale,¹³ to Paul Hervieu and Edouard Gauthier in the Biblioth que de l'Arsenal, to Edmund Gosse in the Brotherton Library, Leeds, to Robert Louis Stevenson in the Beinecke Collection, Yale University Library. I have also consulted the letters to Francis Viel -Griffin in the Princeton University Library, to Alfred Vallette and Rachilde in the University of Washington.¹⁴ The

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12. The theses of Dr. Goddard and Dr. Green provide a discussion of the American influences and useful bibliographical information.
 13. The letters to Georges de Porto-Riche will not be available until 1970.
 14. Schwob's letters to W.G.C. Byvanck at the University of Leyden have been mislaid, according to a letter from P.F.J. Obbema, Keeper of the Western Manuscripts, of the 22nd November 1965.

most important collections of Schwob's manuscripts and documents relating to him are housed at the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, and at the Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, where Dr. John A. Green has gathered material which will prove invaluable to future students of Schwob. Meanwhile the most precious source of original papers, the Edouard Champion Collection, remains unlocated. Its disappearance is the greatest obstacle to fresh research.¹⁵

I wish to express my gratitude to the directors and staff of the following libraries: M. Jacques Guignard of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, M. Jacques Chapon of the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet, Mme L. Hauteceur of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut, Mrs. D.G. Brewster of Bedford College Library, Mr. C.S. Page of the University Library, Leeds, Dr. Burgemeister of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dresden, P.F.J. Obbema of the University Library, Leyden, Mrs. W.M. Randall of the Princeton University Library, Mrs. J.O. Combs of the University of Washington Library, Mrs. D.W. Bridgwater of the Yale University Library; and the staff of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale.

15. Professor Garnet Rees of the University, Hull, and Mr. Norman Gardiner, gave much-appreciated help in attempting to locate the collection, but enquiries to the presumed present owner went without reply.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Bradford A. Booth, of the University of California, Los Angeles, for information on the Schwob-Stevenson correspondence; to Professor Geoffrey Bullough, King's College London, for his discussion of the sources of Hamlet; to Professor C.L. Cline, of the University of Texas at Austin, for letters on the Schwob-Meredith correspondence; to Dr. Ian Fletcher, of the University of Reading, and Fr. Brocard Sewell for details on John Gray; to M. Michel François for permission to consult the papers of the Pierre Champion Collection in the Bibliothèque de l'Institut; to the late M. Pierre Moreno for authorisation to read material on Schwob in the Bibliothèque Jacques Doucet; to Mlle Marianne Schwob, great-niece of Marcel Schwob, for an interview in which she discussed the family history and showed me letters in her possession; to Mrs. William Pickles, née Dorothy Salmon, for an account of her meetings with Schwob's friends during her research; to Dr. J.A. Green of Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, for his helpful suggestions, and for news of Schwob research past and present.

My thanks are due to the Council of Bedford College for scholarships to facilitate my research in London, and to the Ministry of Education for supplementary awards to pursue my research in France.

Finally, I am most deeply obliged to my supervisor, Dr. E. Le Breton (Eileen Souffrin) whose advice and unflinching

encouragement have been of immeasurable assistance in the years I have been privileged to work with her.

CHAPTER I

An Outline of Marcel Schwob's Literary Career.

The recurring theme of many appreciations of Marcel Schwob's work is the vast extent of his culture. Henri de Regnier's tribute is typical:

"Parmi nous, Marcel Schwob était déjà légendaire. Nul n'ignorait la merveilleuse étendue de son intelligence et sa prodigieuse connaissance de tout. Il y avait du Pic de la Mirandole chez ce singulier personnage à qui rien n'était étranger de tout ce qui s'était écrit et pensé à toutes les époques et dans tous les pays. Son universelle capacité d'esprit lui conférait une extraordinaire aptitude à tout comprendre et à tout pénétrer. Il lui était aussi facile d'expliquer un texte d'Eschyle qu'un tercet de Dahte, de traduire une tirade de Shakespeare qu'une page de Cervantès. Toutes les littératures lui étaient familières, de leurs plus vieux auteurs aux plus modernes. Il se sentait aussi à l'aise dans les inventions orientales des Mille et Une Nuits que dans les imaginations mathématiques d'un Edgar Poe. Il avait lu tous les livres."¹

Schwob's renown among his contemporaries was due in particular to his profound knowledge of English literature. He might at times have given the impression of displaying mere book-learning - Paul Valéry once remarked: "Quand je pense à Schwob, j'ai toujours envie de dire: Monsieur Marcel Schwob, Expert"² - but there is no doubt that English culture had

1. Nos Rencontres, 1931, pp.111-112.

2. Paul Léautaud, Journal Littéraire, 1954, I 132, (11th June 1904).

very deep roots in his temperament. Pierre Champion insisted on this point in his Marcel Schwob parmi ses Livres:

"Un domaine annexé par Marcel Schwob, et qui était pour lui une source de féeries, fut celui de la littérature anglaise et des romans d'aventure (mais il faut se rappeler que pour Marcel Schwob l'aventure est aussi un choc spirituel). Il en tirait de singulières délectations. Ce sont les livres anglais surtout que Marcel Schwob aimait lire et traduire à haute voix. L'anglais se confondait avec sa langue naturelle. Marcel Schwob l'avait su enfant; il le parlait avec son domestique chinois; [...] il l'écrivait avec ses correspondants. Les mots anglais demeuraient chez Marcel Schwob logés au fond de sa sensibilité; l'anglais était pour lui la langue de la tendresse quand il parlait à sa femme."³

The truth of these records is confirmed by Charles Whibley, the English writer and friend of Schwob, in the obituary notice of The Academy:

"Most astonishing of all was his knowledge of English and English literature. When I first met him he had never crossed the Channel, and he spoke English with a humour and energy which few Englishmen can surpass. Nothing that touched our literature was alien to him; and while he had a perfect knowledge of Meredith, Stevenson, and the moderns, he had studied the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries with a peculiar zeal [...] There was nothing which his eager intelligence could not grasp, either in life or letters. He once went to a cricket match, and in less than half an hour he understood the purpose of the game, though he had never seen it played before."⁴

The foundations of Schwob's familiarity with English letters had been laid in his earliest childhood. His mother had been

3. MSPL pp.45-46.

4. op.cit., 18th March 1905, p.277.

educated at an English boarding school and was anxious that her children should have the advantage of learning the language from infancy; thus, notwithstanding the financial strain, an English governess was entrusted with the instruction of the young Schwobs. At the age of three Marcel was already speaking English, and a year later was read to tackle the written word:

"Le premier livre que j'eus me fut rapporté d'Angleterre par ma gouvernante. J'avais quatre ans [...]/ De ce livre je reparlerai plus tard; j'y ai appris à lire."⁵

Growing up in a cultivated Jewish family, Schwob was speedily introduced to the great names of contemporary French literature. His father, Georges Schwob, proprietor of the Phare de la Loire at Nantes, had been a fellow-pupil of Flaubert and a collaborator on the Corsaire-Satan; through him Marcel discovered Banville, Gautier, Nerval, Baudelaire, and the novels of Balzac and Stendhal. Moreover, Georges Schwob had long been acquainted with American literature, and just as he had once revealed this new world to his brother-in-law Léon Cahun, so he must have been the first to awaken his son's interest in the work of foreign writers.⁶

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5. 'Le Souvenir d'un Livre', in Mimes, 1964, p.174. This book was probably an adaptation of Robinson Crusoe. See below p.297.
 6. Green, op.cit. pp.38-42, bases his description of Georges Schwob on the obituary notice in Le Petit Phare, 28th August 1892, and a subsequent article by Léon Cahun, ibid., 2nd September 1892.

In 1882 Schwob left Nantes to study in Paris at the Collège Sainte-Barbe. For the next eight years he was to live with Léon Cahun, then Assistant Conservator of the Bibliothèque Mazarine. Champion writes that:

"de toute son enfance, voilà l'événement le plus important. Léon Cahun c'est, pour Marcel Schwob, la rencontre de l'aventure, et aussi le contact avec la vraie science et l'érudition."⁷

The significance of Cahun's rôle in Schwob's intellectual development can be readily imagined. "Philologue consommé, auteur de savantes recherches ethnographiques et linguistiques, explorateur, auteur de romans pour la jeunesse",⁸ Léon Cahun demonstrated to his nephew that the romance of adventure might be heightened by scholarship, and that discipline need not cramp imagination. He introduced Schwob to the literature of the Orient, and increased his awareness of the subtleties of Greek and Latin through his insistence on the difference between "une traduction classique, c'est à dire de mots, et une traduction exacte, c'est à dire de choses et de pensées."⁹ Guillaume Apollinaire declared that it was Cahun who had urged Schwob to study Villon and translate Shakespeare.¹⁰ Finally,

7. MST P. 17.

8. Maurice Pottecher, 'Portraits et Souvenirs: Marcel Schwob', Le Monde Français, June 1947, p. 438. See also the chapters on Léon Cahun in W.G.C. Byvanck, Un Hollandais à Paris en 1891, 1892, pp. 147-163, 262-274.

9. MST p. 200.

10. La Revue Immoraliste, April 1905, p. 40.

Marcel Schwob owed to his uncle the first stirrings of another life-long passion: painting. A letter from Cahun to Mme. Schwob in 1882 mentions Marcel's Sunday visits to the Louvre, and the gradual awakening of his artistic sense.¹¹

At school, Schwob was one of a distinguished class, which counted Paul Claudel and Léon Daudet among its members. Daudet recalled that Schwob "parlait couramment l'anglais et l'allemand, en sa qualité de juif polyglotte, et lisait Emmanuel Kant dans le texte."¹² In 1884 came the revelation of the novels of Robert Louis Stevenson through the translation of Treasure Island, and Schwob lost no time in acquainting himself with the other works of this writer who was to have so great an influence in his life. It was during his adolescence that Schwob laid the foundations of his vast knowledge of English literature. Daudet qualified him as "déjà érudit, mais dédaigneux du programme, et qui battait les buissons au détriment des succès immédiats."¹³ The contemporary English novelists, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, already well-known in France, were appreciated by Schwob in varying degrees; as for the poets, Browning, Swinburne and Rossetti, he was among their most ardent admirers.¹⁴ Possibly his passion for

11. The letter is in the collection of Mlle. Marianne Schwob.

12. Souvenirs des Milieux Littéraires, 1914-1920, I 135.

13. idem.

14. See André Fontainas, Mes Souvenirs du Symbolisme, 1928, p. 197.

the Elizabethan dramatists also dated from this time - in the absence of records it is difficult to say - and it was certainly during the 1880's that he realised his spiritual affinities with the writers of the eighteenth century. He mentioned his admiration for them in letters to Stevenson, and his first articles contained references to Fielding, Smollett and Sterne.

Literature was not Schwob's only interest, and philosophy, though taught by such men as Burdeau and later Boutroux, did not divert him from the pursuit of other disciplines:

"Marcel Schwob s'évada, en somme, de la philosophie par la philologie, en faisant du haut allemand, de l'argot, du sanscrit, de la paléologie grecque surtout. F. de Saussure lui enseigne, à l'Ecole pratique des Hautes-Études, la phonétique indo-européenne. A la même école, il a rencontré M. Bréal dont les encouragements et l'enseignement auront sur lui beaucoup d'influence."¹⁵

His initiation into linguistics was to lead him to the field in which he was to make so important a contribution: the language of the poetry of François Villon.¹⁶ In 1888, "il copia d'un bout à l'autre, avec un amour que trahit cette belle copie, le Petit et le Grand Testament."¹⁷ After making his first appearance in the academic world with his Etude sur

15. MST pp. 40-41.

16. For an assessment of Schwob's scholarship, see Julian Wayden, 'Le Sort de François Villon et de son Oeuvre', Sorbonne, Doctorat d'Université, 1950.

17. MST p. 50.

l'Argot Français,¹⁸ in collaboration with Georges Guieysse, he began early in 1889 to frequent the Archives Nationales,¹⁹ and on the 2nd April 1890 read at the Institut a paper on François Villon et les Compagnons de la Coquille. In the following months Schwob read several other studies on obscure aspects of Villon's career and poetry, which were to form the basis of a book, François Villon et son Temps. This work was never completed, and it was left to Pierre Champion to collect and publish the fragments in 1912, a year before the appearance of his own monograph on Villon.²⁰

Through his researches Schwob had come into contact with a Dutch scholar, W.G.C. Byvanck, the author of a Specimen d'un Essai Critique sur les Oeuvres de François Villon, published in 1882. Schwob in March 1889 wrote to Byvanck requesting a copy of the study, and proposed exchanges of information. The correspondence thus begun centred at first on linguistics but soon branched out into discussions of English literature, for Byvanck was well versed in the subject and was able to guide

18. Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris, 1892, VII 33-56. Off-prints were issued by the Imprimerie Nationale and Emile Bouillon in 1889.

19. On the 16th March 1889 Schwob consulted the records of the trial of Cartouche to document his tale 'La Dernière Nuit', in the Echo de Paris, 16th April 1889.

20. Marcel Schwob, François Villon, Rédactions et Notes, 1912. They also appeared in the seventh volume of the Oeuvres Complètes.

Schwob's explorations. Since the letters are a unique indication of some of Schwob's reading over the period of his greatest literary activity, it will be useful to quote from them here.²¹

In September 1891 Schwob was writing about a recent discovery:

"Je viens de lire "The Light that failed" de Rudyard Kipling et je n'ose vous dire tout le bien que j'en pense. Le personnage de Dick Helder me semble quelque chose de Shakespearien. De plus, le "rompu" du récit, l'absence de convention dans les événements, l'espèce de cruauté non pas fatale, mais, si on peut dire, inconsciente des événements, me paraît un pas énorme vers le véritable réalisme."²²

Byvanck had to confess that he knew nothing of Kipling, except that he was detested by Oscar Wilde, "qui est un peu snob,"²³ and Schwob returned to a topic of mutual interest: the possible sources of Shakespeare.

"Puisque vous êtes plongé dans Shakespeare, je vous dirai une bonne folie. L'autre jour en relisant Henri IV, je suis sûr que j'ai vu Falstaff étendre la main gesticulante de Don Quichotte et frapper son ventre, comme s'il était plein de l'olla podrida que Sancho puisa dans les pots de Gamache. Il y a dans le langage de ces scènes une profonde teinte de l'humeur de Cervantes. Et je suis d'autant plus

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21. Schwob's letters to Byvanck were bequeathed to the University of Leyden, but have now been mislaid. Thus the only available source is the article of J. Fransen, 'W.G.C. Byvanck - Marcel Schwob', in Neophilologus, 1st January 1947, pp. 110-117. Byvanck's letters to Schwob are in the Pierre Champion Collection of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut, MS 5096.
22. Fransen, op.cit. pp. 116-117.
23. CPC 5096 letter 41 (25th September 1891).

persuadé de l'influence du roman espagnol que Ben Jonson en est tout plein et cite dans ses comédies avec infiniment de respect l'admirable Don Quixotte. Mais je suis sûr que pour vous ces choses sont des redites et que vous allez me renvoyer la date de la traduction de Don Quichotte en anglais - vous l'avez déjà, je le parierais."24

Sure enough, the 20th January 1892 brought from Byvanck the reply that there was no question of a "filiation directe entre Sancho et Falstaff, " but that there might be other influences:

"il y a opposition chez Shakespeare contre l'alto estilo de Guevara, puis influence réaliste espagnole par la Celestina et le Lazarillo que Shakespeare et ses contemporains Nashe, Greene connaissaient."25

The year 1893 brought little news from Schwob to Byvanck, for reasons explained in his letter of January 1894. Schwob had been nursing his mistress Louise through the last stages of consumption; her death in December left him utterly disconsolate. "J'ai le cerveau vide - je lis, je lis, je lis - et je n'ose pas penser... Toutes les douleurs ne me paraissent rien auprès." Schwob sought distraction in work, and spoke of a number of articles on English poets. Ferdinand Brunetière had commissioned a study of Robert Browning for the Revue des Deux Mondes, and Schwob consulted Byvanck about the necessary documentation; he was advised to refer to the studies of Mrs. Sutherland Orr, Edward Dowden and Arthur Symons. Byvanck

24. Fransen, op.cit. p. 116.

25. CPC. 5096 letter 19.

himself had written an obituary article on Browning for De Gids in 1890 and sent it to Schwob for his consideration.²⁶

Early in 1894 Schwob had completed the plan of his essay, and exposed it in a letter to Byvanck.

"Je commence à voir beaucoup de choses dans Browning. Votre progression (influence du milieu et des événements historiques) me paraît parfaite. Voici celle que j'ai trouvée de mon côté et avec laquelle je bâtirai mon article...

Je vois quatre stades artistiques dans Browning:

1. C'est un poète du moi; il est encore impuissant à extérioriser son moi (Pauline). Il en extériorise des parties, mais il désire les réabsorber (Paracelse et Aprile - Sordello et Eglamor - cf. Tête d'Or et Cébès).²⁷

2. Il est arrivé au don de l'artiste et peut projeter des personnalités. Mais il ne s'intéresse qu'à leur développement intérieur et le drame n'est que l'occasion des drames du moi (Théâtre de Browning dont le dernier point d'évolution pouvait être soit A soul's tragedy soit In a Balcony - où le drame a été réduit au simple schéma).

3. Le drame étant dans l'âme, non dans l'objet (la mort de Mme Browning a pu aider cette évolution commencée cependant depuis Men and Women en lui faisant apparaître comme superficiel le jeu des objets, auprès des douleurs intimes) conception de moi différents qui reflètent un drame non exposé par l'auteur même. Par conséquent monologues dramatiques - The Ring and the Book.

4. Evolution finale. Le seul moi est celui du poète par rapport à Dieu; il contient tous les autres moi; la diversité dans l'unité. Conception des apologies où le poète est à la fois défenseur et demandeur et les contient en lui. Fifine at the fair: où Browning contient Don Juan qui contient lui-même Elvire.

26. *ibid.* letter 42 (28th January 1894).

27. For Schwob's admiration of Claudel's play, see Jacques Petit, 'Autour de la publication de Tête d'Or', Cahiers Paul Claudel I, 1959, pp. 135-170, and J. Franssen, 'Paul Claudel inconnu et le Dr. W.G.C. Byvanck', Neophilologus XXIII, 1937-1938, pp. 338-346.

A partir de là l'évolution me semble terminée et doit mener fatalement aux "Parleyings with certain people of importance."

Cette construction me plaît assez parce qu'elle représente très bien la marche du moi inférieur vers le monde, pour revenir, chargé du monde et l'enfermer dans un moi supérieur. Mais voilà trop de métaphysique."²⁸

This letter appears to be one of the last that Schwob wrote to Byvanck;²⁹ at the end of the following year he fell a victim to an incurable disease which was to cut short his literary career and interrupt contacts with many of his friends.

At the beginning of his correspondence with the Dutch scholar, Schwob was unknown to the reading public. Only a few articles had appeared, in his father's paper, the most important being a study of Robert Louis Stevenson.³⁰ In February 1889, however, he started to write for the Echo de Paris, publishing the tales which were to make up his Coeur Double and the Roi au Masque d'Or, the Mimes and the Livre de Monelle. By April 1891, shortly before the appearance of his first book, he was

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28. Fransen, 'Byvanck-Schwob', p. 117. The article on Browning was not completed.
29. Léon Daudet, op.cit. III 297-301, gives a portrait of Byvanck in his account of a journey with Schwob to Holland in 1894, so there may have been a reunion that summer. Champion, MST p. 225, mentions a letter of Byvanck with an invitation for Schwob to come to the Hague, in the summer of 1904. Instead, Byvanck visited Schwob in the autumn: his articles on Schwob in De Gids, May-October 1905, relate Schwob's readings of English literature in 1890, and their last meeting.
30. Champion claims that it was in 1891 that Schwob began the series of 'Lettres Parisiennes' printed in the Phare (MST p. 62n.).

sufficiently well thought of in the world of journalism to be offered the post of sub-editor, under Catulle Mendès, on the new weekly literary supplement of the Echo de Paris. With this appointment assured, he felt free to terminate his contract with another paper, L'Événement, where since October 1890 he had been contributing a series of articles under the general title of 'Les Oeuvres et les Hommes'. The position helped to build his reputation, but not his finances, for Magnier was singularly reluctant to pay Schwob for his services and the series brought nothing but experience and a gratifying number of useful contacts in the literary circles of the day. With his failure at the agrégation in July 1891 Schwob had abandoned all pretence of preparing for a university career, much to the disappointment of his family, and was ready to launch himself into literature. Coeur Double had earned him a tribute from Anatole France,³¹ and the entry to his salon; and from the spring of 1891 Schwob was also a frequent visitor at Alphonse Daudet's. It was probably at this time, too, that he became an occasional caller at Edmond de Goncourt's grenier and at Mallarmé's mardis in the rue de Rome: Camille Mauclair recalls his appearances there,

31. His review 'Marcel Schwob', in Le Temps, 12th July 1891, is included in La Vie Littéraire, 1892, IV 318-324.

accompanied by Byvanck.³² In these milieux, where English literature was known and appreciated, Schwob would have the opportunity to talk about the authors he admired, and to share his latest discoveries. It was at these gatherings moreover that Schwob must have made his first contacts with English men of letters. Arthur Symons, who had come to Paris for the Exposition in September 1889 and stayed until June the following year, doubtless met Schwob at Mallarmé's; one of his memories of the winter was Marcel Schwob "in a quiet corner by his own fireside, discussing the First Quarto of Hamlet."³³ At Alphonse Daudet's house in the rue de Bellechasse Schwob met the journalist Robert Sherard, a friend of Oscar Wilde; Sherard, in his book on Daudet, spoke of Schwob as

"a young man who knows more of English literature than any man in France, and who will spend hours in reading aloud to Daudet, and translating as he goes along, from Swift, Defoe, Stevenson or Addison's Spectator."³⁴

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32. Mallarmé chez Lui, 1935, p. 40. Byvanck came to Paris in the spring of 1891 to survey the literary scene, and it was through Schwob that he met many of the writers discussed in Parijs 1891: Notities, translated with Schwob's help under the title of Un Hollandais à Paris en 1891.
33. Quoted in Roger Lhombreaud, Arthur Symons, 1963, p. 69. Symons wrote a review of Schwob's Moeurs des Diurnales in The Saturday Review of the 8th August 1903, and an obituary notice on the 4th March 1905. See also D. Salmon, op.cit. pp. 62, 96-97. According to Miss Salmon's bibliography there were a number of letters from Symons to Schwob between 1902 and 1904. Paul Léautaud in his Journal Littéraire of the 13th February 1905 mentions a manuscript to be sent to Symons, which does not seem to have been published.
34. Alphonse Daudet, 1894, pp. 424-425.

Perhaps the most interesting of Schwob's early friendships was that with Oscar Wilde. It was Byvanck who had recommended him to read Wilde's Intentions and Schwob was delighted by the discovery:

"C'est plein de talent: en somme nous pensons tous cela en France aujourd'hui sous une forme moins paradoxale. L'apothéose du mensonge - il y a encore trop de Baudelaire là-dedans. D'ailleurs chez Wilde la perversité est plutôt superficielle. Néanmoins le livre m'intéresse beaucoup. L'essai sur Waine Wright [sic] "Pen, pencil and poison" est admirable et d'un tragique qui me ravit."³⁵

Wilde was in Paris early in November 1891 writing his play Salomé, in French. At the same time he made contacts with the younger generation of writers, meeting André Gide on the 27th November, and Schwob a little later: Sherard claimed that it was Pierre Louÿs who introduced them to each other in the café François Premier.³⁶ Schwob's first impressions must have been very favourable, for he dedicated to Wilde the tale 'Le Pays Bleu', printed in the Echo of the 6th December, and translated 'The Selfish Giant' for the paper's literary supplement on the 27th. Jules Renard noticed a photograph of Wilde on Schwob's mantelpiece on the 23rd December, a token of his initial admiration. Subsequently,

35. Fransen, op.cit. p. 117. The letter probably dates from the autumn of 1891. Intentions was published in May 1891.

36. D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 40.

however, there were frequent quarrels and reconciliations.³⁷

In his diary, toward the end of January 1892, Schwob drew a rather unflattering portrait of Wilde;³⁸ and confided further observations to Byvanck:

"Il porte de longues redingotes brunes et tient un haut jonc à pomme d'or. Sa voix est indolente, affectée, et féminine - son attitude continuelle est baudelairienne. C'est un délicieux conteur et il ment avec un art d'invention excessif. Il est au dernier point subjectif et pervers, et il prend plaisir à répandre une contagion de perversité autour de lui par sa conversation attirante."³⁹

It would appear that he admired the artist more than the man.

In December 1892 Schwob played a small part in the correction of the text of Salomé, which had been entrusted in turn to Stuart Merrill, Adolphe Retté and Pierre Louÿs. Robert Ross, Wilde's friend and literary executor, clarified Schwob's rôle:

"The play was passed for press, however, by no less a writer than Marcel Schwob, whose letter to the Paris publisher, returning the proofs and mentioning two or three slight alterations, is still in my possession. Marcel Schwob told me some years afterwards that he thought it would have spoiled the spontaneity and character of Wilde's style if he had tried to harmonise it with the diction demanded by the French Academy."⁴⁰

37. *ibid.* p. 42, and Léon Daudet, *op.cit.* p. 25.

38. MST p. 99. This diary, not published by Champion, was begun at the end of January 1892 and continued intermittently until at least the end of the year. See MST p. 135.

39. Fransen, *op.cit.* *idem.* Schwob seems to be referring in this letter to the incident recounted below by O'Sullivan.

40. Salomé, 1908, pp. viii-ix.

After this service of Schwob's, there are few details of their relations. We hear of their dining together with various other writers, notably at the banquet given in Wilde's honour by Maurice Barrès,⁴¹ and Vincent O'Sullivan recorded this anecdote:

"One morning he went to see Wilde in Paris. Wilde had just finished dressing and was going out to lunch. He looked about for his cane. 'My gold-headed cane has disappeared. Last night I was with the most terrible creatures, bandits, murderers, thieves - such company as Villon kept. They stole my gold-headed cane. There was a youth with beautiful sad eyes who had slain his mistress that morning because she was unfaithful. I feel sure it was he who stole my gold-headed cane.' He spoke with relish and satisfaction[...]

Schwob meanwhile had been looking about the room, and spied the cane in a corner. "But, Mr Wilde, there is your gold-headed cane."

"Ah, yes!" said Wilde, horribly disappointed; "so it is! There is my gold-headed cane. How clever of you to find it."⁴²

Their contacts must have continued up to 1895, for in July 1894 Wilde dedicated to Schwob "in friendship and admiration" his poem 'The Sphinx'. That Schwob should have had the honour of finding his name at the head of so fine a poem is a mark of the respect the two writers had for each others' achievements.

41. Léon Lemonnier, La Vie d'Oscar Wilde, 1931, p. 87.

42. Aspects of Wilde, 1936, pp. 75-76. This incident seems to confirm Léon Daudet's claim that "le lien intellectuel entre Schwob et Wilde était leur commune admiration pour Villon, ... leur commun attrait pour les classes dangereuses, le pittoresque des malfaiteurs, pirates, coupeurs de bourse, et pour leur argot. L'un et l'autre connaissaient à fond le slang, qui est le 'jars' londonien, et l'"entraient" avec une égale facilité." op.cit. III 26.

After the Wilde trial Schwob's attitude changed brusquely. Jules Renard, on the 13th April 1895, remarked ironically on the "pudibonderie de quelques Français que nous connaissons bien", for circumstances had forced Schwob to dissociate himself from Wilde. Jules Huret, in an article in the Figaro that same day, had made unpleasant insinuations about Wilde's companions in Paris: "Ses familiers étaient, croyons-nous, dans le monde des lettres et des arts, MM. Jean Lorrain, Catulle Mendès, Marcel Schwob, et autres écrivains subtils."⁴³ Schwob immediately challenged Huret to a duel, sending Henri Gauthier-Villars and Francis Vielé-Griffin as his seconds, but Huret, having already been called out by Mendès, satisfied Schwob's outraged honour with a procès-verbal.⁴⁴

Schwob's better feelings seem to have prevailed during the summer and by November he was helping Sherard and Stuart Merrill with the organisation of a petition for Wilde's sentence of hard labour to be commuted.⁴⁵ All the same,

43. Lemonnier, op.cit. p. 193. The "decadence" of these other writers was notoriously not confined to their fiction.

44. CPC 5134 p. 25 gives more details of the affair. Princeton University Library has a manuscript letter dated 16th April, thanking the two witnesses for their help. Schwob had previously written to Vielé-Griffin on the publication of 'La Chevauchée d'Yeldis', inviting him to write for the Echo supplement, and mentioning also a letter from John O'Neill, "un de mes bons amis d'Angleterre." loc.cit., n.d.

45. Daudet, op.cit. III 306. It is possible that Daudet is confounding Schwob with Merrill, however: Lemonnier in his passage on the petition (op.cit. pp. 196-198) does not mention Schwob.

during Wilde's voluntary exile in France after his release, Schwob seems to have ignored his former friend. O'Sullivan analyses his motives:

"He took his tone from Henley and his friends who hated Wilde. But he got very angry and confused one night when I told him he had abandoned Wilde to his enemies. He protested that he was always willing to see Wilde, but he seemed to think that the first move should come from Wilde - which was ridiculous. It is certain he did not assist Wilde in any way during his last years in Paris."⁴⁶

From Schwob himself, as far as available documents allow us to judge, there was no further mention of Wilde, except for one curious passage in the 'Lettres à Valmont'.

"Je ne remarquai d'abord en lui qu'une obésité énorme qui gênait assez ses mouvements pour l'empêcher de déployer un reste de grâce et d'éloquence dont on retrouvait la trace dans l'ensemble de ses manières et de son langage [...]. Est-ce Oscar Wilde, après la cellule de Reading Gaol?"⁴⁷

46. 'Two Lives', The Dublin Magazine, January-March 1928, p. 41. In his Aspects of Wilde O'Sullivan had devoted a few paragraphs to Wilde's enemies - notably Henley and Whibley. I imagine that Whibley is understood here, since he was one of the first to hint at Wilde's perversions in his anonymous review of Dorian Gray in the Scots Observer, 5th July 1890. Henley, then editor of the review, seems to have been unaware of the gossip until much later, but rejoiced in Wilde's downfall. In a letter to Whibley of the 13th April 1895, mentioning a third person's encounter with Schwob in Paris, he wrote, "And if Marcel it be, is he not precious glad that I wouldn't let him call on Oscar when he was in the confines of this isle?" See John Connell, W.E. Henley, 1949, pp. 187, 299.

47. L'Echo de Paris, 20th January 1903: OC IX 249.

About Schwob's relations with the poet John Gray there is, unfortunately, very little information. They met early in 1892, for an entry in Schwob's diary of the 21st January records a "visite de John Gray et Robert Sherard, de la part d'Oscar Wilde."⁴⁸ Gray wrote to Schwob on the 18th November 1892: "Oscar, qui sera à Paris en même temps que cette lettre, me dit que vous êtes un ami d'Anatole France":⁴⁹ he was hoping to translate l'Etui de Nacre, serialised in the Echo supplement from the 9th October onwards, and wanted Schwob to arrange an introduction. Schwob must have been of some service to the poet, for he was one of the favoured few to be presented with a copy of Silverpoints, Gray's first volume of verse, published in January 1893.⁵⁰

The literary gifts of Wilde and his circle made them welcome visitors at Schwob's rooms in the rue de l'Université, and at the offices of the Echo and the Mercure de France. One of his early friendships, however, was kept up almost entirely

48. CPC 5133.1 p. 85.

49. MST p. 98.

50. A revival of interest in John Gray has been marked by the publication of a number of essays, edited by Fr. Brocard Sewell, Two Friends. John Gray and André Raffalovich, Aylesford, 1963. A letter from Gray to the publisher John Lane is quoted on p. 168: "I have written to Oscar ... will it be too much if I ask for four large and twelve small Silverpoints? Thus: the Princess of Monaco + Frank Harris + a lady + two French poets + my mother - Two English poets: Swinburne, Dowson = Two artists: Whistler (who will show Mallarmé). Shannon = Schwob." (January 1893).

through correspondence: that with John O'Neill.⁵¹ An employee at the War Office, O'Neill had been sent to Paris in 1868 and stayed for many years in France, writing in both English and French reviews. He was fascinated by mediaeval French literature and wrote to Schwob on discovering the articles and papers on Villon published in 1890 by the young researcher. Byvanck, on learning of O'Neill's letter, recalled that he too had been approached some years ago by the same person, and when he came to Paris in the spring of 1891 a meeting was arranged between the three Villonists - in which the principal topic of conversation appears to have been Hamlet! Evoking the figure of O'Neill in a subsequent article, Byvanck wrote:

"Hij behoorde tot den kring van Henley, den vriend van Stevenson, den dichter en den meest gevierden criticus van Engeland, en hij schreef in The National Observer, het weekblad dat door Henley tot het toonaangevende blad van London was gemaakt."⁵²

O'Neill was also a friend of Oscar Wilde, and mentioned in a letter of the 16th July 1892 an exchange of remarks about Schwob:

51. Author of A First Japanese Book for English Students, 1874; Li Roy des Ribaus! Etude Historique, La Rochelle, 1889. The first volume of The Night of the Gods, "a key to all mythologies", came out in 1893, the second posthumously in 1897.

52. 'Marcel Schwob', De Gids, 1905, III 308.

"je disais de vous à M. Oscar Wilde l'autre soir, quand j'eus le plaisir d'être assis à côté de lui à un grand diner littéraire, que vous êtes un très bon compagnon et de très bon coeur."⁵³

Even more flattering was O'Neill's opinion of Le Roi au Masque d'Or, judged by him to be "plus travaillé et plus vrai" than Coeur Double, and by some ladies of his acquaintance to earn Schwob the title of "the Rudyard Kipling of France."⁵⁴

While Schwob was making personal contacts with English writers, the influence of English and American literature, past and present, was helping to give a distinctive manner to his own works. Many of the tales of Coeur Double bear the stamp of Poe and Mark Twain, and to a lesser extent, of Stevenson. The subjects and style of the tales are, in fact, a sure guide to his current reading. Thus 'Barbe-Noire', printed in the Echo of the 26th October 1892, indicates that it was around this time that Schwob was taking up once more his childhood readings of the pirate biographies of Esquemeling and Captain Charles Johnson. The memoirs of Schwob's friends also fix certain dates. Colette, for example, talks of his visits during her illness:

53. CPC 5134 p. 19.

54. idem: from a letter of the 28th December 1892.

"Assis à mon chevet, Marcel Schwob fidèlement ouvrait un volume de contes américains ou anglais, Twain, Jérôme-K. Jérôme, Dickens, ou Moll Flanders, qu'il n'avait pas encore traduit, et pour moi seule [...] il lisait. [...] A vingt ans, on accepte royalement les présents démesurés."⁵⁵

Schwob's suffering at the loss of Louise accounts for the sudden drop in his literary production in 1894. However, although he did little creative work, he was fully occupied with other projects, mostly linked with English literature. We have seen that he devoted some time to a study of Robert Browning, and in the spring he was probably tackling the translation of John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, for the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. He had perhaps already started on the most ambitious of his undertakings to date: his translation of Moll Flanders. In June he composed a preface for a French version of Stevenson's The Dynamiter, serialised in the Revue Hebdomadaire; the same review, in the autumn, published his translation of Defoe's novel.⁵⁶ On the 1st September his article on George Meredith was printed in Le Journal, and at the beginning of November he gave a talk on Ford's play before its first performance in France. The news of Stevenson's death in December moved him to write a final tribute to the novelist,

55. Mes Apprentissages, 1936, p. 65. Colette was born in 1873.

56. Schwob had previously had dealings with the review: "le directeur M. Jeantet m'a demandé [...] d'autoriser la revue à reproduire la première [...] mon premier roman (!!!): j'ai naturellement consenti - mais cela ne m'enrichira pas de quelque temps, pour sûr." OC X 77, from a letter of June 1892.

which appeared in the New Review in February 1895.

In 1894 Schwob was also engaged on a large programme of reading, in preparation for the series of Vies Imaginaires which he had promised Le Journal. The diary of Edmond de Goncourt shows that Defoe's novels were high on his reading list, and with them almost certainly the pirate biographies. The story of Major Stede Bonnet, the only vie to appear in 1894, is taken from the General History of the Pirates, by Captain Charles Johnson. One reason for Schwob's excursion into the realm of adventure on the high seas, and indeed on dry land, may have been his meeting in the spring of 1894 with the future author of The Book of Scoundrels. Charles Whibley came to know Schwob at one of Mallarmé's Tuesday receptions. His friendship was especially valuable since, as a regular contributor to the most prominent English periodicals, the Scots Observer, later the National Observer, to the Pall Mall Gazette, which had appointed him its Paris correspondent, to the Spectator, MacMillan's and Blackwood's Magazine, he enabled Schwob to make useful contacts across the Channel. It was through Whibley that Schwob met William Ernest Henley, a former friend of Stevenson, director of the first two of the above-mentioned periodicals, and then of the New Review.⁵⁷

57. For an account of Schwob's relations with Whibley and Henley, see D. Salmon, op.cit. pp. 54-64. Pierre Champion, in his notes for a chapter on Marcel Schwob and England, mentioned especially these two writers:

Perhaps with the encouragement of Whibley, Schwob decided at last to visit England. His holiday in the summer and autumn of 1894 was claimed at least by Whibley to be the first, but the memoirs of Léon Daudet leave the impression that Schwob was already a seasoned traveller. Daudet would collect Schwob at the rue de l'Université and the two would set off by train:

"A partir de là, Schwob entrait dans un personnage de la chronique des mauvais garçons de XVe siècle, et n'appartenait plus à la réalité que par les filaments du mal de mer, ou quelques aspects stéréoscopiques de sa dernière conversation avec Mirbeau."⁵⁸

Daudet gives a list of the sea-crossings: Calais-Dover, Le Havre-Southampton, Boulogne-Newhaven, Harwich-Hook of Holland, even Bergen and Newcastle. Since Daudet's friendship with Schwob did not survive the Dreyfus affair, and since Schwob left the rue de l'Université after his return to Paris

"Quant à Charles Whibley, il a été vraiment un compagnon de la vie spirituelle de Marcel Schwob, le plus considérable avec W.G.C. Byvanck. Il a soutenu et encouragé Marcel Schwob toute sa vie, lui donnant les plus sages conseils pour se discipliner et se résigner à l'existence." CPC 5133.3. p. 47. Through Henley, Schwob made acquaintance with a number of English journalists and politicians: Alfred Harmsworth, editor of the Daily Mail, later Lord Northcliffe, Cecil Rhodes and his entourage. See Reginald Pound and Geoffrey Harmsworth, Northcliffe, 1959, and Comtesse Jean de Pange, 'Souvenirs sur Marcel Schwob', Nouvelle Revue Française May 1961, pp. 956-957.

58. Ecrivains et Artistes, 1929, VII 79-80. In Souvenirs I 326-340 Daudet describes his first visits to London, without mentioning Schwob. Note that Schwob's friendship with Mirbeau dated from about 1891. There is no help from the collection of Schwob's letters printed in OC X, because of the lacuna between 1892 and 1896.

in the autumn of 1894, we must conclude that these voyages took place in the early 1890's. However, the only visit to England related by Champion and others is precisely the trip organised by Daudet in 1894;⁵⁹ it began with a tour of Holland, where Schwob was enraptured by the paintings of Jan van Scorel,⁶⁰ and continued with a visit to Georges Hugo and his family at Hauteville House in Guernesey. It was here that Schwob finished the proof-reading of Moll Flanders and prepared a few 'Lettres Parisiennes' for the Phare, evoking the atmosphere of the island and memories of Victor Hugo. Towards the middle of August Schwob and Daudet set off for England, stopping in the capital, where Schwob found so many scenes familiar from his readings:

"A Londres même, Schwob avait une joie d'enfant à retrouver les lieux décrits par Dickens et par Quincey, notamment Oxford Street, la "marâtre au coeur de pierre" des Confessions d'un mangeur d'opium. Dans un modeste concert où nous entrâmes, il remarqua une maigre chanteuse au profil angélique, aux yeux d'aigues-marines. Il fallut l'attendre à la sortie, et je vois encore Schwob, sous un bec électrique, faisant à cette "dancing girl" stupéfaite une déclaration où il la comparait à l'inoubliable petite Anne et qui ne fut pas agréée."⁶¹

59. Jules Renard, Journal, 1887-1910, 1960, p. 240, (26th July 1894), noted: "Schwob, qui vient de se faire payer un voyage par Léon Daudet, me dit: - 'Vous comprenez que, si j'avais refusé, il aurait été très froissé.'"

60. Daudet, Souvenirs III 296.

61. *ibid.* p. 23.

More fruitful encounters were those with W.E. Henley, and later with George Meredith at Box Hill. It is not known how long Schwob stayed in England on this occasion, or whether he and Daudet were able to visit Scotland and Ireland, as they planned; at any rate, he was back in Paris by the 10th September, for an entry in Jules Renard's diary mentions a despondent conversation on that day.⁶²

Pierre Champion places the date of Schwob's meeting with the actress Marguerite Moreno early in January 1895, but it is likely that they were already acquainted by this time. Moreno had studied at the Conservatoire with Lugné-Poe in 1888,⁶³ and Schwob had been associated with the Théâtre d'Art and the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre from the end of 1891. Besides, Moreno in her Souvenirs de ma Vie describes Schwob's "antre sombre, écrasé entre deux étages", in the rue de l'Université.⁶⁴ Their liaison may not have begun until 1895, however, for Schwob's return to creative writing would certainly appear to mark a new period of serenity. During this year he serialised in Le Journal his Croisade des Enfants and the bulk of the Vies Imaginaires.

At the end of 1895 Schwob was forced to undergo an operation, the first of several, which prolonged his life

62. op.cit. p. 243.

63. Aurélien Lugné-Poe, Le Sot du Tremplin, 1930, p. 127.

64. op.cit. p. 78.

for another ten years but which left him an invalid, almost incapable of creative work. In the first mood of despair he was tempted to go into retreat, like Huysmans at La Trappe.⁶⁵ From now on he turned his attention to other fields, notably to historical research. The papers in the Pierre Champion collection contain his notes on subjects from fifteenth-century French documents, copied at the Bibliothèque Nationale or the Archives Nationales. Frequent visits to the theatre helped to while away the evenings when Moreno was away on provincial or foreign tours: Jules Clarétie had given Schwob his free pass to the Comédie Française in 1895.⁶⁶ We may suppose it was through his relations with the theatrical world that Schwob conceived the idea of turning his hand to drama. He began a collaboration with Eugène Morand, the author of several successful though ephemeral plays,⁶⁷ and in 1896 was working with him on an adaptation of King John, as well as an original play for the Théâtre Français.⁶⁸ Nothing came of this project, for although Schwob was never short of ideas, his poor health prevented him from carrying

65. Comtesse Jean de Pange, op.cit. p. 957.

66. CPC 5134 p. 8.

67. L'Héritière, 1885; Raymonde, 1887; Grisélidis, 1891, etc.

68. OC X 88.

them to fruition. The chronicle of the last ten years of his life tells of numerous works begun with enthusiasm, and sooner or later abandoned.

Schwob's failure to keep his promises to editors and publishers did not, however, date solely from the time of his illness. Even in days of his regular contributions to the Echo and other papers, stories from his pen were announced but never printed.⁶⁹ In the spring and summer of 1892, when he was putting together his article on Villon for the Revue des Deux Mondes, he was also engaged in an abortive attempt to write a tale for the Revue Bleue.⁷⁰ In these early years the occasional non-appearance of a piece of prose was of little moment; Schwob was by no means a prolific journalist but his output was enough to make his reputation and satisfy his bibliomania and modest material needs. The case was different when his health failed: the expenses of opium to palliate his sufferings, of operations and journeys of convalescence, were a heavy burden for a man often unable to work for weeks on end. He had been relieved of his post at the Echo in August 1893,⁷¹ and seems to have had no regular

69. See Goddard, op.cit. p. 21.

70. OC X 78-79.

71. Renard, Correspondance, 1953, p. 128, (10th August 1893): "Je lis seulement ce matin les changements survenus à L'Echo. J'espère qu'ils ne vous atteignent pas et qu'on vous donne une compensation." Letters written later in the month indicate that Schwob was in financial difficulties.

income until 1898 when he became a reader for Calmann-Lévy. Schwob was almost entirely dependent on his mother and Moreno: hence the monotonous appeals for money in his letters, and his readiness to accept uncongenial work in order to supplement his resources.

Initially, however, Schwob busied himself with more interesting tasks. An ambitious undertaking was a 150,000 word history of English literature for the publisher T. Fisher Unwin; Schwob went to London in June 1896 to sign the contract, which was witnessed by Paul Valéry.⁷² The commission was probably secured through the good offices of Charles Whibley, but we do not know how far Schwob progressed. There is no mention of the book in his published letters, or in the list of manuscripts in the Edouard Champion collection.

In January 1896 Schwob had sent his 'Art de la Biographie' to Henley's New Review, and in May his 'Plangôn et Bacchis'.⁷³ The following year he was preparing two more studies, and wrote

72. The original is in the Brigham Young Collection. Paul Valéry was in London in April 1896, as a translator in Cecil Rhodes Chartered Company: see the Gide - Valéry Correspondance, 1955, pp. 262-263. Champion quotes a letter from Valéry to Schwob, mentioning visits to Whibley and Henley, MST p. 132.

73. Both articles served as prefaces, the former to the Vies Imaginaires, the latter to Théophile Gautier's La Chaîne d'Or, and were collected in Spicilège, 1896.

to his mother:

"Je pense faire un article pour Henley sur un poète dramatique contemporain de Shakespeare, Heywood, au sujet duquel j'ai fait une découverte - et Henley va demander à Brunetière que je fasse un article sur son édition de Burns qui va paraître."⁷⁴

In October Henley replied: "No, I can't take Heywood for December... but it's good business for January."⁷⁵ By this time, unfortunately, the New Review had closed and the article, if indeed it was ever completed, has disappeared. Cosmopolis⁷⁶ was also seeking Schwob's collaboration, as we learn from letters to his mother:

"Le secrétaire de Cosmopolis m'a écrit qu'il viendrait me voir dès son retour de Biarritz pour tâcher d'arranger des articles réguliers. Je voudrais bien: car je crois que la revue paie un prix assez élevé, plus que n'importe quelle autre en France."⁷⁷

The 'Etoile de Bois' was published there that same month; Schwob may have had other tales in preparation, but they were not printed.⁷⁸ On the 29th October 1897 Schwob wrote

74. OC X 97, (20th September 1897).

75. Quoted from D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 56.

76. "An International Monthly Review, edited by F. Ortman. London & New York". It appeared between January 1896 and June 1898. Contributors included Henry James, Edmund Gosse, Paul Bourget, Anatole France and George Moore.

77. OC X 100, (1st October 1897).

78. OC III 169 gives a list of unpublished tales from 1897.

to Nantes that he was about to begin an article on his friend and former teacher, the linguist Michel Bréal, "mais il paraîtra Dieu sait quand."⁷⁹ Indeed, the idea, like many others, was to come to nothing.

The new year saw Schwob projecting a play, La Vie est un Mensonge, of which only a short sketch of the plot was completed.⁸⁰ Apart from this, there is no record of his activities until the end of the year, when he wrote to Brunetière for a commission from the Revue des Deux Mondes:

"Vous plairait-il que je fasse pour la revue un article sur La Vie de Shakespeare d'après le livre qui paraît ce mois de Sidney Lee, et qui contient le dernier mot de tous les travaux à cet égard?

Il y a longtemps que je m'occupe de cette question et je crois pouvoir faire beaucoup de nouveau et d'intéressant."

Brunetière accepted Schwob's proposition at once and work was begun:

"La librairie m'annonce ce matin que le livre de Sidney Lee est épuisé et qu'on le retire: de sorte que j'écris à Sidney Lee pour lui demander le prêt d'un exemplaire, en attendant, afin de ne pas me mettre en retard. D'ailleurs je commence mon travail immédiatement; car déjà un livre paru au commencement de cette année,

79. OC X 103.

80. MST p. 140. Schwob must have been thinking of Calderon's play La Vida es Sueno. He had in his library the Drames Religieux, in a French translation published in 1898.

Les Sonnets de Shakespeare, de M. G. Wyndham, fixait bien des points nouveaux. Je pense donc pouvoir apporter l'article avant la fin du mois: j'interromprai pour cela les recherches que je poussais sur François Villon [..]"81

Brunetière was to be disappointed once again, for Schwob soon put aside his review. "Je puis à peine travailler et mon article pour Brunetière que j'espérais avoir fini bientôt n'avance guère", he wrote to his mother in January 1898.⁸² No doubt he found his task more difficult than he expected, and preferred to take up his work on Villon again. The drafting of his book was started in the summer of 1899, and kept him occupied intermittently until the end of his life. Only two chapters were completed, although at the outset Schwob had hopes of finishing his biography within twelve months.

What Shakespeare studies lost by Schwob's inability to finish his article they gained with his translation of Hamlet, in collaboration with Eugène Morand, terminated after about four months' work in October 1897, performed by Sarah Bernhardt in May 1899, and published, together with Schwob's preface, at the end of the same year. Apart from this notable achievement Schwob produced very little in 1899. He seems not to have acceded to Félix Fénéon's request that he should

81. Bibl. Nat. ms. naf 25049 pp. 131-132, 1st and 4th December 1898.

82. OC X 105.

take charge of the book reviews in La Revue Blanche,⁸³ but had his Serlon de Wilton⁸⁴ printed in La Vogue in March, Les Derniers Jours d'Emmanuel Kant, the translation of De Quincey resurrected from his juvenilia, from April to July, and his version of the grave-diggers' scene from Hamlet in December. In the autumn Schwob was announcing to his mother a highly profitable collaboration on certain English reviews.

"J'ai pu griffonner un article qui m'a été commandé par Literature, le supplément littéraire du Times et la Fortnightly Review m'en a commandé deux grands de quinze pages chacun, qu'on me paiera, promet-on, trente guineas les deux, - ce qui est un bon prix. Seulement ce sera bien long à écrire: et de plus je n'ose guère écrire directement en anglais. Il faudra donc faire traduire⁽⁸⁵⁾ et cela diminuera grandement le bénéfice. Enfin? tout cela naturellement sur Villon.

Cela préparera admirablement la vente de mon livre en Angleterre sur laquelle je compte beaucoup. - Frank Harris⁽⁸⁶⁾ m'ayant déjà fait promettre de lui réserver le droit de priorité en Angleterre peut-être simultanément avec celle ici."⁸⁷

83. CPC 5134 p. 11.

84. Included in OC VII 361-373.

85. The translation is very stiff and literal: there is no indication whose work it is - or even whether the English was in fact Schwob's own.

86. Frank Harris: His Life and Adventures, 1952, makes only one mention of Schwob, when he introduced Harris to Edmond Rostand in 1898. I find no mention of an earlier acquaintance, although they may well have met through Wilde and his circle, or through Arthur Symons, who wrote in the Saturday Review, edited by Harris.

87. OC X 113. In 1900 Schwob received an offer from Pierre Gaultier, director of a short-lived "société d'éditions artistiques, Au Pavillon de Hanovre", for the publication rights, CPC 5134 p. 12. The question of the English translation was arranged at the same time.

The two articles for the Fortnightly Review⁸⁸ did not materialise, but 'The Poems of François Villon' appeared in Literature on the 16th December. Schwob's name figured frequently in this periodical during the last two months of 1899, with his letter to Sidney Colvin on Stevenson's debt to Villon in 'A Lodging for the Night',⁸⁹ and his exchange of opinions with Edward Dowden on various problematic matters in the latter's edition of Hamlet. This publicity was highly gratifying for Schwob, anxious for the success of his books and for further lucrative appearances in the English reviews.

Thus, by the end of 1899, Schwob could consider himself well established in the esteem of English men of letters. His brief connections with the New Review had made him known to such critics and scholars as Charles Keary, W.P. Ker and G.W. Steevens,⁹⁰ and now he was making his way in the most respected periodicals. Moreover, there was the prospect of his being discovered by a much larger audience across the Atlantic. Around December 1899 Schwob had met the American Vance Thompson, whose collection of essays on contemporary French writers was to appear the following

88. CPC 5134 p. 10: "Henry Davray, qui l'a fréquenté depuis 1895, l... le relance depuis 1899 pour un article sur Villon demandé par M. W.L. Courtney, l'éditeur de la Fortnightly Review."

89. op.cit. 4th November 1899, p. 449.

90. See D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 56. These names figure also in the list of Schwob's English correspondents, CPC 5133.2 p. 30.

year.⁹¹ He was persuaded by Thompson of the possibilities of making a fortune in the U.S.A.

"Il paraît que j'ai un public très passionné en Amérique. Et moi qui ne peux pas souffrir ce pays-là! Enfin! Il me dit qu'il veut m'arranger une série de conférences là-bas. Si je pouvais je gagnerais beaucoup d'argent. Il faudrait aller bien."⁹²

The idea of a lecture-tour was soon forgotten, but Schwob and Morand were requisitioned instead for the preparation of a stage adaptation of Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. By the 18th March 1900 the English copy was finished, and Schwob was hoping that Coquelin would agree to produce it. On the 25th April he wrote to his mother that he had started work on an English play based on the story of Jane Shore,⁹³ to be completed by August. A French translation would then be made for Sarah Bernhardt. Thompson, however, began to make difficulties, and although Schwob and Morand went ahead with the two plays it looked as though there would be no performances. Fresh hope was aroused when the American impresario David Belasco⁹⁴ promised to open his new

91. French Portraits, Boston, 1900: 'The New Erasmus: Marcel Schwob', pp. 184-193.

92. OC X 122-123.

93. OC X 128. Maurice Schwob had brought his brother The London Stage, 1824-1827, 4 vols., which contained Nicholas Rowe's popular tragedy Jane Shore, 1718. Harriet Smithson had played the title-rôle in Paris, 15th October 1827.

94. Author also of Madame Butterfly, 1900, and The Girl of the Golden West, 1905, etc.

theatre in New York the following January with Jane Shore; and Sarah Bernhardt also seemed disposed to accept the French version. Nonetheless, Schwob and Morand were doomed to disappointment, for both projects fell through. Belasco took the typewritten copy to the United States, where it is still to be found in the Copyright Office in Washington. The whereabouts of the French translation, together with the two versions of Dr. Jekyll, is unknown.⁹⁵

1900 was not by any means a wasted year for Schwob, despite these frustrations. In the middle of August, after a bout of illness, he set off for a holiday in England, staying with Charles Whibley in Haslemere, Surrey. When his health permitted he travelled to London to read at the British Museum where he met a number of British scholars, among them Walter Raleigh, Sidney Colvin, and F.G. Kenyon.⁹⁶ Meanwhile Whibley was arranging Schwob's papers for his marriage to Marguerite Moreno, which took place on the 17th September at the Bartholemew's Close Registry Office. Before their return to Paris they paid a visit to George Meredith at Box Hill. This, apparently, was Schwob's last stay in England. The change had been good for

95. The progress of the two plays is recorded in Schwob's letters to his mother, OC XX. For the version of Jane Shore, see Dramatic Compositions Copyrighted in the United States 1870-1916, Copyright Office, Washington, 1918, vol. I item 22465, 25th February 1901.

96. Editor of the Mimes of Herondas, which inspired Schwob's book of the same title.

his health, but he was already too ill to make more than a temporary recovery, and after a series of relapses he was forced to seek warmer climes. From the end of April to the beginning of August 1901 he convalesced in Jersey, unable to work and finding little to interest him.⁹⁷ He thought of visiting Henley at Worthing but for domestic reasons his friend was not able to receive him.⁹⁸ His only distraction was a brief visit from Vincent O'Sullivan,⁹⁹ accompanied by a fellow-American, Francis Marion-Crawford. The latter had written to Schwob on the 25th June asking him to translate his Francesca da Rimini, with a view to a performance by Sarah Bernhardt. Schwob was not enthusiastic, and wrote to his wife:

"C'est un travail qui ne me sourit guère, et j'aimerais autant avoir affaire à Marie Corelli. Mais si je puis obtenir une garantie d'argent, je pense qu'il ne serait pas raisonnable de refuser."¹⁰⁰

When Crawford arrived on the 29th June and read his manuscript, Schwob was reassured and wrote that he would find the work easy and enjoyable. The play, as interpreted by Sarah Bernhardt in April 1902, was more an adaptation than a faithful rendering, and

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97. Following the publication of his 'Villoniana' in Romania, April-June 1901, Schwob was in contact with Gaston Paris about a new series of articles in the review: Bibl. Nat. ms. naf 24457 f 158-163.
98. D. Salmon, *op.cit.* p. 61.
99. Schwob had met O'Sullivan in 1899.
100. D. Salmon, *op.cit.* p. 75, (27th June 1901).

in the eyes of Colette at least, an improvement on the original.¹⁰¹

Almost immediately after his return from Jersey, Schwob spent a short time at Uriage, still listless and ailing. It was then that he resigned himself to the necessity of a long sea-voyage, and his letter to his brother Maurice on the 17th August asked for information about shipping lines and routes to Australia. Biographers of Schwob have often proposed the romantic notion that Schwob set off to the South Seas on a pilgrimage to Stevenson's grave at Apia, but the letters written to his family effectively discount this theory: Schwob was first and foremost concerned with his health. He wrote to the Princess of Monaco¹⁰² requesting the use of her yacht for six months in return for the translation of six plays by Frank Harris. Charmed and touched by this proposal, the Princess replied that she would write to Frank Harris in London, and wished Schwob bon voyage.¹⁰³ These negotiations were probably only half-serious, for Schwob finally had to be content with the Ville de la Ciotat, a far from luxurious steamer which was to take him on "one of the most uncomfortable journeys that mortal man has ever known", as Vincent O'Sullivan put it.

101. MST p. 284. Miss Salmon, who was able to consult the unpublished English version in ms. states that there were considerable differences in Schwob's translation, including the insertion of original scenes: op.cit. p. 76.

102. A celebrated patroness of the arts. Schwob may have known her through Oscar Wilde, or through Frank Harris himself.

103. CPC 5134 p. 3.

Schwob was absent from Paris over the winter of 1901-1902. He made a few sketches for tales inspired by the life of the countries he travelled through, but nothing was completed, still less published. In reply to a letter from Moreno he promised a translation of Romeo and Juliet, in collaboration with Morand,¹⁰⁴ but there is no evidence that he started work on the play. Indeed, he was already taken up with a translation of Macbeth, which he seems to have finished after his return to Paris. Again he had to go through the business of approaching Sarah Bernhardt about the staging, apparently with some optimism, for a year later he had got as far as discussing the incidental music with Reynaldo Hahn.¹⁰⁵ In 1902 also, according to Champion, Jacques Copeau "entra en relations avec Marcel Schwob [...] à propos d'une traduction de Thomas Heywood et d'autres traductions anglaises."¹⁰⁶ Efforts to have his Jane Shore accepted by Coquelin met with no success, but Schwob, at this period, was more than ever obsessed with visions of a career in the theatre and spent much of his time with actors and dramatists. From his experience came the five 'Lettres à Valmont', a chronicle of the back-stage intrigues of the Comédie Française, published in the Echo de Paris between

104. OC X 240, (24th November 1901).

105. CPC 5134 p. 12.

106. *ibid.* p. 8. I have no information about these translations, unless Champion is referring to Copeau's version of A Woman Killed with Kindness, produced at the Vieux Colombier for its opening in 1913.

January and March 1903. His only other published work during this year was the satirical Moeurs des Diurnales,¹⁰⁷ and two articles for the newly founded Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes, one of which was a translation of Charles Whibley's 'Rabelais in England'.

Schwob spent the last two years of his life in an apartment in the rue St.-Louis-en-l'Ile, and despite the decline of his health contrived to lead a busy social life. André Salmon and Paul Léautaud, who came to know him very well at that time, showed him as a "grand bourgeois", receiving prominent figures in the literary and theatrical world, giving paternal encouragement to the younger generation, spending most of his evenings at the theatre or music-halls, driving round Paris in his wife's carriage, and later in his own car.¹⁰⁸ Pierre Champion gives an account of the projects which occupied him during the day,¹⁰⁹ in addition to the still unfinished life of Villon; but it is clear that Schwob could no longer hope to be an active writer. He preferred to talk about art with those who still practised it, and his salon brought together writers, painters, actors, even diplomats, and, according to Champion, "les Anglais y sont

107. A satire on the daily press: extracts were published in the Mercure de France. La Lampe de Psyche, also of 1903, was a collection of the Mimes, the Croisade des Enfants, L'Etoile de Bois and the Livre de Monelle. A second printing in the same year included several of the prefaces from Spicilège: see OC I xliii.

108. André Salmon, Souvenirs sans Fin, 1955, I 236.

109. MST pp. 212-218.

chez eux."¹¹⁰ One of the more notable of Schwob's new acquaintances was Arnold Bennett, whom he met through Henry-D. Davray in the spring of 1903.¹¹¹ The first entry in Bennett's Journals concerning Schwob dates from the 28th September, and we are indebted to this source for glimpses into Schwob's mind over a period when he was a prey to melancholy.

"Last night, in talking of Kipling's literary power, Marcel Schwob said that an artist could not do as he liked with his imagination; it would not stand improper treatment, undue fatigue, etc. in youth; and that a man who wrote many short stories early in life (Schwob seemed to think short-story-writing very exhausting to the imaginative power) was bound to decay prematurely. He said that he himself was going through this experience. He was in a very black and despondent mood when he said this."¹¹²

A month later, Bennett noted that Schwob was no more cheerful:

"He had been reading G.B. Shaw's plays, and broke out into invective against Shaw and all his works. He could see nothing in them at all. He said he could see what we saw and took for esprit, and to us was esprit, but to the French mind it was nothing but foolishness. He denied that the characters had any reality, not even the reality of fantasy, and said that Barrie's plays were much better. I was much inclined to agree with him, but then I always

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110. MST p. 212. Léautaud in June 1903 started to learn English, because of "l'ennui que j'ai éprouvé chez Schwob de ne savoir parler l'anglais avec la société." Journal Littéraire, I 79, (23rd August 1903).
111. See Margaret Locherbie-Goff, La Jeunesse d'Arnold Bennett, 1939, pp. 261-262: Bennett was in Paris from mid-March to the end of June, and there wrote nearly all Leonora. He returned in September, living at 4 rue de Calais in Montmartre, a district he was to explore with Schwob.
112. The Journals of Arnold Bennett, 1932, I 114, (29th September 1903).

find French criticism of English work very instructive, disconcerting, and tonic."¹¹³

With Bennett, Schwob enjoyed long conversations on the English novelists, Dickens, Meredith and Stevenson, and on others whom he appreciated less. His devastating attacks amused Bennett:

"j'espère que Monsieur va mieux, car j'ai remarqué que lorsqu'il est malade, ses jugements littéraires deviennent facilement féroces: ainsi Bernard Shaw laissé moribond dans un champ, Barrie gravement blessé, et Thomas Love Peacock, un cadavre piétiné."¹¹⁴

Another important name in Schwob's relations with English writers from 1903 is that of Edmund Gosse. They were to meet only once, it seems, when Gosse came to Paris in February 1904, on the initiative of Henry Davray. About fifty French writers organised a banquet in Gosse's honour on the 9th February, and Schwob gave a short address in English, speaking of Gosse's rôle in making French literature known and appreciated across the Channel.¹¹⁵ It was towards the end of July 1903 that Schwob had received a letter from Gosse, informing him of his very flattering review of the Lampe de Psyché in the Daily Chronicle.¹¹⁶

113. *ibid.* p. 120, (25th October 1903).

114. CPC 5133.1 p. 122.

115. See The Correspondence of André Gide and Edmund Gosse, New York, 1959, p. 6.

116. On the 25th July 1903. In his second letter to Gosse, Schwob wrote that he had not seen Gosse's review of Spicilège: strange indeed, for it had appeared in December 1896 in Cosmopolis, where Schwob was to write a year later.

Schwob replied in English, explaining the reasons for his delay in writing, and expressing his wish to see Gosse, should he come to Paris.

"I have known you of course for a long time: Donne and Nash (117) had brought us together - and those delightful letters of Stevenson. But I should like to know you quite. Will you let me hope that we may meet when you come to Paris? It is not often that we find a friend on the highway of life. Better take hold of his hand at once. I have been sadly tried in my friends since a few years. Stevenson and Verlaine, Mallarmé, and now Henley (118) and Whistler (119), all gone. Do you remember Dr. Johnson's words: "If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendships in constant repair." This is dry, practical, matter of fact and egotistical philosophy - alas, too true."120

The next letter was written on the 13th August from Bagnères-de-Bigorre, where Schwob was convalescing after another relapse:

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117. Gosse had edited The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, 1899, and The Unfortunate Traveller of Thomas Nash, 1892: both were in Schwob's library.
118. Henley died the 13th July 1903. See D. Salmon op.cit. p. 63. Schwob wrote to Davray with some notes for an obituary article, which appeared in the Mercure de France, September 1903, pp. 545-562.
119. Schwob may have met Whistler at Mallarmé's in the early 1890's, or through Charles Whibley, who married Whistler's sister-in-law in 1896. It is probable that he knew the painter already by the spring of 1895, to judge by the vehemence with which he condemned the verdict in the Eden court case. OC VIII 88, 92.
120. 31st July 1903: the first of five letters to Gosse in the Brotherton Library, Leeds. Note that Schwob quoted the same words of Dr. Johnson in a letter to Bennett, in August 1903 - see D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 66.

"I long to see one day your editions and autographs of Donne. When I read the Life and Letters, I had a strong sense of sympathy with you, so deeply did I feel that you loved Dohne. It is very difficult, I fear, to make people in France understand what a great poet he was. To me some of the pieces ring with a pre-Baudelairian sound - and at the same time he is very much akin to a host of our own poets of the XVIIth century, who are still very imperfectly known - and whose works are often only found in MS. I should also like to talk with you of Richard Graves.(121) Some time ago I accidentally read The Spiritual Quixote, now a very rare book, and it surprised me as being superior to some celebrated works of the same time. I then went into the circle of Graves - Shenstone etc. and I think that the history of romanticism is very much indebted to these men who lived round Percy and Warburton and Ralph Allen: revival of Shakespeare, love of scenery and creation of landscape are there found together - so that on one hand we have the romantic school, and on another Beckford etc. [perhaps even Edgar Poe - (Domain of Arnheim) - etc.] Then again the fun of the Quixote, the deeply English colours of the book, with the inns and Tugwell make me think that Charles Dickens had read the book (last edition 1808) when he wrote Pickwick."

After an interval of some months Schwob wrote on the 25th January 1904 to thank Gosse for his Jeremy Taylor:¹²²

"It is such a long time that I heard from you - except through our friend Davray - that your volume on Jeremy Taylor was doubly welcome to me. You are very kind indeed to have sent it. And I have read it with the utmost pleasure. Jeremy Taylor, of

121. Schwob made a study of Graves, which was not published - see the catalogue of the Edouard Champion collection, OC III 169. He had in his library the 1773 and 1783 editions of The Spiritual Quixote, the 1776 edition of Euphrosyne, Eugenius, 1785, and The Invalid, 1804. Charles Whibley was to edit The Spiritual Quixote, in 1926.

122. Published 1903.

course, is not very popular with us on this side of the Channel; and to my shame I must confess that I knew very little of him or of his works. But you have made me like him and I think the specimens you have quoted are admirable style. The book is exquisitely clear, well digested, and I think, a perfect model of what a biography of a man of letters ought to be."

Because of his poor health Schwob was unable to meet Gosse during his visit to Paris except briefly at the dinner, so that his plans for a longer discussion of topics of mutual interest were not realised. Arnold Bennett noted Schwob's impressions of the English critic: that Gosse was "charming, but pedantic."¹²³ Nearly a year was to pass before Schwob wrote to Gosse again, with New Year's greetings and apologies for his silence: it was the battle for health which had kept him from work and from his friends so long. Now, a little recovered, he was finishing off his Parnasse Satyrique du Quinzième Siècle, ("it is very shocking - but I feel sure it shall interest you") and would send a copy when it was published. In return he requested a copy of Gosse's Critical Kit-kats, of 1896. This was to be his last letter to Gosse: two months later, Bennett wrote to London announcing Schwob's death.

Despite his claims in his letter to Gosse, 1904 was not an inactive year for Schwob. True, he published nothing apart from an article in the Revue des Etudes rabelaisiennes, but he was busy with a number of other works. During his absence from Paris from

123. op.cit. p. 158 (1st March 1904).

mid-May to October on a voyage of convalescence to Sorrento, where he stayed for a few weeks with Marion Crawford, he was constantly in touch with friends at home: Emile Bergerat had asked his collaboration for a play on Villon, to be performed by Coquelin;¹²⁴ there was a chance that Sarah Bernhardt might accept his play La Maison du Péché, based on a novel of Marcelle Tinayre; and he had prospects, not entirely welcome, of contributing a series of articles to the Gil Blas. One study to which he gave serious consideration was a review of Emile Lauvrière's recent thesis on Edgar Allan Poe; but it was never written.

Back in Paris, Schwob settled down to work already in hand; at the Bibliothèque Nationale he was copying out the manuscripts for his Parnasse Satyrique, and continuing his work on Villon. In November there was a revival of his hopes for Jane Shore. Schwob wrote to Moreno, on tour with the Hertz company,¹²⁵ that Vahce Thompson's wife had called with good news, but further investigation led to disappointment:

"Elle et une collaboratrice ont tripoté Jane Shore jusqu'à ce que la pièce ait été finalement prise par Frohman qui la monte pour décembre à New York [...] Nous devons toucher les droits normaux d'une pièce française adaptée en Amérique. Pourquoi les Thompson ne l'ont-ils pas volée purement et simplement, c'est ce que je ne comprends pas."¹²⁶

124. See Léautaud, op.cit. p. 122, (21st April 1904).

125. His letters are copied in CPC 5133.1 pp. 117-154.

126. ibid. p. 125, (13th November 1904),

Consolation came with the certainty that his anthology would soon be completed, leaving him free to prepare a series of public lectures on Villon. These were intended by Schwob as a vindication of his powers in the eyes of those who considered him a spent force: for Schwob, made hypersensitive by his illness, had quarrelled with many of his old friends and thought any refusal to humour his caprices a personal insult. Hence the testiness of this letter to Moreno:

"Croirais-tu qu'Antoine à qui j'ai écrit une seconde lettre a eu la muflerie de ne pas me répondre? J'ai décidément de la chance avec les Ligné-Poe et autres. Mais patience. Je leur revaudrai cela: je vauz mieux encore que ces deux cabotins qui me croient crevé - et je ne le suis pas encore. J'ouvrirai mon cours à "l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes Sociales" jeudi 8 décembre."¹²⁷

André Salmon has related in his Souvenirs sans Fin the story of these talks before a small but enthusiastic audience of Villonists. They represented the sum of Schwob's researches on the poet and were to be incorporated in the book which he was still hoping to finish within two years.¹²⁸ Moreover, they marked a return to the academic world which Schwob had rejected at the beginning of his literary career, for with the support of Michel Bréal, and of Alfred Croiset, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, he was sure of a

127. *ibid.* p. 129, (30th November 1904). Schwob's anxiety to obtain a ticket from Antoine was because the play in question was King Lear, to be performed in its entirety: the first time a Shakespeare play was given an integral staging in France.

128. Notes from these lectures were published by Louis Thomas in 1906, under the title Dernières Leçons de Marcel Schwob sur François Villon.

professorship at the Sorbonne the following winter - and this was but a step to an even more distinguished post:

"Alors, en 1906 il faudra mettre tout en mouvement (gens politiques, France, Jaurès par la Marquise Arconati (129) etc.) pour transférer l'enseignement au Collège de France, ce qui me fera une situation indépendante et assurée dont nous avons besoin."130

In the first fortnight of February 1905 Schwob was drawing up a programme for his course at the Sorbonne, in the hope of the creation of a new chair:

"C'est justement ceci que je vais préparer. Car il manque à la Sorbonne et là la chaire de Littérature Comparée. Si je ne pouvais faire créer l'autre, j'aurai celle-là. Car Faguet remunerait le monde pour me la faire donner."131

By the 18th of the month Schwob had submitted his programme, drawn up a list of sixteen lecturers for his department, and was looking forward to a brilliant professorship. A friend of his, the head of the psychology department of the Sorbonne, had studied his method of teaching:

"Il me dit que mes leçons sont mieux organisées que n'étaient jadis celles de Boutroux - mon idéal d'enseignement - et qu'il étudie, au point de vue scientifique, la composition de mon langage, où les phrases ont, dit-il, une vie spéciale et les mots une valeur et une couleur particulières. Il paraît que je possède - inconsciemment, bien entendu - un don de frapper et de retenir les auditeurs."132

129. Teresa Arconati-Visconti held a famous salon, frequented by politicians, intellectuals and art-lovers. She attended Schwob's lectures on Villon.

130. CPC 5133.1 p. 140, (7th February 1905).

131. *ibid.* p. 144, (9th February 1905).

132. *ibid.* p. 152, (18th February 1905).

At the same time Schwob was not neglecting his other commitments. Champion writes that, at the beginning of 1905, "une fièvre d'activité le saisit."¹³³ On the 12th February he engaged Paul Léautaud as his secretary to help in the compilation of the index of the Parnasse Satyrique. He was making arrangements, once more, to have his Macbeth staged by Sarah Bernhardt, and for the revival of his Hamlet: "Hier, j'ai vu Ulmann. Il y a promesse ferme de lui de reprendre Hamlet vers le 15 mars et de commencer la saison prochaine par Macbeth."¹³⁴ Maurice Donnay was to collaborate with him on a stage adaptation of the vie imaginaire of Septima, to be entitled L'Incantatrice, but was soon to have second thoughts and retire gracefully.¹³⁵ Marion Crawford had made him promise to translate two of his stories - The Upper Berth and Whosoever Shall Offend.¹³⁶ In addition to all this, Schwob had jotted down some notes for a study of 'Charles Dickens et le roman russe', and the portrait of Cyprien d'Anarque, for a series of Dialogues d'Utopie.¹³⁷ All that was finished however, was the Libro della mia Memoria for the first number of Paul Fort's review Vers et Prose. The work appeared posthumously.¹³⁸

133. MST p. 228.

134. CPC 5133.1 pp. 150-151, (12th February 1905).

135. MST p. 217.

136. D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 77.

137. MST p. 232.

138. In March 1905.

This survey of Schwob's career, with its references to his mentors and friends, and his contributions to criticism of English writers and their work, will have shown how wide his interests were, and that the studies to be examined in the body of the thesis represent only a small number of those he contemplated. The eagerness of his fellow writers to see him produce articles, and the readiness of editors to commission them, are a testimony to the esteem in which he was held; but the confidence placed in him did not always lead him to fulfil his obligations, and all too often he would relinquish the task if it proved difficult in the early stages. This was especially the case in the years of his illness, and yet it is noticeable that even then, he was more willing to persevere with his ill-fated plays than with his works of criticism. Financial motives may have influenced him, as was the case with Henley; but one wonders whether Schwob did not see his plays as an expression of the creative faculty so severely diminished with the ruin of his health. Living with an actress, moving in the theatrical world, he could hardly fail to be attracted by the idea of re-establishing himself, and this time in a new field. It is difficult to judge the quality of his dramas now that most of the manuscripts are lost, but since Schwob was consciously aiming at the largely indiscriminating audience of the commercial theatre, contrary to his earlier tenets, we may regard their disappearance as no great loss to literature.

On the other hand, the selection of Schwob's writings on

English authors which we shall be studying display the finest qualities of his imagination and intellect, springing as they did from the depths of his admiration for certain outstanding personalities and their works, and being composed for the most part while he was at the height of his powers. His handful of critical essays makes one wish that he had been able to devote himself more regularly to this genre; it is enough, however, that he should have produced even a small number of studies which by common consent rank among the classics of French criticism of English literature.

CHAPTER II

The Uses of English Literature

Schwob's studies of British authors and their works are important not only for their intrinsic value as criticism, erudition or translation, but for the light they throw on his aesthetic theories, and, underlying these, his attitudes towards man and his world: all reveal an obsessive concern with the human condition and its representation in art. His anglophilia may be seen as but one facet of an inexhaustible delight in the history of man, for he was hardly less conversant with the depictions of the individual and society in other literatures, ancient and modern, from their most consummate formal achievements to their humble folk-tales and chronicles of roguery. His perception of the diversity and evolution of experience was sharpened by study of other disciplines, notably philosophy. The works of Plato, Spinoza, Pascal, Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche wrought a deep impression on him and contributed to the formulations of the principles enounced in his theoretical writings. The erudition of this "Diderot plus moderne"¹ was of vast dimensions, and has led some critics to suppose that Schwob beheld the world entirely "through the spectacles of books." In point of fact, Schwob made it his business to mix with different social milieux: "j'ai été un monsieur montant à cheval," he confided to Jules Renard, "jouant

1. Henri Bérenger, 'Chroniques', L'Ermitage, 30th January 1892, p. 51.

aux courses, vêtu à la dernière mode."² More congenial to him was the frequentation of the lower classes, the unruly elements in his regiment during military service, and later the denizens of cheap bars, dance-halls and similar resorts in the poor quarters of the capital. His early 'Notes sur Paris' expressed so clearly his understanding of the people and their lowly art that it has been claimed that his work cannot be appreciated except as

"a learned attempt to reproduce, symbolically, microcosmically, the soul of the people, with a sentiment "un peu mélancolique, naïf pour les esprits cultivés, naturel pour la plupart des hommes, [..] exprimé avec tant d'art."³

Schwob's observations from real life were later transmuted into the ingenuous, unreflective, perverse, degenerate or violent figures of his tales of pity and terror; they were moreover to serve as a starting point for his investigations into the substructures of language, of society, and of history. The significance of the speciality under discussion in this thesis will emerge, therefore, from an enquiry into the nature of Schwob's thought, his treatment of English literature being marked by his approach to life and letters in general.

An early statement of Schwob's theories may be found in a chapter of Byvanck's Un Hollandais à Paris, the material for which

2. Journal, p. 100 (2nd November 1891).

3. J.A. Green, 'The Literary Career of Marcel Schwob, 1867-1905', Washington, Ph.D., 1960, p. 90.

was collected in the spring of 1891 when Schwob was meditating on the preface to his Coeur Double. Commenting on the rise and decline of certain words used in popular speech, Schwob proposed an analogy with the fortunes of the human personality in the course of time:

"La perspective de l'histoire nous permet facilement de voir cette marche ascendante et descendante des choses dans le passé. Cependant pour moi l'intérêt n'est pas là. C'est l'état présent de la société qui m'occupe, et j'y vois, comme dans les phénomènes du langage dont je vous entretenais, un mouvement qui part d'en bas pour arriver en haut, et qui retourne ensuite à son point de départ. Chaque trait de la nature humaine parvenu à son apogée et figé dans quelque institution sociale m'apparaît menacé parce qu'il y a en bas d'informe et de désorganisé; et en revanche cet état difforme semble idéalisé à mes yeux par le développement qu'il contient en puissance [..] je vois l'individu se perdant dans la masse et la masse se différenciant en individus, tout ordre nécessairement détruit et se reconstituant de ses ruines mêmes."⁴

This continual movement of growth and decay was inevitably accompanied by the disintegration of society into contending forces, and Schwob regarded the emergence in the fifteenth century of the autonomous companies of vagabonds, "la première Internationale en dehors de l'Eglise",⁵ in opposition to the traditional religious and temporal powers, as part of the Zeitgeist:

"Avez-vous remarqué qu'à toute époque il y a dans les idées et les sentiments une sorte d'arrière-pensée, inconsciente souvent et ne se trahissant qu'à des intervalles, mais sans la connaissance de laquelle on ne s'explique jamais d'une façon complète le caractère du temps? Il est vrai que cet arrière-plan

4. Byvanck, Un Hollandais à Paris, pp. 296-297.

5. *ibid.* p. 222.

de l'esprit humain, de par sa nature même, ne revêt jamais une forme distincte, mais on peut se le représenter soit par un symbole, soit par un mythe, qu'on accepte comme sa manifestation réelle et c'est la véritable règle qu'il faut appliquer à tout ce qu'un siècle pense, dit ou fait. Pour le XV^e siècle, je crois que c'est la parabole de l'Enfant prodigue qui exprime le mieux le sentiment confus de toutes les âmes [...]"6

These excerpts reveal an awareness of the polarities of existence, the incessant passage from one state to another, the division of society into hostile factions, the interplay of individual tendencies with those of a wider social movement; above all, Schwob was striving to reconcile the extremes in a deeper synthesis which would provide in some symbolic form a key to the phenomenon in question. Given this conception of life, it is not surprising that Schwob should have distinguished a duality in man himself, deriving the nature of the universal Will, in Schopenhauer's sense of the word:

"La faculté de vouloir se manifeste de deux manières; c'est une porte ouverte au courant des désirs, qui, instinctivement, cherchent une issue, mais c'est aussi une faculté d'inhibition, qui repousse ce fleuve tumultueux, le règle ou le détourne. Il y a des esprits et aussi des époques de l'existence où le caractère instinctif de la volonté est prédominant; à d'autres époques et chez d'autres esprits, le côté régulateur de la volonté ou la faculté d'inhibition prend le dessus."7

From such premisses Schwob was to draw his conclusions about the

6. *ibid.* p. 225.

7. *ibid.* p. 237. Schwob's interpretation of Schopenhauer was influenced by the exegesis of Théodule Ribot: La Philosophie de Schopenhauer, 1874.

material on which a writer must work, and its general organisation in art. Their application may be discerned in his collections of tales, where the recurring image of the hero as outcast, by choice or compulsion, points to a basic preoccupation with the position of man in contemporary society; and in the works of criticism, where Schwob's chief concern was always to isolate the fundamental principle on which the author built his literary and philosophical system.⁸

Schwob's intuition of man's divided nature, reflecting the flux of the world and of history, has led more than one critic to perceive a corresponding dichotomy in his own temperament.⁹ He has been called a Don Quixote, living on two planes of reality, and such oppositions are easy enough to find.¹⁰ From earliest childhood, according to his confession to Byvanck, he suffered from "une nature inquiète et vagabonde",¹¹ and the reading of

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8. 'Philosophical' in the sense used by R.G. Collingwood in his essay 'Ruskin's Philosophy', in Essays in the Philosophy of Art, ed. Alan Donagan, Bloomington, Indiana, 1964, pp. 9-12.
9. See Byvanck, op.cit. pp. 240-241: "Nature complexe, impulsive et réfléchie à la fois! Et cependant malgré cette contradiction intime de son individualité, elle trouve sa règle et sa belle ordonnance dans je ne sais quelle faculté héréditaire de derrière la tête et de derrière toute pensée consciente, qui le met à même de distinguer entre les différentes phases de sa personnalité, et de les retenir dans leurs domaines respectifs."
10. The thesis of Dr. Trembley reposes on a view of Schwob as a divided nature: see especially pp. 11-22.
11. Byvanck, op.cit. p. 300.

certain English authors did nothing to discourage his excursions into the realms of romance. The novelists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries acquainted him with a company of robust and adventurous heroes, whose exploits took them through a variety of colourful settings and the most stirring periods of the past. At the same time De Quincey and Poe made him receptive to a range of more subtle and disturbing sensations, with their lucid descriptions of morbidity, hallucination and obsession, their predilection for the mysterious and the artificial. Small wonder that Schwob found his bourgeois surroundings somewhat drab, and was unable to attune himself to reality and define his field as a writer until,

"ne sachant plus sa route, il avait trouvé un guide sûr qui avait dompté son humeur fantasque, en lui faisant apprécier le haut intérêt de l'étude scientifique exacte. Ses leçons lui avaient indiqué une immense carrière libre, ou (sic) sa curiosité pouvait s'assouvir."¹²

Under the influence of Léon Cahun, Schwob thus weaned himself away from his initial pursuit of sensation to the proper study of mankind, for his uncle's creed was proclaimed in these terms:

"Connaître les hommes, c'est là ma curiosité, mais comprenez-moi bien, des hommes vivants; la psychologie, la morale et toutes ces abstractions ne sont ni de mon goût, ni de mon métier. J'aime causer avec les gens, pour lire leurs pensées, je veux savoir leur condition et leur race."¹³

The juvenilia accordingly were to display the characteristic

12. idem.

13. ibid. p. 150.

combination of a hero of exceptional disposition and destiny, and a background evoked in all the vividness of authentic historical detail. Imagination and scholarship were harnessed together to produce tales which would incorporate and set off the contrasting and complementary features of Schwob's literary temperament.

Although at the outset of his career Schwob had few doubts about the underlying theme of his tales and the most advantageous ways of bending his talents to its illustration, he was confronted with the problem of finding an appropriate form and manner. Despite his passionate admiration for the great novelists of previous generations, Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert, it was not to them that he turned for inspiration in his future course; and his immediate predecessors and contemporaries seemed only to confirm an impression that the French novel was following an entirely negative path. Its mood reflected on the whole a chilling pessimism of professedly Schopenhauerian origin, reinforced by the cult of solitude, the void, of disgust with humanity which the defeat of 1870 brought in its wake.¹⁴ Schwob, as a member of the generation born around the time of the Franco-Prussian war, was imbued with the desire to bring about the country's moral resurgence, and his hopes for the reviviscence of the novel, in style and content, were thus bound up with the new spirit of the society which the novel was to mirror:

14. See Micheline Tison-Braun, La Crise de l'Humanisme 1890-1914, 1958, I 12-15.

"Les jeunes gens de mon âge [...] se sont mis à réfléchir sur les principes qui règlent l'existence de l'homme. Ils veulent se rendre un compte exact de la foi [...] qui devra guider leurs actes, lorsqu'ils seront appelés à remplir leurs fonctions sociales; ils recherchent un idéal et l'union de tous ceux qui peuvent les aider à le réaliser [...] il faut que l'individualisme de l'artiste fusionne avec le sens pratique des gens du monde pour constituer le courant [...] Non, je ne doute pas que nous ne soyons à la veille d'une nouvelle alliance entre l'art et la vie."¹⁵

The advent of the new age would be marked by the collaboration of the explorers of knowledge, particularly of scientists.¹⁶ Alive to the importance of the discoveries of such men as Darwin, Claude Bernard and Pasteur, Schwob had no patience with those who rejected science for blind faith,¹⁷ or who insidiously abused the new findings in corroboration of their own dubious theories. While Zola was attacked by Schwob for this reason, it was Paul Bourget who came in for frequent and bitter denunciations:

15. Byvanck, op.cit. pp. 289, 290, 291.

16. Cf. Albert Thibaudet, Histoire de la Littérature Française de 1789 à nos jours, 1936, II 404: "L'événement capital de cette équipe philosophique [...] consiste dans la prise de contact résolue et complète avec les sciences. On en revient à l'idée de philosophie telle que l'ont conçue les grands philosophes, qui ont été aussi de grands savants: la réflexion sur les objets et les résultats des sciences, la collaboration de la recherche philosophique et de la recherche scientifique, le dialogue et l'excitation mutuelle de deux disciplines qui n'en font qu'une."

17. See his review of Georges Duruy's play Ni Dieu ni Maître, in L'Événement, 28th October 1890.

"Je le hais parce qu'il représente toute la convention mondaine qui nous étouffe, parce qu'il est la personnification de l'atroce pose dédaigneuse moderne qui nous environne, parce que cet homme, qui a écrit le "Disciple", a commis l'action la plus vile qui soit au monde: pour se disculper du reproche qu'on lui faisait de pousser à l'analyse et à l'expérience psychique, il a accusé l'école matérialiste de s'y adonner et il a odieusement travesti les doctrines pour les exposer dans une mauvaise dissertation de philosophie."18

Barrès and de Vogüé were coupled with Bourget as leaders of the anti-rationalist movement which, if allowed to triumph, would impede all progress towards intellectual freedom:

"des jouisseurs ambitieux ou des gens qui cherchent une religion sur laquelle ils puissent établir une bourgeoisie dans trente ans."19

Regeneration through the disinterested utilisation of new fields of knowledge was thus to be one of Schwob's fundamental social ideals, together with concern for the protection of man's integrity against the forces of hypocrisy and repression. The clash of the individual and society, a theme whose growth in his early tales was fostered by his dualist mentality, took on a deeper significance with the discovery of the works of Nietzsche towards the end of 1891, and of those of Kropotkin a little later;²⁰ from the

18. In a letter to Byvanck, quoted by J. Fransen in 'W.G.C. Byvanck - Marcel Schwob', Neophilologus, January 1947, p. 113.

19. idem.

20. Cf. Léon Daudet, Souvenirs, III 10. Kropotkin's La Conquête du Pain was published in Paris in 1892.

objective study of the condition of different types of humanity Schwob passed to a more penetrating insight into the impulses which cause men to dissociate themselves from the submissive masses and struggle for personal or social emancipation in the destruction of established institutions. The mission of the proletariat was akin to that of the artist, in that both must engage in perpetual conflict with the stifling prejudices of the bourgeoisie. Hence Schwob's approval of Byvanck's presentation of the work of Heine and Carlyle, in a chapter of Poëzie en Leven in de 19de eeuw, as

"une protestation de l'individu contre la société qui, par sa masse, opprime la fantaisie, et veut forcer la jeunesse à s'exprimer dans des formules mortes, la protestation du talent qui se juge souverain, contre la morale établie."²¹

He regretted the absence of a chapter on Poe, the outstanding example of the author subjected to intolerable pressures by an uncomprehending public:

"on y aurait vu le violent retour sur elle-même d'une personnalité qui ne trouve pas de "débouché" à son expression et qui se jette dans des rêves terribles de magnétisme, ou dans des utopies délicieusement platoniciennes comme Monos and Una, Eiros and Charmion, Ulalume, Annabel Lee, Eurèka (sic)."²²

Schwob's criticism and creative work must be seen, therefore, as a progressive elucidation of the modes and patterns of human existence, its potentialities and its limitations, and as a search for literary vehicles through which to put across his discoveries. In his state

21. Fransen, op.cit. p. 113.

22. idem.

of disaffection for the practices of the most prominent writers of his day he welcomed the constructive new departures realised by fellow-seekers in a number of related fields, and in particular, as we shall see, by the English authors whose works demonstrated that his aims were not impracticable.

. . . .

The quest for a new order, as Schwob had observed, was by no means confined to himself, and its outcome promised to be highly successful, in view of the gifts of the searchers. Schwob's generation has been claimed by a modern historian to be

"véritablement extraordinaire par sa richesse en esprits génialement novateurs [..] L'époque manifeste, intellectuellement, une vitalité prodigieuse: un véritable Sturm und Drang français déferle, entraînant la révision des valeurs admises et l'instauration de nouvelles formes de pensée et d'art."²³

Enthusiasm for the cause, clarification of principles, proposals for future developments were encouraged by the awareness of a common purpose; the theories and practice of successive schools were tirelessly discussed in literary cafés and ephemeral reviews. While there was undoubtedly a bond of disagreement with the representatives of the literature of yesterday, unity on the aims to be accomplished was more elusive: thus the period was characterised by a certain delight in the search for its own sake, or by a deliberate dismissal of the intractable material that the

23. Claude Digeon, La Crise allemande de la pensée française (1870-1914), 1959, p. 384.

real world presented to the artist. André Gide, recalling the intellectual currents of his débuts, confessed:

"Il semblait qu'en ce temps-là nous fussions soumis, plus ou moins consciemment, à quelque indistinct mot d'ordre, plutôt qu'aucun de nous écoutât sa propre pensée. Le mouvement se dessinait en réaction contre le réalisme, avec un remous contre le Parnasse également. Soutenu par Schopenhauer, à qui je ne comprenais pas que certains pussent préférer Hegel, je tenais pour "contingence" [..] tout ce qui n'était pas "absolu", toute la prismatique diversité de la vie. Pour chacun de mes compagnons il en allait à peu près de même; et l'erreur n'était pas de chercher à dégager quelque beauté et quelque vérité d'ordre général de l'inextricable fouillis que présentait alors le "réalisme", mais bien, par parti pris, de tourner le dos à la réalité."²⁴

And similar recollections abound. Like Gide's, they tend to lay stress on the assimilation into the artistic manifestoes of the innovations of writers and thinkers of other lands: the cosmopolitanism of the last decade of the nineteenth century is well known, with its enlisting of Wagner, the great Russian novelists, Ibsen and Whitman, to give but a few instances. The prestige of Schopenhauer, however, already great in France through the deference of such philosophers as Victor Cousin, Taine and Renan, and through the publication of Ribot's study in 1874, remained a fundamental factor in the growth of the solipsistic and idealistic cult behind symbolism: for it was these two aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy that attracted the attention of the theorists of the school. Professor Lehmann, in his account of the "selective misrepresentation", observes that the solipsism was

24. Si le grain ne meurt, 1924, III 18-19.

magnified in that "it was essential as a presupposition to any aesthetic whatever that allowed a place to the individual choice and style of the artist",²⁵ and that "'idealism' meant simply the inalienable right to look on the world in whatever way one pleased; or to invent worlds, on an equal with the 'common-sense world'."²⁶ At bottom, therefore, the Symbolists were projecting into the work of the German thinker their own sense of a need to emancipate the individual personality and to enlarge the range of artistic representation. As Poe, Gautier and their followers had liberated art from its moral or social function, so the poets of the new school sought to shake off the prejudice that it must reflect faithfully the banal appearances of everyday reality. Of Mallarmé's procedures in poetry, Rémy de Gourmont was to write:

"Il semble que toutes les choses de la vie ayant été dites mille et mille fois, il ne reste plus au poète qu'à les montrer du doigt en murmurant quelques mots pour accompagner son geste."²⁷

Clearly enough, up to this point, the objectives of the symbolist poets and of Schwob were similar: Realism, whether applied by Bourget or Zola to "l'amour des salons ou du ventre de Paris", was constricting to the writer's talents and to the freedom of his vision, and was thus destructive of both the author and the world

25. A.G. Lehmann, The Symbolist Aesthetic in France, 1885-1895, Oxford, 1950, p. 41.

26. *ibid.* p. 44.

27. 'Stéphane Mallarmé', Promenades littéraires, 4^o série, 1912, p. 8.

he wished to depict. In the practical application of the new theories, however, their ways perforce diverged. In verse, the striving after musical qualities, metrical experiments, the purification of language were the subject of much deliberation; and there was a general retreat to the inner world, to dreams and meditations, to imaginary landscapes or legendary backgrounds. Description of material things was spurned except inasmuch as it mirrored a subjective mood, or allowed a spirit world to appear through the tangible reality. Attempts were made to capture the sensed unity of this hidden domain through the cultivation of the senses, through the synthesis of all the artist's intuitions of the central mystery of creation. Schwob, as a writer of prose tales, could not go to such lengths in the pursuit of new subjects and forms; he was bound to the esoteric. Not for him Mallarmé's recommendation: "peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit." His purpose, in his portraits of moral or mental eccentricities, might be to isolate "le secret des belles et nobles existences, le sens et le mot de la vie",²⁸ but the nature of his chosen genre demanded some primarily concrete account of observable human phenomena. It was chiefly in his later collection of tales, Mimes, Le Livre de Monelle, La Croisade des Enfants, which have obvious affinities with the prose poem, that he emphasised the

28. Bernard Lazare, 'Marcel Schwob', Figures Contemporaines, 1895, p. 187.

possibility of "correspondences".²⁹

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Even so brief a review as this of Schwob's basic tenets and the literary situation in which he found himself towards 1889 will have shown the magnitude of his problems at the outset of his career. Although he shared with the rising generation a distaste for the creeds of the schools of physiological and psychological realism, and was to join in the cult of Mallarmé and Verlaine, he found in the poetic manifestoes no solution to the difficulties inherent in his already formulated notions of his proper field and its treatment in fiction. "Voilà un isolé", was Jules Renard's appraisal of him, shortly after their meeting early in 1891.³⁰ By this time Schwob frequented the salons of writers as disparate as Mallarmé, Daudet, Edmond de Goncourt and Anatole France, but as an author in his own right, not as a disciple. In his maturity Schwob made a virtue of his independence, and Paul Léautaud was to characterise him thus:

"Personne de moins systématique, de moins enfermé dans un art, dans une formule, dans une école. C'était vraiment un esprit libre..."³¹

29. See Suzanne Bernard, Le Poème en Prose de Baudelaire jusqu'à nos Jours, 1959, p. 495: "la poésie de Schwob est déjà Symboliste, en ce sens qu'elle suggère par le moyen des apparences visibles des significations plus secrètes, et nous fait deviner un second plan par derrière les personnages linéaires du tableau antique; c'est ce qui donne à certains poèmes leur épaisseur, leur densité de signification."

30. Journal, p. 83 (7th March 1891).

31. 'Marcel Schwob', Passetemps II, 1964, p. 34.

Schwob's achievement in overcoming the disadvantages of his solitary start in literature was all the more noteworthy in that he had also to contend with a profound conviction that only the most creative spirits could hope to bring a fresh vision to bear on life. In one of his earliest articles, a review of Tolstoy's drama La Puissance des Ténèbres, he wrote:

"Tout est dit, a écrit La Bruyère, et l'on vient trop tard depuis plus de six mille ans qu'il y a des hommes, et qui pensent."

C'est vrai - nous venons trop tard, et l'appauvrissement de nos écoles littéraires, qui ne trouvent plus rien de nouveau, et qui se consolent par "le pouvoir magique des mots" devrait nous le montrer. Mais Shakespeare aussi venait trop tard, et Rabelais, et Molière, avec quelques autres. Moins tard que nous, sans doute - mais pour eux - comme pour nous, tout avait été dit et ressassé. Le mot désolant de La Bruyère n'est-il donc pas vrai? Non, certes, même pas dans notre époque de "décadents", et j'en trouve la preuve dans le drame du comte Léon Tolstoï."³²

Undoubtedly, as Schwob hinted, the "Muse moderne de l'impuissance" was nonetheless responsible for his own misgivings about the possibility of genuinely creative work. The mid-1880's had seen the consecration of a school of Decadence, heralded by Bourget's Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine, a study of the writers of the nineteenth century who had fixed the outstanding features of the trend; its tone was set by such works as Huysmans' A Rebours, and Joséphin Péladan's fifteen-volumed Décadence Latine, and by the literary reviews of the movement, Baju's Le Décadent, which ran

32. 'La Puissance des Ténèbres', Phare de la Loire, 27th September 1887.

from 1885 to 1889. Schwob's own writings did not escape the influence of the major themes, but the aspect of Decadence which most intimately concerned him as a novice author was the sentiment of sterility epitomised in a line from Verlaine's poem 'Langueur':

"Ah! tout est bu, tout est mangé! Plus rien à dire!"

In the spring of 1891, shortly before the appearance of Coeur Double, he voiced his misgivings to Jules Renard: "Il pense que nous arrivons tard et qu'il ne nous reste qu'une chose à faire après nos aînés: bien écrire."³³ He had discovered the Tolstoys of the modern world to be few in number, and his warmest admiration went to those who, like Claudel and Whitman, proved that there was a new note to be struck, and who exalted, like Ibsen, man's struggle against the forces that would curb his self-expression: "Brand, drame de la liberté, le dernier drame du maître constructeur."³⁴

. . . .

On launching himself on his literary career, Schwob was thus aware of the necessity to chart new courses, and of the difficulty of achieving the purposes of his undertaking. In common with many of his contemporaries, he felt the need of a guide in his quest, and it would be reasonable to suppose that he had recourse to the English writers who had aroused his admiration. Since his successive approaches to the central problems outlined above were set forth in

33. Journal, p. 83 (7th March 1891).

34. Fransen, op.cit. p. 113.

the prefaces to his collections of tales, it is to these that we shall now turn our attention in order to determine whether any of his principles were derived from his reading of English literature.

The topics expounded in the foreword to Coeur Double had been initially treated in the article 'Le Réalisme', printed in the Phare de la Loire on the 15th April 1889. Following Maupassant, Schwob here distinguished between "subjective" and "objective" realism, and condemned both for their tendency toward the simplification or isolation of their subjects; art, he felt, should reflect the multiplicity of man's aspirations and his intimate links with the natural world and his fellow human beings. Schwob deplored the pseudo-scientific concern with efficient causes, and recommended the reproduction of nature "dans la forme que nous saisissons en elle", through the adoption of certain techniques illustrative of the patterns and structures of the raw material of reality. That he had already determined the themes and form of his tales, although at that date only a handful had been published, is made clear by his profession of faith and by the criteria of his review of Frantz Jourdain's volume of short stories A la Côte. The duality of the passions first caught his attention: "La lutte de l'intérêt et de la pitié qui se partagent le coeur du misérable est suivie avec une émotion croissante"; next, and in greater detail, he pointed out the equilibrium imposed on the progress of life:

"Dans les Trois Robes Blanches, je note justement ce procédé de contraste symétrique qui introduit dans la succession de la vie une loi esthétique. La première robe, c'est la pelisse de baptême, le premier costume officiel de Mademoiselle Marcelle; la seconde, c'est la robe de première communion; "fillette d'hier, femme de demain" la petite Marcelle prendra sa volée dans la troisième robe, dans le voile blanc de la mariée. Et les parents qui se sont sacrifiés pour cette jeune existence, déjà marquée de trois étages, s'embrassent en se consolant au coin du feu, dans la pièce où la troisième robe blanche de Marcelle "jette une lueur d'aurore, très pure, très-calme, très-douce, souriante comme une espérance." Les Bottes de Bulaut, officier de la garde mobile, l'accompagnent à l'état-major, à la garde nationale où il est redevenu caporal, à l'ambulance où il est passé capitaine d'enterreurs avant la capitulation, à l'armée territoriale où elles se sont transformées en "bottes modèle 1876" tandis que Bulaut a été nommé commandant.

Ainsi un trait commun, la robe blanche, les bottes, a servi à M. Jourdain pour établir un contraste et une liaison entre les tableaux réalistes qui peignent les phases de la vie d'un être. N'est-ce pas là qu'on peut retrouver la personnalité d'artiste qui veut se dérober sous la description des choses! Si le fond de l'oeuvre doit être objectif et impersonnel, n'est-ce pas la forme qui appartient à l'écrivain - et j'entends par la forme une liaison, une synthèse, une construction symétrique par laquelle l'art cherche à représenter l'idée de la nature?"

In 'La Terreur et la Pitié' (of 1891) the three elements of form - liaison, synthesis and symmetrical construction - were to receive more exhaustive consideration. Starting from the same premises of the complex interdependence of man and milieu, Schwob declared the springs of action to be egoism and charity, awareness of self and of others, terror and pity; the liaison in and between his tales would be therefore a crisis of either emotion, or the passage from one to another, through situations objectifying them:

"Ainsi est atteint le but et nous sommes venus par le chemin du coeur et par le chemin de l'histoire de la terreur à la pitié; nous avons compris que les événements du monde extérieur peuvent être parallèles aux émotions du monde intérieur; nous avons pressenti que dans un seconde de vie intense nous revivons virtuellement et actuellement l'univers."³⁵

For his present purposes, Schwob chose a more illustrious exponent than Frantz Jourdain of the symmetrical method of conveying the duality of the passions, namely Aeschylus. The excellence of the Greek dramatist's art, frequently proclaimed by Schwob through the preceding six months,³⁶ lay in its representation of life under the aspect of Sein rather of Werden, so that the tragedy could unfold in a long and carefully balanced exposition, with a climax to interrupt the situation and induce the necessary catharsis. The essentially static character of Aeschylus's drama was brought out by a comparison with the architecture of the same period:

"La fin des pièces est pour lui une rupture de l'équilibre dramatique. La tragédie est une crise, et sa solution une accalmie. En même temps, à Egine, un peu plus tard à Olympie, des sculpteurs de génie, obéissant aux mêmes principes d'art, ornaient les frontons des temples de figures humaines et de compositions scéniques symétriquement groupées de

35. 'La Terreur et la Pitié', Spicilège, 1960, p. 124. The essay was originally printed, in a longer form, as the preface to Coeur Double, 1891.

36. See his review of Ni Dieu ni Maître: "Cette pièce, vous le voyez, est construite à la manière des chefs-d'oeuvre anciens. Elle tient du théâtre d'Eschyle par l'immobilité de l'exposition, par l'antithèse des situations, par la rupture de l'équilibre dans le dénouement," L'Événement, 28th October 1890. Also Renard, Journal, pp. 87-88 (20th March 1891), and Schwob's essay 'Eschyle et Aristophane', OC I 67-82.

deux côtés d'une rupture d'harmonie centrale. Les crises des attitudes, réelles mais immobiles, sont placées dans une composition dont le total explique chacune des parties."³⁷

Less primitive art, as a general rule, moves away from the rigid system of counterpoise, and Schwob accordingly saw in the work of Phidias and Sophocles an interest in development, where "la vie est reproduite avec toutes ses inflexions les plus inharmoniques." Thus art follows the same path as language, society and other phenomena of existence, progressing in cycles of contrasting attitudes. After a period of Realism, Schwob maintained that art was now moving to the opposite pole of Symmetry:

"L'Idée qui est fixe et immobile semble devoir se substituer de nouveau aux Formes Matérielles, qui sont changeantes et flexibles."³⁸

At first sight, the prestige of science in the nineteenth century would seem to hasten this tendency of art, its aims being virtually identical:

"Le désir d'entasser des faits singuliers et archéologiques y est remplacé par l'aspiration vers les méthodes de liaison et de généralisation."³⁹

In fact, the practice of the realists, defined by Schwob as "deduction allied with enumerative synthesis", was a travesty of the scientific method, and was the direct cause of the impasse of the modern novel. Rejecting therefore the approach consecrated by Taine, Schwob reiterated the autonomy of art in its fundamental

37. Spicilège, p. 127.

38. *ibid.* p. 128.

39. *ibid.* p. 130.

difference from science:

"L'artiste suppose la liberté, regarde le phénomène comme un tout, le fait entrer dans sa composition avec ses causes rapprochées, le traite comme s'il était libre, lui-même libre dans sa manière de le considérer.

La science cherche le général par le nécessaire; l'art doit chercher le général par le contingent; pour la science, le monde est lié et déterminé; pour l'art, le monde est discontinu et libre; la science découvre la généralité extensive; l'art doit faire sentir la généralité intensive; si le domaine de la science est le déterminisme, le domaine de l'art est la liberté."⁴⁰

Faced with the problem of incorporating in to his fiction certain undeniably determinate conditions without emphasis on, or analysis of, their fixity, Schwob sought to accomplish his fusion in the human personality of the inner and outer world through recourse to observation of the complicated interaction of natural and social laws. Thus, in his tales, the crisis will be brought about by the workings of Chance,

"qui amène à l'organisme physique et conscient les choses dont il peut se nourrir, qu'il peut absorber et s'assimiler."⁴¹

The combination of symmetrical structure and synthesis will set forth in an artistically satisfying manner both a historical situation and a crisis in the life of an individual; verisimilitude and the expression of the writer's own organising vision will be achieved more effectively and economically than with the laborious and misconceived methods of the realists.

40. *ibid.* p. 132.

41. *ibid.* p. 133.

As if in answer to one of the many questions inevitably raised in a preface so full of debatable points, Schwob concluded with a justification of his own aesthetic as a solution to the quandary. Using the old analogy of the systole and diastole of the heart, he postulated a cycle of tension and relaxation in the emotions, and, by extension, in literature and social life. The present age he regarded as one of dilation, characterised by slow and passive emotions, by deterministic preoccupations in psychology and physiology, by neglect of the individual. Such a state could be remedied only by the adoption of a new creed, one which would take into account the interplay of the great forces at work in life: Walt Whitman's "one's self - en masse".

"La littérature célébrera les émotions violentes et actives. L'homme libre ne sera pas asservi au déterminisme des phénomènes de l'âme et du corps. L'individu n'obéira pas au despotisme des masses, ou il les suivra volontairement. Il se laissera aller à l'imagination et à son goût de vivre."⁴²

The form of the new art would be correspondingly attentive to its special function. Extra-literary elements would be banished, in order to accommodate the enlarged scope of the writer's aims; structure and composition would return to classical severity.

These, then, were the theories concretised in Coeur Double and commented on in the conversations with Byvanck early in 1891; they were also to provide a basis for the subsequent prefaces, each point being taken up and developed with more or less emphasis. In 'La

42. *ibid.* p. 135.

Perversité', a review of Jules Renard's novel L'Ecornifleur,⁴³ Schwob returned to the duality of egoism and altruism, and its implications for art. A rational, centralising view of the world gives rise to a sense of continuity in the delineation of life; perversity, Schwob's term for the preception of the variety of forms and beings, implies the desire to animate the inchoate creatures of a world judged by the senses to be discontinuous. Shakespeare, in an age of literary renaissance, was able fully to project the figments of his imagination, whereas latter-day writers, Flaubert, Ibsen and Maeterlinck, are obliged to show their characters as a prey to the shadowy figures that haunt their minds:

"On voit très clairement que dans la période que nous traversons nous sommes soumis aux fantômes de l'hérédité ou de l'extrême littérature. Car notre volonté ne sait plus s'appliquer aux choses extérieures, ni projeter les êtres qui naissent en nous."⁴⁴

Harking back to his theme of the "relâchement du coeur" from 'La Terreur et la Pitié', Schwob proceeded with more explicit observations on the state of mind of contemporary authors, but this time no recommendations for the acquisition of the will to create were forthcoming. Schwob was content to label l'Ecornifleur a novel of crises, with the subtle difference that here the adventure, or outcome of the crisis, was always negative. From 1892 onwards, Schwob's interest in the structural representation

43. First published in the Mercure de France, 1st March 1892.

44. Spicilège, p. 140.

of reality through exposition and crisis was to be inferred chiefly through the persistence of this mechanism in his tales: in the prefaces he abandoned discussion of the subject in favour of exploration of the nature of reality itself. The foreword to Coeur Double affords a key to the previously printed tales of the collection, and to those of Le Roi au Masque d'Or which were to be composed on similar lines, whereas 'La Différence et la Ressemblance', the preface of the latter volume, anticipates in spirit the definitive formulas of 'L'Art de la Biographie'.

In the introduction to his second recueil, then, Schwob went back to the starting point of 'La Perversité' - the purely relative distinctions between difference and similarity. His long enumeration of the assorted types figuring in the tales ended in the paradox that their heterogeneity was of less import than their fundamental similarity. A visitor from another world would remark only the prevalence and continuity of certain features and actions, not only among members of the human race, of different nations and epochs, but among highly-endowed men and the lowest forms of life. A philosopher and a globule of pus have the same freedom of action, within the physiological laws governing their existence. It would be the task of the artist, therefore, to bring out in his portraits the dual nature of reality:

"Saisissez donc les différences charmantes par votre imagination, mais apprenez à les confondre en la continuité des ressemblances, qui font les lois explicatives, par l'exercice de votre raison. Ne donnez pas plus de foi à ceux qui vous montrent la

discontinuité ou les différences individuelles, ou la liberté dans l'univers, qu'à ceux qui vous exposent sa continuité ou ses lois nécessaires. [...] Imaginez que la ressemblance est le langage intellectuel des différences, que les différences sont le langage sensible de la ressemblance. Sachez que tout en ce monde n'est que signes, et signes de signes."⁴⁵

Synthesis, for Schwob, had finally resolved itself into an even more abstract concept than the fusion of an inner state of mind and an outside event. It presupposed the existence of a God, whose incomprehensible nature is objectified in men and things, and thence through words, and whose essence reveals itself only through the transcendence of the senses, which perceive distinctions, through reason, which is "une sorte de symbole de la faculté d'unir du Centre Suprême."

Four years later, in his preface to the Vies Imaginaires, Schwob was cogitating further on two of his major themes: the generalising and individualising tendencies of science and art respectively, and the need to impart a sense of the universal to the particular. Repeating in very similar terms to those of 'La Terreur et la Pitié' his critique of the scientific method in fiction, he insisted on the value of unique traits in literary portraiture, as presented notably by the British biographers Boswell and Aubrey. The excellence of the author of the Brief Lives was to have avoided mention of those aspects of his subjects' careers which had become part of the common patrimony of mankind, while dwelling on their

45. 'La Différence et la Ressemblance', Spicilège, pp. 149-150.

peculiar features and habits. The defect of his method was its very concentration on idiosyncrasy: Aubrey is inferior as an artist to Holbein and Hokusai in that

"Il ne sait pas fixer pour l'éternité un individu par ses traits spéciaux sur un fond de ressemblance avec l'idéal. Il donne la vie à un oeil, au nez, à la jambe, à la moue de ses modèles: il ne sait pas animer la figure. Le vieil Hokusai voyait bien qu'il fallait parvenir à rendre individuel ce qu'il y a de plus général."⁴⁶

Schwob's tireless vindication of the writer's liberty found its ultimate justification in the imaginary biography. In order to fulfil his purpose of endowing each of his characters with an aura of the inimitable and the timeless, he must be allowed the privilege of selecting only the details necessary to the composition of "une forme qui ne ressemble à aucune autre." The contention is that of 'Le Réalisme' and of the preface to Coeur Double, but the position underlying it has greatly evolved. The earlier theory envisaged the artist as at best an artificer, modelling his fictional world on that of Nature; in maturity, influenced no doubt by the doctrines of Nietzsche, Schwob came to regard him as a minor deity, free to invent a universe reflecting the immanent truth, but even more his own independent caprice. Nominal verisimilitude was to be abandoned for the larger domain of the imagination; erudition became increasingly subordinated to the desire to remould reality in a complex and formally delightful pattern. The quest of the hero for fulfilment remained the leitmotiv of the tales, but its nature and

46. 'L'Art de la Biographie', Spicilège, pp. 168-169.

conclusion pointed to a perception of the contradictory implications of the aesthetic which Schwob had adopted by the end of 1895.

Of the repercussion of his theories on both the creative and critical work there will be more to say later; our immediate intention is to estimate the influence of English literature in their formulations. Significantly, though in accordance with his usual practice, Schwob acknowledged no debts in his preface, except perhaps to Whitman with his watch-word "Soi-même et en masse"; and indeed, mentions of Pre-Raphaelite poetry and the eighteenth-century novelists serve the purpose of illustration rather than the indication of borrowings. The student of philosophy, however, will have little difficulty in detecting the origins of Schwob's pronouncements. It was in the summer of 1891 that Schwob passed his agrégation, and his preface to Coeur Double is full of references to the subjects he was then studying intensively,⁴⁷ and which indeed had been part of his intellectual background since schooldays. The ideas of Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pythagoras and Heraclitus on primal substance and the cosmos, on appearance and reality, form the groundwork of his theories; and we recall his declaration to Paul Léautaud that Plato was one of the four great influences in his literary development.⁴⁸ No less important were the German philosophers, notably Kant, Schopenhauer and Hegel, whom Schwob was

47. Cf. the essay 'Eschyle et Aristophane', written in preparation for the examination in 1890.

48. Journal Littéraire, I 115 (23rd February 1904).

able to read in the original, and through the interpretation of his teachers Burdeau and Boutroux. It was the contribution of the Germans to the theory of the relations of man with the phenomenal world, of unity and diversity, of freedom and determinism, that engaged Schwob's interest to the point of absorbing them completely into the scheme of his assumptions and reproducing them as axiomatic in his writings on fiction. The ideas he brought forward were so widespread among the cultivated public of his times that attributions were unnecessary.⁴⁹ English philosophy touched him little, it would seem, and that through the figure of Carlyle, whose influence in France had been powerful from the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁰ The chapter on 'Symbols' from Sartor Resartus was to fecundate the literary movement from which Schwob drew in his conception of signs:

"the Infinite is made to blend itself with the Finite, to stand visible, and as it were, attainable there
 [..]the Universe is but one vast Symbol of God; nay if thou wilt have it, what is man himself but a Symbol of God; is not all that he does symbolical; a revelation to Sense of the mystic god-given force that is in him; a "Gospel of Freedom", which he, the "Messias of Nature", preaches, as he can, by act and word? Not a Hut he builds but is the visible embodiment

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49. Surveys of the influence of German philosophy in France in Schwob's time are to be found in, for example, A. Baillet, Influence de la Philosophie de Schopenhauer en France, 1860-1900, 1927, and Renée Lang, André Gide et la Pensée Allemande, 1949. Schwob's source for ancient philosophy may have been Zeller's Die Philosophie der Griechen, Leipzig, 1876, quoted as an authority by John Burnet in his influential Early Greek Philosophy, 1892.
50. See the section 'Carlyle et l'Idéalisme' in Guy Michaud, Message Poétique du Symbolisme, 1966, pp. 200-204.

of a Thought; but bears visible record of invisible things; but is, in the transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real."⁵¹

Schwob's later adoption of the Nietzschean Uebersensch in his Vies Imaginaires might have been prepared by a reading of Carlyle's On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History; certainly his preface to the collection contains echoes of the dictum that "the History of the World [..] was the Biography of Great Men", although his application of the principle was not unmixed with irony.⁵²

Clearly enough, the foundations of Schwob's aesthetics were laid rather in his study of philosophy than in English literature, but this is not to say that his tales would have been substantially the same had he never read English authors. He was deeply indebted to these latter insofar as their work appeared to anticipate or to exhibit signs of the ideas in circulation towards the end of the century, thus proving that notions essential to the understanding of human existence could alone form the basis of art. For Schwob, Greece and Germany were the source of truths, and England the means of their implementation.

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51. Sartor Resartus, in Thomas Carlyle's Works, 1885, III 149-150.

52. 'The Hero as Divinity', On Heroes, Thomas Carlyle's Works, III 11. Schwob may have been impressed by Carlyle's thought, but he did not care for its expression. Cf. André Fontainas, Mes Souvenirs du Symbolisme, p. 197: "Schwob nous détournait des lyriques surabondants ou d'après et somptueux rhéteurs tels que Carlyle [..]"

What, then, of the literary genres chosen by Schwob to clothe the abstract ideas taken from philosophy? Concomitant with his desire to reaffirm the social dignity and the artistic interest of the individual was his conviction of the necessity to break down the rigidity of traditional narrative genres, to renovate them in the same spirit as the subjects they were to set forth. Already Symbolism had operated a transformation of poetic modes, in harmony with its favoured themes; the novel, the major genre of prose fiction, remained however largely recalcitrant to the new trends, keeping to a stereotyped pattern. Finding the genre uncongenial by reason of its length and complexity, Schwob was not tempted to work within its fabric, and concentrated his efforts on the conte. In the choice of this medium he was undoubtedly influenced by Poe, not only because of the depth of his first impressions, but because the prestige of the Tales of Mystery and Imagination, dating from Baudelaire's translations, had been so great as to stimulate fresh departures in a genre traditionally French. It was thus perhaps as much to the emulators of Poe as to the author himself that Schwob owed his fixation with both the form and substance of the conte as practised in his day:

"The tale proper, in my opinion, affords unquestionably the fairest field for the exercise of the loftiest talent which can be afforded by the wide domains of mere prose.

[...] the author who aims at the purely beautiful in a prose tale is labouring at a great disadvantage. For Beauty can be better treated in the poem. Not so with terror, or passion, or horror, or a multitude

of such other points."⁵³

Although Poe was avowedly of capital importance in Schwob's search for a more personal form of expression, the precepts of the essay on Nathaniel Hawthorne were of sufficiently common currency by the late 1880's for it to be claimed that the stamp of the stories in Coeur Double was not exclusively of exotic origin. The genres practised by Schwob at a later stage were similarly hybrid in their ancestry. The dialogues of Spicilège were of patently Platonic inspiration, and answered to Renan's assertion that this form was, "en l'état actuel de l'esprit humain, la seule qui [...] puisse convenir à l'exposition des idées philosophiques."⁵⁴ Mimes, Le Livre de Monelle, La Croisade des Enfants fall into the category of prose poems, widely explored in France since the publication of Baudelaire's Le Spleen de Paris, and especially favoured by the Symbolists. The biography, at first sight, would seem to have affinities with English literature, all the more so as Schwob in his preface to the Vies Imaginaires expatiated on the qualities of John Aubrey and Boswell. Certainly Schwob's idea of biographical method was far removed from that displayed in the French classic, the Mémoires of Saint-Simon, who, in his own words, was "emporté toujours par la matière, et peu attentif à la manière de la rendre, sinon pour la bien expliquer." Here, however, the names of the two

53. 'Nathaniel Hawthorne', The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. John H. Ingram, Edinburgh, 1874-1875, IV 214, 217.

54. Drames Philosophiques, 1888, p. i.

British writers were quoted by Schwob as only partially illustrative of an ideal technique independently elaborated by himself over a number of years. Dr Hobbs in her thesis 'Marcel Schwob, Biographer', proposes that the novels of Daniel Defoe played their part in deciding the position adopted by Schwob:

"De Foe's genius lies in his ability to relate an imaginary life that is more probable and credible than a true existence actually lived.

Schwob accuses De Foe of treating his own life artistically in his books and of creating human beings who are really only symbols."⁵⁵

But another sentence, "Thus, Schwob makes De Foe a champion of his famous aesthetic theory, "sachez que tout en ce monde n'est que signes, et signes de signes",⁵⁶ appears to indicate that Schwob in fact followed Defoe only insofar as the author of Moll Flanders practised a method in some respects conformable to the one aspired to by himself. The accumulation of detail, incident, and corroboration of testimony were alien to Schwob's concept of the presentation of the hero, and the opening sentence of the life of Cyril Tourneur is proof enough that Schwob was moved by no desire to "lie like truth". They were alike rather in their fixation with man's solitary destiny, but Defoe's figures were set in a canvas more crowded than Schwob would care to paint. A more plausible source would be the Imaginary Portraits of Walter Pater, published in volume form in 1887, which recounted the spiritual lives of

55. op.cit. pp. 65, 68.

56. ibid. p. 68.

young artists or aesthetes in settings of an idealised past. Schwob himself denied any affiliation between the two collections of fictitious biographies, according to Marguerite Moreno: although naturally he knew Pater, "son livre a été sans influencer son esprit."⁵⁷ Despite this categorical disavowal, certain similarities in the concept of the heroes may be noted, for the reason that both Pater and Schwob, in varying degrees, endowed their characters with the attributes they would themselves have liked to possess in life. This evocation by a modern critic of the figures of the Imaginary Portraits could well, mutatis mutandis, convey the essence of those of the Vies Imaginaires:

"Pionniers d'une forme plus riche et plus belle de culture, serviteurs désintéressés d'un idéal esthétique ou moral, les héros de Pater consacrent tous leurs efforts à traduire dans les faits la vision qu'ils portent en eux. Hélas! la hauteur même de leur dessin les isole, elle les oppose à la foule dont ils devraient être les guides; toujours étrangers, toujours solitaires, ils sont et se savent irrémédiablement différents [..]"⁵⁸

The affinity, though interesting, may be taken as coincidental, for Schwob's relationship with his personages had evolved from his own experience and was too subjective to admit of extraneous influence to any marked degree. The form of his biographies, in

57. OC III 200 n.1. Champion seems to have interpreted rather freely Moreno's letter. Her actual words were: "Oui, Marcel le connaissait, mais je ne l'ai jamais entendu exprimer une grande admiration pour lui." CPC 5136 p. 9. See however the testimony of Fontainas, p. 119/ infra.

58. Germain d'Hangest, Walter Pater, L'Homme et l'Oeuvre, 1961, II 87.

particular, owed nothing to Pater, although they were likewise used as vehicles for ideas propounded elsewhere in theoretical studies: holding that general notions had no place in art, Schwob was much more discreet than Pater in the handling of the central theme of the Vies Imaginaires, the confused and frustrated aspirations which drive men through life and into their final tragic conflict with destiny. The keynote of the recueil has to be discerned through the welter of traits and incidents which make up the careers of Schwob's varied assortment of figures, whereas in the Imaginary Portraits the fictive presentation provides only a transparent covering for the discussion of Pater's true interests: his own soul and the steps of his spiritual development.⁵⁹ Earnest didacticism on the one hand, ironic or ostensibly ironic distantiation on the other, such were the differences of intention and approach which discount the possibility of imitation of Pater in Schwob's collection of imaginary lives. As with the other genres, the special mould of biography chosen by Schwob was a consequence of his meditations on the artist's singular and selective vision of the world, and on the potentialities for undetermined action and unique existence of the characters therein. The influence of Poe, filtered through the writings of two or three generations of French admirers, may be traced in the compression and conscious artistry of the conte,

59. Cf. d'Hangest, op.cit. II 82: "le Portrait Imaginaire avait été pour lui un moyen commode d'exprimer son ame intime et de revenir sur les étapes les plus lointaines de son développement spirituel."

the prose poem and the biography, but on the whole Schwob's options in the prose medium seem to have derived from current aesthetic theories in France, and not from specific examples in past or contemporary English literature.

. . . .

It has been necessary to provide an outline of Schwob's artistic creed and practice in order to situate his interest in English literature in the context of his work as a whole. Although in this wider perspective the ideas derived from Greek and German philosophy, and from prevailing French artistic modes, reveal themselves as fundamental and decisive, the English authors revered by Schwob remain important as examples of what could be achieved by a writer endeavouring to remedy the aberrations of his day, and to contribute to the resurgence of the ideal of freedom in art and society. Thus, while he pursued his aims through adoption of the theories and genres described above, the form and content of his creative work were stamped by reminiscences of the British writers whose names constantly came to his lips. We shall examine now his borrowings in the techniques and themes of the tales.

The problem of language was obviously fundamental to any new definition of literature. Schwob's adolescent readings of Villon and the fifteenth-century poets, of Rabelais and Montaigne, had convinced him of a loss of vitality and amplitude in the French tongue; for him the banality and meanness of current usage had reduced the world of language to its own drab bourgeois image:

"maintenant les mots, comme les gens, sont habillés de noir."⁶⁰

There is implicit in much of his criticism a nostalgia for the greater latitude and spontaneity enjoyed by the English writers. In successive ages, and on different levels of sophistication, these had maintained the tradition of approval for individual linguistic initiative and the extension of the frontiers of expression. The Elizabethans enchanted him with the "richesse de métaphores"⁶¹ through which they conveyed their exuberant sense of launching out into a world unexplored, of the nobility of man's faculties; the Hesperides of Robert Herrick captivated him by the savour of their words, "luisants d'huile de fleurs, frottés de nard et diaprés de gouttelettes parfumées";⁶² and the same sensuous appreciation of eccentric and elaborate diction must have accounted for his pleasure in the works of Richard Burton, John Donne, Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor. Defoe, by contrast, appealed to him with his artfully unpolished style, translating so faithfully the unselfconscious reflexions of his heroes and adding pathos to the "nonchalances de langage et les redites exquisés" of Moll Flanders. In his own times, Schwob was attracted to the asperities of Browning's diction, the stamp of an independent and tortuous mind;

60. 'Robert Louis Stevenson', Spicilège, p. 69. The image of clothing recalls Carlyle's Sartor Resartus.

61. 'George Meredith', Spicilège, p. 82.

62. Il Libro della mia Memoria, in Mimes, 1964, p. 178.

to Meredith, with his battery of metaphors designed to confuse the slow-witted and reinvigorate the turgid prose considered appropriate to the novel; to Stevenson, finally, who appeared to Schwob to have married the stylistic discipline of a long training in the classics with the impetuosity of a temperament nurtured in the mountains of Scotland.

Such audacities being foreign to Schwob's writing, it would seem logical to conclude that he hesitated to give this kind of expression to his artistic individuality in his own work: the prescription of the preface to Coeur Double has an impersonal, classical ring: "La composition se précisera dans les parties, avec la langue; la construction sera sévère. L'art nouveau sera net et clair." Mindful of the traditional qualities of compression and sharp outline in the French language, he was chary of waking it from its temporary lethargy by means of an injudicious transfusion of eccentricity and amplitude.⁶³ More particularly, he was aware that his own talents were not susceptible of enlargement by slavish imitation of procedures natural to authors bred in a climate different from his own. Thus his style was distinguished by no

63. Accounting for Schwob's eagerness to submit Claudel to the discipline of translating the Oresteia, W.H. Matheson suggests that "he may have felt that the untrammelled exotic growth of Tête d'Or needed a certain measure of clearing out, that Claudel's luxuriant vegetation needed pruning." Claudel and Aeschylus, Ann Arbor, 1965, p. 56.

startling metaphors and conceits,⁶⁴ no wilful obscurities, no passages of sustained flight of fancy. Instead, we find in his early works, an attempt to extend the range of permissible literary vocabulary by the wholesale introduction of the slang and cant terms unearthed in his researches into the speech and habits of the lowest strata of society. Poupa, his unfinished novel of Roman life, and the tales of Coeur Double set in the Middle Ages, abounded in expressions as colourful as the characters they set forth; their abstruseness, however, gave a somewhat laboured tone to the narrative as a whole, and Schwob was soon to realise that scenes of mediaeval low life could be animated by more subtle means. When his stories appeared in volume form, a large percentage of the archaic words had been cut.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, Schwob's bent was that of an erudite, and he moved among writers of a generation strongly marked by the stylistic preoccupations of Flaubert and the Goncourt brothers, associating themselves with Mallarmé's pledge to give "un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu"; thus he remained convinced that it was the rarity of the word, symbol of its mysterious essence, that imparted the specifically literary tone to a text. In the

64. One striking exception is that noted by Alfred Jarry in his Gestes et Opinions du Docteur Faustroll: "De Schwob, les betes écailleuses que mimait la blancheur des mains du lépreux" - an allusion to La Croisade des Enfants. See Jarry, Oeuvres Complètes, Monte Carlo, 1949, I 213.

65. See J.A. Green, op.cit. pp. 205-208.

mid-1830's the cult of the far-fetched in language had been carried to extreme lengths by the minor Decadents,⁶⁶ and Schwob, without committing their excesses, was enough in sympathy with their aims to pursue his quest for purity and equilibrium through the medium of a frigid and mannered artificiality. In keeping with his early-acquired practice, he composed his tales of the simple and the instinctive in a style of carefully wrought workmanship. His subject was the unleashing and check of the passions, his manner that of the dispassionate, even ironic chronicler; thus the intensity of the one was enhanced by the formality of the other. This convention was, of course, the fruit of earlier labours in the field of narrative, most eminently of Flaubert, whose novels set in history or legend were of particular interest to Schwob for their precise and detailed evocation of past cultures through impersonal narration and the use of specialised terminology. Earlier periods of literature instilled in him an awareness of the resources of language: late Latin and mediaeval French poetry, the legends of India. That his tastes coincided with those of the

66. Baju declared in Le Décadent, 16th October 1886: "Notre style doit être rare et tourmenté, parce que la banalité est l'épouvantail de cette fin de siècle, et nous devons rajeunir des vocables tombés en désuétude ou en créer de nouveaux pour noter l'idée dans la complexité de ses nuances les plus fugaces." Quoted in A.E. Carter, The Idea of Decadence in French Literature 1830-1900, Toronto, 1958, p. 136.

writers of the last decades of the century⁶⁷ attests the prevalence of the desire to establish a specifically literary vocabulary; thus, although Schwob's favourite English writers attracted him in the first instance for their defiance of academic norms, he was influenced by them chiefly in the qualities of their style which were most remote from familiar use. His settings in Mimes have something of the honeyed charm of Herrick's Hesperides: both call forth the injunction, "Mais ne lisez pas longtemps: vous seriez noyé dans un océan de roses."⁶⁸ Rossetti impressed him with an image of the Middle Ages conjured up with a discreet but telling use of archaic terms, which may have been imitated in such tales as 'Alain le Gentil' and 'Katherine la Dentellière' from the Vies Imaginaires, where the inclusion of only a few obsolete words gave the atmosphere required. Meredith and Stevenson, in their very different ways, had a propensity for the display of rich and curious language because of its ornamental beauty, the former with his promptness in decking out his plainest thought with fine imagery - "if the matter looks like being commonplace, then the manner is rushed into fantastic fancy dress"⁶⁹ - and the latter

67. See Carter, op.cit. pp. 127-128, for the spread of interest in late Latin poetry. Baudelaire's poem 'Franciscae meae laudes' awoke interest in ecclesiastical Latin, which was both mystic and decadent, and prepared the way for anthologies of Latin verse: one of which was Rémy de Gourmont's Le Latin Mystique, reviewed by Schwob in the Mercure de France of 1st November 1892. Des Esseintes, in Huysmans' A Rebours, prefers the "style d'une verdure étrange" of the Satyricon to that of Caesar and Virgil.

68. Mimes, p. 179.

69. J.B. Priestley, George Meredith, 1926, p. 188.

with the deliberately romantic ambience of his early stories and essays where the

"words become above all the media of a gorgeously decorative abstract art, like the figures in a Persian carpet, meaningful primarily as design, and appealing in their almost unearthly ability not to suggest nature."⁷⁰

In the translations especially, under the pretext of recreating the values of the English tongue of bygone times, Schwob was able to give free rein to his love of quaint and sonorous words, of unfamiliar constructions, of alien rhythms:⁷¹ his versions of Hamlet and Moll Flanders, while purporting to be of scrupulous fidelity to the originals, owe their appeal to their reflection of his most cherished procedures, normally refined and restrained in his properly creative prose.

If Schwob was receptive to English linguistic influences, it was because of the high degree of discrimination achieved in the

70. Robert Kiely, Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, p. 50.

71. Cf. Paul Dottin: "Dans le plus parfait de ses livres, la Lampe de Psyché, l'angliciste trouve des rythmes qui éveillent dans sa mémoire de lointains échos. Dans les premiers discours de Monelle, il reconnaît l'accent prophétique et la psalmodie mélodieuse de Whitman. Dans les harmonies du retour de Monelle et de la lassitude de Daphnis et Chloé, il retrouve l'ampleur ouatée du Mangeur d'Opium. Mais tous deux, De Quincey comme Whitman, avaient une source commune, et à cette source Marcel Schwob a bu. Les cadences du Livre de Monelle sont les cadences magiques de la bible anglaise. Changez l'ordre des mots, et le charme sera brisé. Schwob (sic) a transposé dans notre langue l'incantation, qui est l'essence du génie littéraire anglais." 'Marcel Schwob et la Littérature Anglaise', La Revue de France, 15th March 1927, p. 377.

pursuit of fine writing, a pursuit peculiarly French;⁷² but since Schwob was more than a style-conscious post-Decadent, the importance to him of the English authors under discussion was that they ultimately bent their language to other uses, beyond the mere exploration of the senses. His inclination towards the stylisation of men and their surroundings was kept in check by observation of how English writers tempered their taste for verbal decoration with a greater concern for the true problems of their characters. In this way, the worst errors of the Decadents were avoided, and the strain of English artificiality combined with Schwob's fostered preferences helped to forge the personal instrument that he was seeking to express his vision of the world:

"L'écrivain qui rompt l'orthographe traditionnelle prouve véritablement sa force créatrice."⁷³

Furthermore, his wide philological studies of English, especially in the language of the Elizabethan age and in the history of criminal slang, gave him a range of words and concepts which could not but fecundate his writings in his mother tongue. The frequentation of British authors, together with the pursuit of impeccable artistry, were major constituents of the individuality

72. Cf. G.K. Chesterton, The Victorian Age in Literature, 1960 (1st ed. 1913) p. 111: "If the rather vague Victorian public did not appreciate the deep and even tragic ethics with which Stevenson was concerned, still less were they of a sort to appreciate the French finish and fastidiousness of his style." Stevenson himself wrote of the influence on his style of the French atmosphere in which he delighted to breathe.

73. 'Robert Louis Stevenson', Spicilège, p. 70.

of his style:

"Une page de [...] Marcel Schwob [...] se reconnaît comme une mesure de Schumann. C'est là le fait, soulignons-le, d'une originalité forte et comme involontaire; c'est aussi le fait d'un travail acharné, amoureux."⁷⁴

The question of language could not be isolated from the larger problem of the technique of the conte, and later of the biography. We have already discussed Schwob's statements on the necessity of symbol and synthesis in the process of filtering crude observation into the artistic depiction of reality, and shown how his assumptions were derived from his own ponderings on certain philosophical enquiries: he was to find the perfect embodiment of his ideas in the works of Stevenson, the continuator of Defoe, Poe and Dickens. It would be superfluous to give much attention here to a subject which has already been adequately treated in other works⁷⁵ on Schwob: suffice it to note that he appreciated Defoe, Meredith, Stevenson and Kipling in the measure that they provided salutary instruction on methods of achieving psychological and natural realism, portraying convincing figures and evoking true-to-life backgrounds without resort to the enumerative procedures of the French Realists. Defoe was proclaimed a "precursor of Naturalism"

74. Emmanuel Buezod, Une Epoque Littéraire 1890-1910, Neuchâtel, 1941, p. 14.

75. See Wesley Goddard, 'Marcel Schwob (1867-1905) Conteur et Critique Littéraire', Doctorat d'Université, Sorbonne, 1950, pp. 86-97, and Green, op.cit. pp. 187-195.

in that he was "absolument dénué d'imagination", and "avant tout un collectionneur de faits sociaux et psychologiques";⁷⁶ but Schwob, with greater perception, saw that these facts were enlivened by Defoe's passionate self-identification with his heroes, and that his egocentricity allowed the apparently objective setting of his novels to take shape in the sequence and form in which it impinged on the hero's vision, thus endowing the whole with organic life. It may have been for similar reasons that Schwob admired Meredith's "stream of consciousness" presentation of the hero of One of Our Conquerors, for here again, the character viewed the phenomena of his being and his world through the mind's eye, through a mode of selection which was fundamentally that of the author himself, operating his artistic freedom of choice. In calling The Egoist a masterpiece of psychological realism, Schwob was thinking of the richness of imagination that transformed and imbued the minutiae of the delineation of Sir Willoughby, whose raison d'être was no pseudo-scientific theory, but a moralist's preoccupation with "le plus terrible mystère du coeur humain." Meredith's power resided, therefore, in his ability to confer vibrant individuality on whatever he observed: social movements, fine shades of feelings and thought, even the peculiarities of diction in his characters. On a more limited scale, Stevenson, in eschewing comprehensive

76. Augustin Filon, 'Daniel Defoe précurseur du naturalisme', Journal des Débats, 22nd July 1908.

description and deduction, and focussing attention on the essential traits of his heroes and the development of the narrative by the means discussed by Schwob in his articles, satisfied his disciple's exigences in the "counterfeiting of nature."

If traces of the technical influence of these British authors are not immediately visible in Schwob's fiction, it is doubtless because allowance had to be made for the difference of genre. Schwob modified profoundly methods adapted to a much broader canvas, and it was by reducing them to his scope that he was able to achieve the concentration and force of the stories in his first receuils. In later years, these methods had become so blended with his personal style that the extent of his original indebtedness is no longer appreciable. We may judge the degree of his emancipation from foreign models by the differences in the early pastiches of Mark Twain and Poe, and the mock pirate-biographies of the Vies Imaginaires: in the latter, the conventions of the originals were thoroughly reworked to produce a study unmistakably Schwob's own in outline and detail.

More than by the genres he adopted, however, Schwob was to transmute the techniques discussed above by his underlying conception of reality itself. Though professedly desirous of accomplishing a synthesis which would replace the conditions of life, and of thus composing unique personages, he was increasingly drawn to the art of creating simulacra of characters, perfectly coherent in their delineation, but with no claims to belong to a world recognisably

existent. The "réalisme irréel" of Stevenson guided him in his earlier collections of tales, encouraging the interaction of factual detail and legendary inspiration, of psychological accuracy with romantic background. It has been remarked that the tale 'Podêr' would not seem remarkable under the name of Maupassant, were it not for the dream alluded to in the last paragraph, which throws an aura of uncertainty over the preceding events.⁷⁷ Stevenson, by the forcefulness of his comparisons, invited suspension of disbelief in his "application des moyens les plus simples et les plus réels aux sujets les plus compliqués et les plus inexistants", whereas Schwob, after diligently practising this mechanism, came to conjure in his reader's mind a state where incredulity and conviction could be juxtaposed in uneasy balance. His erudition assured the authenticity of the attributes and backgrounds of his subjects, his fantasy the dream-like quality of their souls in their inadaptation to regular society.

It was also from Stevenson, Poe and Defoe that Schwob learned the art of fusing the elements of reality and unreality in a scene or image of haunting power, relying on the simple opposition of two incompatible conditions to do the work of evoking an atmosphere. The mechanism was of particular service in his tales of the supernatural, but was used extensively in other stories of terror, in 'La Peste', for example, which is brought to its climax with the

77. George Trembley, 'Marcel Schwob, Faussaire de la Nature', Ph.D., Yale, 1960, pp. 148-151.

discovery that the mask put on by a malingering criminal to simulate the plague conceals the true and terrible symptoms of the disease itself. His notion of the proper balance of a tale, between exposition and dénouement, necessitated this kind of vehicle for the synthesis of the two actions and the irradiation of the whole in one sudden vision of the sense of a life. Moreover, the conte, with its concentration on one person, a couple, or at most a small group of associates, in the performance of a short series of acts culminating in the crisis, and throwing light on the predominant aspect of a clearly defined temperament, was set off to great advantage by his use of a central, binding image to encapsulate the truth of a character in his actions. The image in this particular form also conveyed admirably the feeling of obsession common to many of Schwob's characters, born of their dissatisfaction with the tangible world and their aspiration to another, more attuned to their desires. Thus Mr. Burke, of the infamous partnership:

"La féconde imagination de M. Burke s'était lassée des récits éternellement semblables de l'expérience humaine. Jamais le résultat n'avait répondu à son attente."⁷⁸

In the end, therefore, the feeling of passing beyond reality, or charging that reality with supra-normal intensity, arose not so much from the disturbing contrast of two mutually contradictory phenomena, but the more poignant alienation of man within his environment, the outburst of a nature consumed by the desire to

78. 'MM. Burke et Hare, Assassins', Vies Imaginaires, 1957, p. 255.

break out of his petty circumstances. Schwob thus converted to his needs a technique observed in other novelists, making it the keynote of his method of composition and even coming to suppose that in Stevenson also the use of the image was more essential to the structure of the novels than plot and character. His susceptibility to such an influence derived, of course, from an innate propensity to elaborate visual and auditory images, around which he would then spin his narrative. To Paul Léautaud he explained the

"grand rôle, chez lui, de l'inconscient. Quand il se met devant sa feuille de papier, il ne sait pas trop ce qu'il va écrire. Un état d'excitation tout à fait particulier. Puis, un mot, une image visuelle, lui viennent. Tout un conte fait avec cela."⁷⁹

The manuscripts of his tales corroborate this declaration, as Dr Green has shown. Here, for instance, are some of the notes for 'La Flûte':

"L'évocations (sic) des sons.
Les feux rouges de la côte
Le chant de la flûte; la voix grêle; la voix passionnée
Leur attitude sur les bastingages
La noirceur de la scène"⁸⁰

Although Léautaud was undoubtedly right in attaching great importance to the rôle of erudition in filling in the outline, Schwob preferred to consider himself an intuitive writer, continuing the tradition of Defoe, Poe and Stevenson in his revelations of "la quintessence de la réalité."

. . . .

79. Journal Littéraire, I 117 (11th March 1904).

80. op.cit. p. 227.

As with the techniques of style and narrative, the themes of Schwob's tales echoed those to which he was most responsive in English literature. Of these, decadence, in its various forms, exercised a strong attraction over him, as might be expected of an inheritor to a tradition which had developed over half a century under the guises of Art for Art's Sake, Decadence and Symbolism, and had put forth powerful shoots in England with the Pre-Raphaelite poets, Swinburne and Pater, Wilde and the Aesthetic movement.⁸¹ Already by temperament Schwob was drawn to the curious erudition of the fin-de-siècle man of letters with his knowledge of astrology, necromancy, the jargon of the mediaeval criminal fraternities and their modern descendants, the literature of the faisandé periods of history;⁸² De Quincey and Poe, Gautier, Baudelaire, Flaubert and D'Aureville had beguiled his youthful imagination into strange paths, and when on the fringe of the Oscar Wilde circle he was sensitive to the "contagion de perversité" with which the author of Salomé liked to surround himself. Among the writers whom he frequented early in his career were such amateurs of the bizarre as Pierre Louÿs, Rémy de Gourmont, Catulle Mendès, Jean Lorrain and others to be qualified by Jules Huret as notorious "écrivains subtils". His literary practice drew from the cult of brilliant

81. See A.J. Farmer, Le Mouvement Esthétique et "Décadent" en Angleterre (1873-1900), 1931.

82. See the discussion of Schwob as a Decadent in Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, 1933, pp. 354-359, and the chapter 'Decadence' in Hobbs, *op.cit.* pp. 110-139.

artificiality and ornament of style, of concentration on subjects of perversion and violence, of beauty allied with pain and death, giving rise to sensations of mingled horror and fascination. Given this background, and his own conviction that literature should purvey strong and active emotions, it is not surprising that Schwob should have been obsessed by the scenes of violence in English literature,⁸³ singling out the Elizabethan and Stuart dramatists, especially Ford and Tourneur, for their propensity to themes of lust, unnatural vice, torture and murder. In his presentation of Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore he dwelt on the blasphemy, incest, and passion in death, the manifold reversions of the natural world order; in his biography of Cyril Tourneur he selected from the dramatist's work the incidents of poisoning, assassination and incestuous rape, and served them up in a setting compounded of charnel-houses, sinister gravel-pits and a plague-stricken London veiled in fog. The lurid colours and heavy atmosphere of these evocations of Elizabethan life corresponded to a convention of French decadent literature, where the expectation of doom was conveyed by such ominous symbols. Of the moderns, Schwob saw Dante Gabriel Rossetti as an artist in whom the spirit of the Middle Ages was revived, in whom the spiritual and the sensuous were inseparable, but at odds, whose ephemeral loves, angelic in appearance but often inwardly corrupt, reflected the torment of a soul of divided aspirations. His imaginary life

83. Cf. Dottin, op.cit. pp. 374-375.

of Rossetti was composed of elements familiar to the reader of decadent literature: masochism, neurosis, religious paraphernalia used for purely aesthetic or erotic purposes, and the nocturnal despoliation of the beloved's grave. For Schwob, the fictional Rossetti represented the predominantly passive type of decadent hero, as opposed to the defiant titans of the Renaissance; and in keeping with the impulses of his own "double heart", his literary preferences went now to the masterful personalities of Whitman, Meredith and Kipling, now to the more discreet and subtle gifts of certain men of letters who jealously cultivated their art:

"Schwob nous détournait des lyriques surabondants ou d'après et somptueux rhéteurs tels que Carlyle, pour nous attacher davantage à l'art raffiné, par exemple, d'un John Keats, à des cerveaux de probité concentrée et lucide tels que Walter Pater, Robert-Louis Stevenson, puis Edmond Gosse et Arthur Symons."⁸⁴

That Schwob endeavoured to achieve similar distinction in the field of the essay is evident from a reading of his Spicilège, the title of which already indicated that it was to be the quintessence of a somewhat esoteric intelligence, intended for the delectation of a highly cultured élite. As for the decadent strain in his properly creative work, it would be less easy to say that Schwob here consciously emulated English writers. The movement was launched and developed in France; its most striking effects and profound statements, though often tinged with the sensibility of a Poe or

84. André Fontainas, op.cit. p. 197.

a De Quincey, were made by the French writers of the mid-century and after. Critics commenting on Schwob's decadence have not therefore been tempted to attribute it to any English influence, and have merely noted certain affinities. Nonetheless, two of its features would appear to derive more or less directly from English literature: the macabre and ironic humour which touched many of the tales of the Vies Imaginaires, and the obsession with the child prostitute which inspired the Livre de Monelle. Having reached a certain pitch of intensity, horror and frenzy sought an outlet in a bordering state of emotion. Compassion was the antithesis to which Schwob resorted in his early tales, but subsequently he was drawn to the solution practised by certain Decadents - the parody which had resulted in the Déliquescences d'Adoré Floupette.⁸⁵ His intention was not merely to counteract the shudder of aroused terror, however, but to allow his readers to enjoy simultaneously the sensations provoked by the incidents recounted and the relief consequent on awareness of the author's deliberate distantiation. Following the procedure adopted by De Quincey in Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts,⁸⁶ he dissociated moral considerations from acts of perversion or violence by insisting on the aesthetics of

85. See Carter, op.cit. pp. 108-109.

86. Schwob fired Fontainas with enthusiasm for the author of this book: "c'est sur son conseil que du même Thomas de (sic) Quincey j'ai tâché de transcrire en notre langue l'essai De l'Assassinat considéré comme un des Beaux-Arts, un livre d'épouvante volontairement froide, d'ironie insistante, et d'imperturbable humour [...]" op.cit., idem.

the deed; and with bland imperturbability told the remarkable achievements of Mr Burke and Mr Hare in the artistic despatch of their victims:

"M. Burke le questionnait sur les incidents les plus surprenants de son existence. C'était un écouteur insatiable que M. Burke. Les récit était toujours interrompu par M. Hare, avant le point du jour. La forme d'interruption de M. Hare était invariablement la même et très impérative. Pour interrompre le récit, M. Hare avait coutume de passer derrière le canapé et d'appliquer ses deux mains sur la bouche du conteur. Au même moment, M. Burke venait s'asseoir sur sa poitrine. Tous deux, en cette position, rêvaient, immobiles, à la fin de l'histoire qu'ils n'entendaient jamais. De cette manière, MM. Burke et Hare terminèrent un grand nombre d'histoires que le monde ne connaîtra point."⁸⁷

Yet, whatever the degree of mocking solemnity with which the acts of his eccentric heroes are presented, the recurring disparity between their aspirations and their actual lot in life betrays Schwob's concern with the unhappiness of the human condition, and, as Rémy de Gourmont observed, "à un très haut degré, devenue tout à fait supérieure et désintéressée, l'ironie confine à la pitié."⁸⁸ For Schwob, pity was embodied in the figure of the "petite prostituée", whose prototype was to be found, again, in De Quincey - the little Ann of the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater.⁸⁹ It was the coincidence in Monelle and her sisters of compassion and corruption that appealed to Schwob:

87. Vies imaginaires, p. 252.

88. 'Nouveaux Masques, Marcel Schwob', Mercure de France, January 1898, p. 80.

89. Le Livre de Monelle, 1964, pp. 10-11.

"Nelly dans l'horrible maison, Sonia ivre sur le banc du boulevard, Anne rapportant le verre vide chez le marchand de vin d'une ruelle obscure étaient peut-être cruelles et obscènes. Ce sont des créatures de chair. Elles sont sorties d'une impasse sombre pour donner un baiser de pitié sous la lampe allumée de la grande rue. En ce moment, elles étaient divines."⁹⁰

The Victorian obsession with sin and purity, coupled with a typically decadent taste for refinement of art under the appearance of artlessness, were to provide Schwob with ample material for the creation of the heroines of Le Livre de Monelle, "tourmentées d'égoïsme et de volupté et de cruauté et d'orgueil et de patience et de pitié, ne s'étant point encore trouvées."⁹¹ His "simplicité effroyablement complexe"⁹² delighted in the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the heroine of whose poem 'Jenny' might have been a sister of Monelle, and whose settings, legendary or mediaeval, were recalled in the candour and pious fervour, the rich ornamentation, the "lueur inquiétante, une lueur de lanterne sourde, petite mais très rapprochée",⁹³ of the Croisade des Enfants. Schwob's translation of 'The Selfish Giant' indicated that part of Oscar Wilde's fascination was the garb of ingenuousness with which the writer dissimulated his perversity when turning his talents to the fairy tale; and in 'L'Etoile de Bois', Schwob made a similar attempt to

90. *ibid.* p. 13.

91. *ibid.* p. 14. Many of these heroines have English or English-sounding names: Madge, Jeanie, Ilsée, Cice, Lilly, Nan.

92. Gourmont, *op.cit.* *idem.*

93. Léon Blum, L'Oeuvre, 1954, I 114.

colour his vision of the world with the naivety of a child. Thus the tone of Schwob's decadence bore the stamp of De Quincey and Rossetti, and was accentuated by his characterisation of the men and women in his tales. The Rosamonde of the imaginary life of Cyril Tourneur is typical of the heroines:

"une prostituée du Bankside, qui fréquentait les rues du bord de l'eau [..] Elle était très jeune et sa figure était innocente et blonde."94

Less numerous, but no less well-defined as a group, are the Poésque women - Béatrice, Arachné, Lilith - more mature, but still significantly subject to nervous or wasting diseases, and having the demonic power to keep their lovers under their spell even after their death. Few of the women of Schwob's tales have overtly erotic attributes: the "Madones Amoureuses" who satisfied his self-consciously blasphemous adolescent fixation with sensuality under the guise of virginity were to give way before more disturbing incarnations of voluptuousness, those whose extreme youth or debilitated condition precluded direct arousal of passion, but who in ignorance or innocence awoke perverted sensations in themselves and in others. Thus the child acting out the rôle of the seventh wife of Bluebeard, in expectation of a delicious death:

"Elle se mit à genoux. Il saisit ses cheveux, les ramena en avant, et leva la main.
Lente, les yeux clos et les cils frémissants,
le coin des lèvres agité par un sourire nerveux,
elle tendait le duvet de sa nuque, son cou, et ses

94. 'Cyril Tourneur, Poète Tragique', Vies Imaginaires, p. 196.

épaules voluptueusement rentrées au tranchant cruel
du sabre de Barbe-Bleue.

- Ou... ouh! cria-t-elle, ça va me faire mal!"⁹⁵

To such uses did Schwob put the Victorian myth of simplicity in what Meredith called "the veiled, virginal doll."

Schwob's men number a few corresponding decadent types, neurasthenics, opiomanes, sufferers from hereditary disease, sexual perverts and victims of mysterious passions and delusions: literary descendants of the heroes of De Quincey and Poe. The Rossetti of Schwob's tale is almost a case-study of the phenomenon, overcome in turn by languor and frenzy, transported by his restless imagination to the realms of a more glamorous past, and tormented by the strange loves he sought there. Among the English authors discussed by Schwob, Tourneur and Ford fall within the category of decadents through their morbidity, their preoccupation with the degeneracy of noble spirits, with passion consuming itself in sterility, with acts of gratuitous horror. The grisly humour of the one, the poignant and stately verse of the other served only to heighten by contrast the eccentricity of the characters portrayed in their drama.

In the main, however, the type of hero predominant in Schwob's tales and his preferences among English authors illustrated another theme of his work, that of the mauvais garçon, the leader of a criminal or dissolute life. The figure had been a mainstay of

95. 'La Voluptueuse', Le Livre de Monelle, pp. 43-44.

French Realist literature since the Goncourts in Germinie Lacerteux had explored the possibilities, already indicated by Baudelaire, of creating new sensations through the alliance of fastidious artistry in form with subject-matter whose abjection would normally have put it beyond the pale of letters. The combination further gratified the writer's taste in that it afforded him the opportunity to venture into domains remote from his bourgeois background; accounting for the choice of a popular milieu in Germinie Lacerteux, Edmond de Goncourt wrote that it was perhaps

"parce que je suis un littérateur bien né, et que le peuple, la canaille, si vous voulez, a pour moi l'attrait de populations inconnues, et non découvertes, quelque chose de l'exotique, que les voyageurs vont chercher [...]"⁹⁶

There was unquestionably an element of escapism in Schwob's curiosity about a walk of life alien to his own, but this could be rationalised by his sense of the basic identity of human nature, exposed in the preface to Le Roi au Masque d'Or. For Léautaud, Schwob's pleasure in the "spiritual company" of the lowest strata of mediaeval French society could be explained by

"l'effet d'une conscience étrangement complexe et clairvoyante, qui se cherchait et se confrontait sans cesse, qui examinait toutes les possibilités qu'elle aurait pu subir, dans le passé comme dans le présent, pour s'en élever ou déchoir d'autant."⁹⁷

An intimate personal significance underlay, therefore, in Schwob's

96. Journal, 1935, IV 288 (3rd December 1871).

97. Passetemps II, p. 21.

case, the vogue of the bas-fonds towards the end of the nineteenth century. It was in the apaches, prostitutes and street arabs of the capital that he saw the reflection of his desires and anxieties, as well as "leur rêve d'héroïsme irrégulier, leur érotisme brutal, leur nostalgie d'on ne sait quoi"⁹⁸ to which he thrilled in common with others of his generation. This being his attitude, he was scornful at first of Jean Richepin's Chansons de Gueux, of 1876, accusing the poet of knowing too little about the world of the down-and-outs to do more than depict its external features: "pour faire chanter le peuple, il faut avoir souffert comme lui, longtemps, cruellement; il faut l'avoir pratiqué autrement qu'en artiste et en observateur."⁹⁹ The true artists of the people, to Schwob's mind, were Steinlen, "l'homme du siècle qui a le mieux crayonné la psychologie du pochard,"¹⁰⁰ and Aristide Bruant, whose songs he held as exemplary in their kind, and at whose Mirliton he was a frequent visitor. There, and in other haunts of the Place Maubert and Montmartre, Schwob learnt the accents of the lowly and the outcast, and reproduced them both in his tales and in his scholarly linguistic papers. Whether as an artist or as an erudite, he believed that the two essential conditions of successful delineation of men of the people, and more especially of the mauvais garçon,

98. Tison-Braun, op.cit. p. 17.

99. 'Notes sur Paris, La Chanson Populaire', Phare de la Loire, 7th January 1889.

100. idem.

were a sympathy with their mentality and an understanding of their peculiar means of communication; and rare indeed were the creative writers who could rival him in such knowledge. Byvanck, though delighted to discover through Schwob the habitués of the Mirliton, was properly a historical philologist; and Arnold Bennett, who was similarly introduced to the public dance-halls of Montmartre, lacked the temperament which would have induced him to pursue the study of the reprobate. Among English writers, Schwob found few who put their researches to creative use, although many of his friends shared his passionate curiosity about the life of the underworld: Wilde with his familiarity with the jargon of the London delinquents, Whibley with his accounts of roguery in Elizabethan times, Henley with his collaboration on J.S. Farmer's famous dictionary of Slang and its Analogues Past and Present. In exchanges with these experts Schwob could add to his fund of linguistic knowledge, but for characterological insight he turned to the pages of Defoe and Fielding where he found a wealth of lived experience of the underside of society, distilled into figures whose vitality was unimpaired by obtrusive aesthetic or pseudo-scientific theorising. Jonathan Wild, Captain Jack, Moll Flanders and Roxana epitomised for Schwob the romanticism of the outlaw, in their defiance of conventional moral standards, their adoption of a way of life that was almost autonomous in its organisation and code of values, in the prowesses of their chosen careers of crime; they epitomised too the pathos of the malefactor, the degradation of his violence and thievery,

and conversely his bravado, humour or desperate courage in an unremitting struggle with society. Stevenson also, though on a less serious level, seemed to Schwob to have captured something of the essence of villainy in his stories of adventure among pirates and scoundrels: the fruits, perhaps, of his association with the world of the Edinburgh howffs, in the days of his rebellion against his Presbyterian upbringing. Yet impressed as Schwob was by the gallery of rogues in English literature, he was not tempted to include any specifically English miscreants among the heroes of his first two recueils: and the omission is all the more conspicuous in view of the number of decadents recalling their English origins.¹⁰¹ His blackguards were mostly of French extraction, from many periods of history, some anonymous, others already notorious, such as Cartouche, the hero of 'La Dernière Nuit'. It was in the Vies Imaginaires that Schwob introduced his group of pirates, and the murderers Burke and Hare; and his treatment of their careers sheds light on both the evolution of his own concept of the criminal, and the attitude he regarded as of paramount artistic importance in Defoe and Stevenson. For, despite his fascination with the sources of raw material for characters and the actions through which they translated their largely unconscious yearnings and impulses, his immediate concern as a creative writer was the possibility of transforming the historical and documentary matter into literature.

101. The hero of 'Les Faux-Visaiges', from Le Roi au Masque d'Or, is an Anglo-Norman lord, but the story is characteristic of Schwob's tales with mediaeval settings.

To this end, as we have seen, he at first ignored the moral and sociological principles inveterate in the vision of the English authors, in favour of a purely structural coordination of the traits prevalent in his rogues: their inadaptation to regular modes of existence, leading to rootlessness and susceptibility to the forces of superstition and the inexplicable. Later, with the Vies Imaginaires, Schwob revealed in his characters a stronger will to self-affirmation, baffled as always, however, by the impracticability of their aims; and, with this new strain, he sought to make the focal point of the tale not the crisis, the one act which would bring together and resolve the tensions of the plot, but the keynote to the personality of the hero, the symbol that gave significance to the man and his deeds. If Defoe, Fielding and Stevenson differed in many respects from Schwob in the handling of the criminal type, they left their mark on him in their urge to impose on their material the distinctive touch of their own personalities, thus transcending the limits of mere chronicling of events. Defoe was admired for his faculty of endowing Mary Frith, the supposed original of Moll Flanders, with the emotive force of his own solitary struggle with society; Stevenson for the "violence pittoresque" which coloured the cruder episodes from Esquemeling and Captain Charles Johnson, the sources of his pirate stories. With these examples in mind, Schwob allowed himself similar licence with regard to the histories of the buccaneers which formed the basis of the four pirate-biographies in his Vies. Indeed, he confessed himself

disappointed the day he read the life of Captain Kidd in Johnson, since it seemed to leave nothing unsaid. Schwob preferred the art which threw a veil over certain incidents of a man's life, leaving the reader to speculate about them on the basis of the salient details given: a refinement employed to good effect by Stevenson. Moreover, the dry humour with which Schwob narrated the caprices and discomfitures of his heroes showed him capable of a double distantiation from a theme in which he was, at bottom, subjectively involved - by his insistence that composition should be the predominant factor in the adaptation of the adventures of criminals, and by his provision of a comic counterbalance to the quasi-heroic stance which he had permitted in certain of the other characters. Thus, although English literature furnished Schwob with comparatively few mauvais garçons, it did help him to develop an interest in the type and to work out methods of presentation: a contribution which he constantly acknowledged in his favourite reading and his comments on English authors. Nonetheless, to pretend that this contribution was indispensable to his image of the bas-fonds would be mistaken: his research on Villon, and the ambience of the French literary milieu in the late 1880's were influences undoubtedly as potent and as stimulating.

The criminals and decadents in Schwob's tales, already difficult to distinguish at times, merged also in the figure of the superman (in the Nietzschean sense of the term), presented under various guises in the Vies Imaginaires. Surpassing those of the two other groups

in the dynamism of his pursuit of the unattainable, the force of his obsessions, the superman further set himself apart by the conviction of his own divinity or of his superiority over the common run of mankind in his adoption of heaven-defying values. Empedocles, Herostratos, Cyril Tourneur, so many incarnations of the Antichrist, saw their arrogance provoke catastrophe and death, the revenge of the universal Will on their attempts to thwart it: for Schwob, though fired by the more life-affirming doctrines of Nietzsche, remained mindful of the more sombre philosophy of the latter's master, Schopenhauer. Yet although the unfailing recurrence of a violent or tragic end to each of the careers outlined in the Vies Imaginaires implied an interest in the irony of the perdition of the overweening,¹⁰² Schwob's deeper concern was manifestly with the expansion of the personality, the catalogue of audacious and extravagant deeds, the challenge to established ideas. Of this type of hero, Cyril Tourneur is one of the most striking examples: at once awesome and vulnerable, a demi-god by his supposed divine parentage, he is struck dead by a thunderbolt for his blasphemous pretensions. The Elizabethan heroes, both in real life and in literature, were of course especially suitable for treatment as supermen, although in order to assimilate their motives to those of the modern Nietzschean, Schwob was obliged to play down the moral preoccupations which underlay the drama of Tourneur and Ford - even to the point of making the heroes' punishment seem an act of their disdainful volition, rather than of outraged

102. See the chapter 'Death' in Hobbs, op.cit. pp. 159-179.

providence.

The same tendency to deify may be discerned in Schwob's attitude to the English writers he discusses. He liked to see Defoe and Meredith as solitary giants, misunderstood, even spurned, by an uncomprehending society, and condemned to seek their recompense in art, transposing symbolically the steps of their painful struggle for existence, or the workings of their prodigious intellect. That Schwob found so much matter for hero-worship in English literature is perhaps an indication that his instinctive admiration for the superman was fostered by readings in this field: and indeed, as it has been often observed, the Victorian age was that of the cult of great men.¹⁰³ Carlyle, in his book On Heroes, had sanctioned veneration for the Noble Practical Man, and one trend of later nineteenth-century biography was to elevate its subjects to a godlike level, virtually ignoring their human weaknesses and shortcomings. This was a consequence of the displacement of man by science from his hitherto secure position at the centre of animal creation; if the multitude was blind and lost, then redemption for humanity must be sought in a few outstanding spirits, personifications of the most noble virtues. Schwob's apotheosis of the individual was similarly a reply to a social condition, but formed a complete contrast to the Victorian solution in its negation of the customary pieties. His ironic accounts of the heroism of pirates, incendiaries

103. See Harold Nicolson, Tennyson. Aspects of his Life, Character and Poetry, 1923, pp. 3-5.

and demi-gods could be taken as an urbane satire on the works of edification which passed as biography on the other side of the Channel; and the brevity of his studies, purporting to give the essence of a character in a few succinct traits, certainly marked them off from the ponderous compilations of anecdote and moralising. Nonetheless, despite his tacit mockery of hero-worship for fictional characters, Schwob genuinely admired those whose aim was emancipation and dominion, at least in the abstract. The imperialists Henley and Whibley were his friends, Kipling a literary idol; and he had contacts in the Cecil Rhodes circle.¹⁰⁴ Once more, therefore, Schwob's treatment of the superman theme seems to demonstrate that he assimilated from English literature what appealed to his own temperament, using it for ambivalent purposes, according to the dictates of his divided nature.

. . . .

"Admirons, en passant, qu'on soit toujours, quoi qu'on fasse, trop de son temps."¹⁰⁵ The aptness of this observation in Schwob's case will, it is hoped, have been confirmed in the topics discussed in the foregoing pages: his writings reflected, in their content and in their form, "les doutes, les angoisses, les aspirations d'un âge littéraire."¹⁰⁶ In retrospect, his conformity to the image of

104. It was on his voyage to the South Seas that Schwob discovered the degrading aspects of colonialism: see MST pp. 181-182.

105. Raymond Schwab, 'Marcel Schwob. Un Enchanteur de Masques', Les Nouvelles Littéraires, 30th December 1933.

106. Michel Bréal, 'Les Obsèques de Marcel Schwob', L'Echo de Paris, 2nd March 1905, quoted in Green, op.cit. pp. 10-11.

the fin-de-siècle writer is so marked as to cause the reader at times to lose sight of the features which constitute his originality, or his uniqueness, to use Schwob's own concept. In the essentials of his aesthetics, themes and literary techniques he was indebted to the great moving spirits of the nineteenth-century tradition. His work was permeated by the sensibility of the most dedicated votaries of art in his generation; and in this sensibility, the French and English strains converged and blended harmoniously. It was those who were indifferent to Schwob's manner who insisted on the derivativeness of his fiction, on a preponderance of exotic elements. The validity of such criticisms could best be proved by a close stylistic analysis of such tales as 'Lilith' and 'Cyril Tourneur'; if, in the following chapters, my study of them has been chiefly historical and comparative, the reason is that examination would tend to support the main contention of the present section. - that, whatever the prominence of his borrowings from English literature, Schwob assimilated them to the groundwork of his personal theories, and to those of the French literary schools congenial to his thinking. Hence the emphasis, in this thesis, on the non-creative aspects of Schwob's interest in English literature. His works of criticism, erudition and translation have the advantage of revealing more explicitly the extent of his understanding of the field, the impact of his discoveries on his fiction, and the parallelism of his procedures in critical appreciation and creative work. Not only do they throw light on what Schwob himself converted to his use;

they illustrate also what French literature in general was able to add to its patrimony, through his mediation.

CHAPTER III

The Elizabethan and Stuart Drama(i) Schwob and the Theatre of the 1890's.

Although it was not until 1896 that Schwob turned to translations of Shakespeare and to the composition of original plays, his association with the theatre and his passion for the Elizabethan drama dated from a much earlier period. From 1891 he was in contact with Maurice Pottecher and Paul Claudel; indeed, he was one of the first to realise the genius of the author of Tête d'Or.¹ In the same year, through Octave Mirbeau,² he met Maurice Maeterlinck, whose work he greatly admired.³ Thus, moving in the circles of the young dramatists, it was inevitable that he should be drawn into the activities of the small theatre groups. In March 1893 he was mentioned in the Mercure de France⁴ as a regular visitor at Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art, and when in May 1893, after the performance of Pelléas et Mélisande, Aurélien Lugné-Poe

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1. See Jacques Petit, 'Autour de la publication de Tête d'Or', Cahiers Paul Claudel I, 1959, pp. 135-170.
 2. CPC 5136 p. 91. Fifteen letters from Schwob to Mirbeau are in the Jacques Doucet library, and copies were made by Champion. The first letter accompanied the loan of Tête d'Or: "Je suis heureux de pouvoir vous le faire connaître, à vous qui m'avez appris Maeterlinck."
 3. Renard, in a letter to Schwob of the 2nd January 1892, mentioned an article on Maeterlinck requested by Alfred Vallette for the Mercure de France: Correspondance, p. 110.
 4. op.cit. p. 284.

decided to found his own company, l'Oeuvre, Schwob's knowledge of European drama was very helpful to the young director.⁵

Lugné-Poe and Maeterlinck saw the Oeuvre as a stage not only for the Symbolist drama but also for plays from earlier times, and from other countries.⁶ Thus Ibsen, Strindberg and Björnson formed a large part of the répertoire, and the English theatre was also represented. In 1893 Lugné-Poe consulted Schwob about an adaptation of Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher, which seems to have come to nothing;⁷ but John Ford's tragedy 'Tis Pity She's a Whore inaugurated the second season, Otway's Venice Preserv'd the next, and Shakespeare's Measure for Measure the sixth, in 1898.

From 1896, when Alfred Jarry's Ubu Roi was dedicated to him, there is no further mention of Schwob's name in the memoirs of Lugné-Poe. In the main, Schwob's efforts thereafter were directed towards the Comédie Française, or Sarah Bernhardt and the commercial theatre. His liaison with Marguerite Moreno may have accounted for the change, as well as the breaking up of the earlier circle of his

5. Lugné-Poe had met Schwob "chez Maurice Pottecher, avec Claudel." Champion has little to say about their relations: in CPC 5133.1 p. 130 he mentions a quarrel, without giving the reasons or the date.

Schwob, after reading Byvanck's chapter on Ibsen in his Poëzie en leven in de 19de eeuw, Haarlem, 1889, studied the Norwegian dramatist in depth. Accompanied by Renard, he went to Geneva to lecture on Peer Gynt and Brand, on the 8th and 10th February 1893, at the University. See the letters to Mirbeau, MST p. 104, and OC III 169.

6. See Jacques Robichez, Le Symbolisme au Théâtre, 1957, pp. 291-296.

7. CPC 5134 p. 14.

friends. Maurice Pottecher returned to his native Bussang to found the Théâtre du Peuple, in September 1895;⁸ and although relations with Maeterlinck, Camille Mauclair, Henri Bataille, Claudel and others remained amicable, their careers took them different ways.

The translations of Hamlet and Macbeth may be regarded as the practical outcome of Schwob's delight in the Elizabethan drama, and the communication to a wider public of the discoveries he had previously shared with his intimates. Among the authors Schwob read to his hosts during his visits, Shakespeare and his fellow poets took a place of honour. Jules Renard, at Schwob's insistence, acquainted himself with The Merchant of Venice, and after finishing Henry IV wrote: "Ah! ce Falstaff! Je vous dois de bonnes lectures."⁹

Pottecher also noted Schwob's predilection for the old dramatists:

"Je garde un souvenir inoubliable des veillées prolongées fort avant dans la nuit, où il nous fit connaître quelques pièces des dramaturges contemporains de Shakespeare et jusqu'alors presque ignorés en France. Ces soirées se passaient d'ordinaire chez Léon Daudet. Il nous fit connaître ainsi telle pièce à la fois raffinée et barbare des dramaturges élisabéthains, Beaumont et Fletcher, Massinger, Webster, Ford, pleine de meurtres, de violences, d'amour, de délicatesse, d'incestes, d'or et de sang."¹⁰

Talking of the Hamlet and the Francesca da Rimini, he conjectured:

"Peut-être ces réalisations théâtrales, dont il tira quelques justes profits, lui rappelèrent-elles le temps où nous projetions de jouer ensemble dans

8. See Maurice Pottecher, Le Théâtre du Peuple, 1896.

9. Correspondance, p. 126, (24th June 1893).

10. 'Portraits et Souvenirs: Marcel Schwob', Le Monde Français, June 1947, pp. 440-441.

l'atelier d'un artiste et devant un petit public d'initiés Le Roi Lear. Il rêvait d'interpréter ce rôle en personne, - la jeunesse ne doute de rien!"¹¹

Was Schwob's knowledge of the English drama exceptional for a Frenchman at that time? If we are to judge by the catalogue of his library, which lists all the major dramatists from Marlowe to Ford, his explorations appear to be those of the specialist rather than of the dilettante. Having thoroughly studied the archaisms and the slang of the times, he had no trouble with passages which would have proved a stumbling-block to the less prepared. Despite the growing prestige of the Elizabethan drama in Symbolist circles there were few rivals for Schwob in this period of English literature.

However, a fair number of Schwob's contemporaries were acquainted with the Elizabethan drama, and this was a great step forward. Surveys of its familiarisation in France show that it had aroused little general interest in the first half of the nineteenth century. The discovery of Shakespeare by the Romantics did not lead to curiosity about the other playwrights of his day, except in a very small circle, and it was Stendhal chiefly who upheld their cause.¹² A handful of critics made limited contributions to French knowledge about the lesser figures: Armand Morlaix in the Revue des Deux Mondes of the 15th November 1835 wrote on 'La Tragédie

11. *ibid.* p. 445.

12. See A. Brulé, 'Panorama du Théâtre Elizabéthain en France', Le Théâtre Elizabéthain, ed. Henri Fluchère, 1940, pp. 314-321, (special number of the Cahiers du Sud, June-July 1933).

avant Shakespeare'; Philarète Chasles, in his Etudes sur W. Shakspeare, Marie Stuart et l'Arétin, 1852, included an article on the English theatre before Shakespeare, naming the most notable dramatists, and discussing at length Ben Jonson and Webster. Four years later, A.F. Villemain analysed the drama of Marlowe and the Catilina of Ben Jonson in three articles in the Journal des Savants of January, March and May 1856.

In his study 'Du Théâtre Anglais avant Shakspeare', Chasles had made it plain that analysis of the minor dramatists' art served a higher purpose:

"Pour comprendre Shakspeare dans son ensemble, c'est là ce qu'il faut étudier. Les auteurs dramatiques du même temps et du même pays, inférieurs au grand homme, offrent des matériaux précieux pour cette investigation."¹³

It was from 1863 that the Elizabethan theatre began to be studied as a field in itself. Hippolyte Taine brought out the Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise, the first volume of which contained a survey of the drama from the Renaissance to John Ford; the second began with chapters devoted to Ben Jonson and Shakespeare. Also in 1863 appeared Alfred Mézières's Prédécesseurs et Contemporains de Shakspeare, to be followed a year later by the Contemporains et Successeurs de Shakspeare. Mézières contrasted the French ignorance of the Elizabethan dramatists with the prestige they enjoyed in England and Germany, and referred to the studies of Lamb, Hazlitt, Payne Collier, Ulrici and Tieck. The initiative of Taine and

13. Chasles, op.cit. p. 95.

Mézières was supported by the first sustained effort to present a comprehensive series of translations:¹⁴ Ernest Lafond, in 1863, began his "Contemporains de Shakespeare" with versions of four plays by Ben Jonson: The Alchemist, The Silent Woman, Everyman in his Humour, and Volpone. The next year saw translations of Massinger, The Fatal Dowry, The Bondsman and The Picture, and 1865 came a volume of Webster and Ford, with extracts from 'Tis Pity and the complete text of The Broken Heart. Lafond was preparing translations of Lyly and Marlowe when his work was cut short by death, in 1866.

During the next twenty years there were few renderings into French of the Elizabethan drama, although the works of Taine and Mézières were frequently reprinted. Then there was a new upsurge of interest, described here by Lugné-Poe.

"Vers 1891-1892, à Paris et à Bruxelles, la jeunesse de la poésie dramatique traversa une crise singulière. Elle se révolta soudain, le théâtre libre, ou le théâtre naturaliste paraissant chanceler et ne pas se renouveler. Elle se rejeta sur Shakespeare, ses contemporains, et même vers les pré-shakespeariens. Le Théâtre d'Art, dirigé par Paul Fort, donne le "Faust" de Marlowe Porel (sic) à l'Odéon, (15) "Macbeth", "Beaucoup de Bruit pour Rien", etc."¹⁶

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14. For earlier translations, see Madeleine Horn-Monval, Traductions et Adaptations Françaises du Théâtre Etranger, 1963, vol. 5.
15. On the 5th February 1892, at the Gaité Montparnasse, in the unpublished translation of François de Nion and Casimir Stryenski.
16. 'Le Théâtre', l'Avenir, 12th April 1934: quoted in the file of press-cuttings in the Arsenal library, Atelier 1934-1935, Rt 3745 p. 18. See also Jules Guillemot, 'Shakespeare sur la Scène Française', Revue Bleue, 6th February 1892, pp. 176-177.

The realisation that a number of English men of letters were exploring the old drama may have provoked emulation on the other side of the Channel: Swinburne contributed an important series of articles to The Nineteenth Century, between 1886 and 1895,¹⁷ and J.A. Symonds had published his Shakspeare's Predecessors in the English Drama in 1884. The Mermaid Series of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists, initiated by Havelock Ellis in 1887, provided a representative selection of the major figures and their best work. From the 1880's, allusions to the Elizabethan drama are to be found in French writers. The scene in Pelléas where Golaud drags Mélisande by the hair has been likened to the confrontation of Annabella and Soranzo in Ford's 'Tis Pity; and Elémir Bourges, in his novel Le Crépuscule des Dieux, put to good use his reading of the translations of Lafond with his references to Fletcher, Ben Jonson and Webster. There is in particular an episode where the declaration of love between Annabella and Giovanni from Ford's play is read to the brother and sister Hans Ulric and Christiane, causing them to realise their own incestuous passion.¹⁸ In the preface to his second novel, Les

17. See W.R. Nicoll and T. Wise, 'A Contribution to the Bibliography of the Writings of Algernon Charles Swinburne', Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century, 1896, II 365-370.

18. Le Crépuscule des Dieux, 1884, pp. 95-101. Bourges may have met Schwob in 1892, when Les Oiseaux was serialised in the Echo; he thought very highly of Schwob's Le Roi au Masque d'Or and the Vies Imaginaires. In a letter of the 8th December 1897 Bourges wrote: "Mon ami Schwob a passé deux mois à Valvins. Comme je suis assez sot pour ne pas savoir l'anglais, il m'a traduit, en improvisant sa traduction sur le texte comme une lecture ordinaire, Le Vengeur, de Cyril Tourneur, L'Innocent, de Middleton, et La Femme tuée avec tendresse, de Heywood.

oiseaux s'envolent et les fleurs tombent, Bourges declared: "Je me suis fait l'écolier des grands poètes anglais du temps d'Elizabeth et de Jacques, et du plus grand d'entre eux, Shakespeare..."¹⁹

With this reawakening of interest, translations of the drama began to appear again. In 1889 Félix Rabbe brought out the Théâtre of Christopher Marlowe, mentioning in the foreword the previous studies of the early dramatists, and especially the more recent works of Swinburne and Symonds.²⁰ Georges Eekhoud gave versions of The Duchess of Malfi in 1890, of Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster in 1895, and of Ford's Perkin Warbeck in 1902. The Brussels review La Société Nouvelle published his studies of Webster and of Beaumont and Fletcher in 1895, of Ford in 1896, and his adaptation of Marlowe's Edward II from December 1896 to January 1897. Eekhoud had also written, in 1893, Au Siècle de Shakespeare, an evocation of life in Elizabethan England, as a background to the drama.

This summary review of the growth of curiosity about Shakespeare's fellow dramatists discloses the emergence of two approaches, the first objective and scholarly, the second subjective and creative. Although the later generation did not disdain the historical approach,

Ç'a été une grande joie pour moi et de bonnes séances d'admiration et d'émotion!" Quoted from André Lebois, Les Tendances du Symbolisme à travers l'Oeuvre d'Elémir Bourges, 1952, pp. 149-150. (See also Lebois's 'Elémir Bourges et les Elizabéthains', Revue de Littérature Comparée, 1948, pp. 237-254).

19. Lebois, op.cit. p. 150.

20. See Joseph Texte's informative review of Rabbe's work, 'Christopher Marlowe', RDM, 15th February 1890, pp. 892-915.

it much preferred to relate the Elizabethan theatre to modern ideas in both art and life. Lugné-Poe, as we have seen, attributed Symbolist enthusiasm to a reaction against the naturalist drama, but there is the further reason that the young poets identified themselves with the Renaissance heroes in a general movement of revolt. Their attitude is clearly stated in Jean Richepin's foreward to Rabbe's translation of Marlowe, where an attempt is made to account for the new vogue.

"Parce que la Renaissance a eu, comme nous, quoique avec des raisons différentes, l'amour effréné de toutes les manifestations de la vie, et surtout de cette manifestation suprême: la révolte. Parce que la Renaissance a, comme notre époque, déchainé l'individu. Parce que la Renaissance a été, comme nous, en rut de curiosité, d'indépendance, de bataille, de blasphème. Parce que la Renaissance est, dans l'histoire de l'humanité, ce qu'est notre fin de siècle, un moment de tremblement de terre et d'orage, une halte en pleine anarchie libre, une de ces heures où l'on fait ribote de l'existence."²¹

This disposition to rebellion was to channel itself into one particular branch of political agitation: the anarchist movement. The years 1892 to 1894 saw "l'ère des attentats,"²² with the crimes of Ravachol, Vaillant, Henry and Caserio. Many of the poets associated with the Oeuvre were in sympathy with the aims of the anarchists, wrote in their reviews, even actively helped them.²³ Félix Fénéon was brought to court on such charges in the "Procès des

21. Christopher Marlowe, Théâtre, tr. Rabbe, 1889, I vii.

22. See this chapter in Jean Maitron, Histoire du Mouvement Anarchiste en France, (1880-1914), 1951, pp. 189-230.

23. See Robichez, op.cit. pp. 211-214.

Trente." Schwob himself was a fervent advocate of the anarchist cause when desirous of proving his advanced political views, and affected great admiration for the exponents of "la propagande par le fait." "Quand je pense que nous comparions la mort de Ravachol à celle de Socrate - c'est Schwob, le sage et savant Schwob, qui a écrit cela!" recalled Camille Mauclair.²⁴ Léon Daudet also remembered Schwob's scandalous outbursts:

"En politique, Schwob était anarchiste comme nous l'étions tous alors, plus ou moins, dans le désarroi général des esprits même cultivés, dans la déception, déjà fertile en scandales, du parlementarisme... Donc Marcel admirait les compagnons libertaires - comme on disait alors - et, le jour de l'assassinat de Carnot(25) tombant à Champrosay parmi de braves gens consternés, il éprouva le besoin de faire l'apologie de Caserio et de son crime."²⁶

His attitude, rightly condemned by Daudet as "au-dessous de notre âge et de notre compréhension," could be interpreted as rejoicing in the symbolic defeat of a bourgeoisie served by Church and Army, and arrogant in the exercise of its power, by the representative of a class deprived of every human attribute save its capacity to produce. The allegiance of the younger writers inevitably went to those who rebelled against the established order in the name of the reintegration of the personality. The quest of the Symbolists, the

24. Servitude et Grandeur Littéraires, 1922, p. 115. The execution, on the 11th July 1892, inspired Schwob with a 'Dialogue entre Phédon et Cébès', recounting the socratic death of Démochole, printed in the Echo de Paris on the 17th July 1892.

25. The 24th June 1894.

26. Souvenirs V 106-107.

culte du moi preached by Maurice Barrès, were both, in their different ways, symptomatic of a resistance to social pressures and a desire to realise the potentialities of man by ridding him of his sense of alienation from the universe. Hence the attractions of a literature which proclaimed the possibilities of exalting, untrammelled communion between the emancipated individual and the world around him:

"l'anti-cartésianisme de pensée et d'expression rapprochait deux époques pour lesquelles le théâtre ne saurait connaître de frontières entre le quotidien et l'éternel, entre la terre et les enfers, entre le monde de la pègre comme des rois, et le "surunivers" des esprits, entre la volonté dictant brutalement les apparences et l'inconscient souverain, entre le vociféré et l'inexprimé, entre "être" et "ne pas être."²⁷

Because of this deep-rooted striving towards the expansion of the personality, the literary manifestations of anarchy outlasted the political reactions in artistic circles. Camille Mauclair's pages give a humorous and sympathetic account of the "indignation généreuse" which swept over his generation in the early 1890's, and the ensuing disenchantment with the character, methods and aims of the anarchists.²⁸ Inevitably there were many who were more attracted by the romantic trappings than by a genuine ardour for the liberation of the proletariat; and the bestiality of many of the supposed champions of the oppressed masses found fewer apologists in the course of time.

27. Paul Blanchart, 'Le Théâtre Contemporain et les Elisabethains', Etudes Anglaises, April-June 1960, p. 148.

28. op.cit. pp. 114-123. See also Jacques Monfrier, 'Symbolisme et Anarchie', Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, April-June 1965, pp. 233-238.

Schwob, whatever his artistic pleasure in the energy and single-mindedness of the scourges of the bourgeois, had an alter ego which abounded in moral disapproval in the pages of the Phare de la Loire. He retained enough lucidity to see the futility of outrages against isolated members of a detested class, and the far from noble motives of the perpetrators of the bomb attacks. Here, for example, is his appraisal of Emile Henry:

"En lui de dénote clairement la haine de la société, avec tous les raffinements de cruauté imaginables. Mais, en même temps, on voit se manifester la même espèce d'orgueil que chez Ravachol. Henry a un sourire de vanité en expliquant le mécanisme de ses engins, en écoutant les développements du président sur les plans qu'il a dressés. Il est très fier de son intelligence. On reconnaît ici la vieille maladie d'Érostrate."²⁹

A more subtle expression of his misgivings about the kind of man and society the anarchists were trying to substitute for the existing model is to be found in his satire on the eleutheromane utopia, printed in the Echo de Paris on the 14th August 1892 under the title 'L'Ile de la Liberté.'³⁰ While in his discussions with kindred spirits and confrontations with upholders of traditional authority Schwob exalted the ideals of revolt, tension and violence, his own way of life showed that these were largely cerebral. His ambiguous

29. OC VIII 44 (29th April 1894).

30. This text was added to 'Le Deuxième Phédon' in the last essay of Spicilège, entitled 'L'Anarchie'. The two essays thus form the only written fragments of a book on the subject that Schwob was planning in the summer of 1892: see Renard, Correspondance, p. 117 (13th August 1892).

feelings towards those who overstepped the prescribed limits seem to inform the two studies of Stuart dramatists which he wrote when the anarchist activity was at its most intense: his talk on John Ford, delivered before an audience caught up in the "snobisme passager", turns the defeat of transgression into a quasi-triumph through the simple expedient of ignoring all Ford's allusions to the moral blindness of his hero; and the vie imaginaire of Cyril Tourneur borders on the fantastic in its approach, treating the macabre incidents of his life with an awe that might be taken also as disguised mockery. On the one hand there is admiration for heroes who push to their limits the exigencies of human appetites, on the other a regretful realisation that the most presumptuous may be the most unsuited temperamentally to enjoy the fruits of their endeavours. In Giovanni and the fictional Tourneur, Schwob achieves a finely-poised balance between his theoretical adulation and his practical disapprobation. What interested him in Ford and Tourneur was the personality of the hero, and his two studies present his conception of the Renaissance man at the precarious summit of his glory.

It seems almost natural that the only testimony of Schwob's passion for the Elizabethan drama should be his evocations of Giovanni and Cyril Tourneur, since his tales show his abiding affection for the outlaw, the exceptional being. In these he found the capacity for adventure, the "spiritual shock", as Champion defined the term, which he himself could experience only vicariously. It was not merely the psychological abnormality which held his attention, but its manifestations: hence his curiosity about argot,

superstitious practices, refined forms of criminal activity, and his care in choosing exotic settings, in a bygone age. The Elizabethan heroes answered all these predilections, with their independence, dynamism and superhuman aspirations, and their arigin in a picturesque civilisation of the past. Their special position can be seen most clearly through comparison with the heroes of the tales of Coeur Double and the Roi au Masque d'Or. Here, the characters are the victims of their passions, their superstition, their ignorance; even their occasional virtues are instinctive, unreflective. In the Vies Imaginaires, which date from the same period as the two studies under discussion, there is a recurrence of some of these themes, but we find at the same time, in many of the tales, a new tone, a new conception of the heroes, which makes them conscious of their obsession and rejoice in it. The case of 'Erostrate, incendiaire', will serve as an illustration:

"Il attesta que son âme, en ce sens, était la plus parfaite, et qu'il avait voulu le proclamer. Il ne donna point d'autre cause à son action que la passion de la gloire et la joie d'entendre proférer son nom [..] il aurait été tout ensemble roi, philosophe et dieu, unique entre les hommes."³¹

Schwob's presentation of self-styled gods, Empédocles, Herostratos, Cyril Tourneur, or contemners of the world, Giovanni, Crates, Cecco Angiolieri, points to an external influence which began to hold sway about the end of 1894. Apart from the doctrine of anarchy already

31. Vies Imaginaires, 1957, pp. 41-42.

referred to, there is obviously the teaching of Nietzsche.

Although Schwob had discovered the works of the German philosopher in 1891,³² probably before the publication of the article of Tédor de Wyzewa which launched Nietzsche in France,³³ the influence of his thought is nowhere visible in the Roi au Masque d'Or. Indeed, most of the series of tales had been completed by the end of the year, although the volume itself did not appear until December 1892. The Mimes, being of Hellenistic inspiration, also escaped Nietzschean overtones; but with the Livre de Monelle, which Champion called "le manuel de nihilisme de Marcel Schwob", one would expect definite traces of Nietzsche's ideas right from the first group of tales, later called 'Les soeurs de Monelle', which were published from the 12th October 1892. On the contrary, the only section where such ideas are discernable is the 'Paroles de Monelle'; and this was not printed in the Echo with the rest of the chapters, but appeared only with the publication of the volume, in June 1894. This new section, placed at the head of the book, helps to confer

32. See Byvanck, 'Marcel Schwob', De Gids, May 1905, II 335.

33. 'Friedrich Nietzsche, le dernier métaphysicien', La Revue Bleue, 7th November 1891. In a letter of the 12th February 1892 Byvanck wrote to Schwob: "Vous vous rappelez qu'avec Barrès nous avons parlé de Nietzsche à propos de l'article de Wyzewa dans La Revue Bleue." He asked Schwob to procure a copy of Nietzsche's last but one book: "(ce n'est pas Geburt der Tragödie ou So sprach Zarathustra: ce n'est pas non plus Hammerschläge), ça traite Über die moralische Werthe." A few days later he wrote with the exact title: "Jenseits von Guten und Bösen." CPC 5096 letters 24 and 25.

a Nietzschean tone on the rest of the work, where none had been suggested during the first issue. Although the name of Nietzsche was not mentioned by Schwob, the inspiration was obvious. Max Nordau, in a letter of the 29th June, wrote:

"C'est l'oeuvre d'un artiste exquis, dont le seul tort est d'avoir trop lu le malheureux Nietzsche et le pauvre Maeterlinck. Votre livre représente une phase très passagère de votre évolution, phase que déjà, à l'heure qu'il est, vous avez dépassée. Dans votre oeuvre totale, la Monelle restera une borne milliaire bien curieuse."³⁴

Nordau was mistaken: the Vies Imaginaires, published in the course of 1895, were to illustrate in many cases the putting into practice of the words of Monelle:

"Prends cette torche, dit-elle, et brûle. Brûle tout sur la terre et au ciel [..]"
Détruis, car toute création vient de la destruction."³⁵

The life of Cyril Tourneur especially is moulded by the Nietzschean ethic; and the portrait of Giovanni in the talk on John Ford also owes much to the concept of the Uebermensch. Their atheism, their defiance of the moral law accorded well with the interpretation of Nietzsche developed by his French readers:

"Sa révision audacieuse de toutes les traditions morales et sociales, son exaltation de l'individu, opposé au "troupeau", ses appels impérieux à la joie, à la lutte, au noble triomphe du surhomme, - tout cela prêché sans dogmatisme, dans une langue lyrique, sonore et symbolique [..]"³⁶

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34. CPC 5133.1 p. 73.

35. Le Livre de Monelle, 1959, pp. 15, 16.

36. Renée Lang, André Gide et la Pensée Allemande, 1949, p. 23.

If the foregoing survey seems to have brought us a long way from English literature, it is because the appreciation of Schwob's intentions, and the evaluation of his achievements would be impossible without reference to the background against which he wrote. The combination of the anarchist terror of the previous years and the growing influence of Nietzsche, produced a situation of intellectual tension, unbridled individualism, and a preoccupation with nihilism on the one hand and the triumphant affirmation of life on the other. In this context, Schwob's interpretation of the Elizabethan drama is not only acceptable, but also almost inevitable.

At the same time, it should be born in mind that the studies of Ford and Tournear are extreme examples of the mentality of the period. We need not suppose that Schwob saw the Elizabethan drama exclusively in terms of monomaniac malcontents and revengers; but since records of his readings consist mainly of lists of titles and authors, it is difficult to pronounce on his other views. There is evidence that even during the time when Schwob was most under the spell of Nietzsche, he was also attracted to the opposite pole of compassion, as preached by Tolstoy. Significantly, Monelle first comes as a messenger of pity: "Car, vois-tu, les petites prostituées ne sortent qu'une fois de la foule nocturne pour une tâche de bonté"³⁷; and at the same time as he was writing the Vies Imaginaires, he was

37. Le Livre de Monelle, p. 13.

also composing La Croisade des Enfants, a legend steeped with the simple faith of the Middle Ages.

Thus the two studies of the Elizabethan drama which we are about to consider are of interest not as works of erudition, but as illustrations of the spirit of the age, and of a particular tendency in Marcel Schwob's critical attitudes.

(ii) John Ford: 'Tis Pity She's a Whore

In accordance with his policy of presenting unfamiliar foreign plays, old and new, at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, Lugné-Poe opened his second season on the 6th November 1894 with John Ford's tragedy 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. This was apparently the first revival of the play for more than two hundred years.³⁸ Lugné-Poe himself seems to have had only a limited knowledge of the Stuart drama, but the Symbolist poets associated with the Oeuvre had in many cases a wider acquaintance, and welcomed the opportunity to introduce one of the more notable tragedies to the French stage. The suggestion for the performance of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore came from Marcel Schwob. Soon after the establishment of L'Oeuvre, when Lugné-Poe consulted him about the suitability of Björnson's Over Aevne, Schwob wrote with assurances of his readiness to help if Lugné-Poe decided to continue with the project: -

"mais je pense que nous ne tirerons pas honneur de l'entreprise. Ne songez-vous pas à prendre l'extraordinaire pièce de Ford, 'Tis pity she's a Whore? Mais il faut un poète pour la traduire."³⁹

Lugné-Poe read the play, and kept it in mind for a later date.

In the spring of 1894 one of Mallarmé's Tuesday receptions brought Schwob into contact with Charles Whibley, and we may conjecture that Ford's plays were discussed in subsequent meetings at the rue

38. 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, ed. N.W. Bawcutt, 1966, pp. xi-xii. Samuel Pepys recorded a performance in his diary, on the 9th September 1661.

39. Lugné-Poe, Acrobaties, 1931, p. 69. This letter must date from about October 1893.

de Rome, for during the summer of that year, Mallarmé, debating with Lugné-Poe the merits of various plays, also proposed 'Tis Pity. "Devant Valvins, Stéphane Mallarmé m'avait indiqué une pièce de Ford, celle-là même que Schwob m'avait aussi conseillée..."⁴⁰

There were now no further grounds for hesitation, and preparations for the staging of the play began.⁴¹ Mallarmé, invited to give the introductory talk on Ford and his play, sent a polite refusal;⁴² and it was Schwob who came to present the tragedy on the first night.⁴³

Meanwhile, at Schwob's suggestion, the task of translating the play had been undertaken by Maurice Maeterlinck.⁴⁴ There is evidence that Schwob himself began a French version, since the catalogue of the Edouard Champion collection mentions a set of notes, and a list of words translated by Charles Whibley.⁴⁵ He would probably have set to work in the spring of 1894, in the hope that Lugné-Poe would not refuse to produce the play once a translation had been completed. His failure to make headway would be explained by the need to devote

40. *ibid.* p. 115.

41. In his essay on Stevenson, Spicilège, 1960, pp. 76-77, Schwob mentions the arrangement of the scene where Giovanni enters with the heart of Annabella on his dagger's point.

42. Lugné-Poe, *op.cit.* p. 117.

43. See Renard, Journal, pp. 246-247 (6th November 1894).

44. Lugné-Poe, 'Le Théâtre', L'Avenir, 12th April 1934, (Arsenal Rt 3745 p. 18).

45. OC III 172.

all his time to Moll Flanders in the summer and autumn,⁴⁶ and perhaps also by the practical confirmation of his earlier suspicion that a poet's hand would be required.

Maeterlinck himself, despite his experience as poet and dramatist, found that he had accepted no easy assignment. Even before he came to grips with the translation he voiced his misgivings in letters to Lugué-Poe.⁴⁷ The frank treatment of the theme of incest would, he was sure, horrify the audience: "la pièce est une des plus belles de l'époque, mais il n'y en a pas où la chair soit plus terrible."⁴⁸ He was also anxious about the sub-plots, "pour amuser les matelots de parterre, avec des plaisanteries de bordel,"⁴⁹ and from a practical point of view, about the numerous scene-changes. Lugué-Poe relates that Maeterlinck at first produced a translation of the play in its entirety, then cut it here and there in order to bring out more clearly the main theme;⁵⁰ finally, it occurred to him that the best course would be to leave out the offending sections altogether.

"Je suis parvenu à extirper plus facilement que je ne pensais les deux pièces parasites. Il ne reste plus que le drame de l'inceste, qui, vraiment, vu ainsi d'affilé, est fort beau... Il n'y a que

46. The last instalment did not appear until the 20th October.

47. Acrobaties, pp. 268-270. The order of the letters seems confused; a more logical sequence would be 5, 3, 1, 2, 4.

48. *ibid.* p. 270.

49. *idem.*

50. In l'Avenir, 12th April 1934.

la boucherie de la fin que je n'ai pu nettoyer,
tous les mots y étant à peu près indispensables
au dénouement; mais on pourrait cependant abréger."⁵¹

These passages from Maeterlinck's letters show that the traditional misgivings of the French mind with regard to the liberties of the Elizabethan drama were still all-powerful. Maeterlinck's fastidiousness was responsible for the truncation of Ford's tragedy, and the audience of the *Oeuvre* was denied the opportunity of judging the play on its merits.⁵² The characteristic features of the Elizabethan theatre, the multiple action and the unrestrained language, were done away with, and the too-explicit title, which Maeterlinck at first was willing to translate literally ("Pour moi, fille, p..., p..., cela m'est égal"),⁵³ was softened to the unobjectionable Annabella. Lugué-Poe claimed in l'Avenir that this was Schwob's idea, but in Acrobaties he quoted a letter from Maeterlinck proposing the change on the authority of Taine in his Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise.⁵⁴

Just as the text of the play was adapted in accordance with modern tastes, "une traduction édulcorée ad usum temporis"⁵⁵ so it

51. Acrobaties, p. 270.

52. cf. Pierre Lièvre, 'Théâtre', Mercur de France, 15th May 1934, p. 138: "Il prit l'aspect d'une pièce grecque, c'est-à-dire que son adaptateur obéit à cette impérieuse tendance de l'esprit français, qui veut toujours élaguer ce qui est trop touffu et qui s'efforce inlassablement de l'inscrire dans un cadre à peu près classique."

53. Acrobaties, p. 269.

54. op.cit. II 2.

55. Edmond Stoullig, Le National, 8th November 1894.

was played as if it were one of the Symbolist dramas presented by the *Oeuvre*. Maeterlinck himself must have been largely responsible for this interpretation if we are to judge by the preface he wrote for his translation.⁵⁶

"Ford est allé jusqu'aux régions où toutes les âmes commencent à se ressembler entre elles parce qu'elles n'empruntent plus que peu de choses aux circonstances, et qu'à mesure que l'on descend ou que l'on monte (c'est tout un et il ne s'agit que de dépasser le niveau de la vie aveugle et ordinaire) on s'approche de la grande source profonde, incolore, uniforme et commune de l'âme humaine."⁵⁷

Nevertheless, he did lay stress on the violence of the passions:

"Annabella est le poème terrible, ingénu et sanglant de l'amour sans merci";⁵⁸ but this aspect was ignored by Lugné-Poe and Berthe

Bady, who preferred to bring out the "peur solennelle et sacrée" felt by the lovers at the exchange of their first vows, and with "une sorte de douceur distraite"⁵⁹ glided resignedly to their doom.

In contrast, the other members of the cast were not obliged to follow the interpretation of their director⁶⁰ and invested their parts with a more authentic Jacobean fervour. The critics were quick to seize on the discrepancy:

56. Printed in the Echo de Paris, 6th November 1894.

57. Maeterlinck, Annabella, 1895, pp. xii-xiii.

58. *ibid.* p. xvi.

59. Robichez, Le Symbolisme au Théâtre, p. 301.

60. *ibid.* pp. 251-252, 301.

"La pièce est jouée-sauf par MM. Dupont et Damoye-à contre-sens. Pour représenter cette exubérance de passion, il faut un jeu exubérant. M. Lugné-Poe /sic/ (Giovanni) et Mlle Bady (Annabella) ont rendu leur rôle en préraphaélites, simplifiant, momifiant, mystiques, et symbolistes, là où il faudrait se montrer plein de vie, de santé et de jeunesse. Ils ont gelé la pièce."⁶¹

Even among the symbolist reviews, occasional voices regretted the attenuation of the passions. Romain Coolus in the Revue Blanche commented: "On s'étonnait que des gens capables d'une telle fougue verbale eussent toujours l'air d'avoir peur de casser leur vitrail."⁶² On the whole the play was seen as something of an antiquarian curiosity decked in Symbolist trappings which did nothing to make it more acceptable. For those unfamiliar with the Jacobean drama it was disconcerting, and to the better read the tampering with the text seemed discreditable. Gustave Kahn in La Société Nouvelle declared: "Et c'est le tort de Maeterlinck d'avoir réduit aux proportions d'une tragédie classique ce drame touffu."⁶³

Clearly enough, Annabella as adapted and acted was only a faint echo of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. In its historical context, however, it was not without value, reflecting as it did the theories of the Symbolist drama practised by Lugné-Poe and his colleagues. Indeed, it would have been remarkable if they had arrived at any

61. Stoullig, op.cit. See other press-cuttings in the Arsenal library, Rt 3695 pp. 40-44.

62. op.cit. December 1894, p. 566.

63. op.cit. December 1894, p. 732.

other conception of the play, for historical accuracy was not yet one of the preoccupations of the Oeuvre. Only two years later did Lugné-Poe discover the productions of the Elizabethan Stage Society, under the direction of William Poel and Arthur Dillon, where the watchword was fidelity to the text and scrupulous recreation of the original atmosphere, in the acting and the sets.⁶⁴ Whether Lugné-Poe would have produced a more successful Annabella after coming to a better understanding of the conditions of the Jacobean drama is perhaps an idle question: he did at least succeed in attracting the interest of a "select public".⁶⁵ Nonetheless, forty years were to pass before Charles Dullin's revival of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore at the Atelier, in an unabridged translation,⁶⁶ and under a more explicit though still inaccurate title.

. . . .

Despite mixed feelings about the play itself Schwob's conférence was warmly applauded by the audience and mentioned in

64. Robichez, op.cit. pp. 305-307.

65. Kahn, *ibid.*

66. By Georges Pillement, in 1925. For reviews of this performance, see Arsenal Rt 3745. (The translation was reprinted in 1947, and the play performed at the Théâtre Verlaine, 29th February 1948. See Arsenal R Supp 2265.) See Simone de Beauvoir, La Force de l'Age, 1960, p. 216: "Nous vîmes ensemble, à l'Atelier, Domage qu'elle soit putain, de John Ford, que j'aimai beaucoup. (Note: La pièce était affichée sous le nom: Domage qu'elle soit une prostituée; nous regrettions cette timidité verbale qui trahissait le texte original et le sens du drame. Sartre a pensé à Ford quand il a utilisé le mot putain dans le titre d'une de ses pièces.)"

flattering terms in the reviews: "une délicieuse et suggestive causerie", "excellente de tous points, à la fois poétique, érudite et métaphysique", "sobre et élégante comme une bonne leçon en Sorbonne."⁶⁷ The Symbolist vision is not so marked in Schwob's preamble as in Maeterlinck's preface, yet there are still unmistakable signs of the literary influences of the times. The key to the method of Schwob's study is to be found in the final paragraph of his talk. His first object was to seek the theme of Ford's play, and the dominant impression was, for him, death, fate, and passion.

"Cette pièce est tout entourée par la mort: semblable à une île qui va être submergée par le flux inéluctable d'un océan obscur qui monte, et où s'étreignent encore un peu de temps deux figures passionnées."⁶⁸

These motifs are elaborated throughout the talk, although it is not until the end that Schwob gives the reason for his choice of subjects. Indeed, the wide range of his topics - the Arabian Nights, the Elizabethan heroes, Aeschylus, and tragic fatality - is at first disquieting: one wonders whether Schwob is not merely digressing into the favoured haunts of his literary curiosity. The logical pattern of the talk becomes obvious only in retrospect, fittingly enough, since Schwob was giving an apparently informal

67. Maurice Leblond, Le Rêve et l'Idée, February 1895, pp. 58-59; Coolus, *op.cit.* p. 567; Kahn, *op.cit.* p. 732.

68. Marcel Schwob, Annabella et Giovanni, 1895, p. 334; taken from the Mercure de France, 15th December 1894, pp. 323-334.

talk.

He sets off with the relation of the 'First Kalandar's Tale' from the Arabian Nights. These Persian tales had enjoyed immense popularity all over Europe since the publication of Antoine Galland's French version between 1804 and 1717, and Persian poetry had been no less fruitful a source of inspiration to the major schools of poetry in nineteenth-century France.⁶⁹ The Symbolists took special delight in the tales and it was in the Revue Blanche that Dr. J.C. Mardrus⁷⁰ printed extracts from his new translation, which appeared between 1889 and 1904. The need for a more accurate rendering than Galland's free adaptation had long been recognised, and in England the call had already been answered with John Payne's translation

69. See Nareyeh Samsami, L'Iran dans la Littérature Française, 1936, especially chapters II and IV.

70. Mardrus was a friend of Mallarmé: see Camille Mauclair, Mallarmé chez lui, p. 35, and the preface to E.F. Julia's Les Mille et Une Nuits et l'Enchanteur Mardrus, 1935. If Schwob did not know Mardrus already in 1894, he may have heard of him through Léon Cahun, who was himself planning a translation of the Arabian Nights for Calmann-Lévy: see OC I lvii. Probably they met through Mallarmé, for a letter of Schwob to Alfred Vallette, dated 19th July 1897 from Valvins, begins: "merci pour avoir remis mes livres à M. Mardrus." Mercur de France, July 1940 - December 1946, p. 246. Julia, *op.cit.* p. 64 writes: "Marcel Schwob ne put cacher son enthousiasme un jour que, sur ses instances, Mardrus se mit à lui traduire magnifiquement à livre ouvert un épisode très coloré des Mille et Une Nuits." A copy of the Vies Imaginaires in the Jacques Doucet library is inscribed: "Au docteur Joseph-Charles Mardrus en souvenir de profonde et affectueuse communion intellectuelle. Paris septembre 1898." He was a subscriber to the series of the translation and wrote to Moreno on the 4th November 1904: "Il est arrivé le 16^o volume des Mille et Une Nuits. Le veux-tu?" CPC 5133.1 p. 122.

for the Villon Society,⁷¹ and with Sir Richard Burton's Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, published between 1885 and 1888.

It is on this latter text that Schwob bases his summary of the 'First Kalandar's Tale',⁷² though making a number of errors and omissions in the transcription. These are noticeably more frequent in the first half of the story: it is as if Schwob relied at the outset on his memory, and then was forced to consult the text. From simple paraphrasing of the events he passes to almost word for word quotation.

In the exposition of the tale Schwob neglects to explain that the young man is nephew to the king whose city (not, as Schwob writes, "island") he visits, and that his cousin the prince is already his close friend. The request made by the prince: "O my cousin, I have a great service to ask of thee; and I desire that thou stay me not in whatso I desire to do!" comes at the end of the banquet, and the lady also makes her appearance at this point. She is conducted to the sepulchre by the young man, not, as Schwob has it, by the prince, for he arrives a little later, with "a bowl of water, a bag of mortar and an adze somewhat like a hoe." Both versions relate the young man's week-long search for the sepulchre, after he has entombed the couple; but Schwob then states that he

71. The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night, 1882-1889, 13 vols. Payne was also a friend of Mallarmé: see M. Ryan, 'John Payne et Mallarmé: une longue amitié', Revue de Littérature Comparée, July-September 1958, pp. 377-389.

72. Burton, *op.cit.* I 104-111.

confesses his folly to the king on the eighth day. For brevity's sake, Schwob passes over the intervening account of the young man's misfortunes in his own country, which occupy a whole year. On his return to the city he is told by the king: "Thy cousin hath been missing these many days." Schwob, with his "Mon fils et ma fille [̄.̄.̄] ont disparu depuis sept jours," anticipates the identification of the lady. From this point onward, however, Schwob's account follows Burton very closely, and the king's speech after the discovery of the charred bodies reproduces the details of the original.⁷³ Schwob must have realised, when examining Burton's translation, that the speech shows many similarities with passages in the play, although he does not point them out explicitly. The king is very much like Florio, the tender and virtuous father of Annabella and Giovanni, who dies of grief when he learns of their incestuous passion; his remonstrations to the prince recall the Friar's warnings of divine punishment. The Persian tale contrasts the attitude of the brother and sister towards their love, and that of society; for them it is a thing of beauty, for others an abomination:

"but the accursed girl loved him with passionate love, for Satan had got the mastery of her as well as of him and made their foul sin seem fair in their sight."⁷⁴

73. The "lustre à sept branches" is Schwob's unauthorised addition: the lamp of the Temple of Jerusalem seems curiously out of keeping with the elements of Arabic legend! See also 'Sufrah', Vies Imaginaires, 1957, p. 102.

74. Burton, op.cit. p. 111.

Ford shows Giovanni's awareness of the same conflict:

"The laws of conscience and of civil use
 May justly blame us, yet when they but know
 Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigour
 Which would in other incests be abhorred."⁷⁵

In his commentary on the action of the tale Schwob concentrates on the details of the first part, the events which lead up to the entombment. In the decision made by the prince and princess Schwob finds a startling similarity with the scene in 'Tis Fity where Giovanni commands: "Love me or kill me, sister."⁷⁶ The prince also says, "Come now and take thy final choice." Schwob rather stretches the evidence when he writes that Annabella, "comme la princess du conte, [̄.̄.] a aimé son frère longuement et silencieusement, et elle n'osait pas le lui dire," since the king's speech in the tale makes it clear that the passion was declared mutually from childhood. The most obvious resemblance between the play and tale is the atmosphere generated by the necessity of concealing illicit love:

"ils s'aimeront dans le sommeil et dans les ténèbres,
 dans une atmosphère pesante et étouffée comme celle
 d'un souterrain."

Schwob, following the indications given at the end of his talk, bases the main part of his comparison on the image of the tomb, which he sees as the focus of the tale and of the play. He shows how the physical reality of the sepulchre is transformed in 'Tis

75. John Ford, ed. Havelock Ellis, 1888, p. 175.

76. ibid. p. 101.

Pity to a symbol of the withdrawal of the lovers from the world. The consummation of incestuous passion brings immediate retribution on the lovers in the tale, but Ford allows his hero and heroine to be crushed by a more gradual punishment.

"Ah! s'ils avaient pu descendre dans la tombe de la nécropole pour s'y enfermer dans une nuit éternelle! Peut-être que le feu céleste les y eût frappés, mais la vie n'aurait pas continué à les enlacer dans son réseau inextricable."

Here Schwob gives a brief sketch of the consequences of the affair - the only reference he makes to the plot throughout his talk.

The narration of the 'First Kalandar's Tale' and Schwob's discussion of its similarities with 'Tis Pity occupy the first and longest of the four main sections of the conférence. Despite the interest of the contents, one might begin to wonder whether Schwob's development of the theme is not out of proportion with its relevance to the play. However, it becomes apparent in the course of the talk that Schwob's intention is not to provide an analysis of the play, but to consider some of its aspects in relation to similar aspects in other literatures. When broaching the subject of incest, Schwob could have referred to the classical legends, especially in Ovid; instead he chose to turn to less familiar sources, which he knew would appeal to his audience. The rapprochement of 'Tis Pity and the 'Kalandar's Tale is original and striking, and with its contemporary interest provides an admirable start to the talk.

. . . .

In the second section of his address Schwob touches on a number of topics which develop logically one from the other. The exposé of the theme of the Persian tale leads to a consideration of the moral problems posed by the play.⁷⁷ Schwob might well have been drawn into a direct apology or condemnation of incest: he preferred to avoid pronouncing judgment, by declaring the subject above debate.

"Nous n'avons pas le droit de juger l'amour
d'Annabella et de Giovanni comme un amour ordinaire:
il est trop grand et trop haut."

Already in his presentation of the 'Kalandar's Tale' he had passed over the question of moral disapproval in favour of the splendour of the passion; moreover, the structure of the tale permitted this approach, for the reader's sympathy is engaged with the unhappy lovers until their refuge in the tomb; it is not until much later that their relationship is revealed, and revulsion is called forth by the words of the king. The separation between the two reactions is complete. In Ford, on the other hand, there is supposed to be a constant interplay of pity, admiration and horror, and this attitude calls for analysis. Schwob, although he quotes Giovanni's own words on the subject, does not bring out their implications.

77. This question gave rise to much discussion, notably in the Gil Blas and the Journal des Débats. Incest found no lack of defenders in the avant-garde reviews, and Maurice Leblond protested against the taboo imposed by "les théologiens et les législateurs"; for him, "l'amour libre et sain d'un frère pour sa soeur même dans la vie réelle n'a rien qui nous choque."

He sees them not as a confession of sin, but as a complete justification.

Having stated his own point of view, Schwob passes on immediately to a description of Giovanni as the embodiment of an amoral outlook on life. Thus he ignores the whole import of the play, for John Ford was deeply concerned with ethical dilemmas. The characters of his plays are drawn into situations condemned by conventional morality and condoned by the force of passion. The action hinges on the efforts of his protagonists to find an acceptable solution; the dénouement shows that this solution is almost inevitably death. Nonetheless, Ford himself does not paint the picture in black and white; the attitude of society, not by any means an unreasonable one, is defined through one of the secondary characters - in 'Tis Pity, the function is taken over by Friar Bonaventura - and the hero and heroine present the case for the acknowledgement, if not unqualified approval, of their love. Their nobility and innocence is continually held before the eyes of the spectator:

"Les amoureux de Ford refusent d'être de vulgaires amants et maîtresses - ce qui entacherait leur amour de grossière sensualité - et leur attrait vient justement de leur noblesse, et de l'idéal qu'ils se donnent. A aucun moment nous ne les voyons dépravés ou abjects. Ils sont toujours capables de grandeur, désireux de faire de l'amour une grande et belle chose qu'ils vénèrent."⁷⁸

78. Robert Davril, Le Drame de John Ford, 1954, p. 370.

Thus, as one critic has put it, 'Tis Pity "makes an open problem of incest,"⁷⁹ and absolute values have no place here. All the same, Ford does not by any means show his lovers as devoid of imperfections, and the interest of his tragedy lies in his conception of their strengths and weaknesses. Schwob, by suppressing this essential conflict, makes the hero a one-dimensional character and so reduces the pathos of the play.

Before the reader or the listener even has time to reflect on the implications of this dismissal of the moral argument Schwob has already begun to strengthen his case by launching into a hyperbolic description of Giovanni:

"Toute expansion individuelle est belle dans son acte suprême. Giovanni a renoncé à la science: il ne croit ni au ciel ni à l'enfer; il tiendrait le destin serré dans son poing et commanderait au cours du mouvement éternel du temps; il braverait la Mort menaçante avec ses armées de pestes terribles et ses troupes de dangers ardents comme des étoiles flamboyantes; c'est un héros, c'est un être glorieux supérieur aux hommes - c'est ainsi que le voit Annabella - nous n'avons pas le droit de le voir autrement."

These are, of course, the words of Giovanni himself⁸⁰ and, as we shall see again at a later stage, Schwob accepts them at their

79. G.F. Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford, Stanford, 1944, p. 186. The book is a study of the "modernity" of Ford's moral attitudes.

80. why, I hold fate
 Clasped in my fist, and could command the course
 Of time's eternal motion [...]
 op.cit. p. 173.

stood Death
 Threatening his armies of confounding plagues,
 With hosts of dangers hot as blazing stars,
 ibid. p. 170.

face-value, seeming not to suspect their unconscious irony. One of the features of the play is its emphasis on Giovanni's supposed mastery of his destiny: he sees himself as the victor in every confrontation with the world, yet the spectator realises that he is being drawn inexorably to ruin. An impartial reading of the play leads to the conclusion that Giovanni is a hero in his own imagination only. The rhetoric of his words ensures the fire and intensity of the play, and at the same time provides a striking contrast with the true course of events. With all the vanity of his brilliant but inexperienced youth, Giovanni is intoxicated by his own boasting: the image he has created of himself is not meant to be accepted by the audience. Schwob, having set aside the moral issues of the play, likewise neglects to consider the failings in the hero's character. A truer appraisal of Giovanni and Annabella is to be found in his first designation of their temperament: "ces deux enfants passionnés." Giovanni is fresh from University and his superficial learning serves only to bring forward specious arguments against reason and virtue.⁸¹ As for Annabella, her immaturity is likewise only too obvious,⁸² although Schwob does not discuss her character; she accepts unquestioningly Giovanni's

81. The analogy with Marlowe's Dr. Faustus is clear at this point: see Cyrus Hoy, 'Ignorance in Knowledge', Modern Philology, February 1960, pp. 145-154.

82. See Maeterlinck's study of her character, op.cit. pp. xiii-xiv. Note that, while Schwob concentrates on Giovanni, Maeterlinck is more interested in Ford's female characters.

astounding assurance,

"I have asked counsel of the holy church,
Who tells me I may love you,"

and later is easily terrified by the Friar's threats of hell-fire.

Why, if the reserves of the dramatist on Giovanni's character are so evident, should Schwob choose to ignore them? The answer is to be found in the following paragraphs, with their survey of Elizabethan heroes in general. Schwob insists on the lofty stature of these men, whether real or figments of a poet's imagination; nothing must be allowed to detract from their grandeur. He quotes the example of Macbeth, a murderer but sublime in his villainy: "nous l'admirons, et notre coeur est avec lui." In this observation Schwob comes to the crux of the matter: it is precisely the balance of horror at the hero's evil-doing and pity for his weakness which gives rise to the power of the tragedy. If we see only the glory of the hero we miss the effect of pathos which the dramatist strives after.⁸³ However, Schwob is prepared to sacrifice this more human aspect of the Elizabethan tragedy, after merely hinting at it, in favour of the splendour of the heroic deed. Giovanni is to take his place among a galaxy of outstanding men, so Schwob must show that he has no failings which may preclude the reader's admiration.⁸⁴

83. See Clifford Leech, John Ford and the Drama of his Time, 1957, p. 11.

84. Ford certainly sets Giovanni far above the other men in the play: he has none of the sordidness of Annabella's rival suitors, nor the excessive regard for expedience of the Friar. See Davril's section on 'L'Admiration', op.cit. pp. 313-323.

On the contrary, Giovanni is seen as a fit companion for the real-life heroes of the age, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir James Phips, Captain John Smith,⁸⁵ "qui conquièrent leurs droits par la fixité de leur intention et de leur courage."

From his evocation of the great names of history Schwob returns to the realm of the drama. He recalls that the example of the adventurers inspired the types which abounded in the contemporary theatre, at the Globe, the Blackfriars and the Red Bull. Foremost among these, for Schwob, are Ford's Giovanni, and Cyril Tourneur's Vindice and Danville. The mention of these names does not merely serve to demonstrate Schwob's familiarity with the background of the period, but to prepare the next topic of the conférence. After presenting Ford, Tourneur and Shakespeare, he sets out to show that there is an essential difference between the first two writers and the other in their conception of the hero. Shakespeare presents his protagonists as men of no special distinction until they are caught up in the turn of events: "C'est seulement dans l'agonie de l'action qu'une espèce de souffle épique parcourt la pièce." With Ford and Tourneur the extraordinary doom of the heroes marks them out from the beginning:

"Ils sont déterminés avant que nous les connaissions;
leur fatalité réside en eux-mêmes; ils sont soumis

85. John Smith was the subject of one of Schwob's Vies Imaginaires, 'Pocohontas'. An earlier version, 'Matoaka', was printed in the Echo de Paris, 12th August 1893. See Appendix A item 571.

au destin qu'ils se sont forgé, et si la responsabilité existe pour eux, ils sont responsables de tout."

At this point, Schwob seems to forget that he is discussing the qualities of the Elizabethan heroes, and anticipates his examination of the various concepts of tragic fatality in Aeschylus, Shakespeare and Ford in a later section of his talk. So, without further comment on the problem of destiny he passes on to the next question.

Before we too leave the Elizabethan heroes it is necessary to look back on Schwob's attitude to Giovanni. We have seen that he discounts any criticism on moral grounds and magnifies his stature by comparing him with the greatest of the men of the times. It would seem that Schwob is praising in Giovanni not so much the main character of a particular play as the representative of a certain ideal of human behaviour. We recall that Schwob began his portrait of Giovanni with the generalisation: "Toute expansion individuelle est belle dans son acte suprême," and depicted him as the embodiment of the precept. Giovanni does not only deny the existence of the next world, he also proclaims his sovereignty over his life on earth. In the Elizabethan view such intellectual arrogance could result only in damnation, and although the "aspiring mind" was admired by the men of the Renaissance, it was regarded as dangerous if it strayed beyond the bounds appointed by religion. Hence Ford's attitude to Giovanni: his sense of world order demanded punishment for overweening pride, while his tendency to individualism brought him to bestow on his hero

qualities which force the spectator to ponder on the problems of man's position in the universe.⁸⁶ For Schwob, however, the question of divine sanctions did not arise, and he was able to proclaim in Giovanni's actions the assertion of human liberty and not, as Ford intended, the sign of a fall from grace. In Schwob's conception we see the mark of a more recent philosophy, and in particular the influence of an amoral, indeed an anti-Christian doctrine.

Undoubtedly Schwob's view of Giovanni is coloured by his readings of the work of Nietzsche, with its repudiation of moral restraint on the appetites of the Uebermensch. Although Schwob does not mention the name of the German philosopher, the reference cannot be mistaken: even his choice of words⁸⁷ betrays the inspiration. Whether he was justified or not in distorting the historical perspective is beside the point; the writings of Nietzsche were of vital interest to Schwob's audience and it is hardly surprising that he should allude to them in this eminently suitable context. Furthermore, it is possible to see in Schwob's Giovanni a representative of another of the "types" of the 1890's: the anarchist. Indeed, one review of Annabella states this explicitly: Schwob was evidently suggesting to his listeners an interpretation which they would readily understand, and heartily approve.

86. Sensabough makes this conflict the theme of his book.

87. "un être glorieux supérieur aux hommes," "surhumains," etc.

"La passion de Giovanni et d'Annabella est belle, suivant M. Schwob, leur désolation est poignante parce qu'ils ont libéré leur individu de tous liens de morale religieuse et sociale [...]"

Dès lors, nous possédons le secret de cette admiration qui nous avait, sans ce loyal aveu, déconcertés. Annabella et Giovanni sont des exemplaires d'anarchistes intellectuels, où nos jeunes poètes se plaisent à reconnaître des frères aînés [...]"

... il est entendu pour Ford et ses admirateurs que l'inceste confère une supériorité, une grandeur, un héroïsme auxquels ne sauraient jamais atteindre les vils esclaves soumis à la loi de la Nature et à la loi de Dieu."⁸⁸

. . . .

Schwob completes the second section of his talk with a survey of the sources of the play. Here again he links the names of Ford and Shakespeare, insisting that 'Tis Pity owes a great debt to Romeo and Juliet, with the quartets of hero and heroine, Friar and nurse.⁸⁹ Schwob is not interested in the similarities of the plot so much as in the advance made by Ford on the situation in Shakespeare:

"Roméo et Juliette sont séparés par la haine de leurs familles; Giovanni et Annabella sont unis par le sang; Roméo et Juliette ont l'excuse de leur amour; le péché de Giovanni et d'Annabella est leur amour même. Le drame n'est plus autour des personnages: il se joue au plus profond de leurs coeurs."

This intensification of passion through the unnatural relationship

88. Félicien Pascal, 'Critique Dramatique', La Libre Parole, 8th November 1894, Rt 3695. Pascal had reviewed Le Roi au Masque d'Or in the same paper on the 28th November 1892, in equally hostile terms.

89. See Leech, op.cit. p. 56.

has been taken by many critics of Ford as an instance of his decadence, his need to "tempt the palate of an audience jaded by several decades of theatrical sensationalism."⁹⁰ Schwob regards it merely as a manifestation of Ford's notion of fatality: love, transgression and doom are inextricably bound together in the hearts of the lovers. The paragraph is a prelude to the fuller discussion of the theme of destiny reserved for the latter part of the talk.

Still with the contrast between Shakespeare and Ford in mind, Schwob proceeds to remark on the dependence of Shakespeare for his subjects on collections of tales,⁹¹ and the originality of the author of 'Tis Pity. Schwob would have based his statement on the preliminary notes on Ford's plays in Havelock Ellis's recent edition, and in truth, little research had been done on the subject.⁹² Thus Schwob dismissed the tale from François de Rosset in almost the same terms as Ellis:

"There is a story in Rosset's Histoires Tragiques de Nostre Temps (1615), entitled "Des Amours Incestueuses d'un Frère et d'une Soeur, et de leur fin Malheureuse et Tragique," which Ford may have read; but it has little resemblance to this play."⁹³

90. Bawcutt, op.cit. p. xiii. See also Davril, op.cit. pp. 290-299.

91. Schwob had Dyce's 1875 edition of the complete works of Shakespeare, and could have read there that Shakespeare's source was not the original tales of Bandello and da Porto, but Arthur Brook's poem 'The Tragical Historye of Romeus and Juliet', derived from Bandello through the translation of Pierre Boisthuan.

92. Emil Koeppel's Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen [...]John Ford's did not appear until 1897.

93. John Ford, p. 95.

Ellis himself had found this detail in an earlier edition of Ford by Alexander Dyce, in 1869; Dyce had also given a summary of the tale and drawn a similar conclusion. One wonders whether Schwob even took the trouble to consult the book: significantly, he does not give Rosset's first name, which might be expected in the case of a forgotten compiler of old tales. It may well be that he did glance through Rosset's tale and find it irrelevant, as have many other students of Ford. Professor Davril, however, points out that the collection had "un énorme succès de librairie en France comme en Angleterre,"⁹⁴ and indeed, there are several parallels between Ford's lovers and Rosset's Doralice and Lyzaran.⁹⁵ The brother, "ayant été mené au Collège, en une des meilleurs villes de la province, se rendit en peu de temps si capable, qu'il devança tous ses compagnons."⁹⁶ The Friar talks of Giovanni's accomplishments;

"Art thou, my son, that miracle of wit
 Who once, within these three months, wert esteemed
 A wonder of thine age throughout Bononia?
 How did the University applaud
 Thy government, behaviour, learning, speech,
 Sweetness, and all that could make up a man!"⁹⁷

In Rosset's tale the brother and sister "ne pouvoient si bien

94. op.cit. p. 165.

95. These names disguise the identity of the lovers: Julien and Marguerite de Ravalet, of the Château de Tournaville, near Cherbourg. They were executed on the 2nd December 1602 and buried in the church of St. Julien-le-Pauvre, Paris.

96. Rosset, Les Histoires Tragiques de Nostre Temps, 1615 (2nd ed.) p. 176.

97. John Ford, pp. 100-101.

refrener leur maudite passion, qu'elle n'échappast par fois au frein de la raison."⁹⁸ Then Doralice "fut recherchée d'une infinité de Cavaliers qui avoient beaucoup de mérite,"⁹⁹ but was married off to an old miser. After the wedding she continued her liaison with her brother, and her husband "désormais servira de couverture à ses abominables plaisirs."¹⁰⁰ At times she came near to repentance, like Annabella after the admonitions of the Friar, but persuaded herself of the innocence of her love with arguments that recall those of Giovanni in Ford:

"Durant le temps d'innocence, et que l'on vivoit au siecle d'or, avoit-on toutes ces considerations? Les hommes ont fait des Loix à leurs plaisirs: mais la nature est plus forte que toutes ces considerations. Je la veux suyvre, puis qu'elle est une bonne et seure guide de nostre vie."¹⁰¹

At length the secret was discovered by a servant-girl, as when in 'Tis Pity Putana babbles out the truth to Vasques, and the lovers were forced to elope, finally settling in Paris where they were found eight months later. Doralice was pregnant, an irrefutable proof of the lovers' guilt, and both were executed after the birth of the child. The tale ends on the same note of compassion as in Ford: "tous les assistans ne pouvoient defendre à leurs yeux de pleurer ceste Beauté."¹⁰² The last couplet of the tragedy is the

98. op.cit. p. 177.

99. idem.

100. ibid. p. 180.

101. ibid. p. 181.

102. ibid. p. 195.

Cardinal's comment:

"Of one so young, so rich in nature's store,
Who could not say, 'Tis pity she's a whore?"

In view of the similarity of these elements, Schwob's rejection of Rosset's tale as "entièrement différente" from the play is somewhat arbitrary and appears to confirm the idea that he had not checked on Ellis's statement. Schwob, who had such a keen eye for picking out the development of certain themes in successive adaptations, and whose critical studies frequently demonstrate the contention that

"la grande force de création vient de l'imagination obscure des peuples et que les chefs-d'oeuvre naissent de la collaboration d'un génie avec une descendance d'anonymes"¹⁰³

would surely have been struck by the fact that the details of the story of Doralice and Lyzaran lend themselves admirably to the type of psychological and dramatic elaboration that Ford could bring to them.¹⁰⁴ When one recalls Schwob's pride in his discovery of sources for Moll Flanders and Hamlet, it is difficult to account for his dismissal of Rosset, if he had consulted the book, other than through the desire to uphold his claim that Ford never borrowed

103. 'Saint Julien l'Hospitalier', Spicilege, 1960, p. 120.

104. For other possible sources and influences, see Davril, op.cit. pp. 163-168, and M. Joan Sargeant, John Ford, Oxford 1935, pp. 105-109.

from other authors.¹⁰⁵ Schwob does not make any attempt to substantiate his theory by reference to the rest of the plays - undoubtedly through lack of time, and because he wished to avoid the academic note - and contents himself with the affective statement that

"les femmes touchantes et infortunées qui traversent les pièces de Ford, Penthea, Calantha, Bianca, Annabella, ont été imaginées par lui - ce sont véritablement ses filles."¹⁰⁶

As a corollary to his assumption of Ford's independence of invention Schwob explains that the setting of Parma was not chosen "pour suivre une nécessité historique." He reminds the audience of the fascination of Italy for the English dramatists, from the Elizabethan era to modern times. Here again the examples he gives were of great significance to the contemporary audience. In 1887, Félix Rabbe had translated Shelley's poetical works,¹⁰⁷ and his version of The Cenci had been one of the earliest productions of Paul Fort's Théâtre d'Art.¹⁰⁸ Browning, four years after his death, was

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105. Schwob couples Cyril Tourneur with Ford as an original dramatist. It is curious that he did not see the resemblance of the plot of The Revenger's Tragedy with that of Musset's Lorenzaccio, which the Oeuvre was planning to stage that same season: see the Bulletin, Re 7695. For a discussion of the various accounts of the murder of Alessandro de' Medici by Lorenzino see Pierre Legouis, 'La Tragédie du Vengeur', Etudes Anglaises, January-March 1959, pp. 47-55.
106. The image is taken from Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's', Memories and Portraits, 1887.
107. Oeuvres Poétiques Complètes de Shelley.
108. On the 16th January 1891, at the Théâtre Montparnasse. See Robichez, op.cit. pp. 110-112 for a survey of contemporary interest in Shelley.

beginning to be appreciated in France, after the long years of incomprehension.¹⁰⁹ Schwob, who in the early months of 1894 had been planning an article on Browning, and who, according to Léon Daudet, thought that the reading of Browning or Nietzsche was enough to capture any woman's heart,¹¹⁰ would not have failed to sing the praises of the poet to his friends: hence he had no need to specify the plays A Soul's Tragedy and Luria,¹¹¹ and the dramatic monologue The Ring and the Book.

. . . .

In the third section of his talk Schwob interrupts his reflections on the literary associations of 'Tis Pity and sets out a factual account of Ford's life and background, with only occasional touches of fancy to make his subject more vivid. For the biographical details he leans heavily on the two editions of Ford which he had in his library,¹¹² that of Hartley Coleridge, 1873,¹¹³ and the "Mermaid" volume, edited by Havelock Ellis, of 1888. Quotation from these works will show how closely he followed the English texts.

109. See A.J. Armstrong, Robert Browning through French Eyes, Waco, Texas, 1932.

110. Souvenirs III 64.

111. Which Maeterlinck was to imitate in his Monna Vanna, 1902. See Armstrong, op.cit. p. 14.

112. He also had the first edition, 1744, of Robert Dodsley's Select Collection of Old Plays: 'Tis Pity is in the fifth volume.

113. First edition 1840.

- E vii "1586. John Ford was baptised at Ilsington, in Devonshire, on April 17th.
- E ix on the mother's side he was the grandson of the Lord Chief Justice Popham, John Ford came up to London at an early age to be trained to the law,
- C xliiv- He found a cousin, John Ford, [...] at Gray's Inn [...] xlv
 xlv He did not forget the obligation, but affectionately remembered his cousin. [Coleridge gives a list of all the dedications of the plays, many to the cousin.] He was early in the field.
- E vii 1606. He published Fame's Memorial, an elegaic poem on the death of the Earl of Devonshire,
 1613. Ford's comedy, An ill Beginning has a good End, was acted at the Cockpit. This was one of the plays destroyed by Warburton's cook.
 1616. Shakespeare died.
- E 95 It is uncertain when 'Tis Pity She's a Whore was written. It was acted at the Phoenix in Drury Lane by the Queen's Servants, and published in 1633.
- viii his tragi-comedy, The Lady's Trial, acted at the Cockpit.
 1640. Election of the Long Parliament.
 1641. Actors lament their "sad and solitary conditions." [...] (The Stage-Players-Complaint.)
 1642. The Civil War began, the Register of the Master of the Revels was closed, and on the 2nd of September was published the Ordinance of the Lords and Commons commanding "that while these sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage plays shall cease and be forborne."
- x After nearly forty years spent in London he seems to have retired, just before the outbreak of the Civil War, to his native place. According to a faint tradition he married and had children, ending his days as peacefully as he might;
- C xlviii All this appears to me very dubious.
- E x for Ilsington was in the centre of a Royalist district, and is known to have suffered heavily at the hands of Parliamentary forces.
- C xlix Almost all the contemporary notice that occurs of Ford does not indicate a popular character.
 Deep in a dump John Ford was alone got,
 With folded arms and melancholy hat.
 So quotes Gifford from the "Times's Poets".
 Melancholy was the fashion of that age.
- xlvii The Lover's Melancholy [...] The title of the piece was seemingly suggested by Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy", then recently published. Ford borrowed as freely from that delightful book as Sterne...
- E xiv- He is a master of the brief mysterious words, so xv
 xv calm in seeming, which well up from the depths of

despair. He concentrates the revelation of a soul's agony into the sob or a sigh. The surface seems calm; we scarcely suspect that there is anything beneath; one gasp bubbles up from the drowning heart below, and all is silence."

The only passage which requires comment is the one where Schwob talks of Ford's "tristesse passionnée", an attitude which befits the author of such grave tragedies. He recognises that this is only an imaginary attribute and that all the evidence points to Ford's melancholy as a literary pose. Possibly Schwob would not have troubled to go into the question were it not that he was an admirer of the book which launched the fashion: "le célèbre livre de Démocrite le jeune." Schwob had in his library the 1849 Tegg edition, with its "reproduction du curieux frontispice de l'édition de Londres, de 1652 (sic)." The engraving was in fact only an imitation of Le Blond's title-page, which first appeared in the third edition, of 1628;¹¹⁴ however, it contained the figure "Inamorato", the melancholy lover, whose stance is exactly that of Ford as described in the couplet.¹¹⁵ Ford's debt to Burton is visible in all the plays,¹¹⁶ and most obviously in the title of the first surviving tragi-comedy; thus it is indeed possible that

114. The sixth edition dated from 1651; for details of the peculiarities of the Tegg edition, see Paul J. Smith, Bibliographia Burtoniana, Stanford, 1931, p. 93.

115. The lines were taken from William Hemminge's Elegy on Randolph's Finger: see the edition by G.C. Moore Smith, Oxford, 1923, pp. 13-14.

116. See S. Blaine Ewing, Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford, Princeton, 1940.

the lines from the Time-Poets refer to his literary reputation rather than to his temperament. On the other hand, his abiding preoccupation with the theme of melancholy seems to indicate more than a fashionable attitude. The age in which he lived was one of metaphysical and political doubt and unrest, to which the Stuart tragedy is a vivid witness. One senses that Schwob's vision of Ford has a certain poetic truth.

For his remarks on Ford's collaborators Schwob again refers to the Mermaid edition, where the "Chronology" mentions "The Witch of Edmonton, a tragedy by Rowley, Dekker, Ford, etc.", "A late Murder of the Sonne upon the Mother, in conjunction with Webster", and the dates of the deaths of Fletcher, Jonson and Massinger. Schwob alludes also to Thomas Heywood, the author of A Woman killed with Kindness, as Maeterlinck had done in his preface to the translation. Havelock Ellis's notice on "the Bankside and its theatres" furnished the details on the haunts of the Elizabethan dramatists, and Schwob's line on the "brillantes conversations du soir à la Taverne de la Sirène" echoes the words of Francis Beaumont's poem facing the title-page:

"What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame [..]"

Schwob ends this evocation of the Bankside with a glimpse of the Ford of the legend, "détourné à part dans sa rêverie morne," and like a more recent poet,

"De la réalité grand esprit contempteur."117

. . . .

Schwob's last topic is the rôle of fate in 'Tis Pity - a question he had already touched on à propos of Shakespeare. His conception of the force of destiny in the play seems to be the raison d'être of his talk: the emphasis on death and the tomb in the 'Kalandar's Tale', on the superhuman stature of the hero and on the complete originality of Ford's creation, all contribute to the impression of a violent conflict between a titan and the overwhelming powers of the universe. Hence Schwob's approval of Maeterlinck's cutting the scenes of the play which distract from the real issues, as he sees them, of the glory of Giovanni and the energy of his reactions to social pressures. In the adaptation played at the *Ceuvre*,

"Annabella a pris désormais l'aspect d'une pièce grecque où rien ne vient interrompre la montée du drame. Ainsi se manifesterà plus clairement à vos yeux la véritable signification de l'histoire de ce frère et de cette soeur."

Schwob apparently sees no anomaly in the transformation of the Jacobean drama, with its complex action, into the simple, denuded lines of the Greek tragedy. It may be argued that the suppression of the sub-plots results in a unity of tone which intensifies the poignancy of the doomed passion; but at the same time it strips the play of its essential dimensions. The purpose of the scenes

117. Baudelaire, 'Femmes Damnées', Les Fleurs du Mal.

with Soranzo and Hippolita, Grimaldi, Bergetto, Philotis and Richardetto is to give a variety of perspectives on the focal point of Annabella and Giovanni; the fundamental purity of their love is contrasted with the debased values of those who surround them, and the alternation of sublime joy and suffering with sordid intrigue and low comedy accentuates the splendour of the passion. As many of Ford's critics have observed,¹¹⁸ however, the only merit of the sub-plots is their dramatic function, since Ford had no gift for animating the characters not endowed with the nobility of nature of his heroes and heroines. Thus it is not hard to understand Maeterlinck's reasons for suppressing the "deux pièces parasites"; the play's chances of success might have been jeopardised if the audience had had to sit through long stretches of mediocrity. Whether the drama thus condensed has any real resemblance with Greek tragedy is a question which does not bear close examination: Schwob asserts the unity of action which emerges from Maeterlinck's version, and without further ado proceeds to consider the parallels between Annabella and the Choephoroe of Aeschylus.

His reason for the choice of this play is obvious, the main characters being likewise a brother and sister, Crestes and Electra. In the action of the drama Schwob finds two analogies worthy of mention; both, on closer scrutiny, turn out to be more or less false. The first is the introduction of the old nurse, "qui excuse

118. For example, Davril, op.cit. p. 496; Sargeaunt, op.cit. pp. 69-71.

à sa manière familière les crimes qui vont venir." Gilissa in the Choephoroe has no such rôle: she laments the supposed death of Orestes, and is sent to call Aegisthus, unarmed, to his fatal encounter with the news-bearer. Putana, on the other hand, is a completely unsympathetic character, acting as a gross apologist for sensuality; the possibility of future punishment does not even occur to her. The second parallel, more important, is the swearing of the vow:

"Ainsi Oreste et Electre s'agenouillent auprès du tombeau de leur père pour invoquer la haine là où Annabella et Giovanni invoquent l'amour."

The first part of the action of the Choephoroe takes place by the tomb of Agamemnon,¹¹⁹ with the prayers of Orestes and Electra, their meeting and their appeal to the gods and to their father to favour their bid for justice and revenge. In Ford's play there is no concrete representation of the sanctifying power of the dead; the lovers exchange their vows in "a hall of Florio's house," but the solemnity of the pledge is suggested by their reference to their "mother's dust," as Schwob points out. In order to make the analogy with Aeschylus more explicit, he turns to a later incident in 'Tis Pity:

"La mère d'Annabella, sur son lit de mort, lui a passé au doigt son anneau, en lui faisant jurer de ne le donner qu'à son époux: c'est à son frère

119. Georges Méautis, in his Eschyle et la Trilogie, 1936, p. 224, remarks: "du point de vue scénique, le tombeau du roi était le centre de la pièce." This critic, like Schwob, insists on the symmetrical structure of the tragedies.

qu'Annabella livre la bague sacrée, et elle appelle en témoignage de son action sa mère morte."

Schwob's insistence on the analogy might be justified if Ford had given as much prominence to the scene as Aeschylus to the vow of Cretes and Electra. Whereas in the Greek play the act is of crucial importance, in Ford it is of minor interest. The yielding of the ring does not occur in any of the scenes between the lovers and we hear of it only in retrospect, as part of the Bergetto sub-plot.¹²⁰ After a few lines of dialogue the ring motif is forgotten altogether by Ford, so it seems that Schwob remarks on the passage for the sole purpose of corroborating his theory.

As he develops his argument it becomes apparent that the external resemblances of the two plays interest him less, in fact, than their atmosphere: his attention is engaged by the implications of the vows rather than the pronouncement of them. "Une sorte d'ironie fatale plane au-dessus de ce serment." Schwob finds in the key scenes the first intimations of the doom of the hero and heroine. In their alliance of love or hate they bring down the peripeteia, the reversal of fortune, on their own heads. "Le même souffle de fatalité les entoure, le même destin les emporte," declares Schwob, but in his examination of the concept of fatality in Aeschylus and Ford he pursues his line of reasoning along the

120. John Ford, p. 131. Admittedly, in Maeterlinck's version, the scene takes on more relief through the excision of the sub-plot, coming as the climax of Act II.

path indicated earlier in the talk. Giovanni is an autonomous being, above the censure of human morality. His fatality, therefore, must necessarily reside in his own character and in this respect he is set apart from the heroes of Aeschylus, subservient to the whim of fate.

Before entering into a discussion of Schwob's ideas on the rôle of destiny, it would be helpful to investigate briefly the reasons for his interest. We know that Schwob studied Aeschylus at Louis-le-Grand, and part of an essay on Aeschylus and Aristophanes written in preparation for the agrégation in 1890, has been preserved.¹²¹ Although the subject is not so much the content of the tragedies as their symmetrical structure - which, as we have seen, preoccupied Schwob in his earlier theoretical essays - we find an allusion to a commonplace of Aeschylean criticism: "Ce qui nous frappe, par exemple, dans le théâtre d'Eschyle, c'est la fatalité qui plane sur toutes ses pièces." Of more importance is the influence of current ideas: the Naturalists had seized on the workings of heredity as a fundamental explanation for human behaviour, and Ibsen, since the last few years no stranger to the avant-garde Parisian stage, had made the theme of his tragic vision the "forces of disruption that have broken loose from the core of the spirit."¹²² In the Symbolist drama too the idea of fate was

121. OC I 67-82.

122. George Steiner, The Death of Tragedy, 1961, p. 293.

brought into prominence, and notably in the works of Maeterlinck, so much admired by Schwob. "Dans ses premières pièces, Maeterlinck suggérait l'existence d'une force terrible qui déterminait complètement et qui écrasait la vie humaine."¹²³ In his essay 'L'Etoile' from the Trésor des Humbles, Maeterlinck meditates on ideas of destiny in the three great eras of tragedy: his conclusions are not dissimilar to those drawn by Schwob in his conférence.

"Aujourd'hui, l'on dirait que l'idée du destin se réveille [..]. Au temps des grands tragiques de l'ère nouvelle, au temps de Shakespeare, de Racine et de ceux qui les suivent, on croit que les malheurs naissent tous des passions diverses de notre coeur. La catastrophe ne flotte pas entre deux mondes: elle vient d'ici pour aller là; et l'on sait d'où elle sort. L'homme est toujours le maître. Au temps des Grecs il l'était beaucoup moins, et la fatalité régnait sur les hauteurs. Mais elle était inaccessible et nul n'osait l'interroger. Aujourd'hui, c'est elle qu'on interpelle, et c'est peut-être là le grand signe qui marque le théâtre nouveau. On ne s'arrête plus aux effets du malheur, mais au malheur lui-même, et l'on veut savoir son essence et ses lois."¹²⁴

Thus Schwob in making his discussion of the fatality of Ford's play the climax of his talk was not seizing on one of the major themes for its own sake, but because he knew it would be regarded as extremely significant in view of contemporary trends in the drama. Moreover the choice of Aeschylus as an illustration is a sign of the growing appreciation of a dramatist, hitherto overshadowed by

123. Gaston Compère, Le Théâtre de Maurice Maeterlinck, 1955, p. 25.

124. op.cit. p. 207.

Sophocles and Euripides.¹²⁵ Schwob's enthusiasm for the poet led him to communicate his impressions to others: it was towards the end of 1892 that Schwob had urged Claudel to undertake a translation of the Agamemnon.

Schwob does not linger over the problem of fate in Aeschylus. He states firmly that "Oreste ni Electre ne sont libres - ils sont asservis à une hérédité de crimes." The notion was so widely accepted and fitted in so well with Schwob's theory that it had no need of expansion.¹²⁶ However, in the case of Shakespeare, Schwob was going against the current belief that fate was replaced by the tragic flaw in his drama, and so had to amplify his argument a little.

"L'ambition fatale de Macbeth, la jalousie fatale d'Othello ne sont pas déterminées d'avance par un destin qui gouverne les hommes: mais elles naissent en eux grâce à de simples rencontres, et désormais elles entraînent dans leurs tourbillons."

This proposition is debatable: the whole force of the tragedy in Shakespeare arises from a man's confrontation with a situation which will destroy him through exposure of his one latent weakness. Schwob observes that the working of destiny in Shakespearean tragedy is "comme accidentelle et contingente," and that the heroes are but ordinary mortals before being caught up by events. In his

125. For the status of Aeschylus in France up to Schwob's time, see William H. Matheson, Claudel and Aeschylus, Ann Arbor, 1965, Chapter I.

126. It was to be opposed in two influential studies: A.E. Haigh's The Tragic Drama of the Greeks, Oxford, 1896, p. 93; and Lewis Campbell's Tragic Drama in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Shakespeare, 1904, p. 30.

eagerness to prove the hazard of the encounter as the effective instrument of the tragedy Schwob plays down the essential factor of the hero's psychological tendency to suffer and be destroyed. His metaphor, that destiny "se développe dans un terrain inculte comme si une graine y avait été semée par hasard qui pousse une tige gigantesque,"¹²⁷ does not correspond to the reality. Both in Aeschylus and in Shakespeare the temperament of the hero is of far more importance than Schwob is prepared to concede here, for his argument demands that the "outward fate" of these two dramatists should be contrasted with the "internal fatality" of Ford.

Once more, in his demonstration of this "inner fatality", Schwob underlines the self-sufficiency of Giovanni. From beginning to end he is, in Schwob's opinion, the master of his fate, independent of the whim of the gods or the fortuitous turn of events. Thus again, Schwob falls into the error of taking Giovanni at his own evaluation when giving illustrations of the "resolution" of the lovers. The word, as Schwob justly observes, is constantly on their lips, but their determination is only a cover for obstinate blindness. Schwob is no doubt right in claiming that the ultimate course of their life depends on them alone, for they take it upon themselves to declare their passion, surrender to it, and die for it;¹²⁸

127. The image appears to be taken from the Choéphores: "Puisse de ce faible germe sortir une tige puissante!" (Claudé's translation, Théâtre, 1956, I 921).

128. This observation of Schwob's has been praised as "penetrating and just" by U. Ellis-Fermor in her Jacobean Drama, 1965 (fifth edition) p. 232.

he does not bring out the counterpoint to this positive action, that the lovers are forced also to adapt themselves to the pressures of society. Their fortunes are largely determined by external events: Annabella's marriage to Soranzo is precipitated by the discovery of her pregnancy; the gossip of Putana betrays the secret to her husband; and Giovanni does not "périr volontairement en héros" but at the hands of Soranzo's hired assassins.¹²⁹ Schwob's theory, though forcefully and elegantly expressed, is only partly true; he glorifies the strength of passion as presented through the words of the lovers, and minimises the ethical implications of the theme. The tendency is shown most explicitly in the final paragraph of the section on fatality, where Schwob declares that

"L'idée d'un monde futur dans la pièce d'Annabella n'est qu'un ressort accessoire du drame: ce n'est pas une autorité décisive."

This is to brush aside completely the rôle of the Friar, who constantly reminds Giovanni of the doctrine of the Church and threatens damnation to the transgressors of the law. Annabella's inconstancy stems from her inability to detach herself from the notions of virtue inculcated by religion, and even Giovanni has to reassure himself ostentatiously of his emancipation from "busy opinion." Indeed, without this perpetual moral struggle between

129. In fact Giovanni to his last minute seems to think himself capable of averting his fate, and when he has received the mortal blow, makes a virtue out of necessity by announcing: "thou hast done for me / But what I would have else done on myself." *op.cit.* p. 180.

inclination and conscience there would be little dramatic interest. Schwob admits the preoccupation with the next world in the last meeting between the lovers, but the confused metaphor he uses to convey his conclusion makes it difficult to ascertain his meaning:

"cet autre monde projette une espèce d'ombre livide;
mais elle ne sert qu'à détacher sur ses ténèbres des
gestes tragiques."¹³⁰

. . . .

We see in Schwob's approach the mentality of a generation accustomed to discussing literature as pure art, without heed to moral questions. With a play such as 'Tis Pity' the neglect of the ethical problem posed by the author leads to a certain distortion; however, this is compensated by the affirmation of the splendours of the tragedy. Schwob concludes his talk with a brief recapitulation of his themes, explaining now the reason for their choice. We see that the link between 'The Kalandar's Tale', 'Tis Pity' and the Coephoroe is the image of the tomb, the symbol of the fate awaiting the hero and heroine. They consecrate their vow by the sign of the dead, and thereafter are drawn irresistibly to their ruin. Throughout his talk Schwob has been constant to his purpose of subordinating every other consideration to the central idea of the clash of mighty opposites. The power of passion and fate is shown

130. The metaphor is taken from Ellis's foreword, p. xv:
"their last marvellous dialogue through which pierced
a vague sense of guilt - a lurid shadow cast from the
world they had condemned."

unattenuated by any of society's notions of morality.

Schwob's vision of John Ford and his play is, then, composed of many elements. In criticising 'Tis Pity he uses the perspective of other literatures, of other times; his interpretation shows that mixture of erudition and poetic imagination on which reviewers of his books so often comment. Thus it seems to me that Jacques Robichez does the talk less than justice in dismissing it without discussion: "elle est loin de présenter le même intérêt que les commentaires de Maeterlinck."¹³¹ The judgment of Schwob's contemporaries was more appreciative, and their good opinion was confirmed by that of Professor Ellis-Fermor, in The Jacobean Drama: for she ranked the talk among "the outstanding studies of the late nineteenth century,"¹³² along with Swinburne's essay on Ford.¹³³

131. op.cit. p. 298.

132. op.cit. p. 341.

133. Essays and Studies, 1875, pp. 276-313: originally printed in the Fortnightly Review, July 1871, pp. 42-63.

(iii) The Imaginary Life of Cyril Tourneur

With the publication of the 'Royaume Blanc' (later to be incorporated into the Livre de Monelle) on the 14th July 1894, Marcel Schwob ended his association with the Echo de Paris; the rest of his tales, later collected into the Vies Imaginaires and La Croisade des Enfants, were printed in Le Journal. Schwob had entered into the contract with Fernand Xau in May 1894¹³⁴ but it was not until the 29th July that his collaboration was announced under the following rubric:

"Nous commençons aujourd'hui la série: Vie de certains poètes, dieux, assassins et pirates, ainsi que de plusieurs princesses et dames galantes, mises en lumière et disposées selon un ordre plaisant et nouveau par Marcel Schwob."

For reasons which remain obscure, several months were to pass before the life of 'Major Stede Bonnet, pirate par humeur', was followed by the next of the group, so that in fact almost the entire sequence came out in the course of 1895. The 'Vie de Cyril Tourneur, poète tragique. Viollemment mise en scène à la manière de Cyril Tourneur' appeared on the 1st February, the third in order of publication.

The hero of the tale was the Jacobean dramatist whose two surviving plays, The Revenger's Tragedy¹³⁵ and The Atheist's

134. MST p. 137. See also Renard, Correspondance p. 117 (13th August 1892).

135. Since Schwob died well before controversy arose over the authorship of this play, I follow the attribution of the work to Tourneur. See the introduction to R.A. Foakes's edition, 1966.

Tragedy, had been printed in 1607 and 1611 respectively. After his death Tourneur's name had fallen into the oblivion which awaited many of the poets of Shakespeare's circle, and only The Revenger's Tragedy was reissued from time to time in the various editions of Robert Dodsley's Select Collection of Old Plays.¹³⁶

Critical appreciations of Tourneur were infrequent, the most notable being those of Charles Lamb, in his Specimens of English Dramatic Poets,¹³⁷ of Vernon Lee, in her Euphorion,¹³⁸ and of Swinburne in an article in The Nineteenth Century.¹³⁹ Although Charles Lamb's book had given the stimulus to studies of the Elizabethans, it might be claimed that the revival of Tourneur's fortunes dated from W.C. Hazlitt's 1874-76 re-edition of Dodsley, and even more from John Churton Collins's critical edition of the Plays and Poems in 1878, dedicated to Swinburne. In the introduction to this work Collins spoke with satisfaction of the untiring efforts of scholars during the past fifty years in "the noble task of remembering their forgotten countrymen, of recognising and resuscitating buried merit",¹⁴⁰

136. 1744, vol. 4; 1780, ed. Isaac Reed, vol. 4; 1825-1827, ed. J.P. Collier, vol. 4; 1874-1876, vol. 10.

137. 1808, pp. 245-252.

138. 'The Italy of the Elizabethan Dramatists', op.cit. 1884, vol. I. 57-108.

139. March 1887, pp. 415-427 (reprinted in The Age of Shakespeare, 1908, pp. 259-286). Gosse reviewed Collins in the Academy, 22nd September 1877, and Henley's brief notice may be found in Views and Reviews, 1890, 106-107.

140. op.cit. I xi.

even though these conscientious researches also unearthed a good deal of mediocrity; and in justification of his own contribution he confessed his astonishment that Tourneur had not yet been re-discovered:

"a great poet, who has stamped deep on every page he has written the expression of a powerful, anomalous, unique genius, has as yet found no editor; while his works have been left to moulder away in seventeenth century quartos, or to jostle their inferiors, mauled and mangled in execrable reprints."¹⁴¹

Although Swinburne was to make unfavourable comments on Collins's edition,¹⁴² it became the basis of the text in John Addington Symonds's Webster and Tourneur volume in the Mermaid Series of Elizabethan dramatists, in 1888. The two tragedies were therefore available in a popular edition with modernised spelling, and their author could now claim his place amid the most eminent of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Nonetheless, it was some time before Tourneur's reputation crossed the Channel, for he was ignored by French historians of English literature¹⁴³ and his plays remained untranslated. Thus, although the vie imaginaire did not purport to give a factual account of Tourneur's career and works, it was probably the first text to introduce his name to a wide public in France.

141. *ibid.* pp. xiii-xiv.

142. *op.cit.* p. 416.

143. Taine in his Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise, does not even mention Tourneur, and Mézières gives him a very brief notice in the Contemporains et Successeurs de Shakespeare, p. 374, as a purveyor of "dramas sanglants et horribles."

Some months previously, before a more select audience at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, Schwob had mentioned the heroes of Tourneur in a comparison with John Ford's Giovanni in 'Tis Pity she's a Whore. For him, Giovanni, D'Amville and Vindice were

"trois titans qui luttent contre le monde et les mœurs, qui sont condamnés à périr mais qui affirment leur individu en dépit de l'univers."¹⁴⁴

This concept is expressed in the creation of a similar type in the vie imaginaire: the ideal Cyril Tourneur¹⁴⁵ is endowed with the attributes of the atheist and the revenger of the tragedies, and the author is seen living out the action of his own plays.¹⁴⁶

Much of the material of the biography is, therefore, adapted from the work of Tourneur himself. This was perhaps only to be expected in view of the paucity of information to hand; the details Collins had managed to glean were mainly bibliographical, and his regrets contained an open invitation to Schwob's powers of invention:

"the reader of these works cannot fail to feel that a character of no common interest, must have thus passed without any record away - a career of no common vicissitudes have vanished with its vanished actor."¹⁴⁷

Schwob was at liberty to fill out his "life" with any details he chose, since there were few facts to contradict or follow.

144. Annabella et Giovanni, 1895, p. 10.

145. To avoid confusion, the dramatist will be designated as "Tourneur", and the hero of Schwob's tale "Cyril Tourneur".

146. For Schwob's motivation, see Trembley, op.cit. p. 23.

147. Collins, op.cit. pp. xvii-xviii.

He acknowledged the singular powers of Tourneur's works by transplanting certain incidents into his own story, but did not restrict himself to this one source. The vie imaginaire, as well as being a tribute to its eponymous poet-hero, is a monument to Schwob's other explorations of English literature and to his lively interest in the political currents of the day:¹⁴⁸ an example of Schwob's skill in evoking a past age, and at the same time a comment on the contemporary scene. The complexity of the narrative derives from the interweaving of a number of original and borrowed passages, and although those taken from the works of Tourneur do much to create the atmosphere of the tale, they do not form its framework. However, since Schwob in his title underlines the "manière de Cyril Tourneur", it is with the debts to this source that we shall begin our examination of the story.

. . . .

Schwob had in his library the first edition of Dodsley's collection of plays, the fourth volume of which contained The Revenger's Tragedy, and the 1888 Mermaid edition; but in the composition of his tale he referred to the work of Churton Collins, this being the only printed source of the long allegory 'The Transformed Metamorphosis'. Collins had offered a tentative explanation of this obscure poem¹⁴⁹ but Schwob, understandably

148. The 'Lettres Parisiennes' (OC VIII) reveal Schwob as a man of liberal opinions, very much aware of the current scene.

149. For more recent interpretations, see Allardyce Nicoll, The Works of Cyril Tourneur, 1929, pp. 8-16; Peter B. Murray, A Study of Cyril Tourneur, Philadelphia, 1964, pp. 23-56.

enough, did not try to make any sense out of the various episodes and was content to abstract a few striking images. Indeed, all that remains in the mind after a cursory reading of the poem is the image of "hel's enuironrie", and this Schwob recreates in the introduction to his story with the help of some of Tourneur's less tortuous lines:

"O who perswades my willing errorie
 Into this blacke Cymerianized night?
 Who leades me into this concauitie,
 This huge concauitie, defect of light,
 [...]
 Who puts a flaming torch into my hand,
 [...]
 Who fills my nostrills with thicke foggy sents?
 Why is the skie so pitchie then at noone,
 As though the day were gouern'd by the Moone?"¹⁵⁰

In contrast to this background of infernal gloom there later appears the figure of a "sacred female", evidently inspired by that of Revelation XII i:

"That heau'nly one, of glorious eminence;
 She, whom Apollo clothed with his robe,
 And plac'd hir feet vpon th'inconstant globe.
 [...]
 Her robe, that like the Sun did clearly shine,
 Is now tranform'd vnto an earthly coate...
 The globe takes head, that was her footstoole set:
 And from her head doth pull her coronet.
 Her twelve starred glorious coronet... 151

The woman's regalia is bestowed by Schwob on his hero:

150. Collins op.cit. II 187-188.

151. ibid. pp. 195-197.

"On le représente vêtu d'une longue robe noire, portant sur la tête une glorieuse couronne à douze étoiles, le pied sur le globe céleste, élevant le globe terrestre dans sa main droite."¹⁵²

The plays likewise furnish both motif and incident. Schwob at the outset resumes the themes of the two tragedies in his exposition of the character of Cyril Tourneur: the excesses of violence and lust, the sensuousness that pervades his world, the corrupting struggle against tyranny, the delight in apparent ability to manipulate human affairs, the belief in a purely material universe, allied with a pathetic dread of death as the destroyer of the only happiness possible to man. In order to account for such a temperament Schwob invents strange parents for his hero: "Cyril Tourneur naquit de l'union d'un dieu inconnu avec une prostituée." The poet's remarkable heredity manifests itself not only in his deeds but in their setting: "Tous deux lui donnèrent le goût de la nuit, de la lumière rouge et du sang." This is exactly the impression left by the plays. Many of the scenes take place in darkness or by torchlight, to symbolise the evil intentions of the villains, and the violence and bloodshed they are about to commit. The Revenger's Tragedy begins with a procession of the Duke and his court, who "pass over the stage with torch-light", and ends with a nocturnal banquet illuminated by a blazing star. The motif of black and red is frequently introduced, for example, in the lines of The Atheist's Tragedy

152. Vies Imaginaires, p. 196.

where D'Amville laments hypocritically over the body of his murdered brother:

"Behold the lively tincture of his blood!
Neither the Dropsie nor the Jaundies in't,
But the true freshnesse of a sanguine red,
For all the fogge of this blacke murdrous night
Has mix'd with it."¹⁵³

When George Meredith wrote to Schwob on his Roi au Masque d'Or he observed that "the colours, black and sanguine, betray the writer's youth."¹⁵⁴ In his vie imaginaire, however, Schwob had every reason to ignore this warning, and his habitual delight in colour is especially noticeable here since Tourneur himself set so striking an example. Schwob dwells on the darkness which gives sinister overtones to many of the circumstances of Cyril Tourneur's career: the "journée noire" when he was born, and when

"les ténèbres étaient si profondes que l'enterreur dut éclairer l'ouverture de la maison pestiférée avec une torche de résine; [...] le brouillard sur la Tamise (où trempait le pied de la maison) se raya d'écarlate, [...]"¹⁵⁵

the prowlings by night along the Mall, "secouant dans la main une torche à crinière enflammée", and his enthronement in the "jardin noir [...] sous la foudre." The theme of fire and flame is even carried into the description of the heroine:

"Elle était très jeune et sa figure était innocente et blonde. Les rougeurs y paraissaient comme des

153. Collins op.cit. I 56.

154. See Appendix D.

155. op.cit. p. 194.

flammes vacillantes."¹⁵⁶

The figure of Rosamonde is based on a combination of the two virgin heroines of Tourneur's tragedies, despite her title of "prostituée du Bankside." Like the Gloriana of The Revenger's Tragedy she is a shadowy figure and her rôle is similar in that she is the cause of the obsession for revenge in her lover. Vendice, addressing the skull of his dead lady in the opening scene of the play, tells the reader of the cause of her death:

"Thee, when thou wert appareld in thy flesh,
The old Duke poyson'd,
Because thy purer part would not consent
Unto his palsey-lust."¹⁵⁷

From the last act of the tragedy, which culminates in the slaughter of "a nest of Dukes" and of the chief revenger himself, Schwob takes the image of the "étoile flambante et furieuse", the omen of doom:

"Ouer what rooffe hangs this prodigious Comet
In deadly fire?

I am not pleas'd at that ill-knotted fire,
That bushing-staring star."¹⁵⁸

The act of vengeance for the murder of Rosamonde is adapted from The Atheist's Tragedy. D'Amville, aided by his confederate Borachio, plots the killing of his brother Montferrers in order to appropriate his wealth. They accompany the old man over the fields by

156. *ibid.* p. 196. A similar description occurs in the 'Béatrice' of Coeur Double: "Les rougeurs appaissaient et s'évanouissaient sur ses joues et ses lèvres comme les dernières vacillations d'une flamme qui va s'éteindre."

157. Collins *op.cit.* II 7.

158. *ibid.* p. 134, p. 142.

torchlight and in the confusion of the servants' drunken brawl extinguish the lights and thrust him into a gravel pit. Borachio finishes the deed:

"I lay so fitly underneath the bancke,
From whence he fell, that ere his falt'ring tongue
Could utter double Oo, I knock'd out's braines
With this fair Rubie, and had another stone,
Just of this forme and bignesse, ready..!"159

After this villainous act the graveyard scene provides one of the many touches of macabre humour which distinguish Tourneur's plays. D'Amville, having successfully dispossessed his brother and nephew of life and inheritance respectively, is frustrated in his desire to establish his and his descendants' fortunes because of the inaptitude of his two sons, in whom, since he denies heaven, lies the only eternity he acknowledges. He therefore determines to create a new posterity through his daughter-in-law Castabella, still "vierge et désirable" as a result of the sickliness of her husband, and makes an attempt to accomplish his designs by night in the cemetery:

"These dead men's bones lie heere of purpose to
Inuite us to supply the number of
The liuing. Come, we'l get young bones, and doe't."160

Schwob allows his hero the satisfaction of his object: "Cyril Tourneur posséda sa fille sur le couvercle d'un charnier" - but in the play D'Amville is foiled by the sudden arrival of his

159. *ibid.* I 58.

160. *ibid.* p. 114.

nephew Charlemont, and the reunited lovers take shelter in the chancel-house: "They lie downe with either of them a Death's head for a pillow." After the downfall of D'Anville the play ends with a fanfare:

"The Drums and Trumpets! Interchange the sounds of Death and Triumph. For these honour'd lives, Succeeding their deserved Tragedies."¹⁶¹

Since the tale there are no representatives of virtue to be rewarded, Schwob omits the note of rejoicing and writes, "Des trompettes, dressées dans la nuit, sonnèrent, comme au théâtre, une fanfare funèbre."¹⁶²

. . . .

For an illustration of Cyril Tourneur's atheism, Schwob might have chosen a number of passages from D'Anville's discourses; instead, he turned to the less philosophical but more startling profession of scepticism of Christopher Marlowe. A record of his scandalous assertions was made by a certain Richard Bame in a "Note containyng the opinion of one Christofer Marlye, concernyng his damnable opinions and judgment of relygion and scorne of Gods worde." A list of the same charges, with the omission of an incriminating reference to Sir Walter Raleigh, was sent to the Queen in May 1593, but before any action could be taken Marlowe is thought to have been killed in a brawl at Deptford.¹⁶³ The

161. *ibid.* p. 154-155. Collins's punctuation is emended in recent editions.

162. *op.cit.* p. 199.

163. According to J.L. Hotson, The Death of Christopher Marlowe, 1925.

text of the second version of the note was published in Havelock Ellis's 1887 edition of Marlowe, without expurgations, but the volumes of the Rev. Alexander Dyce in 1850, and of A.M. Bullen in 1885, had left out details offensive to Victorian respectability. "Wherever asterisks occur," explained Dyce, "they indicate clauses of such an abominable nature, that I did not choose to print them." Ellis had reproduced certain passages in italics, saying that these had been scored through in the manuscript. Since Schwob had both the 1873 edition of Dyce and that of Ellis in his possession it is certain that he was familiar with Marlowe's more outrageous declarations, and his line "Une âme pieuse a barré sur le parchemin d'autres affirmations plus terribles" combines an ironic pleasantry at Dyce's reticence with an echo of Ellis's footnote. Nevertheless Schwob himself could not, in the columns of a newspaper, quote any of the items that so shocked Dyce, even though they would fit in splendidly with his conception of Cyril Tourneur, and was obliged to restrict himself to the purely eccentric, and the commonplace, items:

"That Moyses was but a Juggler, and that one Heriots
can do more than hee.164

164. The full text of the libel at this point reads: "one Heriots, being Sir Walter Raleigh's man, can do more than hee." Schwob may possibly have realised that Heriots was none other than the Thomas Hariot whose life was related in John Aubrey's Brief Lives (see the edition of O. Lawson Dick, 1949, p. 123). Schwob wrote at length about Aubrey in his preface to the Vies, thus drawing the attention of both French and English readers to a writer whose works had long been out of print. Schwob had the 1813 edition of Aubrey; the new volume by A. Clarke did not appear until 1898.

That the firste beginnyng of Religion was only to
keep men in awe.

That Christ deserved better to dye than Barrabas,
and that the Jewes made a good choyce, though Barrabas
were both a theife and a murtherer.

That, yf he wer put to write a new religion, he
wolue vndertake both a more excellent and more
admirable methode, and that all the new testament
is filthely written.

That he had as good right to coyne as the Queen of
Englande, and that he was acquainted with one Poole,
a prisoner in newgate, whoe hath great skill in
mixture of metalls, and havinge learned such thinges
of him, he ment, through help of a cunnynge stampe-
maker, to coyne french crownes, pistolettes, and
englishe shilliages."¹⁶⁵

No further comment is needed. The "note obscure et effrayée" is
a direct transcript of part of the "Baine libel."

. . . .

It has already been noted that darkness is one of the
dominant motifs of the story; another is that of the plague, which
attends the birth and the death of Schwob's Tourneur. Since
neither of the two dates was known at the time Schwob was writing,
his assumption that they were plague-years was dictated by artistic
considerations, but according to more recent information Tourneur
did in fact die in an epidemic.¹⁶⁶ In view of Schwob's obsession
with the plague it is not surprising that he should have introduced
it into his story. Already it had figured prominently in the
Roi au Masque d'Or, partly through the influence of Poe and partly,

165. Christopher Marlowe, 1887, pp. 428-430. The text was
expurgated in some later editions.

166. Nicoll op.cit. p. 30; La Tragédie du Vengeur, éd. Henri
Fluchère, 1958, p. 32. Tourneur died at Kinsale on the
28th February 1626.

if Champion's supposition is correct, as a souvenir of the Asian influenza which raged through France in 1890 and 1891.¹⁶⁷ According to André Salmon, Schwob on his death-bed was convinced that he had the bubonic plague which had appeared in Marseilles.¹⁶⁸ Schwob's source for the description of the epidemic was probably the classic account of London in 1665 - Daniel Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year.¹⁶⁹ Although there are no direct quotations, most of the details in the tale can be traced to Defoe - the marking of the doors of "visited houses" with a red cross, the ringing of the bell as the dead-cart passed, the digging of the huge burial-pits and "the deplorable cases of pregnant women." Here too is the passage relating the expedient of a number of merchants to avoid contamination, by installing themselves and their families in ships moored in the Thames and employing watermen to make contact with the outside world. Like Cyril Tourneur in the story, the narrator of the Journal walks the street alone at night; he has an encounter with the visionary Solomon Lagle, whose appearance must have been like Cyril Tourneur's: "Il était blême comme les cierges consacrés, et ses yeux luisaient mollement comme des brûleurs d'encens."

There seem to be two further references to English literature

167. OC III 157.

168. Souvenirs sans fin I 235.

169. Schwob had the 1754 edition: The History of the Great Plague in London. I have also looked in Defoe's Due Preparations for the Plague (1722) and Harrison Ainsworth's Old Saint Paul's, without finding any close similarities.

in the tale. The choice of the name Rosamonde suggests that Schwob was thinking of the unhappy mistress of King Henry II, who was forced to drink poison by the jealous Queen Eleanor. The 'Lamentable Ballad of Fair Rosamond and King Henry' figured in two volumes in Schwob's library: Ambrose Philips's Collection of Old Ballads,¹⁷⁰ and Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.¹⁷¹ It is possible that he also knew Swinburne's dramatic version of the theme.¹⁷² The account of Cyril Tourneur's activities as an "épieur de grand'route" recalls Captain Charles Johnson's General History of the Lives and Adventures of the most famous Highwaymen, although there is no parallel incident in the collection. However, since Schwob declares that Cyril Tourneur took to the road "non pour voler, mais pour assassiner des rois," it is clear that he was using the convention of the rogue biography to cover a more recent political trend.

Schwob insists that Cyril Tourneur was inspired by enmity against kings in general, and indeed slew a large number of them,

170. op.cit., 1723, I 11-17.

171. op.cit., 1794, II 143-155.

172. Rosamond, 1860, was dedicated to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The legend fascinated the Pre-Raphaelites: Arthur Hughes painted the heroine in 1854: see Robin Ironside, Pre-Raphaelite Painters, 1948, pl. 64. Burne-Jones, in the same year, wrote of his "terminal pilgrimage to Godstowe ruins and the burial place of Fair Rosamond"; his painting of her dated from 1862: see Malcolm Bell, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, 1909, pp. 23-24, pl. I. Finally, Rossetti himself painted her from his model Fanny Cornforth, in 1861: see H.C. Marillier, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1899, p. 108.

whereas the Vindice of The Revenger's Tragedy at first sought only the life of Gloriana's murderer. The motives that Schwob ascribes to his hero change from personal vengeance to opposition to all rulers, which indicates that he was thinking of the activities of the anarchists and revolutionaries of his own day. The obvious source of the regicidal tendency of his hero would be the assassination of the Tsar Alexander II in 1881. After comparatively liberal beginnings the Tsar had returned to policies of repression, and in 1879 an organisation known as "People's Freedom" vowed to bring about his death. It took two years and seven abortive attempts, during which several members of the Tsar's entourage were killed, before their purpose was achieved.¹⁷³ Their method, that of throwing bombs, was also used by the French anarchists, and 1894 was a year when the "compagnons libertaires" had brought terror to Paris.¹⁷⁴ Schwob obviously had this in mind when he wrote of Cyril Tourneur's activities, but the specific reference seems to be the death of Alexander II, for in November 1894 his son and successor Alexander III died of nephritis, and the press was naturally full of his father's more dramatic end.

. . . .

173. See Lionel Kochan, The Making of Modern Russia, 1962, p. 183-184.

174. When the campaign culminated in the assassination of Président Carnot, Schwob, in a 'Lettre Parisienne' of the 26th June 1894, wrote: "Paris est encore plongé dans la stupeur par l'horrible crime de Lyon si inattendu et si révoltant [..] Mais le régicide ne relève ni de la religion, ni des théories sociales. C'est une passion propre à des illuminés solitaires." OC VIII. 66.

The foregoing survey of Schwob's appropriations from other authors indicates the extent of his reliance on existing documents. The case is, of course, by no means unusual with Schwob, but the interest here lies in his way of bringing together so many apparently disparate elements. He solved the problem by arranging the events of his hero's life in a blasphemous parallel with those of Christ's. With this clear and easily recognisable pattern before him, all that was needed was to point out the analogies more or less explicitly, adding variations and amplifications where appropriate. The borrowings from The Atheist's Tragedy blend in with the underlying theme of the Antichrist: all Cyril Tournour's actions are a denial of religion and traditional morality, and demonstrate his striving after the "Umwertung aller Werte." Schwob differs from the dramatist in his attitude towards his hero: D'Amville is constantly confronted with the warnings of providence, whereas Schwob's Cyril Tournour is confuted only by the thunderbolt which destroys him. Schwob provides no figures of virtue as a foil to his villain, and relates his macabre career in a uniformly dispassionate tone. The effect, given the nature of the subject and its obvious associations, is all the more astounding.

The oppositions between the lives of Tournour and Christ are brought out in the first sentence. Schwob's hero is born of a divine father - and a prostitute. The qualities he receives from this union are exactly the contrary of those praised in the New

Testament. His birth is heralded by a star of ill omen,¹⁷⁵ and his entry into the world is greeted not by the rejoicings of a heavenly choir but by "la voix des cynocéphales." Like Christ he spent an obscure youth and did not begin to preach until the age of thirty: his message is of railing scepticism, not of faith. Cyril Tourneur intends to coin money "à sa propre image",¹⁷⁶ a thing expressly forbidden by the Commandments; and one thinks here of the pronouncement of Christ on the question of Jews handling money bearing the image of Caesar. Schwob writes that "ces paroles furent recueillies par une personne vulgaire", in the same way that the teachings of Christ were taken down by the humble evangelists. The image of Cyril Tourneur in glory, as we have seen, comes from the Apocalypse, and the "sceau extraordinaire" on his side is evidently the wound made by the lance at the crucifixion. Schwob intimates that his hero was ultimately damned, for "après sa mort [] nul ne vit sa dépouille"; in the New Testament, of course, Christ revealed himself to his disciples, and Thomas was allowed to probe the stigmata to settle his doubts. The obscene interpretation of the relationship

175. In 1572, about the time when Tourneur was born, there appeared a nova in Cassiopeia, which was believed to be a new star of Bethléhem.: see Kocher, op.cit. p. 78. See Aubrey, op.cit. p. 5 "Life of Thomas Allen".

176. Note that this is Schwob's own idea: the Baine libel gave no such suggestion.

between Christ and Mary Magdalene, mentioned in the Baine libel,¹⁷⁷ is the origin of Cyril Tourneur's liaison with Rosamonde, although the prostitute theme is one common enough in Schwob and indeed, he might have been thinking also of his mistress Louise, who had died just over a year before.

From this point onwards the analogies with the life of Christ are less noticeable. Tourneur plunges into a life of crime and debauchery which are a denial of any standards of morality, not merely the christian. He does not suffer a martyrdom, but the "jardin noir" where he awaits his doom may be intended to recall Golgotha, and the "couvercle d'un charnier" suggests the sepulchre. The scene of his disappearance from the world terminates the story with a kind of sinister Ascension.

. . . .

Now that all the elements of the life have been discussed in turn, its structure begins to emerge more clearly. We recognise that we are dealing with far more than an extraordinary career composed of fantastic episodes. Schwob organises his material so that the narrative acquires different levels of meaning: any one incident has three separate associations. To start with, there is the obvious necessity to present a picture of Cyril Tourneur and his times: hence all the details contribute to the evocation of

177. "That the Women of Samaria wer whores and that Christ knew them dishonestlye." A similar remark was made about Mary: "That Christ was a Bastard and his mother dishonest."

a Renaissance hero, impatient of the naive faith of the Middle Ages, setting up human aspirations and capacities as the measure of life and brooking no opposition to his desires. The intellectual turmoil and the violence of passion are symbolised by the bloody deeds he commits, and by the extravagance of his words against religion. Cyril Tourneur moves against the background of Elizabethan London, suggested by references to its better-known features: the Thames (inevitably veiled in fog), Newgate prison, Bankside with its theatres and its prostitutes, and the Queen's highways. Over all this looms the plague, an ever-present reminder of man's mortality. Next there is the relevance of all these items to the theme of Cyril Tourneur-Antichrist. Constantly the reader is made aware of the similarities with the New Testament and his mind is drawn back into the familiar images of the civilisation of Palestine, so many centuries ago. The actions of Cyril Tourneur summon up memories of the life and teachings of Christ, so that judgments of the hero's life spring not only from the reader's sense of values but also from his knowledge of the absolute standards of the paragon of Christian virtues. Finally, the generation of 1895 could not mistake the import of the sentence: "La haine de toute autorité lui monta vers la bouche et aux mains." In this they would recognise the mentality of the revolutionary, the watchword of the numerous terrorist organisations bent on overthrowing the established order and setting up a society where restrictions would be banished and the individual emancipated. The

philosophy of Nietzsche also leaves its trace in this aspect of Cyril Tourneur: "Il jura de braver la mort et de créer une nouvelle humanité au milieu de la destruction fixée par les ordres divins." Cyril Tourneur represents the Übermensch whose defiant rejection of Christian morality had provoked fierce controversy in French literary circles in the early 1890's. In this context we may see perhaps in the background of the story the symbol of the darkness and disease of a decadent world, and in Cyril Tourneur the herald of a new one. Certainly the story demonstrates that the obsessions of one age recur in others, and the apparently unique adventures of Cyril Tourneur could be paralleled by the career of many a revolutionary of Schwob's day. As he wrote in a letter to Charles Whibley on the 13th July 1901, "Human mind and human society does not change much more than a bee's brain or a wasps' nest."¹⁷⁸

The originality of the vie imaginaire seems, then, to lie in Schwob's conception of the hero, and in his subtle powers of investing the action of the story with multiple associations. He offers the vision of a bygone age, through which the reader may see both a more remote past and the present day. The events he describes acquire their significance through the tacit interpretation provided: without this they would be no more than a series of sensational occurrences. It is certainly in this aspect of the tale that we must seek Schwob's own creative hand, for it is scarcely

178. Quoted in D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 81.

visible in the relation of the incidents that make up the life of Cyril Tourneur. There are, of course, many little touches that are his own: the death of Rosamonde, for example, through drinking "dans une coupe transparente du poison couleur d'émeraude", is not to be found in the Revenge's Tragedy or the ballad-sources; but, on the whole, Schwob's part is that of selector and arranger. Although, naturally enough, he does not divulge his sources, he gives ample indication that the different elements were to be found in existing chronicles: the narrative abounds in phrases like: "on rapporte que", "un autre chroniqueur assure que", "une note obscure et effrayée", "certains affirment que". The impression that the information is taken from a contemporary source is strengthened by acknowledgments of lacunae in the biography: "La date de sa naissance est ignorée", "il est impossible de découvrir ce qu'il pensa", "la fin de sa vie se perd dans un rayonnement obscur". With such hints Schwob confesses his debt to the accounts of other writers, even though he must have been aware that few enough of his readers would recognise them.

From the works of a then little-known English poet, Schwob has created an imaginary life which goes far beyond his source of inspiration. English literature provides the substance of the story, but the ability to handle the material is part of Schwob's peculiar talent. Nonetheless, here too there are, perhaps, signs of the technique of Robert Louis Stevenson, which Schwob was defining at almost the same time in his essay for the New Review.

The "réalisme irréel" which Schwob so admired can be seen in the interaction of fantastic hero and familiar background:

"L'illusion de réalité naît de ce que les objets qu'on nous présente sont ceux que nous voyons tous les jours, auxquels nous sommes bien accoutumés; la puissance d'impression, de ce que les rapports entre ces objets familiers sont soudainement modifiés."179

By adopting this technique, Schwob is able to present a convincing picture of the London setting, and a hero from the realms of romance. The background takes on its tinge of mystery through its association with the actions of Cyril Tourneur, but the hero himself does not gain in credibility through his contact with reality. Yet, despite his almost caricatural qualities, the figure of Cyril Tourneur is not entirely remote from the human condition. He is presented through a series of remarkable scenes, for Schwob, disdaining the analytical procedures of the psychological novel, makes no attempt to motivate the character through the workings of his thoughts and passions. It is the reader himself, instinctively clothing the lay-figure provided by Schwob with his own images of the type of man he sees in Cyril Tourneur, who brings the hero to life. Schwob writes in his essay on Stevenson

"Nos contemporains existent avec d'autant plus de force, nous apparaissent avec d'autant plus d'individualité, que nous les attachons plus étroitement à ces créations irréelles des temps anciens."180

179. Spicilège, 1960, p. 72.

180. ibid. p. 75.

By a reversal of this process the characters of a book may also be animated; but whether this readiness of the reader's powers of visualising by association should be exploited by the creative artist is debatable. Nevertheless, Schwob's purpose is helped thereby; he is able to present a man in all his peculiarities, and at the same time show his resemblance with the human race in general. Seen in this light, the story of Cyril Tourneur is a perfect illustration of the essence of biography as defined by Schwob in his preface to the Vies Imaginaires, which is to "fixer pour l'éternité un individu par ses traits spéciaux sur un fond de ressemblance avec l'idéal."

. . . .

The publication of the Vies Imaginaires may be regarded as the summit of Schwob's career as a creative writer, and it is probably this book which has done most to keep his name alive. The question arises, therefore, whether Schwob's tale has played an important rôle in the popularisation of Tourneur's works in France. Certainly the vie must have made Tourneur known to a large public, but the absence of a translation would effectively debar many from following up the indication. The vie itself had one strange echo: it became the basis of a chapter in Alfred Jarry's Gestes et Opinions du Docteur Faustroll, beginning, "L'île Cyril nous parût d'abord comme le feu rouge d'un volcan, ou d'un punch de sang éclaboussant par la chute d'étoiles filantes."¹⁸¹

181. Oeuvres Complètes, I 249-250.

Various editors of Tourneur's plays have mentioned Schwob's biography. Camille Cé and Henri Servajean, in the foreword to their translation of the two tragedies, the first in France,¹⁸² remarked on his "superbe effronterie d'artiste" and his "belle audace d'invention." Allardyce Nicoll began the introduction to his edition with the first paragraph of Schwob's vie, adding the comment

"This macabre conception, frankly fantastic as it may be, perhaps conceals within its fantasy more than a fragment of truth."

It was probably the fantasy which led to the idea of presenting The Revenger's Tragedy on the French stage. At the fourth Concours des Jeunes Compagnies, in July 1949, the troupe of Marc Gentilhomme gave a performance in an adaptation by Jean Stéphane and Jean Toury. In an interview with the producer and actors, a reporter from Combat rashly enquired:

" - Mais qui exactement était Cyril Tourneur?
Alors soudain une immense clameur rauque et organisée s'éleva pour nous répondre et nous cloua sur place.
Nous avions, à notre insu, posé une question sacramentale."¹⁸³

182. La Tragédie de la Vengeance, La Tragédie de l'Athée, 1926.

183. The press-cuttings relative to the performance are to be found in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, under the shelf-mark R Supp 2838. In the same article in Combat, 16th June 1949, it is stated: "La Tragédie du Vengeur est un chef d'oeuvre qu'aucune scène française n'a encore présenté. Artaud y rêvait et bien d'autres. Dasté dut s'interrompre en cours de répétitions." An adaptation by Jean Toury, 'Gloriana sera vengée', was played at La Huchette, on the 1st March 1952. There have also been two adaptations for radio. See M. Horn-Monval, *op.cit.* p. 38.

The reply was, of course, the opening sentence of Schwob's tale.

. . . .

T.S. Eliot, reviewing Allardyce Nicoll's edition of the works of Tournour, disapproved of the quotation of "the hysterical phrase of Marcel Schwob", observing that "this is not criticism; and it is a misleading introduction to the work of a man who was a great English poet."¹⁸⁴ Schwob, of course, was not attempting criticism: there is no hint of aesthetic appreciation in his work. The subject appealed primarily to his imagination and he treated it with the freedom implicit in the title. His tale is as effective a presentation of the "poète maudit" as any more sober and factual account.

184. Elizabethan Essays, 1934 p. 120.

CHAPTER IV

Shakespeare: Hamlet(i) The Play

An event of some importance in the history of the French theatre was noted by A.-Ferdinand Hérold in the Mercure de France of July 1899:

"C'est en effet le 20 mai de cette année que, pour la première fois, un drame de Shakespeare a été représenté à Paris. Grâce à Mme Sarah Bernhardt nous avons eu la joie d'entendre, ici, La Tragique histoire d'Hamlet, Prince de Danemark."¹

This performance of Hamlet in the translation by Schwob and Morand indubitably marked a turning-point in the attitude of the French toward Shakespeare. In literary circles, indeed, the English dramatist had long been admired. After his varied fortunes in the eighteenth century he had been adopted by the Romantics, among whom the figure of the Prince was held in particular sympathy; the paintings and lithographs of Delacroix, which appeared from 1834 onwards, strongly influenced the concept of Hamlet in succeeding generations of writers and consecrated the image of a slight, pale, dark-haired hero, sick at heart with the corruption of the world.² Gautier, Banville and Baudelaire were fascinated by the enigma of Hamlet;³ Jules Laforgue's poetry revealed a spiritual descendant

1. *op.cit.* p. 230.

2. See A. Whitridge, 'Shakespeare and Delacroix', Shakespeare Association Bulletin, 1942, pp. 167-183.

3. See Helen P. Bailey, Hamlet in France from Voltaire to Laforgue, Geneva, 1964, pp. 70-72, 137-139.

of the moody Dane, in whom pathos was mingled with a strong dose of irony. His Hamlet, ou les suites de la piété filiale, published in 1886, was the embodiment of his highly individual attitude to Shakespeare's hero. In the same year, Stéphane Mallarmé achieved a new depth of vision in Hamlet-appreciation with his meditation on Mounet-Sully's interpretation of the rôle: for him, Hamlet was "le seigneur latent qui ne peut devenir."⁴ Scholars and critics likewise had turned their attention to the play, and a number of notable studies had appeared through the century. Of these, we may mention the 'Etudes sur Shakespeare' of Ernest Desclozeaux, published in Le Globe between 1824 and 1826; the Etudes sur W. Shakspeare of Philarète Chasles, in 1852; Alfred Mézières's Shakspeare, ses oeuvres et ses critiques, 1860; Taine's chapters in the second volume of the Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise, 1863; and Paul Stapfer's Shakspeare et l'antiquité, in 1880. Perhaps the most interesting of these studies, though with no pretensions to academic objectivity, was the essay of Victor Hugo, published in 1864.

The reading public was able to form its own opinions through a succession of reasonably faithful translations. Pierre Le Tourneur had opened the way with his Shakespeare traduit de l'anglois, in twenty volumes, from 1776 to 1783. This prose version was revised by Guizot in 1821 and by Francisque Michel in 1839.

4. 'Hamlet', Oeuvres Complètes, 1956, p. 300.

Benjamin Laroche, a year later, brought out his very successful prose translation of the complete works, which was not displaced even by the unquestionably more poetic rendering of François-Victor Hugo, the Oeuvres Complètes de W. Shakespeare, published between 1859 and 1866. The most popular version of all was probably the new Guizot edition of 1860 with its generous annotation. Emile Montégut's Oeuvres Complètes, which appeared from 1867 to 1870, was the last of the noteworthy nineteenth-century attempts to render Shakespeare's entire production into French prose.

While poets were inspired by Shakespeare, while scholars examined the Elizabethan era, its drama, and the motivation of the tragic heroes, and while an increasingly large public absorbed Shakespeare into its culture through a wide variety of translations, the French stage made only an insignificant contribution to a better understanding of the poet. The conflict between the classic standards of the French drama and the audacious nonconformity of the Elizabethan tradition was most apparent in the theatre itself; the result was in the nature of a compromise. Although a number of great French tragedians had interpreted the rôle of Hamlet, bringing profound and permanent insight into the character of the Prince, the plays in which they acted, though highly popular, were mere travesties of the original. Talma made the fortune of the Ducis adaptation, which remained in the repertory of the Comédie Française until as late as 1852. Rouvière played Hamlet in the

Dumas-Meurice version⁵ presented at the Théâtre Historique on the 15th December 1847; he was a slender, pale, intense Prince, less brooding than Talma, and filled with nervous energy and fire. The success of the play was such that it held the stage for well over fifty years. Mounet-Sully triumphed in this adaptation in September 1886, and later, in May 1896, at the Comédie Française. Hamlet was to be produced in Meurice's alexandrines for another twenty years, truncated, adapted, reinterpreted until almost beyond recognition. Even so, conservative drama critics were not satisfied: the legend of "le sauvage ivre" bequeathed by Voltaire survived among certain influential reviewers, although Shakespeare's sublime beauties might be perfunctorily acknowledged. At any attempt to play Shakespeare, authoritative voices condemned the drama on the grounds of its affronts to French taste, and there was no indication that any other criterion would ever be adopted. In 1892 Jules Guillemot, in a review of 'Shakespeare sur la scène française', declared firmly: "Il est des choses devant lesquelles les plus hardis reculent et reculeront toujours."⁶

It was against this background⁷ that Schwob launched his

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5. See Jean Jacquot, 'Hamlet de Dumas-Meurice', Revue de la Société d'Histoire de Théâtre, October-December 1964, pp. 407-445.
 6. La Revue Bleue, 6th February 1892, p. 177.
 7. My summary is necessarily brief; reference should be made to the numerous studies of Shakespeare in France, e.g.: J.J. Jusserand, Shakespeare en France sous l'ancien régime, 1898; Paul Benchetrirt, 'The History of Hamlet in France', Birmingham, Ph.D. October 1952; Helen P. Bailey, Hamlet in France from

translation of Hamlet.

. . . .

We may be sure that Schwob had made an early acquaintance with the works of Shakespeare, and delighted in them from the start. Nowhere in his references to the poet do we find those reservations which so often accompanied otherwise eulogistic commentaries on the drama; it is as though Schwob, when considering Shakespeare, was able to put aside the prejudices of his French education and make his judgments entirely on the basis of his intimate knowledge of the plays, of the background of the Elizabethan drama, and of the most recent scholarship. His constant and fruitful communion with the dramatist is attested by the numerous allusions in his work, from the beginning to the end of his career.

The first reference is especially significant in that it prefigures one of Schwob's themes in his preface to Hamlet. Schwob liked to trace the evolution of great art from humble popular origins: he saw this process at work in Villon and Flaubert, and in Shakespeare, initially, with the songs: thus, in an article for the Phare, when discussing the "chanson populaire" as practised by Aristide Bruant, he brought in comparisons with Gérard de Nerval, Jean Richepin, Goethe, and finally Shakespeare:

Voltaire to Laforgue, 1964; René Taupin, 'The myth of Hamlet in France in Mallarmé's generation', Modern Language Quarterly, 1953, pp. 432-447; Henri Fluchère, 'Shakespeare in France: 1900-1948', Shakespeare Survey, 1949, pp. 115-125; Etudes Anglaises April-June 1960; Yale French Studies XXX, 1964.

"Les chansons de matelots ont passionné Shakespeare. La pauvre Ophélie pleure en chantant des airs du peuple: la mélancolie de Desdémone s'exhale dans une vieille mélodie "où il y a des saules pleureurs"; Ariel, Puck, les créations les plus gracieuses du poète anglais susurrent de merveilleuses chansons que Shakespeare n'a pas faites."⁸

Schwob seems to have been familiar with all the plays: he mentions in particular the great tragedies, and the names of Lear, Othello and Macbeth appear time and time again in his works. Of the historical dramas he says little, and in the Henry IV remarks only the character of Falstaff. He took pleasure in reading Shakespeare to his friends: Renard was a reluctant convert, but others were quicker to respond. Witness this letter of Francis Jammes to André Gide, in August 1898:

"Quel talent de lecture, cet ami Schwob! Il m'a lu La Tempête. C'est prodigieux."⁹

Hamlet, of all the plays, seems to have affected Schwob most profoundly. Through Gustave Merlet, his professeur de rhétorique at Louis-le-Grand, he came to associate the grave-digger's speech with the lines of Villon:

"Quand je considère ces testes
Entassées en ces charniers"¹⁰

and Champion relates that he took up the tragedy in 1890, while studying the works of Pascal.¹¹ He was struck by the analogy of

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8. 'La Chanson Populaire', op.cit. 7th January 1889.
 9. Correspondance 1893-1938, 1948, p. 145.
 10. 'Gustave Merlet', L'Événement, 20th February 1891, and OC IX 71.
 11. MST p. 41.

Hamlet's admonition to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he was not to be played on like a pipe, with Pascal's reflexion, "On croit toucher des orgues ordinaires en touchant l'homme. Ce sont des orgues, à la vérité, mais bizarres, changeantes, variables", and these he brought together in an article on Ferdinand Brunetière, occasioned by the latter's return to the Church, reproving the apologists of reaction for their misguided attempts to claim Hamlet and Pascal for their own:

"Mais un jour M. Paul Bourget a joué de la flûte sur Hamlet(12) et M. Brunetière, qui est maintenant homme d'église, a voulu jouer de l'orgue sur Pascal."13

Though questioning the interpretation put on Hamlet by his literary bête-noire, Schwob did not hesitate to invoke the play in support of his own theories. The principle of adventure, the coincidence of some crucial moment in the inner life of an individual with an event of the outside world, outlined in the preface to Coeur Double, was used by Shakespeare in Hamlet, and he quoted as an example the encounter of the Prince with Fortinbras leading his troops to war.

"Comment l'action intérieure à Hamlet se nourrira-t-elle de cet événement extérieur? Voici; Hamlet s'écrie:

Comment, je reste immobile,
Moi qui ai, par mon père tué, ma mère souillée,
Des excitations de la raison et du sang,
Et je laisse tout dormir? Quand, à ma honte, je vois
L'imminente mort de vingt mille hommes
Qui, pour une fantaisie et un jeu de gloire,
Vont vers leurs tombes!

12. In André Cornélis, 1887.

13. 'Ferdinand Brunetière', L'Evénement, 18th November 1890, and OC IX 19.

Ainsi la synthèse est accomplie; et Hamlet s'est assimilé pour sa vie intérieure un fait de la vie extérieure."¹⁴

Indeed, Schwob saw the whole of the play as an illustration of his theory, as he explained to Byvanck during the visit of 1891:

"Vous voyez, au début de la tragédie, la misanthropie du jeune prince Danois, (sic) son affolement devant la réalité cruelle de la vie, atteindre son apogée et éclater en crise intérieure; alors le spectre de son père lui apparaît et amène une crise des événements extérieurs. Et c'est, dans le drame de Shakespeare, un va-et-vient d'émotions ascendantes et descendantes qui correspond exactement au développement des choses extérieures, mais toujours de façon que les mouvements de l'âme chez Hamlet gardent leur priorité et leur suprématie."¹⁵

Thus Hamlet played an important part both at the beginning and the end of Schwob's literary career. His interest in the play was maintained during the years of his correspondence with Byvanck through the latter's work on Shakespeare: "j'ai vu en lui de très belles choses, et il n'y a aucun doute pour moi que je pourrai renouveler de fond en comble la critique du poète."¹⁶ This ambition was not to be realised: all that Byvanck managed to produce was an "Inleiding tot Shakespeare's Hamlet", in 1900.¹⁷ It would appear that neither Schwob nor Byvanck sent news of their work between 1895 and 1904, when they were actively engaged in

14. Spicilège 1960, p. 134.

15. Un Hollandais à Paris, pp. 235-236. For souvenirs of a conversation on the play between Schwob, Byvanck and O'Neill, see De Gids, 1905, III 311-312.

16. CPC 5096 letter 19 (20th January 1892).

17. Serialised in De Gids, and reprinted in Keur uit het ongebundelde Werk van W.G.C. Byvanck, Zwolle, 1956, pp. 35-153.

Shakespearean studies, but in October 1904 Schwob invited Byvanck to spend a few days in Paris:

"Hélas, moi j'ai peu de choses à vous dire - sauf sur Villon - le reste de ma vie a été bien triste depuis des années. Mais vous - j'ai vraiment soif de vous entendre et de vous demander de me parler de Shakespeare..."¹⁸

Byvanck, after relating his last conversations with Schwob, concluded: "Villon en Hamlet, dat waren Marcel Schwob's oude en blijvende liefden."¹⁹

. . . .

Schwob, who was fascinated as we have seen, by the workings of fate, might well have pondered at times on the combination of circumstances which led him to embark on his translation of Hamlet in the autumn of 1897. He had come to literary maturity on the crest of the Symbolist wave, and to this generation the Prince, detached from the context of his tragedy, had assumed the proportions of a myth. The current attitude was epitomised by Mallarmé:

"L'adolescent évanoui de nous aux commencements de la vie et qui hantera les esprits hauts ou pensifs par le deuil qu'il se plaît à porter, je le reconnais, qui se débat sous le mal d'apparaître: parce qu'Hamlet extériorise, sur des planches, ce personnage unique d'une tragédie intime et occulte, son nom même affiché exerce sur moi, sur toi qui le lis, une fascination, parente de l'angoisse."²⁰

Mounet-Sully's increasingly sensitive interpretation of the rôle

18. De Gids 1905 II 331.

19. *idem*.

20. *op.cit.* p. 299.

did much to give flesh and blood to the symbol, and his appearance in the revised Dumas-Meurice version at the Comédie Française fired the imagination of many an ardent youth. Paul Fort, according to his Mémoires, was partly responsible for spreading the vogue:

"Chose curieuse! ma nouvelle passion hamletique
gagna tous mes jeunes camarades du Luxembourg. Nous
fumes bientôt une multitude de petits Hamlet vêtus
de complets sombres et de mélancolie [..]"²¹

Thus Hamlet was very much a part of the literary and theatrical scene of the 1890's;²² and Schwob, mixing with both French and English writers who professed a cult for Shakespeare, was already assured of encouragement before he began his task. His translation of Moll Flanders was sufficient proof of his competence to tackle this most difficult of all Shakespeare's plays. And he had reached the most propitious moment of his life for the work: recovering from an operation, he was in need of money and undistracted by more creative work; Marguerite Moreno had brought him into contact with important figures in the theatre, who would be able to arrange the staging of the play. The most important factor, however, was the intervention of Sarah Bernhardt.

The actress had already played in Shakespeare's tragedies. She was Cordelia in an adaptation of King Lear, by Jules Lacroix, in April 1868. Ten years later she had played Desdemona to Mounet-Sully's Othello in a benefit performance; the translation,

21. Mes Mémoires, 1944, p. 24.

22. See René Taupin, 'The myth of Hamlet in France in Mallarmé's generation', Modern Language Quarterly, December 1953, pp. 432-447.

by Jean Aicard, was for a long period used at the Comédie Française. In 1886 she wished to play in a more forceful rôle and persuaded Jean Richepin to translate Macbeth for her. The text was hastily produced, the play rapidly rehearsed, with the result that the enterprise met with general condemnation both in Paris and England. Memories of the humiliation may have been responsible for Sarah Bernhardt's unwillingness to take on Schwob's translation of the play, even after an interval of twenty years.

Nonetheless, this one setback did not turn Sarah Bernhardt away from Shakespeare and when Lucien Cressonois and Charles Samson submitted to her their verse adaptation of Hamlet, with the rôle of Ophelia specially remoulded to show off her gifts, she was quick to take advantage of the opportunity. Once more the mediocrity of the text brought disparaging critical comment, and since neither she nor Philippe Garnier, as Hamlet, shone in their parts, the play, first performed on the 27th February 1886, was eclipsed by the revival of the Meurice-Dumas version with Mounet-Sully, later in the year.²³

Thus for Bernhardt, Shakespeare remained a challenge. Jealous of her reputation and fully aware that the rôle of Hamlet was regarded as the supreme test of the great actor, she was determined to measure herself against the renowned tragedians of

23. For fuller details of these rôles, see Beryl Turner, 'Sarah Bernhardt dans les grandes tragédies de Shakespeare', M.A. Birmingham 1954.

the past and present - Kemble, Kean, Macready, Salvini, Rossi, Mounet-Sully, who had won acclaim in this taxing part on the Parisian stage. She was anxious that her chances of success should not be jeopardised by a poor translation and it was perhaps on the recommendation of Emile Faguet, who had encouraged her to tackle Hamlet,²⁴ that she approached Eugène Morand and Marcel Schwob.

. . . .

Although Morand's name precedes Schwob's on the title-page of the volume, he seems to have contributed little to the actual writing of the play, serving rather as a moral support to Schwob in a period of great physical suffering and general despondency, and handling the business transactions with Sarah Bernhardt.²⁵ However, Schwob was not left to wrestle with the more subtle passages alone, for Henley was ready with advice when necessary. A version of the Ghost's speech, "I find thee apt", elicited these comments:

"Your translation "algue grosse" is excellent. But why "se berce nonchalamment" for "pourrit à son aise"? Why this languor for that fury? [..] And "berges", is that quite strong enough for wharf? What I want is a word which gives the association and effect of the old, tumble-down, worm-eaten, wood-built wharf (or landing-stage), with its rusty nails and broken

24. See the Revue Encyclopédique, 24th June 1899, p. 491.

25. Miss Salmon points out that both the manuscript of the preface and the corrections of the proofs were in Schwob's hand, and quotes a letter to Whibley of 1899: "He [Sherard] said I had translated and Morand wielded the scissors, which by the way is pretty near the mark." *op.cit.* p. 57.

plants and superannuated oars and riverside lumber generally. Can't you find one?"²⁶

Spurred on by Henley's illuminating observations, Schwob and his collaborator strove to produce a version worthy of the original; however, they were to discover to their cost that their translation was intended by Sarah to be less a monument to Shakespeare than a vehicle for her own gifts. Accordingly the composition was dominated from start to finish by the future "Princess of Denmark", as she was dubbed by Max Beerbohm. Schwob, installed near Mallarmé at Valvins from the beginning of July 1897 and convalescing after a recent operation, set to work at once and made rapid progress. On the 26th August he wrote to his mother:

"Morand est arrivé pour travailler à Hamlet [..] Il va rester ici cette semaine et j'espère bien que nous pourrons traduire à peu près la valeur d'un acte, étant donné que nous commençons comme toujours par le rôle de Sarah, c'est-à-dire le rôle d'Hamlet. J'espère que la traduction viendra aussi bien que celle des trois premiers actes, qui, je crois, est réussie."²⁷

Work was interrupted by Morand's departure for London, but a month later after Schwob's return to Paris was taken up with greater urgency:

"Morand est arrivé hier soir et demain matin nous allons recommencer à travailler pour finir Hamlet aussitôt que possible. Sarah lui a télégraphié là-bas qu'elle comptait sur nous pour continuer et finir à temps."²⁸

26. *ibid.* (22nd October 1897).

27. OC X 91.

28. OC X 98 (25th September 1897).

Soon afterwards Schwob wrote that the end was in sight, and was already forecasting a performance in the New Year:

"Morand vient travailler tous les matins deux heures, et dans quelques jours nous aurons terminé le quatrième acte: plus de la moitié du cinquième est déjà faite. De sorte que je compté que le 15 octobre tout sera fini et Sarah ayant pris une pièce de Donnay pour remplacer celle de Porto-Riche, il ne faut pas compter que nous passions avant fin janvier ou février, ce qui d'ailleurs serait une admirable époque parce que la saison à Londres suivrait de très près la série des représentations à Paris."²⁹

However, when the translation was completed as planned by the end of the month, the two writers found that the staging was to be considerably delayed:

"Tout est tellement en l'air au théâtre de la Renaissance que nous ne savons rien de précis pour Hamlet. Il va falloir de la patience, là encore."³⁰

Although they made an attempt to have the play accepted in the summer of 1898, Sarah Bernhardt again put them off, for she was contemplating leaving the Renaissance and preferred to keep Hamlet for the inauguration of her new base - the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt.³¹ Thus it was not until the spring of 1899 that Schwob's Hamlet received its first performance.

Schwob had provided Sarah Bernhardt with an integral translation, and expected the entire play to be staged. He had not taken into

29. *ibid.* pp. 99-100 (1st October 1897).

30. *ibid.* p. 104 (29th October 1897).

31. See Louis Verneuil, La Vie Merveilleuse de Sarah Bernhardt, Montréal 1942, p. 233.

account the current theatrical practice, in England as well as in France, of omitting large sections of the drama in order not to tax the spectator's patience, and so was unpleasantly surprised by Sarah's handling of his work. Vincent O'Sullivan gives an account of the stormy rehearsals:

"He may perhaps have really admired this woman as an actress, but I can't recall a word of his to show that he did. While he was rehearsing his "Hamlet" he overflowed in objurgations of her crass ignorance and her play-actressism.

In their disputes she was doubtless right from a practical standpoint [...]. He had illusions as to the reverence in which Shakespeare is held by the English theatre public. One day, after a violent argument with Sarah about some "cuts" which she wanted to make, he ended with: "If you do that in London you will be hooted off the stage." But she, with her great knowledge of all manner of theatre publics, answered sharply: "In London they come to see me, not Shakespeare."³²

Realising in the end that expedience would triumph over purism, he wrote disconsolately to Whibley: "A thing called Hamlet is to be performed here this month and in London (alas!) in June - but I had no hand in it - do not forget that."³³

32. 'Two Lives', Dublin Magazine, January-March 1927 p. 42. See also Jean Touraine, 'Marguerite Moreno nous parle de Marcel Schwob, "traducteur et homme de théâtre", Le Soir, 16th June 1927. "Pendant les répétitions d'Hamlet, lors de la création, Sarah Bernhardt, qui ne se gênait guère avec le texte de ses auteurs, se permit à différentes reprises quelques adaptations fantaisistes, Marcel Schwob en devint comme fou, à tel point qu'il refusa de diriger les dernières répétitions. Ce fut le second auteur, aidé d'Edmond Rostand, qui fut contraint de s'en charger."

33. Quoted in D. Salmon, *op.cit.* p. 58.

In fact, despite Schwob's forebodings, the suppressions probably helped the public to accept the play: the mere fact that a literal text had been tolerated was already a great advance. Practical considerations, inevitable at that time, were largely responsible for the cuts:

"Il y a dans Hamlet des longueurs, des plaisanteries qui nous échappent, des obscénités que nos mœurs ne tolèrent pas. De plus, la simplicité du système des décors au temps de Shakespeare fait que la scène change sans cesse, sans nécessité."³⁴

It was generally agreed that Sarah had given as generous a ration of Shakespeare as could be expected, and the critics responded with the fulsome praise that the actress took as her due. Reviews concentrated on the merits of her interpretation as compared with her predecessors', and on the inventiveness of the stage-business she had introduced. In the almost universal admiration of the Prince, the poem was somewhat neglected.³⁵

When Hamlet was presented at the Adelphi Theatre on the 13th June in the course of the London season, the English critics proved considerably less gallant than their French colleagues. They objected to the production, with its numerous scene-changes and eleven long intervals, they reproved Sarah's temerity in tackling a male rôle, and most of all, they took exception to her concept

34. Henri Fouquier, 'LesThéâtres', Le Figaro, 21st May 1899.

35. See the press cuttings in the Arsenal Library, Re 8.127 I:43-63, Rf 67.587, I, and the thesis of Beryl Turner, I:40-65.

of the character of the hero. She had eliminated the psychological and intellectual complexities and presented "instead of an unhinged dreamer a practical Hamlet who set about and got on with his business of revenge until he was hurled from event to event."³⁶ Regrets were expressed for the disappearance of the mystery, the light and shade, "that serenity, that calmness, that philosophic cast, that unswerving and silent devotion to a resolute, terrible, and unbending purpose."³⁷ In fact, although this was little appreciated, Sarah's interpretation, whether consciously or not, was in line with a new approach to Hamlet. Swinburne had already rejected the over-sensitive, over-cerebral figure popularised by Goethe and Coleridge, and had asserted that "the signal characteristic of Hamlet's inmost nature is by no means irresolution or hesitation or any form of weakness, but rather the strong conflux of contending forces."³⁸ This notion had as yet made little progress and the reviewers of the Morning Leader and the Morning Post were almost alone in approving Sarah's revolutionary vision. Even they regretted her lack of creative imagination:

"To Hamlet's character - that character that is becoming more and more intimately human as we are more and more able to shake off the muddle-headed theories in which the Germans have buried him - Bernhardt adds practically nothing."³⁹

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36. Maurice Baring, Sarah Bernhardt, 1933, p. 134.
 37. 'Bernhardt as Hamlet', The Daily Telegraph, 13th June 1899.
 38. A Study of Shakespeare, 1880, p. 166.
 39. S.R.L., 'The Newest Hamlet', The Morning Leader, 13th June 1899.

In the absence of new subtleties to comment on the English critics were reduced to observing that Sarah's Hamlet was neither fat, mad, nor thirty, and to examining the stage-business, which had the merit of being original and highly effective. On the whole, reservations balanced praise in London. Sarah Bernhardt's great gifts were freely acknowledged, but it was felt that they had not been put to good use. Her Hamlet, for the critics, was a curiosity, made acceptable only through her dazzling reputation.

Whatever the judicious might think, the general public was eager to see the actress in her latest guise, and the play was rapturously received by audiences in Stratford, on the 29th June, and in Austria, Hungary and Switzerland during the summer tour. The real test of the play was to come when the novelty had worn off; and indeed, despite the favourable beginnings, Hamlet did not prosper during the winter season.

During Sarah's absence from Paris, her theatre was being redecorated and the opening of the winter season was delayed until the 16th December. Schwob was anxious for the fate of his play, and on the 8th October wrote to his mother: "Nous ne savons pas du tout si Sarah reprendra Hamlet; mais je crois pour ma part qu'elle y sera forcée."⁴⁰ The Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt did in fact open with Hamlet, but by this time Sarah was tired of the play and impatient to put on Rostand's l'Aiglon. Hamlet received fifty

40. OC X 111 (8th October 1899).

performances during the season and was thereafter virtually forgotten. Schwob, although the run was not a short one for those times, was bitterly disappointed and his letters to Nantes were full of animosity towards Sarah. On the 22nd December he wrote:

"les recettes sont très mauvaises - trois mille francs - nous ne gagnerons rien à cette reprise qui ne pourra durer longtemps. C'est de la guigne: pièce interrompue - si cette grelerine nous avait joué un mois plus tôt on faisait soixante représentations admirables."⁴¹

Most of all, Schwob was worried that the success of his translation would be jeopardised, for the book, dedicated to Henley, was put on sale on the 22nd. His next letter contained similarly gloomy news:

"Oui, la reprise d'Hamlet est bien mauvaise, et hier Sarah a fait relâche [...] parce que la recette était nulle et qu'elle perdait encore moins à ne pas jouer. J'en suis désolé. Les réclames que Fasquelle pourrait faire ne serviraient guère en ce moment, noyées qu'elles seraient parmi les livres d'étrennes."⁴²

By the middle of January indignation had given way to philosophical resignation:

"Sarah, qui est souffrante, a coupé la moitié de la pièce et la joue n'importe comment au milieu de la totale indifférence du public; c'est monstrueux. Tu penses que je n'y ai pas mis les pieds."⁴³

The fate of Schwob's Hamlet was all the more depressing for the translator as it had begun so auspiciously. True, four years later, he was to have the pleasure of expecting a revival, but the

41. *ibid.* p. 118.

42. *ibid.* p. 119 (31st December 1899).

43. *ibid.* p. 121 (13th January 1900).

project was shelved immediately after his death.

. . . .

Posterity has dealt a little more kindly with the Schwob-Morand Hamlet. Georges and Ludmilla Pitoëff "venerated" the translation, and used it for their first creation of the tragedy at the Théâtre Pitoëff, Geneva, from November 1920 to October 1921. Then, having finally obtained permission from Moreno, they gave two performances in Paris, on the 18th and 19th December 1926, and took the play on a provincial tour, acting it at Lyon in the middle of February, and in Belgium at the beginning of April. On the 17th May 1927 they began a long run at the Théâtre des Arts, in Paris; and this unprecedented phenomenon, an uncut version of Hamlet in France, was a posthumous vindication of Schwob's faith in his work.⁴⁴ In contrast to Pitoëff's interpretation, emphasising "la jeunesse et la libre complexité d'une figure à peine arrachée au monde des rêves,"⁴⁵ Jean Yonnel presented a bustling, mature, well-built and lucid Hamlet when the Comédie Française finally decided to stage the play, on the 4th May 1932. Critics were thankful to be spared a Freudian Prince and gave high praise for Charles Granval's

44. See Jean Hort, La vie héroïque des Pitoëff, Geneva, 1966, pp. 130-131. For press-cuttings, see Arsenal, Théâtre des Arts 1926-27, Rt 3.701, vols 17-18, and Hamlet, Représentations, Re 8.127, II 1-37.

45. H. Lenormand, Chantecler, 29th December 1926. The literary supplement of the Figaro on the 25th February 1928 printed two scenes from Schwob's translation, adding that "M. Jovet se proposerait, dit-on, de [la] représenter prochainement."

production. The text met with some unfavourable comment: already Schwob's version seemed out-dated and unsuitable for modern performance.⁴⁶ Since then there have apparently been no further productions of the play based on his text.⁴⁷ This is hardly surprising, since each age has its own view of Hamlet, and just as the contemporary French mind refuses to approach the play through the notions of the past, so it is reluctant to hear Shakespeare's words spoken in the language of a bygone era. Schwob's translation has thus been displaced, and for us its interest lies almost entirely in its significance as the forerunner of the twentieth century's attempts to play Shakespeare without concessions to mistaken notions of dramatic propriety.

46. Only eighteen performances were given that season, not enough to cover the costs; and only twenty-five showings were given in all, between 1932 and 1934.

47. I have found vague references to performances of the Schwob text by Jean-Louis Barrault, in 1931 and 1945, but have been unable to find records of these. Barrault himself, in his Nouvelles Réflexions sur le Théâtre, 1959, mentions only his rôles in an adaptation of Laforgue's Hamlet, in 1939, and in the translation by Guy de Pourtalès, 1943; his most celebrated incarnation of the Prince was in the André Gide version, in 1946.

(ii) The Preface

Professor Edward Dowden, at the beginning of November 1899, published his edition of The Tragedy of Hamlet, the first volume of a complete works of Shakespeare which became known as the Arden series. A review of the book appeared in Literature and immediately caught Schwob's attention, for in the same issue, of the 4th November 1899, his letter to Sidney Colvin on Stevenson's debt to Villon in "A Lodging for the Night" was printed in the correspondence column. Eager to demonstrate his erudition to an English audience, Schwob immediately wrote to elucidate a point raised by the reviewer:

"The author of the article on Professor Dowden's edition of Hamlet is not inclined to accept the explanations offered of Hamlet's swearing by "Saint Patrick", that there is "much offence." (Act I. v. 136.) I agree with him that Professor Dowden's is perhaps a far-fetched interpretation, but there is no doubt that the choice of this saint by Hamlet is very deliberate. The ghost has told Hamlet that he must render himself "to sulphurous and tormenting flames" till his foul crimes "are burnt and purged away." Therefore it is certain that the "poor ghost" is in Purgatory. On this idea the mind of Hamlet dwells, and he remembers the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory. Perhaps Shakespeare had noticed the dramatic force of the matter which Calderon worked out a little later. The legend was well known in the days of Shakespeare."⁴⁸

The letter concluded with a number of references to books familiar to specialists of the period.

Schwob was not to know that this small contribution to

48. Literature, 11th November 1899, p. 472.

Shakespeariana would result in an academic dispute and the writing of a preface to his translation. On the 17th November he wrote to his mother: "Literature a publié une lettre que j'ai écrite au sujet de la nouvelle édition de Hamlet par le professeur Dowden et je commence à être bien connu en Angleterre."⁴⁹ The next day came an unexpected and mocking reply from Dublin with sardonic references to "the great German critic, M^{rs}nestfinder", and which concluded:

"If M. Schwob will do me the honour to look at the edition on which he comments, he will find that his suggestion about Saint Patrick's Purgatory has been anticipated, and is there noted. Jocelyn places St. Patrick's Purgatory in Mayo, and I reject M. Schwob's theory because I believe the ghost of Hamlet's father would have preferred hell to Connaught."⁵⁰

Schwob, discomfitted, bought a copy of Dowden's book and hastened to redeem his reputation with a further letter:

"I own I was quite wrong in commenting on the review of Professor Dowden's edition before I had read the book, but I do not see the scientific force of Professor Dowden's witty objection, and regret that he did not adopt Zschibschwitz's [sic] theory,⁽⁵¹⁾ which seems quite obvious. The ghosts in St. Patrick's purgatory appeared in the mouth of the cave and spoke to the living; and I still believe that this legend is the only cause of the mention of the saint's name. Could Hamlet's father be more fastidious than Shelley, whose favourite reading was "El Purgatorio de San Patricio?"

But I have now read Professor Dowden's most interesting edition, and beg to make a few remarks.

(I) I am much surprised that Professor Dowden has not mentioned that the legend of Hamlet occurs in a

49. OC X 116.

50. Literature, 18th November 1899 p. 496.

51. For Tschischwitz's note, see A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, ed. H. Furness, Philadelphia, 1877, Hamlet, I 111n.

most striking tale of French folklore (La Reine Châtrée [sic]). Bladé, "Contes Populaires de la Gascogne." The queen's son, as in the play, sends the girl whom he loves to a nunnery (cf. Anatole France, "La Vie Littéraire" vol.IV.).
(II) Act I., Sc. I., v. 79.

Marc. Who is't can inform me?

Hor. That can I;
At least the whisper goes so. Our last king, &c.

The true reading (with substitution of a full stop instead of the comma of the first line) is in the Fol. 1623.

Hor. That can I,
At least the whisper goes so: Our last king, &c.

Of course, the whisper is not that Hor. can inform Marc., but the whisper is that "our last king", &c. (III) Professor Dowden has perhaps explained why Polonius classes "fencing" with drinking and drabbing. He says (p. 55, n. 25) that "fencers had a like legal disrepute with players," which may be, but quotes Middleton (Spanish Gipsy, II.,ii), where Sancho, playing with fencers, has lost cloak, band, and rapier at dice, and Dekker's Gul's Horn-booke (ed. Grosart ii., p. 213), where a rich young man is "set upon" by fencers and cony-catchers. There is no doubt about these two passages - they do not refer to fencers with the sword, but to fencers, receivers of stolen goods or thieves (Street Robberies consider'd, London. J. Roberts, n.d. ap. Viles and Furnivall, The Fraternitey of Vagabonds, p. xxiii.) The word must have been taken in a wider sense in Dekker's time, as in France persons of the same description were then called chevaliers de la courte espée.(52) [..] We must admit that fencer = cony-catcher; whereas the fencing that Polonius means is probably the practice of fighting duels."53

The correspondence was closed with Dowden's reply on the 2nd December. Here it was pointed out that the word "fencer" was

52. Here Schwob gives numerous instances of similar French terms, taken from his 'Jargon des Coquillars en 1455'.

53. Literature, 25th November 1899 p. 521.

thieves' cant and not in common use in the seventeenth century, and that the punctuation suggested by Schwob was acceptable but unnecessary.⁵⁴ Finally, Dowden rejected Schwob's attempt to include the Gascon folk-tale in the sources of Hamlet:

"The story of La Reine châtiée, known to me by the volume by Anatole France (which, if I remember aright, contains some delightful comment on a book by M. Schwob⁵⁵), does not enter into the genealogy of Hamlet, to which I confined myself."

Thus the last word of the controversy was left with Dowden, but Schwob was by this time determined to justify at least some of his ideas by exposing them in a foreword to the translation, which was then being prepared for the press. On the 22nd November he mentioned in a letter to Nantes: "Je suis occupé de l'introduction d'Hamlet que nous avons enfin achevée hier avec Morand et terminé de livrer à Fasquelle."⁵⁶ On the composition of the work we find no details in the letters, except this one allusion when the book had already appeared: "Oui, certes l'introduction m'a donné beaucoup de mal, mais j'espère qu'elle me fera honneur, surtout

54. *ibid.* p. 547.

55. Apart from this preface, Schwob also contributed a short review of Dowden's edition to the Mercure de France, 1st January 1900, pp. 225-226. Here he insisted on the points already made in his letters to Literature, with no mention of Dowden's objections, but concluded: "Il suffit de reconnaître que l'édition d'Hamlet de M. Dowden apporte au lecteur les plus récentes recherches des savants sur l'histoire de la pièce, et qu'elle résume les meilleures notes de la grande édition variorum publiée par Furness à Philadelphie."

56. See OC X 116.

en Angleterre."⁵⁷

. . . .

Schwob's preface to Hamlet is radically different from his other works on English literature in that it is solely a work of erudition, offering no imaginative interpretation of the drama. Metaphysics are eschewed: the deeper meanings of the tragedy and of its hero's character are left unanalysed. Instead Schwob concentrates on the various strands of the history of the play, and attempts to clear up some of the controversies arising from the obscurity of the text. Some of the points he makes are original, but in the main he follows the beaten paths of Shakespeare criticism. Indeed, much of his preface is borrowed directly from authoritative sources, and we shall begin our examination with a list of this material.

The reader of Schwob's introduction and notes is immediately struck by the imposing array of names of editors and commentators, English and German, which give the impression that Schwob had done a formidable amount of reading before compiling his preface. Moreover, since he made no explicit acknowledgement of his sources beyond stating that the page references in the notes were made to the Dowden edition, only a careful investigation would reveal that this show of scholarship was in fact derived from only two books - the Dowden Hamlet and the two volumes of Furness's Variorum edition.

57. *ibid.* p. 119.

Schwob quotes from these books almost word for word, though condensing much of the material. The following table will show the extent of his debt.

- D xi For the earliest references to the legendary Hamlet the reader should consult Mr. Gollancz's interesting volume Hamlet in Iceland (1898). The first in date, he tells us, is found in the second section of Snorri Sturlason's Prose Edda (about 1230) [...]. The name Amhlaide is found yet earlier. In the Annals of Ireland by the Four Masters, under the year 917 (=919) [...].
- xii Probably about the opening of the thirteenth century the Danish writer Saxo Grammaticus told in Latin the story of Amlethus in the third and fourth books of his History of the Danes [...].
- xiii Saxo's History was printed in 1514. In 1570 Belleforest [...]/told the story of Amleth in French in the fifth volume of his Histoires tragiques. The English translation of Belleforest's story, The Historie of Hamlet, is dated 1608, and may have been called forth by the popularity of Shakespeare's play. Here the eavesdropper hides behind the hangings of Geruthe's chamber, and Hamlet cries, "A rat! a rat!" [...]. As early as 1589 an English drama on the subject of Hamlet was in existence. It is referred to in that year by Thomas Nash in a printed letter accompanying Greene's Menaphon. Henslowe's diary informs us that it was acted [...].
- F II 8 9 of June 1594, Rd at hamlet [...]. viij^s
- 9 Among other peculiarities of Henslowe's diary is the custom which he adopted of marking each new play with the abbreviation ne. The above entry has no such mark [...].
- D xiii The suggestion that Thomas Kyd was the author [...]. was supported with substantial evidence by Mr. Fleay in his Chronicle of the English Drama (1891), and [...]. by Gregor Sarrazin in [...].
- xiv Thomas Kyd und sein Kreis (1892). We may fairly assume that it was a companion piece to Kyd's Spanish Tragedy [...]. including among the dramatis personae a ghost, and presenting, like Hamlet, a play within the play.
- F II 6 Malone: if the old play of Hamlet should ever be recovered, a similar interlude, I make no doubt, would be found there.
- 9 reference to Lodge's Wit's miserie, 1596.
- 11 reference to Dekker's Satiro-mastix, 1602

- D xiv Mr. Corbin, in a very ingenious study, The Elizabethan Hamlet (1895), has conjectured that the lost play by Kyd exhibited a Hamlet resembling the Amleth of Saxo [...] A rude German drama, Der Bestrafte Brudermord, found in a manuscript dated 1710, is taken by Mr. Corbin and others as based on Kyd's Hamlet [...] it seems to me far more probable that the German play is a debased adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet in its earliest form.
- xv See Cohn's Shakespeare in Germany (1865)
Under the date July 26, 1602, was entered in the Stationers' Registers for the printer James Roberts, "A booke called The Revenge of Hamlet Prince [of] Denmarke, as yt was latelie Acted by the Lord Chamberleyne his servantes." [...] In the following year appeared in quarto, "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniversities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere. At London printed for N.L. and John Trundell. 1603." The Lord Chamberlain's servants of 1602 - Shakespeare's company - had, since the accession of James I, become his Highness' servants [...] In 1604 appeared a second Quarto: "[...] At London, Printed by I.R. for N.L. [...]"
- xvi It is unquestionable that the copy for the Quarto of 1603 was surreptitiously obtained. Errors [...] indicate that [...] a short-hand writer was employed to take notes of the speeches during a theatrical performance [...] The earlier portion of the Quarto is both fuller and less inaccurate as compared to the true text than the later [...]
- xvii [...] is shorter by some seventeen or eighteen hundred lines than the play as we construct it from the second Quarto and the Folio; yet it gives substantially the whole action of the complete play. The names of two characters differ from those familiar to us - Polonius is here Corambis, and Reynaldo is Montano [...] Francisco is known only as first Centinel. [list of transpositions and variations] [...] the Queen appearing as a confederate on Hamlet's side.
- D xviii Such differences as these can be accounted for only in one of two ways - either, as the Clarendon Press editors maintain(58), a considerable portion of the old play is

58. W.G. Clarke and W.A. Wright. Their text, long considered the purest available, first appeared in the Cambridge Edition, then in the Globe Edition of the Complete Works. In 1872 their Hamlet was issued in the Oxford Clarendon Press series, and was frequently reprinted.

included in the Quarto of 1603, or that Quarto imperfectly and often erroneously exhibits Shakespeare's work in a form which he subsequently revised and altered [...] For my own part, repeated perusals have satisfied me that Shakespeare's hand can be discerned throughout the whole of the truncated and travestied play of 1603 [...] With the exception of the following lines [...] I see nothing that looks pre-Shakespearian, and I see much that is entirely unlike the work of Kyd.

- F II 36 [...] "if the Hamlet in the First Folio were not composed from some now unknown Quarto, it was derived from a manuscript obtained by Heminge and Condell from the theatre. The Acts and Scenes are marked only in the First and Second Acts, after which no divisions of the kind are noticed, and where the Third Act commences is merely matter of modern conjecture. Some large portions of the Play appear to have been omitted for the sake of shortening the performance."
- D xx The duration of the action in the play presents difficulties [...]
- xxii The truth is, as stated by Professor Hall Griffin (whose record of the notes of time has aided me here), "Shakespeare is at fault [...]"

With these purely textual and bibliographical points, Schwob has done little more than set out the essential information in a clear and compact form, leaving out material of interest only to the specialist, but indicating sources for further reading. In the frequent cases of doubt or controversy he does not hesitate to invoke the authority of Dowden, - to adduce the existence of a Ghost in the so-called Ur-Hamlet of Thomas Kyd,⁵⁹ for example. He even goes beyond Dowden on certain issues, turning conjectures into certainties. The question of whether the English translation of Belleforest preceded or followed Shakespeare's play, and whether

59. Kyd's authorship of this play has since been contested, by A.S. Cairncross; in The Problem of Hamlet, 1936, pp. 57-59, and G.I. Duthie, The "Bad" Quarto of Hamlet, Cambridge, 1941, pp. 56-77.

it could have been Shakespeare's source, was discreetly left unsolved by Dowden but Schwob, perhaps with a mind to his French audience, insists: "c'est dans le livre des Histoires tragiques qu'il l'a lue, et dans le texte français."⁶⁰ The crux here is the date of the Hystorie of Hamblet: no earlier edition than that of 1608 is known, yet Belleforest's story dated from 1570 and the collection of his tales had proved very popular in France. Furness had given extracts from arguments for either side of the case, but had declared himself in favour of the year 1608 as the date of publication of the Hystorie.⁶¹ Schwob would no doubt have been swayed also by the opinion of Sir Sidney Lee, who in his biography of Shakespeare pronounced that the dramatist had most probably read the story "in the French".⁶² Another possibility, passed over by Schwob, is that the author of the Ur-Hamlet read Belleforest, and his version was in turn adapted by Shakespeare.⁶³ The disappearance of the play effectively prevents the finding of a satisfactory solution, and Schwob's hypothesis may be as reasonable as any. Nonetheless, in the absence of conclusive evidence, one feels that Schwob was a little rash in making such a claim.

60. La Tragique Histoire d'Hamlet, Prince de Danemark, 1900, p. vii. The reference to Belleforest as "continueur de Pierre Boisthuau" confirms that Schwob was accentuating the French element in his preface. Belleforest was one of the numerous revisors of the Histoires Prodigieuses, first published in 1560.

61. op.cit. II 87-90.

62. A Life of William Shakespeare, 1898, p. 222.

63. Suggested by, for example, A.A. Jack, Young Hamlet, 1950, pp. 35-36; Cyrus Hoy, in his edition of Hamlet, New York, 1963, p. viii-ix.

For the same reason Schwob's statement on the origins of the German play Der Bestrafte Brudermord must be considered too dogmatic. Many scholars had debated the question, opinions being divided between the Ur-Hamlet and the 1603 Quarto as the true source;⁶⁴ and Furness, after reviewing the arguments, concluded:

"I think there can be little doubt but that in Fratricide Punished we have a translation of an old English tragedy, and most probably the one which is the groundwork of the Quarto of 1603."⁶⁵

Dowden was much influenced by the more recent theory of Tanager, proposing that Q1 was the basis of the play, with a few later modifications from Q2; however, he talked in terms of probabilities and Schwob was guilty of misrepresentation when he wrote that "Dowden écarte avec raison cette hypothèse tout à fait gratuite." The Ur-Hamlet has, in fact, been reinstated by a majority of twentieth-century scholars as the most likely source of the German travesty, although the influence of the Quartos has by no means been discounted.⁶⁶ It is generally recognised that the reconstitution of the elements of the Brudermord cannot be exact, so that it is possible that Schwob's declaration may be as justified as any other made with a greater show of proof; but again, his way of dismissing the case for the other side bespeaks a rather unacademic approach.

64. See Furness op.cit. II 114-120.

65. *ibid.* p. 120.

66. See Reinhold Freudenstein, Der Bestrafte Brudermord, Hamburg, 1958, p. 41, for a table of opinions. The author himself, after a thorough examination of the play, takes the minority view that it is indebted to both Quartos, and not to the Ur-Hamlet.

A third point where the loss of the Ur-Hamlet has reduced researchers to conjecture is in the status of the First Quarto. The wide variations between the texts of 1603 and 1604 had provoked much speculation. It was held at first that Q1 was an early draft of the perfect play, transformed by the poet in his maturity; later critics came round to the idea that it was in fact a pirated copy, wretchedly abused by the stenographers, actors and printers. This latter view was expounded notably by the Oxford editors, who furthermore accounted for the differences between the two quartos by postulating the remains of the Ur-Hamlet in Shakespeare's first revision.⁶⁷ Dowden, while observing that "when careful and judicious investigators fail to agree, the matter must be admitted to be doubtful", nevertheless preferred to adopt the view that Shakespeare had completed the revision of the old play in 1603 and made other improvements for the edition of the following year. Later scholars have reached no agreement on the matter. Duthie claims that "behind the reported text of Q1 there lies a version of the play either identical with or at least extremely close to that given in Q2,"⁶⁸ but the American editors Parrott and Craig, and later Cyrus Hoy, have reverted to the older standpoint, maintaining that the pirates worked from Shakespeare's new play-book and occasionally brought in reminiscences of the old tragedy.⁶⁹

67. For views on the Q1, see Furness op.cit. II 12-33.

68. op.cit. p. 181.

69. Hoy op.cit. p. 99. The Tragedy of Hamlet ed. T.M. Parrott and Hardin Craig, Princeton 1938, pp. 30-41.

Schwob, as before, proclaims the superiority of Dowden's judgment, and this time substantiates the rejection of Kyd's hand with evidence from the text. In the choice of his example he follows an indication of Furness from the preface to the Q1 Hamlet:

"See the opening speech of the Player King [...]
Here is not only the antithesis, but the artificial elevation, that was to keep the language of the Interlude apart from that of the real drama. Shakspeare has most skilfully managed the whole business of the Player King and Queen upon this principle; but, as we think, when he wrote his first copy, his power as an artist was not so consummate. In that copy the first lines of the Player King are singularly flowing and musical; and their sacrifice shows us how inexorable was his judgement."⁷⁰

Schwob takes over this paragraph and amplifies it for the benefit of his French readers, less familiar with the two versions. The point of his argument is firmly kept in view, and he points out that Shakespeare's reworkings are on his own text, not Kyd's. "Ce sont là des remaniements d'auteur." It is interesting that Schwob should have chosen this particular passage since it recalls his ideas on realism in the theatre, first laid down in the essay on Stevenson. Talking of the occasional necessity to represent an object by a stylised replica on the stage, he gave as an illustration the decision to show the heart of Annabella by a scrap of red cloth cut in the traditional shape, when Ford's 'Tis Pity she's a Whore was produced. Here, in the same way, he shows the need to avoid "faults of perspective" in the representation of a play within a

70. op.cit. II 16-17.

play and praises Shakespeare for the "délicat travail d'art" in reshaping 'The Mouse-trap' in a style sharply differentiated from that of the body of the play.

. . . .

In the main, therefore, Schwob's analysis of the sources and the various texts of Hamlet follows orthodox lines: in the welter of critical findings on the enigma we can point to a number of sources which authorise his opinions. The problems of Belleforest, of the Bestrafte Brudermord and of Kyd are all germane to the genesis of the play, and Schwob does well to state them and pronounce thereon; but the reader of his preface cannot fail to note that he gives less prominence to these points than to the business of 'La Reine Châtiée'. After finding himself the butt of Dowden's sarcasms, Schwob was determined to expose fully and energetically his reasons for including the tale among the sources of Hamlet.

'La Reine Châtiée' had been collected by Jean-François Bladé, an eminent folklorist, in the first volume of his Contes Populaires de la Gascogne. Bladé himself had not commented on any affinities with Hamlet but Anatole France, reviewing the book, had been more explicit:

"Shakespeare aussi n'est pas dégagé de tout lien avec la poésie orale des peuples. Il puisait aussi volontiers dans la tradition que dans l'histoire. Voici précisément, colligé et traduit par M. Bladé, le conte de la Reine Châtiée, dans lequel on retrouve le thème de cette histoire d'Hamlet, prince de Danemark, que le grand Will a immortalisé."⁷¹

71. La Vie Littéraire, 4^o série, 1892, p. 83.

France went on to quote long extracts from the tale. Perhaps it was in the Vie Littéraire that it first caught Schwob's eye, since the volume also contained France's review of Coeur Double. The mere fact that 'La Reine Châtiée' was of popular origin would have been enough to arouse his interest, and the correspondences between the tale and the play must be admitted to be striking. While at first glance the reader is tempted to the same conclusions as Schwob and France, reflexion leads to the query as to how the Hamlet saga in this particular form came to implant itself in Gascony. There is no record of any conversations of Schwob with his friends on this subject but one imagines that Henley and Whibley would have had reservations about the idea. It is significant that Byvanck, in his 'Inleiding tot Hamlet', makes no mention of folk-tale.⁷²

Before discussing Schwob's theories in greater detail, I shall give a brief outline of the tale. A king and queen have an only son; shortly before his twenty-first birthday he is commanded by his father to choose a wife so that he may rule in the king's place. A bride is found, "belle comme le jour", who sings "comme une sirène toutes sortes de chansons", but the queen, reluctant to be displaced, has her husband poisoned. That night, the prince is visited by his father's ghost and is charged with the task of

72. Bladé's tales seem, however, to have been known to a cultivated public. See A. Lavergne, Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Gers, Auch, 6th July and 5th October 1903. "Mounet-Sully s'est fait applaudir en disant deux au moins de ces contes: 'La Reine Châtiée' et 'Le Coeur Mangé'."

vengeance. Instead of obeying, he flees from the palace, rides to the home of his best friend and tells him to explain to the fiancée that she must give up all hope of marriage and retire to a convent. During the prince's exile, the ghost again appears with his demand for revenge and eventually the prince returns to his homeland, to be told that the queen reigns, to the country's misfortune. A third time the ghost appears, and the next day the prince goes to confront his mother. When he announces that he intends to bring his new wife to the palace, the queen, as before, brings a poisoned drink to toast her daughter-in-law; the prince reveals his knowledge of the secret murder, and forces his mother to drink the poison. She refuses his request for forgiveness and after her death he rides away into the night. "On ne l'a revu jamais, jamais."

Schwob's original motive in introducing the legend was to show its importance in clarifying the rôle of Ophelia. As he points out, the versions of Saxo and Belleforest have only the figure of a courtesan employed by the usurping king to spy out the reality of Hamlet's madness.⁷³ "Mais aucune des deux formes de la légende ne laisse supposer qu'Hamlet ait été amoureux; aucune ne contient le douloureux et amer: 'au couvent!'" In his summary of the analogies of the tale and the play, however, Schwob seems to lose sight of his immediate purpose and includes the Ophelia-motif:

73. The development of her function in Shakespeare's Hamlet is described by J. Dover Wilson in What Happens in Hamlet, Cambridge, 1935, pp. 101-114.

along with all the other points of similarity. While conceding that the queen's motive is not the same and that the character of Claudius is absent, he emphasises that "il y a d'autres traits profondément tracés, qu'on chercherait vainement ailleurs" - the function of the ghost, the hesitations of the prince, and the parts of Horatio and Ophelia, who dies forlorn in her convent.

Having stated his reasons for believing that 'La Reine Châtiée' must belong to the genealogy of Hamlet, Schwob accounts for its presence in Gascony. This indeed is the essential factor in accepting or rejecting the tale as a source, and the lack of a convincing explanation may have led many researchers to discount it. The standard works on the sources of Hamlet, those of Kemp Malone, Israel Gollancz and Kenneth Muir,⁷⁴ make no mention of the tale. On the other hand, the 'Reine Châtiée' has been the subject of several articles, where the authors each propose their own theories without reference to Schwob or to their other predecessors. The diversity of their solutions seems to indicate the basic improbability of the folk-tale's being part of the Hamlet legend.

One of the first to notice the tale was the folklorist Reinhard Köhler. In his Kleinere Schriften zur Märchenforschung, 1898, he mentioned Bladé's story, but adding only the brief comment:

74. Kemp Malone, The Literary History of Hamlet, 1923; Israel Gollancz, The Sources of Hamlet, 1926; Kenneth Muir, Shakespeare's Sources, 1957. Professor G. Bullough, who is preparing a volume on the subject, is giving some consideration to 'La Reine Châtiée' - his present tentative theory will be mentioned below.

"Entspricht der Hamletsage: nur fehlt der Buhle der verbrecherischen Königin."⁷⁵ A fuller discussion was given by Fagus some twenty years later, under the title of 'Hamlet de Gascoigne ou Shakespeare Folk-loriste'.⁷⁶ Noting the differences between the play and the tale of Belleforest (and passing over completely the intermediary of the Ur-Hamlet), Fagus attempted to account for these through the Gascon version: the secret crime, the hesitation of the prince, the ghost, the rôle of Ophelia, all were present here but not in Belleforest. The explanation, for Fagus, could be based on the findings of Abel Lefranc, published in Sous le masque de William Shakespeare in 1918: that Shakespeare might be William Stanley, Earl of Derby, "et ayant approché le roi Henri en sa cour de Nérac: n'aurait-il pu ouïr ces contes de la bouche des gens du pays?" The theory is attractive, but loses its validity when it is realised that no overwhelming proof has been put forward that Shakespeare was other than Shakespeare; and again, Fagus begs the question of the provenance of the tale itself.

A more serious study was made in 1926 by A.H. Krappe.⁷⁷ He discussed and rejected the notion that the peasants from whom Bladé heard the tale could have read and adapted Shakespeare, or that it could have been the surviving form of a Teutonic saga, mysteriously

75. op.cit. I 118.

76. La Minerve Française, 15th November 1919, pp. 220-226.

77. 'Shakespeare in Romance Folk-Lore', Neuphilologische Mitteilungen, May 1926 pp. 65-70.

introduced into this remote region. He preferred the idea that it must have been inspired by a performance of Hamlet in French translation;

"Many of these had a brilliant success both in Paris and in the provinces, and one or several such performances in Toulouse or Bordeaux were unquestionably responsible for the Gascon story."⁷⁸

Krappe ruled out the versions of La Place and Ducis as being too unlike Shakespeare but shirked further examination of the translations, merely observing that

"A close inspection of the local records would doubtless furnish the necessary data for a convenient terminus a quo, the terminus ad quem being 1855, when Bladé began his work of collection."⁷⁹

This interesting line was not followed up, although it seemed that further investigations might be undertaken two years later, on the centenary of Bladé's birth. On the 3rd and 8th February 1928 Comoedia published articles on 'La Reine Châtiée' and its collector, and there was mention of a book on Bladé to be written by Jean Carrère, and one on Shakespeare's sources which Fagus was contemplating. Neither of these appears to have been completed. Thus many years were to pass before the question of Bladé's tale was taken up again, this time by Gaston Guillaumie in his Anthologie de la littérature et du folklore gascons of 1943. His solution was that

78. op.cit. pp. 69-70.

79. ibid. p. 70.

"l'ingénieux compilateur Saxo Grammaticus n'a donné qu'une des versions de ce thème emprunté par lui aux "Sagas" scandinaves, et qu'il existait une autre tradition du Nord, plus complète, où figurait l'épisode du fantôme du roi assassiné et l'autre aspect du caractère d'Hamlet, avec ses scrupules et ses hésitations venant de son effroi du spectre paternel. Shakespeare aurait connu cette autre tradition plus complète [..]"80

Guillaumie offered no explanation of the arrival of the legend in Gascony and mentioned the theory of Abel Lefranc with due caution. Once more the question of the relation between Saxo, Shakespeare and the French tale had been skirted. It seems that researchers, once they have discussed the obvious parallels, are reluctant to delve into the deeper, more essential matters. This is especially noticeable in the study of Max Lüthi, 'Hamlet in der Gascogne', from the Shakespeare Jahrbuch, 1951-1952. After his penetrating analysis of the tale, Lüthi's conclusions about the origins are disappointingly vague:

"Trotz den vielen Anklängen dürfen wir in der Gascogner Erzählung nicht ohne weiteres die ins Volk abgesunkene Shakespearesche Dichtung sehen (obschon auch das im Bereiche des Möglichen steht.) [..] Die Übereinstimmungen können ihren Grund darin haben, dass es sich um die Darstellung eines menschlichen Urerlebnisses handelt, bei der sich wie von selber immer wider die gleiche Gebärden und Bilder einstellen. Es ist denkbar, dass Saxos Erzählung, auf der Shakespeares Drama fusst, und die Gascogner Volksmär und die Orestessage alle auf verwandte Mythen zurückgehen."81

80. op.cit. V 111.

81. op.cit. pp. 55-56. Gilbert Murray tackles the question of the evolution of the Hamlet and Orestes legends from primitive vegetation ceremonies, in The Classical Tradition in Poetry, 1927, pp. 205-240.

Schwob's approach differs from that of the other researchers in that he attempts to deal with both the implantation of the tale in Gascony, and Shakespeare's presumed adaptation. He remarks that another story in Bladé's collection, 'La Gardeuse de Dindons', has affinities with the theme of King Lear and concludes:

"Dès lors une seule explication devient possible. Lear et Hamlet appartenaient au folk-lore anglo-saxon dès le XIII^e siècle, et ces récits ont été transportés en France par les Anglais. Ils s'y sont implantés durant l'occupation anglaise de la Guyenne qui n'a pas duré moins de trois siècles."

The fact that no trace remains of the Hamlet legend in English folklore is ascribed to the disappearance of traditions passed on orally, or through prose narratives. Only those celebrated in ballads were preserved: "c'est justement le cas du roi Lear."⁸²

Given the popularity of the story of King Lear, it is not surprising that it appeared in a modified form in Gascony;⁸³ but

82. The statement may have some general truth but the example is ill-chosen. Perhaps through a lapse of memory, perhaps through over-anxiety to prove his point, Schwob neglects the fact that the legend of Lear flourished in numerous prose-narratives: those of Geoffrey of Monmouth, 1135 A.D., Wace, Layamon, Robert of Gloucester and Ralph Holinshed, to name but a few. The 'Lamentable Song of the Death of King Leir and his Daughters', which Schwob trustingly took for a forerunner of the play, was in fact inspired by it, as the nineteenth-century editors were agreed. See King Lear, ed. A. Dyce, 1857, and Appendix A. Schwob also had in his library A Collection of Old Ballads, 1723; the editor, presumed to be Ambrose Philips, had introduced the 'Lamentable Song' thus: "I cannot be certain directly to the Time when this Ballad was written, but that it was some Years before the Play of Shakespear, appears from several Circumstances, which to mention would swell my Introduction far beyond its usual Length." op.cit. II 12.

83. See the articles of Kähler, Krappe and Guillaumie.

there is nothing to prove that the case of Hamlet was parallel. Schwob builds his claim on the notion that the legend was already known in England at the time when Saxo was compiling his chronicle, and has a convenient excuse for his total lack of evidence. Hamlet belonged to the history of an alien race. It is of course possible that the Danish settlement introduced the theme long before Saxo reported it, and before the author of the Ur-Hamlet adapted it from Belleforest; but such speculations cannot be made the basis of a statement as categorical as Schwob's. Nor can we attach too much credence to his supposition that it was the English occupation alone which led to the spreading of the Lear and Hamlet stories into Guyenne. As Schwob himself remarks, the last part of 'La Gardeuse de Dindons' offers parallels to the Cinderella theme - one of the most ancient and widespread of legends.⁸⁴ He assures us that the Hamlet theme is not to be found elsewhere - and yet one can hardly imagine that the English troops would spread it in only one of the regions they had conquered. His theory at first glance seems plausible enough, but in fact takes far too much for granted. 'La Reine Châtiée' remains a fascinating enigma, but its mystery may well be solved one day. Certainly the ingenious conjectures of Schwob and his followers will do nothing to elucidate its origins or its relation, if any, to the main strand of the Hamlet legend. Nothing less than a methodical investigation into the

84. See Marian Roalfe Cox, Cinderella, 1893.

archives of the region would settle the problem, either by turning up an unsuspected source or by demonstrating that the tale is a purely indigenous invention.⁸⁵

From his survey of sources and texts Schwob passes to a discussion of various controversial points arising from the ambiguities of the play. He turns first of all to the questions of Hamlet's age and physique, of perennial interest to students of the tragedy, as can be seen from many a preface, and especially to those of Schwob's time. The Romantic convention of a slight, pale Prince barely out of adolescence had been reappraised with the growing trend towards a more accurate interpretation of the text. Sarah Bernhardt herself had definite ideas about Hamlet's age and did not scruple to alter the text to suit her purpose:

"Madame Sarah Bernhardt makes Hamlet five and twenty, for Yorick's skull has been in the ground eighteen years, about halfway between the twelve years of the First Quarto, which makes Hamlet nineteen, and the three and twenty of the Folio, which makes him thirty."⁸⁶

Henry Fouquier, in his instructive article in the illustrated supplement of the Figaro, supported this mid-way solution of a twenty-five year old Hamlet and wrote

"Cette nécessité de la jeunesse de Hamlet me paraît si grande que je regarde comme une distraction de Shakespeare ce mot dit par le fossoyeur que le

85. Professor Bullough is at present inclined to think that a chapbook giving a brief and incomplete outline of the play may have penetrated into the region.

86. 'Madame Bernhardt's Hamlet', The Morning Post, 13th June 1899.

crâne de Yorick est depuis vingt-trois ans en terre."⁸⁷

The arguments were carried into the columns of the Revue Blanche on the 15th June 1899,⁸⁸ and although the purpose of the enquiry was not strictly to establish Hamlet's age, many of the contributors mentioned their opinions in passing. Alfred Jarry specified that Hamlet was "un peu moins de vingt-cinq ans", Max Nordau opted for thirty, Lina Diligenti for twenty-seven to twenty-eight, Rachilde "entre 25 à 60 ans" - only Romain Coolus and Louis Ernauld were in favour of an eighteen year old Hamlet. Schwob, then, seems to have taken a minority view in portraying the Prince as "un jeune homme de vingt à vingt-cinq ans."

Dowden in his edition of Hamlet had given the matter only a very brief consideration and concluded that although the gravedigger's words give incontrovertible evidence of Hamlet's age as thirty, the indications are that he must be rather younger, perhaps twenty-five. In Furness's edition, however, there was printed a long extract of Dowden's earlier article in the Academy of the 25th December 1875, which argued that the average age of Shakespeare's princely heroes was in the early twenties and Hamlet, by his greater intellectual maturity, must be considered just a little older than they.⁸⁹

Schwob exposes the problem through the text, confronting the

87. op.cit. 30th May 1899. This article is to be found in the file of press-cuttings at the Arsenal Library, Rf 67.587 I.

88. pp. 283-294.

89. op.cit. I 392-394.

details of the First and Second Quartos. In his summing up of the testimony of the text he stresses the preponderance of hints of Hamlet's youth:

"la manière dont Laertes le peint à Ophélie, le désir qu'il a de retourner à l'université de Wittenberg(90), la faiblesse physique dont il se plaint, surtout les idées de suicide qui le hantent sans motif précis, avant l'apparition du spectre [..]"

These are indeed the commonplaces of the arguments in favour of Hamlet's immaturity, and Schwob seems content to leave the matter there. He diagnoses a taedium vitae, "cette mauvaise accommodation d'un esprit trop noble et trop délicat aux platitudes de l'existence", but forgets the other, more energetic side of Hamlet's character; and in particular, he omits to observe, as Dowden had done, that the age of thirty befits the hero towards the end of the tragedy, full of experience, and awaiting death. Schwob appears to take Hamlet's sorrows too lightly: considering the wretchedness of his situation at the beginning of the play, it seems inadequate to speak of his outlook as "un mal moral de la jeunesse". Moreover, in his determination to present Hamlet as a very young man, Schwob overlooks the important dramatic function of the contradiction in time. The exigencies of tradition and the plot demanded a youthful Hamlet in the exposition of the play, but the more mature figure towards the end was in keeping with the conception of a tragic hero

90. Schwob, on his own authority, dismisses as irrelevant the evidence of J.W. Hales that men of thirty were often to be found still studying in Danish schools.

who could say in resignation: "the readiness is all."⁹¹

The question of Hamlet's physique caused even more controversy than that of his age. One aspect of the quarrel was related much later, at the time of the Comédie Française production of the play.

"Nordique, était-il un buveur de bière, épais de corps [...]? Ou bien, un préromantique, svelte et beau [...]?"

- Je n'admets pas, dit Georges Vanor, le soir de la première représentation, pendant un entr'acte, de voir un homme gras joué par une femme maigre. Catulle Mendès passait par là. Un homme gras? Une femme maigre? Il y avait Shakespeare et Sarah, des dieux sans adjectifs. L'air lourd des couloirs fut troué comme d'éclairs d'épées - déjà - par de mots drus et durs."⁹²

In the ensuing duel Mendès received a wound which nearly put an end to his days. The anecdote shows clearly that the problem of Hamlet's fatness was no idle question and that it was hotly and lengthily debated in literary circles. The mishap of Catulle Mendès probably did much to keep the issue surrounded with publicity and indeed, on the 27th May 1899, Jules Huret published a letter from the Shakespearean scholar Georges Duval, stating that the adjective "fat" was applied to John Lowin, the actor who played Henry VIII and Falstaff, as well as Hamlet. This information was intended to end the polemics aroused by the "regrettable incident que vous savez."⁹³

91. The implications of the dual time-schedule are discussed by Carl Anders Dymling in 'Hamlet's Age', Filologiskt Arkiv III, Stockholm 1956.

92. Arsenal Rf 67.587 II 81.

93. *ibid.* I 52. In fact, it was not Lowin who first played Hamlet, but Burbage: see Furness *op.cit.* I 446.

Duval's hope was premature, for the Revue Blanche was soon to print a number of 'Opinions singulières et curieuses touchant le seigneur Hamlet'. A number of literary and theatrical personalities were asked for their impressions of Hamlet's physical appearance, moral physiognomy, and of his likeness to his creator, Shakespeare. Of these only Max Nordau and Georges Polti saw Hamlet as robust.

On the whole, despite the evidence of the text, most people preferred the more aesthetic view of the Prince and Sarah Bernhardt was retrospectively emphatic in her rejection of the literal reading:

"La peine qui dévore ce malheureux Hamlet ne peut, à mon avis, lui laisser les beaux mollets, l'estomac bombé, la belle carrure."⁹⁴

Schwob, then, was this time taking the traditional view in denying the corpulence of Hamlet. He bases his objections on the notes appended to the Variorum edition.⁹⁵ Firstly he proposes that the word "fat" should be emended either to "faint", as suggested by a Mr. H. Wyeth, or to "hot". This latter was the reading that he himself adopted in his translation; it had been first mooted by Plehwe, who referred back to the line of Claudius:

"When in your motion you are hot and dry."⁹⁶

94. 'Les Trois Hamlet', Journal de l'Université des Annales, 15th June 1914: quoted by Beryl Turner, *op.cit.* pp. 102-103.

95. *op.cit.* I 446.

96. Elmer E. Stoll also follows Plehwe: see the Shakespeare Quarterly, 1951, II 296-301. In the same review, Arthur Dickson had suggested that the sense should be "sweaty", following Dover Wilson (p. 172). Leslie Hotson declared that "fat" merely meant full-fed, or replete. The Spectator, 30th May 1952, p.701.

Schwob also cites this earlier line as justification of the change. Secondly he follows an indication from the third appendix of Dowden's edition:

"Mr. W.J. Craig, who in knowledge of the language of Shakespeare is, I believe, unsurpassed by any living student [...] understands fat to mean not reduced to athletic condition by a fencer's training."⁹⁷

Thus Schwob was probably one of the first in France to mention this technical sense of the word, anticipating by nearly fifty years Marcel Pagnol's contention that Hamlet "a quelques kilos de trop pour 'poids de combat'."⁹⁸ Finally, Schwob produces the clinching argument that the word did not apply to Hamlet so much as to Burbage:

"Si Shakespeare a écrit fat c'est qu'il aurait prévu l'essoufflement de Burbage pendant la fatigante scène du duel. Burbage était gros. Les paroles de la reine seraient alors destinées à prévenir les rires du publique."

On this point he again follows the information given in the Variorum edition. Schwob's opinions, then, are a restatement of the current findings of scholars and historians, backed up in all probability by an instinctive preference for a hero truly "the glass of fashion and the mould of form". The critic of the Daily Telegraph was surely speaking for public feeling when he wrote that

"Robust Hamlets may be accepted for the sake of their acting. It is the wispy, willowy Hamlet who best conforms to our predilections."⁹⁹

97. Dowden op.cit. pp. 235, 237.

98. See the long demonstration in the preface to his translation, Hamlet, 1947.

99. 13th June 1899.

Schwob reverts to this non-critical approach at the end of his paragraph, forsaking the purely scholarly method for an appeal to his reader's instincts:

"En aucun cas on ne saurait voir en Hamlet, si indigné contre l'habitude de boire, un étudiant alourdi par la bière. C'est vraiment transformer Faust en Siebel."¹⁰⁰

. . . .

Having settled the problems of Hamlet's age and physique to his own satisfaction, Schwob turns to the wider questions of "la portée générale du drame." Here we would expect the kind of analysis that Schwob had already given in his discussion of Ford, Defoe, Meredith and Stevenson - the search for the central motive and theme of the work. Instead, no sooner has Schwob stated the subject than he implies his reluctance to consider it. Perhaps he was unwilling to add to the great mass of Hamlet studies; perhaps he felt he had little original contribution to make. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that Schwob had studied the play for so many years without evolving some personal view, and it would have been interesting to have even a brief glimpse of this. Modestly, however, Schwob refers his readers to the study of Stéphane Mallarmé, the article from the Revue Indépendante January 1897, reprinted in Divagations. We may imagine that Schwob was thinking not only of the admirable

100. This was perhaps intended particularly as a refutation of Max Nordau's portrait of Hamlet as a ponderous, beer-drinking student of Wittenberg: see La Revue Blanche, 15th June 1899, p. 287.

perceptiveness of the poet, but also of the conversations which they must have had while Schwob was translating the play at Valvins two years before. Thus this short passage is a tribute to the memory of the master, and a reason for Schwob to go no further into the most difficult problem of the play. He resumes the impression made by the tragedy in one image:

"île désolée dont les grèves s'affaissent incessamment dans l'océan de la mort."

The image seems to embody Schwob's concept of tragedy as a whole - we recall that he had used it to evoke the idea of Ford's 'Tis Pity.

In compensation for his failure to discuss the general implications of the play Schwob proceeds to analyse a number of aspects of Hamlet's character, "choisis parmi ceux qui intéressent surtout les rapports d'Hamlet avec les autres personnages et avec le drame." This approach is significant in itself, for hitherto the personality of the hero had so dominated French adaptations of the play that the other characters had deliberately been stripped of their parts for the greater glory of the prince, or rather of the actor who played him. The rôle of Fortinbras, for example, had been generally ignored. The restoration of the Norwegian prince in Mounet-Sully's 1896 revival of Hamlet was the occasion of an acrimonious campaign by Louis Ménard to claim the credit for proposing the adaptation: he was the first to point out the parallelism of the rôles of Hamlet and Fortinbras as an essential

feature of the drama.¹⁰¹ As a result of his complaints in the Revue Blanche on the 1st July 1896, letters from Lugné-Poe and Mallarmé were published in the following number of the review, upholding the necessity of the contrast: "c'est la veulerie d'un peuple inactif opposée à la gloire du hasardeux conquérant."¹⁰² Already, with the completeness of his translation, Schwob was making possible a fuller comprehension of Shakespeare's subtle composition: it was the vainglory of Sarah Bernhardt which frustrated this design, by ruthlessly diminishing the rôles of the other actors. Charles Whibley remarked, perhaps at Schwob's instigation, that in her performance "Everything must be cut out, and the central figure must be thrown like a silhouette upon a white ground."¹⁰³

Thus Schwob, in his preface at least, sought to restore the balance by discussing Hamlet's character in its dramatic perspective. His first step was to discover what lies behind Hamlet's use of the terms "true-penny" and "old mole" to the Ghost of his father. Schwob does not explain the associations of these words, although the references to demonology are shown in the Furness edition;¹⁰⁴ nor does he make use of the suggestion that Hamlet addresses the Ghost as though it were the devil to curb the curiosity of Marcellus.

101. See Paul Benchetrirt, 'Hamlet at the Comédie Française: 1769-1896', Shakespeare Survey, 1956, pp. 59-68.

102. op.cit. p. 96.

103. 'Two Spectacles', Blackwood's Magazine, July 1899, p. 123.

104. op.cit. I 114.

He concentrates on the attitude of Hamlet - and this had caused not a little bewilderment among actors and critics. Mounet-Sully had uttered the words as terms of endearment, murmuring them tenderly to the absent spirit, and Jules Lemaitre had seized on this apparent contradiction.¹⁰⁵ Schwob himself has no original explanation to offer. He refers to the account of Taine:

"Comprenez-vous qu'en disant cela ses dents claquent, ses genoux s'entre-choquent, il est pâle comme sa chemise".¹⁰⁶

Thus Schwob harks back to a much older conception of Hamlet's mental state at this moment: a hysterical reaction to the horror of the Ghost's revelations. This explanation is convincing on the stage and has satisfied other commentators from Dowden to Dover Wilson.¹⁰⁷ However, it does not exhaust all the possibilities of the scene.

André Gide, for example, sees a further significance:

"Ces plaisanteries de mauvais goût, il ne les risque qu'ensuite, en possession déjà du secret, et de retour auprès des autres étudiants. C'est devant ceux-ci, qu'il les ose; il veut crâner devant eux; ces plaisanteries sont à leur adresse et font déjà partie de la comédie qu'il se prépare à jouer [...]".¹⁰⁸

From his discussion of the cellarage scene Schwob passes logically to an appraisal of Hamlet's madness. He states his opinion unequivocally at the beginning of his paragraph: "Il est très

105. Impressions de Théâtre, 1888, I 133.

106. Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise, II 163-164.

107. Dowden, *op.cit.* p. 51. Dover Wilson, *op.cit.* pp. 88-101.

108. Le Théâtre Complet d'André Gide, Neuchâtel, 1949, VII. 190.

certain que Shakespeare accepta la tradition de la démence simulée [..]" . For Schwob at least there were no complications, and his attitude seems typical of that of many of his generation in France. It represents a complete revolution against the early nineteenth-century idea that Hamlet was truly insane; and Furness's Variorum edition provided a large number of learned diagnoses of the malady. Taine, in his influential study, had found in Hamlet signs of "empoisonnement moral", and while conceding that his dementia was feigned, he maintained that

"son esprit, comme une porte dont les gonds sont tordus, tourne et claque à tout vent avec une précipitation folle et un bruit discordant."¹⁰⁹

In a survey of the stage-history of Hamlet in France,¹¹⁰ Henry Bidou discerned an inexorable tendency towards complete lucidity in the portrayals of the Prince. Voltaire had begun with the accepted attitude of the eighteenth century: "Hamlet devient fou au deuxième acte". Chateaubriand made a step forward with his comment on the play as

"ce Bedlam Royal, où tout le monde est insensé et criminel, où la démence simulée se joint à la démence vraie, où le fou contrefait le fou [..]"¹¹¹

This "progrès vers la raison" was more accentuated in the theatre, where madness might be attenuated by giving prominence to other of

109. op.cit. II 164.

110. Journal des Débats, 29th May, 5th June, 14th, 21st and 28th August 1916. My summary is based principally on the article of the 21st August.

111. Essai sur la littérature anglaise in Oeuvres Complètes, 1911, XI. 595.

Hamlet's attributes. Thus Talma, in Ducis's version, languished in sentimental melancholy and Rouvière was devoured by raging passion. Nonetheless, critics continued to be fascinated by the enigma, and their writings provide a chronicle of the evolution of opinion. Jules Janin, in 1847, declared that "Hamlet est fou, mais on comprend le but et le motif de cette folie." It was Mounet-Sully's interpretation in 1886 which really bewildered the reviewers, and Francisque Sarcey wrote for many when he lamented:

"au théâtre, la vérité est que je ne comprends pas Hamlet; je ne sais ni ce qu'il est ni ce qu'il veut. Est-il réellement fou où feint-il de l'être? Ou, feignant de l'être, s'est-il laissé prendre à son piège, en sorte que tantôt il est un comédien de la folie, et tantôt un fou authentique, sans qu'on sache où finit le comédien et où le fou commence?"¹¹²

Mounet-Sully, according to Bidou, was the first to play the part as though Hamlet were "un Brutus simulant la folie et attendant l'heure." From this it was but a short step to Sarah Bernhardt's conscious, alert and entirely vengeful Prince.¹¹³ In stating with conviction his belief in Hamlet's sanity, Schwob was aligning himself with a school of thought which had long been in existence and which now seemed to triumph. None of the contributors to the July number of the Revue Blanche disagreed with this conception.¹¹⁴

112. Quarante ans de théâtre, 1900-1902, III 356.

113. "Je trouve Hamlet le plus sensé, le plus rusé, le plus malheureux des êtres", was Bernhardt's summary of the prince in 'Les Trois Hamlet'.

114. Henry Fouquier also, in the supplement of the Figaro, denied Hamlet's insanity, since it would detract from the beauty of the play. He, like Schwob, accepted the reality of the "antic disposition".

Schwob's general discussion of Hamlet's supposed madness is brief and decisive. He points to the influence of Saxo and Belleforest as the source of confusion: the theme was important in the old play but not so essential dramatically in Shakespeare's version. For the rest he substantiates his argument by making comparisons with Ophelia and Lear, especially the latter. Of Ophelia's madness there is no doubt, says Schwob; it is only a question of contrasting her behaviour with Hamlet's. He finds close similarities between the reactions of Hamlet and Lear in that both are a prey to their nerves, too highly strung to permit them to face their problems with equanimity.

"Leurs paroles font des dissonances, des accords inharmoniques avec la musique de la pièce; ils sont à plusieurs octaves intellectuelles ou sensibles au-dessus de leurs comparses dans le drame. Ils ont des accès d'hystérie."

With this last sentence, in key with the interpretation of Sarah Bernhardt, Schwob betrays the origin of his idea of Hamlet. We find here more than a trace of the terminology of Hippolyte Taine, - expressed in such phrases as

"Son esprit est encore intact; mais à la violence du style, à la crudité des détails précis, à l'effrayante tension de toute la machine nerveuse, jugez si l'homme n'a pas déjà posé un pied au bord de la folie."¹¹⁵

When Suzanne Desprès acted Hamlet in 1913, the question was still important enough to figure in an enquiry in Comœdia (29th September). Again, the conclusion was that he was merely playing a part.

115. op.cit. II 160.

and

"L'extrême angoisse aboutit ici à une sorte de rire qui est un spasme. Désormais Hamlet parle comme s'il avait une attaque de nerfs continue."¹¹⁶

It seems that Schwob has removed Hamlet from the realms of insanity only at the price of exiling him in the "morbid névrose que Poe nous a inoculée."¹¹⁷ Indeed, Schwob goes on immediately to explain Hamlet's behaviour to Ophelia in exactly the terms which Poe had used in his Marginalia.

Poe had supposed that Hamlet was driven to "partial insanity" by the revelations of the Ghost (an observation which Schwob passed over), and that this condition was exaggerated by Hamlet himself, under the impulse, common in drunkenness and, by extension, in madness, "to counterfeit a further degree of excitement than actually exists."¹¹⁸ Schwob sets out to demonstrate that this theory is perfectly illustrated in the nunnery scene.

In his explication, Schwob at first relies heavily on Dowden. Referring back to the first interview of Hamlet and Ophelia after the appearance of the Ghost, Schwob adapts Dowden's comment:

116. *ibid.* p. 164.

117. MST p. 161. Paul Claudel, in a letter to Schwob of the 17th March 1900, called Hamlet's madness "l'ironie de quelqu'un déjà libéré de son destin, le sarcasme du protagoniste qui surveille d'un oeil sagace ses comparses engagés si consciencieusement dans une action dont la catastrophe, que seul lui envisage, les implique tous." MST p. 269.

118. The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, 1875, III 470.

"This is the only entirely sincere meeting of Hamlet with Ophelia in the play; and it is entirely silent - the hopeless farewell of Hamlet."¹¹⁹

He continues with remarks taken from the editor's notes: "Yet there is estrangement in the word 'Nymph'. [..] He answers as to a stranger [..] The sententious generalisation, couched in rhyme, has an air of having been prepared [..] Has she not rehearsed her part to Polonius?"¹²⁰ Schwob parts company with Dowden in supposing that Hamlet catches sight of the King and Polonius as he turns to leave after bidding Ophelia go to a nunnery,¹²¹ following here the stage-business drawn up by Sarah Bernhardt.¹²² Whatever the case - and the moment of Hamlet's realisation that his words are overheard by the two spies cannot be determined owing to the lack of stage-directions from Shakespeare¹²³ - Schwob's description of Hamlet's reactions at the simultaneous treachery of Ophelia and the accidental manifestation of Polonius, is designed to bring out the full force

119. Dowden op.cit. p. 58.

120. ibid. p. 102.

121. Schwob, for all his knowledge of Elizabethan slang, does not seem to have alighted on the meaning which Dover Wilson was to attach to the word "nunnery".

122. "The actress adopts the modern notion that Hamlet is suddenly embittered towards Ophelia by the discovery that her father has been watching them from behind the curtains." Hence the emphasis on the line "Where's your father?" 'Madame Sarah Bernhardt as Hamlet', The Daily News, 13th June 1899.

123. Dover Wilson's theory that Hamlet realises from the start that he is being spied on has not found favour in all quarters.

of the hero's complex emotions and to indicate the possibilities of a powerful scene on the stage.

"Hélas, elle savait que Polonius était là: elle aussi, elle a menti et elle l'épie. Cette fois la colère éclate, sincère et forte. Mais en même temps Hamlet, qui se sent observé et qui doit jouer son rôle de folie, simule une colère plus grande. Le roi ne s'y trompe pas [...] en effet, comme l'indique Poe, il a dépassé le but dans un accès de simulation - nerveuse, celle-ci, et non plus feinte."

Hamlet, indeed, has succeeded in alarming Claudius: the matter of his discourse has been pointed enough to bring home to the guilty king that "there's something in his soul, o'er which his melancholy sits on brood." At the same time, the mask of the "antic disposition" has been lifted: the two enemies begin to arrive at a clearer understanding of each other's purposes. Schwob skilfully unwinds the threads of this critical scene, showing how Hamlet's partial betrayal of himself to the King is caused by involuntary as well as deliberate pretence of anger. In gaining a certain advantage, he also loses ground himself.

This same pattern is observable in the next scene selected for discussion. It is significant that Schwob should single out the two principle stages in the clash between Hamlet and his uncle, where Hamlet's moral victory is weakened by his concession of material power to his foe. Schwob again begins by attempting to explain the circumstances, not explicitly indicated by Shakespeare, in which the two adversaries launch into their battle of wits; then he considers the reasons for Hamlet's falling short of success.

The Dumb-show scene is certainly one which requires elucidation, and despite the scrutiny of numerous commentators, its representation on the stage is largely a matter of the producer's ingenuity. Dover Wilson's theory that Hamlet did not wish the King to see the pantomime has by no means found universal acceptance and Schwob enrolls himself in the large school which upholds the belief that Hamlet arranged a double trial of Claudius. The problem, then, is to decide on the function of the dumb-show and the reactions of the interested spectators while it is being put on. Schwob resorts to the notes provided by Furness, citing and dismissing various readings. He rejects Halliwell's suggestion that "the King and Queen should be whispering confidentially to each other during the dumb-show, and so escape a sight of it", since this precludes the possibility of a double test.¹²⁴ He takes the questions of Ophelia and the king as additional proof that the lesson of the mime has been perceived in the right quarter. Of the dumb-show itself, Schwob has more to say: he quotes passages from Hunter's commentary:

"To represent the story of a play in dumb-show when the play itself is going to be performed appears a most extraordinary mode of procedure, and nothing like it has been traced in the usages of the English theatre [...] the Dumb Shows in Sackville's Gorbodue and Gascoign's Jocasta [...] are something essentially different."¹²⁵

124. op.cit. I 243. Dover Wilson, however, in his interpretation of the scene, maintains the truth of this suggestion.
op.cit. p. 159.

125. ibid. p. 242.

Hunter went on to cite an unpublished diary of Abraham de la Pryme which purported to show that "such strange and unsuitable anticipations were according to the common practice of the Danish theatre." Neither Furness nor Dowden, who repeated this information, discounted the evidence of Hunter, but Schwob takes it upon himself to deny it in the name of Shakespeare's general practice of ignoring ancient or foreign customs. Thus, having disposed of all arguments for the other side and having scarcely troubled to weigh up the chances of their validity, he pressed on with a further demonstration of the theory formulated by Caldecott, that "Hamlet, intent on 'catching the conscience of the king', would naturally wish that his 'mouse-trap' should be doubly set";¹²⁶ the ultimate proof, according to Schwob, is that "ceci s'accorde merveilleusement au caractère d'Hamlet."

The scene set, Schwob turns to examine the implications of his last statement. Carl Rohrbach in 1859 had endeavoured to explain Hamlet in anti-romantic terms,¹²⁷ and in particular had insisted that the Prince's talents were more suitable for the stage than for the throne. This passage, published in the Variorum edition, had caught Schwob's attention and he used it as the basis of an elaborate exposure of Hamlet's "passion de comédie."¹²⁸ He mentions Hamlet's

126. *ibid.* p. 241.

127. Shakespeare's Hamlet erläutert durch C. Rohrbach, Berlin 1859.

128. The same point has been made by L.C. Knights in An Approach to 'Hamlet', 1960, p. 66: "∟...∟ Hamlet's habitual tendency to make everything, even what he deeply feels, into a matter of play-acting. Again and again intrinsic values, direct relations, are neglected while he tries out various roles before a real or imagined audience." The examples that Knights gives are those cited by Schwob.

ostentatious mourning, his perpetual discourses to all who approach him, his interest in the troupe of actors and his admonitions to them before the play-scene.¹²⁹ It is this characteristic which would account for Hamlet's arrangement of a double test; the pantomime and the play will try the King, and Hamlet will play the no less important rôle of observer of the King's reactions. Here Schwob supposes that Hamlet's intention is to kill Claudius at his first sign of guilt: "if he but blench / I know my course." In fact, the remainder of the speech shows that Hamlet's immediate aim is to prove the honesty of the Ghost. Probably the implications of the cellarage scene had escaped Schwob, and he did not realise that before Hamlet could kill Claudius he must be sure that the spirit was not a devil in disguise. However, this misunderstanding does not invalidate Schwob's conclusion:

"C'est un drame vrai que prépare le faux drame.
Dès lors la nécessité de la pantomime apparaît:
on ne joue pas une pièce sans l'avoir répétée.
La pantomime, c'est la répétition que se donne
Hamlet, acteur du drame où il tuera son oncle."

Thus, in the analysis of the nunnery-scene and the play-scene, Schwob establishes parallels between the comedy of crafty madness which overreaches itself and betrays Hamlet's disgust at the "o'erhasty marriage", and the fundamental tendency to self-

129. The speech was declaimed by Sarah Bernhardt from a platform, very much in the manner of a lecturer to his students. The English critics found it an ill-considered piece of stage-business.

dramatisation, which results in the dumb-show and the 'Mouse-trap', with Hamlet this time as the spy on his uncle; at the end of this scene, the Prince's purpose is achieved but the next move is left to the King, now aware that his secret is revealed.

It now remains for Schwob to explain Hamlet's actions at the close of the play-scene. Convinced that the hero intended to take revenge on his uncle on the spot, Schwob is obliged to invoke the old argument of Hamlet's inability to act on a deliberate policy, in order to account for his failure to perform the deed forthwith. In fact, there are no indications that Hamlet wishes to do anything at this juncture but rejoice in his enemy's headlong flight. Schwob is right, however, to point out Hamlet's "surexcitation extrême", emphasised by the stage-business accompanying the King's retirement. Jubilant at the self-disclosure, Hamlet seizes a torch and brandishes it - a sign of light in the surrounding darkness. Schwob describes this episode in detail, with some justification, since it was one of the most acclaimed moments of Sarah Bernhardt's interpretation.

"Watching the murderous uncle with an almost too impulsive and palpable anxiety, she leaps up to the daïs when the assassin is "frighted with false fire" and thrusts the torch into his guilty face as he hurries from the hall."130

During the action of 'The Mouse-trap' the stage-lights had been dimmed to fit the words of the murderer Lucianus; at the cry of

130. The Daily Telegraph, 15th June 1899.

the courtiers for light, torches were hastily kindled, allowing Hamlet his dramatic illumination of the mocking quatrain, "Why, let the stricken deer go weep." Schwob reminds the reader that similar symbolic uses of torchlight are to be found in Macbeth and Othello and this, to his mind, is further proof that the metaphor was of great significance to Shakespeare, needing to be brought out in the performance of his plays.¹³¹

Schwob brings to an end his meditations on Hamlet's rapports with the action of the play in a commentary on the graveyard scene. With fine perception he avoids the common-place observations about the relaxing of tension before the climax of the tragedy, and ponders on the significance of the scene to Hamlet himself. He realises that Hamlet's preoccupation is with death but gives no hint that the Prince is thinking of his own fate. Schwob's conclusion is opposed to Taine's, that "sa pensée habite déjà le cimetière; pour cette philosophie désespérée, l'homme vrai, c'est le cadavre."¹³² His Hamlet is contemplating Claudius's imminent departure from life, and he is trying to harden himself to the idea of deliberate murder.

"Il sera ouvrier de mort; donc il vient interroger
l'ouvrier de la mort. Comme il voudrait avoir
l'habitude de ce qu'il veut faire!"

131. Martin Holmes makes the point that this stage-business would depend for its effect on being played in a private theatre, indoors; at afternoon performances at the Globe the significance would be diminished. The Guns of Elsinore, 1964, p. 125.
It is worth noting that Schwob also had a predilection for images of torchlight: see the 'Vie de Cyril Tourneur', for example.

132. op.cit. II 166.

Yet whereas Shakespeare shows Hamlet "considering too curiously", though in a detached manner, on death and dissolution, Schwob by his choice of images reads another emotion into the hero's words:

"il interroge longuement, comme un enfant qui redemande cent fois la même chose à une grande personne; plutôt comme un amateur pose des questions à un professionnel, à un technicien, à un ouvrier d'art; plutôt encore comme le malade qu'on va opérer interroge son chirurgien, et essaie de retarder l'instant."

Undoubtedly Schwob here was thinking of his experience as an invalid, transferring to Hamlet his own dread and anguish. The paradox with which he terminates his examination may well have come to represent for him something of the essence of the tragedy:

"Et comme avant, Hamlet, en théorie, était préoccupé de la conscience de l'âme après la mort, maintenant qu'il va passer à la pratique, il est préoccupé de la conservation du corps."¹³³

. . . .

A recent editor of Hamlet began his preface with the remark that everything about the play is problematic.¹³⁴ This is hardly the impression that a French reader would gain from Schwob's introduction. Here, all doubts are dispelled. Although Schwob states clearly and fully the main points of contention, the solutions he proposes are arbitrary rather than satisfying. His conclusions,

133. An observation echoed by Kenneth Muir in his Shakespeare: Hamlet, 1963: "Hamlet is concerned, after he has heard the Ghost's story, with what happens to the soul after death; but he seems to be equally concerned with what happens to the body." p. 16.

134. Cyrus Hoy, op.cit. p. vii.

admittedly, are drawn from his readings of Furness and Dowden, but more often than not he is dogmatic where these editors are non-committal. Thus, even without the dubious matter of 'La Reine Châtiée', and the misunderstanding on the sources of King Lear, his work is of little value to the student of Shakespeare.¹³⁵

In his interpretation of Hamlet, Schwob appeals to French interest through allusions to such distinguished names as Mallarmé, Taine and Poe, and the work of his predecessors undoubtedly colours some of his own attitudes. Thus there is a continuity between the past and present, though a new note is struck through his concentration on Hamlet as an integral part of the play: a reminder that, unlike many academic critics, he was also a man of the theatre whose idea of the hero was dictated as much by the realities of stage-performance as by exegesis. Schwob examines the external: Hamlet's age, his

135. Possibly Professor Dowden was mixing politeness with praise when he wrote this letter to Schwob:

"Highfield House, Highfield Road, Rathgar, Dublin. July 6
1900.

Dear Sir, I must, though so much time has elapsed since I received it, thank you very heartily for your gift of La Tragique Histoire d'Hamlet.

It is most interesting, as you can readily understand, to me, to see how a thoroughly competent scholar can transfer the thought and words of Shakespeare into the medium of French prose. Your introduction is a study of real value, and perhaps you are right, and perhaps I am wrong, about La Reine Châtiée.

However this may be, I value your gift highly as the work of a scholar who is also an artist. And I should have thanked you long since but for a succession of illnesses which resulted in all my correspondence falling sadly into arrear."

Quoted from D. Salmon, op.cit. p. 95.

physique, his simulated madness; his deeds rather than his thoughts. The commentary is closely linked to the unfolding of the action. Readers would therefore constantly recall the discussions of recent years, and the productions they had seen. The preface is indeed an epitome of the attitudes of the late nineteenth century towards Hamlet.

The usefulness of Schwob's introduction is also, in a sense, its weakness. By contrast with his other works on English literature it seems impersonal, too consciously critical. We miss the feeling of intense and intimate appreciation so conspicuous in the essays on Stevenson and Defoe. There are nonetheless flashes of real insight - the image of disharmony in the souls of Hamlet and Lear, the ingenious portrait of Hamlet as actor, the sudden glimpse of anguish in the patient in conversation with his surgeon - which reveal the power of the play over Schwob's imagination. It is these passages which give to the preface some of the "vision" which Schwob had praised in Mallarmé's study; it is these passages alone which Paul Claudel praised in his letter to Schwob.

"En somme la remarque si fine de Poë dans ses "Marginalia" que tu cites, celles que tu ajoutes sur le caractère histrionique d'Hamlet qui depuis l'apparition de l'habitant de l'autre monde ne fait plus de ce côté-ci de la scène que jouer un rôle, sur sa visite au cimetière où il vient confronter le fossoyeur "avec les sentiments de l'enfant qui interroge une grande personne, de l'amateur devant le professionnel, du malade devant le chirurgien" me paraissent contenir tout ce qu'il y a d'essentiel sur le Danois, tout ce que nous pouvons déduire avec légitimité du drame. "Le reste est silence.""¹³⁶

136. MST p. 269.

(iii) The Translation

As late as 1960, in his introduction to a special number of Etudes Anglaises devoted to a survey of 'Shakespeare et le Théâtre Elisabethain en France depuis Cinquante Ans',¹³⁷ Michel Poirier confessed regretfully that the great English dramatists are still far from being fully appreciated by the French. Since the untiring efforts of successive translators and producers have not managed to dissipate reserve and prejudice, Poirier concluded that his compatriots' widespread incomprehension must be ascribed to "une différence profonde de tempérament et de formation."¹³⁸ That the mould and language of Shakespeare's plays illustrate in the most intense and brilliant form the genius of his country and civilisation, and that this genius is quite disparate with that of the French, had been observed at all times by critics and translators, and their statement of the phenomenon was to take on tones of greater resignation on the one hand, and of greater defiance on the other, in an age which discovered Shakespeare as a fecund yet still enigmatic source of inspiration. By the middle of the nineteenth century the limitations of the Le Tourneur version, even with the refurbishments of Guizot and Francisque Michel, were apparent enough to move Philarète Chasles to a consideration of Shakespeare's French

137. April-June 1960.

138. op.cit. p. 101.

translators,¹³⁹ scornful at what had previously passed as fidelity² to the original, Chasles saw no reason to hope for better things for the future: yet in 1859 François-Victor Hugo began the publication of the Oeuvres Complètes, later to be praised by Swinburne as "a monument of perfect scholarship, of indefatigable devotion, and of literary genius."¹⁴⁰ The fact that this notable achievement was followed by numerous rival renderings testifies to the continuing dissatisfaction with even the most distinguished attempts to bridge what Chasles had termed "le profond abîme qui sépare à jamais les nations de souche teutonique des nations de souche romaine." The Schwob-Morand version of Hamlet was lauded by the French critics and appreciated by the English; yet its inadequacy seemed to the latter just as obvious as its merits. Max Beerbohm went into a long disquisition on the obstacles facing the translators:

"The fact is that the French language, limpid and exquisite though it is, affords no scope for phrases which [...] are charged with a dim significance beyond their meaning and with reverberations beyond their sound. The French language, like the French genius, can give no hint of things beyond those which it definitely expresses. For expression, it is a far finer instrument than our language; but it is not, in the sense that our language is, suggestive. It lacks mystery. It casts none of those purple shadows which do follow and move with the moving phrases of our great poets. In order to be really suggestive, a French poet must, like Mallarmé, deliberately

139. 'Des Traducteurs de Shakspeare', Etudes sur W. Shakspeare, (1852), pp. 331-344.

140. Quoted by J.-B. Fort in his introduction to F.-V. Hugo's Théâtre Complet de Shakespeare, 1961, I lxxii.

refrain from expressing anything at all. An English poet, on the other hand, may be at once expressive and suggestive. That is a great advantage. It is an advantage which none of our poets has used so superbly as Shakespeare. None of our poets has ever given to his phrases shadows so wonderful as the shadows Shakespeare gave to his. In none of Shakespeare's plays, I think, are these shadows so many and marvellous as in "Hamlet"; and the quality of its theme is such that the shadows are more real to us, and reveal more to us, than the phrases casting them. Cut away those shadows, and you cut away that which makes the play immortal - nay! even that which makes it intelligible."¹⁴¹

It was on this last count, of course, that Schwob stood condemned in Beerbohm's eyes: just as in his preface he had steered clear of the mysteries inherent in the play, so his offering was judged to lack the necessary breath of the ineffable. For André Gide nearly fifty years later, the metaphysical overtones were precisely those that the translator must put across, for they are the essence of the tragedy:

"Oui, c'est de l'art, n'en doutons pas; et tout est à ce point transposé dans un domaine supra-réel, tout baigne dans une atmosphère si particulière, que les écarts les plus singuliers de langage en viennent à paraître naturels, et naturelle cette diapature étrange où s'irisent également les contours, selon une sorte d'indice de réfraction constante. Comment transposer cette réalité extra-naturelle dans une langue beaucoup plus rétive que celle de Schlegel ou de Gundolf, dans une langue intransigeante, aux strictes exigences grammaticales et syntaxiques, une langue aussi claire, précise et prosaïque (pour ne point dire anti-poétique) que la nôtre? C'est là le travail du traducteur de Shakespeare; et tant qu'il n'a rendu que le sens du texte, il n'a rien fait; presque rien fait."¹⁴²

141. 'Hamlet, Princess of Denmark', The Saturday Review, 17th June 1899, pp. 747-748.

142. Le Théâtre Complet d'André Gide, VII 201.

Gide's more elegant restatement of Beerbohm's words on the opposing tendencies of the Shakespearean and Gallic modes of thought and language accounts for the absence of a satisfactory version of Hamlet even up to our own day. The culture-barrier therefore figures largely in an article by Christian Pons for Etudes Anglaises, entitled 'Les Traductions de Hamlet par des Ecrivains Français'. Having posed and answered the query why "this thing's to do," Pons proceeds to analyse the techniques of the more notable translators in their endeavours to overcome the problem. Of the first rendering worthy of the name, Pons has this to say:

"Lorsque Shakespeare est violent, ou familier, Le Tourneur est embarrassé, il élude la difficulté, mais il n'est jamais ridicule [...] En présence des images shakespeariennes, il arrive à Le Tourneur de substituer à la métaphore originale une autre image, parfois plus abstraite, qui "passe" mieux dans notre langue [...] Enfin, il connaît déjà - et mieux que la plupart de ses successeurs - l'art de la transposition. Il sait décomposer logiquement, articuler conformément au génie de notre langue ce qui, dans Shakespeare, éclate sans préparations."¹⁴³

The Oeuvres Complètes of F.-V. Hugo form the subject of a separate article, commensurate with their importance as the standard work of translation:¹⁴⁴ J.-B. Fort remarks on Hugo's innovation in basing

143. op.cit. pp. 118-119.

144. See the article by J.-B. Fort, 'François-Victor Hugo traducteur de Shakespeare', Etudes Anglaises pp. 106-115, and the catalogue of Madeleine Horn-Monval, Les Traductions Françaises de Shakespeare, 1964, for a list of editions based on his work.

his text on a collation of the best English editions and gives this appraisal of the outcome:

"Dans l'ensemble, cette traduction [..] est encore largement valable, même pour un lecteur devenu exigeant. Elle a certes ses taches, ses erreurs, ses maladresses, ses insuffisances [..] Qui s'en étonnerait? Le beau, c'est qu'il y ait, en dépit de ces erreurs, tant à louer dans le détail de cette oeuvre, composée d'une haleine, et qui possède une unité, une harmonie générales proprement admirables. Devant le style vigoureux et dru de Shakespeare, François-Victor se débarrasse du langage conventionnel, de la diction poétique, de la phrase molle et ronde d'un Le Tourneur ou même d'un Guizot."145

The other nineteenth-century translations are dismissed by Pons as uniformly mediocre, although he acknowledges their authors' better comprehension of the tragedy and their oft-proclaimed desire to provide faithful yet idiomatic accounts of the original:

"Voici qu'on respecte désormais également le texte anglais et la langue française.
Oui, dans les Préfaces, les Introductions et les Avant-Propos. Mais les résultats sont décevants, parfois désolants - ou désopilants."146

Thus, of the thirty-five or so versions of Hamlet published before Schwob's, ranging from that of Antoine Laplace in 1746 to that of Jules Lermina in 1898, none came near to conveying at the same time Shakespeare's powers as poet and dramatist. Schwob was the first to attempt a translation suitable for both the library and the stage, with all possible fidelity to the spirit and letter of the

145. op.cit. pp. 111-112.

146. Pons, op.cit. p. 122.

English text, and a corresponding disdain for the conventions of the French theatre. The revolutionary character of his rendering is amply recognised by Christian Pons, who sees in it a good omen for the twentieth century: however, the next two decades were to see a return to the "vers de mirliton" of the Dumas-Meurice type. It was left to Guy de Pourtalès in 1923 and Jacques Copeau in 1939, to rediscover the path marked out by Schwob. The first of these translations was used for a stage-version of Hamlet,¹⁴⁷ and it was with a mise en scène in mind that two further texts appeared in 1946 and 1947 - those of André Gide and Marcel Pagnol respectively.¹⁴⁸ Their approach as dramatists is approved by Christian Pons, yet he finds fault with the movement and tone which they impose on Shakespeare's poetry:

"Car Gide, plus et mieux que Schwob ou Pourtalès, est d'abord littéraire. Entendons qu'il a le sens du mot propre et que sa traduction possède un rythme, un mouvement, un "élan". Malheureusement, le mot propre, le mouvement sont trop souvent gidiens, ce qui ne saurait surprendre dans un texte d'André Gide, mais se révèle fâcheux lorsque le texte est aussi de Shakespeare. La forme gidienne édulcore le lyrisme shakespearien, moins pesamment mais aussi sûrement que les incongruités d'un Montégut ou les archaïsmes

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147. La Tragique Histoire de Hamlet, Prince de Danemark, tr. Guy de Pourtalès, was staged by Georges Pitoëff at Geneva, 1919: see the press-cuttings, Bibl. Arsenal, R Supp 937; and by Jean-Louis Barrault at the Comédie Française in 1943 (R Supp 2560, pp. 11-13).
148. Gide's version was performed by Jean-Louis Barrault at the Théâtre Marigny, October 1946 (R Supp 1925). Pagnol's Hamlet, Prince de Danemark was played at the Comédie Française in December 1946 (R Supp 2560).

d'un Schwob [..] Cette traduction "littéraire" n'est pas moins "ininterprétable" ou "incompréhensible" que les précédentes."¹⁴⁹

Pagnol is allowed "un élan, un langage plus direct, un tour plus vif", but betrays a mediterranean insensitivity to the accents of a different climate:

"Il ne "sent" pas la grandeur lyrique de Shakespeare. Il ne l'édulcore pas, mais il la détruit sans y prendre garde."¹⁵⁰

It would appear, therefore, that Shakespeare's manner remains the element most refractory to the endeavours of translators even when, like Gide, they are most conscious of the need to capture this elusive quality. Only in the translation of Yves Bonnefoy, first published in 1957,¹⁵¹ does Pons discern the beginnings of the assimilation of Shakespeare into French, or rather the possibility of an extension "des structures, des résonances, du 'registre' pour ainsi dire, de pensées et d'émotions de la langue française"¹⁵² to cover the sublime range of Hamlet.

Posterity will decide whether Bonnefoy's text indeed marks a turning-point in the history of French translations of Hamlet: rather than make a premature judgment, we shall merely take note

149. op.cit. pp. 125-126.

150. ibid. p. 126.

151. In the 4th volume of the Oeuvres Complètes de Shakespeare, éd. Pierre Leyris et Henri Evans.

152. Pons, op.cit. p. 116.

of the poet's essay appended to his version: 'Shakespeare et le Poète Français'.¹⁵³ Meditating on the reasons why the characters of the plays appear in their French guise as through a deforming glass, he concludes that

"l'essence de ce malheur des traductions de Shakespeare repose dans les métaphysiques contraires qui régissent et parfois tyrannisent et le français et l'anglais."¹⁵⁴

Bonnefoy thus explores more deeply than Beerbohm and Gide the essence of the language of Hamlet. He contrasts the tendency to restriction and definition of French poetry as displayed in both Racine and Baudelaire, with Shakespeare's illuminating vision of human nature in which the universal is fused with the particular, the individual with the archetype:

"cette grande et généreuse poésie dans chacun de ses mots ouvre le monde, un brave new world, à nos yeux. Tout autre, vraiment tout autre est la poésie française. Dans le plupart des oeuvres de cette poésie plus prudente, plus secrète, il est sûr que le mot ne semble pas poser ce qu'il désigne que pour exclure aussitôt de l'espace du poème tout ce qui n'est pas désigné. Dire, ce n'est plus commencer de décrire ce qui est, mais s'enfermer avec certaines choses élues dans un monde plus simple et clos."¹⁵⁵

Having thus defined the underlying problem, Bonnefoy refuses to accept a permanent schism between the two mentalities and languages, and sees in the rôle of the translator a means of drawing them

153. Hamlet, tr. Yves Bonnefoy, 1962, pp. 229-245.

154. op.cit. p. 235.

155. ibid. p. 237.

together. Taking advantage of the greater scope of modern French poetry, he is able to naturalise almost imperceptibly features which once would have remained alien:

"Traduire devient la lutte d'une langue avec elle-même, au plus secret de sa substance, au plus vif de son devenir. Or, je crois la poésie française bien plus capable aujourd'hui que naguère encore, d'engager cette lutte contre soi. D'une façon générale, dans l'histoire de l'Occident, il se peut bien que le moment soit venu où les grandes langues aient à dépasser leur naïveté, à rompre avec leurs croyances instinctives pour s'établir dans une vérité plus contradictoire, plus difficile."¹⁵⁶

Since Bonnefoy does not pretend to have found an entirely satisfactory compromise between two different modes of thought and speech, it is not for us to claim that Schwob comes within sight of the ideal. We should evaluate his efforts more justly in scrutinising them in their historical perspective, taking into account the techniques he used to surmount the fundamental problem discussed in this preamble, and comparing his achievement with that of other translators. The surveys of Pons and Bonnefoy are a shade too severe on those who strove to present Hamlet to a French public: aspiring towards a surely impossible ideal, they forget that the translators, even in their most daring innovations, were inescapably bound by the linguistic habits of the times they lived in. Our purpose in examining Schwob's version of Hamlet will therefore be to determine

¹⁵⁶. *ibid.* p. 242.

the translator's own criteria, and to what degree he succeeded in realising them.

. . . .

Schwob's apprenticeship in the art of translation was begun in 1881 under the expert supervision of his uncle Léon Cahun. Having submitted a sample of his work for comment, he received the following reply in a letter from Paris:

"Tes traductions n'étaient pas mauvaises, classiquement parlant. J'avais naturellement choisi les plus faciles. Maintenant, je vais profiter de l'occasion pour te montrer quelle différence il y a entre une traduction classique, c'est à dire de mots, et une traduction exacte, c'est à dire de choses et de pensées."¹⁵⁷

His early instruction in Latin and Greek led Schwob to a close examination of the subtleties of linguistic evolution, and persuaded him of the artificiality of attempts to render works of different periods into the one mould of modern French. Already at the age of sixteen he had formulated his theory of translation in a preface to his version of Catullus:

"Les traductions en vers ont mauvaise réputation: ou bien elles conservent la forme et altèrent complètement le sens; ou bien elles conservent le sens et envoient au diable la forme. Les deux méthodes sont également défectueuses. Il est évident que notre versification, entravée par la rime, est rebelle à la traduction. Pour faire une traduction tant soit peu exacte, en vers, tout en conservant la forme, il fallait donc choisir une prosodie licencieuse. J'ai cru bien faire en imitant la langue libre du seizième

157. MST p. 20.

siècle, la versification licencieuse de Marot.

Je n'ai pas eu cette raison seulement pour traduire Catulle dans la langue du XVII^e siècle, mais il m'a semblé qu'à l'époque de Catulle la langue latine était formée au même degré à peu près que chez nous la langue française sous Henri IV. J'ai suivi le raisonnement de Littré qui traduisit Homère en langue romane. On ne saurait croire combien les expressions et les tournures ont d'analogie dans deux langues arrivées au même degré de formation."158

The disappearance of the manuscript precludes any appreciation of the practical results of Schwob's theory, and the surviving translations from the same period are all based on contemporary texts - a few poems of Whitman, De Quincey's Last Days of Emmanuel Kant, and Wilhelm Richter's Die Spiele der Griechen und Römer, of 1887. In the early years of his literary career it was likewise towards modern works that he was attracted, with his version of Wilde's 'The Selfish Giant', and his projected translations of Stevenson's tales. His failure to complete his adaptation of Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore for the Oeuvre in 1894 leaves us ignorant as to whether he worked in verse: but that the theory of linguistic equivalence was in his mind is obvious from the style of Moll Flanders, published the same year. Quite possibly he shelved his work on Ford on realising his incompetence in handling poetry. It will be recalled that the passage of Hamlet included in the 1891 preface to Coeur Double was presented in blank verse, or rather a lamentably flat metaphrase; but by 1894 Schwob realised that his vocation was

158. *ibid.* pp. 23-24.

for prose, and that the lyrical effusions of his youth were no indication of a capacity to render dramatic poetry into a similar French medium.¹⁵⁹ In 1897, when he began his translation of Hamlet, he seems to have opted without hesitation for prose, and in his preface to the published text, so far from apologising for his choice, he declared it to be the most satisfying solution. Thus, in view of the controversy aroused by his selected medium and the application of his aforementioned linguistic theory, it will be useful to glance at current ideas on translation before turning at last to Schwob's Hamlet.

. . . .

An anonymous contributor to the summer issue of the Quarterly Review of 1895 qualified the Victorian era as one of great translators, citing the names of a host of poets, scholars and dilettanti as practitioners of a high and exacting discipline. While admitting its theoretical impossibility,¹⁶⁰ he showed that translation might be rewarded with relative success through the application of certain general principles, defined and discussed in the writings of the translators themselves. Turning first to Dryden's preface to The Epistles of Ovid, the author of the article weighed up the merits of metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation,

159. "Et sa fureur parce que Mme Léon Daudet citait à table un vers de lui!" Renard, Journal, pp. 272-273 (19th March 1895).

160. A topic which has been studied in Georges Mounin's Les Problèmes Théoriques de la Traduction, 1963.

concurring with the poet in his recommendation of paraphrase as the golden mean. This procedure (which Christian Pons calls "transposition") consists of reproducing the sense of the original in the idiom of the target language: its danger, as Dryden recognised, was that the translator's own style might supplant the writer's mode of expression. Hence Dryden's insistence on "maintaining the character of an author, which distinguishes him from all others and makes him appear that individual poet whom you would interpret."¹⁶¹ This prescription was echoed by Matthew Arnold in his essay On Translating Homer, of 1861; for him, one of the translator's chief concerns must be to raise in the modern reader the sensations of the first audience. Rossetti, for his part, was content with the less ambitious yet equally difficult aim expressed in his preface to The Early Italian Poets, that

"a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one.
The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation as far as possible with one more possession of beauty."

Artistic considerations being uppermost in the minds of such translators, it was held that occasional departures from the letter were justified in the cause of fidelity to the spirit. The finished version should be, concluded the critic, "in the language of Painting, not perhaps exactly Impressionist, but rather Impressionist than Pre-raphaelite."¹⁶² A reaction to this attitude found vehement

161. Preface to The Second Miscellany, quoted in 'The Art of Translation', The Quarterly Review, July-October 1895, p. 341.

162. *ibid.* p. 337.

expression in the preface of Robert Browning's translation of Aeschylus's Agamemnon, where the reader was prepared for an unembellished and uncompromising picture of the original through the metaphrastic approach. "I should expect the result to prove very hard reading indeed if it were meant to resemble Aeschylus", was the challenge of the translator.¹⁶³ The question of style and form, therefore, assumed a crucial importance: the character of the original modes might be masked by a zealous desire to polish asperities, while more sophisticated art would suffer through transposition into English metres based on a different prosody. Poets like Browning, Swinburne and Tennyson might display their virtuosity in finding equivalents for stately measures, but the less gifted partnerships of Butcher and Lang, and Lang, Leaf and Myers took advantage of the growing prestige of rhythmic prose in order to produce versions of the Odyssey and the Iliad which a Victorian public acclaimed as being of "high literary beauty, and [..] not only the most useful, but the most satisfying translations available."¹⁶⁴ The success of these volumes, published in 1879 and 1883 respectively, was greatly due to their imitation of the familiar vocabulary and cadences of the Bible; their reception was also prepared, it may be imagined, by the archaising strain of much Pre-Raphaelite poetry. Dante Gabriel Rossetti put to good use his

163. The Agamemnon of Aeschylus, 1877, p. VI.

164. The Quarterly Review, p. 351.

hours in the British Museum "looking for stunning words for poetry", and William Morris showed a similar enthusiasm. Our critic notes that his age was in sympathy with the Elizabethans and that the merits of the great translations of that era were being discovered through recent republications.¹⁶⁵ We may recall also the outstanding versions by Morris of the Icelandic sagas,¹⁶⁶ by John Payne of The Poems of Master François Villon,¹⁶⁷ of The Arabian Nights by Payne and Sir Richard Burton, all of which conjured up visions of exotic, vanished civilisations in a style tinged with quaint and curious uses of the English tongue.¹⁶⁸

By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, certain trends were to be distinguished in the English theory and practice of translation. Paraphrase was acknowledged as the only satisfactory artistic method, especially in verse renderings, although the exigencies of accuracy were seriously and on occasion excessively, respected. The ranks of those who held that exactness of meaning must take precedence over approximation of form were swollen by recruits whose work received the emphatic approbation of a large

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165. The writer probably had in mind Henley's monumental edition of the Tudor Translations, which appeared from 1892.
166. Grettis Saga, 1869, and Völsunga Saga, 1870. Morris also translated the Odyssey in 1887, and some Old French Romances in 1896.
167. See Appendix A item 740.
168. See the chapter 'Shakespeare and the Language of Poetry' in Otto Jespersen, Growth and Structure of the English Language, Oxford, 1962, 9th ed., pp. 214-221.

public. Thirdly, under the influence of contemporary literature and a revival of interest in archaic, non-classical genres, there was an exploration of the possibilities of old words and idioms in the recreation of the peculiar atmosphere of the original texts.

As for the relevance of all this to Marcel Schwob's conceptions, it should not be forgotten that he admired the works of the English translators and frequently had recourse to them: to Burton, for example, for the Kalandar's tale in his talk on John Ford, to Rossetti's Dante and His Circle and Mrs. Foster's version of Vasari for his dialogue 'L'Art'; Payne's Villon was in his library, and so were the Tudor Translations, edited by Henley. It was doubtless through discussions with Henley that Schwob enlarged and affirmed his own ideas, for the poet's highly specialised knowledge of the language of the Elizabethans and his delight in their adaptations of foreign writers, both ancient and modern, could not fail to instruct and inspire Schwob. His dedication of the Tragique Histoire d'Hamlet to Henley was surely the acknowledgement of a debt as well as a mark of friendship.

Meanwhile, Schwob could hardly remain blind to certain noteworthy experiments in translation in his own country - in particular to those of Stéphane Mallarmé who, it will be remembered, was in contact with Schwob while Hamlet was being translated. Mallarmé had rendered into rhythmic prose a number of the poems of Edgar Allan Poe,¹⁶⁹ according to his distinctive personal conception

169. 'Les Poèmes d'Edgar Poe', Oeuvres Complètes, pp. 190-246.

of the translator's art:

"Cette méthode de traduction a pour but de créer un texte français qui évoque l'original, qui le fasse voir le plus possible, mais non pas, comme c'est le but de la plupart des traductions, qui le remplace, qui se substitue à lui et le rende inutile [...] Pour qui ne peut pas lire l'original, soit qu'il ne l'a pas sous la main, soit parce qu'il ignore l'anglais, elle paraît pour le moins bizarre."¹⁷⁰

In particular, Mallarmé allowed a number of Anglicisms to confer strangeness and originality on his poetic vocabulary: his use of the words ignorer, nier, pérennel and aucun in their English sense has been noted, and likened to the "vent crispé" and the "illumination" of Verlaine and Rimbaud - both of whom also had some familiarity with the English language of poetry. Although such affectations were only a superficial symptom of the influence of English on the diction of the Symbolists, they did indicate a desire to renew and enrich French modes of expression, which Schwob whole-heartedly shared.¹⁷¹ Similarly, any archaic flavour was in keeping with the taste of the times, when "les brasseries du Quartier Latin étaient moyenâgeuses d'aspect et où les serveuses portaient hennin,"¹⁷² and when the memory was still fresh of Jean Moréas and his disciples of

170. Jacques Schérer, L'Expression Littéraire dans l'Oeuvre de Mallarmé, 1947, p. 27.

171. See René Taupin, 'French Symbolism and the English Language', Comparative Literature, Fall 1953, pp. 310-322. Taupin claims, p. 310, that: "The various translations of Whitman's works and Marcel Schwob's translation of Hamlet show that French poets cultivated a sort of jargon resulting from a transposition of the etymological and "racial" values of English words."

172. Benjamin Crémieux, Je Suis Partout, 15th May 1932 (Rf 67 5897 II p. 68).

the école romane, who had revived the vocabulary of Eustache Deschamps and the manner of Ronsard in their efforts to bring French verse back to the Latin tradition.¹⁷³ Such features of poetic language at the turn of the century help to account for the stylistic mannerisms of Schwob's Hamlet; it remains for us to consider some of its more fundamental peculiarities. Firstly, the choice of poetry rather than prose: we have suggested that Schwob's basic reason for rejecting verse lay in his awareness of his own strengths, but he had good precedents in the examples of Le Tourneur, François-Victor Hugo and Guizot, all of whom had preferred prose as the instrument of greater accuracy. The verse adaptations, indeed, had been equally disastrous from the point of view of those who could refer to the original English, and Schwob's break with the stage tradition was an unmistakable sign of a more exacting approach to the play. The popular Dumas-Meurice version had shown how much of the original meaning had to be sacrificed to rhyme - and to reason. Michel Grivelet, in his article 'La Critique Dramatique française devant Shakespeare', remarks that with this approach

"c'est déjà, insensiblement, la porte ouverte aux retouches, aux adaptations, destinées à éliminer des obscurités, d'apparents illogismes, à mettre de la raison et de la clarté là où on a le sentiment qu'elles manquent."¹⁷⁴

173. See Marcel Raymond, De Baudelaire au Surréalisme, 1959, p. 59.

174. Etudes Anglaises, p. 266.

And Harley Granville Barker, discussing this same Dumas-Meurice play, drily observed that

"throughout the translators seem to feel that above all things Shakespeare's meaning, when they have fathomed it, must be made crystalline, that a logically-minded French audience will have no patience with a Hamlet who cannot go mad in a succinct and rational way. No need ever to suspect their Hamlet's sanity."175

Thus Schwob's preoccupation with exactitude was not merely concern that the language of Shakespeare should not be dimmed by feeble and conventional approximations, but that the characters should not be distorted by arbitrary interpretations.

Schwob upheld his settling for prose towards the end of his introduction to Hamlet:

"Les critiques d'outre-mer, en premier lieu n'accordent pas qu'on puisse traduire Shakespeare. La grâce de sa poésie disparaît, disent-ils, parmi la prose, et un vers français ne saurait représenter un vers anglais. C'est vrai; mais le graveur qui fait une eau-forte d'après un tableau n'y transporte pas les couleurs. Il les transpose en valeurs. Si on peut comparer la peinture et la poésie, il faut accorder qu'un poème mis en prose est comme un tableau mis en gravure. Le poème perd le mystère de son harmonie et le tableau la brume de ses teintes; en échange, la prose donne la gloire du verbe et l'eau-forte le tranchant éclat de ses lignes. Tout art est interprétation; et si la nature peut être interprétée, l'oeuvre du poète ou du peintre sont-elles plus rebelles?"176

One feels here that Schwob is making a virtue out of necessity; for the tendency to black-and-white abstraction of French has been noted

175. 'On Translating Plays', Essays by Divers Hands, 1925, p. 23.

176. op.cit. pp. xxvi-xxvii. See also Schwob's comments on the Laurie translation of Stevenson: Appendix E.

by other Anglicists, Taine, for example, and Gide, who was to state the matter most neatly: "Il est du génie de notre langue de faire prévaloir le dessin sur la couleur."¹⁷⁷ The very emphasis with which Schwob commends the compensatory powers of prose is suspicious. Surely the "mystère de son harmonie" is an essential quality of Hamlet, without which the tragedy would lose its aura, its haunting ambiguities. Granville Barker was certainly of this opinion:

"But the emotional strength of expression by which this Englishman gives intense and individual life to his characters will often involve him - legitimately, it could be argued - in obscurity, in allusive vagueness, in the thing half said, or said but as a symbol of the greater force of things left unsaid, and of things unsayable. Try to bring a method such as this to terms of exactitude and clarity, and whatever else may result, the emotion will be dissipated, the strength lost and character will be fatally flattened out."¹⁷⁸

Some feature of the original must necessarily be abandoned in the passage to the target language, but the loss may be diminished by judicious choice. As a modern scholar has remarked, "good translation is grounded in practical formal criticism, for the translator must estimate just what parts are strongly functioning in giving the effect."¹⁷⁹ Schwob's striving after "la gloire du verbe" is rewarded by incontestable energy of diction and firmness of outline to the play, yet since he tacitly admitted the loss of one necessary dimension, the reader may wonder whether greater efforts could not

177. Quoted in J.-P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet, Stylistique Comparée du Français et de l'Anglais, 1966, p. 59.

178. op.cit. pp. 23-24.

179. Paul Goodman, The Structure of Literature, Chicago, 1954, quoted in Winifred Nowottny, The Language Poets Use, New York, 1962, p. 13.

have been made to preserve at least a suggestion of it. Closer analysis of Schwob's metaphor hints that this may be so, for the art of engraving allows the use of shading and burring, as well as the sharp definition of line. On the same analogy, there is no overwhelming reason why French prose should be disqualified at the outset from evoking some of the mysteries of the original. The assignment demanded rare resources of sensitivity, as the preamble to this chapter will have indicated: but to realise the secret of an adequate translation, and then to pass it by in favour of a quality more properly French is, to say the least, an extraordinary procedure. If Schwob in his own creative work had shown more propensity to rhetoric than to suggestion, his preference would be understandable; yet the later recueils are there to confirm his reputation as the foremost writers of prose tales and prose poems of the Symbolist period. Proof of his ability to project a sense of the universal through the particular - though scarcely with the same intensity as Shakespeare - may be found in his Vies Imaginaires and his Mimes, of which Suzanne Bernard has written:

"[La poésie] de Schwob est déjà Symboliste, en ce sens qu'elle suggère par le moyen des apparences visibles des significations plus secrètes, et nous fait deviner un second plan derrière les personnages linéaires du monde antique; c'est ce qui donne à certains poèmes leur épaisseur, leur densité de signification."¹⁸⁰

The sacrifice of ambiguity to eloquence may have been dictated by

180. Le Poème en Prose, p. 495.

the rationalising attitude to Hamlet discussed earlier, and embodied in Sarah Bernhardt's interpretation of the rôle, but it is axiomatic that any great dramatic text should be susceptible of varied readings. Our scrutiny of Schwob's language will shed more light on his fidelity to the principle enunciated in the preface; meanwhile, to acquit him to some extent of the charge of deliberate excision of a vital element of the tragedy, we may stress that his "declaration of intent" was in fact retrospective, written in answer to his critics. It seems entirely probable that his figure of speech was less calculated to give an all-embracing definition of his language than to confound with rhetoric those who had fastened pettily on its inevitable limitations.

The second singularity of Schwob's translation is the way he handles his prose. One of the reproaches levelled at his work by later critics is its literalness: the preface of Marcel Pagnol contains some instructive examples of the "phrases incompréhensibles, et parfois ridicules," which the metaphrastic method leads to. Again, Schwob's preface seems to countenance the deliberate use of the technique:

"C'est ici une traduction de bonne foi en dépit du proverbe italien; ce n'est pas un commentaire. Les mots sont représentés par des mots, et les phrases par des phrases."

Such protestations seem naïve, not to say excessive, to the modern reader; what Schwob had in mind, of course, was a contrast with the adaptations purporting to convey the spirit of the original, hitherto presented on the French stage. Those who seek to overthrow

a pernicious convention are more violent and exaggerated in their reactions than their successors, to whom the need for change is less urgent. Schwob deserves praise for his moderation, his scruples in ensuring that respect for the English should not outweigh respect for the French. His lapses are not to be ignored, but they may be explained by contemporary trends in literary French which have been forgotten by audiences of our own day. Pagnol accused Schwob of doing violence to the language by never changing the order of the English words; his attack, and others like it, is strangely anticipated in the Moeurs des Diurnales, in the section entitled 'De l'Art de Traduire':

"Grâce à ce procédé, il est loisible à chacun de se charger de la rubrique. En effet, il suffit de chercher chaque mot dans le dictionnaire et de le représenter par son équivalent français, sans le changer de place. Outre les avantages énumérés plus haut, vous trouverez celui d'être fidèle et exact sans vous donner aucune peine [..] Vos erreurs (si vous en commettez) passeront ainsi pour les sottises des Allemands ou des Anglais et vous aurez fait oeuvre de bon patriotisme."¹⁸¹

With this sardonic injunction to the foreign-affairs editors of the daily press, we may leave the realm of theory and discuss its practical application in the higher art of Hamlet.

. . . .

"La phrase anglaise s'organise autour d'un mot image et la phrase française autour d'un mot signe."¹⁸² This bald statement

181. Moeurs des Diurnales, 1903, p. 141.

182. Vinay and Darbelnet, *op.cit.* p. 58.

from a style manual explains why the passage from Shakespeare's language to Schwob's entails the loss of so many nuances and overtones: the more abstract, intellectual French term does not make the same forceful appeal to the senses. A few examples from the first scene of the tragedy will illustrate this process: "it harrows me with fear and wonder", "jump at this dead hour, With martial stalk hath he gone by", "in the gross and scope of my opinion", "lofty and shrill-sounding throat" are reduced to the pale "J'en ai l'angoisse de peur et de surprise", "juste à cette heure morte, martial, il a passé", "somme tout, en mon opinion", "son gosier aigu au son strident". The auditory and visual power of these images is almost nullified, along with their contribution to the atmosphere of the play. Herein lies the most prejudicial effect of the attenuation, for "every aspect of the language of a poem is, or could be, expressive in itself and in its relation to other aspects";¹⁸³ and since the cumulative effect of the imagery of Hamlet is to foster the impression of Denmark as a diseased body spreading physical and moral contagion, it follows that every involuntary enfeeblement of diction, every change of metaphor, undermines the whole structure of the drama. Aware of this danger, Schwob is careful to make his version concrete and vivid whenever the occasion presents itself; his attempts at compensation are unobtrusive, blending in with current French usage. Thus in Act IV

183. Nowottny, op.cit. p. 13.

sc. i we find the following lines:

"But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life,"

and

"like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure,"

are rendered as

"comme un qui héberge une honteuse maladie pour ne
point la divulguer, nous l'avons laissé ronger jusque
sur la moelle de la vie,"

and

"comme l'or fin parmi la gangue de vils métaux, brille
pur."

A cognate problem is raised with the translation of the type of metaphor so abundant in the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, where the image is conveyed not so much in one pregnant word, or in a formally elaborated simile, as in the illuminating juxtaposition of the two terms whose fundamental relationship is perceived by the poet in the "fine frenzy" of his cogitations. The clothing of a noble abstraction with the immediacy of a physical expression, the intellectual satisfaction of recognising the justness of a comparison, have made this kind of metaphor the mainstay of English poetry; and it has been claimed that its influence was responsible for the gradual abandon of periphrase in French verse, and the introduction of images such as Baudelaire's

"Qui chiffonne le coeur comme un papier qu'on froisse."184
 Nonetheless, it would appear that such fecund audacities cause more distress than delight to the French mind, to judge by the severity with which Christian Pons condemns literal versions of these metaphors.

"Dans le cas particulier de Hamlet - je ne dis même pas de Shakespeare - il vaut mieux transposer, c'est-à-dire transférer dans un autre mouvement, équivalent dans notre langue. [..] Il ne faut pas hésiter à être plus long que l'original lorsque la langue française exige qu'on décompose logiquement et qu'on développe ce qui est implicite ou ce qui éclate en quelques mots dans une image shakespearienne."185

The solution he proposes is the amplification of the image, in a kind of Claudelian verset, marking a progress from the prosaic formulation to the poetic suffusion. Thus "to take arms against a sea of troubles" might be tackled thus:

"Ou s'il n'est pas préférable de prendre les armes et de partir en guerre contre la tempête, contre l'ouragan, et contre l'océan pour ainsi dire, contre l'infini de nos petits malheurs."186

This laborious emendation is hardly more convincing than Schwob's "prendre les armes contre une océan de peines", which had earned Pons's disapproval; and when one imagines what might become of Hamlet's darting thoughts if systematically analysed in this manner, there can be no hesitation in rejecting the verset as eminently unsuitable for Shakespeare's purposes. Bonnefoy, discussing Pons's

184. Taupin, op.cit. p. 315.

185. op.cit. p. 128.

186. ibid. p. 129.

proposal in his essay 'Transposer ou traduire Hamlet', rightly remarks that

"ce parallélisme serait la transposition la plus dangereuse, puisqu'il ne revit pas l'élan qui a fait naître la phrase, et ne s'attache qu'à sa marque dans l'accompli."¹⁸⁷

He opts for the method which Schwob had chosen, the word for word rendering which may result in forms unnatural to French ears, but which remains "la seule intelligence, bien que virtuelle, de l'énigme irréductible d'un sens". In Schwob's version of the celebrated soliloquy there is only one case of balking at a metaphor: "the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to" becomes "des mille secousses naturelles à qui la chair est asservie". The rest pass without modification into French: "quand nous avons secoué cet enlacs mortel", "les soufflets et les avanies du temps", "porter la faix, ahanner, et suer sous une accablante vie", "le teint naturel de la résolution s'étirole sous l'ombre pâle de la pensée". Whatever the temptation to blend these images more smoothly into the texture of French prose, the translator does well to remember that no greater service can be paid to Shakespeare than to allow his words the force and intensity of their native form. The normal syntax of French is hardly offended here: only the mental habits are jolted - and this is arguably one of the chief virtues of translation.

A second distinctive feature of Shakespeare's language which

187. op.cit. p. 255.

has always proved a stumbling-block to his interpreters is the pun.

As Bonnefoy puts it,

"le calembour qui est chez Shakespeare ambiguïté,
suggestion de la complexité du réel est malaisément
autre chose en français qu'un attentat nihiliste
(ou parfois révolutionnaire) contre l'esprit."188

J.-B. Fort in his article on François-Victor Hugo shows how inconsistent and often unhappy the translator was in his handling of this form of wit; and at the other end of the time-scale, Bonnefoy is generally obliged to renounce the attempt and explain the play on words in a footnote. Gide also tends to skip the difficulties, and his version of "A little more than kin and less than kind" -

"- Mais à présent, cousin Hamlet, mon fils [..]7
- De fait, hélas! un peu plus de coeur,"

while more inspired than the usual variations on "cousin" and "fils", loses the bitter pleasantry pointed by the alliteration. Schwob's rendering is superior in its closeness to the original sense and sound:

"Un peu plus que germain, moins que du même germe,"

and the standard set by this first hint of Hamlet's ambiguous status is maintained with the same felicity throughout the play. In the exchange between Polonius and Ophelia, Act I sc.iii, Schwob makes a sustained effort to convey the different meanings of "tender":

"- Il m'a, monseigneur, ces dernier temps, donné bien
des manifestations de son amitié.

188. *ibid.* p. 241.

- [] Et vous croyez à ces manifestations, comme vous dites?

- [] Pensez que vous êtes un bébé, que vous avez pris ces manifestations pour argent comptant, qui ne sont point courantes. Manifestez-vous donc plus rarement, ou bien, pour ne pas rompre le fil de votre pauvre phrase, vous me manifesterez pour un sot."

Gide manages to translate all this by "offres" and "offrir", but at the expense of the rest of the text; Pourtalès and Bonnefoy use the same words, except in the case of "tender yourself more dearly", where they have "estimez-vous plus haut". Schwob's "manifestations" fits perfectly into all contexts, and the length and pomposity of the word make it especially suitable for Polonius, who delights in his own rhetoric.

In the gravediggers' scene of the Fifth Act, the pun on the two meanings of "arms" defeats most of the translators, who are constrained either to omit it, explain it in a footnote, or invent a different one. The passage in Shakespeare runs:

"- There is no ancient gentlemen but [] gravemakers; they hold up Adam's profession.

- Was he a gentleman?

- He was the first that ever bore arms.

- Why, he had none.

- [] The Scripture says, Adam digged; could he dig without arms?"

Portalès gives "le premier qui ait jamais eu le bras long - le blason, [] Eh! Pas de blason du tout [] "Adam bêchait";

pouvait-il bêcher sans bras?"¹⁸⁹ - which leaves the hearer in complete confusion. "Avoir le blason" certainly means "to bear arms", but the pun demands in addition "avoir le bras long", which merely means "avoir beaucoup de crédit", and has no logical connection with the following words. The reply of the second clown is dictated by Pourtalès's choice of terms for the first part of the pun, and insists on the "blason"; it is disconcerting, therefore, to find that the second part refers back to the "bras". There seems no point to this artificial riddle if the pun is to be so well concealed. Pagnol's ingenuity has a happier outcome:

"- C'était un gentilhomme?

- C'est le premier au monde qui ait eu un "champ". Tu sais bien qu'on dit "Sur champ de gueule" "Sur champ d'azur". [...]

- [...] Et puis après?

- [...] L'écriture dit qu'Adam piochait. Et comment pouvait-il piocher, s'il n'avait pas eu de champs?"¹⁹⁰

Schwob's version succeeds in preserving the humour of the original without moving so far away from it. "C'est le premier qui ait jamais eu droit de haute main", and "Pouvait-il bêcher sans mains" renders the anatomical image and obviates the need for amplification in an exchange which gains its effect from briskness. Schwob's handling of the pun sets him apart from other translators; his ease and competence put across the exercise of verbal wit so dear to the

189. op.cit. p. 138.

190. op.cit. p. 259.

Elizabethans, and so accentuate the "local colour" of the play.

This latter preoccupation with the restitution of the purely superficial elements of Shakespeare's language places Schwob, if we are to follow Bonnefoy's reasoning, in the misguided tradition of the nineteenth-century translators:

"Ils avaient adopté la prose dans ses ambitions romantiques, qui sont d'appréhender la variété du réel, le pittoresque, la couleur locale, la vérité des êtres les plus différents de nous, et en un mot de ramener le langage à la réalité de la vie [...] Et, le souci du pittoresque étant aussi peu shakespearien que possible, il est probable qu'une part de l'échec des traducteurs du XIX^e siècle tient justement à ce qu'ils ont perdu le vrai lieu de la vérité de Shakespeare, qui est cet élan des êtres, cette profondeur d'âme, cette passion subjective dont son vers est l'immédiate expression."191

If this surmise be true, Schwob's earnest endeavours to procure for his audience an impression similar to that wrought on the Elizabethans were the sign of a basic misunderstanding of Shakespeare's purposes. His theory of linguistic equivalents, in particular, would have to be dismissed as mere indulgence in a desire to display his knowledge of mediaeval and Renaissance verse, or to rival contemporary poets and translators in dazzling the reader with recherché vocabulary. For Schwob, however, the use of archaisms was indispensable:

"Mettre une période de Shakespeare à la mode d'aujourd'hui, ce serait à peu près vouloir traduire une page de Rabelais dans la langue que parlait Voltaire. Nous avons tâché de ne pas oublier que Shakespeare pensait et écrivait sous Henri IV et Louis XIII."

191. op.cit. p. 234.

This theory, whatever its scientific value, is not to be condemned as typical of an approach neglectful of the deeper springs of Shakespeare's mind and work. Critics have deplored Schwob's supposedly indiscriminate use of obsolete expressions, and Valéry Larbaud in his remarks on the topic, observed that: "Il est sûr que leur abus est toujours senti comme une marque de mauvais goût et de vulgarité pédante."¹⁹² Schwob's practice, on the contrary, is more subtle than his detractors have given him credit for and is moved by no gratuitous impulse to decorate the text. In the main, he is content to evoke the flavour of the original: a passage such as the following has no noticeable archaisms yet has the ring and movement of Shakespeare's own words:

"Non point; ils s'efforcent comme à l'ordinaire. Mais il y a, monsieur, une nichée d'enfants-comédiens, jeunes faucons, dont le fausset domine tout colloque et qui n'en sont que plus furieusement applaudis, qui sont maintenant à la mode, et remplissent de leurs cris de crécelle toutes les scènes ordinaires (ainsi les nomme-t-on) tant que maints porte-rapière, crainte des porte-plume, osent à peine y fréquenter."¹⁹³

The "verve et truculence" of Schwob's dialogue, distinguished by Pons, is thus achieved with a minimum of ostentatious effects. Nowhere in the translation do we find any attempt at total recreation of the speech of a bygone age: it would have been as futile as ridiculous. What does emerge from a study of Schwob's archaisms

192. Sous l'Invocation de Saint Jérôme, 1946, p. 142.

193. *op.cit.* p. 80.

is their subservience to the dramatic structure. Undoubtedly they are there to bring out the "élan des êtres" on which Bonnefoy insists.

Thus we find Schwob's quaint turns of phrase appearing in the ancient folk-songs Ophelia recalls in her madness, and in the rustic speech of the grave-diggers. With Hamlet, the use of obsolete expressions is almost non-existent, except in some phrases where a poetic effect is required - hence: "au for de mon coeur", and "de moult plus grande beauté". Horatio, too, is given an unremarkable vocabulary, except in one striking passage from the First Act, when he is explaining the reasons for the rearmament of Denmark:

"Moi, je le puis. Du moins, voici le bruit qui court: notre feu roi - dont l'image à l'instant nous a apparu - fut, vous le savez par Fortinbras, de Norwège, sous la piqure d'un orgueil très jaloux, défié au combat. Auquel combat notre vaillant Hamlet (car tel l'estimait cette partie de notre ancien monde) occit ce Fortinbras. Or, Fortinbras, par pacte scellé, dûment ratifié par décret et cri de héraut, avait engagé au conquérant, avec sa vie, toutes les terres dont il se tenait saisi, en échange desquelles une portion équivalente fut engagé par notre roi, laquelle serait revenu au patrimoine de Fortinbras, s'il eût été vainqueur. Ainsi, par la même convention et teneur de l'article désigné, la sienne revint à Hamlet. Or, monsieur, le jeune Fortinbras, tout bouillant de lave, a remorqué sur les marches de Norvège, de-ci, de-là, une bande de gens sans feu ni lieu, prêts, pour le pain et la solde, à toute entreprise qui aura de l'estomac. Or, la présente (comme bien paraît à notre Etat), serait de nous reprendre, par main-forte et contrainte, ces susdites terres, ainsi perdues par son père. Et voilà, je pense, le grand motif de nos préparations, la raison de nos présentes gardes et la cause capitale de ces postes ventre-à-terre et de ce branlebas dans le pays."194

194. *ibid.* pp. 9-10.

Here the recounting of the combat, with its reference to the old practices of chivalry, its rotund legal terminology, takes on an epic tone with the deftly-placed archaisms; the audience shares Horatio's disdain for the barbarity of Fortinbras and his "lawless resolute".

It is with Polonius that Schwob uses an out-moded diction to best effect. Not only the words but the whole structure of the courtier's speech is out of touch with modern usage. His fussy and interfering behaviour towards his children is expressed in his choice of terms; Ophelia he calls a "fillette nice", and Laertes is suspected of all sorts of misdemeanours. The scene where Polonius instructs Reynaldo in the techniques of spying begins on the appropriate note:

"Ce sera merveille de votre sagesse, bon Reynaldo, devant que de lui rendre visite, de faire enquête sur sa conduite."¹⁹⁵

and continues in a pastiche of the Rabelaisian manner, particularly apt as Laertes is studying in Paris; one might even imagine that Polonius's jargon betrays a little nostalgia for

"telles galantes, folles et ordinaires passades qui sont compagnes notoires, par commune fame, à jeunesse et liberté."

The Players' speeches stand out from the context of the play through their hyperbole or rhetorical stiffness: their manner, rather than their language, is old-fashioned, so Schwob, contrary to what might

195. *ibid.* p. 53.

be expected, introduces no obsolete turns into them. For the rest, the archaisms are few and far between: we find the forms gésir, ouïr, se tenir coi, together with the interjections fi, nenni, cordieu, voire, all of which are familiar to a modern audience though possibly stripped of their pristine force because of the humorous connotations they have acquired.

Schwob's notes acknowledge his debt to certain poets of the fifteenth century in rendering some abstruse allusions. This is an excellent expedient when the French poem is sufficiently obscure for the substitution to pass unnoticed: thus the vexed question of the hawk and the handsaw is neatly resolved by the abstraction of the lines

"Mon amy est, qui me fait entendant
D'un cygne blanc que c'est un corbeau noir"196

from Villon's 'Ballade du Concours de Blois'. The translation of "For oh, for oh! the hobby-horse is forgot!" by "Mais où sont les poulaines d'antan" is open to criticism, however. The fault is not Schwob's change of metaphor - the reference to the figure from the Morris dance, outlawed by the Puritans, would mean nothing to a French audience, and the variations on "le petit cheval" offered by other translators do nothing to explain matters - but the unexpected adaptation of Villon's most celebrated refrain might have the deplorable effect foreseen by Hamlet:

196. *ibid.* p. 235.

"to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered."

It will be seen, then, that Schwob's use of archaism is no gratuitous literary elegance, but a device to enhance aspects of the text which might otherwise not have found sufficient relief. As such, it may be linked with other of his techniques for differentiating the characters among each other and in their changing moods. Variety of tone is essential in a translation of Hamlet; in the case of Claudius, for example, there must be a contrast between the anguished perplexities of his private thoughts, the decisiveness of his dealings with Hamlet, and the rotundities of his ceremonial speech to the court, where the

"imperial jointress", the elaborate "an auspicious and a dropping eye", the balance of "mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage", and the alliteration of "delight and dole", all combine to represent an official oration where the required sentiments are enunciated, without much reference to what is going on in the speaker's mind."¹⁹⁷

Schwob is particularly happy in putting over this kind of exercise in eloquence, and is more careful than many of his successors in reproducing the tricks of rhetoric:

"Quoique le souvenir de la mort de notre cher frère Hamlet soit toujours vert, et qu'il nous convienne d'ensevelir nos coeurs dans le chagrin, tandis que tout notre royaume se contracte en un froncement douloureux, cependant la raison balance la nature et veut que, si nous songeons à lui avec une douleur discrète, nous ne perdions pas la mémoire de notre personne. Voilà pourquoi, avec une joie voilée, souriant

197. B. Ifor Evans, The Language of Shakespeare's Plays, Bloomington, 1952, p. 98.

d'un oeil, pleurant de l'autre, - le carillon aux funérailles, le glas aux noces, - pesant également délices et deuil, nous avons pris notre soeur de naguère, maintenant notre reine, partenaire impériale de cet Etat guerrier, pour notre femme. Et nous n'avons point en cela enfreint vos bons conseils que vous nous avez donné largement en cette affaire. A tous, merci."198

Osric, though a minor character, has some pains expended on his preciousness with the characteristic "furieusement", "bellement", "très suave seigneur". His description of Laertes shows Schwob rising to the stylistic challenge with delight:

"croyez-moi, parfait gentilhomme, empli des plus excellentes distinctions, de très amoureuse société et grande montre; en vérité, pour parler de lui en homme qui sent son monde, il est le cadran ou calendrier de noblesse, car vous trouverez en lui l'ensemble de toutes parties désirées d'un gentilhomme."199

The grave-diggers, in contrast, have a familiar tone, with such expressions as "C'est-y qu'on doit l'enterrer d'enterrement chrétien", "oui-dà", "ouais", "donne un coup de pied jusque chez Vaughan", etc. As for the dialogue of the Prince himself, it would be impossible to quote examples of all Schwob's renderings of his changing humours: it is sufficient to say that he thoroughly appreciated Shakespeare's range of style displayed in Hamlet, where

"the cunning is, that while words are explored for their own sake, by some creative ingenuity the interest in language is brought to the service of the action and of the characterisation so as to render it a natural and integral part of the conception."200

We shall reproduce just one passage, that where Hamlet's scorn at

198. op.cit. p. 14.

199. ibid. pp. 211-212.

200. Evans, op.cit. p. 91.

the vanity of human pretensions bursts forth in musings on the lawyer's pettifogging; polysyllabic legal terms alternate with short, almost vulgar words which show man in his most abject light:

"Où sont ses fatrasseries maintenant, ses grabelleries, ses subversions, salvations et chicanes? Pourquoi souffre-t-il maintenant que ce vilain drôle lui daube sur le museau avec sa pelle sale, et que ne lui fait-il citation pour coups? Hum! Ce bonhomme était peut-être en son temps grand acheteur de terres, avec ses écritures, ses reconnaissances, ses charges, ses dupliques, tripliques et recollements; est-ce la finasserie de ses finesses et la conclusion de ces conclusions que d'avoir sa fine trogne pleine de fine ordure?"²⁰¹

Thus, through his scrupulous researches into the English language and his full utilisation of the resources of the French, Schwob allows his readers to share his own perceptions of the subtleties of psychology and poetry in Hamlet.

. . . .

Our attention so far has been directed towards Schwob's handling of isolated words and phrases: we must now examine his way with speech-structure, the balance of his sentences and the flow of his dialogue. It is precisely on this count, according to critics, that Schwob falls down. On the occasion of Pitoëff's revival of the play in 1927, Pierre Brisson formulated the reproach which has been laid at Schwob's door ever since:

"L'ouvrage est mené avec une virtuosité étonnante. On sent une connaissance approfondie de la langue et de ses ressources. Les phrases ont une membrure, une force d'attaque dont on reçoit une vive impression.

201. op.cit. p. 193.

Mais la traduction ainsi entendue reste une traduction de lecture. Par souci extrême de fidélité les auteurs arrivent parfois à des constructions torturées d'une lourdeur effroyable."²⁰²

The essentially undramatic nature of Schwob's text was not perceived by the critics of 1899 - possibly because the passages which gave rise to the accusation were omitted in performance by Sarah Bernhardt; however, it is significant that the actress had great difficulty in remembering her lines, and was reluctant to commit herself to frequent stagings.²⁰³ Antoine was to write of the translation in 1932 that it was

"littérairement fort belle, par la préciosité, la recherche, le pittoresque de la langue, et propre à nous offrir les plaisirs les plus délicats, mais elle a le grand tort de ne pas être scénique, et j'en appelle aux comédiens qui eurent à se débattre avec un texte difficile à se "mettre dans la bouche" comme ils disent, paralysant constamment l'expression dramatique."²⁰⁴

Schwob's failure to see this basic deficiency of his version is surprising in view of his own literary and dramatic experience. From his friendship with Renard and Georges Courteline, from his former association with the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre, through his frequentation of the Comédie Française, one might suppose him perfectly capable of judging what style was adapted to the drama and what to ordinary narrative. Moreover, as a self-confessed disciple of Flaubert, he recognised the importance of ease of

202. Pierre Brisson, Le Temps, 30th May 1927, (Rt 3701. XVIII; 43).

203. See Beryl Turner, *op.cit.* p. 105.

204. L'Information, 10th May 1932 (Rf 67. 587 II 60).

diction, and since both he and Moreno were noted for their readings of prose and poetry,²⁰⁵ it is curious that they should have permitted the intrusion of cumbersome passages - and that Sarah Bernhardt should have accepted a text which her expertise would tell her to be difficult to act.

What, then, are the features of Schwob's Hamlet which have provoked André Gide to call it, in private, "infernale, impossible, incroyable, un monstre, à rigoler",²⁰⁶ and in public,

"ininterprétable, irrespirable, cacophonique, privé de rythme, d'élan, de vie, parfois incompréhensible sans une attention soutenue, que n'a pas, au théâtre, le temps de prêter le spectateur."²⁰⁷

As we have already seen, attacks on the translation are principally aimed at its literalness, its contravention of the rules of French style in order to preserve the English turns of phrase. One obvious example of this tendency is Schwob's predilection for the attributive adjective placed before its noun, even when no emotive effect is intended: thus he writes "la générale voix du Danemark", "la matinale et liquide rosée de jeunesse", "l'indulgente route de roses", "une despotique et damnée lumière", "l'immédiate mort d'Hamlet", and even "les chastes et immaculés sourcils de ma fidèle mère". Similar combinations had been practised by Mallarmé in his versions of Poe;

205. Renard, op.cit. pp. 238-239: "Il lisait admirablement, je ne dis pas: sans prétention à bien lire."

206. In a letter to Wesley Goddard, op.cit. p. 36.

207. Théâtre Complet VII 202, quoted from the letter-preface to the New York edition of Hamlet, 1944.

but while such forms as "ta morte Ulalume" or "la brumeuse moyenne région" may delight the seeker after exquisite sensations in the privacy of his library, a French theatre-audience might well be startled by these unorthodox transpositions, which are not even warranted by a departure from everyday usage in the original. This trick, or snobisme perhaps, of Schwob's is trivial when compared with the outcome of his disinclination to rearrange the clauses of sentences whose complication jars on the French ear:

"Certaines phrases de Shakespeare sont retorses comme l'enfer; pleines de redondances [...] je voudrais qu'un Anglais m'en expliquât la beauté. Devant celles de Schwob, qui s'efforce de n'en sacrifier ni une redite, ni un repli, on pense: ça doit être beau en anglais."208

Gide, brought into immediate contact with the problems of accuracy and style during his translation of the First Act of Hamlet in the summer of 1922, was to note a generalisation of Schwob's approach in the works of his own day, and to condemn it as contrary to the spirit of the original and to the exigencies of good French:

"Je crois absurde de se cramponner au texte de trop près; je le répète, ce n'est pas seulement le sens qu'il s'agit de rendre, il importe de ne pas traduire des mots, mais des phrases, et d'exprimer, sans en rien perdre, pensée et émotion, comme l'auteur les eût exprimées s'il eût écrit directement en français, ce qui ne se peut que par une tricherie perpétuelle, par d'incessants détours et souvent en s'éloignant beaucoup de la simple littéralité."209

As always, much depends on the discretion of the translator, for

208. Gide, op.cit. p. 190, quoted from his diary, 14th July 1922.

209. ibid. p. 195, quoted from the preface to the 1930 edition of the First Act.

this advice, if applied uncritically, leaves the way open for the substitution of his own habitual mode of expression for that of the original; what other criterion is more natural in judging "what the writer might have thought in French"? It is all too easy to condense and clarify in the name of French style, especially if it makes the translator's task a little less arduous. Such liberties may be tolerated in the rendering of works which have no pretensions to literary excellence, but the reader of Hamlet, ignorant of English though aware of the exceptional qualities of Shakespeare's poetry, may wonder at the "degré zéro de l'écriture" displayed in the recent translation of Georges Brousse, truly the reductio ad absurdum of Gide's method. The scientific misconceptions of Gide's recommendations to translators have been exposed and condemned by Vinay and Darbelnet in their manual of comparative stylistics;²¹⁰ we extract from their indictment the essential argument that:

"le choix s'établit non pas entre une traduction littérale et une traduction libre, mais entre une traduction exacte et une traduction inexacte."

Whether, by the rigorous standards of these writers, Schwob's version also would fall into the latter category, is a question we will not dwell on, being obliged to consider it from the historical point of view. Schwob's avowed aim was to provide a mirror not only to Shakespeare's thought, but also to the manner in which that

210. op.cit. pp. 267-269.

thought was expressed. To this end he strained the French syntax to its utmost limits, encouraged by the knowledge that poetic licence might be invoked to excuse many of his deviations from current linguistic practice.

Ifor Evans, in his book on Shakespeare's language, marvelled at the mutual enhancement of content and form in Hamlet:

"The ease with which the argument is maintained, through all elaborations and qualifying phrases and clauses, within the pattern of a blank verse of complete lucidity, is as masterly as the thought itself is subtle."²¹¹

Herein lies the quandary, for this organisation of the poetry is the direct expression of what Vinay and Darbelnet have termed the "intuitive" or "sensorial" development of English thought, at the opposite pole to the French "reasoned development". To borrow the image with which they define the contrast, the French attitude is "plutôt celle d'un spectateur commentant des faits que celle d'un acteur les traduisant au fur et à mesure de leur émergence."²¹² It is obvious that if Schwob were to pursue to its logical conclusion the premise of his introduction, the results would do a sad disservice to Shakespeare. And indeed, where there is a sustained image or prolonged stretch of narrative, the balance of the original is often lost in Schwob's text. Here, for example, is his version of the death of Ophelia:

"Il y a au bord d'un rû [sic] un saule oblique, qui mire ses feuilles chenues à la vitre de l'eau; là,

211. op.cit. p. 94.

212. op.cit. p. 221.

elle descendit avec de fantasques guirlandes de soucis, d'orties, de pâquerettes et de ces longues fleurs pourpres à qui les rudes bergers donnent un nom plus grossier mais que nos froides filles appellent doigts-de-mort, et, comme elle se haussait pour couronner les branches pendantes de ses diadèmes d'herbes, un méchant rameau se rompit, et voilà que trophées agrestes, elle-même, tout tomba dans le rû qui pleure. Ses robes flottèrent large et, comme une ondine, un temps la firent nager; et, dans ce temps, elle chantait des paroles de vieux airs, comme inconsciente de sa détresse, ou comme une créature native habitante de l'eau."213

Shakespeare's blank verse provides enough natural pauses to allow the detachment and articulation of each component phrase, at the same time welding them into one integrated whole. Schwob follows the same divisions in his prose but is unable to achieve a sense of cohesion. Each of his phrases when considered in isolation can be seen to fit into a normal breath-space, yet the speech in its entirety seems too long for ease of diction. The long adjectival clause following "ces longues fleurs pourpres" in particular burdens the speech and destroys its tension: once the rhythm of the English has disappeared there is nothing to give impetus to the passage but the necessity to relate the event, and so it degenerates into a jumble of words. Gide, in his translation of the same scene, has omitted nothing essential but his more careful balance starts off a lyrical flow similar to that of the original:

"Un saule se penche sur la rivière, qui mire dans le courant vitreux ses feuilles grises; c'est là qu'elle est venue, portant de bizarres guirlandes de renoncules, d'orties blanches, de pâquerettes et de

ces digitales pourprées auxquelles nos bergers
libertins donnent un vilain nom, mais que nos chastes
filles appellent doigts de morts."214

The passage we have been discussing is rather in the nature of a set piece, with its formal depiction of the scene, including the symbolism of the flowers, the account of Ophelia's death and the deliberately ennobling epithets and similes; it is the reconstitution of an event by one whose attitude remains until the end objective, "un bref désordre qui s'est annulé." The dense arrangement of pictorial details and allusions taxes the translator's ingenuity, but still presents less of a problem than the reproduction of the far-ranging thoughts of Hamlet in their spontaneous formulation - "the flash and outbreak of a fiery mind." The effect of improvisation rather than of logical induction, of a keen mind fastening on the implications of the phenomena of life as they come within his ken, must be captured and preserved in the full force of original diction; and it is here that Schwob comes to grief. Take his passage on Hamlet's reflections over the tragic flaw:

"Ainsi parfois il arrive, en divers hommes, que, par quelque vicieuse tare de nature, comme en leur naissance (en quoi ils ne sont point coupables puisque nature n'élit point son origine), par la pléthore de quelque humeur qui déborde les enceintes de la raison ou par quelque accoutumance qui contrarie toutes formes d'honnêteté, il arrive, dis-je, que ces hommes, frappés de la flétrissure d'un seul défaut (livrée de nature ou planète de fortune) - leurs vertus fussent-elles pures comme la grâce, infinies autant qu'il est en l'homme -

214. op.cit. p. 145.

ils seront attaqués du blâme général pour cette spéciale faute."215

Inextricably confused, leaden, without even the saving grace of having rendered vividly the image-words "mole", "pales and forts", "o'er-leavens", Schwob's translation does nothing to persuade the reader, still less the hearer, of the essential qualities of Shakespeare's dialogue:

"However difficult Shakespeare's style may be by reason of the diction, phraseology, and imagery, it is always a speakable style in a strictly elocutionary sense. The thought-elements of it come in an order that is faithful to that of unpremeditated utterance. It observes familiar and colloquial syntax; it runs to principal clauses or their phrasal equivalents, to loose and accumulative rather than to periodic sentences, and to simple constructions."216

Given the structural differences of the two languages, it is no doubt useless to expect the French to overcome the problems posed by passages such as these; Schwob should at least be credited with allowing his public to see what Shakespeare said and not glossing over the difficulties with flourishes of his own. On the occasions where the idea and form of the original admitted of no faithful representation in French, Schwob is modest enough to prefer metaphor. As a lover of the English language, and that of Shakespeare in particular, he may have felt it preferable to shock his compatriots in order to leave the text of Hamlet intact. Such

215. op.cit. pp. 35-36.

216. T.A. Dunn, Philip Massinger, Edinburgh, 1959, quoted in Nowotny, op.cit. p. 20.

circumspection, however, must seem merely irritating to those who uphold the standards of the French style, and a few extracts like those quoted have been enough to earn Schwob's translation its rather dubious reputation. The "dram of evil" outweighs all its other qualities in the eyes of some critics; however, many have excused its occasional ponderous stretches as blemishes on an otherwise outstanding work.

. . . .

The vicissitudes of the Schwob-Morand Hamlet require a little description here, since they illustrate the evolution of ideas on the translation of Shakespeare for the theatre. Ferdinand Hérold, after the first performance of the play, gave unqualified praise:

"je ne crois pas que jamais, du moins en notre langue, poème, roman ni pièce ait été aussi admirablement rendu que vient de l'être Hamlet.

Ce ne sont pas seulement les plus subtiles significations du texte anglais que nous retrouvons strictement reproduites, dans la version française, c'en est aussi l'ordonnance harmonieuse, c'en sont encore certaines assonances et certaines allitérations, qu'il est nécessaire de garder. Les drames de Shakespeare, on le sait, sont mêlés de prose et de vers: mais toutes les parties en vers ne sont pas de même nature. Il y a des scènes où le vers est un vers pédestre, il y a des morceaux qui sont composés comme des fragments d'épopée, il y en a qui sont des poèmes lyriques. Les traducteurs nouveaux ont réussi à ménager toutes les nuances. Pour la première fois, dans la traduction d'une pièce de Shakespeare, nous avons senti, à la seule audition, quels passages étaient en vers, et quels en prose."²¹⁷

217. 'Les Théâtres', Mercure de France, July 1899, pp. 230-231.

Francis Jammes, in December 1899, wrote to Schwob of his delight in the style:

"Ce qui m'a le plus frappé dans votre traduction, si admirable que je la sens définitive, c'est que par ce don extraordinaire que vous possédez, ailleurs comme là, vous vous soyez placé naturellement, et sans peine aucune, à cette époque. Pour qui vous sait comprendre, il n'y a pas de différence entre le poète qui a écrit le lépreux, le cuisinier, le pirate, l'ombrelle, etc. [..] et le poète qui a écrit Hamlet. Le style est, en effet, si bien adapté au génie du temps et du lieu que, malgré moi, j'ai évoqué, tout le temps que je lisais, des acteurs, des décors, un public si particulier que cette évocation est elle-même un poème ou un tableau."218

Louis Dumur, reviewing the volume in the Mercure de France, observed that:

"M. Marcel Schwob a rendu un grand service aux lettres françaises. Il a prouvé deux choses: 1^o que Shakespeare n'est pas intraduisible en notre langue; 2^o que le français est assez souple pour réduire sans grave déchet à sa norme les oeuvres étrangères même les plus difficiles. On niait ces deux choses; les voici établies."219

The critic of the Revue Blanche was no less flattering, and ranked Schwob with other distinguished French translators:

"M. Schwob ne sera jamais ni plus personnel, ni meilleur; nous le savions déjà plus écrivain que créateur - excellent écrivain, cette traduction le prouve autant que le plus délicieux de ses Mimes.

A traduire l'oeuvre des grands poètes et des parfaits prosateurs, souvent les plus altiers esprits s'employèrent. Il semble qu'il ne faille pas moins d'un Baudelaire, d'un Leconte de Lisle, d'un Vielé-Griffin pour traduire les tragiques grecs, Poe, Walt Whitman ou Swinburne. L'intelligence qu'il faut ici

218. MST pp. 289-291.

219. op.cit. April 1900, pp. 485-486.

est très grande: l'esprit du traducteur doit pouvoir repenser l'oeuvre qu'il traduit."220

The author of this review was no other than André Gide, and the terms of this first appreciation of Schwob's Hamlet give no hint that it appeared in the least untheatrical to his generation. Indeed, it enjoyed great prestige in the first two decades of the twentieth century, not only with men of letters but with the greatest French actors.

"Elle est mieux que fidèle, disait de Max, que le rôle du prince de Danemark hanta toute sa vie, sans qu'il eût jamais l'occasion de le jouer à Paris, elle est parfaite. Marcel Schwob et Eugène Morand ont fait plus que de donner à chaque mot son sens strict, ils ont retrouvé en français l'équivalent musical, syllabe par syllabe, du mot anglais."221

In 1927 the critics began to comment unfavourably on the aspects of the adaptation which made it unsuitable for the theatre; André Rouveyre in the Mercure de France attacked especially the use of unfamiliar words:

"Elle a trop de tournures lourdes, enchevêtrées (et je ne compte pas les termes peu ou point intelligibles pour le public ordinaire, s'ils peuvent avoir un certain sel pour nous). Je crois que le traducteur doit éviter les anachronismes (soit vétustes, soit modernes) qui chiffonneraient le lecteur intelligent."222

The same observations were made by the critics as a whole in 1932. While the virtues of the text were not neglected, it was judged almost unanimously to be out of keeping with modern notions of

220. op.cit. 15th February 1900, p. 320.

221. L'Ami du Peuple du Soir, 26th April 1932 (Rt 67 587 II 11).

222. op.cit., 15th July 1927, p. 410 (Rt 3701 XVIII 47-51).

dramatic dialogue. The opinion of Emile Mas in the Petit Bleu is typical:

"Sans doute, un acteur qui a une âme d'artiste pourra se complaire aux analyses subtiles, aux minutieuses dissertations harmonieusement développées par Eugène Morand et Marcel Schwob; [...] mais théâtralement, ils nuisent à l'action que le comédien doit exercer sur le spectateur, qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec le lecteur." 223

The most interesting of the 1932 reviews, however, is that of François Porché in the Revue de Paris, not so much for its criticism of the translation as for its explanation of the peculiarities. Evoking the figure of Marcel Schwob "penché sur la version, feuilletant ses dictionnaires, prenant à cette tâche un plaisir extrême", Porché goes on to consider the character of the man and his times:

"Mais cet homme était trop exquis, trop subtil. Comment eût-il été simple? Voire, il fuyait la simplicité comme la peste. En cela d'accord avec son temps. J'ai demandé, quelques lignes plus haut, si Morand et Schwob, au lieu de se montrer archaïsants délibérés, n'auraient pas dû accommoder Shakespeare au goût du jour, et j'ai répondu que non. Mais c'est que, malheureusement, ils ont aussi fait cela. J'entends à leur insu. Ils ont été archaïques à la mode de 1898, date qui est celle de leur traduction: donc, archaïques et... symbolistes. A la quintessence de leur auteur ils ont surajouté la flore de rhétorique cultivée, comme en serres chaudes, dans les cénacles de la fin du siècle dernier. De sorte que, si l'Hamlet de Eugène Morand et Marcel Schwob nous semble aujourd'hui un peu hérissé, difficile, c'est peut-être moins parce que le texte anglais est âgé de trois cent trente ans que parce que la traduction est vieille de trente-quatre." 224

223. op.cit., 3rd May 1932 (Rt 67 587 II 21).

224. op.cit., 15th June 1932, pp. 917-918 (Rt 67 587 III).

This conclusion of Porché serves to remind us that criticism of any translation is very much coloured by the current literary fashions, and that even the most acclaimed version will seem outmoded after the passage of twenty years or so. Hence Bonnefoy's strictures on Gide's Hamlet, as being "un théâtre de marionnettes, faux, littéraire, affecté". The perennial fascination of Shakespeare's tragedy is attested by the impatience of successive ages with earlier interpretations and their desire to mould Hamlet more closely in their own image. After a certain lapse of time, however, the older translations acquire a curiosity value, so that it is not unlikely that Schwob's Hamlet may once again find admirers and partisans.²²⁵ The prospect would be flattering to a writer who claimed in his preface to have chosen his words in their purest associations, sub specie aeternitatis.

225. In the course of the century, it has been published by Crès in 1920, in the sixth volume of the Oeuvres Complètes in 1928, by Grasset in 1932, by Blaizot in 1952, and by Gallimard in the 1950 and 1952 editions of Shakespeare's Théâtre Complet in the Pléiade series.

CHAPTER VDaniel Defoe: Moll Flanders(i) Defoe and Schwob

A year before his death, Marcel Schwob talked to Paul Léautaud of his literary education: "Platon, quatre pages du Banquet, Daniel de Foë, Poe, énormément, Flaubert ..." ¹. The inclusion of Defoe's name on this select list would seem by no means incongruous to a modern reader now that the author of Moll Flanders has earned due recognition as one of the foremost writers of the early eighteenth century, but to Schwob's contemporaries there would have been some cause for surprise. To them Defoe was only just becoming known as the creator of a number of novels of exceptional interest, the fame of Robinson Crusoe having always overshadowed the merits of the other works of fiction. The revival of his fortunes in France was due in no small measure to the efforts of Marcel Schwob.

Defoe was one of Schwob's independent discoveries, first made, no doubt, in the course of his youthful explorations of eighteenth-century English literature. The impression wrought on him by the novels owed little to the recommendation of the author's biographers and critics, for Defoe was in this respect largely without honour even in his own country. The study of his fluctuating reputation is almost as fascinating

1. Léautaud, Journal Littéraire, I 115 (23rd February 1904).

as that of his chequered career, and a brief summary will be helpful for a proper understanding of the novelty of Schwob's whole-hearted admiration.²

In his own times, Defoe was far from being a respected figure. His early championing of unpopular causes, his indefatigable stirring-up of controversies in a wide variety of newspapers, especially in his own Review from 1704 to 1713, his notoriously fickle political sympathies, together with suspicions of his dealings as a government spy, brought opprobrium on him in the public sphere; his literary production, designed for a wide and mainly ill-educated audience and written in a homely style, was scorned by the polite wits of the day. Pope, it is true, privately acknowledged the genius of his novels but on the whole his achievements, except of course for Robinson Crusoe, were ignored by the accredited judges of literature. Defoe himself cared little for disdainful opinion, since his fiction was appreciated by the many and sold by the thousand, whether in the original or in chapbooks. It was the critics who made an issue out of his political loyalties and the literary merits of his works. After his death his reputation was low and his

2. For a fuller survey, see Charles E. Burch, 'British Criticisms of Defoe as a Novelist', Englische Studien, 1932-1933, pp. 178-198, and 'Defoe's British Reputation, 1869-1894', op. cit. 1933-1934, pp. 410-423.

novels officially forgotten. Not until the turn of the century did his fortunes change:

"Defoe the turn-coat, the time-server, as pictured by his political opponents, becomes in their hands the high-minded and unselfish patriot who was not appreciated by his generation. And with his character more than restored, there developed a new interest in his literary work." 3

The nineteenth-century evaluations of Defoe hinged for the most part on the degree of moral excellence to be found in the author and his works. Those who saw in Defoe a paragon of middle-class virtues were embarrassed by the novels and either dismissed them curtly or explained them away as fit only for the taste of less delicate times. Critical comment attached itself to the entirely wholesome Robinson Crusoe, The Apparition of Mrs. Veal, and The Journal of the Plague Year, not forgetting The Family Instructor and Religious Courtship, those edifying accompaniments to many a Victorian Sunday. Charles Lamb, John Forster, William Lee, Leslie Stephen, William Minto, Edmund Gosse⁴ and others might have

3. Burch, op. cit., 1932, pp. 181-182.

4. See Lamb, 'Estimate of Daniel De Foe's Secondary Novels', Essays of Elia, 1868, p. 422; Forster, Daniel De Foe, 1855, p. 141; Lee, Daniel Defoe; his Life and Recently Discovered Writings, 1869, I 355; Stephen, Hours in a Library, 1874, I 2; Minto, Daniel Defoe, 1879, p. 141; Gosse, A History of Eighteenth Century English Literature, 1889, pp. 177-180.

very different views of the fictional biographies, but there was agreement on one point: that they were very little read. This may have been so in polite circles, but Paul Dottin, a twentieth-century biographer of Defoe, mentions a number of chapbooks of Moll Flanders which circulated through the north of England and Scotland, and frequent clandestine editions of the original, "la pudeur de l'époque victorienne ayant mis le livre à l'index."⁵ However, the book was included in some of the Works, in 1840, 1854 and 1869. The 1854 edition, in Bohn's British Classics, was especially popular, and was several times reprinted. Thus it is probable that Moll Flanders and the companion novels reached a fairly wide public, although that public discreetly preferred to enjoy in silence books which were then hardly to be called respectable. A number of writers, naturally enough, found themselves in this company. Charles Lamb wrote of his admiration for the minor works, but first discussed them in correspondence with Walter Wilson, during the eight years in which the latter was compiling his biography of Defoe. Lamb's summary of their merits runs thus: "His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy from their deep interest to find a shelf in the libraries of the wealthiest, and the most learned."⁶ Charles Dickens

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5. Dottin, Daniel Defoe et ses Romans, 1924, III 669.
 6. The Letters of Charles Lamb, Boston, 1905, IV 207. (16th December 1822). See also IV 223-224, and V 187.

likewise expressed his delight in Defoe, in letters to John Forster:

"Did you ever read (of course you have though) Defoe's *History of the Devil*? What a capital thing it is! I bought it for a couple of shillings yesterday morning, and have been quite absorbed in it ever since." 7

He was not similarly affected by Defoe's heroines, so different from his own sentimental ladies:

"Defoe's women too - Robinson Crusoe's wife for instance - are terribly dull commonplace fellows without breeches; and I have no doubt he was a precious dry and disagreeable article himself ..." 8

George Borrow, on the other hand, felt a bond of sympathy for Defoe from childhood, and in his own novels attempted to utilise some of the earlier writer's techniques⁹. The greatest homage he paid to Defoe was to weave into the plot of Lavengro the fortunes of an old apple-woman's copy of Moll Flanders, her only treasure. The popularity of Borrow's work, published in 1851, must have brought the name of Defoe's narrative before a large audience. Theodore

7. The Letters of Charles Dickens, 1938, I 136 (3rd November 1837). The History of the Devil was also read with enjoyment by the young Dante Gabriel Rossetti: see the Family Letters, 1895, II 6 (1st September 1842).

8. Dickens, op. cit. II 768 (1856).

9. See René Fréchet, George Borrow, 1956, pp. 174, 339, 342.

Watts-Dunton, a friend of Borrow in his old age, came under the spell and wrote an article on Defoe in the Athenaeum on the 8th October 1887¹⁰. Another admirer was Sir Edward Burne-Jones; and it was due to his remark on a similarity between one of Defoe's books and Treasure Island, reported to Robert Louis Stevenson by Sidney Colvin, that Stevenson wrote of his familiarity with Defoe's works:

"Here is a quaint thing, I have read Robinson, Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Memoirs of a Cavalier, History of the Plague, History of the Great Storm, Scotch Church and Union. And there my knowledge of Defoe ends ..."¹¹

Guessing the title of the book, he had a copy sent out and wrote of his delight in it to Henley:

"I read for the first time Captain Singleton; it has points; and then I re-read Colonel Jack with ecstasy; the first part is as much superior to Robinson Crusoe as Robinson is to - The Inland Voyage. It is pretty, good, philosophical, dramatic, and as picturesque as a promontory goat in a gale of wind. Get it and fill your belly with honey."¹²

These examples are sufficient to show that a number of distinguished writers continued to appreciate Defoe, for

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10. Later recast for the preface to his edition of Captain Singleton, 1906.
 11. The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson, 1924, XXXII 315 (July 1884).
 12. Ibid. p. 317. (July 1884).

all the qualities which might be expected to alienate a Victorian public, and which certainly earned the disapproval of many critics and scandalised the puritans. Towards the end of the century there were signs that opposition on the moral front was at last weakening, so that a wider public might be encouraged to take up and enjoy Defoe's accounts of criminal or immoral lives. Thomas Wright, who published his biography of Defoe in 1894, just after the time when Schwob was serialising his translation, made the pertinent observation that

"Moll Flanders", "Colonel Jack", and "Roxana" are not books for the drawing-room table, but neither are "Hamlet", "Gulliver's Travels" (unexpurgated), "Tom Jones", "Joseph Andrews", or "Tristram Shandy". Defoe lived in an age when a spade was called a spade." 13

The controversy over Defoe and his secondary novels seems to have created little stir in France. Translations of Robinson Crusoe were legion, but Dottin's bibliography mentions only two major studies of the author prior to Schwob's translation. Both were written by eminent Anglicists, however, and must have caught the attention of a cultivated élite. Philarète Chasles, in the Revue de Paris of January 1832, based his portrait of the novelist on the recent biography of Walter Wilson, and saw in Defoe's life a protest against the dishonesty and intrigues of the society in which he

13. The Life of Daniel Defoe, 1894, p. 277.

lived:

"Voilà, au milieu de ce tumulte, un niais, un homme de génie, qui s'avise de se faire le martyr de la vérité méprisée et du bon sens foule aux pieds." 14

Chasles regretted the eclipse of these works of fiction:

"Parmi les romans nombreux que publia de Foë dans sa vieillesse, on ne connaît guère en Europe, et même en Angleterre, que Robinson Crusoe; c'est encore une des injustices de cette étrange destinée. Nul ne lit aujourd'hui l'Histoire de Moll Flanders, les Mémoires du Capitaine Carleton, la Vie de Roxane, l'Histoire d'un Cavalier, le Colonel Jacques, et le Colonel (sic) Singleton, ouvrages qui, pour la puissance dramatique, l'intense réalité des tableaux et la vigueur de l'intérêt, égalent au moins Robinson." 15

J.J. Jusserand, in his essay Le Roman Anglais et la Réforme Littéraire de Daniel Defoe, was chiefly concerned with Defoe's stylistic innovations, his reaction against the self-conscious, mannered prose of the day; and had little to say about the novels - but that little was not complimentary:

"Dans ses romans de moeurs ... Defoe reprend la tradition picaresque [...] mais on ne trouve pas chez eux cet air avenant et cette supériorité aux accidents de la fortune que l'expérience de la vie a donnés aux héros de Le Sage. ... la sécheresse de Defoe est par trop apparent, et, dans l'impossibilité de sympathiser avec aucun de ses personnages, le lecteur moderne qui, par un accident de plus en plus rare, entre en leur société ne tarde pas à leur fausser compagnie." 16

14. 'Daniel de Foë, auteur de Robinson Crusoe', Le Dix-huitième siècle en Angleterre, 1846, p. 208.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

16. Le Roman Anglais et la Réforme Littéraire de Daniel Defoe, Brussels, 1887, p. 25.

Events were to disprove this observation. Already in 1885 a French translation of Roxana had appeared¹⁷, and authors of the realist school were discovering in Defoe an honoured master:

"M. Alphonse Daudet puts Defoe at the head of all the standard English writers of fiction, pronouncing him to be England's national author. "Even Shakspeare", he asserts, "does not give so perfect an idea of the English character as Defoe. Robinson is the typical Englishman par excellence, with his adventuresomeness, his taste for travel, his love of the sea, his piety, his commercial and practical instincts. And what an artist he is - Defoe! What effects of terror there are in 'Robinson' - the foot of the savage on the sand; and then his dramatic gift - the return of Robinson to the island, and the parrot still screaming, 'Robinson Crusoe! Robinson Crusoe!' If I were condemned to a long period of seclusion, and were allowed only one book to read, I would choose 'Robinson'. It is one of the few works of fiction that may be considered as nearly immortal as any written thing can be'.

Equally enthusiastic in the praise of "Robinson Crusoe" is another eminent Frenchman, M. Zola ..." 18

Thus the publication of Schwob's Moll Flanders in the autumn of 1894 could be regarded as a choice example of his theory of "adventure" - the conjuncture of his own mark of respect for the English novelist with the disposition of the times to welcome it. The debate about Defoe's

17. Lady Roxana, ou l'Heureuse Maitresse, tr. M. B.-H.G. de Saint-Heraye, Paris, 1885.

18. Wright, op. cit. pp. 239-240.

personal character was over, few readers were prepared to be scandalised by his revelations of low life, and the secondary novels were emerging from the twilight. Novels like Germinie Lacerteux and Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre had revived an interest in the fortunes of women from the lower classes, and Defoe's techniques could be appreciated by a generation accustomed to the style and subjects of the realists and naturalists¹⁹. Once again, with his instinctive flair, Schwob had chosen exactly the right moment to introduce to the French public a little-known English author.

Defoe seems to have been associated with Marcel Schwob's imaginative life from beginning to end. In the Libro della mia Memoria, composed shortly before his death, Schwob spoke of his childhood readings, in particular of the book given to him by his English governess:

"Je vois la grosse table mal équarrie où mange Robinson. Mange-t-il du chevreau ou du riz? Attendez ... nous allons voir. Tiens, il s'est fait un plat tout rond, en terre rouge. Voilà le perroquet qui crie; on lui donnera tout à l'heure un peu de blé nouveau. Nous irons en voler dans le tas de réserve, sous l'appentis. Le rhum que Robinson buvait, quand il était malade, était dans une grosse bouteille noire, avec des côtes. Le mot "fowling piece" (pièce à volailles), que je ne comprenais pas trop, me donnait les imaginations les plus extraordinaires sur le fusil de Robinson!"²⁰

19. See Augustin Filon, 'Daniel Defoe, précurseur du naturalisme', Journal des Debats, 22nd July 1908.

20. Mimes, 1964, p. 181.

After this auspicious beginning, we find no further mention of Defoe until 1888. In his first article on Stevenson, in the Phare in August that year, Schwob mentions his name briefly, together with those of Swift, Smollett and Sterne²¹. The vagueness of the allusion is such that it would be hazardous to suppose that Schwob had a wide acquaintance with the novels; nonetheless, his remark in his letter to Stevenson, "You love that time, and I do too,"²² suggests that his readings of eighteenth-century authors had been fairly extensive.

The first reference to Moll Flanders comes in the tale 'La Démoniaque', printed in the Echo de Paris on the 31st July 1892²³. Here, in the middle of a tale of a woman possessed by a spirit, Schwob interpolates a rather inaccurate and sensationalised account of Moll's first theft:

"Daniel De Foë a écrit que Moll Flanders, après s'être prostituée pendant trente ans dans les rues de Londres, ne trouva pas d'asile ni d'argent. Comme elle passait près d'une boutique ouverte, où la servante, tournant le dos à la rue, éclairait une étagère avec sa chandelle, Moll Flanders vit un paquet blanc sur une chaise. Et un démon vint derrière son épaule et lui souffla dans l'oreille: "Prends ce paquet; prends-le vite, prends-le". Elle le prit et s'enfuit. Puis elle pleura sous l'arche du pont de la Tamise."

21. See Appendix F.

22. See Appendix E.

23. This mediocre and unrepresentative tale has not been published in any of the collections of Schwob's works.

The large gap in the published correspondence of Schwob with his family between 1892 and 1896 makes it impossible to trace through his own words the progression of his interest in Defoe through this crucial period, and we must seek our information from other sources. A number of references disclose that Schwob's enthusiasm was at its height in 1894. On the 18th February Edmond de Goncourt noted in his diary:

"Il est en train de traduire un roman, complètement inconnu de l'auteur de Robinson Crusoe: roman qu'il me dit avoir quelque ressemblance avec Germinie Lacerteux." 24

Possibly Schwob, realising after his failure to complete the article on Robert Browning that he would be unable to settle to original work so soon after the death of Louise, decided to take up another discipline which would keep him occupied for a few months. While preparing to present Moll Flanders to the French public, he lost no opportunity of reading other of Defoe's novels at various gatherings:

"Ce soir Schwob apporte, chez Daudet, un volume de Daniel de Foe, qu'il nous traduit, qu'il nous interprète. C'est un traducteur très séduisant, avec son mot à mot trouvant si bien l'expression propre, ses petites hésitations balbutiantes devant un terme archaïque, ou un terme d'argot, avec son intonation à mezza voce qui, au bout de

24. Journal, 1935-1936, IX 148.

quelque temps, a le charme berçant d'une cantilène. Ce volume, je crois, s'appelle le Capitaine Jack, et c'est l'histoire d'un voleur-enfant, écrite avec un sentiment d'observation moderne, et mille petits détails d'une vie vécue, contes bien certainement à l'auteur, enfin avec toute la documentation rigoureuse et menue d'un roman réaliste de notre temps." 25

Through his absorption in Defoe, Schwob again took up the pirate biographies of Captain Charles Johnson and Esquemeling, with the intention of adapting some of them for the forthcoming Vies Imaginaires. Jules Renard commented sardonically:

"Il lit des histoires de flibustiers et de corsaires, cet homme qui, même en habit, a toujours l'air d'être en robe de chambre, et il s'en inspirera, en les copiant ..." 26

In the middle of the summer Schwob was still busy with his translation. It was to be published by instalments in the Revue Hebdomadaire in the autumn: presumably Schwob had offered the translation in lieu of the novel which, as he had forecast, would take a long time to complete. The deal may have been made in June, when Schwob was invited to supply a preface to a version of Stevenson's The Dynamiter. He took his work with him on his visit to Georges Hugo in Guernesey, though prepared to seek distraction in the form of the charming young ladies of the house. When impassioned readings of

25. Ibid. p. 150 (4th March 1894).

26. Journal, p. 240 (26th July 1894).

Browning and Nietzsche failed to capture their hearts, he would console himself with Moll Flanders: "On le voyait, de la rue Hauteville, assis à sa table devant la fenêtre, penché sur un dictionnaire et rageant."²⁷ His lack of success in these flirtations did ensure the speedy dispatch of the novel before he travelled on with Léon Daudet to London at the beginning of August. "De Guernesey, Marcel Schwob envoyait des paquets d'épreuves à Marc Ferry, inquiet."²⁸

In his preface to Moll Flanders, Schwob spoke only of Defoe and his heroine, but it is evident that he had studied also the influence of the writer on other authors he admired. In his later essay 'R.L.S.' he developed his theory that Stevenson belonged to the tradition of the eighteenth century through his use of a particular literary technique: the production of an effect of horror through setting perfectly ordinary events against a background of apprehensive mystery. Schwob chose as example the incident in Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year, where extreme precautions are needed before the contents of an abandoned purse may be taken with safety. Schwob found the same procedure elsewhere in Defoe, and drew an

27. Léon Daudet, Souvenirs III 21.

28. OC I. xxxix.

analogy with a striking instance in Stevenson:

"Deux des incidents les plus terrifiants en littérature sont la découverte par Robinson de l'empreinte d'un pied inconnu dans le sable de son île, et la stupeur du Dr. Jekyll, reconnaissant, à son réveil, que sa propre main, étendue sur le drap de son lit, est devenue la main velue de M. Hyde." 29

In the same essay Schwob mentioned the influence of Defoe on Poe, and it was to this topic that he frequently turned in discussion of the novels. During the last year of his life his interest in Defoe rose to a new peak, and we find references to his conversations in Paul Léautaud's diary:

"Il me lit ensuite des pages du poète ..., puis, pour me faire voir la filiation de Poe avec D. de Foë, l'ouvrage de ce dernier sur La Peste de Londres. L'influence est flagrante. C'est le même son sous les mots, le même agencement, la même atmosphère spirituelle." 30

Arnold Bennett likewise noted a talk with Schwob on Dickens, in the course of which Schwob remarked that "Dickens's ghost story 'The Signalman' was 'plagiarized' from something in Defoe's essay on apparitions, but much improved."³¹ In April 1904 Schwob had projects for turning his current reflections into more profitable account by writing a new study of Defoe:

29. Spicilege, 1960, p. 73.

30. Op. cit. p. 115 (23rd February 1904).

31. Journals I 158 (1st March 1904).

"Il veut reprendre sa Préface de Moll Flanders pour un Essai sur Foë, à propos de sa vie extraordinaire, et de sa fin mystérieuse à 71 ans, dans une sorte d'exil volontaire, de cachette secrète, loin de Londres. Il me lit la dernière lettre de Foë à son fils, la dernière lettre qu'on ait de lui. Il croit avoir pénétré les raisons de cet exil de Foë.

Il e lit aussi une page de Foë: Royal Gin³². Le Suicide admirable d'ironie et d'humour. De la quintessence de Baudelaire, comme il dit. On voit tout de suite, à cette lecture, la filiation de Poe avec Daniel de Foë." 33

In his enfeebled state of health, Schwob was unable to realise this ambition. It would have been curious to read his definitive views on the novels, and his estimate of the personality of their author.

32. This title does not appear in checklists of Defoe's works: Léautaud may have misheard Schwob, who could have been referring to Royal Religion, of 1704, or Of Royal Education, first published in 1895.

33. Léautaud, op. cit. p. 121 (15th April 1904).

(ii) The Preface to Moll Flanders

The original preface to Schwob's translation of Moll Flanders appeared at the head of the first instalment, in the Revue Hebdomadaire of the 4th August 1894. The definitive version appeared with the first edition of the book in January 1895: it was substantially the same as the original except for the correction of a few dates, the elimination of a footnote, and the addition of three new paragraphs.

The study is primarily concerned with the relation of Moll Flanders to Defoe's other novels, and the identification of the heroine with a living prototype, a notorious pickpocket named Mary Frith. Schwob is at pains to show that a common feature of Defoe's novels is their basis in their author's own experience, his sense of the solitude of man in his struggle for survival, and in the tales of similar situations related to him by friends from an older generation. Thus Robinson Crusoe is partly an allegory of Defoe's own life, partly a reworking of the story of Alexander Selcraig cast away on the island of Juan Hernandez; while The Journal of the Plague Year and Moll Flanders originate in the reminiscences of Defoe's elders³⁴, and in the writer's own researches. By choosing this approach to the novels, Schwob is able to put into practice

34. It seems likely that the narrator of the Journal was Henry Foe, an uncle of the novelist: see James Sutherland, Defoe 1937, pp. 8-9.

once more his method of bringing out the dominant motif of an author's work, and showing its different manifestations in individual writings. This technique is especially well suited to the study of Moll Flanders since it allows the novel to be studied from the point of view of its theme; allusions to the author's life and to his other fiction need be made only insofar as they throw light on this one basic aspect, and the necessity for a separate section on Defoe's biography and historical background, essential for an appreciation of the novel, is obviated. All the relevant details fit naturally into the scheme adopted by Schwob.

The preface begins on a note that was to be heard again and again until fairly recent times: the regret that Defoe's reputation should rest solely on his account of the life of the mariner of York. "La fortune littéraire de Robinson Crusoe a été si prodigieuse que le nom de l'auteur, aux yeux du public, a presque disparu sous sa gloire."³⁵ Schwob suggests that the other novels would not have fallen

35. Virginia Woolf regretted the eclipse of the secondary novels: see her essay in The Common Reader, 1925, I 122. And Sutherland began the preface to his biography with the statement: "To the great majority of his fellow countrymen to-day Defoe is known only as the author of Robinson Crusoe." Op. cit. p. viii.

into oblivion had Defoe taken the precaution of signing them with his title to fame; the idea is attractive, with its appeal to modern indignation at the blind neglect of past times, but it cannot be borne out by fact. The Journal of the Plague Year, which Schwob includes with the forgotten works, had actually been popular and highly admired since the time of its publication; and although the other novels were supposedly studied only by specialists during the nineteenth century, it was because of their scabrous nature and not through any dissociation from the name of their author. Their gradual return to favour came through growing public tolerance of "realist" novels and through the lead taken by a number of writers and critics in rehabilitating Defoe. Such arguments, however, could be disregarded by Schwob, for he preferred to capture his reader's attention straight away with a striking contrast between the pre-eminence of Robinson Crusoe and the obscurity of the minor novels. Moreover, it led him smoothly into his next point, a comparison of the literary fortunes of Defoe and Cervantes: the Spanish writer also, according to Schwob, had become known to posterity as the author of one outstanding work. "Car on ne lut guère ses admirables nouvelles, son théâtre, sans compter Galatée et Persiles y Sigismunde." Indeed, if we are to accept the general truth of Schwob's opening statement, the parallel he draws between Defoe and Cervantes is apt and illuminating. The outward features of their lives have much in common: their late début in serious writing after lives spent in public activities, their difficulties,

humiliations and sufferings. Their characters, too, have a common stamp: "l'un et l'autre énergiques, résistants, doués d'une extraordinaire force de travail." Thus, through this analogy with the life of a writer probably much better known in France than Defoe, Schwob skilfully and unobtrusively gives as much information about the fortunes of the English novelist as is necessary to his study. The revelation of Defoe's political career would no doubt come as a surprise to those who remained under the impression that Robinson was a children's book, and the implied parity of stature with Cervantes would predispose the reader in favour of the novel he was about to discover. A yet more cogent reason for bringing the names of Cervantes and Defoe together was, however, the similarity of the autobiographical strain in their novels:

"Et, ainsi que Don Quichotte contient l'histoire idéale de Cervantes transposée dans la fiction, Robinson Crusoe est l'histoire de Daniel De Foe au milieu des difficultés de la vie." 36

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36. Curiously enough, Defoe himself mentioned Cervantes' use of a historical figure as the original of Don Quixote: "The famous history of Don Quixote, a work which thousands read with pleasure, to one that knows the meaning of it, was an emblematic history of, and a just satire upon the Duke of Medina Sidonia; a person very remarkable at that time in Spain." The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, 1790, III ii. André Malraux drew a similar comparison: "Robinson, Don Quichotte, L'Idiot. ... Les trois solitaires du roman mondial! Et que sont ces trois récits? la confrontation de ces trois solitaires avec la vie, le récit de sa lutte pour détruire sa solitude, retrouver les hommes ... Or, remarquez que les trois grands romans de la reconquête du monde ont été écrits, l'un par un ancien esclave, Cervantes, l'autre par un ancien bagnard, Dostoievsky, le troisième par un ancien condamné au pilori, Daniel de Foe." Les Noyers de l'Altenburg, 1948, pp. 120, 121.

This conclusion to Schwob's comparison brings him to the main argument of the first part of his preface: the identification of Defoe with Robinson, and later with his other heroes and heroines. Here we come to one of the most fascinating questions in Defoe criticism. It has been generally recognised that the personality of Defoe's creations is very much a projection of his own, but critics have hesitated to push the analogies too far. In particular, the case of Robinson Crusoe once caused some doubt, since Defoe himself proclaimed that the book was an allegory of his life. The success of the Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures and of its sequel The Farther Adventures had provoked the jealousy of other writers, one of whom, Charles Gildon, attacked Defoe in a pamphlet published in September 1719. Defoe, who was about to publish a third part to his novel, the Serious Reflections during the Life of Robinson Crusoe, included in the preface to this work a justification of his "mere fiction", both on moral grounds, and on the plea that Robinson was a representation of himself. The fact that Defoe made this confession so long after the publication of his work, and in response to some ill-natured but highly pertinent criticism, was enough to cause speculation on the truth of his assertions, but many critics were willing to abide by the author's claim. The authority of William Lee was probably decisive for Schwob, who took up without query the biographer's suggestion that many incidents in Robinson referred to Defoe's life, although time had rendered the allusions obscure.

Lee had based his hypothesis - not, we may remark, his dogmatic pronouncement - on Defoe's words in the Serious Reflections, and Schwob was content to reproduce Lee's arguments. It should be noted here that Schwob mentions Lee's name only once in his preface, and then without any indication that he was the author of the standard biography of Defoe. For this oversight there was good reason: the curious reader might discover that many of the facts which Schwob produced implicitly as his own research were lifted without acknowledgment from the authoritative source. Furthermore, a comparison of Schwob's quotations from the Serious Reflections with those given by Lee might lead to the conclusion that Schwob had not read this work himself, but had merely copied the extracts in the biography. Lee had considerably abridged Defoe's text, without indicating the omissions by means of suspension marks; and Schwob likewise fails to point out the passages excised. Here is Lee's paragraph: it will be noticed that Schwob even reproduces the connecting remarks given by the biographer.

"In the Preface to this third volume he affirms that "the story, though Allegorical, is also Historical. Farther, that there is a man alive, and well known too, the Actions of whose Life are the just subject of these Volumes, and to whom all or most Part of the Story most directly alludes; this may be depended on for Truth. (37) ... In a Word, there's not a Circumstance in the imaginary Story, but has its just allusion to a real Story, and Chimes Part for Part, and Step for Step with the inimitable

37. At this point Lee makes an unsignalled omission from Defoe; and Schwob omits from Lee, though indicating this by suspension marks.

'Life of Robinson Crusoe'." With respect to the fictitious representation of Crusoe's forced confinement in an island, he says "'tis as reasonable to represent one kind of Imprisonment by another, as it is to represent any Thing that really exists by that which exists not. (38) Had the common Way of Writing a Man's private History been taken, and I had given you the conduct or Life of a Man you knew, and whose Misfortunes and Infirmities perhaps you had sometimes unjustly triumphed over; all I could have said would have yielded no Diversion, and perhaps scarce have obtained a Reading, or at best no attention."39

Of Schwob's reliance on Lee in this passage there can be no doubt; and further evidence can be found by comparing the text of Schwob's preface in the Revue Hebdomadaire with that of the 1895 editions. In the latter, we find an interpolation, a passage from the Serious Reflections not quoted in Lee. This, it might be thought, could be proof that Schwob had consulted the original text, and had decided to add a sentence very relevant to his theory of the identification of Defoe and his hero. It seems more likely, however, that he had referred to the biography of Defoe by Thomas Wright, which appeared in November 1894, since Schwob, by a strange coincidence, included in his later version of the preface the only passage from the Serious Reflections which Wright had quoted:

38. Another of Lee's unsignalled omissions, at this point. Schwob's translation of this quotation from Defoe is taken word for word by Albert Camus in his epigraph to La Peste.

39. Lee, op. cit. I 2.

"The adventures of Robinson Crusoe are one whole scheme of a real life of twenty-eight years, spent in the most wandering, desolate and afflicting circumstances that ever man went through, and in which I have lived so long in a life of wonders, in continued storms, fought with the worst kind of savages and man-eaters; by unaccountable surprising incidents, fed by miracles greater than that of the ravens; suffered all manner of violence, and oppressions, injurious reproaches, contempt of men, attacks of devils, corrections from Heaven and oppositions on earth [...] (40). In a word, there's not a circumstance in the imaginary story but has its just allusion to a real story, and chimes part for part, and step for step, with the inimitable Life of Robinson Crusoe."⁴¹

This last sentence, which was conveniently quoted by Lee, would enable Schwob to place the passage in its right context without having to refer to the original. The exact correspondence of the quotations from Lee and Wright seems conclusive proof that Schwob had not been able to read the Serious Reflections for himself; and this would be no cause for surprise or censure, since the work was not widely available. Its unrelieved moralising had proved unpalatable to the public, and after its appearance in 1720, no further edition had been called for. The text seems to have been printed only in an edition of 1790, and in the second volume of William Hazlitt's edition of the Works in 1841. True enough, Schwob could have obtained

40. The omission from Wright's quotation at this point is indicated by Schwob with suspension marks.

41. Wright op. cit. p. 270.

a library copy, but he no doubt considered the quotation in Lee sufficient for his purposes⁴².

What were these purposes? We have already seen that Schwob wished to establish parallels between the lives of Defoe and Crusoe, and the long extracts transcribed from the Serious Reflections were taken by him as unquestionable evidence for his supposition; but with this point conceded, Schwob could elaborate his idea so as to suggest that all Defoe's fiction was based on the same autobiographical principle.

"Ayant réduit sa propre vie par la pensée à la simplicité absolue, afin de la représenter en art, il transforma plusieurs fois les symboles et les appliqua à diverses sortes d'êtres humains."

The significance of this passage is not to be underestimated. Firstly from the point of view of Schwob's art, his approach is typical, as we have seen, of his critical method of distilling the essence of a writer's objectives. Secondly, it marks out a new path in analysis of Defoe. Schwob ignores the traditional questions of structure, characterisation and morals, in all of which Defoe had generally been found wanting. Instead he points to the essential unity of Defoe's work, which stands above the

42. Schwob had in his library a fourth edition of Robinson Crusoe, dated 1719: but this contained only the first part of the trilogy. There was also the first French translation, by Saint-Hyacinthe and Van Effen, 1721; which may however have come into his possession at a later date. In any case, Schwob does not use their translation of Serious Reflections.

more pedestrian points of criticism. Schwob's attitude sets him apart both from those who praised Defoe the man and despised the novels, and from those who acknowledged some merit in the fiction and scorned its author. In Schwob we see both a realisation that Defoe's experience and his writing were inextricably bound together, and a generous and perceptive appreciation of his aims. Nonetheless the reader cannot help feeling that Schwob is attributing to Defoe a sophisticated procedure more typical of his own highly conscious art than of Defoe's probably instinctive choice of themes. We remember that Schwob had written in his preface to Le Roi au Masque d'Or: "Sachez que tout en ce monde n'est que signes, et signes de signes."⁴³ Schwob, evidently, was writing for an audience likely to see more than one nuance in the word "emblem" which Schwob had mentioned in connection with Robinson Crusoe.

Thus Schwob seeks to explain Defoe by noting the variations in his works on one fundamental motif - the author's lonely battle in a hostile world.

"Et ainsi que lui-même a lutté, solitaire, pour obtenir une petite aisance et une protection contre les intempéries du monde, ses héros et héroïnes sont des solitaires qui essayent de vivre en dépit de la nature et des hommes".

Schwob's interpretation, going as it does to the heart of the matter, reconciles and transcends many of the nineteenth-century attitudes to the novels. Lee, for example, had accepted the identification of Robinson and Defoe, but had not postulated

43. Spicilege, p. 150.

a similar link between the author and his other heroes, because of their more scandalous adventures. Leslie Stephen, on the other hand, had perceived Defoe in all his creation, and ascribed this multiple projection to a lack of sensitive psychological insight:

"He looks at his actors from the outside, and gives us with wonderful minuteness all the details of their lives; but he never seems to remember that within the mechanism whose workings he describes there is a soul very different from that of Daniel De Foe. Rather, he seems to see in mankind nothing but so many million Daniel De Foes; they are in all sorts of postures, and thrown into every variety of difficulty, but the stuff of which they are composed is identical with that which he buttons into his own coat; there is variety of form, but no colouring, in his pictures of life."⁴⁴

A more common explanation of the phenomenon was that Defoe, like a good journalist, was cashing in on a best-selling formula. Schwob, however, chooses to dismiss the contingencies of morality and psychology in his insistence that only the essence of the novels need be considered; his approach is purely artistic, and avoids both over-tender care for Defoe's reputation and the rather patronising attitude towards his attempts to motivate his characters. That Schwob's view has prevailed in the twentieth century is demonstrated in its restatement by Leslie Stephen's daughter:

"It is not merely that Defoe knew the stress of poverty and had talked with the victims of it, but that the unsheltered life, exposed to circumstances and forced to shift for itself, appealed to him imaginatively as the right matter for his art."⁴⁵

44. Op. cit. pp. 24-25.

45. Virginia Woolf, op. cit. p. 124.

And so the other novels are briefly mentioned and analysed by Schwob from the point of view of the theme they embody; he makes no distinction between the honest and the criminal, since all are obsessed by the common need to earn their bread, their security, and the respect of their fellow-men. All have to contend without any outside help, and Schwob emphasises in particular the loneliness of *Moll Flanders*:

"enfin Moll Flanders, après une vie de prostitution et de calcul, ruinée, ayant quarante-huit ans déjà, et ne pouvant plus trafiquer de rien, aussi solitaire au milieu de la populeuse cité de Londres qu'Alexandre Selkirk dans l'île de Juan Hernandez, se fait voleuse isolée pour manger à sa faim [...]"

Having finally arrived at the subject of his preface after his tour of the background material, Schwob without further ado proceeds to expose the substance of the novel by the time-honoured expedient of quoting the title in full. The bibliographical details of *Moll Flanders* and the other works of this period mentioned by Schwob are all to be found in the catalogue of William Lee in the first volume of his biography⁴⁶.

...

The first part of Schwob's introduction was designed to bring out the thematic relation of *Moll Flanders* to Defoe's work; the second attempts to establish a historical original for Moll, the model which Defoe was to animate with his experience.

46. Op. cit. pp. xlvi-xlvii.

The obvious sources are considered first: "Sans doute l'idée lui en vint pendant son emprisonnement d'un an et demi à Newgate en 1704". Schwob thus refutes the delicate scruples of William Lee, who had indignantly dismissed the idea that Defoe at that time "was compelled to associate ordinarily with the most abandoned of both sexes," and who suggested that Defoe's interest in the redemption of profligates began only with his collaboration on Applebee's Journal, on the 25th June 1720⁴⁷. Other biographers of Defoe have considered Defoe's early acquaintance with prisoners as the seed from which the novel sprang, and Thomas Wright was to corroborate Schwob's theory in his monograph:

"Much of the material upon which Defoe based his stories, was no doubt obtained during his imprisonment at Newgate; where although, as he was confined only for having published a libel, he would not be compelled to associate with his fellow prisoners, the criminals, yet it is quite certain that he was not the man to lose such fair opportunities for studying a class in which he was always so much interested; and it is known that he often kept manuscripts, intended for the press, by him for years." 48

Schwob did adopt Lee's proposal that the name of the heroine was found by Defoe in a newspaper:

"It is possible that Defoe was indebted for the name of his heroine to the following: - if not, the fortuitous coincidence is at least remarkable. In the Post-Boy of the 9th of January 1722, and previously, is an Advertisement of Books sold by John

47. Ibid. pp. 343-344.

48. Op. cit. p. 277.

Darby, and among them is, "The History of Flanders, with Moll's Map." 49

Still following Lee, Schwob goes on to quote from a letter in Applebee's Journal, on the 16th July 1720:

"The fourth week of his connection with Applebee's Journal he inserted a Letter, written by himself, under the disguise of a female pickpocket and shop-lifter, who after conviction had been respited, and transported. She had succeeded in getting back to England, where she remained undiscovered until, meeting with an old male acquaintance who recognised her, he threatened to give her up to certain death unless she gave him money, and she says, "the Rogue has a Milch Cow of me as long as I live." She concludes by asking what she ought to do under the circumstances, and signs the communication, "MOLL." This was undoubtedly the precursor of "Moll Flanders", and shows how early, after his connection with Applebee, our author's attention was drawn to the helpless and hopeless condition of those who had once fallen into crime." 50

Up to this point Schwob has based his arguments on the evidence provided by Lee, but his further speculations on the source of the heroine are quite original, and indeed unique, for no other editor (as far as I have been able to ascertain), has followed his suggestion that Moll Flanders was modelled on Mary Frith. Most scholars have been satisfied with the theory that the original may have been some obscure woman pickpocket whom

49. Lee, op. cit. I 355 n. Dottin, however, finds it a "pure coincidence, étant donné la date de composition du roman". op. cit. III 684.

50. Op. cit. I 345. Schwob expands his translation with quotations from the actual letter, printed in II 256-258.

Defoe had encountered in prison; and they have no doubt whatsoever that the manuscript of the narrator mentioned in Defoe's preface to the novel was an invention, and that Defoe was entirely responsible for the conception of his work. Schwob, however, seems inclined to accept Defoe's word, for his preamble to the discussion of the Mary Frith legend centres on the account given by the supposed transcriber of the manuscript.

For his present purposes, then, Schwob discards the basic critical commonplace on Defoe's art: that his outstanding merit lay in his ability to produce the illusion of reality. In the early eighteenth century the convention of fiction had not yet been established; a story, to be socially acceptable, had either to be true or to be organised round some edifying moral. Defoe himself was conscious that his Robinson Crusoe could be criticised for its fantasy, and in his Serious Reflections inveighed against authorial recourse to imagination:

"This supplying a story by invention, is certainly a most scandalous crime ... it is a sort of lying that makes a great hole in the heart, in which, by degrees, a habit of lying enters in ..."51

Such scruples could easily be quietened by an elaborate fabrication of details all tending to prove the authenticity of the narrative. The preface to Moll Flanders is an excellent example of Defoe's "lying like truth", with its presentation

51. Op. cit. p. 112.

of the history as the heroine's autobiography, made fit for chaster ears, its references to the two corroborating accounts of Moll's husband and her governess, which Defoe could not promise to publish as yet⁵², and its artless confession that the chapters on Moll's last years in America were derived from another source, "for nobody can write their own life to the full end of it, unless they can write it after they are dead". All this circumstantial evidence was taken seriously by Schwob, at this juncture, at least - he later refers to the "prétendus Mémoires" - although he must have been aware that Defoe used exactly the same procedure in other works whose fictitious character was not in doubt. One can only conclude that he was hoodwinked because on this occasion he wished to believe that Defoe's fantasy was true.

Apart from the "evidence" of the preface, Schwob also cites as significant the date which Defoe appended to his memoirs: 1683.⁵³ Indeed, as he points out in connection with

52. In 1730 there was published a chapbook, falsely attributed to Defoe: Fortune's Fickle Distribution, containing the adventures of Moll, her governess Jane Hackabout, and her husband James MacFaul. Schwob owned the 1759 edition. See Dottin op. cit. p. 664-667.

53. This date was printed 1685 in the Revue Hebdomadaire preface, but was corrected in the final instalment of the novel.

the Journal of the Plague Year, the pretended time of composition was often a part of Defoe's attempt to pass off his narrative as genuine: thus the chronicler of London in 1665 was supposed to be long since dead at the time when his manuscript came into Defoe's hands. Schwob might have pointed out also that Robinson Crusoe, though written in 1719, was dated 1704, because, as Edmund Gosse observed, Defoe wished to give the impression that Crusoe's extraordinary career was not imitated from the history of Alexander Selcraig, published in 1712. Examination of Defoe's dating prompts the idea that no reliance is to be placed in his chronology. In the case of Moll Flanders Defoe merely wished to indicate that the events described took place in a fairly remote past. It is noticeable that he provided few clues which might help to fix the era, no allusions to the political events of the preceding century, as in Roxana, for example. Thus the date 1683 is of no importance except insofar as it is one fiction serving to confirm another, to give the appearance of solid fact. Schwob would probably have paid no attention to it had he not been obsessed by the desire to identify Moll Flanders with Mary Frith. For Schwob, the mention of this year is the second link in his chain of evidence.

Passing from documentary details in Defoe, Schwob now arrives at the central point of his demonstration: the legend of Mrs. Frith, or Moll Cutpurse. He would have come across the name of this notorious pickpocket, to mention but one of

her many professions, in Alexander Smith's A compleat history of the lives and robberies of the most notorious highwaymen⁵⁴, and in Captain Johnson's edition of Smith's work, A general history of the lives and adventures of the most famous highwaymen, etc.⁵⁵ The details he gives, however, are taken from the preface to Middleton and Dekker's comedy, The Roaring Girl, which was printed in the sixth volume of the second and third editions of Dodsley's Select Collection of Old Plays. Not that this source was mentioned by Schwob: he preferred to leave his readers marvelling at the erudition so nonchalantly exposed. A transcription of the preface will show Schwob's dependence on his unacknowledged predecessor:

"MARY FRITH; or, Moll Cut-purse, the name by which she was usually distinguished, was, as Mr. Granger observes (see Supplement to his Biographical History 4to. p. 256.), (56) "a woman of a masculine spirit and make, who was commonly supposed to have been an hermaphrodite, practised, or was instrumental to almost every crime and wild frolick which is notorious in the most abandoned eccentric of both sexes. She was infamous as a prostitute and a

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54. An enlarged edition of The history of the lives of the most noted highwaymen, first published in 1711. See the 1926 edition, ed. Arthur L. Hayward, pp. 282-290.
55. pp. 192-194 in the first edition of 1734. In the Revue Hebdomadaire Schwob gave the date of this work as 1742 (the 4th edition), but corrected it in 1895 to 1736 - when the 2nd edition was published. Schwob's own copy was the very rare undated G. Smeeton edition - see Philip Gosse, A Bibliography of the Works of Capt. Charles Johnson, 1927, pp. x-xi.
56. James Granger, Supplement ... to A biographical history of England, 1774, p. 256-257. Granger gave a number of details not mentioned by the editor of the play.

procuress, a fortune-teller, a pick-pocket, a thief, and a receiver of stolen goods: she was also concerned with a dextrous scribe in forging hands. Her most signal exploit was robbing General Fairfax upon Hounslow-Heath, for which she was sent to Newgate; but was, by a proper application of a large sum of money, soon set at liberty. She died of the dropsy, in the 75th year of her age; but would probably have died sooner, if she had not smoked tobacco, in the frequent use of which she had long indulged herself."

Mr. Steevens says (Note to Twelfth Night A.I. S.iii) that "on the Books of the Stationer's Company, August 1610, is entered "A Booke called the Madde Pranks of Merry Mall of the Bankside, with her walks in man's apparel, and to what purpose. Written by John Day." Nathaniel Field, in his Amends for Ladies, a Comedy, 1639 /1618/ gives the following character of her: /.../

A life of this woman was likewise published in 12 mo in 1662, with her portrait before it in a male habit; an ape, a lion and eagle by him. (57)

It is probable that she died about the time of this second publication of her life. In the play of the Feign'd Astrologer, 1668, p. 62. she is mentioned as being then dead /.../"58

In a note to the preface published in the twelfth volume of the 1780 edition, and in the sixth of the 1825 edition, Schwob found also this detail:

"Mrs. Mary Frith, alias Moll Cut-purse, born in Barbican, the daughter of a shoemaker, died at her home in Fleet-street, next the Globe Tavern, July 26, 1659, and was buried in the church of Saint Bridget's. She left twenty pounds by her will, for the conduit to run with wine, when King Charles the Second returned, which happened a short time after.

From an MS. in the British Museum."

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57. This illustration is missing from the British Museum copy of The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith, but is to be found in The Works of Thomas Middleton, ed. A.H. Bullen, 1885, IV 2.
58. Dodsley, op. cit., 1780 and 1825, pp. 3-4. Schwob himself owned the 1744 edition.

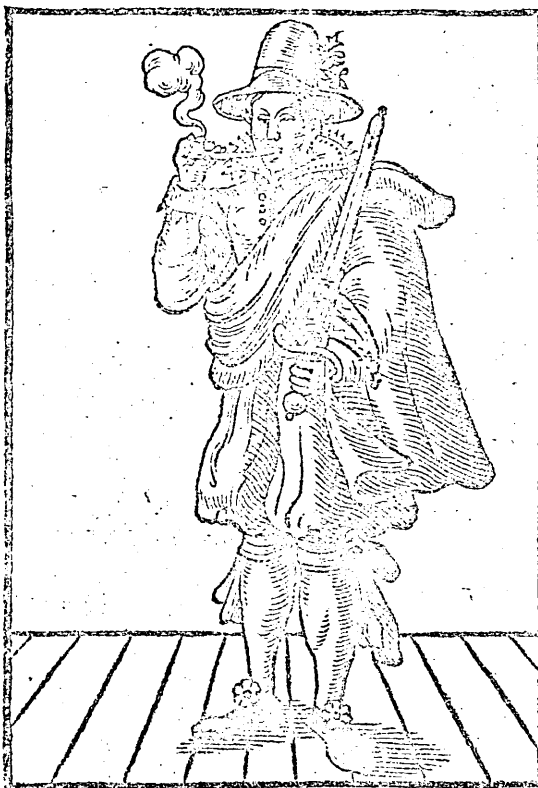
The Roaring Girl

OR
Moll Cut-Purse.

As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-stage by
the Prince his Players.

Written by *T. Middleton* and *T. Dekker.*

My case is alter'd, I must worke for my living.



Printed at London for *Thomas Archer*, and are to be sold at his
shop in Popes head-pallace, neere the Royall
Exchange. 1633.

Schwob presents this list of allusions to Mary Frith more or less as it stands in Dodsley's preface, inserting one other item: a description of the frontispiece of The Roaring Girl, a woodcut which shows the heroine

"vêtue en homme, l'oeil oblique, la bouche
tordue, avec ces mots en légende:
'Mon cas est changé: il faut que je travaille
pour vivre.'" 59

Further information on Mary Frith was available in the various editions of Middleton's plays, those of Alexander Dyce in 1840, of A.H. Bullen in 1885, and of Havelock Ellis in 1890 - the last-named was in fact in Schwob's library. All these repeat the basic information and insist that the date of her death must be around 1659. However, despite the unanimity of the editors and the date he had himself quoted, Schwob states that "Il paraît qu'elle vivait encore lorsqu'on publia sa vie en 1661." This affirmation seems to demonstrate that Schwob had not been able to check on the exact title of the biography, which was The life and death of Mrs. Mary Frith. Commonly called Mal Cutpurse. Indeed, if he had relied exclusively on Johnson, Dodsley and Ellis, his mistake is easily explained, for these editors had talked only of the "Life of Moll Cutpurse."

59. Schwob's phrase "ces mots en légende" perhaps indicates the 1825 edition: he might have commented on the unusual position of the inscription in the 1780 frontispiece: see illustration p. 323.

nonetheless, even without the evidence of the date and title of the biography, Schwob should have realised the lack of logic in his conclusion that

"la preuve même de l'identité de Mary Frith avec Moll Flanders, c'est la date de 1683, que De Foe assigne aux prétendus Mémoires complétés par une troisième main. La tradition lui permettait de croire que la vieille Mary Frith avait vécu jusqu'aux environs de cette année. Nous n'avons aucune preuve formelle de la date précise de sa mort."

If Schwob accepts that Mary Frith died at the age of seventy-five, then, according to his calculation, her fame as a pickpocket must have been great when she was barely out of the cradle - for Middleton's play was performed between 1604 and 1608.⁶⁰ Schwob was already flying in the face of the facts as he had transcribed them from Dodsley's preface by insisting that Mrs. Frith's life could be lengthened some twenty years: and in his satisfaction at proving his theory, as he imagined, he quite overlooked the necessity of discounting the evidence for a life-span of three score and fifteen years⁶¹.

60. See Richard H. Barker, Thomas Middleton, New York, 1958, pp. 169-170.

61. Byvanck was quick to spot the flaw in Schwob's reasoning. Thanking Schwob for the gift of the book in a letter of the 8th February 1895, he wrote: "... l'introduction à Moll Flanders me semble excellente (seulement attendez-vous à des objections au sujet de Moll Cutpurse, qui bien certainement était morte avant 1660. Le titre de la brochure de 1662 est The Life and Death. Et son testament (fictif) parle du retour éventuel de Charles II etc. etc.) CPC 5906 letter 43.

Schwob's mathematical error would not in itself invalidate his hypothesis about the identity of Mary Frith and Moll Flanders, but since he makes it the clinching argument of his case, the reader is bound to be sceptical when it turns out to be false. However, as Schwob has covered up his tracks so well, it would be difficult to bring up other evidence against his conclusions without having first studied the texts he mentions. Indeed, so skilfully has he marshalled his points that it would hardly occur to the reader that he has only presented a number of brief references to Moll Cutpurse: and despite his mention of The Roaring Girl and of the biography given in Captain Johnson's collection, he has refrained from actually making any quotation from these works. There was good reason for this omission. It will be remembered that Schwob had left out of his transcription from Dodsley the phrase "commonly supposed to have been an hermaphrodite;" yet the keynote of the Mary Frith legend is the heroine's adoption of a masculine way of life.

"A very Tomrig or Rumpscuttle she was, and delighted and sported only in Boys play and pastime, not minding or companying with the Girls." 62

"[...] above all she had a natural abhorrence to the tending of Children, to whom she ever had an averseness in her mind, equall to the sterility and barrenness in her womb, never being made a Mother to our best information." 63

62. The Life and death of Mrs. Mary Frith, 1662, p. 6.

63. *ibid.* pp. 13-14.

"[...] from the first entrance into a competency of age she would wear [a man's habit], and to her dying day she would not leave it off ..." 64

Apart from these details, which show that the conception of Moll's character is very different from that of Mary Frith, there is no correspondence between the incidents of the two women's careers. Moll Cutpurse was "born of Honest Parentage", and brought up with great affection; when her father and mother died her education was entrusted to her uncle. In her youth her boisterousness and her refusal to dress in a manner befitting her sex outraged her guardians, so an attempt was made to reform her ways by arranging for her to be kidnapped and transported to America, where she might hope to find a husband. She foiled this design and set up a flourishing business as manager of the fraternity of cutpurses and foists. Later in life, she established a no less successful "double temple of Priapus and Venus, frequented by Votaries of both sorts."⁶⁵ The narrative refers several times to her devotion to the Stuart monarchy - hence the terms of her will. Moll Flanders, on the other hand, is destitute from her infancy, spends the first part of her career in amorous adventures, in the course of which she produces and abandons a dozen children, and turns to crime only when her fading charms

64. *ibid.* p. 18.

65. *ibid.* p. 122.

allows her no other way of earning her bread. As for her assuming male attire, Defoe cannot be said to belabour the point, as Schwob would have it. Moll disguises herself only at the instigation of her governess:

"I was tall and personable, but a little too smooth-faced for a man; however, as I seldom went abroad but in the night, it did well enough; but it was long before I could behave in my new clothes; it was impossible to be so nimble, so ready, so dexterous at these things, in a dress contrary to nature; and as I did everything clumsily, so I had neither the success, or the easiness of escape that I had before, and I resolved to leave it off; but that resolution was confirmed soon after by the following accident." 66

From this brief comparison of the lives of the two Molls, it is clear that Schwob could not have cited passages from any of the various accounts of Mary Frith without immediately disproving his own theory. However, Schwob cunningly gives the impression of having referred to the sources by remarking on Defoe's probable familiarity with the legend:

'Ceux qui donnèrent à Daniel De Foe de si précis détails sur la peste de 1665 durent lui raconter mainte histoire sur l'extraordinaire vie de cette vieille femme, morte riche, après une existence infâme, à soixante-quinze ans. Le frontispice de la pièce de Middleton, avec sa légende, s'appliquerait

66. De Foe's Work's, 1889, III 174. Schwob's translation was based on the third edition of the novel, revised by Defoe himself. The main discrepancy with the first edition is in the sequence of events in the description of the embarking of the convicts on the transportation ship. It was in 1901 that Schwob acquired a second edition of Moll Flanders (1722) "au très bas prix de 30 francs;" See D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 8.

THE ROARING GIRLE:

OR,

MOLL CUT-PURSE.

As it hath lately beenc Acted on the Fortune-stage by
the Prince his Players.

Written by T. Middleton and T. Dekkar.

My catc is alter'd, I muſt worke for my living.



Printed at London for Thomas Archer, and are to be sold at his
Shop in Popes head-pallace, neere the Royall
Exchange, 1611.

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A

à Moll Flanders [...] Il a dû voir aussi dans sa jeunesse les nombreuses pièces de théâtre où figurait ce personnage populaire.(67) Le livre de colportage contenant l'histoire de la vie de Moll la Coupeuse de bourses a certainement été feuilleté par lui."

All this, of course, is irrelevant to the issue. Defoe would no doubt be perfectly cognizant of the story of Moll Cutpurse⁶⁸, but it does not necessarily follow that he based his own novel thereon. Schwob's arguments simply do not bear close examination. Once his central premise is found to be untenable, the rest of his case immediately collapses.

Before we proceed to discuss why Schwob was so anxious to prove Defoe's dependence on a historical source, we must first consider two remaining minor, but interesting details of his evidence. The first is his mention of the frontispiece of Middleton's play. Schwob must have noticed that the woodcut shown in Ellis's edition was not identical with that in Dodsley's: and if he had taken the trouble to check with other modern editions, he would have realised that Dodsley's title-page was not an exact copy of the original of 1611⁶⁹. The standard

67. There is some apparent incongruity in the puritan's frequentation of the theatre, but according to the biographer J.R. Moore, Defoe "knew Restoration dramas exceptionally well". See Daniel Defoe, Citizen of the Modern World, Chicago, 1958, pp. 25-26.

68. Especially if, as Moore suggests, he was in fact Capt. Johnson ...

69. The titlepage reproduced on p.329 is that of The Roaring Girl in the Ashley Library of the British Museum.

picture of Moll Cutpurse is not applicable to Moll Flanders: it shows a decidedly masculine character, quite different from the much-courted heroine of Defoe's novels. The second point arises from the sentence "Il la fait nommer avec admiration par Moll Flanders", which was inserted in the 1895 edition. The passage where Moll alludes to her illustrious predecessor occurs at the beginning of her career as a thief:

"I grew as impudent a thief, and as dexterous, as ever Moll Cutpurse was, though, if fame does not belie her, not half so handsome." 70

Surely, if Defoe intended his Moll to be a representation of Mary Frith, he would not have destroyed the illusion by making his heroine speak in these terms. Schwob's sentence is particularly ill-placed, coming as it does before the words "la preuve même de l'identité de Mary Frith avec Moll Flanders". He does not seem to realise that the two statements contradict each other.

...

Having demonstrated to his own satisfaction that Moll Cutpurse and Moll Flanders were one and the same character, Schwob explains why he found this business necessary. He compares Defoe's use of the legend with his earlier adaptation of Alexander Selkirk's account of Juan Hernandez:

"C'est l'embryon réel que De Foe a fait germer en fiction. C'est le point de départ d'un développement qui a une portée bien plus haute."

70. De Foe's Works, III 163.

In a footnote to his description of Mary Frith in the Revue hebdomadaire, omitted in the 1895 edition, Schwob had given an example on the same process in François Villon:

"Il y a eu de même, en France, au quinzième siècle, une courtisane célèbre par les scandales qu'elle causa en 1410, et qui mourut dans un âge très avancé. Elle se nommait "La Belle Heaulmière". La vue de sa vieillesse, ou le récit qu'on fit de sa vie à François Villon, en 1461, lui inspira l'admirable poème les Regrets de la Belle Heaulmière. L'imagination artistique de Daniel De Foe dut être frappée de la même manière." 71

Given the charm of this passage, and its analogy with the case of Defoe, why should Schwob have left it out of his definitive version? Perhaps he realised that the similarity was only apparent, and might make the curious reader reflect that while Villon had not changed the name or the history of his lady when elevating her into poetical fame, Defoe had made a radical transformation of Mrs. Mary Frith. At all events, the note was intended only to show a parallel case, and not to buttress Schwob's argument since he was firmly convinced of the correctness of his surmise. The final "proof" of Defoe's indebtedness to the legend of Moll Cutpurse is given in an astounding petitio principii:

"Mais il était nécessaire de montrer que l'imagination de Daniel De Foe construit le plus puissamment sur des réalités, car Daniel De Foe est un écrivain extrêmement réaliste."

71. 'Daniel De Foe et "Moll Flanders"', op. cit. p. 75.

The logic of this proposition is difficult to find. Granted that Robinson Crusoe and the Journal of the Plague Year were partly inspired by existing documents, Schwob is not entitled to make a generalisation about the factual basis of the other novels: and it is noticeable that he cannot quote a historical foundation for Roxana and Colonel Jack. Schwob, in fact, is attributing to Defoe a theory of composition which cannot be fully corroborated by evidence from the novels; and so he has to fabricate his own testimony. Furthermore, the notion that realist writers work best on incidents from real life is not universally valid. The truism that fact can be treated fantastically, and fiction realistically, was by no means unknown to Defoe - witness his solemn and utterly convincing description of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal. Schwob never gives serious consideration to the possibility that Moll Flanders was from beginning to end Defoe's own invention. Of course, he could not have dreamed up such a character had the type been unknown in the society of his time, but the popularity of the picaresque novel, which had established the adventuress as a literary personage in her own right⁷², enabled him to devise a protagonist and plot without reference to an authentic prototype. Of the conception and composition of Moll Flanders, Ian Watt remarks:

"Defoe's high regard for genuine biography is reflected in the way his own novels always pass

72. See Dottin, op. cit. pp. 645-648.

themselves off as authentic autobiography. This alone would involve the type of narrative structure he used: he had only to absorb himself completely in his own make-believe that Moll Flanders was the life of a real person, and an episodic but life-like plot sequence was inevitable." 73

Schwob's belief in the factual origins of the novel seems to have sprung from an a priori conviction of the superiority of creation from life: witness this remark from the 'Dix Leçons sur François Villon', nearly ten years later:

"C'est une vérité universelle pour toutes les oeuvres dignes de ce nom qu'elles ont été suggérées par la nature, par la vie, par la réalité. Il n'y a pas de grande création poétique, si dégagée puisse-t-elle paraître des contingences, pour peu qu'elle exerce sur nous un pouvoir d'attrait ou d'émotion, dont la force n'ait été puisée dans l'éternelle source d'énergie qu'est le monde extérieur." 74

Since the first section of the introduction is concerned with Defoe's use of symbolism in the content of the novels, it would have seemed appropriate for Schwob to end with an examination of the realism of the form, now that he has touched on the subject: Defoe's methods invited such an investigation, and the interests of a contemporary audience demanded it. Instead, Schwob gives only one instance of Defoe's realism: the resemblance of Moll Flanders to Germinie Lacerteux. At this point, it becomes obvious that Schwob has abandoned the main line of his preface, and his argument, so admirably organised until now, disintegrates into a number of more or less unconnected

73. The Rise of the Novel, 1957, p. 107.

74. OC. VII. 295-296.

paragraphs. He does not point out any similarities of approach or technique between the two novels; and indeed, despite Schwob's remark to Edmond de Goncourt, the only parallel in the plot is the variety of the two heroines' amorous adventures. Schwob modestly refrains from specifying the nature of Germinie's passions, but correctly isolates the economic motive as the basic interest of Defoe's novel: "Mon Dieu, donnez-nous notre pain quotidien!"⁷⁵ In the 1895 edition of his preface, Schwob amplified the point by observing that escape from poverty was the obsession of Defoe:

"Les livres de Daniel De Foe ne sont que le développement des deux supplications de l'humanité: "Mon Dieu, donnez-nous notre pain quotidien; - mon Dieu, préservez-nous de la tentation!" Ce furent les paroles qui hantèrent sa vie et son imagination, jusqu'à la dernière lettre qu'il écrivit pour sa fille et pour son gendre quelques jours avant sa mort".

This links up, of course, with the theme of the first part of the introduction: the pervasion of the novels by the features of life which most strongly impressed the mind of their author⁷⁶. Schwob has good reason to insist on Defoe's dread of want, for the writer was plagued by debts throughout his career. It was the action of a creditrix which drove him away from his family

75. Or more correctly the prayer of Agur: "feed me with food convenient for me ... lest I be poor, and steal ..." Proverbs XXX 8, 9.

76. Defoe's economic theories have received much attention from American critics: see John R. Moore, Daniel Defoe and Modern Economic Theory, Indiana University Studies June 1934, and the chapter on Robinson Crusoe in Ian Watt's Rise of the Novel, pp. 60-92.

and caused him to spend the last year of his life in hiding⁷⁷. Schwob does not give details of Defoe's unhappy departure from the world, but the wording of his sentence shows that he did not accept the hypothesis of William Lee, that Defoe was in prosperous circumstances in his old age, and was forced to seek refuge near Greenwich only because of the malice of an old political enemy⁷⁸.

In the original version of his foreword Schwob finished his discussion of Defoe with an apology for not including an analysis of the novelist's artistic powers, but suggested that the reader could do that himself:

"Il suffira de lire et d'admirer la vérité nue des sentiments et des actions. Ceux qui n'aiment pas seulement Robinson comme le livre de leur enfance trouveront dans Moll Flanders les mêmes plaisirs et les mêmes terreurs." 79

The 1895 edition had this passage followed by another paragraph describing an actual case of the book reviving memories of childhood: George Borrow's discovery of the book with the old woman of London Bridge, in Lavengro:

77. See Sutherland, op. cit. pp. 269-274.

78. Lee, op. cit. I 463-465. Schwob, to increase the pathos, says that Defoe's last letter was written a few days before his death: it was dated the 12th August 1730, and Defoe died on the 26th April the following year.

79. Champion also mentions Schwob's unusual respect for Robinson: "Il tenait pour un livre fort grave le Robinson Crusoë où nous avons vu un livre d'enfant." MSPL p. 47.

"I took the book from her hand, a short, thick volume, at least a century old, bound with greasy black leather. I turned the yellow and dog's-eared pages, reading here and there a sentence. Yes, and no mistake! His pen, his style, his spirit might be observed in every line of the uncouth-looking old volume - the air, the style, the spirit of the writer of the book which first taught me to read - I covered my face with my hand, and thought of my childhood." 80

Schwob's attention may have been drawn to this incident by a reference in Wright's biography of Defoe. The content is interesting, but not strictly relevant to the preface as a whole, and interrupts the sequence of ideas between Schwob's talk of the artistry of Moll Flanders and his efforts to bring out the special features of Defoe's style in his translation. Possibly Schwob included it for sentimental reasons, seeing in it a reflection of his own attachment to Robinson as the book from which he had learned to read.

...

Paul Léautaud, in his obituary essay on Schwob, made a brief reference to the work which we have been discussing:

"Dans Moll Flanders, la préface n'est qu'un ensemble de notes sur l'héroïne et sur l'histoire du livre et de son auteur, mais le talent de Marcel Schwob paraissait à tel point dans les plus petites choses qu'on le trouve encore là tout entier, avec ce style qui sait tout dire, tout évoquer, tout ranimer, sans un mot inutile ou fade, sans effet." 81

80. George Borrow, Lavengro, 1906, p. 190-191.

81. Passetemps II, p. 27.

This aspect of Schwob's preface, for want of space, has not received its due attention here, but the reader will be able to judge for himself the truth of Léautaud's stylistic appreciation. It could even be claimed that Léautaud was wrong in calling the work a collection of jottings. Schwob had definite ideas about Defoe's themes and techniques, and exposed them with cogency and clarity, guiding the reader over a wide terrain, and adroitly slipping in essential details while relentlessly pursuing his main arguments. He faltered only in the last pages, through the desire to include a number of points which would not fit in anywhere else; thus his conclusion leaves the study on a rather aimless, disjointed note.

As for the contents of the introduction, it will be obvious that we have certain reserves. To begin with, one cannot but feel that Schwob's erudition is somewhat coy about its origins. His illustrious predecessor in the field of Defoe studies, Philarète Chasles, had not hesitated to acknowledge his sources and had provided a list of authorities for further reading. Schwob, on the other hand, borrowed largely from Lee and Wright, with only the most indirect recognition of their help. He mentioned Dodsley's Old Plays, but without the date; if he had wished his readers to be able to look up the play, he would surely have mentioned in which of the four editions of Dodsley it was to be found. It is curious, too, that Schwob should have taken his information from the oldest and rarest of the reprints of the original comedy, and one which contained a

unique frontispiece. Perhaps this was just his taste for the curious; but it may well have been a desire to put enquiring readers off the scent. After all, the same information about Mary Frith was available in the recent editions of Bullen and Ellis.

However, a majority of readers, taking up the book for its "entertainment value", will remain unaware of, and unconcerned about, Schwob's plunderings. Thus the chances are that they will be left with serious misconceptions about Defoe's methods, for few scholars would agree wholeheartedly with Schwob on his view of the novels as conscious allegories of Defoe's life, and none on his identification of Mary Frith with Moll Flanders⁸². Yet Schwob's theories, mistaken though they may be, appeal to the reader's imagination and remain in the mind long after the factual details provided by the experts have been forgotten. It would appear that there is such a thing as poetic truth in criticism, just as there is "réalisme irréel" in the art of story-telling⁸³.

Schwob's preface, therefore, is valuable for a study of

82. On the first point, it should be noted that Wright echoed Schwob's ideas in his biography, seeking to prove the complete identification of Defoe with Robinson Crusoe. This approach was rejected by Dottin, who claimed that it gave a false perspective of Defoe's career.

Dottin seems to have been the only critic to comment on Schwob's discussion of Mary Frith, but dismissed the idea as highly improbable. *op. cit.* p. 671.

83. See the essay on Stevenson, Spicilege pp. 73-77.

his own method of literary criticism. We see his delight in recognising affinities between writers of different nationalities - Cervantes⁸⁴, Beaumarchais, Villon, and his gift for making illuminating comparisons between their techniques. More important, we see how Schwob, perhaps unconsciously, attributes to Defoe his own procedure of composition. The writer who "construit le plus puissamment sur des réalités" is none other than Schwob himself, with his researches into old books, archives and legends and his ingenious welding of assorted picturesque snippets into a coherent new creation. It is precisely this sense of identity which heightens Schwob's appreciation, and enables him to communicate to the reader his own enjoyment of the novel. His preface is not merely a study of Defoe, but a foretaste of the pleasure to come.

84. Schwob had in his library several editions of Don Quixote, together with a life of Cervantes by Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, 1819.

(iii) The Translation

Schwob's translation of Moll Flanders was serialised in the Revue hebdomadaire from the 4th August to the 20th October 1894; the first edition of the book was published by Ollendorff on the 31st January 1895⁸⁵, and a second followed on the 9th March. The novel appears to have attracted little critical attention, but the handful of reviews all gave high praise for Schwob's labours. Since then it has enjoyed a certain popularity, as witnessed by the number of reissues. In 1918 it was reprinted by Crès, ten years later as the fifth volume of the Oeuvres Complètes, and in 1934 by Gallimard. Shortly after the last war there seems to have been an upsurge of interest in the novels of Defoe in France, and translations of The Journal of the Plague Year, Captain Singleton, Colonel Jack and Roxana were brought out. Moll Flanders still outstripped the rest in popularity, but no longer in Schwob's translation exclusively. In 1945 Denis Marion published his new version, which was to prove highly successful, going through

85. The first of the presentation copies, deposited at the Jacques Doucet library, is inscribed:
 "à Marguerite Moreno en profonde admiration
 intellectuelle et artistique. Marcel Schwob."

four separate editions ranging from the Club Français du Livre to the cheap paperback with its wide circulation. Schwob's work, meanwhile, was reëdited by Gallimard in 1955 and has since been regularly reprinted, though its relatively high price, together with the sobriety of its cover⁸⁶, keeps it out of the mass market. Its status as a classic, however, is confirmed by the announcement that the forthcoming edition of Defoe's works in the Pléiade series will include the Schwob version.

The rival translations each have their own merits, and Marion himself acknowledges his predecessor's work as "célèbre à juste titre."⁸⁷ They are distinguished by a radical difference of approach. Marion's chief concern is to turn the "prose si savoureuse" into a French style pleasing to the modern ear; Schwob, on the other hand, is prepared to sacrifice elegance and concision to the demands of Defoe's idiosyncratic style. His preface ends with a justification of this method:

"partout où cela a été possible, les phrases ont conservé le mouvement et les coupures de la prose de De Foe. J'ai respecté la couleur du style autant que j'ai pu. Les nonchalances de langage et les redites exquises de la narratrice ont été rendues avec le plus grand soin." 88

86. In contrast with that of the Marabout cover, taken from a still of the film, where Kim Novak, a remarkably well-preserved sexagenarian Moll, gazes wistfully through the prison bars.

87. Heurs et Malheurs de la fameuse Moll Flanders, tr. Denis Marion, 1962, p. xx.

88. op. cit. p. 4.

The implications of Schwob's theory have already been discussed in relation to his translation of Hamlet⁸⁹; here his search for a linguistic equivalent to the English prose leads him predictably enough to a recreation of the style of the eighteenth-century picaresque novel, as French critics were quick to observe. The reviewer of Le Temps, on the 31st January 1895, wrote:

"Nous devons remercier M. Marcel Schwob de nous avoir donné avec sa puissance d'artiste et de savant, l'oeuvre de Daniel De Foë pure de toute altération et d'avoir aussi scrupuleusement reconstitué cette langue du commencement du dix-huitième siècle qui peut joindre les gestes extérieurs aux détours subtils de l'âme profonde."

Paul Monceaux, when the second edition appeared, was no less eulogious:

"son traducteur est un fort habile homme, un lettré subtil, qui, tout en calquant avec une rare exactitude les phrases de l'original, leur a prêté les grâces indolentes de nos romanciers du XVIII^e siècle, surtout de l'auteur de Marianne." 90

89. See above (pp. 607 et seq.)

90. 'Moll Flanders', La Revue Bleue, 11th May 1895, p. 607. Personal appreciations were expressed by Mallarmé and Pierre Louÿs: the former was struck by Defoe's portraiture of Moll, and concluded: "L'intensité de vie, maintenant, chez de Foë, et la rectitude dans le déploiement si appuyé de sa phrase, vont à l'obsession et enlacent: que vous ayez transposé ce beau style tenace, aux repos exquis parfois, dans votre traduction, sans une lassitude et avec des ressources prêtes, est d'un art non moins magistral que l'oeuvre [..]" Louÿs was also enchanted with the book: "On reste stupéfait, après l'avoir lu, qu'il soit resté si longtemps inconnu en France." CPC 5136. 80-81. See also Jules Renard, Correspondance, p. 143 (7th February 1895).

Since these and later critics have stressed this aspect of the translation, it is curious that the existence of a genuine eighteenth-century adaptation of Moll Flanders has not been noticed. Schwob, Marion, even Paul Dottin, all claim that the 1895 version was the first in the French language. In fact, the original work had been catalogued as early as 1872, in the third edition of Jules Gay's Bibliographie des Ouvrages Relatifs à l'Amour⁹¹, and a copy of it still exists in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dresden, entitled:

"Memoires et aventures de Mlle. Moll Flanders, écrits par elle-même, traduit de l'Anglois. A Londres, Chez Mourse Libraire dans le Strand. 1761, 232 p." 92

The survival of the book is a matter of historical interest, but need not concern us here as Schwob could not have referred to the work of his anonymous forerunner.

In their eagerness to comment on the style of Schwob's translation the critics have singularly neglected a matter of some importance: its incompleteness. Schwob himself gave no hint that he had omitted a number of passages from the

91. op. cit. V 33. See also H.W. Streeter, The Eighteenth Century English Novel in French Translation, New York, 1936, p. 59.

92. I quote this title as written in a letter from the Director of the library, 14th April 1966.

novel⁹³, and Denis Marion seems to have been the first to comment thereon in the introduction to his own work. He suggests that the cuts were made in order to make Defoe acceptable to the tastes of Schwob's day, when the novelist "devait encore se conquérir un public." It would be hard to quarrel with this idea. Since the book first appeared in serial form, it would be expedient to leave out Moll's moral reflections, of no appeal to the readers of light fiction. The book, however, might be expected to attract a more serious public so it is surprising that Schwob did not subsequently restore the passages in question, especially as he later claimed that Hamlet should be presented in its entirety, without concession to public prejudice. As it stands, the book cannot be said to be "l'oeuvre même de Daniel De Foe", for it dissimulates the puritan tendencies of the author and plays down the contrast between Moll's wicked life and her moments of remorse, essential to the mood of the novel. Admittedly the action is not disrupted by the suppression of Moll's pious meditations, and the incidents that disappear make no difference to the dénouement, for the plot is of the episodic variety where isolated events have little bearing on the structure of the whole. It is the theme

93. He merely said of his translation: "Je sens qu'elle est bien imparfaite", which could of course be taken as a confession of its incompleteness; the reader would surely see, however, the translator's time-honoured apology for his shortcomings. Cf. his use of the word in Spicilege p. 65: "la biographie de François Villon, encore imparfaite, sans doute, et pleine de lacunes".

of the novel which suffers, for Defoe's intention was to trace the spiritual decline and regeneration of his heroine. The account of Moll's wrong-doings is counterbalanced by analysis of the state of her conscience, and Defoe considered the latter of as much importance as the more entertaining part of the narrative. In his preface, which Schwob did not translate, he reproved those who would omit the passages of edification:

"It is suggested that there cannot be the same life, the same brightness and beauty in relating the penitent part, as is in the criminal part: if there is any truth in that suggestion, I must be allowed to say, 'tis because there is not the same taste and relish in the reading; and indeed it is too true that the difference lies not in the real worth of the subject so much as in the gust and palate of the reader." 94

Defoe's novels have recently been examined with reference to the religious diaries kept by members of the non-conformist sects, and it has been established that Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders exhibit the same pattern of spiritual adventure, the same solitary battle between deep-rooted sin and aspiration towards virtue, as in the contemporary records of private strivings for the perfection of the soul. Once this theme has been recognised as the raison d'être of the book, the structural weaknesses seem less important.

"The episodic nature of the plot, with all its abruptnesses and discontinuities, has led many critics to doubt the presence of any coherent initial plan on Defoe's part, or of any internal consistency in the action itself. My response to this has been that a work may possess thematic

94. op. cit. p. x.

coherence despite any amount of incoherence in the outward narrative, and that a conventional pattern of spiritual decay supplies this coherence in Moll Flanders." 95

Thus Schwob would appear guilty of a double distortion: firstly in being too accommodating to the frivolity of his readers, sparing them the healthy dose of morality prescribed by Defoe; secondly in his suppression of essential contributions to the working out of the great underlying theme.

Before we examine Schwob's omissions, where the justice of the latter charge will be only too patent, it would be as well to see whether anything can be said in mitigation. The obvious point is that Schwob was presenting Moll Flanders primarily as a choice diversion for a largely respectable and educated audience. Defoe's exhortations, intended for the redemption of those in his heroine's situation, would not be applicable to such readers: and the initial antiquarian charm would wear off with frequent repetition. It is noticeable that the closing instalments of the novel were far more ruthlessly shorn of their uplifting content than the early chapters. On the whole, although Schwob's cutting offends against strict literary canons, the disappearance of Moll's garrulous arguments with her conscience will hardly be regretted by the average reader. Schwob's skill in preserving just enough of the

95. G.A. Starr, Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography, Princeton, 1965, p. 161.

"virtuous and religious uses" to satisfy morality, with a full measure of Moll's entertaining adventures to please the public, might have earned the approval of the commercially-minded author himself.

This said, serious students of the novel cannot but regret the zeal with which Schwob wielded his scissors. In his desire to remove all the passages superfluous to the chronicle of Moll's exploits, Schwob omits many details which throw interesting sidelights on the eighteenth-century background, and on Defoe's own life. The first passage sacrificed tells of Moll's experiences in the Mint, where she seeks refuge from creditors after her second husband's bankruptcy⁹⁶. Defoe himself must have made the same kind of observations on the conduct of the debtors when he himself was forced to flee to such places of safety; furthermore, the episode is an example of the irony of fate. Moll, still in her first youth and confidence, announces: "I was not wicked enough for such fellows as these",⁹⁷ and her reflections on her neighbours in their desperate plight are contrasted with her better understanding when she herself is later reduced to penury.

96. Defoe, *op. cit.* pp. 48-49; Schwob, *op. cit.* p. 73; Marion, *op. cit.* pp. 90-92. These writers will be hereafter designated in the notes by their initial.

97. D. p. 49.

The next omission, which seems at first less important, is the story of the captain's fiancée, who wins her husband with Moll's help⁹⁸. It is a digression in the usual tradition of the eighteenth-century novel, but has a certain relevance to the story in that it underlines the economic motive predominant in Defoe, illustrating the sad truth that

"beauty, wit, manners, sense, good humour, good behaviour, education, virtue, piety, or any other qualification, whether of body or mind, had no power to recommend: that money only made a woman agreeable." 99

The problem of the over-large proportion of women doomed to spinsterhood was one of great moment at the time¹⁰⁰, so Defoe was justified in devoting some ten pages to showing hopeful young ladies at least one ingenious way out of their difficulties. In Schwob's day the lesson was not quite so urgent, and the episode could go without any great loss. Schwob left a glaring inconsistency in his version, however, whereby on one page Moll laments that the undissolved legal tie after the flight of her second husband prevents her from contracting a new marriage, while on the next we see her already seeking security in the shape of a third, polygamous spouse. Her change of mind is made less abrupt in the original by the interpolation

98. D. pp. 50-57; S. p. 75; M. pp. 96-106.

99. D. p. 50.

100. See Ian Watt's chapter on Richardson's Pamela in The Rise of the Novel.

of the tale of the captain's fiancée, a practical demonstration to Moll that she dare not continue in her unsupported state.

The interlude of Moll's affair with the gentleman of Bath results in punishment for adultery on both sides, and inspires an abundance of reflections on the folly of giving way to natural but illicit inclinations. These are all expunged by Schwob, who follows literally the words of Defoe:

"but I leave the readers of these things to their own just reflections, which they will be more able to make effectual than I ..." 101

With the stifling of the voice of contrition we lose one dimension of Moll's character, for her final reform is foreshadowed throughout the book. Schwob shows only the impact of the liaison and the desertion of the lover on Moll's material existence: their effect on her conscience is attenuated. Thus the tragedy of the defeat of her good intentions by dire necessity is not allowed its full force. For all her lapses into sin, Moll retains some notion of right and wrong, yet whenever Defoe sets her moral sense to work, Schwob steps in and cuts short the flow of her anguished thoughts. His officiousness is especially noticeable in the period of Moll's stay with the governess at the birth of her child by the fourth husband. Having not yet reached destitution, she is able to judge objectively the sordid business run by her protectress. Her comments are intended as an ironic contrast with the less sensitive attitude she develops when forced to

make a living as a pickpocket, in association with the same woman; and Schwob nullifies Defoe's purpose in suppressing them. Again, Schwob leaves out of this scene of Moll's life her statements on maternal obligations, where incongruously enough, for she herself abandons no less than eleven children she acts as mouthpiece for Defoe's righteous indignation. Her admonitions to undutiful mothers have no bearing on the action, but counteract the reader's previous feelings about her indifference to her offspring¹⁰².

Moll's career as a thief is recounted in a series of loosely-connected incidents, any of which could be cut without serious detriment to the plot. Accordingly Schwob shortens the narrative where he thinks fit, leaving out Moll's advice to the public on avoiding the attentions of her confederates, the history of her governess¹⁰³, the outcome of her first abortive arrest, where her accuser is constrained to pay damages¹⁰⁴, and the ten pages relating her adventures in the gaming houses and her expedition to Harwich¹⁰⁵.

102. D. pp. 139-140; S. p. 197; M. p. 235.

103. D. pp. 172-173; S. p. 249; M. pp. 290-292.

104. D. pp. 206-207; S. p. 296; M. pp. 342-343.

105. D. pp. 212-220; S. p. 304; M. pp. 353-364.

The chapter of Moll's arrest and condemnation abounds in moral meditations which are for the most part drastically pruned in Schwob's translation. The modern reader, as Denis Marion has remarked, is bound to feel that these passages are unwarrantably copious, but they are important both for an understanding of Moll's gradual return to a state of grace and for the general purposes of the novel, that is, its lesson for hardened sinners who might find themselves one day in Moll's situation. Schwob concentrates on the practical business of the horrors of prison life and the securing of a reprieve, although Defoe made it plain that pardon is concomitant with Moll's sincere change of heart.

After the climax of Newgate the interest of the story wanes, and so too, apparently, does Schwob's delight in the "redites exquis de la narratrice", proclaimed in the preface as one of its chief attractions. Several details of Moll's reunion with her fourth husband, the highwayman, their voyage to America and their efforts to restore their fortunes as planters in the colonies, fall away before Schwob's scissors. Anything not strictly relevant is given short shrift, even when the passage concerned runs only to a few lines. It seems that Schwob could hardly wait to get the story out of his way, for his cutting was done in a very arbitrary manner. Conceivably he was pressed for time or forced to make abridgements to fit in with a word-limit, but this would not have prevented him from restoring the missing passages in the book. It is

just as likely that he finally lost patience with Defoe's unfailling readiness to preach and decided that the reader should not be left with the impression of a drearily puritan Moll. Significantly, he passes over a paragraph which states Defoe's purpose most clearly:

"As the publishing this account of my life is for the sake of the just moral of every part of it, and for instruction, caution, warning, and improvement to every reader, so this will not pass I hope for an unnecessary digression ..." 106

...

After this survey of the elements of Moll Flanders which did not survive the uprooting from their native soil, we turn to consider the positive merits of the translation presented to the French public. It has already been noted that a commonplace of critical praise was Schwob's "tour de force de la rédiger dans une langue qui pastiche celle du XVIII^e siècle"¹⁰⁷, yet, as in the case of Hamlet, acclaim for this stylistic feat has been tempered by pertinent queries as to whether the brilliant effect of the whole does not cover a multitude of faults of detail. For George Trembley, Schwob's theory of translation, geared as it was to his desire to lose his identity in the world of the past, had no genuinely literary impulse, and could result only in falsity:

"L'idée est intéressante dans son principe, mais c'est une idée d'érudit. En pratique elle conduit Schwob à inventer une langue artificielle, faussement archaïque, qui parfois ne ressemble que de très

106. D. p. 268.

107. M. p. xx.

loin à du français. Sa méthode, en fin de compte, aboutit au mot à mot, à la traduction juxtalinéaire." 108

He presses his point with a list of Schwob's calques:

"j'étais une grande fortune", "nous fûmes réunis ensemble", "ses fortunes étaient faites désespérées", "son coeur s'enfonça", to which one might add "mon doux coeur", "livre ordinaire de prières", "éclater en larmes", etc. Trembley goes so far as to say that "presque tout Moll Flanders serait à citer".

This condemnation is, of course, too sweeping. The modern critic has taken less notice of Schwob's conformities to usage than to the quirks of his style, and marvels at these supposed lapses:

"et l'on s'étonne que l'excellent artiste qu'était Marcel Schwob lorsqu'il écrivait de son propre cru, ait pu commettre entre mille autres ... des phrases dans le genre de celles-ci ..." 109

Our comments on the translation of Hamlet will have shown that Schwob's eccentricities were in fact deliberate, in conformity with the poetic language of his times. Hence his predilection for the unusual term, contrée instead of pays, fardin rather than sou for "farthing"; and the striving after "transparency" in the French text, to allow the reader to sense the underlying English turn of thought and expression. Defoe's novel gave Schwob his first opportunity to practise on a large scale his youthful theories; and as he hints in the preface, the main

108. op. cit. pp. 13-14.

109. ibid. p. 14.

linguistic feature to be found in Moll Flanders is that of speech-structure. Whereas in Hamlet he was to grapple with the rendering of the density, the allusiveness of the poetry in image and in dialogue, here he was faced with a familiar style of extreme diffuseness, a concatenation of phrases and clauses each with some minute circumstance to add to the mosaic of the whole. The heroine, a woman of intuition despite her calculating strain, forms her ideas under the impact of the immediate reality, and recounts her reactions not in a logical, organised manner, but in a web of associated memories and reflections. The overwhelming temptation of the translator is to impose some tautness and lucidity on the narrative in order not to offend against the canons of French style, yet this must necessarily betray the effect sought by Defoe. Schwob's sentences, with their studied lack of elegance, and obvious imitation of the mode of the picaresque novelists, are a faithful representation both of the outpourings of Moll Flanders and of the rhythm and movement of the English text. Direct quotation will best illustrate his technique; we will take an example from one of the heroine's spiritual debates:

"But my own distresses silenced all these reflections, and the prospect of my own starving, which grew every day more frightful to me, hardened my heart by degrees. It was then particularly heavy upon my mind, that I had been reformed, and had, as I hoped, repented of all my past wickedness; that I had lived a sober, grave, retired life for several years, but now I should be driven by the dreadful necessity of my circumstances to the gates of destruction, soul and body; and two or three times I fell upon my knees, praying to God, as well I could, for delivrance; but I cannot but say,

my prayers had no hope in them: I knew not what to do, it was all fear without, and dark within; and I reflected on my past life as not repented of, that heaven was now beginning to punish me, and would make me as miserable as I had been wicked." 110

It will be seen that Schwob does nothing to smooth out the awkwardness and untidiness of this extract, or to remove the expressions which would be redundant in modern French:

"Mais mes propres détresses réduisirent au silence toutes ces réflexions, et la perspective de ma propre faim, qui devenait tous les jours plus terrifiante pour moi, m'endurcit le coeur par degrés. Ce fut alors que pesa surtout sur mon esprit la pensée que j'avais eu des remords et que je m'étais, ainsi que je l'espérais, repentie de tous mes crimes passés; que j'avais vécu d'une vie sobre, sérieuse et retirée pendant plusieurs années, mais que maintenant j'étais poussée par l'affreuse nécessité de mes circonstances jusqu'aux portes de la destruction, âme et corps; et deux ou trois fois je tombai sur mes genoux, priant Dieu, comme bien je le pouvais, pour la délivrance; mais je ne puis m'empêcher de dire que mes prières n'avaient point d'espoir en elles; je ne savais que faire; tout n'était que terreur au dehors et ténèbres au dedans; et je réfléchissais sur ma vie passée comme si je ne m'en fusse pas repentie, et que le ciel commençât maintenant de me punir, et dût me rendre aussi misérable que j'avais été mauvaise." 111

Before passing further comment on Schwob's style, let us see how Denis Marion handles the same passage:

"Mais ma propre détresse fit taire toutes ces réflexions et la perspective de mourir moi-même de faim, qui devenait chaque jour plus redoutable, endurcit mon coeur par degrés. Ce qui m'accablait surtout, c'était que je venais de me corriger et de me repentir, je l'espérais du moins, de toute ma perversité passée; que depuis plusieurs années je menais une vie sérieuse, grave et retirée et que maintenant j'étais poussée par la terrible nécessité de ma situation aux portes de la destruction, tant de l'âme que du corps; et à deux

110. op. cit. p. 156.

111. op. cit. p. 223.

ou trois reprises, je tombai à genoux, priant Dieu de mon mieux pour ma délivrance; mais je ne puis que dire que mes prières étaient sans espoir. Je ne savais que faire, tout était peur au-dehors et ténèbres à l'intérieur; et je réfléchissais que je n'avais pas dû me repentir sincèrement de ma vie passée, puisque le Ciel commençait déjà à me punir de ce côté-ci de la tombe et voulait me rendre aussi malheureuse que j'avais été pervertie." 112

This is certainly easier on the ear than Schwob's version.

"Je l'espérais du moins", "à deux ou trois reprises", "je tombai à genoux", "je ne puis que dire", "dire mon mieux", and "sans espoir" are neater and more idiomatic than Schwob's renderings, and so is the arrangement of the paragraph, with the break in the sentence before "Je ne savais que faire". On the other hand, Schwob comes closer to the spirit of the original: we hear in his words the voice of a despairing woman, her thoughts in turmoil, a prey to temptation. His "pesa sur mon esprit" keeps the force of the image better than Marion's more abstract "accablait"; his plainer vocabulary, "eu des remords" and "vécu d'une vie" is in keeping with Moll's incomplete instruction; the sentence-structure, too, following the disjointed phrasing of the English, conveys the perplexity of the heroine in all its pathos. Schwob, therefore, presents a Moll full of the quivering life bestowed on her by her creator's art; Marion's heroine, by contrast, seems more collected, her emotions blunted by distantiation. Yet the more polished manner of Marion's prose should not be thought to

112. op. cit. p. 264.

show up uncouthness in Schwob. The earlier translator's adoption of an exacting method is sufficient proof of preoccupation with style, and his seemingly unsophisticated language has subtleties absent from the modern work. His "remords" and "vécu d'une vie sobre" recall the formulas of confession from the Book of Common Prayer; by leaving "détresses" in the plural he preserves Defoe's balance with the following "réflexions"; and the key words of the passage are underlined by a discreet use of alliteration: "remords, repentie", "sombre, sérieuse", "terreur au dehors et ténèbres au dedans", "misérable" and "mauvaise".

Paul Dottin attributed the success of Moll Flanders in France to Schwob's translation, which he did not hesitate to call a masterpiece. It is hoped that the foregoing brief analysis of this work will have thrown some light on the special techniques he practised, and accounted for the deviations, baffling at first sight, from theories of translation in vogue today. Thus the modern reader of Defoe's novel is in the fortunate position of being able to choose between two approaches; if his sympathy is more readily engaged by a version couched in the language he is most familiar with, he will find Marion's work preferable, but if he looks for a rendering which may claim to be literature in its own right, he will turn to Schwob. For, as we have seen, the novel had made an intense appeal to his temperament and imagination, and in translating it into his own language, he was reliving

to a certain extent the creative experience which had gone
into the composition of Moll Flanders.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

with 'Lilith', printed on the 9th November 1890 in the Echo de Paris, and published the spring of the following year in Coeur Double, we turn to an early product of Marcel Schwob's literary career. The substance of the tale was furnished by the life and poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, whose legend was then sufficiently established in France to justify Schwob's presentation of him in a kind of vie imaginaire rather than through a conventional study. Born exactly three months after George Meredith, on the 12th May 1828, Rossetti in his lifetime had enjoyed a full measure of the celebrity which was long to elude the novelist. In France as in his own country, he was first known as a painter. Not that he made his name through public showings of his work, for after the critical onslaught on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1850, when the secret of the initials signed on their canvases had been disclosed¹, he determined to hold aloof from public exhibitions and did not join Millais and Holman Hunt as a representative of the new school of painting at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1855². Thus he was not discussed or even

1. See G.H. Fleming, Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1967.

2. Or indeed at the Exhibitions of 1867 or 1878.

mentioned in the controversy over the movement in which such critics as Edmond About, Théophile Gautier and Prosper Mérimée took issue between 1855 and 1857³. Recognition of the talent and sincerity of Hunt and Millais was generally accompanied by regret at their waywardness, and in 1858 the art-critic of the Revue des Deux Mondes solemnly reaffirmed the sacred canons of the disciples of Raphael, forecasting the imminent eclipse of the English heretics: "le préraphaélitisme tombera bientôt dans le discrédit et l'oubli, et, il faut l'avouer, jamais résultat n'aura été plus désirable ni châtement mieux mérité"⁴.

Despite such predictions the Brothers, now each pursuing their individual paths, steadily imposed themselves as the leaders of the most significant tendency in British art. When Rossetti came to Paris in November 1855 he was primarily a tourist, curious to see the great works of Delacroix and Ingres during the last days of the Exposition⁵; whereas it

3. See Edmond About, Voyage à travers l'Exposition des Beaux-Arts, 1855, pp. 25-27; Théophile Gautier, Les Beaux-Arts en Europe, 1855, I 31-43; Prosper Mérimée, 'Les Beaux-Arts en Angleterre', RDM, 15th October 1857, pp. 866-880. Extracts from these articles are to be found in S.N. Ghose, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Contemporary Criticism (1849-1882), Dijon, 1929.

4. Henri Delaborde, 'Les Préraphaélites', RDM, 15th July 1858, pp. 259-260.

5. Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ed. Oswald Doughty and John Robert Wahl, Oxford, 1965, I 277-284.

was as a painter in his own right that he was presented by Whistler to Fantin-Latour in 1864⁶. Thereafter Rossetti was given his due as a founder of the Brotherhood although the respective rôles of the original members and of their champion John Ruskin were but imperfectly distinguished: witness the confusion of Ernest Chesneau, author of Les Nations Rivaies dans l'Art, whose errors were corrected by Rossetti himself in a letter of November 1868⁷. Historical misapprehensions still persisted, but more serious was the difficulty of explaining to a French public the aims of a painter whose works were rarely displayed. Photography was of limited help and Chesneau in 1882 confessed that he had never seen the originals of the paintings of Rossetti under discussion in his La Peinture Anglaise; he was obliged to make enquiries of the artist himself when preparing his book on the Pre-Raphaelite movement⁸.

Thus Rossetti was seen as an éminence grise behind the fashion launched across the Channel in the 1870's by such later exponents of the cause as Walter Crane and Kate Greenaway⁹.

6. *ibid.* II 525-531.

7. Quoted in Edouard Rod, 'Les Préraphaélites Anglais', Études sur le XIX^e Siècle, 1888, pp. 72-73.

8. See Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His Family Letters with a Memoir, by William Michael Rossetti, 1895, I 393.

9. See Phillippe Jullian, Robert de Montesquiou. Un Prince 1900, 1965, p. 122.

Foremost among the devotees was Robert de Montesquiou, after his stay in London in 1884:

"En cette première visite Robert aime les Préraphaélites, avec quelques réserves il est vrai, il trouve fort justement que "les derniers Rossetti sont des Douguereau bizarres", mais Burne-Jones, dont il a admiré au Salon de 1878 le tableau Merlin et Viviane, lui plaît beaucoup. C'est ce peintre lui-même qui le conduit à "l'abbaye-phalanstère" de William Morris où il choisit des tissus ..."10

Stéphane Mallarmé had discovered Pre-Raphaelite art long before Montesquiou, during his year in London from 1862 to 1863, and his pleasure in the paintings was communicated to those who frequented his mardis at the rue de Rome:

"... dans les figures féminines de Hunt, de Burne Jones et de Rossetti, le poète devait aimer les reminiscences des figures idéales de Poe, des poèmes de Tennyson, des rêveries lakistes. Nous étions tous d'ailleurs, en cette période de 1890-1893, séduits par le même mirage. Nous avions tous sous les yeux les photographies de la Beata Beatrix, du Miroir de Venus, du Roi Cophetua / ... / Tout cela ravissait notre imagination de symbolistes et de wagnériens ..." 11

In the case of Mallarmé and Montesquiou there was later a reaction against the Pre-Raphaelites, largely on account of Whistler, whose art, together with that of the Impressionists, they came to prefer, and who was scathing in his denunciation of Rossetti, his former friend¹². At the time when Schwob

10. *ibid.* p. 127.

11. Camille Mauclair, Mallarmé chez lui, p. 72.

12. See Horace Gregory, The World of James McNeill Whistler, 1961, p. 186, and H. Rossetti Angeli, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His Friends and Enemies, 1949, pp. 126-130.

was composing his tale, there were still few dissident voices: Rossetti both as painter and poet commanded the respect of many connaisseurs¹³.

Poems, Rossetti's first book of original¹⁴ verse, was published in 1870, and the almost unanimous praise of the English critics found an echo in the Revue Britannique where Amédée Pichot singled out the most striking feature of the volume:

"M. Rossetti montre un goût prononcé pour les sujets étranges, comme par exemple dans le Berceau d'Eden, où, adoptant une tradition talmudique, il donne à Adam une première épouse avant Eve, Lilith, une femme-esprit ... " 15

Pichot was no less fascinated with 'The Blessed Damozel', for him one of Rossetti's remarkable 'saintes un peu païennes'.

Among the first English critics of Rossetti's poetry was H. Buxton Forman, whose study in Our Living Poets of 1871,

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13. Gabriel Mourey, in his D.-G. Rossetti et les Préraphaélites Anglais, (1910), remarked on the general lack of understanding for the school in France: "malgré les efforts tentés par quelques écrivains d'art [...] les amateurs la dédaignent et les artistes la méprisent, sans connaître, d'ailleurs, les oeuvres qu'elle a produites". op. cit. p. 5.
14. Rossetti had previously published The Early Italian Poets in 1861; this was his volume of translations from the poets of Dante's times.
15. 'Correspondance de Londres', La Revue Britannique, June 1870, p. 560.

caught the eye of Emile Blémont and was thus the starting-point of 'L'Ecole Préraphaélite', one of the important series of articles on English poets which Blémont published in La Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique in 1872¹⁶. With this detailed source of information Blémont was able to give a short outline of Rossetti's career and fuller appreciations of the poems. Like Pichot he was attracted by 'The Blessed Damozel', 'A Last Confession', 'Jenny', 'Sister Helen', - "une merveille de poésie passionnelle [...] qui flotte entre le ciel et l'enfer", and the sonnets of 'The House of Life'. Rossetti reminded Blémont of Sully Prudhomme in his intensity and loftiness of thought and in the perfection of his form, and he concluded: "Rossetti n'est pas un Titan, mais il est un poète complet; nous n'osons pas dire parfait. Il a le triple don du sentiment, de la pensée et de l'harmonie"¹⁷. After these two intelligent and sympathetic articles, Léo Quesnel's survey of 'La Poésie au XIX^e Siècle en Angleterre', in Le Correspondant, March 1878, crammed into three pages of commentary on Rossetti almost every conceivable prejudice and error: the poet was summarily dismissed as "malade d'esprit et de coeur"¹⁸. His reputation was more than restored when Joseph

16. See M.E. Schreiner, 'Emile Blémont et la Renaissance Littéraire et Artistique', Doctorat d'Université, Sorbonne, 1953, pp. 135-136.

17. op. cit., 27th July 1872, p. 108.

18. op. cit. 10th March 1878, p. 810.

Knight, the friend and future biographer of Rossetti, contributed to Le Livre an article on his career and on the recently published Ballads and Sonnets. No doubt was left on his position in contemporary literature:

"Parmi les auteurs modernes de sonnets en Angleterre, M. Rossetti a droit à la première place. Pour trouver les mêmes qualités que dans ses ouvrages, il faut s'adresser aux sonnets de Shakespeare, de Milton ou de Wordsworth".¹⁹

After the death of Rossetti in 1882 interest in his poetry was sustained in France by a number of distinguished admirers of English letters. Paul Bourget, visiting Oxford in the spring of 1883, was moved by the sight of the faded frescoes of the Debating Hall of the Union Building²⁰ to pen a warm tribute to their chief designer, with ample reference to the recent biography of Rossetti by William Sharp²¹, and to the poems 'Eden Bower', 'The Blessed Damozel', 'Jenny', and the sonnet-sequence 'The House of Life'.²² Two years later Gabriel Sarrazin

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19. 'Correspondances Etrangères', Le Livre, 10th December 1881, p. 723.
20. For an account of the "Jovial Campaign" of 1857 see Oswald Doughty, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. A Victorian Romantic, New Haven, 1949, pp. 224-242.
21. See Ian D. McFarlane, 'Paul Bourget et l'Angleterre', Doctorat d'Université, Sorbonne, 1950, p. 55; pp. 78-79 for the acquaintance of Bourget with William Sharp and William Michael Rossetti; and p. 171.
22. 'Sensations d'Oxford', La Nouvelle Revue XIV (1883) pp. 557-599; reprinted in Etudes et Portraits, 1889, II 175-236.

in his Poètes Modernes de l'Angleterre was to dwell on these same key poems, giving long extracts of 'Jenny', and the whole of 'The Blessed Damozel', in translation²³. He underlined Rossetti's debt to the Italian Primitives for his image of beauty in woman, and his revival of "the old ecstasy of Dante":

"A une époque où l'idée de l'amour s'est appauvrie ou matérialisée, où l'invasion des mille petits besoins de l'esprit bourgeois, s'implantant sur la ruine totale des deux ou trois grands instincts de l'esprit chevaleresque, a tué pour jamais les passions dont vivaient les amoureux de la Renaissance [...]
Rossetti est un des seuls à oser réarborer, en parfaite sincérité de coeur, le grand Amour extatique des moines et des chevaliers." 24

The appeal of the Pre-Raphaelites was not unheard in a society debased by sordid interests and industrial squalor. Their evocation of a world of purer values and richer aesthetic sensations gave heart to a rising generation of writers, among them Maurice Maeterlinck: in 1886, against a background of social strife in Belgium, he took refuge in the mediaevalism of the English poets and painters. His first plays, La Princesse Maleine and Les Sept Princesses, were permeated with Pre-Raphaelitism, and his Douze Chansons, printed in reviews from 1891 onwards, appear to have been first entitled 'La Quenouille et la Besace' - a reminiscence of Rossetti's ballad

23. Which latter was set to music by Claude Debussy: see McFarlane, op. cit. p. 182.

24. Sarrazin, op. cit. pp. 244-245.

'The Staff and Scrip'.²⁵

...

Details of Schwob's first readings of Rossetti are exceptionally scanty. The name may have been known to him from his adolescence, when the Pre-Raphaelite fashion was at its height, and he doubtless heard of Clémence Couve's translation of 'The House of Life', published in 1887 with a preface by Josephin Péladan. At that time Schwob was too attracted by the vigorous, open-air school of American writers to pause over the more sophisticated charms of Rossetti. Quite conceivably he had little or no acquaintance with the poems when he made his derogatory reference to their author in his first article on Robert Louis Stevenson²⁶. A change of attitude may have been brought about by his discovery of Rossetti's 'Three Translations from François Villon'²⁷, for in his second article on Stevenson, Schwob specifically mentions these versions²⁸. The catalogue of his

25. See W.D. Halls, Maurice Maeterlinck, Oxford, 1960, passim.

26. See Appendix F.

27. 'The Ballad of Dead Ladies', 'To Death, of his Lady', 'His Mother's Service to Our Lady', appeared in the Poems of 1870 and in The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ed. W.M. Rossetti, 1886, II 461-464.

28. See Appendix G. Schwob's study of Villon in the RDM of the 15th July 1892 also mentions these translations: see Spicilege, 1960, p. 7.

library lists only one volume of Rossetti, the 1892 reissue of Dante and his Circle, and only one documentary source, the Rossetti Papers (1862-1870), edited by William Michael Rossetti²⁹, which did not appear, however, until 1903. We may presume that Schwob used the 1886 Collected Works, again edited by the poet's brother, which provided texts of the greater number of the original verse and the translations, together with an important biographical preface; and perhaps also the monographs of William Sharp³⁰ and Hall Caine, both of 1882, and that of Joseph Knight, 1887. By the time he came to write 'Lilith' a fair amount of information about the poet's life was readily available, but public curiosity was whetted by allusions to matters too delicate to be broached. Rossetti remained a figure enveloped in an aura of mystery, "une sorte de créature imaginaire", as Knight had remarked ten years before³¹.

29. It is curious that Schwob should have come by W.M. Rossetti's presentation copy of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass, the New York edition of 1867: see Appendix A, item 346. W.M. Rossetti was one of the first to publicise Whitman's works in England, editing the Poems in 1868.

30. A friend of Rossetti, known to the world as the poetess "Fiona McLeod". His name appears in Champion's list of Schwob's English correspondents, CPC 5133.2, without any details of the subjects treated in the letters.

31. op. cit. p. 723.

His reluctance to exhibit his paintings, his reticence over the inspiration of his later love-poetry, coupled with the strange circumstances of the recovery of the manuscripts of his poems in 1869, were responsible for the circulation of wild rumours in his last secluded years:

"a host of distorted legends sprang up round the name of Rossetti, exaggerating all that was morbid, darkening every shadow, dwelling mainly on his lapses from conventional standards, and substituting for the brave, genial, robust personality, which the chosen friends still discerned under the overshadowing of doom, an affected, decadent, fantastic figure, posturing in a gloomy danse macabre, or wandering in an airless labyrinth of poisonous loveliness." 32

It was this image of the poet that appealed to Schwob's imagination. The Pre-Raphaelite was seen through the eyes of a post-Decadent; only a few weeks before publishing 'Lilith' Schwob had written of the Zeitgeist in his 'Portes de l'Opium':

"On était lassé de bien des sentiments avant de les avoir éprouvés; plusieurs se laissaient attirer vers un gouffre d'ombres mystiques et inconnues: d'autres étaient possédés par la passion de l'étrange, par la recherche quintessenciée de sensations nouvelles ..." 33

In writing his tales for Coeur Double, Schwob was to reveal his own taste for the rare and mysterious, the violent and the perverted. Rossetti was thus to undergo a curious change in his hands, emerging as a fit companion for the tormented Poe'sque heroes of his first collection of tales.

...

32. Arthur C. Benson, Rossetti, 1904, pp.1-2.

33. Coeur Double, 1891, pp. 95-96.

At the beginning of this chapter 'Lilith' was termed a vie imaginaire of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and indeed it presents a number of analogies with the later 'Life of Cyril Tourneur'. These two pseudo-biographies of English authors make full use of the technique of selecting and elaborating vivid incidents from their careers and writings. The heroes of the plays or poems become identified with their creator: Cyril Tourneur acts out the rôles of D'Amville and Vendice, and Rossetti is shown as the lover of the women in his songs and ballads. The style of the tales is made to harmonise with the action. Just as Tourneur's life is "violemment mise en scène à la manière de Cyril Tourneur", so the macabre deeds of the fictional Rossetti are recounted by Schwob, with admirable resourcefulness, in a pastiche of Poe's stories of disinterred ladies.

Schwob's skill in composition may best be determined by a preliminary unravelling of the various strands he has brought together: the biographical material, the elements taken from Rossetti's works, those from Poe, and finally his own contribution. It will be seen that Schwob frequently modifies his data, making it difficult to draw a line between his direct transcriptions, his intentional fantasy and his misconceptions. His purpose was primarily artistic, to present a coherent image of the poet, logical even in its romance, rather than a scrupulously exact biographical study. It was the spirit of the man as he conceived it that he set out to convey.

The story opens with a glimpse of the influences in literature and art which shaped in the mind of the young Rossetti a certain ideal of woman:

"Il avait longtemps étudié Dante et Pétrarque; les formes de Béatrice et de Laure flottaient devant ses yeux et les divins vers où resplendit le nom de Françoise de Rimini chantaient à ses oreilles." 34

A slight knowledge of the family background would certainly lead to this assumption. Gabriele Rossetti, the poet's father, had been appointed first Professor of Italian literature at King's College London in 1831: obliged to flee the Austrian tyranny in his native land, he devoted the rest of his life to the elucidation of the Divine Comedy, which he believed to be a political, anti-Papal allegory with occultist overtones³⁵. This obsession resulted in his son's early aversion for Dante:

"our father's speculations and talk about Dante - which, although he highly valued the poetry as such, all took an abstruse or theoretic turn - rather alienated my brother than otherwise, and withheld him from "looking up" the Florentine, to see whether the poems were things readable." 36

After this inauspicious beginning Rossetti developed a passionate

34. *ibid.* p. 87.

35. See Joseph Knight, Life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1887, pp. 12-13, and E.R. Vincent, Gabriele Rossetti in England, Oxford, 1936.

36. Family Letters, I 63-64; Collected Works, I xxvi. See also B.J. Morse, 'D.G. Rossetti and Dante Alighieri', Englische Studien, 1933, pp. 227-248.

interest not only in Dante but in his predecessors and contemporaries, the poets of the Sicilian and Tuscan schools of the thirteenth century. From 1845 he spent long hours in the British Museum copying out and translating their almost forgotten works, and by 1849 his versions of The Early Italian Poets, together with Dante's Vita Nuova, were circulating in manuscript among his friends. The volume was finally published at Ruskin's expense in 1861, and represents not only an exceptional felicity in rendering the spirit and form of the originals but also a considerable feat of scholarship considering the youth of the writer and the lack of preceding research. As for Petrarch, although Rossetti adopted the balanced Petrarchan form for his sonnets, no such devotion as Schwob claims was bestowed on the singer of Laura, if we are to believe the words of William Michael Rossetti:

"Of Italian poets he earnestly loved none save Dante: Cavalcanti in his degree, and also Poliziano and Michelangelo - not Petrarca, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Tasso, or Leopardi, though in boyhood he delighted well enough in Ariosto." 37

Schwob's error is, of course, unimportant except in that it reveals his desire to link his subject with the two supreme Italian poets of spiritual and bodily beauty in women. It is hardly necessary to add that Schwob himself was a lifelong

37. Collected Works, I xxvii-xxviii. See also F. Clivero, Il Petrarca e D.G. Rossetti, Florence, 1933.

student of Dante, recalling in the spring of 1905 his childhood readings of the Inferno "le matin avant cinq heures"³⁸, and talking about the poet in his last conversations with Byvanck³⁹. The fragments published after his death were entitled Il Libro della mia Memoria - a phrase taken from the Vita Nuova.

Schwob's attribution to Rossetti of an unbounded admiration for Correggio may likewise be a projection of his own love of the paintings discovered in the Louvre:

"Il avait passionnément aimé dans la première ardeur de sa jeunesse les vierges tourmentées du Corrège, dont les corps voluptueusement épris du ciel ont des yeux qui désirent, des bouches qui palpitent et appellent douloureusement l'amour." 40

Rossetti himself even in his maturity seems never to have overcome his contempt for the master, prejudiced from his youth against a technique which he found deficient. Through the acquisition of a manuscript notebook of William Blake in April 1847 he would have seen Correggio exposed to withering scorn⁴¹, and he did no more than echo Blake's distaste when after his last walk round the Louvre with Holman Hunt during their visit of

38. 'Le Livre et le Lit', in Mimes, 1964, p. 173.

39. 'Marcel Schwob', De Gids, May 1905, p. 336. Schwob's library contained a number of precious editions of Dante: see Catalogue, pp. 82-86.

40. This is hardly an exact impression of Correggio's Virgins: Schwob's lines should be compared with his early poem, 'La Madone Amoureuse', OC I 191-193.

41. The Note-Book of William Blake called the Rossetti Manuscript, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, 1935, p. 79.

October 1849, he penned this 'Cry of the P.R.B., after a careful examination of the canvases of Rubens, Correggio, et hoc genus omne:'

"Non noi pittori! God of Nature's truth,
If these, not we!

...

Because, dear God! the flesh Thou madest smooth
These carked and fretted, that it seemed to run
With ulcers; and the daylight of thy sun
They parcelled into blots and glares, uncouth
With stagnant grouts of paint ..." 42

Schwob's lines on Raphael also seem to be the reflection of his personal preferences at a more settled age:

"Plus tard, il admira la pâle splendeur humaine
des figures de Raphaël, et leur sourire paisible,
et leur contentement virginal".

His taste coincided with that of Rossetti in this case, although the painter appears to have been less taken with the religious subjects than with the portraits: we find him expressing his enthusiasm for a head of François Premier, to which the above description would hardly apply. Schwob's rather approximative account of Rossetti's predilections in art comes to a strange conclusion:

"Mais lorsqu'il fut lui-même, il choisit pour maître,
comme Dante, Brunetto Latini, et vécut dans son
siècle, où les faces rigides ont l'extraordinaire
béatitude des paradis mystérieux."

The unwary reader might imagine Brunetto to be a painter, although Schwob, conversant with the fifteenth Canto of

42. Family Letters, II 71-72.

the Inferno, knew full well that he was "un grand philosophe et un maître éminent de rhétorique"⁴³, once supposed to be the master of the young Dante. One is puzzled to see Rossetti described as his disciple: the connection has escaped the biographers and the only mention of the author of the Tesoro in his works is in the translation of the sonnet accompanying the Vita Nuova, "Messer Brunetto questa pulzelletta"⁴⁴. A more logical choice would surely have been Giotto, especially as Rossetti had chosen as the subject of one of his canvases Giotto painting the portrait of Dante on the wall of the Bargello⁴⁵. Schwob's caprice must be accepted as a device to focus attention on his hero's progressive withdrawal from the recognisably modern and humanist world of the post-Renaissance to the remote and spiritualised sphere of the Middle Ages. Thus he indicates the two poles of Rossetti's

43. See Dante, La Divine Comédie, éd. Alexandre Masseron, 1964, vol. I, Chant XV, ll.22-124 and notes.

44. Collected Works, II 96. See the Poems and Translations by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ed. Edmund G. Gardner, 1954, p. 401: "The Messer Brunetto of this sonnet is not Brunetto Latini, but Betto Brunelleschi, the leader of the gay fellowship who desired the company of Guido Cavalcanti in Boccaccio's well-known novella (Decameron, vi. 9). If the sonnet is really by Dante, the "little maid" probably refers to one of his philosophical canzoni."

45. See the reproduction in H.C. Marillier, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1899, facing p. 43.

nature: the mystic strain which had produced 'The Blessed Damozel' and the pictures of his youth, 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin' and 'Ecce Ancilla Domini', and then the sensuous languor of the sonnet 'Body's Beauty' and the paintings of the "women and flowers" period.

The same movement from flesh to spirit is shown in the chronicle of the poet's loves. The women chosen for Rossetti by Schwob were the heroines of the songs already distinguished by the French critics, illustrative of the alliance of strangeness and beauty - Jenny, Sister Helen, Rose Mary and Lilith. The use of this latter name for the title of his tale, the two lines from 'Eden Bower' quoted in the rubric -

"Not a drop of her blood was human,
But she was made like a soft sweet woman" -

indicate, however, that before the final synthesis, the body will take precedence over the soul. Some justification for this emphasis was to be found in the poetry of Rossetti: a French reader might well wonder at the diligence with which biographers, with the exception of Joseph Knight, played down his evocations of the physical joys and torments of love in favour of its sublimated ardours⁴⁶. For them, the only women

46. The reason might well have been reluctance to reawaken the controversy over Rossetti's leadership of a supposed "Fleshly School of Poetry". For an account of Robert Buchanan's attack on Rossetti and its disastrous results, see Rosalie Glynn Grylls, Portrait of Rossetti, 1964, pp. 146-154.

in the poet's life was the ethereal Lizzie Siddal whom he met in 1850 and who was his wife for two years, dying in 1862. Schwob's bestowal on Rossetti of four premarital, if chiefly cerebral amours, was nearer the truth. From about 1856 Lizzie was unhappily aware that she had a rival in Fanny Cornforth, the model for many of Rossetti's paintings for the next ten years. William Michael Rossetti, giving only the slightest hint of her relationship to his brother, described her as "a pre-eminently fine woman, with regular and sweet features, and a mass of the most lovely blonde hair - light-golden or 'harvest yellow'."⁴⁷ Fanny was undoubtedly the Lilith of both the poems and paintings⁴⁸, and Schwob was shrewd in his adoption of her attributes for his own tale. The combination of the blue eyes and golden hair of innocence, and the sensual allurements of the witch, were to epitomise his conception of the phase of dark and ill-fated delights in Rossetti.

47. Family Letters, I 203.

48. See R.L. Megroz, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1928, pp. 188, 230, and the reproduction of the painting 'Lady Lilith' in Marillier, op. cit. facing p. 133. Megroz discusses the two strains in his chapters 'Dante and the Divine Woman', and 'The "Fleshly" Poet'.

The original poems were variations on the theme of the betrayed woman and her reactions: withered sensibility, an anguished yearning for the old integrity, or the implacable thirst for vengeance. Only through the consciousness of his heroines did Rossetti allow a glimpse of the lovers or of the exotic background. The narrative structure of Schwob's tale demanded a different approach. He had no space to allow the gradual building up of a situation through reminiscence, meditation or allusion: his need to convey the beguilements of the women rather than their sufferings led him to condense and modify the action so as to bring into relief their lures, the trappings of witch-craft, and their baneful treatment of the seducer. Since Rossetti himself was the hero of the tale Schwob was obliged also to give the shadowy lovers, especially those of Jenny and Sister Helen, a solid form, elevating them to an importance more commensurate with that of the women.

The first of the poet's fictive loves is Jenny,
 Whose eyes are as blue pools, whose hair
 Is countless gold incomparable." 49

Here Schwob underlines the duality of the prostitute, the contrast between outward purity, "son front candide qui semblait ignorant du péché", and the inner degradation. The narrator of the poem, a mere reflective observer of the

49. Collected Works, I 83.

sleeping girl, becomes in the story Jenny's lover, taking on substance through this more involved rôle which causes his suffering: "ce fut un amant triste et rêveur; il cherchait l'expression de la volupté avec une âcreté enthousiaste." The new prominence of the man is reinforced by Schwob's elaboration of the lover's only intervention in the poem:

" I lay among your golden hair,
 Perhaps the subject of your dreams,
 These golden coins.
 For still one deems
 That Jenny's flattering sleep confers
 New magic on the magic purse, -
 Grim web, how clogged with shrivelled flies!
 ...
 Ah Jenny, yes, we know your dreams." 50

Jenny, although a "fallen woman", and as such of peculiar interest to the Victorian age, has affinities with the "vierges tourmentées" of Correggio - the most modern of the painters appreciated by Schwob's Rossetti: the link is accentuated by the alteration of her temperament from "lazy, laughing, languid", to "nerveuse et passionnée". A correspondence in time likewise exists between the religious fervour depicted in the works of the Tuscan Primitives and the supernatural glamour of Sister Helen and Rose Mary, emanations from a world of legend. In contrast with the immediate human appeal conferred on his contemporary figures, Schwob operates a noticeable distantiation between the reader and the mediaeval

50. *ibid.* pp. 92-93.

characters. The "faces rigides" of the saints in bliss are a mark of their dissociation from mortal cares: Sister Helen and Rose Mary are stated unequivocally to be figments of the poet's imagination - "filles des temps superstitieux, qui envôûtaient leurs amants, ayant été abandonnées par eux." Whereas Rossetti with passionate insight had explored the pathos of their plight, Schwob discards all psychological delineation, preserving only the material symbols of sorcery - the melting wax image, the beryl globe with its spirit tenants. Again, the character of the false lover of Sister Helen is substantiated by the addition of an original detail of somewhat Swinburnian masochism which foreshadows the demonic tendency to be displayed in the climax of the tale.

The extreme limit of Rossetti's "cosmic homesickness"⁵¹ is reached at the dawn of creation:

"It was Lilith, the wife of Adam ..."

Once more it is the remote, primaeval aspect of the temptress which is captured by Schwob. 'Eden Bower' and two other poems on the Lilith theme had dwelt on the insinuating, paralysing charms of the eternal feminine: Rossetti's translation of the lines from Goethe's Faust ran thus -

"Hold out thy heart against her shining hair,
If, by thy fate, she spread it once for thee;
For, when she nets a young man in that snare,
So twines she him he never may be free." 52

51. See William Gaunt, The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy, 1942, p. 145.

52. Collected Works, II 469, 519.

'Body's Beauty', the sonnet written for the painting 'Lady Lilith', stresses her indolent grace:

"And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold." 53

No such veil of enticing beauty is cast by Schwob over his Lilith; nothing remains of her drama of jealousy and blandishment in his bare, dispassionate statement of her elemental nature and function:

"Elle ne fut pas faite de terre rouge, comme Ève, mais de matière inhumaine; elle avait été semblable au serpent, et ce fut elle qui tenta le serpent pour tenter les autres."

With Lilith, then, Schwob reaches the culmination of the movement traced through the course of Rossetti's loves. The appearance of fresh and innocent beauty which had clothed the corrupted Jenny is gradually stripped away to reveal the underlying core of age-old sin. The rôle of the hero, amplified with Jenny and Sister Helen, diminishes and is finally absorbed in that of mankind as a whole, the victim of the witch's universal malevolence. The fundamental sterility of the flesh is implied in the terseness of his lines on Lilith, yet even in this ultimate rejection he recognises the immanence of the sorceress in woman. Betrayed and suffering, she has shared also in the sorrows of the flesh and must seek assuagement. A creature of instinct, she engages in an eternal exploitation

53. *ibid.* I 216.

of her bodily loveliness to beguile the race of Adam into the common woe. In her, unearthly malignance and helpless submission to the human condition unite, and in posing the problem in these terms, Schwob already gives a hint of another way out of the quandary. His passage on Lilith is therefore crucial in the structure of the tale, representing the crisis where the pendulum passes from terror to pity⁵⁴; and pity, for Rossetti, will be incarnated in a spiritual counterpart of the previous beloved:

"Il lui parut qu'elle était plus vraiment femme, et la première, de sorte que la fille du Nord qu'il aima finalement dans cette vie, et qu'il épousa, il lui donna le nom de Lilith."

Thus the soul is delivered from the body, yet is fashioned in its image. Its outward form is that of the fleshly ideal - the new Lilith is described in the very words that Rossetti in his poem had used for Jenny: "Elle avait les yeux de la couleur du ciel, et sa longue chevelure blonde était lumineuse"⁵⁵.

54. See his preface to Coeur Double, p. xi: "L'homme devient pitoyable, après avoir ressenti toutes les terreurs, après les avoir rendues concrètes en les incarnant dans ces pauvres êtres qui en souffrent."

55. Joseph Knight, op. cit. p. 70 had particularly mentioned that Lizzie Siddal's hair was "of a deep bronzed red". That Rossetti had a preference in youth for this colour of hair transpires from this letter of Mrs. Gaskell, of October 1859: "... if a particular kind of reddish brown, crepe-wavy hair came in, he was away in a moment struggling for an introduction to the owner of said head of hair". Quoted in Grylls, op. cit. p. 42.

The portrait of Lizzie blends concrete physical elements with suggestions of evanescent beauty:

"sa voix avait le doux son des choses qui sont près de se briser; tous ses gestes étaient tendres comme des lissements de plume."

Already the reader perceives the insubstantiality of Lizzie: like the other heroines, she partakes only in appearance of the reality of the world, and it comes as no surprise to learn of Rossetti's attitude to her:

"Et si souvent elle avait l'air d'appartenir à un monde différent de celui d'ici-bas qu'il la regardait comme une vision."

The thematic link with the opening of the tale is here apparent. Lizzie will be to Rossetti what Beatrice and Laura were to Dante and Petrarch. On earth as in heaven, to which she already seems to aspire, she will be the inspiration of his poetry.

And indeed the narrative continues with an account of the composition of the sonnets from 'The House of Life'. Still adapting freely from Rossetti's literary career, Schwob asserts that the sequence followed the story of his passion - perhaps basing his claim on Hall Caine's words, that "the poems he had written, so far as they were poems of love, were chiefly inspired by and addressed to her."⁵⁶ Later

56. T. Hall Caine, Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, London, 1882, p. 44.

critics and more precise bibliographers have queried this attractive notion as the sonnets for the most part belong to a later period and are believed to sing of a different passion⁵⁷. Dante Gabriel and later William Michael Rossetti were somewhat evasive in the dating of these poems in the various editions⁵⁸ but there was no denying the fact that nearly half the contents of the definitive 'House of Life' were absent from the 1870 volume⁵⁹, and probably did not spring directly from an attachment to Lizzie. For reasons of artistic unity, however, Schwob ignored the evidence of W.M. Rossetti's notes, and through the use of a fitting metaphor - "l'oeuvre était semblable à un missel patiemment illuminé" presented the book as the outcome of a mystic love.

The death of Lilith is likewise borrowed in substance from historical fact, but much embellished in the relation.

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57. See the Poems, ed. Oswald Doughty; 1957, pp. xv, and the editor's more lengthy treatment of the problem in his biography, pp. 369-392. R. Glynn Grylls, basing her theories on recently available documents, has come to different conclusions about the outcome of Rossetti's love for Jane Morris: op. cit. pp. 235-240.
58. Grylls, op. cit. pp. 184-185.
59. See W.M. Rossetti's notes in Collected Works, I 516-518, with his list of the sonnets appearing in 1870 and 1881.

The consumption which had long threatened Lizzie's life, the laudanum which ended it while her husband was absent, are passed over by Schwob in favour of a conventional death-bed scene.

Her last words are borrowed directly from 'The Blessed Damozel':

"The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven

...

She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge ...

I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light ...

There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me: -
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, - only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he." 60

These lines, according to Schwob, inspired the immediate composition of the eponymous poem, "le plus beau joyau dont on eût jamais paré une morte". He continues with the direct transcription of other verses, setting the scene of the lover's vision of the beloved, long after her death, awaiting him in heaven

"her day
Had counted as ten years.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

She gazed and listened and then said

...

"All this is when he comes"

...

Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.)

...

And then she cast her arms along

The golden barriers,

And laid her face between her hands,

And wept. (I heard her tears.)" 61

So ended the poetic life of Rossetti, according to his French biographer - with a cavalier disregard for the truth, since 'The Blessed Damozel', written in 1848 and published in 1850, had strictly no connection with Lizzie; if the first, it was by no means the last of his lyrics. Schwob's episode of the burial of the manuscript of this and other poems seems to be derived from Hall Caine:

"At her request he had copied them into a little book presented to him for the purpose, and on the day of the funeral he walked into the room where the body lay, [...] saying, as he held the book, that the works it contained were written for her and for her, and she must take them with her for they could not remain when she had gone. Then he put the volume into the coffin between her cheek and beautiful hair, and it was that day buried with her in Highgate Cemetery." 62

At this point Schwob all but parts company with the records of Rossetti's existence in a dénouement of mounting hallucination and horror. The brief interlude with Lilith over, the tone of

61. idem.

62. op. cit. pp. 44-45.

demonic obsession is resumed, and Schwob shows his hero roaming far from home in an effort to escape the scenes which would recall his dead love. Rossetti himself moved no farther than from Blackfriar's Bridge to Cheyne Walk, making Tudor House his residence for the rest of his days except for his stay at Kelmscott House from 1872 to 1874 and for various excursions in search of health. Nor did his demeanour betray preoccupation with the past, at least according to the testimony of his brother:

"Certainly many tender and some dreadful memories haunted him; but it would be useless to fancy or to suggest that he was at this time, or for some years to come, a personification of settled melancholy." 63

So far from being pursued by morbid visions, Rossetti entered into a most fruitful period of creative work, especially in painting, and produced the series of canvases which established his fame.

The motives which Schwob adduces for the recovery of the manuscripts, two years and not seven, after the death of Lizzie, are however warranted by the facts. He had insisted on the enormity of the sacrifice both of "son immortalité terrestre" and "l'espoir des temps futurs", thus anticipating the words of William Michael Rossetti:

"Rossetti thus not only renounced any early or definite hopes of poetic fame, which had always been a ruling passion with him, but he also

63. Family Letters, I 234.

abandoned a project already distinctly formulated and notified; for, as we have seen, a forthcoming volume of his original poems was advertised in The Early Italian Poets." 64

It was certainly "l'âcreté de la gloire perdue" which prompted Rossetti to undo his earlier act. In recent years many of his friends had published volumes of poetry - William Morris, Meredith, Swinburne, his own sister Christina. Stimulated then by "reluctance that his light should be permanently hid under a bushel"⁶⁵ he made arrangements for the family tomb to be opened, and since the step was taken at the encouragement of friends it was to them that he entrusted the formalities and the business of removing and disinfecting the book. He saw nothing of the opening of the grave by torchlight on the 10th October 1869, and the manuscript was not handed to him until several days after the disinterment⁶⁶. These details, though macabre enough in themselves, did not completely satisfy

64. *ibid.* p. 225.

65. William Michael Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti as Designer and Writer, 1889, p. 150.

66. See Family Letters, I 270-275. W.M. Rossetti observed that his brother's poetic ambitions had revived even before his visit to Penkill in September 1868, and that he was thus receptive to the proposals of disinterment made by Alice Boyd and William Bell Scott. Other friends who urged him on were the solicitor Henry Virtue Tebbs and Charles Augustus Howell, who were present at the exhumation. The book was disinfected by a Dr Llewellyn Williams.

Schwob's imagination, and we shall see that he found an even more dramatic preliminary to the publication of the 1870 Poems.

...

we have already said that the influence of Edgar Allan Poe is discernible in 'Lilith', and the importance of the American writer in Schwob's early fiction may be realised more clearly through a glance at the contents of Coeur Double. 'Le Train 081', 'Les Sans-geule', 'Arachné', 'L'Homme Double', 'L'Homme Voilé', 'Béatrice' and 'Lilith', though published in the Echo in a different order, along with other disparate tales, form in the volume an obviously cohesive group⁶⁷. Of these, 'Arachné', 'Béatrice' and 'Lilith' all revolve round the theme of women casting their spell over their lover even after death, and are obviously imitated from Poe's triad of 'Berenice', 'Ligeia', and 'Morella'. Indeed, a reader unaware of the history of Rossetti might easily take Schwob's tale for an original invention, while following the pattern of character and narrative set by Poe. The only extraneous feature would be the four early loves of Rossetti, but even these might be justified by the example of the divided loyalties of the hero of 'Ligeia'.

67. For a study of Poe's influence on Schwob, see Léon Lemonnier, 'L'Influence d'Edgar Poe sur les Conteurs Français Symbolistes et Décadents', Revue de Littérature Comparée, 1933, pp. 102-133.

Thus Schwob begins with a review of Rossetti's learning and culture: in Poe, we have the "rare learning" of Ligeia, the "profound erudition" of Morella. The description of the person of Lilith corresponds to the preoccupations of Poe in describing his heroines: not only the physical features, but their voice and manner:

"I would in vain attempt to portray the majesty, the quiet ease of her demeanour, or the incomprehensible lightness and elasticity of her footfall. She came and departed as a shadow. I was never made aware of her entrance into my closed study, save by the dear music of her low sweet voice, as she placed her marble hand upon my shoulder ... And at such moments was her beauty - in my heated fancy it thus appeared perhaps - the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth ..." 68

Lilith, like Poe's Eleanora and other heroines, languishes into an early death:

"She had seen that the finger of Death was upon her bosom - that, like the ephemeron, she had been made perfect in loveliness only to die ..." 69

As in 'Morella' there is a death-bed conversation between husband and wife, where the course of the future is foretold⁷⁰. Poe, unlike Schwob, does not dwell on the details of the

68. The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. John H. Ingram, Edinburgh, 1874-1875, I 372-373.

69. *ibid.* p. 367.

70. *ibid.* pp. 390-391.

entombment but passes on rapidly to observe the hero's state of mind after his bereavement. This phase is more fully developed in Schwob than in Poe, for his hero has no distraction from his meditations. The flight and travels of Rossetti are perhaps a reminiscence of a passage in 'Ligeia':

"She died, and I, crushed into the very dust with sorrow, could no longer endure the lonely desolation of my dwelling in the dim and decaying city by the Rhine ... After a few months therefore of weary and aimless wandering, I purchased, and put in some repair, an abbey, which I shall not name, in one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England." 71

The most striking parallel both in content and in style occurs in the narration of the disinterment of the manuscript from Lilith's grave. The incident is recounted not directly but through a flashback, permitting the horror of the hero's consequent emotions to precede the account of his deed. The same retrospective recreation of the scene is to be found in 'Berenice':

"I found myself sitting in the library, and again sitting there alone. It seemed that I had newly awakened from a confused and exciting dream [...]"

71. *ibid.* p. 379. It may be remarked at this point that the pages on the hero's life after the death of Lilith also recall, in a less definite manner, the wanderings of Flaubert's Saint Julien after the murder of his parents. It was in the summer of 1892 that Schwob began his preparation of a preface to this work: see Spicilege, pp. 225-226.

It was a fearful page in the record of my existence, written all over with dim, and hideous, and unintelligible recollections. I strived to decipher them, but in vain; while ever and anon, like the spirit of a departed sound, the shrill and piercing shriek of a female voice seemed to be ringing in my ears. [...] a menial entered upon tiptoe [...] he whispered me of a violated grave - of a disfigured body enshrouded [...] He pointed to my garments; they were muddy and clotted with gore." 72

Even this brief summary shows Schwob's immense debt to Poe for the form and substance of his tale; so that when the total of his borrowings from Poe and Rossetti is calculated, the reader might legitimately ask whether there is anything in 'Lilith' for Schwob to call his own. Surprisingly, his own strokes of invention are distinct and numerous enough to mark 'Lilith' with his individual stamp. The quality that enables him to recreate and remould his données is his gift for visualising a detail or a situation in a heightened manner, so that the impression he notes down is a significant development of the original. This process of composition is illustrated in nearly every sentence, allowing the reader to seize at every step his association of ideas. The name Correggio immediately summons up a particularising image of great sensual power; the "little book" mentioned by Hall Caine is transformed by the loving precision of the true bibliomane into a visually memorable object with its "maroquin rouge et les agrafes d'or."

72. Works, I 362-363.

Schwob's account of Sister Helen's revenge is made doubly gruesome in the accumulation of pictorial and sensory details: the wax image is melted in "une poêle d'airain", and a refinement of torture added in the practice of an allied superstition: "il l'aima, tandis qu'elle lui perçait le cœur avec sa fine aiguille d'acier".

The most extensive passage of Schwob's own creation is that which relates his hero's anguished wanderings after the death of Lilith. His theme is the vision of Lilith in paradise, and Rossetti's efforts to keep it pure in his mind despite the memories of her earthly form conjured up by nature. This conception of the poet's state of mind is no doubt suggested by a verse from 'The Blessed Damozel':

"(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)" 73

There are references to the poem throughout this section, with the image of Lilith "idéalement fixée au delà du ciel", but sad in her separation from the earthly love. Schwob's imaginings thus remain firmly anchored to their starting point, yet he allows himself ample scope in creating a pendant to the lyrical beauties of Rossetti's words. Though the dream-like, moonlit landscape through which the hero wanders

73. Collected Works, I 234.

is filled with reminiscences of Rossetti's autumnal world, suggestive of yearning, desolation and tragic loss, the effect of the whole comes from Schwob's own powers of evocation:

"Mais le bruit de la mer lui rappelait ses pleurs, et il entendit sa voix dans la basse profonde des forêts; et l'hirondelle, tournant sa tête noire, semblait le gracieux mouvement du cou de sa bien-aimée, et le disque de la lune, brisé dans les eaux sombres des étangs de clairière, lui renvoyait des milliers de regards dorés et fuyants." 74

This page also has an important structural function, serving as a bridge passage between the burial and recovery of the book, between the exposition and the crisis. The hero is shown recalling the faces of the past, of his first loves, then of Lilith: the two merge in the ideal of woman celebrated in his buried book. In the final paragraph of his interpolation, Schwob skilfully draws together all the influences in the life of Rossetti, showing how they are resolved into one terrifying obsession:

"Il était poète ayant tout; Corrège, Raphaël et les maîtres preraphaelites, Jenny, Hélène, Rose-Mary, Lilith n'avaient été que des occasions d'enthousiasme littéraire ... L'homme de lettres revécut en lui et le rendit implacable."

74. The image of the swallow is taken from 'Sudden Light', Collected Works, I 295; see also the poems 'Passion and Worship', 'Heart's Haven' and 'The Portrait' for other verbal coincidences. Again, there are similarities in this passage with Flaubert's Saint Julien l'Hospitalier: see the 1895 Ferroud edition, prefaced by Schwob, pp. 23, 45, 59. The influence of Flaubert was probably more unconscious than deliberate.

It will be seen that Schwob's own contributions to the story are as organically essential as the elements borrowed for the construction, and it would be impossible to consider them entirely separately, so dependent are they on the other passages. His narrative technique can be seen, therefore to display its characteristic tendency at an early stage. The features manifest in the 'Vie de Cyril Tourneur' are all to be found in 'Lilith': the reproduction of a motif with an individual flourish, the symmetrical arrangement of incidents, the movement back and forth in time, and from one pole to another, yet with each episode leading inexorably towards the crisis of the plot. This flair for recreation, this gift for imposing a new rhythm on an assortment of existing items, enable Schwob to compose a work indisputably his own.

...

His own, that is to say, in conception and execution: his attitude to Rossetti bears the imprint of his times. Where Schwob's contemporaries were attracted to the songs of the mediaeval heroines, to the women embroiled in illicit loves, to the quaint settings of gothic romance, modern readers are likely to find such poems as 'The Blessed Damozel' and 'Rose Mary' of less interest than the chronicle of the poet's own passions and inner tensions in 'The House of Life' - "his turbid, mannered love-poetry, with its characteristic alternation of the hectic and the languid, of overripe

voluptuousness and the chill of desolation."⁷⁵ A reaction against bourgeois reality and its conscientious reflection in the fiction of the day explains Schwob's insistence on the exotic elements in Rossetti; his burden might have been that of Hall Caine in characterising the poet:

"His life was an anachronism. Such a man should have had no dealings with the nineteenth century: he belonged to the sixteenth, or perhaps the thirteenth, and in Italy not in England." 76

Typical also of the last decades of the century was his predilection for the Poësque hero, quivering to his sensations of the supernatural, of demonic beauty, of frustrated aspirations to the ideal:

"un personnage aux nerfs exacerbés, cultivant en soi l'étrangeté."⁷⁷

Doubtless Rossetti would have been less fascinating to Schwob if his career had not seemed in itself a "tale of mystery and imagination". Thus not only are the individual motifs of 'Lilith' charged with Schwob's personal vision, the story as a whole is permeated with an alien sensibility.

Apart from these distortions, Schwob may be charged with a certain partiality in his presentation of Rossetti. The painter, for example, is almost entirely ignored though his

75. W.W. Robson, 'Pre-Raphaelite Poetry', The Pelican Guide to English Literature, 1958, VI 361-362.

76. *op. cit.* p. 270.

77. Lemonnier, *op. cit.* p. 125.

achievements in this field were justly celebrated. His successive ideals of beauty were expressed no less hauntingly on canvas than in verse - witness the Dante and Beatrice paintings of the 1850's, the studies of full-blown, exotic womanhood during his maturity, and brooding intensity of the portraits of Jane Morris from 1868. It is true that Rossetti once emphatically declared himself primarily a poet, and that his paintings derived their value from his poetic tendencies⁷⁸, but this was said at a time when the artistic vein had momentarily run dry: his career, by and large, shows an alternation, with some overlapping, of either phase, and it would be erroneous to prize one above the other.

Within the chosen confines of Rossetti's poetry Schwob seems guilty of a further over-schematic division into songs of physical and spiritual beauty. This was an inevitable consequence of his use of the earlier narrative poems, which had marked the pursuit of the opposing tendencies to their limit. By 1870 Rossetti was already envisaging a synthesis in his sonnet sequence, and wrote in a letter to a friend:

"I should wish to deal in poetry chiefly with personified emotions; and in carrying out my scheme of the 'House of Life' (if ever I do so) I shall try to put in action a complete dramatis personae of the soul." (79)

78. Letters, II 849, (to T.G. Hake, 21st April 1870).

79. ibid. p. 850.

The reconciliation of flesh and spirit is stated most explicitly in the sonnet 'Heart's hope':

"Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
Thee from myself, neither our love from God." 80

That Schwob did not depict his hero in this stage of harmony is indicative of his desire to remain true to the theme of his first recueil: that "le coeur de l'homme est double", and that "l'âme va d'un extrême à l'autre."⁸¹ The objection may be raised that fidelity to such tenets is an aberration when it leads to a false image of the subject, but this is to misunderstand Schwob's declared aesthetic purposes. In the preface to Coeur Double, he had rejected the realist technique of "énumération complète" for the selection of details necessary to the crisis of the tale, the conjuncture of the privileged moments of the hero's inner and outer existence. With Rossetti, this crisis supervenes with the despoliation of the grave. The impulsion to commit what the hero terms "a prostitution and a theft" springs from his thirst for literary glory. Thus the axis of Schwob's tale is its dénouement, all the more gripping in its sudden onset after the long exposition. It follows that the contents of the latter need echo the documentary source only insofar as they contribute to the image of an

80. Collected Works, I 179.

81. Coeur Double, p. ix.

exceptional hero. The artist refuses to be bound to a truth lacking in appeal to his imagination and sense of adventure.

'Lilith', therefore, is noteworthy not only for the attitude to Rossetti it discloses but also for the motivation of the choice of elements which establish this attitude. Allowing free play to his creative faculties, Schwob extracts from the life and writings of the poet those traits which may be elaborated into a fantasy of supernatural inspiration. Rossetti is shown as haunted by the women he loves, and their images are finally fused into one obsessive vision, which drives him to give to the world the book in which his ideal is set forth. Thus the hero's soul is mirrored in the variety and intensity of his amours, real and imaginary, carnal and spiritual: the figure of a remote woman is the guide in his quest, and its object. If any conclusion is to be drawn from the tale, it is surely this: that the expression of the ideal may be achieved only through the violation of its earthly image.

In the years when Schwob was composing his Coeur Double, he had not yet, according to Champion, been influenced by Symbolism⁸². However, it is difficult not to see in 'Lilith' the precursor of the dialogue 'L'Art', composed in the spring of 1895⁸³. Here, drawing largely on Rossetti's translations

82. MST p. 72.

83. See the postface of Maurice Saillet, Spicilege, 1960, pp. 230-232.

from the Italian poets, Schwob discussed the theme propounded by his main speaker, Dante:

"J'ai dit et je prétends que les peintres, les sculpteurs, et les poètes sont soumis aux femmes qui leur révélèrent l'amour, et que tout leur art ne consiste qu'à se laisser guider par la forme qui leur persuada de l'imiter dans les chansons, ballades et assemblages de vers, ou sur les murailles sacrées, ou dans le coeur du marbre étincelant." 84

The later work may be considered as a more ample and penetrating exploration of the subject left implicit in 'Lilith' - the importance of love as a stimulus to "literary enthusiasm". We may conclude our remarks on Schwob's first illustration of this concept by drawing attention to its curiously prophetic nature. A year or so after writing 'Lilith' Schwob was to meet

84. *ibid.* p. 189. Sallet claims, p. 232, that he used, besides Vasari's Lives of the Painters, "les chroniques dantesques plus ou moins apocryphes de Boccace et ses continuateurs". The catalogue of Schwob's library gives more precise details of the sources that provided illustrations of his theory:

Rossetti, D.G., Dante and his Circle, with the Italian Poets preceding him (1100-1200-1300), London, 1892. (item 374).

[van Mander, Carel], Het Leven der Doorluchtige Nederlandsche en eenige Hoogduitsche Schilders ... overgebracht door Jacobus de Jongh, Amsterdam, 1764, 2 vols. (item 465). Schwob probably consulted the French translation of H. Hymans, Le Livre des Peintres, 1884-1885, 2 vols.

Vasari, Giorgio, Lives of the most eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects, tr. Mrs Jonathan Foster, London, 1890, 6 vols. (item 484).

See Appendix C for a table of Schwob's borrowings from Dante and his Circle in 'L'Art'.

his Louise, fated like Lizzie Siddal to fade with consumption and to die at an early age. As her death approached Schwob too followed the action of the fictional Rossetti:

"Il ouvrit au public son coeur et en montra les déchirements; il traîna sous les yeux de tous le cadavre de Lilith et son inutile image parmi les demoiselles elues."

One wonders if it was with the tragic irony of his Livre de Monelle in mind that Schwob ended his contemporaneous study of Robert Louis Stevenson with the enigmatic words: "Tant il est vrai que les grands poètes construisent à l'avance les réalités futures".

CHAPTER VIIGeorge Meredith

The article on George Meredith, printed in Le Journal on the 1st September 1894 and later included in Spicilege, marks a departure from the usual pattern of Marcel Schwob's literary criticism. His analysis of the oeuvre is here coupled with a sketch of the author himself, drawn from life, for of all the English authors discussed by Schwob, Meredith was the only one he was to meet in the flesh. For the past ten years the poet-novelist had been enjoying a hard-won and belated glory, and his reputation as one of the greatest forces of contemporary literature attracted to his cottage at Box Hill, near Dorking, a not entirely welcome succession of admirers and interviewers to hear and record his pronouncements on various artistic, philosophical and political questions. Schwob had the honour of being one of the first French writers to be received at Flint Cottage, and his article remains among the most vivid short appreciations of Meredith in his old age.

We may conjecture that Schwob discovered the works of Meredith around 1890. Among his English friends at that time Arthur Symonds was a great admirer of both the novels and verse, having written a review of The Ordeal of Richard Feverel on

its reissue in 1885¹ and an article entitled 'George Meredith's Poetry' in 1887²; he had also proposed to dedicate his Introduction to the Study of Robert Browning to "the greatest of English novelists"³. Oscar Wilde had briefly but brilliantly spoken of Meredith's qualities in his essays 'The Decay of Lying', 'The Soul of Man under Socialism', and 'The Critic as Artist'. André Raffalovich, a friend of Wilde and of John Gray, had written two articles on Meredith in the French press as early as 1881⁴, and Stuart Merrill had contributed a review of the Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life to the New York periodical Curio in January 1888. However, it is not until 1893 that we find any allusion to Meredith in Schwob's existing documents: a letter to Paul Hervieu on the publication of Les Paroles Restent in the April of that year contained this flattering remark:

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1. In Time, December 1885.
 2. The Westminster Review, September 1887.
 3. See Lionel Stevenson, The Ordeal of George Meredith, New York, 1953, p. 270, and R. Lhombreaud, Arthur Symons, pp. 54-55.
 4. Stevenson, op. cit. p. 244, states that these articles were printed in Le Gaulois and the Journal de St. Petersbourg, but I have been unable to trace them. See also Letters of George Meredith, ed. W.M. Meredith, 1912, I 326-327.

"Je ne peux comparer à votre livre que ceux de Georges (sic) Meredith en Angleterre, son "Egoïste" et ses "Aventures de Harry Richmond". Seul il a fait jouer, comme vous, dans ses livres, la dramatique comédie de société." 5

Since Schwob's part of his correspondence with Meredith has disappeared⁶, we cannot say how and when he drew himself to the notice of the novelist. His first letters may have dated from the summer of 1893 and have treated at first of purely literary topics, for it is unlikely that Schwob would have confided in a complete stranger the sorrow that the imminent death of his mistress Louise was causing him during the last months of the year. Byvanck claimed that Schwob did later unburden himself on the subject⁷, being prompted to do so no doubt by the discovery that Meredith too had suffered a similar trial in the long illness and death of his second wife, in 1885. Louise's passing was the occasion of the first letter from the novelist to Schwob that has been preserved. It begins with a typical exhortation to courage:

5. Lettres à Paul Hervieu, Bibl. Arsenal ms. 13. 969/80.

6. Professor C.L. Cline informs me, in a letter of the 26th September 1968, that he has been unable to trace the originals of either Schwob's or Meredith's letters. I have quoted Meredith's, as they were copied by Pierre Champion, CPC 5133.3, pp. 42-43, in Appendix D.

7. In a letter to Pierre Champion of the 8th February 1924 Byvanck wrote: "Il m'a dit et écrit que seul avec Meredith j'avais été le confident de ses amours. Lorsque je vis Meredith en Angleterre j'ai voulu le mettre sur chapitre là mais il ne s'est pas laissé entraîner". CPC 4909 p. 251.

"I grieve to think of you as in questa selva selvaggia. I wish I could help. I have been in the black heart of it, have gone through it. We have got to get strong grasp of the knowledge of the nature of life. Then we carry some light within us." 8

For further enlightenment of his ideas of the relationship of men, women and Nature, Meredith enclosed a copy of his recently reissued sonnet-sequence Modern Love.

By the spring of 1894 Schwob's mind, as his correspondent had predicted, had "gathered itself together under the blow". Among the many projects he formed was a study of Meredith's novels, to judge by this letter from Box Hill of the 9th March. Thanking Schwob for his gift of Le Roi au Masque d'Or, Meredith commented:

"I am as yet unable to see an indication of the path you will take. I hope it is to be in creative work, and am rather pained by the thought of your giving time to critique ... I would forfeit the honour of an examination of my books by you, if I could have another 'Sabbat' or 'Flute' in the place of it."

His enthusiasm perhaps damped by this reply, Schwob turned to other activities but did not neglect to praise Meredith's triumphs among his friends. Moreover, he was anxious that the novelist should make acquaintance with the rising generation of French writers and when Paul Valéry was in London in July 1894 it was through Schwob's letter of introduction that he obtained his invitations to Flint Cottage. Schwob himself was

8. 26th January 1894.

9. See Frédéric Lefèvre, Entretiens avec Paul Valéry, 1926, pp. 17-18.

not long in following Valéry. While in Guernesey, he and Léon Daudet were summoned to Box Hill and came to pay their visit some time in the last fortnight of August¹⁰. Whether Schwob had already decided to turn this interview to good account by making it the basis of an article, or whether it was the impact of Meredith's personality which brought him to record his impressions, the urge to write came at an opportune moment for, having no vie imaginaire ready for Le Journal, he was able to placate his editor with a contribution of another kind.

Schwob's meeting with Meredith did not lead to any greater intimacy in their rappports - in fact, their correspondence seems to have stopped at this point, and Miss Salmon states that she was unable to find further significant mention of the novelist in other of Schwob's letters. Nonetheless, cordial memories were kept on either side, and when the Daudet family went to London in May 1895, an allusion to Schwob provoked an amusing incident:

"L'amiral Maxse s'obstinait à appeler Schwob "mossier Schwaba". Meredith le reprenait, en épélant à pleins poumons: "S, tce, ha, dobble you, o, bi," Cependant que Henry James, enchanté,

10. See Meredith, Letters II 470 (15th August):
 "M. Marcel Schwob and Léon Daudet come for two or three days on their way to Scotland in October." Their visit was therefore considerably advanced.

rejetait la tête en arrière et riait de tout son coeur." 11

A month later, when requested by Georges Hugo to help his wife Pauline with a translation of the poem 'France, December 1870', Schwob was presumably generous with his advice, for it was rendered to Meredith's satisfaction in the Nouvelle Revue of the 1st July 1895¹².

Even after these first tributes to Meredith's genius in the French press his works were to remain something of an esoteric cult, and it was no doubt with the abstruseness of the novelist in mind that Schwob chose Sir Willoughby Patterne, hero of The Egoist, to figure as one of the speakers in his erudite dialogue 'L'Amour', composed in the summer of 1895¹³. writings such as this, however, could do little to popularise Meredith in France and it was realised that in order to stimulate wider interest, translations of his works must be provided.

11. Léon Daudet, Souvenirs III 289. It seems improbable that Schwob accompanied the Daudet family to London on this occasion. Neither Mme. A. Daudet, in her Notes sur Londres, 1897, nor Léon Daudet, *op. cit.* pp. 273-274, mentions his name.

12. CPC 5134 p. 13 - from a letter of the 18th June 1895. See also Meredith, Letters II 478.

13. Collected in Spicilege.

Henry-D. Davray, who was to publish a version of An Essay on Comedy in the Mercure de France of September 1897, took it upon himself to recruit those competent for the task.

"Chacun se r cusait. Je me souviens que Schwob, que je consultai   ce propos, resta ahuri devant mon outrecuidance, et murmura pensivement: 'En effet, ce serait tr s beau, mais c'est le sacrifice de toute une existence!'" 14

Schwob's health at this period was too frail for such a monumental undertaking, and even the prospect of another meeting with Meredith was enough to daunt him. The septuagenarian author, now almost entirely deaf, would submit his visitors to a dazzling, didactic and ultimately exhausting display of wit and philosophy, leaving them little opportunity to talk themselves. Hence Schwob's reluctance to return to Flint Cottage during his stay with Charles Whibley in the autumn of 1900: "Je devrais  crire   George Meredith, mais j'en ai   peine envie", he confessed in a letter to Moreno¹⁵. Only at the request of Davray did Schwob pay his courtesy call: "Allez donc voir Meredith! Ne pouvez-vous pas d'Haslemere vous transporter facilement   Dorking?"¹⁶

14. 'George Meredith', The Anglo-French Review, February 1919, p. 38.

15. D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 52, (1st September 1900).

16. CFC 5134 p. 10 - from a letter of the 4th September 1900.

Towards the end of September, this time accompanied by his wife, Schwob made his second and last visit to Box Hill. Of this encounter we have no record for it probably left less impression than the first. When talking of Meredith it was always to his meeting of 1894 that Schwob referred.

Arnold Bennett noted such a conversation:

"We talked a good deal about Meredith, and Schwob showed an extraordinary knowledge of the byways of English literature. He said Meredith was certainly the son of a tailor, and quoted a passage from 'Peter Simple', where two characters go to 'Meredith the tailor', and he said this was George's father. (17) [..] He has 'ataxy' or something of one leg and limps and always tells any visitor that he had the misfortune to hurt his ankle that very morning. Schwob heard this from Oscar Wilde and didn't believe it. However when Schwob called on Meredith, sure enough he had hurt his leg that very morning. Schwob's enthusiasm for Meredith's last book was magnificent."¹⁸

Bennett's words confirm the depth and durability of Schwob's esteem for Meredith's genius. From his first discovery of the novels to the time of his death, he was instrumental in

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17. The tailor in question was Meredith's grandfather, Melchizedek Meredith, portrayed in Evan Harrington. Although the novelist's close friends were aware of his humble origin he was always very secretive about his early years in Portsmouth. Constantin Photiadès was the first to make the details public, in his George Meredith, sa vie et son art, 1910. Schwob's supposition was a curious foreshadowing of the truth.
18. The Journals of Arnold Bennett, I 198-199 (29th November 1904). The book referred to by Bennett was presumably The Amazing Marriage, 1895, which featured a portrait of R.L. Stevenson in the character of Gower Woodseer.

establishing a cult for their author among the literary élite of France.

...

At the time of the composition of Schwob's article, Meredith and his works were quite unknown to the French public: this, wrote Schwob, was the justification for his study. In fact, as we have seen, André Raffalovich had appointed himself the champion of the novels as early as 1881, and older readers of the Revue des Deux Mondes might have remembered the efforts of E.D. Forgues to popularise the first novels, some thirty years previously. In November and December 1864 his much condensed translation of Sandra Belloni had been serialised, with the following introduction:

"Il y a chez M. Meredith une originalité vraie, une verve spirituelle, une indépendance d'allures qui permettent de remplacer à son égard la critique par une de ces réductions particulièrement propres à faire connaître certaines oeuvres de la littérature anglaise [...]. C'est une composition sui generis dont la saveur piquante et la désinvolture philosophique nous ont parfois rappelé un des maîtres de la fiction moderne [...]. Henri Beyle."¹⁹

In April and May of the following year The Ordeal of Richard Feverel was presented by the same translator, with this note: "on retrouve les qualités qui ont valu à M. George Meredith tant de légitimes succès en Angleterre". The version of Sandra Belloni appeared in volume form in 1866, which argues

19. op. cit. p. 444. See also Meredith, Letters I 165, 167.

a certain vogue for Meredith in France, but when the sequel Vittoria was published in 1867, Forgues together with the English critics showed considerably less enthusiasm, dwelling on the over-complication of plot and language,

"le tout précipité, enchevêtré, confus et assez obscur pour déconcerter l'intelligence la plus prompte, l'attention la plus soutenue ." 20

Although in England Meredith regained esteem and gradually favour with his succeeding novels, his fortunes in France suffered a severe setback through the cool reception of Vittoria. Forgues presumably felt himself unequal to the task of translating such tortuous prose, and no critical notice seems to have been taken of the other works until the isolated articles of Raffalovich. In 1894, then, the novels could hardly be said to enjoy wide popularity in France, but it was an exaggeration on Schwob's part to claim that "On ne les connaît point ici". Was this exaggeration unconscious?²¹

It is not unlikely that his categorical statements were set down with more regard for their dramatic effect than for strict accuracy.

20. op. cit. p. 1023, 15th June 1867. Meredith wrote to Swinburne in March 1867: "I am afraid it must be true that the style is stiff; but a less condensed would not have encompassed the great amount of matter." Letters I 189.

21. It is curious that Schwob should not have known of Forgues's translations, in view of his contacts with Brunetiere at the RDM.

Thus the extent of French neglect of Meredith was brought out by Schwob in a telling contrast with the situation of two other eminent foreign writers in 1894. His examples, Tolstoy and Ibsen, were well chosen by reason of their appeal not only to the avant-garde, but also to a large public. Tolstoy had won general acclaim in the almost overnight discovery and vogue of the Russian novel in the mid-eighties²², while Ibsen in 1890 had made a controversial *début* on the Paris stage under the auspices of Antoine at the Théâtre Libre, and later of Lugné-Poe at the Escholiers and the Œuvre²³. Their names were representative of the giants of modern literature long ignored, but finally accepted by the French, and Schwob's juxtaposition of Meredith's name with theirs is a tacit plea for the recognition of his comparable stature, through the depth of his thought and the range of his literary powers.

Having suggested with one deft stroke the consideration deserved by his subject, Schwob turns to examine the situation of Meredith in England. He concedes that any lack of interest among the French may be excused in view of the absence of translations, and even more because of the comparative novelty of the writer's honour in his own country. Seven years ago, declares Schwob, his works were unknown even there: "J'entends

22. See F.W.J. Hemmings, The Russian Novel in France, 1884-1914, 1950.

23. See J. Robichez, Le Symbolisme au Théâtre, pp. 92-103, 148-157, 203-211.

que le public des romans ne trouvait pas encore d'intérêt à ceux de George Meredith". In fact, it was with the publication of Diana of the Crossways in 1885 that the novelist found a wide readership, but Schwob overlooks the warm critical praise with which such works as Harry Richmond (1871), Beauchamp's Career (1876), and The Egoist (1879) were greeted. Without a certain public demand it is unlikely that even the recommendation of discerning reviewers would have sufficed to call forth the Uniform Edition of Meredith's works from 1885 to 1887.

preferring to paint the scene in black and white, however, Schwob contrasts the supposed indifference of the many with the judicious praise of the happy few:

"les plus nobles écrivains anglais, Swinburne, Henley, Robert Louis Stevenson, s'inclinaient des longtemps devant lui avec déférence." 24

Again, this assertion is calculated to emphasise the lofty rank of Meredith in contemporary literature and to prepare a kindly reception for his works abroad. The prestige of Swinburne was sufficient to guarantee the excellence of any writer he cared to recommend, and Schwob artfully makes use of the publicist's gambit of appeal to an unimpeachable authority.

24. The legend of neglect was fostered by Meredith himself, embittered by the commercial failure of his early poetry and of his novels Vittoria and Rhoda Fleming. A more accurate picture of his critical reception may be found in René Galland's George Meredith and British Criticism, 1851-1909, 1923, and L.T. Hergenham's unpublished thesis "A Critical Consideration of the Reviewing of the Novels of George Meredith", London, Ph.D., 1960.

The admission of Meredith's prolonged obscurity demanded some explanation, which Schwob takes as his cue for a succinct review of the form and content of the novels. He accounts for the slow rise to fame with reasons which have remained a commonplace of Meredith criticism:

"Le langage de George Meredith est d'une extrême difficulté, par suite de la complexité des idées qui se pressent dans ses phrases. Toutes les nuances de sentiment, toutes les antinomies d'esprit, toutes les constructions, d'imagination sont exprimées avec une richesse de métaphores qu'on retrouverait seulement dans les oeuvres de l'époque d'Elisabeth."

Meredith's style is here presented in its most favourable light, as if it were only the intellectual shortcomings of the average reader that might be a bar to appreciation of the novels. Schwob might have pointed out that the writer's method, though brilliantly successful as a rule in its flights of imagination, imagery and epigram, its dense arrangement of complex, ingenious notions, not infrequently led to an unbearable straining of the language²⁵. The freakishness of his style was the burden of much contemporary criticism, and W.E. Henley was one of those who stated the matter most trenchantly:

25. Meredith made further confession of his unwieldy style in a letter to Samuel Lucas: "This cursed desire I have haunting me to show the reason for things is a perpetual obstruction to movement. I do want the dash of Smollett and know it." Quoted in Siegfried Sassoon, Meredith, New York, 1948, p. 33.

"He writes with the pen of a great artist in his left hand and the razor of a spiritual suicide in his right. He is the master and the victim of a monstrous cleverness which is neither to hold or to bind, and will not permit him to do things as an honest, simple person of genius would [...]. He is tediously amusing; he is brilliant to the point of being obscure; his helpfulness is so extravagant as to worry and confound." 26

When English defenders of the novels did not hesitate to reprove their gross lapses it would not have been amiss for Schwob to give some warning of Meredith's disregard for his public's patience. His excessive abstruseness has often been ascribed to irritation at the strictures on his earlier novels and a determination to baffle philistine critics and the subscribers to the circulating libraries, together with scorn for current prejudices about novel-writing. In the words of Siegfried Sassoon:

"His temperament was that of a poet and intellectual experimenter. He was always an unwilling novelist, and he became contemptuous of the task of writing fiction for a middle-minded public." 27

It is perhaps a tribute to Schwob's intelligence that he appeared blind to problems pinpointed immediately by more practical critics.

Following his remarks on the narrative style, Schwob passes on to a rapid consideration of Meredith's expression of spoken and unspoken thought. Dialogue, and analysis of

26. Views and Reviews, 1890, p. 44-45.

27. *op. cit.* p. 36.

the characters' motives and feelings take up a large part of the novels and in this latter respect Schwob called The Egoist "un chef d'oeuvre d'analyse psychologique"²⁸. It is interesting that Schwob should have put his finger on two aspects of technique which have received much attention in twentieth-century novels. The critic Lionel Stevenson estimates thus Meredith's innovations in the field of spoken thought:

"In the actual dialogue among the characters, he carried further than ever the fragmentary effect of real conversation - the irrelevancies, digressions, and revertings through which people contrive to communicate with each other [...]. These effects are baffling to a reader accustomed to logical rhetoric, but Meredith was approximating actual human speech more closely than any previous English novelist had done." 29

Schwob seizes not so much on the speech-structure as on the rôle of dialogue in delineating the character of the speaker:

"Ses personnages parlent une langue si individuelle qu'on reconnaît le mode de la pensée française dans le babil de l'exquise Renée (Beauchamp's Career), et la gauche lourdeur de la réflexion allemande dans les balbutiements mignons de la petite princesse Ottilia (Harry Richmond)."

The while question of speech as an indicator of mental habits was to be explored in depth, by profession psychologists, but the phenomenon was obvious enough to be exploited by a succession of observant writers. Schwob seems to imply that Meredith was exceptional in his use of particularising dialogue, yet in fact the technique had long served to mark social or

28. In his preface to The Dynamiter, 1894.

29. op. cit. p. 226.

national distinctions³⁰. It might even be claimed that Meredith was less successful here than his predecessors. The speech of his Mrs Berry and Mrs Waddy, both women of the people, has neither the comic genius of Dickens nor the dignity of George Eliot; it borders on patronising caricature; and the stage-German of Otilia is as tiresome as it is incredible.³¹ Meredith achieves his happiest effects when poking fun at the inflated sentiments of would-be romantic heroes: the pompous language of his Richmond Roy betrays an incorrigible refusal to face the realities of life. He abandons these broad touches altogether when seeking to impress on his readers the serious import of his characters' words. Otilia, when she reappears in the novel as a grown woman, speaks English indistinguishable from that of a native: the same could be said of the Italian Vittoria and her compatriots, and of Renée and her family. The Fleming sisters, though the daughters of an uneducated farmer, talk in the style of their social superiors. On the whole, although Meredith was careful to render the nuances of individual modes of expression, he was most at ease when operating within the narrow range of the social caste he intimately knew - that of the minor aristocracy

30. Schwob, an admirer of Flaubert, should have been struck by his differentiation of characters through their speech habits, in the novels of modern life.

31. See for example p. 152 of Harry Richmond, 1914.

and the landed gentry, the polite and prosperous. Here the cut and thrust of his dialogue echoes the rapid working of subtle minds, affording insights into personality and speeding the action between the ponderous passages of authorial comment and meditation.

The device of recording unspoken thought had received little attention in Schwob's time: Edouard Dujardin's experiment in Les Lauriers sont coupés (1888) was long to remain in oblivion. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that Schwob should have noted Meredith's passage of interior monologue at the opening of a novel dating from 1890:

"Le mécanisme de l'intelligence est si minutieusement étudié dans One of our Conquerors que les cinquante (32) premières pages sont consacrées à nous énumérer toutes les associations d'idées qui naissent dans la tête de M. Victor Radnor à la vue d'une tache de boue sur son gilet blanc."

Naturally, at a time when the implications of this new technique remained to be explored Schwob could do no more than point to its existence; and indeed Meredith, for all his originality in dialogue, was so influenced by the demands of logical presentation of ideas that his experiment was still far removed from "the more inchoate than rational verbalisation" which was to characterise the twentieth-century stream-of-consciousness

32. Actually only fifteen pages.

novels³³. Nonetheless, his exhibition of the hero's "ineffectual clutching at the volatile idea"³⁴ seems so striking in retrospect that a recent critic has commented:

"Though it was James who perfected this technique, Meredith has a fair claim to have been at least level with him in the advance, even the later James's brilliantly detached use of it in In the Cage being preceded by One of Our Conquerors, where the "stream of consciousness" handling of Victor goes far in the somewhat different direction of Virginia Woolf." 35

In his description of the content of Meredith's fiction Schwob singles out the aspects testifying to the author's keen interest in political and psychological questions:

"les problèmes du radicalisme dans Beauchamp's Career, du socialisme dans The Tragic Comedians (l'histoire de Ferdinand de Lassalle), de l'esprit révolutionnaire dans Vittoria, des années d'apprentissage d'un jeune homme dans Richard Feverel et Harry Richmond; et dans l'Egoïste, qui est un livre unique au monde, il a exploré le plus terrible mystère du coeur humain."

Wisely, Schwob does not attempt to separate the two trends nor to give one prominence over the other. Adapting the convention

33. See Robert Humphrey, Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel, Berkeley, 1955, p. 3.

34. One of our Conquerors, 1914, p. 10.

35. F.N. Lees, 'George Meredith: Novelist', The Pelican Guide to English Literature, 1958, VI 333.

of the Bildungsroman, Meredith related the protagonist's gradual discovery of his identity through the stripping away of illusions born of egoism and sentimentality, and this often painful quest for truth and maturity he linked in many cases with the social pressures of the outside world. Thus the fortunes of the heroine in Diana of the Crossways are closely associated with her experiences in the male-dominated sphere of politics. More than most of the English critics Schwob insists on Meredith's fascination with the ideological questions of his times, and with good reason. The novelist had spent many years as a political journalist, albeit with a provincial paper whose Tory tendencies he did not inwardly approve; he had been an ardent partisan of the Risorgimento and had travelled in Italy during the summer of 1866 as war correspondent of the Morning Post; in 1867 he had assisted Admiral Maxse in the unsuccessful electoral campaign for the Radicals of Southampton. Thus problems and events which had hitherto served as a background to the proper business of the novel - the study of human relationships - often assumed in Meredith an importance which fully justified Schwob's qualification of them as "l'essence même de son oeuvre". The author himself was to insist on his right to treat of non-fictional themes, as for example in the preface to Diana of the Crossways: "To demand of us truth to nature, excluding Philosophy, is

really to bid a pumpkin caper". Thus Schwob's indication of Meredith's essential interests is illuminating and his examples well-chosen, but one can only regret that he finished his paragraph with a gratuitous gibe at two other great Victorian novelists:

"Tout cela était bien ardu pour des lecteurs accoutumés aux émotions plus simples et plus faciles que leur donnaient les romans de Charles Dickens et de George Eliot."

This tacit belittling of two writers who are now regarded with more affection and esteem than has ever been Meredith's lot cannot fail to astound the modern reader, but it should be remembered that Schwob was writing at a time when his subject was at the height of his glory, "when much of the universe and all Cambridge trembled"³⁶, and when the two other novelists had fallen into the temporary neglect which so often follows a great author's death. George Eliot at least was quite wrongly banished by Schwob to the ranks of the sentimentalists. Her analyses of human nature were no less rigorous than Meredith's, witness the subtle and powerful portrait of Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda, a study in egoism to rival that of Sir Willoughby Patterne. Moreover, since Schwob had just expressed his admiration of Meredith's grappling with political issues, he might have recalled that George Eliot

36. In the words of E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, 1927, p. 120.

had turned her attention to radicalism in Felix Holt, Zionism in Daniel Deronda, and a whole range of creeds in the provincial skirmishings of Middlemarch. On this occasion Schwob's desire to laud Meredith caused him to forget that the Victorian era was distinguished by its novelists' awareness of social questions. One has only to think of Disraeli's Young England trilogy, of Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton, Charles Kingsley's Alton Locke, of Dickens's crusading works, in order to place Meredith's preoccupations in their right perspective³⁷.

...

The first section of Schwob's essay ends on a peal of praise for Meredith's creation: his hercès, significantly compared with those of the sixteenth-century English dramatists, his heroines, described in the words of Robert Louis Stevenson, "fair women with fair names, the daughters of George Meredith"³⁸, and finally the sheer power of his literature:

"la poussée d'un génie qui ne cesse de se développer durant plus de trente ans à travers douze grands romans et quatre volumes de poèmes doit être finalement irrésistible."

His initial rise to fame is attributed by Schwob to the endeavours of perspicacious critics, those precisely whom he had already mentioned: Swinburne, Henley and Stevenson.

37. See Arnold Kettle's chapter on 'The Early Victorian Social-Problem Novel' in the Pelican Guide VI 169-187.

38. The phrase comes from 'A Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's' in Memories and Portraits, 1887.

Swinburne had been one of Meredith's earliest advocates, with the letter to the Spectator of the 7th June 1862 in which he poured scorn on the critic of Modern Love and proclaimed that

"Mr. Meredith is one of the three or four poets now alive whose work, perfect or imperfect, is always as noble in design as it is often faultless in result."

This was Swinburne's only printed contribution to Meredith criticism: the novelist had hoped that a general survey of his books might be prepared for the Fortnightly Review to compensate for the ill-success of Vittoria, but nothing came of this project. Personal relations between the two writers were often strained, especially after a dispute about Meredith's alleged under-payment of the poem 'Halt before Rome' during his brief editorship of the Fortnightly Review in 1868, and Meredith was offended by Swinburne's inability to appreciate his later novels. Thus Schwob was misinformed in his claim that the poet's "efforts et articles répétés" were instrumental in winning public acceptance for Meredith. The task was achieved through the patience of more devoted, if less prestigious figures. Stevenson and Henley, however, were doughty champions of the novels, and vie for the honour of the greater importance in the growth of the Meredith cult. "Stevenson's influence in widening the circle of Meredith's admirers and in bringing into his popular estate was greater than that of any other person", wrote Edmund Gosse³⁹. Stevenson

39. Quoted in Sassoon, op. cit. p. 142.

had been a personal friend since the spring of 1878, when he was just beginning his career as a writer, and his essays 'A Gossip on Romance' and 'A Humble Remonstrance' in the collection Memories and Portraits, and 'Books Which Have Influenced Me' from Essays in the Art of Writing contain numerous expressions of his admiration. In an interview with a reporter in San Francisco in 1888 he declared that Meredith was "out and away the greatest force in English letters", and in a letter to Henley of April 1882, giving his impressions of The Egoist, he concluded: "I see more and more that Meredith is built for immortality".

As a critic, Henley was to play a major role in the forming of public opinion with regard to Meredith. His praise was mixed with much forthright censure of the novelist's mannerisms, as we have seen: and Meredith, in his old age, was increasingly sensitive to adverse criticism. J.A. Hammerton tells us that the two men were never on terms of intimacy despite the circumstances of their acquaintance. Already before their meeting in 1878 Henley had written an article on Meredith in the Conservative Weekly Journal, and when The Egoist appeared a year later he was to write no less than four reviews, in the Athenaeum, the Pall Mall Gazette, the Academy and the Teacher, and he asked Sidney Colvin to contribute an article to the Times. Doubtless Henley must have told Schwob something of his rôle in securing Meredith's ascendancy, though he may

have forborne to add that the novelist himself was curiously unappreciative of these labours. It was to Colvin that he voiced his annoyance, with characteristic energy of expression⁴⁰. The publication of Diana of the Crossways was followed nonetheless by an eulogious review in the Athenaeum, and the collected edition of Meredith's work elicited a survey of his achievement in the State on the 17th April 1886. This was to be nearly the last of Henley's articles on Meredith's behalf, for there was now no question of battling for a lost cause. Probably there were more personal reasons for Henley's silence, for his reviews of the Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life in the Athenaeum and the Saturday Review of the 11th June 1887 had been intensely irritating to Meredith, who still regarded himself primarily as a poet.

...

After a general and objective presentation of the writer and his novels, Schwob in the second section of his article introduces a more personal note with the first allusion to his meeting with Meredith. His physical approach, "tandis que le train m'emportait assez lentement vers Dorking", is accompanied by a closer scrutiny of the philosophy underlying the works. As always, Schwob builds up his commentary on

40. See L. Stevenson, op. cit. p. 233.

one essential element - "le mot caractéristique [] et la tendance générale de ses livres". Sound intuition prompted him to turn to Meredith's poetry, that part of his creation neglected even by many of his admirers but which, as the critic G.M. Trevelyan was to point out, set forth his ideas in their fullest and most exact form. Here was a rich field for Schwob, for the collections of verse spanned the whole of Meredith's career, marking the most crucial moments of his existence: Modern Love, in 1862, was occasioned by the death of his first wife and a reconsideration of their disastrous marriage; the Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth, 1883, covered the years of his maturity and the affirmation of his poetic gifts; the Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life, 1887, and A Reading of Earth, 1888, distilled the philosophy of his old age, tinged with grief at the loss of the second Mrs. Meredith. Schwob's gleanings were confined to Modern Love, the volume which the poet himself had signalled as revelatory. In this sequence of fifty sonnets, Meredith, drawing largely on his own experience, recounts the estrangement of a married couple, their tensions, infidelities and frustrated attempts towards reconciliation, which culminate in the wife's suicide. The husband ponders on the causes of the breakdown and, while accepting some share of the responsibility, points to the inability of his wife, despite her intelligence and wit, to understand him. When she cuts the knot his anguish bursts

forth in the despairing cry:

"Their sense is with their senses all mixed in,
Destroyed by subtleties these women are!
More brain, o Lord, more brain! or we shall mar
Utterly this fair garden we might win." 41

Schwob seizes on this appeal for brain as the epitome of Meredith's thought and quotes it together with his own comments:

"La femme n'a pas assez de cerveau. Elle ne peut pas comprendre l'homme. Il faut qu'elle se hausse jusqu'à son intellectualisme. Les cordes de la lyre sur laquelle jouait l'Amour ne rendent plus qu'un son discordant."

Schwob could have been expected at this point to show the working out of this argument in the novels, but no examples are forthcoming. The truth of the matter is that Meredith, having put the bitterness of his failure behind him, went on in his mature work to recognise that lack of brain, in his own definition of the word, is not peculiar to woman. His *Renée*, his *Diana Warwick*, his *Clotilde von Rüdiger*, his *Nataly Dreighton* are at the mercy of their imperfect understanding, but they are not alone in their struggle. Indeed, their progress towards self-understanding is overshadowed by the foredoomed convulsions of the comic *Richmond Roy* and the tragi-comic *Sir Willoughby*. Meredith's plea was that humanity as a whole should engage in a common endeavour towards enlightenment; and against the background of the novels and the poems, Schwob's

41. The Poetical Works of George Meredith, ed. G.M. Trevelyan, 1928; p. 154.

isolation and exaggeration of one early attitude undoubtedly creates a mistaken impression in the mind of the French reader. The truth of Schwob's observation is only partial, and the student of Meredith is more likely to be struck by the intelligence and depth of understanding of the heroines. Through his refusal to envisage women in the stock Victorian pattern of "the veiled virginal doll", Meredith came to be acclaimed as one of the early champions of the feminist cause, urging the equal right of men and women to acquire and practise the "intellectual courage" which he found the highest good in life.

It has been remarked that Meredith's point of view was nonetheless akin to Milton's "He for God only, she for God in him", and Schwob's extension of his argument seems to confirm the existence of a similar hierarchy in the works of the poet. "Que la femme augmente son cerveau pour comprendre l'homme; que l'homme augmente son cerveau pour comprendre la Nature", is Schwob's summary of the poet's philosophy. The lesson of Nature is expounded in the thirteenth sonnet, the key lines of which are translated by Schwob:

"I play for Seasons; not Eternities!"
 Says Nature, laughing on her way. "So must
 All those whose stake is nothing more than dust!"
 And lo, she wins, and of her harmonies
 She is full sure! Upon her dying rose
 She drops a look of fondness, and goes by,
 Scarce any retrospection in her eye;
 For she the laws of growth most deeply knows,
 Whose hands bear, here, a seed-bag - there, an urn.
 Pledged she herself to aught, 'twould mark her end!

This lesson of our only visible friend
 Could we not teach our foolish hearts to learn?" 42

This time Schwob has selected an enduring tenet of Meredith's creed, expressed in various forms in many subsequent poems. In 1862, and later when he suffered a more grievous bereavement, Meredith proclaimed that human passions should be restrained through the observation of the cycle of Nature: sorrow and joy alike must be regarded as fugitive, and life lived in the present. The last sonnet of Modern Love mentions engrossment with the past as one of the reasons for the failure of a marriage:

"Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
 They wandered once; clear as the dew on flowers:
 But they fed not on the advancing hours:
 Their hearts held cravings for the buried day." 43

So Meredith proposes that the means of overcoming the difficulties of life may also lie with man's nature. His efforts to understand himself are to be strengthened by conscious application to the forces of spiritual wisdom. Meredith's recommendation of Nature as an ally has earned him the mockery of many recent critics, who too readily forget that each individual must choose his philosophy according to the aspect of the human condition most familiar to him. The poet found his way to serenity and integrity through his "reading of Earth"; he did not exclude other ways to this goal. Still less did he

42. *ibid.* pp. 138-139.

43. *ibid.* p. 155.

pretend that the lesson of Nature could easily be put into practice, even when observed. Imperious passions hold sway over wisdom, as the poet recognises in his couple's answer to Earth:

"Yes!yes! - but, oh, our human rose is fair
Surpassingly! Lose calmly Love's great bliss,
When the renewed forever of a kiss
Whirls life within the shower of loosened hair!" 44

In view of this acknowledgement of the obstacles, Schwob seems indiscriminating in his attribution to Meredith of unquestioning belief in her powers. Though optimistic, the poet was not inclined to utopianism, and would doubtless have hesitated to endorse Schwob's claim that

"l'activité exaltée du cerveau fera cesser
l'éternel conflit, l'incompréhension entre
l'homme et la femme, entre les sociétés factices
et les passions de la nature."

Schwob's statement of Meredith's thought seems inadequate, even distorted. Indeed, in so short a space, it would have been difficult to do justice to a vast subject, and such essential features as the interdependence of blood, brain and spirit, and the rôle of comedy, so important in the question of Meredith's attitude towards women, have been omitted altogether. The desire for concision has led Schwob to simplification: a glance over Meredith's work as a whole

44. *ibid.* p. 139.

would show where the summary is to be modified, even refuted⁴⁵. For the modern reader, moreover, there is disappointment in the failure to distinguish the enduring qualities of Meredith's thought, which have enabled it to be absorbed into consciousness of succeeding generations.

It may well be asked why Schwob should have chosen so narrow an interpretation of the philosophy, after insisting in his first section on the complexity of the author's imagination, the wide and ambitious range of his interests. The exclusive discussion of Modern Love may be explained by its particular significance to Schwob at this moment of his life. He was fascinated by the poem because of its reflection of his own situation, for despite his affection for Louise he was only too aware of the disparity of their intelligence and experience; and although he once told Jules Renard that his mistress was "bête, mais si gentiment", the portraits of her in the 'Soeurs de Monelle' betray her perversity and lack of feeling. In the period between her death and his meeting with Moreno he may often have despaired of meeting a woman able to comprehend and encourage him. Conceivably it was some such complaint that drew from Meredith the untypically disparaging remark about the

45. The harshness of Nature, for example, is not ignored by the poet: see his Sonnet XXX in Modern Love, and Norman Kelvin's commentary in A Troubled Eden: Nature and Society in the Works of George Meredith, Stanford, 1961.

female sex, that it understood as yet no more than "l'épiderme de la paume du mâle". Again, the example of Nature so emphasised by Schwob must have been of some comfort to him after Louise's death, although it is tempting to think that Meredith's words would have received less attention had they not foreshadowed the doctrine of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. Even though the name of the German philosopher is not mentioned, his vogue in Paris would make it possible for the French reader to recognise certain affinities between the two writers, with their "adoration raisonnée de la terre"⁴⁶, and their exhortations that the past should be forgotten without regret. Curiously enough, the 'Paroles de Monelle', published in the summer of 1894, while in general most reminiscent of the Nietzschean tone, nonetheless contain echoes of the lines of Modern

Love quoted by Schwob:

"La rose de l'automne dure une saison; chaque matin elle s'ouvre; tous les soirs elle se ferme.

Aime le moment. Tout amour qui dure est haine.

Sois heureux avec le moment. Tout bonheur qui dure est malheur ..."

...

The two themes of mental activity and social harmony are taken up again in the third section of the article and underlie

46. The words are those of Remy de Gourmont, in 'George Meredith', Promenades Littéraires, 1912, IV 160.

the portrait of Meredith presented there. The fundamental interest of the novels and poetry is shown to be embodied in their author: the old man who "a exalté son activité cérébrale au delà de toutes les limites humaines" still continues his work, at peace with the world, in the idyllic setting of the Surrey countryside. Schwob's brief evocation of Box Hill, which contributes in no small measure to the charm of the essay remarked on by Lammerton and Siegfried Sassoon, is organic rather than ornamental, in that it provides a link between the homage to Nature of the preceding section and the image of the poet as one who draws sustenance from her presence. This aspect of Meredith is subordinated, however, to that of the intellectual giant. Schwob's stress on the loftiness of the novelist, the extraordinary difficulty of his style and subjects, the almost impracticable aims of his teaching, finds its culmination in his account of Meredith the man, where every detail counts towards the impression of "la fonction intellectuelle la plus prodigieuse de ce siècle". Schwob's choice of phrase is not without significance in the context of his current readings of English literature and of the creative work he was elaborating. When we recall that the year 1894 was the period of his most intense fascination for the Nietzschean superman and the heroes of the Elizabethan drama, and saw the conception of the godlike figures of the Vies Imaginaires, Schwob's exalted vision of Meredith is easily explained. The novelist may be seen as one of Schwob's

gallery of exceptional beings who tower over the rest of humanity⁴⁷.

Schwob's impressions of his interview are skilfully arranged so as to show Meredith in his most commanding light. The reader is put into a pleasantly expectant mood with the description of the countryside around Meredith's home and the chalet where he works. He waits, with Schwob, for the arrival of the novelist, and learns in the meantime of Meredith's strict seclusion during his hours of writing.

"Il interdit, sous peine de son plus sévère déplaisir, qu'on le dérange pendant cette période de la journée. Même son fidèle Cole, son domestique, "le meilleur de l'Angleterre", qui le sert depuis quatorze ans, n'oserait affronter l'orage."

This little touch, besides showing that Schwob, despite the solemnity of the occasion, has not lost his sense of humour, also introduces the leitmotiv of the "surchauffe cérébrale". What strikes Schwob in the physical appearance of Meredith as he advances to meet his guests is the expression of the eyes rather than the noble figure as a whole: "ces yeux, pendant les premières minutes où il me parla, étaient littéralement

47. J.B. Priestley, in his George Meredith, 1926, p. 52, remarks on Meredith's likeness to "those magnificent beings of the Renaissance".

ivres de pensée"⁴⁸. Schwob modestly and fittingly leaves no record of his own part in the ensuing conversation, merely reporting those of Meredith's words which indicate the immense part played by the mind in his life. Even so mundane a topic as the writer's legendary indigestion leads to the observation that the brain alone never tires: "C'est l'estomac qu'on surmène". Schwob presents Meredith as exceptionally alive to the world around him, perceiving everywhere subjects for analogy with the mental processes. The coppice of pine-trees outside the study-window is viewed as a background to the imaginative faculty: "Le cerveau a besoin d'obscurité pour que les pensées puissent jaillir et se mouvoir librement". The darting flight of the swift calls to Meredith's mind "the flitting of the brain". This acute consciousness of the physical world is not without its disadvantages. Meredith, like Lamb, seems to have been "constitutionally susceptible of noises", and when Schwob spoke of the tower of Utrecht, visited during his summer tour of Holland with Léon Daudet, he declared his loathing of the bells: "à Bruges, je m'en souviens, elles m'empêchaient

48. Siegfried Sasson, op. cit. p. 226, commends Schwob's sensitiveness in this observation, adding: "Conventional people who visit a man of genius and depart to record his superficial mannerisms would do well to remember that they have, possibly, been intruding on spiritual territory which is beyond their understanding".

de penser pendant la nuit."⁴⁹ This detail may appear to betray an almost comic over-sensitivity, but Schwob explains it as the symptom of "une intelligence constamment tendue". Just as the phenomena of the physical world constantly impinge on Meredith's imagination, so the creatures of his mind's eye impose themselves on him with an almost material presence. "Parmi cette solitude de cloître, devant la petite fenêtre obscure, il a écrit sous leur dictée."⁵⁰ Comparing Meredith with Balzac in his emotional involvement with his characters, Schwob illustrates the English novelist's affection for his heroines with an example calculated to charm the French reader. When the conversation touches on Renée de Croisnel, Meredith indulged in a little reminiscing: "Was she not a sweet girl? I think I am a little in love with her yet".

The section ends with another attempt by Schwob to delve

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49. Likewise, during his stay at Kingston Lodge in the spring of 1866, Meredith had been "driven half to distraction by a loud and persistent peal of bells in the church tower" near his home. L. Stevenson, *op. cit.* p. 151.
50. Priestley pertinently observes that "nearly all extremely creative men of genius, men who, later in life, have had the capacity of living intensely with the creatures of their imagination, seem to have been deprived of a normally happy and healthy childhood, which would not have driven them, as they were driven, to compensate themselves for the lack of companionship and outward incident by an early life of dreams and fantasies." *op. cit.* p. 8.

beneath the surface and discover the reason for the strange brilliance of Meredith's conversation, so frequently noted by commentators. Pursuing his notion of an unusually vivid world of fictional characters in the author's mind, he supposes the existence of a great range of bold philosophical concepts, externalised in a correspondingly striking form of speech:

"On éprouve vivement que M. Meredith traduit ce qu'il dit, et que ses métaphores sont le résultat d'une transposition de signes. En d'autres termes, de même que le calculateur Jacques Inaudi (51) ne se sert pas de chiffres pour son travail mental, mais de symboles qui lui sont propres, M. Meredith ne pense ni en anglais, ni en aucune langue connue: il pense en Meredith."

This rhetorical flourish, with its climax in the already quoted apotheosis of Meredith as the "most prodigious intellectual function of the century", undoubtedly closes the third section of the essay on a memorable note; nonetheless, it is no more than rhetoric. Schwob seems to have succumbed to the spell of Meredith's eloquence and to have allowed himself to reproduce one of the author's more frequent lapses of style. As Henry James remarked in his discussion of Lord Ormont and his Aminta:

"so many of the profundities and tortuosities prove when threshed out to be only pretentious statements of the very simplest propositions." 52

51. Inaudi was an illiterate peasant from Piedmont who created a stir in Paris through his feats in mental calculation. See RDM, 15th June 1892, pp. 905-924.

52. Quoted by F.N. Lees, op. cit. p. 335.

The extravagance of Schwob's final instance of Meredith's mental powers did not escape the notice of Jules Renard and Paul Valéry. Both made the same objection, Renard in a note of the 1st September 1894⁵³, and Valéry at greater length a month later:

"Je vous répondrais: "Tout le monde pense en Meredith", je veux dire tous ceux qui pensent. Et malheur à ceux qui ne peuvent penser que les choses communes! Ce n'est que dans un nombre de cas infiniment faible que l'état mental peut se raconter ..." 54

...

In conclusion, Schwob rapidly recalls the ideas which have emerged from his study of Meredith's works and personality, warning the reader not to be deceived by the apparent simplicity of the terms used:

"Pour des hommes tels que Tolstoï, Ibsen, Meredith, les mots intelligence, amour, nature, enveloppent beaucoup plus d'idées que nous ne saurions concevoir. La dernière simplicité de l'art et de la philosophie dissimule un nexus d'expériences et de méditations que leur première simplicité ne soupçonnait pas."

Life may inspire almost the same reactions in old and young, in the uneducated and in the philosopher. Meredith's reflexions, his attitudes towards age-old problems, remind Schwob of the sayings of other sages. From the book of Proverbs he quotes the words of Agur:

53. Correspondance, p. 137.

54. Lettres à Quelques-Uns, 1952, p. 51.

"There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
 yea, four which I know not:
 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent
 upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the
 sea; and the way of a man with a maid," 55

and those of the Japanese painter Hokusai in the epilogue to
 the Hundred Views of Fuji:

"At seventy-three I have at last caught every
 aspect of nature - birds, fish, animals, insects,
 trees, grasses, all ... When I reach a hundred
 my work will truly sublime, and my final goal will
 be attained around the age of one hundred and ten,
 when every line and dot I draw will be imbued with
 life." 56

These cogitations on the serenity of old age lead inevitably
 to thoughts of death, and the mood of tranquil resignation,
 unmingled with metaphysical speculations, is rendered by
 Meredith's metaphor: "ce n'est que l'autre côté de cette
 porte". In his conversations the writer frequently had
 recourse to such understatements to express his matter-of-
 fact attitude towards death, although in his poetry the
 changing of the coat, the passing into another room, were
 decidedly ennobled. His 'Ode to the Spirit of Earth in
 Autumn', admittedly a product of 1862, when he was in his
 prime, expounds a brisk, even sanguine view of personal
 annihilation as the sine qua non of a flourishing posterity:

55. Proverbs XXX 18-19.

56. Ichitaro Kondo, Katsushika Hokusai, Vermont, 1955, n.p.

"Teach me to feel myself the tree
 And not the withered leaf [...]
 Death shall I shrink from, loving thee?
 Into the breast that gives the rose
 Shall I with shuddering fall?" 57

Caring nothing for religion's promises of immortality, Meredith in his last years adopted a position which resolutely ignored all aspects of death save that of the simple physical change. His comfort was the knowledge that he had fulfilled the obligation laid on every member of the human race:

"Our life is but a little holding, lent
 To do a mighty labour [...]" 58

Thus Schwob's essay draws to its close on the subdued yet uplifting note of Meredith's words on death, and the reader is left with an image of the poet, in all the dignity of his old age, framed in the doorway of his cottage, in the autumn green of Box Hill.

...

Schwob judged his study worthy of inclusion in Spicilège, thus confirming the maturity of his critical powers, for none of his previous literary articles, those printed in the 'Les Œuvres et les Hommes' series for L'Événement in 1890, had been deemed good enough for collection in a volume. His prefaces to a French translation of Stevenson's Le Dynamiteur and to his own serial version of Moll Flanders had inaugurated his period of serious literary criticism of English literature,

57. Poetical Works, p. 176.

58. ibid. p. 577.

and certain of his friends expressed their anxiety at his neglect of the creative work in which he had made his reputation. Like Meredith before him, W.E. Fenley urged Schwob not to leave his true path: "That's not your work at all. There are scores to do it: but there is only one man living who can tell the story of Odjigh"⁵⁹. Paul Valéry, in the letter already mentioned, hinted at his regret that Schwob should have concentrated on Meredith's philosophy at the expense of his personality and imaginative genius:

"Je ne sais si ses opinions touchant la femme, ou cette Nature dont Box Hill est un des plus tendres billards, doivent être prises, élevées dans du soleil jusqu'aux yeux. J'ai peur ou horreur des maximes, invocations ou insinuations que les litterateurs glissent dans leur littérature pour simuler de la philosophie. La combinaison de ces ordres divers demanderait un génie spécial et jusqu'à ce jour inédit, car cela n'a jamais été fait."⁶⁰

To the discreet strictures of Valéry may be added a more general criticism of the essay. As Miss Salmon observes, Meredith and his works never inspired in Schwob the same haunting passion as Defoe and Stevenson: "c'était l'éloignement, l'aurole de mystère qui l'attirait surtout"⁶¹. The intensity of insight which charges his preface to Moll Flanders and, as we shall see,

59. Letter of 26th September 1894, quoted in D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 55.

60. Valéry, op. cit. p. 51.

61. D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 48.

his obituary article on Stevenson is lacking here, and it is noticeable that the prestige of his subject is largely established by direct comparison with Tolstoy and Ibsen, by appeal to the judgement of accredited arbiters such as Swinburne, and by the belittling of Meredith's great contemporaries in the English novel. The literary background, indeed, is scarcely touched on, so that Meredith stands out as a solitary giant. Schwob would have done him no disservice in showing him in his right perspective, as one major figure in an age of great writers. Yet this isolation of Meredith is in itself significant. Unable to feel the basic spiritual affinities which he had discovered in Stevenson and Defoe, yet impelled to confer on Meredith the glory of the Uebermensch, Schwob resolved to strip the writer of all but the one essential characteristic, and to place him in a background which would set off his splendour.

To the reproach that Schwob has narrowed his subject to the scope of his own exclusive vision, the answer may then be given that this concentration is part of the design. Though deprecated by the scholar, it cannot but meet with the approval of the publicist. Addressing the readers of a popular newspaper on an author to be truly appreciated only by an *élite*, Schwob was aware that the broad stroke would have a more telling effect than the subtle detail: hence his sweeping statements, his minor inaccuracies, his exaggerations. Whatever the intrinsic value of his essay as criticism, Schwob must be

credited with great skill in the presentation of Meredith and in the arrangement of his material⁶². Never losing sight of his one dominant theme, he builds his article on an admirably solid structure, passing - in a contracting and expanding movement - from the situation of the novelist, his prose works, his philosophy, through to the man himself, and back again to the outside world and its wisdom. The essay may be compared to a portrait in a landscape, impressive in the grandeur of its setting and the authority of its central figure, but more faithful to the painter's idiosyncratic conception of his sitter's character than to reality; it is, on the whole, the triumph of artistic form over factual content. Schwob was to declare in his preface to the Vies Imaginaires that the biographer "n'a pas à se préoccuper d'être vrai; il doit créer dans un chaos de traits humains". The vision of the creative writer has, therefore, overcome the critic's more sober appraisal in Schwob's essay, resulting in what Siegfried Sassoon rightly called a "charming and sympathetic account".

As an introduction to Meredith and his works the article was undoubtedly of great value, stimulating further and more

62. Mona Mackay, in her study Meredith et la France, 1937, is generous in her praise of Schwob: "Il a le don de l'exactitude critique uni à celui de la concision; il excelle à résumer un tempérament, un esprit, un homme tout entier en quelques mots bien choisis ..." p. 87.

detailed studies of the novels, among which we may mention those of Henry-D. Davray, André Chevillon, Firmin Roz, Emile Legouis and Remy de Gourmont. If a wider public was not converted to the Meredithian cult, it was because of the general lack of adequate translations. Only a selection of the poetry, and the minor tales and novels, had been rendered into French by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Davray states that the Nouvelle Revue Française was planning a complete edition of the works just before the First World War⁶³, but the publication was interrupted until the early 1920's, when Meredith's star, in England at least, was under eclipse. Across the Channel, however, he continued to attract attention, with the translation of his biography by Robert Sencourt in 1931 running into several editions, and the appearance of French versions of his major novels at regular intervals up to, and just after, the Second World War. The current vogue of Victorian literature has done much to restore Meredith's former glory, but it is certain that he has never lacked a small but discriminating body of admirers in France⁶⁴. In the formation of this company, as Miss Salmon remarks, Marcel Schwob was to play the part of pioneer.

63. op. cit. p. 38.

64. See, for example, the notes of André Gide in his Journal 1889-1939, 1951.

Robert Louis Stevenson(i) A Literary Friendship

A French translation of Treasure Island was serialised in Le Temps between the 25th September and the 8th November 1884, and it was in this version, not in the original, published in December 1883, that Marcel Schwob discovered the works of Robert Louis Stevenson. In him Schwob saw a kindred spirit in his love of adventure, and the exponent of an art which revealed new possibilities in fiction. Treasure Island, in spirit and in style, was far removed from the world of Zola and Bourget: laborious analysis and description of modern man and his society were rejected in favour of escapades with a swashbuckling crew of villains against the colourful background of the tropics. The novel of romance, all but ousted by a trend to ponderous social and philosophic investigation, was triumphantly reinstated and a new model offered to those who sought to recount with consummate artistry the misdeeds of the scoundrels of the ages. While living the experiences and collecting the material later to be transmuted into the tales of Coeur Double Schwob must have kept the example of Stevenson constantly in mind, for his dedication of the collection to the Scottish writer is an explicit acknowledgement of a literary influence, as well as of his unbounded admiration. His initial delight in Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver found

its logical extension in further readings of Stevenson's fiction and four years later, when about to launch himself into the world of letters, he took the step of making his existence known to the object of his enthusiasm. From Nantes, where he was spending the summer vacation studying for his licence, he sent a request to his friend Georges Guieysse:

"Pourrais-tu me procurer d'une manière quelconque l'adresse - ou sinon au moins le where about de Stevenson? Je te raconterai plus tard pourquoi ..." 1

Receiving no help from this source Schwob was forced to write to Stevenson via his London publishers. Having introduced himself as the nephew of Léon Cahun, author of a number of popular adventure-novels, he came to the point of his addressing the writer:

"The first time I saw your name was in the Temps, when that paper published Treasure Island. I was quite astonished - and immediately bought the English copy. I need not tell you how I suffered from the translation of André Laurie (2): you must naturally feel much keener pain than I when you are cut to bits. He disgraced the words; he disgraced the style; in short, he blotted out all the colours and just left the drawing. Instead of translating as he should have done - Billy Bones by something like Mes-os or Hands by Mes-mains, - he wrote dull, slovenly words, as if he had understood nothing. Do not believe I am criticising the Laurie translation in order to harpoon the French translation of your novels - I would be quite incapable of such a thing as translating Kidnapped - for instance - I would not dare to blur the vivid colour of your words, - I would suffer blurring them - and nevertheless,

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1. MST p. 45 (10th August 1888).
 2. "André Laurie" and "Philippe Daryl" were the pen-names of Paschal Grousset.

the translator must; but I shall not be that man.

So you must please read openly and frankly what follows, as it is written - and not analyse as if you were looking for my motives - I have none but a very strong admiration for you.

Since then I have read all you have published with increasing pleasure and increasing sympathy. We have the same relish for the powdered, polite, firm, intelligent and clear-headed old gentlemen of the eighteenth century - you love that time and I do too. We have the same principle of composition - I mean simplicity - and instead of the coordinate description the realists use - a progressive description with a few marking points that represent much better a picture to the mind's eye than a close and accurate analysis. And last - not least - the figures you create are so life-like, they move about so easily and speak so naturally, that I cannot help having lived some hours with John Silver and Alan Breck - and that I cannot help neither liking you for it." 3

In conclusion, Schwob proposed to send the translation of the account of a Boer's adventures in the Transvaal wars of 1835, published by A.G.C. van Duyl⁴. "You will find there all the incidents you like - and fine characters - a battle in a fortification built with waggons, and the life of a boy sixteen years old among the savages [..]" Schwob offered the manuscript as "a very feeble token of sympathy", thinking to interest his correspondent in a theme similar to that of

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3. The original of this letter is lost, but Schwob must have kept a copy, for Champion gives a summary, MST pp. 161-162, and Miss Salmon the full text, op. cit. pp. 84-86. See my Appendix E.
 4. Een Afrikaander, Amsterdam, 1883. I have no other information about the correspondence of Schwob and Van Duyl.

Treasure Island. At this time, however, Stevenson was forsaking the adolescent heroes of his earlier books for characters of greater maturity: The Master of Ballantrae, on which he was currently working, covers the adult life of two "fraternal enemies", and treats with deep insight the repercussions of unrelenting malevolence on a temperament powerless to offer adequate resistance. Schwob's suggestion was therefore of no appeal at this stage of Stevenson's evolution.

The letter must have been posted to London soon after the middle of August, for on the 3rd September Schwob was writing to Guieysse with news of his recent overtures:

"Stevenson est "yachting in the Pacific": (5)
Voilà ce que m'écrit un de ses éditeurs, Chatto & Windus. Il passe de bonnes vacances, au moins! Je lui ai fait d'honnêtes propositions, appuyées d'un article élogieux. Les propositions sont tentantes, l'article est bien mauvais. Je te parlerai des premières à Paris." 6

The study alluded to by Schwob was printed in the Phare de la Loire on the 27th August and enclosed together with his first published tale, 'Les Trois Oeufs, conte de Pâques'⁷, in a further letter sent at the end of the month. He apologised for

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5. Stevenson had sailed with his family from San Francisco on the yacht Casco in June 1888.
 6. MST p. 46.
 7. Printed in the Phare, 2nd and 3rd April 1888.

the inadequacy of his criticism but asked that it be considered as a refutation of Mme. Th. Bentzon's notion of Stevenson as expressed in her article in the Revue des Deux Mondes of the 1st April 1888⁸.

"Dear Sir -

Ma foi, tant pis - je vous écris en français, j'aurai les coudées plus franches et je me suis présenté dans votre langue, ce qui doit suffire à la politesse internationale. Votre éditeur, Chatto & Windus, à qui j'ai envoyé une tartine que j'ai publiée sur An Inland Voyage m'écrit que vous êtes "yachting in the Pacific". De sorte que vous recevrez sans doute dans le même paquet "my letter of introduction" et celle-ci. - Voici ce morceau de prose; il n'est pas brillant, mais il exprime ce que je pense de vos livres. Je trouve que Bentzon vous a fort mal traité; j'ai essayé de montrer que vous n'étiez pas si "eccentric" qu'elle voulait bien le croire; je suis d'avis qu'elle a massacré "Dr. Jekyll and M. Hyde", et bien qu'elle écrive du haut de la Revue des Deux Mondes, j'ai toujours le "Jumping Frog" de Mark Twain sur le cœur; mais décidément deux colonnes de journal ne suffisent pas à une critique. Je n'ai pas dit le dixième de ce que je voulais dire; quand on n'a pas la place de donner des preuves, on a un ton dogmatique et on a l'air de juger dans son faux-col.

Ne pensez pas que "my literary productions" ressemblent à ce spécimen. Je vous envoie dans cette lettre un conte indoustani - du XVIII^e siècle. Vous devez si bien connaître Voltaire et Voisenon que le pastiche vous semblera imparfait - mais il n'y a plus que vous, aujourd'hui, qui puissiez écrire comme ces gens-la." 9

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8. 'Le Roman Etrange en Angleterre', op. cit. pp. 550-581. For Schwob's article see Appendix F.
9. The original of this and Schwob's following letter are in the Edwin J. Beinecke Collection of the Yale University Library: see George L. McKay, The Stevenson Library of Edwin J. Beinecke, New Haven, 1958, vol. IV, items 5434 and 5435. See Appendix E.

Schwob ended with the hope of a discussion of the Dutch manuscript and other matters at a later date, possibly during a visit by Stevenson to the Exhibition of 1889, but gave his Paris address should the novelist wish to reply beforehand. It was not until the following January that the Casco docked at Honolulu, where Stevenson found in the pile of mail Schwob's "two friendly and clever letters"; his brief note, penned on the 8th February 1889, promised a meeting in the summer, for at that time he still had plans to return to Europe¹⁰. Encouraged by this response Schwob on the 1st May wrote another letter which despite its length must be quoted in full, since it holds the key to a number of points in Stevenson's detailed reply, and to the second article which Schwob was to write in consequence.

"Cher Monsieur,

J'ai beaucoup tardé à vous répondre. C'était afin que ma lettre n'eût point la peine de voguer à travers l'Océan Pacifique. Je veux qu'elle vous trouve au débotté - si tant est que vous ayez chaussé des bottes pour aller aux Sandwich.

Et j'ai bien des choses à vous dire - des compliments d'abord - des excuses ensuite. J'ai lu The Black Arrow avec un plaisir tel - ... me voici aux excuses - un plaisir si entraînant que j'ai voulu mordre au fruit que je m'étais défendu. Je vous en demande sincèrement pardon. J'ai écrit à MM^{rs} Cassell pour obtenir la traduction. On vous fera part sans doute de ma proposition. J'ai commencé mon travail - une quinzaine de pages (trente de votre roman) sont prêtes. Mais je ne veux pas continuer avant de vous avoir consulté "in a good, long, chat, when you come to Paris". Car vous y viendrez - c'est de toute nécessité. Il n'y aura jamais eu en France d'Exposition comparable à celle-ci. Le seul ennui que vous

10. The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson, ed. Lloyd Osbourne, 1923-24, XXXIII 234 (8th February 1889).

auriez pu craindre, c'est le général Boulanger: il est chez vous.

Revenons "to the Black Arrow". Ce sont les deux premières femmes que je vous aie vu esquisser (je n'ai pas lu Prince Otto.), et je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que vous vous êtes magistralement tiré de ce casse-cou. The lass of "Kidnapped" m'avait déjà délicieusement impressionné - j'ai retrouvé dans The black Arrow la même délicatesse de dessin, la même vivacité de couleur, la même vie. Vous avez réellement créé deux femmes. - Vous avez eu le courage aussi de faire un autre Dick, un autre Crookback que celui de Shakespeare. Je ne puis assez vous dire combien votre nouveau Dickon m'a intéressé. Vous l'avez vu tout autrement que Shakespeare - et le vôtre est peut-être le vrai.

Mais je me laisse entraîner - j'écrirais bien un volume à propos de votre volume. Je voulais seulement vous demander quand vous venez - je vous communiquerai alors la brochure hollandaise dont je vous ai parlé.

Maintenant il faut que je vous fasse part des changements qui me concernent. A l'examen de la licence-ès-lettres que j'ai subi à Paris en novembre dernier, j'ai été reçu le premier. - J'écris maintenant à l'Echo de Paris qui est à peu près notre seul journal littéraire. Je vous envoie en même temps que cette lettre mon dernier conte: "still the eighteenth century - I hope you will like it." (11) Enfin je suis chargé par le gouvernement d'une mission à l'effet de réunir les éléments d'une Histoire de l'argot en France. Mon travail m'a déjà conduit à faire des corrections dans le texte de notre ami François Villon. Je me suis justement rencontré des ces corrections (et nos deux méthodes sont tout-à-fait différentes) avec M. W.G.C. Bijvanck, docteur-ès-lettres (12), qui vous a fort gracieusement cité dans son édition du Petit Testament de Villon pour votre étude "François Villon, student, poet and housebreaker", ainsi que pour la nouvelle: "A lodging for the night (New Arabian Nights)."

11. 'La Dernière Nuit', L'Echo de Paris, 16th April 1889, was based on the adventures of Cartouche and his gang.

12. See above p. 13.

Un fascicule de mon travail paraîtra dans trois semaines à l'Imprimerie Nationale: je vous l'adresserai aussitôt.

And now you must, as you promised, write again. I read with a thrilling French pleasure your letter to the Times from the Samoa (13), but I would rather read with a friendly gratefulness a letter from London privately directed to me, when you have some time.

Je vous attends à Paris avec impatience et je me mets bien entendu à votre entière disposition quand vous y viendrez.

Croyez à ma sincère amitié (encore littéraire hélas!)

Very respectfully yours,
Marcel Schwob."

The next letter from Stevenson to Schwob printed in Sidney Colvin's edition of the correspondence¹⁴ is dated the 19th August 1890, but a number of clues indicate the dispatch of at least one other brief note in the meantime. As Miss Salmon

13. 'Recent German Doings in Samoa', op. cit. 11th March 1889.

14. The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson to his Family and Friends, 1899, 2 vols. I have used the enlarged edition in the Tusitala Works, 1923-1924, vols. 31-35. Colvin seems to have chosen from the letters Schwob loaned him only those which threw some light on the novelist's career and personality, for Byvanck, in De Gids, May 1905, p. 349, stated that the texts were "niet geheel volledig", and Sherard, in Twenty Years in Paris, 1905, p. 387, talked of "many other letters". Schwob himself must have approved of the selection, for in his letter to his mother, OC X 114, he did not complain of cuts. Champion, MST p. 164, claimed to have translated his excerpts from the originals, but Professor Bradford Booth, in a letter of the 22nd February 1967, informs me that these have now been lost.

has observed, the 1894 preface to the French translation of The Dynamiter contains a sentence not reproduced in any of the published letters:

"Quand je viendrai, disait-il encore, nous dînerons chez L..., si c'est un bon restaurant, nous regarderons couler la Seine verdissante, et nous parlerons de Villon." 15

Immediately afterwards Schwob quoted the line beginning the 1890 letter: "More about Villon; it seems incredible [..]" In all probability, therefore, the extraneous sentence was taken from an acknowledgement of the 'Etude sur l'Argot Français', and the promise of Schwob's forthcoming work on Villon and the Coquillards.¹⁶ Since Stevenson left Honolulu in June 1889 he may not have received the off-print until his arrival at Samoa in December, and at that time he envisaged a return to Europe. The following month, however, he acquired an estate near Apia, and in February set off on the voyage home in order to dispose of his Bournemouth property before settling at Vailima. A serious bout of illness at Sydney forced him to undertake another health-cruise between April and August, and it was on his return to Sydney that he wrote a long and self-

15. Le Dynamiteur, tr. G. Art, 1894, p. ii. The restaurant in question was the "Lapérouse", according to Champion, MST p. 170.

16. See the Memoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris, 1892, VII 169-183, 296-320.

revelatory reply to his impatient admirer. He showed keen interest in Schwob's researches on Villon and authorised a translation of The Black Arrow, though confessing that he found the character of Richard Crookback its only praiseworthy feature, sounder in conception to that of Shakespeare's hero, whom he dismissed as being as incongruous as Porthos in Dumas's Vicomte de Bragelonne; he expressed his delight at finding an appreciative reader in France, where he had received his artistic apprenticeship; reported on his current literary projects, and hoped that Schwob would be able to talk with his step-son Lloyd Osbourne in Paris, since he himself would be able to communicate only "in the form of occasional letters from recondite islands."¹⁷

Schwob was deeply conscious of the privilege he enjoyed in his epistolary rappports with one of the most eminent British writers of the day and confided them to Byvanck, who replied in a letter of the 8th October 1890:

"Je vous envie votre correspondance avec M. Stevenson, dont le talent m'a toujours inspiré un si grand intérêt. Est-ce que c'est besoin de santé qui le retient au milieu de l'océan Pacifique, je me rappelle avoir lu que sa constitution a été fort ébranlée." 18

17. Works XXXIII 308-309 (19th August 1890).

18. CPC 5096.9.

A few days later Schwob's good fortune was revealed also to a much wider audience: the readers of L'Événement. On the 11th November he began his series 'Les Oeuvres et les Hommes' with an essay devoted to Stevenson. Partly a reworking of the study from the Phare, partly a direct transcription of the recent letter from Sydney, this document marks an important step in the enlargement of Schwob's ideas on the novelist, yet it was ignored by Champion and omitted from the Oeuvres Complètes¹⁹. If Schwob sent a covering letter with the cutting, it has not been preserved; Stevenson, in any case, confined himself in his reply to the points raised in the article. Goodhumouredly he corrected Schwob's startling misapprehensions on his classical education and his relative estimate of Dumas and Shakespeare and balanced a rose-tinted view of the South Seas with a graphic account of the discomforts of the rainy season. He adjusted Schwob's formula of the proportions of artist and adventurer in his personality and ventured to recommend two more meritorious works for translation than The Black Arrow, though realising that Schwob would "soon have better to do than to transvase the work of others". Again he expressed interest in his correspondent's work on Villon and regretted that it would now be impossible to discuss the poet "in the flesh". As compensation he proposed an exchange of photographs, and promised the dispatch of some of his books: "Prince Otto, Memories and Portraits,

19. I have reproduced it in Appendix G.

Underwoods, and Ballads, none of which you seem to have seen."²⁰

At the beginning of February 1891 Schwob mentioned this courtesy in a letter to his mother:

"J'ai reçu aussi de Stevenson une longue lettre (toujours de Samoa) où il me dit une quantité de choses gracieuses. Mais ce qui est encore plus aimable de sa part, c'est que j'ai reçu de chez Chatto et Windus son éditeur de Londres six beaux volumes de lui que je n'avais pas lus et dont il m'annonçait l'envoi dans sa lettre trop tard pour le Nouvel An "let them be an Easter present.""²¹

After these signs of growing friendship it is disappointing to find no record of further letters from either side until 1894, though all the indications are that an exchange was kept up. Certainly Schwob must have sent in the spring of 1891 a copy of the book so proudly dedicated to Stevenson, and an off-print of his July 1892 article on Villon in the Revue des Deux Mondes; while there is evidence that Stevenson in turn presented his French admirer with other of his books as they came off the press. The preface to The Dynamiter alludes to the receipt of a book of "contes océaniens, de légendes de Samoa, curieusement tressées de civilisation

20. Works XXXIV 50-52 (19th January 1891).

21. OC X 54. The other two volumes, to judge by the number of subsequent references, must have been The Merry Men, of 1887, which included 'Will o' the Mill', 'Markheim', 'Thrawn Janet', 'Clalla', 'The Treasure of Franchard', and the Familiar Studies of Men and Books, 1882. This collection of essays, it is true, contains the 'François Villon, Student, Poet, and House-breaker', which Schwob already knew, but he does not mention until 1894 the other studies, those on Thoreau and John Knox.

Otherwise, the two books may have been Virginibus
(continued
overleaf)

occidentale et de sauvagerie polynésienne".²² As Miss Salmon remarks, this can be no other than the Island Nights' Entertainments, which appeared in April 1893. Possibly Schwob did not reciprocate this gift until the summer of the following year, for Stevenson's next letter, dated the 7th July 1894, begins on a somewhat plaintive note: "Thank you for having remembered me in my exile". He wrote in praise of Mimes and, prompted by the example of his own development, urged Schwob away from the pleasant groves of Arcady into a sterner reality:

"You have yet to give us - and I am expecting it with impatience - something of a larger gait; something daylight, not twilight; something with the colours of life; not the flat tints of a temple illumination; something that shall be said with all the clearnesses and trivialities of speech, not sung like a semi-articulate lullaby. It will not please yourself as well, when you come to give it us, but it will please others better. It will be more of a whole, more worldly, more nourished, more commonplace - and not so pretty, perhaps not even so beautiful. No man knows better than I that, as we go on in life, we must part from the prettiness and the graces. We but attain qualities to lose them; life is a series of farewells, even in art; even our proficiencies are deciduous and evanescent." 23

He conceded that Schwob would perhaps never excel his 'Hermès Psychagôgos', and repeated this opinion to a former boon

21. Puerisque, of 1881, and The Silverado Squatters, (cont.) 1883, to which Schwob alludes in his 1894 preface.

22. op. cit. p. iii.

23. Works XXXV 140.

companion, W.E. Henley²⁴, who duly passed it on:

"Did I tell you of a letter from R.L.S.? No - I didn't, I remember: for it only came the other day. He said some very nice things about you, and asked if I knew the Hermès Psychagôgos in the Mimes. It's a "nailer", he says; and I (W.E.H.) might have been proud to put it in verse. I agreed with him. It is; and I might. I wish I could." 25

We may imagine that Stevenson also received and approved Schwob's preface to The Dynamiter²⁶, the last tribute from his pen before the novelist's sudden death on the 3rd December 1894. In the first shock at the loss of his distant friend Schwob could do no more than devote a brief 'Lettre Parisienne' to his memory²⁷, and it was in Henley's New Review of February 1895 that he published his definitive study of "le grand romancier anglais". Its value was immediately recognised and Henley, his editorial satisfaction overcoming more appropriate sentiments, wrote to congratulate Schwob on the 12th:

"Your 'R.L.S.' has gone rippingly, I think. It has been much discussed and praised in my hearing, and elsewhere. And this morning J.M. Barrie writes

24. For details of their estrangement see J.C. Furnas, Voyage to Windward, New York, 1951, pp. 281-299, and R.L.S. Stevenson's Letters to Charles Baxter, ed. DeLancey Ferguson and Marshall Waingrew, New Haven, 1956.

25. D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 32 (6th September 1894).

26. Printed in the Revue Hebdomadaire, 2nd June 1894, p. 110, at the head of the first instalment of Art's translation.

27. Phare, 19th December 1894, reprinted in Spicilege, 1960, p. 223.

that in his opinion it is good enough to make the number a distinguished one." 28

Schwob's thoughts must often have turned to Stevenson when he was composing his pirate biographies for the Vies Imaginaires in 1895, and his correspondence with Menley and Whibley also kept the name of the writer in his mind. Sidney Colvin knew of his letters, and it was to him that Charles Baxter, Stevenson's life-long friend and executor, applied for an introduction to Schwob in the spring of 1899²⁹. Towards the end of this year Colvin likewise was to consult Schwob on the novelist's readings of Villon, and Schwob was pleased to confirm that recent research had not invalidated the vision of the poet given in 'A Lodging for the Night':

"je ne saurais assez dire combien la vue générale de Stevenson, combien son impression, demeurent exactes. Aujourd'hui le sens de l'oeuvre de Villon apparaît plus clairement [...] Mais l'homme demeure le même; et le portrait que Stevenson en a peint est selon le mot du grand historien

30

A previous approach by Colvin resulted in even more gratifying publicity for Schwob's association with the writer: on the 12th November he announced to his mother the appearance of the Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson, "où figurent en belle

28. D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 56. J.A. Hammerton, in his Stevensoniana, 1903, p. 177, wrote that Schwob's essay "must rank with the best ever written on Stevenson and his work."

29. G.L. McKay, op. cit. item 4320 (31st March 1899).

30. op. cit. p. 449 (4th November 1899).

place les lettres qu'il m'a adressées"³¹. This undoubtedly was a great advantage for one anxious to place his articles in English reviews, but had the drawback of attracting the attention of Vance Thompson, who led him into his ill-starred theatrical ventures.

In October 1901 Schwob began his voyage to the South Seas, as Stevenson had done some thirteen years ago³². Unlike his predecessor, he found there neither relief from his illness nor inspiration for his writings:

"He was forcing his nature. He was not in the least like Stevenson - utterly different by race and training. To him, Semitic by origin and with a profound Latin culture, the Pacific and its islands were naturally hateful. But Stevenson was there in Paris. Through The Wrecker and The Ebb-Tide and the Letters to Colvin he saw as on a stage the glorious adventure of the Pacific, and had the wild idea to get on that stage himself. How hallucinated he was in his talks to me before he started!"³³

Pierre Champion recalled that Schwob had little to say of his

31. OC X 114.

32. He was thus away from home when Henley's controversial review of Graham Balfour's official family biography of Stevenson appeared in the Pall Mall Magazine of December 1901. His opinion of Henley's outburst against the "seraph in chocolate" image is not recorded, but the biography is listed in his library catalogue. He was also in correspondence with Balfour: see CPC 5133.2.

33. Vincent O'Sullivan 'Two Lives', The Dublin Magazine, January-March 1928, p. 44.

adventures on his return, so great was his disenchantment:

"Il n'était pas entré, comme il l'espérait, à la suite de Robert-Louis Stevenson, dans la connaissance de l'âme des indigènes. Il n'avait pas vu le tombeau de son ami. Là-bas, comme partout, il avait trouvé les divisions, les haines ethniques, la rivalité des races, tout ce qu'exploitaient si bien les Allemands." 34

Even his encounters with "des types effarants d'aventuriers, qui lui rappelaient les antiques corsaires" gave rise to only a few uncompleted projects, listed by Champion:

"Océanide, Vaililoa, Captain Crabbe, Cissy, De la pourpre des mers à la pourpre des flots ...
Mais était-il capable, alors, de les réaliser?
Sur la même feuille, il plaisante et fait des mots: 'Claudine s'en va ou un voyage dans la mer Polaire.'" 35

The passage of time attenuated these disappointments and enabled him to recall his peregrinations with some degree of cheerfulness.

Arnold Bennett noted such a conversation:

"He was talking a lot about his voyage in the South Seas, on Captain Crawshay's steamer. He said Crawshay was a terrific swearer, with very conventional and proper ideas, and he would read only one author - Washington Irving. He could not understand the craze for R.L. Stevenson. He admitted that Stevenson was a man of parts, but stated that his books were impossible." 36

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34. MST pp. 200-201. Edmund Gosse, in a letter of August 1903, wrote to Schwob: "It was a mistake of yours to go to that odious Samoa, which was only a rainbow-coloured bubble blown by R.L.S. and which burst in soap-suds when he died." Quoted in D. Salmon, op. cit. p. 38.
35. MST p. 201.
36. Journals I 166 (15th April 1904).

Towards the end of his life, then, Schwob's discussions of Stevenson seem to have been coloured by his own memories of Samoa; but he always considered the novelist with special affection as the first British writer with whom he had corresponded, and whose literary interests most fully coincided with his own.

(ii) Aspects of Stevenson

The selection of Schwob's vast output in verse and prose up to 1888 published by Champion in the Ecrits de Jeunesse affords a glimpse of what trends in literature the aspiring author was following, and what he was most decisively rejecting. Almost at the outset of his career, as we have already seen, he expounded his creed in 'Le Réalisme':

"il s'agira d'imiter la nature dans la forme que nous saisissons en elle. Les oeuvres naturelles ont une composition, une organisation; sans chercher à décomposer cette organisation dans ses parties déterminantes, on essaiera de la reproduire artificiellement. Certes, la structure de l'oeuvre d'art n'est pas celle de l'oeuvre naturelle: la composition factice est là pour remplacer le système d'organes que préside à l'union des choses vivantes." 37

This ideal seemed to Schwob to be realised in the work of Stevenson, and it is worthy of notice that in his first letter he spoke not so much of the content of Treasure Island as of its non-realist technique, which resulted in the greater vividness and impact of its characters. Stevenson's own theoretical writings contain close parallels with Schwob's argument. Here, for instance, is a passage from 'A Humble Remonstrance', written for Longman's Magazine, December 1884, in reply to Henry James's essay 'The Art of Fiction':

37. Printed in the Phare, 15th April 1889, unpublished in volume form.

"Our art is occupied, and bound to be occupied, not so much in making stories true as in making them typical; not so much in capturing the lineaments of each fact, as in marshalling all of them towards a common end. For the welter of impressions, all forcible but all discrete, which life presents, it substitutes a certain artificial series of impressions, all indeed most feebly represented, but all aiming at the same effect, all eloquent of the same idea, all chiming together like consonant notes in music or like the graduated tints in a good picture." 38

In his 'Note on Realism', dating from 1883, Stevenson had accused the realists of ignoring the proper demands of art in their desire to be comprehensive:

"In literature (from which I must draw my instances) the great change of the past century had been effected by the admission of detail. It was inaugurated by the romantic Scott; and at length, by the semi-romantic Balzac and his more or less wholly unromantic followers, bound like a duty to the novelist. For some time it signified and expressed a more ample contemplation of the conditions of man's life; but it has recently (at least in France) fallen into a merely technical and decorative stage, which it is, perhaps, still too harsh to call survival. With a movement of alarm, the wiser or more timid begin to fall a little back from these extremities; they begin to aspire after a more naked, narrative articulation; after the succinct, the dignified, and the poetic; and as a means to this, after a general lightening of this baggage of detail." 39

In view of Schwob's eagerness to put into practice the ideas he had worked out in reaction to Zola and Bourget, and of his delight in finding a prestigious ally in Stevenson, it is not

38. Reproduced in Janet Adam Smith, Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson, 1948, pp. 91-92.

39. Essays Literary and Critical, Works XXVIII 69-70.

surprising that he should underline in his first article his subject's sovereign indifference to "l'amour des salons ou du ventre de Paris" and the garb in which the chronicles of these latter were presented. The topics selected for discussion, despite some errors of detail, show a judicious perception of the essentials of Stevenson's art, all the more remarkable since he was then ignorant of the relevant essays in Memories and Portraits. He begins by situating Stevenson in his literary background, as successor to a generation of novelists who seemed to have brought the genre to its definitive form. While his English contemporaries were reduced to "des fades histoires qui sentaient le thé, le vieux caoutchouc, les brosses à dents familiales", Stevenson had flung in his lot with the rising Americans, whose work "fleuraient les épices des sous-bois californiens". His advantage over his trans-Atlantic rivals Mark Twain, Bret Harte and Louisa Alcott lay in his "solide éducation classique", which enabled him to think and to express his thoughts clearly and concisely. For Schwob, therefore, Stevenson stood at the head of a new trend in fiction: a manly, healthy enjoyment of the outdoor life, as contrasted with the effete langours of the Tennysonian and Rossettian schools, coupled with a strict regard for the traditional standards of literary form. Thus Treasure Island was the consecration of a new kind of novel, in which Schwob saw yet another example of Stevenson's ability to bring together two

opposing but mutually enhancing qualities:

"cette terrible histoire de flibustiers qui commence dans le fantastique et continue avec la précision de détails d'un journal de bord ..."

Already we find Schwob alighting on the duality in Stevenson which was to become the leitmotiv of his essays: here it is the combination of classic discipline and modern freedom, of fact and fancy which catches his attention.

At this stage, however, he discerns no ambivalence in Stevenson's view of human nature and repudiates the suggestion of Mme. Bentzon that his work betrays a preoccupation with the supernatural:

"Si Stevenson relève d'une tradition quelconque, ce n'est pas de la morbide névrose que Poë nous a inoculée, mais des idées saines et spirituelles du dix-huitième siècle."

He accuses Mme. Bentzon of seeing all Stevenson's work through the perspective of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, in order to brand him as "le représentant du roman étrange en Angleterre."

Indignation caused him to overlook the fact that the words "roman étrange" appeared only in the title of her review, and that it covered also the New Arabian Nights and The Dynamiter, which fully justified her designation. Subsequent readings of Thrawn Janet and Olalla were to convince Schwob of his hastiness in underestimating Stevenson's fascination with the eerie, instilled in him by the blood-curdling tales of superstition and wild deeds told by his nurse. For the time being Schwob preferred to give prominence to the vital, exuberant

strain in the novelist, and his affinities with the eighteenth century, the epitome of measure and lucidity. It is almost superfluous to observe that Schwob dwelt on these affinities because he was currently much absorbed in the early English novelists: and just as he rejoiced in Stevenson's affection for the old gentlemen, and indeed the villains of the period, so he chose to point out the conscious adaptation of the manner

"des Swift, des Smollett, des de Foë et des Sterne. Greffez sur la prose nette et limpide de cette époque un bourgeon d'originalité fantasque, une pointe de coloris romantique, et vous aurez le style de Stevenson."

It was, in fact, by having "played the sedulous ape" to the notable stylists of previous centuries rather than through his digestion of the classics that Stevenson had achieved mastery over language; his problem as an artist was to find subject-matter worthy of his instrument. One critic has said of his first book that

"The discrepancy between the triviality - one might almost say insipidity - of the experiences related and the charm of the narrative as writing is quite startling." 40

For Schwob, on the other hand, An Inland Voyage in its treatment of characters represented a notable accomplishment for a young writer: the deployment of a clear, bright style to animate

40. Richard Aldington, Portrait of a Rebel, 1957, p. 88.

human beings and their surroundings in a manner owing nothing to current notions of verisimilitude:

"Supposez qu'il n'a pris parti ni pour le roman subjectif, l'analyse psychologique de Paul Bourget, ni pour le roman objectif, la description physiologique d'Emile Zola, mais qu'il fabrique des êtres vivants, qui parlent, marchent et agissent dans des paysages vrais, coloriés, brossés en trois touches de pinceau, qui ne sont ni tout âme ni tout corps, - et vous aurez son procédé de composition."

Having delivered himself of this subject for reflexion in his French readers, Schwob sought to awake their interest still further with a discussion of the Inland Voyage, a work particularly suited for the presentation of Stevenson in France since it related the author's experiences and encounters during his canoe-trop down the Sambre in 1876. Having drawn attention to its analogies with Sterne's Sentimental Journey, the "même finesse d'observation, la même ironie aimable, sans les tendances lacrymatoires", Schwob translated two character-sketches, "vrais tous deux sans être réalistes". The same note sounds in his conclusion: the reader is assured of the fruitful outcome of Stevenson's rejection of a mistaken theory for a vigorous tradition:

"L'Ile au Trésor a montré aux lecteurs français la vérité scrupuleuse et la couleur exacte d'un récit de la plus grande fantaisie. C'était la qualité maîtresse de Swift et de Thackeray."

...

In his covering letter to Stevenson, Schwob lamented his inability to say in so limited a space the tenth of what was in his mind. A chance to fill the gaps came two years later

when the editor of L'Événement granted his request for a column to be devoted to books and personalities of topical importance⁴¹. The fact that the articles born of this venture were not reissued in volume form during Schwob's lifetime bespeaks his poor opinion of them, yet the first of their number must have been inspired by personal interest as well as the necessity to earn some small income. Even so, the study of Robert Louis Stevenson which inaugurated the series hardly shows Schwob in his best light as a critic, and his reluctance to provide a literary analysis may have been in accordance with editorial policy, if we may judge by the letter from Magnier which closed the collaboration:

"Non, mon cher Monsieur Schwob, plus de chroniques bibliographiques, mais de la causerie, de l'observation, de la critique sur la vie, les personnalités, les hommes, la société." 42

This injunction was most conscientiously followed by Schwob at the outset, and appeal to the average Frenchman with a proper sense of national pride seems to have been uppermost in his thoughts as he arranged his material. The receipt of the August 1890 letter from Sydney encouraged him to adopt a personal approach to his subject so that his article consists of quotation, allusion to the text, and a record of his own

41. "il est entré à l'Événement en écrivant, de province, à Magnier, pour lui offrir de faire des chroniques". Renard, Journal, p. 78 (16th February 1891).

42. MST p. 60.

sensations on discovering the novels. Thus he begins by plunging the reader straight into the atmosphere of Treasure Island:

"Je me souviens de la nuit où je lus pour la première fois le nom de Stevenson. J'allais vers le Midi - un long voyage de dix-sept heures - et j'avais pris à la gare un nouveau volume anglais ... Je tournais les dernières pages de l'Ile au Trésor quand un vent frais pénétra dans le wagon, secouant les arbres le long de la voie; l'horizon se teintait de rose, et un frisson particulier m'annonçait l'approche du matin."

Schwob's deviation from the prosaic truth is amply justified by the arresting effect it produces. His sense of being whisked away from the banality of the workaday world, deliciously suspended in time and then gradually returned to an embellished reality, is shared by the reader: his journey through time and space coincides with that of Jim Hawkins and his companions on their romantic quest.

As in his article for the Phare, Schwob says little of the plot of Treasure Island, passing almost at once to an exposé of the narrative technique which makes it so enthralling:

"tout d'abord la curiosité et l'horreur grandissaient par une merveilleuse composition de créatures falotes qui apparaissaient successivement et se dessinaient en traits de plus en plus nets aux différents plans de l'histoire; puis une demi-douzaine de caractères fortement conçus dans une action singulièrement attrayante; enfin un procédé littéraire nouveau consistant à faire refléter les différentes phases des aventures par la manière, le style et le point de vue de trois ou quatre personnages qui reprenaient la narration, chacun à leur tour."

On this occasion Schwob refrains from explicitly enlisting Stevenson as an ally in his quarrel with the realists, though he insists on the "progressive description with a few marking points" which had struck him from the beginning.

In his second paragraph, Schwob observes that Treasure Island was not Stevenson's first work. He had previously mentioned six works as the fruits of the literary apprenticeship: now he writes: "Il y avait six ans que Stevenson écrivait, quand l'Ile au Trésor a consacré sa réputation en Angleterre et l'a fait connaître en France". The statement is correct as far as the publications in volume form are concerned: An Inland Voyage, the first narrative of any importance, appeared in May 1878, and was followed by the Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes, 1879, the collection of essays Virginibus Puerisque and Familiar Studies of Men and Books in 1881 and 1882, The New Arabian Nights in 1882, and The Silverado Squatters in December 1883, just before the pirate story. However, Stevenson had been writing since 1866, and his more important essays dated from 1874⁴³. Probably Schwob was not then fully aware of the nature of Stevenson's earliest literary efforts: the essays at first attracted little notice and were acclaimed only when the cult of their author was well established. Thus they are passed over almost in silence in this article, and Schwob lists only the works

43. See the bibliography in Graham Balfour, The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson, 1901, vol. 2.

of fiction dating from more recent years: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Kidnapped, The Black Arrow, The Master of Ballantrae. Each of these masterpieces, according to Schwob, had been neglected in France - except, he might have added, by Mme. Bentzon, who had devoted a long article to a review of Stevenson's works, and had even translated long extracts from Dr. Jekyll. Thus, four years before writing his study of George Meredith, Schwob had learned the art of partly suppressing the truth in order to make his assertions more forceful; the point he wishes to drive home here is the contrast between French ignorance of Stevenson and Stevenson's love of France⁴⁴.

If he had read the Familiar Studies of Men and Books, Schwob would have realised that the novelist had long been greatly attracted to certain French writers: Villon, Charles d'Orléans, Victor Hugo. These "premiers croquis" are barely mentioned by Schwob, who was more anxious to expatiate on the two chronicles of Stevenson's travels in France, already discussed in his first article. He describes An Inland Voyage a little more circumstantially than before, with a respectful allusion to Stevenson's companion, "un grand seigneur d'Ecosse"; this was Sir Walter Simpson, a baronet whose title had been in the family but one generation, his father having been

44. The influence of France on Stevenson has been frequently discussed: see the studies of Charles Sarolea, Robert Louis Stevenson and France, 1923; Harriet MacPherson, R.L. Stevenson. A Study in French Influence, 1930; Cecil MacLean, La France dans l'Oeuvre de R.L. Stevenson, 1936.

honoured for his researches into the anaesthetic uses of chloroform. Schwob stresses his subject's interest in the most humble of French peasants: "de pauvres servantes, de vieilles dames qui habitent au bord de l'eau, des soldats de petite garnison"; in his mountain excursion, he is moved by "la nature aride, le rude caractère des paysans cévenols". Such details reinforce Schwob's presentation of a man deeply concerned with French life and prepares the statement of Stevenson's frustration at his lack of recognition in a country which had fostered his interest in both literature and humanity. Realising that Stevenson is his own best advocate, Schwob translates the relevant passage from his letter:

"Comprehend how I have lived much of my time in France, and loved your country, and many of its people, and all the time was learning that which your country has to teach - breathing in rather that atmosphere of art which can only there be breathed; and all the time knew - and raged to know - that I might write with the pen of angels or of heroes, and no Frenchman be the least the wiser! And now steps in M. Marcel Schwob, writes me the most kind encouragement, and reads and understands, and is kind enough to like my work." 45

Schwob could even have lingered at this point over an evocation of the exhilaration the young Stevenson felt on exchanging the stifling puritanism of Edinburgh for the freedom of the artists' colony at Fontainebleau, and a consideration of the

45. Works XXXIII 308-309.

influence of French literature in his formation as a writer⁴⁶.

Instead, he presses on with his notion of Stevenson's love of the popular elements of French culture:

"Pensez-vous que ce soit le jardin de la France et l'urbanité française qui attirent cet artiste? - Non pas. - Comme Dante-Gabriel Rossetti, comme James Payn (sic) il a une affection singulière pour François Villon, un vrai poète français. Rossetti et Payn l'ont traduit; Stevenson a lu le travail de M. Longnon sur sa vie, et il en a tiré un de ses meilleurs essais littéraires et une excellente nouvelle, traduite récemment."

Had Schwob been writing for a literary audience he would undoubtedly have given more precise details on these works. The essay 'François Villon, Student, Poet, and House-breaker' was written for the Cornhill Magazine in August 1877, the story 'A Lodging for the Night' in Temple Bar in October: they were reprinted in the Familiar Studies and the New Arabian Nights respectively. Both were based on Auguste Longnon's Etude Biographique sur François Villon, which came out in 1877⁴⁷

46. J.-M. Carré, in his 'R.L. Stevenson et la France', Mélanges Offertes à Fernand Baldensperger, 1930, I. 112, quotes the essay on Fontainebleau, (Further Memories, Works XXX 99-116) and remarks that the short stories especially are marked by French influence: "Mais surtout il y affirme un goût de la perfection verbale, un sens subtil de l'expression nuancée, un culte du mot propre et juste qu'il a certainement développés chez nous".

47. See the letter to Sidney Colvin, Literature, 4th November 1899, for further details.

A year later the poems of Villon were "first done into English verse in the original forms" by John Payne. Schwob had confused the scholar with the popular novelist who in 1883 succeeded Leslie Stephen as editor of the Cornhill. James Payn was an early correspondent of Stevenson, who also at first took him for the translator. Writing of his conversations with Henley during the latter's treatment at the Edinburgh Infirmary in 1875, he confessed:

"I think that would make you smile. We had mixed you up with John Payne, for one thing, and stood amazed at your extraordinary, even painful, versatility." 48

Rossetti had rendered the poems of Villon's more pious moods, but Stevenson was taken by the duality of poet and criminal, his "glorious ignominy". He was to have second thoughts about his choice of theme, explaining his reasons in the preface to the Familiar Studies:

"I am tempted to regret that I ever wrote on this subject, not merely because the paper strikes me as too picturesque by half, but because I regarded Villon as a bad fellow. Others still think well of him, and can find beautiful and human traits where I saw nothing but artistic evil; and by the principle of the art, those should have written of the man, and not I." 49

Such misgivings on ethical grounds were doubtless viewed by

48. Works XXXV 157 (11th August 1894).

49. ibid. XXVII. xxi. On the next page Stevenson refers to the translation of Villon by John Payne, which suggests that Schwob did not have the volume of Familiar Studies at the time of writing this article, and thus fell into the same error as Stevenson.

Schwob at a later date as evidence for his division of Stevenson into moralist and outlaw; for the present he merely noted that Stevenson's interest in the poet was creative rather than scholarly, and went on to show how this standpoint gave rise to "des passions plus violentes encore, plus modernes, et qui ne laissent pas d'étonner un moment".

Schwob had indeed been taken aback by Stevenson's dismissal of The Black Arrow - a "piece of tushery" serialised in the boys' magazine Young Folks in 1883, but not published in volume form until 1888. He admired the personages of Joanna Sedley and Alicia Risingham, though admitting that the introduction of women into an adventure story was a veritable "casse-cou"; Stevenson, in his letter of August 1890, proclaimed his detestation of these ladies, and satisfaction with only two female rôles in his novels to date - the Countess of Rosen, and Madame Desprez in The Treasure of Franchard. Only one character of The Black Arrow pleased him:

"Dickon Crookback I did, and I do, think is a spirited and possible figure. Shakespeare's - O, if we can call that cocoon Shakespeare! - Shakespeare's is spirited - one likes to see the untaught athlete butting against the adamantine ramparts of human nature, head down, breach up; it reminds us how trivial we are today, and what safety resides in our triviality. For spirited it may be, but O, sure not possible! I love Dumas and I love Shakespeare: you will not mistake me when I say that the Richard of the one reminds me of the Porthos of the other; and if by any sacrifice of my own literary baggage I could clear the Vicomte de Bragelonne of Porthos, Jekyll might go, and the Master, and the Black Arrow, you may be sure, and I should think my life not lost for mankind if half a dozen more of my volumes must be thrown in." 50

This passage, quoted and translated by Schwob, forms the basis of his discussion of Stevenson's "enthousiasme littéraire". It is amusing that both authors reprove each other for admiration of foreign pot-boilers, though Stevenson at least set forth his reasons most persuasively in a 'Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's'; had Schwob been conversant with the essay⁵¹ he would doubtless have toned down his expressions of wonder. Here is Stevenson's defence of the Vicomte de Bragelonne:

"What other novel has such epic variety and nobility of incident? often, if you will, impossible; often of the order of an Arabian story; and yet all based in human nature. For if you come to that, what novel has more human nature? not studied with the microscope, but seen largely, in plain daylight, with the natural eye? What novel has more good sense, and gaiety, and wit, and unflagging, admirable literary skill? Good souls, I suppose, must sometimes read it in the blackguard travesty of a translation. But there is no style so untranslatable; light as a whipped trifle, strong as silk; wordy like a village tale; pat like a general's despatch; with every fault, yet never tedious; with no merit, yet inimitably right. And, once more, to make an end of commendations, what novel is inspired with a more unstrained or a more wholesome morality?" 52

Porthos is barely mentioned in the essay, still less compared with Shakespeare's Richard, for as Stevenson confessed at the beginning of his gossip:

"Of Shakespeare I have read all but Richard III., Henry VI., Titus Andronicus, and All's Well that Ends Well; and these, having already made all suitable endeavour, I now know that I shall never read - to make up for which unfaithfulness I could read much of the rest for ever." 53

51. Memories and Portraits, Works XXIX 110-118.

52. ibid. pp. 114-115

53. ibid. pp. 110-111.

Probably since settling in Samoa he had managed to overcome his urge to shirk Richard III and discovered a similarity between the two characters in their expression of their author's overflowing creative energy. For Stevenson the principal charm of Dumas's novel lay in the vividness of its characters, which brought him to regard them as his old friends. Porthos was the only exception: Stevenson could not find him true to life. This is the whole point of his remarks in the letter, but Schwob, ignorant of Stevenson's earlier essay, seizes on the one brief statement and develops it in a sense which the writer could not have intended:

"Nous n'aimons point tant Dumas, peut-être, et beaucoup d'entre nous, j'en suis sûr, donneraient le Vicomte de Bragelonne pour garder Porthos. Je n'en veux pour exemple le succès ^{que} du roman de Paul Mahalin. (54) - Mais demandez à Zola, à Daudet, de jeter au feu une demi-douzaine de leurs oeuvres préférées, afin de rendre parfait un livre de Dumas; croyez-vous qu'ils répondront avec la même fougue que Stevenson - oseront-ils mettre sur le même piédestal Hamlet et les Trois Mousquetaires? - Richard III ne sera-t-il pas pour eux le Richard de Shakespeare, le géant de bronze coulé par le poète, plutôt qu'un richard (sic) enveloppé dans la gangue de l'histoire? Leur passion littéraire n'ira pas jusqu'à grandir Dumas, ni leur souci de littéralité jusqu'à critiquer Shakespeare."

From Stevenson's typically generous eulogy of Dumas's romance Schwob has built up a fantastic hypothesis, complete with rhetorical questions and over-statements which quite misrepresent

54. D'Artagnan, published in May 1890.

the original point of view. There is an element of sophistry in his introduction of Zola and Daudet, and in his supposition that Stevenson would place Shakespeare's masterpiece in the same rank as Dumas's. He was rightly chidden for his presumption in the next letter from Sydney:

"Sapristi, comme vous y allez! Richard III. and Dumas, with all my heart; but not Hamlet. Hamlet is great literature; Richard III. a big, black, gross sprawling melodrama, writ with infinite spirit but with no refinement of philosophy by a man who had the world, himself, mankind, and his trade still to learn. I prefer the Vicomte de Bragelonne to Richard III.; it is better done of its kind: I simply do not mention the Vicomte in the same part of the building with Hamlet, or Lear, or Othello, or any of those masterpieces that Shakespeare survived to give us." 55

If Schwob had taken the question of Stevenson's praise of Dumas to unwarrantable lengths it was because he wished to set off the author by means of another striking contrast: the purely literary appraisals of the Vicomte with Zola and Daudet, and the impetuous delight in character and incident with the Scottish writer. This startling naivety of appreciation is ascribed by Schwob to the special circumstances of Stevenson's education:

"Mais vienne un montagnard écossais encore ivre du parfum des bruyères de sa patrie; mettez-le au dur régime de la plus solide éducation classique que l'on puisse voir; assouplissez-le à l'érudition moderne et voyez l'extraordinaire tempérament qui jaillira de cette contrainte."

The lines are an echo of those of the Phare article; Schwob is again underlining the double debt of his subject to the themes of modern American writing and to the rigorous stylistic training of the English. Stevenson's letter of 1891 was to undeceive him on this count also, with its reference to the essays in Memories and Portraits. Far from being a "montagnard", the writer had been bred in the cultured atmosphere then prevalent among the professional classes of Edinburgh, but had shared his father's contempt for orthodox schooling.

'Some College Memories' recall his university studies:

"But although I am the holder of a certificate of attendance in the professor's own hand, I cannot remember to have been present in the Greek class above a dozen times [...]. Indeed, I denied myself many opportunities; acting upon an extensive and highly rational system of truancy, which cost me a great deal of trouble to put in exercise - perhaps as much as would have taught me Greek - and sent me forth into the world and the profession of letters with the merest shadow of an education." 56

Schwob's mistaken supposition invalidates his theory of the cause of Stevenson's "admiration impersonelle" for Dumas. He imagines the writer as still spontaneous in his wonder after ten year's literary experience; like an adolescent reader of Robinson Crusoe "il laisserait la maison la plus chaude, les parents les plus aimés pour faire la course en mer et bâtir sa hutte dans une île déserte". His acquaintance with

56. Memories and Portraits, Works XXIX 15-16.

the 'Gossip' would convince him that Stevenson's predilection for the Vicomte did not spring entirely from its appeal to the fresh, unreflecting mind, but to a great extent from his mature craftsman's appreciation of the cunning contrivances that enhanced the adventure story.

The mention of Robinson Crusoe leads Schwob to a summary of Stevenson's recent activities, his Pacific cruises, his interest in Samoan politics, his decision to settle on the island of Upolu. The voluntary exile is seen by Schwob as the victory of the "artiste inconscient" over the erudite and the man of letters: possibly Byvanck's letter was his first intimation of Stevenson's broken health, and the real cause of his search for a favourable climate. His correspondent was to provide a more accurate analysis of his personality, modestly omitting the scholarly aspect on which Schwob had insisted:

"0.6 of me is artist; 0.4, adventurer. First, I suppose, come letters; then adventure; and since I have indulged the second part, I think the formula begins to change: 0.55 of an artist, 0.45 of the adventurer were nearer true. And if it had not been for my small strength, I might have been a different man in all things." 57

The article comes to an end with a list of Stevenson's works in progress, taken from his recent letter, interwoven with a word-picture of the contrasting scenery of Scotland and the South Seas. The Master of Ballantrae had already been despatched

57. Works XXXIV 51.

from the "rivages retentissants d'une île des Tropiques", and now there was the promise of The Wrecker and The Pearl Fisher, "a black, ugly, tramping, violent story, full of strange scenes and striking characters". In the South Seas was to be the record of his voyages, together with his observations on history and civilisation of the islanders⁵⁸. Schwob endeavours to capture the spirit of these new works in the picturesque terms of a contemporary French poet:

"Aussi, semblable aux Conquistadores chantés par Hérédia, il est parti vers l'Eldorado des poètes, vers un monde nouveau d'idées inconnues et de paysages dorés; debout sur les récifs océaniques, il attend que les pêcheurs de perles émergent des mers bleues du Sud, et il répand à pleines poignées sur l'autre hémisphère ces perles neuves, plus précieuses que l'or du Nouveau Monde, d'un éblouissant orient."

This attempt at apotheosis of his subject in a haunting farewell vision was crowned with better success in the later article on George Meredith: here there is a false note, for the image Schwob conjures up is that of his own fancy, fed by conventional travellers' tales. One guesses that this forced and artificial ending was calculated to leave the

58. In the South Seas appeared by instalments in Black and White, February-December 1889, was privately printed in 1890, and published in 1896. The Wrecker came out in 1892, and The Pearl Fisher, under its definitive title of The Ebb-Tide, posthumously at the end of 1894. Schwob in his necrology in the Phare called it a masterpiece, which opinion Stevenson would have condemned as a gross exaggeration.

reader in a mood similar to that evoked in the first paragraph of the essay, and to illustrate the progression from the fantasy of Treasure Island to the reality of Stevenson's present existence. On the whole, it provides the keynote to the essay, for the writer presented there is not so much the Stevenson of history as the incarnation of Schwob's literary ideal. The reader sees a man keenly interested in the life of the lowliest members of society, an admirer of the great poet of the people; the product of a profound classical education and an unsophisticated background; an erudite and a lover of adventure in romantic settings. Schwob's interpretation of Stevenson's attitude to Dumas also seems strongly coloured by memories of his own approach to Robinson Crusoe while still a youth heedless of literary criteria. In his next article, Schwob was to adopt the same procedure of singling out those features of Stevenson which corresponded to his own preoccupations, but with more regard for biographical truth.

....

Schwob's reputation as an admirer of Stevenson made him a natural choice when a preface was required for G. Art's translation of The Dynamiter, serialised in the Revue Hebdomadaire. The venture was a success and Art, hoping for a second "coup de fortune", wrote for Schwob's advice on another of Stevenson's works to render into French⁵⁹.

59. CPC 5134 p. 4.

The introduction follows on more or less the same lines as the Événement article: quotation from Stevenson's letters, notes on his travels and literary career, and an attempt to define his individual qualities. Schwob begins by remarking on the slight growth of French interest in the novelist over recent years, with the translation of Treasure Island, Dr. Jekyll and The Master of Ballantrae⁶⁰, an article in Le Temps dealing with his intervention in Samoan politics, and the study of Mme Bentzon. Almost immediately, however, he suggests that his fame in France was likely to be short-lived, being already overshadowed by that of the young Rudyard Kipling. It was in 1890 that Schwob wrote to Byvanck of his enthusiasm for 'The Light that Failed'; the same year marked the great success of the Barrack-Room Ballads which Henley had published in the Scots Observer, thus launching Kipling on a brilliant career. By a strange coincidence the reasons alleged for his popularity were similar to those mentioned by Schwob in the case of Stevenson, in his article for the Phare:

"Les miévreries des préraphaélites et des esthètes, après avoir plu à quelques initiés, finissaient par lasser l'Angleterre. Sans s'être jamais laissé profondément entamer, elle réagissait contre un art qui tournait à la décadence." 61

60. I have been unable to trace this translation.

61. Léon Lemonnier, Kipling, 1939, pp. 176-177. Stevenson himself was delighted at the success of his rival, writing to congratulate him on Soldiers Three in 1890 and again in 1891, and conveying his impressions to Henry James. See Works XXXIV 45-46.

Schwob does not propose to restore Stevenson's fortunes with a full study of his life and works, but to set down a few notes on the writer

"depuis l'époque déjà lointaine où les lecteurs du Scot's (sic) Observer s'étonnaient des contes modestement signés R.L.S., depuis les cinq années pendant lesquelles Stevenson vagabonda par la forêt de Fontainebleau, jusqu'à son établissement dans l'île de Samoa, en plein Océanie, où il est allé chercher la santé au soleil des mers australes." 62

Again he quotes from Stevenson's letters, that of 1890, regretting that the French had not discovered his works; from the missing note of the winter of 1889-1890 promising a meeting in Paris and a discussion on Villon; and from the letter of January 1891 where Stevenson talked at greater length about himself and requested an exchange of photographs to compensate for not being able to make a closer acquaintance. The extracts present Schwob as a correspondent privileged in the first realisation of Stevenson's powers in France, in the ability to discuss one of the writer's more esoteric passions on an equal footing, and in the admission to the ranks of those favoured with a token of personal interest. Of Stevenson they tell little of real importance, but do illustrate his love of France and of one great French poet, a point calculated to awaken the sympathy of Schwob's readers, together with the charm of his expression and personality. This latter

62. Le Dynamiteur, p. i.

aspect, partly spontaneous, partly cultivated, was indeed a powerful mover of hearts towards the author, and Schwob was using the tactics of the publicist in allowing his subject to address the reader in his own beguiling fashion.

Schwob continues with a regret that the adoptive son of France would never visit its shores again, and that those he leaves behind must be content with his "bleicher Doppelgänger", the Island Nights' Entertainments, recently published. Mention of these tales of the South Seas leads Schwob to a description of Stevenson's life in the Antipodes. Again he prefers to use personal testimony and quotes from Jules Desfontaine's Autour de l'Hémisphère Austral an account of Stevenson's arrival at Tautira on the yacht Casco in September 1886, his nearly fatal haemorrhage and his kindly reception by the natives. (It would be interesting to know whether Schwob had met Desfontaines, for his book was published in Schwob's home-town Nantes in 1891). There follows an excerpt from Stevenson's letter of January 1891, with a more down-to-earth account of life in Samoa than was the case in Schwob's preceding article:

"We live here in a beautiful land, amid a beautiful and interesting people. The life is still very hard: my wife and I live in a two-roomed cottage about three miles and six hundred and fifty feet above the sea; we have had to make the road to it; our supplies are very imperfect; in the wild weather of this (the hurricane) season we have much discomfort: one night the wind blew in our house so outrageously that we must sit in the dark; and as the sound of the rain on the roof

made speech inaudible, you may imagine we found the evening long. All these things, however, are pleasant to me." 63

Schwob goes on to quote Stevenson's own estimate of the proportion of writer and adventurer in his temperament, making it the basis of his summary of the novelist's themes. In the light of Stevenson's remarks on his classical education he abandons his earlier notions of a strict academic training, but still emphasises the dual attraction towards sophisticated art and the unorthodox existence:

"Son admiration est la plus grande là où il rencontre une haute culture littéraire jointe à une vie flexible et changeante, et il aime également le poète voleur François Villon et l'individualiste solitaire dans les forêts du Maine, Henry David Thoreau." 64

It is clear that Schwob had made good use of the Memories and Portraits and Familiar Studies of Men and Books which he had virtually ignored in his former articles. He no longer presents Stevenson merely as a writer of fiction but as the author of a large number of "essais délicats et littéraires"; at the same time he reverses his first judgment on Stevenson's links with the "roman étrange". His wider reading enables him to distinguish

"une double personnalité qui le fait pencher tantôt vers John Knox le prédicateur, tantôt vers Barbe-Noire le flibustier."

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63. Works XXXIV 51. Schwob's translation has two curious faults: "three miles and six hundred and fifty feet" becomes 3.650 pieds, and by a mis-reading "wild weather" becomes doux.
64. The essay on Thoreau figures in the Familiar Studies. Schwob likewise admired the hermit of Walden, and had in his library H.B. Salt's Life, published in 1890.

Here Schwob adverts to a phenomenon singled out by every critic of the novelist, even inspiring one biographer to call her study Presbyterian Pirate⁶⁵. Stevenson's religious upbringing was accompanied by his nurse's lurid tales; his rejection of the tenets of the Kirk went hand in hand with an over-hanging sense of puritan morality and the defiant frequentation of reprobates in Edinburgh howffs. Thus the two strains of respectability and rebellion came out in his conduct and his writings, doubtless with a degree of self-conscious exaggeration:

"Stevenson's double life, such as it was [...], included such contrasts as meeting George Meredith at Box Hill and wandering the streets of London in disreputable clothes in the hope of being arrested as a vagabond." 66

While still at the stage of having broken with the pious practices of his childhood and of being the occasional participator in debauchery, Stevenson could observe the two opposing ways of life with informed impartiality. His first literary works, as we have noted, were marked by preoccupation with form so that the excesses of either manifestation were reduced by him to the proportions of the chosen genre. To Henry James he protested that

65. Doris Dalglish, op. cit., 1937.

66. Aldington, op. cit. p. 103.

"Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt, and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing, and emasculate." 67

Romance, for him, did not admit of subtle characterisation or reflections on the wider problems of humanity. It glorified incident, and incident, to be most striking, must spring from the clash of the desires of characters unequivocally virtuous or wicked. Deliberately, therefore, Stevenson trimmed his narrative of all that would distract attention from the action in hand, allowing the reader to be "submerged by the tale as by a billow"⁶⁸. In Schwob he found an ideal audience, capable of appreciating superb artistry in the handling of the action, the economical delineation of character through the traits of immediate appeal to his particular readership, and grateful for the jettison of those self-indulgent probings which seemed to bedevil contemporary fiction. The Dynamiter, composed at about the same time as Treasure Island, showed the same characteristics as the pirate story, and Schwob saw no necessity to account for its content and manner other than through his distinction of Stevenson's disposition to portray the conflict of villainy with virtue, in a narrative of exemplary style. Indeed, it would have defeated his purposes as advocate of The Dynamiter to indicate

67. Smith, op. cit. p. 92.

68. ibid. p. 93.

the immaturity of the work, and that Stevenson's literary evolution brought him to a much deeper insight into metaphysical problems and a more subtle portrayal of those who wrestled with them. He must have realised that The Master of Ballantrae was hardly destined for an adolescent audience; and the posthumous publication of Weir of Hermiston would confirm the complete reversal of the attitudes which had shaped the romances⁶⁹. Schwob, therefore, unwilling to prejudice the French reader against the work before him, resolutely evaded the question of The Dynamiter's place in its author's development and concentrated on its essential links with the influences of Stevenson's youth. The essay 'A Penny Plain, Twopence Coloured' afforded the evidence for the statement that:

"dès son enfance, il eut un goût très vif pour les petits livres de colportage où de hideuses gravures en couleur accompagnent le simple récit des exploits d'un John Sheppard, d'un capitaine Kidd ou d'un Jonathan Wild."

69. Cf. Robert Kiely, Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, p. 250.

"Weir of Hermiston, in its acknowledgement of the human tragedy represents the final shattering by Stevenson of his own rigid romantic convention which had been designed to keep the "dazzle and confusion of reality" out of his fiction. His early attempts to subordinate character to incident simply do not extend to The Master of Ballantrae or Weir of Hermiston. But personality is not the only element Stevenson has allowed to enter with vigor into his art. Accompanying it with full force is a good deal of the monstrousness, illogic, and poignancy of life; we find morality, for a change, instead of moralizing; and into a mold still somewhat cumbersome and brittle with boyish inexperience pours a torrent of adult passion."

Like Schwob, Stevenson had read Esquemeling's The Buccaneers and Marooners of America and Captain Charles Johnson's General History of the Pirates; the book of this "singulier Plutarque des malfaiteurs" was used in the documentation of Treasure Island⁷⁰. His taste for the lurid and eccentric strengthened through the reading of such works is given full rein in such works as Admiral Guinea, a play written in collaboration with W.E. Henley⁷¹, and in the series of New Arabian Nights, in which Mrs. Stevenson played a greater part than Schwob seems to have suspected. Indeed, the two examples are significant, for Stevenson himself in both these ventures was given the rôle of refurbishment and polishing: the impulse to complete them was that of his partners, who had an eye to making money rather than to literary merit, and did not scruple to flatter public taste. Schwob's term "violence pittoresque" is particularly apt for the description of the mood of these early works, the end-products of a disposition to play down the moral complications of an act by giving prominence to the means of its accomplishment. The Dynamiter, avowedly a pot-boiler, constantly discourages thought about the issues it raises by revelation of the incompetence of the would-be destroyers

70. See his letter to Colvin, Works XXXII 315-316 (July 1884).

71. Schwob may have heard of this play through Whibley: the three melodramas born of the collaboration were published in one volume in 1892. See Jerome H. Buckley, William Ernest Henley, Princeton, 1945, pp. 96-110.

of the social fabric, the ambiguity of the heroine, the collapse of tense situations into farce. Stevenson has been charged with subscribing in this novel to an escapist attitude to evil and violence:

"As long as adventurous intrigue is nine-tenths fraud, it can be treated as a frivolous disguise for boredom or timidity, rather than a meaningful allegory of the human condition. [...] The threat vanished along with the lure; and if there are men and women with tendencies toward suicide, seduction, murder, thievery, madness, and anarchy, most of them are silly, ineffectual people who have to tell lies and wear false whiskers in order to bolster up their own absurd image of themselves." 72

Schwob, then, neatly extricates himself from the dilemma posed by critical honesty and the desire to show unreserved esteem for Stevenson's work by side-stepping all discussion of the theme of The Dynamiter and its treatment. He merely points out its connection with one pole of Stevenson's temperament, and without any value-judgement passes to the other pole: the novelist's passion for "John Keats, et les essayistes les plus fins du dix-huitième siècle", and the still unknown novels of George Meredith⁷³. Here we recognise the premisses of earlier studies, amplified and aligned with the arguments of the present: a schematic division of Stevenson's personality into contrasting tendencies. Three years after the publication

72. Kiely, op. cit. pp. 133-134.

73. See above p. 445.

of his first collection of tales Schwob was still fascinated by the implications of the first sentence of his preface: "le coeur de l'homme est double". Thus, in one pithy paragraph, Schwob sets down what he considers to be the key to Stevenson's work:

"Ainsi on pourrait appliquer métaphoriquement à Stevenson lui-même la dualité qu'il a donnée au docteur Jekyll; il a une âme de "pirate" et une âme de sermonnaire raffiné. Son imagination a les audaces les plus subites et sa raison les plus logiques subtilités. S'il nous mène parmi des meutriers, il décrit un assassinat avec autant d'horreur qu'il met de finesse à démêler les ténuités de nuances spéciales à différents types de causeurs dans un essai sur la conversation (74); c'est un brutal et un dilettante."

For Schwob, the paradox also constitutes Stevenson's originality, and it is with this emphatic statement that he concludes his examination of the writer's general characteristics. As is often the case with Schwob, the rhetorical force of his expressions dissimulates the partial inaccuracy of his proposition: for Stevenson might be seen as adapting to his own purposes the Romantic tradition of beauty and evil in association, of aesthetic delight in the morally repugnant. Propensities similar to Stevenson's might be discerned, mutatis mutandis, in Poe, Baudelaire, in Schwob's contemporaries the Goncourt brothers and Huysmans: and did not Oscar Wilde fascinate Schwob with his cult of beauty and his intimate acquaintance with the London underworld? Indeed, had Stevenson wished to

74. 'Talk and Talkers', in Memories and Portraits.

point out to his French correspondent that his "uniqueness" was shared by many, he need have cited no better example than Schwob himself, for the violent and dainty qualities of his writing are admirably demonstrated in Coeur Double and Mimes respectively.

The article concludes with a brief review of Stevenson's career and a few notes on The Dynamiter. The minor inaccuracies of the biographical details may perhaps be attributed to Schwob's confused memories of a conversation with Charles Whibley: he claims that Stevenson sent his first tales, signed merely with his initials⁷⁵, to the Scots Observer, and there became a friend of Henley. In fact, it was through Sidney Colvin that Stevenson placed his articles in such reviews as MacMillan's, Longman's, Temple Bar, The Portfolio, and especially the Cornhill, whose editor Leslie Stephen introduced him to Henley at the Edinburgh Infirmary in 1875. Stevenson wrote for Henley's own reviews: London, The Magazine of Art and occasionally for the Scots Observer, which Henley founded in November 1888. The two men had already quarreled at this period, and the only contributions of any importance sent by Stevenson to the review were the Father Damien letters, on the 3rd and 10th May 1890. Schwob was probably muddling

75. Stevenson signed his first essays with his full name, but those in the Cornhill appeared over his initials: see Balfour, op. cit. I 141, and the bibliography. Later usage alternated between full name and initials: the former was used in the Scots Observer articles.

the débuts of Stevenson with those of Kipling, which latter were indeed sponsored by Henley.

The starting-point of The Dynamiter, as Schwob explains, was the Fenian terrorism which was a feature of the Irish independence movement in the 1880's. Stevenson felt very strongly about the sufferings of the victims, to the point of making a wild scheme to move in with the boycotted Curtin family, thus provoking a martyrdom which would put an end to the injustice. The original framework of the tale was provided by Mrs. Stevenson, who thought up the plot to amuse her husband during his illness at Hyères in 1883 and put it into a publishable shape in 1885 when the household was short of money. Stevenson himself is thought to have contributed only reappearances of Prince Florizel, and 'Zero's Tale of the Explosive Bomb'⁷⁶. Schwob has little to say of the book, except a statement of the obvious:

"Avec sa puissante fantaisie créatrice, Stevenson a réussi à envelopper de contes et de féerie l'oeuvre destructrice de la bande de malfaiteurs qui tenta dès lors de désorganiser la société."

Naturally enough in 1894 it was the topicality of The Dynamiter which attracted his attention:

"Vous reconnaîtrez dans le mystérieux Zéro un chef semblable à l'étrange baron Sternberg, dont l'attentat de Liège vient de nous révéler l'existence; et la catastrophe du Dynamiteur vous rappellera invinciblement la sinistre mort de Martial Bourdin dans le parc de Greenwich."

76. See Aldington, op. cit. pp. 168-169.

The 'Lettres Parisiennes' comment at greater length on these incidents: Martial Bourdin, believing himself to be under police observation after the trial in Paris of Joseph-Emile Henry, made his way to Greenwich Park on the 16th February 1894 to bury his stock of dynamite; he apparently stumbled over a tree-root and was blown up. The outrage in Liège was of more recent occurrence. An explosion on the 3rd May blinded and severely injured a Dr. Renson as he entered his home. The perpetrator of this deed and leader of the terrorist movement was suspected to be a much-travelled Russian, Ernest von Ungern Sternberg; while efforts were made to trace him speculation was rife about his character and background, and was scarcely stilled when the Russian Embassy at Gibraltar declared him, in the middle of June, to be employed there as an attaché⁷⁷.

Schwob's preface to The Dynamiter may be regarded as the culmination of a certain approach to Stevenson: his first three studies are essentially concerned with the popularisation in France of a foreign author, and whatever their shifts of emphasis, they revolve round Stevenson's affection for the French nation and its culture, his lesson to the practitioners of an aberrant theory of literature, his exceptional position in contemporary English fiction. Copious quotation of his

77. See the 'Lettre Parisienne' of the 15th June 1894, OC VIII 59-60.

work and letters establishes the charm of his writing and personality, and largely replaces critical analysis. With increasing clarity and insistence Schwob brings out the contrasts in Stevenson's make-up, finally proposing them as the key to a true appreciation of his books. The points mooted are of special interest for the light they throw on Schwob's own artistic development, and contribute at times to the impression that he is abusing the virtues of the subjective method of criticism. Hence, no doubt, the relative mediocrity of these articles: it is as though Schwob were consciously avoiding the quick of the matter, the circumstances not being conducive to more profound study. The first essay was dashed off in the middle of his studies for the licence, when he was "en passe de devenir lypémanique", the scope of the second limited by stipulations of his contract; the inferior status of The Dynamiter curtailed the possibilities of a far-reaching appraisal of Stevenson's wider talents. By a regrettable irony, therefore, Schwob had little incentive to compose a really penetrating study of the novelist's art before his death imperatively called forth a reexamination and a synthesis of the earlier ideas and impressions.

...

Comment on 'R.L.S.' seems almost an impertinence. Neither the sketch of a life nor the estimate of an oeuvre, the essay undertakes to share a vision; Schwob, in his final

sentence, resumes thus the purpose of his writing:

"ces quelques pages, ne sont que l'essai d'explication que je me suis donnée des rêves que m'inspirèrent les images de Treasure Island par une radieuse nuit d'été." 78

It is in this spirit that critics have considered the article.

"Véritable chef-d'oeuvre d'analyse et de pénétration, non seulement cet essai nous révèle Stevenson mais aussi tout la personnalité subtile de Marcel Schwob", wrote Miss Salmon⁷⁹, and René Lalou made it the starting-point of his introduction to Treasure Island⁸⁰. This was the only one of his four studies which Schwob judged worthy of inclusion in Spicilege where it figures appropriately between his works on Villon and Meredith, those two temperamentally incompatible authors so greatly admired by Stevenson. Its superiority over the articles published in the French press is immediately obvious. Schwob easily surpassed all his previous efforts under the stimulus of writing for a distinguished English review whose contributors and readers had long been acquainted with Stevenson's works, and who would expect much more than a superficial introduction to the novelist. Once again he put

78. Spicilege, p. 79. The essay was entitled 'R.L.S.' in the New Review, and 'Robert Louis Stevenson' in the volume.

79. op. cit. p. 34.

80. L'Ile au Trésor, 1946, p. 16.

into practice his favourite critical technique of seeking out the keynote to an author's individuality; the essay was to be an examination of the "accent nouveau" of Stevenson, the answer to the query: "quelle était l'essence de ce pouvoir magique?"

Thus the essay opens, as in the Événement article, with a record of the "émoi d'imagination" which came over Schwob on his first reading of Treasure Island, but whereas the dream of the train journey was previously the framework of a scrutiny of the narrative technique, here it serves as a prelude to the list of images left stamped on Schwob's mind: the faces of John Silver, of Captain Flint, the charred round scrap of paper and the haunting sounds of the book:

"les deux ahans de Silver plantant son couteau dans le dos de la première victime; et le chant vibrant de la lame d'Israël Hânds clouant au mât l'épaule du petit Jim; et le tintement des chaînes des pendus sur Execution Dock; et la voix mince, haute, tremblante, aérienne et douce s'élevant parmi les arbres de l'île pour chanter plaintivement: "Darby M'Graw! Darby M'Graw!""

It is clear from his letters and articles that these were not Schwob's original, spontaneous impressions but the outcome of retrospective deliberation on the importance of visual and auditory images in the novel, the analysis of an initially indefinable sensation of the jamais vu ni lu, to use his own term. In the same way he may have been bringing subsequent reflexions and discoveries to bear on the question

of literary analogies: we have no proof that his readings of Johnson and Esquemeling antedated that of Stevenson, for instance, and the folk-tale 'The Hand of Glory', in which Schwob sees the source of the midnight attack on the isolated house, may have been known to him only from the spring of 1893, according to the date of publication of his French version in the Echo de Paris⁸¹. However, the object of his enumeration of borrowings and parallels - the treasure of Captain Kidd, the skull nailed to the tree in Poe's The Gold Bug, the figures of Captain Flint and Benn Gunn from Esquemeling, the death of Flint from the passing of Falstaff, and the dangling corpses in Villon's 'Ballade des Pendus' - is to demonstrate that the anecdotal elements of Treasure Island have their echoes in the various branches of literature in the common European heritage. La Bruyère's words, the dictum of every generation conscious of its own decadence, set the seal of authority on Schwob's proclamation of the inevitability of imitation in art. If the force of Stevenson's images does not spring from their originality, wherein lies the source of their undeniable power?

Before attempting to reply to this question, Schwob pauses over a consideration of the formal rigidity of words, of language, of literary genres at the end of the nineteenth

81. 11th March 1893. Collected in OC IX 155-158.

century. The basic patterns of the novel and the drama were laid down by the ancients: some superficial degree of variety was possible in the Renaissance with the licence of orthography, but the modern tendency is towards a deadening conformity:

"Les langues, comme les peuples, parviennent à une organisation de société raffinée d'où on a banni les bariolages indécents."

The novel is likewise unable to escape standardisation, claims Schwob, quoting the line from George Meredith's Modern Love where the husband languidly sums up his wife's French book:

"The actors are, it seems, the usual three."

This state of affairs cannot be altered, since the quantity and quality of observable human phenomena remain more or less constant. The business of the artist is therefore to find a new coign of vantage, some fresh method of observation:

"Ce qui fait la gloire de Hans Holbein dans le dessin de la famille de Thomas Morus, ce sont les courbes qu'il a imaginé de faire decrire à son calame."

It is on this criterion, therefore, that Schwob will judge the achievement of Robert Louis Stevenson.

First he glances at Stevenson's innovations in narrative technique, recapitulating and modifying some of the points mentioned in L'Événement. The use of two or more chroniclers to recount the action from differing standpoints he now compares to Browning's practice in The Ring and the Book, doubtless recalling his studies of the poet a year ago for an uncompleted article: he does not investigate the possibility that it might be an adaptation of the epistolary novels of the eighteenth

century, or recall its use in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, for example. More interesting are his observations on the "silences du récit", the corollary to his previous references to the increasing sharpness of the characters' relief as their successive appearances make them familiar to the reader. This ultimate distinctness is set off by the tantalising vagueness with which their backgrounds, their previous history, are surrounded. Schwob sees in this procedure a reproduction of the fascinating enigma of the lacunae in Petronius's Satyricon, and even goes so far as to say that

"Ce qu'il ne nous dit pas de la vie d'Alan Breck, de Secundra Dass, d'Olalla, d'Attwater, nous attire plus que ce qu'il nous en dit." 82

Stevenson's second and more significant variation on the basic pattern of the novel is deployed, according to Schwob, in his treatment of separate, static elements:

"C'est essentiellement l'application des moyens les plus simples et les plus réels aux sujets les plus compliqués et les plus inexistantes."

The germ of this idea, it will be remembered, was already

82. Schwob himself practised this technique in his own tales: see Green, op. cit. pp. 181-187. André Gide, in the composition of his Faux-Monnayeurs, showed a similar concern with interplay of light and obscurity in the presentation of characters and scenes, modelling his novel in this respect on those of Dickens and Dostoievsky. In conversation with Roger Martin du Gard he remarked of Les Thibault that "Tout baigne dans la même clarté, directe, sans surprises [...] Pensez à Rembrandt". See Gide, Journal des Faux-Monnayeurs, 1927, pp. 32-33, and Martin du Gard, Notes sur André Gide, 1951, pp. 37-38.

present in the Phare essay, and is expanded here with a reference to the earlier practice of Defoe and Poe: "le récit minutieux de l'apparition de Mrs. Veal, le compte rendu scrupuleux du cas de M. Valdemar". In his explanation of the effect of the extraordinary, however, Schwob unconsciously transposes the nature of object and condition, and demonstrates that the same result may be obtained through the interaction of abnormal circumstances and a banal feature of everyday life. He illustrates his argument with an example from Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year, where the reluctance of passers-by to pick up an abandoned purse speaks eloquently of an unwonted state of affairs: "et aussitôt l'horreur de la peste nous entoure". The terror of the supernatural may thus be induced without resort to clumsy contrivances: the simple juxtaposition of Robinson Crusoe's deserted island with the footprint in the sand, the recognition of the hand of Mr. Hyde on the sheet of Dr. Jekyll's bed, are enough to arouse sensations of awe and mystery.

His theory substantiated by patient analysis and numerous examples, Schwob now presents his reader with the paradox that the realism used by Stevenson in conjunction with the fantastic or the inhabitual is itself something of an illusion:

"Autant vaudrait écrire que le réalisme de Stevenson est parfaitement irréel, et que c'est pour cela qu'il est tout-puissant. Stevenson n'a jamais regardé les choses qu'avec les yeux de son imagination."

Reverting to the instances of memorable visual images from

Treasure Island, and citing others from later works, he points out the fundamental impossibility of each and concludes with one which Stevenson himself had acknowledged, where Alison Durie, in The Master of Ballantrae, "spied the sword, picked it up [..] and thrust it up to the hilt into the frozen ground".⁸³ For him, it is this use of imagery which is unparalleled in literature. Others had used the evocative power of words to heighten the narrative: Stevenson seems alone in his recourse to descriptions and acts which, on closer examination, prove to be hyperbole. And herein lies another paradox: that these images, unreal as they are, are "à proprement parler, la quintessence de la réalité".

Schwob's explanation of this phenomenon is based on another seemingly inadvertent inconsequence of logic. After his inversion of object and circumstance in their appurtenance to reality and fantasy, he now uses the one term "reality"

83. Stevenson remarked on the exaggeration in his letter of the 19th January 1891, but Schwob gave another account to his friends. Sherard, op. cit. pp. 386-387, wrote: 'I remember the exultation with which he discovered in The Master of Ballantrae a slip made by its author [..] Schwob, though he was no swordsman, pointed out that it would be impossible to ram a sword to any distance into the frozen earth, and, very proud of his discovery, wrote to Stevenson to draw his attention to the error.

He never showed us Stevenson's reply, though as to the many other letters which he received from him he was always proud to display them."

with two significations. On the one hand he refers to the familiar, concrete features of everyday existence, on the other, to their selective reproduction for artistic purposes. Hence he claims that Stevenson's characters live in our minds through the powerful appeal of the one image that resumes them:

"N'est-ce pas là ce qui les dénote dans notre mémoire? ce qui leur donne cette vie factice qu'ont les êtres littéraires, cette vie qui dépasse tellement en énergie la vie que nous percevons avec nos yeux corporels [...]"

It would appear that, propelled by the associations of his thoughts, Schwob has not sufficiently distinguished between two categories of reality: the straightforward interplay of impossible content and true-to-life representation, or vice versa, as practised by Defoe and Poe, and the more complex triangle of credibility, probability and artifice as found in Stevenson. Schwob, then, passes directly from the unreal-romantic, through the factual-real-convincing, to the factitious-artistic, heedless of the resulting confusion. Moreover, it is the ambiguity of his terms which begets an absurdity in the argument. As René Lalou pointed out, the statement that Stevenson saw only with the eye of his imagination is an unjustifiable exaggeration, and Schwob's long quotation of the character-sketches from An Inland Journey in the Phare article attests to the writer's gift for depicting plausible types without the use of hyperbolic imagery. The two procedures are used in effective conjunction throughout Stevenson's work; in the first phase especially, the flashes of intensive

vision help to compensate for the deliberate lack of profundity or roundness in characterisation. One might conclude that a youthful audience or the undemanding reader of adventure stories would retain an outline of the action and personages; the man of letters would, like Schwob, be more impressed by the presence of the "unreal images". Indeed, the same could be said of Schwob's observations as of their subject: the expression is so striking that only a second and more searching glance reveals inconsistency. The perception is so fine, so poetically right, that one overlooks the fact that its cogency depends on the exclusion of other important features of Stevenson's art.

For Schwob, therefore, the "romantisme de son réalisme" is the keynote of the Scottish novelist's technique, and the origin of the more than human vitality and immediacy with which his characters are endowed. Here Schwob notes the curious property of fictional heroes, that they more often seem to be models for living men than of them:

"Nos contemporains existent avec d'autant plus de force, nous apparaissent avec d'autant plus d'individualité, que nous les attachons plus étroitement à ces créations irréelles des temps anciens."

The explanation proffered, that "nous vivons rarement avec plaisir de notre vraie vie", is probably more true of Schwob's own proclivity to seek refuge from the drabness of his life in the glamour of the imaginary than of the general run

of mankind, which prefers a resigned stolidity; but his distinction between the peculiarities of Stevenson's characters, and those of Cervantes, Rabelais and Shakespeare is both arresting and well-founded. Don Quixote, Frère Jean, Prince Hal all have features common to numerous members of the human race, but these are described in such a way as to make us accept them as their exclusive property. Stevenson, on the contrary, has conceived people of such unique and fanciful elements that in order to accept them we must accept also the convention of the romantic image: "Ce sont des fantômes de la vérité, hallucinants comme de vrais fantômes".⁸⁴ Schwob illustrates his contention with an example taken from the theatre - in the recent production of Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore the illusion of a real heart could be obtained only through the use of a stylised substitute. The incident serves as further confirmation of his theory that the features of Stevenson's heroes "s'attachent à la mémoire de nos yeux en vertu de leur irréalité même".

René Lalou remarked in his preface to Treasure Island

84. Edmond Jaloux, in his preface to Le Cas Etrange du Docteur Jekyll et de Monsieur Hyde, 1924, likewise remarks that the heroes of Dostoievsky, Dickens and Stendhal have their counterparts in real life, but that "Will du Moulin ou David Balfour ne sortent jamais de cette radieuse tombe de cristal où les a enfermés le génie d'un voyageur toujours malade et qui ne tenait au monde que par les passions de son esprit." op. cit. p. 7.

that too great an attachment to the spirit rather than to the letter of Stevenson led to factual errors in Schwob's preface, and its conclusion is a case in point. By concentrating on Stevenson's particular brand of realism and imagery Schwob has finished by giving it exaggerated proportions, and mistakenly applying it to the structure of the narrative as a whole.

"Ces images irréelles de Stevenson sont l'essence de ses livres", declares Schwob: but the examples he cites are better defined as mysterious than unreal, and part of the external trappings of the story. He evidently is more concerned with the significance of doors, pavilions, silvery fish and young men with cream tarts than the creator of these phenomena, who was primarily interested in action and did not hesitate to subordinate individual motifs, however striking, to the development of the plot. Schwob is obliged to admit that

"dans les romans, Kidnapped, Treasure Island, The Master of Ballantrae, etc., le récit est incontestablement très supérieur à l'image, qui cependant a été son point de départ."

He omits to specify what were the images in the case of these novels⁸⁵, but the clue to his insistence on their rôle may perhaps be found in his comment on the three parts of Will

85. Lloyd Osbourne declared that the starting point of Treasure Island was a map drawn by himself to while away a rainy Scottish afternoon: Works II xviii.

o' the Mill, that they are "juste à la hauteur de leurs images, qui semblent ainsi être de véritables symboles". Schwob's own desultory practice of Symbolist techniques may have encouraged him to read into other authors manipulations of meaning which were never intended, and a method of composition which was not demonstrably theirs. The procedure of elaboration which he ascribes to Stevenson is strangely like his own:

"Comme le fondeur de cire perdue coule le bronze autour du "noyau" d'argile, Stevenson coule son histoire autour de l'image qu'il a créée."

Having come to the end of his reflexions on the use of a visionary power, Schwob turns at last to his own picture of the creator far away "in the islands of the blessed":

"Toutes les belles fantasmogories qu'il avait encore en puissance sommeillent dans un étroit tombeau polynésien, non loin d'une frange étincelante d'écume; dernière imagination, peut-être aussi irréelle, d'une vie douce et tragique."

The conclusion is discreet, touching, and with no trace of the emotionalism which marred so many of the obituaries on Stevenson. The words: "I do not see much chance of our meeting in the flesh" are the only reference to their exchange of letters; they account for the conception of the essay, the approach to the novelist's works not through a personal, but through a purely cerebral correspondence. Schwob remarks that

"les traits de John Silver hallucinent Jim Hawkins, et que François Villon est hanté par l'aspect de Thevenin Pensete,"

- the same sense of hallucination imbues his own study of Stevenson, allowing him to maintain the intensity of perception which makes more pedestrian handling seem inadequate. His essay may thus be seen as a reproduction of the methods he ascribes to Stevenson, the image of an image, brilliantly persuasive because of its very unreality. Conversely, it might be said that Stevenson's works gain a new concentration through the perspective of Schwob's mind - a refinement perhaps envisaged by the creator of the phrase: "tout en ce monde n'est que signes, et signes de signes".

On a more mundane level, there are other notable factors which contribute to the success of the study. Addressing an English audience, Schwob was free to make references to English literature without perplexing his readers, and so permitted himself the obvious pleasure of displaying his wide knowledge of its ramifications, from Shakespeare to Captain Charles Johnson and to folk-lore. Nor are other fields of English art forgotten: an incidental allusion to Hans Holbein, "pour lui le maître des maîtres"⁸⁶, with Hokusai⁸⁶, reveals the deep affection which accompanied Schwob's prowesses of erudition. More than is usually the case in his discussions of British authors, he explores by-ways not primarily literary: - the standardisation of language, the unreliability of the

86. CPC 5133.4 p. 8.

senses, the dissatisfaction of man with his own identity - which illuminate not only Stevenson's achievements, but also the versatility of Schwob's own mental powers, and confer on his essay something of the manner of a Charles Lamb or a Hazlitt. Thus, from his adolescent reading of Treasure Island, Schwob has built up a highly sophisticated statement of the workings of artistic creation, in a particular author, and with writers in general.

...

The appearance of 'R.L.S.' in Spicilege in 1896 confirmed Schwob's position as "érudit, par excellence, en le cas de Stevenson", as Mallarmé termed him⁸⁷. By that year Alphonse Daudet, Régnier and Vielé-Griffin were among those fascinated by the author of Treasure Island, and Schwob's friends Davray and Wyzewa came forward as enthusiastic advocates of the Scottish novelist⁸⁸; Wyzewa also translated a number of the shorter novels⁸⁹. Alfred Jarry, presumably at Schwob's instigation, published a version of Clalla in the review

87. 'Sur Robert-Louis Stevenson', Ceuvres Complètes, p. 879.

88. Davray wrote on 'Robert Louis Stevenson en France' for the Revue Hebdomadaire, 1st April 1903, pp. 5-13; Wyzewa reviewed 'La Correspondance de R.L. Stevenson' in the Revue des Deux Mondes, 15th December 1899, pp. 921-932.

89. St. Ives, 1904; The Wrong Box, 1905; The Ebb-Tide, 1905; he also wrote a preface to a translation of Weir of Hermiston, in 1912.

La Vogue, between February and May 1901⁹⁰. Stevenson has not been without distinguished admirers - Gide, for example - in the present century, but it was not until the 1920's that he became known to a wide French public as the author of other works than Treasure Island and Dr. Jekyll. The series of translations undertaken by Théo Varlet⁹¹ and the popularity of the adventure novels of Pierre Mac Orlan, Pierre Benoît, Marc and Louis Chadourne and others⁹² reawakened interest in him, and the Vie de R.-L. Stevenson, by J.-M. Carré, published in 1929, was a best-seller.

The fascination of Stevenson's personality has been so great, his appeal to the sense of adventure in the young of all ages so immediate⁹³, that his primary ambition to be

90. See the preface by Anne de Laty to the book, published by the Collège de Pataphysique, Charleville, 1961.

91. See E. Donce-Brisy, Robert-Louis Stevenson dans la Littérature Française, Lille, 1923.

92. See Jacques Delebecque, 'Notes sur Quelques Ouvrages de R.-L. Stevenson', Mercure de France, 1st January 1921, pp. 55-87.

93. Of Gladstone, for example, it is related that, "by chance Treasure Island fell into his hands; he opened it, began to read, and [...] fastened on it with youthful zest, sitting up 'till two in the morning to finish it." See J.A. Steuart, Robert Louis Stevenson, Man and Writer, 1924, II 21.

regarded as an artist has been generally overlooked. The past two decades, however, have seen a recrudescence of esteem for Stevenson the writer, with the studies of David Daiches, Janet Adam Smith and Robert Kiely; and Schwob's essay may be seen as a forerunner of their more properly critical approach. Nonetheless, the obviously personal tone of 'R.L.S.' marks it off from later objective appraisals, and allows it to encompass in its small dimensions the features of both portrait and the literary appreciation. For, while avoiding both the biographical and the analytical manner, Schwob has succeeded in projecting the essential qualities of Stevenson as a man and as a writer through the prism of his own sensibility. The essay stands almost alone among Schwob's works on English literature as an appreciation of an artist by an artist in prose, and as such must be counted as his outstanding contribution to French understanding of an English author.

CONCLUSION

"Par le prodige de ses évocations matérielles il a suscité en nous l'intelligence des plus subtils mystères de l'esprit. Il a souvent résolu le problème le plus difficile de l'art, qui est de satisfaire d'un seul coup l'imagination et la pensée"¹. Such was a contemporary reviewer's estimate of Marcel Schwob's achievement in Coeur Double, curiously echoing in his choice of terms the dualistic principles of the author's mind and writing. On the appearance of his first volume of tales Schwob was thus credited with success in his purpose of bringing together and fusing the separate motions of the outer and inner worlds, of striking his reader's attention through the balance of general truth and poetic insight. To the retrospective scrutiny of George Trembley, however, the unity of Schwob's work was only apparent, the outcome of a continual effort to dissimulate the irreconcilable dichotomies of his temperament. The esthete, the erudite and the adventurer did not constitute a well-integrated personality; fantasy and the critical spirit pulled in opposite directions. Harmony could be attained only in a privileged state where the two great planes of existence converged, recalling

1. Henri Bérenger, 'Chroniques', L'Ermitage, 31st January 1892, p. 50.

"l'état de demi-sommeil dans lequel, le réel et l'imaginaire se mêlent sans tout à fait se confondre, construisent une troisième dimension qui n'appartient ni au monde réel, ni au monde imaginaire, mais qui participe de tous les deux." 2

Meanwhile, the conflicting tendencies of Schwob's nature betrayed themselves in the various aspects of his oeuvre, notably, in the field that concerns us here, with his hybrid theories of translation and his preference for authors of divided souls, such as Defoe and Stevenson; for Hamlet and Moll Flanders, the wearers of masks which conceal their true identity.

Although no other critic has submitted the "double heart" of Marcel Schwob to so searching an analysis as Dr. Trembley, many have voiced suspicion of the rift and discussed its implications. Thus Emmanuel Buenzod:

"Mais, qu'il s'agisse de ses traductions ou de ses oeuvres proprement creatrices, la question à laquelle on revient toujours est de savoir s'il a jamais cherché dans l'art d'écrire autre chose qu'un dérivatif à son inquiétude et à son ennui; car il semble presque partout énigmatique, insaisissable - et l'on se demande toujours jusqu'à quel point ce qu'il raconte l'engage." 3

The idea of literature and romance as an outlet for Schwob's restless spirit arose from the autobiographical interpretation of a sentence from 'Les Portes de l'Opium', where the narrator, having evoked the decadence of sensation

2. Trembley, op. cit. p. 19.

3. Une Époque Littéraire, p. 97.

in his contemporaries, spoke of his own yearnings:

"J'éprouvais le désir douloureux de m'aliéner à moi-même, d'être souvent soldat, pauvre, ou marchand, ou la femme que je voyais passer, secouant ses jupes, ou la jeune fille tendrement voilée qui entrait chez un pâtissier [..]" 4

By extension, Schwob's dealings with English literature have been taken as evidence of a proclivity to alienation, the refusal of an inadequate reality for the better gratification of his curiosity about the manifold possibilities of human life. Jules Renard was one of the first to postulate this need for escapism:

"Quelques-uns, Marcel Schwob, par exemple, aiment les écrivains étrangers quels qu'ils soient, par goût du dépaysement." 5

This suggestion was refuted by Miss Salmon at the end of her study of Schwob's relations with English writers and works: for him the word dépaysement was meaningless, since he sought out national and historical differences merely in order to affirm the transcendence of certain values, which together made up the verisimilitude and individuality of the characters portrayed:

"La littérature anglo-saxonne, comme toutes les autres littératures, c'était surtout pour Marcel Schwob le domaine des "existences uniques des hommes, qu'ils aient été divins, médiocres, ou criminels!" 6

4. Coeur Double, p. 96.

5. Journal, pp. 214-215 (5th April 1894).

6. op. cit. p. 80.

This explanation, though certainly containing part of the truth, does not account for the inescapable fact that it was to English literature rather than to any other that Schwob turned in his criticism, translations, creative work, and friendships. Such an explanation ignores also the prevalence of estrangement from reality among the writers of the post-Baudelairian generations, the "nostalgie, dans le temps ou dans l'espace"⁷, which sent so many on voyages towards more glamorous realms. The lure of the pirate biographies was powerful enough to lead Schwob into this picturesque adventure, recounted by Léon Daudet:

"Appelé à Nantes pour affaires, il imagina de revenir incognito à Guernesey sur un bateau charbonnier, transforme par son mirage en un dangereux corsaire, et il escomptait notre surprise à tous. Or, il advint que cette apparition au large de ce sabot noir et insolite inquiéta le capitaine du port, qui lui donna ordre de stopper et s'informa incivilement de ce qu'il avait à bord. Le charbonnier répondit: "un journaliste français célèbre, du nom de Schwaba". Ce signalement aussitôt connu souleva l'hilarité générale, laquelle durait encore quand Schwob parut, habillé en loup de mer, comme un personnage de son cher Stevenson. Furieux de notre gaieté, il voulut repartir immédiatement, et cette fois ce fut Georges Hugo qui, pris d'attendrissement, se suspendit à ses basques de toile goudronnée." 8

7. François Fosca, 'Marcel Schwob', Les Essais, March 1905, p. 337. The quotation continues: "Gautier la signale déjà aux Goncourt; lui regrettait l'Orient et la Venise du XVIII^e siècle; eux le XVIII^e siècle; Flaubert, l'Empire romain, ou l'Orient [...]; Baudelaire regrettait la Hollande et les tropiques, et parmi les vivants, je n'aurais qu'à citer Elemir Bourges, Jammes, Henri de Regnier. Il semble qu'il faille à ces esprits délicats un domaine pour leurs rêves".

8. Souvenirs III 22.

This incident took place during the visit to England of 1894.

This, to Daudet's mind, was a symptom of Schwob's eccentric dissociation with the everyday world, but in view of the date at which the incident took place we may take it rather as an example of the double distantiation practised in the pirate tales of the Vies Imaginaires - a vicarious refuge in the world of romance, and mockery at the excesses of credulity and caprice accompanying the taste for adventure. Schwob was perfectly aware of the ridiculous aspects of his escapism, and it is noticeable that those who accused him of inadaptation to his times were those who saw him through the atmosphere of his tales, or whose friendship with him cooled off over the years⁹. Much of what passed for alienation in Schwob may have been his indisputable bohemianism, his scholarly indifference to bourgeois standards¹⁰; that his affection for English literature sprang from some deeper motivation may be gauged by its persistence

9. Renard, for example, who wrote in his diary on the 26th July 1894: "Il lit des histoires de flibustiers et de corsaires, cet homme qui, même en habit, a toujours l'air d'être en robe de chambre, et il s'en inspirera, en les copiant ..." op. cit. p. 240.

10. Cf. Camille Mauclair, Servitude et Grandeur Littéraires, p. 73: "Schwob et Jaures sont les deux seuls êtres que j'aie vus porter un vieux chapeau de paille au mois de novembre à la stupeur des passants, s'étonnant de ce qu'on s'étonnât et n'ayant pas pris garde que l'hiver était survenu. Schwob se promenait toujours avec une serviette bourrée à éclater et des bouquins de toutes tailles dans les poches d'un veston dont il valait mieux ne rien dire".

to the end of his career, when the desire for the exotic was assuaged after the South Sea escapade, and when the rewards of prestige in academic and literary circles on both sides of the Channel compensated for the feverish joys of his earlier quixotism.

Indeed, though the rational basis of his affinities with English literature may be deduced from historical data, one can only speculate about the initial impulse which directed his attention thither. Nonetheless, a passage from Il Libro della mia Memoria, the most directly self-revealing of Schwob's texts, written shortly before his death, reminds us of the rôle played by his English governess in bringing Robinson Crusoe and the language of Defoe into his life, and prompts us to believe that in later years English literature fused in Schwob's mind the longing for the exotic with nostalgia for the enchanted images of childhood. Of his first reading book he was to write:

"son odeur me donne encore aujourd'hui le frisson d'un nouveau monde entrevu, et la faim de l'intelligence. Encore aujourd'hui je ne reçois pas d'Angleterre un livre nouveau que je ne plonge ma figure entre ses pages jusqu'au fil qui le broche, pour humer son brouillard et sa fumée, et aspirer tout ce qui peut rester de ma joie d'enfance." 11

Schwob's truant fancy was encouraged by his encounter with

11. 'Le Souvenir d'un Livre', Il Libro della mia Memoria, in Mimes, 1964, p. 174.

the decadents and eccentrics, pirates, little prostitutes and mauvais garçons that peopled English literature; and it was from this kind of alienation, peculiar to adolescence, that he was rescued by Léon Cahun's advice that he should harness imagination to erudition in order to objectify the shadow world which afforded him such intense delight.

Henceforth Schwob's aim was to incorporate the basic impulses of human nature, dispersion and integration, into an aesthetic system taking into account both the incoherent multiplicity of life and the rationalising principle of art. In this new guise Schwob's alienation was both half-conscious, marked by a residual dissatisfaction with life and a desire to rejoin the spiritual haunts of his childhood, and deliberate in that it enabled him to set off in search of new modes of existence, to experience and assume them, thus identifying the most eccentric of mankind with the norm of social behaviour. His tendency to integration likewise was conscious, reflecting the fundamental unity of the world, and unconscious insofar as it revealed itself in the obsessive recurrence of certain themes¹². Thus English literature came to exercise its lasting sway over Schwob through its provision of types, situations and techniques for fruitful development in his own work. It was doubly potent in its innate emotive appeal and its function as exotic foil to what was being elaborated

12. See Trembley, op. cit. pp. 45-46.

concurrently in France, and through its satisfaction of his more philosophical preoccupation with the phenomena of reality, his wish to discern the sense of historical evolution, to apprehend the interconnectedness of all things. His transcendentalism was charmed by the discovery of the affiliation of Defoe, Foe and Stevenson, of Graves and Shearstone with the English Romantic movement, of Charles Dickens with the Russian novelists.

It is significant that most of Schwob's works relating to English literature dated from the period 1894-1895, when his intellectual activity was approaching its peak, and when he was more than ever engaged in the quest for unity under the diversity of appearances. The Livre de Monelle showed, under various incarnations, "l'âme à la recherche de soi et du monde"¹³; the Vies Imaginaires stressed that a biographer may animate his subjects only by delineating "ses traits spéciaux sur un fond de ressemblance avec l'idéal"¹⁴. This attitude, as we have seen, was the development of Schwob's contention that art depended on the synthesis of the phenomenal world and individual personality in one moment of illumination, and that the writer's vision alone could organise the heterogeneous raw material into a convincing representation of reality. Thus the careers of his characters tended towards one focal point in which the objective and subjective worlds briefly

13. *ibid.* p. 70.

14. 'L'Art de la Biographie', Spicilege, p. 168.

came together, giving their ultimate sense to either; the myriad details of an existence interested Schwob only as far as they were resumed in this epitome. It was as an "abstractor of the quintessence" that he chronicled imaginary lives; and this concept of art dominated also his studies of English writers and their work. So much will have emerged already from the preceding chapters: the isolation of a central image around which to construct his tales, of an underlying theme to shed light on a subject has been noted again and again. On this point, then, we shall not linger. Our present concern is to discuss how this procedure contributed to the impact of Schwob's criticism.

The secret lies in Schwob's manner of formulating his chosen leitmotifs. Definition by an intellectual concept is habitual to criticism, and accordingly we find his key to Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, the drama of unlawful passion finding its culmination in heroic death, indicated in the phrase: "Toute expansion individuelle est belle dans son acte suprême". In the preface to Moll Flanders Schwob declared that "C'est l'existence matérielle de l'homme, et sa difficulté, qui a le plus puissamment frappé l'esprit de De Foe". The "mot caractéristique dans l'oeuvre de George Meredith" was set down in the form of a quotation from Modern Love:

"More brain, o Lord, more brain!"

These abstract statements are concretised, however, by the addition of the kind of visual or auditory image which had

provided the starting-point of his tales. Thus the action of Ford's tragedy is encapsulated in the lines:

"Cette pièce est tout entourée par la mort:
semblable à une île qui va être submergée par
le flux inéluctable d'un océan obscur qui monte,
et où s'étreignent encore un peu de temps deux
figures passionnées."

And, having like Defoe reduced the writer's career "par la pensée à la simplicité absolue", he restored its idiosyncrasy with a list of the striking "emblems" through which Defoe himself had bodied forth his obsession; the intellectual deficiencies of women which, in Meredith's eyes, excluded harmonious relationships between the sexes, were conveyed in the sentence: "Les cordes de la lyre sur laquelle jouait l'Amour ne rendent plus qu'un son discordant". In the essay on Stevenson the accumulation of sensory impressions, both from Treasure Island and of Schwob's invention, put across the point of the enquiry so forcefully that the expression of the concept is almost unnecessary. Already before Schwob provides the response, intuition prompted by a multiplicity of examples has assured us that "ces images irréelles de Stevenson sont l'essence de ses livres". As he had shown that Stevenson's narrative proceeded in episodes each marked by its image, "qui semblent être ainsi de véritables symboles", so he took pleasure in advancing his argument by the persuasiveness of the visions incessantly conjured up in his mind's eye, dissimulating the considerable cerebral activity that accompanied them. It is a tribute to the success of this method that,

for example, his analysis of George Meredith's novels, though conducted partly in visual and auditory terms, is less memorable than his account of the interview, which drives home the idea of the author's extraordinary mental faculties through a series of pictures and sounds: the sombre pine-copse, the darting of the swift, the bells of the tower of Utrecht. Passages of this nature alone were retained by Paul Claudel from his reading of the preface to Hamlet; and if indeed they vibrate in our memory, it is because they appeal primarily to the potential poet in each of us. This power of evocation derived, of course, from the intensity with which Schwob experienced what he read, and his ability to rarefy the original sensation and project it with increased force. To describe this process of impingement and heightened awareness he had frequent recourse to the idea of haunting, as for instance with his definitive summary of the impact made by Treasure Island:

"Alors je çonnus que j'avais subi le pouvoir d'un nouveau createur de littérature et que mon esprit serait hanté désormais par des images de couleur inconnue et des sons point encore entendus."

Schwob was sensitive to the presence of the subconscious. In 'La Perversité' he spoke of the modern writer's difficulty in incarnating the phantoms of "the secret recesses of his heart and mind"; he liked to think of his own images as coming from beyond the threshold of controlled reflexion; and he was quick to seize on examples of obsession in characters of

fiction. His Rossetti could not escape the vision of Lilith; Captain Kidd was pursued by the spectre of "l'homme au baquet sanglant"; and in Stevenson's tales he noted that "les traits de John Silver hallucinent Jim Hawkins, et que François Villon est hanté par l'aspect de Thevenin Pensete". However, it was not only the imprint of unreal reality, the image charged with supra-normal energy, that drew from Schwob so many illuminating perceptions: a touch on the deepest chords of human nature was enough to awake a response in him. Thus he emphasised the importance of the prayer against poverty in Defoe:

"Ce furent les paroles qui hantèrent sa vie
et son imagination, jusqu'à la dernière lettre
qu'il écrivit ... quelques jours avant sa mort."

The attitudes of the authors studied were fixed in their most poignant form: "nous aimerions à nous représenter Ford tout enfoncé dans la tristesse passionnée", he wrote in his talk on 'Tis Fity, and the last impression he kept of Meredith was of a noble but aged countenance framed in the doorway of his cottage. Schwob's images, therefore, had in addition to their intellectual and sensory appeal a discreet but telling emotive force, going to the quick of what the reader might confusedly feel about the work under discussion, and helping to establish the author as a man of flesh and blood, not as a mere appendage of his creation. Moreover, they did allow a glimpse of Schwob's own personality: normally self-effacing

in his fiction, he larded his criticism with allusions to what he most cherished in the realm of letters. The illustrations from Esquemeling, Poe, Shakespeare and Villon in 'R.L.S.' served a precise purpose as points of comparison with Stevenson's method, but acquired richer overtones in the essay through their special place in Schwob's affections. The evocations of the death-scenes in Aeschylus's Coephoroe, and the 'First Kalandar's Tale' from the Arabian Nights, at first sight irrelevant to an analysis of John Ford's tragedy, took on their air of rightness through the conviction with which Schwob showed the affinities between these three products of different cultures, brought together by their common prestige and their importance in his literary formation. In his criticism as in his fiction, then, Schwob attempted to satisfy both the imagination and the intelligence.

The effectiveness of Schwob's use of imagery was augmented by the very structure of his studies. As Rémy de Gourmont remarked, "il envoie ses lignes vers la périphérie puis les ramène au centre"¹⁵. The secondary elements - discussions of points of biography, of historical sources, and parallels with the work of other writers - revolve round a focal point, sooner or later revealed in the manner exposed above: the reader has the impression of penetrating to the heart of the

15. 'Nouveaux Masques. Marcel Schwob', Mercure de France, January 1898, p. 80.

matter after a brief preamble, and then continuing a more leisurely tour of other related questions. At the same time, the detachment of the author from his immediate literary background, and the elevation of his stature by association with great names from other literatures, concentrated attention on him as one of a select and timeless company with whom it was appropriate to admire only the essence of his genius, passing over the concerns of more pedestrian criticism. Thus, although Schwob's essays cover a wide range of topics, their organic unity is, on the whole, preserved, and as in the tales one senses the hand of the artist ordering his material so as to bring the crucial questions into prominence. The arrangement of Schwob's studies is aesthetically pleasing, almost as if he were trying to imitate the symmetrical disposition of the figures on the pediment of a Greek temple - his ideal of art.

With the succinctness of the studies of English authors went the pursuit of an extreme expressivity of language. The concision and colour of Schwob's style have been remarked by many critics, translating with marvellous fidelity the subtle sensations called forth by his readings¹⁶. From the language of his tales he transposed the concrete vocabulary evocative

16. Cf. the observations of Dr. Philippe, Paul Léautaud and Mona Mackay, quoted above pp. 64, 338, 444.

of the visible world, so that his reflexions took on a form apprehensible by the senses as well as by the intellect. Moreover, the more personal approach adopted by Schwob in his non-creative work allowed him a certain familiarity of manner. The essay on Meredith had its origin in an interview, Ford's tragedy was presented in a talk before a small avant-garde theatre audience, the study on Stevenson was an exploration of his intimate reactions to the novelist's art: under such circumstances, the elaborate artificiality of his fiction would have been out of place. The consequent change of tone was noted with approval by Paul Léautaud:

"Schwob sait toujours dire, sur tous les sujets, une parole définitive, juste, exacte, mais dans ses livres, qui sont trop travaillés, aucune sensibilité ne paraît." 17

Thus Schwob's use of imagery, set off by the structure and language of his studies, would seem to contribute largely to the success in presentation of his criticism; and the qualities of this aspect of his work are, by and large, those of his tales. The two sides of his literary temperament cannot be separated, especially since the works which interest us here belong to a period of great creative energy; however, they are not to be judged on the same grounds. Schwob's initial attitude to the critics was one of mistrust, voiced in the following passage:

"Les critiques sont comme des impuissants, les eunuques et les bossus qui raillent les gens bien

17. Journal Littéraire, I 74 (14th July 1903).

faits et droits: ils ne peuvent rien produire et jettent leur venin de crapaud sur l'oeuvre des autres. Ce sont des jaloux et des égoïstes." 18

Behind this deprecation lay a fear that his own paucity of creative imagination would frustrate his desire to become a great writer, a fear which he attempted to exorcise in later years:

"Marcel Schwob ne croyait pas plus au don de création, et, pour /tout/ dire, à l'originalité. Il savait que tout avait été dit et oublié. Son art, c'était le don de choisir et d'amalgamer. Il retrouvait l'origine de tous les livres. Il n'ignorait pas que les siens étaient faits de beaucoup d'autres." 19

Schwob admired, therefore, and imitated the "miraculeuse transformation d'art et de style"²⁰ practised by Shakespeare and Flaubert on the folk-tales and songs which inspired their masterpieces, seeing in their imposition of a new order an instance of the demiurgic power he had often claimed for the artist. When he implicitly arrogated for himself as a critic the same right to dispose the facts of literary history

18. OC I 8.

19. *ibid.* p. xxx. Schwob did hold firmly to another kind of imagination, as exposed to Byvanck: "Car j'y tiens, à mon imagination, et je ne changerais contre rien au monde ce qui me reste de mon humeur fantasque. Combien de ressources une ville comme Paris offre à ceux qui veulent exercer la mobilité de leur esprit en cherchant l'unité sous toutes les manifestations diverses de l'existence!" Un Hollandais à Paris, p. 301.

20. 'Saint Julien l'Hospitalier', Spicilege, p. 115.

according to a purely subjective vision, however, he was defying the convention that the truth of criticism must tend towards objectivity. If his lives of Cyril Tourneur and Rossetti had only a tenuous link with biographical data, the metamorphosis was acceptable in its conformity to the standards of fiction; but when he committed errors of omission or distortion in matters essential to the understanding of the authors whose works he was introducing to the French public, the value of the content of his criticism may be called in doubt.

In other words, the strength of Schwob's method is also its weakness. By throwing the spotlight on points which touched him as a man and writer of his times, Schwob sacrificed on occasion the general to the particular, the global truth to a passing preoccupation. He ignored the moral evolution of Stevenson's novels, the ethical conflict of Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; and the contradictions of his feelings for his mistress were projected into his interpretation of Meredith's attitude towards women. His lapses are more evident in the works of erudition. As a specialist in the French literature of the Middle Ages, Schwob pursued his research with the utmost rigour, basing it on the manuscripts and documents of the Paris libraries. His investigations into English literature, by contrast, followed those of other scholars, and then only insofar as they confirmed his preconceived notions of probability. It appeared to corroborate his theory

of the transformation of folk or popular art by a master spirit that Shakespeare and Defoe should have incorporated into Hamlet and Moll Flanders the stories of 'La Reine Châtiée' and Mary Frith, and so a considerable part of the prefaces to these works was devoted to the support of what remain dubious hypotheses. Thus Schwob's approach left him rather at the mercy of his "literary enthusiasm", and its failings are all the more regrettable as they detract from a sum of fine observations and illuminating analyses.

To mitigate the faults of perspective incidental to the transposition into criticism of contemporary artistic creeds and a high degree of self-involvement, Schwob's work on English literature displays an assurance and perspicacity born of long acquaintance. Only rarely in his studies did he glance at the important figures of the author's milieu - as with his review of the Elizabethan heroes, real and fictional, in his talk on Ford - but their scope would have been narrower had he not been thoroughly conversant with the periods that interested him, not merely through their major and minor literary productions, but also through their social history and language, especially the language of the populace. His letters to Gosse showed a curiosity about the quaint and unvisited corners of English letters, the novels of Richard Graves, the poetry of John Donne, the prose of Bishop Taylor, for their own interest, and to bring out their unexpected affinities with other fields of literature. His erudition was subsumed in the fabric of his

studies, so as not to distract attention from more important issues: for Schwob's line of enquiry was inductive, moving from consideration of specific instances to the apprehension of some deeper artistic or human experience. In his preface to Coeur Double he had written that "l'art doit faire sentir la généralité intensive", and his criticism, at its best, is capable of similar insight.

...

Schwob's attachment to English literature, as proclaimed in his creative and critical work, was deplored by those who saw it as stifling such originality as he possessed. Where O'Sullivan was politely vague in his estimate of Schwob's derivativeness, Jules Renard was scathing:

"Le talent de Schwob, c'est une mixture de vins, ce n'est pas un vin. Je me moque de cette intelligence. Tous ses contes, il les a empruntés. Il a traduit Hamlet et Francesca da Rimini. Il a un style de traducteur exact." 21

A similar condemnation was penned a year later by Paul Léautaud:

"C'est de la fabrication, de la marqueterie et je sens comment c'est fait et avec quoi. De vastes lectures, dans tous les genres, - des phrases et des idées notées sur des fiches, - puis arrangement, combinaison de ces phrases et de ces idées classées par catégories, en un tout quelconque [...] au fond, tout cela sent les vieux livres." 22

21. op. cit. p. 757 (7th June 1902).

22. op. cit., idem. See also his comments on Coeur Double, p. 138 (4th September 1904).

The partial truth of these appraisals would not have been denied by Schwob, even though both criticised the manner rather than the idea behind his tales. Having accepted that his talents lay in the recreation of past civilisations, he strove after no other originality than perfection of composition imbued with his personal sensibility and that of his times. It was precisely the attainment of this aim that Léon Daudet praised in the Mimes:

"ils ont le caractère classique d'être essentiels, rapides, comme des concentrations de vie et, en outre, ils possèdent le caractère moderne de signifier plus qu'ils n'expriment ... ils sont, ces mimes à double goût, une greffe de l'âme actuelle, consciente et pleine de tourments, sur l'âme antique primesautière et ensoleillée." 23

To the public which greeted his books on their appearance, Schwob's approach seemed entirely acceptable. The Mercure de France had stated in 1892 that "Aucune époque [..] ne fut plus propice que la nôtre à se croiser les bras et à attendre"²⁴; and one of its leading critics was of the opinion that the future of French literature might lie not so much in novelty at all costs as in "le retour aux traditions d'autrefois, et notamment à la plus importantes de toutes, qui est l'imitation d'un modèle déterminé"²⁵. Schwob became

23. 'Marcel Schwob: Mimes', La Nouvelle Revue, 1st April 1894, p. 627.

24. Quoted in Koenraad W. Swart, The Sense of Decadence in Nineteenth-Century France, The Hague, 1964, pp. 143-144.

25. Tédor de Wyzewa, 'D'un avenir possible pour notre chère littérature française', Mercure de France, July 1893, p. 198.

Schwob became a literary creator through his erudition, which he valued insofar as it enabled him to conjure up figures endowed with the attributes of life²⁶. His solution to the artistic dilemma of his generation consisted in the adoption of a new concept of realism, and a new ideal of man; thus it seemed to him quite legitimate to renovate existing material according to these criteria. Within a decade of the publication of his last collection of tales the inevitable artifice of such a manner of composition outweighed the will to renewal that had inspired it, but on purely historical criteria Schwob cannot be reproached for having sought literary stimulus across the Channel. English literature helped to define and foster his talent; in return, he incorporated his documentary borrowings into tales with every appearance of homogeneity to uninformed readers, and, to those few familiar with his sources, with great dexterity of combination. O'Sullivan's argument that Schwob was only making a poor imitation of English authors was irrelevant²⁷: after his early experiments

26. He recommended the young Pierre Champion to model his historical work on that of Jules Quicherat: "Oui, lisez attentivement Rodrigue de Villandrando, et voyez comment Quicherat a tire une figure admirablement vraie des documents épars qu'il a recueillis". MSPL pp. 53-54.

27. 'Two Lives', The Dublin Magazine, January-March 1928, p. 44.

with the style of Poe and Mark Twain in Coeur Double, Schwob preferred to treat his model freely in accordance with his own tastes, and those of the élite for whom he wrote.

Indeed, awareness of the exigencies of his readers may have played no inconsiderable part in deciding the subject matter and form of Schwob's work, especially in his essays. His vision of Rossetti was one which appealed to a public with a liking for the macabre, and the regicide Tourneur was found one of the most remarkable heroes of the Vies Imaginaires²⁸. If in his criticism the passing over of moral issues may be a cause of wonder, the silence must be seen as natural in an art jealous of its autonomy, and hostile to the imposition of bourgeois values on aesthetics. Conversely, his criticism was enhanced by its multiplicity of references to the preoccupations of the times, literary, social and political, and by its reflection of the cosmopolitanism of its public. The studies of Ford, Defoe and Meredith derived their breadth from the illuminating rapprochement with writers of other ages and other traditions; the final essay on Stevenson, written for an English audience, allowed him to display his specialist knowledge of unfamiliar areas of their literature. Moreover, the style of his work was refined in proportion to the distinction

28. See the letters of Albert Samain and Elémir Bourges, MST pp. 122-123, 133.

of his readership. Champion claimed that "il n'est pas un article de lui qui ne soit soigneusement rédigé, comme le plus achevé de ses ouvrages"²⁹, but those prepared for the small reviews and the English periodicals were noticeably more condensed and elegant in expression. The high standards and expectations of his readers unquestionably spurred Schwob on towards the equipoise between his perception and his powers of striking presentation.

...

Some idea of Schwob's importance as a publicist for certain aspects of English literature will have emerged from the preceding chapters. He was not the first in France to have discovered any of the authors and works - even John Aubrey had figured in Emile Montégut's Heures de Lecture d'un Critique, in 1891 - but he was certainly responsible for securing them a wider readership. The age was increasingly attentive to foreign voices, and his personal prestige among the leaders of French literature and of the theatre assured him an effective diffusion for his ideas. Instrumental in persuading Lugné-Poe to produce Ford's tragedy and Sarah Bernhardt to stage Hamlet in a faithful prose translation, he opened the way for Antoine's King Lear and Jacques Copeau's A Woman Killed with Kindness, acted in unabridged texts and in productions which broke away from the nineteenth-century scène à l'italienne: he thus

29. *ibid.* p. 60.

prepared the enterprises of the Cartel in the between-war years. His rejection of the declamatory alexandrine in the dialogue was a necessary preliminary to

"la recherche d'un théâtre libéré d'un "scribisme" perdurant au Boulevard sous des formes diverses, et libéré de l'étreinte réaliste pour retrouver la théâtralité pure." 30

Defoe, after the success of Schwob's translation of Moll Flanders, could no longer be regarded as the author of one classic book, and Stevenson too was revealed as more than a purveyor of tales of adventure or the supernatural. The fame of Rossetti and Meredith was to be more restricted: they remained minority cults, yet Schwob's view of them has coloured to some degree the attitude of subsequent admirers. Translators of Hamlet have used his version, together with those of F.-V. Hugo and Gide, as a standard against which to set their own work; Camus and Malraux echoed him on Defoe; and André Suarès, in an article on Stevenson, explored lines of thought not dissimilar to those of the essay in Spicilege³¹.

The influence of English literature, through Schwob, on French writers, has been variously estimated. On the publication

30. Paul Blanchart, 'Le Théâtre Contemporain et les Elisabethains', Etudes Anglaises, April-June 1960, p. 149.

31. 'Stevenson', Les Ecrits Nouveaux, April 1921, pp. 8-12.

of Champion's biography in 1927 a columnist of Le Nouveau Siècle surveyed

"tout ce qui enchante la présente génération et qui a été, peu ou prou, lancé par Marcel Schwob. Comptons bien: l'exotisme romanesque, les histoires de pirates et de marins, - les histoires d'apaches à travers les âges, le culte de Villon et de Rabelais, - l'humanisme pittoresque, nouveau "romanticisme" selon Stendhal et Mérimée, - la haine du jargon appelé journalistique, - et nous en oublions." 32

From this enumeration it is plain that Defoe and Stevenson alone left their stamp on the French novel - their principal inheritor, by common consent, being Pierre Mac Orlan. Mac Orlan himself confessed a debt to Schwob, and through him to Stevenson, Defoe, Capt. Charles Johnson and Villon - for his English was insufficient for him to be acquainted with the originals except through translations³³. These latter, in fact, seem to have contributed more to the popularisation of Stevenson than Schwob's essay, since the vogue of the adventure novel coincided with the work of Théo Varlet. When closely examined, therefore, Schwob's transmission of English influence is reduced to a tangential factor in the development of a minor offshoot of the French novel. The authors he advocated among his contemporaries were welcomed because they were thought

32. Anselme, 'Un animateur: Marcel Schwob', op. cit. 13th February 1927.

33. See Green, op. cit. pp. 253-258 for a discussion of the influence of Schwob and Stevenson on Mac Orlan, based on a personal letter from the writer, and on the findings of Adèle Bloch in her unpublished dissertation 'Le Monde Fantastique des Romans de Pierre Mac Orlan', Columbia University, 1956, p. 49 ff.

to indicate a way out of current artistic problems³⁴. Later generations had different problems, and naturally sought different solutions.

As a translator, Schwob's procedures were both too idiosyncratic and too redolent of the stylistic peculiarities of the fin de siècle to find emulators. His Moll Flanders is still admired, his Hamlet has its readers, but as a text for stage-productions it has become outmoded. The principle of these two works, nevertheless, remains valid, for Schwob's insistence that the respect of the spirit and letter of the text should be the prime concern of the translator is now considered axiomatic. His method allowed a confrontation and a compromise between two discrete modes of thought and expression, thus, in a small measure, preparing the conciliation foreseen by Yves Bonnefoy through the evolution of French poetry. His critical approach, too, has remained entirely personal, that of the writer recognising in others the themes and manner of composition which formed the groundwork of his own creation,

34. Cf. Henry-D. Davray, 'George Meredith', The Anglo-French Review, February 1919, p. 36: "Il n'est pas surprenant que, vers la fin du siècle dernier, certains jeunes Français anglicisants n'aient tenu à coeur de professer à l'égard de George Meredith une admiration militante. Pour s'affranchir du Parnassisme, du Réalisme et du Naturalisme, les 'Jeunes' d'alors avaient cherché des dieux peu connus. Zola et Coppée 'bouchaient le siècle' et on voulait déboulonner ces idoles, saccager leurs autels, disperser leurs fidèles."

rather than that of the academic or the professional reviewer. It is interesting to note, however, that his intuitive discovery of the central core of the author's work and his application of his findings to its other external features has been practised, though much more systematically by the school of Leo Spitzer, which contends that the critic must

"work from the surface to 'the inward life-center' of the work of art: first observing details about the superficial appearance of the particular work ... then, grouping these details and seeking to integrate them into a creative principle which may have been present in the soul of the artist: and, finally, making the return trip to all the other groups of observations in order to find whether the 'inward form' one has tentatively constructed gives an account of the whole." 35

Schwob's enterprise in presenting English literature to his compatriots has had, therefore, something of the effect of the "silences du récit" in Stevenson: without causing any perceptible deviation from the main course of French literature, it has played its part in the enrichment of the native tradition, the enlargement of the interests of a generation of writers, and the quickening of the intellectual evolution of many whose works were to dominate the first half of the twentieth century. Prevented from adding to the small number of his essays by ill-health, Schwob sparked off ideas for others to bring to fruition; indeed, his eloquence in private discussions may have been no less productive of spiritual encounters than

35. Leo Spitzer, Linguistics and Literary History, Princeton, 1967, p. 19.

his written studies. However, the monuments of his anglophilia must be his translations and the essays and dialogue of Spicilège, to which, as its editor Maurice Saillet observed, might be added 'Annabella et Giovanni' and the prefaces to Hamlet and Moll Flanders, "car ils témoignent de la même qualité de style au service de la même curiosité d'esprit"³⁶. To this one book the admirer of Schwob returns to relish the synthesis of imagination and thought:

"ce Spicilège, qu'on ne se lasse pas de relire, tant l'intelligence y surabonde, les points de vue rares, les associations d'idées les plus subtiles, les remarques et les contrastes les plus ingénieux." 37

It is fitting that works inspired by Stevenson, Meredith and Rossetti should have figured so prominently there, for English literature had no less important a place in the affections of one who was, in the words of Paul Claudel³⁸, "un amateur passionné des choses de l'âme et de l'intelligence".

36. Spicilège, 1960, p. 234.

37. Léautaud, Passetemps II, p. 30.

38. André Suarès et Paul Claudel, Correspondance 1904-1938, 1951, p. 68 (28th January 1906).

APPENDIX A

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The Exempla, ed. Thomas Frederick Crane. London, 1890.
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The Poems, tr. John Payne, London, 1901, 3 vols.
- 48 SHIRAZI, J.K.M.,
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- 63 HERODAS,
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The Mimes, ed. J. Arbuthnot Nairn, Oxford, 1904.
- 250 [BURTON, Robert],
The Anatomy of Melancholy ... by Democritus Junior,
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de l'édition de Londres de 1652).
- 251 -
Ancient Songs from the time of King Henry the Third to
the Revolution, London, 1799.
- 252 -
Anglorum Speculum or the Worthies of England in Church
and State, London, 1864.
- 253 ARBER, Edward,
An English Garner, Westminster, 1897, 8 vols.
- 254 AUBREY, John,
Letters written by Eminent Persons ... and Lives of
Eminent Men, London, 1813, 2 vols.
- 255 BROME, Richard,
The Dramatic Works, London, 1873, 3 vols.
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 Browning, London, 1899, 2 vols.
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 5 vols.
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Fifty Comedies and Tragedies, London, 1679.
- 259 The Works, ed. George Darley, London, 1866, 2 vols.
- 260 CHAUCER, Geoffrey,
The Poetical Works, ed. Robert Bell, London, 1878,
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 7 vols.
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A Collection of Old Ballads, London, 1723, 3 vols.
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The Dramatic Works, London, 1760, 4 vols. (2nd ed.)
- 264 CONGREVE, William,
The Works, London, 1710, 3 vols. (1st ed.)
- 266 DEFOE, Daniel
Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions,
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- 267 The Consolidator, London, 1705. (1st ed.)
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 the Year 1720, London, 1727. (2nd ed.)
- 269 The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders,
 London, 1722. (2nd ed.)
- 270 The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson
 Crusoe of York, Mariner, London, 1719, 3 vols. (4th ed.)
- 271 La Vie et les Aventures Surprenantes de Robinson Crusoe ...
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 3 vols.
- 272 The Life and most surprising Adventures of Robinson
 Crusoe ... the whole 3 volumes faithfully abridged,
 London, 1722. (1st ed.)
- 272 Fortune's Fickle Distribution, London, 1759
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- 273 LEE, William,
Daniel Defoe, his Life and Recently Discovered Writings,
 London, 1869, 3 vols.

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The Gull's Horn-Book, ed. R.B. McKerrow, London, 1904.
- 275 DICKENS, Charles,
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1837. (1st ed.)
- 276 The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit, London,
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- 277 The Adventures of Oliver Twist, London, 1856.
- 278 FORSTER, John,
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- 279 DONNE, John,
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- 280 Poems, by J.D. with Elegies on the Author's Death,
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- 281 Bianthanatos, London, 1644. (1st ed.)
- 282 Letters to severall Persons of Honour, London, 1651.
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- 283 The Life and Letters of John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's,
ed. Edmund Gosse, London, 1899, 2 vols.
- 284 GRAVES, Richard,
Eugenius, London, 1785, 2 vols.
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- 286 -
Fairburn's Everlasting Songster, nld.
- 287 FIELDING, Henry,
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- 290 HAZLITT, William Carew,
Handbook to the Popular, Poetical, and Dramatic Literature
of Great Britain, from the Invention of Printing to the
Restoration, London, 1867.
- 291 HEYWOOD, Thomas,
Pleasant Dialogues and Drama's, London, 1637. (1st ed.)
- 292 Love's Maistresse: or, the Queens Masque, London,
1640. (2nd ed.)
- 293 The Dramatic Works, ed. R.H. Shepherd, London, 1874,
6 vols.
- 294 HOGARTH,
Low Life, London, 1764.
- 295 GRAVES, Richard,
The Invalid, London, 1804.

- 296 JONSON, Ben,
The Workes of Benjamin Jonson, London, 1640, 2 vols.
- 297 LAMB, Charles,
The Works, ed. William Macdonald, London, 1903, 12 vols.
- 298 LYLly, John,
The Dramatic Works, ed. W. Fairholt, London, 1892,
2 vols.
- 300 MORUS, Thoma,
De Optimo Reip. Statu, Deque nova insula Utopia,
Basel, 1518.
- 301 NARES, Robert,
A Glossary, London, 1859, 2 vols.
- 302 NASH, Thomas,
The Works, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow, London, 1904, 2 vols.
The Unfortunate Traveller, ed. Edmund Gosse, London,
1892, 3 vols.
- 303 PEPYS, Samuel,
The Diary, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, London, 1897, 10 vols.
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Edgar Poe, sa Vie et son Oeuvre, Paris, 1904.
- 306 DE QUINCEY, Thomas,
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- 307 BECKFORD, William,
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- 308 PERCY, Thomas,
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- 309 HAZLITT, William Carew, ed.
Remains of the Earlier Popular Poetry of England, London,
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Londres, 1784, 11 vols.
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Rossetti Papers (1862-1870), London, 1903, 2 vols.

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The Poems, ed. George Wyndham, London, 1898.
- 314 Shakespeare's Sonnets Never before Imprinted, London,
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- 315 Comedies, Histories and Tragedies faithfully reproduced
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- 316 LENNOX, Charlotte,
Shakespear Illustrated ... by the author of the Female
Quixote, London, 1753, 3 vols.
- 317 Mr. William Shakespeare his comedies, histories and
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- 318 Six Old Plays on which Shakespeare ..., London, 1879,
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- 319 The Works, ed. Rev. Alexander Dyce, London, 1875 [1857],
9 vols.
- 320 The Tragedy of Hamlet, ed. Edward Dowden, London, 1899.
- 321 BRADLEY, A.C.,
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- 331 STERNE, Laurence,
The Works, London, 1815, 3 vols.
- 332 SWIFT, Jonathan,
Les Trois Justaucorps, Dublin, 1721. (1st ed. of French
translation).

- 333 A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation,
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sur la vie et les Ouvrages de Swift, Londres, 1753.
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London, 1766, 24 vols.
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- 339 Opuscules Humoristiques, tr. Léon de Wailly, Paris,
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The Works of the Ingenious Mr. William Wycherly, London,
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- 374 ROSSETTI, Dante Gabriel,
Dante and his Circle, London, 1892.
- 409 CONGREVE, William,
Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Amours of William
Congreve, ed. Charles Wilson, London, 1730.
- 410 CIBBER, Colley,
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on Theatrical Subjects, London, 1759.

- 412 CHETWOOD, W.R.,
A General History of the Stage, London, 1749.
- 413 HALLIWELL, James Orchard,
A Dictionary of Old English Plays, London, 1860.
- 414 DODDSLEY, Robert,
A Select Collection of Old Plays, London, 1744, 2 vols.
- 415 The Best Plays of the Old Dramatists, London, 1887,
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John Ford, ed. Havelock Ellis
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George Chapman, ed. N.L. Phelps,
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- 416 The Old Dramatists, London, 1873, 4 vols.
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- 463 DEFOE, Daniel,
The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell, London, 1720, (1st ed.)
- 464 HEYWOOD, Thomas,
London, 1624. (1st ed.)
- 477 INGRAM, John H.,
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London, 1886.
- 481 Recollections of some particulars in the Life of the Late William Shenstone, London, 1788. /William Seward.
By Richard Graves/.
- 482 BALFOUR, Graham,
The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson, London, 1901, 2 vols.
- 483 SALT, H.B.
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- 484 VASARI, Giorgio,
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6 vols.

- 555 ESQUEMELING, Alexander Olivier,
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Paris, 1688.
- 557 DEFOE, Daniel,
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- 558 JOHNSON, Capt. Charles,
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- 559 Lives and Adventures of the Most Celebrated Highwaymen etc.,
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- 560 DEFOE, Daniel,
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- 564 FIELDING, Henry,
The History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild
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- 570 ESQUEMELING, Alexander Olivier,
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The Adventures and Discourses of Captain John Smith,
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- 703 VILES, Edward and FURNIVALL, F.J., ed.
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Text Society, Extra Series IX, London, 1869.
- 704 HARMAN, Thomas,
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- 705 DEKKER, Thomas,
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Slang and its Analogues Past and Present, London,
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- 714 GROOME, Francis Hinde,
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The Poems of Master Francis Villon of Paris, now first
done into English Verse in the Original Forms, by
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A list of Schwob's omissions from the text in his translation
of Moll Flanders

<u>Defoe pp.</u>	<u>Schwob pp.</u>	<u>Marion pp.</u>
48-49	73	90-93
50-57	75	96-106
59	77	111
90	124	157
94	128	162
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97	133	168
99	137	172
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172-173	249	290-292
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206	296	342-343
209	299	348
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225	311	373-374
226	313	375-376
235	326	391
236-237	327	392-394
238-239	329	396
240-241	336	398, 399
247	339	409-410
250	344	414
250-251	344	395
260	356	429-430
261-262	357	431, 432-433
267-268	366	443-445
269	367	446
271	369	448
277	378	459
279	381	462
Defoe's own preface is omitted entirely.		

APPENDIX C

Schwob's borrowings from D.G. Rossetti's Dante and his Circle in the dialogue 'L'Art'.'L'Art',¹

189 La divine conductrice élue
qui demeure dans le Grand Cycle
et qui contemple éternellement
le visage de Celui qui est per
omnia saecula benedictus

190 La vie nouvelle commence,
pour moi, dans le livre de ma
memoire,
à la fin de ma neuvième année,
le jour où j'aperçus la très
gracieuse dame que certains
nommèrent ici Béatrice.

Elle avait une robe de couleur
cramoisie, soutenue par une
ceinture;
et dès que mes yeux tombèrent
sur elle, Amour gouverna mon
âme

D'abord, à la première heure du
neuvième jour de juin, en l'année
1290, je fus frappé de stupeur;
car la Douleur entra et me dit:
"Je suis venue demeurer avec toi",
et je m'aperçus qu'elle avait
amené en sa compagnie la Peine
et la Bile. Et je lui criai:
"Va-t'en, éloigne-toi!" Mais,
comme une Grecque, elle me
repondit, pleine de ruse, et
argumenta souplement. Puis
voici que j'aperçus venir Amour
silencieux, vêtu de vêtements
noirs, doux et nouveaux, avec un
chapeau noir sur les cheveux;

Dante and his Circle²

95 that blessed Beatrice
32 guerdoned in the Great Cycle
95 who now gazeth continually on
His countenance qui est per omnia
saecula benedictus

30 In that part of the book of my
memory ... there is a rubric, saying,
Incipit Vita Nova
Nine times already since my birth
... when first the glorious Lady
of my mind was made manifest
to mine eyes; even she who was
called Beatrice by many who knew
not wherefore.

31 Her dress ... was of ...
crimson, girdled

from that time forward, Love quite
governed my soul

107 On the 9th of June 1290.

Upon a day, came Sorrow in to me,
Saying, "I've come to stay with
(thee awhile";

And I perceived that she had
(ushered Bile
And Pain into my house for company.
Wherefore I said, "Go forth - away
(with thee!"

But like a Greek she answered, full
(of guile,
And went on arguing in an easy style.
Then, looking, I saw Love come
(silently,
Habited in black raiment, smooth
(and new,
Having a black hat set upon his hair;

1. 'L'Art', Spicilège, pp. 187-204.

2. The Collected Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1886,
vol. II.

et certes, les larmes qu'il
versait étaient véritables.
Alors je lui demandai: "Qu'as-
tu, joueur de bagatelles?" Et me
répondant, il dit: "Une angoisse
à traverser;
191 car notre dame est mourante,
mon chere frere".
mes yeux devinrent las de pleurs,

et voici que le jour qui
accomplissait l'année que ma
dame avait été élue dans la cité
de la vie éternelle, me
souvenant d'elle tandis que
j'étais assis seul, je me pris
à dessiner la semblance d'un
ange sur certaines tablettes.
Et cependant que je dessinais,
comme je tournais la tête, je
perçus qu'il y avait auprès de
moi des gens que je devais
courtoisement saluer et qui
observaient ce que je faisais.
Et je me levai, par respect,
et je leur dis: "Une autre
était avec moi".

Quand j'envoyai mon livre au
temps de Pâques à mon maître
Brunetto Latini, ce fut ma
fillette que je chargeai de
le lui apporter.
j'y nommais Monna Giovanna ...
les gens de Florence, à cause
de sa grâce, la surnommaient
Primavera,

et ainsi que le printemps précède
l'année, je la vis un jour
marcher devant ma divine dame.
Or, dans mon sonnet, j'exprimais
le souhait d'un voyage. Il me
semblait que je serais
parfaitement heureux si le temps
de ma vie coulait au balancement
d'une barque errante où nous
aurions été trois, Lapo Gianni
et toi, Guido, et moi Dante.
Nous, compagnons anciens, nous

And certainly the tears he shed
(were true.
So that I asked, "What ails thee,
(trifler?"
Answering he said: "A grief to be
(gone through;
For our own lady's dying, brother
(dear".

78 until they were so weary with
(weeping

84 On that day which fulfilled
the year since my lady had been
made of the citizens of eternal
life, remembering me of her as I
sat alone, I betook myself to draw
the resemblance of an angel upon
certain tablets. And while I did
thus, chancing to turn my head, I
perceived that some were standing
beside me to whom I should have
given courteous welcome, and that
they were observing what I did ...
Perceiving whom, I arose for
salutation, and said: "Another
was with me".

96 SONNET. Sent with the Vita Nuova

Master Brunetto, this my little maid
Is come to spend her Easter-tide
(with you;

68 This lady's right name was Joan;
but because of her comeliness ...
she was called of many Primavera

as the Spring cometh first in the
year, so should she come first on
this day,

126 SONNET. He imagines a pleasant
Voyage for Guido, Lapo Gianni, and
himself, with their three Ladies.

Guido, I wish that Lapo, thou, and I,
Could be by spells conveyed, as it
(were now,

Upon a barque, ...
But we, observing old companionship,
To be companions still should long
(thereby.

nous serions tenu par les mains.
192 Et notre barque aurait été
guidée par la dame Giovanna, la
dame Béatrice, et celle qui était
la trentième parmi les soixante
beautés de Florence. Et tout le
temps de notre vie se serait
passé à deviser d'amour

c'est toi qui me donnas
l'explication du cœur enflammé.
Amour tenait ta dame endormie,
roulée dans un manteau; puis il
la contraignait à manger ton
cœur; puis il disparaissait
en pleurant.

J'interprétai ton songe par son
contraire, sachant que douleur
pendant le sommeil signifie
joie.

je vis une autre dame qui avait
les mêmes yeux ... mais elle
se nommait Mandetta, et elle
était de Toulouse.

193 une dame froide et blanche
et dure comme la pierre, dont la
tête était ceinte d'herbe verte
mêlée de fleurs; et sa robe
était de couleur verte ... et
le blond de ses cheveux était
uni au vert de l'herbe fraîche;
et cette dame était de Padoue,
et son nom était Pietra degli
Scrovigni ... tu composas pour
elle ... une admirable sextine.

Ainsi elle a mérité une fois de
plus de porter le nom de
Giovanna, selon
194 celui de saint Giovanni (sic)
le Précurseur

And Lady Joan, and Lady Beatrice,
And her the thirtieth on my roll*,
(with us

And not to talk of anything but love

*That is, in his list of the sixty
most beautiful ladies of Florence

116 He interprets Dante's Dream

34 /Love/ had
My heart within his hand, and on
(his arm

My lady, with a mantle round her,
(slept;

whom (having wakened her) anon he
(made

To eat that heart; ...

Then he went out; and as he went,
(he wept.

116 Sweet was thy dream; for
(by that sign, I say,
Surely the opposite shall come to
(pass.

123 SONNET. Of the Eyes of a
certain Mandetta, of Thoulouse,
which resemble those of his Lady
Joan, of Florence.

113 SESTINA. Of the Lady Pietra
degli Scrovigni*.

Utterly frozen is this youthful lady,
Even as the snow that lies within
(the shade;

For she is no more moved than is
(the stone ...

Covering their sides again with
(flowers and grass.

When on her hair she sets a crown
(of grass

*the name of a Paduan lady

114 Because she weaves the yellow
(with the green...

A while ago, I saw her dressed in
(green

69 it is also as one should say,
'She shall come first': inasmuch
as her name, Joan, is taken from
that John who went before the
True Light

Ah! pourquoi ne lui a-t-elle
pas fait voir, au sommet de
l'escalier sacré, ma chère
Selvaggia, dont le corps repose
tristement sur le mont della
Sambucca, dans le sauvage
Appenin?
à Dante Alighieri, qui est trop
fier
195 de venir à mon école y
prendre des leçons;
il ne vaut pas mieux que moi;
j'ai menti, et il ment encore,

il a mangé la graisse, moi j'ai
rongé les os;
il a jeté la navette, moi j'ai
tondu le drap
car je suis l'aiguillon, et il
est le taureau.
ma Becchina, la fille du savetier

j'étais nu comme une pierre
d'église;
et mon plus haut souhait allait
jusqu'à désirer être souillon de
cuisine

le mari de Becchina, qui était
orgueilleux comme ses sacs d'or,
j'avais un père vieux et riche,
qui possédait de vastes domaines

j'ai vécu dans la boue du fossé

Un jour le vieillard me refusa
même un verre de vin maigre

Car dans le dernier sonnet de la
Vie Nouvelle

il commence par dire qu'il n'a
point compris le doux langage
qu'un ange lui adressait au
sujet de Béatrice (c'est à
l'endroit où les vers changent
de mesure); puis dans l'envoi,
il dit aux dames qu'il a compris.

177 at summit of the sacred
(stair
Saw not that highest of all women
(there

172 SONNET. Of the Grave of
Selvaggia, on the Monte della
Sambuca.

205 who's prouder than you are?

Yet if you want more lessons at my
(school
defying him as no better than
(himself

if I jest and lie,
You in such lists might run a
(tilt with me ...
And if I bite the fat, you suck
(the fry;
I shear the cloth and you the
(teazle ply
... I'm the goad and you're the bull.

187 SONNET. Of Becchina, the
Shoemaker's Daughter.

199 Never so bare and naked was
(church-stone

198 That if one could turn
(scullion to a cook,
It were a thing to which one might
(aspire.

202 SONNET. To Becchina's rich
Husband.

197 I've a father old and rich,
And that if once he dies I'll get
(his lands
Meanwhile God keeps him whole and
(me i' the ditch.

194 A glass of some thin wine ...
One day I begged

And he had almost killed me

183 On the last Sonnet of the
Vita Nuova.

For where the measure changes,
(first you say
You do not understand the gentle
(speech

A spirit madetouching your Beatrice:
And next you tell your ladies how,
(straightway,

APPENDIX D

Letters of George Meredith to Marcel Schwob
(from the Collection Pierre Champion, Bibliothèque de l'Institut,
Paris)

1. Box Hill, Dorking, Jan. 26th, 1894.

My dear M. Marcel Schwob,

I grieve to think of you as in questa selva selvaggia. I wish I could help. I have been in the black heart of it, have gone through it. We have got to get strong grasp of the knowledge of the nature of life. Then we carry some light within us. But words of an outsider are a discord until the mind lies restful - or gathers itself together - under the blow. Forgive me for seeming to preach.

I have sent to beg you to accept my little book of 'Modern Love'. If by any chance you attempt 'The sage enamoured of the honest lady', be warned that you will find it tough.

Most faithfully yours,
George Meredith.

2. March 9th, 1894.

My dear M. Marcel Schwob,

I have traversed wild land with you in your 'Roi au Masque d'Or'. Admirable writing throughout. But so many Frenchmen write well. Where the numbers fall behind you, is in imaginative energy. This is always a refreshment to the reader. 'La flute' - vrai poème. 'Le sabbat de Mouflaines' - nocture Moyen Age. 'La peste' - qui me fait souvenir de la rapidité et brièveté des récits de Benvenuto Cellini. Strong and prompt imagination in all. The colours, black and sanguine, betray the writer's youth. There is no betrayal of it in the style.

I am as yet unable to see an indication of the path you will take. I hope it is to be in creative work, and am rather pained by the thought of your giving time to critique. Here in England the critic is much wanted: in France the creative writer is most wanted. I would forfeit the honour of an examination of my books by you, if I could have another 'Sabbat' or 'Flute' in the place of it.

Accept my thanks and cordial greetings, and believe me,
Very truly yours,
George Meredith.

3. August 10th, 1894.

Dear M. Marcel Schwob,

I beg to thank M. Léon Daudet for the books. I reserve the reading of them until I lay down my

galley oar. I am bound to it up to the end of the month, and then I have to go on a round of visits. Pray make it known to M. Léon Daudet that I should be honoured if he will be my guest in October, at any date of it suitable to you both. Our turn of the leaf or Indian summer is very lovely in this foliaged valley - worth the run to it for an impression of our scenery.

I cannot send a letter to Hauteville House without asking you to present my homage to the Lady 'Jeanne' of her illustrious grandfather. She is dear to every wielder of the pen in these islands.

Believe me,

Very faithfully yours,
George Meredith.

APPENDIX E

Letters of Marcel Schwob to Robert Louis Stevenson
 (From the Stevenson Library of Edwin J. Beinecke, Yale University
 Library)

1. Mid-August (?) 1888

Sir,

I must first beg pardon because I am not introduced - and put the excuse on the simple fact that we have no other common acquaintance but the bookseller and that I am sitting some five hundred miles from you.

I am the son of the editor of an important commercial paper in Nantes and presently studying in Paris - passing my Licence-ès-Lettres in November. I am generally in Paris, Palais de l'Institut, 1 rue de Seine, at my uncle's, M. Léon Cahun, whom perhaps you know by name. He is the author of Les Pilotes d'Ango, La Bannière Bleue, Les Mercénaires, etc. I believe these novels have been translated. At present I am spending my holidays till the 1st of October at my father's, 64 rue de Gigant, Nantes, (Loire-Inférieure).

Now to the fact. The first time I saw your name was in the Temps, when that paper published Treasure Island. I was quite astonished - and immediately bought the English copy. I need not tell you how I suffered from the translation of André Laurie: you must naturally feel much keener pain than I when you are cut to bits. He disgraced the words; he disgraced the style; in short, he blotted out all the colours and just left the drawing. Instead of translating as he should have done - Billy Bones by something like Mes-os or Hands by Mes-mains, - he wrote dull, slovenly words, as if he had understood nothing. Do not believe I am criticising the Laurie translation in order to harpoon the French translation of your novels - I would be quite incapable of such a thing as translating Kidnapped - for instance - I would not dare to blur the vivid colour of your words, - I would suffer blurring them - and nevertheless, the translator must; but I shall not be that man.

So you must please read openly and frankly what follows, as it is written - and not analyse as if you were looking for my motives - I have none but a very strong admiration for you.

Since then I have read all you published with increasing pleasure and increasing sympathy. We have the same relish for the powdered, polite, firm, intelligent and clear-headed old gentlemen of the eighteenth century - you love that time and I do too. We have the same principle of composition - I mean

simplicity - and instead of the coordinate description the realists use - a progressive description with a few marking points that represent much better a picture to the mind's eye than a close and accurate analysis. And last - not least - the figures you create are so life-like, they move about so easily and speak so naturally, that I cannot help having lived some hours with John Silver and Alan Breck - and that I cannot help neither liking you for it.

Now to the second fact. I have developed the reasons of my very great sympathy - or friendship, as you please, for all your novels - and consequently for you. This will explain what follows. In 1883 a Dutch gentleman, M. Van Duyl, published the manuscript of a Boër who had wandered about Transvaal and Zululand during the war of 1835. M. Van Duyl has left me free to do what I please with the book in France or in England. If there had been no R.L. Stevenson in England, I would probably have tried to work out a fine novel with it, but I much prefer sending it to you, who will do that so much better than I can.

I am translating it into English - as soon as the translation is ready, I shall send it over. I need not say the relation is entirely true - the author relates a period of his life. You will find there all the incidents you like - and fine characters - a battle in a fortification built with waggons, and the life of a boy sixteen years old among the savages - I really believe nobody can use these elements as well as you can.

It is naturally self-evident that you are at perfect liberty to use the book as you please and that I shall forward the translation out of pure pleasure - I have no idea whatever of collaboration - and desire you to accept the M.S. as a very feeble token of sympathy.

Of course I shall be happy if you reply: I really long to know you - and letter acquaintance is a sort of friendship too.

Yours truly,
Marcel Schwob

2.

Nantes (Loire-Inférieure)
64 rue de Gigant.

Dear Sir -

Ma foi, tant pis - je vous écris en français, j'aurai les coudées plus franches et je me suis présenté dans votre langue, ce qui doit suffire à la politesse internationale. Votre éditeur, Chatto & Windus, à qui j'ai envoyé une tartine que j'ai publiée sur An Inland Voyage m'écrit que vous êtes "yachting in the Pacific". De sorte que vous recevrez sans doute dans le même paquet "my letter of introduction" et

celle-ci. - Voici ce morceau de prose; il n'est pas brillant, mais il exprime ce que je pense de vos livres. Je trouve que Bentzon vous a fort mal traité; j'ai essayé de montrer que vous n'étiez pas si "eccentric" qu'elle voulait bien le croire; je suis d'avis qu'elle a massacré "Dr. Jekyll and M. Hyde", et bien qu'elle écrive du haut de La Revue des Deux Mondes, j'ai toujours le "Jumping Frog" de Mark Twain sur le coeur; mais décidément deux colonnes de journal ne suffisent pas à une critique. Je n'ai pas dit le dixième de ce que je voulais dire; quand on n'a pas la place de donner des preuves, on a un ton dogmatique et on a l'air de juger dans son faux-col.

Ne pensez pas que "my literary productions" ressemblent à ce spécimen. Je vous envoie dans cette lettre un conte indoustani - du XVIII^e siècle. Vous devez si bien connaître Voltaire et Voisenon que le pastiche vous semblera imparfait - mais il n'y a plus que vous, aujourd'hui, qui puissiez écrire comme ces gens-là.

Si vous avez le temps de me répondre un mot, envoyez-le jusqu'au premier octobre à l'adresse ci-dessus; et à partir de ce moment-là chez Monsieur Léon Cahun, Palais de l'Institut, 1 rue de Seine, Paris.

Quant aux mémoires du boër, j'espère que nous en causerons à loisir - peut-être de vive voix si par hasard vous veniez voir l'Exposition de 1889; - je ne veux pas troubler en ce moment toutes les idées que doit remuer en vous l'odeur de l'Océan.

Believe me, dear sir, respectfully and truly yours,
Marcel Schwob.

The third letter, of the 1st May 1889, is quoted in full in pp. 451-453.

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APPENDIX F

'Robert L. Stevenson', Phare de la Loire, 27th August 1888.

Après la forte génération des Thackeray, des Dickens et des Eliot, le roman paraissait avoir atteint sa formule définitive. Les romanciers secondaires, miss Austen, miss Marryat, miss Thackeray, Ouida, puisaient chez leurs aînés; Georges Sand et George Eliot faisaient école; les bas bleuissaient à vue d'oeil et le roman était tombé en quenouille. - De l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, une nouvelle floraison littéraire s'épanouissait; Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Louisa Alcott, tenaient la tête des lettres anglaises, Edgar Poe pénétrait plus avant dans les masses; au lieu des fades histoires qui sentaient le thé, le vieux caoutchouc, les brosses à dents familiales, le style sain des Américains fleurant les épices des sous-bois californiens; las du poète lauréat Tennyson, des mystiques pré-raphaélites de l'école Rossetti, le public courait aux poètes nés dans les huttes de mineurs, bronzés au hâle du soleil sur les paquebots du Mississipi et qui avaient jeté la pioche, lâché le gouvernail pour la plume de journaliste, d'essayiste, d'humouriste, en un mot d'artiste.

Mais l'Angleterre n'a pas dit son dernier mot. Les gens qui ont créé le roman moderne ne l'abandonneront pas si facilement. Et on a beau dire, les études classiques que les Américains méprisent, sont un vigoureux appoint dans les lettres. Des hommes d'un grand talent, comme Zola, son élève Huysmans ou Alphonse Daudet, le savent bien et déguisent avec du style leur ignorance de la forme. Les maîtres écrivains ont passé à l'école d'Astier-Réhu; et il ne les a vidés ni desossés; pour savoir écrire, il faut discipliner son esprit. Richepin, Bouchor reviennent à l'art classique; ils en ont besoin - ils le comprennent à mesure qu'ils travaillent - et l'auteur de la Chanson des Gueux aide l'auteur du Faust Moderne à traduire Les Ciseaux d'Aristophane. La logique n'a jamais rien produit, mais on ne saurait rien produire sans la logique. Et il fallait être Molière pour faire faire à M. Jourdain de la prose sans le savoir. Aussi les Anglais sont-ils nos maîtres dans l'art d'écrire. Ils se soucient peu du style et de la forme; ils pensent justement qu'à une idée claire le style vient tout seul. Et ils ont des idées claires parce qu'ils ont beaucoup travaillé le latin et le grec, lu d'un bout à l'autre Homère, Pindare, Thucydide, tourné nombre de vulgus et confectionné des vers anapestiques. L'élève idéal de M. Lockroy qui aura tout lu dans des traductions, sera un piètre écrivain; fût-il rempli d'idées autant qu'un tonneau de bon vin, il ne saura pas les mettre en bouteilles. Ce sera le cas de dire:

'Qu'importe le flacon, pourvu qu'on ait l'ivresse?'

mais en lettres le Champagne a mauvais goût dans les litres à douze.

Stevenson est venu sur le terrain armé d'une solide éducation classique. La seule oeuvre qu'on connaisse de lui en France par une traduction complète, l'Ile au Trésor, n'est pas son coup d'essai. Il n'avait pas publié moins de six ouvrages avant celui qui a sanctionné sa réputation.

L'Ile au Trésor, cette terrible histoire de flibustiers qui commence dans le fantastique et continue avec la précision de détails d'un journal de bord, a saisi le public et consacré une nouvelle forme du roman.

Madame Bentzon, qui a récemment découvert Stevenson dans une étude de la Revue des Deux Mondes, semble avoir renouvelé l'observation célèbre du voyageur: "Ici les femmes sont rousses". Elle conclut d'une de ses nouvelles Le cas de Docteur Jekyll, que M. Stevenson est le représentant du roman étrange en Angleterre. Rien ne saurait moins caractériser son talent. Nous ririons de voir l'Athenaeum oublier Boule-de-Suif, Une vie, Pierre et Jean pour juger gravement Maupassant sur le Horla. Si Stevenson relève d'une tradition quelconque, ce n'est pas de la morbide névrose que Poë nous a inoculée, mais des idées saines et spirituelles du XVIII^e siècle, des Swift, des Smollett, des de Foë et des Sterne. Greffez sur la prose nette et limpide de cette époque un bourgeon d'originalité fantasque, une pointe de coloris romantique, et vous aurez le style de Stevenson. Supposez qu'il n'a pris parti ni pour le roman subjectif, l'analyse psychologique de Paul Bourget, ni pour le roman objectif, la description physiologique d'Emile Zola, mais qu'il fabrique des êtres vivants, qui parlent, marchent et agissent dans des paysages vrais, coloriés, brossés en trois touches de pinceau, qui ne sont ni tout âme ni tout corps, - et vous aurez son procédé de composition.

Stevenson a fait deux voyages en France, en 1878 et 1879. Il a publié ses notes sur le premier, une descente en périlleuse d'Anvers à Précy par la Sambre, le canal de Sambre-et-Oise et l'Oise; le second a paru sous le titre: Excursion avec un Ane dans les Cévennes. Je ne veux parler ici que du premier, An Inland Voyage. Ceux qui ont lu le Voyage Sentimental de Sterne trouveraient la même finesse d'observation, la même ironie aimable, sans les tendances lacrymatoires. Le seul mot qui conviendrait à ce charmant esquisse est un mot anglais: sensible; cela veut dire qu'elle est pleine à la fois de bon sens et de sentiment.

/Here Schwob translates two character sketches from the Inland Voyage, "vrais tous deux sans être réalistes et on pourrait bien y voir deux types de caractère français"./

Il faut résister au plaisir de tout citer. L'écrivain dont le premier livre est cousu de pages semblables doit aller très loin. L'Ile au Trésor a montré aux lecteurs français la vérité scrupuleuse et le couleur exacte d'un récit de la plus complète fantaisie. C'était la qualité maîtresse de Swift et de Thackeray. Et Stevenson, qui réunit l'esprit du dix-huitième siècle à l'observation exacte et au je ne sais quoi de mélancolique du dix-neuvième, marche à grands pas sur leurs traces. Les lettres d'ont pas de patrie et l'Europe doit féliciter l'Angleterre d'avoir vu naître depuis dix ans un écrivain de plus.

APPENDIX G

'Robert-Louis Stevenson', L'Événement, 11th October 1890.

Je me souviens de la nuit où je lus pour la première fois le nom de Stevenson. J'allais vers le Midi - un long voyage de dix-sept heures - et j'avais pris à la gare un nouveau volume anglais - l'Ile au Trésor. Dès les premières pages, je fus saisi par un sentiment d'étrangeté indescriptible, le jamais vu ni lu. C'était une histoire de pirates du dix-huitième siècle; ils cherchent le trésor du capitaine Flint, qui a longtemps arboré le drapeau noir à squelette blanc dans les mers des Tropiques; tout d'abord la curiosité et l'horreur grandissaient par une merveilleuse composition de créatures falotes qui apparaissaient successivement et se dessinaient en traits de plus en plus nets aux différents plans de l'histoire; puis une demi-douzaine de caractères fortement conçus dans une action singulièrement attrayante; enfin un procédé littéraire nouveau consistant à faire refléter les différentes phases des aventures par la manière, le style et le point de vue de trois ou quatre personnages qui reprenaient la narration, chacun à leur tour. Je tournais les dernières pages de l'Ile au Trésor quand un vent frais pénétra dans le wagon, secouant les arbres le long de la voie; l'horizon se teintait de rose, et un frisson particulier m'annonçait l'approche du matin.

Il y avait six ans que Stevenson écrivait, quand l'Ile au Trésor a consacré sa réputation en Angleterre, et l'a fait connaître en France. Depuis, presque chaque année, un nouveau chef d'oeuvre: Docteur Jekyll, Kidnapped, The Black Arrow, The Master of Ballantrae. Tout cela est resté lettre morte pour nous. Et pourtant, c'est en France que Stevenson s'est mis à aimer les lettres; c'est dans notre pays qu'il a jeté ses premiers croquis. Un jour, il part avec un grand seigneur d'Écosse, son ami; ils viennent en Belgique, chacun avec un sac de nuit et une perissoire. Ils veulent traverser la Flandre et le Nord par les canaux. Chaque soir, ils s'arrêtent dans les hôtelleries de la route; ils attendent patiemment qu'on leur ouvre les écluses; ils parlent avec les mariniers, les ouvriers et les aubergistes. Quand ils sont arrivés jusqu'à l'Cise, Stevenson a rempli son album. C'est une suite de vues prises dans cette humble navigation fluviale, un morceau de la vie d'un patron de barque, considéré avec des yeux d'artiste, un Voyage sentimental où les passants ne sont ni de jolies soubrettes, ni des élégantes aux cheveux poudrés, ni des officiers de bonne maison, mais de pauvres servantes, de vieilles dames qui habitent au bord de l'eau, des soldats de petite garnison.

Une autre fois, Stevenson monte dans les Cévennes. Il

y a emmené un âne, seul compagnon de voyage. La nature aride, le rude caractère des paysans cévenols, l'intéressent et l'émeuvent. Son premier livre a été un "Voyage dans le Nord de la France"; le second sera un "Voyage avec un Ane dans les Cévennes". - "Comprenez bien, m'écrit Stevenson, que j'ai passé une grande partie de ma vie en France, que j'ai appris à aimer votre pays et beaucoup de ses habitants, que j'y ai appris ce que votre pays seul peut enseigner, tandis que j'y respirais l'atmosphère artistique qu'on ne peut respirer que là. Et je savais tout le temps - et j'enrageais de savoir - que même si j'eusse écrit avec la plume d'anges ou de demi-dieux, pas un français ne m'aurait connu davantage. Et puis, voici que vous arrivez, que vous m'envoyez les plus gracieux encouragements, que vous me lisez, que vous me comprenez et que vous voulez bien aimer un peu ce que je fais!"

Pensez-vous que ce soit le jardin de la France et l'urbanité française qui attirent cet artiste? - Non pas. - Comme Dante-Gabriel Rossetti, comme James Payn, il a une affection singulière pour François Villon, un vrai poète français. Rossetti et Payn l'ont traduit; Stevenson a lu le travail de M. Longnon sur sa vie, et il en a tiré un de ses meilleurs essais littéraires et une excellente nouvelle, traduite récemment. Ce n'est pas un amour d'érudit: il a des passions plus violentes encore, plus modernes, et qui ne laissent pas d'étonner un moment.

Il s'agit de Richard III, qu'il a imaginé différent de la merveilleuse création de Shakespeare, dans son roman The Black Arrow.

"Le Richard III de Shakespeare est plein de feu, m'écrit-il; on aime à voir ce brutal athlète montant à l'assaut des remparts indestructibles de la nature humaine, tête basse, forçant les brèches. Voilà qui nous rappelle notre terre-à-terre d'aujourd'hui, et combien on est plus en sûreté dans le terre-à-terre. Oui, ce Richard III est plein de feu, mais, oh! sûrement, il n'est pas possible. J'aime Dumas et j'aime Shakespeare: vous me comprendrez si je vous dis que le Richard de l'un me fait penser au Porthos de l'autre; et si, par quelque sacrifice dans mon propre bagage littéraire, je pouvais débarasser de Porthos le Vicomte de Bragelonne, je donnerais de grand coeur Jekyll et le Master of Ballantrae, et The Black Arrow, et je penserais que ma vie ne serait pas perdue pour l'humanité, fallût-il encore sacrifier pour cela une demi-douzaine de mes livres."

Voilà, certes, un enthousiasme qui surprend. Nous n'aimons point tant Dumas, peut-être, et beaucoup d'entre nous, j'en suis sûr, donneraient le Vicomte de Bragelonne pour garder Porthos. Je n'en veux pour exemple que le succès du roman de Paul Mahalin. - Mais demandez à Zola, à Daudet, de jeter au feu une demi-douzaine de leurs oeuvres préférées,

afin de rendre parfait un livre de Dumas; croyez-vous qu'ils répondront avec la même fougue que Stevenson - oseront-ils mettre sur le même piédestal Hamlet et les Trois Mousquetaires - Richard III ne sera-t-il pas pour eux le Richard de Shakespeare, le géant de bronze coulé par le poète, plutôt qu'un richard enveloppé dans la gangue de l'histoire? Leur passion littéraire n'ira pas jusqu'à grandir Dumas, ni leur souci de littéralité jusqu'à critiquer Shakespeare. Mais vienne un montagnard écossais, encore ivre du parfum des bruyères de sa patrie; mettez-le au dur régime de la plus solide éducation classique que l'on puisse voir; assouplissez-le à l'érudition moderne et voyez l'extraordinaire tempérament qui jaillira de cette contrainte. Dix ans de vie littéraire n'émousseront pas ses premières impressions, elles apparaîtront aussi vives, aussi ardentes que dans le feu de la jeunesse; l'admiration impersonnelle, l'absence d'égoïsme y seront aussi frappantes que chez un garçon de quinze ans qui lit Robinson Crusoe: il laisserait la maison la plus chaude, les parents les plus aimés pour faire la course en mer et bâtir sa hutte dans une île déserte. Aussi Stevenson jetterait au néant les livres les plus chers pour vivre avec plus d'illusion dans le Vicomte de Bragelonne.

Hélas, quand je parlais de Robinson Crusoe, je disais vrai. L'artiste inconscient a prévalu, en Stevenson, sur l'érudit et le littérateur. Un jour j'appris qu'il était "en partie de yacht" sur le Pacifique. Quelques semaines après, je recevais une lettre des îles Sandwich, timbrée de Honolulu. Entretemps le Times publiait un article de Stevenson, daté de Samoa, sur les démêlés des Allemands, un vigoureux plaidoyer rempli de cœur et d'amour de la liberté. Et voici qu'il m'annonce la nouvelle la plus étrange: il se fixe à Apia, dans les Samoa, avec sa femme et son beau-fils. Ce n'est pas une fugue, comme celle de Saint-Saëns aux îles du Cap-Vert. Stevenson ne reverra peut-être jamais l'Europe. Il a été étreint au cœur par les mers du Sud, infiniment bleues, battant d'écume blanche les récifs de corail; il reste sous un ciel plein d'étoiles nouvelles. Déjà il envoyait The Master of Ballantrae à sir Percy Florence et à lady Shelley "des rivages retentissants d'une île des Tropiques", de Waikiki; nouvel Ulysse, il dit que "par dessus tout il fut beaucoup sur la mer"; il ne reviendra jamais à Ithaque, dans ses montagnes boisées d'Ecosse, dans le pays des grands lacs, dans les îles brumeuses de la mer du Nord - car sa Pénélope l'accompagne - et ils tisseront à eux deux le tissu des histoires les plus étranges mêlées de jours de bonheur.

Mais si l'homme est perdu pour l'Europe, l'artiste nous enverra de merveilleuses oeuvres, écloses sous la Croix du Sud. Il nous promet un Naufrageur et un Pêcheur de perles,

une histoire "horrible, noire, gesticulante, pleine de scènes extraordinaires et de caractères étonnants". Puis il est "plongé jusqu'à mi-corps" dans un grand livre sur les Mers du Sud. Ce sera, dit-il, le "livre des Mers du Sud". Aussi, semblable aux Conquistadores chantés par Hérédia, il est parti vers l'Eldorado des poètes, vers un monde nouveau d'idées inconnues et de paysages dorés; debout sur les récifs océaniques, il attend que les pêcheurs de perles émergent des mers bleues du Sud, et il répand à pleines poignées sur l'autre hémisphère ces perles neuves, plus précieuses que l'or du Nouveau Monde, d'un éblouissant orient.

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Yale University Library,	2 letters to Robert Louis Stevenson.

III. Articles published in periodicals and newspapers

The following table includes only those articles relevant to the thesis; it is based on that of Dr. J.A. Green, an augmented version of Pierre Champion's checklist in OC I. The symbols represent:

Ch	<u>Chantecler</u>		
Com	<u>Comoedia</u>		
Cos	<u>Cosmopolis</u>		
EP	<u>L'Echo de Paris</u>	EPS	<u>L'Echo de Paris, Supplément Littéraire</u>
Ev	<u>L'Événement</u>		
Fig	<u>Le Figaro</u>		
Jnl	<u>Le Journal</u>		
Lit	<u>Literature</u>		
MF	<u>Mercure de France</u>		
NR	<u>The New Review</u>		
Ph	<u>Phare de la Loire</u>		
RDM	<u>Revue des Deux Mondes</u>		
RER	<u>Revue des Études Rabelaisiennes</u>		
RH	<u>Revue Hebdomadaire</u>		
Vog	<u>La Vogue</u>		
VP	<u>Vers et Prose</u>		
CD	<u>Coeur Double</u>		
RMO	<u>Le Roi au Masque d'Or</u>		
S	<u>Spicilège</u>		
VI	<u>Vies Imaginaires</u>		

'Jules Verne: <u>Un Capitaine de quinze ans</u> ',	23 Dec	1878	Ph	
'Tolstoï: <u>La Puissance des Ténèbres</u> ',	27 Sep	1887	Ph	
'Les Trois Oeufs, Conte de Pâques',	2-3 Apr	1888	Ph	CD
	15 Feb	1891	EP	
'Robert L. Stevenson',	27 Aug	1888	Ph	
'Terrifiante Histoire de mes Dents',	3 Oct	1888	Ph	

'Etude sur l'Argot Français', <u>Mémoires</u> <u>de la Société de Linguistique de Paris</u> ,	1889		
'Notes sur Paris: la Chanson Populaire',	7 Jan 1889	Ph	
'Notes sur Paris: l'Argot',	22 Jan 1889	Ph	
'Notes sur Paris: les Bals Publics',	5 Feb 1889	Ph	
'Notes sur Paris: La Vie de Brasserie',	11 Mar 1889	Ph	
'Les Trois Gabelous',	19 Mar 1889	EP	CD
'Un Squelette',	30 Mar 1889	EP	CD
'Le Réalisme',	15 Apr 1889	Ph	
'La Dernière Nuit',	16 Apr 1889	EP	CD
'Le Train 021',	28 May 1889	EP	CD
'Arachné',	20 Jul 1889	EP	CD
'Sur les Dents',	23 Sep 1889	EP	CD
'L'Homme Double',	20 Jan 1890	EP	CD
'François Villon',	28 May 1890	EP	OC IX
'L'Homme Voilé',	20 Jul 1890	EP	CD
'Béatrice',	14 Sep 1890	EP	CD
'Les Portes de l'Opium',	28 Sep 1890	EP	CD
'Robert-Louis Stevenson',	11 Oct 1890	Ev	
'Ni Dieu ni Maître',	28 Oct 1890	Ev	
'Lilith',	9 Nov 1890	EP	CD
'Les Faulx Visaiges',	20 Aug 1891	EP	RMO
'Le Géant Egoïste', (translation of Oscar Wilde's tale)	27 Dec 1891	EPS	OC IX
'François Villon d'après des documents nouveaux',	15 Jul 1892	RDM	S
'Le Deuxième Phédon',	17 Jul 1892	EP	S

'La Démoniaque',	31 Jul	1892	EP	
'L'Ile de la Liberté',	14 Aug	1892	EP	S
'Barbe-Noire',	26 Oct	1892	EP	
'La Main de Gloire',	11 Mar	1893	EP	OC IX
'Matoaka',	12 Aug	1893	EP	OC IX
'Le Dynamiteur' (pref.),	2 Jun	1894	RH	OC IX
'Stede Bonnet',	29 Jul	1894	Jnl	VI
'Daniel De Foe et "Moll Flanders"',	4 Aug	1894	RH	MF
<u>Moll Flanders</u>	4 Aug-			
	20 Oct	1894	RH	MF
'George Meredith',	1 Sep	1894	Jnl	S
'Annabella et Giovanni',	15 Dec	1894	MF	
'Burke et Hare',	23 Jan	1895	Jnl	VI
'R.L.S.',	1 Feb	1895	NR	S
'Cyril Tourneur',	1 Feb	1895	Jnl	VI
'Sir Wm. Phips',	26 Apr	1895	Jnl	VI
'Walter Kennedy',	23 Jul	1895	Jnl	VI
'Capitaine Kid',	23 Aug	1895	Jnl	VI
'Paolo Uccello',	4 Sep	1895	Jnl	VI
'Gabriel Spenser',	16 Oct	1895	Jnl	VI
'Cecco Angiolieri',	24 Nov	1895	Jnl	VI
'L'Art de la Biographie',	1 Jan	1896	NR	VI, S
'L'Etoile de Bois',	Oct	1897	Cos	LP
'Serlon de Wilton',	3 Mar	1899	Vog	OC VII
'Les Derniers Jours d'Emmanuel Kant',	Apr-			
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