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RENOIR: THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE
OF HIS CLIMB TO FAME

By

Elizabeth Anne King

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ABSTRACT

RENOIR: THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF HIS CLIMB TO FAME

By

Elizabeth Anne King

Pierre Auguste Renoir, who today is much admired and revered in our society, is known for his depictions of the human element in his vast legacy of approximately 4,000 paintings and for his contributions to the movement of impressionism, an ideology in art committed to the study of the effects of light on objects in the surrounding environment. A number of his works are poignant, spectacular and moving; without a doubt, the history of art would experience a grave vacuum should certain of his paintings, in particular, Au Moulin de la Galette, never have been created. Yet few of his paintings do in fact reflect the goals of impressionism; his oeuvre is uneven in quality; and the vast majority of his paintings are portraits or nudes, both of which, unconcerned with ideals, are intended to sell. Why, then, should such a talented artist, noticeably outstanding in his handling of paint, colour and composition, and obviously a dedicated, hard-working man, have produced so few truly great works of art? To get at an answer, it is necessary to look at surrounding factors. Hence, this thesis is an examination of the background of Renoir, the conditions in nineteenth century France which influenced

his life, the prevalent conceptions of art, the motivational forces directing this artist, and their resultant impact upon his work.



Figure 1. Photograph of Pierre Auguste Renoir, 1861

to my Mother and Father

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potential of enriching future work on this topic. Their expressed desire to see this study carried further was most encouraging for, admittedly, one can never be quite certain of the value of one's contributions to a given area of research, and outside opinions do help one put a subject into perspective.

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

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The twentieth century of the Western World is built upon dreams of hope and opportunity. Through application and intellect, a person can improve his or her position in life. During previous centuries, for the most part, the occupation and status of a man or woman would have been determined by that of his or her parents at birth. In France one hundred years ago, with few exceptions, upward mobility was almost impossible and one's station in life was fairly rigidly fixed. To acquire and maintain a position of wealth, one needed money either to school one's self, to buy land, or to purchase and maintain a business. It was a rare exception for someone who "beat the system" to increase his wealth from little or nothing. Even if one's wealth was increased, it was rare for a person to be accepted into the social class of a bourgeois, let alone "la haute" of France. Pierre-Auguste Renoir was a man who defied all odds and shattered all molds by breaking free of his low social status and circulating within higher echelons. Renoir was a poor man who "made it big".

Today many writers regard Renoir as a revolutionary who dared to go against the grain and who rose above the

tide of customs which governed taste. Stylistically, his art stood as an alternative to tiers upon tiers of placid paintings which covered the Salon walls. His acts stood as a challenge to the very idea of Salon showings in that he chose to include his paintings in a group show of independent artists instead of the conservative Salon, as though he were a belligerent, childish artist thumbing his nose at the establishment. But was Renoir a veritable revolutionary? If so, to what degree? Was not the upper crust, amongst whom he circulated, conservative? Was it not in their best interest to maintain their status quo by upholding the checks and balances which kept the lower class in their place? How amused would they be by a radical who defied the system which they had worked for and believed in? Quotes attributed to Renoir contradict all that we tend to associate with him: he himself would have denied the revolutionary label.

On the contrary, according to Jean, his son, Renoir's favorite and oft-repeated theory was that of the "cork": "'One is merely a cork....You must let yourself go along in life like a cork in the current of a stream.'"(1) Jean questioned him about his association with the "Impressionist revolution", but was promptly informed that, on the contrary and in keeping with the "cork" theory, Renoir believed himself simply to have followed the path of those who had worked before him. Jean recounts the words of his father:

"'You go along with the current...Those who want to go against it are either lunatics or conceited; or what is worse, 'destroyers.'"(2) Renoir elaborated: "'When I painted in light tones I was not being revolutionary, I was being the 'cork.'"(3)

But if Renoir was not a radical, what, then, was he? At that, was not impressionism, with whom Renoir was then and still is today closely associated, in itself revolutionary? Was not the creative process radical and out-of-step when measured, inch by inch, against the typical Salon canvas? Was not the unity of the impressionist group on the issue of rejecting the staid, static Salon exhibitions indicative of a defiant, maverick temperament out to turn society upside down and push it forward at whatever the cost? By virtue of association, was not Renoir a part of the thinking and decision-making which made impressionism what it is?

Renoir today is perhaps the best known of the impressionists among the public at large. What is impressionism? What credence did Renoir place in the movement? To what degree was he instrumental in its outset and evolution? How significant was Renoir's contribution to the movement? How revolutionary were his works, and how did they fit in with the art of Paris at the time? These are questions which shall be broached in this thesis to help put Renoir and his contributions into perspective.

BACKGROUND

Those familiar with books on Renoir are aware of his rags-to-riches tale. Of humble origin, he was born on February 25, 1841, the son of a tailor in Limoges, France and was the fourth of five children. The family moved to Paris in 1845 when Renoir was four years old.(4) Money gave a person options and Renoir, being poor, was without those options. When Renoir was thirteen years old, his father was unable to pay for additional schooling. Had he continued the academic route, his father would have needed money for the boy's training in high school and university, should Renoir demonstrate aptitude and gain entrance. Renoir had two major talents: he could sing and he could draw. He was encouraged to become a baritone opera singer by Gounod, the choirmaster of his church, but as an occupation, this was dubious. Had a person desired a sampling of poverty at its most debilitating, this as a career would have offered more than ample flavour. Renoir, as a singer, could have been as poor as a church mouse. On the other hand, art could be lucrative. Most if not all decoration at the time was painted by hand, there was a market demand for decorated objects, and one could support oneself with wages drawn from the activity. Renoir was, hence, placed by his father into an apprenticeship program as a porcelain painter. He made his debut by decorating the borders of dessert plates with garlands, arabesques

and flowers, and later, he progressed to embellishing the center of plates with depictions of Marie Antoinette profiles, which were lucrative. Paid by the piece, Renoir received two sous for a dessert plate and "three sous for Marie Antoinette in profile".(5) He was offered, according to Jean Renoir, "the exorbitant salary of twenty francs a month" but his sister made him turn it down and accept only a salary by the piece.(6) According to the biographer Vollard, Renoir earned a salary of six francs per day when painting porcelain.(7) The point is, from an early age, Renoir had to earn a living.

Porcelain painting is said to have made its mark in Renoir's work as an artist. This can be seen both in his treatment of the painted surface and in his work ethic. As pointed out by the author Pool, "it has often been suggested that this early experience fostered in him a precise use of the brush, a delicate touch and an appreciation of the effect of bright colours on a smooth white ground. Renoir always retained a technical brilliance in his handling of surface and texture; moreover, dark shadows and rich impastos cannot be achieved on porcelain. He often spoke of painting as a handicraft, observing that good craftsmen are needed to do it well and that the disappearance of the old apprenticeship system was by no means an artistic gain."(8)

In addition, Renoir learned at an early age that

aesthetics were inextricably bound with money. Permission to depict Marie Antoinette profiles was granted only to those who showed the ability to handle the exercise. In other words, these had to be accomplished and flattering enough to sell. Renoir's position and success were contingent upon his ability to create attractive depictions of people.

Renoir was geared into a career as a porcelain painter and regarded it as his position for life. However, he ran into a snag. Mechanization made inroads into pottery and pre-printed designs replaced the hand craftsman. Renoir's employer was driven out of business in 1858 (9) and Renoir was out of a job. Vollard stated that Renoir was seventeen at this time and had worked as a porcelain painter for four years.(10)

Renoir tried various solutions to re-establish himself in the career as a porcelain painter, but to no avail. The buying public preferred the evenness of mechanically printed designs over and above the range in quality of hand painting. Still an adolescent, Renoir was forced to seek an alternate career. He turned to mural and fan painting, then later depicted religious scenes on blinds for missionaries in Africa under the employment of M. Gilbert. In each case, he worked for an employer who paid him by the piece or square footage.

The "crisis in career" turned out to be fortuitous.

In the long run, the challenge of adapting to new conditions and a new repertoire of images paid off, not merely in his resultant gain in versatility. Perhaps due to the incentive of piecework, Renoir had learned to work quickly and to take shortcuts. This became his major strength, particularly when he painted religious scenes. The work entailed the transfer of designs onto blinds. Renoir's predecessor had approached the chore by meticulously squaring off the material to be painted, drawing the outlines of the scene, square by square, onto the blinds, then painting within the outlines. Renoir shortened these steps by eliminating the squares completely and sighting the design directly onto the blinds. Renoir was able to paint a number of blinds to his predecessor's one, and as a result made, in proportion, more money.

THE CONDITIONS

Money gave Renoir options which he never before had had. He was encouraged by his lifelong friend Laporte to elevate his position in life by becoming an artist. He could redirect his profits into formal training by entering the École des Beaux Arts. Laporte was aware of an atelier instructed by Gleyre whose fees were low and covered only the cost of the studio rent and model. The risk was high but so were the stakes. He could submit to the Salon, do

portraits and cultivate a moneyed clientele who, when he made a name for himself, would pay him upwards of 1,000 francs per painting instead of the paltry sum he received for his piecework. He would be self-employed instead of under the thumb of an employer. He would be a man of letters rather than a plebian. He would be in a position to generate and sell "high art" which could command a high market value once his name became familiar on the tongue of the bourgeois Parisian. Be his occupation the reproduction of religious scenes as an artisan or the orchestration of masterpieces in the guise of an artist, Renoir nevertheless was dealing with visual images, and both were work. The latter role, however, might be more gratifying in the long run. Renoir, at the bottom looking up, had nothing to lose.

Should this endeavour prove unprofitable, Renoir could always return to work as an artisan with full confidence in his ability to find a comfortable job and earn a living. To his last days, Renoir never lost sight of the idea that art was an occupation. He started work as early as 8:00 a.m. (11) and kept at it throughout the day, taking only a few breaks, then stopped "as soon as it grew dark." (12) However, before practicing Academic art, Renoir first needed to acquire both an approach and knowledge of the medium; these fundamentals he could attain through the schooling system.

An aspiring student need not enter the Academic system to achieve the goal of professional artist. Well-known options, distinct from the official system, included the Academie Suisse and the Academie Julienne where, for a small fee used to cover rent and the cost of a model, artists worked together. However, the best and most legitimate means to becoming an artist was the official Academy. Clearly demarcated to all who had the time, talent, inclination, perseverance and money, its structure assured security, if not fame, to all who succeeded within it.

To train artists in the fundamentals in painting, the Academy had sanctioned two complementary forms of instruction, the first of which was administered at the École des Beaux Arts, and the second, at the studio of a recognized Academician. A student entered the École and, following a proscribed series of steps, copied drawings, progressed to studies of plaster casts of classical sculpture, then worked from a living human model.(13) Upon completion of the École, or while still in attendance, a student then joined the atelier of a recognized Academician to whom he paid a monthly fee.(14) In this purlieu the student would paint from available plaster casts or the living model and an Academician would come around once or twice a week to give critiques. The atelier of an Academic painter, although a sanctioned part of the Academic training

program, was distinct from the École.

Such routes were not open to anyone: a ceiling was placed on the number of students admitted to the École. Applicants were required to submit to and pass an entrance examination. The age of entrants into the École ranged at least from fifteen to twenty-seven.(15) Admitted students who created the best works during the year were rewarded with medals; those who did not "were required to keep on taking the annual examinations."(16)

Within the structure of the École a student could vie for the annual medals and awards offered. The culminating and most prestigious award within this educational system was the Grand Prix de Rome.(17) On average, one student was awarded this coveted prize per year, although occasionally no awards were given, and sometimes multiple awards were made.(18)

The Grand Prix de Rome had a number of advantages. Aided by a generous scholarship which covered most of the recipient's expenses, including food, lodging and medical care, a student was sent by the École to study for four years at the French Academy in Rome.(19) Furthermore, funds were provided to support their study for additional years after the student's return to Paris.(20) The age of recipients of the Prix de Rome, on the whole, ranged between twenty-five and thirty. The age limit of eligible winners was thirty; in late 1863 this was reduced to twenty-five.

Publicity meted out to award recipients gave them direly needed recognition when they joined the throngs of artists who met the public.

The École des Beaux Arts was not the be-all to end-all in the life of an artist; it simply helped an aspiring youth get his feet off the ground. Winners of awards benefitted most from the system due to publicity which aided their establishment of a clientele and, in turn, income. The École also served a practical purpose. When artists ground their own paints, they needed guidance in discovering what minerals and ores were stable and could be used in combination to ensure permanence. However, with the advent during the 1830's of oil paint in tubes, (21) instruction from the Ecole in this vein became phased out. Manufacture of oil paint in tubes, ironically, was no guarantee of the medium's stability.

The next step in the career of an artist was the establishment of ties with the public. To live, the artist needed to sell his work. The Salon, established by the Academy, acted as a liason between the artist and the public who admired and purchased art. On an annual basis, in late March or early April, artists, usually no younger than the age of twenty, (22) submitted in general from one to three canvases to the Salon. As early as 1791 anyone could enter; they need not go through the École des Beaux Arts to receive this privilege. A jury, dominated by members

of the Academy, was elected to select works which would be admitted. Having gone through the École regime and, consequently, being moulded by its doctrine, the judgements of the jury tended to perpetuate the status quo. After having viewed as many as 5,000 paintings, the jury then authorized the placement of the chosen works on the walls of the Palace of Industry--the equivalent of Britain's Crystal Palace--by a hanging committee.

The Salon established its own built-in merit system which rewarded the signal success of artists who created oil paintings of outstanding worth (Appendix A). This was distinct from the École, which had its own system of awards, mentioned earlier. All artists who had previously won a Salon medal were automatically granted the privilege, called hors concours, of by-passing the jury and exhibiting on the Salon walls. Awards themselves, coupled with generous gifts of money, were classified as first-, second- and third-class medals. A number of artists could win medals within each one of these categories. These were capped by one single, highly esteemed Medal of Honour which originated in 1853.(23) Medals called the attention of patrons to particular artists; while mere entrance into the Salon provided the skeletal basis of public exposure. Medals could lead to government purchases, state commissions and publicity, in addition to aiding the foundation of a regular clientele.

The Salon did not mark the end of the road to official recognition. Two concomitant societies, prevalent as adjuncts to the system of merits and honours bestowed upon artists, were indirectly connected with the Salon. The penultimate laureate was the Legion of Honour, with which an artist was decorated and to which he automatically became a member. Artists were singled out and conferred this distinction later in their lives after they had contributed a recognizably salient body of work to the whole of contemporary French art.

The ultimate token of esteem was election to the Academy. This glory, like the Legion of Honour, generally was conferred later in an artist's life, and membership was permanent. An artist was voted in by the members of the Academy when a "chair" opened; in short, when one of its members died. Admission in great measure was exclusive. Forty artists were permitted to join the Academy; of these, fourteen seats were reserved for painters.(24) The average age of entrants was fifty-three in the nineteenth century.(25) As can be seen from the foregoing survey, the system, as complicated as it was, provided a range of significant rewards, spaced out along the career of an artist, which assured both his fame, if earned, and the system's growth. There were many examples of painters who had used the system to advantage and became, as a result, rich; hence, a career in art was most

attractive to one with talent.

STAGE ONE: EDUCATION

Thus was the system available to Renoir when he chose to become an artist. Renoir wrote the entrance examination to the École des Beaux Arts and placed sixty-eighth on a list of eighty.(26) In 1862 Renoir attended evening classes at the École des Beaux Arts under Signol.(27) Further evaluations of the influence of Signol and the École des Beaux Arts on Renoir have yet to be established.

Renoir also attended the atelier of Gleyre, the Swiss artist who, according to the author Boime, was not an Academician,(28) but was respected. Because his own youth had been beset with the struggle of scraping together 25 or 30 francs to meet the consulting fees of his own master, Gleyre was sympathetic toward students of limited financial means. Thus, he kept his own atelier fees low,(29) charging in the early 1860's 10 francs per month to cover the cost of rent and the model's wage.(30)

The advantage of entering Gleyre's atelier was not strictly pecuniary. His instruction was recommended to many new students by their senior peers perhaps because, in the words of Boime, "in the period just prior to the Reforms of 1863, his was the most promising of the important ateliers, and perhaps one of the last maintaining the old

tradition".(31) Because Gleyre had inherited it from the respected artist, Delaroche and its lineage went back to the highly revered painter, J.-L. David, it had a great tradition of respectability. Gleyre encouraged original thinking in art, drawing from memory, landscape painting in open air, drawing, composition, and copying of the great colourists in the Louvre.(32) Gleyre's atelier is significant because it was in this environ where Renoir met his closest friends and colleagues, namely, Monet, Bazille and Sisley, all of whom contributed to the development of impressionism.

One can surmise that Renoir was well indoctrinated by Academic training and placed full credence in its benefits. Renoir regarded himself as a serious student, and became upset when the atelier closed due to Gleyre's poor health and unstable financial condition.(33) Renoir, while in attendance, wrote all of the exams, beginning in April, 1862 when he was admitted and ending in April, 1864, during the closing days of Gleyre's studio.(34)

When the Reform of 1863 lowered the age limit of the contestants in the Prix de Rome competition from thirty to twenty-five, this affected a number of students who were presently attending the École. Those vying for this coveted award but who had reached the age of twenty-five were automatically struck off the list of potential candidates. Sisley, two years older than Renoir, became a part of this

category in 1864, one year after its enactment, and, with understandable consternation, signed a petition which fulminated against it. Renoir did not sign. It seems doubtful that Renoir ever held hopes of winning it himself, even though one of his major competitors, albeit a close friend, was put out of action.

If Renoir had harboured no hopes of winning the Prix de Rome, such a petition would have been meaningless to him. Renoir felt strong aversion to being associated with anything which remotely resembled the notion of radical, and not without good cause. His career depended upon acceptance by society. Should his actions affront anyone, he would risk losing his own credibility and, subsequently, his potential to earn a living. Furthermore, he endorsed the Academic system. Without it, he would have experienced great difficulty in closing the gap between the tools and knowhow of an artisan and those of a great painter.

An unanswered question is, had the Academic system been of such great import to Renoir, why did he not simply switch to another studio after Gleyre's atelier had closed? Peer pressure cannot be undermined: none of his colleagues selected this route. Moreover, cost was a major factor. Renoir could afford Gleyre's atelier, but his resources might easily have been stretched thin if not totally depleted under the pressure of paying consulting fees over and above the basic costs of the model and rent. Moreover,

there might have been little advantage. Renoir might have felt secure enough to strike out on his own, given his background and training under Gleyre. The benefit of joining another atelier would arise only if Renoir were vying for the Prix de Rome. But the problems associated with doing so would have been insurmountable. Within one year Renoir would need to win the confidence and support of a new instructor who already would have selected his star pupils. In addition, Renoir would need to usurp not only these satellites but also those of other Academicians in other studios, all within a span of two years. Renoir had not received the backing for this award from Gleyre, let alone even hoping to win the confidence of other Academicians under new conditions. However, another route to success open to him was the Salon, within which Couture and Gerome had both won their glory without first winning the Prix de Rome. Thus, the stage was set for Renoir's entrance into the world of art, competitions, Salon shows and patrons.

STAGE TWO: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CAREER AS AN ARTIST

The ground was laid for the second stage in Renoir's career as a professional artist: he needed to cultivate sources of income. To effectuate this, Renoir chose three courses of action: he exhibited in the annual Salon shows, he made

new contacts, and he maintained close ties with his friends. Eager of necessity, Renoir entered his works in the Salon of 1864, the year in which Gleyre had closed his studio. Renoir submitted one painting, Esmeralda Dancing with her Goat, a theme selected from a contemporary novel, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, by Victor Hugo. Renoir's work was accepted by the jury. The significance is, Renoir learned not only that his paintings could be accepted in Salon corridors but, moreover, they could attract the interest of potential clients. When the Salon had ended, a patron who wanted to buy Esmeralda Dancing with her Goat approached Renoir. Unfortunately, following a conversation with the Barbizon artist Diaz in the Forest of Fontainebleau, Renoir had destroyed this work, believing that it contained too many blacks; thus, it no longer was available for the walls of the art aficionado.

Cracks were prevalent in the Academy and Salon systems which created hardships for artists who hoped to build careers in art. A wide gulf separated expectations from reality. The Academy was built on the premise that art is a respectable profession for a learned man who should enjoy the same economic and social status as that of a man of letters; specifically, an artist expected to be a bourgeois. However, the Salon itself was overloaded with artists whose abilities ranged from exceptional to mediocre. Wide differences in ability among artists, or

people in any field for that matter, obviously is a fact of life. Well-planned organizations would accommodate these variations and bring out the best in all people. However, in this sense, the design of the Salon was a failure. Artists of humble talents were pitted against those with multiple gifts in one great competition which had one set of expectations regarding what artists should produce, and little room for divergence. This affected all artists, including Renoir. Reasons for this situation had to do with the historical background of the Royal Academy.

When the Royal Academy first became an official organization in 1648,(35) it developed alongside artists' guilds, an older, well-established mediaeval system of services in the visual arts. Both the Royal Academy and the guilds shared rigid views on what constitutes art. However, each had distinct structures, objectives and, to a certain extent, audiences. Guilds were equipped to employ wide ranges in artistic abilities: those of exceptional talents were trained to co-ordinate and conduct challenging projects in painting and sculpture, whereas artists with lesser abilities were channelled into the crafts. On the other hand, the Royal Academy was designed to cater specifically to the interests of the elite.(36) During the seventeenth century the Royal Academy rose in power and soon dominated the guilds, which were finally extinguished in the French Revolution when the last of their

members, the Guild of St.-Luc, was destroyed.(37) In its inception, the Royal Academy did not have to deal with mediocre artists, for those with lesser abilities could be sent to a guild to learn a trade. Without this as an alternative, mediocre artists, who now had only the Royal Academy to look to, became an integral part, if not the Achilles' heel, of the system.(38)

In combination with the decree which allowed anyone to submit work to the Salon jury, Paris became flooded with more artists and more paintings than the market could handle. Because there was a great variance in the degree of talent possessed by the artists themselves, similarly, the quality of their overall body of work ranged. As a result, the best in art became watered down by the worst. Buyers of art had much to choose from and, consequently, upcoming artists experienced great difficulty: most found their works obscured among the hoards of exhibits which covered the Salon walls. Although nascent artists expected to enjoy the status and income of a bourgeois, much time was needed to build up a clientele who supplied a stable, substantial income. In the interim, these artists were faced with the financial burden of middle-class rents and family responsibilities.(39)

A new, upcoming artist would feel lost and hopeless being one of 3,000 entrants into the Salon. Should the artist be admitted, usually he was represented by only one

or two paintings displayed amid a sea of approximately 2,000 that filled the Salon walls. Although admission itself marked a modicum of success, it could be undermined when an artist saw his work "skied" near the rafters on the high walls, so that a patron, not wishing to stand back or strain his neck muscles, could easily overlook the work. The room in which it was hung also mattered: an artist usually was assured of greater success if his painting was placed near the entrance to the Salon and greeted the throngs of art lovers. However, should a painting be obscured among the multitudes of works which embraced the walls of remote rooms, it could be overlooked by prospective patrons. Many bourgeois parents discouraged their sons from pursuing this vocation because it contained the element of risk: an artist could fail to draw an income and, draining his parents' resources and his inheritance, a life of poverty could lie in wait. As pointed out by the authors White and White, an artist could lose his bourgeois status.(40)

Implications of rejection were numerous. Should an artist be excluded from a Salon showing, he would be forced to wait one year for the next exhibition. It thwarted access to public exposure, the artist's major contact with potential clientele. Moreover, art not endorsed by the Salon was usually refused by dealers and, on the whole, turned down by buying customers. Purchasers were known to return paintings which they had bought and to ask for

their money back should the artist have been refused that year at the Salon, as had happened to Jongkind, a colleague of the impressionists.(41) People did not necessarily assert their own taste, judgement and discretion, but rather let Salon juries set the pace.

To survive, Renoir needed to submit his work to the Salon and to build up his contacts. Renoir approached the Salon by creating paintings which would win Academic approval. Renoir's contributions to the Salon ranged from the years 1864 to 1890 inclusive, by which time he was well established. Work created by Renoir for this express purpose will be analyzed at a later point.

Early in his career, Renoir fortuitously befriended Jules Le Coeur, whose family became important to his career. Renoir's ties with this man, beyond friendship, were somewhat complex. The two companions courted sisters, Clémence and Lise Tréhot, the latter of whom was Renoir's girlfriend approximately between 1866 and 1872. Jules Le Coeur, eight years older than Renoir, was an architect turned painter. Douglas Cooper speculates that Renoir and Jules might have met as early as 1862 or 1863 at the École des Beaux Arts when the latter "was engaged in supervising the reconstruction" of the institution.(42) That they knew each other in 1865 is recorded in a letter by Jules.(43) However, according to Cooper, their friendship lasted only for a few short years and Renoir instead developed closer

ties with other members of the Le Coeur family, in particular Charles, the brother of Jules.

The Le Coeur family was significant in the career of Renoir because they became his first major patron. Renoir was introduced to and accepted by this prosperous family as early as 1865 (44) and retained ties with them until 1874. In 1866 Renoir, who had a knack for winning the confidence of the head of a family first and then progressing to other members, initiated a series of portraits of the Le Coeurs. Beginning sensibly with the widowed mother of Jules and Charles, viz., Mme. Joseph Le Coeur (1866, Figure 2), Renoir extended his portraits to include the rest of the immediate family and, if married, their spouses. Few settings could be more glamorous for several of these sittings than the cosmic garden of Mme. Joseph Le Coeur's elegant home, a "late eighteenth-century pavillon on the edge of Paris, which had once been given by Napoleon to Masséna in recognition of his military victories."(45)

The occupations of Renoir and Charles Le Coeur complemented one another and, moreover, greatly benefitted Renoir. An architect, Charles gave Renoir a golden opportunity. Privately commissioned, Charles was responsible for the design and construction of "an hôtel particulier at 22 Avenue de Latour-Maubourg which was being built for the Prince Georges Bibesco. As part of the

Figure 2.

Mme. Joseph Le Coeur,

1866.



decoration of this hôtel he commissioned Renoir to paint two ceilings."(46) Work on this commission was carried out during the early part of 1868, according to a letter written by Jules,(47) who had enquired about Renoir's progress. Drawings of the decoration which survive reflect, in one, the influence of Fragonard and, in the other, the influence of Tiepolo (48) (Figure 3).

Thus the Le Coeur family, the first and most important contact in Renoir's early career, could have opened additional doors had not a disgraceful incident occurred



Figure 3. Fête Champêtre (ceiling decoration), 1868.

in 1874. Renoir, who had become a friend of the family, watched Marie, the young daughter of Charles and Marie (née Marie Charpentier) Le Coeur, grow from a child of seven and blossom into a young lady of sixteen, a marriageable age. Aside from basic attraction, Renoir, advancing in years, would benefit financially from strengthened ties with this family. They were rich; he was not. The author Douglas Cooper records the unfortunate episode in this fashion: "Renoir, so family tradition relates, made overtures to Marie Le Coeur, then aged sixteen, writing her a billet which was read by Jules. The latter promptly informed his brother Charles, as a result of which Renoir was banished from the Le Coeur circle for ever."(49)

It appears, after Renoir was cut off from the Le Coeur family, that his social interaction with Prince Bibesco also came to an end, such as it may have been. Although much ink has been spilt on Renoir's friendship with the Prince, their ties must be regarded as indirect and primarily related to work: Charles as an architect and Renoir as an artist. Thus, Renoir, 33, once again was floating in his career without promise of future patrons, but with one difference: ten years had passed since his departure from Gleyre's atelier.

Although the incident with the Le Coeur family did coincide with Renoir's involvement with the first impressionist group exhibition in 1874, it did not determine his decision to participate actively in the development of impressionist shows and policy-making of the group. The inspiration for an independent artistic exhibition can be traced back to the Paris World Fair of 1855 when the artist Gustave Courbet displayed his own works in the Pavilion of Realism. Because his paintings had been excluded from the official art exhibition, he decided, as an alternative, to build, at his own expense, his own exhibition quarters and to hold his own show.(50) Manet adopted Courbet's practice when, during the Paris World Fair of 1867, both artists displayed their works independently in individual pavilions.(51) During this same year, Bazille had suggested that he and his friends

hold their own independent exhibition, but this idea was taken seriously only six years later, in 1873. Several months had yet to pass before the Le Coeur incident would occur. Hence, Renoir's agreement to exhibit with his friends in an independent group show was unrelated to the Le Coeur incident. Rather, feeling restricted by the limited number of opportunities to build a clientele through the Salon, Renoir hoped that an independent exhibition would draw patrons and provide a smaller, more intimate environment where his works could easily be seen, appreciated and sold.

The decision to participate in the organization of an independent group show came not during a period of depression and failure, but rather in the wake of moderate success. Renoir had had in his pocket at this time the patronage of the Le Coeurs, Captain Darras (during the Franco-Prussian War) and Prince Bibesco. Moreover, Paul Durand-Ruel had been introduced to Renoir in 1872 and, by 1873, supported his work. Although short-lived, Durand-Ruel had paid at this point more than the market value for the works of Renoir and his friends in hopes of attaining a monopoly on these artists and their depictions of landscapes. In 1873, following a number of purchases made by this dealer, Renoir was able to rent a large studio on rue St. Georges in Paris.(52)

And yet, Renoir did not have a sharp ken for value.



Figure 4. Pont des Arts, 1867.

Earlier, when Renoir did piecework, the number of francs attached to one item was small. One can compare Renoir to Monet in this respect. When Renoir was earning in the vicinity of three to eight sous for a profile of Marie Antoinette, Monet was selling his caricatures of teachers and lawyers in his home town of Le Havre for twenty francs each.(53) Similarly in 1872, when Renoir received two hundred francs for Pont des Arts (1867, Figure 4) from Durand-Ruel,(54) Monet was receiving three hundred francs for each of his paintings from the same dealer during the same year in London.(55)

Paul Durand-Ruel supported landscape painters. His father had initiated this trend by handling canvases of

the Barbizon painters, all of whom Renoir and his friends were either aware of or personally acquainted with from their expeditions to the Forest of Fontainebleau. Durand-Ruel continued the practice of his father, but more aggressively when he added Renoir, Monet, Sisley and Pissarro to his repertoire of landscape painters. Of his close colleagues, Renoir was the only artist who was not fully ensconced in landscapes as a subject matter. Instead, at this time, his work was distributed among Academic styles, portraits, landscapes, rococo styles, classical themes and romantic styles. Despite this range, it seems fitting that Durand-Ruel's first purchase from Renoir was a landscape, given the dealer's ostensible wish to make a name for himself as the major retailer of this *métier* in Paris.

Holding a monopoly on specific artists had distinct advantage. Once a demand for these artists was created, Durand-Ruel could create a bull market by causing the value of their works to artificially rise and fall. Rises could be instigated by withholding all with the exception of select works from the market, whereas falls would be generated by flooding the market, a strategy which could be most useful when the competition tried to handle the works of these artists. If the competition held no paintings by the artists who received support from Durand-Ruel, the latter could display in his shop one or

two examples of their oeuvre. This would leave a patron with the desired impression that such paintings were hard to come by, and hence, valuable. The prices of individual works by these artists could then rise and the dealer, in turn, could reap higher profits. However, if the competition, seeing the prices rise, decided to capitalize on this and handle the oeuvre of the same artists, Durand-Ruel could retaliate by pulling out from storage his stockpile of their work and use these to flood the market. Prices would drop, and as a result, the competition would be forced to sell low. Had the competition bought high with hopes of selling even higher, he could face the loss of much money and even go out of business.(56)

Over and above the support of patrons and, in particular Durand-Ruel, Renoir had in his background a history of submitting to the annual juried Salons (Appendix B). Before his decision to join his friends in an independent group show, Renoir had entered his works in all of the nine Salons held between 1864 and 1873 inclusive (the Salon of 1871 was cancelled due to the Franco-Prussian War). Renoir was admitted to five of these Salons, namely, during the years 1864, 1865 and 1868-70 inclusive. Renoir was excluded from the Salons of 1866, 1867, 1872 and 1873, although during the latter year he was included in an exhibition of rejected artists. Of the seven accepted paintings, two were classical, one was a landscape, three



Figure 5. Woman of Algiers, 1870

were portraits and one was in the mode of Delacroix (Woman of Algiers, 1870, Figure 5). Of the Classical paintings, one, Bather with a Griffon, was distinctly a contemporary portrait of Lise Tréhot. Of the four rejected paintings, each fell into one of the four aforementioned categories, such as Diana which was executed in the classical mode (Figure 6). By virtue of his desultory approach, was Renoir seeking a "key" to what the jury would like, or had he yet to find his own element?

Quite often writings underline the poor treatment of the impressionists by the established Academy and the lack of recognition of their ability on the part of the Salon. Renoir himself complained of these express points when he

Figure 6.

Diana, 1867.



discussed his early years.(57) It should be pointed out that all of the works submitted to the Salon by Renoir, with the exception of three paintings, were done according to academic standards. Renoir's "genius" could not be discerned if he did not show it. Moreover, the two paintings created with a style which reflected later trends in impressionism, viz., an interest in light, vibrant colours and loose brushwork, were both accepted by the jury. These paintings, titled Lise with a Parasol (1868,

Figure 7) and Summer (1869, Figure 8) were exhibited in the Salons of 1868 and 1869 respectively. The third painting, Bather with a Griffon (1870, Figure 35), was produced in a realist mode, a style that was frowned upon by the Academy at that time in France. Nevertheless, it was accepted by the jury and exhibited in the Salon of 1870.

Nor was Renoir ignored by the press. Between 1868 and 1870 inclusive, three of the four paintings accepted into the Salon received press coverage. Moreover, an



Figure 7.

Lise with a Parasol,
1868.

Figure 8.

Summer, 1869.



Figure 9.

Morning Ride in the
Bois de Boulogne,
1873



additional painting, Morning Ride in the Bois de Boulogne (1873, Figure 9), which had been refused by the Salon jury but later exhibited in the Exposition artistique des oeuvres refusées of 1873 (essentially a Salon des Refusés fashioned after its forerunner of 1863), was discussed favourably by three critics and subsequently purchased by Henri Rouart.

Press coverage in general was positive. One reviewer mentioned and two discussed Lise with a Parasol, a canvas in which Renoir observed the effects of reflected outdoor light on forms in space. Two reviews were positive and one was negative. Burger commended Renoir on his inclusion of green reflected from the background foliage on the white gauze dress of his foreground model, since these lighting conditions occur naturally in real life.(58)

The negative criticism levied by F. de Lasteyrie against Lise with a Parasol seemed moreso directed toward the "realist school" led by Manet and Courbet in general than against Renoir and his painting in particular.(59) More than likely, the charges spelled out would have had an effect diametrically opposed to the critic's intent; in other words, it would have stimulated interest in the realist school and the artist's work rather than snuffing it out. By referring to Lise... as "a fat woman splashed with white" and by implying that this one particular painting was indeed powerful enough (albeit in a negative connotation) to forebode the demise of the realist

school,(60) one would be curious to see exactly what kind of a painting could generate all of these catastrophic disasters. Furthermore, was Lise... as grotesquely fat as Lasteyrie made her out to be or was he exaggerating?

Lasteyrie's use of terminology, although deliberately vituperative, is humorous and does stimulate interest. By using the word fat, one could say that he called a spade a spade, minus the euphemisms. How many people would rush to stand in front of the painting had the critic referred to the subject as a sweet, sophisticated, placid, pretty young thing standing daintily outdoors in her gorgeous white dress and gently shading herself under her delicate sun umbrella? Running to see the painting would be as thrilling as viewing the wedding album of someone whom you do not know. But Lasteyrie's select terminology in combination with the implication that this painting could bring an end to the strong realist movement in art would stimulate an audience to wonder what on earth was in the painting which would make it so destructive. Ironically, art very well can be made or broken through polemics, not quality. Or perhaps, controversiality is a quality of art.

The handful of paintings by Renoir admitted into the Salon between 1864 and 1873 inclusive may seem scant if not parsimonious, and the reviews in the newspapers more brief jottings than full-fledged articles. However, an unbiased evaluation of Renoir's seeming modicum of success

can be made only in the context of the period. The number of artists working in Paris at the time was not small but great: White and White estimate that the number of painters alone who were alive and working in 1863 totalled approximately 3,300.(61)

Statistics are unavailable for the number of paintings that were shown in the Salon between 1864 and 1873 inclusive. However, White and White state that the number of entries admitted to the Salon between 1835 and 1847 totalled on average a little over 2,000 with a low of 1,597 in 1843 and a high of 2,536 in 1836 (Appendix C).(62) Should circumstances have remained fairly constant, one could speculate that these figures would apply as the lower average for number of works shown in the Salon between the years 1864 to 1873, with the ceiling being no greater than 3,000 or 3,500. It is necessary to go over the Salon catalogues to arrive at a more accurate figure.

According to White and White, 3,000 painters submitted 5,000 entries to the Salon of 1863.(63) According to Rewald, 70 per cent of the paintings were rejected in this year.(64) Because of the resultant outcry among artists, a Salon des Réfuses was established, and the following year the jury eased up considerably in its decision-making. According to Rewald, in 1864, the year in which Renoir first entered the Salon, only 30 per cent of the paintings were rejected and provision was made for the display of rejected

works.(65)

Should a 30 per cent acceptance rate in 1863 be accurate, then approximately 1,500 paintings would have been displayed, well below the norm of approximately 2,000 set for the decade between 1835 and 1847.(66) The following year, in 1864, if 70 per cent of the works were accepted, this would mean that approximately 3,500 paintings alone were displayed, provided 5,000 of them were again handed into the jury. These figures seem improbable and one cannot make an assessment with them.

The question is, was the jury being hard on Renoir and short-sighted in ascertaining the merit of his work between the years 1864 and 1873 respectively? Was the press myopic in its criticisms and blind in its failure to recognize Renoir's talent and "genius"?

To begin with, as mentioned previously, the paintings which Renoir submitted to the Salon for judgement by the jury were of academic orientation, and in relationship to his competition on this level, his paintings were average, not outstanding. Again, as stated earlier, most of the press coverage which he did receive was positive. The one example of negative criticism did associate Renoir with the realist school, but in reality Renoir rarely submitted a painting which could fit into this category without argument. This is hardly enough evidence to convict the artist on the grounds of his association with any maverick

tendencies.

In ascertaining the "fairness" of the press, one must keep uppermost in mind what Renoir was competing against. The number of painters working in Paris was large and the number of works accepted per artist was small. Renoir was only one of approximately 3,000 practicing artists. Renoir was not a special case: like many, he was merely starting out in the mid-1860's and joining their throngs. Critics had no reason to single him out. Again, the conditions laid out by the Salon applied to Renoir as they did to all others: an artist was limited to three entries, and generally only one or two were accepted per artist. Given the possibility, of these entries, that the number of works accepted by the jury and admitted into the Salon might have been narrowed down by as many as one-half to two-thirds, Renoir's paintings would number only one or two among approximately 1,700 to 2,400 canvases. That he was accepted and, above all, that his paintings caught the attention of the press amid this mass of work is to his credit. Renoir had few legitimate complaints about his treatment when the plans for an independent exhibition were in progress. As pointed out by White and White, the structure of Salon shows as a whole lay at the bottom of discontent experienced by an artist.(67) The Salon was a slow, tedious road to success. This affected not only Renoir, but most artists.

FOOTNOTES

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1. Jean Renoir, Renoir, My Father, p. 36
2. Ibid, p. 76
3. Ibid, p. 78
4. Ibid, p. 13
5. Ibid, p. 60. According to the author Ambroise Vollard, Renoir was paid 8 sous per profile of Marie Antoinette. (Vollard, Renoir, p. 23)
6. Jean Renoir, ibid, p. 60
7. Vollard, Renoir, p. 24
8. Phoebe Pool, Impressionism, p. 47
9. Ibid, p. 60
10. Vollard, op. cit.
11. Claude Roger-Marx, Anciens et Modernes Renoir, p. 53. According to Vollard, Renoir "went to his studio just as punctually as a clerk to his office." (Vollard, op. cit., p. 17)
12. Jean Renoir, op. cit., p. 4
13. White and White, Canvases and Careers, p. 19
14. Ibid
15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. Ibid
19. Ibid, p. 25
20. Ibid, p. 19

21. Ibid, p. 83
22. Ibid, p. 45
23. Ibid, p. 31
24. Ibid, p. 17
25. Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century, p. 4
26. Francois Daulte, Auguste Renoir, Catalogue Raisonne, Vol. I, Figures, 1860-1890, p. 32
27. Fosca, Renoir, pp. 8-10
28. Boime, op. cit., p. 59
29. Clement, Gleyre, p. 171
30. Rewald, op. cit., p. 74
31. Boime, op. cit., p. 61
32. Ibid, p. 58-65
33. Ibid, p. 63; see also Rewald, op. cit., pp. 74, 90
34. Douglas Cooper, "Renoir, Lise and the Le Coeur Family--II: The Le Coeurs", Burlington Magazine, September-October 1959, p. 322; see also Rewald, op. cit., p. 72
35. White and White, op. cit., p. 6
36. Ibid, p. 5
37. Ibid, p. 155
38. Ibid, pp. 27, 102-103, 155-156
39. Ibid, pp. 129-130
40. Ibid, p. 113
41. Rewald, op. cit., p. 79

42. Cooper, op. cit., II, p. 322
43. Ibid, p. 322, n. 1
44. Ibid, p. 325
45. Ibid, p. 326
46. Ibid
47. Ibid. This ceiling decoration no longer survives.
Following two changes of ownership, a pickaxe met
Renoir's efforts, crumbling the ceiling to a debris.
This occurred in c. 1911. (Cooper, ibid)
48. Ibid
49. Ibid, p. 328
50. Rewald, op. cit., p. 16
51. Ibid, p. 171
52. Ibid, pp. 280, 599
53. Ibid, p. 37
54. Ibid, pp. 255, 272
55. Ibid, p. 255
56. According to White and White, "monopoly of an artist's
production was important in making speculation
rational; Durand-Ruel in his first daring coup bought
up almost the entire production of several Barbizon
painters." (White and White, op. cit., p. 92).
Durand-Ruel was a businessman first and foremost.
When opportune, profit motive was substituted for
scruples. If it was necessary to construct a
fictitious collection, he would; or if it benefitted

the dealer to show recent paintings in an exhibition of earlier generations of painters, this, too, he did. For instance, "In 1870....In London he opened a gallery on New Bond Street and exhibited his pictures, as well as the collections of several French amateurs who had entrusted them to him for safe-keeping. Since his own name was not well-enough known, he used a fictitious sponsor: 'The Society of French Artists.' Among the pictures, mostly 'School of 1830,' appear several paintings by Monet and Pissarro." (White and White, op. cit., p125; see pp. 124-126 for additional accounts)

57. C. L. de Moncade, "Le peintre Renoir et le Salon d'Automne", La Liberte, X:13, n.p., Oct. 15, 1904, translated by Lucretia Slaughter Gruber;; quoted in B. E. White, Impressionism in Perspective, under the heading "Renoir's interview with C. L. de Moncade" (Editor's title), pp. 21-22
58. Rewald, op. cit., p. 180
59. Ibid, p. 187
60. Ibid. In the critic's words: "'And thus, from to imitation, the realist school threatens to go down ...in cascades.'"
61. White and White, op. cit., pp. 45-46
62. Ibid, p. 30
63. Ibid, p. 52

64. Rewald, *op. cit.*, p. 136, n 22
65. *Ibid*, pp. 102-106; 136, n. 22
66. White and White, *op. cit.*, p. 30
67. *Ibid*, p. 155. The Academic system and its Salon were originally designed to handle only a few hundred artists. However, through time, the profession of art had grown, but the system had not changed to accommodate this expansion. In turn, severe restraints were placed on its ability to help each individual artist build a moderate clientele, which, in turn, would assure a steady income (For a synopsis of the structural problems within the Academic system, see White and White, *ibid*, "Conclusions", pp. 155-161).

PART II: RENOIR'S EARLY CAREER

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EARLY GOALS AND HURDLES

Renoir's main objective in life was to earn a living through art. If it were merely a matter of making money, he would have remained employed in the occupation of painting blinds, where he was offered a partnership had he agreed to stay. However, Renoir wished to become affluent. This never would come about in the little esteemed business of decorating blinds, but it was possible through art.

Once Renoir became an artist, he would experience a rise in status. As a painter of blinds, he would always have been low on the social scale. On the other hand, because the occupation of an artist connoted self-employment, he would be allowed admission to the ranks of the bourgeois. Although at the outset he might earn very little, Renoir was bound and determined to ride this occupation for what it was worth, to overcome poverty, and to be comfortable, if not wealthy.

Renoir learned the significance behind adding numbers when he did piecework. According to the writer Daulte,

Renoir was paid 30 francs each for the blinds which he painted. In his words: "Comme Renoir travaille rapidement, il peint jusqu'à trois stores par jour que M. Gilbert lui paie trente francs pièce. Il amasse ainsi un petit pécule, qui lui permettra bientôt de réaliser son rêve: se vouer à la peinture."(1) Over the period of one year, if he worked a six day week, his wage would reach the vicinity of 9,000 francs. If, instead of 30 francs per blind he received 500 to 1,000 francs per painting, he would soon have more money than he would know what to do with. His earnings over the period of one year could range anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 francs at a time when an average skilled worker earned an annual salary of 1,300 to 2,000 francs. Renoir would be rich.

Before taking the École des Beaux Arts examination and entering the profession of art, Renoir had tested himself. It was a calculated risk. Could he compete in the top leagues of the world of art? Renoir sought to discover his limitations before he went into the profession, not after. The only way an artist could learn how he stood among the best would be through experiment. Renoir applied for and received permission to paint in the Louvre and copy its masters. Given to him by the administration and valid for the duration of one year, the cards were issued on January 24, 1860, March 5, 1861, January 21, 1862, and April 9, 1863 respectively.(2) Notably, Renoir had received his

cards before he entered the École on April 1, 1862, the start of the summer semester.(3) In addition to testing and developing his own skills, Renoir, understandably, might also have wanted to give himself every advantage when he competed against his fellow students for awards: practice in copying the masters would give him a distinct edge.

Renoir, a serious student at the École and at Gleyre's atelier, undoubtedly would have stayed to compete for its awards and, ultimately, the Prix de Rome had he experienced greater success when taking the examinations. The results of Renoir's examinations were uneven: only once did he come close to the top, but at that, he rated merely fifth on the list (Appendix D). His next closest two ratings were both tenth, a further distance from award. Coupled with the shut-down of the atelier of his instructor, Gleyre, Renoir's unsuccessful attempts at competing for medals and prizes within the schooling system caused him to renounce his desire to contend for the coveted Prix de Rome in 1864,(4) to leave behind the École and to test his skills in the real world of Salons, patrons, state commissions, press reports and auctions.

Renoir quickly learned that there was life after the École des Beaux Arts. An artist could make his mark in the world of art through the Salon without first winning the Prix de Rome: Thomas Couture (1815-1879), who ran an atelier for students, had done so as had his contemporary,

the Academician Jean Léon Gérôme (1824-1904). Renoir, who relished the prospect of winning Salon medals, worked diligently to create Academic showpieces which, he hoped, would be approved by a difficult-to-please jury and admitted to the Salon. However, Renoir faced one major shock once he was accepted: being one mere artist amid the multitudinous hoards of exhibitors proved a great burden, especially if his works were "skied" in a back room. Renoir could hardly expect to be noticed. Moreover, even though he was admitted to five of the seven Salons held between 1864 and 1870 inclusive, Renoir could not be guaranteed that its jury would admit him to any subsequent Salon. Renoir's hopes for finding a smooth journey down the road to fame and fortune were dampened.

Nonetheless, Renoir continued to submit his work to the Salon, and for good reason. Despite its drawbacks, here was one of his few opportunities to become acquainted with moneyed clientele, to win Salon awards, and to vie for government commissions, which usually were meted out only to Salon medalists. Even though his early entries drew little attention and few patrons, Renoir was chained to this system. Having come from a poor background, his family had no social ties with the upper class. Any contacts which Renoir wanted to make had to be earned on his own merit or cultivated of his own accord. Nor was Renoir able to turn his back on the numbers of people who

visited the Salon. As many as 8,000 to 10,000 people daily paid an admission fee for the privilege of viewing the paintings, sculpture, drawings and prints within.(5) For the duration of its run of approximately forty days, these numbers would sometimes add up to as many as 400,000 guests over the whole of the exhibition.(6) Even if only one or two people noticed his work and, subsequently, became his patrons, his entrance into the Salon would have proven productive.

Renoir needed his name to become known and circulated. He did receive a modicum of publicity through his early Salon showings, but he would be long inhumed before he could hope to build up a reputation in this manner; at least, so it seemed from the start. Renoir was in a quandary: he wanted desperately not only to succeed within the Salon, but moreover, through it, to earn much money. Renoir firmly believed, through application and meeting the right people, that this was possible. But only the Salon system of merits and awards could quench Renoir's thirst for fame and fortune. Recognition through any other channel was not genuine honour: true commendation had to come from the Salon. Renoir could agree wholeheartedly with his elder colleague, Manet, who stated that the Salon was an artist's proving ground.(7) Yet award through the Salon seemed as close at hand as the moon. Even the simple task of cultivating one or two new patrons though this system proved

to be a gargantuan hurdle against which Renoir more often collapsed than climbed. The glittering goddess tempting him to reach for the sky became Renoir's target, yet foil. It lured him in with its promise of patrons, success, fame and fortune, yet it denied him these exact rewards.

Thus, Renoir had much food for thought when he made decisions about his direction in art. The Salon was a viable route without which he could not live, yet his dire need for recognition seemed as though it would never find satisfaction. Renoir was forced to seek alternatives. In the interim, Renoir continued to maintain close contact with his friends.

RENOIR AND HIS FRIENDS

Who the impressionists were was to a great extent determined by friendships. Renoir, Sisley, Bazille and Monet had considerable interaction as friends throughout the 1860's. They worked together, lived together, revelled at parties, saw plays, ballets and operas together and visited the same cafés. They exchanged views on Wagner's operas and argued about the merits of writers whose books they had read. The friends congratulated one another when their paintings were accepted into the Salon, and consoled any of their group who failed to gain entrance, noting how unjust the system was and how short-sighted the members

of the jury were, feeling especially convinced of the latter when their own works were refused.

The formation of the impressionist circle for the most part took place naturally: Claude Monet, Frederic Bazille, Alfred Sisley and Renoir had met and developed a friendship at Gleyre's atelier. The activities of this group were not always as a foursome; on the contrary, at an early date Monet and Bazille had paired off as one set of friends, while Renoir and Sisley were a second.

The meeting of Monet, Bazille and Sisley became singularly the most significant event in Renoir's artistic life. Through their joint efforts in painting landscapes and their awareness of current theories and trends, the group developed a style, now known as impressionism, through which they later became famous. Because of this style, the group is now looked upon as an art historical landmark.

Had it not been for his role in the impressionist movement, Renoir's place in the history of art in all probability would have been minor. Renoir listened to the ideas discussed by his colleagues, especially during his frequent visits to the Café Guerbois in the evenings, and saw the new and stunning canvases produced by his friend, Monet, who propounded upon his intent to paint light and colour. Influenced by these ideas, Renoir created masterpieces for which he is now famous, such as Au Moulin de la Galette, 1877, which otherwise never would have come

about (Figure 48).

The formative years in the development of style was shared by Renoir, Sisley, Bazille, and Monet between 1862 and 1874 inclusive. Sisley, however, faded into the background somewhat, but not completely, after the early 1870's. The year 1870 also marked the sad termination of Bazille's participation. This talented artist died in the Franco-Prussian War when struck by a bullet while in action in the battle of Beaune-la-Rolande on November 28.(8) Renoir and Monet, who then continued to maintain close contact with one another, have since been credited as the prime generators of the impressionist style.

During its formative years, Monet surfaced as the natural leader of the group. Not only was he aggressive and gregarious, but he must also have seemed worldly to his friends, including Renoir. By 1862, the year of their acquaintance, Monet had had informal instruction from the artist Boudin and experience painting landscapes for five years, while virtually none of his associates could at that time have claimed a career as a professional artist. Renoir came close, yet the practice of copying on one cup after another the profile of Marie Antoinette required little skill, particularly after the third, fifth, or, especially, the tenth representation. On the other hand, landscape painting demanded critical judgement, particularly in the placement of motifs such as trees, grass, sky, rocks, and

water within a convincing space and atmosphere.

Monet must also have served to a certain degree the character of a mentor to his friends. Among them, he was the only person who was able to present an alternate viewpoint toward Academic training. Monet had worked independently in Parisian studios, such as the Academie Suisse, developing his own tastes and interests for a period of approximately two years prior to his entrance to Gleyre's atelier in 1862. During this time, Monet's curiosity had led him around the art world and had increased his awareness of the identity of artists living in Paris and their work. He formed an out-of-step attitude toward training at Gleyre's atelier, which must have stimulated thought and interest among his friends.

Renoir, on the other hand, was unable to follow Monet's example of independence. Renoir's one and only opportunity to excel was through the emulation of "high art" which, taught by the Academy, could command a high price on the market. Renoir, well aware of this, took his studies in art seriously, hoping to learn how to paint in this mode.

Nevertheless, he could benefit from surveying the scene as though from Monet's vantage point. Monet had alternate ideas which comforted Renoir and their friends when, as students, they were pommelled by their instructors with unkind criticisms. For instance, Renoir had been attacked for his prolific use of reds and was warned to avoid at



Figure 10.
Eugène Delacroix,
Massacre at Chios,
1824.

all costs the path of his predecessor, Eugene Delacroix, who was known to bathe shadows and highlights of his work such as Massacre of Chios, 1824, with this colour (Figure 10).(9) Renoir idolized Delacroix and found support in this veneration through Monet. Delacroix offered an additional role model to these impressionable young artists: he was a maverick who had fought the Academic system and won. Renoir was further berated by his École instructor, Signol, for a crude rendering of the toe of Germanicus. Renoir had been working from a plaster cast derived from a surviving statue of this ancient Roman

general (10) when Signol spotted him at work. To drive the point home, Signol testified that a toe in art never should resemble that of a coal merchant.(11) When Signol aimed this jibe at Renoir, he had in mind the outlawed realist school led by Gustave Courbet who painted anything from pigs and bulls to obese women and lesbians. Because Courbet refused to glamourize his subjects and remove their flaws but instead relished the vulgar and garish aspects of the human condition, his work sparked an outrage among conservative stalwarts. Signol's derision of Renoir's drawings implied that such characteristics were unorthodox, repulsive and without a home in the world of art. Renoir endured the sting of this opprobrium through the support of his friends, in particular Monet, who admired Courbet. Monet acquired his reverence for Courbet second-hand, through his informal instructor, Boudin, who had known Courbet and had worked with him. Moreover, Monet realized that the realist school was the newest, most progressive and most stimulating of contemporary art movements. At that time in Paris, it behooved creative members of the avant-garde to bear the pennant of realism. Vanguard artists and writers engaged in the thankless mission of depicting contemporary life stripped of narrative, moral content and the idealized treatment of human form. Monet could pass on his affirmation of realism to Renoir and their friends. On the other hand, having his vision clouded with

Academic precepts, Renoir listened to new ideas, but, nevertheless, he felt pulled in the other direction. Monet's views might supply the benefit of a fresh outlook but, without a doubt, Renoir saw with his own eyes paintings which did sell for 100,000 francs, and these were all Academic showpieces. That alone was good reason for remaining on a straight and narrow path.

A poignant difference existed between the background of Renoir, who was from a working class family, and that of his friends, who were bourgeois. Today the width of the ravine between these two social categories, in status no less than income, is narrow in comparison with the chasm that divided French society during the nineteenth century. Artisans such as tailors, the trade of Renoir's father, were part of the servile race who performed menial tasks. Never would a bourgeois be found using his hands to sew tedious stitches to create a wardrobe for another individual. A true bourgeois would be a designer of fashion who hired a team of seamstresses to carry out his ideas. So great was the aversion not merely to artisan praxis but, moreover, to anyone associated with servile activity, that certain bourgeois flatly refused to be seen in the same room with their inferiors.(12) Indeed, during the nineteenth century even the design of homes mirrored distinction between social categories. Neither the trade of Renoir's father nor his own former employment as a

painter of blinds or porcelain were regarded in high esteem: both were pegged in the lower social echelons of France.

Nevertheless, Renoir was accepted by his friends. Without a second thought, they refused to permit his background to slant their perceptions of his talent and accepted him into their ranks. However, had a taint of reverse prejudice existed? In other words, did Renoir select his friends on the very basis of their manifest promise in art or high social rank?

The answer to this query remains in doubt. Without question, Renoir at this point had no inkling of what would become of his friends. However, one cannot help but wonder if there was any motive or advantage on his part when he did choose his friends, granted that he did have a tendency to be selective. For instance, Renoir's first friend from early childhood, Emile Laporte, had encouraged him to join Gleyre's atelier. Renoir frequently lunched at the home of Laporte's parents during his student days.(13) In 1864 Renoir painted the portraits of Laporte (Figure 11) and his sister, Marie. Shortly afterward, Renoir apparently terminated his fellowship with this man. Renoir declared that they no longer had any interests in common,(14) whereas Laporte speculated their falling out might have occurred because: "'Life...women...separated us....Indeed, when I started falling in love, I began to neglect my friends a

Figure 11.

Portrait of the Painter,
Emile Henri Laporte,
 1864.



bit.'"(15) Laporte's social status probably would have been reasonably close to Renoir's own. When Renoir shifted ranks and fostered a friendship with his new Gleyre circle, Laporte appears excluded.

Although a substantial number of students who attended the École were born of poor or working class families, Renoir tended to avoid their company. These students could attend drawing, painting and sculpture classes at the École only because they had been awarded scholarships, engendered for the express purpose of helping needy but artistically promising students whose abilities had been noticed in



Figure 12.

Self-Portrait, 1875.

provincial drawing schools. According to the author Philippe Grunhech, "Even contemporary observers had noted that in the ateliers of the École it was more common to encounter the sons of workers and of peasants than the sons of the rich bourgeoisie or of the aristocracy..."(16) Jean Renoir, in his biography on his father, relays an account of Monet which concurs with this position. Well aware of social distinction, Monet discriminated between those who could and could not be his friend. "Except for his friends in the 'group,' he looked upon the rest of his fellow

students as a sort of anonymous crowd--'just a lot of grocer's assistants,' he called them." (17) Thus, a number of students in the École were not well-to-do, but Renoir chose only the latter as friends.

Obviously Monet did not regard Renoir as part of the faceless, characterless mass below, and one cannot help but wonder why this would be. It appears Renoir was able to successfully hide his humble origins and, moreover, to abstain from cultivating ties with anyone who, like himself, was poor or from the working class. Renoir cannot be blamed for desiring to disassociate himself from a sector of the populace which was disdained and which he thought would hinder his own acceptance by the upper classes: it was his attempt to improve his own standing in life. Renoir was in a position to generate ploys which could enhance his own social position and impress his friends. For instance, he could casually mention that he had been offered a partnership in the business of painting religious scenes on blinds, but had turned it down to enter the École and become an artist. From his earnings, Renoir had the means to purchase textiles of a heavier weight and higher quality, and could enlist the aid of his father for the design of a suit for himself of a stylish cut.

Yet Renoir had little control over certain behaviours which revealed that, at certain points in his life, he must have been acquainted with the borderline between desperation

and hopelessness. For instance, other students from wealthier backgrounds discarded their paint when it neared the end of the tube. Renoir rummaged through the wastebarsrels and salvaged these tubes, squeezing out the very last drops which he then added to his own canvases.(18) Renoir, moreover, methodically pressed paint out of its tube from the bottom upward, making sure that he did not miss even a scant drop when he arranged colours on his palette. This habit of Renoir stayed with him throughout his life, and his neatly rolled tubes of paint often ranked among his first idiosyncratic traits noticed by his visitors.(19) However, despite the financial difficulties which Renoir had seen his own parents face, he apparently withdrew from others, even close friends, who fell upon hard times, as in the case of Sisley.

As with Laporte, Renoir's friendship with Sisley came to an end. Sisley's father, who had made much money through a legitimate silk business which traded principally with South America, lost all of his wealth in 1871 as a result of the Franco-Prussian War.(20) Renoir apparently worked with Sisley in that same year, but only once since then, in 1873.(21) Although he painted portraits of Sisley in 1874 and his two children in 1875, Renoir apparently stopped visiting him as a friend or working companion. During the early 1870's, Renoir admittedly would have felt elated by his friendship with the Le Coeur family and his encounters

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with Prince Bibesco. Needless to say, it was Monet, not Renoir, whom Sisley was influenced by when he painted landscapes. On his deathbed in January, 1899, Sisley would summon Monet, not Renoir, to see him.

After the École and during the early stages of his career, Renoir moved toward his objective of success at a slow, halting pace. The Salon created more obstacles than openings on the way to his goal of a comfortable income. However, during the 1860's, Renoir saw the inchoate growth of a modest number of patrons, including the Le Coeurs. As evident in Appendices E, F and G, Renoir would have had great difficulty making ends meet as an artist had it not been for his friendship with the Le Coeurs. Aside from their direct support, Renoir, through them, met other patrons, especially Prince Bibesco and probably the Countess de Pourtalès.

For an income, Renoir looked toward portraiture and, for sitters, he relied heavily upon personal contacts, few of which were made through the Salon. Renoir tended to make the most of his affluent friends and contacts by painting portraits of them and their families. In one sense, he was left with little choice: he was poor while they were rich. Without question, he needed to earn an income which only they had the capacity to provide. Renoir perceived them as a ticket to greater gain, whereas they saw him as a talented artist who needed a financial boost.

The depiction of Alfred Sisley's father was the first of what was to become a series of portraits of children; budding adolescents; youthful, charming mothers; and, occasionally, distinguished fathers, all of whom came from well-to-do families. Renoir accepted commissions to paint portraits until approximately 1890, at which point work which he did on his own, especially his nudes, was in demand and supplied a more than substantial income. Borrowing the pose of Ingres' portrait of Louis-Francois Bertin (1832, Figure 13), Renoir showed Sisley's father seated in an armchair (William Sisley, 1864, Figure 14). Although he

Figure 13.
Jean-Auguste-Dominique
Ingres, Portrait of
Louis-Francois Bertin,
1832.





Figure 14.
William Sisley, 1864.

fell short of the brutal, turbulent character simmering beneath the surface of his predecessor's potent image, the portrait was accomplished and did win the approval of the jury who admitted it into the Salon of 1865, the year following its completion. The portrait was subsequently purchased by Dr. Leudet, the brother-in-law of Alfred Sisley.(22)

Renoir's surviving portraits of Alfred Sisley begin at a later date than that of his father. Renoir included Sisley in Mother Anthony's Inn (1866, Figure 15) and portrayed him stealing a clandestine kiss from his wife

in 1868 (Alfred Sisley and his Wife, Figure 16). Renoir also made him the sole subject of two portraits, both titled Alfred Sisley, which were painted in 1868 (Figure 17) and approximately 1874 respectively. The actual date of the latter painting, which was exhibited in the third impressionist exhibition of 1877, is speculative and possibly could have been created during Renoir's last working visit with Sisley.

Renoir's main goal at this point was the establishment of a steady flow of income, and portraiture proved to be



Figure 15.
Mother Anthony's Inn,
1866.

Figure 16

Alfred Sisley and his
Wife, 1868.

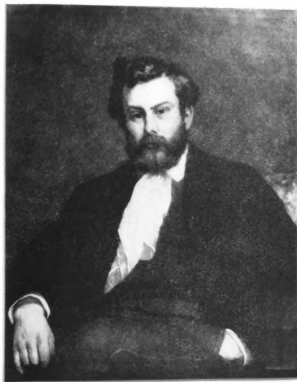


Figure 17.
Alfred Sisley,
1868.

one direct, lucrative means to this end. In June 1870 Renoir was a guest for several weeks at the apartment of Edmond Maître,(23) whom he had met through Bazille and the latter's distant relative, the Commandant Lejosne.(24) Sometimes portraiture led to additional responsibilities. During his stay, Renoir not only created portraits of this amateur musician and his mistress, Rapha, but, moreover, painted designs on some of their belongings, such as a cabinet which can be seen in the background of Femme au Corsage de Chantilly (1869-70, Figure 18).(25) Approximately ten years later, Renoir decorated the country home, located at Wargemont, of his recently acquired patrons, the



Figure 18.

Femme au Corsage de
Chantilly, 1869-70.

Bérards. According to the biographer Fosca, "On the woodwork and the doors of the library and the bedrooms, and over the fireplace in the little sitting-room, he painted flowers; on the dining-room panelling he depicted La Chasse l'ete (hares, partridges and quails) and La Chasse d'hiver (rabbits, pheasants and woodcock)."(26) In addition, there was a flourishing market for paintings of nudes, which he not only enjoyed depicting, but selected as a motif throughout his career. However, until the mid to late 1880's, portraiture was the mainstay of Renoir's income. As early as 1874, among his friends, Renoir was the only artist who was in good financial shape, and this came about specifically because he painted nudes and willingly accepted commissions for portraits to support himself.(27)

Concepts about what art was and was not were clear-cut in nineteenth century France (Appendices H, I). Beauty and honourable ideals were regarded as being synonymous with art. The public raved when they saw paintings of flawless goddesses sitting in tranquil, spectacular, idyllic countrysides, and gasped when bedazzled by vast crowd scenes wherein people appeared to move about convincingly in real space, be they standing nearby in the foreground or vanishing off into the distance. These were virtuoso paintings which few people had the patience or ability to carry out; hence they admired them greatly.



Figure 19. Jean-Francois Millet, The Gleaners, 1857.

As easily as the public could be beguiled by art, they could be offended. An artist who wanted to be noticed in nineteenth century France need only observe the weak links in taste. Depictions of peasants were only beginning to receive acceptance when Renoir came on the scene. Millet, however, suffered the sting of cruel derisions when he monumentalized humble workers such as The Gleaners or The Sower in his art (Figure 19). The director of Art in France at that time, Count de Nieuwerkerke, spoke of Millet's subjects in an opprobrious manner: "'this is the painting of men who don't change their linen, who want to intrude themselves upon gentlemen; this art offends and disgusts

me.'"(28) Courbet and Manet, like Millet, both ran against strong opposition when they depicted human figures which were flawed, not idealized, and found in contemporary French society rather than the classical past.

Renoir had a few decisions to make. He could follow the straight and narrow path, clearly laid out by Salon strictures, which could lead him only after many years, if ever, to fame and success. Or he could break the rules and, by creating ignoble art, possibly achieve notoriety instantaneously. Both options were tempting, and true to form, Renoir was pulled in both directions, as is reflected in his work.

DECISIONS AND INDECISIONS

Upon leaving the École des Beaux Arts and stepping feet first into his career, Renoir cannot be accused of placing financial gain as a strict, all-encompassing prerogative in life. Comradeship mattered as much as art, and Renoir willingly joined his friends in their gay, spirited trips to the outskirts of Paris to paint depictions of the countryside.

Impressionism was largely a landscape movement that had been initiated and led by Monet, an avowed follower of this métier, who rounded up his friends, including Renoir, for what was to become the first of their many

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peregrinations throughout the countryside around Paris. In 1863 he sojourned with Bazille in the Forest of Fontainebleau, then expanded his entourage the following year to include Renoir and Sisley. Monet had practiced painting en plein air since his mid to late teens.

The impressionists were not the first to tackle the problems of outdoor vistas and make their mark in it. Mounting respect in Parisian eyes for landscapes was born as a result of the tireless efforts of an earlier generation of artists, the Barbizon painters, a group which included Corot, Millet, Theodore Rousseau, Dupre, Daubigny and Diaz. The Forest of Fontainebleau, which contained breath-taking scenery, had been a hunting preserve stalked by the kings of France, but later became an artists' mecca inspired by the lustrous visions created in the art of their Barbizon forerunners. Hence, the nascent impressionists were joining a vanguard of aspiring artists when they sojourned here.

Renoir had many reasons for adhering to paintings of the countryside as a subject in art. Encouragement to paint landscapes in open air came not just from Monet but also from Gleyre, their former instructor.(29) In addition, other Academicians such as Cabanel, Bouguereau and Gérôme all endorsed the activity.(30) Landscapes served a useful purpose: not only were they compelling in and of themselves, but they made convenient backdrops for figures and classical themes. Quite rightly, Renoir needed to get a handle on

them. Through them, he was able to kill two birds with one stone: he could enjoy an outing with his friends, thereby welding these ties more permanently, and he could develop his skills in depicting the out-of-doors *au naturel*. Renoir at this point very much was under the influence of Monet.

Renoir's early renderings of the Forest of Fontainebleau were tight, restrained, and detailed. When Renoir undertook Clearing in the Woods (c. 1865, Figure 20), he was determined to depict a shallow expanse of land with a stream which broke a wooded region. He successfully caught the magnitude of individual trees, bush and rock by showing a raking light against stark shadows, and used



Figure 20. Clearing in the Woods, c. 1865.



Figure 21.
Young Man (Jules Le
Coeur) Walking his
Dog in the Forest
of Fontainebleau,
 1866.

this chiaroscuro effect to portray the structure of individual branches. Nevertheless, the full breadth of Renoir's creative potential was stagnated by overt caution. Form was constrained; and composition, conservative. Renoir denoted the leaves and foliage in Young Man (Jules Le Coeur) Walking his Dog in the Forest of Fontainebleau (1866, Figure 21) with greater freedom, but nonetheless, these resembled bunched splatters of colour that were vacant of vitality expressly because the brush strokes were deadened by repetition. In addition, the greens and oranges in this

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painting, potentially dynamic and vivacious colours, were vitiated by a heavy application of lugubrious earth tones. Colours were monochromatic and lacked the brilliance of his future work, wherein the inherent greens of trees and blues of water, imbued with a rainbow of colours, resulted in an atmosphere of scintillating light, life and exuberance. Renoir's early paintings, hence, must as of yet be considered Academic exercises in want of the fervour of exploration and the excitement of discovery that will be found in his forthcoming art.

Five years later, thoughts of fame and success shifted closer to the forefront of Renoir's thoughts. He ached for these goals but did not quite know how to get there. He had a taste of what it was like to mix shoulder-to-shoulder with la haute and wanted to be a part of this, not just a mere hired, albeit talented, artist.

At first, the Academic route seemed most promising when Renoir joined forces with Sisley, a rising star who competed for the Prix de Rome when under the tutelage of Gleyre during their student days. A few years later, however, the satellite productions of Sisley began to fade into the background, especially when Renoir's eye wandered over to the paintings of Monet. In contrast, Monet's work was stupendous: already it showed manifestations of novelty and greatness.

Early on, Monet was building an edifice of first-rate

work based on the concept of depicting light and colour through landscapes.(31) Landmark results from these included Garden of the Princess (1866, Figure 22), wherein people were reduced to quick brush strokes, not detailed studies; Terrace at Sainte-Adresse (1866, Figure 23), which had shadows permeated with colour, not black, and had forms reduced to strong light and dark contrasts; and Women in the Garden (1866-67, Figure 24), again, with strong light and dark contrasts whose shadows were imbued with colour,

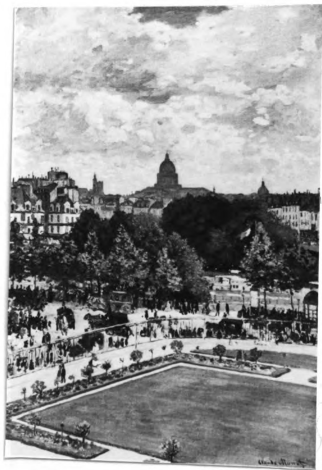


Figure 22.
Claude Monet,
Garden of the Princess,
1866.

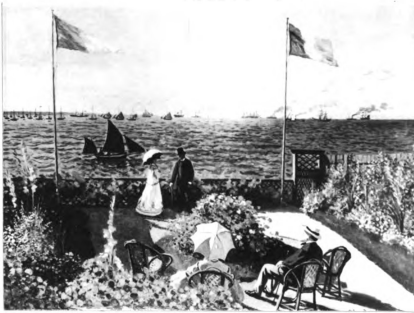


Figure 23. Monet, Terrace at Sainte-Adresse, 1866.

not black or dull earth tones.

However, Monet experienced negative repercussions when he submitted the latter work to the Salon of 1867, a year that Paris hosted the World's Fair. It was refused because it was carried one step too far out-of-bounds for Academic taste. Monet was deeply let down by this development because he had counted on this Salon to sell his work. However, he refused to modify his artistic goals simply to cater to the predilections of a handful of Salon jurors.

Through Monet, Renoir had a first-hand opportunity to watch a friend defy the system. Renoir knew that exactly these moves could help an artist become famous down the

Figure 24.

Monet,

Women in the Garden,

1866-67.



road. Previous artists such as Delacroix, Courbet, and presently Manet, all of whom revolutionized art, usually faced strong opposition at first, but later became known and well-to-do as a result of their efforts. Now Monet was making obvious ploys to follow the same route, and, true to form, he was eliciting the antagonisms of the Academy. If his art could raise such a great fuss, the potential was there for Monet to be remembered.

Notably, when the power and promise of Monet's work became evident to all within their circle, Renoir decided not only to strengthen their ties, but, moreover, to work

with him and copy his style while in progress. In a letter to Bazille, Monet wrote: "'I have indeed a dream, a picture of bathing at La Grenouillère, for which I've made some bad sketches, but it's a dream. Renoir, who has been spending two months here, also wants to do this picture.'"(32)

Renoir's knack for copying the works of his friends was not limited to Monet. In 1874, he arrived at the home of Monet in time to see Mme. Monet posing with her son for a painting which Manet had begun. Renoir immediately pulled out his paints, placed his easel right beside Manet's, and began to paint exactly the same motif from almost exactly the same point of view (compare Mme. Monet and Her Son in



Figure 25. Mme. Monet and Her Son in their Garden at Argenteuil, 1874.



Figure 26. Edouard Manet, The Monet Family in Their Garden in Argenteuil, 1874.

their Garden at Argenteuil, Figure 25, by Renoir with The Monet Family in Their Garden in Argenteuil, Figure 26, by Manet). Following his departure, Renoir's elder, more sophisticated colleague, in a moment of irritation, approached Monet and advised him to tell Renoir to give up painting. In his words, "'He has no talent at all, that boy.'"(33) It is difficult to ascertain whether Manet's drastic pronouncement was prompted as a result of Renoir's rather obvious mimicry or a serious evaluation of the man's abilities. That it should be noted at all is of great interest.

One decade later, Cézanne began to produce his most

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outstanding paintings. Renoir visited this artist at his home province of Aix, France and, working at his side, created still lifes and at least one landscape which, in composition and subject matter, could never have materialized without knowledge of Cézanne's work. The art dealer and biographer Vollard showed another biographer, Fosca, a landscape by Renoir, stating that the artist had visited Cézanne with the express purpose of picking up his style.(34) Exactly which landscape Vollard showed Fosca is not known; however, Renoir did paint his own version of Mount Sainte-Victoire (1899, Figure 27) with Cézanne's work in mind (compare Cézanne's version of Mount Sainte-Victoire, 1888, Figure 28).(35) Ironically, this painting was created when Renoir revisited the province of Aix in 1889, one year after Renoir and Cézanne had had a falling out.(35) Existing still lifes by Renoir that were created at Cézanne's side include Fruits of the Midi (c. 1881, Figure 29) and Grapes and Fruits (1881, Figure 30). In these, Renoir retained components of his own style, including a haphazard pastiche of iridescent violets, mauves, blues and greens which scintillated amid the reds and oranges of the fruit. Cézanne, on the other hand, reduced his palette to unadulterated primary colours and their complements which he left unmixed and let stand, side by side, in stark, flat planes. Cézanne also wrapped blue outlines around each depiction of individual fruit, although



Figure 27. Mount Sainte-Victoire, 1889.



Figure 28. Paul Cézanne, Mount Sainte-Victoire, 1888.



Figure 29. Fruits of the Midi, c. 1881.



Figure 30. Grapes and Fruits, 1881.

Renoir chose not to adopt this device. Hence, Renoir had no aversion to working with his colleagues such as Monet, Manet and Cézanne, observing their approaches and incorporating their styles into his own work.

The body of work by Renoir which most poignantly expresses Monet's influence was created in 1869 at their new outdoor haunt, La Grenouillère. During this time, a radical about-face sprung into the paintings of Renoir, best observed in his representation of one specific site at this fun-filled paradise. Working side by side, Renoir and Monet created almost identical versions of a point on the Seine River punctuated with a small, circular island which was jammed with a crowd of people and bridged to the mainland with a wharf. The two versions by these artists were, predictably, both titled La Grenouillère (see Figure 31 for Renoir's version and Figure 32 for that by Monet).

At this moment, Renoir's technique did not meander but sprinted in leaps and bounds. In contrast to the taut, particularized versions of Clearing in the Woods or Young Man (Jules Le Coeur) Walking his Dog in the Forest of Fontainebleau, Renoir suddenly exhibited great latitude in his approach. His brush stroke transformed into loose, distinct, stark, unblended units as seen, like Monet, in his depiction of water. The full spectrum of colours, frequently placed adjacent to one another within their host verdure, gave birth to sprinklings of tinctures which



Figure 31. La Grenouillère, 1869.

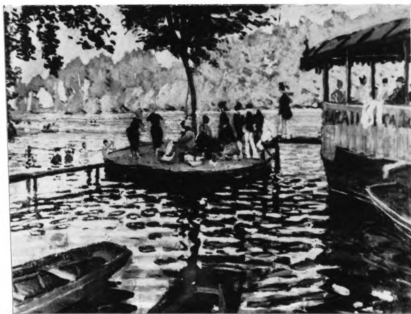


Figure 32. Monet, La Grenouillère, 1869.

glittered gaily from shrubs, trees, grass and flowers. The technique of a loose brush stroke, in combination with a liberal use of colour dappled throughout the scene, became a hallmark of impressionism.

When Renoir and Monet made their selection of site, method might have furnished the impetus behind their madness. La Grenouillère served two-fold advantage: it attracted a number of wealthy, prominent Parisians to its environs and it was a playground resort. During the day, Renoir and Monet could don a conservative front and meet well-to-do patrons who might return home with the youthful adventurers in mind for future commissions. At night, the two friends could storm the town and enjoy themselves without restraint.

La Grenouillère represents an abrupt shift in style when placed in context with other of Renoir's work created during the same period. Within a span of less than eight months, Renoir had jumped from impressionism (La Grenouillère) to romanticism (compare Woman of Algiers, 1870, Figure 5 and Parisian Women Dressed as Algerians, 1872, Figure 33 by Renoir with Delacroix's version, Les Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement, 1834, Figure 34) to classicism (Bather with a Griffon, 1870, Figure 35).

Night and day could not be greater opposites than La Grenouillère and Bather with a Griffon. In the former work, Renoir matched, step by step, almost identically the path

Figure 33.

Parisian Women Dressed
as Algerians, 1872.



Figure 34. Eugène Delacroix, Les Femmes d'Alger dans leur
appartement, 1834.



Figure 35.
Bather with a Griffon,
 1870.

cleared by his friend Monet; whereas in the latter canvas, with the exception of its realist content influenced by Courbet, Renoir diverged barely one inch from Academic ground rules. Aside from the obvious difference of subject matter (landscape as opposed to a bather), the chasm between techniques was radical. Loose brush strokes permeated La Grenouillère, but were subordinate to the whole in Bather with a Griffon. Figures in La Grenouillère were loosely sketched, enabling the eye to trace the movement of the

brush down a leg from hip to toe, whereas the nude figure in Bather with a Griffon was a belaboured study of light and shadow cast across exposed flesh. Form was decomposed in the figures portrayed on Renoir's landscape, whereas form was solid and impervious in Bather with a Griffon.

Not only did Renoir experiment with different styles from one painting to the next but he also played with the combination of styles within the same painting. Essentially, Bather with a Griffon was a portrait, a classical nude and a nineteenth century realist painting all rolled into one. Beginning with her overall pose and extending to the disposal of her recently removed garb, Renoir's bather would need little adjustment to correspond almost exactly with the time revered form of Aphrodite of Knidos (c. 350-325 B.C., Figure 36) by Praxiteles. Because it was painted in reverse, one can with a fair degree of assurance speculate that Renoir had consulted an etching of Aphrodite that would have been in circulation at the time.

As mentioned earlier, Renoir had been chastised as a student for a rendering which was described as a coal merchant's toe and might have tried to avoid all such implication in this painting at whatever cost. Be that as it may, despite his bold attempts to launder respectability into it by using a distinguished Praxitelian predecessor, Bather with a Griffon had more in common with

Figure 36.
 Praxiteles,
Aphrodite of Knidos,
 c. 350-325 B.C.



the toe of a coal dealer than with the ancient Greek goddess of love. As touched upon earlier, Courbet, the leader of the realist movement, blazed the trail for artists who were interested in the depiction of contemporary life stripped of rose-coloured visions, flawless physiques and calm, beautiful faces. Certain examples of Courbet's realist paintings, especially The Bathers (1854, Figure 37), his famous work which had aroused antagonisms and tipped the whip of Napoleon III, were blatant, belligerent selections



Figure 37. Gustave Courbet, The Bathers, 1854.

of coarse, earthy, flawed fat, unattractive human beings. By no means did Renoir consciously attempt to emulate Courbet's lead to the letter. However, without a doubt, Bather with a Griffon failed to conform with the Academic outline of pulchritude but instead echoed the covenants of the realist school.

Bather with a Griffon not only contravened the physical paradigms laid out by Praxiteles but also went against Academic doctrine. To nineteenth century art connoisseurs, forms found in nature, including the human body, were looked upon as mere take-off points from which an artist could work. The human figure needed to be purified; namely, to

be raised above mundane, blasé platitudes, cleansed of any imperfections and idealized. It was believed that beautiful visions would uplift the spirit of humankind, provide individuals with ideals worthy of emulation, and eventually strengthen and improve the human race. Renoir, however, created a clearly identifiable facial and anatomical portrait of his model, Lise Tréhot. The face conformed with the specific contours and modulations of Tréhot rather than being generalized and beautified. The body itself was given particular traits such as awkward, bulging breasts, a narrow chest, broad hips and thick thighs, denoting the configuration of a specific individual instead of a model translated into a slender, artistic showpiece.

Renoir further appears to have toyed with the idea of following the mode of Manet's Luncheon on the Grass (1863, Figure 38) which showed two clothed nineteenth century bourgeois men relaxing in the company of a seated, nude woman. As a result of this juxtaposition, Manet ran up against a great deal of criticism. Renoir's background figure in Bather with a Griffon, although a woman, appears originally to have been cast as a man. Fully dressed and in the company of a bather who has just removed her dirndl, she is not just a companion, but a voyeur who appreciates the nude body of her friend. The griffon, like most dogs in art history, is a time-honoured symbol of fidelity in art, and, in combination with the wedding band worn on the



Figure 38. Manet, Luncheon on the Grass, 1863.

left-hand ring finger of the bather, would make sense only if the background figure were a man.

Had he shown a nineteenth century bourgeois man in the background, like Manet, instantaneously Renoir would have jumped from a nonentity to a radical outcast. Nineteenth century Parisian sensibilities accepted works wherein nude women appeared with clothed men, but only on the provision that the men wore classical robes which safely distanced the scene in the past. But, on the other hand, if a nude woman appeared in the same scene as a man garbed in contemporary bourgeois or aristocratic dress, it created an uproar. How dare an artist hand to posterity a legacy

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which suggested that Parisians were morally debauched and sexually lascivious?! The consequences were far graver than he was willing to bear. Faced with a desire to remedy his impecunious status, Renoir compromised his values: the attainment of a moneyed clientele and income took precedence over long-term ideals. Renoir chose not to promote his own demise as an artist by raising the antagonisms of Academicians and eliminating his hopes of ever exhibiting again in Salon corridors. Renoir was unable to face the prospect of being a poor, starving artist.

Had Renoir tampered with the spirit of revolt, it was in a substantially modified manner. In Bather with a Griffon, Renoir more or less played with existing modes of expression (realism and classicism) and their various combinations, rather than trying to achieve a new or radical approach to art. Nevertheless, especially in this painting and his work of this period, it is evident that Renoir was pulled between the pursuit of radical ideals and Academic precepts.

Granted, Renoir had arrived at a perfect solution for those who were unable to make up their minds about what style they liked best: he could now offer paintings which combined current tastes, such as classicism and realism. When he showed Bather with a Griffon in the same Salon as Woman of Algiers, obviously he had hoped to impress art collectors with his ability to handle almost any style.

Indeed, Renoir built up a repertoire of canvases which he could offer to customers when they knocked on his door. If they wanted a classical painting, he could show them one, or if they preferred a romantic, he had examples of these, too. He had worked in the styles of Delacroix, Courbet, Rubens, Boucher and Fragonard, and he could offer conventional portraits of patrons seated on horses. Should someone want a bather, he could sell them one, or, should a client prefer landscapes, why, he had these as well. Renoir would copy verbatim paintings of his predecessors in the Louvre if the price was right, and, at least at this point in his career, fairly low prices would do. Renoir was building up a reputation for being able to paint in the style of Delacroix, which led to at least two commissions, one of which, at the request of Jean Dollfus, a rich industrialist, involved the direct copying of La Noce Joive (The Jewish Wedding) in the Louvre (see Figure 39 for Renoir's version and Figure 40 for the original by Delacroix).

Between 1869 and 1873 inclusive, Renoir continued his production of conservative paintings designed for exhibition on Salon walls but, with the exception of Bather with a Griffon, never once did he paint a canvas which would challenge Academic values. In the foregoing painting the realist content might have ruffled a few feathers, but not all indignantly condemned him, obviously, because he was



Figure 39. La Noce Joive (The Jewish Wedding), 1875.



Figure 40. Delacroix, Jewish Wedding in Morocco, c. 1839.

let into the Salon.

Concurrently, in the company of Monet, Renoir surreptitiously built up a repertoire of landscapes which reflected Monet's advancements. For the time being, the Academic route seemed most lucrative; however, it was equally obvious that Monet's novel paintings, by virtue of their unorthodox nature, presaged posterity. Rather than gamble and risk losing the fortune which could be had through either one of these viable approaches, Renoir chose to follow both.

THE IMPRESSIONIST DECADE

The First Step

In late 1873, Renoir swung full force into impressionism, marking the start of a phase which lasted almost nine years. Renoir's earlier work in the footsteps of Monet predisposed him to claim membership in the group. By the time of the first independent exhibition, the number of artists with similar interests had enlarged to include Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Edgar Degas and Paul Cézanne, among others.(36) Pissarro and Morisot shared with the Gleyre's group an interest in landscape painting.

One of the major bonds which held these friends and colleagues together was their common desire to display their own paintings. Motivations among the artists were many

and varied. A prime impetus was the desire for recognition. All members of the group could wholeheartedly concur that the Salon offered an unquestionably fickle and tedious system which hindered the acceptance of ambitious, creative young artists, especially those whose works were less than congenial, if not at loggerheads, with the Salon norm. An independent group exhibition would obviate the practice of catering on an annual basis to the Academic leanings of conservative Salon juries.

Another advantage to such an exhibition was expressed by Morisot who believed their work was distinct, unique and united by their common interest in landscapes. To be convinced of their merit, patrons needed to be exposed to their work as one whole unit, rather than seeing it scattered and watered down by run-of-the-mill paintings in the Salon.

Degas, of an alternate view, insisted that practitioners of divergent styles be included in the independent show. Because his art centered on Parisian night life and people as subject matter, obviously he wished to avoid having his own art swamped by and lost amongst the landscapes of his friends. Renoir could concur with Degas's policy on two counts. First, the inclusion of a greater number of artists, albeit of different styles, would mean that the substantial cost of holding a show would be spread among a wider range of people, thereby easing the

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financial burden on each individual artist. This was not a concern of Degas, but it meant much to artists such as Renoir, Pissarro and Monet who were less affluent. Second, many of Renoir's paintings were not landscapes and, like Degas, he might have felt uncomfortable if he were part of an exhibition that was dominated by this subject matter. Moreover, Renoir intended to cater to a wide range of public taste. An art connoisseur who liked his paintings but disliked landscapes could now choose from his selection of alternate subjects, such as portraiture and nudes. Third, Renoir was fully aware that landscapes did not sell as well as paintings of people. An exhibition that was open to a greater range of subject matter might attract a broader range of buyers.

Renoir's decision not merely to show with the group of independent painters, but, moreover, to accept a management position on the committee, came at a time of moderate success. Juries usually accepted his work into the Salon, and critics, for the most part, were positive. Renoir sat in a favourable position with a growing clientele, in particular, the Le Coeurs, for whom he created the most portraits during this time and through whom he was led to new patrons. The dealer, Durand-Ruel, intermittently purchased some of his work and, even though he lacked the adequate funds to carry it out fully, seemed enthusiastic about supporting Renoir and his friends. He

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purchased paintings by a number of the artists during the early 1870's, although the frequency of these gradually dropped off, not because he disliked their works but because he was unable to find buyers. These artists undoubtedly hoped that an independent show would spur Durand-Ruel's sales and give the public an opportunity to view their work objectively in order to, ultimately, share their dealer's enthusiasm.

Had Renoir believed he was joining the ranks of mediocre or insignificant artists who were failures at the Salon, he would have abstained from showing with them. However, prudently, Renoir was associating with a respectable group who had experienced a reasonable degree of success at the Salon, especially Morisot and Degas who had always been accepted by its jury since the submission of their first entries in 1864 and 1865 respectively. Renoir was not alone in his determination to be visible in the public eye as a creditable artist. All wished to avoid the stigma of being confounded with artists who could not make it in the Salon. For this reason, the majority of artists were opposed to the participation of Cézanne, whose works, consistently rejected by the Salon juries, caused the artists to believe that these would lower the quality of their show. Cézanne was permitted to join the group, but only by the skin of his teeth, and at the insistence of Pissarro.

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In keeping with the idea of a respectable exhibition, the timing of the show took on as great a significance as the status of its participants. A show held concurrently with the Salon or after it had ended might mislead the public into believing that these artists were displaying their works separately only because they had been rejected by the jury and were unable to get into the Salon. Hence, to avoid any confusion, these artists ran their exhibition before the Salon had a chance to open its doors. Moreover, members of the group realized that not all of their colleagues consistently had good fortune when submitting to the Salon. For instance, Renoir, Monet and Sisley all fell into this category: although they were sometimes admitted, each had also faced rejections. If exhibitors in the independent show also submitted their work to the Salon only to watch the jury turn it down, why, critics could have a heyday, being supplied with ample ammunition to attack them as incompetents who, failing approval through official routes, were groping for last resorts. Thus, the organizers of the independent exhibition, including Renoir, agreed upon a pact which barred the inclusion in their galleries of anyone who submitted work to the Salon.(37)

In addition to the above, Renoir had personal motivations for becoming a part of an independent group exhibition. First, the overall respectability of the group enhanced his own, not only in their status as artists but

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also in their family background. Morisot was the daughter of a wealthy magistrate (38) and Degas came from an upper middle class background.(39) Second, like his comrades, Renoir unquestionably felt the pangs associated with slow recognition. Displaying only one or two paintings amid a couple or so thousand would dampen the spirits of many artists who hoped to gain public recognition and clients. Third, as mentioned earlier, the Salon attracted throngs of visitors. Should an independent exhibition attract even a fraction of these multitudes and interest them in their art, members of the group conceivably could survive in moderate comfort, if not decadent luxury. Finally, since the Franco-Prussian War, Renoir's works had been rejected from both Salons held in 1872 and 1873, although his entry during the latter year had been successfully shown in the 1873 Salon des Réfuses (see pages 33-35). It would be easier for Renoir to participate in an independent exhibition and be assured of having his works displayed, rather than submitting to the Salon without guarantee that his paintings would even be accepted. In the latter instance, if he was rejected, Renoir would have to wait one year before he could submit new work, and at that, he could again face rejection.

The Salon had yet to aid Renoir in building a solid clientele. If Renoir did meet patrons through this gallery, their numbers were low. Because the mainstay of his

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business was built on personal contact, Renoir had every reason to believe that this trend would continue at an independent show where he would be one of 30, not 1,500, painters and where he could meet people on a one-to-one basis. On December 27, 1873, when Renoir added his signature to the first charter of independent artists, the independent group exhibition held the greatest promise of fame and fortune, and thus, was worth the risk.

The Shows

The group of independent artists held a total of eight independent impressionist exhibitions which ranged intermittently from 1874 until 1886 inclusive; of these, Renoir participated in only four shows; namely, in 1874, 1876, 1877 and 1882 respectively (Appendix J).

Before their first opening, minor details, such as their name, needed to be clarified among members of the independent artists. In this, there were two opposing views. Degas promulgated the idea of calling their exhibition by a quaint, but neutral title such as La Capucine (the nasturtium),(40) based on the name of the street, 35, boulevard des Capucines, where it would be held. Renoir, however, adamantly vetoed all attempts to give the show a name, including Degas' suggestion, the most neutral that was brainstormed. To Vollard, Renoir explained

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that he "...was afraid that if it were called the 'Somebodies' or 'The So-and-Sos' or even 'The Thirty-Nine,' the critics would immediately start talking of a 'new school'".(41) Renoir feared that a "new school" would frighten away people who bought art. Hence, the title finally agreed upon for the first impressionist exhibition was: "Societe anonyme des artistes peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, etc..."(42) Despite Renoir's efforts, the first show was dubbed "impressionism" by the critic Louis Leroy in his derisive article on this group of painters, and the name stayed.

Renoir ceased production of his academic work and went full force into independent exhibitions, showing a total of sixty-eight works during the whole of his participation, beginning with a modest contribution of seven paintings in the first and reaching the astounding number of twenty-five in the last show (Appendix K). For the first exhibition, Renoir displayed a range of works, mostly of people, which could appeal to a variety of public tastes. He employed models to pose for three of his paintings, including La Parisienne (1874, Figure 41), La Loge (1874, Figure 42) and The Dancer (1874, Figure 43). La Loge was created after Renoir had made a number of studies of his model Nini, whose countenance he transformed from a plain, apparently homely appearance to that of a stunning vision.(43) The Dancer was of a young ballerina

Figure 41.

La Parisienne, 1874.



standing singly against a plain background, whereas La Parisienne was strictly a genre portrait of a woman, Mme. Henriot, one of Renoir's preferred models, who more than obviously had adopted a cute pose which would appeal to the taste of certain audiences for pretty, albeit unprofound pictures. However, all of these paintings are about appearance and subject matter, not theory. During this exhibition, Renoir included only one painting, The Harvesters (1873, Figure 44) in which he did experiment

with impressionist theories by breaking away from conventional brush strokes and showing an interest in the qualities of light. However, Renoir's paintings were far from being fully developed, nor were they as daring as Monet's. The sentiments of the critic Jean Prouvaire, who visited their show and wrote an article on it, are wholly apt. Apparently he has "Très fortes réserves sur le mouvement, mais, dans l'ensemble, appréciation sympathique des peintres, qu'il trouve moins révolutionnaires que leur théories." (44)

The impressionists were met with a host of critics



Figure 42.

La Loge, 1874.



Figure 43.
The Dancer, 1874.



Figure 44. The Harvesters, 1873.

when their doors opened to the public. Had Renoir thought the term "fat" was a serious malediction directed toward Lise with a Parasol in the Salon of 1868, he was in for an even greater shock. During the impressionist exhibitions, the critics went on the rampage. Beginning with Louis Leroy and patterning themselves after his lead, many jumped on the bandwagon and gleefully contributed to the rapidly growing ranks, clever or otherwise, of derisive articles.

Leroy, on his own account, had toured the first impressionist exhibition with a cohort, the painter Joseph Vincent, whom he had encountered on the premises. The reader is led to believe that all commentary in Leroy's subsequent article originated from the collaborated efforts of both men. According to this facetious account printed in Charivari, the legs of The Dancer were described by Vincent as being "'as cottony as the gauze of her skirts'"(45) and The Harvesters, a loosely painted work, was called "too finished" when compared with the paintings of Morisot.(46) In the ribald view of these adversaries, a man depicted by Renoir in the midst of a field of wheat should have been depicted with one stripe of colour, not three, had the artist been a true impressionist.(47)

Whereas his friends went one way and continued to develop impressionism, Renoir turned and ran in the opposite direction. During the second impressionist exhibition in

1876, Renoir took no chances. Under no circumstance did he wish to show paintings which could draw the attention of critics who would label him a revolutionary. Renoir feared this tag would give his reputation a beating and cause his slowly building clientele to drop. Almost all of his works were portraits, and two thirds of these were society commissions, but not one was a landscape. Moreover, eleven of the fifteen paintings were owned by his patrons whose names Renoir included next to the entries in the catalogue, hoping to add an air of respectability to these works. However, this ruse failed to waylay the attacks of critics. If two years earlier Louis Leroy had sharpened a knife, the critic Albert Wolff now wielded a hatchet. In this show, Nu au Soleil (1876, Figure 45), a modest study, was one of the few, if only, paintings in which Renoir experimented with impressionist theory. The flesh of the nude was dappled with reds, blues, violets, greens and yellows, denoting sunlight that had been refracted upon striking the skin.

Wolff described this torso as "'a mass of flesh in the process of decomposition with green and violet spots which denote the state of complete putrefaction of a corpse!'"(48) Less ingenious critics took this description and played it to the utmost, perhaps causing the impressionists and, especially, Renoir to feel that they would never live it down. Never again would Renoir depict

Figure 45.

Nu au Soleil, 1876.



human flesh with obviously variegated tints of colour.

In 1876, during the winter months which preceded the third impressionist show, Renoir was sought out by a recently acquired patron, Georges Charpentier, who had purchased his painting, Pêcheur à la Ligne, during one of the group's auctions held at the Hôtel Drouot in 1875. Renoir was commissioned to tackle portraits of this patron's family and, later in the year, was invited to their evening salons, at which he became a regular guest. Apparently one of the most spectacular in Paris, these soirées bristled with influential coterie of keynote politicians, official

painters, famous writers, and prominent critics.(49)

Before the commencement of the third impressionist exhibition in 1877, and because of his contacts made at the salons held by the Charpentiers, Renoir was well on his way to establishing a solid clientele in the upper class quarters of French society. During this exhibition, Renoir had distributed his subject matter equally into three distinct categories. This would enable patrons to choose their preferences in art, be these society portraits, which comprised the first third of his paintings; genre, the second; or landscapes, the third. This time, when Renoir singled out the society portraits which he would show, the notability of his patron mattered. The individuals who had posed for him were prominent, well-to-do citizens of Paris. Mme. Charpentier, the daughter of a "grand bourgeois", a jeweler to the Crown,(50) was married to M. Georges Charpentier, a publisher who owned a bookstore (51) and who, in addition, maintained the Charpentier library that was founded by his father.(52) Mme. Daudet, the daughter of a rich industrialist, was a talented writer who had published poems, memoirs and essays.(53) Jeanne Samary was an attractive, well-known and very popular actress in Paris whom Renoir had met at the Charpentier Salon and had volunteered to paint.(54) Renoir had hoped that the prestige of these prominent people would enhance his own.

Renoir also showed two respectable portraits of men, completed a few years earlier, including the Portrait of Alfred Sisley (c. 1874, Figure 46) and the Portrait of Jacques-Eugène Spuller (1871, Figure 47), a member of the provisional government during a short-lived commune following the seige of Paris after the Franco-Prussian War. Although his exhibits were dominated by portraits of women, Renoir wished to remind visitors that societal depictions of men were also within his powers. Renoir was more strongly committed to building an income by painting the portraits of moneyed clientele than to following the ideals

Figure 46.
Portrait of Alfred Sisley,
c. 1874.





Figure 47.
Portrait of
Jacques-Eugène Spuller,
 1871.

of impressionism.

Especially in his representations of women, Renoir distinguished his paintings with a "soft-focus" appearance which had a tendency to make the sitters look very attractive, even if they were not. To achieve the same results, Academic paintings used a scumble; that is, a thin coating of opaque colour placed over an abrupt edge to soften it. Renoir eliminated the distinct edge, completing contours of a figure, face or hand with jagged dabs of paint. As he had learned when depicting Marie Antoinette profiles, attractive appearances sell.

Notably at this time, Renoir credited himself with insisting upon the use of the title "impressionism" for the third group exhibition in 1877. Vollard presented Renoir's reasoning as follows: "It served to explain our attitude to the layman, and, hence, nobody was deceived".(55) Degas, naturally, was opposed to the use of the name of impressionism. A neutral title could have been employed as a reference to a general exhibition which contained a variety of styles; whereas the name impressionism denoted only a handful of artists within this exhibition, among whom he felt his own work did not belong. Renoir, however, had personal motivations for now desiring the designation "impressionism". Undoubtedly, at the salon of the Charpentiers, he would have been introduced as one of the impressionists since, at this point, this name was circulating in Paris. Thus, by using this name, Renoir undoubtedly hoped that a number of the wealthy art collectors whom he had met at the Charpentier salon would recognize the show when it was advertised and be interested in visiting it. Once drawn, they could see his work and perhaps purchase a few paintings or commission a portrait. If the exhibition was called by any other designation, these amateurs might unwittingly overlook the advertisement and not realize that Renoir's work would be in it. To draw these wealthy clientele, it had to be called impressionism. Renoir, however, apparently was unable to convince his

his associates to go along with the new name. His friends and colleagues, instead, agreed upon the title Exposition de Peinture (Exhibition of Painting) for the third independent group show.(56)

For this show, Renoir produced his greatest and deservedly famous work, Au Moulin de la Galette (1876, Figure 48). This masterpiece cannot help but overwhelm a viewer. One is beguiled by the dazzling lights, the sensuous waltzes, the gay smiles, the relaxed demeanors, the fond, affectionate gestures of hands brushing shoulders, the warm contact of embracing bodies, the frivolous conversations and the pungent wines. Not one single person has a quarrel with another; or, if so, this is not depicted.



Figure 48. Au Moulin de la Galette, 1876.

All are vivacious. All are engrossed in their surroundings and enveloped in an atmosphere of moderate pleasure of one sort or another. No one is either languid or downright depressed. Women are pretty with wide set eyes, smooth noses and archaic smiles on their lips, reminiscent of the expression carved on the faces of ancient Greek kouros and kore statues. Men, on the other hand, are stoic and suave. Many of the costumes are of a relatively dark navy blue or black colour; yet the painting as a whole avoids melancholy for it is sprinkled with arrays of colour radiating from the occasional dress, terrace, trees, flowers, hats and ornaments. No one would have a sour thought, and realities such as jealousies, broken engagements, false promises, pregnancies, marital breakdowns and the menial chores of daily life have no place in this world of wine, song and roses. Perhaps Renoir had his head set squarely upon his shoulders when he constructed this masterpiece: life is short and the world is to be enjoyed. Perhaps the spirit of freedom permeated its influence: Renoir was 35 at the time and a bachelor.

At this point it may seem difficult to ascertain why, exactly, a painting such as Au Moulin de la Galette is a specific example of impressionism, but not mainstream art, or, for that matter, any other style of art. After all, it seems moreso a depiction of a glamorous outdoor ball attended by cavorting people sharing intimate waltzes and

obstreperous revelry than that of artistic theory. To find an answer, it is necessary to return to the first impressionist exhibition where the name had originated.

In the spring of 1874, Monet had titled one of his paintings with the caption, Impression, Sunrise (1872, Figure 49), which was spotted by Leroy and his accomplice, Vincent.(57) In their eyes, the label "impression" aptly described what they were seeing in the works of a number of artists; in particular, Renoir, Monet, Sisley, Morisot, Pissarro, Degas, and Cézanne. The critic and his associate saw brush strokes stand unblended on the surface of the canvas, which implied a lack of concern for exactitude and

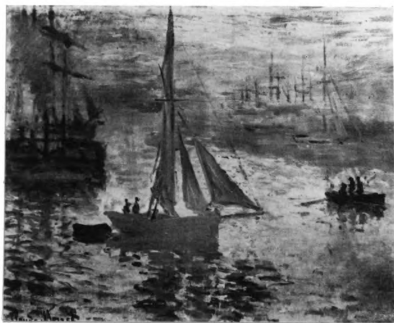


Figure 49. Monet, Impression, Sunrise, 1872.

truth to nature. These two adversaries were accustomed to viewing paintings in which brush strokes were subordinated to the whole and smoothed to an indiscernible, glossy patina. They believed that colours should ring and, moreover, exhibit a certain agreement with those extant in nature. Most highly valued in France at that time were trompe l'oeil paintings which could make a viewer forget that the image hanging in front of them was comprised simply of slippery oil brushed on the surface of a primed canvas, but instead almost convince them that living, breathing people, massive buildings, spacious rooms, sun-drenched vistas, light-shot trees, elegant dining room suites, and other paraphernalia stood before their eyes.

The use of distinct brush strokes was not unknown to the French public. Delacroix liberally deployed them throughout his canvases to convey the excitement and drama of his action-packed subjects, well aware that these would be optically blended the moment a person stood back from a painting. However, to art connoisseurs, unblended brush strokes were chiefly associated with an unfinished canvas. A technique, called ébauche, was taught by the École des Beaux Arts and practiced by artists, wherein the composition was rapidly built up with an undercoat of paint using crude, broad brush strokes which covered the whole of the canvas surface in a haphazard, multi-directional fashion. This method was employed as a means to envision the overall

product in short order. The subject would later be worked to achieve a smooth finish. Not only did Gleyre advocate this practice to his students at the atelier, but this technique dates at least as far back as 1800 to Jacques-Louis David's unfinished portrait of Mme. Récamier (Figure 50).(58)

Thus, when critics and artists viewed the first independent show, they were not impressed. They were familiar with unblended brushstrokes but chiefly associated these with the inchoate stage of a finished work. They knew full well the practice of putting down on paper a quick rendering of a subject, but regarded this as merely one



Figure 50. Jacques-Louis David, Mme. Récamier, 1800.

step in a series of stages toward a finished painting. To contemporaries, the name impressionism well suited the art on display at the first independent exhibition. These seeming dilettantes created only what caught their eyes at a quick glance; namely, their first impressions of the scene or, in other words, a sketch; but not a finished, studied, perhaps one could say scholastic version of their métier. Unfinished sketches, per se, were not nearly as irritating as attitude: the artists not only presented these to the public as completed works, but propounded them as earth-shattering masterpieces. It was either a farce or the artists were stark raving mad and fit only for an insane asylum. If these artists apparently failed to take seriously their own paintings, the public might have questioned how anyone else could have been expected to do so.

The ideas of the artists, when compared with those in published reports, are as divergent as the sun and the moon. Had the artists any intention of capturing an "impression" of what they saw, this was incidental to their concerns. Instead, originating with Monet, impressionism took root in the idea of depicting light with colour. Glass prisms, which refract the rays of the sun into the visible spectrum, demonstrated that light was synonymous with colour. Because black was not part of this spectrum and denoted the absense of light, it was incongruous with their

interests and, hence, dropped from their palette.

Early on, under the influence of Monet, Renoir showed an interest in depicting light, as evidenced in Lise with a Parasol (1868, Figure 7; page 35). In Au Moulin de la Galette, Renoir interpreted the impressionists' interest in light in a novel and spectacular fashion. In this painting, like Monet, Renoir's use of light was daring but, unlike Monet, it was literal. In real life on a clear day the outdoor sun greets the ground, benches, and people in sharp, patchy contrasts of shadow and light when it is filtered through the leaves of trees and surrounding plants. Renoir depicted the premises of this dance hall and its affable crowd with these splashes of light and colour, adding to the motion, gaiety and bedazzlement of the activities.

Following the position of the realists who were their forerunners, the impressionists, in Renoir's words, wanted to take the literature out of painting.(59) In France, "high art" had grown on the tradition of choosing select passages from classical and, later, contemporary literature. Whereas at one point in time this approach had given artists an opportunity to demonstrate their erudition and knowledge of ancient sculptures, now such ploys were tired, worn out and overdone. Long ago, the art world was "Diana-ed" to death but, on the other hand, contemporary life opened up a new field day to artists.

Renoir had personal reasons for desiring to see classical and contemporary literature removed from the realm of art. Having stopped formal schooling at the age of thirteen to undergo an apprenticeship in porcelain painting, his knowledge of classical literature would have been truncated. Moreover, Renoir had difficulty appreciating most contemporary French literature. In France during the nineteenth century, there were two styles of language in circulation. One, referred to as classical French, was used in books by most writers and spoken by scholars. The other was vernacular French, quite commonly used on the street by the average citizen who had little or no education. Renoir took a disliking to authors such as Victor Hugo expressly because his books influenced readers away from the use of simple French.(60) The author William Gaunt tabulates Renoir's reaction to contemporary authors in another fashion: "He had a distrust of literature as a bad influence on painting and his views of authors were seldom appreciative. He summed up the naturalism of Zola in the phrase 'He imagines he has painted the people when he says they smell.' He could not bother with Flaubert's 'Madame Bovary', 'the story of an idiot whose wife wanted to be somebody'. He liked to hear Mallarmé talk but had only a glimmering through him of the sensuous power of words. Renoir was not an intellectual."(61)

RENOIR'S RISE TO WEALTH AND PROMINENCE

Following the third impressionist exhibition, Renoir, who now perceived these as failures, wanted to get out of them essentially because he was experiencing a considerable degree of success through another channel, portraiture, and the impressionist shows were harmful to his reputation. Since the end of 1876, Renoir circulated in the realms of famous, wealthy people and painted their portraits, for which he was well reimbursed. These he met through his patrons, the Charpentiers, but not the impressionist exhibitions. He noticed, whenever his work sold with the impressionist painters, that prices would drop to less than half of what he could attain when working on a one-to-one basis with moneyed clientele. During the auction at the Hôtel Drouot in 1875, he fared the worst among his friends. His twenty paintings put up for bidding commanded 2,250 francs.(62) Even though this sum may seem low, in this one day his earnings were better than the approximately 1,500 franc annual salary of the average skilled worker, or the 1,200 franc annual wage of the average clerk.(63) Two years later, following the third impressionist exhibition, Renoir and his friends held another auction, again, at the Hôtel Drouot, "where all Paris auctions take place under government supervision".(64) Renoir's paintings brought between 47 and 285 francs,(65) totalling 2,005 francs for fifteen paintings and one pastel during the

bidding.(66) Again, it was a fair wage relative to Renoir's background and the cost of living, but now it no longer measured up to his standard of living. Since 1873, Renoir had been renting a studio at 35, rue St. Georges and, by 1875, could afford "to rent - for 100 francs a month - a small house with a garden on the heights of Montmartre, Cortot."(67) In comparison, in 1866 the average skilled worker with a family of four could afford to rent good living accommodations at a rate of 294 francs per year, not month; thus, by now Renoir was living the life of a full-fledged bourgeois, well out of the range of a person in the lower income bracket. Renoir did not wish to lose this status, and felt concerned that the impressionist auctions and shows would have a deflationary influence on his rates.

Renoir was also worried about his reputation. If in 1874 he had openly objected to titles as tame as "Nasturtium", surely he experienced several shades of mortification when the core members of the group, including him, were labelled lunatics. Association with a school in a negative context probably turned Renoir off from ever wanting to show with the group again. Wolff's 1876 article in *Le Figaro* ran: "'Yesterday a poor soul was arrested in the rue Le Peletier, who, after having seen the exhibition, was biting the passers-by. Seriously, these lunatics must be pitied; benevolent nature endowed some of them with

superior abilities which could have produced artists."(68)

Renoir would also have been concerned about what was said about his works. In 1877, the year following its original use, lesser critics were having a heyday with the charge "putrefaction of the corpse."(69) Renoir, who took pains to make his work pleasing to the public, surely felt chagrined when he read press coverages and glanced at cartoons. In Le Charivari, one humourist, Cham, published a caricature "in...which an impressionist painter tells his model: 'Madame, a few tones in the face are lacking for your portrait. Couldn't you first spend a couple of days on the bottom of a river?'"(70) Now that Renoir was becoming known and receiving a reasonable return on his canvases, he refused to jeopardize this success on account of abuse directed toward him by critics. Moreover, should even one of his prized patrons be labelled by the press in one portrait as being a corpse in the advanced state of decomposition, Renoir could face losing all of his clientele.

Renoir looked with a yearning heart back to the Salon. When art lovers wanted to buy art, they went here where they could choose from a wide selection of artists. At the Salon, approximately 1,300 painters exhibited, whereas the numbers of participants in independent shows had dwindled from thirty down to eighteen by the third exhibition. If eighteen artists thought they could outdo

1,300, why, they had to be a bit crazy. Moreover, the Salon offered a range of coveted medals which could lead to government commissions and positions in prestigious societies such as the Legion of Honour or the Academy. Renoir longed for such honours and even made an unsuccessful attempt to acquire a coveted state commission through M. J.-E. Spuller (Figure 47) and M. Georges Charpentier during the late 1870's or early 1880's.(71) However, he knew that he was cutting himself out of these exact awards expressly because he was exhibiting with the independent artists. Renoir realized that when his patrons did visit the Salon, they would undoubtedly run into their friends and colleagues. If only one patron pointed Renoir's work out to one associate and this led to another commission, it would be well worth his while to have his paintings there.

Unlike his comrades, Renoir was the first to return to the Salon. In 1875, the year following the first impressionist show, Renoir was the only member who handed work over to the jury in hopes of selection, although to no avail: his canvas was rejected.(72) In 1878, Renoir again was the only member among his colleagues (with the exception of Cézanne) who submitted his work to the Salon, and he continued this practice henceforth, giving up on independent shows (with the exception of the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition, which shall be discussed later).

One difference in attitude existed between Cézanne and Renoir. Cézanne knew without a doubt that he would be rejected from the Salon but submitted regardless, never modifying his work to get in. Renoir always hoped to be accepted, and geared his art accordingly.

From hereon, Renoir restricted his submissions to the Salon to genre and portraiture, both of which he knew would get him past the jury and, moreover, had a market. In a letter to Durand-Ruel dated March, 1881 he confessed: "Il y a dans Paris à peine quinze amateurs capables d'aimer un peintre sans le Salon. Il y en a 80.000 qui n'achèteront même pas un nez si un peintre n'est pas au Salon." (73)

In addition, Renoir realized that the vast numbers who visited the Salon dwarfed those who dropped into the impressionist exhibitions. For instance, a total of 3,500 visitors attended the first independent group show over a period of thirty days and viewed 165 works, dominated by paintings, by thirty artists. On the other hand, attendance at the Salon throughout the course of its duration could reach, in Zola's estimation, 400,000 visitors who viewed as many as 4,000 works of art. (74) Of these, paintings could number as many as 2,400, while the number of painters who showed their works could reach approximately 1,300 to 1,500 (Appendix C). (75) Thus, the Salon attracted up to 300 visitors per painter, well above the 116 guests per artist attracted to the independent group show. In

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addition, the Salon drew between 160 to 200 visitors per painting shown, whereas the impressionists had only 21 visitors per work. The independent show did have the advantage of enabling its artists to exhibit a greater number of canvases, instead of the one or two that were restricted by the Salon. Nevertheless, the large number of visitors who attended the Salon made this latter exhibition more appealing to Renoir.

Renoir knew how to take advantage of the Salon (Appendix L). He was fully aware that the public liked paintings of people, particularly ones whom they could recognize. If Renoir's paintings stood out at the Salon because the individuals whom he represented were known and attractive, Renoir, in turn, would be noticed and remembered, which would increase his own sales, commissions and income. For instance, Renoir contributed to the Salon of 1881 two portraits of Jeanne Samary: one, an oil and the other, a pastel (see Figures 51 and 52 for examples of Renoir's paintings of this actress). It benefitted Renoir to paint many portraits of this woman, which he did, because she was a well-known, charming, beautiful actress whom Parisians loved and raved about. In a letter dated March 1881 to Durand-Ruel, Renoir confessed: "Mon envoi au Salon est tout commercial. En tout cas, c'est comme de certaines médecines. Si ça ne fait pas de bien, ça ne fait pas de mal."(76)

Figure 51.

Portrait of Jeanne Samary,

1877.



Figure 52.

Woman with a Fan,

1881.

There was, in addition, a peculiarity to human temperament, also capitalized upon by Renoir. Should word get around that notables were having their portraits painted by a promising artist, quite often this attracted new clientele, some of whom felt genuine admiration for his work. Others would have been speculators drawn to the potential of the art to increase in value. In addition, a third segment of art patrons might have perceived the ownership of canvases by a talented painter who carried out portrait commissions for la haute as a status symbol which would elevate their own prestige. Renoir, undoubtedly aware of this trait, made sure that many of his Salon entries included prominent, moneyed members of Parisian society. Thus, he submitted to the Salon portraits of the Charpentiers, previously discussed; the grandchildren of M. Armand Grimpel of the Bérard-Grimprel Bank;(77) and Mme. Léon Clapisson, who was married to Léon Clapisson, the son of the musical composer for the comic opera, La Mere Gregoire (Mother Gregory).(78)

Renoir also sent to the Salon picturesque views of poor people who barely scraped by during their lives. Under no uncertain terms, these genre paintings revealed none of their hardships and little insight into their daily lives; but, rather, were intended to please a French public who wanted to see only glamorous visions of poverty and believe that the sordid side of the human condition was

not all that bad. An example of Renoir's genre painting, submitted to the Salon of 1880, is Fisherwoman of Mussels at Bernval (1879, Figure 53). Coming from a spartan background himself, one could be led to believe that Renoir would feel an empathy for the poor and wish to direct his paintings to improve their condition. Renoir, however, simply desired to paint an attractive work which would appeal to buyers and sell, as did most genre art that was typical of his time.

However, it was Renoir's contact with the Charpentiers,

Figure 53.

Fisherwoman of Mussels
at Bernval, 1879.



not strictly the Salon, which led to his ultimate success. The Charpentiers were Renoir's veritable opening to an affluent lifestyle. Essentially, this contact dates back to the Le Coeur family, through whom the Charpentiers would have learned of Renoir, although at that time they had yet to meet him. Marie, the sister of Georges Charpentier, early on had married Charles Le Coeur, the architect who had arranged Renoir's commission to paint ceiling decorations for the mansion of Prince Bibesco (pages 18-20). In 1869 Renoir had produced a portrait of the Charpentier's mother, Mme. Théodore, née Marie-Pauline Le



Figure 54.
Mme. Théodore
Charpentier,
1869.



Figure 55.

Portrait of Charles Le Coeur,
1874.

Grand (Figure 54) and later painted a number of portraits of Charles and Marie Le Coeur and their children (Figures 55-57; Appendices M, N). It seems little coincidence, one year following the severance of Renoir's ties with the Le Coeurs, that Georges Charpentier made a point of attending the auction at the Hôtel Drouot where, in 1875, he purchased a painting by not just anyone, but Renoir. It seems more striking that this same man, in 1877, chose to seek Renoir out and commission him to paint portraits

of his family before inviting him to attend the stimulating soirées in their salons. Had he been informed of the incident which occurred between Renoir and the Le Coeur family, perhaps Georges Charpentier, twelve years younger than his sister, did not see things in exactly the same manner and felt that she and her husband had been too hard on Renoir, whom he obviously thought was a talented artist. Having a grandfather, Augustin Le Grand, who was a prominent engraver, a father who was an architect and a father-in-law who was a Crown jeweler, Georges Charpentier felt great sympathy toward the Fine Arts.

Figure 56.

Portrait of Mlle. Marie
Le Coeur, 1869.





Figure 57.

Portrait of

Mme. Charles

(née Marie Charpentier)

Le Coeur, 1870.

And assist the artist the Charpentiers did, far beyond Renoir's wildest hopes, dreams and imaginations. Renoir attained recognition through the efforts of Mme. Charpentier, for whom he had painted one of his major commissioned works, Mme. Charpentier and her Children (1878, Figure 58). Not only was he well remunerated for this painting, receiving 1,000 francs for it, but Mme. Charpentier used her influence over the hanging committee to ensure that it would be placed in the prime location of the Salon, which, in turn, transformed it into the key



Figure 58. Mme. Charpentier and her Children, 1878.

painting of 1879. Renoir became a success overnight. The painting was discussed by almost all critics, who furnished nothing for it but praise.

Renoir's strength in Mme. Charpentier and her Children lies in his ability to show warm human interaction. The son of Mme. Charpentier, Paul, is seated on the sofa and looks down with an angelic, engaging smile at his older sister, Georgette, who takes advantage of their resigned dog as a chair. One would believe that these were the sweetest, most well-behaved children in the world, even though they might under normal circumstances get into typical childhood antics such as fights and other assorted

mischiefs.

The Charpentiers augmented the public exposure of a number of artists whom they supported, including Renoir. To publicize these artists, in 1879 both of the Charpentiers were instrumental in producing a weekly publication, La Vie Moderne, "devoted to artistic, literary, and social life".(79) As part of the plan, the Charpentiers donated a room on their editorial premises for use as a gallery of art,(80) wherein artists would be given alternating one-man shows. The reasoning was sound. According to the Charpentiers, often the public was heard propounding an interest in visiting the private studio of their favorite artist to see his work as a whole, rather than hunting for one or two glimpses of his work amid the multitudes of canvases deployed throughout the walls of an annual Salon. The Charpentiers intended to give the public access to a broad range of paintings by one artist without the interference of works by extraneous artists.(81) In this exhibition chamber, Renoir was the second artist to hold a one-man show, for which his brother, Edmond, devoted an article in La Vie Moderne.

Through the evening soirees at the salon of the Charpentiers, Renoir made a network of connections with a number of wealthy, prominent citizens, for whom he carried out portrait commissions. The range and breadth of these contacts was profound, especially when compared with the

modicum of clients made by Renoir through other contacts. From the soirées, the most important of Renoir's newly acquired patrons were the Bérards, who commissioned a number of portraits and remained his steadfast clients until the death of M. Paul Bérard in 1904 (Figure 59). In July 1879, at their invitation, Renoir enjoyed a two-month work-holiday at the Bérard's country home in Wargemont, near Dieppe, where he painted a number of portraits of this family and decorated their home on rainy days (pages 67-68).



Figure 59.
Portrait of Marthe Bérard,
1879.

Throughout the 1880's, Renoir returned on subsequent occasions to visit them and to fulfill new portrait commissions .

During this period, Renoir became inundated with requests to paint portraits. To Mme. Charpentier in the autumn of 1880 he wrote: "'J'ai commencé un portrait ce matin.... J'en commence un autre ce soir et je vais après pour un troisième probablement.'"(82)

Over and above his newly gained wealth of clientele, Renoir's relationship with his art dealer turned around during this period. In 1880, the financial shape of Durand-Ruel had benefited from rising returns in the stock market which, at this time, flourished from active trading by speculators who wished to "make a killing" during the building of the railroad. Durand-Ruel acquired new financial backing, which enabled him to resume his purchases of paintings by Renoir and the impressionists.(83)

Certain of Renoir's commissions extended beyond portraiture. For instance, in 1876, at the request of the Charpentiers, he decorated the main stairway of their mansion with matching paintings of a man and a woman, respectively, leaning on a forged iron bannister (Figures 60, 61).(84) Three years later, in 1879, at the request of Dr. Emile Blanche and his wife, Renoir was commissioned to paint two panels based on the first and third acts of the opera Tannhäuser by Richard Wagner.(85) As directed,



Figures 60, 61. Stairwell decorations for the Charpentier mansion, 1876.

Renoir designed these panels for the spaces above the doors of the Blanche's living room at their chalet in Bas-Fort-Blanc, near Dieppe. He created a total of four panels, the first two of which were turned down (86) (Scenes from Tannhäuser, Acts One and Three, Figures 62-65 inclusive).

SCENES FROM TANNHÄUSER



Figure 62. Act One (rejected), 1879.



Figure 63. Act One (accepted), 1879.

SCENES FROM TANNHÄUSER



Figure 64. Act Three (rejected), 1879



Figure 65. Act Three (accepted), 1879

As is easily noticed from the foregoing picture of Mme. Charpentier and her Children, Renoir had a gift for depicting warm interactions among people and, during this period, created one of his greatest masterpieces of conviviality, Luncheon of the Boating Party (1881, Figure 66). People are smiling and enjoying themselves; the day is sunny, pleasant, and warm; thoughts appear innocent; and conversation, light-hearted. It is a world of health and good cheer. Colours are attractive and bright, much light infiltrates the work, the paint itself is handled for the most part uniformly yet loosely, and complexities such as light filtering through glasses or touching flowers adorning



Figure 66. Luncheon of the Boating Party, 1881.

the table are compelling. Women are charmingly pretty, alluring and aware of it, whereas men are relaxed and seated in informal poses as if such pleasurable company were their custom. The colour, lightness and gaiety beguiles us to like this work. How could anyone dare muster up the gumption to find even a scant flaw in it? Most people, including artists, undoubtedly would be of the view that, had they been in Renoir's shoes and produced a similar work, they would feel good about it.

A number of the people in the painting have been identified. We do know a bit about who loved whom. Although the central focus is somewhat diffused, our eye is pulled toward Aline Charigot, the woman seated near the end of the table on our left who is doting her fullest attention on a dog. In 1880 Renoir became involved in a relationship with Charigot (1860-1915), whom he had met at the home of Camille, a dairymaid.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Renoir and Charigot cohabited in 1882⁽⁸⁸⁾ and, nine years later, were married.⁽⁸⁹⁾ On the other hand, we are left unawares of intrigues which might have occurred between others. The painting is not a specific psychological portrait of either the whole of the group or of any one person in particular; rather, it is a general depiction of life, vitality and gaiety. If we attempted to discover anything in it which could be deemed spiritually or intellectually profound, we would reach an impasse. The

painting itself, by virtue of its mere presence, inspires feelings of empathy and lightheartedness, like a panacea to the troubles of daily life and cares of the world.

Much emphasis has been placed on the so-called "technical" breakthroughs of impressionist paintings, such as the distinct comma-like brushstrokes, the lightened canvas, the idea of painting light and atmosphere, and the idea of capturing a quickly rendered impression of a scene rather than working it with painstakingly meticulous care. However, these do not formulate the major reasons behind viewer enjoyment of Luncheon of the Boating Party; rather, they are incidental details. Granted, technical approach figures heavily in the success of Renoir's painting. Renoir generalized form rather than making it specific. Renoir counted heavily upon maximum reduction to achieve optimum emotional impact. Had Renoir included every single hair, fingernail and dimple, as was a valued mode of operation during his day, the result would have pulled one's attention away from the main point of the painting; namely, his friends who were enjoying the afternoon on a sundeck by the river. Indeed, one's eyes would be continually distracted, even entranced, by prodigious detail. Instead, faces are round and flat; eyes are large, wide set and depicted with few strokes; noses are smooth and straight; while lips are small and, in the case of women, encased with spurious pouts amid their rouged cheeks. Light raking

across faces, necks, arms and hands is minimal, and shadows cast on garments are reflections of colours already present in the background of the painting. Complexities of light and shadow are reduced to flat surfaces with little tonal variation. Atmospheric effects on the figures to indicate depth of space are discarded. In certain instances, figures in the background have a "painted-in" look, as though they were afterthoughts which were entered later. The journalist Maggiolo, appearing in the right foreground and wearing a light, striped seersucker jacket, has a head growing out of his right shoulder.

Focus on the general results in convincingly casual poses. A man "caught" holding a cigarette, a woman "caught" sipping some wine from a glass, and another woman "caught" leaning on a balcony all have relaxed, natural demeanors. Subject matter in art has been played down during the twentieth century, particularly since the advent of the impressionists; and yet, Renoir's best paintings would lose the whole of their strength without it.

However, Luncheon of the Boating Party significantly marks the point at which Renoir had parted company with impressionism. No longer were his colours and light daring or experimental, especially when compared with Au Moulin de la Galette or Nu au Soleil. Skin was strictly flesh toned, with virtually no attempt to incorporate the concept of refracted light. Light filtering through the red and

white overhanging canopy could have been used to create dynamic lighting conditions by striking the diners below in splashes of red and white. However, Renoir simply let this one pass by. Renoir did riddle clothing that was light in tone with pale blue, yellow and mauve tints to create a feeling for light and shadow; however, on the whole, every item in the painting rigidly adheres to its inherent colour: blues were blue; browns, brown; reds were red; and yellows, yellow. In contrast, during the same period, Monet carried his experiments with impressionism to their extreme. In Haystacks (1884, Figure 67), the innate colours of the stacks of hay, rolling land and clear sky no longer



Figure 67. Monet, Haystacks, 1884.

dictated the hue which Monet would apply to his canvas. Monet attempted to capture light in fleeting moments during odd hours of the day before it had a chance to shift. Haystacks, often a dull, raw sienna in everyday life, were transformed into a resplendent spectrum of hues, such as a combination of reds and violets, which lost their relationship with the original colour of the straw. On the other hand, Renoir attempted to please. Renoir cared not one iota about impressionism and, at this point, having attained a comfortable level of success, no longer needed to resort to its theory to try and sell his works. His main concern was whether or not what he did would be liked and would sell.

The years of 1877 to 1882 were among the most significant of his life because it was then, for the first time since his start in a career as a professional artist, that he became considerably affluent. He could afford servants such as a cook whose portrait he painted in 1878 (Portrait of an Old Woman, Figure 68). He became accustomed to receiving payment in the four figure range for his paintings and, in 1881, even felt chagrined when the amount given to him for a portrait commission did not meet his expectations. M. Louis Cahen d'Anvers, a Parisian banker, had asked Renoir to paint a full-length portrait of his two young daughters, Alice and Elisabeth, as they posed in their prettiest dresses. Before beginning this painting,

Figure 68.

Portrait of an Old Woman,
1878.



now known as Pink and Blue (1881, Figure 69), Renoir had not the prudence to discuss his rates with Cahen d'Anvers and, upon its completion, was disturbed by the 1,500 franc sum which he received for it. On February 19, 1881, he registered a complaint in a letter to Charles Deudon: "'Quant aux quinze cents francs des Cahen, je me permettrai de vous dire que je la trouve raide. On n'est pas plus pingre...'"(90) Obviously, Renoir was well aware that he had created one of his better masterpieces in portraiture and felt, quite rightly, proud of it. His complaint, however, implies that he was now accustomed to receiving

a higher return on his commissions.

Thus, Renoir had come a long way during the twenty-nine months which separated the commission of Mme. Charpentier and her Children from that of Pink and Blue. When Renoir was remunerated for the former canvas, he had been grateful to receive the token sum of 1,000 francs, but now he changed his tune. 1,500 francs no longer represented a good income, even though the latter painting was considerably more modest

Figure 69.

Pink and Blue, 1881.



a work both in size (it was less than one third the surface area of Mme. Charpentier and her Children) and artistic conception.

The prices attained by Renoir are known for only a few of his paintings during this period. However, the art dealer Durand-Ruel purchased many canvases from Renoir and the impressionists, particularly between 1880 and 1882 when he was in good shape financially. Durand-Ruel, who wished to hold a monopoly on their work when demand for it escalated, which seemed imminent (pages 29-30), paid the impressionists quite reasonable prices for their work. For instance, he acquired The Fisherwoman of Mussels at Bernval and Dans la Loge from Renoir for 3,400 francs.

This period was highlighted financially for Renoir by the sale of Luncheon of the Boating Party, which now dwarfed in comparison the 1,000 franc mark paid by the Charpentiers for Mme. Charpentier and her Children. Durand-Ruel sold this painting to M. Balnesi on December 10, 1881 for 15,000 francs but then, five months later, bought it back and held on to it for forty-one years. In December 1923 , four years after the death of Renoir and one year after that of Durand-Ruel, it was then sold by the dealer's sons to Duncan Phillips of Washington, D.C. for 200,000 dollars, then equivalent to approximately 2,500,000 francs. It was a common practice of Durand-Ruel to buy back paintings and resell them at a later date for

additional profits. Thus, the years 1877 to 1882 were significant to Renoir because they provided him with a more than abundant source of income and prepared the ground for the next step which he would take as an artist.

RENOIR'S "MACHIABELLIAN PHASE"

The Preparation

The stage was now set for Renoir's entrance into a new phase of his career: that of a painter of "high art". Although portraiture had ensconced him into a position of considerable affluence, to Renoir it was inconsequential relative to what could be had in art. Granted, between 1877 and 1882, the sums of 1,000, 2,000 and, especially, 15,000 francs were quite high when compared with the considerably depressed sales of 200 francs which he had received for many of his works during the early 1870's, not to mention the paltry 3 or 8 sous payment he accepted for each depiction of Marie Antoinette's profile when he was a porcelain painter.(91) As the artists were well aware, the renowned painter Corot did not receive more than 1,000 francs for any of his works until he reached the age of seventy-five.(92) Renoir was thirty-six when his portrait commissions consistently commanded at least this amount. However, these seemingly high figures were automatically dwarfed when placed next to the market value



Figure 70. Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier, Friedland, 1807, watercolour, 1888.

of "high art" by painters such as Meissonier, who was known to receive 100,000 francs for some of his paintings,(93) or Bouguereau, whose works also touched the 100,000 franc range (Figures 70, 71).(94) Renoir, who knew full well how much these paintings were worth, no longer wished to dally in portraiture and now coveted the direction of Academic artists.

Occasionally, the prices attained by Bouguereau for his paintings are unfavourably compared by art historians with those received by the impressionists. However, the fairness of such a comparison can be questioned. The amount of time which Bouguereau needed to create one of his paintings far outstripped that which Renoir would have spent

on any of his works, with, perhaps, the exception of The Large Bathers (1884-87, Figure 77). By virtue of the nature of the problem which he set for himself, Bouguereau's "photographic" images of people, depicted as though they were physically present in a life-entrenched natural world, would have been exceedingly time-consuming. On the other hand, Renoir was able to execute paintings with greater speed, mainly because he used a sketchy technique and

Figure 71.

William Adolphe Bouguereau,
Alma Parens, last half of
nineteenth century.



omitted what was then considered to be the final step of covering the work with a smooth, polished finish. Appreciative of Bouguereau's efforts and technical competence, the French public rewarded him accordingly. On the other hand, sketchy techniques were not highly valued by most and, for this reason, commanded considerably less return on the market.

Renoir had structured his life in a series of methodical steps. First, he had endeavoured to establish himself so that he could afford a studio, servants, models, supplies, and a comfortable home. Essentially, he wanted to cover his basic cost of living, including business expenses, and have some cash left over. He now had achieved this and, at this point, decided to revamp his bearings. He could continue in the direction of this channel and rely upon portrait commissions as an income for the remainder of his life, or he could direct some of his profits toward the attainment of higher goals. Renoir opted for the latter route and chose to become a painter of "high art".

Degas was the first to observe a change come over Renoir and, according to the artist Caillebotte in his letter to Pissarro, tried to convince his colleagues that Renoir had Machiavellian ideas.(95) Surprisingly, although he chastised Degas for his trait of calling down almost all artists with whom he came in contact, Caillebotte did not disagree with him. "'As for me,'" he continued, "'I

have no right to condemn anyone for these motives.'"(96)

Renoir knew that artists took certain steps on the road to becoming painters of good taste, some of which he had missed during the course of his own career, but for which he now chose to compensate. One of these was the Prix de Rome, which enabled artists to travel to Italy on a four year scholarship to experience and absorb le bon goût left in the masterpieces of ancient sculptors, Pompeian artists and Renaissance painters; in particular, Raphael. Not everyone won this coveted award; only students who came out on top during the competitions at the École des Beaux Arts. Renoir, who left the École after two years of study when the atelier of his instructor, Gleyre, shut down, obviously was out of the running. However, had he desired to be a winner, he need not tell his clients of his failure to attain sufficient results on the École examinations (Appendix D).

The two prominent and most controversial artists in Paris had for a number of years been Ingres and Delacroix, albeit now deceased. Ingres had patterned himself after Raphael, the epitome of a civilized man and highly cultivated artist, when he was a Prix de Rome student; whereas Delacroix had travelled in the opposite direction to the untamed, exotic African domain of harems, tigers, lions, brilliant sunlight, and ruthless Bedouins in Algiers, a stronghold of France. Renoir decided to sojourn,

significantly, in Algiers where Delacroix, who was much admired by many art collectors in Paris, made some of his most famous works. Next on Renoir's itinerary was Italy, where he expressly intended to imbibe the art of Raphael.(97) Renoir again might have had on his mind the idea of somehow forming a combination or resolution of the two incongruent styles of Ingres and Delacroix.

Had this trip been meaningless to Renoir, he would not have gone, let alone put himself through the motions of downplaying it as much as he did. Under no circumstance did he wish to reveal exactly how much the journey really meant to him. Not only was this his chance to emulate the role of a Prix de Rome winner, but it was also like investing in a life insurance policy. Inundated with art which followed the precepts of the Academy, patrons, on the whole, were conditioned to believe that paintings by a Prix de Rome recipient were at the apogee of this universe. As a result, work from the hands of such a recipient was in high demand and readily commanded top francs. Renoir hoped that his trip to Italy would enable him to branch out and extend himself into this lucrative channel. Advantage in doing so would be two-fold. First, he could stave off the possibility of exhausting the supply of patrons who requested his services for portrait commissions. Second, having ingested the highly revered examples of Raphael's work, Renoir could proceed to work

in this mode and create his own version of "high art". Although this was less prestigious than being a full-fledged Prix de Rome recipient, Renoir hoped that art in the style of Raphael would be sought after by collectors who admired this Renaissance artist. Should his calculation prove correct, Renoir could extend the range of his clientele beyond those who commissioned portraits to those who supported art which reflected lofty values. Consequently, Renoir would draw a higher return on each painting. As Degas would have put it, Renoir was going for power.

Armed with letters of introduction, on January 15, 1882 Renoir made a side trip to Palermo, Sicily where he made the acquaintance of the composer Richard Wagner who, one day earlier, had added the finishing touches to his opera, Parsifal.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Well aware that he avowedly was antagonistic against having his portrait painted, Renoir procured a sitting from the distinguished composer, although he was granted only thirty-five minutes (Figure 72).⁽⁹⁹⁾ Having in the back of his mind the success of his depictions of famous Parisians, in particular, the actress Jeanne Samary, coupled with his knowledge of the breadth of Wagner's popularity in Paris, Renoir could speculate how much he would receive for this portrait when he returned to France. Thinking back to his earlier days during the 1860's, Renoir could reminisce the time when his close friend Bazille, the artist Fantin-Latour and the amateur



Figure 72.

Portrait of Richard Wagner,
1882.

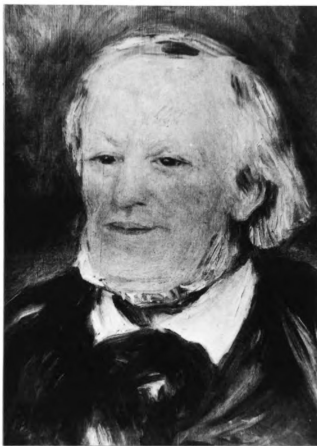
musician Edmond Maître all raved about Wagner.(100) In addition, Renoir could recall the success of his recent commission for the Blanche's home of two scenes from Tannhäuser, essentially a tribute to Wagner. Amid all of the Wagner aficionados, not only would Wagner's portrait command a high price but, in addition, it could enhance Renoir's own budding reputation as a painter of famous and notable persons. Ironically, later in life, Renoir had developed a distaste for Wagner's operas, considering them boring.(101) Upon his return from Italy, Renoir sold the portrait of Wagner to the Charpentiers and, eleven years

later, at the request of M. Chéramy of the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra, made a duplicate of it (Figure 73).(102) Renoir might have wanted to develop a reputation as a painter of high art, but he was as of yet uncertain of where this direction would take him. Consequently, he hesitated to give up his reputation as a painter of famous and affluent persons.

En route back to Paris, while staying in the southern province of Aix, France to visit and work with Cézanne, Renoir was notified by Durand-Ruel of the Seventh

Figure 73.

Portrait of Richard Wagner,
1893.



Impressionist Exhibition in which he was invited to participate. In a sharply worded reply dated February 24, 1882, Renoir indicated that he would exhibit only with Monet, Sisley, Morisot and Pissarro, then later eased up a bit and included Degas; otherwise, he flatly refused to participate.(103) Impressionism was now receiving a growing acceptance by the public, although the independent shows had become infiltrated by a wave of new artists, such as Gauguin, whose unconventional works, paradoxically influenced by the impressionists, would never win Salon endorsement.

Two days later, on February 26, 1882, Renoir wrote a second letter in which he revealed to a greater extent his reasoning. He intended to exhibit at the Salon of 1882, a move which would violate the pact agreed upon by the original members, including himself; however, if, in the artist's sentiment, one were forfeited, it would be the impressionist show. In addition, Renoir vented his pent-up feelings against "revolutionary" artists who included Gauguin, Guillaumin and, this time, even Pissarro, a staunch socialist, stating that if these men were included in the show, he would not exhibit. "'Le public,'" he explained, "'n'aime pas ce qui sent la politique et je ne veux pas, moi, à mon âge, être révolutionnaire. Rester avec l'israélite Pissarro, c'est la révolution. De plus ces messieurs savent que j'ai fait un grand pas à cause du

Salon. Il s'agit de se dépêcher à me faire perdre ce que j'ai gagné. Ils ne négligeront rien pour ça, quitte à me lâcher une fois tombé. Je ne veux pas, je ne veux pas. Débarrassez-vous de ces gens-là et présentez-moi des artistes tels que Monet, Sisley, Morisot, etc. et je suis à vous, car ce n'est plus de la politique, c'est de l'art pur.'"(104) Renoir feared that he would once again be labelled a revolutionary by virtue of presence in the same show, and that his reputation, which he took pains to build, would suffer among la haute upon whom he depended for his sales and high standard of living. Had Renoir wished at one point in his career to emulate Delacroix, he took few lessons in character. Whereas the latter artist did his utmost to support artists who tried to swim upstream, Renoir disparaged them.

Renoir regarded Gauguin, not Durand-Ruel, as the person responsible for the instigation of this exhibition and, moreover, stated he believed, by exhibiting in it, that his own work would tumble in value by 50 per cent.(105) As Renoir more than implied in his letter to Durand-Ruel, money was their common interest.(106)

Although many of his sentiments against exhibiting in the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition were tainted by his dislike of Gauguin, Pissarro and Guillaumin, Renoir, drawn to the lure, was fully aware of the positive benefits of public exposure, be it in a private exhibition or

at the Salon. In the same letter, Renoir revised his position. Paintings by him but in the possession of Durand-Ruel were the dealer's personal property. Because he felt he could not prevent the dealer from displaying these, Renoir granted him permission to include them in the show, albeit on one provision. Durand-Ruel had to make it clear, in all captions, catalogues and printed literature, that Renoir's works were "the property of...and exhibited by M. Durand-Ruel." (107) Renoir chose to wash his hands of any personal association with the show.

Frankly, this stipulation was a clever ruse on the part of Renoir, for it enabled him to save face and feign innocence amid his friends when he broke their agreement and exhibited at both the Salon the independent show. Moreover, he could now clear his name of any responsibility for the labelling of his work as radical art should critics choose to be unreasonably vicious, and he could pin the blame on Durand-Ruel should his prices drop as a result of his participation in the show. Of course, these paintings were by Renoir and, as an artist who creates work for a dealer to sell, he did have much say over them. Moreover, in his letter, Renoir essentially granted Durand-Ruel permission to include his works in this show, which the dealer, quite rightly, took as such. In act alone, but not intent, Renoir was a part of the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition, and the show itself exemplifies

this. Of the 25 paintings exhibited, 17 were landscapes selected by Durand-Ruel, in keeping with his staunch support of this subject matter. Among these, such as View of Venice (Grand Canal) (c. 1881, Figure 74) and View of Venice (Doge's Palace) (1881, Figure 75), (108) Durand-Ruel included as many paintings as he could which reflected the impressionists' interest in light and colour. It is interesting to note, during this period, that Renoir knew his audience. The dealer supported impressionism, and, true to form, Renoir painted a number of landscapes in this mode in order to sell his work through him. Not one of the paintings which Durand-Ruel put in the show was a



Figure 74. View of Venice (Grand Canal), c. 1881.



Figure 75. View of Venice (Doge's Palace), 1881.

society commission, although he did include genre. Had Renoir selected and organized his works himself, a substantial proportion would have been of both la haute and genre (Appendix K).

When Renoir returned from his journey, he stepped into the next phase of his career: he became a painter of high art. It had been said that, during this period, Renoir was in dire straits because France entered a major depression which began in 1882. According to the writer B. E. White, "in the mid-1880's, Renoir's dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel, could give the artist little financial help. The years 1883-87 were desperate for Renoir; he sold few

works, and these went for low prices." (109) However, this view can be challenged.

It would be wrong to blame Renoir's weakened financial condition on the inconsistent backing of Durand-Ruel. It must be remembered that the dealer had stopped purchasing this artist's work from 1874 to 1880, forcing Renoir to seek other outlets. Rather, Renoir had relied upon income from a steadily increasing volume of clientele who commissioned him to paint their portraits. He had met the majority of his patrons at the salon of the Charpentiers between 1877 and 1882. Hence, Renoir experienced his greatest loss when, in 1882 or 1883, the Charpentiers withdrew their support. (110) Because with them went his ties with many of the patrons and art collectors in the upper echelons of society, this was particularly devastating to the artist.

However, these forces were counterbalanced by other factors. In 1883 Durand-Ruel had held in his gallery a one-man show which honoured Renoir. Apparently as a result of its success, Renoir stopped exhibiting in the Salon from 1884 to 1889 inclusive, a total of seven years. To the Salon of 1890 he submitted his last formal entry, The Daughters of Catulle Mendès (1888, Figure 76). (111) Had he been desperate for money, in the interim Renoir would have sent works to the Salon on an annual basis for approval by its jury. Renoir added new clients and retained former ones, especially the Bérards, whom he visited to fulfill

Figure 76.

The Daughters ofCatulle Mendès, 1888.

commissions which rode him through difficult times, as in the years 1884 and 1885. Renoir destroyed all of his works generated during the summer of 1886 not long after he had created them, an act which an artist who was hard up for cash never would have done. Most telling, however, were Renoir's living accommodations. In 1887 he was forced to move from his 3,000 franc home to a more modest abode which rented for only 1,200 francs.(112) The former figure represented 10.8 and the latter figure 4.3 times the 277 franc per year rent paid by the average skilled worker with a family of four for a moderate home in 1884.(113) Overall, the money situation might have been tight and Renoir might have had to reduce his standard of living from that of a

middle class bourgeois to one in the lower range, yet, without question, he was still a bourgeois. Moreover, this period was short-lived: through the efforts of Durand-Ruel, all of the impressionists had swung clear of these difficulties by 1888. The worst of his financial troubles seems to have lasted for one year; thus, for the greatest portion of the years between 1883 and 1888, Renoir possessed both the time and the income to create "high art".

The Work

To originate his personal vision of "high art", a period in his life which lasted approximately from 1883 to 1887, Renoir began what was intended to be his once-in-a-lifetime definitive oeuvre, The Large Bathers (completed in 1887, Figure 77), which he claims to have worked on for three years. Because his approach was extrinsic to his experience, the act of formulating this painting was difficult for Renoir.

Renoir's work during this period, especially The Large Bathers, can best be understood in relationship to the principles of high art established by the Academy. The most salient feature of this painting is its subject matter; that is, the theme of women bathing in a wooded landscape. The Academy propounded that "The human form is the highest form and expresses perfect 'absolute'



Figure 77. The Large Bathers, c. 1884-1887.

beauty."(114) In keeping with Christian beliefs about man being fashioned in the image of God, only the nude form could express perfect or "'absolute' beauty", further legitimized by the revered models left by the ancient Graeco-Romans. In-depth study of the human nude served two-fold advantage, as pointed out by the author Boime. "On a more practical level, the live model was ideal for studying the practical functioning of muscle, bone and sinew that otherwise could only be furnished by charts and skeletons. Academicians further taught that the forms of the body with their contracted and expanded volumes, concavities and convexities, yielded the greatest variety of examples for mastery of the material world."(115)

From especially the 1880's onward, the Salon saw a proliferation of themes on the bather grace its exhibition corridors. Depictions of the nude female form, coupled with its associations with water, birth, life-giving forces, and death, gave host to a wealth of poetic imagery, thoughts of love, and sexual desire in a male dominated world of art. Indeed, so popular became this mode that annually books were bound in which individual Salon paintings of female nudes were complemented with lofty poetry and prose intended to uplift the mind and titillate the desires of yearning male hearts who took a few moments out to read them. To the average male Parisian art lover, this was an example of high art, fully endorsed by and under the aegis of the Academy.

Renoir might have been accused of wasting his talents on repetitious portrayals of women as sexual objects and, without question, he did succeed in capturing the sensual side of a woman. To Vollard, Renoir made his artistic objectives clear when he informed him of the criteria which he used to determine when a painting was completed. In the artist's words, in reference to a woman's behind, Renoir stated that he considered a painting finished when he wanted to reach out and touch it.(116) Somehow The Large Bathers fails to measure up to the "sensual" woman rendered in other of his works. This is significant because clearly it was intended not as a "commercial" painting which would "sell",

but rather as "high art" in which he wanted to create beauty and achieve lofty values. Nudes were a genre of painting that was fully endorsed by the Academy and rewarded at the Salons; thus, when creating these throughout his career, Renoir simply was following the Academy's established dictums which he himself firmly believed in. On January 4, 1886 Renoir stated to Morisot "that he thought nudes were one of the essential subjects in art."(117) Definitely this is an echo of Academic doctrine.

The next noticeable feature of The Large Bathers is its strong linear quality. Rebounding upon Renoir was the old adage of the Academy and, in particular, Ingres, who decried: "Drawing is the probity of art."(118) Renoir endeavoured to achieve proficiency in drawing during this period, and the impetus behind this move was deep-rooted, going beyond the sense of failure which he had experienced as a student when his standing in the Figure Drawing Competition were low (Appendix D). Parisian art collectors and Academicians discerned the degree of control that an artist had over his ability to draw, believing this to be a direct reflection of his intellectual powers and mentality. In the words of Boime, "The Academy insisted on artistic integrity in the form of clarity and precision. Slipshod workmanship was considered unethical, and therefore looseness and sketchiness in definitive works were condemned....Acceptable in preparatory sketches, spontaneity

was suspect in final compositions, where fuzzy execution implied muddy thinking and poor moral standards."(119)

Having followed and built, in part, his reputation on his own mode of impressionism over the past decade, when fuzzy executions were his hallmark, Renoir might have felt he had not just a high level of achievement in art to attain, but, moreover, his whole moral character and intellectual capabilities to defend. On one hand, he might have been trying to "prove" himself, but on the other, this approach corresponded with the concept of what le bon goût was in France during the nineteenth century.

When viewed next to his earlier paintings such as Mme. Charpentier and her Children, Pink and Blue or Luncheon of the Boating Party, wherein he achieved natural looking, relaxed poses, The Large Bathers appears contrived. The third dictum of Academic ideals stressed that "only a certain set of 'nobly' expressive positions and gestures (again classical or high Renaissance in origin) are appropriate in the representation of the human figure."(120)

Thus, for "nobly" expressive gestures and positions, Renoir looked to a low relief cast in iron of Bathing Nymphs (1668-70, Figure 78) by Girardon, "situated in the Allée des Marmousels at Versailles."(121) The bathers which Girardon had placed on the right shore of his relief were virtual prototypes of Renoir's bathers who, in a similar manner, were shown seated by the water on the left shore



Figure 78. François Girardon, Bathing Nymphs, iron bas-relief, 1668-70.

of his canvas. In the mode of Girardon, Renoir also included background nudes, one of whom stands with arms raised. Unlike Girardon, Renoir has shown this bather with both arms raised, not one.

As pointed out by B. E. White, Diana at her Bath (1742, Figure 79) by Boucher, an ever popular artist, was a second source for gestures and positions. In both, the bathers are framed by a shallow landscape. Following Boucher's lead, Renoir used the pose of one bather to complement her seated adjunct, and the resultant planned array of diagonals and criss-crossed limbs, according to White, establishes a pattern which simulates this painting.(122)

However, Renoir did not permit himself to get carried away only with the concept of diagonals, but rather used

them to achieve superior goals. Arms were raised just high enough and torsos were turned just slightly enough to reveal sexual components of the female human body, of which, indeed, Renoir had the perspicacity to include front, side and back views. Often an artist would include multiple views of the human figure in his work to display his technical virtuosity.

Another characteristic of The Large Bathers was its overall chalky appearance and light tonality. This effect was influenced by the frescoes of Raphael, whom Renoir was trying to emulate. Academic doctrine advocated that "only the most 'perfect' forms (as those found in classical



Figure 79. Francois Boucher, Diana at her Bath, 1742.

sculpture and the paintings of Raphael) should be selected from nature to portray such subjects."(123) As he confessed to Vollard later in his life, Renoir struggled to make his paintings look like a fresco or, in other words, to have the countenance of a work by Raphael: "I must admit that some of my paintings of the period are not very soundly painted, because after having studied fresco, I had fancied I could eliminate the oil from the colour....At this time I also did some paintings on cement, but I was never able to learn from the ancients the secret of their inimitable frescoes."(124)

In addition, Renoir used as a reference the former painter's fresco of Galatea (1513, Figure 80), modelling his far bather seated on the left shore of his canvas after the central woman, Galatea, in Raphael's painting. With the exception of the position of the right arm and leg, Renoir's bather mimics almost exactly the pose of Galatea in Raphael's fresco. It appears as though Renoir had worked either from drawings that he had made or from a print of Galatea. As a result, he ran into a snag which he would not have encountered had he worked from a living model. Unlike Raphael's model, Renoir's bather was seated, not standing. When he depicted her right leg, Renoir apparently had experienced some difficulty with it, for her thigh appears abnormally attenuated in proportion to the remainder of her figure. Indeed, the treatment of this thigh,

unlike the sharply outlined treatment of the human figure in other parts of this painting, was given a fuzzy edge, enhancing the impression of elastic motion. The indistinct edge makes the exaggerated length of the thigh appear less obvious.

The Academy postulated that "Pictorial composition should preserve classical balance, harmony and unity: there should be no jarring elements either of form or expression."(125) Renoir perhaps had a glimmering of Raphael's mastery of geometric groupings for human figures,

Figure 80.
Raphael, Galatea,
fresco, 1513.



sometimes employing circles within circles, triangular conformations and squares all within the same painting, as in Galatea. To conform with the precept of classical balance, harmony and unity, Renoir included a geometric configuration in The Large Bathers, but simplified it to the more modest use of one right triangle, seen in the alignment of the three foreground figures who dominate the composition.

Thus, when Renoir was financially equipped to generate his version of high art, he followed Academic precepts and looked to earlier examples laid out by the recognized progenitors of le bon goût, a move which, he hoped, would be noticed by and win accolades from staunch conservative quarters. In addition, although atavistic traits of impressionism reside in this work, as seen in the luminescent shift of reds, blues and yellows within the background foliage and the nacreous flesh, these are greatly subdued. The natural colour of the object, be it blue water, green foliage, or flesh-toned skin, governed the hue which Renoir had utilized in this work. Moreover, Renoir severely restricted the flow and interaction of each of his forms with tight outlines. Renoir was searching for an audience who believed in the Academic system, who was wealthy, who had conservative tastes, and to whom the idea of a toned down version of impressionism would have its appeal. Poignantly, he first exhibited this work at

Le Petit's (the 'department store of painting' in the words of Zola),(126) a gallery known to attract a high volume of the upper class in Paris.(127) Significantly, when Renoir did create his own version of "high art", this was not impressionism. Nevertheless, Renoir did retain in this work his own sense of youth and playfulness, which gives it a delightful spirit and unique touch.

RENOIR'S FINAL YEARS

The Large Bathers marks a turning point in Renoir's career, throughout which he was intermittently drawn to the classical nude bather as a theme. Now, this seed developed into a fully mature plant whose fibres gradually permeated his thoughts and formed an inalienable component of his art. From 1890 onward, rarely did Renoir divert his theme away from that of the classical nude, whose expression became a hallmark of his oeuvre.

The motif itself remained constant, especially with the advent of The Large Bathers; however, its demeanor had changed. During the 1890's, Renoir returned to a modified version of impressionism, creating a rich body of work which hinged on a loose handling of brush strokes and a palette whereon warm colours, in particular, red, increasingly reigned. The sharp outlines of Renoir's "harsh" period, from which he had just walked away, began to thaw as his



Figure 81.
Self-Portrait, 1910.

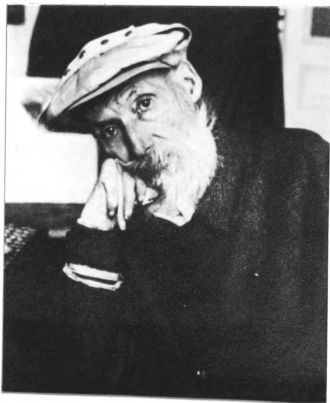


Figure 82.
Photograph of Renoir,
1913.

brush strokes changed into the former, soft, ductile strength of impressionism. On the surface, the "harsh" or "sour" period seemed only a brief stint; a ceremony which Renoir felt plagued to perform; and the finale, or perhaps dead-end, of a long-term goal. However, emerging from this, as though released from a chrysalis, came a new sense of three-dimensional solidity which Renoir carried with him throughout the remainder of his career.

Reasons for Renoir's return to the impressionist vogue can be attributed to the frustration which he undoubtedly had experienced when working within the tight strictures of Academic guidelines. Or perhaps, as he himself had claimed, his work was not well received; although this is not entirely true. Granted, certain of Renoir's associates, in particular, Durand-Ruel and Pissarro, did experience disappointment when viewing work from this phase. However, others, such as Morisot and Monet, apparently liked the work and lent moral and critical support to the artist. Moreover, although Pissarro might have felt opposed to Renoir's The Large Bathers, he lent wholehearted encouragement to this artist for his decision to pursue his ideals and beliefs in art regardless of consequence.

Although the art market was in a slump during the mid-1880's, these hard times might have worked, in the long run, to the benefit of the artists. For a variety of reasons, perhaps, in part, related to the slump, all had

turned to new expressions and, perhaps with the assistance of Durand-Ruel who saw its foreshadowing, the word that impressionism was dead slowly fingered its way through the public at large. Paris became bombarded with new movements such as pointillism by Seurat, Signac and Pissarro; expressionism by Van Gogh; primitivism by Gauguin; symbolism by Denis and architectonic landscapes by Cézanne.

Impressionism, no longer a contemporary idiom, now became history. Moreover, the number of art lovers who competed for examples of impressionist canvases skyrocketed when the doors of the market were opened in the United States. Speculators who anticipated a rise in value now eagerly purchased examples of these works and, to serious collectors, only the original impressionist paintings created during the 1870's, the movement's developing years, would suffice as a component worthy of being added to their collection. Collectors with less critical discernment or a smaller pocketbook, by virtue of necessity, would have been content with more recent works.

With increasing demand for impressionist paintings, the prices quickly stepped into pace, performing mere warm-ups during the 1890's, then ascending in leaps and bounds after 1900. Had the owner of Renoir's La Source felt, to even the minutest degree, queasy about spending 110 francs for this painting during the March 24, 1875 sale at the Hôtel Drouot, (128) his hesitation would have been

appeared by his acquisition of 1,000 francs when he resold it to Durand-Ruel in 1890 (129): he had succeeded in increasing his profits by 900 per cent within a span of merely fifteen years; or, in other words, his original investment had appreciated in value at a rate of approximately 17.2 per cent per annum with compound interest. However, the same owner probably would have choked had he learned that this exact painting was resold sixteen years later by Durand-Ruel for 70,000 francs, (130) representing a sheer profit of 69,000 francs, or, in other words, an increase in the dealer's original investment at a rate of approximately 30.4 per cent per annum with compound interest. Obviously, by 1890 Durand-Ruel was fully cognizant of the potential value of impressionist works, particularly those done during the 1870's; otherwise, he never would have taken the trouble to seek out the original owners and offer them deals which they could not afford to refuse. Lines of communication between Renoir and Durand-Ruel were open and fluid; hence, Renoir could not help but be aware that impressionist works by him were in growing demand. Predictably, 1890 designated the year in which Renoir returned full-fledged to the impressionist mode.

Even today, arguments are volleyed as to whether or not these last works by Renoir are, indeed, impressionism and, ironically, the viewpoint of either proponent can be

vindicated. Arguments alone are not nearly as interesting as the tactics which might have evolved to sell his works. A means to generate sales of impressionist paintings by Renoir would be to create a deficit of his work in the market. Believing that his paintings were scarce, the public could be more easily swayed into buying them. However, one problem was extant; namely, Renoir was still alive, in good health, and prolific in his production of art. What better way could there be to create a demand for his work but to advocate that this was no longer impressionism and that the movement had reached its apogee during the 1870's but was phased out during the 1880's?! An art buyer with greater purchase power could easily be beguiled into coveting only the "original" and "true" impressionist works which would, of course, command a greater asking price.

Enigmatically, impressionism could be deemed alive but dead. A double entendre could be employed to sweep a hesitant bourgeois with more tightly squeezed financial resources into the steady flow of clients who would purchase Renoir's recent work. Canvases might not have had an experimental use of colour, as did those engendered during the 1870's, but they did have a soft focus, a contention which would have been capitalized upon. After all, was not Renoir an impressionist and, by virtue of association, were not all of his works representative of this mode

regardless of style? The average customer off the street would be unable to distinguish an early impressionist painting by Renoir from his later work and, moreover, few paintings by this artist could be labelled true impressionism, including those of the 1870's. Buyers would know only that they were now the new, proud owners of a "Renoir".

However, with the exception of the loose handling of the brush, little remained of impressionism in Renoir's work and, even in theory, evident as early as 1884, Renoir's thoughts had changed. As indicated in his letter dated May 1884, Renoir had desired to found a new movement, which he called The Society of Irregularists, for which he wrote a short document.(131) This he used to advocate the merits of imperfect and asymmetrical art, claiming that such is appropriate because in nature itself, nothing is identical. Unfortunately, he was unable to draw many converts to this idea. His doctrine, although true, appears to be less a profound theory and moreso a vindication of his own work, which had yet to reach the high level of competence achieved by his contemporaries who could produce almost "photographic" appearances in their art. Had Renoir not attempted to emulate these artists, the irregularities in his own work would have meant nothing to him.

Despite his manifesto, ideas to Renoir mattered less than product. Mary Cassatt once commented to him: "'There

is one thing against your success: your technique is too simple. The public doesn't like that.'" Renoir retorted: "'Don't worry...Complicated theories can always be thought up afterwards.'"(132)

Early on in his career, Renoir had been influenced by Monet's practice of eliminating black and earth tones from his repertoire of colours. However, later in his career, Renoir had conflicting reactions to this approach. Originally, thoroughly indoctrinated by his contemporaries' theories on light, Renoir was known for advising a young artist that black and white are not colours and do not exist in nature.(133) Yet, within the same time frame, Renoir blatantly contradicted himself. Without a doubt, Renoir's son Jean knew what he was talking about when he reminisced that Renoir loved nothing more than to pull the leg of the art dealer Vollard.(134) There is a distinct possibility that Renoir was playing the devil's advocate when, upon Vollard's insistent prodding, he contradicted everything which the impressionists stood for and declared: "black is the queen of colours".(135) Nevertheless, a certain degree of seriousness stands behind this remark. This statement mimics Academic doctrine and, specifically, the tenets espoused by his instructor, Gleyre, who pronounced that "'ivory black is the base of all tones'".(136) Not surprisingly, Renoir's statement to Vollard was made during a period when he had returned full force under the umbrella

of Academic covenants. Moreover, Renoir made an additional comment which belittled artists who thought they could change the world by eliminating the colour black from their palettes.(137) The sting of this barb was aimed directly at Monet and, poignantly, reflected distinct anti-impressionist sentiments.

Audience might have influenced the disparity between Renoir's former pro-impressionist comment to the young artist and his latter two anti-impressionist remarks. Renoir had made his mark and fortune by 1910 specifically because of his involvement in impressionism. In a formal interview, it was in his best interest to uphold this movement. However, to a close associate such as Vollard, Renoir could share his private thoughts and admit that he, personally, did not place great credence in the concept upon which the whole of the impressionist movement was founded. Indeed, the seriousness of his deep-rooted antagonism against impressionism was summed up in his own statement when he said that paintings of this style were of no worth other than being a surface upon which one could strike a match.(138)

CONCLUSION

Art was Renoir's means to earn a living and, early on in his career, he had begun to equate work with money. He had learned, when he was paid by the piece, that the more flowers or profiles he could paint in one day, the greater his earnings would be. When he switched from the modest profiles of Marie Antoinette to the more lucrative occupation of painting blinds, it served a sound lesson which demonstrated that the return from art was quantitative as well as qualitative. Renoir was permitted to tackle more challenging responsibilities when he had proven that he could create a quality product. In addition, he discovered that he could increase his daily income when he was paid more highly for each individual unit of piece work. His change from the occupation of porcelain painting to that of blinds allowed him to build up his savings which he used to finance his studies in art at the École. In turn, art enabled him to earn 200, 500, or even 1,000 francs per individual painting instead of a mere pittance.

Renoir did not know which direction would prove most lucrative when he first stepped into professional art as a career; hence, he created a variety of styles along a number of channels, including landscapes, classical themes, Delacroix's romanticism, portraits and nudes. In addition, when Monet's work began to take on the shape of greatness, Renoir made a point of painting with this artist and copying

his work, well aware that Monet's innovations could, plausibly, carry him along to his personal goal of posterity and wealth.

For a variety of reasons, when he first began to exhibit with the impressionists, this move offered the best channel available toward his objective of fame and fortune. However, Renoir's contributions, on the whole, were modest and very conservative; only a small handful of his work reflected the ideals of impressionism established by Monet, and, when these were criticized, Renoir took measures to ensure that negative statements could never be said of his art again. Indeed, Renoir started to use the impressionist exhibitions to display his growing repertoire of portraits of la haute bourgeois and the upper class, for which he was well remunerated, hoping that these would lead to more commissions and, in turn, a greater income. Society portraits were a far cry from the original artistic ideals of impressionism.

Renoir missed only three Salons as a result of his involvement in the independent shows, and was quick to get out of the latter when exhibiting with this group appeared to be an artistic liability. Although he did display his works in four of the eight impressionist shows, his last participation came about only because he had taken advantage of one technicality. However, essentially his spirit was wrapped up in Salon shows and making money, but not

impressionism. Poignantly, Renoir's commitment to theory was best displayed in his attitude toward Pissarro, Gauguin and Guillaumin during the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition. Forgetting his own struggles to attain a footing in the art world, and manifestly never having had a set of ideals to be able to appreciate others who did, Renoir violently reacted against the very idea of even showing with any "radical" or "political" artists. Renoir, who was circulating among the top echelons of society at this point, feared that la haute would react negatively against him if he were so much as remotely associated with his colleagues by virtue of being in the same show. Having reached a point where he was receiving upwards from 1,500 francs per portrait, he did not want to lose this. Money, not ideals, seemed to matter most.

During the 1880's, when Renoir finally turned toward his own version of high art, this was not impression. Instead, perhaps with the works of Bouguereau and Meissonier in mind, Renoir now wished to upgrade his art and produce canvases which would command a greater return per piece. Through the sale of Luncheon of the Boating Party for 15,000 francs, he had already proven to himself that he was ready to handle this stage and could gamble in this league. In addition, the upper class clientele who commissioned his portraits, due to the strong influence of the École and Academy, were entrenched in the association of high art

with almost "photographic" images of subject matter and lofty, Academic ideals.

Shortly after this period, the demand for impressionism took off when the doors of the market in the United States were opened. This demand might also have been influenced by the notion that impressionism was now dead, first "noticed" by Durand-Ruel in 1886 when he viewed the works of these artists at the gallery of Georges Petit. Impressionism now became lucrative and Renoir, without wasting any time, returned to it, albeit only in loose brush strokes and dominant reds, but not the idea of depicting light with colour. During this period Renoir did produce his richest and, for the first time in his life, most consistent body of work, although based to a large extent on classical nudes and, occasionally, even classical themes.

Renoir must be regarded as an impressionist, if only in the guise of an associate, not leader; and perhaps his return to the Salon, where subsequently he became successful, did contribute to the early growing acceptance of the movement. In contrast, Pissarro and Morisot, who held fast to their commitment to the independent shows and never again submitted a work to the Salon, are nowhere near as well known as Renoir, even today. However, to Renoir, impressionism was a style which, he hoped, would lead to his ultimate goal of fame and fortune, and he did follow any channel which might end in this destination.

As evidenced in Au Moulin de la Galette, Renoir was capable of producing masterpieces of great note under the mode of impressionism; however, because his ideals in art were subordinate to his quest for wealth and status, he compromised his values throughout the majority of his career; indeed, toward the end of his life when these did begin to dominate, they were more strongly rooted in Academic doctrine than impressionism.

Overall, one cannot help but admire the man for his efforts and, in particular, success in skyrocketing from a non-entity to the status of a famous, wealthy artist, as one might admire any "poor man who made it big" story. Nevertheless, unfortunately his work suffered as a direct result of his ambition and, amid the massive legacy which Renoir passed down, only a mere handful are masterpieces.

FOOTNOTES

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Early Goals and Hurdles

1. François Daulte, Auguste Renoir, Catalogue Raisonne, 1860-1890. Vol. I, p. 32. According to this author, Renoir was paid 30 francs per blind and could paint up to three blinds per day. For a number of reasons, this figure is questionable. This was a period when wages were low for artisans. According to White and White, in 1857, skilled workers such as printers and stonecutters earned 5 francs per day; roofers earned 6 francs; and metalcutters, 7. In 1878, skilled workers such as carriage builders and wheelwrights earned 5.50 francs per day, whereas industrial workers earned 4.90 francs. Between 1878 and 1884, "shop clerks averaged 100 francs per month." (White and White, Canvases and Careers, Table 9, p. 130). Had Renoir been paid 30 francs per blind and had he been able to finish up to 3 in one day, then his earnings, viz., 90 francs, would have exceeded by a wide margin those of his occupational coequals. This would mean, in one day, that he would have drawn between 12 to 19 times the wage of an equivalent skilled worker of the same period, and 23 times that of an unskilled worker. Renoir might have been able to work quickly, but probably not that quickly. It seems doubtful that his efforts could replace the manpower of 12

to 19 individuals. In addition, the profit of the owner and distributor, in combination with the cost of packaging and shipping, would have been tacked on to the wholesale cost of the blinds, over and above Renoir's basic wages. This would, at the very least, double or, more accurately, triple the cost of the blinds to the consumer. Moreover, the blinds were made of inexpensive material, namely, translucent paper, not silk. (Jean Renoir, Renoir, My Father, p. 82). To missionaries, the notoriously poor audience to whom these were directed, the cost of purchasing one blind alone would represent the wage of approximately two weeks to one month. It is questionable whether they would make a purchase at so great a cost when the product was so fragile and perishable.

2. Daulte, op. cit., p. 32
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. White and White, Canvases and Careers, p. 30; Rewald, The History of Impressionism, p. 327
6. Rewald, *ibid*, p. 327
7. Manet stated that the "'Salon is the real field of battle. It's there that one must take one's measure.'" Renoir "regretted his occasional rejections simply because to exhibit at the Salon

seemed the natural thing to do." (Rewald, *ibid*, p. 214.

Renoir and his Friends

8. Daulte, *op. cit.*, p. 36
9. Vollard, Renoir, an Intimate Record, p. 31
10. Germanicus Caesar, 15 B.C. to A.D. 19
11. Vollard, *op. cit.*, p. 31
12. Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Ambition and Love, see ch. on "The Pretensions of the Bourgeoisie", in particular, p. 15
13. Daulte, *op. cit.*, p. 414
14. Vollard, *op. cit.*, p. 30
15. *Ibid*, p. 39
16. Philippe Grunheec, The Grand Prix de Rome: Paintings from the École des Beaux-Arts, 1797-1863, p. 20
17. Jean Renoir, *op. cit.*, p. 111
18. Lawrence Hanson, Renoir: the Man, the Painter and his World, p. 34
19. Vollard, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17
20. Rewald, *op. cit.*, p. 72; White and White, *op. cit.*, p. 112. Rewald claims that Sisley's family was wealthy through the silk trade, whereas White and White state that he belonged to the middle sector of the middle class.

21. Rewald, op. cit., pp. 289, 597
22. Daulte, op. cit., Catalogue Number 11
23. Ibid, pp. 36, 416
24. Rewald, op. cit., pp. 76, 116, 197
25. Daulte, op. cit., Catalogue Number 46; p. 416
26. Fosca, Renoir, p. 140
27. Rewald, op. cit., p. 350
28. John Canaday, Mainstreams of Modern Art, p. 164

Decisions and Indecisions: Renoir 1864 to 1874

29. Albert Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century, p. 59
30. Albert Boime, "We Don't Want to Set the World on Fire, We Just Want to Start a Flame in Your Heart", Art Pompier: Anti-Impressionism. See section on 'Academic Doctrine', (no page number)
31. Rewald, op. cit., p. 150. The origins of this idea may date back to the instructor, Gleyre, who created some "remarkable studies of light" which "should not be overlooked because they were outdone by his pupils Renoir, Monet and Whistler." (Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945: Taste and Corruption, p. 130)
32. Rewald, op. cit., p. 228
33. Ibid, p. 341-342
34. Fosca, op. cit., p. 197

35. This date, cited in Cabanne et al., Renoir, pp. 154-155, and in Daulte, op. cit., p. 54, has behind it an unusual history. Cézanne had severed all ties with Renoir one year before the painting was created. Accompanied by his wife, Renoir had visited Cézanne in Aix-en-Provence in 1888 and, apparently, was warmly received. However, within a few days, he was thrown out, having to leave the home of his friend "in haste", carrying with him "his roughly sketched out works." (Daulte, *ibid*, pp. 52-53). Why a rift occurred between the two artists, who had known each other and associated within similar circles for the past approximately twenty years, is unknown. One year later, Renoir returned to southern France and rented from Maxime Conil, the brother-in-law of Cézanne, a property in the vicinity of Aix-en-Provence, where he created a number of landscapes, including Mount Sainte-Victoire (Daulte, *ibid*, p. 54). Perhaps Renoir had begun a sketched out version of Mount Sainte-Victoire in 1888, then returned in 1889 to complete it. Or, perhaps remembering the strength of Cézanne's versions of this mountain, Renoir might have wished to see if he could do the same.

36. The other exhibitors during the first impressionist exhibition include:

Zacharie Astruc	Antoine Ferdinand Attendu
Edouard Béliard	Eugène Boudin
Félix Bracquemond	Edouard Brandon
Pierre Bureau	Félix Cals
Gustave Colin	Louis Debras
Armand Guillaumin	Louis Latouche
Viscount Ludovic Napoléon Lepic	Léopold Levert
Stanislas Lépine	Alfred Meyer
Auguste de Molins	Emilien Mulot-Durivage
J. de Nittis	Auguste Ottin
Léon Ottin	Léopold Robert
Henri Rouart	

(See Lionello Venturi, Les Archives de l'Impressionnisme, Vol. II, pp. 255+; Rewald, op. cit., p. 591

37. According to Rewald, this stipulation was discussed and approved in 1877 (Rewald, *ibid*, p. 390-391). That the exhibition might be confused by the public with a Salon des Refuses was, at the outset, a concern of the group, especially Degas, and members were determined to refrain from sending any of their works to the Salon (Rewald, *ibid*, p. 312).
38. *Ibid*, p. 76
39. White and White, op. cit., p. 112

The Shows

40. Rewald, op. cit., p. 313
41. Vollard, op. cit., p. 62

42. Venturi, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 255+
43. Daulte, op. cit., Catalogue Numbers 114, 115, 116.
According to Daulte, the model Nini was nicknamed "Guele de raie" ("fish-face"). Yet Renoir, in conversation with Vollard, referred to Nini as "...a beautiful girl...and very charming". However, Renoir stated that he preferred the model Marguerite. In his words, "'Nini always seemed to me a sort of Belgian counterfeit.'" (Vollard, op. cit., p. 74)
44. "Very strong reservations about the movement, but, on the whole, sympathetic appreciation for these painters, whom he finds less revolutionary than their theories." (Jean Prouvaire, "L'Exposition du Boulevard des Capucines", Le Rappel, 20 April 1874; summarized by Venturi, op. cit., Vol II, p. 297
45. Louis Leroy, "L'Exposition des impressionnistes," Charivari, April 25, 1874. Reprinted in full in English in Rewald, op. cit., pp. 318-324. This particular quote is found on p. 318.
46. Ibid, p. 322-323
47. Ibid
48. Rewald, op. cit., pp. 369-370
49. Daulte, op. cit., p. 40
50. Ibid, p. 411
51. Georges Rivière, Renoir et ses amis, p. 167
52. Daulte, op. cit., p. 411

53. Ibid, p. 412
54. Ibid, p. 40
55. Vollard, op. cit., p 64
56. Rewald states: "However, Degas lost out when he energetically opposed the plan of calling the event Exposition des Impressionnistes." (Rewald, op. cit., p. 390). On the other hand, Venturi lists the title on the catalogue for the third impressionist exhibition as the Catalogue de la 3e Exposition de Peinture (Venturi, op. cit., p. 259). It would appear the latter title, placed in the exhibition catalogue, was adopted as the official name. Curiously, later in his life, Renoir confessed to his son Jean that he disliked the name impressionism. Referring to the first impressionist exhibition wherein the group was given this vituperative tag, he commented: "'The only thing we got out of it was the label 'Impressionism,' a name I loathe.'" (Jean Reanoir, op. cit., p. 160)
57. The name impressionism, coined in derision by the malevolent critic Louis Leroy, is a misnomer, although it serves to explicate the impact of the new style on the French public and their resultant interpretation. Paintings by Monet, not Renoir, inspired this opprobrious tag.
58. This remains unfinished because Mme. Récamier was

dissatisfied with her portrayal and refused to take the work. In turn, David refused to finish it.

- 59. Vollard, op. cit., p. 66
- 60. Ibid, p. 20
- 61. William Gaunt, intro., Renoir, p. 8

Renoir's Rise to Wealth and Prominence: 1877 to 1882

- 62. Rewald, op. cit., p. 354
- 63. White and White, op. cit., p. 130
- 64. Rewald, op. cit., p. 351
- 65. G. Geffroy, Claude Monet, sa vie, son oeuvre, Paris, 1924, Vol. I, ch. XIX, quoted in Rewald, *ibid*, p. 397, n. 71
- 66. Daulte, op. cit., p. 41
- 67. Rewald, op. cit., p. 384
- 68. Ibid, p. 370
- 69. Ibid
- 70. Ibid, p. 397, n. 66
- 71. Fosca discusses this, quoting in full Renoir's letter to M. Charpentier. Following is an excerpt:

"My dear friend,

"Spuller, a politician and a friend of Gambetta's, has decided to try hard to get me a State commission; only, as he knows nothing about such things and doesn't want to make a howler, he asked me to give him exact information on what is possible: he wants me to say to him, 'I want to have such a ceiling and such a wall or staircase in such-and-such a place.' By racking my brains, I finally decided that the only man who could give him this information was the secretary of M. Bardoux, who is the employer

of your friend Lafenestre - through whom you could perhaps help me. I want to hurry matters along because of the budget, etc., etc. In other words, could you write a line to Lafenestre on my behalf or go and see him yourself?..." (Fosca, op. cit., p. 118-120)

Perhaps by invitation through Charpentier, Renoir apparently visited Lafenestre personally to discuss the project, the results of which were mentioned in Renoir's next letter to Charpentier, as follows:

"My dear friend,
"I have seen Lafenestre, who asked to be remembered to you. He told me to apply to the town council, but I don't think it will be any use...." (Fosca, ibid, pp. 118-120)

Fosca interpreted this last letter as follows: "We do not know whether Renoir's attempt to obtain a commission for some decorative work from the city failed, or whether he simply got discouraged."
(Fosca, ibid, p. 120)

72. Rewald, op. cit., p. 358
73. "There are in Paris fewer than fifteen art lovers capable of liking a painter without the Salon. There 80,000 of them who will not buy so much as a nose if the painter isn't in the Salon." Letter of Renoir to Durand-Ruel, Algiers, March 1881, reprinted in Venturi, op. cit., Vol.I, p. 115
74. Rewald, op. cit., p. 327
75. Based on figures available in White and White, op. cit., pp. 28-31; and Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, selector and editor, The Art of All Nations, 1850-1873, pp. 455-456

76. "My shipment to the Salon is strictly commercial.
In any event, it is comparable to certain medicines.
If it does no good, it does no harm." (Letter from
Renoir to Durand-Ruel, Algiers, March 1881, printed
in Venturi, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 115)
77. Daulte, op. cit., p. 414
78. Ibid, p. 411
79. Rewald, op. cit., p. 430
80. Ibid
81. Ibid
82. "'I have begun a portrait this morning...I will begin
another one this evening and, later, I am probably
going to do a third.'" (Daulte, op. cit., p. 45)
83. Rewald, op. cit., pp. 452-453; see also Daulte, op.
cit., p. 45
84. Daulte, ibid, p. 40
85. Ibid, p. 43
86. Ibid, p. 43; Catalogue Numbers 315-318
87. Ibid, p. 44
88. Ibid, p. 47
89. Charigot bore Renoir's first son, Pierre, on March
21, 1885. Later, two additional sons were born:
Jean, in 1894 and Claude (nicknamed Coco) in 1901.
Renoir and Charigot were married on April 14, 1890
(B. E. White, "Renoir's Trip to Italy", The Art
Bulletin, Vol. 51, Dec. 1969, p. 333)

90. "'Regarding the fifteen hundred francs from Cahen, I take the liberty to tell you that I find it hard to take. No one could be more stingy.'" (Daulte, op. cit., p. 45)

Renoir's "Machiavellian Phase"

The Preparation

91. Jean Renoir (who cited 3 sous), op. cit., p. 60;
Vollard (who cited 8 sous), op. cit., p. 23.
A sous is 1/20th of a franc; or, in other words, the proportional equivalent of a nickel to one dollar.
92. Rewald, op. cit., p. 335
93. B. E. White, "Renoir's Trip to Italy", Art Bulletin, December 1969, Vol. 51, p. 338
94. B. E. White, "The Bathers of 1887 and Renoir's Anti-Impressionism", The Art Bulletin, March 1973, Vol. 55, p. 122. (According to White, Bouguereau's Two Bathers sold in 1886 for 100,450 francs.)
95. Caillebotte to Pissarro, January 24, 1881; published for the first time in Rewald, *ibid*, p. 448
96. *Ibid*
97. Although, as he had intended, Renoir did view the frescoes of Pompeii, these were incidental to his concerns
98. Rewald, op. cit., pp. 460-461; see also Daulte, Catalogue Number 394
99. Rewald, pp. 460-461. However, after twenty-five

minutes had elapsed, Wagner, apparently tired, stood up and abruptly terminated the sitting (Vollard, op. cit., p. 105). He disliked the result because he thought it made him look like a "protestant pastor" (Fosca, op. cit., p. 167).

100. Rewald, op. cit., pp. 460-461

101. Jean Renoir, op. cit., pp. 188-189. To Vollard, Renoir confessed:

"I used to like Wagner very much. I was quite carried away by the kind of passionate fluidity that there seemed to be in his music; but a friend took me once to Beyreuth, and I hardly need tell you that I was frightfully bored. The screams of the Walkyries are all right for a short time, but when they last six hours on end, you go mad. I'll never forget the scandal that I created when, in an excess of boredom, I lighted a match in the theatre while the performance was still going on." (Vollard, op. cit., pp. 106-107)

102. Daulte, op. cit., p. 420

103. Letter of Renoir to Durand-Ruel, February 24, 1882, quoted in Venturi, op. cit., Vol I, pp. 119-120

104. "'The public dislikes anything which smells of politics and, I, at my age, do not wish to be a revolutionary. To stay with the Israelite Pissarro, this is revolution. On top of this, these gentlemen know that I have taken a great step because of the Salon. They cannot wait to make me lose what I have earned. For that, they neglect nothing, even if it means letting go of me once I have fallen. I don't want to, I don't want to. Get rid of these folks

and introduce me to some artists such as Monet, Sisley, Morisot, etc. and I am yours, because this is no longer politics, this is pure art.'" (Daulte, op. cit., p. 47)

105. Renoir to Durand-Ruel, February 26, 1882, quoted in Venturi, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 121
106. Ibid
107. Ibid
108. Venturi, *ibid*, Vol. II, p. 269, Numbers 146, 147; B. E. White, "Renoir's Trip to Italy", The Art Bulletin, Vol. 51, December 1969, pp. 337-338
109. B. E. White, "The Bathers of 1887 and Renoir's Anti-Impressionism", The Art Bulletin, Vol. 55, March 1973, p. 113
110. Hanson, op. cit., p. 216. Little is known about the reasons behind the severance of these ties. According to Hanson, Renoir, in the view of Mme. Charpentier, "...had become vieux jeu and was subject to criticism for failing to paint pictures pretty enough to get into the Salon" (Hanson, *ibid*, p. 216). However, this seems more on the level of scurrilous gossip than sound reasoning from, in the words of the author Georges Riviere, a "femme remarquablement intelligente" (Rivière, op. cit., p. 167). More accurately, Renoir was able to get into the Salon without any difficulty since 1878, and stopped

exhibiting by choice after 1883, as mentioned in the thesis, apparently due to his enormous success during his one-man show held in 1883 at Durand-Ruel's art gallery.

111. According to Francois Daulte, following this exhibition, Renoir apparently refused to submit another painting to the Salon because *The Daughters of Catulle Mendès*, although accepted, was poorly lit, being hung just below the canopy. In Daulte's words:

Mais, une fois de plus, les membres de la commission de placement n'accordent à la toile de Renoir qu'une mauvaise lumière, juste sous le vélum. Dépit  par cet accrochage injuste, Renoir renoncera d sormais   repara tre au Salon." (Daulte, op. cit., p. 55)

By this point in time, 1890, the unhappy undercurrents, both within the Salon and without, had led to number of changes. Boime describes this development:

"In 1881 occurred the first Salon managed entirely by artists, a policy placed on a permanent basis two years later. While this liberalized the representation (indeed, Manet received an award in 1881), Academicians still received the lion's share of the votes....In 1883 the Soci t  des Artistes Fran ais was founded: embracing some 3,000 artists who had been admitted at least once to the Salon, it organized the Salons and elected the juries. Until 1889 it functioned smoothly, but in that year a schism within the organization occurred over awarding the hors concours category to foreign artists entering the World's Fair....As a result, Meissonnier and his followers...defected to form an entirely new Salon organization under the auspices of the Soci t  Nationale des Beaux-Arts." (Boime, "We Don't Want to Set the World on Fire, We Just Want to Start a Flame in Your Heart", Art Pompi r:

Anti-Impressionism, see section on 'Salon Des Refuses', no page number.

It would seem reasonable to believe that a modified Salon, long overdue for a major structural overhaul, would have been more sympathetic to artists such as Renoir who had struggled with alternate ways to become known. However, judging by the reception of his work at the Salon of 1890, Renoir appears to have received little sympathy from the new organization of artists who took over.

- 112. B. E. White, "The Bathers of 1887 and Renoir's Anti-Impressionism", op. cit., p. 122
- 113. White and White, op. cit., p. 131

The Work

- 114. Ibid, p. 6
- 115. Boime, "We Don't Want to Set the World on Fire...", op. cit., see section on 'Idealization and the Nude' (no page).
- 116. Vollard, op. cit., p. 57
- 117. Denis Rouart, compiler and editor, The Correspondence of Berthe Morisot, p. 160
- 118. Gardner's Art Through the Ages, seventh edition, p. 742
- 119. Boime, "We Don't Want to Set the World on Fire...", op. cit.

- 120. White and White, op. cit.
- 121. B. E. White, "The Bathers of 1887...", op. cit.,
p. 120
- 122. Ibid
- 123. White and White, op. cit.
- 124. Vollard, op. cit., pp. 122-123
- 125. White and White, op. cit., pp. 6-7
- 126. Camille Pissarro, Letters to his son Lucien,
p. 75, n. 1
- 127. Rewald, op. cit., p. 481

Renoir's Final Years: 1890 to 1919

- 128. Francois Duret-Robert, "Un milliard pour un Renoir?",
ch. in Cabanne et al., Renoir, p. 250
- 129. Ibid
- 130. Ibid
- 131. Venturi, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 127
- 132. Jean Renoir, op. cit., p. 254
- 133. Rewald, op. cit., p. 210
- 134. Jean Renoir, op. cit., p. 10
- 135. Vollard, op. cit., p. 112; see also Jean Renoir,
op. cit., pp. 176-177
- 136. Boime, The Academy and French Painting in the
Nineteenth Century, op. cit., p. 63
- 137. According to Rouart, Renoir stated:

"Painters fancy themselves extraordinary creatures. If once they take it into their heads to put on blue instead of black, they imagine they are going to change the face of the world. Personally I have always refused to set up as a revolutionary. I have always felt, and still feel, that I am simply carrying on what others have done before me, and done much better than I.'" (Denis Rouart, Renoir: A Biographical and Critical Study, pp. 104-106)

138. Rosamund Frost, Renoir, p. 10; Rouart, op. cit., p. 64.

Rouart quotes Renoir as follows:

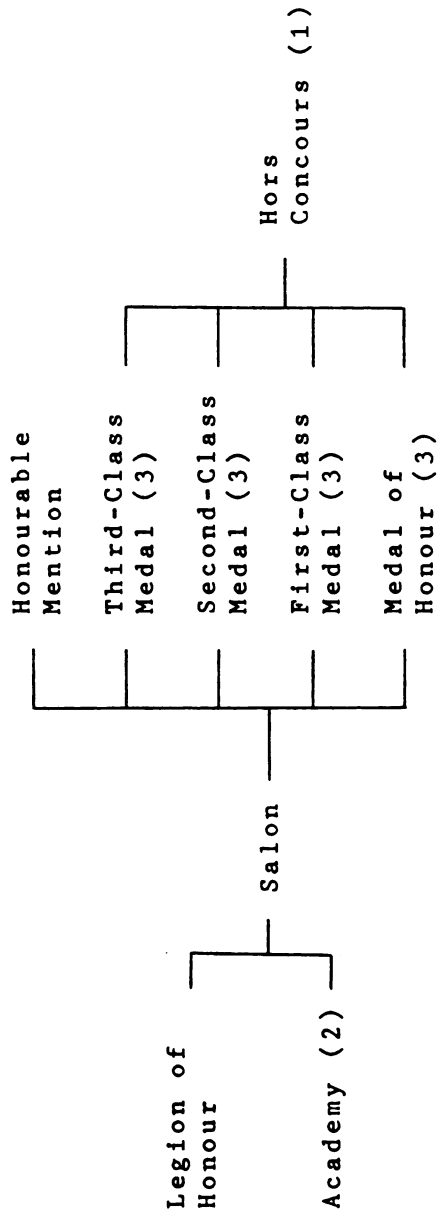
"'I tried painting in tiny dabs, which made it easier to run tones into one another, but then the surface is always so rough - that rather puts me off....I like to fondle a picture, run my hand across it. But damn it all, when they're painted like that, I feel more inclined to strike a match on them. Then there's the dust that settles in the crevices and mars the tones.'" (Rouart, *ibid*)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SALON SYSTEM OF HONOURS AND PRIVILEGES



1. A person who received a Salon medal was automatically admitted to subsequent Salon showings without having to go through the Salon jury.
2. Entrance to the Academy was by election, after which time the selected artist would assume one of the 14 spots that were available for painters.
3. Cash prizes accompanied medals; for instance, the following were awarded in 1853:

Third-Class Medal -	250 francs
Second-Class Medal -	500 francs
First-Class Medal -	1,500 francs
Medal of Honour	- 4,000 francs

 (White and White, Canvases and Careers, p. 31)

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

PAINTINGS ENTERED BY RENOIR IN THE SALONS: 1864 TO 1873 (1)

Jury*	Year	Title	Subject**
A	1864	Esmeralda Dancing with her Goat	C
A	1865	Summer Evening	L
A		Portrait of William Sisley	P
R	1866	Young Man (Jules Le Coeur) Walking his Dog in the Forest of Fontainebleau	L
R	1867	Diana	C
A	1868	Lise with a Parasol	P
A	1869	Summer	P
A	1870	Bather with a Griffon	C
A		Woman of Algiers	D
R	1872	Parisian Women Dressed in Algerian Costumes	D
R	1873	Morning Ride in the Bois de Boulogne (2)	P

* - refers to the jury
decision:
A - Accepted
R - Rejected

** C - Classical
L - Landscape
P - Portrait
D - Style and subject matter
of Delacroix

1. Compiled from a variety of sources.
2. Exhibited in the Exposition artistique des oeuvres refusés, 1873 (essentially a Salon des refusés).

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

NUMBER OF WORKS SUBMITTED TO AND EXHIBITED IN THE SALONS (1)

Years	Number of Works Submitted	Number of Paintings Submitted	Number of Works Exhibited	Of these, Number of Paintings	Number of Painters
1765-90			300-400		
1791*			794	551	210
1806			704	573	293
1835			2,536 ²		
1842	c.4,000				
1843			1,597 ³		
1848**	5,362 ⁵		5,180	4,598	1,900 ⁴
1853				1,208	728
1863		5,000			3,000
1864			3,478		
1865			3,559		
1866			3,338	1,998	

* - First Salon open to all

** - Second Salon open to all

1. This Appendix is based on figures available in White and White, Canvases and Careers, pp. 28-31; and Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, selector and editor, The Art of All Nations, 1850-1873, pp. 455-456.
2. This marked the high point in numbers of works exhibited between 1835 and 1847 inclusive, which averaged a little over 2,000 (White and White, op. cit., p. 30).
3. This marked the low point in the numbers of works exhibited between 1835 and 1847 inclusive (White and White, p. 30).
4. According to White and White: "This is about one and a half times the numbers of painters and paintings ordinarily appearing in juried Salons during the 1840's". Should this be true, the number of painters who appeared in juried Salons would usually range from 1,250 to 1,275.
5. The revolutionary government of 1848 announced that the Salon would be "free", namely, that all works submitted would be hung. Thereupon, 182 works were withdrawn, indicative of certain artists' respect for juried exhibitions.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

THE EXAMINATIONS WHICH RENOIR WROTE AND HIS STANDINGS
WHILE ATTENDING THE ECOLE DES BEAUX ARTS

Date	Type of Examination	Standing	No. of Examinees
Spring 1862	Entrance Examination	68	80
18 April 1862	Perspective Competition	5	?
16 August 1862	Examination of the Painted Sketch	10	?
31 March 1863	Figure Drawing Competition	20	80
7 October 1863	Figure Drawing Competition	28	80
5 April 1864	? (possibly Figure Drawing)	10	106

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

RENOIR'S INCREASING NUMBER OF PATRONS: 1864 TO 1875

1864	M. Lacaux Dr. Leudet
1865	Colonel Barton Howard Jenks Mlle. Sicot Jules Le Coeur and the Le Coeur Family
1868	Prince Bibesco Edmond Maître
1870	Comtesse Edmond de Pourtalès Mme. Massonie
1871	Captain Paul Darras
1872	Paul Durand-Ruel (dealer) Théodore Duret
1873	Henri Rouart Gustave Caillebotte
1874	Mme. Georges Hartmann
1875	Jean Dollfus M. de la Pommeraye Delphine Legrand Auguste Moulines Victor and Marie Chocquet Georges Charpentier Charles Ephrussi Emmanuel Chabrier

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

PAINTINGS OF THE LE COEURS BY RENOIR (1865 TO 1874)

- 1866 Young Man (Jules Le Coeur) Walking his Dog in the
 Forest of Fontainebleau
 Cabaret of Mother Anthony *
 Mme. Joseph Le Coeur
 Jules Le Coeur and Clémence Tréhot (water colour)
- 1868 Head of Joseph Le Coeur
 Mme. Charles Le Coeur and her son Joseph in the
 Garden (project)
- 1868-69 Le Garçon au Chat*
- 1869 Mme. Théodore Charpentier
 Monsieur and Madame Charles Le Coeur
 Mademoiselle Marie Le Coeur
- 1871 Joseph Le Coeur
- 1872 Morning Ride in the Bois de Boulogne* (Joseph
 posed for the boy)
 Mademoiselle Marthe Le Coeur
- 1874 Charles Le Coeur (Galant Jardinier)
- c.1874 Garden at Fontenay* (Madame Charles Le Coeur) (1)

* - not owned by the Le Coeurs

1. Believed to have been created at the time of the rift between Renoir and the Le Coeurs, and, thus, was left unfinished. (Douglas Cooper, Renoir, Lise and the Le Coeur Family - II: The Le Coeurs, op. cit., p. 328)

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

MISCELLANEOUS PAINTINGS BY RENOIR
THAT WERE OWNED BY THE LE COEURS

- 1866 Two major still lifes with vases of flowers
 One view in the Fontainebleau Forest
 One still life (Bourriche et Perdrix)
- 1867 Lise holding a bunch of Wild Flowers
- c.1873/4 Roses
- 1873 L'Amazone (head of Mme. Darras, a study for the
 head of the woman in the equestrian portrait,
 Morning Ride in the Bois de Boulogne, 1872)

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX H

PUBLIC AND CRITICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD TYPES OF PAINTINGS

Subject Matter or Format	Public and Critical Attitudes	
	1860 to 1874	1874+
Portraits	approved	approved
Classical	approved	approved
Historical	approved	approved
Romantic	approved (1)	approved (1)
Genre	approved	approved
Nudes	approved	approved
Realist	unacceptable	growing acceptance
Landscapes (general)	approved	approved
Landscapes (impressionist style)	non-existent	unacceptable

1. approved, provided the use of colours, such as red, were toned down, and brush strokes subdued to an indiscernable sheen.

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

PUBLIC AND CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD STYLE

Characteristic	Approved	Unacceptable
Cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - classical robed figures - Renaissance figures - 19th C. contemporary la haute in historical setting - any noble past historical figure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 19th C. contemporary Parisian bourgeois or aristocrats in "risque" setting (clothed man with nude woman; scenes of prostitutes)
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - classical robes preferable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rags, soiled garb, unless "morally uplifting"
Human Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ideal; beautiful; flawless; slender; unidentifiable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ugly; particular; flawed; fat individualized; low echelons of society; risque subject
Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - toned down; match those in nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - out of balance or dominating colours (i.e., too much red)
Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - almost indiscernible tonal shifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sharp "black-white" contrasts
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - brush stroke smooth, indiscernible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - each brush stroke prominent
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - variety of brushes; mahl stick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - palette knife, rags, fingers, sponges, sticks
Theoretical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - imagination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of imagination: figures based on reality, not creativity
Conceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subject matter from literature (i.e., classical literature) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theory as subject (i.e., the capturing light with colour)

APPENDIX J

APPENDIX J

RENOIR'S PARTICIPATION IN EXHIBITIONS: 1874-1890

Date	Salons	Impressionist Exhibitions	
1874	-	1st	P
1875	R		
1876	-	2nd	P
1877	-	3rd	P
1878	A		
1879	A	4th	-
1880	A	5th	-
1881	A	6th	-
1882	A	7th	P
1883	-		
1884	-		
1885	-		
1886	-	8th	-
1887	-		
1888	-		
1889	-		
1890	A		

A - Accepted

P - Participant

R - Rejected

- - Abstained from showing

APPENDIX K

APPENDIX K

RENOIR'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPRESSIONIST SHOWS

First Exhibition

Society Anonyme des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs,
Graveurs, etc...

35, boulevard des Capucines, Paris

15 April to 15 May 1874

Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Admission: 1 franc

30 Exhibitors

Renoir

- 141. The Dancer (1874)
- 142. The Loge (1874)
- 143. La Parisienne (Woman in Blue, 1874)
- 144. The Harvesters (1873)
- 145. Flowers
- 146. Sketch (pastel)
- 147. Head of a Woman

Total: 7 works exhibited

Second Exhibition

11, rue Le Peletier, Paris

10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

20 Exhibitors

Renoir

- 209. Woman and Child (property of M. Poupin)
- 210. On the Terrace (property of M. Chocquet)
- 211. Portrait (property of M. Chocquet)
- 212. Etude (Nu au Soleil, 1876)
- 213. The Reader (Mme. Chocquet Reading, 1876; property of
M. Chocquet)
- 214. Head of a Man (Portrait of Monsieur Chocquet, 1876;
property of M. Chocquet)
- 215. Portrait of a Child (portrait of M. Chocquet)

- 216. Head of a Child (property of M. Chocquet)
- 217. Portrait of a Woman (Woman with a Rose, 1876; property of M. Dollfus)
- 218. Portrait of Mlle. S.
- 219. Woman at the Piano (1876; property of M. Poupin)
- 220. Portrait of Claude Monet (property of M. Dollfus)
- 221. Luncheon at the Fournaise's
- 222. Portrait of Mme. D.
- 223. Portrait of a Young Girl (Portrait of Mlle. Legrand or The Attentive Girl, 1875; property of M. Legrand)

Total: 15 works exhibited

Third Exhibition

6, rue Le Peletier, Paris

April 1877

Hours: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

18 Exhibitors

Renoir (studio: 35, rue Saint-Georges, Paris)

- 185. The Swing (1876; property of M. Caillebotte)
- 186. Bal du Moulin de la Galette (1876)
- 187. Portrait of Mme. Georges Charpentier (1877; property of M. G. Charpentier)
- 188. Portrait of Mlle. Georgette Charpentier (1877; property of M. G. Charpentier)
- 189. Portrait of Mme. Alphonse Daudet (1867; property of M. Alphonse Daudet)
- 190. Portrait of Alfred Sisley (1874)
- 191. Portrait of Mlle. Jeanne Samary (The Dreamer, 1877)
- 192. Portrait of M. Jacques-Eugene Spuller (1871)
- 193. Young Girl
- 194. Seated Woman
- 195. The Seine at Champrosay
- 196. Saint-Georges Square
- 197. The Sunset
- 198. Garden
- 199. Garden
- 200. Head of a Young Girl
- 201. Bouquet of Wild Flowers
- 202. Two Heads
- 203. Two Heads
- 204. The Dahlias
- 205. Portrait of a Child

Total: 21 works exhibited

Seventh Exhibition

251, rue Saint-Honore (Salons du Panorama de Reichshoffen)

March 1882

9 Exhibitors

Renoir

- 137. Young Girl with a Cat (1880)*
- 138. The Two Sisters
- 139. A Loge at the Opera
- 140. A Luncheon at Bougival
- 141. Daydreaming
- 142. Woman Gathering some Flowers (The Inverted Parasol,
1872)
- 143. Banana Plantation near Algiers
- 144. Plate of Prunes
- 145. Lilacs
- 146. View of Venice (Grand Canal)
- 147. View of Venice (Doge's Palace)
- 148. Young Girl Sleeping
- 149. The Reading
- 150. At the Shore of the Seine
- 151. The Boaters.
- 152. The Shores of the Seine
- 153. Woman Seated on the Grass
- 154. The Seine at Chatou
- 155. Chestnut Trees in Blossom
- 156. Geraniums
- 157. Desaix Garden in Algeria
- 158. Peonies
- 159. The Peaches
- 160. Woman with a Fan
- 161. Near Bougival

Total: 25 works exhibited

* also exhibited in the Salon of 1880

Note: This appendix was derived from tables in Venturi,
op. cit., pp. 255+; and from catalogue entries in
Daulte, Auguste Renoir, Catalogue Raisonne, op. cit.

APPENDIX L

APPENDIX L

WORKS WHICH RENOIR SHOWED IN THE SALON: 1875 TO 1890*

- 1875 Rejected (it is not known which work Renoir had submitted)
- 1878 The Cup of Chocolate (1878)
- 1879 Portrait of Mademoiselle Jeanne Samary (1878)
Mme. Charpentier and her Children (1878)
Two pastels of Hommes**
- 1880 Fisherwoman of Mussels at Bernval (1879)
Young Girl with a Cat (1880)***
- 1881 Portrait of Jeanne Samary (oil)
Portrait of Jeanne Samary (pastel)
- 1882 Mademoiselle Grimprel with a Blue Ribbon (1880)
- 1883 Portrait of Madame Léon Clapisson (1883)
- 1890 The Daughters of Catulle Mendès (1888)
-

* See also Appendices B and J

** According to Daulte, these pastels were shown in the Salon of 1879 (Daulte, Auguste Renoir, Catalogue Raisonné, op. cit., p. 42)

*** Also shown in the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition (see Appendix K)

APPENDIX M

APPENDIX M

FAMILY CONNECTIONS: THE CHARPENTIER AND THE LE COEURS

Le Coeurs

Félix Claude
Jauillain

Catherine Apolline
Félicie Jauillain
(1802-1874)

Joseph
Le Coeur
(1803-1857)

Louise
(1829-
1893)

Marie
(1831-
1910)

Jules
(1832-
1882)

Charles
(1830-
1906)

Marie
(1834-
1922)

Georges
(1846-
1905)

Marguerite
Lemonnier

Marie
(1858-
1937)

Joseph
(1860-
1904)

Marthe
(b.1865)

François
(1872-
1934)

Madelaine
(b.1875)

Georgette
(b.1872)

Paul
(1875-
1895)

Charpentiers

Augustin
Le Grand

Théodore
Charpentier
(1797-1867)

Marie-Pauline
Le Grand
(1802-1875)

APPENDIX N

APPENDIX N

PATRONS ACQUIRED BY RENOIR THROUGH HIS FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES

Renior's Friends/Contacts	Patrons Acquired Through Renoir's Friends/Contacts	New Clients Acquired Through These Patrons
Le Coeurs	Captain Paul Darras Prince Bibesco Countess Portalès (?)	Jean Dollfus
Frederic Bazille	Edmond Maître	Dr. Emile Blanche
Edgar Degas	Henri Rouart M. & Mme. Laine Théodore Duret	
Charpentiers	Paul Bérard Louis Cahen d'Anvers Mme. Alphonse Daudet Mme. Edmond Henri Turquet Mme. Clapisson Jeanne Samary Bernheim Jeune (?) Mme. Hériot	Georges Grimprel
Emmanuel Chabrier	Benjamin Godard Eugene Pierre Lestríguez	
Impressionists	les Dachery	M. Alfred Nunes
Berthe Morisot	Stephane Mallarmé Ambroise Vollard Théodore Wyzewa (?)	Mme. Robert de Bonnières

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