

Jean-Paul Jérôme
Peintre de la relation
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Painter of Communication

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Jean-Paul Jérôme

peintre de la relation

Fernand Ouellette

*Ce qui m'a toujours sauvé, c'est que
je n'ai jamais su ce que je voulais.*

(Braque)

Il n'y a pas de plus profonde raison d'affronter la toile que de répondre au Désir, à la nécessité de la haute musique de l'être. Voudrait-on s'en convaincre que la seule œuvre *Apollon* (1974) suffirait à nous arracher le regard. On ne peut suivre quelque piste sans vertige. Jérôme nous plonge en plein labyrinthe. Il capte la lumière apparente pour mieux nous abandonner à la lumière invisible. La grande sonorité noire nous imprègne. La nuit novalisienne résonne comme un appel. Le tissu terrestre de verdure, de brun solide, d'amour dense comme un vin de vigne, de traces de bleu fin, ne peut que préparer l'œil au passage illuminant du gris au blanc vif, et quelle violente vibration! mais afin de mieux le perdre, et qu'il aille éperdu dans l'abîme qu'ouvre le noir. En inversant une parole de Dufy, on pourrait dire qu'il y a des fonds noirs qui équivalent au blanc absolu. «Mais nous venons trop tard, ami. Oui, les dieux vivent. Mais là-haut, sur nos fronts, au cœur d'un autre monde» (Hölderlin). Lorsqu'il superpose les dédales, Jérôme nous entraîne dans l'ailleurs des dieux.

Fondamentalement, Jean-Paul Jérôme est un peintre de la *relation*. En ce sens, il n'y a pas de sensibilité plus moderne. Lorsqu'il peint, il est en errance, en *divagation* (comment saurait-il ce qui va surgir?), mais cette errance même n'est possible qu'à travers les lacis, les réseaux multiples qu'il établit en cheminant avec un instinct sûr. Deux triangles sont parfois reliés par des cycles de parallèles. Une sphère entre en rapport avec un triangle par deux ponts. Les formes tendues, ébranlées par l'attraction, sont mises en relation par une, deux ou plusieurs lignes. Chez lui, toute géométrie est mouvante. Cela va de la complexité de *Haut Pays* (1974) à *Matin de lumière* (1974), où, lentement, dans un triptyque bleu, dérivent des sphères en s'attirant.

Si on peut dire que dans l'acharnement de perfection qui caractérise Jérôme, dans sa patience, on sent présente la longue tradition de la peinture européenne, on peut également



ajouter que ce peintre de galaxies en expansion et de molécules a bien la générosité, l'ouverture de la peinture américaine. Peintre de formes plus que du geste ou du signe, il poursuit dans la solitude le travail d'approfondissement émerveillé entrepris par les enlumineurs et les miniaturistes du Moyen-âge.

Retenons quelques tableaux peints depuis 1972. En jetant un coup d'œil sur la série de toiles de Saint-Ours (1972), on voit que le mouvement et la forme prédominent. Le trait noir se dilate, engendre une forme (comme chez Atlan), délimite les zones claires. Le coussin de lin (car Jérôme peint toujours sur une toile de lin non *cérusée*) atténue les sauts trop éclatants du noir au blanc. Ainsi, la résonance n'en est que plus forte. Viendront les grandes surfaces à formes pures comme *Nocturne* (1972-1974), *Essor* (1972) et *Musique pour Neige* (1972). Dans celle-ci, par exemple, Jérôme commence par diviser l'espace, comme s'il avait besoin de fenêtres. Cette répartition supportera toute sa composition. Chaque fenêtre aspire des tonalités. La ligne de lin elle-même s'élargit plus ou moins. Les parties cernées ont une autonomie apparente, bien qu'elles soient en correspondance l'une avec l'autre. Jérôme laisse courir les traits noirs. Des angles aigus apparaissent. Le graphisme ressemble aux fils visibles d'une immense volière invisible, comme si le peintre voulait empêcher que ses formes si légères ne s'envolent. Mais ce filet noir module comme une musique. Qui est plus musicien? Quelle tendresse dans *Musique pour Neige*, quelle courtoisie devant la Femme! Nul n'est plus secrètement admiratif du féminin enclos dans cette toile. (Schubert l'accompagne avec son cœur blessé dans l'andantino de la *Sonate pour piano en la majeur*.) Aucun tableau ne nous fait mieux comprendre à quel point Jérôme est un plasticien.

Cette surface de formes nettes (ce ciel de grands oiseaux) deviendra de plus en plus organique, végétale, délirante, pour atteindre son sommet dans *le Jardin de la licorne* (1973), grand triptyque où le mystère, la profusion et l'achèvement des formes stupéfient. Les mondes s'appellent, se nourrissent l'un

Né à Montréal, en 1928. Il étudie à l'École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, et, notamment, la fresque, pendant trois ans, avec Stanley Cosgrove. Depuis 1954, il a tenu de nombreuses expositions particulières, principalement à Montréal et à Paris. En 1955, il fut membre fondateur du Groupe des Plasticiens et cosignataire du *Manifeste des Plasticiens*. Il exposait, en octobre 1974, à la Galerie Bernard-Desroches et il prépare pour cette même galerie, en décembre 1975, une exposition de quinze dessins-poèmes au crayon de sépia et de pierre noire Conté. Le Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal lui a commandé une murale, le *Palais des temps*, polyptique de cinq panneaux juxtaposés de six pieds sur deux, soit d'une dimension totale de six pieds sur dix.

l'autre, croissent comme une forêt vierge. Mais, dans ce gouffre végétal, tout est spirituel, tant la joie de la conquête d'un espace irradié. Les tableaux de la même période comme *L'Ange des moissons* (1973), *L'Envers de l'eau* (1973) et *Voyage vers Amsterdam* (1973), plus paisibles, révèlent la lumière qui monte du cœur. Jérôme respire par ses formes, ses couleurs, comme on respire le bleu du ciel, le vert du feuillu, le frémissement ou le silence de l'eau.

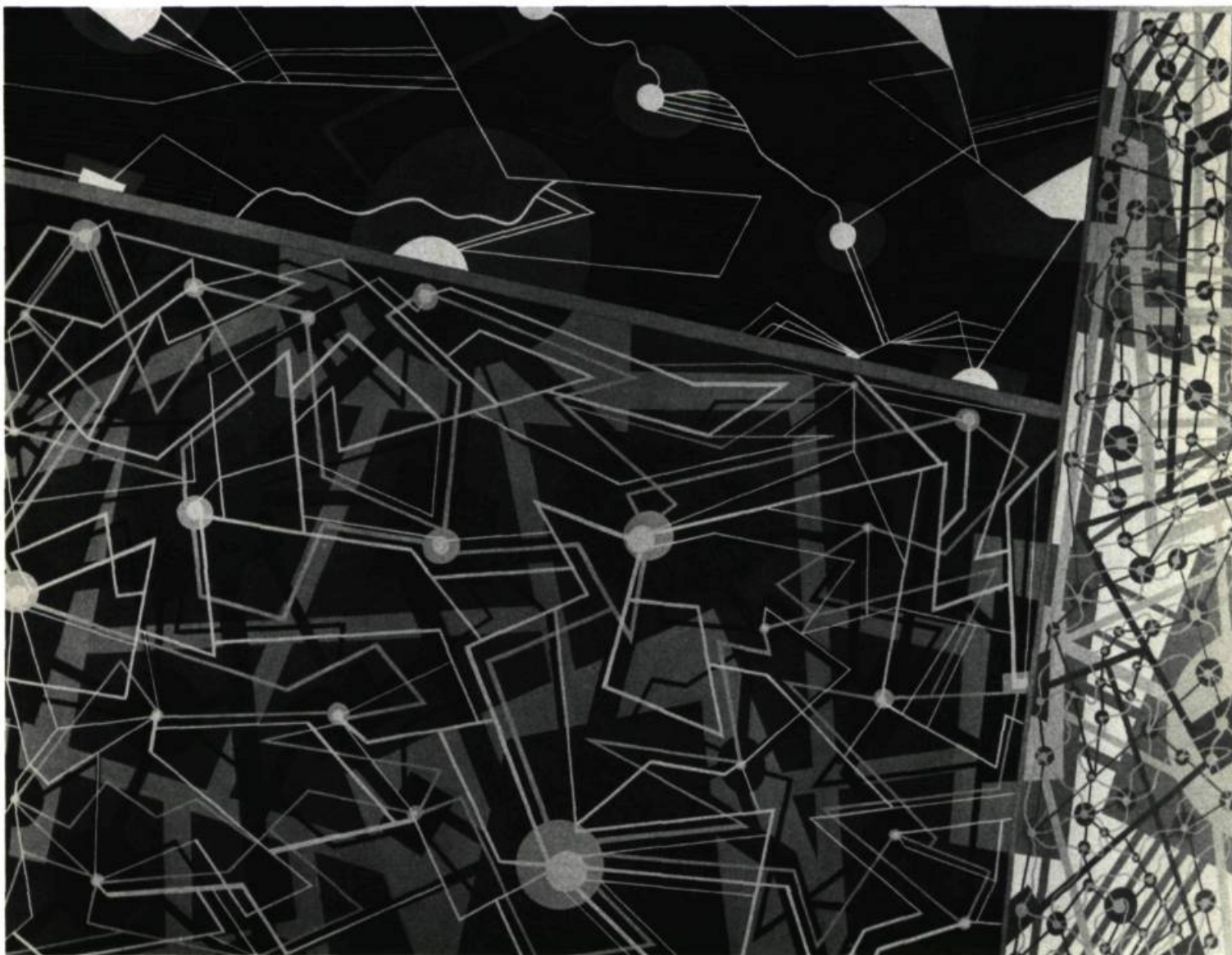
Le dessin est tellement spontané dans cette série d'œuvres, où le végétal et l'organique dévorent tout l'espace, que Jérôme tentera d'échapper à ce «piège de la réalité» (Bazaine). Seul Dieu doit savoir dessiner, disait Chagall. Délaissant l'organique, Jérôme s'applique avec la même liberté à manifester l'organisé. Dans chaque partie du tableau, il commence par construire un grand réseau de base constitué uniquement de droites. Durant cette période, il abandonne la courbe. Les *Séquences de ciel* (1973) sont très significatives. Aucune courbe. Et déjà la fenêtre grise, par son silence, annonce *Mécanique céleste* (1974). Jérôme se bat contre son don pour la courbe ou la sinieuse. D'autres réseaux de droites se super-

posent, s'enchevêtrent, s'imposent, qui nous laissent en suspens, dérouterés. Il lui suffira, dans les *Grimpeurs* (1973), de concevoir des zones verticales se rejoignant au delà de la toile, de laisser monter quelques traces modulantes, pour que le vertige ascensionnel nous entraîne dans l'indicible. *Grimpeurs*, *Le Randonneur* (1973) et *Le Sud belliqueux* (1974) sont bien des fêtes, des états de possession où la joie pénètre tout comme une eau tellurique.

En 1972, les limites du lin n'étaient pas encore franchies. A partir de *Séquences de ciel*, le rideau de lin est coupé. Les formes se prolongent d'un espace à l'autre, sont assourdies ou éclatent. On verra, dans les *Grimpeurs* (diptyque), un trait parcourir les quatre parties du panneau de droite. Et dans *Matin de lumière*, la ligne de lin devient une piste qui traverse les volets et le panneau central, répartit l'espace, équilibre les sphères. Dans les œuvres plus récentes (*Matin de lumière*, et autres) les sphères glissent dans le feutré, comme voilées par une membrane de lumière mate. Ainsi après l'explosion des formes dans *Le Jardin de la licorne* et dans *Apollon*, Jérôme n'entend plus que la lenteur de quelques sphères qui

1. Jean-Paul Jérôme, juin 1974, Montréal.

2. *Apollon*, 1974.
Acrylique sur toile de lin; 89 cm. x 116.
Coll. Fernand Ouellette.





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3. *Haut pays*, 1974.
Acrylique sur toile de lin; 61 cm. x 183.

4. *Le Jardin de la licorne*, 1973.
Triptyque; Acrylique sur toile de lin;
390 cm. x 97.

5. *Musique pour Neige*, 1972.
Acrylique sur toile de lin; 81 cm. x 100.
Coll. Fernand Ouellette.



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passent dans le bleu ou le vert. Le silence lui-même se met à vibrer. On peut déjà prévoir un autre cycle, où la richesse du peintre, sa passion des formes se déchaîneront dans de multiples fugues, dans l'ivresse de son *Hymne à la joie*.

Comme je le disais plus haut, Jean-Paul Jérôme est d'abord un plasticien. Sur ce plan, c'est vraiment un peintre de synthèse. Il rassemble dans son œuvre toutes les acquisitions de l'art dit abstrait ou non figuratif. Certes son originalité est puissante. A première vue, même, il ne semble pas avoir de racines. Cependant, il appartient bien à un arbre de peintres où l'on pourrait mentionner Braque, Gris, Matisse, Mondrian, Malévitch, Magnelli, Léger ou Mortensen (qu'il a connu à Paris). Sur le plan pictural, marqué par la couleur des Flamands, il a su prendre la leçon de Mondrian, qui a *nettoyé* l'espace. Bien que ne peignant que par aplats, il a pu éviter l'ornemental dont se méfiait tant Kandinsky. La profondeur de sa spiritualité est telle que Jérôme peut se passer d'une matière trop présente, trop accentuée.

Il accorde des tons sourds, des formes, sans jamais appeler à sa rescousse la matière. Un peintre comme Fernand Toupin, son ami, qui se situe à l'antipode de Jérôme, se dépouille tant des formes et des lignes, qu'il n'a besoin que d'un peu de matière imprégnée de lumière et d'ombre sur une surface blanche, en sollicitant à peine la couleur, pour que le choc se produise. Il n'y a pas de peintres plus complémentaires, qui à eux seuls nous proposent les deux pôles de la peinture d'aujourd'hui.

L'imagination de Jérôme est débordante. Il est en pleine force créatrice, possédant son métier comme nul autre. Toutefois, il n'a jamais besoin de *séduire*. Cette œuvre difficile, dissonante parfois, est l'anti-séduction! En ce sens Jérôme entre en peinture par la porte étroite. Aucune concession. Nul n'a un regard plus innocent. Il a la rigueur d'Uzac traçant des sillons ou sculptant l'ardoise. Voilà des artistes qui répondent au Désir, qui n'écoutent que l'œil secret. Si nous ne savions pas ce qu'est la peinture, il faudrait nous tourner vers Jérôme. Nulle part, il n'y a plus de liberté et d'au-

thenticité. Il faut bien dire qu'il n'y a pas de commune mesure entre le langage des mots et cette œuvre, ces surfaces où la musique emporte tout. On ne peut, à vrai dire, rien communiquer de cet univers. Comment saisir l'eau dans ses doigts, ou le soleil par ses yeux? Aucune peinture, pourtant si près de la nature, ne se soumet plus précisément à ses propres lois, qui sont d'un autre ordre. La peinture n'obéit qu'à son besoin d'être. Aussi n'exige-t-elle pas de sujet ou d'objets. Elle a faim de l'espace, des tonalités, des accords et des mouvements. Elle ne peut que se donner à la contemplation des formes et se laisser frapper par l'illumination. Il faut surtout au peintre beaucoup d'innocence pour que tous les possibles apparaissent. Le peintre doit être dans l'attente des possibles. Et lorsqu'on médite sur un tableau de Jérôme avec des yeux vierges, on *voit* que tout est possible. Dans une pareille peinture, c'est la vie elle-même qui toujours palpète, toujours *vivante*, dans un lieu infini.

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TEXTS IN ENGLISH

JEAN-PAUL JÉRÔME PAINTER OF COMMUNICATION

By Fernand OUELLETTE

*What always saved me was that
I never knew what I wanted.*
BRAQUE.

There is no more profound reason for confronting canvas than responding to Desire, to the necessity of the lofty music of the human being. If we wished to convince ourselves of this, the single work *Apollon* (1974) would be enough to seize our gaze. One cannot follow a trail without giddiness. Jérôme plunges us right into a labyrinth. He captures visible light the better to abandon us to invisible light. The great black resonance permeates us. The *Novalisian night* resounds like a summons. The earthly tissue of greenery, of solid brown, of love dense as a high vintage wine, of traces of fine blue, can only prepare the eye for the illuminating passage from gray to bold white, and what a violent vibration this is! but in order the better to lose it, and in order that the eye should go, bewildered, into the abyss that black opens. Reversing a remark by Dufy, one might say that there are black backgrounds, equal in value to absolute white. "But we come too late, friend. Yes, the gods live. But up there, on our foreheads, in the heart of another world." (Hoelderlin). When he superimposes labyrinths, Jérôme sweeps us along into the *elsewhere* of the gods.

Fundamentally, Jean-Paul Jérôme is a painter of communication. In this sense, there is no sensitivity more modern. When he paints he drifts, he rambles (how should he know what will arise?), but this very wandering is possible only through the networks, the many systems he establishes as he proceeds with a sure instinct. Two triangles are sometimes joined by cycles of parallels. A sphere is connected to a triangle by two bridges. Taut forms, shaken by attraction, are related by one, two or many lines. With this artist, all geometry is mobile. This goes from the complexity of *Haut Pays* (1974) to *Matin de lumière* (1974), where, in a blue triptych, spheres slowly drift while attracting each other.

If one can say that in the passion for perfection that distinguishes Jérôme, in his patience, one feels the presence of the long tradition of European painting, one can also add that this painter of expanding galaxies and of molecules certainly has the generosity and the openness of American painting. A painter of forms rather than of gesture or sign, he pursues in solitude the work of profound study undertaken by marvellous illuminators and the miniaturists of the Middle Ages.

Let us consider a few picture painted since 1972. Upon glancing at the series of Saint-Ours canvases (1972), we see that movement and form predominate. The black stroke expands, develops a form (as in Atlan's work), defines clear zones. The linen canvas (for Jérôme always paints on a raw linen canvas) reduces the too vivid leaps from black to white. In this way, the repercussion is only stronger. Then come big surfaces with pure forms such as *Nocturne* (1972-1974), *Essor* (1972) and *Musique pour Neige* (1972). In the last one, for example, Jérôme begins by dividing space, as if he needed windows. This division will support his whole composition. Each window breathes in tonalities. The weave itself widens more or less. The encircled parts have a visible

autonomy, although they remain in correspondence with each other. Jérôme lets the black lines run free. Acute angles appear. The graphism resembles the visible threads of a vast, invisible aviary, as if the painter wanted to prevent his so light forms from flying away. But this black net modulates like music. Who is more of a musician? What tenderness in *Musique pour Neige*, what courtesy toward Woman. No one is more secretly admiring of the feminine enclosed in this canvas. (Schubert accompanies it with his wounded heart in the andantino of *Sonata for Piano in A Major*.) No picture makes us understand better to what point Jérôme is a plastician.

This surface of clean forms (this sky of big birds) will become more and more organic, plant-like, delirious, to reach its peak in *Le Jardin de la licorne* (1973), a large triptych in which the mystery, the profusion and the completion of the forms astound. Worlds call each other, feed each other, grow like a virgin forest. But, in his vegetable chasm the joy of the conquest of a space is so great that it irradiates and all is spiritual. The works of the same period as *L'Ange des moissons* (1973), *L'Envers de l'eau* (1973) and *Voyage vers Amsterdam* (1973), more peaceful, reveal the light that rises from the heart. Jérôme breathes through his forms, his colours, as one breathes the blue of the sky, the green of foliage, the shimmering or the silence of water.

The drawing was so spontaneous in this series of works where the plant-like and the organic devour all the space that Jérôme would try to escape this "trap of reality" (Bazaine). "Only God must know how to draw", said Chagall. Forsaking the organic, Jérôme applied himself with the same freedom to demonstrating the organized. In each part of the picture, he began by building a big basic network made up solely of straight lines. During this period he abandoned the curve. The *Sequences de ciel* (1973) are very significant. No curve at all. And already, by its silence, the gray window foretells *Mécanique céleste* (1974). Jérôme struggles against his gift for the curve or the sinuous. Other networks of straight lines are superimposed, become entangled, command attention, and leave us in suspense, confused. It would suffice him, in *Grimpeurs* (1973), to conceive vertical zones joined beyond the canvas, to allow some modulating traces to rise, in order that ascensional dizziness should involve us in the indescribable. *Grimpeurs*, *Le Randonneur* (1973) and *Le Sud belliqueux* (1974) are certainly celebrations, states of possession in which joy penetrates everything like telluric water.

In 1972, the limits of canvas had not yet been crossed. From *Séquences de ciel*, the curtain of linen is abandoned. Forms are carried from one space to the other, are subdued or explode. We would see in *Grimpeurs* (diptych), a stroke travel through the four parts of the panel on the right. And in *Matin de lumière*, the line of the weave becomes a trail that crosses the volets and the centre panel, distributes the space, balances the spheres. In the more recent works (*Matin de lumière* and others) spheres slide in the half light, as if veiled by a membrane of dull light. Thus, after the explosion of forms in *Le Jardin de la licorne* and in *Apollon*, Jérôme no longer hears anything but the slowness of some spheres which pass in blue or green. Silence itself begins to vibrate. We can already foresee another cycle, where the richness of the painter and his passion for forms will break forth in many fugues, in the intoxication of his Hymn to Joy.

FIRST COMERS . . . AND OTHERS

By Andrée PARADIS

It cannot be denied, if we believe we are living in a democracy, that culture, including counter-culture and new culture, are to be reckoned among fundamental rights. To reduce democracy to its essential characteristics is to establish the relationship between individual and State. Under democracy, the individual is more important than the State. Society is made for man, not man for Society. The State must put within the reach of every person under its jurisdiction, wherever that person may be, the required educative, cultural and other tools necessary to his happiness and his full development.

Democracy is opposed to racism, to a totalitarian rule; it believes in a "strange quality of man", in his poetic capacity, in his mystery. A democracy worthy of the name admits not only that men are born and live as equals, but that they are capable of special characteristics. It encourages their own choice of lifestyle in a régime that contains supple and varied methods of action.

Democracy goes far in its respect for man; in return, it expects than man should go far in the direction of responsibility and solidarity, as "under democracy, man is valued through his natural, immediate, naïve quality rather than through what he acquires". It gives him the means of acquiring, but does not demand great knowledge. The first comer lives in a process of culture as well as the scholar or the artist, with this difference, that in general he does not know it. To try to convince him of it, to speak to him of his real attainments, risks frustrating him temporarily, but the slow advancement of a civilization does not occur otherwise. To such an extent have we botched the idea of culture, which is above all a state of mind, an attitude of thought and of the senses, so much have we confused it with cultural tools offered as privileges of the élite, that we must not be surprised to see a barrier raised against culture. The phenomenon is international; it is, however, stronger and more aggressive in young countries that have little traditional culture.

Within this confrontation between counter-culture and new culture and traditional culture, bubbles of "creation" are fermenting. This new action-phase seems to be going toward commitment and awareness. It remains for well-rounded minds to develop exact thoughts! It remains also to improve the quality of the surrounding milieu, without faltering.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

As I have said above, Jean-Paul Jérôme is first a plastician. In this regard, he is truly a painter of synthesis. He gathers together in his work all the attainments of so-called abstract or figurative art. Certainly he exhibits a powerful originality. At first sight, even, he seems not to have any roots. However, he really belongs to a group of artists among whom we might mention Braque, Gris, Matisse, Mondrian, Malévitch, Magrelli, Léger or Mortensen (whom he knew in Paris). With regard to the pictorial, having been marked by the colouring of the Flemish, he was able to understand the work of Mondrian, who *cleaned* space. Although he painted only in flat tints, he was able to avoid the decorative that Kandinsky mistrusted so much. The depth of Jérôme's spirituality is such that he is able to do without too present or too much emphasized a material. He reconciles dull tones and forms without ever calling on the material to support him. A painter like his friend, Fernand Toupin, who is the opposite of Jérôme, casts aside forms and lines to such a degree that he needs only a little material impregnated with light and shadow on a white surface, hardly making use of colour, for the shock to be produced. There are no painters more complementary, who by themselves alone present to us the two poles of contemporary painting.

Jérôme's imagination brims over. He is full of creative force, possessing his craft like no other. Yet, he never needs to *seduce*. This difficult art, sometimes discordant, is the antithesis of seduction! In this sense Jérôme enters painting by the narrow door. He makes no concession. No one has a more innocent look. He has the severity of Uzac tracing grooves or sculpting slate. These are artists who respond to Desire, who listen only to the secret eye. If we did not know what painting is, we would have to turn to Jérôme. Nowhere is there more freedom and authenticity. It must be said that there is no common ground between the language of words and this production, these surfaces where music prevails over everything. To tell the truth, one can communicate nothing of this universe. How can one seize water in his fingers, or the sun through his eyes? No painting, however close to nature, submits more precisely to its own laws, which are of another order. Painting obeys only its need to exist. Thus it demands neither subject or objects. It has a hunger for space, for tonalities, for harmony and for movement. It can only give itself up to the contemplation of forms and allow itself to be struck by illumination. A great deal of innocence is necessary in a painter in order that all the possibilities should appear. The painter must be in a state of waiting for possibilities. And when we meditate on one of Jérôme's pictures with fresh eyes, we see that everything is possible. In such a painting, it is life itself that always palpitates, always *alive*, in an infinite space.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

FIVE NOTES ON BURNE-JONES

By Jean-Loup BOURGET

Together with William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) is the principal representative of the second-generation Pre-Raphaelites, those who rejected Holman Hunt's moral-

istic naturalism in favour of the decorative symbolism practised by Rossetti. Burne-Jones' reputation as a leading artist reached its height at the end of the 19th century and subsequently declined. In more recent years, the fashion for Art Nouveau and the research into its origins, as well as the general revival of interest in painting inspired by poetry and literature, have reestablished Burne-Jones as an artist of the first rank. A retrospective of his work is to be shown at the Hayward Gallery, London¹.

1. The Love of Opposites

One of Burne-Jones' most famous canvases is at the Tate Gallery in London. It is *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* (1884). Painted in rather muted shades of brown, it might well escape the eye of the casual visitor, inattentive to the systematic series of oppositions in its basic structure. Firstly, the title itself implies a two-fold opposition which is made explicit by the two main figures: King vs. Beggar Maid. This again has the double articulation of Powerful vs. Humble (or Rich vs. Poor) and Masculine vs. Feminine. But the actual position of the characters in the picture reverses this relationship and makes the King subject to the Beggar Maid: Low vs. High. In terms of physical appearance, the following antinomies may be observed:

Maturity	vs. Youth
Dark hair	vs. Blond hair (contrary to the evidence of Tennyson's poem)
Olive skin	vs. Fair complexion
Beard	vs. Smooth-skinned
Clothing	vs. Nudity
Armour	vs. Dress

In compositional terms, we may add:

Profile	vs. Full face
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The Beggar Maid has a bunch of anemones in her right hand, while the King is holding his crown on his knees:

Crown	vs. Bouquet
Precious stones	vs. Flowers

a contrast which is also that of

Inorganic	vs. Organic
Culture	vs. Nature

The lower right-hand corner of the painting contains a further royal accessory: the spear and the shield (mechanical or cultural). Symmetry is obtained by the branches and the fruit (lemon-)trees in the upper left-hand corner: organic, Nature. The two page boys reading the musical score (above left) provide formal contrasts which seem unimportant but which echo the texture of the whole and the opposition between the two main characters:

Red hair	vs. Dark hair (the colours of the King/Beggar Maid relation are inverted)
Red clothing	vs. Green clothing (complementary colours)

Below, however, the sofa-cushions reverse this contrast:

Green cushion	vs. Red cushion
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The spear-shaft (lower right) is red in opposition to its green pennant. Even the strap of the shield is green on one side, red on the other. Above right, a landscape (Nature) and an Oriental carpet (Culture/Civilization) are juxtaposed. Three purple anemones from the Beggar Maid's bouquet lie scattered on the steps, repeating the Nature motif (wild flowers) vs. Culture (the very elaborate décor). At the same time, the bas-reliefs 'moving' in and out between the figures represent stylized animals, oriental in inspiration, an indication perhaps of a synthesis between Nature and Art.

This rapid examination would appear to

establish two things. Firstly, it seems clear that Burne-Jones' figurative technique functions according to a basic antinomy, a series of opposites, which far from being fortuitous, is quite systematic. Furthermore, that these oppositions are in no way dynamic (which also explains why they are not more immediately apparent). They express juxtapositions, rather than the conflicting elements of a potential synthesis. The formal contrasts are present (composition, colour), but instead of clashing, they balance each other. The same is true of the quasi-ideological oppositions. Temporal power and material wealth are, as it were, counterbalanced by moral subordination expressed in terms of space. Conversely, the Beggar Maid's "elevated" position compensates for her lowly rank.

A look at Burne-Jones' work as a whole provides ample confirmation of this preliminary evidence. At the outset one is struck by the number of pictures centred around two characters. A selection of the titles given to the artist's treatments of some of his favourite themes will illustrate this: religious subjects such as *The Annunciation* (implicit are the Virgin and the Angel; cf. in particular, the 1876-79 version at Port Sunlight) or *St. George and the Dragon* (1868, Walthamstow), profane subjects such as *The Idyll* (1862, Birmingham), mythological subjects like *Pan and Psyche* (1869-74, Cambridge, Mass.) or *Merlin and Vivien* (1870-74, Port Sunlight), allegorical ones, for example *Love and the Pilgrim* (1896-97, Tate Gallery). (Rossetti, on the other hand, tended to prefer either the one-figure composition or the very "peopled" one.) A study of these pictures shows the same series of oppositions which were pointed out in the case of *King Cophetua*:

— Natural oppositions	
Masculine	vs. Feminine
Dark hair	vs. Blond or red hair
— Spatial oppositions	
Low	vs. High
Profile	vs. Full face
— Cultural oppositions	
Clothing	vs. Nudity
Breast-plate	vs. Rag
— Symbolic oppositions	
Earth	vs. Water (or Air)
Rocks	vs. Grass (cf. <i>Pan and Psyche</i>)
Culture (musical instruments, books) vs. Nature (branches, rose-bushes)	
— Colour oppositions	

The frequent opposition (but one absent from *King Cophetua*) of the natural and the supernatural should also be noted. Thus, in *The Annunciation*, the Virgin (Nature) vs. the Angel (Supernatural). In *The Depth of the Sea* (1887, Cambridge, Mass.), a siren (Supernatural) drags a poor mortal down into her green and watery kingdom. The *Merciful Knight* (Nature) kneels in front of Christ on the Crucifix (Supernatural), [1863, Birmingham]. Love (Angel = Supernatural) guides the pilgrim. In series of paintings, the oppositions can be seen to be reversed: in the *Pygmalion* series (1878, Birmingham), Pygmalion initially represents Nature and Galatea is the (inorganic) statue. Then Pygmalion is made subject to Galatea (the Supernatural). However, in each individual picture, these oppositions are not ones of real antagonism. In a subtle way, they complement each other, like mutual reflections in a mirror or still water.

2. Sleep

Burne-Jones' universe is characterized by his fixed antinomies. Attention has frequently been drawn to his love of the Sleeping Beauty theme