

Henri Matisse's "Bathers by a River"

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FIGURE 1. Henri Matisse (French, 1869–1954). *Bathers by a River*, 1910–16. Oil on canvas; 261.6 x 391.2 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection (1953.158). Originally this painting was to be part of the ensemble that included *Dance II* (fig. 7, p. 32) and *Music* (fig. 8, p. 33), which the Russian collector Sergei I. Shchukin commissioned from Matisse to decorate the most public part of his mansion, the main staircase. After Shchukin decided against buying it, Matisse was to work on the picture in two subsequent campaigns, in 1913 and again in 1916, during World War I, which probably affected its final form.

What I dream of is an art of balance,  
of purity, and serenity, devoid of troubling  
and depressing subject matter. . .

HENRI MATISSE, 1908<sup>1</sup>

# Henri Matisse's *Bathers by a River*

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Throughout his long life, the French painter Henri Matisse (1869–1954) largely succeeded in fulfilling his dream of producing works with untroubled and serene subjects, that is, sunlit interiors, flowers, beautiful women, and colorful near-abstracts. The exceptions to this rule constitute a small body of important works—illustrations of violence or death in several books, including *Jazz* (1947), the *Crucifix* and *Stations of the Cross* in the Chapel of the Rosary at Vence (1951), and, I believe, the Art Institute's *Bathers by a River*.<sup>2</sup>

*Bathers by a River* (cover and fig. 1) is not ordinarily excepted from Matisse's works about "luxury, calm, and voluptuousness."<sup>3</sup> The prevailing interpretations of the Art Institute's painting have resulted from some combination of historical, stylistic, and biographical clues as to its meaning. Historically, the canvas appears to share the original joyous theme of the decorative panels commissioned for the home of the Russian collector Sergei Shchukin in 1909;<sup>4</sup> stylistically, it is seen to be the culmination of the artist's assimilation of Cubism;<sup>5</sup> and, biographically, it has been used to demonstrate the artist's use of real experience—his 1912 and 1913 voyages to North Africa in this instance—to enrich and transform conventional themes.<sup>6</sup> Without attempting a single exclusionary or authoritative interpretation of this impressive canvas, this paper will highlight aspects of the painting that pose the difficulties of "reading" it in a smooth art-historical narrative either about modern art or about Matisse's individual artistic achievement.

The historical sequence of the canvas's evolution has recently come to light. We know that a composition of

*Bathers*, originally designed to complete and complement two canvases of 1910–11, *Dance II* (fig. 7, p. 32), and *Music* (fig. 8, p. 33), was meant to synthesize the frenzied energy of the former and the contemplative attentiveness of the latter in a scene of "sérénité," of active contentment, in which women bathe and socialize near a waterfall. The third canvas of the trio, the Art Institute's *Bathers by a River*, however, was abandoned in 1910, resumed unsuccessfully in 1913, and finally completed in 1916, during World War I. The painting's long gestation and its subsequent wartime completion resulted in the radical alteration of the style and, as I shall suggest, of the character of the subject and its meanings.

American formalist critics and post-World War II artists have long valued the canvas as one of a group painted by Matisse between 1913 and 1917 in which he achieved, by means of an exploration of Cubist compositional methods, a new simplicity and structure in his decorative paintings. As John Golding noted, "Whereas the sinuous muscularity of the dancers and the contained simplicity of the musician [in *Dance* and *Music*] had been given a strongly decorative emphasis, the gravity of the later painting [*Bathers by a River*] again speaks eloquently of the Cubist encounter."<sup>7</sup> This compositional strength and austerity marks a high point in the "style-history" of Modernism and, according to some historians, helped prepare the way for the development of non-objective painting after the war. What is not always taken into account in these formalistic histories is that Matisse painted *Bathers by a River* at a moment of intense crisis and internal division among advanced artists using the Cubist style. I suggest that part of the meaning of the Art

Institute's canvas arises from the fact that *Bathers by a River* is a strategic response to this crisis.

Finally, Matisse scholars have relied on the artist's temperament or on the evidence of patterns of recurrence in his work to insist on the unity and coherence of his oeuvre and of particular works. Despite the absence of a complete biography of the artist—authorized or unauthorized—many problems in Matisse's art have been resolved by recourse to the painter's character traits and the crises in his life. The information we do have indicates that Matisse possessed a generally conservative character, even though he periodically engaged in unexpectedly audacious artistic behavior. The consistency of the choices Matisse made and of the life he led has been extended to his artistic productions; thus contradictions and conflicts within and between works are minimized or explained away. For example, Jean Guichard-Meilhi wrote: "In these [post-1918] paintings, even the smallest and most hurried ones, there is a marvelous certainty, exactness of proportion, variety and elegance. This peaceable, balanced Matisse is no less true to himself than the Matisse of the great periods of conquest."<sup>8</sup>

Especially since the publication of his written statements on art, unusual weight has been given to his expressed intentions or his post-facto reflections.<sup>9</sup> But these are often contradictory or inconclusive. For example, according to his daughter, Marguerite, Matisse considered the Chicago painting unfinished; on the other hand, he numbered it one of five of his most important, pivotal canvases.<sup>10</sup> As Amy Goldin once remarked, a propos of Matisse, "The artist has privileged access to his intentions, but not to his accomplishment, and his own assessments cannot free us from the necessity of making our own."<sup>11</sup> Thus, while taking account of the artist's comments on his work, we will place them in the context of other clues to the painting's significance.

Matisse once wrote that "a work of art must carry within itself its complete significance and impose that upon the beholder even before he recognizes the subject matter. . . . [He should] immediately understand the sentiment which emerges from it, for it [the significance or sentiment] is in the lines, the composition, the colour."<sup>12</sup> It takes a certain willfulness to continue to claim that the sentiment of this large decorative canvas is one of hedonistic plenitude. Our eyes report something far different.<sup>13</sup> Against a background articulated by vertical panels as percussive and insistent as a drumbeat, four columnar female figures enact some unspecified ritual. Viewed as a compositional whole, that is, as a unified group on a single field, the women lack coherence and rapport. Instead, one is led to read the structure narratively, from left to right, as on a frieze or scroll. The analogy of a frieze is supported by the sculptural quality of the

figures, plastically rendered and embedded in the flat ground. Reversing the Galatea myth, the figures exchange their pink flesh tones for pervasive stone-gray overpainting.

Although the canvas encourages lateral, left-to-right reading, it is not without spatial cues. The figure on the left stands on a *repoussoir* cluster of light gray foliage; she looks at the second figure, which, higher up and extending beyond the frame, appears to occupy a more distant position. Not only is the exact activity of this figure ambiguous, but its upper portion—head and shoulders that run off the upper edge of the picture plane—is obscure, multiform, possibly veiled.<sup>14</sup> The canvas is bisected by a black vertical band, which emphasizes the canvas surface while alluding to deep space. To the right of this band of black stands a robed figure, positioned lower and, hence, closer to the viewer than her counterpart on the far left. The last figure, at the far right, whose ankles are cut by the framing edge, advances into the viewer's space.

An obvious transition occurs from left to right. The figure at the far left moves toward a natural paradise of luxuriant lime-green foliage, looking toward the seated/wading figure in the middle distance. The latter thrusts her foot into the viscous black band near the center of the canvas. The exact median, however, lies between the edge of the black vertical and the rising curve of the diamond-headed serpent emerging from the lower edge of the picture. The line of the serpent, which flows into the downturned arms of the third figure, helps to bridge the visual gulf and obtrusive flatness effected by the black vertical. Despite this mediation, one is struck by the contrast of the verdant left side of the composition with the unearthly right side, with its stark figure-ground relations. While the two left figures are innocently nude, those on the right seem partially clothed. The last figure on the right presses forward on the picture plane, the wafer of her featureless face confronting the viewer. Rigid and affectless, she resembles a displaced caryatid or some abraded gisant, up-ended from a tomb. An architectural resonance results from the black area behind her head, which resembles a capital or impost block surmounting the column of her body. Severed at the ankles, possibly mutilated in the left arm, the figure seems fragmented, maimed, yet possessed of an iconlike dignity. The ice-blue panel at the right and the rising movement of the double, curved "landscape" lines suggest a final, faint note of hope.

It would be too extreme to call the emotional tone of this painting melancholic: the tropical exuberance of the emerald foliage at the left and the monumental, tense vitality of the figures preclude a mournful effect. Rather, the sentiment imposed on the beholder by *Bathers by a*

*River* is that of *gravitas*: weightiness; having consequence, dignity, seriousness.

The conditioning to read the work as a paean to joyful sensuality is difficult to overcome. The “joy of life” theme was a major one in the artist’s work from 1904 and continued to occupy him until his death.<sup>15</sup> Particularly in decorative panels, the artist favored this traditional, universal, and pleasurable theme, at once arcadian and utopian: the nude at leisure in a natural setting. Since the canvas has been identified as the third in a series, its interpretation has been dominated, understandably, by Matisse’s own stated intention concerning the program of the whole:

I have to decorate a staircase. It has three floors. I imagine a visitor coming in from the outside. There is the first floor. One must summon up energy, give a feeling of lightness. My first panel represents the dance, that whirling round on top of the hill. On the second floor one is now within the house; in its spirit and in its silence I see a scene of music with engrossed participants; finally, the third floor is completely calm and I paint a scene of repose: some people reclining on the grass, chatting or daydreaming. I shall obtain this by the simplest and most reduced means, those which permit the painter pertinently to express all of his interior vision.<sup>16</sup>

The final version of *Bathers by a River* is not the painting described by Matisse in this early, intentional statement. The sobriety and solemnity of the final canvas, the treatment of the female figures without exoticism or eroticism, all point to the expression of an “interior vision” profoundly affected by World War I. Although the figures may have been conceived, and even resumed, in 1913, as an Edenic reverie, Matisse used these female figures in 1916 as apparent integers of stoicism and mute witness. The canvas, finally, seems to narrate a passage from abundant life to stark and frozen sterility. What was once a fecundating stream or waterfall is now an unspeakable caesura, an impassable trench or black maw, dividing past from present. As Pierre Schneider observed, “Between 1910 and 1916 the aesthetic climate and the psychological climate had very much changed: the paradise envisaged between 1909 and 1910 appeared to Matisse in these war years as [a paradise] lost: a serpent has slipped in.”<sup>17</sup> Quite literally here, a serpent has been inserted into the paradisaical scene on the left side of the canvas; the wasteland on the right is the result.

In the “aesthetic . . . [and] psychological climate” of the war, the serpent seems to reflect both an artistic and an extra-artistic intrusion or “Fall.” Therefore, this study of the nexus of meanings in *Bathers by a River* will consider, first, the context of the work as affected by the war, and, secondly, the context of the work as affected by the internal problems of the avant-garde in Paris around 1916.

*Bathers* was resumed during the Battle of Verdun (February through June 1916; 650,000 dead) and completed during the Battle of the Somme (July through November; over one million dead). The year 1916 was one of the bloodiest of the war; nonetheless, the allies still believed victory to be possible and the war to be honorable. Matisse felt keenly the effects of the struggle. His family in the north was in a zone of German occupation, which had been the scene of early and heavy fighting; his family farm in Bohain had been destroyed, his widowed mother suffered a heart condition, and his only brother was a hostage in Germany.<sup>18</sup> “The lack of news from my family,” the artist wrote to his friend, the artist André Derain, at the beginning of 1916, “and this anguish that is the result of continual waiting, the little that we know, all that is hidden from us—this gives you a picture of the civilian during the war.”<sup>19</sup> If the war had dragged on, Matisse’s two sons, aged fifteen and sixteen, would have had to serve. The artist himself had tried to enlist at the beginning of the hostilities; too old, he chafed at the passive role of those behind the lines. Matisse and his fellow artist Albert Marquet wrote to their friend and patron, the socialist deputy of Montmartre, Marcel Sembat, to ask what they might do further to aid the war effort. He replied, “Do just what you are doing: painting well.”<sup>20</sup> Although Matisse took refuge in painting, this was also a painful struggle, which he always linked to the war effort: “I hope to get finished with it [his *Moroccans*, a major canvas with which he was then struggling], but what tortures!” he wrote to his friend Charles Camoin in July 1916. “I’m not in the trenches, but I agonize all the same.”<sup>21</sup>

A letter of July 1, 1916, to his former pupil, the German artist Hans Purrmann, reveals his state of mind:

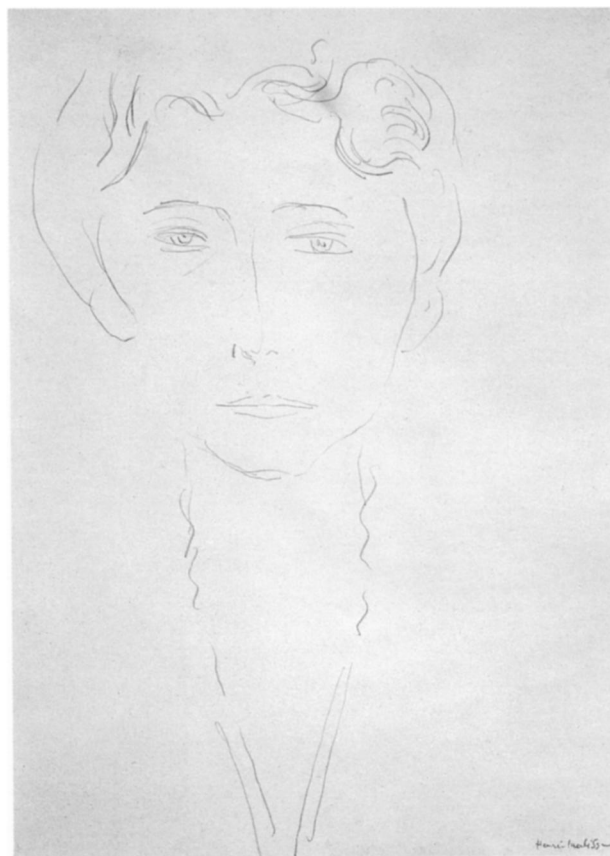
Derain, who came back [from the front] yesterday displayed a state of mind so marvelous, so grand, that in spite of the risks I shall always regret that I could not see all these upheavals. How irrelevant the mentality of the rear must appear to those who return to the front.

As I told you I have worked a great deal. I finished a canvas the sketch of which is on the back [The Detroit Institute of Arts’ *The Window*]. I have also taken up again a five-meter-wide painting showing bathing women [*Bathers by a River*]. As for other events concerning me: [he details several other paintings he has recently finished]. . . these are the important things of my life. I can’t say that it is not a struggle—but it is not the real one, I know very well, and it is with special respect that I think of the *poilus* who say deprecatingly, “We are forced to do it.” This war will have its rewards—what a gravity it will have given to the lives even of those who did not participate in it if they can share the feelings of the simple soldier who gives his life without knowing too well why but who has an inkling that the gift is necessary. Waste no sympathy on the idle conversation of a man who is not at the front. Painters, and I in particular, are not clever at translating their

feelings into words—and besides a man not at the front feels rather good for nothing. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The tenor of these remarks indicates the artist's sense of impotence, of being on the sidelines of great events, of possibly missing an experience that could have deepened his character or have permitted him to share in a noble common enterprise. There is little political passion in Matisse's remarks; he was, after all, writing to a German, the putative enemy, whose friendship he was at pains to preserve. He seemed to regret that he was not sharing an extraordinary communal experience of selflessness, of heroism, of momentous public import. The adventure was fully available only to sufficiently young males; Matisse was left behind with women, children, and the elderly. Yet even these could share the war's effect: the enrichment of the individual who is involved in a cause greater than himself or herself.

FIGURE 2. Henri Matisse. *Portrait of Mabel Warren*, 1913. Pencil on paper; 28.2 x 21.6 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, gift of Mrs. J. Gardner Bradley, Mrs. Warren Thayer, and Miss Sylvia Warren. Matisse believed that, in the creation of a portrait, the artist and subject engage in an interchange revealing something of each party's inner character.



Matisse empathized with the “woman’s role” in his forced; home-front inactivity. He also assumed a nurturing, protective role with the wives of friends in service and with impoverished foreign artists stranded in France. In the early years of the war, he maintained a kind of perpetual open house at his suburban home in Issy (fifteen minutes from the Gare Montparnasse, Paris) for those seeking a brief escape from the hardships of the capital.<sup>23</sup> Shuttling between his apartment-studio in the heart of Paris and his suburban home, Matisse—anxious, insomniac, plagued with migraine headaches—did what he could to help. In his inevitably passive role as non-combatant, however, he could mainly endure, like the women around him.

The war dislocated and altered the lives of women nearly as much as those of men; Matisse's own contacts with women broadened during this period. From 1913 to 1918, Matisse produced some of his strongest portraits of women, starting with that of his wife, Amelie Matisse (Leningrad, The Hermitage Museum), in 1913, and including those of Yvonne Landsberg (Philadelphia Museum of Art), Sarah Stein (San Francisco Museum of Art), Greta Prozor (Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne), Eva Mudocci (private collection), Germaine Raynal (New York, The Museum of Modern Art), Josette Gris (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), Marguerite Matisse (the painter's daughter, then in her early twenties; private collection), and his new Italian model, Laurette (New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum). In these portraits of highly accomplished and individualistic women in the painter's circle, Matisse was able to break away from his earlier portrayal of women either as domestically specific or as symbolically universalized nudes in an aestheticized natural paradise. This series of portraits allowed the artist to explore a more nuanced, less conventional treatment of women. The artist was to work all his life in the continuum between using the model simply as the springboard for making a picture (as opposed to making a “woman”) and using painting to reveal the inner truth or character of the individual he was representing.

The latter pole seems more operative in the portraits of women Matisse did between 1913 and 1918. An eyewitness account of one portrait-sitting with Matisse details the artist's procedure. Matisse was quoted describing a session with Mabel (Mrs. Samuel D.) Warren (fig. 2), widow of the former president of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: “There was a constant movement of her [Mrs. Warren's] will forwards and backwards, giving and withdrawing, opening and closing; my first drawing was nothing, but when, after hesitating, her being agreed to lend itself, I was able to work.”<sup>24</sup> (In an opposite experience, Matisse and his wife

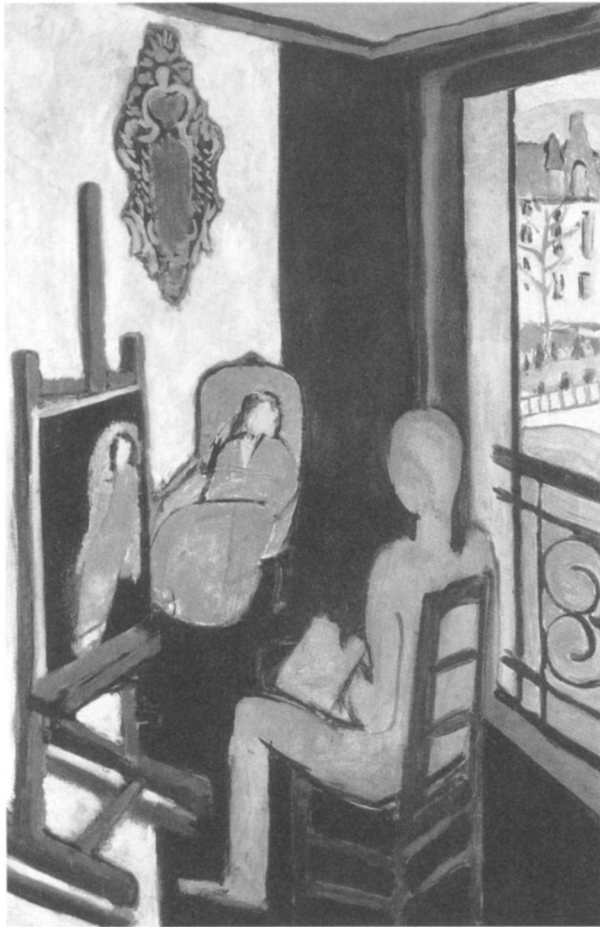


FIGURE 3. Henri Matisse. *The Painter and His Model*, 1916–17. Oil on canvas; 146.5 x 97 cm. Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne. Photo: Jack Flam, *Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869–1918* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1986), p. 447, fig. 451.

sweated through over one hundred sittings for her 1913 portrait, now in The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad; it appears that there was some struggle of wills between them in which neither gave nor received.) The dialogic relationship inherent in portraiture is expressed in Matthew Stewart Prichard's description of the artist as a seer, "a person with a character free enough to flash back to his searchlight a revelation of itself."<sup>25</sup> Matisse's finest portraits are those in which his own qualities of character are projected on a model in whom he discovered them. In other words, in finding what is essential in the model before him, the artist discovered something about himself as well; eduction and projection met and mingled in a prolonged interchange. In the complex dialogue between artist and sitter that results in a portrait, what is negotiated is an exchange or synthesis of identities, which becomes manifest in the image. The portrait becomes a

fused trace, an indexical sign, of this activity of giving and receiving, discovering and becoming. In Matisse's last written text on the subject, he affirmed that "the art of portraiture [demands] the possibility of an almost total identification of the painter with his model."<sup>26</sup> The sense of an interchange between near-equals, even of the artist emptied or denuded in the exchange with the model's reality, is clearly shown in *The Painter and His Model* (fig. 3) of 1916–17.

The results of the artist's new and deepening relationship with women are evident in *Bathers by a River*; the figures, though clearly female, transcend a symbolic transparency in which they can stand simply for "natural" creatures or as culturally conditioned objects of male desire. Androgynized, they are heroic in a traditionally "masculine" way, the artist projecting his own "feminine" role behind the front lines on their patient, stiffened resolve. These figures slip the bonds of easy symbolic reading; Amazonian in their tense strength, they become a Greek chorus of witnesses to some tragedy, signifiers of suffering that need not break, but may even strengthen, one's courage. This work could only have been painted in 1916, at the moment when the enormity of World War I was finally realized, but before the disillusionment and cynicism of 1917 had set in.

*Bathers by a River* is a response, as we have indicated, to the internal crisis in the avant-garde community during 1916–17. Whereas a certain rivalry had marked the relations between the proliferating "schools" of avant-garde artists between 1912 and 1914, the early years of the war were marked by a renewed spirit of camaraderie and a fruitful regroupment of them. Necessitated in part by the material deprivations of the war, this solidarity was also the result of attacks on Cubism by certain nationalistic critics who wanted to discredit the movement by labeling it *boche* (a pejorative term for German) or to bury the style under premature announcements of its demise. The year 1915 witnessed the complete disruption of art activities in the capital but, by 1916, small, fraternally organized exhibitions, conferences, musical evenings, and soirées reemerged. Matisse participated in or attended these activities and shared in the intense reinvestigation of the premises of the avant-garde.

That Matisse explored Cubism in 1915–16 is evident from his frequently discussed "studies" of Cubist methods, such as *Variation on a Still Life after de Heem* (New York, The Museum of Modern Art) and *Pink and White Head* (Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne).<sup>27</sup> Less known is the extent of his participation in the renewed studio debates on the nature of Cubism itself and the future of advanced art. Among Matisse's closest friends of the period were the three theorists of Cubism, Juan Gris, Gino Severini, and Pierre Reverdy; he also

had frequent dealings with two other theorists who examined Cubism from slightly different perspectives, Amédée Ozenfant and Léonce Rosenberg. So passionate were their studio discussions that, sixteen years later, Ozenfant remembered “the effects of the theoretical anxieties [that] wrinkled [Matisse’s] brow and led him into rages which made the spectacles jump on his nose.”<sup>28</sup>

At issue was the question of the future of Cubism. Was it simply the style of Modernism or merely another code of representation to be added to traditional codes? (Pablo Picasso’s return to pre-Cubist modes of representation seemed to indicate the latter.) On the one hand, the mechanization of the war seemed to call for discontinuous, hard-edged geometric forms and a certain kind of “cubo-futurist” compositional complexity.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, some Cubist and Cubist-inspired painters, such as Gris, Severini, Rivera, Férat, Metzinger, and Lipchitz, had begun to develop a flat, simplified, abstracting style, known by 1918 as “classical” or “crystal” Cubism, which favored pure plastic form over meaningful subjects. Other artist-writers such as André Lhote, Roger Bissière, and Ozenfant began to call for a new synthesis of the intellectual rigor of Cubism with the return to *sensibilité*, or feeling.

Through Matisse’s friend Reverdy, we know that the question of subjects for painting had become a point of

contention in 1916.<sup>30</sup> Opposing overtly modern subjects—machines, sports, airplanes, etc.—as necessary for advanced painting, Reverdy upheld the everyday, ordinary object or experience as sufficiently “contemporary,” and minimized the importance of the initiating bit of reality for the painting’s (or poem’s) emotional effect. According to Reverdy, no matter how much the artwork ideally approaches the condition of architecture, geometry, or mathematical construction, it must discharge poetic emotion. With great lucidity, however, Reverdy insisted that emotion does not arise from subject matter or from anecdote, but from the “image,” that is, a metaphoric joining of distant realities. The precision and surprise of the juxtaposition occasion the artistic emotion produced.

Insistence on the difference between “image” and “representation” was necessary in vanguard Parisian studios in 1916: traditional genres of representation had reappeared—landscape, portraits, multifigured scenes. Although geometricized, or given an angular look, traditional subjects were justified as restoring “human values” lost in the intellectualizing of Modernism and in danger of being further damaged by the barbarism of the war. In particular, controversy raged—to the point of fist-fights and challenges to duels—over whether there could be such a thing as a “Cubist portrait.” The pure, plastic form of Cubism was, according to Reverdy and his group, antithetical to the representational aims of portraiture. Preventing these plastic forms from becoming merely decorative arrangements was another problem. What could tradition teach about the Grand Style of monumental public painting that could be useful to artists now consciously forging a new tradition? What subjects retained truths about the human condition without falling into anecdotal sentimentality? Was there a style proper to noble subjects—a style that, in fact, made them noble?

*Bathers by a River* can be viewed as Matisse’s resolution of some of the issues we have just sketched. We also know that Matisse was questioning the conditions for “greatness” in painting: did it depend on style, on invention, or on elevated subject matter? As early as 1914, a letter to Camoin indicates the painter’s meditation on nobility in painting. Matisse had borrowed a small Seurat landscape from Félix Fénéon; he compared it to a reproduction of Delacroix’s *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel* and a Cézanne still life. He remarked that the Seurat canvas was “great,” despite its Neo-Impressionist “positivism, its somewhat inert stability,” deriving from its simple “juxtaposition of objects.” The Delacroix, on the other hand, “remained anecdotal” despite its meaningful subject matter and other qualities, which Matisse found disappointing.<sup>31</sup> It appears that he was reaching



FIGURE 4. Henri Matisse. *Jeannette V*, 1916. Bronze; 58.1 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.

beyond style toward the possibilities of invented or constructed subjects, and beyond the anecdotal toward the meaningful. In a moment of uncharacteristic disgust for his *métier*, he had written in 1913 to his friend Camoin, “the truth is that Painting is quite a disappointing thing.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, it seems that one cannot attribute the new sentiment of sobriety in Matisse’s work of the period solely, or even primarily, to his investigation of Cubism as disinterested formal research, but rather as a Grand Style capable of expressing subjects of sufficient depth or grandeur to overcome a certain trivialization of the painting profession.

Typically, Matisse’s response to the crisis in style and representation of this period was both totally involved and multiple. For example, he resumed portraiture but did so almost exclusively outside the framework of Cubist devices. He also took it up in sculpture with his *Jeannette* bust, the final version of which (*Jeannette V*) (fig. 4) was completed, along with *Bathers*, in 1916. With its brutal strength, poise, and male-female balance, this stunning head rivals the women in the Chicago canvas. It embodies “a highly abstracted kind of sexual energy,” as Flam put it, “an extraordinary sense of psychological nakedness.”<sup>33</sup> Its combination of bold modeling, with slashing, flattening “cuts” that excise softer surface effects for monumental simplicity, can also be found in the third version of Matisse’s sculpted *Back* (fig. 5), completed at the same time as *Bathers*. It seems that, in working out the “decorative” panel, *Bathers*, Matisse combined the radical flattening of Synthetic Cubism with something wholly other, sculptural plasticity and volume. The first and third figures in *Bathers by a River* especially are modeled in caressing impasto planes and then clarified with thick, black-line “cuts” of brushstrokes — e.g., the long line of back, buttocks, and leg in the first figure and of breast, belly, and thigh in the third figure. Sculpture combines the intimacy of tactility with the permanence of the monumental.

Matisse’s reversion to sculpture indicates a wariness of the decorative effects of flattening, inherent in Synthetic Cubism. In an article written by Severini just as Matisse was finishing his *Bathers*, the period of the two artists’ closest contact, the Italian Futurist discussed this problem of decorative abstraction in terms reminiscent of Matisse’s practice. Eschewing “decorative good taste” as incapable of reconstructing an object in nature into a new, autonomous “reality-in-itself,” Severini said:

I mean by “decorative good taste” that logic which suggests sometimes to artists that they place, for example, a curved line near a straight one, because the straight line needs a curved one, thus taking a “means” for an “end.”

This logic is closer to the dressmaker than to the painter. When one form or color has no reason for being other than the



FIGURE 5. Henri Matisse. *Back III*, 1916. Bronze; 188 x 113 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. In this sculpture, produced during the same period that Matisse was reworking *Bathers*, the artist strove to invest the nude figure with a sense of monumentality and power. As in the Chicago painting, Matisse achieved his aim by distilling the female form to its essential, architectonic volumes.



FIGURE 6. Henri Matisse. *The Moroccans*, 1916. Oil on canvas; 181.3 x 279.4 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, gift of Mrs. Samuel A. Marx.

color and form near them, that form and that color are neither true, essential, nor plastic.

They are simply arbitrary and decorative; they belong to no objects, and cannot in consequence reconstruct them.<sup>34</sup>

Severini's statement about the radical difference between decorative abstraction and abstracted reality was crucial to Matisse's practice as well. Although Matisse never hesitated to call his work decorative, he never meant it to be a pleasing formal arrangement for its own sake. For the artist, simplifications had to arise from feeling, from deepening identification with the model, from extracting essentials; otherwise, they were worthless. I believe this is why Matisse struggled so painfully with *Bathers* and with the other large panel he worked on concurrently, *The Moroccans* (fig. 6). Reusing themes he had already treated in depth, he struggled to give them even deeper resonance and import. Shortly after the passage cited above, Severini quoted Matisse: "From one side to the other a painting ought to be 'composed,' 'willed' and technically perfect. I find virtually correct this saying of Courbet, which Matisse told me: 'One ought to be able

to re-commence a masterpiece at least one time, in order to be sure that one has not been the plaything of one's nerves or of chance."<sup>35</sup>

*The Moroccans*, *Jeannette V*, *Back III*, and *Bathers by a River* were all reworkings of successful earlier versions of their subjects. Only with *Bathers* was Matisse unable to "re-commence a masterpiece." The 1916 *Bathers* was his third attempt to make a scene of bathers at rest in *sérénité*, but he was no more successful at this than he had been three or six years earlier. Ultimately, although he worked on the same canvas, he made a different painting with a new meaning. *Bathers by a River*, in fact, marks an important break with the artist's older theme of "luxury, calm and voluptuousness," with its nineteenth-century view of women as signifiers of (male) hedonism. He introduced, in this unique painting, a new significance for these women.

I cannot conclude, as did Flam, that the simultaneous reworking of *The Moroccans* and *Bathers* demonstrates that the Art Institute painting contains a note of Moroccan exoticism and mysteriousness (by which, I



FIGURE 7. Henri Matisse. Photograph of *Bathers by a River* in 1913. Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne. Photo: Jack Flam, *Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869–1918* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1986), p. 356, fig. 364. In 1910, Matisse began, but did not complete, this monumental composition of female bathers gathered near a waterfall. He resumed work on the same canvas in 1913, but three years later, due to the impact of World War I, completely transformed the idyllic pastoral scene into an entirely different, and hauntingly somber, expression of endurance and suffering.

feel, he meant “female” mysteriousness). That Matisse was *not* able to complete *Bathers* at the time he was also painting *Arab Café* (Leningrad, Hermitage) of 1913, and that the 1916 version of *Bathers* is such a departure in style and emotional tone from its counterpart, *The Moroccans*, leads me to favor the opposite conclusion. If Matisse originally intended a link between the two works, he could not achieve it in 1913 and he transformed *Bathers* into something else in 1916.

Also unconvincing for me are the visual parallels that Flam drew with Gauguin’s Tahitian canvases. In May 1913, Matisse had the occasion to study (and promote the sale of) Paul Gauguin’s monumental canvas *Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going?* (fig. 8) of 1897.<sup>36</sup> There is no record of Matisse’s thoughts on this work, but I have noted earlier that he was experiencing disillusionment with painting at this time. Perhaps it was not merely the Edenic, decorative qualities of Gauguin’s painting that Matisse may have responded to, but more

particularly its ambitious theme, the title’s philosophic resonance, and its somber hint of death and corruption in the arcadian garden.

Probably more significant to Matisse’s canvas than this twenty-year-old painting by Gauguin may have been two major works by Picasso that Matisse was able to study while working on *Bathers*. In 1915, he remarked in a letter to Derain that he had studied Picasso’s *Harlequin* (fig. 9) at Léonce Rosenberg’s gallery and that it was in “a new style, without collages and nothing but painting.”<sup>37</sup> Despite its flat, posterlike handling of forms and colors, the painting, with its grinning harlequin seen against a solid black background, has a somber, haunting quality. The effect is anything but “decorative,” and Matisse may have learned more than a little from it that he used to good effect in *The Moroccans*, where the figures are also deployed against a solid black ground.

More to the point for Matisse’s *Bathers by a River* is Picasso’s 1908 canvas *Les Femmes d’Alger (O.K.)* (fig. 10).

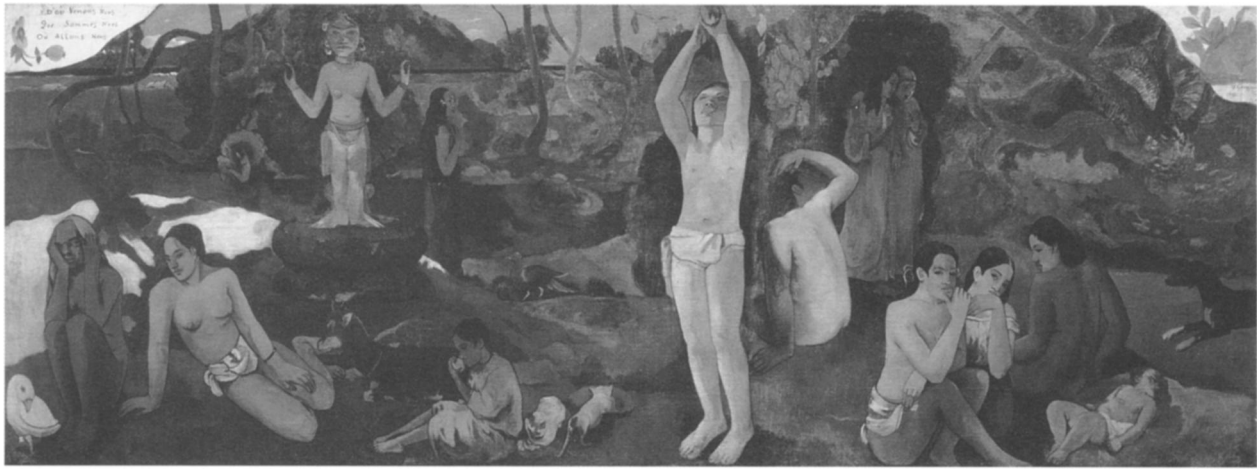


FIGURE 8. Paul Gauguin (French, 1848–1903). *Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going?*, 1897. Oil on canvas; 139.1 x 374.6 cm. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Tompkins Collection. Matisse was able to study this monumental work in 1913, and both its decorative qualities and its philosophic overtones may have stimulated his 1913 and 1916 transformations of *Bathers by a River* (fig. 1 and fig. 7).

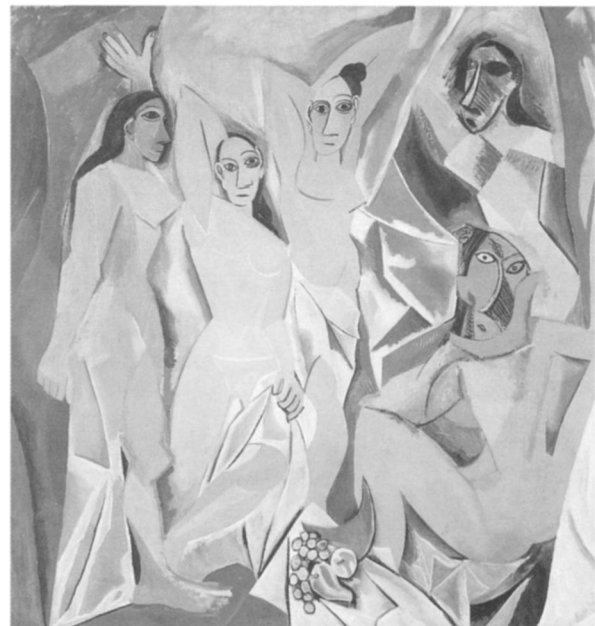
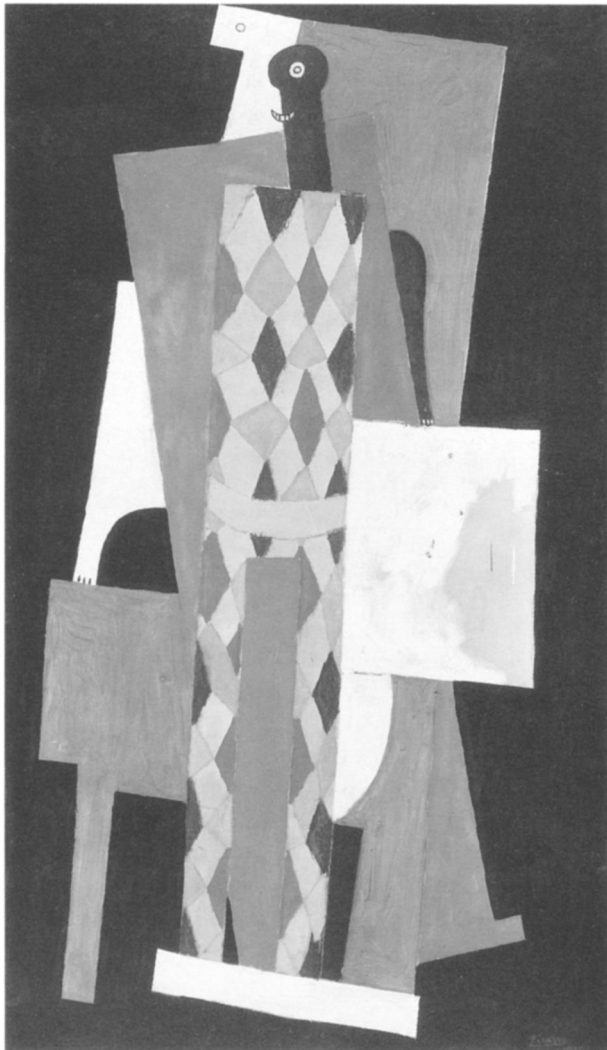


FIGURE 10. Pablo Picasso. *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1908. Oil on canvas; 243.9 x 233.7 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. Picasso's distortion and highly charged, aggressive presentation of five women in this signal work may have inspired Matisse to create the powerful, rather than languidly sensual, nudes in *Bathers by a River*.

FIGURE 9. Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973). *Harlequin*, 1915. Oil on canvas; 183.5 x 105 cm. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. Matisse's appreciation of Picasso's eerie image, with its flat, grinning figure set against a solid dark background, may be reflected in his use of the same device in *The Moroccans* (fig. 5).

10), which Matisse saw later in July 1916 at an exhibition curated by André Salmon entitled “L’Art moderne en France” or “Salon d’Antin.”<sup>38</sup> I believe Picasso’s charged image of powerful females must have stimulated Matisse to render his image of “bathers” with austere intensity. Picasso’s symbolic painting presents five over-life-sized “goddesses” twisting in an ambiguous, enclosed space and charged with the power of the artist’s own sexuality, fear, and aggression. The *Demoiselles* may have been the final challenge to Matisse. Consequently, he would go beyond his habitual portrayal of female nudes, reaching deeper into himself for an emotive and public theme that would raise his effort beyond the shallow representation of current Cubist easel painting. He struggled to defy the limitation of the decorative to render only bland content, and to enhance the formal properties of a Grand Style by means of a grand theme. Larger than life, deeply imbued with the gravity of the times, Matisse’s commemorative female figures embody the strength and endurance ideally present in civilian life during wartime.

In Reverdy’s terms, Matisse transformed the “representation” of female bathers by a waterfall into an “image” of national suffering. *Bathers by a River* brings together a number of distant realities for a distinct emotive effect. It joins the lush garden and its nude inhabitants on the left to the solemnity of the architectonic mourners on the right. It combines the tactile, volumetric presence of the sculptural in the figures, with the insistent flatness of mural painting in the background. And it reconciles a Cubist-inflected formalism with a “historical” subject in the Grand Style. In fusing these contradictory elements, Matisse produced an image of women of great poetic intensity, immediacy, and power.

#### Appendix: The History of *Bathers by a River*<sup>39</sup>

*Bathers by a River* was photographed for the artist’s dealer, Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, in November 1916 (photo no. 1517) and, as far as we know, was never worked on again. Although Marguerite Matisse indicated that her father considered the work unfinished, the fact that he had it photographed and exhibited in its present state indicates that he considered it a completed work. The painting stayed in the artist’s studio for a decade, until it was shown in 1926 at Paul Guillaume’s gallery in Paris. Shortly afterward, Matisse sent the other important 1916 canvas, *The Moroccans*, to an exhibit at the Valentine Dudensing Gallery in New York, entitled: “Henri Matisse Retrospective: The First Painting, 1890, the Latest Painting, 1926.” The show ran from January 3 to January 31, 1927. The artist must have wanted to expose

these more abstract panels to the public, which had known only his small easel paintings for the preceding eight years. He had, in fact, returned to a variant of the 1916 manner in his *Decorative Nude on an Ornamental Background* (Paris, Musée National d’Art Moderne) of 1925–26. *Bathers by a River* must have been purchased around this time by Guillaume, since references to the painting in 1926, 1929, and 1930 refer to it as belonging to the Guillaume collection.<sup>40</sup> From 1930 onward, Matisse included the canvas in major retrospectives, and it was frequently reproduced. According to Jeanne Walter, Guillaume’s widow, the canvas hung in the salon of the Guillaume apartment on Avenue Foch in Paris when not on exhibit. Clement Greenberg recalled that it hung again in the Valentine Dudensing Gallery for some years in the late 1930s, where it profoundly affected such artists as Robert Motherwell, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman.<sup>41</sup> After Guillaume’s death in 1934, the painting passed into the collection of his widow.

In 1950, Henry Pearlman saw the painting at an exhibit entitled “Autour de 1900” at the Galerie Charpentier in Paris. He purchased it from Walter in the summer of 1951, but, conscious of the painting’s importance and its poor condition, he looked for an opportunity to sell it to an American museum that could properly restore and exhibit it. Accordingly, in 1953, he approached Daniel Catton Rich, Director of The Art Institute of Chicago, suggesting that the painting be exchanged for a Toulouse-Lautrec canvas in the museum’s collection. Such a transaction was an exceptional move for the museum. Since the Art Institute was rich in works by Lautrec, however, it was agreed to exchange *Bathers by a River* for *The Opera “Messalina”* from the Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection (1929.919). The transaction was handled by E. and A. Silberman Gallery, New York.

Rich wrote to Matisse to tell him of the Art Institute’s acquisition and to solicit the artist’s comments on the work. He received in return a postcard from the artist indicating that *Bathers* was one of his five most important paintings. In an interview with Courtney Donnell, Associate Curator of Twentieth-Century Painting and Sculpture, Katharine Kuh, Curator of Modern Painting and Sculpture under Rich, recalled: “Matisse wrote him [Rich] a postcard which I had in my files, in which he said, in French, that he considered it one of his five key, no, pivotal works. . . . He said there was another work in Chicago that belonged in that group. . . , the painting Sam Marx owned, *The Moroccans*, which has subsequently been given to The Museum of Modern Art.”<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, a search of the Art Institute’s archives has failed to turn up this important document.

28. Natalie Dumova, "I Collected for my Country. . . Kuranti (Chime of Bells)," *Historical Miscellany*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1989), p. 222 (in Russian).
29. "It [*Music*] has been overpainted with a little red in order to conceal the genitals, even though these were originally indicated very discreetly. They were included to complete the torso. A restorer could easily remove the paint by rubbing it with a bit of liquid solvent such as mineral spirits, benzine, until the hidden portion is revealed," in *Matisse, Painting, Sculpture, Drawings, Letters* (Leningrad, 1969), p. 222 (cited in French, book in Russian).
30. Kean (note 2), p. 136.

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BOCK, "Henri Matisse's *Bathers by a River*," pp. 44–55.

1. Henri Matisse, "Notes of a Painter," cited in *Matisse on Art*, ed. Jack Flam (New York, 1978), p. 38.
2. This work has been variously titled in English and in French. Among the latter are *Au Bord de la rivière* and *Les Jeunes Filles au bain*. Jack Flam, in his authoritative recent monograph, *Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869–1918* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1986), referred to the Art Institute's canvas as *Bathers by a Stream*.
3. *Luxe, calme et volupté* (Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne) is the title of a painting of 1904 by Matisse, in which he first used the subject of women, mostly nude, relaxing on a beach. The title is taken from the refrain of Baudelaire's poem *L'Invitation au voyage*.
4. On the Shchukin panels, see John Hallmark Neff, "Matisse and Decoration: The Shchukin Panels," *Art in America* 63, 4 (July–Aug. 1975), pp. 38–48. Albert Kostenevich, "*La Danse* and *La Musique* by Henri Matisse: A New Interpretation," *Apollo* 154 (Dec. 1974), pp. 504–13; Beverly Whitney Kean, *All the Empty Palaces: The Merchant Patrons of Modern Art in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (New York, 1983), pp. 193–201; and, in this issue of *Museum Studies*, Kostenevich, "Matisse and Shchukin: A Collector's Choice," pp. 26–43.
5. See John Golding, *Matisse and Cubism* (Glasgow, 1978), pp. 14–19, and Lisa Lyons, "Matisse: Work, 1914–1917," *Arts Magazine* 49, 9 (May 1975), pp. 74–77. These authors placed the work in the formal discourse of Cubism and the historical context of the war.
6. For the most basic texts on the painting, see Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Matisse: His Art and His Public* (New York, 1951), pp. 189–203; ill. p. 408; Pierre Schneider, *Matisse*, trans. Michael Taylor and Bridget Strevens Romer (New York, 1984), pp. 284, 472, 488–90; and Flam (note 2), pp. 277–309. Schneider and Flam stressed the Golden Age theme and the Moroccan echoes in the work.
7. Golding (note 5), p. 18.
8. Jean Guichard-Meili, *Matisse* (New York, 1967), pp. 93–94.
9. Dominique Fourcade, *Henri Matisse, Ecrits et propos sur l'art* (Paris, 1972), and, in English, *Matisse on Art* (note 1).
10. See Appendix on p. 55 for these references.
11. Amy Goldin, "Matisse and Decoration: The Late Cut-Outs," *Art in America* 63, 4 (July–Aug. 1975), p. 54.
12. "Notes of a Painter," in *Matisse on Art* (note 1), p. 38.
13. The eyes of the "ideal viewer" have always been male, which may account for the continued tendency to see the painting as portraying desirable, sexually available females, the conventions of nude female representations leading to habituated responses. The equation of the nude female in an outdoor setting as a sign of "the natural," of fulfilled pleasure, of the release from onerous labor, and of the ultimate gratification of desire is certainly made by and for men.

14. The meaning of the figure has certainly eluded scholars. Flam (note 2) saw the woman in a Moroccan context: "And these women, like the veiled women who would not pose for Matisse in Morocco, are presented to us anonymously, without faces. In fact one of them—the second bather from the left—seems actually to be veiled" (p. 419). Clement Greenberg cited in his monograph *Henri Matisse* (New York, 1953) the "echoes of Cubism. . . in the handling of anatomy, especially in the seated, wading bather upper left corner, whose body is cut into cones and rectangles not all of which belong to it," commentary on pl. 18. Lyons (note 5), p. 75, related the seeming intersection of two possible figures to the conflation of two nudes in Cézanne's *Five Bathers* in the Pellerin collection, which Matisse may have examined.

15. Cf. Catherine C. Bock, *Henri Matisse and Neo-Impressionism, 1898–1908* (Ann Arbor, 1981), pp. 63–96, for an account of the early development of this theme and Schneider (note 6), pp. 241–75 and passim, for an argument on the theme of the joy of life as the central one in all of Matisse's oeuvre.

16. Henri Matisse, cited in Charles Estienne, "Des Tendances de la peinture moderne, Entretien avec M. Henri-Matisse," *Les Nouvelles*, April 12, 1909, p. 4; "Estienne: Interview with Matisse, 1909" in *Matisse on Art* (note 1), p. 49.

17. Paris, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, *Henri Matisse, Exposition du centenaire*, exh. cat. by Pierre Schneider (1970), p. 76.

18. To raise money for his brother and others conscripted for labor in Germany, Matisse designated eleven etchings to be sold as a suite, dedicated to "the civilian prisoners of the town of Bohain"; the proceeds were to be used for food packages for them. Clement Janin, "Les Estampes et la guerre," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 15 (1917), p. 382; first noted in Kenneth E. Silver, "*L'Esprit de corps: The Great War and French Art, 1914–1915*" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1981).

19. Cited in Raymond Escholier, *Matisse ce vivant* (Paris, 1956), pp. 112–13.

20. Agnes Humbert, "Notes analytiques," in Gaston Diehl, *Henri Matisse* (Paris, 1954; English ed., New York, 1958), p. 141. Humbert compared *Bathers* with the portrait of Yvonne Landsberg (1913), noting that the spirit ruling both "arises from essentially intellectual speculations." She added, however, that *Bathers by a River* "features the bizarre impression of malaise and restlessness doubtless cruelly felt by the artist at this epoch of his life."

21. Cited in Danièle Giraudy, "Correspondance Henri Matisse–Charles Camoin," *Revue de l'art* 12 (1971), p. 19. After recounting the illnesses in his family, Matisse concluded: "You see that the home front is no fun. Add to that our beautiful painter's profession, which is beautiful only in pipe-dreams."

22. Cited in Barr (note 6), pp. 181–82.

23. See Schneider (note 6), p. 735, for a description of the Matisse household as "full of women" during the first years of the war. Schneider's biographical account of these years is the most detailed.

24. Letter from Matthew Stewart Prichard to Mabel Warren (Nov. 7, 1913), cited in Flam (note 2), p. 374. A typescript of Prichard's letter is in the Matisse Archives in The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 374.

26. "Portraits," in *Matisse on Art* (note 1), p. 152.

27. John Golding's (note 5) is still the classic exploration of Matisse's debt to Cubism in these years. The artist's examination of "methods of modern construction" began in 1913 and continued into 1917. Golding observed:

Matisse's greatest debt to Cubism lay in the fact that its manifestations of 1913 and 1914 suggested to him ways in which he could manipulate space in a freer and more abstract fashion that would parallel or complement the coloristic abstraction during the years in which he had been assimilating and consolidating the Fauve experience. . . . [It clarified] his ability to use pure, unmodulated color, often at maximum intensity or hue, in such a way that it defines the architectural breakdown of the picture surface, adhering to its two-dimensionality, and yet simultaneously playing its part convincingly in a naturalist rendition of space.

About the Art Institute painting, Golding noted:

The anatomy of some of the figures is unfurled outwards and upwards in what amounts to an independent variant of multi-viewpoint perspective. All are contained in simplified, interlocking forms, which in their angularity and architectural verticality recall some of the grandest of Picasso's wartime images, [in which he] was consolidating the monumental, architectonic compositional procedures implicit in the medium.

In addition, Lyons (note 5) stressed the influences of Juan Gris's vertical dissections of the picture plane in contemporary still lifes.

28. Amédée Ozenfant, *Memoires, 1886–1962* (Paris, 1968), p. 215.

29. For a brief period, Futurism made a strong showing in Paris as a kind of Impressionism. Since war "impressions" were of utmost intensity, the impulse toward an art portraying the effects of speed, dynamism, and movement was strong. The editors of the avant-garde journal *SIC* (1916–1919) supported this position but gradually relinquished it in favor of a proto-Dada attitude.

30. Relevant texts from Pierre Reverdy's review, *Nord-Sud*, can be found in *Nord-Sud, Self-defence et autres écrits sur l'art et la poésie* (Paris, 1975). The essay from which the following account is derived is "L'Image," pp. 73–75.

31. Letter dated autumn 1914. Giraudy (note 21), p. 18.

32. Letter dated Nov. 1913. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

33. Flam (note 2), p. 420.

34. Gino Severini, "La Peinture d'avant-garde," *Mercure de France* 121 (June 1917), reprinted in idem, *Temoignages, 50 ans de réflexion* (Rome, 1963), pp. 59–60.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

36. Flam (note 2), p. 367.

37. Cited in Escholier (note 19), pp. 112–13; probably written in Feb. 1916.

38. Etienne Alain Hubert, "Pierre Reverdy et le Cubisme en mars 1917," *Revue de l'art* 43 (1979), p. 61.

39. The research for this Appendix was gathered and organized for the departmental files by Courtney Donnell, Associate Curator of Twentieth-Century Painting and Sculpture at the Art Institute, to whom I am grateful.

40. *Bathers* was illustrated in an article by Sylvain Bonmarriage, "Henri Matisse et la peinture pure," *Cahiers d'art* 1, 9 (1926), p. 239, with the caption: "Jeunes filles au bain, exposé à la galerie Paul Guillaume, terminé en 1918 [sic]." The Druet photo of the 1913 version of the canvas (fig. 7) was published in *L'Esprit nouveau*, no. 22 (1925) along with *Music*, *Dance*, and other paintings.

41. Clement Greenberg, "The Late Thirties in New York," in *Art and Culture* (Boston, 1961), p. 233.

42. Katharine Kuh, interview with Courtney Donnell, Oct. 1982.

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MAKELA, "A Late Self-Portrait by Lovis Corinth," pp. 56–69.

I wish to thank Neal Benezra, Douglas Druick, and Peter Zegers for their comments on this article.

1. "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden / voll Schmerz und voller Hohn!"

2. "Heute leide ich wieder unter einer starken Depression. . . Ich sah, dass meine Malerei tatsächlich ein reiner Mist war. Das Leben zwecklos, keine Aussicht, schwarzer Vorhang, dazu kommt ein Wüten gegen mich und meine Arbeiten." Lovis Corinth, *Selbstbiographie* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 172–73.

3. "Es ist mir zum Heulen. Ein Ekel vor jeder Malerei erfasst mich. Warum soll ich noch weiter arbeiten, alles ist Dreck." *Ibid.*, pp. 184–85.

4. Much information on Corinth's childhood and early career can be gleaned from the first three chapters of his *Selbstbiographie*, which were written between 1912 and 1917. It was probably the stylistic unity of these chapters—which contrast sharply with the subsequent portions of his autobiography that were written between November 1918 and May 8, 1925, in the form of diary entries—that later led Corinth's wife, Charlotte Berend-Corinth, to reissue them separately as Lovis Corinth, *Meine frühen Jahre* (Hamburg, 1954). See also "Aus meinem Leben" in Lovis Corinth, *Legenden aus dem Künstlerleben* (Berlin, 1909), pp. 1–68, for another account by the artist of his childhood and student years. The hero of the story, Heinrich Stierner, is the artist himself.

5. Horst Uhr, in "The Drawings of Lovis Corinth" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia Univ., 1975), rightly drew attention to the influence of Jugendstil on Corinth's graphic works of these years, but in my opinion overestimated the overall impact of the movement on Corinth's evolving style. For an overview of Munich's Jugendstil movement, see Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Art Nouveau in Munich: Masters of Jugendstil*, exh. cat. by Kathryn Hiesinger (1988).

6. The best introduction to this side of Corinth's personality is probably Josef Ruederer's humorous short story "Sein Verstand," whose main character is Corinth himself. First published in Ruederer's collection of short stories *Wallfabrer-, Maler- und Mördergeschichten* (Berlin, 1899), it is now more readily available in Josef Ruederer, *München. Bierheim und Isar-Atten. Satiren und Erzählungen*, ed. Hans-Reinhard Müller (Munich, 1987), pp. 165–220. See also the recollections of Paul Eipper, *Ateliiergepräche mit Liebermann und Corinth*, 3rd ed., ed. Veronika Eipper (Munich and Zurich, 1986); and of Charlotte Berend-Corinth, *Mein Leben mit Lovis Corinth* (Hamburg-Bergerdorf, 1948) and idem, *Lovis* (Munich, 1958).

7. The main repositories of these caricatures—which generally take the form of postcards and letters to his friends—are the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, Department of Prints and Drawings; and the Handschriftensammlung of the Münchner Stadtbibliothek, estates of Josef Ruederer and of Max Halbe.

8. Until that time, the modest estate of Corinth's father, who had died in January 1889, allowed the artist to live and work without undue financial strains.

9. "Das physische Vermögen schwält dem Betrachter aus manchem Corinthischen Bilde wie tierische Brunst entgegen. Man möchte zuweilen nicht hinsehen, glaubt, das, was für Augen da ist, riechen zu müssen." Julius Meier-Graefe, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Modernen Kunst*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1927), pp. 361–62; as cited in Uhr (note 5), p. 162. For an early expression of Meier-Graefe's admiration for Corinth, see Meier-Graefe to Corinth, July 2, 1923, in *Lovis Corinth: Eine Dokumentation* (Tubingen, 1979), p. 305 (subsequently referred to as *Dokumentation*).

10. *Selbstbiographie* (note 2), pp. 171–72, 181–82, 189–94. On Corinth's concept of himself as the artist/genius whose melancholy was inborn, see Siegfried Gohr, "Homo melancholicus: Das Selbstverständnis Corinthins," in Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, *Lovis Corinth: Gemälde, Aquarelle, Zeichnungen und druckgraphische Zyklen*, exh. cat. (1976), pp. 42–46.

11. See Georg Biermann's description of the artist's personality over ten years later in "Lovis Corinth," *Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte* 27 (1912–13), p. 348. See also Corinth's own lighthearted 1909 essay "Aus meinem Leben," in *Legenden* (note 4), pp. 3–68, as well as the first three chapters of his *Selbstbiographie* (note 2), which were written between 1912 and 1917.

12. Among the most poignant descriptions of Corinth's physical disabilities during his later years are those by Charlotte Berend-Corinth (note 6); and by the writer and journalist Paul Fechter in *Menschen und Zeiten: Begegnungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten*, 2d ed. (Gutersloh, 1949), pp. 243–47.