the existing state of social evolution and to advance the process of enlightenment. Lazare wrote, “To transform ideas, to develop a more generous and more human morality must be the role of philosophers, poets, novelists, and artists.” He added, “This will also be ours, and the combined effort of the proletariat working toward its own emancipation and the writer down from his ivory tower for good will suffice to create the new world.”

In the writings of Proudhon, Grave, and Kropotkin, artists had been called upon both to denounce the injustices of their time and to depict the idyllic future. The supporters of art social tended overwhelmingly to concentrate on portraying the better world that was possible. Their message was one of calming and ameliorating the evils of the present. A writer in L'Art social called artists advance sentinels who could see past the sordid present to a brighter world: “Holy mission: to improve, to render a society more beautiful—that is to do social art.” René Ghil wrote, “Scientifically, in morals, we have achieved our duty and arrived at an altruism without sacrifice, at an unceasing tendency toward improvement at the intersection of balancing egoisms, which are the durable survivors of the primordial instinct of [self]-conservation.”

The focus on amelioration and soothing calm was not accidental, since an essential strand in the fabric of anarchocommunism itself was the effort by the displaced and marginalized to rejoin—verbally, if it was no longer possible to do physically—the center of contemporary existence. Inevitably, the pressure to present a positive, utopian image of the world to come began to shape and mold Neo-Impressionism.


4
Utopianism and the Retreat from the Grande Jatte

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Neo-Impressionism and the Search for Solid Ground

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Georges Seurat’s Sunday Afternoon on the Isle of Grande Jatte (Figure 6), painted originally in 1884 and reworked in 1886, became the cornerstone of the Neo-Impressionist movement from its debut at the final Impressionist exhibition in 1886. Maurice Heret called the work a “manifesto painting.” A recent biography of Seurat says that the painting forced the avant-garde artists of the day to respond to it, and Fred Orton and Griselda Pollock have examined the painting as the one “every vanguard artist . . . had to come to terms with.” They argue that “vanguard painters had to situate their practice in relation to Seurat’s current preoccupations; they had to develop along similar lines, take up the issues raised, or challenge his dominance.” They examine Emile Bernard’s Breton Women at a Pardon, produced in 1888, as a work that both appropriates and challenges Seurat’s painting.

If the Grande Jatte served as a manifesto for Neo-Impressionism, however, its legacy for the movement is ambiguous. As a technical springboard for the new movement, the painting represented an essential ground zero from which the group proceeded. Yet the Neos as a circle no less than the Catholic reactionary Bernard modified—even reversed—the implications of Seurat’s painting. The Grande Jatte is a multivalent questioning or undermining of both form and subject matter in the dominant artistic discourses of the day: Impressionist images of bourgeois leisure fuse with Pierre Puvis de Chavannes’ idylls, and then both are turned on their heads in a dizzying blend of deadpan irony and visual puns, many turning on slang terms for prostitution.

2. See Thomson, Seurat, 97–126.
Critics allied with the socialist or anarchist movements noted the manner in which Seurat lampooned his subjects. For the socialist Henry Fèvre, a supporter of Benoit Malon and a founding member of the Club de l’Art Social in 1889, Seurat’s work depicted the “stiffness of idling Parisians, at once starchy and flabby, where even recreation itself is a pose.” The poet Paul Adam, still involved in his long flirtation with the anarchist cause, commented in his review of the Impressionist exhibition for the *Revue contemporaine*, “Even the stiffness of these folk, their cutout forms, contribute to the modern tone, remind us of our too small clothes glued to our bodies, the reserve of our gestures, the British cant we all imitate. We strike attitudes like people in a Memling [painting].” He declared, “Monsieur Seurat has seen that perfectly.”

Alfred Paulet, in *Paris*, took the *Grande Jatte* to portray the “banal promenade” of Parisians in their Sunday best, marching about like automatons.

That the satirical implications of Seurat’s painting occurred to Fèvre and Adam, however, does not mean that such an interpretation came easily. Indeed, many critics found the work incomprehensible. Even Fèvre, a proponent of social art, confessed in his review of the 1886 exhibition that he had to study the painting over and over to grasp what Seurat had done. “It is the grandest canvas of the exposition,” he decided, “and the layman who looks at it from the side remains quiet, dumbstruck, tempted to cry, ‘Hey! What sort of painting is this?’” Fèvre mentioned the abuse and coarse jests the *Grande Jatte* had elicited, but he argued that repeated viewing made both the subject and the manner of the painting clear: “And one closes one’s eyes upon it, partly because one is dazzled—and then opens them, shading them with a hand; blinking, one allows a peek through two fingers and then understands; one understands the intentions of the painter, that the dazzling and the desired blindness are intentional, and little by little, one familiarizes oneself with it, one guesses, then one sees and loves the great yellow spot of grass eaten by the sun, the golden dusty haze in the treetops, the details the retina, blocked by the light itself, cannot distinguish.” Part of the reason Fèvre had difficulty in interpreting the *Grande Jatte* may have stemmed from the...

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comparisons he saw with Puvis de Chavannes: “It is a bit like a materialist Puvis de Chavannes, a grosso mondo of nature, savagely colored.” 6 Puvis occurred to others too when they looked at the Grande Jatte. Félix Fénéon thought of Seurat as a “modernizing” Puvis. But what might a materialist Puvis or a modernizing Puvis be? How can Puvis’ name gain entrance to the same sentence as materialist or savagely colored? What might a comparison of Seurat and Puvis signify—and to whom?

The Neo-Impressionists—much like the anarchists and even the socialists generally—were divided in their appraisal of Puvis and his works. In the 1880s, his admirers ranged from the far right to the far left. Vincent van Gogh wrote in a letter to his sister Wilhelmina in 1890 that Puvis’ The Sacred Grove, of 1884 (Figure 7), seemed to promise a “complete but kindly rebirth of all things that one had believed in and desired, a strange and happy meeting of very remote antiquities with crude modernity.” 7 It is not difficult to find remote antiquities in Puvis’ classical landscape. Crude modernity, however, seems present only in the eye of the viewer, for Puvis ruthlessly expunged it from the painted canvas. Indeed, Puvis’ world of art—the painting’s full title is The Sacred Grove, Dear to the Arts and the Muses—is all but completely sealed off from our own. Puvis contended that The Sacred Grove must be surrounded “by high mountains that close off access to this favored place.” 8 His world was necessarily a world without modern referents. One critic praised his paintings for their “eternal and immutable” character, and another, Théophile Gautier, wrote—in 1865, to be sure—that “his paintings have for their only date the golden age.” Much like Ingres’ Golden Age, from the years 1842–1849, Puvis’ pastoral scenes spring from a profoundly reactionary antipathy to the modern world. In an essay in the Revue de Paris in 1871, Puvis wrote, “I do not exaggerate when I say that we are very, very sick. There is an immense poisoning of the moral sense. . . . How can [we] bring back religious faith, faith in politics, the respect of hierarchy, and the family spirit?” 9 Immediately after the suppression

of the Paris Commune, with the blood of as many as thirty thousand still staining Père Lachaise and the Lobau Barracks, religious faith and respect for hierarchy were anything but neutral phrases: they had framed and justified the slaughter itself.

Some anarchists nonetheless found merit in Puvis’ art, at times exactly because of his elitism. Fénelon hailed his paintings as accessible to “thinkers alone.” French republican theorists, however—and even more clearly many socialists and anarchists—praised Puvis’ work only in spite of its political subtext, for capturing on canvas the perfectibility of humanity and the social order. The socialist leader Jean Jaurès detected in the paintings a demonstration of the coming reconciliation of humanity with itself and with nature. In Puvis, he found a “sweet and white milky way that crosses, from the origin of the centuries, the disorder of the times and the brutality of things.” Bourgeois republicans such as Antonin Proust discovered the integrated, seamless reflection of social harmony they believed wanting in the paintings of Manet.

The appeal of Puvis’ lethargic utopias escaped others. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and a team of his friends worked for two days straight to complete a biting parody of The Sacred Grove (Figure 8). Here the crude modernity glimpsed by van Gogh assembles to invade the grove. A long line of bohemians led by Toulouse-Lautrec and Adolphe Willette marches in from the right, startling Puvis’ placid nympha. A modern clock graces the central structure in Puvis’ grove—a sort of classicized gazebo—while the nikes who float overhead lug oversized paint tubes.

The insurgent anarchists of Emile Pouget’s Le Père Peinard commended Toulouse-Lautrec for tearing apart the safe, gauzy world of official art. They considered the peaceful glades of Puvis’ art merely an artificial gloss over a sordid present. For Pouget and his colleagues, Toulouse-Lautrec’s art—regardless of his personal politics—was a powerful indictment of a smug and heartless society, and it was Toulouse-Lautrec who preeminently revealed the essence of the capitalos gatos who dominated French society.

12. Levin, Republican Art and Ideology, 184–86.
13. The article “Chez les barbouilleurs, les affiches en couleurs”—by the same Félix Fénelon who praised Puvis’ Sacred Grove, which Toulouse-Lautrec mocked—appeared in
Toulouse-Lautrec’s parody of The Sacred Grove not only attacked the form of Puvis’ painting but punctured its nostalgic utopianism, in keeping with the way Toulouse-Lautrec’s scenes of the underside of urban Paris were the negation of Puvis’ anemic Classicism. Toulouse-Lautrec’s art was neither utopian nor dystopian; it neither evoked a golden past nor anticipated a better future. Bound to a permanent present, it was an art of empathy rather than hope—endless, often lacerating rendering of a world without any expectation of escape or release, much less social transformation. To a “timeless” art of rest and repose, Toulouse-Lautrec counterposed a relentless art inextricably bound to social reality as he experienced it.

The regularity of the references to Puvis’ art in critical reviews of Seurat during the period should not divert attention from the qualifications offered whenever Puvis’ name came up. A “modernizing” Puvis, a “materialist” Puvis, a Puvis of “savagely colored” nature is not Puvis at all: the restrictions yield an anti-Puvis in whose work key concepts and forms are inverted and reversed, reinvented for a new art in a new cause. Paul Alexis’ description of Seurat’s Bathers at Asnières as a “false Puvis” sensed the inversion. In Seurat’s paintings, Puvis’ atmosphere of calm is replaced by an exaggerated rigidity and a distinct critical edge. Toulouse-Lautrec parodied Puvis directly, showing the clash between the allegorical figures and the invading bohemians; in the Grande Jatte, the bourgeoisie has made the Grove its own. The policeman from Toulouse-Lautrec’s work has been sent home, but there is a military band.

Reviews of the Grande Jatte were sprinkled with references to the hieratic qualities of the painting, but remarks about the painting’s classical qualities do not efface the avidity with which critics sought to pin down the precise mixture of classes depicted in the work. Jules Christophe, writing in the Journal des artistes in 1886, discriminated a broad range of social classes. He inferred that Seurat had tried to capture the “diverse attitudes of age, of sex, and of social class: elegant men and women, soldiers, nurserymaids, bourgeois, workers.” Paulet identified maids, clerks, and soldiers among the crowd, and Hermel observed the presence of wet nurses, conscripts, and canotiers. Recent scholarship has further extended the debate over the class composition of the painting, as well as the relationship between the Grande Jatte and the slumped plebeian figures in Seurat’s earlier Bathers at Asnières, painted in 1883–84 (Figure 9). But the crux is not the exact delineation of the status of the figures—who broadly number the haute bourgeoisie, together with its satellites, servitors, and parasites—but what Seurat does with the mix. Toulouse-Lautrec’s images of the Parisian netherworld cling to some vestige of Impressionism’s claimed spontaneity and objectivity; Seurat’s group image of bourgeois Paris at leisure, by contrast, is all deliberation and predetermination—a deadpan vivisection of time, place, and milieu. Nothing in the Grande Jatte seems “natural”—no more than Neo-Impressionism claimed to continue the “natural spontaneity” of Impressionism. The stiff, overdressed figures standing or sitting in mute isolation exist in an openly unreal environment, where a tree can have two shadows and a lurking prowler hides in the darkness of a cope.

The venom of Seurat’s image is partly coded: the pet monkey belonging to the large woman at the right seems clearly to serve as a signifier for prostitution. The painting also employs more straightforward elements of caricature, however. The dress of the woman with the monkey, for example, seems a clear target: the grotesque dimensions of the bustle are all the more apparent from the rigid profile in which she is shown. Of course, even with the extra few inches of “hump” Seurat added to the bustle after he initially painted it, the woman’s dress is scarcely more exaggerated than those presented in fashion illustrations of the time. There were, though, established techniques by which the figure could be smoothed out and the dimensions of the bustle minimized. Artists from Camille Corot to James Tissot—or for that matter, the Neo

Henri Edmond Cross—commonly placed the woman at an angle to the viewer, slanting her either toward or away to diminish the sense that the subject had some large artifact strapped to her bottom. Seurat deliberately does the opposite: the woman is rendered in painfully precise silhouette, stiffened and flattened and juxtaposed to her equally stiff companion and the absurd monkey.

Two other works in Seurat's oeuvre are linked to the Grande Jatte thematically as well as in size and scale: Bathers at Asnières, and The Models, of 1887–1888 (Figure 10). One recent study of Seurat's work dismisses the idea that the Grande Jatte and the Bathers are pendants; they do not share a common horizon line and the figures in the two works are not to the same scale.19 Seurat was not Hans Memling, however, and the juxtaposition of two class groupings, engaged in two radically divergent forms of recreation on opposing banks of the same river, possibly on successive days

19. Ibid., 125.
(Sunday, Monday) rewards attention. John House has argued persuasively that the two paintings together convey a sense of warring social spheres: the story of the Horatii and the Curatii—to use Seurat’s own example—transformed in keeping with modern social class. We can even infer a certain one-sided interaction between the two tableaux, as a young boy of the Bathers standing in the river, uncomfortably close to the ominous green effluent, cups his hands above his mouth to shout across the river to the opposite bank.

The relationship between the Grande Jatte and The Models poses analogous questions of class juxtaposition. In The Models, the right corner of the Grande Jatte, which is shown bisecting Seurat’s studio diagonally, forms the backdrop to a scene of three young women, apparently auditioning as models. The motif of the auditioning model was developed also by Oswald Heidbrinck in The Reception of the Model, in an issue of the Courrier français from 1892 (Figure 11). Heidbrinck, attuned to the Courrier’s predilections, seized on the scene as a way of portraying a large amount of female flesh; his nudes are more robust than Seurat’s and are provocatively posed. Though some viewers from the period—including Paul Signac’s pupil Lucie Cousin—found the nudes of The Models to be a “sort of triptych of feminine beauty,” others found the counterposition of the Grande Jatte backdrop and the would-be models particularly significant. Adam underscored the contrast between the “natural” simplicity of the models and the unnatural and exaggerated clothing and pose of the figures from the earlier painting. The critic Gustave Geffroy, writing in Clemenceau’s La Justice when that journal could still pose with some credibility as the voice of a “socialist” opposition, saw the models as working-class women whose thin build bespoke the “truth of the towns and of arduous toil.” He perceived an odd mixture of cruelty and gentleness in the painting’s treatment of the models’ clothing and physiques. Geffroy felt that a certain affectionate empathy was dominant in the painting; he added that the painting “is perhaps the sign of the dreaming vision and the caress by M. Seurat of the things he adores.” The Models, although slightly smaller than the Grande Jatte, forms not so much a pendant to it as an extension into a different space, a different set of class relations. Both the contrast noted by Adam between nude, “natural” modesty and clothed artificiality and Geffroy’s invocation of class are applicable. The foreground world of young women from the working class in this interpretive framework would indicate simplicity and modesty; the prospective models are nude, but simple and un-

21. House, “Meaning in Seurat’s Figure Paintings,” 348–49.
25. Before its added painted border, the Grande Jatte was 207 cm. x 308 cm. The Models measures 200 cm. x 205 cm.
adorned. The clothed, fashionable figure from the Grande Jatte is the prostitute, her rigidity contrasting with the models' thin contours. If the juxtaposition was intended to illustrate the contrast between a natural world and the unpleasant artificiality of bourgeois life, Seurat was breaking with the clichéd oppositions of male and female, and culture and nature, that were dominant in his time; both sides of the polarity are of the same gender, making class rather than gender the criterion of differentiation.

Unlike Impressionist scenes of urban life, Seurat's works make no pretense of capturing a candid, spontaneous glimpse of reality. Seurat's paintings form an interconnected series of deliberate, conscientious efforts to freeze, analyze, and essentialize modern life. His deliberation, with its attendant return to careful preliminary studies, made Camille Pissarro suspicious of Seurat—if only fitfully—from the outset of the Neo-Impressionist movement. However "primitive" the result seemed to most critics—in the stiff friezes of partly flattened figures which reminded Adam of Memling and others of the Pan-Athenaic procession—the result was grounded in a complex matrix of scientific and "scientific," theories. Charles Henry argued that "the progress of social organization will have the effect of simplifying and improving our social psychology." It would be possible, he maintained, to fix and freeze the essence of the psychology of modern life.

Neo-Impressionism and Utopianism

In theory, anarchocommunist analyses of art provided for just the sort of social critique Seurat essayed in the Grande Jatte. In practice, however, proponents of art social—above all, the anarchocommunists and the reform socialists around the Revue socialiste—heavily emphasized the need for art to calm, to soothe, to embody the beautiful dream of a dawning golden age. The anarchist poet Paul Napoléon Roinard typically linked political anarchism and social art as necessary complements, so that there were "anarchists of the act or the dream." It is no coincidence that Fèvre, when defending the Grande Jatte against its detractors, could level no more damaging accusation against them than that they were "profane"—enemies of a sacred world of beauty.

It has been argued that Kropotkin and his fellows rejected utopianism. It is certainly true that anarchocommunist writings emphasized their scientific basis. But, like the English Fabians and the French Independents, the anarchocommunists believed that it was essential to exhibit in detail the shape of a future classless society. Kropotkin's followers held that the failure of Marxian socialism to prepare a detailed blueprint for the future proved that Marxism only pretended to work for a thoroughgoing social revolution. They believed that concrete visions of a golden future were essential to anarchists and utopian socialists because they gave a solid form to yearnings for a better, alternative society. The plethora of anarchist utopian novels at the turn of the century testifies to the prevalence of the notion that through an awakening of the dream of a better world, the cause would be advanced. Both anarchocommunists and Malon's followers would have concurred with Malon's friend and colleague Georges Renard that socialism was to come about as "Eden regained, peace descending from the sky 'strewing gold, flowers, and ears of corn,' as in the songs of one of our old chansonniers, . . . concord reigning from one end of the globe to the other."

26. See Medlyn, "The Development of Georges Seurat's Art," 109–14; and Thomson, Seurat, 146. House argues similarly that the return to "more supple contours" in The Models demonstrates that the stiffness of the Grande Jatte figures is a deliberate part of the picture's program. In other words, the rigidity of the men and women of the Grande Jatte must be discussed in terms not just of style but of significance.

27. For an examination of the equation of the female with nature and of the male with culture, see Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in Woman, Culture, Society, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (New York, 1974), 67–87.

28. See the interview with Henry in Jules Huret's Enquête sur l'évolution littéraire (Paris, 1891), 413–19. Henry added, "It is certain that one will arrive at a certain stable state in language, which will tend toward certain immobility in the evolution of psychological factors." (p. 417).


31. "Marx advances no fundamental theory of future society: for him, the term communism is only a trompe l'oeil" ("Le Congrès international à Bruxelles," La Révolte, IV [September 19–25, 1891], 2).


33. Among the novels are Joseph Déjacque's L'Humanisphère, republished by Grave in 1899, and Grave's own Terre Libre, of 1908. Sebastian Faure's Le Bonheur universelle, of 1920, was a late entry into this category. William Morris' News from Nowhere, of 1890, with its depiction of a quasi-medieval, rural, decentralized future, was widely acclaimed by French anarchocommunists.

34. Georges Renard, Paroles d'avenir (Paris, 1904), 80–81.
The Neo-Impressionists themselves most commonly responded to anarchocommunist theoretical statements not as guides to actions but as lovely dreams. In April, 1892, Camille Pissarro wrote in a letter to Lucien that he had received a new book by Kropotkin. The book—most likely Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*—impressed him greatly. He wrote to Octave Mirbeau the same month, "I have just read Kropotkin's book. *It may be that it is utopian, but in every way it is a beautiful dream.*" He went on, "And as have we had plenty of examples of utopias becoming realities, nothing prevents us from believing that it will be possible one day, unless man founders and returns to complete barbarism." In 1892, Cross wrote to Maximilien Luce that he received Grave's *La Révolte* regularly. "What a generous and powerful philosophy!" he exclaimed.

Such attitudes were clearly predisposed to accept Puvis de Chavannes as the harbinger of a new âge d'or; even the syndicalist Édouard Berth saw in Puvis' work a "harmonious and serene form, freely social." Many anarchist critics were remarkably eclectic in their appreciation of art and artists; they acclaimed works and artists for subject matter and emotional impact. The praise for Puvis could move swiftly to praise for Claude Monet: an anarchist critic commended Monet for capturing not mere reality but "reality enchanted." Puvis and Monet alike could be admired for their consistent eschewing of the ugly and the sordid.

Hence, it is to be expected that when anarchist critics praised Neo-Impressionism, it was rarely if ever for the multivalent ironies of Seurat's images. Rather, Neo-Impressionism's anarchist supporters hailed the movement for capturing the certainty of a radiant and beautiful future. One of the most detailed and enthusiastic critiques of Neo-Impressionism in an anarchist journal was the one in Jean Grave's *Les Temps nouveaux* in which Charles Albert employed Signac's *D'Éugène Delacroix au néo-impressionnisme* as the theoretical framework for an examination of the movement. Albert congratulated the Neos for the way they captured the "beauty of tomorrow: not the harsh and fugitive beauty dear to unhealthy souls of our time *but essential beauty, refreshing and pure.*" For Albert, the key to understanding Neo-Impressionism lay in recognizing Signac's goal of "complete harmony" in "integral purity." Conscious of the passion with which Neo-Impressionism had been debated by artists, intellectuals, and the public, Albert argued that he found in its works a "deeply uniform impression of restful serenity, of peaceful harmony, of innocent and pure freshness." It was clear to him that Neo-Impressionism looked forward to the day when the workers would be liberated from the struggle for bare necessities, when in a "regenerated society," Neo-Impressionism would be employed "for our railway stations and our factories, for our schools and *maisons de santé*, for our meeting halls and our playhouses, for our baths and gymnasiuims, as well as for the beauty of our streets and our towns." Mirbeau was satisfied with Pissarro's landscapes for conveying the essence of the "great terrestrial harmony," and an article in *Les Temps nouveaux* saluted the landscapes of Luce as embodying the "image of the harmonious and free life we desire."

Anarchist criticisms of Neo-Impressionism were often—taken together—contradictory. Mirbeau criticized Signac's art for its immobility: "He ignores movement, life, the very soul of things. M. Signac renders nature immobile and static." Within anarchocommunist circles, however, it was widely argued that Mirbeau gave priority to aesthetics—the idea of beauty in particular—over the analysis that was the basis for a comprehensive, essentializing art. The essence that art pursued was by definition beautiful, just as the essence of life and humanity was beautiful. The anarchist

42. Ibid., 7.
Jacques Brieu, writing in *La Plume*, defined “integral art” in such a way as to make art part of a trio of unresolved antinomies existing in separate but equal spheres: science, he said, searches for truth, ethics for the good, and art for the beautiful, with each needing the others but unable to be substituted for them.  

When anarchist militants or writers attacked Neo-Impressionism, it was often for a perceived inability to capture the essential beauty of the golden age; Neo-Impressionism was sometimes taken to task for being too “cold” and unemotional. Occasionally the critique was only implicit: one anarchist writer briefly summarized and examined the bases of Neo-Impressionist theory, then cited as his own ideal a maudlin evocation of motherhood from the Salon of 1887. Others were more specific in their criticisms: the poet P. N. Roinard classified the Neos as Neo-Realists (a grouping so broad that he could list Toulouse-Lautrec, Louis Anquetin, and Vincent van Gogh in it as well), in contrast to the “Neo-Mystic” symbolist artists. Roinard asserted that Neo-Impressionist theory was disastrous: “Pointillism . . . makes me rage,” he wrote, “but it is dying.” He conceded, “Certainly this formula, the last good idea of an analysis fallen into minutiae and shabbiness, is not altogether distute of interest.” But for him, Neo-Impressionism’s claim to a scientific basis was a liability, as “science always produces bad art.”

Roinard, it should be made clear, was not excluding science from anarchist theory—just from anarchist art, which he wished to see permeated with an overriding idealism. He rejected Neo-Impressionism’s claim to provide a synthetic vision of life; he looked instead toward a coalescence of Neo-Realism and Symbolism to form an art “ideally real.”

A more detailed and incisive—if ultimately almost as hostile—a attempt to examine the same division of contemporary art and its implications for the anarchist movement came in a two-part review in *Le Libertaire* by the editor Paterne Berrichon, who, in concord with Roinard’s classification, began, “Springing from Impressionism, two groupings of painters can be distinguished from all others,” namely the “chromo-luminarists” (Neo-Impressionists) and the Symbolists. Berrichon expressed no sympathy for the

Symbolists whatever: “As opposed to the Neo-Impressionists, the Symbolists want everything of the subject and nothing of the object, but there are grounds for complaint against them for a subjective exaggeration, resulting sometimes in a superstitious monstrosity, indeed idiocy.” Berrichon took Symbolism to be a by-product of the “aesthetic uncertainty of our time, of its general psychological state” marked by a nostalgic mysticism and a fondness for morbid emotion and a general embrace of “artistic barbarism.”

Berrichon conceded more space and sympathy to the Neos. He saw them as moral and philosophical comrades, but he found their theoretical and formal framework overrestrictive: it ended in “too much disciplined exclusivism based upon a too rigorous science where art loses its face.” He added of the Neos that, “all analytics, their vision killed emotivity.” Their study of color yielded only a “cold shock on the eye of the spectator, without repercussion in the nervous corridors attendant upon sensation.”

Unlike Roinard, Berrichon took some pains to expose what he saw as the fundamental problem inherent in the idea of a “scientific art.” Like Brieu, he asserted that artistic truth is not scientific truth. The two kinds of truth must maintain a certain separation so that a global truth can be found in their continued interaction: “The one and the other . . . are but different aspects, poles, elements of a total Truth still to be discovered . . . . Neither Harmony nor Rhythm is capable of a litigious marriage of similar unities.” (He asked, “But does this [unity] exist even in Nature?”)

Roinard and Berrichon struck at the heart not just of Neo-Impressionist theory but of the whole concept of *art social* as a perfect synthesis of the scientific and the ideal. They rejected the idea of synthesis as a fusion, in favor of a conception of it as a permanent oscillation between antinomial truths; Brieu saw synthesis as residing in a triangular field marked out by the separate claims of science, ethics, and art. Both interpretations denied that art could by itself serve as the seat of synthesis. It could only be one element of an aggregate, and an element bound more closely to the affirmation of ideals than to the critique of existing forms or institutions.

In accord with that conviction, the Neo-Impressionist circle tended to smooth out the deliberate ambivalences of Seurat’s work,
to deemphasize his detached irony in favor of a relatively unambiguous assertion of social harmony and the beauty of a return to a "natural" life.

In addition to drawing on Puvis' classical pastorals, the Neo-Impressionists could also tap a more explicitly utopian artistic tradition. Dominique Papety's Dream of Happiness, of 1843 (Figure 12), is a clear prototype from that tradition. Papety's painting is a rather crowded classical landscape, with a somewhat awkwardly conveyed Fourierist theme: idealized figures, including children, loll on what is apparently the lawn of a phalanstery, reveling in the abundance of the emancipated future. The costumes are classical: only the title and the word harmonie inscribed on the base of the statue at the left manifest the work's social theme.

Papety wanted to distinguish his work from the "timeless" but always antique world of such reactionary pastorals as Ingres' Golden Age. Ingres located the âge d'or in a distant past, whereas Fourier placed his in the future. Yet for the coming age to be truly golden, for it to depict humanity once more in harmony with the world of nature, the signs of industrialization—with all its tensions and dislocations—had to be minimized, even effaced. Papety intended at one point to include a railroad in his Dream of Happiness, but that symbol of the machine age could only have

been intrusive in Fourier's decentralized world of autonomous communities.54

Signac's In Times of Harmony, of 1895, is structurally and thematically linked both to Papety's Dream of Happiness and—more surprisingly—to Seurat's Grande Jatte. More exactly, it reworks the Grande Jatte to make it conform with the utopian thinking behind Papety's painting. Originating as an oil sketch for an anticipated major work, the painting in 1896 became the basis for a five-color lithograph produced for Jean Grave's Les Temps nouveaux, for which Signac received some hundred francs (Figure 13). The original painting was exhibited in 1895 at the Indépendants and in

54. Fourier's follower Gabriel Desiré Laverdant demanded that artists invoke the coming golden age in their art: "And you whose soul withdraws from those terrible scenes and lets itself be carried away irresistibly by radiant dreams and images of wealth and happiness, offer to our eyes ravished by luxury smiles, glorious feasts, voluptuousness and happiness" ("Salon de 1842," La Phalange, April 3, 1842, quoted by Nancy A. Finley in "Fourierist Art Criticism and the Rêve de Bonheur of Dominique Papety," Art History, II [1979], 328).