

In an important essay he wrote in 1927, Edward Hopper compared the work of John Sloan to that of Edgar Degas: "Sloan's design is the simple and unobtrusive tool of his visual reaction. It attempts tenaciously and ever the surprise and unbalance of nature, as did that of Degas."¹ Referring to this discussion of Sloan and considering the relationship of Hopper's own work to that of Degas, James Thrall Soby warned:

There is, however, a danger in linking Hopper to so cultivated an artist as Degas. For while the Frenchman evolved his art from the great traditions of Italy and France, Hopper is by comparison a self-made painter working from a much narrower cultural heritage. Unlike Charles Demuth, he is not remarkable for the use he has made of divergent sources, but for his relative lack of sources.²

Soby, like most critics, has insisted upon viewing Hopper's work as a kind of homespun American hybrid, incorrectly discounting Hopper's intense interest in European—especially French nineteenth-century—art.³ Hopper, himself, protested this kind of narrow-minded nationalistic criticism: "The thing that makes me so mad is the 'American Scene' business. I never tried to do the American scene as [Thomas Hart] Benton and [John Steuart] Curry and the midwestern painters did. I think the American Scene painters caricatured America. I always wanted to do myself."⁴ Describing Thomas Eakins, the American artist that he admired most, Hopper called him "a great world painter."⁵

One of the most significant yet least known characteristics influencing Edward Hopper's artistic expression was his love of French art and culture. This was by no means limited to the period 1906-10, when he made three visits to Paris, but rather was an important, if somewhat concealed undercurrent in his work evident even in his last painting. His fascination with things French at one time or another encompassed painting, prints, illustration, sculpture, fiction, poetry, theater, movies, and even food.

Hopper's interest in French culture began well before he first arrived in Paris at the age of twenty-four in October 1906. Until his departure for France, Hopper had studied with Robert Henri at the New York School of Art where he had been enrolled since 1900. Henri discussed certain European masters in his classes including Daumier, Manet, Courbet, Degas, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, and Renoir among French artists.⁶ Hopper's classmate Rockwell Kent who referred to him as "the John Singer Sargent of the class" recalled that Henri's students at this time were reading and discussing Eugène Sue, Verlaine, Baudelaire, and the French Decadents in general.⁷ Hopper himself paid tribute to his teacher when he wrote that Henri made the "influence of the French masters of the nineteenth century . . . of vital importance to American painting."⁸ Perhaps because he had gained much from several years of study and work in Paris, Henri encouraged his students to go abroad.

Hopper exclaimed over Paris in a letter to his mother written soon after his arrival:

Paris is a very graceful and beautiful city, almost too formal and sweet to the taste after the raw disorder of New York. Everything seems to have been planned with the purpose of forming a most harmonious whole which certainly has been done.⁹

It was not only the physical beauty of Paris that captured his imagination, but also the animated Parisians: "Every street here is alive with all sorts and condition of people, priests, nuns, students, and always the little soldiers with wide red pants."¹⁰ He was fascinated by their constant presence in the streets and cafes and by their apparent hedonism:

The people here in fact seem to live in the streets, which are alive from morning until night, not as they are in New York with that never-ending determination for the "long-green," but with a pleasure loving crowd that doesn't care what it does or where it goes, so that it has a good time.¹¹

He repeatedly sketched the various Parisian types he observed and also produced a series of humorous watercolor caricatures (Figs. 1, 2, and 3). During this first stay and when he returned to Paris in the spring of 1909, Hopper lived on the left bank at 48 Rue de Lille with a French family consisting of a widowed mother and her two teen-aged sons. He did not enroll in any

EDWARD HOPPER, FRANCOPHILE

GAIL LEVIN

Edward Hopper's achievement belongs to a much larger context than the American Scene. His aims and work transcend any provincial attitude. He deserves to be viewed in the great tradition of the artists he admired most.

school, but rather chose to visit exhibitions on his own and to paint out-of-doors around Paris.

He saw the Salon d'Automne of 1906 which he described to his mother as "for the most part very bad," although "much more liberal in its aims than the shows at home."¹² His first four months in Paris were quite cold, gray, and rainy, preventing him from doing much of the outdoor painting he preferred. As a result, his initial city scenes were dark to match his impression of his surroundings. Not until the weather broke in the spring did he begin to respond to the famous light in Paris. Nonetheless, as he wrote to his sister, he was immediately able to appreciate the city's infinite charms:

Paris as you must know is a most paintable city, particularly on and around the Isle du Cite [sic] which was the first Paris. Here the streets are very old and narrow and many of the houses slope back from the top of the first story which gives them a most imposing and solid appearance. The wine shops and stores beneath are darkened or green contrasting strongly with the plaster or stone above. On the roofs hundreds of pipes and chimeneys [sic] pots stick up into the air giving the sky a most peculiar appearance. The roofs are all Mansard type and either of slate or zinc. On a day that's overcast this same blue-grey permeates everything.¹³

His oil painting *Paris Street* with its dramatic blue-gray tonality exemplifies these first impressions of his new surroundings (Fig. 4). The city was soon to capture his heart: "I do not believe there is another city on earth so beautiful as Paris nor another people with such an appreciation of the beautiful as the French."¹⁴ As the weather warmed, he began to paint out-of-doors along the Seine and by late May he frequently took the boat to nearby Saint Cloud or Charenton (Figs. 5 and 6).¹⁵

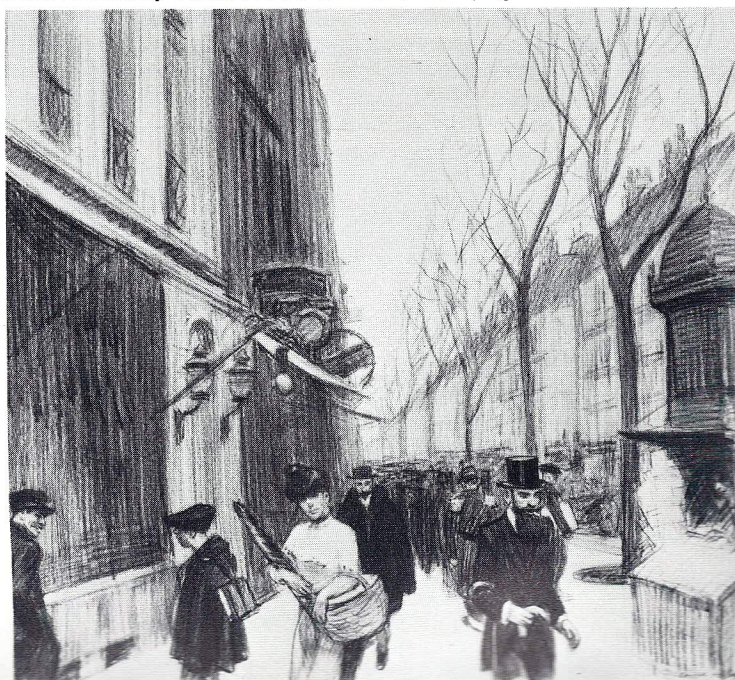


Fig. 1. Edward Hopper, *Street in Paris*, 1906-07. Pencil and charcoal with touches of white paint on paper, 13 1/4 x 16". Private Collection.

During this time Hopper saw Patrick Henry Bruce, his former classmate in the Henri class who had settled in Paris in early 1904. He later acknowledged that Bruce had introduced him to the work of the Impressionists in Paris, "especially Sisley, Renoir, and Pissarro."¹⁶ Hopper certainly was already familiar with Manet's painting from the Henri class, yet it is impossible to know if he made his sketches after *Olympia* and *The Fifer* in New York or Paris (Figs. 7 and 8).¹⁷ Among his extant sketches after French artists are Jean Francois Millet's *The Man with a Hoe*, Henri George Alexandre Regnault's *Salomé*, Rodin's sculpture "*She Who Was Once the Helmet-Maker's Beautiful Wife*" or *The Old Woman and Winter*, as well as copies after Gustave Doré's illustrations which he had known from childhood (Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13).¹⁸

At the end of June Hopper left Paris to travel, going first to London which disappointed him after the French capital. He found London "less beautiful . . . in contrast to the gay sparkle of Paris" and wrote home about his discovery of "a little French restaurant on Soho St. where I eat cheaply and well. You see I could not forget the French cooking (there is nothing like it)."¹⁹ He soon referred to London as "a sad, gloomy place" and announced that he planned to return to Paris before going home: "Who could help returning to Paris—there is nothing like it."²⁰ On August 21, 1907, after very brief visits to Holland and Germany and nearly three additional weeks in Paris, Hopper sailed for New York.

He worked there as an illustrator designing for an advertising agency, yet he continued to paint. He had his first chance to show his work in the "Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Contemporary American Artists" held at 43-45 West 42nd Street. This group exhibition organized by several former stu-

dents of Robert Henri included artists such as Arnold Friedman, Guy Pène du Bois, George Bellows, Rockwell Kent, and Glenn Coleman. Hopper exhibited three oils, *The Louvre and Seine* (Fig. 6), *The Bridge of the Arts* (Fig. 14), and *The Park at St. Cloud* (Fig. 5), and one drawing, *Une Demmiondaine*. His choice to show only work done in France is indicative of the importance he placed on his experience there. Except for Hopper and his friend du Bois, who showed one scene of Paris, the other artists exhibited paintings of their American surroundings. Although the reviewer for the *New York American* hailed the exhibition as "One Step Nearer to a National Art," Hopper's work still paid homage to the French capital.²¹

Returning to Paris in March 1909, Hopper resumed painting along the Seine. He also made excursions to Fontainebleau, Chartres, and Saint Germain-en-Laye.²² He reported to his mother that he had chanced upon several "fellows" whom he knew from New York²³; these might have been Patrick Henry Bruce, Walter Pach, Guy Pène du Bois, or other classmates from the New York School of Art. Due to unusually rainy weather, he ended his second stay in Paris early, on July 31, and sailed home.

When he returned on his last trip abroad in May 1910, he stayed only a few weeks in Paris, preferring to make a long-anticipated trip to Spain. He then spent another few weeks in Paris and on July 1, 1910, sailed for New York. Although he never again visited Europe, his memories remained vivid and the experience significant for his later development.

Guy Pène du Bois grasped, more than any other writer, the depth of Hopper's knowledge and admiration of French culture. He wrote: "Something about the French appeals to him. He has studied their language and knows their literature to an extent exceedingly rare among Americans. He has painted Paris with

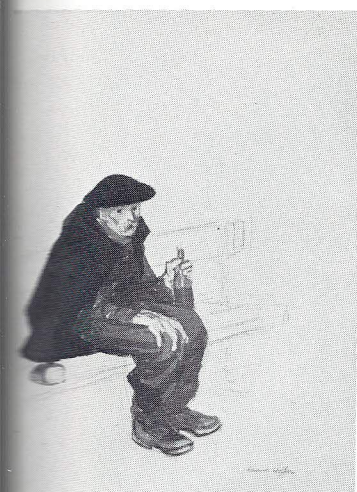


Fig. 2. Edward Hopper, *Parisian With Wine Bottle and Loaf of Bread*, 1906-07 or 1909. Watercolor and pencil on composition board, 15-1/8 x 10-11/16". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

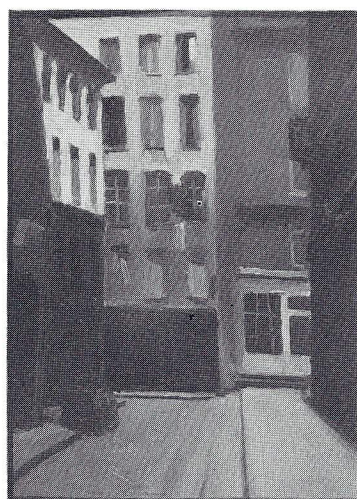


Fig. 4. Edward Hopper, *Paris Street*, 1906-07. Oil on wood, 13 x 10". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

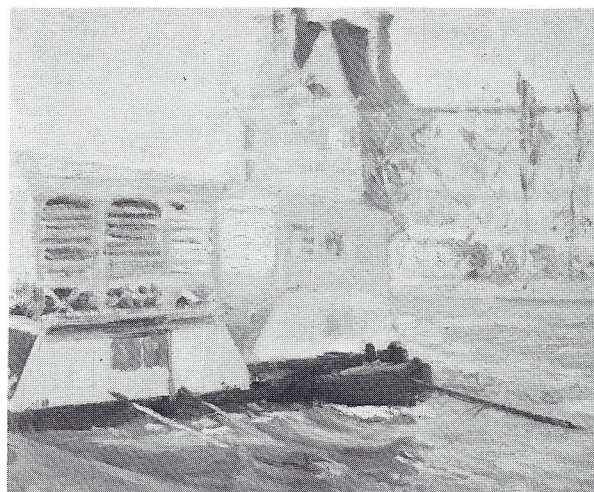


Fig. 6. Edward Hopper, *The Louvre and the Seine*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 28 3/4". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

Fig. 7. Edward Hopper, *Study after Manet's Olympia*, c. 1900-07. Pen and ink on paper, 8-7/8 x 5 1/2". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 8. Edward Hopper, *Study after Manet's The Fifer*, c. 1900-07. Pen and ink on paper, 10 x 7". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 3. Edward Hopper, *Parisian Workman*, 1906-07 or 1909. Watercolor and pencil on composition board, 15-7/8 x 10-11/16". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 5. Edward Hopper, *The Park at Saint Cloud*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 28 3/4". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

love in a series of pictures."²⁴ Hopper was probably reading French literature before he first went abroad, including the romantic novels of Victor Hugo. His design for a cover or frontispiece to an edition of Hugo's *Les Misérables* was most likely done as an assignment for his illustration class (Fig.15). Four pencil studies for this cover are extant as well as a pen and ink sketch of the novel's hero Jean Valjean and a rough pencil sketch of Gavroche, another of the characters. Later, possibly just after his first trip to France in 1906-07, he painted an impressive series of watercolor illustrations for an unpublished edition of Hugo's book of poems about the Paris Commune entitled *L'Année Terrible*, originally published in 1872 (Fig. 16).

Hopper also developed an interest in popular French illustration. He saved several of the humor magazines he must have acquired on one of his last two trips to Paris. Of the three issues he saved of *Les Maitres Humoristes*, one was devoted to the cartoons of Albert Guillaume and two to the satirical illustrations of Jean Louis Forain.²⁵ He also saved his copy of the humor magazine *Le Sourire* for May 15, 1909.

The period following his last trip to Europe was a time of economic and aesthetic struggle for Hopper. His love of French, his sense of humor, and his frustration at having to support himself through work as an illustrator when he desired to be an artist are reflected in a sign he made in French after he had settled in New York. It begins "Hopper Maison Fondée 1882" (House of Hopper Founded 1882 [the year of his birth]):

Maison E. Hopper. Objects of art and utility. Oil painting, engravings, etchings, courses in painting, drawing and literature, repairing of electric lamps and windows, removal and transportation of trunks, guide to the country, car-

penter, laundry, hair dresser, fireman, transportation of trees and flowers, marriage and banquet rooms, lectures, encyclopedia of art and science, mechanic, rapid cures for the ill in spirit such as flightiness, frivolity and self-esteem. Reduced prices for widows and orphans. Samples on request. Demand the registered trademark. Maison E. Hopper, 3 Washington Square (Fig.17).

Years later he admitted, "It seemed awfully crude and raw here when I got back. It took me ten years to get over Europe."²⁶ As late as 1962 he insisted, "I think I'm still an impressionist."²⁷

Noting in 1931 that Hopper's paintings of Paris "appear to have been completely forgotten," Guy Pène du Bois acknowledged that Hopper had "become the painter par excellence of the American scene," and yet he recalled:

I remember one of those Parisian scenes very vividly. It might have been the stark Victorian house whose front yard is traversed by a railroad track. It is of a little café, isolated in a barren landscape, near the fortifications certainly, in which two or three figures sit stolidly at little round tables. You would have difficulty in finding this particular French café in France. You would have difficulty in finding the particular American house that Hopper paints in America. Perhaps one is not more the American scene than the other is the French.²⁸

The painting which made such a lasting impression on du Bois is *Soir Bleu* of about 1914 which Hopper first exhibited in a group exhibition at The MacDowell Club of New York City from February 11-21, 1915 (Fig.18).²⁹ It is a memorable painting among the artist's oeuvre and not just because it is one of his larger canvases. The painting has a haunting quality; the characters' expressions are eerie. The people already convey the boredom that Hopper would capture in the paintings of his maturity such as *Automat* of 1927 (Fig. 19) or *Nighthawks* of 1942. Even



Fig. 9. Edward Hopper, Study after Millet's *Man with a Hoe*, c. 1900-07. Pen and ink on paper, 10 3/4 x 11-15/16". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 11. Edward Hopper, Study after Rodin's *La Vieille Femme*, c. 1900-07. Ink on paper, 8-7/8 x 5-5/8". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

Fig. 10. Edward Hopper, Study after Regnault's *Salomé*, c. 1900-07. Pen and ink on paper, 10 x 7". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

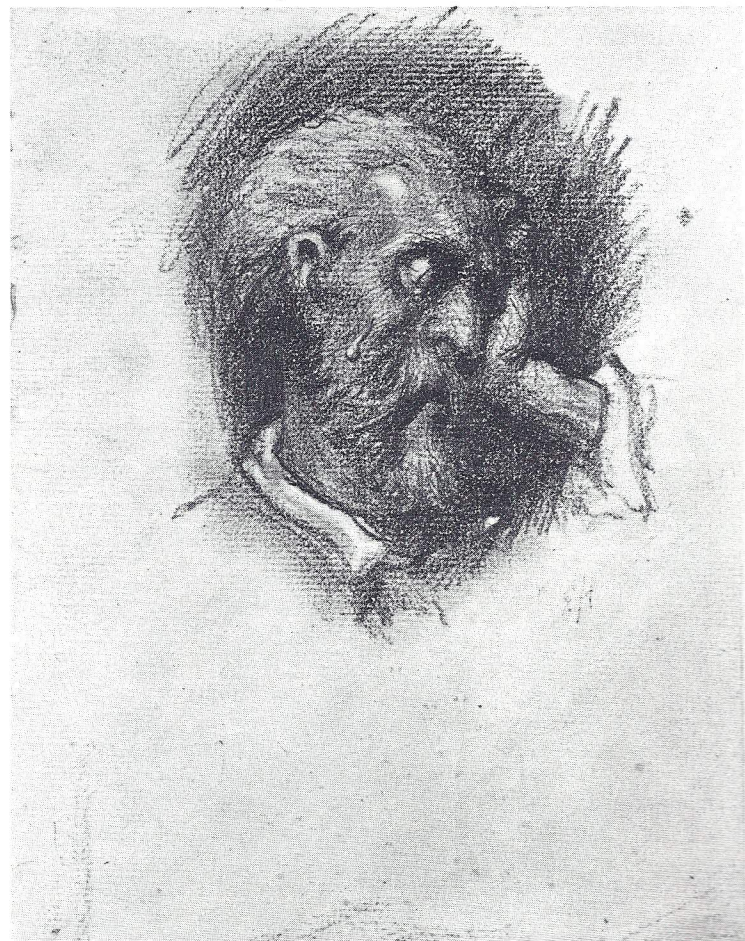


Fig. 13. Edward Hopper, Drawing after Gustave Doré's *The Enchantment of Don Quixote*, c. 1900. Pencil on paper, 7 1/2 x 5-5/8". Courtesy Kennedy Galleries.

Fig. 12. Edward Hopper, Drawing after Gustave Doré's illustration for Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798): "Beyond the shadow of the ship I watched the water snakes," c. 1897-1900. Private Collection.

the composition of *Automat* is predicted in *Soir Bleu*. The figure in the later painting has taken the place of the clown who sits at a round table at the same angle. The empty chair also echoes the angle of one in the earlier painting. The electric lights replace lanterns. The horizontal and vertical accents are also similar.

Hopper exhibited only one other painting with *Soir Bleu*—*New York Corner* (well known today as *Corner Saloon*) of 1913 (Fig. 20). Among the other eleven artists in the exhibition were George Bellows, Leon Kroll, Randall Davey, and John Sloan. The reviewer for the *New York Herald* praised *New York Corner* as “a perfect visualization of New York atmosphere” but ignored the much larger *Soir Bleu*.³⁰ Other reviewers were not so subtle: “Edward Hopper is not quite successful with his ‘*Soir Bleu*,’ a group of hardened Parisian absinthe drinkers, but he is entirely so with his ‘*New York Corner*,’ and “In Edward Hopper’s ‘*New York Corner*’ there is a completeness of expression that is scarcely discoverable in his ambitious fantasy, ‘*Soir Bleu*.’”³¹

Hopper’s fantasy grew out of his French experience and reflects his nostalgia for some of the liveliest and most exotic moments of his memory. In May of 1907, he had written to his mother of the “carnival” of Mi-Carême which he explained was “one of the important fêtes of the year”:

Everyone goes to the “Grand Boulevards” and lets himself loose . . . Do not picture these in costume, they are not for the most part . . . perhaps a clown with a big nose, or two girls, with bare necks and short skirts . . . The parade of the queens of the halles (markets) is also one of the events . . . Some are pretty but look awkward in their silk dresses and crowns, particularly as the broad sun displays their defects—perhaps a neck too thin or a painted face which shows ghastly white in the sunlight.³²

This letter helps to explain the eerie look of the standing woman



Fig. 14. Edward Hopper, *The Bridge of the Arts*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 23-1/16 x 28-1/16". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

with her painted face and long thin neck, the presence of the clown, and the scant attire worn by the women. As du Bois indicated, the café appears to be located on the outskirts of the city along the fortifications, the old ramparts encircling Paris where people met to socialize.

In representing a fête, Hopper has recalled the *fête galante* invented by Watteau in the eighteenth century. Hopper too has explored the psychological subtleties of human nature without reverting to an overt story. His clown, dressed in white, recalls Watteau’s *Gilles* also silhouetted against a dramatic blue sky (Fig. 21). Even the balustrade Hopper used across the back of the space is a device which appeared in Watteau’s works such as the engraving *The Island of Cythera* (Fig. 22).

Despite the negative critical reaction to his “fantasy” *Soir Bleu*, Hopper remained involved with French imagery. Nonetheless, he never again exhibited *Soir Bleu*. When he began to etch in 1915, he chose many French subjects and gave four of his prints French titles: *Les Poilus* (Fig. 23) and *La Barrière* (Fig. 24) of 1915-18, *Les Deux Pigeons* of 1920, and *Aux Fortifications* of 1923.³³ Other prints include subject matter that is clearly French: *Evening, the Seine, Cafe, Street in Paris*, and *Somewhere in France*, all of 1915-18, and *Train and Bathers* of 1920.

Hopper had not yet had a one-man show when a group of his watercolors was reproduced in *Arts and Decoration* in February 1916.³⁴ In the first magazine article to feature his work, he allowed himself to be represented by eight watercolor caricatures that he had made in Paris, again indicating the importance he placed on that aspect of his career (Figs. 2 and 3).

One of the few artists that Hopper would admit he admired was the nineteenth-century Parisian etcher Charles Meryon whose preoccupation with light and architecture matched his own. In illustrating the cover for *La France* for November 1919 (Fig. 25), Hopper certainly was aware of a similar view in Charles



Fig. 15. Edward Hopper, Illustration for Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, c. 1900-09. Pen and ink on paper, 8-1/16 x 6-1/4". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.

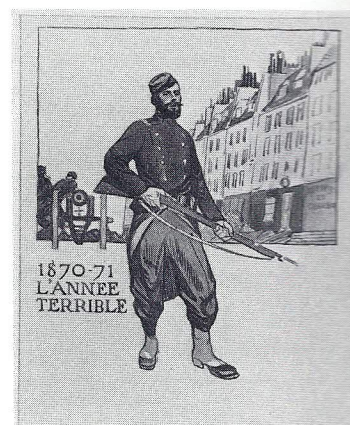



Fig. 16. Edward Hopper, Illustration for Victor Hugo’s *Book of Poems, L’Année Terrible*, 1906-07 or 1909. Pen and ink on paper, 8-1/16 x 6-1/4". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



MAISON E. HOPPER
OBJETS D'ART ET D'UTILITÉ

Peinture à l'huile, gravures, eaux fortes, cours de peinture, de dessin et de littérature, réparation des lampes électriques et des fenêtres, enlèvement et transportation des malles, guide de compagnie, charpentier, blanchisseur, coiffeur, pompier, transportation d'arbres et de fleurs, salles de noces et de banquets, lectures, encyclopédie d'art et de science, mécanicien, guérison rapide pour les maladies de l'esprit tel que la légèreté, la frivolité et l'amour propre. Prix réduits pour les veuves et les orphelins. Echantillons sur demande. Exigez la marque de fabrique. Maison E. Hopper 3 Place Washington.

Fig. 17. Edward Hopper, *Maison E. Hopper*, c. 1913-19. Ink on paper, 5 x 7-1/4". Private Collection. ▶

Meryon's etching *Le Stryge* or *The Vampire* of 1853, one of the artist's most famous images. But his cover is closer still to a view of the familiar gargoyle captured by Charles Negre in his well known photograph of around 1851 of *Henri Le Secq* at *Notre-Dame*. Hopper's illustration of two covers for this American magazine devoted to French culture probably represented a commercial assignment that he found more palatable than most.³⁵

Finally during January 14-28, 1920, Hopper, at the age of thirty-seven, had his first one-man show at the Whitney Studio Club on West 4th Street. Of the sixteen oil paintings he exhibited, eleven were painted in France over ten years earlier, the remainder during more recent summers spent in Massachusetts or Maine. He now listed the French titles of pictures in the catalogue, rather than reverting to the English translations he had used for three of these paintings in 1908 (Figs. 5, 6, and 14). His decision to exhibit so many paintings from his French sojourn rather than works painted in America again reveals the significance he placed on these pictures and on his stay in Paris.³⁶

On July 9, 1924, Hopper married Josephine Verstelle Nivison, also a former Henri student and a painter, at the Huguenot Church—the Eglise Evangélique on West 16th Street. Years later Jo revealed that in an argument she had demanded that he list three reasons why he married her. He replied, she said, "You have curly hair. You know some French. And you're an orphan."³⁷

The Christmas card he designed for Jo in 1923 before their marriage indicates that France represented a romantic ideal for Hopper—in fact, a symbol of longing (Fig. 26). He represented them together reclining before an open window, with the full moon and the spires of Notre Dame in plain view in the Paris

night. Yet Hopper had not been in Paris for thirteen years and he and Jo had never been there together. Beneath this scene, next to the inscription "A Mlle. Jo Noël, 1923," he included six lines on evening from Paul Verlaine's "La Lune Blanche." These lines were an appropriate choice; they were from the collection *La Bonne Chanson* that Verlaine had written for his fiancée in 1870. Hopper quoted these same lines in an interview nearly forty years later.³⁸

Jo encouraged Hopper's love of French, for she too was a Francophile. "Once," she said, "he started quoting Verlaine on Bass Rock in Gloucester. I took it up when he stopped. He was surprised."³⁹ The year they were married she gave him the major book *Degas* by Paul Jamot, recently published in France.⁴⁰ During their long marriage, Hopper often wrote cards and notes in French (Fig. 27). Among the many cartoons he drew for her, *Le Rêve de Josie* represents her dream man; it is a caricature of Hopper as a tattered professorial, monocled intellectual (Fig. 28). The books he has in his rustic basket are telling; two are in French: Marcel Proust's *Du Coté de Chez Swan* and *Poésie de Paul Verlaine*.

The turning point in Hopper's life came in 1924 not only with his marriage, but four months later in November when the Frank K. M. Rehn Gallery gave him a one-man show of his recent watercolors. The exhibition was a success and sold out, enabling him to cease work as an illustrator. These watercolors were painted out-of-doors "from the fact" and marked a definite departure from his enduring nostalgia for France. They were of the world he had observed around him particularly during the summers of 1923 and 1924 spent in Gloucester, Massachusetts. With a renewed sense of confidence after years of struggle, Hopper began to work more frequently in oil developing his



Fig. 18. Edward Hopper, *Soir Bleu*, c. 1914. Oil on canvas, 37 x 72". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 19. Edward Hopper, *Automat*, 1927. Oil on canvas, 28 x 36". Des Moines Art Center, Edmundson Collection.

mature style.

By this time, his consciousness had been raised and he believed that "now or in the near future American art should be weaned from its French mother."⁴¹ He understood well, however, that American artists could learn worthwhile lessons from European art:

To expect a new and entirely unique art in America is not to understand the lesson of history—the logical growth of the art of one nation from that of another or others. It is self-evident that new countries must be settled by older peoples, who carry their ethnic and aesthetic inheritance to the new land. These serve as a foundation for future development in the changed environment.⁴²

Although obvious references to France or French art ceased to appear in his work by 1924, Hopper continued to derive inspiration from French nineteenth-century painting. He subsequently limited all overt allusions to French culture to private communications with his wife. Years later, he still inscribed drawings to his wife in French (Fig. 29).

When asked which painters from the past he admired, he cited "Rembrandt above all, and the etcher Meryon. His sunlight is romantic; there's absolutely the essence of sunlight in that etching of his called Turret in the Weavers Street . . . I also like Degas very much."⁴³ Hopper's many adaptations of motif and composition from French artists like Manet and Degas continued throughout his maturity and are too numerous to survey here. He began this assimilation of French art in his early sketches and in his illustrations and simply continued the process in certain of his etchings and oil paintings, perhaps not always on a conscious level.⁴⁴

Among his etchings, *House on a Hill (The Buggy)* of 1920 (Fig.



30) presents a horse-drawn carriage partially cut off by the bottom edge of the composition. The intentional placement (as is indicated by a preliminary sketch) in the extreme lower-right corner recalls Degas' composition in *Carriage at the Races* (Fig. 31).

Many of Hopper's paintings are organized with a sharply receding diagonal thrusting emphatically into space and culminating in an off-center vanishing point, a compositional arrangement frequently found in Degas' work. Comparing, for example, Hopper's *New York Movie* (Fig. 32) of 1939 with Degas' *The Interior* (Fig. 33), not only is there a similar diagonal recession in both, but also apparent is a striking resemblance between the pose of the usherette in *New York Movie* and the man in *The Interior*. Like Degas, Hopper, in order to dramatize his painting, stressed the lights and shadows which appear in a dimly lit interior.

Even in his last painting, *Two Comedians* of 1965 (Fig. 34), Hopper appears to have referred back to French art. He and his wife adored the theater and attended it frequently.⁴⁵ It should not surprise us then that it is they who take their final bows.⁴⁶ Hopper no doubt admired the theatrical themes of Manet, Degas, Daumier, and others. His own composition is certainly in the tradition of a work like Daumier's lithograph *The Recall of the Singer* (Fig. 35). The costumes, however, recall the members of the Commedia dell'Arte painted frequently by Watteau. Hopper appears to have cast himself and his wife as the young lovers Pierrot and Pierrette. They are the comedians, then, who by their last act have discovered the most ironic comedy of all—human existence. Since Hopper chose to portray himself as a clown here, it is tempting to speculate that, at the very least, he had also felt some degree of identification with the figure of the

◀ Fig. 20. Edward Hopper, *New York Corner (Corner Saloon)*, 1913. Oil on canvas, 24 x 29". Museum of Modern Art, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.

Fig. 23. Edward Hopper, *Les Poilus*, 1915-18. Etching, 6 x 7". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 24. Edward Hopper, *La Barrière*, 1915-18. Drypoint, 7 x 7 3/4". (Exists only in posthumous print). Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 21. Antoine Watteau, *Gilles*, c. 1719.



Fig. 22. After Antoine Watteau, *The Island of Cythera*. Engraving.

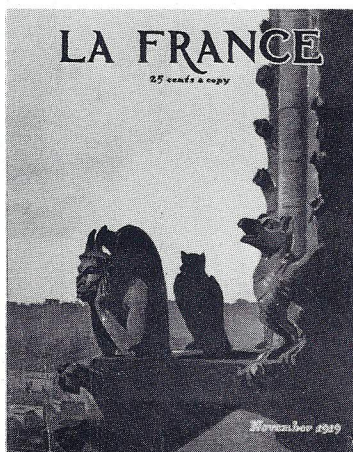


Fig. 25. Edward Hopper, Cover of *La France*, American Magazine, 4, November 1919.



Fig. 26. Edward Hopper, *A Mille. Jo Noël*, 1923. Gouache on paper, 7 x 8-5/8". Private Collection.

downcast clown in his early painting *Soir Bleu* (Fig. 18). Hopper, who was already balding at the time, was so self-conscious during these years that he always wore a hat when photographed. From Paris he had even written to his mother to report that it appeared that his hairs had "ceased to fall out in such large quantities."⁴⁷

In his "Notes on Painting" written for the catalogue of his first retrospective in 1933, Hopper warned:

The question of the value of nationality in art is perhaps unsolvable. In general it can be said that a nation's art is greatest when it most reflects the character of its people. French art seems to prove this.

The Romans were not an aesthetically sensitive people, nor did Greece's intellectual domination over them destroy their racial character, but who is to say that they might not have produced a more original and vital art without this domination. One might draw a not too far-fetched parallel between France and our land. The domination of France in the plastic arts has been almost complete for the last thirty years or more in this country.

If an apprenticeship to a master has been necessary, I think we have served it. Any further relation of such a character can only mean humiliation to us. After all we are not French and never can be and any attempt to be so is to deny our inheritance and to try of impose [upon] ourselves a character that can be nothing but a veneer upon the surface.⁴⁸

Thus Hopper rejected the French "veneer" he had once loved and ostensibly followed the growing trend toward a more nationalistic art. Although he was never to forget the marvelous experience or the extraordinary art of France, he responded to the critics' pleas for an "American" art. Among his contemporaries, only Guy Pène du Bois understood that Hopper was no mere provincial:

It is a pity that the patriotic admirers of Hopper have discounted Hopper. No painter's importance can rest so simply in that which he paints. But then, these mistakes adjust themselves. Sometime, Hopper will be recognized as a painter with a very sound technical equipment and a superbly individual vision.⁴⁹

It is time to recognize that du Bois was correct. Hopper's achievement belongs to a much larger context than the American Scene. His aims and his work transcend any provincial attitude. He deserves to be viewed in the great tradition of the artists he admired most.

The author is compiling a catalogue raisonné of Edward Hopper's work in all media and organizing a major retrospective exhibition of the artist's work. Research has been sponsored by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Whitney Museum of American Art where the exhibition will open in September 1980. The exhibition will be sponsored by Philip Morris Incorporated.

Information concerning the location of his paintings, drawings, prints, illustrations, letters, or photographs of the artist is requested by Gail Levin, Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021.

1. Edward Hopper, "John Sloan and the Philadelphians," *The Arts*, 11 (April 1927), p. 173.
2. James Thrall Soby, *Contemporary Painters* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1948), p. 39.
3. Only Jerrold Lanes ("Edward Hopper French formalist, Ash Can realist, neither, or both," *Artforum*, 7 [October 1968], pp. 44-50) treated this issue in any depth.
4. Brian O'Doherty, *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 15.
5. Brian O'Doherty, televised taped interview with Edward and Jo Hopper, 1961. I am grateful to Brian O'Doherty for sharing this interview and his recollections of Hopper with me.
6. William Innes Homer with the assistance of Violet Organ, *Robert Henri and His Circle* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 163.
7. Rockwell Kent, *It's Me O Lord: The Autobiography of Rockwell Kent* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1955), p. 91.
8. Hopper, "John Sloan," p. 174.

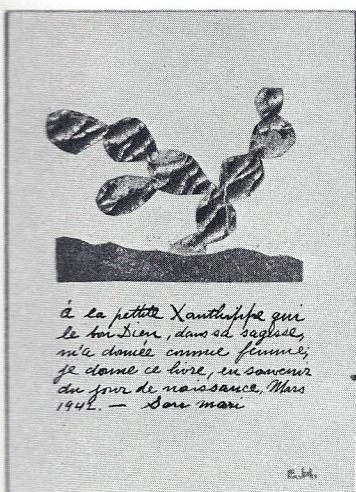


Fig. 27. Edward Hopper, Birthday Card for Jo Hopper, March 1942. Ink and collage on paper, 5 x 3 1/2".

Private Collection. Inscribed: "à la petite Xanthippe qui le bon Dieu, dans sa sagesse, m'a donnée comme femme; je donne de livre, en souvenir du jour de naissance, Mars 1942. — Son mari."



◀ Fig. 28. Edward Hopper, Le Rêve de Josie, c. 1924-30. Pencil on paper, 11 x 8 1/2". Private Collection.



Fig. 29. Edward Hopper, Sketch of Jo Hopper and other figures, 1942. Inscribed: "A ma femme—jour de naissance, 1942." Conté crayon on paper, 10 1/2 x 18". Whitney Museum of American Art, Bequest of Josephine N. Hopper.



Fig. 30. Edward Hopper, House on a Hill (The Buggy), 1920. Etching, 8 x 10". Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Harrison Fund.

Fig. 31. Edgar Degas, Carriage at the Races, 1873. Oil on canvas, 14-1/8 x 21-5/8". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



9. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of October 30, 1906. This and all subsequent correspondence are on file either in originals or copies at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of November 23, 1906.
12. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of October 30, 1906.
13. Edward Hopper to his sister, Marion Hopper, unpublished letter of November 29, 1906.
14. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of December 8, 1906.
15. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of May 26, 1907.
16. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Edward Hopper Retrospective Exhibition* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1933), p. 10. For further information on the friendship of Hopper and Bruce, see Gail Levin, "Patrick Henry Bruce and Arthur Burdett Frost, Jr.: From the Henri Class to the Avant-garde," *Arts Magazine*, 53 (April 1979), pp. 102-06.
17. Information provided by Denis Rouart and Daniel Wildenstein, *Edouard Manet: Catalogue raisonné* (Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, Lausanne, 1975), suggests that Hopper could have seen *Olympia* after its acquisition by the Louvre in 1907 or he could have known it as a print or in various published reproductions such as Theodore Duret, *Histoire de Edouard Manet et de son oeuvre* (Paris, 1902), p. 41, no. 44. He probably did not actually see *The Fifer* which, though bequeathed to the Louvre in 1908, did not actually enter the museum until 1911. He could have known various published reproductions including that in Duret, p. 41, no. 76. Henri may have shown his students photographs of these works.
18. Hopper's copy of *Masterpieces from the Works of Gustave Doré* by Edmund Ollier (New York: Cassell Publishing Co., 1887) survives with "E. Hopper" inscribed inside the front cover.
19. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of July 4, 1907.
20. Edward Hopper to his father, unpublished letter of July 18, 1907.
21. "One Step Nearer to a National Art," *New York American*, March 10, 1908.
22. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letters of May 29, 1909, and June 7, 1909. Edward Hopper to his father, unpublished letter of June 18, 1909.
23. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of May 18, 1909.
24. Guy Pène du Bois, "The American Paintings of Edward Hopper," *Creative Art*, 8 (March 1931), p. 191.
25. *Les Maîtres Humoristes, A. Guillaume* (Paris: Société D'Édition et de publications, October, 1908). *Jean Louis Forain*, January and November 1908.
26. Quoted in O'Doherty, *American Masters*, p. 16.
27. Quoted in Katharine Kuh, *The Artist's voice: Talks with Seventeen Artists* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 135.
28. Du Bois, "The American Paintings," p. 191.
29. "Exhibition of Paintings by George Bellows, Randall Davey, Edward Hopper, Leon Kroll, Gus Mager, Kathleen McEnery, Henry Lee McFee, Thalia Millett, Waldo Pierce, Leopold Seyffert, John Sloan, Eugene Speicher," February 11-21, 1915, The MacDowell Club of New York City. Hopper's paintings are nos. 8 and 9 in the catalogue.
30. "Shows and Sales. Mr. Bellows Paints Cross-Eyed Boy," *New York Herald*, February 13, 1915.

31. "Strong Man at the MacDowell" and "Exhibit at MacDowell Club," unidentified newspaper clippings saved by Hopper.
32. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of May 11, 1907.
33. For a discussion of the French subject matter and influences in Hopper's prints, see Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper: The Complete Prints* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1979 [in press]).
34. "Walkowitz and Hopper," *Arts and Decoration*, 6 (February, 1916), pp. 190-91.
35. For Hopper's attitude toward illustration and a catalogue raisonné of his illustrations, see Gail Levin, *Edward Hopper as Illustrator* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. in association with the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1979 [in press]). This and the publication cited in note 33 are in conjunction with the exhibition *Edward Hopper: Prints and Illustrations*, organized by the author, which will open at the Whitney Museum on September 25, 1979.
36. Barr (Hopper Retrospective, p. 11) incorrectly listed this exhibition, arranged by Guy Pène du Bois, as taking place in 1919 where "he showed a group of Paris oils with only one or two American pictures about which he felt doubtful." Hopper had produced numerous American paintings by this date, but chose not to exhibit them.
37. O'Doherty, *American Masters*, p. 41.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Paul Jamot, *Degas* (Paris: Editions de la Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1924). As late as Christmas 1951, Hopper gave Jo a book of the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud, *Poésies* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1950). He inscribed it: "à la petite chatte qui découvre ses griffes presque tous les jours. Joyeux Noël, 1951." They also owned a typescript of "Extraits de Morceaux Choisis, Autres Fragments sur Mallarmé," by Paul Valéry.
41. Hopper, "John Sloan," p. 177.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
43. Kuh, *The Artist's Voice*, p. 135.
44. For Hopper's assimilation of French painting in his illustrations, see Levin, *Hopper as Illustrator*. For specific examples of the influence of Degas' paintings on several of Hopper's mature paintings, see Gail Levin, "Edward Hopper's 'Office at Night,'" *Arts Magazine*, 52 (January 1978), pp. 134-37.
45. Hopper's wife had actually pursued both an acting and a painting career before their marriage. He saved many ticket stubs from plays they attended and carefully wrote down the name of the play on the back of each ticket. Hopper ("Notes on Painting," p. 18) wrote that "Molière at his greatest [is] as new as Ibsen . . ." He had also attended the theater in Paris where he remarked about the reasonable ticket prices. Hopper, who also loved movies, told Brian O'Doherty (televised interview) that he admired "French producers" [directors] and wanted to see Jean Luc-Goddard's *Breathless*. I shall treat Hopper's love of the stage and screen in a forthcoming publication.
46. Lloyd Goodrich, *Edward Hopper* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976), p. 154.
47. Edward Hopper to his mother, unpublished letter of April 27, 1907.
48. Edward Hopper, "Notes on Painting," in Barr, *Hopper Retrospective*, pp. 17-18.
49. Du Bois, "The American Paintings," p. 191.



Fig. 32. Edward Hopper, *New York Movie*, 1939. Oil on canvas, 32 1/4 x 40-1/8". Museum of Modern Art, New York.

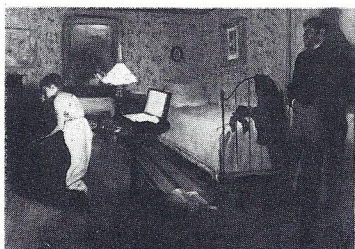


Fig. 33. Edgar Degas, *The Interior*, 1868-69. Oil on canvas. Henry P. McIlhenny Collection, Philadelphia.

Fig. 35. Honoré Daumier, *The Recall of the Singer*, 1857. Lithograph, 8 x 10 1/2". Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1922.



Fig. 34. Edward Hopper, *Two Comedians*, 1965. Oil on canvas, 29 x 40". Private Collection.