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Abstract:
In painting Emilie Ambre, Manet may have seized the occasion to foreground mutual concerns shared with the composer Georges Bizet regarding the performativity of their mediums. Both the musician and the artist found themselves castigated for their harshness of tones, their depiction of lower-class figures, and their embrace of realist strategies.

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En garde: Manet's Portrait of Emilie Ambre in the Role of Bizet's *Carmen*

by Therese Dolan

In September 1879, Édouard Manet left for the town of Bellevue, a suburb of Paris on the Seine, to undergo treatments for a leg ailment that would ultimately be the cause of his death in 1883. There he met his neighbor, the opera singer Emilie Ambre who was the former mistress of King William III of Holland. The portrait of the opera singer in the title role of George Bizet's *Carmen*, that resulted from this encounter (fig. 1), has been recently discussed by Juliet Wilson-Bareau in *Manet/Velázquez*[1] and Manuela B. Mena Marqués in *Manet en el Prado*[2] with regard to its history and place in Manet's love of Spanish subject matter and style. My purpose in this essay will be to situate the portrait in the musical aesthetics of Manet's time, highlighting the visual characteristics of the work that relate to shared notions of performance in painting and opera. Manet has cleverly painted a small quarter note at the far left edge of Ambre's shawl. Its presence serves as a coded visual marker of Manet's alliance with Bizet in presenting the image of a woman who transgressed the norms of acceptance for public display and contravened the traditional expectations of the Opéra-Comique.

Figure 1, Edouard Manet, *Portrait of Emilie Ambre as Carmen*, c. 1879. Oil on canvas. Philadelphia Museum of Art Gift of Edgar Scott [larger image]

During the spring of 1878, Ambre sang the role of Violetta in Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata* and also performed in *Aida* (fig. 2), but she received only lukewarm reviews from the Parisian critics. Hoping to find more success with foreign audiences, Ambre signed on with Colonel Mapleson's Italian Opera Company in 1879 to sing the title role as the fiery gypsy in George Bizet's *Carmen* in America. Manet began her portrait that autumn, and the following summer he rented a villa from the singer where he completed the work. Ambre had never performed as Carmen in Paris, a controversial role that had been performed by the diva Marie Celestine Galli-Marié. Bizet's opera experienced a stormy debut in 1875 and was played in the capital until February of the following year. It would not be seen again in Paris until April 1883, the month that Manet died, although it enjoyed great success in Marseilles, Lyons, and Angers, as well as in Vienna and London. Among the many roles Ambre had

sung it is perhaps curious that she should pose as Carmen, but both sitter and artist may have had compelling reasons for depicting her in this title role.[3]

Figure 2, Alfred Lemoine, *Mlle Emilie Ambre (Aïda)*. Lithograph. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra
[larger image]

Performance in Art and Music

Bizet's *Carmen*, with a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy based on the 1845 novella of Prosper Mérimée, tells the story of a gypsy who works in a cigarette factory in Seville. Carmen entices Don José, a corporal, away from military service, into a life of thievery and smuggling. He stabs her to death in a jealous rage outside of a bull ring where she has just declared her love for the matador Escamillo. Bizet debuted the work in Paris on March 3, 1875 at the Opéra-Comique, a family theater where many marriages were arranged in between acts. The story of thieves, cigarette makers, and a gypsy stabbed by her lover who had deserted his military duty, was hardly considered a proper subject for a theater where everyone supposedly lived happily ever after. The Opéra-Comique differed from French Grand Opera in subject matter and style of singing. While Grand Opera most often focused on themes of serious intent frequently set in distant lands or mythical climes, and a libretto sung without interruption, Opéra-Comique offered lighter fare of topical interest that featured spoken dialogue in its lyric presentation. During the nineteenth century, women were only gradually admitted to the stalls and balconies at the back of the Opéra orchestra, a move that some saw as a threat to the august tone of serious performance.[4] The Opéra-Comique, on the other hand, prided itself as a family theater where wives and children could expect wholesome entertainment provided by edifying characters performing in sentimental stories with morally uplifting endings. As Herbert Lindenberger noted, the opera house "frames and differentiates the events that transpire within it."[5]

At the time Bizet's opera was performed, much critical attention focused on the music and staging of the opening of the second act where the composer introduces the "Bohemian Song." The setting of the "Bohemian Song" provides a performance within a performance at Lillas Pastia's tavern. This is the moment chosen by Auguste Lamy for his vignette in the March 13, 1875 issue of *L'Illustration* (fig. 3), as the opera's significant central scene. It was also Manet's choice for Ambre's pose as she leans against a wooden table which suggests the only interior scene in the opera. At this moment in the opera, gypsy girls are dancing for the

patrons of the tavern when suddenly Carmen breaks into song in a rhythm that describes the exotic spell cast by a gypsy melody. This moment in the second act of the opera brought to the fore the difference between Bizet's genre and that of high Opera with its traditional ballets as entr'actes.[6] Instead of a graceful sprite, softly shrouded in pastel tulle, floating in front of a fantasy backdrop, Bizet presented a hip-swinging gypsy in garishly colored ethnic dress strutting in the center of a vulgar tavern. Critics seized on this scene as an ethnographic moment of naturalism,[7] one which compelled the viewer to adopt the bohemian point of view.[8] In *La Traviata*, Giuseppe Verdi's heroine of doubtful morality, Violetta, could proclaim she was *sempre libere*, but she ends up dying true to her love for Alfredo Germont which has been purified through sacrificing her relationship with him so that he might regain his family's honor. Women and men costumed as gypsies and matadors frolic at the second act ball at Flora's, but the audience understands these characters as properly classed bourgeois wearing masquerades rather than incarnations of true bohemian types. Violetta's death scene shows her sending her maid out to give her last coins to the poor, then collapsing in a final paroxysm of true love in the arms of Germont who has come too late to make of her an honest woman. Carmen's death, on the other hand, is violent and unredeemed, spurred by her refusal to return to Don José and her avowal to live her gypsy life freely or die. She lies on the ground in front of the arena, gored and bloody like the bull slain by the matador whose triumph over the feral animal is cheered by the enchanted crowd offstage. The difference between Verdi's romantic opera heroine and Bizet's realist opéra-comique figure spanned the same contrast of artistic expression as the nymphs and Venuses of Salon painting did in comparison with Manet's forthright portrayals of Victorine Meurend enjoying her lunch while sitting naked on the grass or staring as *Olympia* (fig. 4) perched haughtily on her bed awaiting her next customer.

Figure 3, Auguste Lamy, "March 13, 1875." Wood Engraving. *L'Illustration* [larger image]

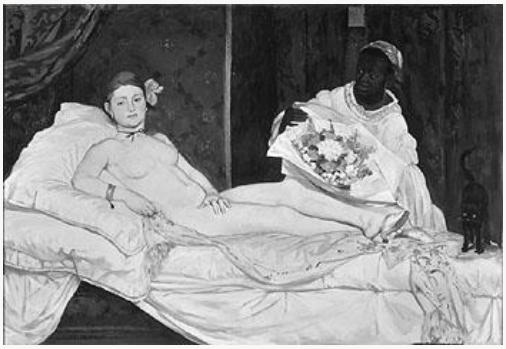

Figure 4, Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863. Paris, Musée d'Orsay [larger image]

Although Emilie Ambre had sung other starring operatic parts, the opportunity to do her portrait as Carmen provided Manet with an occasion to foreground what I perceive are mutual concerns shared by the musician and the artist regarding the performative aspects of their respective mediums. Bizet's opera has been characterized by Evlyn Gould as a "meditation in action" on the relation of words and music, accomplished through "an open attention to the generic conventions of the *opéra-comique* form."[9] Unlike the continuous recitative of opera, spoken dialogue alternated with sung passages, breaking into the coherence of the narrative, thus causing the audience to pay attention to the way in which the opera was put together. As Gould observes, Bizet's *Carmen* "substitutes the more ruptured quality of music interrupted by theatrical declamation to submit our attention to the jarring effect of two separate textual registers."[10]

Gould and Carolyn Abbate highlight the "Bohemian Song" that opens the second act of the opera as a prime instance of operatic self-reflexivity.[11] Carmen's friends Frasquita and Mercedes join her spirited refrain, *tra lalalala*, and at the end of the third stanza the tempo accelerates to *presto* during which the three gypsy women entertain the crowd with a highly charged dance. Carmen sings a tale about song and dance while at the same time executing a song and dance, highlighting the increasing energy that emanates from the excitement stimulated by the very act of performing. Bizet here pairs the narrative of Carmen's description of the aural and visual effects of the intoxicating gypsy performance with a non-narrative refrain of lilting syllables which separate the stanzas of the song. Sense and non-sense in the "Bohemian Song" join in artistic affectivity through a semiotic blending that signifies abandonment to musical pleasure. This taunting non-narrative refrain of *tra lalalala* occurs at crucial moments throughout the opera at precisely the points when the dramatic force of the opera transgresses the genre of the comic-opera form.[12] It serves as an aural marker of Carmen's unwillingness to conform to bourgeois standards, underscoring her bohemian recalcitrance in an acoustical mirror image of Bizet's own reluctance to toe the generic lines of the Opéra-Comique form. The lyrics of the "Bohemian Song" itself provide strong sense impressions that significantly combine the visual with the aural as Carmen sings of how the rods on the *sistra* tinkled with metallic brightness, how copper and silver rings gleamed on tawny skins, how orange and red fabrics floated in the wind, and how the Bohemians, with arms flying, raged with their instruments, creating an "éblouissant tapage"—a dazzling uproar that bewitched the gypsies.

Manet chose the moment of the "Bohemian Song" to stage his presentation of Emilie Ambre as Carmen, and through the medium of paint challenged his brush to achieve an examination of artistic means similar to what Bizet had achieved in his Opéra-Comique. The rapidity of Manet's brush stroke obliterates the contours of the figure by virtuoso paint handling, as can be seen in his treatment of the lace mantilla and the decoration of the bolero jacket in the Ambre portrait. This forces the viewer to register the canvas as both a naturalistic image of Ambre and as colored pigment on a flat surface. This deliberate visual ambivalence between the narrative function of the portrait and the free play of paint is wittily created by Manet by his delineation of the bows on the front of Ambre's dress, for they function as instances of both description and suggestion. Our first conceptual understanding of them is that they are decorative closures made of fringe or ribbon on her bodice. But these painterly marks without clear delineation also connote Carmen's ultimate demise in the last act, as they can also be read as the stab wounds from which Carmen's blood flows. Manet allows the paint to drip and coagulate in thick droplets at the bottom of the closures, creating both referent and representation in this painterly gesture.

The bold trace of Manet's brush recalls Charles Baudelaire's words in his essay on "The Painter of Modern Life," when he stated that "the pleasure that we derive from the representation of the present is due not only to the beauty with which it can be invested, but also to the essential quality of *being present*."[13] The poet valued the active brushwork that contradicted the notion that what we are viewing is a finished moment in time, resolved and polished for the spectator. In the academic portraiture of Manet's and Baudelaire's time, the eye of the spectator passed flawlessly through the varnished surface to the mirrored perfection of the illusionistic image beneath. One is convinced that the image is a likeness, that lace is lace, and that satin has sheen on its surface. In art that is beginning to be abstracted, however, the eye of the spectator must actively engage in turning the mark-making brushstroke into a conceptual object. We see this again in Emilie Ambre's hand holding the fan where the pull of the paint and the delineation of what looks like an "unfinished" hand actively opening a fan that is midway between a closed and open position renders the sensation of movement. One has the impression of a performance happening before one's eyes.

For Baudelaire, the end result of presentness was to privilege the experience of being a part of the crowd. Modernity for him meant more than just contemporary subject matter, although that too was important. What was crucial for Baudelairean modernity, and what we find so beautifully articulated in Manet's portrait of Emilie Ambre, was that painting, through the deliberate attention to the mechanics of its representation and perception, permitted the viewer to participate in a fantasy of presence—of audience—in the actual performance of the work of art. What critics had decried as slovenly brushwork throughout the years proved to be a deliberate strategy of oppositional tactic. Could Manet paint hands and faces clearly and carefully? He proved this magnificently the same year Ambre posed for him when he executed his double portrait of the Guillemets which he titled *In the Conservatory* (Berlin, Nationalgalerie). The carefully modeled hands of the couple in the central portion of the painting and the crisp detailing of the pleats of the woman's dress which echo the syncopated rhythm of the bench rails and slats across the lateral surface of the canvas prove that Manet could indeed work carefully and provide convincing illusions. But to capture a diva dressed to sing in an avant-garde opera, a work scorned for its radical

qualities, called for a procedure that equaled the stylistic force and vigor, the aesthetic audacity that marked Bizet's own work.

Much has been made of the Spanish musical sources of Bizet's compositions in Carmen. His operatic score incorporates the sounds of Spanish folk music by its adaptation of spontaneous rhythms and bold color, but ends by translating the Spanish flavoring into the French idiom. The Spanish quality that Bizet grafted onto French music composed for a French audience in many ways parallels Manet's fascination in the 1860s with Spanish subject matter and sources, which he echoed at the time he painted Bizet's heroine. *Emilie Ambre in the Role of Carmen* clearly recalls his 1862 portrait of *Lola de Valence* (Paris, Musée d'Orsay), itself reminiscent of Goya's portrait of the Duchess of Alba (New York, Hispanic Society of Anerica). Manet had sold the image of Lola to Jean-Baptiste Faure the year before he began Ambre's portrait, so it must have been fresh in his mind. During the time he was painting Ambre, Manet also reprised his theme of the Spanish dancers and bullfighters on fans and tambourines which he executed for *La Vie Moderne* Gallery. Critics today argue that Bizet's music sounds Spanish to all but the Spaniards, with the foreign elements of the composer's score, such as Sebastien Yradier's music for Carmen's "Habañera," transformed so thoroughly by Bizet's imagination and musical style that the Spanish source emerges transformed by his own idiom.[14] Similar arguments have been convincingly made by Michael Fried with regard to the Frenchness of Manet's art.[15] Despite his many borrowings from other sources, Manet's painting consistently presented an image that resonated thoroughly with originality and a Parisian contemporaneity authentically true to its time.

Manet had several contemporary pictorial sources for depicting Ambre in *Carmen*. In 1874, the year before Bizet's opera debuted, Gustave Doré published three hundred engravings to *Voyages en Espagne*, many of which could have served as inspiration for the music as well as décor for the stage.[16] That same year Narcisse-Virgile Diaz's *Bohémiens Going to a Fête* (Wooster, Massachusetts, Wooster Art Museum) portrayed a band of Gypsies on a forest path, a scene evoked in Act III of the opera. Ten days after the opera opened Auguste Lamy portrayed Carmen in a pose from each act of the opera surrounding a central vignette of Lillas Pastia's tavern taken from Chouden's set designs. In the lower right-hand corner of Lamy's illustration (fig. 3) Carmen covers her breasts with her right arm to protect her from the impending stab from Don José. A poster advertisement for the opera focuses the spectator's gaze on Carmen's upthrust breasts as she dies in her jealous lover's arms (fig. 5). The leads of the opera, Galli-Marié and Paul Lhérie, were drawn by Georges Clairin in 1875 (fig. 6), with a pose by Carmen that is quite close to that of Manet's 1862 figure of *Lola de Valence*: arm on hip and feet posed in a similar position. Manet avoided the drama of the death scene, ignoring the moment Carmen is punished in order to focus on the proud assertion of her seductive talents as she prepares to sing the "Bohemian Song." Manet captures well the boldly unrepentant aspect of Bizet's *femme fatale* by posing Ambre with her hand on her hip in a gesture of physical assertiveness and assurance, often used in the Dutch painting of Frans Hals and reserved in old master painting for invincible men of military or royal might.[17] Critics of Bizet's *Carmen* often called attention to Galli-Marié's provocative swinging of hips in her performance.[18] Manet joins Ambre's two hands at her left hip which he further accentuates by the position of the fan which she will shortly whip open to begin her song and dance, the moment in the opera when Bizet calls attention to the difference of his Opéra-Comique form of dialogue and dance from that of traditional

Opera. Ambre's face and gaze, while avoiding the frontality and confrontational stare of Manet's earlier powerful nudes, remains as assured and unapologetic as the bold strokes that define her strong features on the canvas.

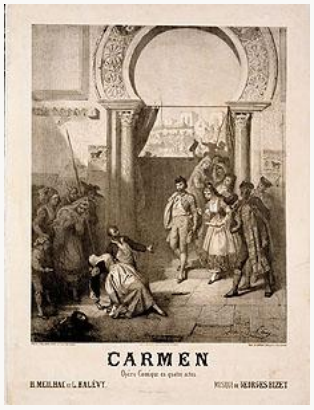

Figure 5, - L. Leray, *Carmen*, 1875. Poster. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [larger image]

Figure 6, Georges Clairin, *Paul Lhérie and Célestine Galli-Marié in "Carmen*," 1875. Lithograph. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [larger image]

One theater critic wrote that Galli-Marié "has imitated the gestures, expression, and the costumes of the *señoras* of the crossroads with the accuracy of a photographer. The unique M. Manet is capable of flattering her. Under the pretext of exactitude, please, let's not sink so low."[19] By posing Emilie Ambre in a similar position to Nadar's photograph of Galli-Marié as Carmen (fig. 7), and Mora's later photograph of Emilie Ambre in her role, hand on hip, fan in right hand ready to flutter, head turned in the same direction, in an identical three-quarter length view against a blank background (fig. 8), Manet could call attention in his rendition to the very elements that made his version the expressive affirmation of oil on canvas rather than the smooth transcription of a mechanical process.[20] Manet divides Ambre's face into distinct areas of light and shadow, as if a strong stage light were shining on her from the right. With his brush loaded with white, he dabs a highlight over the surface of her eye, pulls a broken stroke over the side of her face, down her cheek, and under her lip, then scumbles the paint in patches to suggest the light flickering over the lacy surface of her

mantilla. Thick commas of gold paint suggest the staccato parade of gold ornamentation decorating her bolero jacket, while broad areas of white and beige capture the sway of the fringe on her sleeves. Manet turns his back on the fine detailing and chiaroscuro modeling used for traditional portraiture of the time in order to embrace the startling juxtapositions of light and shade, broken brush stroke, and bold paint application that would become the signature of the avant-garde style that he and his Impressionist friends pioneered at the time.

Figure 7, Nadar, *Célestine Galli-Marié in the role of "Carmen,"* 1875. Photograph. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [larger image]

Figure 8, Mora, *Emilie Ambre as Carmen*, 1880. Photograph. Harvard University, Nathan Marsh Pusey Library [larger image]

Manet refuses to limit his canvas to the task of reproducing a likeness; by varying the tempo of his brush across the surface of his canvas, by refusing to clarify detail, and by drawing the eye to the mark-making activity of his hand by leaving the canvas in a sketch-like state rather than finishing it off with the polished varnish of conventional Salon painting, he highlights the performative aspect of his craft and its distinction from traditional expectations of the imitation of appearances. The paint in Manet's work plays a role similar to that of Emilie Ambre as Carmen: it acts a part, dons a disguise, ultimately disclosing itself as material artifice. For this reason, Manet may have chosen to portray Emilie Ambre

leaning against a table rather than actively singing. The canvas has become the stage, the arena, for the representation of performance.[21]

Transgressing Gender and Genre

We have no record that Manet ever attended any of the performances of Bizet's *Carmen*, but it is not unlikely, given his strong interest in music and his musical connections. Several members of the opening night audience had been or would be the subjects of his art, such as Offenbach, Faure, and Marie Colombier. Manet would also have easily identified with most of the characters and scenes of the opera. His earliest work in painting and printmaking focused on gypsy characters, and his 1862 *Gypsy with a Cigarette* (Princeton, Princeton University Art Museum) could be Carmen herself or any of the factory workers of the chorus.[22] The children playing their fifes across the stage in Act I of the opera would have resonated with Manet's 1866 image of *The Fifer* (Paris, Musée d'Orsay). Had he seen the production or the second act scene reproduced in the center of Lamy's woodcut engraving for *L'Illustration*, he would have been struck by its strong visual resemblance to his 1862 watercolor and oil *The Spanish Ballet* (Washington, D.C., Phillips Collection). Manet's Spanish dancers would find themselves at home in Lillas Pastia's tavern, along with the guitarist singing his *Moorish Lament* (New York Public Library) that Manet executed as a sheet music cover in 1866, while his *Exotic Flower* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), an 1868 etching and aquatint, could be Carmen about to throw her flower at Don José. Manet's 1866 *Matador Saluting* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) could have doubled for the proud Escamillo who steals Carmen away from Don José. The crowds shouting for the brave toreador in the bull ring in Act IV were also captured several times by Manet's agile brush in his own bullfighting scenes done upon his return from Spain in 1865. Manet's lifelong fascination with things Spanish would have predisposed him to Bizet's subject matter, while the depiction of a woman of ill-repute in an improper venue could only have evoked the sharpest of memories in the painter of the reaction to *Olympia*.

Ambre was the not the first costumed Spanish singer Manet had painted. In 1861 he had scored his first public success with a lively depiction of *The Guitar Player* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), which earned him an honorable mention at the Salon. Figures of gypsies, matadors, and bullfights had populated Manet's canvases during the early 1860s, and the opportunity to take up the subject of a French woman playing a Spaniard in the late 1870s must have resonated with Manet on a variety of levels. In 1862 he had asked his favorite model Victorine Meurend to don the costume of a toreador, the same year that he painted Lola de Valence posing on stage in her role as the star of Mariano Camprubi's Spanish ballet company. Manet would have known the character of Carmen from the opera itself, from the publicity surrounding it, or from Ambre as its star, as a defiant temptress whose dangerous sexuality and dramatic portrayal breached the rules of decorum at the Opéra-Comique. The critical assault on Bizet's *femme fatale* could not have failed to evoke memories in Manet of the barrage of reproof that descended on his own transgressive portrayal of a women of easy virtue, his notorious paintings of the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Paris, Musée d'Orsay) and *Olympia* (fig. 4) which had become *causes célèbres* a decade earlier at the Salon des Refusés and the Salon of 1865. Bizet and Manet shared some of the same advocates and detractors who took to the press with their opinions of the works. Bizet died three months after the first performance of his work, mired in the controversy surrounding his opera, tragically unaware of the resounding success his piece would experience with composers and audiences alike in Europe and America. Manet also would

not live long enough to see his own body of work acclaimed as masterpieces of their time, nor could he foresee that his most controversial paintings would one day enter the Louvre where they would hang along with the works of so many of the great painters who had inspired him.

When the tale of a coarse gypsy woman murdered by her depraved lover was first proposed to the Opéra-Comique director Adolphe de Leuven, he protested that the opera would frighten the audience. The librettist Halévy promised that Carmen's character would be toned down; he would introduce a pure *opéra-comique* character, the demure Micaëla who personifies purity and goodness as she croons to Don José about his mother's love; and the death scene would be "sneaked in at the end of a very lively, very brilliant act, played in bright sunlight on a holiday with triumphal processions, ballets, and joyous fanfares."[23] After much negotiating, de Leuven reluctantly agreed to produce the work, but warned the librettists not to have Carmen die: "Death on the stage of the Opéra-Comique! Such a thing has never been seen! - Never! Don't make her die. I beg of you…[24] In the end, de Leuven resigned his position rather than have blood stain the planks of the Opéra-Comique during his tenure.

Mishaps seemed to plague *Carmen* from its very beginning. The part was initially offered to Marie Roze who turned it down because she did not like the death scene. The new director, Camille du Locle, then contacted the mezzo-soprano Galli-Marié who was interested, but fought fiercely with the composer over the styling of the "Habañera." During rehearsals the chorus threatened repeatedly to strike. They found the two first-act choruses unperformable when they were directed to pour out of the cigarette factory and then scuffle around the officer after Carmen was arrested. As the librettist Halévy recalled, "The members of the chorus were in the habit of singing ensembles, standing motionless in line, their arms slack, their eyes fixed on the conductor's baton, their thoughts elsewhere."[25] To sing as well as to move about on stage was asking too much of them, and was considered too realistic for operatic style.[26] After many rehearsals and shortly before the opening of the opera, the director decided he could not bear the tragic ending and asked Bizet to change it as well as to shorten the Act II duet which he found "too naturalistic."[27] Bizet ferociously held his ground and the principal singers threatened to resign if any changes were made.[28]

Word of the scandalous nature of *Carmen* leaked to the public; the director, du Locle, fearing a riot, persuaded the usual family subscribers to forego the debut. When a member of the ministry asked for a box at the premiere, du Locle suggested he preview the dress rehearsal instead in order to decide for himself if this was the music by which he wanted to arrange his daughter's engagement. The composers Charles Gounod, Ambroise Thomas, Léo Delibes, Jacques Offenbach, Jules Massenet, and Charles Lecocq attended, along with music publishers, the regular music critics, and other members of the press, attracted by the rumor of the "immorality" of the piece about to be debuted. Alexandre Dumas *fils*, whose wildly successful theater piece, *la Dame aux Camélias*, featured a dying heroine redeemed from her sordid past through her redemptive love, also came to the opening. The opera tenor Jean-Baptiste Faure, a supporter of Bizet's as well as a model for Manet and a major collector of his paintings, was not singing at the Opéra that evening and appeared in the audience. The morning of the premiere, several prominent newspapers gave advanced

critiques of the new work, deploring its poor taste as a signal that the reputation of the Opéra Comique as a family theater was endangered.[29]

On opening night Marie-Gallié was singing *pianissimo* when the bass-drum player miscounted the music and beat two loud bars at the wrong time. The chorus of cigarette workers, still resentful of having to act as well as sing, disliked the idea of pushing and shoving each other on stage. They got dizzy because of the cigarettes they were forced to smoke as part of the realism of the play. Bizet also had to resort to hiring someone to play the harmonium backstage to keep the tenor Don José on pitch. Despite all this, the first act was well received, especially the "Habañera" and the duet for Micaëla and José. The second act proceeded well until Don José's "Flower Song" and his duet with Carmen deviated from the traditional form of *opéra-comique*. The audience response was chilly at best, and by the end of the fourth act when Carmen is slain by Don José outside the gates to the bull ring, only three or four people remained in the audience. Predictably, the piece was scorned in the press for its shocking and immoral spectacle.[30]

Bizet had transgressed the rules of the Opéra-Comique. The stylistic innovations he enthusiastically embraced when first commissioned to do the opera turned out to be artistic mortal sins. The only character the critics believed suited to this stage was the sweet and suffering Micaëla, whom Prosper Mérimée mentioned in only one sentence of his novella *Carmen*.[31] To introduce unsavory, working-class characters who succumb to their unruly passions was to undermine the established proprieties of the comic-opera genre. Achille de Lauzières, the Marquis de Thémines, viciously attacked the opera in the periodical *La Patrie*. His review served as a podium from which he preached against the moral decay of French society that he saw mirrored in Bizet's work. He voiced his revulsion at the invasion of the courtesan in the august realm of the theater. "This is the class from which writers enjoy recruiting the heroines of our drama," he thundered. "And when once an author has become fouled in the social sewer, he is forced to descend…to the lowest level for a choice of models…This…one is a '*fille*' in the most revolting sense of the word; a woman, mad over her body, giving herself to the first soldier who comes along, out of caprice, bravado, by chance, blindly…A savage; half-gypsy, half Andalusian; sensual, mocking, shameless; believing neither in God nor in the Devil…she is the veritable prostitute of the gutter and the crossroads."[32] One can plainly see from these vitriolic words that the concerns of this critic revolved around the issues of morals and class rather than those of any innovative harmonies or staging. The Marquis de Thémines insisted that if the librettists had chosen to show "the love affair of a bad soldier, a bad son who ends as a murderer, with a working-girl in a tobacco factory who begins by slashing with a knife and ends stabbed by a dagger"[33] as a melodrama for a boulevard theater, then he could accept the subject as appropriate for the lower-class audiences who sought such fare. But to populate the stage of the family-centered Opéra-Comique with ruffians and unredeemed sluts portended the demise of society and the arts.

Bizet could have written off the Marquis de Thémine's criticism as "sour grapes" from a failed composer who never achieved the success he had sought in the musical world. But the review from *Le Siècle*'s Jean-Pierre-Oscar Commetant wounded him more deeply. Conservatory-trained and a respected pianist and composer, Commetant minced no words in attacking *Carmen*: "Friends of unrestrained Spanish gaiety must have been delighted," he

stated. "There were Andalusians with sun-burned breasts, the kind of women, I like to think, who are found only in the low cabarets of Seville and lovely Granada. A plague on these females vomited from Hell!...this Castilian licentiousness! It is a delirium of castanets, of leers *à la Congreve*, of provocative hip-swinging, of knife-stabs gallantly distributed among both sexes; of cigarettes roasted by the ladies; of St. Vitus dances, smutty rather than sensuous..."[34] Commettant recommended that Carmen be gagged, placed in a straitjacket, and have water poured over her head to cool off her "uterine frenzies." He also laid some of the blame on Galli-Marié's interpretation of the lead role. "This distinguished artist could have corrected what was shocking and antipathetic in the character of this heartless, faithless, lawless gypsy," he fumed. "She has, on the contrary, exaggerated Carmen's vices by a realism that would at best be bearable in an operetta in a small theater. At the Opéra-Comique, a subsidized theater, a decent theater if there ever was one, Mlle Carmen should temper her passions."[35] François Oswald corroborated the shocking element of Galli-Marié's performance, claiming that it would be difficult for her to go further with her licentious performance without calling in the police.[36] Bizet had converted Lillas Pastia's tavern into a brothel, and his heroine had played her part as a hardened strumpet rather than a docile coquette. The guardians of culture found themselves once again on high alert against a realist portrayal of illicit love revolving around the vexed body of a bold woman who contravened bourgeois codes of behavior.

The criticism Bizet received from the press must also have resonated with Manet. The charges of realism and immorality, of breaching the standards of accepted decorum, and of aesthetic anarchy, had also been leveled at his most innovative works, especially *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia*. Bizet and Manet even shared some of the same detractors. The Marquis de Thémines, probably the most apoplectic disparager of Bizet's opera, had little time or respect for Manet's art from his first mention in his report on the Salon of 1869, where he treated the artist's painting as a prank that had gone on too long,[37] until the year before Manet's death when he still could find little to like in the artist's work. Thémines loved narrative paintings with licked surfaces, deploring the jury's admission of Manet's paintings which he characterized as misshapen and crude sketches.
[38] Thémines admits in his review of the Salon of 1872 that he never dealt much with Manet's submissions in the Salon reviews over the years because he never took them seriously. On May 3, 1875, two months to the day after the première of Bizet's *Carmen*, Thémines began his report of the annual Salon with a look at the crowds who attended the exhibition and saw them bobbing like corks on the tide of popular opinion. He claimed that they came specifically to see works by Manet because of his reputation, and to look at canvases not even knowing if they are by the artist. They shrug their shoulders and think the paintings are a bad joke, until they hear the praise of other critics. Then they become all-knowing and put on erudite airs, claiming that Manet possesses true talent, that he does not paint to be understood by the rabble. The crowd believes that any painter who can find a critic to write good press and a buyer to purchase the work must be a great master, Thémines sneered.
[39] A few weeks later, Thémines devoted a paragraph in his Salon review to disparaging Manet's *Argenteuil* (Tournai, Musée des Beaux-Arts) deploring its incorrect drawing, false color, and lack of perspective. I quote Thémines in the original because of his obvious awareness of the *sounds* of his chosen words: "Cette ébauche, ou plutôt cette débauche peinturlurée moitié enfantine, moitié charge, a eu les honneurs de l'exposition." ("This sketch, or better yet this loudly-colored debauch, half infantile, half caricature, captured the

honors of the exposition.")[40] Let the jury award Manet a medal, even the medal of honor, Thémines scoffed, but he doubted if any jury member would choose Manet to paint the portrait of his spouse or a loved one. Thémines's reviews of Bizet and Manet are only weeks apart in the 1875 issues of *La Patrie*, joined by his mutual disdain of the aesthetic improprieties these works portrayed.

Paul de Saint-Victor, the powerful critic of *La Presse*, shared with Thémines a long-lasting disdain for Manet's stylistic idiosyncrasies and proved no less accepting in 1875 of Bizet's *Carmen*: "M. Bizet belongs to this new set, whose doctrine consists of allowing the musical idea to evaporate instead of expressing it in definite contours. For this school of which M. Wagner is the oracle…a theme is out of fashion, melody superannuated; the voice, suppressed and dominated by the orchestra, is only a feeble echo. Such ideas must necessarily produce confused works...The orchestration of *Carmen* abounds in clever combinations, and new and rare effects. But the excessive opposition which the voice finds in the instruments is one of the errors of the new school."[41] Saint-Victor's charges against Bizet's lack of contours, innovative narrative, and deliberate cacophony must have echoed in Manet's memory as he recalled the same critic's similar complaints about his own stylistic innovations in his works of the 1860s. He characterized Manet's print of gypsies as *un pochade indigeste*[42] (an undigested rough sketch) and had dismissed the artist's 1862 painting *Music in the Tuileries* (London, National Gallery) for its modernist style, employing an acoustic comparison: "his *Music in the Tuileries* hurts the eye as carnival music assaults the ear."[43] Expressing his view on *Olympia* in 1865, he weighed in with the comment: "Art sunk so low doesn't even deserve reproach."[44] He failed to find in Manet's work the correct drawing and allegiance to academic standards he sought as a member of the jury and voted to reject Manet's work from the Salon in 1866, 1867, and 1868.

But if Manet and Bizet shared opponents in the press, they also found a strong mutual supporter who endorsed their efforts to forge ahead with unprecedented bold artistic works that turned their backs on the rigid classifications of traditional aesthetic protocol. Théodore de Banville valiantly defended Bizet's *Carmen* for daring to transform the traditional fare of bourgeois expectation at the theater. With incisive Gallic irony and wit Banville commented on the production of *Carmen* in *Le National* in May, 1875: "The Opéra-Comique, the traditional theater of kind-hearted brigands, languorous maidens, rose-water loves, has been forced, violated, stormed by a band of unbridled romantics headed by M. du Locle; then Georges Bizet, Wagnerian, who is set against expressing passion in songs set to dance tunes...[T]he bold attempt of the insurgents has left no door open for conciliation.[45] Banville perceptively understood that Bizet aimed in *Carmen* to renovate the stale traditions of the opéra-comique form by a courageous confrontation of its worn-out clichés:

> M. Georges Bizet is one of those ambitious men for whom...
> music must be, even in the theater, not an entertainment,
> a way of spending an evening, but a divine language expressing the
> anguish, the folly, the celestial aspirations of the being who...is a
> wanderer and an exile here below… Instead of those pretty sky-blue
> and pale-pink puppets who were the joy of our fathers, he has tried to
> show real men and real women, dazzled, tortured by passion...whose
> torment, jealousy...mad infatuation are interpreted by the orchestra
> turned creator and poet… To bring such a *coup d'état* M. Bizet...found

> the only associates who could have the idea, the courage, and the audacity to give him enough range by throwing out the window all the old rubbish and the old ghosts of the Opéra-Comique...[46]

Just two years prior to his support of Bizet, Banville had come to Manet's defense against what critics called stylistic oddities in his portrait of the artist Berthe Morisot called *Repose* (Providence, Rhode Island School of Design), which he exhibited at the Salon of 1873. Manet had portrayed Morisot in a slouching position with a detached expression, contrary to the formal and dignified conventions of academic painting. Critics called the work slapdash, uncouth daubing, and one critic baptized her the "queen of slovenliness." Banville, however, defended this attractive portrait that "persuades through an intense spirit of *modernity*" portraying Manet as a sensitive artist who echoed an exquisite feeling for *la vie moderne*.[47] Banville's commitment to the renovation of subject matter and style, to getting rid of the clichés of academicism and presenting instead an engaging representation of the realities of contemporary life, found artistic sanction pictorially and musically in the avant-garde performances of the artist and the composer.

With their realist works on the subject of a woman of ill-repute, unapologetic for her transgressive sexuality, Manet and Bizet challenged the artistic conventions of the arena in which their works were staged. Bizet set up audience expectations for a normal Opéra-Comique production by opening each act with a scene featuring a crowd and typical song sequences. He then undermined the audience's comfort by introducing events that unsettled theatrical expectations. As Susan McClary observes, "Carmen's entrance in Act I attenuates the symmetrical return of the refrain we expect. She destabilizes the established order, imposes one of her own and sends the formal dimensions of the opera sprawling."[48] Manet's pictorial strategy of thwarting Salon expectations of the display of ideal feminine nudity of luscious pulchritude with his depiction of flatly-delineated realist women gazing unashamedly at the viewer had also violated artistic norms in the 1860s.

Manet's and Bizet's stylistic interventions into traditional genres for art and music, combined with their focus on intransigent women who contravened feminine stereotypes of the day, earned them both an unusual amount of partisan discourse, and attached to each of them a signature work by which posterity would best know them. As Commetant noted in his diatribe against *Carmen*, Bizet's opera might be better suited to boulevard theater with its lower class audience as its authors had become "fouled in the social sewer" and were forced to descend "to the lowest level for a choice of models..."[49] This could only remind Manet of the many similar assaults on his *Olympia* at the Salon in 1865, typified by Jules Claretie's indignant trouncing of the figure as "a base model picked up I know not where. A courtesan no doubt."[50] Manet set up a private exhibition in 1867 to show his works and on occasion invited the public to his studio to view his rejected paintings, but he never stopped trying to force the Salon jury to accept works that encroached upon its august standards. Manet and Bizet both quickly learned from the public and from the critical reception of their controversial works that originality of style, combined with provocative subject matter deemed too "realist" for their traditional audiences, set up a counter-discourse of aesthetic anarchy that pitched itself against the conventional rules of the cultural world of art and music as it existed in Paris of their time.

Conclusion - Painting and Music

Manet's depiction of Ambre as a gypsy contrasts with and acts as a visual response to Henri Regnault's *Salome* (fig. 9), which had been the sensation of the Salon of 1870. Théophile Gautier found Regnault's figure "muy gitana" ("very gypsy") in her bizarre and savage grace.[51] Seated against a backdrop of brilliant yellow silk and garbed in lush materials of gold, pink and yellow with green stripes, Regnault's Salome engages the viewer with a sultry look beneath a cascading mop of dark hair, lips slightly parted in a come-hither smile. Her exoticism is connoted by a green serpentine bracelet worn above her elbow, and a leopard-skin rug lapping like small waves at her feet which are slipping seductively out of purple slippers lined tantalizingly in red. She strikes her provocative pose in a seated position with the gleaming utensils of basin and sword atop her legs which enticingly open beneath her transparent gold-accented skirt. Several critics seized on the technical virtuosity of the piece, chastising Regnault for substituting deep meaning with bravura effect.[52] Regnault's own ambivalence about what to title the painting—he had called it variously *Herodiad, The African Woman*, and *The Favorite Slave*—confirmed the suspicion that he was more concerned with pictorial pyrotechnics than with profound subject matter. Zacharie Astruc, one of Manet's earliest and strongest supporters, insisted that Regnault's dexterity merely covered a paucity of ideas.[53] Théodore Duret found in the depiction of Salome merely a collection of borrowings from other contemporary artists,[54] whereas in the same Salon he had praised Manet's striking originality while acknowledging the artist's Goyesque inspiration.[55]

Figure 9, Henri Regnault, *Salome*, 1870. Oil on Canvas. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
[larger image]

Regnault counted on the facility of his brush to render the tactility of cloth, metals, and other precious materials, relying on gleam and sheen to enhance his titillating coquette. Manet's gypsy figure holds her dignified pose dressed in a costume which held a similar potential for surface allure with its transparent lace mantilla and decorated bolero jacket. But in place of metallic luster and sensuous animal skin, Manet provides the viewer with scumbled passages of paint dashed onto the surface, broad strokes crudely indicating creases on sleeves. Manet refuses to differentiate the hard texture of the lacquered fan held in Ambre's hand from the soft fringe hanging directly above it; both play their part as

referents to the actual world at the same time as they signal the materiality of paint in a way that could not be more opposite of Regnault's glittering illusionism.

Critics evoked musical analogies with Regnault's painting; George Lafenestre claimed it suggested a symphony in yellow major,[56] Duranty compared Regnault to a one-man orchestra playing all the instruments at once,[57] and Astruc complained that the artist let a medley of tones substitute for clarifying his thought.[58] Years later Blaze de Bury invoked Regnault in an article on Bizet, claiming that painting and music were but one art, and suggested that one could grasp in *Carmen* the same note of color which would recall the "famous yellow tone" of *Salome*.[59] Critical comparisons between art and music had become more frequent since the 1860s,[60] an outcome of the notion prevalent throughout Romanticism that all the arts could be recognized as different expressions of a common source. Manet had demonstrated interest in depicting musical themes and performers from the beginning of his career, and the nonrepresentational aspect of music may have provided him with the impetus to depart from strict imitation of the model as he has in his portrayal of Ambre.[61] In the same report on the Salon of 1870 where Duret criticized Regnault for being a one-piece band, he talks about Manet's art where "each nuance or distinct hue becomes a striking *tone*, a particular *note* of the palette."[62] Duret sought feeling and emotion from a painting, not merely transcription, hence an experience closer to music than *pompier* painting or photography. Duret championed the avant-garde music of Richard Wagner for the same reasons he defended Manet; both men were disliked because of their originality and their efforts to change the way their art was perceived.[63] Music's freedom from imitation, its direct appeal to the imagination, had been remarked upon by Diderot and contemplated in the writings of Baudelaire on Wagner. Manet may be hinting in his portrait of Emilie Ambre as Carmen that music and paint possessed intriguing congruities, for he delineates a black quarter-note perched jauntily at the far left edge of the shawl that hangs next to Ambre's waist. Its presence there subtly indicates its existence both as musical sign and painterly referent to the fringe of a shawl. Even when a quarter note takes its place in a musical score it is an abstract sign that awaits performance in order to achieve meaning; no less so, for Manet, are the many marks that cover his canvas.

I believe Manet may have responded in his portrait of Emilie Ambre to Bizet's audacious opera as complementary to his own aesthetic enterprise. There were several striking similarities in their personal and artistic lives. Both lost a parent in 1862 and both sired a male child out of wedlock who was raised with his mother's name. Critics believed Bizet's true artistic beginning occurred with *The Pearl Fishers* of 1863, the same year Manet painted the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and
Olympia. Bizet saw his work criticized for its formlessness and lack of contours, critical terms borrowed from the studio world. Conversely, Manet's detractors resorted to musical analogies when they accused him of making "tones howl" in *Music in the Tuileries*,[64] and of creating a failed "orchestrated dialogue, a kind of duet, between the young woman's pink gown and the rosy hues of her face"[65] in *Woman with a Parrot* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). Both the musician and the artist found themselves castigated for their harshness of tones, their depiction of lower-class figures instead of ennobling characters, their changing of art from romanticism to realism. Bizet chose the stage of the Opéra-Comique instead of the cabaret of the boulevard to confront musical tradition. Similarly,

Manet avoided the independent exhibitions of the Impressionists and persevered at trying to get his work shown at the Salon, challenging the august academics on their own turf.

Bizet died tragically three months to the day after the opening night of *Carmen*. Four thousand people attended his funeral and he was lionized in death as a master musician.[66] The ink was barely dry on the diatribes in the press against Bizet and his gypsy opera when Victorien Joncières acclaimed that the musician was "the first who had the courage to embrace the new doctrines, and at a time when even more than today he ran the risk of remaining alone and misunderstood. His boldness will clear the way for the musicians of his generation, who, stirred by his example, will follow him on the road along which he advanced so resolutely. All of us, we young composers, might never have abandoned the monotonous paths so often traveled by our precursors had Bizet not preceded us in the unexplored territory of the new art."[67] In May 1879, just months before Manet began his portrait of Ambre as Bizet's heroine, Albert Wolff compared the artist to a gypsy musician and leader of the new school of painting, pointing the way for a younger generation.[68] From the earliest years of his career, Manet had depicted gypsies in paintings, prints, and in his large 1862 oil of the *Old Musician*, which has been seen by art historians as a manifesto painting and a type of artistic self-portrait. Manet's elective affinity to gypsies, who embodied freedom and self-sufficiency in their personal lives and in their role as artistic performers, subtended much of the ideology of his painting career despite his gentrified manners and aristocratic bearing. The portrait of Emilie Ambre as Carmen, completed just three years before his death, provides an accomplished visual testimony to the aleatory and improvisational, the calculated and considered aspects of Manet's modernist enterprise. Both Manet and Bizet had created, in more ways than one, true *pièces de résistance*.

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Notes

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University during the summer of 2002, considerably deepened my understanding of operatic conventions.

[1] Juliet Wilson-Bareau in Gary Tinterow and Geneviève Lacambre, *Manet/Velázquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting*. Exh. cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 503-4.

[2] Manuela B. Mena Marqués, *Manet en el Prado*. Exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2003), 326.

[3] There is no record of Manet and Bizet ever meeting; however, it is almost certain that they knew of each other through the press as well as through shared acquaintances. Bizet and his wife rented an apartment in 1869 on the rue de Douai located near the Café de la Nouvelle-Athènes frequented by Manet, Monet, Degas, Verlaine, Zola, and Mallarmé, among others. Bizet's maternal uncle, François Delsarte, served as a voice coach for the noted operatic baritone Jean-Baptiste Faure, whose portrait Manet painted in 1877 and who became one of the major collectors of Manet's art. In 1873, while Bizet was negotiating the performance of *Carmen*, Faure proposed to the composer that he create an opera with a heroic leading role. Manet also was highly conversant with music. Manet's mother, reputed for possessing a beautiful voice, performed at home and at fashionable gatherings. Manet married his piano teacher, Suzanne Leenhoff, to whom the composer Emmanuel Chabrier dedicated his *Impromptu in C Major*.

[4] Werner Spies, *Opera, State and Society in the Third Republic, 1875-1914* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 92.

[5] Herbert Lindenberger, *Opera in History from Monteverdi to Cage* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 130.

[6] It is also worth noting, as Gould does, that the "Bohemian Song" with its flamenco dance also breaks from the Wagnerian desire to suppress dance in opera, a factor that contributed to the tumultuous reaction and quick cancellation of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* on the Parisian stage in 1861. Evlyn Gould, *The Fate of Carmen* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 123.

[7] "Poets, painters and musicians, everyone is preoccupied today with ethnology; it is not surprising that this curiosity for information is gaining and extends to the least details of the mise-en-scène; truth is sought, *naturalism* is made." F. de Lagenevais, "Revue musicale," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, March 15, 1875. As cited in Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 125-26.

[8] Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 126.

[9] Ibid., 108.

[10] Ibid., 113.

[11] Ibid., 114ff, and Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices, Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 68.

[12] Gould, *The Fate of Carmen*, 132-33, and Susan McClary, *Georges Bizet, Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 50, 85-89, 95.

[13] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (New York: Da Capo Press, 1964), 1. Italics mine.

[14] Theodore S. Beardsley, "The Spanish Musical Sources of Bizet's *Carmen*." *Inter-American Music Review* 10, Spring-Summer, 1989, 143-46.

[15] Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1996).

[16] See Jean-Louis Martinoty, "De la réalité au réalisme," *L'Avant-scène opéra* 26, March-April 1980, 100-106.

[17] See Joaneath Spicer, "The Renaissance Elbow," in Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg, *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 97.

[18] Mina Curtiss, *Bizet and His World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 403.

[19] Galli-Marié "a photographié les gestes, la mine, le costume des *senoras* de carrefour. L'unique M. Manet est capable de lui faire des compliments. Sous prétexte d'exactitude, ne tombons point si bas, s'il vous plaît." D. Bernard, "Théâtres," *L'Union*, March 8, 1875. Unless otherwise indicated, all translation are mine.

[20] It is impossible to know if Manet knew Nadar's photograph of Galli-Marié; however, the painter and photographer were lifelong friends, thus the probability exists.

[21] On the notion of the performativity of Manet's art, see especially James Rubin, *Manet's Silence and the Poetics of Bouquets*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), to which

this essay owes a large intellectual debt, as well as Carol Armstrong's *Manet Manette* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002). Another possible reason for Manet's choice of Lillas Pastia's tavern as the site of his painting may have been its contrast with the first act which takes place in an open plaza in the heart of Seville, with the enclosed tavern near the ramparts. The tavern, like the bordello implied in *Olympia*, was a place that was tolerated, and whose opening and closing were regulated by the authorities, as witnessed by Lillas Pastia's warning in the libretto that it is getting late and she, more than anyone, needs to obey the rules.

[22] This has already been pointed out by Marilyn Brown in *Gypsies and Other Bohemians, The Myth of the Artist in Nineteenth-Century France* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985), 76, and Seymour Howard, "Manet's Men's Women," *Arts* 59, January 1985, 80.

[23] As cited in Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 348.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ludovic Halévy, "La millième représentation de Carmen," *Le Théâtre*, January 1905.

[26] This aspect persisted in later performances of the opera. The American diva Minnie Hauk made Carmen a signature role in Great Britain and America. She describes in her memoirs the reluctance of singers to perform in a naturalistic way when cast in Bizet's opera: "they had been singing mostly purely Italian music in front of the footlights, without making any effort to act the parts. To deviate from the traditional windmill acting, to the average Italian singer, would surely mean disaster. The movement of hands and arms by the Italian soloists and choristers when singing *ensembles* in their old Bellini or Donizetti operas was often a sight to behold. They looked as though they were being drilled for optic telegraphy or railroad switching. They stood, to all appearances, nailed to the boards, the soloists in a straight line right in front, the choristers in two or more lines behind, the men on one side, the women on the other, and every high note was accompanied by the raising of their right arms! This would never do for *Carmen*. In Bizet's opera natural action, life, and varied movements meant as much as the singing, one blending into the other." Minnie Hauk, *Memories of a Singer* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 160-61.

[27] As cited in Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 383.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., 396-406.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Mérimée published *Carmen* serially in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1845 and in book form in 1846.

[32] As cited in Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 400

[33] Ibid.

[34] As cited Ibid., 403.

[35] Ibid.

[36] François Oswald. "Bruits de Coulisses," *Le Gaulois*, March 3, 1875.

[37] "Les visiteurs se demandent si c'est de bonne foi que l'artiste fait ses tableaux, ou s'il veut les mystifier. Seulement, si c'est une mystification, elle dure un peu trop." M. de Thémines, "Salon de 1869," *La Patrie*, June 1, 1869,

[38] M. de Thémines, "Salon de 1870," *La Patrie*, June 18, 1870.

[39] M. de Thémines, "Chronique," *La Patrie*, May 3, 1875.

[40] M. de Thémines, "Salon de 1875," *La Patrie*, June 8, 1875.

[41] Paul de Saint-Victor as quoted in Douglas Charles Parker, *Georges Bizet, His Life and Works* (Freeport, N Y: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 69-70.

[42] Paul de Saint Victor, "Société des Aquafortistes," *La Presse*, April 2, 1863.

[43] Paul de Saint-Victor, "Beaux-Arts," *La Presse*, April 27, 1863.

[44] Paul de Saint-Victor, "Le Salon de 1865," *La Presse*, May 28, 1865.

[45] As cited in Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 408.

[46] Ibid.

[47] "in caractère intense de *modernité*." Théodore de Banville, *Le National*, May 15, 1873.

[48] McClary, *Georges Bizet, Carmen*, 50.

[49] As cited in Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 399.

[50] Jules Claretie, "Deux heures au Salon," *L'Artiste*, May 15, 1865.

[51] Théophile Gautier, "Salon de 1870," *Journal Officiel*, June 2, 1870.

[52] See Dianne W. Pitman's incisive analysis of the reception history of this painting in *Bazille, Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 17-24.

[53] Zacharie Astruc, "Salon de 1870," *L'Echo des Beaux-Arts*, May 20, 1870.

[54] Théodore Duret, "Salon de 1870," *Critique d'avant-garde* (Paris: Charpentier, 1885), 51-53.

[55] Ibid., 35-41.

[56] Georges Lafenestre, *L'Art vivant: La Peinture et la sculpture aux salons de 1868 à 1877*, vol. 1, (1868-1873), (Paris: G. Fischbacher, 1881), 178-80.

[57] Edmond Duranty, "Salon de 1870," *Paris Journal*, May 5, 1870.

[58] Astruc, "Salon de 1870."

[59] H. Blaze de Bury, *Musiciens du passé, du présent et de l'avenir* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1880), 329-30.

[60] See Louis Viardot, "Ut Picture Musica," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 1, January 1859.

[61] I am currently preparing a book manuscript regarding the issues of Manet's involvement with the richly complex Parisian musical scene of his times.

[62] Théodore Duret, "Salon de 1870," 41. Italics mine.

[63] Thédore Duret, "Richard Wagner aux concerts populaires," *La Tribune*, December 26, 1869.

[64] Paul de Saint Victor, "Beaux-Arts: Société des Aquafortistes: Eaux-fortes modernes, publication d'oeuvres originales et inédits (1)," *La Presse*, April 27, 1863.

[65] Paul Mantz, "Salon de 1868," *L'Illustration*, June 6, 1868.

[66] Curtiss, *Bizet and His World*, 422.

[67] As cited in Ibid., 424.

[68] Albert Wolff, "Salon of 1879," *Le Figaro*, May 18, 1879.

Illustrations

Figure 1, Edouard Manet, *Portrait of Emilie Ambre as Carmen*, c. 1879. Oil on canvas. Philadelphia Museum of Art Gift of Edgar Scott [return to text]

Figure 2, Alfred Lemoine, *Mlle Emilie Ambre (Aïda)*. Lithograph. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [return to text]

Figure 3, Auguste Lamy, "March 13, 1875." Wood Engraving. *L'Illustration* [return to text]

Figure 4, Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863. Paris, Musée d'Orsay [return to text]

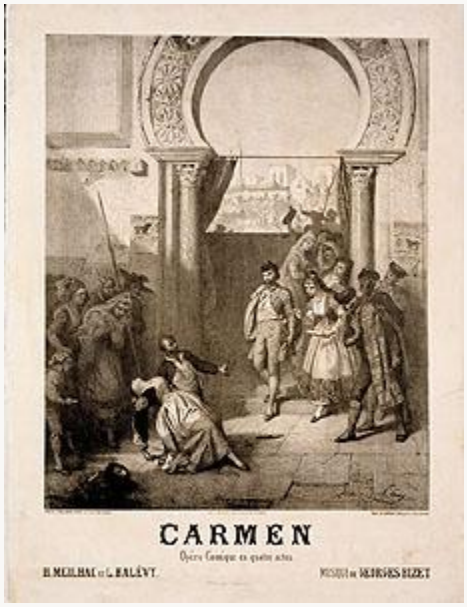

Figure 5, - L. Leray, *Carmen*, 1875. Poster. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [return to text]

Figure 6, Georges Clairin, *Paul Lhérie and Célestine Galli-Marié in "Carmen,"* 1875. Lithograph. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [return to text]

Figure 7, Nadar, *Célestine Galli-Marié in the role of "Carmen,"* 1875. Photograph. Paris, Bibliothèque du Musée de l'Opéra [return to text]

Figure 8, Mora, *Emilie Ambre as Carmen*, 1880. Photograph. Harvard University, Nathan Marsh Pusey Library [return to text]

Figure 9, Henri Regnault, *Salome*, 1870. Oil on Canvas. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
[return to text]