

# THE FIGURE OF VENUS: RHETORIC OF THE IDEAL AND THE SALON OF 1863

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On pourrait, si l'on voudrait, désigner d'un nom particulier le Salon de 1863, l'appeler le *Salon des Vénus*.<sup>1</sup>

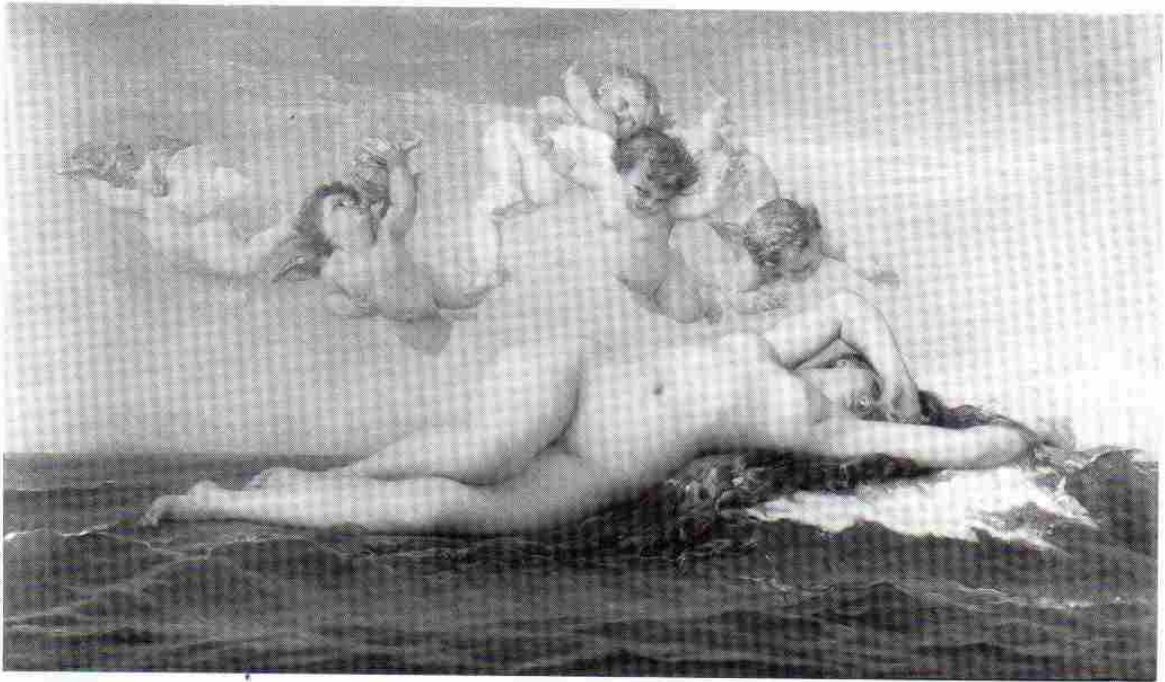
Or, si l'on interroge les propriétés des fluides, on constate que ce 'réel' pourrait bien recouvrir, pour une bonne part, *une réalité physique* qui résiste encore à une symbolisation adéquate et/ou qui signifie l'impuissance de la logique à reprendre dans son écriture tous les caractères de la nature. Et il aura souvent fallu réduire certains de ceux-ci, ne les/l'envisager qu'au regard d'un statut idéal, pour qu'ils/elle n'enraye pas le fonctionnement de la machinerie théorique.<sup>2</sup>

In 1863 Alexandre Cabanel's *La Naissance de Vénus* (plate 35) and Paul Baudry's *La Perle et la vague* (plate 36) were the main attractions of the Salon, with a *Naissance de Vénus* by Amaury-Duval (plate 37) running a close third. In spite of the title given in the Salon catalogue, most critics also referred to Baudry's painting as a birth of Venus<sup>3</sup> and often included a general discussion of the Venus theme in their articles.<sup>4</sup> These paintings — celebrated by many and derided by a few critics — were invariably a focus of attention for reviewers.<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite their subject-matter, their status as high art was not guaranteed. In the Salon pamphlet *Les Peintres de genre au Salon de 1863*, Charles Gueullette rhetorically asked:

N'appartient-elle pas au genre plutôt qu'à l'histoire, cette voluptueuse composition de M. Baudry: *La Perle et la vague*, devant laquelle le public se donne rendez-vous? Et *La Naissance de Vénus* de M. Cabanel. La façon dont elle est posée, les petits amours qui l'entourent, ne lui donnent-ils pas l'apparence d'un tableau de genre plutôt d'une oeuvre sérieuse?<sup>6</sup>

Most often critical questioning of the status of such paintings was implicated in the more general question of the relative genius or decadence of French painting, as it could be identified in the treatment of the nude as high art.

In the 1860s critics deplored the breakdown in the distinctions between high art and lesser genres, between paintings of 'the ideal' and paintings of 'the real'.<sup>7</sup> The 'decadence' of the French school had long been a theme in nineteenth-century



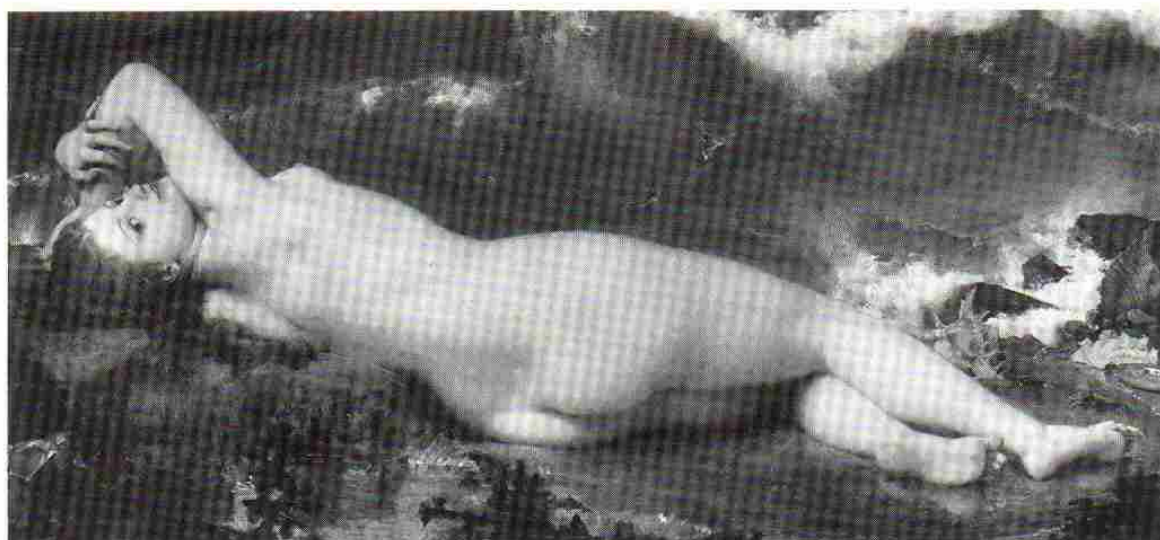
35 A. Cabanel, *La Naissance de Vénus*. Salon of 1863. Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Salon criticism. Often the nude's perceived failure to represent the ideal, a sign of its 'decadence', was used as evidence that high art genres were disintegrating. If the nude was the ultimate genre for the creation of 'the ideal' in art, Venus was the exemplary subject, enabling the artist most effectively to display his transformative power or mastery.

Second Empire critics who challenged the exalted status of the nude often described mythological paintings in a way which implied that their subject-matter was merely an excuse for the titillating display of the naked female body in paint, an analysis which has been so fully incorporated into modern art-historical literature as to preclude any attention to the subject-matter of such paintings, which have served more often than not as academic contrasts to the avant-garde work of the Impressionists. While agreeing that the authorized display of the female body is an important aspect of their function, I shall argue here that the refusal to consider these paintings' subject-matter avoids some very important issues. For, if one believes that any mythological subject could have provided an equally effective excuse for the display of the unclothed female form, it becomes difficult to explain why there was such a focus on Venus in 1863.

To begin with, there was something quite specific about the figure of Venus which made it an important locus for the articulation of this crisis of the nude. If Venus was the perfect vehicle for the expression of 'the ideal' in art, her representation might also anticipate its breakdown, and along with it the anxieties about masculine creativity and control which this breakdown thematized. The critical preoccupation with Venus in the Salon of 1863 is, in fact, symptomatic of a need to assert the primacy of masculine creativity and control, both of which were perceived — consciously or not — as under threat. Dismissing 'Venus' as a subject and denying that it actively produced or promoted social, cultural, political or sexual meanings forecloses a necessary area of historical investigation. We shall



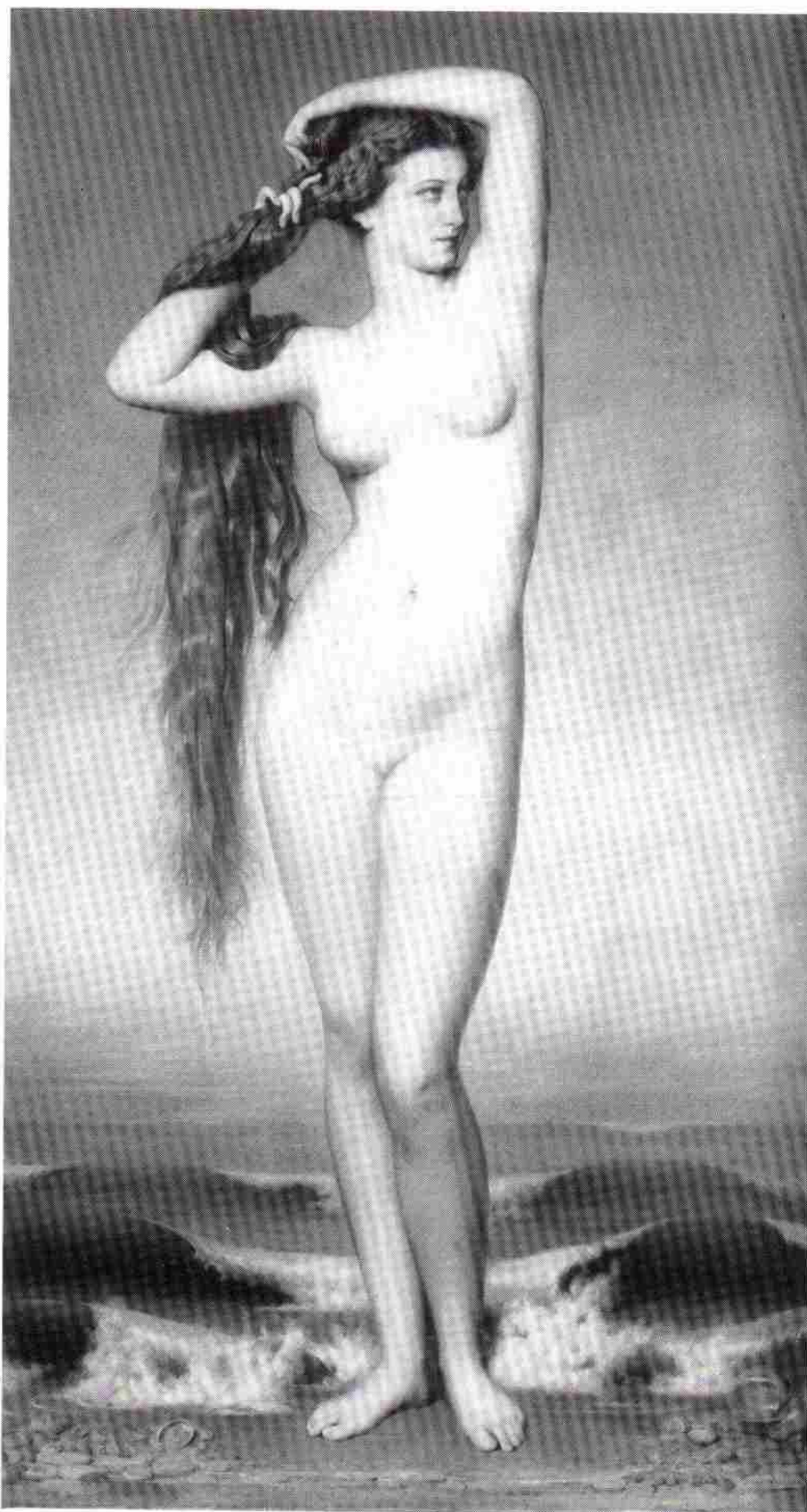


36 P. Baudry, *La Perle et la vague*. Salon of 1863. Madrid, Museo del Prado

see that as an ideal representation of woman, 'Venus' played an especially important role in the construction of both 'Woman' and 'Art', providing the site where the tensions between the 'real' and the 'ideal', the sexual and the aesthetic, were made explicit. In other words, the crisis of the nude resulted less from internal stresses and contradictions in codes of representation than it did from conflicting discourses about the status of woman as a social and sexual agent and from the nature and terms of man's relation to and control of the feminine. This paper will examine some specific and sometimes idiosyncratic ways in which current debates about the status of woman and the female body were registered in the critical reaction to paintings of Venus in the Paris Salon of 1863.

To speak of Venus was, of course, to speak of Woman, and Venus's association with the sea seems to have played an important role in linking her myth even more intimately to current conceptions of women and femininity. Commonly used in nineteenth-century descriptions of Woman, the sea was associated with menstruation and its ostensibly debilitating effects which formed part of a discursive network regulating the bodies and lives of contemporary women.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the association of Venus with primordial fecundity and her identification with the sea, imagined as unceasingly productive and uncontrollable, constructed her as a palimpsest upon which anxieties about male creativity and control could be projected as a response to the first scientific evidence that women's bodies played an active role in the process of human conception. These and other reasons demand that we take these paintings and the critical response they elicited seriously, locating them as an integral component of nineteenth-century patriarchal discourse through which sexual difference was hierarchically defined and through which the subjection of women was effected. Even an aesthetic discussion of the ideal intimately relates to the discursive production of sexual difference and to the crucial status of gender in wider operations of power and knowledge.

Nineteenth-century biology itself was fundamentally associated with the female body. The word 'cellule' entered into scientific vocabulary in part through the study of embryology, a discipline which led to a revolution in the understanding of female anatomy and reproduction.<sup>9</sup> As Thomas Laqueur has shown, during



37 E. Amaury-Duval, *La Naissance de Vénus*. Salon of 1863. Lille, Musée des Beaux-Arts.



the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the conception of woman in relation to man shifted:

The old model, in which men and women were arrayed according to their degree of metaphysical perfection, their vital heat, along an axis whose telos was male, gave way by the late eighteenth century to a new model of difference, of biological divergence. An anatomy and physiology of incommensurability replaced a metaphysics of hierarchy in the representation of women in relation to men.<sup>10</sup>

Laqueur emphasizes that this biology of incommensurability did not follow simply from scientific advances, but was part of a more general cultural reconstruction of 'woman'. If evidence for sexual difference could be gleaned from biology, it was in the realm of culture that concepts of woman's complete alterity and the inferiority of her difference were instantiated. Thus the old hierarchy, which saw women as defective versions of men, was replaced by a new one. While men and women were now constructed as biologically different creatures, the superiority of man over woman was maintained. Throughout the nineteenth century, the discursive production of sexual difference fabricated in fields as diverse as medicine, philosophy and art naturalized a hierarchy of gender, one of whose loci concerned the capacity for original creativity, understood as necessarily sexed. In art, this had one valency, in biology, another.

For our purposes, the nineteenth-century discovery that mammals ovulate spontaneously during regularly recurring periods of heat, a process occurring independently of intercourse, conception or pleasure, is of prime importance.<sup>11</sup> In 1840 the physiologist Raciborski contrasted the old belief in a male-controlled form of conception with the possibilities suggested by recent scientific findings: 'Quant à la fécondation, on a eu jusqu'à présent la faiblesse de croire que le germe, luttant contre les lois de l'impénétrabilité, passait au travers de l'enveloppe épaisse des ovaires pour pénétrer dans le réservoir d'oeufs et en choisir un à son goût et à sa fantaisie.'<sup>12</sup> In 1843 an experiment conducted by Theodor L.W. Bischoff showed that ovulation in dogs occurred independently of male interaction with the female in coitus. F.A. Pouchet considered this discovery so important that he formulated it as the 'principal point' of his magnum opus, *Théorie positive de l'ovulation spontanée et de la fécondation des mammifères et de l'espèce humaine* of 1847.<sup>13</sup>

As Thérèse Moreau points out in her study of Michelet, *Le Sang de l'histoire*, the scientific discoveries of ovology and embryology revealed that men were not the sole cause of generation, and the legitimacy of these theories was hotly debated, especially by the Church.<sup>14</sup> For this was never merely a scientific debate on the mechanics of fertilization and conception. Rather, it called into question deeply rooted assumptions about the supremacy of men in the generation of the species. It was linked to more general debates about the power of creation epitomized by a disagreement between Pouchet and Pasteur about the possibility of spontaneous generation. Furthermore, as we shall see, it had equally disturbing implications for parallel constructions of the mental power of creation. The consequences of this debate for the prevalent conception of male creativity were voiced by Ernest Legouvé, member of the Académie Française, Professor at the Collège de France

and author of numerous books and lectures on French women of the nineteenth century: 'La science pendant quatre mille ans, c'est-à-dire jusqu'à notre siècle, a refusé à la femme le titre de créatrice; les savants ont prétendu que la *mère* n'était pas mère.'<sup>15</sup> Acknowledging this new model of the female body's role in the production of human life, it thus became necessary to define the status of the male body with relation to the conception and development of the fetus. In the entry 'Mère' for the *Larousse du XIX siècle*, the anatomist Antoine Serres described the new understanding of the female body's role in reproduction. He suggests a kind of competition between male and female in the creation of life, and attempts to substantiate the pre-eminence of the male's role through elevating the importance of men in the initial conception. After mentioning the earlier 'theory of the superiority of the father', Serres continues:

Ce n'est pas lui seul qui crée l'enfant, puisque l'enfant n'est pas encore créé comme homme quand l'action paternelle cesse. La reproduction demande encore un second agent, c'est-à-dire la mère; la mère qui assiste l'enfant dans l'acquisition de chacun de ses organes; . . . La mère, contrairement à la vieille doctrine orientale, a donc une part *au moins égale* à celle du père dans la création de sa postérité. A lui, il est vrai, l'impulsion première, mais à elle la véritable formation.<sup>16</sup> [my italics]

In Serres's discussion, the importance of the female body in the development of the fetus after conception is acknowledged (barely), while the significance of the male role in the initial conception is stressed. The secondary importance of the material process of development and growth in the womb is signalled by the ancillary role of the mother. This has interesting parallels with artistic debates about the relationship between the ideal and the material, in which the definition of genius in art depended upon an emphasis on the initial conception of a work, and a corresponding de-emphasis of the material execution or *métier*, a schema which, of course, goes back to the ancient distinction between *techné* and *physis*.

Jules Michelet entered publicly into debates about generation in his book *L'Amour*, one of the mid-nineteenth century's most widely circulated works of popular medicine and morality. Michelet's influence on the intellectual life of France during this period cannot be underestimated. His widely circulated books *L'Oiseau* (1856), *L'Insecte* (1857), and *La Mer* (1861) popularized a natural history of the world which put forth a progressive, pro-science and anti-clerical view, while the Republican politics espoused in works such as *Le Peuple* (1846) and the *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1847–53) have made him an important figure for the Left in the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

Yet, as we shall see, on the level of gender politics Michelet was far from progressive. In *L'Amour*, he presented Pouchet's belief in spontaneous ovulation in humans to the lay person.<sup>18</sup> This in itself was a pro-science and anti-clerical move. Yet, in taking this position, Michelet was forced to negotiate a potential crisis in the notion of male supremacy in procreation. One of the central purposes of his book is therefore to reinforce the notion of male creativity and man's corresponding control over women's personal and reproductive lives. *L'Amour*, then, stands as an important landmark, weaving together biological 'knowledge' of the



female reproductive system and 'common sense' advice for men in their intimate relations with women with questions of male creativity. Michelet's obsessive focus on the debilitating effects of the female reproductive cycle, and specifically the menstrual period, was part of a more general trend in which descriptions of social and physical phenomena, couched in the language of biological 'knowledge', naturalized oppressive hierarchies as objective truth.

According to Michelet, 'la femme, le miracle de divine contradiction'<sup>19</sup> holds within herself 'une lutte de qualités contraires'<sup>20</sup> between an ideal femininity and a physical state ruled by nature. Yet woman is more subject to the natural and uncontrollable ebbs and flows of her own body, and specifically of her menstrual period:

Élevée par sa beauté, sa poésie, sa vive intuition, sa divination, elle n'en est pas moins tenue par la nature dans un servage de faiblesse et de souffrance. Elle prend l'essor chaque mois, notre pauvre chère Sibylle, et, chaque mois, la nature l'avertit par la douleur, et par une crise pénible la remet aux mains de l'amour.<sup>21</sup>

Michelet begins the chapter 'La Femme est une malade' by explicitly comparing the 'lutte de qualités contraires' innate to woman with the sea:

Bien souvent assis, et pensif, devant la profonde mer, j'épiais la première agitation, d'abord sourde, puis sensible, puis croissante, redoutable, qui rappelait le flot au rivage. J'étais dominé, absorbé de l'électricité immense qui flottait sur l'armée des vagues dont la crête étincelait.

Mais avec combien plus d'émotion encore, avec quelle religion, quel tendre respect, je notais les premiers signes, doux, délicats, contenus, puis douloureux, violents, des impressions nerveuses qui périodiquement annoncent le flux, le reflux de cet autre océan, la femme!<sup>22</sup>

This association of woman with the sea is ostensibly rooted in the realities of her biological make-up. On the most basic level, the sea represents the eternal change which Michelet describes as the source both of man's fascination for woman and of woman's ultimate inferiority. Yet the metaphor of the sea also becomes the source for Michelet's description of man's 'proper' relation to her. For though uncontrollable by women, the female body is, in Michelet's model, controllable by men. The comparison between woman and the sea is transformed from a description of the uncontrollable forces of nature into the ebb and flow of the menstrual cycle, deemed to be both the basic cause of her changeability and the symptom of her weakness and man's control over her. The menstrual period is described as a cycle of wounding, scarring and healing, only to be wounded again:

... elle est généralement souffrante au moins une semaine sur quatre. La semaine qui précède celle de crise est déjà troublée. Et dans les huit ou dix jours qui suivent cette semaine douloureuse, se prolonge une langueur, une faiblesse, qu'on ne savait pas définir ... C'est la cicatrisation d'une blessure intérieure, qui, au fond, fait tout ce drame. De sorte qu'en réalité, 15 ou 20 jours sur 28 (on peut dire presque

toujours) la femme n'est pas seulement une malade, mais une blessée. Elle subit incessamment l'éternelle blessure d'amour.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout Michelet's text it is clear that woman's wound is in some sense inflicted by her male partner and related to intercourse. When speaking of the first months of pregnancy, for example, Michelet describes woman's relationship to 'celui qui l'a blessé, dont elle souffre, et qu'elle aime d'autant plus'.<sup>24</sup> Michelet's vision of a man sitting by the chaotic sea is, above all, a metaphor for sexual desire, and represents a fantasy of control over woman's body through the sexual act which, in this metaphorical schema, turns the sea from chaos to the 'flux and reflux' of a cycle. Thus, the uncontrollable sea submits itself to a controlled cycle just as the woman submits herself to the 'wound' which man metaphorically inflicts upon her through sexual intercourse. What I want to highlight here is the 'transformation' of the woman's body by man through sex and the importance of the sea metaphor in this vision of the relations of man and woman.

Male responsibility for the cycle is put into play through equivocation in defining the 'wound'. On one hand, it seems to be defined as the product of intercourse and the blood as that of a virgin. On the other, Michelet seems to ascribe the 'wounding' to spontaneous ovulation, which many theorists believed was the source of menstrual blood.<sup>25</sup> Although the evidence for spontaneous ovulation in humans was still ambiguous, numerous clinical reports based on autopsy material claimed that cicatrices were found on the ovaries of virgins left by the release of an ovum without intercourse.<sup>26</sup> Michelet's conflation of these two 'wounds' — the wound of intercourse and the wound of the ovum bursting from the ovary — functions in part to negate the role of the female body in spontaneous ovulation by rhetorically delegating the responsibility for the conflated wounds to men.

In an endnote entitled 'La Femme réhabilitée et innocentée par la science', Michelet argues that the notion of the menstrual period as wound serves to redeem woman by replacing the Biblical idea that menstruation is a sign of constitutional impurity (hence 'curse') with its medical redefinition as a sign of violence imposed on her in 'la blessure sacrée d'amour dont vos mères vous ont conçus'.<sup>27</sup> Yet this revision is hardly liberating. For the female body is still constructed to legitimize the inferiority of woman and her constant need of man's healing and support. Within the bourgeois family structure, woman's role as wife and mother is rationalized by her 'sick' nature which both requires a husband's protection and prevents her from working outside the home. Woman's sickness makes her unfit for prolonged and concentrated mental or physical activity. Such a construction of femininity rationalizes the exclusion of middle-class women from the work force: 'La femme, si malade et interrompue si souvent, est un très-mauvais ouvrier. Sa constitution mobile, le constant renouvellement qui est le fonds de son être ne permet pas qu'elle soit longtemps appliquée.'<sup>28</sup> In addition, the quality of changeability is supposed to maintain male interest.

Furthermore, it is woman's defective nature which guarantees man's creative power, necessitating his transformation of her. In Michelet's chapter, 'Il faut que tu crées ta femme. Elle ne demande pas mieux', man is said to create woman at her request: 'Il faut vouloir ce qu'elle veut, et la prendre au mot, la refaire, la renouveler, la créer.'<sup>29</sup> Michelet describes the contemporary male desire for woman



as a 'passion moderne pour un être progressif, pour l'oeuvre vivante, aimante, que nous faisons heure par heure, pour une beauté vraiment nôtre, élastique à la mesure de nôtre puissance même . . .'<sup>30</sup> The constant cycle of change Michelet describes in woman's body is constructed as the very sign of man's creative power. Accordingly, those same characteristics which he designates to signal woman's lack of control over her own body, are, in this move, reconstructed as produced by men.

There is a direct relationship between this linkage of the menstrual cycle to male creativity and contemporary myths about pregnancy and its effect upon women. Several times throughout his text Michelet refers to the notion that the impregnation of a virgin actually changes her constitution, imprinting it with the characteristics of her first male partner:

Double prodige, la naissance de l'enfant, la transformation de la mère. L'épouse imprégnée se fait homme. Envahie de la force mâle qui une fois a mordu en elle, elle y cédera de proche en proche. L'homme gagnera, la pénétrera. Elle sera *lui* de plus en plus.<sup>31</sup>

In a footnote Michelet elaborates medical 'evidence' that the impression of the husband is 'le résultat physique d'une modification de l'organisme'.<sup>32</sup> The idea that the female body is transformed by man through sexual intercourse functioned to negate the impact of recent discoveries about the productive role that female bodies actually played in the conception and development of the fetus.

Michelet's notion of men 'creating' women was adapted by writers on art and theorized as significant to artistic practice. A discussion of the menstrual period in terms similar to Michelet's crops up in a set of articles published in *L'Artiste* called 'La Femme au point de vue du beau'.<sup>33</sup> The somewhat startling inclusion of such a discussion in an article about woman and the beautiful becomes less so once we realize that medical discourse, Michelet's popularized version of medical theory, and theories of the ideal in art are equally instrumental in securing male power. Like Michelet, the author of these articles, Charles Beaurin, sees changeability as the essential aspect of woman, a quality he calls 'l'ondulabilité'. Water and the sea are employed as metaphors for woman's essence and are directly related to the 'wounding' and 'healing' of menstruation:

La loi physiologique du renouvellement germinateur, qui est le privilège de la nature féminine, soumet en elle le feu mensuel de la vie à une périodicité semblable au flux et au reflux de la mer. C'est un retrait et un retour de forces qui ne laissent la femme qu'un tiers du mois à l'état de complète expansion, mais de haute marée vitale. Le cours de sa dépense, de sa préparation et de sa réparation n'est que le travail de surcroît de vie qu'elle est destinée à donner à l'enfant.<sup>34</sup>

According to Beaurin, 'cette alternative de puissance et d'affaiblissement détermine en la femme un état quotidien d'inégalité. . .'.<sup>35</sup> Throughout his fetishistic account of woman's body, described part by part, feminine inferiority is deduced through references to physiology and contrasted to man's superiority. Describing the forehead, for example, Beaurin states that,

Le front est moins développé chez elle que chez l'homme. Il est moins

moulé par le travail intérieur du cerveau. La réflexion a présidé à la formation du front viril, la spontanéité à celle du front féminin . . . lorsque le front féminin se trouve développé c'est toujours aux dépens de la poitrine.<sup>36</sup>

Mental activity on a woman's part thus reduces her femininity. For Beaurin as for Michelet, rational thought is, by definition, a male characteristic antithetical to woman, whose chronic instability causes her to make intuitive and impulsive decisions, 'une impression toujours propulsive ou réulsive'.<sup>37</sup>

Like Michelet, Beaurin stresses man's creative role in relation to women. Woman's internal physiology, the cause of her 'ondulabilité', a characteristic which is said to make her more susceptible to transformation by man, is metaphorically read from (among other things) the curves which make up the surface of the figure:

Cette mobilité essentielle de la nature féminine entraîne dans l'espèce et dans l'individu une variation indéfinie, une susceptibilité profonde de modifications, de transformations, de métamorphoses . . .<sup>38</sup>

Beaurin describes man as 'le roi de la création' while woman is 'l'être élite de prédilection'.<sup>39</sup> Woman 'a été créée pour l'amour, pour l'éprouver et pour l'inspirer'. However, 'la condition essentielle de leur accord est l'ascendant de l'homme. . . .' 'Ondulabilité' is, therefore, a product of woman's 'besoin d'harmonie avec l'enfant qu'elle doit élever et avec l'homme dont elle doit être la compagne'.<sup>40</sup> All of this is significant to artistic practice because, according to Beaurin, love 'porte en lui l'intuition du Beau'.<sup>41</sup> Beaurin's text provides an important example of the way common conceptions of feminine essence, based on medical 'knowledge', intersected and in part structured artistic discourse on the ideal.

Like Michelet, whose works formed a cornerstone of literary and popular culture in mid-nineteenth-century France, Charles Blanc was, in the artistic sphere, a theorist who exerted a profound impact. His *Grammaire des arts du dessin*<sup>42</sup> is most commonly referred to by art historians for its importance as an educational text for artistic practice. Yet its explication of the origin and purpose of art and the ideal illustrates the extent to which such notions in academic discourse are not only dependent on gender, but are also fundamentally about male power. Blanc appeals to God and to nature to justify a hierarchy among different representational and cognitive modes. The extent to which his description depends upon a 'natural' and gendered inequality between men and women shows how reliant discourses on art already were upon discourses on sexuality.

In the first chapter of the book, for example, Blanc formulates the general principles of art which are said to derive from the primordial experiences of man. He describes man in the Garden of Eden, newly put upon the earth and surrounded only by beauty, quintessentially represented by woman (Eve): 'la difformité lui est inconnue, et, au contraire, il a pour compagne une femme qui est la beauté même.'<sup>43</sup> However, if woman is initially the representative of beauty, by tasting the apple she 'répand sur la terre tous les malheurs. Le beau disparaît alors ou s'obscurcit.'<sup>44</sup> Thus woman is the cause of all that is ugly and foul, her original sin compelling man to transform what she has defiled into 'le beau'. For Blanc,



although woman has caused 'le beau' to be obscured, man may still retrieve his paradise lost since 'la nature . . . montre encore, ça et là, au travers du voile sombre qui la couvre, quelques traces de sa beauté première' and 'nous apportons en naissant une secrète intuition du beau, qui est l'idéal.'<sup>45</sup> The 'ideal', then, is a category which depends, at its very inception, on gender. The purpose of all creative endeavour is therefore to reclaim what the feminine has lost for man: 'Ainsi, l'humanité, guidée par une étoile qui est le souvenir de sa grandeur passée et l'espérance de sa grandeur future, va marcher à la conquête du Paradis perdu, c'est-à-dire du vrai, du bien et du beau.'<sup>46</sup>

The terms of Blanc's definition of artistic endeavour are themselves derived from Victor Cousin's *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, of 1817 (republished in 1853).<sup>47</sup> However, Blanc takes Cousin's christianized version of platonic idealism a step further by making explicit not only female responsibility for the Fall, but also the necessity of male creativity in the face of a world ruined by woman. Cousin's rhetoric of man's search for the ideal was widely employed in discussions of woman and art, especially in the Catholic press. For example, writing for *L'Union*, in a review of the 1863 Salon, Du Bosc de Pesquidoux proposed a definition of art which reiterated that of Blanc: 'L'Art est la représentation du beau pour produire le bien; ou plutôt, l'art est une parole qui doit exprimer le beau, le bien, le vrai.'<sup>48</sup>

Blanc's Biblical account of the origins of art, with its dependence upon notions of original sin, might at first seem opposed to that of Michelet, who, as we have seen, perceived himself as taking issue with Christian definitions of women. Yet Blanc and Michelet share a preoccupation with male creativity and its conceptual inseparability from the inadequacy of women. That supposedly 'opposed camps' have the same theoretical base helps to demonstrate how pervasive this notion of the relationship between creative endeavour and the feminine was.

In Blanc's terms, the purpose of art is to recognize in nature those qualities which are manifestations of 'le beau' and to use them as a guide for depiction. In keeping with academic theory, this does not involve copying nature, but, rather, idealizing by seeing through her veil what she once was and could once again become.<sup>49</sup> Thus, Blanc defines art: 'L'ART EST L'INTERPRETATION DE LA NATURE.'<sup>50</sup> Though everyone bears within themselves an intuition of 'the ideal', not everyone is born with the same ability to conceptualize it: 'Chez la plupart des hommes elle est obscure, latente et endormie.' While it can sometimes be awakened by the sight of beauty, there are those who 'port[ent] en lui cette idée du beau à l'état de lumière, et ne peu[vent] faire un pas dans la vie sans embellir tout ce qu'il voit, sans éclairer de ses regards tout ce qu'il rencontre.'<sup>51</sup> This is the definition of 'un grand artiste'.<sup>52</sup> An unequal relationship between those who can recognize 'the ideal' and those who cannot is thereby constructed.<sup>53</sup> In Blanc, as in Cousin, this special ability of intellection is presumed to be a male attribute and not a female one. On the contrary, women are themselves part of the veiled nature through which man can reach 'le vrai'. As the being whose uncontrolled act caused the need for art in the first place, woman becomes the very site of transformation back to the original state of grace. Far from being a neutral aesthetic concept, the ideal is both based on, and supportive of, an underlying hierarchy of creativity and intellection, which is, before anything else, gendered.

Various aspects of artistic practice are similarly defined by Blanc. He gives

an explicitly gendered account of the inferiority of colour to drawing taken from seventeenth-century academic theory:

Le dessin est le sexe masculin de l'art; la couleur en est le sexe féminin. Des trois grands arts . . . l'architecture, la sculpture et la peinture, il n'y en a qu'un seul à qui la couleur soit nécessaire; mais le dessin est tellement essentiel à chacun de ces trois arts, qu'on les appelle proprement les *arts du dessin*.<sup>54</sup>

Thus colour, the feminine aspect of art, is both inferior and supplementary to drawing, the masculine one. All the arts are consequently defined in terms of their relation to the masculine, to *dessin*. In painting Blanc admits that 'colour . . . is essential' but qualifies this by stating that 'it takes second place'. He compares this unequal relationship with the reproductive relationship between man and woman:

L'union du dessin et de la couleur est nécessaire pour engendrer la peinture, comme l'union de l'homme et de la femme pour engendrer l'humanité; mais il faut que le dessin conserve sa prépondérance sur la couleur. S'il en est autrement, la peinture court à sa ruine: elle sera perdue par la couleur comme l'humanité fut perdue par Eve.<sup>55</sup>

In other words, Blanc sets up a hierarchy within painterly practice that parallels the one described by Michelet for human generation.

Like Michelet, Blanc justifies this structure through an appeal to the natural. He describes the superiority of line over colour as 'écrite dans les lois mêmes de la nature' because objects can be recognized exclusively by their line and shape but not by their colour alone. Furthermore, while drawing produces form, which is absolute and unchanging, a 'projet de l'esprit', colours are relative and 'varient suivant le milieu où elles se trouvent'.<sup>56</sup> Blanc's hierarchy is thus built on oppositions between 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics:

La couleur . . . joue dans l'art le rôle féminin, le rôle du sentiment; soumise au dessin comme le sentiment doit être soumis à la raison, elle y ajoute du charme, de l'expression et de la grâce. Voilà comment la peinture, qui est le dernier venu des trois arts, en est aussi le plus charmant.<sup>57</sup>

Drawing is essential, while colour is supplementary and superficial; drawing is aligned with reason and thought while colour is associated with emotion and physical sensation. Drawing is masculine, while colour is feminine.

For Blanc, the artist must give his works the 'empreintes de la vie' which he can only find 'dans les individus créés par la nature'. Thus to produce a masterpiece, he must make nature his own:

Les voilà donc à jamais inséparables, ces deux êtres: le type, qui est un produit de la pensée, l'individu, qui est un enfant de la vie. Que l'artiste épouse donc la nature; qu'il l'épouse sans mésalliance, mais, qu'il s'unisse avec elle d'une indissoluble union.<sup>58</sup>

Accordingly, the central aesthetic problem turns on the need to resolve the conflict



between the real and the ideal, a conflict provoked by Eve when she ate the apple. 'Uniting' with nature, the artist metaphorically makes nature his wife. Nature/woman becomes the property of the artist, and is transformed by him into art through a process of possession which, as in Michelet and Beaurin, can be aligned with heterosexuality.

While Michelet's discussion of male creativity is based on explicit reference to sexuality, Blanc's appears to exclude it altogether. Or does it? Rather than one encompassing, and the other repressing sexuality, might not both descriptions of the ideal be part of the same deployment of a definition of sexuality under control?<sup>59</sup> Significantly, Blanc does not call for a sexless art, but a modest one:

La pudeur . . . elle est l'inverse de la naïveté, car où l'innocence finit la pudeur commence. Eve ne rougit de sa nudité dans le Paradis terrestre que lorsque, ayant touché à l'arbre de la science, elle connut le bien et le mal . . .<sup>60</sup>

In Blanc's text, 'the ideal', 'modesty' and 'chastity' go together. However, this is not the same as saying that sexuality is completely erased from the equation. Modesty and chastity only take on their significance in relation to their opposites. In academic theory, the ideal depiction of the female body must evidence its rootedness in nature while at the same time demonstrating that it is the product of artistic transformation and thus does not reproduce nature's 'imperfections'<sup>61</sup>:

. . . elle est toujours chaste, la beauté statuaire. Pourquoi? Parce qu'elle est idéale, c'est-à-dire qu'au lieu d'avoir les accents de la vie individuelle, qui seule pourrait éveiller nos désirs, elle porte les empreintes de la vie générique, de la vie divine. Un *portrait* peut exciter l'amour sensuel, un *type* ne peut provoquer que l'admiration. Aucune idée, aucun soupçon même d'impudeur ne saurait s'attacher à Vénus, si elle est une statue impersonnelle de l'amour.<sup>62</sup>

Recalling his definition of line and his privileging of sculpture, which achieves aesthetic supremacy through form alone, it is not surprising that Blanc points to statuary's beauty as always chaste. The sculpture of Greek antiquity functions as evidence of a society in which the real and the ideal were not antithetical. Blanc contrasts this to the visual culture of modern society, with its preference for painting — the record of superficial, changing appearances, the art that is feminine.<sup>63</sup> Blanc takes the Grecian Venus, which both includes chastity and hints at its opposite, as an example of the most successful portrayal of the nude:

L'antiquité grecque . . . a su conserver une physionomie individuelle, même à la beauté idéale. . . . L'artiste grec a donc puisé dans son esprit l'idée absolue de grâce et de sagesse, et il a pris dans la nature les traits qui caractérisent Vénus et Minerve.

Ces déesses, différemment belles, mais également adorables, deviennent ainsi des caractères dans l'Olympe. Divines par la pensée, humaines par la forme, elles vont réconcilier la nature et l'idéal, et marier le charme de la vie à la dignité de l'abstraction. L'art les a fait descendre

de l'Empyrée, pour qu'elles apparussent au milieu de nous, familières et vénérables, comme des pensées vivantes: Minerve est la prudence, et Vénus la beauté . . .<sup>64</sup>

Venus, therefore, embodies the ideal precisely because she represents the female body transformed.

Second Empire definitions of Venus encompassed the notion of the fully controlled or ideal body as well as the unregulated female body. Thus, representations of Venus served as a locus through which man's control of woman's body, or his lack thereof, could be variously articulated. Venus could represent ideal beauty and chaste love or, alternatively, she could be the goddess of sensual love and ruler of *courtisanes*, a goddess to whom virgins were sacrificed in temples. French culture took its definitions of Venus from mythologies in which her role ranged between these extremes. Thus, she effectively mirrored contemporary construction of woman, serving to incarnate either Madonna or whore. In addition, Venus's association with the sea worked metaphorically to evoke the menstrual cycle around which discourses of femininity had crystallized.

The *Grand Dictionnaire universel* devotes no less than ten pages to Venus.<sup>65</sup> We learn that her name was used to signify the sexual act, 'les plaisirs de Vénus', colloquially to refer to venereal disease, 'un coup de pied de Vénus', and in medical terminology to signify the female genitalia, 'le Mont de Vénus'.<sup>66</sup> The many variations on the word 'Vénus' which appear in Alfred Delvau's *Dictionnaire érotique moderne* as descriptions for the sexual act demonstrate the extent to which she was equated in popular usage with sensual pleasure. Delvau's language also reflects the aspect of Venus as *courtisane*. For example, an entry on 'Vénus populaire' has as its definition 'la fille de trottoir, qui ne demande que deux francs pour un voyage à Cythère'.<sup>67</sup>

Most interestingly, the shifting definitions of Venus seem to revolve at least in part around the issue of her productive power. The *Grand Dictionnaire universel* begins its consideration of Venus with this description:

La même que l'Astarté syrienne, déesse de la beauté, mère de l'Amour, reine des Nymphes et des Grâces. Elle présidait à tous les charmes féminins, dont elle possédait le secret . . .<sup>68</sup>

However, within a few paragraphs, the description of Venus as an ideal of woman has to be modified:

C'est ainsi que Vénus est représentée le plus souvent; mais si l'on remonte à l'origine de son mythe, on est amené à voir en elle une divinité de la production. Les Hellènes personnifiaient le principe générateur féminin par Aphrodite.<sup>69</sup>

Significantly, when Venus as a symbol of generative power is brought into play she comes to represent a fallen form of womanhood:

La puissante déesse de la génération . . . devient la déesse des courtisanes, la personnification de la vie galante, la patronne des plaisirs dissolus. Elle tombe au rang des coquettes de bas étage, introduit dans l'Olympe les mauvaises mœurs et débauche tous les dieux.<sup>70</sup>



Through her reproductive power, Celestial Aphrodite constantly threatens to 'fall' from a divine form of 'the goddess of generation' into 'coquette'. Thus, the text produces the threat of the powerful and productive woman who possesses the ability to participate in the creation of living beings rather than simply functioning as a vessel for that which is produced by man. This threat is expressed in an immediate slippage from the goddess of generation to the goddess of prostitutes.

The *Dictionnaire*'s categorization of Venus into general divisions also manifests the need to contain a Venus who symbolizes productivity.<sup>71</sup> Acknowledging the difficulty of making such distinctions, the author states that 'for the ancients themselves these classifications became difficult'.<sup>72</sup> Significantly, the demarcation does not make it clear where the sensual and base Venus, the Venus of *courtisanes*, fits.<sup>73</sup> Thus a contemporary preoccupation with separating the 'femme honnête' from the 'fille publique', linked to a negative definition of the autonomous and productive female body, structures the understanding of Venus and the attempt to classify her many types.<sup>74</sup> In fact, the 'fille publique' seems to be the only possible representation of a female body outside of the male-controlled reproductive economy. Here the female body's 'autonomy' is defined as both threatening and morally retrograde. Thus the 'fille publique' sustains the negative definition of the autonomous and productive female body by becoming, in some sense, a stand-in for the 'goddess of generation'.

Significantly, in their reviews of the Salon of 1863, critics prefaced their treatments of the Venus paintings by Amaury-Duval, Baudry and Cabanel with more general discussions of the mythological figure which seem to partake in the same attempt to control and limit her definitions. For example, Maxime Du Camp gives a history of Venus which demonstrates the importance of containing the productive female body in order to construct an ideal femininity:

Que de la Vénus barbue de Chypre, type primordial de la fécondité mâle et femelle, déesse androgyne née de la mer, symbolisant l'action génératrice du soleil sur l'élément humide, soit sortie la Vénus d'Homère, être faible et de beauté parfaite, cela se conçoit facilement, car chaque attribut des dieux primitifs, sortes de monstres antédiluviens des olympes primitifs, devint une divinité. Vénus, gardant pour elle-même la beauté, donna la fécondité à Cérès, l'agilité à Diane, la multiplicité à Amphitrite: elle resta donc et nous est arrivée comme prototype de la femme divinisée par la beauté des formes.<sup>75</sup>

For Du Camp, Venus moves from a monster embodying both male and female attributes, to a goddess of female beauty alone. The hermaphrodite, containing within itself complete generative power, transforms into woman, who depends on her conjunction with man for this power. Here, Venus's formation depends on fixing her attributes and removing her access to the power of fecundity, defined as male. Yet there remains a tension between this Venus of the ideal, and the unidealized goddess who still embodies fecundity, agility and multiplicity.

Another critic, Olivier Merson, discusses a similar range of meanings:

Aphrodite signifia d'abord la Cause universelle; tout ce qui respirait dans le ciel, sur la terre, au fond des abîmes de l'Océan passa pour son

ouvrage. Mais les idées des hommes se troublent bien vite, et devenue reine de Cythère, de Paphos, de Gnide, d'Idalie, . . . et de mille autres lieux encore, elle fut et resta Vénus-Pandémos, ou Etoera, c'est-à-dire la divinité des courtisanes.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast to Du Camp, Merson describes Venus's initial state as an ideal one, attributing her 'fall' to male desire. Perhaps this passage also speaks of the impossibility of maintaining this image of female power and fecundity in a culture predicated on male creative supremacy. Thus, the 'divinity of courtesans' remained the predominant conception of Venus for nineteenth-century critics.

An analogous process of containment seems to form the central thematic structuring many discussions of the paintings of Venus in the 1863 Salon. Claude Vignon's review for *Le Correspondant*<sup>77</sup> provides an especially explicit example of how a rhetoric of the controlled body overlaps with a language of art which is used to demonstrate the aesthetic success or failure of the Venuses. Rather than assuming that Vignon's comments represent her personal interactions with paintings, one must interpret them in light of the discursive structures which underpin their descriptions and the power structures which these serve to mobilize and reinforce. For the critic Claude Vignon, a woman, was also an academic sculptor — Noémie Cadiot — who had studied with Jean-Jacques Pradier and had exhibited at the Salon. As a female critic writing from an academic perspective under a male pseudonym, it was only possible to use a 'masculine' descriptive language and interpretative model.

Vignon describes Cabanel's *Vénus* as a perfect transformation of the female body, one which speaks of male creative mastery. The eye is at once 'attiré par un chatoyement de couleurs tendres' (notice that it is colour, the feminine side of art, that exerts its pull upon the viewer). Then 'il se fixe sur un heureux agencement de lignes'; the viewer becomes active again, the eye following the lines, as if led by the artist's hand over the body constructed in its ideal form. Next 'il s'arrête, captivé par un charme inattendu, par une harmonie singulière de contours et de nuances.'<sup>78</sup> For Vignon, this balance between the active and the passive, through which the body is metaphorically mastered, makes the painting so successful that 'on peut rester longtemps devant la Vénus de M. Cabanel; rien n'y blesse.'<sup>79</sup> With the evocation of the wound, Vignon implies that the female body, in its untransformed physicality, is a combative force that must be tamed. In addition to proclaiming that this Venus does not injure the viewer's eye, Vignon might also be implying the ethereal nature of the depicted body — a body not subject to the 'wound' of intercourse and menstruation, not bound enough to the physical world to provoke male desire. Yet this choice of vocabulary seems to indicate an overcompensation for, and denial of, the erotic elements of the painting. Like Blanc, Vignon defines the perfect Venus as a balance of the physical and the ideal. Thus she says of Cabanel's Venus: 'Ce n'est point une belle femme, c'est l'idéale beauté incarnée dans la femme.'<sup>80</sup> In this description the artist's mastery (of both artistic means and of woman) is reinforced.

According to Vignon, unlike the idealized Venus of Cabanel, Baudry's Venus takes up a pose 'plus tourmentée que réussie'. With her 'pieds mal attachés' she has 'un je ne sais quoi de gauche et de provoquant'.<sup>81</sup> Here, as in Blanc's



formulation, physical imperfections, which according to academic theory are the sign of specificity, are seen to detract from the ideality of the figure. Similarly, the critic Jules Castagnary points to *La Perle's* 'minois de modiste parisienne', a sign of contemporaneity that prevents her from being a goddess.<sup>82</sup> Writing for the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, Paul Mantz noted that the mortality of Baudry's Venus was indicated by her imperfections which are specifically linked to the artist's lack of drawing: 'Elle est nue comme une déesse, mais c'est une mortelle, ainsi qu'on le voit un peut trop aux imperfections de sa structure, à la manière insuffisante dont les reins s'attachent aux hanches, la petitesse de ses pieds chimériquement dessinés.'<sup>83</sup> Georges Lafenestre also complained in the *Revue contemporaine* that Baudry failed to transform 'ces rougeurs d'un torse déformé . . . cette étroitesse des pieds contemporaines' with the result that 'nous sommes toujours à Paris, seulement à Paris; l'artiste n'a pu nous emporter plus loin.'<sup>84</sup> According to these critics, Baudry has failed to achieve the balance of the ideal/real, mind/body which would serve as the sign of a body transformed and mastered, the body of high art.

Many other critics gave similar descriptions of the two paintings. Those, like Vignon, who wished to praise Cabanel, pointed to the superior transformatory power of his drawing and modelling. H. Francingues, the critic for the *Revue des races latines*, noted that Cabanel's Venus was perfectly drawn, and that 'tout ce que l'imagination peut rêver' was graciously accomplished in her form, and contrasted this to Baudry's complete lack of modelling in the figure.<sup>85</sup> Writing for *La Gazette de France*, the critic 'Un Bourgeois de Paris' suggested that 'la Vénus de M. Cabanel a une âme' while Baudry's 'n'a qu'un corps', and related the untransformed body of Baudry's Venus to the artist's inferior powers of idealization. He noted that Baudry's drawing is much less harmonious than Cabanel's. Finally, the critic concludes: 'Plus je regarde cette Vénus, moins j'y reconnais une déesse: je vois la main du peintre, et ne sens nulle part l'âme de l'artiste.'<sup>86</sup>

Vignon sets Amaury-Duval's *Naissance de Vénus* in opposition to Baudry and Cabanel. Within the terms of her academic schema Amaury-Duval's Venus shows thought alone, not thought applied to and in control of nature: 'il supprime ou néglige absolument le charme, et, faisant l'abstraction du plaisir des yeux, conçoit le beau par la pensée seulement.'<sup>87</sup> Taken together, the three Venuses offer a range of the physical and its mastery. Vignon describes Cabanel's as a perfect illustration of mastery, Baudry's as an example of the constant threat to that mastery provoked by the female body, and Amaury-Duval's as an example of painting which fails even to address that purpose of mastery through transformation. Amaury-Duval's abstract Venus presents an example less threatening than Baudry's of an artist's failure to fulfill the aims which had been constructed for Art and prompts Vignon to conclude: 'si Vénus n'est pas la beauté qui charme, que sera-t-elle donc? Une conception néoplatonicienne qui ennuie?'<sup>88</sup>

Vignon's analysis of Amaury-Duval's Venus alludes to Victor Cousin's neo-platonic definition of the ideal which links the notion of transformative power over the female body to the question of male creativity or genius. According to Cousin:

Deux extrémités également dangereuses: un idéal mort, ou l'absence d'idéal. Ou bien on copie le modèle, et on manque la vraie beauté; ou bien on travaille de tête, et on tombe dans une idéalité sans caractère. Le

génie est une perception prompte et sûre de la juste proportion dans laquelle l'idéal et le naturel, la forme et la pensée se doivent unir. Cette union est la perfection de l'art: les chefs-d'oeuvre sont à ce prix.<sup>89</sup>

For Cousin, as for Blanc, genius is both the power to perceive the ideal forms posited by God before the fall and the power to transform the model back in paint to an approximation of the original state, a transformation performed by an act of mind which leads from the physical characteristics of the model to some notionally transcendent ideal. Francingues's criticism is also based in Blanc's and Cousin's notion of art as transformation. However, in contrast to Vignon, Francingues feels Amaury-Duval's *Venus* is too direct a copy of the model. Instead of presenting us with 'une petite femme maigre', Baudry should show us things 'non pas tout à fait comme la nature les avait faites, mais comme elle aurait dû les faire'.<sup>90</sup>

The negative relationship of the 'ideal' Venus to the physical was elaborated in a caricature by Bertall in the *Journal amusant* (plate 38) which constructed the paintings in terms of the physical reaction they provoked in their male viewers.<sup>91</sup> Furthest left, the 'Amaury-Duvalistes' stand to the side of a painting and point at it with reserve, noting its solidity and good drawing. In the centre are the 'Cabanellistes', a more agitated crowd of men, who describe the painting as caressable cotton. Furthest right, from the crowd of 'Baudrystes', a disembodied hand reaches up from below the canvas and grabs hold of the scribble that stands for Baudry's Venus. Lest one miss the point, Bertall includes a reference to prostitution in the title, 'quartier Breda'<sup>92</sup> emphasizing that these 'women' are viewed as sexual objects in a public space, and further implying that the Salon is not only an exhibition space, but also a market place.

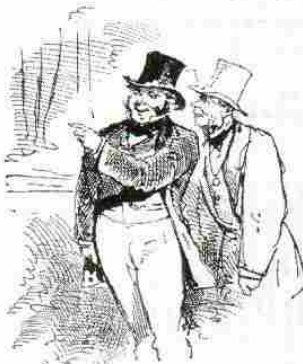
The Venuses' excessive rootedness in the physical world, signalled by a lack of idealization (be it in the quality of facture, or colour, or in the depiction of the detail) implies the varying degrees to which they appear as products of the artists' and viewers' sexual, rather than spiritual, interactions with the works. An overtly sexual tone signals the engagement of body rather than mind. Bertall's caricature further mocks a philistine viewing public lacking the ability to 'grasp the ideal' and appreciate high art, who instead take pleasure in the physical, sexual and material aspects of the paintings. Hence, the caricature reflects and reinforces two of the hierarchies implicit in the ideal which we have already observed in Blanc's analysis. First, woman is formulated in terms of male desire, and contrasting degrees of man's control over both his and her body are presented, with the less idealized female bodies provoking a more intense male desire. Second, an implicit hierarchy among the viewing public is described, by which the bourgeois viewers, who are the butt of the joke, are shown as unable to appreciate high art, while the implied reader/viewer, who can laugh at their philistinism and lack of taste, is constructed by default as the possessor of the power to recognize the ideal or lack of it. At the same time, the caricature mocks the very notion that the ideal precludes sexual desire in the service of disinterested beauty.

The female body was central to mid-nineteenth-century academic art. However, its potential volatility posed a threat to high art modes such as history painting. Earlier types of history painting, predicated on a depiction of the heroic male nude, had by this time been largely eclipsed by depictions of the female nude. Yet, as



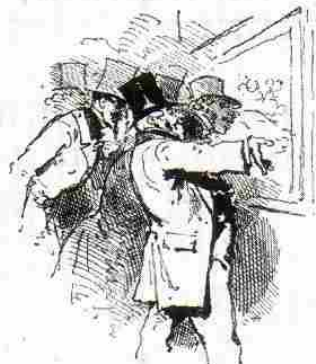
## LE SALON DE 1865 ET SON SOUS-SOL, — dépeints par BERTALL.

## QUARTIER DES VÉNUS DE 1863 (quartier Breda).

LES AMATEURS DE VENUS SE PARTAGENT EN TROIS BOUDOIRS : LES BAUDRYSTES, LES CABANELLISTES, LES AMAURY-DUALISTES.  
Jugements des Pâris de 1865.

AMAURY-DUALISTES.

— Moi, je préfère la Vénus d'Amaury-Duval. Bon dessin! et puis, c'est de la peinture solide : fer-blanc de premier qualité!



CABANELLISTES.

— Moi, c'est Cabanel qui est mon homme. Jamais on n'a travaillé le cotou comme ça!



BAUDRYSTES.

— Quant à moi, je donne la pomme à la Vénus de Baudry. Au moins c'est de la chair, ça vous dit quelque chose...  
— O l'éloquence de la chair!...

38 Bertall, *Quartier de Vénus de 1863 (quartier Breda)*. From *Journal amusant*, 30 May 1863. From the Resource Collections of the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities

we have already seen, the female body, and especially Venus, carried such important and wide-ranging implications for the demonstration of male mastery that its representation was fraught with difficulty, and its failed representations came to symbolize most forcefully the 'effeminacy' of the French School of painting. Thus, in 1863, Théophile Thoré explicitly connected the paintings of Venus with an elegiac tone in the criticism:

Il est remarquable que tous les articles sur le Salon, dans tous les journaux, sont extrêmement tristes. Il y a quelque chose d'élégiaque dans le ton des critiques, même lorsqu'ils célèbrent la naissance de Vénus . . .  
On ne s'amuse pas, quand on tombe. Toute décadence est sombre.<sup>93</sup>

Maxime Du Camp's discussion of the 1863 Venuses for the *Revue des deux mondes* provides an example of the role Venus played in critical laments about the 'decadence' of the French School. Like Charles Blanc, Du Camp stresses the importance of 'conception' in art, and the need for the artist to render in a superior form what he can only glimpse in nature.<sup>94</sup> Bemoaning the decline of French art, Du Camp claims that the capacity for 'interpretation' (the term Blanc used for artistic transformation into the ideal) has been lost.<sup>95</sup>

In Du Camp's account, both Cabanel and Baudry are condemned for painting 'decoratively'. The decorative is linked to the feminine, the superficial, the material, and signals the decadence of French art: 'En un mot le culte exclusif de la matière dans toutes ses manifestations'.<sup>96</sup> In Du Camp's analysis, as in Bertall's caricature, the preoccupation with the material or physical (as opposed to the spiritual) aspects of art ranges from the decorative and largely innocuous to the sexual and immoral. Baudry's painting (which he tellingly refers to as 'La Vague'), is an example of a depiction which has crossed the line of propriety, thus illustrating

the threat posed by the 'cult of matter': 'Il est peut-être bon toutefois qu'on ait vu où l'on peut arriver lorsque, ne cherchant que la grâce, on ne sait pas la contenir dans les limites au delà desquelles elle change de nom.'<sup>97</sup> Cabanel, on the other hand, chooses to emphasize the erotic component of his work, so as to exhibit his control and mastery. He is thus an artist who, 'looking only for grace . . . [knows] how to contain it within limits', but chooses 'limits' which allow for too much between them.

Like Blanc, Du Camp elaborates a natural hierarchy of artistic talent, in which some artists are more capable of sensing the ideal than others. Du Camp is especially disappointed in Cabanel because he is an artist who has the power to create an ideal Venus, but chooses instead to paint the female body for display<sup>98</sup>:

Un reproche en passant: sa Vénus ne naît pas, elle se réveille. Couchée sur une vague dont le soulèvement blanchi d'écume lui sert d'oreiller, elle est étendue de façon à faire ressortir le contour des hanches et de la poitrine; de ses yeux à peine entr'ouverts, elle semble solliciter l'admiration du spectateur et lui dire: 'Vois comme je suis belle! regarde je suis là pour que tu me contemples à ton aise; la mer est un prétexte, mon nom un laisser passer. Je suis une femme, rien de plus, mais rien de moins, et si le vieux roi David m'avait seulement aperçue, il m'eût préférée à la jeune Abigaïl!' C'est trop, tout ce discours est inutile, et cette Vénus n'en tient pas d'autre.<sup>99</sup>

According to Du Camp, Cabanel's is not a Venus who must be chaste since she is newly born.<sup>100</sup> We are not presented with a female body transformed by the artist into a new and ideal state, but with a previously existing woman who has been awakened. This, combined with the statement that 'the sea is a pretext, my name a blank cheque', might be used as evidence that the choice of Venus as a subject-matter for painting during the Second Empire was nothing more than a pretext for the portrayal of a naked woman. It should be noted, however, that the verbal pronouncement created by Du Camp for the woman, her declaration that the sea is a pretext and her name a 'laisser passer', functions, as does the provocativeness of the depicted body, actively to prevent the viewer from reading in the high art mode and seeing an ideal Venus. Thus, rather than a description of Venus's irrelevance as a subject-matter, Du Camp's narration of the woman's voice is a device which reinforces his complaint that Cabanel refuses to use his transformative power to picture the ideal.

In the same context, Du Camp evokes Cabanel's deliberate positioning of this Venus so that her hips and chest are prominently laid out for display. Yet he also stresses that despite her eroticism, Cabanel's Venus is 'fort bien peinte, d'un pinceau savant'. This, combined with the firm modelling, is said to hint at 'un ensemble qui serait heureux, s'il n'avait certaines exagérations intentionnelles qu'il ne convient point d'indiquer'.<sup>101</sup> Thus while Du Camp asserts that Cabanel, unlike Baudry, is in complete control of his practice, he also indicates that despite his innate power to compose, and his academic training, the artist chooses to imbue his work with overt eroticism which stresses the physical effects of the painting, rather than the spiritual ones. Thus, Cabanel becomes an example of an artist corrupted into 'decadence'.<sup>102</sup>



Du Camp contrasts Cabanel, whose control of the image is indicated by firm modelling and defining line, the 'masculine' side of art,<sup>103</sup> with Baudry, an artist facile with colour, the 'feminine' side of art. All of Baudry's painterly practice is described in passive terms. He owes his strong use of colour 'to nature'. His painting lacks the drawing and composition which bespeak a strong controlling thought:

il ne compose absolument pas; on dirait que le modèle prend la pose qui lui convient et que M. Baudry se contente de le copier. Son modelé est tellement creux que bien souvent ses figures ont l'air d'être peintes sur baudruche; quant à son dessin, il est parfois bien incomplet, ainsi que l'on peut s'en convaincre en regardant sa *Vague* ...<sup>104</sup>

Instead, the model takes the pose that she chooses, and Baudry copies her.<sup>105</sup> As long as she is in control, only the feminine in art can be achieved — composition, drawing and modelling cannot. In Du Camp's narrative, the woman's body is constructed as a force which overwhelms Baudry's attempts at mastery. If the artist does not transform the model, and the attributes which could denote a theme are suppressed, art itself disappears:

L'absence de composition est radicale dans tous ces tableaux, et elle en arrive aujourd'hui à ce point très-curieux que, si l'on fait abstraction des accessoires voisins du personnage, le sujet disparaît complètement. En effet, si l'on supprime par la pensée cette lourde vague en papier peint qui forme le fond du tableau, si l'on supprime également deux ou trois coquillages admirablement traités, que restera-t-il? Une femme, et dans quelle posture! avec quel regard! Passons: ceci n'étant de l'art par aucun côté, nous n'avons rien à en dire.<sup>106</sup>

Du Camp relates this scandalous situation to Baudry's innate inability to 'interpret' (transform) the model, while the painting, with its submission to the physical, reveals in the artist 'un esprit fort tourmenté'.

Du Camp says the woman incarnates 'la vague' rather than what many other critics define her as, the pearl. The ambiguity of her allegorical function is encouraged by the painting's composition, where the line of the woman's body is echoed by the line of the wave's foam.<sup>107</sup> It is as if the pearl could, at least theoretically, represent a masculinized figure, hard edged and solid, extracted from nature, while the wave, with its constant movement and change, the very 'essence' of woman, can only represent the feminine. The woman's identification with the sea signals that it is impossible for this Venus to fulfil Du Camp's definition of a successful painting: 'Allégoriser une vague n'est pas chose facile. Qu'est-ce qu'une vague? L'inquiétude, la profondeur, la perfidie, l'instabilité.'<sup>108</sup> The association of the woman with the sea is accompanied by complaints that a specific model, recognizable from Baudry's previous paintings, is again being copied with props rather than being transformed into a Venus who plays an allegorical role.<sup>109</sup>

Baudry's own explanation of the inspiration for the painting reinforces the importance of sea metaphors for the construction of woman. In a letter to Olivier Merson he wrote:

J'avais d'abord pensé comme titre à *la Vague*, c'est-à-dire au mouvement

de courbes ondoyantes, à la fraîcheur éphémère et pure de l'écume; tout cela était très féminin. Mais pourtant la transposition d'idée de l'eau à l'être vivant est un peu trop une abstraction. Il m'a paru plus simple de faire de la vague *l'écrin* et de la figure *la Perle*, la perle s'enlevant en lumière sur l'écrin azuré de la vague. Vénus Aphrodite a la même origine.<sup>110</sup>

Baudry initially describes a metaphorical association between woman and the sea, but, in order to facilitate representing her, he changes his conception so that the woman becomes the pearl contained within the wave. Regardless of whether this is an accurate account of the original conception of the painting and the title, Baudry's use of it as an explanation suggests several points. First, it attests to the pervasiveness of the metaphorical link between woman and the sea, and shows how closely Beaurin's and Michelet's descriptions of women are tied to the idea of Venus. Second, it demonstrates a conceptual incompatibility between the purposes of high art and a depiction of the uncontained female body which leads to Baudry's redefinition of the woman as pearl rather than wave. That Du Camp continues to identify her as the wave signals his denial of Baudry's ability to paint an ideal woman who has the solidity and definition of an extracted pearl.

Du Camp not only summons the metaphor of the sea in his discussion of Baudry's painting, but also links it to 'feminine' qualities of execution, as he stresses the female body's power to overwhelm Baudry's artistic mastery. Like Vignon and the others, he frames his objections to Baudry in terms of a separation between the conception of the work, inspired in the mind, and the physical execution of the work, linked to the body. In this respect Baudry contributes to the general decadence of the French School in which 'Tout est subordonné à couleur et à la ligne, l'exécution seule est comptée pour quelque chose . . . on entre de plus en plus dans le matérialisme qui amène l'art à n'être plus qu'un métier.'<sup>111</sup> By now, it should hardly be surprising that in Du Camp's rhetoric, the power of conception is associated with a masculine power to interpret, while execution is associated with the feminine and the material. Remembering our discussion of the crisis of male creativity in the context of bio-medical theories of the female body's active role in the conception and birth of children, it becomes apparent that a parallel structure is operating here in the demotion of 'the feminine'. We saw in Serres that the initial conception was defined as male, while the material process of development and growth was defined as female. Where male creative genius is being defined and analyzed, the initial conception is emphasized and acknowledged as masculine. In Baudry's case, where the development of the work in the physical act of painting is stressed, the work is linked to the material and described as feminine.

While the different forms of the 'culte de la matière' which the two paintings were said to represent are not identical, they are related and mutually reinforcing. Furthermore, each of them plays into an unequal hierarchy where the material, the inferior term, is represented as and by the feminine. Thus it was only natural for Du Camp to refer to 'decadent' modern art like the Venuses as 'l'art efféminé et bassement sensuel'.<sup>112</sup> For Du Camp, this meant an art fostered by 'cette société française qui ne semble plus obéir, hélas! qu'à l'intérêt spécial et rapide



du moment'.<sup>113</sup> We have seen that woman is constructed in these terms, as ruled by the physical, and constantly changing. Thus 'effeminate' is not simply a synonym for 'weak'. It has implications, as do these paintings, for a more general construction of the feminine.

The hierarchies of power and knowledge, which construct the categories embodying the feminine as inferior, operated politically to instantiate modes of cognition through which woman and the feminine could only be negative terms. I have shown how a vocabulary of mastery and control of the female body accompanied a characterization of women as out of control of their own bodies, as debilitated, sick and mutilated. This definition of woman functioned across a variety of discourses for both the subjection of women and the promotion of male creative mastery. Woman's debility had to be maintained by patriarchy especially when the definition of her sexuality shifted from a defective sameness to a sexual difference with the potential for power of its own. As the productive role of the female body in human generation was scientifically demonstrated, woman's complete alterity had to be established as both otherness and inferiority in order to affirm male creativity and procreative superiority.

As we have seen, discussions of Venus played a crucial role in the production and reproduction of this discursive structure. For the figure of Venus marks the place where contemporary definitions of the female body and female sexuality most powerfully intersected with the theories of the ideal in which male creativity was codified. It is perhaps here, in the discourse of art and the ideal, that the integral part these constructions of woman played in the preservation of male creative supremacy is most dramatically exhibited.

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## NOTES

This paper is a revised version of my Masters Thesis "'Le Salon des Vénus": Paintings of Venus in the Salon of 1863', Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 1989. I am grateful to Tamar Garb and Caroline Arscott for their supervision of that project. I am indebted to Neil McWilliam for helpful suggestions on the earlier version. I am especially grateful to Abigail Solomon-Godeau without whose aid and moral support this paper might never have reached its final form.

- 1 All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Trans. 'One could, if one wished to, designate the Salon of 1863 by a particular name, calling it the Salon of Venuses.' Théophile Gautier, 'Salon de 1863', *Moniteur universel*, no. 164, 13 June 1863, p. 1.
- 2 Luce Irigaray, 'La "Mécanique" des fluides', in *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Paris, 1977, p. 105. Trans. 'Now if we examine the properties of fluids, we note that this "real" may well include, and in large measure, a physical reality that continues to resist adequate symbolization and/or that signifies the powerlessness of logic to incorporate in its writing all the characteristic features of nature. And it has often been found necessary to minimize certain of these features of nature, to envisage them, and it, only in light of an ideal status, so as to keep it/them from jamming the works of the theoretical machine.' Luce Irigaray, 'The "Mechanics" of Fluids', in *This Sex Which is not One*, trans. Catherine Porter, Ithaca, New York, 1985, pp. 106-7.
- 3 *Explication des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, gravure, lithographie et architecture des artistes vivans*

- exposés au Palais des Champs Élysées le 1 Mai, 1863*, Paris, 1863, p. 14, cat. no. 91.
- 4 A perusal of the press indicates there was a general interest in Venus. See, for example, F.R. Cambouliu, *Les Femmes d'Homère*, Paris, 1854; C. de Sault, 'Les Femmes grecques', *Revue germanique*, 1e partie, 1 May 1863, 2e partie, 1 June 1864; Emmanuel des Essarts, 'L'Amour dans l'antiquité', *Revue française*, 1 June 1863, pp. 184–96 (this article is immediately followed by a review of the 1863 Salon that discusses the Venuses). Émile Deschanel, *Les Courtisanes grecques*, 3rd ed., Paris, 1859.
  - 5 See Christopher Parsons and Martha Ward, *A Bibliography of Salon Criticism in Second Empire Paris*, Cambridge, 1986, for invaluable bibliographical information on the Salon during this period. Virtually all Salon reviews I have consulted had substantial discussion of the Venuses. Most that did not were specialist journals, such as architectural journals, which only reviewed the architectural section of the Salon, a hunting review, which only reproduced a few pictures of animals, or some popular illustrated magazines which tended to reproduce and describe genre painting and landscape for the most part. Most reviews specifically refer to the Baudry and Cabanel Venuses as the most popular works in the exhibition. Many of them include Amaury-Duval's *La Naissance de Vénus* in their discussion. In November and December 1863, the *Gazette des beaux-arts* published engravings of Baudry's *La Perle et la vague* and Cabanel's *La Naissance de Vénus*.
  - 6 Trans. 'Doesn't it belong to genre rather than to history painting, this voluptuous composition by M. Baudry: *The Pearl and the Wave*, in front of which the public gathers? And the *Birth of Venus* by M. Cabanel. The fashion in which she is posed, the little cupids that surround her, don't they give an appearance of a genre painting rather than a serious work?' Charles Gueullette, *Les Peintres de genre au Salon de 1863*, Paris, 1863, p. 6.
  - 7 Claudine Mitchell describes some of the predominant themes of Second Empire criticism: 'A recurrent subject of discussion was that of the "décadence" and "abaissement" of French art. The signs of decadence, the critics thought, were multiple and conspicuous. They deplored the absence of that kind of unity which would constitute a "French school", and the absence of a leader, a great artist as Ingres and Delacroix had been during the Restoration. Now there was a multiplicity of small "individualités" who had "talent" but no "genius". They saw the disintegration of the hierarchy of genres, the collapse of history painting, and the "invasion" of every genre by landscape ...'
  - 8 Claudine Mitchell, 'What is to be done with the Saloniers?', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1987, p. 110.
  - 9 See Christine Planté, "'Ondine," ondines — femme, amour et individuation', *Romantisme*, no. 62, 1988, pp. 89–102, on metaphors of flux and water which inflected nineteenth-century discussions of woman.
  - 10 Thérèse Moreau, *Le Sang de l'histoire, Michelet, l'histoire et l'idée de la femme au XIXe siècle*, Paris, 1982, p. 82.
  - 11 Thomas Laqueur, 'Orgasm, Generation and the Politics of the Reproductive Body', *Representations*, no. 14, Spring 1986, p. 3.
  - 12 Ibid., p. 25. According to Thomas Laqueur, although as early as 1672 de Graaf had argued that the 'female testicle' actually produced eggs, no one actually observed a mammalian egg until 1827 when Karl Ernst von Baer definitively demonstrated its existence in the ovarian follicle and the Fallopian tube of a dog. At the time that he showed this direct evidence of ovulation, von Baer still believed that animals only ovulated when sexually stimulated and used a bitch which he knew had recently mated.
  - 13 Trans. 'As for fertilization, until now we have foolishly believed that the sperm, battling against the laws of impenetrability, passed across the thick envelope of the ovaries in order to penetrate the reservoir of eggs and choose one according to its taste and liking.' Raciborski, *Du rôle de la menstruation*, Paris, 1840, p. 117, quoted in Moreau, op. cit., p. 89.
  - 14 Laqueur, op. cit., p. 26.
  - 15 Moreau, op. cit., p. 84. We might see a parallel structure operating in the discourse of the 'right to life', whose stress on the importance of conception of a fetus promotes the importance of the male role in the creation of life, while demoting the importance of physical processes by which the female body participates in the conception, development and growth of the fetus. Like the critical focus on the conception of a work in art, this right to life discourse sees the entire outcome already implied in the initial conception. It is of course no accident that the right to life is a Christian discourse and its proponents predominantly male, for it, like the discourse of the ideal in art, works to preserve the pre-eminence of God's, and then man's, creative power.
  - 16 Trans. 'For four thousand years, that is to say until our century, Science has refused to give woman the title of creator; the scholars have pretended that the *mother* was not a mother.' Ernest Legouvé, *Cours d'histoire morale des femmes*, Paris, 1848, pp. 3–9, quoted in Moreau, op. cit. p. 83.
  - 17 Trans. 'It is not he alone who creates the



- child, since the child is not yet created as a man when the paternal action ceases. Reproduction still demands a second agent, that is to say the mother; the mother who assists the child in the acquisition of each of his organs; . . . The mother, then, contrary to the old oriental doctrine, plays a part *at least equal* to that of the father in the creation of his posterity. The first impetus, it is true, comes from him but from her comes the real formation.' Serres quoted in Moreau, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
- 17 See, for example, Roland Barthes, 'Modernité de Michelet', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. VII, no. 5, September–October, 1974 and *Michelet*, trans. by Richard Howard, New York, 1987. For a discussion of Michelet's politics see Linda Orr, *Jules Michelet. Nature, History, and Language*, Ithaca, 1976, pp. 1–24.
- 18 Jules Michelet, *L'Amour*, 5th ed., Paris, 1861. All references will be drawn from Jules Michelet, *Oeuvres complètes XVIII 1858–60*, ed. Paul Vialaneix, Paris, 1985, henceforth referred to as 'Michelet'. *L'Amour* was first published in Paris in 1858 in an edition of 2,000 and was sold out within a few weeks. The second edition of 22,000 was followed by two more editions before the end of 1859. Michelet was able to write of this unprecedented sale in 1859 that 30,000 copies had sold in the course of two months. By 1861 *L'Amour* was in its fifth edition (Michelet, pp. 30–1). It sparked a debate along with its sequel *La Femme*, which involved criticism both by Catholics, as in the anonymous *L'Amour. Renversement des propositions de M. Michelet par un libre penseur*, Paris, 1859 and C.P.M. Haas, *La Femme: réfutation des propositions de J.M.*, Paris, 1860, and feminists such as Mme J.P. d'Héricourt, *La Femme affranchie. Réponse à MM. Michelet, Proudhon etc.*, Paris, 1860. *L'Amour* was satirized in a play first performed at the Palais-Royal on 16 March 1859: Eugène Labiche et Edouard Martin, *L'Amour, parodie mêlée de couplets en un acte*, Paris, 1859.
- 19 Trans. 'woman, the miracle of divine contradiction', Michelet, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
- 20 Trans. 'a battle of opposite qualities'. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- 21 Trans. 'Elevated by her beauty, her poetry, her lively intuition, her power of prediction, she is no less held in a servitude of weakness and suffering by Nature. She takes flight each month, our poor, dear Sibyl, and each month Nature warns her with a pain, and with a terrible crisis, throws her back into the hands of love.' *Ibid.* He reinforces this model by contrasting physical differences between healthy male and debilitated female bodies: 'Elle ne fait rien comme nous . . . Son sang n'a pas le cours du nôtre; par moments, il se précipite, comme une averse d'orage . . . elle ne digère pas comme nous. Sa digestion est troublée à chaque instant par une chose: elle aime du fond des entrailles. La profonde coupe d'amour (qu'on appelle le bassin) est une mer d'émotions variables qui contrarient la régularité des fonctions nutritives.' Trans. 'She does nothing like us . . . Her blood doesn't flow like ours; at moments it rushes out like a sudden storm . . . she doesn't digest like us. Her digestion is troubled at each instant by one thing. She loves from the depths of her bowels. The deep vessel of love (what we call the pelvis) is a sea of variable emotions that prevent the regularity of the nutritive functions.' *Ibid.*, pp. 61–2.
- 22 Trans. 'Very often, seated and thinking in front of the deep sea, I sensed the first agitation, at first muffled, then perceptible, then getting louder, dreadful, that called the wave to the shore. I was dominated, absorbed with the immense electricity that floated on the arms of the waves where the foam shimmered.
- 'But with how much more emotion, with what religion, what tender respect, I took note of the first signs, sweet, delicate, contained, then painful, violent, the nervous impressions that periodically announce the flux and reflux of that other ocean, Woman!' *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- 23 Trans. 'She is generally ill at least one week in four. The week that precedes that of the crisis is already troubled. And in the eight or ten days that follow this painful week, there continues a languor, a weakness, that one does not know how to define. . . . It's the scarring of an interior wound, that, fundamentally, causes this drama. Such that in reality, 15 or 20 days in 28 (one could say almost always) woman is not only a sick person but a wounded person. She incessantly suffers the eternal wound of love.' *Ibid.*, p. 64.
- 24 Trans. 'he who has wounded her, for whom she suffers, and whom she loves the more for it'. See Michelet, p. 124.
- 25 Michelet describes the menstrual blood as the result of 'un accouchement continuel, l'ovaire toujours déchiré et toujours guéri'. *Ibid.*, p. 225. See further pp. 225–7 where Michelet gives a résumé of recent medical research in this area.
- 26 Laqueur, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 27 Trans. 'Woman rehabilitated and made innocent by science'; 'the sacred wound of love through which our mothers conceived us'. Michelet, *op. cit.*, p. 225. See also *ibid.*, p. 85.
- 28 Trans. 'Woman, so sickly and so often interrupted is a very bad worker. Her mobile constitution, the renewal of which constitutes

- the depth of her being, prevents her from applying herself for long periods of time.' Ibid., p. 65. The class specific nature of the account reveals itself when, speaking of the perpetual state of woman's weakness, Michelet states: 'Partout où la femme n'exterminé pas son sexe par un travail excessif (comme nos rudes paysannes qui de bonne heure se font hommes), partout où elle reste femme, elle est généralement souffrante aux moins une semaine sur quatre.' Ibid., p. 64.
- 29 Trans. 'You must create your woman (wife). Nothing would give her greater pleasure'; 'You must want what she wants, and take her at her word, remake her, renew her, *create her*' [emphasis in the original]. Ibid., p. 75. According to Michelet, woman wants to be 'created' so that she will be loved more, 'parce qu'elle devine que tu aimeras davantage, et toujours de plus en plus, si tu la fais tienne et toi-même.'
- 30 Trans. 'modern passion for a progressive being, for a lively and loving work, which we make hour by hour, for a beauty truly ours, elastic in proportion to our own power . . .'. Ibid., p. 76.
- 31 Trans. 'Double marvel, the birth of the child and the transformation of the mother. The impregnated spouse becomes a man. Invaded by the male force that has taken hold of her, she yields nearer and nearer to it. The man will win, will penetrate her. She will be *him* more and more.' Ibid., p. 124.
- 32 Trans. 'the physical outcome of a modification of the organism'. Ibid., p. 228. Michelet cites the work of Stark and Burdach as evidence that 'pour le chien, le premier occupant influe plus que vingt qui peuvent suivre; il marque leurs enfants de sa ressemblance.' For analogous evidence in humans he refers the reader to 'Lucas, t. II, 60.' Ibid., p. 227-8.
- 33 Charles Beaurin, 'La Femme au point de vue du beau, I,' *L'Artiste*, vol. II, 16 October 1865, pp. 169-73; 'La Femme au point de vue du beau, II,' *L'Artiste*, vol. I, 15 January 1866, pp. 25-31.
- 34 Trans. 'The physiological law of germinative renewal, which is the privilege of the feminine nature, submits the monthly fire of life within her to a periodicity similar to the flux and reflux of the sea. It is a retreat and return of forces that leaves woman in a state of complete openness only a third of the month, but it is a high, vital tide. The course of her debilitation, of her preparation, and of her reparation is only the work of a surplus of the life that she is destined to give to her child.' Beaurin, 1866, op. cit., p. 28.
- 35 Trans. 'this alteration of strength and weakness determines in woman a daily state of inequality . . .' Ibid.
- 36 Trans. 'The forehead is less developed in her than in man. It is less moulded by the interior workings of the brain. Reflection presides over the formation of the virile forehead, spontaneity over that of the feminine forehead . . . when the feminine forehead is developed it is always at the expense of her breast.' Ibid., p. 26.
- 37 Trans. 'always through a feeling of propulsion or revulsion'. Ibid., p. 28.
- 38 Trans. 'This essential mobility of the feminine nature carries in the species and in the individual an indefinite variation, a profound susceptibility to modifications, to transformations, to metamorphoses . . .' Ibid. Of course, Beaurin's reading of the woman's inner state from her external characteristics partakes in a more general culture of visibility predominant in the nineteenth century and earlier, which included such pseudo-scientific disciplines as physiognomy and phrenology, which were used 'scientifically' to justify imperialism and other forms of domination and discrimination. The science of physiognomy was incorporated by Le Brun into academic painting theory in the late seventeenth century and remained part of its stock in trade.
- 39 Trans. 'the king of creation'; 'the elite being of preference'. Beaurin, 1866, op. cit., p. 31.
- 40 Trans. 'has been created for love, to prove it, to inspire it'; 'the essential condition of their accord is the ascendancy of man'; 'need for harmony with the child that she must raise and with the man to whom she must be the helpmate'. Ibid., p. 28.
- 41 Trans. 'carries with it the intuition of Beauty'. Ibid., p. 31.
- 42 Charles Blanc, *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, Paris, 1867. Originally published in the *Gazette des beaux-arts* in instalments from 1860 until 1867, Blanc's book reflected and transformed academic theories of art, conceptions of its purpose, and rules for its execution. It became one of the most important sources of artistic theory for years to come. The most important sections for my argument, the 'Principles', were published from April 1860 to August 1861. For a discussion of the impact of Blanc's *Grammaire des arts du dessin* see Misook Song, *Art Theories of Charles Blanc 1813-1882*, Ann Arbor, 1984.
- 43 Trans. 'deformity is unknown to him, and, on the contrary, he has for a companion a woman who is beauty itself'. Ibid., p. 6.
- 44 Trans. 'pour upon the earth all the catastrophes, The beautiful disappears then, or obscures itself'. Ibid.
- 45 Trans. 'nature still shows, here and there, across the sombre veil that covers her, a few traces of her original beauty', and 'we carry with us, on being born, a secret intuition of "the beautiful" which is the ideal'. Ibid., p. 7.



- 46 Trans. 'Thus humanity, guided by a star that is the memory of its past grandeur and the hope of its future grandeur, will march to the conquest of Paradise lost, that is to say the true, the good, and the beautiful.' Ibid.
- 47 Victor Cousin, *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, Paris, 1853. (All translations will be taken from Cousin, *The True, the Beautiful and the Good*, trans. O.W. Wright, New York, 1890). For example, Cousin states: 'Every thing that is real is imperfect. . . . The traits of beauty are scattered and diverse. To reunite them arbitrarily . . . without any rule that governs this choice and directs these borrowings, is to compose monsters; to admit a rule is already to admit an ideal different from all individuals. It is this ideal that the true artist forms to himself in studying nature. Without nature, he never would have conceived this ideal; but with this ideal he judges nature herself, rectifies her, and dares undertake to measure himself with her.' Cousin, 1890, p. 156.
- 48 Trans. 'Art is the representation of the beautiful in order to produce the good; or rather, art is a speech which must express the beautiful, the good, the true.' Dubosc de Pesquidoux, 'Beaux-Arts. Salon de 1863', *L'Union*, no. 161, 20 June 1863, n.p. Similarly, in 'De la moralité dans la littérature et dans l'art', Antonin Rondelet states: 'L'oeuvre d'art la plus belle n'est pas celle qui reproduit avec la plus de fidélité la nature: c'est au contraire celle qui s'en détache volontairement pour se mettre à la poursuite de l'idéal.' *Revue contemporaine*, vol. 33, no. 265, 15 April 1863, p. 547.
- 49 Blanc, op. cit., p. 11. Seventeenth-century academic theory serves as the root for much of Blanc's own theory of art. Blanc's account is, however, more explicitly dependent on gender, and his demotion of the feminine is perhaps tied to a more general crisis in academicism which was blamed by many contemporary critics for the prevalence of female nudes in 'high art' paintings.
- 50 Ibid., p. 10. Blanc capitalizes this sentence in the middle of a paragraph to show its importance as a basic tenet of Art.
- 51 Trans. 'Among the majority of men it is obscure, latent and sleeping'; 'carry within them this idea of the beautiful in a state of light, and cannot take a step in life without embellishing everything they see, without enlightening with their looks everything they meet'. Ibid., p. 7.
- 52 Ibid., p. 11. Blanc describes the three aspects of Art, in ascending order as '*l'individualité*', '*le caractère*' and '*la beauté*': 'L'artiste qui se borne à imiter la nature n'en saisit que *l'individualité*: il est esclave. Celui qui interprète la nature en voit les qualités heureuses: il en démêle le *caractère*: il est maître. L'artiste qui l'idéalise y découvre ou y imprime l'image de la *beauté*: celui-là est un grand maître. . . . C'est ici que va éclater la supériorité de l'art. La nature, en effet, ne produit que des individus: l'art s'élève à la conception de l'espèce.' Trans. 'The artist who limits himself to imitating nature, seizes only individuality: he is a slave. He who interprets nature, sees in it pleasing qualities: he disentangles character from it: he is a master. The artist who idealises it, discovers or imprints in it the image of beauty: that one is a great master. . . . It is here that the superiority of art will manifest itself. Nature, in effect, only produces individuals: art elevates itself to a conception of the species.' Within this hierarchy, Nature is described as a term inferior to Art, and by inference, inferior to man who creates art.
- 53 Similarly, in a review of the Salon of 1863, Georges Lafenestre comments: 'le caractère commun de ces grandes oeuvres est de tenir peu de compte de la réalité contemporaine et passagère; soit qu'elles traduisent un grand fait du passé ou du présent, soit qu'elles symbolisent les sentiments et les pensées de leur temps, l'interprétation de l'homme et de la nature par le génie individuel de l'artiste y tient la meilleure place; sorties de l'imagination elles s'adressent directement à l'imagination, et ceux qui ne possèdent pas cette faculté ne les sauraient comprendre.' Trans. 'the common character of these great works is to take little account of contemporary and fleeting reality; whether they translate a great event of the past or present, whether they symbolize the feelings and thoughts of our time, the interpretation of man and nature by the individual genius of the artist here holds the best place; products of the imagination, they address themselves directly to the imagination, and those who do not possess this faculty will not know how to understand them.' Georges Lafenestre, 'La Peinture au Salon de 1863', *Revue contemporaine*, vol. 33, 15 June 1863, p. 604.
- 54 Trans. 'Drawing is the masculine sex of art, colour is its feminine one. Of the three great arts, architecture, sculpture and painting, there is only one in which colour is necessary; but drawing is so essential to all of them, that one properly calls them the *arts of drawing*.' Blanc, op. cit., p. 22.
- 55 Trans. 'The union of drawing and colour is necessary for engendering painting, just as the union between man and woman is for engendering humanity; but it is necessary that drawing keep its preponderance over colour. If it is otherwise, painting courts its ruin: it will be lost by colour like humanity was lost by Eve.' Ibid., p. 23.

- 56 Trans. 'project of mind'; 'vary according to the environment in which they exist'. Ibid., p. 24.
- 57 Trans. 'Colour plays in art the feminine role, the role of sentiment; subjected to drawing like sentiment must be subjected to reason, colour adds charm, expression and grace. See how painting, which is the latecomer of the three arts, is also the most charming.' Ibid.
- 58 Trans. 'imprints of life'; 'in the individuals created by nature'; 'Therefore these two beings are forever inseparable; the type, which is the product of thought, the individual that is the child of life. Let the artist marry nature, then; let him marry her without marrying below his station, but unite with her in an indissoluble union.' Ibid.
- 59 On the deployment of 'sexuality' see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, London, 1980.
- 60 Trans. 'Modesty ... is the inverse of naïveté, because where innocence finishes modesty begins. Eve only blushed at her nudity in the earthly Paradise when, having touched the tree of science, she knew good and evil ...' Blanc, *op. cit.*, p. 419.
- 61 Not surprisingly, due to the indexical nature of photography which prevented the kind of transformation described by Blanc, there was much difficulty with the concept, let alone the display, of the photographic 'nude' in this period. Those promoting the status of photography as an art, such as Disdéri and Alexandre Ken, felt their cause would be undermined by the photographic display of the female body which, when shown in provocative detail, would draw attention to the un-idealizing aspects of the photographic apparatus. See Alexandre Ken, *Dissertations historiques, artistiques et scientifiques sur la photographie*, Paris, 1864, reprint, New York, 1979. A.E. Disdéri, *L'Art de la photographie*, Paris, 1862. On photography and the female body see Abigail Solomon-Godeau, 'The Legs of the Countess', *October* 39, Winter 1986, pp. 65–108, and 'Notes on Erotic Photography: Towards a Project of Historical Salvage', in Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions and Practices*, Minneapolis, 1990.
- 62 Trans. '... it is always chaste, statuary beauty. Why? Because it is ideal, that is to say, instead of having accents of individual life, which alone can awaken our desires, it carries the imprint of generic life, of divine life. A *portrait* can excite sensual love, a *type* can only provoke admiration. Not a single idea, not even a single suspicion of immodesty can attach itself to Venus if she is an impersonal statue of love.' Blanc, *op. cit.*, p. 419.
- 63 Ibid., pp. 510–11. According to Blanc: 'Dans le domaine de la sculpture païenne, l'homme était nu, tranquille et beau; dans les régions de la peinture chrétienne, il sera troublé, pudique et vêtu. La nudité le fait maintenant rougir; la chair lui fait honte et la beauté lui fait peur. Ses jouissances, il les placera désormais dans le monde moral; il lui faudra un art expressif, un art qui, pour le toucher ou le ravir, emprunte toutes les images de la création. Cet art sera la peinture. Chargée d'exprimer les sentiments intérieurs, la peinture n'a pas besoin des trois dimensions comme la sculpture ... elle s'exerce uniquement sur des surfaces unies ... car la simple apparence lui suffit et doit lui suffire.'
- 64 Trans. 'Greek antiquity ... knew how to preserve an individual physiognomy even in ideal beauty. ... The Greek artist thus has searched for the absolute idea of grace and knowledge, and he took from nature the traits that characterized Venus and Minerva.  
'These goddesses, differently beautiful, but equally adorable, therefore became characters in Olympus. Divine in thought, human in form, they would reconcile nature with the ideal, and marry the charm of life with the dignity of abstraction. Art made them descend from the empyrean so that they appear in our milieu, familiar and venerable, like living thoughts: Minerva is prudence, and Venus, beauty.' Ibid., p. 12.
- 65 *Grand Dictionnaire universel du dix-neuvième siècle*, ed. Pierre Larousse, Paris, vol. xv, n.d. (c. 1875), p. 875. The 'Avant Propos' to the *Grand Dictionnaire universel, premier supplément* states that the first volume of the dictionary was begun in 1865 and the last was on sale by 1876. Work on the dictionary is said to have extended throughout the period between these dates, thus the ideas expressed there can be said to have had common currency in the mid 1860s and early 1870s.
- 66 Trans. 'the pleasures of Venus'; 'a kick from Venus'; 'the mountain of Venus'.
- 67 Trans. 'the girl of the street, who only asks two francs for a voyage to Cythera', Alfred Delvau, *Dictionnaire érotique moderne*, Paris, 1864, p. 295.
- 68 Trans. 'The same as Syrian Astarte, goddess of Beauty, mother of Love, queen of Nymphs and Graces, she presided over all feminine charms, for which she possessed the secret ...' *Grand Dictionnaire universel, op. cit.*, p. 876.
- 69 Trans. 'This is how Venus is represented most often; but if one returns to the origin of her myth, one is brought to see in her a divinity of production. The Hellenic peoples personified the principle of female generativity by Aphrodite.' Ibid.
- 70 Trans. 'The powerful goddess of generation



- ... becomes the goddess of courtesans, the personification of *la vie galante*, the patroness of dissolute pleasures. She falls to the level of flirts of the lowest order, introducing into Olympia bad habits and debauching all the gods.' Ibid.
- 71 Ibid., p. 877. Early in this section the Venuses are divided up according to the four stories of their birth.
- 72 Ibid. They are classified by Pausanias's description of three statues of Venus: 'Vénus Céleste, qui marquait un amour pur et dégagé des convoitises corporelles', 'Vénus la Populaire, qui marquait un amour impudique' [and] 'Vénus Apostrophia, ainsi appelée parce qu'elle détournait les coeurs de toute impureté.'
- 73 'La Vénus Céleste et la Vénus Marine sont identifiées par le récit même d'Hésiode, qui fait naître Aphrodite à la fois des deux éléments. Cicéron fait naître Eros de Mercure et le confond ainsi avec Hermaphrodite, en même temps qu'il avoue l'analogie des deux Vénus, l'une fille de la Mer et l'autre fille de Jupiter ... D'après cette distinction des diverses Vénus par leur origine, où faut-il placer Vénus Populaire ou Pandème?' Ibid.
- 74 See T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, Princeton, 1984, pp. 108–9: 'The empire had to give sexuality a certain form, and wished to make it the property of a chosen few: women who would be given power over what they possessed but also *impersonality*, a quite special existence lived out on the edge of the human world. These women were called *courtisanes*. And they were a necessary term in the myth of the "social", one which defined, by opposition, the more difficult category *femme honnête*. ... *Courtisane* and *femme honnête* are classifications dependent on each other for what clarity they have, in areas of conduct and perception where most things are in doubt.' Clark also quotes Parent Du Châtelet describing a dream of Woman's legibility: 'We will have arrived at the limit of perfection ... if we arrange it so that men, and in particular those who are looking for [prostitutes], can distinguish them from honest women; but that these women, and especially their daughters, cannot make this distinction, or at least can do so only with difficulty.'
- 75 Trans. 'That from the bearded Venus of Cyprus, primordial type of male and female fecundity, androgynous goddess born from the sea, symbolizing the generative action of the sun on the water, would emerge Homer's Venus, a weak being of perfect beauty, is easily conceivable, because each attribute of the primitive gods (kinds of antediluvian monsters from primitive Olympus) became a divinity. Venus, keeping beauty for herself, gave fecundity to Ceres, agility to Diana, multiplicity to Amphitrite: she remained then and has arrived to us as a prototype of woman made divine by the beauty of forms.' Maxime Du Camp, 'Salon de 1863', *Les Beaux-Arts à l'Exposition universelle et aux Salons de 1863, 1864, 1865, et 1867*, Paris, 1867, p. 31.
- 76 Trans. 'Aphrodite signified above all the Universal Cause; everything that breathed in the sky, on the earth, at the depths of the ocean passed for her work. But men's ideas became quickly troubled and she became queen of Cythera, of Paphos, of Gnide, of Italy ... and of a thousand other places still, she was and remained Venus Pandemos, or Hetera, that is to say, the divinity of courtesans.' Olivier Merson, 'Salon de 1863, IV. Aphrodite', *L'Opinion nationale*, no. 148, 1 June 1863, n.p.
- 77 Claude Vignon [Noémie Cadiot], 'Le Salon de 1863', *Le Correspondant*, June 1863, pp. 363–92.
- 78 Trans. 'pulled by a shimmer of tender colours'; 'it pauses, captivated by an unexpected charm, by a singular harmony of contours and nuances'. Ibid., p. 381. Similarly, Paul Mantz noted that Cabanel's *Venus* was 'savamment rythmée dans son attitude' and that 'la ligne générale se déroule harmonieuse et pure', thus linking the painter's controlling thought expressed through rhythm and line to the success of the work.
- 79 Trans. 'one can remain a long time in front of M. Cabanel's Venus; nothing wounds there.' Ibid.
- 80 Trans. 'This is not at all a beautiful woman, it is ideal beauty incarnated in woman'. Ibid. Similarly, Girard de Riaille describes Venus as 'la femme type, la beauté, l'amour matériel divinisé'. *A travers le Salon de 1863*, Paris, 1863, p. 58. G. de Saint Valry described Cabanel's figure as a chaste body whose expression suggested the unchaste: 'Si le corps est d'une déesse, la physionomie est tout ce qu'il y a de moins antique et de moins divin; ce sourire, ces yeux provoquants contrastent avec le caractère de chasteté si bien saisi dans tout le reste.' G. de Saint Valry, *Le Pays*, 19 May 1863, n.p.
- 81 Trans. 'more over elaborate/tormented than well executed': 'badly attached feet': 'an awkward and provocative *je ne sais quoi*'. Ibid., p. 382. Critics focused on the foot as a problem point in this painting. In this respect it is interesting to note that 'un coup de pied de Vénus' was a familiar phrase for venereal disease.
- 82 Trans. 'appearance of a Parisian milliner'. Jules Antoine Castagnary, 'Salon de 1863' in *Salons*, Paris, 1892, p. 113. Similarly, Lamquet suggested that Baudry's *Venus*

- showed the trace of a garter on her leg. Lamquet, 'Salon de 1863 — Genre historique', *Les Beaux-Arts*, vol. 6, 1 June 1863, p. 327.
- 83 Trans. 'She is nude like a goddess, but it's a mortal, as one sees a bit too well in the imperfections of her form, the inadequate way in which the loins attach to the hips, the smallness of the chimerically drawn feet.' Paul Mantz, 'Salon de 1863', *Gazette des beaux-arts*, vol. 14, no. 6, 1 June 1863, p. 484.
- 84 Trans. 'These blushes of a deformed torso ... this narrowness of contemporary feet'; 'We are still in Paris, only in Paris; the artist hasn't been able to transport us further away'. Georges Lafenestre, 'La Peinture au Salon de 1863', *Revue contemporaine*, vol. 33, 15 June 1863, p. 606.
- 85 Trans. 'everything the imagination can dream of'. H. Francingues, 'Exposition des beaux-arts — La Peinture au Salon de 1863', *Revue des races latines*, vol. 38, June 1863, p. 585.
- 86 Trans. 'M. Cabanel's Venus has a soul [while Baudry's] has only a body'; 'The more I look at this Venus, the less I recognize a goddess there: I see the painter's hand, and don't sense at all the soul of the artist.' Un Bourgeois de Paris, 'Salon de 1863', *La Gazette de France*, 7 July 1863, n.p.
- 87 Trans. 'He suppresses or absolutely neglects charm, and, making an abstraction of the eye's pleasure, conceives of beauty by thought alone.' Vignon, op. cit., p. 382.
- 88 Trans. 'If Venus is not beauty that charms, then what will she be? A neoplatonic conception that bores us?' Ibid.
- 89 Cousin, 1853, op. cit., p. 189. Trans. 'Two extremes are equally dangerous — a lifeless ideal, or the absence of the ideal. Either we copy the model and are wanting in true beauty, or we work *de tête*, and fall into an ideality without character. Genius is a ready and sure perception of the right proportion in which the ideal and the natural, form and thought, ought to be united. This union is the perfection of art: *chefs-d'oeuvre* are produced by observing it.' Cousin, 1890, op. cit., p. 157.
- 90 Trans. 'not just as nature has made them, but as she should have made them'. Francingues, op. cit., p. 586.
- 91 A similar descriptive strategy is used by Adrien Paul who implies that the crowds which gather around Cabanel's Venus are attracted to her. Adrien Paul, 'Beaux-Arts. Salon de 1863', *Le Siècle*, no. 10263, 3 June 1863, n.p.
- 92 This was a common area for prostitutes. See Clark, op. cit., pp. 86–7.
- 93 Trans. 'It is notable that all the articles on the Salon in all the papers, are extremely sad. There is something elegiac in the critics' tone, even when they celebrate the birth of Venus. ... One doesn't have a good time when one declines. All decadence is gloomy.' W. Bürger [Théophile Thoré], *Salons de W. Bürger 1861 à 1868*, vol. 1, Paris, 1870, pp. 428–9.
- 94 Du Camp, op. cit., p. 12.
- 95 Ibid., p. 26.
- 96 Trans. 'In a word, the exclusive cult of matter in all its manifestations'. Ibid., p. 38.
- 97 Trans. 'Perhaps it is sometimes good for one to see where one can end up when, looking only for grace, one doesn't know how to contain it within the limits beyond which it changes its name.' Ibid.
- 98 Ibid., pp. 32–3.
- 99 Trans. 'One reproach in passing: his Venus isn't in the process of being born, rather she awakens. Lying on a wave where the whitened swell of the froth serves as a pillow, she is stretched out in a manner which makes the contour of her hips and her chest more prominent; from her barely opened eyes, she seems to solicit the admiration of the viewer and say to him: "See how beautiful I am! Look, I am there for you to contemplate at your ease: the sea is a pretext, my name a blank cheque, I am a woman, nothing more but nothing less, and if the old king David had only seen me he would have preferred me to the young Abigail!" It's too much, all this discussion is useless, and this Venus doesn't say anything else.' Du Camp, op. cit., p. 33.
- 100 Ibid., p. 32.
- 101 Trans. 'very strongly painted, with a knowing brush': 'an ensemble that would be successful if it didn't have certain intentional exaggerations that it is not at all convenient to indicate'. Ibid., p. 33.
- 102 Ibid., p. 84.
- 103 Ibid., p. 36.
- 104 Trans. 'He absolutely does not compose; one would say that the model takes the pose which suits her and that M. Baudry contents himself to copy her. His modelling is so crude that very often his figures have the look of being painted on "baudruche" [gold beater's skin; sheep's intestines used to make various objects including balloons; something devoid of content, full of air]; as for his draughtsmanship, it is often very incomplete, as one can convince oneself upon seeing his *Vague* ...' Ibid.
- 105 Other critics also made reference to copying the model. See, for example, Victor Fournel: 'Un pareil sujet dispense d'invention et d'idée; il s'agit simplement de trouver un beau modèle et de le copier de son mieux.' Victor Fournel, 'Les Beaux-Arts en 1863, Le Salon — Salon des élus et Salon de refusés', *Revue de l'année*, Paris, 1864, p. 387.
- 106 Trans. 'The absence of composition is radical in all his paintings, and today it has arrived at the very curious point that, if one elides the



- accessories neighbouring the figure, the subject disappears completely. In effect, if one imagines away this heavy wave of wallpaper that forms the background of the painting, if one equally gets rid of two or three admirably treated shells, what will be left? A woman, and in such a position! with such a look on her face! Let's move on; since this has nothing to do with art from any perspective, we have nothing to say about it.' Du Camp, *op. cit.*, p. 35. Other critics made reference to the inappropriateness and power of *La Perle's* look. See for example: Ch. de Sault [Mme de Charnace] 'Salon de 1863', *Le Temps*, 5 June 1863, n.p.
- 107 Théophile Gautier described explicitly the formal echoes between the line of the woman's body and the wave. Théophile Gautier, 'Salon de 1863', *Moniteur universel*, no. 164, 13 June 1863, p. 1.
- 108 Trans. 'To allegorize a wave is not an easy thing. What is a wave? Disquiet, depth, treachery, instability,' Du Camp, *op. cit.*, p. 35. Ernest Chesneau also refers to Baudry's painting as 'La Vague', thus implying that the wave is the main subject of the picture and equating it with the woman. Ernest Chesneau, 'Beaux Arts — Salon de 1863', *Le Constitutionnel*, no. 132, 5 May and no. 131, 30 June 1863. Interestingly, this slippage continued. In the 1867 Universal Exposition, the painting was exhibited under the title *La Vague et la perle*. In the Baudry catalogue of 1986, though the title is given in the catalogue as *La Perle et la vague*, the first sentence for the entry starts: 'Baudry expose ce tableau au Salon de 1863 sous le titre: *La Vague et la perle*.' Baudry 1828–1886. Musée d'art et d'archéologie, La Roche-sur-Yon, 17 January–31 March 1986, p. 77.
- 109 Du Camp, *op. cit.*, p. 35. Du Camp states: 'Une femme nue dans un bois, c'était Vénus; la même femme couchée dans une grotte, c'était la Madeleine; la même femme vêtue à la mode de 1793, c'était Charlotte Corday; aujourd'hui il nous montre la même femme la tête renversée sur un matelas de sable et l'appelle la *Vague*.'
- 110 Trans. 'I had at first thought of the Wave for the title, that is to say of the movement of undulating curves, of the ephemeral and pure freshness of the foam; all that was very feminine. The transposition of the idea of water to a living being is a bit too much of an abstraction, however. It appeared to me simpler to make the wave the jewel box and the figure the Pearl, the pearl lifting itself to the light on the azure jewel box of the wave. Venus Aphrodite has the same origin.' Musée d'art et d'archéologie, La Roche-sur-Yon, 1986, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
- 111 Trans. 'Everything is subordinated to colour and line, the execution alone counts for something . . . one enters more and more into a materialism that brings art to be nothing more than a *métier*.' Du Camp, *op. cit.*, p. 26–7.
- 112 Trans. 'effeminate and vulgarly sensual art'. *Ibid.*, p. 3. Similarly, J. Graham, the critic for *Le Figaro*, set up an opposition between 'le côté des hommes' and 'le côté des dames', between 'art héroïque' and 'art érotique'. Graham places both Baudry and Cabanel on 'le côté des dames'. J. Graham [Arthur Stevens], 'Un Etranger au Salon,' *Le Figaro*, no. 865, 31 May 1863, p. 2.
- 113 Trans. 'this French society that no longer seems to follow anything, alas! but the special and rapid interest of the moment'. Du Camp, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

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