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How Nineteenth Century Neurosis Shaped Curating of the Domestic Interior

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Curating of personal space, as we see it today, underwent significant development as a result of the dramatic social and urban changes of the nineteenth century. This transformation was influenced by a better understanding of the psyche and of how to treat mental illnesses associated with the industrial revolution, including a better appreciation of the curative importance of the domestic space. This era was not of course the first instance of curating domestic environments – for example, the upper classes of previous generations had used their home surroundings to display their wealth and status. However, Psychologie Nouvelle brought a fresh perspective to interior decoration and use of personal space, epitomized by Dr Jean-Martin Charcot at the end of the nineteenth century.

The interaction between emotion and environment has long been a powerful concept. However, the connections in this era were particularly interesting due to the sheer speed of change; the industrial revolution's rapid impact was echoed in a range of societal developments. It was recognised that homes could act as a refuge from fast paced city life, and it was also acknowledged, from a scientific perspective, that domestic surroundings were an important consideration in the cure of those suffering from mental illness. In different ways the attitude towards interior decoration changed and developed.

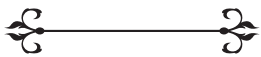
This paper looks at this transformation, and the role that neurosis played in taking the principles of interior decoration into another dimension - the curating of personal space for mental tranquillity. Charcot is a particularly powerful example of how the private environment was used to alleviate effects of modernity. His influential neurological developments, integrating drawing, photography and science, set him apart from his contemporaries. Additionally, from the research, one questions whether Charcot was suffering from a mild neurosis

or individualist sensibility, through his desire for seclusion and individuality.

This subject is extensive and in areas such as psychoanalysis it is necessary to be as scrupulous as possible, within the limits of the available information. Studying the home of Charcot was critical in demonstrating how the links between industrialisation, neurasthenia, individualist sensibility, and the decorative arts were expressed through curating the domestic interior. Given the lack of archives and images of the Charcot mansion's interior, publications and contemporaries' descriptions have been used.

Starting with a general review of developments in neurasthenia in relation to interior decoration during the nineteenth century, it became evident that the individualist sensibility, a more common and less violent condition in society, played a noticeable role in the development of curating and that Charcot was a prime example. The novel The Yellow Wallpaper threw new light on how the connection between environment and the psyche was viewed at the time.

Understanding such developments and the link between design and our changing environments can give insights to both creative and scientific minds. Our immediate surroundings, particularly the private interior, have the power to change the perception of space as well as sometimes helping to counteract negative impact of the external world on our lives. These points are a reminder of the need for interior architecture and design to evolve as the broader environment changes.



The Industrial Revolution and the Development of the Sicknesses of Modernity

When discussing the emergence of psychoanalysis in the nineteenth century, it is essential to understand the impact that urban environmental changes had on culture and society in the Western world. The *Industrial Revolution*, which spread across Western Europe and the United States around the early 1800s, and its increased momentum between 1840-1870 had a profound effect on many aspects of daily life.

This escalating industrialisation resulted in the renovation of formerly traditional cities into metropolises, or *die Grossstadt*. Narrow streets and intersections were transformed into avenues, boulevards and monumental squares. This drastic change in scale and the flood of people from the countryside to towns resulted in overcrowding at times but vast empty spaces at others, both of which were new phenomena for society and resulted in a *'nervous and feverish population'* (Vidler, 2002: 25). The rapid changes in urban environments and accompanying observations in sociology, economy and political geography, also saw the development of psychology and psychoanalysis.

Over time, recognition of changing social behaviour, in relation to the radically different urban environment, led to the discovery of new pathologies. The study of the mind became almost fashionable among neurologists due to recurring complaints of nervous anxieties from patients and initiated the rise of new treatments. The fast pace of city life, along with the competition to succeed, was increasingly distressing to many and resulted in numerous cases of *neurasthenia*; a mental condition defined by U.S. neurologist George Miller Beard (1839-1883) around 1820. Beard labelled neurasthenia as the core mental illness of modernity, a pathology that later

included several other neurological conditions[1]. It was categorised as a type of overstimulation of the nervous system[2] resulting in several symptoms including anxiety, exhaustion and depression. At the time it was particularly associated with men in Northern and Eastern areas of the United States and considered a *maladie* of the middle and upper classes. These symptoms were also found in Europe, predominantly in England and France, but cases were less common than in the U.S. initially.

Later, around the 1870s, doctors began more frequently to observe similar changes in the symptoms and behaviour of their patients in Europe. One of the first psychologists to outline the effects of modernity in European society was Berlin psychologist Carl Otto Westphal (1833 - 1890). Underlining symptoms such as « *…palpitations, sensations of heat, blushing, trembling, fear of dying and petrifying shyness* » (Vidler, 2002 : 27), he termed the sickness *agoraphobia* and acknowledged it as a form of neurasthenia[3]. These emerging pathologies illustrate the initial connection made between modern spatial environment and its effects on the psyche.

1. When the diagnosis of neurasthenia became more commonplace, around the 1860s, it was the condition that included other illnesses of modernity, such as agoraphobia and hysteria. In addition, due to neurasthenia being commonly associated with Americans during its early appearance, it was sometimes referred to as *'Americantitis'*.

2. During its infance it was labelled a condition of the *literal* nerves rather than the *figurative*.

3. Interestingly the discussion of agoraphobia became commonplace among architects as well as psychologists. For example, Viennese architect Camillo Sitte (1843-1903), argued that the symptoms of agoraphobia were not be found in traditional cities, which had not been renovated, as the environment was on a more human scale. *«Agoraphobia is a very new and modern ailment. One naturally feels very cozy in small, old plazas and only in our memory do they loom gigantic, because in our imagination the magnitude of the artistic effect takes the place of actual size. On our modern gigantic plazas, with their yawning emptiness and oppressive ennui, the inhabitants of snug old towns suffer attacks of this fashionable agoraphobia. »* (Sitte cited by Vidler, 2002 :27). He agreed with psychologists at the time that the vast emptiness of developing cities was detrimental to the health of the population.

Hysteria; A Violent Case of Neurasthenia

During the same period another nervous condition, *hysteria,* was commonly studied amongst male physicians. Hysteria was a violent form of neurasthenia and was a sickness mostly identified in female patients; it too was thought of as a bourgeois illness prompted by changes in the social environment.[4] Symptoms included neurotic fits, exhaustion, insomnia and depression. French neurologist Jean Martin Charcot (1825-1893) was at the forefront of psychoanalytical developments at the Salpêtrière in Paris and became the founder of modern neurology. Charcot's work and advances in psychoanalysis, as well as his keen interest in art and interior decoration, make him an excellent example of how curating the domestic space became part of the response to the stresses of industrialisation and the treatment of mental illnesses. Charcot's influence and role will be discussed in more detail later.

There existed many treatments for hysteria. However, it was believed by many clinicians, including Charcot, that the appropriate remedy for *non-insane*[5] cases of hysteria was the *rest cure*, a combination of exercise, air, seclusion from society within a domestic environment, and above all no 'work' - including any kind of creative stimulation. In addition, Charcot introduced treatment methods using the internal space for cases as these, as will be discussed later.

During this period there were a number of literary representations, which described these sicknesses of modernity. I have chosen to discuss *The Yellow Wallpaper*,

4. It was also believed that hysteria was a condition caused by disturbances of the uterus and by the late 19th century it was associated with sexual dysfunction, the resulting prescriptions were hysterectomies.

5. In 1870, physicians considered there to be different levels of hysteria, 'non-insane' and 'insane' hysterics. These separate cases were treated in the same wing at the Salpêtrière but were later separated and treated differently.

a fictional short story written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1892. It provides a literary commentary on the knowledge of, and approach towards, mental illness (in women) during late 19th century. It influenced views on how to treat hysteria at the time and gives a powerful portrayal of the effects of space on the psyche.

The reader is led through the unravelling mind of the main character,[6] a woman diagnosed with hysteria during that period. She narrates her experiences in the first person through a secret journal. Having been diagnosed by her husband, a physician, she is treated with the *rest cure* and taken away from the city to a secluded country house for the summer to treat her hysterical condition.

She is told which room she will stay in by her husband, despite her preference to stay in the more beautiful rooms in the house, and kept in near isolation there. This kind of complete control over patients was a common approach in the treatment of hysteria. « *If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression - a slight hysterical tendency - what is one to do ?* » (Perkins, 1892 : 4). The implication is that her husband passed off her condition as unimportant, and that her opinions on the matter were not considered credible.

The introduction to the novel depicts the main character as quite sane, although her husband describes her as having « *… a slight hysterical tendency* » (Perkins, 1892 : 4). Indeed, she remains rational in her detailed and analytical description of the room in which she is to reside for the following three months.[7]

At the beginning of the novel it appears she simply has an unfavourable opinion on the artistic aspects of the wallpaper,

describing it as a « *… sprawling flamboyant pattern committing every artistic sin.* » (Perkins, 1892 : 6). However, Perkins describes how the main character's surroundings gradually affect her mental state ; she begins obsessing over the wallpaper, as well as the other furnishings in the room. Time and time again she comes back to describing and analysing the colour of and the pattern in the wallpaper, and only mentions other aspects of her daily life occasionally : « *I am getting really fond of the room in spite of the wallpaper. Perhaps 'because' of the wallpaper. It dwells in my mind so ! I lie here on this great immovable bed - it is nailed down, I believe - and follow that pattern about by the hour.* » (Perkins, 1892 : 11). The main character in effect describes the wallpaper as taking over her thoughts, illustrating how an environment can influence the mental state.

At this stage of the story she analyses the pattern in the wallpaper : « *I know a little of the principle of design, and I know this thing was not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that I have ever heard of.* » (Perkins, 1892 : 11). It could be argued that her exploration of the pattern in the wallpaper is a direct reflection of her attempt to make sense of the emotional pattern in her mind. She experienced a set of behaviours and thought patterns which, when assembled in her mind - the mind of a hysteric - were muddled and indistinguishable, just as the pattern in the wallpaper.

6. Although Perkins mentions the name *Jane* at the end of the novel, this is the only mention of this character and it remains unclear to the reader whether this is our protagonists name.

7. « *I never saw a worse paper in my life. One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin. It is dull enough to confuse the eye in following, pronounced enough to constantly irritate and provoke study, and when you follow the lame uncertain curves for a little distance they suddenly commit suicide - plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions.* » (Perkins, 1892 :6).

As we delve deeper into the story, it is evident that her mental state is worsening. Her obsessive analysis[8] of the wallpaper tracks this deterioration, and Perkins (1892) describes her as « *...following the pattern by the hour* », picking out recurring shapes and the dynamic effects of daylight versus moonlight, determined to come to some conclusion. Over time she begins to hallucinate figures trapped behind the pattern.[9] This could be seen as an echo of her own experience as a woman suffering from hysteria, being creatively stifled and feeling entrapped by the *rest cure*.

Her mental state continues to decay. She keeps this deterioration hidden from her husband, as begins to identify the figures in the wallpaper, a woman, occasionally many women, creeping and crawling behind the pattern, trying to get out. In the last few pages of the novel, she has a full mental breakdown. She believes that she has come out of the wallpaper, or perhaps even become the woman behind the pattern, as explained by Perkins : « *There are so many of those creeping women, and they creep so fast. I wonder if they came out of the wallpaper as I did ?* » (1892 : 22).

The novel ends with the main character locking herself in the room on the final day of her treatment and beginning to tear the paper from the walls in order to free the woman, and herself, from the confinement of the pattern. When her husband enters, he finds her crawling around the room exclaiming ; « *I've got out at last... in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back !* » (Perkins, 1892 : 23). Perhaps for our protagonist the action of tearing off the wallpaper was a symbol of freeing her mind from the constraints of its mental pattern and her confused thoughts.

The novel not only gives a realistic depiction of the treatments of mental illness but also of a woman's place in the domestic environment during this era. The author, a few years prior to writing this story, had been diagnosed with hysteria

and was prescribed the *rest cure*. Having followed the doctor's prescription for three months, as in the book, she discovered her mental state was on the brink of ruin so « *...using the remnants of intelligence that remained* »[10] (Perkins, 1913) she went back to working on her writing.[11] Soon after publishing the novel, Gilman writes of another sufferer whom she 'saved' from this fate of mental collapse in an article for *The Forerunner*.[12] Once the family of this patient read *The Yellow Wallpaper*, they stopped treatment immediately from fear of a similar end to that in the story, and saw an improvement in the mental state of the hysterical woman. Despite such positive outcomes, many physicians discredited the short story and labelled it as the work of someone who had already been driven insane.[13] There were thus two opposite opinions, one that regarded the novel as the product of a damaged mind, and the other regarding it as a warning on new curative treatments. Such exchanges point to the interaction between 'scientific' and 'creative' professions in the nineteenth century as well as to the experimental nature of treatment at the time.

8. « *This paper looks to me as if it knew what a vicious influence it had! There is a recurrent spot where the pattern lolls like a broken neck and two bulbous eyes stare at you upside down. I get positively angry with the impertinence of it and the everlastingness. Up and down and sideways they crawl, and those absurd, unblinking eyes are everywhere. There is one place where the two breadths didn't match, and the eyes go all up and down the line, one a little higher than the other. I never saw so much expression in an inanimate thing before* » (Perkins Gilman, 1892 :8-9)

9. « *But in places where it isn't faded and where the sun is just so - I can see a strange, provoking, formless figure, that seems to skulk about behind that silly conspicuous front design.* » (Perkins Gilman, 1892 : 10).

10. « *I went home and obeyed those directions for some three months, and came so near to the border line of utter mental ruin that I could see over. Then, using the remnants of intelligence that remained... I cast the noted specialist's advice to the winds and went to work again - work, the normal life of every human being ; work, in which is joy and growth* » (Perkins, 1913).

11. Similarly, between 1910 and 1913 the famous writer Virgina Woolf (1882-1941) was treated with the rest cure after suffering several nervous breakdowns during her lifetime.

12. About the novel « *It has to my knowledge saved one woman from a similar fate – so terrifying her family that they let her out into normal activity and she recovered.* » (Perkins, 1913).

13. On Perkins' novel « *... a Boston physician made protest in The Transcript. Such a story ought not to be written, he said ; it was enough to drive anyone mad to read it. Another physician, in Kansas I think, wrote to say that it was the best description of incipient insanity he had ever seen, and - begging my pardon - had I ever been there ?* » (Perkins, 1913).

The Yellow Wallpaper reflects the opinions regarding hysteria, a woman's place in the marital home, and the negative effect the domestic interior could have on the psyche, even over a short period of time, during the late 19th century. It could be assumed that the wallpaper was in William Morris' Arts and Crafts style given the period the novel was written in. This style stood for traditional craftsmanship and was essentially anti-industrial, similar to the Decorative Arts movement in France, to be discussed later, and reflects the aversion to industrialisation.

Perkins' description of a deteriorating mind in relation to space highlights two key points. Firstly, how the psyche can alter the perception of the surrounding environment, and secondly, how the interpretation of a setting can make a lasting impression and affect the mind. These issues hark back to the previous discussions on neurasthenia brought about by modern urban developments. It could be argued that neurasthenia was a sickness associated with the architectural, urban atmosphere whilst hysteria was related to domestic space. If that was the case, this distinction could have influenced Charcot's judgement in using interior environments to treat his hysterical patients. The novel describes how decoration of the interior environment can affect the mind and shows how occupying domestic surroundings that embody someone else's psyche, can cause mental collapse. *The Yellow Wallpaper* exemplifies the link between the Psychologie Nouvelle and the decorative arts.

The Individualist Sensibility

Having discussed one of the more severe reactions to modernity that occurred during the mid-late nineteenth century, largely in the U.S., it is relevant to examine *individualist sensibility*. This was a concept identified in Europe during the same era and was a form of *individualist anarchism*, a philosophy assembled through the different ideals, discussions and writings of theorists such as Max Stirner (1806-1856) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Unlike neurasthenia, it was not defined as a severe mental illness as such but rather as a heightened sensitivity, or mild neurosis, caused by modern life. This sensitivity implied an intense need for independence from society. It shined a spotlight on the desire for discretion and finesse which placed a metaphorical, and sometimes literal, wall between the individualist and the things that could render them 'ordinary'.

In individualists, contact with society and the pressure which society exerts on them heightens the individual's sensitivity. Unlike the agoraphobic, it was not only modern urban developments that instilled a nervous disposition, but also the *attitudes* of society and the fear of humiliation, which filled them with trepidation. Sufferers became hostile towards *social things* such as social hierarchy, group mentality and judgement.

The dominant characteristic of the individualist was supposed to be their ability to detect the differences between people. It was assumed by individualists, that they had a superior intelligence to that of *common* people who did not notice the differences in men, which were apparent to them. Henri-Frédédric Amiel[14] described the sensitivity of the individualist as impressionist, artistic, delicate, capricious

14. Henri-Frédédric Amiel (1821-1881) was a Swiss philosopher, poet and critic.

and nuanced. From this he made a comparison between the intellects of the individualists and the intellectual poverty he associated with the egoists [15] of the time. Individualism was a way to evade confrontation, « *...a way to close your door and defend your interior* » (Palante, 1909 : 10) ; the individual, as discussed by Georges Palante,[16] in « *... the fortress of his uniqueness* » (1909 : 10), created his isolation ; it was an intellectual and sentimental withdrawal and a form of escaping society. The individualist's attitude was generally that of a defensive nature. The tools used to combat contact with society were indifference and contempt. The principles adopted by these so-called individualists and their methods of avoiding contact with society will be discussed in more detail later.

The idea that individualist sensibility was a sort of mild neurosis was linked to the treatment of milder forms of hysteria. The principal embedded in individualist sensibility was to express one's own individuality in the decoration of the domestic space and in the creation of a sanctuary closed off from the pressures of modern life.

15. *Egoism* was another form of individualist anarchism but was a far more violent and anarchistic philosophy that appeared during the time, and was defined by Max Stirner.

16. Georges Toussaint Léon Palante (1862-1925) was a French philosopher and sociologist who wrote *'La Sensibilité Individualiste'* in 1909. He adopted similar principles as those of Friedrich Nietzsche

Curating the Domestic Interior as a Treatment for Neurosis

When discussing the principles of individualist sensibility it is helpful to consider to some key figures that displayed the same or similar characteristics and philosophies. Edmond (1822-1896) and Jules de Goncourt (1830-1870) were writers and art collectors from a well to do family in Paris. The brothers published their perspective on the growing problems in society due to rapid advances of French cities, particularly after the Haussmanisation of Paris. They believed that there had been a loss in finesse since the reign of Louis XV. Edmond de Goncourt expressed his opinions, and perhaps those of much of the general public, when speaking of Haussmann's new Paris in 1860 : « *The interior is dying. Life threatens to become public... I am a stranger to what is coming, to what is there, like these new boulevards, lacking in all curves, inexplicable axes of the straight line.* » (Cited by Silverman, 1992 : 20). This description underlines his fear of this new society, as an individualist. When he wrote of 'life threatening to become public', we can observe the concern he had for the loss of privacy and perhaps his individuality. His apprehension about the new urban environment, describing the boulevards as 'lacking in all curves' with 'inexplicable axes', reflect symptoms of agoraphobia and the fear of open space. The brothers frequently communicated their views in journals, arguing with theorists who believed that the changes in society were beneficial.[17]

> *« ...Depuis que l'humanité marche, son progrès, ses acquisitions sont toutes de sensibilité. Elle se nervosifie, s'hystérise, pour ainsi*

17. Edmond de Goncourt frequented the house of Charcot at his Tuesday evenings where he interacted with philosophers, artists, physicians and politicians. The quote from the Journal des Goncourts was written as a reaction of a conversation with Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828-1893) at Charcot's mansion.

> *dire, chaque jour; et quant à cette activité dont vous souhaitez le développement, savez-vous si ce n'est pas de là que découle la mélancolie moderne. Savez-vous si la tristesse anémique de ce siècle-ci ne vient pas de l'excès de son action, de son prodigieux effort, de son travail furieux, de ses forces cérébrales tendues à se rompre...de la débauche de sa production et de sa pensée dans tous les ordres?»* (Goncourt, E. 1864 : 78).

The Goncourt brothers maintained that society's nervousness was a product of the progression of society and that the standardisation of design, and the competition to succeed caused a sort of weakening sadness. This extract, as wellas other written works by the brothers, shows the relationship between their attitude towards the modern environment and the problems of neurasthenia as a result of the changing urban landscape. It also echoes the individualist view on the pressure for success within nineteenth century society.

As a reaction to their social atmosphere, and responding to their sensitivity to modernity, the brothers withdrew to their interior. It has been suggested that they were self-treating their individualist sensibility, or neurosis, by creating *La Maison d'un artiste*,[18] their house on boulevard Montmorency in Paris. *[see Fig. 1]* A home and sanctuary, which allowed them to escape anxieties associated with the outside world.

In this image of the attic *[see Fig. 2]*, it is apparent that interior decoration was used as a form of distraction - there is very little empty space in the room, the collection of items is extensive and somewhat eclectic. The brothers claimed that they themselves - along with their family - began the trend for collecting Chinese and Japanese artefacts, a craze which surfaced during the mid-late nineteenth century. In the attic,

we can see an oriental influence synthesised with the French style. The brothers surrounded themselves with decorative items dating back to the eighteenth century, believing that Parisians during that era had more finesse and distinction. They encompassed family memories and musings of what they believed were better times in their collection, and conserved heirlooms that were a narrative of the de Goncourt family's recollections. To all intents and purposes they were surrounding themselves with these antiques in order to relive the ideologies of an era that they believed had been lost. Their desire to escape Western hegemony in design was so strong that they were travelling back in time to seclude themselves from the anxieties of modern life.

18. The brothers also published a book by the same name but for the purpose of this research I am only discussing the home itself.

Figure 1.
E. Goncourt. Maison des Goncourt. Façade sur le boulevard Montmorency. (1886)

Figure 2.
E. Goncourt. Le Grenier. Panneau du fond à droite attenant au No. 55. (1886)

The Development of the Decorative Arts in France and the Emergence of Art Nouveau

When discussing developments in society and psychoanalysis during the last decades of the nineteenth century, it is also critical to consider how tastes in art and interior decoration were adapting to the changing environment.

At the time, a group of commercial artisans in Paris, including Phillipe Mourey (1840 - 1910) and Pierre Clerget (1875 - 1943), recognised a common predicament as a result of societal changes. In response to industrialisation and the boost in commercial production they saw a need to revive French arts and crafts, returning to the decorative arts and turning away from industrial mass production. As part of the solution, the group founded the *Central Union of Decorative Arts* in Paris [19] in 1864. This association promoted the production of artisanal furniture and objets d'art and in 1878 began publishing the journal *La Revue Des Arts Décoratifs*, writing exposés on recent exhibitions, ornamental items of particular interest and 'how to' articles surrounding the decorative arts *[see Fig. 3]*.

Reflecting the previously mentioned emerging pathologies and the individualist sensibility, this revival showed their disappointment with industrialisation, related to the loss individualism occurring in Europe at the time. It was also a way of upholding the traditional artisanal skills of the French that became less popular with the fashionable elite, not unlike the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, which occurred in Great Britain during the same period. This emphasis on the importance of individuality was further increased by the attention drawn to Chinese and Japanese art, as in the example of the Brothers de Goncourt.

19. *The Central Union of Decorative Arts* was originally named the *Central Union of Fine Arts Applied to Industry.*

Sigfried Bing, a German born collector of mainly Japanese art and artefacts, established an interest in the manufacture of artisanal objects and set up a ceramics company in 1863. Bing concurred with the importance of revitalising the applied arts and so supported artists from around Europe, in his Paris workshop, by providing the opportunity to explore Japanese tradition. Additionally he commissioned pieces that exposed artists to more artisanal methods such as a glasswork and printing. Bing was considered a major taste maker in France and would go on to become an integral name in the foundation of a new movement, *Art Nouveau* ; in fact, the name of the movement was coined when he set up his gallery, the Maison de l'Art Nouveau in Paris in 1895.

In Françoise Levie's documentary Mr. Bing and L'Art Nouveau, critics of the movement described Bing's new gallery as feeling « ...like the home of a lunatic anxious to nurture his diseases » (2005). This description reiterates the devices adopted by the individualists and the views of the Brothers de Goncourt ; the practice of creating a space in order to directly impact or affect the state of the psyche by building an environment that harmonised with their own persona. The Brothers de Goncourt also appeared to nurture their sensitivity to modernity with the decoration of their home on boulevard Montmorency, reflecting the ideals they coveted, as commented previously. It can reasonably be assumed that Bing himself, along with the Brothers de Goncourt, were individualists, at least to some extent. In integrating a blend of decorative arts, antiquity and oriental artefacts in the decoration of their personal spaces, these men illustrated their struggle to find mental tranquillity and peace in the frenzied modern city.

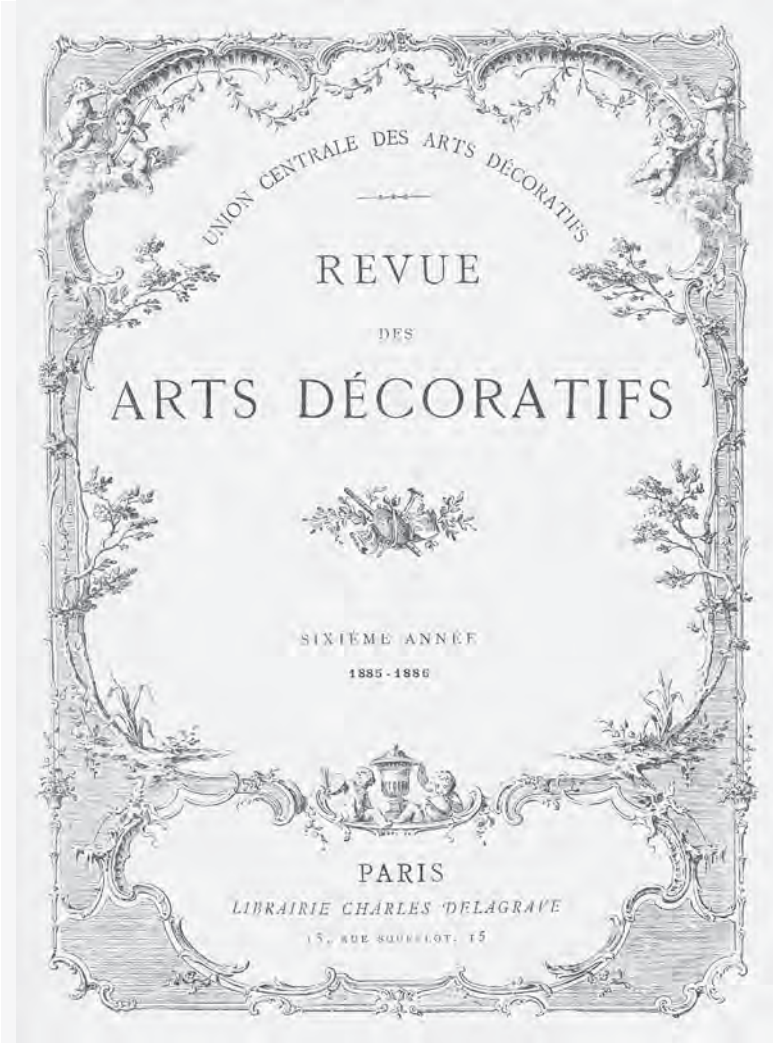
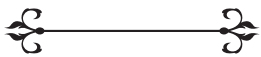


Figure 3.
Anon. Front cover of Revue des Arts Decoratifs. (1885-86)



Charcot's lifetime spent alternating between the study of the mind and, less renowned but just as noteworthy, the decoration of in his home, make him an interesting illustration of the developments in curating the domestic space as a form of escapism in the nineteenth century.

The themes discussed previously are firmly reflected in the career and private life of Charcot. Firstly, his influence on the study of neurological conditions, primarily with hysteria, during the emergence of the Psychologie Nouvelle, highlights his interest in the psyche and of the triggers that alter the state of mind. Secondly, his passion for art and interior decoration, which filtered into his professional work, demonstrates his avant-garde approach towards the connection between art and science, and between environment and the psyche. As we have seen in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, this link was already established but was further explored by Charcot. At a personal level, he had clear characteristics of the individualist sensibility and employed methods in the decoration of his home that were similar to those adopted by the brothers de Goncourt. In both cases their homes were adorned with a wealth of decorative arts, comprised of artisan furniture, paintings, sculptures and mementos, expressing their individuality. Professionally, he used his understanding of these matters in the treatment of his patients.

Charcot's Early Life and Indecision Between Medicine and Art

Jean-Martin Charcot, born in Paris in 1825, was the son of an artisan carriage builder and decorator. He, along with his three brothers, had a humble upbringing in a working to middle class quarter of Paris. Charcot showed an interest in art from a young age,[20] illustrating his skill through detailed drawings and paintings of his surroundings. In *Charcot Artiste*, Henri Meige[21] discusses how Charcot's father did not have the means to send all four of his sons into further academic education and so proposed that Charcot, being the strongest artist and a good student, could either study art or medicine. Although art was more familiar to Charcot, not only due to his family background but also on account of his neighbourhood where there were many artisan businesses, he was more inclined towards medicine given its social status and economic gains.[22]

In 1851, already midway through his medical training, Charcot was studying at the Paris Medical School and interned under Pierre François Olive Rayer at Charité Hospital. The first patient assigned to him was Monsieur Fould, a gentleman suffering from a nervous disorder and displaying symptoms of neurasthenia. Rayer prescribed a voyage around Italy to improve his health and instructed Charcot to accompany him as his personal physician. During the trip they travelled as far south as Naples, taking in much art and architecture along the way. It was here that Charcot's passion for art really solidified.[23]

Christopher G. Goetz wrote of Charcot's particular taste in art in an article for the journal 'History of Neurology' making the connection between his artistic and scientific sides:

« *His personal artistic preferences focused primarily on the Dutch masters, whose realism revealed the world with simplicity and unadorned clarity. His own personal artistic style reflected his scientific approach to clinical neurology.* » (1991 : 421). Charcot disliked the work of the Symbolists and Impressionists ; he did not appreciate the abstract nature of such works, and only acknowledged their skilled use of colour. From this one can deduce that, despite his interest in art, Charcot was unable to detach himself from the rational mind of an academic and the constraints of clinical method.[24]

20. As noted by Goetz et al. in Charcot : Constructing Neurology (1995).

21. Henri Meige (1866-1940) was a French Neurologist who studied under Charcot, a nd wrote *'Charcot Artiste'* (1925). Meige was also editor of the Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière, a journal with demonstrative photography of neurological symptoms at the hospital.

22. While Charcot chose academic study, two of his brothers chose military careers and the other took over their father's carriage building business.

23. A letter that Charcot wrote during his time in Italy ; « *Seeing this country gives me the greatest urge to paint and to use watercolors. With every step I take, I find something that is wonderful and fresh, even though people have been tempted by the same images for centuries. For sure, if I had doctors in my family, I also had painters. My heart is torn between the two.* » (Goetz et al. 1995 :8)

24. Charcot constantly surrounded himself with creative figures in Paris during his lifetime, which further solidified his passion for art. One of these acquaintances was wealthy art collector, Monsieur Laurent Richard. It was through him that Charcot met Richard's widowed daughter, Augustine and the couple were married soon after. Mme Charcot inherited a thirst for art from her father. Mme Charcot and her children spent some time living in Kensington, London. It could be argued that this period away from France, during the emergence of the English Arts and Crafts movement, instilled a passion for the decorative arts, which she relayed back to Charcot.

A Doctor's Psyche

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who studied under Charcot at the Salpêtrière Hospital for several months between 1885 and 1886, attended Charcot's *Leçons du Mardi* [25] and even translated the third volume of Charcot's *'Leçons sur les Maladies du Système Nerveux'* (1875) into German, was occasionally invited to the famous Tuesday evening soirées [26] at the Charcot residence on boulevard Saint-Germain. Freud wrote of his experiences at these events in his letters to Martha Bernays, in which he detailed the atmosphere and conversations between guests and, more intriguingly, the composure of Charcot and his family.

Through Freud's first-hand experience, working and socialising with Charcot, we can see the formal attitude adopted by the doctor with those outside his family. Freud gives us an impression of the persona that Charcot, along with the rest of his family, projected. He talks of one instance, at a Tuesday evening event, when he was *"so bored he could burst"* (Personal communication by letter. 2nd February 1886). Despite a multitude of interesting personalities, no introductions were made, so Freud was left speaking with the only three people he was acquainted with. Charcot has been represented in many different lights, but there is always a commonality in these depictions - his reserved, formal *composure*. It appears as though Charcot's cold conduct reflected his need to withdraw from the hustle and bustle of society and the outside world, in order to maintain his privacy.

Charcot has also been referred to as a miraculous healer and « *hieratic figure* » (Meige, 1906 : 31) not unlike the great personalities of the Renaissance and therefore inaccessible to

25. The Leçons du Mardi were weekly clinical lessons set up in November 1882 at the Salpêtrière.

26. After his Leçons du Mardi, Charcot often invited his colleagues and interns from the Salpêtrière to spend the evening at his home on Boulevard Saint-Germain, along with an eclectic group of artists, journalists, politicians and art historians.

the masses. He used this affiliation with *higher power* to his advantage. Due to his distinct lack of interest in interacting with people, Charcot used this status to distance himself from them. He was serious and often closed off in approaching people, never fully extending his hand to greet them, and speaking only as much as was considered acceptable. He had no time for habitual pleasantries and even at the height of his fame, retained his coyness, without appearing too serious or too proud. In his avoidance of contact, Charcot used art to liberate himself from the pointless woes of daily life, transporting himself to a world of decoration that stimulated his visual senses. As will be discussed later, he separated himself from the *common* people by transforming his home into a place of refuge, which for him was calming but appeared frenetic to others. His technique of enveloping himself in his distinctive tastes allowed him to maintain his individuality.

As another form of refuge, Charcot made sketches that became a sort of cryptic language in letters that he wrote to his family. Instead of filling the page with writing, he would introduce iconographic puns. For instance, rather than writing the address of his apartment, '6 Avenue du Coq', he would draw a small sketch of a cockerel with six eggs, each branded with the letter 'A' (Meige, 1906 : 16). This imagistic 'code', which no doubt was difficult to decipher by anyone other than Charcot, could be seen as a reflection of Charcot's thought patterns. As in the complex relationship between the pattern in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and the *pattern* in the mind of a hysteric. He had an inherent need to distance himself from the conventionality of society. Perhaps this was a means of creating a metaphorical barrier between himself, of higher intellectuality, and the *common* people.

The Charcot Mansion as an Artistic Process

Having discussed Charcot's character, it is appropriate to explore the Charcot Mansion as an extension of his personality reflecting his individualist sensibility at least in part. There is little surviving evidence of how the private chambers of the Charcot family were decorated, so, for this purpose the reception rooms - the *Salon*, the *Salle à manger*, the antechambers and Charcot's study - will be examined.

Charcot filled portfolios with sketches from his travels around Europe but he also immersed himself in the art of interior decoration. In 1884 the family moved into their home, *L'Hotel Varengeville* on boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris. His career as a neurologist was well established and, by overseeing his wife and daughter's ideas in the family atelier, he began to exploit his passion for decorative arts. Charcot himself designed most aspects of the rooms and furnishings such as the large, intricately decorated oak doors *[see Fig. 4]*, however, he did not execute many of the works himself.

The apartment constituted the entire ground floor of the building; a vast space, so vast in fact that one would not think it the ground floor (Geotschy, 1900 : 43).

> *« When you enter the home on boulevard Saint-Germain andpass through the vestibule, a huge antechamber appears with tall heavy sets of doors that lead on the right to the dining room, on the left to the large reception area and at the end to the smaller reception rooms…All over there are art objects of all types and styles…Nothing that is not a creation. »* (Geotschy, 1900 : 44).

The interior decoration of such a space was no small feat but gradually the family built up their collection in the mansion

into an extravagant space of self-expression that they desired. Using their home as a backdrop they were able to project their taste for antiquity and their personalities by collecting an array of *objets d'art* and elaborately sculpted furniture, whilst also modifying or designing architectural elements to complete the ensemble. The cabinet designed in the Renaissance style *[see Fig. 5]*, adorned with enamelled plaques from Limoges and perforated brass executed by Mme Charcot, is an example of the family's work as a team to create an object that embodied their artistic skills. The outcome was an exhaustively detailed piece of furniture, every part redesigned to accentuate the object's presence in the space. The modifications made by the family reflect their interest in the decorative arts movement, breaking away from mass production in favour of unique pieces.

Charcot himself was the inspiration and the project manager of the work carried out in the atelier, using it to bring together the family's common thoughts to achieve their vision of a beautifully ornamented home. Due to his position as the man of the house, the overtly decorated appearance of each object and the house as a whole, with its sombre tones, reflected Charcot's passion for the work of Renaissance masters.

> *« The mansion was furnished luxuriously to Charcot's visual taste, which inclined to the medieval : tapestries, stained-glass windows, wrought-iron chandeliers, wood panelling and dark wooden columns, and furniture of sculpted woodwork. Charcot's study was an imposing but well-proportioned room. »* (Owen, 1971 : 229).

According to Meige, it was not Charcot's intention to convey wealth in the decoration of his home, that he simply appreciated the charm of a harmoniously adorned home : « *...Le luxe, ni le faste, ni le confort moderne, ne touchaient Charcot. Chez lui, aucun désir d'ostentation. Il appréciait tout simplement le charme d'une demeure harmonieusement parée, sans même songer à sa richesse.* » (Meige, 1906 : 20-21). Contrary to this, when examining photographs of the interior, it is easy to understand why those who frequented the house often came to a different conclusion. In fact, Sigmund Freud characterised the house as a « *magic castle* » (Personal communication by letter. 20th January 1886). This description of the house as a castle suggests that the space flaunted his wealth, or even its mystical allure, and that Charcot was not always successful in his intentions, as in his experimental treatments for hysteria.

Freud's first chronicle of the house describes Charcot's study in detail with a brief mention of what he saw of the rest of the house :

> « *It is as big as the whole of our future apartment, a room worthy of the magic castle in which he lives. It is divided in two, of which the bigger section is dedicated to science, the other to comfort. Two projections from the wall separate the two sections. As one enters one looks through a triple window to the garden ; the ordinary panes are separated by pieces of stained glass. Along the side walls of the larger section stands his enormous library on two levels, each with steps to reach the one above. On the left of the door is an immensely long table covered with periodicals and odd books ; in front of the window are smaller tables with portfolios on them. On the right of the door is a smaller stained-glass window, and in front of it stands Charcot's*

> *writing table, quite flat and covered with manuscripts and books ; his armchair and several other chairs. The other section has a fireplace, a table, and cases containing Indian and Chinese antiques. The walls are covered with Gobelins and pictures ; the walls themselves are painted terra cotta. The little I saw of the other rooms on Sunday contained the same wealth of pictures, Gobelins, carpets and curios – in short, a museum.* » Freud (Personal communication by letter. 20th January 1886).[27]

This description of Charcot's home shows how intriguing Freud found the space. Pointing out how the walls were covered with a « *wealth of pictures, Gobelins, carpets, and curios – in short, a museum* ». Ferdinand Levillain[28] described the home of his late mentor in a similar way, noting that Charcot was not a systematic collector but an eclectic artist ; « *Son hotel était un veritable musée de trésors artistiques, collectionnés par lui avec un goût et un jugement rares ; ce n'était pas en effet un collectionneur systématique, mais un artiste très éclectique* » (Marqeur, 2008 : 87). He states that the home was a « *…museum of artistic treasures* ». This idea that the Charcot mansion resembled a museum of his life could reflect his arrogance, and his desire to be unique. Displaying his belongings with such formality and placing emphasis on their importance, as if outsiders should admire them.

The apartment displayed consistency throughout ; large rooms were dominated by a luxurious darkness, a combination of corniced ceilings, wood panelling, engraved pillars and

27. Freud also comments on the vast bookshelves in Charcot's study in his account. These were designed by Charcot himself as an imitation of those found in the Medici Library at the San Lorenzo Convent in Florence. They reflect Charcot's evident taste for the Renaissance period and his extensive travels through Italy. (Philippon et al. 2003 :414). When Charcot's son, Jean-Baptiste Charcot, donated his fathers library to the Salpêtrière in 1906, some of these bookshelves, along with other detailed engravings from Charcot's study were also given.

28. Ferdinand Levillain (1837-1905) was a graveur-médailleur or metal engraver who worked in Paris during the same period.

elaborate renaissance style wallpaper, saturated the rooms. Ornately carved, dark timber furniture settled amongst enamelled clocks and portraits of friends and relations made out of clay, some of which were Neo-Renaissance imitations accomplished by the family in the atelier. As well as working with his family, he collaborated with artisans in order to successfully realise his designs to the quality he desired. In many cases he would begin with an exotic antique that he had acquired during his travels, and alter it to suit his taste but occasionally, as in the case with the oak doors in the dining room *[see Fig. 4]*, he would create custom designs.

This example of one of Charcot's intricately designed fireplaces, executed by Mme Charcot, in the dining room *[see Fig. 6]*, exhibits the use of a variety of materials to create a finished product that has a dominating presence in the surrounding setting. The fireplace, using an arrangement of elaborate tiles, was itself in the Renaissance style, carved into sculptural forms and adorned with a collection of statuettes and trinkets, as Charcot left no part untouched. This modification of the furnishings within the house, and urge to achieve his precise ideals, reflect Charcot's controlling quality in creating his refuge from the modern world.

The dominating influence was the Renaissance, an almost medieval style, including faded tapestries hanging from the walls, wood panelling throughout and extravagant elements, such as oversized wrought iron chandeliers *[see Fig. 7]* and even paintings by Goya and Frans Hals, emphasizing different aspects of each room. These paintings, along with a canvas by Jan Steen were the only representation of *contemporary* art that Charcot included in his home. He was seduced by the antiquity he witnessed on his travels around Europe, studying the archives of decorative relics and imitating the styles

by embellishing his exotic acquisitions, such as lamps and reliquaries, in his home. Additionally he introduced stained glass windows throughout. Goetschy gives a description of the dining room in which he portrays the windows : « *...Multi-coloured glass panels in triangular form, each representing the various German princes.* » (Goetschy, 1900 : 44). Other stained-glass windows were adorned with antique coats of arms. These windows gave an atmospheric light not unlike that of a church, a mysterious space that echoed silence and meditation : « *...Les vitraux ornés de personnages hiératiques, ou d'antiques armoiries, par où filtrait un jour très pâle, un éclairage d'église, quelque peu mystérieux, ménageant des retraites d'ombre propices au silence et à la méditation.* » (Meige, 1925 : 20).

In contrast to this sedate lighting, the reception room walls were cluttered with *objets d'art*, pottery plates and platters conceived by Mme Charcot in the hispano-moresque style. These chambers were so animated by objects that one could spend hours exploring the space. Even though this visual stimulation might be thought more exhausting than calming, every object, painting or piece of furniture was positioned with such precision, that the feeling of unity between them was enhanced and a well-balanced ambiance was created.

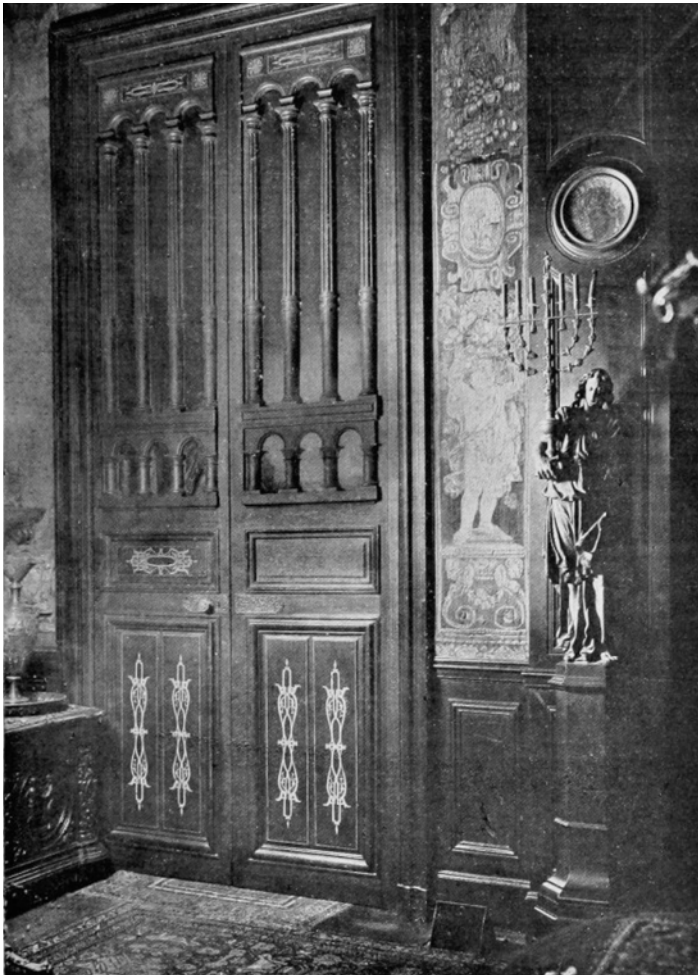


Figure 4.
Anon. Salle à manger -
Les portes sont ornées d'incrustations exécutées par Mme Charcot. (1900)

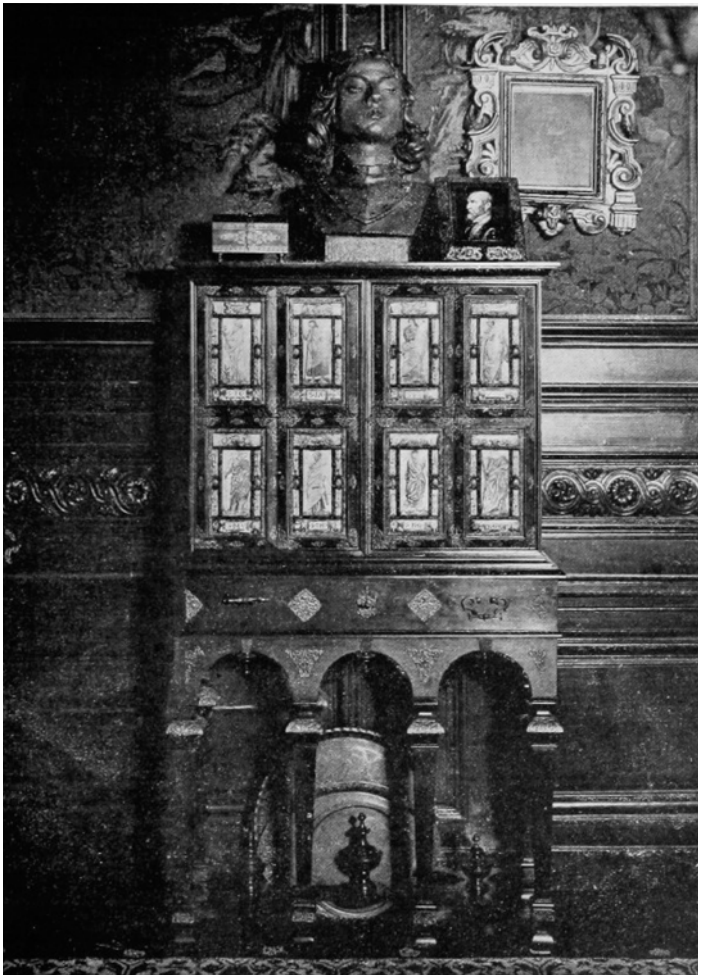


Figure 5.
Anon. Cabinet orné de plaques en émaux de Limoges, dessinées par le Dr Charcot. Le cuivres ajourés sont de Mme Charcot. (1900)

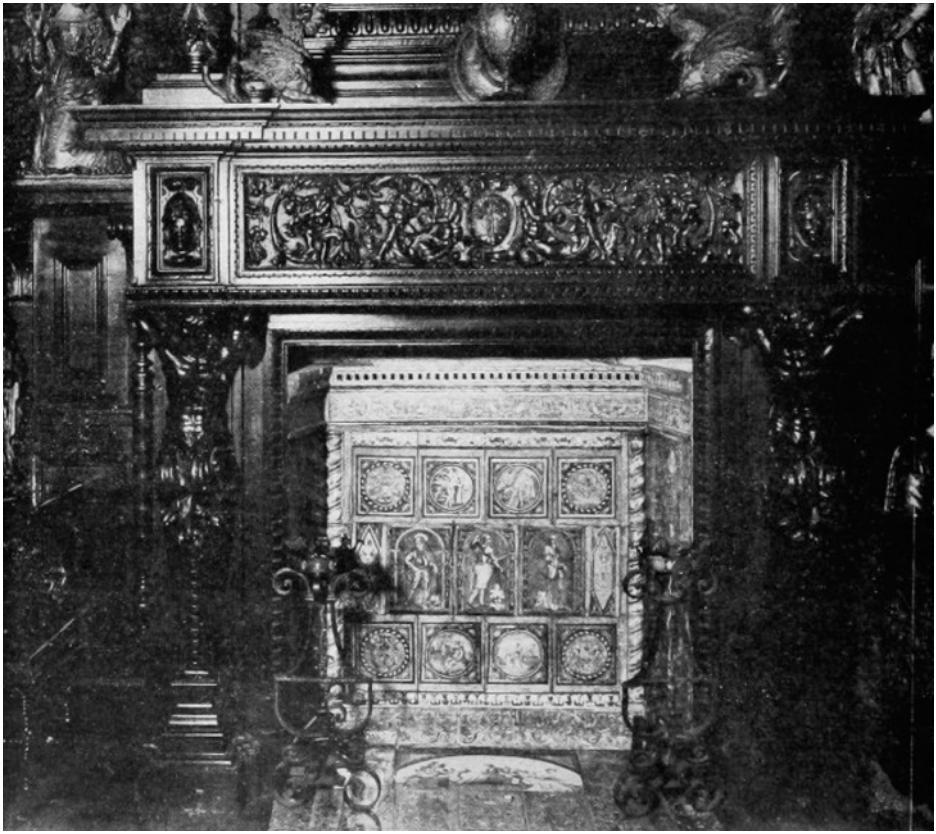


Figure 6.
Anon. Salle à manger - Cheminée dont la decoration en faïence a été dessinée par le Dr Charcot et exécutée par Mme Charcot. (1900)

Figure 7.
Anon. Le Salon - Le plafond à caissons a été peint, et le lustre émaillé, par Mme Charcot. (1900)

Charcot's Home as the Expression of his Psyche and Neurosis

Having discussed the concept achieved by the family within the mansion, the following part considers the relation between the Charcot home and the psyche of the doctor. The interior decoration as a whole, as well as the attention that he paid to every object, reveal the link between his psyche and the domestic space. When considering the impact of the psyche on the domicile and vice versa, Charcot is a very interesting case.

Monsieur and Madame Charcot had a shared concept when creating their dream home; to illustrate their togetherness using carefully selected and modified pieces of art and furniture. This ideal is similar to the individualist philosophy in the desire to display ones uniqueness, separating themselves from the norms of society.

Together, their first goal was to rid the apartment of all of the existing elements that crowded the space in order to start with a blank canvas. It was as though they wanted to eradicate any memory of previous tenants in order to fully expose their originality and distinctive style, again similar to the behaviour of the individualists. This erasure of what had gone before could well have been a counterattack on the influences of the domestic interior and psyche of others, as previously discussed in *The Yellow Wallpaper.*

An article written by Gustave Geotschy about Madame Charcot in the *Revue des Arts Decoratifs* (1900) records that the Charcot family were among the first to embrace the new movement of true interior decoration of the domestic space:

> *Cette conception de la "belle demeure", de ce chez soi du rêve où tout vous est cher, où chaque objet appelle un regard amical et semble vous sourire…Mme Charcot, l'avait su réaliser, de concert avec son illustre époux, bien avant que se mit à souffler sur l'art mobilier ce vent de renouveau.* (1900 : 42).

This abstract underlines how Charcot and his family were not only devoted to the concept of self-exploration through the decoration of their domestic environment, but also the projection of their ideals, through a collection of objects that carried sentimental value. This artistic release was a form of meditation for the famous doctor. Every night he would take his place in the atelier to share his ideas and influences, exploiting his talents.

The Renaissance clearly influenced the decoration of the Charcot home. The ideals of the Renaissance artists were based on prioritising the human over the battle between church and state, concentrating on the human aspect of their art. There is a similarity to the ideals of the individualist, focusing on his own needs for self-expression and individuality, rather than focusing on the current social environment. The individuals themselves becoming the main 'subject' of their lives, as it were, secluding themselves from the urban domain.

The introverted side of Charcot's personality is not obvious when studying his home. In fact, the opposite is true. He seems to reveal an exhibitionist quality, parading his knowledge and skill in art and design through a flamboyant collection of elaborate furniture, sculptures and paintings. The grandeur that the house exhibits could even be taken as Charcot boasting of his wealth and social status, having worked his way up the social classes from a relatively humble

family background. This behaviour was not dissimilar to the meticulous delivery of his lectures at the Salpêtrière, which are discussed later, flaunting his ability to create an extravagant home through his lifetime experiences. In this way, the integration of decorative arts exuded a feeling of luxury, whilst also offering a mystical sanctuary away from the exasperating stresses of the modern world.

Charcot's precision in the arrangement of his home also bears similarities to his teachings at the Salpêtrière. In the mansion, every piece of furniture, painting or trinket had its proper place, every part played a role in harmonising the space and achieving the perception of the 'whole'. In his lectures, every word was carefully thought out and condensed into concise sentences. This accuracy could again be seen as Charcot's inability to leave behind his organised academic nature.

Freud's depiction of Charcot's study,[29] mentioned previously, portrays the separation of 'comfort' and 'science' within the space. It could be argued that this 'comfort' area was a refuge from work life within his domestic environment. He created a clear division between exertion and repose and, perhaps, a division between his conscious and unconscious mind. In Freud's description of these two spaces, it is fascinating to see that his area devoted to work, despite being filled with books and manuscripts, was not as adorned with decorative art objects, as was his rest area. From this, one can deduce that Charcot's psyche was most at ease when surrounded by an overwhelming amount of visual stimuli. Additionally, he chose to place his cases containing Indian and Chinese antiques within the area devoted to rest. Perhaps admiring these artefacts was where he found his solitude, losing himself in the art of other nations. These oriental artefacts link back to

the anti-industrial attitude of the Decorative Arts, as the Far East had not yet succumbed to industrialisation and so retained artisanal traditions and styles.

It is apparent that he was a man who was in constant need of occupying his mind, when he wasn't working at the Salpêtrière he was in his atelier at home designing and making. The overly decorated home reflects Charcot's compulsive and controlling psyche in his meticulous decisions. Meige argues that

« ... No frame could have better harmonized with Charcot's personality » [30] (1906 : 20) referring to his own description of Charcot's calculated demeanour. The abundance of his collection of artwork, trinkets, and furniture that drenched the space created an incredibly mentally stimulating environment [31] and seem to represent a psyche that never rested and was never satisfied. Charcot was also interested in reviving the decorative arts. His application of diverse materials, such as terracotta, metal, wood, leather, glass and fabric in his interior allowed him to integrate a variety of artisanal pieces from frames and chairs, to lamps and chandeliers. These items held prominent positions in the reception rooms of the house and expressed Charcot's eclecticism. This could be seen as a recollection of his youth, of his father's carriage building and decorating business, or merely a representation of his

29. *« It is divided in two, of which the bigger section is dedicated to science, the other to comfort. Two projections from the wall separate the two sections. As one enters one looks through a triple window to the garden ; the ordinary panes are separated by pieces of stained glass. Along the side walls of the larger section stands his enormous library on two levels, each with steps to reach the one above. On the left of the door is an immensely long table covered with periodicals and odd books ; in front of the window are smaller tables with portfolios on them. On the right of the door is a smaller stained-glass window, and in front of it stands Charcot's writing table, quite flat and covered with manuscripts and books ; his armchair and several other chairs. The other section has a fireplace, a table, and cases containing Indian and Chinese antiques. The walls are covered with Gobelins and pictures ; the walls themselves are painted terra cotta. »* Freud (Personal communication by letter. 20th January 1886).

30. *« Ce cadre était aussi son œuvre. Vastes pieces d'une somptuosité somber, étoffes aux couleurs atténuées par les ans, muebles d'un luxe sobre, aux ors éteints, aux lignes irréprochables, peintures, sculptures at bibelots : tout était dispose pour la plus parfait harmonie de l'ensemble et la plus complete satisfaction des yeux. »* (Meige, 1906 : 20).

31. *« The function of décor is not to arouse particular emotions, but to give the milieu a character in accord with the man who must live there, without compelling his thoughts to focus on the image of a concrete reality, without forcing them to be objective when the hour of subjective refuge awaits them. »* (Joyce Henri Robinson, 1996 : 103).

appreciation for the craftsmen of France, a way of re-living the past, just as the Brothers de Goncourt had done with their collection of eighteenth century antiquities.

No space was left empty, the floors were covered in a patchwork of Persian rugs, the ceilings obscured by detailed cornicing, every architectural element in the home was carved or engraved with intricate detail and almost every piece of furniture embellished. One can imagine that to many people Charcot's interior would have had the opposite effect, being filled with stimulating items, the mind could wonder across the space for hours. However, it could be deduced that this was Charcot's method of forgetting the outside world, of closing himself off from the routines of everyday life. Possibly, being surrounded by this hectic atmosphere was calming to his mind.

The various descriptions of the house reveal that a key goal of Charcot and his family was to create a harmonised space.[32] In fact, it appears as though his collection of varying styles and eras came together as a whole despite their over embellished and gaudy nature. The harmony they achieved through their vast assortment of ornate pieces, created a refuge from modern life.[33] Charcot focussed on the importance of creating a synthesis using the organisation of the elements in his home, the spaces almost set up as a gallery, each item positioned at a particular angle to accentuate its presence and create links to other components in the space. With seating often pushed to the perimeter of the room, creating a sort of viewing platform of the wall in front, covered in curios, for those within the space, again accentuating the atmosphere of a museum.

Architects and theoreticians, such as Nicholas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1789), have claimed that the evolution from one room to another is very important in creating suspense

and curiosity to the beholder. They explained that the rooms one first enters in a domicile should be less extravagant than those that follow to instil an anticipation of what is ahead. In observing Charcot's home, one can note his direct challenge to this approach ; each room in the Charcot mansion appears just as opulent as the last. Even the entrance vestibule walls were cluttered with curios, ornaments and art, but in fact, as we have seen from Freud, the house still intrigued the beholder. This could well have been because Charcot was more concerned with the tranquil moods the space evoked for him, rather than those of his guests.

From the way Charcot's mansi on on boulevard Saint-Germain was curated, one can see his central role with innovative principles of interior decoration at the end of the nineteenth century. Charcot represents the image of a man who, although immersed in modern society, was struggling to come to terms with the fast pace the city, like many others, and recognised the importance of composing the domestic space as a refuge from the feverish metropolis.

32. This concept of harmony in the domestic environment had been previously discussed by Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières (1721-1789), a French Architect and theoretician who wrote 'The Genius of Architecture'. *« What is pleasing in nature charms us by its harmony and attracts us by the fine concord between the parts of every object ; true mastery consists in operating by the same means as nature. »* (1992 :87)

33. Le Camus de Mézières goes on to discuss the importance of judgement and arrangement within the domestic environment *« ...The merit of every object lies in its placing, which alone confers grace and value upon it. From the simplest objects, taste alone draws the most delightful effects. »* (Le Camus de Mézières,1992 :89)

The Leçons du Mardi and the Creative Tools Charcot Introduced in his Medical Observations

Having analysed Charcot's home, his professional life should now be considered. Throughout his career as an established neurologist, and indeed as the world's first chaired professor of neurology, his work was influenced by his interest in art, particularly during his employment at the Salpêtrière in Paris. Imagery played an important role in his clinical observations and, as a physician, he produced powerful testimonies through the use of photography and sketches by his own hand. His use of images and reference to the environment in his clinical lectures depict his avant-garde views on curative theories.

Charcot made many of sketches throughout his career featuring different medical ailments. His drawings of patients at the Salpêtrière were more detailed than those he produced of people suffering from neurological disorders in public, but he would still make quick illustrative sketches of their symptoms. Charcot was skilled as a draftsman *[see Fig. 8]* and his imagery was also accurate in recording signs of mental illness. Charcot organised the assembly of a photography service at the Salpêtrière with Albert Londe [34] (1858 – 1917), where patient symptoms were documented, particularly of neurological diseases :

« ...photography was in the ideal position to crystallize the link between the fantasy of hysteria and the fantasy of knowledge » (Didi-Huberman, 2003 : xi). The photographers used sequential and time-lapse photography techniques to capture the aggressive body movements found in the patients.[35] *[see Figs. 9 - 10]*

Critics of Charcot's diagnoses of hysteria demeaned the

condition by referring to it as the *'Salpêtrière illness'* and arguing that it was a result of Charcot imposing the dramatized illness on his patients. He strove to prove them wrong by writing *'Les Démonaiques dans l'Art'* (1887), a book distinguishing the existence of hysteria, not as an ailment but as a form of distortion of the soul due to demonic presences, in all forms of Renaissance art. He finds this manifestation in the bodily contortions of the artistic subjects, which he compares to the symptoms of hysteria he witnessed in his patients. Not only did he analyse individuals within these works but also commented on *'hysterical'* groups, as in *Les Danseurs de Saint-Guy* (1642) by Pierre Breughel [36] *[see Fig. 11]*. The book reflects his continuing examination of the link between art and science.

In 1882, weekly clinical lessons were set up at the Salpêtrière, the *Leçons du Mardi*. These were a voyeuristic method of studying neurological disorders, parading ailing subjects in an amphitheatre filled with physicians and interns. Charcot was a resident speaker at these clinical sessions and would often announce to the room : « *All I am is a photographer. I describe what I see.* » (Nevins, 2012: 47). This self-characterisation reveals how he saw himself as a dedicated observer and associated himself with the creative field, despite not actually being a professional photographer.

Charcot's presence during his *Leçons du Mardi* was calm and particular. He was extremely eloquent in the delivery of his lectures, never including unnecessary vocabulary and always using the most expressive words. That said, Charcot would occasionally abandon his reserved persona for the

34. Albert Londe was an influential French photographer, medical researcher and chronophotographer. He was hired in 1878 by Charcot as a medical photographer at the Salpêtrière as a result of his developing a system to photograph the muscular and physical movements in patients.

35. For this portrayal, Londe had created a 12-lens camera in order to successfully capture the progression of the muscular and physical movements of the patients at the Salpêtrière, which proved to be essential in Charcot's teachings (See Fig. 10).

36. Pierre Breughel (1567-1625).

benefit of science ; when he was unable to demonstrate the symptoms of an illness by exhibiting the patients themselves, he would re-enact the maladies, almost as a theatrical performance. By parading these sufferers, Charcot allowed the audience to experience the « *phantasmatic link between seeing and knowing.* » (Didi-Huberman, 2003 : 8). However, when it came to recording symptoms, Charcot believed the most powerful tool was the image. He rarely spoke of illnesses without referring to visual evidence to support his observations and, although he used photography, Charcot found there was no better way to express oneself than through drawing. This method allowed him to present clear processes and create accurate illustrations of ailments, which was invaluable in proving his theories. Constant use of the blackboard and coloured chalks to sketch his thoughts remained indispensable in his teachings. His use of imagery in science was an aspect of his life where Charcot truly revealed his inner artist, through his continuous and varied experimentation with the effective combination of art and science, just as an artist explores his subject to find an appropriate representation.[37]

37. Being an admirer of the work of Shakespeare, Charcot drew another connection between the creative and scientific worlds. He found there to be a model for the analysis of feelings and passion in Shakespeare's writings, and made comparisons between the writer's observations of humanity and Charcot's own clinical observations at the Salpêtrière. (Meige, 1906 : 33)

Figure 8.
J.M. Charcot. La goutte, sa nature, son traitement et le rhumatisme goutteux. (1867)

Figure 9.
P. Régnard. Attaque d'Hystérie - Première Phase. (1876)

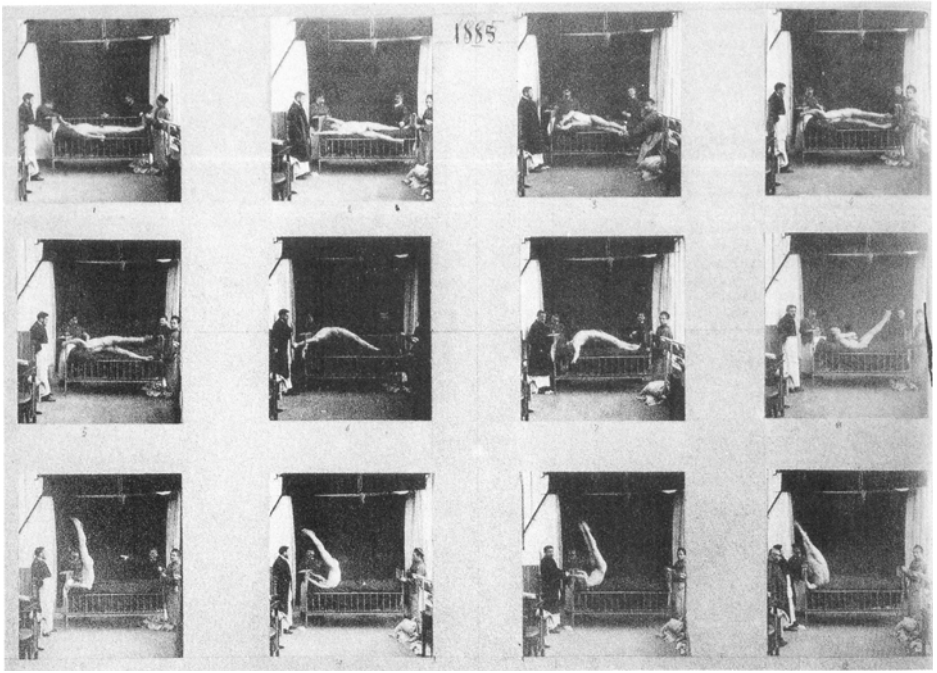


Figure 10.
A. Londe. Hystérie, La Salpêtrière, 1885. (1885)

Figure 11.
P. Breughel. Les Danseurs de Saint-Guy. (1642)

Charcot's Private Consulting Rooms

Along with treating patients at the Salpêtrière, Charcot saw private patients in his consulting rooms at boulevard Saint-Germain. Not only did he project his personality into his personal space but, when treating these patients at his home, the doctor created a mise en scène or staging. This treatment relates back to the idea discussed in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, how the projection of another's psyche and taste within an environment can affect one's mental state.

Charcot's use of the spatial environment as a tool, experimenting with lighting in a way not dissimilar from the spot lit examinations at the hospital (Gelfand, 2000). An article written for the journal *'Médecin Moderne'* depicted the theatricality of Charcot's private consultations :

> *« Théatral à la Salpêtrière, il l'était encore chez lui. Les clients qui venaient le consulter n'étaient pas, à la sortie du salon d'attente, immédiatement introduits dans le cabinet. On ne pénetre pas avec cette facilité dans un sanctuaire. Il faut l'initiation préalable. Celle'ci s'operait dans un petit réduit noir, mueblé de bibelots élégants, éclairé faiblement. On passait là au moins un quart d'heure, 20 minutes, le temps de se faire à l'obscurité. Tout à coup une grebe de lumière éclatait, une large porte venait de s'ouvrir ; debout sur le seuil, baigné d'une nappe de claret éblouissante, Charcot, le Dieu, vous attendait. »*
> (Fiessinger, cited by Gelfand, 2000 : 225).

In this description, the dramatic staging Charcot employed is exposed ; the patients were made to wait for at least fifteen minutes in a small, dimly lit space, surrounded by

ornate trinkets and elaborately embellished furniture, in order for their eyes to become accustomed to the darkness. Then a shard of bright light would cut through the space as Charcot opened the door to his consultation room, where he, *"the God"* would be waiting for the client. This aspect of Charcot's treatment illustrates his arrogance in the dramatization of his entrance; perhaps his conceit was a direct reaction to the insinuatio` treatments.

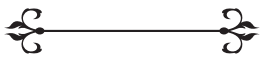
The combination of urbanisation and industrialisation during the nineteenth century resulted in many stresses and strains in society which had not been experienced hitherto and which provoked new nervous conditions, such as agoraphobia. The change was so violent in some respects that even milder forms of neurosis such as the individualist sensibility required respite. Resulting studies of the psyche and deeper understanding of mental illness and neurosis, led to a better comprehension of the impact of both the external and the internal environment on people in the modern world. Reviving the decorative arts, and using oriental influences untainted by modernity, underline the desire to re-awaken the past and escape mass-production and the standardisation of design.

One consequence was that the domestic interior became more important almost as a mental refuge from the tensions of hectic city life. Another was a better appreciation of the potential positive or negative effects of the surrounding environment, and the associated exploration of different treatments for those suffering from neurotic conditions, using the interior space. In the latter respect, case studies and increased examination of neurotic ailments, made curating of the domestic environment a more conscious process driven by the exchange between the decorative arts and psychological

developments. Both trends took the concept of interior decoration down a new path.

The personal and professional lives of Jean-Martin Charcot effectively illustrate the above points. His innovative treatments in response to modernity, particularly his use of staging, highlight his recognition of the powerful effect of environment on the mind, and his work at the Salpêtrière demonstrates his desire to link the fields of art and science. Also, Charcot's psyche displayed the symptoms of individualist sensibility which was reflected in his devotion to curating his domestic environment as a sanctuary from the outside world.

He was in a unique position, being a renowned neurologist and admirer of art, where he was able to experiment with psychological developments within both a clinical and a personal environment.



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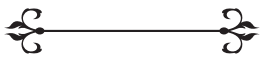


Figure 1
Goncourt, E. (1886) *Maison des Goncourt. Façade sur le boulevard Montmorency.* [online image] Available at : <http : //gallica.bnf.fr/ark :/12148/btv1b6935825t/f5.item > [Accessed 24 November 2013]

Figure 2
Goncourt, E. (1886) *Le Grenier. Panneau du fond à droite attenant au N°55.* [online image] Available at : < http : //gallica.bnf.fr/ark :/12148/btv1b6935825t/f10.item > [Accessed 24 November 2013]

Figure 3
Anon. (1885-86) [scanned image] In : Revue des Arts Decoratifs, 6 : *Front cover*

Figure 4
Anon. (1900) *Salle à manger. – Les portes sont ornées d'incrustations exécutées par Mme Charcot.* [photograph] In : Goetschy, G. (1900) 'Les Femmes du Monde Artistes : Madame Charcot'. Revue des Arts Decoratifs – Exposition Universelle 1900, 20 : pp. 47

Figure 5
Anon. (1900) Salon. – *Cabinet orné de plaques en émaux de Limoges, dessinées par le Dr Charcot. Le cuivres ajourés sont de Mme Charcot.* [photograph] In : Goetschy, G. (1900) 'Les Femmes du Monde Artistes : Madame Charcot'. Revue des Arts Decoratifs – Exposition Universelle 1900, 20 : pp. 45

Figure 6
Anon. (1900) *Salle à manger. – Cheminée don't la decoration en faïence a été dessinée par le Dr Charcot et exécutée par Mme Charcot.* [photograph] In : Goetschy, G. (1900) 'Les Femmes du Monde Artistes : Madame Charcot'. Revue des Arts Decoratifs – Exposition Universelle 1900, 20 : pp. 46

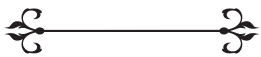
Figure 7
Anon. (1900) *Le Salon. – Le plafond à caissons a été peint, el le lustre émaillé, par Mme Charcot.* [photograph] In : Goetschy, G. (1900) 'Les Femmes du Monde Artistes : Madame Charcot'. Revue des Arts Decoratifs – Exposition Universelle 1900, 20 : pp. 44

Figure 8
Charcot, J.M. (1867) *La goutte, sa nature, son traitement et le rhumatisme goutteux.* [online image] Available at : <http://www2.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/img/?refphot=03229&mod=s> [Accessed 19 November 2013]

Figure 9
Régnard, P. (1876) *Attaque d'Hystérie – Première Phase.* [online image] Available at : <http://cushing.med.yale.edu/gsdl/cgi-bin/library?c=salpetre&a=d&d=DsalpetreSalpetriereBAC> [Accessed 24 November 2013]

Figure 10
Londe, A. (1885) *Hysterie, La Salpêtrière, 1885.* [online image] Available at : <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Albert_Londe-Hysterie,_La_Salp%C3%AAtri%C3%A8re,_1885.jpg> [Accessed 26 November 2013]

Figure 11
Breughel, P. (1642) *Les Danseurs de Saint-Guy.* [online image] Available at: <http://ihm.nlm.nih.gov/luna/servlet/detail/NLMNLM~1~1~101392808~148205:-Un-Groupe-De-Danseurs-De-Saint-Guy> [Accessed 29 November 2013]



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