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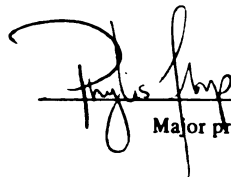
H. Siddons Mowbray, The Crystal Gazers

presented by

Carol Lee Gregorich

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

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H. SIDDONS MOWBRAY
THE CRYSTAL GAZERS

By

Carol Lee Gregorich

A THESIS
Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

H. SIDDONS MOWBRAY THE CRYSTAL GAZERS

By

Carol Lee Gregorich

This thesis deals with the iconography of H. Siddons Mowbray's painting, Crystal Gazers. Mowbray's biographical data is given within the milieu of the American art scene of the late nineteenth century. The Pre-Raphaelite movement is also discussed in relation to Mowbray as he executed paintings with carefully articulated physical detail and he was also, due to the Pre-Raphaelite painters influence, interested in Italian Trecento art. The American Aesthetic movement, a direct result of Pre-Raphaelitism's emphasis on decorative surface, is examined as Mowbray was a key figure in promoting Aestheticism in his early-to-mid career. Mowbray's involvement in the American Renaissance is also discussed.

The major findings of this study are the connections between Pre-Raphaelitism, Rosicrucianism, Symbolism, American Aestheticism, and the American Renaissance. Avant-garde art movements in Europe influenced expatriated American artists, like H. Siddons Mowbray, who brought these styles back to the United States and changed American art.

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INTRODUCTION

The raison d'être for this thesis is a late-nineteenth century painting, Crystal Gazers, c. 1895, (Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University-14" x 6½") by Harry (Henry) Siddons Mowbray (1858-1928), who was a French-trained, American artist. While searching for the meaning to this intriguing image, I discovered, through the analysis of its formal qualities, similarities in style and concept between American and European art movements during this era.

Major art movements of the nineteenth century that are discussed in this thesis in relation to Mowbray have already been thoroughly studied. The phenomenon of expatriated artists has been documented by both Albert Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century, and Helene Barbara Weinberg, The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme and by numerous other scholars noted in this paper's bibliography. Pre-Raphaelitism, a movement with which Mowbray shares some formal qualities, has been diligently researched and presented in William Fredeman's The P.R.B. Journal. This source is particularly valuable because it documents the Pre-Raphaelite painter's interest in the decorative, flattened surface of early Italian Renaissance art which

influenced Mowbray and other Aesthetic movement artists some ten or so years later.

American art movements to which Mowbray has been linked have also been well documented. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition catalog, In Pursuit of Beauty, is an essential source for research on the American Aesthetic movement; it has an excellent bibliography. Edwin H. Blashfield, an artist, a contemporary of Mowbray and a participant in the American Renaissance-a style that grew in importance toward the turn-of-the-century, wrote Mural Painting in America. While the tone of this book is often pedantic, it describes the interest in civic duty many American artists felt at the time. The impact of this concept went into decline shortly thereafter with the advent of Modernism. And finally, Rosicrucianism and Symbolism have been discussed by Robert Pincus-Witten in Occult Symbolism in France and this source is helpful in giving a detailed account of mysticism and the admiration for academic styles of art via Joséphin Peladan (1858-1918). Mowbray's Crystal Gazers also exhibits some affinity to Symbolism and Mysticism.

Thus the aim of this study is not to reiterate what has already been discovered but instead to establish connections between these various movements in Europe and America. The Crystal Gazers is the focus of this study since its arrangement of surface pattern and use of color-

though still representing a recognizable subject--was an initial step toward early-twentieth-century abstraction.

Though relatively obscure now, Mowbray is an important artist to consider because his career encompassed many styles and sources encountered abroad and in the United States during a time that prefigured a radical change in how art is perceived. Mowbray is also significant because he is representative of a type of popular artist who was influenced by avant-garde European ideas whose styles he mimicked.

My contribution to the study of late nineteenth-century art is in establishing the connection between European and American art movements and the overlap of academic and avant-garde styles and ideas through the career of H. Siddons Mowbray and other artists of his circle. Since Mowbray is not a well-studied artist I made use of archival sources, most which are not readily available to the general public. His memoirs, published posthumously by his wife, chronicle his mural career in depth, but they shed little light on the artistic inspirations for his earlier easel paintings which contain much more evocative imagery.

I believe that Mowbray was important--though perhaps retardataire to twentieth century eyes--because of his interest in spirituality and Symbolism. Though there is no specific primary evidence to support this interest, there are numerous clues in his paintings. Some of his early to mid-career paintings evoke a feeling of mysticism that will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Many other American and European artists in the mid-to-late nineteenth century also searched for a meaning to life and a more spiritual existence to replace what Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and the Industrial Revolution had taken away. European and American artists were more receptive to spiritual ideas in the later nineteenth century, many originating from Eastern religions and philosophy. Darwin's evolutionary theories of how humankind originated seemed to have taken the mystery out of life for many. This accelerated a loss of faith in organized religion, and a lack of spirituality in general, that had been growing ever since the Enlightenment's emphasis on science and a mechanistic conception of the universe.

Spiritual emptiness and escape from mass industrialization in the late nineteenth century also turned Americans and Europeans toward a Romantic yearning for a less hectic, idyllic Medieval past and to the near and far East. The Industrial Revolution, ironically, also gave more people the leisure time to contemplate the meaning of life, as it gave them the money to spend on art objects and more interest in art appreciation. It was into this milieu that H. Siddons Mowbray was born and flourished as an artist.

CHAPTER ONE

Harry (Henry) Siddons was born August 5, 1858, in Alexandria, Egypt, to English parents--Eliza Fade Siddons and John Henry Siddons, an English banking house representative, about whom little else is known.¹ Harry's father died of sunstroke in 1859 in Alexandria.² Mrs. Siddons moved to America with Harry, intending to live with her sister, Annie Fade Mowbray, and brother-in-law, George Mordey Mowbray (1814-1891), in Titusville, Pennsylvania.³ But in 1863 Mrs. Siddons was killed by an exploding oil can while staying with friends in Brooklyn before going on to Titusville.⁴ Harry was subsequently adopted by his aunt and uncle, the Mowbrays.

On October 29, 1868, the Mowbrays moved to North Adams, Massachusettes, near the Berkshire Mountains.⁵ George Mowbray, a chemist and explosives expert who worked with nitroglycerine, was interested in blasting for the Hoosac Tunnel.⁶ Here in North Adams, at the age of eleven, Harry went to the Drury Academy, which he attended on and off until 1878.⁷ The Drury Academy provided a more stimulating environment than Titusville and here his earliest creative efforts are

noted in his memoirs, as he drew maps and decorated them with whales and other sea motifs.⁸

At age fourteen, in 1873, Harry was accepted to West Point, where he began to study art under Professor Robert W. Weir (1803-1889).⁹ Mowbray illustrated Taps, a book of songs and stories about West Point under the publisher, Homer Lee of New York City.¹⁰ Since he didn't like much else about military life, Mowbray left West Point in 1876.

During the winter of 1877 Mowbray studied with Alfred C. Howland (1838-1909), a landscape painter who was also a member of the National Academy of Design in New York City.¹¹ Howland, then living in Williamstown, Massachusettes, had studied art in Paris and other European cities. Since Mowbray wished to paint figures rather than landscapes he decided to pursue his artistic training in Paris, a location noted for fine art schools.¹²

On October 26, 1878, Mowbray sailed for Liverpool from New York City on the ship City of Berlin with Paris as his final destination.¹³ On board he met Carl Sommerhoff, an acquaintance of the artist Stanley Mortimer, who urged Mowbray to look up Mortimer while in Paris.¹⁴ Although the two men looked for Mortimer at the Atelier Bonnat, a studio popular with American art students, they met William A. Coffin instead, an artist and writer for Scribner's Magazine who became one of Mowbray's closest friends.¹⁵

Impressed with the portraits done by Léon Joseph Florentin Bonnat (1833-1922), which Mowbray saw at the 1878 Universal Exposition in Paris, he began studying with Bonnat by 1879.¹⁶ Mowbray's artistic training was successful for in the spring of 1880 his Young Bacchus (1879) was hung in the French Salon.¹⁷

In his memoirs Mowbray wrote about his student days with a great deal of fondness, sometimes more for the social life than his artistic training. He found Bonnat's studio "...the most depressing hole I had ever seen."¹⁸ Plaster casts were still used there and students went through months of repetitive drawing before they were ever allowed to touch paint. Of his social life he wrote: "Few had much money, many were horribly poor, yet there was a little world here in Paris into which we fitted as naturally as the millionaire in the Champs Elysée, a little world of infinitesimal cheap lodgings and restaurants and a social circle that accepted the blouse and béret as the correct form, café concerts...all within range of the smallest purse."¹⁹

Mowbray was also able to travel frequently while living abroad. Sometime in 1882 he went to Spain with Henry O. Walker (1843-1929) and Thomas Dewing (1851-1938), "...the latter already a full-fledged artist who was enjoying a European holiday."²¹ They visited the Prado museum in Madrid where Mowbray copied Velázquez's The Spinners and Las Meninas and also admired Surrender at Breda.²² He didn't find Goya very interesting, but he liked the early Renaissance paintings that he saw

there.²³ Mid-nineteenth century British artists, notably the Pre-Raphaelites, and art writer, John Ruskin (1819-1900), especially liked the surface patterns and spiritual devotion of the early Italian Renaissance artists and incorporated those ideals into their works. Mowbray was probably aware of British aesthetic ideas either before or upon his arrival in Paris.

On this same trip through Spain Mowbray also sketched the Alhambra at Granada, though the site didn't live up to the Romantic expectations Mariano Fortuny (1838-1874) and Henri Regnault's (1843-1871) exotic paintings had raised for him.²⁴ In his memoirs though, he wrote that "...romance and sentiment cover it."²⁵

While visiting Seville, Mazos, a fellow student at the Atelier Bonnat, acted as tour guide. He took them to a "Miséréré" at the Cathedral of Seville, sung by Gayarré, a great tenor at the time.²⁶ Mowbray was quoted as saying, "The impression I then received, of the soaring symbolisms of the Gothic, will never be forgotten by me."²⁷

Summers between 1880-82 were spent with the family of Achille Bordes, a French student at the Atelier Bonnat. The family lived "...at Rablay, twenty miles south of Anger in Anjou."²⁸ The two students also spent part of a winter in Algiers sometime between 1880-83. Once again Mowbray found this foreign country to be somewhat less spectacular than he had imagined.²⁹

Sometime in the early 1880s Mowbray shared a studio with another classmate from the Atelier Bonnat, Walter Gay (1856-1937). Their studio was on the Avenue de Villier which was an expensive district for established artists such as Bastien Le Page (1848-1884).³⁰ Under Gay's influence Mowbray painted genre scenes of a Louis the Thirteenth Cavalier which was sold to Arthur Tooth, a London dealer.³¹ Dulac, a model shared by both Gay and Mowbray, also posed for the artist, Jean-Léon Gérôme, whom Mowbray met about this time and from whom he asked and took advice.³²

Mowbray soon moved to cheaper quarters on the Rue Fromontier which had a more artistic "atmosphere." Mowbray, writing about the poverty of his student days, remarked that "...in the little world of the student, like the Orient, poverty has no stigma."³³ In 1883 Mowbray's studio was located near the Place Pigalle, where Edgar Degas (1834-1917) and other famous artists worked. The Etchers and The Story were painted at this time and accepted for exhibition at the Salon of 1883 in Paris.³⁴

Toward the end of Mowbray's student days in Paris he took a studio at 28 Rue Rodier with another student of Bonnat's, Ralph Selby from California. Here Mowbray painted Alladin and Lalla Rookh which were purchased by Parisian dealers, Arnold and Tripp.³⁵

Around 1885 Mowbray left for New York City on the ship Alsacian from Liverpool.³⁶ His ageing father and a desire not to become a dealer's painter moved him to return to the United States.³⁷

After Paris New York City seemed depressing and squalid. Mowbray missed the Parisian cafes and night life of his school days.³⁸ But soon after his return to the United States in 1885, he became an active member in the artistic community by joining The Society of American Artists.³⁹ At that time the "Society" was a more radical organization than other groups of American artists and most of its members had trained abroad. Mowbray recalled that the group "...flourished for many years as an active, liberal body."⁴⁰ in response to the more conservative National Academy of Design. Mowbray, however, was also an associate of the "Academy" in 1888⁴¹ and a member in 1891,⁴² foreshadowing his later career conservatism.

Since few American artists at the time could support themselves exclusively with the sale of easel paintings, most taught art classes to supplement income from sales. Mowbray was no exception. He was an instructor at the Art Students League from 1886-1900,⁴³ and was also a teacher for the Gotham Art Students School, founded by lithographer John Sharp.⁴⁴ Additional income came from the illustrations he supplied to Harper's and Scribner's magazines. From 1890-96 Mowbray was an instructor at the Metropolitan Museum School of Art.

Thomas B. Clarke (1848-1931), an influential American collector, supported many American artists, including Mowbray, when it was not popular to do so. In 1884 he purchased a few of Mowbray's works that can best be described as Oriental fantasies. Clarke also acquired The Sisters (1886) and in 1887 Evening Breeze which won the Clarke prize in 1888.⁴⁵ This award was sponsored by Thomas B. Clarke, for the first time in 1884, through the National Academy of Design and awarded to the best American figure painting exhibited each spring. Clarke also owned Mowbray's paintings Alladin and The Last Favorite.⁴⁶

On June 7, 1888 Mowbray married Helen Amelia Millard, a classmate from the Drury Academy.⁴⁷ It was also at this time that he became disenchanted with "...the photographic realism of the school in which I was educated..."⁴⁸ and he wanted instead to do murals similar to those of the Italian Renaissance. (In other words Mowbray changed his style from a painstaking method of recreating physical reality to a more stylized, flatter surface with a symbolic quality comparable to early Italian Renaissance altarpieces.)

Mowbray received his first mural commission in 1889 from Thomas B. Clarke: an overmantle for the New York Athletic Club on Travers Island.⁴⁹ It was titled The Month of Roses and though a minor accomplishment it led to more important mural commissions which occupied him for the rest of his life. Among the only easel paintings Mowbray executed after the late 1880s were a series of fifteen paintings

of The Life of Christ in 1924. These paintings resemble his mural style which Royal Cortissoz described as "...follows Florentine precedent..." rather than the photo-realism of his earlier easel paintings.⁵⁰ These works are indeed very much like the early Renaissance artists whose paintings he had admired at the Prado.⁵¹

Harry Siddons Mowbray died January 13, 1928 in Washington, Connecticut at the age of 86.⁵²

The American art scene, one hundred years before Mowbray's career began, consisted mainly of primitive portraits painted by itinerant artists. Americans wanted to see their own likeness portrayed and most didn't have much interest in European art. Benjamin West (1738-1820) was one of the first and most popular American-born painters to go abroad. In the 1760s he made England his second home and became the friend of George III, the reigning British monarch. West specialized in Neo-classical paintings, Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus (c. 1768) for example, that were much admired all across Europe.⁵³

After the United States rebelled in 1812 and was no longer dependent on Great Britain, she began manufacturing her own resources. This promoted a feeling of greater Nationalism which resulted in artists staying at home to train. In the early part of the century, artists such as George Caleb Bingham (1811-1879) and Thomas Cole (1801-1848), celebrated the fresh, unspoiled American landscape or painted scenes of American life. Bingham's Fur Traders Descending the Missouri (1845)

exemplified the latter, while Cole's The Oxbow (1836) illustrated the former. To go to Europe to train, they believed, might actually taint and spoil the fresh, new American style with decadent influences.⁵⁴

After 1840 or so, with peace and prosperity at home, Americans had a growing desire to seek culture abroad.⁵⁵ With the invention of the steam engine in the 1820s, travel by boat and train became more comfortable and less time consuming so that well-to-do Americans could travel abroad and not feel quite as provincial and insecure about the lack of Raphaels and Titians in their collective past. Roger Stein also notes that America's greater access to lithographs and engravings by European masters at this time fueled this growing interest in art.⁵⁶

American artists soon followed wealthy tourists and increasingly began to study overseas. Paris, renowned for its avant-garde and strong academic tradition, was a key site. So was Rome, which had much of the great art of the past. Munich and Düsseldorf were also popular with American artists, and these cities were noted for their teachers and schools specializing in genre and history painting.⁵⁷

Since the United States was such a young nation art schools were not as plentiful or as prestigious as their European counterparts. France was an especially attractive place to study because Napoleon had established a consistent pedagogy in 1801⁵⁸ and in 1793, following social reforms instituted by the French Revolution, the Louvre Palace became the national art gallery of France, and a museum collection of

international renown. Thus art students in this environment had a stable base of instruction as well as access to great masterpieces to enrich their study. Another enticing feature of French schools was their use of nude figure models; both male and female. Puritanical Americans disapproved of nudity and "sensuality," and nude models were rarely used. Schools in the United States were more likely to utilize plaster casts from Greek and Roman statues exclusively since nude models were so hard to find.⁶⁰

In France, American students could attend the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the government sponsored academy, if they were able to pass the entrance exams. They could also work in private studios for a nominal fee with instruction from established artists. Typical French academic teaching methods consisted first of drawing from engravings and plaster casts of Greek and Roman statuary, and when these were satisfactory, the student was allowed to work from a live model of either sex. In this way the students first learned to draw, and then, when they were accomplished in this mode, to paint, which usually began with adding color to a drawing.⁶¹

E.H. Blashfield (1843-1936), an American artist who studied with the French painter, Léon Bonnat, was trained in a French academic manner and later wrote books and gave lectures in the United States. In his book on mural painting Blashfield wrote of how he was sent by Bonnat to make drawings of Marc Antonio Raimondi's engravings after Raphael to discipline his drawing skills.⁶² Blashfield continued to

advocate this approach in his own instruction as described in his book, Mural Painting in America, published in 1913. He recommended that students draw for one or two years before painting in a traditional academic manner. He also noted "...the necessity for harmony between architect, sculptor, and painter..." which was one of the aspects of the French academic reforms of 1863.⁶³ Blashfield admired the French methods a great deal and seems to have fully absorbed a majority of their ideas, and drew upon them extensively in writing his book.

Academic teaching methods led to a very tight, finished style and a consistency in imagery that some artists and art critics thought trite. Compare Dewing's A Young Sorcerer (1877) to Gay's Nude Figure of a Boy (1877) and also to Mowbray's illustration for Orisons, a poem from a Harper's Magazine dated 1895.⁶⁴ All three figures have a similar contrappostal stance and facial profile.

Albert Boime believes "That the issue of originality provided the basis of the reforms of 1863 was demonstrated by the controversy touched off in the aftermath."⁶⁵ These reforms in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts instituted by Comte de Niewerkerke (1811-1892) and Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1817-1878) in 1863 had two different effects on both French and American students. For one, art history, archaeology, and other more diverse courses were offered so that students would understand history and what role they would assume in the future, so that they would fit into the Western artistic tradition.⁶⁶ For another, the

reforms had painters, sculptors, and architects receiving instruction in other areas of artistic disciplines to eliminate specialization and "...break down the barriers between craftsman and artist..."⁶⁷ A new emphasis was placed on how these three areas worked together when executing a commission for a painting, a building, or a sculpture.

American artists who returned to the United States from European schools in the 1870s and 1880s with new ideas, however, were not accepted and welcomed by older artists who had been trained almost exclusively in the United States. In reaction the younger, expatriated artists founded the Society of American Artists in 1877. This group was organized by Richard Watson Gilder (1844-1909), Helena De Kay (1848-1916) who was Gilder's wife, Walter Shirlaw (1838-1909), Wyatt Eaton (1849-1896), and Augustus Saint Gaudens (1848-1907).⁶⁸

The older American artists held control of the National Academy of Design, which, when established, had been a rather radical organization. Founded in 1826 by such artists as Thomas Cole (1801-1848), Asher B. Durand (1796-1886) and Samuel F.B. Morse (1791-1872), the National Academy of Design was a reaction to the American Academy of Fine Arts which had been established in 1802.⁶⁹

Even as late as 1903 tradition still held out for the National Academy's supporters. Harrison N. Howard, in the Chicago-based periodical Brush and Pencil, reviewing the National Academy's 78th annual exhibition praised the American landscape tradition at least three

times. He also commented that "...following its usual practice, the Academy offers very few examples of the nude."⁷⁰ In the review of the 79th annual exhibition in February 1904 the author stressed that the paintings were from international sources, expatriated artists, and complained about their "foreignness."⁷¹ He also went as far as to comment that "...expatriated Americans have contributed nothing really important to the evolution of national culture."⁷²

By 1906 several of the members of the Society of American Artists had taken control of the National Academy of Design and changed the rules so much that the radical Society was no longer useful as a vehicle for protest and thereafter "...ceased to exist."⁷³

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

¹Herbert F. Sherwood, ed., H. Siddons Mowbray, Mural Painter 1858-1928 (Stamford, Connecticut, n.p., 1928), p. 10.

²AAA: roll 1898, frame 18.

³Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. 13 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 298.

⁴Sherwood, p. 11.

⁵Malone, p. 297.

⁶Sherwood, p. 12.

⁷Malone, p. 298.

⁸Sherwood, p. 13.

⁹AAA: roll 503, frame 1142, DeWitt McClellan Lockman Papers incorrectly gave name as Professor John P. Weir. H. Barbara Weinberg, The American Pupils of Jean-Léon Gérôme (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1984), p. 83. According to Weinberg it was Robert W. Weir who was an art instructor at West Point.

¹⁰Doreen Bolger Burke, American Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. III (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), p. 326. Burke gives the title as West Point Tic Tacs: A Collection of Military Verse, published in 1878.

¹¹Sherwood, p. 17.

¹²Sherwood, p. 17.

¹³Sherwood, p. 18.

¹⁴Sherwood, p. 18.

¹⁵Sherwood, p. 19.

¹⁶AAA: roll 503, frame 1145.

¹⁷Sherwood, p. 25.

¹⁸Sherwood, p. 19.

¹⁹Sherwood, p. 21.

²⁰Burke, p. 326.

²¹AAA: roll 503, frame 1147.

²²Sherwood, p. 27.

²³Sherwood, p. 27. See Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts. The Quest for Unity (Detroit Institute of Arts: 1983), p. 125 for a more detailed account of the influence of Velásquez on late nineteenth century artists.

²⁴Sherwood, p. 29.

²⁵Sherwood, p. 29.

²⁶Sherwood, p. 29.

²⁷Sherwood, p. 32.

²⁸Sherwood, p. 40.

²⁹The Quest for Unity, p. 125.

³⁰Sherwood, p. 36.

³¹Sherwood, p. 36.

³²Sherwood, p. 37.

³³Sherwood, p. 38.

³⁴Sherwood, pp. 38-9.

³⁵Sherwood, pp. 42-3.

³⁶Burke, p. 326.

³⁷Sherwood, p. 44.

³⁸Sherwood, p. 46.

³⁹AAA: roll 1898, frame 6.

⁴⁰Sherwood, p. 47.

⁴¹AAA: roll 1898, frame 7.

⁴²Barbara Ball Buff, "The National Academy of Design," Antiques 117 (February, 1980): 336.

⁴³AAA: roll 1898, frame 7.

⁴⁴Sherwood, p. 48.

⁴⁵Sherwood, p. 55.

⁴⁶Malone, p. 298.

⁴⁷Malone, p. 298.

⁴⁸Sherwood, p. 56.

⁴⁹Sherwood, p. 56.

⁵⁰Royal Cortissoz, "H. Siddons Mowbray, American Mural Painter," Scribner's Magazine, May, 1928, p. 50.

⁵¹AAA: roll 2092, frames 462, 485, show two reproductions from this series.

⁵²AAA: roll 1898, frame 74, from May 6-29 of 1928 a memorial exhibition was held at the Century Club, 7 West 43rd Street in New York City. Frame 1092, another exhibition was held in 1930 at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Frame 77, in 1966 the Washington Art Association in Washington, Connecticut held an exhibition of Mowbray's paintings.

⁵³James T. Flexner, The Light of Distant Skies (New York: Dover, 1969), see chapter one.

⁵⁴James T. Flexner, That Wilder Image (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1962), p. xii.

⁵⁵Roger B. Stein, John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 4 and Elizabeth Ewing Tebow, Arcadia Reclaimed: Mythology and American Painting (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1987), p. 25.

⁵⁶Stein, p. 5.

⁵⁷Lois Marie Fink, "American Artists in France, 1850-1870," The American Art Journal 5 (November, 1973): 32.

⁵⁸John B. Harrison and Richard E. Sullivan, A Short History of Western Civilization, 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 658.

⁵⁹William H. Gerds and Linda Ferber, The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1985), pp. 109+, Susan P. Casteras article notes examples of contemporary British paintings shown in the United States that were censored due to their nudity and sensuality.

⁶⁰Susan Hobbs, "Thomas Wilmer Dewing: The Early Years, 1851-1885," The American Art Journal 2 (Spring, 1981): 10. For historical precedent see James T. Flexner, The Light of Distant Skies (New York: Dover, 1969), p. 159 which notes that most Americans disapproved of sensuality and nudity in art all through the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. See also H. Wayne Morgan, New Muses, Art in American Culture 1865-1920 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), pp. 36-7 which discusses Thomas Eakins' use of nude models at the Pennsylvania Academy and why he was asked to resign for such activities.

⁶¹For a more detailed explanation of academic teaching methods see Albert Boime, "The Teaching Reforms of 1863 and the Origins of Modernism in France," Art Quarterly 1 (Autumn, 1977): 1-39 and also H. Barbara Weinberg, "Nineteenth-Century American Painters at the Ecole-Des-Beaux-Arts," The American Art Journal 4 (Autumn, 1981): 66-84.

⁶²Edwin H. Blashfield, Mural Painting in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 216.

⁶³Blashfield, p. 9.

⁶⁴Hobbs, 1981, figures 11 and 12 and for Mowbray an illustration for the poem by Louise Imogene Guiney, "Orisons," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, June, 1895, p. 75.

⁶⁵Albert Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century (London: Phaidon, 1971), p. 182.

⁶⁶Fink, p. 36.

⁶⁷Boime, Art Quarterly, p. 4.

⁶⁸In Pursuit of Beauty-Americans and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), pp. 418-19.

⁶⁹Buff, p. 383. See also Eliot Clark, History of the National Academy of Design. 1825-1953 (New York, 1954).

⁷⁰Howard N. Harrison, "The National Academy of Design 78th Exhibition," Brush and Pencil 11 (February, 1903): 378.

⁷¹"The National Academy of Design 79th Annual Exhibition," Brush and Pencil 13 (February, 1904): 300.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁷³Sherwood, p. 47.
Benjamin West-Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus: Flexner, 1969-plate 2.

CHAPTER TWO

H. Siddons Mowbray's Crystal Gazers, c. 1895, (Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University-14" x 6½") depicts two young women, a brunette and the other with lighter reddish hair, placed one in front of the other. The brunette, standing behind, rests her chin and left hand on her companion's shoulder. Both wear long gowns. The brunette has a brick red dress with a floral pattern and only her sleeve and shoulder are visible. The other figure wears a spring green dress of a solid color and a salmon pink floor-length robe with a floral motif. She alone wears a gold head band.

The two women gaze into a small crystal ball held by the lighter haired woman. A round mirror in the upper right corner of the composition repeats the shape of the crystal ball. The surface of the mirror seems neither concave, as in a window into the room, nor convex, as the mirror in Jan Van Eyck's Gionvanni Arnolfini and His Bride (1434).

The mirror hangs on a wall covered with wallpaper that has a tulip motif in blue, mustard, green, and rust. One quarter of the way down the wall is a border of blue, four-petal flowers. Below this is a portion of

a couch of a brick red color with the same light blue four-petal flower pattern. In the lower left is a small piece of a decorative border on what would logically be the floor of the room.

The two figures are pushed so far into the foreground, while being directly placed against the background, that the painting has no middle ground making the space of the painting appear ambiguous. Another ambiguity is the contrast of the painterly texture of the two figure's garments, the sfumato on their faces and hair and the lack of clarity of the mirror's image contrasted with the linear crispness of the mirror's frame, the tulip motif in the wallpaper, the women's hands and the crystal ball which has no image distinguishable to the viewer. Their lack of readable facial expression also precludes any clear reading of what they see in the crystal ball.

Mowbray's Crystal Gazers seems to hint at some story but since the crystal ball, mirror and facial expressions are ambiguous, it evokes qualities of the Symbolist movement of the late nineteenth century. Reinhold Heller identifies subject matter common to the Symbolists as "...dreams, silence, hair, women as femmes fatales or as femmes fragiles, mysticism and death..."¹ Another reason to link the painting to Symbolism is that it doesn't hold any profound and readable "moral truth" to enlighten a viewer like a Pre-Raphaelite painting might. It does, however, share visual characteristics of Pre-Raphaelitism which includes carefully articulated detail, fidelity to nature, and a Medieval

quality in the style of the gowns and flattened surface of the painting itself.

Iconographically the Crystal Gazers may be related to at least three of Mowbray's other paintings. The first, Florial (c. 1896), a tondo with a diameter of 24" exhibited at the Knoedler Gallery in February of 1897² has been described as "...graceful maidens treading a measure to the sound of pipe and tambourine."³ and also "...in the foreground of which, amid apple blossoms and iris, appear two female figures clad respectively in garments of pink and green."⁴ The garments of "pink and green" could be similar to those of the Crystal Gazers. Both paintings also use specific flowers which Mowbray could have chosen for their symbolic meaning as it was popular at the time to do so. Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, used flower symbolism extensively in his paintings.

The painting most closely related in iconography to the Crystal Gazers is Mowbray's Le Destin (1896), described as follows:

Guided by destiny in the form of a woman who floats inconspicuously at one side, four young women are industriously applying themselves to the task of weaving the intangible thing we call life, but vaguely conscious of the almost invisible threads by which they are united to the fate who governs them so absolutely.

Three young women bend over a tapestry frame on which they are weaving the story of life. Peace and War are seen pictured in the woof and the three maidens hold threads which lead upward to the hand of a shadowy figure of Fate, who appears at the extreme right of the composition. At the other end of the frame a 4th young woman who holds a pair of shears in her hand, turns from the tapestry to look

into a crystal globe in which she reads a horoscope. The setting for the figure is a grassy terrace and beyond the white marble balustrade which encloses it appears a distant prospect of meadow, woods, and mountains. The sky shows the fading greenish, yellow evening and pink clouds lie in masses near the horizon. The attention given to detail, the care with which the minor things in the composition are painted and the general aspect of the canvas show an influence on the painter derived from a love of the sincerity of the "Italian primitives." On the other hand, in the color scheme he makes no effort whatever to imitate the time faded tints of the early pictures. Figures and landscapes are painted with the frankest and freshest of palettes.

There is great charm in the picture, sufficient reality in the rendering to escape the charge of "idealism" which good painters shun and there is sufficient imagination to satisfy the demands of those who appeal for a subject and a meaning in the art of today.⁵

Le Destin is larger in scale and seems to bridge the gap between Mowbray's earlier easel paintings of the 1880s and his mural commissions which were executed during the late 1890s. The use of the female figure with a crystal ball in Le Destin is similar to the Crystal Gazers but the painting as a whole is in the style of his murals: flatter and stylistically similar to early Italian Renaissance paintings. The allegorical, mythological narrative quality is also more closely tied to his mural programs.

The subject of Le Destin may have come from two sources. Diego Velázquez's (1599-1660) The Spinners, a painting Mowbray had seen and copied at the Prado museum in Madrid, depicts female figures spinning in the foreground and weaving tapestries in the background. The composition of the Crystal Gazers may

also have been influenced by The Spinners. As previously mentioned, the Crystal Gazers portrays two figures pushed into a shallow foreground space while they are placed directly against the background. (Though the Crystal Gazers is extremely realistic in detail, its flatness imparts a rather surreal quality.) Velásquez's The Spinners has a frieze-like foreground and it also has an ambiguous spatial quality that is sort of dreamlike. Here, as in the Crystal Gazers, there are figures in the foreground, little to no middle ground and a background that is on the same plane as the foreground. In The Spinners the "background" is rather like looking into a window in which there is a scene of female figures weaving a tapestry. It is unclear as to whether this event is really happening in the same time and place as that of the women toiling away at spinning in the foreground since the figures do not interact with each other, hence the ambiguity. This "window" effect perhaps could be related to the mirror in the upper right of the Crystal Gazers even though in this case it is unreadable, but both allude to something more.

A renewed popularity of Velásquez's paintings at the time in European circles, and American painters studying abroad such as Mowbray, were probably influenced by this. The frieze-like quality was also attractive as it was a component in the admiration for Greek and Roman art at the time.

A second source for Le Destin could also be related to a painting by the Renaissance artist Guercino at the Villa del Aurora in Rome, which Mowbray had seen and admired in the early 1890s. Specifically there is one painting of the "fates" that is contained in this building.

It has been theorized that another painting, The Sisters (1885), may actually be another name for the Crystal Gazers and in that case, the Kresge painting would have a date ten years earlier.⁶ The Sisters is mentioned in sources but never reproduced, and the provenance, so far, is untraceable. (Like Superman and Clark Kent these two paintings never appear in the same room together). Mowbray painted The Alchemist in 1884 and The Bat in 1886, an "...allegorical picture depicting nymphs in the woods with a bat-man entwined in the net..."⁷ These two works date to around the time that he left France. He was possibly influenced by Rosicrucian ideas and mysticism, while in France and soon after his return to New York. Sadayoshi Omoto also suggests that "...one may claim for Mowbray the distinction of being the American counterpart of the exhibitions to the Salons de la Rose + Croix (1892-1897) promoted by Joséphin Peladan, the Rosicrucian revivalist."⁸

In 1873, five years before Mowbray went to France, Helene P. Blavatsky (1831-1891), a Russian immigrant, founded the

Theosophical Society in New York to promote Theosophy, a blend of oriental religion, western occult, and nineteenth-century spiritualism.⁹ Americans in the mid-nineteenth century had already been exposed to mystical ideas in the form of Transcendentalism through writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). A comparison between Emerson's philosophy and Theosophy demonstrates the parallellism of their concepts. Both focus on an all encompassing godhead. To Emerson that meant nature embodied as the "Emersonian oversoul" and in Theosophy as a universal "oneness." This harmonious "oneness" is demonstrated in art in which people looking at Theosphical images would all get the same harmonious "feeling." Both also share Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, as points of departure.

As early as 1856 Emerson wrote a poem called Brahma, in which he writes of "The supreme God of Hindu mythology and, in later theological developments, the divine reality itself, once thought to comprehend the entire universe which is the manifestation of that reality."¹⁰ Lines thirteen and fourteen are as follows:

The strong gods pine for my abode
and pine in vain the Sacred Seven

In occult symbolism the number seven is sacred and Helene P. Blavatsky devoted ample space in her theosophical writings to the meaning of number symbolism.

According to Robert P. Welsh "For modern Theosophy the sphinx, especially asleep, represents the lower, material world of illusion (the Hindu Maya)."¹¹ This lower, material world of illusion described in Theosophy recalls Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" in which humankind is chained to life on earth in a dark cave: the images we see are mere shadows and illusions that are untrue and only philosophers rise above this world to see the light of true wisdom.

Elihu Vedder (1836-1923) is one American artist who was using the image of the sphinx early on. Though he claimed that he wasn't a "mystic" he had "...read much in a desultory manner..."¹² and was acquainted, during the 1870s in Perugia, with two Englishmen, William Davies--who was interested in Buddhism and reincarnation--and Edwin Ellis--who also delved into mystic thought.¹³ Vedder painted The Questioner of the Sphinx in 1863, an image in which a lone man in the desert presses his ear to the lips of the sphinx, perhaps to find answers to that which is unknowable. "In The Questioner of the Sphinx we are confronted with an unanswered mystery."¹⁴

A much later image, c. 1900, by the Czech painter Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957), a Theosophist, called The Way of Silence also has a sphinx motif. A lone man wanders between a row of colossal sphinxes under a starry, night sky. In the bottom right, on the

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plinth of the nearest sphinx, are the words "Quam Ad Causum Sumus" or: Why Are We Here? Both The Way of Silence and Vedder's image have a lone male figure, a night sky, a sphinx image, and an unanswered question. Vedder's painting is probably not a direct model for Kupka but it demonstrates the prevalence of mystic thought both in Europe and America in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

Another image by Elihu Vedder with occult overtones is The Dead Alchemist (1868) in which "...the psuedo scientist dies after having discovered the secret of making gold."¹⁵ Alchemy was a thematic obsession with Rosicrucian groups throughout history.¹⁶ They have always been fascinated with the mystical change of matter from one substance to another.¹⁷

H. Siddons Mowbray may also have had an interest in alchemy which is hinted at in his painting, The Alchemist of 1884. His sketching at the Alhambra in Spain as a student may also relate to alchemy. If he was interested in the building enough to consult the book, Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra (1847) by Jules Goury and Owen Jones, as many Aesthetic artists did in their pursuit of decorative patterns and motifs, he may have read about alchemy in the text.

Strangely enough, there is an area in the Alhambra called the "Hall of the Two Sisters"--which referred to two large pieces of

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marble of equal size which are embedded in the pavement in that area. The king of Granada responsible for the decoration in this area was Yusuf I, who ruled from AD 1334-1353 at which time he was stabbed to death as he was praying in a mosque.¹⁸ Even more interesting is this passage from Goury's text:

So vast were his (Yusuf I) revenues, a considerable portion of which he expended on various buildings for the ornament of his capital, that, like his contemporary, Alfonso the Learned, he was reputed to owe his riches to the transmutation of metals, (alchemy) the source of the vast treasures lavished on the decoration of the Alhambra being otherwise incomprehensible to simple minds.¹⁹

A comparison between one of Mowbray's magazine illustrations, Nourmandee, for a poem by Thomas Bailey Aldrich from an 1892 issue of Harper's Magazine with a plate (plate XVIII of volume 2) from Goury and Jones's Alhambra folios is illuminating. Both contain the same geometric floral motif; a symmetrical flower with eight petals rather similar to a poinsetta. On Mowbray's illustration there is also Arabic script and Yussuf is the name of the "host" in the poem. Aldrich's poem is the tale of an Oriental host who entertains his guest with a beautiful dancing girl named Nourmandee. Mowbray may have been chosen as an illustrator as he had already done several paintings with Oriental motifs by that time. One can only guess whether the content of poem or illustration had any occult meaning as neither man explicitly said so.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES

¹Reinhold Heller, "The Art Work as Symbol," in Barry Friedman, Fernand Khnopff and the Belgain Avant-Garde (New York: Barry Friedman Ltd., 1983), p. 11.

²AAA: roll 1901, frame 1200.

³AAA: roll 1898, frame 1057.

⁴AAA: roll 1902, frame 47.

⁵AAA: roll 1902, frame 47.

⁶Sadayoshi Omoto, "A Mowbray Painting in the MSU Collection," Kresge Art Center Bulletin 8 (May, 1975): no pagination.

⁷AAA: roll 1898, frame 1116.

⁸Omoto, no pagination.

⁹Maurice Tuchman, ed., The Spiritual in Art-Abstract Painting 1890-1985 (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), p. 388.

¹⁰The Norton Anthology of Poetry, revised shorter ed., (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975), p. 324.

¹¹Tuchman, p. 79.

¹²Reich, Marjorie, "The Imagination of Elihu Vedder-As Revealed in His Book Illustrations," The American Art Journal 1 (May, 1974): 39.

¹³Reich, p. 42.

¹⁴Reich, p. 41.

¹⁵Reich, p. 41.

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¹⁶Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), p. 36.

¹⁷It is not surprising that many artists during the nineteenth century were fascinated by alchemy as it has affinities to Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and also to Theosophy. See Mina Roustayi, "Getting Under the Skin-Rebecca Horn's Sensibility Machines," Arts Magazine 5 (May, 1989): pp. 65,68. Like Theosophy, alchemy is Utopian in that it is a desire to devise a Universal medicine to eliminate suffering. Through alchemy-by granting immortality-and in Theosophy a universal harmonious feeling is attained. Alchemy is neo-Platonic in that it attempts to change "the obscurity of ignorance into the light of wisdom" (Horn-footnote 22) just as in Plato's theory.

¹⁸Jules Goury and Owen Jones, Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra...1843-45 (London: n.p., 1842), p. 11.

¹⁹Goury and Jones, p. 11.

CHAPTER THREE

The relevance of Pre-Raphaelitism to this thesis lies in the similarities in content and style between Mowbray's mid-career easel paintings and the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites. Mowbray's easel paintings also fit into the American Aesthetic movement, discussed in Chapter Four, which was a direct result of the British aesthetic ideal of "art for art's sake." British aestheticism's visual form was partially derived from the surface decoration inherent in Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Like the works of the Pre-Raphaelites, Mowbray's easel paintings, dated from the mid-1880s to the mid-1890s, are extremely realistic and detailed as, for example, in Harem Scene (1884). Some of his paintings also have a narrative quality and are, more often than not, literary. This is especially true of his series of paintings based on Irishman Sir Thomas Moore's Romantic novel, Lalla Rookh (1817)¹. Harem Scene formed part of this series.

To support himself early in his career, Mowbray also did magazine illustrations which, by nature, are narrative. His Annunciation, to accompany a poem in an 1897 issue of Harper's, has a distinct literary tone. It uses lilies to symbolize the Virgin,

depicts a female figure with a Pre-Raphaelite facial expression, ignores correct perspective, and is more flattened and symbolic, similar to early Italian Renaissance painting. It closely parallels Pre-Raphaelite paintings like Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Ecce Ancilla Domini (1849).

Pre-Raphaelitism was born in England in the mid-nineteenth century by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), John Everett Millais (1829-1896), James Collinson (1825-1892), Frederic George Stephens (1828-1907), Thomas Woolner (1825-1892), and William Michael Rossetti (1829-1919). The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's aim was "...to create an art fresh, sincere, and free from what they considered to be the tired and artificial manner propagated by the successors of Raphael in the academies."² In France, where Pre-Raphaelite paintings were featured at the Universal Exhibition of 1855, Millais's Ophelia (1851-2) was shown. Perhaps expatriated American painters, like H. Siddons Mowbray, who did figure paintings in a Pre-Raphaelite manner saw the style in France at a later date as it wasn't popular in the United States.

Although at mid-century Mowbray was too young to read art criticism and theory, other Americans knew of the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood through the writings of Oxford-educated John Ruskin from his 1851 pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism, as well

as from his many books which were widely circulated in the United States. Like the Pre-Raphaelite painters, Ruskin was opposed to art academies. In his third volume of Modern Painters (1848) he took a critical stand against Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) of the English Royal Academy.³ Ruskin, disgusted by Industrialism and modern life, looked to the past and promoted the ideal of the artist as a Medieval craftsman. Ruskin believed that the Gothic artists contributed to the spirituality and good of the community by making art in service to God, by painting altarpieces or building cathedrals. Perhaps Ruskin despised a type of workshop or school, like the English academy, that had standardized types and reduced the spiritual fervor of the late Medieval era.

The American periodical, The Crayon (1855), edited by William Stillman (1828-1901), featured Pre-Raphaelite ideas. William Michael Rossetti contributed articles written from London. Another publication, The New Path (1863), edited by Clarence Cook (1828-1900), also promoted American and English Pre-Raphaelitism and Ruskin's aesthetic ideals. American artists who were involved with the Association for the Advancement of Truth in Art were responsible for the writing and publication of The New Path and they also "...adopted the English Brotherhood of 1848 as a model for their own defiance of convention in painting and as mentors in a strict attention to the appearance of objects out of doors."⁴ The

paintings of the American Pre-Raphaelites, as opposed to those of the British movement, are characterized by landscape, as in Thomas Farrer's (1839-1891) Mount Tom (1865), and still-lives in their natural environments that looked as if they had just been stumbled upon; John William Hill's (1812-1879) Bird's Nest and Flowers (1867) is an example of this type.

Visually, a typical British Pre-Raphaelite painting has a superreal fidelity to natural detail. Each blade of grass, each individual flower on a flowering plant, each leaf on a tree, each hair on a human head is finely executed as, for example, in William Holman Hunt's The Hireling Sheperd (1851).⁵

Most British Pre-Raphaelite paintings also had a narrative component that viewers could read for their didactic messages. In The Hireling Sheperd for example, "...ruddy-faced from beer in his hip keg, pays court to the sheperdess, the lamb on her lap makes a meal of green apples, just as the sheep in the background succumb from being allowed to feed on corn."⁶ The painting is "...a private allegory of the need for mid-Victorian spiritual leaders to cease their sectarian spiritual disputes and become true sheperds tending their distracted flocks."⁷

In another instance Malcolm Warner cites John Everett Millais's A Huguenot (1851-2) as a prime example of British narrative and how "Indeed, British art in general aspired to the

condition of storytelling."⁸ Warner describes A Huguenot as having "...begun life as a picture simply of lovers whispering by a garden wall. Acting on the advice of his friend Holman Hunt and his own acute knowledge of public taste, Millais finally gave his lovers a moral dimension and a very specific narrative content. The full title as printed in the Royal Academy exhibition catalog was A Huguenot, on St. Bartholomew's Day, Refusing to Shield Himself from Danger by Wearing the Roman Catholic Badge, and there was a passage from a history book to go with it."⁹ Warner also mentions a Hogarth revival at the time that the Pre-Raphaelites were painting and their participation in it, in particular the artists Hunt and Brown.¹⁰ Hogarth, in his time, was especially noted for narrative paintings with a moral content.

Quite often the Pre-Raphaelites based their paintings on poems and novels which gave their works a literary and Romantic quality. Esther (1886), by Millais, was a subject from the book of Esther, chapter five, Verse I of the bible. "Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the King's house..."¹¹ In this painting Esther, in a long yellow robe stands in front of a royal blue curtain between two white pillars. Her long auburn hair is a thick, wavy texture -★ that was especially favored by Pre-Raphaelite painters, in particular those of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Millais's Ophelia (1851-2), which

is taken from one of Shakespeare's plays, is another literary painting popular within this group.¹²

An English painter associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, who also did paintings of a literary bent, was Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898). Though his style didn't have the verisimilitude of most Pre-Raphaelite painters, at times it had an Italian primitive quality similar in color, composition, and lack of correct perspective to that of Trecento artists. King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid (1884) is a painting inspired by an Alfred Lord Tennyson poem based on a Medieval ballad.¹³ The king sports Medieval armor and the colors used in the painting are similar in quality to those used by Fra Filippo Lippi, an early Renaissance artist. Walter Hamilton, a contemporary of Burne-Jones, wrote, "A wierd sort of sensation of being carried back into the Middle Ages is engendered by long gazing at these pictures, for in that temple of art of which Burne-Jones is the high priest, one seems to feel the priestly influence stealing over one, as when standing before some piece of glorious glass-painting, in an old Gothic Cathedral."¹⁴

Another characteristic of Pre-Raphaelitism is especially apparent in paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti; a woman as the embodiment of an "ideal" in a Neo-Platonic vein. A certain type of woman, long, thick hair and a far away, dreamy expression symbolized his ideal of womanhood. In his painting, Venus

Verticordia (1864-68), his image of the goddess of love "...he rendered his floral motifs and female model, a voluptuous, long-necked, heavy-tressed type adored by the PRB, with near biological accuracy..."¹⁵ The realism of his paintings are matched with an equal emphasis on the symbolic content "To Rossetti, the roses stood for sensual love, as did the foreground honeysuckle, since its flowers attract bees."¹⁶

Walter Hamilton described the type of female that "Aesthetic" (i.e. Pre-Raphaelite) artists favored as: "...a pale distraught lady with matted dark auburn hair falling in masses over the brow, and shading eyes full of love-lorn languor, or feverish despair; emaciated cheeks and somewhat heavy jaws; protruding upper lip, the lower lip being indrawn, long crane neck, flat breasts, and long thin nervous hands."¹⁷

Although the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood had excluded women, they objectified and idealized them in their paintings. These same British artists were also highly regarded and admired by Sâr Joséphin Peladan and the artists of the Rose + Croix, another fraternal organization of artists who held exhibitions in France from 1892-97. Peladan, in his writings about the Rose + Croix Exhibitions, even invited the Pre-Raphaelite artists to France. By comparing the "manifestos" and ideals of both groups distinctive parallels can be drawn between the two.

Romanticism is apparent in the statements issued from both organizations. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood formulated a "list of immortals."¹⁸ A prerequisite for inclusion is that the artist should be a "genius" in the Romantic sense. Peladan, in his Rose + Croix manifesto (1891-published in Le Figaro), declared that "The Salon de la Rose + Croix will be a temple dedicated to Art-God, with masterpieces for dogma and for saints, geniuses."¹⁹ Peladan's manifesto reflects his admiration for Leonardo da Vinci. So too did the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as Leonardo was included in their "list of immortals."

An interest in Catholicism was also shared between the two groups. On the Pre-Raphaelite's "list of immortals" Jesus Christ received four stars, denoting His importance. The painters that they most admired were Italian Christian artists (i.e. Catholic) and they chose Ghiberti, Fra Angelico, Raphael, Leonardo, Michaelangelo, and the Venetians as favorites, as did John Ruskin. Peladan also favored the Italian primitives and wanted to see a flatter, more linear style similar to theirs. He also rejected the cabbalistic (mystic-semitic) aspects of Rosicrucianism and said in 1891: "In 1886 we wrote: 'Merodack, Nebo, Alta, Tammuz, these Orphic figures, I have raised them in my work to foretell of the solemn day when the Rose + Croix, cleansed of Masonic contamination, purified of all heresy, and blessed by the Pope, will

be welded to the key of Peter...!"²⁰ Peladan was from an extremely Catholic family; his father wrote religious poetry and, as a child, Peladan tried to forcefully baptize a Jewish schoolmate.²¹

Symbolism was also used extensively by both groups of artists. Pre-Raphaelite paintings were usually more easily read and they used familiar imagery similar in type to Italian Trecento narrative paintings. Christ in the House of His Parents (1849-50) by Millais is characteristic of this form of symbolic narrative. Christ, as a child, is in his father's carpenter shop and he has a nail wound in the palm of his hand alluding to his Crucifixion. On the right of the composition, John the Baptist comes running with a bowl of water to wash the wound.

The symbolism used in a typical Rose + Croix work of art is much more esoteric. Fernand Khnopff's (1858-1921) Istar (1888), an illustration for Peladan's novel of the same name, shows a nude woman against a post with her head thrown back in ecstasy as her thighs disappear and change into a mask of a contorted face. This new literature was directed more to the avant-garde culture rather than the Bible-reading general public so it was not as easily understood and accepted as were the Pre-Raphaelite paintings.

Knopff, incidentally, was noted for his Anglophilia and his association with the Pre-Raphaelites and Edward Burne-Jones.²² He even did two paintings in response to poems by Michael and Dante

Gabriel's sister, Christina Rossetti. I Lock the Door Upon Myself (1893) and Who Shall Deliver Me? (c. 1891).²³

Both groups of artists were recognized and discussed in their day. The Pre-Raphaelites were popularized by John Ruskin and many of their paintings were in major exhibitions in England, France, and the United States. As for Peladan's Rose + Croix exhibitions Robert Pincus-Witten notes that "...a portion of the central dome of the official Salon held at the Palais du Champ de Mars of 1893, was reserved for the Rosicrucian group."²⁴ A traditional Italianate style could be found in many paintings of this circle so that visually they were not too radically different from academic salon paintings.

Eventually, however, the Pre-Raphaelites and the Rosicrucians fell out of favor, and even today, they are largely ignored in art historical textbooks. The Rosicrucians, almost completely forgotten today, would have been more popular and acceptable in their day than Gauguin, Van Gogh, or even the Impressionists are today.²⁵

Criticism of the Pre-Raphaelite's "...engrossment in didactic content, their obsession with photographic detail, and their indifference to formal problems..."²⁶ eventually led to their downfall in the art historical hierarchy. Walter Hamilton notes their lack of concern with technical problems such as perspective, but he also cites "...the general tone of colours employed, give the

majority of the paintings an appearance which can best be indicated as resembling the Japanese style of art, a resemblance which is also to be found in the furniture and costumes adopted by Aesthetic people."²⁷

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

¹Gwendolyn, Owens, "H. Siddons Mowbray-Easel Painter 1858-1928," Art & Antiques 3 (July-August, 1980): 86.

²Horst de la Croix and Richard Tansey, Gardener's Art Through the Ages, 8th ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p. 850.

³Roger B. Stein, John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 43.

⁴William H. Gerdts and Linda Ferber, The New Path: Ruskin and the American Pre-Raphaelites (New York: The Brooklyn Museum, 1985), p. 13. See also pp. 109-133. Not only did Americans read about Pre-Raphaelite paintings but they were also able to see a few examples in 1857 and 1858 when a group of recent British paintings toured several larger American cities including New York. This same event is also mentioned in In Pursuit of Beauty-Americans and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), p. 327.

⁵The Germ, a short-lived publication written and illustrated by the seven founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, was originally supposed to have the title, "Thoughts on Nature," perhaps owing to their ideology about veracity to physical appearance. See William Fredeman, The P.R.B. Journal (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975) for indices with this and other alternative titles to The Germ.

⁶H.H. Arnason, History of Modern Art, 3rd ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1986), p. 30.

⁷Arnason, p. 30.

⁸Malcolm Warner, Comic and Aesthetic: James Tissot in the Context of British Art and Taste in Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz, ed., James Tissot (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1984), p. 32.

⁹Warner, p. 32.

¹⁰Warner, p. 32.

¹¹Nineteenth Century European Paintings and Drawings (London: Sotheby's, June, 1990), p. 72.

¹²Ophelia was shown in the 1855 French Exposition and was also displayed in the Manchester Exhibition in England in 1857 where it was admired by American painter John LaFarge. He liked the Medieval quality and brilliant colors. See Henry Adams, John LaFarge, 1830-1870. From Amateur to Artist (Ph. D. diss., Yale, 1980), p. 130.

¹³de la Croix and Tansey, p. 851.

¹⁴Walter Hamilton, The Aesthetic Movement in England (New York: AMS Press, 1971 - reprint from London, 1882), p. 24. The British Pre-Raphaelites and their circle were very highly regarded in the late 1880s by French artists who were associated with Sâr Joséphin Peladan's Rose + Croix exhibitions in the 1890s. The Rose + Croix artist who specifically comes to mind in regard to a stained glass effect in his paintings is Georges Roualt (1871-1958). He may have been directly affected and influenced by the Medieval revival paintings of Edward Burne-Jones. See Arnason, pp. 105-6; Roualt was extremely religious and he was apprenticed to a stained glass artisan.

¹⁵Arnason, p. 30.

¹⁶Arnason, p. 31.

¹⁷Hamilton, p. 24.

¹⁸Fredeman, p. 107.

¹⁹Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), p. 206.

²⁰Pincus-Witten, p. 209.

²¹Robert Pincus-Witten, p. 16. Music by the composer, Richard Wagner who was anti-semitic, was played at some of the Rose + Croix exhibitions. For more on anti-semitism see Pincus-Witten for explanation of the "War of the Two Roses," the split between the Catholic (Peladan) and Jewish factions of the Rosicrucians.

²²A few critics in the early 1890s also regarded the Pre-Raphaelites as Symbolists. See Reinhold Heller, "The Art Work as Symbol," in Barry Friedman, Fernand Khnopff and the Belgian Avant-Garde (New York: Barry Friedman Ltd., 1983), pp. 10-11.

²³Maurice Tuchman, ed., The Spiritual in Art-Abstract Painting 1890-1985 (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), p. 405.

²⁴Robert Pincus-Witten, Les Salons de la Rose Croix 1892-1897 (London: Picadilly Gallery, 1968), no pagination.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, The Quest for Unity (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983), p. 26.

²⁷Hamilton, p. 24.

CHAPTER FOUR

Two important American art movements with which H. Siddons Mowbray can be identified following his return from Paris are the Aesthetic movement, dating from the 1860's to the 1890's, and the American Renaissance, the 1870's to the 1920's.

The Aesthetic movement was materialistic, being concerned more with surface appearance than intellectual or spiritual content. Industrialization brought new wealth to the middle-class patrons of this movement, and with it a desire to fill and decorate their homes to impress others with their taste and culture. Wealthy American businessmen saw themselves as the new Medicis whose desires to acquire objects to glorify themselves linked their image to this ideal of the cultured mercantile leaders of the past.¹

Repose (1885-95) by Mowbray is an excellent example of an Aesthetic painting. Aesthetic colors, which include intense greens and pinks, mauve, olive green, teal, brick red, and mustard yellow are favored here and in other paintings of the period. Mowbray used Oriental motifs, such as a pseudo-Buddhist prayer wheel in the upper left of the composition here, and in many of his other

paintings from the period. Repose also contains Greek motifs: an Aegean cityscape, and an amphora in the foreground. This mixing and matching of styles and periods was typical of Aesthetic eclecticism. Styles and patterns were used out of their historical context since Aesthetic artists were more concerned with pattern and the decoration of surfaces than the content or with promoting a moral truth or historical accuracy.

Aestheticism also appeared as "...static and self-contained, suggesting...a mood, usually of languor, wistfulness and sensuality."² In Repose, Mowbray's two women fit this description as do those of English artist Albert Joseph Moore (1841-1893). Moore's painting Beads (1875) which shows two female figures reclining on a couch in a horizontal composition was a type Mowbray admired and after which he patterned some of his paintings. This painting by Moore, like Mowbray's Repose, used surface ornament, women in Greek-style drapery, and pottery in the foreground. In another of Moore's paintings, The End of the Story (1877), he portrayed in a vertical format (34" x 12") a standing female figure draped in a Greek gown just like an ancient statue. The main concern here, however, was with color harmony, decorative floral patterns, and an "art for art's sake" attitude much like what Whistler promoted.³

Not only were Greek and Roman motifs used in paintings but they were also sometimes used for frieze designs for wallpaper.⁴ The upper decorative band below the ceiling in domestic interiors was the most popular area for the rhythmic flat pattern which had an effect similar to a Greek temple. The artists of the Aesthetic movement strove to bring art and decoration into every part of daily life, to create a more cultured existence, one that reflected the new elevated cultural status of its patrons.

In the United States the Aesthetic movement was inspired by English industrial design from the South Kensington school, seen at the Centennial exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. David Huntington wrote that "It had precipitated the design reforms that by 1876 had established England as a leader of the Western world in the decorative arts."⁵ These English reforms of the mid-nineteenth century motivated the French reform of 1863 which, among other issues, stressed better industrial design and collaboration between artists.

Oriental motifs were popular in the United States in Aesthetic designs due in part to Commodore Perry's voyage (1835-1855) which opened Japan in 1854 to trade with the West, but also because of the interest in Japanese art that art critics and painters such as American John LaFarge (1835-1910) shared during the mid-nineteenth century.⁷ The reasons for those artist's interest in

Japanese art were due to their perception of its being "...a mixture of the antique and modern that fascinated the art communities."⁸ and also to its "spirituality." ("Japanese art seemed most important in expressing mystery and undefined feeling."⁹) At the same time in France the Goncourt brothers led a Rococco revival which featured Chinese decorative motifs and a concern with interior decoration.¹⁰

Many English artists and critics also admired Oriental patterns and "...to the English much of the appeal of Japan was that it still presented a kind of living Medieval culture in which art and industry had not yet become separated."¹¹ At mid-century John Ruskin was also a part of the English Medieval revival. Ruskin, like the Goncourts, looked to the past because he abhorred present day reality and was disgusted by industrial mass production. But his was a more spiritual longing, while the Goncourts, according to Debra Silverman, were motivated more by their irritation over the French Revolution's destruction of their claim to nobility.¹²

English Pre-Raphaelite artists, who had garnered critical support from Ruskin, also inspired the American Aesthetic movement if one considers their parallel concern with surface decoration. Medieval revival qualities are apparent in English Pre-Raphaelite works in the flatness of surface, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's use of patterns and even gilding on some of his

paintings. The Pre-Raphaelite artist's hope was to recapture the innocence and sincerity of the Trecento artists through a revival of some of their techniques.

Aestheticism had Oxford-educated Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) as its unofficial spokesman in the United States. Wilde was another student of Ruskin who had heard the latter's lectures on Florentine art at Oxford. In 1882-3 Wilde traveled to the United States to "...possibly instruct and elevate our rich, clever, but not particularly cultured transatlantic cousins."¹³ Walter Hamilton, writing in 1882 from London, quoted American reporters on Oscar Wilde's lecture tour:

Mr. Wilde was not at all adverse to the American process of interviewing, and began by informing the reporter that he had come to the United States to lecture on the "Renaissance," which he defined as the revival of the intimate study of the correlation of all arts.¹⁴

By the time Wilde arrived in the United States some Americans had already noted the importance of early Italian art. In 1870 Yale University had purchased James Jackson Jarves' (1818-1880) collection of Italian primitives.¹⁵ Jarves, who was another Ruskin admirer, had written a book of art criticism that included discussion of Trecento and Quattrocento artists. In 1879 Reverend James Mason Hoppin, a Ruskin disciple who was an art history

professor at Yale, and who had been its divinity chair in 1864, gave an introductory address on the topic: "The Early Renaissance."¹⁶

Americans admired early Renaissance art of the Trecento with its colorful, gilded altarpieces and icons. Perhaps it took expatriated Americans who had been to France, and especially in Rome, and had seen later Renaissance collaborative interiors and murals to convey to the rest of the United States the grand scale of this type of art. H. Siddons Mowbray's decoration of the University Club Library in New York City (1904) is a good example of an American monumental decorative interior. The decorative program was based on Quattrocento artist Pinturicchio's decorations of the Borgia apartments in the Vatican, which Mowbray had seen in the early 1900s.

Art and sketches from the excavations of Heinrich Schlieman and others at the time were published and available in the United States for study. These forms and designs, which had been used for Aesthetic motifs in wallpaper and easel paintings, were used during the American Renaissance to visually compare the democracy of the United States to those of ancient Greece and Rome so that America could fit into the Western lineage of great civilizations.¹⁷ Mowbray's design for the Appellate Court House in New York (1896), titled Transmission of the Law, demonstrated his concern for history during the American Renaissance. It was

painted to resemble a frieze similar to the Parthenon and was described as "...a rhythmic succession of groups, separated by winged figures, and representing the evolution of Law, down to our own times."¹⁸

Mural painting became popular during the late nineteenth century as a means of public edification and enlightenment for the untutored masses as every great civilization had done in the past. Pageants with performers in Greek dress were also popular in this era as another means for public education.¹⁹ Elizabeth Tebow argues that many of these murals and pageants took the form of allegories using mythology because "Mythology provided a sophisticated and universal language to commemorate national accomplishments."²⁰ The same author also notes that Sir James Frazer's The Golden Bough, an account of myth within different cultures, was very influential at the time.²¹ Typical of this was Mowbray's Ceres and Proserpine, a mythological mural commissioned by F.W. Vanderbilt for his house in Hyde Park, New York. Another example of Mowbray's use of mythology is the Gunn Memorial Library in Washington, Connecticut which was described as "...a sort of antechamber of Greek mythology."²²

In the United States the inspiration for murals was derived mainly from French sources. H. Wayne Morgan notes that "...mural painting in Europe took on fresh life at mid-century especially in

France where a major renovation in Paris...provided outlets for muralists."²³ French Beaux-arts design reforms of 1863 called for art for the lower classes to inspire and educate them. The reform also wanted more cooperation on the part of artists and craftpersons to bring industry and fine art together. Barbara Weinberg suggests that "It is reasonable to imagine that the committment to collaboration which are so notable a feature of the American Renaissance were in some measure provoked and reinforced by the Ecole's curriculum reforms of 1863."²⁴

The many American students--E.H. Blashfield is especially notable--who had studied in France brought reform ideas back to the United States. Maybe they were also inspired by the Rose + Croix exhibitions and Symbolist art which called for a more "ideal" art, a more linear style--as opposed to a more painterly style like Impressionism--and having a "mural-like" quality (a flatness and massing of large color areas). At the turn-of-the-century Blashfield wrote: "Our technique was acquired in the main in Paris ateliers, and it is applied to the creation of wall paintings which derive largely from the study of the Italian work of the Renaissance, and which in turn is in some cases modified by admiration for the art of Puvis de Chavannes."²⁵

Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), a French academician who favored classical themes, was venerated by Rosicrucian and

Symbolist artists and also by Americans who admired an academic style. He, along with Henri Martin (1860-1943), a French artist who exhibited with the Rose + Croix group, did murals in the United States. Blashfield wrote of Martin: "Here...you have Henri Martin, and behold you find him beginning with close drawing in which all the details, although kept relatively flat, are made out and modeled..."²⁶

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

¹Elizabeth Ewing Tebow, Arcadia Reclaimed: Mythology and American Painting (Ph. D. diss., University of Maryland, 1987), p. 30.

²Malcolm Warner, Comic and Aesthetic: James Tissot in the Context of British Art and Taste in Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz, ed., James Tissot (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1984), p. 33.

³Louise d'Argencourt and Douglas Druick, ed., The Other Nineteenth Century, Paintings and Sculpture in the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Tannenbaum (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1978), p. 135.

⁴In Pursuit of Beauty-Americans and the Aesthetic Movement (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), p. 20.

⁵Founders Society Detroit Institute of Arts, The Quest for Unity (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1983), p. 15.

⁶For a more detailed overview of French industrial design and the 1863 reforms see Debra Silverman, Nature, Nobility, Neurology: The Ideology of Art Nouveau in France, 1889-1900 (Ph. D. diss., Princeton, 1983).

⁷See Henry Adams, John LaFarge, 1830-1870: From Amateur to Artist (Ph. D. diss., Yale, 1980).

⁸H. Wayne Morgan, New Muses, Art in American Culture 1865-1920 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), p. 65.

⁹Morgan, p. 66.

¹⁰See Silverman, note 6 above, for the Goncourt's Rococco revival.

¹¹Adams, p. 356.

¹²Silverman, p. 26.

¹³Walter Hamilton, The Aesthetic Movement in England (New York: AMS Press, 1971-reprint from London, 1882), p. 100.

¹⁴Hamilton, p. 100.

¹⁵See footnote 16 in The Quest for Unity, p. 45.

¹⁶Roger B. Stein, John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 236-7.

¹⁷In Pursuit of Beauty-Americans and the Aesthetic Movement, p. 20.

¹⁸Herbert F. Sherwood, ed., H. Siddons Mowbray, Mural Painter 1858-1928 (Stamford, Connecticut: n.p., 1928), p. 69.

¹⁹Trudy Baltz, "Pageantry and Mural Painting-Community Rituals in Allegorical Form," Winterthur Portfolio 3 (Autumn, 1980): 212.

²⁰Tebow, p. 31.

²¹Tebow, p. 126.

²²E.K. Rossiter, "Influence Upon His Town," in Sherwood, p. 130.

²³Morgan, p. 50.

²⁴H. Barbara Weinberg, "Nineteenth-Century American Painters at the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts," The American Art Journal 4 (Autumn, 1981): 70.

²⁵Edwin H. Blashfield, Mural Painting in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 261.

²⁶Blashfield, pp. 220-21.

CONCLUSION

Since Mowbray's memoirs, published in 1928, are mainly a dry account of his mural painting career and his civic activities, one can only speculate on his feelings and motivations earlier in his career. Numerous passages from his book appear to reflect merely on his stature in society. Mowbray hosted the American Academy in Rome's 1902 exhibition at the Villa Del Aurora, which was attended by the reigning King and Queen of Italy. He noted that: "Like most Latins they had an inherent appreciation of art, talked of it intelligently and looked closely at the technique of the exhibits."¹ At the end of his list of those attending the reception and what they wore, Mowbray wrote: "After all the guests had departed Mr. Meyer Story and I relit cigars and went over the day's events. It had been a good day for the Academy and we all felt good. 'Let's cable Charley McKim,' said Mr. Meyer, 'this will please him.'"²

Perhaps Mowbray's early paintings had a more private meaning that he didn't write about later in his life as they didn't serve to educate the public as he later felt murals should. Could his painting, The Alchemist of 1884, be a tribute to his stepfather,

the daring chemist, who experimented with nitroglycerine and also invented an amazing substance, translucent celluloid, later used in the production of motion pictures?³ (Or was Mowbray just being stylish?). Perhaps The Alchemist reveals his interest in mysticism, an interest Mowbray may have shared with his colleagues in France during the mid-1880s. He was certainly in the right places at the right times to be exposed to occult ideas as were many other contemporary American artists and writers. When Mowbray wrote his memoirs at the turn-of-the-century, however, occult ideas had fallen out of favor. Sâr Joséphin Peladan, for instance, at his death in 1918, ten years before Mowbray's own death, was considered an extremely ridiculous character.⁴ Barry Friedman also notes that "In the early twentieth century artists and public no longer defined themselves through their relation to history; learned discourse and mystical symbols seemed irrelevant in the face of war and social upheavals."⁵

Perhaps Mowbray was merely an Aesthete; his early pictures may have no deeper meaning than a pretext for an exquisite decorative surface and a token nod to the fashions of the day. In his writings he seems to be an avid Francophile with a rather "Orientalist" bent.⁶ On his trip to Algiers he collected decorative trinkets, later to be used as props in his paintings, but he was disappointed that the Near East didn't live up to his Romantic

expectations.⁷ A section of chapter three of his book chronicles his travels and various discomforts in Spain. "The interior of Spain...on those endless railway journeys, was the most desolate country..."⁸ and, "A more or less continuous diet of Spanish cuisine...made the mere thought of cooked oil an abomination."⁹ And finally, "We simply could not stand the continuous, rank oil cuisine."¹⁰ Mowbray's characterization of the Spaniards as lazy and their trains tardy, reflects a less than open-minded sensitivity to cultural differences.

Mowbray seems to have had the typical, for the time, attitude of condescension toward other cultures not like his own so maybe he had no interest whatsoever in Oriental philosophy or mysticism but merely promoted an exotic style because of its international popularity during the 1880s.

An unpublished memory of Mowbray's details a trip to Winnipeg, Canada where he met authentic Indians: "We saw many of the Red Lake Sioux, and were impressed with their statuesque beauty. Their resemblance to the ancient Roman statues was enhanced by the great blankets which they wore like togas."¹¹ This idea of the "Noble Savage" was a common phenomenon in literature in the Western hemisphere.¹² In the 1890s Helene Blavatsky wrote about a tribe of natives called the "Todas" and she remarked that they were "Handsome as a statue of Phidias or Praxiteles..."¹³

Artists and writers in Europe and America had been searching for a more spiritual existence from the mid-nineteenth century to the late part of the century. During the mid-1800s this is evidenced by the widespread interest in early Italian religious art, and later by the Rosicrucian's and Symbolist's interest in mystic religions.

A Utopian culmination of religion and art occurred in 1893 in the city of Chicago. The World's Parliament of Religions was held there during the World's Columbian Exposition. Theosophy, which was promoted here, became very popular around 1897, roughly contemporaneous with the American Renaissance.¹⁴ Utopian ideas like Theosophy and the American Renaissance's emphasis on our great, infallible democracy as a means of improving the human condition gave people something to look forward to as the twentieth century approached that unfortunately has not come true yet.

I offer one last quote from H. Siddons Mowbray's student days, that may shed light on the nature of his early career ideals:

I never noticed any deep socialistic trend among the art students, in consequence of poverty. Occasionally the school would burst into the International, and songs about hanging bourgeois from lamp posts were common, but that was mere youthful bravado. Everyone of them knew, at the bottom of his heart, that with the killing off of wealthy patrons, art would have a cold outlook indeed.¹⁵

ENDNOTES

¹Herbert F. Sherwood, ed., H. Siddons Mowbray, Mural Painter 1858-1928 (Stamford, Connecticut: n.p., 1928), p. 91.

²Sherwood, p. 93.

³Sherwood, p. 52.

⁴Robert Pincus-Witten, Occult Symbolism in France (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), p. 1.

⁵Barry Friedman, Fernand Khnopff and the Belgian Avant-Garde (New York: Barry Friedman Ltd., 1983), p. 6.

⁶Edward Said, Orientalism (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 3, "...orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."

⁷Founder Society of Detroit Institute of Arts, The Quest for Unity (Detroit: Founders Society DIA, 1983), p. 125.

⁸Sherwood, p. 26.

⁹Sherwood, p. 28.

¹⁰Sherwood, p. 34.

¹¹AAA: roll 503, frame 1143.

¹²James T. Flexner, The Light of Distant Skies (New York: Dover, 1969), pp. 6-7. Historical precedent for the "Nobel Savage;" Benjamin West in Rome in the late 1700s: "Everyone wanted to be present when the savage met culture face to face. A cavalcade of carriages, each crowded with connoisseurs, accompanied West to the Vatican. They watched as he was suddenly confronted with the Apollo Belvedere. 'My God,' cried West, 'how like a Mowhawk warrior!' The connoisseurs were delighted, for his remark had tied

together the old and the new, identified the ancient Rome they loved with the innocence they longed for."

¹³Robert S. Ellwood, Eastern Spirituality in America (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 226-7.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 226-7.

¹⁵Sherwood, p. 38.

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