WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN BOOK:

RE-READING VOLLARD'S *LIVRES D'ARTISTES*

HONORS THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

AS A REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF ARTS

ART HISTORY

BY

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LEXINGTON, VA

MAY 2010

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INTRODUCTION

The *livre d'artiste*, or the French artist's book, is a difficult concept to define. Most book arts scholars agree that an artist's book is different from an illustrated book; yet, the terms of this difference vary greatly. For Marcel Duchamp the artist's book is "a book made by an artist."[1] In the typical Duchampian manner, the definition of art lies in the mind of the artist: "A book is an artist's book if the artist himself says so."[2] However, many book arts scholars do not subscribe to this simplistic approach and instead emphasize different aspects of the art form as defining features of a true artist's book. These aspects range from the degree to which the visual elements of the book could exist independently as separate artworks, the extent to which the book itself is a coherent art object, and even the education and profession of the creator.

For one scholar in particular, Johanna Drucker, a true artist's book must be made by an artist who is conscious of the complex interrelationship of text and image and the inherent conundrum of the book as art object and cultural artifact. Drucker argues that most French *livres d'artiste*, and all those produced by the twentieth-century French publisher and art-dealer Ambroise Vollard, are illustrated books rather than true artist's books because their creators were not "self-conscious about the structure and meaning of the book as a form." I argue that Vollard's early twentieth-century *livres d'artistes* are indeed visionary masterpieces that served as precursors to and were some of the first true artists' books, even in Drucker's postmodern sense of self-awareness and semiotic questioning.

In addition to Drucker's definition, other book arts scholars insist that a true artist's book contains images with a certain degree of artistic independence. Eleanor Garvey and

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[1] Peyrée, Yves, *French Book Art / Livres d'Artistes: Artists and Poets in Dialogue*, trans. Anne Walker (New York: New York Public Library, 2006), 12.
[2] Ibid.

Peter Wick, for example, have declared that the artist must "create something that is not merely decorative illustration, but an important graphic statement in its own right."[3] Thus, for these scholars the ability of the visual elements of a book to stand alone as separate, independent works of art is what makes them part of an artist's book instead of an illustrated book.

Still other experts of the book arts find flaw with this definition, which rests on an antiquated distinction between illustration as a decorative art and stand-alone printmaking as a fine art. Other scholars even dispute the term "artist's book" itself. Richard Kostelanetz writes that the problem with much of the current terminology for discussing, analyzing, and defining the artist's book "is that it defines a work of art by the initial profession (or education) of its author, rather than by the qualities of the work itself."[4] This firm, restrictive definition "serve[s] only to exclude."[5] Can one consider a fine tome with both visual and verbal components an *artist's* book even if its creator never had formal training or successfully sold a painting? Is illustration somehow opposed to the fine arts?

Instead of dissecting the Western canon of fine arts, which continues to reject most visual and literary artists, I focus on the content rather than the creator of the artist's book. Dick Higgins takes a similarly content-based approach when he defines the artist's book as:

> A book done for its own sake and not for the information it contains. That is: it does not contain a lot of works ... It *is* a work. Its design and format reflect its content – they intermerge, interpenetrate ... The experience of reading it, viewing it ... that is what the artist stresses in making it.[6]

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[3] Garvey, Eleanor and Peter Wick, *The Arts of the French Book, 1900-1965: Illustrated Books of the School of Paris* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1967), 13.

[4] Kostelanetz, Richard, "Book Art" in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (Layton, OH: Peregrine Smith Books and Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 29.

[5] Higgins, Dick, Preface to *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (Layton, OH: Peregrine Smith Books and Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 11.

[6] Higgins, 11.

The artist's book is, thus, a work of art in itself, designed not only to transmit information both verbally and visually, but also to provide an enriching experience for the viewer/reader.[7] In an artist's book the verbal and the visual inform, challenge, and supplement one another.

Ambroise Vollard certainly treated all his book projects as works of art. He was tremendously involved in all his book projects, from choosing the literary artist and visual artist to editing the final appearance of the page. The art dealer and publisher showed creative initiative and a modern aesthetic in addition to strategically pairing visual artists to texts that would particularly inspire them to create conceptually exciting visual compositions. As a publisher of fine books, Vollard let the visual artist reign supreme, never impeded the artist's interpretive process, and allowed entirely conceptual and even abstract images to accompany the text.

Several of Vollard's artist's books, including those examined here, *Parallèlement*, *Les Pastorales de Daphnis et Chloé*, *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, the *Père Ubu* series, *Sainte Monique*, and *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, reveal brilliant, insightful collaborations among visual and literary artists. The texts range from ancient Greek romances to Vollard's own contemporary satire, and the artists are equally as varied, from Odilon Redon to Pablo Picasso. Yet, a stimulating interaction between text and image that enriches the reader/viewer experience remains constant in all of Vollard's editions.

In some of the Vollard books, such as *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, images can clearly stand alone as independent works of art. In others, such as *Parallèlement*, text and image are literally and inextricably interwoven. Moreover, the visual components of these artist's books reveal both the artists and Vollard's awareness of the classic problems of text

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[7] I call the individual who encounters an artist's book the "reader/viewer" as he ideally engages in both activities equally.

and image encountered in the verbal elements of the books, such as ekphrasis in *Daphnis et Chloé* and the nature of representation itself in *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*.

It is my contention that Ambroise Vollard's *livres d'artistes* are not "mere" illustrated books, as Drucker would have it. Instead they are true artists' books in which the literary and the visual interact to create a more insightful overall experience for the reader/viewer. The *livre d'artiste* projects of *Éditions Vollard* reveal, though to varying degrees, their creators' awareness of issues of semiotics and ideology inherent to the book itself.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK:
FROM ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT TO *LIVRE D'ARTISTE*

The book as an object, a cultural artifact, and a concept has undergone a tremendous transformation over the history of Western civilization. Words and images have often intersected in the book, and the tradition of the illustrated book is especially rich in France. The French illustrated book dates back to the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages, enjoyed an expansive preeminence from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, and finally became a part of the avant-garde movements of visual fine art in the twentieth century.

Early illuminated manuscripts throughout Europe were almost entirely religious in purpose. Illustrations visually represented the sacred or devotional content of the texts in order to aid the viewer/reader in spiritual contemplation. Of the earlier French manuscripts the thirteenth-century Psalter of Saint Louis is particularly exemplary (fig. 1). The Psalter contains several richly colored full-page illustrations of biblical scenes as well as gilded, illuminated majuscules.[8] Each illustration of this single edition book object was drawn, illuminated with colored ink, and gilded by the hands of skilled artisans.

By the fifteenth century illuminated manuscripts became even more extravagant as in *Les Très riches heures du Duc du Berry* (fig. 2). In this early book one can see a progression from strictly religious subject matter to the secular; the image of "May," for example, depicts the lay activities associated with that particular month of the calendar. Most importantly *Les Très riches heures* begins the trend of identifying a specific artist/creator of the book, in this case Pol de Limbourg and his brothers.[9] In the twentieth century the distinction between

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[8] Stones, Alison, "Notes on the Plates" from *The Art of Illumination*, D'Anonca, P. and E. Aeshclimann, trans. Alison M. Brown (London: Phaidon, 1969), 217.
[9] Stones, Alison, "Notes on the Plates," 225.

anonymous craftsmen and identified fine artist would become a key aspect of the artist's book.

Upon the invention of movable type and the printed book in Europe around 1450, the book-making process became less intimate. Instead of being left to a single "artist-scribe" the job of creating a book was divided among the typesetter, the engraver, the inker / applier of color, and the printer.[10] Professional craftsmen and artisans would generally fulfill these posts. Occasionally a fine artist would provide a drawing or painting to be used as illustration for a text, but professional engravers would most often translate the original fine artist's work into a printable media suitable for reproduction. This was the case for two of the most important illustrators of the eighteenth century, François Boucher (fig. 3) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (fig. 4). Nevertheless, these well-known Rococo painters paved the way for later fine artists to become involved in the book arts.

The era of French Rococo was the "golden age of illustrated *éditions de luxe*."[11] During this period the conventions of the book against which Vollard and his avant-garde artists books would rebel were established. Robert Granjon, a French typecutter, developed the printer's flower, or an ornamental, often floral, design, to embellish the page (fig. 55).[12] The predominant aesthetic for the French Rococo illustrated book incorporated these frilly and flowery designs along with engraved illustrations printed *hors texte*, or on separate pages facing the text. This aesthetic continued well into the twentieth century, becoming the basis for conservative French bibliophile taste.

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[10] Strachan, William J, The Artist and the Book in France: The Twentieth Century "Livre d'Artiste" (New York: Wittenborn, 1969), 25.
[11] Horodisch, Abraham, *Picasso as a Book Artist* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1962), 15.
[12] Strachan, 27.

Across the English Channel, however, a singular luminary made tremendous progress in the evolution of the illustrated book to the true artist's book. William Blake was an eighteenth-century British artist and poet who combined both his visual and literary talents in the creation of unique, philosophical, and spiritual books. In his most famous works, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, published in 1789 and 1794 respectively, Blake created an entirely new printing technique so that he could combine text and image.[13] Using a kind of relief etching, Blake hand-inscribed both words and visual images onto the same plate, thus making the end result more formally coherent (fig. 5).[14] The artist's images are just as lyrical as his poetry, and his whimsical style and formal distortion prove that he was artistically ahead of his time. This degree of text/image interaction within the book would not be achieved in France until Vollard's own *Parallèlement* in 1900 (figs. 20-25). Blake's powerful verse, innovative printing techniques, and gestural aesthetic make his work "the embodiment of independent thought realizing itself through the forms and structures of the book."[15] This visionary artist and his work, however, remained almost entirely unknown until after his death.

Another important foreign figure in the development of the French artist's book is the Spaniard Francisco de Goya y Lucientes. Though an established court painter, Goya was also a talented printmaker who dared to satirize the abuses of Spanish society in a collection of aquatint etchings called *Los Caprichos*. The scathing series of etchings with harsh

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[13] Davids, Betsy and Jim Petrillo, "The Artist as Book Printer: Four Short Courses" in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons (Layton, OH: Peregrine Smith Books and Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 151.

[14] Though this practice would have also made the process faster and less expensive, "The goals [Blake's] method served were individual aesthetic, and interdisciplinary rather than industrial or commercial." Davids and Petrillo, 154.

[15] Drucker, Johanna, *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 1995), 26.

captions were published in an album in 1799 (figs. 6-7).[16] Text and image appear on the same page and, in one iconic print, text appears interspersed with the image (fig. 7). By choosing to publish prints along with text, Goya laid the foundation (along with Boucher and Fragonard) for the twentieth-century elevation of printmaking to a fine art. Goya's preeminence as a painter was just as extensive as many of the artists who worked on book projects with Vollard, thus his activity as a published printmaker served as a precursor to the twentieth-century *peintre-graveur* (painter-printmaker). The edition of *Los Caprichos* also compares more specifically to the early *peintre-graveur* print albums produced at the beginning of Vollard's publishing career, thus, providing a precedent for Vollard's first forays into the *livre d'artiste*.[17]

Variations of the sixteenth-century manufacturing procedure of the illustrated book continued in France and throughout Europe until the invention of lithography in the late eighteenth century, which fundamentally changed the printing process due to its planographic instead of relief or intaglio characteristics (fig. 8). While more conservative book collectors still clung to the tradition of wood engraving (the French Royal Academy declared burin engraving as the only autographic method to be considered a fine art)[18] professional illustrators and fine artists alike began to notice the subtle tonal possibilities of lithography, which permitted the printmaker to draw a design in oily crayon at varying levels of pressure, thus creating a variety of printed tones. With intaglio and relief techniques, the printmaker can only achieve shading and tone through techniques like cross-hatching, for example (fig. 3).

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[16] Davids and Petrillo, 155.
[17] See the print album *Les Peintres-Graveurs* (1896) (fig. 18)
[18] Strachan, 25.

Along with the prevalent use of lithography for graphic advertising, the work of

Honoré Daumier played an extremely important role in the medium's proliferation in France.

Though he would later pursue painting and even sculpture, Daumier began his career as an

advertising illustrator and is best known for his work as a caricaturist.[19] The artist's

lithographs display an unparalleled mastery of the medium and an unbelievable virtuosity as

a draughtsman (fig. 9). Though his work is known more for satire and jest than its aesthetic

merit, Daumier furthered lithography as a legitimate medium for French artists.

Eugène Delacroix, already established as a fine painter, also championed lithography

as an illustrative medium for fine artists in his suite of prints to accompany a French

translation of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*. Published in 1828, many book arts

scholars consider this the "first major illustrated literary work in the newly invented print

technique of lithography."[20] Delacroix's eighteen lithographs are dark, brooding, and

Romantic – fitting for the text of *Faust* and also emblematic of the artist's larger oeuvre (fig.

10). Though the illustrations follow the text quite strictly and appear only as *hors texte* (or

on separate pages from text), the prints successfully enrich the viewer/reader's experience of

the text, representing a triumph for lithography and yet another step toward Vollard's artists'

books.[21]

In the later eighteenth century, Symbolism ruled the visual and literary arts in France.

With this movement came an increased "synaesthetic concept of the arts," in which multiple

media were used to express a single artistic idea.[22] This interdisciplinary approach was

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[19] Lemann, Bernard, Introduction to *Honoré Daumier: Lithographs* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1946), 3.

[20] Garvey, Eleanor and Peter Wick, *The Arts of the French Book, 1900-1965: Illustrated Books of the School of Paris* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1967), 14.

[21] The elderly Goethe stated of the book, "And if I must confess that M. Delacroix has ... surpassed my own notions, how much more will the reader find all in full life, and surpassing his imagination." Mitchell, 9.

[22] Strachan, 27.

especially favorable for the combination of literary and visual art in the *livre illustré* and, eventually, the *livre d'artiste*. In this spirit the poet Stéphane Mallarmé and the artist Édouard Manet collaborated closely to produce an illustrated French translation of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven* in 1875.[23] This edition featured four lithographs by Manet that reveal not only the artist's simplified modern aesthetic, but also a more conceptual kind of illustration (figs. 11-12). Manet's scenes do not necessarily depict specific moments from the narrative of the poem; rather, the lithographs represent the visual translation of powerful verbal images, emotional states, and philosophical concepts. This looser yet more cerebral approach to illustration would play a key role in the development of images that appear within the artist's book. Instead of acting as literal illustrations subservient to text, Manet's conceptual images move beyond the text of the book and act as a space for visual interpretation to enhance the verbal comprehension of the reader/viewer.

Also connected to the Symbolist movement was a philosophical ferment that developed new ideas about the ideology of the book. Mallarmé pioneered the discussion of the book's place in Western culture and the idea of "the book as a metaphysical project."[24] He contemplated the book's infinite roles in a complex, multifaceted cultural iconology. The text contained in a book can be "law, bible, history, prophecy, secret diary, public record, checkbook, etc."[25] Mallarmé opened a veritable Pandora's box in his awareness of the issues surrounding the transmission of ideas through written language printed in book form. In his own writing, Mallarmé brought the semiotic problems of words and ideas and the cultural

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[23] Mitchell, Breon, *Beyond Illustration: the Livre d'Artiste in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Lilly Library at Indiana University, 1976), 9-10.
[24] Drucker, *Century*, 33.
[25] Clay, Steven, "Embrace & Incite: The Book is a World" from *Talking the Boundless Book: Art, Language, and the Book Arts:Essays from Art & Language, Rereading the Boundless Book*, ed. Charles Alexander (Minneapolis: Minnesota Center for Book Arts, 1995), 22.

problems of the book as an object to the surface. His metaphysics of the book and the

written word would contribute to Vollard's approach to the *livre d'artiste*, and ultimately the

modern artist's book.

After the invention of lithography and the interdisciplinary environment of

Symbolism, yet another development led to the renaissance of the graphic arts and, thus, to

the development of the artist's book: the influence of Japanese prints. In the later decades of

the nineteenth century, French artists were highly influenced by the formal elements of the

Japanese print: asymmetric compositions, skewed perspective, flat fields of color, and even a

cropped framing edge. In addition to a profound aesthetic influence, *Japonisme* also led

French artists to reconsider printmaking as a medium for fine art. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

is one well-known example of a painter-turned-printmaker who published his printed graphic

works. The artist's album *Yvette Guilbert*, published in 1895, was an important

contemporary of and influence on Vollard's print albums in 1895 and 1896 (fig. 13).

Though there was comparable contemporary activity in Great Britain and even in

America,[26] it was the published prints by *peintres-graveurs* in France that set the stage for the

twentieth-century artist's book. Several aspects of the long history of the illustrated book in

France, such as illuminated manuscripts, luxury rococo books, albums of printed lithographs,

Japanese woodblock prints, and even a new semiotic awareness created an artistic

environment ripe for Vollard's experiments with word and image in the *livre d'artiste*.

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[26] The British etching revival of the mid nineteenth century included such established fine artists as Francis Seymour Haden and James Whistler. Later in the 1890's, William Morris's Kelmscott Press romantically (and politically) returned to the cooperative production of the book by craftsmen's hands in England. In the United States, Gelett Burgess published a Parisian-style illustrated letterpress magazine called *Le Petit journal des refusées* in the 1890's. Drucker, *Century*, 29-30.

VOLLARD: DEALER, DISCOVERER, EDITOR

Ambroise Vollard was, in a word, an enigma. Though a solitary, intensely secretive

man whose most loyal companion was his cat[27] (fig. 14), Vollard would become a central

figure in the Parisian and international art scene of the first half of the twentieth century. As

if he knew it was his destiny all along, Vollard stated in his 1936 autobiography, "there was

something of the collector about me from childhood."[28] He was born in 1866 in la Réunion,

a small island off the East coast of Madagascar, to an upper middle class family of French

heritage.[29] There he led a happy childhood before leaving the island at nineteen years old to

pursue his studies in France.[30] Vollard moved from southern France to the metropolis of

Paris in 1887 for law school, but he quickly dropped out and began his career as an art

dealer.[31]

After breaking free from his father's control and financial support, the young

entrepreneur very quickly established himself as a formidable art dealer. By 1894, only a

few years after leaving law school, Vollard had purchased his own shop on the Rue Laffitte,

which at that time was called the Rue des tableaux (Paintings Street) because of all the art

galleries and shops it accommodated.[32] Out of both personal taste and economic necessity,

Vollard was interested in the most avant-garde art. He remarked that upon opening his shop,

"the Impressionist movement had won the day; but by then fresh adventurers were exploring

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[27] Johnson, Una E, *Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur: Prints, Books, Bronzes* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 15.

[28] Vollard, Ambroise, *Recollections of a Picture Dealer*, trans. Violet Macdonald (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 14.

[29] Dumas, Ann, "Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde," in *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 3.

[30] Ibid., 4.

[31] Johnson, 17.

[32] Vollard, 70.

fresh paths."[33] Because he could not afford the work of the increasingly popular

Impressionists, Vollard became the art dealer for a younger, yet unrecognized generation:

Pierre Bonnard, Maurice Denis, Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Pablo

Picasso, among others. Vollard very much prided himself on spotting raw talent and taking

the most exciting new artists under his wing. He called himself a *marchand-décrouvreur*

(dealer-discoverer).[34]

In 1895 Vollard hosted two full-fledged one-man exhibitions featuring Cézanne and

van Gogh.[35] Because these artists were still relatively unknown, Vollard purchased their

work in bulk at low prices, then generated interest through strategic and shocking publicity,

and finally sold high. The art dealer's great secret was investing money in new, unknown

artists, stockpiling their work until the time was right, and then finally selling at exorbitant

prices to a loyal client base he had developed. This ingenious scheme made Vollard very

wealthy and inspired resentment from some.[36]

Yet, he was more than just a shrewd businessman. Vollard also took genuine interest

in art and served as a mentor and friend to several young artists. "The Rue Laffitte," Vollard

reminisced, "was a sort of pilgrims' resort for all the young painters."[37] He would hold

dinners in the cellar of his shop/gallery, the infamous *cave Vollard* [38] (fig. 15). There, many

now renowned painters, sculptures, poets, writers, critics, patrons, and collectors would fete,

feast, discuss, and plan. In this congenial and creative environment many of the *livre*

d'artiste projects originated.

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[33] Vollard, 230.

[34] Dumas, 9.

[35] Ibid., 8.

[36] One particularly scathing epithet is "Vole-art," a pun on Vollard's name and the French words "voleur" (thief) and "art." Ibid., 3.

[37] Vollard, 71.

[38] Ibid.

Though Vollard made most of his fortune through paintings, he always had a keen interest in the graphic arts. During his early days in Paris, Vollard loved to roam the second-hand bookseller stands along the bridges of the Seine in search of prints. Vollard "developed a passion for engravings and drawings,"[39] which were affordable enough for him to begin collecting even when he was still in law school. After establishing himself as an art dealer, Vollard "dream[t] of publishing engravings,"[40] that is, engravings by *peintres-graveurs*. He felt the term "*peintre-graveur*" was a misnomer, as it generally referred to "professional engravers who [were] not in any sense painters."[41] Instead, Vollard wanted to commission artists who were painters by profession to create printed works, ranging from etching to lithography and woodcut (fig. 8), elevating these media from an artisan's craft to the realm of the fine arts.

Vollard's patronage of the *peintre-graveur* contributed to the "rebirth of printmaking"[42] in the late nineteenth century as an independent art form rather than a professional craft for the mass reproduction of other artworks. Professional printmaking "required uniformity of results and emphasized conformity of spirit" and focused on reproducing existing images rather than creating anew.[43] For Vollard and the avant-garde artists he commissioned, however, printmaking became a true medium of fine artistic expression instead of a way to copy and reproduce images created in other media. Vollard hosted two major exhibitions of exclusively printed work at his gallery in 1896 and 1897 featuring Toulouse-Lautrec, Whistler, Denis, Bonnard, and Redon among others[44] (fig. 16).

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[39] Vollard, 14.
[40] Ibid., 247.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Dumas, 10.
[43] Davids and Petrillo, *Critical Anthology*, 150.
[44] Vollard, 247.

Along with these exhibitions, Vollard also produced a limited edition album of prints from the original etching plates and lithographic stones of each exhibition (fig. 17). These print albums were the art dealer's first venture into the sphere of publishing and his first step towards the creation of artists' books.

Art dealing provided Vollard with the start-up capital to pursue his true calling and most "cherished ambition"[45]: to publish books. He fondly recalled the day that the idea first struck him:

> Strolling along the quays, I dipped one day into the books in a second hand dealer's box. On the title-page of a fine octavo I read: *Ambroise Firmin-Didot, éditeur* ... "*Ambroise Vollard, éditeur* ... that wouldn't look bad either," I thought. Little by little the idea of becoming a publisher, a great publisher of books, took root in my mind. I could not see a fine sheet of paper without thinking: "How well type would look on it!" Soon my only remaining hesitation was whether to publish prose or verse. I decided on verse ...[46]

Though the tradition of the *livre illustré* and the *livre de luxe* had been long established in France and throughout Europe, it was a sector reserved for printers, professional engravers, and bibliophiles, not art dealers, avant-garde painters, and high-profile collectors. The proposition of publishing may seem sudden and unfounded for Vollard, the consummate dealer of great canvases, but several aspects of his interest in art prompted his move away from paintings and towards books. To begin with, the art dealer's interest in printed works provided him with the necessary background to produce printed text and images in books. Vollard also had a profound interest in contemporary literature, especially in its relationship to visual art. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire frequented the soirées in Vollard's *cave* on the Rue Laffitte.[47] Vollard discussed Apollinaire's contemplative Symbolist poetry at the dinner

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[45] Ibid., 261.
[46] Ibid., 251.
[47] Dumas, 21.

table and also read thoughtfully the work of older poets such as Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé, both of whom would later inspire *livres d'artistes*.[48] The art dealer's interest in the intermingling of visual and literary art continued even farther. Writers and poets often acted as critics and judges for visual works of art in twentieth-century France, and Vollard wondered, "Why should not painters turn judges of literature?"[49] Always a man of action, he planned a contest, *Le prix des peintres*, in which a jury of visual artists would judge the latest literature.[50] The plan, however, fell through when he failed to receive enough submissions.

Vollard primarily focused on the fine arts, but he also delved into the decorative arts. This interest may explain or at least corroborate his passion for fine books. Vollard called attending one exhibition of pottery a "revelation" that made him realize the beauty of the decorative arts and appreciate their influence on and interrelation with other art forms.[51] Many art critics, art historians, and museum professionals still relegate the artist's book to the sphere of the decorative arts. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France artists and critics similarly viewed the *livre illustré* as beneath the fine arts. Yet, Vollard, with his avant-garde taste, saw past the stale hierarchy of artistic media and into the true potential of the so-called decorative arts. In his publishing of the artist's book, Vollard raises the medium of the book to fine art.

Vollard considered himself an editor above all else. He spent nearly all his time and money on his publishing ventures: original prints, albums, and especially artist's books. The last forty-five years of his life were almost entirely occupied by publishing.[52] The artist's

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[48] Vollard, 252.
[49] Ibid., 243.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 249.
[52] Johnson, 19.

book was his passion; his "commitment to publishing them trumped financial reason."[53]

Vollard's editions were marketed between 2000 and 4000 francs each around 1930, when it

would have cost him in the hundreds of thousands of francs to produce each small edition of

150-300 books.[54] Thus, as Una E. Johnson, a Vollard scholar, states, the publisher, "spen[t]

– and lavishly – the growing wealth that modern paintings had brought him ... on the

publishing of fine prints, albums, and illustrated books."[55] Even during World War II, when

Vollard was forced to close his gallery, he continued publishing, incurring great personal

cost.[56] For such an astute businessman, Vollard's excessive spending on publishing

demonstrates above all else his true dedication to and belief in the *livre d'artiste*.

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[53] Rabinow, Rebecca, "Vollards *livres d'artiste*" in *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 197.

[54] By 1930, Vollard marketed his editions between 2000 and 4000 francs. It would have cost him well into the upper hundreds of thousands of francs for simple production costs of a small edition of 150 – 300 books. Thus, Vollard barely made any profit at all; that is if he even succeeded in breaking even. In 1911, with the outbreak of World War I, the value of the French franc began to plummet. It would not recover until the creation of the new franc in 1960. While the value of the franc had increased to about fifteen francs to the United States dollar before WWII, its value plummeted once again postwar, reaching about 600 francs to the dollar after the war. Thus, it is difficult to determine exactly how much the books cost in terms relative to the United States in the 1930's or in modern terms. Rabinow, 206 and http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/indicateur.asp?id=29&type=1&page=achatfranc.htm.

[55] Johnson, 19.

[56] Rabinow, 200.

THE MAKING-OF

The sheer amount of time, money, and effort Ambroise Vollard put towards his book projects reveals his incredible passion for the *livre d'artiste*. Though the artist's book requires the collaboration of literary artist, visual artist, typesetter, printer, and papermaker, etc., the coordinator, or the *maître d'oeuvre*, must synthesize the creative efforts of all the other artists into one coherent whole. All final decisions about issues of form and interpretation must ultimately go through him. [57] Vollard was an especially controlling *maître d'oeuvre* and inserted himself into almost every part of the manufacturing process to ensure a formally unified final product. However, when it came to the creativity of the visual artist, Vollard did not interfere.[58] Thus, Vollard took a rigorous and innovative approach to the artist's book by elevating image to a position of authority over text and micromanaging the entire production process to serve his own creative ends as *maître d'oeuvre*.

Before ever initiating a book project, the *maître d'oeuvre* must choose the visual artist and the literary artist, or an already written text. This decision bears tremendous weight on the entire project, as the relationship between text and image is the crux of the *livre d'artiste*. Vollard took many different approaches to making this important decision, yet all reflect his concern for a creative yet coherent end result. Most often, Vollard selected the visual artist first and let him choose the text. In an interview Vollard summarized his process:

> I do not look for an "illustrator" on whom I impose such and such a
> manuscript; I look for a painter who will agree to illustrate the work which
> is the object of his predilection. I fix my mind on the painter who chooses
> his writer and then I leave the artist free to make the book into a succession
> of pictures.[59]

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[57] Strachan, 238.

[58] Johnson, 23.

[59] Zahar, Michel, "Vollard Editions: Interview with Ambroise Vollard" *Formes* (English ed.) no. 12 (February 1931, 33.

The Odilon Redon project with Gustave Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* perfectly exemplifies Vollard's deference to the visual artist in choosing the text. Redon had already been working on a series of lithographs dedicated to Flaubert, and Vollard simply proposed the idea of making a full book by printing them alongside the original text.[60]

Sometimes Vollard suggested a particular text to a visual artist with whom he wanted to work, as in Pablo Picasso's etchings for Honoré de Balzac's *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*.[61] By the time of the Balzac book project, Vollard was familiar enough with Picasso's *oeuvre* and personality to propose a text that would inspire the artist. Balzac's short story about an aging artist who breaks free from conventional representational technique was the perfect fit for Picasso.

In the early years of Vollard's publishing career, the *maître-d'oeuvre* himself found inspiration in texts which then seemed to "call out for a visual artist."[62] One such text is Paul Verlaine's *Paralèllement*, a "tender" and "voluptuous" series of poems that reminded the editor of Pierre Bonnard's work.[63] In one episode later in his career as publisher, Vollard first commissioned a visual artist to create images and then searched for a literary artist to write an accompanying text. Once Vollard read the text for Georges Rouault's prints, he deemed it unsatisfactory and ended up publishing the prints along with a poem written by Rouault himself.[64] In this case, Vollard let the visual artist create both image and text.

However Vollard made the arrangement of the visual and the literary components in his book projects, his interest was always primarily "in the artist and his chosen images."[65]

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[60] Edwards, Hugh, "Redon, Flaubert, Vollard," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 36, no. 1 (January 1942), 5, PAGE, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4115287.
[61] Ashton, Dore, *A Fable of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 89.
[62] Peyrée, 21.
[63] Vollard, 253.
[64] Rabinow, 207.
[65] Johnson, 23.

Once an artist began work on images, Vollard "left the artist free."[66] He placed an

unparalleled level of importance on the visual artist in his books. For other publishers and

editors of the *livre illustré*, the text always dominated, with images acting as subservient and

often superfluous filler. Edouard Pelletan, an important later nineteenth- and twentieth-

century publisher, stated in his bibliophile manifesto that "To illustrate a book is to interpret

a text and to decorate a page" and declared it the duty of the artist to illustrate "the

conception of the writer, without distorting it."[67] For Vollard, on the other hand, the visual

artist reigned supreme in his interpretation of the text. Instead of simply decorating the page,

Vollard's commissioned artist would create a work with artistic merit in its own right.

Though the work could stand alone, in the *livre d'artiste* it accompanies and enriches the

text. Vollard once told a reporter that the secret to the quality of his books was that he, like

the "publishers of the future, ... ask[ed] writers to put their talents at the service of the

painters' inspiration."[68]

The avant-garde editor also distinguished himself from other more conventional

French book publishers in his disregard for the bibliophile market. The bibliophile society is

a long-standing French tradition, dating back to the creation of the *Société des Bibliophiles

Français* in 1820.[69] Since then, many more societies have been created for lovers of fine

books. Some of the more famous include *Les Cent Bibliophiles* (fig. 18), *Les Amis du livre

moderne*, and the *Livre d'art*.[70] The bibliophile societies worked in conjunction with

publishers and printers to produce commissioned books to which their members subscribed.[71]

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[66] Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 33.
[67] Ray, Gordon N, *The Art of the French Illustrated Book: 1700 – 1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press and The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1982), 382.
[68] Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 33.
[69] Strachan, 243.
[70] Strachan, 52.
[71] Ibid., 243.

Subscription ensured that neither author, artist, nor publisher would suffer financially from poor sales. Vollard, however, published his books independently, without cooperation or subscription from any bibliophile society.[72] He refused to cater to the conventional tastes of the bibliophile *sociétaires*, or members, regardless of the financial risk he incurred.

The bibliophile societies preferred traditional French *livres illustrés* or *livres de luxe*, featuring established older texts and the strictly illustrative work of professional wood engravers.[73] Vollard endeavored in his editions to publish newer, fresher texts – from Verlaine's banned *Parallèlement* to his own harsh satirical writing, the *Père Ubu* series. In addition, Vollard wanted the visual components of his books created by painters instead of professional engravers. Fine artists created the printed images in *Éditions Vollard*, and each one employed his own avant-garde idiom.

Vollard also favored the relatively new printmaking technique of lithography. The bibliophiles only accepted wood engraving done by a professional artisan as an approved medium for creating images that would illustrate text in a servile manner. Vollard, however, wanted powerful images in his *livres d'artiste* that could stand apart from the text as independent artworks and portray the unique talents of the artists who would create them. Lithography was perfect for capturing the complex texture and surface quality of the fine artists he employed. Indeed, lithography has been called "the painter's medium *par excellence*."[74]

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[72] One notable exception to Vollard's independence was during and immediately after WWI, when he was forced to cooperate with the publisher Georges Crès to help distribute and sell his editions. Rabinow, 200.
[73] Vollard stated explicitly in an interview, "In those days there was a team of professional illustrators who tried to give conscientious descriptions of the text in engravings. Nothing was left out ... I fought this tradition ..." Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 33.
[74] Strachan, 310.

Though he let the visual artist have complete freedom in interpreting the text, Vollard involved himself in almost every other aspect of the *livre d'artiste* production process. Paper, for example, was of paramount importance. The type of paper he chose depended upon the type, the printing technique, the ink, and the size of the page, among other factors. Paper not only brought up practical concerns of printing, but would affect the reader/viewer's experience. Different weights, textures, and colors of paper would all affect the overall unity of the book and the reading/viewing event. Vollard called paper "a subject of grave anxiety" and preferred to use a paper entirely handmade by the sculptor Aristide Maillol.[75] Vollard often had paper especially made with a watermark unique to *Éditions Vollard* or even to the book.[76] This insistence on perfection caused the delay of many book projects. For example, Maillol made his *papier Montval* only in small batches at a mill in a small town of the same name.[77] It often took months to obtain enough paper for proofing and printing even a small edition of books.

The peculiars of typesetting and typefaces caused just as much stress for Vollard. Though he has come to be considered an avant-garde modernist, the editor preferred older typefaces. He thought contemporary typecutters had lost all the character and art in their craft by using "overperfected instruments."[78] For his edition of *Daphnis et Chloé*, an ancient Greek romance, Vollard could find no satisfactory existing type and had the *Imprimerie Nationale* recut a seventeenth-century typeface called *Romain du roi*.[79]

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[75] Maillol and Vollard were friends and business partners (Vollard arranged the sale and exhibition of much of Maillol's work). However, the majority of their business relationship was based on Maillol's sculptures. The artist's interest in paper is not well documented. Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 33.

[76] Johnson, 28.

[77] Rabinow, 204.

[78] Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 33.

[79] Strachan, 40.

A book's binding may be its most visible element for the majority of its life, closed and on the shelf. The modern reader expects a book to be bound, with the paper sewn together and the exterior covered in a cloth or leather casing. The French bibliophiles, however, generally produced their artists' books *en feuilles*, or unbound, with the loose sheets presented in *en emboîtage*, or in a box.[80] Vollard followed this trend, most likely to cut back on production costs and to sell the books at lower prices in order to promote the *livre d'artiste*.[81] After purchasing the *livre d'artiste en ff* (*en feuilles*), the owner customarily arranged for the binding himself. Some of these bindings were quite extravagant and reveal that this final stage in production had an artistic aspect as well (fig. 19).

It was Vollard's job, as the *maître d'oeuvre*, to make decisions and oversee the production process of the book. Typography, paper, image types, printing methods, and page layout all came down to the overall creative design aesthetic of the *maître d'oeuvre*. Vollard served as the director and the coordinator of the cooperative efforts of all the artists and artisans involved in the creation of a *livre d'artiste*, and integrated their separate work into one cohesive art object.

The great publisher's proof notes and corrections show "a modern concern ... for the general placing of the text on the page."[82] This is to say that he reduced the presence of superfluous figures, ornaments, and punctuation, thus streamlining the text. Vollard did not fear the negative space of the blank page, nor was he apprehensive of asymmetrical designs (fig. 20). His tremendous and creative involvement in the production and publishing

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[80] Ibid., 246.
[81] "[Vollard] priced his books moderately so that the basic versions were affordable for collectors." Rabinow, 197.
[82] Strachan, 40.

processes of his beloved *livres d'artiste* demonstrates Vollard's status as both a patron of avant-garde artists and an avant-garde artist himself.

TEXT/IMAGE, IMAGE/TEXT

"From the moment of the appearance of the book," states Roland Barthes in his *Rhetoric of the Image*, "the linking of text and image is frequent."[83] In the special case of the artist's book, text and image do not simply "link;" rather, they collide. The reader/viewer finds him/herself caught up in the complex web of semiotics that results from this interaction of text and image. The semiotic implications of text and image are extremely important when analyzing images within an artist's book. Without taking the relationship of text and image into consideration, one cannot fully understand either component of the book.

Words and images relate to one another even without direct juxtaposition as in a *livre d'artiste*. Both verbal and visual expression consists of a system of signs that represent things or ideas. Thus, visual and literary artists "speak a common language even without meaning to."[84] Words and images are both denotative and connotative at the same time, that is to say, they denote, or indicate, specific information and connote, or suggest, ideas, feelings, and associations. According to Barthes, the denoted message is literal and pertains to the process of identification, while the connoted message is symbolic and pertains to the process of interpretation.[85] In addition, denotation and connotation are often coded. For example, in a drawn image both denoted and connoted meaning are coded through rules of transposing reality to paper (e.g. perspective), the artist's choice to omit some aspects and include others in his reproduction of reality, and, finally, the unique style of the artist. All of these "codes" may change the meaning of a verbal or visual image, as can the psyche and distinct cultural experiences of the viewer/reader.

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[83] Barthes, Roland, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 38.
[84] Wheeler, Monroe, ed. *Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 17.
[85] Barthes, 37.

When one juxtaposes text and image, the nuances of their meanings combine to make interpretation even more complex. Barthes identifies several major relationships between text and image such as anchorage. In the process of anchorage, language "elucidates" the image but does so selectively in order to control the way in which the viewer perceives the image.[86] When presented with an image, the viewer may interpret it in an infinite number of ways. Anchoring text, such as a caption, appears often in the artist's book (figs. 3,4,6,7,9, 45) and serves as a limit and guide to the viewer's interpretation of an image. Other relationships include description, where text helps to identify the image, and relay, where text helps to further along a narrative created by the image.[87]

Illustration presents a specific structural and semiotic conundrum for Barthes. He wonders, "Does the image duplicate certain of the informations [sic.] given in the text by a phenomenon of redundancy or does the text add a fresh information [sic.] to the image?"[88] In a true artist's book images may duplicate information in the text, enhance information in the text, and even provide entirely new information.

The relationship between verbal and the visual in the realm of the book is a sliding scale of power with text at one end and image at the other. Sometimes, text dominates the relationship with images illustrating literally the events of a (usually) narrative work. Conservative bibliophiles favored this traditional type of text-image relationship, where image serves text. Almost the entirety of illustrated books before the twentieth century, including the early illuminated manuscripts, the works of Boucher, Fragonard, and even Delacroix's lithographs for *Faust*, followed this tradition of literal illustration.

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[86] Barthes, 40.
[87] Ibid., 39-41.
[88] Ibid., 38.

Vollard, however, rejected the tradition of servile reproduction and literal illustration.[89] The avant-garde publisher wanted equilibrium between the text and image of his book projects, if not a domination by the visual. Yves Perée, a book arts scholar, similarly describes the ideal artist's book as one of cooperation:

> Text and image must ultimately strengthen one another, without losing [its] respective autonomy. It is a means of working together that may not interfere with the independence of either contributor. Neither word nor image aims to illustrate the other. Both strive to achieve more, a greater cumulative value.[90]

In this ideal collaboration, both visual and verbal could stand alone, but instead they act together for a greater viewer/reader experience. It is as if the literary artist and the visual artist are "approaching the same subject-matter from opposite directions; dealing with it twice within the covers of the one volume."[91] Both affect the interpretation of the other by offering challenging and often conceptual insight. Some examples of this collaboration are *Parallèlement*, *La Tentation de Sainte-Antoine* and *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. All of Vollard's *livres d'artiste* reflect this type of text/image relationship to some extent. In his autobiography Vollard described the movement away from the literal in both visual and literary currents of Symbolism:

> The [artists] were attempting to capture the almost immaterial charm that resides in the vagueness of the subject ... They would no longer describe, they would evoke. They would not state precisely, but suggest.[92]

Here Vollard summarizes eloquently the transformation from literal to conceptual, and evolution that would continue all the way towards abstraction. The most avant-garde relationship of text and image is one that is entirely abstracted. Though "abstract

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[89] Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 33.
[90] Perée, 21.
[91] Wheeler, 16.
[92] Vollard, 230-231.

illustration" may seem like an "oxymoron," it does indeed exist.[93] Instead of literally

illustrating or conceptually interpreting the text, images seem to have no connection to the

words. However, these abstracted images may reflect the inner subjective world of the artist,

including memory and dream associations.[94] Though one cannot find truly abstract

illustration in any of Vollard's publications (even the abstract suite before *Le Chef-d'oeuvre*

inconnu is conceptually related to the tale (figs. 34-35)), the practice plays an important role

in many modern and postmodern artist's books.

Words themselves can take on a visual element and further complicate the semiotic

problem. In poetry especially, text assumes the visual and spatial properties of an image.

Yves Perrée describes how Stéphane Mallarmé, French poet and friend of Vollard, pioneered

the poetic visualisation of text:

> By placing [words] on the page or throughout a book in an unconventional manner,
> [Mallarmé] turned them into visual compositions. Texts become images ... Mallarmé
> went beyond the known borders of poetry and travelled into the land of the visual
> arts. He rejected the traditional function of the book ... and made it a medium that
> was not strictly limited to writers.[95]

Mallarmé laid the foundations for a kind of book that was not only for a writer, but also for

the visual writer. Vollard exploited the imagistic aspect of the text in his artist's book

Parallèlement. In this *livre d'artiste*, Pierre Bonnard's lithographs reflect and intermingle

with the shape of Verlaine's verse (figs. 20-25). Even prose had a visual element for

Vollard, as evidenced by his obsessive attention to typeface. The smallest detail of the visual

representation of letters could affect the connotative meaning of the text, and Vollard took

this into account, searching out and even recreating extinct typefaces for his book projects.

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[93] Mitchell, 6.

[94] Rice, Shelley, "Words and Images: Artists' Books as Visual Literature" from Lyons, Joan, ed, *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook* (Layton, OH: Peregrine Smith Books and Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985), 65.

[95] Perrée, 14.

In the *livres d'artistes* of Ambroise Vollard, text and image interact in new and fresh ways, especially for the turn of the twentieth century. In order to understand the unique contributions artists made through these books, one must keep in mind the semiotic concerns of meaning and interpretation. While Vollard did not explicitly discuss the semiotic details of his book projects in his autobiographical writings, the complexity of the projects themselves and his interaction with contemporary figures on the forefront of semiotic exploration (e.g. Mallarmé) both demonstrate Vollard's awareness of complex issues involving text and image. Whether or not the visual artists of these *livres d'artiste* were completely conscious of the visual/verbal semiotic challenge, they paved the way for later artists' books that would dissect the relationship of text and image in the postmodern book.

PARALÈLLEMENT

For his first venture into the established tradition of the French illustrated book Vollard chose as text *Parallèlement*, a late collection of Paul Verlaine's poetry, and as artist Pierre Bonnard, an up-and-coming member of the *Nabis*.[96] Both choices revealed Vollard's daring spirit, and the project acts as a testament to the editor's unique involvement and creativity throughout the design and production processes of the artist's book. Done under the artistic direction of Vollard, Bonnard's lyrical illustrations not only accompany Verlaine's sumptuous verse, but also fulfill Verlaine's inherent Symbolist desire to unite previously disparate art forms such as poetry, music, and visual art.

Vollard formed part of an elite Parisian circle of artists and intellectuals. As required by his job as an art dealer he knew all the current trends in painting and printmaking, but he kept abreast of the latest in literature and poetry. The esoteric work of the Symbolist poets dominated the art scene of *fin-de-siècle* Paris, and Vollard gravitated toward the fresh and irreverent verse of the Symbolist poet Verlaine. "I began turning the pages of Verlaine's *Parallèlement*," declared the picture-dealer, "It seemed to me exactly what I wanted."[97]

Parallèlement is Verlaine's last major *receuil*, or collection of poems. Originally published in 1889, it includes sensual, even explicitly erotic, verse written throughout the poet's tumultuous life.[98] The French government banned the collection on "moral grounds" due to its lascivious content.[99] But the prurient poems reflected Verlaine's life as a reckless Bohemian, tragically divided between religious ardor and passions of the flesh. A formerly

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[96] Vollard's first publications were *Quelques aspects de la vie de Paris* (1895) and *Les Peintres-Graveurs* (1896), but these were print albums rather than true artists' books. Johnson, 19.
[97] Vollard, 252.
[98] Shapiro, Norman R, introduction to *One Hundred and One Poems by Paul Verlaine, A Bilingual Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 146.
[99] Vollard, 253.

devout Catholic who destroyed his perfect bourgeois marriage for an affair with a younger

man (Rimbaud), Verlaine often referred to himself as an *homme-duplex*.[100] The title of his

late collection refers to this duality. *Parallèlement* provides a carnal answer to Verlaine's

more spiritual collections *Sagesse* and *Amour* and represents the division of the poet's own

being into two separate, parallel lives.[101]

Vollard had originally intended to print his edition of *Parallèlement* in 1900 at the

Imprimerie nationale of France, but the controversial and erotic verse caused a few

problems. After printing was finished and the explicit content of the book was realized, all

copies were recalled. "It is considered inadmissible," declared the Minister of Justice, "that a

[banned] book ... be republished in a cover ornamented with the effigy of the Republic."[102]

Vollard simply re-designed the title page without the hallowed image of lady France. This

alteration satisfied the *Imprimerie nationale* and reprinting began later in 1900.

Yet lustful content was not the only revolutionary aspect of Verlaine's poetry.

Though he had been a part of the Symbolist movement since its inception he challenged

traditional poetic constructs and even Symbolist tenets throughout his life. Francois Coppée,

a friend and contemporary poet of Verlaine, described his poetry as "absolutely new" and

"inimitable."[103] Verlaine's verse showed novelty in its incredibly subtle lyricism and

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[100] Stone, Alan, Introduction to *Royal Tastes: Erotic Writings* (New York: Harmony Books, 1984), xi.

[101] With regard to *Parallèlement* Verlaine stated, "Si j'ai le temps de faire une oeuvre, m'aura, moi, mes vices, mes qualités, scrupules, élans, bons ou mauvas, pour pivot. Donc, parallèlement à mes oeuvres catholiques je veux fair et j'ai fait encore ces derniers temps des vers ... où les sens et leur vanité, l'orgueil de la vie et l'ivresse de la nature sentie à ma façon tiendront toute la place" (If I have the time to create a work, I will, me, my vices, my qualities, scrupules, spirits, good or bad, on a fulcrum. Thus, parallel to my Catholic works I want to create and I have again created these last types of verse ... where sense and vanity, pride and life and drunkenness of nature felt in my way will have a place) Maisongrande, Henri, *Verlaine* (Paris: Éditions Pierre Charron, 1972), 44.

[102] Vollard, 253. There is some doubt as to the validity of this story, as Vollard was notorious for his tall tales. Nonetheless, the book was banned in France in 1868. Castleman, Riva, *A Century of Artists Books* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 87.

[103] MacIntyre, C.F, Introduction to *Paul Verlaine: Selected Poems* (Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1997), xii.

uncompromising musicality. In his very own "Ars Poetica" ("Art poétique") he declares "De la musique avant toute chose ... le reste est littérature (Music first and foremost ... the rest is literature)."[104] In "Art poétique" Verlaine also praises uneven rhythm and denounces forced rhyme and stuffy elegance. The poet successfully evoked a sense of musicality in his verse; Verlaine's poems directly inspired several compositions by Claude Debussy.[105] This intermingling of different art forms, in this case music and poetry, fulfilled the syncretistic, synthaesthetic goal of the Symbolists. Vollard would take this even further, adding visual art to the mix.

To accompany such controversial poetry, Vollard chose an equally avant-garde visual artist, Pierre Bonnard, and commissioned him to work in lithography, an equally unorthodox medium for the book arts. Conservative French bibliophiles considered engraving the superior printmaking method, thus, lithography was inferior and even taboo.[106] Vollard and Bonnard's reasons for choosing lithography are not clear, yet one may imagine that lithography captured Bonnard's drawing technique better than relief or intaglio print techniques. With lithography Bonnard could draw directly onto stone in fluid motion with an oily crayon instead of having to carefully incise his design in metal or wood with a stylus.

Vollard began the design process of *Parallèlement* by setting the type in Garamond, an old sixteenth-century French font he found "expressly designed to print the work of a poet."[107] He then gave Bonnard proofs of the text, on which the artist drew freely with lyrical, sensuous, and gestural arabesques that intermingled with the text, pushed at the margins, and even crossed the gutter between pages (see figs. 1-6). Bonnard then recreated

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[104] Ibid., 180-182.
[105] Debussy's "Claire de lune" and "En bateau" were both inspired by Verlaine's poems of the same names. MacIntyre, xii.
[106] Vollard, 254.
[107] Vollard, 252.

the roaming, asymmetrical proof drawings on lithographic stones. Finally the *Imprimerie nationale* printed the lithographs in voluptuous rose sanguine ink on top of the already printed black text.[108]

Verlaine's poetry captures the contradictory nature of his life, and Vollard's edition captures this spirit of duality. Bonnard's gentle rose-colored lithography contrasts with the almost sharp-edged black Garamond type. Even the large format of the pages (29.5 x 23.9 cm)[109] lends Verlaine's verse an air of grandeur and authority, yet the book remains an intimate object. The verse itself is far from erudite; rather, the diction is accessible and even incorporates French slang.[110] The sexuality of the Verlaine's poetry and Bonnard's images renders the book a more private object, counteracting the somewhat intimidating large format and formidable type.[111]

Bonnard's delicate drawings accompany Verlaine's subtle text perfectly. The soft, sensual curves of nude flesh (figs. 21-25) and the lush, languid overgrowth of an ancient forest (fig. 20) in Bonnard's lithographs serve only to reinforce the poet's mantra: "Rien que la nuance! (Nothing but nuance!)."[112] Just as Verlaine's verse creates indistinct mental images, so Bonnard's illustrations quietly suggest poetry. While the lithographs do illustrate, employing representational images that take the poems as a beginning reference, they quickly enter the realm of suggestion. The text provides a starting point for Bonnard's whimsical

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[108] Castleman, *A Century of Artists Books*, 28.

[109] Ibid., 86.

[110] Stone, *Royal Tastes*, viii.

[111] The modern book has mostly been considered a private object. This combined with the mildly pornographic aspects of several late nineteenth and early twentieth century artists' books, including *Parallèlment* and *Daphnis et Chloé*, warrants further research. The French bibliophile market was largely male, but both *Parallèlement* and *Daphnis et Chloé* failed commercially, suggesting that a voyeuristic or masturbatory aspect to the work was either absent or not alluring enough to up sales. Still, John Lewis states that "Ever since Bonnard's exquisite *Parallèlement*, nudes have been one of the mainstays of the private press movement." Lewis, John, *The Twentieth Century Book: Its Illustration and Design* (London: The Herbert Press, 1984), 86.

[112] MacIntyre, 180.

scenes. The text does not restrict the images either in subject matter or space; rather, the visual and textual elements of *Parallèlement* coexist in parallel harmony.

Before Vollard's publication of *Parallèlement* in 1900, text and image did not interpenetrate with such equality in the French *livre de luxe*. Publishers often printed plate-type illustration distinct and separate from the text. The daring design of Vollard and Bonnard would have seemed audacious as the image encroached upon the authority of the text.

In the double-page spread for the poem "Allégorie," Bonnard creates an idyllic scene that frames Verlaine's text (fig. 20). The artist loosely suggests the columns of a Grecian edifice with a series of simple vertical lines and a triangle for a pediment. The structure emerges from a wild thicket of lush flora that the artist creates with an indeterminate, sketch-like scumbling technique. The foliage continues across the gutter of the page and eventually fades into nothingness, or the cream color of the blank page. The weight of the asymmetrical composition lies on the right page of the spread. Though the eye reads from left to right, Bonnard's image draws it to the right side of the visual composition first before it returns to the left side to begin reading the text. The asymmetry of Bonnard's composition thus contributes to the equality of text and image in the reader/viewer experience.

Bonnard's image for "Allégorie" not only follows the subject matter of Verlaine's text, but, more importantly, also captures its sentiment. Verlaine writes:

> An ancient temple in decay
> On the blurred summit of some yellow hill,
> Like a fallen king crying for his throne,
> Looks at itself reflected in slow water
> . . .
> You sadden me, tired and naïve subject.
> Tell me, among all artists, what poet
> What moody artisan made you,

> Faded time-worn tapestry
> As banal as a theatre-set
> As false as my destiny?[113]

Bonnard's image illustrates an old temple and suggests the shores of a pond. Where one should find the water in the image, one instead finds the text; is the text then the reflection of the image? Regardless, the Bonnard's image does more than simply illustrate the text. It also portrays the disillusioned, decadent mood of the poem. Verlaine's poetic voice laments the decay of a clichéd temple. Much like the poet's own destiny, the old temple is a common, false trope. Bonnard's loose, lackadaisical style reflects the dismissive pessimism of the text. The artist revels in the mawkish, romantic whimsy of the image, much as the poet is conscious of his own hackneyed imagery.

Parallèlement represents a Symbolist climax in its literal and conceptual combination of visual art and poetry. Within Vollard's attentively designed book, printed on specially hand-made paper with a watermark unique to the book, different art forms collide and harmoniously coexist.[114] The reader/viewer of Parallèlement experiences the book in multiple artistic dimensions that subtly complement one another and contribute to greater overall meaning and artistry in the book object and understanding of the text.

Vollard took a risk in choosing a rebellious artist to illustrate the text of an irreverent poet. The result was an aesthetic success but a commercial disaster. Cézanne recognized its unique beauty, but the bibliophiles did not.[115] The book sold poorly, and Vollard lost quite a

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[113] Verlaine, Paul, Selected Poems, trans. Martin Sorrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 171.
[114] Johnson, 27.
[115] Cézanne responded, "That's good ... C'est dessiné dans la forme (It's drawn in the shape/character [of the text])." Vollard, 90.

bit of money.[116] Regardless of commercial implications, the great editor would continue on

in his publishing enterprise.

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[116] Ibid., 254.

DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ

Though *Parallèlement* proved a commercial disaster, Vollard was not deterred in his publishing efforts.[117] In 1902 he collaborated with Pierre Bonnard again to publish a third-century Greek romance by Longus, *Les Pastorales de Daphnis et Chloé*. Vollard's reasons for choosing this ancient text are not entirely clear, but it has several aspects that render it particularly appropriate for the *livre d'artiste* format. Longus's romance has a strong narrative tone and may be considered one of the earliest precursors to the modern novel, making it an especially important text in the history of the written word.[118] In addition the tale originates from a wall painting, linking *Daphnis et Chloé* to the tradition of ekphrasis, or "the verbal representation of visual representation."[119] Vollard knew on some level the subtle implications of these aspects of Longus's work on his publishing project. Thus, while publishing an ancient Greek text translated into the terms of modern French language and avant-garde visual expression, Vollard also created a book that presents a visual/verbal conundrum to the reader/viewer.

Daphnis et Chloé tells the story of two extraordinarily beautiful young lovers and their struggle to reach the physical expression of their love. The true parents of both Daphnis and Chloé abandon their children upon birth. Daphnis and Chloé are left with nothing but tokens of their noble status. A herd of goats cares for Daphnis, who is ultimately found and raised by a goatherd. A herd of sheep nurtures Chloé, who was taken in by a shepherd. The two become friends and lovers and innocently explore one another in the idyllic pastoral setting of the island of Lesbos. Both suffer abductions and other adventures before finally joining together in marriage, upon which day they discover their noble heritage and

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[117] Vollard, 254.
[118] Johnson, 24.
[119] Mitchell, 109.

consummate their love. Scholars have read the tale as a timeless, universal love story or, alternately, as an allegory of the ancient Grecian mystery religions, where the neophyte progresses from ignorance to wisdom through union with others and nature.[120]

In the larger tradition of the French *livre illustré*, bibliophile societies commonly published *luxe*, translated editions of the ancient classics.[121] These finely-produced tomes added status and erudition to a bibliophile's library. Vollard may have had similar intentions with his edition of *Daphnis et Chloé*, but, as usual, with an avant-garde twist. Instead of choosing an established engraver to illustrate the text verbatim, Vollard chose a yet un-established avant-garde artist, Pierre Bonnard, to provide visual accompaniment in lithography. Yet these choices led to an edition of a third-century text that was truly relevant when it was published in France in 1902. Translated to French, instead of left in Ancient Greek as were many *éditions de luxe*, and accompanied by images in Bonnard's "unfinished" aesthetic, Vollard's edition reflected the modern French idiom, both verbally and visually. The 1902 *Daphnis et Chloé* artist's book "revisualize[s] legend and epic and romance" in modern terms.[122]

Much like the sensual poetry of Verlaine, Longus's lyric prose seems to "cr[y] out for illustration" or at least to inspire artists.[123] Ranging from Titian to Boucher, Chagall to Maillol, and even the composer Ravel, Longus's tale has spurred on artistic interpretation since its original creation in the late second or third century (figs. 26-29). The clear, narrative tone of the pastoral romance has inspired many representational images, but its

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[120] McCail, Ronald, Introduction to *Daphnis and Chloe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), i.
[121] Example: William Morris's *Canterbury Tales* (1896). Critical Anthology – Davids/Petrillo 156. Or Paris Imprimerie Nationale's *Imitation of Jesus Christ* (1855). Ray, 357.
[122] Wheeler, Monroe, ed. *Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936), 17.
[123] McCail, xxix.

"sentimental theme[s]" and "the optimistic view that it takes of the relationship between man and his environment" have also inspired more abstract, generalized artworks, such as the orchestral composition of Ravel.[124]

In addition to its overarching thematic elements and universally appealing narrative, *Daphnis et Chloé* also quite explicitly calls to the visual artist through the early appearance of ekphrasis. Ekphrasis is the tradition of describing one work of art in the terms of another; for example, describing a painting with written words. In the preface to the text Longus alerts the reader that the entire story to follow was inspired by a picture he once saw:

> Out hunting in Lesbos,
> in a grove sacred to the Nymphs
> I saw a sight
> whose like, for beauty, I had never seen –
> a painting,
> a love-story ...
> And after I had gazed and marvelled,
> I felt a longing to write down what the picture told ...
> And then I set to work and completed these four books -- [125]

Daphnis et Chloé is an ekphrastic exercise describing a visual work of art in verbal terms. In the artist's book published by Vollard, Longus's ekphrasis comes full circle with Bonnard's visual interpretation of Longus's verbal representation of the alleged original painting. The reader/viewer may even imagine that Bonnard's lithographs represent visually that original painting Longus describes. This complex circle spans centuries, keeping the text alive and vibrant for new generations through artistic reinterpretation.

Vollard and Bonnard's interpretation of *Daphnis et Chloé* for a turn-of-the-twentieth century French audience combines a reverence for the ancient work with a fresh modernist perspective. Vollard's typographical choice of *Romain du Roi* lends an element of regard

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[124] McCail, vii.

[125] Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, trans. Ronald McCail (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

and respect for Longus's work because the type was often used for classical Greco-Roman works.[126] Romain du Roi also harkens back to the pastoral element of the late seventeenth-century French novels typically set in the royal typeface.[127] The grandeur and "boldness" of Romain du Roi contrasts with the delicacy of Bonnard's lithographic illustrations, yet the gentle lithographs capture the pastoral sentiment of the text exquisitely.

The one hundred fifty-one separate lithographs by Bonnard are printed in black ink and appear as headpieces, tailpieces, and vignettes scattered throughout the text.[128] Just as Longus's verbal description of *Daphnis et Chloé* has been called "fluid and impressionistic" so Bonnard's visual interpretation can be seen as evoking the loose, spontaneous feel of a preparatory sketch (figs. 30-33). These visual accompaniments follow Longus's text almost exactly. In one image Bonnard illustrates the innocent yet frustrating sensuality of the two young lovers (fig. 30). The text beneath the image reads, "[Chloé] rolled onto her side, and Daphnis, as he pressed home his kiss, ended up lying alongside her."[129] Another quite literal illustration depicts Daphnis caring for his herd in order to earn his master's blessing to marry Chloé (fig. 31). In the gestural image, Daphnis lovingly cares for a goat as Chloé helps. The text on the facing page reads, "[Daphnis] even oiled the goats' horns and combed their hair ... All his work on them was shared by Chloé."[130] Bonnard suggests the figures and their idyllic surroundings with a minimal use of gestural line. Instead of reproducing each leaf as in traditional engraving, the artist adopts a more modern, "unfinished" aesthetic that pairs well with the innocence of the text.

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[126] Strachan, 44.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ray, 506.
[129] Longus, 30.
[130] Ibid., 67.

The exactitude with which Bonnard follows Longus's text reveals that the artist had read and contemplated *Daphnis et Chloé* before beginning his prints. His charming yet avant-garde images accompany Longus's sweet narrative and evoke its pastoral setting in perfect harmony. Una E. Johnson, a scholar of the book arts, hails Bonnard's prints as portraying "with lavishness and antique grace the tranquil atmosphere of the Golden Age."[131]

Bonnard's prints for *Daphnis et Chloé* may appear slightly more aesthetically conservative than those he produced for *Parallèlement*. Unlike the *Parallèlement* lithographs which creep in and out of text blocks (figs. 20-25), those for *Daphnis et Chloé* do not touch the text. However, illustrations are interspersed with text, and text and image do regularly appear on the same page (figs. 30-32). The *Daphnis et Chloé* prints also display a greater consciousness of the framing edge than those in *Parallèlement*. Where the earlier lithographs were asymmetrical and sprawling, those in *Daphnis et Chloé* are very symmetrical and fill out the whole printing area of the lithographic stone, with an implied, or sometimes even clearly-delineated border (fig. 33).

Text and image do not spatially interpenetrate in *Daphnis et Chloé* to the extent they do in *Parallèlement*. While Vollard and Bonnard executed an avant-garde design for Verlaine's relatively modern text, they may have feared taking such a modern visual approach for Longus's ancient text. Another factor that may have contributed to the more conservative nature of Bonnard and Vollard's design might have been the commercial failure of *Parallèlement*.

Regardless, what *Daphnis et Chloé* lacks in the formal interaction of text and image, it more than recuperates in the work's rich ekphrastic implications. Bonnard's literal

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[131] Johnson, 24.

illustrations demonstrate that the artist read the text carefully. Thus, he knew that, according to Longus, a painting provided the original inspiration for the story. Bonnard played a conscious part in the cycle of ekphrasis within Vollard's edition of *Daphnis et Chloé*. The artist visually reinterpreted the text and returns to the visual idiom from which the story originated.

Vollard's 1902 *Daphnis et Chloé* may seem like a traditional French *livre illustré*, but both the publisher and Bonnard took important avant-garde steps to make the edition truly representative of contemporary trends in aesthetics and thought. Bonnard's subtle images accompany Longus's sensuous prose and transport the contemporary reader/viewer back to the idyllic Golden Age of Greece while also rendering the timeless themes in a modern style. *Daphnis et Chloé* provides the reader/viewer with a unique, modern interpretation of an ancient text within an artist's book that demonstrates its creators' awareness of issues of text and image.

LE CHEF-D'OEUVRE INCONNU

Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu (*The Unknown Masterpiece*), a text written by Honoré de Balzac and illustrated by Picasso, is perhaps the most misunderstood of all Vollard's editions. Ironically, the text tells the story of a misunderstood artistic genius. Scholars and critics have accused Picasso of creating "barely intelligible"[132] prints, being "uninterested"[133] in the appearance of the book, and completely "disregarding"[134] Balzac's text. Similarly, they charge Vollard with intending to ridicule Picasso by placing his abstract drawings in binary opposition to the masterpiece of story's protagonist.[135]

Yet, Vollard made a brilliant choice in pairing Picasso's avant-garde style with Balzac's prophetic fable. Picasso's illustrations do not follow the text with the exactitude preferred by the bibliophile societies of the day; rather, they coexist with the text. In *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, Picasso's inspired visual accompaniments enhance both the narrative path and interpretation of Balzac's text for the reader/viewer, provoking thought about issues of truth, beauty, the model/muse, and the question of artistic representation itself.

Vollard published his edition 100 years after Balzac originally published his story in 1831.[136] *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* recounts the tale of an old genius, Frenhofer, who goes mad obsessing over a painting that he hopes will capture the essence of beauty. He refuses to reveal his masterwork to Porbus (a thinly-veiled French disguise for Franz Pourbous, the Flemish master)[137] and the neophyte Nicolas Poussin, though he does not refrain from

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[132] Horodisch, 33.
[133] Castleman, *A Century of Artists Books*, 28.
[134] Johnson, 26.
[135] Horodisch, 33.
[136] Balzac, Honoré de, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), 13.
[137] Ibid., 9.

spouting a treatise on art to his two friends. Balzac created in Frenhofer a character with surprisingly modern opinions on art:

> You artists fancy that when a figure is correctly drawn, and everything in its place according to the rules of anatomy, there is nothing more to be done ... You fondly imagine that you have copied nature, think yourselves to be painters, believe that you have wrested His secret from God. Pshaw! You may know your syntax thoroughly and make no blunders in your grammar, but it takes that and something more to make a great poet.[138]

For Frenhofer the goal of art was not "to copy nature, but to express it," a quote that may remind one of Cézanne, another artist who identified with Frenhofer. Émile Bernard commented on Cézanne's identification with Frenhofer:

> One evening when I was speaking to [Cézanne] about *The Unknown Masterpiece* and of Frenhofer, the hero of Balzac's drama, he got up from the table, planted himself before me, and, striking his chest with his index finger, designated himself – without a word, but through this repeated gesture – as the very person in the story. He was so moved that tears filled his eyes.[139]

When Frenhofer finally reveals his long-anticipated masterpiece, Poussin describes it as "confused masses of color and a multitude of fantastical lines that go to make a dead wall of paint" with a human foot emerging from the chaos.[140] One may imagine that Frenhofer has reached the limits of representational imagery and broken through towards abstraction, however this conjecture is improbable for a story written in 1831 and set in 1612. Yet, Balzac establishes Frenhofer's artistic genius early on in the fable (one of his works is mistaken for a Giorgione).[141] Thus, with the creation of a chaotic mess of line and color Frenhofer has either lost his mind or reached a new level of artistic expression. Either way, Balzac anticipated a point in the visual arts when painting would become shockingly unintelligible. Who better to interpret this fable

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[138] Balzac, Honoré de, *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu* (Lexington, KY: Valde Books, 2009), 3.
[139] Balzac, trans. Howard, 7.
[140] Balzac, trans. Valde, 21.
[141] Ibid., 9.

visually than the artist whose "Demoiselles d'Avignon" made Georges Braque feel as though he were made to drink gasoline and spit fire.

Picasso could readily relate to Balzac's protagonist in 1927, when Vollard officially commissioned and purchased the thirteen etchings that would accompany the story.[142] Not only was Picasso on the forefront of modernist art, having already mastered Cubist abstraction and collage, but he had also been experimenting with the theme of the artist and his model, an issue central to Frenhofer's struggle in *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Picasso was in a position where he could relate to and freely interpret Balzac's fable. And freely interpret he did. So much so that it inspired a conservative backlash when the book was published in 1931 and still garners disdain or at least confused dismissal from contemporary scholars.

The edition begins with a series of fifty-six entirely abstract drawings consisting entirely of black lines and dots on a white background (figs. 34-35). Vollard declares that this suite is "En manière d'introduction par Pablo Picasso," a kind of visual preface to the text.[143] Here the visual elements by Picasso play a role just as important as (if not more than) Balzac's text, as they form the initial experience of the reader/viewer. These multiple pages of abstract designs confuse and shock the reader/viewer, much like the characters Porbus and Poussin when they first see Frenhofer's masterpiece. Picasso's abstracted introduction is a chaotic mess of lines without even the representational element of the human foot in Frenhofer's masterpiece. The suite of drawings prefaces the story and sets its tone. With these abstract designs Picasso creates an experience in the reader/viewer that the experience of Balzac's characters will later echo.

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[142] Ashton, Dore, *A Fable of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 89.
[143] Horodisch, 33.

Throughout the main body of the text, Vollard intersperses woodcuts after Picasso's

drawings and thirteen original etchings with the type. These works focus predominantly on

the theme of the artist and the model (figs. 36-38). Picasso's representational etchings

employ a fluid, arabesque line to depict the artist, his model, and his creation in a studio

setting. The artist appears differently in each print, perhaps referring to different phases of

the same artist's life or possibly to different artists in order to represent the universality of

Frenhofer's predicament. In most of the etchings a canvas or easel stands between the model

and the artist, but in one notable exception (fig. 37) the model sits behind the artist as he

paints. This positioning suggests that instead of perfectly copying from nature the artist finds

inspiration from something more cerebral or perhaps emotional, much like Frenhofer.

While the etchings apply representational imagery, they also reflect a modern

awareness of the picture plane. Picasso relies on line, flat decorative pattern, and simple

(often mathematically inaccurate) perspective to depict his subjects. He keeps modeling and

shading to a bare minimum. One notices flatness and decorative patterning especially in the

woodcuts. These smaller abstracted prints remind the reader/viewer of the synthetic cubist

collages Picasso and Braque pioneered earlier in the twentieth century (fig. 40).

Many of the etching and woodcut prints also feature a work of art. The trope of the

painting-within-a-painting combined with the subject matter of the act of painting, the

location of the prints among text, and the flat, decorative style make the metaphysical

contemplation of art and representation virtually inevitable.

Before the beginning of the third book is an especially striking image (fig. 39). In

this etching a man, possibly an artist, looks in profile at a seemingly planar image. Included

in this "reflected" image are two separate views: a perfect mirror image of the man's profile,

perhaps depicting a more traditional representational strategy, and a more abstracted, stylized image that moves towards flatness. In this image Picasso compresses different stages in the modernist artistic progression from literal representation to conceptual abstraction into a single moment in space and time – much in the vein of his previous Cubist explorations.

Vollard and Picasso have created an artist's book that confronts the reader/viewer with several difficult semiotic, structural and artistic questions. Which is the more "real" or "true" of these image techniques, the representational realism or the cerebral abstraction? Is textual expression any more "true" than visual expression? Balzac's text also raises these issues, thus, the reader/viewer is prompted with both visual and textual charges to contemplate the nature of art and representation.

The book sold poorly, as did all of Vollard's editions, but it remains a true masterpiece for Vollard, Picasso, and Balzac. Picasso may have puzzled contemporary bibliophiles and modern scholars and critics alike, but he certainly took his work as illustrator seriously. The mystery of Balzac's tale followed him for many years after Vollard's edition was published. In 1937 Picasso purchased number seven Rue des Grands-Agustins as his studio, the very same address that served as the setting for Frenhofer's work in the story.[144] At this address he painted his very own *Chef-d'oeuvre* (albeit *très connu*), "Guernica." The purchase was no coincidence: Picasso "often reminded his friends of the significance of his premises."[145] The hold of Balzac's tale was so strong that the artist still spoke of Frenhofer as late as 1959 when he told Henry Kahnweiler (another important patron of the artist's book):

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[144] Balzac, trans. Howard, 6.
[145] Ashton, 92.

That's the marvelous thing about Frenhofer ... At the end, nobody can see anything but himself. Thanks to the never-ending search for reality, he ends in black obscurity. There are so many realities that in trying to encompass them all, one ends in darkness.[146]

[146] Ashton, 92.

VOLLARD AS AUTHOR

In addition to his highly successful career as an art dealer and his passion for publishing fine books, Ambroise Vollard also took on the role of author. The never-tiring Renaissance man stated in his autobiography, "not satisfied with being a publisher, I tried my hand at writing as well."[147] He began his career as writer with introductions to his print albums for Cézanne, Renoir, and Degas, though these are examples of more journalistic rather than creative writing.[148] After the "joy of seeing [him]self in print," Vollard could not stop.[149]

He continued on to write a satirical series called *Père Ubu* (*Father Ubu*), a hagiography of *Sainte Monique*, and his own autobiography. The *Père Ubu* books and *Sainte Monique* were produced as full-fledged *livres d'artiste*, with the cooperation of artists such as Georges Rouault, Jean Puy, and the perennial favorite, Bonnard. In these projects Vollard assumed the dual role of author and publisher/editor, while also working closely with the visual artist. These special editions exemplify the ideal artist's book, in which author, publisher, and illustrator work together in order to create an artistic and coherent book that engages the reader/viewer.

The *Père Ubu* series consists of eight books, each satirizing a particular aspect of twentieth-century French life (fig. 41). Vollard borrowed the protagonist's name from the famous play by Alfred Jarry, *Ubu Roi*, which lampooned the French bourgeoisie and served as an important predecessor to the theater of the absurd. Vollard greatly admired the shocking play, which premiered in 1896, and he appropriated the title character's name for

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[147] Vollard, 263.
[148] Morel, Jean-Paul, "Vollard: The Author Behind the Mask" in *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 213.
[149] Vollard, 263.

his own critique of French society.[150] *La Politique coloniale du Père Ubu* (*The Colonial Policies of Father Ubu*), *Tout Ubu colonial* (*The Complete Ubu Colonialist*), and *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* (*The Reincarnations of Father Ubu*) all attack French colonialism and reflect Vollard's own heritage, born and raised in l'Île de la Réunion, a French territory off the south-east coast of Africa.[151]

For visual accompaniment to his writing, Vollard turned to Georges Rouault, yet another artist on the forefront of the latest aesthetic trends in Paris. Rouault's work ranges from Symbolism to Fauvism to Expressionism. The Expressionist aspect of his work for *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* inspires sympathy for the oppressed subjects of colonialism and complements Vollard's scathing and disillusioned critique of French imperialism. Rouault prepared twenty-two mixed etchings and over one hundred watercolor paintings that master printers later translated into woodcut for the project.[152] The artist's images do appear interspersed with text, but because of the logistics of printing both engraving and etching plates along with type, the two do not overlap (fig. 42).[153]

Rouault's prints feature the bold outlines so characteristic of his work, yet they also achieve a rich, painterly quality achieved by a combination of etching, drypoint, and aquatint.[154] His reduction of complex forms such as the human face to the most minimal lines and washes of ink (figs. 42-44) reflects a primitivist aesthetic, evoking, though probably inaccurately, African tribal arts in the French colonies. In one particular image the artist's abstraction reproduces the look of a traditional African mask (fig. 43). While Vollard's text

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[150] Mitchell, 21.

[151] Vollard, 2.

[152] Zahar, Michel, "Georges Rouault; or, The Return to the Dramatic Grotesque: Illustrations for Ambroise Vollard's *Les Réincarnations du père Ubu*" *Formes* (English ed.) no. 31 (1933), 354.

[153] With lithography (as in *Parallèlement*) images can be more easily printed directly on top of text, while with etching, engraving, and woodcut the nature of the plate makes it more difficult to double print.

[154] Mitchell, 21.

critiques the French colonizers, Rouault's images provide insight, whether consciously or not, into the French perception of the colonized. Though sympathy for the colonized was growing in France, even the staunchest supporters of the cause had a skewed perception of African culture. Visual artists found inspiration in the abstract simplicity of primitive arts in Africa and the East. Yet, their aesthetic inspiration came from artifacts taken out of their appropriate cultural context in European museums and, thus, ignored the true function of African art and many of its important social and spiritual functions.

The primitivist simplicity of Rouault's images renders them more powerful and provokes a sincere sympathetic response from the reader/viewer. Vollard commented that the artist's prints, "render the pathetic and nostalgic side of the Negro soul in a way that gives it an epic quality."[155] Thus, *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu* not only offers a serious critique of French imperialist policy but also a genuine defense of the Africans it oppressed. Vollard chose Rouault for the *Réincarnations* project with a full knowledge of the artist's style and capabilities. Vollard kept in close contact with artist throughout the stages of production.[156] Thus, the empathy of the reader/viewer inspired by Rouault's subtle yet potent images was an intentional component of the book. Without this integral human component, Vollard's text might seem too harsh or flippant. Instead, Vollard's text and Rouault's images work together to make an indictment of colonialism that also brings one's attention to the suffering of those oppressed at its hand.

Le Père Ubu à l'aviation (*Father Ubu in the Air Force*) and *Père Ubu à la guerre* (*Father Ubu at War*) critique the horrors of World War I. The Great War inspired strong

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[155] Strachan, 68.
[156] Ibid.

feelings in Vollard, who worked in the Ministry of Investigations during the conflict.[157]

Vollard, like many artists and thinkers of the time, questioned the reasoning behind all the

death and destruction of the 1914 war, wondering if the soldiers were being "gloriously

killed ... or shot by way of example."[158] The art-dealer maintained continued correspondence

with his friend Jean Puy, an enlisted artist who served in the trenches during World War I

and who would later illustrate several texts.[159] Vollard wrote these texts during World War I

and editions of *Le Père Ubu à l'aviation* were published as early as 1918 and *Le Père Ubu à*

la guerre as early as 1920.[160]

Vollard commissioned the Fauvist painter and World War I veteran Jean Puy to

illustrate *Le Père Ubu à la guerre*. The artist's gestural style translated the tongue-in-cheek

satire of French militarism into the visual idiom with humorous irreverence. Due to wartime

conditions Vollard could not print Puy's original drawings in with the text, but only line

block reproductions.[161] Still, Puy's comical designs capture the essence of Vollard's

lampooning tale. Though humorous, Puy's illustrations of war originate from his own

violent and disillusioning experience in the trenches.

Many of the larger format illustrations bear captions, indicating that Puy took cues

from Vollard's text in creating his images (figs. 46,48,49). Yet, rather than following

Vollard's writing exactly, Puy merely draws inspiration from certain lines, altering and

embellishing as he sees fit. Unlike Barthes' concept of anchoring text, the text did not limit

Puy's artistic interpretation nor did it limit the reader/viewer's interpretation of the image.

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[157] Vollard, 285.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Dumas, 17.
[160] Morel, 214-215.
[161] Strachan, 68. Included at the end of 1923 edition are eight original etchings and one original lithography.

Rather, the captions provide a point of departure for further interpretation. For example, one particularly insightful image's caption reads, "les remises de décorations" (handing out medals) (fig. 48). While the caption helps the reader/viewer identify the narrative element of the image, it does not circumscribe the reader/viewer's interpretive imagination. The image has many more levels of interpretation, such as the masses of identical onlookers waving flags, the bourgeois General who doles out medals with an air of disdain and superiority, and the row of diminutive, robotic soldiers. Each of these visual aspects expands upon the caption and adds another layer to the critical caricature of militarism.

The artist's cartoon-like style caricaturizes all the great types of war: from sword-brandishing generals (figs. 45-46), to saccharine nurses (fig. 47), to mindless patriots (fig. 48). No one escapes Vollard and Puy's merciless critique. The French military quickly censored the book, though its justification was not the seditious satire but rather that the noses of many characters had been "elongated to the point ... of obscenity" (fig. 49).[162]

Vollard's *Sainte Monique* represents a more sincere and personal kind of writing than the satirical *Père Ubu* series. *Sainte Monique* tells the story of the illustrious Saint Monica, most famous for giving birth to Saint Augustine. Though he did do some limited research on the life of Saint Augustine and his mother, Vollard's version is largely a work of fiction. An example of the fictitious nature of *Sainte Monique* is the ridiculous yarn of a frame story that sets the scene. The art dealer found and purchased a lost manuscript on a jaunt to North Africa, only to have his absent-minded housekeeper destroy it.[163] The Catholic Church immediately blacklisted Vollard's *Sainte Monique* as apocryphal hagiography.[164]

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[162] Strachan, 68.
[163] Morel, 215.
[164] Ibid.

Vollard does not explain his interest in the Catholic saint, yet the two do share some biographical overlaps: both moved from Africa to Europe in order to conduct their studies, and Augustine converted to Christianity under the guidance of Saint Ambroise, Vollard's first name.[165] These biographical similarities, along with a narcissistic desire to elevate himself to the status of a religious writer, may best explain Vollard's gravitation toward Saint Monica.

For the visual component of the 1930 deluxe edition of *Sainte Monique*, Vollard turned again to Pierre Bonnard. Under Vollard's direction the artist created designs in lithography, etching, and woodcut. The author/editor wanted to see if he could successfully create an artist's book with these mixed media.[166] In spite of their efforts, the etchings destroyed the sense of unity in the book because the *cuvette* (the impression of the plate's edge on the paper) was distractingly visible at the margins, while the lithography stone and woodblock did not leave such an edge (figs. 50-51).[167] Instead of wasting all the etchings and depriving the reader/viewer of these images, Vollard solved the problem by place them in a suite at the end of the text/print hybrid.

Bonnard's sketch-like full-page lithographs display a vibrant sense of motion that evokes a bustling a North African city (fig. 52), the carefree play of a young girl (fig. 53), and an amorous encounter of lovers (fig. 54). Each print makes the events of Saint Monica's life more real to the reader/viewer, much in the tradition of older religious iconography. In medieval manuscripts illuminated illustrations served the purpose of retelling the narrative of the text in visual terms to make a more spiritual, devotional experience for the reader/viewer. Similarly, Vollard and Bonnard's *Sainte Monique* takes the reader/viewer on a textual and

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[165] Morel, 215.
[166] Strachan, 56.
[167] Ibid.

visual pilgrimage through the life of Saint Monica. Though the images are not particularly

avant-garde for 1930, their traditionalism harks back to the religious roots and function of

Vollard's text.[168] Text and image work together in order to bring the narrative of Saint

Monica's biography to life for the contemporary reader/viewer.

Vollard's ventures as author represent a special case of his work as publisher of *livres*

d'artiste. In these projects especially, author, publisher, and visual artist worked closely

together to create *livres d'artiste* in which the close collaboration of verbal and visual artist

resulted in the harmonious coexistence of the verbal and the visual elements of the book. If

nothing else, these unique projects demonstrate Ambroise Vollard's indefatigable passion for

the interaction of the literary and visual arts.

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[168] Ironically, the most formally rebellious part of the book are the vignettes and culs-de-lampe (see fig. 55) scattered throughout the text. These nonchalant, simplistic designs seem to poke fun at the frilly, overworked type ornaments that fill older French *livres de luxe* (fig. 56). It was Bonnard, said Vollard, who "proposed those decorative vignettes in linear themes and flowing arabesques that should stir the artisans of the art industries." Zahar, "Vollard Editions," 34.

LA TENTATION DE SAINT-ANTOINE

Vollard nearly left one of his most fascinating collaborations of visual and literary

artists unfinished and unpublished due to his untimely death. Begun in 1896 but not

published until 1938, less than a year before Vollard's death in a car accident, Gustave

Flaubert's *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* (The Temptation of Saint Antony) with lithographs

by Odilon Redon was almost never realized.[169] Despite, or perhaps because of, its slow

production, *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine* is a masterwork for Redon, Flaubert, and Vollard.

Though they never met, Redon and Flaubert had an unparalleled kinship of mind and spirit,

cultivated under Vollard's guidance.[170] In this unique *livre d'artiste* project Redon's images

and Flaubert's text inform one another and expand upon one another. Not only are text and

image of equal importance, but each also challenges the viewer/reader to interpret both

aspects of the book more deeply.

La Tentation de Saint-Antoine, published in 1874, is a book of "opulence and

anxiety,"[171] "extravagance and surreality."[172] It philosophically narrates the life of an ancient

saint who, after the death of his parents, gives away all his inheritance to become a desert

ascetic. There, the future Saint Antony "struggles alone against besieging demons" ranging

from beautiful women, to proselytizing heretics, to the devil himself.[173] Flaubert's lyrical,

ambiguous language creates images of terrifying monsters and evokes feelings of spiritual

despair in the reader. In Flaubert's *Tentation* the devil is not frightening because of the horns

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[169] Edwards, Hugh, "Redon, Flaubert, Vollard," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 36, no. 1 (January 1942): 4, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4115287.

[170] Mrosovsky, Kitty, Introduction to Flaubert, Gustave, *The Temptation of Saint Antony* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 20.

[171] Ibid., 19.

[172] Eisenman, Stephen F, *The Temptation of Saint Redon: Biography, Ideology and Style in the Noirs of Odilon Redon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 201.

[173] Mrosovksy, 5.

on his head, but, rather, because he is the "metaphyscial underminer."[174] In one particularly

existential passage, the devil torments Antony:

> But things reach you only through the medium of your mind. Like a
> concave mirror it distorts objects ... Form is perhaps an error of your senses,
> and Substance an image in your mind ... But are you sure of seeing? Are
> you even sure of being alive? Perhaps there is nothing![175]

Flaubert's staccato "linguistic palpitation"[176] of philosophical questions captures perfectly

that spiritual anxiety so characteristic of the *fin-de-siècle* writers, but that could also

transcend to later generations of artists and thinkers. Both Michel Foucault and Jean-Paul

Sartre were later fascinated by the complex metaphysical angst of *La Tentation*.[177]

Just as he questions the nature of seeing *La Tentation*, Flaubert's doubts also extend

to the realm of art and the nature of images and subject matter. In a personal letter the author

wrote:

> The nearer expression draws to thought, the more each word sticks to it and
> disappears, the greater the beauty. I believe the future of art lies in that
> direction ... Form, increasingly skilled, becomes attenuated ... it no longer
> acknowledges any orthodoxy and is as free as the will that produces it.[178]

Always ahead of his time, Flaubert championed an art that rejected tradition -- even to the

point of distorting form and subject for the purpose of personal expression. This belief

aligned the writer with the work of Odilon Redon, a Symbolist artist whose artwork reflected

his inner state much as Flaubert's writing revealed his "entire soul."[179] Redon described his

art as being "limited to the resources of the *clair-obscur* as well as to the effects of abstract

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[174] Mrosovksy, 20.

[175] Flaubert, Gustave, *The Temptation of Saint Antony*, trans. Kitty Mrosovsky (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 212.

[176] Mrosovsky, 13.

[177] Ibid., 27-32.

[178] Ibid., 44.

[179] Hennequin, Emile in Eisenman, *The Temptation of Saint Redon*, 203.

line, that agent of profound source acting directly on the spirit."[180] Thus, for Redon, a

powerful contrast between light and dark along with an idiosyncratic, somewhat abstracted

concept of line were the tools he employed to express his tortured inner being. Redon and

Flaubert suffered similar psychological trauma at an early age, making them kindred spirits

in psychological and philosophical anxiety. While both were lonely, indifferent students,

Redon suffered a chronic illness that led to his childhood exile in the countryside and

Flaubert experienced the death of a friend at a young age.[181]

Redon's art, especially his graphic work, reveals an affinity for literature. The artist

used literature as a basis for his art, drawing thematic inspiration from literary figures like

Poe, Baudelaire, and Picard.[182] Yet Redon's art is not only inspired by specific works of

literature and poetry, but also imbued with the essence of verbal expression. His work was

especially favored by Symbolist literary figures because of his ability to translate the most

nuanced of verbal metaphors into visual image. It is difficult to decipher where the verbal

ends and the visual begins in Redon's art: "the boundaries between art and writing ... are

never very clear."[183] In the artist's images one cannot easily distinguish where textual

inspiration ends and the artist's own visual imagination begins. Redon's artworks rarely

illustrate literally; rather, they approach and contemplate the ideas of a particular text in the

terms of the artist's unique imagery.

These characteristics of Redon's troubled personality and mysterious artwork

rendered him the "ideal interpreter of Flaubert's vision."[184] Redon was introduced to *La*

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[180] Eisenman, 187.

[181] Ibid., 183-184.

[182] Leeman, Fred, "Odilon Redon: The Image and the Text" in *Odilon Redon: Prince of Dreams 1840-1916*, ed. Douglas Druick (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1994, 175.

[183] Eisenman, 187.

[184] Seznec, Jean in Mrosovsky, Kitty, Introduction to *The Temptation of Saint Antony*, 20.

Tentation by philosopher/critic friend in 1882 (two years after the death of the author).[185]

Redon immediately recognized the book as a "literary marvel" and a veritable "mine" for his

art.[186] Without any commission, the artist began work on a series of lithographs dedicated to

Flaubert and inspired by *La Tentation* in 1887 (figs. 57-59).[187] Even before a Belgian printer

published the prints in 1888, Stéphane Mallarmé, an illustrious poet and dear friend of

Redon's, commented on the series and called it a visual evocation of "hidden dreams ...

spoken by [Redon] with such subtlety, and sadness, and power."[188]

These powerful lithographs depict with the most dramatic chiaroscuro surreal and

frightening scenes in which forms seem to emerge eerily from the inkiest black background.

In one plate, the horned, winged devil takes Antony into space, soaring upwards into an

infinite, unknown darkness with "no bottom, no top, nor high, nor low" (fig. 57).[189] In

another, a snake with human eyes, described by Flaubert as a "primordial figure whose bod[y

is] nothing but [its] image," slithers out from the shadows (fig. 58).[190] The legend for this

print calls the reader/viewer's attention to several compelling semiotic conundrums in

Flaubert's text. Redon's choice to interpret visually these particular excerpts instead of other

more narrative passages indicates that these philosophical issues intrigued him. If one could

see these primeval creatures, Saint Antony asserts, "one would discover the link between

matter and thought, what Being consists of!"[191] In Redon's lithograph, one *can* see these

mysterious figures. And in the image, one sees a literal mapping out of Redon's unique

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[185] Leeman, 189.

[186] Redon to Hennequin: "Je vous remercie ... de m'avoir fait lire la *Tentation*; une merveille littéraire et une mine pour moi" (Thank you ... for making me read the *Temptation*; a literary marvel and a personal [gold]mine) Roger-Marx, Claude, "Prólogue" in *La Tentation de Saint Antoine, Gustave Flaubert, illustrated by Odilon Redon* (Paris: Éditions Les Peintres du Livre, 1969).

[187] Leeman, 191.

[188] Mallarmé, Stéphane in Leeman, 191.

[189] Flaubert, 210.

[190] Ibid., 220.

[191] Flaubert, 220.

visual interpretation of Flaubert's verbal expression. Flaubert's verbal thought materializes in Redon's visual image. This pairing creates a complex semiotic web, and, also, a link between matter and thought (at least according to Flaubert's Saint Antony).

Another more famous graphic work of Redon also comes from this series. In this print, a coiling worm that morphs into a beautiful woman rises from the tenebrous background (fig. 59). Her head is a skull as she represents the combined allegorical representation of Lust and Death, whose "irony exceeds all others."[192] The fact that this image has achieved such success as a separate print attests to the independent artistic merit of Redon's prints for *La Tentation*. While these graphic works could stand alone, Vollard chose to pair them with Flaubert's text in order to enrich both the literary and the visual experience for the viewer/reader.

Vollard noticed Redon's two controversial print albums inspired by Flaubert, though neither earned much commercial or critical success.[193] The artist and publisher finally met around 1894, and in 1896 Vollard expressed interest in a book project in addition to financing a reprint of the entire set of lithographs.[194] Redon began work on new lithographs to add on to the previous set, but Flaubert's conservative heiress thwarted the project. She owned the rights to the text and expressed concern to Vollard about the illustration of certain components of Flaubert's story, namely, the nude females. As a condition of the contract with Flaubert's heiress, Vollard would have to "submit the artist's compositions to her" for final approval.[195] He, of course, would have none of this, as artistic freedom for both the visual artist and his own publishing concerns was paramount to his process.

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[192] Flaubert, 219.
[193] Leeman, 192.
[194] Edwards, 5.
[195] Vollard, 257.

Thus, negotiation over the rights to the text delayed the book project again and again. In the meantime, Redon prepared sketches and studies for the project.[196] Finally, in 1938, twenty-twp years after Redon's death and one year before Vollard's, the publisher and Flaubert's heiress reached an agreement. He published the book with twenty-two lithographs in black and white and fourteen wood engravings executed by master printers after Redon's drawings.[197] In the edition, the lithographs appear as full-page *hors-texte* plates without text captions (fig. 61). However, Vollard placed the prints opposite the text from which Redon drew inspiration. The woodcuts appear on the same page as the text to which they most closely correspond.

Redon's visual accompaniments to Flaubert's text are not illustrations. The artist himself stated that he "never used the defective word 'illustration,'" and that the "right term [for his literary work] ha[d] not yet been coined."[198] Unlike an illustration, which depends entirely upon the text, Redon's prints and drawings can exist independently of *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*. Yet, when paired with the text they "intensify [its] elusive qualities."[199] Redon's mysterious, ambiguous images match Flaubert's love of the "indefinite word" and his metaphysical inquiry into the human spirit.[200] In this masterpiece *livre d'artiste* text and image have a symbiotic relationship in which each challenges the other and enriches the experience of the reader/viewer.

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[196] Nineteen such sketches are currently in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. Edwards, 4.
[197] Johnson, 163.
[198] Leeman, 194.
[199] Edwards, 6.
[200] Leeman, 190.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of this paper, I have explored the history of the illustrated book in France from the Middle Ages to its twentieth-century evolution into the artist's book. From humble beginnings as an aid in understanding the religious content of illuminated manuscripts, to the heights of avant-garde art movements in post-war Paris, the French book has developed into an art form in its own right. The role of the book artist has also evolved, from a craftsman to a printmaker to a fine artist, or *peintre-graveur*.

In addition to experimenting with almost every artistic "ism" of twentieth and twenty-first century Europe, French book artists have also delved into the philosophical implications of the book. In the realm of the *livre d'artiste*, the artist combines text and image and thus creates a semiotic conundrum. The relationship between text and image can vary greatly in the artist's book. In more traditional books, image literally illustrates text and serves only to enhance the written narrative. Text and image often cooperate with one another, challenge one another, and enrich the overall experience of the reader/viewer of the artist's book. The most avant-garde relationship between text and image is abstract illustration, where image can exist entirely independently of text and does not necessarily connect to the written word in either representation or concept.

Ambroise Vollard, a successful patron of avant-garde artists, had a penchant for publishing fine books and favored the role of the visual artist in the creation of illustrated books. In his book projects Vollard encouraged an equal balance between text and image, and sometimes even the dominance of image over text. He served as a central figure in bridging the gap from illustrated books, where image serves text, to artists' books, where text

and image cooperate. Vollard's relentless exactitude and creativity in his publishing projects were crucial in the development of the artist's book in the twentieth century.

However, contemporary book arts scholars differ as to their definition of a true artist's book. Some assert that an artist's book must be made by a fine artist, not a mere illustrator or artisan. Others insist that the images in a genuine artist's book must have enough aesthetic merit to stand alone as works of art. One scholar in particular, Johanna Drucker, states that an artist's book must demonstrate that its creator was conscious of both the semiotic issues inherent in the combination of text and image and the cultural issues of the book as an object. Drucker claims that Vollard's book projects were illustrated books instead of artist's books.

Throughout this paper I have argued that Vollard's *livres d'artistes* are indeed true artists' books. I have proven the legitimacy of several of his greatest books (*Parallèlement*, *Daphnis et Chloé*, *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, *Le Père Ubu* series, *Sainte Monique*, and *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*) according to varying definitions of the artist's book by contemporary scholars. For example, all of the visual artists in Vollard's editions were first and foremost fine artists. The images that appear in these book projects can stand alone as separate works of art, though to varying degrees of aesthetic merit. Text and image work together in each of Vollard's editions to better the intellectual, physical, and/or spiritual experience of the reader/viewer. Finally, the creators of these books show an awareness of semiotic and structural issues ranging from Symbolist synaesthesia, to ancient ekphrasis, to questions of truth and beauty in artistic representation.

Though modern artists' books may display a greater degree of semiotic and structural consciousness on the part of their creators, the books of *Éditions Vollard* do also embody

issues of image and text. Vollard's *livres d'artistes* are true artists' books and also works of

fine art. Without the avant-garde foundations laid by Vollard and his chosen artistic

collaborators, the artist's book would not have reached the height of postmodern questioning

that it encompasses today.

FIGURES

1. Unknown artist. "The Creation of Eve." *Psalter of Saint Louis and Blanche of Castille*. Illuminated manuscript. Early thirteenth century. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris.
As reproduced in D'Anonca, P. and E. Aeschlimann. *The Art of the Illumination: An Anthology of Manuscripts from the Sixth to the Sixteenth Century*. Page 73. Trans. by Alison M. Brown. London: Phaidon, 1969.

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3. Joullain et Cars after François Boucher. Illustration from *Oeuvres de Molière, Nouvelle* edition.
Engraving. 1734. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
As reproduced in Ray, Gordon N. *The Art of the French Illustrated Book, 1700 to 1914*. Page 23. New
York: The Pierpont Morgan Library and Cornell University Press, 1982.

LE MEDECIN MALGRÉ LUY

4. Unknown artist after Fragonard, Jean-Honoré. Illustration from *Contes et nouvelles en vers de Jean de la
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As reproduced in Ray, Gordon N. *The Art of the French Illustrated Book, 1700 to 1914*. Page 136. New
York: The Pierpont Morgan Library and Cornell University Press, 1982.

5. Blake, William. "The Tyger" from *Songs of Experience*. Etching and Watercolor. 1794 (copy c. 1825). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
As reproduced in < http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/17.10.42>.

6. Goya y Lucientes, Francisco de. "Que viene el Coco" from *Los Caprichos*. Etching. 1797-1798. Private Collection.
As reproduced in Salaman, Malcom C., ed. *Masters of Etching: Francisco de Goya*. Plate II. New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1927.

Que viene el Coco.

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Etching. 1797-1798. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
As reproduced in <http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/images/aria/rp/z/rp-p-1921-2064.z>.

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Auckland: University of Auckland, 2004.
<http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/ahist/arthist111/work_of_art/Analysing2DMediap3.htm>.

Relief (ex: woodcut, linocut)
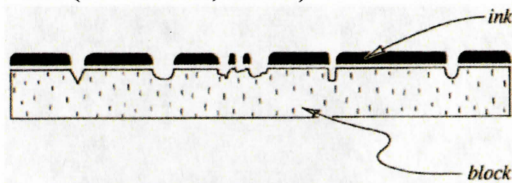
Intaglio (ex: engraving, etching, drypoint, aquatint)
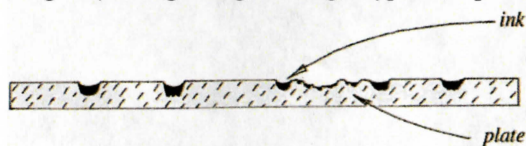
Planographic (ex: lithography)
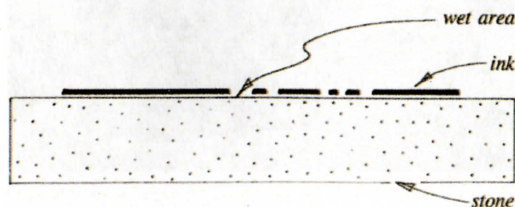
9. Daumier, Honoré. "La Femme de ménage." Lithograph. 1840. Private Collection.
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10. Delacroix, Eugène. Illustration for Goethe's *Faust*. Lithography. 1828. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
As reproduced in Ray, Gordon N. *The Art of the French Illustrated Book, 1700 to 1914*. Page 209. New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library and Cornell University Press, 1982.

11. Manet, Edouard. Illustration for Poe's *The Raven* (trans. by Stéphane Mallarmé). Lithograph. 1875. Dallas Public Library, Dallas, TX.
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15. Bonnard, Pierre. "Cave Vollard." Oil on cardboard. c. 1907. Private Collection.
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16. Bonnard, Pierre. "Exposition les Peintres-Graveurs, Galerie Vollard." Lithograph. 1896. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
As reproduced in As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 189. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.
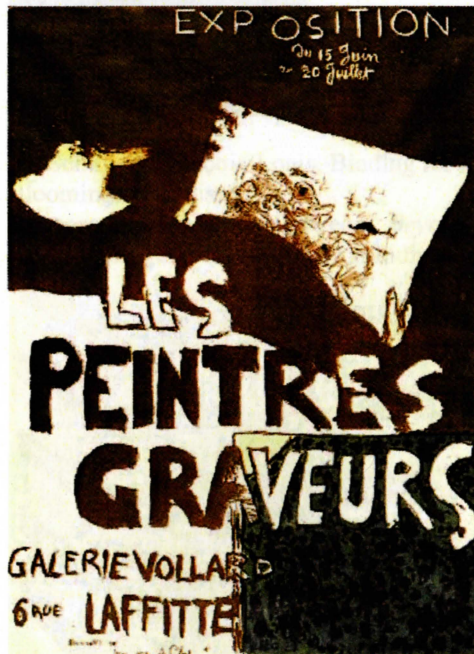
17. Bonnard, Pierre. "Album d'estampes originals de la Galerie Vollard." Lithograph. 1897. Museum of Modern Art, New York.
As reproduced in As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 191. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.

18. Logo of Les Cent Bibliophiles Society, 1896.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

19. Schmied, François-Louis. Binding for Paul Fort's *Les Ballades françaises*. Leather. 1927. Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana.
As reproduced in Mitchell, Breon. *Beyond Illustration: the Livre d'Artiste in the Twentieth Century*. Page 71. Bloomington: Lilly Library at Indiana University, 1976.

20. Bonnard, Pierre. "Allégorie." Lithograph from Verlaine, Paul. *Parallèlement*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1900.
As reproduced in <http://www.maitres-des-arts-graphiques.com/-EXB.Para/-EXB.Parallelement.04.html>.

21. Bonnard, Pierre. "Sappho." Lithograph from Verlaine, Paul. *Parallèlement*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1900.
As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 198. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.
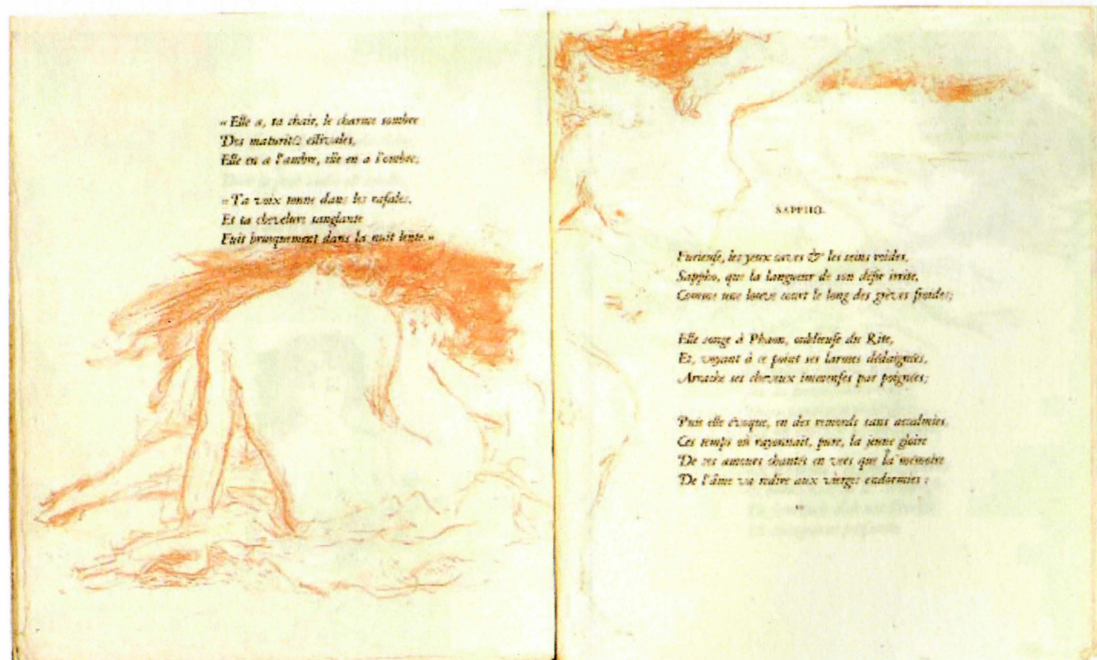
22. Bonnard, Pierre. "Printemps." Lithograph from Verlaine, Paul. *Parallèlement*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1900.
As reproduced in <http://www.maitres-des-arts-graphiques.com/-EXB.Para/-EXB.Parallelement.14.html>.
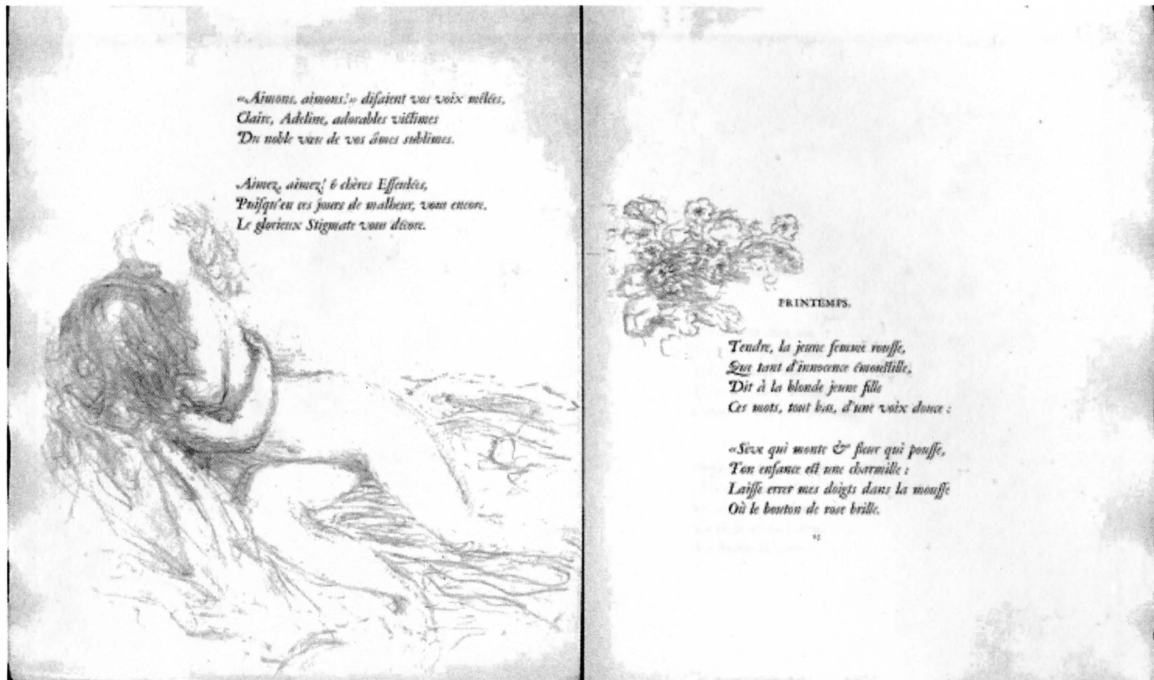
23. Bonnard, Pierre. "Été." Lithograph from Verlaine, Paul. *Parallèlement*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1900.
As reproduced in <http://www.maitres-des-arts-graphiques.com/-EXB.Para/-EXB.Parallelement.16.html>.

24. Bonnard, Pierre. "Seguidille." Lithograph from Verlaine, Paul. *Parallèlement*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1900.
As reproduced in Castleman, Riva. *A Century of Artists' Books*. Page 86. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994.

25. Bonnard, Pierre. "À Madame." Lithograph from Verlaine, Paul. *Parallèlement*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1900.
As reproduced in Garvey, Eleanor M. and Peter A Wick. *The Arts of the French Book 1900-1965: Illustrated Books of the School of Paris*. Page 31. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1967.
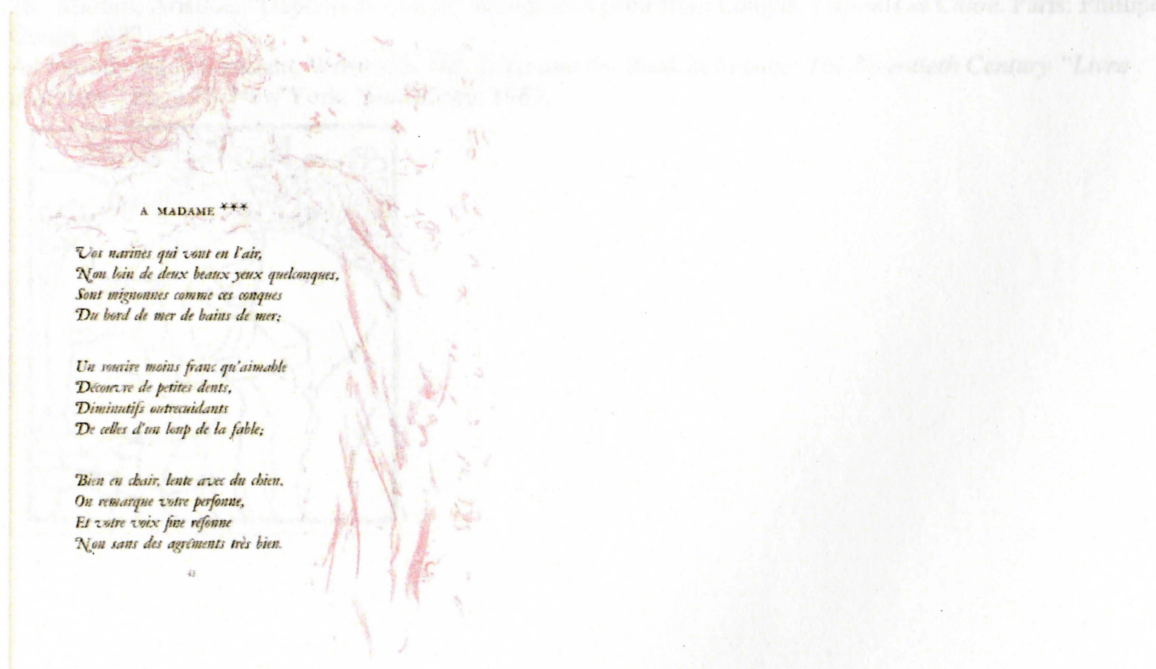
26. Titian. "Three Ages of Man." Oil on canvas. 1512-1514. National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh. As reproduced in <http://www.nationalgalleries.org/index.php/collection/online_az/>.

27. Boucher, François. "Daphnis and Chloe." Oil on canvas. 1743. The Wallace Collection, London. As reproduced in <http://wallacelive.wallacecollection.org:8080/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&moduleFunction=search>.
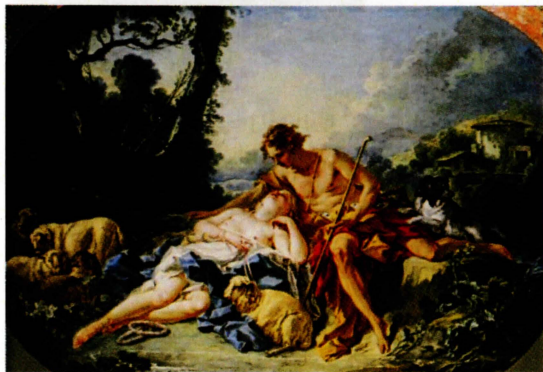
28. Maillol, Aristide. "Daphnis et Chloé." Woodblock print from Longus. *Daphnis et Chloé*. Paris: Phillipe Gonin, 1937.
As reproduced in Strachan, William J. *The Artist and the Book in France: The Twentieth Century "Livre d'Artiste."* Page 75. New York: Wittenborn, 1969.

29. Chagall, Marc. "Daphnis et Chloé au bord de la fontaine." Lithograph. 1961. Franklin Bowles Gallery, San Francisco.
As reproduced in
<http://www.franklinbowlesgallery.com/SF/Artists/Chagall/pages/Lithographs/daphnis/CHAG1300.htm>.
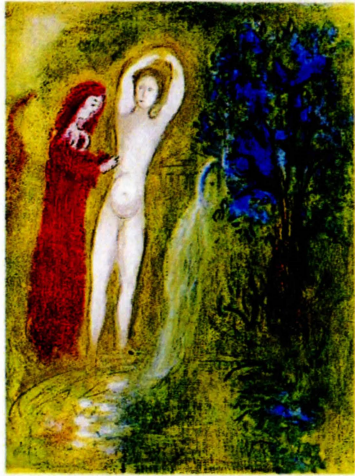
30. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled." Lithograph from Longus. *Les Pastorales, ou Daphnis et Chloé*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1902.
As reproduced in Strachan, William J. *The Artist and the Book in France: The Twentieth Century "Livre d'Artiste."* Page 39. New York: Wittenborn, 1969.

Ils étoient sous le chêne, assis l'un près de l'autre, et ayant goûté du plaisir de baiser, ne se pouvoient saouler de cette volupté. L'embrassement suivoit quant et quant pour baiser plus serré, et en ce point comme Daphnis tiroit sa prise un

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31. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled." Lithograph from Longus. *Les Pastorales, ou Daphnis et Chloé*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1902.
As reproduced in Hofer, Philip, Ed. *The Artist and the Book: 1860-1960 in Western Europe and the United States*. Page 25. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1982.


Eux étant ainsi occupés, vint un second mes-
sager dire qu'on vendangeât au plus tôt, et qu'il
avoit charge de demeurer là jusqu'à ce que le
vin fût fait, pour puis après s'en retourner en la
ville querir leur maître, qui ne viendroit sinon au

32. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled." Lithograph from Longus. *Les Pastorales, ou Daphnis et Chloé*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1902.
As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 200. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.

Disant ces mots, il mit la pomme au giron de
Chloé, et elle, comme il s'approcha, le baisa si
soevement qu'il n'eut point de regret d'être monté
si haut pour un baiser qui valoit mieux à son gré
que les pommes d'or.

33. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled." Lithograph from Longus. *Les Pastorales, ou Daphnis et Chloé*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1902.
As reproduced in <http://www.ursusbooks.com/item52557.html>.

34. Picasso, Pablo. "Introduction." Etching from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 205. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.
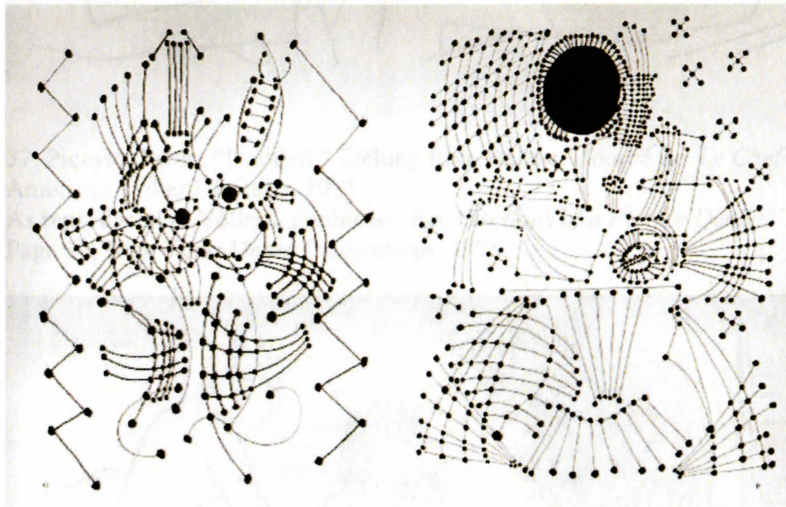
35. Picasso, Pablo. "Introduction." Etching from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Horodisch, Abraham. *Picasso as Book Artist*. Page 13. Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1962.
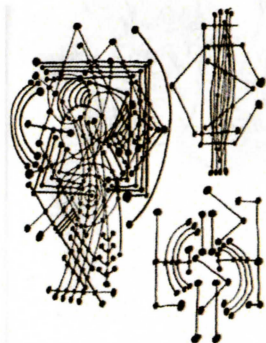
36. Picasso, Pablo. "Untitled." Etching from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Horodisch, Abraham. *Picasso as Book Artist*. Page 16. Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1962.
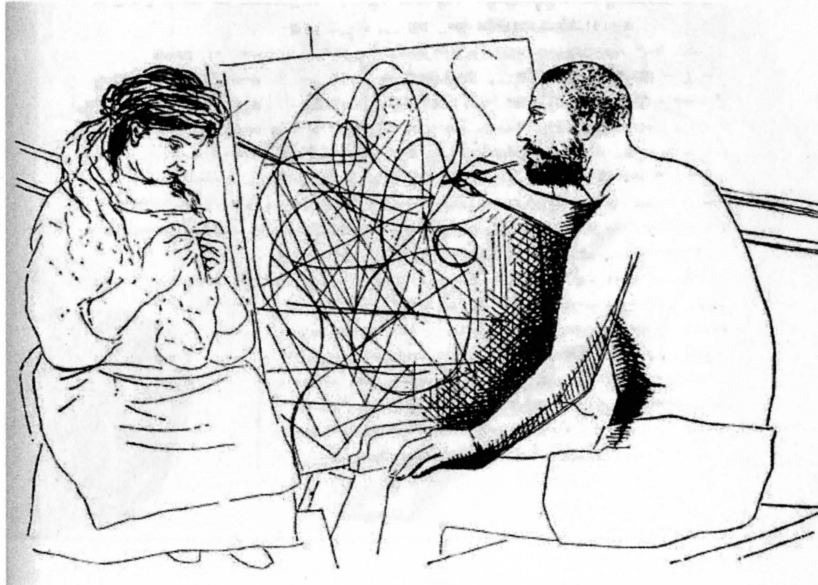
37. Picasso, Pablo. "Untitled." Etching from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Vollard, Ambroise. *Recollections of a Picture Dealer*. Translated by Violet Macdonald. Page 90. New York: Dover Publications, 1978.
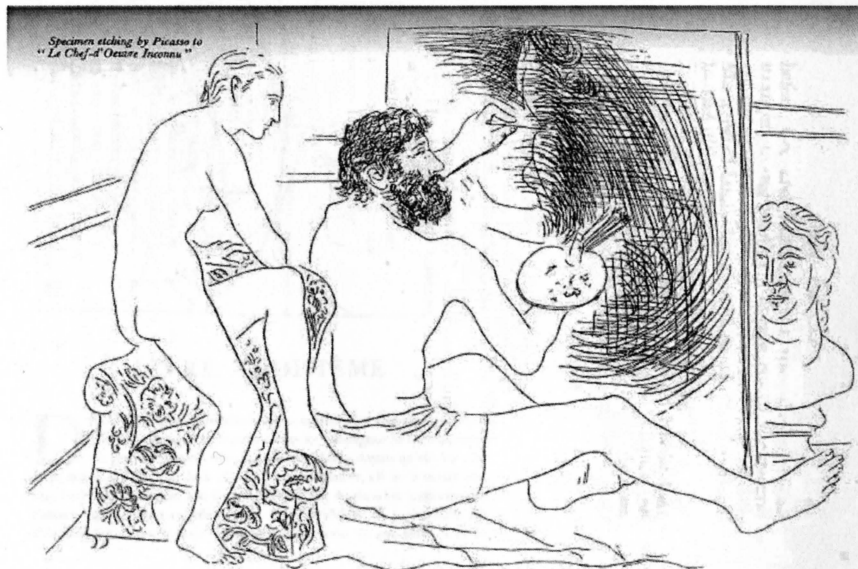
38. Picasso, Pablo. "Untitled." Etching from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Strachan, William J. *The Artist and the Book in France: The Twentieth Century "Livre d'Artiste."* Page 61. New York: Wittenborn, 1969.
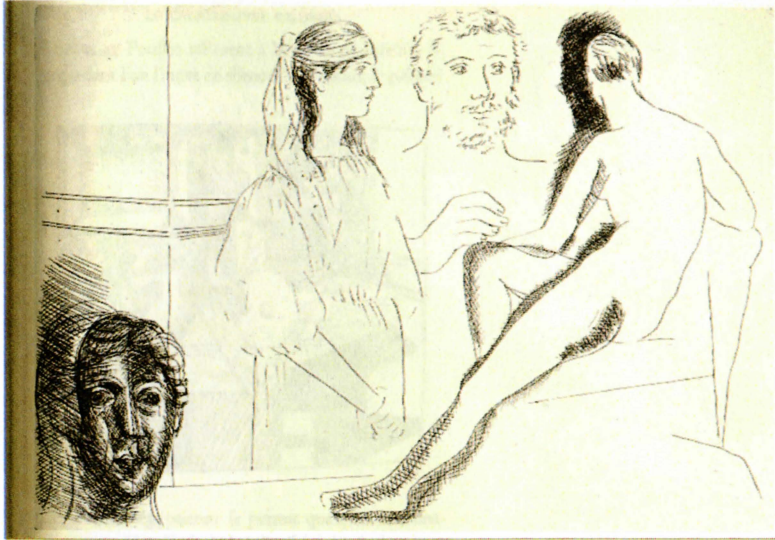
39. Picasso, Pablo. "Untitled." Etching from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Hofer, Philip, Ed. *The Artist and the Book: 1860-1960 in Western Europe and the United States*. Page 155. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1982.
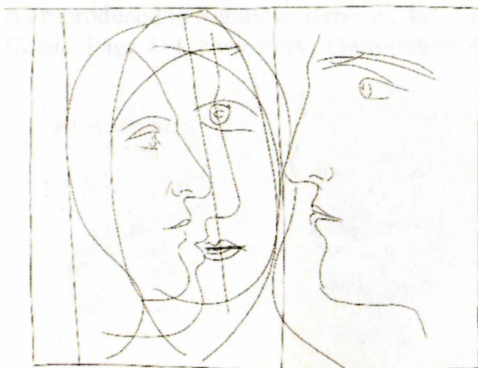
LIVRE TROISIÈME

Déjà le dieu, ayant dépouillé la forme mensongère d'un taureau, s'était fait connaître et il avait abordé dans les campagnes du Dicté, lorsque le père de la jeune fille, ignorant son destin depuis qu'elle lui a été ravie, ordonne à Cadmus de la chercher; son châtiment, s'il ne la trouve pas, sera l'exil, ajoute ce père à la fois tendre et cruel. Après avoir parcouru tout l'univers (qui pourrait en effet découvrir les infidélités de Jupiter?), le fils d'Agénor fuit sa patrie pour se dérober au courroux de son père; il va en

61

40. After Picasso, Pablo. "Untitled." Woodblock print from Balzac, Honoré de. *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1931.
As reproduced in Wheeler, Monroe, ed. *Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators*. Page 67. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936.
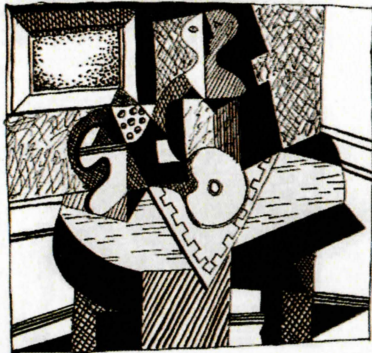
41. Bonnard, Pierre and Jean Puy. "*Couvertures*." Lithographs from *Père Ubu Series*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1918-1938.
As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 214. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006, 214.

42. Rouault, Georges. "Frontispiece." Mixed etching from Vollard, Ambroise. *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1932.
As reproduced in Rabinow, Rebecca, Ed. *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*. Page 215. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.
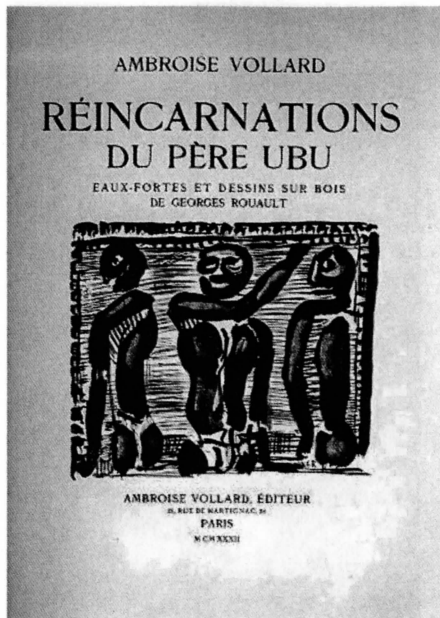
43. After Rouault, Georges. "Untitled." Woodcut from Vollard, Ambroise. *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1932.
As reproduced in Zahar, Michel. "Georges Rouault; or, The Return to the Dramatic Grotesque: Illustrations for Ambroise Vollard's *Les Réincarnations du père Ubu*." Page 357. *Formes* (English ed.) no. 31 (1933).

44. Rouault, Georges. "Pédagogue." Mixed etching from Vollard, Ambroise. *Les Réincarnations du Père Ubu*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1932.
As reproduced in Johnson, Una E. *Ambroise Vollard, éditeur: Prints, Books, Bronzes*. Page 110. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977.

45. Puy, Jean. "Frontispiece." Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Le Père Ubu à la guerre*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1923.
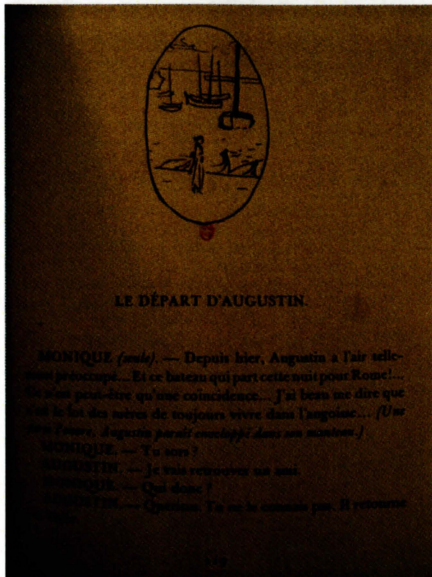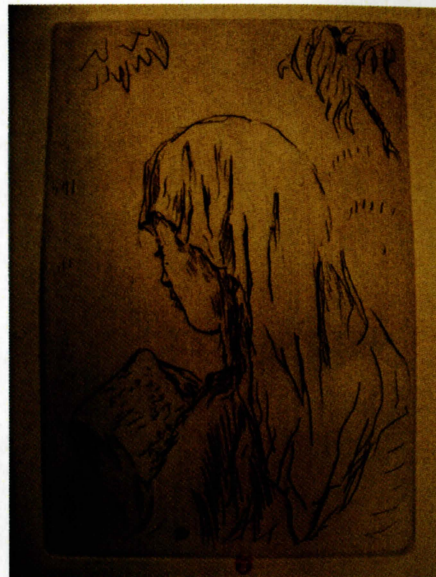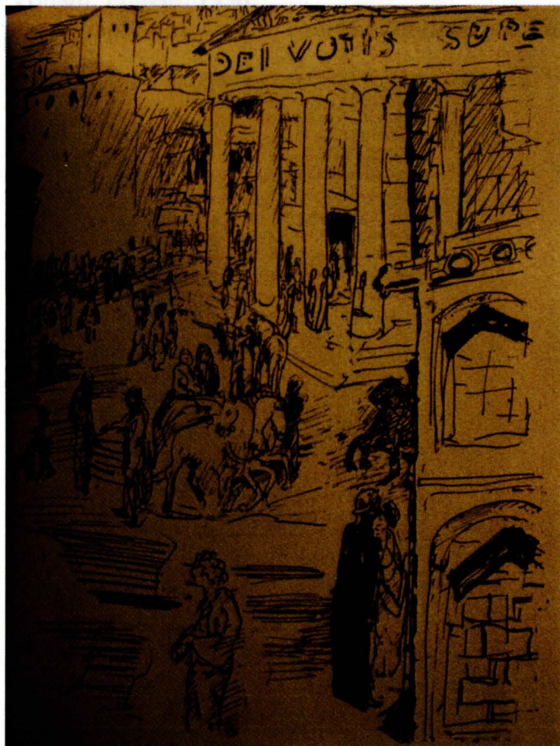Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

46. Puy, Jean. "Quand il est monté sur son grand cheval méchanique." Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Le Père Ubu à la guerre*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1923.
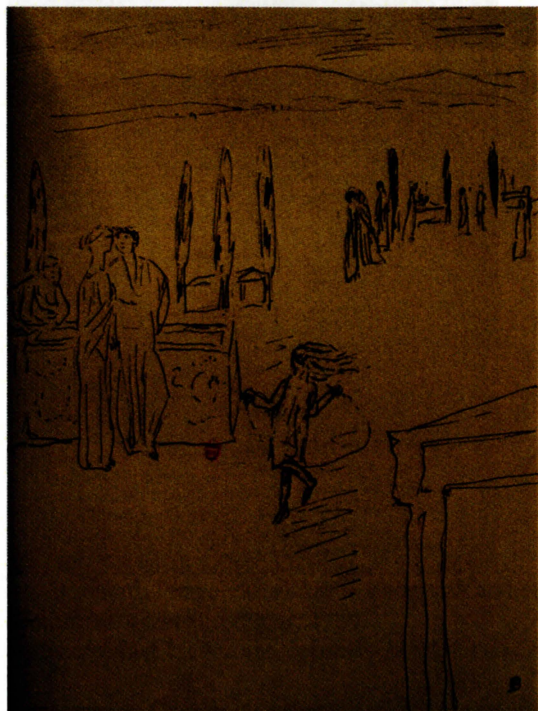Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

47. Puy, Jean. "Untitled." Mixed etching from Vollard, Ambroise. *Le Père Ubu à la guerre*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1923.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

48. Puy, Jean. "Les remises de decorations." Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Le Père Ubu à la guerre*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1923.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.
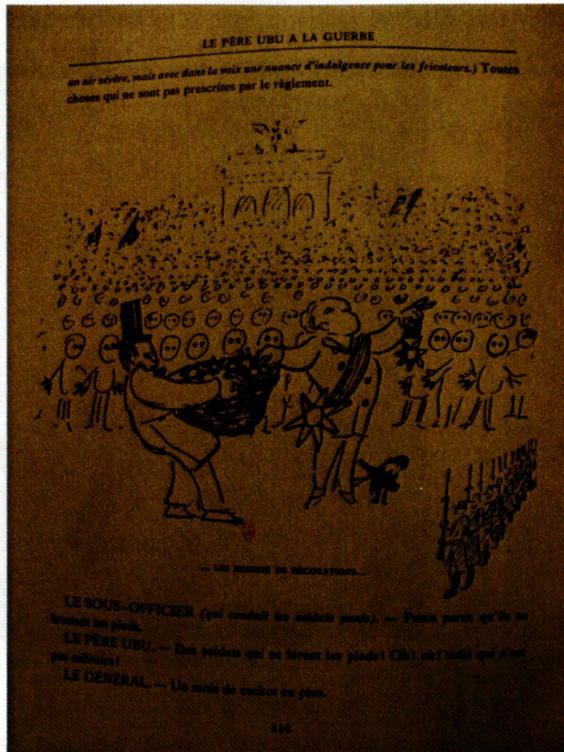
49. Puy, Jean. "Quel beau mort ferait le Père Ubu!" Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Le Père Ubu à la guerre*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1923.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.
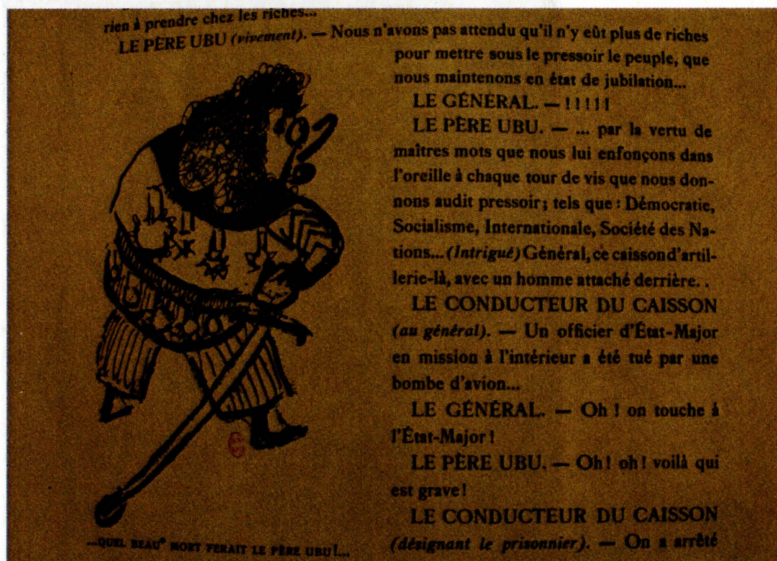
50 - 51. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled" Lithograph and etching from Vollard, Ambroise. *Sainte Monique*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1930.
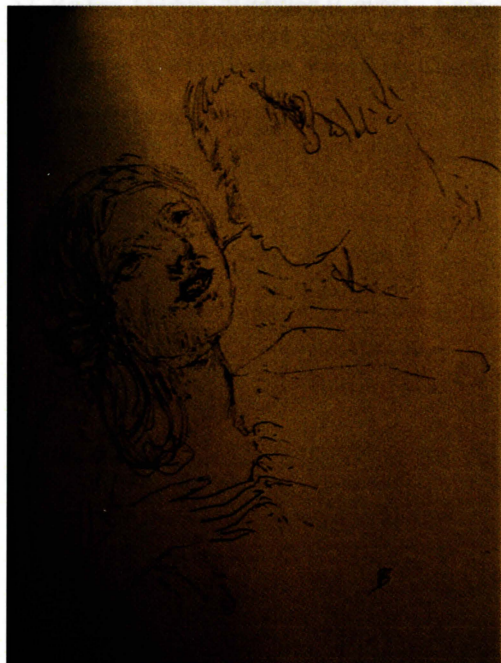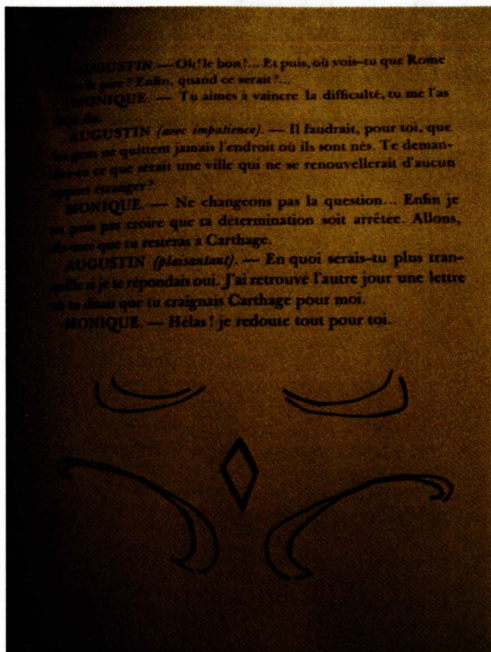Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

(lithograph – no cuvette)   (etching – cuvette)

52. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled" Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Sainte Monique*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1930.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

53. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled" Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Sainte Monique*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1930.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

54. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled" Lithograph from Vollard, Ambroise. *Sainte Monique*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1930.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.

55.

56.

55. Bonnard, Pierre. "Untitled" Lithograph and etching from Vollard, Ambroise. *Sainte Monique*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1930.
Photographed by Author, courtesy *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* – do not reproduce.
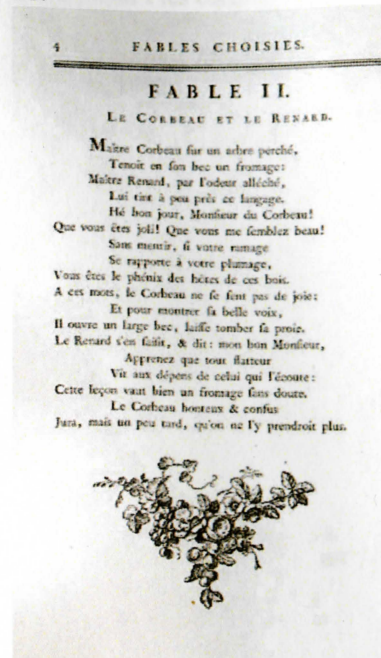
56. Jombert, Charles Antoine Jombert. "Untitled type ornament." Engraving from Fontaine, Jean de la. *Falbes choisis mises en vers*. Paris: *Imprimerie Nationale*, 1755-1759.
As reproduced in Blumenthal, Joseph. *The Art of the Printed Book 1455-1955: Masterpieces of Typography through Five Centuries from the Collections of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York*. Plate 74. Boston: David R. Godine, 1994.

57. Redon, Odilon. "Untitled (Cover)." Lithograph from *À Gustave Flaubert*. Brussels: Deman, 1888.
As reproduced in Eisenman, Stephen F. *The Temptation of Saint Redon: Biography, Ideology, and Style in the* Noirs *of Odilon Redon*. Page 211. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
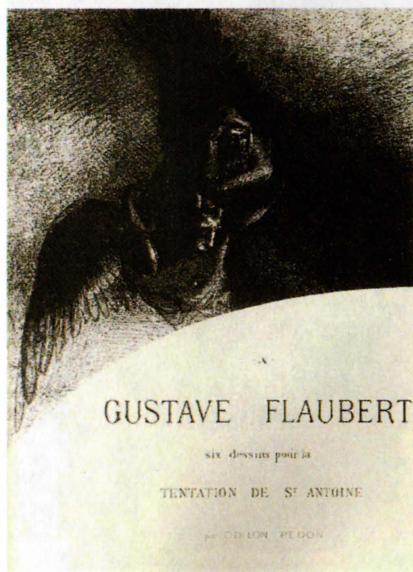
58. Redon, Odilon. "Il doit y avoir, quelque part, des figures primordiales, don't les corps ne sont que les images." Lithograph from *À Gustave Flaubert*. Brussels: Deman, 1888.
As reproduced in Eisenman, Stephen F. *The Temptation of Saint Redon: Biography, Ideology, and Style in the* Noirs *of Odilon Redon*. Page 215. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

59. Redon, Odilon. "La mort: Mon ironie dépasse toutes les autres!" Lithograph from *À Gustave Flaubert*. Brussels: Deman, 1888.
As reproduced in Eisenman, Stephen F. *The Temptation of Saint Redon: Biography, Ideology, and Style in the* Noirs *of Odilon Redon*. Page 214. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
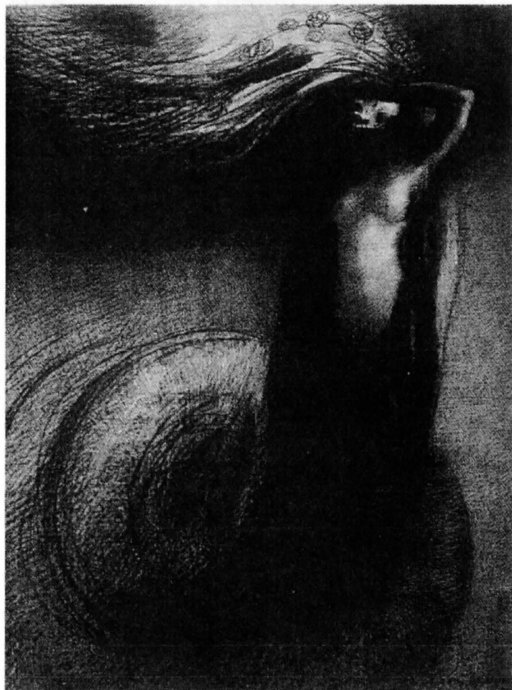
60. Redon, Odilon. "C'est dans la Thébaide …" Lithograph From Flaubert, Gustave. *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1938.
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61. Redon, Odilon. "Saint-Antoine: Quel est le but de tout cela?; Le Diable: Il n'y a pas de but!" Lithograph From Flaubert, Gustave. *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*. Paris: Ambroise Vollard, Éditeur, 1938.
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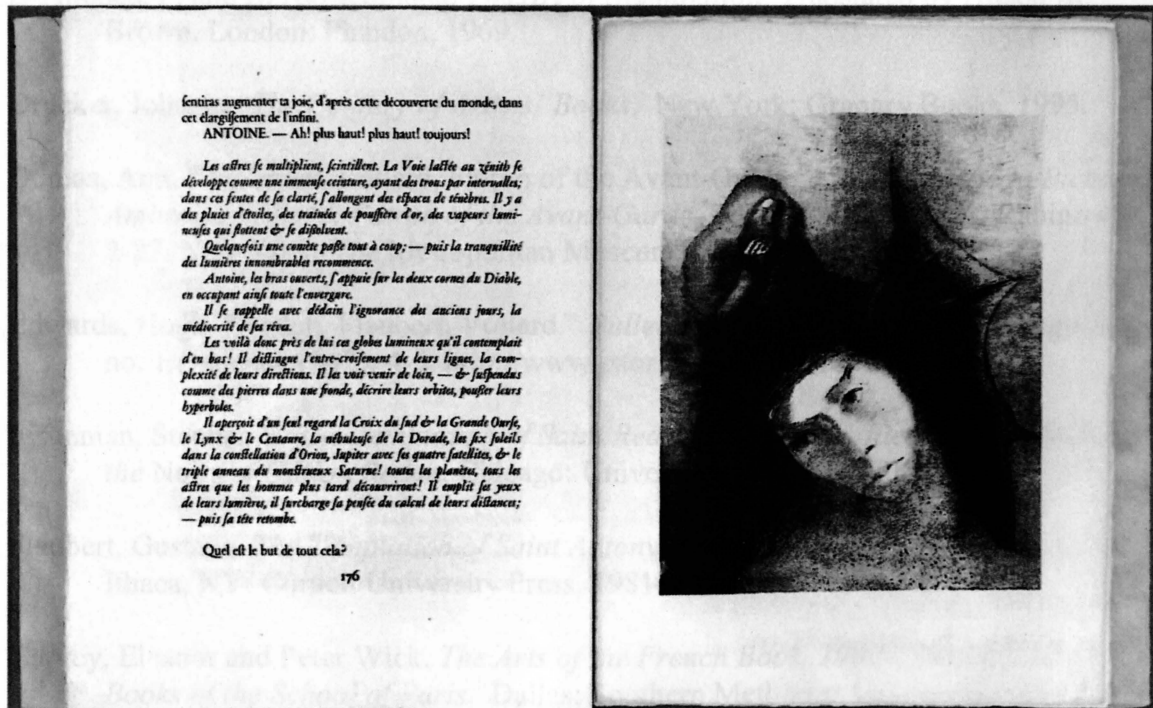
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