Olympia in Context

Manet, the Impressionists, and Black Paris

In late 1862, Édouard Manet (1832–1883) noted in his studio *carnet* that a model he described as "Laure, très belle négresse" ("Laure, very beautiful black woman") sat for a portrait in his rue Guyot studio in northern Paris.[1] This portrait was the second of Manet's three known paintings posed by Laure, all made within a twelve-month period (fig. 1). During the previous summer, Manet had depicted a nursemaid figure with Laure's deep-brown skin tones, but with indeterminate facial features, in a Parisian park scene. The portrait that resulted from this second sitting was completely different. If the nursemaid had been rendered as a "type," one of several stock figures in a genre scene, Laure was now the subject of a carefully observed painting, in which the previously blank visage is rendered with the detail of a portrait in demeanor and attire. She is now the sole focal point of the viewer.

Manet's presentation of Laure as a subject in her own right introduces us to her as a specific individual who compels the same sustained attention from the viewer that she received from the artist. Within months, Laure would return to the studio, to pose the maid figure to a prostitute in Manet's groundbreaking *Olympia* (see fig. 55).[2] The Laure of *Olympia* assumes such a markedly different stance from that of her portrait, one characterized by formal and thematic ambiguity, that this final pose situates the earlier portrait not as a mere study for *Olympia* but as a stand-alone work.

Manet's three representations of Laure can collectively be seen as an important manifestation of his defining artistic commitment—to paint what he saw in the daily life of modern Paris, in a radically modern style and in defiance of the romanticized classicism and exoticism that defined the academically sanctioned art of his day. Manet's images of Laure figure modernity with formal pictorial values—a broad, loose brushstroke and flattened pictorial effect—that were antithetical to the illusionistic mimicry prevalent since the Renaissance. Laure also figures modernity through a simultaneous citation of, and evolution beyond, the stock figure of the exotic black serving woman, long featured in academic painting as existing irreducibly outside modernity. Manet, to the contrary, placed her squarely amid scenes of modern life in the Paris of his time. Moreover, as Manet depicts her, Laure figures modernity with an ambiguity, a contingency, that captures the fraught interracial interface of the era, yet in a manner strikingly apart from the derisive stereotypes and caricatures with which the period's popular media more typically depicted black Parisians. And finally, Laure figures modernity as part of Manet's effort to assert the artistic merit of marginalized subjects, individuals whose ethnicity, class, regional

Édouard Manet, *Olympia* (detail of fig. 55).

Fig. 1. Édouard Manet, *La négresse (Portrait of Laure),* 1863. Oil on canvas, 24 × 19 11/16 in. (61 × 50 cm). Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin.

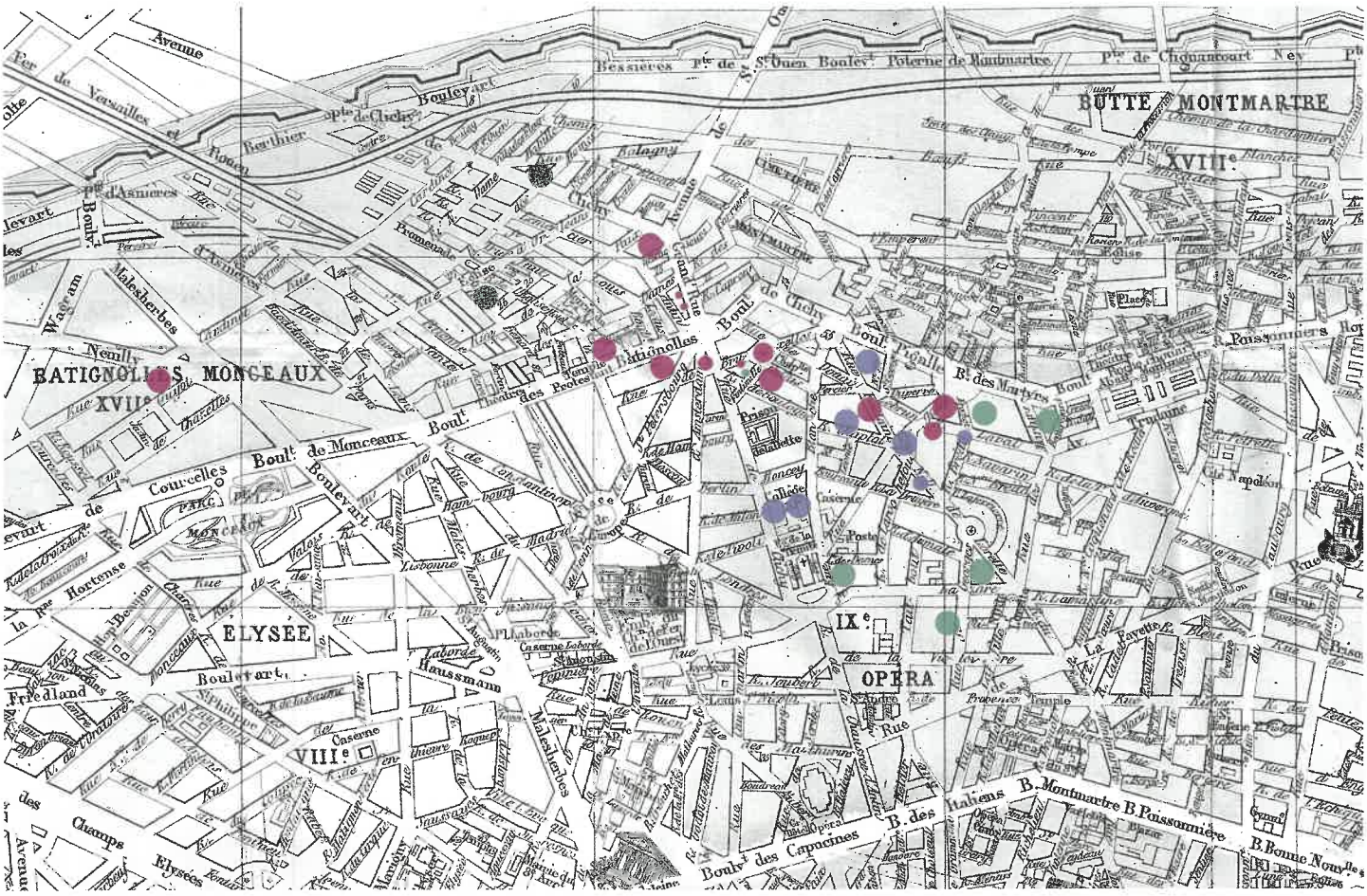

Fig. 2. Map of northern Paris, 1864, with the locations of the studios and residences of Manet and his artistic circle and key black residents and performance venues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

origins, or occupation place them firmly outside bourgeois European society, at a time when only portraits of elite or historical subjects were sanctioned by academy convention.

The Racial and Social Mix of Manet's Paris

Central to an expanded understanding of Manet's Laure is the multiracial context of modern life in the newly rebuilt neighborhoods of northern Paris, where Manet lived much of his adult life. Manet was an artist firmly committed to painting the realities of everyday life that defined 1860s Paris. His three images of Laure capture a small black presence in Paris that took deeper root in the aftermath of the French abolition of territorial slavery in 1848.[3] Nowhere was this free black presence in central Paris more manifest than in the city's northerly ninth and seventeenth arrondissements, which were simultaneously home to Manet and the Impressionists (fig. 2; see also pp. 182–83). Manet's notebook revealed that Laure herself lived at 11 rue Vintimille, just below the Place de Clichy, less than a ten-minute walk from Manet's studio; this note is corroborated in 1860s rental records.[4] Several notable Parisians of color resided nearby, including Alexandre Dumas père, who lived on Avenue Frochot, a private street just blocks away from the rue de Vintimille. This presence—while not measured by the French census, which does not record race—suggests that these northern areas have traditionally hosted some of the largest black populations in central Paris, a fact that persisted over

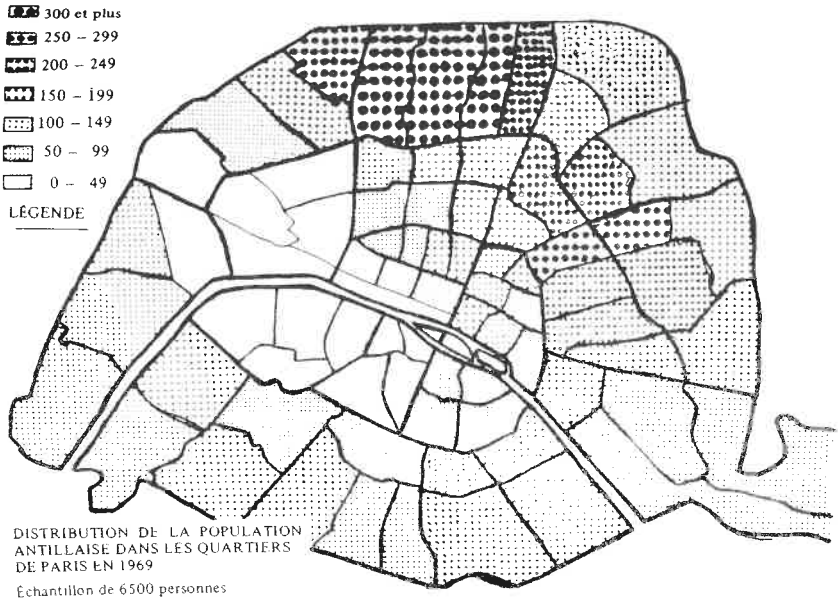

Fig. 3. Map of Paris, "Distribution de la Population Antillaise dans les Quartiers de Paris en 1969." From Alain Anselin, *L'émigration antillaise en France* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1979), 295.

successive generations and is manifest today, especially to the east and in the *banlieues* (suburbs) that have become home to more recent arrivals, including those from West Africa (fig. 3).

Manet also lived and worked in this area, along with his artist and writer friends Monet, Renoir, Baudelaire, and Zola, especially in and around the Nouvelle Athènes quartier of the ninth arrondissement, and the Batignolles neighborhood in the adjacent seventeenth. Manet acolyte Frédéric Bazille's 1870 painting, *L'atelier de Bazille* (Bazille's studio), a group portrait of the artist with Manet and Impressionist painters Monet and Renoir, captures this reality, as it is set in Bazille's studio on the rue de La Condamine; so does the artists' gathering seen in Manet's *Au café* (At the café; figs. 4, 5). The artists maintained studios along streets emanating from the Place de Clichy, and many of their paintings are set in specific locations throughout the area. They gathered in the cafés and cabarets lining Haussmann's new boulevard from the Place de Clichy east to the Place Pigalle. They walked south along newly built residential streets, through the Tuileries Gardens to the Louvre. Manet and his circle strolled the area's boulevards and parks on a daily basis. They departed from the Gare St. Lazare for leisurely outings in Argenteuil and other pleasure destinations along the Seine. They attended performances and society events at the Opéra and observed popular entertainments at the circus and cabarets in Places Blanche and Pigalle. The ninth arrondissement was a socially diverse area, where migrant workers, avant-garde artists, the bourgeoisie, and the demimondaines who served and entertained them lived in close proximity and mingled in public spaces.

The portraiture of Manet's associate, the photographer Nadar—in whose studio the first Impressionist exhibition took place—captures the social and ethnic diversity of this milieu, as did the work of other photographer friends of Manet.[5] While these photographers' portraits of Manet (fig. 6), Baudelaire, and the famed black writer Alexandre Dumas père are iconic, their portraits of other black Parisians have received far less scholarly attention. Yet these portraits comprise a veritable gallery of black residents of 1860s Paris, who manifest varied walks of life, occupations, and social position. Some portraits manifest affinities with the racialized typing of ethnographic photography, especially through the practice of making double portraits paired in frontal and profile views (see figs. 48, 49, 51, 52). Photography nonetheless captured a much wider range of social positions among black Parisians than is seen in the more limited archetypes of Salon-sanctioned fine art painting. The photographic portraits capture a little-known interracial network of friendships and professional connections among the photographers and their subjects.

Archives reveal extensive correspondence between Nadar and two friends, Martinican lawyer Victor Cochinat

Fig. 4. Frédéric Bazille and Édouard Manet, *L'atelier de Bazille* (Bazille's studio), 1870. Oil on canvas, 28⅝ × 50⅝ in. (98 × 128.5 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Fig. 5. Édouard Manet, *Au café* (At the café), 1869. Transfer lithograph, 10⅜ × 13⅛ in. (26.3 × 33.4 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Rosenwald Collection.

Fig. 6. Félix Nadar, *Portrait d'Édouard Manet,* 1866. Print on salted paper, 9 1/16 × 6 7/8 in. (23 × 17.5 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 7. Félix Nadar, *Jeune modèle* (Young model), ca. 1855–59. Print on salted paper, 9 7/16 × 7 9/16 in. (24 × 19.2 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

and Guadeloupian journalist Louis Lherminier, who sometimes referred other friends to Nadar's studio.[6] We thus see the woman in *Jeune modèle* (Young model), who, though her name is now lost, was referred to Nadar by Lherminier (fig. 7).[7] We also see Dolores Serral (fig. 8), whose name evokes a famous Spanish dancer who may have been black; Nadar noted that Serral was a friend of the duchess of Medina Coeli, whom he also portrayed.[8]

Images of members of the black bourgeoisie include a Nadar portrait of his friend Coquinat and an anonymous portrait of a matron described simply as the wife of the mayor of Battersea (fig. 9). The photographer Jacques-Philippe Potteau, though ethnographically motivated, still conveys the stylishness of young student Marie Lassus, the daughter of a French father and a black mother from New Orleans (fig. 10), and Delphine Garçon, who is

Fig. 8. Félix Nadar, *Portrait of Dolores Serral de Medina Coeli,* ca. 1854–70. Print on salted paper, 9 1/16 × 7 in. (23 × 17.7 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 9. Unknown photographer, *Mme Archer, femme du maire de Battersea* (Mrs. Archer, wife of the mayor of Battersea), n.d. Photograph printed from glass negative, 7 1/8 × 5 1/8 in. (18 × 13 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

described as being born on the island of Réunion to a Malay mother and creole father (fig. 11).

A portrait of the equestrienne Selika Lazevski is one of the most striking Nadar portrayals of an entertainment personality (fig. 12). Selika sat for Nadar on the same day as the Lazevskis, a well-known white equestrian couple; Nadar noted that all three were performing at the Nouveau-Cirque.[9] "Mlle Kara" was one of several actresses depicted by Nadar; she too was described as a performer at the Nouveau-Cirque (fig. 13).[10]

In working with Laure, therefore, Manet followed his career-long practice of engaging models who were part of his daily lived experience. The evolving specificity of his images of Laure, from blank-faced nanny to portrait and finally as Olympia's maid, is perhaps an indication of Manet's gradual awareness of this expanding black presence.

Fig. 10. Jacques-Philippe Potteau, *Marie Lassus, 19 years old, mulatto, née à la Nouvelle-Orléans d'une mère noire et d'un père Parisien* (born in New Orleans to a black mother and a Parisian father), 1860. Albumen print on paper mounted on cardboard, 7 9/16 × 5 1/4 in. (19.2 × 13.2 cm). Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris.

Fig. 11. Jacques-Philippe Potteau, *Delphine Garçon, 22 ans,* 1860–69. *Née à l'île de la Réunion d'une mère Malaise et d'un père Créole* (Born on the island of Réunion to a Malaysian mother and a creole father). Albumen print mounted on cardboard, approx. 7 1/8 × 5 3/16 in. (18 × 13.2 cm). Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris.

Fig. 12. Atelier Nadar, *Selika Lazevski, écuyère de haute école* (Selika Lazevski, equestrian of the high school), ca. 1891. Albumen print from glass negative, dimensions unknown. Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Charenton-le-Pont.

Fig. 13. Atelier Nadar, *Mlle Kara, Conservatoire,* ca. 1886. Albumen print from glass negative, 5¾ × 4⅛ in. (14.5 × 10.5 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Children in the Tuileries Gardens and the Black Presence in Manet's Paris

Children in the Tuileries Gardens (ca. 1861–62) depicts an everyday scene that Manet could well have observed during his regular strolls through the Tuileries, on his way from his studio to sketching sessions at the Louvre (fig. 14). This view of well-dressed children meandering through the gardens, carefully attended to by their uniformed nannies, is thus an example of Manet's commitment to painting ordinary events from daily life. These excursions may also have been a context for Manet's dawning awareness of Paris's changing black population, as black nannies became increasingly visible.[11]

The painting is an early manifestation of the formal strategies and subject matter that became hallmarks of Manet's art; in choosing to portray this scene, Manet embraced a well-established subject of genre painting, while updating it to reflect current realities. Its pictorial methods display the abrupt break with convention that characterizes his work. This becomes clear when *Children* is juxtaposed with Timoléon Marie Lobrichon's 1870 painting *Promenade des enfants* (Promenade of children in the Tuileries Gardens), a painting that typifies the Salon-sanctioned approach to this scene (fig. 15). *Promenade* fits within a conventional genre painting style—generalized figures arrayed before perspectival vistas sweeping over manicured gardens into a distant background expanse. The palette of pleasant pastel pinks, blues, and greens accentuates the artist's depiction of a scene of charming and well-ordered bourgeois leisure—the children are regimented into a paradelike rank, yet display the inevitable unruliness of toddlers at play, even as their immaculately aproned nannies gently assert a semblance of discipline. The sunny skies and brilliant green foliage project optimism, well-being, and security, the latter reinforced by the dignified gray-bearded gentlemen hovering nearby, ready to impose the masculine authority and protection valued by conservative Lobrichon admirers. It is a decorative scene, updated with uncomplicated realism, intended to please without provocation, and to adorn bourgeois interiors as a luxe backdrop for other luxury possessions.

Manet, like Lobrichon, captures the beguiling aspects of coming across a children's outing—the amusing efforts by the nurses to keep the youngsters moving ahead in formation, the charming round straw hats and loose cream-colored play clothes, the affectionate gestures of nannies adjusting the children's caps or shooing them back into line. But Manet mitigates the prettiness by depicting slightly older children, from a back view, in a far less open and sunny setting. The view into background depth is closed off by murky black tree trunks, and the distant view is indistinct, rendered with blanked-out spaces and loosely gestural brushstrokes that create a flattened picture plane. It is an economy of detail, a pictorial simplification, that sets off a generation of modernizing depictions of such genre scenes. The slightly sinister sense of Manet's figures, who are pushed into the foreground by a garden that seems to close in on them, is underscored by the artist's version of the gray-bearded male presence. While idealized and dignified by Lobrichon, in Manet's work he now may be a vagrant, a figure that the children are perhaps being steered away from, rather than a soothing, protective presence. Manet modernizes the genre scene through both his formal pictorial devices and his figural presentation.[12] If Lobrichon paints a scene of sanitized orderly cheer, Manet conveys something perhaps closer to observed reality—a rapidly changing city where displaced loiterers and bourgeois families intermingle at every turn.

Manet's rendering of the right-most nurse, who has the brown skin tones of his model Laure, further advances the picture's modern-world qualities. Where Lobrichon shows the nannies as his bourgeois viewers would perhaps prefer—elegantly uniformed European workers—Manet, even if marginally, injects a dose of the reality that nannies in 1860s Paris were a mix of races, albeit still predominantly European. This image of Laure captures the demographic fact that by the 1860s a Parisian nursemaid could very well be black. Manet tapped into a tradition dating back to the Renaissance: depicting affluent European subjects with black servants, to emphasize that their wealth was extensive enough to import costly exotic help. Yet this presence was often due to the controversial practice of recruiting household workers from the French Caribbean under employment contracts that the era's progressive voices viewed as exploitative.[13]

The brown-faced nanny and foreboding graybeard in *Children* are, therefore, part of Manet's mode of escaping the most saccharine aspects of the genre, by painting everyday life in a way that indexes contemporary anxieties,

Fig. 14. Édouard Manet, *Children in the Tuileries Gardens,* ca. 1861–62. Oil on canvas, 14⅞ × 18⅛ in. (37.8 × 46 cm). Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. Museum Appropriation Fund, 42.190.

Fig. 15. Timoléon Marie Lobrichon, *Promenade des enfants* (Promenade of children in the Tuileries Gardens), 1870. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

both formally and in subject matter. *Children* depicted life as it was, not as the conservative upper classes may have wished it to be.

Still, Manet evokes tradition even as he transcends it. He uses the figural devices of genre types and at times echoes aspects of Lobrichon's figurations. Both the nannies and their children are composed as types—their sketched-in faces uniformly indistinct, so as not to distract from the detailing of the attire that defines their social position. These figures are clearly intended to depict an occupation or social position rather than specific individuals, a strategy that recalls Romantic painters' interest in depicting sweeping scenes, even in everyday life. It was Eugène Delacroix who advanced the idea, in paintings such as *Le 28 juillet. La Liberté guidant le peuple* (July 28. Liberty leading the people; 1830), that a range of Parisian "types" should be depicted in paintings, but with all the metaphoric classicism of history painting rather than the specifics of actual appearance. From the revolutionary and the street urchin to the dandy flâneur, each is defined by costume and context; there are few or no portraits.[14] The focus on costume as a key manifestation of socioeconomic status also typifies the popular media genres of fashion plates and the then-recently completed mega-opus *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (The French painted by themselves), for which Balzac was a contributor. From that tome we understand that the expensive round straw hats and loose white play clothes of the bourgeois children are essential for understanding the social placement of these figures, as are the high-buttoned, white-collared dress and head scarf of their nursemaids, one of whom is posed here by Laure. The head scarf is particularly characteristic of typing the black female servant: by showing it piled high on her head, and tied to the side—its red and yellow tones evoking the madras plaid foulards worn in the French Antilles—Manet deftly captures a reality also seen in anonymous

Fig. 16. Unknown photographer, *Femme noire tenant une petite fille sur les genoux* (Black woman holding a little girl on her lap), 1842–55. Daguerreotype, image: 2¾ × 2⅜ in. (7 × 6 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

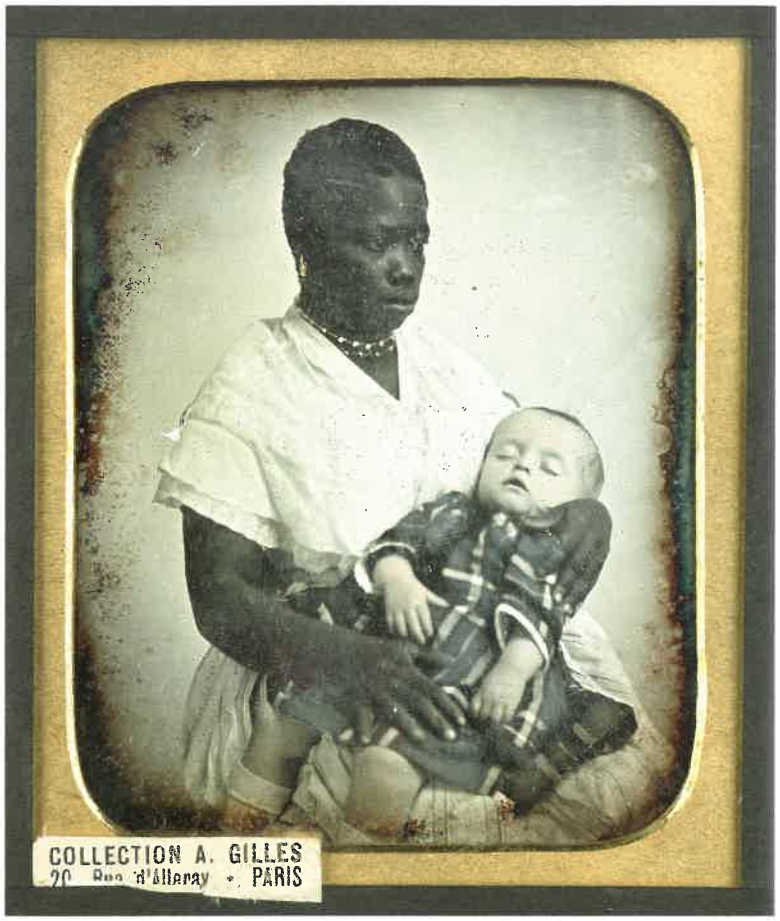

Fig. 17. Unknown photographer, *Femme noire tenant une petite fille sur les genoux* (Black woman holding a little girl on her lap), 1842–55. Daguerreotype, image: 2¾ × 2 3/16 in. (7 × 5.5 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

photographs of black women holding their charges on their laps (figs. 16, 17).[15]

Despite the benevolent effect of these images, satirical imagery reveals that the view of black women servants, as seen in mass media, was often denigrating and suspicious, despite the women's value to status-seeking employers. Black nannies and household maids were frequently caricatured and satirized in overt racial terms in popular media, and portrayed as crafty, deceptive, and uneducated. In an ad for the Silencieuse sewing machine, a grinning black maid scams her employers by covertly using their new (and silent) machine to make a dress to wear to a "servant's ball" (fig. 18), while, in a satirical panorama of a young aristocrat's amorous adventures, a preening black maid seeks to seduce her boss, again with a sly grin, but he does not love her; the title, in her voice, mocks "black French" syntax (fig. 19). This genre of satire illustrates that prejudice was anything but obscure—it was common enough, and loaded enough with racist connotation that it was a highly effective gag line, instantly understood by all.

Fig. 18. "Cora the Seamstress," from an advertisement for the *Silencieuse* sewing machine in *La vie Parisienne,* March 23, 1872. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

This instant recognition is underscored when the subject is well known, as when the black writer Alexandre Dumas père is caricatured, with racially exaggerated features, as a nursemaid to the theater (fig. 20).

It is further seen in at least one instance of derogatory racial commentary about the ostensibly engaging portrayal of a black nanny in Jacques-Eugène Feyen's 1865 painting *Le baiser enfantin* (The childlike kiss; fig. 21).[16] This little-known painting is important for its rare portrayal of one black and one white nanny as social and occupational peers, as they sit together on a bench and enjoy watching their infant charges at play. By depicting both women as nannies, Feyen presents an aspect of everyday life that was typically overlooked by Salon artists in favor of the omnipresent imagery of white women with black maids. *Baiser* is moreover a fine representation of naturalistic painting, with the rich colors and textures of the nannies' attire framing the frilly whites of the infants' frocks. There are subtle ethnic differences between the nannies' attire, such as their contrasting Alsatian and French Caribbean

Fig. 19. "La sultane. Aime bon blanc, lui pas aimer bonne noire" (The sultana. Loves the good white man, who does not love her [because he sees her as a] black maid [*sic*]). From the caricature "Les héros de romans depuis 1780 jusqu' à nos jours" (The heroes of novels from 1780 to the present day), in *La vie Parisienne,* January 1863. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 20. CHAM, Caricature of Alexandre Dumas père as a nanny, n.d. Lithograph, 14⅜ × 9⅞ in. (36.5 × 25 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

headscarves, but both typify well-dressed servants in affluent Parisian households. The black nanny is particularly engaging for the viewer, her face more fully frontal, her downward glance drawing our attention to the antics of the temperamental toddler in her charge as she smiles in amusement. Critical reception for this benevolent gesture, however, belies the racist perceptions, whether intended by the artist or not, that any image of happily smiling servants can call forth; it is described by one admiring Salon critic as "this grin so specific to civilized *bamboulas*."[17]

The critic's choice of this particular term for black women, perceived as extremely derogatory and racist then and now, reveals one reason that *Baiser* was well received by Salon critics in a year when Manet's *Olympia* was disparaged. Even as it captures the authentic charm of the black nanny it retains the racially coded trope of the contentedly smiling or grinning servant, a convention rejected in Manet's more unlovely, and more modern, portrayals of Laure.

Fig. 21. Jacques-Eugène Feyen, *Le baiser enfantin* (The childlike kiss), 1865. Oil on canvas, 42⅛ × 59 1/16 in. (107 × 150 cm). Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

Manet's Portrait of Laure

Manet's first depiction of Laure in *Children,* as a generalized, yet modern, figural type, suggests that, while Manet saw black servants as part of the city's public life, and chose to depict that reality, this awareness was initially a distanced one. They were anonymous figures whom he could well have seen during his strolls around the city. In contrast, his second image of Laure, *La négresse,* is a closely observed portrait of an individual, and thus alternatively titled *Portrait of Laure* herein (fig. 22; see also fig. 1).[18] Once again, with this seldom-discussed representation of a specific personality who compelled his close attention, Manet combines tradition and innovation in both iconographic details and picture-making style, much as he had done months earlier in *Children.*[19]

The portrait, finished in early 1863, depicts the subject in a pale dress, worked in broad brushstrokes, that sits low on the shoulders. The image may appear at first glance to be more a study than a finished painting—the color tones of the shoulders seem to be unfinished and do not match

Fig. 23. Eva Gonzalès, *Une négresse,* ca. 1879–80. Charcoal on paper, 13⅜ × 10¼ in. (34 × 26 cm). Private collection.

Fig. 24. Henri Guérard, *An African Woman, after Eva Gonzalès,* ca. 1888. Zinc etching and aquatint on gray paper, plate: 14¾ × 11½ in. (37.5 × 29.2 cm). Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Esther Mauran Acquisitions Fund.

those of the face, where loose strokes of pigment are left unblended. But such open brushwork and lack of halftones are also seen in other Manet portraits throughout his career; they are an early harbinger of Manet's revolutionary approach to painting. It is a style that depicts the figure more in flat planes of color, loosely bound by outline, than in fully contoured and naturalistically modeled forms.

The portrait inspired at least one artistic investigation of this new mode of representation, by Eva Gonzalès, Manet's only student. The artist gave or loaned this work to Gonzalès for her personal study, and she later made a painting, now lost, and a drawing, *Une négresse,* in which she, like Manet, carefully composed the face, but in profile, while giving a more cursory treatment to the figure below the neck (fig. 23).[20] After Gonzalès's 1883 death in childbirth, her husband, Henri Guérard, made an etching that reconstructed her composition, but in reverse, and with a firmer modeling of the face that, unlike the more painterly works by his wife and Manet, appears to have been directly influenced by pseudoscientific ethnographic photography (fig. 24).[21]

Fig. 22. Édouard Manet, *La négresse (Portrait of Laure)* (detail of fig. 1).

Fig. 25. Édouard Manet, *Victorine Meurent,* ca. 1862. Oil on canvas, 16⅞ × 17¼ in. (42.9 × 43.8 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Richard C. Paine in memory of his father, Robert Treat Paine 2nd.

Manet's own work, however, consistently displayed his distinctive painterly method. During the same period, he made a smaller portrait of Victorine Meurent (fig. 25), the model for the prostitute in *Olympia,* that manifests an uncanny stylistic equivalence with his portrait of Laure. If Laure is a deep-brown form set against a lighter background, Victorine's pale complexion is set against a background of browns similar to Laure's skin tones. The thinner, paler tonalities of Laure's shoulders, which appear to mark the painting as unfinished, are in fact a characteristic of Manet's flattened painting style that can also be seen in Victorine's hair, as well as in the treatment of hands and garments in many other Manet portraits.

This body of work exhibits almost none of the genrelike realism seen in Feyen's *Le baiser enfantin,* even though the Feyen, which was shown at the same 1865 Salon as *Olympia,* features a black nanny posed by a woman who appears to be the same model.[22] In contrast to the posed charm of Feyen's academic illusionism, the contours and modeling of Laure's face and shoulders, like the drape of her dress fabric, are suggested by Manet, but not fully articulated. Feyen's smooth surface underscores his fealty to convention, while Manet leaves the presence of the canvas support manifest. While Manet engages his viewer through Laure's frank gaze, Feyen directs the viewer to her cherubic charge, even as he portrays the nanny's attractive visage in a more naturalistic manner. *La négresse (Portrait of Laure)* depicts the specificity of the model's rounded facial features and her faintly bemused demeanor, with broad, loose brushstrokes. It is a salutary example of Manet's modernity; rather than assigning Laure specific emotions conveyed by the performed smile of genre paintings, he captures her natural expression, leaving it to the viewer to conjure the possibilities for her state of mind. He thus presents a more nuanced study of the subject's character, but with simplified formal means.

Laure, Jeanne Duval, and Racial Interface in Manet's Circle

While there is no known evidence that Manet interacted socially with Laure, he frequently received his friend Charles Baudelaire, the writer, for studio visits (fig. 26). Baudelaire was at times accompanied by Jeanne Duval, a biracial former actress who was his longtime mistress.[23] Manet painted a large portrait of Duval, *Baudelaire's Mistress (Portrait of Jeanne Duval)*, in 1862, the same year as Laure's portrait (fig. 27).[24] This proximity of timing lends credence to Adolphe Tabarant's speculation that it was Baudelaire who introduced Manet to Laure.[25] It is also noteworthy that, during the same period that Manet documented Laure's residence on rue de Vintimille, near Manet's studio, Baudelaire sent letters to Jeanne Duval at 17 rue Sauffroy in the nearby Batignolles; she had earlier lived on the rue Saint-Georges with her maid.[26] Manet's three images of Laure and his portrait of Duval, all painted in 1862–63, therefore underscore the degree of racial and economic diversity among the general population within Manet's environs as well as the multiethnic mix of Manet's close social and artistic circles.

Fig. 26. Félix Nadar, *Portrait of Charles Baudelaire,* 1856. Print on salted paper, 9½ × 7 in. (24 × 17.5 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Baudelaire was not among the twelve artists and writers with whom Manet met every Friday at the Café Guerbois off the Place de Clichy, though he sometimes joined Manet's daily table at the Café de la Nouvelle Athènes on the Place Pigalle, and the two friends often strolled the city together.[27] As a prototypical Baudelairean flâneur, Manet observed every aspect of life, from destitute shantytown dwellers to the statesmen, socialites, and demimondaines, all of whom he portrayed in empathetic and elegant portraits, regardless of social stature.

Duval's relationship with Baudelaire was both turbulent and emotionally intimate, featuring multiple cycles of breakup and reconciliation as well as shared visits with artists and writers and to a coffeehouse on the rue Richelieu.[28] By the time of her Manet portrait, Duval and Baudelaire had been an established couple, if episodically, for two decades, and their relationship drew extensive derisive commentary in published accounts, specifically because of Duval's mixed-race heritage.[29] She appears to have been born to a black Nantes brothel worker and an unknown French father, and was an actress well established in Parisian demimonde circles; she may have been the photographer Nadar's mistress when Baudelaire met her at a Montparnasse theater.[30]

Baudelaire expressed feelings about Duval that acknowledged her as his principal muse for many years but also revealed a mix of admiring and disparaging views about her ethnic heritage. In a September 1856 letter to his mother, after a temporary breakup, he laments that, whenever he saw a fine object, he wanted Duval to be there to admire it with him.[31] Yet his two pen-and-ink sketches of Duval, while sensitively capturing the strong personality and facial features described by Nadar and others (as well as her French Antillaise madras head scarf), were inscribed "quarens quem de voret" ("in search of someone to devour"; figs. 28, 29).

While Duval inspired an extended suite of poems in Baudelaire's seminal volume *Les fleurs du mal* (1857),

Fig. 27. Édouard Manet, *Baudelaire's Mistress (Portrait of Jeanne Duval)*, 1862. Oil on canvas, 35 7/16 × 44 1/2 in. (90 × 113 cm). Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest.

some of the poems similarly exhibit ambivalence—an emotional need and powerful sexual attraction to her as an emblem of idyllic faraway lands, but also exoticizing attitudes about non-European cultures shared by Baudelaire's early idol, Delacroix.[32] As Anne Higonnet writes, in Baudelaire's descriptions of and allusions to Duval, she "evokes the experience of a black woman whose suffering and degradation has obliterated identity."[33] The pressures of public controversy and private turmoil in the couple's relationship may have helped determine the final version of Baudelaire's portrait in Gustave Courbet's allegorical painting *The Artist's Studio* of 1855. Some scholars suggest that a portrait of Duval initially appeared hovering over Baudelaire's shoulder, and though painted out by Courbet, is still discernible as pentimento.[34]

Although Duval was disparaged as a "black Venus" by Baudelaire's mother, Manet painted her in a semi-reclining pose that he also used for bourgeois members of his

Fig. 28. Charles Baudelaire, *Portrait de Jeanne Duval his mistress,* 1865. China ink on paper, 8 1/16 × 5 3/4 in. (20.5 × 14.5 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris (kept at Musée du Louvre, Paris).

Fig. 29. Charles Baudelaire, *Une femme pour Asselineau* (A woman for Asselineau), ca. 1855. Black lead, China ink, 6 3/4 × 7 7/8 in. (17.2 × 19.9 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris (kept at Musée du Louvre, Paris).

Fig. 30. Édouard Manet, *Madame Manet sur un canapé bleu* (Madame Édouard Manet on a blue sofa), 1874. Pastel on brown paper, 19 5/16 × 23 5/8 in. (49 × 60 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

innermost social circle.[35] Duval assumes a seated position on a sofa, her legs elevated and extended somewhat stiffly before her, a pose in which Manet painted his wife, Suzanne, facing in the opposite direction on a blue sofa, a decade later (fig. 30).[36] Beth Archer Brombert notes that, while Duval's tempestuous, on-and-off relationship with Baudelaire may have animated Manet's portrayal of her amidst billowing white skirts and fluttering lace curtains, his wife's prim control of her own ruffles suggests the

Fig. 31. Édouard Manet, *Study for Baudelaire's Mistress (Jeanne Duval),* ca. 1862. Watercolor on paper, 6 9/16 × 9 3/8 in. (16.7 × 23.8 cm). Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany.

static propriety of his married life. Yet the placement of Duval's right hand is comparable to that in Manet's similarly posed portrait of Berthe Morisot, and a version of the demimondaine Duval's green fan is held by Morisot, Manet's sister-in-law, artistic colleague, and upper-middle-class social peer. The similarity of the women's white hosiery and velvety black shoes belies an equivalence in the pictorial worthiness that Manet assigns to these three women of radically different social standing. He was attentive to the sartorial details of Duval's portrayal, evolving her dress from the pink and white stripes in a pastel study (fig. 31) to the blanched white-on-whites of the painting, for an overall effect, highlighted by the green fan, perhaps evocative of his interest in Spanish painting.[37] The pastel may also more accurately capture Duval's light-brown complexion.

Duval was not unique as a person of color circulating among Manet's close associates. The celebrated writer Alexandre Dumas père, whose grandparents were a French aristocrat and an enslaved woman from Haiti, lived on Avenue Frochot, an elegant gated private street one block south of Manet's Place Pigalle café, the Nouvelle Athènes. While Dumas gained international fame for his novels *The Three Musketeers* (1844) and *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1845), he was outspoken about racism in the French upper classes, whose literary salons he frequented, and was frequently racially caricatured in the popular media (see fig. 20).[38] He also published a short novel, *Georges,* in 1843 that dealt with the prevalence of racial prejudice in French Caribbean society, even as he maintained ties with the region, as shown in his somber portrait by the Guadeloupean photographer Alexis Gouin (fig. 32).

Dumas also sat for portraits by several renowned Impressionist photographers, and had humorous exchanges with Nadar during portrait sittings.[39] Étienne Carjat, a friend of Manet and Baudelaire, made a late-life portrait of Dumas in a style that, while capturing the gravitas apparent in Carjat's earlier portrait of Baudelaire, subtly references Dumas's penchant for flamboyant self-parody. Dumas, who lived lavishly and supported numerous mistresses, was a sought-after habitué of both the elite salons of his father's aristocratic class and the café society of upper-class males and their demimondaine companions—young women from working-class backgrounds who worked as café waitresses, shopgirls, stage performers, and prostitutes at varying levels of economic success.

Duval and Dumas thus both embody a duality of racial attitudes. Each had intimate personal relationships and social privileges transcending racial lines, yet each was confronted with racial animosity and prejudice. This decidedly mixed reception reveals a multifaceted black presence, yet a racially based anxiety, as embedded in the

Fig. 32. Alexis Gouin, *Portrait d'Alexandre Dumas (père),* ca. 1851. Daguerreotype, 2⅝ × 2⅜ in. (6.7 × 6 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

social fabric of Manet's day. It contextualizes Manet's representations of Laure and Duval.

Alexandre Dumas fils, the illegitimate son of the elder Dumas, was also portrayed by Nadar and others, including the painter Léon Bonnat (fig. 33). He chronicled the mores of the Second Empire demimondaine in the 1850s play *La dame aux camélias* (The lady with the camellias), which inspired the Verdi opera *La Traviata.* The 2015 Paris Opéra production of *Traviata,* first performed in Paris in 1856 at the Théâtre-Italien, features a reproduction of the painting *Olympia*, and the style of the heroine's act 1 dress is reminiscent of Manet's portrait of Duval (fig. 34). As in his other works, Dumas fils draws on the plight of his own mother and of his abandoned Haitian great-grandmother, as well as his brief affair with the courtesan Marie Duplessis,

Fig. 33. Léon Bonnat, *Alexandre Dumas (fils),* 1886. Oil on canvas, 30¾ × 24^{13}⁄$_{16}$ in. (78 × 63 cm). Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

Fig. 34. Scene from Verdi's *La Traviata* with a reproduction after Manet's *Olympia,* customized with the faces of the performers, Paris Opéra production, 2015.

known for her beauty and self-taught artistic achievements, who died at the age of twenty-three. She was the direct inspiration for *Camélias*, his story of a tragic young woman whose loyalty is exploited by rich male patrons; the language Verdi used to describe the heroine also has strong similarities with Baudelaire's characterization of Jeanne Duval. A caricature satirizes Dumas fils's creative persona as a champion of the tragic "wronged woman" (fig. 35).

Dumas fils was known to be a friend of Manet at the time of *Camélias*'s Paris debut, to the extent that Manet traveled with him to Normandy the day after the successful opening. Scholars note that Olympia is the name of the rival of Marguerite Gautier, Dumas's heroine in the play; Manet's familiarity with the *Camélias* narrative may thus have influenced his decision to paint *Olympia.*[40]

By just a few years, Dumas fils's *Camélias* prefigured the life story of one of his father's other mistresses, the young mixed-race, New Orleans–born actress Adah Isaacs Menken (fig. 36). Menken, one of the most highly paid American actresses of the period, and an aspiring writer, began an affair with Dumas père, who was almost twice her age, during her highly publicized tour of London and Paris in 1864–66 (fig. 37).[41] Menken gained public notoriety both for her relationship with Dumas and for her role in the play *Mazeppa,* in which she wore a body stocking to appear nude while riding a horse onstage. She was photographed in costume for many roles, including as Marguerite Gautier from *La dame aux camélias* (fig. 38). Menken died in Paris, at age thirty-three, after a sudden illness.

What we know of Jeanne Duval's final years rendered true-to-life the archetypal tragic ending that was invariably the fate of demimondaine heroines of the era's works of opera and literature.[42] Nadar wrote of spotting her hobbling along a city street years after Baudelaire's death, in apparently failing health, just before the siege of Paris during the 1870 Franco-Prussian War's Commune.[43] Many thousands of Parisians died from starvation and disease during the war's siege of Paris. There is no known subsequent mention of Duval.

Jeanne Duval, Alexandre Dumas père and fils, and Adah Menken were early examples of a black presence in the environs of the Pigalle entertainment district that expanded exponentially in the decades after their deaths. Menken was in Paris in the early years of an ever-growing

Fig. 35. Gédéon [Gédéon Baril], *La dame aux camélias* (The lady with camellias), May 2, 1868. Lithograph, 18⅝ × 11⅝ in. (47.2 × 29.4 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 36. Unknown photographer, *Adah Isaacs Menken,* ca. 1865. New York Public Library Digital Collections, Billy Rose Theatre Division.

Fig. 37. A. Liébert and Co., *Alexandre Dumas père and Adah Isaacs Menken,* n.d. Carte de visite (calling card), albumen silver print. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 38. Charles Reutlinger (?), including, at lower right, *Adah Isaacs Menken as Marguerite Gautier in La dame aux camélias*, ca. 1860s. Albumen silver prints. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

G-166920

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G166922

Marguerite Sanchez

G166923

Fig. 39. Henry Rocher, *Edmonia Lewis,* ca. 1870. Albumen silver print, 3⅝ × 2 1/16 in. (9.2 × 5.2 cm). National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 40. Camille Silvy, *Sarah Forbes Bonetta (Sarah Davies),* 1862. Albumen silver print, 3¼ × 2¼ in. (8.3 × 5.6 cm). National Portrait Gallery, London.

number of African American artists, actors, and writers whose European tours included high-profile visits to Paris during Manet's time. They included the landscape painter Robert Seldon Duncanson, the Rome-based sculptor Edmonia Lewis (fig. 39), and the Shakespearean actor Ira Aldridge, who met with Alexandre Dumas père.[44] Many free families of color in New Orleans sent their children to schools in France and some settled in Paris, including the playwright Victor Séjour, who had several successful plays produced in Paris during the 1850s and 1860s.[45] A black British link is marked by the French photographer Camille Silvy, who portraitized Manet and spent many years in London. He was commissioned by the British royal family to make wedding portraits of Sarah Bonetta Davies, a young woman of West African origin who was orphaned in a British military expedition and became a goddaughter of Queen Victoria (fig. 40).[46] The early African American expatriate community saw significant

new arrivals in the early twentieth century, when many well-known creative personalities spent extended periods in Paris or became long-term expatriates. Legendary performers and writers including Josephine Baker, Katherine Dunham, and Langston Hughes lived and worked in and around the same Place Pigalle entertainment district frequented by Manet, Dumas, and their circles a half-century earlier, until the later evolution of the Left Bank as the epicenter of creative Paris (see fig. 2).

The Free Black Working Class of Paris and Manet's Gallery of Outsiders

If Jeanne Duval and the Dumas family embody the extent to which interracial social contacts were commonplace within Manet's immediate artistic circle, then Laure represents the greater number of black Parisians who were intermittently visible along the margins of that world. Even though Laure may have been an associate of Jeanne Duval's, we have almost no factual information about her independent of Manet's description.[47] Yet Laure manifests the fact that northern Paris in the late nineteenth century was home not just to prominent blacks, but to a small but highly visible population of ordinary black people, either born in France or new migrants, often from the Antilles.

As the histories of black Paris have developed, scholars, while noting a paucity of census data, suggest a numerical stasis in this population from the 1848 emancipation of slavery in French colonies until the 1950s postwar period.[48] These accounts suggest that in the postwar years northern Paris had the highest concentrations of residents of French Caribbean origin, and they further appear to support the presumption that this pattern existed in the nineteenth century as well (see fig. 3).[49]

Socioeconomic conditions in the French Antilles motivated a small but steady stream of migration to the metropole that, after the 1950s, surged into a postwar wave of mass migration.[50] While prominent black Parisians later joined the French avant-garde's early twentieth-century move to the Left Bank, northern Paris—especially from the Barbès-Rochechouart area just east of Pigalle to Belleville and Gare du Nord—remained a major location for West and North Africans living in central Paris, even as the Paris banlieues became home to much greater numbers after World War II, including immigrants from Africa, as guest worker programs accelerated after the 1950s. It is this combination of the newer banlieues and the northern areas of central Paris that hosts many black Parisians today.

The even keel of Paris's late nineteenth-century black population can be attributed to a sense that abolition, while attracting strong support among the French political intelligentsia, was not the same burning social issue in 1848, on a stand-alone basis, that it would be fifteen years later in the United States.[51] It was instead, like anticlerical and anti-imperial views, among the perspectives that came hand-in-hand with the much higher-profile republican movement. Just as France's first short-lived abolition of slavery in 1794 was an outcome of the French Revolution, its final 1848 abolition was part of the establishment of the short-lived republic that preceded the Second Empire. It is therefore important to understand that any visual expression by Manet of a common humanity across race and social class most likely stemmed from his adamant and well-known republican political views.[52]

After the 1848 abolition, moreover, persons of color were not unique as migrants in Paris. During the mid-nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution, entire families moved from the French provinces to Paris, where young women from poor families could find work in shops, the entertainment and sex industries, or as self-employed vendors and service providers. Migrants from the French Caribbean could thus be seen overall as a part of the era's broader-based working-class migrations, internationally and within France.

Manet's comment in his notebook that Laure lived at 11 rue [de] Vintimille, residing on the working-class third floor there, underscored the mix of economic classes living in close proximity in his neighborhood. While the area included one of Paris's most concentrated black populations, it also abutted the labyrinthian medieval allies and shantytowns that, though long home to workers and migrants, were being razed by Baron Haussmann, Napoleon III's prefect of the Seine during the 1860s, to make way for the broad boulevards and plazas of modern Paris.[53] For the flâneur artist, such marginal figures were among those deemed worthy aesthetic subjects.[54] *La négresse* is striking in its resemblance to Manet's treatment of other neighborhood outsiders, *The Absinthe Drinker* and *The Street Singer:* both, like Laure, were subjects of some of his early portrayals of area residents and societal outsiders (figs. 41, 42). The works share a

Fig. 41. Édouard Manet, *The Absinthe Drinker,* 1859. Oil on canvas, 71 1/16 × 41 5/8 in. (180.5 × 105.6 cm). Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

Fig. 42. Édouard Manet, *The Street Singer,* 1862. Oil on canvas, 67 3/8 × 41 5/8 in. (171.1 × 105.8 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Bequest of Sarah Choate Sears in memory of her husband, Joshua Montgomery Sears.

blank background of brown-gray tonalities that keeps our attention focused on the figure. The absinthe drinker's pant leg displays the same kind of outlined shaping of flat color bands seen around Laure's shoulders. This loose, open brushwork and flattened form in *The Street Singer*, while appearing to some observers as unfinished, was a deliberate characteristic of Manet's radical new painting style.

La négresse: From Exotic Symbol to Creole Paris

Manet's *La négresse* is simultaneously rooted in conventions of nineteenth-century representations of black women and also a firm break with them. Comparing it with an early precedent, Marie-Guillemine Benoist's 1800 painting *Portrait d'une négresse* (Portrait of a black woman; fig. 43), underscores the implication of academy-sanctioned painting methods in the representation of a black woman; such a woman's life in pre-abolition Paris was markedly more circumscribed than that suggested by Manet's Laure in the early years after the second and final 1848 abolition. The woman who posed Benoist's *Négresse* was a servant of the artist's brother-in-law, a French Navy officer, who brought the model to Paris during a visit from his base in the Antilles.[55] Before 1848, black household servants of Antillean origin—whether slaves or free during the short-lived abolition of 1794–1802—were technically not enslaved when they accompanied their masters to metropolitan France. But their opportunities to earn a living, should they try, were likely limited by the extensive social and financial networks of wealthy slave owners visiting Paris.

Benoist, a former student of Jacques-Louis David, exhibited the painting at the Salon of 1800, after painting the portrait in honor of the first French abolition of slavery in its territories in 1794 (which was overturned in 1802).[56] Benoist's portrayal of the young woman featured a graceful rendering of the seated woman's slim figure, deep-brown skin tones, and poised facial expression, seen in half view. While Benoist was attentive to the specificity of her model's facial features—the irregular hairline and somber, slightly guarded expression—her overriding concern was to portray her as a symbol more than as an individual; the artist, in contrast to Manet, appears to have never recorded her model's name. Although the model is portrayed as emblematic of liberty, she can be assumed to have had little or no ability to influence the manner of her portrayal.

The model's blue shawl and the red ribbon accentuating her white dress reference the French Tricolore. Her stylish French clothing signifies the anticipated new role of freed slaves from the territories within French society. Some reviewers focused on the issue of slavery, rather than the painting's formal qualities, and praised the Salon's display of the painting as a salute to liberty. Virtually all art critics, however, revealed deep-rooted racist attitudes in their denouncements of Benoist's choice of subject matter, stating that the image, especially its deep-brown skin tones, was an "affront to the art of painting."[57]

The front of her white Empire-style gown, then at the height of fashion, is folded down to expose her left breast. Two centuries earlier, Raphael had employed this pose in his widely admired painting *La Fornarina* (1518–19). Since then, when used in depictions of female allegorical figures, the bared breast had been emblematic of liberty or divinity, although other meanings are also relevant given the context of slavery for the model. By 1800 the nude breast was considered by critics to be too erotically charged to be acceptable in portraits of known living subjects; from the model's subject position, this nudity could well have been more reminiscent of the practice of stripping black women to the waist at slave markets.[58] Critics also described their revulsion at the juxtaposition of black skin and luxurious white fabrics, especially given the presumed contact between the white female painter and the sitter necessary to drape the fabrics, which carried strong connotations of illicit eroticism.

This context underscores the transitional aspect of Manet's portrait of Laure with her breasts covered, and in attire that places her as a black member of the French proletariat. It constitutes a clear break with her dramatically articulated and exotically attired predecessors, whose attributes establish them as residents of colonies or as emblems of political ideals. This break is underscored by the pared-down pictorial values with which he turns toward modern life and away from the seductively

Fig. 43. Marie-Guillemine Benoist, *Portrait d'une négresse* (Portrait of a black woman), 1800. Oil on canvas, 31⅞ × 25⅝ in. (81 × 65 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris.


POURQUOI NAÎTRE ESCLAVE !

decorative works of the past. Both the portrait and Manet's depiction of the maid in *Olympia* are therefore among the first modernist paintings in which a black woman is portrayed not as an exoticized foreigner but as part of the working class of Paris.[59] In 1802, Napoleon reinstated slavery in France, setting off a decades-long antislavery movement, until slavery was abolished again in 1848. French activists also supported the American abolitionist movement through the 1865 Civil War, and the human rights of freed blacks afterward; thus many fine art images of black women during this period served abolitionist themes.

The 1872 bust *La négresse (Pourquoi! Naître esclave!)* (The black woman [Why born a slave?]) by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux typifies the continuity of this iconography throughout the nineteenth century, despite Manet's modernist interventions (fig. 44). Produced in terra-cotta for sale in an edition, the busts were adapted from the allegorical figure of Africa in Carpeaux's monumental sculpture *Les quatre parties du monde* (Four parts of the world) for the Fountain of the Observatory in the Luxembourg Gardens. The bust reflects the artist's abolitionist political stance through the inscription "Why born a slave?" on the base, and its idealized, theatrical rendering of the Africa figure. Like Benoist, Carpeaux depicted his figure with bared breast, which though based in notions of liberty, still marked black women in a sexualized manner. Even though the Carpeaux bust is recognizable as that of a popular black Parisian model, such images of bare-breasted black women no longer drew the outrage that had greeted Benoist's *La négresse*.[60] Over the decades, the consistency of this iconography had become an accepted, even reassuring, emblem of the stability of the French class structure and of its empire, due to its firm relegation of these figures to the realm of symbolism. Given its assumptions about the presumed viewer, as well as its disregard for the possible self-presentation preferences of its subject, this mode of representation, with varying degrees of intention, amounted to a representation of empire.[61] It is, arguably, only when works of fine art depict the black female figure in modes consistent with the model's actual subject position, as a free person of color, that these works can be seen as modern. Still, the purely visual appeal of these symbolic images, with their finely modeled figural treatment, may for some viewers mitigate their mixed ideological meanings.

Manet's radical iconographic turn is perhaps best seen in a direct comparison of his portrait of Laure with Delacroix's 1820s portraits of the model Aspasie, one of its most direct precedents (figs. 45, 46). Both artists depicted a free black woman who was a resident in France, not a visitor from a distant land. But while Delacroix's images of Aspasie straddle the pictorial values of empire and liberty, and ultimately undermine the latter, Manet's images of Laure more consistently project republican humanism.

As detailed by Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, Delacroix's studio journals make clear his intention to challenge prevailing conventions of female portraiture by painting Aspasie, using a mulatto model to achieve an image that merged the completely disparate modes of representing black and white women.[62] His choice to represent a woman of color as the subject of a portrait, as someone other than an exoticized symbol or servant, was inventive at that time, when slavery was still in full force in the French colonies. The virulent racism within France itself was manifest in the popular culture of the era; this was apparent in the harrowing saga from the previous decade when Saartjie Baartman, a South African woman was, due to her full-hipped physiognomy, displayed in a degrading and dehumanizing manner, naked in animal cages, and billed "the Hottentot Venus" in traveling vaudeville shows in England and France (fig. 47).[63] Baartman was perhaps the single most egregious example of French pseudoscientific assertions of black women's immutable inferiority to European standards of female beauty, morality, and intelligence. This presumption was not only a key component of Europe's sociopolitical justification of imperial conquest and the slave trade in its colonies; it was also manifest in fine art's rigid representational modes for non-European subjects.

Delacroix's images of Aspasie, while refusing the most overt racism of the period in certain individual portrayals, remain implicated with imperial visual agendas; in the end, these works, taken collectively, leave the stereotypes intact, but express them within the devices of fine art.

Fig. 44. Workshop of Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *La négresse (Pourquoi! Naître esclave!)* (The black woman [Why born a slave?]), 1872. Cast terra-cotta, height: 24 in. (61 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, gift of James S. Deely, 1997, in memory of Patricia Johnson Deely, 1997.

Fig. 45. Eugène Delacroix, *Aspasie,* ca. 1824. Oil on canvas, 31⅞ × 25⅝ in. (81 × 65 cm). Musée Fabre, Montpellier.

Delacroix eschews the carnivalesque public display and depraved exploitation used to define Saartjie in popular culture as the hypersexual yet grotesque black woman. He instead invokes the fine art trope of the courtesan to express hypersexuality as unchecked sensuality. In the first portrait of Aspasie, the model's upswept hair and quiet facial expression portray at first glance a modest, ordinary persona. But the pale-toned blouse, though simple and modest in style, is draped to display an expanse of bare breasts that becomes more pronounced with each successive version of the portrait—the three portraits combine to infer sexual availability. This suggestion is made explicit in the third portrait, in which she is essentially bare breasted, the blouse now a mere drape arranged to enhance the display of a prostitute's body available for hire (see fig. 45).[64] Delacroix later made *Portrait of a Woman in a Blue Turban* (see fig. 46), an Orientalizing yet facially individualized portrait of a modestly dressed woman who may have been

Fig. 46. Eugène Delacroix, *Portrait of a Woman in a Blue Turban,* ca. 1827. Oil on canvas, 23¾ × 19⅜ in. (60.33 × 49.21 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, the Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund, Inc., in honor of Patricia McBride.

Aspasie, a possible modulation of the previous series. Still, his serial portraits of 1824, taken as a whole, serve to intensify stereotypical significations, by suggesting that for a black woman, modest attire can never connote respectability; it is but a thin veneer of culture, a temporary masking of an excessively sensuous nature, a nature that must be suppressed and subordinated within European culture or situated in exotic or symbolic venues wholly outside European culture. It is the duality of this context, combined with the visual pleasure of simply observing and appreciating the pictorial accomplishment of these works as objects of fine art, that challenges the viewer today.

Within the context of these precedents we can see Manet's representations of Laure as fully clothed, her garb

Fig. 47. Léon de Wailly, *Vénus hottentote (Hottentot Venus),* 1805. Watercolor on vellum, 18⅛ × 13 in. (46 × 33 cm). Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, Paris.


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Figs. 48 and 49. Félix Nadar, *Maria l'Antillaise* (Maria the West Indian woman), between 1856 and 1859. Prints on salted paper, each 9⅞ × 7½ in. (25 × 19 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

off-the-shoulder but revealing no cleavage, as a break with the representation of empire, and a turn to a more unambiguous representation of everyday life in Paris. The radical aspect of this turn is underscored when Manet's Laure is compared not just to Delacroix's precedent, but to works by artists of Manet's own time. Nadar, a regular at Manet's Friday salons at the Café Guerbois, was an early enabler of Manet's young Impressionist protégées Monet, Renoir, and Morisot; the first Impressionist exhibition was held in his studios. But even though Nadar worked in photography, the medium then most emphatically linked to modernity, he repeated Delacroix's approach to black female representation in his portraits *Maria l'Antillaise* (Maria the West Indian woman; figs. 48, 49).[65] Two photographs of Maria pair images of the model clothed in elegant attire, combining a European artist's model drape and a Caribbean head wrap. The second bare-breasted view—with the drape pulled back like that of Delacroix's *Aspasie*—in this context may suggest sexual availability. Nadar's paired images are reminders of a continued stereotypical trope, not just in overtly ethnographic imagery, but in some of the most respected art photography of Manet's time.

Yet Nadar's portraits of Maria also reveal a commonality with the evolving modernism of Manet's Laure, in that both Laure and Maria are shown in attire that appears to be a blend of French and Antillean influences. The artist's model drape worn by Maria is a European-style garment with no racial signifiers—Nadar used it in many portraits of women, black and white, including Sarah Bernhardt, one

of the best-known French actresses of the day. The drape provides a neutral background that allows Nadar to focus on capturing his subject's individuality, as revealed by facial expression and pose. This approach was Nadar's own modernizing gesture, like Manet's pictorial flatness, supplanting past portraiture that defined its subjects in large part by the meticulous detailing of attributes, interiors, and fashions. Yet Maria's head wrap, and her floral-print skirt, are French Antillean in style. Likewise, Laure wears a head wrap, though rendered in loosely brushed bands of color that minimalize pattern, together with a European-style dress or blouse.

Parisian Creole Culture and Modes of Representation

Manet appears to capture some of the complexity of the sartorial choices that could be observed among black Parisian women in everyday 1860s life. Laure wears a subtly colored, vaguely patterned foulard and simple jewelry comprising a double-pearl pendant earring in the one visible ear and a necklace of colored stones set in golden links. To a much greater extent than Nadar's Maria, Laure's attire projects a hybridity, a blend of French and French Caribbean influences, that came to characterize black French life during and after this period.[66] A comparison of Manet's Laure with images from popular culture and fashions of the day can help evaluate the assumption that Laure is a representation, albeit a tentative and ambivalent one, of a modern black woman who is presented as she might appear in the daily life of 1860s Paris.

One body of contextual images for Manet's Laure comprises contemporaneous ethnographic portraits made in multiple mediums, but especially in sculpture and photography. These images can perhaps help ascertain what Laure was not intended to represent. Two Charles-Henri-Joseph Cordier sculptures, *Capresse des colonies* (1861) and *African Venus* (1851; fig. 50), reveal stark differences in attire and presentational style. By the time of the mid-century rise of the Orientalist style, epitomized in sculpture by Cordier's *Capresse,* the representational norms for the black Other had become part of establishment art. While the polychrome *Capresse* appears to be a documentary representation of its sitter, the presumably allegorical flowers sprouting from her hair suggest that this figure may actually be a blend of the artist's imagination and observed reality. Its hyperrealism is a display of the Orientalizing impulse to construct images of the Other that may not have reflected contemporary reality in colonized locales. The earlier *African Venus* is more convincing as an individualized portrait of the young African woman who served as its model during a visit to Paris. Many observers admired Cordier works such as *African Venus* as dignified portraits of individuals from non-Western cultures—even though in a manner inspired by the portrait sculpture of Greek and Roman antiquity, as attested by the artist's fluid molding of the model's distinct facial features and draped garment, as well as his meticulous detailing of her thickly wrapped hair and ornate jewelry.[67] *African Venus* and its male companion piece, *Said Abdallah* (1849), were among the first works to enter the art and artifacts collection of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, whose founder, Arturo Schomburg, purchased the Cordier *Venus* during a trip to Paris despite its ethnographic origins.[68]

A set of photographic portraits, described as images of women from the Antilles and taken by anthropologist Jacques-Philippe Potteau, portray black women said to be residents of Paris.[69] The paired images, posed in profile and frontally, including portraits of Louise Kuling (figs. 51, 52), suggest the ethnographic roots of Nadar's paired Marias. Kuling's impassive expression and rigid posture imply that the purpose was to display the clothing, the hairstyle, the physiognomy of the sitter, but not to reveal a specific personality. Although she gazes toward the viewer, unlike Laure, it is from a distance that is too great to allow an immediacy of connection. She is an ethnographic type.

On the other hand, Potteau's frontal portrait of Marie Lassus, a nineteen-year-old student in Paris from New Orleans, seems to capture the woman's youthful curiosity, well-groomed coiffure, and fashionable attire in a less wooden manner (see fig. 10). Her simple two-tiered earrings and jewelry are very similar to those worn by Manet's Laure. But Potteau paired this image, like that of Kuling,

Fig. 50. Charles-Henri-Joseph Cordier, *African Venus,* 1851. Bronze with silver and gold patination, marble, 20⅛ × 8½ × 6½ in. (51.1 × 21.6 × 16.5 cm). Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Jesse Metcalf Fund, Museum of Art.

Figs. 51 and 52. Jacques-Philippe Potteau, *Louise Kuling, Creole, 35 years old, born in Norfolk Virginia,* 1860–69. Collodion process print on aristotype paper, mounted together: 8¼ × 10⅝ in. (21 × 27 cm). Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris.

with a profile image seemingly intended solely to document the physical features that pseudosciences such as phrenology co-opted to suggest an ethnic type, as defined by the photograph's label.

The fact that the women in each of Potteau's portraits are bareheaded suggests that black women in 1860s Paris did not necessarily wear the foulard as part of their ordinary daywear. A well-known creole ship-boarding song, "Adieu foulard, adieu madras," sung at departure celebrations for migrants leaving the French Caribbean for Paris, seems to commemorate an end to wearing the foulard upon embarkment.[70] The foulard may well have been part of a workplace "uniform," required by affluent employers of domestic workers in order to display their ability to afford presumably more expensive staff from distant lands. While the foulard was also donned by choice for French Antillean cultural celebrations, a domestic worker wearing a foulard would thus project the same significations as a twenty-first-century household maid wearing a crisp white apron over a black dress. This

uniform could also be an asset for stage actresses (such as Jeanne Duval; see fig. 28) or to draw customers and extract higher prices in the sex and popular entertainment sectors. It was commonplace enough in these sites of paid employment that it was the subject of racially derogatory satire (see figs. 18, 19).

In this context, an attempt to stylistically place the delicate, upright neck ruffle, off-the-shoulder neckline, and loosely fitted full sleeves of Laure's dress or blouse in Manet's *La négresse* is especially engaging. The portraitized Laure does not wear the more tailored day dress styles, with kerchief or neck ribbon, seen in Baudelaire's sketch of Duval, in the Potteau ethnographic portraits, or even in her own prior depiction as a nursemaid in *Children in the Tuileries Gardens.* Neither does she wear the picturesque floral prints of Nadar's overtly exoticized Maria. The specific style of the neckline ruffle, which is bordered at the seam with a thin satin ribbon, resembles the fashions of Parisian grisettes, who were extensively sketched by Constantin Guys (figs. 53, 54), the flâneur artist who

Fig. 53. Constantin Guys, *Young Spanish Girl,* n.d. Watercolor on paper, 7 × 6 in. (17.78 × 15.24 cm). Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., Acquired 1937.

Fig. 54. Constantin Guys, *Portrait de Jeanne Duval (présumé,* research ongoing), mid-19th century. Ink, wash, and watercolor on paper, 8 7/16 × 6 in. (21.4 × 15.2 cm). Collection of Jean Bonna.

inspired Baudelaire's *Painter of Modern Life.* There is a similar matte finish and linenlike consistency of the fabric, and similarly monochromatic color tones, which match the creamy hues of Laure's dress. Laure's off-the-shoulder bodice is shared by Guys's *Young Spanish Girl,* who, like Laure, displays her physical attributes but covers the bosom. The grisette held moderate ranking within the hierarchy of Parisian demimondaines—elevated above the streetwalker, sometimes maintained in somewhat tenuous comfort by a handful of loyal male patrons. She might also work as a shopgirl or as a café waitress, but was not yet the grand courtesan who lived luxuriously, held opulent balls, and hosted salons.[71] Still, photographs and drawings reveal that mixed-race and black women, often elaborately attired, were present in higher-end establishments (see figs. 70, 72). It is reasonable to conclude that Laure's attire in *La négresse* is a conflation of French Caribbean references and a version of the grisette attire found within the Paris demimonde. This style, combined with her foulard, would be consistent with the "uniform" of a woman employed in entertainment, in shops, or at sites of sex work, part of whose job, perhaps, is to perform the erotic connotations of women of Antillean origin. It leaves open the possibility of a multiplicity of roles.

Laure of *Olympia:* A Revision of Precedent

In early 1863, Manet resumed his work with the model Laure, now together with Victorine Meurent, for the making of a major work in which he transforms their images from the mode of portraiture to that of performance. In the painting later known as *Olympia,* each model posed a role emblematic of modern life—Victorine as the unsentimental prostitute who was rapidly replacing the deferential, Renaissance-style courtesan, and Laure as a representation of the changing racial composition of the Parisian working class (fig. 55).

While *La négresse (Portrait of Laure)* was an empathetic depiction of Laure, Manet positioned her as Olympia's maid with seeming ambivalence. Here, Laure is again clad in attire reflecting hybrid French and Antillaise influences. Yet the overall effect, on first impression, is very different. In *Olympia,* Laure has a central place within the pictorial plane, well-positioned to be a focal point. But other details conspire to exactly the opposite effect, and the figure's modernizing features are all but obliterated for many viewers. Still, with sustained attention, the figure of Laure in *Olympia* reveals a metonymy, a duality of overt tradition and sublimated innovation.[72] The figure evokes stock types, yet begins to evolve from then-prevalent modes of stereotyping, while being wholly consistent with the formal devices of modernist painting.

T. J. Clark stated that a defining characteristic of modernity in 1860s Paris was the breakdown of long-established bourgeois behavioral norms, including a shift of recreational activities from private to public venues and a more overt presence of prostitution within society.[73] Manet's representation of the prostitute in *Olympia* has long been understood to be the crux of this discontinuity. Clark provides a comprehensive iconographic lineage for *Olympia* and documents the extensive critical and artistic commentary about this figure, which he concludes was "the main representation of modernity in 1860s Paris"; but he asserts that the maid, while "modern," ultimately meant "nothing."[74]

Yet a close formal analysis of the painting, as well as a broader examination of the multiple contexts within which *Olympia* was created, titled, and displayed, suggests that Manet's revisionary depiction presented the black maid as a second focal point and site of disruptive modernity. This doubled lack of fixity, or disruption of pictorial convention, was crucial to the modernity of Manet's *Olympia* and to the silence and negative initial response it provoked upon its first showing at the 1865 Salon. Manet thus maintains, even intensifies, the de-Orientalized cultural hybridity of Laure's depiction initiated in *La négresse.* Manet's continuing commitment to observed truths noted during his routine encounters with women of color, whether as passersby in the park or through social and artistic contacts (Jeanne Duval), can be seen as an early modern artistic representation of the emerging cultural hybridity, defined by Maryse Condé a century and a half later, of the free black community then staking out a place in the same northern Paris neighborhood where Manet lived and worked.[75]

The modernizing rupture that Manet's painting ushers in is evident in even a superficial comparison with Titian's 1538 *Venus of Urbino* (fig. 56), a Venetian Renaissance painting invariably cited as the source for *Olympia.*[76] Manet flattens the spatial depth, refusing the Renaissance perspective of Titian's work as he forecloses the view into the room with a heavily draped curtain and shadowy tonalities. The scene presented to us is that of two figures thrust into the foreground of a shallow two-dimensional space, rather than of a window through which we are drawn into an illusion of interior space. This closing off of a view into depth would normally deflect attention from content to surface as the materiality of the support competes for visual interest.

Manet simultaneously invites viewer interest in *Olympia* through radical revisions of expected figure tropes. The depiction of the prostitute transforms one standard by converting Titian's invitingly diffident courtesan into a confrontational sex-for-pay worker. Olympia meets our gaze with an assertive stare in place of the demure glance of Venus; her gray-white flesh and thin, flattened physiognomy replace the naturalistic tones and voluptuous curves of her Renaissance precedent. Manet's depiction of the prostitute laid bare the modern reality that prostitution as a sex-for-cash commodity enterprise was supplanting the tradition of the cosseted and discreet courtesan who, with a luxurious lifestyle maintained by wealthy patrons, existed outside the money economy. It was therefore a key factor disrupting the fixity of the social classes in modern Parisian life.

The maid is likewise presented in a revisionary manner. While Titian's maid is proportionally much smaller than the

Fig. 55. Édouard Manet, *Olympia,* 1863. Oil on canvas, 51 3/8 × 74 13/16 in. (130.5 × 190 cm). Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

Fig. 56. Titian, *Venus of Urbino,* 1538. Oil on canvas, 46 15/16 × 65 3/16 in. (119.2 × 165.5 cm). Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence.

courtesan, Manet's maid assumes a spatial dimension nearly equivalent to that of the prostitute. And though positioned behind and subordinate to the prostitute, Manet's maid faces us from the foreground of the picture, in contrast to her counterpart, who turns away far in the background depth. The greater equivalence between the two figures in *Olympia* sets up a counterbalancing relationship between them in purely formal terms—the maid's blackness is heightened by the prostitute's whiteness, and vice versa—with the effect, for many critics, of transferring a racially charged connotation of uncleanliness and illicit sexuality from the black maid to the white prostitute. Beginning with Manet's friend Émile Zola's review of *Olympia* at the Salon, this is the primary context in which the maid has been historicized, if mentioned at all.[77] Still, the maid's frontal placement may also suggest that Manet intended her to be an object of attention in her own right.

This impression is heightened by Manet's second revision, centered on the style of the maid's attire, aspects of which extend the sharp break, seen in the earlier *La négresse,* with conventional images of black women in nineteenth-century French art. The maid wears a bulky white dress of a vaguely European style, not the brightly patterned, seductively draped, and exotically styled garment typical of nineteenth-century depictions of black women within female spaces, such as Delacroix's Orientalist icon *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (Women of Algiers in their apartment; 1834) and other exoticized harem scenes (figs. 57, 58). The 1870 painting *Moorish Bath,* by Jean-Léon Gérome typifies the seductive visual opulence—in its treatment of surface, texture, and decorative patterning—with which Orientalist images aestheticized what is essentially a portrayal of two slaves, with the black servant displaying the bare breasts,

Fig. 57. Eugène Delacroix, *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (Women of Algiers in their apartment), 1834. Oil on canvas, 70⅞ × 90⅛ in. (180 × 229 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 58. Léon Bénouville, *Esther à l'Odalisque* (Esther as Odalisque), 1844. Oil on canvas, 48$^{13}/_{16}$ × 63$^{13}/_{16}$ in. (124 × 162 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Pau.

muscular arms, and elaborate head scarf and jewelry that define this genre (fig. 59).[78]

Laure's European garment, in combination with the subtle head scarf or foulard, captures a *creolité* that is more suggested than defined. This simple head wrap disrupts one of the most consistent attributes of the black female's exoticization in nineteenth-century French art. A highly defined and elaborately wrapped head scarf is visible in precedent paintings, whether the black woman is posed as a maid in a harem by Delacroix or by Benoist as an emblem of liberty. But as with the portrait of Laure, Manet depicts republican modernity in *Olympia,* not the Romanticized exoticism of empire. Laure's attire is on the one hand similar to that in available images of brothel attire; it is also not unlike the night robe styles of a respectable French woman in her boudoir.[79] The blend of European and Antillean influences in the garb of a black woman is an early representation of the sartorial hybridity of the black woman resident in Paris.

It is of even greater importance to this figure's revisionary depiction that the breasts of Olympia's maid are fully covered and only vaguely detailed. As with the portrait, this treatment supersedes the bared breast and suggestively delineated curves that were a standard aspect of images of black women in nineteenth-century French art. As seen in the work of Benoist, Nadar, Delacroix, Cordier, and Carpeaux, this iconography was deployed regardless of the work's style, medium, or subject.

Abolitionist Aesthetics and Republican Sentiment

Manet was therefore truly transgressive in figuring Olympia's maid as a black member of the French proletariat, and using the devices of early modernist pictorial flatness to do so. This, like his portrait of Laure, breaks with her dramatically articulated and exotically attired predecessors, whose attributes clearly establish them as residents of remote colonies or as political symbols. Manet's depiction of the maid in *Olympia* is therefore among the early images in Salon painting in which an image of a black woman is de-Orientalized, and portrayed not as an exoticized foreigner but in a modernist way, as part of the working class of Paris.

Fig. 59. Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Moorish Bath,* 1870. Oil on canvas, 20 × 16 in. (50.8 × 40.6 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Robert Jordan from the collection of Eben D. Jordan.

Whether intentional or not, Manet's sartorial choice for Laure in *Olympia* has stronger affinities with abolitionist works by contemporaneous artists of color than with those of his Paris colleagues. Manet's Laure shows parallels with *Forever Free* (1867), a visualization of abolitionist sentiment by the African American sculptor Edmonia Lewis (fig. 60; see also fig. 39). By 1864, Lewis had settled in Rome, where she maintained a studio for decades amid a community of American expatriate sculptors. She was known to make commissioned work for abolitionists in the United States as well as in Europe. Lewis spent extended periods in Paris, including a visit to research the 1867 Exposition Universelle's display of Egyptian artifacts.[80] The young woman depicted in *Forever Free* blends the dramatic gesture and pose of traditionally rendered figures, such as Carpeaux's *La négresse* inscribed "Why born a slave?" (see fig. 44), with modestly covered Western attire similar to that of Manet's Laure. While there was no known contact between Lewis and Manet's artistic circle, Manet's approach to the attire of his black model is more akin to the representational preferences of this expatriate American artist of black and Native American ancestry than to the imagery of Carpeaux, a fellow Frenchman working in an academically sanctioned style. This affinity can perhaps best be attributed to their shared abolitionist sentiment—Lewis's in the context of the American antislavery movement, Manet's a more abstract belief embedded in his strong republicanism.[81]

This contrarian practice of depicting covered European attire for black female subjects also resonates with artistic depictions of events related to the French abolition of slavery in its colonies. The best-known freedom-themed painting by a French artist of color was the monumental *Le serment des ancêtres* (Oath of the Ancestors), by Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, who was born in Guadeloupe to a French colonial officer and his enslaved mistress (fig. 61). Painted in 1822, the work captures a scene from the 1804 revolution that led to Haiti's independence, in which the mulatto leader Alexandre Pétion and his black counterpart, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, unite forces to defeat the French. This scene of unity and liberation features several vague figures in

Fig. 60. Edmonia Lewis, *Forever Free,* 1867. Marble. Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 61. Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, *Le serment des ancêtres* (Oath of the ancestors), 1822. Oil on canvas, 131½ × 89¾ in. (334 × 228 cm). National Museum, Port-au-Prince.

Fig. 62. François-Auguste Biard, *Proclamation de l'abolition de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises (27 Avril 1848)* (Proclamation of the abolition of slavery in the French colonies [27 April 1848]), 1849. Oil on canvas, 102⅜ × 154⅝ in. (260 × 392 cm). Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

the background, including a black woman in a head wrap to the right, who is fully clothed.

This idea is elaborated further in French artist François-Auguste Biard's 1849 painting *Proclamation de l'abolition de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises (27 avril 1848)* (Proclamation of the abolition of slavery in the French colonies [27 April 1848]; fig. 62). Monumental and vividly colorful, it deploys the pictorial elements typical of representations of empire—generic figures, sweeping gestures—to depict, with an irony intended or not, a scene of colonial liberation. In keeping with the colonialist ideological agenda of the genre, it also represents the abolition proclamation as a magnanimous gesture bestowed by Europeans—personified by the man at center lifting his top hat, proclamation in hand, before Antilleans swooning in presumed gratitude. The painting offers a rich tableau of figural types, attire, and figure clusters with their own subnarratives, and is a tour de force of history painting. However, there is no obvious allusion to the importance of colonial subjects' own fight—from the Haitian revolution to repeated Martiniquaise revolts—to secure their freedom.

It is still a display of the period's ethnographic impulses, depicting all black women with the foulard, but those posed as slaves being freed on the left are generally bare-breasted, while those newly freed on the right are fully covered. The painting's sartorial distinction between enslaved and free black women documents a reality that Biard could have observed during his two-year residency in Brazil.

Manet himself noted the attire of enslaved black women based on his own firsthand observations, during a trip to Brazil as a sixteen-year-old rebelling against his father's pressure to attend law school. Manet's father, a prominent jurist, consented to the voyage, in which Manet joined a group of other well-born boys for a merchant ship ocean crossing in preparation for a naval career, in the ultimately futile hope of deterring Manet's aspirations to become an artist.[82]

Although Manet traveled in 1848, the year of the final French abolition, slavery did not end in Brazil until 1850. Manet described his encounters with various aspects of slavery in letters he sent back to Paris, mainly to his mother during the ocean crossing and while in Brazil.[83] The neutral racial tone of these notes first becomes apparent in letters sent from aboard the ship on the voyage to Brazil, in which he noted that the shipmate charged with both tutoring and disciplining the ship's servant boys was a black man. Manet simply mentions that the man is black as he recounts various aspects of shipboard life, without further comment about that fact. He focuses instead on describing the man's responsibilities: "We have 26 men on board, including a chef and a Negro maître d'hotel. We're looked after by four poor little ship's boys and two apprentices. . . . Our maître d'hotel, who is a Negro as I told you, and is responsible for their training, gives them a terrible licking if [they don't behave]."[84]

These comments are an indication that, from early on, Manet maintained a mode of close and objective observation when confronted with racial difference. His interest was to understand and depict what he saw, more than the casual, reflexive, racially based disparagement that typified the era, as noted in Alexandre Dumas père's accounts of his experiences in Paris salons. Manet's comments show a mix of curiosity and empathy, alongside some negative attitudes that are typical of even republican thinking during the era. At one point he remarks, when describing black women he encountered on the streets of Rio de Janeiro: "The population [of Rio] is three-quarters black or mulatto; they are generally ugly, except for some exceptions among the black and mulatto women, the latter of whom are almost always pretty."[85] Present-day readers may well note with rue the continuity of these views in some veins of current attitudes about race and beauty.

Yet, in the same passage, Manet goes on to state his disgust upon witnessing a slave market: "I saw a slave market, and it's a rather revolting sight for us." He then expresses his general antipathy for slavery by commenting that "in this country, all the black people are slaves; they all look downtrodden and the whites have power over them that is truly extraordinary to us."[86]

The young Manet again reveals his penchant for discerning observation with his detailed description of what he saw at the slave markets, noting that the men being sold wore pantaloons and a light jacket but were denied shoes. The young Manet is especially detailed in his descriptions of the enslaved women's attire: "The Negresses are generally naked to the waist; some with a scarf tied at the neck and falling over their breasts. . . . They dress with a great deal of care. Some wear turbans, others do their frizzy hair in very artistic styles and almost all wear petticoats adorned with monstrous flounces."[87]

The straightforwardness, on balance, of Manet's teenage descriptions of black Brazilians suggests that even at the age of sixteen, he displayed an innate respect for the humanity, and at times the creativity, of individual enslaved blacks whom he encountered. Manet, though an avid republican, was no activist challenging the social order. Yet he respected individuals' personal dignity, regardless of their station in life. His teenage letters foretold an empathy also seen in his portrayals decades later of marginalized Parisians.

Manet's letters from Rio reinforce a sense that his decision to present Laure as fully clothed was a turn to modernity. He knew exactly how to depict an enslaved woman—she would have to be bare-breasted, as he had seen in Brazil. In choosing not to disrobe Laure, and to de-emphasize or omit the conventions of elaborate hair, jewelry, and full skirt, he is doing so not in disregard for their aesthetic merit—he described the Brazilian slaves' attire and coiffure in a respectful, even admiring manner. He makes these choices because he intends to represent Laure not in a distant scenario of empire, subjugation,

and slavery, but as a free participant in the everyday life of modern Paris.

Thus the Laure of *Olympia* can in the first instance be arguably seen as a still-more evolved manifestation of Manet's republican sentiments than the model's portrait. Manet represents Laure, even in the context of a brothel maid, as a paid worker who is on the job. It is an image of pragmatic realism, not of an exotic perversion or a fantasy sex object. This is especially notable since Manet was surely aware of the erotic connotations projected onto the black female figure dating back at least to the eighteenth century. As Theodore Reff summarizes, these views about black women were commonplace, from the Abbé Raynal's supposition in 1775 of "an ardor of temperament which gives them a power to arouse and experience the most burning raptures"; to J. J. Virey's pseudoscientific assertion in his widely read 1824 *Histoire naturelle du genre humain* (A natural history of mankind) that "Negresses carry voluptuousness to a degree of lascivity unknown in our climate [because] their sexual organs are much more developed than those of whites"; and Gustave Flaubert's entry "negresses. More passionate than white women," in his *Dictionnaire des idées reçus* (Dictionary of misperceptions), posthumously published in 1911.[88] In this context, it may be arguable whether Manet's choice not to sexualize Laure is motivated by disdain or respect. As Griselda Pollock writes of Laure's modest attire, "Manet does not, at least, inflict the wound of exposure on Laure. When we look at this painting, we do not have to ignore the sitter's feelings in order to be able to bear looking at her at all."[89]

The inverse of this seemingly respectful treatment, however, is the fact that Manet, despite modernizing Laure, appears to also embrace pictorial devices that, for many viewers, obliterate her. On the one hand, Manet describes Laure as "trés belle négresse" and renders her, arguably, as such in her portrait. On the other hand, in *Olympia,* he appears to construct the maid figure within established tropes of marginalization, servitude, and sexual undesirability. In most reproductions of *Olympia,* she is barely distinct from the somber green-black curtain wall behind her. Her gaze is directed to the prostitute. As Lorraine O'Grady writes, pictorial conventions of the time were that "[the nonwhite woman is] castrata and whore . . . her place exists outside of what can be conceived of as woman. She is the chaos that must be excised and it is her excision that stabilizes the West's construct of the female body. . . . Thus, only the white body remains as the object of a voyeuristic, fetishizing, male gaze. The nonwhite body has been made opaque by a blank stare."[90] This critique reflects the widespread audience reception of Laure's role in *Olympia* across generations—from the racialized stereotyping in 1865 Salon reviews to the late twentieth-century postmodernist "recoil" that Anne Higonnet describes, as discussed earlier, in reviewing O'Grady's work on Baudelaire and Jeanne Duval.[91] In order to unpack the perceived marginalization of *Olympia*'s Laure, it is useful to examine what Manet may have intended for the figure, as well as the ways in which varying modes of viewing *Olympia,* during and after the 1865 Salon, may have affected observers' perspectives.

A Duality of Meaning for the Baudelairean Muse

Manet remained enigmatic about his intentionality for *Olympia;* he wrote very little about it. The most commonly cited indicator is an excerpt of a poem written by his friend, Zacharie Astruc, that Manet submitted to the 1865 Salon as the only descriptive text to be included with the exhibition catalogue's listing of *Olympia.*[92]

> When weary of dreaming, Olympia awakes,
> Spring enters in the arms of a gentle black messenger
> It is the slave, like the amorous night,
> Who comes to make the day bloom, delicious to see:
> The august young girl in whom the fire burns.

These words themselves, described by Pollock as a "very bad" allusion to Baudelaire's poetry, lack any fixed meaning.[93] They may seem to offer validation for negating the maid by the poem's equation of the "gentle black messenger" with "slave." But the irony of Olympia's description as "august," when Manet pictures her as anything but, can also extend to the use of the term "slave" fifteen years after abolition. As we have seen, Manet knew from his time in Brazil how to depict the attire of an enslaved black woman, but did not choose to present Laure in such attire.[94]

It is moreover unclear whether Manet himself actually named the painting *Olympia,* as evidence suggests that it was Astruc who named it just before the 1865 Salon opening. Nils Gosta Sandblad cites an 1865 letter in

which Baudelaire refers to the painting by describing it as "the painting representing the woman with the négresse and the cat," without mentioning the name "Olympia."[95] This suggests that, even though the painting was completed in 1863, and remained in Manet's studio until the 1865 Salon—a two-year period during which Baudelaire regularly visited Manet—Baudelaire did not think of the painting by the name "*Olympia.*" Baudelaire's quote, which gives nearly equal weight to the prostitute, maid, and cat, also suggests an intended formal equivalence of the two women. This is despite the fact that Manet made the painting soon after the opening of his friend Alexandre Dumas fils' play *La dame aux Camélias,* in which the rival of the tragic courtesan Marguerite Gautier is named Olympia. It is possible that, just as Dumas's Olympia was a secondary character, but still central to the narrative, Manet also intended to have *Olympia*'s Laure, even as Olympia's maid, be a figure of more than passing interest.

The painting's potential links to Dumas fils may also relate to Manet's decision to render the maid as a black woman. He transforms the two attendants in Titian's Renaissance-era *Venus of Urbino* (see fig. 56), who are sometimes described as gypsies, into a single black woman, a presence in nineteenth-century French brothels alluded to in some of Baudelaire's poems in *Les fleurs du mal.* Françoise Cachin makes the singular observation that "the importance accorded to the bouquet and its bearer, as essential to the subject as the nude figure, clarifies the enigma of Manet's thought: *Olympia* is first and foremost a grand painting, and it was meant as such."[96] She goes on to suggest a correspondence between Manet's "superb" rendering of Laure, as a brothel maid whose carefully painted "elegant" hand rests on her bouquet of flowers, and the "flower-adorned" woman described in a *Fleurs du mal* poem titled "À une Malabaraise" (To a woman from Malabar); yet she is more a "nursemaid-procuress, . . . not a harem slave."[97] As with the young Manet's descriptions of black women in Brazil, today's reader may note, with ambivalent admiration, that while the poet retreads extremely offensive stereotypes of the day, he is also uncannily accurate as he describes some of the life options faced by the period's women of color in Paris. Deborah Cherry summarizes commentary by such critics as Gayatri Spivak, Griselda Pollock, and Christopher Miller, warning that "the representation of an 'exoticised, eroticized black femininity' in Baudelaire's modernist poems recycles and renews a longstanding trope of western racism;" while artists Maud Sulter and Lorraine O'Grady, in their extensive work on Jeanne Duval and Baudelaire, note the racialized (and sexist) historicization of Duval as "bestialized, stupefied, hated, ugly" and overall a negative influence on Baudelaire—a characterization that contradicts much of the fragmented information still extant about the relationship.[98] As a possible personification of the Malabaraise, she becomes a version of the muslin-draped grisette seen in the watercolors of Constantin Guys (see figs. 53, 54).

"To a [Woman from] Malabar"
Your feet are as slender as your hands and your hips
Are broad; they'd make the fairest white woman jealous;
To the pensive artist your body's sweet and dear;
Your wide, velvety eyes are darker than your skin.

In the hot blue country where your God had you born
It is your task to light the pipe of your master,
To keep the flasks filled with cool water and perfumes,
To drive far from his bed the roving mosquitoes,
And as soon as morning makes the plane-trees sing, to
Buy pineapples and bananas at the bazaar.
All day long your bare feet follow your whims,
And, very low, you hum old, unknown melodies;
And when evening in his scarlet cloak descends,
You stretch out quietly upon a mat and there
Your drifting dreams are full of humming-birds and are
Like you, always pleasant and adorned with flowers.

Why, happy child, do you wish to see France,
That over-peopled country which suffering mows down,
And entrusting your life to the strong arms of sailors,
Bid a last farewell to your dear tamarinds?
You, half-dressed in filmy muslins,
Shivering over there in the snow and the hail,
How you would weep for your free, pleasant leisure, if,
With a brutal corset imprisoning your flanks,
You had to glean your supper in our muddy streets
And sell the fragrance of your exotic charms,
With pensive eye, following in our dirty fogs
The sprawling phantoms of the absent coco palms![99]

Fig. 63. Édouard Manet, *Olympia* (detail of fig. 55).

Olympia herself, nude except for her jewelry and neck ribbon, is likewise depicted in ways linked to *Fleurs* poems, including "Les bijoux" (The jewels).[100]

> "The Jewels"
> Knowing my heart, my dearest one was nude,
> Her resonating jewelry all she wore,
> Which rich array gave her the attitude
> Of a darling in the harem of a Moor. . . .[101]

Here again, as with Baudelaire's epistolary description of *Olympia,* we see a degree of equivalence between the prostitute and the maid in the poet's words, which Manet seems to re-create pictorially in *Olympia.* As a Baudelairean painter of modern life, Manet strives to render archetypal scenes modern, presenting a brothel scene as he sees it in the daily life of Paris. This was the path, he believed, to joining the pantheon of great French painters. As Michael Fried discussed, Manet's dual motivation, to be in the vanguard yet achieve popular acclaim, could help to

Fig. 64. Édouard Manet, *Baudelaire's Mistress (Portrait of Jeanne Duval)* (detail of fig. 27).

explain his profound surprise and dismay at the intensely hostile public reaction to *Olympia.*[102]

Manet's ambivalence derived from the impossibility of synthesizing his republicanist recognition of his subjects' equal humanity, regardless of social standing, with his desire to be an acclaimed painter. This ambivalence, like that seen in Baudelaire's poetry, and in the lived experiences of their friends Dumas fils and Jeanne Duval, can be seen as a zeitgeist, a condition of early modernity in the creative expression of 1860s Paris. It captured the fraught aspect of race that Manet could readily observe in his contacts with Baudelaire and Duval—an interracial couple who were publicly censured and denigrated even as he accepted them into his studio. Consciously or not, he veils the modernizing aspects of Laure as maid due to his ambition to be accepted as a great painter.

It is worth noting that Manet renders the curtain behind Laure in *Olympia* and the sofa on which Jeanne Duval reclines in the same blended, deep green-and-black tonalities (figs. 63, 64). This links the two paintings to the

racial ambivalence of the period and underscores the possibility that Laure, the model, and Duval, the writer's mistress, may have been personally linked, as Tabarant suggested. Together, they represent a presence of women of color in the demimondaine of northern Paris.

Manet's ambivalence could therefore explain why, after centering Laure as a working Parisian in culturally hybrid, everyday attire—an advance from Orientalized exoticism—he then negates this modernizing gesture with the indeterminate style of the attire, and with what many perceive as a degree of tonal negation. This ambivalence can be one explanation for Manet's competing instincts to have Laure personify the modern black working woman in Paris, in a manner described in the poetry of his friend Baudelaire; but then to overlay her with pictorial tropes that casual viewers would perceive as commonplace racial typecasting, given his quest to show at the Salon and be recognized as a great French painter.[103]

Ironically, these conflicting objectives would suggest a metonymy around the figure of Laure that only heightens its interpretive richness. Laure exemplifies a radically modernized black persona while she simultaneously denotes the old stereotypes. Laure's indeterminate modernity could therefore evade detection by the public Salon exhibition's bourgeois audience, while meriting admiration from more sophisticated artists and critics within Manet's circle.

Modernity and Composition

While Manet's conflicted motivations present one possible resolution of the conundrum of Laure in *Olympia*—the duality of her modernity and seeming obliteration—the formal materiality of this painting suggests others. Much of the perception of Laure as a stereotype is rooted in a perception of the painting's tonality, in which Laure is somewhat difficult to discern from the murky coloring of the flattened background and instead seems blended into it, especially in the reproductions of *Olympia* through which most viewers know the work. But an analysis of the formal structure of *Olympia,* at different stages of Manet's creative process, reveals the importance of such drafts to the understanding of any finished painting. Theatrical critic Jennifer DeVere Brody warns against the fallacy of calling the opening night of a theatrical play the "premiere," given the extent of rehearsals. She notes a similar incompleteness in any history of art that "obscures the process of

Fig. 65. Édouard Manet, *Olympia Study,* 1863. Watercolor and graphite, 8¼ × 12³⁄₁₆ in. (21 × 31 cm). Location unknown.

artmaking in favor of . . . an artwork's debut. *Olympia*'s drafts, or rehearsals, make plural its origins although we think of it as a singular event."[104] This points to the importance of examining the multiple stages of the making of *Olympia,* and of its title, as well as the varying circumstances of its viewership across time.

We see, for example, that in a preliminary watercolor, Laure is far more firmly represented than in many reproductions of the completed painting; her dark-brown skin tones are more differentiated from the green-black wall behind her (fig. 65). This distinctiveness from the background is retained, to a slightly lesser extent, in an 1867 etching in which the darker background tones close off the view into a pictorial depth still visible in the earlier, lighter tones of the wall behind Laure (fig. 66).[105] Its graphic qualities suggest that Manet darkened the space around Laure primarily as part of his flattening of the picture plane, as a modernizing device. The more muted the tonalities of the maid in relation to the background, the flatter the pictorial plane, as seen in comparison with a larger plate variation of the etching, in which the darker tones and less textured surface of the curtains create a lessened sense of depth (fig. 67). We also learn from x-ray studies that the scale of Laure's body was reduced from more ample volumes that, like those of Titian's gypsy maid, were closer to Old Master prototypes of the portly/matronly/obese maid.[106] All of this suggests that Manet was not necessarily thinking of stereotyping Laure in blending her in tonally, but instead enhancing the modernist pictorial style of the image.

Cachin further notes that the tonal blending that some late twentieth-century viewers see in the *Olympia* painting may also be due simply to a darkening of the painting's tonality with the passage of time.[107] This darkening may contribute to the murky black background seen in the plethora of bad reproductive images of *Olympia* that are widely circulated today. It is striking that viewing *Olympia* in person reveals that the tonalities of the curtain are actually green-black, with an overall impression of varying shades of deep green. In such direct encounters, the Laure figure is quite distinct from, and not blended in with, her surrounding background.[108]

Still, it is undeniable that, just as with the prostitute's body, Manet uses a minimum of half-tones and naturalistic molding for Laure, instead shaping her face from a series of loose, flat, slightly impastoed slashes of paint. He does not strive for the contours and shade gradations seen in Feyen's *Le baiser enfantin,* which, as noted earlier, may also have been posed by Laure (see fig. 21). Feyen's naturalism conveys the loveliness of Laure's features and

Fig. 66. Édouard Manet, *Olympia* (small plate), 1867. Etching and aquatint, plate: 3 7/16 × 6 15/16 in. (8.7 × 17.7 cm). New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, gift of Samuel Putnam Avery, Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs.

Fig. 67. Édouard Manet, *Olympia* (large plate), 1867. Etching, plate: 6 5/16 × 8 7/8 in. (16 × 22.5 cm). New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, gift of Samuel Putnam Avery, Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs.


PROMENADE AU SALON DE 1865, — par BERTALL (suite)

MANETTE, ou LA FEMME DE L'ÉBÉNISTE, par MANET.

Que c'est comme un bouquet de fleurs.
(Air connu.)

Ce tableau de M. Manet est le bouquet de l'Exposition. — M. Courbet est distancé de toute la longueur du célèbre chat noir. — Le moment choisi par le grand coloriste est celui où cette dame va prendre un bain qui nous semble impérieusement réclamé.

Fig. 68. Bertall, "Manette, ou la femme de l'ébéniste, par Manet" (Manette, or the cabinet-maker's wife, by Manet), caricature of Manet's *Olympia,* from *Le journal amusant,* May 27, 1865. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

the deep-brown skin tones that informed Manet's description of her as "très belle négresse," while Manet himself aims for modernity more than beauty through the formal inventions of flatness.

But again, when directly observing *Olympia,* we quite readily see a degree of facial expressiveness less discernible in most reproductions. Laure's features are composed with a quizzical, but not unkind, gaze, as if concerned about the consequences of the prostitute's curt disregard for her admirer's flowers. Direct viewing also yields observation of other details, often blurred in reproductions. We see Laure's elegantly elongated coral-red earrings and her delicately turned hand on the proffered bouquet. We note the subtly contrasting cream and pink tonalities of her dress, as well as its lightly ruffled sleeves and neckline.

Many reproductions, in contrast, obscure the subtle animation of Laure's facial expression and project mainly its color tones, leaving viewers to discern only the blank stare perceived by O'Grady. As Jonathan Crary discusses, a novel representation must be binding, or fixed, in order to hold the attention it draws; and any unbinding, or lack, of clarity—as with Laure's seemingly blank affect—has the effect of deflecting attention.[109] In this case, all but the most careful attention then dissipates into boredom; the viewer lacks interest in what appears to be merely an expected, and thus already known, trope. The overall impression, at least to the casual viewer, is that the maid for the most part conflated the stock obese and asexually unattractive black maid figure from art history with racist stereotypes from popular culture—thus producing a figure that was familiar, derogatory, and, therefore, dismissed.

This impression is only heightened by the figural profile produced by the particular angle of Laure's pose. Despite Manet's 1862 description of Laure as "très belle," she now projects, for some viewers, an obesity not indicated in her portrait; she is slender from the waist up but appears to balloon into corpulence below, covered by loose, bulky skirts. This is not just an allusion to the broad hips of Baudelaire's "Woman from Malabar." Manet's "trés belle négresse" Laure is often perceived as a stereotypically obese figure, and this is how she was frequently depicted in the many satirical cartoons of *Olympia* that appeared in the popular press at the time (fig. 68).[110]

The perception of obesity is not, however, the only possible reading of this figure, especially when the attire is placed within the context of the period's fashions. Manet may simply have tried to capture the look of the full-sleeved dress over wide crinolines that was considered to be very stylish at the time. Laure's sleeve, in particular, with its close fit above the elbow and voluminous flare to the wrist, is a quite accurate match with silhouettes seen in fashion plates and reenacted fashions, even though it contributes to the impression of obesity. This perceived obesity was likely a surprise for Manet who, we have seen from x-rays, actually reduced the volumes of Laure's figure in the interest of flatness.[111]

Period photographs and drawings convey the range of attire worn by women of color in sex work venues. There was the exotic attire consistent with the offer of exotic scenarios (fig. 69), or the expensive stylishness of a featured star or favorite (fig. 70). Leading artists from Jules-Robert Auguste to Edgar Degas reveal the long-standing practice of portraying lesbian scenes in brothels and other settings, either for the titillation of male customers or to document actual relationships among sex workers (fig. 71). Short comic filmed *scènes galantes* such as *Richesse d'un jour* (Wealthy for one day) provided popular entertainment that portrayed stylishly attired black and white women, working as hostesses at an upscale bar for a

Fig. 69. Félix-Jacques-Antoine Moulin, *Odalisque,* 1853. Print on salted paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 70. Albert Brichaut, Photograph of brothel at 2 rue de Londres, Paris, 1900. Print on aristotype paper, 4 13/16 × 7 1/16 in. (12.1 × 17.9 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Fig. 71. Edgar Degas, *Deux femmes (Scène de maison close)* (Two women [Scene from a brothel]), ca. 1877–79. Monotype on paper, plate: 9 13/16 × 11 3/8 in. (24.9 × 28.9 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Katherine E. Bullard Fund in memory of Francis Bullard.

wealthy clientele, and conspiring to seduce and rob a gullible new guest (fig. 72).

Despite the contingencies of *Olympia*'s possible meanings perceived by close observation, the stereotype of the marginalized black female has dominated many viewers' perceptions and attracted scathing critical commentary, beginning with derogatory reviews of the 1865 Salon. Most critics described the maid figure, if they mentioned her at all, as "hideous," and limited their remarks about her to no more than a single phrase. As the expected stereotype, rather than a novelty, the maid did not merit serious attention. Yet the rare Salon critics with substantive knowledge of art were engaged by the Laure of *Olympia.*[112] So was Manet's protégé Frédéric Bazille, the first artist among successive generations, from Manet's own time to the present moment, to focus on reimagining Laure's pose in *Olympia* as they forged an evolving modernist aesthetic.

Bazille, Degas, and Modern Black Paris

Laure's depiction in *Olympia* influenced at least two contemporaneous works of art by Manet's acolyte, Frédéric Bazille. The scion of a wealthy family from Montpellier in Provence, Bazille met Manet after moving in 1862 to Paris, where he abandoned his medical studies to become a painter. After studying with the Orientalist painter Jean-Léon Gérôme, Bazille joined the circle of artists surrounding Manet in order to pursue his preference for the new modern style in painting scenes from contemporary life.[113] In an 1870 painting, Bazille depicts a visit to his studio in the rue de La Condamine by his friends Monet, Sisley, Astruc, Renoir (a former studio mate), and Manet. The tall, lanky figure of Bazille was painted into the scene, as a gesture of admiration, by Manet (see fig. 4).[114]

In 1870, Bazille made two paintings, both titled *Négresse aux pivoines* (Black woman with peonies) that are generally described as an homage to his friend Manet, figured as a direct reference to the flower-bearing black

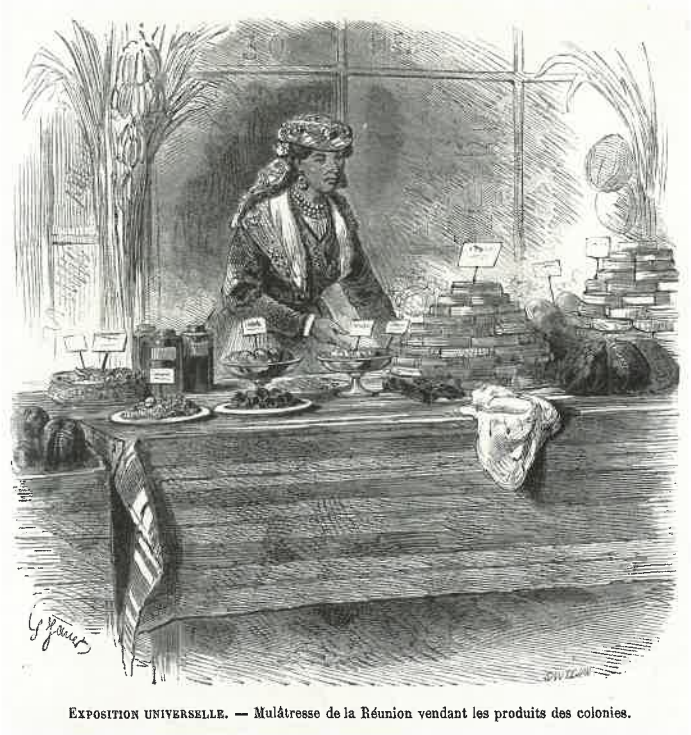
. 72. Film stills from the 1906 silent film *Richesse d'un jour* (Wealthy for one day), produced by Pathé Frères.

woman in *Olympia.*[115] Some scholars suggest that Bazille's black model may be the same person, Laure, who posed for Manet.[116] This can be questioned due to a difference in skin tones and, more subtly, in features. The Bazille model does, however, appear to be the same woman who posed wearing an identical head scarf for Thomas Eakins's study *Female Model,* painted while he was a student in Paris (fig. 73). Eakins's choices in depicting his model can be viewed in the context of exoticism in American art, with its closely observed treatment of the French Caribbean madras head scarf and bared breasts.[117] Such an interest in exoticism was made manifest by the painting's initial title, *The Negress,* based on the unnamed model's race. In spite of this, Eakins's practice was to name his portraits, including those of his black friends, like the artist Henry Ossawa Tanner.[118] A second context for Eakins's interest in exoticism was his study, while in Paris, at the studio of Gérôme, the leading proponent of Orientalism. The painting of figures like that in *Female Model* would have been requisite training in Gérôme's studio, although Eakins asserts his own style with a vague, shadowy treatment of his model's bared breasts, in contrast to Gérôme's frank detailing of the female nudes in his own work, including *Moorish Bath* (see fig. 59). Eakins's somber tonalities of brown, moreover, had more in common with early Manet portraits (see figs. 1, 25, 41) than with Gérôme's vivid interiors, an early harbinger of Eakins's commitment to realism when, upon his return from Paris, American subjects became the sole focus of his portraiture. Still, Eakins's embrace of French tradition placed him in diametric opposition with the growing preference for Manet's commitment to scenes of modern life among other young artists in 1860s Paris, including his contemporaries Bazille, Monet, and Renoir.

The Eakins model, whose name remains unknown, also posed for Bazille's composition *Black Woman with Peonies,* a pastel sketch for one of his two paintings of this subject (fig. 74).[119] The shape of the woman's head scarf in this study resembles the squared-off foulard seen in a later image of a woman from Réunion selling exotic merchandise at a later world's fair, in one indication of styles Bazille might have observed at the time of his work (fig. 75). A variant of the foulard's angular style at a still-later world's fair marks both the enduring tradition of this

Fig. 73. Thomas Eakins, *Female Model*, ca. 1867–69. Oil on canvas, 23 × 19¾ in. (58.4 × 50.2 cm). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum purchase, Mildred Anna Williams Collection.

Fig. 74. Frédéric Bazille, *Black Woman with Peonies,* ca. 1870. Watercolor, gouache, black chalk, and graphite on card, 13 3/16 × 20 11/16 in. (33.5 × 52.5 cm). Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK.



EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE. — Mulâtresse de la Réunion vendant les produits des colonies.

Fig. 75. Sautejau, "Exposition Universelle," from *Le monde,* November 2, 1867. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

attire, as well as the ethnographic origins of imagery juxtaposing black women with flowers or vegetation as a marker of their closer proximity to nature than to culture; the 1889 fair featured a *zoo humain* (human zoo), in which hundreds of black people were displayed in ethnographically motivated mockups of African villages (see fig. 80).[120]

Bazille vacillated, however, between this tentative step toward modernity and his mastery of tradition with the vividly decorative *La toilette* (1869–70), the sole Orientalist painting he submitted to the Salon (fig. 76).[121] Given that objective, Bazille portrays his black model in the traditional role of servant in an exotic harem, nude to the waist and in colorful and richly patterned non-Western attire. The harem scene of *Toilette* has been related to Bazille's early admiration of Delacroix; he had studied a smaller version of *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement* (see fig. 57) in a Montpellier collection; but an earlier version of *Toilette* featured just two women—the reclining white nude and her black servant—as had Manet's *Olympia.*[122]

Fig. 76. Frédéric Bazille, *La toilette* (The toilet), 1869–70. Oil on canvas, 52 × 50 in. (132 × 127 cm). Musée Fabre, Montpellier.

Even as *La toilette* was completed, however, Bazille turned resolutely to the scenes of modernity conveyed in the two *Peonies* paintings, which were both posed by the same model. This turn is subtly marked by Bazille's relegation of his two-figure *Toilette* sketch to a corner behind his back in *L'atelier de Bazille,* as he gives his full attention to his mentor, Manet's, call for the embrace of modern life (see fig. 4).

With the *Peonies* paintings, Bazille appears to not only resume Manet's modernizing project, but to assert it with a clarity that supercedes Manet's ambiguity. Bazille establishes a fixity—an image that rivets the viewer's eye and invites contemplation—for his tribute to Manet. The model, inspired by Laure, is even more precisely placed as a member of the black Paris working class.

Fig. 77. Frédéric Bazille, *Young Woman with Peonies,* 1870. Oil on canvas, 23⅝ × 29⅝ in. (60 × 75 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon.

Bazille's representational choices relate directly to the way in which his experiences and interests, as an acolyte of Manet, shaped the evidently sustained mode of his attention to *Olympia.* It was established practice for young artists to visit the Louvre and the Salon to sketch paintings they admired, and Bazille is known to have done so from 1863 to 1870, as part of his artistic training.[123] The repeat viewings required for sketching would have forced Bazille to deconstruct the layers of form, stance, attire, and physical attributes with which Manet created Laure's *Olympia* pose; presumably Bazille also had opportunities to speak directly with his mentor about the painting, although there are no known records of such discussions. Bazille, therefore, much more so than the typical Salon viewer of

Fig. 78. Frédéric Bazille, *La négresse aux pivoines* (Black woman with peonies), 1870. Oil on canvas, 23⅝ × 29⁹⁄₁₆ in. (60 × 75 cm). Musée Fabre, Montpellier.

Manet's time, would have been able to decipher the veiled modernist turn of the Olympia's maid.

One liberating factor for Bazille's clarity may have been the paintings' intended ownership and display. If Manet was motivated by his ambition to show publicly, Bazille's paintings after *La toilette* were typically sold privately, and were held primarily by his family and friends. At least one of the *Peonies* paintings was promised in advance to his sister-in-law, Suzanne, wife of his brother Marc.[124] Like many young artists, moreover, Bazille may have sought to pay tribute to his mentor by resolving the tenuous and ultimately sublimated nature of Manet's revision of the Laure figure, even as he asserted his own artistic vision.

Bazille describes, in correspondence with his family, how he painted the homage paintings back-to-back in the spring of 1870.[125] The version in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (hereafter NGA; fig. 77) was presumably painted first, because the woman's enormous bouquet includes early-blooming tulips and semi-open peonies, while the Musée Fabre version (fig. 78), for which the *Black Woman with Peonies* study was made (see fig. 74), displays the model as a household servant, intent on arranging flowers, mainly peonies in luxuriant full bloom, in a vase.[126]

Bazille's figuring of the black model in his *Peonies* paintings retains, and arguably advances, key modernizing elements of Manet's representation of Olympia's maid,

Fig. 79. Frédéric Bazille, *Young Woman with Peonies* (detail of fig. 77).

while adding new types of imagery that reflect his own artistic interests.[127] The most important of Bazille's revisions, and one that greatly strengthens his revisionary representation of the model, is that she is the single figure in the image, and in the NGA version, her occupational status remains unclear. She is overtly a member of the Parisian working class—her proffer of peonies from a wicker basket in the NGA version suggests that she poses a flower vendor. Whether as maid or flower seller, Bazille's model, as the sole figure shown, is the focal point of interest, together with the flowers. No mistresses hover to marginalize or diminish her status.

The model's attire, featuring smart, stylish details, reinforces this modernity; like Laure, she projects a culturally blended sense of fashion. Her cream-toned dress—which does not bare her breasts—is crisply tailored and well fitted. Bazille carefully details a high-buttoned, form-fitting bodice that is cinched to reveal a slim waistline—very unlike the Manet maid's more tentatively realized frock. Like Olympia's maid, she does not wear the heavy jewelry of the exoticized black woman; each model wears coral-hued earrings whose color reflects the pinks in her bouquet, but while Manet merely sketches them as pendulant slashes, Bazille carefully crafts them, in the NGA version, to reveal their distinctive flower shape (fig. 79), which is also seen in the Eakins study (see fig. 73). In adorning the model with flower-shaped earrings, Bazille may again be using the aesthetic refinement of fine art to reflect a

Fig. 80. Antillean vendor in the "zoo humain" (human zoo) at the 1889 Exposition Universelle.

practice, captured by photography, of placing leafy or flowery head wraps on Antillean saleswomen (fig. 80). While the floral earrings may also allude to Baudelairean references, Bazille maintains Manet's representation of cultural hybridity; the model repeats the combination of head scarf and dress worn by Laure and Jeanne Duval, in a style consistent with the fashions of the day. Bazille clearly does not seek to present this model as "exotic," as a comparison with precedent paintings and popular imagery can attest.

Overall, the model is figured by Bazille with far more specificity, if less innovative technique, than that seen in Manet's Laure, and with a level of exquisite detailing, including the carefully blended skin tones, that is more unambivalently portraitlike. Part of this is due to the greater clarity of Bazille's realist painting style, with a tighter brushstroke than Manet's. Bazille's treatment of the flower-bearing black woman may signal a deliberate attempt to represent her differently from Manet, and in his own style. Thus her head scarf pattern is clearly delineated, her brown skin tones are modeled to be distinct from the gray background, and the smallest details of her dress, from its buttons to the crenellated neck ruffle, are carefully articulated. The acolyte artist's tribute to his mentor may also be a retort, an assertion of his own individual style. While Bazille does not record his model's name, he extended himself to engage her and borrowed money from his parents to pay her fees.[128]

Bazille's *Peonies* paintings therefore mark the beginning of an *Olympia*-inspired lineage of modernizing portrayals of the black Parisian proletariat. This figure is quiet, industrious, even unremarkable. She is simply part of the daily life of the city. It appears, at first glance, that the artist has inscribed this black figure with none of the racial stereotypes—immorality, uncleanliness, marginalization—that some critics attribute to Manet's *Olympia.* Still, Bazille's model, like Laure, is an enigma, a representation of ambiguity. Her facial expression is calm, without overt emotion; she takes care in her handling of the flowers. She is surrounded not by murky shadows, a tensed black cat, or a prostitute, but by beauty—a brilliantly colored array of lush flowers.

But the presence of these flowers signals that, while Bazille has not repeated past stereotypical tropes, he has set up allusions to them in a visually different way. The profusion of the flowers, and their placement relative to the figure, make clear that the *Peonies* paintings are not intended to be just portraits. In both the title and the image, the black woman and the flowers are nearly equivalent—though she is mentioned first—in their appeal as focal points of interest. It is, therefore, the direct juxtaposition of these dual pictorial elements, rather than either of them separately, that is the true subject of the painting. And it is this juxtaposition that evokes racial and gender stereotypes, albeit in inverse proportion to Manet's *Olympia.* If Manet submerged his modernizing revision so that the first impression, for the casual viewer, is the stereotype, Bazille presents the modernized figure as the first impression and sublimates stereotypical elements.[129]

Paintings of women with flowers are a well-established genre of European art, and flowers have long symbolized beauty, luxury, romance, and sensuality. An 1865 work by Bazille's friend Edgar Degas, *Woman with Chrysanthemums,* is in this tradition in its depiction of a bourgeois woman with a vase of flowers.[130] As with Bazille's peonies, the flowers are of at least equivalent interest in both the title and

the image, and the woman's facial expression is enigmatic.

What is new in the *Peonies* works is that the figure in the painting is a black woman, a figure whose image as an allegorical or Orientalist Other has historically evoked very different connotations—exoticism, foreign origins, and the excessive carnal aspect of sensuality. For this reason, it can be argued that Bazille does not de-Orientalize his black model, but instead re-Orientalizes her. This logic would suggest that by juxtaposing the model with the flowers, and giving the flowers equal spatial importance with her, Bazille equates her with the flowers, and with related ideas of nature, the earth, and primitivism. In the National Gallery version, this is made explicit, with the flowers held beside the woman's face, while absorbing comparable pictorial space, functioning as an index and pointing to her to establish this equivalence. She is thus, arguably, exoticized and relegated from culture to nature by her proximity with the flowers, in the same way that Olympia's maid is marginalized by the presence of the prostitute.

However, direct juxtapositions are often based on the premise that each element helps to define the other. If Manet established a formal synchronicity between the prostitute and the maid, Bazille does so between the woman and the flowers. Therefore, the meanings of the flowers as well as the figure must be understood in order to deduce Bazille's possible intentions in his portrayal of the woman. There are many accounts of widespread interest in the literary and symbolic references of flowers in late nineteenth-century Paris; Manet, Baudelaire, and their circle were known to embrace this interest.[131] In 1860, Baudelaire wrote to his friend the engraver Félix Bracquemond, who was also a friend of Manet, stressing "the necessity to consult the books on analogies, the symbolic language of flowers," while designing a frontispiece depicting the Garden of Eden for one of his books.[132] Zola wrote of Manet's portrait of his friend Berthe Morisot, noting that she was shown wearing a corsage of violets because they represented the modesty and reserve of her personality.[133]

Reff points out that romantic scenes in popular plays and novels often depicted suitors offering bouquets to their lovers and flattering them with detailed explanations of each flower's meaning.[134] Historian Beverly Seaton and other writers observe that as early as 1809, numerous manuals describing the meanings of individual flowers and their combinations in bouquets were printed, and that between 1830 and 1880, these texts frequently went into multiple reprints to meet popular demand in France.[135] Seaton notes that European popular interest in the language of flowers—which peaked in the 1860s, just before the Bazille paintings—may have started with French and British travelers to Turkey, and that much Western flower symbology is of Eastern origin.[136] While tracing the origins of specific meanings is therefore difficult, France is considered to be the most extensive source; the first flower symbology guide published in the United States was by a French-American author. British manuals were popular throughout the Victorian era.

Thus, in analyzing Bazille's most direct juxtaposition of figure with flowers, when the model holds up lush peonies beside her face in the NGA *Peonies* painting, it is useful to note that there have been literary associations of peonies with the healing powers of physicians to the gods, and with tributes to the gods; the word's etymology derives from the Latin word *paeon,* which means hymn of praise to a helping god; Homer's *Iliad* mentions the pre-Apollonian Paeon, a physician to the gods.[137] Given Bazille's earlier medical studies and acolyte relationship with Manet, this meaning supports the idea of the painting as a tribute to Manet, although it remains unclear whether Bazille may have consulted flower manuals.[138] The peony is also associated with the moon goddess Selene, and therefore is supposed to be picked only at night.[139] This allusion could reinforce the reasons why Bazille chose the black model, as a reference to Laure's pose in a brothel setting, to figure in his tribute to Manet.

Other symbolic meanings of peonies, however, may project less conventional associations onto the figure, since the peony can also symbolize shame, shyness, and uncondoned relationships; according to a Chinese legend repeated in Victorian manuals, a young scholar who grows peonies falls in love with a servant girl, who wills herself to assume the flower's form in order to remain with him because of societal censure of the affair.[140]

It is interesting to consider this allusion together with the literary meanings of tulips, whose name, significantly, is a Latin translation of the Turkish word for turban.[141] Tulips are invariably cited, in French, English, and American manuals, as symbols of declarations of love.[142] Seaton

points out that this meaning is differentiated by the specific colors seen in the NGA bouquet—red tulips symbolize a declaration of love, while yellow tulips signal a hopeless love.[143] In his 1853 poem "L'invitation au voyage," Baudelaire wrote of a "tulipe noire" as an idealized woman with whom the dreamer would travel to a country "où tout vous ressemble" (where everything/one resembles you).[144]

The possible literary allusions/metaphors of Bazille's *Peonies* paintings suggest that these works may not only be tributes to Manet, but also a broader reference to the realities of modern Paris society captured by Manet's and Bazille's images of black women. As Manet's friend, Bazille could well have been aware of the relationship between Baudelaire and Jeanne Duval, as well as of the Baudelairean references attributed to *Olympia*.

More important, however, is that these significations open up the suggestion that, by the 1870s, the image of the black Parisian woman no longer carried a single signification. It could instead project a multiplicity of meanings. As the eroticized black woman is transformed from the Other who exists wholly outside French society to a free working woman within the metropolis, art begins to represent this new figure in differing roles comparable to her European counterparts. She may be a servant working for a wage or an independent flower vendor. She may, like Jeanne Duval, become the next iteration of ethnic artist's models who often became artists' long-term lovers—a role well established by the "belle Juive" and Italian artist's models during the 1830s and 1840s.[145] She may be someone of foreign birth who is secreted and indulged, but ultimately discarded, like the young painter's mistress in Honoré de Balzac's story "Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu" (The unknown masterpiece). Or she may become a publicly acknowledged longtime mistress of a prominent man, like Jeanne Duval. She is simply a representation of a new racial reality within French society.

Within the decade, Degas, a friend of both Bazille and Dumas fils, painted *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando* (1879), depicting the biracial Prussian circus star at work in Paris (fig. 81).[146] She most likely lived during the season at the cirque's residence near the Place Pigalle, a short walk from Degas's Montmartre apartment, and was one of several well-known black circus workers of the period.

The circus was a widely popular site of public entertainment in 1860s Paris, a destination frequented by the middle classes and aristocracy to an extent comparable to opera and ballet.[147] The Cirque Fernando drew an especially stylish crowd, including Manet, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Seurat, in part due to the intimate scale of its single ring.[148] Degas visited the Fernando on several evenings in January 1879 to observe one of Miss Lala's signature feats—being hoisted to the ceiling of the domed building while suspended from a rope clenched between her teeth. While this was a thrilling display of almost superhuman strength, Degas depicted the act more as a work of the performing arts than of athletics. After making notebook sketches at the circus during the performances, he made several studies of Miss Lala in action, including at least four in pastel. In these studies, he experimented with differing poses and color schemes, as well as the performer's placement in the architecturally striking interior, before settling on the final painting. An early study (fig. 82) presented a frontal view of the acrobat, her silk costume in blue-trimmed red differing from the blue-green and lilac tones with golden trim in later versions. It was in the second study (fig. 83) that Degas first placed Miss Lala in the profile pose that he would retain for the final painting, which adds the richly decorative interior design that is absent from the study.

In this second pastel, Miss Lala's brown skin takes on its deepest tones; her complexion is lighter in the other studies, and in the final painting, although this may be due to the effects of lighting from different points of view. The study presents the figure in direct perspective from the side, while the painting depicts her from below, an angle from which she is bathed in yellow light, save for the darker upper planes of her face and arms. Degas's ambiguous treatment of Miss Lala's facial features, similar to his iconic portrayals of ballerinas, suggests his well-known class-based biases; as much as he admired the physical

Fig. 81. Edgar Degas, *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando,* 1879. Oil on canvas, 46⅛ × 30½ in. (117.2 × 77.5 cm). National Gallery, London, purchased 1925.

Fig. 82. Edgar Degas, *Study for Miss Lala at the Cirque Fernando,* 1879. Pastel on laid paper, 19⅛ × 12½ in. (48.6 × 31.8 cm). Collection of the Speed Art Museum, Louisville, bequest of Mrs. Blakemore Wheeler.

Fig. 83. Edgar Degas, *Miss Lala at the Fernando Circus,* 1879. Pastel on paper, 18¼ × 11¾ in. (46.4 × 29.8 cm). J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

skills of these performers, he also harbored an upper-middle-class disdain for their working-class origins, and their willingness to be on public display.[149]

Still, Degas captures the artistry of Miss Lala's act with an aesthetic similar to his paintings of ballet dancers, with a graceful placement of her crossed feet and a delicately spread left hand more like ballet than athletics. Save for her raised clenched fist, Degas does not convey her body with the bulging muscularity more typically seen in publicity posters, such as one showing her, again in exuberant red, in the midst of her second signature act, in which, while suspended from a trapeze, she clenches a cannon between her teeth as it fires with a ground-shaking boom (fig. 84).[150]

It is arguable whether *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando* is a portrait of the performer, or a genre scene

reflecting Degas's overriding impulse to portray the circus as a remarkable feature of modern spectacle—one reason why he may have sublimated the overt pictorial linkage of Miss Lala to old tropes of black female brute strength. For Degas, who like Manet styled himself as the impartial flâneur artist, roaming Paris and taking in all aspects of city life, Miss Lala was one of the many working women, including other women of color, whom he portrayed throughout his career (see fig. 71).

During the same period, Degas's Impressionist and Post-Impressionist cohort also made images of black Parisian men who were known within creative circles, including Paul Cézanne's *Scipio.* Toulouse-Lautrec depicted Rafael Padilla, a circus performer who became well known as Chocolat for his comic, at times racially stereotyped, concert hall dance performances.[151] But the bodies of women, including black women, remained a principal, if not prevalent, site for these artists' investigations of the issues of race, gender, and class that were central to the new modernity.

Miss Lala therefore can be seen as an end bracket for a groundbreaking lineage of iconographic representations of the black female figure that, beginning with Manet's images of Laure, broke with imaging the romanticized Other of empire and, in the spirit of painting modern life, immortalized the formation of a new culturally hybrid black female working-class and demimondaine presence in late nineteenth-century Paris—Miss Lala's mixed-race ethnicity being a symbol of this cultural blending in the wider society. The images of black women by Manet, Bazille, Degas, and their cohort collectively portray the early formation of a black female presence that has expanded across the centuries to assume a multifaceted and still-evolving significance in the cultural life of France, Europe, and the wider world.

Fig. 84. Jules Chéret, *Folies Bergère, Miss Lala,* ca. 1880. Lithograph, 21 13/16 × 15 3/8 in. (55.3 × 39 cm). Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Chapter 1. *Olympia* in Context

1. Adolphe Tabarant, *Manet et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 79; see also Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 277.
2. Ibid. Pollock and Tabarant both suggest this sequencing and timeline for the two paintings.
3. For a discussion of the 1848 abolition and its short-lived 1796 precedent, see Pascal Blanchard et al., *La France noire: Trois siècles de présences* (Paris: Découverte, 2011), 23, 31. For an estimated size and a profile of the small late nineteenth-century black French population, see Pap Ndiaye, *La condition noire: Essai sur une minorité française* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2008), 126; see also Blanchard, *France noire,* 41–43.
4. Tabarant, *Manet et ses oeuvres,* 79; Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 255.
5. Adam Begley, *The Great Nadar: The Man Behind the Camera* (New York: Tim Duggan, 2017), 182.
6. Nadar correspondence archives, Bibliothèque national de France, NAF 24276 XVII Lemaître-Lysès, feuillets 379–84; NAF 24265 VI Chennevières-Cocteau, feuillets 554–63.
7. Based on Nadar's inscription on inverse of the *Jeune modèle* photograph: "amenée par Lherminier/v.1855."
8. Based on author's reading of Nadar's inscription on the inverse of the Serral photograph: "Dolorés Serral/l'amie [*sic*] de Medina Coeli."
9. Registry of orders, Nadar archives at the Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Montigny-le-Bretonneux (ref. 3555–59).
10. Registry of celebrities, Nadar archives at the Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Montigny-le-Bretonneux (ref. 6641).
11. Blanchard, *France noire,* 42–44.
12. For discussions of Manet's *Children in the Tuileries* and other Impressionist-era paintings of nannies and children, see Laura Corey et al., *The Art of the Louvre's Tuileries Garden,* exh. cat. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 88; see also Anne Higonnet, *Berthe Morisot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 91, 111.
13. See Oruno D. Lara, *La colonisation aussi est un crime: De la destruction du système esclavagiste à la reconstruction coloniale* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 11, 93–94, for an assessment of post-abolition French colonial rule as being so exploitative as to be a crime against humanity comparable to that of slavery itself. For specific denouncements of the recruitment of Antillean women as domestic workers in France as the new slave trade, see Mireille Rosello, "Lettres à une noire de Françoise Ega: La femme de ménage de lettres," in *L'heritage de Caliban,* ed. Maryse Condé (Paris: Jasor, 1992), 178, 180.
14. Ségolène Le Men discusses the roots of genre painting in Romantic illustration, including the use of durable formulaic types such as the "Creole" and the "Maure," in "Peints par eux-memes," in Luce Abélés, Nathalie Preiss-Basset, and Ségolène Le Men, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes: Panorama social du XIXe siècle,* exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995), IX–XI.
15. These two photographs reveal a shared French-American affinity for nanny-and-child images; the version with the bareheaded nanny, while titled by the French collection from which it was acquired, is believed by Orsay curators to have been made in the United States, though perhaps by a French photographer or family while traveling in the United States; the baby may also be deceased.
16. During my May 22, 2015, visit to Lille, where I viewed *Le baiser enfantin* in storage at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, I noted in the Feyen object files that *Le baiser enfantin* entered the Lille museum's collections in 1866, after it was shown at the 1865 Salon in Paris, and then at the 1866 Salon in Lille.
17. Gonzague Privat, *Place aux jeunes, causeries critiques sur le salon de 1865* (Paris: F. Cournol, 1865), 97.
18. This painting is consistently referred to in art history by the anonymous title *La négresse.* In one exception, the title *Portrait of Laure* is used in Hugh Honour, *L'Image du Noir dans l'art occidental: De la Révolution américaine à la Première Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1989), Tome 2: 204. See also Anne Coffin Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 78.
19. There is a paucity of scholarly commentary about the portrait beyond a passing mention in essays about the broader history of images of black women in nineteenth-century French art. An exception is the illustrated profile by the Pinacoteca Agnelli, the current owner of the painting, in Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli al Lingotto, *Collection Catalog* (2002; repr., Milan: Bompiani, 2006), 68–69. The Pinacoteca also establishes a provenance for the painting that extends from Eva Gonzalès through collectors in Paris (Auguste Pellerin, Prince de Wagram), in Budapest (Marczell de Nemes, Baron Herzog), and in Turin (Riccardo Gualino). The painting entered the Agnelli family collection in 1959, after ownership by the Honolulu Academy of Art.
20. Britany Salsbury, "Henri Guérard, *An African Woman after Eva Gonzalès,*" in *Altered States, Etching in Late 19th Century Paris,* exh. cat. (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 2017), https://publications.risdmuseum.org.
21. Ibid.
22. I make this assumption based on visual analysis of this image, which I first came across during dissertation research in 2011 at the Image of the Black in Western Art archives at Harvard's W. E. B. Du Bois Institute. I found very little information elsewhere about this painting, but the Image of the Black archives cover sheet for the image indicated that the painting was shown at the Salon of 1865; the fact that this is the same year that *Olympia* was shown reinforces the possibility that the model could have been Laure.
23. These studio visits were first mentioned in Étienne Moreau-Nelaton, *Manet raconté par lui-même* (Paris: Henri Laurens, 1926), 65; also see Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 263; and Stéphane Guégan et al., *Manet: The Man Who Invented Modernity,* exh. cat. (Paris: Musée d'Orsay, 2011), 107.
24. The titling of this work has varied. The Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, uses *Lady with a Fan,* and its curator, Judit Gesko, describes it as a portrait of Jeanne Duval in the museum's online collections catalogue. As seen in Guégan et al., *Manet,* 145, it was titled *Baudelaire's Mistress, Reclining* in the Musée d'Orsay's 2011 Manet exhibition.
25. Tabarant, *Manet et ses oeuvres,* 79.
26. During her earlier relationship with Nadar, Duval was described as living on the nearby rue Saint-Georges, in an apartment with her maid, as noted in Begley, *Great Nadar,* 24.
27. Manet biographer Beth Brombert describes the Manet group's visits to the Café Guerbois and Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes in *Édouard Manet: Rebel in a Frock Coat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 29–60, 164.
28. Roberto Calasso characterizes the emotional and intellectual intimacy of Baudelaire's relationship with Duval in *La folie Baudelaire* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2008), 34, 40–41.
29. See an extended discussion of Jeanne Duval and the Manet portrait in Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 261–77.

30. Ibid.; see also see Begley, *Great Nadar,* 24, 29–30.
31. Calasso, *La folie Baudelaire,* 40.
32. See a discussion of the poems that scholars generally agree were inspired by Duval in Jacques Dupont, Introduction to *Les fleurs du mal* by Charles Baudelaire (Paris: Flammarion, 2004), 13. Also see Edward J. Ahearn, "Black Woman, White Poet: Exile and Exploitation in Baudelaire's Jeanne Duval Poems," *French Review* 51, no. 2 (December 1977): 212–20.
33. Anne Higonnet discusses this mix of admiration and exoticizing objectification, as explored in contemporary artist and critic Lorraine O'Grady's work on Baudelaire and Jeanne Duval, *Miscegenated Family Album* (1980–94); see Anne Higonnet, "Hybrid Viewer,—My Difference,—Lorraine O'Grady!" in *New Histories,* ed. Lia Gangitano and Steven Nelson (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1996), 154–60.
34. James H. Rubin, *Courbet* (1997; repr., London: Phaidon, 2003), 144.
35. Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 262.
36. In-depth readings of this portrait include Therese Dolan, "Skirting the Issue: Manet's Portrait of Baudelaire's Mistress, Reclining," *Art Bulletin* (December 1997): 611–29; Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 262–69; Suzanne Singletary, "Manet and Whistler: Baudelairean Voyage," in *Perspectives on Manet,* ed. Therese Dolan (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2012), 58–60. Singletary reprises commentary linking the portrait to the Duval suite in *Fleurs,* as does Guégan et al., *Manet,* 101, 107.
37. Some publications of the Budapest museum include a discussion of the Spanish influence, most recently in its curator Judit Gesko's catalogue entry for this painting, in *Chefs-d'oeuvre de Budapest: Dürer, Greco, Tiepolo, Manet, Rippl-Rónai* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2016), 150–51; Pollock links the fan and Duval's crucifix necklace to her French Catholic heritage (Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 272).
38. For a description of Dumas's confrontations with racism at Paris salons, see C. Brighelli and J.-P. Rispail, *Alexandre Dumas ou les aventures d'un romancier* (Paris: Gallimard, Coll. Découverte, 1986), 75.
39. Begley, *Great Nadar,* 208–9.
40. Nils Gosta Sandblad, *Manet: Three Studies in Artistic Conception* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1954), 97–98. Also see a discussion of possible links between Manet's *Olympia* and the eponymous Dumas theatrical character, in Phylis A. Floyd, "The Puzzle of Olympia," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2005).
41. For a profile of Menken, see Renée Sentilles, *Performing Menken: Adah Isaacs Menken and the Birth of American Celebrity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
42. As described by Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat,* 114.
43. Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 270, is among the scholars who cite Nadar's account.
44. When Aldridge performed as Othello at Versailles in 1866, Alexandre Dumas père, who was in the audience, embraced Aldridge afterward and exclaimed, "Moi aussi, je suis nègre!" ("I, too, am black!"). Blanchard, *France noire,* 50.
45. See a discussion of New Orleans creoles and other African American visitors to nineteenth-century Paris in the preface to Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), xiv.
46. Silvy's portraits of Davies were exhibited during a Silvy retrospective, *Camille Silvy: Photographer of Modern Life (1834–1910),* at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2010. It is likely that the Silvy portraits were made in his London studio, although the Bonettas may have visited Paris during their honeymoon trip from London to the Maldives.
47. See a semifictionalized account in which Victorine Meurent describes Laure as a friend who worked in a millinery shop in the ninth arrondissement, in Eunice Lipton, *Alias Olympia: A Woman's Search for Manet's Model and Her Own Desire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 66.
48. See Ndiaye, *Condition noire,* 126; see also Blanchard, *France noire,* 41–43. See a discussion of political difficulties due to the absence of census data on the black French minorities in Joel Dreyfuss, "Why France Can't Say the M-Word," *The Root* (May 27, 2012), www.theroot.com.
49. From Alain Anselin, *L'émigration antillaise en France,* INSEE (Paris: Anthropos, economica, 1979), 295.
50. Ibid.
51. Anne Lafont, faculty member at the Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), expressed this view of the role of abolition in republican politics during a discussion with me at the INHA in September 2011.
52. For a discussion of Manet's republican sentiments, see Philip Nord, *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 31–34.
53. For a discussion of Haussmannization, and its displacement of the poor to make way for new grand boulevards in northern Paris, see Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat,* 54–55.
54. Baudelaire called on artists to focus on modern life in "Le peintre de la vie moderne" (The painter of modern life; 1863); see Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays,* trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (New York: Phaidon, 2005), 1–42.
55. On the Benoist portrait, the negation of the model's subjectivity, and the status of enslaved individuals brought by their owners to Paris, see Sylvain Bellenger et al., for brief mention of the Benoist in Sylvain Bellenger, "Les droits de l'homme et du citoyen," in *Girodet: 1767–1824,* exh. cat. (Paris: Gallimard/Musée du Louvre, 2006), 331, 335; also Hugh Honour, *L'Image du Noir dans l'art occidental,* 7–9; and especially James Smalls, "Slavery Is a Woman: Race, Gender, and Visuality in Marie Benoist's *Portrait d'une négresse,*" *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2004).
56. Bellenger, *Girodet,* 331.
57. Quoted in Honour, *L'Image du Noir,* 7–8.
58. Bellenger, *Girodet,* 331; Smalls, "Slavery Is a Woman."
59. See Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 285–86, for a discussion of the differentiation of the "de-Orientalized" black female figure, who appears in modest everyday French work attire, from her Orientalized precedent shown with bared breasts, ornate turban and jewelry, and print fabrics that signify tropical venues.
60. Honour, *L'Image du Noir dans l'art occidental,* 166, notes that the model, though her name is now lost, posed regularly for Carpeaux and other artists.
61. For an analysis of mid-nineteenth-century portraiture as a visualization of empire, see Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 266–72.
62. Grigsby provides a detailed analysis of Delacroix's three portraits of Aspasie as a visualization of empire, writing that "the mulatta incarnated empire; she was its sign because she was its product . . . because a person of mixed-race confused the rational categories of black or white, each with its own set of representational norms." Ibid., 266–69.
63. Kellie Jones provides a full account of the Saartjie Baartman episode, its sociopolitical context, and of its resonances in the art and exhibition options of contemporary black women artists in "A.K.A. Saartjie, 'The Hottentot Venus': Context (Some Reflections and a Dialogue) 1998/2004," in *Eyeminded: Living and Writing*

Contemporary Art (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), 44–67.

64. See Honour, *L'Image du Noir dans l'art occidental,* 36–37, who also suggests that the first portraits were of a different model.

65. See Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 10–34, for a reading of paired portraits, including Maria, in the context of the iconography of colonial conquest as inscribed on the black female body.

66. See Maryse Condé, "Chercher nos verities," in *Penser la creolité,* ed. Maryse Condé and Madeleine Cottentot-Hage (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 305–10, for Condé's analysis of the increasing cultural hybridity of the Paris-based Antillean community during the late twentieth century, but traced back to Aimé Césaire. See also Madeleine Dobie, "Invisible Exodus: The Cultural Effacement of Antillean Migration," *Diaspora* (2004): 149–83; and Holly Collins, "*La querelle de la créolisation: Créolization* vs. *créolité* in Glissant, Condé and the Créolists," *Nottingham French Studies* 56, no. 1 (February 2017): 67–81.

67. See Laure de Margerie, Édouard Papet, et al., *Facing the Other: Charles Cordier (1827–1905), Ethnographic Sculptor,* exh. cat. (New York: Abrams, 2004), 50–54, 70.

68. See the entry for *African Venus* in the online collection exhibition *Treasures of the New York Public Library,* http://exhibitions.nypl.org/treasures/items/show/165.

69. Blanchard, La *France noire,* 49.

70. Samia Messaoudi and Mehdi Lallaoui, rev. by Céline Bonneau, *Les Antillais d'Ici: "Les métro-caribéens"* (Île-de-France: Au Nom de la Mémoire, Bezons, 2009), 23–24. The song dates to 1769, and multiple versions have been developed, first in Guadeloupe and then in Martinique and Guyana.

71. Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat,* 114, describes the hierarchy, fashions, and occupations of the grisette in close detail, defining her as "a girl of working class or lower middle class origins, without the vulgarity of the urban underclass or the coarseness of the proletariat."

72. Jennifer DeVere Brody, "Black Cat Fever: Manifestations of Manet's *Olympia,*" *Theatre Journal* 53, no. 1 (2001): 97.

73. T. J. Clark, "Olympia's Choice," in *The Painting of Modern Life,* rev. ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 105–7.

74. Ibid., 69, 93, 146.

75. Condé and Cottentot, *Penser la créolité,* 305–10; Collins, "*Créolization* vs. *créolité,*" 67–81.

76. Clark, "Olympia's Choice," 93; Juliet Wilson-Bareau, "The Hidden Face of Manet: An Investigation of the Artist's Working Processes," *Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 997 (April 1986): 44.

77. See Guégan et al., *Manet,* 136–37, for an exposition, exceptionally in some length, of Zola's formalism, and a rejection of its failure to take content into account.

78. As discussed in Adrienne Childs, "Exceeding Blackness in the Art of Jean-Léon Gérome," in *Blacks and Blackness in European Art of the Long Nineteenth Century,* ed. Adrienne L. Childs and Susan H. Libby (Farnham, Surrey, Eng.: Ashgate, 2014), 125–34, 137–42.

79. Nathalie Harran, *La femme sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Errance, 2010), 78–83, 154.

80. Kirsten Pai Buick, *Child of the Fire: Mary Edmonia Lewis and the Problem of Art History's Black and Indian Subject* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010), 204.

81. Nord, *Impressionists and Politics,* 31–34.

82. Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat,* 15–16.

83. All excerpts from Manet's letters during the Brazil trip are sourced from Édouard Manet, *Lettres de jeunesse: 1848–1849 Voyage à Rio* (Paris: Louis Rouart, 1928).

84. As translated in Juliet Wilson-Bareau, ed., *Manet by Himself: Correspondence and Conversation, Paintings, Pastels, Prints and Drawings* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), 15–16. "Nous avons 26 hommes à bord dont un cuisinier et un maître d'hôtel nègre. . . . Nous avons pour nous servir quatre pauvres petits mousses et deux novices. . . . Notre maître d'hôtel, qui est nègre, comme je te l'ai dit, et qui est chargé de leur éducation, leur flanque de fameuses roulées quand."

85. Manet, *Lettres de jeunesse,* 58. Author's translation. "La population est au trois quarts nègre, ou mulâtre, cette partie est géneralement affreuse sauf quelques exceptions parmi les négresses et les mulâtres; ces dernières sont presque toutes jolies."

86. See ibid., 52, for Manet's account of witnessing a slave market in Rio.

87. Manet, *Lettres de jeunesse,* 52. The English translation of this text is from Wilson-Bareau, *Manet by Himself,* 22, with my additions: " . . . les négresses sont . . . pour la plupart nues jusqu'a la ceinture, quelques-unes ont un foulard attaché au cou et tombant sur la poitrine . . . elles se mettent avec beaucoup de recherche. Les unes se font des turbans, les autres arrangent très artistement leur cheveux crépus et elles portent presque toutes des jupons ornés de monstrueux volants."

88. See Theodore Reff, *Manet: Olympia* (New York: Viking, 1977), 92–93. Reff notes that at least Flaubert made clear "how ridiculous he thought such comparisons were." He also points out that the figure of the white prostitute herself also drew widespread derisive descriptions of "primitive barbarity and ritual animality."

89. Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 301.

90. See Lorraine O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity," repr. with "Postscript T" in *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage,* ed. Grant Kester (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 3.

91. Higonnet, "Lorraine O'Grady," 1996, 156–57.

92. Clark, "Olympia's Choice," 83, 283.

93. Pollock, *Differencing the Canon,* 301.

94. The Pinacoteca Agnelli catalogue entry for Manet's portrait of Laure suggests that the model may have been evocative for Manet of his youthful trip to Brazil; see Pinacoteca Agnelli, *Collection Catalog,* 68.

95. Sandblad, *Three Studies,* 97–98.

96. Françoise Cachin, Charles S. Moffat, and Juliet Wilson-Bareau, *Manet, 1832–1883,* exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983), 175, 179.

97. Ibid., 179–80. Cachin was one of the few critics to offer a considered, if cryptic, reading of Manet's portrayal of Laure as Olympia's maid, including her important suggestion of its Baudelairean influences, in ibid., 175, 179. Ted Reff also relates the Laure figure to the Baudelaire poem "À une Malabaraise," and more tangentially to Baudelaire's poems "À une dame créole," "Bien loin d'ici," and "La belle Dorothée," in *Manet: Olympia,* 91–92. Cachin and other writers point to the black cat as the painting's most obvious Baudelairean reference, with its widely known connotations of promiscuity and illicit sex.

98. In Deborah Cherry, "Image-Making with Jeanne Duval in Mind: Photoworks by Maud Sulter, 1989–2002," 6 (unpublished essay, March 2012, which the author generously shared with me). See Cherry's discussion of Sulter's work in the final chapter herein.

99. Charles Baudelaire, "To a Malabar Woman," in *The Flowers of Evil/Les fleurs du mal* (1857), trans. William Aggeler (Fresno, Calif.: Academy Library Guild, 1954), https://fleursdumal.org/poem/309.

100. Cachin et al., *Manet,* 180.
101. Charles Baudelaire, "The Jewels," in *The Flowers of Evil,* trans. James McGowan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 17.
102. For a discussion of Manet's competing impulses in handling Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese influences in his 1868–69 painting *On the Balcony,* see Michael Fried, "Manet's Sources," *Artforum* (March 1969): 24, 32–33. Anne Higonnet reviews the historicization of Manet "as an artist who positioned himself in the history of art by citing it profusely," in "Manet and the Multiple," *Grey Room,* no. 48 (Summer 2012): 104.
103. Fried, "Manet's Sources," 24, 32–33.
104. Brody, "Black Cat Fever," 7.
105. Cachin et al., *Manet,* 185–86.
106. For a description of the earlier and later stages of the painting of *Olympia,* see Wilson-Bareau, "Hidden Face of Manet," 45.
107. Cachin et al., *Manet,* 186.
108. Based on my observations during repeat viewings of the painting *Olympia* in the galleries of the Musée d'Orsay from 2010 to 2012. It is noteworthy that when I began this project, working from reproductions, I described Laure's features as barely discernible, with no trace of expressive affect, but that view has evolved with direct observation.
109. See O'Grady, "Olympia's Maid." Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 92, refers to Manet's awareness of the "volatility" of the blank face in the perception of the viewer, of its capacity to destabilize attention. Georges Bataille also cites "messy" brushwork as evidence of Manet's "indifference" to constructing an effect of beauty, instead allowing a split between figural facts and the materiality of the painting almost to the point of formlessness; see Bataille, *Manet: Biographical and Critical Study* (New York: Skira, 1955), 70–74.
110. The Bertall and other derisive caricatures are summarized in Alan Krell, *Manet and the Painters of Modern Life* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 56–61; and Clark, "Olympia's Choice," 97. Also see Carol Armstrong, *Manet/Manette* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 44–45; she points out that Bertall names his caricature Manette, as a metaphorical allusion to Manet himself, as an artist who, like the prostitute, requires public display. Armstrong also notes that the cartoons satirized the prostitute with a derogatory intensity comparable to that for the maid, as a level of equivalence between the two.
111. Wilson-Bareau, "Hidden Face of Manet," 45.
112. Clark, "Olympia's Choice," 96, 99, 140.
113. For a discussion of Bazille's stated preference for simple subjects based on modern life, see Dianne Pitman, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 58.
114. Ibid., 185. Also see Michel Hilaire, "L'atelier de la rue la condamine," in Michel Hilaire, Paul Perrin, et al., *Frédéric Bazille, La jeunesse de l'Impressionisme,* exh. cat. (Paris: Musée d'Orsay/Flammarion, 2016), 164–69.
115. As described on the National Gallery of Art collection website: https://www.nga.gov/Collection/art-object-page.61356.html.
116. See Honour, *L'Image du Noir dans l'art occidental,* 206.
117. See Guy C. McElroy et al., *Facing History: The Black Image in American Art, 1710–1940,* ed. Christopher C. French (San Francisco: Bedford Arts; Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1990), 87; see also Honour, *L'Image du Noir dans l'art occidental,* 188–89.
118. McElroy, *Facing History,* 87. The de Young/Legion of Honor–Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, owner of this painting, renamed it *Female Model* in 2002, a change from *Negress,* citing evolving usage of racial terminology in a curatorial memo included in the museum's object files. The National Gallery similarly renamed its Bazille painting in 1994 as *Young Woman with Peonies,* after concluding, as described in its archives, that it was unnecessary to reference the model's ethnicity.
119. The Eakins and Bazille model was also known to pose for Henri Regnault's *Seated African Woman* and possibly, much later, for Édouard Debat-Ponsan's 1883 *Le massage, scène de hammam* (trans).
120. See Blanchard, *France noire,* 50, 56–57, 62–65, for an account of the racially derogatory displays of colonized cultures, including a four-hundred-person "villages nègre" (black villages) display at the 1889 Paris world's fair, where fig. 80 was made. For a more comprehensive account of the human zoos, see Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boetsch and Nanette Jacomijn Snoep, *Exhibitions: L'invention du sauvage*, exh. cat. (Arles: Acts sud, and Paris: Musée du quai Branly, 2011).
121. Pitman, *Bazille,* 165–75; see also Michel Hilaire, "La Toilette," in Hilaire et al., *La jeunesse de l'Impressionisme,* 146–48.
122. Pitman, *Bazille,* 169–71.
123. Ibid., 15, 59, 55.
124. Valérie Bajou, *Frédéric Bazille, 1841–1870* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1993), 175.
125. See translations of Bazille's letters in an appendix to the exhibition catalogue in J. Patrice Marandel, *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1978), 179–84, especially 182, for a letter dated "Jan 1870—Monday" about "three charming models, one a superb négresse."
126. Pitman, *Bazille,* 179, suggests this sequence, and while the preliminary sketch of the Fabre version, now in Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum, may suggest the reverse order, it is possible that there was a second study that is now lost.
127. Ibid., 180–82, also cites Courbet's *The Trellis,* an 1862 depiction of a young woman picking flowers, as a possible influence for the figure with flowers composition.
128. Bajou, *Frédéric Bazille,* 176, describes the young Bazille's delight at having engaged the model, and his request from his father for funding to pay her fees. See also Marandel, *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism.* See Pitman, *Bazille,* 223–29, for a concordance of differing versions of Bazille's letters due to the lack of some dates.
129. Pitman notes the absence of exoticizing objects in comparing the *Peonies* paintings with precedent images of black women, in Pitman, *Bazille,* 183.
130. See Joseph Rishel, "Catalogue VI Painting, VI-4 Negress Arranging Peonies," in Joseph Rishel, Jean-Marie Moulin, et al. *The Second Empire, 1852–1870: Art in France under Napoleon III,* exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1978), 252, about Bazille's previous engagement with flower paintings, including possibly the Degas.
131. See Reff, *Olympia,* 105–11, for a detailed account of the "vogue" for flower symbology in France and Manet's use of it. Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat,* 165, notes that a strong interest in flower symbology cut across all social classes, and that knowledge of the meanings of specific flowers was so widespread that a bouquet of flowers was "as eloquent as a love letter or poem." Useful texts about nineteenth-century French flower symbology include Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers: A History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995).
132. Reff, *Olympia,* 103.
133. Ibid., 106–7.

134. Ibid., 105. In relating flower symbology to the bouquet in *Olympia,* Reff discusses specific popular plays, including *La dame aux camélias,* by Manet's friend Dumas fils. He suggests that, since the camellia was an emblem of demimondaines like the play's tragic heroine, and her maid brings her a bouquet that does not include camellias, she rejects it; he also suggests that this scene was an inspiration for *Olympia.*

135. For an account of the initial publication of these books by minor or almanac publishers, see Seaton, *Language of Flowers,* 78.

136. Ibid., 62, 80–84. Seaton provides histories by countries of the interest in and sources of flower symbology. Reff, *Olympia,* 105, concurs on the partially Eastern origins of the craze, which he says was at its height in the 1860s, linking it to "the oriental practice of sending bouquets, or *Selams,* as discreet messages of love."

137. For a discussion of "paeon" as the name of a song of praise sung to the god Apollo, see Diana Wells, *100 Flowers and How They Got Their Names* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin, 1997); for links of the god Paeon, a son of Endymion, to the peony's medicinal powers, and Homer's citation of Paeon's healing of Hades after Heracles wounded him in the Trojan War, see Bobby J. West, *A Contemplation upon Flowers: Garden Plants in Myth and Literature* (Portland: Timber, 1999), 279–80.

138. Manet was known to keep a garden of peonies, his favorite flower, and white lilacs, at his family's Gennevilliers estate; he also made two series of paintings of peony still lifes, in 1864 and 1882. See Brombert, *Rebel in a Frock Coat,* 164–65.

139. West, *Contemplation upon Flowers,* 282, also notes the peony's significations of the moon, and a use in amulets to ward off illness and evil spirits.

140. Ibid., 353.

141. Ibid., 281. West notes that tulips are native to Turkey, and European travelers there perceived a resemblance to local headwear.

142. These meanings are consistently cited in flower symbology texts. See West, *Contemplation,* 354; and Seaton, *Language of Flowers,* 196.

143. Seaton, *Language of Flowers,* 196–97.

144. Philip Knight, *Flower Poetics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 115.

145. For a discussion of the changing fashions among artists for models of varying ethnic types, see Susan Waller, *The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris, 1830–1870* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 39.

146. For an extensive analysis of the implications of race for this painting, see Marilyn Brown, "Miss La La's Teeth: Reflections on Degas and Race," *Art Bulletin* 89, no. 4 (December 2007): 738–65.

147. Linda Wolk-Simon, with contributions by Nancy Ireson and Eveline Baseggio Omiccioli, *Degas, Miss La La, and the Cirque Fernando,* exh. cat. (New York: Morgan Library and Museum, 2013), 3–4.

148. Ibid., 3.

149. Brown, "Miss La La's Teeth," 740–42; James Smalls, "'Race' as Spectacle in Late Nineteenth-Century French Art and Popular Culture," *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 351–82. Scholars generally agree that Miss Lala's real name was Olga, and that she was born to a black father and white mother in the Prussian town of Stettin, but documentation of her surname is inconclusive.

150. Brown, "Miss La La's Teeth," 744–48.

151. For a biography of Rafael Padilla, aka Chocolat, see Gérard Noiriel, *Chocolat clown nègre: L'histoire oubliée du premier artiste noir de la scène Française* (Paris: Bayard, 2012).

Chapter 2. Affinities and Interface

1. Baudelaire sets forth his beliefs about the ideal lifestyle and subject matter of modern artists in *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863), while the longing for an escape from the city to "*luxe, calme et volupté*" is captured in his poem "L'invitation au Voyage," from the poetry collection *Les fleurs du mal* (1857).

2. Matisse's choice to work with models of diverse national origins may well have taken shape due to his extensive travel, not only within Europe but also in North Africa, the United States, Tahiti, and the Caribbean. During his return voyage from Tahiti in 1930, Matisse made stops in Panama, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, as delineated in agendas provided by the Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux. Also see the chronology of John Elderfield, *Matisse: A Retrospective,* exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 297, 358, 359.

3. The commission was from a Lyonnais group of bibliophiles known as Les XXX. For an account of the commission, see Dominique Szymusiak, "Poésie et regard: Le Baudelaire de Matisse," in *Matisse et Baudelaire,* exh. cat. (Le Cateau-Cambrésis: Musée Matisse, 1992), 35–36; also Marguerite Duthuit-Matisse, Claude Duthuit, et al., *Henri Matisse: Catalogue raisonné de l'oeuvre gravé* (Paris: Imprimerie Union, 1983), 130.

4. See Alfred Barr, *Matisse: His Art and His Public* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1951), 563, for excerpts from Matisse's 1946 note "How I Made My Books."

5. As described in ibid.

6. Based on agendas detailing Matisse's Villa Le Rêve studio sessions provided by Wanda de Guébriant, director of the Archives Matisse in Issy-les-Moulineaux, as well as dates of drawings and other works separate from the Baudelaire project, Matisse had studio sessions with Carmen in 1943, 1945, and during several separate periods in 1946.

7. For a discussion of Baudelaire's fascination yet disillusionment with modern urban spaces, see Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections,* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 186–91.

8. See Herbert Marcuse, "The Affirmative Character of Culture" (1937), in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory,* trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (London: Free Association, 1988), 88–133.

9. See a discussion of Matisse's early admiration for these artists, whose work he viewed at exhibitions and sometimes purchased, as well as his visual evocations of Baudelaire's poem in *Luxe, calme et volupté,* in Elderfield, *Retrospective,* 32–36.

10. See a discussion of the philosophical contradictions of primitivism—Gauguin wrote that by going to Tahiti, Panama, or Martinique, "civilization was falling away from him"—in Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Going Native: Paul Gauguin and the Invention of Primitivist Modernism," in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History,* ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 310–29.

11. Quoted in Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 192–93.

12. See Jack D. Flam, *Matisse on Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 30–43.

13. Jack D. Flam, "Matisse and the Fauves," in *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art,* exh. cat., ed. William Rubin (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), 1: 212.

14. For the problematic aspects of primitivism, see James Clifford, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," *Art in America* (April 1985): 165–66.

15. As recounted in Barr, *Matisse,* 52, 531.

16. Ibid., 138–40.

17. See Solomon-Godeau, "Going Native," 310, for a characterization of Gauguin's "explicit linkage of . . . the tropics to the sensual and