PAULGAUGUIN AS IMPRESSIONIST PAINTER - A CRITICAL STUDY

DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
Master of Fine Art
(M. F. A.)

BY

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ALIGARH (INDIA)

1997
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
Dedicated to My Parents
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Miss Sabiya Khatoon of Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) has completed her dissertation entitled "PAUL GAUGUIN AS IMPRESSIONIST PAINTER - A CRITICAL STUDY", under the supervision of Prof. Ashfaq M. Rizvi and Co-Supervision Dr. (Mrs.) Sirtaj Rizvi, Reader, Department of Fine Arts.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the work is based on the investigations made, data collected and analysed by her and it has not been submitted in any other University or Institution for any Degree.

15th MAY, 1997
ALIGARH

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I immensely obliged to my Supervisor Prof. Ashfaq Rizvi whose able guidance and esteemed patronage the dissertation would be given final finishing. Honestly speaking I have no works to express my thanks to my Co-supervisor Dr. (Mrs.) Sirtaj Rizvi who gave the full co-operation and suggestion time to time and encouraged me in completion of my work.

Initially my thanks are due to the Chairperson Mrs. Seema Javed for her affectionate cooperation.

It would be burden on my conscience and mind if I fail to express my sincere sense of gratefulness to Mr. M.A. Khan who have helped me in collecting information pertinent to my topic. I would like to extend my thanks to the Director of National Gallery Modern Art and other staff who have directly or indirectly helped in collecting information.

I will feel guilty if I fail to express my thanks to Maulana Azad Library Staff who have kindly provided me a reference material.

Above all I would like to express my thanks to my teachers and other department staff who have helped me and without their contribution. I would not be successful in
my work. I am thankful to Nadeem, Ilma, Taskeen and Reshma without their help my work would have been incomplete.

I am also thankful to my guardian Mohd. Ashfaq Khan, S.M. Alvi who has helped me by all means throughout my dissertation work.

I thanks all once again.

(SABIYA KHATOON)
CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

NEO-IMPRESIONISM
Impressionism: A variety of naturalism which depicts objectively the world of ephemeral appearance or the effort to present a general impression of an incident, a view or an object, rather than to record it in detail, to paint what the eye sees at a glance. Ideally the doctrine requires an objective attitude with no personal comments, no alteration, or exaggeration of the record of instantaneous vision for the sake of design or personal self-expression, normally the attention of the artist is concentrated upon superficial appearances, as opposed to inner structure of forms or events, which distinguishes impressionism from Abstraction. Specifically impressionism implies the study of light reflecting on surfaces as exemplified in the work of Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, et al., in the late 19th century French paintings.

Around 1850 a number of these younger painters left Paris to paint with "new eyes", in the open air (plein air in French). They wanted to discard all pre-conceived notions of what a picture "must look like", and did the unprecedented thing: they actually worked in the fields or at street corners, and attempted to paint what they saw - not what the Academy taught they ought to see.
They were, thus, searching for a reality not seen before them by the painters who had painted their canvases in the gloomy interior of their studios. And in this sense it is correct to say that impressionism is realism. But this is only a partial truth.

**Neo Impressionism:**

Confusion and lack of direction are the keynotes of the post-impressionist world. Once the rules and canons of academic painting had been thrown overboard, and the artist gained a liberty unknown hitherto, the way became open for a kind of individualism never before known in the history of painting. "I paint what I will" is the leading motto of the numerous schools that sprung up during the last sixty years or so; and where as in all former periods there always existed a style characteristic of that period, and instantly recognizable, now for the first time in the history of painting there is no style of which one could say: "Twentieth century style", as one could talk of "Sixteenth century Flemish" or "Seventeenth century Dutch" painting. There are dozens of style,¹ and one could enumerate at least

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¹ The best known are: impressionism, neo-impressionism, futurism, dada, art nouveau, Jugendstel, secession, fauves, constructivism, verism, surrealism, abstraction, neo-primitivism, supermatism, automatism, tachism.
eight major "school" in the first half of the 20th century.

And yet, on closer examination, one discovers at least one leading point of view that is common to all these tendencies: it is the artist's definite intention to create a new world - justified entirely by aesthetic standards, and not by its likeness to the extraneous, observed world. Realism is now left to the photographic camera and the colour film. The artist is not here to depict what his eyes see. He wants to make images: new ones.

The process of liberation is gradual, and many of the painters of the 19th century, who started as impressionists, turn to original conceptions, and depart from the principles of the found PAUL GAUGUIN (1848-1903) leaves France for the South Sea island in search for exotic themes, strange symbols of life, passion, fertility, delight and sin, and the blazing colours of the tropics. But in this process the discovers simplification. No more does he build up the colour on his canvas by many little strokes of the brush; large expanses of brilliant tints dominate his work, and what is blue he will paint very blue, and what is red, he will paint the BRIGHTEST of red, reducing shading often to almost nothing. With a sensuousness that extends from beautiful brown bodied women to the
passion for gorgeous colours, he fills his canvases with an exoticism that is much more inside his own vision than in the South Sea islands on which he lived.

TWO TAHI\TIAN WOMEN ON THE BEACH, painted in 1891, is full of these simplifications, in the dresses of the two girls or in the treatment of the sea, and the blazing red of the girl's dress at the back is emphasized by the contrasting, bright white flowers of the cloth. In another painting of his, TWO TAHI\TIAN WOMEN WITH MANGOES, both are naked to the waist, and their beautiful breasts have nipples of the same colour as the mangoes; in other paintings he introduces South Sea idols and spirits that watch what the mortals are doing. And all these symbols take on an intense emotional content, combined with the beauty of these large-handed, large-footed, broad-chested primitive people, in which Gauguin found some primordial strength, some natural, hidden force that he missed in the streets of Paris.

Nevertheless, other painters in France and Germany did not have to travel to the islands of the Pacific. They found exoticism inside themselves.

Gauguin died in 1903, and so did a number of other famous painters of his generation. By 1906 the visitors to the Paris Salon (French name of an annual exhibition) were confronted with paintings by the "Fauves" the "savage
beasts", who carried Gauguin's love of wild colours even further. They were by that time influenced by a growing school of German painters too, for the Russian-born Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) settled in German, opened a school as early as 1902, and before him were several great painters, among them Edward Munch (1863-1944) one of the true pioneers of expressionism. School after school arises in these crucial years, between 1903 and 1914, in Germany we have the two powerful, revolutionary groups, "Die Brucke" and "Der Blaue Reiter" ("The Bridge" and The Blue Rider"), whilst the Fauves of Paris are soon in the battlefield with half a dozen other groups that include the cubists, the dadaists and the neo-primitives.

Perhaps the best way to visualize the transition from impressionism and Gauguin's brave new world to the gradually growing abstractionism is to look carefully at a painting by the still living German painter, Prof. Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, entitled LOFTHUS painted as early as 1911. In this Norwegian landscape simplification has been carried on in two directions: all unnecessary detail in the drawing has been eliminated, in order to make the large masses the more prominent, and all colour has been reduced to the most powerfully concentrated tints, with practically
no attempt at shading; intense black outlines emphasize the design. The result is an almost passionate conception of patches of colour; no whittling down here of these boldly laid on areas of orange, deep blue, sap green and cadmium yellow: the artist now does not paint what he carefully observes, with meticulous truthfulness, but catches the ESSENCE of a vision, and translates it into a design that pleases his senses. This is a long way from Pissarro or Manet, and a considerable step even beyond Gauguin. We must first distinguish between the art and the legend. To understand perhaps millions of people, the name of Gauguin signifies something typical, even something heroic. He is the stockbroker, the ordinary middle-class salaried man, who threw up a good job to devote his whole time to 'art'. More than that, he is the artist who revolted against the ugliness and deceptiveness of modern civilization and went to the South Seas, to warmth and colour, innocence and naivete. Novels and plays, and biographies that read like novels, have been written round his romantic life-story, until the facts, which are not quite so romantic, have been forgotten. So ubiquitous is this legend, so answering to some deeplonging in our breasts, that the paintings to which Gauguin devoted all his energies and all his thoughts, no

3. Naivete The Simplicity.
longer seem, to exist in their own rights, but seem to have become part of the inconography of the legend.

The Revolutionary Artist, held in suspicion and ridiculed both by the crowd and the expert, who in revenge isolates himself from the society he disapproves, is a recent figure. He appeared only towards the end of the 19th century. Up till then, despite their struggles and hard times those artists who attained celebrity were somehow linked with their epoch. This was seen not only in the official consecration of their talents but also by the careful way in which the greatest artists sought the approval of their contemporaries. Both Ingres and Delacroix were decorated. The case of Stendhal, writing only to be read in 1930, was exceptional. What was important in this situation was not that Balzac failed to be elected to the Academy but that he should have stood. In so far as the facts concern the personal character of Gauguin we may be tempted to exercise our moral judgement. Gauguin deliberately deserted his wife and four young children, left them to fend for themselves as best they might, and for twenty years remained in different to their fate. That is the brutal aspect of the facts. There is, however, another aspect. Once his decision was made,

5. Ingres - A right of entering.
Gauguin made no concessions to himself. All his property, including the proceeds of the choice collection of pictures he had made, he gave to his wife. He loved his children so much so that he took his eldest son, Clovis, to share his poverty in Paris - perhaps, from the point of view of the child, not the kindnest thing he could have done. In Tahiti he kept a Journal for his daughter Aline, and when she died his grief was expressed in two letters to his wife, one so bitter that she destroyed it, the other sentimental enough to have survived 'I have lost my daughter, I no longer love God. Like my mother, she was called Aline - everyone loves after his own fashion, for some love is exalted in the presence of death, for others .... I don't know.

Egoism it undoubtedly was, and nothing was ever to move Gauguins from the dedication of his life to what he conceived to be an end justifying the renunciation of all human bounds. such fanaticism in another milien is held to be saintly, and though from a religious point of view there could be no greater heresy, GAUGUIN HAD SUBSTITUTED THE LOVE OF BEAUTY FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, AND HIS LIFE ONLY MAKES SENSE WHEN THIS IS REALISED. Nevertheless, when he made his

6. Tahiti.

great decision he was actuated, not only by a blind faith in his own destiny, but by a confident hope that once all his time and energy were devoted to painting, his reputation would be secured, his paintings would sell, and he would still be able to support his family. But, of course, his paintings did not sell - he was merely able to produce more and not necessarily better unsaleable paintings. His savings disappeared in eight months. He retreated to Copenhagen, to sponge on his wife's parents for a year and a half. He made himself so disagreeable to everyone there that finally he had to return to Paris, where for six months he lived in conditions of terrible poverty and distress. The rest of his life is to be interpreted, not so much as a flight from civilization, but rather as a desperate search for the lowest possible cost of living. He went to Brittany, not because he had any love for the country or the seaside, but because he heard that at the pension of Marie-Jeanne Gloanac in Pont-Aven one could live for £2 or £3 a month. When he found that he could not earn even that small amount by his painting, he began to think of those tropical islands where the food grew on trees and where even clothing was not a necessity. 'May the day come, he wrote to his wife, 'and soon, when I shall go and busy myself in the woods of an island in Oceania, live there Joyfully and calmly with my art. Far from my family, far
from this European struggle for money. There, in Tahiti, I shall be able, in the silence of the lovely tropical nights, to listen to the soft murmuring music of the movements of my heart in loving harmony with the mysterious beings who surround me. True, at least, without money troubles, I shall be able to love, sing, and die...  

In undertaking his "search for the absolute" he was also opposed by his wife. Less constrained, without doubt, by moral contingencies than Balazac, that bourgeois, who in the conflict between the seeker and society had sided with the latter, the majority of contemporary critics have blamed the unhappy Mette. They reproach her for having refused Gauguin the moral, or for that matter, the financial help he required. But in fact if she was to be blamed, her guilt arose from lack of love rather than confidence, in this new man who revealed himself to her after eleven years of marriage. This situation is not so much that of Mette Gauguin, the uncomprehending wife of a masterly artist, as that of every woman whose husband, genius or not, leaves his home to devote himself to a task, whether or not its value justifies the sacrifice, for in the last analysis success is the only justification acknowledged. As a bad


painter Gauguin would have been called a scoundrel. But great painter that he is, he is considered a victim. And is it just to reproach his wife for not having realised that the man who had abandoned her was a genius, whom time alone would consecrate, when hardly anybody recognised him in his period own period, not even the Impressionists who were then the avant - garde?

It was with the Impressionists that Gauguin went to school, as others attend the academy. His first master was Pissarro. The Impressionists themselves allowed him to exhibit with them with some misgivings and despite the irritation of Monet, who refused to be hung in the company "Of the first dauber that came along." But from the very first stay in Brittany at Pout-Aven, Gauguin began to experiment in other directions and in 1886 Felix Feneon mentioned a picture of his of "a pear-tree which we regret to see executed in monochrome." From his journey to Martinique in 1887 he brought back a fresh vision and a new technique and cut himself off completely from the Impressionists whom he considered to be now just as academic as the official artists of the previous generation.

Gauguin himself was never fashionable this can be explained by the fact that the public, whose sensebility

10. Scoundrel - A rascal
11. A pear tree - Name of Tree
had not yet been acclimatised to the Impressionist vision, was unprepared to assimilate so rapidly a new stage in painting. But this is not quite the whole story. The real problem was that a completely new form of painting had arrived, and in this doubtless lies true reason for the misunderstanding of Gauguin's work.

Gauguin proposed the following ambitious programme. He was determined to break "the shackles of reality" and to make of nature something to utilise, rather than a model to imitate, and thus to liberate the artist by giving him the power to recreate the pictorial universe dominating his thought with the aid of elements divided according to an order and a hierarchy determined by himself. To a public whose ability to understand was hampered by a traditional education, Baudelaire had already formulated the rules of this programme. "Nature" he said, "is a dictionary --- the visible world is no more than a store house of images and signs, to which the imagination gives a place and a relative value". Thus the painting could be conceived following a voluntary and arbitrary logic, adhering only to the rules necessitated by the coherence of the work itself, and without obligatory reference to the indications of the real world. From this conception Gauguin derived those colours which so shocked his contemporaries. "Red Dog!" 12

exclaimed an English lady, horrified by the coloured indication used to represent a red dog, which was right in relation to the painted whole - what Gauguin called the Validity of the lie", although it would have been false in reality.

Hence also stem those deformations necessitated by the general rhythm and the proper distribution of tones, the principal of which, with the different interpretations of the various schools, has been that of contemporary painting as a whole. "There is," said Matisse, a "necessary proportion of tones which can induce me to modify the shape of a figure or transform my composition." The human body itself, in the same way as the vegetable world of the objects, acts only as an arabesque to reveal, or a weight to balance, the coloured equilibrium of the whole. Rich in possibilities though it is, for many this theory has proved dangerous. "What I have sought", wrote Gauguin, "is the right to attempt anything."

The decisive change in Gauguin's style - it is not too much to call is a transformation took place quite suddenly in the year 1888, and must be attributed to his meeting with a painter called Emile Bernard, already a friend of VanGogh and a young man of great charm, fine sensibility and prodigious intelligence. It has been argued that Gauguin had arrived at these principles before he came
under the influence of Benard, and certainly some of the pictures he painted in Marlinique in 1887 show a new emphasis on linear design a greater simplicity of composition and an increasing richness of colour. But they are still true to nature' - there is nothing schematic about them and no trace of the symbolism which makes a sudden appearance with paintings like THE YELLOW CHRIST\textsuperscript{13} and JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL\textsuperscript{14} painted in 1888 and 1889. There can be no doubt that the influence of Bernard on Gauguin was profound and decisive. It completely obliterated the influence of the impressionists. Pissarro's comment, in a letter to his son Lucien, is a sad recognition of this fact.

This was written in April 1891, about the time that Gauguin was embarking on the ship that was to take him to Tahiti; before, therefore, the characteristic work of Gauguin which would justify such criticism had been painted. But in paintings such as the portrait of his friend Meyer de Haan (Nirvame) 1890 - now in the Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, U.S.A.) and La Belle Angele (1889 - now in the Louvre) \textbf{HE HAD ALREADY REVEALED THE STYLE BASED ON THE NEW THEORY} and all that Tahiti was to add was a more exotic,

\textsuperscript{13} "The Yellow Christ". Painting of Gauguin, painted in 1888-1889.

\textsuperscript{14} "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel". Painting of Gauguin, painted in 1888-1889.
a more colourful subject matter.

It will be noticed that Pisarrow's criticism of Gauguin has two aspects - one is social and the other technical, and they remain the two aspects from which Gauguin's work can still be criticised. To what degree do we still feel them to be valid? There is no doubt that from the point of view of the 'SOCIALIST REALIST', GAUGUIN'S LATER WORK REPRESENTS A FLIGHT FROM REALITY; IT IS AN escapist art.

But I think it must be admitted that, on a large view of its history and development one of the functions of art is to be 'escapist'. The world is apt to be 'too much with us', and we retreat into day-dreaming or fantasy as a natural reaction. Such reactions have a therapeutic value, a biological functions; they are thus a part of the dialectical process of life itself. In this sense the landscapes of the gentle Pissarro are as much an 'escape' as the symbolic compositions of Gauguin. Gauguin's condemnation of modern society was as strong as Pissarro's and much more firecely expressed.

But the more serious criticism is the technical one. Pissarro was willing to accept the validity of a symbolic art, but the symbolism must be genuine (not taken over from past civilizations) because only a genuine symbolism could

15. Escape-symbolic Composition of Gauguin.
evoke in the painter the necessary 'sensations' - and without these sensations the painting would lack sensibility: it would be coarse and schematic. Admittedly Gauguin does not carry the research into the subtleties of sensation to the degree that Pissarro did, or Cezanne. That was not his aim.

A critic who in this respect was the most exacting I have ever known, the late SIR CHARLES HOLMES, ONCE PAINTED OUT THAT THE BEST OF GAUGUIN'S WORKS DO VERY MUCH MORE THAN COMBINE FORMIDABLE COLOUR WITH STRIKING AND AUDACIOUS DESIGN. They have real substance. The figures are admirably modelled in very low relief, and the paintings have a 'complex' underlying their outward pattern. They seem haunted by some spell of savage MAGIC AND MYSTERY, AN INDWELLING SPIRIT, WHICH IN THIS AGE OF THE SCEPTIC AND THE MATERIALIST IS NATURALLY SUSPECT. ... Nor is his colour as simple as it seems.

The intuitive philosophy, and literary and musical symbolism had substituted the exploration of an interior world where the spirit wanders amongst mysterious relationships and harmonies, for the realistic depiction of the visible and every day world. In such a vaguely defined world the painter had to face the danger of becoming literary. The Pre-Raphaelites succumbed, and Puvis de
Chavannes did not always resist the temptation. He employed the allegory, that is to say, an accepted and suitable symbol which could be understood more by reason than by intuition. Gauguin chose to transpose his sensations without recourse to this method, and by purely plastic means. He suggests, and to suggest is to play upon illusions and to find a means of permitting the expression, in signs perceivable in another language, of an image which may be imposed on the sensibility without the assistance of translation by means of reason. It was for this reason that so many poets and painters attached such importance to the music, which exerts its appeal in this fashion. Baudelaire had already noted the relationship existing between colours and feeling, and Gauguin himself, in describing a painting in which he desired to express the sensation of terror "without literary means, as in the past, "wrote" a hormony composed of sombreness, sadness and fear, producing an effect on the eye with, its violet, dull blue and orange yellow, analagous to the tolling of a funeral bell. "But this suggestion is not obtained through the application of a systematic code or by a measured symbolism of colour and lines - "Colour being enigomatic in the sensation which it gives us, it can logically only be used in an enigmatic fashion". "TO ACHIEVE THIS SAID"
MALLARME, "ONE MUST SUPPLEMENT EVERYTHING WHICH THE WORK CONTAINS IN POWER, WHILE PRESERVING ALL ITS MYSTERIES IN THEIR VIRTUAL CONDITION, AND NOT EXHAUSTING IT."  16

A work of art is a promise - and many see it only as a sketch - offered to the sensibility of the spectator. Its implications are only fully realised when it awakens an echo in him. "Does not the promise evoke mystery?" said Gauguin, "SINCE OUR NATURE DOES NOT ADMIT THE ABSOLUTE?"

The sense of mystery is the very basis of Gauguin's art. Since the beginning, since Brittany, it was always the same secret, that he tried not be decipher but to grasp as a question which admits no reply. The titles of certain of his canvases "D'OU' VENONS-NONS ON SOMMES - NONS, ON ALLOWS NONS?" indicate the tone of his work, where the general idea expressed would have bordered on the commonplace, if its plastic quality had not revealed. The artists's emotion before the enigma of Man and his Destiny. In Brittany, with the heavy sadness of the landscape, as in Oceania, with its dismal splendour, Gauguin was attracted by the primitive and timeless elements of the human being, or, put in another way, by the eternal elements, with his fears, his obsessions, and his beliefs, seen in their pure state.

16. 'Taralon Jean' "Gauguni's Painting's", London (Lindsay Drummonds), 1949, p.4.
In this Tahitian canvases no hint of joy crosses the faces darkened by who knows what thoughts of eternity. All is grave nobility and delight in the animal beauty of the naked body. All gestures are suspended in an immobility full of possibilities. A quality of silence lies heavily like anguish. Fear prowls through the thick undergrowth, or stands behind the stretched out woman who quivers with terror in the where disquietening shadows whisper. Everywhere invisible presences can be felt, hidden forces which man suddenly appear, breasts or gods, human forms who by an almost in apparent play of vision became strange, unreal creatures, beings inhabiting a world of apparitious and who shake off morality to become divine.

The rhythmical quality of Gauguin's compositions in perhaps obvious enough, but it is one more technical accomplishment and with the rest we have noted, disposes of the easy assumption that Gauguin was merely a 'literary' painter. Literary he certainly was - it was one of his deliberate aims to reinfuse painting with dramatic significance - but he never for got that the drama must have from as well as substance. That he was a 'decorative' painter must again be admitted, and no doubt some of his qualities would have been better applied to monumental art rather than to the confined space of the cabinet - picture.
CHAPTER - 2

LIFE SKETCH OF PAUL GAUGUIN
The picture of Gauguin can be pieced together from self-portraits and from letters, read in conjunction with one another; the painted and the written word help to bring alive a face that has been altered by the passage of time. His most recent biographers have discovered photographs, too, to assist us. The strongly modelled face, with its deep furrows, is the mirror of a personality which can never be completely disguised by the distortions and falsifications of a novel or a film.

His inner life, intense, rich, profound, was lived in far greater secrecy than one might gather from the famous and spectacularly violent episodes connected with it such as the extraordinary climax of his friendship with Van Gogh in Arles, when Van Gogh, without premeditation, sliced off his ear. More important facts about his life concern his vocation for the exotic, in life as in art, the building up of his personality as a superman, beyond all normal emotional and moral ties, his complete withdrawal from society and from his bourgeois background; the blindly egoistic choice of freedom and salitude inspired by his almost super human pride.

His taste for the exotic and for adventure began with the Voyages he made in his early youth. The sailor

1. Bourgeois - have not people in a society.
2. Voyages - A passage.
boy was running away from bourgeois civilization in search of the island of his dream, as earthly paradise created by his imagination. He dreamed of countries where time had stood still in some primordial age of truth and innocence, distant lands where he could leave his ship and find salvation.

In February 1889, in a letter to his wife, Gauguin gave the finishing touch to his ideal picture of himself by admitting that he had made the choice between his sensitive and his primitive nature and had chosen to follow the latter, which he maintained would allow him to progress firmly and without hesitation.

Paul Gauguin was born in Paris on 7 June 1848, the year of the second French Revolution; but when reaction took over again a little later, his father, a liberal journalist, had to go into exile. Paul Gauguin was three years old when his parents took him to Peru, the president of that country being a relative of his mother. The child's father died on the voyage, and his mother remained in Lima for only four years. Back in France the boy was raised in Orleans until, at seventeen, he went to see as an apprentice in the merchant marine and sailed back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean between Rio and Lettavre. After the French defeat in 1871, and the death of his mother he gave up the sea and took a position in a broker's office in Paris.
For eleven years Gauguin followed a successful business career. In 1873 he married a young Danish girl, leading with her and their children a pleasant, comfortable life. Occasionally, on Sundays, he painted as an amateur, though he was ambitious enough to send a landscape to the Salon of 1876. But, unwilling to follow academic precepts, Gauguin soon began to haunt exhibitions and art galleries. His amazing instinct immediately attracted him to the then still scorned and ridiculed works of the Impressionists, whose canvases he not only admired but also bought. It was not long until he became acquainted with Camille Pissarro, always easy to approach and ready to help beginners. Pissarro introduced him to Cezanne and Degas and arranged for Gauguin to show his timidly Impressionist paintings in the exhibitions of their group in 1880, '81, and '82. His body and soul now consecrated to painting, Gauguin no longer lived except during his hours of liberty from the office. Relying upon his modest savings and his lucky star, he suddenly decided in 1883 to abandon the bank and take up painting "every day". He moved with his wife and five children to Rouen, where Pissarro was then working, but

3. Amateur - A lover of any art.
4. Everyday - Painting of Gauguin.
soon found living there too expensive. Madame Gauguin was able to persuade him that an easier life awaited them in Denmark with her relatives. She hoped above all that the insistence of her family would induce her husband to resume his profitable business career. But the sojourn in Copenhagen turned out to be a complete failure. Gauguin was unsuccessful both as a representative for a commercial firm and as an Artist. An exhibition of his work was forced to close after only five days.

Discouraged and penniless, Gauguin left his family in Copenhagen and returned to Paris in the summer of 1885. He obtained employment as a billposter in Paris railway stations, but ill health forced him to stop work and spend several weeks in a hospital. Yet no misfortune, no poverty, could induce him to abandon his art. Early in 1886 he moved to the small village of Pont-Aven in Brittany, where he found peace, new subjects, and credit at the inn. When he returned to Paris late that same year, he met Vincent Van Gogh who greatly admired him. Overcome by an irresistible desire to escape, Gauguin resolved to leave for Martinique. First he landed in Panama and worked as a common laborer with the diggers of the Panama Canal, to earn his passage to the island. He immediately fell in love with the exotic beauty of Martinique and infused his Impressionist work with some of its tropical colors. But, unable to endure the
climate, he obtained passage home as a sailor and late in 1887 returned to France, sick and exhausted. Once more he went to live in Pont-Aven, where he soon met a young friend of Van Gogh's, Emile Bernard. Under his influence, he now gradually broke away from Impressionism and adopted a bolder style, some what inspired by Japanese prints, with radical simplifications of drawing brilliant, pure, bright colors, an ornamental character of composition, and willful flatness of planes - a style which he called Synthetism. At the insistence of Vincent Van Gogh, and with the financial help of Vincent's brother Theo, Gauguin left Pont-Aven in the fall of 1888 to join Van Gogh in Arles. But their divergent temperaments and opinions soon caused the two friends to quarrel violently. Van Gogh suffered a nervous breakdown, followed by an attack of insanity during which he threatened Gauguin's life. After Van Gogh had been taken in a serious condition to the public hospital in Arles, Gauguin left hurriedly for Paris, and thence again for Brittany.

Gauguin's new style attracted the attention of several young painters in Pont-Aven and he slowly gathered a small group of followers around him. Yet this modest success was not accompanied by any material benefits. The dreariness of his situation once more stirred in Gauguin the irresistible desire to seek out farewell lands, despite the failure of his trip to Martinique. At the end of 1890,
he went back to Paris to prepare for a voyage to Tahiti, dreaming of life under palm trees and a tropical sun.

Living in the Jungle of Tahiti, Gauguin set out to work feverishly, his imagination tremendously stimulated by his lovely and peaceful surroundings. His will to simplify forms as well as his arbitrary use of colors, combined with his literary aspirations, gave his work its decorative stamp. Thus the novelty of Gauguin's art consisted not only in his subjects, but also in his conception of these subjects, in his efforts to reconcile the barbarous character of Meori idols with the sensitivity of European artist.

After the first few months in Tahiti, Gauguin's enthusiasm was once more supplanted by bitter resignation, hunger and poverty again became his daily guests. He fell ill and spat alarming quantities of blood. Finally, in desperation, he begged to be taken home. The French government repatriated him in the summer of 1893. In Paris unexpected news awaited him an uncle in Orleans had left him a small legacy, and Gauguin was able to spend money liberally, if only for a short while. He held a comprehensive exhibition which met with little success, rented a large studio where he lived with an Indonesian girl, gave receptions, and undertook some short trips,

5. Desperation - Hopelessness
including one to Copenhagen. He spent the summer of 1894 once more in Pont-Aven, accompanied by his young mistress. Some slighting remarks addressed to the strange couple involved him in a brawl with several sailors during which his ankle was broken.

During his sleepless nights Gauguin now again abandoned himself to his favorite dream: life in the tropics. Inspite of his harassing experiences, of hunger and illness suffered in the South Seas, he decided to return there, this time forever. Disposing of everything he owned at public action (though he had to buy back most of his pictures so as not to let them go for ridiculous prices), Gauguin got ready to leave in the spring of 1895.

The fate that awaited him in Tahite was no more pleasant than the one he had met there before. He worked only between trips to the hospital, accumulated debts, was grief-stricken at the news of the death of his favorite child. Eventually in 1898 he went to hide himself in the mountains and attempted suicide, but unsuccessfully, even death did not want him. Meanwhile in Paris the dealer Ambraise Vollard began to take some interest in Gauguin's work, exhibited his paintings and offered him a contract which guaranted him at least the bare essentials of his frugal life. But now the painter began to quarrel with the
colonial administration until, after several more sojourns at the hospital, he sold his belongings in 1901 and lift Tahiti for the nearby insland of Hiva-Hoa.6

Gauguin began to think of returning to France when his health improved and he was able to paint more frequently. However, he still suffered from heart trouble and from eczema of his injured foot. Whenever he could not paint, he wrote his memoirs as well as acid letters to various local officials, one of whom brought suit against him. In January 1903, a cyclone destroyed his hut, in March he was condemned to several weeks in prison and found himself without means to go to Tahite for an appeal. Yet no appeal was necessary. The threat of imprisonment released him to death. Gauguin expired on May 8, 1903, lovely and heart-broken, far from his country, his family, his friends. But ever since, his paintings have asserted his powerful presence throughout the civilized world.

6. Hiva Hoa - Island near Tahiti.
Maurice Malingue, after years of research, has succeeded in correcting a series of fallacies about Gauguin's beginnings as a painter, and clearing away the legends which have grown up around these fallacies.

The second-class seaman, Paul Gaugin, who had left his ship on 23 April 1871, went straight to St Cloud to look for his mother's house, destroyed during the war; he found his sister Marie-Marcelline, who had been given a home by her teacher Gustave Arosa, with whom she stayed until her marriage in 1875. Arosa was passionately devoted to art and possessed a collection of paintings by Delacroix, Daumier, Courbet, Corot, Jongkind and Pissarro.

Gauguin was unemployed. Arosa's son-in-law got him a job with Bertin, a stockbroker, but his true vocation was painting. In fact by this time (1871) he had already begun to paint regularly, not intermittently like the usual 'Sunday painter'. There exists in Copenhagen, in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, a painting by him entitled House by a Lake painted in oils on paper, which shows the influence of Corot. Marie Heegaard has recorded that Gauguin used to paint at St Cloud with Marguerite, Arosa's daughter, and Marie was often their model. Later he attended a course at the Academic Colarossi. In 1880, at Arosa's house, he met Pissarro, who, by his teaching and example, contributed to the formation of Gauguin's art.
Gauguin was a talented stockbroker, and supported his family with ease. The real reason he continued to work was because this made it possible for him to buy paintings that he liked (Manet, Cezanne, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, Monet and Guillaumin) and to spend moments of leisure painting. In 1886 he showed seven paintings in the fifth impressionist exhibition. The man whom people regarded as a 'Sunday painter' was already a mature artist; he had already painted THE SEINE AT THE PONT D'LENA in 1875, a white scene much closer to Guillaumin than to Monet and, in 1880, THE STUDY OF A NUDE, OR SUZANNE SEWING which has the plastic strength of a Courbet but departs from reality—i.e. Gauguin constructs a nude figure which is far removed from naturalism (Huysmans himself called him a naturalist), and which is already close to the style defined by Rene Huyghe as expressionism.

Impressionism for Gauguin meant the painting of Pissarro, with its colours minutely fragmented to catch the subtlest shifting of light and shade. And he remained faithful to Pissarro for years, with a momentary lapse in the STUDY OF A NUDE, an isolated premonition of what was to happen later in his Brittany and Tahiti periods.

In 1881, in Pissarro's house in Osny, Gauguin met Cezanne. On a human level this encounter was without sequel. The 'bourgeois' of Aix was not made to understand

1. 'Marchiori Giuseppe' "Gauguin" (Dolphin Art Italy) 1968, p.12.
2. A member of the middle class.
someone like Gauguin many years later he was to say acrimoniously: 'Gauguin had carried his little sensation round all the steamships.'

Gauguin on the other hand was fascinated by the painting of Cezanne which seemed to him to contain hints of the near future, when impressionism would be nothing more than a memory, Albert Aurier noted that Gauguin had flattened out Cezanne's relief modelling. In a letter to Schuffenecker, written on 14 January 1885, Gauguin demonstrates how well he understood the misunderstood Cezanne who 'loves the mystery and motionless peace of the figure of a man lying dreaming on the ground. His colours are as serious as the oriental character. A southerner, he spends whole days out on the mountains reading Virgil and watching the stars. His painted horizons are lofty, with strong, deep blues, his reds have an extraordinary resonance.' He goes on to observe that Cezanne's backgrounds are as realistic as they are imaginative, that his paintings are completely original and that the Master of Aix is as mystical as his own drawing. It is worth adding that Gauguin made use of certain stylistic elements from Cezanne's work, in many still-lifes, even ones dating from his last years, the memory of Cezanne is still sharp and clear. Gauguin's relationship with Pissarro continued until 1886, in the Breton landscapes and in particular in the
Pont-Aven series. But other influences were beginning to crowd in on him. His ideas were being confirmed by physical and emotional sensations. The voyage to Martinique satisfied all the dreams he had held during his earlier long sea voyages, the visits to Brittany in 1888 and 1889 laid the foundations of a new vision, which was to be matured and developed in Tahiti from 1891 to 1893. By now his impressionist vision was giving way to a kind of probing into the mysterious kernel of the human mind. He could see clearly into his own mind, and now began to depart from subjection to an object painted from real life, outlining his paintings directly from his inner consciousness. He went so far as to advise his friend Schuffenecker not to paint from life, because art 'is an abstraction which is accomplished by dreaming amid natural surroundings.'

Technique:

The tropical vegetation of Martinique, the empty beaches, the violence of the Ocean, the native inhabitants, the harsh colours and the brilliance of the light were all to be brought together later in paintings composed of broad patches of colour, this synthesis is very different from the minute variations of shade in the WILLOWS painted primarily under the influence of Pissarro.
The inspiration gained from his exotic voyage is the keynote of his Breton paintings; these tend, in the words of Albert Aurier, to be 'completely flat surfaces on which decorative patches of colour are juxtaposed'. The idea of decoration can be defined in terms of mural painting, Aurier saw Gauguin's painting as specifically intended for indoor or outdoor walls, directed as it was to formal 'primitive' simplification, reaching 'beyond the horses of the Parthenon to the wooden horses that children play with. This was the start of Gauguin's journey towards the origins of mankind, a first essay in his flight to the 'Barbary that renews ones youth'. This mythical place differed from the barbary of Polynesian idols, and might be identified with the crude sincerity and rough innocence of the Breton calvaries and crucifixes.

'I love Brittany', said Gauguin in 1888. 'When I walk along in my sabots on the granite earth I hear the hollow, powerful sound that I am looking for in my painting. It would be difficult to find better words to express the intensity of Gauguin's emotion than these. Expressed in pictorial terms it resulted in 'syntheticism', based on

3. Justaposed - A being placed near
4. Crucifixed - A picture of Christ upon the cross
5. Composition or more things together
pure colour, 'the passionate equivalent of a sensation', which in its turn resulted in the school of Pont-Aven, with Gauguin as its leader.

The fundamental doctrine of the school of Pont-Aven was 'to exalt colour and to simplify form'. The painting which interprets this doctrine best is THE VISION AFTER THE SERMON, OR JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL (1888). The figures of Breton women in white bonnets in the foreground gave Emile Bernard occasion to accuse his master, whom he had always seemed to regard with undying admiration, of Plagiarism. Bernard had painted a picture of BRETON WOMEN IN A FIELD (with the same white bonnets) before Gauguin and he therefore considered himself as a precursor of the syntheticist movement. In fact the white bonnets were traditional dress and might have inspired anybody. The most cursory comparison of the two paintings shows that Bernard's was only a careful reproduction of traditional manners and dress, whereas Gauguin's Vision is planned on a scheme reminiscent of Lautrec's At Fernando's Circus and the two wrestlers recall a woodcut by Hokusai. It is a daring and prophetic representation of an imaginary world laden with symbolism, upon which modern art, from the Nabis and fauves to the expressionists, was to draw heavily.
Style:

(Gauguin) was fiercely individualistic and yet was bound to the most anonymous popular tradition.' Then: 'We supplemented Gauguin's basic teaching, substituting for his too simple theory of pure colour the theory of harmony infinitely varied as in nature'.

A further element in his vocabulary was the blue border round every shape, called CLOISONNISME, derived from Japanese prints and medieval stained glass windows, and which was used felicitously in the early years of the twentieth century, particularly by the Italian Gino Rossi.

Gauguin, in the course of his careful meditations about art, had arrived at the conclusion that 'grey does not exist. Each object has its form and colour clearly outlined by a border.' In a letter to Schuffenecker on 14 January 1885 Gauguin seems to have anticipated theoretical symbolism - moments of illumination alternating with periods of doubt, negation and discomfort. There are moments when he should 'conserve his moral energy by closing the doors of his heart', he declared to his wife that 'the duty of an artist is to work and become strong', and with proud self-confidence to be a great artist. His confidence in being a great artist was never shaken, and this made it possible for him to react in his paintings against fate,
which was so often against circumstances gave him his reputation as a strong man, as a man who had won the 'right to do what he liked'. He stood out from his contemporaries because of his very original way of looking at things, and his personality, which was capable of resolving the most disparate collection of cultural tit-bits into a unified whole. The most painstaking modern criticism (in particular by Field and Dorival) has been successful in sorting out masses of documents and dates, often enough taken directly from papers found on Hiva Oa after Gauguin's death by Victor Segalen, or in the archives of Monfreid's heirs.

The question of plagiarism was raised after Bernard's accusations on the subject of the VISION AFTER THE SERMON. A list of sources from which Gauguin took much of his inspiration would be far too long to include here. For my purposes it will suffice to reduce the very complex material to a simple outline.

So was Gauguin a large-scale plagiarist? A possible reply to that is that he never improvised; he made lengthy studies, both drawings and watercolours, for his compositions and during the stages of elaboration would insert (one only needs to look at the final sketch of the great painting WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?7, a forest of symbols and figures drawn from

6. Plagiarism - Literary theft
7. 'Marchiori Giuseppe' "Geuquin" (Dolphin Art Italy), 1968, p.17.
the most varied sources) an Indonesian sculpture, a drawing of the School of Rembrandt or a fragment of Courbet. But he was not really aiming at a 'savage' interpretation of the women in the Egyptian bas-relief in the Louvre in his THE MARKET. Everything that he assimilated in this way was to become a vital part of the composition of a painting; his borrowings never appeared as mere appendages, upsetting the balance of a work. The Crucifix at Tremalo was transformed into the YELLOW CHRIST, THE APPLE WOMAN FROM THE COURRIER FRANCAIS BECAME TAHITIAN WOMEN WITH MANGO BLOSSOMS; Bernard's traditional white bonnets were transposed through Gauguin's imagination into the women watching Jacob struggling with the angel on the red Breton earth; Botticelli's Venus assumes the shape of a Tahitian Venus in Pape Pape Nace. In each of these cases the original painting has been superseded or done away with; the new composition bears the unmistakeable mark of Gauguin's personality.

Colour Scheme

Gauguin's colours certainly vibrate in the Tahitian paintings; he uses broad patches of brilliant colour to render the intensity of the island light, the light brings the figures and landscapes to life and links everything together in subtle and peculiar relationships.
In an interview which he gave to the ECOLE DE PARIS on 13 May 1895, Gauguin made his ideas even clearer: 'In my paintings every detail is carefully weighed and studied first of all. Just as in musical composition... To stimulate the imagination as music does, without recourse to ideas or pictures, but solely through that mysterious affinity which exists without a shadow of doubt between certain combinations of lines and colours and the mind of man. 'He added sarcastically: 'Do you want to know what will be the most accurate form of art before long? Photography in colour, which will be with us shortly.' When his interviewer asked him why he did not want to be classified as revolutionary, Gauguin replied: 'It is a ridiculous term. Roujon first applied it to me. I told him that every artist whose work differs from that of his predecessors is worthy of the name revolutionary.'

Exotic painting should not be confused with folklore. For Gauguin exotic painting meant the possession of a mysterious image which had emanated from the earth, like the breath of some animal. Earth, he said, is our animal spirit. And when he wanted to get back to the primordial purity of life he spoke of joyful savages, unfettered freedom which increased his detachment from the bastard civilization of Europeans. 'My Eve is almost an

9. Ibid., p.24
animal. That is why she is chaste in spite of her nakedness, whereas all the Venuses in the Salon are indecent and immodest.'

This man who were only a brightly coloured loincloth (which must have betrayed the whiteness of this particular cannibal) had the eye of a civilized man, turned, more than he would have willingly believed, towards Paris. He claimed not to want praise or glory, but he anxiously awaited the judgement of his few distant friends on the canvases that he had sent, months beforehand, to France. The simple life did not really satisfy him, he was conscious of being worthy of the consideration and admiration of his successors.

And yet, between illness and excesses and difficulties of every nature, though he repeatedly said that he could not go on any longer, and had decided to give up his painting, he continued to paint in the most brave and brilliant colours, he portrayed, with symbols and representations, the myths and customs of Polynesian life, learnt from books or from everyday contacts with the natives whose life he shared.

Between 1897 and 1898, Gauguin entered his most acute crisis, which brought him to a dramatic suicide attempt. But from the brink of despair his pride led him back to his painting, and he began again with savage
energy. In this state he painted WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING? which Jean Leymarie has called his spiritual testimony. This painting is nearly four metres long, and painted predominantly in blue and a sort of Veronese green; groups of figures are seated on either side of the central figure, a naked man picking a fruit from a tree, with his arms in the air. Gauguin 'put all his energy, all the mournful passion of the terrible state he was in, into this precise and scrupulous vision, anything that seems hurried disappears and makes way for the abundant life which springs from the painting. 'Gauguin was fascinated by his work, he described it to Monfreid in terms which convey it every clearly. He would stand looking at it for long periods and confessed to Monfreid that he admired it.

As has already been observed it is a long frieze showing symbolic figures, taken from a variety of sources, but 'the symbolism is sensual rather than intellectual'. Before we are even aware of it we take in the purity of the colours, which offer us a magical vision of an imaginary life, this picture expresses all that is most original in Gauguin's art, at the height of his artistic maturity. It is, in the profoundest sense of the term, his masterpiece. In it Gauguin has summed up his whole world of barbaric dreams this is the climax of his search for primordial purity.
CHAPTER - 4

INFLUENCE OF PAUL GAUGUIN OWN MY WORK
I myself Ms. Sabiya Khatoon was born in a middle class family on 6th of July 1973. I have completed my schooling from Nehru Children School since my childhood. I was very much interested in arts. After completing my Intermediate, I joined Department of Fine Arts of Aligarh Muslim University and completed B.A. (Hons) and Diploma in Applied Arts.

In my composition I mostly use brush instead of knife. Some of my work in B.A. (Hons) and Diploma in Applied Arts are Poster Design, Package Design, Book Cover with the use of bright colour. After completing my Diploma I got admission in M.F.A. Some of my work in M.F.A. are creative composition Portrait etc. In my drawing I use bright as well as fresh colours. This is because of influence of Paul Gauguin. My composition are mostly on female figures.

I am very much interested in modern paintings are based on "different moods of a women" and scene of paintings on violence and current affairs.

M.F.A. I got privilege to write about my favourite artist Paul Gauguin. I was assigned project work on the topic "Paul Gauguin as Impressionist Painter - A Critical Study".

As I have selected Gauguin as my favourite painter he has so many qualities in his paintings as well as in
his life, the inspiration gained from his exotic voyage is the keynote of his Breton paintings, these tend in the words of Albert Aurtier to be completely flat surfaces on which decorative patches of colour are juxtaposed. The idea of decoration can be defined in terms of minimal paintings. I feel so attraction towards his style and his devotion towards paintings, a painting by him entitled "House by a Lake" painted in oil on paper, which shows the influence of corot. Marie Heegard has recorded that Gauguin used to paint at St Cloud with Marguerite.

Gauguin was a talented stockbroker, and supported his family with ease. The real reason he continued to work was because this made it possible for him to buy paintings that he liked. I regard him as a sincere person have soft and loving feelings towards his family to earn and support them. He work very hard to stabilish himself as a painter and his style of work is totally different from any other artist.

I would be difficult to find better words to express the intensity of Gauguin's emotion than these. Expressed in pictorial terms it resulted in syntheticism based on the pure colour. Gauguin was never improvised, he made lengthy studies both drawings and water colours.

In each of these cases the original painting has been superseded or done away with the new composition bears the unmistakable mark of Gauguin's personality.
Each and every paintings shows a different look of his personality and I feel he is a different person or artist among all.

I have selected his as my favourite artist because of his own qualities and the style and work of his painting and techniques.
PLATE NO. 1

COWS AT THE WATERING PLACE

Gauguin's painting with broken brush strokes and colours to those of Pissarro. His love of exotic high colour shows in the very strong red of the roof and the vibrant orange-red of the cows. His choice of tones is close and warm and even the greens are dotted with warm dabs of terra-cotta and ochre.

Collection at Galleria d' Arte Moderna, Milan.

PLATE NO. 2

St PETER's Ray MARTINIQUE

Here colours became bolder, and some what decorative effect like tapestry.

The painting is dominated by the strong complementary colours of the blue sea and the orange foreshore, and by the red-dappled green of the trees.

Collection at Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek Copenhagen.
PLATE NO. 3

VISION AFTER THE SERMON

This is probably Gauguin's most important work. Painted in the style known as CLOISONNISME (flat areas of unmixed colour surrounded by heavy outlines like those of stained glass), represents a complete break from the Divisionism.

Collection at National Gallery of Scotland

PLATE NO. 4

THE YELLOW CHRIST

The figure of Christ, though distorted by extreme elongation of the arms and by arbitrary use of colour, was based on a wooden crucifix in the chapel of Tremalo near Pont-Aven.

Collection at Buffals, Albright Art Gallery

PLATE NO. 5

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH PALETTE

Gauguin painted this from a photograph, dating probably from 1880, which was owned by Mme Jeanne Schuffencker, he made additions and corrections.

Collection at Art Sachs Collection New York.
PLATE NO. 6

SELF PORTRAIT'a Iami CARRIERE

Painted by Gauguin in exchange for the picture which carriere had done by Gauguin in Paris in 1891. Gauguin wears an embroidered shirt as worn on Sundays by the peasants in Brittany, which in Paris drew attention to him.

Collection at National Gallery of Art Washington.

PLATE NO. 7

WE GREET THEE, MARY

We Greet Three Mary, in which housed the tropical setting for a biblical scene. He painted a canvas an angel with yellow wings who points out two Tahitian women the figures of Mary and Jesus, also Tahitions. In the background somber mountains and flowering trees. A dark purple road and an emerald green foreground.

Collection at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
PLATE NO. 8

FATA TE MITI

Here the paintings creates its own myth, it is a mythical interpretation of reality. The fugitive image is captured in the realm of poetry, like a fable immortalized by music and colour, with mystical harmonies from the orient.

Collection at D.C., National Gallery of Art Washington.

PLATE NO. 9

MAHANA NO ATUA

This painting unites many different elements taken from other works.

Collection at Art Institute Chicago

PLATE NO. 10

THE WHITE HORSE

This pastoral scene again forecasts Art Nouveau and the decorated fin de siecle stained glass- Jean Leymarie was reminded of a meaningful phrase from Mallarme. 'It is extraordinary that so much mystery could be couched in so much brilliance'.

Collection at Paris Jen d Paume.
PLATE NO. 11

TAHITIAN WOMEN WITH MANGO BLOSSOM

This painting is also called LES SEINS AUX FLEURS ROUGES in the Wildenstien Catalogue. These young girls, seems like the realisation of imaginary Eves of which Gauguin had dreamed in the year before he came to the south seas.

Collection at Metropolitan Museum of Art New York

PLATE NO. 12

RIDERS ON THE BEACH

The figures of the riders are painted with a primitive liberty, in accordance with Gauguin's policy of rebellion against convention.

Nature must be represented with plastic and coloristic equivalents, not reproduced' were Gauguin's words. 'If you see a blue shadow, you should paint it as blue as you possibly can'.

Collection at Essen, Museum Folk Wang.
PLATE NO. 13

THE CALL

The Call is yet another. Here the artist makes less frequent use of the ornamental elements and flat patterns which appear in more imaginary works.

He strives for a more naturalistic representation, using small brush strokes which model forms and indicate textures, and his color harmonies are softer.

Collection at The cleveland Museum of Art.

PLATE NO. 14

SELF PORTRAIT

The self-portrait in the shape of a Ceramic Vase.

Collection at Kunstindustriemuseet Copenhagen.

PLATE NO. 15

RELIEF IN LIME WOOD

Collection at Museum of Fine Art Boston.
Critics and Gauguin

Gauguin's defeat, downfall and tragic end were brought on largely by his personal weaknesses and mistakes. A slave to passion, lacking good judgement and a sense of humour, restless and erratic, intolerant and bitter yet blindly optimistic and unable by temperament to settle down for long to a routine life, he was much more tormented than Van Gogh since he lacked the latter's inner sweetness and faith. He kept returning to the civilization he despised since he could not get the appreciation and praise he wanted for his sophisticated art from the unsophisticated natives.

Gauguin's is chiefly a decorative art. Like the symbolist poets he tried to make his subjects represent his personal emotions and ideas. But he lacked Van Gogh's emotional power and Cezanne's interesting structure. While Cezanne's work is symbolised by his sculpturesque forms and Van Gogh's by his scorching flames, the patterned flower characterises Gauguin. He aimed at creating his own beauty rather than representing what he found in nature. In spite of ridicule and neglect, he believed that he was destined to be a great artist. He refused to produce art that would sell easily but chose provocative subjects instead. He put art before everything, even his family life.
Gauguin pioneered in the abstract use of colour - green or blue horses, red dogs - to represent emotion through unexpected combinations. Instead of the minute contrasts of the Impressionists he preferred large areas of bright tropical colour since 'a metre of green is greener than a centimetre of green'. He used unusual, exotic colours emotionally selected in exciting combinations to arouse interest. While he filled his figures with the most daring colours he usually made his backgrounds soft.

Gauguin's sensuous poster-like design is better suited for murals than pictures. He distorted his figures like his colours in order to fit into a rhythmic pattern. By different textures and slight shading he modelled them in low relief. Rejecting both perspective and recessed planes, he raised his horizons instead. His flat backgrounds give his paintings a tapestry-like appearance, leading the eye over the tastefully arranged pattern of harmonious colours. His forms lack the solidity of Cezanne's. He created a feeling of calm stability by stressing strong horizontal and vertical lines and avoiding restless diagonals. The sinuous shapes of the minor figures provide movement without interfering with the relaxed mood. The large figures in the foreground, though
flattened, look natural enough but those in the distance have been distorted beyond recognition to fit into the decorative pattern. Except for emphasis he avoided extreme contrasts.

In his STRUGGLE BETWEEN JACOB AND THE ANGEL (1889) Gauguin increased the emotional power of the painting by combining a Biblical scene with women of his own time. The thick black flowing outlines add to the emotional power. In this and THE YELLOW CHRIST (1888) he introduced symbolism for the first time. In the latter he combined a representation of folk sculpture with his impression of the piety of Briton peasant women who sit at the road side contemplating the sufferings of the Redeemer. In THE VISION AFTER THE SERMON the figures stand out almost like silhouettes against the bright red meadow which occupies most of the space. BEAUTIFUL ANGELA, also painted in Brittany, after being refused by the subject, was bought by Degas and now hangs in the Louvre. The interweaving of sinuous lines gives a sense of movement to the calm poses of the figures in his MATERNITY. Through his sea pictures he reveals fear of the unknown and repining for the loss of liberty and love.¹

¹. 'Tomory Edith' "A History of Fine Arts in India and the West" (Orient Longman Anna Salai Madras), 1982, p.461.
The number of writings and contemporary documents which deal with the life and work of Gauguin is immense, but by far the most important among them are the letters and writings of the painter himself: LETTERS A DANIEL DE MONFREID (New edition 1950) LETTERS A SA FEMME ET A SES AMIS (New ed. 1949), LETTERS A EMILE BERNARD (1954), NOA NOA (New ed. 1966), AVANT ET APRES, RACONTARS D'UN RAPID, ANCIEN CULTE MABORI, CAHIERS POUR ALINE (1897). A complete list of his letters would include many other unpublished ones, preserved in the archives of M. Luc de Monfreid.² News of his life and ideas about art are all jumbled together with dates and descriptions of Polynesian life, written in the direct style of a diary. Gauguin used to get down to his writing when his physical disabilities prevented him from painting. During his final, harrowing months between 1902 and 1903, in the isolation of Hiva Oa, he spent a good deal of his time writing, alternating memoirs and thoughts with daily angry letters to the authorities. AVANT ET APRES reflects the state of mind he was in, rebellious, angry and violent - on the borders of madness. These are the outpourings of a man who will not admit defeat, although he realises that death is near, and who lets his pen run where his momentary whim leads it. There are some interesting passages, nevertheless, which.

² 'Marchiori Giuseppe', "Gauguin" (Dolphin Art Italy), 1968, p.26.
like some of the descriptions in NOA NOA, deserve to be regarded as a literary counterpart to his paintings, inspired by his sincere love of primitive life and by the earthly paradise which civilized man has destroyed. Gauguin aspired to the State of Rousseau's noble savage, living naturally and expressing himself freely but what sacrifice and what pain it cost him.

Alongside the hostile and negative criticism which refused to see any real meaning in his art, Gauguin had favourable recognition from Huysmans and Mallarme, Octave Mirbeau and Charles Morice, Gide and, with some reserve, Strindberg: also from the young critic Albert Aurier who wrote about him from 1891 onwards.

Letters from artists, from Van Gogh, Maurice Denis, and Paul Serusier and from the faithful Schuffenecker and Daniel de Monfreid, all confirm to what extent Gauguin's 'savage' vision was comprehended by the young, from his disciples at the School of Pont-Aven to the Nabis. Official circles on the other hand all reacted in the same way as the Director-General of the Beaux Arts, Roujon, who had declared to Charles Morice that he would keep Gauguin's work out of the national collections at all costs. Roujon was a typical member of that dyed-in-the-wool bureaucracy which, from Paris to Hiva Oa, was the enemy of the painter of red horses. This explains the destruction of so many
paintings, left by Gauguin in Papeete and the Marquesas Islands, by zealous petty officials. There were other cases of destruction for more sinister motives – lack of comprehension or sheer jealousy. Pissarro, to whom Gauguin, whilst still a broker's agent, had turned as his master, and Emile Bernard, his first great admirer, both later turned against him. Pissarro was upset by Gauguin's slighting references to pointillism and Seurat's 'PETIT-POINT'. Bernard accused him of plagiarism in JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL, revealing the typical acrimony of a failed painter towards Gauguin. Although Van Gogh and Cezanne had both been close friends of his, and had regarded him as being full of promise, Bernard ended up in Cairo painting murals in churches and in Italy copying Renaissance paintings.

Many years were to pass between the day in 1903 when M. Fayet, who had paid a few hundred francs for the picture, sold TA ARII VAHINE (1896) for 30,000 francs and 25 November 1959 when YOU ARE WAITING FOR A LETTER was sold for £130,000 or 180 million old francs.

Critical appreciation moves more slowly than the world market. In 1996 the Salon d'Automne presented the first big retrospective exhibition of Gauguin's works, and

3. Collection in National Gallery of Scotland.
included 227 of his paintings. In the same year the first monograph on the artist was published, written by Jean de Rotonchamp. Charles Morice published his monograph in 1919, Robert Rey in 1924. Jean Dorsenne's study of Gauguin's relationship with his wife, Mette Gad, followed in 1927 and in the same year appeared Michel Guerin's study of his graphic work. A series of monographs follows: A. Alexandre (1930), A. Bertram (1930), B. Ternoviz (1934), R. Cogniat (1936), J. Rewald (1938), L. Hautecoeur (1942), M. Malingue (1944), R. Cogniat (1947).

The biographies which contain the most information, sometimes previously unpublished, are by Maurice Malingue (1948) and Henri Perruchot (1961). The memoir by Gauguin's son Pola, entitled Gaugin, mon pere, is interesting. Also noteworthy is the catalogue of the Gauguin exhibition at the Orangerie in 1949, edited by Jean Leymarie with a preface by Rene Huyghe, GAUGUIN CREATEUR DE LA PENTURE MODERNE, and Raymond Cogniat's volume entitled LA VIE ARDENTE DE PAUL GAUGUIN, with an interesting preface by Henri Focillon. The final passage of this preface is worth quoting as it contains a thought often disregarded by the critic keen to romanticize Gauguin's life: 'Gauguin's glory does not reside in his having added a chapter to the history of primitive curiosities, or some hitherto unpublished...
adventures to the collection of navigators' log-books and memoirs. It is time we stopped thinking of him as the hero of a seafaring story, one of Robert Louis Stevenson's more colourful characters. Gauguin is really the opposite of picturesque and romantic.'
CHAPTER - 5

CONCLUSION
Paul Gauguin, the most eclectic of nineteenth century artists, created original workout of Eastern and Western influences. His sophisticated technique derived mostly from the advanced Egyptian, Persian and Combodian cultures, though he sought rejuvenation in barbarism. Because he hated Greek and classical art and modern civilization, its degradation, banality, psychical tensions, its boredom and morbid, oversensitive ideas of beauty, he looked for simple, primitive subjects in the South Seas. But while he changed his subjects his style remained the same. He did not adopt the hard, angular lines of oceanic art but used the soft flowing ones that came to him naturally. Tahite gave him the splendid physical models that suited his aim, but the stateliness of his art, with the impassive faces and grave, rigid figures bears greater resemblances to Egyptian and Cretan than to Polynesian art. As in Egyptian sculpture he distorted the flattened forms, and as in Medieval stained glass and Byzantine enamels and Japanese prints he used broad areas of flat colours. He was also influenced by folk art and primitive woodcuts.

The greatest influence on Gauguin's art came from E. BERNARD. After their meeting Gauguin's art was completely changed. At the age of twenty Bernard had worked out the theory of synthesisism and the technique of
cloisonnism synthesis gives greater importance to the memory than to observation. Memory simplifies what has been seen to the simplest essentials, to what is significant or symbolic to the viewer. He expressed the synthesis through the technique of cloissonism, inspired by Medieval stained glass, Japanese woodcuts and folk art. Black or blue contours (cloissons) surround the figures like the lead partitions in stained glass; and the colours of the bold, flat surfaces try to imitate the brilliance of light passing through stained glass. Entirely unselfish and disinterested, Bernard brought recognition to lovely geniuses like Van Gogh and Cezanne at a time when he was almost alone in seeing their possibilities, thus helping them to become famous.

In his turn GAUGUIN influenced the Fauves (in particular Matisse's audacious colours), the colour symbolism of the Blue Rider group, and the Surrealist dream world. Gauguin's sculptures made people more ready to accept Polynesian and African fetishes.

Gauguin's interest in non-European cultures derived from his early travels. As a child he lived in Peru and France, and when he became a sailor he saw many lands, including India. For the most part he taught himself since he had little formal education. He became a successful businessman and as such he collected modern art with an
inborn sophistication. At twenty-five he started painting, encouraged and taught by Pissarro who had also helped Van Gogh and Cezanne. A natural artist, he had to struggle less than these two and advanced very quickly. Bored with business, he became a full-time painter ten years later but could not sell anything. As a result his family life broke-up, and he became bitter at the neglect of artists by modern society. During his stay in Brittany his style matured. Inspired by Bernard he adopted the new style of cloissonnism and symbolism, with brilliant enametlike colours. Here he worked out his principles: simple and unmodelled massive forms without shadows but with heavy contours and flat colours and designs unrelated to natural appearance. In search of the exotic and primitive he worked for a time in building the Panama Canal but malaria forced him on to Martinique where his colours became more luxurious. Sickness obliged him to return to France where Theo Van Gogh put on a one-man show for him and where he met Vincent Van Gogh in Arles. Finally he settled in Tahiti, disgusted by what he considered the rottenness in art and the reign of gold in industrialised countries.
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