

# Monet, Manet, and Degas Living in Modern Times

By  
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Annotated  
by  
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— Tokyo —

*Monet, Manet and Degas*  
*Living in Modern Times*

by  
Sophia Wisener

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## まえがき

この書物は、西洋絵画の中でも最も人気のある印象派の三人の画家たち、モネ Monet、マネ Manet そしてドガ Degas の名画を選び、それらの現代的意味を考えようとしたものである。印象派の画家たちが登場した時代の状況はどうであったのか、彼らが対決しなければならなかったのはどんな勢力だったか、作品制作の上でどんな技法上の努力があったか、そしてまた、彼らの間での人間関係はどのように作用したのか、彼らの営為は全体としてどういうメッセージをわれわれに伝えようとしているか、本書はこうした問題点を基本において八点の名画を取り上げている。

本書の特長は、その名画のそれぞれが生み出される現場を物語りのスタイルで再現したところにある。美術史の中での印象派の位置づけを試みた前半部も重要だが、主眼は物語りの部分にある。そこでは印象派の画家たちが、周辺人物とともに生き生きと動き出すからである。それによって名画の背景にある現実がよく見え、それとともに絵画への理解も深まるであろう。著者の願いもそこにある。

ここに選ばれた作品は、マネの『エミール・ゾラの肖像』、『アルジャントゥイユ、ボート遊びの人たち』、『バルコニー』の三作、モネの『昼食』、『ラ・ジャポネーズ』の二作、ドガからは『ベレッリ家の肖像』、『アイロンをかける女たち』、そして『アブサント』の三作である。モネの『昼食』を扱う第 I 章ではマネとの交流を描いて、マネの色彩観と室内での創作態度へのモネの挑戦を際立たせる。戸外での自然の光と時間の流れの瞬間を捉えることに賭けた印象派の画家たちの描出法の特徴が浮かび上がる。第 VIII 章のマネの『バルコニー』の章では、モデルと画家の現実的な関係をテーマにしながら、マネの意図が、モデルの人物像の外見を越えて彼らの個性や心理についての洞察にまで鑑賞者をいざなうという点にあることを述べる。第 VII 章のドガ

の『アプサント』の章では、ゾラやゴンクール兄弟のようなリアリズムの作家と印象派の方法の親近性を述べ、安酒に溺れる下層社会の民衆の現実を深部から捉えたこの作品が、作家と同様に「この世の魂」を描いたことを評価する。ここにもモデルを越えた世界への想像力に関わろうとする印象派の描出法の特長が語られている。著者のメッセージもこの点にある。

著者の Sophia Wisener さんはアメリカ人で、ケンタッキー大学で美術史を学び、1990 年インディアナ大学で修士号を得、ハイデルベルク大学に留学された後、1992 年に来日された。美術に対する造詣は当然のことながら深いものがあるが、一方彼女の関心は言語にもそそがれている。絵画を鑑賞することが文学作品を読むことと同じようなレベルで考えられているからである。絵画の中の細部が、言語の細かなニュアンスを読み取るようにすくい取られている。

Wisener さんの文章はしたがって明晰で読み易く、細部への配慮もゆき届いている。彼女が美術史の研究者である一方で、すぐれた語学教師でもあることを示すものである。現在そのことを関西大学の教師として実践しておられる。

ところで本書の利用法については、次項の著者自身による解説が大変興味深い。そこには、英文講読クラス・英会話クラスのいずれにも応用できる有効な方法がたくさん示唆されている。ここに提示された英語教育の方法論はほとんど原理・原則的なレベルで展開されていると言ってよい。本書はこの意味でオリジナリティを主張できるものであり、慧眼の士は本書がこの点で他に類を見ないテキストであることを見抜かれるであろう。

本書の注を作成するに当たっては、*OED*, *COD* をはじめ研究社新英和大辞典、オックスフォード米語辞典、小学館ロベール仏和大辞典などを利用させていただいた。美術史や文学関連の事項については、オックスフォード西洋美術辞典、新潮世界文学小辞典、白水社フランス文学辞典などを参照したが、他にも参考にした辞典、事典類は数多い。なお、関西大学の西村規矩夫教授（西洋美術史）、伊地智均教授・柏木治教授（フランス文学）の諸先生には特別にご教示をたまわるところが多々あった。このことに対し厚く御礼申

し上げたい。しかし、注解の不備や誤解があるとすれば、責任は言うまでもなく注解者にある。それらの点についてご叱正ご教示をたまわれは幸いである。

この書物の出版にあたり、英宝社の方々、ことに宇治正夫氏には格別の配慮をいただいたことを感謝とともに記したい。

1999 年 夏

坂 本 武

## **To Teachers: Suggestions for Using this Book**

Teachers using this book will, of course, organize their lessons to suit their own style and course objectives. In writing this book, I had to consider how I would use this material in my own classes. The following suggestions are taken from the resulting lesson plans. Any or all of them could be incorporated into reading, composition, or conversation courses. Teachers are encouraged to use this book to create their own activities and innovative lessons.

### **Using the Pictures:**

Before having students read each story, have them study the picture. Through this observation, the students become engaged in the image and develop motivation to read the text. Various tasks targeting different skills and skill levels can be assigned. Of course, the more the target language is used, the more effective the learning. For example:

1. Vocabulary building: List words that describe the picture. *Specific vocabulary can be targeted with directions from teacher (e.g., adjectives describing colors, give names for 5 shades of red, etc.).*
2. Description: Describe the picture in detail. What do you see? *This can be an oral activity with students working with a partner or in small groups.*

*Ideas and vocabulary are enhanced when students use brainstorming techniques, such as creating a mind-map as they discuss. Writing a short composition describing the picture is a good follow-up assignment or an alternative activity. In a composition class, specific learning targets can be incorporated into the assignment.*

3. Prediction: Study the picture. What is happening? What happened before, to lead up to this scene? What happens next? *This can be used for discussion or as a writing assignment as indicated above. For more advanced students, creative writing can be developed from this exercise.*
4. Compare and contrast: Study the pictures in the introduction. Describe how each is an example of the conditions described in the text. Compare the pictures for each chapter to each other and to those in the introduction. *This can be assigned as a writing or discussion problem at various times throughout the reading of the text. Points of comparison can be provided, or with more advanced students, they can choose their own. The language forms for comparing and contrasting should be reviewed or pre-taught. This activity helps develop critical thinking skills.*
5. Role-play: Enact the story by changing the story into a dialog and recreating the picture in a staged setting. *By having students write the dialog, teachers can see to what extent students understand natural discourse, responses, gambits, repair strategies, etc. Extemporaneous role-play after a few minutes of visualizing their characters can also be quite effective. The role-play offers the opportunity for students to experience the text on a physical level, and practice appropriate register, gestures, and other sociolinguistic qualities.*

### Using the text:

The book is written in two sections. The first part, the Introduction, is objective and academic, giving the historical background of the

artists and the times in which they lived. The second is a series of short stories of historical fiction. The intent and writing style is different, and the two sections can be used for comparative purposes to demonstrate different types of writing. Both can be used to develop reading skills by assigning the reading in stages, each stage designed to develop specific skills. For example, for each section, have students go through the following stages as they approach the book:

1. Timed-reading: Assign a specific length of time for the students to read a particular section in class, and keep time. This needs to be calculated according to the level of the students. It should be long enough for the students to finish reading without having time to use their dictionaries. At this stage, they are not allowed to look up any vocabulary, just read for general meaning. When time is up, they should close their books and discuss what they understood with a partner or in a small group. Then have students read it again with the same time limit, followed by another group discussion, then a plenary discussion, where each group gives a short presentation. This develops students' skimming skills.
2. Scanning for specific information: Again within a time limit, have students find specific information, words, dates, or phrases in the text. This information can be pre-selected by the teacher, or can be derived from students' brain-storming. The task is not for comprehension, but for training students to scan or find specific items quickly.
3. Reading for comprehension: Students read the segment once again, this time more slowly, underlining any words, phrases, ideas they don't understand. With their partner or in their groups, students



discuss what they read and the underlined items. Together, they try to determine the meaning. For homework, they can look up vocabulary in their dictionary.

4. Follow-up for comprehension: Have students write in English wh-questions about the reading assigned. These questions should not have answers that can be copied directly from the text, but require some consideration of what the text says. The questions can be used several ways: a) The teacher collects them, checks the question-form and returns them to students. Students, using correct grammar, then ask the questions to their partner, who answers in English. b) The teacher collects questions, and selects enough of the best questions to comprise a worksheet, which is given to the students as the next assignment. c) In groups, students read their questions and group members correct the form. Each group picks the best 2–3 questions and writes them on the board. Working in the same groups, students then try to answer all questions together from the board and write the answers. In plenary, the teacher has the groups give their answers, encouraging a class discussion. Feedback for all these activities should assure that everyone fully comprehends the text.
5. Reading again for fun: Tell students that before the next class, when they have some free time, they should read through the section in a relaxed way, just for enjoyment.

### **Projects:**

This book can be used as the basis for longer-term research projects, which could culminate in long composition or oral report assignments.

1. There are many topics of research generated by the text, which can be explored by students. Some examples are the history of the railroad, photography, or museums; the Industrial Revolution; life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Japanese influence on Western art; Western influence on Japanese art; and comparing the *Industrial Age* to today's *Information Age*.
2. Researched biographies: Students can select an artist to learn about. They must research biographical information and the social and historical background of the time the artist lived. This would produce an academic style paper, written to the teacher's requirements.
3. Creative writing: As a follow-up or independent assignment to the biographical study, have students select a work of art by their chosen artist, and create a story about the picture.

Regarding the second and third projects: For lower level students, other Impressionist painters can be used, maintaining the thematic continuity of the text. For advanced students, teachers may prefer to have students choose artists from other time periods. Groups could choose a specific time period or artistic style, working together on the background, while individuals within the groups select particular artists within that period and write biographies or historical fiction.

The creative writing task would complement the academic writing in allowing students to experience and practice various approaches to reading, writing, and creating, and simultaneously understand the many ways the English language is used.

*Sophia Wisener*

## Color Plates

- I Claude Monet. *The Luncheon*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France  
©Photo RMN-Lagiewski
- II. Edouard Manet. *Portrait of Emile Zola*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France  
©Photo RMN-H. Lewandowski
- III. Edgar Degas. *The Bellelli Family*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France  
©Photo RMN-Gérard Blot
- IV. Edgar Degas. *Women Ironing*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France  
©Photo RMN-H. Lewandowski
- V. Edouard Manet. *Argenteuil, The Boaters*. Musée des Beaux Arts, Tournai, Belgium  
©Giraudon, Paris
- VI. Claude Monet. *La Japonaise*. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, USA  
©1999 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- VII. Edgar Degas. *Absinthe*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris  
©Photo RMN-H. Lewandowski
- VIII. Edouard Manet. *The Balcony*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France  
©Photo RMN-H. Lewandowski

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## Introduction

It is effortless for us to enjoy and appreciate the paintings of the French Impressionists. The colors and use of natural light maintain a fresh quality that never seems to dull. The casual painting style allows our eyes to easily blend the colors into forms. The subjects, relaxed images from day-to-day life, allow us to imagine the spirit 5 of another time and way of life.

While the painting style may feel unrestrained, the subject matter is realistic: we can recognize the people and places in the pictures. This may not seem so remarkable to us today, but in the mid-nineteenth century the image of a luncheon in the garden or of 10 women ironing shirts as the subject of a painting was revolutionary. New ideals and modern philosophies about naturally and realistically presenting the society around them, held by contemporary artists and writers, led to a fresh understanding of the purpose of art. This new way of thinking was reflected in the subject matter, 15 and posed a serious, yet auspicious challenge to the conservative art establishment and its institutions.

The 1860s marked the advent of modern times in France. Modernism was the result of major cultural changes stemming from the expansion of the Industrial Revolution and its ramifications: new 20

inventions, from engines to photography; the railroad, which joined cities closer together and expanded local regions; and cultural discoveries like the art of Japan and China. Equally important was the concern of social critics that because of the development of industry, technology, and the ever-increasing disparity between income and social classes, people were becoming alienated from society.

Impelled by a multitude of influences, the art of the Impressionists is not only the product of modernism, but also a contributor to modernism's assimilation into society. Monet, Manet and Degas, three of the most influential artists of the period, demonstrate the process of modernization through the way they approached their art. It is this process, and their way of thinking about art, that we will examine in a series of independent short stories about these men and their work. As the artists worked together in Paris in the late 1800's, they knew each other well and had many mutual friends. Though the stories are independent, many of the same characters appear throughout the book and narratives overlap.

## Industrial Society

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the impact of the Industrial Revolution became apparent throughout the entire social structure and culture, changing the ways of everyday life. The proliferation of factories and manufacturing businesses gave birth to a new middle class, which, with its increasing affluence, competed with the nobility for social status and lifestyle. The accumulation of possessions represented social status, and so collecting expensive objects became fashionable. Leisure time increased. New pastimes,

such as touring and weekends at the sea, were made possible due to the extensive railroad system, which by 1860 criss-crossed the European continent.

With the increasing wealth of the middle-class, however, came the disparity between them and the growing number of poor, working-class people, who took on increasingly menial jobs. Peasants left their farms to work in factories in the cities in hope of a better life. Instead they suffered poor working conditions, long hours, and little pay. They found themselves serving and subservient to those who enjoyed the fruits of the Industrial Revolution, but had little opportunity to enjoy the benefits themselves. 5 10

The tensions and a sense of despair in society grew. Drug addiction and alcoholism became major social problems, and were considered symptoms of social degeneration. Highly addictive beverages, such as absinthe with its narcotic effect, became more popular. By the end of the nineteenth century absinthe was made illegal, but at the height of Impressionist painting it was common to see both men and women sitting alone in a blank stupor induced by the drink. 15

## Social Critics

20

The negative cultural climate gave rise to a group of social critics, who wrote critical articles and realistic novels to demonstrate the current state of the society. Writers Emile Zola and the Goncourt brothers, Edmond and Jules, produced well-researched essays and novels dealing principally with working-class life. Zola was a leading theorist of the French Naturalist movement. He thought human 25

beings and their behavior to be products of both heredity and social environment. This way of considering people's temperaments and character provided an explanation for the degeneration of the increasingly industrialized society. To support himself while writing  
5 his novels, Zola earned money as an art critic for Parisian newspapers and magazines. He was a staunch supporter of Degas, Manet, and later Monet and the other Impressionists, because their realistic subject matter represented in visual form the social concepts he tried to convey in his written works.

10 From a wealthy, aristocratic family, the Goncourt brothers opened new areas of social history and art criticism through their writings. Through their novels, they too, contemplated the moral collapse of society caused by the impact of industrialization. Highly cultured, they were collectors of fine objects of art, particularly those from  
15 Japan and China, and wrote books about Hokusai and other Japanese artists; they were the first to educate the French public about Japanese art. Like Zola, the brothers also admired Degas's paintings for the accurate visual representations of the realities of modern society.

## 20 **The Salon**

The realistic subject matter in the innovative works by Monet, Manet, and Degas, while appreciated by social critics such as Zola and the Goncourt brothers, was considered offensive by the public and the Salon, the official art institution of France at the time. The  
25 French term *salon* means a gallery used for art exhibitions, but came to refer to the official exhibitions sponsored by the French

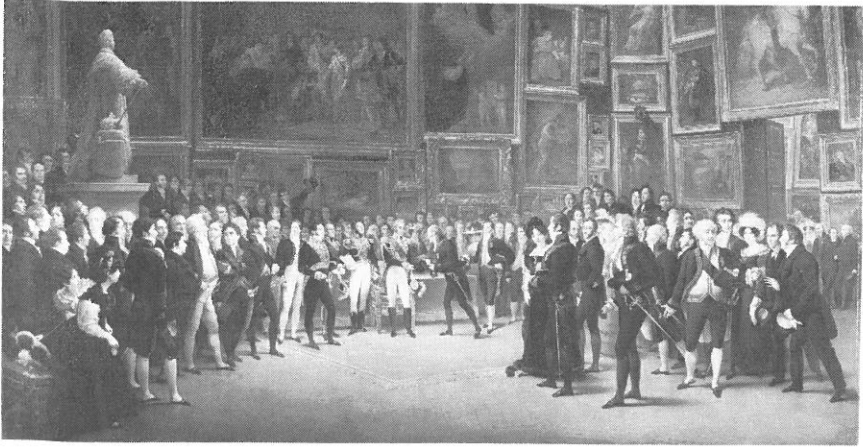


Fig. 1 François Joseph Heim. *Charles X distributing prizes to the artists at the end of the 1824 Salon at the Louvre*. 1824. Louvre, Paris. (©Photo RMN)

Academy of Art (Fig. 1). The first official Salon, sponsored by Louis XIV, was held in 1667 in the Salon d'Apollon of the Louvre Museum. By the 1730s, the event had become an annual affair, and soon dictated the standards by which fine art was judged. The juries, composed of Academy members, accepted or rejected the 5 works submitted for exhibitions. Their conservatism led to the rejection of many innovative works, and avant-garde artists were consistently shut out of the Salon.

It was the aim of all artists to be accepted into the Salon. Acceptance meant not only critical acknowledgement by one's peers, but 10 more importantly, the exhibition of one's work meant exposure to the public, which led to commissions for new paintings. If a painter was not accepted, his livelihood could be threatened. Artists, therefore, tended to conform to the stylistic preferences and tastes of the jury.



Fig. 2 Jean-Léon Gérôme. *Death of Caesar*. 1859. The Walter's Art Gallery, Baltimore

The criteria for acceptance were narrow. The painting style had to be in line with what was deemed appropriate by a particular jury, which meant that images were rendered as precisely as possible using shading and modeling to give the illusion of depth. Composition was designed according to the principles of classical symmetry and linear perspective. Subject matter was ranked in order; large, historical, biblical, or mythological scenes were considered the best (Fig. 2). Portraits were acceptable when painted in the traditional manner, promoting the subjects' social status in society (Fig. 3). Landscapes were at the bottom of the list of appropriate subject matter, but still acceptable if some pretense of mythological or historical theme was evoked (Fig. 4). Scenes of contemporary life were not considered fine art, and were often refused exhibition.

Subject matter was a major problem for Manet, Degas, Monet



Fig. 3 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. *Mme. Inès Moittezier*. 1856. National Gallery, London (©National Gallery, London)



Fig. 4 Eugène Fromentin. *A Nomad Tribe Moving through the Pastures of the Tell*. 1866.  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, USA; Gift in memory of Frank D. Stout, 76. 66

and the other Impressionists, who were more concerned with the process of painting for its own sake. They used family members and friends as models in order to explore painting techniques, making something more than the model the subject of the work. Often the  
5 real purpose of the painting was to study the play of light or color, or the effect of brush strokes. At times it was the exploration of the personality of the model, rather than a replication of his or her features. As a result, the life and lifestyle of the artists were apparent to the public who viewed the works. All this was new in terms of  
10 subject matter and the approach toward painting, and countered the views of the traditionalists at the Salon.

After repeated rejection by the Salon's jury, in 1863 a group of