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Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature

Sander L. Gilman

How do we organize our perceptions of the world? Recent discussions of this age-old question have centered around the function of visual conventions as the primary means by which we perceive and transmit our understanding of the world about us.¹ Nowhere are these conventions more evident than in artistic representations, which consist more or less exclusively of icons. Rather than presenting the world, icons represent it. Even with a modest nod to supposedly mimetic portrayals it is apparent that, when individuals are shown within a work of art (no matter how broadly defined), the ideologically charged iconographic nature of the representation dominates. And it dominates in a very specific manner, for the representation of individuals implies the creation of some greater class or classes to which the individual is seen to belong. These classes in turn are characterized by the use of a model which synthesizes our perception of the uniformity of the groups into a convincingly homogeneous image. The resulting stereotypes may be overt, as in the case of caricatures, or covert, as in eighteenth-century portraiture. But they serve to focus the viewer's attention on the relationship between the portrayed individual and the general qualities ascribed to the class.

Specific individual realities are thus given mythic extension through association with the qualities of a class. These realities manifest as icons representing perceived attributes of the class into which the individual has been placed. The myths associated with the class, the myth of difference from the rest of humanity, is thus, to an extent, composed of fragments of the real world, perceived through the ideological bias of the observer.

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These myths are often so powerful, and the associations of their conventions so overpowering, that they are able to move from class to class without substantial alteration. In linking otherwise marginally or totally unrelated classes of individuals, the use of these conventions reveals perceptual patterns which themselves illuminate the inherent ideology at work.

While the discussion of the function of conventions has helped reveal the essential iconographic nature of all visual representation, it has mainly been limited to a specific sphere—aesthetics. And although the definition of the aesthetic has expanded greatly in the past decade to include everything from decoration to advertising, it continues to dominate discussions of visual conventions. Patterns of conventions are established within the world of art or between that world and parallel ones, such as the world of literature, but they go no farther. We maintain a special sanctity about the aesthetic object which we deny to the conventions of representation in other areas.

This essay is an attempt to plumb the conventions (and thus the ideologies) which exist at a specific historical moment in both the aesthetic and scientific spheres. I will assume the existence of a web of conventions within the world of the aesthetic—conventions which have elsewhere been admirably illustrated—but will depart from the norm by examining the synchronic existence of another series of conventions, those of medicine. I do not mean in any way to accord special status to medical conventions. Indeed, the world is full of overlapping and intertwined systems of conventions, of which the medical and the aesthetic are but two. Medicine offers an especially interesting source of conventions since we do tend to give medical conventions special “scientific” status as opposed to the “subjective” status of the aesthetic conventions. But medical icons are no more “real” than “aesthetic” ones. Like aesthetic icons, medical icons may (or may not) be rooted in some observed reality. Like them, they are iconographic in that they represent these realities in a manner determined by the historical position of the observers, their relationship to their own time, and to the history of the conventions which they employ. Medicine uses its categories to structure an image of the diversity of mankind; it is as much at the mercy of the needs of any age to comprehend this infinite diversity as any other system which organizes our perception of the world. The power of medicine, at least in the nineteenth century,

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lies in the rise of the status of science. The conventions of medicine infiltrate other seemingly closed iconographic systems precisely because of this status. In examining the conventions of medicine employed in other areas, we must not forget this power.

One excellent example of the conventions of human diversity captured in the iconography of the nineteenth century is the linkage of two seemingly unrelated female images—the icon of the Hottentot female and the icon of the prostitute. In the course of the nineteenth century, the female Hottentot comes to represent the black female *in nuce*, and the prostitute to represent the sexualized woman. Both of these categories represent the creation of classes which correspondingly represent very specific qualities. While the number of terms describing the various categories of the prostitute expanded substantially during the nineteenth century, all were used to label the sexualized woman. Likewise, while many groups of African blacks were known to Europeans in the nineteenth century, the Hottentot remained representative of the essence of the black, especially the black female. Both concepts fulfilled an iconographic function in the perception and the representation of the world. How these two concepts were associated provides a case study for the investigation of patterns of conventions, without any limitation on the “value” of one pattern over another.

Let us begin with one of the classic works of nineteenth-century art, a work which records the idea of both the sexualized woman and the black woman. Edouard Manet’s *Olympia*, painted in 1862–63 and first exhibited in the Salon of 1865, assumes a key position in documenting the merger of these two images (fig. 1). The conventional wisdom concerning Manet’s painting states that the model, Victorine Meurent, is “obviously naked rather than conventionally nude,”² and that her pose is heavily indebted to classical models such as Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (1538), Francisco Goya’s *Naked Maja* (1800), and Eugène Delacroix’s *Odalisque* (1847), as well as other works by Manet’s contemporaries, such as Gustave Courbet.³ George Needham has shown quite convincingly that Manet was also using a convention of early erotic photography in having the central figure directly confront the observer.⁴ The black female attendant, based on a black model called Laura, has been seen as a reflex of both the classic black servant figure present in the visual arts of the eighteenth century as well as a representation of Baudelaire’s *Vénus noire*.⁵ Let us juxtapose the *Olympia*, with all its aesthetic and artistic analogies and parallels, to a work by Manet which Georges Bataille, among others, has seen as a modern “genre scene”—the *Nana* of 1877 (fig. 2).⁶ Unlike *Olympia*, *Nana* is modern, a creature of present-day Paris, according to a contemporary.⁷ But like *Olympia*, *Nana* was perceived as a sexualized female and is so represented. Yet in moving from a work with an evident aesthetic provenance, as understood by Manet’s contemporaries, to one which was influenced by the former and yet was seen by its contemporaries

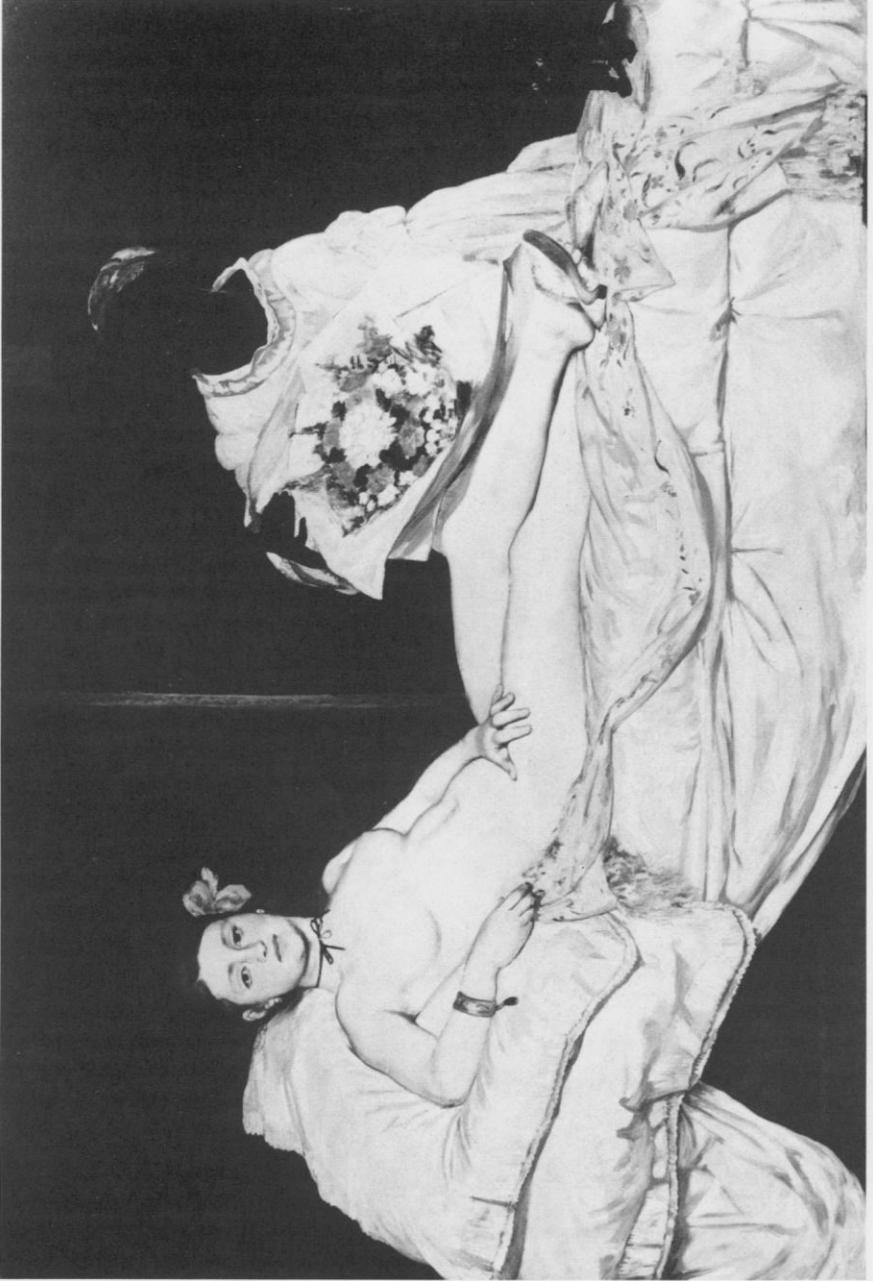


FIG. 1.—Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1865. Musée de l'Impressionisme, Paris. Phot. Museum.



FIG. 2.—Manet, *Nana*, 1877. Kunsthalle, Hamburg. Phot. Museum.

as modern, certain major shifts in the iconography of the sexualized woman take place, not the least of which is the apparent disappearance of the black female.

The figure of the black servant in European art is ubiquitous. Richard Strauss knew this when he had Hugo von Hofmannsthal conclude their conscious evocation of the eighteenth century, *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), with the mute return of the little black servant to reclaim the Marschallin's forgotten gloves.⁸ But Hofmannsthal was also aware that one of the black servant's central functions in the visual arts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was to sexualize the society in which he or she is found. The forgotten gloves, for instance, mark the end of the relationship between Octavian, the Knight of the Rose, and the Marschallin: the illicit nature of their sexual relationship, which opens the opera, is thereby linked to the appearance of the figure of the black servant, which closes the opera. When one turns to the narrative art of the eighteenth century—for example, to William Hogarth's two great cycles, *A Rake's Progress* (1733–34) and *A Harlot's Progress* (1731)—it is not very surprising that, as in the Strauss opera some two centuries later, the figures of the black servants mark the presence of illicit sexual activity. Furthermore, as in Hofmannsthal's libretto, they appear in the opposite sex to the central figure. In the second plate of *A Harlot's Progress*, we see Moll Hackabout as the mistress of a Jewish merchant, the first stage of her decline as a sexualized female; also present is a young, black male servant (fig. 3). In the third stage of Tom Rakewell's collapse, we find him in a notorious brothel, the Rose Tavern in Covent Garden.⁹ The entire picture is full of references to illicit sexual activity, all portrayed negatively; present as well is the figure of a young female black servant.

The association of the black with concupiscence reaches back into the Middle Ages. The twelfth-century Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela wrote that

at Seba on the river Pishon . . . is a people . . . who, like animals, eat of the herbs that grow on the banks of the Nile and in the fields. They go about naked and have not the intelligence of ordinary men. They cohabit with their sisters and anyone they can find. . . . And these are the Black slaves, the sons of Ham.¹⁰

By the eighteenth century, the sexuality of the black, both male and female, becomes an icon for deviant sexuality in general; as we have seen, the black figure appears almost always paired with a white figure of the opposite sex. By the nineteenth century, as in the *Olympia*, or more crudely in one of a series of Viennese erotic prints entitled "The Servant" (fig. 4), the central female figure is associated with a black female in such a way as to imply their sexual similarity. The association of figures of the same sex stresses the special status of female sexuality. In "The Servant"



FIG. 3.—William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress*, pl. 2, engraving, 1731.



FIG. 4.—Franz von Bayros, "The Servant," ca. 1890.

the overt sexuality of the black child indicates the covert sexuality of the white woman, a sexuality quite manifest in the other plates in the series. The relationship between the sexuality of the black woman and that of the sexualized white woman enters a new dimension when contemporary scientific discourse concerning the nature of black female sexuality is examined.

Buffon commented on the lascivious, apelike sexual appetite of the black, introducing a commonplace of early travel literature into a “scientific” context.¹¹ He stated that this animallike sexual appetite went so far as to lead black women to copulate with apes. The black female thus comes to serve as an icon for black sexuality in general. Buffon’s view was based on a confusion of two applications of the great chain of being to the nature of the black. Such a scale was employed to indicate the innate difference between the races: in this view of mankind, the black occupied the antithetical position to the white on the scale of humanity. This polygenetic view was applied to all aspects of mankind, including sexuality and beauty. The antithesis of European sexual mores and beauty is embodied in the black, and the essential black, the lowest rung on the great chain of being, is the Hottentot. The physical appearance of the Hottentot is, indeed, the central nineteenth-century icon for sexual difference between the European and the black—a perceived difference in sexual physiology which puzzled even early monogenetic theoreticians such as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach.

Such labeling of the black female as more primitive, and therefore more sexually intensive, by writers like the Abbé Raynal would have been dismissed as unscientific by the radical empiricists of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe.¹² To meet their scientific standards, a paradigm was needed which would technically place both the sexuality and the beauty of the black in an antithetical position to that of the white. This paradigm would have to be rooted in some type of unique and observable physical difference; they found that difference in the distinction they drew between the pathological and the normal in the medical model. William Bynum has contended that nineteenth-century biology constantly needed to deal with the polygenetic argument. We see the validity of his contention demonstrated here, for the medical model assumes the polygenetic difference between the races.¹³

It was in the work of J. J. Virey that this alteration of the mode of discourse—though not of the underlying ideology concerning the black female—took place. He was the author of the study of race standard in the early nineteenth century and also contributed a major essay (the only one on a specific racial group) to the widely cited *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales* [*Dictionary of medical sciences*] (1819).¹⁴ In this essay, Virey summarized his (and his contemporaries’) views on the sexual nature of black females in terms of acceptable medical discourse. According to him, their “voluptuousness” is “developed to a degree of lascivity unknown in our

climate, for their sexual organs are much more developed than those of whites." Elsewhere, Virey cites the Hottentot woman as the epitome of this sexual lasciviousness and stresses the relationship between her physiology and her physiognomy (her "hideous form" and her "horribly flattened nose"). His central proof is a discussion of the unique structure of the Hottentot female's sexual parts, the description of which he takes from the anatomical studies published by his contemporary, Georges Cuvier.¹⁵ According to Cuvier, the black female looks different. Her physiognomy, her skin color, the form of her genitalia label her as inherently different. In the nineteenth century, the black female was widely perceived as possessing not only a "primitive" sexual appetite but also the external signs of this temperament—"primitive" genitalia. Eighteenth-century travelers to southern Africa, such as François Le Vaillant and John Barrow, had described the so-called Hottentot apron, a hypertrophy of the labia and nymphae caused by the manipulation of the genitalia and serving as a sign of beauty among certain tribes, including the Hottentots and Bushmen as well as tribes in Basutoland and Dahomey.¹⁶

The exhibition in 1810 of Saartjie Baartman, also called Sarah Bartmann or Saat-Jee and known as the "Hottentot Venus," caused a public scandal in a London inflamed by the issue of the abolition of slavery, since she was exhibited "to the public in a manner offensive to decency. She . . . does exhibit all the shape and frame of her body as if naked" (fig. 5). The state's objection was as much to her lewdness as to her status as an indentured black. In France her presentation was similar. Sarah Bartmann was not the only African to be so displayed: in 1829 a nude Hottentot woman, also called "the Hottentot Venus," was the prize attraction at a ball given by the Duchess Du Barry in Paris. A contemporary print emphasized her physical difference from the observers portrayed (fig. 6).¹⁷ After more than five years of exhibition in Europe, Sarah Bartmann died in Paris in 1815 at the age of twenty-five. An autopsy was performed on her which was first written up by Henri de Blainville in 1816 and then, in its most famous version, by Cuvier in 1817.¹⁸ Reprinted at least twice during the next decade, Cuvier's description reflected de Blainville's two intentions: the comparison of a female of the "lowest" human species with the highest ape (the orangutan) and the description of the anomalies of the Hottentot's "organ of generation." It is important to note that Sarah Bartmann was exhibited not to show her genitalia but rather to present another anomaly which the European audience (and pathologists such as de Blainville and Cuvier) found riveting. This was the steatopygia, or protruding buttocks, the other physical characteristic of the Hottentot female which captured the eye of early European travelers. Thus the figure of Sarah Bartmann was reduced to her sexual parts. The audience which had paid to see her buttocks and had fantasized about the uniqueness of her genitalia when she was alive could, after her death and dissection, examine both, for Cuvier presented to "the Academy the

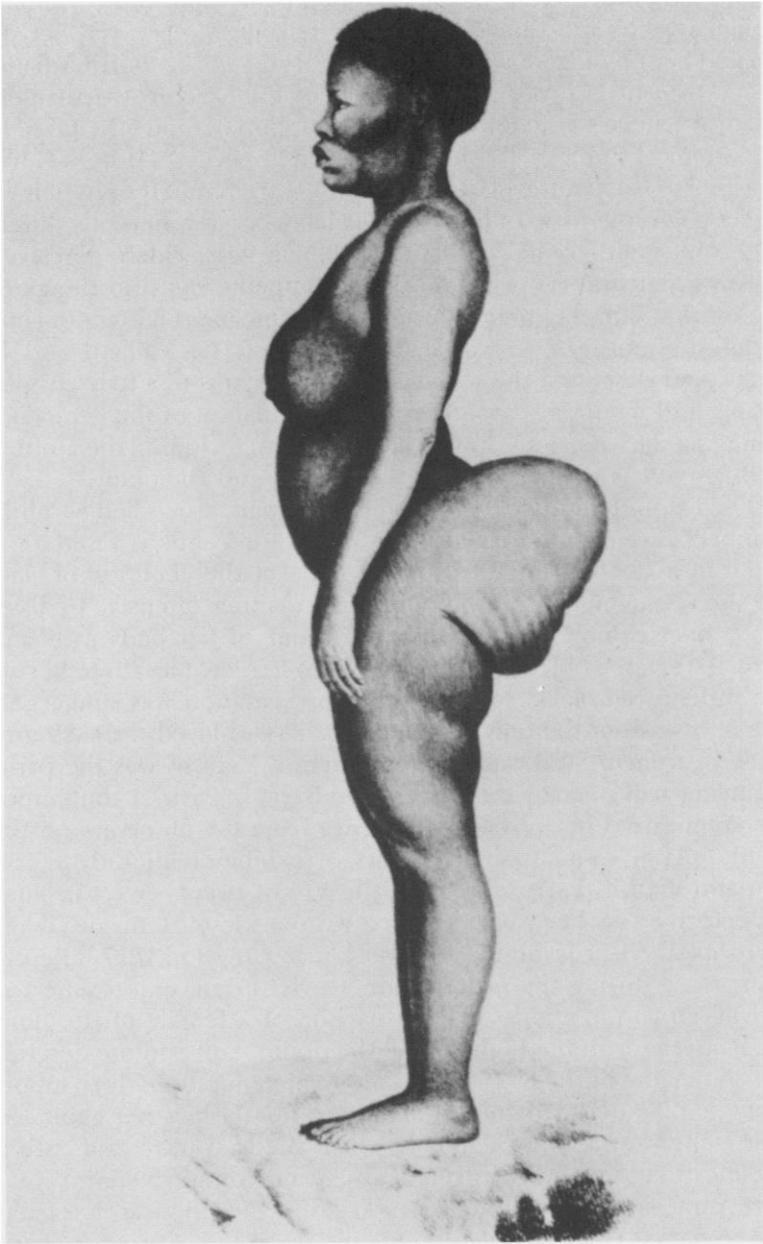


FIG. 5.—“The Hottentot Venus.” Georges Cuvier, “Extraits d’observations faites sur le cadavre d’une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentote,” 1817.

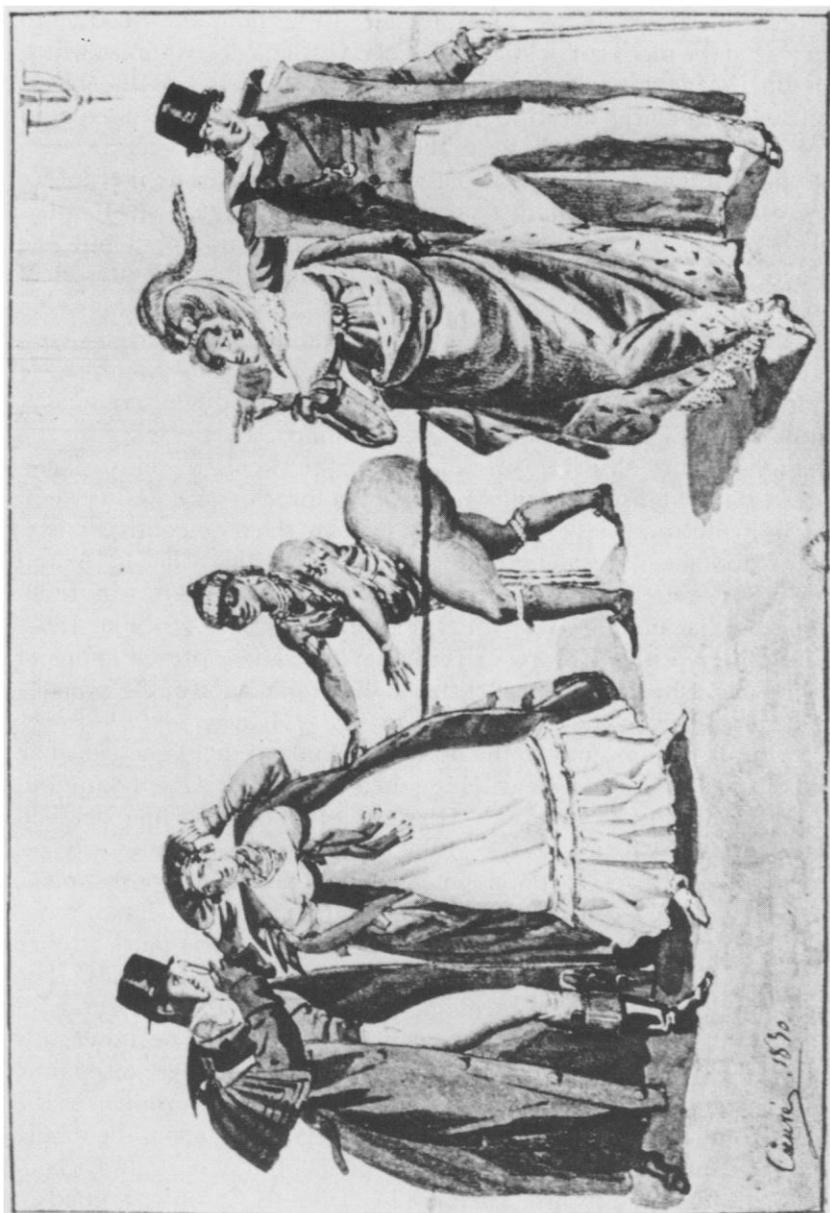


FIG. 6.—“The Ball of the Duchess Du Barry,” popular engraving, 1829.

genital organs of this woman prepared in a way so as to allow one to see the nature of the labia.”¹⁹

Sarah Bartmann’s sexual parts, her genitalia and her buttocks, serve as the central image for the black female throughout the nineteenth century. And the model of de Blainville’s and Cuvier’s descriptions, which center on the detailed presentation of the sexual parts of the black, dominates all medical description of the black during the nineteenth century. To an extent, this reflects the general nineteenth-century understanding of female sexuality as pathological: the female genitalia were of interest partly as examples of the various pathologies which could befall them but also because the female genitalia came to define the female for the nineteenth century. When a specimen was to be preserved for an anatomical museum, more often than not the specimen was seen as a pathological summary of the entire individual. Thus, the skeleton of a giant or a dwarf represented “giantism” or “dwarfism”; the head of a criminal represented the act of execution which labeled him “criminal.”²⁰ Sarah Bartmann’s genitalia and buttocks summarized her essence for the nineteenth-century observer, or, indeed, for the twentieth-century one, as they are still on display at the Musée de l’homme in Paris. Thus when one turns to the autopsies of Hottentot females in the nineteenth century, their description centers about the sexual parts. De Blainville (1816) and Cuvier (1817) set the tone, which is followed by A. W. Otto in 1824, Johannes Müller in 1834, William H. Flower and James Murie in 1867, and Luschka, Koch, and Görtz in 1869 (fig. 7).²¹ These presentations of Hottentot or Bushman women all focus on the presentation of the genitalia and buttocks. Flower, the editor of the *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*, included his dissection study in the opening volume of that famed journal. His ideological intent was clear. He wished to provide data “relating to the unity or plurality of mankind.” His description begins with a detailed presentation of the form and size of the buttocks and concludes with his portrayal of the “remarkable development of the labia minoria, or nymphae, which is so general a characteristic of the Hottentot and Bushman race.” These were “sufficiently well marked to distinguish these parts at once from those of any of the ordinary varieties of the human species.” The polygenetic argument is the ideological basis for all the dissections of these women. If their sexual parts could be shown to be inherently different, this would be a sufficient sign that the blacks were a separate (and, needless to say, lower) race, as different from the European as the proverbial orangutan. Similar arguments had been made about the nature of all blacks’ (and not just Hottentots’) genitalia, but almost always concerning the female. Edward Turnipseed of South Carolina argued in 1868 that the hymen in black women “is not at the entrance to the vagina, as in the white woman, but from one-and-a-half to two inches from its entrance in the interior.” From this he concluded that “this may be one of the anatomical marks of the non-unity of the races.”²² His views were

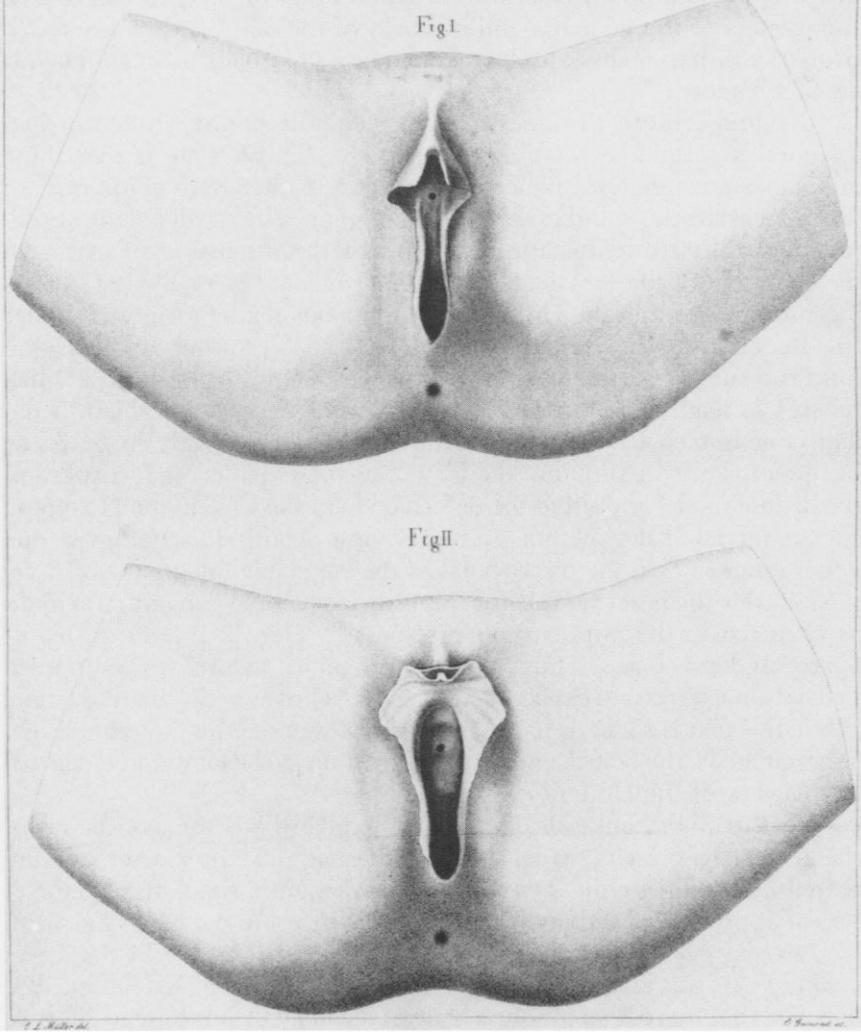


FIG. 7.—The "Hottentot Apron." Johannes Müller, "Ueber die äusseren Geschlechtstheile der Buschmänninnen," figs. 1 and 2, 1834.

seconded in 1877 by C. H. Fort, who presented another six cases of this seeming anomaly.²³ In comparison, when one turns to the description of the autopsies of black males from approximately the same period, the absence of any discussion of the male genitalia whatsoever is striking. For example, William Turner, in his three dissections of male blacks in 1878, 1879, and 1896, makes no mention at all of the genitalia.²⁴ The uniqueness of the genitalia and buttocks of the black is thus associated primarily with the female and is taken to be a sign solely of an anomalous *female* sexuality.

By mid-century the image of the genitalia of the Hottentot had assumed a certain set of implications. The central view is that these anomalies are inherent, biological variations rather than adaptations. In Theodor Billroth's standard handbook of gynecology, a detailed presentation of the "Hottentot apron" is part of the discussion of errors in development of the female genitalia (*Entwicklungsfehler*). By 1877 it was a commonplace that the Hottentot's anomalous sexual form was similar to other errors in the development of the labia. The author of this section links this malformation with the overdevelopment of the clitoris, which he sees as leading to those "excesses" which "are called 'lesbian love.'" The concupiscence of the black is thus associated also with the sexuality of the lesbian.²⁵ In addition, the idea of a congenital error incorporates the disease model applied to the deformation of the labia in the Hottentot, for the model of degeneracy presumes some acquired pathology in one generation which is the direct cause of the stigmata of degeneracy in the next. Surely the best example for this is the concept of congenital syphilis as captured in the popular consciousness by Henrik Ibsen's drama of biological decay, *Ghosts*. Thus Billroth's "congenital failure" is presupposed to have some direct and explicable etiology as well as a specific manifestation. While this text is silent as to the etiology, we can see the link established between the ill, the bestial, and the freak (pathology, biology, and medicine) in this view of the Hottentot's genitalia.

At this point, an aside might help explain both the association of the genitalia, a primary sexual characteristic, and the buttocks, a secondary sexual characteristic, in their role as the semantic signs of "primitive" sexual appetite and activity. Havelock Ellis, in volume 4 of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1905), provided a detailed example of the great chain of being as applied to the perception of the sexualized Other. Ellis believed that there is an absolute scale of beauty which is totally objective and which ranges from the European to the black. Thus men of the lower races, according to Ellis, admire European women more than their own, and women of lower races attempt to whiten themselves with face powder. Ellis then proceeded to list the secondary sexual characteristics which comprise this ideal of beauty, rejecting the "naked sexual organ[s]" as not "aesthetically beautiful" since it is "fundamentally necessary" that they "retain their primitive characteristics." Only people "in a low state

of culture” perceive the “naked sexual organs as objects of attraction.”²⁶ The list of secondary sexual characteristics which Ellis then gives as the signs of a cultured (that is, not primitive) perception of the body—the vocabulary of aesthetically pleasing signs—begins with the buttocks. This is, of course, a nineteenth-century fascination with the buttocks as a displacement for the genitalia. Ellis gives it the quality of a higher regard for the beautiful. His discussions of the buttocks ranks the races by size of the female pelvis, a view which began with Willem Vrolik’s claim in 1826 that a narrow pelvis is a sign of racial superiority and is echoed by R. Verneau’s study in 1875 of the form of the pelvis among the various races.²⁷ Verneau uses the pelvis of Sarah Bartmann to argue the primitive nature of the Hottentot’s anatomical structure. Ellis accepts this ranking, seeing the steatopygia as “a simulation of the large pelvis of the higher races,” having a compensatory function like face powder in emulating white skin. This view places the pelvis in an intermediary role as both a secondary as well as a primary sexual sign. Darwin himself, who held similar views as to the objective nature of human beauty, saw the pelvis as a “primary [rather] than as a secondary . . . character” and the buttocks of the Hottentot as a somewhat comic sign of the primitive, grotesque nature of the black female.²⁸

When the Victorians saw the female black, they saw her in terms of her buttocks and saw represented by the buttocks all the anomalies of her genitalia. In a mid-century erotic caricature of the Hottentot Venus, a white, male observer views her through a telescope, unable to see anything but her buttocks (fig. 8).²⁹ This fascination with the uniqueness of the sexual parts of the black focuses on the buttocks over and over again. In a British pornographic novel, published in 1899 but set in a mythic, antebellum Southern United States, the male author indulges his fantasy of flagellation on the buttocks of a number of white women. When he describes the one black, a runaway slave, being shipped, the power of the image of the Hottentot’s buttocks captures him:

She would have had a good figure, only that her bottom was out of all proportion. It was too big, but nevertheless it was fairly well shaped, with well-rounded cheeks meeting each other closely, her thighs were large, and she had a sturdy pair of legs, her skin was smooth and of a clear yellow tint.³⁰

The presence of exaggerated buttocks points to the other, hidden sexual signs, both physical and temperamental, of the black female. This association is a powerful one. Indeed Freud, in *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905), echoes the view that female genitalia are more primitive than those of the male, for female sexuality is more anal than that of the male.³¹ Female sexuality is linked to the image of the buttocks, and the quintessential buttocks are those of the Hottentot.



FIG. 8.—“The Hottentot Venus,” popular engraving, ca. 1850.

We can see in Edwin Long's painting of 1882, *The Babylonian Marriage Market*, the centrality of this vocabulary in perceiving the sexualized woman (fig. 9). This painting was the most expensive work of contemporary art sold in nineteenth-century London. It also has a special place in documenting the perception of the sexualized female in terms of the great chain of aesthetic perception presented by Ellis. Long's painting is based on a specific text from Herodotus, who described the marriage auction in Babylon in which maidens were sold in order of comeliness. In the painting they are arranged in order of their attractiveness. Their physiognomies are clearly portrayed. Their features run from the most European and white (a fact emphasized by the light reflected from the mirror onto the figure at the far left) to the Negroid features (thick lips, broad nose, dark but not black skin) of the figure furthest to the observer's right. The latter figure fulfills all of Virey's categories for the appearance of the black. This is, however, the Victorian scale of sexualized women acceptable within marriage, portrayed from the most to the least attractive, according to contemporary British standards. The only black female present is the servant-slave shown on the auction block, positioned so as to present her buttocks to the viewer. While there are black males in the audience and thus among the bidders, the only black female is associated with sexualized white women as a signifier of their sexual availability. Her position is her sign and her presence in the painting is thus analogous to the figure of the black servant, Laura, in Manet's *Olympia*. Here, the linkage between two female figures, one black and one white, represents not the perversities of human sexuality in a corrupt society, such as the black servants signify in Hogarth; rather, it represents the internalization of this perversity in one specific aspect of human society, the sexualized female, in the perception of late nineteenth-century Europe.

In the nineteenth century, the prostitute is perceived as the essential sexualized female. She is perceived as the embodiment of sexuality and of all that is associated with sexuality—disease as well as passion.³² Within the large and detailed literature concerning prostitution written during the nineteenth century (most of which documents the need for legal controls and draws on the medical model as perceived by public health officials), the physiognomy and physiology of the prostitute are analyzed in detail. We can begin with the most widely read early nineteenth-century work on prostitution, that of A. J. B. Parent-Duchatelet, who provides a documentation of the anthropology of the prostitute in his study of prostitution in Paris (1836).³³ Alain Corbin has shown how Parent-Duchatelet's use of the public health model reduces the prostitute to yet another source of pollution, similar to the sewers of Paris. Likewise in Parent-Duchatelet's discussion of the physiognomy of the prostitute, he believes himself to be providing a descriptive presentation of the appearance of the prostitute. He presents his readers with a statistical



FIG. 9.—Edwin Long, *The Babylonian Marriage Market*, 1882. Royal Holloway College, London. Phot. College.

description of the physical types of the prostitutes, the nature of their voices, the color of their hair and eyes, their physical anomalies, and their sexual profile in relation to childbearing and disease. Parent-Duchatelet's descriptions range from the detailed to the anecdotal. His discussion of the *embonpoint* of the prostitute begins his litany of external signs. Prostitutes have a "peculiar plumpness" which is attributed to "the great number of hot baths which the major part of these women take"—or perhaps to their lassitude, since they rise at ten or eleven in the morning, "leading an animal life." They are fat as prisoners are fat, from simple confinement. As an English commentator noted, "the grossest and stoutest of these women are to be found amongst the lowest and most disgusting classes of prostitutes."³⁴ These are the Hottentots on the scale of the sexualized female.

When Parent-Duchatelet considers the sexual parts of the prostitutes, he provides two sets of information which merge to become part of the myth of the physical anthropology of the prostitute. The prostitute's sexual parts are in no way directly affected by her profession. He contradicts the "general opinion . . . that the genital parts in prostitutes must alter, and assume a particular disposition, as the inevitable consequence of their avocation" (*P*, p. 42). He cites one case of a woman of fifty-one "who had prostituted herself thirty-six years, but in whom, notwithstanding, the genital parts might have been mistaken for those of a virgin just arrived at puberty" (*P*, p. 43). Parent-Duchatelet thus rejects any Lamarckian adaptation as well as any indication that the prostitute is inherently marked as a prostitute. This, of course, follows from his view that prostitution is an illness of a society rather than of an individual or group of individuals. While he does not see the genitalia of the prostitute altering, he does observe that prostitutes were subject to specific pathologies of their genitalia. They are especially prone to tumors "of the great labia . . . which commence with a little pus and tumefy at each menstrual period" (*P*, p. 49). He identifies the central pathology of the prostitute in the following manner: "Nothing is more frequent in prostitutes than common abscesses in the thickness of the labia majora" (*P*, p. 50). Parent-Duchatelet's two views—first, that there is no adaption of the sexual organ and, second, that the sexual organ is especially prone to labial tumors and abscesses—merge in the image of the prostitute as developing, through illness, an altered appearance of the genitalia.

From Parent-Duchatelet's description of the physical appearance of the prostitute (a catalog which reappears in most nineteenth-century studies of prostitutes, such as Josef Schrank's study of the prostitutes of Vienna), it is but a small step to the use of such catalogs of stigmata as a means of categorizing those women who have, as Freud states, "an aptitude for prostitution" (*SE*, 7:191).³⁵ The major work of nineteenth-century physical anthropology, public health, and pathology to undertake this was written by Pauline Tarnowsky. Tarnowsky, one of a number of

Saint Petersburg female physicians in the late nineteenth century, wrote in the tradition of her eponymous colleague, V. M. Tarnowsky, the author of the standard work on Russian prostitution. His study appeared in both Russian and German and assumed a central role in the late nineteenth-century discussions of the nature of the prostitute.³⁶ She followed his more general study with a detailed investigation of the physiognomy of the prostitute.³⁷ Her categories remain those of Parent-Duchatelet. She describes the excessive weight of prostitutes, their hair and eye color; she provides anthropometric measurements of skull size, a catalog of their family background (as with Parent-Duchatelet, most are the children of alcoholics), and their level of fecundity (extremely low) as well as the signs of their degeneration. These signs deal with the abnormalities of the face: asymmetry of features, misshapen noses, overdevelopment of the parietal region of the skull, and the appearance of the so-called Darwin's ear (fig. 10). All of these signs are the signs of the lower end of the scale of beauty, the end dominated by the Hottentot. All of these signs point to the "primitive" nature of the prostitute's physiognomy, for stigmata such as Darwin's ear (the simplification of the convolutes of the ear shell and the absence of a lobe) are a sign of the atavistic female.

In a later paper, Tarnowsky provided a scale of appearance of the prostitute, in an analysis of the "physiognomy of the Russian prostitute." At the upper end of the scale is the "Russian Helen" (fig. 11). Here, classical aesthetics are introduced as the measure of the appearance of the sexualized female. A bit further on is one who is "very handsome in spite of her hard expression." Indeed, the first fifteen prostitutes on her



FIG. 10.—"The Face and Ear of the Prostitute." Pauline Tarnowsky, *Etude anthropométrique sur les prostituées et les voleuses*, pl. 5, 1889.



FIG. 11.—“The Russian Helen.” Tarnowsky, “Fisionomie di prostitute russe,” pl. 25, 1893.



FIG. 12.—“The Madwoman/Prostitute.” Tarnowsky, “Fisionomie di prostitute russe,” pl. 17, 1893.

scale “might pass on the street for beauties.” But hidden even within these seeming beauties are the stigmata of criminal degeneration: black, thick hair; a strong jaw; a hard, spent glance. Some show the “wild eyes and perturbed countenance along with facial asymmetry” of the insane (fig. 12).³⁸ Only the scientific observer can see the hidden faults, and thus identify the true prostitute, for prostitutes use superficial beauty as the bait for their clients. But when they age, their

strong jaws and cheek-bones, and their masculine aspect . . . [once] hidden by adipose tissue, emerge, salient angles stand out, and the face grows virile, uglier than a man’s; wrinkles deepen into the likeness of scars, and the countenance, once attractive, exhibits the full degenerate type which early grace had concealed.³⁹

Change over time affects the physiognomy of the prostitute just as it does her genitalia, which become more and more diseased as she ages. For Tarnowsky, the appearance of the prostitute and her sexual identity are preestablished by heredity. What is most striking is that as the prostitute ages, she begins to appear more and more mannish. The link between the physical anomalies of the Hottentot and those of the lesbian appear in Billroth’s *Handbuch der Frauenkrankheiten* [*Handbook of gynecological diseases*]; here, the link is between two further models of sexual deviancy, the prostitute and the lesbian. Both are seen as possessing the physical signs which set them apart from the normal.

The paper in which Tarnowsky undertook her documentation of the appearance of the prostitute is repeated word for word in the major late nineteenth-century study of prostitution. This study of the criminal woman, subtitled *The Prostitute and the Normal Woman*, written by Cesare Lombroso and his son-in-law, Guillaume Ferrero, was published in 1893.⁴⁰ Lombroso accepts Tarnowsky’s entire manner of seeing the prostitute and articulates one further subtext of central importance in the perception of the sexualized woman in the nineteenth century. This subtext becomes apparent only by examining the plates in his study. Two of the plates deal with the image of the Hottentot female and illustrate the “Hottentot apron” and the steatopygia (figs. 13 and 14). Lombroso accepts Parent-Duchatelet’s image of the fat prostitute and sees her as similar to women living in asylums and to the Hottentot female. He regards the anomalies of the prostitute’s labia as atavistic throwbacks to the Hottentot, if not the chimpanzee. Lombroso deems the prostitute to be an atavistic subclass of woman, and he applies the power of the polygenetic argument to the image of the Hottentot to support his views. Lombroso’s text, in its offhanded use of the analogy between the Hottentot and the prostitute, simply articulates in images a view which had been present throughout the late nineteenth century. Adrien Charpy’s essay of 1870, published in the most distinguished French journal of dermatology and syphilology,

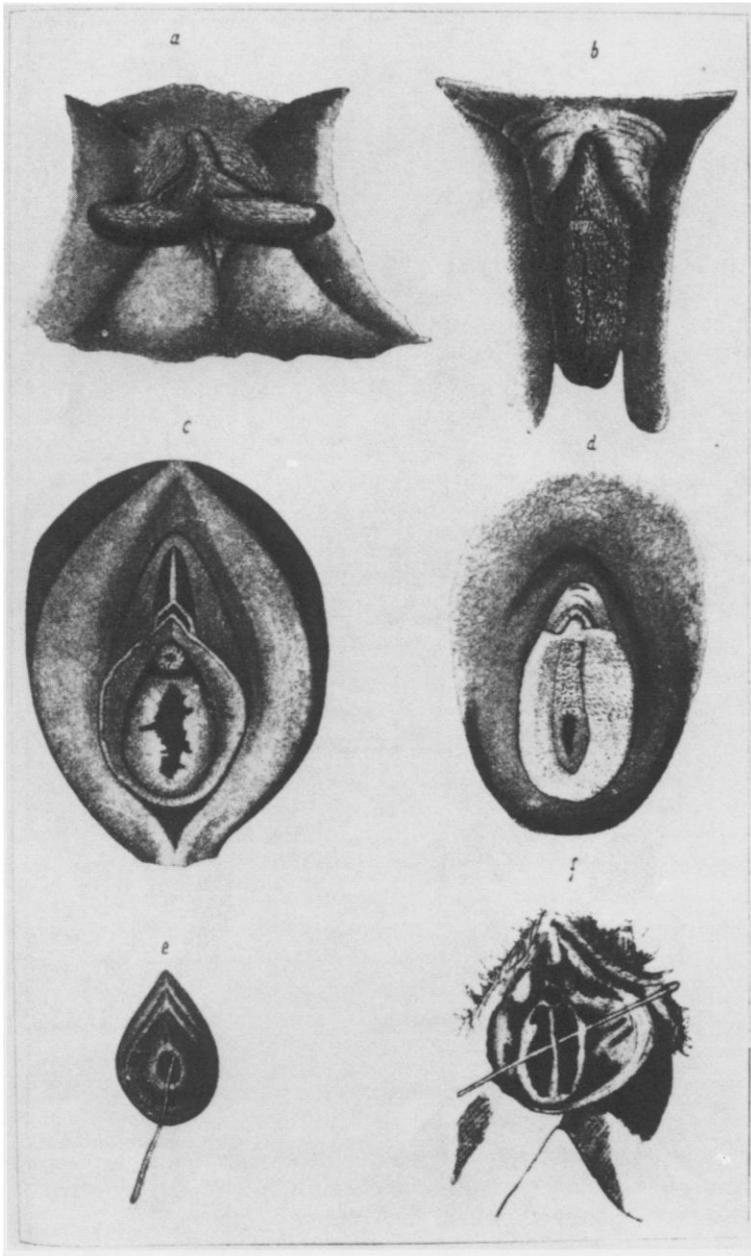


FIG. 13.—The "Hottentot Apron" (figs. a and b) and other genital anomalies. Cesare Lombroso and Guillaume Ferrero, *La donna delinquente: La prostituta e la donna normale*, pl. 1, 1893.

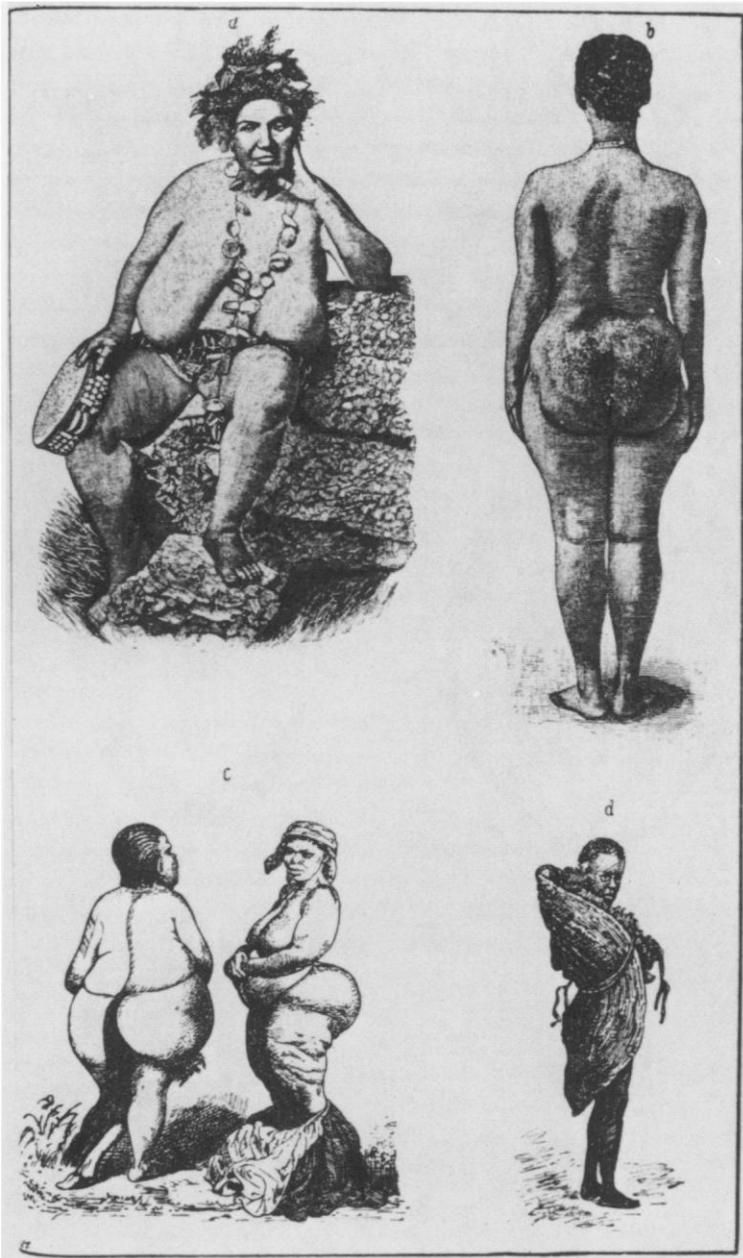


FIG. 14.—The Hottentot buttocks (figs. b and c) and an Ethiopian prostitute (fig. a). Lombroso and Ferrero, *La donna delinquente*, pl. 2, 1893.

presented an analysis of the external form of the genitalia of 800 prostitutes examined at Lyons.⁴¹ Charpy merged Parent-Duchatelet's two contradictory categories by describing all of the alterations as either pathological or adaptive. The initial category of anomalies is that of the labia; he begins by commenting on the elongation of the labia majora in prostitutes, comparing this with the apron of the "disgusting" Hottentots. The image comes as a natural one to Charpy, as it did to Lombroso two decades later. The prostitute is an atavistic form of humanity whose "primitive" nature can be observed in the form of her genitalia. What Tarnowsky and Lombroso add to the equation is the parallel they draw between the seemingly beautiful physiognomy and this atavistic nature. Other signs were quickly found. Ellis saw, as one of the secondary sexual characteristics which determine the beautiful, the presence in a woman of a long second toe and a short fifth toe (see *SPS*, p. 164). The French physician L. Jullien presented clinical material concerning the antithetical case, the foot of the prostitute, which Lombroso in commenting on the paper immediately labeled as prehensile.⁴² The ultimate of the throwbacks was, of course, the throwback to the level of the Hottentot or the Bushman—to the level of the lasciviousness of the prostitute. Ferrero, Lombroso's coauthor, described prostitution as the rule in primitive societies and placed the Bushman at the nadir of the scale of primitive lasciviousness: adultery has no meaning for them, he asserted, nor does virginity; the poverty of their mental universe can be seen in the fact that they have but one word for "girl, woman, or wife."⁴³ The primitive is the black, and the qualities of blackness, or at least of the black female, are those of the prostitute. The work of a student of Lombroso's, Abele de Blasio, makes this grotesquely evident: he published a series of case studies on steatopygia in prostitutes in which he perceives the prostitute as being, quite literally, the Hottentot (fig. 15).⁴⁴

The perception of the prostitute in the late nineteenth century thus merged with the perception of the black. Both categories are those of outsiders, but what does this amalgamation imply in terms of the perception of both groups? It is a commonplace that the primitive was associated with unbridled sexuality. This was either condemned, as in Thomas Jefferson's discussions of the nature of the black in Virginia, or praised, as in the fictional supplement written by Denis Diderot to Bougainville's voyages. It is exactly this type of uncontrolled sexuality, however, which is postulated by historians such as J. J. Bachofen as the sign of the "swamp," the earliest stage of human history. Blacks, if both G. W. F. Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer are to be believed, remained at this most primitive stage, and their presence in the contemporary world served as an indicator of how far mankind had come in establishing control over his world and himself. The loss of control was marked by a regression into this dark past—a degeneracy into the primitive expression

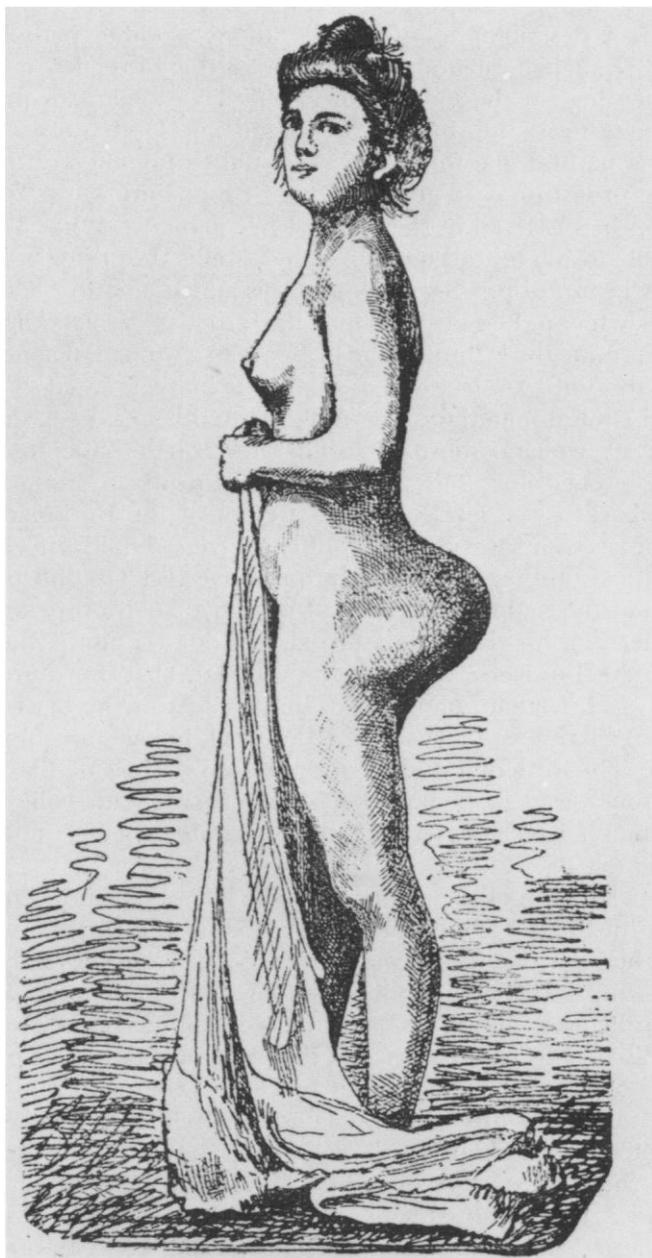


FIG. 15.—An Italian Prostitute. Abele de Blasio, "Staetopigia in prostitute," pl. 1, 1905.

of emotions in the form of either madness or unrestrained sexuality. Such a loss of control was, of course, viewed as pathological and thus fell into the domain of the medical model. For the medical model, especially as articulated in the public health reforms of the mid- and late nineteenth century, had as its central preoccupation the elimination of sexually transmitted disease through the institution of social controls; this was the project which motivated writers such as Parent-Duchatelet and Tarnowsky. The social controls which they wished to institute had existed in the nineteenth century but in quite a different context. The laws applying to the control of slaves (such as the 1685 French *code noir* and its American analogues) had placed great emphasis on the control of the slave as sexual object, both in terms of permitted and forbidden sexual contacts as well as by requiring documentation as to the legal status of the offspring of slaves. Sexual control was thus well known to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The linkage which the late nineteenth century established between this earlier model of control and the later model of sexual control advocated by the public health authorities came about through the association of two bits of medical mythology. The primary marker of the black is his or her skin color. Medical tradition has a long history of perceiving this skin color as the result of some pathology. The favorite theory, which reappears with some frequency in the early nineteenth century, is that the skin color and attendant physiognomy of the black are the result of congenital leprosy.⁴⁵ It is not very surprising, therefore, to read in the late nineteenth century—after social conventions surrounding the abolition of slavery in Great Britain and France, as well as the trauma of the American Civil War, forbade the public association of at least skin color with illness—that syphilis was not introduced into Europe by Christopher Columbus' sailors but rather that it was a form of leprosy which had long been present in Africa and had spread into Europe in the Middle Ages.⁴⁶ The association of the black, especially the black female, with the syphilophobia of the late nineteenth century was thus made manifest. Black females do not merely represent the sexualized female, they also represent the female as the source of corruption and disease. It is the black female as the emblem of illness who haunts the background of Manet's *Olympia*.

For Manet's *Olympia* stands exactly midway between the glorification and the condemnation of the sexualized female. She is the antithesis of the fat prostitute. Indeed, she was perceived as thin by her contemporaries, much in the style of the actual prostitutes of the 1860s. But Laura, the black servant, is presented as plump, which can be best seen in Manet's initial oil sketch of her done in 1862–63. Her presence in both the sketch and in the final painting emphasizes her face, for it is the physiognomy of the black which points to her own sexuality and to that of the white

female presented to the viewer unclothed but with her genitalia demurely covered. The association is between these hidden genitalia and the signifier of the black. Both point to potential corruption of the male viewer by the female. This is made even more evident in that work which art historians have stressed as being heavily influenced by Manet's *Olympia*, his portrait *Nana*. Here the associations would have been quite clear to the contemporary viewer. First, the model for the painting was Henriette Hauser, called Citron, the mistress of the prince of Orange. Second, Manet places in the background of the painting a Japanese crane, for which the French word (*grue*) was a slang term for prostitute. He thus labels the figure as a sexualized female. Unlike the classical pose of the *Olympia*, *Nana* is presented being admired by a well-dressed man-about-town (a *flâneur*). She is not naked but partially clothed. What Manet can further draw upon is the entire vocabulary of signs which, by the late nineteenth century, were associated with the sexualized female. *Nana* is fulsome rather than thin. Here Manet employs the stigmata of fatness to characterize the prostitute. This convention becomes part of the visualization of the sexualized female even while the reality of the idealized sexualized female is that of a thin female. Constantin Guys presents a fat, reclining prostitute in 1860, while Edgar Degas' *Madam's Birthday* (1879) presents an entire brothel of fat prostitutes. At the same time, Napoléon III's mistress, Marguerite Bellanger, set a vogue for slenderness. She was described as "below average in size, slight, thin, almost skinny."⁴⁷ This is certainly not *Nana*. Manet places her in a position vis-à-vis the viewer (but not the male observer in the painting) which emphasizes the line of her buttocks, the steatopygia of the prostitute. Second, *Nana* is placed in such a way that the viewer (but again not the *flâneur*) can observe her ear. It is, to no one's surprise, Darwin's ear, a sign of the atavistic female. Thus we know where the black servant is hidden in *Nana*—within *Nana*. Even *Nana*'s seeming beauty is but a sign of the black hidden within. All her external stigmata point to the pathology within the sexualized female.

Manet's *Nana* thus provides a further reading of his *Olympia*, a reading which stresses Manet's debt to the pathological model of sexuality present during the late nineteenth century. The black hidden within *Olympia* bursts forth in Pablo Picasso's 1901 version of the painting: *Olympia* is presented as a sexualized black, with broad hips, revealed genitalia, gazing at the nude *flâneur* bearing her a gift of fruit, much as Laura bears a gift of flowers in Manet's original (fig. 16). But, unlike Manet, the artist is himself present in this work, as a sexualized observer of the sexualized female. Picasso owes part of his reading of the *Olympia* to the polar image of the primitive female as sexual object, as found in the lower-class prostitutes painted by Vincent van Gogh or the Tahitian maidens à la Diderot painted by Paul Gauguin. Picasso saw the sexualized female as the visual analogue of the black. Indeed, in his most radical break with

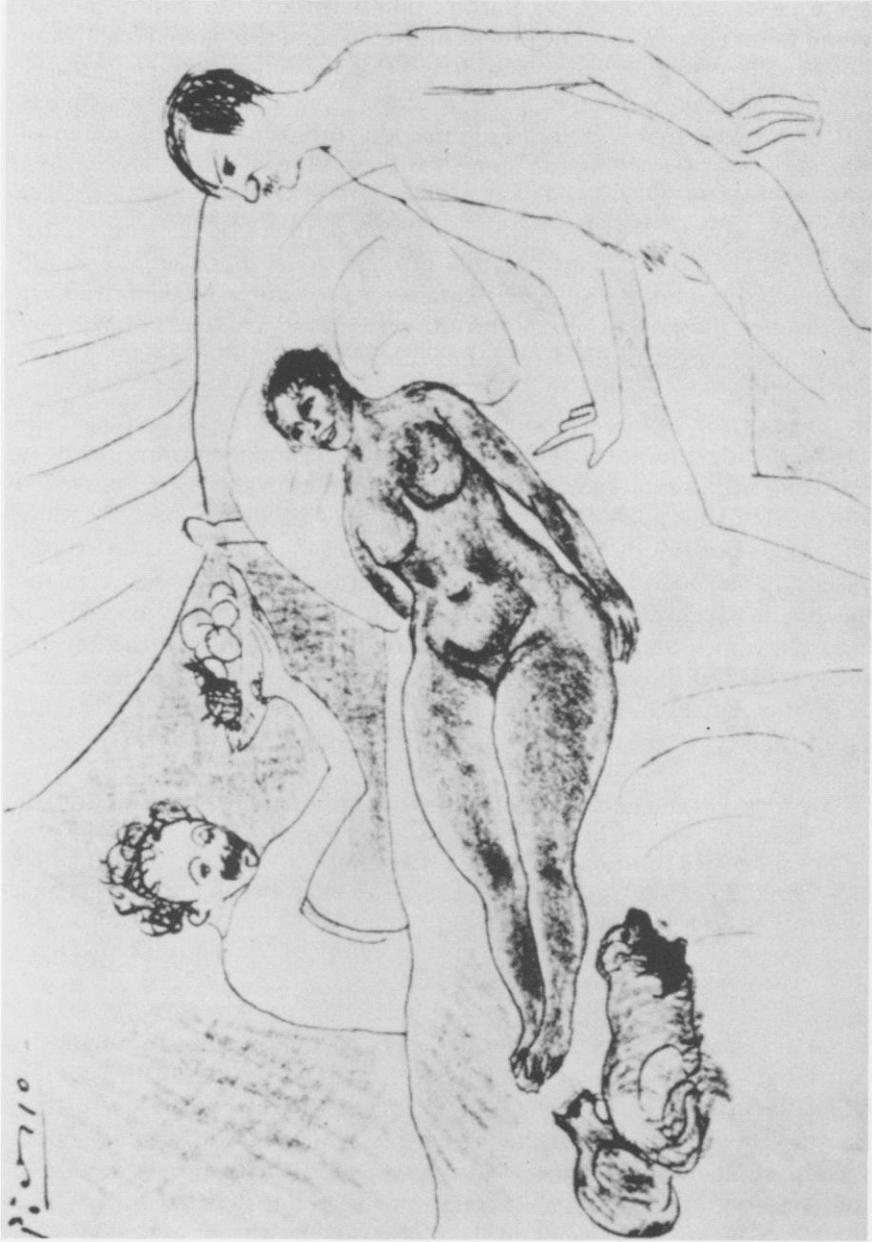


FIG. 16.—Pablo Picasso, *Olympia*, 1901, New York.

the impressionist tradition, *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907), he linked the inmates of the brothel with the black by using the theme of African masks to characterize their appearance. The figure of the male represents the artist as victim. Picasso's parody points toward the importance of seeing Manet's *Nana* in the context of the medical discourse concerning the sexualized female which dominated the late nineteenth century.

The portrait of *Nana* is also embedded in a complex literary matrix which provides many of the signs needed to illustrate the function of the sexualized female as the sign of disease. The figure of *Nana* first appeared in Emile Zola's novel *L'Assommoir* (1877) in which she was presented as the offspring of the alcoholic couple who are the central figures of the novel.⁴⁸ Her heredity assured the reader that she would eventually become a sexualized female—a prostitute—and, indeed, by the close of the novel she has run off with an older man, the owner of a button factory, and has begun her life as a sexualized female. Manet was captivated by the figure of *Nana* (as was the French reading public), and his portrait of her symbolically reflected her sexual encounters presented during the novel. Zola then decided to build the next novel in his Rougon-Macquart cycle about the figure of *Nana* as a sexualized female. Thus in Zola's *Nana* the reader is presented with Zola's reading of Manet's portrait of *Nana*. Indeed, Zola uses the portrait of the *flâneur* observing the half-dressed *Nana* as the centerpiece for a scene in the theater in which *Nana* seduces the simple Count Muffat. Immediately before this meeting, Zola presents *Nana*'s first success in the theater (or, as the theater director calls it, his brothel). She appears in a revue, unable to sing or dance, and becomes the butt of laughter until, in the second act of the revue, she appears unclothed on stage:

Nana was in the nude: naked with a quiet audacity, certain of the omnipotence of her flesh. She was wrapped in a simple piece of gauze: her rounded shoulders, her Amazon's breasts of which the pink tips stood up rigidly like lances, her broad buttocks which rolled in a voluptuous swaying motion, and her fair, fat hips: her whole body was in evidence, and could be seen under the light tissue with its foamy whiteness.⁴⁹

What Zola describes are the characteristics of the sexualized woman, the "primitive" hidden beneath the surface: "all of a sudden in the comely child the woman arose, disturbing, bringing the mad surge of her sex, inviting the unknown element of desire. *Nana* was still smiling: but it was the smile of a man-eater." *Nana*'s atavistic sexuality, the sexuality of the Amazon, is destructive. The sign of this is her fleshliness. And it is this sign which reappears when she is observed by Muffat in her dressing room, the scene which Zola found in Manet's painting:

Then calmly, to reach her dressing-table, she walked in her drawers through that group of gentlemen, who made way for her. She had large buttocks, her drawers ballooned, and with breast well forward she bowed to them, giving her delicate smile. [*N*, p. 135]

Nana's childlike face is but a mask which conceals the hidden disease buried within, the corruption of sexuality. Thus Zola concludes the novel by revealing the horror beneath the mask: Nana dies of the pox. (Zola's pun works in French as well as in English and is needed because of the rapidity of decay demanded by the moral implication of Zola's portrait. It would not do to have Nana die slowly over thirty years of tertiary syphilis. Smallpox, with its play on "the pox," works quickly and gives the same visual icon of decay.) Nana's death reveals her true nature:

Nana remained alone, her face looking up in the light from the candle. It was a charnel-house scene, a mass of tissue-fluids and blood, a shovelful of putrid flesh thrown there on a cushion. The pustules had invaded the entire face with the pocks touching each other; and, dissolving and subsiding with the greyish look of mud, there seemed to be already an earthy mouldiness on the shapeless muscosity, in which the features were no longer discernible. An eye, the left one, had completely subsided in a soft mass of purulence; the other, half-open, was sinking like a collapsing hole. The nose was still suppurating. A whole reddish crust was peeling off one cheek and invaded the mouth, distorting it into a loathsome grimace. And on that horrible and grotesque mask, the hair, that beautiful head of hair still preserving its blaze of sunlight, flowed down in a golden trickle. Venus was decomposing. It seems as though the virus she had absorbed from the gutters and from the tacitly permitted carrion of humanity, that baneful ferment with which she had poisoned a people, had now risen to her face and putrefied it. [*N*, pp. 464–65]

The decaying visage is the visible sign of the diseased genitalia through which the sexualized female corrupts an entire nation of warriors and leads them to the collapse of the French Army and the resultant German victory at Sedan. The image is an old one, it is *Frau Welt*, Madam World, who masks her corruption, the disease of being a woman, through her beauty. It reappears in the vignette on the title page of the French translation (1840) of the Renaissance poem *Syphilis* (fig. 17).⁵⁰ But it is yet more, for in death Nana begins to revert to the blackness of the earth, to assume the horrible grotesque countenance perceived as belonging to the world of the black, the world of the "primitive," the world of disease. Nana is, like Olympia, in the words of Paul Valéry, "pre-eminently unclean."⁵¹



FIG. 17.—Frontispiece. August Barthelemy, *Syphilis*, 1840.

It is this uncleanliness, this disease, which forms the final link between two images of woman, the black and the prostitute. Just as the genitalia of the Hottentot were perceived as parallel to the diseased genitalia of the prostitute, so too the power of the idea of corruption links both images. Thus part of Nana's fall into corruption comes through her seduction by a lesbian, yet a further sign of her innate, physical degeneracy. She is corrupted and corrupts through sexuality. Miscegenation was a fear (and a word) from the late nineteenth-century vocabulary of sexuality. It was a fear not merely of interracial sexuality but of its results, the decline of the population. Interracial marriages were seen as exactly parallel to the barrenness of the prostitute; if they produced children at all, these children were weak and doomed. Thus Ellis, drawing on his view of the objective nature of the beauty of mankind, states that "it is difficult to be sexually attracted to persons who are fundamentally unlike ourselves in racial constitution" (*SPS*, p. 176). He cites Abel Hermant to substantiate his views:

Differences of race are irreducible and between two beings who love each other they cannot fail to produce exceptional and instructive reactions. In the first superficial ebullition of love, indeed, nothing notable may be manifested, but in a fairly short time the two lovers, innately hostile, in striving to approach each other strike against an invisible partition which separates them. Their sensibilities are divergent; everything in each shocks the other; even their anatomical conformation, even the language of their gestures; all is foreign.⁵²

It is thus the inherent fear of the difference in the anatomy of the Other which lies behind the synthesis of images. The Other's pathology is revealed in anatomy. It is the similarity between the black and the prostitute—as bearers of the stigmata of sexual difference and, thus, pathology—which captured the late nineteenth century. Zola sees in the sexual corruption of the male the source of political impotence and projects what is basically an internal fear, the fear of loss of power, onto the world.⁵³

The "white man's burden" thus becomes his sexuality and its control, and it is this which is transferred into the need to control the sexuality of the Other, the Other as sexualized female. The colonial mentality which sees "natives" as needing control is easily transferred to "woman"—but woman as exemplified by the caste of the prostitute. This need for control was a projection of inner fears; thus, its articulation in visual images was in terms which described the polar opposite of the European male.

The roots of this image of the sexualized female are to be found in male observers, the progenitors of the vocabulary of images through which they believed themselves able to capture the essence of the Other. Thus when Freud, in his *Essay on Lay Analysis* (1926), discusses the ignorance

of contemporary psychology concerning adult female sexuality, he refers to this lack of knowledge as the “dark continent” of psychology (*SE*, 20:212).⁵⁴ In using this phrase in English, Freud ties the image of female sexuality to the image of the colonial black and to the perceived relationship between the female’s ascribed sexuality and the Other’s exoticism and pathology. It is Freud’s intent to explore this hidden “dark continent” and reveal the hidden truths about female sexuality, just as the anthropologist-explorers (such as Lombroso) were revealing the hidden truths about the nature of the black. Freud continues a discourse which relates the images of male discovery to the images of the female as object of discovery. The line from the secrets possessed by the “Hottentot Venus” to twentieth-century psychoanalysis runs reasonably straight.

1. The debate between E. H. Gombrich, *The Image and the Eye* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982) and Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Hassocks, 1978) has revolved mainly around the manner by which conventions of representation create the work of art. Implicit in their debate is the broader question of the function of systems of conventions as icons within the work of art itself. On the limitation of the discussion of systems of conventions to aesthetic objects, see the extensive bibliography compiled in Ulrich Weisstein, “Bibliography of Literature and the Visual Arts, 1945–1980,” *Comparative Criticism* 4 (1982): 324–34, in which the special position of the work of art as separate from other aspects of society can be seen. This is a holdover from the era of *Geistesgeschichte* in which special status was given to the interaction between aesthetic objects.

This can be seen in the alternative case of works of aesthetic provenance which are, however, part of medical discourse. One thinks immediately of the anatomical works of Leonardo or George Stubbs or of paintings with any medical reference such as Rembrandt’s *Dr. Tulp* or Théodore Géricault’s paintings of the insane. When the literature on these works is examined, it is striking how most analysis remains embedded in the discourse of aesthetic objects, i.e., the anatomical drawing as a “subjective” manner of studying human form or, within medical discourse, as part of a “scientific” history of anatomical illustration. The evident fact that both of these modes of discourse exist simultaneously in the context of social history is lost on most critics. An exception is William Schupbach, *The Paradox of Rembrandt’s “Anatomy of Dr. Tulp,”* *Medical History*, supp. 2 (London, 1982).

2. George Heard Hamilton, *Manet and His Critics* (New Haven, Conn., 1954), p. 68. I am ignoring here George Mauner’s peculiar position that “we may conclude that Manet makes no comment at all with this painting, if by comment we understand judgment or criticism” (*Manet: Peintre-Philosophe: A Study of the Painter’s Themes* [University Park, Pa., 1975], p. 99).

3. For my discussion of Manet’s works, I draw especially on Theodore Reff, *Manet: “Olympia”* (London, 1976), and Werner Hofmann, *Nana: Mythos und Wirklichkeit* (Cologne, 1973); neither of these studies examines the medical analogies. See also Eunice Lipton, “Manet: A Radicalized Female Imagery,” *Artforum* 13 (Mar. 1975): 48–53.

4. See George Needham, “Manet, *Olympia*, and Pornographic Photography,” in *Woman as Sex Object*, ed. Thomas Hess and Linda Nochlin (New York, 1972), pp. 81–89.

5. See Philippe Rebeyrol, “Baudelaire et Manet,” *Les Temps modernes* 5 (Oct. 1949): 707–25.

6. Georges Bataille, *Manet*, trans. A. Wainhouse and James Emmons (New York, 1956), p. 113. And see Hofmann, *Nana*.

7. See Edmund Bazire, quoted in Anne Coffin Hanson, *Manet and the Modern Tradition* (New Haven, Conn., 1977), p. 130.

8. See my *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston, 1982). On the image of the black, see Ladislav Bugner, ed., *L'Image du noir dans l'art occidental*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1976–); the fourth volume, not yet published, will cover the post-Renaissance period.

9. See the various works on Hogarth by Ronald Paulson, such as *Hogarth: His Life, Art, and Times*, 2 vols. (New Haven, Conn., 1971) and *Hogarth's Graphic Works*, 2 vols. (New Haven, Conn., 1970); and see Ross E. Taggart, "A Tavern Scene: An Evening at the Rose," *Art Quarterly* 19 (Autumn 1956): 320–23.

10. M. N. Adler, trans., *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London, 1907), p. 68.

11. See John Herbert Eddy, Jr., "Buffon, Organic Change, and the Races of Man" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 1977), p. 109. See also Paul Alfred Erickson, "The Origins of Physical Anthropology" (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 1974) and Werner Krauss, *Zur Anthropologie des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts: Die Frühgeschichte der Menschheit im Blickpunkt der Aufklärung*, ed. Hans Kortum and Christa Gohrisch (Munich, 1979).

12. See Guillaum-Thomas Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, 10 vols. (Geneva, 1775), 2:406–7.

13. See William F. Bynum, "The Great Chain of Being after Forty Years: An Appraisal," *History of Science* 13 (1975): 1–28, and "Time's Noblest Offspring: The Problem of Man in British Natural Historical Sciences" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge, 1974).

14. See J. J. Virey, "Nègre," *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, 41 vols. (Paris, 1819), 35:398–403.

15. See Virey, *Histoire naturelle du genre humaine*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1824), 2:151.

16. See George M. Gould and Walter L. Pyle, *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine* (Philadelphia, 1901), p. 307, and Eugen Holländer, *Aeskulap und Venus: Eine Kultur- und Sittengeschichte im Spiegel des Arztes* (Berlin, 1928). Much material on the indebtedness of the early pathologists to the reports of travelers to Africa can be found in the accounts of the autopsies I will discuss below.

One indication of the power which the image of the Hottentot still possessed in the late nineteenth century can be found in George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, ed. Barbara Hardy (1876; Harmondsworth, 1967). On its surface the novel is a hymn to racial harmony and an attack on British middle-class bigotry. Eliot's liberal agenda is nowhere better articulated than in the ironic debate concerning the nature of the black in which the eponymous hero of the novel defends black sexuality (see p. 376). This position is attributed to the hero not a half-dozen pages after the authorial voice of the narrator introduced the description of this very figure with the comparison: "And one man differs from another, as we all differ from the Bosjesman" (p. 370). Eliot's comment is quite in keeping with the underlying understanding of race in the novel. For just as Deronda is fated to marry a Jewess and thus avoid the taint of race mixing, so too is the Bushman, a Hottentot surrogate in the nineteenth century, isolated from the rest of mankind. The ability of Europeans to hold simultaneously a polygenetic view of race and a liberal ideology is evident as far back as Voltaire. But in Eliot's novel the Jew is contrasted to the Hottentot, and, as we have seen, it is the Hottentot who serves as the icon of pathologically corrupted sexuality. Can Eliot be drawing a line between outsiders such as the Jew or the sexualized female in Western society and the Hottentot? The Hottentot comes to serve as the sexualized Other onto whom Eliot projects the opprobrium with which she herself was labeled. For Eliot, the Hottentot remains beyond the pale; even in the most whiggish text, the Hottentot remains the essential Other.

17. Paul Edwards and James Walvin, *Black Personalities in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge, La., 1983), pp. 173, 175. A print of the 1829 ball in Paris with the nude "Hottentot Venus" is reproduced in *Illustrierte Geschichte der Medizin*, ed. Richard Toellner, 9 vols. (Salzburg, 1980), 4:1319; this is a German reworking of Jacques Vie et al., *Histoire de la médecine*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1977).

18. See Henri de Blainville, "Sur une femme de la race hottentote," *Bulletin des sciences par la société philomatique de Paris* (1816): 183–90. This early version of the autopsy seems to be unknown to William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530–1880* (Bloomington, 1980), esp. pp. 239–45. See also Stephen Jay Gould, "The Hottentot Venus," *Natural History* 91 (1982): 20–27.

19. Georges Cuvier, "Extraits d'observations faites sur le cadavre d'une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentote," *Memoires du Museum d'histoire naturelle* 3 (1817): 259–74; rpt. with plates in Geoffrey Saint-Hilaire and Frédéric Cuvier, *Histoire naturelle des mammifères avec des figures originales*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1824), 1:1–23. The substance of the autopsy is reprinted again by Flourens in the *Journal complémentaire du dictionnaire des sciences médicales* 4 (1819): 145–49, and by Jules Cloquet, *Manuel d'anatomie de l'homme descriptive du corps humaine* (Paris, 1825), pl. 278. Cuvier's presentation of the "Hottentot Venus" forms the major signifier for the image of the Hottentot as sexual primitive in the nineteenth century.

20. See, e.g., Walker D. Greer, "John Hunter: Order out of Variety," *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* 28 (1961): 238–51. See also Barbara J. Babiger, "The Kunst- und Wunderkammern: A catalogue raisonné of Collecting in Germany, France and England, 1565–1750" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1970).

21. See Adolf Wilhelm Otto, *Seltene Beobachtungen zur Anatomie, Physiologie, und Pathologie gehörig* (Breslau, 1816), p. 135; Johannes Müller, "Ueber die äusseren Geschlechtstheile der Buschmänninnen," *Archiv für Anatomie, Physiologie, und wissenschaftliche Medizin* (1834), pp. 319–45; W. H. Flower and James Murie, "Account of the Dissection of a Bushwoman," *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology* 1 (1867): 189–208; and Hubert von Luschka, A. Koch, and E. Görtz, "Die äusseren Geschlechtstheile eines Buschweibes," *Monatsschrift für Geburtskunde* 32 (1868): 343–50. The popularity of these accounts can be seen by their republication in extract for a lay audience. These extracts also stress the sexual anomalies described. See *Anthropological Review* 5 (July, 1867): 319–24, and *Anthropological Review* 8 (Jan., 1870): 89–318.

22. Edward Turnipseed, "Some Facts in Regard to the Anatomical Differences between the Negro and White Races," *American Journal of Obstetrics* 10 (1877): 32, 33.

23. See C. H. Fort, "Some Corroborative Facts in Regard to the Anatomical Difference between the Negro and White Races," *American Journal of Obstetrics* 10 (1877): 258–59. Paul Broca was influenced by similar American material (which he cites from the *New York City Medical Record*, 15 Sept. 1868) concerning the position of the hymen; see his untitled note in the *Bulletins de la société d'anthropologie de Paris* 4 (1869): 443–44. Broca, like Cuvier before him, supported a polygenetic view of the human races.

24. See William Turner, "Notes on the Dissection of a Negro," *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology* 13 (1878): 382–86; "Notes on the Dissection of a Second Negro," *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology* 14 (1879): 244–48; and "Notes on the Dissection of a Third Negro," *Journal of Anatomy and Physiology* 31 (1896): 624–26. This was not merely a British anomaly. Jefferies Wyman reports the dissection of a black suicide (originally published in *Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History*, 2 Apr. 1862 and 16 Dec. 1863) and does not refer to the genitalia of the male Hottentot at all; see *Anthropological Review* 3 (1865): 330–35.

25. H. Hildebrandt, *Die Krankheiten der äusseren weiblichen Genitalien*, in *Handbuch der Frauenkrankheiten* 3, ed. Theodor Billroth, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1885–86), pp. 11–12. See also Thomas Power Lowry, ed., *The Classic Clitoris: Historic Contributions to Scientific Sexuality* (Chicago, 1978).

26. Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. 4, *Sexual Selection in Man* (Philadelphia, 1920), p. 158; all further references to this work, abbreviated *SPS*, will be included in the text.

27. See Willem Vrolik, *Considerations sur la diversité du bassin des différentes races humaines* (Amsterdam, 1826) and R. Verneau, *Le bassin dans les sexes et dans les races* (Paris, 1875), pp. 126–29.

28. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), 2:317, and see 2:345–46.
29. See John Grand-Carteret, *Die Erotik in der französischen Karikatur*, trans. Cary von Karwarth and Adolf Neumann (Vienna, 1909), p. 195.
30. [Hugues Rebell?], *The Memories of Dolly Morton: The Story of a Woman's Part in the Struggle to Free the Slaves: An Account of the Whippings, Rapes, and Violences That Preceded the Civil War in America with Curious Anthropological Observations on the Radical Diversities in the Conformation of the Female Bottom and the Way Different Women Endure Chastisement* (Paris, 1899), p. 207.
31. See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London, 1953–74), 7:186–87, esp. n. 1; all further references to this work, abbreviated *SE* and with volume and page numbers, will be included in the text.
32. The best study of the image of the prostitute is Alain Corbin, *Les filles de nocce: Misère sexuelle et prostitution (dix-neuvième et vingtième siècles)* (Paris, 1978). On the black prostitute, see Khalid Kishtainy, *The Prostitute in Progressive Literature* (London, 1982), pp. 74–84. On the iconography associated with the pictorial representation of the prostitute in nineteenth-century art, see Hess and Nochlin, *Woman as Sex Object*; Nochlin, “Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman,” *Art Bulletin* 60 (Mar. 1978): 139–53; and Lynda Nead, “Seduction, Prostitution, Suicide: *On the Brink* by Alfred Elmore,” *Art History* 5 (Sept. 1982): 310–22. On the special status of medical representations of female sexuality, see the eighteenth-century wax models of female anatomy in the Museo della Specola, Florence, and reproduced in Mario Bucci, *Anatomia come arte* (Florence, 1969), esp. p. 1.
33. See A. J. B. Parent-Duchatelet, *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1836), 1:193–244.
34. Parent-Duchatelet, *On Prostitution in the City of Paris*, (London, 1840), p. 38; all further references to this work, abbreviated *P*, will be included in the text. It is exactly the passages on the physiognomy and appearance of the prostitute which this anonymous translator presents to his English audience as the essence of Parent-Duchatelet's work.
35. See my “Freud and the Prostitute: Male Stereotypes of Female Sexuality in *fin de siècle* Vienna,” *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 9 (1981): 337–60.
36. See V. M. Tarnowsky, *Prostitutsija i abolitsionizm* (Petersburg, 1888) and *Prostitution und Abolitionismus* (Hamburg, 1890).
37. See Pauline Tarnowsky, *Etude anthropométrique sur les prostituées et les voleuses* (Paris, 1889).
38. Tarnowsky, “Fisiomie di prostitute russe,” *Archivio di psichiatria, scienze penali e antropologia criminale* 14 (1893): 141–42; my translation.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 141; my translation.
40. See Cesare Lombroso and Guillaume Ferrero, *La donna delinquente: La prostituta e la donna normale* (Turin, 1893), esp. pp. 349–50, 361–62, and 38.
41. See Adrien Charpy, “Des organes génitaux externes chez les prostituées,” *Annales des dermatologie* 3 (1870–71): 271–79.
42. See L. Jullien, “Contribution à l'étude de la morphologie des prostituées,” in *Quatrième Congrès international d'anthropologie criminelle*, 1896 (Geneva, 1897), pp. 348–49.
43. See Ferrero, “L'atavisme de la prostitution,” *Révue scientifique* (1892): 136–41.
44. See A. de Blasio, “Staetopigia in prostitute,” *Archivio di psichiatria* 26 (1905): 257–64.
45. See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (New York, 1977), pp. 3–43.
46. See Iwan Bloch, *Der Ursprung der Syphilis: Eine medizinische und kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, 2 vols. (Jena, 1901–11).
47. Reff, *Manet: “Olympia,”* p. 58; see also p. 118.
48. See Théodore Lascaris [Auriant], *La véritable histoire de “Nana”* (Paris, 1942). See also Demetra Palamari, “The Shark Who Swallowed His Epoch: Family, Nature, and Society

in the Novels of Emile Zola," in *Changing Images of the Family*, ed. Virginia Tufte and Barbara Myerhoff (New Haven, Conn., 1979), pp. 155–72.

49. Emile Zola, *Nana*, trans. Charles Duff (London, 1953), p. 27; all further references to this work, abbreviated *N*, will be included in the text.

50. See August Barthelemy, trans., *Syphilis: Poeme en deux chants* (Paris, 1840). This is a translation of a section of Fracastorius' Latin poem on the nature and origin of syphilis. The French edition was in print well past mid-century.

51. Paul Valéry, quoted in Bataille, *Manet*, p. 65.

52. Abel Hermant, quoted in Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 4:176 n. 1.

53. See Joachim Hohmann, ed., *Schon auf den ersten Blick: Lesebuch zur Geschichte unserer Feindbilder* (Darmstadt, 1981).

54. See Renate Schlesier, *Konstruktion der Weiblichkeit bei Sigmund Freud* (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 35–39.