MONET'S *DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE:* CLASS AND ABSENCE

by

KENDRA MACOMBER

(Under the Direction of Alisa Luxenberg)

ABSTRACT

Before Claude Monet (1840-1926) found his way to Impressionist landscape painting, he was an artist still looking to make his mark in the Paris art world. Monet hoped to distinguish himself and earn acclaim at the Salon with a monumental painting now titled *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1865-1866). Scholars have claimed that this painting accurately reflected Monet's social standing. While this claim might be partly true, to view the painting as a manifestation of Monet's class is complicated by the fact that both the canvas and the artist went through many changes. The lack of investigation into class and Monet's *Déjeuner* is surprising, considering it hails from a period in nineteenth-century France which witnessed profound shifts in the structure between various social classes and their appearance in the visual arts. This paper will explore the conflicting and fluid manifestations of class in Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe.*

INDEX WORDS: picnic, nineteenth century, class, fashion, bohemian, France, Claude Monet, absence

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CHAPTER 1

Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*: Class and Absence

Before Claude Monet (1840-1926) found his way to Impressionist landscape painting, he was an artist still looking to make his mark in the Paris art world. Monet hoped to distinguish himself and earn acclaim at the Salon with a monumental painting now titled *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1865-1866). The canvas, though never completed, was an important manifestation of Realism in its depiction of life-sized contemporary figures within a genre scene. Traditionally, scholars have claimed that Monet purposefully placed his painting in conversation with other earlier controversial works from the 1860s, specifically Édouard Manet's (1832-1883) painting *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* from 1863.[1] Curiously, Manet's work has often been discussed in terms of class, while studies of Monet's work lack similar analysis beyond Joel Isaacson's statement that the painting accurately reflected Monet's social standing.[2] While Isaacson's claim might be partly true, to view the painting as a manifestation of Monet's class is complicated by the many changes that both the canvas and artist underwent. The lack of comprehensive investigation into class and Monet's *Déjeuner* is surprising considering it hails from a period in nineteenth-century France which witnessed profound shifts in the structure between various social classes and their appearance in the visual arts. This paper will explore the conflicting and fluid manifestations of class in Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe.*

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[1] The claim that Monet was thinking of Manet when he started his project is synthesized by Joel Isaacson. See Joel Isaacson, *Monet: Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (London: The Penguin Press, 1972), 17-18.
[2] Ibid., 41.

Claude Monet started *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* in the summer of 1865 with hopes of creating a sensation for the Salon of 1866. The painting, which would have stood at about 15 feet high by 20 feet wide, was an expensive enterprise.[3] Despite all of Monet's work, the canvas was abandoned in April 1866 right before the Salon, and he instead submitted *Woman in a Green Dress* modelled by his companion, Camille Doncieux (1847-1879).[4] Monet left *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* with his landlord, and after he recuperated it in 1884, he cut the canvas into at least two pieces supposedly because it had suffered water damage. These two fragments can be found in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris (fig. 1). In the Pushkin Museum in Moscow hangs a 4 by 6 foot oil sketch that provides an entire composition (fig. 2) and offers valuable insight into the missing fragments of the painting.[5] However, since changes were made from the sketch to the final canvas, it cannot be known for certain whether the rest of the large composition remained the same. Neither the sketch nor the final canvas were painted *en plein air,* a mode of painting that Monet would later become famous for, but were instead painted in his studio.[6] Like other Realist works, the scene was not observed and painted on the spot; it is known that Monet used the same

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[3] The expense of the project can not only be quantified in terms of supplies, but in transportation of materials and time devoted to the task. A canvas this large was often called a *machine* and was traditionally allocated for history painting. Take, for example, Thomas Couture's *Romans of the Decadence* (1847)*,* which was a history painting and a Salon sensation that measures about 16 feet high by 25 feet wide. Monumental canvases were traditionally employed for history painting, this started to shift with the onset of Realism, with such works as Courbet's *Burial at Ornans* (1849-1850) that measures 10 feet high by about 22 feet wide. Monet's decision to paint his picnic scene on such a large scale could be seen as a continuation of Courbet's Realism. For more about the expense of working on such a large scale and the tradition of *machines* see Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers: institutional change in the French painting world* (New York: Wiley, 1965).

[4] Throughout this paper, Camille Doncieux will be referred to by her maiden name, Doncieux. She does take her husband's name when she marries Monet in 1870.

[5] Monet sold the large sketch to Jean-Baptiste Faure, perhaps in 1874. Interestingly Faure also bought Manet's *Déjeuner*, but in 1878. The sketch was originally in the Stchoukine collection in the beginning of the twentieth century, which was absorbed into the Pushkin collection. This sketch will be referred to as the Moscow sketch throughout the paper. Isaacson, *Déjeuner*, 17-18. Provenance, see Anne Baldassari ed., *Icons of Modern Art: The Shchukin Collection* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2016), 455.

[6] Aurisch uses evidence put forth by Wildenstein in *Monet, or the Triumph of Impressionism* (1996) and also contends that the canvas was too large to have been painted out-of-doors. Helga Aurisch, "The Impressionists at Fontainebleau" in *In the forest of Fontainebleau: Painters and Photographers from Corot to Monet,* ed. Kimberly Jones (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 177.

model for multiple figures. Other surviving preparatory works include Monet's various pencil sketches and an oil sketch depicting his painter friend Frédéric Bazille (1841-1870) and Doncieux (fig. 3). Even though Monet was never satisfied with the final canvas, he kept the two Orsay fragments and prominently displayed the central fragment at his Giverny studio (fig. 4).[7]

In both the Moscow sketch and the final canvas fragments of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Monet portrayed a sunny summer's day with bright green leaves illuminated by light coming through the trees. These trees block a recession into deep space and obscure most of the sky, allowing only glimpses of blue to peer from behind the leaves. The densely packed foliage in the background directs the viewer's focus to the picnicking figures in the foreground. Despite their prominence, the life-sized figures are surrounded by immense trees, and about half the height of the canvas is taken up by the forest. As seen in the Moscow sketch, these figures are arranged in a semi-circular composition, both standing and sitting around a tablecloth. An opening within the circle of figures closest to the viewer seems to invite the observer to the party. Considering Monet's plans to display the canvas in the Salon, he clearly anticipated that its audience would have included a wide range of people. The painting seems to emphasize this connection to the public by encouraging viewers to join the picnic-goers and escape the city for a sunny day amidst the trees.

All of the figures at the picnic appear to engage with one another in some way, although it is unclear what their relationships are to one another. The poses displayed do seem to suggest some semblance of familiarity among the group. For example, in the Moscow sketch, one figure reclines casually in the right foreground with his vest open and a coat discarded behind him.

[7] When Monet died in 1926 the center fragment fell out of public view until it was donated to the French State and eventually was placed in the Musée d'Orsay. The left fragment was unknown until it was found rolled up in Monet's Giverny studio by Georges Wildenstein in the 1950s. Mr. Wildenstein donated it to the Louvre in 1957. Isaacson, *Déjeuner,* 17-18.

Another figure leans against a tree while smoking, which was not usually done in the presence of ladies,[8] implying that either the women in the picture are not "ladies" or that the smoker lacks good manners. Overall, the figures seem to be in positions that could not be considered graceful. One woman adjusts her hat, another reaches for a plate, and a man twists to look back at the three walking figures. All-in-all, this group of 'elegant picnickers'[9] lacks grace and sophistication in their poses.

The narrative about Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* has its origins in the early twentieth century with the Duc de Trévise's visit to and subsequent publication on Giverny. The modern scholarship on the *Déjeuner* owes its foundation to Joel Isaacson's short monograph published in 1972 that provided a broad overview of the work. Isaacson devoted a great deal of the monograph to Monet's process and preparatory works, his time in Chailly, and Bazille's involvement. Isaacson compares *Déjeuner* to various images, such as photography, fashion plates, and landscape paintings. From the start, Isaacson pits Monet's project against Manet's earlier *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) and claims that Monet wanted to create a more objective and less problematic canvas of the same theme. When Isaacson does mention class, he does so in relation to Monet's apparent Rococo inspiration, and claims that the work represents a nineteenth-century revision of an aristocratic practice. However, recent scholarship has begun to question such simplistic interpretations of *fête galante* paintings, and inquire into the ambiguities of the figures' identities shown within.[10] According to Isaacson, Monet's modernization of

[8] Phillippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 107.
[9] Called "Elegant" in Birgit Haase, "Fashion en Plein Air" in *Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 88. Desmarais, however, calls these figures awkward and stiff. Mary Dailey Desmarais, "Hunting for Light: *Luncheon on the Grass"* in *Monet the Early Years,* ed. George T.M. Shackelford, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 21.
[10] Plax discusses how Watteau's *fêtes galantes* were an assertion of the aristocracy's position, because at the time they were experiencing a decline of authority. She also sees Watteau's paintings as breaking the barrier between

ancien régime imagery is an accurate representation of his milieu and exhibited the new "right to leisure" practiced in the nineteenth century.[11] Isaacson's assertion about the "right to leisure" hints at a sort of democratization of pleasure among those who work. Certain forms in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* contradict Isaacson's interpretation, such as the figure of the servant pushed to the right edge of the Moscow sketch. The presence of this outlying figure suggests that social hierarchies were at play within Monet's original conception of the *Déjeuner* project that were more complicated than Isaacson allows.

Traditionally, scholars have approached Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* as a direct response to Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* from 1863 (fig. 5). On a basic level, both works depict outdoor excursions with food and refreshments, more commonly referred to as picnics. However, the items associated with a picnic are front and center in Monet's work, while those in Manet's version are off to the side. Monet's and Manet's shared title, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* serves as the foundation of the perceived connection between these two works. Manet originally titled his painting *Le Bain* when it was exhibited in 1863, and his 1867 one-man exhibition near the Pont de l'Alma was the first documented instance of it being retitled *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.[12] Monet's title also came after the fact since he never finished the painting and it was not exhibited under a specific title during his lifetime. Monet only called the project *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* in a 1927 interview with the Duc de Trévise, and earlier in 1924 he had called it *Déjeuner dans la forêt.*[13] Monet may have called his project *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* to friends who came to see it in his studio,[14] but there is no record to confirm this speculation. This in turn raises questions regarding

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high and low art. See Julie Anne Plax, *Watteau and the Cultural Politics of Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[11] Issacson, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* 41.

[12] Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 131.

[13] Isaacson, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 96.

[14] Ibid., 28.

the stability of the relationship between Monet's and Manet's paintings. Despite the uncertainty of the chronology, scholars pounced on the similarities in title and subject of each work.[15] The parallels have led many to assume some competition between the artists that might have been partly imagined.

In regards to this supposed rivalry, scholars hold differing opinions as to which artist reacted to the other. Those who assume that Monet's work responds to Manet's usually do so because Monet's work came later.[16] Other scholars, such as Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette in *Origins of Impressionism* (1994), argue that Manet did not change his title from *Le Bain* until he had seen or heard about Monet's canvas, but they assume that Monet had called it *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* by then to friends.[17] Tinterow and Loyrette base their claim on a quotation from Degas that was conveyed by Daniel Halévy in his book *My Friend Degas* from 1960. Monet did say to Duc de Trévise that he considered his *Déjeuner* project to be "after Manet," but this was much later in Monet's life after Manet's version had already garnered more fame.[18] It could be that Monet saw himself working then in a similar style as Manet, or perhaps his statement refers to the similar subject matter of their respective works. Due to the lack of primary evidence, modern scholars have been left with plenty of room to speculate about the possible relationship between Monet's and Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

Despite all of the scholarship regarding the two paintings and their potential connections, only Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* has been thoroughly examined in regards to issues of class.[19]

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[15] There are other depictions of picnics from around the same time, such as Glaize's *The Picnic* (1851), Pissarro's *Picnic at Montmorency* (c. 1859), Morlon's *Boaters of the Seine, Port of Call at Asnieres* (1860), and Tissot's later picnic scene *Holyday* (c. 1876).
[16] Dianne W. Pitman, "Overlapping Frames" in *Monet and Bazille: A Collaboration,* ed. Kermit Swiler Champa, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 40. This idea is also suggested in Issacson, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* 15.
[17]Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism*, 131.
[18] Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 190.
[19] T.J. Clark. See T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1985).

Part of the lack of scholarly attention given to class in Monet's art could be due to perceptions of the artist as apolitical or not interested in class. Meanwhile, Manet's art became inextricably tied to issues of class with T.J. Clark's social history about the artist, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (1985). In this publication, Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* only garners a passing mention by Clark, even though the painting touches on the book's interest in leisure and spectacle.[20] This lack of scholarly investigation is particularly glaring because Monet's *Déjeuner* has discernable markers of class, from its depiction of fashion to the inclusion of a servant-figure in the sketch. Furthermore, Manet's work is problematized by the inclusion of a nude, modelled by Victorine Meurent (1844-1927).[21] This nude is not idealized or sensual, and she gazes straight and unflinchingly at the viewer.[22] Unlike Monet's painting, Manet's *Déjeuner* is not considered a depiction of a bourgeois picnic.[23] Manet's *Déjeuner* can instead be connected to bohemian ideas with the nude woman in the foreground cast as a prostitute and the right-hand man identified as a student, a member of a group often associated with radical ideas. All of the figures in Manet's scene could be considered to exist on the fringes of society, and their attitudes did little to endear them to a well-mannered viewer. Even the venue where the painting was exhibited for the first time, the Salon des Refusés, points to the idea that

[20] Ibid., 5.
[21] Meurent was not only artist's model, but an artist herself and a musician, all occupations that could be deemed unacceptable for women, depending the circumstances. Carol Armstrong, *Manet Manette* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 137.
[22] Louis Étienne in his brochure, *Le Jury et Les Exposants* wrote in 1863 translated in: "A commonplace woman of the demimonde, as naked as can be, shamelessly lolls between two dandies dressed to the teeth. These latter look like schoolboys on holiday, perpetrating an outrage to play the man…This is a young man's practical joke---a shameful, open sore." Louis Étienne, *Le jury et les exposants : salon des refuses* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1863). Translated in Fred S. Kleiner, ed. *Gardner's Art Through the Ages: A Global History* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2012), 780-81.
[23] Paul Hayes Tucker, "Making Sense of Édouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe"* in *Manet's Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* ed. Paul Hayes Tucker (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7.

this work was unacceptable to a serious art-going audience.[24] Clearly Manet's *Déjeuner* was not painted as an image of a bourgeois lifestyle.

Like many scholars of nineteenth-century topics, Isaacson relies on the classification "bourgeois" to denote a certain class, but as Sarah Maza contends, the term is deeply problematic. The thesis of her book, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie* (2003), claims that the bourgeoisie did not actually exist in France. Maza herself admits that her thesis is perhaps overly dramatic, but she maintains that it is only so shocking because it reveals how the word bourgeois has become a crutch in modern academic scholarship. To support her argument, Maza demonstrates that the term is notoriously hard to define and is used to lump together a large spectrum of people.[25] Initially, the French term *bourgeois* was mostly used to signify a specifically defined legal category up until 1789, and then it reemerged in 1815 to denote an unflattering elitism, tied to the new political system that favored the rich.[26] After the 1830s, the term was habitually used politically to place blame on the "bourgeois monarchy" for the problems of the country. [27] The term took on new life with writers such as Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) and Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), who both wrote derisive portrayals of bourgeois types.[28] Due to these connotations, no one wanted to be called bourgeois in nineteenth-century France.

Although this paper adopts Maza's reservations about the term bourgeois, other scholars have raised valid criticism with her thesis that should be acknowledged. For example, one

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[24] Ibid., 14.
[25]Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary: 1750-1850* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1-2.
[26] Ibid., 146. The Charter of 1814 had an electoral system, but only a small group of land-owning men was actually able to vote.
[27] Ibid., 161. Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, who came to the throne in 1830, was known as the "bourgeois king." His regime is often thought of as a middle-class monarchy that ruled in the name of the bourgeoisie.
[28] Ibid., 182.

reviewer of Maza's book questions whether there was actually a class that behaved in "bourgeois ways," without explicitly using the term.[29] These "bourgeois ways" were not enumerated in the review, but could perhaps encompass economic activity, upbringing, and social conduct. Yet another critic contends that Maza ignored the existence of industrial and commercial bourgeois practices and systems, such as redistribution of income and modern banking.[30] With so much dissenting discourse among scholars, the term bourgeois clearly cannot be easily applied to a cohesive group within nineteenth-century France. Therefore, the language of this discussion of Monet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* will seek to be more specific than the term bourgeois alone permits.

One way to use "bourgeois" is as the antithesis of the "bohemian." Bohemian Paris was a variation of social class that emerged in the nineteenth century and that was closely associated with creative types such as artists. A nineteenth-century French dictionary defines bohemian as: "this Bohemia…resides in the Latin Quarter or on the summits of the faubourg Montmartre. It is composed of authors who unsuccessfully solicit the production of their first dramas…of painters regularly refused at the annual exhibitions, of musicians reduced to giving private concerts."[31] Bohemians were often characterized as disreputable, youthful, excessive, prone to unconventional appearance and fashions, and erratic work behaviors. Oftentimes, the artists associated with Parisian bohemia sought official recognition for their art, but also resented the lack of autonomy and dependency that came with it.[32]

[29] David Garroich, "Reviewed Work(s): The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750–1850 by Sarah Maza" *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (2005): 800-802.
[30] Cissie Fairchilds, "Reviewed Work(s): The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750-1850 by Sarah Maza," *The Buisness History Review* 78, no. 1 (2004): 159-161.
[31] Quoted by Marilyn R. Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians: The Myth of the Artist in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1985), 8.
[32] Maza wrote about this resentment in terms of authors, but the same feelings could be applied to artists and the Salon. Maza, *Myth of the French Bourgeoisie,* 182-183.

While Monet's studio did not reside in the Latin Quarter, this characterization of bohemian could encapsulate his position in the 1860s. The Salon jury rejected his paintings several times, and Monet had difficulty earning a steady income early on in his career. Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) was another artist in Paris identified with a bohemian lifestyle, famously writing in a letter to the photography critic Francis Wey (1812-1882) in 1850, "…in our civilized society I must lead the life of a savage. I must free myself even from governments. My sympathies lie with the people; I must go to them directly. I must draw my wisdom from them, and they must give me life. For that reason I have just embarked on the grand, independent and vagabond life of the bohemian."[33] Courbet's writing indicates his political leanings, and the fact that he had to divorce himself from "civilized society" also reveals how bohemians sometimes consciously separated themselves from the mainstream. Yet, as Marilyn Brown has shown, the line between bourgeois and bohemian could be blurred.[34] Monet fits into this nebulous category since he received support from his family in Le Havre and sought recognition at the Salon, but was frequently short of rent, changed residences, and consorted with Courbet's circle, a group who did not always fit within the artistic expectations of the mainstream art world.

Despite their different life circumstances, it could be argued that Monet, Manet, Courbet, and Bazille all interacted with bohemian Paris and depicted it to various extents. As Elizabeth Anne McCauley describes, to take part in this bohemian counterculture meant to forsake the safest path, remain loyal to one's own creativity, and reject the "bourgeois spirit."[35] Therefore, artists like Monet were sometimes caught between two antithetical modes by coming from a

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[33] Petra Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 98-99.

[34] Ibid., 4. A fictional account where the reader can witness a blurring between the bohemian and the bourgeoisie can be found in Emile Zola, *The Masterpiece (L'Œuvre)* (New York: Macmillan. 1886).

[35] Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848-1871* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1994), 123-124.

middle-class upbringing or comforts while simultaneously adopting some aspects of a bohemian lifestyle.

The class ambiguities between the terms "bourgeois" and "bohemian" are apparent in Monet's own biography. Claude Monet has often been characterized by scholars as bourgeois, and yet he has also been described as financially insecure.[36] Monet's monetary issues have been well-documented, and early on he often relied on friends to support him.[37] Even his family's class cannot be easily defined. Monet was originally born in Paris, but due to financial difficulties his family moved to Le Havre to work in a wholesale grocery. Monet's family had a large house, but they often had to take boarders to make ends meet.[38] The family's characterization as bourgeois could relate to their occupations, since neither Monet nor his family were ever manual laborers. When Monet arrived in Paris, his decision to study at the Académie Suisse, which had more masters and was often considered more liberal, points to his involvement with less mainstream art training and facilitated his contact with a bohemian community. [39]

Déjeuner sur l'herbe has hints of the bohemian in its setting, the Forest of Fontainebleau. The forest was associated with Parisian Bohemia partly because of its occupants, such as gypsies and artists, who embodied the bohemian persona.[40] Tourists would even travel to the forest just to see the exoticism of this bohemian life. Aside from the setting, the act of picnicking and lazing-about that Monet depicted, particularly with the lounging Bazille figure in the Moscow

[36] Belinda Thomson, *Impressionism: Origins, Practice, and Reception* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 76.
[37] Kermit Swiler Champa "A Complicated Codependence," in *Monet and Bazille,* ed. Champa, 69.
[38] Paul Hayes Tucker, *Claude Monet: Life and Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 1 and 5.
[39] Monet first tried to get a scholarship to go to Paris to study art, but upon failing to receive the scholarship, his family had to undertake the financial burden, which led to Monet always asking for more money from his father. Ibid., 7-13. About Monet's education, Aurisch, "The Impressionists at Fontainebleau," 173.
[40] Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians,* 15.

sketch, indicated a bohemian existence.[41] In 1889, Émile Zola would write the article "Bohemians on Holiday" for the periodical, *Les Types de Paris,* which described artists and their models going to the country, having a picnic, and discussing art.[42] Zola wrote this years after Monet worked on the *Déjeuner,* and it is unknown whether Zola ever actually saw the painting, but he would have been aware of Manet's version. Another depiction of a similar subject can be seen in Paul-Émile-Anthony Morlon's (1845-1905) lithograph from 1860 titled *Boaters of the Seine, Port of Call, Asnières* (fig. 6). This picture shows a boating party shored and their lack of propriety is evident in the way they dance, flirt, smoke, and drink. Compared to both Monet's and Manet's picnic scenes, the figures in this image are overtly revelers, and there is less ambiguity regarding their relationships with each other. The figures are clearly romantically paired up, aside from the man relaxing beneath the tree. The on-shore boaters wear more working-class clothing, with one man in a sleeveless shirt. There are obvious similarities between Zola's article and these three examples, all of which reveal that the association of urban bohemians and country picnicking existed in the nineteenth century.

The Forest of Fontainebleau was historically a hunting ground for French kings since the Middle Ages, but that changed after the Revolution when the land became more open to the public.[43] Geographically, the forest was 35 miles south of Paris and had three major geological strata: the plain, the large sandstone banks, and an area of silt and limestone. Fontainebleau held economic significance because of its vast wood and paving stone resources. By the mid-nineteenth century the forest had become a popular destination for tourists seeking nature in its

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[41] As Brown describes, the Bohemian persona was sometimes associated with the idea of idleness or laziness. Ibid., 14.
[42] As summarized by Brown in Ibid., 16.
[43] In Desmarais' eyes, the forest's tradition of hunting connects Monet's painting to Rococo hunting picnic scenes. Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 25.

purest state. By 1849, the new railroad had shortened the 6-to-8-hour trip to Fontainebleau to an hour and five minutes, allowing more tourists to visit the forest even for just a day. Aside from its drastically reduced length, the train ride was relatively inexpensive, and by 1856 the increased flow of tourists led to twelve daily departures to the forest.[44]

Monet made various trips to Fontainebleau, but he began his *Déjeuner* project specifically in Chailly, where he also painted other scenes from the forest, such as the road from Chailly to the forest. This location became popular with artists in the late 1820s who took advantage of its location, accessibility, and variety of lodging options.[45] As suggested previously, the inundation of transient artists hinted at a bohemian lifestyle, as found in Zola's "Bohemian Holiday," and it seems as though these artists and other visitors enacted this bohemian persona while visiting the forest.[46] The influx of visitors to Fontainebleau was not without its difficulties, and tensions arose between some artists and tourists. To the tourists, artists had become an integral part of the forest that validated the beauty of Fontainebleau.[47] On the other hand, artists, especially landscape painters, were often frustrated by the throngs of sightseers and wanted to preserve the natural "primitivism" of the forest rather than enable what they saw as the inauthentic version enjoyed by tourists.[48] The artists' discontent can be clearly seen in a caricature made by Cham in 1864 (fig. 7), in which an artist is depicted shooing a tourist away,

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[44] Jones says that the trip to Fontainebleau was affordable to the general public but she did not enumerate exactly what kinds of people could afford to make the trip. She does emphasize how popular the forest was, with 135, 877 visitors passing through the Fontainebleau station in 1857 from May to November. See Kimberly Jones, "Landscapes, Legends, Souvenirs, Fantasies: The Forest of Fontainebleau in the Nineteenth Century," in *In the forest of Fontainebleau: Painters and Photographers from Corot to Monet,* ed. Kimberly Jones, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 6-13.

[45] Ibid., 11.

[46] Bohemians and gypsies were often conflated in the nineteenth century. Gypsies sought refuge in the Forest of Fontainebleau when they migrated to France. Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians,* 64.

[47] Green also discusses the impact tourists had on the residents. Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester, NY: Manchester University Press, 1990), 119.

[48] Ibid.,118.

calling him a “bourgeois cretin,” after the sightseer disturbs the leaves the artist was endeavoring to paint.[49] Unlike many of his predecessors, Monet seemingly embraced tourism in *Déjeuner*, as he depicted figures that were fashionable city-dwellers seeking nature.[50] Monet positively represented urban outsiders in Fontainebleau and thereby created a stage on which the tourists enact a spectacle on an unprecedented scale for the Salon-goers in Paris.

The approach that Monet took for *Déjeuner* was at odds with how he painted the forest earlier in 1864 in *Woodgatherers at the Edge of the Forest* (fig. 8). This work shows a closer connection to the Barbizon style of landscape painting with its browns and other earthy colors alongside small figures in an expansive landscape. The portrayal of the back-breaking labor of wood gathering refers more to early Realist paintings for which urban workers or country laborers were popular subjects. Most notably, the Barbizon painter Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) created several canvases that focused on wood gatherers.[51] Monet similarly depicted laborers embedded in a landscape in his *Forest of Fontainebleau* from 1864 (fig. 9), which appeared in the Salon of 1866 with *Woman in the Green Dress*.[52] Like the *Woodgatherers,* the livelihood of the laborers in the *Forest of Fontainebleau* also depended on the wood trade, and highlights a large industry in the Forest of Fontainebleau. While these two paintings of the forest and its laborers were painted at a similar time as *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* the figures depicted could not be more different.

It is important to keep in mind that the *Woodgatherers at the Edge of the Forest* and the *Forest of Fontainebleau* had a different genre and scale than *Déjeuner*. The *Woodgatherers* and *Forest of Fontainebleau* are both landscapes on much smaller canvases than the genre scene of

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[49] Kimberly Jones, “Landscapes, Legends, Souvenirs, Fantasies,” 20.
[50] Monet's mentor, Eugène Boudin (1824-1898), was also known to depict tourists in nature, famously on beaches.
[51] Aurisch, “Impressionists at Fontainebleau,” 173.
[52] Monet painted versions of this scene both with and without laborers.

Déjeuner.[53] Unlike those in the *Déjeuner,* the figures in the two landscape paintings are small and distant, and appear to blend into the natural landscape that surrounds them. This immersion of the laborers is in direct contrast to the life-size figures in the *Déjeuner* which appear to be in closer proximity to the viewer and stand out against the background in their colored clothing. Unlike his Realist predecessors or contemporaries, Monet never painted peasants or laborers on a large scale or dominating their pictorial space. When Monet did decide to focus on large-scale figures, he tended to paint fashionable women or men at leisure, which shows his privileging of certain classes in his art.

Monet's figure-types in *Déjeuner* are explored by Mary Daily Desmarais, who compares them with those in earlier French depictions of leisure.[54] Desmarais takes Monet's connection to the Rococo further than previous scholars, such as Isaacson, by relating Monet's painting to the Rococo revival, which was at its peak in the 1860s.[55] At the time, Rococo art was appreciated for its "realism," and Desmarais quotes Théophile Thoré (1807-1869), a French journalist and art critic, who said "Before him (Watteau), they painted princesses, and he painted shepherdesses; they painted goddesses, and he painted women; they painted heroes, and he painted mountebanks."[56] Both Monet's scene and Watteau's *fêtes galantes* are similar through their

[53] *Forest of Fontainebleau* measures about 39 in x 51 in and *Woodgatherers at the Edge of the Forest* measures about 23 in x 35 in.
[54] Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 21-33.
[55] Rococo art had various aspects that would appeal to a French audience at a Salon in the 1860s. The Rococo was seen as the first particularly French style, and therefore it was an important part of France's national identity. The Rococo-style lost some of its political connotations of aristocratic corruption and instead became appreciated for its aesthetic. The desire to have a purely French-style displays a need in France to distinguish themselves within an increasingly global market, where such occurrences as World Fairs and imperialistic expansion created a competitive and nationalistic mood. Considering the renewed, or perhaps continued interest in the Rococo style, it is no surprise that Monet, and other artists, quoted the style in their painting. Allison Unruh, "Aspiring to La Vie Galante: Reincarnations of Rococo in Second Empire France," (New York University, Dissertation Ph.D. 2008), 40. Also see Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 23.
[56] Michael Fried also discusses how Manet interacted with the Rococo, and Watteau in particular. Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism: Or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 44, 71-72. For Théophile Thoré's words see Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 191.

depictions of figures in contemporary clothing enjoying nature.[57] Desmarais explains how Monet held the Rococo artist Watteau in particular esteem, and later in life he said to Georges Clemenceau that *Embarkation for Cythera* (1717) was the painting he would most want to own from the Louvre.[58] Considering that Monet hoped to garner attention with his *Déjeuner* project, it makes sense that he used visual language that connected to a historical French style experiencing a resurgence in popularity.

Desmarais specifically connects Monet's project to eighteenth-century *repas de chasse* paintings, a genre that depicted outdoor hunting meals of the nobility.[59] The *repas de chasse* motif refers to a meal that would occur before, during, or after a hunt and was often a subject in French Rococo painting.[60] Carle Van Loo's *Une halte de chasse* (1737, fig. 10) is an example that shows a relatively large hunting party, complete with dogs, horses, and servants. The group has stopped to enjoy a picnic at a tablecloth on the ground while the figures actively engage with one another. Courbet's later scene, *The Huntsman's Picnic* from 1858 (fig. 11), also has roots in this genre and is often compared to Monet's painting.[61] Unlike Van Loo and other Rococo artists, Courbet depicted provincial commoners instead of members of the nobility. Desmarais identifies their class through clothing, and traces their origins to the artist's native Jura region in

[57] Desmarais discusses how Watteau was among the first of French painters to rethink mythological subjects with figures in modern dress. Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 23.

[58] Monet said this quote in a conversation with Georges Clemenceau, who would later publish it in his book about Monet. Georges Clemenceau, *Claude Monet: Cinquante ans d'amitié* (Paris: La Palantine, 1965). This conversation is often discussed, for further reference see: Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 191. Unruh, *Aspiring to La Vie Galante* 214. Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism,* 135.

[59] The actuality that hunting was only for the nobility has recently been complicated by Plax. See Julie Anne Plax, "Fêting the Hunt in Eighteenth-Century Painting," in *Artistes, savants et amateurs: Art et sociabilité au XVIII siècle (1715-1815),* (Paris: Mare & Martin, 2016), 127-137.

[60] Desmarais finds deep connections between Watteau's *Repas de Chasse* (c. 1718-20) and Monet's canvas, especially in terms of poses. The Courbet-figure in Monet's canvas is positioned similarly to the central figure in Watteau's painting, which Desmarais finds especially telling because Courbet was an avid hunter. Perhaps Monet did see this Watteau's painting, considering it was shown at the Galerie Martinet in 1860. Courbet depicted hunting scenes quite often between 1856-1869. Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 24. For definition of *repas de chasse* see Shao-Chien Tseng, "Contested Terrain: Gustave Courbet's Hunting Scenes," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 2 (2008): 224.

[61] This comparison was mostly recently done Desmarais. Ibid., 27-28.

France. [62] In the nineteenth century, hunting was no longer confined to the aristocracy, and a larger spectrum of people could hunt for food, profit, or even sport.[63]

The figures in *The Huntsman's Picnic* do not seem to particularly enjoy their picnic or hunt, as evidenced by the dead animals pushed off to the side and the lack of interaction amongst the group.[64] The figures' rigid poses, typical of Courbet's style, further point to their discomfort within their roles.[65] The inelegant figures, the clash of earthy and bright tones, and rough brushwork embody the art critic Théophile Gautier's (1811-1872) assertion from 1861 that Courbet was the "Watteau of ugliness."[66] Courbet turned the subject of outdoor pleasure, associated with Watteau, into the antithesis of the eighteenth-century painter's graceful figures and refined style. While Monet also placed his figures in awkward poses, there is a marked difference with Courbet's stiff picnic-goers who do not engage with the food or the landscape. Unlike Courbet's group, which seems to be pasted onto the landscape, Monet's picnickers interact with the forest by leaning on trees and moving in and out of the light. While there are obvious similarities between the two nineteenth-century works, including the presence of servants, similar references to eighteenth-century French art, and the use of large canvases for genre scenes, the paintings and their respective artists clearly had different concerns in relation to depicting class.

Picnics occupied an exceptional place in nineteenth-century society, and these excursions allowed for less rigid manners and social behavior than meals expected in public society. The act of picnicking itself often had negative connotations of immoral character and clandestine

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[62] Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 28.
[63] Tseng, "Contested Terrain," 219.
[64] Ibid., 225.
[65] Desmarais "Hunting for Light," 28.
[66] Théophile Gautier, *Abécédaire du salon de 1861* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1861), 133.

romance, hinted at by Monet with the heart and "P" initial carved on the large tree on the left-hand side of the Moscow sketch. The tablecloth also held immoral associations, as the cloth was often related to the bed sheet and sexual activity.[67] The compositional choices Monet made in his picnic scene, such as the casual poses and the intermingling of the sexes in the Moscow sketch, hint at the informal sociability allowed at picnics. Such freedom made possible by picnicking is unashamedly apparent in Morlon's print, but also other early Impressionist works, like Camille Pissarro's (1830-1903) *Picnic at Montmorency* (c. 1859, fig. 12). Pissarro's composition implies that this group of revelers hail from the lower class with their location along a remarkably unscenic road and their dress, particularly with the men in shirtsleeves. Despite its plainness, the landscape in Pissarro's picnic engulfs the figures. These picnickers toast glasses, implying alcohol consumption, and the depiction of a woman leaning on and wrapping her arm around a man makes the presence of romance much more explicit. Unlike Monet's project, the *Picnic at Montmorency* does not have an open space on the tablecloth for the observer and no figure invites the viewer to join the leisurely activity. The group in Pissarro's work is set further back and off to the right, creating smaller figures and establishing a distance between the viewer and picnickers. Ultimately, the viewer may not even want to join this picnic due to its unsightly location and morally questionable figures.

Although their poses are not as blatantly flirtatious as those in Pissarro's work, the figures of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* still interact closely with one another. As previously mentioned, Monet's figures are sometimes called 'elegant picnickers,' but in the final canvas they have less than graceful positions. These awkward poses painted by Monet, such as the woman adjusting her hat, stand in direct contrast to other nineteenth-century excursion scenes of the upper-class,

[67] Charlotte Boyce, "'Tell me what you eat': representations of food in nineteenth century culture," (PhD Dissertation, Cardiff University, 2006), 207-219.

such as *The Empress Eugenie Surrounded by her Ladies in Waiting* by Franz-Xavier Winterhalter (1855, fig. 13). The sumptuous dresses, graceful poses, and intimacy amongst the women in this painting leave no doubt of their high social standing. In addition to choosing to convey inelegant in-between moments, Monet also fails to offer any substantial clues regarding the relationships between the figures, especially in the Moscow sketch where the male figures outnumber the females. The casual nature of some poses, such as the man in the foreground of the Moscow sketch lying down in his shirtsleeves and an unbuttoned vest, suggests the ease amongst the group or even a disregard for propriety.[68] The lapse in formal manners displayed by the picnickers could demonstrate the lax behavior allowed at a picnic or serve as a visible representation of their social standing.

One male figure makes a particularly obvious breach of manners by smoking a pipe as he leans against a tree in the Moscow sketch. Smoking occupied an unstable place in the world of manners; some were more accepting of it while others, like Charles Dubois, who wrote *Considerations on Five Plagues: The Abuse of the Corset, the Use of Tobacco, the Passion for Gambling, the Abuse of Strong Drink, and Speculation* (1857), found the use of tobacco suspect.[69] Dubois claimed that smoking, "makes the mind lazy, leads to idleness and inaction. True workers of body and mind do not smoke..."[70] This attitude reflected the moral implications of smoking and suggested indolence among partakers of tobacco. Gentlemen were not to smoke in front of ladies, and there were separate rooms designated for men to smoke in when indoors. The combination of idleness and smoking are apparent in Morlon's lithograph, *Boaters of the*

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[68] Clark says that for a man to strip down to his shirtsleeves is a momentous decision, that most gentlemen do not take. Clark, *Painting of Modern Life,* 267.
[69] Charles Dubois, *Instruction pour les fumerurs, les priseurs, etc.: indiquant l'art d'user du tabac sans danger pour la santé, avec propreté et peu de depense* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1858), 15.
[70] Original French: "Quant à la fumée de tabac, elle alourdit la pensée, rend l'esprit paresseux, porte à l'oisiveté et à l'inaction. Les vrais travailleurs de corps et d'esprit ne fument point..." Ibid., 15.

Seine, which at the right of the scene, depicts a man in a striped shirt lazily reclining against a tree smoking while the rest of the figures flirt and dance. Interestingly, Monet chose a more rural pipe over other smoking instruments such as cigars, which were very popular and more expensive at the time.[71] Nadar attributed the pipe with bohemian connotations when he spoke about students in the Latin Quarter.[72] Courbet also famously painted a portrait with a pipe from 1846-47 that T.J. Clark describes as a bohemian self-portrait (fig. 14). Monet may have chosen this particular smoking instrument to suggest something about the bohemian identities of particular members of the group in the *Déjeuner.* The decision to replace the central seated male figure from the Moscow sketch with one that strongly resembles Courbet in the final canvas further supports this theory.

While the smoking man and the rest of this circular group of figures enjoy the picnic and each other's company, another figure, which only appears in the Moscow sketch, remains disconnected from the group. He sits in a cramped position on the other side of a large birch tree, pushed to the very edge of the frame. Unlike the other figures bathed in light coming through the trees, this figure blends into the shadows with his dark clothing and high hat. His head turns towards the picnickers, as though he is observing them, but none in the group return his gaze. The placement and depiction of the servant marks him as an outsider, and his isolated inclusion speaks directly to the underlying issue of class within the frame.

Desmarais is the only scholars to go into depth exploring this servant figure from the Moscow sketch. This lack of scholarly attention could be due to the fact that the part of the final version of *Déjeuner* where it might have appeared is no longer extant, and therefore, modern scholars cannot be sure that it made an appearance in the final canvas. Issacson does not deeply

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[71] Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie,* 107.
[72] Félix Nadar, *Quand j'étais étudiant* (Paris: M. Lévy, 1856), 76-77.

investigate this figure at all, and T.J. Clark briefly describes him as a servant of some kind, but there is a lack of clarity as to what type of servant.[73] Desmarais calls this servant a valet, and claims that precedent for this figure can be found in the French painter Carl Van Loo's *Une halte de chasse* (1737) or Watteau's character Crispin from his *French Comedians* (1720, fig. 15). In the Watteau painting, a column separates the figure of Crispin from the group, similar to how a tree blocks Monet's servant figure from the picnickers. The two figures are also very similarly posed, with both men seemingly observing the main action as they crouch forward with their left elbows bent.[74] Desmarais contends that Monet's servant figure plays an important role by elevating the other figures within the canvas, thereby marking them as a higher class, but not as nobility in the Rococo tradition of *fêtes galantes.*[75] Although Desmarais' assertion makes for a compelling explanation, it is unlikely that one isolated figure could elevate an entire group of people so completely given that their relaxed poses, discarded clothing, and smoking call into question a bourgeois status.

Besides the presence of the servant, fashion is a marker often cited by scholars to read a middle-class status for the figures.[76] In both the sketch and final canvas of *Déjeuner,* the men actively attend to the women in the scene as they walk with them, and even hold their accessories. These actions, along with the men's traditionally sober clothing, allow the women's fashion to shine.[77] Monet's emphasis on female fashion has been a hallmark in scholarship about the artist. Joel Isaacson again broke ground by exploring the subject of Monet and fashion plates

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[73] Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life,* 5.
[74] Desmarais, "Hunting for Light," 24.
[75] Ibid., 24-25.
[76] Many scholars have discussed Monet, fashion, and the middle-class: Mary Gedo, *Monet and His Muse: Camille Monet in the Artist's Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 37. Groom, "Claude Monet: *Camille."* 44. Ruth Iskin. *Modern women and Parisian consumer culture in impressionist painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 201.
[77] Philippe Thiebaut, "An Ideal of Virile Urbanity," in *Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity,* ed. Gloria Groom (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012), 135.

in his article "Impressionism and Journalistic Illustration" from 1982. Isaacson focused on illustrations found in weekly newspapers and satirical journals from the Second Empire and the early years of the Third Republic that coincided with the development of Impressionism. The argument that these journalistic illustrations served as references for Impressionist artists, who used them as surveys of life in Paris, is now presumed in scholarship.[78] Isaacson noted the references to fashion plates in the groupings and posing of the figures in the *Déjeuner* project, *Femmes au jardin* (c. 1866-7, fig. 16), and also *Woman in the Green Dress* (1866, fig. 17).[79]

Monet often used Doncieux as a model, and in both *Femmes au jardin* and *Déjeuner* she posed for multiple figures. Monet was not known to hire models often due to economic constraints, and most of the time he had his companion or friends pose for him.[80] The fact that he used the same model for multiple figures belies the notion that the scene was observed from life; clearly it was a constructed image. It seems likely that Doncieux actually wore the clothing depicted in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* while she posed due to the relatively consistent appearance of the dresses in the multitude of times they appear in various Monet paintings (*Déjeuner* and *Femmes au jardin*). Doncieux wears a variety of stylish dresses in *Déjeuner*, with some made of muslin or cotton, others with trailing skirts with raised over-skirts, and some with a close-fitting *paletot* (a type of short jacket).[81] It is unlikely that the financially unstable Monet could have bought these fashionable dresses from a professional dress maker or department store, so where

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[78] Even before Isaacson published this article, he mentioned fashion plates in his monograph on the *Déjeuner*. Joel Isaacson. "Impressionism and Journalistic Illustration," *Arts Magazine* 56, no. 10 (1982): 92-115. Another seminal text about Monet and Fashion is Mark Roskill, "Early Impressionism and the Fashion Print," *Burlington Magazine* 112, no. 807 (Jun. 1970): 390-393, 395.
[79] Isaacson, *Déjeuner,* 49.
[80] For more about the issues Monet faced with figure-painting see Anne M. Wagner, "Why Monet Gave up Figure Painting," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 4 (1994): 612-629.
[81] Haase, "Fashion en Plein Air," 89-92.

he obtained them remains uncertain.[82] A letter that Bazille wrote to his mother reveals that he had rented a dress for a painting, and scholars have postulated that Monet also rented some dresses or could have shared rented ones with Bazille. Another possibility is that Doncieux owned the dresses before meeting Monet, and he had alterations made to them so that they appeared more in line with the current fashion trends.[83] The issue of the dresse's expense contradicts Isaacson's claim that Monet accurately depicted his own class status since these pricey dresses were beyond his reach as a struggling artist.[84] No matter how the dresses were obtained, Monet's representation of up-to-date fashion in his early works has been hypothesized as a way to elevate Camille Doncieux's status, particularly in *Woman in a Green Dress*.[85] While that painting was not a portrait, those who knew Monet would have clearly recognized the model as Doncieux.

Alternatively, Ruth Iskin has suggested that Monet's interest in fashion, along with his generalization of Doncieux's features, shows that he was creating a certain "type" of woman: a Parisienne.[86] A Parisienne was a modern fashionable woman who came to embody a chic lifestyle in Paris after being surrounded by its shops, society, and culture. The wealthiest women could most easily adopt this lifestyle, though less financially secure women could assume some aspects of the Parisienne.[87] By depicting Doncieux as this type of fashionably dressed woman, Monet elevated her position to someone whose taste could be emulated and set her within the

[82] To buy a dress from a department store and have it altered to fit was relatively expensive. It is also unlikely the dresses were bought from a second-hand shop because of their contemporaneity. Birgit Haase's argument is discussed in Gloria Groom, "Claude Monet: *Camille,"* in *Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity,* 47.
[83] Ibid., 47.
[84] Isaacson, *Déjeuner,* 40-41.
[85] Many scholars have discussed Monet's elevation with Doncieux: Gedo, *Monet and His Muse,* 37. Groom, "Claude Monet: *Camille,"* 44. Also, Iskin has suggested that Doncieux takes on a persona of a live-model, like those who modeled clothes in department stores. Doncieux would also often take on the poses seen in fashion plates. Iskin, *Modern women and Parisian consumer culture,* 201.
[86] Iskin, *Modern women and Parisian consumer culture,* 184-224.
[87] Ibid., 192.

echelon of chic trendsetters. Additionally, by depicting a Parisienne in the Fontainebleau forest, Monet produced an image of civilized nature in which the country was a contemporary area dominated by the city.[88]

The other main model for the painting, Frédéric Bazille, came from an upper middle-class family of Montpellier and did not have the same money issues as the struggling Doncieux and Monet. Bazille made for an excellent model considering his reputation for wearing fashionable or even dandy-esque clothing.[89] An example of his bold fashion choices can be seen in the checkered pants depicted for his portrait in Henri Fantin-Latour's *A Studio at Les Batignolles* from 1870 (fig. 18). While Monet fades into the background in Fantin-Latour's painting, Bazille stands statuesquely at the forefront of the group as the tallest figure in the frame. In the left-hand fragment of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* the figure Bazille posed for is portrayed as extremely stylish. The figure wears a respectable black suit with a white shirt, complete with a hat, cane, and gloves, all markers of a proper gentleman.[90] However, Bazille also modeled for the figure sprawled out on the ground on the right side of the Moscow sketch. The figures Bazille posed for oscillated between gentlemanly and discourteous, while the multiple figures Doncieux modeled for were all fashionable, even when shown in awkward poses as they reached for dishes and fixed their hats. The difference in treatment suggests that the bar for women was higher and that unlike Doncieux, Bazille's class was not in question.

The parasol that the standing Bazille-figure holds on the right side of the central canvas fragment, presumably for his female companion, is a particularly stylish accessory within the

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[88] Monet did not just depict Doncieux as a fashionable Parisienne in the 1860s, but continued to do so into the early 1870s. Ibid., 202-203. Also see Gloria Groom, "Spaces of Modernity," in *Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity,* 171.
[89] Champa "A Complicated Codependence," 71. Also see Thiebaut, "An Ideal of Virile Urbanity," 139.
[90] Thiebaut, "An Ideal of Virile Urbanity," 138.

picture.[91] The parasol as a fashionable object was omnipresent during outdoor activities and signified a number of details about the respectability of the owner. When opened, it provided shade and created a small domestic-like interior while outdoors, connecting the owner to the feminine sphere. The parasol was an intensely gendered object, not only as an indispensable part of a respectable female's outfit, but also by taking on a masculine character when closed, with a shape described as a "phallic sword."[92] The placement and position of the parasol with the Bazille-figure allows him to lead the woman and the viewer through the picture.

The yellow color of this particular parasol makes it especially visible in both the Moscow sketch and the final canvas. Usually when a fashionable woman carried a parasol, its fabric would match the color scheme of her dress. Monet did not follow this particular trend with his painting, despite the lengths he went to convey a seemingly accurate sense of fashion in his frame. The color yellow could have been one of the neutral colors owned by women in order to avoid buying multiple parasols to match all of their outfits. This color choice could also reflect the increased availability of the parasol, which was sold as a ready-made accessory for a variety of price ranges in department stores in the 1860s.[93] The availability of fashions and women's aspirations to embody the Parisienne-type point to the slipperiness of clothing at this time as an indicator of class and consequently place a greater emphasis on other outward displays, such as a person's manners.[94] No matter how fashionable the picnickers' clothing may be, ultimately their poses serve as a better measure of their class.

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[91] The parasol would belong to the woman because the umbrella, was larger and darker color, and meant for rain. Also, it is assumed that the parasol belongs to the woman in grey and blue because of the coupling and grouping that occurs within the canvas. It is possible that the parasol is supposed to belong to the woman in the yellow on the opposite side of the group, but that would disrupt the grouping of the figures.
[92] Susan Hiner, *Accessories to Modernity: fashion and the feminine in nineteenth-century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 108-113.
[93] Ibid., 117-118.
[94] Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie,* 89.

The discontinuities of class in the canvas, from bohemian personas to etiquette and fashion, are manifested in the figure modelled by Gustave Courbet in the final canvas. Courbet was an artist who had a profound impact on Monet's art in the 1860s. Helga Aurisch contends that Monet looked up to Courbet so much that he turned down the opportunity to study with Thomas Couture (1815-1879) and instead attended the more liberal Académie Suisse, where Courbet had trained.[95] Both painters were known to use popular imagery as references for their work, such as fashion plates or woodcuts. Beyond sources, Courbet's impact on Monet can be seen in the monumentality of both the canvas and figures along with the rough application of paint that connects to Courbet's own style and approach to art.[96]

Aside from their significant aesthetic connections, Courbet and Monet also had a close personal relationship. Having by then achieved a certain level of success, Courbet is known to have lent Monet money, and he was even present as a witness to Monet's marriage to Doncieux in 1870. When Monet began to paint the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Courbet provided him with both advice and more monetary support.[97]

The Courbet-figure does not appear until the final canvas. Previously in the Moscow sketch, the place was instead filled by a younger beardless man in a light suit. In the central canvas fragment, the Courbet-figure holds a prominent position at the top center of the tablecloth. His seated form is casual and confident, with one leg bent under him and supporting his arm. This position not only takes up more space but also makes the Courbet-figure appear as

[95] Aurisch, "The Impressionists at Fontainebleau," 173.
[96] Courbet's use of woodcuts was famously explored by Linda Nochlin. Linda Nochlin, "Gustave Courbet's *Meeting:* A Portrait of the Artist as a Wandering Jew," in *Courbet* (New York: Thames and Hudson), 29-55.
[97] It appears as though Monet asked for Courbet for money multiple times from 1865-1870. In a letter from the spring of 1870, Monet refers to Courbet lending him money on multiple occasions. Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet,* 624. For information about Courbet helping Monet with the canvas, see Isaacson, *Déjeuner,* 28-33.

though he is presiding over the group.[98] Aside from his position within the composition, the sunlight creates a spotlight on the figure, particularly on his shoulder, arms, and head. The sunlight separates his dark suit and hair from the background, and also adds to his predominance within the frame. Additionally, the Courbet-figure is the only figure with parted lips, giving the impression that he is about to speak. The unfinished state of Courbet's left hand supports this idea, as the loose paint makes it appear as though he is gesturing.[99] Courbet, who as an artist built a persona as a rough-mannered workman and rebel, often depicted the lower classes or people from his provincial region in his own work, and this figure could be seen as a foil to the fashionable Parisians in Monet's canvas. The decision to include Courbet as uncharacteristically urbane and sociable within the composition embodies the ambiguity of the representation of class in the picture.

The depiction of Courbet speaking fits the persona Courbet presented to the world. As T.J. Clark describes, Courbet cultivated a public persona that he was a provincial slob, with rough manners and revolutionary ideas.[100] He was often loud and arrogant, and wore provincial clothing.[101] Zola described Courbet in his notes for *L'Oeuvre* as "the monster puffed up with his own personality, unself-critical, who has become God: Courbet, Hugo."[102] Despite Courbet's

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[98] The depiction of Courbet as confident was not without precedence, as seen in Courbet's *The Meeting* from 1854, where Courbet paints himself with a self-assured stance on equal footing with his patron. Nochlin also contends that Courbet's self-portraits are often egotistical and narcissistic. Nochlin, "Gustave Courbet's *Meeting,"* in *Courbet,* 46-49.
[99] Many of the figures' hands are unfinished or covered in some way, either by gloves or other accessories. This avoidance of hands is similarly seen in the faces, many of which are not brought up to a high degree of finish. These details could hint at Monet's discomfort painting figures. Wagner, "Why Monet Gave up Figure Painting," 612-629.
[100] T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 revolution* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1973), 29.
[101] As discussed by Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Courbet was not from a poor family, his father was actually the richest landowner in village of Flagey. Courbet employed letters to further the notion he was unmannered. They were filled with misspellings and punctuation errors, and his peers often used these shortcomings as proof of his lack of education. Courbet actually continued his formal education until he was about twenty years old, thus dispelling his contemporary's notions that he was uneducated. Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet,* 1-3.
[102] Quoted in Clark, *Image of the People*, 24.

propensity for provincial clothing and arrogance, both do not outwardly appear on the figure for which he modeled in *Déjeuner*.[103]

While Monet painted Courbet's likeness, he revised the way Courbet was usually shown. Photographic portraits from the time reveal that Courbet usually wore inelegant clothing, as seen in Félix Nadar's (1820-1910) portrait where a large, rough coat engulfs Courbet's figure (fig. 19).[104] Étienne Carjat's (1828-1906) portrait, made after 1860, emphasizes Courbet's occupation by showing him in his shirt sleeves and holding artistic instruments (fig. 20). When Courbet painted himself in *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life* in 1855 (fig. 21), he chose to refrain from the traditional black suit that was associated with the middle class, though not typically worn while painting, and instead showed himself in chic, yet unusual clothing: a green jacket and striped trousers.[105] But in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Monet painted the Courbet-figure in a more respectable black suit that emphasizes his shoulders and hides his considerable girth.[106] A bright white shirt peeks out from under his properly altered jacket, and a pink flower attached to the lapel reinforces the stylishness of the suit. Flowers were fashionable for men to place into buttonholes, with roses and violets being the most popular.[107] So while Monet includes Courbet's likeness in the painting, he clearly takes it out of its usual context as a painter or craftsman, and unlike the huntsmen in Courbet's painting, Monet's painted figure is clearly enjoying the picnic as the social center of the canvas.

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[103] Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet,* 624.
[104] McCauley discusses how Nadar used this type of coat on his sitters to signify the bohemian, and therefore this coat could not have been Courbet's own. See McCauley, *Industrial Madness,* 129.
[105] Nochlin describes the suit as "natty" Linda Nochlin, "Courbet's Real Allegory: Rereading *The Painter's Studio*," in *Courbet,* 154.
[106] Clark, *Image of the People,* 24.
[107] Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers: A History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 9-10.

The figure of Courbet replaced another in the final canvas, but other problematic parts originally found on the right side of the Moscow sketch, including the figure smoking a pipe and the reclining Bazille figure, no longer appear and may not have been included in the final canvas. While the reason for cutting up the canvas has always been explained by water damage, questions remain regarding the removal of some parts not adjacent to others. Scholars have surmised that the canvas was left with Monet's landlord in Argenteuil in January 1878 as collateral to cover overdue rent.[108] If this canvas was stored until Monet could pay his debts, it is doubtful that the landlord would allow the painting to suffer harm. Assuming that the canvas was rolled, beginning at the left side of the canvas in the middle and leaving the right edge exposed to the elements, there is no logical explanation as to why Monet cut the canvas in the middle as he did (fig. 22). Additionally, in the photograph of Monet in his studio with the Duc de Trévise from 1920 (fig. 4), the central fragment is larger than it appears today and includes a second woman's face above the arm on the already cropped seated female figure. The fragment was cut again at some point, eliminating about one foot of its width from the right-side. With this second cut, that woman's face was removed, and it is unclear who cut the canvas this second time. After Monet's death in 1926, the painting was owned by Michel Monet and then held in a private collection until 1987 when it was donated to the French State.[109] Since Monet lived for six years after this photograph was taken, it is possible he could have cut the canvas again as he continued to reconsider the work. Monet did cut the canvas at least once in the 1880s, and the way in which

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[108] Isaacson, *Déjeuner,* 17.

[109] Isaacson only briefly mentions this second cut, which he claims happened after Monet's death: "Earlier a further alteration in the central group could be discerned. This central portion of the painting, when it hung on Monet's studio wall, was larger than it is today; it was mutilated further sometime after his death, possibly at the time it left his studio to enter a private collection." Isaacson offers no concrete evidence for his claim or that Monet did not make this final cut himself. Ibid., 67. Wildenstein does mention this later cut, but does not mention when or who did it, only that it was done after 1920. Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: biographie et catalogue raisonné* (Lausanne, Paris: La Bibliothèque des arts, 1974), 146.

it was cut suggests that Monet framed certain fragments deliberately, and eliminated others that, more than being damaged, were problematic.

Cutting canvases was not an unusual practice among Monet's artistic circle, and the inspiration to do so could have come from Manet, who was known to cut and rethink canvas fragments as separate works. When Monet cut the *Déjeuner* in 1884, Manet's famously cut *Incident in a Bullfight* (1864, fig. 23) was on display at his posthumous exhibition at the École des Beaux-Arts.[110] Monet's decision to cut his work into two fragments, when he could have kept it one piece, raises questions. This central cut divided a female-figure between the two pieces. One explanation is that cutting where he did prevented the Courbet figure from being cramped by the edge of the canvas and allowed him to retain a central position. This cut also allowed Monet to make the side fragment long and narrow, which brings to mind Renoir's paintings of dancing couples from the 1880s (fig. 24). During the year of 1884, Monet spent a great deal of time with Renoir and would have been aware of Renoir's recent formatting decisions. Significantly, Monet did not throw away either fragments of the *Déjeuner*, especially because he was well known for destroying works that troubled him.[111] The two remaining fragments have been sanitized of the sketch's more conflicting aspects. The bohemian nature of the pipe smoking and the relaxed manners of the reclining Bazille-figure no longer contrast with the bourgeois aspects hinted at by the presence of the servant.

It is important to note what had transpired in France and Monet's life from the time he abandoned the *Déjeuner* in 1866 until he later cut down the large painting. In the 1880s, France experienced a backlash to bohemian and revolutionary art movements[112] that could explain

[110] Manet began the painting in 1862 and the painting was shown at the Salon of 1864. Later the painting was cut into two independent fragments, but it is not known exactly when.
[111] Aurisch, "The Impressionists at Fontainebleau," 177.
[112] Brown, *Gypsies and Other Bohemians,* 97.

Monet's decision to crop out the bohemian aspects of the picture like relaxing Bazille figure. The reaction against revolutionary ideas and the bohemian could be partly due to the French Commune (March 18, 1871 – May 28, 1871) that occurred after the Franco-Prussian War (July 19, 1870 – May 10 1871). Albert Boime has discussed how the solidification of the Impressionist group in the Commune's aftermath led to their art actively engaging with the reconstruction effort that came after the insurrection. It often resulted in agreeable, harmonious views of places impacted by the violence during the Commune.[113] A great deal changed for Monet during the war and Commune when he was in England. Bazille died in battle, and for a time Monet believed that Courbet had been executed for taking part in the Commune.[114] The rumors of Courbet's death proved to be untrue, but he was tried, convicted, and exiled from France for his Commune participation, and died in Switzerland in 1877.[115] Two years later, Doncieux passed away at the age of 32 after struggling with a long illness. By the time Monet recuperated and cut down the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, the three major figures involved with the project and his life were no longer alive.

Although the 1870s were filled with tragedy for Monet, he finally found financial security in the 1880s, and his income reached about 45,000 francs by 1884. In 1883 he started to rent the house in Giverny that he would later buy, and he lived there with his new companion, Alice Hoschedé (1844-1911), who was also the wife of Monet's patron, and their respective children.[116] Monet hung the central fragment in his studio, which allowed it to be considered a

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[113] Albert Boime, *Art and the French Commune: Imaging Paris After War and Revolution* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1997), 7-8.
[114] Monet wrote to Pissarro in 1871 when he thought that Courbet was dead: "You have doubtless learned of the death of poor Courbet shot without a trail. What shameful conduct, that of Versailles, it is frightful and makes me ill. I don't have the heart for anything. It's all heartbreaking." Monet apparently visited Courbet in jail as soon as he was back in Paris in the fall of 1871. Ibid., 50.
[115] Courbet was the scapegoat for the Commune's destruction of the Vendome Column as described by Chu, *Letters of Gustave Courbet,* 6.
[116] Tucker, *Claude Monet,* 100-120.

singular work largely free of the influence of the Moscow sketch. This "new" painting shows an equal number of male and female figures, making two couples that are reminders of Monet's closest relationships with Doncieux, Bazille, and Courbet.[117] The cropped figures on both sides of the canvas imply that the picnic continues beyond the frame. The white tablecloth comes right to the front edge of the frame, leaving a space for the viewer to join in. Two wine bottles await the spectator, along with the untouched food that is ready to be consumed on the plates being handed out by the figure in a polka-dot dress. The new scenes that Monet created by cutting the *Déjeuner* seem to represent a more coherent and idealized view of middle-class leisure, that along with the cropping along the bottom edge, bring the viewer even more completely into the picture. Therefore, this "new" painting reflects Monet's life in the 1880s in the sense that he was no longer a bohemian youth living on the fringes of society, but rather a widower and father with a successful career.

In the end, discerning class in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* remains challenging. Various inconsistencies arise in the painting, such as the inclusion of class-elevating signs undercut by casual poses and manners. Perhaps this painting is, as Baudelaire suggested a painting should be, a manifestation of modern life, with all its false appearances and discontinuities.[118] Monet's diverse peer group, and their corresponding figures in *Déjeuner,* imagine a world in which people of varying classes and personalities formed friendships and enjoyed nature together. Like many other Realist works, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* was the artist's construction and not an actual scene observed by him, and yet this project could still be considered a reflection of Monet's place in the world, which dramatically changed from the time he started the project until he cut the canvas. While the genre subject of Monet's painting may seem straight forward, the decisions

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[117] Interestingly, Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* also has two male and female figures.
[118] See Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life* (London: Phaidon, 1863), 1-41.

he made and the details visible in the remains of the project reflect how class could not always be easily demarcated in nineteenth-century France. While we can never know all of Monet's intentions while creating the work, the painting reflects the ambiguities of class in the nineteenth century and Monet's changing responses to it.

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FIGURES

Figure 1: Monet, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* 1865-1866, Musée d'Orsay, left fragment approximately 14 ft x 5 ft, center fragment pproximately 8 ft x 7 ft.

Figure 2: Monet, Moscow Sketch, 1865-1866, Pushkin Museum, 4 x 6 ft

Figure 3: Monet, *Bazille and Camille (Study for Déjeuner sur l'herbe*), 1865, National Gallery, Washington D.C., 36 5/8 x 27 1/8 in.

Figure 4: Monet in his Giverny studio, 1920

Figure 5: Manet, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* 1863, Musée d'Orsay, approximately 82 in × 104 in

Figure 6: Morlon, Boatters of the Seine, Port of Call at Asnieres, 1860.

Figure 7: Cham, caricature from “Excursions a Fontainebluea” *Le journal amusant,* no. 461, 1864. (In the caption, the painter calls the tourist a “Cretin of bourgeois” and yells at him for messing up the leaves he was trying to paint).

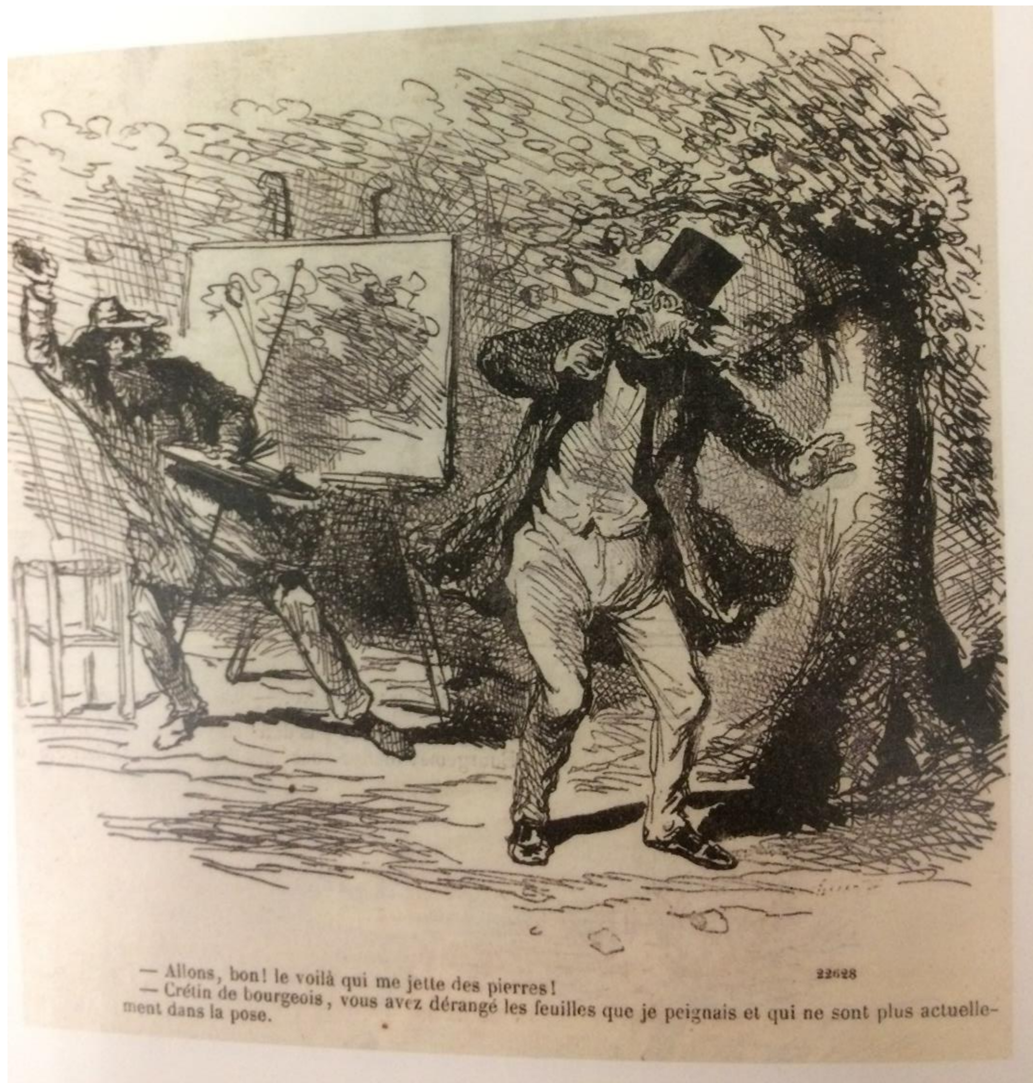

Figure 8: Monet, *Woodgatherers at the Edge of the Forest,* 1863, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 23 1/2 x 35 1/2 in.

Figure 9: Monet, *Forest of Fontainebleau,* 1864, private collection, 39 in x 51 in

Fig. 10: Carle Van Loo, *Une halte de chasse,* 1737, Louvre, approximately 7 x 8 ft.

Figure 11: Courbet, *The Huntsman's Picnic,* 1858, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, Germany, approximately 7 x 11 ft.

Figure 12: Camille Pissarro, *Picnic at Montmorency,* c. 1859, private collection, n/d

Figure 13: Franz-Xaver Winterhalter, *The Empress Eugenie Surrounded by her Ladies in Waiting,*1855, Compiègne, Musée National du château, 118 × 165 in

Figure 14: Courbet, *Self-Portrait (The Man With A Pipe),* 1848-49, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France, 17 2/3 x 14 2/3 in.

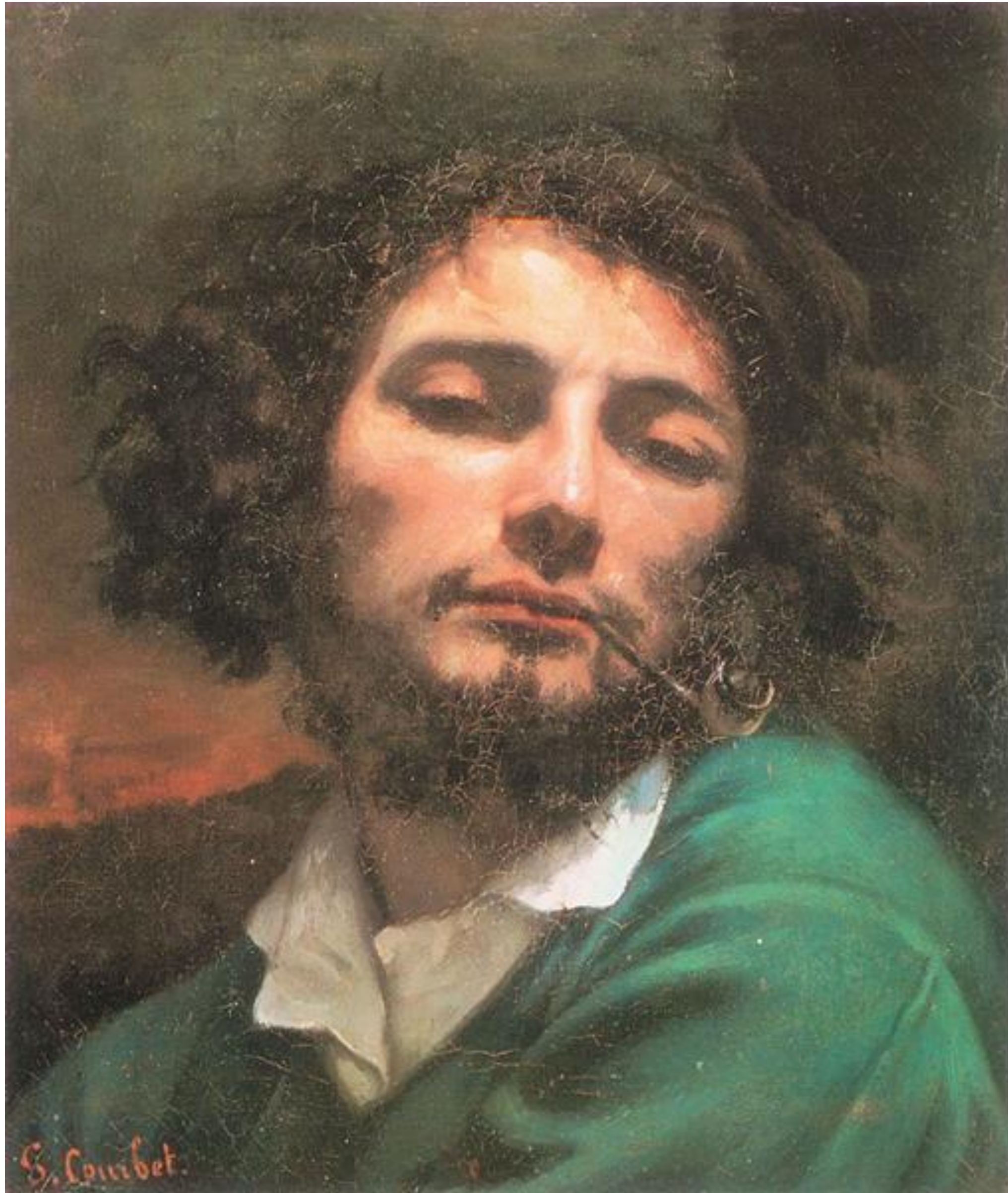

Figure 15: Watteau, *French Comedians,* ca. 1720, The MET, 22 1/2 x 28 3/4 in.

Figure 16: Monet, *Femme au jardin,* 1866-1867, Musée d'Orsay, 100 in × 81 in

Figure 17: Monet, *Woman in the Green Dress,*1866, Kunsthalle Bremen, approximately 91 × 59 in

Figure 18: Henri Fantin-Latour's *A Studio at Les Batignolles,* 1870, Musée d'Orsay, 80 in × 107 3/4 in

Figure 19: Nadar, *Courbet,* n/d

Figure 20: Étienne Carjat , *Courbet,* after 1860

Figure 21: Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory Summing Up Seven Years of My Artistic and Moral Life,* 1855, Musée d'Orsay, 142 × 235 in

Figure 22: Monet, diagram of fragments on Moscow Sketch, 1865-1866.

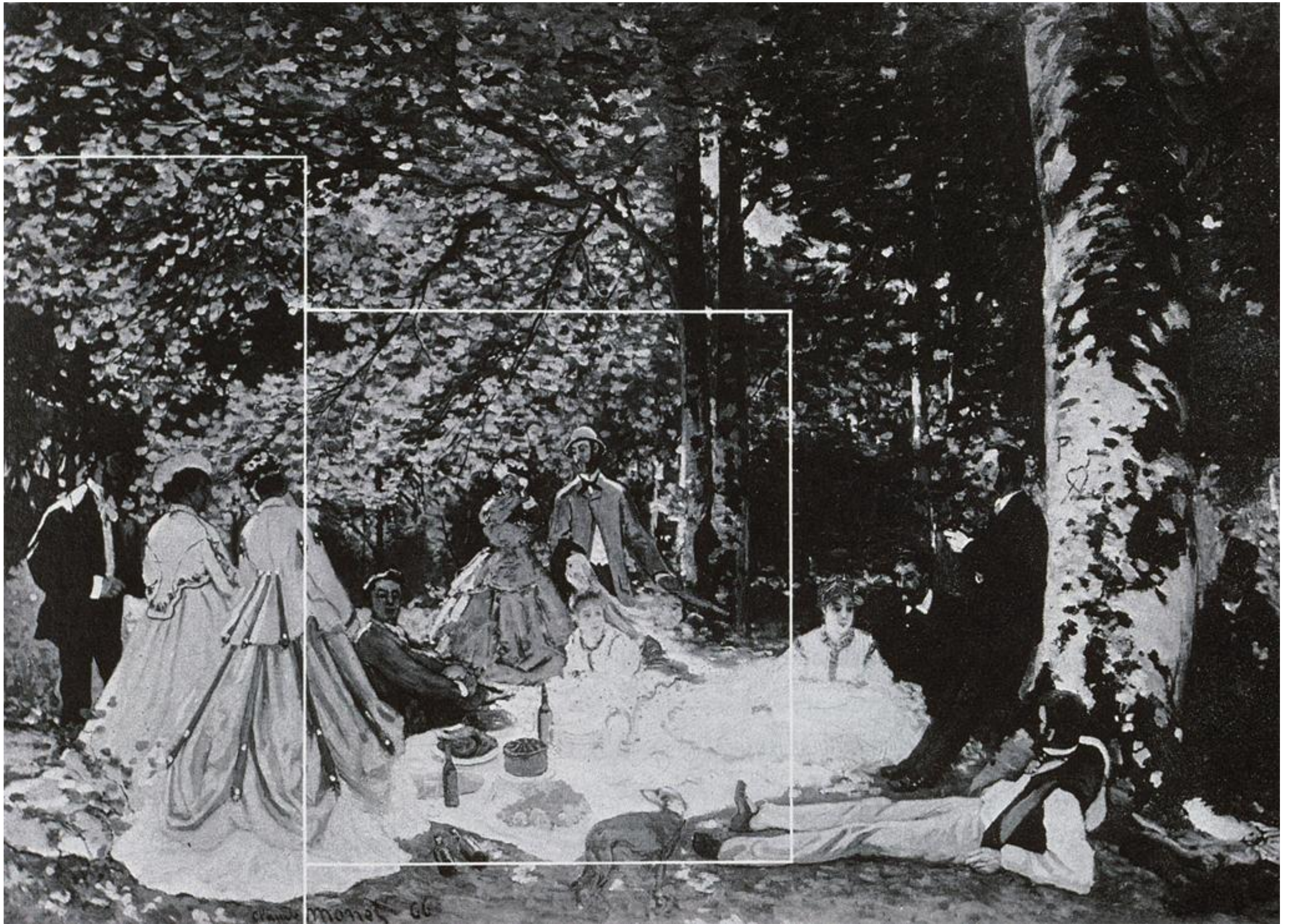

Figure 23: Manet, *Incident in a Bullfight* (proposed reconstruction by National Gallery, D.C.), 1864

Figure 24: Renoir, Dance at Bougival*,* 1883, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 71 5/8 x 38 5/8 in