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Painters of Modernity: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Manet and Degas

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Sociology Department in fulfillment
of the graduation requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with
honors in Sociology

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I utilize the theoretical framework of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to analyze the representation of class ideology in the paintings of French Impressionists Edouard Manet and Edgar Degas. Using Bourdieu's theories of habitus and class distinction, I investigate various historical and biographical factors to illustrate how Manet and Degas were simultaneously endowed with significant cultural and economic capital of the old elite, yet predisposed to create reactionary art. I also identify several examples of bourgeoisie iconography within specific paintings created by these two artists. I argue that Manet and Degas, acting as agents within the fields of cultural production and power, produced that both portrayed and legitimized the cultural authority of the bourgeoisie class, in defiance of traditional artistic practices favored by the aristocracy and the French Académie.

KEYWORDS

Bourdieu, sociology of art, Manet, Degas, Habitus, class ideology, nineteenth century France, Impressionists, sociology of culture, cultural capital, field of cultural production, field of power, bourgeoisie, symbolic violence, class stratification, fin de siècle, flâneur, Académie

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INTRODUCTION

French Impressionism has captured the public's imagination unlike any other artistic movement. The Impressionists' pastel-toned paintings, characterized by sketchy, painterly brushwork, and infused with light and a sense of temporality, submerges the viewer in visions of beauty and leisure. Yet art historians regard Impressionism not only as beautiful, but as revolutionary (Samu, 2004). Scholars identify the unfinished quality of paint surface, the lack of linear perspective and depth, and the practice of *en plein air*¹ as proof of Impressionism's momentous break from the academic style of painting upheld by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, the foremost authority in art at the time. The Impressionists' preference for depicting everyday scenes of modern life, rather than adhering to the hierarchy of subject matter established by the Académie, is interpreted as further evidence of the incongruity between the Impressionists and their antecedents. A familiar narrative has thus emerged in the discipline of art history - one that underscores the movement's intentions to overthrow the established cultural order in favor of a new aesthetic closely aligned with modernity. On this conception, Édouard Manet and Edgar Degas are leaders of an artistic vanguard.

¹ Translated to English, *en plein air* refers to the act of painting outdoors, rather than the traditional academic practice of painting within a studio. For more information regarding the relationship between this style of painting and the broader changes of art practice in the nineteenth century, please refer to Anthea Callen's *The Work of Art: Plein Air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth-Century France* (Reaktion Books, 2015).

The Impressionists did strive to produce art that significantly deviate from established traditions of the art world, and they certainly did receive the indignation and rejection of critics who felt scandalized by their work. However, there are many ways in which this customary view of the Impressionists, and specifically of Manet and Degas, must be expanded and revised. Conventional interpretations of these artists' work commonly stress a sense of egalitarianism and democracy. Manet and Degas's choice of a more accessible and lowbrow subject matter is often read as a sign of their desire to reject an elitist, rigid cultural order that prized art dedicated to "stale religious and classical subjects". Although compelling, such a traditional view is ultimately reductive. Instead, through their work, Manet and Degas transformed the symbolism embedded in the classical, academic art favored by an aristocratic 'cultural elite' into a new lexicon of imagery that sought to legitimize the dominant status of a newly affluent, bourgeoisie class. By simultaneously rejecting and embracing these classical aesthetics, Manet and Degas produced art closely aligned with a new socio-cultural class hierarchy.²

² There has also been considerable debate over whether Manet should, in fact, be considered an Impressionist. Although identified as such by the public, several art historians have argued that Manet served more as a role model for the Impressionists, rather than as an Impressionist himself. For instance, in her book *Manet Manette*, Carol Armstrong refers to the comments of American art critic Clement Greenberg: "...he [Greenberg] also claimed that 'Manet's best years were just those, in the 1860s, in which he was the most inconsistent'; that his worst were his more consistent ones, the Impressionist 1870s; and that his 'inconsistency' separated his work from the day-to-day

The conception of art as a mechanism for class reproduction is one that has been covered at length by Pierre Bourdieu, whose work will serve as the theoretical framework for this paper. Drawing on Bourdieu, I will argue that, in many ways, Manet and Degas incorporated elements of classical imagery into their art to ridicule the propriety of the old aristocracy and cater to both the political and aesthetic ideologies of the bourgeoisie. In chapter two, I give a brief overview of the sociology of art and the various scholars whose work has contributed to a deeper examination of social and cultural transformations through art. I contrast their ideas to those of Bourdieu, and explain why Bourdieusian theory serves as the most appropriate analytical lens for this

procedures of the Impressionists (as well as of other modernists like Cezanne, Van Gogh, and the Cubists)” (2002:xiii). Moreover, Manet himself never exhibited with the other Impressionists, and continued to submit his work to the Salon throughout his career. Similarly, Degas, although popularly identified as an Impressionist, was “keen to point out the distance between his art and that of the Impressionists” (Musée d’Orsay 2015), and held a particularly critical view of *plein air* painting (painting outdoors), which was a key practice of the Impressionists. He once remarked: “If I were the government, I would have a special brigade of gendarmes to keep an eye on the people who paint landscapes from nature” (Musée d’Orsay 2015). Therefore, this thesis aims not to discuss the work of Manet and Degas in terms of Impressionism, but rather as individual artists. Throughout this paper, refer to the work of other Impressionists in order to differentiate their work from that of Manet and Degas and highlight the need for an expanded view of the art of these two artists.

thesis. I also analyze Manet and Degas's biographies through a Bourdieusian theoretical framework. I discuss how the personal histories of these artists produced a unique habitus which predisposed them to create "bourgeois" art. In chapter three, I give an account of the broader socio-political changes that were occurring in nineteenth-century Paris. Specifically, I address how modernity restructured society's class divisions and how Haussmannization³ gave rise to new forms of bourgeoisie culture. This chapter also addresses how certain significant cultural attitudes and practices which emerged during this period came to influence Manet and Degas. In the final chapter, I analyze a selection of their artwork, from its inception as an idea to its reception by critics and patrons, so as to dissect the way in which their art functions both as reflection and enforcement of bourgeois class ideology. I contextualize such work within the broader canon of Western art to illustrate how Manet and Degas appropriated aristocratic and classical art to further their own class interests. This paper ultimately seeks to determine how, by working through Bourdieu's framework, we can come to understand Manet and Degas as agents operating within a sphere of intense cultural and economic competition. By evoking the

³ The term "Haussmannization" refers to the massive public works project that occurred in Paris between 1853 to 1870. Charged by Napoleon III with the task of renovating the entire city, Georges-Eugene Haussmann constructed a network of new boulevards, several public parks, a new sewage system, along with several other urban renewal projects (Rideout 2016). Please see Chapter Three for more information about the effects of Haussmannization upon the work of Manet and Degas and the class divisions of Paris.

art of the past, Manet and Degas created remarkable images of the modern age and of the new class that ruled it.

CHAPTER 2: BOURDIEUSIAN LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE LIVES OF MANET AND DEGAS

The sociology of art, as a sub-field of the broader discipline, aims to elucidate the complex relationship between the art world and the social world. In her book *Meaning and Expression: Toward a Sociology of Art*, author Hanna Deinhard (1977:3) articulates some of the central questions that this discipline attempts to address:

How is it possible that works of art, which always originate as products of human activity *within* a particular time and society and *for* a particular time, society, or function - even though they are not necessarily produced as 'works of art' - can live beyond their time and seem expressive and meaningful in completely different epoch and societies? On the other hand, how can the age and society that produced them be recognized in the works?

This field addresses how art can function both as a model *of* and a model *for* society; that is, to determine the ways in which artistic representation of human thought serves as a reflection and an enforcement of social values and dynamics. The sociology offers insight on how art can be used to establish and maintain systems of power. Janet Wolff (1995), for example, has written extensively on the conflation between the aesthetic appeal of a painting and the representation of the female body, and how the dichotomies that arise from such a conflation (beauty and ugliness, erotic and chaste) relate to a politics of gender.

Sociologists of art have studied the production and social effects of art in a multitude of ways. Although these approaches all provide important contributions to the field, none, aside from Pierre Bourdieu, fully capture the relationship between class ideology and Impressionism that I study here. For instance, unlike Bourdieu's conception of art as a shaper of social relations outside of the art world, Howard Becker (2012) is primarily concerned with tracing the development of an artwork within the art world.

Becker argues that art is not created in a vacuum of individual artistic genius. Rather, many social factors contribute to the production of art, from the resources available to the artist, to the distribution networks through which an artwork is circulated, to the philosophical arguments that aestheticians and critics use to define and elevate art from non-art. His book *Art Worlds* addresses the dynamics of the art world broadly, outlining the various steps that all artworks undergo, from inception to reception.

Although Becker's arguments are useful in providing insight into the nature of art worlds and their functions, he does not address issues of class and does not seriously examine how class ideologies and socio-economic hierarchies are reflected in the artistic practices of a society. Furthermore, Becker's approach seems to investigate the way art worlds constantly adapt to align with emerging art practices. For example, Becker (2012:145) discusses the institutional theory of aesthetics, or the "development of a new aesthetic to take account work the art world has already accepted". Prior to the emergence of Impressionism, for instance, the conventional theory of aesthetics put forth by institutional bodies evaluated an artwork on its imitative abilities, that is, the artist's ability to replicate his subject accurately in his work. Monet's paintings, which deviated completely from this criterion, forcefully catalyzed a new theory of aesthetics in which these works were "rationalized as experiments in capturing the relationship between light and color" (Becker 2012:146). For art history to maintain its legitimacy as a discipline, therefore, conventional theories of aesthetics must adapt to the emergence of revolutionary art practices, such as abstract art and action painting in the mid-twentieth century, to account for the new system of aesthetic value introduced by these avant-garde practices. *Art Worlds* offers an astute account of the ability of the art world to expand,

contract, and shift to account for changing social dynamics. However, rather than offering an adequate ideological framework to analyze how art and the art world influences social dynamics, as Bourdieu's work does, Becker achieves the opposite; he seeks to understand how wider social changes have shaped art.

Similarly, Michael Farrell's *Collaborative Circles: Friendship Dynamics & Creative Work* (2003) concerns the production of art in terms of collaborative action. Unlike Becker, however, Farrell addresses the work of and relationship between the Impressionists directly. He presents the Impressionists as a cohesive group with an established set of ideals and practices, much like a society. As a society, the group must also actively discourage deviance to maintain a sense of cohesion and collectivity. For instance, Farrell argues that certain Impressionists serve as "group boundaries" that help define the group's identity. In this regard, he notes that "Cézanne seemed to embody what the Salon and the public attempted to pin to them – incompetence and undisciplined rebellious-ness. While they [the Impressionists] sought the approval of the Salon jury and the public, he showed only contempt for their standards by submitting work that was deliberately provocative and sloppy" (2003:52). By assuming this role of "boundary marker," Cézanne's work serves as a foil for the aesthetic values of Manet and Degas, which aligned closer with the tastes of the Académie than would be previously presumed. Furthermore, the fact that the Impressionists recognized the dangers of deviant behavior illustrates the existence of a status quo which favored those artists both inclined and able to consider the tastes of the cultural elite.

Although Farrell offers an insightful account of the inner dynamics of the Impressionists, his intellectual focus is mainly preoccupied with the internal evolution of

the group. Unlike Bourdieu and the aims of this paper, Farrell's analysis looks inward – his interests lie not with the Impressionist's relation to a broader social context, but with the narrative of the group's history. *Collaborative Circles* seeks to identify how autonomous individuals come to associate with one another, how a cohesive group identity was formed, and how, eventually, members separate, having lost the dependence upon each other to attain their professional goals.

Harrison White (1993) has also written on the changes that occurred within the Parisian art world of the nineteenth century. White's work, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World*, traces the various mechanism that pushed the central mode of art exhibition out of the academic Salon and into the privatized dealer-critic system. The book serves as a useful tool to contextualize the social and artistic environment in which Manet and Degas were working. However, as this paper seeks to understand the reciprocal relationship between artist and habitat, individual and community, *Canvases and Careers* only answers half the question. White characterizes the Impressionists as “beneficiaries of new conditions in the social world of painting” (1993: xxi). By describing the artist in this way, White places him in a passive position. The artist is the receptacle of social change, not the instigator. In the introduction of his book, White describes the aims of his research: “Much of this study will deal not with the individuals recalled today as great, but with the social institutions of the French painting world and their effects upon the social and economic status of the thousands of painters, famous or forgotten, whom France produced in the nineteenth century” (1993:1).

White's approach is in sharp contrast Bourdieu's, which, contrarily, seeks to understand the social impact of cultural objects and specific individuals in reflecting and reinforcing class hierarchy. As a mathematical sociologist, White utilizes a positivist approach in addressing his topic. *Canvases and Careers* often refers to quantitative data, such as the wages of artists and laborers, the number of sales conducted by the Académie per year, or the number of submissions received by the Salon. These methods are driven by a sense of empiricism and objectivism. There is no analysis of the art itself, only a qualitative interpretation of data. Although Bourdieu has utilized empirical data in his literature⁴, his analysis of art and culture emphasizes a type of qualitative analysis absent from White's. For instance, Bourdieu argues that only by understanding the characteristics of the artwork can one come to comprehend its social effects:

There is a social effect of the work, which is not a blanket effect, but is differential, since a work does not have the same effect on everyone... This differential effect provides insights into the work of art. The word 'effect' is important: saying that there is an effect of the work of art is to say that some of the cause of this effect can be found in the work of art. The question then is whether we might not be able to use these effects to try to trace their cases, to try and see in these works something that will allow us to explain these effects (2017:27).

Bourdieu's conception of a cultural object therefore mandates a certain degree of art historical inquiry. As this paper seeks to decipher the social effects of artistic

⁴ See *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), in which Bourdieu builds his case by surveying two large groups of respondents on their tastes and opinions on a wide range of issues. As a review written by Berger (1986:1445) notes, however: "Bourdieu respects quantitative data, but he is no positivist. Having been trained to think epistemologically, he distances himself somewhat from the numbers".

representation and iconography, Bourdieu's approach, to analyze the actual effects through visual representation and iconography, serves as a more insightful analytical lens than those offered by others.

Bourdieu's Sociology of Art

Bourdieu, who is largely devoted to the investigation of culture's role in preserving systems of power, provides a more useful tool with which to investigate the representation of class ideologies in Manet and Degas's bodies of work. In his set of lectures *Manet: A Symbolic Revolution* (2017:17), Bourdieu describes Manet as a kind of heretic, and gestures to a revolutionary form of art practice that strikes at the very heart of what I hope to illuminate in this paper:

The heresiarch who produced the painting created an effect of scandal and infringed the symbolic order, flouting the harmony between cognitive structures and social structures on which our experience of the social world as self-evident relies. Here the structures present themselves typically in the form of binary oppositions: there is a tension between what is aesthetically high and low – an opposition which corresponds to the hierarchy of the genres – between the masculine and the feminine, the bourgeoisie and the people, etc.

In this brief passage, Bourdieu articulates an integral aspect of Manet and Degas that we must consider. It was not the unfamiliarity or strangeness of their art that scandalized its viewers, but rather its subversion of the “binary oppositions” to which the nineteenth century viewer was accustomed. Their heresy manifested in distortions of the recognizable.

Importantly, Bourdieu considered art not only as a static product bound within the limits of the art world, but rather as a Hobbesian mechanism utilized by agents competing within a broader social context. According to Bourdieu, the processes of the social world occur in the “field”, a sphere of social activity in which agents are located according to

their social positions. These social positions are determined by one's capital, whether they be economic, social, or political. The agent's actions, and his ability to navigate the social hierarchy within the field, is determined by his position and *habitus* – the culmination of social factors that orient one's actions and thought. Specifically, agents within the field of cultural production, in which cultural objects are conceived, produced, distributed, and received, are positioned within a social hierarchy via the process of “structural subordination”. One's position is determined by two factors: firstly, “the market”, whose “sanctions and constraints” are exercised in the form of ticket sales to exhibitions, prices of individual works, commissions, and, for example, the election of the artist to join the Académie; secondly, “durable links” – the social networks “based on affinities of lifestyles and value systems, and operating especially through the intermediary of the salons, which unite at least a portion of the writers [and artists] to certain sections of high society, and help to determine the direction of the generousities of state patronage” (Bourdieu 1992:49).

Another field exists within the social world – a social sphere of intense competition which Bourdieu defines as the *field of power*. Within the field of power are countless individuals and groups, all vying for legitimacy and resources (Bourdieu 1992:10):

A field of possible forces exercising on all bodies entering it, the field of power is also a field of struggle, and may thus be compared to a game: the dispositions, that is to say, the ensemble of incorporated properties, including elegance, facility of expression, or even beauty, and capital in its diverse forms - economic, cultural, social - constitute the trumps which will dictate both the manner of playing and success in the game.

This field of power exists “horizontally”, intersecting with all other fields operating within society, including the field of cultural production. Agents within this intersection,

whether he be artist, patron, dealer, critic, Salon, art group, or any other body of individuals or institutions, compete to accrue capital within the market, establish a network of available durable links, and claim aesthetic legitimacy (i.e. for their work to be categorized as “high art” or a part of “high culture”). Class thus emerges as the crucial determining mechanism of artistic engagement. The viewer’s class position dictates his ability to read the cultural references upon which the artist draws.

Similarly, the artist’s work is shaped, consciously or not, by his position within the field of power. Unlike other agents within the field of power, however, Bourdieu envisions the artist as a sort of social anomaly. Artists, according to Bourdieu, have an exceptional position within the conventional socio-economic hierarchy of class divisions. This group of professionals, although lacking in significant economic capital, partake in many of the luxuries that the working class cannot: “The artist is the exception: his idleness is a form of work, and his work a rest; he is elegant and casual in turn; he puts on, according to whim, the labourer’s smock, or decides on the tailcoat worn by the man of fashion. He does not follow the rules. He imposes them” (1992:56). Although the artist may live in destitution, his profession mandates a certain amount of leisure, affords him access to ruling class patrons, and instills within him an elite cultural “language”. Identified by Bourdieu as the “dominated dominant” and by Impressionist Camille Pissarro as the “penniless bourgeoisie” (Bourdieu 1992:56), the artist is therefore uniquely positioned to observe and portray the complex class relations that exist within society.

According to Bourdieu, the bohemian artist is an individual particularly paradoxical in nature. Although he may identify with “the ‘people’, with whom it often

shares misery”, Bourdieu (1992:56) argues, the bohemian is ultimately separated “by the art of living that defines it socially and which, even if ostentatiously opposed to the conventions and properties of the bourgeoisie, is situated nearer to the aristocracy or the grande aristocracy than to the orderly petite-bourgeoisie”. Manet and Degas, as archetypal embodiments of the bohemian artist, are similarly suspended from traditional class stratification. Manet, aside from depicting scenes of bohemian life (see, for example, *The Absinthe Drinker* [1859]), “attributed his artistic failures to what he called ‘my woeful Bohemian habits’”, as, “when his entries for the Salon of 1874 were refused, he wrote to a friend: ‘This is once again the result of the eccentric life, outside of every social convention, within which I have closed myself up in my artists’ individuality for years. It makes me, I know, impossible, and very often shocking to the milieu of respectable people, living a regular and sociable life’” (Seigal 1999:298). Similarly, in her biographical account of Degas, Crisci –Richardson (2015:183) notes: “The legend surrounding Degas has blurred the fact that in his life Degas, a bourgeois, did not pursue either family interests or wealth making, but assumed, even verbally on occasions, a very anti-bourgeois stance and the marginal life-style of the bohemian artist”. The ambiguous nature of Bourdieu’s bohemian artist is clearly echoed in the lives and dispositions of Manet and Degas.

It is this very nature of ambiguity, Bourdieu (1992:111) argues, that imbues Manet and Degas with an aptitude for artistic subversion:

Revolutions are incumbent on those hybrid and unclassifiable beings whose aristocratic dispositions, often associated with a privileged social origin and with the possession of large symbolic capital... underpin a profound ‘impatience with limits’, a social but also aesthetic limits, and a lofty intolerance of all compromises with the times.

This passage aligns itself, on one hand, with the conventional view of the Impressionists as revolutionaries expressing a “profound impatience with limits”, both aesthetic and social, in their work. On the other hand, Bourdieu also gestures to an image of the artist as an individual hailing from “privileged social origins”, acutely aware of the constraints that often accompany wealth and status.

The Personal Histories of Manet and Degas

As the scions of affluent families, Manet and Degas emphatically embody this paradoxical archetype. Manet’s father, Auguste Manet, was a well-respected and affluent judge, and his mother, Eugénie-Desirée, was the daughter of a diplomat and the goddaughter of Charles Bernadotte, the Swedish crown prince (Neret 2003). Similarly, Degas was born into an affluent banking family. According to Jeffrey Meyers (2005:131), “The [Degas] family name was originally written in the noble particle, De Gas... [Degas’s] paternal grandfather, René-Hilaire De Gas, the son of a modest baker, was born in 1770. During the French Revolution, when food was scarce and currency unstable, he built his fortune by speculating in grain and changing money.” Later, he “opened a bank and became wealthy enough to buy a vast palazzo in the city and summer villa on the outskirts of town in Capodimonte.”

Though affluent, Manet and Degas’s families were not without their domestic discord. Both Manet and Degas rejected the “social limits” imposed by their parents and class status. For instance, Auguste Manet, being a judge, encouraged his son to pursue law, which Manet had “no aptitude for” (Meyers 2005:4). Auguste later persuaded his son to enter a short-lived career in the navy, which ended after Manet’s naval trip to Rio de Janeiro in 1848 (Meyers 2005). Upon his return, Manet was finally able to convince

his exasperated father to allow him to pursue art as a profession – a career move that was deemed by Auguste and Eugénie-Desirée to be a significant blow to the family’s social standing. To compound matters, Manet also married Suzanne Leenhoff, a Dutch piano teacher with no notable family name or financial means – “a foreigner judged by [Manet’s family] to be of inferior social status” (Meyers 2005:67).

Likewise, Degas’s father also expected his son to attend law school. However, Degas’s subpar grades at the Faculty of Law of the University of Paris and lack of enthusiasm for the legal profession persuaded his parents to accept their son’s aspirations to pursue a career in art. Degas, furthermore, was the first in his family to democratize the family’s surname of ‘De Gas’, which was used, “with some pretensions...by the artist’s father [Augustin de Gas, Degas’s father] when he moved to Paris to establish a French branch of [René-Hilaire de Gas, Degas’s grandfather’s] Neapolitan Bank” to ‘Degas’, thereby renouncing his family’s aristocratic class origins (Baumann, Karabelnik-Matta 1995:98).

Thus, both Manet and Degas came to reject the bourgeois careers that their families had aspired for them, and were subsequently perceived to have polluted their prestigious bloodlines. Although Manet and Degas’ rejection of a bourgeois profession in civil service was undoubtedly driven by their deep passion and talent for art, this spirit of rebellion may also be attributed to a certain sense of resentment towards their relatives. Manet’s painting of his parents, [Fig. 1] *Portrait of M. and Mme. Auguste Manet*, for example, is read by Meyers (2005:13) to be a “revealing and devastating picture of his parents”, which “publicly displayed the emotional tensions, inner loneliness and repressed anger within the family. This mood became a keynote of Manet’s work: the

strange uneasiness and isolation of people, alienated not only from each other but also, in the modern mode, from themselves”. This portrait depicts a stern Auguste Manet, dressed in a manner that clearly alludes to his position as a judge – note, for example, his “high, brimless magistrate’s hat” (Meyers 2005:13). Standing behind August’s shoulder, Manet’s mother looks down upon her husband with a palpable amount of disdain. Here, we are presented with clear impression of marital discord.

This reading of Manet’s family life is made more salient when considering that Manet’s father died of syphilis – a venereal disease rampant in Parisian brothels – and was rumored to have even fathered an illegitimate child with a mistress (Locke 2003). Perhaps, then, we can read this portrait as an accusation of hypocrisy – as noted by Meyers (2005:14): “the picture suggests that Auguste [Manet’s father], then paralyzed by syphilis and as hard and rigid as the tortoiseshell box on the table next to them, is desperately trying to maintain his dignity. Unable to speak and hiding the unspeakable, the ‘unflaggingly virtuous’ father suffers for his darkest family secret and sexual sin”.

In nineteenth century French society, morality and class status were often conflated. Take for example, the ambitious Napoleon III, self-proclaimed Emperor of the Second Republic, who hired Georges-Eugène Haussmann to carry out a massive renovation of the Paris in hopes of remaking the city into a vision of a modern cosmopolitanism (Rideout 2016). By doing so, “Napoleon and Haussmann erased entire neighborhoods from the map” by ridding “the center of Paris of the slums and all the problems attached to this complex sector of society” (Rideout 2016:181). In her article *Beyond the Façade: Haussmannization in Paris as a Transformation of Society*, Amy Rideout explains that the displacement of thousands of working-class families was

spurred not only by a desire to alleviate disease and physical disorder, but also by the perception of the working-class as “at fault morally, and were assumed to live a “sordid and deviant life”. Politicians, as “morally superior” upper class citizens, not only viewed the poor as morally decrepit, but also “feared their unknown, foreign, threatening traditions that ran idiosyncratic to mainstream society” (2016:181). In contrast, the middle and upper class were conceived as naturally inclined to upholding decency and “family values”.⁵

This painting, which makes conspicuous August Manet’s class standing and esteemed profession, can therefore be read as a rejection of upper-class morality. Bourdieu’s assessment of Manet’s heresy in “infringing the symbolic order” is made manifest in this painting – Auguste’s stiff, crippled composure, typical of a syphilis

⁵ Refer, for example, to the work of French economist and physician Louis-René Villermé, who conducted several studies on the spread of disease in working-class neighborhoods of the city. As noted by Ann-Louise Shapiro in her book *Housing the Poor of Paris, 1850-1902*, “Villermé’s work was laced with judgments of working-class morality and character as underlying, predisposing factors in the poor health of the population” (1985:78). In contrast, Michèle Lamont’s *Money, Morals, & Manners: The Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Classes* discusses the way members of the upper-middle class often distinguish themselves from the lower classes not only economically, but also culturally. Specifically, Lamont discusses the “idea of a virtuous or worthy person”, which “members of the upper-middle class constantly define themselves and others by making distinctions along this moral dimension” (2008:1).

patient, is particularly damning considering the close associations between the disease and the lower class. For Manet, then, his family's class standing and his father's profession as a judge were not sources of pride, but rather a deep shame. Nancy Locke (2003:116) explains: "In the case of the Manets, who were very well-off financially, the principle problem posed by the birth of Léon Leenhoff [the man suspected to be Auguste Manet's illegitimate son] was its potential to tarnish Auguste Manet's reputation as a civil judge. It is not hard to image how such a social scandal could have brought dishonor to the name of one whose duty was to rule on just such issues..."⁶

Similarly, Degas maintained a strained relationship with his family. Not only were his parents unhappily married, like Manet's, but Degas was also forced to pay the consequences of his relatives' poor financial decisions. Whereas Degas's grandfather, René-Hilaire Degas, achieved great wealth, his son plunged the family into bankruptcy. At the time of his death, in 1874, Auguste Degas, Edgar's father, "was deeply in debt, and his family declined more publicly and precipitously than Manet's. Auguste's sons and daughters assumed he would leave a wealthy estate, but instead faced scandalous humiliation and comparative poverty" (Meyers 2005:190). These financial difficulties were compounded by the speculating losses and feckless loans taken out by Achille and René, Degas's brothers, for whom their father borrowed to protect. As a result, Degas,

⁶ If Léon was indeed Auguste's illegitimate son, it is probable that Manet married Léon's mother and Auguste's mistress, Suzanne, to pass Léon off as his own son, thereby protecting his family's reputation and his father's career. Nancy Locke (2003) elaborates upon this theory in her book *Manet and the Family Romance*.

“as the oldest son and head of the family”, “felt obliged to save their honor by assuming responsibility for their massive debts” (Meyers 2005:190) after his father’s death. Degas also involved himself in a lengthy legal battle with his brothers over his father’s estate, his resentment towards them further inflamed by their public reputations of infidelity and violent behavior.⁷ Thus, we can also read Degas’s decision to change his last name as an effort “to distance himself from an exalted if financially troubled clan” (Riley 2001:65).

As for the matter of the artist’s “possession of large symbolic capital”, Bourdieu reveals his Marxist influences. He argues that “in order to manage the regulated inter-generational transmission of real and symbolic capital, societies must necessarily develop appropriate structures which enable successful cultural reproduction” (Nash 1990:432). Educational institutions, claim Bourdieu, persist as such social structures. Within them, students undergo processes that endow them cultural capital that takes three forms: the individual’s frame of mind, access to cultural goods, and “in its institutionalized state as, for example, educational qualifications” (Nash 1990:432). The notion of the school as a replicator of class and cultural privilege closely mirrors the Marxist notion of base and superstructure.

According to Marx (Zaleski 2008), society is composed of the economic base and broader social structures, two separate yet interdependent components. Marx – who

⁷ See chapter 14 in Jeffrey Meyers’s *Impressionist Quartet: The Intimate Genius of Manet and Morisot, Degas and Cassatt*, in which he gives a comprehensive account of the Degas family’s financial troubles, as well as the relationship between Degas and his brothers, Achille and René.

argued that all operations, performed either individually or institutionally, are fundamentally shaped by the dominant economic system – believed that all broader social structures ultimately serve to reinforce the legitimacy of society’s economic base. In the case of industrialized Western Europe, this economic base took the form of capitalism, which relies on the division between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to sustain itself. Schools, as a major social institution, have come to act as a mode of class reproduction.⁸ This occurs through a twofold process. Firstly, students are indoctrinated with the belief that one must participate in the practices of capitalism to assume contributing roles in society and are instilled with values of obedience, efficiency, and a desire for material success.

Secondly, schools are stratified by social class. Elite, private boarding schools, for example, offer its students resources and social networks that are vastly different from those available at a public school located in a poverty-stricken neighborhood. Similarly, the social networks gained in the former differ significantly in nature from those formed in the latter. In other words, education is integral in shaping not only one’s class status,

⁸ Please refer to Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis’s *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (1976), for a more comprehensive review of how schools function as a form of superstructure. Written by two Marxist economists, this book discusses how schools function in accordance to the “correspondence principle”, that is, how the internal systems and intrinsic nature of schools correspond to and reinforce the internal systems of capitalism, as well as prepare students to enter the capitalist labor market.

but also one's habitus. Education functions as an armory which equips the privileged individual with the necessary cultural weaponry to dominate within the field of power. For the less fortunate, education is an obstacle to an upward class trajectory: "It is through the family home that the cultural capital of the school is accumulated and the absence of such cultural capital for working-class youth is a much more immovable barrier to social mobility than material poverty" (Fowler 1997:23). Education is the mechanism by which class privilege and inequality is replicated and reinforced inter-generationally.

As members of the upper-middle class, Manet and Degas received privileged educations that served to endow them with valuable cultural capital. However, elements of their education were also tainted by elements of artistic subversion. The combination of these two factors further contributed to a nature of duality that came to define Manet and Degas's art. For example, Manet's family wealth allowed him to embark upon a Grand Tour of Europe from 1853 to 1856. The Grand Tour was a sort of "educational rite of passage" (Gross 2008) in which aristocrats, landed gentry, and wealthy artists undertook travelled throughout Western Europe to experience Classical and Renaissance art. During his travels to Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, Manet studied the work of old masters, such as Franz Hals, Diego Velázquez, and Francisco Goya. He also spent much of his free time in Paris visiting the hallowed halls of Louvre and the Musée du Luxembourg, where he was registered to copy renowned masterpieces (Bome, Kossolapov 2003).

As was a prerequisite for any serious nineteenth century artist, Manet also received a formal artistic education. Beginning in 1850, "Manet also accumulated capital

in the studio of Thomas Couture where he trained for six years, which is a very long time” (Bourdieu 2017:310). Under this tutelage, Manet developed a deep reverence for the work of Renaissance masters; Titian, Giorgione, and others. Unlike many other academic painters at the time, however, Couture held a unique vision of what he believed art and the artist should aspire to:

He stressed the value of modern subjects and insisted that the artist should ‘relate to [his] own times. Why this antipathy for our land, our customs, our modern inventions?’ In view of his success with vast scenes of Roman orgies, this might seem an odd assertion. One critic noted that Couture strived to remain in both camps, “to conciliate avant-garde and conservative tendencies...He nervously sought a style capable of reconciling his longing for traditional forms with his anxiety to be modern (Meyer 1992:9).

This desire to synthesize old and new, traditional and innovative, conservative and avant-garde, undoubtedly made a lasting impression on the young artist. For example, his paintings *Olympia* (1863) and *The Luncheon on the Grass* (1862/3), received overwhelming amount of public backlash precisely because of Manet’s decision to depict figures of modernity (the prostitute, in the case of *Olympia*, and the newly rich bourgeois man, in the case of *The Luncheon*) while referring heavily to the work of old masters, such as Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (1532/4) and *The Pastoral Concert* (1510), as well as Raimondi’s *The Judgment of Paris* (1515).

Bourdieu (2017:311) argues that Manet’s decision to study under Couture was informed by contradictory inclinations: “indeed, it is possible to think that Manet’s aristocratism may have played a role in his decision to train in this relatively marginal studio, which was not the best place to start building a proper academic career”; yet, simultaneously, “it is possible to think that if he chose Couture’s studio, it was partly because it eschewed [other studios’ approaches] to teaching which fostered conformist

and disciplined artists”. Manet’s habitus was fundamentally shaped by his education – one uniquely hybrid in nature, as it supplied both Manet’s elite art historical knowledge and cultivated his aesthetically revolutionary inclinations. John House notes: “[Manet] was seeking to create a type of exhibition painting that dealt with issues that were explicitly contemporary and often controversial, whilst legitimizing itself by demonstrating the artist’s wide knowledge and appreciation of the art of the past” (House, 5). Although Manet’s instruction was academic in nature, his mentor, by seeking to mediate between the “high” subjects of the academy and the “low” subjects of modernity, imparted upon his talented student an inclination for dissent that would soon send Paris’s art world into an uproar.

Like Manet, wealthy Edgar Degas also received a privileged education: “In 1845, aged eleven, Edgar entered the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, one of the best in France, and spent the next eight years there” (Meyers 1992:133). Baudelaire, who was expelled from the school and reflecting upon his time there, remarked:

The fees were high, which meant that [Degas] schoolfellows were for the most part the scions of the landed aristocracy and the sons of wealthy industrialists or of well-paid members of the legal profession. A number of the boarders came from the families of planters and merchants settled in the French colonies (Meyers 1992:133).

Such a comment demonstrates the privileged economic and cultural capital that shaped Degas’s habitus. Like Manet, he also embarked upon a Grand Tour, during which he cultivated a great admiration for classical and Renaissance art: “with close family ties and sufficient wealth to travel and study, he spent nearly three years, from 1856 to 1859, in Naples, Rome, and Florence. Degas also journeyed through central Italy – to Viterbo,

Orvieto, Perugia, Assisi, and Arezzo – and learned color and line by copying hundreds of Old Masters in museums” (Meyers 1992:136).

In 1855, Degas met French Neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, who would become Degas’s mentor. Known for his deep reverence for classical painting, Ingres was regarded as a champion of academic painting and a prominent member of the “old guard”. Like the Académie, Ingres subscribed to a belief in the superiority of historical painting, although he was most famous for his portraits (Jover 2005), and often modelled his subjects after classical figures. Despite his strict adherence to such academic practices, however, Ingres did depart from the old tradition in several ways. His bold use of line and dismissal of color as a substantial component of the painting would come to greatly influence a future generation of modern artists.⁹ The fauvist Matisse once commented “Ingres was the first one ‘to use pure colors, outlining them without distorting them’” (Arikha 1986:11). Likewise, in her book *Ingres and the Studio: Women, Painting, History*, Sarah Betzer notes that, through his portraiture, Ingres sought to reconcile divergent aesthetic inclinations: “At the center of Ingres’s oeuvre, portraiture was an integral element in his struggle to negotiate the ideal and the real: the particular Scylla and Charybdis of his fraught relations with the academic system,

⁹ Ingres once wrote: “Colour adds ornament to a painting; but it is nothing but the handmaiden, because all it does is to render more agreeable the true perfections of the art. Rubens and Van Dyck can be pleasing at the first sight, but they are deceptive; they are from the poor school of colourists, the school of deception. Never use bright colors, they are anti-historic. It is better to fall into gray than into bright colours” (Jover 189).

viewers, critics, and portrait sitters throughout his career” (Arikha 1986:24). Ingres, as Degas’s idol, undoubtedly relayed this sense of conflicting artistic inclinations onto his student.

The parallels between Ingres and Couture are undeniable. So too, are the similarities between Manet and Degas. Both were born into wealthy families and endowed with illustrious educations that inculcated them with a significant “possession of symbolic capital”. Both received formal, academic artistic training, travelled through Europe in search of Classical and Renaissance art, and were enrolled in academies populated by fellow members of the elite class – peers who likely played a role in cultivating a taste and knowledge of high art. Yet their formative years also sowed seeds of defiance and subversion. Disillusioned by strained family relationships and a decline in socio-economic standing, both came to reject notion of class-contingent morality. At the hands of their mentors, moreover, Manet and Degas developed an insatiable taste for modernity. The paradoxical nature of their habitus resulted in a capacity and desire to coopt the imagery of the aristocracy and thereby construct a new class iconography – one characterized by an altered socioeconomic order. Simultaneously equipped with elite cultural capital and predisposed to undermine practices of “high culture”, Manet and Degas emerged as iconoclasts suspended above the conventional arrangement of class divisions. The stage on which they emerged, moreover, was a society made anew by modernity. The world around them was undergoing social, political, and economic changes seismic in nature and, as luck would have it, Manet and Degas were positioned to create a paradigm shift of their own.

CHAPTER 3: THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CLASS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARIS

Erwin Panofsky (1940:187) once claimed that “the cosmos of culture, like the cosmos of nature, is a spatio-temporal structure”. Certainly, Manet and Degas’ habitus were shaped, and forcefully so, by the “spatio-temporal” conditions of their environments – the time and place in which they were embedded. The following chapter will focus on the social transformations within Paris’s class structure, as reflected in the work of Manet and Degas, which in turn served as fertile ground for the development of a new visual lexicon of class ideology. The industrialization of the nineteenth-century gave rise to a nouveau riche class of consumers – the bourgeoisie, whose appetite for new forms of leisure and entertainment was insightfully portrayed in the work of Manet and Degas.

During the mid-nineteenth century, Paris was undergoing a socio-political paradigmatic shift. Industrialization ravaged the old socio-economic order which had granted dominance to the old aristocratic families and the Académie. In its place emerged a newly minted bourgeoisie, whose culture came to dominate Paris’s socioeconomic sphere. The rise of this new class culture can largely be attributed to the social effects of Haussamaization. The 17-year long project, occurring between 1853 and 1870 (Moncan 2002), saw demolition of the winding, narrow streets and overcrowded medieval neighborhoods that characterized old Paris. To infuse the city with light and air, Haussmann constructed new parks and public squares, an advanced system of sewers, aqueducts, and a grand network of wide boulevards.

These monumental changes to Paris’s material body also had significant effects on the city’s cultural landscape. The open spaces provided by Haussmann’s boulevards,

avenues, and parks gave rise to a culture of spectatorship, among the newly affluent class of consumers. Modernity remade Paris, but it also marked the emergence of new contenders in the field of power. Rideout (2016:183) explains:

New connections and improved circulation of people, goods, and ideas increased the wealth of the affluent – by making Paris a ‘hub of national spatial integration.’ Opportunities in finance, real-estate speculation and commerce fed a growing bourgeoisie, while spatial segregation of residents by income and removal of the poor worsened the poverty of the lower classes. Haussmannization was seen by many as being carried out with bourgeoisie goals in mind.

The new age of Parisian modernity was therefore inalienably intertwined with the tastes and interests of a bourgeois class eager to reap the fruits of their newfound wealth. The tastes of these consumers, distinct from the titled aristocracy, cultivated new forms of visual culture. The rise of department stores, outdoor café culture, and popular exhibitions such as the panorama and diorama emerged to meet the demand for a new culture of spectatorship. In her book *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*, Vanessa Schwartz (1999:2) argues that the consumption of these new forms of popular entertainment, in addition to “the saturation of communication forms with images”, such as “the development of lithography, photography and technologies that made illustrated books and the illustrated press accessible and cheap”, resulted in a new mass culture in which “a new urban crowd became a society of spectators”.¹⁰ Like

¹⁰ For a clear example of this, we can turn to the department store display. Prior to the opening of the British store Selfridges in March, 1909 by Harry Gordon Selfridge, stores were very much unlike the ones to which we are accustomed to today (Rappaport 2004). Rather than displaying the retail goods for the customer to view and peruse through

Haussmann's massive renovation, this new mass culture of seeing and being seen was also created with the bourgeoisie in mind.

In fact, the act of viewing – essential in the culture of spectatorship – came to be associated specifically with the bourgeois man. This archetypal image of the observer, coined the *flâneur*, emerged in the 19th century to describe man of leisure who strolls

freely, products were hidden from view. The customer would traditionally be forced to describe the item he wanted to purchase to the sales clerk, who would then browse through the available inventory to find an item that matched the customer's description. Selfridge revolutionized the process of shopping. Instead of the dimly lit, dull, monochromatic shop interiors that characterized the shopping experience of the past, Selfridge created an architecturally beautiful space that would attract the masses: "the selling space had wide aisles, electrical lighting, crystal chandeliers, and a striking color scheme: all-white walls contrasted with thick green carpets" (Rappaport 2004:152). Customers were now encouraged to stroll through the department store, as one would stroll through the boulevards of Paris. Furthermore, "the rising tide of mass-produced commodities that swept through the nineteenth century called for new forms of representation in the service of publicity, promotion, and distribution. Many different forms of advertising were developed – from printed newspaper announcements, posters, billboards, and shop window displays to gigantic world fairs and expositions" (Grunenberg, Hollein 2002:20). Thus, the modern practices of consumerism were born, in which a culture of spectacle became synonymous with the shopping experience and the bourgeoisie.

through the streets of Paris passively, absorbing with a discerning eye the currents of the city. Charles Baudelaire (1863) presents this figure memorably as the ultimate bourgeois dilettante:

The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. 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 ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world—impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define... The spectator is a prince who everywhere rejoices in his incognito.

It is only through class advantage that the *flâneur* can afford to spend inordinate amounts of time strolling down the newly paved boulevards of Paris, watching the scenes of city life, and partaking in the new forms of leisure that came to dominate the city's entertainment culture.

Baudelaire's description of the *flâneur* is remarkably consistent with the image of the Parisian artist. Indeed, Manet has often been identified as a prime example of the *flâneur*:

The realism of the *flâneur* manifests itself in theme, atmosphere, and subject matter, but even more profoundly in a mode of perception attuned to modern urban life in a new sensation of seeing. Baudelaire's *flâneur* does not simply take a stroll through the crowd but forges a new aesthetics of perception, and Manet's art, in turn, constructs a beholder whose encounter with the painting is strikingly similar to what Baudelaire's *flâneur* experiences in the crowd (Golsan 1996:165).

Furthermore, to turn to a visual example, Henri Fantin-Latour's portrait of Manet, titled [Fig. 2] *Édouard Manet* (1867), portrays the artist as the archetype of the bourgeois *flâneur*. Compare, for instance, this portrait with Paul Gavarni's [Fig. 3] *Le Flâneur* (1843). By depicting his subject with a satin top hat, well-tailored three-piece suit, and

polished cane, Fantin-Latour gestures to Manet's status as both a member of the upper-class as well as a spectator of the city.

The practice of *flânerie*¹¹ also left a lasting impression on Degas and his work. His depiction of female subjects is underlined by a clear sense of voyeurism, the most noteworthy examples of which are his ballerina and bather paintings, for which he is best known. The production of these paintings is contingent on Degas's ability to infiltrate a space to observe and record. A reviewer of Degas's [Fig. 4] *Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub* "wrote that Degas 'wanted to paint a woman who did not know she was being watched, as one would see her hidden by a curtain or through a keyhole'" (Kern 1996:123). Thus, we can see how the act of *flânerie* is in fact a privilege – one that both Manet and Degas obtain through their class and gender identities.¹²

¹¹ Translated from French, this term refers to the act of strolling and seeing.

¹² There has been much scholarship on the gender dynamics underlying the concept of the *flâneur* and its relation to the male gaze. Some scholars argue that the *flâneur* can exist only as a male, as gender expectations in France during the 19th century dictated that 'proper' women never be seen wandering public spaces on her own. Furthermore, many feminist art historians and sociologists have noted that, within the public arena, the female body is under the constant supervision of the male gaze. Thus, the ability of the *flâneur* to move about the city without being noticed himself – that is, to spectate without becoming part of the spectacle, is one not afforded to women. Cultural critic Janet Wolff, for example, has argued: "There is no question of inventing the *flâneuse* [the female counterpart of the *flâneur*]: the essential point is that such a character was rendered

The scenes of leisure captured in the art of Manet and Degas are therefore signifiers of a particular bourgeois class culture. By assuming the role of the *flâneur* to illustrate the pulse of ‘modern life’, Manet and Degas depicted a uniquely bourgeois lifestyle. Paintings such as Manet’s *Boating* (1874), *Argenteuil, Chez le Père Lathuille* (1874), and *Music in the Tuileries* (1862) and Degas’s *The Orchestra at the Opera* (1870), *Before the Race* (1882), as well as his famous series of works set at the ballet, all capture scenes of bourgeois entertainment. They portray a culture that has been carefully and forcefully curated by a new cultural elite. Their portrayals of ‘Hausmannicized’ Paris, iconic in its glittering boulevards and sun-drenched garden parties, illustrate how Manet and Degas were two of the fortunate few privy to this exclusive space; their art gestures to the class requirements of participating in this culture of spectatorship. The rise of the popular culture, as depicted by Manet and Degas, signified a shift in the cultural and economic power structures of society. As painters of modern life, Manet and Degas were also painters of a newly hierarchized field of cultural production.

impossible by the sexual division of the nineteenth century” (1995:47). Other scholars, such as Anne Friedberg, argue that “there was a *flâneuse* and traces her origins to women’s legitimate occupation of urban space through the rise of consumer culture” (Schwartz 2003:10). For more literature on this topic, consult Wolff’s 1985 essay *The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity* and Griselda Pollock’s *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and the Histories of Art* (1988), in particular, her essay titled *Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity*).

According to Bourdieu, not only are agents within the field of cultural production stratified, but so too are the methods of production. He argues that the artistic field tends to utilize “two independent and hierarchized principles of differentiation,” firstly, “pure production,” which is catered to “a market restricted to producers,” and large-scale production, which is “oriented towards the satisfaction of the demands of a wide audience” (Bourdieu 1992:121). In the context of Paris’s art world in the 1840s, we can understand pure production as the art produced for the Académie and the Salon; that is, art that is put on display not only for public viewing but also as part of a ritualized form of competition between artists or other “producers.”¹³ Bourdieu argued that, within the hierarchy of the field of cultural production, art created through the process of “pure

¹³ Unlike the practices of modern day art galleries, the French Salon in the 18th and 19th century would display paintings as close to one another as possible, leaving virtually no empty space in between. The paintings would be hung from floor to ceiling, giving viewers a sense of overwhelming visual stimulation. Artists, therefore, would compete for prime exhibition locations, usually wall space that was eye-level to the viewer in order to ensure that their work received the attention of the viewers. Often, the art that was awarded this advantageous position was considered the best among those on display. Thus, there was a great sense of competition among artists, who, in a sense, painting not only for the prestige of displaying at the Salon, but also, to a certain degree, for each other. See Pierre Antoine Martini’s etching of a salon in 1785 titled [Fig. 22] *Coup d’oeil exact de l’arrangement des Peintures au Salon du Louvre* (1785), part of the collection of the British Museum, for an illustration of the *salon-style hang*.

production” is positioned higher than art produced through “large scale production.” For art to acquire the attention and interests of other producers within the art world, it must speak the “proper language,” for example, contain the appropriate historical and cultural allusions, display the proper technique and brushwork, depict a recognizable subject matter, etc. Namely, the criteria of pure production were dictated by the cultural and economic elite which, prior to the emergence of the bourgeoisie in nineteenth century Paris, constituted chiefly of the aristocracy.

On the other hand, art produced for the masses, like the modern forms of “mass culture” introduced by Haussmann and industrialization, needed only to elicit general interest from laymen. The burgeoning dominance of spectatorship culture can accordingly be read as a reevaluation of the hierarchized relationship between “pure” production and large-scale production, which favored the cultural authority of the bourgeoisie. Not only was the work of Manet and Degas a reflection of the rearrangement of Parisian class stratification, but it also served to mediate a hierarchy reconstruction of its own. By coopting images of “pure production” (Classical and academic iconography) to create a new type of art which depicted the products of “large-scale” culture (bourgeoisie spectatorship), Manet and Degas were attempting to establish the legitimacy of bourgeois culture as “high culture.” As champions of this new aesthetic, Manet and Degas contributed to a transformed field of power in which the economic capital of the bourgeoisie, not the cultural capital of the nobility, was the new currency. The streets of Paris had been repaved for the bourgeoisie and the new industries of finance and production made the fortunes of the nouveau riche. Changes within Paris’s economic configurations were accompanied by changes within the art

world. Manet and Degas, as painters of and for the bourgeoisie, would come to play an integral role in aggravating these transformations and forging a new vision of modern life.

CHAPTER 4: THE DECLINE OF THE SALON

The changes brought on by modernity left no feature of society untouched. Economic change was followed by a transfiguration of the cultural order; the rise of the bourgeoisie coincided with the fall of the Académie – the foremost authority on art in nineteenth century Paris. As a dominant agent within the field of power, the Académie’s downfall left a vacuum of power within the field of cultural production. In this chapter, I will illustrate how Manet and Degas, as contenders within this same field, took advantage of this crucial juncture in art history to forge a path towards a new aesthetic. By weaponizing aristocratic iconography against its progenitors, Manet and Degas rejected the conventions which dictated the iconography’s traditional usage and blended such imagery with representations of modernity. Bourdieu once remarked about Manet: “If is as if Manet wanted at once to rival his great predecessors and, at the same time, to accomplish in terms of the modern world what they had done in the past” (2017:36). The same could be said regarding Degas.

The influx of artists into Paris, as well as the blossoming number of amateur artists equipped with innovations in artistic equipment and resources, called into question the legitimacy of the Académie. Harrison and Cynthia White (1993:85) explain:

Changes in roles and technology had direct connections [to changing views and status of the artist]. The tin paint tube, for example, invented in the 1830’s and marketed by English firms in the early 1840’s, had a whole chain of consequences. No longer was the artist constrained to stay indoors in studio light and paint from sketches and models. No longer was paint preparation a major chore. He could travel on the new railway system to paint the outdoors, as did the pioneer landscapists of the Barbizon school. He would no longer be tied to a fixed location as were the middle classes of the normal, work-a-day world.

The democratization of art posed several problems for the Académie. No longer was the production of art left to an exclusive group of individuals. Rather, art was being produced at an increasing rate, as thousands began participating as producers in what was once a restricted field of production. As a result, “fatigue bore upon the jury of the single yearly Salon, as they stumbled, almost unseeing, amid the thousands of paintings submitted. At these times, reality compelled attention to artists as individuals in a social context: thus for some of the jury log-rolling of the crassest kind dominated their deliberations, rather than concern with the type and quality of each painting” (White 1993:89).

As the number of submissions grew, so did the number of disgruntled, rejected artists. Many began protesting against the Académie’s rigid expectations and exclusionary practices. In 1863, for example, the jury of the Salon rejected two thirds of all the paintings presented, including the works of notable artists such as Manet, Courbet, and Pissaro. These artists and their contemporaries protested the decision and, in the face of mounting criticisms, the state intervened. Napoleon III issued a decree establishing the Salon des Refusés – a state-sanctioned space in which art that was rejected from the Salon could be officially displayed. The implications of Napoleon’s order were enormous. By offering an alternative exhibition space, the state was lending legitimacy to a new ‘avant-garde’ school of art heavily composed of Impressionist works. In turn, it also gestured to the fallibility of the Académie’s monopolistic authority and prescribed order of genres. The Salon des Refusés also broke ground on a new series of independent exhibitions that would soon follow – for example, the Salon des Independants (beginning in 1884) and Salon d’Automne (beginning in 1903) – spaces that, similar to the Salon des

Refusés, were characterized by their reactionary nature against the Salon and the Académie (Nord 2000).

This was only the beginning of the Académie's decline, as "in December 1880, Prime Minister Ferry Issued a degree overhauling the Salon system. In the future, Salons were to be juried by a new body, the Societe des Artistes, composed of ninety elected members. All artists who had exhibited at least once at previous Salons were entitled to vote in Societe elections" (Nord 2000:71). The democratization of the Salon process signaled a crack in the once unquestioned authority of the Académie. These changes in the Salon's evaluation process were paralleled by a transformation in the broader channels through which art was distributed and received: "The preferred exhibition venue ceased to be the Salon, whether official or independent. What took its place was the private gallery. Art dealers, assisted by critic allies who turned out boosterish catalogues and newspaper reviews, took charge of brokering between the painters and their putative publics" (Nord 2000:71). Thus, patrons of the art no longer had to submit to the requirements of the Académie, which had long mandated that artist and customers alike understand the aesthetic, moral hierarchy and classical allusions championed by the Académie. Rather, the only precondition for participation was economic capital (of which the bourgeoisie had plenty), and, to a certain extent, social capital. The field of power had shifted; one field of restricted production had been replaced by another.

The compromising of the Académie's ability to dictate the whims of artistic production and consumption within the art world signified the availability for both the rise of a new body of authority and a new set of aesthetic values. Read through Bourdieu, the decline in the Académie's cultural dominance was the result of a new aesthetic

conflict that emerged in the 1850s. Prior to the introduction of Realism, “bourgeois art” mandated a certain method of painting. In the eyes of the Académie, the best artist could serve as the executioner of a moral imperative, one which sought to remake man in the image of God:

Thus, he who paints landscapes perfectly is above the one who makes only [pictures of] fruits, flowers, or shells. He who paints living animals is more estimable than those who represent only things that are dead and motionless and since the figure of man is the most perfect earthly work of God, it is certain also that he who gives himself to the imitation of God in painting human figures is more excellent than all others... There are different workers who apply themselves to different subjects. It is an established fact that to the degree in which they occupy themselves with more difficult and noble things, they separate themselves from that which is lowest and most commonplace (White 1993:90).¹⁴

Take, for instance, Alexandre Cabanel’s [Fig. 5] *The Birth of Venus* (1863), which was considered by art historians to be a prime example of academic French painting (Rosunblum 1989). This artwork, purchased by Napoleon III for his personal collection, presents the viewer with a mythical scene of Venus’s emergence from the ocean. Cabanel’s seamless brushwork, careful modelling of light, and choice of subject matter falls perfectly in line with the demands of the Académie – so much so that in the same year this painting was exhibited at the Salon, its creator was made a professor at the

¹⁴ This quote is taken from André Félibien’s *Conférences de l’Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture*, published in 1705. Félibien was a chronicler of arts and King Louis XIV’s official court historian. Despite the early date of this publication, the tenets it proclaimed remained steadfast and alive throughout the Académie’s tenure as the authority on artistic production and exhibition in France.

esteemed Ecole des Beaux-Arts.¹⁵ In contrast to Cabanel's L'art pompier¹⁶, the Realism Movement, led by Gustave Courbet and his groundbreaking *A Burial at Ornans* (1849), denounced the conception of the human subject as a derivative of the divine. Rejecting "bourgeois" art's depictions of vainglorious generals and Roman emperors, Realism embraced the rugged beauty of common life. The search of beauty was abandoned in favor of the emphasis on the ugly and mundane. The worldly, everyday struggles of the working class was rearticulated as worthy subjects of the artist, whose duty now lay in achieving art's most essential function – to tell the truth.

The conflict between these two schools of art gave birth to a new breed – one pointedly opposed to the cavalier posturing of "bourgeois art." Bourdieu explains: "Faced with this 'bourgeois art', a 'realist' current perpetuates itself with difficulty as a

¹⁵ Cabanel, as a darling of the Académie, "was elected regularly to the Salon jury and his pupils could be counted by the hundreds at the Salons. Through them, Cabanel did more than any other artist of his generation to form the character of *belle époque* in French painting" (Tsaneva 2014). His strict adherence to academic practices also led to his staunch opposition against the Impressionists. It was, in fact, largely because of Cabanel's efforts to prevent Manet and others from exhibiting at the 1863 Salon that the French government established the first Salon des Refusés (Tsaneva 2014).

¹⁶ The term 'L'art pompier' was a derisive term for the academic, large-scale, "official" art favored by the Académie. As a pun, the word pompier was referred dually to both the terms "from Pompeii" and "pompous," thus alluding to the Classical origins of the work as well as the pretensions and exclusivity of the Académie (Harding 1979).

current which prolongs and transforms the tradition of ‘social art’ – to use the labels of the day. Against one and the other was defined, in a double refusal, a third position, that of ‘art of art’s sake’” (1996:71). “Social art”, as a child of Realism, also emerged as a tool to unveil the ultimate truth of the human experience. Yet this new movement adopted another utilitarian function – to instruct, educate, and enlighten the viewing public. Defenders of “social art” re-conceptualized the discipline as a social apparatus, in which the most accomplished artists were those who could best “enhance narrative readability for the allegorical subject of the painting” (Fowler 1997:106).

In a “double refusal” of both “social” and “bourgeois” art, “art for art’s sake” espoused an “immoral definition of art” (Bourdieu 1996:72) and emphasized a leisurely engagement with art. Rejecting “all social justification of art and the artist” (Bourdieu 1996:134), Manet and Degas instead believed that art could exist simply to provide aesthetic pleasure without assuming the burden of moral instruction. Yet Manet and Degas also rejected the hierarchy of genre prescribed by the Académie. They sought to emphasize the ephemeral, human quality of their subjects, none of which was idealized as the “perfect earthly work of God”. Their work was, in the words of Fowler, the product of the “aesthetic gaze”.

In her book *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory*, Bridget Fowler expands upon Bourdieu’s definition of the artistic habitus by introducing the concept of distinct and oppositional “naïve” and “aesthetic” gaze. Much like the proponents of “social art”, those who possess the “naïve” gaze cannot divorce a cultural object’s aesthetic value from its social function. For example, they “refuse to evaluate the beauty of a great house independently of their moral disapproval of it as a site of exploitation.” (Fowler 1997:46).

The “aesthetic gaze”, on the other hand, “prioritizes style or the mode of representation” and is “not concerned with registering or orally evaluating the nature of the empirical world but with self-sufficient form of play, concerned therefore with the way images are developed or narratives are constructed” (Fowler 1997:46). Manet and Degas, whose art was rejected by critics for their unconventional brushwork, lack of perspective, and unfinished surface, are conceived as adherents of the “aesthetic gaze”. This new and revolutionary “mode of representation” served as the point of distinction between the work of Manet and Degas and that of their forbearers. Their efforts to introduce a new method of depiction was thus a deviation from the practices of both “social” and “bourgeois”, academic artists.

Moreover, Fowler argues that the aesthetic gaze “has acquired its dignity from being detached from participation and action” (46). Whereas the “naïve gaze” evaluates a piece of art on its ability to participate and effect change within the social world, the “aesthetic gaze” insists upon art to withhold from such a practice. It is this sense of detachment, Bourdieu argues, that defines the work of Manet and Degas:

It is the pitiless elimination of all ‘received ideas’, all the typical commonplaces of any group and all the stylistic traits marking or betraying adherence to or support for one another of the attested positions or position-takings. It is the methodical use of a free indirect style that leaves as indeterminate as possible the relationship of the narrator to the facts or persons of which the tale speaks (Bourdieu 2017:111).

The work of Manet and Degas was both remarkable and revolutionary in that it “[possesses] a cold objectivism which is itself an attack on the intricate order of the classical cosmology and especially on the salience of the traditional moral order within the ideal mythical or historical composition” (Bourdieu 1996:107). Their art did not convey the romanticized figures characteristic of Renaissance art, nor did it encourage its

audience to adopt an attitude of reverence. The work of Manet and Degas was groundbreaking in both its refusal to position itself within this “traditional moral order”.

Like Manet and Degas, the “aesthetic gaze” is also characterized by a sense of paradoxical duality. Although the “aesthetic” gaze is grounded in a rejection of an academic order, the gaze is also derived from “the lengthy study of old texts” (46). Those who possess the aesthetic gaze are interested, first and foremost, in aesthetic progress, or the historical evolution of styles and modes of representation. It is only through a laborious education of an art historical canon, a familiarization with previous art movements, and the work of old masters, that one can truly acknowledge the innovations of the new and obtain an “appreciative awareness of the power to startle which is possessed by the newly new” (Fowler 1997:46). As explained by Donough and Toblowsky: “For Bourdieu, the culturally purer approach is the aesthetic which relies on an awareness of tradition, while the naïve approach provides simple, mass entertainment” (1998).

This aesthetic valuation system reflects Marx’s labor-theory of value, in which the value of a good corresponds directly with the labor-time invested in the production of that good. Similarly, according to the “aesthetic gaze”, “the value of the commodity was based on the amount of labour-time used in its production, the consumption of symbolic goods can also be measured by the time and rigour necessary to master them” (Fowler 1997:74). Through the aesthetic gaze, the value of a cultural object is contingent upon the amount of work one must undergo to “read” the work, whether it be through a formal education or exposure to the necessary cultural iconography and symbols.

As a result, the “aesthetic gaze” is not only associated with the historic, but also with the aristocracy. Those who possess the aesthetic gaze must also possess a habitus that is informed by experiences of privilege, as exemplified by Manet and Degas’s educational experiences. A paradox emerges. Manet and Degas, as defenders of the “aesthetic gaze”, offended the cultural order dictated by the Académie through its detachment. Moreover, it was only by inculcating themselves with the cultural material of the aristocratic ruling class, that Manet and Degas could assume this “gaze”. The Académie’s diminishing authority over the art world presented itself as a golden opportunity for Paris’s newly affluent bourgeoisie to imprint their own class ideologies and tastes upon their art. Manet and Degas, in their fortuity, had the capital and habitus to meet this new demand.

CHAPTER 5: THE WORK OF MANET AND DEGAS

The stage was set for Manet and Degas to inaugurate a break with the old order in favor of the new. The revolutionized aesthetics codified by Manet and Degas were uniquely associated with an emerging middle-upper class and a modern vision of Paris. Yet, creating their “subversive” art, Manet and Degas also borrowed from their wealth of cultural capital. Their audience, after all, was not the common farmer unfamiliar with classical and Renaissance art. Rather, Manet and Degas were acutely aware of their bourgeois audience’s significant cultural capital, as well as their desire to assert their legitimacy within the fields of power and cultural production. Manet and Degas, speaking in a language transparent to this new class of elite patrons, proceeded to produce a lexicon of imagery in line with their class ideology.

Republican Politics

Bourdieu has maintained that the field of power intersects with all fields of society, including the political. It is therefore not unimaginable that an emerging, culturally dominant class would seek to employ art as a means of forwarding their political interests as well. Although Manet and Degas are not known for their overtly political art, their oeuvres did include examples of political subject matter. Republicanism, the underlying political attitude identifiable in some of their work, is significant in its rejection of a constitutional monarchy and census suffrage: two models of government that obviously supported existing class hierarchies. Rather, the republican political ideology favored the establishment of a constitutional republic, a system of universal suffrage, and opposition to Napoleon III’s political platforms, which favored the preservation of aristocratic privileges. By illustrating a republican ethos closely held

by segments of the bourgeoisie public, Manet and Degas were therefore representing the milieu of a new era.

As noted by Philip Nord in his book *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century*, Manet “was in any ways the most radical [in his republicanism] of the lot [the Impressionists]” (2000:31). During his trip to Rio in his youth, Manet once wrote in a letter: “...try to preserve our good Republic until my return, for I well and truly fear that L. Napoléon is not himself much of a republican” (Nord 2000:31). Manet’s republican identity is confirmed in his painting, titled [Fig. 6] *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*, which allude to the bloodshed and chaos that ensued as a result of Napoleon III’s shortsighted foreign policies. *The Execution* depicts the dying breath of the ill-fated Second French Empire. Following France’s victory during the Second French intervention into Mexico, Napoleon III, with an eye towards expanding French imperialism in South America, encouraged Maximilian I, younger brother of Austrian emperor Frances Joseph I, to ascend the throne as Emperor of Mexico. However, Maximilian’s reign was short-lived and the young monarch soon faced significant opposition from loyalists supporting the overthrown former president, Benito Juárez. Despite Maximilian’s pleas for French support, Napoléon’s attentions were diverted by the ongoing American Civil War and his interest in forging an alliance with the Confederacy (Gentry 1970). Choosing to further Franco-American interests rather than support his puppet king, Napoleon withdrew his troops from Mexico,

effectively abandoning the figurehead he had created. Maximilian was eventually court-martialed and executed.¹⁷

The Execution clearly illustrates Manet's contempt for Napoleon III and French foreign policy. Manet completed three paintings and several etchings of the same scene, all of which depict Maximilian in a sympathetic light. In the 1867 version of the painting, Maximilian's slender frame is hidden behind a blast of gunpowder. Despite the impact of the bullets, Maximilian stands bravely, his stance wide and his arms thrown back. Maximilian is accompanied by his generals Miguel Miramon and Tomas Mejia. The dramatic elegance with which Manet captures Maximilian is contrasted with the nondescript manner with which he characterizes the firing squad, portrayed as a nebulous mass. Oriented away from the viewer, identities of the executioners are hidden. Any sense of individuality is instead reserved for the executed, who, in a final act of solidarity, grip each other's hands tightly.

Manet's decision to dress the soldiers as he did is particularly notable. There is no doubt that Manet was aware of the similarities between the Mexican and French army uniforms and such a parallel only served to further inflame the painting's political nature. French art critic and Manet's friend, Emile Zola, commented:

On examining a proof of the condemned lithograph, I noticed that the soldiers shooting Maximilian were wearing a uniform almost identical to that of our own troops. Fanciful artists give the Mexicans costumes from comic opera. M. Manet who truly loves truth, has drawn their real costumes... You can understand the horror and anger of the gentlemen

¹⁷ To compound France's public embarrassment, Benito Juarez was backed by the United States – the same nation that France had sacrificed Maximilian to support (Gordon, 1968).

censors. What now! An artist dared put before their eyes such a cruel irony: France shooting Maximilian (Nord 2000:21)!

Manet's condemnation of the Mexican (and by extension, French) army was further aggravated by his representation of the soldier on the far right, strongly resembling Napoleon III, who prepares his rifle with a disturbing air of nonchalance. In reality, Maximilian's execution was botched and a coup de grâce called for. This second shot was again bungled and another, final, deathblow was delivered. The soldier may be the one called to execute the first or second mercy killing.

Manet's inclusion of this figure therefore gestures not only to the Mexicans' incompetence in marksmanship but also France's (and Napoleon's) incompetency in dealing with foreign affairs. Moreover, considering Maximilian's progressive, republican-leaning political platform, Manet's sense of affinity towards him was profound. Aside from upholding policies of land reform and religious tolerance, Maximilian also fought to grant voting rights to those outside of the ruling classes. Manet is, in essence, depicting the story of two murders – the first of Maximilian, and the second of Mexico's civic rights – both at the hand of Napoleon. Manet's passionate condemnation of Napoleon is made more salient by *The Execution's* clear allusion to Goya's [Fig. 7] *The Third of May*, which depicts the massacre of unarmed Spanish citizens at the hands of French troops. The compositional similarities between these two paintings are unmistakable. Art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto compared *The Third of May* and *The Execution*, writing:

The Third of May also depicts an execution, an early event in the so-called Peninsular War between France and Spain... The French were as unpopular in Spain as they later were in Mexico, and they encountered a fierce insurrection, which ultimately triumphed. *The Third of May* execution was an indiscriminate killing of civilians by French soldiers in

reprisal for a guerilla attack the previous day. Goya's painting of the massacre, which shows terrified civilians facing firing squad, was intended to arouse anger and hatred on the part of Spanish viewers (2007).

By referring to Goya's work, Manet was building upon the public's familiarity with *The Third's* political message to arouse similar emotions of "anger and hatred" towards Napoleon III. Manet's allusion to the famous work again demonstrates his ability to appropriate the "high culture" of the elites in a disruptive and dissident manner.

Bourdieu, moreover, notes an important discrepancy between *The Execution*, and traditional examples of historic painting. The Salon cast historical painting as the most noble of all genres. He writes:

In particular, [Manet] painted work which gave no historical purchase, and therefore left nothing to be said...Even a history painting like *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*, the focus of the work is no longer history; it is rooted in a new type of culture and competence. Gradually, little by little, everything changed, and that is why the critics put up such a strenuous show of resistance (2017:90).

Indeed, if we compare Manet's painting to that of other historical paintings, such as Delacroix's seminal work [Fig. 8] *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), which was accepted with open arms into the Salon in 1855, the stylistic differences between the two paintings becomes apparent. Manet does not arrange his subjects into the academically conventional pyramidal scheme, as David did. Rather, the figures are placed in a planar manner. Our eyes move horizontally, from the singular soldier on the right, along the line of firing pistols, and rest finally upon the figure of Maximilian. Manet also rejects the careful modelling of light and shadow that was read by the Salon as an indication of good taste and practice. The surface of *The Execution* is unfinished where it should be polished. Its sympathies lie not with the glorified general, but rather belie the failures of

French imperialism. It depicts a historical subject matter, certainly, yet it defies all accepted conventions of history painting.

A similar sense of anti-Napoleonic sentiment also pervades Degas's [Fig. 9] *The Daughter of Jephthah* (1860). The subject painting is derived from the biblical story of Jephthah the Gileadite, "a valiant warrior with a band of followers; he has been recalled from exile by the Israelites to fight the Ammonites, who have declared war" (Boggs 1988:86). To secure a victory, Jephthah promises to sacrifice to God "whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me". Tragically, it was Jephthah's daughter, his beloved one and only child, who emerged to greet her father. This biblical tale of tragedy and needless sacrifice arrested the public imagination, and Israel's fight to reclaim the territory promised to them by God but stolen by the Ammonites came to symbolize the "the struggles of oppressed peoples throughout history fighting for their independence" (Boggs 1988:86).

A likewise narrative of noble struggle emerged in the context of the Franco-Prussian war of 1859, in which French-Piedmontese forces battled the Austrian army for control of Italy. In this conflict, Israel serves as an allegory for Italy, supported by France in its struggle for independence from Austria. In 1859, Napoleon III struck a deal with Austrian sovereign Francis Joseph. The treaty divided certain Italian territories between French, Piedmontese, and Austrian forces (Encyclopedia Britannica 2006): "The emperor of France, Napoleon III, was after all – with his past as a Carbonaro¹⁸ and his turbulent

¹⁸ A Carbonaro is a member of the former Carbonari – a network of underground revolutionary societies operating in Italy from 1800 and 1831. They were mainly

accession to the throne – but a modern Jephthah who had inexplicably sacrificed Italy at the Peace of Villafranca (11 July 1859), just when the victories won had made it possible to hope that the country would be liberated” (Boggs 1988:86). As with *The Execution*, Degas’s sympathy for the Italian cause reflects his conviction in the republican values of self-determination, political participation, and civic virtue. Here, Degas depicts Jephthah’s arrival not as a parade of military celebration, but as a public spectacle of shame. Jephthah’s head hangs in rueful regret upon the sight of his daughter. In a denouncement of his shortsightedness, Degas casts a shadow upon Jephthah and his army, while a beam of sunlight falls upon Jephthah’s daughter – the sacrificial lamb.

The bible was not the only historical source for Degas’s inspiration. This painting also exemplifies Degas’s deep reverence and dependence upon his privileged art history education. As explained by Davis:

The matte finish and suffused, muted colors relate to the fresco cycles by quattrocento masters such as Piero della Francesca, while the intense, brilliant, coloristic accents can be directly related to passages in Delacroix’s works, some of which Degas refers to specifically in his letters. The large scale of the painting and its religious subject reflect the frescoes, but also Delacroix’s grand compositions depicting historical, religious, and literary subjects (2000:44).

Degas’s depictions of the “cluster of women in the background” can also be read as reference to “Andrea Mantegna’s *Crucifixion*” (Davis, 2000:44). It is through Degas’s reference to such classical imagery, therefore, that Degas lays the foundation for a

characterized by their fight for Italian unity and the establishment of a constitutional government, and the rejection of foreign tyrannical powers, such as the Prussian occupiers.

revolutionary and politically charged message. Demonstrating the wealth of his cultural capital, Degas turns the symbolic language of the aristocracy against them.

The Daughter and *The Execution* are two examples of how anti-Napoleonic, republican ideologies manifested as tangible, artistic imagery. By incorporating the iconography of a broader canon of celebrated art to communicate a message of republicanism, Manet and Degas sought to legitimize the cultural authority of the bourgeoisie, many of whose politics aligned with republican values. Republicanism's rejection of a constitutional monarchy was a rejection of a social hierarchy as determined by systems of inheritance. By denouncing the policy of census suffrage, in which one's voting power is determined by one's social rank in the census (in the case of France, one's property-ownership), republicanism sought to transfigure the social hierarchy within the field of power. Manet and Degas "entered into republican society, painted its inhabitants, and looked to it for patronage. Such attentions were reciprocated, at least up to a point. It was in republican circles that the new painting found many of its first buyers" (Nord 38). As agents within the field of cultural production, Manet and Degas would need the support of these patrons, whose backing served as both as a form of economic and social capital.

Religion in Paintings of Modern Life

Republican patrons diverged from the aristocratic elite not only in their political views, but also in their religiosity. The dawn of modernism also introduced a new, more secular age: "republican society was remarkable in its time for its welcoming attitude to *distinguished* members of France's religious minorities [emphasis mine]" (Nord 1988:59). Protestants and Jews – two populations previously excluded from the Catholic

aristocracy of French society – were often both the subjects and patrons of Manet and Degas. However, as implied by the term “distinguished members”, not all Jews and Protestants were admitted as members of high society. Religious tolerance did not translate into class equality. Aside from their religious identities, the subjects of Manet and Degas’ works are also notable for their bourgeois status. By depicting their Protestant and Jewish bourgeoisie subjects as active consumers and spectators in the stylish spaces of Parisian modernity, Manet and Degas signaled the dawn of a new social hierarchy within the field of power.

Take, for example, Degas’s portraits [Fig. 10] *Friends at the Theater, Ludovic Halévy and Albert Cave* (1879) and [Fig. 11] *Portraits at the Stock Exchange: Ernest May* (1879). Both works depict two of Degas’s Jewish acquaintances: Ludovic Halévy, an old classmate, and Ernest May, “a well-to-do Jewish banker and would be patron of the arts” (Nord 1988:59). Degas’s decision to place his two subjects at the opera and stock exchange was not an arbitrary decision.¹⁹ Both locations are spaces of modernity,

¹⁹ Biographers writing on the life and work of Degas have noted the anti-Semitic attitudes that he developed later in life. Linda Nochlin, for instance, has argued for a political interpretation of *Portraits at the Stock Exchange* and reads the painting as an allusion to “a whole mythology of Jewish financial conspiracy” (1987:96). Despite his close friendships with several Jews in his youth, Degas’s later position on the famous Dreyfus Affair condemned him as an outspoken anti-Semite: “...he became a fanatical opponent of Dreyfus and got furious with anyone who disagreed with him” (Meyers 2005:239). His painting of Halévy, therefore, may also be read as a sign of the anxiety surrounding

one produced by the culture of spectatorship and the other by the Industrial Revolution. These new venues of entertainment and finance were now open to those of common birth, yet barred entry to those without the funds to participate. One form of qualifying capital was exchanged for another.

In *Friends at the Theater*, for instance, Degas's subject is notable not only for his religious affiliation, but also for his position as a *flâneur*. As a visitor of the opera, Halévy's assumes a role as an unseen spectator – seated inconspicuously among the rest of the audience, his identity is obfuscated and his male gaze, exercised upon the ballerinas, is omnipresent. Not only is Halévy thereby placed within a space of modernity, he is also the embodiment of modernity. By casting Halévy as such an individual, Degas was gesturing to a new age of secularism and a social hierarchy in which money, not nobility, grants one a privileged position within the field of power.

Similarly, Manet counted many Jews among his friends and acquaintances. His painting [Fig. 12] *The Railway* (1873), for example, portrays the infant daughter of Alphonse Hirsch, a French Jewish painter. Accompanying Hirsch's daughter within the painting is Manet's favorite model, Victorine Meurent. Like Degas's two

the emergence of a more religiously tolerance modernity, and may belie Degas's conservative aristocratic and catholic upbringing. Degas's bigotry alludes to a contradictory image of the man as one simultaneously progressive in his artistic approach, yet also remarkably backwards in many ways. The painting may also be read as a sign of the general anxiety regarding the question of who belonged in a new, modernized Paris.

aforementioned portraits, Manet positions these two women in the arena of modernity. Rather than placing his subjects in a natural scene or within a domestic setting, as was the common practice of Classical and Renaissance portraits, Manet positions his subjects in front of an iron fence. Behind them bellows a speeding train trailed by a plume of thick, white smoke. From their dress, both figures can clearly be identified as bourgeois. Meurent sits demurely, holding a book and a puppy in her hand, both symbols of bourgeois femininity, while the young Hirsch, adorned in a white silk dress fastened with a blue bow, looks off into the distance. Manet takes great care in emphasizing the fine quality of the dress's fabric. We are once again presented with a vision of modern Paris populated by the members of a newly dominant social class.

Not only were Manet and Degas signaling to modernity's transformative power, but they were also labeling their work as fine art— a cultural territory previously held exclusively by the aristocracy. More importantly, however, their work was also *received* as fine art by a republican, Jewish, Protestant, and bourgeois public. In this way, their art was remade anew:

The production of a work of art is not complete once the object (the 'work of art') is produced: when the work of art leaves the studio, if it ever does, it is not finished. It will only become a work of art, in the full sense of the word, when it is recognized as such by connoisseurs, that is, by people who are capable of recognizing a work of art when they see one, and who would not confuse it with an ordinary object (Bourdieu 2017:275).

A work can only be realized as art, Bourdieu argues, upon the acceptance of those who have the authority to do so, that is, those who hold the sufficient cultural capital to distinguish "art" from "non-art". In the case of Manet and Degas, this process is reflexive. Manet and Degas produce art which endows the bourgeois with the cultural

legitimacy to assume the role of “connoisseur”. In return, their patrons provide Manet and Degas with the economic and social capital to continue their work.

Luncheon on the Grass

The interdependence between Manet, Degas, and the bourgeoisie is also defined by their independence from the Salon as a necessary venue of brokerage between artist and patron. Manet and Degas could fetch high prices for their work, despite their rejection from the Académie and the hostility they received from critics. Bourdieu illustrates this point when he discusses the class backgrounds of the attendants of the salon exhibition held by Manet’s wife: “If we look at all the different sources that we have on the salon of Mme Manet...we can see that it included seven members of the higher echelons of trading and financial bourgeoisie... and only five avant-garde painters at the most, who all came from the higher echelons of the bourgeoisie” (2017:309). No longer was the Salon needed to supply the artist with patrons and the patrons with art.

Take, for instance, Manet’s [Fig. 13] *The Luncheon on the Grass* (1863), which was first submitted and subsequently rejected from the Salon in 1863. In the face of this rejection, Manet and his fellow Impressionists sought to establish an “anti-Salon Salon”, capable of “consecrating the work exhibited as worthy of being exhibited” (Bourdieu 2017:134). The product of these efforts was the Salon des Refusés, which translates literally into the Salon of the Rejects. Yet, Bourdieu notes that such an institution creates a paradox, which illuminates through the analogy of the Church: “How to contest the monopoly of the Church on consecration without offering as alternative another monopoly of consecration, constructed according to the same principles, and destined in its turn to be challenged by another church. Here we discover a kind of infinite

propagation of heresies” (2017:135). *The Luncheon on the Grass* illustrates just this principle. Although wholly concerned with depicting the people and pleasures of modernity, this painting is rife with allusions to the imagery of classical, “high” culture, just as the work displayed at the Salon relied on classical imagery to command deference from its viewers. Yet, while the Salon’s displays sought to reinforce the cultural legitimacy of the Academy and the aristocracy, *The Luncheon* presented the dawn of a new cultural order.

The painting depicts a scene of bucolic pleasure, reminiscent of a Titian landscape. Compare, for example, *The Luncheon* with Titian’s [Fig. 14] *The Pastoral Concert* (1510) or Raphael’s [Fig. 15] *Judgment of Paris* (1515). Much like Titian’s Renaissance masterpiece, *The Luncheon* also includes a nude female subject within a romanticized image of the countryside. However, the vision of the female body presented by Manet is a far departure from the idealized, Rubenesque figures that populate Titian’s paintings. In his rendering of the skin, Manet has replaced the rosy, flattering hues often used to denote health and beauty with a sallow complexion, rippled with signs of age.

We can read Manet’s refusal to idealize his female subject as a sort of double transgression. On the one hand, the paunchy stomach and the saggy skin – all elements of a naturalist approach to painting – gestures to Manet’s general refusal to pander to “the ideal mythical or historical composition”, as advocated by the Académie’s rigid moral order. Bourdieu also notes that Manet’s choice in the painting’s size also flouted the Académie’s hierarchy of genres:

This painting is full of incongruity - we should say ‘incongruence’ – that is to say that it was full of contradictions from the point of view of the

schemas of perception tacitly inscribed in the minds of the people of the period, from the perspective of what was admissible for the majority of viewers and artists. For example, we notice that this painting, which measures 2.08m × 2.64m, is too large for its subject matter... In fact, the dimensions of *Luncheon on the Grass* are those that history painters used for their reconstruction of noble events (in the hierarchy of the arts there were, first, religious paintings, then history paintings, then genre scenes and, last of all, still lifes). Manet deliberately chose to use a large format for a landscape, a genre scene, which was an inferior genre (Bourdieu 2017:18).

Secondly, the realistic female body can also be read as a denial of the male gaze. The woman's body has not been remade for the sexual gratification of the male viewer. In fact, Bourdieu notes the "lack of communication" between the subjects as a gesture to the fragile state of traditional masculinity: "Manet's contemporaries had noticed it, but it took a more recent critic to point out that nobody is listening to the man on the right, despite the way he is gesturing with his right hand. In other words, the model couldn't care less, and looks at the viewer instead; her attention wanders, and she commits a sort of snub against male domination..." (Bourdieu 2017:32). In this painting, Manet simultaneously subverts both artistic and gender conventions.

Unlike "social art" and Realism, moreover, which emphasized the everyday struggles of the worker, this painting is a portrait of bourgeoisie leisure: "If Realism depicted work, Impressionism depicted leisure. But leisure now – unlike seventeenth century Dutch painting – is marked unmistakably by high capitalism and its transformation of everyday life" (Fowler 1997:192). *Luncheon on the Grass* can therefore be interpreted as an example of Manet's "aesthetic gaze" – it both rejects the Académie's practices of idealization and Realism's subject matters of struggle and labor.

Aside from the positioning of the female figure, the compromise of masculine dominance is further compounded by the two male subjects in the painting. These male

figures are dressed nearly identically in *paletots*, a French overcoat that became wildly fashionable in the 19th century. As explained by Marcia Pointon, the *paletot* held considerable significance as an indicator of the shifting socio-economic boundaries that characterized a new age of modernity: “The paletot was particularly confusing ...anonymity rendered invisible what was worn beneath, the paletot meant the breakdown of hierarchies of dress for men” (2017:749). No longer could one distinguish another’s class identity through his style of dress. As such, “the popularity of the *paletot* across economic classes”, combined with the coat’s ability to mask one’s socio-economic status, “contributed to the jacket’s connotation of democratic leveling and social neutrality...” (Singletary 2017:45). Similarly, the black suit, uniform and remarkable in its simplicity, came to be closely associated with the bourgeoisie male:

The eschewal of colour and ornament signified the renunciation of excess and luxury associated with aristocratic decadence. The ‘triumph of black’, as French social historian Phillippe Perrot has named it, stood for a new political and social order, a new ethics founded on austerity and merit, work and the careful guardianship of money and property. Decency, effort, sobriety and self-control were the new bourgeois values, and the rejection of flamboyant costume, jewelry and decoration amounted to a stoical, masculine defense of propriety and masculinity (Garb 1998:35).

The male figures presented in *Luncheon on the Grass*, can therefore be simultaneously read as emblems of bourgeoisie masculinity and a rejection of aristocratic culture.

It is clear, then, how Manet’s painting could serve to trigger a deep sense of anxiety among the French aristocracy, whose social privilege relied on the very class divisions that the *paletot* threatened to destroy. However, the *paletot* also elicited discontent among the lower classes as well. Pointon articulates this concept eloquently:

If we want to be reminded of men’s fashions, we must turn to James Tissot, but what the portraits of Manet, Degas, and Fantin-Latour emphasize is the instability of these subjects – their tendency to crumple.

The fashionably dressed male body, for all its apparent authority seemingly reinforced in portraiture and photography, is subject to remorseless processes of disintegration. Many of the pigments that are used to depict his stylishness derive from various kinds of soot, the smart *paletot* he wears will fade if exposed extensively to sunlight, its color may penetrate his veins and affect his metabolism without an interleaved layer of linen akin to the protective priming layer between paint-layer and canvas, the quality of cloth may be an illusion, and his trousers may end up as rags (2017:757).

The fragility of the *paletot* paralleled the fragility of the “fashionably dressed male body”. For aristocrats, the *paletot* symbolized the threat of a new economic system that forewarned the deterioration of their class privileges. For the working class, who yearned to project an image of affluence and panache despite their humble origins, the “disintegration” of the *paletot* represented the threat of exposure – the uncovering of one’s true class identity. Only the newly affluent bourgeoisie, who did not fear the exposure of their true class identity nor the shifting social hierarchy that was rapidly tipping in their favor, could remain immune to the effects of the *paletot*.

The painting’s shock value can therefore be attributed not only to the naked female subject, but rather the clothed male subjects that symbolized the coming of a new age. If represented alone, his allusions to Classical and Renaissance art may have garnered him praise and acceptance at the Académie. However, by blending the iconography of the old and new, the classical and modern, Manet introduced a new lexicon of imagery that defied traditional conventions of artistic practice. As noted by Bourdieu:

There was a boundary that separated the past, the noble, the distant and the pictorial tradition from the present: we thus have an intentional collapsing of the past and the present by Manet...the contemporaneity of the work entered into a sort of symbolic collision with the traditional imagery to which it alluded (2017: 29).

Luncheon on the Grass exemplifies the “collision” of tradition and contemporary which was at the heart of the scandal that followed Manet throughout his career. With one painting, Titian’s subjects have been transformed into contemporary figures; the idealized female figure has been desecrated; Renaissance scenes of pastoral beauty have been transfigured into a modern reality.

Bourgeoisie Consumerism

Manet and Degas also introduce an array of emblems that represent a culture intrinsically tied to the bourgeoisie – conspicuous consumption. The nineteenth century introduced a new mode of living to Parisians cosmopolites. As the city gradually evolved into a society of spectacle, so too did it evolve into a society of consumption, and the city landscape itself change to reflect this “embourgeoisement” of space. For example, in his groundbreaking but unfinished work, German philosopher Walter Benjamin (1927) discusses how [Fig. 16] the shopping arcade – an architectural structure composed of a long series of arches, flanked on both sides by storefronts, and covered by a steel and glass ceiling – can be read as a symbol of the conflation of consumerist and bourgeois culture, as well as the modernist desire to exert human control over the natural world.²⁰

²⁰ Please refer to Donna Haraway’s article *Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936* for an interesting analysis of how the exhibitions presented in the Museum of Natural History’s Akeley African Hall can be read as a manifestation of masculine ideals that emerged during modernity. For example, Haraway argues that the ideology that motivated the construction of the hall frames nature as a type of “moral truth” – “the effective truth of manhood, the state conferred on

Both the arcade's material nature and the contents that it housed were deeply characterized by the changes of modernity.

Benjamin explains how the use of iron was closely tied to the industrialization that occurred during the nineteenth century: "For the first time in the history of architecture, an artificial building material appears: iron. It undergoes an evolution whose tempo will accelerate in the course of the century. This development enters a decisive new phase when it becomes clear that the locomotive – on which experiments had been conducted since the 1820s – is compatible only with iron tracks" (1927:4). Similarly, the nature of storefronts – spaces that opened up the interior of the store to the world outside – was in line with an emerging consumerist culture which fed upon the act of viewing. As explained by Zoë Thompson, "for Benjamin... the arcade was the interior disguised as an exterior, a place of exclusion and of the exclusive. It shut out the unpredictable and unwelcome elements, both natural (rain) and the social (the poor)... The arcade was the fantastical successor to the street and its subtle transformation" (Thompson 2016:65). The arcade and storefronts within it was constructed as a uniquely modern space – one open to affluent bourgeois consumers and reflected the culture of spectatorship that came to define a modern Paris.

Degas's [Fig. 17] *At the Milliner's* (1882) and [Fig. 18] *The Millinery Shop* (1884/90) capture the spirit of the arcade and the culture of conspicuous consumerism

the visitor who successfully passes through the trial the Museum" (1984:28). The taxidermy animals in the hall illustrate man's domination over the natural world and through the act of killing; man is transformed and thus "achieves his existence."

that came to define bourgeois ideology in several important ways. Firstly, both paintings depict the production of a luxury good – the high fashion hat – that was now available to a rising group of bourgeois consumers. Secondly, the manner with which Degas frames these paintings positions the viewer as a *flâneur* wandering through the arcade, catching a glimpse of the scene framed by the shop window. Compared to the aforementioned *Bathers* series, for example, “the device that frames and structures our view [in regards to *At the Milliner’s* and *The Millinery Shop*] is not the keyhole but the *vitrine* or shop window. In fact, a number of Degas’s milliner scenes – especially ... *At the Milliner’s* and *The Millinery Shop* – are composed to suggest that they are scenes glimpsed by a passer-by on the street: the cut-off, glancing view on to the scene, the elevated viewpoint, and the un-self-consciousness of the observed women all contribute to the effect...the glass in the frame suggesting the *vitrine* of the represented shop” (D’Souza 2006:136).²¹

These depictions of the “intimate scenes of everyday life”, moreover, were directly in line with the tastes of the bourgeoisie, as explained by Bourdieu: “As the bourgeoisie took over from the Academy and became the arbiter of taste, history painting

²¹ It is interesting to note that the hat, much like the paletot, functioned as far more than simply an article of clothing. As explained by Diana Crane, “because hats represented a more modest expense than jackets and coats, they provided an ideal opportunity for ‘blurring and transforming...traditional class boundaries’ (2000:82). Please see Crane’s *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* for more information on how clothing was used to establish, reaffirm, and project one’s class identity.

lost pride of place to genre painting. Heroic painting was no longer as much in demand as intimate scenes of everyday life” (2017:249). We can understand these two paintings as images of and for the bourgeoisie. In both form and content, Degas has created these works with the bourgeois class in mind, and illustrated the emergence of the culture of conspicuous consumption – a culture closely affiliated with the bourgeois class, certainly, but also one that would come to characterize all the modern world.

Secondly, Benjamin identifies the upper-middle class living room as the second spatial manifestation of bourgeois desire. For Benjamin, the bourgeois living room reflected the commodity fetishism that drove the wheels of conspicuous consumption.

Benjamin explains:

His [the bourgeois man’s] living room is a box in the theater of the world. The interior [the living room] is the asylum where art takes refuge...He makes his concern the idealization of objects. To him falls the Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character by taking possession of them...The collector delights in evoking a world that is not just distant and long gone but also better – world in which, to be sure, human beings are no better provided with what they need than in the real world, but in which things are freed from the drudgery of being useful (2003:19).

To negotiate a place for themselves in the upper echelons of the field of power, the bourgeois class turned to commodities as the method through which to establish their social status, class identity, and cultural capital. As a result, the items that they collected to populate their living rooms were no longer valued for their utility. “Freed from the drudgery of being useful,” (Benjamin 2003:19) the bourgeoisie’s positions were valued, rather, for their ability to “evoke” an impression of an elite class identity.

The relevance of bourgeois living room becomes more salient when we consider how this space came to intersect with another new process of modernity– the mechanical reproduction of art through photograph or print. Sieburth explains:

Rather than having to seek out the revered work of art in ritualized institutions like museums and churches, the viewer can wait for the reproduced work of art to seek him out in a shop, after which he may hang the piece in his living room. Tradition is shattered as the original presence and unique history of the world of art becomes irrelevant (1994:91).

Through mechanical reproduction, art has becoming a fetishized commodity, available for consumption. Through it, the bourgeois individual can stake a claim of cultural capital. The consumption of art also allows for one to secure a position in society in a manner independent from one's pedigree. Conjointly, through mechanical reproduction, "ritualized institutions," like the Académie, are made unnecessary and redundant. No longer must the bourgeois demonstrate his good taste by being seen at the Salon. Rather, he can demonstrate his cultural capital by displaying the same works within his own home, and, in particular, his drawing room: "In a nutshell, the argument is that the bourgeoisie, the potential buyers and the consumers of art, became more numerous, richer and more interested in art. The demand for works of art increased, particularly for a certain kind of work, for works that could be hung in a bourgeois drawing room..." (Bourdieu 2017:249). Here, we are again reminded of the shift from "pure production" – a process closely dictated by the authority of Académie – towards the emergence of "mass production."

The commodification of art and its close association with the bourgeoisie is made salient in Manet's [Fig. 19] *Portrait of Emile Zola* (1868). As one of Manet's lesser-known works, *Portrait of Emile Zola* may not command the same recognition as *The Luncheon on the Grass* or *Olympia*; this portrait, however, should nonetheless be read with as discerning an eye, as it is rife both with class ideology and criticism of the Académie. A close friend of Manet's and a figurehead of the naturalist school of

literature, Emile Zola was a notable republican bourgeois and famed critic of the Académie. He once declared: “I care little for beauty or perfection. I thumb my nose at *les grande siècles* [a French term for the reign of Louis XIV, which was regarded at the time as the golden age of French culture and politics] ... There are no more masters, no more schools” (Nord 2000:25). It was Zola, for example, that espoused Manet as a visionary and “wrote an article on Manet in *LA Revue du XXE siècle* [in 1866] and defended him again the following year when he organized a private exhibition on the fringes of the Universal Exhibition” (Musée d’Orsay).²² As an art critic, he was outspoken in his rebellion against the formalities and pretension of the Salon system. In his portrait, Manet not only depicts Emile Zola in his bourgeois drawing room, but he also refers to the mechanical reproduction of art by depicting a small copy of his seminal work [Fig. 20] *Olympia* in the upper-right hand corner of the painting Manet’s choice of combining the images of Zola and *Olympia* is, in many ways, a twofold attack on the conservatism of the Salon and its jury.

Olympia, possibly Manet’s most well-known work, is famed for the public backlash that it generated upon its unveiling at the 1865 Paris salon.²³ The Salon’s

²² In fact, it was for this gesture of support that Manet offered to paint Zola’s portrait in thanks.

²³ I have written extensively on the scandal that surrounded *Olympia* in my art history capstone paper. In this essay, I offer my own interpretation for why this painting incited such outrage amount art critics and the viewing public, and discuss the ways in which Manet coopted Renaissance imagery to create this fundamental work. I also relate

audience was so enraged by the painting that the curators were forced to move it further up, away from the crowd below, and even hire guards to save it from vandalism (Adut 2009). French critic Paul de Saint-Victor described *Olympia* and its audience as “a crowd thronging in front of the putrefied *Olympia* as if it were at the morgue” (Bernheimer 1989:256). By presenting *Zola* against the backdrop of *Olympia* – two emblems of the cultural paradigm shift taking hold of Paris’s art scene, Manet foreshadowed the emergence of a new culture no longer dominated by the Académie and old, aristocratic cultural elite.

By including not only a reproduction of *Olympia*, but also copies of several other artworks in *Portrait*, Manet gestured to the rise of Benjamin’s age of technological reproduction:

Not only did Manet reproduce his own etching [*Olympia*] from which mechanical reproductions of his paintings ensued, he also embedded the print of *Olympia* among a Japanese woodblock print of a sumo wrestler by Kuniaki II and an engraving of Diego Velázquez’s *Los Borrachos (The Feast of Bacchus)*...But his pastiche of nineteenth-century prints goes further to accommodate mass-produced art, made possibly by photography and its related industries and its inextricable link to the history of print-making. Just as the traditional Japanese wood-block print was made for mass consumption and (foreign) distribution, so too were the reproduced masterpieces Manet copied...This technological method of reproduction proliferated in the art market and invaded every middle- and upper-class home and artist’s studio during the second half of the nineteenth century. By fabricating this web of reproducibility within his own paintings, Manet brought the weight and changeability of tradition to bear on his modernity (Weingarten 2006:241).

Olympia’s iconography to both the broader social backdrop of 19th century Paris and the socio-historical context from which Manet was borrow from.

The technology that allowed for the mechanical reproduction of art therefore not only allowed for the consumption of once singular works by the “middle- and upper-class” bourgeoisie, but also demonstrated the instability and “changeability” of traditional artworks. The emergence of print technology, for instance, allowed for the alteration of the medium and color of the original painting. By reproducing various other works within his portrait of Zola, Manet again straddles the divide between the past and future, traditional and contemporary.

Secondly, if *Portrait* is to be read as a parody of the Académie, as Bourdieu argued Manet’s work largely was, then we must also understand the unique “character” necessary to “generate violence of the parodic type.” As explained by Bourdieu:

If you have so completely absorbed a system that is in your bones, you feel very comfortable with it, and your only desire is to perpetuate it. So what sort of character manages to be at once completely inside and outside the system? It is the quintessential symbolic revolutionary: it is someone who, even as he is completely possessed by a system, manages to take possession of it by turning his mastery of that system against it. It is a very strange thing (2017:244).

Manet’s self-reflexive inclusion of *Olympia* gestures to his possession of and possession by the practices of Renaissance and academic art. The act of depicting a painting within a painting has a long tradition in both the Italian Renaissance and Flemish Baroque art – Giovanni Paolo Panini’s [Fig. 21] *Modern Rome* (1757) and David Tenniers the Younger’s *Gallery of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in Brussels* (1651) are examples of this. In both these paintings, the purpose of illustrating numerous paintings was to emphasize the collector’s sophistication and great knowledge of art, that is, to legitimize the collectors dominant cultural position within the field of power. *Portrait* can similarly be read as a utility of cultural aggression. By including a reproduction of his own painting

within the bourgeois living room, Manet builds upon this historical tradition to endow the bourgeois class with a certain degree of cultural capital.

In his lecture *Foundations of Dispensationalist Aesthetics*, Bourdieu discusses the underlying phenomenon of Manet's reference to these historical, academic works, and compares such a practice to that of a religious heretic: "Mallarmé [a French symbolist poet and critic] speaks of Manet's return to the sources which is a classical heretic strategy: the heretics are always wrong-footing the orthodox. One of the ways of wrong-footing the Church is to lay claim to the sources which it has consecrated as its own" (2017:179). In painting *Portrait of Emile Zola*, Manet does just this. By coopting the lexicon of imagery that characterized classical and Renaissance art, Manet lays claim to the canon of art that the Académie used to justify the legitimacy of the principles and moral order that they presented as absolute and indisputable. The manner with which Manet does this, however, demonstrates his own reliance on the same canon of art:

Manet was a cultured artist who, on stepping out from the caste of his masters, pitted Velázquez against Couture. Now pitting Velázquez against Couture implies a specific state of mind: it meant pitting a foreigner against a Frenchman, an old master against a contemporary artist and a dead man against a living person, all of which of course implies that he had visited museums" (Bourdieu 2017:181).

Again, we are reminded of Manet's unique habitus – his ability to reframe his own privilege and capital to create something that would be recognizable to and in line with the ideologies of an emerging class group, yet in a manner which undermined the traditional artistic practices and symbolic representations of the "masters." In his work, Manet defines modernity by juxtaposing its images against those of tradition. By including classicism and Renaissance elements in his paintings, Manet makes salient the contemporaneity of his subjects.

With a taste for classical beauty, yet an eye for modernity, Manet and Degas created art that signaled a break from the old order. However, their greatest innovation lies not only the radicalism of their work, but rather in their use of the familiar to create the contemporary. Their avant-garde was a type different from that of Duchamp's *Fountain*. Rather Manet and Degas relied upon their audience's ability to recognize the allusions within their paintings as a sign of a society made anew by modernity and dominated by an ascendant class of spectators and consumers. Endowed with a unique disposition and a habitus simultaneously academic and revolutionary, classical and current, Manet and Degas constructed a new Paris – one populated by the bourgeoisie and their pleasures.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In the last lecture Bourdieu gave on Manet and his work, he remarked: “Manet’s allusion to Renaissance masterpieces, like any allusion to anything noble, denoted not only a sense of familiarity and belonging, which conveyed an irreproachable patent of nobility, but also his ambition to situate himself within the order of ‘great art,’ and even to rival the greatest masters of the past” (2017:489). Despite a lifetime of mockery and insult, Manet nevertheless achieved his ambitions. In the decades since their conception, the work of Manet and Degas has endured within the public’s imagination. Our lionized vision of nineteenth century Paris, striking and splendid in its modernity, has been largely informed by the art of Manet and Degas. Despite the work’s beloved position within the canon of western art, however, we rarely conceive of these paintings as a social impetus for the construction of a new class hierarchy.

Influenced by Marxism, it is no surprise that Bourdieu’s vision of art maintains aspects of a Hegelian view of history. Various scholars in the discipline have therefore criticized Bourdieu’s conceptual framework as overly reductive in its consideration of individual agency and intent. If Manet and Degas produced art that was ultimately dictated by their habitus, can they still be considered revolutionaries? In other words, if industrialization and the rise of the bourgeoisie is simply a product of historical inevitability, can the artist truly be understood as anything more than a cog in the tireless engine of history?

A similar set of questions emerge when considering the implications of Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*:

“Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels believed that it was inevitable that a socialist revolution would overturn capitalism. They express that belief...when they say that the ‘fall [of the bourgeoisie] and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable’. Yet the *Communist Manifesto* is also famous as a call to arms. It encourages political activity to bring socialism about, and its very publication was part of just such political activity. If, however, the advent of socialism is inevitable, then why should Marx and Engels, and those whom they hope to activate, strive to achieve socialism?” (Cohen 1986:65).

To reconcile the apparent paradoxes within both Marx and Bourdieu’s arguments, we can refer to the work of several scholars who have attempted to pose a solution to this “consistency problem”. G.A. Cohen, for instance, argues that the proletariat revolutionary, like Manet and Degas, serve to minimize the “birth pangs” of this inevitable uprising: “...although it is inevitable that a socialist revolution will come, it is not inevitable how long it will take for it to come, nor how painful its course will be. It may therefore be rational for revolutionaries to dedicate themselves to the socialist movement, so that they will be in a position to shorten, and to reduce the severity, of the ‘birth pangs’ of socialism” (1986:66). In this way, Manet and Degas serve as important contributors to the inevitable cultural dominance of the bourgeoisie. Whereas the emergence of the bourgeoisie as the cultural elite may be unavoidable, Manet and Degas played an integral role in capturing the form and content of this new ruling class’s visual iconography.

Furthermore, through his theories, Bourdieu offers a response to the questions posed by Deinhart at the beginning of this essay: art, far more than simply the product of a singular epoch or people, gestures to a fundamental human inclination – the desire to dominate. Bourdieu once remarked that “in matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust

provoked by horror or visceral intolerance of the tastes of others” (“Distinction”, 56). If what Bourdieu claims is true, then there is invaluable knowledge to be gained in understanding what angers us, disgusts us, makes us uncomfortable.

Occasionally, we are presented with objects which offends us – articles that we dismiss, indignantly, as ludicrous in its claim to be art. Perhaps it is time we reflect upon why this is so. Those things that elicit a sense of anxiety within us, which transgress our common sensibilities, are the very same things that reveal assumptions often taken for granted. In his article *On the Social History of Art*, T.J. Clark remarked:

“Like the analyst listening to his patient, what interests us, if we want to discover the meaning of this mass of criticism, are the points at which the rational monotone of the critic breaks, fails, falters; we are interested in the phenomena of obsessive repetition, repeated irrelevance, anger suddenly discharged – the points where the criticism is incomprehensible are the keys to its comprehension. The public, like the unconscious, is present only where it ceases; yet it determines the structure of private discourse; it is the key to what cannot be said, and no subject is more important” (1973:251).

Indeed, Manet’s *Luncheon* revealed an uncomfortable truth about the shifts in systems of power and privilege in nineteenth-century Paris. Degas’s *Friends at the Theatre* confronted Parisians, who prided themselves upon their modern ideals of equalitarianism and secularization, with the question of whether such espousments were truly anything more than hyperbole. Just as art functions as a translation of the social world, it is also a site in which our convictions and constitutions are both manifested and contradicted, in which systems of dominance and subordination, privilege and marginalization, advantage and disadvantage are negotiated and rearranged. Through art, we say what cannot be said, and leave implicit what we already know.

FIGURES



[Fig. 1] Manet, Édouard. *Portrait of M. and Mme. Auguste Manet*, 1860. Oil on canvas: 110 cm × 90 cm (43.3 in × 35.4 in) Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



[Fig. 2] Fantin-Latour, Henri. *Édouard Manet*, 1867. Oil on canvas: 117 cm × 90 cm (46.25 in × 35.4 in) Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago.



[Fig. 3] Gavarni, Paul (Hippolyte-Guillaume-Sulpice-Chevalier). *Le Flâneur*, 1842. Print: dimensions unknown. Collection unknown.



[Fig. 4] Degas, Edgar. *Woman Bathing in Shallow Tub*, 1885. Charcoal and pastel on light green wove paper: 81.3 cm × 56.2 cm (32 in × 22 1/2 in) New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



[Fig. 5] Alexandre Cabanel, *The Birth of Venus*, 1863, oil on canvas, 130 cm × 225 cm (51 in × 89 in). Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



[Fig. 6] Manet, Édouard. *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*, 1867. Oil on canvas: 48 cm × 58 cm (18.9 in × 22.8 in) Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek.



[Fig. 6] Goya, Francisco. *The Third of May 1808*, 1814. Oil on canvas: 268 cm × 347 cm (106 in × 137 in) Madrid, Museo del Prado.



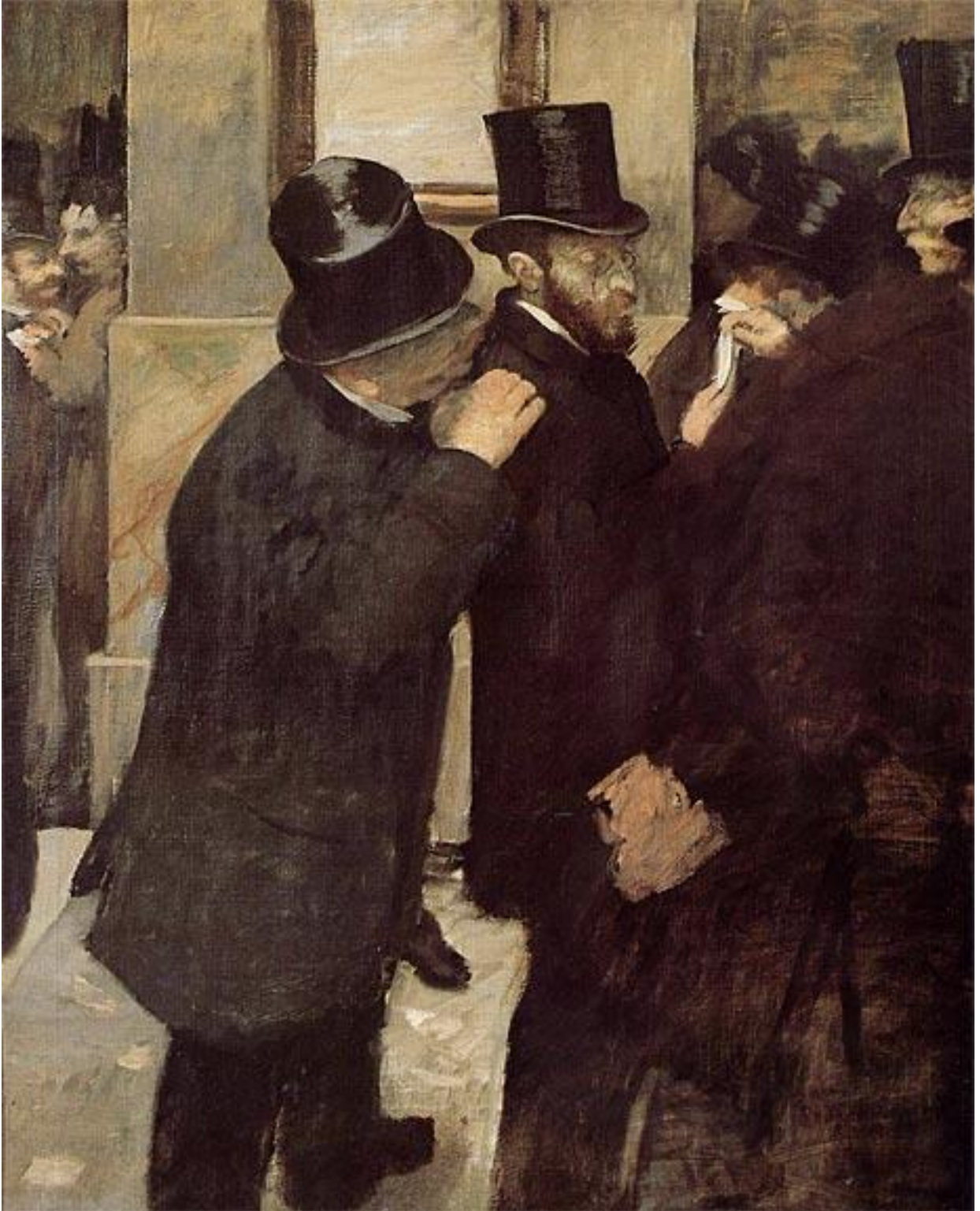
[Fig. 8] Delacroix, Eugène. *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830. Oil on canvas: 260 cm × 325 cm (102.4 in × 128 in) Louvre, Paris.



[Fig. 9] Degas, Edgar. *The Daughter of Jephthah*, 1859. Oil on canvas: 183 cm × 296 cm (72 in × 116.5 in) Northampton, Smith College Museum of Art.



[Fig. 10] Degas, Edgar. *Friends at the Theater, Ludovic Halévy and Albert Cave*, 1879. Oil on canvas: 79 cm × 55 cm (31.1 in × 21.7 in) Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



[Fig. 11] Degas, Edgar. *Portraits at the Stock Exchange: Ernest May*, 1878-9. Oil on canvas: 100 cm × 82 cm (39 in × 32 in) Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



[Fig. 12] Manet, Édouard. *Gare Saint-Lazare (The Railway)*, 1873. Oil on canvas: 93.3 cm × 111.5 cm (36.8 in × 45 in) Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.



[Fig. 13] Manet, Édouard. *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (*The Luncheon on the Grass*), 1863. Oil on canvas: 208 cm × 264.5 cm (81.9 in × 104.1 in) Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



[Fig. 14] Titian. *Pastoral Concert*, 1510. Oil on canvas: 118 cm × 138 cm (46.5 in × 54.3 in) Paris, Musée d'Louvre.



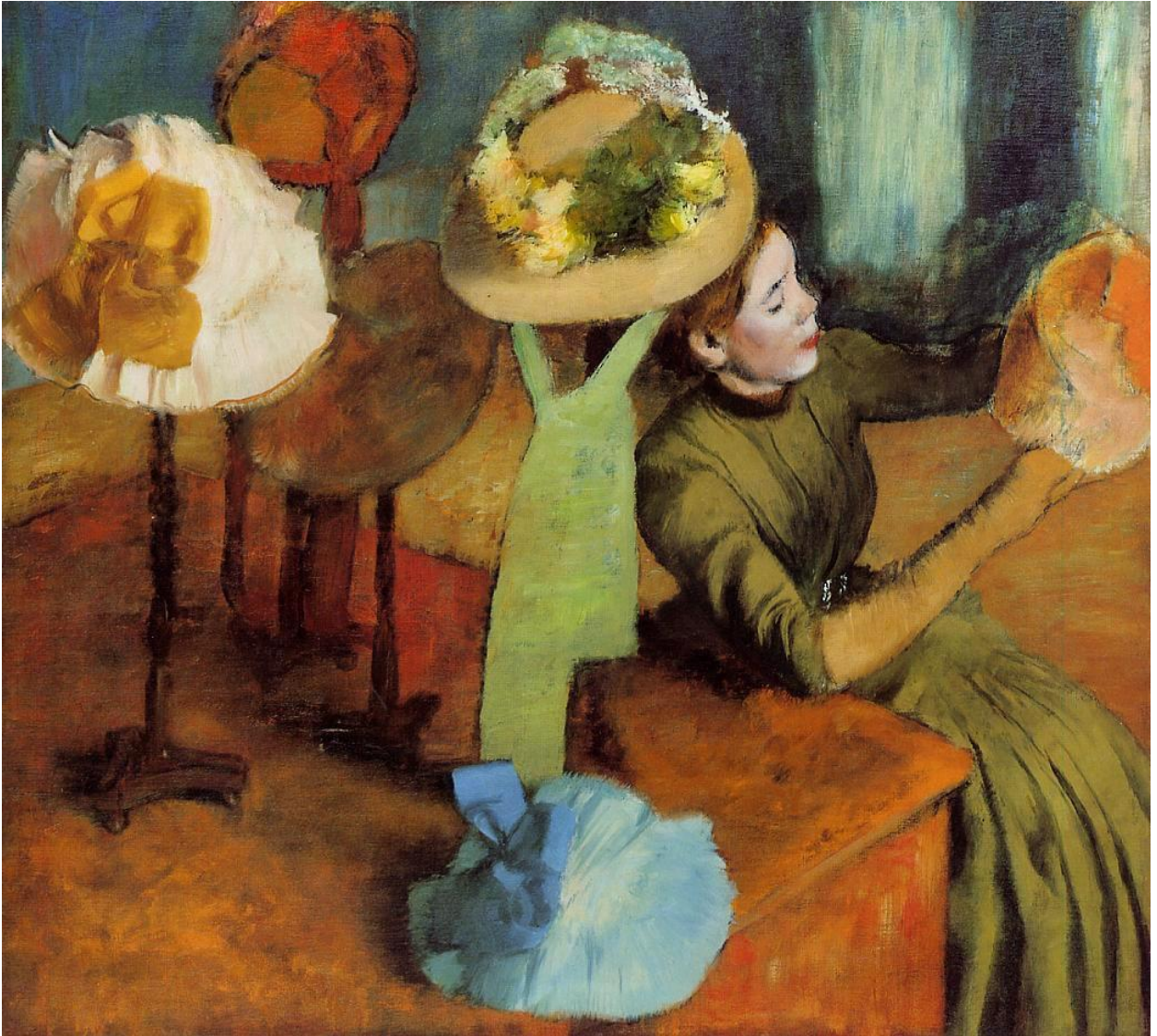
[Fig. 15] Raimondi, Marcantonio after Raphael. *The Judgment of Paris*, 1510-20. Prints: 29.1 cm × 43.7 cm (11.5 in × 17.1 in) New York City, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



[Fig. 16] Artist unknown. *Detail from a 19th century postcard showing the Passage Bellivet, Caen, opened in 1836, 1836.* Photograph. Public domain.



[Fig. 17] Degas, Edgar. *At the Milliner's*, c.1882. Pastel on paper mounted on board: 70.2 cm × 70.5 cm (27.6 in × 27.3 in) New York City, The Museum of Modern Art.



[Fig. 18] Degas, Edgar. *The Millinery Shop*, 1879-86. Oil on canvas: 100 cm × 110.7 cm (39.4 in × 43.6 in) Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago.



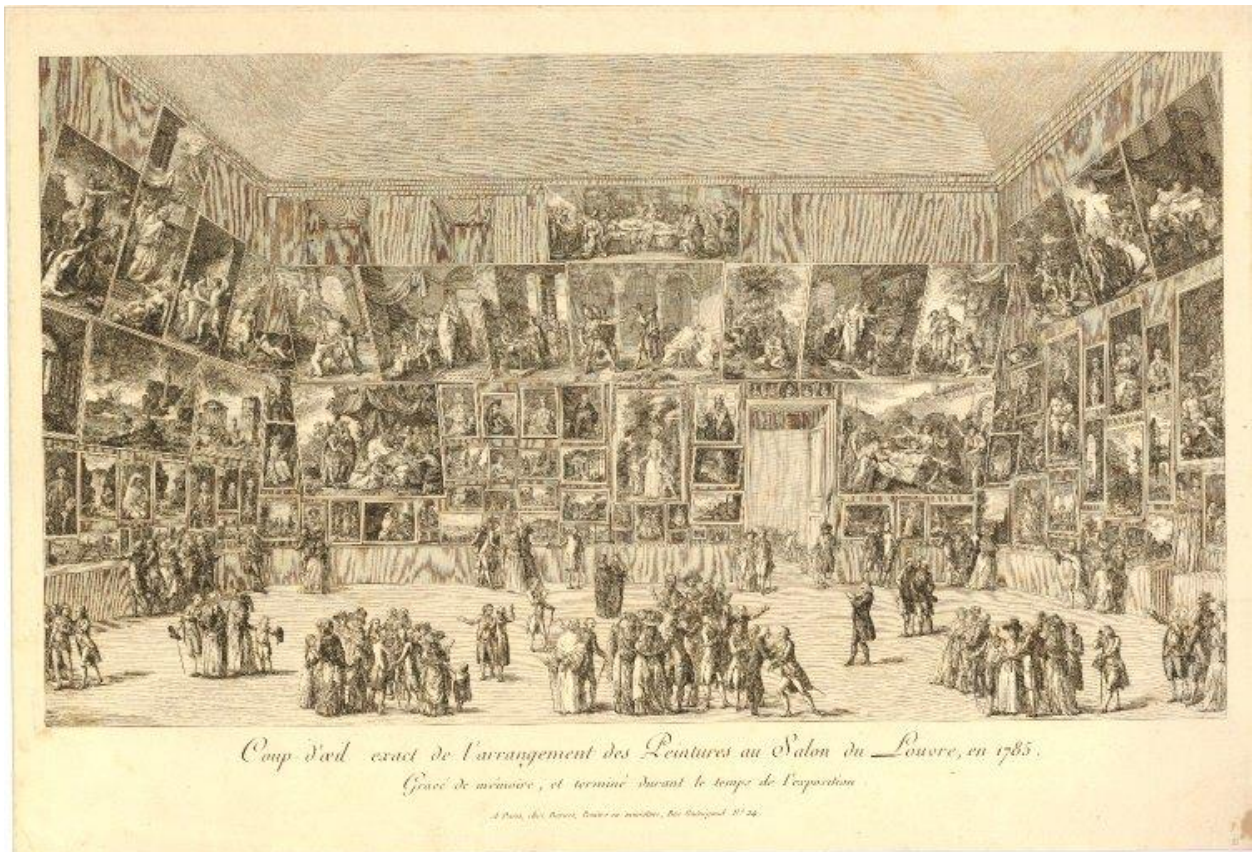
[Fig. 19] Manet, Édouard. *Portrait of Emile Zola*, 1868. Oil on canvas: 146 cm × 114 cm (57.5 in × 44.9 in) Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago.



[Fig. 20] Manet, Édouard. *Olympia*, 1863. Oil on canvas: 130.5 cm × 190 cm (51.4 in × 74.8 in) Paris, Musée d'Orsay.



[Fig. 21] Panini, Giovanni Paolo. *Modern Rome*, 1757. Oil on canvas: 172.1 cm × 233 cm (67.75 in × 91.75 in), Boston, Museum of Fine Art.



[Fig. 22] Martini, Pierre Antoine. *Coup d'oeil exact de l'arrangement des Peintures au Salon du Louvre, en 1785*, 1785. Etching on paper: 34.7 cm × 51.1 cm (13.7 in × 20.1 in), London, British Museum.

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