



Continuing a December *Journal* tradition...

The books for this month are a holiday gift list: books to broaden the library and the mind, to provide pleasure and enjoyment, to give to oneself and others.

Hidden in the Shadow of the Master: the Model-Wives of Cézanne, Monet, and Rodin, by Ruth Butler. New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 2010, 376 pp., \$24.00.

The artistic careers of Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, and Auguste Rodin are in the canon of modern art history. *Hidden in the Shadow of the Master* is the story of the lost accounts of the mysterious muses, models, and wives who shaped the private and professional lives of these creative giants. Ruth Butler vibrantly recreates the untold stories of Marie-Hortense Fiquet, Camille Doncieux, and Rose Beuret. Meticulous research paired with Butler's captivating writing style enable the lives of these women to illuminate the cultural context, social pressures, personal battles, and artistic triumphs of their renowned "other halves." The less exemplary details of these artists' lives reveal themselves, as the unbending women behind them, who pushed, inspired, and challenged them, emerge from their previously secretive places.

In the latter part of the 19th century, impressionism and fascination with the human physique replaced predominantly religious and historical artistic styles. Painters and sculptors were accustomed to using familiar models for multiple projects. Cézanne's obsession with his mistress, Marie-Hortense Fiquet, was all-consuming. Although he reproduced her likeness in nearly 30 oil paintings, he spent years battling with her in a tumultuous, passionate, and contemptuous relationship. The biographical records of Fiquet leave much to the imagination, but this immensely patient woman appears to have exhausted her youth for Cézanne's creations, and she bore him a son out of wedlock. She did eventually wed him and then attempted to destroy his reputation.

Monet was enamored with Camille Doncieux from the moment they met. Although Doncieux may have appeared simple, meek, and naive to others, the much older Monet was struck by the mesmerizing dark-featured beauty, and soon she transitioned from his model to his mistress. Monet spent hours passionately painting her in multiple poses and landscapes, and she was the model and inspiration for his

masterpiece *Camille* or "The Woman in the Green Dress." Despite the social and economic pressures directed at the painter not to publically associate with his mistress, Monet secretly married Doncieux. Childbearing ruined her health. Unable to sell his works, Monet begged his family and friends for loans to care for his son and his wife's deteriorating health. He attempted suicide in the Seine River soon after Doncieux passed away at the age of 32.

More prominent during his lifetime than Cézanne and Monet, Rodin came from a life of anonymity, with a mother who was a seamstress and a father who was a detective. He began as a shy sculptor rebelling against traditional French institutions. Accepted into École Impériale de Dessin at age 10, Rodin later became a professional apprentice and studied Early Renaissance artists such as Michelangelo. In 1886, after meeting Rose Beuret, a quiet girl from the country, he created his first series of deeply emotional and symbolic works, including *The Gates of Hell*, *The Kiss*, and *The Thinker*. Although Beuret remained in the background of his life, she gave birth to his child and remained as his partner for more than 50 years. She ultimately married him during their late 70s. Her subtle, lifelong, erotic influences on his sculptures, portraits, and caricatures revolutionized the Impressionist Era. Despite his frenzied decade-long affair with the much younger Camille Claudel, Rodin remained with his true muse and model, Beuret, until they died together decades later.

The influence of the selfless contributions of Marie-Hortense Fiquet, Camille Doncieux, and Rose Beuret on these struggling artists has endured. Their silent beauty became iconic features of modern cultural history. Butler's book now adds an account of their underlying passion and disdain toward, as well as obsession with, their artistic partners. These pioneering "shadows" paved the way for subsequent women to supersede the gloomy, archaic gender barriers enveloping our society. The representation of women in global leadership roles in culture, education, politics, economics, and the social hierarchy has remarkably increased over the last century, since the lifetime of these three women. However, the question of how much longer it will

take modern society to accept the full equality of women and forever remove the glass ceiling between the genders remains.

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The Black Book, by Orhan Pamuk. New York, Vintage Books (Translated edition), 2006, 466 pp., \$15.95.

The 2006 Nobel Laureate in literature, Orhan Pamuk, is from Turkey. *The Black Book* is one of his most notable books, published in 1990 and translated into English in 1994 and again in 2006. This book should carry a warning label for those who have trouble with personal identity and with defining where their world ends and where that of other people begins. The story is set in Istanbul. The key characters are emblematic of the whole book in that they are highly interrelated. The story is told mostly through the voice of Galip, a lawyer who is married to his cousin Rüya. The second narrative voice is that of Galip's uncle, Celal, a famous Turkish newspaper columnist. After 3 years of a marriage in which Galip feels in love but distanced, as well as jealous and suspicious, Rüya abruptly disappears with Celal. Galip desperately searches for them. He plunges into a mystical and deep analysis of Celal's newspaper columns, eventually moving into Celal's apartment and searching through his private papers and pictures. In his endeavor to locate where they have gone, he immerses himself so completely into Celal's world that he becomes part of it. He lives in Celal's apartment, sleeps in his bed, and wears his robe. He uncovers all sorts of potential conspiracies, alluded to in coded language in Celal's columns, and he "discovers" a system used by Celal whereby he discerned letters in the shape of a person's features (nose, eyes, forehead, etc.) that are part of a code revealing something about that person. Members of left-wing Turkish splinter groups appear in newspaper articles under different names over the years because they wish to remain difficult to trace or to switch allegiances. A mysterious individual calls Celal's apartment while Galip is living there. The caller thinks that Galip is Celal and wants to meet with him to discuss an impending military coup alluded to in Celal's columns. As Galip stalls arrangement of a meeting, the man becomes angry and threatens him with murder. Galip tries to manipulate the man into providing the location or phone numbers of other apartments that serve as secret homes for Celal. Eventually, the newspaper that publishes Celal's famous daily column runs out of material, and thus Galip begins writing the columns as though he were Celal.

In weaving this lyrical tale, Pamuk describes the struggle for national identity experienced by Turkey through the 20th century. He laments the powerful effect of foreign movies that led many Turks to forgo their traditions in terms of

dress, speech, gestures, and social expression in favor of what they see in foreign movies. Poignantly, Istanbul's most gifted manufacturer of store manikins can no longer sell his life-like creations to stores because they look too much like traditional Turks and not enough like Western Europeans or Americans. The stores have jumped on the identity-change bandwagon. However, the man continues making manikins, which are stored deep below the street level in Istanbul, like an inanimate community from the past that is a rebuke to current society's abandonment of its own traditions.

The weaving of a story within a story, or many worlds within each other or side by side like multiple universes, goes beyond the "subterranean" old Turkey and the "above-ground" new Turkey. In the book lies another story, that of a writer who marries a beautiful woman. His dreams and hers become the same, and their breathing is synchronous. This inspires his writing. Unfortunately, like Galip, without warning he is left by his beautiful wife and unable to tune into the dreams he once shared with her. He is unable to write a sentence. Strangely, his last book is about a man who changes places with his double. Perhaps inspired by this notion, he sets for himself the goal of remembering all the dreams of his former self when he was married and to become the double of the person he used to be. He succeeds, and at that moment, the sentences pour once more from his pen. He writes of duplicate worlds that coexist. He begins writing the novel about the man who has a double all over again. This complicated tale is heard by Galip from one of a series of people telling love stories in a noisy Istanbul bar. Galip, in turn, tells a story of a journalist who read a book by Marcel Proust and was so enthralled that he immediately read it again and went on rereading it for the rest of his life. Eventually, he came to believe that he was Proust and lived his life with this new identity. And so this book goes on with its intertwined stories and worlds within worlds, like a magic carpet that is closely woven with a sort of dense text that one finds in the works of Saul Bellow and Joseph Conrad. There is no skimming through this book. Its swirling narrative sweeps us along as if in a crowded chaotic bazaar, while Galip searches for Rüya and Celal.

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Bring Up the Bodies, by Hilary Mantel. New York, Henry Holt and Co, 2012, 432 pp., \$28.00.

In *Bring up the Bodies*, Hilary Mantel's addictive sequel to her blockbuster historical novel of Tudor England, *Wolf Hall*, the action picks up precisely where it previously ended. The narrative is again threaded—with the uncanny immediacy to which readers of *Wolf Hall* have become adjusted—by a nameless third person, within the mind of Thomas Cromwell, Master Secretary to King Henry VIII and a growing blood enemy of Anne Boleyn. The two are nearly equally matched in