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FRÉDÉRIC BAZILLE AND MASCULINITY
BETWEEN PARIS AND MONTPELLIER, 1841-1870

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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The Early Impressionist painter Frédéric Bazille, who moved frequently between Paris and his hometown of Montpellier, attended medical school for four years before deciding to paint full-time. Yet scholarship on Impressionism neglects these facts, thereby resisting the relevance of his medical training or provincial upbringing to his paintings. My dissertation instead embraces Bazille's dual training and double geographies to illuminate the contradictions that riddled notions of masculinity during the French Second Empire. I contend that Bazille's awkwardly posed and ambiguously structured bodies do not simply represent an immature phase of Impressionism that ended with his premature death in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, but that they instead thematize contemporary anxieties about intimacy and vulnerability in social conduct.

Bazille's attempts to order his knowledge of corporeal structures and processes essentially required him to grapple with the problem of knowing too much. Chapter One argues that Bazille's medical training shaped his paintings of male nudes in natural settings, as the Montpellier school's Vitalist doctrine theorized the body as a holistic system that demanded both internal and external harmony. Chapter Two posits that Bazille's struggles to merge medicine and art into holistic painted bodies backfired,

leading him to fixate in his portraits on clothing details that emphasized the separation between the structures of bodies and the clothes that overlay them. Chapter Three examines how Bazille's portraits of his Impressionist friends and their portraits of him present intimate homosocial dynamics that compel a reconsideration of Impressionism's origin story. Finally, Chapter Four actively redresses Impressionist scholarship's geographical bias by situating Bazille's vision of his Southern home, articulated through his images of soldiering and laboring bodies, against the increasingly vulnerable Second Empire.

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INTRODUCTION

“What lay on the pillow was a charnel-house, a heap of pus and blood, a shovelful of putrid flesh. The pustules had invaded the whole face, so that one pock touched the next... A large red crust, starting on one side of the cheeks was invading the mouth, twisting it into a terrible grin. And all around this grotesque and horrible mask of death, the hair, the beautiful hair, still blazed like sunlight and flowed in a stream of gold... It was as if the poison she had picked up in the gutters, from the carcasses left there by the roadside, that ferment with which she had poisoned a whole people, had now risen to her face and rotted it.”

Emile Zola, *Nana* (1880)¹

“I have chosen the modern era because it is that which I understand best [and] that I find the most alive for living people ...”

Frédéric Bazille²

Émile Zola's 1880 novel *Nana*, often referenced by art historians for its descriptions of prostitution and the Parisian demi-monde, ends on an exceptionally powerful note with a graphic description of the death of its titular courtesan, quoted above. In the last words of the novel, Zola neatly sutures Nana's fate to that of the French Second Empire—as Nana dies, Zola writes, “A great breath of despair came up from the boulevard and filled out the curtains. ‘To Berlin! To Berlin! To Berlin!’”³ These final words of the novel are, of course, the words of the crowds who enthusiastically flooded into Paris streets on July 14, 1870, after hearing that Napoleon III had ordered the French army to mobilize and so declared the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, which would usher in the end of his empire.⁴ Though *Nana* was certainly not Zola's final word on the Second Empire, his fusion of political and symbolic bodies

¹ Émile Zola, *Nana*, trans. George Holden (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 470.

² Quoted in Gaston Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis* (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1932), 63. letter to his parents, March, 1866: “J’ai choisi l’époque moderne, parce que c’est elle que je comprends le mieux, que je trouve la plus vivante pour des gens vivant...”

³ Zola, *Nana*, 470.

⁴ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 38.

in a character that represents the apex of gender trouble during the period proves instructive for the work that follows here.

This brief discussion of the conflation of Nana's rotting corpse with the French state isolates a current of scholarship regarding masculinity and the body under the Second Empire that informs my approach to analyzing the career of the Early Impressionist painter Frédéric Bazille (1841-1870). My study aims to position Bazille as an *avant-guerre* prophet, whose paintings, as a result of his life experience, encode anxieties about the body, specifically the male body, in the pre-war years that might then be read as degeneration after the decisive loss of the Franco-Prussian War. Many of these fears about masculine bodies concerned contamination and moral weakness—conditions challenged persistently by cultural figures like the insidious Nana. In embracing the specificities of the pre-war years, this text challenges scholarship on masculinity and the body that deals only in the consequences felt after 1870 and retrospectively isolates the causes of the physical, psychological, and moral degeneration whose acknowledgment would create exceptional social turmoil under the new Third Republic. These scholars track backward instead of discussing Second Empire men on their own terms for how they struggled and ultimately failed to meet the demands of defending their country from the Germanic states.⁵ By looking back, their approach minimizes the extent to which men angled to improve their social standing or to change themselves for the better, and further denies the complexity of manhood under the

⁵ One related example of this is Tamar Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Flesh and Figure in Fin-de-Siècle France* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998). In her chapter on Gustave Caillebotte, she argues that, because Frenchman blamed the siege and subsequent loss on their forefathers, a sporting culture arose after the war that promoted a standard of masculine virility to which all bourgeois men were held. Further literature on topics such as Eugen Sandow and physical culture in the Third Republic operates from a similar perspective.

Second Empire, during which dramatic changes in industry, physical geography, and social control pushed daily life into a state of flux for most French citizens.

Examining Bazille's life consequently means presenting a perspective on masculinity under the Second Empire that has heretofore never been thoroughly probed by art historians. He was raised in Montpellier by his haute bourgeois family whose social network encompassed the better part of the city's distinguished residents, including its most influential businessmen, intellectuals, and professional society members. After finishing his *baccalauréat* in 1859, he completed three years of medical school at Montpellier's very old and world-renowned Faculté de Médecine, which had spearheaded medical innovation in previous centuries. When he moved to Paris in 1862, he did so ostensibly to complete his medical education. However, his engagement with making art, begun in Montpellier's arts-rich community, triumphed after his relocation to Paris, as he pursued professional training in Charles Gleyre's studio and eventually quit medical school to paint full-time. Between 1862 and 1870, he consistently moved between Paris and Montpellier, creating figure paintings that arguably employed his medical and artistic knowledge of the body to engage the societal codes of both his birthplace and his adopted home. When he died in 1870, after volunteering for military service during the Franco-Prussian War, he left approximately sixty-five paintings.⁶

Though evidence of a truncated career, Bazille's paintings serve as exceptional documents of the early years of Impressionism and the subjective experience of the artist who created them. However, as the literature review below will reveal, there is a paradox implicit in studying Bazille: he serves as a peripheral, yet crucial figure in a central art

⁶ Michel Schulman's catalogue raisonné listed sixty-eight paintings, though paintings in private collections and paintings with unsecure attribute have caused some fluctuation in this number over the years.

historical narrative; his paintings intrigue formally, but lack some of the blatant virtuosity of Manet or Monet; and though the circumstances of his biography set him apart from his friends, they have also defied synthesis into critical responses to his paintings. Yet the circumstances of Bazille's life—his medical education, his movement between Paris and his southern hometown, his participation in the formation of the Impressionist group, and his eventual voluntary conscription in the climactic Franco-Prussian War—put him at a critical nexus of Second Empire political and cultural history that calls for further explanation. Furthermore, Bazille created his paintings when he was between 21 and 29 years old, the period during which Frenchmen of his era and class would have been expected to grow into manhood and mark out sustainable lives for themselves. As a consequence of his youth and the complicated decisions that he began to face, in spite of his position of privilege, Bazille's choices for subjects cannot and should not be totally separated from the circumstances of the life that he endeavored to build for himself.

This study first seeks to assess the importance of Bazille's medical education in determining how he formulated his painted bodies. France was the leading center of medical innovation well into the nineteenth century, and the two schools Bazille attended, in Montpellier and then Paris, represented opposite doctrines of medical thought dating back to the Enlightenment. The Paris Faculté had embraced the metaphysical philosophy of René Descartes, which described a “body-machine” and was interpreted as preserving the mind as the domain of the soul,⁷ whereas the Montpellier Faculté had instead advocated a doctrine that became known as “Montpellier vitalism,” which conceived the body as a holistic organism that required all of its systems to remain in harmony to

⁷ Elizabeth A. Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 3.

maintain health.⁸ Bazille's medical training occurred simultaneously with his artistic training and under the auspices of a *montpelliérain* Faculté seeking to maintain vitalism's legacy as the cornerstone of their distinction. Where this medical education focused on the functional and anatomical capabilities of the body, Bazille's artistic education added aesthetic judgment and notions of the ideal to anatomical studies.

These two medical and aesthetic ways of structuring the body, both based in observing the relationship between the visible and the invisible, likely functioned cooperatively for Bazille, as they both represented the primary ways of thinking for the all-consuming occupations of physician and artist.⁹ The body itself, as Elizabeth Grosz has argued, has been consistently feminized in western philosophy, especially Cartesian thought, where the mind is allied with the masculine and viewed as capable of higher, private reasoning that only secondarily involves the body.¹⁰ Montpellier vitalism certainly grew from a similarly masculine, exclusive, institutional medical community, and yet its philosophical holism and insistence on the subjectivity of each individual body seem to suggest a relative collapse between bodies that are gendered male and female. Even if the body of the vitalists' teachings is persistently defined as male through androcentric language,¹¹ it allows for bridging subjectivity and objectivity to insist that

⁸ Elizabeth A. Williams, *The Physical and the Moral: Anthropology, Physiology, and Philosophical Medicine in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). Foucault describes the evolution of medical perception from the Enlightenment through the nineteenth century as a process that capitalizes on the increasing ability of physicians to transform the previously unknowable interior of the human body into a visible entity that they could know with certainty.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), x, 8–10.

¹¹ The term androcentric refers to the insistence on a masculine point of view as the center of a worldview, culture, and history. Androcentrism is frequently manifested in terms like “man-made” and “mankind,” where words traditionally gendered male are used to refer to the whole of humanity. For more on the dangers of androcentric language in the sciences, see: Janet A. Kourany, *Philosophy of Science after Feminism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

interiority affects exterior appearance, which crucially complicates artistic practices of bodily representation. It further complicates an analysis of Bazille's painted bodies because he very rarely painted professional female models for whom narratives of mastery between painter and subject are frequently demarcated through transactions.¹² In continually painting human figures who are often both intimately linked to him and/or male, he blurs the unproductive duality of masculine and feminine, and his methods of doing this can be interrogated to enrich our comprehension of gendered subjectivity during this period.

The literature review below also reveals the extent to which narratives of Bazille's life have naturalized perceptions of the artist as dilettante, amateur, or purposeless practitioner, in contrast to an artist like Monet being described as hardworking, professional and resolute. Though Bazille remains privileged in every way besides his provincial origins, this continued amateurization of his practice functions to feminize his position relative to his artistic friends, whose mastery of feminized landscapes and female models renders them mighty in their masculinity. Bonnie G. Smith has described how amateur status, throughout the nineteenth century, functioned to marginalize female historians on the basis of frequently fictitious accusations of a casual approach and claims to only contributor status in projects led by male historians.¹³ Smith further describes the amateur's feminization as a consequence of "summon[ing characters] to existence as vividly as possible in the narratives, finding reality in the body and the details of physical

¹² For more discussion of female models, see: Marie Lathers, *Bodies of Art: French Literary Realism and the Artist's Model* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001); Susan S. Waller, *The Invention of the Model: Artists and Models in Paris, 1830-1870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

¹³ Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 7–10, 37, 40.

appearance,” as opposed to a focus on the loftier ambitions of historical narrative.¹⁴ In this sense, the projects of Smith’s “amateur” historians parallel trends in Bazille’s work that have caused art historians to classify him as lesser, a view that this dissertation certainly aims to dismantle. However, the frequent threads of feminization of the artist’s work or self-image, as well as often nebulous distinctions between homosociality and homosexuality that govern discussions of his paintings of men, make clear that it is possible to proceed only by addressing the perplexing consequences of this gendered perspective on interpretations of Bazille’s biography.

Bazille and Art History

“Early Impressionism,” Bazille’s most accurate stylistic designation, was first extensively formulated by Kermit Champa in 1973,¹⁵ and for Champa, Bazille primarily functioned as a less-talented foil and the financial support that enabled the formal genius of Monet and Renoir. In the text of his *Studies in Early Impressionism*, Champa pairs Bazille with Alfred Sisley under the title of “The Talented Amateurs,” and repeatedly expresses a dubious view of Bazille’s skill as a painter, accusing him at turns of lacking “a sense of total dedication to his work,” an absence of focus leading to amateurism, and of remaining confused, random, and unsuccessful in mobilizing his pictorial powers.¹⁶ He further declares, in assessing Bazille’s prospects, had he not been prematurely killed, that “Nothing in his work... suggests even the remotest possibility of change or maturity

¹⁴ Ibid., 53.

¹⁵ Kermit S. Champa, *Studies in Early Impressionism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1985). Champa’s book was originally published in 1973.

¹⁶ Ibid., 80, 84, 86, 89.

in the overall character of his art.”¹⁷ Though this exceptionally damning declaration by even an observer as astute as Champa may be dismissed as an acknowledgement of Bazille’s increasing divergence from Monet’s “genius” principles, reviewers as recently as 2004 perpetuated this perception of Bazille as less skilled, and therefore less worthy of serious analysis, with one scholar writing that “Bazille never achieved the reconciliation of modeling and mark-making that we have come to see as central to the work of the group.”¹⁸

Continuing Champa’s formalist framework, the *Origins of Impressionism* exhibition, organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1994, engaged substantially in comparing Bazille’s works to those of his friends, as well as works from the art historical past. In doing so, these art historians and curators acknowledge Bazille’s increasing skill in reference to his success where his friends still failed: the Salon.¹⁹ Gary Tinterow has admitted that this exhibition’s priority was to document the formal emergence of Impressionism as a style, while critics expressed concern that it crowded affirmed masterpieces in with “all the miscellaneous gunk of art in France in the eighteen-sixties” and that the curators had oversimplified a very complicated origin story in order to visually dazzle audiences.²⁰ Although hardly part of the “miscellaneous gunk,” Bazille does not quite fit as an Impressionist. He has been classified as one, owing to the

¹⁷ Ibid., 81.

¹⁸ John House, “Frédéric Bazille. Paris,” *The Burlington Magazine* 146, no. 1211 (February 2004): 123.

¹⁹ Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994). See, for example, page 147, where Tinterow allows that “Bazille accommodated something of the novelty of Monet’s method to the grand tradition of French painting,” which enabled his entrance.

²⁰ Gary Tinterow, “The Blockbuster, Art History, and the Public: The Case of Origins of Impressionism,” in *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University*, ed. Charles Haxthausen (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francis Clark Art Institute, 2002), 144–146. Tinterow himself quotes the criticisms of, first, Adam Gopnik in *The New Yorker* and, second, Michael Kimmelman in *The New York Times*.

historical contingencies of his production, and yet these are the same artistic criteria at which his art often does not excel.²¹

Beyond these foundational texts of Early Impressionism, Bazille has received considerable monographic attention from academic scholars and museum curators alike. A presentation of his “principal works” at the Salon d’Automne in 1910 revived some interest in the artist as one who “shared the ideas and sentiments” of his Impressionist friends and who died early “without giving the full measure of his talent.”²² A trio of French scholars—Gaston Poulain, Gabriel Sarraute, and François Daulte—contributed, in the first half of the twentieth century, to a serious excavation of the details of Bazille’s biography and the reproduction of primary sources that has proved indispensable for later work.²³ Daulte’s *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (1952) served as the first widely-available catalogue raisonné of the artist’s paintings and drawings, incorporating much theretofore unpublished correspondence in its narrative of the artist’s life. In 1995, Michel Schulman produced a more comprehensive catalogue raisonné of Bazille’s paintings, drawings, sketchbooks, and correspondence that built from Daulte’s original work to include attributions made in the intervening forty-five years.²⁴ Later French scholarship on the artist has embraced the biographical tone of these earlier works, and though these scholars engage in meticulous excavation of the facts of Bazille’s life, they often do so at

²¹ Dianne Pitman also troubles how Bazille has been classified, noting how a formalist schema for evaluating Impressionist art “continues, implicitly, to provide the framework within which Bazille’s works are judged to be less ‘advanced’ than those painted at the same time by Monet.” See: Dianne W. Pitman, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 1–2. Though I detail below how our arguments diverge, this is a crucial starting point on which we agree.

²² Société du Salon d’Automne, *Catalogue des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, dessin, gravure, architecture, et art décoratif exposés au Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées du 1er octobre au 8 novembre 1910* (Paris: Imprimerie Kugelmann, 1910), 187.

²³ Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis*; Gabriel Sarraute, “Catalogue de l’oeuvre de Frédéric Bazille” (Thesis, Ecole du Louvre, 1948); François Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, Éditeur, 1952).

²⁴ Michel Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Éditions de l’Amateur, 1995).

the expense of contextualizing those facts within the wider historical circumstances of his era. One notable exception is Valérie Bajou's *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870* (1993).²⁵ Bajou's text embraces the intensely biographical approach of its forebears, yet extends discussions of the significance of the subjects of his paintings through thorough and generous formal analysis that resists qualitative judgments.

In the last forty years, museum exhibitions have added considerably to scholarship on Bazille. In 1978, the Art Institute of Chicago presented *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism*, which revived Bazille's work for the American public and positioned it squarely in relation to that of his friends.²⁶ In 1992, the Musée Fabre organized an exhibition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Bazille's birth that then traveled to the Brooklyn Museum, where it was displayed as *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*.²⁷ The Musée Marmottan Monet also produced a small solo exhibition in 2003 that reintroduced an excellent selection of Bazille's paintings to Parisian audiences, highlighting the diversity of his chosen subjects.²⁸ The 1992 exhibition, especially, drew together an exceptional array of scholars across France and the United States to represent an expansive array of Bazille's paintings, and its catalogue embraces diverse approaches to biography, regionalism, and art criticism that suggest substantive avenues for further study.

However, while these biographical studies and museum exhibitions have largely driven Bazille scholarship, they have also had the consequence of limiting interpretations

²⁵ Valérie Bajou, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1993).

²⁶ J. Patrice Marandel, *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1978).

²⁷ Aleth Jourdan et al., *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, trans. John Goodman (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum, 1992). The French version was published as *Frédéric Bazille et ses amis impressionnistes*.

²⁸ Marianne Delafond and Caroline Genet-Bondeville, *Frédéric Bazille* (Paris: Musée Marmottan Monet, 2003). For a review of this exhibition and its catalogue, see: House, "Frédéric Bazille. Paris."

of the artist's paintings that draw from art historical or historical circumstances beyond a narrow view of the conditions of his life in Paris and/or Montpellier. The most substantial exception to this has been the work of Dianne Pitman, whose dissertation and subsequent book, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s*, sought to resituate Bazille in relation to the beginning of Modernism by focusing on Bazille's artistic practice and engagement with contemporary criticism.²⁹ Although Pitman does argue that previous categorizations of Bazille's paintings as Impressionist have led to misjudgments of his work, she thoroughly resists the notion that his subject matter resonated with "the social determinants of cultural production." She continues, "I resist the expectation, which has achieved orthodoxy in the study of nineteenth-century French art, that individual works of art ultimately be interpreted as signs or symptoms of underlying social and political orders."³⁰ Though Pitman's resistance to such automatic historicizing may be useful and constructive in examining certain works of art, this dissertation argues instead that Bazille's expansive array of interests and the depths of the passions he articulated demand such a social and political approach. His painting is interpreted here as an area of engagement that remained deeply interconnected with his other motivations.

Pitman's work in her monograph, however, as well as her contributions to museum catalogues on Bazille's work, including the 1992 Brooklyn Museum catalogue, has advanced scholarly abilities to produce methodologically rigorous interpretations of Bazille's paintings. For example, her work, as well as Kermit Champa's, for the High Museum of Art's 1999 exhibition *Monet and Bazille: A Collaboration* serves as a basis

²⁹ Pitman, *Bazille*. For her dissertation, see: Dianne Williams Pitman, "The Art of Frédéric Bazille (1841-1870)" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, 1989).

³⁰ Pitman, *Bazille*, 9.

for the third chapter of this dissertation, which seeks to further substantiate the consequences of interpersonal relationships between Bazille and his friends.³¹ Other scholars who delve into Bazille's work on similar critical and thematic levels include: Norma Broude, Therese Dolan, Bridget Alsdorf, and Susan Waller.³² They tie specific Bazille paintings to gender theory, literature, art historical communities, and studio practice, and their efforts have enabled the broader historical framework that this dissertation pursues for Bazille's work.

Furthermore, if previous scholarship often failed to probe the societal factors that distinguish Bazille and his work, it is hardly the fault of their creators that the more thematic historical work required to expand the specificity of our understanding of Bazille's life has simply not been done. For example, though Montpellier boasts an exceptionally passionate community of local historians, especially those who continue to articulate the history of the medical faculty for new audiences, their work can be difficult to access outside the city and may not seem as rigorously executed as the American academic community would like.³³ A particular example of this phenomenon as it affects

³¹ David A. Brenneman, ed., *Monet & Bazille: A Collaboration* (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1998).

³² Norma Broude, "Outing Impressionism: Homosexual and Homosocial Bonding in the Work of Caillebotte and Bazille," in *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Therese Dolan, "Frédéric Bazille and the Goncourt Brothers' Manette Salomon," *Gazette Des Beaux Arts*, February 1990, 99–103; Bridget Alsdorf, *Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-Century French Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Susan Waller, "Académie and Fraternité: Constructing Masculinities in the Education of French Artists," in *Artistic Brotherhoods in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Laura Morowitz and William Vaughan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 137–53; Susan Waller, "Realist Quandaries: Posing Professional and Proprietary Models in the 1860s," *Art Bulletin* 89, no. 2 (June 2007): 239–65. For other thematic considerations of Bazille's work, see: Alison Strauber, "At Home in the Studio: Two Group Portraits of Artists by Bazille and Renoir," in *Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789-1914*, ed. Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner (Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 121–34; Rozanne McGrew Stringer, "Hybrid Zones: Representations of Race in Late Nineteenth-Century French Visual Culture" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 2011).

³³ For an example of this opinion, see: Williams, *The Physical and the Moral*, 22, n. 7. On Louis Dulieu's four-volume history of Montpellier's Faculté de Médecine, she writes that it "has invaluable detail but is essentially antiquarian in character and attempts little in the way of historical analysis of either the theoretical or institutional foundations of Montpellier medicine."

this dissertation is François-Bernard Michel's 1992 book on Bazille, which fashions itself as "reflections on painting, medicine, landscapes and portraits, the origins of Impressionism, the true nature of Claude Monet, melancholy, and provincial society."³⁴ Michel, a celebrated physician, author, and Montpellier native, presents a personal meditation on Bazille that envisions the rich intellectual and artistic life that the artist likely had in between the areas of documented knowledge we retain.³⁵

This dissertation also demands further consideration for narratives from the periphery, here referring to the components of Bazille's *montpelliérain* ethos, in reciprocal dialogue with the narratives of the center, Paris, which have previously dominated nineteenth-century studies. While historians and scholars of literature have expended considerable effort to expand the scope of their research beyond Paris-centric canons of knowledge,³⁶ art historians have mostly remained tethered to conditions of display and reception that embrace Paris as the discursive center of the art world. Notable exceptions to this, with regard to embracing an artist's provincial origins, include Gustave Courbet's ties to his home in Ornans, as well as his relationship to Alfred

³⁴François-Bernard Michel, *Frédéric Bazille : réflexions sur la peinture, la médecine, le paysage et le portrait, les origines de l'Impressionnisme, la vraie nature de Claude Monet, la mélancolie et la société provinciale* (Paris: Grasset, 1992).

³⁵ A particularly salient example of this technique can be found on Ibid., 185–191. There, Michel describes how conversations may have progressed during an evening at the Café Guerbois. He frequently delves into Bazille's interpersonal relationships with an enthusiasm that art historians have tended to avoid.

³⁶ Some of the most foundational texts in this regard have been: Maurice Agulhon, *The Republic in the Village: The People of the Var from the French Revolution to the Second Republic*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Lynn Avery Hunt, *Revolution and Urban Politics in Provincial France: Troyes and Reims, 1786-1790* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1978); Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen : The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976). For some more recent interventions in history and literature, see: Bertrand Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars: France in Turmoil, 1870-1871* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); David M. Hopkin, *Voices of the people in nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Geoffrey Wall, *The Enlightened Physician: Achille-Cléophas Flaubert, 1784-1846* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013).

Bruyas, the Montpellier collector who figures peripherally into this dissertation.³⁷

Another exception concerns Paul Cézanne's return to his *provençal* ancestral home, Aix-en-Provence, after 1878, and the fervor with which he engaged in painting its landmarks and local people.³⁸ Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutyński and Anne Dymond have further contributed to the literature on *provençal* artistic culture by examining the specific cultural geographies that produced critics like Léon Lagrange and bodies of work such as Paul Signac's later Mediterranean images.³⁹ However, where these studies often fail to define reciprocal relationships between the region the artist has adopted as home and the art world to which he is beholden, this dissertation explores the significance in the correspondences between Bazille's understanding of his home in Montpellier and his new experiences of urban Paris.

Masculinity Studies and Art History

In his review of the 1978 Bazille exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, whose language I dissect further in Chapter One, Champa blatantly exposes the gendered

³⁷ T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Sarah Lees, ed., *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet! The Bruyas Collection from the Musée Fabre, Montpellier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Ting Chang, "Hats and Hierarchy in Gustave Courbet's 'The Meeting,'" *Art Bulletin* 86, no. 4 (December 2004): 719–30; Lauren S. Weingarden, "Imaging and Imagining the French Peasant: Gustave Courbet and Rural Physiologies," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2013), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring13/weingarden-imaging-and-imagining-the-french-peasant>.

³⁸ Nina Athanasoglou-Kallmyer, *Cézanne and Provence: The Painter in His Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Philip Conisbee and Denis Coutagne, eds., *Cézanne in Provence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Nancy Ireson and Barnaby Wright, eds., *Cézanne's Card Players* (London: The Courtauld Gallery in association with Paul Holberton Publishing, 2010).

³⁹ Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutyński, "Decentralising the History of French Art: Léon Lagrange on Provençal Art," *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 2 (2008): 515–31; Anne Dymond, "A Politicized Pastoral: Signac and the Cultural Geography of Mediterranean France," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (June 2003): 353–70. In singling out Jirat-Wasiutyński and Dymond here, I deliberately leave off scholars who have examined the activity of Van Gogh and Gauguin in Arles and surrounding cities. The extreme circumstances of these iconic artists differ from the artists and critics mentioned here who became interested in promoting the exceptional nature of their surroundings as much as their own art.

implications of Bazille's paintings that this dissertation takes as its *raison d'être*. He describes the male swimmers in *Summer Scene* (Fig. 1) as blurring the boundary between "naked" and "nude," as invoking "a conceptual and psychologically shadowy area" based in the artist's own uncertainties about his sexuality,⁴⁰ and Norma Broude later followed with an essay that sought to establish elements of homosociality and homosexuality in Bazille's paintings of male nudes, such as *Summer Scene* (1869) and *Fisherman with a Net* (1868) (Fig. 3).⁴¹ In this sense, the distance between the body of the artist and the bodies that he paints is often collapsed, placing the question of how Bazille exercised these bodies in theory and practice at the forefront of questions that must be examined in order to understand his oeuvre. Thus, this dissertation examines Bazille's interpretations of the human body specifically within the context of the artist's masculinity and the socially entrenched masculinities he would have been required to negotiate.

Studies of masculinities and the symbolism of the masculine body have multiplied in recent years in the social sciences and gender studies, yet there exist many areas of study in the humanities, especially Art History, where there remains room for work in critical masculinities to occur. An approach centered in critical masculinities assumes the view of "men and masculinities as social-historical-cultural constructions reflexively embedded in the material and bodily realities of men's and women's lives."⁴² Drawing to some extent from established feminist theory, critical masculinities and its inherent interdisciplinarity have the potential to allow art historians to reconsider the predominantly male art historical canon in a way that views the gendered social

⁴⁰ Kermit Champa, "Frédéric Bazille: The 1978 Retrospective Exhibition," *Arts Magazine* 52, no. 10 (June 1978): 110.

⁴¹ Broude, "Outing Impressionism."

⁴² "Mission Statement: American Men's Studies Association," accessed December 17, 2014, http://mensstudies.org/?page_id=4460.

conditions that they experienced as men as crucial to the circumstances in which they produced their art. This endeavor would also provide further means for analyzing deviations from masculine social norms within the biographies of these artists as part of their projects of art production. It is for this reason that this dissertation examines Bazille's hybrid position between Paris and the south, between his upper-class family and his impoverished artist friends, and, most importantly, between his modes of structuring the body derived from his medical and artistic training.

Studies of historical masculinities, especially concerning nineteenth-century subjects, continue to proliferate. Though Victorianists have concerned themselves with masculinities in the form of "muscular Christianity" and other idiosyncratic types for years,⁴³ most scholars of French material identify Robert Nye's *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (1993) as a necessary beginning for their work.⁴⁴ Nye's seminal text, though an excellent examination of how the legacy of the eighteenth-century practice of dueling affected male behavior as class structures shifted in the nineteenth century, is especially guilty of the scholarly problem outlined at the beginning of this introduction. Though Nye synthesizes exceptional material from the Ancien Régime through the July Monarchy and then persuasively outlines the crusades against masculine degeneration in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War's societal devastation, the Second Empire receives minimal consideration. In addition to Nye, the historian

⁴³ See, for example: James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Andrew Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Jo Briggs, "'The Old Feelings of Men in a New Garment': John Everett Millais's A Huguenot and Masculine Audiences in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 2012), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/autumn12/briggs-john-everett-millais-a-huguenot>.

⁴⁴ Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

Bertrand Taithe discusses French masculinity in exceptional, explicit detail, while also attending to the regional and political complexities that plagued the country as the century progressed.⁴⁵

Scholars of French literature have, perhaps, functioned as an avant-garde for art historians in the matter of discussing creative expressions of masculinities. The figure of the Baudelairean *flâneur*, often invoked by art historians when discussing Manet or Degas, and the efforts of nineteenth-century novelists to “type” the people around them provided fodder for deconstructing masculine types, especially in conjunction with excavating principles of the feminine.⁴⁶ In an attempt to promote new interrogative frameworks and further research, Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert produced *Entre Hommes*, a collection of essays, in 2008 that drew together perspectives across Francophone cultures.⁴⁷ Probing literature has often allowed for entry into realms that historians have been more fearful of treading, as it may seem a more credible way of analyzing the subjective feelings and relational attachments excluded from the more official historic record.⁴⁸ Literary scholars have also more explicitly taken on the cultural

⁴⁵ Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars: France in Turmoil, 1870-1871*; Bertrand Taithe, “Neighborhood Boys and Men: The Changing Spaces of Masculine Identity in France, 1848-71,” in *French Masculinities: History, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 67–84.

⁴⁶ See, for example: Aruna D’Souza and Tom McDonough, eds., *The Invisible Flâneuse? Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006); Susan Hiner, “Monsieur Calicot: French Masculinity between Commerce and Honor,” *West 86th* 19, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2012): 32–60; Margaret Waller, *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993); Margaret Waller, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: Display, Cover-Up, and Exposure in Modern Masculinity,” in *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory*, ed. Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 115–42.

⁴⁷ Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert, eds., *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008).

⁴⁸ See, for example, Waller, *The Male Malady*; Brian Joseph Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2011).

structuring of the body during this period,⁴⁹ with very recent texts by scholars such as Julia Przyboś and Susan Harrow reworking the influences of and on bodies in the work of canonical authors, including Balzac and Zola.⁵⁰

Within the discipline of Art History, I draw from texts by Tim Barringer, Norman Bryson, and Tamar Garb, as well as a 2011 essay collection on French interior scenes, all of which suggest a role for masculinity studies in furthering a comprehensive understanding of art in late-nineteenth century Europe, which may include further efforts to queer artists and artworks alike.⁵¹ Homosocial circumstances, in particular, have provoked considerable scholarship in nineteenth-century art. For example, Thomas Crow's *Emulation: David, Drouais, and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France* models the complexity and nuance available to fortify discussions of homosocial relationships between artists,⁵² and Bridget Alsdorf's *Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-Century French Painting* represents a very recent intervention into the discourse on homosociality in the 1860s.⁵³ It is also necessary to single out Martin Berger's work on Thomas Eakins as a formative influence on this

⁴⁹ A leader in this respect was: Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ Julia Przyboś, *Les aventures du corps masculin* (Paris: Éditions Corti, 2012); Susan Harrow, *Zola, The Body Modern: Pressures and Prospects of Representation* (Oxford: Legenda, 2010). Przyboś's reexamination of the body in Balzac's novels is especially related to this dissertation as it argues that the vitalist theories of the Parisian physician Xavier Bichat influenced Balzac's understanding of the capabilities of the living body.

⁵¹ Tim Barringer, *Men At Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Broude, "Outing Impressionism"; Norman Bryson, "Géricault and 'Masculinity,'" in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 228–59; Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*; Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner, eds., *Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011).

⁵² Thomas Crow, *Emulation: David, Drouais, and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France*, Revised edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

⁵³ Alsdorf, *Fellow Men*.

study.⁵⁴ Taking masculinity as a discursive construction and casting it as part of a range of constructions instead of a normative position, Berger's text illuminates how one might broadly analyze an era's paradigms for gendered behavior and life milestones as a means of validating the agency of the artist in crafting painted responses.⁵⁵ Texts such as these continue to appear with more and more frequency, and yet many of the most compelling questions they raise in their analyses have yet to be taken up by other researchers.

Museum audiences have also been enticed by the subject of the male nude in recent years, as exhibitions on the male nude across art historical movements from 1800 to the present day have generated considerable interest. In October 2012, the Leopold Museum in Vienna unveiled an exhibition titled *Nude Men. From 1800 until the Present Day*, which collected brazenly desirous images of men in various states of undress, naked and nude, and further provoked Viennese audiences by scattering explicit advertisements throughout the city.⁵⁶ The Musée d'Orsay soon followed, mounting *Masculin/Masculin: L'homme nu dans l'art de 1800 à nos jours* in September 2013.⁵⁷ The curators chose to shift the exhibition's focus to primarily French material, but notably, they placed Bazille's *Fisherman with a Net* on the catalogue's cover. Both exhibitions readily engaged with prior studies of the status of the male nude in nineteenth-century art,

⁵⁴ Martin A. Berger, *Man Made: Thomas Eakins and the Construction of Gilded Age Manhood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁵⁵ Scholarship on Eakins, before and after the publication of Berger's book, has provided a cache of excellent writing on masculinities and the body in art that is, perhaps, unmatched for any other artist. See, for example: Whitney Davis, "Erotic Revision in Thomas Eakins's Narratives of Male Nudity," *Art History* 17, no. 3 (September 1994): 301–41; Randall C. Griffin, "Thomas Eakins' Construction of the Male Body, or 'Men Get to Know Each Other across the Space of Time,'" *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 70–80; Sarah Burns, "Ordering the Artist's Body: Thomas Eakins's Acts of Self-Portrayal," *American Art* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 82–107; Michael Hatt, "The Male Body in Another Frame: Thomas Eakins' The Swimming Hole as a Homoerotic Image," in *Manly Pursuits: Writing on the Sporting Images of Thomas Eakins*, ed. Ilene Susan Fort (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), 262–81.

⁵⁶ Tobias G. Natter and Elizabeth Leopold, eds., *Nude Men. From 1800 Until the Present Day*, trans. Ian Pepper and Bronwen Saunders (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2012).

⁵⁷ Guy Cogeval et al., *Masculin Masculin: L'homme nu dans l'art de 1800 à nos jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013).

including Alex Potts's *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (1994) and Abigail Solomon-Godeau's *Male Trouble* (1997), that complicated the range of motives and desires male artists and critics could produce or experience in response to the male model.⁵⁸ However, where Solomon-Godeau and others have argued that the genre of the male nude "disappeared" as the nineteenth-century progressed, other scholars have suggested that it was instead "relegated to other forms of visual culture and other types of 'gazes,' such as the medical gaze."⁵⁹ Thus, in focusing primarily on demonstrating the ubiquity of the type and less on interrogating these other gazes, both exhibitions more productively demonstrate how scholarship on permutations of the male body in French art has become static despite the wide array of theorizations of gender and embodiment that remain at the disposal of art historians.

Methodological Background

Art historians have generally tended to build studies concerned with masculinities from other histories of related issues and the work of theorists, such as Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler, which may be broadly used to interpret various historical and performative phenomena.⁶⁰ In relying on these theorists, these studies have chosen to disregard the core literature on critical masculinities, a subfield of

⁵⁸ Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997). See also: Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male: A New Perspective* (New York: Paddington Press, 1978); "Professional Poseurs: The Male Model in the École Des Beaux-Arts and the Popular Imagination," *Oxford Art Journal* 25, no. 2 (2002): 41–64.

⁵⁹ In this critique, I quote: Aruna D'Souza, *Cézanne's Bathers: Biography and the Erotics of Paint* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 131. As an important corrective, D'Souza cites: Anthea Callen, "Doubles and Desire: Anatomies of Masculinity in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Art History* 26, no. 5 (November 2003): 669–99.

⁶⁰ I refer primarily to Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, Sedgwick's *Between Men*, and Butler's *Gender Trouble*.

gender studies that arose in the early 1980s and which has been inherently interdisciplinary and expansive since its inception.⁶¹ Social scientists, including sociologists Raewyn Connell and Michael Kimmel, have contributed substantially to the foundation of masculinity studies, defining frameworks for how men respond to social factors across historical boundaries.⁶² Building from Connell and Kimmel, other sociologists have expanded their frameworks to define particularly nuanced models of queer identities and the factors that dictate how one chooses to embody his or her gender.⁶³ For these reasons, my study embraces such literature and proceeds with the intention of synthesizing the facts of Bazille's biography and the subjects of his paintings with the sociological and historical ramifications of manhood during his era. To do so, Bazille must be viewed as an artist who engages socially and emotionally in depicting the body and constructing his own physical, identifiable persona.

A necessary component of my approach to Bazille has been to depend upon sociological models that stipulate roles for biography and history. Works by Barbara Laslett and Philip Abrams have influenced the ways in which I assess the reciprocal relationship between my subject, the painter Bazille, and the world of objects in which he

⁶¹ For a sense of how critical masculinities has progressed as a discipline over the past thirty years, see these edited collections: Harry Brod, ed., *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman, eds., *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994); Judith Kegan Gardiner, ed., *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

⁶² R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005). Among Kimmel's many contributions to the field of masculinity studies, this collection is especially valuable for historical studies: Michael Kimmel, *The History of Men: Essays in the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

⁶³ See, for example: Sharon R. Bird, "Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity," *Gender and Society* 10, no. 2 (April 1996): 120–32; Wayne Brekhus, "A Sociology of the Unmarked: Redirecting Our Focus," *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 1 (March 1998): 34–51; Joanne Entwistle, "The Dressed Body," in *Body Dressing*, ed. Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 33–58; Wayne Brekhus, *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs: Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Peter Hennen, *Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

lived.⁶⁴ Laslett writes, “If we are to understand why people act as they do, we need to know how they theorize their world, we need to understand consciousness—how it is constructed and its relationship to action.”⁶⁵ Laslett’s insistence likely draws from Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of *habitus* and *hexis*, which can define for bodies their motivating structures and embodied behaviors.⁶⁶ Through these formulations, he attends to the experience of bodies in social spaces, writing: “The world of objects, a kind of book in which each thing speaks metaphorically of all others and from which children learn to read the world, is read with the whole body, in and through the movements and displacements which define the space of objects as much as they are defined by it.”⁶⁷ In 2007, Robert Nye remarked that *habitus*, “as the formative context of social relations and [Bourdieu’s] understanding of the ways that bodies unconsciously incarnate culture,” has been “curiously underexploited by gender historians,”⁶⁸ and yet this notion describes precisely the theorization of Bazille’s world to which my dissertation aspires. Through consideration of the social and historical circumstances that governed the choices he made in his life, his paintings may then be viewed as visible actions taken in response to his theorization of the world.

By approaching Bazille’s experiences in both Paris and Montpellier as crucial components of his identity formation, I define more clearly how Bazille’s experience as a

⁶⁴ Barbara Laslett, “Biography as Historical Sociology: The Case of William Fielding Ogburn,” *Theory and Society* 20, no. 4 (August 1991): 511–38; Philip Abrams, *Historical Sociology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982). This assertion is based on a question that Abrams poses: “How do we, as active subjects, make a world of objects which then, as it were, become subjects making us their objects?” (xiii).

⁶⁵ Laslett, “Biography as Historical Sociology,” 517. Peter J. Kastor enacts a similar biographical model in his *William Clark’s World: Describing America in an Age of Unknowns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) that proposes how broader social history can be responsibly extrapolated from the circumstances of one man’s life.

⁶⁶ For further definitions of these terms, see: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53, 69–70.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶⁸ Robert A. Nye, “Western Masculinities in War and Peace,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (April 2007): 419.

man from the provinces existed in dialogue with his experiences in Paris. I argue for the reciprocity of this relationship and for Bazille's inability to entirely shed either facet of his identity. Regional distinctions, in addition to the considerations of medicine and gender already discussed here, accordingly prove crucial in determining the significance of the visual language that Bazille employed. In determining the extent to which these regional concerns affected the artist's paintings, Wayne Brekhus's "grammar and microecology of social identity" has proved exceptionally instructive. For Brekhus, identity is continuously changed and reestablished through either "identity-potent" or "identity-diluted" settings, which he defines as a relationship between self and place that can describe how concentrated a certain identity trait is to a person's self-presentation.⁶⁹ The social distinctions between urban and provincial and the social capital that Bazille accumulated and deployed in his movement between his identity-potent family home in Montpellier and an arguably identity-diluted Paris, thus affected his self-presentation and presentation of subjectivity in his art. Though it was fairly common for young men to go to Paris to learn career skills and then return to their home region, they encountered in Paris "an attractive countermodel of masculinity based around dynamic notions of creativity, youth and even revolutionary enthusiasm."⁷⁰ These "dynamic notions," and the contrast of the supposedly staid life of the provinces, can be readily and productively examined through Bazille's continued movements between his two homes and through the figure paintings he made in the midst of these shifting social environments.

However, my shift to embrace critical masculinities and sociological thought does not necessitate dismissing social theorists like Foucault and Butler or discarding

⁶⁹ Brekhus, 21-26.

⁷⁰ Taihe, "Neighborhood Boys and Men," 68.

disciplinary pioneers like Sedgwick. These theorists, along with others who expand, specify, or trouble their assertions, will be used within the thematic chapters that follow to illuminate specific circumstances within each chapter's respective framework. They are especially instrumental in examining Bazille's figure paintings because, in their theorizations of sexual difference, they regard the body as "the political, social, and cultural object par excellence," and they evoke "a body bound up in the order of desire, signification, and power."⁷¹ These theorists are among those who allow for the probing of the peculiar intimacies and vulnerabilities that Bazille's paintings reveal in the bodies they present. For Bazille, the lushness of his painted surfaces, the intensity of his engagement with depicting the human form, and the delicacy of his gaze participate in his discursive construction of the body, one which cannot be extricated from the political, social, and cultural milieu of his era.

Chapter Progression

Nineteenth-century studies, as a field of inquiry, now rests at an impasse where "canonical" masters are concerned, as scholars continue to examine new material and apply lessons in critical thought from the century that has since passed. Consequently, peripherally canonical artists like Bazille, assigned to a specific art historical movement and ideological construction, have remained just beyond the pale of art historians seeking rightfully to venture into the totally unknown. And yet, T.J. Clark stated in 2001 that "we have barely begun to discover the true strangeness and tension of nineteenth-century art,

⁷¹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 18–19.

lurking behind its extroversion... Even Corot is a monster of intensity.”⁷² In the last five years, conferences have been held at the Clark Art Institute and Yale University, among other established centers of art historical research, with an eye toward expanding the scope of nineteenth-century studies into new topics and methodological frameworks.⁷³ When these new methods are coupled with the continued inroads into understanding historical masculinities, gendered behavior, and the socially constructed body as outlined above, new avenues will continue to open that researchers must then pursue.

My dissertation thus proceeds with chapters that examine thematic considerations in the chronological order that they presented themselves during his painting career. Chapter One addresses the influence of his medical education on his later artistic pursuits. Bazille spent three years as a student at Montpellier’s storied Faculté de Médecine, and he moved to Paris in 1862 to complete his education at the Paris Faculté de Médecine. Though artists have long pursued technical anatomical knowledge to supplement their visual studies of the human body, few engaged with a full medical curriculum. Bazille’s medical knowledge has been mostly neglected in the literature, with few attempting to prove a link between his studies in medicine and art.⁷⁴ Other scholars have dismissed or downplayed the substantiality of this link on the grounds that Bazille failed to pass his examinations, that he was only biding his time until he could begin building his career as an artist, or that he was, as previously mentioned, a dilettante. However, I trace Montpellier’s curriculum and the biases of its Faculté members toward the medical

⁷² T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 12.

⁷³ On October 30-31, 2009, the Clark Art Institute presented its symposium titled “Is Paris Still the Capital of the Nineteenth Century?” The symposium’s organizers, Hollis Clayson and André Dombrowski, will publish and edited collection of essay from this symposium in 2015. On November 12-14, 2010, Yale University presented “The Long Nineteenth Century: Time, History, Culture,” which considered both approaches to the nineteenth century as a time period and historical notions of temporality.

⁷⁴ One exception, concerning Bazille’s views on race, is: Stringer, “Hybrid Zones,” 132–191.

philosophy of Vitalism, a key part of Montpellier's medical heritage, to argue that they heavily informed the conditions of vision and the formulations of the human bodies that Bazille would later present in his male nudes. These paintings, including the large-scale tableau *Summer Scene* (1869), further demonstrate, through their intensity and attentive execution, the freighted connotations of exposing homosocial relationships in modern settings.

Chapter Two posits that Bazille's struggles to merge medicine and art into holistic painted bodies backfired, leading him to fixate on clothing details in his portraits, notably his *Family Reunion* (1867) (Fig. 27). After arriving in Paris in 1862, Bazille continued his medical and artistic educations simultaneously, eventually quitting medicine to paint modern subjects. Painting figures in modern clothing, which often purposely obfuscated the body, required Bazille to conflate his medical understanding of the body as protective layers cooperating with functional systems with his aesthetic understanding of the body as a collection of interior structures supporting ideal, exterior formations of muscle and skin. These endeavors meant grappling with two intensive, totalizing theories of the human models before him, and for Bazille, clothing details emphasized the separation between the structures of bodies and the clothes that overlay them. Bazille's anxieties about the signifying potential of clothing also exacerbated anxieties he likely had about putting his Southern family before judgmental Parisian Salon audiences. He mobilizes their immaculate dress to suppress physical signifiers of their Southern heritage as a consequence of his understanding of identity construction in Paris.

Having previously established the impact of his medical training and the charms of Paris on Bazille's figure painting, my third chapter examines the early careers of the

individual artists, including Bazille, who were later subsumed under the Impressionist label in order to reconceive homosociality's role in the origin stories of Impressionism. Using the portraits Bazille produced of Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Alfred Sisley, and the portraits that they, in turn, made of Bazille, as well as the surviving letters these men exchanged, I investigate how they envisioned their individuality while, at the same time, living and traveling together and facing numerous emotional, physical, and financial challenges as a group. Bazille's portraits, especially, capture the extreme familiarity that he shared with each of these men. In *The Improvised Field Hospital* (1865) (Fig. 60), he depicts an injured, bedridden Monet, whose temporary infirmity proved the very opposite of his usually exaggerated masculine behavior. Monet lays under a healing apparatus that Bazille likely rigged from his medical training. Bazille's portraits of Renoir and Sisley present similarly intimate dynamics; each portrait by Bazille forges a record of the relationship between friends—artist and model—but the paintings also function collectively in a manner that separates them from the manifesto-like groups in Fantin-Latour's *Studio in the Batignolles* (1870) (Fig. 54) and Bazille's own *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* (1870) (Fig. 59). Even as their styles diversified and they maintained individual identities, they banded together to face an academic art world that was increasingly hostile to innovation.

While my first three chapters aim to challenge and extend notions of Bazille's art and masculinity that other scholars have cursorily expressed, Chapter Four returns squarely to Montpellier, examining the strong local elements that influenced the artist's engagement with depicting laborers, Southern historical sites, and soldiers in the last years of his life. It scrutinizes how Bazille, as a southerner, likely understood his

Frenchness differently than his Parisian friends. In 1869-70, as his viticulturist father and his colleagues faced the phylloxera epidemic threatening vineyards surrounding Montpellier, Bazille produced studies of harvesters and grape fields. In 1870, as French forces retreated from German advances during the Franco-Prussian War, he enlisted in the Zouaves, a seemingly invulnerable colonial regiment of the French army known for its heroism in previous foreign wars, and died in battle shortly thereafter. This chapter thus situates Bazille's vision of his Southern home, articulated through his images of soldiering and laboring bodies, against the increasingly vulnerable and rapidly failing Second Empire. Investigating the vision of France that Bazille manfully chose to defend, in the face of his own anxieties about his social position, will necessarily decenter long-held premises about the sites at which Impressionist styles developed.

It has never been the intention of this dissertation to elevate Bazille to the level of Monet or Renoir as a master of Impressionist painting, but to argue that understanding both the artist and his artwork is most crucial to furthering our comprehension of the scope of this group's project during the earliest phase of its production. It is my hope that these thematic examinations of Bazille's painted oeuvre may not only spur necessary new interpretive studies of the early careers of the Impressionists but also suggest, as the intersectionality of Bazille's short life suggests, how specifications of masculine comportment and perceptions of the human body dictated behavior for young men across French regions. In using an extended case study of an individual to describe the collective social environment of France in the 1860s, my dissertation crosses disciplinary boundaries to describe the humanistic significance of one young artist's deeply and

broadly acquired knowledge and how this knowledge reflected and extended the common experience of his contemporaries.

CHAPTER ONE

“A little less science and a little more art”¹

“For this was the point, surely: he would be a better doctor for having read literature. What deep readings his modified sensibility might make of human suffering, of the self-destructive folly or sheer bad luck that drive men toward ill health!... Rise and fall—this was the doctor's business, and it was literature's too.”

Ian McEwan, *Atonement*²

“The profound study of anatomy has ruined more artists than it has perfected. In painting, as in morality, it is dangerous to see beneath the skin.”

Denis Diderot, *Pensées détachées sur la peinture*³

During the summer of 1869, Frédéric Bazille wrote to his close friend Edmond

Maître about a painting that he had begun at home in Montpellier. He complained:

I have migraines almost incessantly, complicated by all sorts of pains. And further, I am in a moment of profound discouragement. I am beginning a painting that I promised myself I would make with intense pleasure, and now I do not have the models I need. It is going poorly, and I do not know who I can be angry with. If I must stop, I will arrive in Paris with only one painting that you will probably find atrocious, because I do not know at all where I am with it. It is my nude men...⁴

The painting that was causing Bazille so much agony eventually transformed from simply

Bazille's “nude men” into *Summer Scene* (Fig. 1), a depiction of eight male figures in

various states of undress engaging in various leisure pursuits by the side of a river in a

¹ Statement by Armand Trousseau, a professor of clinical medicine in Paris, in 1857, quoted in Thomas Neville Bonner, *Becoming a Physician: Medical Education in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, 1750-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 242.

² Ian McEwan, *Atonement* (New York: Anchor Books, 2001), 118.

³ Quoted in Dorothy Johnson, *David to Delacroix: The Rise of Romantic Mythology*, Bettie Allison Rand Lectures in Art History (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 92.

⁴ Letter 122, to Edmond Maître from Montpellier, Summer 1869, in Didier Vatuone and Guy Barral, eds., *Frédéric Bazille: Correspondance* (Montpellier: Les Presses du Languedoc, 1992), 175–6. It is important to note that this letter is a fragment. The French reads: “J’ai des migraines presque incessantes, compliquées de toutes sortes de maux. De plus, je suis dans un moment de découragement profond. Je viens de commencer un tableau que je me promettais de faire avec un vif plaisir, voilà que je n’ai pas les modèles qu’il me faudrait. Ça va mal et je ne sais contre qui être furieux. Si je suis forcé de m’arrêter, j’arriverais à Paris avec un seul tableau que vous allez peut-être trouver atroce, car je ne sais pas du tout où j’en suis. C’est mes hommes nus...”

Southern landscape. Yet Bazille seemingly transformed the stress of creating this painting into his greatest success. Its acceptance into the Paris Salon of 1870 marked perhaps the highest point in the young artist's career, which would soon end prematurely with his death later that year in battle during the Franco-Prussian War. Bazille's physical and emotional distress during the creation of *Summer Scene* and his insistence that it was "atrocious" suggest how he struggled to condense everything that he knew about painting and the body, and all his anxieties about masculinity into this one extraordinarily meaningful canvas. Past examinations of this painting have focused on its position within the history of Impressionism, as an unusually finished hinge between the experimentation of the 1860s and the concerted movement-building of the 1870s. Yet art historians have neglected the likely sources of Bazille's anxiety around *Summer Scene*'s genesis.

As my introduction indicates, the influence of Bazille's medical education has remained underexplored in the literature, with many scholars of (early) Impressionism supposing that such training did not matter because Bazille increasingly paid more attention to becoming an artist than he did to becoming a doctor. However, dismissing such training as peripheral is to dismiss the utility of in-depth medical training for an artist interested in figure painting—medicine for art's sake, we might call it. Thus, this chapter asserts the importance of Bazille's medical studies for his endeavors to depict the human body in nature, specifically the masculine body, throughout his career as an artist. This chapter proposes how understandings of vitalism, developed in eighteenth-century Montpellier, and similar theories of the body's relationship to light, water, and air that Bazille may have learned as part of his medical curriculum nuanced and frequently

troubled his attempts to paint the body. Although his medical training was a few years in the past by the time he began painting *Summer Scene*, these issues of atmosphere and naturalism that permeated the content of Bazille's medical education in both Montpellier and Paris also posed the largest quandaries for his friends attempting to paint modern bodies engaged in outdoor leisure pursuits in the natural light and air. Displayed in the Salon of 1870, it reached a significantly broader audience than many of these other early experiments, and its embrace of ambiguity in the modern male nude likely influenced younger painters who continued grappling with the nude and the depiction of bathing after Bazille's death.

Summer Scene also provides the most appropriate starting point for a new study of Bazille because, while it has fascinated many scholars and museum-goers alike, it has mostly defied substantive explanation. Most interpreters have applied arguments à la Michael Fried's "Manet's Sources"⁵ for what Bazille may have meant by borrowing one figure or another from this or that art historical source and to what degree such borrowings were deliberate. Furthermore, though it is frequently put forth as an instructive predecessor to Gustave Caillebotte's male bodies of the 1880s, especially *Man at His Bath* (Fig. 2), these images seemingly responded to post-war Third Republic calls for masculine fortitude and health that resonated with Caillebotte in both his personal hobbies and activities.⁶ However, art historians have mostly neglected to assess the actual environment of masculinity that preceded the Franco-Prussian War, which would

⁵ For Fried's approach and his response to criticisms, see: Michael Fried, *Manet's Modernism Or, The Face of Painting in the 1860s* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23–184.

⁶ Fiona Barber, "Case Study 6: Caillebotte, Masculinity, and the Bourgeois Gaze," in *The Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 137–55; Norma Broude, "Outing Impressionism: Homosexual and Homosocial Bonding in the Work of Caillebotte and Bazille," in *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 117–74; Tamar Garb, *Bodies of Modernity: Flesh and Figure in Fin-de-Siècle France* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 24–53, 221–223.

later be classified as degenerate and blamed for the failures of French men in the war's momentous defeat.

Kermit Champa is one such art historian who, five years after the publication of his cornerstone *Studies in Early Impressionism* in 1973, chose to address the question of Bazille's sexuality head-on. In his review of the 1978 Bazille exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, Champa wrote:

Complications emerge, however, around the *real* embarrassment Bazille feels in and for his figure. He feels it so strongly he cannot help painting it in as though it were fact, since for him it is. "Nudity" is fact "naked" for Bazille. He stares with embarrassed curiosity at his figures; they in the same way stare at each other. **Fascination and titillation are a large part of Bazille's documentary response to the realist nude...** Since Bazille's sexual preferences were pretty clearly oriented more toward men than women, it is not surprising that *Summer Scene* is much richer in real innuendo... Further, if one can imagine the image minus its bathing suits (at least some of which are late retouches I currently just suspect, pending X-rays of the canvas), the range of innuendo becomes positively alarming . . . **Bazille nevertheless had in *Summer Scene* approached a conceptual and psychologically shadowy area, bordered on one side by fact and on the other by personal fantasy purporting to be external fact.** Whether he realized this or not, or whether he intended it, one will never know.⁷

The flippancy of Champa's remarks is certainly partially conditioned by the fact of their appearance in a short exhibition review, and yet he zeros in on substantive questions of Bazille's masculinity and masculine gaze in ways that much of the extended literature on the artist has avoided. Norma Broude provided one exception to this, in 2002, when she described *Summer Scene*'s male bodies as "erotically differentiated" as soft flesh or hard muscle, accentuating the "feminization of masculinity" present in some of the figures.⁸

Broude describes these male nudes, as well as those of Gustave Caillebotte, in relation to

⁷ Kermit Champa, "Frédéric Bazille: The 1978 Retrospective Exhibition," *Arts Magazine* 52, no. 10 (June 1978): 110. Emphasis mine. As of June 2012, there remains no definitive evidence that the swimming trunks are late retouches, though the implications of this possibility will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁸ Broude, "Outing Impressionism," 157.

a “homosocial spectrum that structures relationships of men under patriarchy,”⁹ a formulation originally put forth by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Yet her conclusions also speak to the lack of evidence available for making assertions related to the sexual identities of nineteenth-century painters.

Because late Second Empire masculinities have been commented on only peripherally in both historical and art historical literature, I believe that allegations for what *Summer Scene* may or may not actually reveal about Bazille’s personal predilections are misplaced because, to recall Champa’s words, the societal discourses that would have shaped Bazille’s preferences remain “a conceptual and psychologically shadowy area.” Thus, this chapter seeks to correct, complicate, or refute these allegations as necessary by mobilizing the painting’s iconographical puzzles, physical surfaces, and plausible origins in Bazille’s medical education. Furthermore, this chapter seeks to provide a fuller picture of the environment of masculine health, hygiene, and comportment during the decade in which Bazille grew to maturity. That his life ended prematurely at twenty-eight should do little more than assure us of the irrelevance of the post-war environment to his view of his world. I contend here that Bazille partially theorized his world through the intensive medical training he undertook at Montpellier’s Faculté de Médecine in the three years before he set out, on his own, for Paris. When viewed through the medical knowledge that Bazille acquired during a crucial period of his maturation between ages eighteen and twenty-one, his paintings thereby become visible actions taken in response to his theorization of the world.

The previous Bazille literature has marginalized the consequences of this artist’s medical training by noting that it was not, by any means, uncommon among the

⁹ Ibid., 120.

Impressionists to have pursued other professions, before committing to painting, especially at the behest of their parents. However, none of their initial forays into other careers, such as business and the law, were as closely related to studying art as Bazille's studies in medicine, nor were any of their ventures nearly as lengthy.¹⁰ Bazille undertook medical studies in an era where a developing modern medical discourse "demanded that the body be exposed, penetrated, and monitored."¹¹ The precise pedagogical necessity of anatomy for representing the body will be explored later in this dissertation. However, the current chapter seeks to explain the value of artists pursuing medical and scientific study of real and ideal bodies, which allowed them to comprehend more of medicine than can be obtained through visual and observational studies of specimens. I believe that, with his genuinely thorough understanding of the inner and outer workings of the human body, Bazille would have viewed painting the human body on a two-dimensional surface as a more complex challenge than other artists who lacked similar training and the simultaneous benefit and limitation of having developed a "medical gaze."

The awkwardness and inconsistent modeling of his figure paintings is often decried by art historians as indicative of his lack of skill relative to his more masterful friends. I would propose instead that this is the visual evidence of his attempts to reconcile all that he learned in his medical education—one sort of anthropocentric specialty—with all that he was quickly learning in his endeavors to become an artist.

¹⁰ Manet, Degas, and Cézanne studied law at the behest of their own distinguished families, while Sisley studied business prior to becoming a painter. Renoir and Monet, hailing from a lower rung of society, could pursue trades, as opposed to the traditional professions, and Renoir painted porcelain and other decorative objects prior to enrolling in Gleyre's studio.

¹¹ Geertje Mak, *Doubting Sex: Inscriptions, Bodies and Selves in Nineteenth-Century Hermaphrodite Case Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 117.

That his exam scores were a bit lackluster¹² and that he eventually left the medical profession behind him should not deter this avenue of analysis. Even after turning fully to painting, Bazille's interests continued to lie thoroughly in formulating his idiosyncratic version of the modern body. In contemplating the human form to paint it, an endeavor itself thoroughly concentrated on the study of anatomy, it is highly unlikely that he would have been able to segregate the learning from medical school with the knowledge he acquired as he viewed the body through an increasingly more artistic lens.

Turning to *Summer Scene*, then, requires moving ahead to 1869, years after Bazille had finally quit medical school.¹³ Though he continued to move between Montpellier and Paris with some regularity, he had by then firmly entrenched himself in the workings of the Parisian art world—*Summer Scene*, when it was chosen for display in the Salon of 1870, would be neither his first submission, nor his first displayed painting.¹⁴ Its square shape and its heroic size made it Bazille's most elaborate finished work, but it was also not the first or only time he would paint nude or semi-nude men, with *Fisherman with a Net* (1868) (Fig. 3) and *Jeune homme nu couché sur l'herbe* (1870) (Fig. 4) also depicting nude men on riverbanks similar to those near Montpellier. With

¹² Though he only rated “satisfaire” and “médiocre” on his exams, even having one adjourned to be retaken (and barely passed), an examination of the medical school's student register from this period suggests that those marks were very common, even in those who completed all the requirements for a degree from the medical faculty. Students lucky enough to receive “bien satisfaire” on any exam were few and far between.

¹³ There is some debate in the earlier literature over when, exactly, Bazille gave up his intentions to continue taking medical classes and trying to pass his exams, but Dianne Pitman identifies July 1864 as the period when he elected not to retake his medical exams and thus take up painting full time. See: Dianne W. Pitman, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 55, 217. What is certain is that, because Bazille chose to dedicate much of his time to Gleyre's studio and cultural activities instead of medical classes and practical instruction, it likely would have taken him longer than the minimum fourth year to complete his medical training, no matter how skilled he was.

¹⁴ In fact, *Summer Scene* was the fifth (and final) painting that Bazille would have admitted to the Salon. His first came in 1866, with *Still Life with Fish* (1866, Detroit Institute of Arts); two acceptances followed in 1868 with *Family Reunion* (1867, Musée d'Orsay) and a flower still life, likely *Flower Pots* (1868, private collection); and then one acceptance in 1869 with *View of the Village* (1868, Musée Fabre).

male figures depicted in various stages of comfort and awareness of their bodies, this corpus of paintings sheds light on how grappling with masculinities in conjunction with related cultural frameworks could generate new standards for portraying the masculine body.

This chapter consequently proposes that an explanation for the construction of these men may be found in the medical teachings that Bazille experienced in Montpellier and Paris before embarking on his career as a painter. These male figures and their environment, their interiority and stasis, and the clarity and intensity of the Southern light, water, and sky demonstrate a visual and affective continuity that resonates with the persistent philosophical core of the Montpellier Faculté de Médecine's medical legacy—Vitalism. The saturation of scientifically-oriented minds in Bazille's own family and their elite social circles suggests how such ideas may have influenced his thinking inside and outside of his medical classes. My interpretation of these paintings holds that he likely understood these medical doctrines in several ways: biographically and historically, through the connections of his father and the history of his proud home city; academically, through his own two years of study at the institution; and artistically, through both his simultaneous study of the artistic body and the prominence his medical professors placed on visual acuity in diagnosing, treating, and curing various kinds of ailments.

Vital Forces and Medical Vision

When Bazille entered medical school in November of 1859, he became part of the Montpellier Faculté de Médecine's long tradition of international distinction and local

pride. Far from being strictly French, the Montpellier Faculté grew philosophically out of its only predecessor school at Salerno, Italy, and from physicians trained in Judaic, Spanish, and Arab medical teachings; this plurality of beliefs, combined with “the ambiance that reigned in the Pays d’Oc,” meant that Montpellier immediately distinguished itself as a unique center for learning.¹⁵ The Montpellier Faculté, from its founding in 1181, charted an independent trajectory from its Parisian and other European counterparts. After years of religious wars and fluctuations in the commercial endeavors facilitated by the nearby Mediterranean sea and its tributary rivers, the city itself also developed as a metropolis with unusual values. Because the Faculté continued to remain free from an overarching university ideology and from the close watch of reigning theologians through the centuries, it maintained a “spirit of independence and an intellectual liberalism favorable to the teaching of medicine.”¹⁶

Because of its fame for encouraging intellectual freedom, the medical faculty numbered Nostradamus and François Rabelais among its most distinguished students, and regularly sent physicians to serve the kings of France and fill other high-ranking positions.¹⁷ Montpellier’s early preeminence also stemmed partially from the fact that they advocated clinical instruction and a curriculum that joined surgery and medicine from 1732, bucking an outdated hierarchy that viewed anatomical study of corpses, necessary for developing surgical skills, as a lesser course of study than theoretical medicine. Shielded by their preference for the theoretical, Paris resisted dissection well into the nineteenth century out of respect for cultural and religious traditions that

¹⁵ Charles Coury, *L’enseignement de la Médecine en France des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Expansion Scientifique Française, 1968), 27.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For a fairly exhaustive list of such achievements, see: Albert Leenhardt, *Montpelliérains, médecins des rois* (Largentière, Ardèche: Imprimerie E. Mazel, n.d.).

prescribed maintaining the integrity of the dead.¹⁸ Thus, *montpelliérain* physicians could benefit from studying the interior structures of the body *in situ*, demonstrating their commitment to progress in medical thought as practical science over philosophy. With this spirit of open-mindedness, they developed the doctrine of Vitalism, which promoted a rivalry with the Parisian Faculté de Médecine even as it distinguished Montpellier as a center of medical innovations.

Vitalism evolved during the eighteenth century explorations of animism, the semi-religious belief that animals, plants, and inanimate objects each contain a spirit that guides their more mechanistic functions. This belief in an abstracted principle that guided bodily functioning manifested in various doctrines—animism and dynamism, for example—before the “vital principle” appeared in *Nouveaux élémens de la science de l’homme* in 1778 by Paul-Joseph Barthez, a professor at the Montpellier Faculté de Médecine. Barthez developed his theory through what he referred to as “‘reasoned empiricism,’ the judgment of the phenomena of observation by a trained ‘*esprit*,’” he believed that “‘everyone sees but few people observe.’”¹⁹ For Barthez, defining Vitalism meant describing how an unseen bodily force, his *Principe Vital*, might be manipulated to heal and cure. Barthez continually references the various forces that compose what he refers to as the vital principle; these forces maintain the “preestablished harmony” of the body in concert with “laws founded on the same nature as the Vital Principle.”²⁰ Illness

¹⁸ Florent Palluault, “Medical Students in England and France, 1815-1858: A Comparative Study” (D.Phil., University of Oxford, Trinity, 2003), 13.

¹⁹ Elizabeth A. Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 258.

²⁰ P. J. Barthez, *Nouveaux éléments de la science de l’homme*, ed. M. E. Barthez, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Paris: Germer Baillière, 1858), 358. According to its editorial preface, the 1858 reissue, which I have chosen to cite here for its temporal proximity to Bazille, was prompted by debates on vitalism that occurred in 1855 at the Académie impériale de médecine. It also changed “*élémens*” in the original issue’s title to the proper “*éléments*.”

and ailments arise when these laws fall into disorder, and Barthez aims to propose methods for reestablishing harmony and thereby restoring the body to health.

Beyond the Montpellier school, Barthez's seminal formulation of Vitalism meant a significant widening of the scope of medicine's view of the body; it "treated the individual as a complex of physical, mental and vital activities, ...related this multifaceted person to his environments, both natural and social..., [and oriented] medicine within the dimensions of space (both natural and social) and of time (both natural and historical)."²¹ Furthermore, Barthez's theory embraced an intimidating amount of variability, creating meaning from "diverse internal and environmental influences, including internal anatomical dispositions..., temperament, climate, the volume and type of ingestibles, age, sex, and so on."²² Historian Elizabeth A. Williams has characterized this period of medicine in Montpellier as "an instance of the mobilization of what may be called 'local knowledge'—learned conventions purposefully associated with ancient local traditions."²³ Barthez's theory proved as syncretic as Montpellier itself, and his contributions distinguished him as a premier medical theoretician. While other Montpellier physicians had moved to Paris to continue working, Barthez's claims radiated outward as a contribution of the École de Montpellier.²⁴

However, though many subscribed to the doctrine of Vitalism in Montpellier and throughout Europe, it remained in stark opposition to the mechanistic doctrine that the

²¹ Alisa Schulweis Reich, "Paul Joseph Barthez and the Impact of Vitalism on Medicine and Psychology" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Los Angeles, 1995), 509.

²² Elizabeth A. Williams, *The Physical and the Moral: Anthropology, Physiology, and Philosophical Medicine in France, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 52.

²³ Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier*, 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 276–281. Williams does much to problematize this turn of events, though her arguments concerning Enlightenment epistemological structures fall beyond the scope of this project. Also, Barthez did eventually move to Paris, serving as a physician for Napoleon, but *Nouveaux éléments* was written entirely in Montpellier.

Parisian Faculté advocated throughout the eighteenth century. Mechanism grew from the metaphysical philosophy of René Descartes, which described a “body-machine”— subsequent interpretations of this Cartesian formulation declare mind and body divided, reducing the body to mathematical formations that preserve the inner-workings of the mind as part of the immortality of the soul.²⁵ *Montpelliérain* physicians decried Paris Medicine as characterized by: “focus on disease, not patients; localism; materialism; detached objectivity, not involved subjectivity; a scientific orientation.”²⁶ These qualities contrasted harshly with the holism of Vitalist medicine and the related Hippocratic, “humanistic, patient-centered approach.”²⁷ Where Parisian medicine sought to explain all functions definitively, Montpellier vitalism provided a framework for interpretation; where the Paris school’s “universalist framework based on physiochemical strictures narrowed the range of possible action and function, vitalism recognized infinite possibilities.”²⁸

Though Vitalism faced much debate in the course of Enlightenment efforts to increase scientific knowledge, its legacy held strong into the nineteenth century, with Barthez’s *Nouveaux élémens* being reissued continuously.²⁹ It remained a medical theory to be reckoned with, as new innovators in Paris, such as Claude Bernard in his

Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale (1865), felt it necessary to debunk

²⁵ Ibid., 3.

²⁶ Ann La Berge and Caroline Hannaway, “Paris Medicine: Perspectives Past and Present,” in *Constructing Paris Medicine*, ed. Ann La Berge and Caroline Hannaway (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1998), 52.

²⁷ Ibid. I have clipped their accounts of these characterizations to remove “liberalism and republicanism” from the list regarding Paris and “Catholicism” from the list regarding Montpellier. In relation to the Protestant, republican Bazille, these descriptors are certainly the opposite, and my analysis here deals little with the political and religious implications for the study of medicine during this period.

²⁸ Williams, *A Cultural History of Medical Vitalism in Enlightenment Montpellier*, 330.

²⁹ A second, significantly augmented edition of Barthez’s *Nouveaux élémens* was released in 1806, and then a third edition followed in 1858.

vitalism on their way to establishing the prominence of their own theories.³⁰ However, by the time that Bazille enrolled in medical school, the Montpellier Faculté's reputation had diminished considerably, and vitalism was characterized in Paris as "philosophical medicine" and thus "superannuated, speculative, and metaphysical."³¹ Vitalism's reputation had survived the restructuring of France's medical instructional establishments under the Revolutionary government in 1795 and subsequent Napoleonic reforms.³² However, Montpellier's enrollment numbers soon rapidly declined as members of the Parisian Faculté made extraordinary advances in surgical medicine that attracted a large following of both domestic and international students.³³ Consequently, the rivalry between the Montpellier Faculté and their Parisian counterpart continued, and, in their attempts to maintain the school's reputation for innovation, the professors at Montpellier in the 1840s and 1850s elected to promote further the one part of their history that Paris could not match: the legacy of vitalism.

³⁰ Claude Bernard, *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1865), 116–117. I have listed the pages on which Bernard specifically addresses "*le vitalisme*," but comments on "*la force vitale*" are found pervasively throughout the book. See also: Hubert Bonnet, *La Faculté de médecine de Montpellier: Huit siècles d'histoire et d'éclat* (Montpellier, France: Sauramps médical, 1992), 289. Bonnet, in addressing vitalism's legacy, notes that Bernard's objection to Barthez's theories, unsurprisingly, rested on his failure to formulate his theories through the scientific method—forming a hypothesis and then subjecting it to tests. Considering Bazille's specific working milieu, it is also, perhaps, notable in that Claude Bernard's writings would prove to be a formative influence on Émile Zola and his "experimental novel."

³¹ Williams, *The Physical and the Moral*, 13.

³² For a detailed account of the implications of these restructurings, see Louis Dulieu, *La Médecine à Montpellier: De la Première à la Troisième République*, vol. 4.1 (Avignon: Les Presses Universelles, 1988).

³³ Coury, *L'enseignement de la Médecine en France des origines à nos jours*, 136. Coury notes that, while the Paris Faculté's numbers increased from 2,000 enrolled students in 1830 to 3,855 students in 1877, Montpellier's numbers had declined to about 154 enrolled students by 1884. For more on how students chose their medical schools, see: Palluault, "Medical Students in England and France, 1815-1858: A Comparative Study," 54. Though guidebooks would likely not have influenced Bazille's choice of medical school, as his family was certainly biased toward instruction in Montpellier, Palluault continues: "Student guidebooks did not even discuss the choice of a school as if matriculation at Strasbourg or Montpellier was only dictated by the impossibility of going to Paris... The fear of appearing less knowledgeable than competitors educated in Paris might have encouraged young men to shun Montpellier and Strasbourg, ignoring family tradition and proximity... Paris's only disadvantages lay in its higher cost of living, its more agitated political life and its urban distractions" (54-55).

Among the voices that engaged in a “dynamic reinterpretation” of vitalism as the century progressed were the professors who had led the medical faculty when Bazille enrolled in 1859.³⁴ Though they lacked the celebrity standing of Parisian doctors (Guillaume Dupuytren or Jean Cruveilhier, for example), François-Anselme Jaumes, François Ribes, Germain Dupré, and Justin Benoît, among others, published prolifically in individual treatises as well as in their institutional journal *Montpellier médical*, working together to distinguish further the reputation of their institution. As the chairs of pathology and general therapeutics, hygiene, clinical internal medicine, and anatomy, respectively, they generated the course of the school’s curriculum both through their writings and in teaching the content of those writings to their students.³⁵ They also exemplified the prideful attitude of the school through their repeated assertions of the institution’s primacy and independence in the face of the imperial government that increasingly seemed to prefer that Montpellier cede dominance in every arena to the Paris Faculté.³⁶ While they might not have had as many ostentatious, innovative theories as the nineteenth-century progressed, Justin Benoît had responded to critics by noting that not all propositions can be called progress and that the school’s philosophy valued watching and waiting over latching onto doctrines that may eventually be proven untrue.³⁷ For the

³⁴ T. Lavabre-Bertrand and A. Mandin, “La philosophie médicale de l’Ecole de Montpellier au XIXe siècle,” in *Actes du XXXIIIe Congrès International d’Histoire de la Médecine, Anvers 3-7 septembre 1990*, ed. Eric Fierens et al. (Brussels: Societas Belgica Historiae Medicinae, 1991), 455.

³⁵ It is important to note that curriculum records for the period in question are fragmentary, as syllabi or lesson plans were not kept as part of the school’s record. Consequently, the most reliable means of suggesting what Bazille would have learned in his classes with these faculty members is to consult the writings they would have published as the result of their research and teaching.

³⁶ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, 95. Bonner describes how, when the Napoleonic government closed the universities in 1792, the Montpellier faculty continued, without pay and at the risk of imprisonment, to “to teach their classes, hold examinations, and admit new pupils, describing themselves as ‘perhaps the only [faculty] in the republic that did not interrupt its useful work.’”

³⁷ Justin Benoît, *Situation et tendances de la médecine moderne*, *Montpellier médical*, Journal mensuel de médecine (Montpellier: Imprimerie de Boehm, 1858), 14.

Montpellier Faculté, vitalism remained a viable, even preferred, avenue for interpreting the functioning of the human body.

François-Anselme Jaumes, in particular, dedicated himself to the refashioning of vitalism in conjunction with the more updated knowledge of pathology that he was tasked with teaching.³⁸ His *Étude sur la distinction des forces* describes the differences between the soul and the vital principle, seeking to clarify how psychologists and physiologists have confused the two and explain their crucial distinctions.³⁹ For Jaumes, the living body was the “theater of action” for the vital forces, and these vital forces were distinct from the bodily matter that they animated.⁴⁰ Jaumes himself viewed defending vitalism as a means of defending the status of the Montpellier Faculté, noting that it has long drawn the attention of scholars but could still be clarified.⁴¹ He described the goal of his *Traité de Pathologie et Thérapeutique générales* from 1869 by writing: “The force was connected to the study of the entire body, acting, functioning as a single organ. Naturally, the first question posed is that of harmony, of the end, of the unity of vital actions.”⁴² François Ribes, the chair of hygiene, further noted in his *Traité d’hygiène thérapeutique* (1860) that “The atmosphere and the human economy, considered in their physiological relations, form a whole of which we will study the conditions and qualities,

³⁸ Dulieu, *La Médecine à Montpellier*, 4.1:216. Dulieu says that Jaumes is considered the “véritable héritier des idées bartheziennes.”

³⁹ François-Anselme Jaumes, “Étude sur la distinction des forces,” in *Mémoires de l’Académie des sciences et lettres de Montpellier, section de médecine* (Montpellier: Imprimerie de Boehm, n.d.), 1–38.

⁴⁰ F.A. Jaumes, *Traité de Pathologie et de Thérapeutique générales* (Paris: Victor Masson et fils, 1869), 568, 18.

⁴¹ Jaumes, “Étude sur la distinction des forces,” 36.

⁴² Jaumes, *Traité de Pathologie et de Thérapeutique générales*, 16. The French reads: “La force a été de s’attacher à l’étude du corps entier, agissant, fonctionnant comme un seul organe. Naturellement, la première question qui a été posée est celle de l’harmonie, de la fin, de l’unité des actions vitales.”

in order to determine how we can make good use of them in curing illnesses.”⁴³

Montpellier certainly viewed the unity of its professors with regard to formulations of the body as one of its greatest strengths, as the city lacked the myriad institutions that begat masses of new ideas and teachings in Paris.

Arguably to capitalize on such unity, Dupré and Benoît produced state-of-the-field essays for the Faculté journal that provided practical statements of Montpellier’s philosophy in addition to Jaumes’s more theoretical treatises. Benoît, in 1858, commented, “the role reserved for the physician in modern society makes him feel the obligation to preliminary studies that teach him all of common knowledge.”⁴⁴ He further stated that Montpellier would thus “recognize that concrete, technical, and material teaching is necessary” and “draw from every source to enrich the art that completes and reorders science.”⁴⁵ His own studies of anatomy had suggested potential effects of air and nutrition on surgical maladies,⁴⁶ and as the chair of anatomy, he directed a curriculum that involved advanced applications of the Faculté’s theories, delivered in his resounding oratorical style.⁴⁷ Students benefited from this element of the curriculum by attending anatomy class three times a week, with more than three absences punishable by being prevented from registering in the following trimester. They were also expected to

⁴³ François Ribes, *Traité d'hygiène thérapeutique, ou Application des moyens de l'hygiène au traitement des maladies* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière et Fils, 1860), 181. The French reads: “L’atmosphère et l’économie humaine, considérées dans leurs rapports physiologiques, forment un tout dont nous allons étudier les conditions ou les qualités, afin de déterminer comment nous pouvons en tirer parti, dans la curation des maladies.”

⁴⁴ Benoît, *Situation et tendances de la médecine moderne*, 7. The French reads: “Le rôle réservé au médecin dans la société moderne lui fait sentir l’obligation d’études préliminaires qui l’initient à toutes les connaissances communes.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12. The French reads: “il reconnaît qu’un enseignement concret, technique et matériel est nécessaire, et il puise à toutes les sources pour enrichir l’art qui complète et recommande la science.”

⁴⁶ Dulieu, *La Médecine à Montpellier*, 4.1:271. Dulieu cites this as a belief of Benoît ca. 1848.

⁴⁷ François Bonnel, Joseph-Eugène Claustre, and Christophe Bonnel, “L’Anatomie, un patrimoine,” *Nunc Monspelienis Hippocrates: Revue de la Société montpelliéraine d’Histoire de la Médecine*, no. 10 (2010): 17.

visit the *salles de dissection*, which were open every day from nine o'clock in the morning to nine o'clock at night, in order to practice their skills.⁴⁸

Dupré, however, went still further. In March of 1860, he chose as the subject for his first medical clinic lecture the importance of practical clinical teaching and its relationship to theoretical teaching, furthering the belief that “the clinic is taught at the sickbed” that had been part of Montpellier’s curriculum since the post-Revolutionary restructuring of the medical curriculum.⁴⁹ Dupré argued that observation and in-person examinations of patients were more valuable than almost any other kind of instruction, stating: “The face of the sick person, the state of his eyes, his attitude in the bed, the manner with which he breathes, speaks, eats, drinks, swallows... it provides a set of phenomena that the eye practices seeing, that words cannot reproduce, that a drawing is powerless to represent.”⁵⁰ The goal of teachings like Dupré’s, after the “eyes, ears, fingers at the bedside” had been used to make observations, was for the student to learn “to generalize on the basis of observation.”⁵¹ Though the rise of hospitals in the eighteenth century had increased the ease of and potential for clinical bedside teaching,⁵² Dupré’s focus on elucidating the “set of phenomena” for the eye suggests that he

⁴⁸ Regulations described as part of a decree by the Faculté on 23 August 1858; in *Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier Renseignements Scolaires* (Montpellier: Jean Martel Aîné, 1879), 16.

⁴⁹ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, 98. Bonner cites “The clinic is taught at the sickbed” from Montpellier’s teaching plan presented to the National Convention on March 31, 1795.

⁵⁰ Germain Dupré, *De l’enseignement Clinique de son importance et de ses rapports avec l’enseignement théorique* (discours prononcé le 16 mars 1860, à l’ouverture du Cours de Clinique Médicale) (Montpellier: Imprimerie Boehm & fils, 1860), 12–13. “La face du malade, l’état de ses yeux, son attitude dans le lit, la manière dont il respire, parle, mange, boit, avale ... il fournissent un ensemble de phénomènes qu’un œil exerce aperçoit, que la parole ne peut pas reproduire, que le dessin est impuissant à représenter. »

⁵¹ Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education: A Comparative Study* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), 238.

⁵² Clémence Gavalda, “L’Enseignement médical à Montpellier de 1498 à 2011: Histoire de la filière Universitaire de Médecine générale” (Thesis for Docteur en médecine, Université Montpellier 1, UFR de Médecine, 2011), 60. Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, 8. Bonner notes that teaching at the bedside was “all but universally recognized” as the best method by the nineteenth century, but that debates still remained about how to integrate such teaching into the curriculum.

inculcated in his teaching his desire for his students to cultivate what might be termed a medical gaze.

Michel Foucault later described such a medical gaze, writing that “the doctor’s gaze is directed initially not towards the concrete body, that visible whole, that positive plenitude that faces him—the patient—but towards intervals in nature, lacunae, distances” that distinguish diseases and conditions from each other.⁵³ Physicians thus train to focus on details in the form of symptoms, direct and indirect, and then they are tasked with assembling these details into a diagnosis that wholly explains the problem. By repeatedly seeing and examining the patient, a doctor gains knowledge, so that the time shortens between seeing and knowing.⁵⁴ In her dissertation on representations of race in late nineteenth-century painting, Rozanne McGrew Stringer suggested that Bazille’s understanding of the “physician’s gaze,” cultivated by his *montpelliérain* medical training, resulted in his more humanizing images of African women in *La Toilette* (1870) (Fig. 103) and his *Nègresse* paintings (both 1870) (Figs. 111 and 112).⁵⁵ Though I consider neither race science, nor those specific paintings in this dissertation, I concur with Stringer’s assessment of the potential for a command of a physician’s or medical gaze to affect how a man conceives or represents his world. Though Bazille’s interest in details, particularly of clothes, will be discussed later in this dissertation, this chapter asks how Bazille turned this medical gaze on whole, resolutely male bodies—and

⁵³ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 8.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁵⁵ For her explanation of the role of Bazille’s medical training, see: Rozanne McGrew Stringer, “Hybrid Zones: Representations of Race in Late Nineteenth-Century French Visual Culture” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 2011), 146–151.

how Bazille's endeavors to paint the human body rested on bridging the distance between seeing and knowing what bodies can signify.

Though science and medicine continued to develop through the processes of “observation, inference, verification, [and] generalization,”⁵⁶ observation remained a deeply politicized practice for medical men, even in more freethinking locales such as Montpellier. Medical practice during this period retained divisions that decreed at what parts of the body physicians could look, what could be touched, or palpated, but not observed, and what need to remain unseen, out of propriety. For much of the nineteenth century, doctors often did not observe or examine fully naked bodies, unless these bodies belonged to poorer people who constituted the majority of hospital patients or unless these bodies were actually cadavers, donated to labs for the purpose of medical inquiry.⁵⁷ Doctors in private practice, in particular, often touched without seeing—covering the area to be examined with a sheet or darkening the room.⁵⁸

Jaumes similarly discusses the role of the senses in medical practice, identifying observation and interpretation as crucial components of assessing vital forces. In his *Étude*, he declared: “all that is known of the vital force is the result of the interpretation of changes perceived by the senses.”⁵⁹ He later declared in his *Traité* that, because vitalist operations are “produced by an instinct that does not feel, does not perceive,” studying them requires external examinations as “internal observation is powerless.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Flexner, *Medical Education: A Comparative Study*, 5.

⁵⁷ Mak, *Doubting Sex*, 30.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 30, 100–101. Mak's concern is physician examinations of hermaphrodite bodies—she describes how sex had to be determined “by means of an examination that had to maintain a precarious balance between what needed to be known and the culturally and socially respected bodily integrity” (100).

⁵⁹ Jaumes, “Étude sur la distinction des forces,” 18. The French reads: “tout ce que l'on sait de la force vitale est le résultat de l'interprétation de changements perçus par les sens.”

⁶⁰ Jaumes, *Traité de Pathologie et de Thérapeutique générales*, 576. The French reads: “[les opérations vitales] produi[sent] d'un instinct qui ne se sent pas, ne s'aperçoit pas, se font sans nous et trop souvent

Jaumes's words echo Barthez's insistence on observation as a skill that must be developed, while seemingly demanding further precision in determining the how to master these vital forces through observation. Observation must then be compounded with an ability to describe what is being seen—"description... does not mean placing the hidden or the invisible within reach of those who have no direct access to them; what it means is to give speech to that which everyone sees without seeing—a speech that can be understood only by those initiated into true speech."⁶¹ This true speech refers to doctors using the language of diagnosis and curative intervention, and yet it may be viewed as a parallel to the process of observing reality and then creating its visual representation in paint. In fact, Monet wrote to Bazille in 1864, claiming with a faux scientific tone: "it is by the force of observation and by reflection that one makes discoveries."⁶²

In addition to contributions to his education, the influence of Dupré and Benoît may have resonated for Bazille even beyond the walls of the Faculté, as these distinguished scholars and their colleagues commanded respect from the same elite circles in Montpellier as Bazille's distinguished family. Both Dupré and Benoît eventually ascended into the ranks of the Cercle de la Loge, a fraternal organization that welcomed only the most elite male citizens of Montpellier. Bazille would join in 1870, three years after his younger brother, Marc, and in the tradition of his father, Gaston; as one of the most elite families in the city, with a house on the Grand'Rue, the Bazille men would have been well-known in this elite circle, and Gaston's interest in science and

malgré nous. Pour les étudier, l'observation interne est impuissante ; le recours à l'observation externe est de rigueur."

⁶¹ Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, 115. Foucault, 154, suggests that he views vitalist philosophy as "feeble" in the scheme of medical innovations during the he examines.

⁶² Quoted in Kermit S. Champa, *Studies in Early Impressionism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1985), 84.

viticulture suggests more than a passing acquaintance with some members of the medical faculty.⁶³ His father's connections to the community also included his involvement in their church council, yet another way that the elder Bazille's connections may have helped his son. The anatomy professor Benoît was also a member of the church council and Montpellier's Protestant elite, and when the most important tools for anatomical instruction—cadavers—were hard to come by, this connection may have afforded Frédéric extra privileges in pursuing hands-on anatomical instruction.⁶⁴ Though almost no evidence exists of Bazille's thoughts during his time in medical school in Montpellier, it is apparent that every advantage was afforded to him in his studies and his life outside the school, and his exam scores suggest that he learned enough of the required curriculum to keep working toward fulfilling his father's desires that he become a physician.

Consequently, as a medical student, Bazille would have been forced to engage with the human body on both the cerebral level of the theories his teachers put forth and on the practical, tactile level of flesh and bones, living and dead. Bazille's medical education likely had a powerful effect on the artist's perspective when he continued to engage with representing the body visually. Modern theories of embodiment, much like Vitalist thought, propose to collapse the mind/body and subject/object dualities that characterized Cartesian thought and its subsequent medical extrapolations that divorced

⁶³ *Cercle de la Loge, 1782-1900* (Montpellier: Imprimerie Serre & Roumégous, 1900). This document contains a list of all members of the Cercle and the dates of their entry, and in some cases exit, into the society. Numerous members of Bazille's family on both his father's side and his mother's were members throughout the years, and Gaston Bazille joined in 1841, the year Frédéric was born. Germain Dupré joined in 1853 and remained a member until his death in 1893; Justin Benoît joined in 1870, the same year as Bazille; and François Ribes was also a member, though only for ten years between 1839 and 1849. The implications for Bazille's membership in this organization and his father's scientific interests will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

⁶⁴ François-Bernard Michel, *Frédéric Bazille : réflexions sur la peinture, la médecine, le paysage et le portrait, les origines de l'Impressionnisme, la vraie nature de Claude Monet, la mélancolie et la société provinciale* (Paris: Grasset, 1992), 23.

mental health from physical health. Theories of embodiment suggest instead that the body gains conscious knowledge in the process of existing within and moving through space.⁶⁵ Bazille's Vitalist training would have suggested a similar formulation. Through its intense engagement with the factual intricacies of anatomy and the intimacy required between doctors and patients, medicine becomes a "profession that marks the bodies of its practitioners," capable of effecting a transformation "that goes to the very core of the initiate's body."⁶⁶ The intensity of the extended process of medical education, with its unyielding emotional and physical demands, seems invasive, with the student often feeling vulnerable in the face of the knowledge and institutional controls that dictate his behavior.⁶⁷ The medical student, increasingly able to understand the functions of his own body in discrete parts and processes, may increasingly find it hard to grasp the idea of the body as a whole and of his body being truly his.⁶⁸

And indeed, clinical training in addition to book-based studying and lectures encourages the student in "extend, organize, and interpret his experience," as he encounters new phenomena in his practical work that require references back to books

⁶⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 67–79; Thomas J. Csordas, "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology," *Ethos* 18, no. 1 (March 1990): 7. See also: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁶⁶ Suzanne Poirier, *Doctors in the Making: Memoirs and Medical Education* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009), 72. Poirier's sample is primarily composed of memoirs from twentieth-century American medical students, consequent to when memoirs by medical students started to appear with some frequency. However, the stability of trends over the course of that century and the more than cursory similarities between French and American institutions convinces me that her analysis may be judiciously applied for my case study.

⁶⁷ Eric R. Marcus, "Medical Student Dreams about Medical School: The Unconscious Developmental Process of Becoming a Physician," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 84 (2003): 367–86.

⁶⁸ Poirier, 77, quotes Charles LeBaron's 1981 memoir *Gentle Vengeance: An Account of the First Year at Harvard Medical School*: "I wonder if it will ever be my body again, with moments of flashing, mysterious poetry, not just a sack of enzymes, a matrix of lipoproteins, a jumble of hollow, pulsing viscera, a juicy computer where hard-wired, low-speed elements process frequency-coded voltage fluxes along phospholipid bilayers."

and lectures for explanation.⁶⁹ Jaumes himself noted a similar phenomenon when describing his method for distinguishing aspects of the vital force, writing: “To clarify myself on digestion, circulation, I proceed in the same manner as for gravity or electricity: I look, I scrutinize the instrument, here I examine the rules; then, I reflect, I reason absolutely, I repeat it, as when it was about things strange to my own body.”⁷⁰ Jaumes’s words indicate the self-reflexive quality of medical practice—not only do students objectively learn and observe the machinations of the scientific phenomena that make up medical practice, but they also learn, occasionally with contempt or horror, the processes that continue within their own bodies to keep them alive as they study.

When Bazille arrived in Paris, he found more new experiences to interpret and more independence in his medical dealings than he would have encountered while living at home in Montpellier. Not only did he encounter new professors and more advanced ideas about surgery and clinical practice, but he would also have found that the customs of Parisian student life allowed them to cultivate more specialized interests. He could organize his day as he pleased, and the large amount of disciplines, opportunities, and courses made it easy for students to choose the subjects that interested them and prevented them from easily focusing on any extended tasks.⁷¹ Abraham Flexner’s 1925 comparative study of medical curricula praised the French system’s organization that “throws upon the student himself a heavy responsibility for his own course” as the students are “largely free to select their own masters.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Flexner, *Medical Education: A Comparative Study*, 238.

⁷⁰ Jaumes, “Étude sur la distinction des forces,” 15. “Veux-je m’éclairer sur la digestion, la circulation, je procède de la même manière que pour les faits de pesanteur, d’électricité: je regarde, je dissèque un instrument, j’en examine le jeu; puis, je réfléchis, je raisonne absolument, je le répète, comme lorsqu’il s’agit de choses étrangères à mon corps lui-même. »

⁷¹ Palluault, “Medical Students in England and France, 1815-1858: A Comparative Study,” 182.

⁷² Flexner, *Medical Education: A Comparative Study*, 121.

Bazille's masters, of course, proved to be much more fluidly appointed than the medical school likely would have preferred. Though his letters certainly suggest that he attended anatomy and surgery classes and *concours* events at the Paris Faculté, in addition to some mornings spent at the Hôpital de la Charité, he pursued his artistic training at Gleyre's atelier, which will be discussed further in Chapter Two, and he often went to courses in literature when he had the time. A letter his father from February of 1863 notes that Bazille attended classes with Saint-Marc Girardin, a Sorbonne professor who taught the tragedies of Voltaire that spring, and Philarète Chasles, a comparative literature professor at the Collège de France who wrote widely on English, German, American, and Spanish literature.⁷³ Though it is difficult to discern how Bazille may have actually spent his time in comparison to what he told his parents, that he should simultaneously pursue three courses of study—in medicine, literature, and art—with varying levels of prioritization suggests the intensity of his commitment to learning as much as possible, even if the process proved more important than the end goal.

Part of that process meant living the carefree life of a student in the Latin Quarter, free from the restrictions of hometowns where social strata could be more predetermined. Though the ability to enroll in medical school certainly suggested a more elevated level of social class and education, medical students, as a group, were known for their rambunctious behavior and their compulsion to view socialization as part of the educational process. Not only did Bazille have new friends that he met in Gleyre's atelier and the medical school who represented the new complexity and cosmopolitanism of his

⁷³ Letter 16, to his father, before February 20, 1863, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 43. Bazille tells his father "Je vais chaque matin à l'atelier à 8 heures, et je n'en sors qu'à 3 heures du soir. Le temps qu'il me reste dans l'après-midi me suffit à suivre deux cours de l'Ecole de médecine, l'un d'anatomie, l'autre de chirurgie. Je vais aussi souvent aux cours de M. Philarète Chasles et St-Marc Girardin." Note 2 on the same page describes Saint-Marc Girardin's course, "Etude des tragédies de Voltaire."

life, but he also retained friends from Montpellier. He noted in a letter to his mother late in 1862 that he had dined fully and agreeably “with not only some medical students, but a number of friends from *collège*,” who were also studying in Paris.⁷⁴

Whether they studied medicine or law, or any number of subjects, students frequently joined together, and political activism, in the midst of a long century of political turmoil, proved enticing for many of these young men. Even in the provinces, political activism proved synonymous with student life; in 1819, students in Montpellier rioted over admission to a local theater.⁷⁵ Student revolts continued throughout the 1830s and 1840s, waxing and waning with the organized revolts of 1830 and 1848.⁷⁶ In Paris, though, the first semester of Bazille’s medical education began by exposing him to medical student politics first-hand. A new Dean of the Faculté, Pierre Rayer, had been appointed by the government, and the students viewed this apparent imperial favoritism with contempt.⁷⁷ Bazille bemusedly and perhaps excitedly reported the events to his parents, explaining:

Two hours before the opening of the amphitheater doors, more than a thousand students protested gathered outside, engaged in yelling and breaking the windows... The students, in beating against the door, made the bust of the Emperor fall on the heads of the professors, the dean stood up with a dignified air, putting his hand on the bust, he cried, ‘Yes, I will uphold him!’⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Letter 8, to his mother, December 1, 1862 in *Ibid.*, 31. He writes: “J’ai de plus de l’agrément de n’être là qu’avec des étudiants en médecine, dont plusieurs amis de collège.”

⁷⁵ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, 75.

⁷⁶ Bonner, *Becoming a Physician*, 216.

⁷⁷ Jean-Claude Lemaire, *Vingt ans de médecine sous le Second Empire* (Paris: Éditions E.D., 1974), 22. Rayer had served Napoleon III as a personal physician since 1852, and the fact that he could not teach specific courses infuriated the students, who preferred another professor Robin, whose positivist principles clashed with government preferences. Rayer is listed as the chair of “Médecine comparée” from 1862-64 in Françoise Huguet, *Les professeurs de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris : dictionnaire biographique 1794-1939* (Paris: Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique, Éditions du CNRS, 1991).

⁷⁸ Letter 7, to his mother, (after) November 15, 1862, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 30. Of the Doyen Rayer and the student protest, he writes, in full: “La séance solennelle d’ouverture a été présidée par un nouveau Doyen nommé Rayer qui a été nommé de par l’autorité de ministre, et qui n’était même pas professeur. Les étudiants ont protesté contre cette mesure. Deux heures avant l’ouverture des portes de

As Bazille notes in his letter, the newspapers did not cover this, for fear of being seen as supporters of the students, and the publication the Faculté issued with the new Doyen's convocation address hinted at none of this tension, with Rayer noting that he was presenting himself to the students, "to you who listen to me, such as I am, such as you always find me, ready to welcome you, to assist you, to support you, as a guide, as a father."⁷⁹ In a curriculum that prized personal freedom, such paternalistic governance, with its ties to the imperial state, proved undesirable for the liberal-leaning students.⁸⁰

For these students, social awareness and activism where the cause suited it proved an enduring privilege of their enrollment in Parisian educational institutions. Enthusiasm for these student revolutions could also provide a means of equalizing Parisians and students from the provinces and a social identity within a group of like-minded individuals.⁸¹ Whether Bazille was a participant or an observer in any political actions, and to what degree, does not matter as much as his awareness of such activism as a

l'amphithéâtre plus de deux mille jeunes gens étaient réunis dans les cours, occupés à vociférer et à casser les vitres. Quand les portes ont été ouvertes la presse a été si forte qu'un étudiant a eu le bras cassé et plusieurs ont été à demi étouffés. Tu ne te figures pas le sabbat qui a accueilli le pauvre doyen, il n'a pu prononcer un seul mot. Les étudiants, en frappant dans une porte, ont failli faire tomber le buste de l'Empereur sur la tête des professeurs, le doyen s'est levé d'un air digne et, mettant la main sur le buste, il s'est écrié: 'Oui je le soutiendrai!'

Les huées n'ont fini que grâce à l'intervention d'une centaine de sergents de ville qui ont mené une dizaine d'élèves en prison. Les journaux n'ont pas osé parler de cette scène, il paraît même qu'on le leur a défendu."

⁷⁹ "Allocution de M. Rayer, Doyen de la Faculté; Dans la séance de rentrée de la faculté de médecine de Paris, le 17 novembre 1862," in *Faculté de Médecine de Paris; Séance de Rentrée de la Faculté; le 17 Novembre 1862* (Paris: Rignoux, Imprimeur de la Faculté de Médecine, 1862), 5. The French reads: "Jeunes élèves, trop peu de jours se sont écoulés depuis que j'ai été appelé à votre tête, pour que j'aie pu songer à autre chose qu'à me présenter moi-même, à vous tous qui m'écoutez, tel que je suis, tel que vous me trouverez toujours, prêt à vous accueillir, à vous seconder, à vous soutenir, comme un guide, comme un père."

⁸⁰ Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 164. Nord cites Bazille's presence at these "riots" in a list of evidence for the artist's likely Republican politics, which will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

⁸¹ Bertrand Taithe, "Neighborhood Boys and Men: The Changing Spaces of Masculine Identity in France, 1848-71," in *French Masculinities: History, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 68.

possible means of negotiating his social position in Paris. Life as a medical student demanded that the young artist learn as much raw and difficult scholarly material as he could while simultaneously maturing into adulthood, discovering the potency of his own body as an instrument, and grappling with the idea that the disembodied phenomena of his texts occurred inside and around him as he consumed knowledge of them.⁸² Thus, in choosing to turn, finally, from medicine to art and from one bodily system to another, Bazille also moved from a student's life, which included social activism and expansive intellectual exercise as a matter of course, to an artist's life, which provided the visual tools to mobilize socially and intellectually conscious discourse.

Medicine, Leisure, and Water

That Bazille would later choose a bathing scene for a statement painting should not come as a surprise, as scenes of various types of bathing had been inscribed as enthusiastically approved subject matter for independent artists the moment Manet exhibited his painting *Le Bain*, now known as *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (Fig. 5), in the Salon des Refusés in 1863.⁸³ Manet based his puckish comments on the status of art in idyllic scenes by Titian/Giorgione and Marcantonio Raimondi, but bathing and swimming, despite their increasing frequency as artistic subject matter, must be understood alongside prostitution, sanitation, and wet-nursing. All discourses that “are concerned with the body’s products, comportments, or employments” with “an evolving official government code of regulations, stipulating prohibitions, and approving

⁸² Poirier, *Doctors in the Making*, 2, 94.

⁸³ Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 131.

practices.”⁸⁴ Beyond these occasionally arbitrary government regulations, bathing put the body in contact with water and other outside influences, and many a doctor and hygienist weighed in on how a person might maximize their bathing experience and minimize bodily degeneration. These views often aligned with Vitalist notions of how health could be affected by circumstances exterior to the body.

In his delineation of his Vitalist doctrine, Barthez built, in part, on the contributions of a predecessor on the Montpellier Faculté, Théophile de Bordeu. Bordeu advocated thermalism, or hydrology, whose interests in a vital principle and thermalism, also known as hydrotherapy or hydrology, which advocated exposure to water as a therapeutic treatment for illnesses both mental and physical. For Bordeu, the body’s repeated exposure to water correlated to its levels of sexual desire, and “skin was cleansed, their strong emanations and transpiration destroyed; everything that distinguished their sex was deadened.”⁸⁵ While some of Bordeu’s ideas were discarded and others were folded into Barthez’s conception of vitalism, hydrotherapy remained a viable practice as much attention continued to be paid to how people exposed themselves to water and which types of water they pursued, which often became a question of social class.

These medical beliefs were circulated colloquially in hygiene and etiquette manuals, such that their cautionary tales led to a vogue for cleanliness. By 1851, 6,000 bathtubs were available for public use in Paris, up from merely 500 earlier in the century,

⁸⁴ Linda Nochlin, *Bathers, Bodies, Beauty: The Visceral Eye*, The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 2004 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 30.

⁸⁵ Quoted and translated in Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 37.

and 1.8 million baths were dispensed.⁸⁶ Beyond cleanliness, cities with thermal waters, known as *villes de bains*, *villes thermales*, or *stations thermales*, became tourist sites for those seeking medical benefits of the waters or simply seeking to relax in the fabled waters. The demand for these services outstripped available resources as the nineteenth-century progressed, at first because Frenchmen desired to escape the “prerevolutionary idleness” of the previous century and then because available opportunities for leisure steadily increased.⁸⁷

Though Mediterranean beaches long lagged behind beaches in Normandy and England in numbers of bathers coming to “take the waters,” vitalist physicians at Montpellier were among the first in France to “recognize the virtues of the sea.”⁸⁸ Where many travel books and hydrological guides focused on the chemical composition of the waters or the benefits that visitors could expect to receive, the *montpelliérain* Ribes took great pains to distinguish his view that hydrotherapy should be studied through the causes of therapeutic changes, as opposed to the empirical conditions themselves. In speaking of both therapeutic and preventative hydrotherapy, he wrote that even the circumstances one left to seek the *eaux* must be considered, or else:

that would be to make an abstraction of reality because patients and their exterior circumstances are in a veritable alliance...[the patient] must be observed and studied in its living, emotional, nutritional, intellectual, and

⁸⁶ Martin Schmidt, “Between Hygiene, Intimacy and the ‘Pink Cheeks’ of Bourgeois Virtue: A Cultural History of Bathing,” in *Intimacy! Baden in Der Kunst | Bathing in Art*, ed. Burkhard Leismann and Martina Padberg (Ahlen, Germany: Kunstmuseum Ahlen, 2010), 16.

⁸⁷ Étienne Rousseau-Plotto, “Histoire du thermalisme : La fréquentation des villes thermales, un art de vivre et de survivre des élites cosmopolites européennes au XIXe siècle,” in *L’essor du Thermalisme sous le Second Empire : Actes du Colloque organisé par l’Association La Route de l’Impératrice Eugénie le samedi 29 septembre 2007 dans la salle de l’Orangerie de la Villa Arnaga à Cambo-les-Bains* (Mairie de Sare: la Route de l’impératrice Eugénie, 2008), 10.

⁸⁸ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750-1840*, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 86.

motivational modes; it is the cooperation of active parts that, with the intervention of other circumstances, will return his health to order.⁸⁹

For Ribes and his colleagues, the comprehensive experience of taking the waters, as well as the more stable conditions of a person's daily life, needed to be considered holistically. Health remained contingent on the harmony of these modes and conditions of the patient's life.

Most of these *villes thermales* kept at least one doctor and an inspector in residence to attend to visitors' concerns and ensure, to the degree possible, that the waters could actually deliver on the benefits they promised.⁹⁰ Prior to joining the Montpellier Faculté in 1852 and subsequently advocating for the importance of observation in clinical teaching, Germain Dupré had served as a *médecin-inspecteur* at Lamalou-les-Bains, a *ville thermale* about sixty miles from Montpellier.⁹¹ Indeed, "*M. le docteur Dupré*" was identified in a hydrological guide as an authority who could verify the ability of Lamalou's waters to treat "everything that bears the vague and very elastic name of *douleurs*" and the fact that, like other medicines, "these waters have the clear effect of lowering the pulse and slowing the heartbeat."⁹² Though Montpellier did not itself have *eaux* of note, there were numerous *villes thermales* close to Montpellier,⁹³ and Bazille

⁸⁹ Ribes, *Traité d'hygiène thérapeutique*, 450–451. The French reads: "Ce serait faire d'une abstraction une réalité; car les malades et les circonstances extérieures sont dans une véritable alliance... il doit être observé et étudié dans ses modes vivants, affectifs, nutritifs, intellectuels et moteurs; il est un concours de parties actives qui, avec l'intervention des autres circonstances, reviendra à l'ordre de la santé."

⁹⁰ Joanny Berthier, *Album universel des Eaux Minérales et des bains de mer* (Paris: Le Monde thermal, 1862), 50.

⁹¹ Louis Dulieu, *Lamalou-les-Bains et son histoire* (Montpellier: Causse & Cie, 1971), 30. Dulieu notes that Dupré's tenure at Lamalou started in 1842 (perhaps 1838) and ended in 1844.

⁹² Isidore Bourdon, *Précis d'hydrologie médicale ou les eaux minérales de la France dans un ordre alphabétique* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière et Fils, 1860), 149. The French reads: "tout ce qui porte le nom vague et très-élastique de *douleurs*" and "Comme la digitale et la quinine, ces eaux ont pour effet bien évident d'abaisser le pouls et de ralentir les battements du cœur."

⁹³ See Berthier, *Album universel des Eaux Minérales*. Berthier's list includes Avène, 45; Balaruc, 53; Foncaude (or Font-Caouada, in *languedocien*), 91; as sources for *eaux* in the Hérault, Montpellier's department. Montpellier also has its own entry, 126, but for a *bains de mer*, not a *station thermale*,

noted once that he was alone in the family home at Méric while his cousins and his brother were “*aux eaux*,”⁹⁴ suggesting again that his family’s high social position allowed them to circulate in these increasingly fine resorts.⁹⁵

Because bathing in regulated establishments and vacationing at *stations thermales* had become so popular in the carnival atmosphere of the Second Empire, Bazille’s decision, then, to render his male nudes bathing in a river—an unregulated body of water, likely touched by the increasing industrialization of the Languedoc’s landscape—becomes a highly meaningful choice. He likely would have known of the series of paintings his friends Monet and Renoir made in 1869 of the Grenouillère, a Seine-side resort that catered offered baths and catered to bourgeois Parisians looking to spend some time away from the city. Marketing itself as Trouville-sur-Seine, a play on the Normandy resort town of Trouville that regularly attracted a more elite level of patrons (and whose beach-goers were frequently painted by Eugène Boudin), the Grenouillère presented the variant of packaged, civilized nature that Parisians cherished.

Baths in the Seine were common during the 1850s and 1860s, and sections deemed appropriate for bathing were often roped off and made privatized and manageable by the companies that ran them. They functioned similarly to the *stations thermales*, but often lacked the same meticulous awareness of their medical benefits. These structures were erected even in front of the Louvre, as seen in the foreground of a print from 1867 (Fig. 6) where “BAINS ET FLEURS – BAINS FROIDES- DAMES” is

approximately eight kilometers from the city. See also Bourdon, *Précis d’hydrologie médicale ou les eaux minérales de la France dans un ordre alphabétique*. Like Berthier, Bourdon lists Avène, 42, and Balaruc, 61, as eaux in the Hérault; he also includes Lamalou, 148; Rieumajou, 189; and Villecelle, 256, as well as Cette (known as Sète after 1928) as a *bains de mer*, 159.

⁹⁴ Quoted in François Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, Éditeur, 1952), 81, n.1.

⁹⁵ Liliane Franck, *La Vie Montpelliéraine aux XVIIe et XIXe siècles* (Montpellier: Charité, 1985), 218.

written across the side of the building to advertise their available services. Baths in the Seine were originally established in 1761, when river-bathing was initially seen as a means to strengthen and invigorate the body.⁹⁶ The active motion of swimming, as opposed to the more regulated behavior of entering the health-oriented baths, was believed to increase the ability of water to act on the body; swimming created a tension in the water that massaged the body and helped to produce supple muscles and strong constitutions.⁹⁷ However, these river baths did not always provide a stress-free invigorating experience; Honoré Daumier showed their less glamorous side in the caricature “Bain à quatre sous” from his *Croquis d’été* (1839) (Fig. 7). While some men dive athletically into the water, others hover on the sidelines with expressions of horror on their face—every peculiarity and unrefined aspect of these very human bodies, except what can be hidden under bathing trunks, is exposed within the culture of the cheap river *bains*.

However, by the 1860s, not all the people who patronized bathing and swimming resorts were focused on improving their health. Monet’s and Renoir’s images of the baths at “Trouville-sur-Seine” depict the evolution of these river baths into resorts outside the city. Early in his stay, Monet wrote to Bazille: “I have a dream, a painting, the baths of La Grenouillère for which I have made some bad sketches, but that’s a dream. Renoir, who has come to pass two months here, also wants to make this painting.”⁹⁸ Both artists eventually completed a number of sketches and more complete works, three surviving by

⁹⁶ Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 115.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 125–6.

⁹⁸ Letter 53, Monet to Bazille, September 25, 1869, in Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1 (Lausanne, Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1974), 427. The French reads: “J’ai bien un rêve, un tableau, les bains de La Grenouillère pour lequel j’ai fait quelques mauvaises pochades, mais c’est un rêve. Renoir, qui vient de passer deux mois ici, veut faire aussi cet tableau.”

each artist,⁹⁹ that clearly represent the proximity of baths to both a restaurant and the *camembert* platform on which male and female bathers could stand and talk between swims.¹⁰⁰ La Grenouillère, in this respect, was less than strictly conceived for health and more for socializing—at only a twenty-minute train ride from the Gare Saint-Lazare, it provided its visitors as many pleasures as they could afford. In addition to the usual changing cabins (available for a fee!) and supply buildings, the Grenouillère also provided boats and bathing costumes for rent, restaurants and stands that sold refreshments, and swimming lessons and ferry services to ensure that no guest was unnecessarily put out by his or her experience.¹⁰¹

Monet's *La Grenouillère* (Fig. 8), the version now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, especially demonstrates the contingent freedom of this space—though Monet depicts women either standing in their figure-covering, dark-blue swimming costumes or still in regular street clothing, he depicts male swimmers in the water to the left of the *camembert*, seemingly shirtless and gesturing playfully towards the women who remain safe on the island, though his increasingly fragmented facture makes their physical appearances difficult to codify. Monet's *La Grenouillère* in the National Gallery, London (Fig. 9), shows a similar social interaction—women stand on a pier in their full-length costumes, some even talking to men in bourgeois dress, while men, schematically painted into the background yet clearly more flesh than fabric, swim freely and playfully

⁹⁹ Monet's three paintings of La Grenouillère are held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; the National Gallery, London; and the Arnhold Collection, Berlin (now lost, possibly destroyed). Renoir's three paintings of this subject are held in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm; the Oskar Reinhart Collection, Winterthur; and the Pushkin Museum, Moscow. Renoir also completed a few other miscellaneous studies of the area that do not focus on the *camembert*.

¹⁰⁰ For more on the physical location of La Grenouillère, see: Ronald Pickvance, "La Grenouillère," in *Aspects of Monet: A Symposium on the Artist's Life and Times*, ed. John Rewald and Francis Weitzenhoffer (New York: Abrams, 1984), 37–51.

¹⁰¹ Robert L. Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 212.

in the background. Yet the mingling of the genders here—with women and shirtless men in the same space, without even ceremonial barriers separating them—suggests that these guests were not necessarily the uppermost echelon of society and, at minimum, in agreement to allow the coexistence of the social classes within this escapist space.¹⁰²

Robert Herbert has noted that the meticulous pay structure of the Grenouillère recalled that of Parisian café-concerts, another space in which social classes could acceptably mix, and that these two types of establishments actually shared many of their customers.¹⁰³

Where Monet and Renoir seemingly endeavored to present the revelers without judgment as they appeared, in truth, before them, Maupassant would later describe similar scenes in a manner “shot through with disgust and indignation.”¹⁰⁴

Governments had started to regulate exactly when and where French men and women could bath and what type of dress should be worn in mixed versus single sex baths, and society turned these restrictions into judgments by suggesting which moral or social class of person might choose a mixed bath over a more restricted single sex environment.¹⁰⁵ The men in *Summer Scene*, however, wear distinctive *caleçon* suits—tight, striped trunks whose importance within the highly constructed, composite imagery of *Summer Scene* cannot be underestimated. Though advertisements for fashionable bathing costumes listed *caleçons* among their available options,¹⁰⁶ these small suits were forbidden in the most affluent establishments, and men were required to wear knee-length

¹⁰² My assessment here is meant to recall the description of the social classes in Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grand Jatte* in T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 265. Clark declares that Seurat's mingling of workers and the bourgeois represents “a *modus vivendi*, agreeing to ignore one another, marking out invisible boundaries and keeping oneself to oneself.”

¹⁰³ Herbert, *Impressionism*, 212.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Wilson, Martin Wyld, and Ashok Roy, “Monet's ‘Bathers at La Grenouillère,’” *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 5 (1981): 17.

¹⁰⁵ Nochlin, *Bathers, Bodies, Beauty*, 31–33.

¹⁰⁶ For example, see: Berthier, *Album universel des Eaux Minérales*, n.p.

full *caleçons* that covered the arms to the elbows.¹⁰⁷ Men commonly wore the *caleçon* style when only other men were present, or when the class politics of the swimming space allowed for exposure of the male torso.¹⁰⁸ However, this did not necessarily hamper their ability to show off for proximate women—at seaside resorts, men “acted out a scene of bravery: they hoped to emerge as heroes for having faced the staggering blows from the sea, felt the scourging of the salty water, and overcome it victoriously.”¹⁰⁹ Alain Corbin continues to describe masculine behavior at the seaside, writing: “The virile exaltation that a man experienced just before jumping into the water was like that of an erection, and it was quickened by the proximity of women, a potential audience for his boldness and one that he could see, exceptionally, in a semi-nude state.”¹¹⁰ Though men would certainly take opportunities to show off for female bathers when presented with them, bathing only with other men arguably offered some compelling benefits.

The space Bazille paints in *Summer Scene*, likely modeled on a secluded area near the Lez River, which flowed behind Bazille’s family’s summer home at Méric, would be virtually the opposite of these regulated *bains*, both medical and tourist. By the time Seurat painted his *Bathers at Asnières* (1884) (Fig. 10), men of a wide array of social classes had come to view bathing as an activity that could fill their days off from work, when fun trumped health in deciding agendas.¹¹¹ Without the proprietors and other supervisors who managed reputable establishments, swimmers and bathers were subject to municipal laws—but only if those laws could be actively enforced. An 1835 decree by

¹⁰⁷ Olivier Saillard, *Les Maillots de bain*, Les Carnets de la mode (Paris: Editions du Chêne, 1998), 21.

¹⁰⁸ Saillard, 21, and Sarah Kennedy, *The Swimsuit* (London: Carlton Books, 2007).

¹⁰⁹ Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, 77.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ For more on Seurat’s *Bathers* and a discussion of the social classes of these men, see: S. Hollis Clayson, “The Family and the Father: The ‘Grande Jatte’ and Its Absences,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 14, no. 2 (1989): 162.

the mayor of Montpellier had specifically forbade nude bathing, or “*baigner sans caleçon*,” under any circumstance, and police records from mid-century suggest that locals sometimes complained about nude bathers in the river.¹¹² These nude bathers would, most certainly, have been male. Men were “supposed to be quite intimate physically with each other, to share beds and to urinate together; they were not expected to be ashamed of being naked in front of each other.”¹¹³ The frequently touted distinction between the bodily realm and the intellectual or spiritual realm allowed this manner of physical display to continue—thoughts could be more easily cloaked.¹¹⁴

In this riverside space where male nudity might be considered acceptable, the *caleçons* invoke shame, as if these men are hiding something they would otherwise be able to display. The suits that Bazille’s bathers sport thus contextualize the space in which these men bathe, which will be discussed further below, but they also suggest a healthful choice in costuming through their fabric. Prior to and throughout the nineteenth century, choosing a color for undergarments and other clothing that lay closest to the skin was actually a choice related to physical health and hygiene. According to the historian Michel Pastoreau, hygienic doctors preferred that bathing suits should be white, yet recognized that white became transparent in water. Bathing suits could also not just be one dark color because dark colors next to the skin were thought to be a potential pollutant to the body—thus, the fashion became to combine a light color with a dark

¹¹² Liliane Franck, *Une rivière nommée Lez* (Montpellier, France: Imprimerie de la Charité, 1982), 129. Pitman, 153, also mentions this reference in her discussion of *Summer Scene*. Other parts of this decree applied to public baths on the river, but *Summer Scene* likely does not represent a public bath, even a river-based one, because there is no indication of any of the usual infrastructure (changing cabins, etc.).

¹¹³ Mak, *Doubting Sex*, 31.

¹¹⁴ Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex between Men before Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 39. Katz speaks here of Walt Whitman, arguing that he believed “spiritual love was a disembodied emotion, not linked consciously with sexuality. As such, this love could flower, officially, legitimately, and openly, between man and man, woman and woman, older and younger. Spiritual love was not exclusive” (40).

color, usually white and navy, as stripes.¹¹⁵ Along the lines of these hygienic doctors, some believed that stripes, when worn directly against the naked skin, could act as a filter and protect or purify the body.¹¹⁶

However, the striped *caleçons* are only one part of the bodily economies that Bazille presents in *Summer Scene*, and the freshwater of the Lez River, in addition to the clear blue skies, the warm sun, and clean air of the Languedoc, likely would have been seen to have health benefits of its own. Beyond perceived health benefits of river water and its function as exercise, swimming in rivers fulfilled the necessary components of cleanliness for, especially, men during the summer months during the mid-nineteenth century when there were still health concerns related to the contents and frequency of baths.¹¹⁷ Though, at the end of the eighteenth century, doctors advocated primarily sea beaches and salty waters, cautioning their patients to choose bathing spots far from the mouths of rivers,¹¹⁸ some hygienists in Bazille's time came to believe that freshwater had a particular tonic effect on the body—that it concentrated and made more effective the body's natural internal heating mechanisms.¹¹⁹ Beyond the type of water, Montpellier's hot, dry climate, according to François Ribes, was believed to invigorate the body—a warm atmosphere led to “the general excitement of the economy and the excitement of the skin.”¹²⁰ Ribes further denoted that “warm and dry air makes us agile; it gives our tissues density, it heightens all functions, provided that neither of these qualities is a

¹¹⁵ Michel Pastoreau, *The Devil's Cloth: A History of Stripes and Striped Fabric* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 72.

¹¹⁶ Pastoreau, 85.

¹¹⁷ Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness*, 174–5.

¹¹⁸ Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea*, 70.

¹¹⁹ Antoine François, comte de Fourcroy, quoted in André Rauch, *Le souci du corps: Histoire de l'hygiène en éducation physique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983), 35.

¹²⁰ Ribes, *Traité d'hygiène thérapeutique*, 182.

degree too elevated. Its influence is translated by a stimulation.”¹²¹ The warm tones of the skin of Bazille’s men and the prominence of their maleness demonstrate the invigoration spurred by their surrounding environmental conditions and further conveyed in the vibrancy of the painting’s colors.

Completed the summer after he did the bulk of the work on *Summer Scene* and just a few weeks before he joined the army, Bazille meditated on the qualities of the surrounding landscape in his *Landscape by the Lez River* (1870) (Fig. 11). The circumstances of Bazille’s stay in the country amplified his ability to contemplate the surrounding landscapes—he wrote to Edmond Maître on August 2, 1870, to say that he was completely alone, that his family being elsewhere created a solitude that “makes [him] work a lot, and read a lot.”¹²² Likely facing away from the river, this painting looks up toward the surrounding hills similar to the one on which family’s summer home rested and opens onto the vibrant blue summer sky. The trees seem top-heavy, some with feathery leaves and others with solid round leaves that lend themselves to the dab of a paintbrush. The wildness of the clouds, the roughness of the exposed reddish soil, and the shadows as the hills descend into the river valley suggest the documentary nature of this landscape painting. As such, it contrasts the more idealized landscape of *Summer Scene*, where the light is brighter and there are less browns and tans to balance out the greens of the trees and the river. The water in the section of the Lez River that flows through his family’s property is heavily tinted green, as is the pool of water in the front of *Summer Scene*, and the greenish tint to some of the figures makes them appear as if they

¹²¹ Ibid., 185. The French reads: “L’air chaud a une action thérapeutique différente, suivant qu’il est plus ou moins sec; l’air *chaud et sec* nous rend agiles; il donne de la densité aux tissus, il avive toutes les fonctions, pourvu que ces deux qualités ne soient pas à un degré trop élevé. Son influence se traduit par une stimulation.”

¹²² Quoted in Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps*, 81, note 1.

are part of the landscape—bodies that are not just acted upon by the water and sun, but themselves acting within and through the landscape in which Bazille has posed them.

Modeling Men

When Bazille chose to paint men in a Southern landscape, he engaged with a composition as multivalent as the facets of his life—as a *montpelliérain* medical student turned Parisian social butterfly turned artist, moving between the provinces and the big city. The body in a water-filled landscape, clothed in modern styles yet entrenched in long art historical tradition, provides aesthetic grounds for Bazille to try to sort out the elements of Vitalist theory, precise medical perception, and more colloquial connotations of bathing and swimming that likely factored into his theorization of his world. The leap from aspiring doctor to artist was certainly not straightforward, even with Bazille's retention of a medical gaze, and yet the two professions shared crucial components of their practice. When, in the eighteenth century, Winckelmann praised the Apollo Belvedere as the image of ideal masculinity, the male body presented a “more complete and elevated subjectivity” while also evoking “the full register of power and desire, from the austere sublime to the sensually beautiful.”¹²³ In France, the male nude was restored to a position of honor in the academic hierarchy, yet it came with requirements, such as its placement in a Biblical or mythological narrative, which allowed nudity to signify heroism.¹²⁴

¹²³ Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 129–131.

¹²⁴ Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 43.

Outside the art world, some physicians acknowledged the potential for nudity to favorably affect the body, believing that “exposing the entire surface of the body to light is very favorable to the body’s regular evolution,” even if rules of decorum regularly prohibited it.¹²⁵ As Anthea Callen has further noted, the positions of physician and artist both “involved prolonged and careful looking, even touching, which transgress the moral boundaries of inter-personal social contact. Artist and doctor alike are objects of envy and fantasy, because, for them, this transgression is sanctioned.”¹²⁶ In examining *Summer Scene* and Bazille’s other male nudes, transgressions are presented in the artist’s attempts to paint versions of masculinities that could be enacted within his contemporary society. Through the art historical quotations and the pseudo-Arcadian setting, Bazille cloaks his men, even as he endeavors to paint their most daring desires.

As mentioned before, *Summer Scene*’s size and the complexity of its composition distinguish it as Bazille’s most elaborate finished painting. Its subject matter—eight male bathers in a wooded area near a pond—seems to place it among the numerous scenes of leisure that characterized the Impressionist turn to painting scenes of modern life, including the Grenouillère images previously discussed. The eight male figures wear clearly modern attire—the striped *caleçon* bathing costumes previously discussed and, in some cases, portions of their street clothes. They vary in age, though most hardly seem older than Bazille himself—with the exception of the young boy swimming in the

¹²⁵ Ribes, *Traité d’hygiène thérapeutique*, 208. Ribes writes: “Dans les climats où la nudité n’est pas incompatible avec la santé, l’exposition de toute la surface du corps à la lumière est très-favorable à l’évolution régulière du corps...” He repeats this as a claim of M. Boudin that was then confirmed by M. de Humboldt in his *Voyage aux régions équinoxiales*—Ribes does occasionally appear to speak expansively and anthropologically about how conditions vary across geographical regions, but I would argue that it can hardly be a coincidence that the conditions he praises correlate more to the climate in Montpellier than any other part of France.

¹²⁶ Anthea Callen, “Doubles and Desire: Anatomies of Masculinity in the Later Nineteenth Century,” *Art History* 26, no. 5 (November 2003): 681.

foreground, these men are squarely in the period of manhood characterized by “virility, during which man lives as his species and enjoys the ability to reproduce.”¹²⁷

It is also not enough to consider *Summer Scene* through the strict art historical lens of its visual quotations, as a number of scholars have proposed various identifications that I summarize here. The figure on the left, who seems to stabilize his body by leaning on the tree, appears to be a modernization of Saint Sebastian—a common trope used by artists interested in depicting a vulnerable, semi-nude male under the cover of religious narrative.¹²⁸ Two men in the distance wrestle, and they recall the depiction of *Wrestlers* from 1853 by Bazille’s friend and mentor, Gustave Courbet (Fig. 12).¹²⁹ The central reclining man borrows the pose of a classical river god or perhaps a shepherd in a pastoral landscape.¹³⁰ The pair at the right, with one man helping another out of the water, recalls Sebastiano del Piombo’s *Christ in Limbo* (Fig. 13), which Bazille may have seen in reproductions.¹³¹ As Michael Fried did with “Manet’s Sources” for 1862’s *The Old Musician* (Fig. 14), the men in *Summer Scene* might be matched to other similar figures for the purposing of divining the meaning of the painting as a whole—with *The Old Musician*, Fried describes how, for example, Manet has turned his studio assistant Alexandre into a modern version of Watteau’s *Gilles*, which Fried believes

¹²⁷ J.B. Fonssagrives, *Hygiène alimentaire des maladies, des convalescents et des valétudinaires ou du régime envisagé comme moyen thérapeutique* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière et Fils, 1861), 375. *Virilité* can sometimes be synonymous with *masculinité*.

¹²⁸ Broude, “Outing Impressionism,” 157.

¹²⁹ Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism*, 113.

¹³⁰ J. Patrice Marandel, *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1978), 95; Pitman, *Bazille*, 161. Pitman suggests that this pose was “obviously” borrowed from a 1656 painting by Laurent de la Hyre entitled *Landscape (Shepherd Playing A Flute)* that would have been in the Musée Fabre’s collection for Bazille to see.

¹³¹ John Robert Alderman, “Sources in Bazille’s Late Work” (unpublished qualifying paper, Harvard University, 1972), n.p.

demonstrates Manet's insertion of himself into the traditions of French art.¹³² However, where it is possible that an artist as messianic as Manet may have intended this piecemeal composition as evidence of a larger artistic statement to be deciphered, Bazille's peculiar composition, with its repetitive themes and altered bodily emphases, should be interpreted instead as evidence of his fixation on and anxiety regarding how to paint the male body. Where his medical gaze would have provided him with a perspective on how one might know the body by seeing it, instinctively examining first the details and then assembling them into a whole that follows the established course of a disease or injury, these art historical quotations perform a similar role as eminently legible social types—that, if successful, could immediately cue the same seeing-and-knowing process for viewers of the painting.

The argument that these particular choices of masculine types were shaped at least in part by Bazille's anxiety is perhaps born out by a close examination of the canvas. Examining the midsections of figures wearing striped trunks reveals *pentimenti*, which may suggest material evidence of Bazille's anxieties in painting these male forms (Figs. 15-17). Indeed, his letter to Edmond Maître that began this chapter indicates the difficulties Bazille faced in composing *Summer Scene*—almost constant migraines and anger and confusion over the painting itself. The areas where the canvas has been reworked and where traces of previously painted forms remain can be seen most clearly in the areas of flesh in the backs and legs of the figures, as if the striped trunks were painted on over fully fleshed out bodies or reduced from more standard bathing suits to

¹³² Fried, *Manet's Modernism*, 34–48.

their current revealing state.¹³³ Recall that Bazille's letter to Maître identified this painting as "[his] male nudes."¹³⁴ The most relevant surviving preparatory sketch (Fig. 18) shows that Bazille had indeed considered leaving the figures fully nude—in it, the St. Sebastian figure is the only clothed figure. However, he is no longer pressed against his tree and instead is a young man tentatively dipping his toe into the water. The wrestlers are nude, although they maintain their inert position, the reclining figure at the center turns more toward the viewer, and there is an additional semi-nude man. On the whole, this configuration, without the cover of art historical quotations, would likely have been more jarring to audiences than the painting that received jury approval in 1870.

In the final composition, Bazille's men are marked not only by their dress, but also by the poses and postures they inhabit which resonate formally for an art historically trained eye. Indeed, artists like Manet and Degas prided themselves on their ability to develop and employ a formal visual language through the study of masterworks. However, these poses cannot be divorced from the symbolic potential of their individual visual traditions. In the case of *Summer Scene*, a number of the figures' positions tell the viewer more about Bazille's fluid formulations of the masculine body and his inability to establish a coherent message around such bodies. The most compelling visual argument for examining the social implications of these poses is the modernization of Saint Sebastian, an early Christian whose unlikely survival after Roman forces attempted to execute him made him a sympathetic figure for suffering populations. Usually

¹³³ According to a conservator at the Fogg Museum in Cambridge, MA, where *Summer Scene* is housed, this painting has never been x-rayed or submitted to infrared technology, so it cannot be confirmed with certainty, at this time, whether or not there is underpainting in these areas. Any discussion of pentimenti herein is thus based on my examination of the canvas in June 2012. Kermit Champa also noted, in the 1978 exhibition review quoted earlier in this chapter, that he suspected the bathing suits of being "late retouches" by Bazille.

¹³⁴ Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 176.

represented as an attractive young man tied to a post and riddled with arrows, the figure of Saint Sebastian, in his religious ecstasy, invokes a sense of beauty in the face of pain and martyrdom. Representations of Sebastian varied from Renaissance Sebastians, by artists such as Andrea Mantegna and Pietro Perugino, whose beauty and immaculate anatomy rendered them upright and stoic in their suffering,¹³⁵ to Baroque Sebastians, such as Guido Reni's, and beyond that became increasingly dramatic in representing both anatomy and the twisted, tortured poses of a man being pierced with arrows.

One Italian example, in particular, that has been proposed as Bazille's source is Jacopo Bassano's *Saint Sebastian* (Fig. 19), a painting that Bazille likely saw in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in 1868. The image depicts a masculine and muscular Sebastian leaning away from a column and toward an archer who prepares to loose yet another arrow upon the martyr.¹³⁶ As Richard Kaye has outlined, Sebastian's story allowed him to function, in the nineteenth-century, as shorthand for erotic emancipation—perhaps even as an image deliberately constructed to provoke “unsanctioned, homoerotic yearning.”¹³⁷ One French critic wrote of Italian Saint Sebastian images, “It is probable that the contrast of the immobility and suffering of the body, with the ardor and enthusiasm of the soul and its heavenly hope, is one of the most touching and poetical

¹³⁵ Though I have somewhat arbitrarily employed these two examples because they remain in the Louvre's collection, it is important to note that both were acquired by the museum after Bazille's death: Mantegna's in 1910 and Perugino's in 1896.

¹³⁶ Gary Tinterow suggests this in the catalogue entry for *Summer Scene* in Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism*, 335. For Bazille's visit to Dijon, see Pitman, *Bazille*, 160. She notes that the resemblance to Bassano's painting is “perhaps not close enough to establish that Bazille copied it, but close enough to suggest that it made a strong impression on him.”

¹³⁷ Richard A. Kaye, “‘Determined Raptures’: St. Sebastian and the Victorian Discourse of Decadence,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27, no. 1 (1999): 272. Although Kaye discusses primarily Victorian manifestations of the trope of Saint Sebastian, he draws from Victorian interpretations of Italian imagery that would likely have been familiar to Bazille. On pages 274-76, he does discuss some French imagery, but from after Bazille's death and steeped in the tenets of the Symbolist movement.

subjects that art can offer to the eye."¹³⁸ Incorporating such a heavily symbolic figure into a multi-figure scene of modern leisure suggests that Bazille wanted both to elevate the potency of his male utopia and to hide, if only minimally, something of the intensity of his visions. Even Dianne Pitman, in her formalist reading of Bazille's paintings, notes the appeal of the Saint Sebastian figure to someone who identified with the "self's isolation in suffering."¹³⁹

Past the Saint Sebastian lays the river god or shepherd, and he gazes into the background of the painting past a pair of men who seem engaged in wrestling for play or for sport. As previously mentioned, they recall Courbet's *Wrestlers*, who in turn recall the imagery of the classical gladiator. Courbet's men differ from Bazille's in three revealing ways. First, they remain firmly tied to mainstream Paris—the Arc de Triomphe looms in the background, and even as these elements of Parisian spectacle are relegated to the back of the painting, these men are clearly part of a show at the Hippodrome on the Champs-Élysées.¹⁴⁰ Second, though their faces remain unknown, their bodies are extremely muscular, with every muscle and vein bulging to show their strength, as well as darker and dirtier, to emphasize their lower-class status and the effect of their consequent labor on their bodies. Bazille's men may be laborers, with their sinewy strength maintained in his exacting attention to the appearance of their muscles, but they lack the brute force and deliberate aggression of men wrestling for money.

Furthermore, Bazille portrays his *Wrestlers* from the back, while Courbet's lurch toward the viewer—imposing the threat of their strength on those consuming the painting, bringing viewers into the spectacle they present. However, as Michael Fried

¹³⁸ Antoine Pasquin, *Voyages en Italie* (1842), quoted in *Ibid.*, 277.

¹³⁹ Pitman, *Bazille*, 161.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 228.

notes: “because neither of the men has been depicted even slightly from the rear, nothing mitigates their character as looming, alien, material presences in the absolute forefront of the picture’s space, the obscuring of their faces only adding to the effect of near-monstrosity.”¹⁴¹ Fried’s comment on the bathers proves instructive for *Summer Scene* because the act of mitigation most characterizes Bazille’s wrestlers—from the clear limits of their strength, their more playful posture over the serious brutishness of Courbet’s wrestlers, their position farthest into the background of any of the men in the painting, and Bazille’s choice to turn their backs to the viewer. Though Courbet does obscure the faces of his wrestlers, we see enough to determine the soberness of their altercation. However, Bazille, in turning away the faces of his wrestlers, makes their identities private. He strips them of emotions and social class, allowing their wrestling to become anonymous play instead of serious fighting for entertainment. Within the vignette-like composition of the painting, and the isolated space of the river, Bazille creates room for private acts in the company of other men.

In making these representational choices, Bazille further mitigates the ties of these men to spectacular sporting pursuits, and in doing so, he limits the relevance of the most prevalent interpretation of these images for Second Empire France—that the male body, in its most developed, athletic form, could engage male and female gazes for entertainment in arenas, café-concerts, circuses, and other venues of modern life. Though scholars often draw comparisons between Bazille’s men and Caillebotte’s with an eye toward the social implications for fortifying the masculine body, these safe social overtones may be anachronistic for Bazille. It was only after the Franco-Prussian War and Bazille’s death that weight-lifting and other sportive forms of body-building became

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 230.

popular for regular men because they functioned as analogues for the new Third Republic—"French men were impelled to become not just courageous, patriotic and hygienic, but vigorous, muscular and manly."¹⁴² By the 1860s, prior to the war's horrific destruction of France's pretensions to masculine superiority, though the male body could certainly be celebrated, it was the physicians and the social theorists who had begun to express the most concern about the relationship between the body's ungovernable interior motives and its exterior appearance. Within this homosocial setting, a fact that I return to at the end of this chapter, the wrestlers, in their isolation, both uphold and subvert the healthfulness of a scene of modern men bathing in a freshwater river.

If not the wrestlers, then the true subject of the river god's gaze may be the man in the back who, away from the men already at the waterside, is still in the process of undressing. The undressing figure, with the two men that recall Sebastiano del Piombo's *Christ in Limbo*, form a triangle that, more than any other set of elements in this painting, suggests the sequence of a narrative. While the man in the back removes his clothes, adding them to the piles on the ground, and will presumably enter the water, one half-dressed man pulls another, still in his striped swimsuit, out of the water in order to go back to polite society. There are no changing cabins at the riverside because no privacy for dressing is required to maintain the decorum of the environment, and yet the intrusion of the discarded clothes into this idyllic scene insist on the continued presence of society's rules. Although it is hard to discern what the discarded clothes might be, they conform to the shorts and shirts worn by bourgeois men; at least one man has worn a top hat to this rendezvous, as it rests on the grass between the half-dressed man's legs. This

¹⁴² Fae Brauer, "Flaunting Manliness: Republican Masculinity, Virilised Homosexuality and the Desirable Male Body," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 6 (2005): 24–25. For more on physical culture under the Third Republic, see: Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 55–79, 223–224.

hat suggests the *flâneur*, the dapper dandy roaming the Parisian streets, and here on a riverbank near Montpellier it anchors this composition firmly in the modern world, where the top hat could signify a specific upper-middle social class of man bound by a social code specific to that class.

The man who has already put on his pants is peculiar for another reason beyond his action: his beard. He is the only figure with facial hair, and the only figure besides the young boy who has a distinctive appearance. Facial hair was an important secondary sex characteristic that visually marked men—bourgeois men would have been expected to sport such facial hair to physically embody the standards of virility and masculinity that bourgeois manhood required.¹⁴³ After reaching the age of maturity, modern men without beards, or some form of facial hair, faced questions about their sexual identity,¹⁴⁴ yet Bazille may have left them beardless here as part of his own fond recollection of his youthful experiences.¹⁴⁵ Alternatively, to show these men bearded would be to make obvious their modernity, transgressing acceptable representation of the male nude.¹⁴⁶ Even more peculiarly, this unique man resembles Bazille, with his thin physique, close-

¹⁴³ Norman Bryson, “Géricault and ‘Masculinity,’” in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994): 243.

¹⁴⁴ Pierre Delcourt, *Le Vice à Paris*, 1888, quoted in Michael D. Sibalis, “Paris,” in *Queer Sites: Gay urban histories since 1600* (London: Routledge, 1999): 18. Alex Potts notes that the male hero in Sacher-Masoch’s *Venus in Furs* (1870) comments on the Apollo Belvedere: “he has the same slender, steely musculature, the delicate features, the wavy locks and the feature that makes him so distinctive: he has no beard.” See: Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*, 126.

¹⁴⁵ Patricia Simons, “Homosociality and erotics in Italian Renaissance portraiture,” in *Portraiture: Facing the subject* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997): 40. Though writing in relation to Renaissance art, Patricia Simons describes how paintings of idyllic youths by older artists could be “charged by a referential element, by the suggestion of some actual presence pre-existing the representation” that further exacerbates the confusion of homosocial and homoerotic desire when men are depicting other men. On a similar note, Zola’s inclusion of bathing by the riverside in his autobiographical novel, 1865’s *La confession de Claude*, often supports arguments that Cézanne’s bathers recall escapades from their youth in Aix-en-Provence.

¹⁴⁶ Xavier Rey, “Im natur,” in *Masculin Masculin: L’homme nu dans l’art de 1800 à nos jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013), 182.

cropped hairstyle, and pointed nose. This visual similarity may simply be an anomaly, perhaps because, as he told Maître, Bazille could not access the models who had posed for the other men—and yet, in a composition that hews so closely to the content of Bazille's life, it seems to reiterate the passion with which he engaged in the process of making this painting.

Finding Other Models

In considering the history of the male nude as an art historical category, Bazille's choice to set not just *Summer Scene*, but also his other attempts at modernizing the male nude, in landscapes that were markedly Southern should be taken into account in analyzing his strategy. I have previously discussed the space of the Lez River that Bazille likely favored in *Summer Scene*—semi-private with access to beautiful vistas of trees and sky that were readily available in Montpellier. Certainly, logistical arguments can be made for this choice. As Bazille spent his summers with his family at their house at Méric, he could sensibly take advantage of the scenes that bordered their property and use his friends and family members to pose. It also makes sense that an artist who, as a member of the budding Impressionist circle, was interested in light effects and landscapes would engage with a setting so different than the suburban leisure scenes that his friends were painting and that seemed ripped from the lives of their targeted bourgeois Parisian audiences. However, Montpellier and the South, more generally, would have seemed looser and less refined to Parisians, a region of the country where rigorous daily struggles with morality and honor might be temporarily set aside. It is with an eye toward these

seductive connotations of the south that I address Bazille's other attempts at the male nude, 1868's *Fisherman with a Net* and 1870's *Jeune homme nu couché sur l'herbe*.

After years of sketching male models in his artistic training, Bazille's first attempt at painting the male nude, *Fisherman with a Net* (Fig. 3), demonstrates the intensity with which he approaches his subject. The background of this landscape, though comparable in content to his other paintings done on the banks of the Lez River, often seems sketchy, with furious tangles of paint forming the grass and the dusty soil appearing through it. Passages in the lower half where the grass transitions into the fishing hole and from green to the patches of dirt appear unusually painterly, and Bazille's attempts to capture the sun streaming through holes in the canopy of trees result in jagged patches of brighter greens on the forest floor. Even so, both male figures are carefully modeled, their muscles delineated through shades and shadows with knowing precision. This painting's main figure might further be described, in the same vocabulary as Caillebotte's *Man at His Bath* (1884) (Fig. 2), as "assertively naked,"¹⁴⁷ "uncompromisingly manly,"¹⁴⁸ and exemplifying "a masculinity defined by activity."¹⁴⁹ Where Caillebotte presents his male bather as privately nude in his domestic interior, his face turned from the viewer and engaged in his task to the point of vulnerability, Bazille gives us a fisherman that athletically turns to cast out his net, his facial features visible in profile complete with a mustache, a small goatee, and a delicately painted layer of fuzzy hair beginning to grow where his sideburns and beard would be.

Warmer, redder flesh tones that modulate into greyer patches of shadow create the topography of the fisherman's shoulder blades and back muscles; these colors maintain

¹⁴⁷ Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 25.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 50.

¹⁴⁹ Barber, "Case Study 6: Caillebotte, Masculinity, and the Bourgeois Gaze," 152.

the tanned, healthy glow of the fisherman's skin that suggests the strength of his energy.¹⁵⁰ This body is punctuated by the shadows it makes upon itself, from the creases in his neck as he turns his head, from the undersides of his arms onto his torso, and between his legs as his warmly colored flesh gives way to the bunching net that hangs between his legs from a right hand blocked by his body. His proper maleness is buttressed by his "bulging buttocks" that indicate, as a forceful anatomical sign, his inferred heterosexuality.¹⁵¹ His posture is strong and erect, but hardly that of didactic, neoclassical ceremony, and nonetheless, it provides a stark contrast to the other male figure in the painting, who is seated in the space between the fisherman and the pond into which he casts his net. This man, with no facial hair and a floppy bowl haircut, sits on the grass, hunching over to remove his final sock, perhaps to join his friend in fishing or to swim in the river that seems to flow in the distance.¹⁵² These male bodies are further framed by elements of the civilization they have temporarily escaped, with the sandy buildings of a nearby town to the left and the seated man's discarded clothes to the right, his white shirt and brown trousers providing, as in *Summer Scene*, an indication of the scene's modernity.

Beyond the healthy glow of the fisherman's skin and the virility projected by the appearance of facial hair, his choice of fishing equipment indicates much about his physical strength and athleticism. This type of net, known as an *épervier*, further tied this

¹⁵⁰ Léopold Deslandes, *Manuel d'hygiène publique et privée, ou Précis élémentaire des connaissances relatives à la conservation de la santé et au perfectionnement physique et moral des hommes* (Paris: Gabon, 1827), 59. Deslandes writes that people who have pale skin are "blafarde, sans énergies"—pallid and without energy.

¹⁵¹ Brauer, "Flaunting Manliness," 23. Brauer cites Ambroise-Auguste Tardieu, *Étude médico-légale sur les Attentats aux Mœurs* (first published 1857, republished in 1873) to note the view that "inverts," or homosexuals, could be distinguished by their "pointy penises" and "flaccid" rather than "bulging buttocks."

¹⁵² Some scholars have suggested that this pose recalls that of the Hellenistic *Boy with Thorn* sculpture, the best version of which is in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. See: Rey, "Im natur," 182.

image to the South, as fishing with such nets was very common in the Languedoc.¹⁵³ Fishing manuals from the period describe throwing the *épervier* as “an act that requires force and, above all, skill,” differentiating it from varieties of nets that could simply be placed in the water.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, it was an act that required the entire body to perform as one fluid machine, as the manuals describe a multi-step process in which the net must be draped over the fisherman’s left shoulder, using the left elbow to ensure that the net does not fall, and then, while shifting his weight from left to right, the fisherman must extend his arms swiftly and confidently to guide the net so that it falls properly to the bottom of water in its conical form to trap any fish swimming in the area. The manuals caution that the fisherman must “balance [his] body to put the different parts of the net in harmony,”¹⁵⁵ and also that, for his security, “he must not have, on the parts of his clothing in contact with the net, any buttons or hooks or anything that would be susceptible to sticking in the mesh.”¹⁵⁶ It is a fortunate twist of luck for Bazille’s fisherman, then, that his nudity ensures his safety by removing a number of items that could catch on the net, whose weights would then pull his body into the pond.

In the erectness of his body and the calibrated strength his activity requires, the fisherman appears resolutely masculine, and sussing out where he might fall on the spectrum of acceptable masculine comportment requires less guesswork on the viewer’s part than the men in *Summer Scene*. Yet when Bazille submitted *Fisherman with a Net* to

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Renaud, *Le parfait pêcheur à la ligne suivi d’un traité de pisciculture simplifié des lois et ordonnances sur la pêche fluviale*. (Paris: Desloges, 1858), 66. The French reads: “opération qui demande de la force et surtout de l’adresse.”

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 67. The French reads: “vous balancez le corps pour mettre en harmonie les différentes parties du filet.”

¹⁵⁶ N. Guillemard, *La pêche à la ligne et au filet dans les eaux douces de la France* (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1857), 268. The French reads: “il doit n’avoir, dans la partie de ses vêtements exposée au contact du filet, ni boutons, ni agrafes, ni quoi que ce soit susceptible de s’accrocher dans les mailles...”

the Salon in 1869, the jury rejected it, but accepted *View of the Village* (Fig. 20).¹⁵⁷

Though *View of the Village* was also a Montpellier painting, it portrayed his cousin, Thérèse, seated delicately in the foreground of a view of the nearby town of Castelnau; where *Fisherman with a Net* attempted a modernization of the male nude, *View of the Village* combined two more established and entirely decorous forms of visual representation, the portrait and the Italianate landscape. Though the male nude occupied a particular place in the visual arts, Bazille's *Fisherman* transgressed its boundaries—it is, perhaps, not a question of skill that the *Fisherman* was rejected from the Salon, but that the fisherman is so intensely absorbed in his activity and thus unaware of whose eyes may be gazing at his exposed flesh. As such, *Fisherman with a Net* is too real, too obviously modern, and too indicative of an acceptable display of a bourgeois male body to be displayed in a venue as public as the Paris Salon.

Jeune homme nu couché sur l'herbe (Fig. 4), however, provides the exact opposite of the virile strength in *Fisherman with a Net*. A “young man” or boy, lays on shaded grass—perhaps near a river or pond as in Bazille's other male nudes, though the noticeably unfinished lower portion of the painting reveals instead the remnants of a rejected Monet canvas, from the period of the mid-1860s where he concerned himself with painting young women in fashionable dresses.¹⁵⁸ Where the fisherman alertly readies to throw his net, and *Summer Scene*'s men exist in their static daydreams, the young man sleeps with his head on his arm, a discarded item of clothing resting haphazardly at his feet. He naps while the sun is high, seemingly and perilously inviting

¹⁵⁷ Didier Vatuone, Catalogue entry for *Fisherman with a Net*, in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, Trans. John Goodman [Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992]: 109.

¹⁵⁸ This conclusion about how Bazille repurposed a canvas of Monet's has been drawn by the curatorial staff at the Musée Fabre. I discuss Monet's fashion plate paintings in Chapter Two in relation to Bazille's *Family Reunion*.

“the unbridled dream.”¹⁵⁹ Where the flesh of the men in Bazille’s other male nudes is darker, redder, and even tanned, perhaps from exposure to the sun, this young man’s tender flesh is pale, creamy pink and peach tones—except for his rosy face—as if it is unusual for the full length of his body to be exposed to the harsh Mediterranean sun.

Though there is a boy in the foreground of *Summer Scene*, swimming away from the viewer while looking toward the St. Sebastian figure, his social position is constructed in relation to those of the clearly male figures configured on the shores of the pond in which he swims. He is male because he swims among overtly male figures in a men-only space. The sleeping nude not only lacks this possibility for contextual inference, but the sense abandon of this young man also calls to mind the iconic *jeune homme* by Hippolyte Flandrin, 1836’s *Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer* (Fig. 21). Flandrin’s young man sits on a rock with the sea extending off in the background, his face curled to his knees, his hands carelessly clasped together, and his stretched feet exhibiting some of the tension that the rest of his rigid body suppresses. Michael Camille has analyzed the pose of the young man, writing, “Circumscribed and enclosed within itself as a body without sexual organs, this was the ideal icon of Victorian bodily consciousness in all its fear of fetishism and castration.” Camille continues: “The reduction of the body to its planar circular form, self-contained and with its masculine erotic loci erased, was a means of holding at arms length the body of the other.”¹⁶⁰ In this sense, Bazille’s boy might be interpreted as an attempt to create a non-threatening body

¹⁵⁹ Alain Corbin, *Time, Desire, and Horror: Towards a History of the Senses*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1995), 7. Corbin notes that teachers feared time spent sleeping because it was undisciplined time.

¹⁶⁰ Michael Camille, “The Abject Gaze and the Homosexual Body: Flandrin’s Figure d’Etude,” in *Gay and Lesbian Studies in Art History*, Research on Homosexuality (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1994), 167.

whose serenity and isolation help to mediate the potential discomfort of the male artist's gaze on the boy's prostrated, vulnerable form.

However, the most apt comparison to the *Jeune homme* may be Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Young Boy with a Cat* from 1868 (Fig. 22), and some art historians have suggested that Bazille and Renoir may have even used the same model for the young male figures they created in the late 1860s.¹⁶¹ A similarly nude young male figure positioned with his back toward the viewer, this boy stands squarely on his right foot, coyly crossing his left leg in front of it. He looks over his shoulder with his elfin features betraying a cool, indifferent gaze, while he wraps his arms protectively around a large, disconcertingly happy tiger cat. Where the lighter shades of Bazille's boy's tender flesh seem logically relegated to the parts of his body that would usually be clothed, Renoir's boy has pallid and greyish flesh, a sickly kind of porcelain that is accentuated by its contrast to the vibrantly flowered cloth that covers the table on which the boy leans. Bazille's boy seems peaceful, with his eyes closed, while Renoir's is wide-awake and slyly attuned to his environment.

Furthermore, while some scholars have remarked that Renoir likely meant his painting as a modernization of Renaissance images of prepubescent gods,¹⁶² both

¹⁶¹For potential implications of this overlap in models, see: Aruna D'Souza, *Cézanne's Bathers: Biography and the Erotics of Paint* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 144. Note 39 also repeats the suggestion that Renoir painted *Young Boy with a Cat* during the period in which he worked primarily in Bazille's studio. I will return to these shared studio spaces and collaboration in Chapter Three. On Renoir, see also: Douglas Cooper, "Renoir, Lise and the Le Coeur Family: A Study of Renoir's Early Development-II: The Le Coeurs," *The Burlington Magazine* 101, no. 678/679 (October 1959): 327. Cooper proposes that Renoir used Joseph Le Cœur, the nephew of his friend Jules Le Cœur, as the model for *Young Boy with a Cat*, based on a head sketch that is known to be Joseph around age 8. Henri Loyrette's catalogue entry for this painting in *Origins of Impressionism*, 455, however, declares it unlikely that it could be Joseph Le Coeur who modeled, as the boy's father was a very respectable architect and probably would not have allowed for the creation of such an image.

¹⁶²Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism*, 455. Loyrette's catalogue entry for *Boy with a Cat* suggests a model like Parmigianino's *Cupid Cutting His Bow* from 1523-24 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

Renoir's *Boy with a Cat* and Bazille's *Jeune homme* seem to modulate the pose of the Borghese Hermaphrodite (Fig. 23), which entered the Louvre through Bonaparte connections in 1807. These figures coil their arms under their heads, with their feet playfully twisted together. Though the hermaphrodite's body twists to allow for the experiential discovery afforded by sculpture in the round, Bazille has kept his young man's body straight and his face turned out toward the viewer. Renoir, however, presents a boy who does not sleep, but stands and emphasizes the verticality of the painting with his back to the viewer, his face turned over his shoulder, and his arms around the cat. Though cats frequently functioned as a symbol of licentious behavior that is, of course, notably employed to signal female sexuality in Manet's *Olympia* (Fig. 24), Renoir's happy cat and the boy's embrace of it suggests a more inclusive reading of these gendered symbols. Where Michael Camille declared Flandrin's young boy a "body without sexual organs," Bazille and Renoir seem instead to situate their young men in the visual context of bodies with *too many* sexual organs to play at hiding—the perplexing, androgynous body of a hermaphrodite.

Hermaphroditism became more common as a topic of medical inquiry in the same years that Bazille engaged in representing his peculiarly sexed nudes. In 1868, the most famous historical case of hermaphroditism crystallized around the suicide of Herculine Barbin, by then known as Axel Barbin, in her/his apartment on the rue de l'École de Médecine in Paris.¹⁶³ Though Bazille's knowledge of this case cannot be proven now,¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Herculine Barbin is, of course, the person whose memoirs Michel Foucault would later find and publish as: Herculine Barbin, *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, trans. Richard McDougall (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980). For an overview of Barbin's case, see: Alice Domurat Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 16–19, 51–52.

¹⁶⁴ Barbin's apartment on the rue de l'École de Médecine would only have been about a ten-minute walk from two of Bazille's previous studios, the one on the rue du Furstenberg and the one he had only just

the problem of the hermaphrodite both socially and medically spoke to increasingly numerous anxieties about the destabilization of boundaries for expressing male and female genders. Hermaphroditic bodies that could not be definitively categorized as either male or female “presented extremely powerful challenges to biomedical claims about the natural, inviolable distinctions between men and women.”¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, hermaphroditism became one way of conceptualizing homosexuality; describing homosexuals as “psychic hermaphrodites” accounted for the disjunction between physiological expectations for normative romance and psychological desires for same-sex partners.¹⁶⁶ Long before Barbin and these problematic social formulations, however, the figure of the hermaphrodite arose in Greek and Roman mythology—a man, Hermaphroditus, fled from a woman, only to fall into a pool, cursing: “May every one hereafter, who comes diving/ Into this pool, emerge half man, made weaker/ By the touch of this evil water.”¹⁶⁷

Bazille’s professor and fellow *montpelliérain* elite, Justin Benoît, had encountered “*un cas d’hermaphrodisme*” as a intern in Montpellier in 1840, and he subsequently published his findings in the *Journal de la Société de médecine pratique de Montpellier*, an organization that then listed François-Anselme Jaumes among its officers.¹⁶⁸ Benoît describes how Marie B. came to him from the Tarn department, just north of the Hérault

vacated at the beginning of 1868 on the rue Visconti. Though he and Renoir had moved to a studio in the Batignolles by the time Barbin died, his familiarity with the neighborhood likely would have heightened the impact of any reports of this news that he might have encountered.

¹⁶⁵ Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex*, 28.

¹⁶⁶ Richard Cleminson and Francisco Vásquez García, *Hermaphroditism, Medical Science and Sexual Identity in Spain, 1850-1960*, Iberian and Latin American Studies (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), 3. Dreger, 26, refers to the view that feminists and homosexuals were “behavioral hermaphrodites”

¹⁶⁷ Ovid, quoted in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 40.

¹⁶⁸ Justin Benoît, “Consultation sur un cas d’hermaphrodisme,” *Journal de la Société de médecine-pratique de Montpellier* 2 (1840): 23–37.

and Montpellier, in order to confirm her sex before entering into a marriage—from the age of thirteen or fourteen, Marie B. claimed, she had come to believe that she “offered a sexual organization different from that of her classmates.”¹⁶⁹ Though, after a fairly exhaustive examination by the era’s standards,¹⁷⁰ Benoît concludes that Marie B. is, in fact, a man and thus cannot enter into the marriage that she wishes, he cautions his readers that “we must take care not to confound habits that result from the social position of the individual with the propensities that are innate or that depend on the individual’s organic constitution.”¹⁷¹ In expressing this divide between Marie B.’s fashioning of herself as female and the then-inevitable “truths” of her biology, Benoît describes a conundrum that likely would have seemed familiar to any medical student harboring non-normative sexual desires. While their innovative medical education in Montpellier afforded students an intellectual understanding of the variations of the sexed body, integrating the psychological effects of that recognition may not have been as easy to achieve.

For the writer Gustave Flaubert, the figure of the hermaphrodite even became a means of conceptualizing an ideal partner—in 1846, he wrote to his mistress Louise Colet: “I should like to make of you something entirely apart, neither [male] friend [*ami*] nor mistress. Both of those are too restrictive, too exclusive... What I want, in short, is that *like a new kind of hermaphrodite*, you give me all the joys of the flesh with your

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 24. The French reads: “...elle parvint à l’âge de treize ou quatorze an sans que rien de particulier lui eût fait soupçonner qu’elle offrait une organisation sexuelle différente de celle de ses compagnes.”

¹⁷⁰ Mak, *Doubling Sex*, 102. Mak notes that Benoît’s account is exceptional in that it is the earliest case she found in medical literature of bimanual palpation as an examination technique; this, of course, supports the view of Montpellier physicians as exceptionally brave innovators.

¹⁷¹ Benoît, “Consultation sur un cas d’hermaphrodisme,” 35. The French reads: “nous devons prendre garde de confondre les habitudes résultant de la position sociale de l’individu, avec les propensions innées ou qui dépendent de sa constitution organique.”

body, and all those of the soul with your mind.”¹⁷² When Flaubert ultimately determined that he had failed to make such a composite being of Colet, he broke off their relationship shortly thereafter.¹⁷³ As Flaubert’s letters indicate, the figure of the hermaphrodite could function as something of a utopian construct. In painting *Jeune homme couché sur l’herbe* and *Young Boy with a Cat*, Bazille and Renoir, respectively, endeavored to modernize both the playful Cupids of the Renaissance and perhaps the hermaphrodites of earlier times. Hermaphroditism would later be used to characterize the threat of mingling genders,¹⁷⁴ but Bazille and Renoir operated in an art historical space that gave them leeway to experiment. In presenting ephebic male bodies that seem almost comfortably legible as both male and female, they explore the potential for homoeroticism in modern figure painting and the political significance of young men gazing desirously at other young male bodies.

With *Fisherman with a Net* and *Jeune homme nu couché sur l’herbe*, though the former is a finished painting and the latter is something quite less so, Bazille seems to experiment with demonstrably different manifestations of the male body. Both paintings portray male figures alone, or nearly so, with hardly any contextualization. These isolated representations of modern masculine behavior may not have been successful by the conventional metrics of the art world, yet they surely represent attempts to normalize the

¹⁷² Quoted in Jan Goldstein, “The Uses of Male Hysteria: Medical and Literary Discourse in Nineteenth-Century France,” *Representations*, no. 34 (Spring 1991): 149. I have retained Goldstein’s emphasis in italics. Flaubert’s words are also interesting in light of the frequency with which higher reasoning capabilities featured in a physician’s evaluation, Benoît’s included (see p. 27, where he notes that Marie B.’s “intellectual aptitudes more closely resemble those of a man”), of whether or not the patient being examined was, in fact, a woman or a man.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁷⁴ Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 91. Nye notes this in describing Henri Thulié’s *La Femme. Essai de sociologie physiologique* (1885). Nye writes that Thulié asks his readers to consider, as the result of a Second Empire society that “encouraged promiscuity in men, concubinage in women,” “the monstrosity of life in a world of perfect sexual equality, where a society of hermaphroditic beings can fertilize one another, and themselves, all of whom enjoy the same aspirations, pleasures, responsibilities, and aptitudes.”

genre of the modern male nude in keeping with the social, medical, and psychological demands of displaying gendered bodies. Thus, Bazille's paintings of nude men—*Fisherman with a Net*, *Jeune homme nu couché sur l'herbe*, and most certainly *Summer Scene*—cannot merely be viewed as men, but as amalgamated bodies that draw from the extenuating ideas and cultural touchstones that compose them.

Homosociality/Homosexuality/Homoeroticism

Having delineated the implications for a number of the problematic visual touchstones in Bazille's male nudes, it is necessary in analyzing *Summer Scene*, especially, to further consider the gendered implications for men bathing together in nineteenth-century France. The often problematic differences between homosociality and homoeroticism, which this dissertation will continue to explore in Chapter Three, apply especially to Bazille's men, who, at turns, present a healthful homosociality that paradoxically increases and represses the homoeroticism of their images. Through the specificity of Bazille's medical gaze, his male bodies appear strong and vital in their leisure, and in their stasis and isolation, the men, especially in *Summer Scene*, display no overt signs of homosexual behavior. Yet in becoming aesthetic objects, absorbed in their leisure, they emphasize the pleasure and desire inherent in the way that Bazille gazes at his anonymous male subjects.

Summer Scene presents bodies that oscillate—between active and inactive, “artifice combined with naturalism,”¹⁷⁵ specific and general, historical and modern. The instability of such an image perhaps crippled any hopes Bazille may have had for its

¹⁷⁵ Randall C. Griffin, “Thomas Eakins’ Construction of the Male Body, or ‘Men Get to Know Each Other across the Space of Time,’” *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 74. Griffin’s interest in *Summer Scene* stems from the likelihood that Eakins saw it on display in the Salon of 1870.

success in public exhibitions,¹⁷⁶ yet it also seemingly alternates between exposing illicit desires and actively containing the sexuality of its male subjects. Michael Hatt has written, with regard to Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* (1884-85) (Fig. 25), that the homoerotic marks "the visual boundary that divides the homosocial and the homosexual." For Hatt, the "homoerotic, then, reproduces the erotic inasmuch as it valorizes desire, mitigating it by the implicit claim of disinterestedness, but differs from it by actually concealing that desire."¹⁷⁷ Per this definition, homoeroticism in visual representation need not be contingent on proof of the artist's homosexuality, and indeed, it cannot be contingent without delving too deeply into psychobiography or ahistorical definitions of sexual identity. However, approximating definitions of homosexuality and homosociality for the 1860s, especially with regard to medical discourse and the possibility of enacting either system of behavior, allows *Summer Scene*'s instability to take on productive significance.

Homosociality, indeed, fits snugly within the realm of acceptable relations between men in the nineteenth century, which remained understudied until Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's landmark study *Between Men* in 1985.¹⁷⁸ Sedgwick primarily sought to debunk the polar opposition of homosexual and heterosexual that characterized and contained the homosexual as a deviant other in favor of a "male homosocial spectrum." In analyzing Shakespeare's Sonnets, for example, and their triangular relations between the male speaker, his (male) fair youth, and the dark lady, she writes:

¹⁷⁶ For a discussion of critical responses to *Summer Scene*'s presence in the Salon, see: Pitman, *Bazille*, 37–46.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Hatt, "The Male Body in Another Frame: Thomas Eakins' *The Swimming Hole* as a Homoerotic Image," in *Manly Pursuits: Writing on the Sporting Images of Thomas Eakins*, ed. Ilene Susan Fort (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), 268. Indeed, Michael Hatt's discussion of these boundaries and how other scholars have dealt or failed to deal with them informs much of my approach in this section.

¹⁷⁸ Sedgwick, *Between Men*.

the tensions implicit in the male-male bond are spatially conceived (you are this way, I am that way) and hence imagined as stable; while the tensions of the male-female bond are temporally conceived (as you are, so shall I be) and hence obviously volatile... For a man to undergo even a humiliating change in the course of a relationship with a man **still feels like preserving or participating in a sum of male power**, while for a man to undergo any change in the course of a relationship with a woman feels like a radical degeneration of substance.¹⁷⁹

She further characterizes this male homosocial spectrum as an instrument through which power may be wielded—that the fear of being named a homosexual, and denounced as such, affords homophobia a structural role in modern society that denies a continuum of experiences to maintain the stability of the dichotomous extremes.¹⁸⁰

This insistence on the role of “homosexual panic” in structuring society, further delineated in Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), forms the basis for Norma Broude’s interpretation of *Summer Scene* vis-à-vis its potential homosexual overtones. She cites a Bertall caricature (Fig. 26), published on the occasion of *Summer Scene*’s appearance in the Salon of 1870, to describe the painting’s main problem: its lack of distinct tone. The caricature shows the men in *Summer Scene* in similar positions and engaged in similar activities, except that all have been drawn in the striped *caleçons* and the Sebastian figure reaches out of *Summer Scene*’s frame and into the painting below, Charles Chaplin’s *Young Woman Carrying a Tray*, which had also been displayed at that Salon. The caption, in the words of the active, re-masculinized Sebastian, states: “Mademoiselle, be kind enough to pass us a glass, it will give us some tone. We certainly need it!”¹⁸¹ Broude reads the caricature as an expression of what the critic “actively needed to repress or deny” after viewing the painting, and she writes: “By

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 45. Emphasis mine.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 86–90.

¹⁸¹ Broude is citing Pitman’s translation: Pitman, *Bazille*, 40–41. The French reads: “Mademoiselle, soyez donc assez amiable pour nous passer un petit verre, ça nous donnera du ton. Nous en avons bien besoin!...”

creating a humorous outlet for what could not be said directly, Bertall has given tangible form, through reversal and denial, to his uncomfortable intuitions about *Summer Scene*, and he has supplied it with the heterosexual dimension—the tone—that he clearly felt it lacked.”¹⁸² Broude’s analysis astutely questions the motives of the caricaturist, yet her comments perhaps skew wide of Bazille’s own struggles in constructing *Summer Scene*. They seem premised on an assumption of Bazille’s intentions that equates the act of gazing with desiring, and while that aligns with some theorizations of desire, it also negates the significance of the mediated forms of representation that led Bazille to compile this atypical array of male bodies.¹⁸³

As historical studies of queer populations have demonstrated, evidence of their actions as well as social and sexual preferences often comes from unlikely archives, with histories being delineated through investigating mechanisms of oppression instead of direct evidence of the subject’s circumstances.¹⁸⁴ Broude’s brave interpretation of Caillebotte’s *Pont de l’Europe* images as well as *Summer Scene*, does, however, acknowledge that, “in an era that still lacked a widely accepted definition of homosexual identity, a variety of self-definitions remained possible.”¹⁸⁵ Pitman makes a similar

¹⁸² Broude, “Outing Impressionism,” 157. For a different interpretation of this cartoon, see: Pitman, *Bazille*, 40–41. Pitman argues, instead, that the formal and thematic relationships between these two paintings motivated the caricaturist to lampoon them together.

¹⁸³ I am thinking here of Diana Fuss’s characterization of homosexual looking as “structurally vampiric,” such that it involves “neither immediate identification nor unmediated desire but rather a complicated and unstable exchange between already mediated forms.” Diana Fuss, “Fashion and the Homospectatorial Look,” in *On Fashion*, ed. Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 211.

¹⁸⁴ I refer here to techniques such as using police records of arrests to reconstruct spaces of homosexual encounters, as, for example, in William A. Peniston, *Pederasts and Others: Urban Culture and Sexual Identity in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2004). For a later example outside of France, see the exceptional Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). These authors are both quick to point out the necessity of using the sources they have relied on because much of the evidence that would provide more definitive information faced destruction by the men in question.

¹⁸⁵ Broude, “Outing Impressionism,” 135.

statement in discrediting speculation about Bazille's potential homosexuality, writing that "the absence of homosexuality as a term in the critical discourse and indeed the psychological theory of the time" limits the lengths to which we make take our speculation.¹⁸⁶ That is to say, art historians may interrogate homosexuality's "variety of self-definitions" for this period and how they are visually communicated, yet these need not function as strict categories—Bazille's men need not be homosexual nor heterosexual, yet they can manifest desire, longing, nostalgia, shame and any number of other subjective concerns that center on the male body. Though it is useful to interrogate the reception of the painting, as Broude does, and the painting's engagement with its contemporary art theories, as Pitman does, these painted men cannot also become unmoored from the sheer fact that they are representations of the body—an entity that this artist, Bazille, was specifically trained in only superficially disparate disciplines, to examine, order, and represent.

Furthermore, scholars have directly and instructively challenged Sedgwick's ideas in the near thirty years since *Between Men* was published. For example, literary scholar Andrew Dowling, in an effort to define male "others" beyond the homosocial, has described manhood as the "result of arduous public and private ritual," noting that "queer theory in general tends to underestimate the success with which a culture imposes heterosexuality as the unquestioned norm."¹⁸⁷ Richard Kaye similarly insists that, though "mephitic scenarios of 'anxiety' and 'panic'" certainly did hold sway in the nineteenth century, Sedgwick's insistence on homosociality's definition in opposition to homosexuality limits the potential for analysis of how men did publicly experience great

¹⁸⁶ Pitman, *Bazille*, 156.

¹⁸⁷ Andrew Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 5.

sensual pleasure in response to homoerotic imagery.¹⁸⁸ That Kaye and Dowling, as well as Hatt, discuss Anglo-American images and texts is not incidental; in the introduction to their 2008 collection of essays titled *Entre Hommes*, a purposeful nod to Sedgwick, Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert examine how even feminist studies of French masculinities have often reified masculine dominance, “solidif[ying] rather than problematiz[ing] the male body.”¹⁸⁹ In applying Sedgwick as Broude and others have, scholars of French material confront deep academic resistance to deconstructing the representations of French male bodies. Sedgwick’s Anglo-centric theories neither provide every French answer, nor do they pose every productive question.

Sedgwick’s insistence on the necessity of recovering a multiplicity of available formulations within which men can conceive their relationships to other men—her male homosocial spectrum—seemingly remains inviolate no matter the culture. In the case of the 1860s, however, the male body remains to be recovered as a surface on which elements of that culture are inherently inscribed; this masculine culture must remain distinct from the physical fitness craze of the post-Franco-Prussian War and from the dominance of honor as a guide for masculine conduct that seems to have waxed before and after the years of Bazille’s short life.¹⁹⁰ As I have attempted to demonstrate through my interpretations of *Summer Scene*’s men, as well as the *Fisherman* and the *Jeune homme*, Bazille consistently explored the array of poses that the male body of his time might assume within art history in conjunction with vernacular and specialist medical

¹⁸⁸ Kaye’s argument concerns St. Sebastian and decadence at the fin-de-siècle. Kaye, “Determined Raptures,” 270–271.

¹⁸⁹ Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert, “Introduction: Marking French and Francophone Masculinities,” in *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory*, ed. Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 16.

¹⁹⁰ See: Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*.

doctrines. Though his less expansive efforts show hints of philosophical unfinish, *Summer Scene* shows men together, yet in intellectual isolation. Reading this painting as homoerotic, on Hatt's boundary between homosocial and homosexual, suggests that some form of active desire on the part of the painted figures or their audience is present, but how would this configuration of men satisfy their desires? What actions would they take?¹⁹¹ What, in the painting, could have motivated masculine viewers toward a homoerotic emotional response?¹⁹²

The introverted nature of these men, especially the thinly veiled St. Sebastian figure, and the static condition of even most active figures, the wrestlers, precludes the indulgent portraying-and-looking that often signals homoeroticism in art. However, that is not to say that these men do not gaze at each other, even if these acts are difficult to characterize. Though his inflammatory description of Bazille's sexuality, against which this chapter has argued, remains problematic, Champa's insistence on Bazille staring with "embarrassed curiosity" proves useful, as it suggests a desire to look and a furtive enjoyment.¹⁹³ Champa further employs "fascination" and "titillation" as motivating factors for Bazille, but these do not appear anywhere on the stoic faces of the men in the painting. The figure groups occupy distinct spaces within the canvas; there is little communication between groups (with exceptions to be discussed below); and so Bazille disrupts the unfolding of these figure groups into a coherent narration.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ For more on the relationship between actions, pleasure and desire, see: Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 40–43.

¹⁹² This language mirrors that of Richard Kaye in discussing how images of St. Sebastian operate. See: Kaye, "Determined Raptures," 271–272.

¹⁹³ Champa, "Frédéric Bazille," 110.

¹⁹⁴ This commentary is based in the analysis of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* in Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," *October* 44 (Spring 1988): 13. A connection between *Summer Scene* and Steinberg's analysis of the *Femmes d'Alger* was posed to me by an audience member during a very early

In the sketch for *Summer Scene* discussed earlier, these gazes are more deliberate—the Sebastian figure, who remains clothed, gazes into the water at a swimming man, not a boy, who seems to look back at him. The bodies of the wrestlers more closely entwine, such that where they look cannot be determined, and instead of the pair leaving the water in the final composition, the sketch includes a man still in the process of shedding his clothes, so that his shirt remains over his face and compromises his awareness and his ability to act. The river god, whose pose is even more feminized, is absorbed in his thoughts, playing with the grass in front of him—and standing behind this figure, a man stands and surveys the scene before him, perhaps even looking directly at the backside of the river god who lays before him.

The final painting, however, seems to indicate Bazille's efforts to cover his desires to know the male body intimately, though homosexual inclinations need not be assumed as the cause of such aspirations. His men do gaze, but the vignette structure of the painting separates them from each other. It is not the river god but an upright and thoroughly secluded Sebastian who is lost in his thoughts, and it is the river god who gazes. Whether at the wrestlers, now clearly two bodies disentwined, or at the undressing man in the distance, we see enough of the river god's face to believe him unmoved, though we might ascertain otherwise from the modest, covering gesture of his hand over his genitals. The boy in the water looks at Sebastian's feet, while the men on the right look at each other in the normal course of their actions; any indiscretions have been

presentation of this material at the Philadelphia Museum's Symposium on the History of Art in 2010. Steinberg writes: "In the *Demoiselles* painting this rule of traditional narrative art yields to an anti-narrative counter-principle: neighboring figures share neither a common space nor a common action, do not communicate or interact, but relate singly, directly, to the spectator. A determined dissociation of each from each is the means of throwing responsibility for the unity of the action upon the viewer's subjective response." Though I do not believe invoking the viewer is an operation that interests Bazille, Steinberg's other remarks on the composition do apply.

entirely mediated by the new iterations of these figures, and the most questionable men in the sketch, the one whose gaze roves and the one who cannot gaze, have been effaced.

The art historically legible poses of the men work to contain their sexuality, even that of the tame Sebastian figure, while their engagement in the popular, familiar activities of bathing mediates their semi-nakedness. Where male homosexuality would have seemed indefensible as a subject of visual representation, homosociality, in conjunction with the benefits of the Southern environment outlined by the medical doctrines to which Bazille was likely exposed, could be viewed as healthful. The tension between this southern environment and the Parisian audience for which Bazille intended this painting could also mirror a tension between Bazille's safe position in his family home, with its prominence in the Montpellier, and the freedom he had discovered in Paris, as he pursued instruction in medicine, art, and literature. These scenarios would have demanded that different facets of his identity be emphasized, or perhaps hidden, if he wanted to succeed in each environment, and *Summer Scene* might be read as an experiment for recreating different masculinities that Bazille had encountered in his incessant search for information and skills. When placed in a unified environment and interpreted through the precision-oriented corporeal gaze of the artist-physician, which type of masculinity seems most appealing as an identity to enact?

In *Summer Scene*'s evolution, the alteration that becomes most tantalizing, then, is the addition of the man at the right, who helps his friend out of the water. Still wearing his trousers and, uniquely, the typical bourgeois beard, he resembles Bazille, with his thin physique, close-cropped hairstyle, and pointed nose. Besides the wrestlers, it is this man who comes closest to making an active gesture, much as Bazille's own agency defines

the parameters of this image. Stripped of the heroic defenses of their masculine predecessors, Bazille's male bodies become subjective expressions of the artist's own psychic and social position,¹⁹⁵ but only insofar as that social position rests on his knowledge of the body from both his medical and artistic educations and his understanding of himself as man moving between Paris and Montpellier. With Bazille's willingness to locate the masculine form in modern life, he threatens the standards of social decorum by acknowledging the potential of the male body to become a vehicle for the embodiment of a modern masculinity,¹⁹⁶ which would be threatening even without any homosexual overtones to exacerbate the threat. In mitigating the actions of these men through their poses and lack of interactions, Bazille makes plain all of the intricate specifications of display and restraint for Frenchmen, which, regardless of whether or not the man at the right is a self-portrait, also applied to the artist himself.

When Zacharie Astruc reviewed the Salon of 1870, he included a long section praising Bazille and *Summer Scene*, declaring: "Sunlight floods his paintings. In the *Bathers*...the eye has seen well. One notices the finesse of the scales of light in the flesh, in the two small wrestlers in the sun, and the man getting dressed, back there against the trees, in the joyous heat of a beautiful summer afternoon."¹⁹⁷ Unlike Bertall, Astruc seems to have found nothing in need of repression, and instead celebrates Bazille's rendering of the men's flesh, as well as their range of activities. Astruc further zeroes in on the relationship between these figures and their environment, a central tenet for both the burgeoning style of Impressionism and Vitalist philosophy that collapsed barriers between mind, body, and exterior influences like sun, water, and air. Bazille may have

¹⁹⁵ Garb, *Bodies of Modernity*, 29.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 28.

¹⁹⁷ Quoted and translated in Pitman, *Bazille*, 43–44.

conceived *Summer Scene* as an extension of his desire for new subject matter, his homoerotic yearnings for the likely lower-class models he employed, or, as I have ultimately argued in this chapter, necessary explorations of masculinities grounded in the vestiges of Bazille's embodied perspective as a former medical student gazing at bodies that are at once distinct from and yet morphologically the same as his own. Thus, if these various iterations of masculinity seem anxious and imprecise on the canvas, that may accurately reflect the psychic bounty at stake for Bazille in achieving a complicated representation of modern men that embraced both the light and dark of his task, which allowed the artist to dip his toes into all his areas of expertise and present this composite image to Paris audiences in Salon.

CHAPTER TWO

“Déprovincialisez-vous avant de vous emparisienner!”¹

“Paris in 1862 is a town with all France for its suburbs.”
Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables* (1862)²

“Paris is the promised land toward which all the minds of the provinces tend.”
Paul Avenel, *Les Calicots, Scènes de la vie réelle* (1866)³

Frédéric Bazille’s 1867 painting *Family Reunion* (Fig. 27) seems innocuous at first, as, perhaps, it should. Displaying his extended family on the terrace of their summer home at Méric, near Montpellier, Bazille paints a scene that could be taken from life, one in which we may easily imagine his parents, cousins, and in-laws taking a break from their leisurely conversation to sit for him. Previous commentators have pointed out that the scene seems almost photographic, mingling the poses of nineteenth-century photography with an anachronistic snapshot aesthetic that demands narration beyond the scope of the painting. Though such an argument for the influence of photography on *Family Reunion* has been readily debunked,⁴ the sheer strangeness of the configuration of family members in this painting and Bazille’s means of depicting their dress and demeanors have remained unexplored in the literature. This oversight evidences preoccupations with outdated conventions for addressing family portrait paintings and twentieth-century familiarities with the poses and intimacies the artist presents. In this chapter, I aim to recover the strangeness of this painting and Bazille’s artistic choices for

¹ Alfred Delvau, *Les plaisirs de Paris, guide pratique et illustré* (Paris: Achille Faure, 1867), 6.

² Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, trans. Norman Denny (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 126.

³ Paul Avenel, *Les Calicots, Scènes de la vie réelle* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1866), 1. The French reads: “Paris est la terre promise vers laquelle tendent toutes les intelligences de la province.”

⁴ Dianne W. Pitman, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 95–111.

enhancing the perceived naturalistic representation of his family. Furthermore, I argue that *Family Reunion* must be viewed as a confrontation between Bazille's southern values and the spectacle that he encountered when he arrived in Second Empire Paris in 1862. Bazille faced further challenges in both modernizing the aestheticized body, a project taken up contemporaneously by his artistic peers, and working simultaneously through the medical and artistic pedagogies of the body. With these goals, his arrival in Paris heralded a shift that allowed the idiosyncratic way that he moved within the theatrical spaces of the city to affect his understanding of the body's potential to mediate the creation of knowledge.

Parisian Bodies of Knowledge

When Bazille moved to Paris in 1862, he followed generations of young male students who left their provincial hometowns to come to Paris, obtain an education, and then return home as more distinguished contributors after living it up in the frequently more forward-thinking metropolis. This journey proved to be a recurring theme in contemporary writings, for not only could young men pursue a professional education in Paris's distinguished institutions, but the city itself presented a space in which young men might grow, through experience, to maturity. While many plays and novels emphasized as a matter of course the conviction that the most quality minds ended up in Paris, other texts, such as Alfred Delvau's frequently facetious 1867 guidebook *Les Plaisirs de Paris*, comforted provincial parents that the benefits of Paris surely outweighed any detriment to a young man's character (as long as they returned to their home). Delvau wrote:

The fathers who send their sons to Paris, the wives who sent their husbands there fear for them a thousand dangers—but imaginary ones... Because

Paris is the great École where a crowd of charming professors teaches simpletons of every age and every stripe the difficult science of life... Your heart may have suffered some damage, but on the other hand, your spirit has been fortified. You are a man!⁵

Upon his arrival in the *grande École*, Bazille simultaneously committed to both medical training at the Paris Faculté de Médecine and to artistic training at the atelier of the Swiss painter Charles Gleyre.

The Paris that Bazille found, by 1862, ran on the machinations of the Second Empire, and the celebrity of Napoleon III had been firmly established across France. In Paris, the most intensive period of Haussmannization had been completed,⁶ and Bazille arrived to see the city with boulevards and *flânerie* in the process of being fully established. Napoleon III had long predicated his imperial ambitions on catering to the provinces, touring them extensively and using his control of the mass media to reach those areas to which he could not go himself.⁷ While the young Bazille might have known much about the French capital from his reading and other sources, any perception of familiarity with the French capital likely did not diminish its appeal, as Bazille immediately began to circulate among households of cousins and family friends upon his arrival. His letters bear out his dual engagement with medicine and art over the course of

⁵ Delvau, *Les plaisirs de Paris*, 293–294. The French reads: “Les pères qui envoient leurs fils à Paris, les femmes qui y laissent aller leurs maris redoutent pour eux mille périls—imaginaires... Car Paris est la grande École où une foule de professeurs charmants enseignent aux ignorants de tout âge & de tout poil la science difficile de la vie... Votre cœur a peut-être subi quelques avaries, mais, en revanche, votre esprit s’est fortifié. Vous êtes un homme!” As is frequently the case throughout his text, Delvau chooses his words to play on their double meanings—I believe he uses the specific word “*avaries*” to play on its maritime connotation of mechanical damage, as opposed to simple emotional suffering, to suggest ease with which aspects of these young Paris-going men may be reconfigured for maximum functionality.

⁶ For a description of the process of Haussmannization, see: Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 16–21.

⁷ Matthew Truesdell, *Spectacular Politics: Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte and the Fête Impériale* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 164–165. Truesdell, in his chapter titled “The *Fête Impériale* in the Provinces,” describes how, in the 1850s and 1860s, Paris contained only 5% of France’s population, and most of Napoleon III’s supporters came from the provinces. Because universal male suffrage appeared in France after the revolutions of 1848, these provincial male voters gave Napoleon a strong base of support that he continuously and ingeniously appealed to for the duration of the Second Empire.

1862 and 1863,⁸ but he also frequently discussed the theater and the musical shows he attended, causing his father to write and admonish him: “I am far from disapproving of those things that amuse you, I am on the contrary enchanted, but I very much desire that you also are working, and I am always afraid, knowing your tastes for *flânerie*, that you are letting the hours flow by in a pointless manner.”⁹ Bazille’s father’s description of his son’s interests as “goûts de *flânerie*” suggests much about the young artist’s engagement with his surroundings. Though scholars have previously, and with some frequency, referred to Bazille as a dilettante or a hobbyist,¹⁰ accusing him of a style of half-hearted engagement consistent with that of the *flâneur*, it is worth asking *why* the theater and the urban social scene held such appeal for the young Bazille, in order to determine why it may have drawn his attention from both his medical and artistic studies.

Though his father worried about the level to which he immersed himself in Parisian theater, Bazille continued to write home about the plays and operas that he had seen. For example, he noted having seen Meyerbeer’s opera *L’Africaine* multiple times. *L’Africaine*, when it opened at the Opéra in April 1865, was initially met with some indifference on the part of critics,¹¹ and yet letters exchanged between Bazille and his family frequently mention this story of the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama and the

⁸ See, for example: letter 6, to his father, November 1862, and letter 8, to his mother, December 1862, in Didier Vatuone and Guy Barral, eds., *Frédéric Bazille: Correspondance* (Montpellier: Les Presses du Languedoc, 1992), 28–29, 31–32.

⁹ Letter 13, Gaston Bazille to his son, January 11, 1863, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*: “Je suis bien loin de trouver mauvais que tu t’amuses, j’en suis au contraire enchanté, mais je désire beaucoup que tu travailles aussi, et j’ai toujours peur, connaissant tes goûts de *flânerie*, que tu ne laisses écouler bien des heures d’une manière inutile. »

¹⁰ See my discussion of this accusation of dilettantism and its sources in the introduction to this dissertation on pages 6–8.

¹¹ Maurice Allem, *La vie quotidienne sous le Second Empire* (Geneva: Famot, 1979), 273.

African queen who attempts to woo him.¹² At first, he deemed it “a masterpiece as beautiful as anything Meyerbeer has done” and declared that he hoped to see it again because he felt “many things that [he] did not completely understand on first hearing.”¹³ Though he saw the opera at least once more before the month was out and again proclaimed it a masterpiece and the female singers perfect,¹⁴ he returned later that year and complained to his mother that the production had been poorly executed.¹⁵

One of the imperial theaters, the Opéra was also one of the most expensive theaters in Paris during this period, with prime tickets selling at 11 francs and less desirable tickets selling for 3 francs.¹⁶ Despite the political gulf between the Emperor and the young artist, they would have agreed on the importance of contemporary theater and witnessing new plays as soon as possible. On at least forty-eight occasions at the Château de Compiègne, Napoleon III enjoyed one to three plays a night. The wide range of these plays encompassed eighty-five distinct authors, and, perhaps more remarkably, approximately 45% of the plays produced there were less than three months old.¹⁷ Like the emperor, Bazille pursued the newest productions that Paris had to offer—he likely saw *L'Africaine* for the first time in the week after it opened, and he would also write

¹² In addition to Bazille's own letters about seeing the production in Paris, there are two instances where Gaston Bazille also writes about the opera. In one letter written in Avignon, he tells his wife that he had seen another play there, but would have preferred *L'Africaine*, and in another, he writes to Frédéric that Marc has gone to Nîmes to hear a singer from the Paris Opéra perform *L'Africaine*. See

¹³ Letter 66, to his mother, May 5, 1865, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 108–109.

¹⁴ Letter 67, to his father (fragment), May 1865, in *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁵ Letter 73, to his mother, November 1865, in *Ibid.*, 115–116.

¹⁶ Catherine Naugrette-Christophe, *Paris sous le Second Empire le théâtre et la ville : Essai de topographie théâtrale* (Paris: Librairie Théâtrale, 1998), 254. These numbers are from 1862, at which time the Théâtre-Italien was the most expensive at 12 francs. However, these numbers may have been partially irrelevant to Bazille's ability to go to the theater, as he often accompanied his wealthy cousins, the Lejosnes, to the theater or the Opéra, taking advantage of their box seats. See: Michel Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 1995), 37.

¹⁷ Xavier Mauduit, “Les Souverains au théâtre et le spectacle dans les palais impériaux sous le Second Empire,” in *Les spectacles sous le Second Empire*, ed. Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 26–27.

home in his first weeks in Paris about his attempts to gain tickets to *Le Fils de Giboyer* by Emile Augier shortly after its premier.¹⁸ Augier, declared the “king of contemporary theater” by the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1860, had written *Le Fils de Giboyer* with the authorization of the emperor, and its political satire of the corrupt press, embodied in the bohemian journalist Giboyer, made it a must-see.¹⁹ The primacy of being among the first to see these theatrical smashes exposes the important position these plays held in Bazille’s worldview.

Furthermore, beyond simply attending the theater, Bazille attempted to compose a Romantic play of his own. Entitled *Le Fils de Don César*, he wrote this play with his friend Édouard Blau, a librettist, whose portrait will be discussed later in this chapter.²⁰ By August of 1865, Bazille and Blau had passed a draft of their play onto readers, hoping that they could stage it somewhere in Paris. When their first readers failed to respond, Bazille vowed to continue shopping their manuscript, “offering it to all the directors in Paris, one after another,” until someone agreed to support their work.²¹ Though they failed, and the play is now lost, the desire to create a piece of theater suggests the possibility that Bazille viewed the plays and operas he attended with the same critical eye he might have turned toward a Delacroix or a Manet in preparation to create a painting of his own.

Indeed, Bazille’s appreciation for the theater to the point of creating a play of his own suggests the extent to which he may have appreciated parts of his daily life as

¹⁸ Letter 8, to his mother, December 1, 1862, and Letter 11 to his father, January 1, 1863, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 32, 36.

¹⁹ Jean-Claude Yon, “Une triade et un vétéran : Augier-Dumas fils-Sardou et Scribe sous le Second Empire,” in *Les spectacles sous le Second Empire*, ed. Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 129–131.

²⁰ No text of this play has survived, and there is no documentation in Bazille’s letters or otherwise about the specificities of the plot or his working relationship with Blau.

²¹ Letter 73, to his mother, November 1865, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 116.

subject matter for constructing new painted realities. The city itself may be conceived as a theatrical space—“a setting for forms of spectacular culture and an arena for the symbolic representation of different forms of social and cultural space.”²² In Paris, spectacular culture, the conditions of seeing and being seen that reached their pinnacle toward the fin-de-siècle,²³ arose in conjunction with Haussmannization, as the rapidly changing city combined with a quickly changing consumer economy in which goods and commodities became central to structuring societal relations and symbolizing cultural identities.²⁴ Both the theater and the city shared “a history in which relations between audience and players, script and performance are mediated by historically and culturally grounded conventions that generate forms of sensory experience,”²⁵ and sensory experience for an aspiring artist like Bazille indubitably revolved around the visuality of the newly imagined city. Paris required Bazille to act, as would an actor onstage, within its own carefully prescribed cultural spaces and behavioral directives because the newly constructed modernity of the city demanded that Bazille attend to constructing himself as a social being.

By the 1830s, vision, or how a person apprehended the surrounding world, had changed from a practice that privileged the information derived by the eye to one that

²² Alexander Cowan and Jill Steward, “Introduction,” in *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture Since 1500*, ed. Alexander Cowan and Jill Steward (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 7.

²³ Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities*. Schwartz addresses the pre-cinematic gaze mostly after 1880 through spectacular institutions such as the Paris morgue and the Musée Grévin, but she also effects a productive critique of T.J. Clark’s *The Painting of Modern Life* and how it engages with formulations of spectacle in the preceding time period.

²⁴ Leora Auslander, “The Gendering of Consumer Practices in Nineteenth-Century France,” in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 81.

²⁵ Cowan and Steward, “Introduction,” 7.

occurred as the body took on new uses and new means of signification.²⁶ Urban
 visibility, especially, demanded considerably more responsiveness from city-dwellers,
 and as increasing numbers of people left their small towns to take advantage of the
 resources that urban environments could provide, they frequently lost access the intimate
 relationships that had informed how they viewed their previous homes. Even in a city
 like Montpellier, Bazille's familiarity with the community—the exceptional knowability
 of the city for someone of his class—would have provided a baseline for urban vision
 that his move to Paris would drastically shift. As Rebecca Zurier has described it, “urban
 visibility is distinct from the visual expertise that a farmer uses to survey a field or scan a
 sky, because unlike the rural or natural environment, every object in a city is made by
 someone to send a message to other people, and the densely packed configuration
 changes quickly.”²⁷ With the natural wonders and the stereotypical earnestness of the
 provinces at his back, Bazille would have been forced to interpret an onslaught of
 information, images, and options that probably challenged his sense of self and his place
 in this new world.

However, the act of strolling through Paris, with its newly refined spaces of
 display and consumption stimulated more than the roving eye. Walking itself as a
 physical act “can activate the walker's inner, thinking self and thereby bring that self into
 contact with the external world, an encounter that gives rise to a reciprocal exchange or
 oscillating flow between inward and outward attention”—one that foregrounds the

²⁶ Jonathan Crary, “Modernizing Vision,” in *Vision and Visibility*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 42–43.

²⁷ Rebecca Zurier, *Picturing the City: Urban Vision and the Ashcan School* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 7.

“body’s role in mediating between consciousness and the world.”²⁸ The *flâneur* might employ walking as a means of establishing his selfhood, as it could afford a sense of mastery of his environment through his roving gaze.²⁹ Navigating the city in this manner, whether through boulevards, parks, or markets, again suggests the body as a primary means of creating meaning, as was the case with the plays that Bazille observed, participated in, and attempted to write. Therefore, to succeed at his various Parisian endeavors, Bazille would need to acknowledge these conditions and subsequently attempt to function with this pre-established system.

Indulging Spectatorial Practices

As indicated in the previous section, Bazille entered a highly constructed realm of visuality and self-fashioning when he arrived in Paris in 1862. Though he worried about balancing his theater attendance with spending enough time with his Parisian relatives so as not to offend them, he frequently experienced extremely busy days as well as nights. His days overtly combined art and medicine, with studio time in the morning and medical anatomy classes in the afternoons. This studio time was spent in the atelier of Charles Gleyre, a Swiss painter who had become one of the most distinguished independent teachers in Paris since he had assumed control of Paul Delaroche’s atelier in 1843. While Chapter One sought to rectify the previous disregard by scholars for Bazille’s medical training, the current chapter thus moves to Bazille’s artistic training, with his medical influences in mind, in order to examine how these disciplines retained similarities in their pedagogical approach to the body. Atelier practices, which posed a sort of relational

²⁸ Nancy Forgione, “Everyday Life in Motion: The Art of Walking in Late-Nineteenth-Century Paris,” *Art Bulletin* 87, no. 4 (December 2005): 669.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 679–680.

identity between the bodies of the artists and those of the models they drew or painted, may have allowed Bazille to see the spaces of the city, the medical school, and the atelier as meaningfully contiguous.

Even in Montpellier, Bazille had studied art and medicine at the same time. While enrolled in Montpellier's Faculté de Médecine, he continued taking private drawing lessons with Auguste Baussan, a professor in sculpture and drawing at Montpellier's École des Beaux-Arts. When he joined the faculty of the École, Baussan replaced his father, Joseph, and further assumed the public responsibilities of teaching students in attendance at the "*écoles gratuites*" organized in conjunction with the Musée Fabre and municipal authorities.³⁰ Though almost none of Bazille's drawings from these years survive, it may be assumed that Bazille, then between eighteen and twenty years old, had a close relationship with his teacher because his likeness appears in a number of Baussan's sculptures, including a small bronze medallion of Bazille in profile that was made in 1862.³¹ The fact that Baussan was primarily a sculptor may have begun Bazille's practical understanding of the close correspondence of medicine and art where the body was concerned. Understanding sculpture meant understanding how to conceive the body as a three-dimensional form in space, subject to earthly forces that may be creatively elided in conceiving a two-dimensional painting.

When he moved to Paris and left Baussan's direct tutorials, Bazille entered a space in Gleyre's atelier that further prioritized the intricacies of the body in its

³⁰ Materials regarding Baussan's position within the school, as well as materials advertising these *écoles* can be found in boxes R 1/9 (104), R 1/9 (111), and R 112, in the Archives municipales, Montpellier, France.

³¹ Other examples of Baussan using Bazille's likeness include his 1884 statue of Saint Roch for the Église Saint-Roch de Montpellier, the 1884 marble bust of Bazille that decorates the artist's tomb in the Cimetière protestant de Montpellier, and his 1894 monument to Jules-Émile Planchon, a *montpellierain* botanist who discovered the phylloxera aphid and, with the help of Bazille's father, saved suffering French wine crops. The circumstances of the phylloxera epidemic will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

operational discourse. Gleyre encouraged formal experimentation, preferring that students should seek their own styles and develop their own tastes instead of emulating their master's successful paintings.³² Baussan himself encouraged Bazille in their continued correspondence to "draw, draw a lot, that will serve you without a doubt, but also do medicine, it's difficult for me to say that to you, but believe me, believe me, satisfy your father."³³ Where Baussan hewed to more traditional forms of representation, Gleyre's own explorations of the body indicate that, as a master of the *juste milieu* idiom that brought the traditional and the modern together in the Salons of the 1850s, he developed his own brand of eclectic classicism, which allowed him to emphasize the emotional components of the underrepresented stories he chose to paint.³⁴ *Hercules and Omphale* (Fig. 28), completed the year that Bazille entered his studio, demonstrated Gleyre's adherence to a more Romantic classical style akin to that of Anne-Louis Girodet or Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, in which the forms of conventionally classical bodies struggle against atmospheric light conditions and emotional content. Gleyre took his subject matter from a gender-bending episode of the Hercules legend in which the hero must serve the Eastern queen Omphale, doing women's work for a year, after accidentally killing a man in a fit of rage.³⁵ An infrequently depicted story, this subject allowed Gleyre to experiment with depicting a demoralized yet whole heroic male nude, lending a

³² William Hauptman, *Charles Gleyre 1806-1874*, vol. 1 (Zurich, Princeton: Swiss Institute for Art Research, Princeton University Press, 1996), 20.

³³ Quoted in Marianne Delafond and Caroline Genet-Bondeville, *Frédéric Bazille* (Paris: Musée Marmottan Monet, 2003), 18. This letter was originally collected in Gabriel Sarraute, "Catalogue de l'oeuvre de Frédéric Bazille" (Thesis, Ecole du Louvre, 1948). The French reads: "Dessinez, dessinez beaucoup, cela vous servira sans doute, mais faites aussi de la médecine, c'est dur ce que je vous dis là, mais croyez-moi, croyez-moi, contentez votre père."

³⁴ H. Barbara Weinberg, *The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 58.

³⁵ Carlo Caballero, "In the Toils of Queen Omphale: Saint-Saëns's Painterly Refiguration of the Symphonic Poem," in *The Arts Entwined: Music and Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marsha L. Morton and Peter L. Schmunk (New York: Routledge, 2011), 120.

theme more appropriate for a history painter the situational specificity of a genre painting. *Hercules and Omphale*, however, was one of very few historical and literary scenes that Gleyre produced in the later years of his career. Instead, in the manner of artists such as David, Ingres, and numerous others, Gleyre made a number of intensely detailed portraits in the period during which Bazille studied in his atelier, modulating his explorations of the heroic body to fit the specific modern bodies that he portrayed in his portraits.

As with the holistic body advocated in sculpture and vitalist medicine, the drawing methods that Gleyre promoted in his atelier suggested the fluidity of boundaries between different types of bodily construction and representation. Though he continued to emphasize the importance of the live model in training his students, he also kept a skeleton in his studio. He believed that, if students were having too much trouble working out how to represent the live model's pose, examining a similarly posed skeleton, devoid of malleable, expressive, and ultimately distracting flesh could assist them in maintaining the structural integrity of the figure.³⁶ One of Bazille's own *académie* drawings (Fig. 29), dating to around 1863, distills both Gleyre's teachings and Bazille's skill at observing the structures of the human body. The drawing shows a bearded man turned to the side, his right leg set forward and his left trailing and turned out, his arms reaching out before him to hold the top of a pedestal as if beginning to turn it like a wheel. Bazille relies on contour lines to manage the boundaries of the body, and traces of erased lines remain in the paper where he had previously placed the figure's torso. He seems to have struggled with placing the figure's body within the space of the page, as the man's toes overlap and show through the outlined base of the pedestal, and

³⁶ Hauptman, *Charles Gleyre 1806-1874*, 1:332.

yet the muscular definition of the male model is carefully executed, especially with the finely rendered muscles in the torso down through his abdomen. The execution of the drawing alternates between managed elision and precise documentation—at this point in Bazille’s career, this likely indicates a struggle between the limits of his artistic abilities and the advanced operations of his more clinical, medical gaze.

Furthermore, the separation of the layers composing or covering the body was a pedagogical technique long-engrained in the methods of the *École des Beaux-Arts* and its independent imitators. This practice spans from David’s sketches for the *Oath of the Jeu de Paume* (Fig. 30), in which he grafted painted male portrait heads onto meticulously drawn heroic male bodies, and also in the studies for Ingres’s female portraits which, even in their modernity, adhered to academic traditions. First, the artist drew a nude body to perfect its structure and then added appropriate clothing, a process that must have influenced how artists approached the bodies they sought to fix on canvas. Ingres, specifically, adopted a rigorous plan of sketching in stages his portrait subjects, often bourgeois or aristocratic women for whom propriety circumscribed available modeling strategies. He would draw the heads and shoulders of his subjects in great detail, and then he substituted models to draw nude versions of his subjects’ bodies as they would be posed in the completed painting. His studies for his 1848 portrait of the Baronne de Rothschild, including three crucial studies now in the Musée Bonnat in Bayonne (Figs. 31-33), illustrate the progression of his experiments for this visual checklist of “features not usually found in Ingres’s portraits of women.”³⁷

³⁷ Carol Ockman, *Ingres’s Eroticized Bodies: Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 68.

Ingres first drew the nude from a model, posed in the informal forward-leaning pose that distinguishes this aristocratic portrait. He then began to experiment with overlaying Mme de Rothschild's exquisite dress over the model's nude form, with one drawing showing her legs still nude and the shoulder-baring top of her dress executed in careful detail. In the third drawing, Ingres finally covered her legs with her skirts. He struggled to resolve how the body gives shape to clothes and how that relationship could be transferred to the painted surface without sacrificing its depth. Sarah Betzer has described Ingres's process, which he also used for his second portrait of Madame Moitessier (1856), as working "less to guarantee the painter's access to an approximation of his sitter's body than it does to underscore the distance between his experience of each and the irresolvable disjunction between them." Betzer further argues that Ingres's difficulty in realizing his final painting "highlights the strangeness (qua impracticality) of the process he used."³⁸ Ingres's embrace of the strangeness in his practice may have appealed to Bazille, as the young artist seems to have struggled with how he might render meaningful strangeness in his own paintings of the late 1860s.

Though Ingres had become one of the elder statesmen of academic art by the time Bazille arrived in Paris, his influence continued through the 1860s with the more experimental younger artists. Perhaps as a consequence of his admiration of Ingres or his own academic training, Bazille's near-contemporary Edgar Degas continued this practice of drawing his figures nude and then clothed during the first part of his career. His preparatory sketches for his 1867 *Portrait of Mlle Fiocre in the Ballet "La Source"* (Fig. 34) show his experiments with the poses of his figures in the nude before finally painting

³⁸ Sarah Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio: Women, Painting, History* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 53.

them in their costumes in the final painting.³⁹ Furthermore, Degas's early efforts to remake the genres of history painting and portraiture, especially in *The Bellelli Family* (Fig. 35), indicate how practices such as Ingres's could have been brought into modern idioms of painting, and even into the modern life genre scenes that Bazille and his friends were seeking by 1867. Though we cannot be sure if Bazille himself embraced this practice of conceiving his figure paintings in stages, he likely understood the historical and conceptual significance of the process. He certainly described Ingres's portraits as his best work, saying, "Almost all of his portraits are masterpieces, but [his] other paintings are quite boring."⁴⁰ He made this observation after seeing Ingres's posthumous retrospective in 1867—in which the portrait of the Baronne de Rothschild and a selection of its preparatory sketches were displayed.⁴¹ Bazille would certainly have been aware of the extent to which standards of social decorum prevented an artist from a direct translation of the body posing in front of him to his paper or canvas, especially a woman concerned for her reputation and good name.

Not only was the nude body essential to the construction of bodies in paint, but the body of the artist himself also became central to the homosocial logic of relations within the atelier. Susan Waller has detailed the extent to which new students were subjected to the *charges*, or the hazing rituals of the atelier, and these ranged anywhere from simply buying food and drink for fellow students to naked faux duels or singing

³⁹ Ann Dumas, *Degas's Mlle. Fiocre in Context: A Study of Portrait of Mlle. E.F...; À Propos Du Ballet "La Source"* (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1988), 32–33. At least for *Mlle. Fiocre*, the study on which I base this observation is an oil sketch, as opposed to Ingres's drawings.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Gary Tinterow, "The Rise and Role of Fashion in French Nineteenth-Century Painting," in *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 19. Letter 93 in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 140.

⁴¹ Gary Tinterow, "Catalogue Entry for 'Baronne James de Rothschild, Née Betty von Rothschild,'" in *Portraits by Ingres: Image of an Epoch*, ed. Gary Tinterow and Philip Conisbee (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 425.

songs replete with sexual vulgarities.⁴² Bazille seems to have acknowledged that he too was subject to some of this hazing, writing to his parents “My entry into the studio was carried out without too many hitches. I was forced to sing, to stand on one leg, etc., etc., it was annoying, but I will be left alone now.”⁴³ As Waller rightly points out, the “etc., etc.” was likely meant to assuage the fears of his concerned parents, who perhaps had heard stories about the range of acts demanded of new students, though Gleyre seems to have been a comparatively considerate studio head.

Furthermore, the habits of the students, beyond the direct parameters of Gleyre’s instructions, foregrounded the body as a component of studio life in ways that extended beyond the frequent presence of live models. In some studios, the more experienced students ordered new ones to pose nude with the paid models, increasingly the likelihood that the young artists entering these ateliers experienced their own bodies as a crucial component of their processes through which they began to create their art.⁴⁴ Though Bazille told his parents that his days consisted of working in the atelier during the morning, attending his required medical classes in the afternoon, and then the theater at night,⁴⁵ some of his fellow students attended special courses in the evening at the École de Médecine that were organized specifically for artists to study anatomy from prepared

⁴² Susan Waller, “Académie and Fraternité: Constructing Masculinities in the Education of French Artists,” in *Artistic Brotherhoods in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Laura Morowitz and William Vaughan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 140–144.

⁴³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 140. The French reads: “Mon entrée à l’atelier s’est effectuée sans trop d’encombre; On m’a fait chanter; on m’a fait tenir sur une jambe, etc., etc., toutes choses ennuyeuses, mais on va me laisser tranquille maintenant.” Waller quotes a letter that is quoted in Gaston Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis*, 4th ed. (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1932), 18.

⁴⁴ Waller, “Académie and Fraternité,” 141. Waller here refers to known incidents in the ateliers of Delaroche and Gérôme. Though we know much less about what occurred in Gleyre’s atelier, except that he did not approve of the more vicious pranking, Gleyre did take, effectively, take over Delaroche’s atelier in 1843 after Delaroche’s former students pleaded with him, according to Hauptman, *Charles Gleyre 1806–1874*, 1:328–329.

⁴⁵ Letter 6, to his father, November 1862, and Letter 8, to his mother, December 1, 1862, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 28, 31–32.

cadavers.⁴⁶ These sessions heightened the stakes from just drawing *écorché* models by bringing actual human bodies before the audience, who would hang on every word as a professor or his assistant dissected specimens and described their forms and functions. More peculiarly, and much like the skeleton in Gleyre's studio, these dissection demonstrations worked from the inside out, emphasizing "deep structures" invisible from the exterior and adding layer upon layer until reaching the exterior surface.⁴⁷ The suspense of these revelations, the waiting and drawing conclusions as the demonstration progressed, suggested a narrative of the medical body presented before an artistic audience to be consumed and then further disseminated.

Beyond the demands of modeling and studying, recreational activities in the atelier drew both its body-centric practices and Bazille's interest in theater together once more. At least twice during Bazille's tenure in Gleyre's atelier, the students staged plays for friends and charged minimal admissions prices. As Dianne Pitman has noted, these atelier productions helped to teach students "the expressive language on which pictorial narrative largely depended," and Bazille's own training in painting shared with the theater an emphasis on "the invention and composition of narrative scenes."⁴⁸ In February 1863, the atelier chose to perform *La Tour de Nesle*, an historical romance by Alexandre Dumas père, and Bazille was cast as Sire de Pierrefonds, a peripheral courtier with few lines. He was excited about the play, however, and invited all of his friends; he

⁴⁶ Hauptman, *Charles Gleyre 1806-1874*, 1:331. For more on the relationship between organized artistic training and anatomy lessons, see: Anthea Callen, "The Body and Difference: Anatomy Training at the Ecole Des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Art History* 20, no. 1 (March 1997): 23–60; Philippe Comar, ed., *Figures du corps: Une leçon d'anatomie à l'École des Beaux-Arts*, format réduit (Paris: Beaux-Arts, 2012).

⁴⁷ Callen, "The Body and Difference," 26.

⁴⁸ Pitman, *Bazille*, 62. Pitman agrees on the depth of Bazille's knowledge of theatrical components, but disavows its impact on his paintings, writing that he did not view "such conventions" as "essential to the medium."

also wrote to his mother about the decorations he was expected to contribute.⁴⁹ Bazille eventually reported that the production had been a success—so much so that a caricature of the play’s cast appeared in a little newspaper called *Le Boulevard* on February 8, 1863 (Fig. 36). Though Bazille’s role was minor, the caricature shows his lanky form leering out from the periphery. His body once again separates him from his peers, short and burly men whose confusion at the events of the play contrast with the knowing sneer on the face of Bazille as Pierrefonds.

In December 1863, the atelier elected to perform a translation of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, and Bazille had initially declined a role, fearing he would lose too much time.⁵⁰ He eventually assented to taking “the role of a dancer” and executing a “pas de deux in the large feast scene,” as it entailed no time commitment for learning lines. He enthusiastically described his costume to his father, writing: “I have made a costume in pink *lustrine*, a bodice and a very short skirt, and then I had petticoats of stiff muslin like what upholsterers use. Somebody loaned me a silk leotard, dancer’s boots, and fake necklaces and bracelets which had a superb effect.”⁵¹ In preparing his lines and donning costumes appropriate to the characters he played for his atelier, aiming for this “superb effect,” Bazille seeks satisfaction for himself and his audience through the mobilization of his own body. He clearly relished the process of making his own costumes and learning his own parts and believed he understood how theatrical productions could succeed from those he observed and from his own attempts to write a play. When he

⁴⁹ Letter 14, to his mother, January 18, 1863, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 41.

⁵⁰ Letter 34, to his mother, December 8, 1863, in *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵¹ Letter 36, to his father, after December 14, 1863, in *Ibid.*, 71–72. The French reads: “J’avais fait faire un costume en lustrine rose, un corsage et une jupe très courte, puis j’avais des jupons en mousseline raide qui sert aux tapissiers à coller le papier. On m’avait prêté un maillot de soie, des bottines de danseur, des colliers et des bracelets faux qui ont fait un superbe effet.”

began to produce large-scale tableaux, the ability to combine words, actions, and visual effects in the form of costuming and set design to create meaning would prove indispensable.

Fashioning His Family

In addition to the protean vision of the human body that Bazille likely developed as he concurrently pursued medical and artistic training, his immersion into Parisian social and theatrical culture would also have made him acutely aware of the discursive power of clothing in fashioning individual and social identities. As Ingres clothed his preparatory nude sketches in the silk dresses befitting the aristocratic stature of his true subjects, Bazille seems to have realized that clothes did, in fact, make the man (or woman). I argue, further, that this necessarily shifting perception made Bazille more aware of clothing as layers put over a bodily frame, which in turn caused him to approach his figure paintings, and especially *Family Reunion*, with a performative naturalism contingent on his detailed observations of clothing. Choosing to paint his contemporaries in modern clothing inherently required him to engage with the standards of respectable dress for various classes and gender identities, as did many of his friends and contemporaries. However, his own engagement with presenting himself as an elegant man-about-town allowed him to engage with standards of dress in depicting his extended family, who remained very close to him even when they were separated by great distances.

Scholars addressing Second Empire fashion have frequently departed from two principle sources: the writings of Charles Baudelaire and the proliferation of illustrated

fashion magazines after advancements in printing technology. Baudelaire, in his oft-quoted 1859 essay “The Painter of Modern Life,” describes the relationship between *la mode* (fashion) and modernity as such:

Fashion should thus be considered as a symptom of the taste for the ideal which floats on the surface of all the crude, terrestrial and loathsome bric-à-brac that the natural life accumulates in the human brain: as a sublime deformation of Nature, or rather a permanent and repeated attempt at her *reformation*...[Fashions] should be thought of as vitalized and animated by the beautiful women who wore them.⁵²

For Baudelaire, who privileged the superficial and the artificial, the distinction between the natural, “loathsome” body and its beautiful, animate coverings proves to be the very height of potential for modernity. Art historians have zealously analyzed how artists of the period, especially Manet, have engaged with Baudelaire’s formulation of fashion in choosing to render contemporary feminine clothes with an unprecedented intensity.⁵³

Relying on Baudelaire, however, minimizes the voices of critics who expanded or countered his forceful and poetic, if problematic, evaluation of modern women in favor of a more balanced evaluation of fashion’s role in modernity. Notable among these was Baudelaire’s friend, critic, and dramatist Théophile Gautier, who, in 1858, had published his own comments on fashion in a series of articles entitled *De la mode*.⁵⁴ Though scholars have often described Gautier as anti-realism, this accusation may be misconstrued. In his Salon criticism from the 1850s, Gautier acknowledged that traditional categories of art had become blurred and suggested that modernity, as a

⁵² Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life,” in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), 32–33.

⁵³ Indeed, Carol Armstrong has written that Baudelaire’s formulation of modernity, “with its... fascinated attachment to the scintillating surface of *le beau fard*, the fashionable, and all that is feminized and spectacularized in the modern culture of the commodity, it proposes a modernism in the image of ‘la Femme.’ This observation enables her to understand Manet’s modernity “in the image of the feminine.” See: Carol Armstrong, *Manet Manette* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 128–133.

⁵⁴ Théophile Gautier, *De la mode* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1993).

symptom of that instability, and portraiture, as a genre documenting modernity, might play a role in reforming outdated artistic standards.⁵⁵ Consequently, Gautier's assessment of modern clothing, unlike Baudelaire's, continually described both the frequently delightful strangeness of modern dress and the ambivalence of artists toward it.

Unlike Baudelaire's seeming insistence on the newness and ephemerality of fashion, Gautier poses an overt connection to Antiquity. Gautier refers to modern clothing as "a kind of second skin,"⁵⁶ and he singles out Ingres's 1832 portrait of *Monsieur Bertin* (Fig. 37) for praise by writing: "Are not the vent of the tailcoat and the creases of the trousers firm, noble, and pure like the folds of a chlamys or a toga? Does the [male] body not exist under its prosaic vestments like a statue under its drapery?"⁵⁷ Ulrich Lehmann has referred to Gautier's description as "fake statues erected with pretentiousness," but describes these statements as an acknowledgment that the impact of male dress "lies in its ability to adopt stylistic changes...while maintaining a curiously uncompromising refusal to change its overall conception."⁵⁸ Like classical statues, male dress becomes transhistorically iconic in form. Furthermore, though Gautier may knowingly allude to Ingres's adherence to academic drawing practices, his retention of the body and clothing as separate elements remains distinctive from Baudelaire's suggestion that bodies animate the fashions they wear. For Gautier, the bodies are

⁵⁵ Stéphane Guégan, "Théophile Gautier, Militant of Modernity," in *Manet: Portraying Life* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2012), 36–37.

⁵⁶ Translation quoted in Marie Simon, *Fashion in Art: The Second Empire and Impressionism*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (London: Zwemmer, 1995), 158. Gautier, *De la mode*, 11–12. The French reads: "une sorte de peau dont il ne se sépare sous aucun prétexte."

⁵⁷ Gautier, *De la mode*, 19. Gautier writes: "Les plis de la redingote et du pantalon ne sont-ils pas fermes, nobles et purs comme les plis d'une chlamyde ou d'une toge? Le corps ne vit-il pas sous son vêtement prosaïque comme celui d'une statue sous sa draperie?" Translation from Ulrich Lehmann, *Tigersprung: Fashion in Modernity* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2000), 25.

⁵⁸ Lehmann, *Tigersprung*, 25.

animate in spite of the static over-layer they wear and which disseminates their social symbolism.

Prints in the numerous fashion periodicals of the day capitalized on this socially symbolic language, and artists certainly looked to these fashion plates for inspiration. Scholars have documented clear correspondences between figures from specific fashion plates and figures in paintings by artists such as Claude Monet and Paul Cézanne.⁵⁹ Monet notably borrowed heavily from the figures in fashion plates to compose his 1866 painting *Women in the Garden* (Fig. 38), which Bazille subsequently bought from him for a generous sum in order to provide his friend with financial support.⁶⁰ Monet's figures take their playful poses and indirect gazes directly from fashion prints in *Le Monde Elégant* and other periodicals (Figs. 39-40), and more importantly for the comparison between Monet and Bazille, the women's forms are wholly submerged beneath their inflexible skirts, supported by the crinolines that were on their last legs of fashionableness by this point in Monet's career.⁶¹ The redheaded woman in the back, who runs stiffly away from or toward a figure that we cannot see, reveals no human form beneath the conical structure of her crinoline, lifted entirely from a fashion plate image. Though sitting would be the one action that could challenge the dominance of the rigid, caged petticoat, even the woman in the extremely popular white dress with black

⁵⁹ See, for example: André Dombrowski, *Cézanne, Murder, and Modern Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013), 189–231, 282–289; Joel Isaacson, "Impressionism and Journalistic Illustration," *Arts Magazine* 56, no. 10 (June 1982): 95–115; Mark Roskill, "Early Impressionism and the Fashion Plate," *The Burlington Magazine* 112, no. 807 (June 1970): 390–93, 395.

⁶⁰ Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 428–429.

⁶¹ Penelope Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion* (London: B.T. Batsford Limited, 1992), 63.

embroidery,⁶² who covers her head with a parasol and gazes into a pile of picked garden flowers, sinks into her collapsed skirts as she sits beneath the tree.

Though looking at fashion plates “could contribute to explaining the fixity of the figures”⁶³ in *Family Reunion* and though Bazille’s familiarity with *Women in the Garden* is documented, the depictions of the painter’s cousins differ markedly in the way that the force of their bodies persists despite the covering of their clothing and in the life and character they retain in their faces. Even as Émile Zola commented that Bazille’s portrayal of modern clothing suggests that “the painter loves his time,”⁶⁴ to attribute these differences to our knowledge that *Family Reunion* is a portrait of people to whom Bazille was very close would be reductive. Though they wear very similar fashionable dresses, the painter’s subjects, with their uncomfortable stares, assume poses that look nothing like the stock postures of the fashion plates that governed Monet’s explorations of figure painting. Dianne Pitman’s extended discussion of *Family Reunion* has couched Bazille’s choices regarding the pose in terms of succeeding at evading André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri’s concerns that poses in his group *carte de visite* portraits not become too overtly theatrical or too dry because of the stiffness required by available photographic processes.⁶⁵ Pitman further notes that Bazille’s apparent interest in the relationship between the subjects and the beholders of the painting may be analogous to techniques used in Dutch portraiture (then analyzed in the nineteenth century by Théophile Thoré, whose writings may have been known to Bazille).⁶⁶ Even as this painting demands a

⁶² Birgit Haase, “Claude Monet: Women in the Garden,” in *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 103.

⁶³ Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 165.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Pitman, *Bazille*, 83.m

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 109–111.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

thorough analysis of pose and its relationship to photography, such analysis cannot trump an assessment of this painting at its most intimate detail.

The focal point of *Family Reunion* is the young woman seated at the center table, Bazille's cousin Thérèse des Hours. Wearing a blue and white version of the dotted dress that appears in Monet's painting, Thérèse looks out with a blank expression on her face, contorting her torso to face the viewer while her left elbow seems to rest on her hip and her left hand grasps her right wrist. Her pose, unorthodox and perhaps even rude for a portrait,⁶⁷ has led previous commentators to narrativize the scene as a family interrupted at their gathering—someone has walked onto the terrace, and they have turned to assess his presence, causing the entire extended family to stare out like “a pride of lions interrupted in their midday nap.”⁶⁸ I address this impulse to instill the painting within a familial narrative below, but here, I am interested in how, because Thérèse sits and twists around to face the viewer, her dress conforms to her body, causing the blue underskirt to show through the sheerer white and dotted top layer. Bazille also allows the flesh of her arm to show through its sheer white sleeve, and achieves a similar effect in the dress of Pauline des Hours, the woman who stands behind the central table. Pauline, a recently married cousin, stands arm in arm with her new husband, Émile Teulon, in a dress carefully variegated between white and pink, which, upon close examination, seems to be a visual effect of its very thin pink stripes. Teulon's fashionable waistcoat has creases around his waist that similarly account for the form of the body it houses.

⁶⁷ Jean S. Boggs, “Edgar Degas and the Bellellis,” *Art Bulletin* 37, no. 2 (June 1955): 132. Boggs notes that “it would have offended Ingres' sense of propriety to place the baron Bellelli with his back toward us and at an angle which destroys the order of the room.” Though, unlike Bellelli, Thérèse is at full attention, she looks out almost aggressively, and the bodily contortions that make this pose possible draw into question how a woman might remain proper when she is represented as in such a pose.

⁶⁸ Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism*, 138.

Bazille's other cousin Camille, seated on the parapet at the far right of the painting, also wears a dotted dress like that of her sister Thérèse.⁶⁹ Camille greets the intruder/viewer with a facial expression that is comparatively inquisitive. She bends over to rest her elbows on her knees, supporting her chin with her almost claw-like left hand, and her right hand falls between her knees, causing a fold in the lap of her skirt that allows her seated frame to remain present under the large piles of skirts. Furthermore, the casual, crumpled nature of her posture provides a startling contrast to the stern, mannered stance of the woman next to her, Bazille's future sister-in-law Suzanne Tissié. Though Camille's posture recalls the candid, intelligent pose of Victoria Dubourg in Degas's ca. 1868-69 portrait of her (Fig. 41),⁷⁰ it perhaps suggests more about Bazille's willingness to deconstruct the acceptable elements of feminine portraiture. Degas portrays Dubourg as "conspicuously lacking in the conventional trappings of feminine coquetry and grace... her posture informal, her gaze direct."⁷¹ However, the more compelling source for Camille's posture may be Ingres's *Baronne de Rothschild* portrait discussed earlier in this chapter, as Bazille would have seen the posthumous retrospective of Ingres's work in 1867 just as *Family Reunion* began to take shape in his mind. Indeed, in the same letter in which he declares Ingres's portraits to be "masterpieces," he tells his father that he

⁶⁹ Gloria Groom, "The Social Network of Fashion," in *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 34–35. Berthe Morisot's painting *The Sisters* of her and her sister Edma is a good example of this custom of young sisters dressing alike, though, as the authors note, Morisot's choice was more heavily freighted with meaning as her sister was newly married.

⁷⁰ Pitman, *Bazille*, 85.

⁷¹ Norma Broude, "Degas's 'Misogyny,'" *Art Bulletin* 59, no. 1 (March 1977): 101. Broude also notes that Degas's 1880-84 portrait of Mary Cassatt, now in the National Portrait Gallery, depicts Cassatt in a very similar pose. Dubourg and Cassatt were, of course, both female artists known for their warmth and intelligence. I have found no evidence that Bazille knew Dubourg or Degas's painting of her (she and Fantin-Latour would not meet and marry until 1869), but they certainly shared similar passions for both playing and listening to music, especially German composers such as Wagner. For more discussion of Dubourg's life and practice, see: Elizabeth Kane, "Victoria Dubourg: The Other Fantin-Latour," *Women's Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (Autumn - Winter 1989 1988): 15–21.

imagines completing “a painting at Méric that will be as large and will take me all of the summer,” a likely reference to *Family Reunion*.⁷² No matter which portrait may have been Bazille’s source, the dazzling informality of Camille’s pose affords her a manner of lackadaisical confidence that seems almost masculine; with her knowing stare, she pays little attention to preserving the feminine silhouette of her dress.

Bazille’s soon-to-be sister-in-law Suzanne, who sits so rigidly with her elbows out and her hands clasped in her lap, provides yet another idiosyncratic choice in depicting clothes. Like Thérèse, Suzanne sits on a thin-framed wire chair, though one that is turned to the side so that her skirts bunch on her left hip and push through the back of the chair. Marc, the artist’s younger brother and Suzanne’s fiancé, stands behind her chair, leaning onto his right foot, which rests on the chair behind Suzanne and causes her skirts to bunch on the right side as well as the left. We might wonder if Bazille intended this to seem like a moment of witty visual banter between the young couple, as if Suzanne’s right hand actually reaches back to keep her fiancé from damaging her skirts with his dirty shoe, while her hemline overlaps with Camille’s in a playful moment of solidarity between cousins.

In comparison to these young women in their patterned dresses and unorthodox postures, Bazille’s mother, seated at left, appears positively regal. Her blue satin dress, paired with a black lace shawl, flows down and out across the terrace, showing no sign of her body as she tightly crosses her arms across her chest and sits tall. Her posture has been compared to that of her cousin, Valentine Lejosne, as she is depicted in Manet’s

⁷² Letter 93, to his parents, May 1867, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 140. The French reads: “Je projette aussi un tableau à Méric qui sera assez grand et me prendra toute la fin de l’été.”

Music in the Tuileries (1862) (Fig. 42),⁷³ suggesting further similarities in tone for these two paintings as modern, composite group portraits.⁷⁴ The artist's father, Gaston, is the only figure in the painting who does not look outward toward the viewer; his relaxed and casual pose contrasts with the other men, who look alert, but not entirely comfortable. His visible self-satisfaction in his role as patriarch suggests his high status in the society beyond the terrace; as a political figure and successful businessman in Montpellier, he projects his entitlement to this time with his family.

These seemingly minute and unusually naturalistic details in the portrayal of the dresses worn by Thérèse, Camille, and Suzanne deviate from the conventionally smooth silhouettes of nineteenth-century portraiture, even the meticulously observed canvases of Ingres. For Bazille, such particularities of observation are most notable in *Family Reunion*, though they appear with some frequency across the artist's oeuvre in his attempts to render the clothed human form. In 1866, Bazille depicted his friend Édouard Blau (Fig. 43), the aspiring librettist with whom he had written the play *Le Fils de Don César*, sitting in the green chair he described as his "only luxury"⁷⁵ and included in his studio paintings. Blau looks slightly off to the side with a gaze that seems almost uncomfortable in such a closely framed painting, and he wears the austere black garb of a bourgeois gentleman, meant to emphasize the stoicism of proper manhood through its darkness and practicality.⁷⁶ These black garments were meant to cloak the body's surface, and yet Bazille, in portraying only the far upper portion of his friend's body, still

⁷³ Pitman, *Bazille*, 91.

⁷⁴ Tinterow, "The Rise and Role of Fashion," 21.

⁷⁵ Letter 61, to his mother, December 22, 1864, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 101.

⁷⁶ Byrde, *Nineteenth Century Fashion*. Byrde is mostly concerned with nineteenth-century British fashion; however, her description of the purpose of men's clothes in the Victorian period tracks with discussions of men in France who did not conform to a type—dandy, calicot, bohemian, and so on.

refuses to blend the body with the clothes that overlay it. Looking closely at the seam where Blau's vest joins and buttons, Bazille has rendered the garment so that it buckles, with the rippling of one side pulled to meet the other, in response to Blau's posture or perhaps the curve of his stomach under his close-fitting vest. Thus Bazille allows the viewer to see the crisp white of the sitter's shirt peeping through.

Similarly, in his 1869 portrait of Edmond Maître (Fig. 44), Bazille portrays his dear friend seated in profile and absorbed in reading or thinking about the book that rests in his lap. Maître's clothing lacks some of the austerity of Blau's with the buoyant grey and white dotted cravat offsetting the stolidity of his grey jacket. Maître wears a boutonnière of violets, with their stems twisted together and inserted through his lapel. However, Bazille does not hide the twisted stems, instead allowing them to remain visible between the dark lapel and the grey jacket that lies across Maître's chest—a peculiar concession to empirical fact. This small bouquet of violets lays above the languorous curve that follows Maître's sloping shoulder down his left arm to the slightly upward sloping leg that allows the sitter to balance his book with his small, graceful hand. Bazille's poetic gaze and care for his friend, eminently present in this exquisitely painted portrait, suggest the role of these details in the artist's vision of how to paint his friends as embodied figures in modern clothing. Though Bazille so carefully depicted both his friends and his family, he seems to have turned this obsessive gaze as much toward constructing and portraying his own appearance.

Clothing, as Bazille has chosen to render it, might then be viewed as “architecture superimposed on the body”⁷⁷ that functioned as an exterior shell that, if carefully selected and donned, could protect the softer interior matter of the skin, flesh, and mind from the

⁷⁷ Simon, *Fashion in Art*, 158.

brutal vicissitudes of Second Empire societal judgments. Recall Gautier's distaste for modern dress and its deep roots in a preference for classical form, yet he describes drapery as a necessary, yet unfortunate, mask for the body's superior form. If clothing and the body are permitted to remain separate entities, the opposite of the fashion plate figures that Monet and Cézanne employed, the artist engages in a detailed hypernaturalism that more accurately approximates how a painting's audience might process their reality, having been conditioned by spectacular theatrical productions and city streets. Retaining the separation between his bodies and the clothes they wear allows Bazille to attempt to animate both layers, producing modern bodies of a deceptive complexity.

Similarly, in *Au Bonheur des dames*, his 1883 novel describing the growing culture of department stores that threatened the old system of individuated shops, Émile Zola describes the first time that Denise, a character who has just arrived in Paris from a small Norman town, encounters the windows of the titular department store. For Denise, the mannequins come alive in their textiles so beautiful and extravagant, unlike any she had seen before:

A crowd was looking at them, groups of women were crushing each other in front of them, a real mob, made brutal by covetousness. And these passions in the street were giving life to the materials: the laces shivered, then drooped again, concealing the depths of the shop with an exciting air of mystery; even the lengths of cloth, thick and square, were breathing, exuding a tempting odour, while the overcoats were throwing back their shoulders still more on the dummies, which were acquiring souls, and the huge velvet coat was billowing out, supple and warm, as if on shoulders of flesh and blood, with a heaving breast and quivering hips.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Émile Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, trans. Brian Nelson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 16.

The significance of the body in *Au Bonheur des dames*, then, is not so much the flesh and bone structures of human figures, but the “clothes and accessories, and in the uncontrollable desire for bodily coverings and adornments created by modern publicity and display.”⁷⁹ For Denise, the clothes become alive, anthropomorphic, and even erotic, trumping the dummies that allow consumers to envision how clothes shape the human form. Indeed, it is the surfaces that matter here and invoke the question of what lies beneath—the threat that these clothes cover up a “lack of the redeeming faculties that the body, prior to its unveiling, is expected to possess and that the keen unwrapper is intent on appropriating.”⁸⁰ Bazille’s choice to focus on details, as well as places where bodies actively act upon their coverings, creates conditions of embodiment by testifying to the veracity of the bodies that the clothes shield. In doing so, he acknowledges the symbolic potential of clothing within urban visuality without suppressing the dignity and individuality of his subjects.

Fashioning Himself

That Bazille, as a young provincial man coming to Paris, should be wary of the messages clothing can communicate was inevitably compounded by the prevalence of masculine types based upon standards of dress that he encountered even in his immediate social circle between his arrival in Paris in 1862 and the display of *Family Reunion* in 1868. Indeed, though mainstream styles were reliable in their soberness, increasingly outrageous types for dressing added new perspectives to discussions on masculine attire.

⁷⁹ Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 149–155.

⁸⁰ Alexandra Warwick and Dani Cavallaro, *Fashioning the Frame: Boundaries, Dress and the Body*, *Dress, Body, Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 51.

As Judith Butler has written, “gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.”⁸¹ And so Bazille’s “abiding gendered self” had to be constituted in relation to the various settings of his life in which his identity needed to be concentrated or diluted to please his immediate or extended family, his medical school classmates or artistic friends, and the other groups with which he regularly interacted.⁸² Even at the level of the fashion detail—buttons, bodies, accessories—choices about dress, at once multitudinous in the metropolis’s comparative freedom and also limited with regard to his southernness and social class, must have conditioned Bazille’s movements and interactions from the moment he arrived in Paris.

Before the Franco-Prussian War, France was marked by regional diversity, and different masculinities consequently emerged in response to the social customs of each city or region.⁸³ Not only were Bazille’s Paris experiences likely mediated by previous mythologies of young provincials arriving in France’s urban capital, such as those that likely provoked Delvau’s assurances, but Parisians likely viewed Bazille through their own expectations for real or imagined people from the provinces. Even a sophisticated provincial from a long-established city such as Montpellier would have been subject to

⁸¹ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519. See also: Joanne Entwistle, “The Dressed Body,” in *Body Dressing*, ed. Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 33–58. Entwistle applies a similar formulation to the relationship of a body to its clothing in noting that “dress works on the body which in turn works on and mediates the experience of self” (44).

⁸² My discussion of identity density as diluted or concentrated is heavily influenced by the possibility of an “identity grammar” as elucidated in Wayne Brekhus, *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs: Gay Suburbia and the Grammar of Social Identity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁸³ Bertrand Taithe, “Neighborhood Boys and Men: the Changing Spaces of Masculine Identity in France, 1848-71,” in *French Masculinities: History, Culture, and Politics*, Ed. Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007]: 67.

associations of the rural or provincial with “naturalness, family, stability, and community.”⁸⁴ Bazille’s high social class likely made the difference here—the naturalness of his family connections to his mother’s cousins, the Mamignards and the Lejosnes, eased his entry into more elite social events. Hippolyte and Valentine Lejosne, especially, proved instrumental to the young artist’s education by inviting him to their salons, whose guests included artists and writers like Manet and Baudelaire.⁸⁵

And yet, the theme of dress betraying provincality featured heavily in works by nineteenth-century writers. In *Illusions perdues* (1837-1843), Balzac describes the flight of a couple, the aspiring poet Lucien Chardon, who adopts his mother’s noble name, de Rubempré, to increase his status, and his aristocratic mistress Madame de Bargeton, from their home in Angoulême, an old medieval city in the Charente, to Paris. Upon their arrival, both Lucien and Madame de Bargeton constantly measure themselves against Parisian men and women. When Lucien realizes that he is in danger of losing Madame de Bargeton’s affections, he begins to assess his appearance in relation to the men around him:

Lucien passed two hours of torture in the Tuileries: a violent revulsion overcame him as he examined himself... Having thus made the discovery that there is a difference between morning and evening dress, that poet of violent emotions, of subtle perceptions, realized the ugliness of his costume, whose cut was old-fashioned, whose blue was the wrong shade, whose collar was beyond everything... the buttons were tarnished, there were fatal white lines along the creases. What was more, his waistcoat was too short, and of grotesquely provincial cut... He was wearing a white cravat with embroidered ends... Nobody, except a few elderly business men, and one or two sedate civil-servants, seemed to wear white cravats in

⁸⁴ Jo Little, “Embodiment and Rural Masculinity,” in *Country Boys: Masculinity and Rural Life*, ed. Hugh Campbell, Michael Mayerfeld Bell, and Margaret Finney (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 188. Another helpful text for examining non-urban masculinities is Jane Kenway, Anna Kraack, and Anna Hickey-Moody, *Masculinity Beyond the Metropolis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁸⁵ Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 36–37; Pitman, *Bazille*, 54. His earliest letters from Paris include numerous assurances to his parents that he was making time to see his distinguished relatives.

the morning; but what was worse, there was a grocer's errand-boy with a basket on his head on the other side of the railings on the pavement of the Rue de Rivoli, about whose neck the young man from Angoulême noticed the two ends of a cravat, embroidered by the hands of some adored shop-girl.⁸⁶

For Lucien, his sartorial failings make his inability to assimilate to Parisian customs most clear, and his inability to blend in proves the cause of his eventual undoing. It was often the case in Balzac's fiction that, "if the provincial fails in the capital, then it is because Paris has failed to corrupt him, which in turn must be seen as a tribute to the strength of the provincial virtues of honesty and innocence."⁸⁷ If a provincial transplant cannot manage to dress himself properly, how can he possibly be expected to excel in the demands of Paris's labyrinthine social milieu?

However, Bazille's connections and resulting social standing made his chances of success more favorable than the posturing Lucien de Rubempré. Bazille's comportment also differed greatly from that of Courbet and Cézanne, two other well-known nineteenth century artists who hailed from outside Paris. Unlike Courbet,⁸⁸ Bazille received his family's blessing for his time in Paris. Indeed, it was very common for young men from Montpellier to spend time away in the world before returning home to marry.⁸⁹ Bazille was also unlike the young Cézanne, who purposely blustered into Parisian society and performed the stereotypes of southerners as poorly dressed, unsociable, and uncouth.⁹⁰ In all of these cases, though, provincials in Paris tended to be regarded as a sort of hybrid

⁸⁶ Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions*, trans. Kathleen Raine (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 167.

⁸⁷ Andrew Watts, *Preserving the Provinces: Small Town and Countryside in the World of Honoré de Balzac* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), 228.

⁸⁸ T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 36.

⁸⁹ Guy Barral, "Our Young Fellow Citizen, Son of the Honorable President of the Society of Agriculture..." in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, trans. John Goodman (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 25.

⁹⁰ Nina Athanasoglou-Kallmyer, *Cézanne and Provence: The Painter in His Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 17–18.

individual, in whom, as Nina Athanasoglou-Kallmyer writes, “the opposing notions of the rural and the urban, the traditional and the modern, the metropolitan and the parochial were syncretically fused.”⁹¹ For Bazille, it is possible that this in-betweenness shaped a practice of constructing his image, and subsequently that of his family, as a system of moveable parts—choosing one persona instead of another or adopting parts of many types as one might don different costumes in different acts of a play to express the development of a character.⁹²

In contrast to these prejudicial stereotypes, Bazille was known for his exquisite taste in clothing and for his vigorous participation in the social group that eventually met at the Café Guerbois to discuss art and politics.⁹³ When moving in and out of these social circles, those of his more bohemian artist friends and his refined cousins and family friends, Bazille seems to have enjoyed choosing clothes to draw attention. His sheer physical stature, at six foot four, made him “pre-targeted for the curious gaze,” a consequence that he may have relished and exploited in experimenting with his clothing.⁹⁴ Alfred Delvau also instilled in his readers the importance of sartorial cues, suggesting that each new arrival find an excellent tailor to help him. Furthermore, Delvau says, with significant linguistic vitality: “If it is necessary to run with the pack, it

⁹¹Ibid., 28.

⁹² See: Brekhus, *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs*, 145–151. I draw from Brekhus’s description of commuter identities, which includes as one of its attributes “the high-volume accentuation of auxiliary characteristics including specialized knowledge skills (insider knowledge) appropriate to whatever setting one is in.”

⁹³ J. Patrice Marandel, “Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism,” in *Frédéric Bazille and Early Impressionism*, by J. Patrice Marandel (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1978), 19. While Marandel discusses Bazille’s involvement in the Café Guerbois group more generally, Rewald (199–200) describes Bazille as the only member of the group educated and verbally combative enough to keep up with Manet, the group’s leader, and Degas. Rewald writes, “[Bazille] always went right to the center of the problem with a clarity unblurred by sentimentalities, and he approached all questions with a matter-of-factness quite uncommon for his age.” Although Rewald’s sources are unclear, this conflicts greatly with Champa’s portrayal of Bazille as an unaware provincial in his *Studies in Early Impressionism*.

⁹⁴ Kermit Swiler Champa, “A Complicated Codependence,” in *Monet & Bazille: A Collaboration*, ed. David A. Brenneman (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1998), 71.

is even more necessary to laugh with the *singes*—and we are a people that is essentially apeline: transform yourself therefore from head to toe, outside and inside; take on the required skin and learn the language of fashion—even if, when leaving, you discard them both at the station.”⁹⁵ Playing with his words, Delvau uses *singes*, connoting both apes and copycats, to facetiously critique Parisian expectations and to emphasize the need to assimilate, even if temporarily. That he should specify a transformation “outside and inside”—both superficial appearance and interior intangibles like character and morals—evokes the permeable boundaries that Bazille knew to govern the Vitalist understanding of relationships between bodies and their surrounding environments.

Indeed, beyond simply overcoming the markers of his provincial origins, Bazille would have found among his Parisian male counterparts a number of types or roles that he could embody through careful measures of dress and bodily comportment. The *calicot*, the bohemian, and the *flâneur* were all typologies identifiable through the codes of masculine fashion in the 1860s, with varying degrees of flamboyance. These were the codes within which Bazille and his more fashion-conscious friends sought to maintain their identities. The vanity that Delvau’s recommendations require evokes the figure of the *calicot*—the paradoxical male shop-worker who adopts military costume yet behaves effeminately, who presents himself as a dandy yet actively seduces both women and benefactors who might assist in his social climbing.⁹⁶ Tied to the rise of consumer culture and the department store, the figure of the *calicot* allowed the Second Empire

⁹⁵ Delvau, *Les plaisirs de Paris*, 9. The French reads: “S’il faut hurler avec les loups, il faut bien plus encore cabrioler avec les singes,—et nous sommes un peuple essentiellement simiesque: transformez-vous donc des pieds à la tête, en dehors et en dedans, revêtez la peau obligatoire et apprenez la langue à la mode,—quitte, à votre départ, à jeter l’une et l’autre à la borne.”

⁹⁶ Susan Hiner, “Monsieur Calicot: French Masculinity between Commerce and Honor,” *West 86th* 19, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2012): 32–60. Hiner discusses the formation of the *calicot* type during the Restoration Era and its transformations up through the end of the Second Empire.

press a means of critiquing excesses in fashion,⁹⁷ much as it critiqued the provincials who arrived in Paris without a firm sense of urban glamour. Furthermore, the *calicot* demonstrated the fluidity between the popular press, daily life, and theatrical tropes with its fluidity to signify in all arenas; much as the *calicot* was made popular through a series of plays and novels, the threat of the *calicot* is in the social boundaries that he willfully disregards and thus transgresses.⁹⁸

These social boundaries required Bazille to negotiate the terrain of his own body much in the same way that he negotiated the bodies of others during his time in his classes, and the ease of choosing clothes increased with the help of a tailor. Though he seems to have relied on his mother and his favored *montpelliérain* tailors to maintain his measurements and provide him with properly fitted shirts and other garments, a situation that will be discussed in further detail below, tailoring was a necessary fact of life for a man of Bazille's higher class and social interests. However, it was also a process that required the customer to submit his body to the subjugation, through classification and measurement, to another man—a tremendously personal process that could even be categorized as erotic—and tailoring manuals of the period often included instructions for how a professional tailor could take measurements without transgressing social and physical boundaries.⁹⁹ In conducting this practical application of physiology, the best tailors needed to understand how a body, as both a physical structure and an embodied

⁹⁷ Ibid., 49–50.

⁹⁸ Farid Chenoune, *A History of Men's Fashion*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), 34–35.

⁹⁹ Christopher Breward, "Manliness, Modernity, and the Shaping of Male Clothing," in *Body Dressing*, ed. Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 169–171. Breward suggests that this unavoidable sort of eroticism is the reason that the more practical elements of tailoring have been elided from the still fairly minimal literature on men's clothing in the nineteenth century.

presence, would fill the clothes being made—how the clothes could be made to seem as alive as the bodies they covered.

As options for obtaining commercially produced clothing increased, texts appeared across Europe that aimed to help tailors successfully conquer the challenges of producing individualized garments. One of these, Henry Wampen’s “Anatomy for Tailors,” published in London in 1850, encouraged its readers to familiarize themselves with this information in order to apprehend a “clear conception of the entire of the external form of the human figure (not being satisfied with a mere perception of it, which would be nothing more than a vague and indefinable consciousness that a form exists).”¹⁰⁰ Wampen’s pedagogy was not very different from the anatomical texts Bazille would have encountered in medical school, or even the artistic anatomical instruction that he encountered in Gleyre’s atelier with the use of both the live model and the skeleton. Wampen’s text presents a precise bone-by-bone and muscle-by-muscle account of how one body part connects to the next, and the male figure is presented in various poses (Figs. 45-46), one plate each for the embodied skeleton and then the *écorché* male figure, who boasts a straight Greek nose and whose pose resembles Houdon’s famous *écorché* sculpture for the École des Beaux-Arts classes. Wampen further argued that “man alone has attained a consciousness of the aesthetical normal idea” and is more “complete

¹⁰⁰ Henry Wampen, *Anatomy, Preparatory to Anthropometry: Containing the Most Simple Elements of External Anatomy and the Links of Both Sciences* (London: John Williamson Company, 1850). Wampen published this text as a short pamphlet designed to preface his other publications, including *Mathematical Instruction in Constructing Models for Draping the Human Figure* (1853) and *Anthropometry: or, Geometry of the Human Figure* (1864), which conveyed similar goals with less explicitly anatomical imagery. Though Breward, 168, notes that Wampen’s texts were quickly translated from German to English (occasionally they may be found under the name Heinrich Friedrich Wampen) and “Americanized” editions are easily found, indicating the spread of Wampen’s influence, I have yet to find evidence that these manuals were translated into French.

externally.”¹⁰¹ Wampen’s insistence on man as an ideal species reiterates both the academic studio practices described earlier and the emphasis that Théophile Gautier placed on the classical form within modernity. By asserting the existence of a holistic male ideal, any suggestion of tension or anxiety in the body might be suppressed, any suggestion of exterior disturbance expelled.¹⁰²

Texts about tailoring, in both periodicals and separate treatises, also appeared in abundance in France, and many took an approach very similar to Wampen’s in catering to the particularities of the bodies of male clients. Charles Compaing’s *L’art du tailleur* (1863) focused on establishing the measurements that ensured “the regularity and the harmony of these proportions that constitute what one calls beauty,” and established the average man’s height as 167 centimeters, or about five foot five, and almost a foot shorter than Bazille.¹⁰³ Yet, where these texts by Wampen and Compaing danced between art and philosophy as they delineated images of the ideal man, other texts included peculiar drawings of human bodies to assist tailors confronted with physical anomalies, much as physicians writing treatises might focus on pathologies of disease and medical oddities. These texts contain illustrations and commentary that expand the necessity of adapting to the body—of creating clothes that could function as both an impermeable shield and fashionable covering.

For example, Lavigne’s *Méthode du tailleur* (1847) describes the text’s more utilitarian goals by explaining: “The secret of our art consists of dressing a man as he is

¹⁰¹ Ibid., n.p.

¹⁰² Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 145.

¹⁰³ Charles Compaing, *L’art du tailleur: traité complet de la coupe des vêtements* (Paris: Morris et compagnie, 1863), 13–14. Compaing notes that he arrived at this average height by measuring an entire Garde Nationale regiment and taking the average.

made. It is here the case where the method comes to his aid; with it, the less intelligent tailor can, without searching, easily create models for all structures: thus he overcomes all disadvantages.”¹⁰⁴ A series of fourteen figures early in the text illustrates, with images of men drawn from the waist up, the various deformities with which a tailor might need to cope (Fig. 47). The men all sport contemporary haircuts and facial hair, and their features are all fairly distinct, the very opposite of the anonymous ideal. The drawings provide visual references for determining if a client’s shoulders are exceptionally high or low, or if his back is arched, stooped, or both together in an uncomfortable-looking S-shape. One set of these figures presents at left a man labeled “Droit,” or straight, and facing to the right, while two men look back at him labeled “Gros de ceinture et cambré,” large-waisted and arched, and “Gros de ceinture non cambré,” large-waisted, not arched.¹⁰⁵ Lavigne proclaims, in the text that follows, that he has invented a “corsage mécanique” which can take precise measurements and account for all the peculiarities of each man’s body—seeking to remove imperfections in garments before the tailor even begins constructing them.¹⁰⁶

A later text, Fournier’s *Méthode du cours ordinaire* (1860), continued this practical specificity, employing three types of illustrations in the text. The first (Fig. 48) suggests the pieces of a pattern, the geometric shapes into which a tailor would cut fabric before sewing it together. The second (Fig. 49) resembles plates in illustrated fashion magazines—they impose lines of measurement over the ideal, dapper final projects to

¹⁰⁴ Lavigne, *Méthode du tailleur, ou traité complet de coupe*, 4th edition (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1847), 3. The French reads: “Le secret de notre art consiste à habiller l’homme tel qu’il est fait. C’est ici le cas où la méthode vient à son secours ; avec elle, le Tailleur le moins intelligent peut, sans chercher, se créer facilement de modèles pour toutes les structures: il surmonte par là tous les inconvénients.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 10–12.

suggest what the best tailors might achieve. The third, final type (Fig. 50) appears three times in the later sections of the course;¹⁰⁷ meant to represent the culmination of Fournier's advice, they present men, with three distinct faces, almost cleaved in half below the neck, with one leg and half a chest. The waistband lines extend further across the void left by the disappeared halves of their bodies, and then swoop back across the single leg. Though the captions explain that the full line demarcates a standard pattern and the dotted line denotes the changes necessary to cater to all bodily abnormalities, these abstracted tailoring illustrations suggest the extent to which, even in fashion, the body might be broken down before proper reconstruction and display.

All of the texts suggest the "incremental coding" that proper tailoring required. These manuals break down the surfaces and shapes of the body into relevant parts and similarly break down the forms of clothes that will provide acceptable covering. Much like the physician or the painter, the tailor possesses the tools of isolating body parts and restructuring them for maximum functionality. The tailor embraces the task of disciplining the unruly form before him into a product of civilized culture. The power of the tailor fastens the architecture of costuming to the structure of the body; it is this crucible of power that creates, in the clothed body, a powerful social actor.¹⁰⁸ One must only recall Gautier's suggestion of the unchanging nature of male attire to comprehend the staying power of the suit's disciplined austerity. Short of embracing one of the active typologies previously discussed, fashionable men confronted a relatively limited scope of adaptations through which they might distinguish themselves, and consequently the detail

¹⁰⁷ L. Fournier et fils, *Méthode du cours ordinaire*, 3rd edition (Paris: les auteurs, 1860), 92, 107.

¹⁰⁸ This language is modeled after Michel Foucault's description of the "body-object articulation." See: Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 152–153. It must also be noted that much of Foucault's text critically engages the Cartesian body-machine dialectic that Montpellier vitalism often also battled.

might be viewed as foundational for composing a man's "sense of style and distinction."¹⁰⁹

Bazille's decision, then, to depict himself wearing this modern uniform in his self-portrait from 1865/66 (Fig. 51) merits discussion. This portrait also serves the first time he presents himself as an artist in a direct manner. In contrast to the bright hues of his other tableaux, Bazille presents himself primarily in shades of black, white, and grey, a somberness disrupted only by the heavily smeared, bright swatches of paint on his palette. Though some have attributed his choice of pose to the conditions required by painting one's self-portrait using a mirror, positioning his body in profile also favors displaying the slim fit of his clothing, with his weight shifted back on to his right leg in a sort of *contrapposto*, his shoulders pressed downward and back, and his head turned only enough to catch the full shape of his face, with its somber and shrewd expression. Much as in his other portraits, Bazille has included details here in the fashion of *Family Reunion*, as well as the portraits of Édouard Blau and Edmond Maître, that demonstrate his awareness of even his own body in relation to the clothes it wears. A shadowy grey lines the space between the top of his left shoulder in his white shirt and his close-fitting black waistcoat. On the plane of his lower left arm, his loose-fitting shirtsleeves fall into a concentric slouch of alternating whites and greys. The shadow under that left arm, which holds his paintbrush, mirrors the curve of his behind into his forward left leg, again emphasizing the well-tailored fit of his trousers, which seems to echo the sleekly tailored male form advocated by Wampen and Compaing, as well as the precise fitting advocated by Lavigne.

¹⁰⁹ Lehmann, *Tigersprung*, 39.

In *Family Reunion*, Bazille's presence lacks this crisp calculation. He painted himself in, perhaps as an afterthought, at the left margin of the painting behind his uncle Eugène des Hours-Farel—the very antithesis of the purposeful presentation of himself in his 1865 self-portrait. Wearing a rougher brown coat, in contrast to the crisp, tailored black jackets worn by his father, brother, and uncles, Bazille asserts both his membership in the family group and his separateness. Much like his 1865 self-portrait, his presence in *Family Reunion* appears singular and knowing with his eyes full of thoughts and ideas, and he looms at the side much as he did, in the guise of Pierrefonds, in the caricature from the staging of *La Tour de Nesle* in Gleyre's studio. This manner of embodied gaze contrasts with that of Thérèse or Mme Bazille in that, while their gazes are direct and present, they assume the comportment of people who are posing to be displayed. Bazille seems to know more and to be more aware of what it signified to present his family on the Parisian stage. His marginal presence, which will be discussed further below, signals his solidarity with their way of life—he witnesses the gathering on the terrace, while also choosing it as a subject fit for submission into Paris's most prestigious art displays.

Uncanny Bodies

Bazille's choices in constructing his own self-presentation and in fashioning the appearance of his family on the canvas expose the tension between the Parisian Bazille, with tastes for *flânerie* and a diverse array of theater and music, and the *montpelliérain* Bazille, by most written accounts devoted to his family and concerned with remaining honorable in their eyes. These choices further invoked the tension between his desires to paint in Paris and his medical education grounded in Montpellier, his hope of evading his

father's expectations and his role as compliant son. Yet, in coming to Paris, Bazille fit in seamlessly, unlike, as discussed earlier, certain of his fellow talented artists who arrived in Paris from other regions—carefully repressing, beneath his haute bourgeois manners, tastes, and connections, any sense that he was not a carefully cultivated Parisian. In choosing to paint subjects that consistently identified themselves as Southern through the distinctive light patterns and more tropical foliage, Bazille struggled through his painting to meaningfully resolve the contradictions of his two identities.

By choosing to paint his family, Bazille also engaged a genre of painting, portraiture, that, much like Freud's Uncanny, often messily skirts the line between realism or naturalism and more ephemeral influences such as mood and familiarity. In Freud's formulation, the Uncanny is a quality of feeling that renders one uncomfortable: "this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression."¹¹⁰ Family portraits, especially, retain symbolic potential because, to be deemed successful, they should render both the likenesses of the multiple people who are presented while also embodying, through pose, manner, and configuration, some measure of the relationships between the figures presented. With modern portraiture, artists confronted "the belief in modernity that a subject emerges precisely as the result of the multiple roles she or he performs," and yet their efforts illustrated the need of their audiences "to turn a familiar person into a figure in a narrative in order to discover [his or her] essential being."¹¹¹ In *Family Reunion*, the narrative of interruption—that the viewer

¹¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" in *Writings on Art and Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 193–233.

¹¹¹ Elisabeth Bronfen, "Facing Defacement: Degas's Portraits of Women," in *Degas: Portraits*, ed. Felix Baumann and Marianne Karabelnik (London: Merrell Holberton, 1994), 240.

has stepped into a private family event that is recognizable as such—insists simultaneously on familiarity with Bazille’s family as any haute bourgeois family and alienation from the events that motivate their gazes.

In discussing family photo albums and portrait photography, Marianne Hirsch has detailed the implications of what she calls the “familial gaze”—the circuit of gazes shared between family members in the construction, memorialization, and dissemination of their portraits. She writes: “The familial look...is not the look of a subject looking at an object, but a mutual look of a subject looking at an object who is a subject looking (back) at an object. Within the family, as I look I am always also looked at, seen, scrutinized, surveyed, monitored.”¹¹² The complexity of this web of looking, with its emotionally-charged referents, is not dissimilar from the socially-charged gazing that Bazille would have engaged in himself and felt turned on him while strolling the new Haussmannized boulevards in Paris.

This mechanism of the familial gaze thus complicates the distinction that scholars have drawn between group portraiture and family portraiture. For Bridget Alsdorf, writing on Fantin-Latour’s series of group portraits that began with the *Homage à Delacroix* (1864), the group portrait is implicitly superior to the family portrait because those group members choose to pose and present themselves in a unified manner. She describes the association in family portraits as “involuntary in the most fundamental sense, not to mention inherently hierarchical.”¹¹³ She later notes: “Family groups come ready-made, with their hierarchies clear (or dictated to the painter), and bear no

¹¹² Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 9.

¹¹³ Bridget Alsdorf, *Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-Century French Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 18.

immediate affective interest for the artist *unless the family is his own*" (emphasis mine).¹¹⁴ Though these statements make sense with regard to her subject's preference for the building process of a group portrait, their denial of most "affective interest" in images of families disserves the complexity of familial relationships and the familial gaze.¹¹⁵ They further disavow the artist's ability, even if he is not a member of the family, to use finely-honed skills of observation to penetrate the veils of secrecy a close-knit family might project.

Perhaps due to the difficulties of participating in and capturing the familial gazing that Hirsch describes, or Alsdorf's view of their constraints, there are few family groups from the Impressionist era with which *Family Reunion* may be fruitfully compared. One reason for this may be the lack of creative freedom that family portraits provided, as they were more commonly "commissions, favors, or gifts, rather than dreamed up by the artist for personal interest or public display."¹¹⁶ Indeed, structures of patronage and commission continued to shift as the nineteenth century progressed, and yet Bazille's portrait and his apparent intent to display it at the Salon suggests it as a family portrait as deliberately constructed as a group portrait. Degas's 1858-67 portrait of his aunt, uncle, and cousins, *The Bellelli Family* (Fig. 35) is emblematic of the potential for a family portrait to both faithfully portray appearances and convey, through affective poses and the constructed interior, a family relationship. Scholars have pointed out time and again how fond Degas was of his aunt Laure and how her dignified presence contrasts with the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 230.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, the comparative intensity of the symbolism between Sargent's *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit*, which was a commission, and Vuillard's *Mother and Sister of the Artist*, in which the artist seems to explore his own complex family dynamic, as discussed in: Susan Sidlauskas, *Body, Place, and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹¹⁶ Alsdorf, *Fellow Men*, 18. Renoir's portrait of Mme Georges Charpentier and her children (1878) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art provides a good example of an Impressionist family portrait that was a commission.

subordinated, shadowy figure of her husband Gennaro, who Degas supposedly disliked.¹¹⁷ The state of their unhappy marriage is reflected in the interior, with Gennaro Bellelli trapped between his chair, the table, and the mantle of the fireplace, while Laure standing proudly between her daughters.¹¹⁸ As even a young Degas remained in a league of his own, nineteenth-century theorists of painting continued to decree how one might compose a group or family portrait most effectively, and their teachings gained further traction with the advent of photography. Many agreed that a common action might be used to unify the figures, and most cautioned against having all sitters look toward the viewer, as all but one of Bazille's figures do.¹¹⁹

Indeed, the function of the family portrait has often been to sustain, through visual means, a united front,¹²⁰ and thus, the function of the portrait painter has often been to envision the family as a corporate body. Clothing could also function to give meaning in poses, where portrait photographers might arrange women and their skirts to draw the eyes of viewers toward focal points in their images.¹²¹ Though Bazille presents his family as stiff and at turns regal (his mother), indifferent (his father), and perhaps even openly hostile (his female cousins), they are united together on the terrace of their summer home. The family is enclosed within the low-lying stone wall that outlines the platform on which they sit and stand. The large chestnut tree, which one scholar

¹¹⁷ See, for example: Boggs, "Edgar Degas and the Bellellis"; Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 127–128; Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio*, 227–229. Family group portraiture, as a genre, has remained underexplored in the modern era, except where families are portrayed candidly in keeping with the developments of new stylistic idioms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as when Manet, Monet, or Vuillard portrayed portions of families in domestic genre scenes. Though Bazille certainly adhered, on some level, to the goals of Manet and Monet, I treat *Family Reunion* more as a posed formal portrait, not a genre scene.

¹¹⁸ Sidlauskas, *Body, Place, and Self*, 33.

¹¹⁹ Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *A. A. E. Disdéri and the Carte de Visite Portrait Photograph* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 113–116.

¹²⁰ Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 32.

¹²¹ McCauley, *A. A. E. Disdéri*, 118–122.

commented is too large to be supported by its skinny trunk,¹²² spreads over the gathering to enclose the family from above, with a view of the landscape and the nearby village open only behind the younger family members. Space, in family portraits, proves especially meaningful, as the location in which the family poses frequently relates to how they view themselves, and the scale and attitude of the human figures relative to their surroundings may indicate how those represented feel when they have not been actively posed.¹²³ Yet Bazille's brightly lit landscape seems to contradict the almost ominous structure of the chestnut tree. The tree signals the positive containment of this family, insisting on their refinement within the shrewd calculations of Parisian decorum, and yet the whole panorama of the Midi stretches out behind them to emphasize the freedom to which their regional loyalties and familial prestige entitle them.

Because of the enclosed, stage-like space of the terrace with the landscape as an aesthetically engaging backdrop, Bazille creates a space that might be viewed as an interior exterior. Though the family gathers outdoors, they may operate informally, abiding only by the restrictions of their collective family morality and choosing which rules of broader society from which they may disengage. For example, some have suggested that the stiffness of the figures might be attributable to their long-standing strict, Protestant history.¹²⁴ However, this liminal setting allows Bazille to exploit the potential for embedded drama of an interior setting while emphasizing the provinciality of his family and their landholdings. In Monet's *Garden at Sainte-Adresse* (Fig. 52), painted around the same time in 1867, he achieves a similar effect for a scene abutting the Normandy coast. Though Monet shows us a similarly exclusive space, that of his

¹²² Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 165.

¹²³ Hirsch, *Family Photographs*, 48–52.

¹²⁴ Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis*, 91; Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 164.

family at a seaside resort near Honfleur, this terrace space displays a pair of vignettes of social interactions that are not entirely dissimilar from how Bazille groups his figures together. The space of the terrace in both paintings allows for similar experimentation with light effects and the combination of figure painting and landscape. However, Monet's choice to turn his figures away from the viewer or in toward each other distinguishes *Garden at Sainte-Adresse* from portraiture, but it also renders them almost a part of the landscape. It allows the open water and sky to insist on exteriority as the superior paradigm for engagement within the space of the painting.

In his discussion of Manet's *Balcony* (1868-69) (Fig. 53), Jonathan Crary identifies a new space of modernity that is neither quite interior nor exterior, which may help read the space of the Bazille family's terrace. Crary writes that the optical system of Manet's balcony, which we must assume looks out onto one of Paris's newly Haussmannized streets, collapses "the mutual necessity of a subjective interiority on one hand and the objectivity of an exterior world on the other."¹²⁵ Crary further attributes this conflation to the development of a "newly modern individual autonomy," in which a person can intuit "the noncoincidence of one's inherence in the world with anyone else's."¹²⁶ Manet's figures, like Bazille's, fix their gazes away from their fellow figures and deprive the viewer of whatever boulevard goings-on at which they gaze. Though the balcony is something of an exterior space, it remains attached to a larger structure,

¹²⁵ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 83.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 84.

embracing its “inbetweenness,” through Manet’s decision not to show us the street, as Gustave Caillebotte and Berthe Morisot did in later, numerous paintings.¹²⁷

Bazille’s choice to depict his family in this in-between space, encompassing both the enclosed space of the terrace and the landscape which stretches out beyond it, allows him to summon the intensity demanded by what Walter Benjamin called the “phantasmagorias of the interior,” where “the far away and the long ago” are brought together.¹²⁸ Pitman has noted that *Family Reunion* was painting during a period of flux for the family in which the desire for a family portrait may have been stoked by “nostalgia for the old group as well as pride in the new”—Pauline des Hours and Émile Teulon were newly married, Marc Bazille and Suzanne Tissié were freshly engaged to be married.¹²⁹ Consequently, it seems almost as if Bazille worked to suppress the mechanisms of familial gazing in this family portrait by ensuring that no family member is looking at any other. Though Bazille has created an image that upholds the photographic familial gaze where it is a family member who holds the camera and gazes back, Bazille has effaced even this effect by inserting himself in, finally, at the left margin.¹³⁰ His presence there seems to vacate the painter’s viewing position, even as his

¹²⁷ Indeed, the balcony, especially men standing at a balcony, is a recurring theme in Caillebotte’s *oeuvre*. See, for example: Kirk Varnedoe, *Gustave Caillebotte* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 20–21, 140–145; Norma Broude, “Outing Impressionism: Homosexual and Homosocial Bonding in the Work of Caillebotte and Bazille,” in *Gustave Caillebotte and the Fashioning of Identity in Impressionist Paris* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 135–142; Marni Kessler, “Dusting the Surface, or the Bourgeoise, the Veil, and Haussmann’s Paris,” in *The Invisible Flâneuse? Gender, Public Space, and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-Century Paris*, ed. Aruna D’Souza and Tom McDonough (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 54–55.

¹²⁸ Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 38.

¹²⁹ Pitman, *Bazille*, 87.

¹³⁰ Alsdorf, *Fellow Men*, 136, 146. Alsdorf notes that, for Fantin-Latour, “the displacement of the self became a key condition for the group,” and after 1870, Fantin preferred to leave himself out of the group portraits he painted even when he deserved to be present. Bazille, however, as Alsdorf notes in relation to

painted self seems provisional, crowded rapidly and with little deliberation into an empty sliver of canvas. His presence—the completeness of the family—further allows the possibility for *Family Reunion* to masquerade as a normative document of his family's life.

This normative trap, in which the family portraits “trigger... an inclusive, affiliative look,” requires those who intend to analyze such images to “be self-conscious about their own viewing positions as they are vigilant about the postures they analyze.”¹³¹ Furthermore, because family portraits tend to dispel the focused, critical gaze, they create “memories of situations or places which are similar to what we see in the image. We are not led into the image, we are led back into our memories.”¹³² This formulation is not unlike Freud's description of the writer's ability to produce and multiply uncanny feelings through manipulating the reader's sense of what is possible.¹³³ I suggest, then, that Bazille, with his carefully honed skills of observation, produced with *Family Reunion* an image that seized on conventions of family portraiture to represent, through a deliberately heightened realism of modern visuality, a dialectic between Paris and the provinces that subverted and blurred previously held distinctions.

***Sur réal* realities**

The art and literature of nineteenth-century France prized social observation perhaps more than any other era, and therefore, extended commentary on the most minute

1870's *Studio on the rue de la Condamine*, seems to regularly choose otherwise—he inserts his image into his paintings, even at the last minute.

¹³¹ Marianne Hirsch, ed., *The Familial Gaze* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999), xiii, xv.

¹³² Ernst van Alphen, “Nazism in the Family Album: Christian Boltanski's *Sans Souci*,” in *The Familial Gaze*, ed. Marianne Hirsch (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999), 48.

¹³³ Freud, “The ‘Uncanny,’” 227.

of details has proved central to unraveling the meaning of such works. Naomi Schor, in her seminal 1987 book *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, describes how the detail has, historically, been doubly gendered as feminine through its association with the feminized spheres of the ornamental and the everyday.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Schor states that this duality points to the most threatening aspect of the detail—“its tendency to subvert an internal hierarchic ordering of the work of art which clearly subordinates the periphery to the center, the accessory to the principal, the foreground to the background.”¹³⁵ Literary scholar Hannah Thompson expanded on Schor’s discussion in her study of clothing symbolism in Zola’s Rougon-Macquart series, assigning clothing, specifically, an active role in Zola’s masterful takedown of Second Empire society. For Zola, Thompson writes: “Clothing functions to highlight the gaps between various layers of appearance, between interconnecting surfaces, which point to the ultimate instability and uncertainty of all genders, and the consequent denormalization of sexuality and gender identity.”¹³⁶ Thompson argues that assessing how Zola uses clothes, previously seen as innocuous components of the author’s scientific naturalism, may effect a powerful reappraisal of the author’s project.¹³⁷

Though the scope of Bazille’s artistic project appears less overtly critical than Zola’s epic saga, his carefully observed renderings of bodies in clothes and the virtuosity with which he frequently renders the most insignificant seeming sartorial details suggest

¹³⁴ Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Routledge, 2007), xlii.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 15. Also see: Sarah Burns, “Ordering the Artist’s Body: Thomas Eakins’s Acts of Self-Portrayal,” *American Art* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 82–107. In this article, Burns makes the case for small details in photographs of Eakins, such as an unbuttoned button, being “subtle but significant” through revealing Eakins’s defiance of details (84). She speaks of Eakins’ self-portrays as incorporating “signs of the tensions and traumas that underlay them” and inspire the “vigor and strangeness” of Eakins’s other paintings (105).

¹³⁶ Hannah Thompson, *Naturalism Redressed: Identity and Clothing in the Novels of Emile Zola* (Oxford: Legenda, 2004), 9.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

the importance of clothing as a visual vocabulary within the artist's own life and art. For as limited as the literature on Bazille often seems, his attention to his self-presentation remains central to our discussions of him. In discussing, for example, Bazille's appearance in Henri Fantin-Latour's *Studio in the Batignolles* (Fig. 54), scholars inevitably remark on the navy and green plaid pants that announce his elegant form at the right margin of the painting.¹³⁸ Though his comments perhaps discount the power of the overtly superficial realm of the Second Empire, Kermit Champa partially predicated his assertion of Bazille's homosexuality on the artist's attention to clothes, suggesting that the artist had "cultivated his appearance in such a way as to make it a site of almost feminine regard."¹³⁹ However, the theme of feminization in both Champa's comments on Bazille and Schor's on the historical position of the detail suggest it is worth asking what Bazille stood to gain from fashioning himself as feminized and from turning his detail-oriented medical gaze toward the specifications of modern dress.

In describing Bazille's desire to look fashionable and elegant, previous discussions have designed this as a narcissistic process, whereby Bazille pays attention to his clothing through his self-centered and somewhat frivolous motivations. It is possible that this attention to detail has implicitly supported his categorization as amateur or dilettante creator, pejoratively distinguished and feminized as a result of "excesses of useless detail."¹⁴⁰ These discussions, suggesting that dress functioned only as a means of communicating his interior state, further diminish the sociological reality of dress as a dialectical process, in which, according to Joanne Entwistle, "dress works on the body,

¹³⁸ See, for example: Alsdorf, *Fellow Men*, 128; Champa, "A Complicated Codependence," 71.

¹³⁹ Champa, "A Complicated Codependence," 71.

¹⁴⁰ Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 69.

imbuing it with social meaning while the body is a dynamic field which gives life and fullness to dress.”¹⁴¹ Entwistle’s argument builds from Butler’s insistence on the role of performance and costume in constructing gender, yet insists on the reciprocity of the relationship between the body and its coverings, calling it an active, phenomenological entity generated through the “mundane” practices involved in daily dressing.¹⁴²

Following Schor’s formulation of the feminization of the detail, Bazille’s fixation with details of dress for both himself and in his paintings suggests a problematic engagement with the feminine, one whose significance has escaped critical commentary in previous interpretations of his work. Male feminization, through dress, emotional comportment, and the embrace of typologies such as the dandy, *flâneur*, and *calicot*, may be viewed not as a natural act, but something more approximate to a political strategy.¹⁴³ This strategy was, furthermore, particularly common in Paris, where men frequently assumed the habit of emphasizing their “good features by a kind of display that young men in Paris understand as well as women.”¹⁴⁴ For Bazille, it is possible that his status as someone who needed to actively learn how to enact these typologies made him more aware of how they might be mobilized or even exploited to promote a savvy vision of southern life in both his own dealings and his paintings.

Furthermore, Baudelaire, in the same essay where he describes his theory of fashion, describes the effect of drawing from a model on an artist who is accustomed to drawing from memory, writing that the artist “will find himself at the mercy of a riot of

¹⁴¹ Entwistle, “The Dressed Body,” 36.

¹⁴² Ibid., 45–46.

¹⁴³ Margaret Waller, *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993). Waller describes male feminization as a possible “ruse that helps maintain patriarchal power” (3), and though she focuses on the Romantic period, her questions are not out of place within the political and social economy of the boulevards.

¹⁴⁴ Balzac, *Lost Illusions*, 168.

details all clamoring for justice with the fury of a mob in love with absolute equality.”¹⁴⁵

Bazille, who likely compiled *Family Reunion* from a variety of sources, seems to have embraced Baudelaire’s riotous mob in choosing not the screen the details his sources present, and used them to subvert the façade of modernity that men and women could convey through their clothing. Where some artists and authors may have embraced the fashion detail as a means of obfuscating a body viewed as repulsive, especially where the female body is concerned,¹⁴⁶ Bazille’s willingness to probe the intricacies of embodied modern dress may be read as an extension of the nuanced view of the body that, as I have argued, Bazille acquired from the simultaneity of his medical and artistic educations.

Bazille’s portrayal of dress in *Family Reunion* proves important because he defines the relationship between bodies and the clothes that cover them as cooperative, in line with Entwistle’s formulation of body dressing as a dialectical process. This contrasts with how Bazille’s contemporaries, such as Manet and Monet, presented clothed bodies, and how scholars have commented on this relationship only when there is something abnormal about the way that the clothes in question conform to or represent the body being painted, even in paintings that remain Realist on the surface. For example, in the *Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity* exhibition catalogue, Gloria Groom commented about Monet’s 1866 Salon painting *Camille* (Fig. 55), which displayed his mistress in an extravagant green and black striped satin dress, “Part of the ambiguity expressed by reviewers stemmed from the way the dress seemed to relate to its wearer.” Groom has also described how the reactions of critics were grounded in their perception of the dress

¹⁴⁵ Quoted in Schor, 16.

¹⁴⁶ Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 96. Wilson, for example, describes Flaubert’s fixation on describing the clothes and surrounding of Emma Bovary as “a suggestion that the body hidden by clothes and coverings is repulsive rather than alluring.”

as having an unconvincing fit.¹⁴⁷ Justine De Young, in the same exhibition catalogue, describes how Baudelaire's mistress Jeanne Duval, in Manet's 1862 portrait of her (Fig. 56), is dwarfed by her monstrous skirt,¹⁴⁸ and Therese Dolan has elsewhere noted that the crinoline seems to "actively compete with the inert expression of the sitter."¹⁴⁹ Though these paintings and numerous others, indicate the symbolic potential of clothing both within the frame of the painting and in dialogue with the social vocabulary of those who would view it, the relationship between the carefully rendered clothes and the physical presence of the sitter is not as precise as the relationship demonstrated by Bazille in choosing to capture every tiny detail, every sheer overskirt or open buttonhole. Though some might argue that Bazille has sacrificed the overt virtuosity of his peers, especially Manet, he seems to revel in cataloguing detail through these portraits, employing his own brand of naturalism for deceptive ends.

Salon Spectacles

Beyond these shorthand masculinities that governed Bazille's choices for self-presentation and the naturalism he embraced in depicting his family, he would have indubitably been aware of the visual cues that, for Parisians, betrayed even the most astute provincial French man or woman's identity. Recall the plight of Balzac's Lucien de Rubempré and the improper cravat that made him feel out of place in the Tuileries. With the beginning of the Second Empire in 1852 came "barbarian invasions" by

¹⁴⁷ Gloria Groom, "Claude Monet: Camille," in *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2012), 46-47.

¹⁴⁸ Justine De Young, "Fashion and Intimate Portraits," in *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2012), 115.

¹⁴⁹ Therese Dolan, "Skirting the Issue: Manet's Portrait of Baudelaire's Mistress, Reclining," *Art Bulletin* 79, no. 4 (December 1997): 616.

“provincial folk,” which transformed the public culture from one of elites to the more democratic culture¹⁵⁰ in which the bourgeoisie overtook the boulevards, causing social typing to flourish. Indeed, women of the Second Empire who actively sought to construct their identities through their costume faced a difficult challenge; dress that was too sumptuous could put them at risk of being considered a *cocotte* or worse, yet they also needed to fear “the timorous, ridiculous drabness of the provincial,” who was inevitably a year behind the trends of Paris fashion.¹⁵¹ Provincials who came to Paris for the Exposition Universelle in 1867 found themselves wowed by Parisians who had given up their crinolines for the “new, svelte, seductively reduced line” of Charles Worth.¹⁵²

As Zola researched *Au Bonheur des dames*, he wrote of Le Bon Marché, Paris’s first department store, which had opened in 1838, that “it smacked somewhat of the provinces.”¹⁵³ Installed in a specially designed building at the corner of the rue de Sèvres and the rue du Bac in 1838,¹⁵⁴ this would have been only a short walk from Bazille’s studio on the Rue du Furstenberg. However, even as Bazille was immersed in one of the most fashionable neighborhoods in Paris and travelling in the privileged social circles of his Parisian cousins, he continued to purchase his clothes in the south. His letters reveal that, as needed, he wrote home to his parents with extremely specific instructions for items that they were to purchase at the Maison du Prophète in Montpellier. Run by the

¹⁵⁰ Gustave Claudin, *Mes Souvenirs, les boulevards de 1840-1870*, 1884, 16-18, quoted in Chenoune, *A History of Men’s Fashion*, 61.

¹⁵¹ Simon, *Fashion in Art: The Second Empire and Impressionism*, 43.

¹⁵² Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune 1870-71*, Revised edition (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 7.

¹⁵³ Quoted in Simon, *Fashion in Art*, 12.

¹⁵⁴ Gloria Groom, ed., *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 270.

Jewish master tailor Henri Manheimer,¹⁵⁵ the Maison du Prophète specialized in *vêtements confectionnés*, or clothing made-to-order, and served a most distinguished clientele.¹⁵⁶ He also fastidiously described the travails of caring for his wardrobe, writing in March of 1863:

Here is a disastrous passage for Mama. My shirts are completely falling apart. I have only two or three in a presentable state; I'm saving them for the days when I go to the Mamignards. Some will really have to be made for me; if Mama orders them, I'd like them without collars, they're more fashionable and they allow me to make the same shirt last longer. My socks are hardly in better shape, I've bought a few pairs but I'll need more soon.¹⁵⁷

Perhaps relying on his parents to purchase his clothes represented a choice made in deference to financial considerations, though it is more likely that Bazille understood how more static men's fashions could go unnoticed from the provinces to Paris.

With the increasing development of cultural and industrial exchanges between Paris and the provinces as the century progressed and as railroads made travel between regions more possible, the word "provincial" began to shift more readily between functioning as pejorative and representing the true diversity of France. Between 1862

¹⁵⁵ *Annuaire du commerce Didot-Bottin* (Paris, 1861), 1683. This *annuaire* lists: "Manheimer (Henry), succ. de Amédée Sachet (au Prophète), *vêtements confectionnés et sur mesure draperie et nouveautés; confection pour dames*, passage Bruyas." A census of Montpellier's Jewish population in 1863 lists a "Samuel Manheimer, 48, Maître Tailleur." For this census and more, see: Carol Iancu, "Le destin millénaire du judaïsme montpelliérain," in *Les Juifs à Montpellier et dans le Languedoc à travers l'histoire du Moyen Age à nos jours: Actes du Colloque international du Centre Régional d'histoire des Mentalités et du Centre de recherches et d'études Juives et Hébraïques*, ed. Carol Iancu (Montpellier: Centre de recherches et d'études Juives et Hébraïques, 1988).

¹⁵⁶ Louis-J. Thomas, *Montpellier, Ville Marchande: Histoire Economique et Sociale de Montpellier des origines à 1870* (Montpellier: Librairie Valat, 1936), 254. Thomas distinguished the Maison du Prophète both from the "*magasins de nouveautés*" that disseminated Paris fashion and the lesser bazars that sold cheaper, ready-to-wear garments.

¹⁵⁷ Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 49. The French reads: "Voici un passage désastreux pour maman. Mes chemises s'en vont tout à fait. Je n'en ai que deux ou trois en état présentable, je les garde pour les jours où je vais chez les Mamignard. Il faudrait bien m'en faire; si maman m'en commande je les voudrais sans col, je me suis acheté des faux cols, ici c'est plus à la mode, et cela me permet de faire durer plus longtemps la même chemise. Mes chaussettes ne sont guère en meilleur état, j'en ai acheté quelques paires, mais j'en manquerai bientôt." Also translated and partially quoted in Philippe Thiébaud, "An Ideal of Virile Urbanity," in *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity*, ed. Gloria Groom (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 136–45, 311–12.

and 1867, the famously judgmental Goncourts, for example, frequently used it almost as an insult in their journals, using “provincial” as shorthand for a set of qualities and appearances that made a person inferior to their Parisian graces. To the Goncourts, Flaubert was full of paradoxes that “have something provincial about them,” being “coarse, heavy, clumsy, laboured, and graceless”—at times, they state only that he was like “an egregious provincial.” Dining early was termed “at a provincial hour,” and an old, established Parisian courtesan looked “painted and plastered...like a provincial actress.”¹⁵⁸ However, Stendhal and Balzac often spoke more favorably of provincials, even if they too occasionally dealt in stereotypes. Stendhal viewed southerners as passionate, prizing their freedom above all else. Speaking of the Languedoc, Bazille’s home region, he wrote: “Love there has not been replaced by calculation.”¹⁵⁹ Similarly, though Balzac’s *Comédie humaine* in many ways resists viewing Paris and the provinces in a strict binary framework, he upholds the attribution of a deceitful, deliberate cruelty to Parisians that provincials happily lack.¹⁶⁰

Indeed, while Zola might succumb to using “the provinces” or “provincial” negatively, he also envisioned, in *Au Bonheur des dames*, a department store that seems to function properly as a microcosm of France. Not only does Denise, the young woman for whom the window displays became animated, come from the provinces, but Octave Mouret, the department store’s proprietor, came to Paris from Plassans, Zola’s fictionalized version of Aix-en-Provence. In fact, almost none of the employees

¹⁵⁸ Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *Pages from the Goncourt Journal*, ed. and trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), 79, 95, 117, 128.

¹⁵⁹ Stendhal, *Memoirs of a Tourist*, trans. Allan Seager (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1962), 57.

¹⁶⁰ Watts, *Preserving the Provinces: Small Town and Countryside in the World of Honoré de Balzac*, 197–208.

described in the course of introducing the store's operation were native to Paris—like the goods Mouret has assembled for the perusal of his audiences, his employees exhibit the true strengths and diversity of France. There is even one employee from Montpellier—Bouthemont, a department manager—who is described as having “a round, jolly face, an inky black beard, and fine brown eyes,” and being “noisy and fun-loving.” Bouthemont's father, who had sent his son to Paris for education in modern trading practices, remained in Montpellier, “entirely absorbed in his small provincial trade.”¹⁶¹ Though Bouthemont still conforms to the positive, yet patronizing view of provincial attributes, the department store in *Au Bonheur des dames* represents a more meaningful integration of Paris and the provinces.

In light of Bazille's implicit knowledge of the codes of theater, fashion, and visual display, we may read his decision to present his family on the terrace of their Southern summer home, but in elegant dress, as a deliberate calculation. As a young man who seems, by all accounts, to have retained a fair amount of his provincial earnestness, his connections and guidance allowed him to assimilate more readily to the challenging semiotic codes of Parisian life. With its distinctive foliage and the distant town of sandy clay buildings, *Family Reunion* clearly presents his relatives as being deep in the south of France, and, as Gary Tinterow declared, “there is a provincial quality to the painting, an aspect *trop dessiné*... that is very different in feeling from the fashion-print primitivism of Monet.”¹⁶² And yet, the sharpness of the Bazille family's gazes and the crisply rendered clothes and setting allowed Linda Nochlin to proclaim that “all of this creates and absolutely authentic social and visual document of the reality of family life of the

¹⁶¹ Zola, *The Ladies' Paradise*, 37–38.

¹⁶² Tinterow and Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism*, 138.

times...There is absolutely no historical reminiscence here: nothing but the concrete actuality of modern times, presented on the grandest possible scale.”¹⁶³ That *Family Reunion* might be viewed simultaneously as provincially overdone and as a supreme, unsentimental document points to the masterful feat that Bazille achieves.

I have argued here for the role of the detail in reading *Family Reunion* and a number of Bazille’s other portraits—it is the duality of the detail on which Bazille’s achievement turns. The detail, though traditionally feminized for its minuteness, also invokes the everyday in the sense that this scene of a family may be taken as thoroughly true because it is rendered so precisely, so photographically, as many scholars have insisted, that it cannot be interpreted anything besides a document of a family’s life. Bazille’s focus on the details of his family’s clothing, depicting how their bodies act on their clothes and thereby insisting on their existence, makes them exceptionally realistic in a manner that is off-putting and only exacerbated by the directness of their gazes, which are far from the carefree provincial sincerity Parisian audiences might expect—especially the confrontational demeanors of Bazille’s young female cousin. Fashionable and intense, they assume a Parisian air of defensiveness for their protection, and indeed, Bazille presents his family at the height of respectability—they appear so honorable as to disallow the possibility of their denigration by the ever-judgmental Salon audiences who would have been introduced to the painting as *Portraits de la famille X*,¹⁶⁴ following the custom whereby portrait titles omitted personal and family names.

The detail, too, emphasizes Bazille’s understanding of the theatrical conditions of urban visibility that he entered into upon his arrival in Paris from Montpellier in 1862. In

¹⁶³ Nochlin, *Realism*, 127.

¹⁶⁴ Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 166.

Family Reunion, he masterfully orchestrates costume, implied narrative, and other visual symbolism to construct an image of his family that persuasively argues for their acceptance by Parisian social standards, in spite of their avowed origins in the provinces. By inserting his own portrait into the painting, he bears witness, as one who has learned these codes of comportment and employed them in his own favor, to their worthiness. Bazille's arrival in Paris as a student officially (of medicine and art) and unofficially (of theatre and music) immersed him in an environment that insisted on the significance of bodily interiors and exteriors as carriers of meaning. Thus, under the influence of a city where, as onstage, each object and encounter acted to signify a new idea to be interpreted, Bazille poses his family as embodied subjects—like a tailor, or a doctor, or a playwright, he has studied their component parts and assembled them in their best form to promote the vision of a Southern family, his own, that is proud in bearing, exclusive in membership, and exceptional in their portrayal of a calculated love that even a Parisian audience could appreciate.

CHAPTER THREE

“It’s only the men that are missing now”¹

“Between the extremes of pure imitation and the ideal, there is a double peril to avoid, because in imitating nature too closely, the artist runs the risk of reproducing its weaknesses, and in moving too far away one can lose the inflections of life.”

Charles Blanc²

“The intimate is where we end up when we question apparent meanings and values.”

Julia Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt*³

As the introduction’s literature review established, Bazille has always played a crucial role in the narrative of the origins of Impressionism, as he was seemingly present at every major milestone that occurred prior to his death in 1870. Not only did he appear in Henri Fantin-Latour’s *Studio in the Batignolles* (1870) (Fig. 54), but he also produced a series of paintings capturing his own studios in Paris over the course of the 1860s that signal his impulse to keep a record of his experiences. First, he captured his empty studio on the rue de Furstenberg (1865) (Fig. 57), a suite of rooms that had been Delacroix’s final studio and that gave Bazille a place to live and work that was very proximate to the École des Beaux-Arts. He next painted his studio on the rue Visconti (1867) (Fig. 58), only a few blocks away from the rue de Furstenberg and a seemingly smaller, more claustrophobic space. Neither of these paintings contains figures—only the traces of the artists who worked there in the paintings, both finished and unfinished, that hang on the

¹ Letter from Monet in Chailly to Bazille, July or early August, 1865, in Richard Kendall, ed., *Monet by Himself*, trans. Bridget Strevens Romer (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), 23.

² Raymond Balze quotes Charles Blanc in his *Ingres et son école* (9). This is, in turn, quoted in Sarah Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio: Women, Painting, History* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 76.

³ Julia Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeanine Herman, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 43. Kristeva defines intimacy as a form of revolt, or resistance, to what she views as the creation of a new contemporary culture of values that discourages interrogation of principles. She argues that such intimacy is more commonly found in the fruits of cultural production, such as the novel.

walls and with indexical interior elements, such as the burning stove and the palette and paints momentarily relegated to the floors. In 1870's *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* (Fig. 59), however, Bazille expands his scope, perhaps in response to the expansion of his studio space. Not only could he now hang his paintings (and those of his friends) Salon-style in this high-ceilinged space, but he includes a group of his friends, the inner circle, scattered throughout the studio.

As a more informal foil to Fantin-Latour's *Studio in the Batignolles*, *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* is perhaps the most thoroughly analyzed of all Bazille's works for how it portrays the easygoing, collaborative mentality of the social group that would, soon enough, unite in favor of Impressionism.⁴ Especially in Bazille's case, his studio paintings document the mechanics of these social interactions—simultaneously boasting of their faith in their collective abilities and seeming to detail these early days in case any of these artists should make good on the group's claims to revolutionizing the art world. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that these paintings should have received so much attention in the literature on Impressionism. Their early struggles have been supposed as heroic, building toward the validation occasioned by the Impressionist exhibitions, beginning in 1874. Remarks about the intimacy of their early images and their living conditions; romanticized notions of these artists toiling together in obscurity; and emphases on the crippling poverty of Monet and Renoir, especially, dictating their choices of models and materials dominate discussions of early Impressionism. The critic Arsène Alexandre captured this perfectly when, looking back from 1899, he declared that

⁴ James E. Cutting, *Impressionism and Its Canon* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2006), 128. Cutting's book is a statistical analysis of how the Impressionist canon has been constructed through various types of publications and collections, and his analysis ranks *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* as the fifteenth most published image in studies of Impressionism.

“the small hard-working and carefree group, besotted with light... formed at Fontainebleau... in that period without either money or melancholy.”⁵ Yet treating these instances as matters of course or mistaking interiority for minor subject matter disregards the extent to which these artists actively built interpersonal intimacies into their everyday lives in ways that structured their painting.

Thus, this chapter examines the small-scale intimate portraits that Bazille produced between 1865 and 1870, when he travelled with his friends between Paris, Normandy, and the Forest of Fontainebleau, and I discuss the philosophical and psychological underpinnings of these intimacies below. However, a number of Bazille’s fellow artists, in turn, painted portraits of him, and these artists often relied on each other to act as models for their more expansive figure paintings. Thus, Bazille’s portraits, with their experiments in pose and tone, notably put these artists front and center, forcing them to embody the earliest stages of their enterprise and violating the invisibility that has allowed the male artist’s body to retain its power in the history of art.⁶ The uplift-driven narrative of early Impressionism, characterized by the transformation of intense struggle into exceptional success, has regularly minimized this embodiment through its insistence on the disembodied nature of artistic genius. Yet Bazille, especially, and his friends instead force each other’s bodies to be seen, productively threatening the hidden nature of the male artist’s body through these intimate revelations and consequently pulling their objectives as artists into dialogue with their self-presentation.

⁵ Arsène Alexandre, Preface to the catalogue of the Sale of Sisley’s studio, 1 May 1899. Quoted and Translated in Richard Shone, *Sisley* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1992), 222.

⁶ Amelia Jones, “‘Clothes Make the Man’: The Male Artist as a Performative Function,” *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995): 19. Jones’s argument is, much like this dissertation’s section chapter, contingent on the role of clothing as a symbolic operation that forces the male artist’s body to become visible and to perform identities.

Because these particular portraits skirt the line between portrait and genre painting, the specific epistemological role of intimacy and what such intimacy signifies in the 1860s problematizes the divides between public and private, portrait and genre, individual and crowd that structure many paintings done as Impressionism progressed into a “movement.” In the 1860s, however, when their project remained more collaborative and their individual styles had yet to be codified, it was Bazille who stepped in to keep records of where they were working and how they felt. He further helped his friends refine their talents by offering his own lanky, but elegant frame for incorporation into their modern figure paintings. His class and distinction afforded such paintings an element of truth unavailable with professional models.

Thus, this chapter further interrogates Bazille’s record-keeping impulse and examines the dynamics of his intimate friendships to explain the production and the meanings of these compelling small portraits. These artists were, despite their radical ambitions, far from independent. They often faced financial constraints that tied them to family or benefactors. They also made mistakes in their personal and professional dealings that caused immense emotional struggles as they learned to cope with adulthood and build their careers. It is through the construction of these alternative sites as safe, shared environments that they began to flourish—both because these new spaces promoted a relatively innocent masculine sociability that drove them to refine their pictorial philosophies, but that also made the intimacies of their daily lives worthy of depiction.⁷ This independence within their common world allowed for each artist to

⁷ This assertion dovetails with the course of human development through stages in the life cycle, as theorized by Erik Erikson and as applied to art historical concerns in Elizabeth Johns, *Winslow Homer: The Nature of Observation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Johns writes, “During our lifetime we develop, test, confirm, and reconfirm—or perhaps cannot—important psychic strengths,” and she notes

define his individual position in conjunction with the explicit and implicit goals of the group.

Improvisation and Intimacy

The most intricate of these records created by Bazille is *The Improvised Field Hospital* (1865) (Fig. 60), which depicts an incapacitated and bedridden Claude Monet in a richly realized domestic interior. Bazille had followed Monet to Chailly-en-Bière, a small village just on the outskirts of Fontainebleau forest. This trip was the result of months of prodding on the part of Monet, who had been painting in the area since April and demanded that Bazille come to pose for him. He wrote dramatically to Bazille that, if he did not come to Chailly at once to pose for the male figures, the entire project, which would become his version of *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, would fail.⁸ Though his bodily presence was essential for Monet's ambitious composition, Bazille complained to his mother, "Monet awaits me like I am the Messiah."⁹ However, in either this visit, or one shortly after when Monet still expected Bazille to pose for him, Monet injured his leg, supposedly in an effort to save some children from a clumsy Englishman playing discus.¹⁰ When, due to his injury, Monet was confined to his bed in their room at the Inn of the Lion d'Or, Bazille painted the unexpectedly candid *Improvised Field Hospital*,

further that the psychic strength tested in young adulthood is the "competence and the capacity for intimacy" (2).

⁸ Letter 20, from Monet in Chailly to Bazille, end of July or beginning of August, 1865, in Daniel Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, vol. 1 (Lausanne, Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1974), 422. I discuss this letter in more detail later.

⁹ Letter 70, 18 August 1865, in Didier Vatuone and Guy Barral, eds., *Frédéric Bazille: Correspondance* (Montpellier: Les Presses du Languedoc, 1992), 113. "...je pars pour Chailly où Monet m'attend comme le Messie."

¹⁰ This story derives from Gaston Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis* (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1932), 56. Scholars have repeated it in text after text when mentioning this painting, though I agree with Dianne Pitman that that is probably a mythologized version of an event that happened. See: Dianne W. Pitman, "Overlapping Frames," in *Monet & Bazille: A Collaboration*, ed. David A. Brenneman (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1998), 42.

which portrayed Monet in his sickbed staring crossly at his friend. Because Bazille subordinates Monet to his surroundings, delicately but ultimately schematically rendering his face, this image has been treated more as a small genre painting than a proper portrait, and yet it proves difficult to interpret without prior knowledge of the relationship between artist and sitter and the peculiarity of Monet allowing himself to be presented in this way. This image provides a particularly strong point of entry to a discussion of the relationship between intimacy and temporality with regard to Bazille's impulse to record his experience.

Philosophers and psychoanalysts have sought to define intimacy and how its role as part of the psyche responds to the social and historical demands of the individual's situation. Hannah Arendt viewed intimacy as extraordinarily general—a subjective state that is shadowy at best, and whose limits are impossible to spatially define.¹¹ Julia Kristeva, responding to Arendt, instead chose to locate the intimate as a temporal construct—structured over the time it takes an individual to recognize the diversity of his or her feelings and to attempt to form those feelings into an utterance, be it literature or art.¹² If intimacy is both shadowy and temporal, it is also, according to Lauren Berlant, a series of institutions through which people structure their lives—she notes that “intimacy builds worlds: it creates spaces and usurps places meant for other kinds of relations.”¹³ In Berlant's formulation, and the colloquial understanding of intimacy, human relationships provide a range of attachments that people privilege and seek to build in their daily

¹¹ S.K. Keltner, “What Is Intimacy?,” in *Psychoanalysis, Aesthetics, and Politics in the Work of Kristeva*, ed. Kelly Oliver and S.K. Keltner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 165.

¹² This analysis derives from *Ibid.*, 165–66. However, for a description of how intimacy is seen in such works of art see: “The Intimate: From Sense to the Sensible (Logics, Jouissance, Style),” in Kristeva, *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis*, 2:43–62.

¹³ Lauren Berlant, “Intimacy: A Special Issue,” in *Intimacy*, ed. Lauren Berlant (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 2.

lives—that they should not always succeed, Berlant notes, is a fact often suppressed by those in the throes of pursuing them.

Intimacy may be further understood as “as a space where the self can take shelter from exposure to establish a relation with itself.”¹⁴ In this sense, the construction of intimate spaces can provide protected areas for deeper interpersonal communication and observation, which then leads to the production of intimate portraits. The philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy has described one function of the portrait as:

less the recollection of a (memorable) identity than it is the recollection of an (immemorial) intimacy. Identity can always be past, whereas intimacy can only ever be present. Once again, however, the portrait is less the recollection of this intimacy than it is a calling back to it. It calls us or summons us to it or toward it, leading us there; through the painting that is offered up to our look, we enter into the manner in which it is presented to the outside.¹⁵

For Nancy, then, the portrait functions as an object that occasions a recall about the subject it portrays; the relationship between the portrait object and its viewer is a reciprocal, phenomenal relationship through which the viewer experiences something of the look that the subject turned toward the painter.¹⁶ In the case of commissioned portraits, the intimacy of this look can be manufactured as a means of bridging the distance between the painted subject and the portrait’s viewer.

Nancy’s description of portraiture as a genre that summons intimacy, that enacts a mechanism of recall on the part of the portrait’s viewer, demonstrates an affinity with Susan Stewart’s description of souvenirs as specifically intended to enable a person to recall, through a narrative contingent on the souvenir object, “events whose materiality

¹⁴ Hanneke Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 12.

¹⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Look of the Portrait,” in *Multiple Arts: The Muses II*, ed. and trans. Simon Sparks (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 239.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

has escaped us.”¹⁷ In Stewart’s formulation, a reason to read Bazille’s creation of intimate portraits as an impulse to keep records becomes clear. Stewart writes that the souvenir effects “the transformation of exterior into interior... The souvenir reduces the public, the monumental, and the three dimensional into the miniature, that which can be enveloped by the body, or into the two-dimensional representation, that which can be appropriated within the privatized view of the individual subject.”¹⁸ So much of French art during this period, including paintings such as *Summer Scene* (Fig. 1) and *Family Reunion* (Fig. 27), must be considered for how the artists elected to present their subjects to a Salon-going public, but when the paintings in question were never intended for public display, another frame of reference must be established. When artists painted for their own enjoyment or edification, apart from a structured educational program or patronage relationship, intimacy and desire could factor into the painting process more readily.

Bazille thus attempts to “do” intimacy through creating records that allow him to temporarily be alone with his memories of his friends in the form of gazing at their portraits. In examining these portraits together, this chapter further elucidates how they function as distinct productions of an intimacy that is homosocial in nature and collective in ambition. Bazille’s portraits thus stand as visual records of the internal questioning and world-building that occurred as he and his friends sought to break free of the hegemony of the Salon. In conjunction with the portraits for which Bazille posed and the paintings for which he and his friends served others as proprietary models, each cluster of images memorializes the specific temporal world that these young men built together,

¹⁷ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 135.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 137–138.

before breaking camp and moving to the next, and the next phase, and eventually, after Bazille's death, to the first Impressionist exhibition.

Thus, in *The Improvised Field Hospital*, we are met by Monet's intense gaze at Bazille and, by extension, every viewer who followed him. The elaborately detailed interior scene embodies the conflicted feelings experienced by both portrayer and the portrayed. Monet's injured body seems too small as it sinks into the mass of tangled sheets and blankets on the inn's bed; his indistinct identity defies the specificity of his portrait. Presented in shades of white, brown and tan, with green accents, the monochrome palette of the interior mimics the natural shades of the forest, anchoring the bed-ridden artist in a simulacrum of the environment to which he was impatient to return. Centered both horizontally and vertically in the picture plane, it appears almost as if the sweeping curtains on the left and the frantic zig-zags of the wallpaper pattern are closing in on the patient's sickbed. Even in this small, personal exercise, the interior here becomes event—in the way that it embodies the tension between the patient and the artist capturing him, the interior becomes as much a protagonist as the man it surrounds.¹⁹

Though it has often been remarked that the apparatus under which Monet convalesces must have been rigged by Bazille, as a result of the medical training that this dissertation explored in Chapter One, the exact intention of this arrangement has never been included as part of an art historical analysis. It does, however, make sense that Bazille would have constructed this system, as it resembles one suggested in Joseph Goffres's 1853 text *Précis iconographique de bandages, pansements et appareils*.

¹⁹ I borrow the phrase the “interior becomes event” from André Dombrowski, “Cézanne, Manet and the Portraits of Zola,” in *Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789-1914*, ed. Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 107. He writes: “The interior becomes event in Cézanne's paintings, marked by anthropomorphized, billowy curtains and dramatic shadows...”

Goffres, then an *agregé* professor at the Faculté in Montpellier as well as a practicing physician at the Gros-Caillou military hospital in Paris, expansively outlined different types of bandaging practices that could support fractures, maintain pressure or ointments on various parts of the body, and employ various extra measures in assisting the healing processes of the body. For example, a section on "*Pansements avec l'eau*" includes an image (Fig. 61) in which a bandaged leg is secured within a metal frame; a bucket, attached to the top of this frame, provides a source of water that then flows through a siphon over the leg, and is then funneled toward a basin poised to catch the water as it runs off oilcloth positioned under the bandaged leg.²⁰ When fashioned in such a way, the injured leg would be continuously irrigated, ensuring the effectiveness of whatever healing poultice had been applied to it.

In rigging such a system for Monet, in a village without the supplies of Goffres's military hospital or the Faculté in Montpellier, Bazille would have made do with whatever was available in their inn. Consequently, he uses not a utilitarian bucket, but a ceramic crock, perhaps from the kitchen; there is no visible siphon, purposely engineered to draw water against gravity onto the wound. While no one is sure how exactly Monet was injured, a notable difference between the illustration from Goffres's text and *The Improvised Field Hospital* is that Monet's leg remains unsplinted and exposed. His spindly leg arches over the blanket meant to catch the water, and the site of his wound seems to burn—red and pink against the blasé olive color of the blanket. Bazille does not spare his canvas from Monet's pain, a cruel yet exceedingly realist gesture seemingly born out of his unwillingness to eliminate any salient detail.

²⁰Joseph Goffres, *Précis iconographique de bandages, pansements et appareils* (Paris: Libraire de Méquigan-Marvis, 1853), 544–545.

The letters that exist between Monet and Bazille, which provide the primary evidence through which modern scholarship has defined their relationship, indicate the fractious, yet familiar nature of their friendship. Anne Wagner describes the thirty-nine known letters from Monet to Bazille as their own discursive category, which “allowed them to sustain a relationship based, for Monet’s part, at least, on a kind of coercive dependency, a pattern of passivity and aggression which from this distance resembles nothing so much as a thinly disguised repetition of a father-son relationship.”²¹ Bazille, in Wagner’s formulation, is the father, but she notes that Monet did not hesitate to scold Bazille when he felt that Bazille failed to maximize the privileges afforded by his wealth and relative comfort.²² It is likely this scolding that led Kermit Champa to describe Monet’s highly constructed tone toward Bazille as “almost in the manner of a conventionally demanding nineteenth-century bourgeois husband. His demands appear to be met by Bazille in the manner of an equally conventional wife.”²³

While the dynamics isolated by Wagner and Champa certainly exist within the letters, ascertaining Bazille’s opinions and contributions proves more difficult. While Monet’s letters to Bazille survive, Bazille’s letters to Monet do not, and while Wagner and others have suggested reading Bazille’s studio paintings to determine his regard for Monet, this encourages defining their relationship solely on the basis of their contributions to the art world. For better or worse, Bazille’s life contained much more than his art—and much to Monet’s chagrin, it also encompassed more than his friend’s demands. Reassessing the letters requires reading between the lines of the statements that

²¹ Anne M. Wagner, “Why Monet Gave Up Figure Painting,” *Art Bulletin* 76, no. 4 (December 1994): 621.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Kermit Swiler Champa, “A Complicated Codependence,” in *Monet & Bazille: A Collaboration*, ed. David A. Brenneman (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1998), 71.

have heretofore buttressed our understanding of the earliest parts of Monet's career because they can and should also be used to assess the strength of Bazille's allegiances during this period. At the time of *The Improvised Field Hospital*, Bazille and Monet were on more or less collegial terms—Monet made demands, certainly, such as when he sent three paintings to Bazille in Montpellier in the hopes that they would please both his friend and the famed collector Alfred Bruyas.²⁴ He waxes at length about his various studies in progress and painting expeditions,²⁵ but always has the grace to note that he received Bazille's letters "with great pleasure" or that he is keeping Bazille's goodwill in mind.

However, the letters from 1865 also demonstrate that this was the moment when Bazille seems to have begun his tactical avoidance of Monet. Around the time in Chailly, when Bazille was needed to pose for the *Déjeuner*, Monet wrote: "you seem as if you have completely put me aside; you made me a strong promise to help me with my painting...I hope that you will keep your promise, but time passes and I cannot see you coming."²⁶ Bazille appears to have not responded as regularly to letters like this where Monet badgered him to acquiesce to his demands. This pattern escalated in the summer of 1867 when Monet was desperate for money and Camille was pregnant with their first child—he wrote to Bazille over and over again, and as Bazille refrained from answering, Monet became more verbally abusive, noting at one point that "one thinks of the

²⁴ Letter 11, from Monet in Sainte-Adresse to Bazille, October 14, 1864, in Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:421.

²⁵ This is especially the case in the earliest surviving letters, when he traveled from Sainte-Adresse to Rouen and Honfleur while Bazille was in the south or in Paris.

²⁶ Letter 20, from Monet in Chailly to Bazille, end of July or beginning of August, 1865, in Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:422. "...vous l'avez l'air de m'avoir mis complètement de côté; vous m'avez bien promis de m'aider pour mon tableau, vous devez venir me poser quelques figures et, sans cela, je manque mon tableau; aussi j'espère que vous tiendrez votre promesse, et pourtant le temps se passé et je ne vous vois pas venir."

sufferings of your nearest friends: so I no longer dare to believe in your friendship.”²⁷

Monet’s demands, and Bazille’s increasing unwillingness to assist without question, continued until Bazille’s death, even including an incident where he appears to have suggested to Monet that, if he did not have adequate funds for a train ticket, he should simply walk to Le Havre.²⁸

In this sense, we must return to Monet’s gaze out of the painting—it seems to begrudge this act of modeling, to confront Bazille as he gazes over his friend’s compromised body, to enact visually the blustery persona of Monet’s letters. In Michael Fried’s paradigm of absorption and theatricality, *The Improvised Field Hospital* would certainly be viewed as theatrical and would violate the pleasurable looking enabled through gazing at an absorptively posed figure. Harry Berger has, however, described the ability of the painter and the sitter to collaborate in resisting such a pose “to suggest, not the mind’s construction in the face, but the mind’s construction of the face; not the transparency of the body revealing the stereotypical soul... but the controlled activity of a body obeying the command to deliver that stereotype; not physiognomy, but fiction.”²⁹ In giving Monet’s recuperation a tangible purpose, *The Improvised Field Hospital* commemorates as much of the silly game Bazille likely encouraged Monet to play in acting the invalid as it does the reality of the situation.

But this play-acting, as Bazille demonstrated his expertise and then fixed Monet’s injured state on the canvas, encapsulates how this unexpected development reversed their

²⁷ Letter 38, from Monet in Sainte-Adresse to Bazille, August 20, 1867, in *Ibid.*, 1:424. “...on pense aux peines de ses amis d’habitude; aussi je n’ose plus croire à votre amitié.”

²⁸ Letter 58, from Monet in Saint-Michel to Bazille, September 25, 1869, in *Ibid.*, 1:427. This particular letter opens with the declaration that “La présente est pour vous informer que je n’ai pas suivi votre conseil (inexcusable) d’aller à pied au Havre,” and continues to discuss his current projects.

²⁹ Harry Berger, Jr., *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt Against the Renaissance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 215. Berger speaks, in this instance, of Titian’s portrait of Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino (1536-38) as a military commander.

usual roles. Where Monet usually dominated Bazille in terms of artistic skill, often writing to him in a tone that consistently critiques Bazille's skills, his work ethic, and his commitment to painting,³⁰ Bazille's responses to Monet, if he responded at all, were less consistent. With his superiority in at least this area of their lives, and the incongruity of seeing the friend who had begged him to come and pose confined to his bed, Bazille must have seen potential for *The Improvised Field Hospital* in a humorous context.³¹ As a visual joke, this painting could function as an expression of Bazille's 'sudden glory' at having the upper end of this power dynamic, at seeing his friend's desperate ambitions thwarted³²—an attempt to fix on the canvas the intimacy of this admission. The fact that Bazille kept this small painting for himself suggests the pleasure he took from viewing it and the satisfaction gained in recalling this moment. As Wagner has observed, "there was real intimacy in this relationship, but that did not stop Monet's letters from being manipulative, having axes to grind and proofs to offer."³³ Yet there is also a sense of cooperation between the painter, Bazille, and his sitter, Monet, which betrays the operation of a joke and the superiority that Bazille could embrace in his friend being kept from his work.

The cooperation in the construction of *The Improvised Field Hospital* must remind viewers that "space is a practiced place"—it is defined by the actions and operations that occur and reoccur within it.³⁴ This particular space, outside of Paris in an

³⁰ Monet often suggests that he hopes Bazille is working hard and devoting himself "wholeheartedly" to his work or describes his friend as "fickle." Kendall, *Monet by Himself*, 20, 23.

³¹ For a summary of the various theories of humor and their origins, see: Jon E. Roeckelein, *The Psychology of Humor: A Reference Guide and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 162–172.

³² *Ibid.*, 144.

³³ Wagner, "Why Monet Gave Up Figure Painting," 621.

³⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 117.

area populated by painters, is one defined by specific masculine histories. Monet's participation in these comfortable actions of masculine camaraderie was thus curtailed by the fact of his immobilization, and so *The Improvised Field Hospital* confronts the viewer with a man who has been unceremoniously separated from his "natural" environment—the practiced environment in which he was able to flourish—and seems to feel anger and resentment on account of this imposed vulnerability. Landscape painting, perhaps more than any other genre, engages with preconceived notions of gender. Where paintings have arguably been marked as feminine,³⁵ landscape paintings address nature, marked as feminine, through the creation of culture, marked as masculine. Landscape painters were consequently viewed as ultra-masculine; not only did they bear the power of a masculine gaze, but their masculine strength allowed them to tame the feminized landscapes that rested before them.³⁶

In removing themselves from the urban societies whose markets and venues paradoxically drove the production of their work, landscape painters also preserved their individual wells of strength—both morally and sexually speaking. Not tapped out by the demands of modernity, these supposedly isolated painters could then funnel all of their intellectual—masculine—energies into memorializing beautiful, feminine landscapes, set before them. They would further preserve their strength and potency by avoiding the trappings of relationships with women that would distract from painting, enfeebling the

³⁵ W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 35. Mitchell riffs here on Norman Bryson's assertion, in the introduction to *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretation*, of the construction of "woman as image and man as the bearer of the look."

³⁶ Steven Adams, "Signs of Recovery: Landscape Painting and Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century France," in *Gendering Landscape Art*, ed. Steven Adams and Anna Gruetzner Robins (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 15.

mind and sapping needed energies.³⁷ For Corot, who would be at first an abstract idol and then a personal role model for the younger generation of landscape painters, women and sex had no sustained place in his practice. He once wrote to his friend Abel Osmond, “I have but one goal in life, which I intend to follow consistently: to paint landscapes. This firm resolution will prevent my becoming seriously attached. I mean through marriage. As for the little dalliances, I assure you that if I were permitted upon my return to Paris to occasionally embrace [Alexina Legoux, a beautiful shopgirl], this would console me for my celibacy.”³⁸ Monet similarly reveals the landscape as his true mistress when, in mid-1864 prior to his extended relationship to Camille Doncieux, he seems to have been engaged with a young Parisienne named Eugénie whose letters could not compel him to leave Honfleur and abandon his “desire to ‘do everything’ in a landscape ‘more beautiful every day.’”³⁹ Though avoiding heterosexual companionship meant avoiding a certain amount of drama and distraction, however, these artists were able to replace the emotional support such liaisons could provide through pursuing masculine friendships in the practiced places of landscape painting.

The forests around Fontainebleau, in particular, served as a center of landscape painting during the era in which the Impressionists reached maturity. Though these artists traveled frequently and fairly widely within France during these years, Fontainebleau occupied an exceptional position in this period’s cultural imagination for both urbanites seeking escape and for painters seeking “nature” as their subject and way

³⁷ Ibid., 24–25.

³⁸ Letter from Corot to Abel Osmond, now in the Louvre, 8 August 1826, AR 8 L 5, quoted in Vincent Pomarède, “Corot the Figure Painter,” in *The Secret Armoire: Corot’s Figure Paintings and the World of Reading*, ed. Mariantonia Reinhard-Felice (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2011), 31. Michael Clarke, however, has complicated this letter, noting that Alexina, who had been the object of Corot’s affections, had married another man shortly before Corot voiced his decision not to marry. See: Michael Clarke, *Corot and the Art of Landscape* (New York, London, Paris: Cross River Press, 1991), 38–39.

³⁹ Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet, or the Triumph of Impressionism* (Köln: Taschen, 1996), 52.

of life. For painters, it provided “a refuge in which they could devote themselves completely to experiencing nature, ‘a sacred necessary oasis in the midst of the impious invasion of a destructive and improvident civilization.’”⁴⁰ To be in the forest, for both the landscape artists and writers of the time, meant the simplification of one’s life—one that allowed for the embrace of “a familiar motif, a youthful impression, a vision forming an integral part of [their personalities], a vision perceived through the veil of memory.”⁴¹ In 1864, Hippolyte Taine wrote in *La Vie parisienne* that the forest seemed to instill in men a natural, childlike state, where “one returns to the natural life, free from cares, affectations and calculation...good will prevails, one senses sincerity and that this is the substance of man.”⁴² Flaubert notably described the emboldening effects of entering the forest of Fontainebleau in his novel *L’Education sentimentale* (1869), writing that his characters “could feel their souls stirring with a kind of pride in a freer life together, bubbling over with a strength and an irrational joy.”⁴³

This myth of the masculine landscape painter, which permeated Parisian publications, further enabled the construction of spaces that these men came to inhabit—indeed, by the 1860s, painters had become “the true kings of the forest of Fontainebleau.”⁴⁴ They gravitated to *auberges*, or inns, known for hosting painters and being amenable to the financial or behavioral problems such artists tended to create. In

⁴⁰ Kimberly Jones, *In the Forest of Fontainebleau: Painters and Photographers from Corot to Monet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 19-20. Jones quotes: A.S., “La forêt de Barbizon--Dévastations,” *L’Artiste: Journal de la littérature et des beaux-arts* 2, no. 3 (1839): 290.

⁴¹ Carlette Engel de Janosi, “The Forest of Fontainebleau in Painting and Writing,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 11, no. 4 (June 1953): 396.

⁴² Quoted and translated in Adams, “Signs of Recovery: Landscape Painting and Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century France,” 17.

⁴³ Gustave Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education: The Story of a Young Man*, trans. Douglas Parmée, reissue (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 354.

⁴⁴ Frédéric Bernard, *Fontainebleau et ses environs*, Guides-Cicerone (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et Cie, 1853), 119.

this sense, their inn-based intimacy was literally spatiotemporal, built off the time that they spent together in this space that brought men together primarily on the basis of painting and enabled them to ‘be themselves’ by defying conventional bourgeois expectations for work. Steven Adams positions these inns as surrogate homes and sites of “psychic repose,” where “male sexual desire was expressed only by innocence contained within the bounds of the surrogate family and even then through the conduit of good-natured ‘brimades’ (jibes) and ‘plaisanteries’ (jokes).”⁴⁵ If Bazille meant *The Improvised Field Hospital* as a joke, it was likely not an ill-spirited one because the environment of the inn seems to have engendered warmth and intensity in the interactions of its inhabitants. Later in life, Renoir even mistakenly claimed that his first meeting with these friends took place in Chailly, not in Paris, which suggests how meaningful these early days remained.⁴⁶

Because they were able to transform the spaces of the inn, the forest, and even the Parisian studio into intimate ones, these artists further perpetuated a culture that inverted the norms for hegemonic masculinity that governed the main parts of their lives. Hegemonic masculinity was notably defined by Raewyn Connell in her seminal study *Masculinities*, originally published in 1995, as a “configuration of gender practice” that “guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women;” hegemony, according to Connell, depends on the correspondence between the ideals of a culture and the power of a collective or institution, such as the military.⁴⁷ Other scholars have built upon Connell’s definition to describe how hegemonic

⁴⁵ Adams, “Signs of Recovery: Landscape Painting and Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century France,” 16.

⁴⁶ Peter Kropmanns, “Renoir’s Friendships with Fellow Artists—Bazille, Monet, Sisley,” in *Renoir. Between Bohemia and Bourgeoisie: The Early Years*, ed. Nina Zimmer (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012), 241.

⁴⁷ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 77.

masculinities are maintained in groups through homosocial interaction—masculine traits that fit hegemonic ideals are celebrated, while those that do not fit are suppressed in order to suppress contradictions.⁴⁸ “A historically mobile relation,”⁴⁹ hegemonic masculinities may change with respect to the traits that are allowed to establish dominance within a social environment.

Though Bazille and his friends might have felt inclined to put their heads down and work, establishing masculine in-jokes in their studios and instructional ateliers,⁵⁰ they faced rigorous restrictions for masculine comportment as they walked the newly Haussmannized boulevards. Indeed, Chapter Two demonstrated how Bazille fashioned his identity, and that of his beloved family in *Family Reunion*, with an eye toward standards of respectability perpetuated in Paris, and he was not the only one of these young men to worry about what his parents thought or how his work could be marketed to the particularities of a Parisian audience. Where emotional detachment, in the guise of the pseudo-scientific observation of the *flâneur*; competitiveness, in the form of artistic *concours* and disparate levels of success; and objectification of women, in the form of readily available models and potentially negligible mistresses characterized life in Paris and supported their youthful hold on a more mainstream hegemony of masculinity,⁵¹ Fontainebleau offered liberties that abetted their dependence on each other in order to push painting forward.

⁴⁸ Sharon R. Bird, “Welcome to the Men’s Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Gender and Society* 10, no. 2 (April 1996): 121.

⁴⁹ Connell, *Masculinities*, 77.

⁵⁰ For example, the humorous activities discussed in: Susan Waller, “Académie and Fraternité: Constructing Masculinities in the Education of French Artists,” in *Artistic Brotherhoods in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Laura Morowitz and William Vaughan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 137–53.

⁵¹ Emotional detachment, competitiveness, and the sexual objectification are the three characteristics that Sharon Bird identifies as crucial to the perpetuation of a hegemonic masculinity. For definitions and applications of these terms, see: Bird, “Welcome to the Men’s Club,” 122–123.

The opposite hegemony that Fontainebleau offered, and that these artists would seek to create in their Paris studios, came in tandem with the carefree, innocent masculinity described above. The myth of the masculine landscape painter offered cooperation through solitude during the day and playful rabble-rousing at night, as depicted in Renoir's 1866 bohemian set piece *The Inn of Mère Anthony* (Fig. 62). Much like *The Improvised Field Hospital*, *The Inn of Mère Anthony* embraces the milieu of Fontainebleau, as Renoir constructed a scene in the inn that he and Sisley frequented in a village called Marlotte—a sort of record-keeping that is Renoir's own. Like Monet's composite figure paintings, Renoir uses his friends and traveling companions for his models in this “homage to male bonding and the pleasures of Bohemia.”⁵² The bearded man standing in the back is Jules LeCoeur, a painter whose family often supported Renoir's practice.⁵³ The man in the white hat, leaning back comfortably in his chair and conversing with LeCoeur, is Alfred Sisley. Again, Renoir substantiates the idea that the villages near Fontainebleau, in this case Marlotte, are a world apart from regulated polite society—the accepted disparity in dress between Le Coeur, in a worker's blue smock, and Sisley, “elegant in his felt hat and buckled shoes,” adds to the warmth of the scene that Renoir presents.⁵⁴ These distinct men are seated in the dining room at the inn, and while the servant woman prepares to take away their dishes, unnoticed by the artists immersed in their conversation, Mère Antony herself hovers in the back as a very

⁵² Linda Nochlin, “Renoir's Men: Constructing the Myth of the Natural,” *Art in America* 74, no. 3 (March 1986): 104.

⁵³ Douglas Cooper, “Renoir, Lise and the Le Coeur Family: A Study of Renoir's Early Development-II: The Le Coeurs,” *The Burlington Magazine* 101, no. 678/679 (October 1959): 325.

⁵⁴ Colin B. Bailey, “Portrait of the Artist as a Portrait Painter,” in *Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age*, by Colin B. Bailey (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 27.

apparent, yet somewhat remote presence who ensures that her guests are being properly fed. Only the fluffy white dog, notable for its peg leg, looks directly out at the viewer.

This inn, much like the Lion d'Or that Bazille and Monet preferred, was known to offer an inexpensive, relaxed atmosphere where artists could stay, to the point where the Goncourts had remarked of it: "The whole place was smeared with paint, the windowsills are palettes."⁵⁵ The artists who passed through had literally left their marks on the walls of the dining room with caricatures and scrawls of jocular graffiti that characterized the shared values of the environment. Among these marks is a caricature of Henri Murger that Renoir claimed to have painted on the wall of the inn himself. Murger's *Scènes de la Bohème* (1851) and his subsequent move to Marlotte in 1855 had consecrated the small village as a center of bohemian life.⁵⁶ Yet, Renoir's constructed scene retains a tie to Paris in the form of the issue of *L'Événement* that lies on the table in front of Sisley. In the pages of *L'Événement*, around the time that Renoir and Sisley were in Marlotte, Emile Zola and other authors participated in debates about the status of art in French society, with Zola defending Manet against conservative critics.⁵⁷ By discreetly siding with Zola, Renoir never lost sight of the necessity of returning to Paris, and yet this *auberge* allowed him to unite with his friends in an effort to conquer the landscape instead of competing for the attentions of Parisian juries and audiences.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Gary Tinterow and Henri Loyrette, *Origins of Impressionism* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994), 452.

⁵⁶ Barbara Ehrlich White, *Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 24. See also: Colin B. Bailey, *Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2012), 98. For Murger's text and more on the bohemian social milieu, see: Henry Murger, *Scènes de la Bohème*, 2nd Edition (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1851); Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 31–58.

⁵⁷ Steven Adams, *The Barbizon School and the Origins of Impressionism* (London: Phaidon, 1994), 209.

Furthermore, these artists viewed their time in the forest as a sort of apprenticeship—Renoir and Sisley, especially, would set out into the forest and walk from village to village, endeavoring to examine all of the available foliage as well as the famous rock formations to ascertain what sites might be the best to paint. In doing so, they traced the steps of the Barbizon painters who had been there years before.⁵⁸ As for Bazille's impressions of the forest, he wrote to his mother in April of 1863, likely his first trip to Chailly and Fontainebleau: "Some parts of the forest are truly admirable; we have no idea in Montpellier of such oaks. The rocks are less beautiful than their grand reputation, it isn't difficult to find grander ones near to our city."⁵⁹ Though his reactions seem more measured than those of his friends, he did paint Fontainebleau's magnificent oaks in *Forest of Fontainebleau* (1865) (Fig. 63) and *Landscape at Chailly* (1865) (Fig. 64). However, these images should primarily suggest that he understood how pursuing landscape painting could enable the collaboration between friends that he also enjoyed and would communicate in his intimate portraiture.

Another component of mainstream hegemonic masculinity was the objectification of women in order to categorize the definitively masculine against the feminine, and yet Fontainebleau begat a friendly homosociality that did not inherently fear feminization. The affectionate joke of painting Monet as incapacitated, despite his momentary hero status for saving children from a stray discus, captures the moment that he is forced to wait, to be feminized by needing to wait for Bazille to help him, and perhaps in his

⁵⁸ Ann Dumas, "Alfred Sisley: The True Impressionist," in *Alfred Sisley: Poète de L'impressionisme* (Lyon: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2002), 325.

⁵⁹ Letter 21, from Bazille to his mother, dated 8 April 1863, Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 50–51. Bazille writes: "La forêt est vraiment admirable dans certaines parties; nous n'avons pas d'idées à Montpellier de pareils chênes. Les rochers sont moins beaux malgré leur grande réputation, il n'est pas difficile d'en trouver de plus grandioses aux environs de notre ville."

affection, or resentment, for Bazille as the person who cares for him.⁶⁰ Where gender “constitutes [the body’s] ‘interior’ signification on its surface,”⁶¹ a man whose feminized position is commemorated as a portrait doubly suffers the impact of that feminization. It impacts his performance of his own masculine gender and further results in the compromising of his ability to create and perform a persona suitable for depiction in a portrait. And yet Monet loses no public status through the creation of this image—Bazille keeps it for himself, perhaps to recall his pleasure in this moment of looking upon his friend with roles reversed.

Bazille’s pleasure functions, too, as the opposite of emotional detachment, the final component of mainstream hegemonic masculinity; his intimate portrayals of his friends thoroughly debunk any sense of detachment on the visual level. Though suppressing vulnerability could serve as a means of maintaining control,⁶² friendships cultivated privately, especially in an environment removed enough from more permanent life, provided a different sort of control. Scholars of nineteenth-century Europe and America have consistently argued for the depth and power of personal friendships,⁶³ and

⁶⁰ Roland Barthes, *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 14.

⁶¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge Classics Edition (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 189.

⁶² Bird, “Welcome to the Men’s Club,” 123, 125. For more on the relationship between vulnerability and masculinity, see: Warren Farrell, “The Politics of Vulnerability,” in *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*, ed. Deborah S. David and Robert Brannon (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, 1976), 51–55; Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁶³ See, for example: Gabrielle Houbre, *La Discipline de l’amour: l’éducation sentimentale des filles et des garçons à l’âge du romantisme* (Paris: Plon, 1997); Jonathan Ned Katz, *Love Stories: Sex between Men before Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Jeffrey Richards, “‘Passing the Love of Women’: Manly Love and Victorian Society,” in *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*, ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 92–121; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

when such fraternity could be prized, as it was at turns between Bazille, Monet, Sisley, and Renoir, intimacy proved to be a powerful motivator for creativity and innovation.⁶⁴

Between Portrait and Genre Painting

Creativity and innovation spurred these artists to travel together outside of Paris in search of wider subject matter with which to practice their craft, much as independent landscape painters, like Boudin, and the Barbizon School had done before them. The extent to which one supports the view of Impressionism's debts to the Barbizon school and other independent landscape painters should not belittle the influence of their working methods—it was the painters of the Barbizon who first vocally left the center for the periphery, seeking new motifs and new ways of painting by working separately, but together, near Fontainebleau. They cultivated their 'school' around a new attitude toward landscape painting, privileging first-hand access to their subjects and a newly painterly facture that perplexed Parisian critics.⁶⁵ Led by Théodore Rousseau, Charles-François Daubigny, Narcisse Diaz de la Peña, and Camille Corot, they initially pursued what many took to be “the twin impulses of admiration and rebellion,” and were consequently “cast out onto the fringes of so-called Bohemian life.”⁶⁶ Though this view, as well as the evolutionary view of Barbizon's relationship to Impressionism, has been necessarily complicated,⁶⁷ they still share philosophical affinities that illuminate both the benefits

⁶⁴ A similar mechanism of fraternity-as-motivation was at work in Jacques-Louis David's studio during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. See: Thomas Crow, *Emulation: David, Drouais, and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France*, Revised edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

⁶⁵ Adams, *The Barbizon School and the Origins of Impressionism*, 97–102.

⁶⁶ Jean Bouret, *The Barbizon School and 19th Century French Landscape Painting* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1973), 11–12.

⁶⁷ There have been a few notable examples of studies that have complicated, or actively resisted, these views. See: Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990). For an extensive

that Bazille and his friends believed they would find in the forest and the development of an artistic network from, at first, a series of nodes “among many nodes in an amorphous web of artists and groups.”⁶⁸

Indeed, together—as these artists rarely traveled entirely alone—they explored ideas, such as the rejections of slick surfaces and preparatory studies, which would become crucial components of Impressionist practice later in the 1870s and 1880s. Bazille and his friends found Barbizon escapism attractive, and as they began to feel confined by their work in Gleyre’s studio, Monet supposedly encouraged his friends to seek out new modes of instruction by declaring, “Let’s get out of here. The place is unhealthy: they lack sincerity.”⁶⁹ When they arrived in Chailly in 1863, they found precisely the freedom in mentorship they sought. Soon after their arrival, Renoir met Diaz, for whom they held the greatest respect and who told the young man that “no self-respecting painter should ever touch a brush unless he has his model before his eyes.”⁷⁰ These Barbizon painters were not only mentors, but potential collaborators. When, in 1867, Bazille wrote to his parents and notably proclaimed that he and “a dozen young men of talent who think like” him had “resolved to rent each year a grand atelier where

reconsideration of Rousseau’s politics as conservationist, see: Greg M. Thomas, *Art and Ecology in Nineteenth-Century France: The Landscapes of Théodore Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For the role of the so-called “Generation of 1830,” see: Susan Greenberg, “Reforming Paysage Historique: Corot and the Generation of 1830,” *Art History* 29, no. 3 (June 2004): 412–30.

⁶⁸ Thomas, *Art and Ecology in Nineteenth-Century France*, 3. Thomas resists the perception of Rousseau as part of any sort of school or as any sort of authorial genius—he describes him as “a node among many nodes” in this network in which all artists were “using the styles of their age to affirm very different ideas and beliefs.”

⁶⁹ Quoted in Philip Nord, *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century*, Historical Connections (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 14.

⁷⁰ Quoted from an 1879 recollection of this event by Renoir’s younger brother, Edmond, in White, *Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters*, 16.

[they] will exhibit as many of [their] works as [they] would like,” he numbered Courbet, Corot, Daubigny, and Diaz among the artists whose participation he had secured.⁷¹

However, figure paintings and portraits persisted in the oeuvres of the early Impressionists’ immediate predecessors, including Manet, Degas, and even Corot, even if such works by Bazille and his friends have occupied an unresolved position in the literature. Though portraiture has often been discussed in relation to likeness or naturalism, its potential as a tool for innovation and experimentation often escapes analysis due to the perception that exceptional artists painted portraits only as a diminished corollary to their primary practice.⁷² Despite the common perception of portrait practice as lesser, the genre posed numerous challenges for an artist, depending on who was portrayed and who the expected audience might be. If a portrait were commissioned, the wishes of the patron might factor in significantly more than if the artist had elected to paint a portrait for his or her own edification or exploration. Compare Manet’s commissioned *Portrait of Madame Brunet* (early 1860s) (Fig. 65), which the sitter reportedly rejected after bursting into tears upon seeing it for the first time,⁷³ with his repeated images of Berthe Morisot, likely pursued more for his own

⁷¹ Letter 91, to his mother, March or April 1867, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 137. “...une douzaine de jeunes gens de talent le pensent comme moi. Nous avons donc résolu de louer chaque année un grand atelier où nous exposerons nos œuvres en aussi grand nombre que nous le voudrons. Nous inviterons les peintres qui nous plaisent à nous envoyer des tableaux. Courbet, Corot, Diaz, Daubigny et beaucoup d’autres que vous ne connaissez peut-être pas, nous ont promis d’envoyer des tableaux, et approuvent beaucoup notre idée.” As Kathleen Adler notes, however, none of these named artists would ever participate in the eventual series of exhibitions that began in 1874—they would be replaced by a younger array of experimenters. Kathleen Adler, *Unknown Impressionists* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1988), 18.

⁷² Notable recent exceptions to this trend, which they also actively resist, are: Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio*; Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Susan Sidlauskas, *Cézanne’s Other: The Portraits of Hortense* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

⁷³ Charles S. Moffett, “Catalogue Entry for Portrait of Mme Brunet,” in *Manet, 1832-1883* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1983), 53–54. According to Manet’s friend, the art critic Théodore Duret, Madame Brunet burst into tears upon seeing the painting and never claimed the work.

psychological reasons than as proper portraits of his friend.⁷⁴ As the academic hierarchy of subject matter faced more and more challenges, portraits became more and more acceptable as objects for display and collection. Emile Zola was among those who noted how dramatically the number of portraits submitted to the Salon rose over the course of the 1860s and 1870s, and Parisians attempting to become high status art collectors then often bought these public portraits.⁷⁵ However, portraits created by early Impressionists were often not as formal, either in subject or intent, as the portraits that were displayed in the Salon, and they constructed “an image of the sitter that comprehends both the interaction between the artist and model and prevailing codes of social behavior.”⁷⁶ Like Bazille’s portrait of Monet as part of *The Improvised Field Hospital*, the intimate social and scopic dynamics that governed the representations of these familiar models would often have been illegible to the public, even if the artist chose to exhibit these paintings.

Intimacy in portraiture literature has often been reserved as an analytical framework for portraiture miniatures, where images were created for private viewing and treated as talismans, kept near the body as reminders of great personal feeling and transport.⁷⁷ Studies have also, of course, been done of portraits when lovers are involved in the creation of such works or when the works survive as remnants of a love now

⁷⁴ For interpretations of the complex operations at work in Manet’s portraits of Morisot, see: Carol Armstrong, *Manet Manette* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 174–199; Nancy Locke, *Manet and the Family Romance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 147–171.

⁷⁵ Colin Bailey estimates that 266 out of 2,278 painting submissions in 1864 (11.7%) were portraits; 384 of 2991 submissions in 1870 (12.8%); and 359 of 2,095 submissions in 1876 (17.1%). See: Bailey, “Portrait of the Artist as a Portrait Painter,” n. 12.

⁷⁶ Melissa McQuillan, *Impressionist Portraits* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1986), 24.

⁷⁷ See, for example: Carrie Rebora Barratt and Lori Zabar, *American Portrait Miniatures in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze: Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures*; Stephen Lloyd and Kim Sloan, *The Intimate Portrait: Drawings, Miniatures and Pastels from Ramsay to Lawrence* (Edinburgh and London: National Galleries of Scotland and The British Museum, 2008); Marcia Pointon, “The Portrait Miniature as an Intimate Object,” in *European Portrait Miniatures: Artists, Functions and Collections*, ed. Bernd Pappe, Juliane Schmieglitz-Otten, and Gerrit Walczak (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2013), 16–26.

dead.⁷⁸ However, intimacy has consistently been identified, yet underexamined, as a central tenet of Impressionist portrait practice more broadly. John House noted, in his essay for the *Faces of Impressionism* exhibition catalogue, that: “Focusing on sitters who were close to them, persons with whom they enjoyed an everyday familiarity, allowed them to develop a repertoire of forms and poses that evoke the immediacy of daily life, rather than the artificial conventions of ‘high art’ portraiture.”⁷⁹ Though House is right to point out the relative ease with which challenges could be made to standards of portraiture, especially in comparison with endeavors like Degas’s attempts to modernize the practice of history painting, portraiture was not necessarily the ground on which these young Impressionists wished to fight their battles. John Berger similarly wrote that, though “artists painted a number of ‘intimate’ portraits of their friends or models,” it is not the sitter’s “personality or his role which impress us but the artist’s vision.”⁸⁰ Intimacy is minimized here in favor of artistic prowess, and yet studying the output of Impressionist painters in the 1860s requires art historians to admit that even Monet’s artistic vision was far from persuasively codified. Though these artists had talents that were recognized by patrons and established artists, their paintings during this period still functioned as concerted attempts to discern, through the exploratory process of creation, a workable artistic philosophy.

Because many of these images derived from pictorial experimentation, the more difficult question regarding these images is often where the line might be drawn between

⁷⁸ See, for example, the discussion of the portraits of Marie d’Agoult and Franz Liszt in Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio*, 143–183.

⁷⁹ John House, “Impressionism and the Modern Portrait,” in *Faces of Impressionism: Portraits from American Collections*, by Sona Johnston (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1999), 13.

⁸⁰ John Berger, “The Changing View of Man in the Portrait,” in *Selected Essays and Articles: The Look of Things*, ed. Nikos Stangos (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972), 39.

legitimate portraits and genre paintings that include identifiable figures. For example, Mary Cassatt frequently painted her mother or her sister reading or doing needlework, as in *Lydia Crocheting in the Garden at Marly* (1880) (Fig. 66). Similarly, Manet, Morisot, and Caillebotte often used their friends and relatives as models within urban and landscape scenes. These images have been viewed as capsules of modernity, capturing moments of domestic life and operating within the conventions of genre painting. However, with the inclusion of identifiable portraits, they also provide an unorthodox valuation of normal human activities by debunking the artificiality of “high art” portraiture. In the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, genre painting had been defined in strict opposition to the more prestigious category of history painting. When Quatremère de Quincy endeavored to sort out the multiplicity of subjects counted as *peinture de genre*, he included both portraiture and bourgeois scenes in the category of “thinking and animate nature” (as opposed to landscapes—“vegetable and changeable nature”).⁸¹ However, portraiture and genre painting can only retain their divisions when the “social lines” that govern their appearance and iconography remain intact,⁸² and the social lines were exactly what Impressionist painters wished to transgress.

The Impressionist practice of placing portraits within bourgeois scenes or genre subjects innovated by forcing the symbolic languages of each genre to converge. Linda Nochlin has described the Impressionist impulse toward portraiture as “a broader attempt to reconfigure human identity” while working within, transforming, and subverting the

⁸¹ Wolfgang Stechow and Christopher Comer, “The History of the Term Genre,” *Bulletin of the Allen Memorial Art Museum* 33, no. 2 (76 1975): 89–90.

⁸² David R. Smith, “Irony and Civility: Notes on the Convergence of Genre and Portraiture in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” *Art Bulletin* 69, no. 3 (September 1987): 410.

genre.⁸³ Furthermore, adapting genre paintings, a format inextricable from its complex semiotic processes, to represent modern life allowed the Impressionists to observe private life on a public stage, much as Courbet and Manet had presented their Realist subjects on the scale of academic history painting. Though Courbet and Manet heightened their rhetoric through the sheer size of their images, paintings like *The Improvised Field Hospital* must read as subversive for their willingness to expose such a compromised and feminized, but factual moment in such explicit detail. Where domestic interiors are often gendered as feminine, nineteenth-century artists blurring genre lines could use portraiture in domestic interiors, as Bazille does, to explore the “complex combination of biological, psychoanalytic, social, political and economic realities” that defined maleness and masculine life during this period or perhaps even to complicate the continued acceptance of outmoded notions of masculinity.⁸⁴

Furthermore, scholars have often accepted the use of these familiar models in non-portraits as a matter of course without attending to the psychological, intellectual, and emotional consequences of portraying a person one knows, perhaps intimately, as a more anonymous figure in a composition. Susan Waller has referred to such sitters as *modèles privilégié*, or proprietary models, and described how such interactions can cause the line between sitter and model to blur in the face of “intersubjective factors” such as

⁸³ Linda Nochlin, “Impressionist Portraits and the Construction of Modern Identity,” in *Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age*, by Colin B. Bailey (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 55.

⁸⁴ For a productive survey of issues related to masculinity in interior portraiture can be found in: Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner, “Introduction,” in *Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789-1914*, ed. Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 1–14. For more on the relationship between interior scenes and psychological interiority, see: Susan Sidlauskas, *Body, Place, and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

“desire, vanity, affection, and economic dependence.”⁸⁵ Vanity certainly applies to *The Improvised Field Hospital* and the likelihood that Monet would have preferred that Bazille not see him so helpless. Vanity, affection, and economic dependence meaningfully become the aspects of his relationships that Bazille confronts in making his intimate portraits.

By removing the intention of display from some of their earliest works, the earliest Impressionists explored portraiture as a means of seeing each other—intellectually, physically, and emotionally—and consolidating their objectives. *The Improvised Field Hospital*, which figures among these genre scene-cum-portrait images that recur in Bazille’s oeuvre, balancing between Monet’s clear awareness that he is being portrayed and the shadow at right that seems to bring Bazille into the canvas, making it a genre representation of the relationship between painter and model.⁸⁶ As records of this very early period in their career, the group of portraits at the core of this chapter must be analyzed in the context of their production—one characterized by “creative exuberance” in the face of manifold uncertainty about their personal and professional lives.⁸⁷ Consequently, they make clear the necessity of probing further the friendships between these men with both visual and written evidence to understand how

⁸⁵ Susan Waller, “Realist Quandaries: Posing Professional and Proprietary Models in the 1860s,” *Art Bulletin* 89, no. 2 (June 2007): 241. Waller, however, suggests that *modèles privilégiés* are not quite the same as models used for portraits—she writes, “The pose assumed by a model of this sort is presumably not one that draws attention to the model’s individual identity, since this would be the province of portraiture” (240). I suspect that this distinction is due to Waller’s choice to confine her analysis primarily to formal paintings for public audiences, with a few notable exceptions that include Bazille’s *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine*.

⁸⁶ Champa, “A Complicated Codependence,” 82.

⁸⁷ In this characterization, I take cues from Patricia Lee Rubin, *Portraits by the Artist as a Young Man: Parmagianino Ca. 1524* (Groningen: The Gerson Lectures Foundation, 2007). In her examination of Parmagianino’s attempts to use portraiture to advance his career, which takes its own cues from James Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Rubin identifies “creative exuberance” or “immaturity” as a useful analytical framework from which she can discern, in the case of Parmagianino, “what [these portraits] tell us about the interactions of artifice and identity at a time when there was a burgeoning discussion of modes of being.”

the artists that produced them viewed their specific positions within this masculine social circle.

Absorption and Vulnerability

The specific circumstances of *The Improvised Field Hospital* anchor it in a particular moment and history between Bazille and Monet, and though they would remain close friends, it seems as if this period in 1865 was the beginning of the end of Monet's preeminence in Bazille's life. Daniel Wildenstein notes that Bazille soon began to shift his attention to Renoir, "who began to 'tutoyer' him at this time," or to refer to him with the informal *tu* and *toi*. Monet never did, always preferring the formal *vous*.⁸⁸ Thus, as Bazille's social habits started to shift, so did the formats and ambitions of his other informal portraits, which lack the piercing clarity and exposure of Monet's representation in *The Improvised Field Hospital*. They are startling in their efforts to release these men from the standards of bourgeois masculine comportment, and it is difficult to envision how they ever could have been displayed publicly, even if that had been Bazille's intention. And indeed, because Bazille did not require portrait commissions to survive, portraiture could function for him "as a medium to explore the psychological terrain normally closed to the professional portraitist."⁸⁹

Most of the portraits discussed in this section remained in the collections of the sitters themselves or Bazille's family, only reaching the collections of public institutions when relatives who inherited the paintings elected to sell them to collectors.⁹⁰ In that

⁸⁸ Wildenstein, *Monet, or the Triumph of Impressionism*, 58.

⁸⁹ Bailey, "Portrait of the Artist as a Portrait Painter," 1.

⁹⁰ The portrait of Renoir, now in the Musée d'Orsay, was in Renoir's personal collection until his death, and the portrait of Edmond Maître, now in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., remained in Maître's

sense, they remained within the inner circle as long as possible, their actual ownership mimicking the intimacy that conditioned the representation of the paintings' subjects. They are very much indicative of the non-hegemonic masculinity constructed through these sojourns to Fontainebleau. As a structuring principle for these paintings, the intimacy between these men defined how they could represent each other, usurping canvases that, in their desire for success, they might have used to portray other kinds of more prestigious subjects.⁹¹ It is also worth noting that Bazille's more luxurious means allowed him to hire *modèles de profession* to complete his ambitious paintings⁹²—yet he seems to have actively chosen to create these modestly scaled, yet virtuosic images of his closest friends. Though our perspective is less clear on the circumstances of how these other portraits were created, it can be no less certain that Bazille felt deeply for the men who allowed him to paint their images.

The most stunning and least explained of these individual images portrays Alfred Sisley from 1867 (Fig. 67) and was lost during World War II. Like Monet in *The Improvised Field Hospital*, Sisley gazes out of the canvas toward the viewer. Yet Sisley's gaze is lazy and comfortable, so that the portrait's "empathetic character and atmosphere of warm intimacy"⁹³ suggest much about the relationship between Sisley and Bazille at this moment when the latter felt compelled to make his friend his subject. In the surviving images of the painting, it is difficult to make out the distinctions between

personal collection, eventually passing back to Bazille's relatives before it was sold. Bazille apparently kept *The Improvised Field Hospital*, as it passed to his brother and his brother's children. The portrait of Sisley was owned by a M. Dunan, then the Wildenstein Gallery in Paris, and then it disappeared ca. 1940 and is now presumed destroyed.

⁹¹ This sentence applies Lauren Berlant's formulation described earlier in this chapter regarding intimacy as a world-building mechanism. See: Berlant, "Intimacy: A Special Issue," 2.

⁹² Waller, "Realist Quandaries," 259.

⁹³ Dominique Brachlianoff, "The Early Years (1860-1870)," in *Alfred Sisley: Poète de L'impressionisme* (Lyon: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2002), 358.

beard and coat and background, and yet Sisley's pose directs the viewer's gaze straight to his face. His left arm encompasses the upper right corner of the painting, resting behind his head and thereby giving the illusion that he offers his body up for the consumption of the viewer, though Bazille has painted him from only mid-torso up. His right arm, resting on the settee on which he appears to lay, culminates in a hand whose forefinger and thumb curl around a thin pipe that slips seductively between his lips at the side of his mouth.

The homosocial intimacy between Bazille and Sisley that this portrait embodies seems at odds with the popular wisdom of Sisley as something of a skirt-chaser. Sisley, during the years that these men spent together in the atelier of Charles Gleyre, had a reputation for abusing the models—closely inspecting their bodies and claiming it was “essential to the truth of his artistic expression,” and going so far as to paint the nipples of one of the models red.⁹⁴ His affinity for the feminine form seems to have carried on outside the studios to streets of Paris, with Renoir recalling later in life that Sisley “could never resist a petticoat. We would be walking along the street, talking about the weather or something equally trivial, and suddenly Sisley would disappear. Then I would discover him at his old game of flirting.”⁹⁵ However, Sisley was consistently fiercely private in his personal dealings, and he seems to have never wanted to be a figure painter. He chose instead to paint landscapes, with an eye to the traditions of Constable, Claude

⁹⁴ William Hauptman, *Charles Gleyre 1806-1874*, vol. 1 (Zurich, Princeton: Swiss Institute for Art Research, Princeton University Press, 1996), 334.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Shone, *Sisley*, 28.

Lorrain, and Corot, as soon as he left Gleyre's studio in 1862,⁹⁶ with figures only included to increase the extent of *his* detailed gaze.⁹⁷

Even though Bazille's interest in figure painting was certainly more substantial than Sisley's, MaryAnne Stevens has noted correspondences between the landscapes that Sisley produced during the same period that Bazille was painting landscapes at Chailly, with Sisley's brushwork seeming to emulate the "shorter, rather staccato, more fully laden brushwork" that Bazille used in *Landscape at Chailly* (1865) and *Forest of Fontainebleau* (1865).⁹⁸ Sisley, during his period with Renoir in Marlotte and at the height of his friendship with Bazille, seems to have become more confident in his abilities as a painter, producing compositions that "reveal a painter of considerable control and power."⁹⁹ While the extent of Sisley's relationship to Bazille remains especially unclear, as there are no letters or other materials to define how this intensely intimate portrait came into being, this portrait and Sisley's growth as a painter during these early years emphasize how Fontainebleau served to increase the reliance of these artists on each other when the difficulties of urban life and their firm social positions were stripped away. Fontainebleau allowed for "the awakening of inert objects (a table, a forest, a person that plays a certain role in the environment) which, emerging from their stability, transform the place where they lay motionless into the foreignness of their own

⁹⁶ MaryAnne Stevens, "La Celle-Saint-Cloud to Louveciennes: 1865-1870," in *Alfred Sisley*, ed. MaryAnne Stevens (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 77.

⁹⁷ MaryAnne Stevens, "Catalogue Entry for Village Street at Marlotte, near Fontainebleau, 1866, and Women Going to the Woods: Landscape, 1866," in *Alfred Sisley*, ed. MaryAnne Stevens (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 91.

⁹⁸ MaryAnne Stevens, "Catalogue Entry for Avenue near a Small Town," in *Alfred Sisley*, ed. MaryAnne Stevens (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 84.

⁹⁹ Christopher Lloyd, "Alfred Sisley and the Purity of Vision," in *Alfred Sisley*, ed. MaryAnne Stevens (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 12.

space.”¹⁰⁰ The forest allowed them to defamiliarize their environment and thus honed the gazes they then turned on the objects and spaces that they painted. This dislocation from Paris to Fontainebleau abetted innovation by allowing these artists to construct new histories of themselves and their work that embraced the past myths of the landscape painter yet forged the future as a collaborate enterprise.

Unlike the directed gazes of Sisley and Monet, the portraits of Maître and Renoir show their subjects gazing away. Bazille became increasingly infatuated by the charms of Maître and Renoir as he steadily fell out with Monet. In 1867, he painted a portrait of Renoir (Fig. 68) that is markedly different from the portraits of Sisley and Monet that preceded it. Renoir’s entire body appears in the canvas. Seated on the same chair as Maître (Fig. 44), he pulls his knees up to his chest, with his heels resting just off the rim of the chair’s seat. This frog-like pose seems tremendously informal, not only because it disrupts the logic of conventional portrait poses but also because Renoir seems to slouch a little as he rests into the chair. Perhaps he asked Bazille to paint him so informally, in keeping with the tough, but tender and playful, men that he would later paint at *bals* and other occasions.¹⁰¹ Bazille has rendered the pointed features of his friend’s face, framed with the various components of his particular facial hair, with crisp detail, and he draws attention to the face with the bright spot of purple that represents Renoir’s cravat. Though Bazille deeply engages with this portrait of Renoir, painting the whole of him down to the soles of his shoes, the portrait makes it seem as if this is not an endeavor that his subject reciprocates.

¹⁰⁰ Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 118.

¹⁰¹ Nochlin, “Renoir’s Men: Constructing the Myth of the Natural,” 106.

Unlike the openness of Maître's body, Renoir's pose is simultaneously open and closed—though his legs are comfortably separated and his back slouches, his hands clasp in front of him, with an gesture of grasping fingers, and he looks away from the viewer. Linda Nochlin playfully suggests that Renoir and Bazille hereby announce “their membership in an artistic, youthful, and renegade fraternity in which good posture is no longer a requirement.”¹⁰² This is not the absorption of Maître—but almost a screen of restraint that pushes the viewer away and betrays the subject's struggles with the intimacy of the scene. Renoir's face is impenetrable, even though Bazille was one of his closest friends and his studio mate. Art historians have often remarked that, as with Monet, Bazille's relationship with Renoir was extremely close, that Bazille adored his friend even if Renoir's feelings were not precisely motivated by the same emotion. As Harry Berger has written, “A sitter who is used to being looked at, who expects to be looked at, whose visage is represented as the embodiment of the gaze, need not deign to return the favor.”¹⁰³ Such an attitude explains the nonchalance of Renoir's pose; he seems comfortable in his assurance that Bazille will assist him in any way necessary and will thus consent to posing for this portrait in return.

Bazille's relationship to Renoir cannot be as thoroughly defined through their letters as his relationships to other men simply because significantly fewer letters survive. However, from the ones that do, it is evident that Renoir's tone of addressing Bazille differed substantially from Monet's demands and unreasoned cajoling. For example, in July of 1865, when Renoir wrote to Bazille to ask him to meet him in Le Havre to see the regattas, he said:

¹⁰² Nochlin, “Impressionist Portraits and the Construction of Modern Identity,” 55.

¹⁰³ Berger, Jr., *Fictions of the Pose: Rembrandt Against the Renaissance*, 208.

There's nothing to keep you from leaving a place you don't like, nor anything to keep you from staying on in an enjoyable one... You don't have to feel embarrassed about refusing. The truth is, I'd be very glad to have you with us, but take this invitation as a simple offer if you like that idea. Since you've already been there, I thought you might enjoy seeing again the places you found beautiful. This is why I think of you. So don't be embarrassed, don't feel obligated for anything. Just answer.¹⁰⁴

Bazille elected not to meet his friends in Le Havre, but Renoir's tone is remarkable for giving him the option to decline. He seems to ask for only what Bazille can comfortably give him, and he goes out of his way to ensure that Bazille does not feel obligated to him in any way. This may be a strategy on Renoir's part; he certainly took from Bazille as much as Monet and benefited from Bazille's ability to pay for studio space and models, which will be discussed below. Yet Renoir's tactics must have seemed as at least marginally superior to the verbal abuse that Bazille suffered from Monet.

In Bazille's portrait, Renoir looks toward away or into the broader studio space;¹⁰⁵ he perhaps wishes to return to his work. This image was likely painted during the period in which Renoir shared Bazille's studio on the Rue Visconti—though they moved into the studio in July 1866, Bazille did not return from Montpellier until November,¹⁰⁶ at which point they resumed their efforts to work rigorously all day. Bazille wrote to his mother in February of 1867:

Since my last letter, there is news from the rue Visconti. Monet has fallen from the sky with a collection of magnificent canvases, which are going to

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Renoir to Bazille, July 3, 1865; quoted and translated in White, *Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters*, 19. Originally reproduced in François Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, Éditeur, 1952), 47. The French reads: "Rien pour vous empêcher de partir d'un endroit qui déplaît et rien non plus pour vous empêcher de rester dans un amusant... Tu n'as pas besoin de te gêner pour refuser. Il est vrai que je serais très heureux de t'avoir avec nous, mais prends cette invitation pour une simple proposition si cela te fait plaisir. Comme tu as été par là déjà j'ai pensé que de revoir les endroits que tu as trouvés beaux te ferait plaisir. Voilà pourquoi je pense à toi. Et voilà ne te gêne pas, ne te crois obligé à rien. Seulement réponds."

¹⁰⁵ Didier Vatuone, "Catalogue Entry for Portrait of Renoir," in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 139.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

have exceptional success at the Exposition. He will stay with me until the end of the month. With Renoir, that makes two needy painters that I am putting up. It's a veritable infirmary.¹⁰⁷

This letter might be interpreted as sarcastic—expressing to his mother what he perhaps could not express to the friends who depended on him. It might also be covering, through affecting animosity, for the amount of resources that Bazille provided to his friends at his parents' expense. In any case, his characterization of his studio, with the three painters all living together, and no room for his distinguished friends from home to stay on their visits to Paris,¹⁰⁸ as an infirmary suggests his awareness of the ability of his friends to convalesce in his presence and of his own ability to heal them—or at least their practice.

In this sense, Bazille's choice of the word "infirmary" proves instructive—as a physician is frequently not equal, at least in medical knowledge, to the patients that he seeks to cure, Bazille's available funds and his corresponding benevolence toward his friends set him apart from them. With Monet, it is only their friendship that keeps their letters from reading like epistolary records of failed business deal after failed business deal; Renoir's may be more courteous, yet the power in their relationship still falls with Bazille. When Bazille leaves Paris and Monet and Renoir are left to fend for themselves, any remaining sense of where the power lies in this configuration is made clear by Monet. In one of a series of letters where he badgers Bazille to send him money, Monet writes: "Do you know what situation I am in and how I am living during the eight days that I await your letter? Well, ask Renoir, who brought us bread so we did not die. For

¹⁰⁷ Letter 88, to his mother, dated to the end of February, 1867, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 135. He writes: "Depuis ma dernière lettre il y a du nouveau rue Visconti. Monet m'est tombé du ciel avec une collection de toiles magnifiques qui vont avoir le plus grand succès à l'Exposition. Il couchera chez moi jusqu'à la fin du mois. Avec Renoir, voilà deux peintres besogneux que je loge. C'est une véritable infirmerie."

¹⁰⁸ This issue also forms the basis of letters to and from his parents, who ask about the possibilities of these friends from home staying with him.

eight days, no bread, no wine, no fire for the stove, no light. That's atrocious. It's truly very bad of you to forget me.”¹⁰⁹ The onus is always on Bazille to care, to be both benefactor and friend, and to provide stable support for their work. Though he sometimes was powerless to resist their demands for what they needed to make their paintings successful, he also seized opportunities such as painting these portraits, which likely reminded Monet and Renoir, perhaps uncomfortably, who remained in control of their well-being.

When they all turned their attentions to the circle gathering around Manet, it would be neither Monet nor Renoir, but instead Edmond Maître who gained Bazille's most ardent affections and served, in the end, as the subject of his most exquisite portrait. I previously discussed the portrait of Maître in Chapter Two with regard to the attention that Bazille paid to the details of his jacket, like, for example, the boutonniere's stem visible under the lapel, which communicates a surfeit of information equivalent to the knowledge shared between Bazille and his subject. Yet this portrait deserves further consideration due to the state in which we find Maître—he is entirely absorbed in his book, holding it in his left hand and his cigar in his right, “somewhat absentmindedly poised in midair.”¹¹⁰ Every detail of his face is delicately rendered, with the precision of an artist who is not only skilled but who has the luxury of available time to gaze unimpeded at the subject of his painting.

Maître's relationship to Bazille has also been described as uncommonly close, so much so that their relationship has been a subject of debate in previous literature on

¹⁰⁹ Letter 50, August 9, 1869, Monet to Bazille from Saint-Michel (near Bougival) in Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:426.

¹¹⁰ Dianne Pitman, “Catalogue Entry for Portrait of Edmond Maître,” in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 115.

Bazille's paintings, with some scholars even suggesting that they may have been sexually involved.¹¹¹ There is little real evidence for this claim beyond what can be extrapolated from Maître's appearances in paintings of the period, and yet these appearances support pursuing further interpretations of the strength and breadth of their relationship. Maître's position at the piano in the *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* calls to mind their enjoyment of playing piano duets together, and visually depicts the privileged position he held for Bazille—not only is he at the piano, but he is isolated in a corner, behind the large canvas around which Bazille, Manet, and another man stand. Bazille's excessively tall form here, not the elegant, dapper one painted by Fantin-Latour, shields Maître from the rest of the men; he is left alone at the piano, in his solitude, to await Bazille's return to him. Fantin also paints Maître behind Bazille in the *Studio in the Batignolles*, but he looks out toward the viewer with agency that Bazille seems to delight in depriving him.

If Bazille's portrait of Maître, with his absorption in his book, is meant to recall Holbein's portrait of Desiderius Erasmus (1523) (Fig. 69) in the Louvre, which was praised by Zacharie Astruc as a masterpiece of portraiture,¹¹² this is certainly no mere quotation. Holbein's portrait shows Erasmus composing his paraphrase of Mark's Gospel—a record of a task that he was then laboring to complete (it would be published

¹¹¹ The most insistent case for this is presented in Champa, "A Complicated Codependence." Much of Champa's case, which turns on Bazille's loves of music and clothing, is reinterpreted throughout the course of this dissertation. Bridget Alsdorf also assesses the "scant evidence" for a romantic relationship between Bazille and Maître (note 54, p. 273-274), and in a conclusion that I fully support, she writes: "Although I believe it is possible Bazille and Maître were lovers, we do not have nearly sufficient evidence to be confident of it" (274). It is also perhaps worth noting that Maître, like Monet, Renoir, and Sisley, had a mistress during this period, Rapha, and though he never married her, they lived together from his student days until he died and was known to his concierge as Mme Edmond Maître. See: Bailey, "Portrait of the Artist as a Portrait Painter," note 23, 275.

¹¹² Pitman, "Catalogue Entry for Portrait of Edmond Maître," 115.

in 1524).¹¹³ Much as Maître attentively gazes toward his book, Erasmus channels all of his thoughts toward his intellectual exercise, through continuing the activities that have made him famous. Lisa Jardine has described this image as contributing to the “illusion of the aloneness of the scholar” and noted that this illusion is paradoxical for “what he writes in isolation is disseminated worldwide.”¹¹⁴ In using the form of Erasmus to emphasize both Maître’s intellectual capacity and his aloneness, Bazille portrays the particular intensity of their friendship, which defied Maître’s preference for studious solitude. In a letter to his father in 1865, Maître wrote of himself: “Almost always alone, reading books, reading scores; usually dreamy and taciturn, but happy like no other and even childish, when I am in company that pleases me (a rare thing), the pleasure that I can give is always in direct proportion to that which I take.”¹¹⁵ In Bazille, Maître found a like-minded young man who was interested in the same music, books, and art and who had the personal finances to indulge in them equally, unlike Monet and Renoir.

The comparison between the portrait of Maître and the portrait of Erasmus also suggests a correlation to Erasmus’s view of the merits of portraiture versus those of letters. According to Lisa Jardine, in her analysis of Erasmus’s self-promotion and networking, Erasmus and his correspondents believed that the goal of intimate friendship was to make the absent friend present, and that, while “affectionate letters transport souls to remote locations, paintings make present bodies.”¹¹⁶ For Bazille and Maître, letters were often not their primary method of communication, as they spent every spare

¹¹³ Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 47.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in François Daulte, “Une grande amitié: Edmond Maître et Frédéric Bazille,” *L’Oeil*, no. 273 (April 1978): 38–39. The French reads: “Presque toujours seul, lisant des livres, lisant des partitions; rêveur et taciturne d’ordinaire, gai comme pas un et même puéril, quand je suis dans une société qui me plaît (chose rare), le plaisir que je puis donner est toujours en raison directe de celui qui je prends.”

¹¹⁶ Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print*, 31.

moment together and had no need for written communication, but their surviving letters, or those written to their parents, document their omnipresence in each other's lives from almost the moment they met. This meeting likely occurred in 1865, when Bazille's distinguished uncle, Hippolyte Lejosne, introduced his nephew to dinners given by Émile Blanche, a famous psychiatrist who ran a fashionable clinic in Paris. Edmond Maître had been previously introduced into Blanche's illustrious circle by Fantin-Latour, on the basis of their shared interest in Wagner.¹¹⁷

Soon after their meeting, Bazille wrote to his father that he "passed all his nights by playing whist or making music with Maître,"¹¹⁸ and his letters continued to mention Maître's name as a touchstone for describing how he spent his days. Often, his letters begin by begging pardon from his mother or father for not writing in awhile, but then he mentions Maître as part of his excuse. He writes, "Each day I have not stopped working before nightfall, and at that time I would rush to go to dinner and to relax myself at Maître's house."¹¹⁹ There is at least one instance where he is writing to his mother at Maître's, and in place of his customary heartfelt salutation to his family, he writes, "I am going to seat myself at the piano with Maître who is waiting for me."¹²⁰ When he moves from his studio on the rue de la Condamine to a smaller one on the rue des Beaux-Arts, he notes that it is very close, "*à deux pas*," to Maître's apartment on the rue de Seine.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Daulte, "Une grande amitié: Edmond Maître et Frédéric Bazille," 39.

¹¹⁸ Letter to his father, March 14, 1865, quoted in Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Letter 89, to his mother, March 1867, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 135. "Je n'ai pas cessé un jour de travailler jusqu'à la tombée de la nuit, et à cette heure je m'empressais d'aller dîner et me reposer un peu chez Maître." Bazille writes a very similar statement in Letter 104, to his mother, April 1868, in Ibid., 157–158. And again in Letter 134, to his father, end of February or beginning of March, 1870, in Ibid., 188.

¹²⁰ Letter 115, to his mother, mid-February 1869, in Vatuone, *Correspondance*, 167–168. "Je suis en retard, mais n'ai littéralement pas une minute à moi. Je t'écis de chez Maître où je passe la soirée pour la première fois depuis près d'une quinzaine de jours...Je vais me mettre au piano avec Maître qui m'attend."

¹²¹ Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 185.

These instances are fairly constant between 1865 and his death in 1870, and though he does mention Renoir and Monet, or occasionally other painters, in the context of their art, it is his mentions of Maître that most approximate the process of living and companionship, as opposed to the business transactions of sharing studios and selling paintings.

Friendship between men has only in the twentieth-century become structured by emotional and physical measures of restraint, and this has likely influenced the willingness of scholars to delve further into the shadowy areas of the relationships between the early Impressionists. However, as young men in their twenties, close male friendships proved their most appropriate, yet also most intense means of engaging with the world. Nineteenth-century perceptions of love between men as “spiritual, transcendent and free from base desire”¹²² drew from a long historical tradition that celebrated male companionship. Aristotle, in his *Ethics*, described non-sexual friendships between only two men as the highest relationship one could cultivate. For Aristotle, this also meant friendship between two people who were relative equals, and when the Roman Cicero carried this preference forward in his *De Amicitia*, it was adapted into the earliest iterations of Christianity, ensuring that male-dominated societies through the Middle Ages and beyond would prize such spiritual, non-sexual love between men.¹²³ Translations of Cicero’s text on friendship were readily available in nineteenth-century France, and it is not out of the realm of possibility that Bazille may have read Cicero’s words for himself. If he had, he would have found the claim that “he who gazes upon a true friend sees in him, so to speak, his own image. For friendship, absent is

¹²² Richards, “‘Passing the Love of Women’: Manly Love and Victorian Society,” 93.

¹²³ Ibid., 95–99.

present.”¹²⁴ This reciprocal element that Cicero proposes to validate “true” friendship, whether or not Bazille knew of Cicero, both mirrors the discourses of intimacy and portraiture presented earlier in this chapter and suggests how the exceptional depth of the friendship between Bazille and Maître came about.

Much of what scholars have been able to argue concerning the intensity of masculine friendship in the nineteenth century has come, like our knowledge of Bazille and Maître, on the basis of correspondence in such relationships that sounds disarmingly romantic. Gabrielle Houbre, in her study of the “sentimental education” of young men and women during the Romantic era in France, cites numerous examples of letters where young men openly proclaim their love for each other, a type of affection significantly heightened in comparison to the cold and hierarchical tone of Monet’s letters to Bazille which were discussed earlier in this chapter. For example, Houbre cites an 1827 letter from the politician Charles de Montalembert, then seventeen years old, to his friend Léon Cornudet that reads: “I need to open my heart, to join with a soul who understands me, and I have chosen you to console me and to love you.”¹²⁵ Such open declarations of sentiment and deliberate expressions of love were not only relegated to private letters, but they formed a part of the public discourse in the 1860s at minimum in the form of nostalgia toward the Romantic era. Indeed, Flaubert’s *A Sentimental Education*, quoted earlier for its descriptions of Fontainebleau, includes such a relationship between the protagonist, Frédéric Moreau, and his old school friend, Charles Deslauriers, who

¹²⁴ One of these nineteenth-century translations is: Cicéron, *Dialogue sur l’amitié*, trans. M. Legouëz (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et Cie, 1863), 38. “Car celui qui contemple un véritable ami, voit en lui, pour ainsi dire, sa propre image. Par l’amitié, les absents sont présents...”

¹²⁵ Quoted in Houbre, *La Discipline de l’amour*, 95. “J’ai besoin d’ouvrir mon cœur, de m’associer une âme qui me comprenne, et je t’ai choisi pour me consoler et pour t’aimer.”

frequently display their affection physically by walking with their arms around each other or “clasp[ing] hands and look[ing] affectionately in each other’s eyes.”¹²⁶

Thus, though it remains fruitless to speculate on odds of a sexual relationship between Bazille and Maître, the context of these intense male friendships, encouraged as part of youth and consequent to the male-dominated societies in which these young men circulated, should enable us to appreciate the differences in tone in the way that Bazille and Maître addressed each other and to define the ways that their relationship progressed differently from Bazille’s relationships with Monet and then Renoir. Though they would all refer to each other in letters as *cher ami*, or dear friend, Maître frequently turned the words into one, referring to Bazille as his *cherami*,¹²⁷ syntactically emphasizing the intimacy of their friendship. In 1867, they had visited each other’s families in Montpellier and Bordeaux, respectively, to great success. Maître’s response to Bazille’s initial invitation is puckish and full of playful language. He writes, “I would have a keen delight that I cannot say, my friend, in finding you... in this charming world that made you who you are, and that too soon, I fear, will kidnap you from Paris and your friends.”¹²⁸ When Bazille visited Maître and his family in Bordeaux, he reported to his parents: “I had four enjoyable days and I found the family charming, good intelligent bourgeoisie; they live, in sum, like us.”¹²⁹ The insight they provided into each other’s lives likely came from the parity of their situations. They were able to make choices out

¹²⁶ Flaubert, *A Sentimental Education: The Story of a Young Man*, 18, 48.

¹²⁷ Guy Barral, “Our Young Fellow Citizen, Son of the Honorable President of the Society of Ariculture...,” in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, trans. John Goodman (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 25.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps*, 64. “J’aurais un plaisir plus vif que je ne puis dire, mon ami, à vous retrouver... dans ce monde charmant qui vous a fait ce que vous êtes, et qui trop tôt, je le crains, vous ravira à Paris et vos amis.”

¹²⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 65. “J’ai passé quatre jours agréables et j’ai trouvé une famille charmante, de bons bourgeois intelligents; ils vivent en somme comme nous.”

of desire, rather than need, and this enabled them to pursue numerous passions—art, writing, music, their friendship—simultaneously in order to fill their days.

Thus, Bazille's premature death provides us with a fairly straightforward record of Maître's view of his friend. After Bazille died, Maître wrote to his father in extreme distress, proclaiming:

Of all of these pains, one even greater, even more sensitive has made my heart bleed... I cannot say the pain of the loss that I have just had: it is half of myself that has gone away. I was attached to him in profound friendship, and of all the young men I have known, *Chéramy* was the most intelligent, Bazille was the most gifted, the kindest in every sense of the word. No one in the world can ever replace the empty space that he has left in my life. I am devastated!¹³⁰

That, in the hour of his exceptional loss, Maître would express his grief in terms of losing half of himself, of feeling an empty space, proves remarkable. Each of their activities moved them closer and closer together, deeply into the spaces of each other's lives as their other friends came and went, until only a cataclysmic event could wrest them from each other.

If the letters and their fragments of calculated expression seem insufficient for elucidating such a relationship, art historians may still return to the visual. Bazille apparently experienced some anxiety at painting Maître before he eventually completed the finely rendered portrait of 1870. His letters mention another portrait of Maître that he had declared a failure; this painting may exist, as a relatively unskilled frontal portrait

¹³⁰ Letter from February 13, 1871, quoted in *Ibid.*, 85–86, note 2. Maître writes, in full: “Hélas! Parmi toutes ces douleurs, une bien plus grande encore, bien plus sensible a fait saigner mon cœur. Mon noble et bien chère ami Bazille s’était engagé dans les Zouaves; il a été tué à Beaune-la-Rolande, sous Orléans, le 28 novembre et enterré sous la neige, où son père, après dix jours, a pu retrouver son corps qu’il a ramené à Montpellier sur une charrette. Le pauvre homme m’a écrit une lettre déchirante. Je renonce à dire la douleur de la perte que je viens de faire: c’est une moitié de moi-même qui s’en va. J’étais lié avec lui d’une amitié profonde, et de tous les jeunes gens qui j’ai connus. Chéramy était le plus intelligent, Bazille était le mieux doué, le plus amiable dans tous les sens du mot. Personne au monde ne remplira jamais la place vide qu’il laisse dans ma vie. Je suis navré!”

from 1867 (Fig. 70) that captures none of the same warmth or searching observation as the final effort.¹³¹ Renoir was also fairly close to Maître, and he also chose, in 1871, to depict him reading (Fig. 71) shortly after the Commune had ended and they were finally able to reunite in Paris.¹³² As in Bazille's painting, Maître reads with his book on his lap, his gaze directed downward, allowing access to only a portion of his face. Unlike Bazille's painting, we see Maître's whole body—the scope of the painting is wide enough that it is as if the viewer has merely walked into the same room, instead of standing so close to approximate intimacy. That he is again reading and has assumed such a relaxed posture suggests that he is comfortable being observed like this, but Renoir's portrait lacks the close intellectual and emotional framing of Bazille's.

Consequently, the question of Bazille's desire and delight looms large over how this painting must be interpreted. Though scholars have noticed the “embarrassed curiosity” with which Bazille stared at his male nudes in *Summer Scene*,¹³³ there seems to be little embarrassment in the way Bazille gazes at Maître—yet there remains desire and pleasurable indulgence in this gaze. Because Maître is absorbed in his book, he seems to forget himself and his surroundings, making his posture persuasively realistic for a viewer wishing to forget that this is only a painted representation.¹³⁴ Roland Barthes has described such a gaze in terms of “scrutinizing the loved body,” writing, “*To scrutinize means to search*: I am searching the other's body, as if I wanted to see what was inside it... if the body I am scrutinizing happens to emerge from its inertia, if it begins *doing*

¹³¹ See entry #20 in *Ibid.*, 174. For mention of the letter, see: Michel Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 1995), 69.

¹³² White, *Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters*, 39.

¹³³ Kermit Champa, “Frédéric Bazille: The 1978 Retrospective Exhibition,” *Arts Magazine* 52, no. 10 (June 1978): 108.

¹³⁴ I am thinking here, of course, of Michael Fried's argument about the primacy of absorption. See: Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 8–34.

something, my desire changes.”¹³⁵ The shift that Barthes describes as a disruption moves him from passive gazing to active looking and seems to connote a change in access for the person gazing, as if such passive gazing, and visual disassembling of the body to its core, can occur only in a relationship that is intimate enough to allow it.

In this sense, desire need not be sexual, but can be searching; it can freight the action of gazing with meaning based in the characterization of the relationship, similar to how Bazille can only paint Monet as vulnerable in *The Improvised Field Hospital*, because these actions become freighted with meaning through desire. Lauren Berlant, in describing how desire functions, writes:

Desire visits you as an impact from the outside, and yet... makes you feel as though it comes from within you; this means that your objects are not objective, but things and scenes that you have converted into propping up your world, and so what seems objective and autonomous in them is partly what your desire has created and therefore is a mirage, a shaky anchor. Your style of addressing those objects gives shape to the drama with which they allow you to reencounter yourself.¹³⁶

Bazille’s style of addressing these objects is painting these intimate portraits of his friends, and this allows him to actively grapple with his desires, whatever they may be. Whether these desires spring from frustration with another’s demands, as with Monet; of uncertainty about the depth or breadth of a relationship, as with Renoir and possibly Sisley; or, as with Maître, out of true friendship between apparent equals seeking to know each other thoroughly, these portraits allow Bazille to incrementally examine and understand his feelings toward each of these men. In the intersections of how Bazille was able to convince these men to pose for him, how they addressed each other or presented each other to their parents, and how their friendships enabled each man to grow as an

¹³⁵ Barthes, *A Lover’s Discourse: Fragments*, 71–72.

¹³⁶ Lauren Berlant, *Desire/Love* (Brooklyn, NY: Punctum Books, 2012), 6.

artist and thinker, substantial information can be mined that should change our understanding of this group dynamic. These portraits, in allowing Bazille to “reencounter” himself, reveal as much about him as they do about the men that he depicts, and the intensity with which his gaze seems to search must confirm that depth of his engagement with painting.

Simultaneity and Subjectivity

Though Bazille frequently painted his friends in these informal portraits, he rarely used them as models in his most serious attempts at painting, preferring, when he could afford it, to employ others to fill the roles he envisioned. This is in stark contrast to the practice of his friends, however, who used the other members of their group to act out the modern and deceptively realistic subjects that they would seek to memorialize on their canvases. In other words, they continued to use each other as proprietary models whose identities were erased as their bodies were inscribed on canvas. Even if they chose not to use each other as models, they still shared materials, such as paints and canvases, or painted the same set up simultaneously. What the individual portraits tell us about Bazille’s ability to gauge the intimacy present in his relationships with each of his friends should now be brought to bear on other paintings produced within the intimate worlds of Fontainebleau and the studio that Bazille’s portraits document.

A crucial part of the story of *The Improvised Field Hospital* will always be that Monet kept urging Bazille to come to Chailly so that he could pose for Monet’s reworkings of the theme of *Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe* in 1865, and Renoir similarly used Sisley to pose for a number of modern scenes that are not, strictly speaking, meant to

function as portraits. In the case of the *Déjeuner*, Monet's insistence that Bazille leave the city to pose for him outdoors gained further significance because it drew Bazille out of the Parisian studio they shared and into Fontainebleau with its masculine, bohemian sociability. The multiple images of Bazille that Monet painted required him to act the part of a bourgeois picnicker, perhaps one who took the train out to Fontainebleau for a day of so-called rural pleasures in his prospective *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, which he viewed as a more naturalistic re-envisioning of Manet's *succès de scandale*.

There are two surviving studies for Monet's *Déjeuner* as well as the two fragments of the "final" painting (Figs. 72-73)—all of which feature Bazille as some of their male figures. In the study now in the Pushkin museum (Fig. 74), Bazille is featured at least three times and is identifiable, especially for the figure lying in the foreground, by his long, lanky frame. Here, and with the figure leaning against the tree, he looks most like himself, with none of his features distorted to obscure his identity. These two Bazilles, along with the hatted figure on the far left and the figure in the grey suit at the middle of the canvas, populate a canvas that presents vignette-like configurations of options for how to spend the day.¹³⁷ In the fragments of the finished painting, Bazille remains in the same places—at the left with Camille and in the back, talking to likely another version of Camille and gesturing toward the woods with his umbrella. However, the facial features of these Bazilles are only slightly skewed and the body types only slightly varied; it is not entirely clear if Monet would have more carefully obscured his friend's appearance—indeed, in the name of naturalism he would have needed to make it appear as if three or more distinct men were actually present. The other study, *Bazille*

¹³⁷ The man sitting in the middle, clearly not an image of Bazille, is Albert Lambron des Piltières, a fellow pupil of Gleyre. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:144.

and Camille (1865) (Fig. 75), represents the vignette at the far left of the painting. A man, Bazille, wearing a crisp, modern, dark suit and carrying a walking stick, tries to draw the attention of a fashionably dressed woman who looks away from him. The woman, and many of the other women in Monet's paintings of this period, was posed for by Monet's mistress, Camille Doncieux.

By not deliberately differentiating between the Bazilles and, especially in the Pushkin study, by inserting him repeatedly into scenes with Camille, Monet creates a fantasia of motion and socialization that rhythmically progresses across the canvas. If the Pushkin study had been painted forty years later, it might be thought of as related to the motion capture techniques of early film, with the couple starting and stopping in different configurations across the screen, until Bazille finally ends up alone in the foreground. One of the arguments made for why Monet so radically and definitively gave up figure painting in 1868, with the exception of figures firmly entrenched in his landscape scenes or his rare interiors, is that it was simply too difficult for him to separate the people he knew in his life and used as his models from the "real" people he so desperately wanted to paint on the canvas—landscape proved a less existentially demanding genre for him.¹³⁸ If this suggestion is to be believed, then what should we make out of Monet's decision to create repeated fictions of flirtation between one of his closest friends, if not *the* closest at that time, and his beloved mistress? How could he attempt to reconcile the strong feelings he harbored for each of them, in different ways, with the fictional relationship that he endeavored to create on the canvas?

¹³⁸ Wagner, "Why Monet Gave Up Figure Painting," 612. This is Wagner's thesis—her assertion is that figure painting became "ultimately emotionally intolerable to him."

A similar situation occurs in *The Couple (Les fiancés)* (Fig. 76), painted by Renoir in 1868. He posed Sisley with his mistress and frequent model, Lise Tréhot,¹³⁹ who, potentially unlike Camille, seems to have been friendly with Bazille on her own terms.¹⁴⁰ *The Couple* slots Sisley and Lise in as proprietary models in much the same way that Monet used Bazille, Camille, and Courbet in his various iterations of *Le Déjeuner*—in this case, Renoir seems to be borrowing the pose of a popular Disdéri *carte de visite* portrait of Pauline and Richard de Metternich, a pair of Austrian nobles who played a prominent role in elite Second Empire society.¹⁴¹ In *The Couple*, the man who is likely Sisley offers his arm attentively to a fashionably dressed woman who gazes out toward the viewer. The man holds a flower in his right hand, seeming ready to hand it to the woman when she turns back to him. The background around them is hazy and imprecise—perhaps they are on their way to a dance or another social gathering befitting their class. In asking his bohemian friends to act the part of those beyond their social station, Renoir, like Monet, layers personal meanings into the construction of scenes meant to be legible to any Parisian viewer who would encounter them.

In examining a similar configuration of four artists in the early part of the twentieth century, Roger Shattuck believed that a comparative approach illuminated an “intimacy of form” among their works. He compares the benefit of such friendship to the difference between being in the audience at a play and being backstage, peering out at the

¹³⁹For a long time, this was thought to be an image of Sisley and his wife, Marie. The Wallraf-Richartz Museum now, however, believes this identification may not be correct because historical research has suggested that this woman, in fact, looks nothing like Sisley’s wife. In either case, I believe it to be completely possible that the man is Sisley, based on other portrayals of him. This painting has also, on occasion (for example, in the Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity exhibition), been identified as an image of Bazille and Lise Tréhot, Renoir’s mistress and frequent model; while that would make it an interesting pendant to *Bazille and Camille*, that is likely not the case.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, the letter from Renoir to Bazille, quoted in Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis*, 155–156. Renoir includes a special message from Lise to Bazille.

¹⁴¹ Bailey, “Portrait of the Artist as a Portrait Painter,” 21.

actors and the scenery from the wings, and writes, “The intimacy of the voyeur relationship to art, watching it from the wings, represents a yearning to be in touch with the subconscious world which produced it.”¹⁴² The oblique angles afforded by behind-the-scenes access provide the viewer with a view between the seams of the finished work—deconstructing it to discover more about how it comes together.

Beyond being physically present as proprietary models, such an “intimacy of form” extends to simultaneously sharing the act of creation. Clusters of paintings survive that demonstrate more thoroughly how they envisioned their practice as individually collaborative. In this sense, their attempts to work separately, but together, mirror the goals of their slightly older friends and mentors. In her study of Fantin-Latour’s group portraits, including *Studio in the Batignolles*, Bridget Alsdorf describes at length the consequences of attempting to represent, as she puts it, “the strong desire of distinction within the security of a basically homogeneous group.”¹⁴³ These groups of images of similar subjects, some in similar formats as well, achieve goals akin to those described by Alsdorf, but on an incremental level. Much as the spatial-temporal circumstances of Fontainebleau allowed for a supportive homosociality, painting together in Paris enabled the painters’ maturing process to continue.

One such cluster of images involves still lifes of a dead heron and other small birds—in this case, literally *natures morte*—created in 1867. Bazille’s *Still Life with*

¹⁴² Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France, 1885 to World War I*, Revised (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 340–341. While Shattuck’s work is hardly the most current or critical work concerning these artists or their time period, it is one of the few that I have encountered that examines a group of artists separately and then together in an attempt to find affinities and more dominant questions about their practice. Shattuck admittedly insists on “the modern” as a break from the nineteenth-century, yet I believe that the qualities he prioritizes in his examples—the sketch, the intimacy, the candidness of the work—are present in the informal and often private works that I discuss in this chapter.

¹⁴³ Bridget Alsdorf, *Fellow Men: Fantin-Latour and the Problem of the Group in Nineteenth-Century French Painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 10.

Heron (Fig. 77) and Sisley's *The Heron With Wings Spread* (Fig. 78) depict the same array of avian bodies and objects, clearly shifted to account for the slightly different perspectives from which the artists were viewing the forms set before them. Renoir, however, elected to paint Bazille painting *Still Life with Heron* (Fig. 79), and indeed, Bazille is the very picture of artistic labor, bearing "witness to the intimacy of the shared artistic enterprise of a group of young artist friends."¹⁴⁴ Seated and bent toward his easel, with his back to the view, the usually immaculately dressed Bazille sports the disheveled clothes of a working artist, a large grey smock and soft slippers, within the comfort of his studio. Truly absorbed in painting the body of the dead heron, he is surrounded by materials that enable the stages of his art—potentially unfinished canvases on stretchers are propped against the wall; paintings, framed and unframed, line the portions of the wall that we can see. His feet rest on the feet of his easel, putting knees seemingly inches from the surface of his painting, as if artist and instruments might soon merge together—endangering the frequently inviolate canvas. In his painting of his studio on the rue Visconti (Fig. 58), the studio in which Renoir painted him, this same easel looms large over the left side of the canvas, with its vertical axis firmly enclosing the space as if the painting-in-progress dominates all actions within the studio. Furthermore, in Renoir's portrait, Bazille sits on the ever-present green chair—though it may be his "only luxury," a fact that he announces to his parents as if anticipating their concerns about his spending,¹⁴⁵ it has become an integral part of his workspace.

Bazille's finished *Still Life with Heron* presents an achievement far evolved from the blurry work-in-progress in Renoir's portrait. Bazille meticulously delineates the

¹⁴⁴ House, "Impressionism and the Modern Portrait," 19.

¹⁴⁵ Letter 61, to his mother, December 22, 1864, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 101.

volume and spatial expanse of each feather, with the textures of the brushstrokes mimicking the shifting surfaces of the carefully arrayed feathers. Where the back wing falls into the shadows, black lines separate and shade each feather; where the front wing falls into the lighted foreground, greys and whites provide volume to the bluish greys of the wings—for a dead bird, Bazille has expended considerable effort on making it seem lifelike, with its paradoxically monochromatic yet vibrant palette. Sisley's *The Heron with Wings Spread* shifts to the side of this set-up—where Bazille's birds seem perfectly ordered, contained within the white rectangle of the cloth under them, Sisley's birds spill over. His canvas is generally less precise than Bazille's, with broad brushwork and less attention to rendering each feather distinctly. Where Bazille paints the rifle and sack sharply in the background, framing the central form of the heron, Sisley allows them to fade into the darker greys and browns of wall, floor, and shadow.

Despite his physical absence, Monet remains present in this trio of images via the paintings on the studio wall, despite not contributing an image of his own,¹⁴⁶ yet there are echoes of this working process in earlier paintings by Monet and Bazille of the beach at Sainte-Adresse (Figs. 80-81), dating to 1864 and 1865, respectively. Whereas, with the dead herons, Bazille, Renoir, and Sisley clearly seemed to be working simultaneously in the same setup to make their own distinct images, scholars have suggested that Bazille's Sainte-Adresse painting is merely a copy of an earlier painting by Monet. They argue that this is the case because it is likely one of the paintings that Bazille rushed to complete in his studio on the Rue de Furstenberg in Paris, far from the Normandy coast, before finally acquiescing to Monet's demands that he come to Chailly and pose for the

¹⁴⁶ Pitman, "Overlapping Frames," 51. The snowscape above Bazille's head is likely by Monet, which he perhaps touched up in this studio.

Déjeuner.¹⁴⁷ Though a comparison of these two paintings yields a compelling discussion of the differences in the ways that these artists applied paint to their canvases, does the idea that Bazille copied Monet's painting make it a lesser work? Or something else entirely?

Groups of paintings such as this, like the existence of the intimate portraits, are often explained away in the literature by logistical demands—the artists could not afford to pay models, so they chose still lifes out of necessity; Renoir could not afford a more distinguished subject, so he adopted Bazille as his *modèle privilégié*, and so on. Beyond letters that contain demands for one to bring the other paper or paints¹⁴⁸ or that one should pose for another, x-rays and infrared techniques have further allowed us to determine how the actual materials of painting and drawing flowed among them. *Jeune homme nu couché sur l'herbe* (1870) (Fig. 4), Bazille's unfinished image of a young boy sleeping that was discussed in Chapter One, is clearly painted over an scene of women in fashionable dresses by Monet. Perhaps Bazille's most famous painting, his *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* was painted over one of Renoir's discarded figure studies.¹⁴⁹ Anne Distel has suggested, however, that this may be a sketch of the same model made by Bazille and then repurposed for his own use. However, she notes that “whatever the truth of this matter, this chance discovery is a reminder of the intimacy which existed between the two artists.”¹⁵⁰ These facts certainly function as salient details within narratives of early Impressionism that have privileged their hard circumstances as the crucible that

¹⁴⁷ David A. Brenneman, “Introduction,” in *Monet & Bazille: A Collaboration*, ed. David A. Brenneman (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1998), 14–15.

¹⁴⁸ Letter 46, January 11, 1869, Monet writes from Étretat with a very specific list of colors that he would like Bazille to send him. Wildenstein, *Claude Monet: Biographie et Catalogue Raisonné*, 1:426.

¹⁴⁹ Pitman, “Overlapping Frames,” 57.

¹⁵⁰ Anne Distel, “The 1860s,” in *Renoir* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1985), 180.

bound them together in the years when they forged their great movement—that, as stereotypical starving artists, their dependence on each other abetted their ability to develop the styles that revolutionized art history. This is, perhaps, partially the case—their dependence on each other certainly complicated, and perhaps compromised, their relationships to each other, as the letters between Monet and Bazille demonstrate. And yet no one has investigated the connections these ties forge in their paintings through the deeper levels of their friendships—a trend I have attempted to redress in examining Bazille’s impulse to forge records of his friendships through his intimate portraits.

Bazille’s portraits as well as this assembly of heron images insist on interpretation as extensions of the artists’ intimate social relationships, even the murky details of these relationships that are left for art historians in our time. Not every painting was literally a social act, yet these works must be seen as philosophically contrived to function as a unit. Though they remain individualized images with distinct functions and audiences, Bazille’s portraits of his friends and their images of him participate in constructing a paradigm of everyday life as an Early Impressionist that cannot solely be viewed retrospectively through a narrative of their achievements. In this, Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of heteroglossia proves instructive. Heteroglossia allows for the possibility of one “utterance” to function as both its own “individualized embodiment of a speech act” and as part of a unified system of language; both functions of the utterance work simultaneously to define language as a vibrant, shifting, and intensely complex system of signifiers.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ M.M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 272. Emphasis mine.

If paintings and artistic styles, even those still in a laboratory phase, might be viewed as utterances and corresponding discourses, Bakhtin's formulation allows for the argument to be made that portraiture here functions as a dialogic process. Each portrait that Bazille made of his friends, and each image, portrait or otherwise, that they painted of him contributed to the new shifting discourse of modern painting, which would be forged not through adherence to studio systems and styles, but through mingling collegiality and individual innovation, informal mentorship and more formal financial involvement, traditional masculine spaces with more modern ways of approaching masculinity in artistic life. These portraits and paintings, and the specific intimate feelings and instances that they document, further form the basis of the discourse that would continue after Bazille's death with the Impressionist exhibitions. Indeed, Renoir would later recall that his portrait of Bazille painting had been a favorite of Manet, who would "tease him by repeating in front of each of his paintings: 'No, it's not as good as *The Portrait of Bazille*,' which led him to believe that 'for once I had done something that was not too bad.'"¹⁵² Such referential understandings of these portraits, painted by Bazille as records and kept within their personal collections, ground this "new painting" from its earliest days in the shared nuances of these intimate, homosocial spaces that frequently defied the hegemonic masculine constructs that have previously governed scholarly interpretations of the Impressionist studios.

All Together Now

¹⁵² Colin B. Bailey, "Manet and Renoir: An Unexamined Dialogue," in *Manet: Portraying Life* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2012), 58. Bailey quotes Ambroise Vollard's 1920 biography of Renoir, which includes the nostalgic memory errors typical of an artist recalling his earlier years. Manet also persuaded Renoir to include this painting in the Second Impressionist Exhibition in 1876, and it was Manet who gave it to Bazille's father in that same year.

With the achievements of Bazille's intimate portraits in mind, it is necessary to ask how this information can alter or augment the narrative that has arisen around his studio paintings. Especially *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine*, in particular, stands in the scholarly literature as a frequently referenced and delightfully candid document of the movement—where else can one view Manet advising Bazille and Monet on a work-in-progress? Or Zola and Renoir, exchanging a quick word by the stairs? Edmond Maître, of course, remains present and marginalized at the piano, blocked from the rest of the artists and talking heads by Bazille's lithe form, which splits the painting yet positions him as the hinge between Maître and the rest of the group.¹⁵³ Though Fantin's *Studio in the Batignolles* displays a similar group, its comparatively stiff poses lack the same sense of providing a cross-section into a movement so driven by the dynamics between the individual and the collective. Its formality preempts possibilities for intimacy within the canvas; these must be inferred from exterior sources.

Prior studies of this painting have also not shied away from its implications about the homosociability of the Impressionist studio. Linda Nochlin characterized the group as “a self-selected fraternity of innovators.”¹⁵⁴ Alison Strauber has noted that, while the studio might be perceived as a domestic space, Bazille carefully navigates the “breadth of male domestic experience” by circumventing “any sense of feminization or homosexuality...through the heterosexual desire evoked in the glances of the male and

¹⁵³ Though there has been some dispute over the identifications of the figures on the stairs, I am following Bridget Alsdorf in defining these figures as such because I agree that it seems unlikely Renoir would not number among this group, as he shared this particular studio with Bazille for a time. Some scholars have suggested, following Étienne Moreau-Nélaton's assertion, that the Monet figure may be Zacharie Astruc, making the men by the stairs Monet and Sisley. See Alsdorf, *Fellow Men*, 279, note 91.

¹⁵⁴ Nochlin, “Impressionist Portraits and the Construction of Modern Identity,” 57.

female nudes” that pepper the walls.¹⁵⁵ Alsdorf, too, speaks of the power of the female nudes on the wall to contain any sense of desire and transform the studio into a “desexualized, homosocial space” where masculine relationships could appear “more casual and easy, less wary of intrusions.”¹⁵⁶ *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* makes sense to modern scholars because it fits with our vision of the complexly gendered spaces and practices that these (at least artistically) progressive artists chose to inhabit. However, to skip straight to what this painting stands for in 1870 is to leave out the other complexly gendered spaces and practices that made Bazille’s final studio painting possible.

Homosocial is, again, a word that courses through interpretations of Bazille’s studios and similar paintings, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Between Men* is again the text most frequently invoked. Though Chapter One discussed the difficulty of scholars seeking to apply Sedgwick’s concept of “homosexual panic”¹⁵⁷ in describing how nineteenth-century artists constructed their paintings, it is useful to return here to how the fear of homosexuality has affected a willingness to probe other types of relations between men beyond those that are limited or professional. Michel Foucault said that neatly classifying homosexuality as one particular kind of act “cancels everything that can be troubling in affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship, things that our rather sanitized society can’t allow a place for without fearing the

¹⁵⁵ Alison Strauber, “At Home in the Studio: Two Group Portraits of Artists by Bazille and Renoir,” in *Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789-1914*, ed. Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner (Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 126.

¹⁵⁶ Alsdorf, *Fellow Men*, 148–149.

¹⁵⁷ See her remarks regarding Shakespeare and his “dark lady.” Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 45.

formation of new alliances and the tying together of unforeseen lines of force.”¹⁵⁸ He continued: “Institutional codes can’t validate these relations with multiple intensities, variable colors, imperceptible movements and changing forms. These relations short-circuit it and introduce love where there’s supposed to be only law, rule, or habit.”¹⁵⁹

What Foucault describes is, I argue, the mechanism that has allowed Bazille’s intimate portraits to be paradoxically both underanalyzed and used as the most frequent visual aids in scholarship on early Impressionism. Though “affection, tenderness, friendship, fidelity, camaraderie, and companionship” operate beyond the pale of available concrete proof as nebulous emotional and psychological entities, Bazille’s portraits give useful insight into the character and intentions of these men, and art historians can no longer turn away from examining them as such.

The difference between Bazille’s intimate portraits and his studio paintings, however, may best be delineated with regard to what constitute good friendships. As Jacques Derrida has written, “‘Good friendship’ certainly supposes a certain air, a certain tinge of intimacy, but one ‘without actual and genuine intimacy’. It commands that we abstain ‘wisely’, ‘prudently’, from all confusion, all permutation between the singularities of you and me.”¹⁶⁰ *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine* gives its viewer manifold ‘good friendship’—it is couched in a professional setting, the group is split into three distinct vignettes, and the boundary between masculine and feminine is carefully managed for an audience not familiar with the immediate context. What Bazille’s

¹⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. John Johnston, vol. 1, The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 (New York: The New Press, 1997), 136.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 137.

¹⁶⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 62.

portraits of Renoir, Monet, Maître convey is not the managed, professional view of masculine friendship that feeds into narratives of progress, innovation, and rational observation. Bazille's portraits demonstrate genuine intimacy born out of friendships that were messy and intense, that mixed business and pleasure in frequently the most unproductive of ways. In many ways, this is a testament to his youth and the instability of his understandings of himself, which I will continue to explore in Chapter Four. However, Bazille's willingness not only to gaze at his friends, but also to create private images of them with varying levels of cooperation suggests a delightful imprudence that should drive our understanding of his engagement in the early Impressionist circle.

CHAPTER FOUR

“A tall, handsome boy full of spirit”¹

“I will make inseparable cities, with their arms about each other’s necks;
 By the love of comrades,
 By the manly love of comrades”
 Walt Whitman, “For You O Democracy” (1860)²

“What is prejudicial to the Southerner is the passion that bursts out when he speaks.”
 Stendhal, *Memoirs of a Tourist* (1837)³

Upon exiting the train station in Montpellier, one enters a small park named for Jules Planchon, a botanist at the Montpellier Faculté de Médecine and the acknowledged savior of France’s vineyards in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The park contains a monument to Planchon devised by the sculptor Auguste Baussan (Fig. 82). Crowned with a bust of Planchon and adorned with sculpted vines, its most compelling feature is the allegorical figure of a young man, a *vigneron*, who reaches up toward Planchon, stretching his graceful, elongated form toward the man who saved his livelihood. He is at once every *vigneron* and one specific man because, though the sculpture was not erected until 1894, Baussan endowed this figure with the face of his former student, Frédéric Bazille, who had died so memorably over twenty years before. Because of Baussan, Bazille’s face also graces the sculpture of Saint-Roch in the Église Saint-Roch in the center of Montpellier, and his tomb monument in the Cimetière Protestant looms over its neighbors, adorned by a bust of Bazille attended by the female

¹ Eugene Castelnau’s personal journal, December 14, 1870, quoted in Aleth Jourdan et al., *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, trans. John Goodman (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 166.

² Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: First and “Death-Bed” Editions*, ed. Karen Karbiener (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 278.

³ Stendhal, *Memoirs of a Tourist*, trans. Allan Seager (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1962), 262.

allegorical figure of *La Jeunesse*, or youth. Though these peculiar statues postdate Bazille's life, they serve as valuable evidence of the strength of the ties that remained between the young painter and his hometown as his life drew to a close, leaving his family and friends to carry on his memory.

As previously stated, one of the serious flaws in prior literature on Bazille has been the minimization of the role that Montpellier played in forming both his art and his identity. Because he hailed from a family exceptional in its wealth, heritage, and erudition, he was frequently able to cross regional boundaries and gain access to social circles without betraying his provincial roots. And yet, Montpellier and its surrounding *département*, the Hérault, occupied a particular and shifting place in the French landscape—it was not the storied Provence but the Mediterranean Midi, and its greatest institutions, like the Faculté de Médecine, were rapidly declining in national and international prestige throughout the nineteenth century. Consequently, as the Faculté continued to tout new forms of Vitalism as their sustained contribution to modern medicine, the rest of the region relied on its unusually diverse and compelling heritage, as well as developing new industries, to maintain its profile within an increasingly fragmented France.

Further, the nineteenth century more broadly saw an increasing interest on the part of intellectuals and politicians alike in defining “the local” in relation to “the national.” Stéphane Gerson describes this “cult of local memories” as a phenomenon that sought to revive local history and “affection for one's *pays*, or locality” as a means of producing “a deep emotional and intellectual attachment combining territorial

identification with membership in a social or political community.”⁴ Chapter Three demonstrated the role of friendship and community in Bazille’s intimate portrait practice, while Chapters One and Two traced the links that arose for the artist between Montpellier and Paris in the medical and artistic worlds. This chapter thus seeks to establish Bazille’s construction of his own “cult of local memories” through his painting and to define the relation of these local memories to his concept of “nation”—*La France*, in all its troubled, headstrong glory. Gerson further defines such a cult as “an interplay of diverse individual aims and sociocultural forces...[that] converged within an enterprise of self-creation, an effort to rethink and reorder one’s social world while situating oneself within it.”⁵ As Bazille struggled at turns with components of the detail-oriented medical and artistic gaze that his training had cultivated, he also struggled to envision himself as a young man caught between regions of France.

Thus, that Bazille used his final three years to engage in visual explorations of his heritage and the agricultural industries in which his father participated should not be surprising and should not be written off as subject matter merely close at hand. If these phenomena have resisted analysis before, it is likely because many of these explorations remain only as fragmented thoughts and sketches that were never turned into completed paintings. The large-scale paintings that he did create during this period—*Summer Scene* and *La Toilette*, for example—remain intimidatingly eclectic, without the unity of purpose he seems to have intended in these unfinished tableaux. Thus, this chapter examines Bazille’s images of vineyard laborers and Southern landscapes, some including the nearby city of Aigues-Mortes, to define Bazille’s vision of France as one that could

⁴ Stéphane Gerson, *The Pride of Place: Local Memories and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

not wholly be dictated by his experiences in Paris but depended on his increasing comprehension of the disparities between Paris and Montpellier.

Having established Bazille's vision of France through his pursuit of Southern imagery, this chapter will further theorize why he felt so moved to defend his France after the declaration of the Franco-Prussian War in July of 1870. Why, when his father wanted to purchase a substitute to go in his stead, an easily met expense for their family, did Bazille insist on enlisting himself, voluntarily? And furthermore, why did Bazille seek assignment as a Zouave? How might he have perceived the Zouaves subsequent to their heroism in the recent foreign wars that Napoleon III's volatile empire had fought in Crimea and Italy? Bazille would produce some images of soldiers, painted portraits of a close friend in uniform and other sketches and caricatures, both before and after his enlistment. I seek to bring these into the interpretation of Bazille's last months because, in the end, Bazille would not only be a young man, a *montpelliérain*, or a painter, but instead a Frenchman. Unraveling the nexus of particular allegiances, behaviors, and dreams that comprised this identity must prove central to a final evaluation of Bazille's contribution to the history of art, as they compelled both his painted work and his eventual, untimely death on the battlefield in November of 1870.

The body of France

Between 1865 and 1870, the Second Empire started to visibly crack at the seams. Born out of the revolutions of 1848 and the 1851 coup d'état of Napoleon III that turned the optimistic Second Republic into a shadow of the First Empire, it appeared bound to go the way of all other nineteenth-century French governments. The Impressionist

literature, especially that concerning their early years, remains contentious regarding their involvement in politics. Social art historians have explored potential political involvement of the Impressionists at various points in their careers,⁶ while others have adhered to the idea that, even in their earliest attempts, the Impressionists privileged formal elements above all else.⁷ However, Bazille's engagement with the politics of his country is well documented in his letters, from the 1862 medical faculty protests discussed in Chapter One to his intentions to attend the 1870 funeral of the assassinated Republican journalist Victor Noir.⁸ Yet he was not Courbet, spouting ideological rhetoric steeped in the class politics he grew to understand in Ornans, and he was not Cézanne who removed himself from Paris to his native Aix-en-Provence. As I have argued earlier, Bazille's desire to know and to see as much as possible, while also responsible for the iconographically perplexing nature of his work, must extend to his orientation in the participatory structure of *montpelliérain* society and, by extension, to how Montpellier's circumstances related to France at large.

Defining the South

⁶ For general surveys on this topic, see: Jane Mayo Roos, *Early Impressionism and the French State (1866-1874)* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Philip Nord, *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century*, Historical Connections (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); John House, *Impressionism: Paint and Politics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004). There are, of course, numerous other specialized treatments of artists or themes vis-à-vis their political engagement, and these are exemplified most readily by Paul Hayes Tucker's writing on Monet, including: Paul Tucker, "The First Impressionist Exhibition and Monet's Impression, Sunrise: A Tale of Timing, Commerce, and Patriotism," *Art History* 7, no. 4 (December 1984): 465–76; Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet in the '90s: The Series Paintings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

⁷ As discussed in the introduction, work on Bazille by Kermit Champa and Dianne Pitman may be included in this statement.

⁸ Bazille mentions his intentions to attend the funeral in a letter to his mother, but he instead posed for Fantin-Latour's *Studio in the Batignolles* that day. See: letter 130, to his mother, January 13–19, 1870, in Didier Vatuone and Guy Barral, eds., *Frédéric Bazille: Correspondance* (Montpellier: Les Presses du Languedoc, 1992), 184–185.

More than national politics, it was arguably Bazille's appreciation of local politics in Montpellier that governed his expectations for the rest of France. Many scholars have pointed out that the artist's family was exceptionally rich relative to those of his peers. This was certainly true—the family home in downtown Montpellier was formerly the Hôtel Perier, a seventeenth-century *hôtel particulier* acquired by the artist's grandfather years before. Beyond this home, where they lived primarily in winter, they had two other properties outside the city—Méric, the inheritance of the artist's mother and aunt, which is pictured in *Family Reunion*; and the Domaine Saint-Sauveur near the village of Lattes, which became the center of Gaston Bazille's agricultural exploits. Their claim to prestige in Montpellier relied on more than property, however; the elder Bazille's civic engagement and commitment to the city of Montpellier and its Protestant community helped to distinguish the Bazille family from those who rested more significantly on their wealth. While the richest families in town drew their prestige from old and continuing banking endeavors, the Bazille family maintained their elite status through continuing to work and to do good works in their community.

Indeed, to study Gaston Bazille's contributions is to construct a densely populated network—a *montpelliérain* “Who's Who” for the 1860s and beyond—though I necessarily cut my analysis off around the time of his son's death. An agricultural proprietor and vintner by trade,⁹ he also proved to be an opinionated civil servant and reliable leader. Throughout the 1860s, he served at various times, often simultaneously, as a member of the city council (and then an adjoint to the mayor himself!), a member of the prison oversight committee, a member of their church council, and, most importantly,

⁹ In census listings, such as the *annuaires* for the Hérault, he is either listed as a *propriétaire* or a *négociant*. There is likely a subtle distinction between the two in terms of how involved the landowner is with running his agricultural operation.

a member and then officer of the Société d'agriculture of the Hérault.¹⁰ These commitments allowed him access to the most important leaders and civic decisions made in the city.

To grow to maturity as a man in Montpellier meant following in the footsteps of one's father, especially when one's father was as distinguished and beloved as Gaston Bazille. A survey of the elder Bazille's activities during the 1860s almost gives the sense of overcommitment—every commission or committee producing report after report, demanding engagement with contemporary issues and the day-to-day management of the institutions that these rich businessmen, in concert with experts in the institution's particular mission, oversaw for the benefit of their community. In surveying local histories or the *annuaires* for the Hérault, the same names appear constantly, especially where Montpellier's protestant community is concerned, and most of these families demonstrate a similar dual dedication to maintaining their family's status and maintaining the excellence of community assets. While the city certainly could not match Paris for population, it was also not small, numbering about 55,600 people in 1867.¹¹ Yet this echelon of Montpellier's society and its expert adjuncts functioned similarly to a social club where any member might be expected to know precisely the happenings of any other member's life, assuming all remained present and in good standing.

Furthermore, Montpellier, like many French cities, had organized social clubs to formalize the courtesies and kindnesses that arose through regular business dealings.

¹⁰ This list of roles was compiled through examining each volume of the *Annuaire administratif, historique, statistique et commercial de l'Hérault* compiled by Eugène Thomas, the departmental archivist, between 1858 and 1870, and accessible at Montpellier's Archives municipales. As my discussion is limited by Bazille's death, I necessarily omit Gaston Bazille's entry into national politics—he became Senator in 1879 under the Third Republic and continued to serve on commissions and in other capacities until his death in 1894.

¹¹ Eugène Thomas, *Annuaire administratif, historique, statistique et commercial de l'Hérault, pour l'Année 1867* (Montpellier: Ricard frères, 1867), 529.

Gaston Bazille was a member of the Cercle de la Loge, a men's club reserved for two hundred and fifty elite men capable of paying the fees and loyal enough to maintain the attendance requirements.¹² The support of three Cercle members and at least one of five commissioners was required for potential members, and five no votes could end a man's candidacy.¹³ Chapter One discussed how socializing with the Cercle may have helped to normalize Frédéric Bazille's understanding of medical doctrines and to forge connections with his future professors even before he arrived in medical school. In addition to the esteemed physicians and businessmen, the society's rules also stipulated that "officers of the army, actively serving and garrisoned or stationed in Montpellier" could present themselves for membership at any time during their stay. However, garrisoned soldiers who were not officers did not receive the same courtesy.¹⁴ Though the artist did not join until 1870, it is possible that he followed his father to the Cercle as a boy—indeed, members could bring their sons without presenting them for members until their twenty-first birthday.¹⁵

Maurice Agulhon's study of social clubs in the earlier part of the century noted that, in the provinces where "sociability is still shaped by traditional attitudes," clubs such as the Cercle could evoke notions of home through their intimate conditions.¹⁶ For Agulhon, the form of the *cercle* was also "modern, so modern because it participates in a certain collectivization of life."¹⁷ Though Agulhon likely takes collectivization for some of its economic connotations, I am more interested in what it suggests about the

¹² *Cercle de la Grande-Loge, Année 1866* (Montpellier: Boehm et fils, 1866), 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10; *Cercle de la Loge, 1782-1900* (Montpellier: Imprimerie Serre & Roumégous, 1900), 46.

¹⁵ *Cercle de la Grande-Loge, Année 1866*, 9–10.

¹⁶ Maurice Agulhon, *Le cercle dans la France bourgeoise 1810-1848: étude d'une mutation de sociabilité*, Cahiers des annales 36 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1977), 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

“increasingly dense associative life of men.”¹⁸ This *fraternité* and its persistence in modernity evoke certain struggles in the mechanisms of their daily lives. In Montpellier, the kind of communal associations and problem-solving likely harkened back to earlier times as much as it invoked modern economic collectivization. Community could provide fortification, clarity, and support in ways that the anomic conditions of urban Paris could not.

It is with this knowledge that, before I return to the images that Bazille produced, I challenge vehemently the perception of Bazille as a dilettante, whose persistence in the literature I described in my introduction. A dilettante can be defined as an amateur—“a lover of the fine arts; originally, one who cultivates them for the love of them rather than professionally.” As history has progressed, the word dilettante has referred “more or less depreciatively to one who interests himself in an art or science merely as a pastime and without serious aim or study.”¹⁹ Thus, to be a dilettante is to flit from one appearance to the other, rarely going below the surface to commit thoroughly to any particular cause or endeavor—which dovetails nicely with contemporaneous theorizations of the *flâneur*. Yet, being involved in many things (to the point where people at a remove might believe such expansive commitment impossible) is precisely what Bazille attempted to do, in his own manner and according to his own interests, when he reached Paris. In medical school or at the atelier with his separate circles of friends from various places, including those from Montpellier; with his more elevated extended family and Salon-style

¹⁸ John Horne, “Masculinity in Politics and War in the Age of Nation-States and World Wars, 1850-1950,” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 27.

¹⁹ “Dilettante, N.,” *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2014), <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/52779?isAdvanced=false&result=1&rskey=luoU3e&>.

gatherings; in his efforts to keep up with the best in Parisian theater, opera, and music; his art patronage and his facilitation of others' practice; his aborted attempts for organization in the name of the New Painting—the list goes on, astonishingly so for such a young man. Furthermore, to use Philip Nord's phrase, Republican politics was a birthright for Bazille.²⁰

When put in context with the demands Bazille would have faced if he had finished school and returned to Montpellier as planned, however, this wide array of efforts makes perfect sense. Previous chapters have described Bazille's attempts to build his own world, within and without his paintings, and have addressed some of these endeavors in separate contexts. Seen as a unified body of acts, and with an eye to the accomplishments of the artist's father, however, they demonstrate Bazille's allegiances to a *montpelliérain* way of life. Even if these allegiances were not conscious, except perhaps in his avowals of love for his family, they were strong—and they crucially enable a reconsideration of some of his paintings and drawings that have previously fallen outside the scope of doctrinaire Impressionism.

Furthermore, characterizing Impressionism entirely through the eyes of its Parisian audience or particularly northern scenery may be patently incorrect. Philip Nord has characterized the willingness of Bazille, Renoir, Monet, and Sisley to follow the Barbizon school, in addition to their youths spent outside of Paris, as a current of Impressionism that is “provincial in cast.”²¹ But what, precisely, does this suggestion mean? The rustic landscapes they embraced and their interest in defining the importance of one localized moment as a suitable subject for art certainly allow their work to be

²⁰ Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 164.

²¹ Nord, *Impressionists and Politics: Art and Democracy in the Nineteenth Century*, 11.

described as provincial, but their Paris-centric ambitions remained necessary to achieve the kind of success they envisioned. Their work was “provincial” to the extent that Barbizon and Norman landscapes figured heavily into their development and later success, but Normandy was, in many ways, second only to Paris in the nineteenth-century imaginary.²² Richard Brettell has further described Monet’s Normandy paintings as “provincial and modern at the same time,” displaying both the new tourism industry and the common practices of the “completely entrenched local bourgeoisie.”²³

Ultimately, however, Bazille was the member of this “provincial” group who most diligently maintained his community beyond Paris prior to 1870, attentive to the demands of his family and friends in each locale and how they affected his painting. In his *The Spectacle of Nature* (1990), Nicholas Green described nature as a part of the discursive construction of the metropolis; the delights contingent on being in nature are part of having left the city.²⁴ In this sense, I would argue that Bazille’s Montpellier is part of a similarly discursive construction in relation to Paris. The delights and strengths of Montpellier are contingent on what Bazille had difficulty finding in an otherwise vivifying social circle in his adopted home.

Laboring Bodies

Within the scope of previous literature, Impressionism was long valued for its formal innovations that encouraged privileging the spontaneity of observation and the

²² Richard Brettell, “Monet’s Normandy before Monet: Art, History, and Culture,” in *Monet in Normandy* (New York: Rizzoli, 2006), 18.

²³ Richard Brettell, “Monet and Normandy: Notes Toward a Psychological Appraisal,” in *Monet in Normandy* (New York: Rizzoli, 2006), 44.

²⁴ Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-Century France* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 11.

specificity of human vision over premeditated artistic composition. Though early Impressionism, as defined by Kermit Champa, had not yet reached the effervescent brushwork of its high period, Bazille's art, more than that of his friends, hardly embraced the task of depicting the unfettered conditions of modernity. His most involved paintings are static, his figures meticulously detailed, and his poses carefully combined from art historical precedents and visual study. It is the specificity of modern dress that converts these figures from classical and unthreatening, in the manner of Puvis de Chavannes, to modern and shadowy. Much as his human figures appear so contained on the canvas and within the contexts from which they derived, Bazille remained tied to the South no matter how far he travelled, rooted in the traditions that his family honored in Montpellier. When, from perhaps 1867 on, he began to contemplate how he could paint a scene of Southern agriculture, he understandably turned to what he knew best—the family business.

Gaston Bazille would have been nothing without his agricultural prowess—his interest in expanding and innovating at his *domaine*, Saint-Sauveur, which he had purchased in 1849, helped both to establish his reputation regionally and to maintain the family's fortune and prestige. It was here that he raised his prize-winning cows²⁵ and here that he would lay hectare after hectare of vines. By 1866, he was able to post a net profit of 15,745 francs after selling 2,030 hectoliters of wine, and profits only increased from there, as he sold 3,108 hectoliters in 1867 and 2,340 in 1868 (an off-year for most

²⁵ Some detail on the breeds, ages, and other charms of the cows that Gaston Bazille raised at Saint-Sauveur can be found in the reports related to the competitions in which he entered them. See, for example: *Concours régional agricole de Montpellier, au samedi 2 au dimanche 10 mai 1868. Catalogue des animaux, instruments et produits agricoles exposés* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1868).

growers in the Midi).²⁶ These sums, while perhaps not entirely comparable to the earnings of the Montpellier social elite, especially the bankers, place the Bazille family in an elite tier for any region of France. For example, in 1863, a male worker in Paris earned 3.81 francs per day on average, and women earned less than half of that.²⁷ In 1866, wages in Lyons fluctuated from 2.25 to 6.00 francs, depending on the modernity and prestige of a worker's industry.²⁸ Gaston Bazille provided his family with enough to live comfortably and indulge in luxuries when desired, including his approval of Frédéric's wish to paint for a living. Beyond serving as the inspiration for many of Bazille's paintings, the property at Méric also fared considerably well as an agricultural enterprise. Under the direction of Bazille's uncle, Eugène des Hours-Farel, pictured next to the artist in *Family Reunion*, Méric continued to produce hearty crops of grapes and olives,²⁹ and at regional competitions, des Hours-Farel exhibited numerous different types of sulfur that could be used as pesticides on vines.³⁰

Thus, when Bazille began to make studies for a larger tableau that featured the vine-rich landscape surrounding Montpellier, it seems that he began to contemplate how to include the laborers who ensured the vitality of the harvests. He never completed a

²⁶ M. Doniol, "Domaine Saint-Sauveur," in *Les primes d'honneur distribués dans les Concours régionaux en 1868* (Paris, 1870), 490. The report does note that Bazille's sales totaled 38,850 francs in 1867 and 31,590 francs in 1868, but full receipts are only provided for 1866. However, as sales in 1866 totaled 22,260 francs before expenses, it might be estimated that Bazille's net profit in 1867 may have been as much as 30,000 francs.

²⁷ Alistair Horne, *The Fall of Paris: The Siege and the Commune 1870-71*, Revised edition (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 25.

²⁸ George J. Sheridan, Jr., "Household and Craft in an Industrializing Economy: The Case of the Silk Weavers of Lyons," in *Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. John M. Merriman (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 116.

²⁹ For more information on Méric's agricultural history, see: Eugène Des Hours-Farel, "Notes et renseignements agricoles sur l'exploitation d'une domaine aux environs de Montpellier pendant le XVIII^e siècle," in *Bulletin de la Société Centrale d'Agriculture et des Comices agricoles du département de l'Hérault. 52nd année- 1865* (Montpellier: Pierre Grollier, Imprimeur de la Société d'Agriculture, 1865), 81-95.

³⁰ *Concours régional agricole de Montpellier*, 43.

painting of these subjects, yet some conclusions may be drawn from the preparatory materials that remain. Two painted studies of *vendanges* (Figs. 83-84), or grape fields, date to 1868—the same year that Saint-Sauveur received the *prime d'honneur* during the regional agricultural *concours*—and evidence his attention to documenting these beautiful and familiar vistas. These particular views were likely created after a visit to the Tissié property in Bionne, southwest from Montpellier,³¹ and a list of painting subjects in Bazille's sketchbooks suggests that he eventually intended to do two paintings—"une Gde vendange" (sic) and "une petite vendange."³² Bazille's brother, Marc, had married Suzanne Tissié in 1867 (they are pictured together in *Family Reunion*), and Suzanne's brother, Alphonse, was a close friend to the Bazille brothers and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Though Gaston Bazille had *vendanges* of his own and a very profitable enterprise, the Saint-Sauveur property at Lattes lacked the small yet picturesque mountains that fill the horizons of these studies, and Méric had already provided its fair share of Bazille's inspiration. These two small paintings, framed together now and almost contiguous, demonstrate the attention that Bazille paid to the nuances of the landscape. From far away, the hedgerows and plots form geometric patterns that lead toward and culminate in the small mountains of the Gardiole range. The skies remain exceptionally blue, but lighter here and shaded by wispy clouds. In the foreground, Bazille has painted the vines themselves in their appearance as miniature trees, close to the ground and carefully arrayed in rows themselves, as vibrant and healthy. He used a decidedly Impressionist technique, more so than usual, to render their leaves through a trellis of *taches*—daubs of

³¹ Michel Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 1995), 198.

³² *Ibid.*, 198, 309.

light and dark green intermingle to capture their depth and the effects of the sun beating down on them and drying the soil.

Beyond these painted landscape studies, a number of drawings remain of laborers at work in the fields and during the harvests, many in Bazille's sketchbooks now held by the Louvre. Though Bazille had painted Saint-Sauveur, once in 1863 and once in 1865, these images showed little trace of the human labor involved in keeping such a farm. The 1863 painting (Fig. 85) depicts a selection of the farm's buildings opening onto a lush green field where cows, a man, and a little girl watch each other under a light blue sky streaked with clouds. In the painting from 1865 (Fig. 86), conceived as an over-door decoration for one of his uncles,³³ two men relax on the grass at the right of the painting, but the focus is the three cows in the open field, set against the mountains, trees, and the farm's buildings in the distance. Both paintings appear more like static landscapes than images of a functioning farm driven by intellect and labor alike, as Gaston Bazille certainly viewed his operation.

The artist's drawings suggest, however, that the focus of his completed *vendange* painting would be significantly different. Some of these drawings focus on broad landscape views with a large number of figures—RF 5259 nos. 9 and 16, for example,³⁴ show a number of people seemingly at work on the harvest. No. 9 (Fig. 87) is less complete; women and men heave baskets filled by other men and women who lean toward the ground and continue to pick while the baskets are carried toward the cursorily-drawn wagon stationed in the back. No. 16 (Fig. 88) presents the same subject as no. 9 with a similar array of poses and figures, and yet Bazille has experimented here with the

³³ Ibid., 132.

³⁴ As these drawings are from a sketchbook and lack proper titles, I have chosen to identify them in the text by their Louvre inventory number.

compositional arrangement, changing the frieze-style, evenly distributed composition of no. 9 to the more central structure of no. 16, where all of the action and work rises up the hill to the wagon, which sits next to the lone tree. Bazille further seems to have drawn in a mountain in the horizon of no. 16. Though few conclusions can be drawn from preparatory sketches for which no final painting exists, the figures in no. 16 seem to be integrated into the land—composed primarily through the work they perform and the land whose riches they help to harvest.

These drawings actively recall their Realist precedents, both Dutch paintings Bazille might have seen in the Musée Fabre, such as Philips Wouwerman's *The Laborer's Repose* (1646-48) (Fig. 89), and mid-nineteenth-century French painters such as Millet and Daubigny. For these French painters, their laborers proved freighted with political and spiritual messages. Millet, in paintings such as *The Gleaners* (1857) (Fig. 90) and *Man with a Hoe* (1860-62) (Fig. 91), used his laborers' bodies to bear the full brunt of their tortuous lives. They loom large on canvas, stripped of artifice in favor of "directness of vision" that could be used to move his audiences.³⁵ As he painted more and more images of peasants, his fame, or notoriety, increased, and these images were interpreted by a wide array of social critics to suit their own political goals. However, Millet's eye for the emblematic and the archetypal, which guided his compositions, allowed him to fuse past and present into deliberately naïve images of country life.³⁶ T. J. Clark has described Millet's strength as the tension between "the tragic and the

³⁵ Robert Herbert, *Jean-François Millet* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), 13.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

ordinary”—the bodies that Millet painted produced their message through their conjunction, or visible disjunction, from the land they tended.³⁷

Daubigny's painting *Les Vendanges en Bourgogne* (Fig. 92) diverges from Millet's monumental figures in focusing as much on the surrounding landscape as the figures that harvest its fruits. Displayed in the Salon of 1863, this large canvas presents workers spread out into a field around a wagon. While the oxen lay their heads down to rest, to the dismay of the children teasing them, each of the workers is depicted in a distinct state of labor. The faceless women in their kerchiefs, with their muscular, rounded bodies, bend over the plants to pull grapes from the vine, while others carry the collected fruits of their labors to be deposited in the wagon. In this monochromatic scene with its overcast skies, the red kerchief of the woman bending over at the right bursts out of the canvas—a small moment of drama in an otherwise monochromatic scene. The critic Castagnary described this painting at length, declaring: “Such a truthful impression! Such feeling for the French countryside!”³⁸ Though their representational strategies differed, Daubigny's *Vendanges*, like Millet's laborers, could function synecdochically to represent France through its agriculture. Images of grape harvests especially allowed an artist to incorporate numerous people working together at different tasks. Where paintings of laborers gathering hay or harvesting corn tended to depict single figures or small groups in the fields, multi-figure *vendanges* held the potential to evoke a more humanist vision of agricultural France.

³⁷ T.J. Clark, *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France 1848-1851* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 93–94, 98.

³⁸ Jules-Antoine Castagnary, “Salon de 1863,” in *Salons (1857–1870)*, vol. 1 (Paris: G. Charpentier et E. Fasquelle, 1892), 145. The French reads: “Quelle vérité d'impression! Quel sens de la nature française!”

Bazille's sketches, when put in context with Daubigny and Millet, reveal a similar attentiveness to place and the symbolic functions of the human figure in landscape. Castagnary, according to Robert Herbert, understood that Millet's peasant pictures "embodied present aspirations, with the virtue of being aloof from the most obvious contemporary polemics and therefore endowed with greater permanence. The past enters here into a curious dialog with the present, and country with the city."³⁹ If Bazille, too, understood and recognized the value of a message like Millet's, attempting to make a tableau grounded in the people and the land of his home region could have provided a means of passing judgment on how people lived under the Second Empire.

Although his declarations and those of his elite peers must, perhaps, be taken with a grain of salt, Gaston Bazille had a relatively progressive view of the rights and privileges accorded to the laborers on his property. When Saint-Sauveur received the *prime d'honneur* in 1868, the complimentary report noted Gaston Bazille's belief that being well-fed would help his employees fight "pernicious influences in the air" and "that is why all hired workers are fed on the property at the pains and expenses of the proprietor and receive coffee every morning [during the] period when the fevers are most difficult to fight off."⁴⁰ In an 1863 report on Montpellier's attempts to Haussmannize, presented by the elder Bazille himself to the city council in the capacity of his role as an advisor to the mayor, he compared the relative happiness of his city's workers to the misery of their counterparts in northern factories. He brags that, in Montpellier, "work is

³⁹ Robert L. Herbert, "City vs. Country: The Rural Image in French Painting from Millet to Gauguin," in *From Millet to Léger: Essays in Social Art History*, by Robert L. Herbert (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 36.

⁴⁰ Doniol, "Domaine Saint-Sauveur," 476–477. The French reads: "C'est pourquoi tout le personnel à gages est nourri sur le domaine par les soins et aux frais du propriétaire et reçoit tous les matins du café depuis le 15 juillet jusqu'au 15 octobre, époque où les fièvres sont le plus à redouter."

always abundant and well-paid; also our workers, better dressed, better fed, better housed progress morally from day to day, and feel growing within themselves the sentiment of personal dignity.”⁴¹ In 1866, he professed an admiration for Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*,⁴² whose social agenda with regard to the poorest and most disenfranchised members of society could not have escaped a man so politically intelligent. His words do exhibit the paternalism assumed by a social and therefore supposed moral superior—and yet they also point to a particular way of viewing *montpelliérain* workers as exemplary beings.

The artist’s experiments with these subjects proved contemporaneous to a turn of events that would have extreme ramifications for his father’s business and would elevate Montpellier’s wine community to fame (balanced with occasional infamy) long after his death. The vineyards in the Hérault produced, on average, 1.2 billion liters of wine per year between 1860 and 1867—approximately a fourth of the wine produced in all of France.⁴³ By 1868, it had become apparent that a pest had begun to zealously attack nearby vineyards; other regions had already seen major losses in their wine crops, but the Hérault’s Société d’Agriculture and its president, Gaston Bazille, believed they could still fight back.⁴⁴ The Société formed a commission composed of Gaston Bazille; Félix Sahut, a property owner, professor, and viticultural expert; and Jules Planchon, a botanist from

⁴¹ Gaston Bazille, *Complément de rapport sur la Rue Impériale lu le 25 février 1863 au conseil municipal* (Montpellier: Imprimerie Typographique de Gras, 1863), 13. The French reads: “Chez nous, le travail est toujours abondant et bien payé ; aussi nos ouvriers, mieux vêtus, mieux nourris, mieux logés, progressent moralement de jour en jour, et sentent grandir en eux le sentiment de la dignité personnelle.”

⁴² Letter 82, Gaston Bazille to his son, May 31, 1866, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 127.

⁴³ Louis Violla, *Exposition Régionale des vins, des eaux-de-vie, des alcools & des vinaigres des départements de l’Hérault, des Pyrénées-Orientales, de l’Aude, du Gard, des Bouches-du-Rhône, du Var, des Alpes-Maritimes et de la Corse ouvert à Montpellier le 1er mai 1868. Rapport présenté à la Société Centrale d’Agriculture de l’Hérault* (Montpellier: Imprimerie typographique de Gras, 1868), 49.

⁴⁴ According to the departmental *annuaires*, between 1867 and 1870, Gaston Bazille alternated the titles of president and vice-president with Louis Violla.

the Faculté de Médecine, to determine the cause of the destruction at vineyards in nearby Saint-Rémy. There, they found phylloxera, a type of aphid, crawling on the leaves and roots of the infected vines.⁴⁵ Bazille recalled in an 1872 report that then “it was easy for an attentive observer to predict the oncoming destruction of vines in Provence, and the danger run by all the vineyards of the Midi.”⁴⁶ He was hardly overstating his case.

Rhetoric that developed around the endangered vines drove to the very core of France’s self-definition for peasants and intellectuals alike; both soon shouted that, if France found itself unable to produce its wine, its national identity would be irreparably altered.⁴⁷

Defining a connection between Frédéric Bazille’s artistic endeavors and his father’s agricultural and scientific ones rests on stipulating the artist’s knowledge of the earliest struggles because, after the wine industry’s rapid downturn in the 1870s and 1880s, it would not fully recover until 1893.⁴⁸ Most of France would not admit the epidemic’s severity until the 1880s, and even then, ridiculous propositions of folk cures and desperate measures dominated over measured scientific inquiry.⁴⁹ However, with the core group from the Société d’Agriculture de l’Hérault, measured scientific inquiry set the standard from the first moment, and in this age of the learned society, governmental officials and citizens alike looked to such groups to collate the “underlying forces and

⁴⁵ Harry W. Paul, *Science, Vine, and Wine in Modern France* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19–20. Though Planchon usually receives most of the credit for finding the source of the plague, Paul seems almost to discredit Planchon in favor of recognizing the contributions of Bazille and Sahut in making the actual discovery.

⁴⁶ Gaston Bazille, *Etudes sur le phylloxera* (Montpellier: P. Grollier, 1872), 1. The French reads: “il était facile à un observateur attentif de prédire la destruction prochaine des vignes de la Provence, et le danger couru par tous les vignobles du Midi. »

⁴⁷ For a serviceable summary of the debates that occurred after Bazille’s death, with which I shall not concern myself here, see: Christy Campbell, *The Botanist and the Vintner: How Wine Was Saved For the World* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2004). Of the books that treat the phylloxera epidemic seriously, Campbell’s is the one that does the most due diligence with regard to Montpellier’s role.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 112–122. When the government offered a prize to whoever could pose the most convincing cure for the phylloxera, they received numerous odd proposals. Campbell cites a suggestion that “Living toads should be buried in blighted vineyards to draw the poison from the soil” (113).

collective interests” that coursed under debates about this new threat.⁵⁰ By August of 1868, the *puceron*, as they were then calling the pest, had catapulted to the top of their agenda. It was then that Planchon, with the pharmacist Camille Saintpierre, stood before the Société and explained the actions of the investigating committee of which Gaston Bazille had been a part. Planchon noted that they had done a series of experiments in which they exposed the vines to various substances to see what affected the pest and what affected the vine. He concluded that:

For these reasons and by all of the facts, we do not hesitate to view the *puceron* as an enemy that it is necessary to pursue. We are not masters of the elements, or the seasons, or the surrounding conditions that often, it is true, determine the general predisposition of epidemic diseases. But, when we have before us an active case, almost mechanical in its destruction, our duty, our interest commands us to suppress it to start, then to discourse at leisure on its distant origins.⁵¹

Thus, Bazille, Planchon, and the members of the Hérault’s agricultural society came together early to attempt to prevent phylloxera from affecting the vines of the Midi.

Unlike the majority of France’s wine industry, they took it seriously from the beginning—so much so that it is hard to image how a businessman as astute and engaged as Gaston Bazille would not have discussed their efforts with his family. This point is especially salient because Gaston Bazille was not merely a facilitator or a persuasive mouthpiece in these early years, but was as engaged in the search for a cure as much as any of his more overtly qualified scientific friends. In his letters to Frédéric in Paris, he often reported on the state of their family and friends in Montpellier, as well as local

⁵⁰ Gerson, *The Pride of Place*, 158.

⁵¹ Jules Planchon and Camille Saintpierre, *Premières Expériences sur la destruction du puceron de la vigne* (Montpellier: Typographie de Pierre Grollier, 1868), 27. The French reads: “Par ces raisons et par l’ensemble des faits, nous n’hésitons pas à dans le puceron l’ennemi qu’il faut poursuivre. Nous ne sommes maîtres ni des éléments, ni des saisons, ni des conditions de milieu qui déterminent souvent, il est vrai, la prédisposition générale a des maladies épidémiques. Mais, quand nous avons devant nous une cause active, presque mécanique de destruction, notre devoir, notre intérêt nous commandant de la réprimer d’abord, sauf à dissenter à loisir sur ses origines éloignées.”

events and his personal civic and business dealings. Though the epistolary record is far from complete, in 1868, Gaston did write to his son about his planting practices at Saint-Sauveur and confessed: “I do not want to seriously make wine at Saint-Sauveur; I just want to make red wine. I have to win this double victory against all those who believe me crazy or stupid for putting vines in at Lattes. I only regret not having thought of this years earlier.”⁵² This unapologetic view of his endeavors and his choice to make table wine instead of developing a *grand cru* surely impacted his son, who continued to fret over how to construct his paintings.

As early as 1869, Gaston Bazille began to experiment with *greffage*, or the practice of grafting the fruit-bearing top section of one vine onto the rootstock of another.⁵³ He believed that American vines, which appeared to be resistant to the phylloxera, could provide French vines with the ability to go on producing their precious grapes, while also keeping them safe from the aphids that could not yet be simply exterminated.⁵⁴ Later, when Planchon had made contact with distinguished American

⁵² Letter 101, Gaston Bazille to Frédéric, March 24, 1868, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 155. The full comment reads: “Heureusement que si les prés souffrent, les vignes ne se plaignent point de la sécheresse; je m'applaudis donc de plus en plus d'en avoir planté à peu près la moitié de la campagne. J'ai planté cet hiver une dizaine de sétérées en teinturier, j'en aurai maintenant 30 sétérées; les premiers plantiers, quoique très jeunes encore, sont comme les chassepots, font merveille, et cela m'a engagé à persévérer dans cette voie; j'ai essayé aussi quelques sétérées des plantes hybrides obtenus par M. Rouchet notre collègue à la Société d'agriculture; je ne veux pas sérieusement faire du vin à Saint-Sauveur, je veux y faire du vin noir, il faut que je remporte cette double victoire, sur tous ceux qui me prenaient pour fou ou imbécile de mettre de la vigne à Lattes. Je regrette seulement de ne pas y avoir songé quelques années plus tôt.”

⁵³ For this claim, see: Campbell, *The Botanist and the Vintner*, 250. Campbell notes that Gaston Bazille begins experimenting with grafting soon after a presentation on American vines at the Beaune Viticultural Conference in 1869, and that he later figured into the debate over who had truly been the first to suggest grafting as the solution to the entire phylloxera problem. It was certainly apparently in the Montpellier group's early inspections that American vines seemed impervious to the effects of the pest. In his own writings, Bazille only claims to have produced grafts that satisfied him in 1871, suggesting a perhaps involved process of experimentation prior to that date. See: Bazille, *Etudes sur le phylloxera*, 4.

⁵⁴ For more on the struggle to graft American vines to French vines, see: Paul, *Science, Vine, and Wine*, 25–29. It is important to note that American vines were eventually determined to be the source of the epidemic, as cuttings of these vines were likely transported to Europe as specimens for exhibition. Because

vintners, such as Isidor Bush in Missouri, it would be Louis Bazille, a cousin of the artist who had benefited from his advice on which contemporary paintings to collect,⁵⁵ who, in his capacity as the Vice-President of the Société d'horticulture et d'histoire naturelle de l'Hérault, translated Bush's catalogue of grape varieties into French.⁵⁶

Pride and dedication guided the wine producers of the Hérault, who believed it their duty and privilege to continue providing fine products. When Saint-Sauveur was awarded the *prime d'honneur* in 1868, Gaston Bazille stood before those assembled at the exposition and declared: "[The Midi's agriculture] is not at all barbaric, or backward. It mastered crop specialization, and undertook prudent training for cultivating vines, nearly the one crop that the extreme climate of the Midi makes possible and truly profitable. It knew to fix its revenues to the soil, the rewards of thirty years of work and savings."⁵⁷ He was, of course, addressing a like-minded audience that believed agriculture was the Midi's most celebrated endeavor, and in forwarding their own business, Midi growers believed they stood for the whole of French agricultural production.

Bazille indeed likely constructed his remarks with regard to the Midi's increasingly substantial role in the French economy. One and a half million families across France lived off their efforts to cultivate vines, one-sixth of France's revenues came through wine production, and wine was France's second largest export after

the American vines were resistant to the phylloxera that they carried, no one had cause for concern until French vineyards started to suffer considerably losses.

⁵⁵ See letters 129, 131, 132, 136, from Bazille to his cousin Louis in 1870, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 183, 186–187, 189–190.

⁵⁶ Bush & Son & Meissner, *Les Vignes américaines, catalogue illustré et descriptive avec de brèves indications sur leur culture*, trans. Louis Bazille (Montpellier: C. Coulet, 1876).

⁵⁷ Quoted in Louis-J. Thomas, *Montpellier, Ville Marchande: Histoire Economique et Sociale de Montpellier des origines à 1870* (Montpellier: Librairie Valat, 1936), 278. The French reads: "Elle n'est point barbare, ni arriérée. Elle s'est appropriée la spécialisation des cultures, et s'est livrée avec un entrainement réfléchi à la culture de la vigne, à peu près la seule que le climat extrême du Midi rende possible et vraiment rémunératrice. Elle a su immobiliser dans le sol les capitaux, fruits de trente années de travail et d'économies."

textiles.⁵⁸ Though the most serious measures to combat the phylloxera would not be taken until after the younger Bazille's death—for example, the creation of the Commission supérieure du Phylloxera in 1871⁵⁹—the importance of the health of France's vineyards did not escape the notice of Napoleon III. In 1863, he requested that Louis Pasteur undertake research into wine diseases after oidium, a fungus, had threatened vines in the 1840s and 1850s, and then in 1866, he requested that the imperial printer publish a new volume of Pasteur's *Etudes sur le vin*, a compendium of earlier studies concerning vine diseases, their causes, and ways to combat them.⁶⁰

In parsing wine's mythology in France, Roland Barthes declared that “to believe in wine is a coercive collective act.” Wine, further, could enable the worker “to do his task with demiurgic ease,” and for the intellectual, wine could “remove him from his intellectualism, will make him the equal of the proletarian; through wine, the intellectual comes nearer to a natural virility.”⁶¹ Wine, like republican thought, could be the great equalizer, and not only because anyone could drink it. The practice of growing grapes had remained relatively unchanged for thousands of years, but by the nineteenth century, it had spread from cloistered orders and noblemen to a combination of noblemen and bourgeois proprietors. These owners assumed the title of *viticulteur*, leaving *vigneron* to their workers⁶²—a sort of title that could accord dignity and pride in one's labor. By 1865, the image of the peasant functioned as a symbol of what haute bourgeois

⁵⁸ Paul, *Science, Vine, and Wine*, 9.

⁵⁹ Gaston Bazille was a member of this national Commission.

⁶⁰ Paul, *Science, Vine, and Wine*, 170–175.

⁶¹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 58–59.

⁶² Leo A. Loubère, *The Red and the White: A History of Wine in France and Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), 81.

proprietors, especially Protestant ones like Gaston Bazille, prized—the idea that working hard would allow a man “to carve out a place in society by individual effort.”⁶³

The agricultural enterprises of the Bazille family built their fortune and allowed Gaston Bazille to become the vocal patriarch of not only their personal enterprises but the agriculture of the region. Thus, this allowed for a celebration of the laborer that could develop despite the fact of their wealth, both in the elder Bazille’s declarations of pride in the *montpelliérain* worker and in the younger Bazille’s attempts to draw and to paint their bodies. By the time the artist began to toy with these subjects, he had reached an age where he would have been expected to return home to Montpellier from Paris more permanently and pursue a profession seriously, perhaps only painting as a hobby. Valérie Bajou has referred to his studies of *vendanges* as “regulated spectacle, with geometric zones and contrasting values.”⁶⁴ He was, literally, deciding where to plant himself, to lay down roots and make a life. In this, his depictions of laborers and the eventual failure to make a full-scale, complete tableau may indicate partially where his thoughts lay as he progressed toward making a decision.

Furthermore, painting a grape harvest, as opposed to his family members or erudite tableaux, would seem to close the gap between himself and his poorer friends—putting his artistic talent to use in the name of the Republican ideals that he and his father championed. His artistic labor mirrors the tensile strength and virility of the day laborers that harvested the fields, and fixating on their bodies in the middle of the southern landscape functioned as a sign for “the displacement of social relations and its effects,” such that “history and society evaporate before the concrete physicality of appearance

⁶³ Herbert, *Jean-François Millet*, 14.

⁶⁴ Valérie Bajou, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 1993), 169.

and its apparently genetic foundations.”⁶⁵ Describing how to paint these physical traits, essentialized via men and women specifically from the South, is crucial to repositioning Bazille’s images of laborers. Where Millet endowed his peasants with monumentality and Daubigny subordinated his harvesters to the landscape, Bazille seems to have intended to fuse the two together, making his southern laborers intrinsically linked to the land that they worked well and loyally. On the issue of permanence versus contemporaneity, the lives of Midi laborers, as Bazille well knew, did not need to be presented as simple and trite to communicate the region’s pride and their crucial position within French agricultural and economic discourses.

Aigues-Mortes

Bazille’s images of laborers represented bodies integrated into and symbolically intertwined with the South. Their creation necessitated contemplation of the idiosyncrasies of the Southern landscape, and though Bazille seems to have preferred to paint human figures, he continued to contemplate the unique elements of the land surrounding Montpellier in the series of images he made of Aigues-Mortes. Even without human bodies to integrate into the land, Aigues-Mortes provided monumental character and historical witness with a picturesqueness that proved difficult to match within the city of Montpellier. About twenty miles away, Aigues-Mortes can be distinguished through its Tour de Constance and the ramparts that surround the old city. Originally constructed in the thirteenth century by King Louis IX, or Saint Louis, and his son, Philip the Bold, the walls and ramparts were intended to fortify the city as a

⁶⁵ Griselda Pollock, “‘With My Own Eyes’: Fetishism, the Labouring Body and the Colour of Its Sex.,” *Art History* 17, no. 1 (September 1994): 354. I quote Pollock here out of context—she argues that late nineteenth century images of miners “other” their subjects to a degree that racializes their difference.

stronghold on the Mediterranean Sea.⁶⁶ Well-kept, the walls remained a part of the city's identity, and Gaston Bazille had encouraged his son's interest in painting them. He wrote, in the summer of 1866: "I have never seen a painting representing Aigues-Mortes, and I am inclined to believe that a landscape or a seascape (as Aigues-Mortes with its small port, could provide either subject) of this uncommon point in the Midi, would present interest."⁶⁷ Bazille subsequently painted the city at least three times, made a number of sketches, and drew a self-portrait while working there that he labeled with the name of the city. He traveled there in the early summer of 1867, hoping for "eight good days" of work.⁶⁸

Of the paintings that came out of that short trip, none depict the same aspect of the city. The one now housed in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., titled *The Ramparts of Aigues-Mortes* (1867) (Fig. 93), depicts the western side of the city, looking toward the Tour de Constance from the opposite side of the Canal du Rhône à Sète, which, in 1806, linked Aigues-Mortes to other cities in the region and turned it into a truly functioning river port.⁶⁹ Boats line the shores of the canal in front of the city walls, a nod at the maritime industries surrounding the city. Bazille also skillfully paints the colors of the Mediterranean waters that slide from deep royal blue to teal to light green, in addition to capturing the reflection of the city's towers as they speckle the water and

⁶⁶ For more on Aigues-Mortes history as it was repeated in the nineteenth century, see: F. Em. Di Pietro, *Histoire d'Aiguesmortes* (Paris: Furne et Perrotin, Libraires, 1849).

⁶⁷ Letter 84, from Gaston Bazille to Frédéric, July 14, 1866. Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 129. The French reads: "Je n'ai jamais vu de peinture représentant Aigues-Mortes, et je suis assez porté à croire qu'un paysage ou qu'une marine (car Aigues-Mortes avec son petit port, peut fournir l'un ou l'autre sujet) de ce point peu commun du Midi, offrirait de l'intérêt." Frédéric must have been anxious to paint Aigues-Mortes for his father also cautioned him that Aigues-Mortes in August would not be "very agreeable" or "very healthy."

⁶⁸ Letter 94, to his mother, end of May, 1867, in *Ibid.*, 142.

⁶⁹ Gilles Arnaud-Fassetta and Mireille Provansal, "The Lower Valley and the Delta of the Rhône River: Water Landscapes of Nature and History," in *Landscapes and Landforms of France*, ed. Monique Fort and Marie-Françoise André, World Geomorphological Landscapes (Dordrecht: Springer Science & Business Media, 2013), 215.

project toward his viewpoint. Just to the left of center, the Tour de Constance looms above the city walls with its turret projecting into a low rope of white and grey clouds that invoke the careful cloud studies of Boudin.

Another view, now in Montpellier's Musée Fabre (Fig. 94), places the city in the same quadrant of the canvas, but here, the view is from the southeast. From this vantage point, Bazille looks toward Aigues-Mortes over the Étang de la Ville, a body of water that directs the viewer's eye from the front right corner to the left part of the horizon, where a cluster of newer buildings faces off with the walls of the old city. The Tour de Constance looms only slightly over the other walls, its turret minimized by the length of the view. Choosing this angle, especially as opposed to that of the NGA painting, allows Bazille to incorporate the rolling green and brown grasses of the salty marshes that ground the big sky that here makes up the full top half of the painting. Instead of the single tight line of clouds in the NGA painting, clouds dot the sky like tufts of cotton, and three small birds fly down across the city wall, linking sky to land. As in the first painting, Bazille plays with the reflections of the bright Mediterranean sun—here, the surface of the Étang reflects a band of clouds beyond the frame of the painting. The small pools of water at the bottom left and right function as small mirrors against the dullness of the grasses.

The third painting, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 95), turns from these wider vistas to a detailed view of the Porte de la Reine, a gate on the land-locked eastern wall of the city. The palette here is darker; there are no illuminated water surfaces here, and clouds cover the clear blue skies of the other two paintings. Indeed, Bazille complained to his mother that the weather prevented him from working outside

for a large number of his days in Aigues-Mortes.⁷⁰ However, the light streams through the opening of the Porte de la Reine, allowing the trick of painting the receding city street in miniature as if looking through a keyhole. Choosing to paint a land-locked side also allows Bazille to trade boats and buildings for people, and in this painting, the Porte looms over people engaged in everyday activities. To the left of the opening, a man appears to be wearing wooden shoes, perhaps to ease his labor in the salt marshes, and talks to a man on a horse facing away from the city. To the right, a woman sits on the grass. She wears an apron and the blousy shirt of a laborer, and her hands, mangled in Bazille's attempt to paint on this small scale, work at a piece of cloth, perhaps a piece of clothing she needs to mend. The children that she is, presumably, responsible for watching play to her left, sprawled out on the ground and staring raptly at something that rests between them. Their horse grazes behind them. Even the stone looks different in this picture; Bazille paints it as rugged brick instead of a sun-washed sandy stone. Instead of exoticizing the South, or even emphasizing the clear skies and exceptional light, he turns this view of Aigues-Mortes into one that could originate in any part of France. As with his laborer sketches, Bazille attempts to experiment with the components that make up his vision of France, in which Montpellier and its surrounding departments played a substantial role.

I want to suggest here that the historical circumstances of Aigues-Mortes attracted Bazille as readily as the vistas that its distinct architecture provided. For both of the medieval Crusades that took him from France to the East, Saint Louis had left from Aigues-Mortes. The city also served as living testament to the wars of religion that had raged between Catholics and Protestants in the south of France during the eighteenth

⁷⁰ Letter 94, to his mother, end of May, 1867 in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 142.

century. Though Montpellier had reached a particularly stable level of religious and social tolerance by Bazille's lifetime, his ancestors certainly felt the brunt of these clashes—genealogical records demonstrate a number of marriages celebrated in Switzerland, meaning that the family remained Protestant at heart while being publicly Catholic.⁷¹ While Protestants, primarily Calvinists, made up only about five percent of Montpellier's population in 1851,⁷² their influence, including that of Bazille's family, proved disproportionately strong in relation to their small numbers.

The Tour de Constance, especially, held significance as a landmark in Protestant history—after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685 by Louis XIV, the tower served as a prison for Protestants who refused to renounce their faith. When Prosper Mérimée visited the city in the course of writing his *Notes d'un voyage dans le Midi de la France*, he remarked on how dark the main rooms of the tour would have been, as they were “lit only by the narrow *meurtrières* and by the circular opening in the center of the vault.”⁷³ The *montpelliérain* artist Maximilian Leenhardt's 1892 painting *Huguenot Prisoners in the Tour de Constance* (Fig. 96) demonstrates how this historical episode could retain social currency in a region that prized its historically diverse mixture of religious and cultural influences as much as the Hérault did. Taking cues from a number of famous history paintings, including David's invocation of the Reign of Terror in *Intervention of*

⁷¹ Valdo Pellegrin, *Montpellier, la protestante : L'histoire de la ville en 23 lieux de mémoire* (Sète: Nouvelles presses du Languedoc éd, 2009), 144. For more genealogical information, see: Paul Romane-Musculus, “Généalogie de la famille Bazille,” *Bulletin historique de la ville de Montpellier*, no. 8 (1988): 3–10; Paul Romane-Musculus, “Généalogie de La Famille Bazille (suite),” *Bulletin Historique de La Ville de Montpellier*, no. 9 (1988): 30–37.

⁷² Gérard Cholvy, “Une minorité religieuse dans le Midi au XIXe siècle : le Protestants de l'Hérault,” *Bulletin de la Société du Protestantisme Français*, March 1975, 27.

⁷³ Prosper Mérimée, *Notes d'un voyage dans le Midi de la France* (Paris: Librairie de Fournier, 1835), 350. The French reads: “elle n'est éclairée que par des meurtrières étroites et par l'ouverture circulaire du centre de la voûte.” *Meurtrières*, or murder holes, were narrow slits in the walls that afforded defenders of the fortress the ability to shoot arrows or other materials out towards their enemies without endangering themselves when their enemies returned the favor.

the Sabine Women, Leenhardt attempts to maximize the drama of the tower's history as a women's prison for his contemporary audience.⁷⁴

However, like its larger neighbors Nîmes and Montpellier, which experienced major shifts from textile production to agricultural dominance with the economic crises of 1848,⁷⁵ Aigues-Mortes experienced periods of economic tumult as people called for modernization in the region. With the increased ability to lay railroad tracks and transport goods, the question of making the city into a port arose. Not only would that allow for numerous commodities, such as coal, to be exported from the Gard department, but it would also allow one of the city's greatest industries to excel at a lower cost—instead of harvesting salt from the surrounding marshes and then having to transport it through narrow canals to ship from Sète, it might instead be shipped directly from Aigues-Mortes.⁷⁶ As the marshes yielded as much as 70,000 tons of salt per year, supplying a third of France's total salt consumption, this would be no small benefit.⁷⁷

However, notions of the Orient and its supposed mental and physical lassitude mingled with the encroachment of modernity and industry. The idea that Saint Louis and his engineers had constructed Aigues-Mortes on the plan of “*une ville d'Orient*” persisted into the nineteenth century, with Mérimée, though dubious of such claims, noting Jerusalem, Damietta in Egypt, and Acre in Israel as potential inspirations.⁷⁸ Charles

⁷⁴ The name Leenhardt is one of the old Protestant names in Montpellier. Through the complex web of marriage bonds among these families, Bazille and Maximilian Leenhardt were actually cousins, and they may have known each other when Leenhardt was a young boy.

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Montpellier, Ville Marchande*, 249. Nîmes, of course, is etymologically responsibly for denim—material “de Nîmes.”

⁷⁶ Charles Lenthéric, *Le port d'Aiguesmortes et les houilles du Gard*, 2nd ed. (Nîmes: Typographie Clavel-Ballivet et Cie, 1866), 48. Lenthéric is primarily concerned with how turning Aigues-Mortes into a port would benefit the coal industry and their ability to ship product to Italy, Spain, the Mediterranean region, and Africa, but he certainly uses the statistics of other industries when they benefit his argument.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁸ Mérimée, *Notes d'un voyage dans le Midi de la France*, 350.

Martins, a professor of natural history at Montpellier's Faculté de Médecine, commented similarly on what distinguished Aigues-Mortes in his geographical survey of the area from 1875. He wrote: "One no longer believes himself in France, but in the Orient: imagination trumps reason and becomes enamored with the Crusades, and the positivist man of the nineteenth century momentarily becomes a naïve believer from the time of Saint Louis."⁷⁹ Naïveté is an accusation leveled at Bazille with some regularity—lack of intention, inability to leverage imagery for deep social meaning. However, these images of Aigues-Mortes point doubly to the city's increasing role in modern industry and the increasing imaginative embrace of local history and archaeology as the nineteenth-century progressed.

In examining Bazille's choices for painting Aigues-Mortes, the tension between history and modernity rises to the surface. While the walls of the city carried the symbolic weight of their history, the surrounding salt mines and increasing trade buoyed the growth of modern industry in the region. Much as Monet would later choose to incorporate the reconstructed bridges and trains into his landscapes of the Île de France,⁸⁰ Bazille confronted the question of whether or not to erase technological advances in painting his modern landscapes. The fact that Aigues-Mortes was so scenic and that, as Hippolyte Taine would later write, "The universal light plays alone in space, without contrasts and without limits,"⁸¹ only reified the suitability of this subject.

⁷⁹ Charles Martins, *Aigues-Mortes : Son Passé, Son Présent, Son Avenir, Essai Géologique et Historique*, 2nd ed. (Montpellier: Boehm et fils, 1875), 31. The French reads: "On ne se croit plus en France, on est en Orient: l'imagination l'emporte sur la raison, elle s'éprend des croisades, et l'homme positif du XIXe siècle devient momentanément un croyant naïf du temps de saint Louis. Ces pierres séculaires ont éveillé tous ces souvenirs, parce qu'elles sont la traduction des idées, de l'art et des événements qui les ont cimentées."

⁸⁰ See, for example: Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet at Argenteuil* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 57–87.

⁸¹ Hippolyte Taine, *Carnets de voyage. Notes sur la province. 1863-65* (1897), quoted in Bajou, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870*, 107.

Furthermore, it is necessary to confront the question of whether or not the religious history of Aigues-Mortes impacted Bazille. As mentioned earlier, Bazille's father performed administrative duties for their church. Biographical accounts occasionally note that Bazille had earned a prize in Protestant religion while a boy in *collège*, despite being an average student otherwise.⁸² In the years after he completed these paintings of Aigues-Mortes, Bazille would experiment with both implicit and explicit religious imagery. The Saint Sebastian figure in *Summer Scene* and his *Ruth and Boaz*, left unfinished at his death, as well as numerous undated drawings in his sketchbooks suggest a willingness to toy with this religious iconography and to update or transpose these subjects into scenes more legible to modern audiences. Being a Protestant in Catholic France would certainly have marginalized Bazille somewhat if it were not for his origins in Montpellier and the wealth of his family. One scholar has noted that nation building, a deep concern of nineteenth century observers, "required the construction of a secular equivalent of sainthood that disproportionately favoured masculinity as the source of the virtues to be celebrated."⁸³ As the Italian states elevated Victor Emmanuel II and Giuseppe Garibaldi and as the German confederation would soon celebrate Otto von Bismarck, secular sainthood carried religious meaning into the realm of popular politics. In France, however, with only Napoleon III to pave the way, historical conquest and militarism, inside and outside of the armed forces, became paramount in defining heroism and the most exceptional masculine virtues.

Soldiering Bodies

⁸² Pellegrin, *Montpellier la protestante*, 144.

⁸³ Horne, "Masculinity in Politics and War in the Age of Nation-States and World Wars, 1850-1950," 28.

The army, however, hardly functioned as the monolithic superior entity that the government imagined, and soldiers themselves often proved unworthy of the virtuous ideals imposed upon them in service of the hypermasculine, regimental masculinity encouraged by the military. Since the French Revolution, militarism in France required the cultivation of citizen and soldier alike. Such simultaneous emphasis allowed the “most authoritative fantasy of masculinity” to flourish: a male citizen “willing to fight and sacrifice for the political community of which he is a full member.”⁸⁴ As the nineteenth century progressed, this fantasy became much more nuanced, and by the revolutions of 1848, new models of “masculine political subjectivity” came forth that relied on the distinct characteristics and beliefs of the various ideological factions in dialogue with the French government.⁸⁵ As John Horne has pointed out, though male political activism waned after Napoleon III seized power in 1851, the emperor “was quite literally, a caricature of martial virility.”⁸⁶ Though he could dress the part by donning a uniform, and though he had academically studied and published on artillery,⁸⁷ he resembled the Delaroche portraits of his uncle more than the valiant ones by David.

Napoleon III’s inability to serve as the emblematic union of military and government points to the larger issues at hand when considering the masculinity of soldiers under the Second Empire. While laborers in a vineyard could stand as symbols of national agricultural might, and Aigues-Mortes could invoke unique components of the region’s religious history, the relationship between soldiering bodies and the

⁸⁴ Stefan Dudink and Karen Hagemann, “Masculinity in Politics and War in the Age of Democratic Revolutions, 1750-1850,” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁶ Horne, “Masculinity in Politics and War in the Age of Nation-States and World Wars, 1850-1950,” 24.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, *Précis historique sur l’arme de l’artillerie* (Paris: Pagnerre, Libraire, 1849).

governments they defend has been even more readily established. Robert Nye has referred to the “metaphorical reciprocity between the body of the nation and the body of the soldier” that exists in the military.⁸⁸ The directness of this correlation allowed images of soldiers to function as positive propaganda, which will be discussed below, but the power of these mass images, designed to reach large populations, might also be diluted by personal contact with soldiers within families or local communities.

In a French city of Montpellier’s size and particular prestige, some familiarity with military life and practices, both vulgar and spectacular, social and professional, was likely inevitable, even for a someone of Bazille’s elite social class. The Citadelle, originally constructed in 1624, and other military lodgings in Montpellier allowed the city to serve as a stopover for troops heading to wars in Spain or Italy.⁸⁹ In 1862, the Citadelle erected two new pavilions in order to extend their ability to house the engineering regiments that frequently passed through the city.⁹⁰ Having this military infrastructure allowed Montpellier to host garrisons both short-term and long-term, as evidenced by copious documents discussing travel arrangements of various army regiments with the prefecture, which signed off on all movements within the Hérault.⁹¹ With the interests in laborers and in the compelling nearby terrain at Aigues-Mortes, Bazille engages in constructing his vision of France during a period where the country itself faced systematic reorganization characterized most visibly by Haussmannization in

⁸⁸ Robert A. Nye, “Western Masculinities in War and Peace,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (April 2007): 422.

⁸⁹ François Dallemagne, *Les Casernes françaises* (Paris: Picard, 1990), 37, 55.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹¹ Much of this documentation remains in the Hérault’s Departmental Archives in Montpellier under the designations 2 R 577, 2 R 578, and 2 R 581. City and commune officials frequently wrote to the prefect and his assistants with requests regarding the housing and support of military regiments then stationed in their municipalities, both in terms of more permanent assignments and those regiments only passing through.

Paris and forward-thinking cities including Montpellier. As with Haussmannization, which proffered a thoroughly French architectural aesthetic to urban centers, the presence of the unified national army in cities across France provided the Empire with a chance to homogenize “*l’espace national*,”⁹² thereby continuing in part the suppression of the national divisions that had led to revolutionary sentiments in the past.

As Montpellier’s military stake expanded and Napoleon III continued to wage foreign wars, Bazille first enrolled in medical school in Montpellier in November of 1859, having passed his *baccalauréat à sciences* the April prior. 1859, then, would be a crucial year in Bazille’s development—more of an independent man than ever before, having passed his first milestone into adulthood, and embarking in pursuit of a career. Though Bazille would have certainly been following the menial theoretical courses of a first-year student—anatomy and physiology, hygiene, and perhaps chemistry or botany—with his practical experience coming only in the form of anatomical dissections, it is not outside the realm of possibility that he would have come into contact with soldiers in his medical training. The Hôpital Saint-Éloi functioned as both the site of clinical teaching for the Faculté de Médecine and the primary recipient of military patients from Montpellier’s garrison and the surrounding region. Its military connection had been established shortly after the construction of the Citadelle in the early seventeenth century.⁹³ During the 1850s, Saint-Éloi played a serious role in the medical care of soldiers fighting in the foreign wars in Crimea and Italy. While military medics and *officiers de santé* stabilized the sick and wounded in the field, these men were then

⁹² Carole Espinosa, *L’Armée et la ville en France 1815-1870: De la seconde Restauration à la veille du conflit franco-prussien* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2008), 267.

⁹³ Robert Dumas, *Histoire des hôpitaux Saint-Eloi et Gui de Chauliac à Montpellier* (Montpellier: Sauramps médical, 2005), 19.

transported to Montpellier, whose world-class hospitals were closer to the battlefields and provided better care than any other options.⁹⁴

As with most of the major *montpelliérain* institutions, Bazille had personal connections to Saint-Éloi. The distinguished physicians who populated his educational and social milieu and exposed him to the evolution of vitalist thought, including Germain Dupré, were also clinicians at Saint-Éloi. There, they worked in tandem with doctors appointed to the hospital by the military.⁹⁵ Other members of the Faculté, including François Ribes, François-Anselme Jaumes, and Justin Benoît, served turns on the hospital's very engaged administrative board, and there they found themselves mingling further with members of the city's Protestant elite, including Louis Tissié, the father of Bazille's friend Alphonse, between 1857 and 1879.⁹⁶ Alphonse Tissié would follow in his father's footsteps in this regard, serving on the hospital's board between 1884 and 1919.⁹⁷ It is perhaps due to this connection that Saint-Éloi occasionally bought wine from Gaston Bazille, purchasing, for instance, 150 hectoliters of red wine in June of 1859.⁹⁸

While Saint-Éloi, especially, evidenced the engagement of Montpellier's elite in assisting military operations, soldiers treated there exposed the true, and perhaps disappointing, face of military medicine for those who encountered them. Even despite all the Second Empire's foreign wars and social debates over conscription, by the 1860s,

⁹⁴ Louis Dulieu, *Essai historique sur l'Hôpital Saint-Éloi de Montpellier (1183-1950)* (Montpellier: Imprimerie Charles Déhan, 1953), 151–152; Dumas, *Histoire des hôpitaux*, 229.

⁹⁵ Dumas, *Histoire des hôpitaux*, 35. Dumas notes that the clinical professors taught at Saint-Éloi starting after the Napoleonic reforms. Joseph Goffres, who wrote the bandaging treatise discussed in Chapter Three, briefly numbered among these military physicians in 1856.

⁹⁶ Dulieu, *Essai historique sur l'Hôpital Saint-Éloi*, 284.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁹⁸ "Régistre des délibérations de l'Hôpital St-Éloi commencé le 4 juin 1859 et fini le 27 avril 1861," 1859-1861, 10, 1 HDT 1 L 12, Departmental Archives, Hérault, Montpellier, France.

the French army's most significant health concern proved to be sexually transmitted infections, namely syphilis. After returning from postings abroad, officers often preferred to tend to their careers and their privileges rather than supervise their men; soldiers left to their own devices chose cafés and the company of women over military discipline and moderation, which contributed to the bad publicity the army feared.⁹⁹ P.A. Didiot, a principal physician for the garrison in Marseille, estimated in 1866 that the army spent over one million francs annually to treat and “heal” soldiers suffering from venereal diseases—a sum he calls “exorbitant.”¹⁰⁰ In Montpellier, where the garrison fluctuated between 2,700 and 3,200 active soldiers between 1858 and 1860, between five and eleven percent of these men sought treatment in Saint-Éloi for venereal diseases.¹⁰¹ In a unique position to track the measurements and physical well-being of France's population of young men, however, military doctors continued to assert the position that Frenchman—*la race*—was not in the process of degenerating.¹⁰² Convalescing soldiers, often exceptional story-tellers, might buttress this experience by turning their combat and

⁹⁹ Dallemanne, *Les Casernes françaises*, 160–161.

¹⁰⁰ P.A. Didiot, *Étude statistique de la syphilis dans la garnison de Marseille suivie de généralités sur la prostitution et sur la fréquence des maladies vénériennes dans la population de cette ville et complétée des déformés à apporter dans le service de la police sanitaire* (Marseille: Typographie et Lithographie Arnaud, Cayer et Cie, 1866), 10. I have placed the word “heal” in quotation marks to signal the fact that doctors used the term heal, or “guérison,” to characterize what they viewed as successful treatment for syphilis, but we now know that the disappearance of symptoms merely signaled the progression of the disease into its dormant phase. For more information on the challenges of treating syphilis in the nineteenth century, see: Claude Quélet, *History of Syphilis*, trans. Judith Braddock and Brian Pike (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 106–130.

¹⁰¹ J. Jeannel, *Mémoire sur la prostitution publique et Parallèle complet de la Prostitution romaine et de la Prostitution contemporaine suivis d'une étude sur le dispensaire de salubrité de Bordeaux, d'une statistique des vénériens dans la garnison de Bordeaux, et d'une essai de statistique de l'infection vénérienne dans les garnisons de l'Empire Français* (Paris: G. Germer-Baillière, Libraire-Éditeur, 1862), 196–197.

¹⁰² Ély, “L'Armée et la population, études démographiques,” in *Mémoires de médecine, de chirurgie et de pharmacie militaires*, ed. Didiot, Champouillon, and Langlois, vol. 26, 3 (Paris: Librairie de la médecine, de la chirurgie et de la pharmacie militaires, 1871), 17.

sexual escapades into elaborate dramas.¹⁰³ Such stories could also acclimate less-experienced soldiers and men around them to the behaviors and customs that would allow them to appreciate and to succeed in military life.¹⁰⁴

While this medical connection between Bazille and active soldiers remains necessarily circumstantial, 1859 also provided a pivotal moment in Napoleon III's military endeavors, with the war in Italy coming to a close in August of that year and many of the soldiers returning to their stations in France in early December. It was well-remembered that battalions from Montpellier had served bravely and "gloriously" at the Battles of Alma and Bougie during war in Algeria, when almost all active soldiers were called to enter the fray.¹⁰⁵ The victories in Italy at Magenta and Solferino, in conjunction with the triumphs of Crimea, helped the French to reinvest periodically in the belief of the superiority of their military.¹⁰⁶ Those still questioning the legitimacy of the Empire and dubious of Napoleon III's commitment to his promise that the empire would bring peace could suspend their disbelief in the name of these victories.¹⁰⁷ In Montpellier, specifically, veterans who returned were given a warm reception. As the empire took on "a dimension 'of a military fête'" after their successes in Italy, the French people bought further and further into a heroicizing and aestheticizing view of war.¹⁰⁸

These types of public spectacles, of course, had substantial art historical precedent in the history paintings of David and Gros that documented the campaigns of Napoleon I.

¹⁰³ David M. Hopkin, "Storytelling, Fairytales and Autobiography: Some Observations on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Soldiers' and Sailors' Memoirs," *Social History* 29, no. 2 (May 2004): 187.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹⁰⁵ Ch. Favier de Coulomb, *Essai sur les corps de reserve réunis et mobilisés à Montpellier depuis 1727* (Paris: Société Anonyme de l'Imprimerie Kugelmann, 1894), 104.

¹⁰⁶ Espinosa, *L'Armée et la ville en France 1815-1870*, 267.

¹⁰⁷ Horne, *The Fall of Paris*, 30.

¹⁰⁸ Annie Crépin, *Défendre la France: Les Français, la guerre, et le service militaire, de la guerre de Sept Ans à Verdun* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 265–266.

The drama of military pomp further enticed Orientalist artists such as Eugène Delacroix, for whom Bazille's respect is well-documented. Delacroix's *Moroccans Conducting Military Exercises* (1832) (Fig. 97), part of the Alfred Bruyas bequest to the Musée Fabre in 1868,¹⁰⁹ suggests how such colonial regiments were pictured by artists and similarly viewed by the populace of France. Though these are named only exercises, not a proper battle, Delacroix's Moroccans fiercely swirl around the canvas. They charge forward, astride their variously colored horses and holding on with only their legs as their hands grip their guns to fire at the "enemy." The guns themselves are exceptionally slender and cane-like, not the harsher firearms of a finely tuned modern fighting force but the deceptively glamorous yet deadly weapons of the East. Part of the storm that these soldiers raise around them is their dress in turbans and wrapped cloth, mismatched from man to man, and again contrasting the regimented uniforms and clean lines that Delacroix would have seen in France's army. Though their faces remain mostly inscrutable as they raise their arms to fire their guns, their eyes are fierce and intense. The man at the right, in front of the line and perhaps a commanding officer, is the only fighter whose face we can see—and though he looks marginally less enraged than his followers, his head mirrors that of the dark horse aligned behind him. This horse's red eyes, full of unchained rage, or perhaps fear, reveal the true perception of Arab-African masculinity—

¹⁰⁹ Louis Tissié, the banker, hospital administrator, and father to Bazille's friend Alphonse, numbered among Bruyas's closest friends, appearing next to the great collector in Auguste Glaize's *Interior of Alfred Bruyas's Study* (1848), now held by the Musée Fabre. There were further reports of Tissié going out to paint with Gustave Courbet when he came to Montpellier to visit Bruyas. See: Guy Barral, "Our Young Fellow Citizen, Son of the Honorable President of the Society of Agriculture...", in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism*, trans. John Goodman (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 24. As far as Bazille's potential interactions with Alfred Bruyas, scholars have always held that the artist had at least minimal interaction with Bruyas as a young man because they lived on the same street and travelled in the same social circles, perhaps enough to have seen some of Bruyas's paintings up close in his *hôtel* prior to their donation to the Musée Fabre. For more on the Bruyas collection, see: Sarah Lees, ed., *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet! The Bruyas Collection from the Musée Fabre, Montpellier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

hardly more than animals, they might be unleashed at one's enemy with a wrath heretofore unseen in civilized society.

Of course, when Delacroix painted his *Moroccans* and a number of his finest Eastern paintings, France's position in the world was slightly different. Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby has persuasively argued, through the works of Gros, Girodet, and Delacroix that turcos, mamelukes, and Zouaves formed crucial public components of the Napoleonic wars and subsequent foreign interventions.¹¹⁰ However, in the thirty or so years since Delacroix completed these paintings, France's colonial regiments had changed considerably. The initial Zouave regiments had been constructed early in France's conquest of Africa because the army believed that indigenous men would serve well through "their sobriety, their lifestyle, their acclimation to their climate, and their knowledge of the country."¹¹¹ Originally composed only of native Africans, the ranks of the Zouaves swelled as they became more distinguished in France's continued efforts to control Algeria, with Frenchmen believing that being a Zouave afforded more freedom and more glory than their traditional regiments. By 1841, only one company of nine, across three battalions, retained a majority of native soldiers.¹¹²

By incorporating Frenchmen into their ranks, the army invited the Zouaves to play soldier as a child would play dress-up, to assume an outlandish identity and act out its characteristics for the benefit of those watching—a military theater-piece befitting the spectacular Second Empire. Indeed, Graham Dawson has described such narratives of

¹¹⁰ Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹¹¹ Le Lieutenant Duroy, *Extrait de l'historique du 3e régiment de Zouaves, rédigé d'après les instructions de M. le Colonel Lucas*, Petite Bibliothèque de l'Armée française (Paris: Henri Charles-Lavauzelle, 1887), 5.

¹¹² Michael J. McAfee, *Zouaves: The First and the Bravest* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1991), 9–10.

“soldier-heroes” as “subjectively entered into and ‘inhabited’ through identification,” he notes further that adapting such deeply cultural forms of masculinity “enable a sense of one’s self as ‘a man’ to be imagined and recognized by others.”¹¹³ By identifying regiments, like the Zouaves, through a stylized uniform based on national dress (Fig. 98), armies could legitimately expand the skill sets of their forces in terms of new weapons or battle tactics while fending off any perception of equality between conqueror and conquered.¹¹⁴ Thus, for Bazille, assuming the identity of the Zouave may have allowed him to visually display the qualities he prized most deeply in himself, qualities that may well have defined his relationships to his friends, as I have described them in Chapter Three, but that faded in the bustle of Paris and the love of his family.

The Zouaves also invited Bazille to display his attention to detail and dress. Henri d’Orléans Aumale commented, in a series of essays originally published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, on the precision with which Zouaves were expected to attend to their uniforms. He declared: “This was nothing oriental, this was the conformity and cleanliness of the Zouaves’ uniform. No care for detail was neglected there. These concerns could often seem meticulous and identical to the garrison; but during war, they function as a symbol of discipline, and influence, more than one would think, the health and good spirit of the soldier.”¹¹⁵ While many other facets of the French army had changed by the time Bazille joined, he echoes Aumale’s description of Zouave precision

¹¹³ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 2013), 23.

¹¹⁴ For more on the implications of integrated the dress of “hinterland warriors” into Western armed forces, see: Thomas S. Abler, *Hinterland Warriors and Military Dress: European Empires and Exotic Uniforms* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1999).

¹¹⁵ Henri d’Orléans Aumale, *Les Zouaves et les chasseurs à pied, esquisses historiques* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1859), 30–31. The French reads: “Ce qui n’avait rien d’oriental, c’étaient la régularité, la propreté de la tenue des zouaves. Aucun soin de détail n’y était négligé. Ces soins peuvent paraître souvent minutieux et pareils à la garnison ; mais, à la guerre, ils sont comme le symbole de la discipline, et influent plus qu’on ne le pense sur la santé et le bon esprit du soldat. »

in one of his letters from Algeria to his parents, noting that “the question of spats is very important here, it is necessary to blanch them with care or they will not let you go out.”¹¹⁶

If Bazille’s love for detail and attention to his appearance feminized his self-presentation in daily life, they could fit readily with a unit that prized precision in all facets of operation.

However, military service entailed much more than dressing the part. In her compendium of “military sketches,” the British social commentator Julia Clara Byrne instructively quoted another British author’s description of the Zouave:

He is a fellow wearing a red bag with sleeves to it, for a coat; two red bags without sleeves to them for trousers; ...and yellow boots like the fourth robber in a stage play; with a moustache like two half-pound paint-brushes...A fellow who can ‘pull up’ a hundred and ten pound dumb-bell; ... and who can climb a greased pole feet foremost, carrying a barrel of pork in his teeth—that is a Zouave...A fellow who can... take a five-shooting revolver in each hand and knock the spots off a ten of diamonds at eighty paces, turning summersaults all the time and firing every shot in the air—that is a Zouave.¹¹⁷

Though this author spoke facetiously, Byrne’s correction to that passage maintains its view of the Zouave’s exceptionalism. She writes:

the Zouave may be considered an embodiment of the poetry of the French army... There is, even in these matter-of-fact days, a mystery and a romance still lingering about the Zouave...His aspect is peculiar, his costume eminently picturesque: his features and general type are such that it is difficult to divest oneself of the idea that he must be of Oriental extraction, and yet at the present day the Zouave regiments consist mainly, if not entirely, of “*Enfants de Paris*,”—full-grown *Gamins*, retaining the activity, the audacity, the originality, and even the *espièglerie* of their early years.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Letter 142, to his parents, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 196. The French reads: “La question des guêtres est très importante ici, il faut les blanchir avec soin ou l’on ne vous laisse pas sortir.”

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Julia Clara Byrne, *Red, White, and Blue: Sketches of Military Life*, vol. 2 (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), 4–5.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:5.

Full-grown children retaining the mischievousness of their early years, the Zouaves seemed to transmute the wildness of the foreign savage into the youthful manliness of the exceptional French soldier. These aestheticizations of the soldier and their experiences served to deflect attention from the political quagmires in which they participated militarily in favor of stoking “the sensations of a consumer.”¹¹⁹ The Zouaves, simply put, were an invaluable, heroic commodity in an age where degeneration was feared more than any other social ill.

One particularly famous Zouave arose in the 1860s, after the regiments’ prior glories had faded a little. Henri Jacob, known as the Zouave Jacob or the *zouave guérisseur* (healer), began to perform “miracles” and publish popular medical texts around 1867. Having served in Crimea and Algeria, the Zouave Jacob was still a legitimate soldier when he revealed his “powers.” Stationed at Versailles, he travelled to Paris to perform his demonstrations at the behest of patrons who gave him a venue and spoke widely on his behalf, and he performed in full military garb. Those seeking his aid presented themselves at 80, rue de la Roquette, took a number, and waited to be ushered into a room. Once there, the Zouave demanded silence, saying, “Nobody shall speak to me that I have not questioned, or I will leave.” He then, reportedly, would work his way through the room, naming the illnesses that afflicted those who sought his help and, without touching them, declaring them healed. One testimonial came from a paralyzed man, who claimed that the Zouave spoke to him, identified his paralysis, and then demanded, “Levez-vous!”—and the man could walk again. A crucial part of this story is that this faith healer does not accept gifts or payments; having gone to great hardship to

¹¹⁹ Helen Groth, “Technological Mediations and the Public Sphere: Roger Fenton’s Crimea Exhibition and ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade,’” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30 (2002): 557.

travel from Versailles to Paris and back so regularly, he relieves the hardships of those who are willing to believe.¹²⁰ Enough people believed in the medical talents of the Zouave Jacob that he soon was able to publish long-form accounts of his philosophy. In his *L'Hygiène naturelle par le Zouave Jacob ou l'art de conserver sa santé et de se guérir soi-même* (1868), he advocated for methods that he proclaimed would show his readers the proper way to care for themselves in the face of erroneous science and other false claims.¹²¹ He assumed a practical tone because, he argued, men do not read books that they do not find useful. He writes, “the least educated reader should not fear studying this book... he will soon become certain that blood is the most important substance in our economy; that this fluid is the source of life, of vital heat and force.”¹²²

For the Zouave Jacob, spreading medical teachings and presenting miracles functioned as defiance against the exclusivity of the medical system. He sought to empower his audiences to heal themselves through his remedies because he distrusted professional physicians.¹²³ Professional physicians responded by seeking to examine Jacob's claims—a member of the Paris Faculté de Médecine reportedly interviewed him to determine if he was actually capable of healing illnesses. When this “very highly placed” professor asked Jacob if he “healed imaginary maladies” or if he believed “sincerely to have operated on veritable and more or less serious afflictions,” Jacob

¹²⁰ Account taken from a letter by a M. de Chateauvillard published in the *Petit journal*, quoted in: Auguste Hardy, *Les miracles de la rue de la Roquette. Histoire merveilleuse du zouave guérisseur* (Paris: Ch. Schiller, 1867), 4. The Zouave's words, in French, were reported as: “Que personne ne me parle que je ne l'interroge, ou je m'en vais.”

¹²¹ Henry Jacob, *L'Hygiène naturelle par le Zouave Jacob ou l'art de conserver sa santé et de se guérir soi-même* (Paris: Typographie et lithographie Alcan-Lévy, 1868), 11.

¹²² Ibid., 12. “Que le lecteur le moins instruit ne craigne pas d'étudier ce livre, il n'a rien de difficulté et il aura bientôt acquis la certitude que le sang est la substance la plus importante de toute notre économie; que ce fluide est la source de la vie, de la chaleur vitale et de la force; que tout ce que notre corps renfermes provient de lui...”

¹²³ Matthew Ramsay, “The Popularization of Medicine in France, 1650-1900,” in *The Popularization of Medicine 1650-1850*, ed. Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1992), 120.

replied that he only needed the words of the afflicted to know that he had been successful—he left it to science to examine and explain how his miracles occurred.¹²⁴ He was famous enough that he appeared as a caricature by André Gill on the front cover of the weekly newspaper *La Lune* on September 1, 1867 (Fig. 99). Gill portrayed the Zouave Jacob as a malevolent sorcerer, with rays of light, presumably visualizations of his healing powers, emitting from both his eyes and his hands. Dressed in the distinctive blue jacket and red pantaloons of the Zouave, Jacob also sports the glassy-eyed expression of a monomaniac, perhaps an evocation of his obsession with his unusual methods.

However, his costume likely lent his teachings some credibility. Because he had traveled to exotic places and experienced the unimaginable spectacles of war and the Orient, his ideas carried scholarly heft earned through a practice more appreciable to men and women on the street than years spent in medical classes on theories and lofty ideas. Although the rue de la Roquette, in the working-class neighborhoods near the Bastille, was out of the way for Bazille's usual social geography, the Zouave Jacob's sessions functioned theatrically, with his visitors experiencing emotions similar to the deeply-feeling Opéra attendee, and were widely publicized. Bazille himself was not immune to the charms of such medical parlor tricks, as he was known to attend gatherings at the fashionable psychiatrist Émile Blanche's house.¹²⁵ Jacob's teachings seem based in the same humoral medical thought as vitalism, but the self-motivated component of his healing processes, delivered by the authoritative figure of the Zouave, highlights the

¹²⁴ Hardy, *Les miracles de la rue de la Roquette*, 5.

¹²⁵ François Daulte, "Une grande amitié: Edmond Maître et Frédéric Bazille," *L'Oeil*, no. 273 (April 1978): 39.

difficult position in which the French military found itself as the Second Empire progressed.

Indeed, military service proved increasingly contentious by the 1860s, as Napoleon III was far from the motivational leader that his uncle had been. For patriotic men of Republican politics, as the Bazilles were, conscription was a measure to oppose—it gave the emperor too much sovereignty over his citizens and seemed at odds with rights claimed over eighty years of revolutions. As it disproportionately affected the poor, it likely affected the number of available laborers during harvest season,¹²⁶ a fact to which Gaston Bazille surely objected. Young men summoned to serve were viewed as patently unlucky—unfortunate for drawing a number called during the lottery and for being unable to find a way out of their extended commitment.¹²⁷ It was an extremely common practice for men of higher social classes to purchase substitutes to serve their mandatory tour instead of joining the army themselves, yet this severely corrupted the armed forces in practice. Avoiding military service meant a soldier could avoid the fate of being “*déraciné de sa province*,” or uprooted from his home province, when the army deliberately stationed him far from home to promote loyalty only to his regiment.¹²⁸ When the government called for the formation of a *garde nationale mobile* in 1868, protests broke out across France as Republicans and other more radical elements fought against the government’s demand that all men who turned twenty years old between 1864 and 1867 must appear before an examining council for potential induction.¹²⁹ In

¹²⁶ Arpad F. Kovacs, “French Military Institutions before the Franco-Prussian War,” *The American Historical Review* 51, no. 2 (January 1946): 228.

¹²⁷ Maurice Allem, *La vie quotidienne sous le Second Empire* (Geneva: Famot, 1979), 161.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹²⁹ Gordon Wright, “Public Opinion and Conscription in France, 1866-70,” *Journal of Modern History* 14, no. 1 (March 1942): 39–40.

Montpellier and nearby Sète, officials reported protesters crying for a republic and shouting, “One must be an imbecile to serve in the *mobile*; one must be a ninny to serve Napoleon!”¹³⁰ The consensus among Frenchmen, whether they could avoid it or not, was that the army, far from emboldening its soldiers, embraced fools, idiots, and cowards alike; rather than the hypermasculine order associated with war, it functioned to emasculate the men who could not avoid it. Those whose loved ones were forced into military service through conscription embraced popular (and occasionally propagandistic) imagery and verse that suggested the army had the potential to turn wayward, morally ambiguous youths into faithful, upstanding husbands and citizens.¹³¹

Though the French public lambasted conscription at every turn, they likely still fundamentally believed the army capable of defending French interests, even if they questioned the imperial powers that established such priorities. Perpetuating the public images of fighting forces like the Zouaves detailed by the authors quoted above allowed the army to function as an organization predicated on standards of masculine behavior that could discipline or discard all men who fell short.¹³² However, some dissenting voices emerged in intellectual circles and even within the army that drew attention to the disjunction between how the army was perceived and its actual ability to function. One of these was Lucien Prévost-Paradol, a journalist and member of the Académie française, whose recently published *La France nouvelle* (1868) had proposed a variety of reforms for the empire that embraced democratic principles.¹³³ Yet, upon hearing that war had been declared, Prévost-Paradol shed his optimistic proposals for reform and proclaimed,

¹³⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, n. 44.

¹³¹ David M. Hopkin, “Sons and Lovers: Popular Images of the Conscript, 1798-1870,” *Modern & Contemporary France* 9, no. 1 (2001): 19–36.

¹³² R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 214.

¹³³ Lucien-Anatole Prévost-Paradol, *La France nouvelle* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères, 1868).

“You will not go to Germany; you will be crushed in France. Believe me, I know the Prussians.” Soon after, he dramatically killed himself, in despair at the failure of Napoleon III’s newly liberal empire.¹³⁴

Prévost-Paradol’s concerns might be discounted as opinionated journalism, but French politicians, military authorities, and political observers found it much more difficult to discount claims made by General Louis-Jules Trochu in his *L’Armée française en 1867*. Trochu had served in Algeria, Crimea, and Italy, commanding his units in some of the most famous battles of those conflicts with “peacetime precision,”¹³⁵ and earning the military bona fides to assess thoroughly the failings of his peers. The material that composed *L’Armée française* had originally served as a confidential report by a Commission tasked with examining the military’s organization, and as such, Trochu’s exposé offended both those who viewed it as breach of confidence and those who saw it as a carefully calibrated attack on the “legends and traditions” on which the “military superiority of the French to all other races” was built.¹³⁶ In truth, Trochu simply had the audacity to suggest that patriotism alone could not form an exceptional army—that the French were “more of a warrior people than a military people” and therefore were undisciplined in their training and plans of attack.¹³⁷ In summing up his intervention, he turned to an agricultural metaphor in saying: “The great benefit for our country...would not lay in the augmentation of productive surface areas, but in the improvement of the

¹³⁴ David Wetzel, *A Duel of Nations: Germany, France, and the Diplomacy of the War of 1870-1871* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 4.

¹³⁵ Horne, *The Fall of Paris*, 48.

¹³⁶ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871*, reissue (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), 37.

¹³⁷ Louis-Jules Trochu, *L’Armée française en 1867*, 17th ed. (Paris: Amyot, 1867), 21.

methods of farming in the areas where farming exists.”¹³⁸ The raw material of the French army—the French people themselves—could prove the basis of a newly world-class fighting force, but the methods of turning warriors into soldiers needed to be reconsidered. The popularity of Trochu’s book spread rapidly, with sixteen editions being published over the course of three weeks after its release.¹³⁹ Though Trochu’s book exposed the failures of the government to conceive reforms that would satisfy the French population, the issues it raised emphasized the increasing tension between French pride and willingness to admit fault in areas of perceived expertise.

Despite these negative views of the French army, the image of the Zouave as a healer of both medical and social ills and as the symbolic potential of military experience continued to hold sway over large sections of the population. Pictures of Zouaves still summoned memories of Alma, Sébastopol, and Magenta. French citizens who disagreed with the army as an imperial institution could still honor the values and attributes of the most distinctive and distinguished variants of soldiers. It is notable then that two exceptionally close friends of Bazille’s acquiesced to their service when their numbers were drawn instead of procuring replacements. Monet served as a *chasseur* in Algeria very briefly 1861, and Alphonse Tissié, Bazille’s friend from Montpellier, would later serve as a *cuirassier* in the Franco-Prussian War. Both men were painted in their uniforms, leaving instructive images for our interpretation.

Monet had notably resisted his draft demand, yet purchasing him out of his commitment to the army was a hardship for his family and they would only agree if he

¹³⁸ Ibid., 271. The French reads: “Le grand bienfait pour notre pays...ne consisterait pas dans l’accroissement des surfaces productives, mais dans le perfectionnement des procédés de culture sur les surfaces où la culture existe.”

¹³⁹ Wetzel, *A Duel of Nations*, 88.

committed himself to the family business.¹⁴⁰ Facing his conscription, he chose glamour over safety and volunteered for the African chasseurs.¹⁴¹ When he stood for a portrait by Charles Lhullier (Fig. 100) during his leave in Paris in 1861, Monet wore his distinctive chasseur uniform. His face shadowed by the red and blue kepi hat of his regiment, he stands with his right hip thrust out and his hand propped there, pushing back his blue coat. He tucks his left hand into the red cummerbund at his waist in a gesture that is hardly in keeping with the dignified airs of military portraiture. The braids and cords attached to his coat fall down the sides of his body in graceful loops toward the blousy red trousers, a silhouette that reliably distinguished colonial regiments from those operating primarily on French soil. Though Monet would eventually serve only a small part of his commitment, owing to his aunt's personal guilt at her initial failure to purchase his exoneration,¹⁴² the Lhullier portrait indicates the almost magical sense of total makeover that a military uniform could provide to an otherwise shiftless and disobedient young man. Though Monet could not yet support himself, was not contributing to supporting his family, and was not yet even a particularly skilled painter, he could perform as a mature soldier to those who encountered him in the garb of a dashing *chasseur*.

While Lhullier was only an acquaintance of Monet, it was Bazille who painted his friend Alphonse Tissié in uniform (Fig. 101). In a half-length portrait, Tissié displays his majestic cuirassier helmet, which dips forward between his eyes, and the red collar and

¹⁴⁰ Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet, or the Triumph of Impressionism* (Köln: Taschen, 1996), 34.

¹⁴¹ His decision to join the army certainly contributed to the persona of the mythic colorist that he later built, with Monet himself claiming in interviews: "It took a long time for the impressions of light and colour that I received to sort themselves out, but the seeds of my future experiments were there." As Daniel Wildenstein noted, "Lyric pronouncements on this theme are the rule," including one by Hugues Le Roux that "Africa put the finishing touches to his mastery of color." Quoted and translated in *Ibid.*, 36–37.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 40.

epaulets of his jacket. This painting appears to be unfinished, as the greys of the background and the blacks of Tissié's uniform dissolve into a brown of the prepared ground at the painting's base. Bazille renders the metallic details of the helmet's band as a series of Impressionist squiggles, dancing over the darker, burnished v-shape below. It is difficult to distinguish the end of the helmet from Tissié's dark hair before it abruptly shifts into the fleshtones of his face. Bazille's skill at painting the shifting tones of the body is once again on display in this portrait. Dark and light reds and pinks merge into the shadowy areas of his shaven beard and sideburns. As Tissié turns his head toward his painter friend, his neck meets the harsh line of his red collar and transgresses its line; Bazille has again fixated on a miniscule interaction between a body and its clothing. In another roughly contemporaneous painting, the *Portrait d'un dragon* (Fig. 102), Bazille portrays a similarly dressed soldier in profile, the crest of his distinctive helmet displayed for the viewer in a magnificent arc. Though the soldier here looks older, it may be another painting of Alphonse. In any case, both of these paintings attest to Bazille's interest in exploring the imagery and costuming of distinctive units of the French army.

Tissié, further, may have provided Bazille with a view of military life at odds with what Trochu and post-Franco-Prussian War historians soon knew to be true. After Tissié joined the army as a cuirassier, he was stationed in Versailles—close enough that Bazille could visit him there or that he could come visit Bazille in Paris when he had substantial enough leave. This allowed them to continue their close friendship that had already successfully transitioned from Montpellier to Paris. He mentioned in a number of his letters to his parents in 1863 that he had dined with “Alphonse,” frequently identifying him by only his first name and not his last, as he did with his artist or intellectual friends.

On one occasion, he wrote to his mother that Alphonse had “promised to come eat lunch with [him] every Sunday.”¹⁴³ In December 1867, he writes his mother the “fresh” news that he had seen Alphonse the previous day, before his departure and that he had gone to visit him at Versailles.¹⁴⁴ In April of 1868, Bazille wrote to his father that he and two other friends from Montpellier went to see Alphonse at Versailles, and they “dined happily in the mess with his friends, the noncommissioned officers.”¹⁴⁵ Bazille’s experiences with his friend Alphonse and his engagement with painting soldiers at this time likely laid valuable groundwork for his eventual decision to join the Zouaves.

Orientalist tropes were familiar enough to most French citizens during this period, and certainly familiar to anyone who followed literature, the theater, or the Salon, as Bazille did. With colonial engagements in Africa and elsewhere, these tropes could also be historically grounded, beyond the ahistorical academic Orientalism of a painter like Jean-Léon Gérôme. In his painting, Bazille did not shy away from engaging with the complex constructs that Orientalism could yield, perhaps as a paean to the affections of Salon juries. His 1870 painting *La Toilette* (Fig. 103), hardly presents the seamless Salon Orientalism of a painter like Gérôme or the dynamic romanticism of Delacroix’s and instead demonstrates the strange fissures of bringing French culture together with semiotically confusing Eastern influences. Griselda Pollock indeed described *La Toilette* as Bazille “succumbing to the pressure of the continued power of Orientalist

¹⁴³ Letter 27, to his mother, October 6, 1863, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 59. See also: Letter 19, to his father, March 1863, Ibid., 49.

¹⁴⁴ Letter 98, to his mother, end of December 1867, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 149.

¹⁴⁵ Letter 103, to his father, April 1868, in Ibid., 157. The French reads: “Hier nous sommes allés avec [Victor Frat] et Armand Soulier voir Alphonse à Versailles. Nous avons dîné à la cantine d’une façon fort gaie avec ses camarades les sous-officiers.”

representation,”¹⁴⁶ while Therese Dolan has suggested that Bazille drew his subject from the Goncourts’ 1867 novel *Manette Salomon*, in which the painter Coriolis “dreams of being the painter of the Orient.”¹⁴⁷ The first impression of *La Toilette* is, inevitably, the expanse of pale, white flesh that forms the nude body of the central female figure; she lays unresponsively on a fur-covered futon while an African servant and another maid attend to her. She appears almost dead, and some have noted the correspondence between *La Toilette* and Courbet’s peculiar c. 1850-55 painting known as *Preparation of the Dead Girl* (Fig. 104), which depicts attendants preparing the body of a young woman for her funeral.¹⁴⁸ Bazille’s woman, however, appears more like *Olympia* than an innocent young bride. Instead of the rustic surroundings of a country home as with Courbet, Bazille fixates on textiles that compose the boudoir in this painting. The green satin of the woman’s shoe, the fur blanket underneath her, the marble of the floor, the carpets on the walls, and the garments worn by both of the maids—their distinctive patterns and surfaces clash, as the vibrant bodies of the maids clash with the deadness of the central woman. Indeed, Rozanne McGrew Stringer has argued that Bazille’s *La Toilette* can be distinguished from other Orientalist representations by his refusal to consign his African model to a typology.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desires and the Writing of Art’s Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 295.

¹⁴⁷ Therese Dolan, “Frédéric Bazille and the Goncourt Brothers’ *Manette Salomon*,” *Gazette Des Beaux Arts*, February 1990, 99–103.

¹⁴⁸ For more on this painting, see: Linda Nochlin, “Gustave Courbet’s *Toilette de La Mariée*,” in *Courbet* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2007), 55–83, 211–13. Now in the Smith College Museum of Art, *Preparation of the Dead Girl* caused some confusion as to its subject matter throughout the years. X-rays revealed that the girl was originally nude and that the attendants wore black instead of red—changes had been overpainted by another hand following Courbet’s death.

¹⁴⁹ Rozanne McGrew Stringer, “Hybrid Zones: Representations of Race in Late Nineteenth-Century French Visual Culture” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 2011), 174. For an examination of the racial politics at stake in this image, see: *Ibid.*, 132–191.

Though the complex racial politics of this painting and the peculiarity of its influences merit extended discussion, it may also function to indicate how Bazille engaged with constructs of Orientalism—and why the Zouaves, of all the regiments possible, most appealed to him. Indeed, Bertrand Taithe has noted that “the Orientalist myth was particularly alive in military circles.”¹⁵⁰ It also not impossible that Commandant Lejosne, his uncle who had facilitated his access into Parisian social circles in 1862, helped his young relative to secure a placement that both appealed to him and proved commensurate to his social status.¹⁵¹ Like Monet, he may have longed for adventure—seeing the Algerian landscapes would surely expand his capacity for imagining landscapes to paint when he returned from the war. Or perhaps his adherence to duty drove this decision—an elite regiment like the Zouaves would likely be the best way to assist in saving France and returning home to Montpellier as a heroic veteran, ready to marry and move into the next stage of his life.

The Heroism of Going to War

When Napoleon III declared the opening of the Franco-Prussian War on July 19, 1870, Bazille was, as usual, summering in the south at Méric. Even with his anti-imperial Republican policies, Bazille faced a personal, political choice with the passage of the Law of August 10, which mandated that any man meeting certain conditions must

¹⁵⁰ Bertrand Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars: France in Turmoil, 1870-1871* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 84.

¹⁵¹ There is little proof for this assertion, but Lejosne certainly intervened after Bazille’s arrival in Algeria to ensure that they would be able to visit each other. Lejosne had been sent to Algeria as a demotion after allowing a performance of Victor Hugo’s *Ruy Blas*, in which Bazille participated, in his Paris apartment in 1869. For more, see: Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 69, 79–80.

submit himself for military service or find a replacement.¹⁵² Bazille's father could have easily purchased him a replacement who could fulfill his obligation to serve under the law; a replacement, up to forty-five years old, could be found and presented in the drafted man's place, per the conditions set out in previous laws of 1832 and 1868.¹⁵³ The proud French, on the heels of Napoleon III's victories in Crimea and Italy, seemed to have believed wholeheartedly that war against Prussia was theirs to win, though Bazille had likely seen both faces of the army. For every man like his friend Alphonse Tissié, who he held in very high esteem, or even Monet, with a less successful military record, scores of soldiers were weakened by their inability to resist their baser desires, which likely would have repulsed the tightly-laced and honorable young Bazille. And yet, the German states had become the standard by which France needed to measure itself—as the German states rose and began to unify, French fears of decline, of impotence, magnified considerably.¹⁵⁴

The mood across France on the day of the war's declaration varied tremendously. In Paris, people streamed into the streets celebrating and yelling, "*À Berlin*," an event famously and symbolically referenced by Émile Zola in the last pages of *Nana*. The French population honestly believed that they could march through the German territories and defeat Bismarck with only the minimal innovations their army had achieved in recent years. They did not know the extent to which the Prussian emperor, Wilhelm I, and his chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, had embraced new weaponry. They further believed that

¹⁵² Directions for implementing this law were detailed in bulletins from the national government to local officials, such as: Ministère de la Guerre, "Circulaire n°852," August 31, 1870, 1 R 872, Departmental Archives, Hérault, Montpellier, France.

¹⁵³ "Recueil des actes administratifs, no. 29" (Ricard frères, Montpellier, August 14, 1870), 247, 1 R 871, Departmental Archives, Hérault, Montpellier, France.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 78.

the exceptionally regimented methods of the Prussian army commanders could not possibly break through the battle-tested French regiments whose exceptional *esprit de corps* supposedly elevated them above similar European powers. Throughout the rest of the country, views were more complex and frequently more wary. In Montpellier, even those who had protested the Empire felt the necessity of planning for war and began making arrangements to send aid to those who would fight.¹⁵⁵

Between July 19 and August 16, when Bazille joined, the French army faced defeat after embarrassing defeat, though censorship prevented much of that bad news from reaching French citizens. Especially in Paris, these citizens were sustained by their still-buoyant patriotism. The government continued to blame Prussia and portray it as a potential conqueror, emphasizing France's position as "the noble defender of the balance of power and of the right of peoples to choose their own sovereign."¹⁵⁶ As Bazille would have contemplated whether to join the army or embrace the replacement offered by his father, reports arose that fortifications around Paris remained flimsy and inadequate for withstanding Prussian advances. Independent papers proclaimed to publish the truth about the city's defenses in facts and figures, while the imperial *Journal officiel* actively rebutted these claims, between August 12 and August 15.¹⁵⁷ Bazille was an avid newspaper reader,¹⁵⁸ and he perhaps understood both the positive and negative components of the French military as well as any civilian could.

¹⁵⁵ Montpellier had long "shown reluctance" to the Second Empire, and had largely voted against Napoleon III's new liberal policies in the plebiscite in May 1870. As a department, the Hérault voted less than 55% in favor, though the referendum passed overwhelmingly across France. See: Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars*, 63, 200, note 21.

¹⁵⁶ Hazel C. Benjamin, "Official Propaganda and the French Press during the Franco-Prussian War" 4, no. 2 (June 1932): 222.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁵⁸ His letters are peppered with references to events read about in the newspapers or which his parents can expect to read about soon in their own papers. In letter 142, to his parents, August 30, 1870, he complains

Consequently, the combination of these threats to Paris, his adopted home, and the sense of duty upheld by his friend Tissié, who was still on active duty, probably allowed him to view assenting to his conscription as an honorable act. In his examination of dueling, Robert Nye described the act of stepping in to fight a duel as a way for men to “express simultaneously their patriotism, their right to membership in a democratic civil order, and their manliness.”¹⁵⁹ I believe Bazille’s choice allowed him to express similar sentiments. Though it may be only a coincidence, the brave Tissié had received a serious injury in the battle at Reichsoffen¹⁶⁰ on August 6, likely as part of the desperate cavalry charges made to ensure the safe retreat of French infantrymen. Of the 35,000 Frenchman fighting in this battle, 11,000 were wounded; the 3^e Zouaves lost half of their men.¹⁶¹ In the same bloody battle, the 3^e regiment of Zouaves lost two thirds of their effective forces and forty-three of their fifty-seven officers.¹⁶² If Bazille knew of his friend’s injury, it could have spurred him to commit himself to the army in the most active and most overtly patriotic and honorable way possible—joining the recently depleted and exceptionally heroic Zouaves.

His close friends in Paris strongly objected to his choice. The frantic and hasty letter sent by Maître on August 18, with a crude addendum from Renoir, reads:

My dear, my old friend,

I have just received your letter: you are crazy, extremely crazy, sending you love with all my heart; let God protect you, you and my poor brother.
Yours

to his parents that the absence of newspapers in Philippeville is “very painful”—“très pénible.” Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 196.

¹⁵⁹ Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, 147.

¹⁶⁰ This battle is often referred to as the Battle of Frœschwiller or the Battle of Wœrth, or some combination thereof, due to the complex geography of the area.

¹⁶¹ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *1870 : La France dans la guerre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1989), 105.

¹⁶² Duroy, *Extrait de l'histoire du 3e régiment de Zouaves, rédigé d'après les instructions de M. le Colonel Lucas*, 65.

Ed. Maître

Why not ask a friend?
 You don't have the right to make this commitment
 Renoir returns just now, I am giving him my pen
 E

Thrice shit.
 Very crude.
 Renoir¹⁶³

This letter, in all of its desperate pleading, could not stop Bazille from going, but it does reiterate how unique it was for him to surrender voluntarily to wartime military service. Raewyn Connell has commented that “the constitution of masculinity through bodily performance means that gender is vulnerable when the performance cannot be sustained.”¹⁶⁴ A common response, according to Connell, is to “redouble efforts to meet hegemonic standards [of masculinity], overcoming physical difficulty.”¹⁶⁵ I contended in Chapter Three that Bazille and his friends celebrated an alternative formulation of hegemonic masculinity that privileged an easy, innocent homosociality that did not fear feminization when they traveled around the Barbizon villages, yet conformed to the more dominant hegemonic formulation when they worked in their Paris studios. However, the nation of France, always conspicuously female, served as a damsel in distress as the war grew progressively more serious and as the Prussian advances threatened to destroy what the French perceived as their superior, spirited way of life. This threat challenged their easy masculinity for the worse—it invoked men like Bazille, conscious of duty and

¹⁶³ Letter 282, Maître and Renoir to Bazille, August 18, 1870, in Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 383. The French, mostly unpunctuated except by the line breaks retained above, reads: “Mon cher, mon vieil ami, Je reçois votre lettre à l’instant: vous êtes fou, archi-fou, je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur; que Dieu vous protégé, vous et mon pauvre frère. Tout à vous Ed. Maître Pourquoi ne pas consulter un ami? Vous n’avez pas le droit de prendre cet engagement Renoir rentre à l’instant, je lui donne ma plume E Trois fois merde Archi brute Renoir”

¹⁶⁴ Connell, *Masculinities*, 54.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

nobility through their class and religious backgrounds, to objectify female France and to go to great lengths to defend her honor.

This chapter previously discussed the role of the Zouave in popular imagery during this period in fortifying French chauvinism, and indeed, in practice as well as in representation, the French placed their faith in the heroism of their elite regiments, including the Zouaves. And yet, heroism, as Trochu had indicated, was hardly enough to compensate for poorly trained regiments composed of young men more frightened than forceful. Not long after Bazille began his service, the Army decided that they would no longer accept men with no prior experience into Zouave regiments, an extension of their previous decision not to accept anyone without equestrian skills into cavalry regiments.¹⁶⁶ Men who were already back in France as Zouaves on the front lines, however, were simply young recruits who lacked the battle readiness suggested by their elite packaging. In late September, when Prussians attacked a Zouave regiment as they prepared to defend Paris, the young Zouaves panicked and fled, letting “the sight of the renowned red pantaloons” in flight provoke “less chic infantrymen” to follow.¹⁶⁷ The Zouave uniform could no longer be considered a reliable indicator of battle skill and bravery.

Peculiarly enough, for all the skill and nuance Bazille had previously attempted in his approach to paintings like *La Toilette*, his drawn images of soldiers seem amateurish and ill-conceived. Two of these images, a similar format repeating twice, are blatantly cartoonish, seemingly testaments to French ambivalence toward their armed forces. In RF 5260, folio 32 recto (Fig. 105), a soldier wearing the tall hat, plume, and curved saber of a cuirassier or other elite soldier marches along with a staff before him, and two less

¹⁶⁶ Ministère de la Guerre, “Copie d’une dépêche télégraphique adressée le 2 8bre 1870 à M.M. les Préfets du départements,” October 2, 1870, 1 R 872, Departmental Archives, Hérault, Montpellier, France.

¹⁶⁷ Horne, *The Fall of Paris*, 77–78.

distinguished soldiers, their lower rank evident in their simple hats and basic muskets, march behind him. Though difficult to tell if these figures form one scene or two separate ones, the soldiers in the background also seem lesser through hierarchical scale—they are simply smaller than the cuirassier. The bodies of these soldiers are constructed through simple geometric forms—circles for torsos and rectangles for legs—that make them seem barely more than bored doodles in the midst of the other more deliberate sketches in this album. Where this drawing is sketchy, a similarly drawn soldier in the same album, RF 5260, on folio 39 recto (Fig. 106), is more crudely drawn with heavy black lines and, unlike the previous drawing, with his facial features intact. Instead of marching, and at least preparing to fight, this soldier carries mess kits, *gamelles*, and the geometric forms that construct his body end in two legs so flatly and perfunctorily drawn that the viewer cannot determine the difference between front and back. More peculiarly, these cartoonish drawings punctuate an album full of skillful preparatory sketches and deliberately shaded autonomous drawings that render their juvenile nature even more perplexing.¹⁶⁸

Two other images of soldiers by Bazille, tucked into the RF 5260 album (Fig. 107-108), retain the unskilled appearance of those previously mentioned. Though they have not been dated or securely attributed to Bazille's time in Algeria,¹⁶⁹ these two

¹⁶⁸ Bazille's two surviving sketchbooks are reproduced in Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille*, 264–309. Though these cartoonish drawings contrast with many of the more elaborate sketches and clearly preparatory drawings, Bazille certainly included personal musings and other humorous doodles in his sketchbooks. An excellent example of this is that Folio 4 of RF 5260 contains a drawing of the Venus de Milo which is crisply executed from the neck down, but whose face is caricatured to the point of the smoking pipe that protrudes from her mouth. On the verso of Folio 3, Bazille drew a study of a female nude that seems to imagine the position of Venus's legs and the appearance of her genital region, obscured on the statue by the modesty of her drapery.

¹⁶⁹ Schulman does not include these watercolors in his catalogue of Bazille's work, but notes that they are included in the sketchbook near drawing 39, recto, in the album RF 5260 and that they could have been executed in Algeria. See *Ibid.*, 79–81.

watercolors depict French soldiers in exotic landscapes that are, at minimum, inspired by Algeria. One seems to depict a wide view of the city of Constantine, recognizable by the rocky ravine that encircles the city and here divides background from foreground in a long jagged slice. Commandant Lejosne, Bazille's uncle, was stationed in Constantine in September 1870, and Bazille briefly visited him there.¹⁷⁰ In the background, sandy towers on fortified walls line the cliff. Three men who appear to be wearing traditional Algerian dress, likely not French soldiers, stand outside the city walls at the left of the scene. In the foreground, after the stone and post fences that line the cliff outside the city, a French soldier kneels to tie his shoe; he has set his weapon down beside him. Besides this isolated soldier, only rocks populate the image's foreground.

The other watercolor that may come from Bazille's time in Algeria is more nondescript—it portrays an army camp. A row of five simple, A-frame tents at the very front echoes the horizontal layers of hills that recede into a mammoth line of mountains in the background. The rolling hills are dotted with palm trees—one large, more detailed palm tree marks the end of the camp's flat plain, while the others seem more like small green starbursts against the tanned lengths of dessert and paper. The soldiers in this image perform the dull duties of camp life. Two men inside their tents nap and sort out their belongings, while one man outside sits on a rock to eat and the other lugs a sack toward the tents.

These two images represent scenes far from the immediate combat that Bazille had hoped for when he volunteered to serve, and perhaps that alone is the strongest argument for dating these watercolors to his stay in Algeria. Bazille found camp life horrifically frustrating and, from the accounts in his letters, seemed never to have

¹⁷⁰ See Letter 143, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 196–197.

considered the possibility that he could be bored while his country fought a war.¹⁷¹ In one letter to his parents, he asked them desperately not to recommend him to anyone else in the hopes of improving his situation, saying, “I do not want to add to all of these problems, I only find agreeable the moments when I can walk alone.”¹⁷² The disconnect between Bazille’s experiences and the warrior mentality he expected to cultivate point to a frequent misperception of combat, perpetuated by images of the hearty, heroic veteran in the disguise of his majestic uniform. Armand Sabatier, a friend to the Bazille family¹⁷³ served as the surgeon-in-chief for the Ambulance du Midi, a volunteer brigade of medical personnel organized by the Protestant-founded Croix Rouge and sent from Montpellier and Marseille to the northern battlefields. In his report on the Ambulance’s activities, he commented: “Pain is an element with which one does not count in war and on the fields of battle. That is the money with which we buy victory; and it is of course very rare that those who command armies hesitate to provide for a purchase so envied.”¹⁷⁴ Writing shortly after the war’s end, and geographically displaced from the horrors of the Commune, Sabatier ably drew attention to the steep price that France had paid through the lives of their countrymen. While pain proved to be a valuable commodity, it frequently fell short of heroism and valor in even the accounts of military personnel who had personally witnessed atrocities on the fields of battle.

¹⁷¹ François Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, Éditeur, 1952), 84. For a discussion of this quote in relation to fatalism of soldiers on the front lines, see: John Milner, *Art, War and Revolution in France 1870-1871: Myth, Reportage and Reality* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 91.

¹⁷² Letter 142, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 196. The French reads: “Je vous prie de ne me recommander à personne. Je ne veux pas ajouter à tous ces ennuis, je n’ai d’agréables que les moments où je peux me promener seul.”

¹⁷³ In one of his letters relaying news from home, Gaston Bazille informed his son that Sabatier’s wife had suddenly taken dangerously ill. Letter 101, Gaston Bazille to his son, March 24, 1868, in *Ibid.*, 155.

¹⁷⁴ Armand Sabatier, *Rapport sur la campagne de l’Ambulance du Midi (Marseille-Montpellier) suivi de Considérations générales sur les Ambulances militaires et volontaires et d’observations médico-chirurgicales recueillies pendant la campagne* (Montpellier: Boehm et fils, 1871), 112.

Bazille proved no exception to this paradox. In a letter to his parents dated November 25, three days before his death, Bazille noted that he often saw Sabatier, Gustave Planchon (a pharmacist and the brother of the botanist Jules), and René Leenhardt (a surgeon and Sabatier's second-in-command) because their ambulance followed his army corps.¹⁷⁵ Leenhardt similarly reported back to his wife on November 15 that he and Planchon had sought out Bazille when they realized regiments of Zouaves were stationed nearby. He wrote, "A Zouave...who finds himself rightly in his company, helped us, not without difficulty, to find [Bazille], and we would never have succeeded without him. We found this wonderfully nice guy, very popular with his men. He did not want to leave his friends to come with us for fear that one of them would need him during the night, or that they must leave early in the morning."¹⁷⁶ Bazille, in turn wrote to his parents a day later, "I have fallen into a good company."¹⁷⁷

He also repeatedly expressed his satisfaction with the man assigned to his personal service: "My servant has rare skill at getting himself out of situations. With four pieces of burlap with which I was equipped, he built me an excellent tent, I made him sleep with me, he kept me warm. We had a foot of straw, our sheets, our blankets, and a good heat while the rain and the wind raged outside... In short, I am the one in all of my company who will suffer the least."¹⁷⁸ The depth and tenderness of nineteenth-century

¹⁷⁵ Letter 152, to his parents, November 25, 1870, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 207.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in Pellegrin, *Montpellier la protestante*, 148–149. The French reads: "Un zouave...qui se trouvait justement de sa compagnie, nous a aidés, non sans peine, à le trouver, ce à quoi nous ne serions jamais parvenus sans lui. Nous avons trouvé ce gentil garçon à merveille, fort apprécié de ses hommes. Il n'a pas voulu quitter ses camarades pour venir avec nous de peur que l'on ait besoin de lui la nuit, ou qu'on ne dût partir de grand matin."

¹⁷⁷ Letter 151, to his parents, November 16, 1870, in Vatuone and Barral, *Correspondance*, 206.

¹⁷⁸ Letter 145, to his parents, October 24, 1870, in *Ibid.*, 198. Letters 146 and 147 also mention his satisfaction with his manservant, Dandler. The French reads: "Mon brossier est d'une habileté rare à se tirer d'affaire. Avec quatre toiles dont je m'étais muni il m'a bâti une tente excellente, je le fais coucher avec moi, il me tient chaud. Nous avons un pied de paille, nos habits de drap, nos couvertures et une

friendships between men has been well-documented, as has the ability for such intense relationships to arise quickly as an offshoot of the high pressure circumstances of war. This anecdote that Bazille tells about his servant remains acceptable because it upholds class boundaries and remains managed and professional—they share a tent to stay warm. However, the long history of chivalric male intimacy, traced from *The Iliad* through the *Song of Roland* to the deep affections of Napoleon I for his comrades, made male intimacy an acceptable trait and an element of strength.¹⁷⁹ In *The Debacle* (1892), Emile Zola's novel of the Franco-Prussian War, the central structuring principle is the relationship between two soldiers who, though from different social classes, become passionately and intimately intertwined as the war progresses, depending on each other for both physical and emotional sustenance.¹⁸⁰ Any concerns Bazille may have previously felt for the closeness of his male friendships became naturalized and necessary for survival within the context of the military camp.

However, the desolation of Bazille's military drawings more accurately foreshadowed his fate than the friendly reminders of home he found in Sabatier, Leenhardt, and Planchon and in the affectionate associations of his fellow soldiers. His letters describe the reconnaissance missions in which he participated and complain frequently about having not yet seen a single Prussian soldier—it remains unclear how much he knew of battles being fought (and mostly lost) in other areas of France, yet when his regiment of Zouaves approached the village of Beaune-la-Rolande in late November,

bonne chaleur pendant que la pluie et le vent faisaient rage au dehors ... En somme je suis celui de toute ma compagnie qui souffrira le moins.”

¹⁷⁹ For a summary of this long historical tradition, see: Brian Joseph Martin, *Napoleonic Friendship: Military Fraternity, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2011), 2–6.

¹⁸⁰ For an expanded discussion of *The Debacle*, see: Ibid., 245–253.

they had reason to believe they would be victorious. 60,000 French troops and 140 guns rolled toward 9,000 Prussians with half as many guns who hid, exhausted, in a barely defensible village with the nearest reinforcements a day's march away.¹⁸¹ However, the commanding officer, General Crouzat, later reported that Bazille's regiment, the 3e Zouaves, alone "covered the outskirts with their [700] dead and wounded," and none of his staff officers survived the battle.¹⁸²

Though not as consequential in the course of the war as the earliest battles, which exposed the utter superiority of Prussian tactics, or Sedan, which prompted the abdication of Napoleon III, Beaune-la-Rolande does embody all the failures accrued by Frenchmen throughout the war—failures that caused the suffering of young, noble, and loyal men like Bazille. It was viewed by later military observers as "one of the bloodiest battles of the war after invasion."¹⁸³ Sabatier would reference the "insufficiency of the military medical service" on the field at Beaune-la-Rolande and continue to describe the utter destruction of the body wrought by the innovative new weapons that both armies carried.¹⁸⁴ Of Bazille's broken body, Gustave Planchon reported to his brother, the wine investigator, "He was struck by three bullets, one in the chest, another in the shoulder, the third in the abdomen. He would have fallen into the arms of his sergeant-major and would only have survived a few moments, though enough to write a few words to his parents."¹⁸⁵ This pietà-like image of the fallen soldier provides the perfect denouement in

¹⁸¹ Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 272.

¹⁸² Quoted in Ibid.

¹⁸³ *Historique succinct du 3e régiment de Zouaves depuis sa création jusqu'à nos jours* (Constantine: Imprimerie A. Paulette et ses Fils, 1931), 27.

¹⁸⁴ Sabatier, *Rapport sur la campagne de l'Ambulance du Midi*, 31, 78–79.

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Pellegrin, *Montpellier la protestante*, 149. The French reads: "Il a été frappé de trois balles, une dans la poitrine, l'autre à l'épaule, la troisième dans l'abdomen. Il serait tombé dans les bras de son

the narrative of the military hero—impossible to save, comforted by his caring officer in his last moments, and forever in debt to his parents and his nation.

After addressing the circumstances of his death, biographical accounts of Frédéric Bazille usually shift to the role played by his father. Gaston Bazille, upon hearing of his son's injury, boarded a train for as close to Beaune-la-Rolande as he could get and then hired a wagon to take him the rest of the way. Not only did the region remain somewhat unsafe, but the exceedingly dignified father was then tasked with finding his son's corpse by himself. His travel notes describe how he went from ambulance to ambulance, asking if anyone had seen his son and hearing conflicting reports of Frédéric's fate.¹⁸⁶ With the help of the town's priest, eventually rewarded for his help with the artist's copy of Veronese's *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine*, and some army personnel, he eventually found his son in an unmarked, communal grave on the battlefield. He wrote, "I kissed with transport the hand of my son; he is hardly changed, the wide-open blue eyes, the proud expression, calm, nothing tormented, it is still my handsome Frédéric."¹⁸⁷ He then faced the terrible journey back through enemy lines to Montpellier, where his son would be buried in the Cimetière Protestant. Frequently related with an air of mythmaking, this story provides a necessary summation of Bazille's life—a hero to his country, loved by his father, ultimately remembered more for his untimely death than for his profession.

Yet, as is customary, the myth obscures the complexity of the whole length of his life. That his father would go to such lengths to retrieve his body at all reifies the

sergent-major et n'aurait survécu que quelques instants, assez cependant pour écrire quelques mots à ses parents."

¹⁸⁶ Gaston Poulain, *Bazille et ses amis* (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1932), 197–204.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 203. The French reads: "Je baise avec transports la main de mon fils; il est à peine changé, les yeux bleus grands ouverts, l'expression fière, calme, rien de tourmenté, c'est bien toujours mon beau Frédéric."

closeness of their relationship and validates the measure of their influences on each other. That Gaston Bazille essentially traded a painting by his son for the artist's body suggests the impact young Frédéric hoped his paintings could have in the art world, if he could just muddle through his major *tableaux*. And finally, that Gaston Bazille insisted that Frédéric's body be returned to Montpellier reminds us that, at heart, the artist had never really left his hometown—for all his Parisian interests and affects, in the end, he could only be defined by his *montpelliérain* ties.

Gaston Poulain's early biography of the artist recounted that, on the night before he died, while dining with his superior officer, Captain d'Armignac, Bazille proclaimed, "As for myself, I'm sure not to get killed, I have too many things to do in this life."¹⁸⁸ These words now ache of youth and hubris, qualities that the elder Bazille observed in his son's face, even in death. However, they also point to Bazille's outlook on his future and the ambitious, amalgamative goals he maintained for his life—too many operas to see and books to read; too much loyalty to his family and his country; and too many paintings left to paint.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 194.

CONCLUSION

“What is art but life captured, retained—the personal tracing (by consequence varied and formed in the imagination) of that which we see, of that which moves us?”
Zacharie Astruc, “Salon de 1870”¹

“That gentle knight; so pure in heart; the friend of my youth.”
Pierre-Auguste Renoir²

In the wake of Bazille’s death, just short of his twenty-ninth birthday, innumerable questions remained, not the least of which entailed what he might have proceeded to paint had he survived the Franco-Prussian War to build a full, productive career. While *Summer Scene* and *La Toilette* suggest a turn toward complex multi-figure tableaux, perhaps the most perplexing painting left unfinished suggests something else entirely. When Bazille wrote to Edmond Maître at the beginning of August 1870, just two weeks before his enlistment, he mentioned a “half-done” painting of the biblical story of Ruth and Boaz (Fig. 109).³ The artist’s only religious painting,⁴ full of a “symbolist intensity” more characteristic of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes,⁵ his *Ruth and Boaz* likely takes its source material less from the Bible than from Victor Hugo’s epic poem *La Légende des siècles*, which included the poem “Booz endormi” as part of its 1859 release. In Hugo’s telling, Ruth waits at the feet of the sleeping Boaz to see if he will take her as his wife, and she awakes first to the dawn light:

¹ Quoted and translated in Dianne W. Pitman, *Bazille: Purity, Pose, and Painting in the 1860s* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 44.

² Quoted in Jean Renoir, *Renoir, My Father*, trans. Randolph and Dorothy Weaver (New York: New York Review of Books, 2001), 130.

³ Quoted in François Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, Éditeur, 1952), 81, note 1.

⁴ Didier Vatuone, “Catalogue Entry for Sketch for Ruth and Boaz,” in *Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1992), 126.

⁵ Pitman, *Bazille*, 204. Indeed, Pitman’s argument regarding *Ruth and Boaz* is that it serves as Bazille’s response to the two major Salon smashes of 1870, the year that *Summer Scene* was displayed: Puvis de Chavannes’s *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist* and Henri Regnault’s *Salome*.

The whole world dreamed, from Ur to Jerimadeth;
 Stars studded the blue velvet of the air;
 The crescent moon hung low; Ruth said her prayer,
 Begging the heavens in her softest breath—

Barely moving, with veiled, half-lidded eyes—
 To say what god, what summer harvester,
 Had come that night to make his peace with her,
 Leaving his golden scythe there in the skies.⁶

Bazille's painting portrays this moment when Ruth looks toward the sky for answers, for confirmation that she follows the right path. Though this painting remains clearly unfinished with sections of exposed canvas and areas of paint scraped thin, Bazille seems to employ the bodies of his figures to foreshadow their eventual coupling. Placed in the foreground of the canvas, each with drapery that clings and folds to their relaxed forms, the bodies of Ruth and Boaz fit together in a rhythmic wave that invokes the beauty of Hugo's words into this verily mystical landscape. However, in choosing to adhere to Hugo, Bazille's Ruth differs markedly from the story in the Bible—biblical Ruth does not dream.

Bazille was, however, consumed by his dreaming at times, unable to differentiate a practical course of action from his enthusiasm, or perhaps anxiety, at starting a project. One story popularly repeated after his death describes how, as a young boy, he became so consumed with staring out at the sky and the birds and butterflies from his window on the highest floor of the family's home on the Grand'Rue in Montpellier that his mother, concerned her son would fall out the window, had iron bars placed in it to ensure his safety.⁷ It does not overreach to suggest that this tendency to dream persisted into his adult life, governing his own perfectionism and his desire to support excellence in his

⁶ Victor Hugo, "So Boaz Slept," trans. R.S. Gwynn, *The Hudson Review* 61, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 646–48.

⁷ Albert Leenhardt, *Quelques Belles Résidences des Environs de Montpellier*, vol. 2 (Bellegarde: Sadag de France, 1932), 114. There are still iron bars visible on this window today.

friends. As this dissertation has suggested, these dreams, subtle negotiations, and, at times, overt struggles centered on picturing the human body in his modern portraits and figure paintings. This task further engaged standards for masculine behavior that affected how the artist presented himself, how he chose to paint his friends and family, and how he compiled his multi-figure tableaux, works that have frequently resisted analysis in prior literature.

To the extent that my study has sought to complicate the ways in which modern scholars have turned Bazille's life into a fluid narrative, I conclude here with the ways that contemporary acquaintances coped with his death and thus began the streak of imaginative memories that would, in some ways, overshadow his paintings. As the Renoir quotation that began this conclusion indicates, his friends maintained a sentimental view of their lost companion. To Renoir, Bazille was a "gentle knight," noble and kind, and the aged artist remembered his friend as the glue that held their tiny circle together and helped it grow into a corporation capable of staging the first Impressionist exhibition four years after Bazille's death.⁸ In 1876, Manet would write to Bazille's father, as part of his agreement to trade Renoir's portrait of Bazille to the family in exchange for Monet's *Women in the Garden*, and declare that Frédéric's friends would remember him always as a "modest and kind hero."⁹ Of course, there was also Edmond Maître, who, as quoted in Chapter Three, was devastated, writing to his father that "it is half of myself that has gone away."¹⁰

⁸ See Renoir's remembrances of Bazille's social activities: Renoir, *Renoir, My Father*, 92–109.

⁹ Quoted in Michel Schulman, *Frédéric Bazille 1841-1870: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: Éditions de l'Amateur, 1995), 90.

¹⁰ Letter from February 13, 1871, quoted in Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps*, 85–86, note 2.

This romantic image of a lost friend perhaps feeds into the suggestions by various scholars that Bazille served as inspiration for a number of literary characters. One scholar suggests that Bazille's early period in Paris served Edmond Duranty in the creation of his novella *Le Peintre Louis Martin* (1872), whose titular painter struggles with Realism and proposes the idea of an independent exhibition to his friends before dying tragically in the Franco-Prussian War.¹¹ Others have suggested that the depth of the friendship between Bazille and Zola, though less tangible in the historical record than his friendships with his fellow painters, inspired Zola to create in Bazille's image the character of the honorable nobleman Félicien de Hauteceur in *La Rêve* (1888),¹² or to include features of Bazille's in the genesis of Claude Lantier in *L'Œuvre* (1886).¹³ With these nostalgic and literary extrapolations of Bazille's character, the monolithic conception of the artist as grand patron and friend comes into clearer focus than the perception of Bazille as an artist with pictorial talent and potential.

As legitimate and compelling scholarship cannot be built solely on romantic notions such as these, it is my fervent hope that future work will be undertaken to expand our understanding of Bazille and his art. One area of his production that this dissertation did not address is his imagery of women and what constructing femininity might have looked like for the artist, as a man whose noted preoccupations contribute to a narrative of his feminization. In addition to *La Toilette*, which appeared briefly in Chapter Four, paintings such as *Mauresque* (1869) (Fig. 110), his two images entitled *African Woman with Peonies* (both 1870) (Figs. 111-112), and his more delicate *La Robe rose* (1864)

¹¹ Pitman, *Bazille*, 2–4.

¹² Daulte, *Frédéric Bazille et son temps*, 89.

¹³ Kermit Swiler Champa, "A Complicated Codependence," in *Monet & Bazille: A Collaboration*, ed. David A. Brenneman (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1998), 72.

(Fig. 113) and *View of the Village* (1868) (Fig. 20) suggest that the artist struggled with conditions similar to those that he faced in depicting his men—the social appropriateness of behavior, challenges of depicting intimacy and intimate situations, and providing empathy and engagement in unexpected places. His women both fit within familiar art historical types and exhibit a complexity that demands the attention of their audiences. In this sense, while this dissertation has insisted that Bazille serves as an entry point for continuing to deconstruct the narratives that have governed canonical nineteenth-century painting, there remain areas of his own oeuvre where even more deeply critical gender-based analysis can occur.

As I stated in my introduction, however, it has never been my intention to elevate Bazille to the level of Monet or Renoir as a master of Impressionist painting. Bazille, as this dissertation makes clear, stood at a nexus of the powerful forces that formed the social, political, and cultural milieu of Second Empire France. When he shed medicine for art and again as he oscillated between Montpellier and Paris, he experienced the broad disparities that dictated conditions of life across gender, social class, and regional extraction. It has therefore been my goal to present a case for how understanding the intricacies of Bazille's life and, thus, the production of his art can allow interpretation of Early Impressionist paintings and projects to evolve for the better. An Early Impressionism that dispels the myth of “genius” can more adequately grapple with the uncertain and even failing efforts that preceded the break into notoriety. An understanding of Early Impressionism that resists the heroicizing narratives in which Monet's supposed rugged individualism, or Renoir's position as an unrelenting artistic lothario, come to the fore can provide a firmer ground on which their later masterpieces

might stand. Bazille, as a friend, supporter, and recorder of these early impulses, becomes the means through which this more expansive vision of the 1860s might be achieved.

An understanding of the myths I reference above regarding the lengths to which Monet would go to properly paint a landscape, or Renoir's famously misogynist view of women, must be grounded in constructions of masculinity that pervasively affected Frenchmen from the period of their youth, when habits and worldviews could be formed, through the eras in which they earned their reputations of greatness. I have isolated Bazille as the figure of their youth for whom these struggles of masculinity are most accessible at this scholarly moment because, perhaps because of his exceptional social privilege, he could use his art as a means of experimentation, synthesizing pieces of the knowledge he had acquired into painted bodies. Though his struggles with masculinities are most apparent in paintings like *Summer Scene* and *Fisherman with a Net*, his images of his family, his male friends, and his most cherished landscapes evidence a self-reflexivity in his approach to pictorial construction of the human body and to observation of his era's corporeal practices.

In arguing that there is more work to be done on this group of canonical male artists via their masculinities, I am aware that I could be accused of seeking to uphold art historical narratives that continue to limit the attention turned toward artists who operated outside their era's dominant constructions of gender, sexuality, race, and social class. However, as this dissertation contends, work on male artists that acknowledges the vulnerabilities and complexities of both the artists themselves and their work, rather than denying these difficulties in favor of sustaining persistent myths, can contribute just as

readily to diversifying the perspectives that nineteenth-century art history encompasses. Indeed, as the sociologist Michael Kimmel has stated, “the cultural meanings of manhood... have been shaped by the course of historical events, and in turn...ideas about masculinity have also served to shape those historical events.”¹⁴ Thus, my approach to Bazille has been to place his work within the context of his experiences and to examine his reactions to the phenomena that surrounded him. By integrating his painted work with theorizations of his anxieties toward his masculinity and his origins in the South, this dissertation demonstrates a methodology that can be turned toward his peers in order to demand further consideration in art historical discourse for the multiplicity of social classes, gender constructions, and political identities that, in fact, characterized nineteenth-century France.

¹⁴ Michael Kimmel, *The History of Men: Essays in the History of American and British Masculinities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), ix.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1: Frédéric Bazille, *Summer Scene*, 1869, oil on canvas, Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Figure 2: Gustave Caillebotte, *Man at his Bath*, 1884, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.

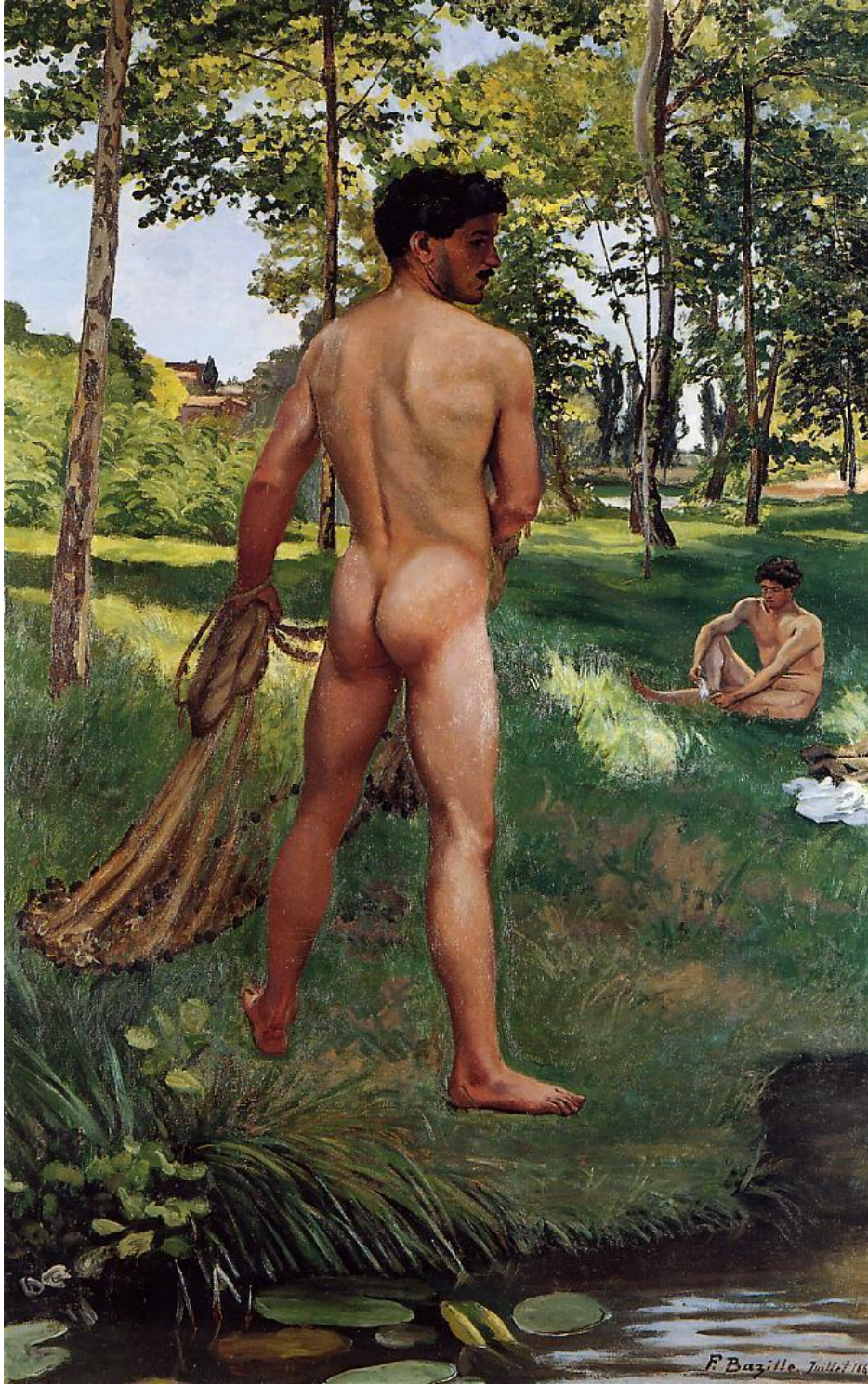


Figure 3: Frédéric Bazille, *Fisherman with a Net*, 1868, oil on canvas, Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Remagen, Germany.



Figure 4: Frédéric Bazille, *Jeune homme nu couché sur l'herbe*, 1870, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 5: Edouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 6: *Bains in front of the Louvre*, ca. 1867, engraving, Maciet albums, Bibliothèque des arts décoratifs, Paris.



Figure 7: Honoré Daumier, “Les baigns à quatre sous,” from *Croquis d’été* (1839).



Figure 8: Claude Monet, *La Grenouillère*, 1869, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 9: Claude Monet, *Bathers at La Grenouillère*, 1869, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London.



Figure 10: Georges Seurat, *Bathers at Asnières*, 1884, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London.



Figure 11: Frédéric Bazille, *Landscape by the Lez River*, ca. 1870, oil on canvas, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



Figure 12: Gustave Courbet, *Wrestlers*, 1853, oil on canvas, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

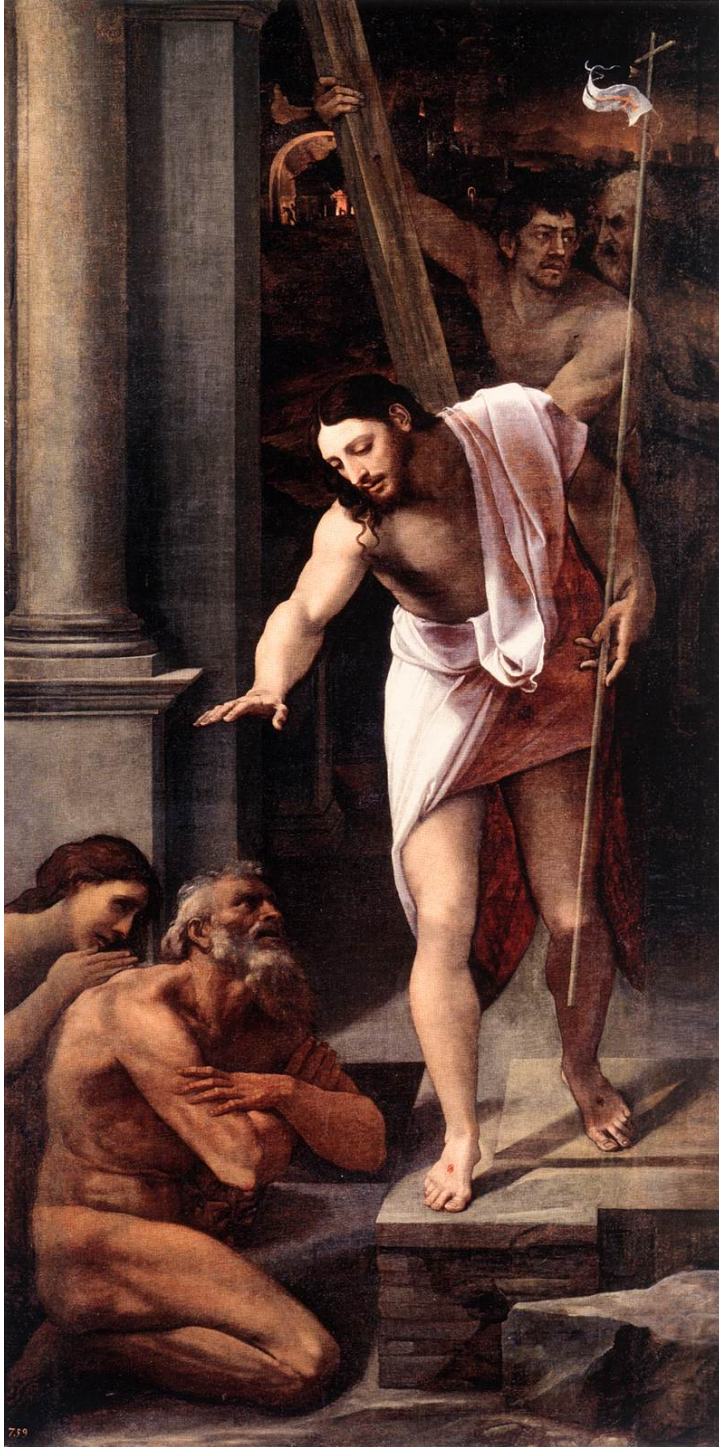
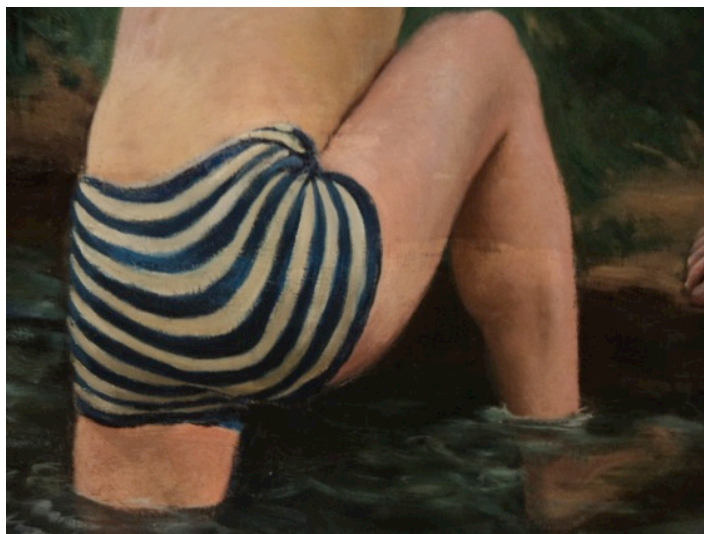


Figure 13: Sebastiano del Piombo, *Christ in Limbo*, 1516, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 14: Edouard Manet, *The Old Musician*, 1862, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Figures 15-17: detail photographs from Frédéric Bazille, *Summer Scene*, 1869, oil on canvas, Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Figure 18: Frédéric Bazille, Study for *Summer Scene*, RF 29731, Recto, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

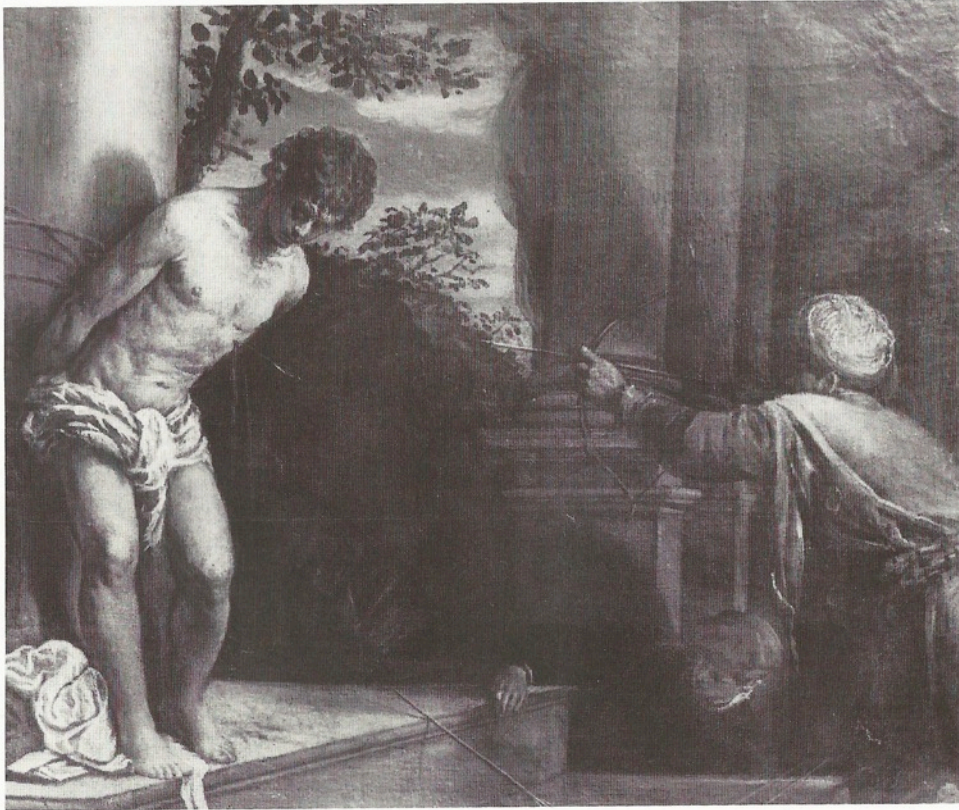


Figure 19: Jacopo Bassano, *Saint Sebastian*, 1574, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France.



Figure 20: Frédéric Bazille, *View of the Village*, 1868, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.

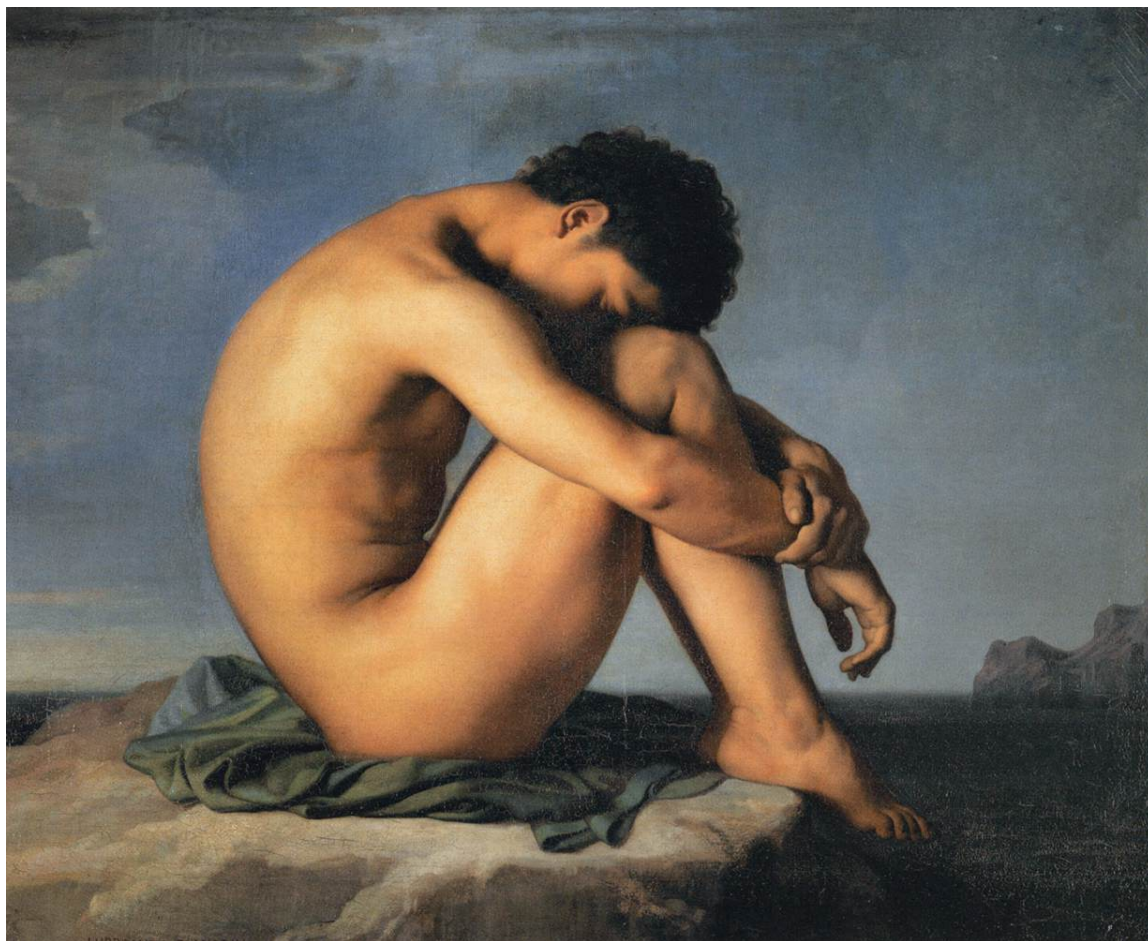


Figure 21: Hippolyte Flandrin, *Jeune homme nu assis au bord de la mer*, 1836, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 22: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Young Boy with a Cat*, 1868, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



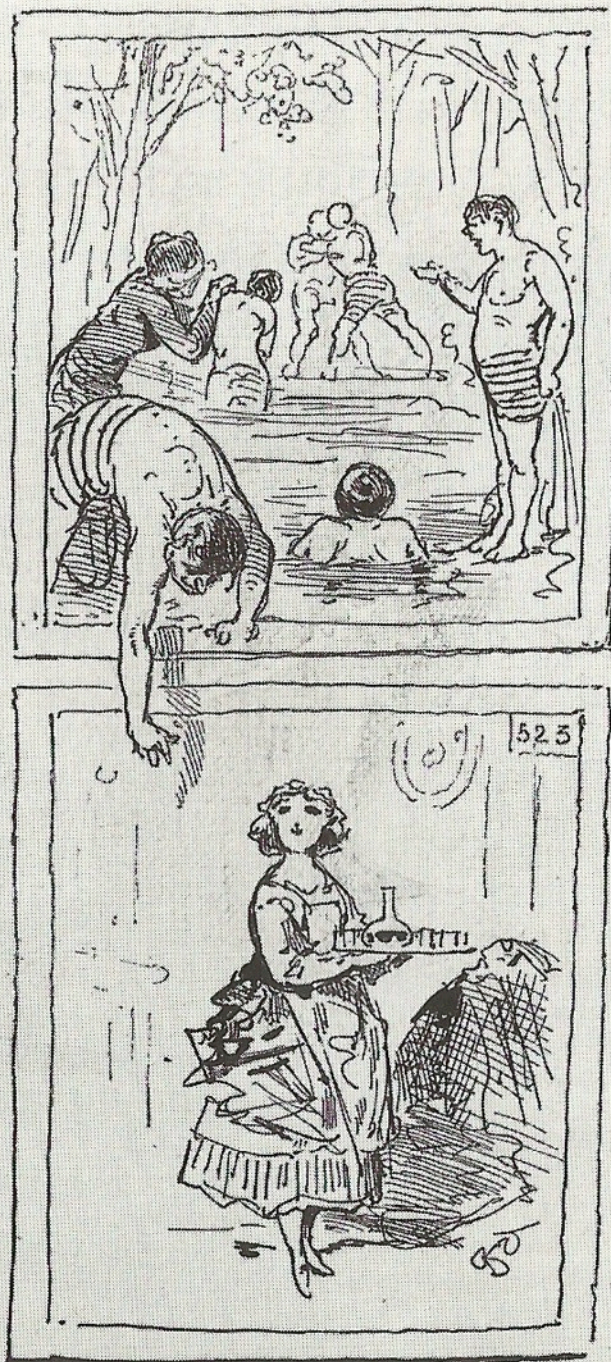
Figure 23: Borghese Hermaphrodite, marble, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 24: Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 25: Thomas Eakins, *The Swimming Hole*, 1884-85, oil on canvas, Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.



LA SOUBRETTE DE CHAPLIN.

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— Mademoiselle, soyez donc assez aimable pour nous passer un petit verre, ça nous donnera du ton. Nous en avons bien besoin!...

Figure 26: Bertall, Caricatures of *Summer Scene* by Bazille and *Girl Carrying a Platter* by Chaplin, 1870. *Journal amusant*, May 28, 1870.



Figure 27: Frédéric Bazille, *Family Reunion*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 28: Charles Gleyre, *Hercules and Omphale*, 1862, oil on canvas, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

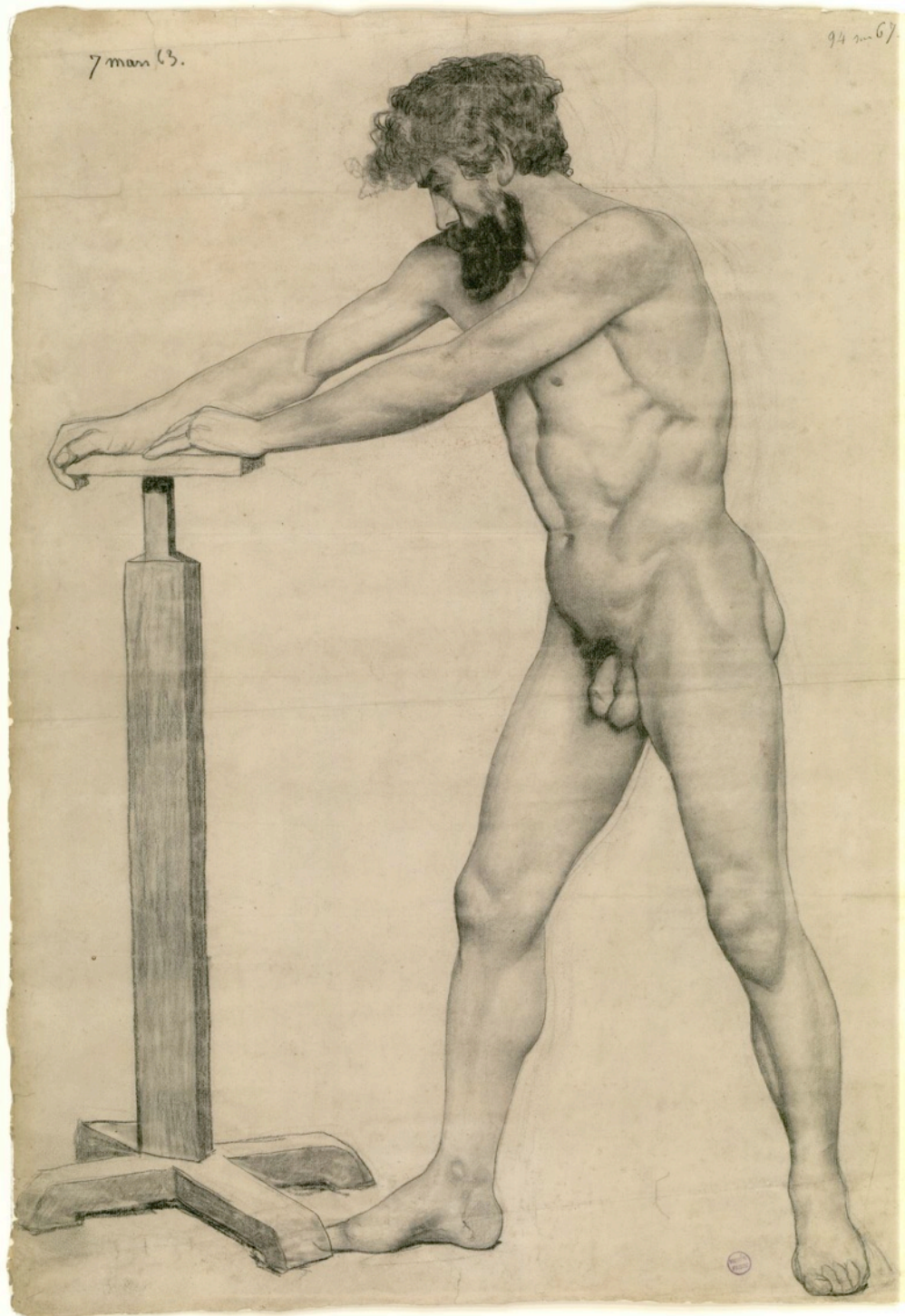


Figure 29: Frédéric Bazille, *Académie de l'homme*, 1863, conté crayon and charcoal on paper, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 30: Jacques-Louis David, *Oath of the Jeu de Paume*, 1790-92, pen, ink, wash, and white highlights on pencil strokes drawing, Palace of Versailles.



Figures 31-33: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Studies for *Baronne de Rothschild*, ca. 1848, graphite on paper, Musée Bonnat, Bayonne, France.

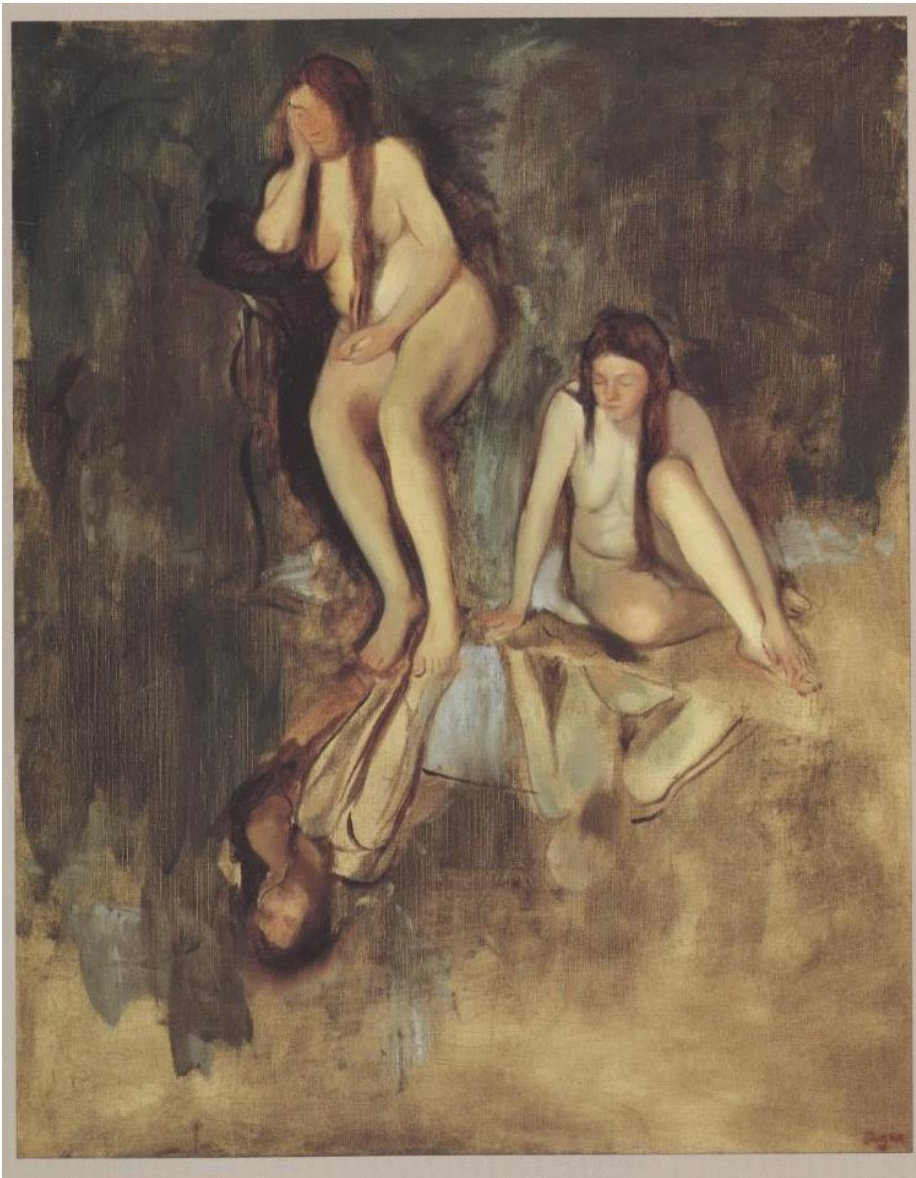


Figure 34: Edgar Degas, *Study for Mlle Fiocre in the Ballet "La Source,"* ca. 1868-69, oil on canvas, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York.



Figure 35: Edgar Degas, *The Bellelli Family*, 1858-1867, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 36: Félix Régamey, Caricature of *La Tour de Nesle*, published in *Le Boulevard*, February 8, 1865.

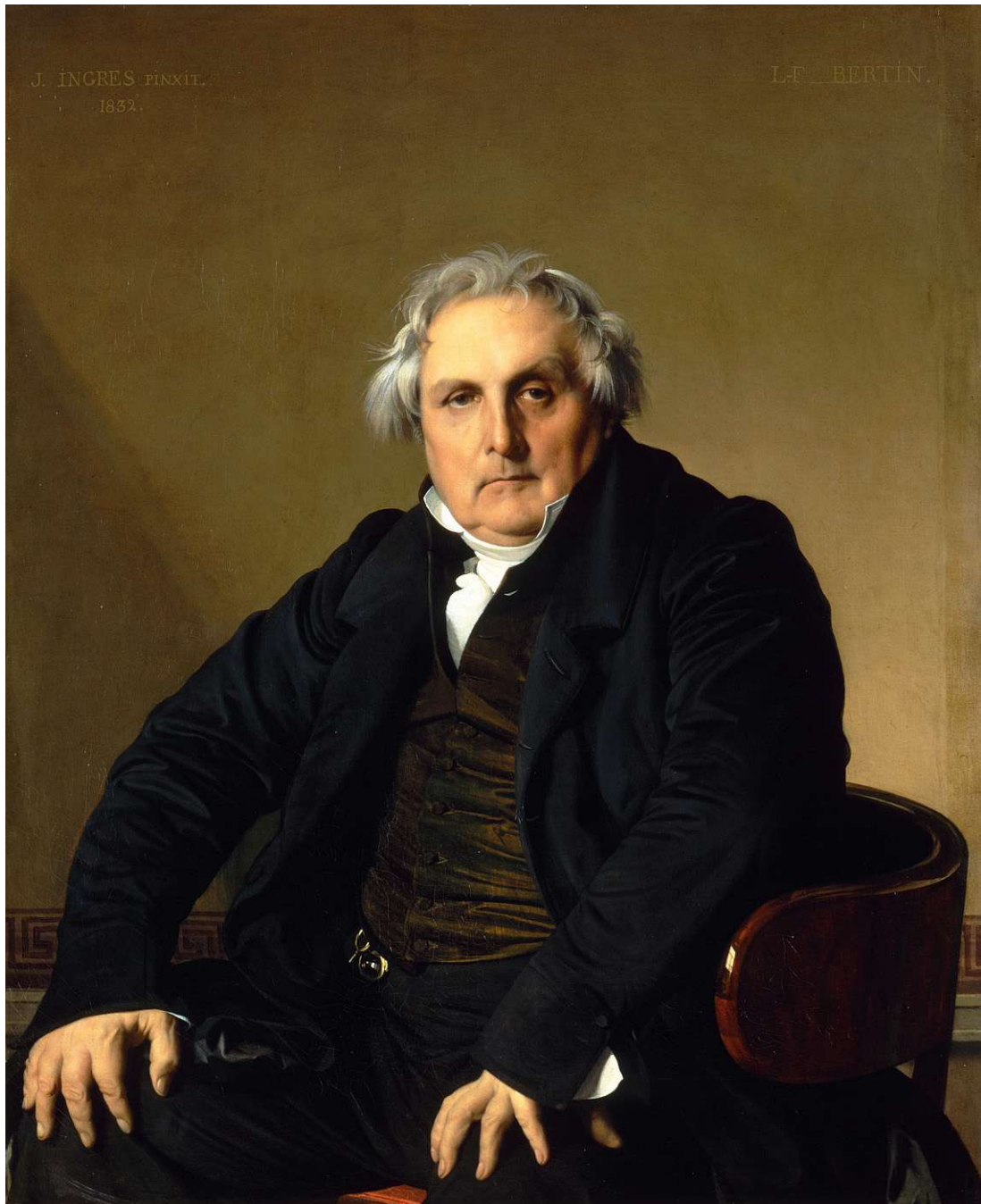


Figure 37: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Monsieur Bertin*, 1832, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 38: Claude Monet, *Women in the Garden*, ca. 1866, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figures 39-40: Fashion plates from *Le Monde elegant*, ca. 1866.



Figure 41: Edgar Degas, *Victoria Dubourg*, 1868-69, oil on canvas, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio.



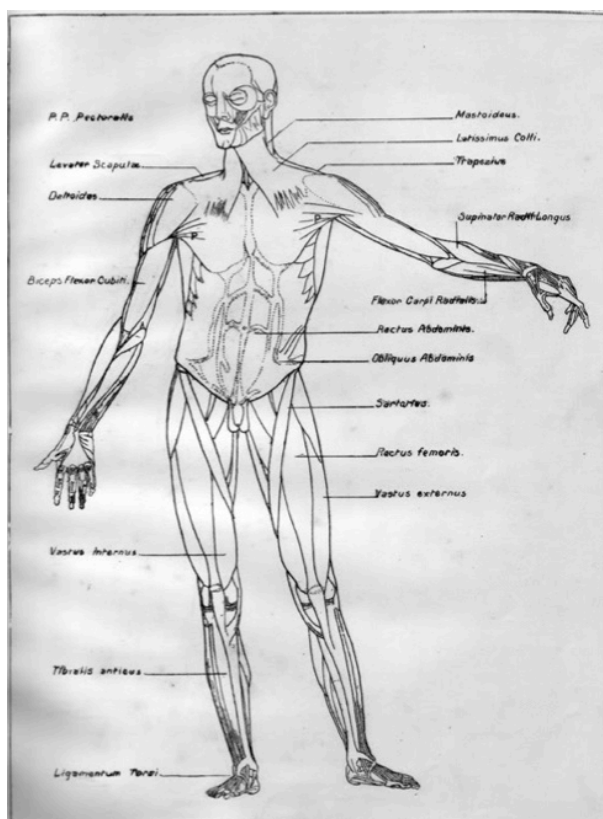
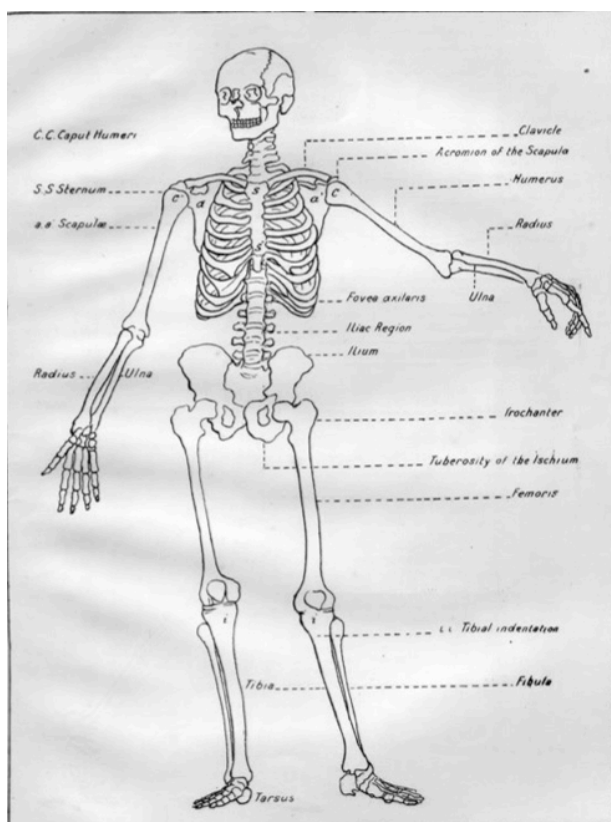
Figure 42: Edouard Manet, *Music in the Tuileries*, 1862, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London.



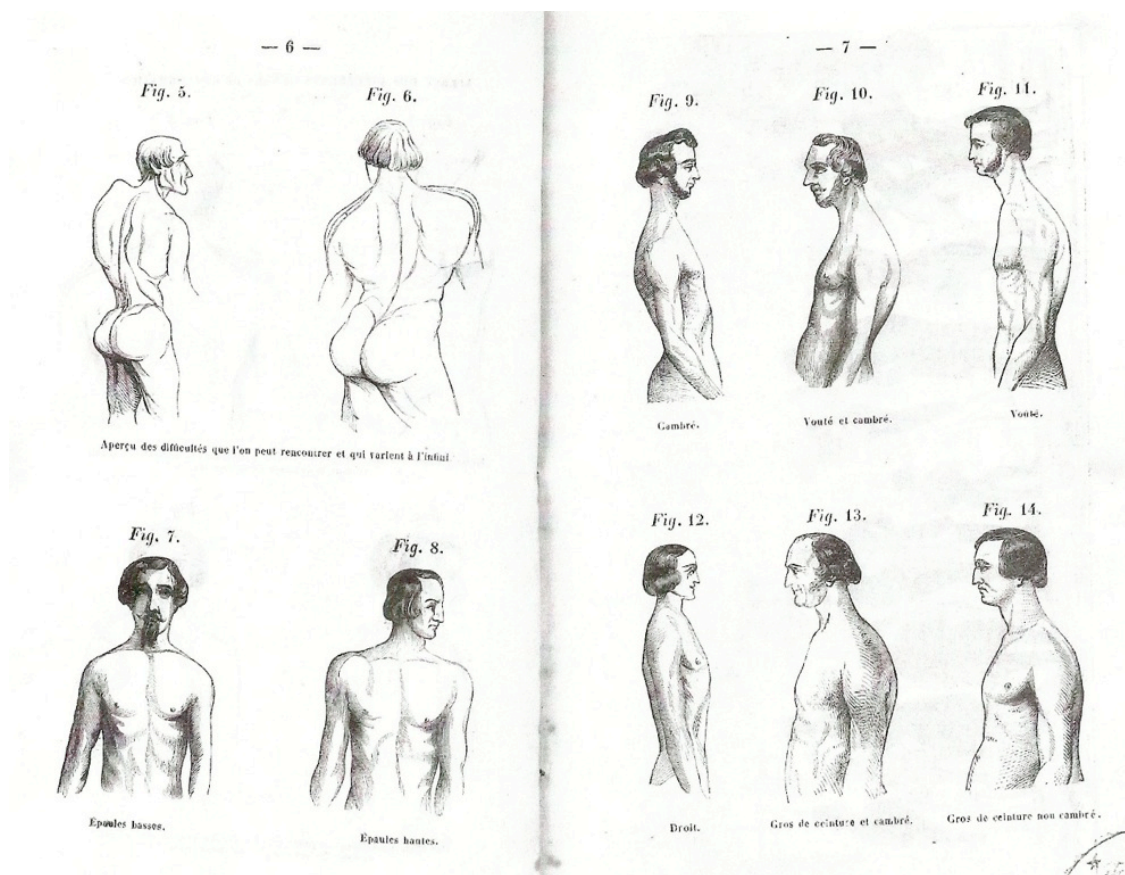
Figure 43: Frédéric Bazille, *Edouard Blau*, 1866, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



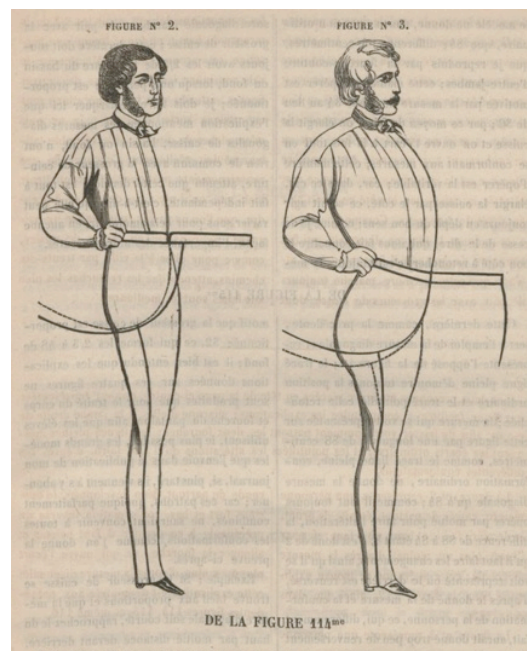
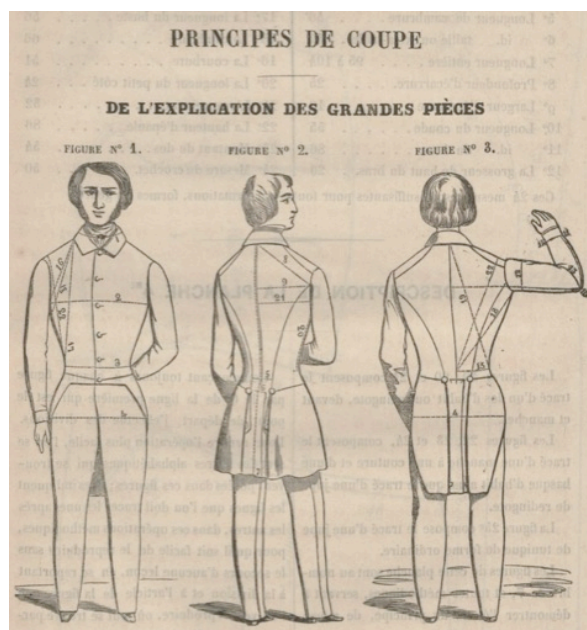
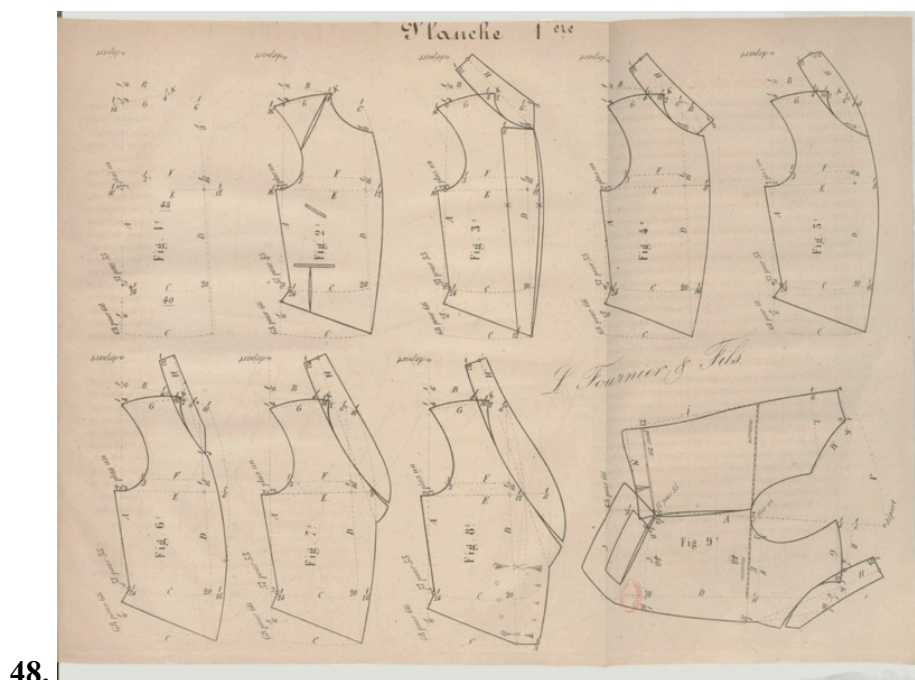
Figure 44: Frédéric Bazille, *Edmond Maître*, 1869, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Figures 45-46: Illustrations from Henry Wampen's "Anatomy for Tailors," 1850.



Figures 47: Illustrations from Lavigne's *Méthode du tailleur*, 1847.



Figures 48-50: Illustrations from Fournier's *Méthode du cours ordinaire*, 1860.



Figure 51: Frédéric Bazille, *Self-Portrait*, 1865/66, oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 52: Claude Monet, *Garden at Saint-Adresse*, 1867, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 53: Edouard Manet, *The Balcony*, 1868-69, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 54: Henri Fantin-Latour, *Studio in the Batignolles*, 1870, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 55: Claude Monet, *Camille*, 1866, oil on canvas, Kunsthalle Bremen, Germany.



Figure 56: Edouard Manet, *Lady with a Fan (Portrait of Jeanne Duval, Baudelaire's Mistress)*, 1862, oil on canvas. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.



Figure 57: Frédéric Bazille, *Studio on the Rue de Furstenberg*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.

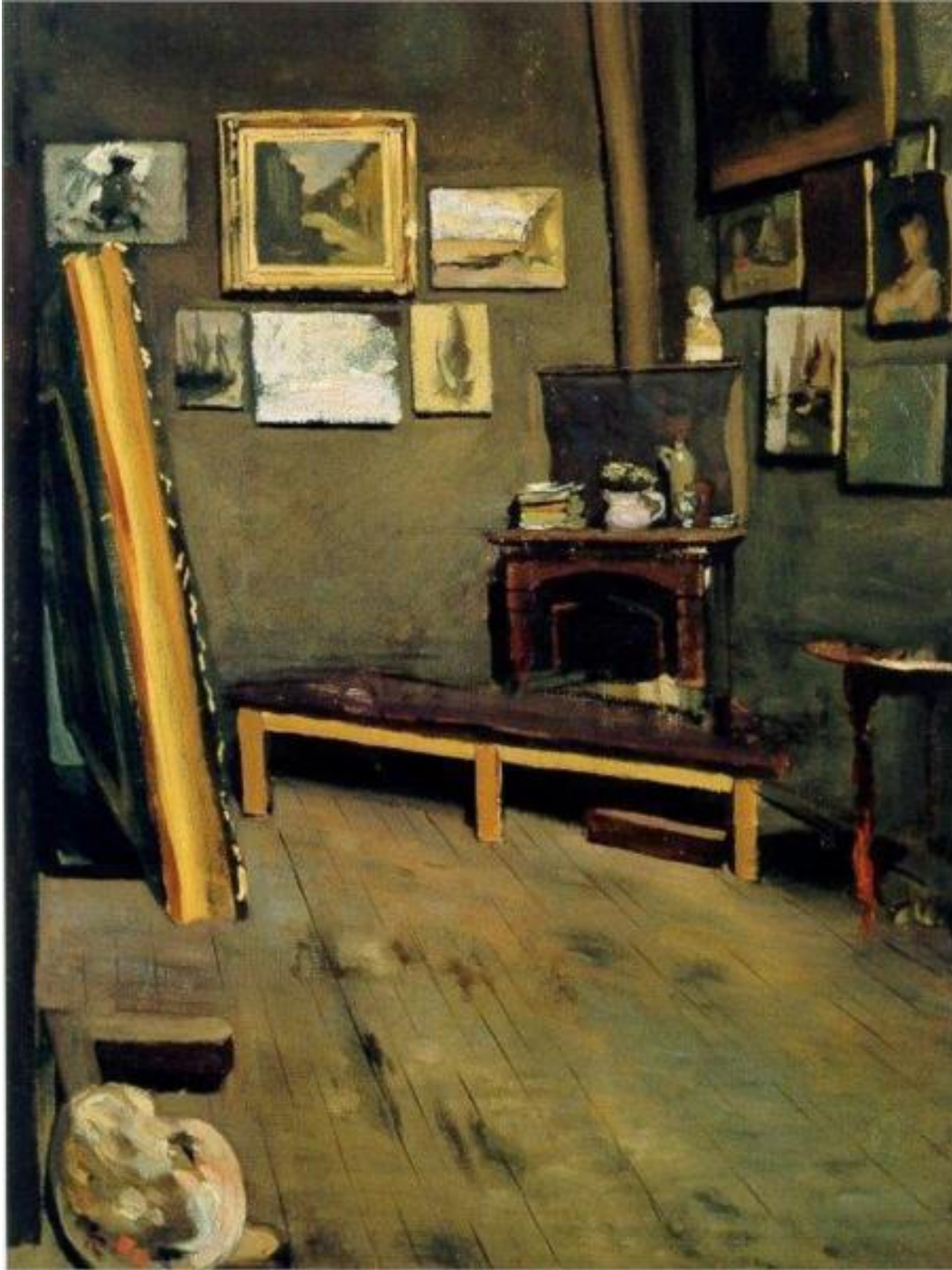


Figure 58: Frédéric Bazille, *Studio on the Rue Visconti*, 1867, oil on canvas, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.



Figure 59: Frédéric Bazille, *Studio on the Rue de la Condamine*, 1870, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 60: Frédéric Bazille, *The Improvised Field Hospital*, 1865, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

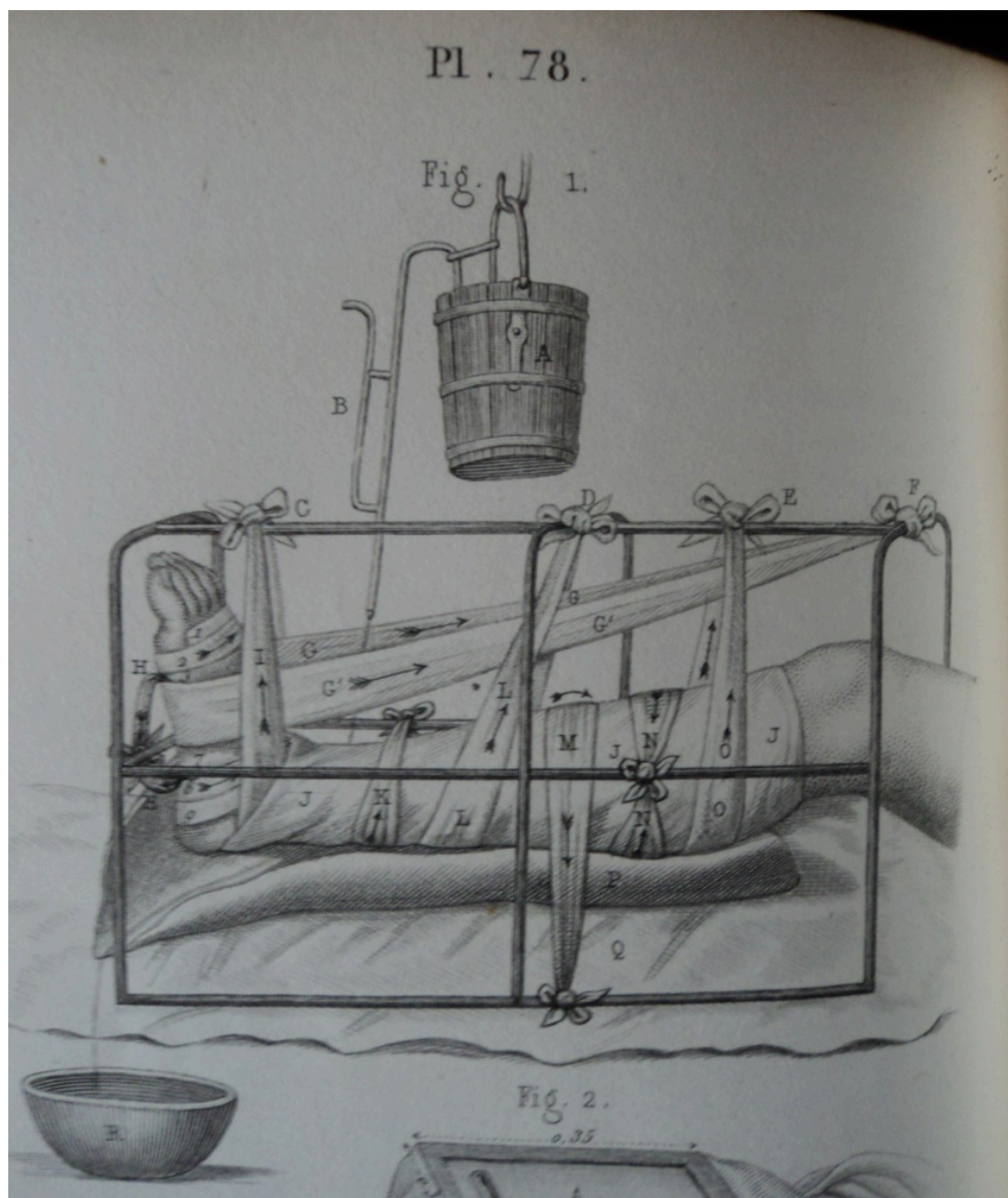


Figure 61: Illustration from Joseph Goffres, *Précis iconographique de bandages, pansements et appareils*, 1853, p. 544.



Figure 62: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Inn at Mère Anthony's*, 1866, oil on canvas, Nationalmuseum Stockholm.



Figure 63: Frédéric Bazille, *Forest of Fontainebleau*, 1865, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 64: Frédéric Bazille, *Landscape at Chailly*, 1865, oil on canvas, Art Institute of Chicago.



Figure 65: Edouard Manet, *Portrait of Madame Brunet*, 1860-63 (reworked 1867), oil on canvas, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California.

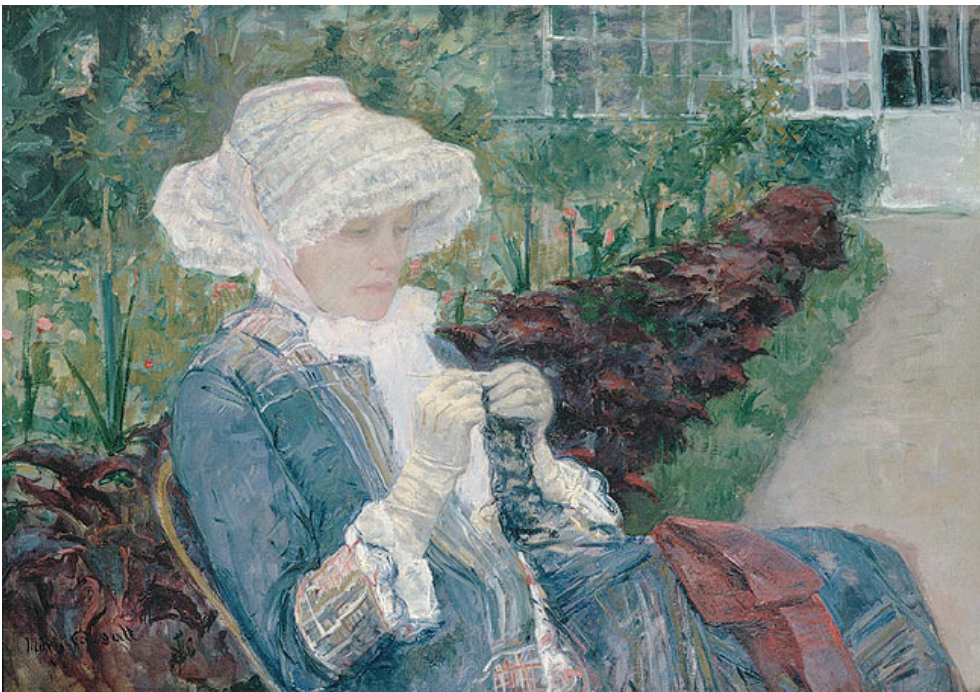


Figure 66: Mary Cassatt, *Lydia Crocheting in the Garden at Marly*, 1880, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 67: Frédéric Bazille, *Portrait of Alfred Sisley*, ca. 1867 (now lost).



Figure 68: Frédéric Bazille, *Pierre-Auguste Renoir*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 69: Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus*, 1523, oil on panel, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

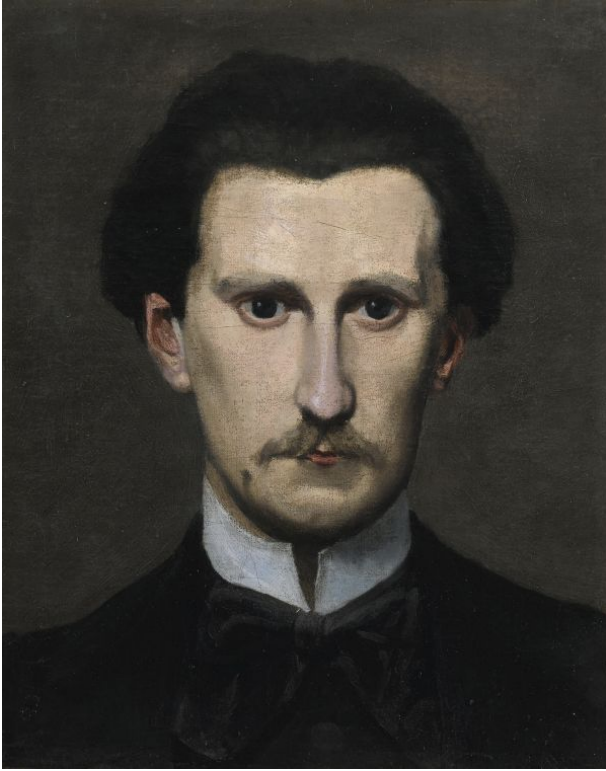


Figure 70: Frédéric Bazille, Fragment of a *Portrait of Edmond Maître*, ca. 1867, oil on canvas, Private Collection.



Figure 71: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Portrait of Edmond Maître (Le Liseur)*, 1871, oil on canvas, Private Collection.



Figures 72-73: Claude Monet, fragments of *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, ca. 1865-66, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 74: Claude Monet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, ca. 1865, oil on canvas, Pushkin Museum, Moscow.



Figure 75: Claude Monet, *Bazille and Camille (Study for Luncheon on the Grass)*, 1865, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Figure 76: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Couple (Les fiancés)*, ca. 1868, oil on canvas, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, Germany.



Figure 77: Frédéric Bazille, *Still Life with Heron*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 78: Alfred Sisley, *The Heron with Wings Spread*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 79: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Frédéric Bazille*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 80: Claude Monet, *Seaside at Sainte-Adresse*, 1864, oil on canvas, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



Figure 81: Frédéric Bazille, *The Beach at Sainte-Adresse*, 1865, oil on canvas, High Museum of Art, Atlanta.



Figure 82: Auguste Baussan, *Memorial to Jules Planchon*, 1894, Montpellier, France.



Figures 83-84: Frédéric Bazille, Studies of *Vendanges*, 1868, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 85: Frédéric Bazille, *Study of Saint-Sauveur*, 1863, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

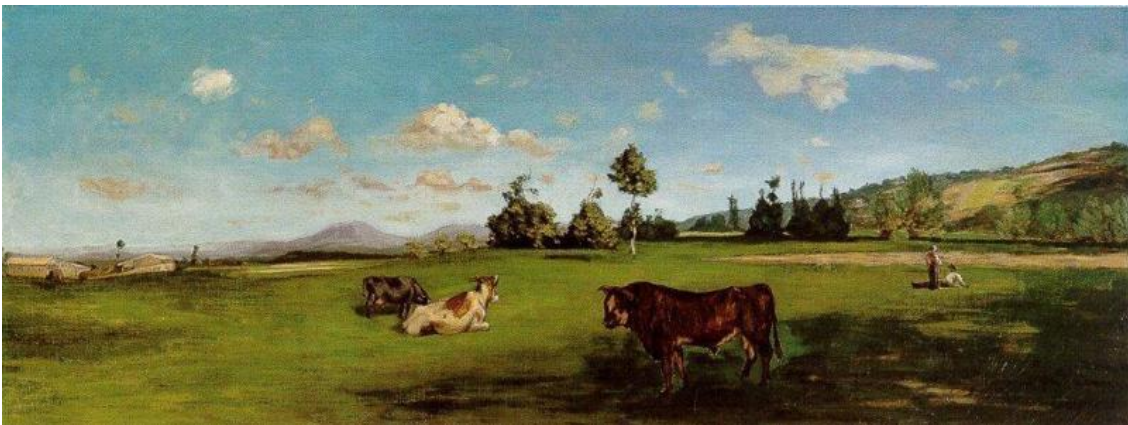


Figure 86: Frédéric Bazille, *Saint-Sauveur*, ca. 1865, oil on canvas, Private Collection.



Figure 87: Frédéric Bazille, Study of harvesters, RF 5259 no. 9, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 88: Frédéric Bazille, Study of harvesters, RF 5259 no. 16, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 89: Philips Wouwerman, *The Laborer's Repose*, ca. 1646-48, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 90: Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*, 1857, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 91: Jean-François Millet, *Man with a Hoe*, 1860-62, oil on canvas, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California.



Figure 92: Charles-François Daubigny, *Les Vendanges en Bourgogne*, 1863, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.



Figure 93: Frédéric Bazille, *The Ramparts at Aigues-Mortes*, 1867, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Figure 94: Frédéric Bazille, *Aigues-Mortes*, 1867, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 95: Frédéric Bazille, *Porte de la Reine at Aigues-Mortes*, 1867, oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 96: Maximilian Leenhardt, *Huguenot Prisoners at the Tour de Constance*, 1892, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 97: Eugène Delacroix, *Moroccans Conducting Military Exercises*, 1832, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 98: Draner, “France-Zouaves de la Cde. Imple.-tenue de Campagne,” ca. 1830, lithograph with applied color, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.



Figure 99: André Gill, "Le Zouave Guérisseur," cover of *La Lune*, September 1, 1867.



Figure 100: Charles Lhullier, *Portrait of Claude Monet in Uniform*, 1861, oil on canvas, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.



Figure 101: Frédéric Bazille, *Portrait of Alphonse Tissié*, ca. 1868, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 102: Frédéric Bazille, *Portrait d'un dragon*, 1869, oil on canvas, Private Collection.

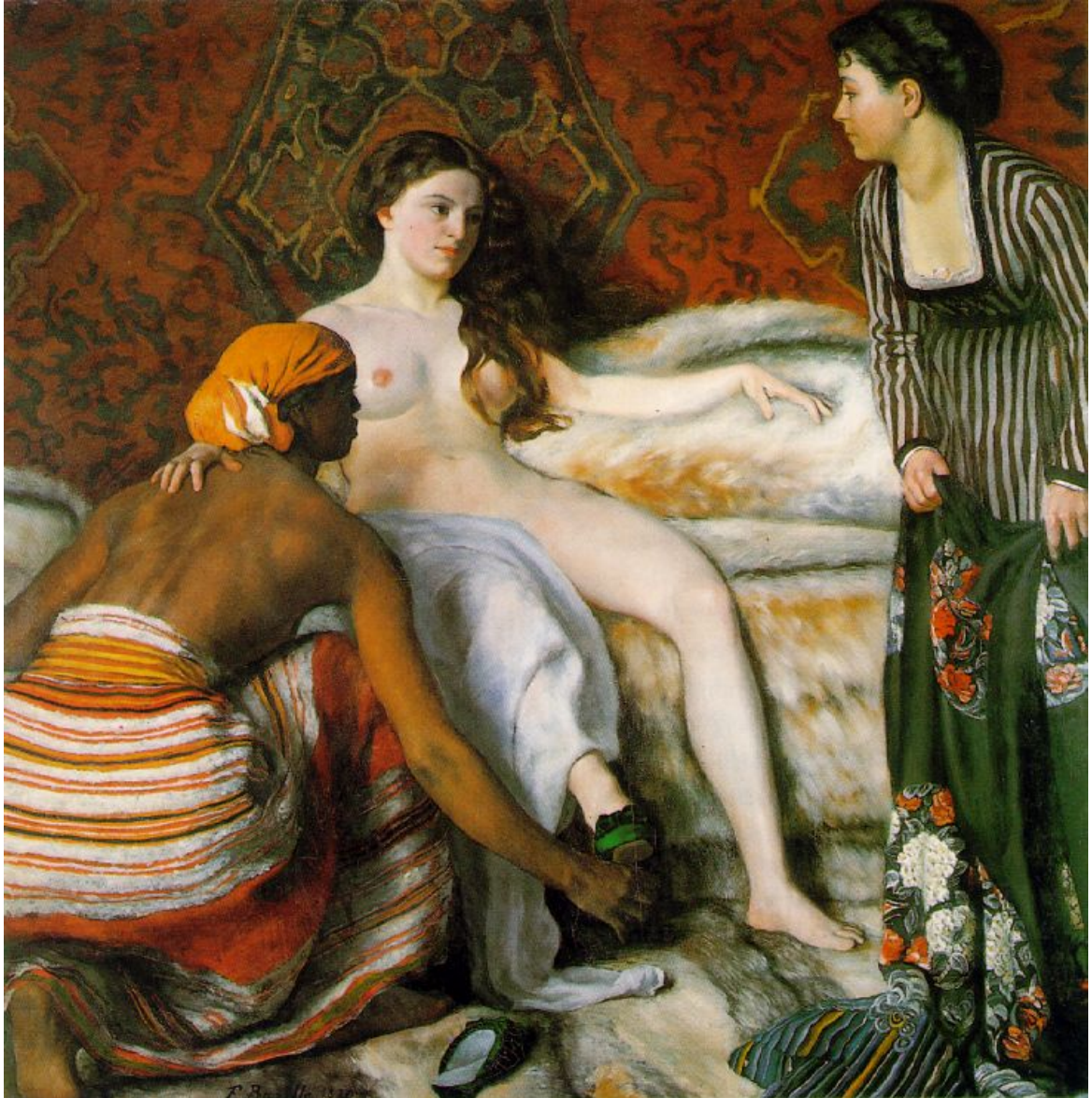


Figure 103: Frédéric Bazille, *La Toilette*, 1870, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



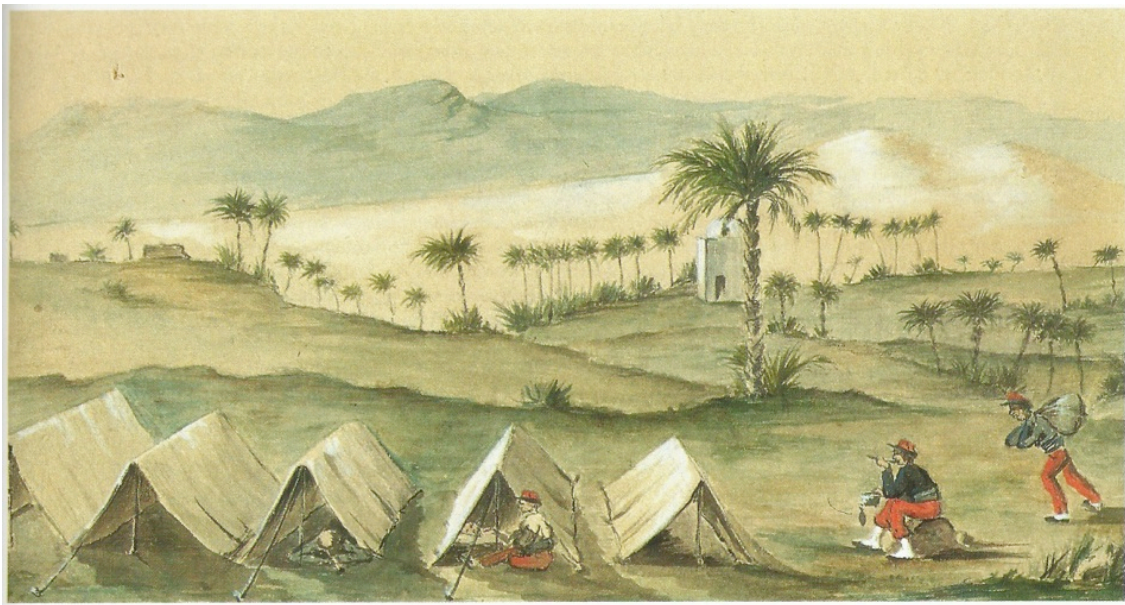
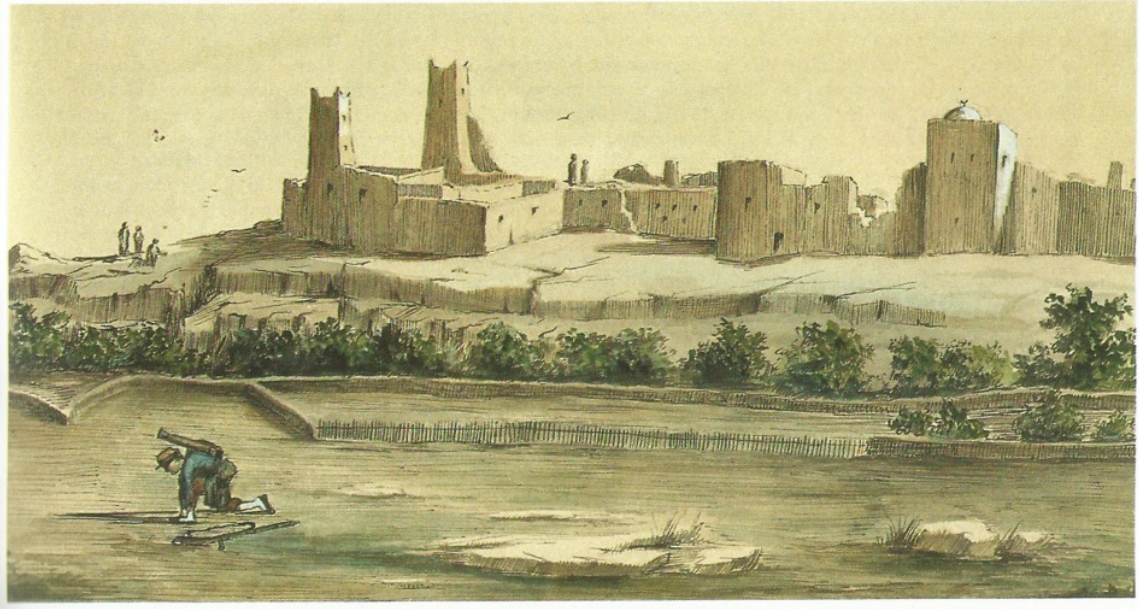
Figure 104: Gustave Courbet, *Preparation of the Dead Girl*, ca. 1850-55, oil on canvas, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts.



Figure 105: Frédéric Bazille, Soldier cartoon, RF 5260, folio 32 recto, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 106: Frédéric Bazille, Soldier cartoon, RF 5260, folio 39, recto, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figures 107-108: Frédéric Bazille, *Views of Africa (Constantine?)*, ca. 1870, watercolors, near RF 5260, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 109: Frédéric Bazille, *Ruth and Boaz*, 1870, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 110: Frédéric Bazille, *Mauresque*, 1869, oil on canvas, Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California.



Figure 111: Frédéric Bazille, *African Woman with Peonies*, 1870, oil on canvas, Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France.



Figure 112: Frédéric Bazille, *African Woman with Peonies*, 1870, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Figure 113: Frédéric Bazille, *La robe rose*, 1864, oil on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

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