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SPECULARITY IN LATE 19th CENTURY
FRENCH LITERATURE AND ART

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Romance Languages

by

Marguerite Cappo Li Bassi

B.A., University of New Orleans, 1997

August 2002

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The unusual structure of this thesis might be compared, with modesty, to Stéphane Mallarmé's methodology. It is an expansion of one "aha!" moment, following which--in his case, *words* light up each other unpredictably to build a poem--in my thesis, *ideas* reflect each other to build its thematic schema of mirror-mimesis.

Now is the moment to acknowledge three professors whose guidance helped me negotiate the uncharted labyrinth of instinctive beliefs that I held in regard to *specularity* in literature and art. It is through their good offices that the present work materialized into coherent expression.

The seminal ideas that gestated this work began some years ago in the instruction of Dr. John Williams to whom I am indebted for my literary love affair with Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Flaubert, as well with many of the illustrious *littérateurs et penseurs français* who preceded them.

Without the unfailing encouragement and moral support of my graduate advisor, Dr. George Wolf, I would not now have this privilege to express my gratitude for his scholarly guidance, patient ear, erudite mentoring and enthusiasm for this project.

For her criticism of all matters concerning art as well as for her incisive comments, innovative suggestions and careful reading of the text, I wish to thank Dr. Isabelle Wallace.

Merci mille fois to Jim Richard, Professor of Fine Arts, who supported the development of my thesis into a series of paintings: *La Naissance de Vénus*, 2002.

ABBREVIATIONS

- B.É. Baudelaire, *Écrits sur l'art*
- B.F.M. Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*
- B.O.C.M. Bataille, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Manet
- C.M. Cachin, Manet
- C.P.M.L. Clark, *Painting of Modern Life*
- D.F.P.P. Denommé, *French Parnassian Poets*
- D.M. Darragon, Manet
- D.P.S.M. Durand, *Poésies de Stéphane Mallarmé*
- E.E.P. Eitner, *An Outline of 19th Century European Painting*
- F.M. Fowlie, Mallarmé
- F.M.M. Fried, *Manet's Modernism*
- G.A.A. Gay, *Art and Act*
- G.F.L.T. Guthrie, *French Literature and Thought*
- G.P.A. Goncourt, *Paris and the Arts, 1851-1896*
- H.B.M. Higonnet, *Berthe Morisot*
- H.E.M. Hanson, *Édouard Manet*
- H.M.C. Hamilton, *Manet and his Critics*
- H.M.T. Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition*
- L.L.F.A. Lethève, *Daily Life of French Artists*
- M.A.P. Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*

- M.É. Mallarmé, *Écrits sur l'art*
- M.M. Michaud, *Mallarmé*
- N.I.P.I. Nochlin, *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism 1874-1904*
- P.M. Perruchot, *Manet*
- P. P. *A Painter's Poet: Stéphane Mallarmé and his Impressionist Circle*
- R.B.F.B. Ross, *Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère*
- R.G.S.L. Rand, *Manet's Contemplation at the Gare Saint-Lazare*
- S.W.M. Schneider, *World of Manet*
- Z.P.M. Zola, *Pour Manet*

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ABSTRACT

In the mid-to-late 1800s, French writers and artists resolved to shed their Romantic skins in favor of new self-conscious “husks”--to borrow Baudelaire’s poetic term--that is to say: Naturalism, Realism, Impressionism and Symbolism. Some of the older reformers found themselves in an awkward, transitional stage contrary to the younger vanguardists who bore no allegiance to the past. The first group included Baudelaire, Flaubert, Courbet, Manet, Degas and Pissarro while the latter listed among its most successful members: Zola, Mallarmé, Huysmans, Morisot, Monet, Renoir and Cézanne.

This thesis argues that *specularity*--a sort of mirror mimesis--was part of the fertile, artistic exchange between these representative writers and artists who shaped nineteenth century French literature and plastic arts during a period of turbulent social and political change. It is important not to conventionalize *specular-mimesis* into an automatic looking glass response between literature and art. Its primary function in this thesis is to single out, investigate and inter-relate literary and artistic *chefs-d’oeuvre* which, at times, bear remarkably similar hallmarks, for one reason or another.

Given that cultivated conversation was highly esteemed by the Parisian bourgeoisie and held to be an elegant art form by salon and soirée intellectuals, four Dialogues constitute the internal structure of this paper. Each Dialogue is preceded by its own Cadre which serves to introduce and familiarize the reader, using a *mise-en-scene* framework, with background information that supports the discourse.

Preface: Cadre of political events that affected late 19th century literature and art

French artists and writers benefited from the great promise of autonomy and individual liberty idealized by the French Revolution as every citizen's inherent right.¹ Robespierre and his henchmen knew only too well the power of a controlled system of public communication as represented by a biased media mix of plastic arts combined with talented writers.² The cunning leader of the *Comité de Salut public* deftly manipulated the paintings of David and the radical harangues of Marat and Saint-Just to suit his own terrorist's purposes.³ During the periods of the Consulate and the subsequent First Empire, the artists were ousted from the Louvre, ostensibly to make room for the art looted from Italy.⁴ During the dynastic changes that took place in the final decades of the 19th Century, the reigning parties of the moment, notably those of Louis-Philippe's aristocracy of the cash box (1830-1848), and Napoléon III's authoritarian Second Empire (1852-1870), would meddle in the affairs of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* and the *Institut*

¹ Jacques Lethève, Daily Life of French Artists in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1972) 44. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as L.L.F.A. The Revolution continued to grant painters and sculptors the right to have studios in the Louvre, a privilege given to them by *lettres patentes* from Henri IV and Louis XIV and their Bourbon descendants.

² R.R. Palmer, Twelve Who Ruled (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970). *Passim*. Palmer describes the leadership roles of Robespierre, Marat, and Saint-Just as bloodthirsty lawyers and pamphleteers during the Reign of Terror of 1793-94. While a member of the Committee of General Security during the Terror, David functioned also as their official propaganda artist and stage director of enormous public spectacles like Robespierre's *Fête de l'Être Suprême*. See also Lorenz Eitner, An Outline of 19th Century European Painting (New York: HarperCollins, 1987) 10. Hereafter listed as E.E. Eitner discusses the usefulness of art as political propaganda in the introduction to his thorough, scholarly study of art history.

³ R.R. Palmer, Twelve Who Ruled (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) 1-21. See also Pierre Goubert, Louis XIV and Twelve Million Frenchmen, Trans. A. Carter (New York: Vintage Books, 1966) 80. In all fairness, Robespierre could have easily referred to the precedent set by the Bourbon Dynasty, in particular that of Louis XIV who managed his *gloire* through painters and writers, notably Le Brun, Le Nôtre, Corneille and Racine.

⁴ L.L.F.A., 44. Both administrations cleared the Louvre but the Emperor delivered the *coup de grâce* on May 18, 1806.

de France.⁵ The overweening interference of these self-interested governments retarded the natural advancement of the liberal arts during a period of rapid industrialization that was epitomized in the word “progress”.⁶

Those poets and writers who were strong individualists supported the idealistic, anti-bourgeois revolution of 1848. The Romantic poet Lamartine joined the new government but quickly resigned his position, disillusioned by the oppressive, conservative, anti-democratic policies of Napoléon “le petit.”⁷ Hugo protested, through self-imposed exile and his novel *Les Misérables*, the blatant social injustices imposed upon the impoverished classes by the elitist regime. Baudelaire and Flaubert tested free speech issues with their controversial publications, *Les Fleurs du Mal* and *Madame Bovary*. Both were publicly prosecuted and fined for daring to “offend public and religious morality.”⁸

The liberation and free will of the artist, briefly enjoyed by David during the Directoire years, returned slowly with the self-taught Courbet; then artistic freedom gained momentum with Manet who flouted his formal training by breaking with the classical methods of his teacher, Couture.⁹ Why did a new vision of art languish, waiting for a Manet to help free it from its political bondage?¹⁰ Why did Manet need to have the

⁵ E.E.P., 272-275. Cf. Dunn’s *The Age of Religious Wars* on the practice of control of art by royal patronage.

⁶ Patricia Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire* (Avon: The Bath Press, 1987) 20. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as M.A.P.

⁷ Michel Échelard, *Histoire de la littérature en France au XIXe siècle*, 41.

⁸ B.É., 44. Baudelaire was tried and fined in July, 1857. See also: Paul Jolas, *Madame Bovary* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1971) 12-13. Flaubert had already suffered the same humiliation in January, 1857.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26. David survived the fall of Robespierre and, from 1794-1799, he was artistically independent. See also 42-43. During the Second Empire, art was used politically to give dignity and authenticity to Industry.

¹⁰ E.E.P., 280. By 1863, private art galleries had begun to show artists who had difficulties in being shown in the Salons. Manet was one of them although he persisted in entering the annual competitions. He was not attempting to challenge the Salon’s political control of public taste but was being merely stubborn, hoping

support of a poet, like Mallarmé, or a writer, like Zola, to validate the significance of his work?¹¹ What role did *specularity*, i.e., *reciprocity of imagery or ideas* (an interaction defined in the next paragraph) perform in the renewal of the arts of painting and writing during the latter half of the 19th Century?¹²

In seeking answers to these questions, I propose an adventurous scenario of imaginary dialogues. The dialogue structure is derived from the precedent set by the Philosophes who developed *social conversation* into an elegant art form in order to promote their sophisticated ideas, using unscientific, layman's French to reach the influential, cultivated audiences of the aristocratic *salons*.¹³ I have followed their example in order to express how, during the late 19th Century, French literature and art interacted in endless mirror imagery, i.e. *specularity*. The term is used in this thesis to define a process of reciprocal reflections that operated between the arts in much the same way as mantelpiece mirrors do when they are placed over facing hearths, each casting identical images of each other, hypnotically descending towards infinity. Appropriately, 19th Century *vieux Paris* homes had living rooms and dining rooms that featured fireplaces

to be officially recognized for his artistic merits. Degas saw this vainglorious effort as proof of Manet's vanity and "bourgeoisness."

¹¹ George Bataille, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1979) 117. "*Je me figure Manet ...rongé par une fièvre créatrice qui exigeait la poésie.*" For Bataille, Manet's was a creativity that literally fed on poetry. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as B.O.C.M. Cf. In the 18th century artists were seen as mere decorators; in the 19th, their status was promoted to that of writers. In Henri Murger's *Les Scènes de la vie Bohème*, 1848, they lived together in a mansard and had endless discussions about their vocations. In fact, double vocations were not rare: Hugo made splendid drawings; the novelist Fromentin was an orientalist.

¹² Françoise Cachin, *Manet* (Evreux: Découvertes Gallimard, 1994) 62. E.g., Ernest Renan wrote his *La Vie de Jésus* in 1863 in which Christ is considered to be a human. In 1864, Manet painted *Le Christ mort aux Anges* which shocked because his Christ was obviously not God but just a manual laborer; both works were vilified by the media.

¹³ Jean-François Bianco, *Le Neveu de Rameau, Diderot* (Paris: Bordas, 1991) 7. "Diderot was partial to open forms such as dialogues and letters as vehicles for his writing his thoughts. This small masterpiece, first published in 1805, has recently had a revival among scholars and may be considered one of Diderot's most brilliant and virtuoso works." Formerly, when scientists, philosophers and *penseurs* discussed their ideas, Latin had been the *lingua franca de rigueur*. Descartes published his *Discours de la méthode* in both Latin and French (1637). Diderot was fluent in Latin but, as a humanist *penseur*, he wrote in French in order to reach the broadest possible audience with his controversial reformist writings.

topped by mirrors.¹⁴ As a rule, these rooms are usually placed opposite each other, sharing wide middle doors that, when opened, triggered the mirroring phenomenon that is related to the understanding of my theme of *specularity*.¹⁵

My argument consists of four dialogues, each one preceded by a *cadre* that serves to set the scene in time and space.¹⁶ Throughout I am arguing that *specularity* is a phenomenon that was particularly active during the Second Empire's booming capitalist economy. It was the period when French writers and artists began to seek, study and portray *le vrai* (reality) found in *la vie moderne de Paris*.¹⁷ It is within this historical context that I found three personages who had radically different life styles but whose professional output often reflects my definition of *specularity*.¹⁸ Édouard Manet, Berthe Morisot and Stéphane Mallarmé were friends who were closely involved in each other's life, in familial and professional settings. Moreover, they are under scrutiny in this thesis as representative of their circle of realist writers and artists who, on the one hand, admired Baudelaire's poetic mythology of *la vie moderne de Paris* but on the other hand created works that either glorified or sullied the Parisian myth.¹⁹

¹⁴ Novelene Ross, *Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. (Ann Arbor: UNI Research Press, 1982) 6. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as R.B.F.B. "Mirrors were then (and still are) a ubiquitous feature of Parisian interior decoration."

¹⁵ Jane M. Roos, *A Painter's Poet: Stéphane Mallarmé* (New York: The Studley Press, 1999) 80-84. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as P.P. See V.M. Moylan's essay on Degas' famed photograph of Mallarmé and Renoir that is fascinating for its *mise en abyme*, its framing and reframing while the "endlessly reflecting mirrors plunge one in an abyss of light, *l'abîme blanche*." Taken at Julie Manet's house, 1895, the photo's mirror also reflects Mallarmé's wife and daughter as well as Degas himself.

¹⁶ Since Michel de Montaigne's Renaissance essay on "Conversation," 1580, (*Essais*, III, Ch.8), intellectual discussion, later known among the elite as *salons*, has been considered a noble art form by the French aristocracy and its 19th century heir, the *haute bourgeoisie* of Paris.

¹⁷ Charles Baudelaire, *Écrits sur l'art*. (Paris: Gallimard, 1993) In his essay on *La vie moderne* Baudelaire gave poetic significance to every aspect of daily activity, fashion, entertainment, art and artifice in the busy life of the Parisian *bourgeoisie*, sometimes glorifying the sordid side of Parisian debauchery found in its streets and brothels.

¹⁸ See Footnote 12 for one striking example.

¹⁹ Manet's work seems to reflect his love for the elegant city with its sophisticated tastes and irrepressible *joie de vivre*; the Goncourts and Zola, along with their disciples, magnified the sordid side of Paris.

In 1999, I exhibited a series of eight large paintings inspired by eight of Mallarmé's poems. By the time I had finished this project, I realized that I wanted to understand more about Mallarmé himself. To my surprise, I learned that two of his best friends were Morisot and Manet. Again these questions arose: who was this poet who sought the company of radical painters? Who were these painters who welcomed the friendship of an avant-garde poet? In studying this microcosm of three creative people, I hope to offer a different way to contemplate and appreciate how often the works of artists and writers reveal the influence of mutual sources of inspiration or reflect similar attitudes and artistic choices.²⁰

To organize the wide scope of this argument, the general division of the text has been organized into *cadres* and *dialogues*, with their narrower discriminations, to form the thesis structure. This schema perhaps avoids the arbitrary monotony of precise chronological arrangement. If it involves occasional repetitions or anticipations of works not at that time finished or shown, it is hoped that the reader may gain some additional information about the interface of literature and art before and after the Franco-Prussian war. In examining works that concern, not only the careers of the three protagonists, but also those of other artists and writers, we may gain insights as to why and how audacious French creativity was unleashed in Paris under the Third Republic.

I owe a profound debt to numerous preceding authors who contributed a broad spectrum of critical observations as well as specific terminology to guide my efforts in this quest to illustrate my theory on the protean role of *specularity* as an important

²⁰ Although mirror imagery is the simplest definition of *specularity*, it is a term that will, however, assume multiple meanings in this thesis, ranging in application from the literal to the figurative as well as from the suggestive to the explicit.

synthesizing component, one that helped energize the development of late nineteenth century French literature and art.

Cadre: Baudelaire and Manet, connoisseurs of *la vie moderne*

Born in 1821, Baudelaire was 11 years older than Manet, maturing under three diverse political systems: Charles X, Louis-Philippe and Napoléon III.¹ Profoundly influenced by the romantic poets, he nevertheless evolved poetically toward metaphysical inspiration believing in poetry's power to see beyond the visible world.² More brilliant than profound, he was gifted with verbal audacity and a sharp critical sense of the arts.³ His essays on modern Parisian spectacle and fashion are legendary, attesting to his keen powers of observation.⁴ Manet appreciated the poet's frank appraisals of his work even when negative because he knew of Baudelaire's affection for him.⁵ The term "modernity" defines the common trait they shared, defining the thought of one and the painting of the other.⁶ Both had roots in the old bourgeois class, both affected the mannerisms of the well-dressed dandy, each loved Paris above all other cities and enjoyed the art of conversation as an art in itself.⁷

¹ Henri Perruchot, Manet. Trans. Humphrey Hare. (Cleveland & New York: The World Publishing Company 1962) 157. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as P.M. Baudelaire was born in Paris, 1821; in 1867 he died of syphilis, alcoholism and drug abuse. Manet returned to Paris from Boulogne to follow his coffin to the Montparnasse Cemetery where he is interred.

² Peter Schofer, Poèmes Pièces Prose (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 73. Baudelaire said: "*Manier savamment une langue, c'est pratiquer une espèce de sorcellerie évocatoire.*" See also P.M., 73. Neither he nor Manet were "realists" except "in the sense that the creator seizes on the real to extract that part which is eternal."

³ B.É., see Baudelaire's commentaries on 1845, 1846, 1855, and 1859 Salons and other articles as well.

⁴ Ibid., 503. The Salon of 1859: *Le peintre de la vie moderne*.

⁵ P.M., 137. On May 11, 1865, Baudelaire wrote to Manet from Brussels. After scolding him for his self-pity, he wrote: "I hope you will not mind this *plain speaking*. You know my friendship for you."

⁶ Eric Darragon, Manet (Paris: Hachette Pluriel, 1989) 63. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as D.M. The rapport between Baudelaire's *idées modernes* and Manet's aesthetic in his painting of a well dressed crowd in *La Musique aux Tuileries* has often been noted.

⁷ Novelene Ross, Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980) 60. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as R.B.F.B. Berthe Morisot and Edma, her sister, "concluded that the artful conversation of such men (artists like Manet and Degas) was worth more than many a sterling virtue."

conversing with the poet.⁸ Then it was back to Café Tortoni from 5 to 6 p.m for the regular rendez-vous with elegantly dressed Bohemian friends who admired and commented upon Manet's studies as they were passed from hand to hand.⁹ In the interim, he continued to sketch *les boulevardiers*.

It could be conjectured that the closeness between the painter and the poet was due to the transitional role that each fulfilled in the Modernist movement of art and literature in Paris during the Second Empire.¹⁰ Although each of them had a metaphorical foot in the Romantic era that had begun its decline in 1830's, each was inexorably drawn to be "the artist who represented his own times" by modernizing their respective genres no matter the personal cost.¹¹ Baudelaire conceived the theory of what *modernity* meant for his time; Manet fulfilled the role of the painter who materialized what *modernity* meant in the painting of his time.

⁷ Novelene Ross, *Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980) 60. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as R.B.F.B. Berthe Morisot and Edma, her sister, "concluded that the artful conversation of such men (artists like Manet and Degas) was worth more than many a sterling virtue."

⁸ C.M., 32. "*Il allait presque chaque jour aux Tuileries de deux heures à quatre heures, faisant des études en plein air, sous les arbres, d'après les enfants qui jouaient et les groupes de nourrices, qui s'affalaient sur les chaises. Baudelaire était son compagnon habituel.*" Reported by Antonin Proust near the end of the 19th century.

⁹ C.M., 32. Manet adored the attention of charming women and discriminating gentlemen. It seems that he was mindless of class and behaved with gallantry and impeccable manners towards all in his coterie of café habitués.

¹⁰ Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal* (Paris: Bordas, 1990) Introduction by Antoine Adam. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as B.F.M. Baudelaire's reverence for Romantic poets like Gautier did not hinder his quest for recording his inner experience. His imaginative experiments in poetry through explorations of his sensuality set him notoriously apart from his contemporaries. Cf P.M., 25-27. Spain was then a fad among romantic writers: Hugo produced *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas* and Gautier wrote *Tras los Montes* (1830-1843). Manet's youthful visits with his uncle to see Louis-Philippe's collection of Spanish paintings profoundly affected his early paintings. Manet never forgot the impression made on him by the Velasquez, the Goyas, the El Grecos, the Murillos, et al. Perhaps these were the touchstone works upon which he built his own unique vision of modern realism that evolved after his "Spanish period" was over. In 1869, his last bow to Goya was *Le Balcon* with its first "portrait" of Berthe Morisot.

¹¹ They were perhaps hampered by dogmatic social attitudes, added to the official mistrust of all sudden changes in the conventional culture. Both were considered not only outrageous eccentrics but also threats to public decency because each dared to write or paint about the socially taboo subject of sexuality and prostitution. Baudelaire shocked with *Les Fleurs du Mal* and Manet scandalized acceptable Salon nudity by using "naked paint" to flaunt his naked *Olympia*, abandoning the sleek "rice powder and rouge" technique of conventional Salon nudes as Cabanel's *La Naissance de Vénus*. See Plate IV, p. 195 and Plate V, p. 196.

Dialogue between Manet and Baudelaire, habitués of the Tuileries

A possible conversation between Manet and Baudelaire, circa early 1860s, during one of their frequent afternoon strolls in the spacious gardens of the Tuileries, the official residence of Emperor Napoléon III.

Baudelaire: What splendid weather for our afternoon stroll, Manet! Remember to inhale the heady perfume of the roses, let it filter up into your anima, let it intoxicate your creative imagination.¹

Manet: (Smiling.) What a sensual animal you are, Baudelaire, you're the embodiment of your own poetry, a veritable system of *correspondances*!² When I first read that poem of yours, I experienced its extraordinary imagery as a passionate hymn to the senses... am I correct?

Baudelaire: Absolutely, but don't forget that all five senses must be subservient to the Queen of the faculties: the *Imagination*!³ We poets as well as you painters would be doomed to fail without her blessing, or at the very least, condemned to mediocrity.

¹ B.É., 371. For Baudelaire, the art of the imagination was superior to the art of realism.

² B.F.M., 13. The poem, *Correspondances*, is usually assessed as a Baudelairean system of synesthesia that evokes the senses (especially that of smell) to create a horizontal relationship of correspondences between the senses. Yet, there are those who argue that the Baudelairean chain of senses can also be linked *vertically* to the world of ideas thereby forming a relationship between the material world and the spiritual (or divine) *idéal*, i.e., *les correspondances entre l'âme et les sens*. One can also experience "vertical reading" of a painting which may be viewed as another instance of artistic mirror-mimesis; e. g., ecclesiastical pictures are usually "read" from top down (or vice versa) due to the abstract triangular religious hierarchy formed by God in His Heaven (apex), earth and its exiled mankind (midway) with Purgatory and Hell below on the lowest level. Such a structured design perfectly echoes the abstract beliefs upon which rests the Church's doctrinaire architecture.

³ B.É., 371. Baudelaire praises the creative imagination as majestically "reigning" over the ordinary idea of the imagination as a mental exercise in fantasy.

Manet: (Teasing.) But you also have your Muse of lyric poetry, Polyhymnia, with the unique privilege that she grants only to poets, *la fureur divine*.⁴ Hélas, Jupiter wasn't as generous with artists since we don't have an ardent Muse to enflame our imaginations!

Baudelaire: Nonsense, *mon vieux*. Although intentions differ, artists feel that same ecstatic surge of creativity that poets experience.⁵ For example, Delacroix exemplifies my ideal of the sublime artist who paints like an inspired poet.⁶ His virile technique with a brush suggests passion and grandeur by using vigorous gestural contour and bold color to create an atmosphere of human drama.⁷ What do you think? I value your opinion.

Manet: Well, I agree with your overall observation. I believe that his painting *La Barque de Dante* is a fine example of your painter-poet equation. In this work, I find that his poetic delirium is perfectly matched, not only by the compositional arrangement of the chaotic turbulence that suggests Dante's "Inferno" but also by Delacroix's flair for audacious, swirling brushwork as you just noted.⁸

Baudelaire: Now that you mention *La Barque*, didn't you ask his permission to make a study of it? You must have been very impressed to want to make a copy of it.

⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 84., Cf. B.O.C.M., 116. Bataille calls this state "poetic delirium." See also Joachim du Bellay. In Ch. XI of his *La Défense et Illustration de la Langue française*, Du Bellay strongly advises that no poet should risk bypassing this ecstatic, altered state of mind if he hoped to create impassioned poetry that would endure. (My translation.)

⁵ Stéphane Mallarmé, *Écrits sur l'art* (Paris: G.F. Flammarion, 1987) 235. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as M.É., 235. During almost daily visits to Manet's studio, Mallarmé observed him furiously attacking his canvas: "...en atelier, la furie qui le ruait sur la toile vide, confusément, comme si jamais il n'avait peint...un don précoce." Apparently the key word to Mallarmé was "*la furie*," to which he connected the poet's "divine fury" with the delirious state of mind that seemed to possess Manet during his act of painting

⁶ B.É., 380. "*L'imagination de Delacroix! Voilà bien le type de peintre-poète!*"

⁷ Ibid, 22. See also Lorenz Eitner, *An Outline of European Painting* (New York: HarperCollins, 1987) 189. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as E.E.P. Delacroix was "conspicuous from the first by his boldness."

⁸ E.E.P., 190. Although Manet admired Delacroix's daring *facture*, he disliked his subjects that were still in the Grand Tradition and monumental, similar to Ingres. Cf. P.M.,64. "He was fascinated by Delacroix's technique."

Manet: Yes, you're right. Proust and I both visited him on that pretext; actually I wanted to meet him in person and discuss his ideas on art almost more than I wanted the opportunity to study his bold new technique by copying *La Barque*.⁹ He was a bit reserved and rather aloof but very polite.

Baudelaire: Since we're the subject of art, I think it's relevant for you modern artists to recall what Gautier declared back in 1836: *art does not have to have a political or moral objective nor does it need to instruct*.¹⁰ In my mind, Gautier's also a superb example of a painter who is graced with a poet's soul. Ultimately he succumbed completely to Polyhymnia's Romantic charms, of course!¹¹

Manet: When I was a teenager, I read his scandalous *Mademoiselle de Maupin* where he outlined his formula for artistic freedom: *l'art pour l'art*. You echoed the same radical idea in the critique on art that you wrote for the Salon of 1846.¹² You, like Gautier, encouraged both poets and artists to create art for its own sake. I believe that I adhered closely to that philosophy with my first entry in the Salon competition in 1859. Maybe carrying out this principle of artistic freedom too far was the reason that my *Buveur d'absinthe* was flatly refused.¹³ It's "anti-academic" in that it's not an allegorical painting, it's about a *real* person living a miserable existence unworthy of pictorial

⁹ C.M.,23. Antonin Proust (not related to Marcel) was a lifetime friend of Manet's dating from their early school days.

¹⁰ Michel Échelard, *Histoire de la littérature en France au XIXe siècle*, 56-57. See also Gautier's preface to his novel *Albertus*, 1832. French poets sought to free poetry from its subservient role as a tool for specific causes and programs during the reigns of Louis-Philippe and of Napoléon III, 1830 to 1870.

¹¹ Baudelaire dedicated *Les Fleurs du Mal* to his "Master and Friend," *Poète Impeccable, Théophile Gautier*, one of the leading exponents of the Parnassian school of French poetry.

¹² B.É., 232, n.3. Baudelaire clearly felt the change from past allegorical and collective art to the contemporary art of the individual.

¹³ P.M., 74-75. Manet's first ambitious try at a Salon entry: "*The Absinthe Drinker*," 1859. Ironically he met his model in the Louvre, a rag picker by the name of Collardet who normally wore his own dignified status symbol: a battered top hat. Obviously Collardet fit Velasquez' model of the "gentleman street philosopher," *le Mendiant Philosophe*, which Manet probably knew from published engravings of the Spanish master's paintings. Collardet also fit Baudelaire's idealization of a humble *chiffonnier*, a rag picker.

representation, according to conventional taste. The wealthy class prefers indifference rather than solutions for such blatant social problems considered best left out of sight, politically speaking.¹⁴

Baudelaire: I'm convinced that our greedy businessmen regard all art as valid only if it relates to their business deals.¹⁵ They see it as a commodity with an eye trained only to watch the rise and fall of stock values at the Bourse. For this avaricious bourgeois class, horrified by imagination and fantasy, art must be viewed as a "utility," something like a controlled machine designed specifically for a mundane purpose.¹⁶

Manet: At the Café Guerbois, we often discuss the philistine nature of the average bourgeois collector who considers art not as good taste but more as a way to buy prestige among his peers.¹⁷ Some of my friends are literally starving while trying to protect their artistic ideals from becoming mere production-line commodities! But what choice do they have?

Baudelaire: Then, by heavens, let your art be a *modern* commodity that can be offered on today's market and not based on the popularity of outdated classical idioms like that of history painting. It's up to you, Manet, to fight for the principle of *l'art pour l'art* as applied to our modern times. Whether you like it or not, the anti-academic group of

¹⁴ B.É., 521. With obvious disgust Baudelaire writes: "...*pour les gens d'affaires, aux yeux de qui la nature n'existe pas, si ce n'est dans ses rapports d'utilité avec leurs affaires.*"

¹⁵ Charles Rosen, Rev. of *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol.1 by Stéphane Mallarmé, ed. Bertrand Marchal, The New York Review of Books, 20 May 1999: 42-46.

¹⁶ Robert T. Denomé, *The French Parnassian Poets* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972) 8. Baudelaire refers to Gautier's remark: "What cause does art serve? It serves beauty. Isn't that enough?"

¹⁷ E.E.P., 282. The average *nouveau riche* businessman collected art to increase his social standing within the monied circle of Napoléon III and his Second Empire entourage of yes-men. They followed the Emperor's example for tasteless mediocrity by purchasing only the art (mainly eroticism thinly disguised by classical subject matter) that embodied "the grand style practiced by Cabanel, Baudrey, Bouguereau (that) suited the pretensions of a new plutocracy."

young painters who meet at the Café Guerbois see you as their leader.¹⁸ They look to you to continue the radical momentum of the movement towards realism begun by the painters of the Barbizon school and pushed forward by Courbet.¹⁹

Manet: But think about this contradiction, Baudelaire: the rapid growth of modern technology is catapulting us into a dazzling future but paradoxically our taste in modern art remains retrograde. Science is speeding ahead and leaving society behind! As a respected art critic, what do you think of such an antithesis? Why can we not bear to accept even moderate changes in the world of the arts?²⁰

Baudelaire: Let us first consider your *Buveur* as seen in our contemporary social context,

Manet. In '59 he was not a pretty sight to look at, and still isn't. I think we can agree on that point. He belongs to the great unwashed masses and that fact alone repelled your Parisian snobs. More serious than that, your painting looked like a rapid oil sketch!

Hélas, you broke one of the Academy's most sacred rules by abolishing the "polished" finish of traditional classical painting.²¹ As for me, I say *bravo, mon cher!* I, for one, heartily approve of the technical defiance you expressed in your *Buveur!*²²

Manet: Thanks for your support, my friend. True, he wasn't a sentimental or pathetic figure; he was an arrogant symbol of society's failures. *Entre nous*, it's also true that I

¹⁸ Ibid., 303. As the main figure at the Café Guerbois gatherings, the press and public saw Manet as the leader of the young radicals.

¹⁹ Pierre Schneider, *The World of Manet, 1832-1883* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1968) 81. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as S.W.M. "Without any such intention, Manet found himself playing the role of master of a new school."

²⁰ Patricia Mainardi, *Art and Politics of the Second Empire* (Avon: The Bath Press, 1987) 33. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as M.A.P. In the modern art world "a new power, the bourgeoisie, had emerged, demanding recognition of its own taste." Cf. E.E.P., 282.

²¹ E.E.P., 285. The distinctive hallmarks of Salon painting were rigidly observed: "minuteness of finish and a dry expertness of handling were the expected."

²² P.M., 77. Baudelaire was well aware that his poem about an "heroic" ragpicker in his *Les Fleurs du Mal* collection might have served as illustration for Manet's '*Le Buveur d'absinthe*.'

referenced Vélasquez' genius for realistic portraiture which I deeply admire.²³ As you know, I'm not engaged in social reform but I portrayed him wearing his own jaunty top hat as an elegant and ironic touch in your honor, Baudelaire.²⁴

Baudelaire: Whatever do you mean by that?

Manet: (Eyes sparkling.) An essay of yours, *Le Dandy*, asserts that the perfect dandy's "elegance" serves as a symbol of the aristocratic superiority of his mind.²⁵ By sporting this modern symbol of aristocratic haberdashery, my *Buveur d'absinthe* perfectly suits your formula while thumbing his nose at our class snobbery, *c'est drôle, n'est-ce pas?*

Baudelaire: (Annoyed.) Very amusing, but please indulge me by not bandying that story about; I don't wish to be considered a literary dandy!²⁶ But I return to my point: you and I share many artistic values and I agree there's a Bohemian grandeur in your painting but such poetic ideals transcend the public's imagination not to mention comprehension. I can attest to that!²⁷

Manet: I suppose you understand that better than I do. Although it's been three years, I still smart with the shame and disappointment that I felt when I heard the painting was refused and then labeled "scandalous." In fact, you and I were together when the news of

²³ Ibid., 75. Manet refused to be an historical painter but, with the Spanish master artists as guides, he would paint from modern life.

²⁴ Ibid., 71-72. Baudelaire, himself a notorious dandy who used facial make-up, undoubtedly admired Manet's elegant dandyism, and shared his horror of vulgarity and Bohemian slovenliness. Perruchot remarks that "They had a curiously profound identity of spirit."

²⁵ B.É., 536. "*La toilette et l'élégance matérielle...symbole de la supériorité aristocratique de son esprit.*"

²⁶ Ibid., 11. (Baudelaire) "*se gardait bien de donner dans les excès vestimentaires de 1830*" of Byron and Gautier.

²⁷ Michel Échelard, *Histoire de la littérature en France au XIXe siècle*, 143. Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* describes his "universe of vice and sex" that scandalized the public and provoked a court trial.

the Salon's refusal reached us.²⁸ I still don't understand why the Hanging Committee thought it offensive!²⁹

Baudelaire: I remember that painful occasion. It was your first refusal *and* your first success.

Manet: *Quoi?* My first *success*?

Baudelaire: Yes, of course! Look here, my friend, you had Delacroix on your side as a member of that jury and you had me defending your work in the literary and artistic camps!³⁰ Didn't that suffice?

Manet: If I seem to be an ingrate, I apologize. It was all so disheartening! We both have experienced public vilification and seem fated to appear socially outrageous in spite of the sincerity of our artistic intentions.³¹ The violent social reactions to my innovative approach to art and your provocative *Fleurs du Mal* poems are eloquent proof of our status as the generation that styled itself as the *maudits*.³²

²⁸ C.M., 28. Antonin Proust recounts this scene in his *Souvenirs*, 1897.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 142. Manet was sincerely puzzled as to the hostility of the academicians. In the 1867 Exposition, he wrote his own catalogue and, using the third person, wrote: "*Il a cherché simplement d'être lui-même et non un autre.*"

³⁰ Anne C. Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) 157. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as H.M.T. "As a member of the selection jury, Delacroix had cast an affirmative vote."

³¹ *Ibid.*, 152. In 1864 Théophile Thoré published the notion that Manet relied on paintings by Spanish masters for inspiration. Alarmed, Baudelaire quickly wrote a letter to him explaining that Manet was simply trying to be "reasonable."

³² B.É., 44. Six poems were censored from *Les Fleurs du Mal* and Baudelaire was fined. See L.L.F.A., 206. Jacques Lethève suggests that the painters who lived close by in the same quarter as Verlaine's *poètes maudits*, might have also agreed to be labeled *maudits*. In the same way, it can be argued that contemporary art critics used the *specularity* principle to label Manet an "intransigent," elliptically assuming him to be the activist leader rather than just an unwilling reflection of the wild new art theories proselytized by his radical young friends.

Baudelaire: Victorian prudishness and hypocritical social mores are to blame, Manet. In this utopian industrial dream world called Paris, no place has been reserved for the underdogs of society as personified by your tipsy Bohemian philosopher.³³

Manet: If my *Buveur* seems to be a street “hero” to me it was because I admired the “heroism of modern life” as expressed in your poignant poem *Le Vin des chiffonniers*.³⁴ My poet-rag-picker epitomizes for me a universal type of poet-drunkard, a sort of Parisian street version of Edgar Poe who’s reminiscent of Velasquez’s ironically grandiose beggar-philosophers.³⁵

Baudelaire: (Heaves a sigh.) *Le tout Paris* of the Second Empire does not care to be reminded about the squalor that exists under its haughty noses. We both have dared to depict the wreckage of urban society, thus exposing ugly truths. The *poncifs* of the Academy would have us paint banal portraits of country peasants and sanitized scenes of satyrs and nymphs.³⁶ No doubt, Manet, your art challenges their saccharine delusions that are held to be the essence of good taste and my poetry arouses unchaste desires that are best left to the privacy of Paris’ ubiquitous brothels.³⁷

Manet: But even we artists cannot be tolerant of each other! In ’59, our great realist Courbet showed me his churlish side, deriding the Spanish influence he saw in my work of that period.³⁸ When Napoléon III married Eugénie of Montijo, all things Spanish

³³ C.M., 42. A breeding ground for Paris’ “social underdogs” was *Little Poland*, a slum area close to Manet’s studio and probably a source for some of his models.

³⁴ B.F.M., *Le vin des chiffonniers*, 120.

³⁵ C.M., 26. Manet made an engraving study of: *Le Mendiant-Philosophe*, a beggar character like Velasquez’ *Ménippe*.

³⁶ E.E.P., 285. Salon painters studied their market and gave the bourgeoisie what it wanted in art. See also C.M., 32. *Poncifs* was a term applied derisively to the entire group of academicians at the École des Beaux-Arts.

³⁷ B.F.M. Baudelaire wrote explicit, sensual poems that he dedicated to his mistress Jeanne Duval. Some titles were: *Le vampire*, *Le chat*, and *Le Balcon*.

³⁸ C.M., 22. “*Il ne faut pas, disait Courbet, que ce jeune homme nous la fasse à la Vélasquez!*”

became the rage in Paris.³⁹ Hugo and Gautier made Spain fashionable before me.⁴⁰ Even you wrote articles praising Spanish art.⁴¹ Why signal me out to criticize, I ask you?

Baudelaire: If it's any consolation, *moi aussi*, I was guilty of mimetic homage to several poets of the Pléiade.⁴² It was during an early stage of my poetic development; later, critics seized on the fact and tried to discredit me. Such attacks strengthen one's resolve, Manet. Look at Wagner, Chateaubriand and Delacroix who suffered similar injustices before you. You're not the first in the decrepitude of your art.⁴³ Take my advice and be patient, my young friend; above all don't lose your head, the situation will improve.⁴⁴

Manet: Ah, my dear friend, thank you for your friendship; you're either calming me down or giving me encouragement. You'll be pleased to know that I'm working on a private exhibit of fourteen paintings for Martinet's gallery.⁴⁵ The theme of *modernity* in the largest canvas was developed out of the conversations we've had during our afternoon outings in the Tuileries. I've titled it *La Musique aux Tuileries*.

Baudelaire: Oh really! How flattering! (Coquettishly.) Which one of my brilliant discourses inspired you to immortalize our conversations in paint?

³⁹ M.A.P., 35. See also C.M., 31. "*Le goût espagnol lui vaut en mai 1861 son premier grand succès. Son Chanteur espagnol est admis au Salon.*"

⁴⁰ C.M., 29. Hugo used Spain for settings in *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas*; Gautier described his travels in Spain.

⁴¹ Ibid., 29. In Baudelaire's Salon commentaries, he associates Spain with realism in the arts.

⁴² B.F.M., Introduction, XIII. "*Ce Baudelaire des débuts...son intention... d'imiter tel ou tel poème de Ronsard.*"

⁴³ B.O.C.M., 108. Baudelaire was quoted in full by Bataille. The poet was referring to *Olympia*, painted in 1863 but not exhibited until the Salon of 1865 where it raised cries of indignation from the Parisian Salon public. I have taken liberties with strict chronology here, since the Tuileries walks took place over a period of about five years. He urged Manet "not to be discouraged" in his attempt to revitalize France's "stagnating" art culture as represented by the banal "candy box" nudes that solicited public praise and official honors in the state Salon competitions controlled by Second Empire appointees.

⁴⁴ C.M., 153. Also re: *Olympia*. Baudelaire wrote from Brussels to Mme Paul Meurice to tell Manet to remain calm and not to lose his head, adding: *vous saurez dire tout cela gaiement, et sans le blesser.*

⁴⁵ E.E.P., 297. In February 1863, he exposed most of his important works to critical inspection. Among these was *La Musique aux Tuileries*, a pictorial manifesto of Baudelaire's elegiac exultation of modern life in Paris, as well as Manet's own exuberant modern palette and novel technique. (See Thesis Plate I.)

Manet: The very subject that we were just discussing: that *art must reflect modern life*.⁴⁶

Many of the thoughts you expressed in your article on the Salon of 1846 concerning the subject of contemporary fashions reinforced my own enthusiasm for modern *chic*.⁴⁷ In the nineteenth century, people don't drape themselves in togas or wear Roman helmets, as I told Couture and his circle of *pompier*s.⁴⁸ In fact, my own taste for wearing men's wear created by exclusive *couturiers* betrays my passion for *la dernière mode*.⁴⁹

Baudelaire: I went even further as a poet when I described our masculine attire as the "outer husk of the modern hero" and that it possesses a "political beauty."⁵⁰ By that I mean it has a relative beauty that applies to today's wealthy and affluent society which it reflects.⁵¹

Manet: I also share your vision of clothing as an "expression of the public soul" as well as a sign of "universal equality."⁵² In one of your essays, *Le peintre de la vie moderne*, you remind us that ancient artists painted their subjects in the modern dress of their own times.⁵³ Therefore, we should follow suit and express the poetic and eternal qualities of our own age; you call upon us to depict the "spectacle of elegant life."⁵⁴ In my *Musique*,

⁴⁶ S.W.M., 88. Manet often stated: "We must be of our times." Cf. B.É., 238. Even before they met, Baudelaire expressed this idea in his long discourse, the *Salon de 1846*, where he distills his modernistic theories about art and society.

⁴⁷ D.M., 63. Manet seemed to have instinctively started on the same path as idealized by Baudelaire.

⁴⁸ E.E.P., 271. The parallel between the ideas of Baudelaire and the aesthetic of Manet has often been observed, in particular with Manet's choice of subject matter during the 1860s.

⁴⁹ S.W.M., 65. George Moore wrote that Manet had the impeccable flair of a British gentleman.

⁵⁰ B.É., 238-239. Each society poetized its clothing as "heroic," as in Roman times, Anthony, was "poetic" in his Greek robes. The "political black" of men's fashions was "an expression of universal equality." (My translation.) By choosing to wear somber colors, the new "nobility of the cash box" virtuously chided the elegantly dressed old *noblesse* for its fondness for expensive, colorful wardrobes in the finest of fabrics.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 236-242.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 36. Manet certainly was Baudelaire's painter who would *not* poetize modern man as *Antony à la romain!* (I submit that the drab somberness of male haberdashery may also suggest anonymity and therefore function as a conservative symbol of non-radical conformity.)

⁵³ B.É., 504. In his essay, *Le peintre de la vie moderne*, Baudelaire decreed that the essential quality of his model artist was "to be of the moment," i.e., "*sa qualité (comme peintre) essentielle de présent.*"

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 239. The painter had only to open his eyes to be inspired by the spectacle of the elegant life.

you'll find much of your philosophy reflected in the inattentive crowd chatting while an offstage orchestra plays. I found it amusing to use my friends to represent the Second Empire's new "nobility" showing off newly acquired wealth through the splendor of chic "outer husks". I disagree with Gautier who, in one of his ironic moods, lugubriously compared our masculine fashions to "uniforms" favored by *croque-morts*.⁵⁵ I enjoyed using all that black haberdashery worn by my friends, using it as a background against which to contrast the bright, shimmering colors worn by the clusters of women in the foreground.⁵⁶ Although I've noticed, that in Japanese aesthetics, the density of black is used, not to symbolize class, but as a spatial element to asymmetrically balance an area of uncluttered space.⁵⁷ As yet, our taste in art hasn't reached such refinements, *hélas!* Baudelaire: (Pensively.) But what can one expect from neo-aristocrats? They accumulate wealth and hoard it like misers, loath to spending it on esthetical pursuits. That, my boy, is decidedly bourgeois in character and not as Epicurean as our Old Regime's feudal philosophy of lavishing fortunes on cultural enrichment by commissioning private and public works of poetry, painting, architecture, sculpture and music.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ C.M., 119. Gautier's verse evokes men's attire that Manet symbolized as the crowd in his *La Musique* and later in *Le Bal masque à l'Opéra*: "*Le Carnaval déjà / prend pour déguisement / l'habit qui sert au bal / comme à l'enterrement.*" Cf. B.É., 238. Gautier dryly observed that the black suit and redingote worn by the bourgeois class formed "*une immense défilade de croque-morts, croque-morts politiques, croque-morts amoureux, croque-morts bourgeois. Nous célébrons tous quelque enterrement.*"

⁵⁶ E.E.P., 296. *La Musique* is considered the first "modern" painting in that it presented a modern crowd at a public spectacle as if caught in a snapshot. No story is told; "the 'music' lies in the harmony of forms and colors." See also R.B.F.B., 32. Manet belonged to this "*beau monde* of Paris seen sunning themselves in the privilege of wealth and leisure among the stately trees of the Imperial Garden."

⁵⁷ A Japanese woodcut print best illustrates this new idea of chiaroscuro composition. Unconcerned with the problems of perspective, the Japanese artist excelled in pure design, using dramatic masses of dark space to asymmetrically balance his scene, an elegant, exotic technique which fascinated Manet and his artist friends like Degas. Japanese artists showed the real, the contemporary and the momentary which paralleled Manet's concerns in his art. See also R. B.F.B., 62.

Manet: Yes, but we bourgeois must be of our own time, as you insist, so *La Musique* is a perfect example of your *spectacle de la vie moderne*. It presents a gathering of Parisian *nouveau riche* socialites, dressed in the latest haute couture, attending a high society event staged in the Tuileries garden. You, my dear dandy, can be seen in profile conversing with a group of elegant gentlemen all wearing *chapeaux hauts de forme*.⁵⁹

Baudelaire: What a capital compliment, Manet, you “fleshed” out my theory, as it were.

Manet: *Touché, mon ami!* Of course, you, more than anyone, belong to this elegant literary and artistic milieu. But I anticipate that the public will be shocked by my panoply of bright patches of color sharply contrasted on the monotone panel of somber darks formed by the men’s top hats and frock coats.⁶⁰ I hope that the sharp contrasts of my palette are not too blatant; I want the critics to be favorably impressed this time.⁶¹

Baudelaire: I can’t wait to see it! Are you serious, you have painted me into my, I mean your, “spectacle of the elegant life”? Did my lofty philosophy about modern painting unleash your *tempérament artistique*? Were you able to capture my classic poet’s profile for all eternity?⁶²

⁵⁸ Youssef Ishaghpour, *Aux origines de l’art moderne* (Paris: La Différence, 1995) 18.

⁵⁹ Baudelaire is shown in profile; later Manet did an engraving of his top-hatted silhouette. It was his habit to copy his portraits and paintings through an engraving, a difficult medium that seemed to subtly reinforce his original designs.

⁶⁰ Manet must have been amused by Gautier’s verses as he painted the somber bourgeois haberdashery modeled by his friends. His *croque-morts* (funeral attendants) are engaged in outrageous fun, not somberly digging graves. He uses the unifying force of a mass of black men’s formal wear as a bold foil to the festive colorations of the women’s fashionable apparel.

⁶¹ P.M., 83. Baudelaire seemed surprisingly unimpressed; Manet’s other friends were skeptical, judging it “too new, too unusual” to be understood, so he did not submit it to the Salon of 1863.

⁶² Baudelaire is half-serious since poets traditionally aspired to be immortalized by a poetic masterpiece known as an *exegi monumentum*, metaphorically their symbolic *tombeau*. Cf. *Les Antiquités de Rome*, by Du Bellay. Sonnet 3, l. 7. The poet hopes to win immortality, figuratively building a monument (*tombeau*) with his verses, *as durable and permanent as marble*: “*Non en papier, mais en marbre et porphyre.*”

Manet: (Winking at him.) Well...you'll see for yourself. Besides, my decision to paint an elegant occasion of modern life and placing it outdoors will no doubt be doubly controversial, right?⁶³ After all, I might as well live up to my reputation as a scandalous radical and a suspicious bohemian eccentric!⁶⁴

(Another voice calls to them.) Hello there, you two...wait up for me! I'm out of breath trying to catch up with you chaps. (It is Antonin Proust, Manet's childhood friend.)⁶⁵

Manet: *Salut, Antonin!* You're all flushed; let's sit down on this bench for a while and relax our legs a bit until you catch your breath. How did you find us?

Proust: When your studio assistant told me you were out for the afternoon, I knew exactly where to look. One of the gendarmes in the gardens who knows you by sight pointed out your habitual itinerary to me. I can see that you've been enjoying this unusually delightful weather by sketching and gossiping with Baudelaire.⁶⁶

Manet: (Feigning indignation, teases Baudelaire.) What! You dare to categorize our intellectual exchanges as mere banter? Gossip indeed! I'll have you know that we were just engaged in a serious discourse on "heroic outer husks" which is Baudelaire's term for modern masculine attire. By the way, *cher poète*, does that term include women's fashion, too? Please stop that laughing, Antonin, it was a very serious conversation.⁶⁷

⁶³ As examples of out of doors social events, compare the vigorous "naturalism" in Manet's "Concert in the Tuileries" to the interpretation of nature as "fantasy" in Watteau's *fêtes gallantes*. For other intriguing connections between Manet and Watteau, see Rima Reck, *Drieu La Rochelle and the Picture Gallery Novel* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990) 136.

⁶⁴ P.M., 75. Manet never became accustomed to being considered "scandalous." Couture's scornful rejection of *Le Buveur* wounded him.

⁶⁵ C.M., 130. Manet's oldest friend, no relation to Marcel. See also Antonin Proust, *Édouard Manet, Souvenirs*, 1897.

⁶⁶ C.M., 32. Proust described these outings, including daily excursions to cafés, restaurants and museums.

⁶⁷ Manet may have had a sense of Baudelaire's possible ironical intentions in his poetic apotheosis of the stolid and unimaginative bourgeois class.

Baudelaire: (Piqued, yet amused.) I can assure you, Proust, that at least *one* of us takes our conversations seriously but you know what a *taquin* our Manet can be!⁶⁸

Proust: Who knows him better than I do? Yet, I have to admit that Édouard is always serious when he speaks of art. He once told me that opinions that have been expounded on art don't matter to him but if he were to formulate such an opinion it would be...

Manet: "Everything containing the spark of humanity, containing the *esprit de l'âge*, is interesting; everything without it is nothing."⁶⁹ I couldn't help finishing your sentence.

Really, my dear Antonin, your memory is quite astonishing!

Baudelaire: (Enthuses.) Now that's precisely the idea we were just exploring, Proust. We agreed that today's artist should concentrate on being of his own epoch, proud to depict his own generation and to prove that contemporary culture is a poetic subject worthy of *the painter of modern life*.⁷⁰

Proust: I find it remarkable that you both have ideas about art that often dovetail so smoothly. You both seem to have parallel visions of modernity but you each temper your views with a healthy dose of individualism.⁷¹

Baudelaire: That's true. Yet, let's consider this fact: I'm ten years older than you young dreamers and reformers. Experience has taught me to be cautious as to how far to go against the grain of public opinion. Having said that, I will always champion the innovative artist who is sincerely engaged in being of his own time as Manet is doing.⁷²

⁶⁸ S.W.M., 65. Manet "shared the true Parisian's incapacity to refrain from the temptation of the *bon mot*."

⁶⁹ C.M., 142. In the section of her book titled *Témoignages et Documents*, Cachin often quotes Antonin Proust who, in 1897 and 1901, wrote warmly of the many experiences he had shared with Manet. See also B.É., 503-521.

⁷⁰ B.É., 503-521. In these sections of *Le peintre de la vie moderne*, Constantin Guys was his ideal *peintre*.

⁷¹ Although it seemed inspired by his ideas, it is puzzling to consider that Baudelaire took no public notice of *La Musique aux Tuileries* in any article or letter.

⁷² S.W.M., 89. One of Manet's mantras: "One must be of one's own time. One must paint what one sees."

Manet and I share a bourgeois ancestry that's rooted in another era but we both have had the courage to break away from familial stereotypes.⁷³ That's what separates us from today's middle class mob. It just proves the many interests and views we share in spite of our stolid and somber conformist origins.

Manet: (Joking.) How else could we stand spending so much time together, my dear poet? Moreover, we scions of the old bourgeoisie are expected to cultivate a taste for sophisticated conversation.⁷⁴ Beyond that, I believe you tolerate my capricious behavior because you glimpse a bit of your own rebellious side in my temperamental ways.⁷⁵

Proust: (Smiles.) Some of our high school and art teachers could certainly testify to your cheeky behavior, Édouard. Look at poor old Wallon, for example, when he had us reading history...

Manet: What nonsense that was! We were reading Diderot's negative criticism of certain artists who painted their subjects wearing contemporary clothing that later became unfashionable and I blurted out: "That's really silly! We must be of our own time and depict what we see regardless of fashion."⁷⁶

Proust: We were only about fifteen years old at the time and, even then, you had already begun to formulate strong opinions about art.⁷⁷

Baudelaire: *Tiens, tiens!* Even as an adolescent you were putting all your beliefs into one artistic doctrine: *paint what you see*. And you're still spouting that same credo today!⁷⁸

⁷³ Auguste Manet, as a highly placed and respected magistrate in the legal system, had planned a career in law for his eldest son. Baudelaire's stepfather, Jacques Aupick, a career military man, emphatically disapproved of Charles' poetic ambitions.

⁷⁴ N.B.F.B., 64. "Of course, Manet also relished the conversation and, more especially, the beauty of the women (who were) easily persuaded to pose and who returned the compliment with compliments."

⁷⁵ See footnote 69. Both artists defied family wishes, both flaunted social convention.

⁷⁶ P.M., 27. Proust and Manet were enrolled in the Collège Rollin, in their second year at the school.

⁷⁷ C.M., 131. Proust citation: "*tout ce qui touchait à l'art le rendait sérieux.*"

Proust: Which just proves that he's still just an incorrigible, grown-up brat who manages nevertheless to remain completely charming no matter how petulant his behavior may seem.⁷⁹

(Manet then makes a deep, mocking bow of acknowledgment to Proust and all three burst into boyish laughter.)

Manet: Well, my friends, it is almost five-thirty. Shall we be off to Tortoni's?⁸⁰ We can quench our thirst while ogling the pretty young *grisettes* who drop in to keep or look for a romantic *rendez-vous*.⁸¹

Baudelaire: Not to mention ogling that excellent wine list, of course. Excluding my own *Fleurs du Mal*, perhaps my favorite bouquet is the one attributed to a delicate ruby-colored Bordeaux! (Chuckles.) *Pardonnez-moi!* That was a terrible pun, wasn't it?

Best of all, the elegant café society crowd at Tortoni's caters to my favorite pastime: watching people watching other people, a truly satisfying entertainment.⁸²

Proust: You have just described that consummate art at which all Parisians excel: the art of being an avid "spectator." We've practically made it into a sophisticated society game,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 25, 61. "*Il n'y a qu'une chose vraie: faire du premier coup ce qu'on voit. / Ainsi Olympia, quoi de plus naïf? / J'ai fait ce que j'ai vu.*"

⁷⁹ S.W.M., 65. "He used his flawless manners to elude personal distress or irritation with a verbal pirouette."

⁸⁰ P.M., 92. Manet loved the fashionable Café Tortoni on the Boulevard des Italiens where he "had become the center of a little court." There he was known as a *boulevardier*, *flâneur*, *railleur* and dandy *par excellence*.

⁸¹ C.M., 32. "*Sur le boulevard des Italiens, le café Tortoni, rendez-vous de la bohème élégante.*" The *grisette* was a shop girl named for the grey color of her working dress. The Goncourts wrote unflattering articles about them.

⁸² R.B.F.B., 26. (Trans. from B.É., 513.) "The crowd is his element...for the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the flow and ebb of the moment, in the midst of the fugitive and infinite." "Looking at looking" was a popular subject--depicted with the studied casualness of a snapshot--by Manet, Degas, and the Impressionists. As a thematic device, it was carried on by Toulouse Lautrec whose forte was portraying spectators watching cabaret spectacles. The quintessential example of Manet's taste for this subject would be his controversial masterpiece: *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, 1882.

a veritable “spectator sport”.⁸³ Isn’t this phenomenon all very much in keeping with your spirit of modernity, Baudelaire?

Baudelaire: Yes indeed, Proust. You might even describe it as a sort of “horizontal correspondence,” that is to say: it’s a linear visual movement that’s activated by the act of looking and being looked at.⁸⁴ Perhaps that is why I’m such an avid practitioner of your “spectator sport.” I think of it as an indispensable method to develop one’s mnemonic skills because memorized observation is an invaluable asset for today’s artist.⁸⁵

Manet: *Allons-y, mes amis!* There’s going to be a good deal of your spectator sport to practice when we get to Tortoni’s; everyone, including the delicious *demi-mondaines*, will want to look at and comment upon my sketches. Then I want to fill you both in on “who’s who” in the crowd that I’m painting in my new Tuileries concert picture. I suppose you could consider it a collective portrait of me and my friends.⁸⁶

Proust: Another *grande machine* destined for the Salon?⁸⁷ Really, Édouard, you’ve been busier than I had imagined.

⁸³ T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 207. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as C.P.M.L. Alfred Delau wrote, circa 1865: “We need publicity, daylight, the street, the cabaret, the café, the restaurant... We like to pose, to make a spectacle of ourselves, to have a public, a gallery, witnesses to our life.”

⁸⁴ Peter Schofer, *Poèmes Pièces Prose* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 82. The “horizontal” movement in Baudelaire’s poem *Correspondances* is known as “synesthesia,” referring to correspondences between the senses, sometimes linear, sometimes mixed, e.g., a perfume can be said to “smell green.” See also B. É., *passim*, for Baudelaire’s belief in intense critical *observation* and its importance to the arts.

⁸⁵ B.É., 521. “*Le peintre de la vie moderne*,” Ch.V, “*L’art mnémonique*.” Cf. C.M., 108. Cachin relates that (Manet took Baudelaire’s advice seriously about the importance of memory for the modern painter when he) counseled a young painter to “cultivate your memory because nature will never give you anything but pieces of information.”

⁸⁶ *La Musique aux Tuileries*, 1863, could be considered Manet’s extended portrait of himself through the representation of his social milieu which included: Baudelaire, Astruc, Baron Taylor, M. and Mme Lejosne, M. and Mme Offenbach, Eugène Manet, Manet himself, plus others little known today. See also R.B.F.B., 33. The same egocentric motif had been expressed in Courbet’s self-referential masterpiece, *L’Atelier*.

⁸⁷ *Grande machine* signified the artist’s strategy to use a *large picture* to attract attention and gain better hanging space in the Salon exhibitions.

Manet: (Slyly.) Ah, but you don't know *all* my secrets, Antonin, at least not this one concerning my visualization of Baudelaire's essays on "*l'héroïsme de la vie moderne*" and "*le spectacle de la vie élégante*."⁸⁸ Stop by early tomorrow morning to see it if you like; I'd appreciate your opinion. (Winks at Proust.) Baudelaire is anxious to come by to see if I flattered him, but of course I did! Then we'll all go to have breakfast together *chez le rotisseur* Pavard, my favorite spot on the notorious Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette not far from Delacroix's studio.⁸⁹ *Ça va? Allons-y!*

(*Bras dessus bras dessous*, the three friends stroll towards the Boulevard des Italiens to join the throng of elegantly dressed Bohemians who frequent the popular Café Tortoni.)⁹⁰

⁸⁸ D.M., 63. It seems clear that Manet and Baudelaire "exchanged these ideas by word of mouth" according to Eric Darragon, without references to any previously formulated concepts by either of them. (My translation.)

⁸⁹ L.L.F.A., 53. From 1845 to 1857 Delacroix lived in a studio at 54, rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette. See also R.B.F.B., 48. In the 1840s, the quarter Notre-Dame-de-Lorette was named for its lovely new church built in 1823. The neighborhood harbored a large number of kept women who were christened "*lorettes*" by the dandified wit, Nester Roqueplan. See R.B.F.B., footnote 88.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64. Unlike Courbet who identified himself with the working class *brasseries* (beer parlors), Manet mingled in high society and frequented the famed, elegant Café Tortoni, *the* café on the fashionable Boulevard des Italiens described by a foreign observer as "more famous than many an immortal monument."

Cadre: “Manet’s gang” a.k.a. *les Batignollais*

Never was the Gallic penchant for polemics practiced with more gusto than during the noisy gatherings of artists and writers at a favorite Bohemian café in the latter half of the 19th century. Courbet’s clique frequented the Brasserie des Martyrs, popular with Left Bank art students who gathered in the Latin Quarter.¹ The self-confident Courbet attracted a following of boisterous young painters who gesticulated and argued about realism in smoke-filled rooms surrounded by a bevy of flashy prostitutes with colorful nicknames.² Intrigued by Manet’s “strange new technique” as displayed in his highly praised painting of a Spanish *guitarero*, a delegation of Brasserie artists visited his studio, respectfully inviting him to join their group.³

Disliking Courbet’s coarse manners and fearing the “revolutionary” reputation imputed to these belligerent *rapins*, Manet politely refused the invitation. Manet preferred to frequent the Café Guerbois that was located almost next door to his color-merchant’s shop in the Grande-Rue de Batignolles (now the Avenue de Clichy.)⁴ Knowing that he could be found there almost daily, friends and acquaintances, artists and writers, soon formed the habit of meeting there regularly, particularly on Fridays.⁵ Notwithstanding his personal charm, it was Manet’s non-conformist stance against his

¹ C.M.,32. This was Courbet’s “fief” that was located on the Rue de Hautefeuille on the Left Bank near Place Saint Michel in the Latin Quarter.

² P.M., 88. There was a bevy of colorful prostitutes known as *Titine, Mimi la Bretonne, Grain de Raison Blanc and Les Oeufs sur le Plat*.

³ *Ibid.*, 88. They wanted him to join their non-conformist ranks that rallied around Courbet in his brasserie headquarters.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 143. Hennequin had his shop on the Grande Route des Batignolles, (now Avenue de Clichy) at #11 next to the Café Guerbois at # 9. The Guerbois later became the Brasserie Muller which disappeared in 1955. Père Lathuille’s popular restaurant was very near the Guerbois, serving as the setting for Manet’s *Chez le Père Lathuille*, 1879. “Manet painted the owner’s son as the young dandy in a banana yellow jacket seducing an older woman, both seated at a table in the restaurant’s garden observed by an aproned waiter.”

fellow bourgeois members of the Academy of Beaux Arts that led his ardent young admirers to see him as their leader. They took vicarious pleasure in Manet's unconventional painting practices that unnerved the jurors of the Salon competitions.⁶ It was clear to them that the creator of pictures left so blatantly unfinished, unprettified and non-narrative was destined to clear a path that would lead to artistic freedom for all of them.⁷

Moreover, these get-togethers were important occasions where not only new acquaintances were made but solid friendships were formed among the artists and writers. Whether from the provinces or from the environs of Paris, they represented a *mélange* of backgrounds and schooling with some financially comfortable and others living from hand to mouth.⁸

The unwelcome notoriety earned by Manet's Salon entries and gallery exhibitions acted like a media magnet; art critics, journalists, aspiring novelists as well as poets began to show up at the *Guerbois*.⁹ Gradually the purely social role of the café in Parisian life changed into a forum where, led by the *Batignollais*, artistic and literary reform became a mainstream topic.¹⁰ It was in such humble crucibles that billiards were played

⁵ Perruchot specifies Fridays as their special meeting day; Schneider states that it was on Thursdays; Zola mentions in his notes on his novel, *L'Oeuvre*, that they met at the *Guerbois* on both Fridays and Sundays!

⁶ S.W.M., 81. "The young avant-garde artists who hailed him as the hero who dared to defy the *Beaux-Arts* Establishment."

⁷ *Ibid.*, 81. " 'Let's go see Manet, he will stand up for us,' recalled Pissarro."

⁸ *Ibid.*, 82-87. Monet, son of a grocer; Renoir, son of a tailor; Pissarro's family owned a general store; Cézanne's father was a wealthy hat-manufacturer; Degas was from a highly cultured banking family; Bazille was from a well to do family.

⁹ P.M., 144-146. They gathered to discuss painting, the latest news and politics; Degas expounded his complicated theories about art. "The press and the public began to label them as "Manet's circle" or "the *Batignolles* school."

¹⁰ L.L.F.A., 181. The "Café *Guerbois*. . . within its walls the theories of realism and impressionism took place." Henri Murger's novel, *Les Scènes de la vie Bohème*, 1848, pictured the typical friendships between artists with their endless discussions. Puccini's celebrated opera, *La Bohème*, centers on four artists who shared lodgings in Paris: artist, poet, writer and sculptor; their favorite café serves as a dramatic focal point for several major scenes in the opera.

while new art theories were aired, fought over and vociferously hammered into some of the modern ideas in art that we recognize today as masterpieces.¹¹ The minds that dreamed these innovations were not always in perfect agreement; bickering, jealousy and anger erupted often, revealing the diversity of the group's temperaments.

Nonetheless, they patched up differences and hoped to overcome the obstacles they all faced.¹² Dubbed by the press as "Manet's Gang," only the Franco-Prussian war and the subsequent siege of Paris separated the participants, albeit temporarily.¹³ In 1872, it was time for new beginnings. They moved their meetings from the Guerbois to a new venue in Montmartre known as the *Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes* on the Place Pigalle.¹⁴

This dialogue attempts to re-create the excitement and verbal clashes¹⁵ that characterized those fervent, explosive arguments that animated both cafés during the period spanning 1869 through 1882.¹⁶ Given this broad temporal context, it is imperative to create a continuous text that would otherwise be left hanging awkwardly due to the

¹¹ Museums the world over are enriched by the *chefs-d'oeuvre* of the Batignollais, notably Paris' Musée d'Orsay.

¹² L.L.F.A., 184. Artists began to organize into societies in order to exhibit independently and to attract buyers.

¹³ Manet and Degas joined the army in Paris. Morisot remained, too. Pissarro, Monet and Sisley went to London. Cézanne escaped to the Midi while Renoir almost died in the army of dysentery. Bazille was killed in action.

¹⁴ R.B.F.B., 65. Bedazzled by the company of artists, novelists, Dandies and Bohemians, George Moore boasted in his *Confessions of a Young Man*, 1917, that he attended neither Oxford nor Cambridge "but I went to the Nouvelle-Athènes...the real French Academy, the café." See also S.W.M., 136. Degas' painting titled *Absinthe*, ca. 1877, is set in this café which may also have served as the setting for Manet's "The Plum," ca. 1877. Both used Ellen Andrée, an impoverished actress as their model. Such sharing of models was not unusual professional behavior among artists of the time. Rivalry, competitiveness and pragmatism probably fostered this type of unabashed *specularity*.

¹⁵ S.W.M., 88-87. Monet fondly recalled the excitement of "those discussions, with their perpetual clash of opinions. They kept one's spirit awake...(and) nourished one for weeks and weeks."

¹⁶ In this thesis, the "dialogue" at the Guerbois concentrates more upon the theme of literary/artistic *specularity*, discussions of theoretical painting styles, and implications of the temperamental behavior of the Batignollais rather than on a strict chronological cataloguing of their works during this critical period of time. Their pioneering energy was somewhat depleted by the time they moved to the *Nouvelle-Athènes*, but some of Manet's most important work would be accomplished in the last decade of his life. From his "second manner" of painting, I have two *chefs d'oeuvre* in mind: *Le Chemin de fer*, 1873; *Un bar aux Folies-Begère*, 1882. Both paintings will be spotlighted in the fourth Dialogue.

sudden dispersal of the Batignollais during the war of 1870 and the subsequent series of cataclysmic, post-war events in Paris.¹⁷ As an example, Manet finally joined Monet to paint *en plein air* in 1874 although he had been entreated by Monet and Morisot to join them as far back as 1871 when they had first settled into the *Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes*.¹⁸

The chronological specifications for references to both art and literature are verified as accurately as possible in the footnotes.

¹⁷ Manet and Degas remained in Paris where both saw executions of the Communards at the barricades; both men suffered from severe food shortages during the Siege of Paris. The hapless Courbet was imprisoned and heavily fined for his leadership role in the Communard revolt.

¹⁸ E.E.P., 303-304. "The collaboration strongly affected Manet's practice," as in *Monet dans son bateau atelier*, painted by Manet in 1874.

Dialogue Café Guerbois and Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes, spanning 1869 to 1882

Monet, Cézanne, Zola, Fantin-Latour and Bazille are seated in the popular Café Guerbois at the marble-topped table reserved for the *Batignollais*, a group of *jeunes turcs* who see themselves as determined young champions of change in the French world of art then dominated by the upper class *bourgeoisie*. Gradually Renoir, Degas, Whistler, Manet and Pissarro arrive, along with the critics Burty and Duranty, to join in the verbal fireworks sparked by passionate beliefs and artistic diversity of personalities and theories.¹

Monet: To answer your question, Fantin, Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* was an epiphany for me.² Although I don't believe "black" is a color, it's his handling of it along with his pure forms and audacious application of paint that bowled me over!³ Of course, it was through Astruc that I met him the following year, after learning that the confusion between our names in Room "M" had irritated him considerably.⁴ When I explained that my name was as authentic as his, he was soon laughing at the mix-up.⁵

Fantin: He never holds a grudge very long; his innate congeniality and superb manners are traits as charming to men as well as to women.⁶

¹ S.W.M., 87. The Guerbois, close to Manet's home in the *Batignolles* neighborhood, was a favorite haunt where his friends and admirers joined him for weekly debating and carousing.

² P.M., 111. The Salon's exhibition showing Manet's *Déjeuner* also fascinated Zola, Cézanne and Bazille.

³ S.W.M., 105. His politician friend Clemenceau, who was Prime Minister, was reported to have said at Monet's funeral services that he had often heard Monet declare: "Black is not a color." Acting apparently on impulse, Clemenceau pulled off the offending black cloth covering Monet's coffin and replaced it with a multi-colored piece of fabric.

⁴ C.M., 93. At first, Manet puzzled over compliments for his "seascapes" until he saw that they were signed "Claude Monet."

⁵ S.W.M., 83. At first Manet was upset over what he considered the deliberate usurpation of his name.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 65. "He was modest, warm-hearted and loved company, particularly the company of women."

Innate testiness is more characteristic of our dear friend, Degas, as we all know too well!⁷

Zola: I heard about a stormy scene when Degas learned that Manet, disliking the treatment of his wife's face in a portrait that Degas painted of them, cut her image off on one side. Degas angrily retrieved his painting and sent back Manet's still life that he owned, *Les prunes*. They made up a short time later and Degas wanted *Les prunes* back but Manet had already sold them! Degas was heartbroken.⁸ He said later: "Maybe Manet was right!"

Cézanne: Manet is a little too bourgeois for my Aixois taste, yet I admire his persistence in challenging the prejudices of those Salon *poncifs* who adamantly persecute him through refusal of his work.⁹ The year we met, *Le Fifre* and *L'acteur tragique* were both rejected out of hand by the jury. I'm sympathetic, but I'm also frustrated and angry when they reject our work as well just because we're considered his rebellious "gang of Bohemian followers."¹⁰ *Tout ça m'emmerde!*

Bazille: Hey, what do fellows think of Thoré's column where he points out Manet's "borrowings" from Velasquez? He's the only critic to come up with such weird ideas.¹¹

⁷ Ibid., passim. Degas had a reputation for being a waspish, domineering, difficult individualist but was also valued as a powerful ally. Schneider quotes Degas' art dealer, Paul Durand-Ruel said: "That man (Degas) knew only one pleasure: to get mad at somebody."

⁸ C.M., 100. After reconciliation, Degas said: "*Comment voulez-vous qu'on puisse rester mal avec Manet!*" The portrait is *M. et Mme Manet*, 1868-1869. Degas replaced the canvas panel and intended to restore Suzanne's image.

⁹ C.M., 32. *Poncif*, a pejorative word signifying "banal," was popularly used as a sneering slur to designate *le clan des académiques* (all the professors at the school of fine arts.)

¹⁰ E.E.P., 424. Cézanne persisted in entering almost all the Salons and was accepted only once. The novice painters of the new school (the future Impressionists) were dubbed "*la bande bohémienne de Manet*." See also Linda Nochlin, *Impressionism and Post-Impressionism 1874-1904*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, 1966) 97. Hereafter listed as N.I.P.M. The conservative 1866 Salon jury, frightened by public reaction to Manet's *Olympia* of 1865, refused almost all of the entries made by Cézanne and his Impressionist friends.

¹¹ P.M., 80. Only one critic noticed them: Théophile Thoré. Baudelaire quickly wrote to him defending Manet.

Zola: As you all know, Manet does not deny his admiration for Spanish and Italian masters that inspired him to rearrange certain of their works but it was more in the nature of a bow towards their genius.¹² Besides, his unique use of paint cancels out any debt that Thoré may imagine as referential. Above all, he is not one of those *singes* who produce the banalities that now represent the *École des Beaux-Arts*, an institution that's stagnating under the thumb of the oppressive Second Empire!¹³

Cézanne: You must be referring to Napoléon's favorite *singes* like Cabanel, Gérôme, Dubufe and Messiaen. Cabanel earns a nice living by keeping the Emperor supplied with lubricious paintings disguised as classical Venuses.¹⁴ Napoléon *le petit* has nothing but contempt for our art and literature; he hauls us into the courts but never invites us Bohemians to his court!¹⁵

Zola: (Amused.) *Tant pis pour lui!* Of course, you all have read my satirical remarks about Cabanel's "rouge and rice powder" style for dressing up his troupe of antique Venuses, like a pimp catering to *le petit* and his wealthy friends?¹⁶

Cézanne: He serves up erotic goddesses like bonbons.¹⁷

Monet: (Teases Cézanne.) Speaking of satire, Cézanne, was that what you were up to in your parodistic version of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*?¹⁸ His is an erotic play of female

¹² Émile Zola, *Pour Manet*, (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1989) 18-21. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as Z.P.M.

¹³ M.A.P., 89. The artist Decamp painted Academicians as monkeys (*singes*) fully dressed *à la bohémien* and seated at easels engrossed in painting.

¹⁴ C.M., 48. In the Salon of 1863, Napoléon III immediately bought Cabanel's ravishing *Naissance de Vénus*.

¹⁵ Robert Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1971) 37. Victor Hugo branded Louis-Napoléon III "le petit" in his poem *Les Châtiments* to reduce him to a caricature of Napoléon 1st.

¹⁶ M.A.P., 158. Zola's *Nos Peintres au Champ-de-Mars* was a satirical review of the paintings by Cabanel, Gérôme and Messiaen. (For Cabanel's *La Naissance de Vénus*, see Thesis Plate V.)

¹⁷ George H. Hamilton, *Manet and his Critics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1989) 87. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as H.M.C. (Zola) attacked "the cream-puff-and pastry school of Salon nudity (and struck at the middle class' artistic prejudices."

nudity versus clothed males while your amorous picnickers consort fully dressed.¹⁹ But, if you want a piece of the lusty Sphinx's wallet you'll have to cater to his fetish for *Venus meretrix* passing for a *Venus pudica*.²⁰

Cézanne: (Flushes and retorts.) If that's true, Monet, then I agree with old Decazes who said: "If Napoléon asks for a woman, give him one with a disease!"²¹ (A burst of spontaneous laughter follows Cézanne's malicious *malédiction*.)

Cézanne: (Still irritated, continues.) And you, Monet, I suppose you were merely making a "costume study" when you painted your version of a *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*?²²

Bazille: (Vexed, defends Monet.) I doubt that he would have undertaken such a monumental project based simply on a subject as trivial as fashion plates at a picnic.²³

As to its title, it's an ordinary enough expression that describes a popular social activity that takes place on outings in the *faubourgs* of Paris. *C'est tout, mon ami!*

Monet: (Sighs.) I never realized that my naturalistic approach to color is a technique that actually works best in smaller formats.²⁴ But I'll overcome that problem in time.²⁵

Baudelaire urged us to use modern dress as a subject worthy of our canvases, didn't he?

¹⁸ P.M., 102. The painting was so baptized by the public and the name stuck. Manet had called it *Le Bain* and before that *La Partie carrée*. (See Thesis Plate III.)

¹⁹ C. Biet, *XIXe siècle* (Baume-les-Dames: Magnard, 1982) 254. In 1869-1870, Cézanne referenced Manet's *Déjeuner* to study the effects of daylight, atmosphere and space, preferring the look of three-dimensional illusion thereby expressing his disagreement with Manet's preference for frankly two-dimensional renderings of space.

²⁰ Louis-Napoléon III, because of his flat, expressionless, lethargic, heavy-lidded, stony gaze, was quickly dubbed by the press as "the Sphinx."

²¹ Robert Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's*, 39. In Baldick's book, Decaze was referring to Napoléon 1st but it works nicely here for Cézanne's truculent mood.

²² E.E.P., 348. "Inspired by Manet's work, Monet conceived a wholly modern version with life-sized figures of five crinolined women and their well dressed men casually posed around their outdoor meal spread out on a tablecloth."

²³ *Ibid.*, 348. In 1865, Monet ambitiously started on an enormous canvas in Bazille's studio but it was too large for his impressionist technique.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 286. Monet realized that as a painter of atmospheric effects dependent upon optical phenomena, he would find some projects intractable.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 349. "Still intent on a large figural composition out of doors, Monet painted 'Women in the Garden,' 1866. His wall-sized *Nymphéas*, 1920-26, would prove his mastery over large painting formats."

Renoir: (Overhears as he arrives.) Yes, he did! Like Manet, you followed the poet's advice, Monet, but his Baudelairean *La Musique aux Tuileries* at Martinet's Gallery with its unusually bright colorations displeased the public while your painting about *la mode moderne* won the Salon's approval in '66 because of your superb handling of color and form in the "Green Dress."²⁶ Manet himself was charmed by its materialistic realism and praised it highly, *et moi*, I heartily agree with him.²⁷ *C'est un vrai morceau!*²⁸

Zola: I have a question here. If, as Baudelaire defines your mission as artists, depicting modern dress is one of his heroic goals for the modern artist, I wonder why Manet's contemporary *Woman with a parrot* garnered nothing but ridicule and scathing reviews when it was shown in the same Salon as Monet's "Green Dress?"²⁹

Renoir: Maybe it's because, in this painting, Victorine Meurent looks like *Olympia* with clothes on?³⁰ Besides, she was modeled for his previous nude in the controversial *Le Bain* which had already raised cries of outrage from the Salon's public.³¹ I think our stolid bourgeois audience doesn't want to see an elegantly dressed *filles en déshabille*, posing

²⁶ Ibid., 349. "Painted for and accepted by the Salon of 1866, it resembles the solid materialist style of Courbet." It is also relevant to Monet's interest in women's fashion *très à la mode*.

²⁷ P.M., 149. "It's you who signs yourself Monet! Your *Dame à la robe verte* was good," said Manet graciously.

²⁸ Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 278. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as F.M.M. Fried notes the ambiguous use of terms like *tableau*, *morceau*, *esquisse* and *ébauche*. For example, Fantin-Latour used both *tableau* and *morceau* in the same sentence to refer to the same painting! Salon jurists probably tried to make such distinctions in order to support their acceptance or rejection of certain paintings, e.g., judging those of the impressionists' to be mere *esquisses* (sketches).

²⁹ Z.P.M., 145. Zola wrote that Manet painted the *Femme au perroquet* in 1867, but not shown until the Salon of 1868, when it elicited an attack by Thoré. Cf. Perruchot writes that the *Femme au Perroquet* was painted in 1866 but not shown in the Salon until 1868.

³⁰ C.M., 45. In the 1860s, Victorine posed for Manet's most scandalous nude, *Olympia*, and also appeared fully dressed in two other controversial paintings: *Chanteuse des rues* (1862) and *Femme au perroquet*, 1866.

³¹ When entered into the Salon of 1863, it was titled *Le Bain*, by Manet but soon became known as *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

next to her pet parrot, demurely sniffing her bouquet of violets, pretending to be an *honnête femme de foyer*.³² Does that idea seem feasible?

Bazille: Yes, I think it's feasible. But, beyond that, there's the main problem of his reductive technique.³³ Manet's aversion for middle tones rules out any indication of the body underneath the cascade of the woman's dress.³⁴ He disappoints the visual expectations of those accustomed to seeing hints of feminine curves under her drapery that classically trained painters never disregard. Besides, this image refuses to be a text. For Manet, his paintings are simply paintings and don't tell "stories."³⁵ Let's remember that the First Commandment of the *poncifs* at the École is this: Thou shalt not paint "non-narrative" pictures because thou shalt languish forever in the *Salon des refusés*!

Zola: Not to mention the dangerous sin of individuality which Flaubert and Delacroix both committed. Ever since the Revolution, "individuality" smells like revolution to the ruling class. The public isn't ready for this new pictorial truth and is obliged to ask itself: *if she has no meaning, why bother to paint her?*³⁶

Fantin: (Pensively puffing on his pipe.) And that's why we're all going to have to confront society's inability to appreciate anything beyond a story-telling picture. For the

³² The art lover may have equated Manet's "femme" with Garvani's "Lorette in dressing gown with parrot." ("Lorette" is a synonym of "kept woman.") Cf. Plate 30 in Novelene Ross' *Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère*.

³³ Z.P.M., 33. Zola, describing *Olympia's* face, notes that her eyes "are reduced to a few black daubs." He advises the viewer to step back a few paces to watch the striking illusion of reality take shape. (My translation.)

³⁴ P.M., 102. Manet abandoned all academic artifice and the illusion of *trompe-l'oeil* by eliminating middle tones thus degrading conventional chromatic values.

³⁵ E.E.P., 300. Manet's "Woman with a parrot," 1866, is "a painting without subject" and marked by "an audacious repression of bodily relief." See R.B.F.B., 48. Gavarni's lithographic series of 1841-42, *Les Lorettes*, shows a *lorette* in a dressing gown holding her parrot. Pl. 30. Manet's painting of Victorine with a parrot is unmistakably related to this stereotype of the *lorette* who was seen as greedy, ambitious and aspiring to the status of *grande courtisane*, the reigning queen of the kept woman category.

³⁶ Z.P.M., 120. For Zola, Manet is an analytical artist who uses the subject merely as a pretext for painting. See also 32. "*Le refus de la littérature*," in Manet's work, wrote Zola, meant no moral or anecdote is

uninitiated public, the woman with her parrot cannot be *just a moment in time* glimpsed by the artist who delights in his memory of her.

Renoir: (Persists.) I still believe that it's the negative implication of Victorine's face that negatively affects art amateurs because they associate her with Manet's "scandals."³⁷ On the other hand, Courbet cleverly foisted his self-referential "Woman with a parrot" upon the Salon jury of '66 who accepted his "realistic" nude the second time around because he painted her as a type of "Psyche."³⁸ Therefore, he was careful not to break the rules, arranging her in a reclining position to reveal total *classical* nudity while carefully averting her gaze towards the parrot as if she were blithely unaware of the artist as painter-viewer or of the intrusive bourgeois male as *voyeur*.³⁹

Monet: Courbet and Manet both share the view that a painting need not hide its own "nakedness." They both allow its facture, whether created with a palette knife or a brush, to flaunt its true nature as "paint."⁴⁰ In my opinion, they differ in that Courbet's rustic eye sees "sculptural stillness" while Manet's retains a blurred impression, a sort of exhilarating "retinal memory."⁴¹

Zola: Bravo! I, too, believe that Manet's paintings are celebrations of the act of painting that invalidates the contrived, pictorial narratives created by the *pompier*s who have

conveyed as in conventional painting. Cf. B.O.C.M., 126. Bataille defines Manet's "silence" to mean the artist's "non-eloquent" subject matter, i.e., "non-anecdotal."

³⁷ Victorine Meurent was Manet's favorite model in the 1860s, enjoying dubious fame through his paintings of her.

³⁸ E.E.P., 262. The same *Psyche* that Courbet had used in his *Awakening* which had been refused by the Salon. See also: C.M., 45. Cachin suggests that Courbet's *Femme nue jouant avec un perroquet* shown in the Salon of 1866 was possibly a response to Manet's nude, *Olympia*, shown in the Salon of 1865.

³⁹ Ibid., 262. Courbet's painting "perfectly conformed to the accepted norm of Salon eroticism."

⁴⁰ Ibid., 282. Courbet's seascapes translated his impressions of atmosphere by vigorous, rough applications of raw pigment with the palette knife. Yet, "never was paint so *naked*" as in Manet's *Olympia*!

⁴¹ S.W.M., 89. Schneider presents a convincing case concerning Manet's "flash of recognition" versus an instantaneous "flashbulb view" of some of the Impressionists.

trained the public to read their paintings as if they were newspapers.⁴² What's more, his Olympia is frankly modern and refreshing, an immoral and unredeemed *fille* compared to Dumas fils' nauseatingly sentimental *Dame aux camélias* where the heroine is absolved of all sins against sanctimonious bourgeois morality by her premature death.⁴³

Renoir: Of course, we all do nude studies; it's a time-honored, noble subject. But we choose to see our nudes as real women whose warm flesh tones exude pulsating sensuality. It's this realism that the bourgeois viewer finds disconcerting as compared to the abstract coldness and statuesque quality of the average Salon "goddess" who remains an out-of-reach illusion.⁴⁴

Degas: (Shows up.) *D'accord*, Renoir! That's exactly how we express our modernity: we show our nudes in ordinary, intimate settings.⁴⁵ We paint our earth-bound Venuses in the privacy of their warm tubs not out in some fantastic forest, dipping a delicate toe in a chilly mountain stream or lolling around on foamy crests of the sea.⁴⁶

Cézanne: (Annoyed.) It's this very invasion of privacy that strikes me as outright *voyeurisme*, if you don't mind my saying so, Degas. I feel like I'm at looking at them through a keyhole.⁴⁷ I prefer to show my bathers splashing about in sylvan settings immersed in a natural environment bathed more by sun and daylight than by buckets of tepid water poured into a vulgar tub.⁴⁸

⁴² E.E.P., 282. Salon painters conditioned public expectations: "before forming an opinion, it was customary for viewers to read pictures like newspapers for information about the painting."

⁴³ Anne Coffin Hanson, *Édouard Manet 1832-1883* (Philadelphia: Falcon Press, 1966) 75. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as H.E.M. "The public also knew that *Olympia* was Marguerite Gautier's rival in Dumas' book." Dumas fils' popular play, *The Lady of the Camélias*, was a huge sentimental hit from its premiere performance in 1852. Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La Traviata* immortalized its sentimental moralistic message.

⁴⁴ E.E.P., 379. Impressionist landscapes was not Renoir's forte, he was essentially "a painter of women; late in life he painted his signature "Bather" series between 1881-1903."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 328. Degas spoke of his intention to "show his bathers moving naturally" in their private spaces.

⁴⁶ C.M., 49. E.g., *La Naissance de Vénus* (The Birth of Venus) by Cabanel, Salon of 1863, that was bought immediately by the Emperor Napoléon III. (See Plate V, p. 196.)

Zola: (Jokes.) The ideal sunny climate of Aix influences you, my friend. If your *nymphes* ventured to wash up and caper about in the outdoors anywhere north of the Loire, they would soon come down with a case of pneumonia!

Renoir: (Anxious to please.) Like Degas, I enjoy posing my models bathing alone in the intimacy of her *salle de bain*; usually I have her either washing herself or combing her magnificent mane of hair. Any of these ritualistic acts by an ordinary, pretty *jeune fille* seen alone, serenely performing her toilette, stimulates me.⁴⁹

Cézanne: (Sneers.) All those euphemisms don't hide the secret lust I see as the real motive!⁵⁰

Degas: (Renoir flushes.) Think what you like, Cézanne, as for me, *je m'en fiche!*

Bazille: (Hesitantly.) I can't help but agree somewhat with Cézanne, Degas, that the intense intimacy of your studies make the viewer ill at ease, like a peeping Tom ogling forbidden fruit.⁵¹ You have a flair for erotic nuance even when you depict a classical scene of adolescent boys and girls exercising outdoors in an open field as well as when you spy upon a mature woman during her most unattractive intimate moments.⁵²

⁴⁷ E.E.P., 328. Degas said his nudes were natural, oblivious of observers "as if seen through a keyhole."

⁴⁸ Ibid., 438. In a letter to Zola, (the shy) Cézanne remarked that he painted his nudes from memory. Cf. Linda Nochlin, *Impression and Post-Impression, 1874-1904* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966) 97. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as N.I.P.I. In one of his letters to Cézanne in 1866, Zola affirms that the two friends had discussed art and literature for ten years, no doubt providing Zola with some of Cézanne's insights about artistic issues, processes and values.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 372 and footnote 42 above. Renoir's *Bather with Griffon*, 1870, demonstrates his *Venus pudica* idealism. He did many lovely studies of young women in their teens, delicately rendered but, beginning in the 1890s, as he matured, his nudes became more abstract and sculptural, their heads smaller and their hips monumental in size.

⁵⁰ E.E.P., 384-386. "Renoir addressed the same motif over and over, evolving into his monumental Bather series of 1918-19. By the end of his life, he had painted a progression of virtuoso tributes to the sexual power of women."

⁵¹ Ibid., 323. Degas' *Pedicure*, 1873, was "a scene of intimate hygiene, observed with intense curiosity."

⁵² Ibid., 317. *Les Filles Spartiates*. (Spartan Boys and Girls Exercising), c. 1860. Degas' "working women" included laundresses, dancers, hat makers, brothel personnel, actresses, singers, prostitutes et al.

Perhaps it's because you choose awkward, working class women, all of whom appear to be completely unaware of being spied upon?

Degas: *Mais non, mon cher Bazille!* I consider my creative act as painter comparable to that of the great Flaubert as author: in these works I am unseen, like God, yet omniscient and omnipotent.⁵³ Would anybody accuse God of being a voyeur? After all, a nude is a picture for men to look at, in which the Woman is the object of somebody else's desire, *n'est-ce pas?*⁵⁴ Every man knows the connection between *Olympia's* cat and the semiotic positioning of her hand. I can assure you that Manet wasn't merely bearing witness to Baudelaire's furtive cats and irresistible women!⁵⁵ With his insolent *Olympia*, Manet openly alludes to Paris' blatant sexual traffic. As to my so-called flair for a more subtle type of eroticism, *eh bien*, let that aspect be reflected in the guilty eye of the prurient beholder. *Moi*, I'm not responsible for another's interpretation of my work.

Bazille: (Argues.) There's a different kind of voyeurism in *Olympia*, it isn't just a picture of a nude *putain*, presented for the enjoyment of a licentious client. It's not the same as keyhole eroticism.⁵⁶ It's a picture looking at the beholder, making him uncomfortable for being caught looking; he's been discovered by this contemptuous stare so, he can only return its contempt by denouncing its lewdness in order to save face.⁵⁷

⁵³ Peter Schofer, *Poèmes Pièces Prose* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 593. Flaubert says that an artist who writes a novel must not reveal himself or be obvious in his God-like role: "*L'artiste doit être dans son oeuvre comme Dieu dans la création, invisible et tout-puissant: qu'on le sente partout, mais qu'on ne le voie pas.*"

⁵⁴ T.J.Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 131. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as C.P.M.L. A (female) nude must address the (male)spectator and "allow access to the body on display." See also 107. "The bourgeoisie believed in Desire." On page 101, Clark notes wryly that the "critics raised a verbal hand or two in horror," referring to Degas' pastels of prostitutes which depicted the darker side of Paris.

⁵⁵ H.E.M., 75. Degas alludes to Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* poems: *Le Chat, Les Chats*, and other poems about cats which, in Baudelaire's lexicon, symbolized woman in a sexual context.

⁵⁶ H.M.T., 90. There is an excellent example of Salon keyhole eroticism: the voyeuristic intention of Ingres' in his orgiastic *Turkish Bath* in the Salon of 1862 was not even thinly disguised.

Renoir: (Flustered.) Bazille, I'm having difficulty following your argument but I'm sure that it's a clever assessment of why the *haute bourgeoisie* hate *Olympia*. I must confess that, like Jean-Jacques, my shyness keeps me from being as blasé and analytically objective as painters are supposed to be while interpreting the nudity of their models.⁵⁸ For me, it's the introspection that I love seeing in a woman's face as she relishes her nudity in the relaxed abandonment afforded by her privacy. My nude could never be as blatantly challenging as Manet's *Olympia* who stares straight out at the spectator. That, *mon ami*, takes the courage and aplomb of a self-assured painter!⁵⁹

Cézanne: (Murmurs to Zola.) Why do you insist that I show up for these boorish affairs? If it were not for Pissarro, I wouldn't waste my time listening to such rubbish!⁶⁰

Zola: (Snaps back.) Oh, come now, Paul! Quit flaunting your Bohemian swagger and stop the puerile posturing; no one is impressed.⁶¹ If you want to batter down the doors of the Salon and have your work accepted in the competitions, I advise you to be loyal to this group. One day, their campaign for recognition as pioneers of *la nouvelle peinture* will open the way to gain public acceptance of your work. You don't have to paint like them but the *esprit de corps* of a united front will capture the attention of the press, don't you understand?⁶² Given enough time, the press can be your ally instead of your enemy.

⁵⁷ Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989) 208. *Olympia*'s aggressive, impudent gaze projects her challenging "masculine attitude that was placed paradoxically in her naked female body."

⁵⁸ Renoir refers to the imputed sexual timidity of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the *Lumières* of the 18th Century.

⁵⁹ E.E.P., 376. Of humbler origin than his colleagues, Renoir tried harder than they to please everybody.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 405-407. At Pointoise, Cézanne became a disciple of the good-natured, kindly Pissarro.

⁶¹ S.W.M., 86. Cézanne was trying hard to hide his southerner's insecurity by being "deliberately uncouth."

⁶² P.M., 144. Manet believed that "one must either be one of a thousand or all alone."

Cézanne: (Jealous.) Of course, *your* eloquence as a journalist always seems biased towards the defense of the *chef de file* of this group!⁶³

Bazille: (Waving several newspapers to change the subject.) Well, my friends, has any one of you read what that clique of poisoned pens has been up to lately?⁶⁴ It's more of the same *merde*! Ever since we were in the *Salon des refusés*, it's our works that automatically get blackballed by the academics.⁶⁵ When are we going to resolve to have our own independent exhibition? I can't see any other solution for guaranteeing regular showings of our work. Another tactic would be to petition them for a *new Salon des refusés* where we could again show our work.⁶⁶

Monet: We could try it but I doubt their consensus. I know that Berthe Morisot is anxious to have us break away from the Salon's officious despotism so that we can establish our independent status. Then we could rent a studio and sell directly to our purchasers without paying commissions to those flunkies who control the Salon.⁶⁷

Renoir: She also pointed out that we would be the sole managers of our hanging space and I regard this control to be a great advantage because we wouldn't have to put up with the Salon's spiteful practice of placing our work in the worst possible locations.⁶⁸

⁶³ E.E.P., 300. Zola defended Manet's *Le Fifre* so strongly that he lost his job at "L'Événement" newspaper.

⁶⁴ George Hamilton, *Manet and his Critics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1989. *passim* Hereafter listed in the footnotes as H.M.C. Some of the critics hostile to Manet and his followers were Castagnary, Chesneau, Wolff, Gautier, Claretie, and other less known journalists quoted by Hamilton.

⁶⁵ E.E.P., 406. A vexing problem already much discussed in 1867: "a liberal, jury-free show was needed."

⁶⁶ M.A.P., 137-138. Bazille "took the initiative and wrote a petition himself to have the Salon officials reinstate the '*Salon of Refusés*,' but the petition was refused." See also N.I.P.I., 97. Cézanne also wrote a stern letter to Nieuwerkerke, the Director of Fine Arts at the École de Beaux-Arts, demanding another *Salon des Refusés*.

⁶⁷ Anne Higonnet, *Berthe Morisot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 98. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as H.B.M. As free agents, the Impressionists' paintings "were for direct sale to consumers" by the artists.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, *passim*. Renoir and his brother took charge of the hanging of the paintings for the first Independent Exhibit of the Impressionists, 1874.

Fantin: Berthe is right. For example, the Hanging Committee deliberately chooses to show Manet's entries, which are rarely accepted, hung high up over the doors or in the corners of Room "M".⁶⁹ Nor do our works fare better, *hélas!* The best hanging space is *sur la cimaise* but it's always reserved for the old guard, those Salon sycophants.

Renoir: Even worse, Salon juries tend to dismiss us all as a "that group of Manet's intransigents" who deserve to remain forever in the *refusés* category. I desperately need to attract buyers instead of the derisive negative publicity we get in the press!⁷⁰

Monet: Me, too. Yet we can agree that there's no question but that we're proud to be known as "Manet's gang," *n'est-ce pas?* Although we sometimes get accepted in the Salon, it's not the same with his work. Unfortunately, we're stigmatized as the *Batignollais* gang who follows his lead. As soon as Manet's signature is noticed on an entry, the poisonous bile of certain jurors and critics begins to secrete, as Bazille observed.⁷¹ Naturally, we get splashed with it, too; *ça n'est pas juste!*

Bazille: Therefore Monet, don't you think it's high time that we try a different strategy for showing and selling our works?⁷² Even Courbet and Manet have resorted to private pavilions in order to exhibit outside the Salon.⁷³

⁶⁹ P.M., 145. Even those who were originally hostile to Manet began to be aware of the officials' bias against him. See Z.P.M., 144. Zola notes Manet's paintings were *mal placés* while "*la cimaise*" was "*sous le nez du public.*" Cf. C.P.M.L., 85. (Olympia) was well hidden above two doors...and looked like an immense spider on the ceiling. (Clark quoted a comment by Félix Jahyer.)

⁷⁰ E.E.P., 376. The pragmatic Renoir didn't scorn the middle class, turning to portrait painting for commissions to escape his chronic poverty.

⁷¹ P.M., 145. The sight of Manet's signature was enough to reject him, even canvases without intent or hint of shock.

⁷² E.E.P., 406. Their strategy developed into a group show organized by the participating artists.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 301. "For the Universal Exposition of 1867, Courbet and Manet built their own exhibition spaces near the Pont de l'Alma. The construction was costly and netted very little in return except for notoriety."

Monet: Well, I've also been discussing an alternative idea with Sisley and Berthe Morisot.⁷⁴ Here it is: we have to form a solid front by making a pact to always show our work as an independent group!⁷⁵ I know we can count on favorable reviews from some of our Guerbois friends who are writers, like you Zola, along with Astruc, Duranty, Burty and Silvestre. My finances are also nil, Renoir, but I won't ever give up my *plein air* theory of painting. I'm determined to continue painting direct, objective observation of the interaction of color, daylight and atmosphere.⁷⁶ And I won't ever surrender my right to artistic experimentation, no matter how bizarre my technique may seem to others!⁷⁷

Fantin: Yet, it's ultra-conservative critics like Castagnary who deny that we are "true" painters! In '63, he had the *culot* to write that Manet's *Le Bain*, *L'Espada* and *Le Majo* are just merely "good sketches!"⁷⁸

Zola: Castagnary isn't a painter but a liberal lawyer turned art critic who wasn't ready in '63 to do a complete about face when it came to subverting conventional taste. But since then, a personal evolution must have taken place because he praised Manet's portrait of me as one of the best portraits in the Salon of '68!⁷⁹ Even Duret can't make up his mind as to which side of the critical fence to choose. He loved his portrait by Manet, completely reversing the opinions aired in his pamphlet *Les Peintres français*.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Ibid., 389. The Impressionist, Alfred Sisley, limited himself to landscapes and a narrow stylistic range.

⁷⁵ H.B.M., 111. The charter of their new "Anonymous Society of Artists" was published by three journals in 1874. See also E.E.P., 406. It was the socialist inclined Pissarro who had proposed that a cooperative association be formed and based on a charter.

⁷⁶ E.E.P., 340. Eitner sees the Impressionists' quest as one for "visual reality...and constant changes of light and atmosphere."

⁷⁷ S.W.M., 108. In 1880, Monet replied to a reporter: "I always intend to be an Impressionist."

⁷⁸ C.M., 49. Castagnary adds as well: "*Est-ce là dessiner? Est-ce là peindre? M. Manet n'est que dur...*"

⁷⁹ P.M., 160. In 1865, Castagnary had been the source of bitter denunciations of *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

Cézanne: (Goads Zola.) In that portrait of you, Manet was every bit as self-referential as Courbet!⁸¹

Degas: (Ignores the remark.) And, let's consider *le bon Théo*, who's merely a former *rapin* turned poet, who has no taste in art whatsoever and is lucky that his pen, which he now wields to critique modern art, is guided by the tasteless Princess Mathilde and her politics.⁸² His wavering opinions show that he's out of date and out of touch with the goals of contemporary art.⁸³

Zola: Aren't you being a bit unfair, Degas? Having political protectors certainly implies a certain loss of creative independence but let's remember that Gautier defended Hugo with youthful ardor in the '30's.⁸⁴ Baudelaire adored him; and don't forget that he helped to rid poetry of its sentimental slop thus preparing the way for realism in all the arts. But times have changed and you can't expect apple trees to bear oranges. Now, it's our turn to face the usual social and political barriers that are thrown up whenever literary and artistic change is in the air. I believe, like Flaubert, that our modern "style" of writing is what makes us suspect in the eyes of the *Institut* because those who judge us there are always for the classics.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ibid., 156. Théodore Duret would be Manet's first biographer; they had met by chance in Madrid, 1865.

⁸¹ In a space above Zola's head, who is seated at his desk, a "photo" of *Olympia* appears, overlapping two prints, one of which seems to reference Velasquez and the other, a Japanese print, attests to modernist interest in the genre. Courbet often reprised his own compositions.

⁸² P.M., 89. Théophile Gautier, protégé of Princess Mathilde, the critic of the *Moniteur universel*, the official newspaper of the Empire. As a self-styled expert on Spain, he lavishly praised Manet's realistic painting of a Spanish *Guitarero*. In 1860 review on Manet, he enthused: "Caramba! Voilà un guitarero..."

⁸³ Ibid., 89. "Gautier's aesthetic opinions were of little value, and his taste in painting generally deplorable." Perhaps it was fortunate for Gautier that he chose to pursue poetry as his vocation instead of painting.

⁸⁴ D.P.P., 6. In 1830, Gautier supported Hugo's break with classical literary form in *Hernani* that launched his fight (*The Battle of Hernani*) for poetic freedom of expression.

Bazille: Still, Zola, it's ironic to note that when he was a young radical himself, Gautier wrote that all critics, no matter what genre they may practice, are "envious, ignorant and impotent." Why didn't he just come out and call them all a pack of *salauds*?⁸⁶

(Snickering and chuckles break out as the garçon arrives once again to refill their glasses from his tall pitcher of dark bock beer.)

Degas: (Wryly.) Manet found an effective antidote for writers of gratuitously vicious criticism. When Duranty vented his bitter "spleen" by publishing boorish remarks on two works by Manet, *Christ with Angels* and *Le Philosophe*, "trampling on oyster shells" as Duranty put it. Manet stormed into the Guerbois and smacked his face *à la Corneille*.⁸⁷

Two days later, the two fought a duel worthy of a Molière farce until an accidental drop of blood appeared on Duranty's chest, at which point an immediate reconciliation took place.⁸⁸ Immediately thereafter, Duranty wrote a eulogistic article on Manet.⁸⁹ *Voilà!*

That's the proper *mode d'emploi* to de-fang a hostile critic.

Whistler: (Just arrived, listens with sardonic amusement.) Really, Degas, you should turn your tongue in your mouth seven times before speaking, as a charming French proverb cautions.⁹⁰ Your own strategy for avoiding the verbal firing squads commanded by such acerbic art critics consists in loudly broadcasting your scorn for the whole ritual of

⁸⁵ Robert Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's*, 36 and 95.

⁸⁶ Théophile Gautier, *Preface de Mademoiselle de Maupin* (Paris: Librairie Droz, 1946) LVII.

⁸⁷ Manet's painting, *Le Christ mort*, 1864, that appeared a short time after Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus* caused a scandal; Manet's *Philosophe* was painted in 1865. Degas is alluding to the 'duel of honor' that is central to Corneille's crisis in his classic play *Le Cid*. It occurs when Don Gomès gives Don Diègue *un soufflet* (a ritual slap) thereby challenging him to a duel that eventually results in heroic tragedy.

⁸⁸ D.M., 175. The duel took place on February 23, 1870. Zola and three seconds stopped the fight that had a comical touch because Manet, mortified, offered Duranty his shoes but they were unfortunately were too small for Duranty. (My translation.)

⁸⁹ P.M., 174. "However Manet had the pleasure of reading an eulogistic article by Duranty" (on Eva's portrait).

⁹⁰ *Le Robert Dictionnaire des Expressions et Locutions* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1989) 686.

"Tourner sept fois sa langue dans sa bouche", i.e., refrain from speaking without discretion. (The number seven is symbolic.)

selection by Salon juries and in ostentatious refusals to participate.⁹¹ Tell me, sir, does such a cavalier attitude make you more heroic than we who compete in the Salons?

Degas: (Angrily.) I paint for no one but myself, Whistler!⁹² And *you*, since you Americans claim to be so free and independent, why do *you* continue to enter the Salons when they are usually antagonistic to your work?⁹³ Furthermore, why do you insist upon imitating Turner?⁹⁴ Sometimes, Whistler, you act as if you had no talent!⁹⁵

Renoir: (Worried.) Oh, it's easy enough to remain aloof if one has the finances to sustain one's self. But I can't afford to thumb my nose at current trends like portrait painting that's been popularized by the Salon painters and our own friend, Carolus-Duran. I am constantly trying to find a compromise between my artistic ideals and my empty stomach; it's very depressing.⁹⁶

Degas: (Softens.) Sometimes it's hard to decide where one's principles end and self-interest begins, Renoir, so I can sympathize with your quandary.

Monet: (Breaks an awkward silence.) By the way, Degas, have you contacted Berthe Morisot about our plans to sketch around Fontainebleau next weekend? She's close to Manet and her dedication to our goals is most important to our sense of cohesion and purpose.⁹⁷ In a manner of speaking, she's our very own *Jeanne d'Arc*.⁹⁸ She identifies her

⁹¹ P.M., 200. Degas always refused to participate. ... (he) "cared nothing for honorable mentions and decorations." After 1870, Degas and Pissarro ceased to submit to the Salon competitions.

⁹² L.L.F.A., 190. "Degas, far from being an anarchist, used to say: 'I accept orders from no one!'"

⁹³ C.M., 48. Whistler's lovely *Girl in White*, 1862, joined the paintings by Manet and the *Batignollais* in the *Salon des refusés*, 1863.

⁹⁴ H.B.M., 131. "Whistler, Berthe Morisot wrote to her sister, "whom we so much admired imitates (Turner) enormously."

⁹⁵ P.M., 145. Degas often bickered with Manet and Whistler who, himself, was a sarcastic, witty eccentric.

⁹⁶ E.E.P., 374. Renoir suffered chronic insolvency throughout the 1870's. Cf. F.M.M., 244. Émile-Auguste Carolus-Duran, habitué of the Guerbois, was a popular portrait artist, e.g., *Portrait de Mme ****, 1868.

⁹⁷ H.B.M., 108. Degas wrote: "We think... Berthe Morisot's name and talent are too important to us to do without."

⁹⁸ George Moore, *Modern Painting* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908) 237. Moore stresses Monet's esteem for Morisot by relating a scene he witnessed where Monet delights in finding and buying a

work with ours and, if she were a man, she'd be here with us, helping to plan our battle to win public recognition.⁹⁹

Degas: Yes, to answer your question; I sent her a note today reminding her of the event.¹⁰⁰ The Morisots have invited me to dine with them next Tuesday so I'll again urge her to join us. Unfortunately, she tells me that Manet is working hard to convince her that we are madmen, but I'm confident that she's completely loyal to us.¹⁰¹ I have come to the conclusion that Manet has more vanity than intelligence!¹⁰²

Whistler: Have you noticed how often Manet has painted our lovely young friend? I would venture to suggest that her elegant bourgeois presence has permanently obliterated the ubiquitous image of his favorite model, Victorine Meurent.¹⁰³

Fantin: Berthe and I studied together with Corot; she's not only fascinatingly lovely but she's intelligent, very talented and paints like a bird sings. I introduced Manet to both Berthe and her sister, Edma.¹⁰⁴

Zola: You all know that Manet is Parisian to his fingertips and he loves beautiful women; some appeal to his refined sensibilities by their elegance and breeding and others

lovely drawing by Morisot of a nude girl sketched in red chalk. Monet happily paid a substantial price for it. Moore was evidently not a male chauvinist and truly admired her artistic worth when he wrote: "This (anecdote) will give a better idea of the value of Berthe Morisot than seventy columns of mine or any other man's criticism." Manet did a virtuoso impressionist pastel portrait of his dandified admirer, Moore.

⁹⁹ S.W.M., 87. "Had it been...proper...to go to cafés, Berthe Morisot would have been seen at the Guerbois."

¹⁰⁰ Philippe Huisman, *Berthe Morisot* (Lausanne: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1995) 29-30.

¹⁰¹ H.B.M, 108. Always well-bred, Degas wrote to Morisot's mother, asking if (Berthe) would consider participating. This letter includes the remark mentioned above in footnote 97, indicating his admiration for her work. Degas must have felt he needed to counteract Manet's possible influence.

¹⁰² P.M., 200. Manet was furious at Morisot for exhibiting with the Batignollais, eliciting Degas' sneering remark. (Actually, it was provoked during an argument about Manet's stubborn hopes for Salon fame.)

¹⁰³ D.M., 221. Whereas Victorine Meurent recalled Baudelaire's ideal of beauty in his *Fleurs du Mal*, from now on Berthe Morisot would represent a poet's influence as appreciated by Mallarmé. (My translation.) Manet painted at least thirteen portraits of Berthe Morisot, from 1869 until 1874, which was the year that she married his younger brother Eugène.

¹⁰⁴ S.W.M., 87. In 1868, Fantin introduced them to Manet while Berthe and Edma Morisot were copying in the Louvre. Manet also met Degas in the Louvre during approximately in the same period.

arouse his sensuality through frankly physical allure.¹⁰⁵ Suzanne, his wife, tells a wonderful story: one day she saw him strolling along, obviously following a pretty young lady. Suzanne caught up with him from behind, surprising him with: “Aha, I’ve caught you!” Without missing a beat, he turned, smiled and replied: “Why, I thought I was following you!”¹⁰⁶

Cézanne: (Dryly.) Where is our famous leader tonight? Distracted by another well-turned ankle?

Fantin: I believe that Braquemond asked him to stop by on his way here to look at a proof of his *ex-libris* engraving. It seems that it has a clever motto: “Manet manebit,” a pun on his name.¹⁰⁷

Bazille: By the way, Fantin, I can come to your studio to pose for your group portrait of us sometime next week; is Wednesday morning a good time for you? I regret that you didn’t have time to join us for my studio portrait of our group.¹⁰⁸

Fantin: Wednesday afternoon would be better. Monet will be there then and I plan to have him standing next to you. (Muses.) You know, it’s ironic that my painting is being executed in a typical artist’s studio while most of you portrayed in it prefer to paint

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 134. “Manet’s eye often followed these (ladies of pleasure, demi-mondaines and real ladies) with pleasure. And sometimes not with just his eye.” Cf. D.M., 319. Manet was one of five or six Parisian males who knew how to converse with women. After dinner, instead of joining the men for cigars in the Smoking salon, he often preferred to linger and chat with the women. (My translation.)

¹⁰⁶ C.M., 39. My translation of an oft quoted anecdote about Manet’s flirtatious nature and agile wit.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 152. Manet’s tomb at the Passy cemetery is marked by a stone stella crowned with a bust of Manet that somewhat resembles his *ex libris* design. Suzanne Manet, Berthe Morisot and her husband Eugène Manet are buried in the same plot. The pun on his name is Latin and translates as: “He (or it) endures (and) will endure.”

¹⁰⁸ D.M., 182. *Atelier de la rue de la Condamine*, 1870. Bazille’s studio was just around the corner from the Café Guerbois where the café’s entrance faced the *grande route Batignolles*, now the present day Avenue

en plein air.¹⁰⁹ I'm planning to enter it in the Salon of '70 with the unpretentious title of *L'atelier aux Batignolles* although Manet himself is the focus of the composition.¹¹⁰ I wonder if it will be my painting or my homage to our *chef de file* that will be judged by the jury? What do you think?¹¹¹

Bazille: It will be interesting to see if the *poncifs* can overcome their dislike of Manet in order to be unbiased and fair to you. Referring to my personal choice as to the ideal locale to set up an easel, I like experimenting with both venues: either my *atelier* or *en plein air*. When Renoir stays with me, we work together in the studio and when Monet spends time with me we go to Fontainebleau where he teaches me his *plein air* method of capturing light, atmospheric effects and scintillating colors.¹¹² Frankly, it's the logistics of Paris' capricious climate that ultimately makes my decisions.¹¹³

Monet: If only Manet would consent to try our theories like you do, Bazille. Berthe is our last resort; hers seems to be the only influence that might convince him.¹¹⁴ If he joined us, I'm certain that our status would soar among the successful private art dealers like Durand-Ruel.

de Clichy. The city of Paris has recently placed a helpful historical marker to identify the exact place that it stood and where it survived until 1955 as the *Brasserie Muller*.

¹⁰⁹ S.W.M., 81. Fantin did several group portraits of his artistic and literary contemporaries. This one shows Manet painting at his easel with Astruc posing for him. To Manet's right is Otto Scholder and to his left are Renoir, Zola, Edmond Maître, Bazille and Monet who are grouped around watching.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 82. Of course, writes Schneider, "it provoked a strange caricature: 'Jesus painting in the midst of his disciples' or 'Manet's Divine School'. The butt of the joke seems to be derived from an obscure Biblical text written on the wall back of the group watching Manet paint Astruc. Manet's blond hair and beard easily translated into the image of Christ."

¹¹¹ D.M., See Chronological Table. Fantin did not need to fret, it was accepted and shown in the Salon of 1870.

¹¹² E.E.P., 347. "In 1863, Monet, accompanied by Bazille, painted for the first time in the Forest of Fontainebleau."

¹¹³ E.E.P., 352. Frédéric Bazille had private means and was a generous host to both impoverished artists, Monet in particular. Cf. F.M.M., 608. Bazille's *Auto-portrait à la palette*, 1870, was painted in his studio located around the corner from the Café Guerbois.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 302. "Morisot introduced Manet to the group and later influenced him to experiment with *plein air* painting during the 1870s." At Argenteuil, he painted alongside Monet, depicting him in his "boat studio."

Zola: Perhaps I can help out by stimulating the interest of individual *amateurs* who collect art. I'm writing several analytical articles in praise of "naturalism," or, if you prefer the term, "realism," in painting.¹¹⁵ Two great artists have braved the social and political lions of conservatism well before us: both Courbet and Flaubert fought for realism in art and literature. My plan is to connect Manet's new vision of art relative to the various viewpoints expressed in your work as "independents." With this relationship in mind, it remains my task to educate the public as to how to "read" the artistic intent in your works as well as in his *oeuvre*.¹¹⁶ My dedication to realistic writing naturally leads me to believe that I have an understanding of realism in art.¹¹⁷ In fact, Degas, I feel that your painting, *L'Intérieure*, may have its pictorial genesis in my novel *Thérèse Raquin*.¹¹⁸ Am I correct or am I being too presumptuous?

Degas: (Dryly.) *Touché*, Zola! You know, of course, that I take great pleasure in all literature and particularly the Naturalist movement's overtones of psychological observation that I find in your novels and in those by the Goncourts.¹¹⁹ In my painting, the intimate atmosphere of a lamplit bedroom suggests your scene of psychological tension between Thérèse and her lover, Laurent, tension due to their guilty remorse after they had murdered her husband. I find such themes fascinating.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Z.P.M., Preface. Zola began his campaign to champion realism with *Mes Haines* that was dedicated primarily to Courbet's version of realism. It is pertinent to note that it was not until the 19th century that artists, considered mere decorators in the 1700s, attained a status equal to that of authors.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 168. Zola's ideas in his article *Les Impressionistes et Manet*, 1879.

¹¹⁷ Goncourt Journal, 108. Dated December 14, 1868, is this entry: "At lunch we met our admirer and disciple, Zola." The Goncourts were the originators of "naturalism" but Zola became its theoretician and greatest exponent.

¹¹⁸ E.E.P., 321. Eitner states that Degas' "Interior" has been mistakenly called "The Rape." See: Émile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin*, Ch.XXI. Zola painted verbal scenes like this reference to Thérèse's dimly lit bedroom which was "*éclairés des leurs jaunâtres...que l'abat-jour jetait sur eux.*"

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 338. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt wrote "naturalist" vanguard literature like their *Soeur Philomène*. They co-authored novels with Edmond the setting scenes and Jules creating the dialogues.

¹²⁰ C.P.M.L., 223. Clark suggests that "the relationship of art to its circumstances is peculiar to Degas."

Whistler: (Toying with his monocle.) There's another literary theme appearing now in realist novels. Have you noticed how many modern writers have chosen painters for protagonists? Beginning with Balzac's artist-hero *Schinner* in his *La Bourse*, we have the Goncourt brothers, Daudet, Gautier and Murger, to name only a few.¹²¹ Isn't it your turn now, Zola?

Zola: (Glances at Cézanne, shrugs and smiles like a Cheshire cat.) *Pourquoi pas?*¹²²

Degas: (Didactically.) There's an electrical magnetism that crackles between literature and art that doesn't allow either to remain isolated or indifferent, the one to the other. They interact like creative rivals who feed off each other for mutual inspiration and artistic guidance.¹²³ For example, it was Astruc who convinced Manet of his *Olympia's* literary connection by composing a Baudelairian pseudo-poem whose first verse was literally attached to the painting.¹²⁴ Manet originally intended to title *Olympia* simply as *A Nude* but her name was taken from Astruc's poem. Unfortunately, Manet didn't realize that today's literate public prefers a classical "reading" of a classical theme. Instead he gave them a nude *fille* publicly flaunting her ordinary humanity, low social class and "naked paint;" it was a triple affront to our tender bourgeois sensibilities.¹²⁵

¹²¹ L.L.F.A., 53. The list of artist-heros includes: the Goncourts' "Anatole", Gautier's "Albertus", Zola's (future) "Claude", Daudet's *femme peintre* "Félicia", matched by Duranty's "Lucie" plus Murger's nonconformist group of decadent young artists in his *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*.

¹²² In his novel, *L'Oeuvre*, 1886, Zola's protagonist is a frustrated, struggling young artist, Claude Lantier, considered to be a hybrid of Cézanne and Manet, who commits suicide when he fails to complete his "grande machine" meant for the Salon, a huge painting inspired by Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. Claude had already appeared in a preceding novel, *Le Ventre de Paris*, part of the Rougon-Macquart cycle.

¹²³ Degas expresses one manner in which intellectual *specularity* can be theorized as interactions between the arts.

¹²⁴ C.P.M.L., 83. T.J. Clark wryly notes that Manet added "five lines of unforgivable verse" by Astruc.

¹²⁵ H.M.C., 68. Hamilton finds that the "classical overtones of the title" probably influenced the bourgeoisie's attitude towards Manet's *Olympia*. The public's moral outrage tried to hide the double standard of the bourgeois male's image versus his sexual practices. It is now a known fact that the bracelet *Olympia* wears belonged to Manet's very bourgeois mother and contained a lock of her hair! Was *Olympia's* gold bracelet simply a typical Manet joke or sly self-referential narcissism or both?

Zola: So, Degas, you're proposing that art patrons anticipate classical "readings" worthy of Racine and David but Manet gave them an ordinary *fait divers* newspaper account concerning a vulgar *fille*?¹²⁶ Well, *mon ami*, I'm taking the same risk as Manet did since I'm in the process of writing a cycle of novels that echoes *Olympia*'s hard realism where brothel creatures like her are closely studied along with the other common working class personages who will populate my series. It's a modern realistic epic about the fictional Rougon-Macquart family based on my research as to how heredity affects patterns of behavior. The entire cycle of novels will cover several generations of the same family in order to define and prove my theories.¹²⁷

Whistler: Well, at least you know what to expect judging by the public's hostile reaction to our new theories concerning realism in art...*courage!* Now, I'd like to ask a rhetorical question that refers to Degas' brilliant harangue on the psychological interdependence of writers and artists: what is it about Manet's work that inspires poets to write verse as pendants to his paintings? Baudelaire wrote a four-line strophe for Manet's *Lola Valence* and also dedicated *La Corde* to him, morbidly inspired by his painting *Boy with Cherries*.¹²⁸ After that, there were Astruc's verses for *Olympia*, as Degas noted. Yet, paradoxically, it doesn't work the other way around. When the Academy's *pompier*s recreate themselves as self-styled "painting poets," they fail miserably because their work loses its authenticity.¹²⁹ Would you, Degas, attribute their inability to pull it off as due to

¹²⁶ Non-narrative pictures challenged the *raison d'être* of painting that the unsophisticated middle class public was accustomed to admiring.

¹²⁷ In a series of twenty novels written during the period between 1871 to 1893, Zola traced the history of a family whose heredity was marked by neurosis and alcoholism.

¹²⁸ P.M., 76. Manet's young studio helper, Alexandre, the model for "Boy with Cherries," hanged himself in Manet's studio. In 1874, Charles Gros, who was a poet and Nina's lover, published a poem for Manet's portrait of Nina de Callias known as *La Dame aux éventails*. Several poets wrote verse for Manet's colorful illustrations of the popular puppet theater marionette, *Polichinelle*.

¹²⁹ E.E.P., 285. "A delusion that ruined them as painters but helped with short-lived success."

the fact that they are *mi-figue, mi-raisin*, psychologically speaking? (Degas, still irked by Whistler, lifts eyebrows and shrugs, feigning indifference.)

Cézanne: (Envious.) Speaking of writing literary homage and dedicating it to an artist, Zola, didn't you dedicate your novel *Madeleine Férat* to Manet in gratitude for his portrait of you that Castagnary praised, the one he painted earlier in that same year?¹³⁰

Monet: (Blurts out impatiently.) *Moi*, I'm an advocate for modern experimentation and, I repeat, I'm only interested in investigating new possibilities in painting without worrying about any references to literature or even to museum paintings.¹³¹ All this chatter about reflections of literature in paintings and vice-versa is giving me a headache.

And, I say for the third time: my only interest is to experiment and to observe atmospheric changes of daylight in front of *plein air* subjects! *C'est tout, tout, tout!*¹³²

Fantin: Look! Manet just came in! *Salut, Manet! Ça va?* We've already had a couple of rounds of beers while waiting for you.

Manet: *Salut, les gars!* Garçon, bring another round of bocks for everybody and put it on my bill. I'll have my usual brandy cocktail. (Everyone stands to shake hands with him as he moves around the big marble-topped table greeting each one individually.)

Cézanne: (Churlishly.) *Désolé*. I won't shake your hand, *monsieur Manet*, since I haven't washed in a week.¹³³

¹³⁰ H.M.C., 114. Hamilton says that Zola dedicated his novel, *Madeleine Férat*, to Manet in return for a loan of 600 francs in 1867-68.

¹³¹ E.E.P., 345. "Monet owes less to tradition than any other major artist of his time."

¹³² Ibid., 345. "Monet was single-minded and egotistical; his art was based on his empirical *plein air* observations rather than on invention. His early technical virtuosity glows in paintings like *La Grenouillère*, 1869." Renoir painted the same site but his version lacked Monet's color and verve.

¹³³ S.W.M., 86. Feigning a Bohemian air, "Cézanne was deliberately uncouth in dress and surly in speech..." See also: E.E.P., 424. "The fastidious Manet brought out Cézanne's penchant for bourgeois-baiting."

(In response, Manet tips his hat and makes an exaggerated mock bow to Cézanne as the others squirm a little.)

Manet: (Lifts his drink in a toast.) *Santé à tout le monde!* Well, *mes amis*, what great philosophical arguments about art theory have I missed?

Zola: (Scowling at the unrepentant Cézanne.) We were just discussing how inspiration plays a reciprocal role in the works of contemporary writers and artists; before that, it was about the journalistic manipulation of public opinion. The latter subject represents a common enemy but I think we need only to be patient and let time soften the unbending attitudes of conservative critics like Castagnary, Wolff and the others.¹³⁴

Degas: I don't give a damn about hostile critics like Wolff! It's clear to me that his brutish language equals his simian physiognomy: he's so ugly, it's obvious that he came here from Germany by way of the trees!¹³⁵ (All exuberantly applaud Degas' stinging insult that the hostile critic richly deserved.)

Manet: (Smiles ruefully.) We all know that Champfleury encouraged and defended Courbet, but only you and Baudelaire, Zola, praise the painter's heroic role as the noble observer of modern life.¹³⁶ It's a mystery to me why certain cultivated, intelligent artists, writers and critics persist in looking backwards into a mirror that reflects only museum walls hung with works by classical artists. My paintings don't claim to mirror anything except the inner gleam in my eyes when I'm in the act of painting; nothing more, nothing

¹³⁴ Jules-Antoine Castagnary wrote critiques of the Salons. See footnote 135 on Wolff.

¹³⁵ S.W.M., 65. Albert Wolff, *Le Figaro's* ferocious art critic, seemed well deserving of Degas' vitriolic comment. Later, Manet offered to paint a portrait of Wolff whose physical ugliness and journalistic influence seemed to fascinate the artist. Degas reported that Manet found anatomical deformities such as that of hunchbacks, etc., to be "terribly *chic*," a word that had just come into popular use.

¹³⁶ There may have been some irony attached to Baudelaire's hyperbolic praise of *la vie moderne* and its "poetic" emphasis on the stolid Parisian bourgeoisie with its conformity of dress, taste, life-style and ambiguous morality. The poet seemed more interested in changing the context of poetry than fashion styles.

less.¹³⁷ I guess you can consider that statement a broad definition of my artistic intentions. And, even though we often disagree on *how* to paint or even *what* to paint, most of us will have our day of glory in the Louvre, mark my words.¹³⁸ “Paint the truth and don’t worry about what people say,” as Fantin once wrote.¹³⁹

Degas: I agree, Manet. The painting of the future will evolve, if not directly from us, then from a steady, logical progression of “-isms” just as we have done; each new generation of painters will take on its role as Baudelaire’s *peintre de la vie moderne*.¹⁴⁰

Monet: Tell me, Manet, how do you compare the “inner gleam” in your eye to the “fugitive instant,” *la première sensation*, of our *plein air* painting?

Manet: (Evasive.) Frankly, I would rather comment upon the area of agreement among us.¹⁴¹ First of all, we’re all participating in a revolution without being true revolutionaries.¹⁴² Our so-called rebellion consists in insisting upon what modern painting is not: mainly, it’s an art that doesn’t function as a “mirror image”.¹⁴³ Second, we consider the subject of a painting to be mainly an “impression” left on the retina of the painter’s eye that necessarily sacrifices superfluous details.¹⁴⁴ Third, our highly visible application of paint refuses to be disguised in its age-old role as a mirror.¹⁴⁵ You

¹³⁷ S.W.M., 111. For Manet, “the act of painting could not be confused with the act of seeing.”

¹³⁸ P.M., 228. To bolster their spirits, as well as his own, Manet would say to his family: “One day, I shall be hung in the Louvre.”

¹³⁹ F.M.M., 205. Manet had posed for Fantin’s *Le Toast: Hommage à la Vérité*, 1865. For some unknown reason, Fantin destroyed the painting after the Salon. See also: P.M., 133. Manet echoed Fantin’s title, “Hommage to the Truth,” (*Le Toast*) printing the same toast, “To the truth our ideal,” on his invitation designed for the elegant exhibition of his paintings that he would hold years later in his studio.

¹⁴⁰ For each successive generation, creativity seems to be an endless process where each new “-ism” has an ideological axe to grind with the one preceding it.

¹⁴¹ Manet used his talent for verbal pirouette to avoid direct conflict between beliefs of the Batignollais and his own theories. Yet, at times he could make brutal and hurtful remarks that rivalled those of Degas.

¹⁴² E.E.P., 311. Manet was “the very opposite of a conscious revolutionary.”

¹⁴³ S.W.M., 175. “Manet’s work (demonstrated) paint’s rebellion against its age-old role as a mirror.”

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 175. “Impression was a word often heard among the habitués of the Café Guerbois.”

¹⁴⁵ E.E.P., 231. “The heros of the Salon...clever technicians of *eye-dazzling illusionism*, for all their photographic acuity, produced pictures of a peculiar deadness.” (The italics are mine.)

could consider these points as an expression of a theoretical manifesto or an oriflamme of revolution, depending upon your artistic stance.

Cézanne: Your declaration states the general idea of what our art is all about but conversely, I prefer to discuss our differences. We each have strongly individual ideas concerning artistic ideals and technique, even those of us who find it difficult to articulate a specific theory or establish an inflexible ideal.¹⁴⁶ Of course, you're older and the first trained artist to take an anti-academic stand which I find a courageous act, but I still haven't heard you articulate the reasons why you paint the way you do.¹⁴⁷ I find that fact a bit puzzling.

Manet: (Defensive.) I don't have a specific dogma that I follow, Cézanne, or even a lofty philosophy to expound and I don't wish to make doctrinaire statements about Realism like Courbet did.¹⁴⁸ Here's my method: paint the truth and there's only one truth, *to put down at once what you see*. When it works, it works. When it doesn't, start over. All the rest is nonsense.¹⁴⁹

Pissarro: (He has been quietly listening.)¹⁵⁰ Since I'm one of the older members of this group, I want to acknowledge my debt to some of my younger colleagues who share my passion for painting landscape through observation of daylight effects.¹⁵¹ When it comes to capturing the warm color effects due to natural light, I believe their approach

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 440. Cézanne's art evolved into "combined formality, emotions, constructive logic and passionate, repetitious series of nature studies."

¹⁴⁷ S.W.M., 176. "Manet said: 'I paint as I feel like painting; paint is paint.' He remained alone and misunderstood."

¹⁴⁸ Charles Rosen, *The Mythology of Nineteenth Century Art* (New York: Viking Press, 1984) 142.

¹⁴⁹ P.M., 82. A quote reported by Antonin Proust, but "saying it was one thing, doing it was another."

¹⁵⁰ E.E.P., 404. "Pissarro joined Monet and Renoir on their trips from the countryside to attend the Guerbois gatherings" where he heard the heated debates, pro and con, on *plein air* painting, as well as the "discussions that pitted Manet and Degas against Monet and his friends."

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 404. "Pissarro, Monet and Renoir painted together along the Seine near Bougival, their mutual neighborhood."

holds the key to the future look of painting. I am referring, of course, to my dear friends Monet, Renoir, Morisot and Cézanne!¹⁵² Painting alongside them has been a privilege as well as a mutual learning experience.¹⁵³

Cézanne: (Touched.) *Mais non, cher maître.* It's I who am indebted to you for your *plein air* instruction, unselfish kindness and unqualified friendship, helping me to better appreciate the difficult art of landscape painting.¹⁵⁴

Monet: Pissarro, you will leave an indelible mark upon landscape painting that we can only aspire to accomplish. As Cézanne said, only your generous spirit and patient tolerance exceed your ability to paint the luminous effects of atmosphere as it affects color and form. You have a deep, intimate feeling for nature that eludes me. I will always envy your eye for structure and mass!¹⁵⁵

Pissarro: (Very moved.) My dear young colleagues, your affectionate words make all the hard work and struggle to understand the complexities of painting the natural world worthy of the sacrifices required of an artist seeking to deviate from the norm. One needs a family of friends because an unsubsidized career in art is always a risky affair.¹⁵⁶

Manet: All of which proves that there's room for more than one style or one vision of "reality." Courbet and Cézanne both express nature's geography through highly individual executions. Pissarro's genius reminds Berthe Morisot of Corot since both

¹⁵² Ibid., 175. "Monet and Pissarro's *plein air* paintings gained Manet's admiration for their color effects."

¹⁵³ E.E.P., 407. Pissarro, "influenced by Cézanne's *facture coulliarde* boldness, began to use his palette knife, too."

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 418. "Generous and kind, Pissarro was probably a father figure to the younger artist whose shyness made him seem solitary and reclusive." At Pissarro's funeral in 1903, Cézanne signed himself as "Pupil of Pissarro."

¹⁵⁵ S.W.M., 218. "Monet spent his life struggling with his technique, endlessly refining his theories."

¹⁵⁶ E.E.P., 402-404. "With little family support and virtually no income from his paintings, Pissarro needed and received encouragement from Monet, Renoir, Cézanne and even the waspish Degas".

studied with him and all three share a devotion to landscapes.¹⁵⁷ Yet, again, one notes that each of them has a distinctive *facture* that's filtered through entirely different artistic *tempéraments*, to borrow Zola's expression.¹⁵⁸

Renoir: Do you believe we'll ever attract a buying public of our own or convince a gallery owner like Durand-Ruel to promote us as an independent group without the impressive status that a Salon success usually represents?¹⁵⁹

Manet: If money is readily available, one could follow Courbet's example, as I did in '67, by building a private pavilion.¹⁶⁰ As a group, you could also form a coalition and show together or individually, alternating the exhibitions from one colleague's studio to another. To exhibit is the vital matter, the *sine qua non* for the artist.¹⁶¹ Even David realized this truth during his independent period.¹⁶² Berthe mentioned that many of you have been discussing long term plans for showing together in one of Nadar's buildings on the Boulevard des Capucines.¹⁶³ That's a bold move! *Bonne chance!*

¹⁵⁷ H.B.M., 110. Corot "relaxed, smoking his *pipette*," was also a regular at the Morisot's Tuesday evening soirées. Both Morisot and Pissarro had painted landscapes under Corot's tutelage that influenced their early outdoor work. Cf. Meyer Schapiro, *Impressionism: reflections and perceptions*. 322-23. By comparing two paintings, by Pissarro and Mondrian respectively, Schapiro concludes: "Without Pissarro's work, this painting of Mondrian (sic), (*Composition with Lines*, 1916-17) would not have been possible."

¹⁵⁸ Z.P.M., Preface, 13. Zola's definition of an artist's uniqueness and genius, a term Baudelaire also employed for Manet.

¹⁵⁹ Vanina Costa, *Tableaux Choisis Musée d'Orsay* (Paris: Éditions Scala, 1994) 79. "*Les artistes compteront dorénavant sur un couple influent: le marchand qui les expose et les vend, et le critique... dans la presse.*"

¹⁶⁰ M.A.P., 141. Mainardi makes the amusing observation that Courbet and Manet were "rather strange neighbors, occupying opposite pavilions on Place d'Alma."

¹⁶¹ P.M., 151-152. Manet wrote his own brochure for his pavilion exhibit, including this assertion in his text.

¹⁶² E.E.P., 26. David exhibited his work in the Louvre, between 1794-1799, charging a hefty entrance fee.

Monet: If all goes well, would you consider taking the risk to join us?¹⁶⁴ In addition to the honor of being associated with a modern *maître* of your stature, your endorsement would give us encouragement and moral strength.

Manet: Thank you, Monet, for those generous words and your confidence in me.

Nevertheless, I must refuse your gracious invitation. Our goals as painters are diametrically opposed.¹⁶⁵ Academic recognition of my paintings in the Salon exhibitions is my most important goal. I intend to enter the Salon competitions as long as I have to, until I triumph over those *pompier*s like Bouguereau with his “Salon eroticism” and sycophants like Messionier with his anecdotal line of *petit genre*.¹⁶⁶

Degas: (Grudgingly.) I must admit that Monet has a point, Manet. If you showed with us, we would have a better chance at press coverage. Your name attracts journalists like bees to honey; after all, you’re now as famous as Garibaldi!¹⁶⁷

Manet: (Wryly.) Thanks for the left-handed compliment, *cher ami*.

Degas: (Shrugs.) *De rien*. In my view, a *succès de scandale* is just as important as a *succès d’estime*. (Conciliatory.) By the way, I saw your racetrack painting on exhibition at your art dealer.¹⁶⁸ Do you now appreciate why I admire these beautiful animals so

¹⁶³ Later known as the First Impressionist Exhibition, 1874, the core group was Morisot, Degas, Sisley, Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, joined by other less known artists. Bazille had been killed fighting at the front during the brief Franco-Prussian war.

¹⁶⁴ H.B.M., 108. “Monet probably sensed that Manet was nervous about any affiliation with the group’s marginal status; in addition to which, Manet firmly believed that it would be a mistake to desert the Salon competitions.”

¹⁶⁵ Although Manet was labeled the leader of the Batignollais group, he was not an Impressionist.

¹⁶⁶ S.W.M., 110. “Manet refused, ‘he had had his fill of scandal.’ This time let it be an Impressionist scandal!” He was often provoked to jealousy by the success of the Salon’s troupe of trained *singes* who conformed to popular taste.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 81. Degas’ caustic remark betrays a tinge of jealousy, spurred by the rivalry between him and Manet.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 74. Degas concentrated on jockeys and horses while Manet caught the whole ambiance of the racetrack. *The Races at Longchamp, Paris* was painted by Manet in 1864. “He successfully captured the excitement of the charging horses as well as the swarm of spectators, viewing the track from a central, plunging point of perspective.”

much? I see them as equine equivalents of my *petits rats d'opéra* who are, unfortunately, only graceful when they're performing.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, what I love about horses is that they are always "on stage," exquisitely elegant and superbly regal. In your study, you caught the impression of the hurtling speed of the horses and the excited crowd with your usual *éclat*. We should go out to Longchamp together on an overcast *maussade* day and make a few studies of the racetrack.¹⁷⁰

Manet: (Mollified.) Why not? Have you seen Muybridge's amazing stop-action photographs of galloping horses? Nadar came by to show them to me last week.

Degas: Yes, I saw them. At last they clearly illustrate how a horse's feet leave the ground in a rolling sequence.¹⁷¹ I hope that photography might offer me an alternative solution to making compositions that demand sketching in the outdoors. As you all know, I prefer to work in my studio because the glare of daylight hurts my eyes.¹⁷² To my regret, I'm forced to appreciate the gloomy grey *climat ingrat* of Paris, as George Sand calls it.

Zola: (Addresses all.) Do any of you feel threatened by the rapid expansion of photography? Are you challenged by its lifelike realism? Will artists someday work with photographers as they do with engravers? Will it be considered as a new form of chiaroscuro art? I'm afraid that the burgeoning *petit bourgeois* will find it more

¹⁶⁹ S.W.M., 158. Degas' adolescent ballerinas were "poor young girls called 'rats' (who danced) in the back line of the chorus. Degas found a quality in their dance movement like that of the horses he loved to paint." In his *Start of the Race*, circa 1860-62, Degas echoed similar scenes in Géricault's various *Barbieri Races* of 1817. Cf. *Ibid.*, 137. "The theme of ballet scenes first appeared in Degas' work around 1868."

¹⁷⁰ See footnote 172. Degas had long faced a battle to save his eyesight that had noticeably worsened.

¹⁷¹ S.W.M., 98. This new technically advanced photographic process "corrected the assumption that horses' legs moved in pairs like hobbyhorses."

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 137. It is known that his frustrating problem with glare hindered Degas' work during his sojourn with his mother's family, the Mussons, in semi-tropical New Orleans in 1872.

affordable to have a photograph of themselves rather than an oil portrait.¹⁷³ Do you foresee great art-photographers attaining the same heroic status that's conferred on great artists? And just imagine! It could even eliminate living models!¹⁷⁴

Degas: Painting will always haunt photography.¹⁷⁵ Don't forget that Daguerre was a professional Romantic painter before he invented his *daguerréotype*.¹⁷⁶ I think we should profit from this technology by heeding Gustave Moreau's remark that "photographic truth is merely a source of information."¹⁷⁷

Monet: Like us, photographers aim at an illusionary reproduction of nature, *n'est-ce pas?* Therefore, one might consider both painting and photography as controlled works of fiction.¹⁷⁸

Manet: It's true that artists and photographers both strive to approximate nature but we have optical differences: the subjective human eye versus the so-called "objective" mechanical one.¹⁷⁹

Monet: Yet, it amazes me that as far back as 1822, Daguerre's "Diorama" was an attempt to visualize an ideal so close to my own pictorial vision where he tried to represent time, wind, light and atmosphere.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ Ibid., 89. In the 1860's, photography imitated painting, flourishing in portrait studios with painted backgrounds and real or fake props. The public wanted *cartes de visite*, family album shots, announcements, etc. See E.E.P., 372. Conversely, Renoir's *The Engaged Couple*, 1868, is somewhat in the posed style of a *carte de visite* photograph! (Reverse mimesis?)

¹⁷⁴ L.L.F.A., 73. It is possible that the nude woman who is shown modeling in Courbet's allegorical, self-referential painting, *L'Atelier*, (The Studio), was painted from a photograph, 1854-55.

¹⁷⁵ Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1997) 215. "It used to be said that photography was tormented by the ghost of painting."

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. 140. (Daguerre) painted primarily romantic, moody landscapes inhabited by ruined churches.

¹⁷⁷ N.I.P.I., 199. Nochlin quotes this remark that is taken from Moreau's written statements on art.

¹⁷⁸ Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 211. The manipulative "fakery" aspect of the digital photograph lends itself to "fiction." Since composition is controlled by the artist in the painting, photography can also be seen to have the same stigma.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 13. The "essentially objective character" of photography distinguishes it from painting.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 139. Daguerre's "Diorama" was a construction built like stage scenery that featured a shifting platform where the viewer sat to watch panels of illusionary, backlit scenes painted on diaphanous fabric.

Bazille: What about the commercial and economic aspect of photography? Because it's fast and cheap, it threatens engravers and all other image-makers.¹⁸¹ Not only commercial businesses will see its advantages but the working class will see its affordability as a welcome boon.¹⁸² To answer you, Zola, I feel we're facing tough competition.

Zola: *Eh, alors*, we can predict that technically brilliant photographers gifted with an artist's temperament may some day achieve museum status by combining the two disciplines?¹⁸³

Burty: (Friendly critic and habitué of the Guerbois, joins them.)¹⁸⁴ Do you mean a new aesthetic, a photographer-artist? I know someone who would be happy to answer all your questions, Zola. Nadar would be the first to admit to his remarkable, protean nature as a photographer, caricaturist, balloonist, aerial cartographer, publicist, dramatist, journalist, novelist and set designer, not to mention artist! He's a real *mise en abyme* of skills!¹⁸⁵

Manet: And an ingenious clown as well! Has anybody seen Nadar's comical photo of George Sand? It's hilarious! He photographed her wearing a towering, black Louis XIV wig then immediately popped it on his own head and shot a droll self-portrait.¹⁸⁶

Burty: You know, we haven't seen him here on Fridays for a while. I wonder why?

Monet: He probably has more work than he can handle.¹⁸⁷ When I inquired about the availability of his building at the corner of the Rue Daunou and the Boulevard des

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 210. "Miniature painting, for example, quickly became extinct."

¹⁸² Ibid., 208. "A strange but lucrative trade in posthumous photographs developed because, ironically, early photography required total immobility of the subject in order to obtain a clear, lifelike image."

¹⁸³ Ibid., *Conclusion*. "Twentieth century collections in MoMA and world-class museums clearly demonstrate how photography has asserted itself into, and has been absorbed by, the paintings of many modern artists."

¹⁸⁴ P.M., 183. Philippe Burty, was a critic on *La République française* newspaper, an ardent Japanophile, and a friend of both Manet and Mallarmé.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 83. Baudelaire joked that Nadar had twice as many vital organs as the ordinary person.

¹⁸⁶ See Biet, *XIXe siècle*, 133.

Capucines, I noticed that he had expanded into a two-story space bustling with a crew of assistants. He's become the biggest studio photographer in Paris; I envy his success!

Degas: Have you added any new Japanese prints by Utamaro to your collection,

Burty?¹⁸⁸ I am looking for a woodblock print of a Geisha at her *toilette* occupied with her makeup box and mirror.¹⁸⁹ Duret has a lovely one but he doesn't want to give it up.

Burty: Not at the moment, Degas, but Goncourt and I just inspected a new shipment of imports at *La Porte Chinoise* that arrived from Japan last week.¹⁹⁰ Since Duret is planning to go to Japan with Henri Cernuschi, he could look around for an Utamaro or a Hokusai woodblock print for you.¹⁹¹

Whistler: Would you ask Duret to look for an elegant man's silk kimono for me? I'm hard to fit because of my height and my favorite one that I wore in Fantin's *Le Toast* is getting rather worn.¹⁹²

Monet: I wish I could find the right subject to depict. I want to capitalize on this rage for *la japonnerie* that's so popular with Parisian collectors.¹⁹³ I'd like to enter it in the next Salon. I'm collecting all the Japanese prints that I can afford to serve as inspiration.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁷ S.W.M., 95. A brilliant and inventive photographer, Nadar's career soared; being the first to use artificial light, artists tagged him the "Titian of photography."

¹⁸⁸ Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's* 219. Burty and the Goncourts did much to introduce Japanese arts to the French. Perhaps Degas found Utamaro's wood block prints interesting because he was an artist devoted to contemporary courtesans and bathers that was also a Parisian theme but Degas painted his women as awkward, working class domestics and prostitutes.

¹⁸⁹ The influence of Japanese prints on Degas' work may be exaggerated but is probably due to the similarity of the compressed frontal space in Japanese art that is echoed in his performance paintings. On the other hand, his manipulation and alteration of spatial perspectives between the performers, the footlights, the orchestra and the audience are also unique hallmarks in his renderings of ballet dancers and cafés-concerts; all are special effects that should be attributed only to Degas' own virtuosic genius and profound analytical skills.

¹⁹⁰ Edmond de Goncourt, *Journal*, 137. An enterprising Chinese woman owned *La Porte Chinoise*.

¹⁹¹ H.E.M., 149. Duret's and Cernuschi's collections of Japanese art comprise a major part of the Musée Cernuschi, located in the elegant Park Monceau quarter of the 8th arrondissement.

¹⁹² F.M.M., 228-230. Whistler also used women's kimonos as "strong decorative elements to evoke his dreamy, intimate oriental settings": *La Princesse du pays de la porcelaine*, 1864, and *Le Balcon*, 1864-70.

¹⁹³ E.E.P., 357. In 1876, Monet's *La Japonaise* sold for the rather large sum of 2,000 francs. His wife Camille modeled a lovely Japanese kimono, striking a typical geisha pose, gracefully holding a fan.

Degas: *Et tu, Brute?* I thought we were going to resolve to show as a group, scorning the trappings of the Salon!¹⁹⁵

Monet: Be reasonable, Degas. At the moment, I have to be practical since I have a family. I've decided to work on two levels: one that concerns an awareness of the public's tastes in art, hoping to find buyers, the way the Salon painters do. The other is reserved for my experimental work where I'm searching for solutions to the problems of painting in daylight during various times of the day. One level of work puts food on the table and the other nourishes my dreams.¹⁹⁶

Manet: (Cheerfully.) We're all having difficulties but we must not despair, *mes jeunes amis!* Don't forget, Monet, we can always count on each other when we're in a pinch.¹⁹⁷ I heard a wonderful bit of nonsense today at Tortoni's that should bring a note of levity to our mood of self-pity. *Écoutez:* René Descartes enters a brasserie and the barman asks if he will have a beer. Descartes answers: "I think not." Then Descartes disappears. (There's an uproarious burst of nervous laughter, breaking the tension of conflict that seemed to be hanging in the air. Even Degas and Cézanne shake with mirth.)

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 358. After 1881, when Monet became more prosperous, he stopped submitting to the Salon.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 358. Degas' implication of betrayal refers to the charter agreement of 1874 to show only as a group, a contract that Monet, Renoir, Cézanne and Sisley all signed but ignored.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 352. Monet worked on two levels, juggling Salon success (studio) with his passion for truth (outdoors). Even when he was able to rent and later purchase his home in Giverny, Monet's correspondence with creditors and landlords asking for delayed payment of debts attests to his perpetual struggle to keep food on the table and colors on his palette. A sampling of his letters to creditors and landlords are on view in a vitrine in the *L'Orangerie* museum of the Louvre.

¹⁹⁷ S.W.M., 103. When Monet was threatened by eviction from his house Gennevilliers, Manet found him another. 110. Manet asked Duret to buy several of Monet's canvases but to never let him know of this charitable arrangement.

Fantin: (Still smiling) *Merci bien, mon capitaine!* We can always count on you to dispel our quarrels and anxieties with a witty anecdote.¹⁹⁸ Even though things look bleak to us now, we ought to remember that you've faced the hisses and taunts of the Salon crowd long before us. Does one ever get accustomed to being the butt of derision and scandal when one is sincerely trying to adhere to artistic ideals and personal principles?

Manet: *Ouf!* That's a question that's much too philosophical for me to answer. But I can tell you that the chagrin of losing out to the Academy's narrow-minded flunkies who mock my work incessantly has indeed left an indelible bruise on my self-esteem.¹⁹⁹ So, judging from my own experience, I can assume that one never gets accustomed to intolerance, injustice and ridicule. But one has to be sincere and persist in the effort to be one's self and to paint what one sees.²⁰⁰

Zola: (Nods agreement.) Even a national idol like Hugo was the object of public wrath and the victim of hostile reaction when he broke with classical poetic convention in his play, "Hernani." Now, he's suffering self-imposed exile in order to adhere to his political principles. It's always dangerous to be in the trenches fighting for change in literature or art when the ruling class is as blindly conservative as it is now.²⁰¹

Degas: (Bored.) I must leave now, *mes amis*. I promised my brother, René, to take him with me to tour the *cafés-chantants* in Haussmann's new Champs Élysées quarter.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 65. This is another instance of how Manet's flair for graceful verbal pirouettes helped him to avoid difficult situations.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 64. "The attacks...have broken the spring of life in me..." he complained dramatically in a letter to his friend, Antonin Proust.

²⁰⁰ C.M., 61. "*J'ai fait ce que j'ai vu,*" (I paint what I see.) Manet replied to a venomous newspaper article on *Olympia* written by Jules Claretie in 1865.

²⁰¹ S.W.M., 16. Claiming to stand for conservative civil and moral order, Napoléon III began his dictatorship by decreeing that "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" be erased from all public buildings.

²⁰² C.P.M.L., 208. Degas' brother, René, wrote to his parents about his evenings at the *cafés-chantants*.

Duranty: (Manet's former "dueling partner" chimes in, biting on his unlit pipe.) My favorite is the Alcazar, where Thérèse's *grande gueule* is bringing in huge audiences.²⁰³

What a superb performer: she moves about with great *élan* and acts out her verses while singing *à tue-tête*!

Degas: (Intense.) You're right, and her tour de force is precisely her body language that she uses to punctuate her stentorian voice. Physically she's *costaude*, with a peasant's stocky body, but when she sings she transcends it through her repertoire of electrifying dramatic gestures. I'm now making a series of studies of her bizarre performances; like Géricault, I hope to portray a person's *inner* character by linking *outside* physical traits and gestures, an experiment that I intend to catalogue scientifically through my art.²⁰⁴

Manet: (Puzzled.) Our motives, as usual, Degas, are poles apart. What I find appealing about painting the *cafés-concerts* is the gaiety of society at play. The informality of the ambience attracts a crowd where an ordinary clerk or worker can sit alongside his boss who may have brought his wife with him.²⁰⁵ It's a bit bizarre in terms of the usual formality of conventional audiences but this novel entertainment provides great stuff for the modern artist to enjoy.

Degas: I agree that it's great stuff, as you put it, Manet. Above all, I see it as pure theater with its strong contrast of glaring stage lighting immediately opposed to the murky

²⁰³ Ibid., 224. Degas wrote a friend to "go quick (sic) and hear Thérèse at the Alcazar."

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 255. "Degas wanted to encode a new set of urban *physiognomies* by painting Parisian characters that would illustrate his century. He planned to record studies of their types, gestures and expressions but finally gave it up." Similar studies had been made by Goya in madhouses as well as by Géricault who had made intense, close-up portraits of mentally disturbed patients earlier in the 19th century.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 223. "The crush of spectators" mirrored postwar social changes caused by the massive migrations of rural workers seeking jobs in the booming city that resulted in the new intermingling of classes.

darkness that envelopes the musicians and the spectators. The whole scene lacks depth and true perspective very much like a Japanese woodblock print does.²⁰⁶

Whistler: (Archly.) I would say, Degas, that, given your psycho-analytical bent, you wouldn't neglect to study the vulgar character of the audience as well. Do you feel that today's display of social homogeneity will eventually undermine the political dominance of the bourgeoisie?²⁰⁷

Degas: (Stiffly.) I refuse to be baited, Whistler, to publicly air my political views. I leave such weighty subjects to journalists like Fournel whose self-styled mission is to agonize over the "dangers" of a classless society.²⁰⁸ But, if any intelligent, contemplative viewer wants to interpret my *café-concert* paintings as social commentary, *ainsi soit-il*.

Zola: On the other hand, the Goncourts don't hesitate to see our Parisian obsession for public spectacle as a psychological phenomenon.²⁰⁹ Other writers assert that we abhor home life and its tedium, so therefore we like to pose, to make a spectacle of ourselves in front of a public and to have witnesses to our life.²¹⁰

Renoir: *Voilà!* We artists fulfill the role of "witnesses," don't we? I've been intrigued by the same idea. I'm composing an outdoor scene of café life except that my audience is to

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 222. Degas' *Le Café-Concert des Ambassadeurs*, circa 1875-1877, hints at the artist's fascination with flattened and foreshortened Japanese perspective.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 213. Many writers were struck (and alarmed) by "the sheer fact of contact...the cramming together of the classes in one place"...and the "general social dishevelment." See 107 and 204. That social revolution was in the air in the 1860s and 1870s is a controversial notion, opines Clark, but the *haute bourgeoisie* feared an "invasion" by prostitutes that would menace *l'ordre morale et sociale*. Frequented by all types of prostitutes and all social classes, the *café-concert* became the symbol of the social fragmentation initially identified negatively with the Haussmannization of Paris. See also 243-244. In 1881, the critic, Paul Alexis, judged the protagonist of Zola's "Nana" to be "the modern fille, product of our advanced civilization, *agent of the destruction of the upper classes*." (The italics are mine.)

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 211. Some pictures by Manet and Degas seem to indicate a "mingling of the classes" by depicting the closely packed audience or the spectacle itself (and sometimes both) half-glimpsed in a café mirror.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 34. In 1860, an entry in the Goncourt journal reads: "The Paris of our way of life...is going through a great evolution...it is not material but moral. The interior is passing away. Life turns back to become public...the soul has discomforts as a result."

²¹⁰ Ibid., 207-208. These provocative observations are by A. Delau, *Les Plaisirs de Paris: Guide Pratique*.

be composed of my Bohemian friends dancing in the garden café of the Moulin de la Galette.²¹¹

Burty: Don't forget that the homogenous group of society that now represents the modern audience has a totally new composition of *couches sociales*. It's now made up of *calicots, putains, gandins* and *haut bourgeois* all of whom rub shoulders as they sit and listen to strutting singers popularizing songs written in street vernacular.²¹² *C'est vraiment bizarre!* The rich are no longer protected by private opera loges yet they seem to relish this genre of "street opera". *Moi, je trouve cela très drôle!*²¹³

Fantin: It seems that performance art and pictorial art have taken a strange new twist where the spectator has lost his identity as a bona fide member of any specific *couche sociale*. Can we assume that this pseudo-revolution that's leveling class differences may be linked to our own struggle to have our work treated with the same respect given to the *pompier*s in the Salon competitions?²¹⁴

Monet: *Pas forcément*. Just because patrician and proletariat classes share café tables doesn't mean the fall of the Second Empire *à la romain*. Consider our own isolation from the legitimate art community, as you just remarked, Fantin. Besides, we still haven't won our independence from the *haute bourgeoisie*'s control of the art market.²¹⁵ So this social

²¹¹ Ibid., 378. Depicting a sort of *Bal des guinguettes* in Montmartre, this is one of Renoir's most ambitious and successful Impressionist paintings, 1876. It is an actual scene from life, not unlike Manet's *La Musique aux Tuileries*, 1862, although each depicts a different social class.

²¹² Ibid., 209. Clark quotes from an article by Louis Veuillot: "The music has same character as the words; both (are) vulgar, corrupt caricatures."

²¹³ Ibid., 221. *Chapeaux de putains* and men's top hats are prominent in Degas' studies of café-concerts.

²¹⁴ E.E.P., 40. Fantin could be expressing the egalitarian ideas of friends like Pissarro who advocated artisan socialism and collective self-help.

²¹⁵ C.P.M.L., 260. "The painters of the new art movement particularly needed access to the American market with its avid *nouveau riche* collectors." The American impressionist, Mary Cassatt, often advised

intermingling strikes me as merely a temporary side effect of the innate obsession of all Parisians with public entertainment.²¹⁶ *Voilà, c'est mon avis!*

Manet: I'm not concerned with social revolution; I enjoy the stimulating non-conformity of café-concert crowds whose diversity thoroughly delights me: men keep their hats on, women swill beer, *cocottes* flirt and dandies pose at the bar.²¹⁷ The strident music, gay fashions and turbulent swirl of forms delight me so much that I often repeat the image of the audience as a reflection in a window or a mirrored wall of the café.²¹⁸

Cézanne: Is this doubling of imagery your way of suggesting the illusionary aspect of real social change? Or does your mirror-mirage function more as a segregating device?²¹⁹

Manet: I'll have to reflect on that, Cézanne, no pun intended.²²⁰ Offhand, I would say that I agree with Degas; the viewer of my *café-concert* paintings will ultimately have to decide for himself how to interpret what he sees. Haven't mirrors always fascinated artists as symbolic devices?²²¹ I can sincerely say, that, for the most part, I consciously avoid using my art to express abstract social issues.²²²

her family and wealthy friends on purchasing paintings that she considered important, especially those of Degas.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 204. Clark believes that French art reflected the “world of leisure” as a symbolic field in which the battle for bourgeois identity was fought. “This implication of leisure in class struggle goes some way to explain the series of transformations undergone by the subject in painting from 1860 to 1914.”

²¹⁷ S.W.M., 149. All of these characters are implied or explicitly represented in Manet's *Au Café*, 1878.

²¹⁸ R.B.F.B., 5. The spatial ambiguity of Manet's *Café, Place du Théâtre Français*, 1881, has customers reflected in either a window or a mirror, an ambiguity that suggests a certain abstract quality.

²¹⁹ C.P.M.L., Ch. Four. “*A Bar at the Folies Bergère*.” In this chapter, Clark's analysis of Manet's most famous example of enigmatic *specularity* is fascinating and will be discussed in detail in the fourth dialogue of this thesis.

²²⁰ C.M., 124. Jacques-Émile Blanche: *Manet adorait les calembours dont la mode est si passé*.

²²¹ R.B.F.B., 5. I, too, would like to propose that the distant mirror in Velasquez's “*Las Meninas*,” (c. 1656, Prado, Madrid), obliquely symbolizes the presence of royalty and its use only *suggests* the game of *specularity* played out between the artist and the spectator. In another pictorial instance, *specularity* had a well-defined, allegorical function as seen in the reflection of the *l'oeil de boeuf* mirror featured in Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Wedding Party*, 1434. Van Eyck signed his name and the date on the wall next to the mirror. Was he calling attention to the unreal distortion of the mirror or pointing to the social allegory?

²²² E.E.P., 292. Unlike the implied social commentary in art so important to Courbet, Manet “held moderate republican and anti-clerical beliefs that reflected his class and family traditions.” See also 296. “(Manet) was a painter not a pamphleteer.”

Bazille: Social non-conformity may be a compelling subject for an artist like you, Manet, but I'm more interested in those *cocottes* of yours. By any chance, do you have the names and addresses of the café models who posed for you listed in that little black book you carry around with you?

Burty: (Feigning disgust.) You artists all behave like tomcats in heat! You're always ready to tackle the first *Marie-couche-toi-là* that you run into!

Bazille: *Bof!* You literary types are just jealous because you don't have enough ink in your horn to keep up with us!²²³

(A ringing peal of delighted laughter spirals upward and echoes around in the barn-like ambience of the Guerbois. Amid a chorus of "*à la prochaine*," the comrades saunter slowly out onto the Grande-Rue des Batignolles while the waiter clears their table and the proprietor locks the door.)

This uninterrupted dialogue is meant to incorporate similar group discussions that would soon take place during the critical, postwar 1870s at the *Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes* on the Place Pigalle. Weekly gatherings continued with newer members replacing Monet, Pissarro and Sisley who all preferred to live in the *faubourgs*, outside of Paris, showing up now and then at the *Nouvelle-Athènes* to revive their former arguments, still debating their endless theories on painting. Zola distanced himself from the later café reunions as he became more of a published author with disciples of his own who met at his home on Sunday evenings.

²²³ "*Il n'y a plus d'encre au cornet*" signifies an impotent man. Le Robert's Dictionnaire des Expressions et des Locutions (Paris: Dictionnaire Le Robert, 1989) 463.

Manet would now begin to enjoy basking in his dashing status as the controversial *chef de la nouvelle école* of painting. Although a dandyish cane helped disguise his lameness, Manet's painful illness finally forced him to limit his physical movements during 1881 and 1882.²²⁴ Continuing to work long hours in his studio, showing up occasionally at the *Nouvelle-Athènes*, he gallantly hid his pain in public, in particular when that public was *une jolie femme*.

²²⁴ E.E.P., 303. It was in the *Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes* that, in 1873, "the younger members of the Batignollais began to plan their independent exhibition in which Manet declined to participate." They continued to gather there, thrashing out their exhibition strategies and nurturing relationships although most of the Impressionists had moved to the countryside. Manet, Morisot and Degas remained urbanites who spent only summer vacations outside of Paris. See also P.M., 243. In 1879, Manet's doctors prescribed a series of hydrotherapy treatments at Bellevue that isolated him from Paris for weeks at a time. "In the Fall of 1881, he was seen once again at the *Nouvelle-Athènes*, joking ironically about his foot." Because of his poor state of health, he regretfully told Mallarmé that he could not fulfill his friend's request to illustrate another one of his translations of a poem by Poe.

Cadre: The new studio

Prior to the Revolution, competitive exhibitions were open to academy artists only; after 1789, the Salon was opened to all artists, precipitating such a large number of entries that the appointment of a selection committee was necessitated, i.e., a Salon jury.¹

In 1806, the Emperor Napoléon I expelled live-in artists from the Louvre to make place for the art looted from Italy. The First Empire kept the royal tradition of aiding the arts by granting studios and/or lodgings to artists, reserving buildings like the *Institut de France* to function as art schools. Certain artists benefited from this royal custom which continued during the succession of political regimes that followed: the Bourbon Restoration, 1815-24, the reign of Louis Philippe, 1830-48, extending right through the Second Empire, 1852-70.²

In Manet's time, the artist had to shift for himself after finishing formal training in the *Académie des Beaux Arts* or in the private studio of a teacher of the stature of Thomas Couture.³ Storage sheds, former gymnasia and abandoned fencing schools became studios, often having lighting that came from above without direct sunlight. In July 1872, Manet settled happily into a former fencing academy building located near the *pont de l'Europe en plein Paris*, overlooking the below-street-level train tracks of the Gare St-Lazare.⁴ Situated on the *rez-de-chaussée*, it had four large bay windows that faced the rue

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Mosnier.⁵ He had room to keep his controversial paintings on permanent view, attracting an endless swarm of curiosity seekers, writers, art critics and close acquaintances.⁶

In this post-war studio, Berthe Morisot reappeared in a series of dazzling paintings, replacing Victorine Meurent as Manet's favorite model.⁷ Her intelligent face, riveting gaze and feminine charm seemed to hypnotize the painter-beholder. One senses that only the bourgeois propriety imposed by their class and the differences in age tempered their mutual attraction.⁸

Manet's life-long love of literature was manifested by his close friendships with poets and writers that remained a constant until his death.⁹ When Baudelaire died in 1867, Zola appeared as if on cue to defend Manet's artistic "revolt" via his newspaper articles and pamphlets.¹⁰ In 1873, Mallarmé entered into his life, a young poet with whom Manet instantly bonded.¹¹ They seemed an unlikely pair: the one an elegant, talented dandy, well off and gregarious; the other an intellectual dreamer, unassuming, plainly dressed and of modest means.¹² Yet, for ten years, Mallarmé visited Manet's studio every afternoon on his way home from his teaching position. Without a doubt they

⁵ S.W.M., 146. From a bay window of his studio, Manet painted his view of the street: "Rue Mosnier Decked with Flags", 1878. Cf. Monet's "Rue Montorgueil Decked with Flags," 1878. The two paintings offer a fine example of identical subject matter interpreted very differently by the two friends. Was the duplication of thematic compositions just mutual salutes or intentional rivalry? Unquestionably it was a form of specific specularly that was not merely accidental.

⁶ D.M., 261. Manet kept his *refusé* paintings on permanent view in his studio. Two years later, due to the clamor of endless streams of visitors and journalists, he lost his lease and he had to again move his studio down the street.

⁷ Ibid., 212. "Berthe Morisot est de retour dans sa peinture avec un éclat étonnant. Manet identifie en Berthe Morisot l'essence même des valeurs vers lesquelles il se tourne."

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¹⁰ P.M., 146-148. In 1865, the painter Antoine Guillemet introduced the twenty-six year old Zola to Manet at the Café Guerbois.

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In what follows, I suggest that Berthe Morisot acted as a catalytic force, helping to stabilize and formulate their triangle of artistic and intellectual networking.¹⁷ Manet, Morisot and Mallarmé were intimate friends who never yielded to vulgar emotional displays concerning their relationships, at least not as far as the public was aware.¹⁸ The artist and the poet had different relationships with Morisot.¹⁹ Her beauty, quick mind and strong talent earned Manet's respect while her sensitive intelligence and penetrating literary grasp gained Mallarmé's admiration and deep affection.²⁰ I suggest that, within

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Gender was the unspoken obstacle but it was tacitly overcome by mutual respect, steadfast loyalty and solid friendship that bound the three of them together throughout their lifetimes.²³ Outside of personal insight, is there any solid evidence extant that substantially supports an argument about Morisot’s magnetic role in this microcosm of three *provocateurs* of artistic and literary change?²⁴ It may be that the answer to this question lies in Manet’s sensitive, inner vision that guided his hand in sublime portrayals of his two friends. Through contemplation of two of his finest works in oils, one might sense the eloquent proof of my presumptions about their symbiotic relationship.²⁵ In

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Dialogue in Manet's new studio en plein Paris, 1873-74

While Berthe Morisot is posing, her mother, Madame Marie Cornélie Morisot, is embroidering and Manet is painting at his easel in the spacious new studio at # 4, rue de St. Pétersbourg, overlooking the Place de l'Europe, not far from the bustling Gare Saint-Lazare.

Morisot: May I please rest a moment, Édouard? My whole body is getting numb from this leaning pose.¹

Manet: Please hold it for just a second longer, Berthe, that greenish color of your eyes is elusive today ...*voilà*.² Thank you for these long hours of posing, *ma chère jeune amie*.

Mme Morisot: It's almost quarter after four; it's time for our afternoon tea and a *gôuter*. Would that inconvenience you, Monsieur Manet?

Manet: *Pas du tout!* My assistant usually brings in refreshments around this time; ah, here he is now. By the way, Berthe, I met that young poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, at Nina de Villard's literary salon last week.³ We hit it off right away so I asked him by this afternoon to meet you and take a look around the new studio. You'll appreciate his keen intellect and provocative poetic ideas.

Morisot: It would be stimulating to have a poet in our midst again. I miss Baudelaire's generous, romantic temperament. His intensely personal poetry expressed emotions that

¹ H.B.M., 107-108. *Berthe Morisot étendue*, 1873. (See Thesis Plate IV.) Morisot complained that her foot became numb when she posed long hours for Manet's *Le Repos*, 1872. (See Thesis Plate V.) Manet was known for working slowly, even his friends who modeled for him complained of fatigue, urging him to stop because it (the painting) "didn't need another touch."

² P.M., 163. "Her huge eyes were of so dark a green that they seemed almost black." (In fact, in this portrait her eyes are shown painted in a brown so dark that they appear to be black).

sometimes resonated deeply within me. I was particularly drawn to his prose poem “Hygiène” ...⁴

Manet: Not only was he a sentimental romantic, always in search of the impossible but he also had a keen sense of social and political affairs.⁵ I miss his lively companionship, too; we had many of the same interests. Mallarmé mentioned him as being one of his most admired literary heroes.⁶ Moreover, it seems that both he and Baudelaire have long been fascinated by the American poet, Edgar Poe, and the rhymed musicality of his “Raven.”⁷ Nina said that the *Parnasse contemporain* of ’66 published a group of Mallarmé’s poems. Come to think of it, perhaps Zola is acquainted with his work through those weekly readings that take place at Lemerre’s bookshop.⁸ I wonder what Zola or Goncourt might think about his poetry?⁹

Morisot: I thought I recognized his name because I read a group of his poems in the Parnassian collection of ’66 as well as a long dramatic poem in the next collection about an exotic but tragic heroine named “Hérodiade.” I was struck by her dark, spiritual

³ P.M., 197. When they met, Manet was in the process of painting Nina’s portrait *à la japonaise: La Dame aux éventails*, 1873. Nina was known under two last names: Nina de Villard or Nina de Callias.

⁴ H.B.M., 36. Higonnet observes Morisot adapted words from Baudelaire’s journal into her diary to fit her own personal situation, even using the same date, 1862, “as if it had been her own.”

⁵ Youssef Ishaghpour, *Aux Origines de l’art moderne* (Paris: La Différence, 1989) 30. The author quotes Bataille for whom Baudelaire was the “*quêteur d’impossible*.”

⁶ P.M., 198. An ardent admirer of Baudelaire, it seems that Mallarmé was impressed that the brilliant poet Baudelaire—*Baudelaire, the god*—had been an intimate friend of Manet for almost ten years.

⁷ C. Biet, *XIXe Siècle* (Baume-les-Dames: Editions Magnard, 1982) 283. In 1853, Baudelaire translated five stanzas of Poe’s *Raven*, VI to X, into French. Four decades later, in 1889, Mallarmé translated the same stanzas. Although both poets were fluent in English, it is not surprising that their translations of Poe reveal differences. “*Traduttore, traditore*,” as the Italians express the difficulties inherent in translations.

⁸ D.F.P.P., 19. The publisher Lemerre invited poets to read and discuss their poems at his bookstore located in the passage Choiseul.

⁹ G.P.A., 240. Edmond de Goncourt would write this perceptive entry on January 16, 1877: “Today Stéphane Mallarmé was one of my visitors. He is subtle, delicate, witty...his conversation showing nothing of the opaqueness of his poetry.”

anguish and strange, metallic essence combined with royal aloofness.¹⁰ Does he himself seem to be rather enigmatic or eccentric in any way?

Manet: No, on the contrary, he seems very shy, quiet and retiring; he has a soft, musical voice and exquisite manners as well. Anyway, patience must be one of his major virtues, too, since he teaches English to unruly schoolboys at the Lycée Fontanes.¹¹

Mme Morisot: (Chiding.) You know that Berthe is fond of modern poets, Édouard, but let's encourage her to associate with young men destined to be more successful. Don't frown at me, Berthe. You like to associate with those young Bohemians in your radical circle of artists none of whom will ever earn a proper living.¹² I am merely pointing out as a concerned mother that you must consider your future. Everyone agrees that it is better to marry and make some sacrifices than remain independent and be in a position that is really not one thing or another.¹³ Look at your friend, Marcello, who doesn't quite fit in any more despite her wonderful talent, aristocratic origins and considerable wealth.¹⁴

Manet: (Smiles, winks at Berthe.) Yes, Madame, you're right, of course, but don't worry. Mallarmé is well married with a daughter and a son even though he's the same age as Berthe.

¹⁰ Daniel Leuwers, *Mallarmé Poésies et autres textes* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1998) 287. *Hérodiade* was sent to be published in March, 1869. It contains an abundance of "mineral imagery," a thematic popularized by Parnassian poets.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 287. The school is known today as the Lycée Condorcet, #8, rue du Havre, 9th arr., very near the Gare Saint-Lazare and not far from Manet's studio.

¹² H.B.M., 41. Mme Morisot said: "Those fellows have no brain; they're weathercocks who play games with you."

¹³ *Ibid.*, 81-85. Her mother did not mince words. Cornélie Morisot told her daughter candidly that she did not believe that she had an exceptional talent and now that Berthe was thirty, her chances for a well-placed marriage was at risk. Mme Morisot's "letters are filled with fears for Berthe's future."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 80. Often women artists, writers and musicians of the nineteenth century chose to use a man's name for obvious reasons. "Marcello" was the professional name of Adele Collona, a young widow, wealthy socialite and accomplished sculptor.

Morisot: (Annoyed.) Don't rub it in, Édouard. I'm not ready to give up my freedom yet, Mother. In fact, I am planning to show with Monet, Renoir, Degas and the other independents. Since we're seen as radical artists and unwelcome to enter the Academy's Salon competition, we're having a private art exhibition of our own which is to take place very soon in one of Nadar's buildings on the Boulevard des Capucines.¹⁵

Manet: You know that your professional ambitions aren't problematic for my brother Eugène. He's so smitten with you that he has enlisted the whole Manet family to persuade you to become my sister-in-law.¹⁶ Ah, there's the doorbell! Well, hello there...we have two guests! Eugène, we just mentioned you; and Mallarmé, do come in please...let me introduce you to the ladies.

Eugène Manet: I hope I'm not interrupting your session with Berthe?

Manet: Not at all, Eugène. Mallarmé, may I present Madame Morisot and her daughter, Berthe? Do come in and join us. Would you gentlemen care for a glass of port?

Morisot: I'm so pleased to meet you, Monsieur Mallarmé.¹⁷ Édouard told us that you admire our dear friend Baudelaire as much as we do; will you be reading your poetry at one of our soirées soon?

Eugène Manet: Careful, sir! You'll fall under the spell of her persuasive charms and grant whatever she wishes. It must be those hypnotic eyes of hers... right, Édouard?¹⁸

¹⁵ S.W.M., 95. Gaspard Félix Tournachon, better known as "Nadar," famed photographer and daredevil balloonist. He also photographed himself and his wife stuffed into the (prop) basket of his "flying" balloon obviously shot in his studio against a fake background sky. Obviously he had a lively sense of humour.

¹⁶ H.B.M., 84. "Manet's wife, Suzanne, (cried out) 'I would so much have liked to have Mlle Berthe as a sister-in-law!' " Moreover, it seems that Édouard Manet facilitated and encouraged "a scheme" for an unchaperoned trip planned for Berthe and Eugène that was considered highly improper, by bourgeois social standards, for an unmarried couple.

¹⁷ P.P., 69. In her article, Heather Lemonedes states that "Stéphane Mallarmé met Berthe Morisot in Édouard Manet's atelier, 1873."

¹⁸ P.M.,163. Her huge eyes were inherited from her mother's beauty but "some unusual quality of her own gave her offbeat beauty a magical charm."

Manet: Not only that, she's stubborn when she has a goal in mind and doesn't give up easily.

Mallarmé: (Graciously.) Her charms must be intellectual ones as well as magical judging by the intelligence reflected in her marvelous eyes. To tell the truth, Mademoiselle Morisot, I already have your name from Edgar Degas, who proudly told me that you are the only woman who shows with that new group of talented young artists.¹⁹

Morisot: (Blushing.) Monsieur Degas is not only an excellent artist himself but also a dear friend who often encourages me to continue my pursuit of a career in art.²⁰

Manet: (Jealous.) In fact, one of her best paintings is hanging over here: "The Harbor at Lorient".²¹ I admired it so much that she made a gift of it to me. Once before, in fact, I was so intrigued by the landscape study she made from the Trocadéro hill that was shown in the Salon of 1866, that I painted the same view from the same spot and showed it in my private exhibition pavilion of 1867.²²

Morisot: (Coily.) Édouard's work has inspired one of my colleagues, a very serious young avant-gardist, to paint his own versions of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia*.²³

¹⁹ H.B.M., 112. The perceptive critic Castagnary wrote in 1874: "These four young men and a woman who for five or six years made the jury tremble." See also 146. In 1877, Paul Mantz, Salon critic of the Gazette, wrote: "The truth is that there's only one Impressionist in the rue Le Peletier group: that is *Berthe Morisot*. (The italics are mine.)"

²⁰ Ibid., 47, 108-109. Cf. R.B.F.B., 61. "Edgar Degas was also among those who competed for Berthe's attentions..."

²¹ P.M., 170. See also H.B.M., 63. Berthe must have been very pleased because "she greatly admired Manet's talent."

²² John Richardson, *Édouard Manet*, (New York: Phaidon Publishers Inc. 1958) 122, note 9.

²³ Biet, *XIXe siècle*, 254-255. Cézanne titled his copy: *Une moderne Olympia*. Morisot is teasing and playing word games with Manet; both recognized that Cézanne's "copies" were satirical and even a bit mean spirited. But could it have been that Cézanne was merely trying to impress an art patron, by demonstrating his mastery of light? His *Olympia* has a glow "worthy of a goddess." Cf. David Downie, "Doctoring the Impressionists." *Art & Antiques*, Summer 1999: 49-53. Cézanne's picture was itself copied by Dr. Paul Gauchet, who used the pseudonym of *Paul van Ryssel* when he made copies of Cézanne and

Manet: (Snaps.) You mean that boorish Cézanne, *le jaloux*, I suppose?²⁴

Mallarmé: (Startled, changes the subject.) For one artist to quote another is quite a strong compliment. Yet, I've noticed that whenever an artist does so, it's usually inspired by either admiration or jealousy, *mais c'est la vie!* As I glance around the studio, Manet, I notice a series of portraits of Mademoiselle Morisot. Is she the "*fée*" of this wonderful space?²⁵

Morisot: (Amused.) What a nice thought but I would describe myself as more of the "*démon*" of this Atelier-Salon.²⁶ Just as much entertaining as painting goes on here since Édward has become so famous!²⁷ Meanwhile, I continually nag him to come outdoors to try our group's new style of painting. He insists that painting is a matter of insight and not based on looking at nature as we do.²⁸

Manet: Aha, so you finally admit to bedeviling me incessantly to desert my studio and join you and your *plein air Batignollais* during your painting sessions in the full

Van Gogh. Perhaps Gauchet may have counterfeited as well as collected works that were sometimes used by the two artists as barter for medical care or financial aid.

²⁴ P.M., 166. Morisot was aware of the motivations behind Cézanne's cynical "copies" but she was getting even with Manet for his attentions to Eva Gonzalez, his student. Her letters as well as her behavior reveal Berthe's and her mother's antipathy for poor Eva. Moreover, "Manet seemed to enjoy keeping their jealousies stirred up with obvious attentions to Eva."

²⁵ D.M., 212. Four or five portraits of her rapidly appeared; she seemed to be the simultaneously secret and evident aspect of his work at this time. Darragon notes: In this studio, "*Berthe Morisot est de retour dans sa peinture avec un éclat étonnant.*" The word "*fée*," meaning *fairy*, therefore "magical" by extension, belongs to Darragon's vocabulary in referring to Morisot. Perhaps he also invoked *démon* to give currency to Baudelaire's influence on Manet's painting *Le Repos*, that portrayed Morisot leaning back on a divan, seeming to be in a deep introspective *rêverie* comparable to the poet's moody poem "*Spleen*" from *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Manet had earlier painted a remarkably similar picture of an exotic woman reclining and wearing a voluminously skirted white dress; it was the *Portrait de Jeanne Duval*, 1862. Jeanne was Baudelaire's erstwhile mistress, with whom he had a stormy but addictive relationship for many years.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 212. Darragon opines that "Baudelairean" imagery evoked the *femme fatale* in Morisot, a quality that fascinated Manet.

²⁷ R.B.F.B., 63. The fashionable artist studio of the day constituted of a kind of cosmopolitan salon. "Manet's studio...attracted the adventurous *beau monde*...financiers, wealthy foreigners, journalists, military officers, their wives and mistresses."

²⁸ S.W.M., 111. "For him there could be no method, no scientific truth, no fool-proof style."

daylight.²⁹ The campaign started at the Guerbois; you've all been pestering me from all sides, trying to convert me to your audacious *plein air* technique.

Morisot: (Retorts.) You see, Monsieur Mallarmé, it's Édouard who's the real leader of our group. They rallied around him and met weekly at the Café Guerbois to have heated arguments about painting theories and to devise strategies that would subvert the Academy's control of art through its annual Salons. Now they've moved to the Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes, a rowdy bar on Place Pigalle, in a quarter that all proper young ladies avoid, *hélas!*³⁰ So I'm forced to lobby Édouard to paint with us when I'm in his studio.

Eugène Manet: Why are you resisting painting *en plein air* with Monet, Berthe and the others, Édouard? I know for a fact that Monet has asked you to come along to Argenteuil this summer. It's not far from our summerhouse in Gennevilliers; the natural light is magnificent and there are picnics, boating parties and other social events to paint; what can you lose? As a Sunday painter, I'm a rank amateur but I'm learning more about the shimmering effect of daylight and atmosphere on opaque, pure colors by working alongside them *en plein air*.³¹

Manet: There you have it, Mallarmé, now there are two against one! All right, I give up! Maybe I'll learn from their wild theory that juxtaposes short strokes of complementary

²⁹ E.E.P., 302. "It was through Morisot that (Manet) was introduced to this group, which was to have an important influence on his later work." (In 1867 he had already worked outdoors in Boulogne and at Longchamp racetrack.) See also B.O.C.M., 158. "*Sans Berthe Morisot...Manet peut-être n'aurait pas fait de peinture impressionniste.*"

³⁰ P.M., 190. Manet had constant arguments at the Guerbois with the Batignollais about their theories of painting in the open air as opposed to his own preference for the atelier and its controlled lighting..

³¹ E.E.P., 340. Through the experience of *plein air* painting, the group became aware that visual reality changed constantly. The core group of impressionists was Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Sisley, Fantin-Latour and Morisot.

colors to translate light on objects, giving the impression of three-dimensional shape.³²

But I anticipate that such a method would be too scientific and too tedious to hold my interest for long. Besides I'm attached to my own sense of form and strong dark silhouettes. As you'll notice, Mallarmé, the depiction of form in their work is more open and not as clearly defined as it is in mine.³³ I prefer solid shapes, not the vague, unfinished manner of painting as proselytized by Monet and Berthe.³⁴

Morisot: (Protesting.) But you'll discover that the artificial light of your studio has darkened your perception of color and is vastly inferior to the brilliant hues that natural light and open space will surely bring to your palette. While Edma and I were students of Corot, I learned to appreciate the atmospheric shimmer of pure color by painting outdoors with him.³⁵ He deviated from traditional landscape renderings by developing a light-drenched approach that's unmistakably his.³⁶

Mallarmé: It seems that all the arts are going through some sort of crisis these days. In spite of our social and political conservatism, I believe that poetry, like painting, must continue to change in form and content in order to fully realize its power to transcend ordinary reality.³⁷ Yet, on the other hand, I also find that writing creatively about today's art is a satisfying challenge for me as well. I wrote several critiques on the subject while

³² Ibid., 341. "The Impressionists used pure colors, setting unblended strokes of intense hue side by side so they blended optically when viewed from a distance. Dissolution of form was unavoidable, it was an intrinsic element in this new broken line technique of painting."

³³ S.W.M., 108-110. Manet had a preference for "massing and solid form" versus Monet's "open form."

³⁴ P.M., 205. "Manet liked solidity, and was repelled by the vague, the unformulated and the diffuse."

³⁵ H.B.M., 26. Like most young students "Morisot's early canvases that still survive do resemble Corot's."

³⁶ E.E.P., 201, 214. Compare "Corot's vanguardist, light-illuminated landscapes to the dark, solid, thick forms of the Barbizon painters who followed him."

³⁷ Pascal Durand, *Poésies de Stéphane Mallarmé* (Saint-Amand (Cher): Gallimard, 1998) 93. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as D.P.S.M. A major change was related to Baudelaire whose modernity affected Mallarmé's work in that he preferred the older poet's dynamism to the inertia of the Parnassian poets.

in London for the International Exposition but disillusionment about a successful literary career in England brought me back to France.³⁸

Eugène Manet: Why not enjoy the challenge of writing critical journalism on art here in Paris? Édouard provokes a riot whenever he exhibits his work because the press lampoons his radical style and unconventional subject matter.³⁹ The journals incite an imbecilic public to react hysterically to his works by publishing narrow-minded critiques along with repulsive caricatures of his paintings.⁴⁰ Of course, the conservative members of each Salon jury find it politic to castigate new forms of art, using “morality” as an excuse. The Mac-Mahon administration fears that public stability would be threatened if society should develop an open mind about artistic freedom.⁴¹ I wonder if it’s the word “freedom” that makes the officials so nervous?

Manet: That’s an excellent idea, Eugène. Those who best understand my work seem to be literary intellectuals like Baudelaire, Astruc and Zola.⁴² In fact, poor Zola defended my *Fifre* before I even met him and was sacked by *L’Événement* for his favorable

³⁸ M.É., 409. Mallarmé’s “Letters about the International Fair in London” appeared in the *National*, October 39, 1871. He moved to Paris from London in November of 1871, settling in a modest apartment at 29, Rue de Moscou in the 8th arrondissement.

³⁹ P.M., 109. The elite Salon audience of bygone days had now “changed to a vaster public who relished the battle between the Academy and the artists.” Now it was a public that consisted of modern, middle-class shopkeepers, professionals, money men and bureaucrats, many suddenly wealthy and lacking any profound literary and artistic education.

⁴⁰ C.M., 60, 144, 162. Seven years after *Olympia*’s scandal, Jules Claretie wrote a venomous article about her creator. Cf. also H.M.C., 54. Cham, caricaturist in *Charivari*, mocked Manet’s strange perspective in *Episode d’une course de taureaux*, (the Bullfight), 1864, by sketching a deformed, “microscopic bull” humorously scaled to the size of a rat.

⁴¹ C.P.M.L., 210. In 1872, “sensing there was a revolution around the corner” due to “the Communard’s depravity” the government re-imposed censorship of the “orgy of songs” popular at the cafés-concerts. The government equated all radical ideas with the anarchical *Communards*, considering them dangerous and subversive. Female communards were deliberately branded prostitutes instead of fierce resistance fighters.

⁴² Baudelaire, Zola and Astruc all fell under the charm of Manet whose social position, audacity and talent for stirring up scandal gave them, no doubt, vicarious pleasure in someone who symbolized Parisian independence and audacity.

review.⁴³ Having said that, would you find writing about my work an interesting challenge for you, Mallarmé?

Mallarmé: Well, as I look around, I must admit that I've never seen paintings quite like yours, Manet.⁴⁴ You must have a complicated theory of art judging by the uniqueness of your pictures.

Manet: Ah, there's the rub, Mallarmé. Quite frankly I don't have a specific formula: I paint what I see.⁴⁵ *Voilà, c'est tout!*

Mallarmé: (Arches eyebrows.) Is it really all that simple?

Manet: (Eyes twinkling.) Well, I feel that it is comparable to Caesar's claim: *Veni, vidi, vici.*⁴⁶

Mallarmé: (Ruefully.) *Eh bien*, so you challenge my poetic insight by parrying my question with a Latin aphorism! So be it. I'll begin with these portraits of Mademoiselle Morisot: are they as spontaneous as some of them appear to be?

Manet: Yes and no. For me, the only "raison d'être" for a painting is that it pleases its creator.⁴⁷ When I told Couture that modern painting need only to reflect its times without repeating hackneyed classical themes or allegories, he disdainfully dismissed me as just

⁴³ E.E.P., 300. Manet, touched by Zola's defense of his *Fifre*, wrote to Zola expressing a wish to make his acquaintance. Cf. Novelene Ross, *Manet's Bar at the Folies Bergère*, cynically states that Zola was noted "for his skill of self-advertisement."

⁴⁴ Michel Dragnet, *Mallarmé. Écrits sur l'art* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998) 307. In *Les Impressionnistes et Édouard Manet*, Mallarmé comments on the singularity of Manet's work: "*de curieux et singuliers tableaux... ces peintures étranges.*"

⁴⁵ C.M., 61. Manet used these words in a reply to a venomous article by Jules Claretie. It's possible that Manet had in mind that his "seeing" was an act more abstract than optical, that is to say, more "insight" than mere "sight." Cf. R.B.F.B., 15. M.J. Frielander noted that Manet saw "what he expected to see, what he was on the look out for, what he loved." Cf. Symons, *Symbolist Movement in Literature*, 75. Symons quotes J.-K. Huysmans: "I write what I see" a remark that seems to establish a peculiar sort of symmetry between sight and imaginative insight. One might assume that there was a common *visual aesthetic* operating at the time between realist literature and art.

⁴⁶ *Nouveau Petit Larousse, Locutions Latines et Étrangères* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1972) XVI. Latinism "*pour exprimer la facilité et la rapidité d'un opinion, d'un fait, etc.*"

⁴⁷ S.W.M., 111. "I paint as I feel like painting" an exasperated Manet would often declare to his friends.

“another Daumier.”⁴⁸ However, to play out our little game here, I could plead Couture’s case by expounding a lofty, moralistic “raison d’être” for these portraits. Therefore, you might say that Berthe represents bourgeois society’s survival and recovery from the terrible tragedy of the Commune and the trauma that followed it. Feminine intelligence, elegance, vitality, daring and liberty defines her in these portraits where she incarnates the heroism of the city of Paris thus becoming a paradigm of *la parisienne de la vie moderne*.⁴⁹

Mallarmé: (Stroking his goatee.) Ah, yes, I see. Yet, I would say that, when considered in chronological order, her eyes in three of the portraits inform *this* viewer that something more subliminal is taking place in each one because of the subtle changes you portrayed concerning the direction and intensity of her gaze.⁵⁰

Manet: Oh, yes? And how so?

Mallarmé: I sense that a personal transformation is taking place, beginning with her diverted gaze and detached presence in *Le Balcon* followed by the moody atmosphere of Baudelairian “spleen” that permeates *Le Repos*.⁵¹ After that deep subjective introspection, I see a new straightforward confidence in her gaze in this last painting that’s now on your easel; it has a slightly amused yet fearless regard that directly engages the eyes of the spectator. In my critical opinion, in this series of portraits, you have caught a profound spiritual evolution that’s revealed by the intriguing hints you have given to Mademoiselle

⁴⁸ C.M., 20. “Allez, mon pauvre garçon, vous ne serez jamais que le Daumier de votre temps.”

⁴⁹ R.B.F.B., 71. Ross theorizes on the “Myth of the ideal Parisienne” as incarnated by such respectable women as Berthe Morisot or in his portraits of *demi-mondaines* such as the ebullient and talented Méry Laurent “who counted Manet as one of her lovers and claimed Mallarmé as a suitor.”

⁵⁰ The chronological order of the portraits mentioned by Mallarmé is: *Le Balcon*, 1868-69; *Le Repos*, 1870; (See Thesis Plate VIII.) *Berthe Morisot étendue*, 1873. (See Thesis Plate VI.) Only this last portrait of the above three identifies Morisot; Mme Morisot had asked Manet not to use her name in the other two, probably to avoid any taint from Manet’s notoriety associated with his “scandalous paintings.”

Morisot's eyes.⁵² Therefore, my dear Manet, I don't translate this suite of enigmatic portraits as a mere allegory about the heroic evolution of Paris' postwar bourgeoisie.

Well, now do you feel that I qualify as *the* critic you need to champion your cause?

Manet: (Amused.) How did you arrive at such a rapid critique that's so antithetical to my own hypothetical one based on conventional, pseudo-poetic methods?

Mallarmé: (Eyes crinkling.) I used an ancient Latin formula: *Veni, vidi, vici*.

Manet: (Guffaws.) Did you hear that ironic quip, Berthe? You can hold your own as a wit, my friend.⁵³ Let's drink to many more of your acute observations concerning my work...*salut!*⁵⁴

Morisot: Since you are discussing pictorial analysis, I would like to offer my perception of Édouard's work. (Smiling.) In honor of Monsieur Mallarmé, I propose to compare Édouard's paintings to modern poetry. I think that his paintings accomplish what Parnassian poets advocate: he eliminates the excesses of romantic tradition by ridding the pictorial plane of unessential detail through a process of aesthetic reduction.⁵⁵

Mallarmé: As a former Parnassian, I partially agree with your analogy but the pure theorist of that school contemplates only the "surface reality" of the material world in the manner of the philosophers of antiquity; that is to say, he meditates solely on the "object"

⁵¹ D.M., 220-221. Darragon records that this was the assessment of the poet Banville. "*Théodore de Banville...place le tableau dans une qualité de spleen... des Fleurs du Mal.*"

⁵² H.B.M., 107. "Manet revealed Morisot's new 'self confidence' in his 1873 *Berthe Morisot Reclining*."

⁵³ See footnote 9. Goncourt wrote that Mallarmé was "subtle, delicate, witty."

⁵⁴ M.É., 297-324. Mallarmé would defend Manet's art refused in 1874 Salon with an article titled: *Le Jury de peinture pour 1874 et M. Manet*. In 1876, he wrote another article: *The Impressionists and Edouard Manet*, (translated into English by G.T. Robinson) that was published in the London *Art Monthly Review*.

⁵⁵ D.F.P.P., 1-2. "An observation of external reality...with the calm deliberation of the scholar (without the passion of the unpredictable lyricist)." Mallarmé broke with this Parnassian ideal by developing his elliptical approach towards material objects, i.e., he chose not to name an object because his imperative was to *suggest* it. Cf. Guthrie, *French Literature and Thought Since the Revolution*. 299. There is a strong relationship between Parnassian realist poetry and the realism of the visual arts. Most Parnassian poets evoked either highly polished sculptural forms or developed visualizations of luscious, savage color.

itself.⁵⁶ He has to work tirelessly to perfect his poem in order to reach an idealized perfection of beauty that can be compared to that of a marble statue, impeccably polished.⁵⁷ Such a viewpoint is more in keeping with Courbet's "poetic" world of realism rather than with the enigmatic subtleties that Manet brings to his naturalistic vision of the material world.⁵⁸ The Parnassians lack mystery; they *say* rather than *suggest*.⁵⁹

Morisot: In other words, Courbet paints raw, rural realism with a crude flavor like simple peasant cuisine, while Manet's urbane realism serves up a lighter, more sophisticated fare that's partially "digested" like the contents of Gargantua's stomach!

Manet: (Pretends shock.) *Quoi?* Berthe! That's a nauseating idea!

Morisot: (Giggles at her Rabellaisian imagery but argues on.) *Revenons à nos moutons!*

Courbet *looks* at the present, Manet is *in* the present!⁶⁰ Let's consider the fact that his work is free of sentimental or narrative text and he creates it solely for himself. Doesn't that fit the aesthetic formula of the "Art for Art's Sake" school?

Mallarmé: Agreed. Manet's work contains no direct reference to meaning but seems to give us something beyond a mere mirror image of "what he sees" as is the case with the Parnassians.⁶¹ Maybe it is because he allows us to see the reality of the paint itself that may be too vulgar for the Salon's *poncifs* because it violates the conventional idea of

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1. The Parnassian school represented a new aesthetic: "A change of emphasis from (Romanticism) to the more accurate observation... of concrete reality."

⁵⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) 83.

Mallarmé accepts in order to reject and "goes beyond the Parnassians." See also: D.F.P.P., 32.

"Parnassianism... made specific reference to systematic study and the factual observation of the external forms of reality."

⁵⁸ E.E.P., 266. "Courbet's reality (was) palpable." In his *Manet*, Bataille further observed that, although he was the first realist master and preceded Manet, "Courbet's... realism was not yet stripped of eloquence."

⁵⁹ D.M., 177. Mallarmé wrote to Huret: "*Les Parnassiens, eux, prennent la chose entièrement et la montrent; par là ils manquent de mystère.*" See also Symons, *Symbolist Movement in Literature*, 3. Symons thinks that Zola and the Parnassians (as realists) "practiced 'saying' rather than 'suggesting'."

⁶⁰ S.W.M., 23. Manet's painting of the *Street Singer*, "with her absence of past or future, places her *only* in the present; she may stand for his revolutionary contribution to art: *the discovery of the present.*"

“seamless illusion” as the primary *règle sacrée* of painting.⁶² As you observed, Manet’s technique is remarkably free of meticulous detailing, thus liberating the act of painting from the tiresome trivialities of its anecdotal past. With somewhat the same reductive process, I’m trying to use only nouns and adjectives to eliminate poetic pedantry that modern poets have inherited.⁶³ I want my poetry to portray, *not the thing* (as the Parnassians do) but *the effect* that it produces.⁶⁴ And so, in much the same way that Manet is inventing new painting, I am inventing a new language.⁶⁵

Morisot: Really? I can’t wait to read your next collection. You’re reinforcing my feeling that, as a mimetic device, “aesthetic illusion” is a common denominator of the painter/poet equation. Isn’t this the *Zeitgeist* effect that attracts you to Manet’s style?⁶⁶

Manet: (Interrupts.) I warned you, my friend! She’s like a dog with a bone and won’t give it up until all that Rabelaisian *substantifique moelle* is thoroughly digested.⁶⁷

Forgive the pun!

Morisot: (Not intimidated.) As I was saying, I feel that certain aspects of “illusion” irrevocably relate painting to poetic vision and vice versa. Poets, since Horace and Du Bellay, have aspired to “paint” with words and, conversely, painters have longed to be

⁶¹ D.F.P.P., 39. “Hugo (reoriented the early Parnassian poetry of) Gautier’s Romanticism towards the more minute observation of reality.”

⁶² M.É., 298. *Le Jury de peinture pour 1874 et M. Manet*. This was Mallarmé’s first article on Manet’s work that simultaneously explained and defended two pictures refused by the Salon: *Bal masqué à l’Opéra* and *Hirondelles*.

⁶³ Biet, *Le XIXe siècle*, See the article by J. Schérer, *Grammaire de Mallarmé*. 290. Cf. F.M., 235. Mallarmé was “inventing a new language” that had its genesis in *Hérodiade*, 1864.

⁶⁴ H.E.M. 19. Mallarmé’s letter written to his friend Cazalis in 1864: *Peindre, non la chose, mais l’effet qu’elle produit*. In using the verb “to paint,” Mallarmé “demonstrates how closely he relates the methods of the two arts.”

⁶⁵ Édouard Dujardin, *Mallarmé par un des siens*. (Paris: Éditions Messin, 1936) 60. “*Mais ce grand écrivain... parle une certaine langue, qu’en réalité il s’est créée lui-même. Il y avait dans ces recherches grammaticales, dans ces dislocations de la phrase, quelque chose... d’aller au delà du réel.*”

⁶⁶ Perhaps Mallarmé might have used “*l’air du temps*” which is analogous to the meaning of “*Zeitgeist*.”

⁶⁷ Rabelais’ famous aphorism from the introduction to *Gargantua*, his bawdy Renaissance satire that made fun of medieval mores. I have borrowed it to suggest Morisot’s tenacity and Manet’s witticisms.

“poetic” as you have just applied the term to Courbet’s realism.⁶⁸ Each artist and poet interprets and manipulates reality by creating a personal “illusion.” For example, my impression of the world is that of “filtered, fleeting reality” as is manifested in my paintings. My style is more “suggestive” of material appearances than that of Édouard who has a more solid technique; in fact, he refers to my paintings as looking “unfinished.”⁶⁹

Mallarmé: It’s interesting that you use the word “suggestive,” it’s my ideal form of poetry!

Manet: (Impatient.) You both sound like a pair of bourgeois economists! Berthe is conserving paint and Mallarmé is husbanding words while all that really matters to me is the reality of the painting itself!⁷⁰ Seriously though, I believe we must cultivate some form of personalized illusion, it is the *lingua franca* of the arts. Otherwise, the cold eye of Nadar’s camera could easily replace us. All things considered, photography may best reflect reality without the subjective interference of an emotional painter or a sentimental poet.⁷¹

⁶⁸ In his *Défense et Illustration de la langue française*, Joachim Du Bellay advises young poets to follow Horace’s dictum: *Ut pictura poesis*. Cf. D.F.P.P., 54. Pierre Michel asserts that Théophile Gautier’s poem *Émaux et camées* essentially reflects “the poet’s intimate affinity with the techniques of the painter rather than those of the sculptor.”

⁶⁹ S.W.M., 88. The need for a “shorthand style” to capture changing reality influenced Morisot’s “sketchy” nervous style of brushwork.

⁷⁰ P.M., 162. Théodore Duret realized this as Manet impulsively added a series of irrelevant still-life objects to his portrait thus enhancing the *painting* itself. He instinctively used *forms* that he wanted, choosing not to emphasize the *reality* of the scene.

⁷¹ Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1997) 207. “Faced with the invention of photography, the Slon painter, Paul Delaroche is alleged to have said: ‘From today painting is dead!’ ” See S.W.M., 96-97. “The glamour of photography would soon wear off.” The truthful eye of the camera coldly recorded unflattering physical details, opening up a whole new field for artists who became “retouchers,” i. e., cosmetically “correcting” reality, thus re-creating the illusion of a painting! Photographers used theatrical painted backgrounds, blending them effectively into the photographed subject matter, imitating the methods of the artist.

Morisot: What a distressing idea! I couldn't survive in a world without escapist dreams or impassioned imaginations! A camera is only a scientific mechanism that lacks soul and humanity; with cold indifference it judges humans and objects to be equal in value.

Manet: (Winks at Mallarmé.) Maybe that's what all art should convey: an absolute *impartiality* that expresses no personal commentary or subjectivity, no emotional involvement whatsoever.

Morisot: *Mais non*, Édouard! For the true artist, such an attitude would be difficult to sustain *ad infinitum*.⁷² Even Nadar cannot resist artifice and dramatic illusion to enhance his photography; his studio is piled up with painted backgrounds and theatrical props. It's ironic: he uses *trompe l'oeil* methods to imitate painting!⁷³ Did you see his photograph of the explorer, Count de Brazza, seated on a cardboard rock with a faked beach and seascape backdrop, flanked by two young negro models dressed as "sailors"?⁷⁴ *C'est très drôle!*

Manet: (Teases her.) Well, I'll be frugal with words, too, like Mallarmé, and say it all boils down to which "-ism" you prefer: Romanticism, and its excess of subjectivity or Parnassianism, and its excess of objectivity. *Voilà!*

Eugène Manet: Sorry to interrupt these philosophical musings by interjecting a bit of domestic reality, Berthe, but your mother's ready to leave and I'm going to escort you both home. Nice to have met you, Mallarmé, I'm sure we'll see each again soon. See you later, Édouard.

⁷² B.O.C.M., 162. "Manet's *Portrait of Mallarmé* is an exception. Its eloquence is discreet, but it is eloquent none the less." (It was not "silent" as Bataille applies the term to the non-narrative aspect of Manet's *oeuvre*.)

⁷³ S.W.M., 95-97. "At first, photography tried to emulate paintings through artifice, avoiding its unvarnished realism."

Manet: (To Mallarmé.) You'll meet the Morisot family soon at one my wife's musical soirées that we have on Thursdays. Like us, the Morisots entertain artists, writers and musicians at their Tuesday soirées, often having Degas and Corot to dinner.⁷⁵ They're a well-bred family and excellent company, especially Berthe and her sister Edma, who are both painters, but Berthe is the most talented artist of the two. What do you think of her? She can hold her own in intellectual conversations, as you no doubt noticed.

Mallarmé: Yes, I agree, talent *and* brains! But, you know, in spite of Mademoiselle Morisot's self-assured bearing, I sense that she's very vulnerable. Her eyes reflect a deep sadness in some of your portraits, especially the one where she is holding an open fan in front of her face. Although the pose is flirtatious, the expression glimpsed in her eyes paradoxically conveys unhappiness.⁷⁶ But then, I find that a hint of mystery is a most attractive trait in a woman, don't you?⁷⁷

Manet: (Evasive.) I find that, unlike men, all women are moody and mercurial. *Mais, vive la différence!* (As they smirk at each other and drink a toast to the women in their lives, the studio assistant arrives to announce the arrival of the novelist, Edmond de Goncourt.)

Manet: Please come in Goncourt, have you met Mallarmé?

Goncourt: Yes, we met briefly at a literary salon several months ago.

⁷⁴ S.W.M., 97. Schneider uses this amusing photo taken by Nadar to point out the mimetic side of photography. Ironically, portrait painters made a comeback as retouchers, set designers and creators of *trompe l'oeil* effects.

⁷⁵ H.B.M., 20, 110. Cf. Philippe Huisman, *Berthe Morisot*. 58. Degas knew Morisot before the others and regularly frequented the Morisots along with Corot who was invited to dine with them on Tuesdays.

⁷⁶ H.B.M., 86-87. According to Higonnet, Morisot's expressive face betrayed her frustrations. She gave up her dreams of a career as an independent artist for social acceptance. The Manet that she would marry was Eugène, Édouard's amiable brother who fortunately supported wholeheartedly her passion for her art.

⁷⁷ R.G.S.L., 132, n.235. The "frank pleasure and delight in the sensuality of women" was a penchant shared by Manet and Mallarmé. They even shared an infatuation for the same lovely *courtesane*, Méry Laurent.

Mallarmé: You were there with Flaubert and Turgenev, I believe?⁷⁸

Goncourt: That's right. We were discussing realism and naturalism, of course. It seems that Zola is planning a vast project based upon the ideas of literary "naturalism" that Jules and I first conceived in *Germinie Lacerteux*. But, after all, as Flaubert said, any form of imitation is flattering, *n'est-ce pas?*⁷⁹ I hope I'm not imposing, Manet, by dropping by so often to see your work in progress, the *Bal Masqué à l'Opéra* that celebrates my boisterous carnival scene?⁸⁰

Manet: Of course not. (Explains.) You see, Mallarmé, this scene I'm painting is reminiscent of a notorious one in Goncourt's play *Henriette Maréchal* that was staged at the Peletier Opera house which was recently ravaged by fire as you know. Well, my dear Goncourt, what do you think?

Goncourt: I find it a wonderful *déjà vu*, I wish Jules were here to see it, too. He would love those delicious young maskers swimming in that undulating sea of black top hats; you've really caught the frenetic gaiety and veiled debauchery typical of our *sans souci* revelry. And how cunning of you to show that provocative red-booted leg dangling over the balcony rail!⁸¹ The sensory effect of those luscious colors splashed on the undulating

⁷⁸ Robert Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1971). For about eight years, Gustave Flaubert and the Russian novelist, Ivan Sergeitch Turgenev, were warm friends and dined regularly with the Goncourts' literary circle at the famed Rive Gauche restaurant owned by the acclaimed chef, Modeste Magny. Baldick re-creates a decade of regular, private dinner conversations at the trendy restaurant where leading literary figures enjoyed good food, spicy gossip and enduring friendships as well as rivalries.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 239. "Zola incurred the jealousy of the elder Goncourt who had welcomed Zola in 1865 as a disciple. Zola absorbed the Goncourt brothers' literary theory about naturalism based on observation of reality as lived in the lower working classes of society." Edmond later resented the success of Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* cycle of novels.

⁸⁰ D.M., 227-30. In 1873, Edmond de Goncourt paid regular visits to the studio, 4, rue de Saint-Pétersbourg, to see "*Le Bal Masqué à l'Opéra*." (See Thesis Plate IX.) Goncourt wrote in his Journal, November 20, 1873: "Today I was in Manet's studio looking at his picture *Le Bal à l'Opéra*, which is, you might say, the setting for the first act of *Henriette Maréchal*." This play created a scandal in 1865, the *same year* as Manet's *Olympia* made her shocking Salon appearance!

⁸¹ Manet would again return to this fragmentation of the female torso in his *chef d'oeuvre: Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*. The green boots and yellow tights of a trapeze artist are visible in the upper left corner.

wall of black evening clothes is almost palpable.⁸² It will surely be accused of inciting social decadence, thus provoking the same atmosphere of scandal that my *Henriette* received at its performances. *Bravo et courage dans le même temps!*

Mallarmé: And Baudelaire would delight in its allusion to his cherished theme of modern Parisian spectacle that he elevated to his poetic ideal of “*notre héroïsme*”.⁸³ You’re fulfilling the role of his ideal *peintre de la vie moderne*, Manet. I believe he would see that this painting transcends the art of Constantin Guys, the journalist/artist who served as the model for his essays on “*les spectacles de la mode*”.⁸⁴ Moreover, I agree with Goncourt that one cannot be but astonished by your delicious range of blacks: tailcoats and dominoes, hats and masks, velvets, cloth, satin and silk.⁸⁵ *Félicitations! C’est merveilleux!*

Manet: It encourages me, my friends, to have your approval because it validates the pure epicurean enjoyment that I feel in celebrating the hedonistic “Bohemian” pleasures of our bourgeois milieu. As avid observers of the demi-mondaine world in our lupanar-ville, Voltaire would agree that, we artists and writers have the “best of *both* possible worlds!” *Moi*, I get to participate in this elegant, risqué revelry and then I’m privileged to re-live the fun by re-creating it in paint!⁸⁶

⁸² Youssef Ishaghpour, *Aux origines de l’art moderne*. 79. Manet symbolized the vulgarity of the crowd by contrasting the black uniformity of bourgeois men’s formal wear with the splashes of bright, gay colors worn by the masked *filles* and the clownish *Polichinelle*. (My translation.)

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 80. Baudelaire had already elevated the dandy’s aloofness, elegant haberdashery and preference for the high life to symbolize the aristocratic superiority of his mind. (My translation.)

⁸⁴ B.É., 507. *Le Croquis de Moeurs*. Manet painted a portrait of Constantin Guys in 1880, and owned at least 60 drawings by Guys, who was also a frequent visitor to Manet’s favorite neighborhood café, the Guerbois. This brief chapter describes Baudelaire’s conception of the ideal modern artist.

⁸⁵ M.É., 300. In Manet’s *Bal*, Mallarmé praised his skill in interpreting black fabrics: “*s’étonner de la gamme délicieuse trouvée dans les noirs: fracs et dominos, chapeaux et lousps, velours, drap, satin et soie.*”

⁸⁶ P.M., 198. Mallarmé describes Manet as “the happy dandy, the satyr in mackintosh.”

Goncourt: Well, gentlemen, I must take leave of you. Flaubert is in Paris and I am dining with him tonight to reminisce about my brother Jules, Sainte-Beuve, and *le bon Théo*. I miss the warm, gossipy dinner-table conversations of those literary evenings we regularly enjoyed for ten years at Modeste Magny's Restaurant on the Rive Gauche.⁸⁷ Please contact me for lunch sometime soon, Mallarmé. Perhaps we can catch up with you someday around lunchtime, Manet, at Tortoni's? *Bonne continuance* with the *Bal Masqué!* *Allez*, good evening, gentlemen.

Manet: Now, Mallarmé, you have an idea of the hectic *va-et-vient* life that goes on in this studio.⁸⁸ But don't allow the hubbub to intimidate you and don't hesitate to drop in as often as you wish. I feel that we're going to have much more to discuss about my views on art and your progressive new ideas on poetry. You've coined an expression concerning your poetry that admirably fits my own concept of art: *Peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit*.⁸⁹ We'll have a lot to discuss concerning that process! But for the present moment, I have a wonderful idea! It just occurred to me that today is Thursday.⁹⁰ So, if you're free, why not bring your wife and join us for dinner this evening? My wife Suzanne is a fine pianist who always entertains our guests on Thursday

⁸⁷ See Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's*, 22. Jules de Goncourt, Sainte-Beuve and Gautier had died. See footnote 78 for more about the lively literary dinner conversations covering a span of ten years at Magny's famed restaurant. Cf. G.P.A. These dinners are mentioned fourteen times in the *Goncourt Journals of 1851-1896*.

⁸⁸ D.M., Ch. VIII. "*L'atelier, rue de Saint-Pétersbourg*." Cf. R.B.F.B., 63. "In a society where artists were celebrities the fashionable studio consisted of a kind of salon, a chic semi-public place to socialize."

⁸⁹ Guy Michaud, *Mallarmé* (New York: New York University Press, 1965) 139. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as M.M. Mallarmé wrote to Huret: "To *name* an object is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment of a poem, which is made up of gradual guessing: the dream is to *suggest* it." This procedure could perhaps, in general, be equated to the impressionist method of "suggestion" that formulated their theory of painting and could explain Mallarmé's attraction for their style of painting.

⁹⁰ H.B.M., 44. "Each family (entertained) the other regularly. Mme Manet received on Thursdays. Mme Morisot continued her Tuesdays." In addition to the bourgeois status gained by hosting a fashionable *soirée*, it also afforded Mme Morisot the opportunity to present her two lovely, talented, marriageable daughters; for Berthe and Edma it was stimulating occasion where they could a new group of intellectuals: artists, musicians, poets and writers.

Mallarmé: What a kind gesture! My wife Maria is German and she's proud, of course, to share the same Teutonic heritage as that of the great *Meistersinger* Wagner.⁹⁶ She'll be so pleased to meet Madame Manet; and again, I accept your invitation with pleasure. *À tout à l'heure!*

⁹⁶ Daniel, Leuwers. *Mallarmé Poésies et autres textes* (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1998) Biographical Notes, 284-289. In 1863, Mallarmé met and married a young teacher from Germany, Maria Gerhard. They had two children, a daughter, Geneviève, in 1864, and a son, Anatole, in 1871. When Anatole died in 1879, Mallarmé went into a deep depression, suffered in silence, unable to erect his poetic *tombeau* for Anatole that was left incomplete.

Cadre: Manet and Mallarmé, a decade of friendship, affection, conversation

After the devastating social upheaval of the War of 1870, followed by the Commune and the Siege of Paris, a cautious citizenry tried to restore stable social and political values under a wary Third Republic which regarded any sign of Parisian audacity as radical and dangerous.¹ One of the post-war casualties was the *Café Guerbois* that had served as the rallying point for the Batignollais vanguardists and their writer friends. By 1872, these artists and writers had moved their headquarters to the *Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes* in the Place Pigalle but the group had diminished, their outlook had matured and new hopes had kindled.² Bazille had died in the fighting against the Prussians; Manet and Degas had joined the army; Renoir had been drafted. The latter three endured severe hardships while the other members had either fled Paris or had gone to London for the duration of the Franco-Prussian War.³ Berthe Morisot and her family had chosen to stay in Paris, where food shortages soon became intolerable.⁴ In 1871, Courbet was elected a member of the Paris Commune, and when the city surrendered after three months of siege, he faced punishment for his leadership role in the civil resistance: he was heavily fined and imprisoned which broke his spirit. Never fully recovering from this trauma, he died in 1877.⁵

¹ H.E.M., 155. In 1874, Manet's 7-color lithograph of *Polichinelle* was suppressed by the police who thought that he had caricatured Marshal Mac-Mahon, the president of the Third Republic.

² S.W.M., 136. The *Nouvelle-Athènes* would be the setting for Degas' *Absinthe*, 1877. It may also have been the locale for Manet's *La Prune*, 1877. It is certain that they used the same model, Ellen André, which was not an unusual practice for artists and could be seen as a form of consensual *specularity*.

³ Walking with Degas through the rubble-strewn streets of their beloved city, Manet sketched lines at butcher shops as well as scenes of brutal executions of Communards at the street barricades.

⁴ H.B.M., 68. "Food shortages became acute: by winter not only was some of the population eating rats but the rodents had attained the status of luxury commodities."

⁵ E.E.P., 265. "The imprisonment broke him..." Fined 323,000 francs, he chose voluntary exile in Switzerland.

It was at the *Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes* that the Independents made definitive plans for a private exhibition in 1874, still urging Manet to join them, though he had ambitions only for the Salon of 1874 to which he sent three canvases.⁶ Only one of these was accepted: *Le Chemin de fer*.⁷ The painting was shown, not out of admiration, but to point out Manet's latest subversion of subject matter: *no train was visible!* Only a cloud of smoke indicated the relevancy of the title!⁸ On this occasion, a new champion came to his defense in the person of the young poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, who published a clever pro-Manet argument that gently chided the Salon's 1874 jury which had refused to accept *Le Bal masqué à l'Opéra* and *Les Hirondelles*.⁹

For the decade that followed their first encounter at Nina de Villard's *salon* in 1873, Mallarmé stopped at Manet's studio almost every afternoon to visit with him.¹⁰ "How well matched in temperament and character were those two when they at last met and how much each had accomplished to further the thinking of the other," observes Rand.¹¹ Did the audacious painter who fed on poetry subliminally absorb symbolist ideas from the dreamy poet who reveled in the company of artists?¹² Did Manet's shorthand manner of painting strike a chord of recognition in the poet because it paraphrased his

⁶ P.M., 199. Morisot, Monet, Degas, Renoir, Pissarro and Sisley joined forces to show at Nadar's rented studio.

⁷ "The Railway," known today as "The Gare Saint-Lazare," is now in the National Gallery in Washington D.C. The other two paintings were "The Masked Ball at the Opera," and "Swallows."

⁸ P.M., 201. Because, instead of a locomotive Manet painted just a cloud of white smoke, "the incorrigible practical-joker was trying to mock them once again."

⁹ D.M., 231. Mallarmé's article, *Le Jury de peinture pour 1874 et M. Manet*, appeared April 12, 1874, in the publication *la Renaissance artistique and littéraire*.

¹⁰ C.M., 105. "*J'ai dix ans vu tous les jours mon cher Manet dont l'absence aujourd'hui me paraît invraisemblable.*"

¹¹ Harry Rand. *Manet's Contemplation at the Gare Saint-Lazare* (Berkeley Los Angeles London: University of California Press, 1987) 93. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as R.G.S.L.

¹² B.O.C.M., 162. The author sees Mallarmé's profound, subtle influence on Manet in his penetrating portrait of the poet. "*Le sujet lui-même était la poésie...qui laisse transparaître l'irréel.*"

own aesthetic reduction of descriptive subject matter in his poetry?¹³ Finally, how much did the thought of Mallarmé affect Manet's work? Specific authorial evidence that answers the above queries do not exist, to my knowledge; therefore I consider that most of my conclusions remain speculative, yet, not only reasonable but also credible as well.

Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* was accepted by the Salon of 1882, ten years after daily contact had begun between the friends. This painting, like the *Gare Saint-Lazare*, was a picture that disturbed the public with its puzzling composition and its unsettling scrutiny of the beholder. Both works suggest pictorial abstractions that compare to Mallarmé's deliberate distortion of the meaning of objects in his poetry, an elliptical maneuver intended to bypass the ordinary "language of the tribe" in order to reach only an initiated few.¹⁴

After years of musing about the unknown, uncharted, unrecorded crossroads where the artistic and poetic thinking of painter and poet coincided or conflicted, I dare to suggest in this paper that they were always essentially on similar missions. It is my belief that they most assuredly realized this during a decennium of dialogue. Of course, they discussed contemporary French art and literature, comparable domains where each saw himself as challenging the past by abstracting it into new forms of art *rather than by destroying it* as was often asserted by their opponents.¹⁵ Manet's premature death in April of 1883 ended their creative partnership and the artistic synergism that flowed between

¹³ P.P., 56. Jane Mayo Roos confirms that "like Mallarmé's poems, Manet's paintings are steeped in ambiguity, indeterminacy and elusiveness."

¹⁴ D.P.S.M., 144. "*Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu.*" (Line 6 of the sonnet: *Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe.*) T.S. Elliot translates this line to mean: "To purify the dialect of the tribe." It seems that Mallarmé had searched for an esoteric device to protect his elitist goals in poetry by banishing the ordinary meaning of common words, those that would be easily understood by the "uninitiated" members of the "tribe," i. e., "the average public."

¹⁵ C.M., Ch. II, *passim*. Manet found inspiration in Velasquez, Hals, Goya, Titian, Reubens et al. Cf. D.P.S.M., 15. Mallarmé drew from classical forms, cherishing the sonnet which he deemed to be "*un grand poème en petit.*"

them.¹⁶ One can only wonder what might have been the effect on Manet's later work, at a time when Mallarmé's art had become so evanescent as to become almost inexpressible, leaving him with the paradox of articulating *silence* through *absence*.¹⁷ Both artists were on the leading edge of twentieth century abstraction in both art and literature, foreshadowing the modern expressions of these disciplines that would develop about a generation after Mallarmé's death in 1898.¹⁸

Berthe Morisot and her work remain relevant to this period of artistic evolution of both friends. Because of her constant contact with them, one can assume that her intellectual presence and the abstract *suggestiveness* of her impressionist style of painting had an impact.¹⁹ And, *to suggest* is the *mot clef* defining Mallarmé's sibylline utterance: "*peindre, non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit.*"²⁰ Although Morisot married Eugène Manet, Édouard Manet's brother, in December of 1874, she continued to have close relationships with the Impressionists, showing along with them in their major exhibitions.²¹ That she and Mallarmé, together with their families, were intimate friends is evidenced by the copious flow of correspondence between them until Morisot's death

¹⁶ R.G.S.L., 92. Rand sadly concludes that "the most dynamic, artistic collaboration of the century ended abruptly."

¹⁷ Ibid., 108. "Mallarmé...not content with interpretation through symbol...wished to do away with this also, leaving nothing but the white page, evocative of all because it contained nothing."

¹⁸ By the mid-twentieth century, abstract art had completely obliterated the subject, the object and the image, leaving only non-figurative paint; literature had distilled symbolism into stream-of-consciousness Proustian prose and Breton's surrealistic novels. Cf. Hilton Kramer. "Nice Sketches, Etchings for the Poet Mallarmé." Rev. of *A Painter's Poet: Stéphane Mallarmé and his Impressionist Circle*. *New York Observer* 22 Mar. 1999: 1 and 25. "An art devoid of objects, had he lived to see it, was certainly the direction in which his own artistic theory and practice were heading."

¹⁹ C.M., 157. Paul Valéry described Morisot's work as "*distinct et abstrait.*"

²⁰ D.M., 176. Mallarmé himself indicated that *poetic suggestion* was the keystone to a new aesthetic as well as a definitive break with Parnassian chiseled mimetics. (My translation.) N.B. The verb "*peindre*," means "to paint."

²¹ H.B.M., 156. Monet, Renoir and Sisley opted for the Salon of 1880, but Morisot, Degas, Pissarro, Cassatt and Caillebotte remained committed to the independent exhibition in a building on the rue des Pyramides, April 1880.

in 1895.²² As a member of the Manet clan, she was often present in Manet's studio. She initiated her own intellectual soirées where Mallarmé was often invited to read his poetry before an elite audience of artists, writers and musicians.²³

Bringing my key figures together in this *cadre* is necessary for narrative consistency but it is not a guarantee of the symbiotic structure of their relationship which is the hypothetical argument upon which this paper is founded. This study proposes that there is inherent in the works of Manet, Morisot and Mallarmé a perceptible unity, both methodological and philosophical, which can be used to analyze certain works created by them.²⁴ One can visualize their artistic interaction functioning like Baudelaireian “spirals” in verse: by identifying and following one of the spirals, it reveals the relative position of the others.²⁵ In this study, the “identified spiral” that I follow is represented by the career of Édouard Manet, 1832-1883, whose artistic intent and personal theory of painting have never been positively documented.²⁶

Just as an artist's work can be read as a conscious or subconscious exercise in narcissism, the arts can also become enamored of each other, like the two-way flirtation

²² Marianne Delafond, *Berthe Morisot ou l'audace raisonnée*. (Paris: Musée Marmottan, 1997) 62. In 1876, an abundant correspondence began, testifying to the strong ties between them. Even before her husband's death, Morisot often turned to Mallarmé for advice and counsel, eventually naming him to be a guardian for her daughter, Julie, after her death.

²³ H.B.M., 181-187. Morisot's gatherings became “known for, above all, the caliber of the conversation.” Guests included Manet, Degas and most of the Impressionists, the composer Chabrier, Mallarmé, Regnier et al.

²⁴ I consider the *specularity* that I identify in certain works to be based upon intellectually conscious or unconscious recognition of ideas shared by them and the artistic world of their time, such as *la nouvelle esthétique*, *le moment fugitif* and *l'effect suggestif*.

²⁵ Graham Robb, *Unlocking Mallarmé*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1996), Foreword, xiii.

²⁶ R.G.S.L., 92. In 1885, Mallarmé still grieved for Manet, two years after his death. He wrote to Verlaine that “for ten years I have seen Manet daily, and his absence today appears unbelievable to me.” The continuity of their dialogues and the dependency implied by their close friendship, are established facts but clear, detailed manifestos of each one's precise thinking on art and literature, either written or spoken, have yet to be examined. See also Henri Mondor, *Mallarmé Correspondance*, (1862-1885). 159. Mallarmé wrote to his friend in London, O'Shaughnessy: “*Je ne vois personne que Manet qui ne vous oublie pas.*” Cf. M.É., 325. Mallarmé describes himself as a daily witness--“*temoin quotidien, moi*”-- in reference to Manet's habit of flinging himself at his canvas “as if he had never before painted.”

that was carried on in late 19th Century France which I have labeled *specularity*.²⁷

Ultimately, the entire truth is beyond our knowledge and cannot be formulated by hindsight. This thesis aims to display those possible dynamics that may have caused aesthetic similarities to emerge between literature and art, a mirroring phenomenon that may be extrapolated, logically and imaginatively, from the merely personal:
conversation, affection, friendship.

²⁷ Ibid., 151. The assertion of Théodore Duret, Manet's friend and biographer, that "painting followed a succession of forms corresponding to those that evolved in literature" can at last be treated in terms of specifics. (The synergetic quality represented by *specularity* will no doubt be familiar to the patient reader by now.)

Dialogue in which Manet, Mallarmé and friends discuss two controversial paintings, one shown in the Salon of 1874, and the other in the Salon of 1882

Manet is in his studio, working on a large canvas while talking to Zola who is preparing to leave. Suddenly, a brilliant flash of lightning followed by a loud clap of thunder startles them: Nature is heralding the March lion as it roars across Paris chased by a pelting downpour.

Manet: All in all, I think December ended well, don't you agree, Zola? My prestige and stature in the world of Parisian art increased by tenfold when Fervacques wrote his favorable article about me in *Le Figaro* and described his interest in my work.¹ I hope that it will convince some of the more hostile journalists of my worth as a sincere artist deserving, not derision, but rational, aesthetic consideration.²

Zola: *Pourquoi pas?* That was a feather in your cap, *mon ami*. In assigning Fervacques, their top art critic, to cover your story, the newspaper admits you're an artist to be reckoned with, which is bound to excite public interest. Luckily, he seemed quite taken with the *Le Bal masqué à l'Opéra*, even predicting its imminent success at the Salon!³

That's priceless publicity, Manet, clearly indicating that your luck has changed. I think

¹ H.M.C., 173-174. See also D.M., 229-230. Fervacques article on *Le Bal masqué* is quoted at length.

² P.M., 48. Couture lectured his students to be humble and sincere: "Whatever you do, make a habit of sincerity." Cf. R.B.F.B., 91. According to vanguardist theory, the modern artist expressed his sincerity (considered in the Dandy's vocabulary to be *noblesse*) through studied objectivity carefully cultivated by Dandy-artists and poets. A quality difficult to define and open to interpretation, sincerity can also express a pictorial artist's sense of morality, sensibility, and inner psychological state. In defense of his work, Manet stated that he was "sincere."

³ C.M., 150. The journalist Fervacques wrote "*C'est une oeuvre de haute mérite, vécue, pensée et admirablement rendue. Nous verrons au prochain salon si le public est de mon avis.*" Fervacques was wrong; along with *Les Hirondelles*, the *Bal masqué à l'Opéra* was refused by the Salon of 1874. The jury kept only *Le Chemin de fer* and the watercolor *Polichenelle*.

your star is now ascending as I predicted it would.⁴ Is the *Bal masqué* the only picture you're planning to submit to the Salon?

Manet: Actually, I'm entering three canvases; I have a feeling that all three will be accepted.⁵ Each one is so different from the other I'm sure the members of the jury will find something to suit their tastes. For a minor Salon category, I'm sending in the watercolor of *Polichinelle*, another painting that Fervacques enthused over!⁶ How did you like my idea to sponsor a competition among my friends to compose a poem for my lithograph of *Polichinelle*?⁷

Zola: It would be wise to be cautious, Manet. The rowdy, drunken character of *Polichinelle* may offend the new moral order as your *Buveur* did in '59!⁸ Sobriety, along with diligence and thriftiness, is a highly praised virtue in the bourgeoisie's straight-laced "trinity" of moral values.⁹

Manet: (Laughs.) But that's the idea, Zola! As in Molière's satire, "Tartuffe," such outrageous, capitalist hypocrisy, feigning pious behavior, deserves to be mocked!¹⁰ I chose Banville's poem as the best because he reduced the image of *Polichinelle* to a clever, concise, suggestive couplet, completely compressing his bawdy personality to *un*

⁴ Zola, *Pour Manet*, 78. "Il est impossible...que M. Manet n'ait pas son jour de triomphe." (Salon de 1866) See also 142. In 1868, Zola bragged that "La réaction nécessaire, fatale, que j'annonçais en 1866, s'accomplit doucement...le succès vient."

⁵ D.M., 230-231. In 1873, the Beaux-Arts' director had increased the number of entries allowed from two to three.

⁶ C.M., 150. "Un exquis *Polichinelle*, crânement campé ..." Manet's watercolor of *Polichinelle* was accepted.

⁷ D.M., 244. Mallarmé and Charles Gros wrote verses but Manet preferred Théodore de Banville's succinct diptych *à la Baudelaire: Féroce et rose avec du feu dans sa prunelle./ Effronté, saoul, divin, c'est lui Polichinelle.*

⁸ C.P.M.L., 101. In this decade, "public standards were ostentatiously prim."

⁹ I consider these three values to be the sum parts of the acclaimed bourgeois virtue of *bon sens*, symbolic of the conservative middle class.

¹⁰ A cynical double standard of morals was practiced by most in the upper classes of Parisian society.

regard.¹¹ That's exactly what I'm doing in my paintings! You, of all people, should understand my reductive aesthetic.¹²

Zola: *Bien sûr!* Still, don't forget that political regimes don't care a fig for aesthetics, Manet, particularly those of a controversial, rogue artist as you're reputed to be.¹³ Well, which are the other two canvases you planning to send in, besides the *Bal masqué*?

Manet: Two landscapes: *Les Hirondelles* and this large canvas on my easel, *Le Chemin de fer*.¹⁴

Zola: Ah, yes! "The Railway." Is it a hymn to the last "super-hero" of the Industrial Revolution that we inherited from the Second Empire?¹⁵ President Mac-Mahon continues to idealize the locomotive as the great icon of the bourgeois railroad barons who love speedy, luxurious transportation to their favorite resorts and country retreats.¹⁶ The Third Republic sees this Hercules of Progress as emblematic of a modern, stable economy, going so far as to extol the huge steel and glass hangars of the train stations as "capitalists' cathedrals."¹⁷

Manet: (Grinning impishly.) I'm all for it, Zola! I see the sleek, sophisticated machinery of the locomotive as symbolic of, not the cult of Progress, but of Baudelaire's idealization

¹¹ A reference to the imagery of the fiery, malicious gleam in the pupil of *Polichinelle*'s eye: "du feu dans sa prunelle."

¹² Zola, *Pour Manet*, 33. Manet's painting, *Le Fifre*, was defended by Zola when it was refused by the Salon of 1866. As art critic for *L'Événement* newspaper he argued that its flattened effect was simple yet forceful: "I do not think it is possible to obtain a more powerful effect with the least complicated means."

¹³ D.M., 244. Police would destroy proofs of his lithograph of *Polichenelle* (who traditionally carried a club) because it was suspected to be a caricature of Marshal Mac-Mahon who was nicknamed "Maréchal Bâton." In spite of his conservative monarchist views, he was president of the third Republic from 1873 until he resigned in 1879.

¹⁴ Now the painting is known as the *Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1873, on view in the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (See Thesis Plate X.)

¹⁵ R.G.S.L., 116. Couture, Manet's former teacher, "urged painters to seek out the grand subject of the locomotive."

¹⁶ Train stations are scattered around Paris, their tracks fanning out towards national and international destinations.

¹⁷ G.A.A., 104. Théophile Gautier lauded railroad stations as the "new cathedrals of humanity."

of modern spectacle.¹⁸ I want to do an on-site sketch of the engineer and his coal stoker in action.¹⁹ As soon as I have time, I plan to get permission from an official at the Gare Saint-Lazare to travel in the cab with them.²⁰ Wouldn't that make an exciting painting? A modern Vulcan playing with fire, feeding his steel monster with fiery coals like a modern Roman god, *n'est-ce pas?*

Zola: I never know if you're pulling my leg or not! If you're serious, it's certainly an audacious idea. Even as we speak, I can feel the studio floor trembling a bit as the trains pass nearby.²¹ Doesn't that annoy you? I would find the roaring, pounding gallop of your heroic "iron horse" with its snorts of steam an intrusive presence, particularly if I were trying to concentrate.

Manet: On the contrary, Zola! That little shiver I feel when a train passes is stimulating; it reminds me of how exciting and sophisticated our Parisian life continues to be.²² Since our humiliating defeat, all Europe has been watching us for signs of internal paralysis and non-productive pining for *le bon vieux temps*. *Jamais!* Instead, like the eternal Phoenix, Paris has evolved once again into the world's leader, flaunting her unrivalled elegance, cultural sophistication and creative genius for all to envy.²³

Zola: Your plans to ride in a locomotive will surprise everybody but, then again, you never shrink from a chance to be in the vanguard of new realism. As far back as '66, I

¹⁸ Ibid., 75. Ironically, Couture wrote his dramatic eulogy to the modern steel monster in 1867, the year of Baudelaire's death.

¹⁹ S.W.M., 140. Manet enthused over the heroic role of the engineer without endorsing the cult of progress.

²⁰ C.M., 103. In 1881, Manet applied for his permission from the director of the Gare Saint-Lazare train station but he was already too ill to paint his "heroic" engineer.

²¹ H.M.C., 173. During his visit to Manet's studio, the art critic Fervacques noted in his newspaper account: "The trains pass close by...the ground...trembles underfoot...white plumes of smoke swirl in the air." No doubt thinking about Manet, Zola himself would climb aboard a locomotive to observe the engineer for his novel, *La Bête humaine*, 1889, part of his Rougon-Macquart cycle.

²² S.W.M., 140. Schneider writes that Manet was deeply interested in the industrial aspects of modern life.

admired your *Fifre* when it caused a sensation, rendered with your audacious novelty of flattened form *à la japonais*.²⁴ *Allez, mon ami*, I'd better be off since the rain is beginning to let up now.

Manet: Don't forget Madame Lejosne's salon next week; I'll see you there.²⁵ (Mallarmé arrives, dripping wet and shivering.) *Salut, Mallarmé! Mon Dieu*, you look drowned! Come dry yourself and warm up at the fireplace. I'm glad you arrived before Zola left. May I present you to Zola?²⁶

Zola: *Enchanté, monsieur*. I'm so pleased to meet you; Manet speaks highly of your poetic gifts.

Mallarmé: *Merci, monsieur*. I, too, am happy to make your acquaintance. For some time, I've been following your literary career as novelist, art critic and journalist.²⁷

Zola: Thank you. I've read your translations of poems by the American poet, Edgar Poe.²⁸ You've an excellent insight into the English language, *monsieur*. *Mes sincères compliments!*

Mallarmé: (Smiles ruefully.) *Hélas, oui!* My ambition to conquer English actually stemmed from my ardent desire to read Poe's mysterious, rhythmic verses.²⁹ Now, that

²³ Ibid., 133. After the Franco-Prussian war, 1870-1871, France recovered with breathtaking swiftness. Paris, the modern megalopolis, continued to dazzle Europe as the quintessential center of elegance, art and culture. Manet adored his city, never quite comfortable outside of it except possibly when at the seashore.

²⁴ Derided as an *image Épinal* (cardboard cutout), the jury of 1866 refused *Le Fifre*, inspiring Zola to defend it. Cf. Henri Mitterand, *Le regard et le signe*. (Paris: PUF, 1987) 82. Zola's youthful admiration for Manet was a veritable learning experience. It taught him to "capture the moment: a look, a fold in a garment, a gesture...etc."

²⁵ P.M. 131. The amiable Commander Lejosne was Manet's doctor; the Lejosnes were often Manet's dinner guests. One of the fashionable, seated women in the foreground of *La Musique*, 1863, is Mme Lejosnes.

²⁶ M.É., 407. The chronology table in this book indicates that Mallarmé met Zola "chez Manet" in 1874.

²⁷ Zola, *L'Oeuvre*, 418. In 1873, success was sweet for the hardworking Zola, winning public acclaim for *Le Ventre de Paris*, and *Thérèse Raquin*, a novel which he attempted to convert into a stage play. It was a hopeless flop.

²⁸ Ibid., 407. In 1872, Mallarmé published translations of eight poems by Edgar Poe.

²⁹ F.m., 11. See also 69. "Poetry is...according to Poe's poetic principle, the 'rhythmic creation of beauty'."

same linguistic skill has become the very shackle that holds my creative imagination prisoner.³⁰

Manet: (Chuckling.) You see, Zola, he has the dubious honor of hammering English grammar into those unruly young *gosses* that attend the Lycée Fontanes.³¹

Mallarmé: (Apologetically.) I know that it's normal for adolescent boys to be more interested in their schoolboy pranks than in parsing English sentences but, beyond that, I just don't have the temperament for teaching; that's my problem.³²

Zola: *Moi aussi*, I also lack the necessary patience. Forgive me but I was just about to leave to visit Edmond de Goncourt.³³ Flaubert's back in Paris now and he'll be there too, regaling us with his gossip, opinions and latest literary efforts.³⁴ It's all very theatrical, he's like a Shakespearean actor, his deep voice booming out while he twists his drooping moustaches. I admire him immensely; he and the Goncourts opened the way for realist writers like me.³⁵

Manet: That sounds like great fun, Zola. *À très bientôt!* Ah, here's Jacques with our afternoon coffee, cigars and brandy. Let's sit here, Mallarmé; let's have a quiet chat,

³⁰ Ibid., 25. Perfectly representing the "ivory tower" intellectual, the dreamy poet spent years seated at his classroom desk, out of touch with his students. "Lost in his own thoughts, Mallarmé, as school teacher, serves as a symbol for the ironic fate of this kind of artist."

³¹ M.É., 406., Today the school is known as the Lycée Condorcet, at 8, rue du Havre, 9th arrondissement.

³² F.M., 14. Mallarmé seldom complained openly about his onerous duties of teaching.

³³ Edmond de Goncourt's younger brother, Jules, had died in 1870, leaving him grief stricken and inconsolable. Zola, Flaubert and others attempted to distract him.

³⁴ G.P.A., 136 and *passim*. Goncourt recorded these aspects of Flaubert's personality. In 1874, he wrote that Flaubert's play *Le Candidat* closed after four days; his *La Tentation de Saint Antoine* was also published in 1874.

³⁵ Baldick, *Dinner at Magny's*, Biographical Notes. The young Zola was welcomed as a disciple by the Goncourt brothers after he gave an enthusiastic newspaper review of their first daring "naturalist" novel, *Germanie Lacerteux*, written during 1864-1865.

smoke a fine Havana and sip our coffee.³⁶ You look as though you need to relax *mon cher ami*, you're still pale and shivering; are you troubled in some way?

Mallarmé: In a word, yes! Just now, as I crossed over the Pont de L'Europe, I thought of throwing myself down onto the tracks.³⁷ Fortunately, a bolt of lightning and a clap of thunder broke the spell of despair that gripped me. Ironically, the *maussade* stormy sky reminded me of Baudelaire's gloomy ceiling of clouds, the "*couvercle*" of his poem, *Spleen*, with its "nervous breakdown" theme...a mood perfectly matching my own despondent, morbid state of mind.³⁸

Manet: (Alarmed.) You mustn't ever give into such black despair again, Mallarmé!

Mallarmé: (Sighs deeply.) For a poet, the blackest *cauchemare* is the paralyzing thought of artistic sterility, to find one's self helplessly contemplating the purity of the blank page, agonizing over the loss of inspiration.³⁹ At such times, my life seems so miserably insignificant and gray, that I feel destined to forever be a failure.⁴⁰ Yet, I feel that, as a poet, I've the sacred duty to continue poetry's divine, metaphysical mission.⁴¹

Manet: (Pensively.) I can empathize with your *angoisse*. After ten months of watching Paris being bombarded, burned and starved into submission, I suffered a nervous

³⁶ R.G.S.L., 150. Cigar smoke, symbolic of dreaming, would be a prominent element in Manet's portrait of Mallarmé.

³⁷ P.M., 197-198. Cycles of depression plagued him. In 1874, Mallarmé moved to rue de Rome that runs along the western edge of the 17th arrondissement, where his apartment building faced the below-street-level railroad tracks that ran under the pont de L'Europe to the Gare Saint-Lazare.

³⁸ B.F.M., 80. Baudelaire's celebrated *poème noir* begins: *Quand le ciel bas et lourd pèse comme un couvercle*, (*Spleen*, 1.1.)

³⁹ Ursula Franklin, *An Anatomy of poesis* (Chapel Hill: UNC Dept. of Romance Languages, 1975) Sterility haunted the poet, often symbolized as the whiteness of an object, e.g., *Le blanc souci de notre toile*. "Toile may refer to the white virgin page prior to the written presence of poetry."

⁴⁰ H.B.M., 126. Mallarmé once said of his life that it was "without anecdote."

⁴¹ F.M., 70. "Like Poe, Mallarmé believed in the alliance of poetry with the arts and the secret meaning of the world."

collapse; then, facing the blank canvas that was waiting for me on my easel paralyzed me and I stopped painting.⁴²

Mallarmé: Thank you for being an understanding friend, Manet. Each day when I enter this haven of creativity, energy, elegance and urbanity, I'm exorcised of my *papillons noirs* as Flaubert calls depressing thoughts.⁴³ At the other extreme, I'm haunted by *whiteness* as symbolic of the perfect poem and it blocks my ability to versify.⁴⁴ I compare the horror of this state to Baudelaire's fear of the *gouffre*, the abysmal, black hole that symbolized oblivion for him.⁴⁵ Both are mere words but I allow their symbolic power to terrify me.⁴⁶

Manet: I understand exactly what you're describing. I sometimes freeze when I face the white of the canvas on my easel. But it's a form of creative self-torture that can't be avoided.⁴⁷

Mallarmé: But I become frozen!⁴⁸ (Attempts to lighten their mood.) Yet I've seen you throw yourself on your canvas in an act of painting that resembles a rapacious Hun's

⁴² P.M., 183-184. Sudden depressions could bring him near to tears; his overwrought nerves had given way.

⁴³ Ibid., 198. See also Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Première Partie, IX. Emma burns her wedding bouquet in her fireplace. The flowers disintegrate into black flakes resembling black butterflies and float upward into the chimney.

⁴⁴ Guthrie and Diller, *French Literature and Thought* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.) 523. Hereafter listed in the footnotes as G.F.L.T. "Sterility was his greatest affliction and the constant theme of his poetry."

⁴⁵ Baudelaire had a horror of the bottomless *gouffre* (abyss) that symbolized cosmic Pascalian emptiness and the eternity of death without God.

⁴⁶ F.M., 108. He often felt close to madness, suffering palpitations whenever he picked up a pen.

⁴⁷ G.F.L.T., 523. Manet sought inspiration from exterior sources; "Mallarmé drew solely from his interior self."

⁴⁸ F.M., 96. Mallarmé's celebrated sonnet, *The Swan*, (*Le vierge, le vivace, le bel aujourd'hui...*), symbolizes poetic stoicism and solitude: the image of the immobilized white swan, caught in the ice of the frozen lake while looking at it disdainfully, may refer to the many romantic examples of animals "designating the poet crushed by the world and hating it." Both Baudelaire and Mallarmé evoked the symbol of the cygne (swan) to dramatize the difficulties faced by writers and artists during the 19th century.

attack on a poor hapless Roman virgin!⁴⁹ In fact, I marvel at the way your elegant persona becomes almost uncivilized when you're possessed by *la fureur divine*. At those moments, *mon vieux*, you seem as one possessed!⁵⁰

Manet: (Pretends surprise.) Really? I've not been aware of such primitive behavior! I'll have to practice more self-control in the future.⁵¹

Mallarmé: No, no, I'm not criticizing; I'm simply saying that I envy your spontaneity, your sure instincts and ability for total concentration. *C'est formidable, je vous assure!*

Manet: (Muses.) Although our means are different, I believe that our intentions are very similar, all things considered.⁵² Perhaps that's why our sense of each other's concepts often doesn't need to be verbalized.⁵³ For example, on the mundane level, there's our common practice of palimpsest: when a painting isn't working for me, I scrape it off and continue again; when you find your verse uninspired, you scratch it out and begin anew. On the creative level, I find that, in the actual doing of a work, it doesn't matter if the inspiration precedes or co-mingles with the creative act.

Mallarmé: That's a good point. I agree. It's getting started that takes audacity but a beautiful Muse can be a great incentive!⁵⁴ She helps us to conceive an embryonic vision of the work deep within our soul. We then nurture it until it's ready to enter into the

⁴⁹ D.P.S.M., 103. Mallarmé used "virgin" as a synonym for the pristine purity of the unblemished page. By analogy, I use it to describe the unpainted canvas that challenges the artist's creativity like that of the poet's unwritten page.

⁵⁰ C.M., 105. "*En atelier, la furie qui le ruait sur la toile...comme si jamais il n'avait peint.*" Mallarmé recognized the poetic *fureur* (ecstasy) that possessed Manet when he was in the act of painting.

⁵¹ H.M.T., 208. Zola noted "his departure for the unknown with each blank canvas that he put on his easel."

⁵² R.G.S.L., 107-108. A visual artist's means are different from a poet's (means of) saturating an object with meaning.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 109. They understood each other naturally, smoothly and profoundly without trying to convert each other.

⁵⁴ F.M., 23. "For a time, the beautiful Méry Laurent was a reigning muse; he admired her luxuriant hair, her charm and her body that Manet painted so often. No one knows their exact relationship, probably that of mutual respect."

material world as an idealized form that we label as “art.”⁵⁵ In my experience, it’s agonizing; a perfect act of creation doesn’t just spring out of one’s forehead fully formed as Minerva did from Jupiter’s brow.⁵⁶

Manet: (Wistfully.) As for me, I wish I could express myself, as you just did, with the elliptical elegance that is the hallmark of your conversation and your poetry.⁵⁷

Mallarmé: (Modestly protests.) What amazes me is that your paintings instinctively express the very process that epitomizes my goal in poetry: *to paint, not the thing, but the effect it produces.*⁵⁸

Manet: (Thoughtfully.) Your phrase does perfectly sum up my approach, doesn’t it? But don’t forget that my instincts have been finely honed by years of study with Couture and by copying the masters in the Louvre.⁵⁹ Speaking of your poetry, have you submitted your *L’après-midi d’un faune* to the *Parnasse contemporain* yet?⁶⁰

Mallarmé: Not yet, since I’m still dotting the final “i’s” and reworking some lines; I plan to send it in soon. I’ve long had ambitions to see it dramatized as a stage play, too, if I

⁵⁵ G.F.L.T., 523. See footnote 47.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 523. The collected poems of Mallarmé form a very slim volume, “attesting to the perfection to which he aspired.” On the other hand, his dozens of articles and various other writings, including the lighthearted *Loisirs de la poste*, and *La Dernière Mode*, as well as his published letters from a vast correspondence, attest to the poet’s lifetime dedication to his muse: *La plume*.

⁵⁷ P.M., 197. “Mallarmé had a meticulously subtle mind, spoke in sibylline utterances and gestured with spiraling motions of a raised finger like a Buddhist monk.”

⁵⁸ F.M., 269. This is “one of Mallarmé’s earliest theories about his art and expresses the heart of Manet’s artistic bent.”

⁵⁹ C.M., 18. Manet was a student in Couture’s studio for six years, until 1856; then he was self-taught for four years by making copies of Tintoretto, Vélasquez and Rubens in the Louvre where he met Degas and the Morisot sisters.

⁶⁰ The most renowned of Mallarmé’s poems, *L’Après-midi d’un faune*, was refused by the *Parnasse contemporain* in 1874. In 1876, Mallarmé had the poem published in an expensive, elegant, deluxe edition illustrated by Manet.

can convince a producer.⁶¹ Then, if I can get it published as a small book, I hope that you'll honor me with your illustrations.⁶²

Manet: *Bien sûr!* As to staging the *Faune*, be careful. Zola tried staging his popular novel, *Thérèse Raquin*, but it was a flop as a drama.⁶³ As to my designing for your faun's amorous adventure, I look forward to working with you. Your poem is a delightful *morceau!*⁶⁴ Especially since I think that I recognize the virginal young beast to be a self-portrait, *n'est-ce pas?*⁶⁵

Mallarmé: (Quips.) How did you know? Do my pointed ears give me away?⁶⁶ You've guessed correctly, of course. I think of it as a portrayal of my creative juices in action.⁶⁷ Do you know what one of my friends in Avignon called it? He dubbed it a poem with an erection!⁶⁸

⁶¹ F.M., 149. In 1865, he wrote in a letter to his friend Cazalis that he was "adapting an heroic interlude about a faun for the theater."

⁶² D.M., Chronology: In April 1876, Manet created his illustrations for the publication of *L'Après-midi d'un faune*.

⁶³ See Bibliography, Émile Zola, *L'Oeuvre*, (Biographical Notes, 418.) In 1873, "Zola tente sa chance au théâtre, avec *Thérèse Raquin*: échec."

⁶⁴ G.F.L.T., 524. Valéry judged it to be "unquestionably the most skillful poem" in French. *Morceau* is an art term that was used interchangeably with *ébauche* and *tableau*. It is used appropriately to describe Mallarmé's poem since he himself declared that his goal in poetry was "to paint, not the thing, but the effect produced (by the thing.)"

⁶⁵ F.M., 167. "The poet becomes the faun of his dream and lives the myth of metamorphosis."

⁶⁶ Ibid., 16. Mallarmé's "neat beard and straight nose contradicted the satyr-like look of his very wide pointed ears." Paul Gauguin's etching of Mallarmé in 1891 strongly emphasized his "pointed ears," making the droll connection.

⁶⁷ D.P.S.M., 112. "*Sexualisant la représentation de l'acte esthétique dans L'Après-midi...*" This is how Durand sums up the symbolization of the Poet's passion and the sensuality involved in the creative act of poetizing, as personified by the "rutting" young faun. It is easy to imagine the youthful Mallarmé identifying with the adolescent ardor of the young animal. In 1886, the theme of Zola's novel, *L'Oeuvre*, based on the life of a frustrated artist, would stress the essentially sexual nature of all artistic creation.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 105. "*Le Faune ou l'érection de l'écriture.*"

Manet: (Strangled with laughter.) Forgive me for another undignified thought, but, considering that your *Faune*'s nymphs are mythical metamorphoses of water plants, couldn't one say that your ardent young animal was just experiencing "wet dreams"?⁶⁹

Mallarmé: (Catches his breath after both have collapsed with hysterical laughter.) As usual, your witty exuberance is the best cure for my doldrums, *mon cher ami*. Now that I'm feeling in better humor, I'd like to continue the conversation we were having yesterday about your *Le Chemin de fer*. As I noted at the time, your main figure, posed by Victorine Meurent, has a startled look, as though she may have been caught day dreaming in her private, interior world, a state much like that of my adolescent Pan.⁷⁰ As to the unusually tight composition, I'm struck by the subtle coordination of your widely disparate elements.⁷¹

Manet: What gives you the impression that she's a *rêveuse*? Is it her expression, the book in her hands or the puppy dreaming on her lap? I'm curious about your insights because I've carefully assembled the elements, both human and material, which are meant to convey a *meditative* atmosphere more than just the momentary optical illusion of a passing train.⁷²

Mallarmé: Well, ever since we met last year, I've felt that your aesthetic choice of objects often coincides with my own.⁷³ I've been studying your esoteric arrangements of forms that seem to suggest an extended world that co-exists beyond the visual confines of

⁶⁹ F.M., 151. Mallarmé's poem is based upon Pan's mythological pursuit of the water nymph Syrinx who saves herself by becoming a clump of water reeds from which Pan made his musical reed instrument: the pan pipes.

⁷⁰ R.G.S.L., 36. "Manet interrupts reading, reminding us what the absorption of reading (*rêverie*) is like."

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 96. Mallarmé found (Manet's) pictorial "freshness" consisted of "a coordination of widely scattered elements."

⁷² *Ibid.*, 40. Rand recognizes the state of "unconsciousness" of the three dreaming creatures in the painting: *the woman, the child and the puppy*.

the space delineated by your canvas as you've done here.⁷⁴ And, what you don't show within limits of your *cadre*, interests me just as much as what you select to depict.⁷⁵

Manet: Are you referring to the steam? I think of it as a *métonymie picturale*.⁷⁶ It reminds me of your poem, *Salut*, where you address the apostrophe "écume" to a glass of champagne to elliptically evoke the image of the ocean.⁷⁷

Mallarmé: *Bravo!* That was one of my thoughts as well as to the "lost profile" of the little girl.⁷⁸

(Berthe Morisot suddenly enters the studio, overhearing Mallarmé's last comment.)⁷⁹

Morisot: *Bonjour, mes amis!* Am I in time for tea? I came to see Édouard's finished paintings that he's sending to the Salon. Ah! *Le Chemin de fer!* The child is beautifully painted, Édouard; I love the huge, ladylike bow and the sophisticated touch of the black velvet band holding her blonde hair.⁸⁰ Now, Stéphane, what were you going to say about her "lost profile?"⁸¹ I hope I'm not interrupting your conversation, *mes amis*.

Manet: Not at all, Berthe! Please join us; we can continue this discussion later.

⁷³ Ibid., 117. Both Manet and Mallarmé stressed the commonplace, choosing objects "whose few apparent possibilities were elevated beyond expectation."

⁷⁴ Ibid., 89. "In Manet's work, like Mallarmé's, nothing is impulsive; the aesthetic devices he employed lead to, and from, the effects he wanted to achieve."

⁷⁵ Ibid., 89. "The passing train that filled the background with steam exited the frame (canvas) before we arrived."

⁷⁶ Surely Manet knew this poetic term from Baudelaire, hinting at the metaphorical relationship between art and poetry, the former as a visual experience, the latter as a mental conceit.

⁷⁷ The first line of Mallarmé's sonnet, *Salut*, is: "*Rien, cette écume, vierge vers/ À ne désigner que la coupe.*"

⁷⁸ R.G.S.L., 17. "Suzanne Hirsch, the daughter of Manet's friend, the artist Alphonse Hirsch, posed as the child in Hirsch's small garden overlooking the recessed train tracks. Her hidden face suggests that she is evoking her own dreamy fantasies. Manet included a glimpse of the *pont de L'Europe* which is actually out of the canvas' scope."

⁷⁹ H.B.M., 126. "She went on visiting Édouard Manet's studio... even while he worked."

⁸⁰ R.G.S.L., 119. Rand notices that the child's functional hair ribbon corresponds to the seductive choker worn by the woman.

⁸¹ This is a technical term in fine arts signifying that the face of a figure in a painting is turned away from the viewer.

Mallarmé: What a nice surprise, Berthe! Although we've corresponded, I haven't seen you since your father's funeral in January. How is your dear mother? They were so devoted to each other.

Morisot: She's devastated, of course. Now, *hélas*, I'm expected to take over family responsibilities for my mother and sometimes it's a bit overwhelming.⁸² Thank heavens I have my art to distract me.

Manet: (Always the gallant, appreciative artist.) That's a stunning black ensemble you're wearing, Berthe. I'd like you to pose for me wearing it. I can see it clearly in my mind: you'll be holding a delicate, lacey black fan, a delicious effect...yes, that's it!⁸³

Morisot: That's a welcome suggestion, Édouard, I need to have a pleasant diversion these days.⁸⁴ But please do continue your conversation about the composition of the *Chemin de fer*, I'm curious about it, too.⁸⁵ May I comment that there seems to be a subtle duality about it: two females are shown, and, at first glance, one assumes that the adult's detailed rendering is a portrait while the *profil perdu* of the little girl suggests that she is figuratively "out of the picture"!

Manet: (Puckishly.) I have an idea. As the host, I think I'll sit back and have my two best friends figure out what's going on in my "Train Picture." I'll give you a small clue: there

⁸² H.B.M., 110. By French custom, it was usually the duty of an unmarried daughter (or eldest son) to assume responsible for a surviving parent.

⁸³ H.E.M., 124. *Berthe Morisot à l'éventail*, 1874. The painting was made in autumn before Morisot married Eugène Manet in December. She was still in mourning at the time and wore black for her wedding. Curiously, Manet painted a gold wedding band on the hand holding the fan.

⁸⁴ H.B.M., 91. In 1872, Morisot wrote: "(Manet) finds me not too ugly and would take me back as a model; I'm so bored I might even suggest it to him myself."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 54. "Morisot greatly admired Manet's work while trying to avoid its influence on her own paintings."

are seven main components on the picture plane.⁸⁶ Seven is a mystical number.⁸⁷ Do you believe in numerology? Or in sorcery like that which Faust found in his *grimoire*?⁸⁸ On the other hand, maybe it's just simply my *envie* to make a *plein-air* study?⁸⁹

Mallarmé: (Chuckles.) What a *lutin* you are, my friend, trying to misdirect and misinform us with nonsensical Faustian formulas! Well, Berthe, shall we have a go at it? First, let me give you a clue: he also spoke about a meditation theme before you arrived.
Donc, attention!

Morisot: You see how devious he can be, Stéphane, he never wants to explain his real intentions to even his best friends. In fact, both of you like to be mysterious!⁹⁰

Manet: (Coyly). An artist has to keep his professional secrets to himself in order to keep his beautiful students interested.

Mallarmé: (Smiles.) My intentions never seem perfect enough to express them. *Allons-y!* Well, I assume that, according to one of your clues Manet, the little girl's role is to meditate on the cloud of steam.⁹¹ Of course, you both know that smoke is a poetic symbol of dreaming.⁹² Children have a great capacity for profound, intense levels of fantasy

⁸⁶ The seven elements are: woman, child, puppy, book, grapes, fence and steam; a hint to the Pont de l'Europe is also seen. If one counts the glimpse of the bridge plus the handle of the woman's fan behind the puppy, the number becomes nine which is another mystical number.

⁸⁷ M.M., 71. Mallarmé's poem, *Ses purs ongles*, ends with seven luminous points of light (stars?) reflected on a mirror. The number seven is steeped with symbolic prestige in cabalistic lore.

⁸⁸ F.M., 231. "The book or the poem is for Mallarmé the book of magic, the *grimoire*." In a chapter titled "The Ritualist," Fowlie finds that Mallarmé's life "appeared to be a composite of poet, professor, magician."

⁸⁹ D.M. 378. Darragon calls this painting a *paysage urbain* (urban landscape) and applies the term equally to Monet's 1877 series of paintings of the Gare Saint-Lazare. Little notice was taken by the Salon jury of this impressionist aspect of *Le Chemin de fer*, seeing it only as another one of Manet's enigmas.

⁹⁰ R.G.S.L., 109. "Neither Manet nor Mallarmé ever wrote complete explications of professional goals or intentions."

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 77. "The child's hidden face suggests that, self-absorbed, she is invoking her own fantasies."

⁹² *Ibid.*, 112. Mallarmé's "style of emblematic thinking" equates Manet's steam engine which is indicated only by a white cloud of vapor suggesting that a locomotive had just passed by.

dreaming which makes me think that she represents the virgin state of pure thought.⁹³

And she's dressed in pristine white...my favorite color that symbolizes "absence."

Morisot: That's a provocative suggestion, Stéphane, but I'll try my hand at the adult who seems to have just looked up at the beholder. Although she seems a bit startled, there's something calm and receptive about her expression; there's also something symbolic about her blue and white vestments... *I know who she reminds me of*...a traditional image in one of those typical altar paintings that the Dutch do so beautifully, depicting the absorbed, facial expression of the Virgin, who's always shown seated on the floor reading a book, startled by Gabriel with his upsetting announcement.⁹⁴

Manet: (Mimics applause and smiles at Berthe.) *Brava!* That's an amusing observation, Berthe, considering my anticlerical opinions!⁹⁵

Morisot: *Mais, pourquoi pas?* Since our culture is steeped in these religious beliefs, it could be your subliminal memory at work, Édouard. Even the traditional colors of blue and white associated with her are cleverly reversed in their chic dresses.⁹⁶

Mallarmé: Actually, I can see Berthe's point. Then there's the charm of the sleeping *toutou* with its baby innocence, but most of all I can relate to Manet's reference to the abstract, interior life of a young animal. It's a concept reminiscent of the experience of my sleepy adolescent *Faune*'s ambiguous amorous adventure in which he couldn't distinguish reality from dream.⁹⁷

⁹³ F.M., 25. "(Mallarmé's) life was consecrated to a search for what he might have termed 'pure' communication."

⁹⁴ R.G.S.L., 44-45. Manet had visited Dutch museums and probably saw many such paintings. See Fig. 19, p. 43.

⁹⁵ H.B.M., 119. The Manet family members were all "strongly anticlerical and politically fervent republicans."

⁹⁶ R.G.S.L., 37. "The contrast of oppositions between the two figures suggests their opposing states of mind."

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 130. In his monologue, the sleepy faun asks himself: "*Aimai-je un rêve?*"

Manet: I thought sure you would connect the *chiot* to *Vénus pudica*!⁹⁸ Too obvious, right?

Morisot: (Defensive, bristles.) I don't think I've ever seen a classical Venus holding a puppy *and* a book! Only you, Édouard, outside of a female artist like me or Mary Cassatt, would dare to acknowledge that women of *all classes*, even an ordinary nanny, can be endowed with literary taste and aesthetic sensibility! (Manet and Mallarmé smile indulgently at Morisot's spontaneous burst of feminist polemic.)

Mallarmé: (Seeks to placate Morisot.) *D'accord, Berthe*. In fact, I notice that your "nanny" has her fingers marking several pages to mark her place in the book she's reading. This must indicate the depth of her concentration as she compares one poem to another or one poet to another.⁹⁹ Right, Manet?

Manet: (Laughs). What an *égoïste*! How can you be certain that she's reading poetry?

Mallarmé: What else could induce the vacuity of her dreamy sleepwalker's expression and the distant, vague torpor of her gaze?¹⁰⁰ And what else could that cloud of smoke be all about?¹⁰¹

Manet: As the devil's advocate, let me say that it's simply evidence that a train has just passed?

Morisot: I'm on Stéphane's side; I think that the cloud is a subtle pointer to something beyond a locomotive leaving a puff of misty steam in its wake. In another vein, I'd like

⁹⁸ Ibid., 38, Fig. 16. Titian's *The Venus of Urbino*, 1538. The nude figure reclines on her right side, her left hand covers her pubis, a small dog (*toutou*) or a puppy (*chiot*) sleeps at her feet.

⁹⁹ R.G.S.L., 76. "The book she's reading presents the world symbolically...a poetic device favored by Mallarmé."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 131. Cf. the *Faune*'s theme of "the transition of wakefulness to sleep" and vice versa.

¹⁰¹ P.P., 53. Jane Mayo Roos writes that Mallarmé was once asked: "What is poetry?" He answered: "A puff of smoke into which the soul entirely withdraws."

to discuss the compressed *plein air* setting that initially implies an Impressionist influence but this painting retains Édouard's own compact, non-Impressionist style.¹⁰² On the other hand, the space, as an entity for his composition, recalls the frontal flatness of Velázquez' studio setting, particularly that of his *Las Meninas*.¹⁰³ Besides the "contained" effect, there's the strong pattern of the iron fence that emphasizes the shallowness between it and the frontal picture plane, giving a feeling that the viewer is enclosed in the same intimate space occupied by the woman and child.¹⁰⁴ I feel like I am an intimate of theirs yet somehow unwelcome to enter their space.

Manet: You're very perceptive today, Berthe. Of course, you do have an advantage over Stéphane since you've long been cognizant of my desire to experiment with Japanese art forms and you're aware of my admiration for their elegant resolutions to spatial problems.¹⁰⁵ But let's move on. Haven't you two ignored the relevancy of the cluster of grapes?¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² R.G.S.L., 9. As a *plein air* landscape painting *Le Chemin de fer* seems to reflect the influence of Manet's Impressionist friends. Ironically, it was "the first *plein-air* painting to be exhibited in the Salon of 1874 but went unnoticed as such." There are those who point out the *subject* was *plein air* but that Manet had actually painted the majority of it in his studio.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 75. "If Velázquez constructed *Las Meninas* to display complexities of mirrored space, then Manet's *Gare Saint-Lazare* can be viewed as a construction that mirrors the mind."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 13. Cf. Fig. 4. Rand uses a similar view of compressed space with an illustration of a Japanese woodblock print by Gototei Kunisada showing a Kabuki stage scene with strong, vertical panels in the background.

¹⁰⁵ Manet's admiration for Japanese techniques is obvious in his many elegant line and wash drawings of cats as well as in his decorative use of Japanese motifs in his portraits of Zola, Nina de Villard, Berthe Morisot (*Le Repos*) and of *Nana*. See also Juliet Wilson-Bareau, *Manet, Monet and the Gare Saint-Lazare* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998) 181. It seems that Manet amused himself in obliquely referring to *Nana*'s social status by depicting a strutting crane on the Japanese-style wall décor of her boudoir since, in French, the word for crane, *grue*, also has the popular meaning of "tart" or "loose woman."

¹⁰⁶ On the ledge below the iron rails of the fence, a bunch of green grapes are placed next to the little girl, lying there most often unnoticed and usually ignored as an object with meaning in the painting.

Morisot: (Pauses, muses.) I suppose that they could represent a snack for the child? What do you think, Stéphane, what else could they be there for?¹⁰⁷

Mallarmé: (Jokes.) Probably for the same reason that my *Faune* ate grapes and became intoxicated with his dreams of conquest. Placed next to her, they symbolically facilitate the child's fantasies by intoxicating her imagination.¹⁰⁸ At least, combined with Manet's "clues," it seems to be a likely exposition considering the subjective view I've been positing to the picture.¹⁰⁹

Morisot: (Quips.) That's wonderful! As the Italians say: *Si non è vero, è ben trovato*.¹¹⁰

Mallarmé: *Eh, bien!* We still haven't exhausted the spiritual possibilities imbedded in this light-filled painting but I'll limit myself to agreeing with Manet's use of banal objects as a device to veil the artist's subjectivity.¹¹¹ In my poetry, I orchestrate symbols, metaphors and allusions to obscure the subjective components.¹¹² If, in fact, he and I are both performing artistically on the same plane, then I would venture to say that Manet's *Le Chemin de fer* embodies my aesthetic principle on realism in the arts: that *painting should not be simply objective but imbued with subjectively*.¹¹³

Morisot: Would you sum up all of these observations we've made into a statement like this: in our contemplation of *Le Chemin de fer* we see Édouard as an artist with innate

¹⁰⁷ R.G.S.L., 35. Rand thinks that the grapes suggest "consumption", i.e., "sense of taste" and, by extension, symbolizes a range of the child's unconscious sensations.

¹⁰⁸ F.M., 162. For Mallarmé's faun, "the grapes resemble a toy on which the faun expends his passion by playfully transforming it into intoxication."

¹⁰⁹ M.M., 86. "Jacques Scherer has pointed out that the two (Manet and Mallarmé) have a similar way of juxtaposing all the elements of a work to bring about a vital interplay from which the pure concept emerges."

¹¹⁰ This is my translation of a popular Italian aphorism: "Even if it isn't true, it still makes a good story."

¹¹¹ F.M., 19. "The object named will remain impure when considered in relation to the idea itself."

¹¹² Ibid., 19. "The immediate purpose of art: the portrayal of real objects and real beings; the ultimate purpose is to transcend the material world." Cf. 29. To paraphrase Fowlie, can painting be described to function like "poetry, the labor of converting impression into expression?"

¹¹³ P.P., 97. Michelle Eligott, author of an essay titled: *Symbolism and the Nabis: Mallarmé and Denis*.

sensibilities who's engaged in a form of self-expression veiled by recognizable conventions?¹¹⁴

Mallarmé: *Voilà!* That's a summation admirably put, Berthe. To answer your question, yes, I would say so.¹¹⁵

Manet: (Noting the hour.) It's getting late, Berthe; is Eugène coming to escort you home? If not, I'll have Jacques signal for a carriage. In the meantime, I'll concede that many of the shrewd perceptions you both have expressed struck some responsive chords within me although I don't often take time to sort out my own methodology and compositional structuring. Self-analysis is not my forte so I find it difficult to objectively critique myself but I can assure you that *I'm not the unthinking, impulsive painting animal that many critics and some colleagues take me to be.*¹¹⁶

(Mallarmé and Morisot, protest simultaneously). *Mais non!* Of course you're not!
Jamais!

Manet: (Moved, nervous.) This close scrutiny of my work is getting too serious for me! Berthe, don't forget that I want you to pose for me as soon as you're free. Here's Jacques to escort you to the *fiacre*. Tell the driver to be careful, Jacques, and tip him well. *À tantôt*, Berthe.

¹¹⁴ R.G.S.L., 109. Although Mallarmé aspired to non-meaning intentions (formlessness) in his poetry, he preferred the strictly structured form of the sonnet; similarly Manet seemed to describe nothing in particular in his work, he nonetheless depended on formal structure to organize his paintings. "Both respected classical models."

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 109. "Manet's quest predisposed him to the deepest alliance with Mallarmé."

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 151-152. "Manet, who for so long had been thought to be an unthinking painter, the unliterary, the mere bourgeois."

Morisot: *Au revoir, mes amis*. I enjoyed this “defense and illustration” of *Le Chemin de fer*.¹¹⁷

Mallarmé: (Enthuses, winks at Morisot.) Me, too, let’s test it out again sometime on another one of Manet’s “veiled subjectivity” projects! Like Egyptian tomb explorers, we’ll translate his secret pictorial hieroglyphics in order to discover his hidden treasure of intentions!¹¹⁸

Manet: (Dryly.) *Eh, bien!* Now it’s you who’s the incorrigible tease, Mallarmé!

(Morisot blows a kiss in the direction of her friends as she departs; the men relax to finish their cigars and brandies.)

(A decade has melted away; it is now 1882 and the painting on Manet’s easel is impressively large. It’s a scene that depicts a barmaid behind her counter at the Folies-Begère, one of the popular new café-concerts that have sprung up like champignons around the grand boulevards.)¹¹⁹

Manet: (Addresses his model.) Thank you, Suzon, I’ll see you tomorrow at ten in the morning.

Suzon: *À demain, Monsieur Manet, merci. Au revoir, Monsieur Degas. Bonjour,*

Monsieur Mallarmé (who is entering.)¹²⁰

Mallarmé: *Bonjour, Mademoiselle Suzon*. (To Manet and Degas.) *Salut, les gars, ça va?*

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 144. Rand says that Manet seems to have invented wordless, egoless meditation in the child’s image. Like Mallarmé’s poetry, the incremental growth of the picture is nonlinear, resembling the arabesque movement of writing. In the surrogate of the adult woman we (the viewer) have come to the surface of consciousness.

¹¹⁸ B.O.C.M., Chap. 5, titled *Le Secret*, 164. Bataille writes: “I wanted to show in Manet one of the most secretive of painters, the most difficult to penetrate.” Cf. F.M., 84. Fowlie deems that “the hieroglyphic aspect of art...has to be translated by performance in order for it to reveal its beauty.”

¹¹⁹ C.P.M.L., 244. “The Folies-Bergère was a kind of café-concert. The guidebooks of that time invariably entered it under that rubric, though they warned their readers that it cost money to go in.” See also D.M., 379. In January of 1880, Manet was working on the *Bar at the Folies-Bergère* in his last studio at 77, Rue d’Amsterdam. (See Thesis Plate XI.)

Manet: *Oui, oui, ça va.* Degas and I were waiting for you to join us in coffee and cigars. Forgive me for not getting up to greet you but I'm a little fatigued from standing at the easel.¹²¹

Degas: *Bonjour,* Mallarmé. You must need a bracing dose of caffeine and nicotine after a day of teaching boring classes of teenagers who are even more bored with Anglo-Saxon linguistics.

Mallarmé: *Mon Dieu, quel boulot!* Because I don't have a moment's peace in that noisy classroom, I'm becoming a veritable *Gaspard de la nuit*.¹²² For years nighttime has been the sole time for my poetry but lately I've become as moon-dazzled as *Gaspard*, a nocturnal creature living off caffeine-induced hallucinations, in a word, an insomniac, *hélas!*¹²³

Degas: I know what a struggle it must be to create poetry after an exhausting day of frustrating endeavor. I myself, I've sometimes wasted an entire day trying to write a *sacré sonnet* and it's not because I lack ideas! I have plenty of them!

¹²⁰ R.B.F.B., 85. "Manet's Suzon is the symbolic mistress of the Folies-Bergère...a *Parisienne*, a *dame de comptoir*."

¹²¹ Philippe Huisman, *Berthe Morisot*. (Lausanne: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1995) In March, 1882, Manet wrote to Morisot in Nice: "I've been feeling better for two days so now I've put aside my cane which is quite something." (My translation.) Cf. H.B.M., 169. "He tried gaily to pretend he would get better..." See also D.M., 380. At the studio he worked in short sessions, continuing to receive visitors. When (Jeannot) extended his hand, he apologized: "It's annoying, excuse me, but I must remain seated."

¹²² C. Biet, *XIXe siècle*, 82. This is the title of a collection of Romantic Gothic prose poems of "night fantasies" by A. Bertrand, 1842. In 1904, Ravel wrote a suite of five compositions based on poems from *Gaspard de la nuit*. See also F.M., 25. "*Le père Mallarmé, on ne fiche rien dans sa classe*," was the usual verdict of his young pupils.

¹²³ F.M., 82. "Almost in the role of an astrologer," Mallarmé sought the dark secret of language and expression. See also 63. "Mallarmé consecrated the theme of night and made it into a uniquely personal aspect of his poetry." See also M.M., 82. "(He) has become madder than ever...the moon bothers him." (Coppée's journal.) See also 39. "I'm going to accustom myself to nocturnal labor, since the wretches who pay me at school plunder my best hours." (Letter to Cazalis, 1865.) See also 135. In 1893, he had literally not slept for ten years...an "absolute insomnia."

Mallarmé: (Smiles, gently replies.) It's not with ideas, my dear Degas, that one makes sonnets, it's with words.¹²⁴ Language transcends the idea...

Manet: (Delighted at Degas' discomfiture.) *Tiens, tiens!* So you see, Degas, it's really best for an artist to stay in his own creative milieu and to seek glory by challenging his own peer group of artists who are now in control of the Salon jury!¹²⁵

Degas: (Flares up.) That cursed Salon is your obsession, not mine! Isn't the second decoration given to you, thanks to Proust, enough glory?¹²⁶ I've always known what a bourgeois you are!¹²⁷

Manet: (Snaps back.) And proud of it; I'm not like you, my skeptical bourgeois friend!

Mallarmé: (Upset.) Do calm down my friends, please! The mere mention of the Salon and you two go at it like the fighting cocks in that painting by Gérôme.¹²⁸

Manet: (Feigns horror.) You don't mean that old *pompier's* crowd-pleaser of the '47 Salon? Can you believe it, Degas? Our own poet, and my best friend, is managing to provoke both of us!

Degas: (Smiles in spite of himself.) What's more, Mallarmé, your revered *maître*, Baudelaire, detested the painting.¹²⁹ But, in light of your eloquent defense of our work, all is forgiven.¹³⁰

¹²⁴ P.P., 83. This amusing exchange was reported by Morisot who said it took place at one of her dinner soirées.

¹²⁵ D.M., 357. The Salon of 1881 was the first Salon organized by the new *Society of French Artists*. See also 235. Degas argued that "realist painters should show separately in a Realist Salon; Manet disagreed. "I believe," Degas wrote, "that he's more vain than intelligent!"

¹²⁶ Ibid., Chronology Table. Manet was named *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur* in December, 1881. Antonin Proust, Manet's friend, had been influential in nominating Manet for this honor that triggered another "scandal."

¹²⁷ Ibid., 360. This bitter exchange between the two friends was provoked by Manet's boastful remarks made to Degas in defense of a Salon medal awarded to his friend and colleague, De Nittis, 1880.

¹²⁸ Claire Barbillon, *Regards d'écrivains au musée d'Orsay*. (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion de musées nationaux, 1992) 62. *Jeunes Grecs faisant battre des coqs* by Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1846, was a solid Salon success in 1847.

Mallarmé: Since Baudelaire was an excellent art critic, please accept my apology. I suppose I chose the wrong analogy for your school-boyish antics. I should have scolded you the way that we usually handle *dissipés* at school: by threatening to send you both to the *piquet*.¹³¹

(Mallarmé's obvious distress is so out of character that it leaves the two competitive old friends momentarily speechless, pausing to reflect on the amusing, endearing and elliptical manner in which the mild professor-poet had handled their quarrel.)

Manet: Well, Degas, you were about to comment on my work in progress just at the time Mallarmé arrived. Are you ready to express your opinion concerning the painting?¹³²

Degas: (Ruefully.) Of course, I don't really need to ask, judging by its monumental size, but you're planning to send it to this year's Salon, *n'est-ce pas?*¹³³

Manet: (Grins.) How well you know me! Regretfully, I had to cancel my original plans to paint the heroic train engineer of the Gare Saint-Lazare because of my health but I found a subject just as compelling and just as modern to represent.¹³⁴ Well, come on then, *allez, allez*, what do you think of my latest *café-concert* painting?¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Ibid., 62. Writing his *Salon de 1859*, Baudelaire found this work "weak and artificial and the facture indecisive."

¹³⁰ M.É., 306. *Les Impressionnistes et Édouard Manet*, demonstrated Mallarmé's understanding of the theories of the new movement as well as his gift for critical prose. From that point, 1876, Mallarmé would be their "champion."

¹³¹ *Dissipé* means an unruly schoolboy whose usual punishment for disruptive behavior was to be sent to the *piquet* which consisted of standing silent and immobile outside the play area during the recreation break between classes.

¹³² D.M., 434. Darragon asserts Degas was not enthusiastic about either *Le Linge* or *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*.

¹³³ Ibid., 385. Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* was shown in the Salon of April 1882; its enigmatic mirror reflection immediately provoked critical polemics as well negative commentary that targeted his impressionist *facture* which ultimately secured its success.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 377. In 1881, Manet wrote to the Western Railway director (Gare Saint-Lazare) to request permission to make a study of the train engineer's "heroic job" while riding along with him and the stoker in a locomotive but the diminishing state of his health probably hindered completion of this project.

¹³⁵ C.P.M.L., n. 92, 314. Eugène Manet wrote to Berthe Morisot in April, 1892: "He's preparing a painstaking failure for the Salon, working and reworking it, always the same painting: a woman in a café... *il se prepare un four*." "Faire four" is a colloquial expression meaning a theatrical flop. (My translation.)

Degas: It seems to be a variation of a subject we both painted all through the late '70s, but this café scene concentrates on an imposing, blasé waitress and suppresses the bustle of the social *mélange* typical of audiences at the new "Folies-Bergère".¹³⁶

Manet: *Ouais!* I knew you would recognize the distinctive décor, the glare of electric globes and the dazzle of chandeliers, not to mention its crowded galleries overlooking the central staging of its theater and circus performances.¹³⁷ Before starting this definitive version I made sketches on the spot, then preliminary oil studies, as you can see by the two smaller canvases.¹³⁸

Degas: Why does this regal, bored barmaid dominate the foreground? Doesn't her disinterested expression clash with the Folies' festive ambiance of music, dance, spectacle and flirtation? I'm not sure what you're attempting to convey by this apathetic waitress, but her blunt stare would surely discourage any potential customer if it weren't for her obvious physical charms.¹³⁹

Manet: She's my favorite theme: *la Parisienne*, symbolic of modern life in Paris, elegantly dressed as if she were a fashion plate illustration in Mallarmé's *La Dernière Mode*.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Degas: *Absinthe*, 1876, *Le Café-concert*, 1882. Manet: *Au Café*, 1878, *La Brasserie*, 1878.

¹³⁷ R.B.F.B., Ch.1 Ross carefully describes all the major public spaces: the pedestrian corridors, fountains, etc. Cf. D.M., 381. Also cf. Zola, *Cronaca Bizantina*. In April, 1882, "probably inspired by his friend's painting," Zola described the Folies-Bergère as an "*endroit bizarre...moitié café, moitié théâtre*." Writing as an art critic, J.-K. Huysmans felt that the "electric glare" was "underpainted," perhaps due to Manet's studio lighting which had daylight as its source of illumination.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 4. "Manet did at least two studies where the barmaid leans or slightly turns to her left with a reflection of her back as she faces a dwarfish man apparently engaged in conversation with her. This model was not Suzon."

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2. Suzon of the Folies was "as fashionable and seductive as a Manet *Parisienne* as was Méry Laurent."

¹⁴⁰ In 1874, Mallarmé edited, published and wrote a women's magazine under the pseudonyms: "Miss Satin, Zizi" et al. Moreover, the iconography of the objects on the marble counter, added to the barmaid herself, becomes a recognizable symbol of Parisian life as well.

Mallarmé: (Pleased.) *Ah, bon?* You have excellent taste as usual. With your permission, may I also address a response to Degas' questions?¹⁴¹ I believe her blank expression conveys more an air of *absence* than that of *ennui*.¹⁴² Her veiled look seems to invite the viewer to enter into her *mysterious world of artifice, ambiguity and fantasy* that's rendered by undisguised layers of paint on a flat surface, flattened even further by the foreground compression of space, an effect unique to Manet.¹⁴³ It's a *mélange* of truth and beauty of color, two qualities that subsume the banal subject of café spectacle to express the larger idea of the subtle relationships between the exterior world of objects and the interior world of ideas.¹⁴⁴

Degas: (Frowns impatiently.) I don't understand what you mean, Mallarmé. Sometimes I find your remarks to be as enigmatic as your poetry, if you don't mind my saying so.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 77. "The poet knew the Folies-Bergère, wrote magazine notices on it and even admired the trapeze artist, Léona Dare" who was a lovely Creole expatriate from Louisiana. It is fascinating to muse about Mallarmé's hero, Baudelaire, who would have been intoxicated by the Folies' lupanar temptations, with its blatant artificiality of décor and habitués, where fantasy coupled with desire, where money and sex came together in a commerce based openly on sexual commodities.

¹⁴² F.M., 79 and *passim*. "Absence" is important for Mallarmé, e.g., "Hell is the absence of living." Also the antithesis of "Absence and Presence" is vital to his sonnet, *Ses purs ongles*, where it opposes "being to non-being"; above all, this poem contains the paradoxical "absence of the Poet." 196. There is also "the absence of chance in the creation of poetry." (*Prose pour des Esseintes*.) For Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 214, "Mallarméan absence reveals the existence of a thing." Cf. "*Je dis: une fleur!...L'absente de tous les bouquets*." (Mallarmé's *Traité du Verbe*.)

¹⁴³ R.B.F.B., 5. G. Maurer believes Manet "liked the idea of many views in a single image and had been attracted to the illusionistic (multiple views) potential of a mirror motif through Velasquez's *Las Meninas*," 1656. The compression of frontal space is also in *Las Meninas* but most critics find its source in Manet's admiration for Japanese wood block prints of interiors that sacrifice perspective to the prerogative of elegant design.

¹⁴⁴ M.M., 24. "This sentence contains at least one key to Mallarmé's famous obscurity: *ellipsis* (as well as "telescoping and metaphorical leaps.") My paraphrase of Michaud's text that "Truth and beauty of color are two qualities" is quoted from Mallarmé's article of 1876, *Les Impressionnistes et Édouard Manet*. Perhaps Manet related the barmaid's expression to that of an inner experience, i.e., the interior world of ideas opposed to the exterior world of objects.

¹⁴⁵ P.P., 81. Morisot invited Mallarmé to read his tribute to Villiers de l'Isle-Adam at her home. Degas walked out during the reading, muttering aloud: "I don't understand anything, anything." Mallarmé denied that he was "difficult to understand." He felt that the reader had to actively participate in fathoming the poet's intentions that were not meant to be read mindlessly as one reads newspaper articles. Perhaps this is also Manet's attitude about the viewer.

Manet: (Softens Degas' curtness.) With our poet, it's just a matter of osmosis, Degas.

I've developed an ear for his oracular style of conversing through our daily chats

concerning life in general and art in particular.¹⁴⁶

Mallarmé: (Wryly.) *Eh bien*, Manet, our relationship exists merely on the subliminal plane?

Manet: (Impishly.) Isn't that typical of most long-term intimacies, *mon cher Capitaine*?

Degas: (Dryly.) Assuming that your ear is an accurate organ, Manet, shouldn't I therefore be able to detect the artistic presence of both you and Mallarmé in this "machine" for the Salon?¹⁴⁷

Manet: (Startled.) You know, Degas, I never really thought about that possibility!

Mallarmé: What a provocative idea, Degas! If, indeed, I have an unintentional part in this superb evocation of the *folies* at the Folies-Bergère, I would say that it might be due to our predilection for consecrating ordinary objects to serve a higher purpose on the sacred altar of Beauty.¹⁴⁸ I think you'll agree that, here, Manet has offered her a visual feast in the form of superb still-lives!

Degas: Still-lives? Ordinary objects? *Mon Dieu, il y en a un embarras de choix!* The entire frontal plane is loaded with everyday objects: bottles of champagne, English beers,

¹⁴⁶ Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. 63. For Symons, Mallarmé's utterances assimilated the obscure form of the Greek sibylline oracle. See also D.M., 247. "Manet's conversations with Mallarmé, outside of Parisian current events, must have emphasized new forms of art regarding, in particular, the sketches for *The Raven* that Mallarmé had translated. Manet, as usual, sought to find a supernatural dimension in reality." (My translation.)

¹⁴⁷ H.E.M., 171. "It is not easy to say who influenced whom. Manet's style of capturing and synthesizing the essential of an object with a few marks may have helped Mallarmé in the development of his thinking, or Mallarmé's views about evoking the essence of objects encouraged Manet toward a briefer virtuoso shorthand. *Undoubtedly their relationship was mutually enriching.*" (My italics.) D.M., 246. They also shared a taste for popular spectacle.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 19. He used "familiar objects...flowers, swans, mirrors...in which he finds both an innate beauty and a *metaphysical use*." (Italics are mine.) See also M.M. 55. In discovering Hegelian "Nothingness," Mallarmé had found the principle and the justification of his work: "There is only Beauty and the perfect expression of it: Poetry."

citrus fruits, sweet liquors, roses and cigar smoke so thick it's tangible, not to mention the beautiful *fille* herself who personifies every male's sexual object *par excellence!*¹⁴⁹

Mallarmé: *But* doesn't her vacant, introverted air seem inappropriate for seduction? I find that there's a paradox lurking behind that absent look. Somehow, she reminds me of *Olympia*...¹⁵⁰

Manet: That's a good point. Like *Olympia*, she could symbolize certain sexual illusions to which men cling, such as the assumption that women who "serve" are, by extension, subservient to males. Her monumental presence should squelch that assumption!¹⁵¹ (After a momentary pause.) Haven't you both ignored the mirror? It's the other major component of my composition!¹⁵²

Degas: (Facetiously.) What mirror? Ah, yes! It's a clever example of optical fraud,

Manet. I almost didn't see it; only glimpses of the gilt frame behind the barmaid's wrist betray its presence! In the corner of the mirror one sees her back and her *gallant* facing her but he's not in the picture per se. Aha! I believe this ocular effect indicates

Mallarmé's influence! Why? Because I think that the *disorientation* between the mirrored

¹⁴⁹ George Mauner, Manet: *The Still-life Paintings*. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Publishers, Inc., 2000) 12. "Although considered an inferior genre by the Academy, still lifes account for some twenty percent of Manet's output." In 1875, he remarked: "A painter can say all he wants to with fruit or flowers or even clouds...I should like to be the St Francis of still life." For the *Bar*, he composed an extravagant *nature morte*; one could say it was a still life with figures! See also R.B.F.B., 1-2. As a *dame de comptoir* in the chauvinist tradition of the epoch the barmaid was branded as a *cocotte* (prostitute).

¹⁵⁰ R.B.F.B., 86. The *Folies-Bergère* "fully recaptured the monumentality of the *Olympia*." Cf. F.M., 410. Both paintings "implied a male beholder." See also C.P.M.L., 241. "*La marchande*" versus "*la courtisane*." As noted above, Mallarmé's stress on the word "absent" appeals to Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 214., where "absence" is a Mallarméan paradox, one of his *jeux de mots* and a code word that reveals the existence of the subject. Therefore, the absent expression of the barmaid may, in Mallarmé's mind, reinforce her status as an individual or as a social force.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 86-87. Like a "goddess representing Baudelaire's world of the senses, the transfixed iconic image of the barmaid seems to tower over the viewer..." (with a subtle hint of haughty contempt that is possibly reminiscent of *Olympia*?)

¹⁵² Ibid., 85. "The independent plane of the mirror is crucial; it separates the apparent reality of the frontal ground that pushes the image forward and partitions the barmaid from the exuberant crowd of spectators and the silent drama of the negotiation that's taking place back of her." Cf. D.M., 384. In this painting of the *Bar* "Manet captured the entire esprit of the Folies-Begère."

background where the dandy is present, and in the frontal plane, where he's absent, corresponds to the word games and disjointed syntax that our poet concocts to mislead the reader and render his poetry inaccessible.¹⁵³

Manet: (Groans loudly to annoy Degas.) *Quelle bêtise!* How farfetched can you get?

Mallarmé: (Pretends to be hurt.) *Écoutez, mon ami!* It's true that I use poetic mirror imagery as metaphor for the uncertainties and risks inherent in the creative process.

Mirrors represent magical portals through which the poet enters, daring to search for his true Self, seeking either artistic immortality or spiritual oblivion. Not to mention the delicious verbal possibilities suggested by the hallucinatory properties of radiant, shimmering glass! So you see, mirrors function as *symbols* in my poems, meant to clarify my ideas, not to obfuscate them. I suppose that you've been reading those critics who misinterpret me!¹⁵⁴

Degas: (Shrugs.) Perhaps, but you have just reinforced my belief that the mirror's "mirage effect" may derive from the metaphysical strangeness found in your poetry.¹⁵⁵

Of course, when we add Manet's subversive artistic temperament and eccentric vision of art, *voilà: we have the distorted mirror!*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ F.M., 58. Dubbed the master of obscurity, the "ultimate goal of Mallarmé's poem was to transcend all objective material beauty in order to disappear into the pure beauty of the Idea." Cf. Baudelaire's theme of *spleen et idéal*.

¹⁵⁴ M.M., 74-75. "Mirrors are a recurrent theme in Mallarmé's poetry, perfect symbols for his contemplation of the metaphysical universe." Mirrors haunt his poems but reflect only shadows and vague twinkles. Four poems featuring pivotal mirrors are: *Hérodiade*, *Les Fenêtres*, *Le sonnet en -yx*, and, above all, *Igitur*, where mirror, night, time, magic and dream induce hallucinations. For Mallarmé, mirrors accomplish the poetic act *par excellence*: abolition of matter (the object), and, by extension, destruction of subject matter as in Impressionist painting. See also F.M., 57. Later in 1886, Mallarmé's disciple, Dujardin, would describe a dinner where hostile journalists made fun of Mallarmé's *Hommage*, a poem composed in honor of Wagner, "written in his purest and most difficult style."

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 81. Paradox is at the core of Mallarmé's thought, e.g., "to know the complete meaning of an object we have to destroy it." See also 70. Poe's atmosphere of metaphysical strangeness is present in Mallarmé's poetry.

Manet: (Guffaws.) You're projecting your own artistic intentions as well as your fetish for pseudo-scientific theories about physiognomy, as exemplified in your series of illustrations on *café chantant* singers like that loud-mouthed Thérèse at the Alcazar.¹⁵⁷

Degas: So what? We're not discussing my work here my dear friend, the *Folies* is *your* folly!

Mallarmé: In all fairness to your observation, Degas, I must admit that I use everyday objects as points of departure in my sonnets that often culminate in mystical mirror imagery.¹⁵⁸ Like Mozart, who said: "*Je cherche les notes qui s'aiment*," I look for the common word that illuminates the word next to it which in turn reflects another, and so forth and so on.¹⁵⁹ Is that why you consider my poetry to be so difficult for the reader?

Degas: In a word: yes! I get dizzy trying to follow the spirals and leaps of your thought, its tangled grammar and arcane game of metaphors, until I finally give up in frustration.¹⁶⁰

Manet: (Attempts to divert the tension.) *Courage*, Degas! Even his conversational prose is laced with arabesques of preciousness that can be intoxicating!¹⁶¹ In fact his Faune's

¹⁵⁶ M.M., 72. Michaud's assessment of Mallarmé's *Sonnet en -yx* could also constitute a poetical analysis of Manet's *Bar*: "A world apart, at once the reflection, the witness, and the symbol of the poet" (or the painter).

¹⁵⁷ C.P.M.L., 221. "Degas did several penetrating studies of Thérèse, noting her gestures, piled up hair, pugilist face."

¹⁵⁸ F.M., 80 and *passim*. The mirror is a perfect symbol of the framed void: *Hérodiade* "fused" into her mirror. Manet featured mirrors in portraits of Astruc and Nana, *Devant le miroir*, a tour de force of brush work depicting a woman lacing her corset seen from the back and in all of his café music hall paintings.

¹⁵⁹ M.M., 89. "Words are disposed in an unpredictable order so as to light up one another..." 95. "In his ideal of poetry... words light up by mutual reflection... each one... finding its primitive purity again." 139. Mallarmé also said: "To name an object is to suppress three quarters of the poem, which is made up of gradual guessing: the dream is to suggest it." His view also seems to be an apt analogy when applied to Manet's concepts, especially in the *Bar*.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24. These literary procedures became Mallarmé's favorite instruments in his quest "to paint not the thing but the effect it produced."

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 23. "Mallarmé's sentences are drawn out in arabesques over one or several stanzas." See also F.M., 11. "An essential of the poet was aesthetic: his intoxication was cerebral and his passion was for words." Manet, as illustrator of Mallarmé's *L'après-midi*, no doubt read and heard readings of the Faune's

tipsy dream of *l'amour sur l'herbe* suggested my studio's *buffet* that you see loaded with voluptuous champagne served up by a modern nymph! *Donc les voici!* (Gestures toward the studio props assembled there: marble topped bar, champagne, etc. Curiously *there was not a bar mirror in the studio.*)¹⁶² Doesn't that fit your theory about the possible, sub-conscious "authorial partnership" implied in this work, Degas?

Mallarmé: (Playfully.) I'll drink to that! But that Dandy reflected in the mirror has nothing to do with me, my elegant friend.¹⁶³ Moreover, this painted milieu is pure "Manet territory": a scene of modern spectacle crowded with elegant male and female friends, each striking a pose as part of the audience.¹⁶⁴ Through these recognizable portraits *and* the well-dressed Dandy reflected in the mirror, the viewer is informed that this is, by authorial extension, a veritable *self-portrait*.¹⁶⁵

Degas: Agreed. That's his trademark! As to the mirror distortion, let me say that I find it most provocative, Manet. I've often taken such liberties in my work in order to compress space and acquire unusual theatrical effects.¹⁶⁶ But, on the right side of the painting,

self-induced "intoxication scene." Cf. M.É., 325. In an article, Mallarmé described the blond Manet as a *chevre-pied* (satyr), synonym of a faun.

¹⁶² D.M., 380. Since only the bar's marble top is seen in the mirror, it seems evident there was not a mirror in the studio. Therefore... "all of the hall's reality was painted from memory and based on his sketches." (My translation.)

¹⁶³ R.B.F.B., 55-57. Both *Nana* and *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* "allude to the life of the Dandy and it was a mode of life with which Manet identified himself. Mallarmé was clearly *un homme d'intérieur* (homebody) and Manet, a man of the world." The poet's modest attire and shy persona was the antithesis of the dandified elegance of Manet's wardrobe and his sophisticated, man about town *savoir faire*.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 57. "Men of culture in Manet's circle prided themselves on a certain brand of carnal knowledge associated with demi-mondaines such as his friends Méry Laurent and Jeanne de Marsy portrayed prominently in the crowd."

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 9. "As in *La Musique* and *Le Bal masqué à l'Opéra*, Manet identified himself in this painting with the social milieu of the Folies and thereby perpetuated himself in the mirror."

¹⁶⁶ R.B.F.B., 6. Degas' imagery where he used "powerfully juxtaposed differing perspectives was probably suggested by Japanese woodcuts."

haven't you pushed mirror distortion into the realm of impossibility with the odd, reflected scene where that hulking *loup* looms over the barmaid?¹⁶⁷

Manet: The realm of possibility shouldn't matter to the creative artist, *mon ami*. Mirrors have always intrigued me but not as metaphors for paintings. What I love is the ambiguity, the "fakery" of the two-dimensional shiny surface that uncannily mimics three-dimensional reality. I'm not a pure realist and never have been, so I feel free to play in the unreal fairyland of magic and enchanted mirrors.¹⁶⁸

Mallarmé: Since Nature offered its first mirror--a calm pool of water--we've succumbed to its seductive power. As in the legend of Narcissus, whose ego willed his own destruction, the metaphysical dimension suggested by mirrored reflections holds me spellbound.¹⁶⁹ In my imagination, mirrors frame a void that contains all the mysteries of man's presence on earth, reflecting simultaneously his black fears for his future destiny and fervent hopes for the eternal purity of oblivion.¹⁷⁰

Degas: Mirror illusion also has a pragmatic function. Didn't Vermeer use the mirror of his "camera obscura" to alter reality?¹⁷¹ Although our modern camera has the mirror's

¹⁶⁷ C.P.M.L., 254 and *passim*. The imposing image of the barmaid is misleading in that she *seems* to be in control of personal space at the bar but in reality "money controls her life." (In the mirror, is she given the right to say "No"?) *Loup* (wolf) perfectly conjures the image of the predatory animal, menacing and fearsome, therefore it is the perfect synonym for a man who preys on women. Cf. Charles Perrault's cautionary fable: *Le Petit capuchon rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 254. Manet was a painter of surfaces, flat and two-dimensional as a mirror, because painting is a surface.

¹⁶⁹ F.M., 114. "The narcissistic use of a mirror is a major theme in Mallarmé's *Igitur*." See also 80. Typically, the last tercet of certain sonnets suggests mirror imagery, as in *Ses purs ongles*. See also M.M., 36. Mallarmé wrote to Cazalis, 1865: "I spend hours observing in mirrors..." His "own narcissism took the form of *Hérodiade*, his heroine who disappeared into her mirror image thus symbolizing the death of the poet (who is the subject of his own poem)."

¹⁷⁰ M.M., 54. "To live (in accordance with the Hegelian ideal) is to empty oneself into nothingness *so that the mystery immanent in the Universe can be revealed inwardly in all its purity*. One must be the place, the locale, where the Mind discovers and becomes conscious of itself, as in a mirror."

¹⁷¹ Jean Beaudesne. "Ce miroir magique est le secret de son génie." *Paris Match* [Paris] 29 Feb. 1996: 80. Beaudesne proposes the possible use of the *camera obscura* by the Dutch master Vermeer to solve the perspective problems encountered in his interior scenes.

capacity to faithfully mimic what it “sees,” the resulting photograph shows its limited frame of vision because it cuts off edges of reality.¹⁷² Your *Bar* implies this photographic effect, Manet, by cutting off the edges of the background scene in a random, casual manner. For example, at the top left edge only the dangling legs of the torso-less trapeze artist are visible, swinging above the audience; fortunately the popularity of photography has accustomed the public’s eye to this modern phenomenon.¹⁷³

Mallarmé: I’d like to point out that today’s painters and photographers are just catching up with a similar poetic device known as “synecdoche” which means: “to cut off part of an image” while suggesting the whole.¹⁷⁴

Manet: (Salutes Mallarmé.) *Bravo, mon Capitaine!* From now on I’ll improvise on your poetic terminology by modifying it into a painterly one: “visual synecdoche.”¹⁷⁵ Don’t you agree that it’s the perfect allusion to the *suggestiveness* of my mirror imagery?¹⁷⁶ I allow the viewer to clearly see the barmaid’s frontal space but one has to make an imaginative mental shift in order to fill in the elusive, *partial reality* reflected in the smoke-hazed mirror.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² E.E.P., 321. Degas was perhaps influenced by photography in his ingenious compositions where he used “innovative, unexpected cropped edges as in scenes of orchestras, stage performances, cafés and interiors.”

¹⁷³ D.M., 246. Degas and Renoir directly painted acrobats and circus performers whereas Manet did so indirectly in the *Bar*. E.E.P., 321. “Long interested in the usefulness of photographic effects, Degas became an enthusiastic amateur photographer about 1885.” He took a famous photo of Mallarmé and Renoir at Julie Morisot’s home in 1895. Cf. Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988. 13-15. The cut-off legs and torso of *Le Bal masqué à l’Opéra* and those of *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* offer “an easily grasped, nontransferable synecdoche of sexual power relations.” At the same time, “this device calls attention to the arbitrariness of the boundaries of the frame.”

¹⁷⁴ A memorable synecdoche is placed in the last line of Mallarmé’s *Salut*: “*Le blanc souci de notre toile.*”

¹⁷⁵ “Visual synecdoche” is a term coined here to impute the magical effect of the Folies-Bergère mirror to certain works of both Manet and Mallarmé.

¹⁷⁶ M.M., 24. Because of the “duality of meaning introduced by the puzzling mirror image, one might see the frontal plane as the external world of the bar and the reflection as “internal reverie” suggested by the barmaid’s expression of self-absorption.” Cf. to footnote 144.

¹⁷⁷ E.E.P. 312. “Since the 1950s, a large number of studies have attempted to unriddle social meanings of some his paintings.” R.B.F.B., 10. “Manet gave considerable thought to the character of the background image” and its social implications.

Mallarmé: (Teases Degas.) Aha, Degas! Don't you recognize *me* here? You could easily compare my "words that reflect each other" to Manet's innovative "dialogue of reflections!"¹⁷⁸

Degas: (Dryly.) No comment, *mon cher poète*. Well, anyway, given my bent for psychological observation and your recent remark about reflections of dark destiny in mirrors, I've added two and two together.¹⁷⁹ The ambiguous *mise-en-scène* staged "in the wings," as it were, and reflected at the barmaid's left, informs me that she's negotiating an *off-scene* transaction that probably relates to her alter ego's licentious livelihood.¹⁸⁰

Manet: Hm-m. So you assume that the customer equates her to the objects on the bar: *for sale*.¹⁸¹

Degas: Exactly! Although the girl isn't flirting, she symbolizes Desire because she works at the Folies-Begère, a popular brothel where dandies flock to pant over the latest *femme à la mode*.¹⁸² Besides, I doubt seriously that her customer is discussing the merits of the wine list with her!

Manet: (Seriously.) As you and everyone know, I paint slowly and often wipe out passages that don't please me.¹⁸³ This composition demanded a male figure for the reason

¹⁷⁸ M.M., 69. "The meaning of a poem, if there is one, is evoked by an internal mirage of the words themselves." The word "mirage" seems to equate *specularity*.

¹⁷⁹ E.E.P., 319. "Degas' intimate portraiture best illustrates his realist tendencies for psychological observation. His undramatic subject, *Les Repasseuses*, recalls scenes from Zola's *L'Assommoir* whose heroine was a laundress. Zola's naturalist novels, in spite of his belief in Progress, also reflected an uneasiness about "l'avenir" (the future)."

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 319-324. "Gifted with social and psychological insights, Degas' realism powerfully combined both."

¹⁸¹ C.P.M.L., 253. "A woman selling drinks and oranges is for sale herself...or believed so by some customers."

¹⁸² R.B.F.B., Pl. 4. An 1838 sketch by Gavarni fits the situation perfectly: A panting pack of Dandies *autour d'une femme à la mode*.

¹⁸³ H.B.M., 57-59. Re: *Le Balcon*: Manet "made his models pose over and over, till they tried wearily to convince him that the picture was already perfect." Berthe Morisot "was delighted to report that Manet had to wipe out the face and head of Eva Gonzalez' portrait over and over because he was dissatisfied with the

that you just stated: the Folies-Bergère symbolizes a modern temple of entertainment where men and women gather to celebrate sensual pleasures.¹⁸⁴ After logically positioning the “panting” gentleman at various sections of the bar, I eventually decided on the illogical space that he now occupies in the mirror.¹⁸⁵ Otherwise, placing him logically in front of the bar, his figure would have infringed on the elegant portrait of my pretty young *grisette*.¹⁸⁶ Don’t you agree?

Degas: (Sighs.) *Bravo!* You’ve cleverly side stepped my questions, with a non sequitur response that compares to the non sequitur mirror displacement! Nevertheless, you’re going to have to answer to a public that will be furious about this image of an archetypal Parisienne juxtaposed almost seamlessly next to the “floating world” represented by your friends and social peers.¹⁸⁷

Manet: *Eh, alors?* You know I don’t give a damn about public opinion!

Mallarmé: Degas has a point. Let’s consider the literary equivalent to the *Bar*. Ironically, the public has long devoured books about the sordid topic that Degas has just brought up.

likeness. In view of her obvious jealousy of Eva, it was ironic that, in the 1870 Salon, Eva’s portrait hung next to Morisot’s *Le Repos*.”

¹⁸⁴ R.B.F.B., 81. The *Bar* acknowledges prostitution by alluding to the familiar Dandy and *cocotte* of Forain’s popular illustrations. See also 10. “All that takes place in this background scene speaks to the theme of pleasure and spectacle in nineteenth-century Paris.” Cf. F.M., 241. In Mallarmé’s poetic lexicon, the theater spectacle had become a temple again in order to acknowledge its Greek origins.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., Pl. 6. Manet’s preliminary oil sketch shows the barmaid turned slightly to face a strange, dwarfish dandy who is only visible in the background mirror.

¹⁸⁶ C.P.M.L., 254. Clark thinks the painter carefully mismatched spatial relationships to express social ambiguity.

Cf. R.B.F.B., 1. Ross states that the girl is a working class *grisette* since she is wearing the house uniform of dark bodice over her *gray* dress. See also F.M., 345. Fried suggests that the customer in the mirror both “is” and “is not” standing before the barmaid. One might say she’s also a fashion illustration given Manet’s and Mallarmé’s passion for feminine elegance. Manet often advised his female models on what to wear; Mallarmé published “*La Dernière Mode*,” a woman’s magazine that he nursed through eight editions until its demise at the end of 1874.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 243. “The critics of 1882 saw the painting as odd and incoherent. The viewers and ‘all the men’ knew what the woman behind her *buffet* was up to.” Philip Burty identified Manet’s salesgirl as “une marchande de consolation.” See also B.É., 239. In 1846 Baudelaire defined the *floating world* as: “Le spectacle de la vie élégante et des milliers d’existences flottantes qui circulent dans...une grande ville—

There's the licentious life of Maupassant's *Bel-Ami* hero, Duroy, and Dumas fils' *demi-mondaine*, capable of "noble love," the Goncourts' prurient tales about "natural" prostitutes among working class women and, most of all, Zola's morbid, microscopic study of a sexually-obsessed "eater of men," his neurotic slut, Nana!¹⁸⁸ These men of letters have helped to whip up unreasonable fears of an imminent social invasion by hoards of diseased, corrupted and power hungry prostitutes.¹⁸⁹ It's all nonsense, of course, but your magisterial handling of the bargirl at the Folies-Bergère might reinforce such unfounded bourgeois paranoia.

Manet: (Shouts.) But this is a painting, by God, it's not something to be read in the toilet! I'm not *writing* with paint brushes! I'm painting *my* Paris, a Paris that I've seen every day of my life, *my personal observation* of the excitement, noise, sensuality and glamour of modern Parisian spectacle!¹⁹⁰ *That's* what this painting means to me even if the Salon's philistine public wants to "read" it as an event in a smutty story!¹⁹¹

Mallarmé: Just bide your time, my friend, they'll come around when they get accustomed to the brilliant *impressionist effect* of the painting. Then they'll overlook the subject and

criminels et filles entretenues—” (The italics are mine.) Modern scenes in Japanese prints of courtesans and performance artists were also labeled “floating worlds.”

¹⁸⁸ R.B.F.B., 81. Writers and artists were having a field day crucifying *la fille publique*: “J.-K. Huysmans’ *Marthe*, E. Goncourt’s *La fille Élisa*; among the artists, Gavarni satirized the ambitious *lorette*, while Monnier’s wholesome *grisette* gave way to Grévin’s mercenary *cocotte*.” D.M., 384. Yet, “the *créatures voyantes* of these novels are not visible in Manet’s painting!” (My translation.)

¹⁸⁹ C.P.M.L., 244. If the woman is selling herself, she is “the modern *filles*, product of our advanced civilization, agent of the destruction of the upper classes.” Paul Alexis, *Le Figaro*, March 12, 1881, cited in Zola’s *Nana*. Cf. R.B.F.B., 28. Baudelaire described the demi-mondaines who haunted fashionable nightspots as “magnificent beasts of prey.” (The Painter of Modern Life) See also Pl. 35 for a reproduction of a Gustave Doré’s fine illustration showing a trio of elegant, crinoline-swathed *Lionnes* riding in an open carriage, admired by dandies on horseback, bowing from their saddles in “penis-erect” postures.

¹⁹⁰ R.B.F.B., 39. By 1882, the veneration of Paris and *la Parisienne* was firmly established. Mallarmé said of Manet that “The man and the painter were one.” See also 10. “All that takes place in this background scene speaks to the theme of pleasure and spectacle in the nineteenth century.”

¹⁹¹ Paul Barbier, *Documents Mallarmé*. (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1968) 78. In 1876, Mallarmé wrote: “(Manet) draws from his own inner consciousness... seeks to lose his personality in nature itself, or in the gaze of a multitude until then ignorant of her charms.” (The Impressionists and Édouard Manet.)

judge you solely upon your talent. It's a matter of educating the public eye and discouraging the jury from acting like clergy in charge of souls.¹⁹² I truly admire your imperative that art should ideally be an impersonal act of creation, one that savors lushly painted surfaces while the condensed subject matter tells no tales.¹⁹³ We have only to await the participation of the new social class that is now evolving in the political life of France. This is a marginalized public that already identifies itself, like your new school of art, as radical and democratic.¹⁹⁴

Degas: I share your impersonal stance, Manet. As you know, compositional ingenuity challenges me as much as implying the mental state of the individuals in my scenes.¹⁹⁵ I've also been interested in distancing myself from the subject, or the situation depicted in my work, by avoiding any implication of self-reference. It's an aspect I compare to the artistic device that Flaubert called "authorial absence."¹⁹⁶ But, if indeed your *Bar* is an extended self-portrait, it informs me of your "authorial presence," thus demonstrating that our intentions are poles apart.

R.B.F.B., 14. "The question of the meaning of a barmaid at the Folies-Bergère may have had for Manet (still) remains open." (Parentheses are mine.)

¹⁹² M.É., 302. Mallarmé expressed these sentiments in his article: *The Jury of 1874 and Edouard Manet*.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 308. *Les Impressionnistes et Édouard Manet*, 1876. Cf. M.M., 86. "Speaking of the 'only man who has tried to open doors for himself and for painting,' Mallarmé was at the same time thinking of what he himself had wanted to do for poetry."

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., *passim*. Mallarmé stresses "the absence of all personal intrusion in the manner of this painter's interpretation of nature...singular because he abjures singularity...recognizable at first sight among all the schools of all the ages." (Compare his analysis of the *theories* of Manet's paintings to Zola's ideas that concentrated on Manet's *personality*.) See 322. He expressed a rare political opinion where he foresaw an alliance between "*la gauche*" (socialist party) and the new school of art (Impressionism). C.P.M.L., 287. Clark considers Mallarmé's optimism about art and democracy as "largely misguided."

¹⁹⁵ E.E.P., 315. Degas was careful to use a deeply calculated artifice so that his art remained objective and distant. Manet's impersonal intentions seem more paradoxical, if he indeed identified with the *Bar*'s social milieu.

Cf. *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* to his earlier *La Musique aux Tuileries* and *Le Bal Masqué à l'Opéra*.

¹⁹⁶ R.B.F.B., 18. Flaubert (like Degas) emulated a scientific model to rid his literary art of all subjectivity.

Manet: *Comme d'habitude!* When were we ever in complete accord? Our friendship was never based on agreement about artistic intentions!¹⁹⁷

Degas: *C'est vrai!* By the way, do I detect the indirect presence of Mary Cassatt who also made the arbitrary use of a mirror at the back of the loge, in her painting: *Lydia in the Loge at the Opera*? By that, I mean the mirrored reflection that she placed in the rear space of the loge *where none actually existed*.

Manet: Of course, my eye is as sharp as yours; I remember the mirror had a dazzling *tour de force* effect in that painting! She captured a frontal view of the young woman together with the reflected theater spectacle all in one frame...*génial!*¹⁹⁸ Obviously, I decided to make a direct reference to her painting of an elegant *Woman in Black at the Opera* looking through opera glasses, by placing her "twin" prominently in my audience at the Folies-Bergère!¹⁹⁹ It's a way of expressing my sincere admiration for her formidable talent. You're a close friend of hers aren't you? Don't you think she will be pleased that one of her French colleagues has quoted her?

¹⁹⁷ E.E.P., 324 and 330. "Unlike Manet, Degas never went through an Impressionist stage; he believed that art was not rooted in impartial sense experience."

¹⁹⁸ R.B.F.B., 6. "Exploring the subject matter of spectators and spectacle, Cassatt altered the opera loge in this painting by placing a mirror in the back of the loge where it reflected the theatrical spectacle that the young woman was seeing." It was Degas who introduced Cassatt's works into the Fourth Impressionist Exposition, 1879. See H.B.M., 109. "Degas, unlike Puvis (de Chavannes) did not make the assumption that art by women was women's art."

¹⁹⁹ D.M., 384. This painting by Cassatt continued the Impressionist theme of "opera glasses and spectacle." See also J.A.Barter, *Mary Cassatt: Modern Woman*. (Chicago: H.N. Abrams, 1998) 111. In *Woman in a Loge*, "the subject sits in front of a mirror reflecting the brilliantly lit hall of a theater or opera house...the background has *dynamically distorted perspective*". (My italics.) Cf. James D. Herbert, *Illusion of the Real*, an essay in *12 Views of Manet's Bar*. 123. Herbert writes that binoculars can be considered "a device that distorts vision," effectively collapsing the distance between Cassatt's woman and the scene she regards so intently. The idea of "collapsed space and optical distortion" of binoculars--a theater accessory that the sophisticated Manet surely owned--might be relevant to the puzzling background scene of the *Bar*, "where spatial compression and mirror distortion defies logic."

Degas: (Evasively.) Like most Americans, she's very independent. Why not ask Berthe Morisot's opinion? They're fairly close these days.²⁰⁰

Manet: Thanks for the advice. In the meanwhile, I think we can all speak as epicurean men of the world in viewing the Folies-Bergère as a microcosm of cosmopolitan sophistication.²⁰¹ Its ambiance combines Parisian *joie-de-vivre* and boulevardier delights, all under one roof. Even a poet as discreet as Mallarmé envisions the Folies as a possible venue for his three-part poetry and drama festival!²⁰²

Degas: (Bemused.) *Quelle bizarre idée!* Are you serious, Mallarmé?

Mallarmé: (Flushes with emotion.) *Oui, oui*, Degas! Manet isn't joking this time. As a youthful poet, I dreamed of my poems as staged dramatic performances.²⁰³ Later I was encouraged by Wagner's example of the self-appointed impresario who fused music, drama and poetry into magnificent spectacles for the opera stage.²⁰⁴ I'm fascinated by his system of correspondences in his musical spectacles that are so similar to Baudelaire's relationships between the senses: *perfumes, colors and sounds*.

²⁰⁰ E.E.P., 328. During 1881-83, Degas produced a series of large pastels of women in milliner's shops, stimulated by the American artist Mary Cassatt with whom he visited fashion and hat salons, reinforcing his natural "delight in beautiful artifice." H.B.M., 154. Although not enough alike to be intimate, Morisot and Cassatt "both stood professionally on the same ground and knew it." (Late 1870s and 1880s.)

²⁰¹ R.B.F.B., 57. In 1884, Zola, in a somewhat critical vein, described Manet as a man who was psychologically dependent upon the epicurean blandishments of Paris.

²⁰² *Mallarmé Correspondance* ed. Henri Mondor, 151. In a letter of 1877 to Mrs. Whitman of London, he imagines a vast spectacle, a "*drame magique, populaire et lyrique*," combining text, ballet and music. It was to be a simultaneous event in three "corners" of Paris: "*mettant comme Néron le feu à trois coins de Paris*." 159. Writing to Arthur O'Shaughnessy in 1877, he asks: "Do you remember Léona Dare of the Folies-Bergère? She has a place in this vast stage show." (My translation.)

²⁰³ F.M., 129 and 148. *Hérodiade* and *L'après-midi d'un faune* were "both written in a dramatic, one-act format." See also 242. "The art of the theater was one of Mallarmé's constant preoccupations." M.M., 38. The poet, Théodore de Banville, had promised to present his one-act *Monologue du Faune* at Paris' *Comédie-Française* theater but deemed it lacked the action demanded by the public.

²⁰⁴ Haskell M. Block *Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963) 61. "Wagner has created a theater of 'sortilege,' of enchantment and magic, through the exploitation of all the arts of the theater..." See also 57. "Baudelaire had called attention to Wagner's synthesis of the arts that he had assimilated into his own system of *correspondances*."

Degas: (Interested.) Ah yes, but it's also true that Wagner was given a catastrophic reception by Parisians!²⁰⁵ He's another misunderstood artist, who persisted in spite of the scorn of an unsophisticated public that preferred an Offenbach operetta to his Tannhäuser. But what does *your* three-part poetry and drama festival encompass?

Mallarmé: (Animatedly.) I see it as a vast spectacle combining text, ballet and music. It will be poetry's triumph in the theater! It will be performed simultaneously in three venues of Paris. I compare it to Nero simultaneously setting multiple fires to burn down Rome!²⁰⁶

Degas: (Incredulous.) And one of these theaters will be the Folies-Bergère?

Mallarmé: Hopefully! I fervently aspire to have the great *danseuse-gymnaste*, Léona Dare, to participate.²⁰⁷ She is more than just the average trapeze performer, she has superior talents and audiences adore her.

Manet: (Puckishly.) *Bravo!* I'll add "Impresario" to my list of salutations addressed to you, *mon Capitaine*.

Mallarmé: (Gives a mock military salute to Manet.) Maybe some day, *mon cher marin*, but now it's all still in the planning stage until I find someone to help financially with production expenses for theaters, actors, dancers, publicity, etcetera.

Manet: Maybe you'll get help from your contacts in London; *on ne sait jamais!*

²⁰⁵ M.M., 15. "Mallarmé never met Wagner but 'the *Tannhäuser* battle in Paris' may have served to inspire him to reflect upon the ties between poetry and music. Music has its secrets, why not poetry?" See also 113. "At heart, Mallarmé could not forgive Wagner for having subordinated poetry to music."

²⁰⁶ See footnote 202. Also to Mrs. Whitman: "(My project) is too ambitious, I want to use all the arts of the stage." Cf. M.M., 164. He wanted to create "an entirely new theater: magical, popular and lyrical." His great work *Le Livre*, left unfinished, was to have been a synthesis of every genre: theater, drama and music.

²⁰⁷ Henri Mondor, *Mallarmé Correspondance*. 321. In a letter to O'Shaughnessy, dated December, 1877, he expressed his ambitions for a great poetry/music/dance festival and his great admiration for the trapeze performer "*Léona Dare...destinée à éblouir le peuple souverain comme ne fut jamais un empereur de Rome.*" Cf. H.M. Block who refers to the same letter in his *Mallarmé and the Symbolist Drama*, 51. Block

Degas: (Still bemused.) *Mon Dieu!* I now realize that the trapeze artist's legs swinging above the crowd is one of Manet's *visual synecdoches*, and by associating you with Léona Dare, is a clever extended portrait of *you!*²⁰⁸ (All three laugh heartily at Mallarmé's expense and Degas continues.) Finding suitable backers for your "spectacle" shouldn't be difficult given the spate of publicity stirred up by the press and the rave reviews since the Folies opened. Naturalist writers went into a frenzy of hyperbolic, oxymoronic prose that defined the milieu and its attractions. Huysmans declares its ugliness to be sublime and its stink of paid love delicious! Zola writes that the Folies is, at once, bizarre and exquisite!²⁰⁹ What better fantasy-mongering to attract Londoners who are already enamored of our effete, dandified and materialistic high-life?

Mallarmé: Given the ecstatic, hyperbolic extremes to which these eloquent authors indulged themselves, it's all the more amazing to contemplate Manet's masterpiece of understatement! In the *Bar*, the swarming flamboyant ambiance that Huysmans formulated has been condensed radically into *one* heroine, *one* admirer and the *impression* of a typical gallery crowd at the Folies.²¹⁰ *Voilà!* There you have it, my friend, that's the *visual* power of symbolic suggestion!²¹¹

observes the poet's fascination with the performance arts and "the demands of audience collaboration that the theater imposes."

²⁰⁸ R.B.F.B., 77. The partial figure of the acrobat in the *Bar* is, in all likelihood, a specific reference to Léona Dare. Mallarmé attended the Folies and wrote frequent notices about it in his *La Dernière Mode*. See footnote 207: in a letter to O'Shaughnessy in London, he indicated that Léona was an object of public adulation. It is likely he expressed his admiration for the Folies' lovely acrobatic star to Manet.

²⁰⁹ D.M., 382. Huysmans wrote a sort of hymn in honor of the Folies, elevating it to the rank of sublime naturalism. Manet's painting related to the spirit of naturalism but it constituted, above all, an immense rendez-vous.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 380. Jeannot observed that Manet did not paint from nature and simplified "magisterially." "Everything was abbreviated: the tones were clearer, the colors were brighter and the values closer." Manet chose to eliminate the clutter and profusion of publicity in the form of posters that chiefly targeted an audience of women: corset, make-up, wigs, etc. (My translation.)

²¹¹ "Suggestion" is a word that is superbly polyvalent for Manet, the new school of painting and Mallarmé's definition of poetry; no other word states more succinctly what their works embodied.

Manet: (Pleased.) *Merci, mon ami!* I couldn't have said it better myself. Now, let's pause for a moment to consider a question that's nagged me for some time. Do either of you believe that a school dedicated to the *pure painted surface* will evolve someday, developing into a process that could totally obliterate figurative art?²¹²

Degas: In art there's an ideal that exists in its own form and is not found by slavishly copying reality. Although art without the support of subject matter seems paradoxical, I feel that I may be moving towards that concept.²¹³

Mallarmé: (Excited.) I think the key word in the question is "pure."²¹⁴ Let's say that, as Manet suggested, I possess the oracular attribute of prophecy so that I can expound on his idea.²¹⁵ Just as the blank page symbolizes the purity of a poem, I can imagine the pure essence of painting to be symbolized by the paint itself.²¹⁶ It's possible, that, some day Paint will stand as a metaphor for the purely *subjective* picture, replacing the outdated metaphor for a picture as "the mirrored surface of nature."²¹⁷ For a Nihilistic society, the traditional *figurative marks* on the painted surface will begin to turn inward to reflect

²¹² Peter Gay, *Art and Act*. Ch. Four. In the early twentieth century, from the early 1900s through the 1940s, both Vasili Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian evolved from figurative to abstract art. In 1943, Mondrian wrote: "Abstract art is in opposition to the natural vision of nature." He had "felt compelled to leave Paris because it was too romantic."

²¹³ E.E.P., 330. Ironically, Degas' struggle with blindness "gave his last works a brutal simplicity verging on abstraction, with a strangely modern look." Cf. M.É., 320. In his *Impressionnistes and Édouard Manet*, Mallarmé described Degas' paintings of women to be essentially interpretations of fabrics and movement: "a strange new beauty...an abstract term." (My translation.)

²¹⁴ F.M., 144 and *passim*. A poem is always an effort to give a purer meaning to an idea. 100. His *Swan* symbolized man's desire to transcend matter and become pure spirit. His personification of night in *Ses purs ongles* has "pure fingernails." Moreover, there is the significant line in his sonnet to Poe: *Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu*. See also M.M., 67. "Letters of the alphabet and elementary sounds had lost their primitive purity...it was the poet's privilege and function to restore this purity." Cf. Valéry said: "Impure poems can be understood at once."

²¹⁵ M.M., 123. Michaud quotes Remy de Gourmont, one of the Mallarmé's *mardistes*: "His words were received like those of an oracle. Really, he was a kind of God..."

²¹⁶ N.I.P.I., 187. In 1890, the *Nabi* Maurice Denis wrote: "Remember that a painting--before it is a battle-horse, a nude woman, or some anecdote--is essentially a flat surface covered with colors."

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 179. The Symbolist, Paul Gauguin, defended paint as *color* by using a remark of the poet: "As Mallarmé said, 'It is a musical poem, it needs no libretto.'" In March 1899, he wrote this quote in a rebuttal letter, replying to the negative opinion of his work written by the critic, André Fontainas.

themselves until they disappear becoming pure color, the ultimate expression of the reflection of nature in Art.²¹⁸

Degas: (Grudgingly.) That's clearly a provocative vision even if muddily expressed! (Amused, his friends chuckle at the typically contrary manner in which Degas reluctantly expressed praise.) To continue your brilliant hypothesis, Mallarmé, tell me, if nature disappears from recognizable representation in art, where will beauty then reside?²¹⁹

Manet: That's a good question! I wonder if Impressionism's dissolution of form will unleash a Pandora's box of Nihilistic schools of art?²²⁰ Will artists be able to find a way to reinvent nature?

Degas: *Courage!* It's the pose of the intellectual elite to make light of serious matters.

After exploring all the possibilities of painting "nothingness," what will be left for future generations of artists except the rediscovery of contemporary life and culture?²²¹ It's a cycle as old as the history of painting.

Manet: I find comfort in that thought, Degas. The act of painting is my *raison d'être!*

How could one enjoy a woman's mystery and beauty by looking at a sexless blob of flat

²¹⁸ R.B.F.B., 12. "Manet's *Bar* established a clear precedent for the concerns of Cubism. In Cubist art, one has to first admire the painted surface in order to identify the object represented." Cf. Jean-Pierre Richard, *L'univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*. 507. "Mallarmé clearly understood how the theory of luminosity fragmented the palette and landscape subject matter of the Impressionist painters; a theory that closely paralleled his own method of abolishing a subject matter in his poetry. He predicted that life would ultimately end as a sacred *Book*, based on the letters of the alphabet encoded into a numerical system that essentially had no content." (My translation.)

²¹⁹ Linda Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power* (New York: Harper & Row 1988) 17. In most of the nineteenth century, "Art-making, the very creation of *beauty* itself, was equated with the representation of the female *nude*." (The italics are mine.)

²²⁰ F.M.M., 407. "Put baldly, it was Impressionism, much more than Manet, that simplified the art of painting." Cf. N.I.P.I., 119. The Neo-Impressionist, Paul Signac, defined simplification of the optical palette as "division of color."

²²¹ Anne Cauquelin, *Que sais-je? L'Art contemporain*. (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1992) 81. Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol epitomize the rediscovery of the banal, kitsch and bad taste of modern life in consumer based societies. Both, like Mallarmé and somewhat like Manet, suppressed artistic intentions and subject matter to stress the importance of the idea itself. (My translation.) See also Kay Larson, "The Dictatorship of Clement Greenberg." *ARTFORUM*. Summer 1987: 76. The powerful art

color?²²² I'm much too tied to my sensuality to contemplate that idea without feeling a shiver of horror!²²³

Mallarmé: (Chuckles.) I agree, Manet! Thank God that's not yet our fate! And thank you for asking that provocative question; it really stimulated my imaginative juices!²²⁴ As for as your question concerning Beauty, Degas, I think you've answered it yourself!

Manet: Well, my dear friends, I must admit that I've enjoyed our discussion but it's almost time for dinner and I believe Suzanne is anxious about my getting enough rest these days...what feminine nonsense! After the Salon, I'll have a few weeks rest in the country and I'll soon be as fit as a fiddle!²²⁵

Degas: *Au revoir*, Manet. Will you be walking towards Rue de Rome, Mallarmé? We can keep each other company for a few blocks. I'm going towards Place de Clichy to hire a fiacre for the Folies-Bergère. I want to verify that Manet has deliberately scrambled the reflections in one of those infamous mirrors behind his mysterious barmaid!²²⁶ I suspect

critic Greenberg expressed contempt for the Surrealists who "reacted against abstract purity and turned back to a (past) confusion of literature with poetry."

²²² Linda Nochlin. "Kelly: Making Abstract Anew." *Art in America* Mar. 1997: 68-78 In the not-too-distant past, "Woman" supplied color with its theoretical tropes and was itself considered somewhat of a whore: flattery, cosmetics, artifice—all supplied the (color) effects of illusion and pleasure. Cf. E.E.P., 309. "The erotic mainspring of Manet's art is evident, in his late work, in an obsessive preoccupation with female beauty and elegance...*a quality of appearance.*" (The italics are mine.) Cf. Ingres is reported to have said: "The best way to own a woman is to paint her."

²²³ R.B.F.B., 57. "Manet was a man who thrived upon the glamour of the city and the company of talented, seductive women. He loved conversing with them and took a genuine delight in all the trappings of feminine artifice."

²²⁴ M.É., 10. Refuting Baudelaire's systematic approach to art criticism, Mallarmé undertook a direct oral method by conversing with artists of mutual affinity. No doubt, he profited from his natural sensibility as a poet to *paint with words*, but he seemed to be genuinely in touch with the new art, so similar to the ideals he was cultivating in his poetry.

²²⁵ *Mallarmé Correspondance*, ed. Henri Mondor, 230. In September, 1882, Manet wrote to Mallarmé: "I wasn't feeling well when I arrived at Rueil but now I'm better...I began some *plein air* studies that I fear I'll not be able to finish. (My translation.) Manet died April 30, 1883.

²²⁶ D.M., 383. As the title of the painting indicates, *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* evokes one of the numerous refreshment counters with attractive waitresses. In *Bel-Ami*, Maupassant described the entrance foyer of the Folies-Bergère where three bars were "reigned over" by a trio of rouged, made-up "salesladies of drinks and love." (My translation.) Cf. C.P.M.L., 240. Clark quotes Maurice du Seigneur: "Manet's *Bar* almost makes one want to go there...to understand the truth of the room's reflection in the mirror on the spot."

that *mon cher ami* is preparing another *tableau à sensation* to attract controversial attention at the Salon!

Manet: (Mischievously.) *Moi?* Are you suggesting that I'm deliberately seeking to annoy my colleagues who will be judging, not my work, but my sanity? Anyway, I should be used to it by now! Be careful of the *lionnes, filles, cocottes, putains*, etc., since you're unaccustomed to the delicious dangers that lurk in that jungle of whores lying in wait at the Folies-Bergère, as Maupassant would have you believe!²²⁷

Degas: *Moi? Pas question!* For me, it's just another café-concert except for the dazzling circus performances with its elephants, acrobats and trapeze artists but I'll heed Maupassant's advice since he implies in *Bel-Ami* that the real, man-eating *lionnes* are found prowling around in the *promenoirs*!²²⁸

Mallarmé: *Allons-y, Degas! Au revoir, Manet. À demain, comme d'habitude?*

Manet: *Entendu! À demain, mon Capitaine! À la prochaine, Degas.*

Degas: (Archly.) You know that I *always* have the last word, Manet. *Bon soir, mon vieux!*

²²⁷ C.P.M.L., 244. In *Bel Ami*, Maupassant's loathsome hero, Forestier, describes the Folies' crowd: "As for the women, there's only one kind...the forty franc whore who lies in wait." Clark's wealth of documentation on the physical appearance of the Folies led me to see a remarkable visual *specularity*: Haussmann's *outdoor* Paris seems to have been re-created *inside* of the Folies! Moreover, I fantasize that the Folies may have provided a necessary outlet for Freudian sexual repressions for anyone who could afford the pricey entrance fee. Consider first of all that the principal elements of street life were assimilated in order to establish an *urban* illusion. *Trottoir*-urbanites, i.e., *filles publiques*, moved their street "offices" to the Folies' *boulevard-promenoirs*, (See footnote 228), re-inventing themselves as pseudo-*courtisanes*. Artificial parks greened, fake fountains gushed, flowers bloomed in spaces mimicking urban *rendez-vous* spaces. Circus performers deserted their traditional *en plein air* tents for the Folies' specious theatrical stagings. Finally, even the main element, the *café-concert*, traded its open-air audience terraces for the spacious audience galleries at the Folies as depicted by the teeming crowd reflected in Manet's *Bar*. Perhaps no other spectacle rivaled the Folies as the most sublime outlet for the imputed repressed sensuality of all classes of Parisian society. Cf. D.M., 382. Maupassant also defined the Folies as "*Cette amusante halle de filles.*" In using the word *halle* he clearly meant a "marketplace" of prostitutes.

²²⁸ R.B.F.B., 10. The *promenoirs* were open public spaces back of the galleries where the crowd could move about freely, hence the popular idea that it functioned as an "indoor boulevard" for the *boulevardier dandies, cocottes*, et al. Degas' witty *double entendre* uses a slang term much in vogue at the time; *lionne* (lioness) referred to a haughty, sleek and elegant breed of *cocotte*.

EPILOGUE

Manet's *Bar* re-examined

On April 30, 1883, Édouard Manet died, still relatively young at 51, due to *locomotor ataxia* that had slowly debilitated his health, leading to mortal complications which resulted in the futile amputation of his left leg. During the month of January, 1884, an exhibition of his works was entrusted to two friends, Antonin Proust and Théodore Duret who ironically arranged for it to be shown in the *École des Beaux-Arts*. Eight of the paintings sent to the Salon over the years were still in his possession: *Olympia*, *Le Balcon*, *La Leçon de musique*, *Argenteuil*, *Le Linge*, *Chez le père Lathuille*, the portrait of *Rochefort* and *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*.¹ The auction took place on February 4 and 5 with an introduction to the sale catalogue written by Émile Zola. The highest price paid in the subsequent sale was the bid by the composer and friend of the Manet family, Emmanuel Chabrier: 5,850 francs for *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*.²

As the preceding pages aimed to make clear, this painting sums up the history of Manet's art as well as his relationship to the modernity of his epoch. It is a picture that resonates with critical and scholarly polemics that most often dispute the artist's *intention*, i.e., his *meaning*, where it might be concealed and if there is one, what did it have to do with Parisian society and why did he feel so strongly about it? It is a fashionable but tiresome modernist assumption to accept the idea that he had nothing to say.³ In the *Bar* he has given us a single figure that dominates the entire painting, a

¹ H.M.C., 263-270. See Plate XII.

² *Ibid.*, 271. After Chabrier died in 1894, the painting was again offered in a posthumous auction.

³ Kathleen Adler, *Manet*. (Topsfield, MA: Salem House, 1986) In the preface, Adler eschews "the now very tired notion, first floated by Emile Zola, of (Manet as) an arch-formalist unconcerned with his subject

lingering, hypnotic image that begs for interpretation.⁴ As George H. Hamilton observes: “The use we make of art is not always that for which it was originally intended.”⁵ It is a remark pertinent to artists, art historians and writers of art criticism who continue to exploit the *Bar* by utilizing its imagery as a personal site, exploring their own historical relationship to a chosen medium of self-expression, thus generating innovative forms, states of expression and societal connections. The photo-artist has one of the problems that always faced Manet: the question of the power of “flatness” to interpret either illusion or reality or both. Three outstanding visual artists involved in photo-graphics have recently produced works contingent upon a single historical source. Each used mechanized means to develop imagery on a planar surface, all are radically different in terms of technique and interpretative style. Yasumasa Morimura, Helmut Newton, and Jeff Wall have produced intensely personal works by reviewing the mythology in Manet’s *Bar*.

The original premise of this thesis, *specular-mimesis*, i.e., the relationship between French literature and the plastic arts--in particular, the art of Manet--seemed to end in the last chapter which speculated on the possible subliminal influence of Mallarmé on the “unreadability” of Manet’s *Bar*. But, in view of current historical discourse and artistic practice, its mythological status has survived, recently provoking methodological wars among art historians and pictorial appropriation among artists as well. It is not

matter.” See also 220. Manet’s *Bar* “retains a power to challenge and tease no matter how often it is viewed, and the impossible spatial problems posed endlessly challenge attempts to resolve them.”

⁴ H.M.C., 279. Hamilton observes that the paintings by Manet which are “seen most incontrovertibly his own are those in which the single figure...dominates.”

⁵Ibid., 275. Cf. John Shearman, *Mannerism*, 135-36. Since art is in a constant flux of change, it has the capacity to be reinterpreted (or misinterpreted) by other artists who return to a certain theme. “The greater the work of art the more it can sustain interest or sympathy from diverse angles of approach. There is a strong incentive for the modern spectator to find such interpretations acceptable since through them he can meet the work of art on his own terms.”

unreasonable to ask: “Why Manet?” and “Why now?” Of many plausible responses, perhaps two might suffice for the purpose of this thesis.

- 1.) Most art historical writers and contemporary artists accept Manet as the progenitor *par excellence* of Modern art, a pictorial ethic that abandons the past and concentrates on the present.⁶ It is an *idée fixe* that originated with Clement Greenberg who decreed Manet’s *oeuvre* to be Modernism’s watershed event.
- 2.) Conventional wisdom has it that “timing is everything.” Given the many *class issues* raised by activists everywhere during the twentieth century and the global *societal uncertainties* extant in the third millennium, *now* is the politic moment for the *Bar* to be closely re-examined for possible *Marxist* or *feminist* “readings” as well as for themes of *ambiguous sexuality* in its pictorial appropriations.⁷

In both art history and art production there has been a return to contemplating and reworking the *Bar*.⁸ In the specialized field of literature that comprises art history, art criticism and writings on the subject of art, the *Bar* has spawned an unusual anthology called *12 Views of Manet’s Bar* which is the brainchild of Bradford R. Collins who brought together divergent views of twelve authors, specialists in the field of art. This collection of essays was proposed by Collins to re-examine and update postmodernist vis-à-vis modernist positions in art history by honing in on one painting in particular:

⁶ Kay Larson, “The Dictatorship of Clement Greenberg.” *ArtForum*. Summer 1987: 76-79.

⁷ See Bradford R. Collins, *12 Views of Manet’s Bar*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996) These ideas are thematic in essays by Griselda Pollack and David Carrier, respectively. Cf. Jeff Wall, “*Picture for Women*” in an essay by Thierry de Duve. *Unity and Fragmentation in Manet*. (New York: Phaidon, 1984) 30. Sexual ambiguity is overt in Yosumasa Morimura’s work (footnote 10) while it is more covertly presented in Helmut Newton’s appropriation of the *Bar* (footnote 18).

⁸ Peter Schofer, *Poèmes, Pièces, Prose*, 114. Paul Valéry reflects upon how “others exploit a work of art after it is published, when it then becomes the ‘property’ of everyone and no one usurper (user) is better than another.” (My translation.)

Manet's *Bar* with its emblematic mirror.⁹ Inviting the reader to muse about the latest arbitrary twists and turns prevalent in art historical thought, Richard Schiff concluded his introduction to this collection of essays with this provocative thought: "The writing we call 'history' therefore becomes artistic like Manet's *Bar*—a matter of historically contingent, self-reflective expression. Has it not always been?"¹⁰

Yosumasa Morimura takes a rather satirical viewpoint of Manet's *Bar* in his remarkable appropriations of Old Master paintings. Ever since Japan was opened up to western culture, commercial traffic and social intercourse in the 1860s, its hermetic mentality has assimilated foreign cultures, later converting them into its own.¹¹ In Morimura's pastiche of the *Bar*, he exhibits his skill in advanced technology of computer graphics, seamlessly fusing the image of the original pictorial plane with photo-collages of his own body. In her essay on the artist, Pilar Gonzalo feels that several art-related issues are being addressed by Morimura: the question of sexuality, the mutability of the body, personal identity, Japanese (Oriental) confrontation with Western snobbism, and ambiguous seduction.¹² Having a romp in the *Bar*, Morimura, is closer to the performance artist than the photographer, staging mimicry that questions: "Is this barmaid for sale? Is what you see what you get?"¹³ Thus he re-stages the dual issue--illusion or reality--that was always present in the *Bar*. By means of cross-dressing, dissection, manipulation, and incorporation of the persona of the *Bar*'s bargirl, as well as through emphatic gestures consisting of crossed and/or opened arms, covered or nude

⁹ Ibid., See the excellent Preface written by Bradford R. Collins in which he states that he chose the *Bar* for pitiless scrutiny of twelve essays because he felt that it could withstand any critical assault.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19.

¹¹ Yosumasa Morimura, *Historia de Arte*. (Madrid: Fundación Telefónica, 2000) 89.

¹² Ibid., 89. Cf. Kathleen Adler's *Manet*, 89. She notes that in *Orientalism*, 1978, Edward Said proposed that "the false Orient created in literature supplied justification for Caucasian superiority."

¹³ Ibid., 91 Pilar Gonzalo states that "Morimura prefers not to be classed as a photographer."

body, armed or armless torso, he signals the barmaid's *yin-yang* split-imagery echoed in the mirror.¹⁴ Humorously, he de-Westernizes some of the objects on the bar by cleverly "Orientalizing" them; e.g., the transformation of the bowl that contains the oranges into Imari-like porcelain. The artist thus reminds us that Japanese prints, kimonos and art objects were not only *le dernier cri* in Paris but also served as inspiration for avant garde artists like Manet and the Impressionists.¹⁵ A favorite subject of Japanese artists in "floating-world" prints of the mid-1800s, was the traditional, theatrical Geisha--soul sister of Manet's bargirl--who, like *la Parisienne*, also painted her face and entertained wealthy males seeking refined entertainment and sexual pleasure.¹⁶ In this context, Morimura's feminized body is subject and object at the same time, a "digitalized form of body painting," comparable to the blatant *artificiality* of Paris' cosmetically enhanced modern woman, among whose ranks were powdered and painted "working women," and to, most of all, the false standards of sexual morality flaunted by *tout Paris*.¹⁷

Helmut Newton made his name as a photographer of women, first winning fame as a fashion photographer then gaining notoriety for his bold, seductive photos of statuesque female nudes. In 1982, his fellow German expatriate and friend, the Parisian

¹⁴ Ibid., 91. Gonzalo suggests: "Through imitation, appropriation, the artist shares his power and acquires knowledge thanks to his actions."

¹⁵ H.B.M., 204. As oblique evidence of the influence of Japanese aesthetics on Manet, (or perhaps it was an innate aesthetic on his part), it is interesting to note Berthe Morisot's observation: "only he (Manet) and they (the Japanese) are capable of suggesting a mouth or ears with a single stroke."

¹⁶ R.B.F.B., 62. His admiration for an artist like Hokusai may have encouraged Manet's fascination with the "floating life" subjects of Japanese woodblock printmakers, expressing a concern with "the real, the contemporary, and the momentary," easily equated to Baudelaire's thematic Modern Life in Manet's art..

¹⁷ B.É., 541. In his essay *Éloge du maquillage*, Baudelaire praised the aesthetics of makeup, endowing it with the status of "virtue" because it opposed "nature," becoming the essence of *super-natural* through its deliberate artificiality. He observed that portraiture, when it imitates nature, can not beautify an ugly sitter; therefore only the beautiful was deserving of embellishment accomplished by the means of artifice, that is to say, cosmetics. Baudelaire, himself a Dandy, wore makeup, probably deeming it essential to a Bohemian artist's decadent allure. Cf. C.P.M.L., 111. Musing on the Second Empire, Flaubert summed up the "inevitable epitaph for the decade" by denouncing the ubiquitous falseness, i.e. *artificiality*, of his generation: "Everything was false...even false *courtisanes*." (Written in a letter to Maxime Du Camp, 1870; also cited in *L'Idiot* by Sartre.)

couturier Karl Lagerfeld, wrote an introductory essay for Newton's book, *Big Nudes*.

Lagerfeld writes that Newton loves pale flesh and cool girls, "cool" in a sense opposite to that of "romantic and sentimental;" for him, there is no "weaker sex." Like Manet, he simply describes what he knows; like Baudelaire (and Morimura) he loves artificiality and what interests him most is the moment.¹⁸ In Newton's reconstruction, his model has the square-jawed Amazonian androgyny that expresses his ideal of woman. She is posed like a statue of Venus, monumental, broad of shoulder, yet her coquettish adornments cancel out her claim to classic nudity, flaunting the same audacity of Manet's *Olympia* who wore modern accessories that branded her as a mere mortal and a *fille* to boot.

Newton's sophisticated nude sports overtly Freudian fetish accessories: masculine black bow tie, dandified black/white button-cuffed gloves *à la Chanel*, sharp phallic objects stuffed into her miniscule belly apron and *de rigueur* crotch-high black silk stockings. Is she not for "male consumption" as is the modernist "message" imputed to Manet's *Bar*? Her averted gaze implies "No," her nudity translates as "Maybe." The ambiguity of the model's imperial aloofness and powerful female presence is an image charged with sexual fantasy that suggest "made for masculine consumption." He playfully re-created the *Bar*'s still-life objects by placing a row of mixed drinks to line up with his bartender's "mound of Venus," each cocktail garnished with flowers, citrus fruit, and armed with pointedly phallic drink stirrers. The enormous dazzling showgirl's headpiece *stands in* for the *Bar*'s mirror and *stands for* the theatrical spectacle associated with the Folies-Bergère. His signature image of nudes, as Lagerfeld notes, is a "potent mixture that is

¹⁸ Helmut Newton, *Big Nudes*. Introduction by Karl Lagerfeld. (New York: Xavier Moreau, Inc., 1980.)

hard to define, of *distance and availability* in his women.”¹⁹ Newton’s bias for photographing female nudity, by definition an “unclothed female,” ingeniously subverts the *Bar*’s imagery of the elegantly dressed *Parisiennne* that Manet idealized into the iconic barmaid.²⁰ Nevertheless, his compelling photograph appears to have drawn its bold dynamics from the original “snapshot of the moment” that Manet painted in Paris over one hundred eighty years ago.

Jeff Wall is a Canadian university professor and photo-artist who invites his audience to extract every possible nuance of meaning from his images.²¹ His photo-painting is a tongue in cheek quotation of the imagery in Manet’s *Bar*, underlining the essential ambiguity of the original: who is doing what and where? Is the scene a mirror image or *trompe l’oeil* play executed merely to amuse the photographer and/or the artist? Intellectually we know that Manet is an authorial but invisible presence, reflected in his picture only by his visible signature. Logically we recognize that, in the photograph by Wall, the photographer is physically present and standing in front of the “background” mirror.²² A comparison of the two works of art emphasizes the technical differences between the plastic artist’s capability to control the painted surface and the “uncontrolled” mechanical procedure available to the photographer when the shutter is opened. But we know that the young woman and the photographer are on the same side of the picture plane, therefore she is a viewer and no longer a figure, thus *Picture for*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Introduction. (The italics are mine.) Manet’s bargirl appears to have the same “ambiguity.” See Plate XIV.

²⁰ It can be assumed that, in a *boulevardier* ambiance like the Folies-Bergère, the worldly Dandy reflected in the *Bar*’s mirror was adept at mentally undressing any eligible female that came under his libertine gaze. Perhaps Newton is assuming, through his photography, that all males in bars fantasize about female nudity.

²¹ Jeff Wall, Unity and Fragmentation in Manet. (New York: Phaidon, 1984) 78.

²² *Ibid.*, 30. Thierry de Duve, *Essay on Jeff Wall*. De Duve explains that “We can grasp that he is outside it (the mirror) because we can see him holding the shutter release mechanism.” See Plate XV.

Women is a picture addressed to women.²³ Wall's innovative photograph "is not an imitation of pictorial Modernism but equivalent to it."²⁴ When it is photography's goal to paint, as it appears to be in most of Wall's large, light box installations in galleries, then it is "driven by the force of historical development" to reflect within itself its own relationship to painting.²⁵ Clement Greenberg describes modernist painting as an "adventure of flatness."²⁶ Wall's motive in *Picture for Women* was "to make the picture plane in photography visible." The direction of the woman's gaze, the dislocation in the *Bar*'s original mirror scene and Manet's horizontal composition, all challenged the mechanical givens of perspective and transparency built into the photographer's art. Thierry De Duve states that the photographer has not made a remake of Manet's *Bar*. "His solution is literally to have made a mirror capable of holding the image, a mirror which is never opaque...but is simultaneously transparent and reflective."²⁷

Whenever any of Manet's *oeuvre* is open to critical study, French literature provides its own critical lens that orients his work into its original context. Journalistic art criticism of 1860s Paris may be described as fixed on the highest *f.* aperture for this metaphorical lens, i.e., the one that most narrows the frame of enlightenment about *la nouvelle peinture* and its vanguardist mission to update hackneyed Salon art.²⁸

Contemporary French journalism/criticism was--and is--a caustic (very French) genre, Dandyishly aloof, an active press response that combines caricature with literature.

²³ Thierry de Duve, *Essay on Jeff Wall*. 30. De Duve writes theoretical art criticisms on modern and contemporary art. Cf. *12 Views of Manet's Bar*, 10. Jeff Wall's title hints that he may share the feminist viewpoint of James Herbert whose essay reconfigures the *Bar*'s "privileged viewer as female, not male."

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁸ Consult George Heard Hamilton's excellent study of *Manet and his Critics*; the extensive quotes from articles by dozens of writers employed by newspapers reveal violent harangues as well as milder critiques.

Perhaps Gallic fondness for theatrical Greek forms (or coercive Second Empire politics) turned art critics into a sort of Greek chorus, where some members hurled insults, epithets and denunciations, while others, less hostile, simply chided the hubris of “sketchiness” in the new art while all the voices claimed to represent public opinion. Nevertheless, today’s enlightened critics who write on Manet’s *Bar* cannot avoid quoting their articles profusely for purposes of orienting the painting towards its original dialectics *vis-à-vis* the press.²⁹ Therefore, each time an analytical study of the *Bar* is undertaken, the process inevitably generates a new spurt of interest in the period’s vitriolic journalistic prose that was never meant to be deathless.³⁰ By way of contrast, Manet’s literary entourage was comprised of poets and creative writers, boasting of such distinguished authors as Baudelaire, Banville, Mallarmé, and, by extension, including the realist *littérateurs*: Zola, Flaubert, the Goncourts, Huysmans, Maupassant, et al. During the seminal generation that created Modernist art, (represented in the previous pages by Manet and the Impressionists,) certain literary genres (poetry, novel and journalism,) became the unexpected chroniclers of this controversial movement, attesting to the symbiotic relationship that operated between these two creative disciplines, obliquely supporting the theory of *specular-mimesis* that drives this thesis.

The fourth and last “imaginary dialogue” ended with the compulsively mischievous Degas stubbornly playing out the rivalry between him and Manet by proclaiming that he, Degas, “always had the last word.” Of course, we now know that it

²⁹ C.P.M.L., 66-70. Clark suggests that writers became “commentators” on the emptiness and conformity of post-war Paris. See also 98. Clark sees such critical commentary as “part of the journalistic game whose rules are obvious and in which hyperbole always wins.”

³⁰ R.B.F.B., 63. “The (Dandyish) press had become just as much a part of the art world establishment as the Salon.” Moreover, one notices that almost every essay in Bradford R. Collin’s *12 Views of Manet’s Bar* depends directly or indirectly on the testimony of contemporary French writers and journalists. Whether hostile or friendly toward Manet’s concept of *la vie moderne*, it was the enigmatic mirror that was the bone of contention for most viewers and press reviewers of *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*.

is Manet and his corpus of work, in particular *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, which speaks last, albeit hermetically, to modernists and postmodernists alike. Contemporary artists and writers on the subject of art seem to regard the *Bar* as a pictorial Rosetta stone rife with authorial data and/or societal information, a sort of visual manifesto where Manet's ideas, sentiments, dreams and intentions--the driving forces behind his work--are lying *in situ*, waiting to be decoded, ultimately granting him "the last word."³¹

³¹ There is an *au verso* (reverse side) to this thought: if the *décalage*--the shift--of meaning in the *Bar* now lies outside of its original context, due to its endless re-revisions and re-visionings, then we are left with the ultimate palimpsest: no word at all...

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

A listing that identifies contemporary figures and supplies information beyond that contained in the text.

ASTRUC, Zacharie, 1835-1907, amateur sculptor, musician, poet and critic, friend of Manet. In 1865 he wrote a long poem for Manet's *Olympia*, the first five lines of which were attached to the Salon's label on the painting: "When tired of her dreams, Olympia awakens..." In 1866--often dated 1864--Manet painted his friend's portrait in which a Titian-like background anticipates the spatial mirrored conundrum of the mirror in *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* shown in the Salon of 1882. Astruc's wife seems to have disliked it so the portrait remained in the artist's studio until his death in 1883. It is also Astruc who sits for Manet in Fantin-Latour's group portrait of the *Batingnollais*, who plays a guitar for a young lady in *La Leçon de musique*, both shown in the Salon of 1870, and is one of the top-hatted male models in *Le Bal masqué à l'Opéra*, 1873-74.

BANVILLE, Théodore de, 1823-91, Parnassian poet, represents the second Romantic generation, an author whose works were performed at the Odéon and the Théâtre Français. Mallarmé approached him to seek his advice and influence in order to have his *Monologue d'un faune* performed on stage as a one-act play. To accompany the watercolor of *Polichinelle*, Salon of 1874, Manet chose a graceful diptych by Banville that succinctly evoked the rascally character and absurd grotesqueness of the popular Italian puppet, *Punchinello*, i.e., known in French as *Polichinelle*, a.k.a. *Punch*.

BAUDELAIRE, Charles, 1821-67, moody, intensely personal poet who deeply admired the Romantic author, poet and painter, Théophile Gautier and keenly felt himself to be a

soul mate of the enigmatic American poet, Edgar Poe. In 1857, Baudelaire shocked the Parisian *haute bourgeoisie* by publishing a collection of dark, sensual, introspective poems titled *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Two months after the collection appeared, he was charged with offences to public morality, fined three hundred francs and six poems were banned from future editions. His art seemed to take revenge against the Romantic attempt to reconcile art and life; with *Les Fleurs du Mal*, he had “revenged” himself against life’s cruelty and sordidness by creating an imaginary world of his own where Beauty dwelt as impeccable poetic form. This idea of perfection of poetic form was to have a profound effect upon the young poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, who idolized Baudelaire. After meeting Édouard Manet in 1858, the two were inseparable for nearly ten years. He was often present for the heated discussions of art at the Café Guerbois and he was Manet’s companion on his Tuileries promenades as well as on his daily circuit of fashionable cafés and restaurants that both dandies found indispensable to the enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of modern life in Paris. He is thought to have had an important influence upon Manet’s choice of subject matter, particularly during the first years of Manet’s public career.

BAZILLE, Frédéric, 1841-70, talented young painter, aligned himself with the group of young avant-gardists who saw themselves as heroic young Turks supporting Manet’s campaign to reinvigorate French art by breaking with traditional Salon “history painting.” Since he was well off financially, he generously shared his studio at various times with the future Impressionists, Monet and Renoir, often monetarily supplementing his two penurious friends who were struggling to make ends meet. His career was cut short by his premature death at the front during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

BURTY, Philippe, 1830-90, art critic and historian who attended the Café Guerbois meetings and, like the Goncourts, helped introduce Japanese art to the French. In an article published in 1872, he commented on Manet's *Chemin de fer* --then still on the easel--by praising its "impression of nature translated with sensitivity and refinement."

BRAQUEMOND, Felix, 1833-1914, famous engraver, painter, lithographer and illustrator who is credited with "discovering" Japanese woodcut prints which had been used to wrap some of his printing supplies imported from Japan. Invited by Braquemond, among others, Manet joined the *Société des Aquafortistes* in 1859. Throughout his creative years, Manet delighted in making etchings of his favorite paintings, producing a curious sort of personal *catalogue raisonné* in which the original image had become optically reversed, an effect inherent to the etching process.

CABANEL, Alexandre, 1823-89, virtuoso artist of the academic nude who worked within the accepted norm of Salon eroticism. He catered to the tastes of his public by painting in a smooth, saccharin style embodied in his popular *Naissance de Vénus*, the hit of the Salon of 1863, that was promptly purchased by his powerful patron, Napoléon III.

CASSATT, Mary, 1844-1926, American painter who studied with Couture and was later championed by Degas, became a formidable female presence in the Impressionists' exhibitions in spite of the concerted disapproval of her work by Monet, Renoir, Pissarro and Sisley. These artists felt that her work should not be included with theirs in the upcoming Impressionist show in 1879. Fortunately, their opinions were outweighed by Degas' bias for her talent and his determination to have her work included in their exhibitions. Although her admiration for Degas was boundless, Cassatt preserved her independence as an artist and never was strictly his pupil, yet she did profit from his

advice and friendship. Both she and Berthe Morisot knew, respected and appreciated the work of each other as impressionist painters but their professional relationship never bonded into a close personal friendship. Her themes centered around the modern woman's life; she made studies of well-dressed women as penetrating as those of Degas: at the theater, tea parties, fashion shops and, of course, the domestic maternal scenes at which she excelled.

CASTAGNARY, Jules Antoine, 1830-88, attorney with liberal ideas that were prudently suppressed during the Second Empire. His critical art reviews were published in 1892 under the title of: *Salons, 1857-1870*. Courbet was the painter who most fully realized his ideal of naturalism yet he followed Manet's work with interest.

CERNUSCHI, Enrico, 1821-96, Italian political refugee, who bequeathed his elegant mansion and private collection of Oriental art to the State as a museum which still bears his name, located in the lovely Parc Monceau area in the 8th Arrondissement of Paris. Avid art collectors and among the first visitors to Japan, he and Duret traveled together to the Orient, returning with many of the objects now on view in the Cernuschi Museum.

CÉZANNE, Paul, 1839-1906, artist of the Impressionist generation who followed his own rigorous, inner system of visual experience. Childhood friend of the self-confident Émile Zola, it seems that he--unlike the amiable Zola--hid his timidity and introversion under a rough exterior. He has remained uniquely alone although he worked with the Impressionists; the visual power of his example guided the Fauves, Cubists and Expressionists to go their various directions. Distortions of perspective, strong geometrical compositions and experimentations with Mediterranean colors are elements that dynamically coalesce into his many still-lives and serial studies of his beloved Mount

Victoire. The corpus of Cézanne's work, with its many thematic repetitions, implies the lifelong quest and constant intellectual struggle of this giant talent to grasp Nature's harmony through elusive visual truths that--for him--seemed to lie just beyond the perceived material surface of the organic world. His last *plein air* watercolors, 1904-06, are almost form-less, minimalist studies of atmospheric light, intensely subjective works that may have directed modern painting towards abstraction, after having first influenced the cubist movement.

CHABRIER, Emmanuel, 1841-94, composer known for the verve and fantasy of his music. The Chabriers were habitués of the weekly soirées held by the Manet family, the Morisots and other bourgeois intellectuals such as Manet's friends, the Lejosnes. He often sang his compositions and accompanied himself on the piano. His *Impronptu in C major* was dedicated to Manet's wife Suzanne, an accomplished pianist. Among his possessions at auction after his death was Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*.

CHAMPFLEURY, Jules Husson, 1821-89, a novelist of the realist school and chief defender of Courbet's *naïveté*, that is to say, "realist" style of painting, although as a writer he became more politically conservative during the critical period between 1848-49 while Courbet grew more radical. In 1869, Champfleury asked Manet to design a poster for his small book *Les Chats*, an animal that was a favorite subject for Manet. Influenced by the simplified lines of Japanese aesthetics, Manet depicted an encounter of two amorous cats on a Parisian rooftop that caused eyebrows to lift in puritanical disapproval despite the elegance of his black and white illustration *à la japonais*.

CLARETIE, pseud. of Jules Arsène-Arnaud, 1840-1913, prolific novelist, historian, dramatist, critic and liberal politician. He published an attack on Manet's *Olympia*,

accusing the artist of deliberately “firing off pistol shots” just to attract attention to himself, derisively calling the scandalous painting: “Venus with the Cat.”

COURBET, Gustave, 1819-77, self-taught, audacious realist painter who helped free painting of time-worn clichés thus preparing the way for the expression of new visual experience, an idea later taken up by the Impressionist painters. His boldly painted, innovative and unsentimental *Enterrement à Ornans* shown in the Salon of 1852, shocked the sensibilities of the beaux-arts establishment as well as those of the Salon public because of its realistic, unheroic view of death.

COUTURE, Thomas, 1815-79, academic artist celebrated for his *Romains de la décadence* in the Salon of 1847, was a rather liberal art professor with whom Manet studied for five years. They quarreled and split company over his pupil’s loudly proclaimed disdain for classical subject matter popularly known as “history painting.”

COROT, Camille, 1796-1875, painter whose oeuvre ranged from highly finished neoclassical landscapes to hazy, impressionistic views of Ville d’Avray, his country retreat. Before the arrival of the Barbizon school of naturalist painters led by Théodore Rousseau, Corot had begun painting in the forest around Fontainebleau in 1822. While traveling in Italy, 1825-27, he continued to experiment with *plein air* techniques, painting landscapes that were compositionally manipulated and finished in indoor studios.

Morisot, Fantin-Latour and Pissarro belonged to the circle of his devoted pupils.

DAGUERRE, Jacques, 1787-1851, French inventor of proto-photography, created and perfected his *daguerréotypes* in 1838 after first experimenting with his imaginative theatrical concept of “Diorama” which combined machinery, stage lighting and back-lit paintings created on diaphanous materials to suggest atmospheric realism in his imagery.

DAUDET, Alphonse, 1840-97, writer of poetic naturalist prose, a style celebrated in his *Lettres de mon Moulin* (1866). Although a close friend of the Goncourts, his art was less coldly scientific; his tales were humane and sanguine. In 1881 he fictionalized the life of a woman sculptor, *Félicia Ruys*, probably drawn from the example of Berthe Morisot's friend, Marcello. Daudet expressed conventional social disapproval of women artists, condemning Félicia to end up as a debauched and exiled arsenic addict.

DAUMIER, Honoré, 1808-79, famous social and political caricaturist who remained almost entirely unrecognized until recently as one of the great painters, sculptors and graphic artists of his age. Rarely using live studio models, he created his ironical "portraits" through his consummate mnemonic skills.

DEBUSSY, Claude, 1862-1918, impressionist composer who stressed form over function; what mattered to him above all was the *sound* of music. He was one of the young *maudistes*--aspiring poets, writers and musicians--a group that raptly gathered around the symbolist poet, Mallarmé, who welcomed them to his home each Tuesday evening to discuss poetry. Inspired by Mallarmé's impressionist style of imagery in his poem describing an afternoon spent by a sensual young faun, Debussy asked permission to publish a dreamy overture to the recital of the poem which had its first performance in 1894: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. When the great Russian ballet dancer, Nijinsky, choreographed and danced to Debussy's music as Mallarmé's *Faune* in 1912 at the Châtelet theater in Paris, the "bestial" sensuality of his movements in the final scene elicited an eruption of both boos and bravos. Among Nijinsky's admirers and defenders was the sculptor Auguste Rodin who wrote in 1914 that the dancer's performance had

been *extraordinaire*: a perfect blend between esprit and statuesque beauty comparable to a fresco that would inspire any artist to paint or sculpt him.

DEGAS, Edgar, 1834-1917, modernist painter who associated with the Impressionists yet retained a highly personalized, expressive and aesthetic approach to art, refusing to follow the trendy current of naturalism. Emphatically individualistic in all things artistic, his personality seems to have been abrasive, prompting his contemporaries to alternately view him as argumentative, aristocratic, intellectual, snobbish and opinionated.

Recognized as a singular master by his own generation, his signature pastels became-- and still remain--synonymous with all forms of feminine artifice particularly those associated with fashion, theater and dance. His penetrating studies of the ordinary working class woman, wearily ironing laundry or bathing in a tub, reprised the literary subject of *naturalisme* as practiced by the Goncourts, Zola, Huysmans, Daudet, Maupassant, et al. In 1894, Degas became a skilled photographer, taking photos of himself, landscapes, friends and the ballerinas that he immortalized. Many of the negatives are mounted on glass with colored gels giving these works a modern look. When he attended Manet's burial services at Passy, he kept repeating over and over a phrase that seems a fitting epitaph for his old friend: "He was greater than we thought!"

DELACROIX, Eugène, 1798-1863, painter belonging at first to the Romantic school, famous as a colorist and practitioner of fiery, baroque style brushwork. His first picture exhibited at the 1822 Salon, *La Barque de Dante*, created a sensation that was repeated by his later works. Of all the Salon painters, he was Baudelaire's *peintre préféré*, admired also by the growing segment of rebellious young art students of Manet's generation for his adamant individualism, boldness of style and brilliance of color which challenged the

stilted artistic practices of mediocre beaux-arts academicians. His picture, *Algerian Women in Their Apartment*, 1834, marked a turning point from Byronian Orientalist fantasies to an authentic Orientalism that he had discovered on a sojourn to Morocco and Islamic Africa in 1832. Depicting exotic women enclosed in their harem quarters, alluring and available, the painting alluded to the Asian custom of sexually oppressing women, a practice also present, but less overtly, in Western culture. Ingres' fabricated Orientalist picture, *Odalisque with Slave*, 1839, showing two women in an Eastern décor with an obligatory eunuch in attendance, suggested the same sexual slavery. In 1865, Manet's jaded *Olympia* represented the same hackneyed theme, but by placing her squarely into a unmistakably modern Paris décor, caused high society to squirm.

DORÉ, Gustave, 1833-83, famous illustrator, especially of Rabelais and Dante. His creative insights and virtuosic graphic abilities also produced remarkable engravings for other literary masterpieces such as Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma mère l'Oye*, c. 1850s. In 1860, his lithograph titled *Loups* prefigured the sexual undercurrent of Manet's *Le Bal Masqué de l'Opéra*, Salon of 1874, by depicting a small group of *very petite female maskers* encircled by a looming crowd of *prowling, top-hatted macho males*. Doré probably created an adult version of his illustrations for Perrault's *Le Petit capuchon rouge*, the popular cautionary tale ostensibly for children, about the "pubescent young girl eaten by the big bad wolf," a moral lesson that surreptitiously implied sexual aggression.

DUMAS, Alexandre (Dumas fils), 1824-95, made his name with the novel *La Dame aux camélias* (1848). Most of his plays were marked by a strong moralizing tendency that contrasted sharply with the robust, flamboyant lifestyle led by Alexandre Dumas père.

DURAND-RUEL, Paul, 1831-1922, important independent gallery owner and patron of the Impressionists who were seeking alternative means besides the Salon competitions.

DURANTY, Louis-Émile-Edmond, 1833-80, novelist, critic and habitué of the Café Guerbois, was close to Manet and Degas; the latter often primed him to be his spokesman with self-interested information about specific views that Duranty may have parroted in his *Manifeste de l'Impressionism*, 1876. In 1879, Degas did a penetrating, mixed-media portrait of him executed from an elevated perspective that the artist may have learned from photography. In 1881, Duranty published a short novel where the heroine was a woman artist, *Lucie Lambert*, perhaps modeled on both Marcello and Berthe Morisot: “she (Lucie) goes to the studio like a boy (Marcello); of course, she is thirty years old (Morisot).”

DURET, Théodore, 1838-1927, art critic who defended Manet, Japanese art and the Impressionists. In 1865, while traveling in Spain, he met Manet who was on his first tour of Spanish museums, viewing the Iberian masters he so admired. A close friendship followed, during which Manet painted a full-length portrait of him in 1868. More discriminating than Zola in artistic matters, Duret supported Manet's progressive style; he recognized that government control of the Salon encouraged the status quo of mediocrity in order to have broad public support. Informed by his close friendship with the artist, he wrote the first biography on Manet in 1901: *Histoire d'Édouard Manet et son oeuvre*.

FANTIN-LATOURET, Henri, 1836-1904, artist and lithographer, attracted at first to Courbet then later affiliated with Manet's entourage at the Café Guerbois. He met Manet, Berthe Morisot and Whistler while all four were copying in the Louvre museum. Although he is best remembered for proto-impressionist studies of flowers, his group

portraits testify to the close affiliations among the young rebels who were to change the look of art by risking the uncharted waters of “making new kinds of marks on flat surfaces.” Three of Fantin’s portraits stand as “manifestos” of both modernist movements, artistic and literary, that were then taking place in Paris: *Homage à Delacroix*, *Le Coin de la table*, *L’Atelier aux Batignolles*, 1864-70.

FLAUBERT, Gustave, 1821-80, celebrated author of *Madame Bovary* and close friend of the Goncourt brothers, was looked upon as *maître* by the young novelist Guy de Maupassant. Traveling from his native Normandy where he lived a secluded life with his mother, he periodically visited Paris and often participated in the literary dinner reunions initiated by the Goncourts at Magny’s Restaurant on the Left Bank that took place in the decade spanning 1862-72. Like the Goncourts, Flaubert was dedicated to a dispassionate scrutiny of contemporary life. Disgusted by mankind, Flaubert took refuge in Art which he regarded as an Absolute comparable to God. He refused to be labeled “realist” insisting that literary realism counted less for him than the *beauty* found in *style*. In 1857, his remark, “*Madame Bovary, c’est moi*,” revealed his total immersion into, and identification with, the tortured psyche of Emma Bovary, his most famous heroine.

FORAIN, Jean-Louis, 1852-1931, illustrator of modern life, akin to Degas, Manet and Daumier. Forain’s satirical portrayal of the “tart” inspired J.-K. Huysmans to write an essay on the Folies-Bergère (*Croquis de Paris*, 1880) as the quintessential setting for vulgarity and exhibitionism, a milieu associated with and symbolized by, the ubiquitous “tart” who--as Huysmans claimed--was responsible for the “libertine elegance” that permeated contemporary Parisian society.

GARIBALDI, Giuseppe, 1807-82, Italian patriot who fought for the unification of Italy and later became a hero in France when he fought on the French side in the 1870-71 war.

GAVARNI, pseud. of Sulpice Guillaume Chevalier, 1804-66, well-known illustrator of Parisian fashion plates in the 1830s, made “objective” drawings of working class *grisettes*, stereotypical *lorettes*, and other sketches of Parisian life for newspapers such as the satirical *Charivari*. Close friend of the Goncourts, who saw him as the perfect artist for their concept of *naturalisme*, he illustrated their study of the kept woman, *La Lorette*. Since Gavarni was given to bouts of depression, the Goncourt brothers tried to cheer him by initiating their series of regular literary evenings held in his honor at Modeste Magny’s celebrated restaurant on the Left Bank of Paris.

GAUTIER, Théophile, 1811-72, independent thinker, advocate of modernity and realism in the arts, first studied painting but soon committed himself to literature. In 1830, he supported Victor Hugo’s cause by playing a leading part in the literary “Battle of Hernani.” In 1835, he wrote the deliberately scandalous *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, in the preface of which he expounded the idealistic poetic theory of *l’art pour l’art*. While affiliated with the anti-romantic Parnassian school of poetry, he produced a volume of poetry in 1852, *Emaux et Camées*, but wrote little else except literary, dramatic and artistic criticism for a state sponsored newspaper during the Second Empire.

GÉRÔME, Jean-Léon, 1824-1904, academic painter, a much-admired star of the Salon, technician of photographic illusionism, whose work exemplified the academic ideal of smoothness and minuteness of finish: *le style léché*. His talent for modernizing antiquity is evident in his idyllic, pastoral Greek scene, *Un combat de coqs*, Salon of 1847. As master of French Orientalism between 1870-80, his paintings were pastiched Islamic

settings, often metaphors for male control of women's bodies: *Marché d'esclaves* shows a naked captive female being examined before an auction, sensual and disturbing, but a popular subject sure to please the male dominated art market. Everyday life was considered too ordinary a subject for great art until Manet, Degas and the Impressionists began to challenge this assumption during the same decade.

GONCOURT, Edmond de, 1822-96, and Jules, 1830-70, aristocratic brothers who lived and wrote titillating novels together such as *Germinie Lacerteux*, 1864, which influenced Émile Zola and may be seen to be the first Naturalist--or Realist--novel. The Goncourts referred to their realism as *l'écriture artiste* which does indeed imitate the photographic technique of close-ups that zoom in on certain areas of the story while using random cut-off effects which free the reader to fill in the blanks at will. In 1851 they began to write their famous memoirs, *Journal des Goncourts*. After the death of his younger brother, Jules, Edmond founded the *Académie Goncourt* to perpetuate their name.

GUYS, Constantin, 1802-92, illustrator and model Dandy who fulfilled Baudelaire's paradigm for the "painter of modern life" and whose idiom of caricature in his impressions of women particularly earned the poet's praise. In fact, "woman as temptress" was Guys' favorite theme which probably intrigued Manet, who knew him from the Café Guerbois gatherings of the 1860s and owned a number of Guys' drawings. Manet eventually executed a pastel portrait of the artist in 1880 when Guys was seventy-eight years old.

HAUSSMANN, George-Eugène, Baron, 1809-91, became prefect of the Seine in 1853 and began demolishing old districts of Paris, building wide boulevards and planning parks. It has been theorized that Haussmann's modernization of Paris facilitated social

change by spawning dozens of new cafés where entertainment attracted a low life audience that mixed freely with high society, giving currency to the *haute bourgeoisie*'s fear that social class no longer mattered. Due to the costs of building the new Paris, he became very unpopular.

HUGO, Victor-Marie, 1802-85, the celebrated Romantic poet, dramatist and novelist whose writings span two literary periods. For the fullness of his destiny, the richness of his inspiration and power of expression, Hugo's genius casts a giant shadow over almost every genre of 19th century literature. His oeuvre addressed lyricism, philosophy, politics and epic poetry. He railed against the arrogant *usurpateur*, Napoléon III, as "le petit" in his satirical poems, *Châtiments*, denounced social injustice in *Les Misérables*; philosophically explored "the grotesque and the sublime" in *Notre-Dame de Paris* and placed personal honor above all else in *Hernani*. Having departed Paris in protest when Napoléon III declared himself Emperor after the *coup d'état*, December 2, 1851, he returned from his voluntary, political exile in 1870 with no cultural or political influence yet enjoyed a lifelong outpouring of affection by his countrymen, covered with official honors and esteem. After his death in 1885, his ashes were placed in the Pantheon.

HUYSMANS, Joris-Karl, 1848-1907, a brilliant novelist influenced by other writers and artists, who admired Zola but broke with the school of naturalism. Huysmans followed Zola's lead until he became disillusioned with naturalism's narrow focus, deciding to break with Zola's literary teachings in 1884. His eye witness description of the Folies-Begère as a Dandy's paradise in *Croquis Parisiens*, 1880, was relevant not only to Manet's 1882 painting of one of its bars but also to his own credo of studied indifference, intellectual dandyism, careful eliticism and ambivalent attitudes towards women. His

startling “purple prose” style--a mélange of oxymoronic *fascination cum repulsion*--is best remembered in the portrayal of the life of his *décadent* protagonist *des Esseintes* in his novel *À Rebours*, 1884. In this work, which soon became the Bible of the *Décadents*, he gave Mallarmé his first name recognition in a literary setting by quoting from *Hérodiade* while simultaneously exalting Moreau’s watercolor of *Salomé* to satiate *des Esseintes* taste for sensual overkill by juxtaposing two dangerous erotic symbols of desire and castration.

LAURENT, Méry, 1849-1900, born Anne-Rose-Suzanne Louviot, minor actress turned model, arrived in Paris at sixteen years of age. For a while she was rumored to be Manet’s mistress whose gracious charms he painted many times and who remained a delightful companion and loyal friend, as well as intimate muse, to both Manet and Mallarmé. After the death of Manet, the memory of the artist became a link of “deep affection” between Méry and Mallarmé.

MALLARMÉ, Stéphane, 1842-98, modest school teacher and acknowledged leader of the Symbolist poets, was a close friend of Manet, Berthe Morisot and the Impressionists. His writings reveal his deep admiration for Baudelaire, Poe and Wagner who served as guideposts and inspiration. Branded obscure and inaccessible, his work demanded, and still demands, a persistent reader willing to persevere the labyrinth of Mallarmé’s precious, elliptical stylistics to attain personal epiphany. Although his lifetime output of published poetry would fill only a slim volume because of his self-imposed crucible of poetic perfection, his method inspired intellectual excitement and sympathetic understanding among ardent young *mardistes* such as Paul Valéry and André Gide. In poems like *Une dentelle s’abolit*, he verbalized--long before the movement materialized--

the process of *plastic abstraction* that would transform the world of art. By 1896, when he succeeded Paul Verlaine as the *Prince of Poets*, he had already achieved cult status among symbolist writers and painters. The poet's influence and iconic importance within the Western world of poetry is particularly apparent in the writings of poets close to Eliot and Joyce. His name recognition is now strongly associated with two of his poems:

L'Après-midi d'un faune (youthful ardor) and *Le Cygne* (poetic stoicism). Unlike Zola who analyzed the *superficial* appearances of Manet's works, Mallarmé seemed to grasp the *subjective* aesthetics that animated the paintings of Manet and those of the Impressionists, an assertion that is demonstrated by his perceptive essay: *Les Impressionists et Édouard Manet*, 1876. In 1885, two years after Manet's death, Mallarmé wrote to Verlaine: "I saw my dear friend Manet every day for ten years and I find still find his absence unbelievable."

MANET, Édouard, 1832-83, eldest son of a family with old bourgeois roots, controversial urban artist whose work is widely regarded as the pivotal artistic oeuvre that triggered a "revolution" in late 19th century art. An inexhaustible *flâneur*, no one knew Paris streets better than he--their textures, colors and inhabitants which define his oeuvre and reflect his response to social and political events that shaped the city he loved. His *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, is considered by leading art historians to be the lynch pin painting that launched the modernist movement in contemporary western art. Committed to painting modern life, Manet's view of modernity took visible form against a background of tradition that contradicted his avowed determination "to be of one's own time." Yet, his work managed to synthesize the past while implying future revolutions that would soon stir up the arts. His second and most important manner of painting began

with his sophisticated nude, *Olympia*, Salon of 1865. During the 1860s, his work was on the cutting edge of modernity; in the 1870s, Degas and the Impressionists began to keep pace with him. A great stylist, dynamic and inventive, he helped free painting from its bondage to subject matter, literature, sentiment and poetry. Dazzled by Constantin Guys' anecdotal art, Baudelaire missed his modernism; he was too sophisticated and allusive for Zola. Despite the critical abuse that the officials of the state-run Salon showings heaped upon him--regardless of the merits of his entries--Manet clung to his belief that he would win the battle to have contemporary art accepted by the Salon and hung in its halls. His painting, like much of Mallarmé's poetry, was the sublimation of refined sensibility that implied an epicurean mixture of sensuality and physical experience. During the twenty years between his innovative *La Musique aux Tuileries*, 1862, and *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, 1882, he continually enriched his painting vocabulary shaped through interactions with his eclectic circle of intimates, in particular the poets, Baudelaire and Mallarmé, as well as the artists Degas, Monet and Morisot.

MARCELLO, pseud. of Adèle d'Affry Colonna, 1836-79, sculptor and painter, was a wealthy, aristocratic young widow of a Roman duke. She was admired by Berthe Morisot, impressed by this independent friend who demanded to be treated like a woman in her private life and like a man in her professional life.

MAUPASSANT, Guy de, 1850-93, first-rank realist writer of novels, disciple of Flaubert and friend of Zola, celebrated for his *Boule-de-Suif*, 1880. In *Bel-Ami*, 1885, his cynical journalist hero, *Duroy*, is introduced into the *demi-mondaine* world of the Folies-Bergère where reputed moral corruption matched the amoral character of his ambitious egocentric protagonist who preyed on women for social and financial gain. Haunted by madness and

death, Maupassant committed suicide in an asylum at the age of forty-three, too late to escape the insanity he had dreaded for many years.

MEURENT, Victorine, 1844-1927, born near the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, was Manet's pretty young model who will be forever linked to two of his pictures that are imprinted into our perceptions of contemporary art: *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia*, both painted in 1863. Among her many other modeling triumphs for Manet, Victorine starred as the *Chanteuse des rues*, 1860, *Femme au perroquet*, 1868, then made a matronly comeback--after a romantic escapade in America--in the *Chemin de fer*, 1873. By then Berthe Morisot had begun to supplant Victorine when Manet changed his palette and switched his focus to portraying the bourgeoisie's new postwar lifestyle, ranging from images of the modern woman, represented by his elegantly costumed Parisienne, to beer-hall studies of pleasure-seeking crowds where social class did not matter. Although Victorine earned her livelihood by modeling, she also ventured into painting for profit. Ironically, one of her self-portraits was hung in the Salon of 1876, the same year that Manet's paintings, *L'Artiste* and *Le Linge*, were refused by the usual lineup of anti-Manet Salon officials.

MONET, Claude, 1840-1926, son of middle class parents, impressionist artist *par excellence*, came from Le Havre to Paris in 1859 where he studied with the painter Gleyre and met Bazille, Renoir and Sisley. During the mid 1860s, he joined the circle at the Café Guerbois, a period during which he experienced frequent official rejections and suffered difficult financial situations. One of the first to suggest that a group exhibition be given, he showed with Morisot, Degas, Renoir, Pissarro, Cézanne and Sisley in the first Impressionist Exhibition of 1874. Only in Monet's work did the Impressionist method of

broken brushwork and daylight effects attain its fullest expression. A strong will shaped him for his leadership role; he endured while less committed talents either briefly followed his example or ended by deserting his empirical approach, as did Renoir around 1888. His admirer, Zola, declared that he was “a man in a crowd of eunuchs.” Monet worked intuitively without preliminary studies, based on observation rather than invention. His name is synonymous with his out-of-doors, shorthand method of “instantly” representing nature by radically shortening the gap between perception and painterly re-creation. While in his eighties and nearly blind, he painted a cycle of eight monumental waterscapes--he called them *paysages d'eau, Les Nymphéas*--that were horizontal panels installed in the *L'Orangerie* of the Louvre in 1925. Foreshadowing abstraction, the panels are devoid of anecdote, horizon or of frames; there is no illusion of actual space and light, only magnificent wall-sized panoramas presenting intricately woven surfaces of colorful adumbrations that glow with shimmering effects.

MOREAU, Gustave, 1826-98, original and solitary artist who devoted himself to subjects from ancient mythology while others painted modern life. His sumptuous, precious style was admired by Huysmans' hero, *des Esseintes*, who singled out Moreau's exotic vision of *Salomé*, Salon of 1878, as sublimely symbolic of refined decadence in the novel *À Rebours*. The painting reprised a theme conceived in 1860 by Flaubert who had re-invented a mythical Carthaginian *femme fatale* as his exotic heroine *Salamambo* in his novel of the same name. Flaubert dramatized her “impossible love” through torrid prose reminiscent of Delacroix's Byronic Orientalist fantasies.

MORISOT, Berthe, 1841-95, the only female painter to be included in the core group of the Impressionists and to show with them in their first Exhibition in 1874. From 1868 to

1870, Morisot posed for Manet's large-scale compositions in his studio at rue Guyot. From 1872 to 1873, Manet captured--and seemed captivated by--the unconventional beauty of Berthe's expressive face in a series of intimate portraits and studies painted in his elegant atelier at 4, rue de Saint-Pétersbourg. Their intriguing model/artist/friend relationship ended when she became engaged to and then married Manet's brother Eugène. She was a career artist at a time when her own *haute bourgeoisie* social class looked askance at such female audacity, particularly onerous in one of their own. One of the few women to earn recognition in art history, she participated in all eight Impressionist exhibitions showing privately as well through Durand-Ruel as well as with other independent galleries. Her painting *facture* captured the essence of Impressionism: nervous flurries of quick brushstrokes that encapsulated the mood of instantaneity considered *de rigueur* in Impressionist theory. Morisot counted Manet, Mallarmé, Degas, Monet and Renoir among her most intimate acquaintances. Some of her paintings, such as the celebrated *Le Berceau*, are hung today next to the works of her friends in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. The Musée Marmottan in Paris also conserves many of her works along with the signature painting that categorized her art and that of her circle: *Impression, soleil levant*, 1874, by Claude Monet.

NADAR, pseud. of Felix Tournachon, 1820-1910, flamboyant friend of Manet and the Impressionist painters, picturesque author, balloonist, consummate Bohemian and possibly the most skilled of all portrait photographers.

NAPOLÉON III, Emperor Louis-Napoléon, 1808-73, nephew of Napoléon Bonaparte, President of the Second Republic, 1848. He seized power through a *coup d'état* in 1851, named himself Emperor in 1852, pursued an erratic, vacillating policy which led to the

disastrous Franco-Prussian War of 1870. He abdicated after the defeat of Sedan in 1870 and died in England while in exile in 1872. While his regime hypocritically imposed strict moral order upon his subjects, he privately wallowed in sensuality, alternating the services of various mistresses with visits from an assortment of prostitutes.

PISSARRO, Camille, 1830-1903, *plein air* artist who admired above all Corot and was in turn “the humble and colossal Pissarro” to Cézanne. Oldest of the Impressionists, pacific and kind, he was known for his anarchist sympathies and social concerns. A “natural painter” with an intensely personal style, Pissarro excelled in impressionist landscapes that adhered more or less to Monet’s vision of nature as seen through changing effects of light rendered by dappled forms and small broken areas of color.

POE, Edgar Allan, 1809-49, American writer and poet with whom Baudelaire identified, author of the celebrated poem *The Raven*, that was translated into French by both Baudelaire, 1853, and Mallarmé, 1875. In 1876, when the latter published his version of Poe’s poem, Manet illustrated it with superbly conceived etchings, sensitively evoking Poe’s moodiness, poetic brooding, amorous longing and ghostly mystery.

PROUST, Antonin, 1832-1905, schoolmate and lifelong friend of Manet who had also originally aspired to be a painter but instead took up journalism and then politics. As a newspaper correspondent he worked for the *Temps* during the 1870 campaign. Later he had a brief career as a politician in Léon Gambetta’s cabinet where he became Minister of Beaux-arts in November, 1881. Through his intervention in December of that same year, Manet received the prestigious *Chevalier de la Légion d’honneur* award. Author of *Édouard Manet, souvenirs*, published in 1913, his book serves as an invaluable source for

affectionate, anecdotal information about Manet's life, but his recollections are informal, partial and not always accurate.

RENAN, Ernest, 1823-92, author of *La Vie de Jésus*, 1863, expounded his theory that posited a positivist vision of Jesus, one that viewed him as a great man more than the Son of God: he reduced the Messiah to the proportions of an historical figure. Manet's painting, *Le Christ mort aux anges*, Salon of 1864, also stripped his subject of Godliness by picturing a non-idealized *Ecce Homo* corpse--that of a common, sunburned manual laborer--flanked by two androgynous, blue-winged angels with detached, absorbed, and strangely indifferent facial expressions.

RENOIR, Pierre-August, 1841-1919, artist associated with Impressionism from 1867-77 but far more romantic and traditional than that of Monet whom he seconded during his early development. In fact, Renoir was more devoted to figurative painting than to Monet's empirical studies of landscape. The large *plein air* painting *Le Bal au Moulin de la Galette*, 1876, is one of his most ambitious and original Impressionist works. From that period, his work evolved in a different direction from the others, becoming more sculptural and monumental, culminating in 1918-19 with his uninhibited, nearly life-size nudes titled simply *Bathers*. Berthe Morisot and Renoir developed a deep friendship, so close that she appointed him as one of the guardians to her teenage daughter, Julie, a request that would be shared with her closest male friend, Stéphane Mallarmé.

SAND, George, pseud. of Aurore Dupin, Baronne Dudevant, 1804-76, author of Romantic novels, plays and country romances. Acquainted with Balzac, (with whom she shared a common disdain for marriage) she earned her own living by moving to and writing in Paris, often frequenting the Left Bank *en travestie*, dressed as a male student to

protect herself in the rough Latin Quarter then preferred by writers. Much publicized liaisons with Musset and Chopin added to her glamorous charisma; yet, it was her capacity for warmth that endeared her to Flaubert who cherished her friendship and wrote his poignant *Le Coeur simple* in homage to her but she died before it was completed.

SIGNAC, Paul, 1863-1935, artist and disciple of Georges Seurat, the inventor of *pointillisme*, who accepted the latter's *divisionism* of the artist's palette of colors. He became the leading theorician of divisionism in Post-Impressionist painting.

TAINE, Hippolyte, 1828-93, a brilliant scholar who, in 1870, expounded his famous theories of *la race, le milieu, et le moment* which Zola was to use as guiding principles for such novels as *Therèse Racquin*.

WHISTLER, James Mc Neill, 1834-1903, American painter, etcher and elegant Dandy who often bickered with Degas, participated in the stormy debates that animated Manet's "gang" at the Café Guerbois. In the mid-1860s, he developed a flat, more decorative style that incorporated Asian compositional ideas and began to paint abstractionist nocturnal scenes for which he is now best known. A formidable print maker, his etching-portrait of Mallarmé was cherished by the poet and became the frontispiece of his collection *Vers et Prose*, 1893. Whistler, an expatriate American like John Singer Sargent, preferred to live abroad rather than pursue an art career at home. His tonalist "Study in Gray"--*Whistler's Mother*--hangs in the Musée d'Orsay, a fine example of "negative intensity" in modern expressiveness.

WOLFF, Albert, 1835-1891, an expatriate German and dictatorial, stinging critic/playwright on the staff of the newspaper *Le Figaro*, who relentlessly vilified Manet's work. Manet, who found his brutish ugliness "chic," offered to paint his portrait

hoping to soften Wolff's implacable hostility towards his work. Evidently it was a strategy that failed since Wolff's posthumous remarks about him were barely polite.

ZOLA, Émile, 1840-1902, leader of the naturalist school of writing, childhood friend of Paul Cézanne, disciple of Edmond de Goncourt, art critic who became closely allied to Édouard Manet. He dreamed at first of writing poetry but after reading the Goncourts' *Germinie Lacerteux*, he succumbed to realist literature. His first novel, *Thérèse Raquin*, earned him a *succès de scandale* in 1867 but one less notoriously violent than that of Manet's spicy *Olympia* in 1865. His important pro-Manet articles, *Édouard Manet, Mon Salon, Manet* and *Écrits sur l'art*, revealed his combative side and attracted controversial attention to himself as well. Because of his interest in *tempérament*-- physical traits that determine the nature of a person--he tended to analyze Manet's artistic persona rather than the modern aspects of his pictures. He believed that a realist author had to be an astute observer, not only of physical appearances, but was also expected to cultivate an awareness of the *relativity* of a personage's social background. Above all, he wanted to apply rigorous scientific methods to the actions and social interactions of individuals. Giving primary importance to *déterminisme*, Zola applied the effects of *heredity* to his great cyclic work, *Les Rougon-Macquart*. Two novels that were written as parts of the cycle of twenty books, *L'Assommoir*, 1877, and *Germinal*, 1885, established him as the *chef de file* of realist literature. *L'Oeuvre*, 1886, followed the fatalistic career of a young artist clearly based upon the composite work of both Manet and Cézanne. Zola's protagonist, *Claude Lantier*--obsessed by his inability to produce a Salon success--commits suicide, a theme of artistic failure that Cézanne took personally, leading him to break off his lifelong friendship with Zola. Both Manet and Zola were attracted to the

modern subject of the *courtisane* and her life style, both baptizing her *Nana*. Manet's painting, refused by the Salon of 1877, depicted her as a gay young actress applying makeup in her boudoir, bare shouldered and scantily corseted, with a seated gentleman waiting for her. In 1879, Zola described this scene in his novel, *Nana*, almost as if he had photographed the painting, perhaps as a tacit bow to Manet's artistic powers of realist observation. Undoubtedly, Zola's affinity for art commentary was a natural gift because he was one of the best word-painters in the French language. Although his genius for description can sometimes be off-putting in terms of Proustian wordplay, *Le Ventre de Paris* is one of his many works that not only showcased his dazzling talent for physical observations but also provided picturesque *Les Halles* marketplace as the perfect cadre for his rich palette of verbalized colorations. In 1895, Zola became engaged in the socially divisive and politically dangerous "Dreyfus affair." He wrote an open letter to the president of the Republic, "*J'accuse*," in which he denounced the judicial wrong inflicted upon Alfred Dreyfus, an army captain and a Jew, falsely accused of high treason. At this point, attracted by socialist theories, Zola's work took an idealistic tone inspired by utopian ideas.

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Plate I. Édouard Manet, *La Musique aux Tuileries*, 1863.



Plate II. Henri Fantin-Latour, *Un atelier aux Batignolles*, 1870.



Plate III. Édouard Manet, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863.

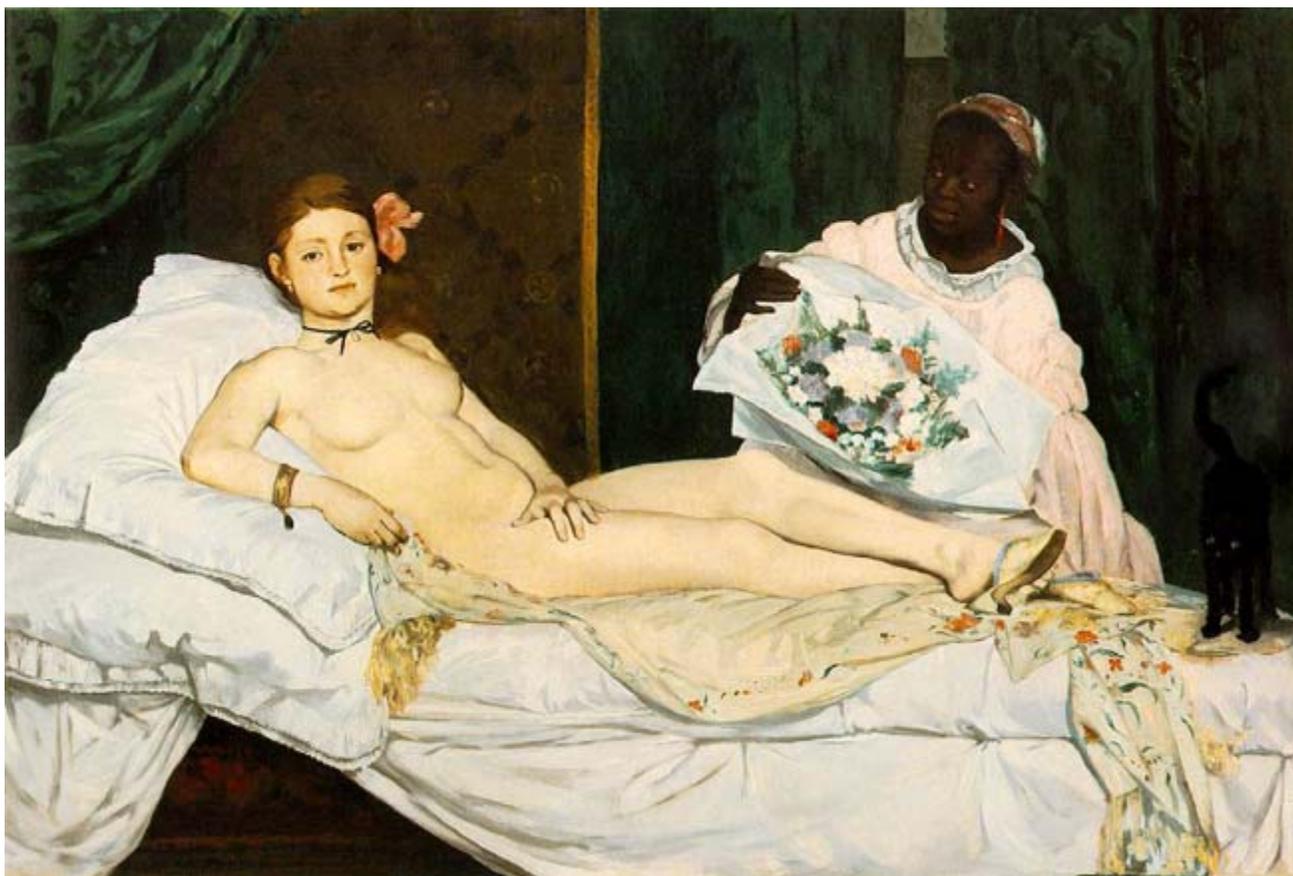


Plate IV. Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1865.



Plate V. Alexandre Cabanel, *Naissance de Vénus*, 1863.



Plate VI. Édouard Manet, *Portrait de Berthe Morisot étendue*, 1873.



Plate VII. Édouard Manet, *Portrait de Stéphane Mallarmé*, 1876.



Plate VIII. Édouard Manet, *Le Repos* (Berthe Morisot), 1873.



Plate IX. Édouard Manet, *Le Bal masqué à l'Opéra*, 1874.



Plate X. Édouard Manet, *Le Chemin de fer* (Gare Saint-Lazare), 1874.



XI. Édouard Manet, *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, 1882.



Plate XII. Yosumasa Morimura, *Daughter of Art History (Theater A)*, 1990.



Plate XIII. Yosumasa Morimura, *Daughter of Art History (Theater B)*, 1990.



Plate XIV. Helmut Newton, *Nude*, 2000.



Plate XV. Jeff Wall, *Picture for Women*, 1979.

VITA

Marguerite Cappelletti Bassi was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She attended Academy of Holy Angels high school followed by two years of vocational art studies at L.E. Rabouin. During the 1970s, she enrolled in night school to learn Italian and traveled often to Italy, especially to Florence, while teaching Italian for several years at the International House of New Orleans.

In 1993, after a year's sojourn in France, she enrolled in the French program at the University of New Orleans where she earned a Bachelor's Degree. In 1997, she entered the university's Master's program in Romance Languages. Every summer, she renews her "Paris moment" by strolling around her favorite Parisian *quartiers*, sketching *en plein air*, practicing French conversational skills, and researching archival records at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* to support her thesis hypothesis.

During the period spent earning her degrees, she continually studied advanced painting with Jim Richard of the Fine Arts Department at the University of New Orleans. In 1999, she had a gallery exhibition of a series of eight paintings that were inspired by the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé, the French symbolist poet.

To accompany the thematic idea of artistic evolution in her thesis, she created a series of paintings, *La Naissance de Vénus*, 2001, that traces the development of 19th century visual arts from its Salon roots through the successive visual aesthetics of photography, impressionism, abstraction and pop art.