

ALFONS MUCHA'S *THE LORD'S PRAYER*:
FIN DE SIÈCLE ILLUSTRATIONS OF GENDER AND SPIRITUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Meredith Hale: Alfons Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer*: Fin de Siècle Illustrations of Gender and Spirituality (Under the direction of JJ Bauer)

Alfons Mucha's illustrated and annotated book *The Lord's Prayer* (1899) presents a mystical and feminine realization of the "Our Father" that reflects the variety of spiritual traditions present at the fin de siècle while departing from conventional, often negative, depictions of women. Mucha, who practiced both Catholicism and Freemasonry, combined the beliefs of faiths that were frequently at odds with one another in his version of the prayer. The Catholic clergy criticized his French commentary for using feminine mystical titles for God. In response, Mucha created a second Czech version that reaffirmed masculine Christian conventions. While Mucha transformed his commentary, the images that depicted this radical text went unaltered. My examination of these illustrations reveals the close relationship between the spiritual and the feminine that Mucha's imagery asserts. The absence of standard symbols, like Christ and his crucifixion, and their replacement with feminine figures provided women with increased spiritual visibility.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bohemian-born artist Alfons Mucha (1860-1939) is popularly known today as a poster artist, especially for his works depicting the actress Sarah Bernhardt, and for his contributions to the Art Nouveau style.¹ Often this conception of Mucha overshadows the fact that he created artistic works in a variety of forms with significant variations in style. In recent years Mucha's *Slav Epic* series (1912-1926), which depicts twenty events of mythical or historical importance to the Slavic people, has received renewed attention, but the series and scholarship on it still remain relatively obscure.² Another significant aspect of Mucha's work that has not frequently been the focus of previous scholarship is his book illustrations. Mucha contributed works to over 250 books and periodicals during his artistic career.³ Mucha himself

¹I will use the Czech spelling of Mucha's first name rather than the Francophone version that appears in most scholarly literature due to biographical details that highlight Mucha's strong connection with his homelands. While Mucha spent eighteen years in Paris (1886-1904), he permanently returned to Bohemia in 1910. The intention behind this naming decision is to represent Mucha as he might wish to represent himself. This is not to suggest that Mucha's artistic works are necessarily Czech in their style or content.

²Both the formation of the Czech Republic in 1993 and the movement of the *Slav Epic* paintings from Moravský Krumlov to Prague's National Gallery in 2012 likely contributed to the interest in the series and Czech nationalism more broadly. Examples of recent works dealing with Mucha's *Slav Epic* include Karel Šrám's exhibition catalogue *Alfons Mucha: Das Slawische Epos* (1994), Jana Brabcová-Orlíková's *Almanach Slovanské Epopeje* (2011), a Master's thesis by Joan Tkacs (2012), and an article by Marta Filipová (2015).

³Victor Arwas, Jana Brabcová, and Anna Dvořák, *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau* (Alexandria, Virginia: Art Services International, 1998), 82. Notable texts include *Adamité* (1890) by Svatopluk Čech, *Contes des grand'mères* (1892) by Xavier Marmier, *Mémoires d'un elephant blanc* (1894) by Judith Gautier, *Ilseé, princesse de Tripoli* (1897) by Robert de Flers, *Rama* (1898) by Paul Verola, *Cloches de Noël et de Pâques* (1900) by Emile Gebhart, and *Mistr Jan Hus na koncilu kostnickém* (1902). Some of these texts, such as *Ilseé, princesse de Tripoli* and *Mémoires d'un elephant blanc*, are noted for their Symbolist imagery.

singled out *The Lord's Prayer* (1899), an illustrated version of the “Our Father,” as one of his most accomplished works in any artistic format.⁴

Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* has not received much scholarly attention in the past, in part because it is a work that is difficult to associate with one primary style or cultural context. Yet of Mucha's *oeuvre*, *The Lord's Prayer* is one of his creations most consistently associated with the Symbolist movement.⁵ This categorization does not simplify matters though because Symbolism often “eludes all definition” and is said to be “a thousand confusing things.”⁶ The illustrated book also has strong Art Nouveau elements, which both separates it from and connects it back to Symbolism. There was a significant amount of interchange of imagery between Symbolist and Art Nouveau circles.⁷ The work is also culturally complex because the religious imagery found within it cannot be definitively tied to a single spiritual tradition. It includes symbols and motifs that can be traced to Catholicism, Freemasonry, Theosophy, and mysticism. In addition, the individual symbols depicted often have connections to more than one belief system. The complex nature of the artistic and cultural influences that were instrumental in the formation of *The Lord's Prayer* make analyzing its visual and textual contents a challenging undertaking, yet study of the book has the potential to provide insights into depictions of gender and spirituality at the fin de siècle.

Study of *The Lord's Prayer* is also significant for the findings its textual aspects make possible. Because Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* is realized in the form of a book and uses the “Our

⁴Ibid., 233.

⁵Studies by Victor Arwas et al. and Michael Gibson highlight *The Lord's Prayer* as an example of Mucha's Symbolist work and Czech Symbolism more broadly.

⁶Albert-Marie Schmidt, *La Littérature Symboliste*. (Paris, 1950), 5.

⁷Anna Dvořák, “Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1978), 24; Robert Schmutzler, *Art Nouveau* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1962), 25.

Father” as its central inspiration, the work is inherently textual. The book itself is composed of seven chapters. Every chapter focuses on one verse of the Lord’s Prayer and consists of three pages total. In each chapter the pages are presented in the following order: first is a decorative page that includes the Latin and vernacular text of the prayer itself, second is a commentary page written by Mucha, and third is an allegorical painting that visually represents the associated line from the prayer (figure 1). In addition to the original French text, a Czech version of *The Lord’s Prayer (Otčenáš)* was also published in the following year. Some of the commentary by Mucha from the original text was changed in this second version, likely due to criticism from the Catholic clergy.⁸ Neither text has ever been translated in English. These translations and their comparison may help with understanding how Mucha wished his illustrations to function, though the text will not be privileged over the image in analysis.

Another critical textual aspect of this study will involve analysis of reviews from Paris, Bohemia, and America following *The Lord’s Prayer’s* publication. These reviews will help uncover how the public reacted to and understood the book’s text and images. The text was first displayed at the Exposition Universelle of 1900 in Paris and famously drew the attention of the Emperor of Austria, Franz Joseph I.⁹ When Mucha traveled to the United States in 1904 to exhibit his works, accumulate funds for his *Slav Epic* series, and establish himself as a painter rather than a decorative designer, *The Lord’s Prayer* was prominently displayed in his exhibitions.¹⁰ These reviews will provide alternative readings of the text while also suggesting how the public categorized the book in relation to existing art movements.

⁸Arwas, Brabcová, and Dvořák, *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 233. Note that a citation is not provided for this information. Attempts to find an original document were unsuccessful.

⁹Anna Dvořák, *Mucha: Le Pater: Illustrations pour Le Notre-Père* (Paris: Fondation Neumann, 2001), 15.

¹⁰Arwas, Brabcová, and Dvořák, *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 92.

Religious subject matter, like that found in *The Lord's Prayer*, also features prominently in Mucha's other works. *The Beatitudes* (1906) and *The Seven Deadly Sins* are two examples of series inspired by traditional Christian biblical stories. Numerous depictions of Mary the Mother of God and Joan of Arc as well as decorative religious works such as his stained glass window in St. Vitus cathedral and emblems Mucha made for Masonic lodges in Czechoslovakia also show a sustained commitment to depicting religious subject matter. Some of the Masonic symbols Mucha used for lodge emblems, like the triangle and the star, appear frequently in *The Lord's Prayer* (figure 2).

The prevalence of spirituality in Mucha's work is unsurprising given his personal involvement with Freemasonry, Catholicism, and mysticism. Mucha was initiated into Freemasonry in Paris in the year 1898 and he was influential in establishing the Komenský Lodge in Prague in 1918.¹¹ This Lodge was the first Czech-speaking Lodge in the country. While Freemasonry had existed in Bohemian lands since 1749, it had been banned during the rule of the Habsburgs and was only reinstated when Czechoslovakia was officially established.¹² Mucha also became the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia.¹³ He eventually rose to an even higher leadership position within the group, becoming the second Sovereign Grand Commander in Czechoslovakia.¹⁴ Figure 3 portrays Mucha in his formal regalia in this capacity. This photograph depicts some of the symbols important to Freemasonry, including the

¹¹Arwas, Brabcová, and Dvořák, *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 67.

¹²Henry Leonard Stillson, ed. *History of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons and Concordant Orders* (Boston: The Fraternity Publishing Co., 1896), 490.

¹³Arwas, Brabcová, and Dvořák, *Alphonse Mucha: The Spirit of Art Nouveau*, 67.

¹⁴Ibid.

triangle on his sash, emphasized by stitched rays of light, and the six-pointed star found on the decorative backdrop.

Mucha was also involved with mysticism and the occult. He participated in numerous séances with Camille Flammarion, Colonel de Rochas, and Madame de Ferkel. Frequently Mucha's Paris studio in the rue du Val-de-Grâce was used to hold these séances. Mucha also socialized with the Theosophist Émile Schuffenecker, who was a painter associated with the Symbolist Nabis, and August Strindberg, who was involved with occultism and is known today for his works as a playwright and painter.¹⁵ While Mucha was less formally associated with mysticism and the occult than with Freemasonry, these traditions significantly influenced his daily life while living in Paris.

Long before Mucha had any knowledge of Freemasonry or mysticism, he was raised in the Catholic faith. At the age of ten his mother sent him away to Brünn (or Brno) in the hopes that Mucha would become a priest.¹⁶ An early drawing of the crucifixion by Mucha (figure 4) demonstrates his youthful devotion to both art and religion. Mucha was ultimately more committed to his brush than to taking religious orders within the Catholic Church. Still, his religious upbringing left a permanent impression upon Mucha causing him to later explore spirituality through art. Christian Brinton, a curator and art critic from Philadelphia, summarizes Mucha's various religious interests and their effect on Mucha's art. He writes:

The youthful acolyte in the cathedral at Brünn has remained a fervent Catholic and his art as well as his religion reflect that colorful Christianity which Cyril and Methodius brought long since from Constantinople and Thessalonica. There are echoes of the Slavonic ritual, of the dim beauty of *ikoni*, in his compositions whether sacred or secular, and this element, coupled with an active interest in the occult, gives a sacerdotal, Asiatic tinge to panel, poster, or painting. It had been Mucha's dream for many years to combine

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Christian Brinton, "Alfons Mucha and the New Mysticism," *The Century Magazine* (December 1904): 223.

these tendencies into a form both esthetic and devotional, and this he was finally able to accomplish in 'The Lord's Prayer.'¹⁷

Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* truly is a mixture of both traditional Catholicism and the occult. Through analyzing its symbols and imagery, one finds evidence of the influence of Freemasonry, Theosophy, mysticism, and Catholicism on Mucha's thought and art. This mélange of spiritual traditions is typical of the fin de siècle, which is associated with the breakdown of tradition through degeneration and decadence. It was hoped that a brighter truth might emerge through exploring new spiritual paths or multiple traditions at once.

Beyond being representative of the spiritual multiplicity of the time, *The Lord's Prayer* is particularly significant for its representation of gender through both Mucha's illustrations and commentary. The nineteenth century is often noted in gender studies for its construction of the dichotomous categories of Angel in the House and femme fatale, which force women to be seen as either virgins or demons.¹⁸ Mucha, who so frequently employed female subjects in his creations, also utilized these tropes. In some of his works, such as his Job cigarette advertisements or his Salon des Cent poster (figure 5), women are sensually objectified. I will argue that Mucha's figures in *The Lord's Prayer* are distinct from these more misogynistic representations, though they are not free from all undermining stereotypes. Through examining Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* ostensibly about God the Father, one can discover the spectrum of roles women played in spirituality at the turn of the century.

¹⁷Ibid., 225.

¹⁸Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de Siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 18, 252-257.

CHAPTER 1: THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS:
SPIRITUAL SYMBOLS IN *THE LORD'S PRAYER*

In 1918, the year of the formation of Czechoslovakia, Alfons Mucha created the painting *France Kisses Bohemia* (figure 6). A cross and two figures, one representing France and the other Bohemia, dominate the work. The female figure wears a headscarf with the Czech crest, a white lion on red ground, which partially covers her body and identifies her as a symbol of former Bohemia. The male figure in the painting wears a red Phrygian cap, thus presenting him as an allegory for France and liberty. He has seemingly just removed the bonds that held Bohemia's arms to the crucifix and symbolically to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He acknowledges her newfound freedom with a kiss of welcome. While Mucha does not idealize the body of Bohemia, an erotic reading of this painting is still nevertheless possible. The work plays upon earlier paintings depicting female crucifixions, particularly representations of the temptation of St. Anthony, in which sexuality and spirituality are closely intertwined. Yet, rather than emphasizing the physical contact between the two figures, the painting instead primarily recognizes the value that both France and Czechoslovakia place on liberty. It also highlights a sense of communion between the two countries, which is further supported by historical context. Mucha painted this work just as World War I was ending. During the war, Czechoslovak Legions fought together with France against the Central Powers. The billowing smoke and smoldering fire in the background indirectly suggest the end of a major armed conflict and emphasizes the solidarity of the two figures. This work also points to the close religious ties between the two countries. The cross, used chiefly as a symbol of oppression to be overcome in

the image, suggests the Catholic religious tradition shared by the two countries and, through its negative portrayal, the shift away from this tradition at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

While this painting postdates Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* (1899) by nearly two decades, the close and affectionate relationship that Mucha represents between France and Bohemia as well as the suggestion that religious ideals might warrant reevaluation are both relevant to Mucha's text. Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* was produced in Paris, and its imagery and text suggest significant French influence. Furthermore, the tension *France Kisses Bohemia* portrays between spirituality and sexuality is also present in *The Lord's Prayer*. While this painting introduces many of the key themes that dominate *The Lord's Prayer*, Mucha's treatment of these themes often differs significantly when realized in book form. His book illustrations typically incorporate more ornament and symbols than are present in *France Kisses Bohemia*. Identifying the imagery used in *The Lord's Prayer* and comparing the text to other illustrated books at the time will build foundational knowledge of the text's symbols and their meaning while providing context to better understand the text's relationship to similar works.

Before initiating these comparisons, some background information about the religious and political developments in both France and Bohemia will situate the imagery found within Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* and other French texts. The Austro-Hungarian Empire as well as the Slavic people generally have close ties to Catholicism. Bohemia was primarily Catholic while under Habsburg power, and this religious tradition broadly unites the Slavic people.¹⁹ Starting in the 1840s, Catholicism became important to the political identity of the people of Bohemia and Moravia despite increasing secularization. At this time Catholic political parties, such as the

¹⁹Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), 118.

Christian Social People's Party, began forming.²⁰ The period surrounding the publication of *The Lord's Prayer* was especially turbulent because of attempts to consolidate the various Catholic political factions that were forming into a single party. This was first attempted in 1895 by Canon M. Karlach.²¹ Ultimately this initiative was abandoned in 1906 after the failure of multiple mergers.

In France, as in Bohemia, politics and religion at the fin de siècle greatly influenced one another. The publication of *The Lord's Prayer* took place just prior to the establishment of secularism in France in 1905. The politics of the Third Republic, particularly the desire for *sociabilité* and *association*, led to the acceptance of Freemasonry.²² In 1901 the Radical Party, many of whose leaders were Freemasons, was founded. While Freemasonry is not technically a religion, in many ways it replaced the previous dominance of the Catholic tradition in France.

At the time of *The Lord's Prayer's* publication, Mucha's illustrations were consistently seen as similar to French sources. Reviews of Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* from the early twentieth century frequently compare the work to the illustrations of Gustave Doré.²³ For instance, the French publication *Le Mois* notes that Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* continues all of the best features of Doré's work, but improves upon it by removing some of Doré's romantic details.²⁴ One reason for the common association of *The Lord's Prayer* with Doré's work may be the religious subject matter of many of Doré's illustrations. Doré was particularly well known for

²⁰Pavel Marek, "Emancipation of Czech Political Catholicism, 1890-1914," *East European Quarterly* 37 no. 1 (2003): 1.

²¹Ibid. 12.

²²Anver Halpern, *The Democratisation of France, 1840-1901: Sociabilité, Freemasonry and Radicalism* (Atlanta: Minerva Press, 1999), xiii.

²³Louise James Bargelt, "Art: Paintings Given to Prague Shown at Art Institute," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 30, 1920, E5; Abel Fabre, "Un Maître Décorateur: Après une Visite au Pavillon de Bosnie." *Le Mois: Littéraire et Pittoresque* 17 (mai 1900): 598.

²⁴Abel Fabre, "Un Maître Décorateur: Après une Visite au Pavillon de Bosnie." 598.

his illustrated versions of Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, *The Bible*, and Michaud's *History of the Crusades*, which were all created between the 1850s and the 1870s. He primarily used wood engraving as his technique, which produces a moody effect that has some similarities with the allegorical paintings in *The Lord's Prayer* (compare figure 7 and figure 17). Mucha's allegorical paintings and Doré's wood engravings also share a monochromatic palette and deep dark tones.

In both Mucha and Doré's work, a ring of stars is commonly used to identify religious subjects, though artists from many time periods and countries often use this symbol. In one of Doré's illustrations to *The History of the Crusades* (1875) a circle of stars is employed to emphasize the Holy Spirit in the form a dove (figure 7). Similarly, Mucha encircles many of his spiritual subjects with stars. This can notably be seen on the frontispiece, the allegorical painting for "Hallowed be Thy Name," and the closing "Amen" page (figure 8). The primary similarities between the two artists include their use of stars, a shared interest in religious subject matter, and a talent to evoke a brooding atmosphere. A mood similar to that of the illustrations in *The Lord's Prayer* can be found in Doré's three-piece series *The Enigma* (1871). In particular, the individual work that shares the series' title shows an interest in Egypt through its inclusion of a sphinx that connects it to Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* and Symbolist work more broadly.

While connections can be drawn between Mucha and Doré, comparisons with other book illustrations that have more similarities in terms of their symbolic vocabulary are ultimately more productive. Because scholarship on *The Lord's Prayer* is limited, there are not many artists that have been closely associated with Mucha's text. Still, Mildred Constantine, Brian Reade, and Peter Selz find notable similarities between Mucha's book illustrations and those by Paris-based Swiss Symbolist artist Carloz Schwabe.²⁵ While some scholars, such as Anna Dvořák, argue

²⁵Brian Reade, *Art Nouveau and Alphonse Mucha* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963), 14; Peter Selz and Mildred Constantine, eds. *Art Nouveau* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1975), 147.

against Schwabe being a direct influence on Mucha's work, they still recognize that significant similarities can be found in the two artists' book illustrations.²⁶ Reade mentions that Mucha knew Schwabe and his works, which makes a direct comparison more compelling.²⁷ A review of *Le Pater* from 1903 also positions Mucha's work as a direct rival of Schwabe's illustrations for *L'Évangile de l'Enfance de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ* (1891), which further strengthens the association between the two artists.²⁸ In addition to *L'Évangile de l'Enfance*, Schwabe's works in *Le Rêve* (1892-1893), a novel by Émile Zola, are also comparable to *The Lord's Prayer*. To begin, both texts by Schwabe focus on religious subject matter. Zola's *Le Rêve* tells the tale of a young orphan girl who loves stories about saints. She wins the heart of a righteous knight and is married, but she dies on her wedding day. *L'Évangile de l'Enfance* recounts the traditional biblical story of the infancy of Jesus. In addition to their subject matter, both texts are also associated with the Symbolist and Art Nouveau styles, as is *The Lord's Prayer*. Comparison of Schwabe's illustrations with those found in *The Lord's Prayer* show that the texts employ similar visual symbols, yet there are some elements that are particularly unique to Mucha's text. The aim of these comparisons is not to show causality, but to indicate the many ways in which Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* can be aligned with and informed by other illustrated books in French and published in Paris from the fin de siècle.

Like Doré's illustrations, those by Schwabe also continue the use of a ring of stars as an indicator of spirituality, with one noteworthy difference. Schwabe's cover illustration to *L'Évangile de l'Enfance* exemplifies the artist's use and depiction of stars in much of his work

²⁶Anna Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 10.

²⁷Reade, *Art Nouveau and Alphonse Mucha*, 14.

²⁸Doucet, Jérôme. "Alph. Mucha." *Revue illustrée* (July 15, 1899): 15.

(figure 9). In this illustration, the stars arch over a nativity scene, indicating the presence of the baby Jesus in the manger below. While stars are used in a similar fashion in Mucha's illustrations, the form of Mucha's stars is essentially different from those of Schwabe. Conventional five-pointed stars are used in Schwabe's illustrations, while all of the stars in Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* are composed of six points.²⁹ Because Doré's stars are less defined due to their luminous nature, this distinction could not be made in the previous comparison. The six-pointed star has a variety of meanings, depending on its context; six-pointed stars are associated with Judaism, Theosophy, and Occultism. Because of this it is not possible to be certain of the symbolic purpose that Mucha intended the stars to fulfill, but choosing this type of star does make it more likely that the images would be read in ways that are not traditionally Christian.

In addition to the use of stars, three symbols in *The Lord's Prayer* are found in other texts illustrated by Schwabe: the burning or smoldering heart, the triangle, and the eye of providence. While common to works by both artists, these symbols are treated in different ways. The burning heart, like the ring of stars, is not unique to illustrated texts from the fin de siècle, yet the way in which they are treated varies greatly. Mucha uses heart imagery prominently throughout *The Lord's Prayer* (figure 10) and typically depicts the heart as a flat shape rather than a mass. Mucha's hearts, due to their conventional shape, are truly meant to be symbols rather than functioning organs. Figure 10b, a detail from the allegorical painting representing "Thy Kingdom Come," particularly emphasizes this flatness by making the heart ornamentation on the female figure's robe. It is a marker of spirituality that has little to no resemblance to an actual human heart. In contrast, illustrations by Schwabe depict bleeding or crying hearts that align more

²⁹Also consult Figure 19 – for an additional example of Schwabe's five-pointed stars.

closely with the decadence and decline typically associated with the fin de siècle (figures 11 and 12). Rather than being primarily used a visual sign of a person's spiritual state, Schwabe's hearts also indicate emotion. Hearts illustrated in *Le Rêve* (figure 11) lack the perfectly symmetrical shape usually given to these organs. They are speared by stakes and blood is flowing from them. In Figure 12 the heart sheds tears, indicating the state of the young girl who stands before it. Generally Schwabe's hearts show anguish, while Mucha's hearts illustrate spiritual purity. Yet Schwabe also occasionally employs the heart symbol to show spirituality without any indication of pain. His cover illustration for *Le Rêve* (figure 13) includes a heart symbol in the rose window of a cathedral that a large dove enfolds with its wings. Due to its central placement, the heart doubles as a sign for the spirit of both the cathedral and the dove.

In addition, the burning heart appears in other books illustrated by Mucha that are often characterized as Symbolist. In Mucha's *Ilsée, Princesse de Tripoli* (1897), the lover of the Princess is depicted with a heart radiating with light (figure 14). The burning heart is also a common motif in illustrations for Judith Gautier's *Mémoire d'un Éléphant Blanc* (1894), which includes images by both Mucha and P. M. Ruty. The chapter headings, illustrated by Ruty, are especially good examples of this (figure 15). Anna Dvořák claims that Ruty's illustrations have more similarities with Mucha's designs than those made by Schwabe.³⁰ She believes that working with Ruty greatly influenced Mucha's style. In *Ilsée, Princesse de Tripoli* and *Mémoire d'un Éléphant Blanc*, the symbols of hearts emanate light. In Ruty's illustration (figure 15) the stylized flames are almost vegetal in design, while the heart in *Ilsée* is represented as if it were an imploding star. The basic heart symbol in *Ilsée* and *Mémoire d'un Éléphant Blanc* is the same as

³⁰Anna Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 24.

that in *The Lord's Prayer*, but the hearts are more dynamic and detailed than the examples found in Mucha's "Our Father."

While hearts and rings of stars are both used in illustrated books by Mucha and Schwabe to represent divine beings, they are not as tightly tethered to this goal as symbols such as the eye of providence and the triangle. The eye of providence suggests divinity through its associations with omniscience – it is always open and looking out onto the world before it. The triangle is commonly used as a symbol of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each represented by one point of the shape. Yet in Freemasonry the triangle has looser associations and can also stand in for any deity.³¹ The eye of providence also has close ties to Freemasonry. While not apparent from its form, all-seeing eyes are connected with the Egyptian deity Ptah and Freemasons greatly celebrated Egyptian culture and art. The Egyptian source of these symbols is not directly indicated by the way in which they are represented by Schwabe and Mucha, but the origins of these symbols will later be shown to affect the texts in other ways.

Typically the eye of providence and the triangle are combined, with the eye set inside the bounds of the shape, effectively creating a double reference to divinity. An example of this can be seen in a preparatory sketch for the "Our Father Who Art in Heaven" illustration in *The Lord's Prayer* (figure 16). It depicts a giant figure with flowing hair standing amid a rocky landscape. The triangle frames the eye that peers down on humanity below. In Mucha's final painting for this scene, he decided to remove the triangle and let the eye dominate the sky on its own (figure 17). In this image, an eye gazes down more intensely upon the people below than in the preparatory sketch. A luminous circle does bring attention to the eye, but any indication of

³¹Clement M. Silvestro, ed. *Masonic Symbols in American Decorative Arts* (Lexington, MA: Scottish Rite Masonic Museum of Our National Heritage, 1976), 52.

the body to which the eye belongs has been eliminated. Mucha's decision to pare down his use of symbols for this painting contrasts with other instances in *The Lord's Prayer* in which he layers several of these symbols in a single object. An example can be seen in a detail of the title page of *The Lord's Prayer* (figure 18). The eye of providence is placed within a triangle, surrounded by a ring of stars, and finally framed by an eight-pointed star. Schwabe's illustration for *Le Rêve* of an eye inscribed within a flower encircled by stars (figure 19) also employs this layering, though with less dramatic effect than Mucha's representations of the same symbol.

In contrast to this conglomeration of symbols, the triangle can also act as a signifier of the divine without being combined with other similar symbols. This is especially apparent in one of Schwabe's chapter title pages (figure 20) in which a triangle stands alone, except for the flowers that help to define its borders. No precise meaning can be derived from this symbol. Instead its vagueness contributes to the spiritual mysticism of Zola's text. Triangles unpaired with the eye of providence also appear in Mucha's illustrations. This can be seen in *The Lord's Prayer* through the use of the Tetragrammaton, a triangle with four Hebrew letters that refer to Yahweh (figure 21). Mucha also uses triangles in *Ilseé* to highlight spiritual figures. For instance, in Figure 22 a triangle is placed behind the head of a woman, acting almost as a makeshift halo. Figures 21 and 22 also include the ouroboros, a symbol of a snake eating its own tale, which provides another example of Mucha's layering of spiritual motifs.

Although Schwabe's illustrations do include Masonic symbols like the triangle and the eye of providence, they do not reference the source of these symbols by featuring Egyptian stylistic elements despite the importance of this ancient imagery to Symbolism broadly. Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* does make this connection. This is one significant difference between the works of the two artists. While subtle, many of the angels on Mucha's decorative pages have

wings that are Egyptian in style, particularly the ornament found on the page for the line “Thy Kingdom Come” (figure 23). In addition to the angel’s wings, this page also includes cobras. Dvořák suggests that these snakes refer to the Egyptian serpent Uraeus.³² While both Schwabe and Mucha were associated with Symbolist circles, Mucha’s involvement with Freemasonry makes him distinctive from other book illustrators of the time.

As this analysis shows, Mucha included a wide range of religious symbols in *The Lord’s Prayer*, from stars and burning hearts to the eye of providence. Yet one of the most prevalent symbols associated with Christianity is conspicuously absent from the text – the cross. Mucha’s illustrations in *The Lord’s Prayer* readily acknowledge Christ’s passion through the inclusion of the crown of thorns as one of the symbols on the cover and in the title page for the fourth chapter (figure 24), but the cross itself is excluded. In contrast the cross and the figure of Christ are represented frequently in Doré’s and Schwabe’s illustrations. Returning to Doré’s illustration for *The History of the Crusades* (1875), one can see a crucifix with Christ illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit (figure 7). Schwabe also includes the cross and the Son of God in many illustrations (figure 25). While one may argue that the Lord’s Prayer is directed towards God the Father of the Holy Trinity and not the Son, the complete omission of the crucifix is unusual. Without the crucifixion, the promise of the Lord’s Prayer to make God’s kingdom come is not possible.

One possible reason for the absence of the cross in the illustrations could be due to the negative connotations of the symbol and Catholicism in late nineteenth century France. This context is relevant because Mucha resided in Paris while completing his work on *The Lord’s Prayer*. In France during this time the Catholic Church was seen as an intensely hierarchical

³²Anna Dvořák, *Mucha: Le Pater: Illustrations pour Le Notre-Père*, 34.

institution that made it very much at odds with the *fraternité* of the Third Republic. A number of laws were passed in the 1880s and 1890s aimed at removing Catholicism from French public life. In 1886 it was required that lay teachers replace all clergy in public schools. Most directly relevant for Mucha's text, in 1890 crucifixes were banned from all but two of Paris's hospitals. The destruction of crosses was also a common way to protest authority. The 1882 strike at Monceau-les-Mines in which six crucifixes were destroyed by miners is one example.³³ Given this political atmosphere, the inclusion of the cross in a French-language text published in Paris would be much more contentious than it might seem to modern viewers of *The Lord's Prayer*.³⁴

The absence of the cross is also significant due to the establishment of a new religious artistic group in Paris just prior to the publication of *The Lord's Prayer*. The Salon de la Rose+Croix, formed in 1891 by Joséphin Péladan, was a Catholic religious group focused on infusing art and life with a new spiritual essence.³⁵ It aimed to create beauty in life through the dedication of members to art and God. As is apparent from the organization's name, the cross is an important symbol for the group. The illustrator of Zola's *Le Rêve* also provided the image for the poster that announced the formation of Rose+Croix. This work (figure 26) features the combination of rose and cross in the upper textual portion of the work. In addition, crosses decorate the side borders of the poster. The aims of the Salon de la Rose et Croix seem concordant with Mucha's own religious inclinations. It aimed to be Catholic in an orthodox fashion, yet it also strove to improve the state of religion. Mucha's continued commitment to

³³Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France, 1889-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 119.

³⁴*Le Pater* was published by Henry Piazza, to whom the text was also dedicated. He was also the publisher of *Ilseé, Princesse de Tripoli* (1897).

³⁵Marla H. Hand, "Carloz Schwabe's Poster for the Salon de la Rose+Croix: A Herald of the Ideal in Art," *Art Journal* 44 no. 1 (1984): 40.

Catholicism, despite his extensive involvement with Freemasonry, is consistent with this. Yet he still does not include the most Christian of symbols in his illustrated version of the Lord's Prayer.

One reason for this omission that will be further explored is that Mucha also does not include a typical depiction of the Trinity in *The Lord's Prayer*. Divinity in Mucha's text is more often visually represented as feminine instead of masculine. For this reason, a traditional representation of the crucifixion is not logical in the text. To return to *France Kisses Bohemia* (figure 6), female crucifixions often have negative connotations due to their association with the temptation of Saint Anthony. In this story the crucified woman is a source of sexual desire rather than religious redemption. The portrayal of crucified women is consistently negative from Félicien Rops's painting *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1878) to František Drtikol's untitled photographs of crucified women (1913) (figure 27). Because the negative connotations associated with female crucifixions were well established by the publication of *The Lord's Prayer*, the absence of any direct representations of the cross in conjunction with women makes it so that negative readings of the figures are less likely to occur. Positive readings of such imagery, as with *France Kisses Bohemia*, are possible but complicated by the fine line between sexual and religious ecstasy.

While Mucha's divine female figures do not undergo the Passion and act as saviors, they do take on other roles that are often associated with God. In particular, Mucha's commentary in *Le Pater* especially stresses the godly female figures as the embodiment of love and of light. While women cannot save humankind through the Passion, they can awaken "holy curiosity"

through these roles.³⁶ Instead of the cross, stars and flaming hearts that metaphorically illuminate the soul act as markers of feminine divinity. These same visual symbols are emphasized in the commentary to *The Lord's Prayer* as well as reviews of the illustrated text; the reiteration of particular words and phrases suggest specific religious historical connections and further define the relationship between gender and spirituality in the work.

³⁶Mucha, Alphonse. *Le Pater*. Paris: F. Champenois, 1899. Note that neither the French nor the Czech versions of *The Lord's Prayer* are paginated. No formal citation will be given for quotations from the prayer when it is indicated as the source in the body of the paper.

CHAPTER 2: THE POWER OF THE WORD: REVIEWS AND MUCHA'S COMMENTARY

Beyond the symbols in the text that illuminate the spiritual forces that shaped *The Lord's Prayer*, the exegesis by Mucha in the French and Czech versions of the text provides additional context for the text's depiction of spirituality. Mucha first published his illustrated version of the Lord's Prayer in December 1899 in French. A subsequent Czech edition with significant changes to the commentary was released in the following year.³⁷ Because Mucha altered his commentary following criticism from the Catholic clergy, differences between Mucha's French and Czech commentary point to religious conflicts present between Catholicism and other spiritual traditions such as Freemasonry and mysticism at the end of the century. The differences in the two versions of the commentary also highlight the role gender plays in constructing spirituality.

Currently no translation of either the French or the Czech versions of the text exist and scholarship on the variances between these two editions and their reception is limited to the research of Anna Dvořák. With regard to the reception of *Le Pater* and *Otčenáš*, Dvořák notes that the French version was received to much acclaim within France and the United States while in Bohemia reviews were largely critical.³⁸ Abel Fabre's review recognizes *The Lord's Prayer* as one of Mucha's most important works and includes five illustrations from the text for the benefit

³⁷Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 182. Dvořák notes that there are two "Czech" editions, but the first of these simply changed the title and half-title page to the Czech language and left the rest of the text unaltered. Victor Arwas et al. writes that there is only one Czech version of the text.

³⁸Dvořák, *Mucha: Le Pater: Illustrations pour Le Notre-Père*, 14.

of the readers of the periodical.³⁹ In the United States, *The Lord's Prayer* was successful enough to attract the attention of a film company. In 1913, after being repeatedly exhibited in the United States, arrangements were made to produce a movie of Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer*.⁴⁰ The beginning of World War I in 1914 kept this project from being realized, yet the proposal of a film version still shows *The Lord's Prayer's* popular reception.

The two reviews from Prague mentioned by Dvořák are negative in tone, but they also postdate the publication of *The Lord's Prayer* by several decades, which is a problem not addressed in her scholarship. Rather than focusing on the content or spiritual descriptions found within the texts, these reviews are largely concerned with aesthetics. Karel Hlaváček wrote in 1930 that Mucha's work was "cheap symbolism that can be bought in Paris for two or three sous."⁴¹ Stanislav Neumann provides a similar negative response to Mucha's style. He claims that Mucha's stars and angel wings resemble "macaroni."⁴² While Mucha maintained throughout his life that his style, referred to by others as Art Nouveau, was purely Czech, these reviews indicate that critics in Prague felt that his work reflected a definite, and detrimental, Parisian influence.⁴³

A review written by Růžena Jesenská in 1902 expresses some of the bewilderment articulated by Hlaváček and Neumann, but it is more productive for the analysis of representations of spirituality in that it closely addresses the content of Mucha's work rather than

³⁹Fabre, "Un Maître Décorateur: Après une Visite au Pavillon de Bosnie." 598.

⁴⁰Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 47.

⁴¹Qtd. in Ibid. Karel Hlaváček, *Kritiky* (Prague Kvasnička & Hampl, 1930), 118.

⁴²Qtd. in Ibid. Stanislav Kostka Neumann, *Statí a projevy, 1893-1903* (Prague: SNKLU, 1964), 43.

⁴³Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 25.

solely its style.⁴⁴ Written following an exhibition of the *Le Pater* at the Rudolfinum in Prague from the same year, Jesenská expresses the foreignness of Mucha's imagery and text to a Czech audience. While the review praises the powerful expression and beautiful decoration of the book, it still questions its relevance for those outside of France. Jesenská asks, "but how many souls in Bohemia prayed from Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer*...?"⁴⁵ That the imagery itself is unconventional to Czech viewers is apparent from her discussion of the ink wash plate (figure 17) that accompanies the first section of the prayer. She writes, "The first image shows us God. Where is God? Who is God? The most beautiful unraveling of the mystery: God is light."⁴⁶ This passage suggests a disconnect between Mucha's illustration of the "Father" and viewers' expectations. It is not immediately apparent that the eye in the sky encircled by light that peers down upon the people below from between rocky outcroppings is intended to represent God, so viewers of the work must question if God is even depicted in the image. Truly, "Where is God?" Rather than what is likely expected – a powerful male figure – God is described as "light," which avoids any reference to the human body. The commentary to *Le Pater* does indeed refer to God as "La Lumière," but the illustrations still present the human form to the reader; in this case, simply the eye of God. Jesenská's review suggests that Czech readers admired Mucha's work, but were also surprised by it. In addition to reviews showing how the illustrated prayer was received, Mucha's exegesis is another important source of textual evidence.

⁴⁴Note that Dvořák includes this source in the bibliography to her dissertation but does not directly address or cite it within her text.

⁴⁵Růžena Jesenská, "Muchův Otčenáš," *Zlatá Praha* 19 (1902): 311. "ale kolik duší v Cechách pomodlilo se z Muchova Otčentáše...?"

⁴⁶Ibid. "První obrz ukazuje nám Boha. Kde jest Bůh? Kdo je Bůh? To nejkrásnější rozluštění tajemství: Bůh je světlo."

In Mucha's text, seven total pages are devoted to commentary. The religious authority of these pages is emphasized through its adoption of the style of medieval manuscript illumination (figure 28). Each page of commentary includes a large initial illuminated capital as well as smaller red capitals for the words that are used to refer to God. Red capitals are used for titles such as "Lumière," "Divinité," and "Amour." Each page of commentary also includes a decorative margin that reiterates the plants featured in the chapter title page that precedes the commentary. While there is some stylistic continuity with the Art Nouveau style found in other elements of the book, such as the sinuous smoke arising from the incense in figure 28, the emphasis on medievalism is a significant departure from the other pages in the text. This suggests that Mucha is intentionally referencing medieval manuscripts in order to endow them with authority from a "purer" society remote from the present day.

The impulse to return to medieval times was popular in the nineteenth century. This can be seen in Bohemia through the discovery of two supposed "medieval" Czech manuscripts in 1817 and 1818 that were later determined to be nineteenth-century forgeries.⁴⁷ The manuscripts, the Královedvorský and Zelenohorský, were used to spur Czech nationalism. They show the authority given to the past and the medieval manuscript form. These manuscripts were created as an "invented tradition" to bring together a divided people through the illusion of a shared history.⁴⁸ Further afield in Britain, the writings of A.W.N. Pugin from the 1830s and 1840s as well as the manuscript creations of William Morris and the Kelmscott Press later in the century clearly demonstrate the nineteenth-century revival of medievalism. In a way, Mucha's text is an attempt to invent the illusion of a past for the relatively new spiritual traditions he practiced.

⁴⁷Andrew Lass, "Romantic Documents and Political Monuments: The Meaning-Fulfillment of History in 19th-Century Czech Nationalism," *American Ethnologist* 15.3 (1988): 458.

⁴⁸Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 7.

Despite the traditional form of the commentary pages, the words that Mucha used to describe God in *Le Pater* were anything but conventional. Mucha attempted to push religious boundaries with the content of his text, while making it more tolerable to a wide range of readers by draping it with medieval conventions.

Dvořák's scholarship notes two major changes to the commentary written by Mucha. First, while the French text uses a variety of titles for signifying a supreme being, in the Czech version these various terms are removed and replaced with a single word for God.⁴⁹ The variety of terms used instead of "God" in the French version include "La Lumière," "L'Idéal," "la Divinité," "L'Amour," "La Puissance bienveillante," and "La Volonté supérieure." Dvořák states that these terms have their origins in both Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism.⁵⁰ Defining Freemasonry as "a quest for light," Dvořák argues that Mucha's use of "La Lumière" particularly demonstrates his commitment to Freemasonry.⁵¹ Secondly, Dvořák indicates that the Czech commentary is significantly longer than Mucha's remarks in the French version. Dvořák's scholarship provides a useful starting point for understanding the differences between *Le Pater* and *Otčenáš*, but analyzing the texts in more detail and reevaluating some of Dvořák's assumptions will provide a more complex picture of its various spiritual influences and its representation of gender and spirituality. In addition, because *Le Pater* was the first realization of Mucha's goal to illustrate the "Our Father" and it is written in a more accessible language, it has been given far more attention than the subsequent Czech version. Providing close readings of *Otčenáš* will help to establish the text as a source of information equal to its predecessor.

⁴⁹Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 43.

⁵⁰Dvořák, *Mucha: Le Pater: Illustrations pour Le Notre-Père*, 14.

⁵¹Dvořák, "Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings," 49.

While Dvořák recognizes that *The Lord's Prayer* is connected with several spiritual traditions, she privileges the text's ties to Freemasonry, presumably due to Mucha's extensive involvement with this group. For Dvořák, *The Lord's Prayer's* association with Freemasonry is exemplified particularly in Mucha's use of the word "la Lumière." This connection is supported through Mucha's biography and the importance sources of light and the invention of electricity played for Freemasons. While Catholicism was not opposed to the use of less technological forms of lighting, such as candles, the religion was wary of electric light because it was seen as a spectacle that might supplant God. Unlike Freemasons, Catholics viewed electric light as a distraction from God's true presence. The Vatican went so far as to temporarily ban electric lighting in churches in 1889.⁵² For Catholics, electricity and Masonic notions of light were potentially harmful, yet the concept of illumination broadly was still an important part of religious belief and practice. While I think Dvořák is right to emphasize the connections between Freemasonry and light, I would argue that this narrow focus neglects to recognize other relevant spiritual associations with light from the time period.

In addition to Freemasonry, the word "light" was also prevalent in Neo-Platonist and Symbolist thought, and became popular through the writings of the German Idealist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, translated into French in the 1870s, especially emphasizes the popularity of the word "light." He writes, "Light is most pleasant and delightful; it has become the symbol of all that is good and salutary. In all religions it indicates eternal salvation, while darkness symbolizes damnation....All this is due to the fact that light is the correlative and condition of the most perfect kind of knowledge...that in

⁵²Ernest Freeberg, *The Age of Edison: Electric Light and the Invention of Modern America* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2013), 277.

no way directly affects the will.”⁵³ As this passage demonstrates, light has close ties with many spiritual traditions in the nineteenth century, not solely Freemasonry. This text was particularly influential for Symbolist artists, providing them with the credo “The world is my representation,” yet it also had a wider impact.⁵⁴ Mucha was in contact with several Symbolist artists, including Paul Gauguin, Jan Verkade, Paul Sérusier, and August Strindberg, and was influenced by their philosophies and imagery.⁵⁵ The publication of the periodical *La Lumière* in 1851 edited by Benito Monfort, which was dedicated primarily to experimental photography but also included frequent occultist articles on Theosophy and Rosicrucianism, is an additional example of the word’s broad usage.⁵⁶ Claiming a single intention for the use of a title like “La Lumière” is difficult to support due to the many contexts in which the term was relevant.

In addition to the wide range of names for God that Mucha includes, the presence of these terms within the French text has implications for understanding how Mucha’s commentary positions gender in relation to spirituality. The unconventional representation of gender’s relationship to spirituality is one of the defining features of the illustrations. In addition to this visual evidence, the text of the French version creates a strong connection between women and spirituality. All of the terms that are used to identify a deity, from “La Lumière” to “La Volonté supérieure,” are feminine nouns, with the exception of “L’Amour.”

The prominence of feminine language in the French text can be emphasized further through comparison with the Czech version that reinserts more masculine language. One

⁵³Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 199.

⁵⁴Henri Peyre, *What is Symbolism?* trans. Emmet Parker (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1980), 85.

⁵⁵Dvořák, “Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings,” 48.

⁵⁶Arwas et al., 67.

difference between the French and the Czech versions is the dominance of the words “Father,” “Son,” and “Lord” in the latter. In the Czech version, “Father” or “Otec” appears in two instances in addition to the necessary use of the word within the prayer itself, while in the French version “Father” only occurs once. The use of the word “son” or “syn” to refer to Jesus the Son of God appears only in the Czech version. Mucha writes, “Humankind asks its heavenly Father, to bless the blaze of his son.”⁵⁷ The word son, “fils,” is present in the French edition, but in a plural usage that refers to children generally and is intended to include both male and female individuals.⁵⁸ These examples suggest that the Czech version of the text more readily accepts traditional Christian figures of spirituality, such as God the Father and the Son.

While the commentary for *Le Pater* and *Otčenáš* are quite distinct from another, the illustrations for these texts were largely unaltered from one version to the other. The only changes to the illustrations involve the replacement of French with Czech text in the first page to each chapter (compare figures 23 and 29) as well as in the commentary.⁵⁹ Both versions retain the Latin text found on the center of each decorative title page while the more vernacular French or Czech is found at the bottom of the page. Because the allegorical plates – the third page of each chapter – contain no text, they are identical in both versions of the prayer.

Given the wide divergences in Mucha’s exegesis, the absence of changes to the illustrations warrants mention. If the variations in his commentary were indeed the result of criticism from the Catholic clergy, as indicated by Arwas et al., it is unusual that the visual representations of these words did not also require alterations. While Mucha eliminated the term

⁵⁷Neither of Mucha’s versions of *The Lord’s Prayer* include pagination and therefore will not be formally cited. Please see appendix 1 for the Czech text.

⁵⁸“Fils d’une même famille.” Please see appendix 1 for the complete French transcription and translation. Note that no page numbers are present in either the French or Czech text for convenient citation.

⁵⁹One aspect of Mucha’s work that has not been investigated is the extent to which the French and Czech versions of the prayer itself linguistically conform to standard versions of the text.

“La Lumière” from the text, many images of God as the embodiment of light remain and were not the source of controversy. To some extent this may be due to the shared visual vocabulary of the spiritual traditions represented in the illustrated prayer. For instance Schopenhauer notes that light is a universal symbol of salvation and illustrations by Gustave Doré and Carloz Schwabe use rings of stars to indicate spirituality. Yet the way in which Mucha represents gender in relationship to spirituality in *The Lord’s Prayer* is not at all typical of Catholicism or Freemasonry. Works from the Theosophical or mystical traditions are more likely to take a heterodox position on women, but this is still not standard. Reviews of the work by individuals like Jesenská suggest that the text and its imagery were surprising to Czech readers from the time period. It was uncertain to these readers who Mucha intended God to be because the terms used and the figures depicted did not match common representations of divinity. Although appellations like “La Lumière” and “L’Idéal” were the cause of controversy, in some ways these names for God are more consistent with Catholic traditions than the dominant presence of women and androgynous figures in the illustrated text. In contrast to Mucha’s decision to adopt a medieval illumination style in designing the pages for his commentary and thus wrap his unconventional text with tradition, stylistically most of Mucha’s divine figures could hardly be called conventional. These figures continue to advance a notion of spirituality that relies upon the accepted text of the prayer as well as tradition while also expanding beyond them.

CHAPTER 3: GENDER IN THE “OUR FATHER”:

MUCHA AND THE SPECTRUM OF THE DIVINE FEMININE

The flaming hearts, rings of stars, and omniscient eyes found within the pages of *The Lord's Prayer* are not an end in themselves, but are instead spiritual indicators of divine beings. In Mucha's text, the viewer is confronted with winged angels, gigantic figures who dominate the sky, and ephemeral women who embody the virtues of love and faith. While some of these figures can be reconciled with traditional Christian imagery, they also differ from standard Christian conceptions of divinity due to their focus on the female form. Christian Brinton, commenting on the work in 1904, recognizes both the variety of figures found in *The Lord's Prayer* and the text's nontraditional representation of the “Our Father.” He writes, “God is no longer the benign or wrathful Father, but a mysterious Being whose shadow fills the earth. Nature is personified as a luminous, adolescent giant, and Love descends from heaven in the guise of woman.”⁶⁰ Writing from Pennsylvania, Brinton's review of *The Lord's Prayer* and comments on Mucha's contributions to mysticism followed Mucha's first visit to the United States in 1904 and the earlier exhibition of the text in the Exposition Universelle of 1900 in Paris.⁶¹

⁶⁰Christian Brinton, “Alfons Mucha and the New Mysticism,” *The Century Magazine* (December 1904): 225.

⁶¹Note that the quotation from Brinton strongly resembles a review by Fabre of the *The Lord's Prayer* – Abel Fabre, “Un Maître Décorateur: Après une Visite au Pavillon de Bosnie,” *Le Mois: Littéraire et Pittoresque* 17 (mai 1900): 598. Fabre writes, “Dieu n'est plus ce vieillard à barbe blanche qui représentait l'Ancêtre des Temps; c'est l'Être immense et fort qui remplit tout de son ombre gigantesque. Près de Lui la Nature est personnifiée sous les traits d'un géant débonnaire et inculte émergeant au-dessus des collines, et l'Amour divin descend sur la terre sous la forme d'une femme.”

Brinton's reading of *The Lord's Prayer* highlights the role women play in constructing the text's spirituality. He writes that Mucha's work "is a sumptuous art, floral, astral, feminine."⁶² Brinton also sees the focus on women in the text as reflecting a general interest found throughout Mucha's *oeuvre*. According to Brinton, Mucha's "perpetual theme" is "the glorification of woman."⁶³ While the prevalence of women in Mucha's art is evident, as seen in his posters of the actress Sarah Bernhardt and cover illustrations for periodicals like *Le Mois* and *Burr McIntosh Monthly*, little critical work has investigated how Mucha represents women and if these representations are truly exalting as Brinton suggests. In fact, most frequently Mucha's representations of women are seen as demeaning rather than glorifying. Jan Thompson's reading of Mucha's work supports this view. She notes that among Art Nouveau artists "Mucha offers the most characteristic examples of the hair fetish and of Woman as sexual object."⁶⁴ Yet Mucha's posters of Bernhardt, especially those for her roles as the male characters Lorenzino (1896) and Hamlet (1898), are strong images of unconventional femininity that counter negative interpretations. While the strength of these images is arguably the result of Bernhardt's self-fashioning, as she was known for carefully curating her public image, Mucha's contributions should not be entirely discounted.⁶⁵

Bernhardt, as an iconic figure of womanhood from the fin de siècle, merits further attention here beyond being a subject of Mucha's posters. She was actively "worshipped" by

⁶²Christian Brinton, "Alfons Mucha and the New Mysticism," 225.

⁶³Ibid., 225.

⁶⁴Jan Thompson, "The Role of Woman in the Iconography of Art Nouveau," *Art Journal* 31.2 (1971-1972): 162.

⁶⁵Heather McPherson, "Sarah Bernhardt: Portrait of the Actress as Spectacle," *Nineteenth Century Contexts* 20.4 (1999): 409-410.

men and women alike and was called “la Divine” and a “priestess outside the temple.”⁶⁶ She did not embody any one understanding of womanhood at the end of the nineteenth century, but rather meant a variety of things to different people. For some she eased the threat of the sexless New Woman with her seductive charm, while for others she was the perfect combination of both masculine and feminine attributes.⁶⁷ She both broke down the gender binary while also epitomizing womanhood. Sometimes Bernhardt even played at being feminine, frivolous, and domestic. Her marriage to Jacques Damala in 1882, her excessive spending habits, and her opulent costumes all point to her acceptance of conventional and conservative ideals of femininity.⁶⁸ Likewise, Mucha does not depict the figures within *The Lord’s Prayer* in a single mode, but rather creates a spectrum of feminine types. While the illustrations in Mucha’s text are not free of all traces of misogyny, I would argue that the figures in the prayer are among Mucha’s most sensitive and progressive depictions of women. As shown by Bernhardt, even independent women can be domestic and not all images of feminine sexuality should necessarily be associated with the femme fatale. In addition, including women as divine figures within a text devoted to the most fundamental prayer of the Christian faith gives women spiritual agency.

Considering the historical role that women played within Freemasonry and Theosophy shows that women were marginalized even within non-Christian spiritual traditions and emphasizes how uncommon Mucha’s imagery was. Freemasons, like most groups concerned with spirituality, have historically resisted allowing women to play an active role in shaping the

⁶⁶Qtd. in Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 167, 170.

⁶⁷Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 173.

⁶⁸Ibid., 179, 187.

beliefs and organization of the society. In Freemasonry, women were not initially allowed to be members of Lodges. In 1740 the text *L'Adoption ou la Maçonnerie des Femmes* was written to argue for the equal participation of women within the “brotherhood.”⁶⁹ While female Lodges existed in the nineteenth century, they were never fully recognized during Mucha’s lifetime. Maria Deraismes was the first individual to organize a Lodge for both men and women in 1893 in Paris.⁷⁰ While Mucha’s involvement with and leadership in this male-dominated society may not have had an effect upon his art, being aware of this makes one consider his works more carefully.

Likewise, the Theosophical Society also struggled with making women full participants in the group’s religious practices, though less conspicuously than Freemasonry. Because one of the founders of Theosophy was a woman, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, its foundational beliefs are often supportive of gender equality.⁷¹ Blavatsky is the author of *Isis Unveiled* (1877), *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), *The Key to Theosophy* (1889), and *The Voice of Silence* (1889). While the Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875, its reach was international and many women were important figures within the organization. In addition to Blavatsky, Annie Besant and Susan Gay also contributed significant literature that addressed gender and religion.

Beyond the input of these women, the beliefs of Theosophy also demonstrate acceptance of women as equal players in the spiritual realm through attempts to downplay sexual difference. In Theosophy, androgyny is associated with both the divine being and ideal humanity. “God”

⁶⁹“History of Women’s Freemasonry,” accessed April 10, 2016, <http://www.womenfreemasonsusa.com/history.html>

⁷⁰Fabien Leloup, *Maria Deraismes: Riche, Féministe et Franc-maçonne* (Paris: Michel de Maule, 2015), 296.

⁷¹Joy Dixon, “The Divine Hermaphrodite and the Female Messiah,” in *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 153.

was associated with neither a mother nor a father figure.⁷² Yet this supposed indifference to gender is not realized within the belief system of Theosophy without significant complications. Because Theosophy is greatly influenced by Eastern religions like Hinduism, belief in reincarnation and karma is also incorporated into the doctrine. Reincarnation allows a human to be continually reborn as either sex and the soul itself is free from any lasting associations with maleness or femaleness. Yet, it was popularly believed that returning as a male was the result of living a virtuous life while a reincarnation resulting in a female body came from bad karma.⁷³ So, despite the intention to make Theosophy neutral to gender favoritism, the society was unable to achieve this ideal. Others, like Frances Swiney, who were loosely associated with Theosophy felt that a place needed to be made for the divine feminine rather than an androgynous spirituality.⁷⁴

One work of art that sheds light on the role women played within the spiritual belief system of Theosophy is Piet Mondrian's 1911 triptych *Evolution* (figure 30). The female figure in this work undergoes the stages of initiation into Theosophy in each frame of the work. The paintings are read so that the left panel comes first, the right panel is second, and the middle panel is last. Going from one panel to the next, the soul travels from the material world, to inner contemplation, to divine realization.⁷⁵ In addition to the trajectory of the soul outlined by the paintings, the inclusion of the six-pointed star and triangles as well as the use of the eyes to indicate revelation relates closely to Theosophy. The closed eyes of the female figure in the right panel show reliance upon memory for self-revelation, while the open-eyed stare of the figure in

⁷²Ibid., 154.

⁷³Ibid., 160.

⁷⁴Ibid., 167.

⁷⁵Mark Cheetham, *The Rhetoric of Purity: Essentialist theory and the Advent of Abstract Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 50.

the central panel reveals the intervention of the divine. While the figure in this triptych is not sexualized, she is definitely female. The leanness of the figure and the lack of curvature in the hips make this female somewhat androgynous, though not significantly so.

The title page illustration for Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* suggests a similar narrative of inner realization while also connecting to Theosophy's idealization of androgyny (figure 31). In this image a giant figure with long flowing strands of hair stands with a trembling female figure in one of its hands and its head raised to the heavens with closed eyes. While the figure's hair suggests that it is most likely intended to be gendered female, other elements complicate a definitive identification of the figure's sex.⁷⁶ The title conveniently covers the giant figure's chest, making its sex more difficult to discern. While overall the figure is quite feminine, small details beyond the hidden chest, such as the thickness of the forearms, raise some doubts about this assumption. Dvořák describes this figure as an androgynous monumental figure that "personifies the Genius of humanity."⁷⁷

Two aspects of this figure make it challenging to interpret. First, the figure has a pose of spiritual ecstasy similar to that found in Mondrian's second panel of *Evolution*, yet Mucha's figure is ostensibly not human. Why would a divine figure experience the same physical reaction as a human? Second, it is unclear whether other comparable monumental figures found within the body of the text are intended to represent this same being or if all of the figures should be considered individually. In Mondrian's *Evolution*, a rather clear progression suggests that the person represented within the three different panels is the same. In *The Lord's Prayer*, two figures found in the internal illustrations are noticeably similar to the "Genius of humanity" that

⁷⁶"Sex" is used here rather than "gender" because I am looking specifically at secondary sex characteristics.

⁷⁷Anna Dvořák, *Mucha: Le Pater: Illustrations pour Le Notre-Père*, .20.

dominates the text's title page. These figures can be found in the painting "Hallowed be Thy Name" (figure 32) and the closing "Amen" illustration (figure 33).

If the figures on these pages are read by themselves and not in reference to any of the other illustrations, the large figure with crossed arms found on the "Hallowed be Thy Name" page seems female due to the being's hair, while the figure on the "Amen" page appears to be an adolescent boy with flowing locks. As with the "Genius of humanity," in figure 32 there is again a lack of indication of a chest, male or female. The uncertain length of the hair that flows upward out of the picture frame also contributes to this ambiguity. Despite the Gibson-girl style of the figure's face, apparent from the linear method of modeling and treating the hair, the gender of the figure is in many ways unclear. The adolescent on the final "Amen" page is notable also for its similarities to a figure study of a young girl created one year before *The Lord's Prayer* (figure 34). Both have an undefined chest, a strong gaze, and outstretched arms. Their similarities further support an androgynous reading of the "Amen" figure. While these three figures have differences, it is possible that all of them are meant to represent the same divine ideal. If so, *The Lord's Prayer* acknowledges that God has both feminine and masculine manifestations and is more sexually ambiguous than the Christian Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit might suggest.

While some aspects of Mucha's representation of women in *The Lord's Prayer* suggest fluidity with regard to gender designation, in other ways these figures often can be read more traditionally due to the social roles they fulfill. The way in which Mucha represents the figures that are definitely female emphasizes the role women play to protect and provide for those under their care. This caretaker function is subtly indicated in two of the designs found on the illuminated manuscript pages (figures 35a and 35b). The female figures featured in each of these

illuminated capitals console a younger adolescent figure. Both women are represented gently touching the head of a youthful figure, and the female angel found in chapter five (figure 35a) also gives the boy she comforts a kiss on the crown of his head. While the angel figure naturally suggests the spiritual or mythical realm, the other female figure (figure 35b) could be earthly or heavenly. There is no attempt in the illumination to make this differentiation explicit. What seems more important is simply the compassion the figure emanates.

Another compassionate figure that is among the most stereotypical of Mucha's women in *The Lord's Prayer* is found on the allegorical plate for "Thy Kingdom Come" (figure 10b). This figure has a heart literally stitched to her white robe to indicate that she symbolizes love. This is the representation of women most commonly mentioned in reviews from the period, including Brinton's. The focus in this image is creating a symbol rather than a person, godly or otherwise. The lack of any trace of sensuality in this figure actually deadens her instead of freeing her from negative connotations. The trails of light that stem from her head suggest that she is an intercessor for God. It is through this figure of love that God's Kingdom will come. She is not herself God, but is instead a realization of the Angel in the House trope who loses herself so that others may find their way. She takes the role of caretaking to an unhealthy extreme. Her spirituality is characterized by weakness rather than strength.

Although the final figure of love that Mucha includes within the text is a cliché rather than a positive portrayal of a woman, his preparatory sketches show that he initially conceived of love in a more empowering manner. In his first drawing for the final allegorical plate (figure 36), the woman is pictured as being a God rather than an intercessor. Where in the final image the woman's spirit escapes from her body heavenward, in the sketch an intense almost triangular light crowns the woman's head and emits rays that create a halo. Rather than a weak expression,

in the sketch the woman's mouth is set resolutely and she directly gazes out at the viewer. Furthermore, the heavy-handed heart in the final version is completely absent in the sketch. While this figure (figure 10b) is the only one in the published book that had a heart directly described upon her body, Mucha's sketches also show that he considered using the same symbol for masculine figures. In a sketch for "Forgive Us Our Trespasses as We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us" (figure 37) the large angel filling the sky initially had a heart inscribed upon his chest. While Mucha ultimately decided to use love as a feminine stereotype, these sketches show that he also personified love in less hackneyed ways and that he does not limit the attribute of love to women.

Beyond these examples, caregiving female figures are featured prominently throughout *The Lord's Prayer* and given particular emphasis in the allegorical paintings representing the verses "Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread" (figure 38) and "And Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil" (figure 39). In "Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread," mother's milk rather than the sustenance directly referred to in the associated verse is used to feed the masses. This liquid flows from a three-breasted giant who fills the sky of the composition. Instead of wine, grapes, or blood often associated with Jesus, a product directly associated with femininity and motherhood sustains the crowds. Yet Mucha's Czech commentary does refer to this liquid as "the blood of the earth," which gives the milk more traditional religious connotations.⁷⁸ The spiritual status of this enormous woman is difficult to define explicitly, but she is clearly given visual markers of divinity. Her halo, almost Egyptian in style, is one such marker. The dark skin of the figure also gives her Egyptian roots, suggesting she may be Nubian. Importantly, while this giant woman provides milk to the masses, she is not portrayed as a mother in a Marian way. In fact, none of the women throughout the prayer actually hold a young baby to symbolize the

⁷⁸See appendix 2 (Chapter five) for the Czech text.

Virgin and Jesus. The unconventional decision to give this figure three breasts suggests that she may be a female embodiment of the Trinity.

In the history of art there is precedent for representing women with more than two breasts. One particularly dominant figure is Artemis, or Diana, of Ephesus, who became an arguably “universal goddess” and first was worshipped around the eighth century BCE.⁷⁹ During the nineteenth century several travelers wrote books on the image of Artemis Ephesus as it was realized on coins.⁸⁰ Instead of having two breasts, her entire body was covered with protuberances, which have most commonly been read as breasts, but have also been seen as bee eggs and bull testicles (figure 40).⁸¹ Scholars have noted that she most likely was a mother goddess figure, though she is also closely associated with nature and protection.⁸² In addition, some sculptures of Artemis Ephesus represent the goddess with dark skin, which strengthens the association Mucha’s three-breasted goddess has with this ancient deity.

Furthermore, Mucha also makes visual references within *The Lord’s Prayer* to another goddess associated with Artemis Ephesus – Isis. Over time Artemis Ephesus accumulated characteristics from a variety of different goddesses, including Isis, when communities adopted her. The characteristics of Artemis Ephesus were merged with those of goddesses previously worshipped by these people.⁸³ In Mucha’s illustrated text, Isis can be found on the decorative title page for “Thy Will Be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven” (figure 24). This figure’s entire

⁷⁹James D. Rietveld. “Universal Goddess on the Via Sacra: The Evolving Image of Artemis Ephesia” (PhD diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2006), 4.

⁸⁰Ibid., 7-8. These studies include John Akerman’s *Remarks on the Coins of Ephesus Struck during Roman Domination* (1841), Ernst Guhl’s *Ephesiaca* (1843), Edward Falkener’s *Ephesus and the Temple of Diana* (1862), and Barclay Head’s *History of the Coinage of Ephesus* (1880).

⁸¹Ibid., 8-9.

⁸²Ibid., 14.

⁸³See R.E. Witt’s *Isis in the Ancient World* (1971) for more information.

body, including her face, is covered by a large piece of blue fabric. While initially an Egyptian mother goddess, the German Romantics envisaged Isis as a veiled woman. To remove her veil was for them to reveal truth.⁸⁴ Isis is also a critical influence for Theosophy, as is seen by Blavatsky's text *Isis Unveiled*. Through his inclusion of a shrouded figure, Mucha is pointing to the German representation of Isis and the goddess's association with Theosophy. Yet he is also simultaneously referencing the original Egyptian version of the goddess through the figure with Egyptian wings presented directly below the cloaked individual. Mucha's inclusion of Isis and the three-breasted goddess serves to provide the text with examples of women who represent a more ancient realization of the divine feminine that have been influential to a number of spiritual traditions, from early goddess worship to Theosophy.

The commentary by Mucha in both French and Czech further emphasize the physical and earthly qualities of the three-breasted goddess. The exegesis in each version likens her to Mother Earth. In the Czech she is referred to explicitly as "Matka země" or "Mother earth" while in the French commentary her breasts are described as "mamelles de la terre."⁸⁵ This suggests that Mucha intended this figure to act as an earth goddess. Through her milk, she is able to "quench the thirst of man," but she cannot satisfy one's soul. This higher task is given to the ethereal robed figure that hovers above the crowd, clasping a glowing heart. The heart symbolizes "the spiritual bread of Love" that will fulfill the soul. While the hordes of people are scooping milk from the ground or dropping to all fours to consume the life-giving liquid directly, there is no depiction of any individual partaking of the spiritual bread held by the young ghost-like figure. Mucha gives preference to the sustenance held by the fragile glowing spirit over the milk of the

⁸⁴Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 273.

⁸⁵See Chapter five transcription and translation in appendices.

earth mother, though he notes that both “food from the material and spiritual life” are necessary. Most of the men, women, and children depicted are focused upon collecting the milk, some even filling large jars that they balance on their heads, but a few individuals pause their consumption and look up to the glowing heart. Most notable is the boy in the foreground on the right side of the frame who is in the act of wiping his mouth. It seems he has just gained awareness that there could be more than the milk within his reach.

Throughout both commentaries, Mucha gives a negative cast to the material and earthly, further indicating his preference for the ethereal robed figure over the monumental mother earth. For Mucha, the goal of humankind is to remove one’s self from the “abyss of the earth” and succeed in rising up to God, or the Supreme Being. In the Czech text he writes, “The human spirit found, that life in the body, affected by countless hardships and bitterness, has only one goal: to exert its will and bring it in harmony with the will of God.”⁸⁶ The French text mentions “the darkness of matter” and states that one must purify one’s self of the things found in the material world. In the Czech commentary accompanying the “Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread” plate, Mucha writes extensively on how the gifts of this earth are only useful in preparing for the future heavenly life and that it is of no benefit to stockpile worldly wealth. While one must fulfill the needs of the body and the earthly life, they are not ends in and of themselves.

Yet, while there is a clear divide between the spiritual and the earthly in the commentary, the sensuality and physicality of figures like the one on the title page (figure 31) complicate a simple reading of the text and image in conjunction. While Mucha occasionally represents divinity with a floating eye or intense light (figure 17), typically the human body in its entirety is used. In this way Mucha’s understanding of the divine is closely coupled with humanity even while his commentary suggests it is secondary to the soul. The imagery and the Czech

⁸⁶For the original Czech, see appendix 2 (Chapter 4).

commentary are often at odds with each other, but giving the text more authority than the images is not justified.

The female figure in “And Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil” (figure 39) epitomizes the ethereal love and protection that Mucha privileges in his Czech commentary instead of the physical nourishment provided by the earth mother. Like the young robed figure holding the glowing heart in “Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread,” the woman in this image is otherworldly and nearly immaterial. In the image, a woman in a flowing habit shields a young boy from seeing a horde of lizard-like dragons that surround him in the night. The boy has wrapped strips of fabric from her habit around his arms and is seemingly being carried upwards out of the darkness by the spirit. The whiteness of the woman’s eyes at first make her a frightening character, but her gestures indicate that she intends only to help and not to harm the boy she envelops. She also has notable similarities to spiritual figures in other realizations of the Lord’s Prayer. František Bílek, a Czech artist contemporary with Mucha, also included an ethereal feminine figure who covers a man’s eyes and helps him escape from darkness (figure 41). Yet Bílek’s woman is even more insubstantial than Mucha’s nun-like figure. Her body from the shoulders down is minimally suggested rather than actually drawn.

Despite some similarities, Bílek’s *Otčenáš* (1890) has a different character than Mucha’s. As one might expect of a Christian prayer, Christ is the central focus of Bílek’s illustrations and women are only occasionally given spiritual attributes. Unlike Mucha’s text, which includes gigantic and physically powerful female figures, Bílek’s women are always corporeally intangible.⁸⁷ Like Mucha, Bílek was highly involved with the Art Nouveau and Symbolist movements. In addition, Bílek often existed outside traditional Catholic practices due to extreme

⁸⁷Note that even Bílek’s portrayals of Christ often show God as having a slight “feminine” body. See the bibliography for a link to the complete text.

beliefs similar in kind to those of the Rose+Croix. Yet Bílek is distinct from Mucha in that the crucifixion was an essential aspect of his spirituality and his art.⁸⁸ While Mucha does not provide a recognizable representation of Christ in his version of the prayer, Christ and his crucifixion is a persistent theme in Bílek's illustrations (figure 42). Comparing Mucha's illustrations of the prayer with a fellow countryman involved in similar artistic styles allows one to see that the strong presence of women in Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* is exceptional.

Mucha does not present a single realization of the ideal relationship between spirituality and gender in illustrating the "Our Father," but instead constructs several types of gendered spiritual figures. The prayer presents the viewer with representations of love, ancient goddesses, ethereal spirits, and androgynous images of God that make one question what constitutes the divine feminine as well as the practice of gender categorization itself. This has strong connections with how imagery of Sarah Bernhardt from the time was understood by viewers. According to Mary Louise Roberts, Bernhardt fascinated public viewers, especially feminist journalists from the period, because "she allowed them to glimpse not so much one way of being female, but the very possibility of being many things at once."⁸⁹ While Mucha's representation of love and the instances in which he emphasizes the ethereal over the physical may not be progressive depictions of women, these too are part of the spectrum of the divine feminine at the fin de siècle. His androgynous figures as well as his three-breasted goddess suggest a more physical and sensual conception of the relationship between gender and spirituality. Yet illustrations of these deities do not demonize this physicality, as is often the case with other images of female sensuality from the time. The viewer is left unable to point to a single one of

⁸⁸Otto M. Urban, *In Morbid Colours: Art and the Idea of Decadence in the Bohemian Lands, 1880-1914* (Prague: Arbor Vitae, 2006), 133.

⁸⁹Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France*, 198.

the figures Mucha depicts as being the complete embodiment of God. Instead, each illustration builds toward a greater understanding of the divine feminine while also increasing the prominence of women in spiritual imagery.

CONCLUSION

Alfons Mucha's *The Lord's Prayer* transforms the expectations of a traditional Christian reading of the "Our Father" through its use of nontraditional spiritual symbols, the French version of the text's preference for ambiguous nonhuman terms to describe the Divine, and the focus on androgynous and female figures to embody this higher power. The illustrated text achieves this transformation primarily through the conspicuous absence of particular Christian symbols and tropes. Instead of the cross, the eye of providence confronts the reader. In place of an almighty Father, Mucha presents us with a female personification of love and an androgynous manifestation of light. Even Marian figures, which are among the most prevalent symbols of the cult of the feminine in Christianity, are missing from Mucha's work.

Rather than being subversive for the sake of controversy, Mucha's artistic decisions seem to be more personal in nature. The illustrated text is largely influenced by Mucha's own practice of Catholicism, Freemasonry, and mysticism. Regardless of the artist's aims however, the book caused religious debate, particularly within the Catholic Church. Mucha quickly responded to criticisms by altering and greatly augmenting his commentary while also changing the nature of the language and the text's intended audience through his use of Czech rather than French. This controversy partially justifies the illustrated text's significance. Mucha's three-breasted giant and androgynous God of light were unexpected representations of the divine at the fin de siècle. Yet, as is supported by the fact that Mucha only altered the text and not the images for the second version of the work, ultimately more spiritual authority was given to the text than the image. The Catholic clergy during the time period viewed Mucha's visual representations of the divine as

supplementary rather than essential to understanding the text, as is often the case with “illustrations.”

Christian Brinton and Anna Dvořák claim that Mucha’s work generally is inherently feminine and that the strong presence of women in *The Lord’s Prayer* therefore should be unsurprising, but this is too firm an assertion. Dvořák writes, “it is typical of Mucha that the deity or the divinity or symbolic being is always female.”⁹⁰ Regardless of the prevalence of women in Mucha’s work, the spiritual context of the prayer makes the representation of women noteworthy. Furthermore, the types of women Mucha portrays within *The Lord’s Prayer*, particularly those in the monochromatic ink wash plates, are distinct from many of his commercial posters of women. While some of these posters are defined by coy expressions and ornate decoration and clothing, the works in *The Lord’s Prayer* focus more on the female subject and less on her various accoutrements. Still, though Mucha’s representation of women does depict them as spiritual rather than simply beautiful, there are ways in which they are not progressive. In the text women are frequently referred to as “mother earth” and “Love,” which perpetuates standard clichés even while it gives these women the power to influence humankind. Yet these depictions should be taken along with Mucha’s other representations of women as all contributing to the fin de siècle understanding of the divine feminine. The quasi-feminine androgynous figures associated with light are most often directly associated with God through Mucha’s commentary, but they are only one aspect of understanding the spirituality presented by the illustrated text.

Today, when Mucha’s *The Lord’s Prayer* is given attention, it is primarily due to its connections with Art Nouveau or its spiritual symbols; its representations of gender go

⁹⁰Dvořák, “Alphonse Mucha: Book Illustrations and Mural Paintings,” 24.

unmentioned. This can be seen in the most current exhibition that features the book taking place at the Palacongressi di Rimini in Italy from April until September 2016.⁹¹ Supported by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Italy and curated by Andrea Speziale, the show is titled "Masonic Art Nouveau: The Myth of the Institution of Art at the Time of the Belle Epoque." The focus is on the aesthetic appeal of the work and the connections between the Art Nouveau style and Freemasonry.

Additional work could be done in the future to look more closely at the multitudes of women Mucha depicted throughout his lifetime and see how they were received by the public in France, Bohemia and America. In particular, few Czech reviews of Mucha's work have been analyzed in English-language studies. Instead of focusing primarily on the aesthetics of Mucha's designs that include women, studying how these works were seen and received and considering them more critically would allow scholars to use them to make more significant contributions to the field of art history than they have in the past.

⁹¹<http://www.italialiberty.it/massoneria-artnouveau/>

FIGURES



Figure 1 – Alfons Mucha, Chapter four of *Le Pater* showing examples of the three different page types in the order they appear throughout the text: decorative page with prayer (a), commentary by Mucha (b), and allegorical painting (c), 1899.



Figure 2 – Alfons Mucha, Jewel for the Dilo Lodge of the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia, Prague, 1920, gold-plated metal and enamel decoration, The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, London.



Figure 3 – Alfons Mucha, *Self-portrait in formal masonic regalia as the second Supreme Commander of Freemasonry in Czechoslovakia, Prague, 1930*. Mucha Foundation.



Figure 4 – Alfons Mucha, *Crucifixion*, 1868 (childhood drawing at age eight). Mucha Foundation.



Figure 5 – Alphonse Mucha, *Salon des Cent* poster, 1896.



Figure 6 – Alfons Mucha, *France Kisses Bohemia*, 1918. Mucha Foundation.



Figure 7 – Gustave Doré, Illustration from *History of the Crusades*, 1875.

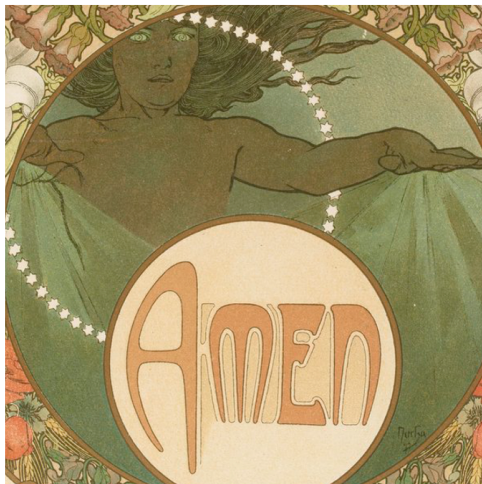
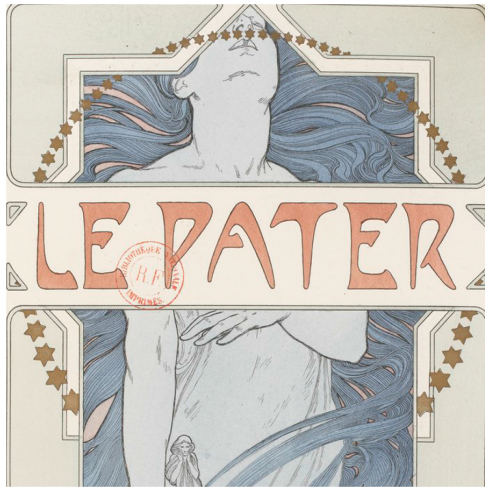


Figure 8 – Alfons Mucha, Rings of stars from *The Lord's Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 9 – Carlos Schwabe, Illustration in *L'Évangile de l'Enfance*, 1891.

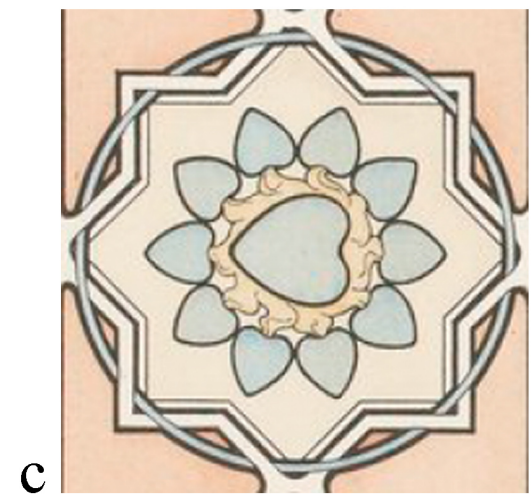


Figure 10 – Alfons Mucha, Heart symbols from *The Lord's Prayer*, 1899.

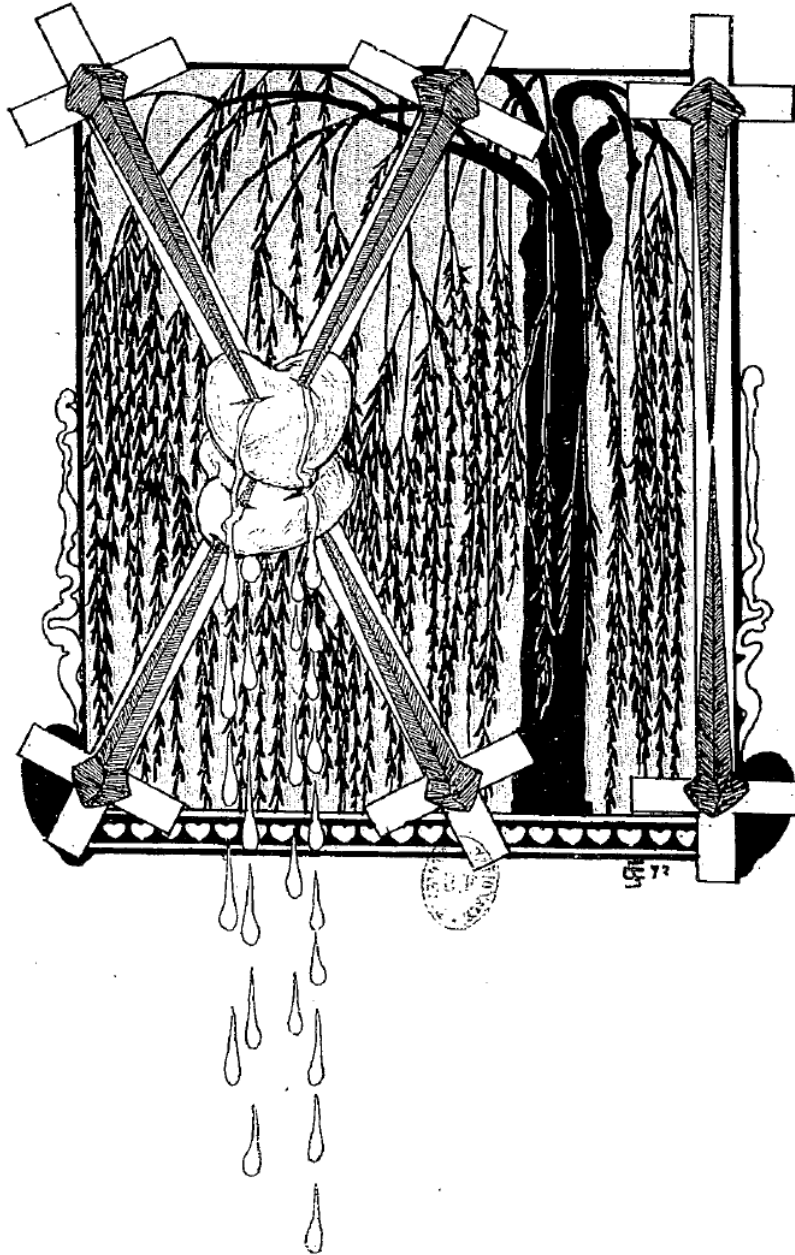


Figure 11 – Carloz Schwabe, Design for chapter eleven title page in Émile Zola's *Le Rêve*, 1892-1893.



Figure 12 – Carloz Schwabe, Illustration in Émile Zola's *Le Rêve*, 1892-1893.

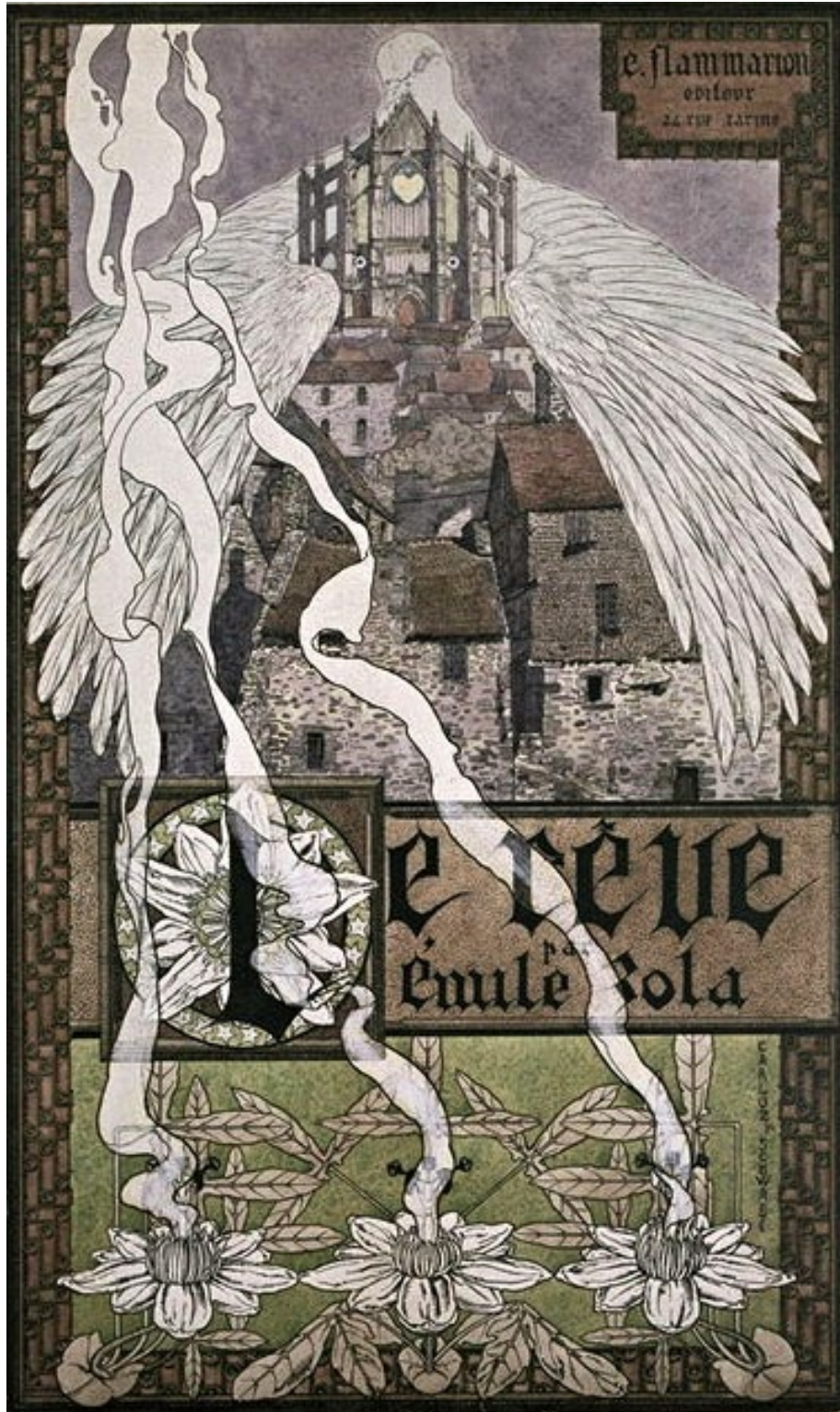


Figure 13 – Carlos Schwabe, Cover illustration for Émile Zola's *Le Rêve*, 1892-1893.



sur une côte lointaine, toute baignée de claire lumière; il la verrait, oh oui, il la verrait, et il éprouvait confusément la joie de la certitude, de la réalité, sans que s'évanouisse la mélancolie du rêve,

« Je partirai, s'écria Jaufré, j'irai par les routes de la mer vers les
« rives où elle habite; la vie me quittera bientôt. Mais je veux suivre
« les destinées méditées par le ciel et j'irai, non point tout d'abord vers le
« palais de la vision, — je n'ose encore lui donner son nom véritable, —
« mais, la poitrine barrée de la croix de laine rouge, vers les saintes
« montagnes de Judée. Ne faut-il point toujours, quel qu'en soit l'objet,

Figure 14 – Alfons Mucha, Illustration for *Ilsée, Princesse de Tripoli*, 1897.



Figure 15 – P.M. Ruty, Chapter heading for Judith Gautier’s *Mémoires d’un éléphant blanc*, 1894.



Figure 16 – Alphonse Mucha, Preparatory sketch for “Our Father Who Art in Heaven,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.

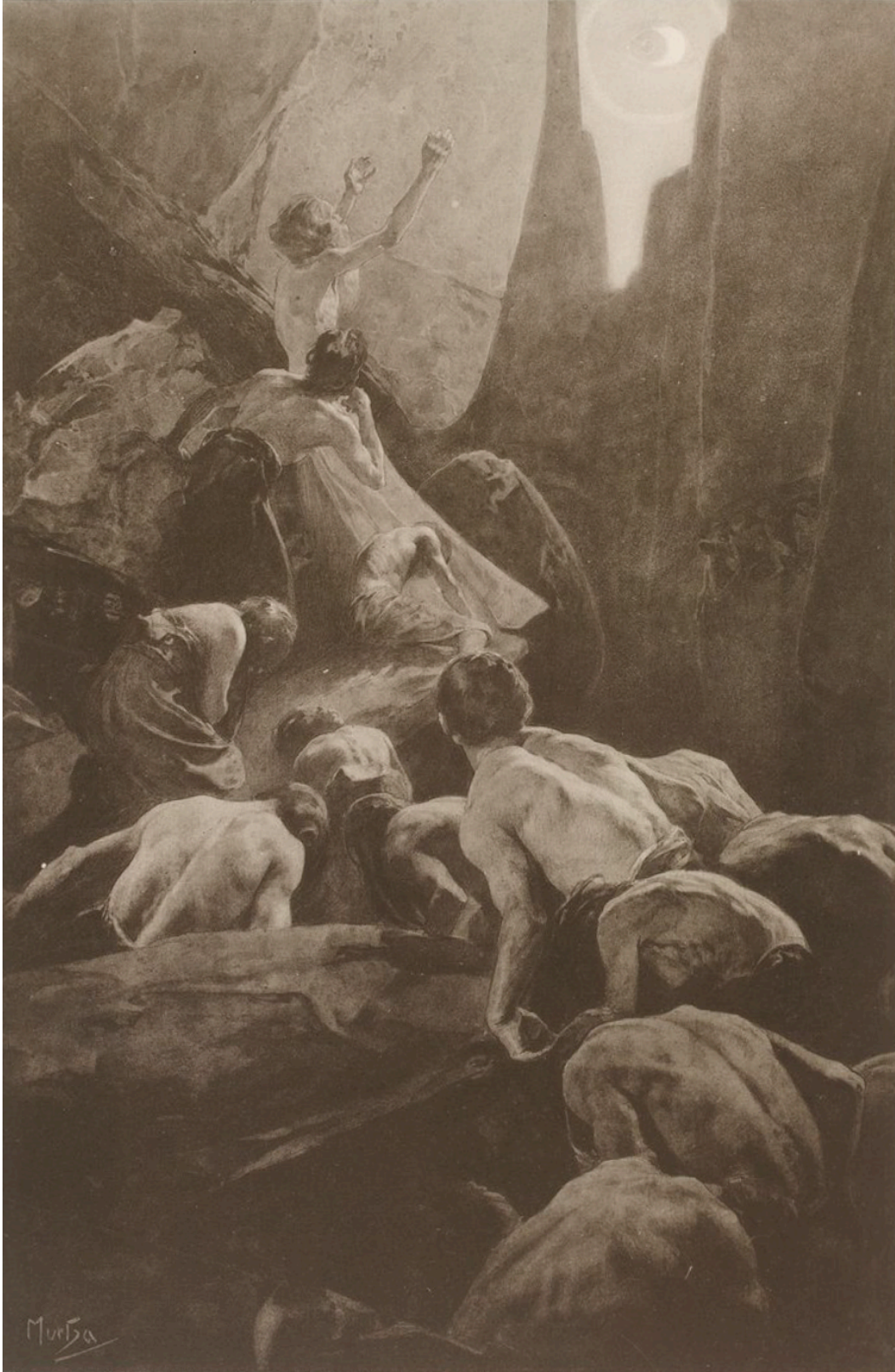


Figure 17 – Alfons Mucha, “Our Father Who Art in Heaven,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 18 – Alfons Mucha, Eye of providence surrounded by a ring of stars from *The Lord's Prayer*, 1899.

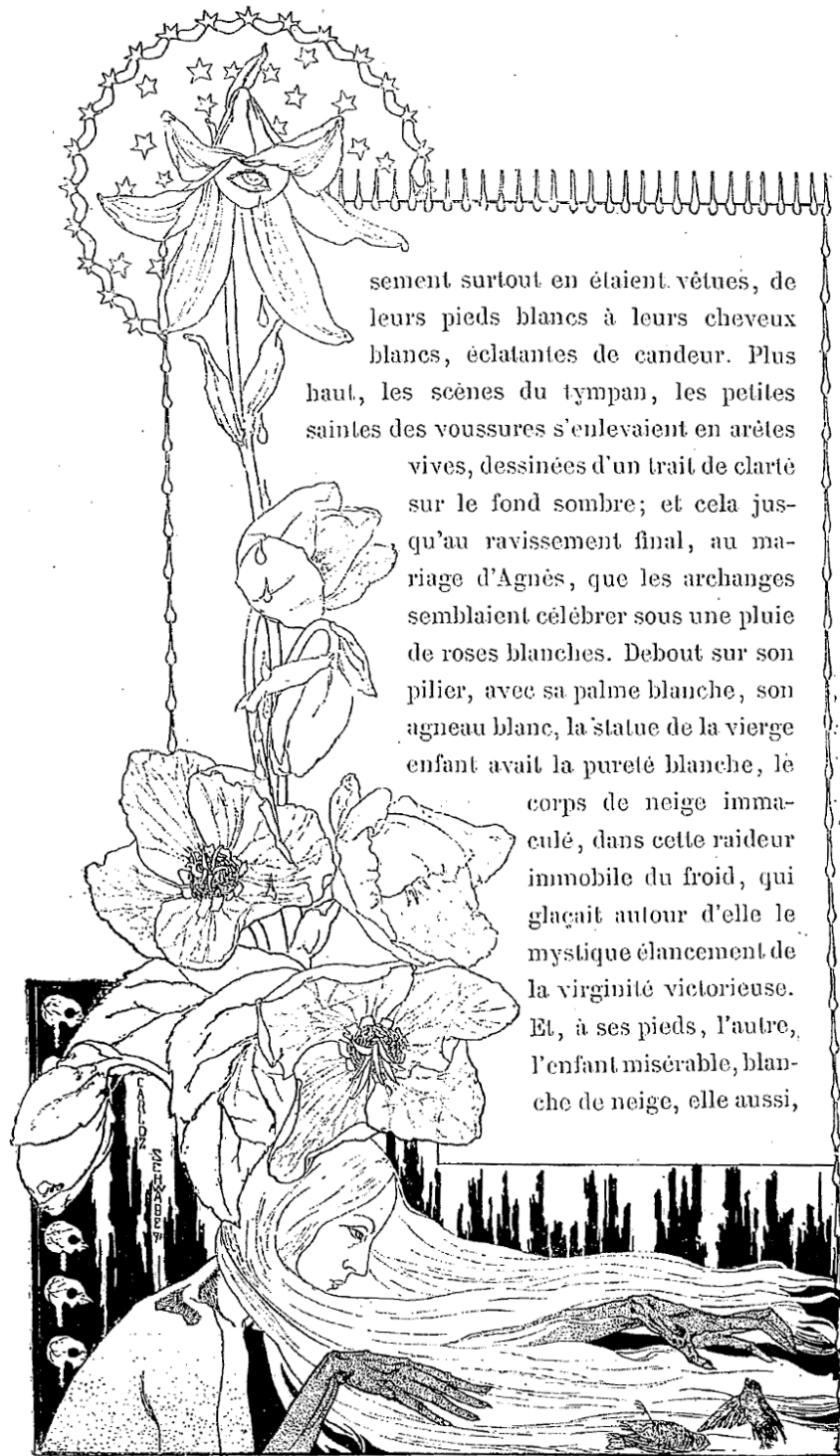


Figure 19 – Carloz Schwabe, Illustration for Émile Zola's *Le Rêve*, 1892-1893.

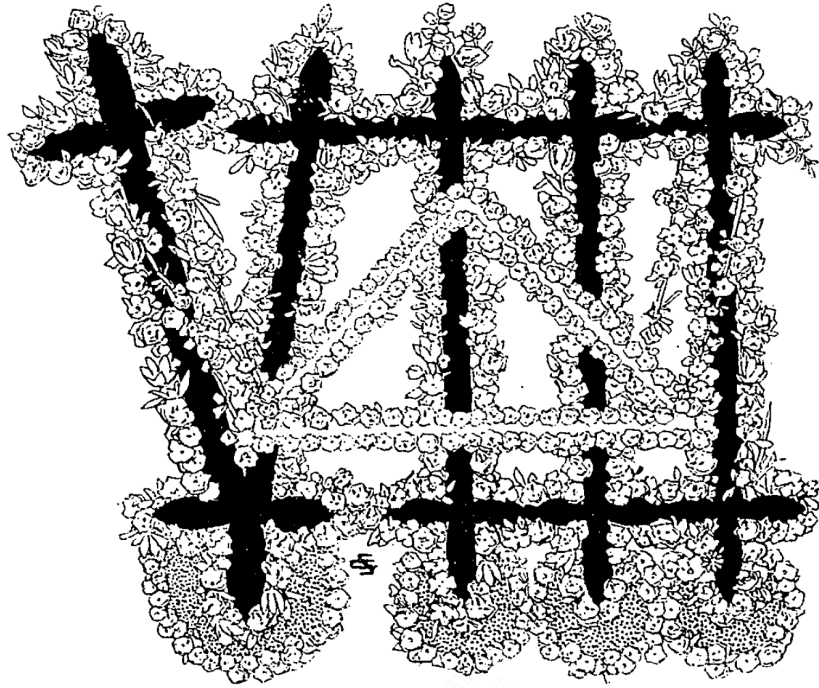


Figure 20 – Carloz Schwabe, Design for chapter eight title page in Émile Zola's *Le Rêve*, 1892-1893.



Figure 21 – Alfons Mucha, Detail of Tetragrammaton and Ouroboros from *The Lord's Prayer*, 1899.



que vous ouvrez de merveilleux durant les veillées d'hiver.

— Tant que le soleil luit, répondit simplement Jaufré, dans les allées claires ou ombreuses bordées par le mystère de la forêt, je vais lentement ou par sauts, selon mon caprice, J'ai là de vieux amis, les arbres. Ils me racontent des choses anciennes qu'ils se rappellent à peine ; j'aide à leurs confidences, je les complète. Ils avouent toujours de leurs belles voix profondes. La forêt est ma pénitente amie. C'est un livre sans pareil. Je lis sur les feuillages des signes compréhensibles pour moi seul ; j'y ai appris des choses admirables et terribles, des histoires touchantes ; j'y ai puisé des leçons de sagesse et de bonté. Dans ce livre éternel, la plupart des pages sont couvertes de récits et de promesses pas toujours tenues, mais reprochées par ceux-là seulement qui ne comprennent point l'ineffable joie de ne pas voir la réalité limiter l'espérance ; et ces pages-là, ce sont les feuilles des hêtres tordus et des chênes vigoureux ou des majestueux sycomores ; mais il y a aussi, comme dans tous les livres de Douceur et de Vérité, des pages blanches où, à loisir, on peut lire le rêve qui n'est pas écrit ; et ces pages-là, ce sont les feuilles des bouleaux légers et frileux qui éclairent de leurs frissons blafards les vallées profondes et la lisière ténébreuse de la forêt.

Pendant les veillées d'hiver, je lis les belles histoires des Saints Apôtres, et aussi le divin Evangile. J'y ai découvert de merveilleux paysages tracés en quelques lettres. Les pêcheurs et leurs filets en sont les naïfs

Figure 22 – Alfons Mucha, Illustration for *Ilsée, Princesse de Tripoli*, 1897.



Figure 23 – Alphonse Mucha, “Thy Kingdom Come,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 24 – Alfons Mucha, “Thy Will Be Done, On Earth as it is in Heaven,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 25 – Carlos Schwabe, Illustration for Émile Zola's *Le Rêve*, 1892-1893.

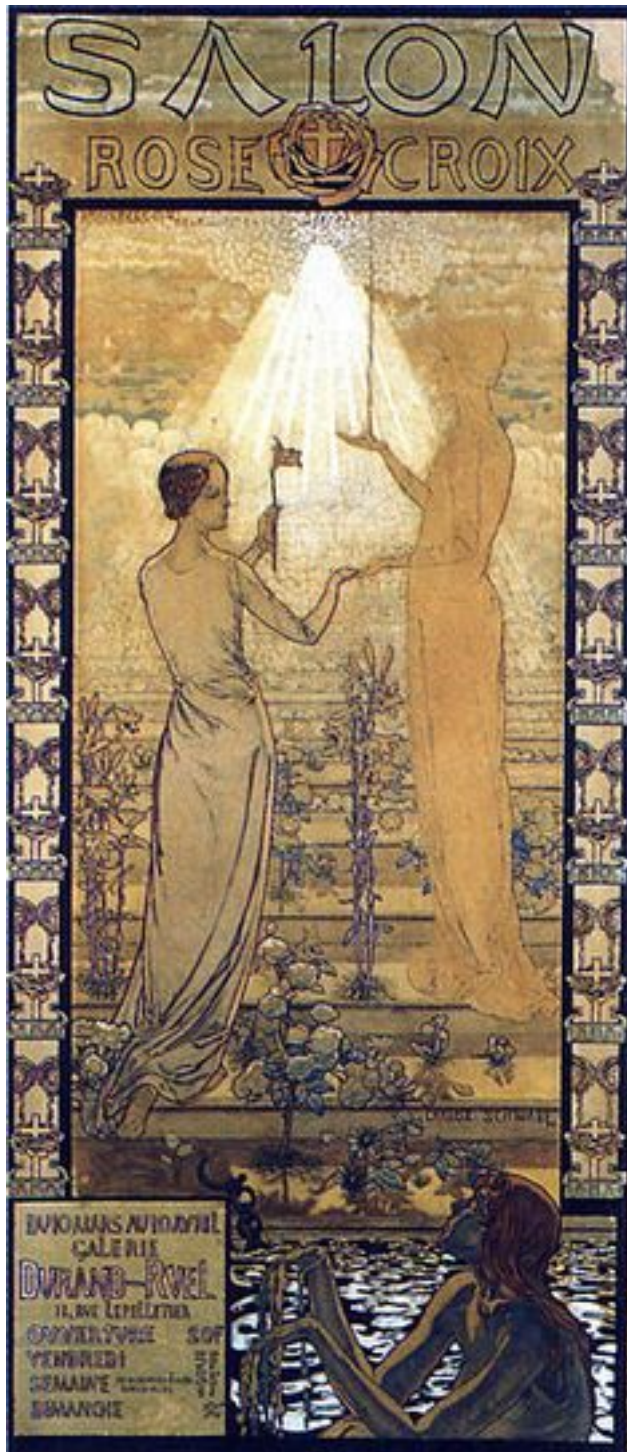


Figure 26 – Carloz Schwabe, Poster for Salon Rose+Croix, 1892.



Figure 27 – František Drtikol, *Untitled* (The Crucified Woman), 1913-1914, photograph, Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague.



Figure 28 – Alfons Mucha, Commentary page for chapter two (“Hallowed be Thy Name”), *Le Pater*, 1899.



Figure 29 – Alfons Mucha, “Thy Kingdom Come,” *Otčenáš*,” 1910 reproduction of 1900 Czech text.



Figure 30 – Piet Mondrian, *Evolution*, 1911, oil on canvas, The Hague.

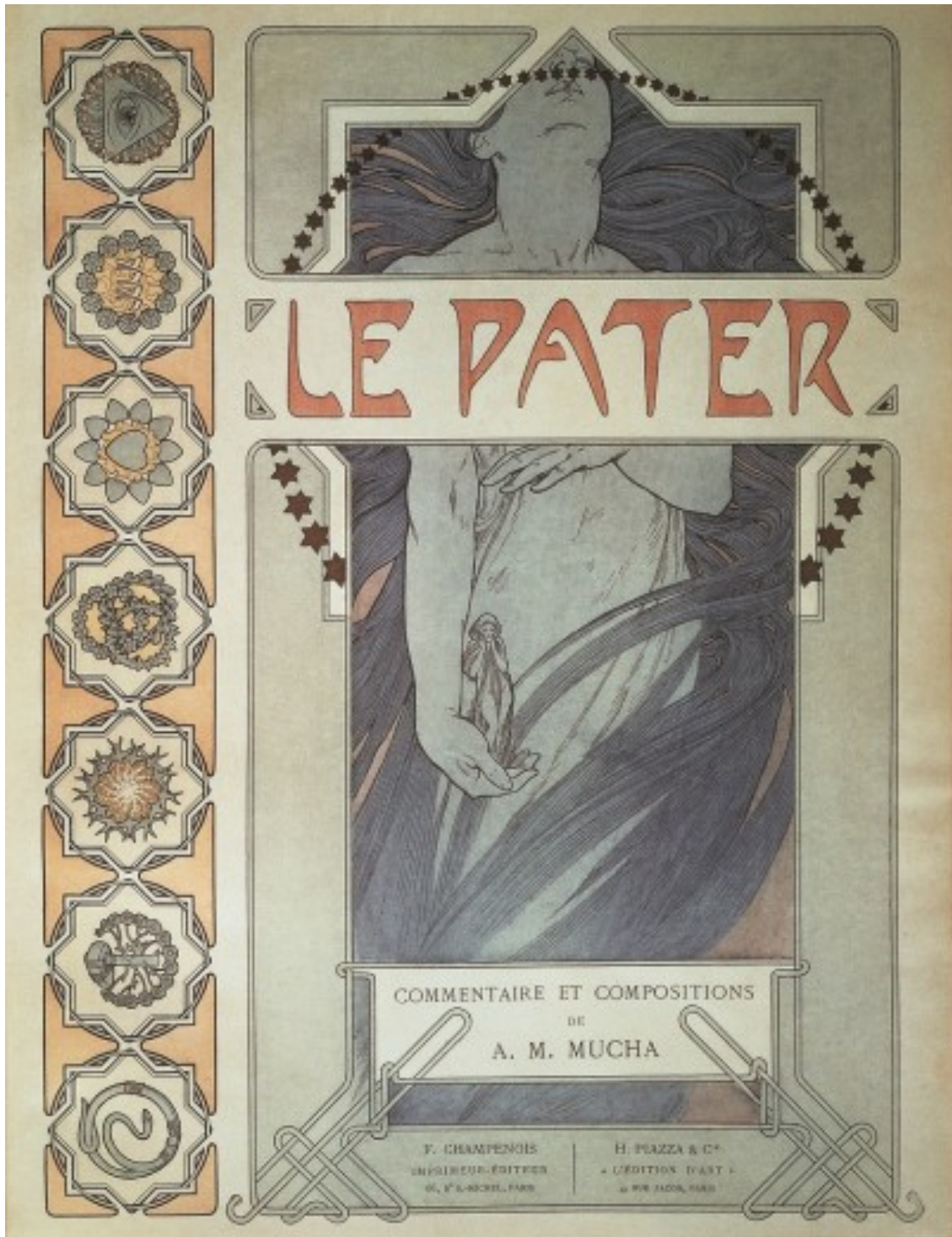


Figure 31 – Alfons Mucha, Title page for *The Lord's Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 32 – Alfons Mucha, “Hallowed Be Thy Name,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 33 – Alfons Mucha, “Amen,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.

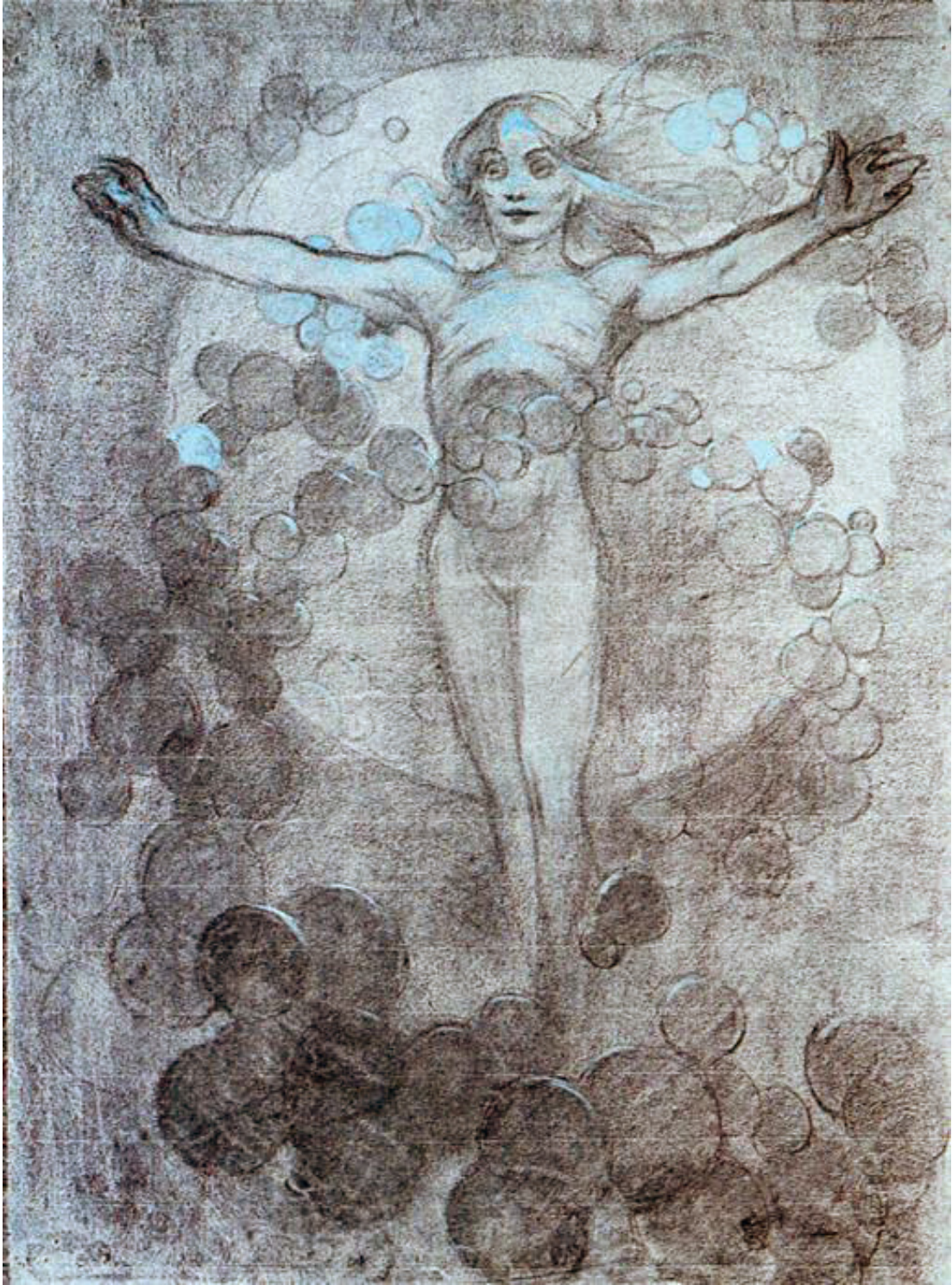


Figure 34 – Alphonse Mucha, Figure Study, 1898.



a



b

Figure 35 – Alfons Mucha, Illuminated capitals from chapters five (a) and six (b), *The Lord's Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 36 – Alfons Mucha, Preparatory sketch for “Thy Kingdom Come,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.

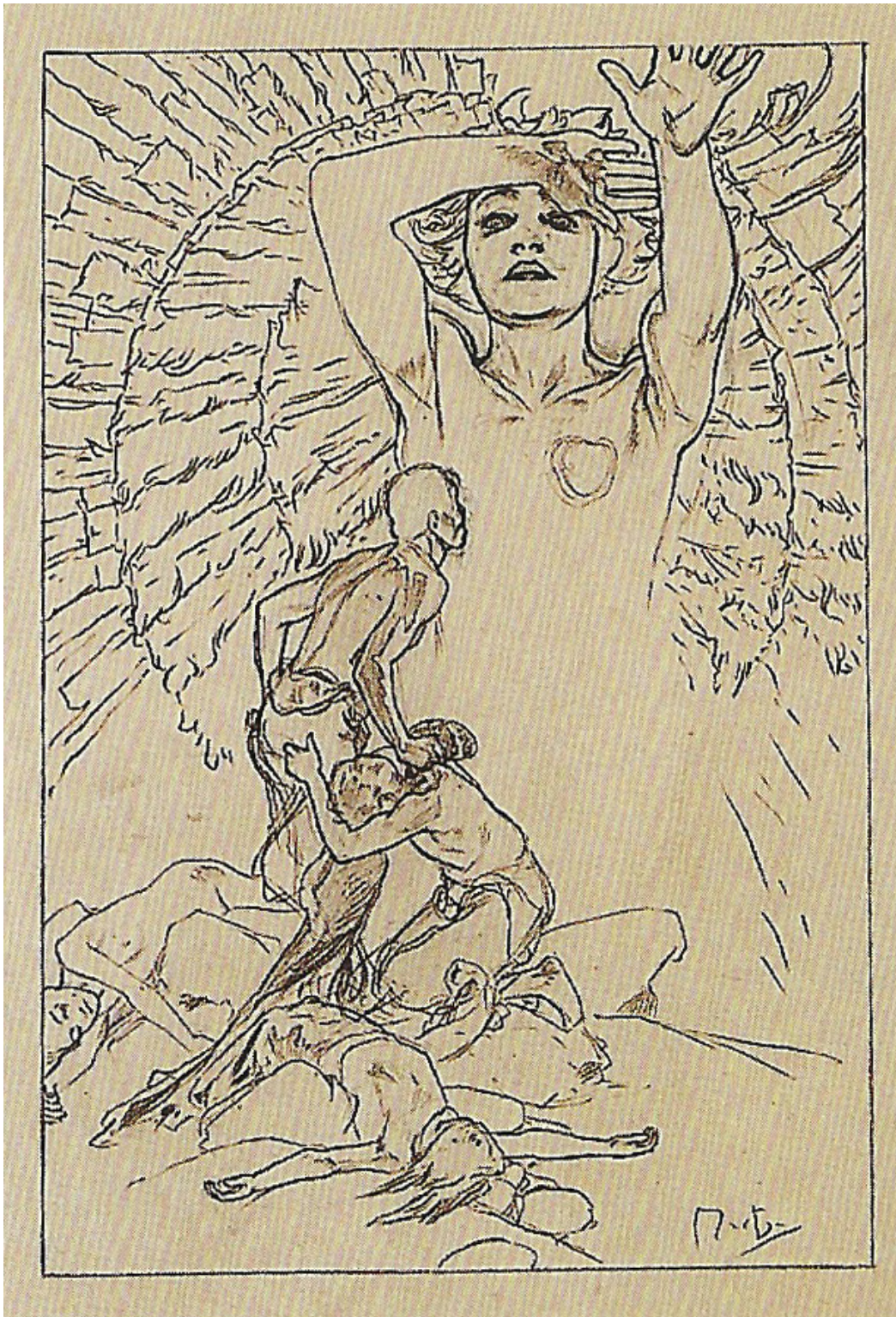


Figure 37 – Alfons Mucha, Preparatory sketch for “Forgive Us Our Trespasses as We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 38 – Alfons Mucha, “Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 39 – Alfons Mucha, “And Lead Us Not into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil,” *The Lord’s Prayer*, 1899.



Figure 40 – *Artemis of Ephesus*, alabaster and bronze, 2nd century CE, Naples National Archaeological Museum.



Figure 41 – František Bílek, Illustration for *Otčenáš*, c. 1890.



Figure 42 – František Bílek, Illustration for *Otčenáš*, c. 1890.

APPENDIX 1: TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF *LE PATER*

Chapter One

Transcription

Au sein de la matière dormante l'homme s'éveille peu à peu, et péniblement parvient à se reconnaître. Pour atteindre là haut, vers l'Idéal, il faut que son âme s'oriente, se dégage, quitte la région des ténèbres où le retient son corps.

L'homme de bonne volonté avance lentement vers cette lueur qu'il aperçoit au loin, et, avec lui, monte la cohue des êtres, ses semblables. Il fait que tous ceux-là sont ses frères, fils d'une même famille, destinés au même avenir, et, dans un élan de filial amour, il nomme cette Lumière qui les regarde tous: ((Notre Père qui êtes aux cieux.))

Translation

Within the sleeping matter man awakes gradually and painfully succeeds in coming to know himself. To reach up there, to the Ideal, it is necessary that his soul finds itself, emerges, and leaves the area of darkness which restrains his body.

The man of good will advances slowly towards that glow that he sees in the distance, and as he goes the mob of beings, his fellow men, rises as well. He makes it so that all of them are his brothers, children of the same family, destined for the same future, and, in a burst of filial love, he names this Light watching them all: ((Our Father who art in heaven.))

Chapter Two

Transcription

Sorti du gouffre de la terre, et arrivé en face de cette Lumière qui est la Divinité, l'homme veut offrir à Dieu le meilleur de ce qu'il possède; et il fait monter avec la fumée du sacrifice qu'il Lui adresse, ses sentiments d'adoration et de glorification.

Toutes les multitudes prosternées ajoutent au feu matériel qui monte, la flamme intérieure qui se dégage de leurs coeurs inconscients.

Ce premier pas vers l'éveil de la lucidité, la Divinité le contemple dans le recueillement d'une compassion bienveillante.

Translation

Out of the abyss of the earth, and having reached the light which is Divinity, man wants to offer to God the best of what he has; and accompanying the smoke of sacrifice that he addresses to Him, he causes feelings of worship and glorification to rise.

All the prostrate multitudes add to the bodily fire that rises, the inner flame that emerges from their unconscious hearts.

This first step towards the awakening of insight, the Divinity contemplates in a reflective moment of benevolent compassion.

Chapter Three

Transcription

De la Divinité émue par cet effort constant qui monte vers elle, descend un premier rayon de vérité qui vient éclairer le gouffre où se débattaient les hommes.

Etonnés d'abord de cette Lumière qui pénètre leurs âmes jusqu'alors plongées dans les ténèbres de la matière, ils se rapprochent, poussés par une sainte curiosité et se sentent dominés par un force inconnue qui règne désormais sur eux: L'Amour.

Translation

From the Deity moved by this constant effort that goes up to it, a first ray of truth comes down that will illuminate the chasm where men were struggling.

At first astonished by this Light that penetrates their souls previously plunged in the darkness of matter, they approach, driven by a holy curiosity, and feel dominated by a mysterious force that now reigns over them: Love.

Chapter Four

Transcription

Connaissant maintenant son Père divin et l'amour qui l'unit à lui, l'homme apprend à avoir confiance dans la Puissance bienveillante qui régit son destin.

En un complet abandon de lui même il accepte de Dieu le bien et le mal avec une égale résignation, sachant d'avance que tous les événements de la vie sont réglés par la sagesse d'une Volonté supérieure.

Translation

Now knowing his divine Father and the love that unites them, man learns to have confidence in the benevolent power that governs his destiny.

In a complete abandonment of himself he accepts from God good and evil with equal resignation, knowing in advance that all the events of life are governed by the wisdom of a superior Will.

Chapter Five

Transcription

Il admire cette sagesse de la Providence qui pourvoit, chaque jour, à tous les besoins des êtres qui vivent autour de lui. Il voit que des mamelles de la terre, sortent des fleuves de lait auxquels s'abreuve la soif de l'homme, tandis que la Bonté Divine lui donne le pain spirituel de l'Amour qui vient rassasier la faim de son âme.

Translation

He admires this wisdom of Providence that each day provides for all the needs of the living beings around him. He sees that the rivers of milk flow from the breasts of the earth, quenching the thirst of man, while Divine Goodness gives him the spiritual bread of Love that will satisfy the hunger of his soul.

Chapter Six

Transcription

Possédant les aliments de la vie matérielle et spirituelle, l'homme tourne alors la conscience vers ses semblables et doit apprendre à reporter sur son prochain l'Amour intérieur qui l'anime.

Maitrisant la force malfaisante de ses instincts primitifs, par la Volonté de son Educateur éternel, il doit comprendre aussi et suivre la grande loi du Pardon.

Translation

Possessing food from the material and spiritual life, man then turns his mind to his fellows and must learn to share with his neighbor the internal Love that animates him.

Mastering the evil force of his primitive instincts, by the Will of his eternal Teacher, he must also understand and follow the great law of Forgiveness.

Chapter Seven

Transcription

En conscience absolue de lui-même, maintenant l'homme s'avance, dans le rayon de clarté entrevue, vers l'Idéal, Foyer lumineux qui l'attire.

Sa volonté, aide et dirigée par la sollicitude de son Guide Divin, traverse les embûches des démons malfaisants et il arrive enfin, purifié de la matière, et libre, face à face avec l'Etre Suprême qui l'a éveillé à la vie.

Translation

In absolute consciousness of himself, now man advances in a glimpsed ray of clarity towards the Ideal bright center that draws him in.

His will, aided and directed by the solicitude of his Divine Guide, travels through the traps of the evil demons and finally arrives, purified from material matter, and free, face to face with the Supreme Being who has awoken him to life.

APPENDIX 2: TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF *OTČENÁŠ*

Chapter One

Transcription

Bohem do temných hrud zaseté semeno vzchází. V útrokách jejich zableskla se nová vůle : Duše v touze po pokroku ocitla se v těle. Člověk zvolna se probouzí a obtížně se uvědomuje.

Chce, aby z temnot duše přišel jas – poznání pravdy, aby si z vůle slabounké a nejisté vypěstoval vůli silnou a věčnou, aby nepatrnou jiskřičku dobroty, již mu Bůh v nitro vehřál zmohutnil v hárající plamen obětovné lásky, hotové zaniknutí v něm pro dobro jiných.

Pokroky za cílem svým chce měřiti duše na těle hmotném, z jeho vlády se vymaňujíc a jeho přednosti a mohutnosti za nástroje pro uplatnění své vůle si upravujíc.

Pomalů postupuje člověk dobré vůle a cíl jeho vysoko nad ním září. Okolo sebe spatřuje houfy bytostí sobě podobných, stejnou vůli oživených, na téže cestě strádajících a poznává, že on sám a všichni tito jsou dětmi téže rodiny a bratři mezi sebou, určení stejnému osudu – a v zanícení a lásce dětině volá k prameni světla, které na všechny láskyplně září. Otče náš, jenž jsi na nebesích!

Translation

By God into dark clods seed sprouts are sown. In their entrails flashes new will: The Soul in desire for progress found itself in the body. Man slowly awakes and realizes the difficulty. He wants from darkness of soul brightness to come – cognition of truth, so that he could from a weak and uncertain will grow a strong and eternal will, so that infinitesimal glimmer of goodness, that God into his interior⁹² swelled, grew bigger into a blazing flame, ready to perish in him for the good of others.

Advancing towards its aim the soul wants to measure his soul to the material body, while from its reign breaking free and its merits and power as tools for employing its will governing. Slowly advances man of good will and his goal high above him shines. Around himself he sees flocks of beings alike to himself, by the same will brought to life, on the same road languishing and discovers, that he himself and all these are children of the same family and brothers to each other, intended for the same destiny - and in zeal and childish love he calls towards the source of light, that on all in a loving way shines. Our Father, who art in heaven!

⁹²Also meaning “heart,” “soul,” or “mind.”

Chapter Two

Transcription

Vynořen z hloubi temnosti člověk ve svatém úchvatu žasne vida, že tajuplná tucha a živá neznámá moc, která z hloubi země ke světlu ho vypudila. Odhaluje před zrakem jeho cesty daleké vystupující až k závratným výšinám a zázračným jasnotám. Tma je mu smrtí, světlo stalo se mu životem. S hrůzou vzpomíná němých a temných kobek na dně neuvědomělosti a líbá s nadšením paprsky vědění prohřáté dobrotivostí Boží. Jako sám vyplnul z hlubin, tak z nitra jeho řinou se do výšin city vděčnosti a blahorečení dobrotě a velebnosti. Boha dobrotivého, jehož slávu tajemná záře oblévá. Čela v prachu, všechno množství koří se Otci, jenž s tklivým účastenstvím v oku postup svých dítek pozoruje. Dýmy obětí přinášejí do výsosti_chtění všech srdcí celého lidstva v slavnostním znění: Posvět' se jméno Tvé!

Translation

Emerged from depth of darkness man in holy astonishment marvels while seeing, that mysterious premonition and living unknown power, which from depth of the earth to light expelled him. It reveals before his eyes journeys long rising to vertiginous heights and miraculous lucidities. Darkness is to him death, light has become to him life. With horror he recalls mute and dark dungeons at the bottom of ignorance and kisses with joy the beams of knowledge warmed through the graciousness of God. As he himself emerged from depths, so do from his interior swell feelings of gratefulness and beatification to goodness and nobleness. Gracious God, whose glory mysterious blaze envelops. Foreheads in dirt, all people bow down to the Father, who with plaintive sympathy in his eye observes the progress of his children. Fumes of sacrifices raise up the desire of all hearts of the whole humankind in ceremonial phrasing: Hallowed be Thy name!

Chapter Three

Transcription

Milosrdí⁹³ Boží dojata neúmornou snahou lidstva po světle pravdy, otevírá bohatství srdce svého. Ze žáru jeho nitra odechvěl se plamen a přizářil do mrákot lidstva. Rozptýlil temnoty, vyzlatil bídné skrýše, prohřál ztuhlé vrásky, ukázal bolesti bližního a v jeho záři slza svatá zahořela. V neznámé touze blíží se davy k velebnému plameni, aby jedenkaždý stulen v jeho zářícím klínu ze štěstí druhá se radoval. Od té chvíle cítí člověk svou neúplnost, nezná jiného štěstí mimo štěstí druhů svých. Svých bolestí necítí, ale strádá nad žalostmi jiných. Silná noha jeho k tomu mu slouží, aby pevně stál, když silnou paží slabšímu pomáhá vystupovati. On sám není ničím, štěstí jiného je mu vším. Jsouc osvíceni a plamen ten, Bohem seslaný je láska. A lidstvo prosí Otce svého nebeského, aby požehnal záři syna svého, aby rozlil lásky proudy po vsí zemi, aby naplnil vyprahlá srdce nešťastných, kteří v temnotách jen ze své bídy žijí. Ston úpěnlivý nese se k výšinám: Přijď k nám království Tvé!

Translation

Mercifulness of God moved by the persistent effort of humankind for the light of truth, opens the wealth of its heart. From the heat of his interior flickered away a flame and shone into the faints of humankind. He dispersed darkness, gilded atrocious hideouts, warmed up stiff wrinkles, revealed the aches of neighbor and in his heat holy teardrop blazed. In unknown desire are crowds nearing a reverend flame, so that each-and-every-one snuggled in its shining lap would from the happiness of a companion rejoice. From that moment man feels his incompleteness, he doesn't know happiness other than the happiness of his companions. He doesn't feel his pains, but languishes over the sorrows of others. His strong leg for this serves, so that he firmly stands, when [using his] strong arm helps the weaker one to get up. He himself isn't nothing, the happiness of another one is to him all. They are enlightened and the flame, by God sent down is love. Humankind asks its heavenly Father, to bless the blaze of his son, to spread currents of love all over the earth, to fill up parched hearts of unhappy ones, who in the darknesses of their penury live. The Pleading sigh carries to the heights: Thy kingdom come to us!

⁹³Archaic version of "milosrdenství"

Chapter Four

Transcription

Člověk vyšel z temnosti v říši světla a posvěcen ohněm svatým lásky, cítí své znovuzrození. Ve světle poznání rozplynuly se tajné tuchy a neznámé touhy, a na místě jich objala celou bytost svými kořeny Vůle. Duch lidský seznal, že život v těle, stížený nesčíslnými útrapami a hořkostmi, jediný má cíl: vyvinouti vůli svou a přivést ji v soulad s vůlí Boží. Ničeho nechtíti je právě záhubné jako chtíti zlo, jenže mnohem zbabělejší. Nechtíti je smrt, chtíti dobro je život věčný. Svévolná smrt z obětavosti není samovraždou,⁹⁴ ale je to apothesa vůle. Strach je lenivost vůle pohrdání hodná. Řekni bolesti: “Chci, abys se stala radostí!” a bolest se promění ne v radost, ale v štěstí. Největší blaho je mítí vůli svou v souladu s vůlí Boží, proto prosíme, aby vůle Boží byla na zemi taká, jaká je v nebi. Moudrost, dobrotivost a láska nekonečná, z nichž vyplývá vůle nejvyšší, vede člověčenstvo⁹⁵ často strmými cestami a bolestnými chvílemi. I ve svém hoří člověk s důvěrou a oddaností volá k nevyzpytatelnému: “Bud’ vůle Tvá jako v nebi tak i na zemi.”

Translation

Man as he came out of the darkness into the realm of light and as he was consecrated by the holy fire of love, feels his rebirth. In the light of knowledge their secret presentiments and unknown desires, and in their place was the whole being embraced by the roots of Will. The human spirit found, that life in the body, affected by countless hardships and bitterness, has only one goal: to exert its will and bring it in harmony with the will of God. To want nothing is as doomful as to want evil, but much more cowardly. To not want is death, to want goodness is life eternal. Willful death by selflessness is not suicide, but is apotheosis of will. Fear is laziness of will worthy of loathing. Tell pain: “I want you to become joy!” and the pain will transform not into joy, but into happiness. The biggest delight is to have the will of your own in harmony with the will of God, therefore pray, so that the will of God on earth be the same, as it is in heaven. Wisdom, graciousness and love eternal, from which follow the supreme will, leads humankind often through steep paths and painful moments. Even while burning man with faith and devotion calls towards the unpredictable one: “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

⁹⁴Archaic version of “sebevražda“

⁹⁵Archaic version of “lidstvo“

Chapter Five

Transcription

Milosrdná dobrota Boží prohrála a prozářila duši člověka a z nevyčerpatelných zdrojů světlem lásky ji živí. Z vůle Nejvyššího i o druhou část člověka, tělo, je postaráno. Matka země žízně a hladu dětí svých štědrou rukou ukájí. Bohaté prameny živného mléka zemi zaplavují a ve svornosti všecko množství z krve země čerpá sílu svému tělu. Bez závisti a hrabivosti každý běže potřebné a pomáhá ochotně jiným se zásobiti. Jet⁹⁶ bohatství země jen spižírnu zásobenou pro cestující po cestách života za nebeskými cíly. Jako není účelem cestujícího zařizovati a rozmnožovati nadbytečné spižírny nýbrž cestovati, tak člověk hrabivý podoběn by byl cestovateli pošetilému, jenž by čas života svého strávil přípravami pro něž by se k cestování samému nedostal. Na pout' svízelnou dobrotivost Nejvyššího skýtá tělu pokrmu hmotného, aby vytrvale ducha nésti schopno bylo a ducha nasycuje pokrmem duchovním, světlem lásky, které člověku osvěcuje nebezpečné cesty. Toto obojí, chléb náš vezdejší dej nám dnes, o Pane!

Translation

Merciful goodness of God warmed through and shone through the soul of man and from inexhaustible sources it nourishes by the light of love. By the will of the Highest even the second part of man, the body, is taken care of. Mother earth satisfies the thirsts and hungers of its children with a generous hand. Generous springs of nutritive milk flood the earth and in concord all the quantity from the blood of earth draws strength to his body. Without envy and greed everyone takes the necessary and helps willingly others to stock up. The wealth of the earth is only a pantry stocked for the travellers on the roads of life towards heavenly aims. As it is not the purpose of a traveller to arrange and multiply the excess pantries but to travel, so would greedy man be alike to the foolish traveller, who would spend the time of his life by preparations for those travels he would never get to. On a difficult pilgrimage the goodness of the Highest [one] provides the body with a tangible meal, so that the spirit would be able to persistently carry it and feeds it by a holy meal, the light of love, which to man illuminates the dangerous roads. This both, give us this day our daily bread, oh Lord!

⁹⁶Possibly as in "Jest"

Chapter Six

Transcription

Dobrotivostí Nejvyššího člověk všemi prostředky obdařen, má bez ustání kráčet k cíli, který pro vlastní jeho blaho Bůh v jasném lůně svém mu ustanovil a kde láskyplné veškeré člověčenstvo očekává. Ve svornosti postupovat mají jednotlivci i davy, s láskou a obětovostí silni slabším pomáhající. Námahou obtížné chůze po stezkách neschůdných mladé síly začasto umdlévají a chodec v drsném rozhořčení a v lenivosti zbaběle svatou vůli Tvůrce svého bolestně uráží. Avšak čím větší urážka vzpurného syna, tím větší milosrdenství Otce dobrotivého. Odpouští, vidí-li jen, že duše lítostná zase zachvěním dobré vůle k cestě pravé se přikloňuje. V nekonečné dobrotě rád odpouští, znaje ve své nevystihlé moudrosti všechny příčiny každého poklesku a veden nezměrnou láskou k tvorům svým. Člověk ať se učí milovati po tom vzoru, ať se učí poznávati bližního svého a poznaje ducha jeho a příčiny jednání jeho zajisté mu odpustí z lásky k Bohu nejmilosrdnějšímu všechny jeho poklesky a křivdy i proti sobě spáchané, aby měl právo vzdychnouti k soudci svému Nejvyššímu: Odpusť nám naše viny, jakož i my odpouštíme našim vinníkům!

Translation

By graciousness of the Highest [one] man with all means endowed, should without cessation walk towards a goal, which for his own benefit God in his bright womb for him determined and where the loving whole of humankind awaits. Individuals and crowds in concord should advance, [while] with love and selflessness the stronger help the weaker. By exertion of difficult walk on impassable paths young strengths often faint and walkers in harsh indignation and laziness cowardly and painfully insult the will of his Creator. However the bigger the insult of a haughty son, the bigger the mercy of gracious Father. He forgives, if only he sees, that sorrowful soul again by a quiver of good will incline itself towards the right path. In endless goodness he likes to forgive, knowing in his unfathomable wisdom all reasons of every transgression and led by boundless love towards his creatures. Man shall teach himself to love based on this model, he shall learn to know his neighbor and by getting to know his spirit and his causes of actions will surely forgive him out of love towards God (the)-most-merciful all of his transgressions and injustices even towards himself committed, so that he has a right to sigh towards the judge Highest: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us!"

Chapter Seven

Transcription

Obrovská spirála zdokonalování člověka se úží. Duch uvědomělý pokračuje, soudí rozeznáváje dobré od zlého. Rozhodující boj je tu přestáti duchu člověka: vůle vyspělá volí prostředky, které z poroby hmoty ji vymaniti mají. Přetrženo má býti pouto, kterým Duch ke hmotě je přikován z otroctví vášni a ze služby těla má býti osvobozen, aby volně, jen Bohu oddán, dobru jiných sloužiti mohl. V púťce pojí se tělo s celou říší temnosti a ve sto způsobách se duchu v cestu staví, hledíc své bytí zachovati. Se životem časným bojuje duch člověka o život věčný rozhodující boj. S důvěrou upřeme zraky své do věčné záře milosti modlíce se vroucně: „Neuved’ nás v pokušení, ó Pane!“ Pevná vůle naše setrvati v dobrém a dětinná důvěra v lásku Otce našeho nás zachrání. Z výše přijde pomoc jistá. Mezi obludami chtíčů a mrtvými úskalími temnosti povede nás rukou spolehlivou s láskou a účastí mateřskou – a zbaví nás všeho zlého!

Translation

A huge spiral of human self-improvement narrows itself. The conscious spirit carries on, making judgments to recognize good from evil. The showdown is here to stop the spirit of man: the mature will chooses means, which from subjugation to matter it shall break out. Severed shall be the bond, with which the Ghost to matter is chained out of slavery to passion and from service to the body shall be freed, so that it freely, only to God devoted, [for the] good of others could serve. In a skirmish the body binds with the whole realm of darkness and in a hundred ways the spirit stands in the way, looking to save its being. With limited time the human spirit fights the showdown for eternal life. With confidence we will set our eyes in the eternal glare of mercy while praying fervently: “Lead us not into temptation, oh Lord!” Our strong faith to remain in good and childish faith in the love of our Father will save us. From above will come help [for] sure. Between monsters of lust and dead pitfalls of darkness will guide us with a reliable hand with love and loving presence – and will deliver us from all evil!

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