

## How the Japanese Read Maurice Denis Some Aspects of the Reception of Symbolism and Classical Art Theory in Modern Japan (1913-1928)

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### *Avant-propos*

*This is a complementary text to my Japanese paper, "A Japanese Theorist Versus A French Theorist on Symbolist Art: Maurice Denis as interpreted by Jūtarō Kuroda—around Cézanne and Later (1920) and Maurice Denis and the Symbolists (1921)", published in the Exhibition Catalogue, Les Nabis et le Japon, at the Nigata Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, Sep. 15-nov.5, 2000. The English translation of the paper, anonymously made by A & T Co. Ltd and published in the same catalogue, not only quoted Maurice Denis's texts through English retranslation of the Japanese translation, without referring to the French original, but also added numerous inadequate terminologies and mistranslations in regard to Japanese interpretations and misunderstandings of the French theorist, which the paper tried to analyse. As a result, the English version is almost incomprehensible to those who don't have any command of Japanese. In addition, the bibliographical reference in alphabet was eliminated for editorial reasons. Consequently, it has remained to be of no use for the non-Japanese specialists interested in the issue. The present English text aims at remedying these fatal inconveniences by providing original texts which will help readers verify and better understand my arguments. Let me add that the present paper is partly based on my lecture, "Maurice Denis and Japan," held at the Kyoto Institute of Technology, on July, 28, 2001. My thanks goes to Ms. Namiko SASAKI, who asked for my contribution to the exhibition, and to Prof. Takanori NAGAI who provided the author with the chance to write this paper.*

### 1.

"Se rappeler qu'un tableau--avant d'être un cheval de bataille, une femme nue, ou une quelconque anecdote--est essentiellement une surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblées."

(Maurice Denis, "Définition du néo-traditionnisme" 1890)

Maurice Denis (1870-1943)'s name has been mainly remembered with this definition of the painting which he delivered in 1890 at the age of 19. The originality of this formulation has been discussed, and tentatives were made to find out its precedents.(let us note that precedents are always searched for *a-posteriori* after a formula gains celebrity). Among other possibilities (Baudelaire, Puvis de Chavanne, Degas, etc.), Maurice Denis himself declared that he had found, much later, a similar formulation proposed by Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893).

"Un tableau est une surface colorée, dans laquelle les divers tons et les divers degrés de lumière sont répartis avec un certain choix; voilà son être intime," (Hippolyte Taine, *Voyage en Italie* (1866), quoted by Maurice Denis in his *Charmes et Leçons de l'Italie*, 1933, p.177)

KURODA Jūtarō (1883-1970) may be regarded as the main Japanese artist who made extensive studies of Maurice Denis and the Fin de siècle Symbolism, including the definition of the painting, above mentioned. Though Kuroda's publications such as *Cézanne and After* (1920) and *Maurice Denis and the Symbolists* (1921), have since long been out of print, and almost forgotten, it will be worthwhile to reread them as an aspect of the reception of Maurice Denis and his theories in the Far East. This paper proposes to study the Modernism

movement, around Paul Cézanne, not merely as a Western phenomena, but rather in the world-wide perspective in its true sense of the term. Let us begin by examining the "origin" of the Nabis school in the fin de siècle symbolism.

## 2.

The famous anecdote explaining the "origin" of the Nabis symbolist movement was first delivered by Maurice Denis, in 1903, in commemoration of Paul Gauguin shortly after the master's death in the South Pacific. Though SAITŌ Yori(1885-1959)'s text on "The Art of Maurice Denis" (1913), the first Japanese text discussing the artist, published in the newly founded and influential monthly literary and artistic magazine, *Shirakaba* (more or less equivalent of the contemporary Bloomsbury Group in England), does not mention the anecdote, a journalist, named "Tagawa" briefly refers to it in his notice on "Maurice Denis and his position" (1913), published in the *Bijutsu Shinpō* [*Art News*: being the Japanese version of, say *Burlington Magazine*]. Kuroda's version, in 1920, almost faithfully translates into Japanese the following text by Maurice Denis:

"C'est à la rentrée de 1888 que le nom de Gauguin nous fut révélé par Sérusier, retour de Pont-Aven, qui nous exhiba, non sans mystère, un couvercle de boîte à cigar sur quoi on distinguait un paysage informe, à force d'être synthétiquement formulé, en violet, vermillon, vert véronèse et autres couleurs pures, telles qu'elles sortent du tube, presque sans mélange de blanc. «Comment voyez-vous cet arbre, avait dit Gauguin devant un coin du Bois d'Amour, il est bien vert? Mettez donc du vert, le plus beau vert de votre palette; et cette ombre, plutôt bleue? Ne craignez pas de la peindre[aussi] bleue [que possible]. Ainsi nous fut présenté, pour la première fois, sous une forme paradoxale, inoubliable, le fertile concept de la "surface plane recouverte de couleurs en un certain ordre assemblés". Ainsi nous connûmes que toutes oeuvre d'art était une transposition, une caricature, l'équivalent passionné d'une sensation reçues. Ce fut l'origine d'une évolution..."

(Maurice Denis, "L'influence de Paul Gauguin", *L'Occident*, oct. 1903; C.A. pp.74-75; Cf. Kuroda Jūtarō, 1920, pp.46-47)

Jean-Paul Bouillon has already remarked that the "aussi blue que possible" (indicated in [...]) was the retouch made by the French artist when he put together his earlier essays and published them as *Théories* in 1910. In my opinion, this modification suggests an important issue: according to my hypothesis, with which Jean-Paul Bouillon does not agree, Maurice Denis in the above quote of 1903 does not see any logical connection, or at least the necessity of making any visible connection, between Gauguin's own choice of elementary colors and the philosophical notion of "équivalent" which Maurice Denis maintains to have been elaborated by the Nabis symbolist circle since then, as "l'équivalent passionné d'une sensation reçue." As we shall try to demonstrate at the end of this paper, this notion of "équivalent" is directly stems from the contemporary psychology, and not necessarily from Gauguin himself. In fact, Denis insists in the same text upon the fact that Gauguin was not "professeur" and that his idea in 1890 remained in a state of "idée simple des couleurs pures." It was only by 1910, that Maurice Denis finally begins to realize the necessity of publicly declaring that the message from Gauguin, transmitted to the future Nabis via Sérusier in 1890, did already contain the hint of pictorial "équivalent" of the nature. Hence, he modified "blue" (1903) into "aussi bleu que possible" (1910) so as to make Gauguin's teaching compatible with the idea of their own "équivalent."

In addition, Jean-Paul Bouillon also pointed out the important fact that it was not until 1934, or 44 years later than the historical event, that the title of "Talisman" was publicly given to the "boîte à cigar" by Maurice Denis so as to make of the piece (currently at the Musée d'Orsay) a relic of the movement. These circumstances clearly show that the anecdote of Bois de l'Amour was no less a historical fact than a founding myth of the Nabis symbolism

retrospectively elaborated (and even retroactively dramatized) by Maurice Denis by his deliberate chrono-political intentions. The following question is to ask the reason why Maurice Denis had to successively make-up his (hi-)story of 1890. What happened between 1903 and 1910? To answer these questions, we have to turn now to Cézanne, central figure to be discussed not only by Maurice Denis himself in his *Théories*, but also by the Japanese, Kuroda, in his *Cézanne and After*.

### 3.

The reception of Cézanne in the Far East is a chapter to be written and added in the History of World Art. Professor Nagai's thorough investigations must be published in their integrity, not only in Japanese but especially in Western language (either in French or in English, judging from Prof. Nagai's competence in a similar fashion as J.B. Bullen's *Post-Impressionists in England*). Let me add here one small anecdote in this respect, which will help us better understand in what kind of intellectual atmosphere Cézanne was welcomed in Japan around 1913. ARISHIMA Ikuma (1882-1974) is the first author who reported the sudden popularity of Cézanne in Paris, where he was staying around 1905-10. Upon his return to Japan, Arishima is asked to write about the artist in the newly founded *Shirakaba* magazine. For the biographical elements, he refers to Théodore Duret's book, *Histoire des Peintres impressionnistes*, published shortly before, in 1906.

Surprisingly, however, the Cézanne Arishima showed to the Japanese public was the absolute antithesis to the idea of the French self-made art critique and historian, Théodore Duret. Arishima characterizes Cézanne as "the artist, who, having penetrated the revolutionary spirit, extremely hated to follow the outdated conventions" 「革命精神に最も深く突入し旧套を踏むことを最も厭ふ情に富んだ画家」 (Arishima Ikuma, 有島生馬 "Peintre Paul Cézanne" 「画家ポール・セザンヌ」), *Shirakaba*, 『白樺』 1910 vol.1.Nr.3).

"Républicain renommé" and close friend of Édouard Manet, Théodore Duret (1838-1927), hated "révolutionnaires" and "idées révolutionnaires" because of his experience of the Commune (1869-70). He not only lost his close friend, Gustave Chaudey (known as Gustave Courbet's adviser) but was menaced to be assassinated with his friend Henri Cernuschi by Raul Rigault (Inaga 1998). He made every effort to deprive Cézanne of the reputation of being "eccentrique" and "révolutionnaire" in the Impressionist circle, so as to give civil right to them. It is therefore simply inconceivable that Duret could have written what Arishima maintains.

A simple consultaion of Duret's book clarifies the mystery. Duret says as follows in his chapter on Cézanne. "[I]l faut se garder d'en faire [de P.Cézanne] un homme pénétré d'idées révolutionnaires et de sentiments hostiles à l'égard des anciennes écoles." Clearly Arishima made a free translation of this passage, but eliminated the caution at the beginning: "il faut se garde" (=we should be careful not to make...), thus committing a plain contradiction to Duret in his interpretation of Cézanne. While Duret is indicating the French classics by referring to "[l]es anciennes écoles," so as to suggest Cézanne's faithfulness to the tradition (if not mentioning directly Poussin, as Maurice Denis will do soon), Arishima mistakes them to be the contemporary 19th century French academicians and misinterprets Duret's text as criticism to the outdated conventions of "art officiel" against which Cézanne strived.

But the vision of Cézanne as "révolutionnaire" was in good terms with the Japanese expectation of the day, and it was in a sense even anticipated and predetermined. YANAGI Muneyoshi (1889-1962)'s text, "Painters of Revolution" testifies to this intellectual atmosphere. I assume that the text was written in reaction to, and as a riposte against KINOSHITA Mokutarō (1884-1945) who had accused the Shirakaba School of superficial understanding of the Western modernity (Inaga 1995). While Kinoshita proposes to learn much more from Manet, "Vermittler der Überlieferung" (the term is from Meier-Graefe) rather than to worship "blindly" (Kinoshita) Van Gogh or Cézanne, Yanagi tries to justify the position of the Shirakaba School by referring to the "Manet and the Post-Impressionism"

show, held at the Grafton Galleries in London in 1910 by the initiative of the art critic, Roger Fry (1866-1934), whom Yanagi highly praises. Yanagi describes how the show was welcomed by the harsh attack from such authoritative academicians as Lord William Richmond, of the Royal Academy, who prayed for God to save the art students from the "unpleasant dunghills" of Post-impressionists:

「英京倫敦のクラフトン画堂で、後印象派 (Post-Impressionists) の作品が展覧せられた[...] 画堂は、又の嘲り笑ふ聲と、怒り罵る言葉とに充たされてゐた。」「ロジャーク・フライが公衆の前に、此絵画の新運動の意義と価値とを、理論あり情緒ある言葉で述べた時、エリウム・リッチモンド卿は一講演をロイヤル・アカデミーに設け、厳かな句調の許に、神が其恩寵によつてかゝる『不愉快なる塵芥』から永く学生を救ひ賜はん事を希願する由を述べた」(Yanagi Muneyoshi 柳宗悦「革命の画家」『白樺』明治 45 [1912] (Vol.3.Nr 1), p.2)

It is commonly said that the term, "Post-impressionism" was coined by Roger Fry especially for the show, so as not to repeat the same term "Expressionisten" invented by the German art critic, Julius Meier-Graefe (1867-1935) in his *Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der Moderne Kunst* (1904) (the English translation of which having been already available as *Modern Art* in 1908). Interestingly enough, Julius Meier-Graefe pretended to be a faithful "disciple" of Théodore Duret, then considered to be the "authority" of Manet and Impressionism through his *Histoire d'Édouard Manet et de son oeuvre* (1902), and *Histoire des Peintres impressionnistes* (1906). And yet this "faithful student"'s "Expressionismus" contributed to the formation of an antithetic idea to impressionism by Roger Fry (who respectfully included Duret's name in the honorary committee of the show), and to which Yanagi and the members of the Shirakaba School willingly subscribed, (mis-)interpreting "Post -Impressionism" as "revolutionary," thanks to Lewis Hind's (misleading) book (as we shall see later).

Yanagi seems to refer to an anonymous text entitled "The Post-Impressionists," which serves as an introduction to the Catalogue: *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*, at the Grafton Galleries (8 Nov.1910-14.Jan. 1911) now attributed to Desmond MacCarthy (1877-1952). However, the definition Yanagi gives to the "Post-impressionism" in his text of 1912, is not based on this preface. On the contrary, his definition in "The Painters of Revolution" is, at first sight, no less surprising than the (probably intentional) mistranslation committed by Arishima Ikuma:

「此世には只汝と自然と神とがあることを信じて、汝が汝の云はざるを得ざる事を描く時、汝は後印象派の画家である。詮ずる所個性の裡に現はれたる人生の厳然たる存在が彼等の出発にして帰結である。而して其本然たる発露表現こそは彼等の藝術である。」

「げに藝術は人格の反影である。そは表現された個性の謂に外ならない。」(ibid.p.4)

However, it turns out that this astonishing definition was by no means Yanagi's personal concoction or fantasy, but was literally based on an English book: C. Lewis Hind (1862-1927)'s *The Post-Impressionists* (London 1911), which was, then, the only available book with the title and was enthusiastically read by Yanagi and his circle. In this book, Yanagi had found the following definition, which he faithfully translated into Japanese in the above quote:

"If a child were to ask—"What is Post Impressionism?" I think I should tell that child about the Sermon on The Mount, and say—"If the spirit that gives life to the movement we call Post-Impressionism is in your heart you will always be trying to express yourself, in your life and in your work, with the simple and profound simplicity of the Sermon on The Mount. You will say what you have to say as if there were nobody else but you and Nature or God"."/"Art



is not beauty. It is expression. [...] "Art [...] is the Expression of Personality in all its littleness, in all its immensity..."

C. Lewis Hind, *The Post-Impressionists*, London 1911

Strangely, the authority the Hind book enjoyed for a short period of time in Japan faded away within a year. KIMURA Shôhachi (1893-1953) casts a retrospective view in the postface to *Post-Impressionism*, which he edited in 1913, stating that they were "at first extremely moved" by the Hind book, but later, "it has become clear that compared to Graefe or Duret, Hind is a simple journalist" and that "his view contains many errors" 「一昨年の冬[1911]」 「これほど抗奮させられた本はなかつた」 が「グレーフェやドユレに比べれば」ハインドは「チ"ヤーナリスト」で「その見方の誤りである事は、日を経るに従つて急速に明白になつた」。(『後期印象派』序). Accordingly, Arishima's mistranslation on Cézanne is also rectified in Kimura's re-translation. In lieu of "il faut se garder," in Duret's French original, Kimura inserts a conciliatory interpretation: "any way, it is inevitable that people look at Cézanne attentively as if he were full of revolutionary ideas and incompatible with the accomplished schools." 「人が彼を注意して革命思想に充ち、完成された流派とは相容れぬ人であるとする事になるのは、兎も角止むを得ない事である」。(Kimura Shôhachi 木村荘八 『後期印象派』 大正 2[1913]. 8. [Nr.17]. Kimura is probably referring to the English translation of Duret's work: *History of Manet and the Impressionist Painters*, 1912).

#### 4.

Such was the vicissitude in the early phase of the Japanese reception of Cézanne which precedes Kuroda's own understanding of the master in 1920s. These conflictual interpretations were proposed in regard to Cézanne's personality around the Shirakaba school in Tokyo, and they were mainly referring to English publications. Contemporary of the Shirakaba school, Kuroda Jûtarô, based in Kyoto, was known as a theoretician of the young artists' circles like "Chat noir" or "Le Masque." As a Western style oil painter, Kuroda took more interest in the theoretical aspect of Cézanne's art. Having a good command of French, Kuroda assiduously - consulted French contemporary literature. Among them, Kuroda particularly took Maurice Denis' writings seriously, as a milestone to establish his own understanding of the modern French art.

In Europe, positioning Cézanne in French modern art history is a major issue at the beginning of the 20th Century. In this context, Maurice Denis's texts, such as "L'influence de Paul Gauguin" (1903), above mentioned, "Le Soleil" (1906) published in *Hermitage* after Cézanne's death and, "Cézanne," (1907) first published in a magazine of rightwing Catholic, *L'Occident*, directed by Adrian Mithouard, take particular importance. Since his "révélation" to the Italian Classicism during his stay in Rome with André Gide in 1896, Maurice Denis rectifies his idea of Symbolism, and tries to integrate Cézanne in his own artistic genealogy (his oil painting, *Homage à Cézanne*, 1901, being a typical case). In so doing, Maurice Denis insists upon the "classical" character of the Maître d'Aix, especially in his texts published after Cézanne's death.

The famous words attributed to Cézanne: "J'ai voulu faire de l'impressionnisme quelque chose de solide et de durable comme l'art des Musées" for example, appears at first and uniquely in Maurice Denis's writing (1906, C. A.p.136), and its credibility lies only on the authority of Maurice Denis' statement. In the previous year, Charles Camoin has already remarked as follows in his reply to the questions raised by Charles Morice about Cézanne: "C'est le primitif du plein air, il est profondément classique et il n'a cherché qu'à vivifier Poussin sur nature" (*Mercure de France*, juin-août 1905, p.369).

This equation between Poussin and Cézanne gains popularity among the contemporary artists who have shortly converted themselves from Symbolism to Classicism. Maurice Denis, who also took part in the same "Questions de Cézanne," is now entitled to make the

declaration: "[Cézanne], [c]'est le Poussin de l'impressionnisme" (*Théories*, p.260; C.A. p.148). And this qualification is to be ratified by Émile Bernard, who, as an eyewitness, publishes the following as an authentic confession of the "Maître d'Aix": "Imaginez Poussin, refait entièrement sur nature, voilà le classique que j'entend être" ("Souvenirs de Paul Cézanne," *Mercur de France*, sep.-oct. 1907, p.626). Thus, the classical image of Cézanne is established among the younger generation.

Cézanne's image thus oscillates between Expressionism (Meier-Graefe, Lewis Hind etc.) and Classicism (Camoin, Denis, Bernard etc.). To this oscillation one may attribute the origin of a confusion (or a careless mistake) Roger Fry commits in his translation of Maurice Denis' important text: "Cézanne." As Richard Shiff has already pointed out, Maurice Denis's original: "Ce qui étonne le plus dans l'oeuvre de Cézanne, c'est assurément les recherches de formes ou plus exactement les déformations." ("Cézanne," 1906) was mistranslated by Roger Fry as: "What astonishes us most in Cézanne's work is certainly his research for form, or to be exact, for deformation." (trans. by Roger Fry in *Burlington Magazine*, Jan. 1910). While Maurice Denis refrains from judging whether the "déformation" in Cézanne is based on the artist's own intention or not, Roger Fry's translation ascribes the "deformation" to the artists' own conscious "research." Whether intentional or not, Roger Fry thereby proposes a slightly more "expressionistic" image of Cézanne than the one given by Maurice Denis. Is Roger Fry subconsciously trying to conciliate the antithetical interpretations between Meier-Graefe and Maurice Denis, so as to pave the way to his own invention of a new terminology: Post-impressionism?

## 5.

When Kuroda Jūtarō conceives a book on *Cézanne and After* (1920), he clearly bares in mind that Cézanne marks the turning point of the Modern art. And yet, Japanese critics and theoreticians, including Kuroda, have to struggle to understand Maurice Denis's dogmatic writings, full of leaping arguments and contradictory statements. The confusion is all the more inevitable as Kuroda is preparing almost simultaneously, another book on *Maurice Denis and Symbolists* (1921).

The most fundamental and problematical statement in Maurice Denis' writings concerning the relationship between Cézanne's classical aesthetics and Maurice Denis's symbolism is the formula of binary opposition between "reproduction" and "representation." Maurice Denis guarantees the authenticity of this confession as the one Cézanne has directly addressed to him, when he visited the Maître d'Aix with his friend Ker-Xavier Roussel on January 1906. Furthermore, Maurice Denis repetitively claims that this opposition between "reproduction" and "representation," proposed by Cézanne, is identical with the symbolistic notion of "équivalent" which he had promoted since "around 1890":

" «La nature, disait Cézanne, j'ai voulu la copier, je n'arrivai pas. Mais j'ai été content de moi lorsque j'ai découvert que le soleil, par exemple, ne se pouvait pas reproduire, mais qu'il fallait le représenter par autre chose...par de la couleur.» Voilà la définition du Symbolisme tel que nous l'entendions vers 1890." (Maurice Denis, "Cézanne" [1907]; C.A. p.140)

" «Le soleil est une chose qu'on ne peut pas reproduire, mais qu'on peut représenter.» [...] Admirable formule qui résumait en le contraste de ces deux mots: reproduire et représenter, notre doctrine du Symbolisme pictural, non littéraire—le Symbolisme des équivalents—opposé au vain effort de copie directe des photographes de l'École des Beaux-Arts, et des naturalistes de l'école du "Tempérament" (Maurice Denis, "Chronique de peinture," *L'Ermitage*, déc. 1906; given as "Soleil" in *Théories*; C.A.p.122)

Kuroda did understand the importance of this passage and translated it in full length in his *Maurice Denis and Symbolists*. But, curiously enough, he committed a serious misunderstanding of syntax because of the ambiguous apposition in Denis' original text, and

consequently overlooked the relationship, which Denis took effort to establish, between Cézanne's aesthetics and the idea of symbolistic "équivalent."

「『敬慕す可き語よ、それは此の「模写」[ルプロデュイル]と「再現」[ルプレザンター]の二語の相違を約説する』とドニは云ふ、『文学上—対量[エキバラン]のサムボリズム—ではなく、絵画上の我が象徴主義[サムボリズム]の教義も、美術学校[エコール・デ・ボザール]の写真的な直接模写や、「個性」[タムペラマン]—派のナチュラリストと反対』すると。

["《The admirable words that resume the difference between "reproduction" and "representation"》, said Denis, 《it is not the Symbolism in literature—that of equivalent—but the doctrine of our symbolism in painting, which goes in contrast to the photographic, direct reproduction of École des Beaux-Arts, or naturalist of temperament》"]

(黒田重太郎訳 『モオリス・ドニと象徴派』 1921, pp.39-40)

Instead of attributing the idea of "équivalent" to the Symbolism in painting, as Maurice Denis intended to do, Kuroda, on the contrary, described it as specific to the symbolism in literature in opposition to visual art. Evidently, Kuroda failed to grasp the intention of Maurice Denis at the very core of the French theoretician's argument.

This misunderstanding, however, is not really due to Kuroda's incomprehension, for he presented a sound explanation of "équivalent" almost in the same period (Inaga 2000b). In his Biography of *Van Gogh* (1923), mainly based on Théodore Duret's *Van Gogh* (1917;1924), Kuroda rejected Théodore Duret's impressionistic understanding of Van Gogh and replaced it by a symbolistic interpretation he had acquired. Translating "équivalent" as "equal valeur," Kuroda explained that the conventional shading and lighting taught in the academies depended on "gradual reduction of color, hue and gradation in chiaroscuro." "Van Gogh, in contrast, tried to achieve multi-layered effect by putting colors of equal value side by side. Van Gogh realized by "the hue" what Rembrandt, Millet and others in Barbizon School have rendered by "value":

「レンブラントやミレーほかのバルビゾンの画家が「調子[ワ]ルール」《valeur》でやる所を[ファン・ゴッホは]色彩[クレール]《couleur》でやろうとした [...]これは色階の漸減や、同色の漸暈や、明暗の階程なしに、同価値《équivalent》の色彩を交互併置しつつ、画面全体に互つて—の漸層的効果に達しようとするのである。」

(黒田重太郎 『ワ"ン・ゴッホ』 (1923)p.198; cf. Théodore Duret, *Van Gogh*, 1917, 1924)

Given Kuroda's clear understanding of "équivalent," it is more than intriguing that Kuroda failed to recognize Maurice Denis's intention of identifying Cézanne's formula with the notion of "équivalent." This failure by Kuroda brings to the fore the plain fact that in Maurice Denis's argument, there remains an evident leap of logic between the formula of "reproduction vs. representation" and the idea of "équivalent." In other words, Kuroda revealed by his defective translation the forced intention of Maurice Denis: positioning Cézanne as "le père du symbolisme en peinture" of the 1890s. As a matter of fact, what Kuroda understood as "equivalent" of the symbolist art theory was neither compatible with, nor reducible to, the formula Maurice Denis attributed to Cézanne by force. Let us clarify this aspect by comparing Kuroda's translation of Maurice Denis with TANAKA Kisaku's tentatives.

## 6.

Kuroda was not the first Japanese who paid special attention to the above mentioned passage. TANAKA Kisaku (1885-1945) had made a full Japanese translation of "Le Soleil" as early as in 1913, without committing the kind of syntax error Kuroda was trapped by.

「『太陽は到底 reproduire することの出来ぬもので、たゞ"何ものか"によつて représenter することの出来るものである』。[...]」かうして reproduire と représenter との二語のコントラストのうちにすべての意義を約言したこの Cézanne の貴い公式こそ自分等の非文学的な画的象徴主義即ち『同価《équivalent》の象徴』の教義で美術学校派の写真の模写のやうな作品や、また作者の『資質』[タンペラマン]を口にした自然主義の無用の研究から全くかけ離れたもので、これこそ...」(田中喜作 訳「太陽」、『藝術』1913 p.10)

Tanaka, who unsuccessfully intended to publish the entire Japanese translation of *Théories*, also published in his translation Maurice Denis's "Notes sur la peinture religieuse" (1896), a dense and long text revealing French artist's initial inspiration in regard to the idea of "équivalent."

"Étant donné la structure de l'oeil et sa physiologie, le mécanisme des associations et les lois de la sensibilité (telles du moins que nous les connaissons encore), ils [les symbolistes] en tirèrent les lois de l'oeuvre d'art et obtinrent tout de suite en s'y conformant des expressions plus intenses. Dès lors, au lieu de chercher, toujours en vain, à restituer telles quelles leurs sensations, ils s'appliquèrent à y substituer des équivalents./ Il y avait donc étroite correspondance entre des formes et des émotions! Les phénomènes signifient des états d'âme, et c'est le Symbolisme. La matière est devenue expressive, et la chair s'est faite le verbe. Pour avoir continué la route qu'indiquaient Taine et Spencer, nous voici en pleine philosophie alexandrine."

(Maurice Denis, "Notes sur la peinture religieuse," 1896; C.A. p.37)

「目の構造と其生理、連合の機能と感受性の法則が付与せられるやうに及むで、彼等[象徴主義画家たち]はそこに藝術作品の法則を抽出し、直接にそこに服従しつゝ、一層緊密な表現を得るのである。かくして何等の巧果もなく、彼等の感覚をあるがままに復旧する代りに彼等はそこに同価[エキヴァラン]によって代用しようとするのである。/云ふまでもなく形態と情緒との間には狭い交響があつた。私等のフエノメースは状態を表示するので、それが即ちサムボリズムに外ならない。画面の物質[マチエール]は表現的により、肉は動詞となつた。テーヌやスペンサーが示した道を踏襲したという事実がこゝに私等をアレキサンドリアの平明な哲学の上に置いたのである。」

(モーリス・ドニ/田中喜作訳「宗教画に就て」『美術新報』1915.4.[Vol.14.Nr.6])

Though a conscientious translation, Tanaka's Japanese text is almost incomprehensible in itself, due to several typographical errors ("phénomèse" instead of "phénomène," "by expressive" in place of "become expressive" etc.) and omission ("état" instead of "état d'âme") as well as poor understanding of adjectives ("étroit," "plein" are mistranslated)." Tanaka also fails to penetrate the meaning of Duret's pedantic original French text. As I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere, the terms like "association," "correspondance," and "équivalent" here are borrowed from the contemporary psychology of "Taine et Spencer" (Inaga 1982; 1999). Whereas Tanaka apparently did not recognize the psychological background which sustained Denis's discussion (hence, incomprehensible result in Tanaka's translation), Kuroda, in his *Maurice Denis and Symbolists* (1921) shows a far more accurate understanding:

「モオリス・ドニに従えば[...]綜合主義は象徴画派を生んだ。そして遂に「外的形態と主観的状态の照応」を信ずるに至つて、表現の内在的意義を拡大する事が出来た。即ち私達の靈の状態を表現するのに神々しい場面を藉り来る事なく、觸目の事象を捉へて超實在的な世界を寓したのである。」(黒田重太郎 『モオリス・ドニと象徴画派』1921 pp.57-58)



"The correspondence between the external form and the subjective condition," as Kuroda rightly singled out here, was the main idea of "équivalent" for Maurice Denis around 1896. And this idea is still kept intact at the moment of Gauguin's death in 1903, when Denis stated that "toute l'oeuvre d'art était une transposition, [...] l'équivalent passionné d'une sensation reçue" (already quoted, C.A. p.75). At this stage, the idea of "équivalent" had practically little to do with the color theory, and at least had nothing to do with Cézanne's idea of "reproduction vs. représentation," which Maurice Denis will hear from Cézanne only in 1906...

As for the connection between the usage of primary colors and the notion of équivalent, it was not until the publication of Gauguin's manuscript in 1906, that Maurice Denis finally obtained a clear idea. In Jean de Rotonchamp's, *La Vie de Gauguin* (1906, p.211), the following passage was printed for the first time:

"J'ai observé que le jeu des ombres et des lumières ne formait nullement un équivalent coloré d'aucune lumière [...] Quel en serait donc l'équivalent? La couleur pure! et il faut tout lui sacrifier. Un tronc d'arbre de couleur locale, gris bleuté, devient bleu pur, et de même pour toutes les teintes. L'intensité de la couleur indiquera la nature de chaque couleur: par exemple la mer blue aura un bleu plus intense que le tronc d'arbre gris, devenu bleu pur, mais moins intense. Puis comme un kilo de vert est plus vert qu'un demi-kilo, il faut pour faire l'équivalent (votre toile étant plus petite que la nature) mettre un vert plus vert que celui de la nature. Voilà la vérité du mensonge."

(Paul, Gauguin, "Diverses Choses," ca. 1896-98, *Oviri*, p.177)

## 7.

In my opinion, 1906 was a capital year for the elaboration of artistic theory in Maurice Denis's thinking. Firstly, Jean de Rotonchamp's book provided Denis with the first hand material to demonstrate Gauguin's idea of pure colors as equivalent of light. Secondly, Cézanne's confession about the "representation instead of the reproduction," obtained through the interview in Aix, allowed Maurice Denis to graft it on the renewed interpretation of "équivalent." And yet, we must keep in mind that the connecting operation itself is due to Maurice Denis's personal choice, and we must be careful not to confuse his speculation with the historical fact. The transmission of Cézanne's visual thinking to the Nabis in the fin de siècle through Paul Gauguin to Serrusier in their encounter at the Bois de l'Amour in 1890 is not so much a truth as a founding myth elaborated and propagated mainly by Maurice Denis.

One more anecdote on the destiny of "équivalent" in guise of conclusion. In Sarah Stein's note there is a description of "équivalence" as was explained by Henri Matisse to his female disciple (*Écrits et propos sur l'art*, pp.72-73). In a lettre written to Maurice Denis, around the same period, in 1907, Aristide Maillol asked Maurice Denis if he had read the newly appeared book by de Rotomchamp. The fact that Maillol was staying in Matisse's house at that moment suggests that Matisse had taken interest in de Rotomchamp's *La Vie de Gauguin*. Later Matisse will confess that after having understood where the color theory of Paul Gauguin came from, he began to better understand Gauguin. In fact, a portion of the transcription of Gauguin's manuscript, published in Rotomchamp's book (which we have quoted from) contained, in reality, the passages Gauguin had copied from Eugène Delacroix (Piron 1856, pp.405-6), without explicitly mentioning the source. Raymond Echolier identified Maurice Denis's "équivalent" with Matisse's "équivalence" without showing the reason (Echolier 1956, p.36). E.C. Oppler, in her *Fauvism Reexamined* (1976, p.258) was intrigued by the similarity between the two, without elucidating the mystery of the coincidence. However, the circumstances above stated would permit us to see the reason of this convergence.

A philological study of the word "équivalent" as an idea, with its contradictory meanings and conflictual transmission in history, remains to be done. By referring to the Japanese

sources, scarcely known in the West, the present paper tried to make some modest contributions to this endeavor to come.

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### **1930-40年代の日本におけるセザンヌの受容**

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