

Édouard Manet, Théodore Duret and Japan

--representations of Japanese aesthetics in the late 19th Century Europe
in the contexte of Japonisme--

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As the title indicates, Théodore Duret (1838-1927) was ^{a person} ~~an important~~ ~~figure~~ who played the role of a bridge between 19th Century French painter, Édouard Manet and Japan. By focusing on this forgotten art critic^{le} and Japonisant, my talk proposes several new hypothesis as for Édouard Manet's Japonisme. Mainly three questions can be raised.

Firstly, how and why did Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe obtain a symbolic significance in the conception of Modern art? Secondly, how and to ^{which} ~~what~~ extent did Manet's Japonisant aesthetics contribute to the Modernist aesthetics? And thirdly, how was Manet's aptheosis realized, constituting the artist as one of the most important artists in the second half of the 19th century? I will argue that in all these three questions Théodore Duret exercised non-negligeable influences. ^{And} yet such facts have ^{remained} ~~been~~ almost completely ^{unnoticed} ~~ignored~~ even by the specialists of Manet studies ^{until now} ~~nowadays~~. How and why Duret's personal influence ^{was} ~~is~~ neglected by the posterity, and what does this negligence imply? We shall see that Duret's influence is all the more crucial as the traces of his personal interventions are almost completely erased from our collective memory. The politics of ^{ob} ~~ob~~lition by and around Théodore Duret is the basso consonante of our discussion.

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Let us begin by the first question. Manet's famous paintings Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe ^{has been} ~~is~~ believed to have provoked a scandal at the Parisien Salon des refusés in 1863. It has been commonly said (at least until in the late 70's) that the year 1863 marks a symbolic year in the evolution of modern art. The monopoly of the state run art market Salon was shaken by the Salon des

refusés authorized that year by the Emperor Napoléon III himself; the independent artists put into doubt the authority of the Académie des Beaux-Arts and the professors of the École des Beaux-Arts; the then dominant historical paintings and religious paintings were also to yield their supremacy in the classical hierarchy of Fine arts to landscape and genre paintings of everyday life; the subject matter or anecdote, either mythological or historical, were no longer of primary importance and what mattered henceforth was "the plane surface covered by colors assembled in a certain order" ["la surface plane recouverte de couleurs dans un certain ordre assemblés"] as Maurice Denis would put it in 1890. From the symbolical year of 1863, the awakening of the "New Painting" ["Nouvelle peinture"], to borrow the term ^{of} Edmond Duranty, (was set forth.)

The most devoted promoters of these ideas were, André Malraux, Georges Bataille and Gaëtan Picon, among others. Malraux declared "the pink penoir of the Olympia, the blue table-cloth of the Déjeuner sur l'herbe are evidently the stains of colors and its material is that of the pigment and not that of the represented things". Bataille, faithful to his theory of sacrifice, formulated that in this painting, "the brightness and dissonance of colors are so great that all else falls into silence". According to Gaëtan Picon, Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe marked the symbolic departure of the "birth of the Modern painting" ["Nanissance de l'Art moderne"].

So much ink has been already shed on the "scandal of the Salon des refusés" ^{of} 1863, and The Déjeuner sur l'herbe was singled out, with Whistler's Symphony in White as the main targets of the public resentment. However we are not sure since when precisely the Déjeuner sur l'herbe really become the notorious focus of the public attention. It is true that the painting was welcomed by rather negative remarks by the main contemporary art critics: Castagnary pointed out the defected anatomy, Thoré=Bürger found Manet's (three) paintings "provocative" and Ernest Chesneau recognized there a "subject matter chosen for a scandal". And yet these remarks do not testify to the "immense raillery", Théodore Duret reported in his biography of Manet published in 1902, Histoire de Édouard Manet et de son oeuvre. It was ^{as late as} in 1983 that one young scholar, Alan Krell blamed Théodore Duret of the fallacious fabrication of this "immense raillery" and declared that no other than Théodore Duret was mainly responsible for the staging of this mythological scandale of the Déjeuner sur l'herbe in 1863.

More curious than Alain Krell's condemnation is the fact that Théodore Duret, who was to become the first historiographer of Manet's Life and Work (beside Edmond Bazille's accounts and Antonin Proust's mémoire) ~~was~~ by no means

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eyewitness of the Salon des refusés of 1863. At that year Duret, at the age of 25, was a young republican opposition candidate ^{to} of the legislative election in his hometown Saintes, and the regional newspaper Indépendant de Saintes depicts his electoral campaign day by day. Judging from the schedules and dates, Duret could not have the time to go to Paris to have a look at the Salon des refusés this year. ^{here is} Duret's alibi [alibi] of absence at the Salon des refusés: this ^{however} simple fact has not been revealed by any scholar until now.

^{more or less} This surprising revelation is implicitly supported by Duret's own account in his biography of Manet. For Duret describes his unexpected encounter with Manet in Madrid in 1865 as their first meeting.

This year, Manet was so frustrated by the scandal, his Olympia had provoked in the Salon, that he fled from Paris to the Spanish capital. At the restaurant of the Hôtel de Paris, opened only two years earlier and situated near Puerta del Sol, Manet were pushing back all the dishes he had ordered as being not edible. Duret, who had just arrived from Portugal by a coach, was so hungry that he asked the waiter to bring back the dishes Manet had rejected, and began to eat them with an enormous appetite. At this scene, Manet lost his temper and stood up to confront this stranger, by saying: "you are making fun of me, knowing that I am Manet...", at this statement, Duret narrates, the stranger [Duret himself] was totally perplexed, because he had never heard of the name of Manet nor the scandal in question...

How could it be possible, then that Duret had known Manet's supposed scandal of the Déjeuner sur l'herbe two years earlier? By the way, it is possible to suppose, from this well-known anecdote, that Duret later imprudently but candidly projected this nervous reaction of Manet he observed in Madrid in 1865, (after the (real) scandal of the Olympia,) back into the context of Salon des refusés of 1863, as if Manet had also been welcomed by a similar "immense raillerie" [réilari] that year.

Anyway, Manet's acquaintance with Duret is dated from this happening and the record preserved at the Prado Museum confirms that Manet and Duret visited (the Prado) together on Sep. 1, 1865. Two years later, at the occasion of Exposition universelle (in 1867,) Duret published his first book on Peintres français en 1867 and devoted one chapter to Manet. The painter made a small portrait of the young art critic in token of their friendship...

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Now back to 1863. What is more significant than the mythological making of the Scandal of the Déjeuner sur l'herbe is another scandal which was to be repressed and forgotten since then. One huge painting by Gustave Courbet,

Retour de la conférence, representing the drunken priests in procession, was not only refused by the Salon but also rejected from the Salon des refusés of 1863, "for the reason of committing an outrage against the religious morality". This outspoken anti-clerical caricature with the ^{scale} ~~dimension~~ of a historical and religious painting (2.3m x ^{high} [on] ^{large} 3.3 m) was simply too much blasphemous to be presented in any French public sphere of the period. Gustave Courbet's intention of arousing the anger among the catholic authorities surrounding the Imperatrice Eugénie is obvious, and Courbet himself declared as follows in one of his letters. "I made this tableau in order that it should be rejected; which would bring me a fortune, the money". Courbet's anti-clerical machine de guerre was intended from the outset to provoke a political scandal (^{displaying} ~~demonstrating~~) his opposition to the Second Empire. The painting, Retour de la conférence, is said to have been ^{to} ~~materially destroyed~~ ^{it} as a "scandalous and impious dirty trick" ^{brought by a} ~~by a~~ fanatic catholic at the beginning of the 20th Century, ^{in order to} ~~and~~ thus ^{the painting} ~~is~~ no longer exists.

Curiously enough, however, this real scandal of Courbet's Retour de la conférence in 1863 is completely eclipsed and hidden by ^{the} ~~the~~ mythological scandal of Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe. By comparing the fate of these two paintings, it can be said that Modernist historiography required a false invention of the myth of Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe in order to inaugurate and celebrate -- retrospectively-- the triumph of "autonomy of art", whereas the double scandal of Courbet's Retour de la Conférence, being refused from the Salon des refusés, was also rejected, for the third time, from the modernist art historiography. Talking about the political scandal of an anti-religious painting is itself anachronistic and scandalous in the conception of modern art history, which pretended to be free from any political involvement. Thus Courbet's absurd masterpiece was not only materially lost; but its material loss was in a sense ratified by its being refused to be remembered as a scandal, on the symbolical level of historiography.

And it must be noted that Théodore Duret himself was closely engaged in this symbolical burial ("enterrement") of this last huge [anti-]historical painting by Courbet. By a curious coincidence, the painting had been executed in 1862 in a barn belonging to Duret's own brother in law, Etienne Baudry in Saintes, and Duret confessed having closely assisted in person at the work in progress. And yet, in his biography of Courbet published at the centennial of the birth of Ornans's Master, in 1918, Duret tried to persuade the readers of the absurdities and worthlessness of such a political work in Courbet's creation. While justifying the loss of such a highly politically charged

propaganda machine, Duret spared more than 10% of his pages 'on this lost work -- a plain contradiction-- which he had known better than anyone else.

All of Duret's effort seems to be concentrated on rehabilitating Courbet as an artist at the price of definitively obliterating Courbet as a political figure, ^{who was} under the influence of Pierre Joseph Proud'hon. Duret added in 1919, at the end of his new edition of Manet's biography, that "the historical painting to which man has given the name of Great Art is no longer but a memory of the past". In short, Manet's triumph ~~is~~ founding father of "modern art" and the canonization of the Déjeuner sur l'herbe went hand in hand, in Duret's historical writings, with the elimination of historical painting. The "de-politicization" of Modern Art (to use Linda Nochlin's term) was itself a political maneuver.

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It was after the Paris Commune that Duret fled Paris with his republican friend and rich banker, Henri Cernuschi (1821-1898), to make a tour du monde. Before setting sail to New York on June 8, 1871, Duret wrote from Liverpool to Édouard Manet: "I am so confused to leave Europe without paying for your paintings." It is known that during the Commune Manet deposited his main paintings with Duret, and constituted Duret as the executor of his will, in case of painter's death. After crossing the Atlantic and the U.S.A. Duret and Cernuschi disembarked in Yokohama on October 28, 1871. During their two month stay in Japan, they purchased many bronze wares, ceramics, ukiyoe-prints and books, including the huge bronze statue of the Meguro Bouddha, the largest specimen ever to be brought out from Japan.

On October 5, 1872, shortly before embarking for the return trip, Duret wrote again to Manet from Pondichery. "It seems as if we had not written each other for centuries. Cernuschi will bring back from Japan and China a collection of ^{such marvelous} bronzes, that nobody has ever seen. There are pieces which will completely overwhelm you. I would not say any more [Je ne dirais que ça]." Immediately after Duret's return to France, an impressionist painter, Camille Pissarro, wrote to him, "I will really be delighted if we can talk together about Japan. I am so interested in that extraordinary country, so fresh and so artistic". With his accomplished mission in Japan, Duret, as a rare eyewitness, was expected to serve as a sorte of apostle of Japanese aesthetics in his friendly Parisien artistic circles.

What were then the lessons Manet and impressionist painters could draw from Duret's experience in Japan. As far as painting is concerned, we can summarize them in ^{the following} three points. First, the expressive lines of the spontaneous drawing, second; the bold arrangement of the pictorial plane, free from the restraint of the European academic linear perspective and third, the wide usage of intensive pure colors under the luminosity of the open air.

Firstly, as for Manet's interest in Japanese and Oriental brush stroke, a striking example can be found in Manet's drawing of the Japanese spaniel, named Tama, which Duret has brought back from Yamato-Kôriyama in Japan. On a same leaf, Manet made the sketch of the dog together with awkward imitations of Japanese painters' seals and the head of the raven, which Manet was preparing for the lithographic illustration of Edgar Alan Poe's Raven, translated into French by his friend Stephane Mallarmé. It seems as if Manet intentionally left this study so as to demonstrate ostentatiously his indebtedness to Japanese lessons. In his important article, "Le Japon à Paris",

published in Gazette des Beaux-Arts in 1878, Ernest Chesneau applauded the "bold dripping" ("tache hardi") of Manet's drawing of the Raven as a remarkable achievement of the Japonisant aesthetics.

It is therefore no surprise that Duret, in his biography of The Life and Work of Édouard Manet (1902), tried to convince his readers of Manet's audacious innovation in drawing by comparing him with Hokusai.

"In Manet's case, the drawings generally remain in the state of sketch ("esquisse") or draft ("croquis"). These drawings were executed so as to grasp a fugitive aspect, a movement, a trait or an eminent detail (...). The slightest object or its detail, which had interested his eye was immediately fixed on the paper. These drafts or drawings which we can call snap-shots, show how surely Manet grasped the characteristic trait, the decisive movement to be singled out. To compare with Manet in this order, I can find nobody else but Hokusai, who knew how to combine the simplification with a perfect determination of the character in his drawing made of the first attack on the Mangoua. Also Manet much admired what he could see of Hokusai, and the volumes of Mangoua accessible to him were welcomed by his unconditional praise" (Duret 1902/1906, p.211).

Thus, thanks to Hokusai's Manga, Manet's often criticized "unfinished" drawings were justified as an instantaneous fixation of fugitive aspects. His apparently uncertain and capricious technique in brush stroke was also positively appreciated as his merit rather than defect. Moreover, Duret defined this instantaneous fixation of the fugitive aspects by the spontaneous drawing as the essence of the "impressionistic" aesthetics. "Handling the paintbrush with the elevated arm, the Japanese artists, for whom no retouch is possible, fixes his vision on the paper by the first attack ("de prime saut"), with a boldness, gracefulness and confidence". And This is why, according to Duret, "the Japanese artists are worth being recognized as the first and the most perfect of the Impressionists" (Duret, 1885, p.167).

However, Duret's explanation would have easily lost its ground if the fact had been known that Hokusai and other ukiyo-e craftsmen did not make their drawing by the first attack ("de prime saut") nor by capturing living ("saisir sur le vif"), but that their technique depended much more on "de chic", i.e. on a "memory of the hand" as Charles Baudelaire despicingly defined. The apparently improvised "sketch made after life" ("dessin d'après nature") of the Manga, was in reality more based on the physical skill of the habitual hand trained by the repetitive copying of masters' model, rather than on the direct observation of nature and spontaneous fixation of its effects. In short, Duret's effort of authenticating Manet's impressionist aesthetics by referring to Hokusai's Manga

proves to be baseless and positively misleading....

Secondly, in terms of composition, the free arrangement of the pictorial plane, clearly indifferent to the academic principle of the Western linear perspective, is commonly observed in the layout of Hokusai's Manga. Duret observes that "in the first volume of Mangua, the human figures and objects have only one inch or so, and scattered here and there, from the top to the bottom of the pages, without the ground to sustain them nor the background to put them forward ("repousser"). And yet, they are posed there with such a convenience and economy that each of them retains its movement and characteristics of its own lank and position" (Duret, 1882, p.167).

Once again, and curiously enough, it was the similar strangeness of "découpage", "assemblage" and "montage" observed in Hokusai's Manga, that was what the contemporary European critics blamed Manet for. Quoting freely from diverse sources ranging from such classics as Titiano, Velasquez and Goya to graphic illustrations and reproduction prints, Manet used to make up ~~a~~ combined image,⁵ and where the public noticed apparent lack of composition skill, distorted or miscalculated perspective and anatomically disproportionate human figures. Such shortcomings in Manet, however, could be perfectly defended in terms of Japanese aesthetics visualized in Hokusai's Manga, and ukiyo-e prints.

It would be misleading and preposterous, however, to suppose that the discovery of Japanese prints encouraged Manet to venture into such "anomalities" in composition. Rather it was only later that Hokusai's examples gave confirmation ex post facto to Manet's previous choices and Duret's explanation did justice to Manet's boldness only as an ulterior "catch up."

Thirdly, the intensity of pure primary colors and its juxtaposition in a bright open air condition were a constant preoccupation of Théodore Duret. As an eyewitness of Japan's nature, Duret claimed, probably not without some intentional exaggeration, that "the vivid primary colors of ukiyo-e prints which could appear excessive at first sight, were in reality quite faithful to the nature of Japan". In 1880, Duret wrote retrospectively as follows:

"When we looked at Japanese images, where the most contrasting and harsh colors were spread out, side by side, on the leaf, we finally understood that there was a new procedure worth trying which would reproduce certain effects of nature we had neglected or thought impossible to render until then. For, these Japanese images, which we had, at first, taken for a "bariolage" were, in reality, astonishingly faithful to the nature". (Duret 1885: p.67).

"Bariolage" was the term chosen by a conservative art critic, Paul Mantz, when he criticized in 1863 the violent tone of colors Édouard Manet had

employed in his Laura de Valence. Here as usual, Duret tried to justify this "bariolage", or an inharmónious jam of primary colors, by insisting on the "faithfulness to nature" of the crude coloration of Japanese prints. As a privileged traveller to Japan, Duret was entitled to testify to such "faithfulness to nature" ("fidélité à la nature") of the Japanese landscape ukiyo-e prints, where, as Duret put it, "the green, the blue, the red in their brightest tone [were] juxtaposed side by side without any intermediary half-tone or transition" (Duret 1885: p.17).

Incidentally ---or more than incidentally--, it was in 1874, or just one year after Duret's return from Japan, that Édouard Manet went to Argenteuil and, together with Claude Monet, painted the landscape by juxtaposing "side by side, without attenuation", the most striking tones, just as Theodore Duret recommended them to practice as "a new procedure worth trying". However, Manet's Argenteuil, presented at the Salon of 1875 was severely criticized by many saloniers because of its supernatural indigo-blue "pushed to its paroxysm" and by its deviation from the "ortography" of painting. So and so that even a friendly critic like Joris Karl Huysmans ironically called it "indigomanie", or an indigo-maniac disease. According to Huysmans' diagnosis, the impressionist painters were suffering from color blindness ("daltonisme"). It was against such an ill-natured criticism that Théodore Duret formulated the above mentioned --baseless-- anti-thesis claiming Japanese print's faithfulness to nature in its color rendition. According to Duret's fantastic opinion, it was not Impressionists' eye that were ill, but that the Europeans' rétina was too weak and too lazy to resist the truth of light effect the Japanese eye could experience in the open air. ✕

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So far we have examined three characteristics in Duret's interpretation of Edouard Manet, in reference to Japanese art, as Duret perceived it, i.e. (i) spontaneity in drawing (ii) freedom in compositional arrangement and (iii) the bold coloration.

Throughout these three points, Théodore Duret's way of interpreting Manet proved to be strongly biased, excessively exaggerating the affinities between Japanese aesthetics and Manet's art. It seems as if these similarities between the two would save Manet from the public incomprehension and guarantee, instead, the merit of his creation. "Japan" was a magical spell to transmute the notorious excentricity of Manet's work into its utmost quality. It was in this process of alchemy that Duret's idea --or ideology-- of Impressionism was elaborated. Let us remind here that Duret is regarded as one of the earliest

champions and authorities of Manet and the Impressionists. It would be surprising, then, to remark that Duret's view of Manet and his whole idea of Impressionism were largely relying upon his exaggerated and almost fantastic ideas, which we can now call Duret's Japonisme.

on Japanese aesthetics
Yet, in my opinion, Duret's Japonisme aesthetics, despite its strong bias and fantasy, did contribute to the defense and illustration of Manet, as the founding father of the Modernist aesthetics. Indeed, Duret was to play a vital role in the process of canonizing and legitimizing Manet as the most important and representative artist in the second half of the 19th Century French Art History. In the third and final part of my talk, I would like to put forward this hypothesis.

an emblematic figure of art
had a vital importance in the process of In my opinion, Duret's Japonisme aesthetics, mobilized in the defense and illustration of Manet (and the Impressionist painters) is also closely connected with the process of legitimizing and canonizing Manet. Duret's intention was to place Manet

In 1884, the following year of Manet's death at the age of 50, the retrospective Exhibition was held at the École des Beaux-Arts. At that moment Édouard Manet was still a highly controversial figure, and was by no means regarded unanimously as the painter who will represent the mainstream of the French 19th Century art history. Let us take just three typical examples of criticism to Manet. *A Retrospective*,

First, Edmond About, who was to enter into the Académie française that year, could not tolerate the Manet retrospective to be held at the École des Beaux-Arts. "Why didn't Manet come to the Art School while he was still alive; then he could possibly have been made a painter" ["on en aurait fait peut-être un peintre"]. For About, all the work left by Manet was simply an "enormous dunghill" ["énorme fumier"], and it was out of question to commemorate at the École an artist who had rejected the teaching of the École des Beaux-Arts. *itself*.

Second, Albert Kaempfer, then Directeur des Beaux-Arts had declared that to ask the hall of the Beaux-Arts for the Manet retrospective ~~was~~ almost amount^{ed} to ask the archbishop to open the gate of the Cathédrale Notre Dame for the glorification of, say, Voltaire [famous atheist in the Enlightenment].

Third, Albert Wolff, one of the most influential art critics of the day, had published in Le Figaro, of May 1, 1883, an obituary to Manet, and declared:

"Manet did not have the satisfaction of finding one of his paintings on the wall of the Luxembourg Museum [then the National Museum for Contemporary Art]. Future will revenge him by placing Le Bon Bock and L'Enfant à l'épée at the Louvres. It is an enough glory for an artist to die at the age of 50 and to leave behind himself two pages worth being collected among the manifestations of French painting".

Judging from the totality (about 60) of obituaries, Wolff's opinion is rather a positive account on Manet's work. Still, Wolff's judgement was a serious challenge to the defenders of Manet. For, by this statement, Wolff implicitly denied to recognize any value ^{at all} either to the Olympia or to the Déjeuner sur l'herbe. *Moreover*, Le Bon Bock was famous for its Flemish brown dark tone and L'Enfant à l'épée was an early piece of Spanish taste executed under the strong influence of Velasquez. Designating these two pieces as the representative masterpieces of Manet was seemingly ^a moderate ^{idea} and it was certainly a largely accepted ^{view} ~~idea~~. But what was hidden underneath was the categorical refusal ^{to} ^{of} Manet's impressionistic later works. Obstinate resistance to the

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open air and hatred to the unfinished brush-stroke were two constants of the conservative art criticism. To have the late Manet accepted by the public, the defenders and champions of Manet had to fight against these two formidable obstacles.

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The most critical challenge, the defenders of Manet had to confront, came on Feb. 4 and 5, 1884, when the auction sale of Manet's studio was taken place. Let me here present one hypothesis: a hidden revolution in artistic judgement was accomplished not by the scandal of the Olympia, ^{of 1865} nor by the mythological scandal of the Déjeuner sur l'herbe in the Salon des refusés ^{of 1863} but, ^{it was} in the auction sale of 1884. It was mainly as a result of the "successful" auction sale of Manet's studio in 1884 that the "scandals" were retrospectively singled ^{but} as relevant and memorable historical "facts". ^{= in question (if not necessarily fabricated)}

Until now, Manet's studio auction has not been seriously analysed, and even the Manet scholars have taken its success for granted, as if it were a matter of course. However, for those who were responsible ^{to} of the sale, the situation was totally different. (i) To realize at any ^{cost} ~~rate~~ the École des Beaux-Arts retrospective (which was made possible largely thanks to the political power of Antonin Proust, republican ex-Ministre des Arts and close personal friend of Manet) and (ii) to accomplish successfully the sale of the auction. ^{these} Here were "two decisive touching stones for the posthumous fate of Édouard Manet". The line I have just cited is from Théodore Duret, who had been constituted executor of Manet's testament by the will of the painter himself, and was to assume the responsibility of organizing the auction sale.

Here let us focus on the original register or the procès-verbal of the Manet Sale, conserved at the Archives de Seine. For, this document presents some ~~of the~~ inconsistencies with ~~the~~ already known and widely acknowledged accounts. The most striking discrepancy is relative to the two main paintings on the second day, ^{of the sale} i.e. Chez le Père Lathuille ^{at the price of} (5.000 fr.) and Le Linge (8.000 fr.). Chez le Père Lathuille has been believed to be bought by "M. Lehnhoff", then known as Manet's nephew, and Le Linge was publicly known as being bought by Eugène Manet, ^{8.000} painter's brother. However the procès-verbal revealed that, in reality, both of these two works were ^{payed} ~~bought~~ by Théodore Duret himself for the expense of as much as 13.000 francs. Curiously enough, the painting which appeared immediately after these two works was nothing but the Olympia, which had to play a symbolic role in the whole sale. The Olympia was withdrawn by Lehnhoff at the price of 10.000 frs., marking the highest price of the second day. The total transactions of the second day amounted to 43.745 frs. for 94

pieces.

From this revelation, associated with some factual data, five observations must be made. Firstly, the prices of main works in the auction were sustained by the family and friends of Manet. As for the second day of the auction, three main paintings i.e. Le Père Lathuille, Le Linge and the Olympia amounting to 23.000 frs. cover, by themselves, almost 60 % of the total transactions (of 94 pieces). Secondly, we can assume that the prices given by Duret to Chez le Père Lathuille and Le Linge were clearly a preventive measure to avoid the sharp drop in price of the following Olympia. How the bidding by Duret was intentional is evident when compared to the result of the first day. Among the main pieces, Nana made only 3.000 frs, Le Bar aux Folies-Bergères no more than 5.850 frs. Only, the Argenteuille, which had appeared before the two, "reached" (at least on the register) to 12.500 frs. The sharp slide down of the price clearly indicates the crisis. And Duret confessed himself the very day, in a letter to Emile Zola, ^{that} ~~the failure at~~ ^{was a} the bidding of the first day. Duret wrote: "I am worried about tomorrow's bidding, for Manet's family and friends have already used up all the available resources at today's sale."

the fact concealed
Thirdly, while Manet's family and friends practically bought back and sustained the main works in the auction, they took pains not betraying uselessly such a negative impression to the public. Let alone Duret's personal expense, which was kept secret to the public. Koëlla Lehnhoff, who took Argenteuille (by ~~12.500~~ frs.), was in reality the unique son of Édouard Manet, and expert Jacob, who took the Olympia (by 10.000 frs.), was the representant of Mme. Manet. And according to an eyewitness, both pieces were withdrawn without any real bidding being taken place. It seems that the affair had been settled before hand as if a premeditated insider's business. Forth, it must be added, for your reference, that at that moment of the auction, nobody bought Manet's paintings at their estimated prices. The Argenteuille and The Bar aux Folies-Bergères had been estimated respectively 15.000 frs. and 10.000 frs.

Finally, it must be already clear that the prices presented and sustained by Manet's camp betrays a certain tendency. Apart from the Olympia and the Bar aux Folies-Bergères (both withdrawn by the family, as ^{previously} scheduled), all other main works so far discussed were more or less controversial pieces because of their impressionistic overtones. As we have already seen, Argenteuille had been criticized for its excessive indigo even by a friendly critique, J.K. Hysmans, who judged at the Beaux-Arts retrospective that "the later works of Manet remained mediocre". Chez le Père Lathuille and Le Linge were ~~only~~ highly appreciated by Stephan Mallarmé but were harshly attacked by Paul Mantz, himself

ex-Ministre des Beaux-Arts, who had declared "not being able to recognize any of the traces of the so often discussed open air" in these pieces.

The high prices given to these later and highly debatable impressionistic works undoubtedly betrays the intention of Manet's family and organizers of the auction sale. At this privileged but risky place for the "social construction of new value" they aimed at creating a new market which would support the impressionistic experimental works, ^{which were} remaining unsold in Manet's studio. Obviously, what was at stake was the future of Impressionism. Without the "success" of Manet auction sale, no brilliant future could be expected to such artists as Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Renoir etc. then known by the disdainful name of the Batignolles School, of whom Manet was once regarded as the leader. It was by no means by chance that the person in charge of the sale, Théodore Duret, was to become the champion and chief defender of the Impressionism, and the appraiser-commissionner, Paul Durand-Ruel was to be remembered in history as the generous protector and the main marchand-dealer of the Impressionist painters.

In short, the sale of Manet's studio was conceived and "directed" (in a theatrical sense of the term) by those script-writers (Duret) and stage directors (Durand-Ruel) speculating on the future rise in price of the Impressionist paintings. Besides, the Manet auction was a hidden battlefield of face-to-face confrontation between its organizers and the conservative art critics like, Paul Mantz, A. Wolff and Huysmans, ^{and} ~~of which~~ the audience were ^{asked} ~~summoned~~ to serve as arbitrators ^{of this ultimate confrontation} ~~final death match~~.

4

The two days bidding in 1884 has been perceived as a "success" or (at worst as a "demi-succès") and was taken as a matter of course by many Manet specialists. However it must be noted that without the "success" of the auction in 1884, the status Manet was going to enjoy (and still enjoying) as "the founding father of modern art" could not have been ratified. Duret was, ^{among} ~~others~~, one of the key persons who staged the auction and gave it the outlook of a "success" at the auction hall and contributed thereafter to diffuse this image of an "unexpected success" to the posterity. In his biography of Manet (1902), Duret gave the following description.

"The sale, which had begun in such a precarious conditions, immediately took an unexpected successful looking (...) The prices looked extraordinary. The spectators, who were looking forward to the failure and ready to burst out laughing, were now ^{forced to keep silence} ~~forced to keep silence~~. Manet sells ! the crowd ^{stay in} ~~stay in~~ R

was saying in astonishment at the excit door...".

In 1884, however, immediately after the auction, Duret had made a confession in a more reserved tone. "My worry [about the sudden slide down of prices] fortunately did not take place on the second day, and the studies most difficult to be accepted also found buyers (...). The public takes the result as an enormous victory. And I myself think I have enough reason to be satisfied".

Although Duret was keeping silence on the issue, we already know that more than 30 % of the total amount of the second day~~s~~ was sustained by nobody [^] else than Duret himself, to prevent the slide down of the prices and to save the face of the Olympia. Without exaggeration it was at least partly by his personal sacrifice, that Duret succeeded in creating the impression of the "success" of the auction. Here is the reason why Duret found himself "worth being satisfied".

The prevailed image of the "success" was almost a fiction, and underneath, there was a hidden reality: the critical shortage of necessary fund at the side of Manet's supporters. But this critical situation, revealed in Duret's letter to Zola in '84, has been entirely effaced from the description of 1902, leaving no hint ~~at~~ any possible disaster. But Duret cannot be blamed for this manipulation and concealment. For the publication of Manet's biography in 1902 had previously excluded any such possibility of describing the disaster in the auction. On the contrary, it was nothing but the "success" of the aucution in 1884 itself that made the publication of Manet's biography possible.

*

Before concluding, let us ask the final question. What has happened by this "success" of the auction ? Three remarks will be necessary. First, a total upside-down of a value judgement was accomplished by the auction. The observation of Albert Wolff, who was at the auction hall of the Hôtel Drouot, is worth being ~~analysed~~ ^{analysed}. ~~cited~~ ^{cited} 2

"I was contemplating for one hour, not without inquietude, the way his friends, the passionate and the speculators were snatching not only the works where Manet's talent is triumphantly sparkling but also the most insignificant things as value of money or as valeur of art. Even the portraits [in water-Colors, and printed ^s matters], half effaced because of the moisture in the studio [^] could obtain a relatively insane prices ["les prix relativement insencés"]".

"The most insignificant things" ["Les choses les plus insignifiantes"] were precisely what Théodore Duret, in his letter to Zola, was worrying about by calling them "the studies most difficult to be accepted". However, far from being insignificant, these fragments, "les plus difficiles à faire

accepter", ~~Manet~~ had to be accepted de facto at the auction, for the auction was the place where the "most insignificant things" should be transfigured and constructed into commodity goods to be circulated, with profit, in the art market.

Secondly, it must be already clear that this overturn in aesthetic value judgement is concomitant with the aesthetics of Japonisme Duret was preaching in explaining Manet. Unfinishedness, fragmentality, sketch-like ephemerality, spontaneity in execution, crude primary colors under the open air were the characteristics Duret was praising in Manet by forcing comparison with Japanese ukiyo-e prints and Oriental ink drawings. ^{it is} Needless to ^{repeat} say that this overturn in aesthetic value judgement was a necessary prerequisite for the future of Impressionism as a whole.

Thirdly, it is remarkable that Wolff was saying that "this auction" was an "assembly of friends and hallucinated", and which was "one of the most fascinating madness of our time" ["folies de notre temps"]. Wolff coolly and cynically grasped that this revolution in artistic taste had been realized with some "insanity" of the people possessed by some collective "hallucination". The auction was a kind of public stage magic show of alchemy, where "les choses les plus insignifiantes" underwent a transsubstantiation and became objects of admiration (as well as that of speculation). Incidentally, Wolff had seen with amazement these series of posthumous promotion of Manet, as an "unexpected apotheosis" ["apothéose imprévue"]. And he sighed "les amis de Manet sont terribles" ["Manet's friends are ^{awfully terrifying}"].

Now conclusion. As Pierre Bourdieu ~~has~~ put it, what has been definitively launched by Manet and his friends was "a sort of bankruptcy of the Central Bank of the symbolic capital in art". Ironically enough, it was not the defenders of Manet but rather their convinced enemy, Albert Wolff, who was horrified at the "institutionalisation of the anomie", which was plotted and successfully realized at the 1884 Manet auction. As a last citation, let's quote here from Camille Pissarro's observation which cast an ironical insight into this "symbolic revolution".

"Manet was a great painter but he had a fault, he was starving for being recognized by the constituted authorities, he believed in the patent, he aspired to the honor. He died without attaining it. Duret, Antonin Proust are named executor of his last will, and to frame up his exhibition with solemnity, they found it best to appoint the worst officials, Manet's relentless enemies [like Wolff], to the organizing committee, so as to give an official

certificate ["cachet officiel"]. All the bourgeoisie are there, all those who loved [irony !!] and defended the artist. Shocking ! Backward! (...) It's miserable, but it's therefore in good order ["c'est bien dans l'ordre"].

Here is a merciless observation by an anarchist to the paradox of an alienated bourgeois artist. Manet's artistic achievement had prevented him from obtaining the social honors he aspired to. And yet the posthumous honor prepared by Manet's republican friends amounted to a spiritual treason, a betrayal to Manet's will. To deceive the bourgeois one should disguise oneself as a bourgeois artist; but ^{once} after the ceremony of this masquerade (i.e. the auction) is finished, who can distinguish the disguised from the real bourgeois ? Those enemy bourgeois were plotted in the conspiracy of a symbolic revolution, tramed by Durand-Ruel and Duret. In "hallucination," they have paid cherfully for the "most insignificant things as value of money, value of art". Still those deceived bourgeois now leaves triumphantly the auction hall, without noticing that they have been deceived. ⁰ (and there was no need to notice it)

In contrast, those artists, like Pissarro himself, who would be able to make profit of this canonization of their precursor, felt betrayed and Pissarro scornfully despised the ceremony of canonization. Such are the ironies of the double treason implied in the symbolic revolution which fabricated the Manets as negotiable consumer goods in the snow-ball-like potlachi of the bourgeois art market. ✓

The following year in 1885, Duret and Durand-Ruel crossed the Atlantic to sell Manet and Impressionist painters in New York and Boston in search of new american markets, which would eventually contribute to the ultimate legitimization of Manet and Impressionists in their native France. As Pissarro grimly put it, "C'est roide, mais c'est bien dans l'ordre". At the centennial of the birth of Édouard Manet, in 1932, his "triumphe" will be commemorated by Paul Valéry and Manet will become a representative classic in the tradition of French Art History. And [to put the useless feet to the snake: ²⁴¹⁸蛇足] as the opposite side of this "mission accomplie", our "éminence grise" ²³²⁰ ["gray eminence"] so responsible to Manet's posthumous apotheosis, was now ready to fall into oblivion. But I am ^{sure} sure, Ladies and gentlemen, you can say | who ' this person was... ^{convinced} ^{now} that ^{for sure}

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