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FEMINIST ART HISTORY AND FEMALE PORTRAITURE IN 19TH CENTURY FRANCE AND BRITAIN - A CRITIQUE

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Table of Contents

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PREFACE

In the realm of academic disciplines, Feminism and Feminist art history have made a significant contribution on matters and theories of practice. One would think that the percentage of people in the academic world unaware of the notion of Feminist Art History is or must be very small. No one would think the opposite, only if lacking in awareness of those cultural, political, historical, sociological, economic or any other forms that bound together the past or present characters of society, always and undeniably occupied by sexual politics, if not formed by them and run for them. The problem does not lie in the justification of their existence. The problem lies in the methods deployed by feminist art historians in order to evoke and reevaluate the assessment of cultural images. These methods are rarely in agreement with each other and often fall under ideological categories, in search for answers either in form of gender or class analysis.

This project aims to bring together, analyze and examine the main issues concerning these methodologies, and its application to feminist art history, looking at female artistic production of 19th century in France and Britain. Questions that are going to be discussed are the role of feminist art history, its beginnings, evolution and ultimate purpose. Debates between Marxist feminists and Radical feminists are going to be discussed , as well as methodologies that claim to unite Marxism and Feminism. It aims to prove that the feminist critique comes mainly either from a Marxist perspective or a gender perspective, for their unification has proved unsuccessful. This is perhaps the most difficult project of Feminist Art History, which challenges

the construction of the traditional form of art history, aiming to provide an alternative art history.

In chapter one I provide a general view of historical facts, concerning the main projects of feminist art history both in theory and practice. Matters regarding the changing social status of women in France and Britain in the 19th century are documented as well as the role of women in the arts and their access to art education and exhibition. I am providing facts that are historically proven and are part of the on-going construction of sexual difference, however examined in different ways by various scholars.

The construction of sexual difference, which has determined the course of women's life and cultural production, has led writers into taking views and adopting theories which are diametrically opposite from each other. This is the content of chapter two, which looks at the adoption of Marxist or radical positions and their differences when assessing cultural images. It aims to show that most Marxist feminists started from a material analysis of class and culture, but moved away believing that sufficient explanations as to women's subordinate position to men and their emancipation, cannot be found in Marxist texts. Examples of iconographical analysis following one or the other approach are considered, both in literary and art historical theory. Gen Doy's Marxist approach leads to a dismissal of Griselda Pollock's methodology, where she has tried to provide ideological structure that combines both matters of class and gender. I have called chapter two "a friction in feminist art history" due to the current literature, which seems to take apart rather than unite feminist theory. I want to show that understanding the ideological structures which form the

theorization of sexual difference, the importance of the role of feminist art history and its position to the traditional discipline of art history, is not an easy task. The issue is that it does not look as if it is going to become any less easy either. For the problems lie in following either one approach or the other. Marxists fighting for a historical materialistic analysis versus a gender based explanation.

There have been approaches which have tried to unite both ideologies, but however have proved fruitless, for most feminist scholars tend to believe that the construction of sexual difference is based on the oppression of women by men. Such an approach is Griselda Pollock's, the British spokesperson for feminist art history, whose influence in the world of feminism and cultural studies is undeniable. I have chosen to concentrate on the analysis of her sophisticated methodology in chapter three, as it seems to be an excellent representative example of the above and is best represented in her *Vision and Difference*, of 1988. I will be researching her attempt to unite Marxism and Feminism, her critique of Marxism, the spaces of femininity defined by her work, her deployment of philosophical methods such as phenomenology and her dismissal of feminist texts which do not comply with her approach.

I want to say that this is not an attempt to dismiss the theory of Feminist Art History, its methodologies and its various academic advocates. Rather it is a project that aims to state its evolution and course of intellectual progress, and highlight its current ideological problems.

1.

Gender and Feminism - The Facts

1. Feminist projects and history of Feminism

Perhaps the most significant intervention in the study of Art History since the 1970's has been the raising of a whole set of debates and issues concerning the way in which notions of gender have affected artistic production and Art History. Feminist Art Historians use gender matters in order to reconstruct a cultural analysis of the historical development. Feminism was not a term used in England before 1895, but long before the later nineteenth century there were distinct and identifiable discourses concerned with the rights of women.[1] Mary Wollstonecraft's text,[2] *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman,* published in 1792, set an agenda for the following century on the subjects of employment, education, civil and legal rights, sexuality and the construction of femininity.[3] Several interconnected strands have been identified in this period. Egalitarian feminism had its origins in the civil rights struggles of the 1790s and dealt with equal opportunities for women in education, employment and

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[1] Deborah Cherry, "Women Artists and the politics of feminism 1850-1900," in *Women in the Victorian Art World,* ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr, UK, 1995, p. 49

[2] Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), was a teacher, governess, reader and translator. While unmarried, she gave birth to a daughter by Imlay, and tried to drown herself from Putney Bridge when she found that he had taken another mistress. First met Godwin in 1791, never married until 1797. Died soon after the birth of her second daughter (later to be Shelley's wife), in September 1797. Having been Imlay's mistress and the philosophic Godwin's wife, she wrote to Imlay: "I have lived in an ideal world and fostered sentiments that you did not comprehend." Publications include: "Thoughts on Education of Daughters," 1785; "Original Stories from Real Life", 1788-9 (illustrated by Blake in 1796); "A Vindication of the Rights of Man", 1790; "Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution", 1794; "Letters from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark", 1796. For more see *The Rights of Woman and The Subjection of Women,* M. Wollstonecraft and J. S. Mill, London, 1929

[3] Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 1, p. 49

law; Social Purity feminism initially organized to secure the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act; Socialist Feminism, and the Women's Suffrage Movement[4]. What the various feminist approaches have shared is the sense in which a feminist intervention must involve a double operation, looking not only at specific questions of practice, but also simultaneously theorizing the place of feminist inquiry within the discipline of Art History and within the wider framework of cultural studies generally. The projects usually pursued by Feminist art historical investigation are the following:

- The recognition of gender systems as primary categories of historical analysis, historically and not biologically determined.
- The affirmation and detection of a whole range of artistic production made and circulated largely within the domestic sphere, for example R. Parker "The Subversive Stitch", which seeks to dislodge the distinction between arts and crafts.
- The construction of a pantheon of great women artists who have subsequently fallen into obscurity or the positive re-evaluation of particular women artists, invoking a history of suppression of women artists' worth, for instance Mary Cassatt.
- The study of the possibilities and constraints upon women who attempted to make a career in the public sphere of the arts, and the examination of the diverse and often implicit ways in which notions of femininity and masculinity function within the arts, for example Germaine Greer's "The Obstacle Race"; Linda Nochlin's essay *"Why there have been no great women artists?"*; Pamela Gerrish Nunn's "*Victorian Women Artists*"; Tamar Garb's article "*L'art Feminin*", and

[4] Ibid., p. 50

Paula Gillett's "*Worlds of Art*", which in different ways look at the training and exhibition possibilities available to women in the nineteenth century.

- The study of images depicting women and to a lesser extent depicting men for the purposes of determining the way in which social representations of gender are reinforced by cultural images, thoroughly examined in Griselda Pollock's "*Vision and Difference*".
- The attempt to embrace the notion of there being a difference between male and female artistic production, either on the basis of innate / genetic disposition, or on the basis of differences in social and cultural experience.

- The positing of a notion of a positive feminine aesthetic (Cixous, Duras, who have championed the idea that there are distinct qualities that can constitute *un ecriture feminin*).
- To investigate whether the experience of women artists of a given period inevitably leads them to represent themselves differently from the way in which men have represented them.
  - The study of the way in which ideas of gender figure implicitly or explicitly in various institutions and practices of art and particularly in writings about art. For instance in writings about art, there are problems such as language; it is often riddled with metaphors that are largely masculinised adjectives. In particular the way the notion of genius implies a division on the basis of gender there have been no women artists of the nineteenth century who have been associated with the notion of genius.
  - The reevaluation of feminist art history, its goals and its position to the traditional form of art history.

2. Natural Inferiority?

The idea of women being of inferior status to men, was nothing new at the time, as it went back to the Greek philosophers, for instance to Plato and Aristotle. In the writings of the latter, a theory of feminine "incompleteness" and inferiority was given detailed explication. Aristotle suggested that women, because they had less intrinsic 'soul heat' than men, could not process their menstrual blood to the 'final stage' of semen.[5] Thus he posited, in the process of conception the woman contributed nothing to the distinctive character of the embryo, only the material which formed it.[6]

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Evangelical Revival, a religious and charitable movement was under way.[7] It helped in transforming attitudes about social behaviour and the role of women, by promoting social morals based on patriarchy and family values, justified by reference to the Bible and established religion. It was a set of ideas, which fitted well with the Rationalist views of women as irrational emotional creatures in need of direction and protection.

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[5] Hilary M. Lips and Nina L. Colwill, *The Psychology of Sex Difference*, New Jersey, 1978, pp. 27-8

[6] There are numerous historical examples that confirm the 'natural inferiority' of women. In 1533, Thomas Wilson suggested that man should precede woman because it was more natural. Wilson's colleagues agreed. In 1644, Joshua Poole decreed that the male gender was the worthier gender and therefore deserved priority; his consultant men were convinced of the credibility of his case. In 1746, John Kirkby helped to set the seal on the case when he insisted that the male gender was the more comprehensive and all male parliament found it feasible to pass the 1850 Act which decreed that he/man should stand for woman. From Dale Spencer, ed., *Mens Studies Modified, The Impact of feminism on the Academic Disciplines*, NY, 1981, p. 6

[7] C. Hall and L. Davidoff, ed., *Family Fortunes: men and women of the middle classes, 1790-1850*, London, 1987

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the concept of Evolution, with Darwin's publication on the Origins of the Species in 1859, exaggerated the latter set of ideas, provided by the Evangelicans, thereby affecting people's thinking about the natural and social world. The notion of the 'natural inferiority' of women, reinforced by the nature of our institutional structures, [as Linda Nochlin discusses in her famous essay "*Why There have Been No Great Women Artists"]*, was [also] discussed in John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women,* of 1861.[8] Here Mill writes "Everything which is usual appears natural. The subjection of women to men being a universal custom, any departure from it naturally appears unnatural."[9] [Nochlin, in citing Mill's comment, argues for the reluctance of men "to give up this "natural" order of things in which their advantages are so great."[10]]

By 1870, the basic unit of life was identified as the 'living cell' and scientists tried to discover which factor determined the future development of the cell into a myriad of living forces, including male and female and the process of sexuality and reproduction. This cell theory was to be elaborated by Havelock Ellis in a series of publications from the late 1880s, ultimately in his most important publication of *Man and Woman,* in 1894.[11] The *Evolution of Sex* was to follow in 1889, by Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson.

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[8] Linda Nochlin, *Women Art and Power, and Other Essays,* London, 1991, p. 152

[9] John Stuart Mill, "The Subjection of Women", London, 1869, in *Three Essays by John Stuart Mill,* World's Classics Series, London, 1966, p. 441. Mill's discussion is mentioned again in this paper, in "Women's Changing Status and Movements", p. 14

[10] Nochlin, Op. Cit. No. 8, p. 152

[11] Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), was a medical doctor whose writings covered a wide range of subjects, including literature, science, religion, philosophy and travel. He formed a close friendship with Edward Carpenter, with whom he shared an interest in sexual radicalism, socialism and the women's movement. He married Edith Lees, a lesbian Feminist. He is best known for his *Sexual Inversion,* London, 1897

According to the theory provided by Geddes and Thompson, the biological interpretation can be summarized in three elements.[12] The first one was the function of metabolism, based on cell theory. According to this, some cells which are well nourished in their very early stages use their energy to be active, to find new sources of support. These cells are Katabolic, and they need to be male. Cells which become female, in contrast are well nourished able to rest passively.[13] These were anabolic. In other words males had relatively quicker, more active metabolisms to those of the females. This was thought to lead usually to such things as greater ability, creativity, variability and scientific insight for men and greater patience, open-mindedness, appreciation for subtle details.[14]

Lips and Colwil write on biological sexual differences, in that although the process of sexual differentiation is well known, still "not every aspect of it is completely understood, and the sexual differentiation of the brain in humans remains particularly puzzling."[15]

In addition to this there are several different theories on how gender identity is formed. The first one is the psychoanalytic theory, following a Freudian pattern. In this a process a young child identifies with the same-sexed parent. The second is called the social learning theory and involves modeling, imitation and reinforcement.

(which examined homosexuality) and his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Philadelphia, 1906-10. He argued that women could and should enjoy sexual relations.

[12] P. Geddes and P. Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, revised edition, London, 1901; first edition 1889.

[13] Lips and Colwill, Op. Cit. No. 5, pp. 27-8

[14] Ibid., p. 52. The second element theory encountered external environmental conditions – food, temperature, light, chemical media and so on which were said to contribute in the determination of sex. The last part of the theory claimed that sexual dimorphism is to some extent the result of the continual action of natural selection.

It suggests that parents determine the behaviour of girls and boys. It is they who provide them with constant reinforcement of their sexual behaviour in other words what does a girl have to do in order to be a girl and what does a boy have to in order to be a boy. The last theory on the construction of gender identity is called the cognitive theory, "according to which a child, between the age of three and five acquires 'gender constancy' and can not be spontaneously altered by a change in hairstyle, dress or name.[16]

Nochlin in reinforcing the above issues regarding education, writes on the "woman question" "The fault lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education – education understood to include everything that happens to us from the moment we enter this world of meaningful symbols, signs, and signals."[17]

3. Doctrine of the separate spheres

In both nineteenth century Britain and France, the place and experience of Middle Class women was largely defined and lived out within the domestic sphere. The division between male and female experience was in part one of access to the city, a difference between a largely public or a largely private existence. Middle class women were discouraged from working in all but very few professions (teaching, nursing or craft related occupations). In England, in spite of attempts at suppression,

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[15] Ibid., p. 62. The process is the following: Chromosomes determining the sex, causing the gonads to differentiate, which in turn secrete the sex hormones - they in turn differentiate the internal reproductive tract, then the external genitalia, then the brain

[16] Theodore Mischell, ed., *Cognitive Development and Epistemology*, New York, 1971, pp. 311-55. For more see C. L. Hull, *Principles of behaviour*, New York, 1943 and J. M. Hunt, "Intrinsic motivation and its role in psychological development", in D. Levine, ed. *Nebraska symposium on motivation*, vol. 13, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1965

the suffragette movement advanced the rights of women much faster and further than in France where the political climate militated against opportunity and civil rights for women and ethnic minorities.[18]

In both countries a woman's identity was established in relation to a set of hierarchical 'subject positions' to be occupied in relation to: i) a husband as symbolic head of the household, upon whom she was economically dependent, and for whom she was expected to provide moral support and the appropriate domestic environment for his leisure; ii) their children, whose education and welfare she was largely responsible for providing or supervising; iii) the extended family relations. George Elgar Hicks', *Woman's mission: i) Guide to Childhood, 1863, ii) Companion of Manhood, 1863,and iii) Comfort of Old Age,* 1863, provide worthy examples to illustrate these 'subject positions'[19].

An identity was largely forged out of the interaction between these various positions and typically everyday experiences that constituted or fell within their realm. The term "accomplishments" referred to a set of social and cultural skills in a domestic context, which were designed to make an able attractive and entertaining companion of the woman, as well as to ensuring that in the most awful event of not finding a husband or should he die young, she should be able to provide for herself and seek out a living.[20] Gerrish Nunn writes

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[17] Nochlin, Op. Cit. No. 8, p. 150

[18] For an excellent discussion on women's artistic culture in France and in the late 19th century Paris see *Sisters of the Brush,* by Tamar Garb, Bath Press, Great Britain, 1994.

[19] For a detailed analysis on the *Woman's mission,* see Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality, Representations of women in Victorian Britain,* Oxford, 1988, esp. pp. 12-23

[20] Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists,* London, 1987, p. 8; Nochlin, 1991, pp. 164-8; Paula Gillett, *Worlds of Art, Painters in Victorian Society,* New Jersey, 1990, p. 133

"The 'accomplishment' is well named, because its only true function is to accomplish woman's required goal of femininity. It is not to make her name, make her money or make herself heard; but to make her a good woman – that is a lady."[21]

"A hand coloured glyphograph by George Cruikshank, called *The Drunkard's Children*, from 1848, demonstrates the desperate need to find a husband, especially if she has no other financial resourses, (see plate 1).[22] This shows a young girl throwing herself off Waterloo Bridge, a favorite jumping – off place for Victorian suicides,[23] having been "homeless, friendless, deserted, destitute, and gin mad."[24]

4. Social and Cultural Skills

To follow Gerrish Nunn's definition of "accomplishments", a 'good woman' – a 'lady'- acceptable and respectable by the norms of societies should have developed the necessary social and cultural skills to confirm her status. It is worth noting here a piece of written correspondence in the *Leisure Hour – A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation*, from 1862

"I have never entered into the dispute concerning the comparative powers of the sexes. We naturally and unavoidably judge of the whole by parts, and, of course, by those parts which come within the circle of our own observation....**I have found in**

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[21] Ibid., p. 8

[22] The series *The Drunkard's Children* of 1848, were enormously popular visual tracts which were reproduced by glyphography, an inexpensive graphic technique that yielded enormous quantities of prints. It followed Cruikshank's (1792-1878) publication of *The Bottle*, treating the drinking problem. The full series of *The Drunkard's Children*, shows: *The Maniac Father and the Convict Brother are Gone – The Poor Girl, Homeless, Friendless, Deserted, Destitute and Gin Mad Commits Self Murder*, 1848, London, David Bogue, now at the Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. For more see Suzan P. Casteras, *The Substance or the Shadow: Images of Victorian Womanhood*, Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, 1982, p. 68

[23] Ibid. Cruikshank's collaborator called this place the English "Bridge of Sighs" and Thomas Hood in his poem of the same name, of 1844, drew attention to the site as a watery grave for female "poor unfortunates" who sought escape from their sordid lives. The average annual number of recorded suicides as written by Mackey, from the Waterloo Bridge, was thirty. However J. Ewing Ritchie wrote in *Night Side of London*, London, 1857, that "it is calculated that 500 people are drowned in the Thames each year... and of the 500 drowned by far the larger class...are of the number of whom Hood wrote..."

[24] Ibid.

them (women) a kindness, a tenderness, a purity of affection, a disinterestedness of friendship, a readiness to oblige, to serve, and to sacrifice; and these, with their gentle manners, lively conversation, and sprightly correspondence...have been my peculiar excitement and solace..."[25]

The above piece, reflects not only the correspondent's personal values through a household manual of taste, a daily magazine, which would have reached many middle-class homes in Britain, but also in a wider manner convey male approval for the contemporary standard feminine qualities and behaviour. Female readers would respond and comply within the rules such as marriage for example as we have seen.

Social and cultural skills, which ranged from flower arranging to porcelain painting, handicrafts, sewing, and other craft related "accomplishments", were perceived as acceptable to middle class women. These skills were of obvious use in providing a fitting aesthetic home environment, to a mostly moderate level of basic education and knowledge of and proficiency in the arts. A smattering of training in painting, the ability to read and play music, a knowledge of literary classics, were some of the necessary educational accessories for the upper middle class women.[26] The classics, Roman and Greek mythology, for instance, which formed the subject matter of much history painting remained, however, a male preserve as such tales were seen as too violent and too sexually explicit for female consumption. It is worth noting here that the insufficient education and rather shallow way of bringing up girls was noted and satirized by the comic magazine *Punch*, in 1891, where "*a page from the diary of a daughter of thirteen*" was illustrated, (see plate 2). [27]

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[25] *The Leisure Hour, A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation*, 'Woman's Tenderness', London, 1862, No. 552, p. 480

[26] 19th century manuals of taste, such as Mrs Ellis's The Family Monitor and Domestic Guide – The Leisure Hour- etc. helped in reinforcing these ideas

[27] *Punch*, London, 1891, 'And Punch's Almanack for 1892'

Pamela Gerrish Nunn in *Problem Pictures*, discusses flower painting and its association to women painters as an established tradition which "possessed a rightness that was politically convenient and socially powerful".[28] Gerrish Nunn argues that flower painting, still-life, the lowest of the genre, was "leased" to women producers, by men, as a result of a political job done by the concept of femininity: woman identified as the deity of flowers herself – Flora.[29] An *Art Journal* review of the 1868 exhibition of the Society of Female Artists declared "Fruits and flowers seem by divine appointment the property of ladies."[30] In this case, the genre of flowers in both Britain and France, was closely associated with women artists, the subject being derived from domestic and not public spaces; spaces that were lived in and defined mostly by women.[31]

The idea was to be trained, but only to a level befitting her station in life. As the public sphere of the metropolitan free market of trade was considered a place of moral and economic uncertainties, a woman's accomplishments were in place to provide the suitable social and cultural milieu to offset and compensate the male for such dangers. It is worth mentioning here an article published in *The Magazine of Art*, of 1880, where a speech is made by H.R.H. the Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, to the Royal School of Art Needlework, at South Kensington. She states:

"If the desire which has been created, and which is increasing, for more beautiful and artistic needlework, should obtain even a larger influence over the wealthy classes of

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[28] Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Problem Pictures, Women and Men in Victorian Painting*, 1995, UK, p. 29
[29] Ibid., p. 29
[30] *Art Journal*, 1 March, 1868, p. 46
[31] For a similar point see Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and the spaces of femininity', *in Vision and Difference*, London, 1988

this rich country than art present, there is no saying how much good may not result from it to the great mass of unemployed women in England."[32]

It is obvious from the above comment that accomplishments such as needlework, were well accepted by the cultural milieu which was set to provide and continue the tradition of women working indoors, staying away from the activities of the masculine sphere. The home first and foremost was a kind of symbolic womb, where the restoration and preservation of a paternalistic morality were maintained. Women were discouraged by convention from entering the public sphere, and much of the literature of the period recounts the plight of those women who fell prey to the temptations of transgressing their domain. It is worth mentioning here the novel *The New Republic or Culture, Faith and Philosophy in an English Country House*, by W.H. Mallock, written in 1878.[33] The idea of the "Feminine Aesthete"[34] becoming a siren or temptress is suggested, along with the idea of woman turning into a man, (referring to the changing role of women which of course was not acceptable). Mallock writes

"how entirely suicidal is the scheme of turning woman into female man. Nature had marked out her mission for her plainly enough; and so our old friend Milton was right in his meaning after all, when he says that man is made for God, and woman for God through him, though of course the expression is antiquated."[35]

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[32] The school expanded its premises and therefore was inaugurated by an address from the princess. *The Magazine of Art*, London, 1880, p. 179

[33] W. H. Mallock, *The New Republic or Culture, Faith, and Philosophy in an English Country House*, London, 1878. Mallock writes on a group of upper middle class and aristocratic people, who come together at a party, and talk about issues such as "the aim of life", "religion", "science", "disgrace of humanity", "women turning to female men", etc.

[34] The Aesthetic Movement although having had its roots at earlier decades, had emerged by 1880 without either a formal manifesto or a single institution or artist to represent it. In most cases Oscar Wilde was the informal spokesman of the movement, praising the cult of beauty and taste. Whistler was its artistic standard-bearer. It found a considerable appeal among artists, playwrights, and intellectuals, and a feminine ideal evolved which Walter Hamilton described in his 1882 book *The Aesthetic Movement in England* as a "pale distraught lady with matted dark auburn hair falling in masses over the brow, and shading eyes full of love-lorn languor, or feverish despair". Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 1, p. 41. For

Indeed, the terms, which define the alternative ends of the spectrum of female morality, embody the doctrine of the separate spheres. In France, one term for a prostitute was a 'fille publique' against whose image, the femme honnette was constructed.

The artist Marie Bashkirtseff (1858-1884) (one of the few women of this period in France to become involved in women's organizations as artist, feminist, and critic[36]), was to complain in 1879, (when one expects that women's status might have differentiated till then, as the movements and campaigns started in the 1840s), of her inability to enjoy the freedom of male artistic counterparts to roam freely and to explore the spectacle of city life.[37] Indeed, in a very generalized sense, images of city and ordinary suburban life are images which enforce a notion of gendered terrains. City life in the art of realists and impressionists is defined as a masculinised and edgy realm of modernity where the suspect presence of prostitution is always around the corner. The depiction of the female in such paintings invariably invokes that "other life" - hedonistic suspicion while the lived everyday experience of the suburbs is largely defined as a feminized space, the space of the family; a serene space peripheral to the city is where nature and culture exist harmoniously.[38]

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more on the Aesthetic Movement see: Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement*, London, 1996, ch. 6.

[35] Mallock, Op. Cit. No. 33, p. 87

[36] Garb, Op. Cit. No. 18, p. 53

[37] Kathleen Adler and Tamar Garb, *Berthe Morisot*, Oxford, 1995, p. 20; Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses, Women, Art and Ideology*, London, 1981, pp. 106-9; *The Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff*, Virago, 1985

[38] The best argument for feminine and masculine spaces, private and public, remains Griselda Pollock's, *Vision and Difference*, Op. Cit. No. 31

A good starting point in the search for an answer to this would be the critical writings of Charles Baudelaire, and in particular his essay *The Painter of Modern Life* of 1863. In this essay Baudelaire reaffirms his belief, and puts forward his arguments, for the appropriateness of painting the heroic aspects of contemporary life. He concerns himself only with the city and lists and describes the various types of women to be found in the public spaces of contemporary Paris. In effect he defines the contemporary bourgeois attitude towards female sexuality by delineating the boundaries (in terms of social spaces within the city) between respectable woman and fallen woman. Briefly he allots to respectable women only one evening public space; the spaces in the auditorium of the theatre and one daytime space; the park. To fallen women he allots the following: the backstage of the theatre, cafes, folies, houses of ill-repute and so on. There can be little doubt that he describes a city dominated by men where women have a very much secondary role. Men are the politicians, the businessmen; they are automatically assumed to be the artists and consumers and viewers of the art produced.

5. Women's Changing Status and Movements

One can say however, that the middle class woman, in nineteenth century Britain especially, has been far more stereotyped than studied[39]. The work of feminist historians and also feminist literary critics, has uncovered a more complex relationship between white middle class women and the culture of femininity, which

[39] Terry Lovell, ed., *Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 1, UK, 1995, p. 20

they perforce negotiated.[40] Women were playing an equally important role to that of men, in constructing bourgeois domesticity and femininity. Recent work by Armstrong[41], shows the identification of specific kind of 'domestic woman' as an authority-figure, who "wielded the pen, using that authority, with some panache, to construct middle class feminine subjectivities."[42] A good example to demonstrate this, is Mrs Beeton's book of 1861, the *Book of Household Management.* In this, she urged the mistress of the house to act like the "commander of an army", marshaling the entire human and other resources of the home and actively participating in every aspect of domestic management.[43]

It is true, however, that in 19th century Britain, in addition to manuals and guidebooks which glorified women's maternal and domestic activities and defined women as inherently weaker and more delicate than men, writers idealized the home even more as household and workplace separated. Works such as Mrs Sarah Stickeny Ellis's *Mothers of England,* (1843) and John Ruskin's *"Of Queen's Gardens"* (1865) portrayed the home as a haven from the competition and materialism of the industrial world:

"This is the true nature of home - it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division... and wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her."[44]

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[40] Ibid. Writers such as Nancy Cott in the US looked at the ways in which aspects of the culture of femininity might be turned to account by women (Cott, 1978) while the active voice which E. P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* gives to the protagonists of his study echoes throughout Davidoff and Hall's work on the making of the English middle-class and the role of femininity and masculinity in its construction (Thompson 1968; Davidoff and Hall, 1978)

[41] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction,* New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987

[42] Lovell, Op. Cit. No. 39, p. 20

[43] Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management,* London, 1861

[44] John Ruskin, "Of Queen's Gardens", in *Sesame and Lilies, Three Lectures,* [1865], London, 1897, twelfth edition, pp. 108-9

It is the above social and cultural skills and the embedded idea of what constitutes the 'feminine' that confused some women when they were trying to be in advance of their time, and disabled them in escaping their limitations. When Wollstonecraft wrote her feminist texts, despite her attempts to declare "we do not desire to rule over men but to rule ourselves,"[45] her personal life has shown exactly the opposite; for instance her close dependence on Imlay and her attempts to commit suicide twice, following a rejection by him. Although Mill in his *The Subjection of Women*, tried a philosophic approach, consisting of an investigation of history and an analysis of human nature, (by 1869 was already considered old-fashioned), he still believed in the power of society to mould human nature.[46] Nevertheless, despite Mill's efforts to contribute to the women's movements, his entire discussion was torn by an implicit tension between his concept of women as complementary to man, and his desire to affirm the basic equality of the sexes.[47]

In talking about marriage, Mill declared, "Under the present laws of marriage, wives could potentially be forced to endure not merely the traditional forms of slavery, but "the worst description" of bondage known to history. Unlike most other slaves, a wife could be made subject to duty at all hours and all minutes."[48] He was referring of course to the laws of marriage, which were very much in favour of men. In Britain, a

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[45] Wollstonecraft and Mill, Op. Cit. No. 2, p. 13

[46] John Stuart Mill, (1806-1873), formed the Utilitarian Party in 1823-6, proprietor of *Organized Review*, 1837-40. M.P. for Westminster, 1865-8, as a follower of William Edward Gladstone. The copy of *The Subjection of Women*, used in this paper, is a 1970 publication, Massachusetts, USA, introduction by Wendell Robert Carr

[47] Ibid., p. 21. Amongst other things which he wrote, making his text a failed attempt but still a helpful contribution to women's evolution of rights, was: " all reforming action in law and education would break down in front of the fact that, long before the age at which a man can earn a position in society, Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm, and sweetness". Though admitting that "law and custom have much to give to women that has been withheld from them", he nevertheless felt that "the position of women will surely be what it is; in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife". p. 21

wife was not entitled to her properties until 1870, when the Married Woman's Property Act gave her the right to retain her own earnings or rents. Before then, a wife virtually possessed nothing, as even her clothing which belonged to her, during her lifetime, could be sold by her husband at any time.[49] She was forced to cohabit with her husband even if he committed adultery and had not legal rights to her properties (even if they were inherited), even in the case of her husband moving out of their household with his mistress. This was in contrast to the unmarried woman, who had the legal right to have total control of her properties, as long as she remained unmarried. The Matrimonial Causes Act created a divorce court but not until 1857. Before this a British divorce could be acquired only through a bill in Parliament. After the Divorce Act was created, a husband had one cause of action, adultery. A wife had to prove adultery plus desertion and cruelty.[50]

It was within this cultural and political climate, of an ever-changing world for women, of the world of Darwinism, Utilitarianism, Socialism and the evolution of science, that the first women's associations were being formed. In 1841, according to Census figures, 278 women in Britain identified themselves as artists ("artist meaning here 'painter of pictures' but not, for instance tile-painter: in the Census, artist denotes the traditional meaning of fine art worker.")[51] By 1871, this figure had risen to 1069. From 1848, women's rights became an urgent issue in Britain, France, Germany and USA.[52]

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[48] Ibid., p. 17
[49] Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 1, p. 10
[50] G. H. Fleming, *Victorian Sex Goddess, Lady Colin Campbell,* Oxford, 1990, p. 3. Also see Casteras, 1982. For a more authoritative discussion on women's changing legal rights see: Erna Reiss, *Rights and Duties of Englishwomen, A study in Law and Public Opinion,* Manchester, 1934
[51] Gerrish Nunn, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 3
[52] For more see: Ray Strachey, *The Cause,* London, 1928

In 1847 the first publications of the Brontë sisters appeared, including Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*. In 1848, the Seneca Falls (a convention on women's rights), in New York, was created. In England a few special schools for females opened in order to educate governesses, such as Bedford and Queen's Colleges. In 1855, the French painter Rosa Bonheur became a great success when her huge picture *The Horse Fair,* was exhibited in London, (exhibited at the Salon in 1853), by the art dealer Ernest Gambart, and the journalists took her up as a model of the modern woman (see plate 3).[53] This was the largest canvas an animal painter has ever produced.[54] Bonheur's case although commercially successful, yet proves that the access to such means of production, the access to genres such as animal painting, would be different for women in contrast with men. Bonheur, had to disguise her gender, by dressing up as a man, in order to get a legal authorization. Difficulties like these would not have to be faced by male artists and their way to recognition as professionals, as they controlled such means of production living in a masculine patriarchal society.

In 1856, the society of Female Artists was established. At the same year, a publication for middle-class women called *Elegant Arts for Ladies*, would recommend that female creativity was best applied to Persian painting, quill work, diaphanie, potichomanie and seaweed pictures.[55] In 1857, the feminist painter Barbara Leigh Smith (later Bodichon), and Bessie Parkes founded the *English Woman's Review*. In 1859, the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women was established. In 1860,

[53] Gerrish Nunn, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 4
[54] Parker and Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 37, p. 37

Florence Nightingale recreated nursing as a profession, by founding the Nightingale School of Nursing. In 1864, the Schools' Enquiry Commission agreed to look into gender inequalities in education, based on the efforts of campaigns supported mainly by the feminist Emily Davies (1830-1921). In 1865, Emily Davies, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Barbara Bodichon, Dorothea Beale, and Francis Mary Buss, formed a woman's discussion group called the Kensington Society. From then on, many campaigns for women's suffrage begun. In 1866, the latter group formed the London Suffrage Committee and began organizing a petition asking Parliament to grant women the vote. Two years later, in 1868, Dr Richard Pankhurst acted as a counsel for the Manchester women to be placed on the register as voters. He also drafted the bill giving married women absolute control over their property and earnings, which became law in 1882.

In the literary world where the writings of Carlyle and Ruskin, the criticism of Arnold, the fantasy of George MacDonald and the realism of George Bernard Shaw, women pre-eminent authors put their own stamp by producing some of the best literary works, now regarded as classics. Elizabeth Barrett Browing, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Dickinson, George Eliot, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth C. Gaskell, and Lydia Sigourney, are some of the many women who contributed towards a different, or rather 'feminine' view of life. Still, in 1895, Victor Joze, wrote in the avant-garde literary magazine, *La Plume:*

"Most women's work carry an obvious mark of weakness and intellectual inferiority... This is because the role of woman is not to guide people but rather to guide children. She, herself, is a sort of large, nervous child incapable of judging things coldly, with fairness and good sense. This is why the writings of most 'blue

[55] Ibid.

stockings' are full of so many exaggerations, of useless bursts of enthusiasm, of empty and overblown sentences."[56]

6. The Arts as a Profession

Painting as a profession would have wide appeal. In the late nineteenth century, it could within reason be seen as a suitable profession for the well adjusted new bourgeois women, whilst for the more open-minded it could be viewed as a symbolic, taking hold of one of our culture's most revered masculine spheres. This influx into the profession was however mostly seen as a craze, which if treated lightly, would disappear. Most critics of the day regarded the term Woman Artists, an oxymoron, and in any case the statement of gender modified the noun.[57] Such terms betray the prevailing assumption that Art is most typically a masculine sphere, after all there is no equivalent term Male Artist.[58] Terms such as 'the fair paintress' or the 'lady painter', similarly designate an alteration in the terms upon which critics made discriminations about work, on the basis of cultural assumptions about gender.[59] The following article of the *Art Journal* of 1874, reviewing the Society of Lady Artists,[60]

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[56] 'La plupart des œuvres de femmes portent une marque évidente de faiblesse et d'infériorité cérébrable (sic)...C'est que le rôde la femme n'est pas de guider les peuples, mais bien celui de guider les enfants. Elle-même est une espède grand enfant nerveux, inacapable de juger les choses à froid, avec justesse et bon sens. Voila pourquoi les écrits de la plupart des bas belus sont remplis de tant d'exagérations, d'emballements inutiles, de phrases évides'. V. Joze, Le Féminisme et le bon sens', *La Plume*, no. 154 (15 September 1895), p. 392

[57] For more see Cherry, Op.Cit. No. 1, ch. 2

[58] Pollock discusses this in *Vision and Difference*, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 24

[59] Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women, Victorian women artists*, London and New York, 1993, p. 66

[60] The Society of Female Artists was formed in London in 1856-7. It became the Society of Lady Artists in 1872 and the Society of Women Artists in 1899. From Cherry, 1993, p. 67; Yeldham, pp. 90-4; Gerrish Nunn, 1987, pp. 72-87, 215; Gillett, 1990, p. 134

however complimentary it may seem, proves the 'natural' discriminations made at the expense of women artists:

"The kind of excellence specially noticeable in this collection is not of itself sufficient to ensure a high pictorial achievement. Refinement is a virtue in all work, and it is the necessary condition of even the strongest and most vigorous accomplishment in the realm of Art... the refinement, which characterizes the painting of lady-artists, is a thing not to be passed over without remark. We cannot say that modern English art does not stand in need of its influence, and there is good reason to believe that in this particular respect Englishmen might take a lesson of Englishwomen...In this collection of paintings by lady-artists graceful taste and refined thought are in advance of inventive power and technical resource. There is not much strength in any branch of the art which here finds illustration."[61]

There were a number of factors that militated against a successful career in the arts, other than those which I have already mentioned. Maintaining a career was a difficult task due to familiar commitments connected to family. It is has been suggested that Edma Morisot (Berthe Morisot's sister), gave up a career when she got married for instance,[62] and other women lost audiences and public attention when they were similarly incapacitated through pregnancy or changing their name to that of their spouse. The inability of many women to maintain a consistent presence on the exhibition circuit or to find constant support could create a vicious circle of unpredictable difficulties.

Henrieta (Mrs E.M.) Ward, (1832-1923) an accomplished history painter, who due to her marriage to a painter, was unusually able to have access to the nude and to the components of artistic training needed to be able to paint history subjects, found that she needed to paint in more traditionally feminine genres, such as everyday genre scenes and still life, in order to attract and sustain buyers,[63] during the recession in the

[61] *Art Journal,* 1874, p. 146, review on Great Marlborough Street
[62] Adler and Garb, Op. Cit. No. 37, p. 20
[63] Gerrish Nunn, Op. Cit. No. 20, p.p. 132-146

art market at certain moments of the 1860s. This in turn meant her prices per painting were substantially reduced. Her history painting though admired, was often patronized on the basis that critics frequently alluded to the guiding hand of her husband behind the flourish and achievement of her intricate history compositions.[64] The following review of 1862 demonstrates the point:

"Mrs E. M. Ward enters this year upon the domain of her husband, and produces a theatrically picture, 'Scene at the Louvre in 1649'. This picture purports to represent the 'despair' of Henrietta Maria on learning the fate that has befallen her husband at Whitehall... Subjects of this kind are at best uninteresting, and least of all fitted for a lady's pencil. Surely it is better for a lady to paint the simple beauty of children, than to invest a beautiful Queen, when struck down by woe, with so extravagant an expression."[65]

Henrietta Ward's success could be associated often with talent of hereditary status. An *Art Journal* review of 1864 demonstrates my point:

"Talent, or genius, is very far, as a rule, from being hereditary; yet it would be strange indeed if it were not sometimes found descending from one generation to another when the individual is surrounded, even from the cradle by everything that would be able to develop, if not create it. Such was the case with the lady whose name appears at the head of this notice. She is granddaughter of James Ward, R.A., whose brother was William Ward, an eminent engraver and whose sister married Morland, and whose daughter was the wife of J. Jackson, R.A.. Morever, Henrietta Ward is daughter of Mr. George Raphael Ward, the well-known mezzotinto engraver, and at one time a miniature painter in large practice, whose wife was also a very clever miniature painter, and a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy; their daughter was united in marriage at an early age to Mr. E.M.Ward, R.A. It would, therefore, indeed have been singular has she not shown powerful evidence of the influences which have on all sides surrounded her whole existence. Art was her inheritance, and amidst it she has "lived, and moved, and had her being."[66]

The critics did not allude to this when it came to her work in lower genres.

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[64] Ibid., p. 141
[65] *Saturday Review*, London, 24 May 1862, p. 593
[66] James Dafforne, 'British Artists: Their Style and Character', *Art Journal*, London, 1864, p. 357

In France, even when women were painting domestic genres, a space particularly associated with them, they would still receive dismissive reviews. The critic Paul Mantz when reviewing Morisot's works at the Salon of 1865, he declared:

"Since it is not necessary to have spent along time drawing at the Academy in order to paint a copper pot, a candlestick, and a brush of radishes on the corner of a table, women succeed quite well in this type of domestic painting. Mlle Berthe Morisot brings to this task really a great deal of frankness, with a delicate feelings for colour and light."[67]

The two burning issues for women wishing to pursue careers as painters in the nineteenth century were 1) Education 2) Exhibition

6. 1 Education

Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote:

"The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to make life sweet and agreeable to them – these are the duties of women at all times, and what should be taught them from their infancy"[68]

As already mentioned women received a limited education. But the limits of this education made it inappropriate to the pursuit of a successful career as artists. Women were taught to paint in watercolour – it being thought of as a more appropriately feminine medium – as opposed to oil. Their subject matter in most cases should be informal portraiture of friends, family, pets etc. Mrs E. F. Ellet, in 1859 wrote:

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[67] Paul Mantz, 'Salon de 1865', *Gazette des beaux-arts,* ser.1, 19, July 1865, 5-42

[68] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *L'Émile or A Treatise on Education,* ed. W. H. Payne (New York and London), 1906, p. 263

"A New England divine says, "Woman, like man, wants to make her thought a thing". "All that belongs to the purely natural, lies within her sphere". The kind of painting, thus, in which the *object* is prominent has been most practiced by female artists. Portraits, landscapes, flowers, and pictures of animals are in favour among them. Historical or allegorical subjects they have comparatively neglected; and perhaps, a sufficient reason for this has been that they could not command the years of study necessary for the attainment of eminence in these. More have been engaged in engraving on copper than in any other branch of art, and many have been miniature painters." [69]

In the words of Pierre Borel:

"You women artists can do no harm to true artists, to those who are sincere; they will preserve intact the monopoly on powerful works and the gift of creative power; with you, *troupe légère,* rests the domain in which they would remain inferior, the more delicate arts, the more intimate and gentle notes; to you the watercolour and the pastel, the landscape, the flower and the child."[70]

Women were not encouraged and received no formal instruction in anatomy or the body, things of which few successful painters could afford to be ignorant. It was only after 1870, with the gaining of access to the Academy, and with that the eventual waning of the hierarchical emphasis on the nude, that women were able to compete more effectively. Yet, this was a gradual process, as the life class continued to be seen as an essential preparatory part of the curriculum of art training, and women continued to be excluded from access to the naked figure in life class on moral grounds. Both the Academies in Britain and France had adopted policies of excluding women artists from their training schools, from whose pool the majority of successful artists emerged, at least until the last third of the period, where the increasing diversity of the audience for art, the dealer market and waning of state patronage, altered all that. The policy of exclusion in France was explicit, in England it was implicit and when a certain L. Herford applied at the school of the Academy though

[69] Mrs E. F. Ellet, *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries,* London, 1859, p. 2

submitting her portfolio, no one thought to check, that the L might stand not for Lawrence, but for Laura. When the rules were checked hurriedly, it was found that there were no grounds for exclusion, and she took up her place at the Academy, in July 1860.[71] Special provisions were made and life class study was only permitted in the case of the draped figure, not in the case of the nude. For the next three years there was a modest intake of a few female students, due to the need to provide alternative facilities for their study. The study by women of even the draped (partially undressed) figure was considered not only questionable on moral grounds, but also a disturbance for the male students.

It is no coincidence that the more successful women came from backgrounds which enabled them a privileged access to artistic training. Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899), Berthe Morisot (1841-1895), Henrietta Ward (1832-1924), Louise Jopling (1843-1933), Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), Eva Gonzales (1849-1883), Elizabeth Jane Gardener (1837-1922) shared in common the fact that they came either from families which had an artistic background or that marriage brought them into contact with established or professional artists, from whom knowledge, advice and even encouragement, could be drawn. This was not simply in terms of the matter of instruction; that is receiving quality instruction to a high level of personal supervision and proficiency, but also in respect of a whole set of know how in career making in the arts. These artists through their exceptional backgrounds and more favorable social status were able to make crucial contacts and obtain knowledge of matters

[70] P. Borel, 'L'Exposition des Femmes Peintres', *La Nouvelle Revue*, vol. 57, Paris, March-April 1889, p. 625

[71] Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 1, p. 54; Gerrish Nunn, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 47

ranging from exhibition possibilities to basic understanding of pigment etc. It was through such connections that the artist could begin to be taken seriously.

On the other hand women artists married or related to artists could turn not necessarily to their advantage. There are certain cases such as Georgiana Burne Jones, which take us to the extreme of reducing women to objects, hence maters of class would be inadequate to consider. Her artistic decline originating from her husband's beliefs that women artists "don't exist" and "don't count."[72] He is quoted as having said "I like women when they are good and kind and agreeable objects in the landscape of existence - give life to it and are pleasant to look at and think about."[73]

Morisot's work in contrast, appears to have been well respected by many of the other exhibitors of the impressionist circle and her family connection to Manet[74] facilitated her inclusion within that circle and inclusion to intellectual conversations.[75] Similarly Cassatt, was treated seriously by Degas, and through his contact she was able to participate in at some of the later shows that have come to be known as the impressionist exhibitions.[76] They took their place within a group whose artists tended to adopt a high profile masculine and aggressive stance, insisting on painting

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[72] Quoted in Elree Harris and Shirley R. Scott, *A Gallery of Her Own, An Annotated bibliography of women in Victorian Painting*, NY and London, 1997, p. 5

[73] Ina Taylor, *Victorian Sisters*, Bethesda, 1987, p. 72

[74] Adler and Garb, Op. Cit. No. 37, p. 21; they first met in 1867 at the Louvre. In December 1874, Berthe Morisot married Eugène Manet, Edouard's brother

[75] D. Rouart, ed., *The Correspondence of Berthe Morisot*, London, 1957, translated by B. W. Hubbard, pp.35-6. Edma wrote to her sister Berthe: "Your life must be charming at this moment. To have Bichette in one's head every morning, to talk with Monsieur Degas while watching him draw, to laugh with Manet, to philosophize with Puvis - each of these experiences seems to be enviable. You would feel the same way if you were far off as I am".

[76] Griselda Pollock, *Mary Cassatt*, London, 1980, p. 9. In 1913, Cassatt told her biographer of her response: "It was at the moment that Degas persuaded me to send no more to the Salon and to exhibit with his friends in the group of Impressionists. I accepted with Joy. At last I could work with complete independence without concerning myself with the eventual judgment of a jury. I already knew who were

according to their individual sensation and temperament, their stripping away of cultural conventions and accretions in art. Nevertheless, paradoxically in this alternative space, these women found a place where their work could be seen and judged more favorably than might otherwise have been the case.

This however, could have had its drawbacks too. There are reminiscences of Morisot[77] talking about the way Manet would take it upon himself to make alterations to her work quite uninvited, and Cassatt could barely shrug off the label of pupil of Degas. Morisot has subsequently been, until of late, known more as the sister-in-law of Manet than as an artist in her own right. The hatch stroke brushwork considered bold in a Renoir, could be interpreted by the same critic as delicate in Morisot's case. Or even if a painting done by a female artist was admired for its curious handling of subject and colour, the question of the 'feminine' would still come up. For instance, when Cassatt exhibited the *Five O'Clock Tea,* (see plate 4), at the Fifth Impressionist exhibition of 1880, J.K. Huysmans made the following comment, contrasting Cassatt with Gustave Gaillebotte:

"Here it is still the bourgeoisie...it is a world also of ease, but more elegant...Miss Cassatt has nevertheless a curiosity, a special attraction for a flutter of feminine nerves passes through her painting..."[78]

To come back to the question of education, the possibilities were for the majority very limited. Those who had moral and economic encouragement from their families in

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my masters. I admired Manet, Courbet, and Degas. I hated conventional art. I began to live. (quoted by Segard, 1913, pp. 7-8)

[77] Talking of the painting *The Mother and the Sister of the Artist,* 1870, Morisot asked Manet's opinion. Manet did not restrict himself in giving advice. Morisot in her correspondence reports the following: "He cracked a thousand jokes, laughed like a madman, handed me the palette, took it back; finally by five o'clock in the afternoon we had made the prettiest caricature that was ever seen...And now I am left confounded. My only hope is that I shall be rejected (she intended to submit it to the Salon jury).

pursuing a career seriously, could enter into private studios or seeking the private tuition of established artists. And again the situation tended to be as that with the Academy, or within the orbit of training in accomplishments where limits were imposed. But some teachers such as Charles Chaplin, in France quickly acquired a reputation for offering women serious instruction, which included proper life class training. It is interesting to find many British women going to France to study with the likes of Chaplin. Louise Jopling was one of his students. She wrote:

"He had a large following for his was the only atelier at that time where all the students were women, so that careful mothers could send their daughters there without any fear of complications arising between the sexes."[79]

Alternatively, from 1842, there were design schools which women in the lower strata of the middle class, might attend in order to receive a modicum of beaux-arts training.[80] 1842 was the year in which the Female School of Design was established in London.[81] In France from 1810, there were about 20 schools of design exclusively for women, one of which L'Ecole de Dessin pour Jeune Filles in 1849, saw Rosa Bonheur succeed her father as director.[82] Under her directorship the school enhanced its paltry teaching of basic art skills and started adopting a rigorous programme of training including study from the nude. This, however was the exception to the rule.

Most often the female student needed to improvise an education from the alternatives available. Some enrolled in the increasing array of independent schools, such as in

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Mother thinks this episode funny, but I find it agonizing'. Still the jury accepted the picture. From Rouart, Op. Cit. No. 75, p. 41

[78] Cited in *Mary Cassatt*, Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 76, p. 23

[79] Louise Jopling-Rowe, *Twenty Years of My Life 1867-1887*, London, 1925, p. 3

[80] For more on female private education see Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 59, pp. 58-60

[81] Anthea Callan's *Angel in the Studio: Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement, 1870-1914*, London, 1979, provides documentation of the difficulties the Female School faced, being run by male administrators and teaching female students.

France the Academie Julian (see plate 5) which accepted female students and made provision for study from the nude. In England the Slade School, (see plate 6) which was set up in the 1850s adopted a liberal policy in both its curriculum and in its attitude to female students. Before 1860, private art schools and lessons from established artists were the two main options in at education for women. However in France, the state school of art, the Ecole des Beaux Arts, remained closed to women until 1897.[83] According to Yeldham: "This was over 30 years after women had been admitted to the Royal Academy Schools in England and the same caution was observed with regard to facilities for study. Initially they were excluded not only from life studies but also from painting!"[84]

Most female students improvised an education out of these possibilities, supplementing the gaps by recourse to art manuals, copying in museums, which needed a license and hence wasn't always an option, and increasingly by making co-operative workshop arrangements where the cost of facilities and models could be shared with each other. Both Louise Joplin and Henrietta Ward, set up such arrangements and even gave instruction, but these did not last for very long due to economic constraints. The Society of Female Artists, as a response to the problems women faced in exhibiting, quickly recognized that the problem of exhibition was also a problem of education, and instituted some instructional facilities in its premises.

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[82] Dore Ashton and Denise Brown Hare, *Rosa Bonheur-A Life and A Legend*, London, 1987, p. 191
[83] Charlotte Yeldham, *Women Artists in Nineteenth Century France and England*, New York and London, 1984, vol. 1, p. 58
[84] Ibid.

6. 2 Exhibition

Many of the problems of exhibition followed on from problems of training. Works often betrayed a lack of conventional training and were excluded from major exhibiting forums on qualitative grounds. As works were judged anonymously at the initial jury stage at the Royal Academy or the Salon, it is clear that this was not an effect of a policy of exclusion aimed at women, as in the case of education. In the case of Henrietta Ward[85] however, where entry into the RA show, or in the case of Louise Joplin, where entry into the Salon was consistently achieved the secondary jury stage, (that of the hanging jury which decided on matters of placing works), could enforce their marginal position by allocating them unfavourably positions within the exhibition.

The problem of exhibition at major venues was clearly related to matters of training but also to questions of subject matter. Most women painted in the low genres, drawing upon subjects they had access to – still life (flowers and fruit), portraits, landscape scenes, domestic genre, female literary heroines, moments drawn from Shakespeare and such like. These genres, while they had a growing place in the buying patterns of the middle classes, most disdained for their lack of high intellectual and moral content. Though the Salon would increasingly accommodate a selection of such works toward the end of the century, the small scale deemed appropriate to these genres meant that anything but the most favourable of positions within the gallery might lead to these kind of works, being overlooked or simply swamped. In the case of the British Society of Watercolour Painters, known also as the Old Society of Watercolour Painters, women found themselves excluded from membership, a right

that enabled one to exhibit a number of works. In the case of this society, works do not appear to have been juried anonymously and few women gained access to its exhibitions. In France, even towards the end of the century, in the 1892 exhibition, when Laurent Just, for example, noticed "that some women were venturing outside of their traditional terrain, he became nervous."[86] Garb writes that "he detected that they were beginning to try their hands at *'la grande peinture'*, academic figures, landscape, outdoor painting. This could only lead to ruin, in his view. Predictably, he complained that women's art would be spoiled by becoming a base imitation of men's. The result of this could only be vulgar pastiche."[87]

Laurent Just's fears remained unjustified, as "despite assertions that the range of women's practice was expanding, the actual distribution of genre and medium at the exhibitions did not change."[88] This was all the more punitive, given that watercolour was a medium in which many women received training or some degree as before mentioned. Morever, the aesthetics equated with watercolour, those for instance of delicate atmospheric effects of colour and the genres thought to be appropriate to watercolour, such as landscape, offered the best opportunity for many women to excel in pursuing artistic careers. This exclusionary policy by the society, was indeed part of the attempt to fend off the charges that watercolour, was a medium for amateurs, a feminine and low art medium.

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[85] Gerrish Nunn, Op. Cit. No. 20, chapter 3.
[86] Garb, Op. Cit,. No. 18, , p. 132
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

Jane Mayo Roos, in *Early Impressionism and the French State,* discusses women's position at the Salon and the degree to which they could participate and move from one level to another. She writes "for a woman who tried to work her way through the system, the course was very different and the rigid structuring of the Salon- precluded advancement beyond the entry levels."[89] Furthermore she discusses a table included in the compiled statistics by the administration of fine arts after the Salon of 1869. This analyzes the exhibitors on the basis of gender and shows that from the 12 percent of the women exhibitors, only 7 percent had managed to secure an award and only 2 percent had received enough medals to be declared beyond the competition. 26 percent of male artists and about 7 percent of female artists were exempted from the jury process.[90] Roos writes "because the concepts women and artists were structured as antithetical categories, it was virtually impossible for art by women to be taken seriously by either the administration or the critics."[91] The limited number of women exhibitors awarded with medals, could not give them enough votes to elect a female member of a jury; the natural consequence of the event was the formation of a masculine jury, following the masculine character of the institution of the Salon.[92] As for the Academy of Fine Arts, the fact remains that no woman has ever been elected to a chair.[93]

In the light of this and in the absolute impossibility of following normal studio practices of opening one's studio to the public, as male artists did in certain moments of the art season, women's exhibition opportunities were limited. Hence the

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[89] Jane Mayo Roos, *Early Impressionism and the French State, (1866-1874),* Cambridge, 1996, p. 18
[90] Ibid., pp. 18-9
[91] Ibid., p. 21
[92] Ibid., p. 20
[93] Ibid., p. 19

consistency of developing an audience for one's work or even of maintaining a sense of identity as a professional artist, were imperiled. As has been mentioned, the private dealer market did not readily absorb female artists and private patronage still depended on being noticed in public forms. A good example to demonstrate this is Emily Mary Osborn's *Nameless and Friendless*, of 1857, (see plate 7), the year the Society of Female Artists was founded. Osborn did not have the capital or property to pursue painting as a profession. However she was the protégé of the painter and educator James Mathews Leigh.[94] In this Osborn clearly shows a young orphan offering her picture to an art dealer. Osborn chooses carefully the imagery, in which the sexual position of her characters, along with the vulnerability of women lacking in financial and home security are obvious. An article of *The Art Journal* of 1864 reviewing Osborn's success, gave an excellent description as to the thoughts of the dealer:

> "The man examines it critically and somewhat contemptuously; and one can fancy the result of the inspection will be of this kind – "Afraid I can't find room for it, I'm already overstocked with things of this sort; there's no sale for them."[95]

On the other hand it is interesting to see the orphan - artist approaching the art market directly, in contrast to real life where she had influential supporters to facilitate her economic situation. Osborn's success enabled her to build a new studio.[96]

Often women who were highly skilled artists had to settle for exhibiting at marginal forums, which received little to no press coverage and lacked any prestige. The solution to this exclusion seemed to many to lie in the forming of segregated

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[94] Yeldham, Op. Cit. No. 83, pp. 309-311
[95] *The Art Journal*, James Dafforne, 'British Artists: Their Style and Character – Emily Mary Osborn', London, 1864, pp. 261-3

societies, such as in England in the 1850s the Society of Female artists, and in France much later in the 1880s Union des Femmes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Engraveurs, etc.

Gillett suggests that it was Osborn's success and her "less fortunate sister-artist in the print seller's shop that were present in the mind with those who worked with Mrs Grote to develop the Society of Female Artists, so as to provide needy gentlewomen with encouragement and access to a special market of purchasers - women and men who visit the society's exhibitions and buy pictures there, either out of charitable motivation or because they were more affordable then the high priced works."[97]

The fact remains that the 1871 census listed over one thousand female painters,[98] (as it has been mentioned), whose social conditions although shaped by sexually orientated ideological forces did not exclude them from participating to labour process.

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[96] Gillett, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 135
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., p. 133

II

Friction in Feminist Art History – Class or Gender?

Having discussed the historical background of gender and feminism, I now want to concentrate on the theories and methodologies feminist scholars and art historians have adopted. The discovery of and reevaluation of women's work has been the first project of feminist art historians. However the acknowledgment of a sexually and socially based society has led writers to adopt different methodologies in reevaluating the works, and in examining the role of feminist art history in relation to traditional art history. Problems have been found in the very structure of the discipline of art history, which can be categorized as a man-made construction.

That women's art existed in 19th century France and Britain is not an issue of dispute. What comes into question, through feminist art history, is the formulation of such concepts as 'women's art', who is responsible for a 'feminine' production, and how has this been enveloped through the discipline of art history itself. Feminist texts, Radical or Marxist[99], aim to a single result. As Joan Kelly writes, "the double perspective of social and sexual oppression must inform all feminist theory."[100]

[99] For the purpose of this chapter I will be looking at texts whose authors have identified themselves either as Radical or Marxist.

[100] Quoted in Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'Placing Women's History in History', in *New Left Review*, No. 133, May-June 1982, p.6

1. Ideological Occupation

Writers whether rich or lacking in sophistication have recognized this double oppression, ever since August Bebel, in *Woman Under Socialism,*[101] identified that feminine qualities "are born under the pressure of social conditions, and are further developed by heredity, example and education. A being irrationally brought up, cannot bring up others rationally".[102] Although Bebel's comment cannot be equated to a "sexually based social reality", an idea which Joan Kelly introduced in her essay *The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory*[103], (1976), yet I don't think Bebel conceived the 'social' in terms economic relations of production. It is worth mentioning here that he dismissed the idea that women had a natural calling to raise families; that idea was "twaddle".[104] Furthermore Bebel argued that the domination of women by men was rooted in history and not in biology. For

> "...the faculties of the female sex, a sex that for centuries has been held under, hampered and crippled, far worse than any other subject beings. We have absolutely no measure to-day by which to gauge the fullness of mental powers and faculties that will develop among men and women so soon as they shall be able to unfold amid natural conditions."[105]

These social conditions of women which "have been generally allowed to determine the degree of intellectual culture in a nation"[106] and have been stressed by the institutional or the individual preconditions for "achievement or the lack of it in the arts" as Linda Nochlin writes[107], have been explored further by contemporary feminist art historians in order to provide alternative methods or methodologies, which

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[101] August Bebel, *Woman Under Socialism,* translated by Daniel De Leon, NY, 1971, first edition published 1883.
[102] Ibid., p. 118
[103] Joan Kelly, 'The Doubled Vision of Feminist History: A Postscript to the "Woman and Power" Conference', in *Feminist Studies,* 1976
[104] Bebel, Op. Cit. No. 101, p. 182
[105] Ibid., p. 189
[106] Mrs E.F.Ellet, *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries,* London, 1859, pp. 1-2

conventional art history has overlooked. Whether it be the "rules of the game which demand scrutiny"[108] rather than the "obstacles" that *women* artists faced, or vice versa, according to Griselda Pollock "we seem to be involved in a contest for occupation of an ideologically strategic terrain".[109]

2. Feminist Art History – An approach or method?

Lynda Nead in *Feminism, Art History and Cultural Politics,* sums up the feminist involvement with art history in two stages. The first one is the rediscovery of women artists, their work, and their integration into the traditional discipline. The second one is its critical approach to the discipline itself, and its confronting position to the values and positions within art history and the exposition of the function of culture in the formation of patriarchy.[110] Nead writes, "feminism and its meaning – that of difference - has to resist becoming a term of difference for the traditional discipline"[111] of art history. After all, the idea of feminism as one possibility, offering new alternative methodologies, outlines the "dangers involved in formulating an effective agenda for feminist cultural politics today".[112]

Nead calls for a 'new' feminism, which should not be an approach to art history, rather to "challenge the values and ideas constructed within art history as part of its

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[107] Nochlin, Op. Cit. No. 8, p. 149
[108] Rozsika Parker, review of Germaine Greer's "The Obstacle Race", cited in *Vision and Difference,* Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 23
[109] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 23
[110] Lynda Nead, 'Feminism, Art History and Cultural Politics', in A. L. Rees and Frances Borzello, (eds.), *The New Art History,* London, 1986, p. 123
[111] Ibid., p. 120
[112] Ibid.

programme of cultural politics".[113] Whether feminist art history is an 'approach' to conventional art history, or a progressive method, or method in progress of art history, its importance lies, according to Nead, "in its project to demonstrate the work of visual representation and the social function of culture and cultural values"[114]. In order to achieve this, I think the construction of a 'strategic terrain' to which Pollock refers, is a necessary step and perhaps the most difficult which feminist historians and art historians face, in order to add, change or develop the current patriarchal form of art history.

Griselda Pollock and Roszika Parker occupied themselves with the construction of such terrain, in *Old Mistresses, Women, Art and Ideology*, (1981), where they offered an analysis in order to provide a "new theoretical framework for the understanding of the significance of sexual difference."[115] Although Parker and Pollock stated that to see women's history as "a progressive struggle against the great odds" is a mistake, what they actually followed however was a process which although it tried to connect women, art and ideology, showed the endless constraints that were placed upon women's art. These come from art institutions, the language and codes of art with which they had to work, and the structures and ideologies of art history itself. Thus they provided a view of women's artistic production deeply reflecting the different constraints women faced at different periods and affected predominantly by matters of sex[116], at the expense of class. Whether this framework falls under a feminist, radical or Marxist perspective is another issue, and will be discussed further on.

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[113] Ibid., p. 121
[114] Ibid., p. 124
[115] Parker and Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 37, p. xix
[116] Pollock and Parker although they stated in their introduction that an approach such as "women's history is simply judged against the norms of male history...fails to convey the specific ways that women

3. Feminist, Radical and Marxist positions

For the purpose of this chapter I am borrowing the definition 'Radical' from the New York Radical Feminist's organizing document, the *Politics of Ego: A Manifesto for New York Radical Feminists.* "Radical feminists are those feminists who argue that the most fundamental dynamic of history is men's striving to dominate women. 'Radical' in this context does not mean anti-capitalist, socialist, counter-cultural, etc., but has the specific meaning of this particular set of feminist beliefs or groups of feminists".[117] For instance recent publications such as *Problem Pictures, Women and Men in Victorian Painting,* by Pamela Gerrish Nunn, (1995), states its 'radical' character in the introduction of the book. Gerrish Nunn writes,

"In prioritizing sex as its organizing factor, this examination of Victorian culture does not deny the influence of race and class as oppressive taxonomies in Victorian society, but it does express the author's belief that gender was and is the most fundamental, crucial and pervasive of these discriminatory systems, and that any appraisal of the nineteenth century based on this belief is bound to reveal significant and useful truths. Inthusfar, *Problem Pictures* is a work of radical feminism".[118]

Instead Marxist scholars argue for a materialist analysis of capital, patriarchy, family and sexuality.[119] However Marx's labour theory of value, in which the value of commodity was based on the amount of labour time used in its production and the consumption of symbolic goods can also be measured by the time and rigour

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have made art under different constraints at different periods, affected as much by factors of class as by their sex", however their book gave emphasis on the factor of sex, thus providing a 'radical' work of feminism despite its efforts to unite factors of class and sex. From Parker and Pollock, Ibid., p. xix.

[117] 'Politics of Ego: A Manifesto for New York Radical Feminists', in *Rebirth of Feminism,* ed. Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, NY, 1971, pp. 440-43. Joan Wallach Scott, in *Gender and the Politics of History,* 1988, devides feminists into three groups: 1. Feminists who concentrate on theories of patriarchy 2. Feminists who attempt to link with Marxist theory 3. Feminists who use psychoanalysis to explain the gendered production of subjectivity.

[118] Gerrish Nunn, Op. Cit. No. 28, pp.1-2

[119] Gen Doy's *Women and Visual Culture in Nineteenth Century France, 1800-1852,* London, 1998, is the most recent publication defending a Marxist approach in assessing women's work and women's images in 19th century France and will be discussed further on.

necessary to master them, has been considered by many scholars and feminists to be 'sex-blind',[120] and non-adequate to explain the complex interlockings of women's lives, their structure and their relationship to modes of production. These 'Marxist Feminists' Gen Doy writes, are not Marxists but socialists who confuse the definition of Marxism. How can they be Marxists if they argue that "A Marxist analysis of capitalism... can be termed 'sex-blind?"".[121]

So there has been a war between several strands of feminism, which all follow different ideologies and consequently methodologies. There has even been a war between the same categories of feminism, (it would be impossible to list them all in this essay), arguing for different approaches. I wish to put this question: How are we to know how to look at sexual politics and their construction, and how to assess visual images 'reflecting' or corresponding to social places-spaces and issues of class? To what degree of sophistication we must aspire, before we are able to understand the multitude of complexities, and the interrelations between patriarchy, class, capital and gender? Can one strand of feminism exist without the other, and if so which are the best to follow?

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[120] The following writers have adopted the view that Marxism is sex-blind: Heidi I. Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism; Towards a More Progressive Union', in *Capital and Class*, 1979, vol. 8; Craig Owens 'The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism', in H. Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*, London and Sydney, 1985; Françoise D'Eaubonne, *Histoire de l'art et Lutte des sexes*, 1977; Carol Ehrlich, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Can it be saved', in Lydia Sargent, (ed.), *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism, A Debate of Class and Patriarchy*, London and Sydney, 1986, first edition 1981; in the same book Gloria Joseph's essay 'The Incompatible Menage à Trois: Marxism, Feminism and Racism'; Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, NY, 1988

[121] Doy refers here to Michelle Barrett's *Women's Oppression Today, Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis*. From Gen Doy, *Seeing and Consciousness, Women, Class and Representation*, Oxford, 1995, p. 20

Gender for Joan Wallach Scott, has two parts: "gender is a constructive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power".[122] Gender as an analytic category has emerged in the late 20th century. However its historical and not biological character has been underlined in key texts such as '*Placing Women's History in History*", written by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, (1982). In this, "The adoption of gender as a fundamental category of historical analysis historically and not biological determined"[123] is one among the many theoretical implications of placing women's history in history", for arguing that "...adding women to the received account - especially in the form of a few more neglected worthies or a lot more descriptive social history does not necessarily change anything substantive in our manner of writing history."[124] Fox-Genovese writes "Make no mistake, the inclusion of women within conventional narratives cannot be dismissed lightly...But adding women to history is not the same as adding women's history".[125]

[122] Wallach Scott, Op. Cit. No. 117, p. 42

[123] Fox-Genovese, Op. Cit. No. 100, p. 6. The rest of the theoretical implications are 1. Forms of male dominance vary and cannot be assimilated under the general rubric of patriarchy. 2. To substitute women's history for mainstream history leaves us prisoners of the status as 'other' to which mainstream history has assigned us. 3. Capitalism and the bourgeois revolutions have tended to generalize gender difference as the custodian of displaced notions of hierarchy and dependence, and thus practically to repudiate their theoretical promises of equality for all. 4. Expansion of capitalism and modern representative government had tempted to blind men of different classes with the double promised of individualism in the public sphere and male dominance in the home. 5. All modern languages of social theory are impregnated with the ideological premises of this gender system. 6. Most modern institutions have systematically extended gender difference as a fundamental part of social order. 7. Official theories of the family and sexual division of labour must be understood as the product of class and gender struggle. 8. Our dominant social theories have provided us with no adequate way to assess the indispensable contributions of women to collective life in society, including class and racial dominance on the one side and the resistance of the oppressed on the other. pp. 6-7

[124] Ibid., p. 6

[125] Ibid.

4. Historical Exclusion of women from knowledge – They (men) are to blame!

Dale Spencer in *Mens Studies Modified,* argues that women have been left out of history due to accepted knowledge and its historical exclusion of women from it. Of course men are the ones to blame. Spencer writes:

"They (men) have created men's studies (the academic curriculum), for, by not acknowledging that they are presenting only the explanations of men, they have passed off this knowledge as human knowledge. Women have been excluded as the producers of knowledge and as the subjects of knowledge, for men have often made their own sex, representative of humanity... Fundamental to knowledge is the premise that women have been 'left out' of codified knowledge"[126].

Spencer emphasizes that this is not done by individual men, rather it is a structural problem which it has been built into the production of knowledge. "Because it has been primarily men who have determined the parameters, who have decided what would be problematic, significant, logical, reasonable, not only women have been excluded from the process *but the process itself can reinforce the 'authority' of men and the 'deficiency' of women"*[127]. Spencer's argument provides a key text in explaining why there have been no great women writers, historians etc.; an argument which has been picked up by later scholars such as Pollock, Nochlin, Nead, Broude, Garrard and others.

The danger with Spencer's argument is that it tends to homogenize women as a whole, and put them into the same category – that of women – women's history – thus obscuring the complexities and contradictions within specific historical epochs, and

[126] Spencer, Op. Cit. No. 6, pp. 1-2

changing roles of women in society. Also it looks at the relationship between men and women, excluding the direct relationship of women to labour and power, (which according to Spencer and other Marxists such as Hartmann, is controlled by men), thus providing a one-dimensional aspect which is incomplete and must be avoided in assessing any cultural products.

What Spencer also does, is to homogenize feminists as a whole, believing that they all work on the same ideological terrain, fighting for the same cause. Spencer writes:

"Rather than separate the personal and political from the production of knowledge, feminists are attempting to bring together and in this synthesis they are striving to construct more accurate, adequate, and comprehensive explanations than those which emerged under the reign of objectivity, and male supremacy. Instead of trying to be 'detached, feminists are blatantly 'involved' in the knowledge which they are producing and unlike the traditional model in which the researcher is presumed to be 'outside' the subject matter being researched, feminist contributions frequently testify to the way in which women are changed by the research process. This is a concrete example of the way women are trying to bring politics and knowledge together"[128].

As for the accomplishment of the task of how they (feminists) try to bring politics and knowledge together, Spencer leaves the question hanging. For

"There is still an ongoing debate within feminism about the criteria of credibility and there are signs of some discomfort at being required to accept the current position...the world is not monodimensional (as men would have it), it is perhaps an indication that we are products of our own culture when we become uneasy with our 'multiple' explanations".[129]

The tendency of feminist scholars to talk about feminism as a homogenous body of theory, has been picked up by the Marxist art historian, Gen Doy in *Seeing and Consciousness, Women, Class and Representation*, (1995). In this, Doy questions the

[127] Ibid., p. 2
[128] Ibid., p. 7
[129] Ibid., p. 8

notion that all those studying women in cultural production are feminists of one sort or another, as she admits that she has done it herself at times.[130] Doy writes, "In the case of women's history, the response of most non-feminist historians has been acknowledgment and then separation or dismissal".[131] Doy's approach is based on the Marxist belief that 'gender struggle is not the basis for understanding history' and will be discussed in detail further on.

The issue of women having being left out of official history or that official history has nothing to do with women's history, was taken further by R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz and S. Stuart. These writers in *Becoming Visible* (1987) identified two main trends, which have shaped women's history. The first is division of labour, from which power tends to go to men, purely because they have the centralized authority.

5. Division of labour

The literature on the division of labour is endless and comes mainly from socialist texts. These scrutinize Marx and his successors for not giving sufficient explanation to the emancipation of women, due to its central analysis, which focuses on the relationship of women to the economic system, rather that of women to men. As Hartmann writes "They give no clue about why *women* are subordinate to *men* inside and outside the family and why it is not the other way around".[132] It is the analysis of patriarchy and capitalism that writers such as the latter, Fox-Genovese and others have found as the responsible elements for making Marxism 'sex-blind'. For Engels,

[130] Doy, 1995, Op. Cit. No. 121, p. 20
[131] Ibid., p. 22

women's emancipation in the labour force was the key to their emancipation.[133] However, according to Hartmann, Engels argued that in "bourgeois families, women had to serve their masters, be monogamous, and produce heirs to inherit property.[134]

Hartmann when examining the political implications of Marxist approaches lists convincingly two crucial remarks which have been adopted and carried further along by feminist art historians like Pollock. Hartmann states that according to the first Marxist approach,

"women's liberation requires first, that women become wage workers like men, and second, that they join with men in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. Capital and private property, the early Marxists argued, are the cause of women's particular oppression just as capital is the cause of the exploitation of workers in general. **Though aware of the deplorable situation of women in their time the early Marxists failed to focus on the *differences* between men's and women's experiences under capitalism.**"[135]

I'm thinking here of Pollock's approach when attacking T.J.Clark, in discussing Edouard Manet's *A Bar a La Folies-Bergère* (1881-2) (see plate 8) on the subject of women's experience being different to that of men.[136] Pollock's argument is that a woman artist could not have painted such a picture, purely because of her sex which could prevent her from entering those spaces of the public sphere, such as café-concerts, etc., and not because of her class. Although the argument is strong in emphasizing the different experiences of women to men under capitalism, it however

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[132] Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 8

[133] Frederick Engels, *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, edited with an introduction by Eleanor Burke Leacock, New York, 1972

[134] Quoted in Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 3. Hartmann sums up the Marxist analysis of the woman question in three forms: 1. Capitalism saw women drawn into the wage labour theory, therefore destroying sexual division of labour. 2. We are all workers in the everyday life system in capitalism (contemporary view). 3. Marxist-feminists have focused on housework and its relation to capital, some arguing that homework produces surplus value and that house workers work directly for capitalists. From the same article, p. 2.

fails to show that it was the very capital and private property that enabled women at all to become painters who exhibited and sold, breaking away from the traditional norms of domesticity.

The necessity for this is well expressed in *The Art Journal* of 1861, in an article referring to the Female School of design and its importance in educating girls from the middle classes in order to gain employment. According to this:

"It has been founded expressly for the purpose we have been considering, its object being twofold - partly to enable young women of the middle class to obtain an honourable and profitable employment, and partly to improve ornamental design manufactures, by cultivating the taste of the designer... since the year 1852, no fewer than six hundred and ninety have entered the school... while members have been able to support themselves... at the present moment its students number one hundred and eighteen; of these twenty are studying with a view of ultimately maintaining themselves..."[137]

Holcombe in *Victorian Ladies at Work*, writes "there was a significant and always increasing number and proportion of middle-class women in the country's labour force".[138] Gillett writing on the reviews of works of female painters discusses publications such as the *Art Journal*, which dealt with cultural matters and their reflection of female creative practice. She claims that many women were earning income through their work in art, as were their counterparts in the fields of journalism and literature.[139] Miss Harriet Martineau, the radical Feminist whose words inspired Jessie Boucherett to found the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women,[140]

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[135] Ibid., pp.3-4
[136] Pollock's approach is discussed in full detail in chapter three.
[137] 'WOMAN, AND ART. THE FEMALE SCHOOL OF DESIGN', *The Art Journal*, London, 1861, p. 108
[138] Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work*, USA, 1973, p. 12
[139] Gillett, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 138
[140] Holcombe, Op. Cit. No. 138, p. 10

pointed out that in 1851, of six million women in Britain over the age of twenty, more than two millions were independent and self supporting like men. She concluded:

"The supposition was ...false and ought to be practically admitted to be false; - that every woman is supported (as the law supposes her to be represented) by her father, her brother, or her husband... A social organization framed for a community of which half stayed at home, while the other half went out to work, cannot answer the purposes of a society, of which a quarter remains at home while three quarters go out to work."[141]

In France, looking at the Impressionist circle, we see that Cassatt, although coming from a haut-bourgeois background, made an enormous success out of the sale of her work, to the extent of enriching her economic capital by investing in property. As for Morisot, although not dependent on the sale of her work for survival, as has often been implied[142], compared to Monet, Renoir and Sisley, her 1875 correspondence suggests the opposite. Charles F. Stuckey and William P. Scott, in *Berthe Morisot, Impressionist,* suggest that her determination to sell could have been caused by her husband's search for work in Constantinople, Beirut, Grenoble and London.[143]

Furthermore I would like to suggest that Morisot's commitment to the avant-garde could hardly being taken as an identification of her art with the management of the household; a commitment which did not change when she married Eugene Manet.[144] In March 1875 along with Monet, Renoir and Sisley, she organized a public auction of recent works which was to cause a scandal. The revolutionary techniques of the Impressionists were not well received; Renoir later recalled "one gentleman called Berthe Morisot a gourgandine (street walker). Pissarro punched him in the face, thus

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[141] Female Industry, *Edinburgh Review,* CIX, April, 1859, pp. 297-8, 335
[142] Charles F. Stuckey and William P. Scott, *Berthe Morisot, Impressionist,* London, 1987, p. 64
[143] Rouart, 1950, 81-90; 1957, 84-94; 1896, 97-107; cited in Stuckey and Scott, p. 64
[144] Stuckey and Scott, Op. Cit. No. 142, p. 63

police had to be called."[145] The critics were similar in their opinions. Pierre Wolff wrote for Le Figaro: "Five or six lunatics – one of them a woman – make up a group of poor wretches who have succumbed to the madness of ambition, and dared to put on an exhibition of their work".[146] Paul Durand-Ruel, the "epitome of the dynamic entrepreneur who twinned financial acumen with devotion to "innovative" trends"[147] of Impressionism handled Cassatt's work with equal care as the rest of the Impressionists. In the 1875 auction, the dealer Hoscede bought Morisot's work *Interior*, which fetched the higher price,[148] although the bids for the pictures were low, compared to her male colleagues. The rest of her buyers were Henry Rouart, her brother in law Gustave Manet, and her cousin Gabriel Thomas[149]. I want to suggest that this involvement Morisot and Cassatt had in the art market and their obvious understanding of art not just as an aesthetic process but also as an economic one, puts them on an equal level to their male associates.

Furthermore, I suggest that it is this understanding of female exhibitors of the art that must be looked at in order to provide answers as to their class and their chosen iconography executed to secure a specific public of perspective buyers. For without this public the woman's role as an economic contributor would not exist. It is also their changing role in the system of art marketing that must be looked at. Nicholas Green writes "it is a tale of big capital investment, the marketing of futures, complex sale and resale techniques between dealers and speculative collectors, the

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[145] Jean Renoir, *Renoir, My Father*, trans. Randolph and Dorothy Weaver, Canada, 1962, p. 158
[146] Ibid., , p. 158
[147] Nicholas Green, Circuits of Production, Circuits of Consumption: The case of Mid-Nineteenth-Century French Art Dealing, *Art Journal*, Spring 1989, London, p. 29
[148] The picture is called Interior or Young Woman with a Mirror, and was sold for 480 francs; Merete Bodelsen, Early Impressionist Sales 1874-94, in the light of some unpublished 'procès-verbaux', *The Burlington Magazine*, June 1968, vol. CX, p. 335

proliferation of supportive art-historical publicity".[150] This system included women more than ever before. In France the decline of the Academy helped women artists to get involved more effectively in the new artist-dealer system.

Green presents the artist as the salaried employee against the dealer appearing as entrepreneurial capitalist, who despite the financial vulnerability of his position, (which may not be secure by taking the chance of investing) remains the hero; On top of that the artist can be at the mercy of market forces beyond his control.[151] For Green it this oscillation that can be found in the writings of John Rewald, "between the positive characterization of certain innovative dealers and the largely negative relation of the avant-garde to financial success that has been the key site for the reproduction of the popular notion of the artist as a social misfit or outsider, the bohemian Van Gogh oppressed by and opposed to commercial (bourgeois) society."[152] It has to be said that women's different social experiences would not allow them to participate in this promotional game of the artist being the outsider, as it would not comply with their 'lady' status. Although artist's work-production-financial outcome cannot be categorized as wage labour, however both women and men artists worked for a living. As Paula Gillett writes,

"The prominence ...as it related to female art practice reflected a widespread awareness among well-informed observers - including readers of the *Art Journal* and other publications dealing with cultural matters - that **many women were earning income through their work in art, as were their counterparts in the field of journalism and literature.** Proponents of legislation to protect married women's earnings heightened this awareness in their 1856 petition, calling Parliament's attention to the fact that modern civilization, in extending the sphere of occupations for women, had "in some measure broken down their pecuniary dependence upon

[149] Ibid., p. 335-6
[150] Green, Op. Cit. No. 147, p. 29
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid.

men"; lower-class women were widely employed in factory work and other occupations, while women of the "middle and upper ranks" of society were now entering the fields of literature and art."[153]

What I want to suggest here, is a concurrent and cohabiting nature between class and sex. Rather than say it was her class that made a woman unsuccessful in gaining access to these places and therefore could not produce the 'masterpieces' male artists produced, at the same time we have to admit that it was her class, that of the bourgeois woman in most cases, that gave her the opportunity for attributing to women's emancipation in general, by making her productive. This includes education, running a studio, exhibition possibilities, etc.

However for Fox-Genovese
"it became customary to speak of market activity as productive. But the human participants in the process no doubt saw it differently. Specifically, the labour of women –although not only of women - was consistently classified as non-productive if it did not command a wage: the grinding expenditure of human energy and the usefulness has nothing to do with the issue"[154]

Here Fox-Genovese refers to housework, which should be paid but never was. Mariarosa Dalla Costa's strong analysis in *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, supports the proposition that women should demand wages for housework.[155] This was something that was discussed nearly one hundred years before, when Barbara Leigh Smith, the contemporary painter and feminist, wrote:

"Women who act as house-keepers, nurses, and instructors of their children, often do as much for the support of the household as their husbands; and it is very unfair for men to speak of supporting a wife and children when such is the case. When a woman gives up a profitable employment to be governess to her own family, she earns her right to live."[156]

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[153] Gillett, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 138 with reference to Holcombe, "Victorian Wives", 10.
[154] Fox-Genovese, Op. Cit. No. 100, pp. 25-6
[155] Quoted in Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 5 . Hartmann refers to Mariarosa Dalla Costa's essay 'Women and the Subversion of the Community', in *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, Bristol, England, 1973.
[156] Barbara Leigh Smith, 'Women and Work', in *The Exploited*, by Marie Mulvey Roberts and Tamae Mizuta, (eds.), with an introduction by Marie Mulvey Roberts, London, 1993, p. 9

Yet for Fox-Genovese, women's labour at home started from the need of women to find their social identity in the family, "the principal arena of activity" purely thanks to the "inhospitability of the workplace, the constraints of law, and the informally licensed violence against women".[157] However I think it is fruitless to excuse the idea of domesticity, which has been discussed in chapter one, as purely a matter of the inevitable course of fortune, thanks to men and the total subordination of women to them, for portraying a fatalistic idea which homogenizes all women – poor them (women), thanks to men women could never make it! So how did women achieve the vote, and became citizens with rights to property, divorce, education and professional success? It is true however, that due to the construction of man-made knowledge, a large percentage of women wanted a home more than anything else, a home in which they felt secure financially and socially, as their social respect would rise due to their marital status. Once they married the division of labour would appear as the norm. Even successful women artists such as Margaret Gillies (1803-87), portrait and figure painter, Martha (1824-85) and Annie Mutrie (1826-93), flower and fruit painters, and Emily Mary Osborn, (1834-after 1909), figure and landscape painter, would find that marriage would automatically put them in the position of the subordinate, as their earnings would become their husbands' properties. Paula Gillett refers to Joanna Boyce (1831-61), figure and landscape painter, as an example of a women artist who agonized over her agreement to a proposal by the artist Henry Tanworth Wells "in a correspondence that discussed marriage with such words as "slavery", "dependence", and "degraded""[158]

[157] Fox-Genevese, Op. Cit. No. 100, p. 16

Especially for the "womanly domesticated woman", a term defined to portray an ideal married woman[159], B.L.Hutchins, wrote in 1913:

"But what is to be the married women's ideal? Self-dependence for her is at present usually difficult, if not impossible. It is only in the case of exceptional and picked women that the strain of carrying on an occupation closely enough to produce an adequate income can be combined with home and children. In the face of facts that are all round us, the greater capacity of men for producing exchange-values; the greater efficiency of women in the realm of use-value; and the success of many homes and households thus run upon the principle of "division of labour", it appears extremely unlikely that any large proportion of married women will aim at earning their own living, as the norm or standard of their lives. We ought, indeed, to go further and recognize that **for the womanly domesticated woman to be forced by economic stress into the field of competitive production or service is really a waste, even a cruelty**"[160].

To argue for an Engels type of argument, that is that familial ideology arose as part of the class practice of the bourgeoisie who were able to impose this on the working class (to remind the reader that for Engels within the family the woman was the proletariat and the man was the bourgeois), and that somehow the bourgeoisie were able to impose this on the working class, is as argument that many writers have followed, such as Michelle Barrett in *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis* (1980). This argument is not clear to me, and far too generalized. Contradictory examples have always existed within various forms of political systems, and have always been formed by both matters of class and gender, for seeing one without the other, manages only to promote a theory that rests on a single variable of physical difference. For Wallace Scott such theory "...assumes a consistent or inherent meaning for the human body – outside social or cultural

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[158] Gillett, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 162. Also see Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 59, p. 36

[159] Hutchins' own words are the following: "...nearest to an ideal state, the wife's position as a creator of use-values, and not a parasite, being fully defined". From B. L. Hutchins, 'Conflicting Ideas: Two Sides of the Woman's Question', London, 1913, in Mulvey Roberts and Mizuta, Op. Cit., p. 64

[160] Ibid., pp. 63-64

construction - and thus the ahistoricity of gender itself."[161]

For Engels the explanation for the origins of and the changes in gender systems is found outside the sexual division of labour. For

"The supremacy of the man in marriage is the simple consequense of his economic supremacy, and with the abolition of the latter will disappear of itself"... "the only answer that can be given is that it must advance as society changes, even as it has done in the past".[162]

This is how Engels concluded his *Origins of the Family*. Does one follow Engel's conclusion and therefore follow a method where the amount of labour work equals the hours put into its production (I can't see how an analogy would work when assessing visual-cultural images), or does one follow Catherine McKinnon's formulation of sexuality being the "primary process of the subjection of women"? McKinnon writes,

"Sexuality is to feminism what work is to marxism: that which is most one's own, yet most taken away... Sexual objectification is the primary process of the subjection of women. It unties act with world, construction with expression, perception with enforcement, myth with reality. Man fucks woman; subject verb object".[163]

For Kelly, economic and gender systems interact to produce social and historical experiences; neither system was casual, but both "operate simultaneously to reproduce the socioeconomic and male dominant structures of ...[a] particular social order".[164]

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[161] Wallace Scott, Op. Cit. No. 117, pp. 34-5. For an argument against the use of gender to emphasize the social aspect of sexual difference, see Moira Gatens, 'A Critique of the Sex/Gender Dinstiction', in J. Allen and P. Patton, eds. *Beyond Marxism?*, 1985

[162] Engels, Op. Cit. No. 133, pp. 144-5

[163] Catherine McKinnon, 'Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory', *Signs*, Spring 1982, Chicago, 7:515, 541

[164] Joan Kelly, 'The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory', in *Women, History and Theory*, Chicago, 1984, p. 61

This order as we have seen is carrying on and reproducing a circle which art historians come to deal with when offering an iconographical analysis of female images. The housework has always been unpaid; the need of women to identify themselves in the family as their principal space, has been a consistent characteristic of women even nowadays. In the case of many female artists whose works were identified as those of their husbands or fathers, and who worked for them either as assistants or as models, then it is not only housework, which has not been accounted, but also manual-artistic labour. A labour that although they would not have been paid for, yet would keep them in the position of the subordinate – woman subordinated by man, woman depends on man. Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall (1829-62), the Pre-Raphaelite heroine and later wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, serves as a good example in demonstrating the above. Jan Marsh in *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood,* discusses in detail the relationship of Lizzie to Rossetti and her contribution to his work which was at times not acknowledged. This was not because of Gabriel, who according to Marsh, "pursued Lizzie's professional advancement with as much energy as his own"[165], but rather the publisher's refusal to use Lizzie's illustrations. However Marsh writes that in view of Rossetti's admiration for her work, "he silently incorporated part of her drawing into his, so that she should at least see her work in print!"[166] Marsh refers to Siddall's *St Cecilia* (for 'The Palace of Art') and Gabriel's own design for *St Cecilia,* as published by Edward Moxon. Whether women artists were paid for this kind of work is doubtful.

For similar cases women have been considered unproductive, remained unpaid, thus

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[165] Jan Marsh, *Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood,* London, 1985, p.72
[166] Ibid.

becoming obscured in the market system. It is due to such diverse factors that women artists such as Morisot and Cassatt, made their home or rather were being made to find their identity in the private space, that of a family house. Families are the cores in which gender systems have been reproduced and transformed; gender systems have been defined as forms of patriarchy.[167]

If it was difficult in the case of Siddal, in distinguishing the similarities in style and composition between her own work and Rossetti's, then artists such Artemisia Gentileschi can prove another art historical tool i.e. that feminists have drawn from the differences in living experiences between male and female artists. Artemisia Gentileschi's work (c.1597- after 1651), has been associated with her father's. Garrard in 'Artemisia and Susanna'[168], establishes as Artemisia's, *Susanna and the Elders*, (1610), (see plate 9) (one which though inscribed as Artemisia's has been considered by several scholars to be the work of her father's Orazio), by distinguishing its uniquely sympathetic treatment of its subject. It is presented, unusually, from the view-point of the female protagonist – as distinct from the way in which the subject was traditionally handled during the Renaissance and Baroque periods by male artists, who emphasized not Suzanna's plight and victimization but rather the elder's anticipated pleasures (Artemisia was herself a victim of rape).[169] This art historical tool Garrad draws from "the definite assignment of sex roles in history" which "has created fundamental differences that cannot help but have been

[167] For Patriarchy see *Papers on Patriarchy: Conference*, London, 1976;Sheila Rowbotham, Sally Alexander, and Barbara Taylor in Raphael Samuel, ed., *People's History and Socialist Theory*, London, 1981, pp. 363-73
[168] Mary D. Garrard, 'Artemisia and Susanna' in *Feminism and Art History, Questioning the Litany*, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrad, 1982, NY, pp. 148-167
[169] Ibid., p. 7

carried over into the creative process..."[170]

It all leads to the occupation of different spaces, public-private, however never monolithic and constantly changing. When Morisot's work is still associated by scholars with the domestic, I have to agree that it is mainly because of her sex, without claiming that sex predates class and capitalism. What I do have to claim though, is that class and sex together have played equal parts in building, developing, and transforming female creativity – production – success. Morisot's work was considered of a higher status by her male colleagues, than that of Elizabeth Eleanor Siddall, in Britain, whose name is known more in connection to her modeling to Rossetti than to her own work (see plates 10 and 11). Morisot's class status was higher than that of Siddall, whose humble background was well known.[171] It is interesting to note that Siddall's work, highly influenced by her immediate circle of the Pre-Raphaelites, included subjects comprising of sexuality and class, compared to the respectable, "safe" subjects of Berthe Morisot . Cherry writes on Siddall's *Pippa Passes*, of 1854, (see plate 12),

"Here the pure and the fallen are not differentiated across class, but within class; purity and respectability are the attributes of the silk-winder journeying round the city on her annual holiday. This representation was inflected by the divergent class appropriations of respectability the mid-century. Patterns of respectability became a focal point in the identity of the upper strata of the working class to which Elizabeth Siddall belonged"[172]

A lower class background could make things difficult for a woman artist. Gillett writes that "even the unconventional Barbara Bodichon had felt constrained to keep

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[170] Ibid.

[171] Lizzie was discovered in a bonnet shop possibly by Walter Deverell, a fellow pupil of Gabriel Rossetti, is fully discussed in Marsh, Op. Cit. No. 164, chapter 1. She was born in London, in 1829 and was the daughter of a cutler and small businessman from Sheficld. For more see also, Jan Mash and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists*, Manchester City Art Galleries, 1998

Elizabeth's modeling career from becoming known"[173]. The social climate condemned women who posed nude. Furthermore, coming back to Morisot, I would suggest that her art although associated with that of Manet, was never really threatened by his status. Instead her work was constantly exhibited, as Morisot became an established artist. However exceptions such as the *Mother and the Sister of the Artist,* 1869-70, (see plate 13) do prove, according to Stuckey and Scott, "Manet's unsolicited collaborator's role which is clearly visible."[174]

Equally Mary Cassatt's and Louise Jopling's[175] works became acceptable fairly easily by the public. It is interesting to see Cassat's introspections to the wealthy female bourgeoisie getting or being sophisticated by reading – a class to which she belonged. Works such as the *Reading "Le Figaro", Reading in the Garden, Lydia Reading, Under the Lamp, Katherine Cassatt Reading to her Grandchildren, Woman Reading,* by Cassatt portray representations of obvious social status and interest in information and education, (see plates 14,15,16,17,18,19). Comparatively, I suggest we look at the photograph of her taken by Theodate Pope , in c. 1905. I think the lived positionality – that of wealthy comfortable lady portrayed – depicted both in the presentation of her portraits of women and the representation of herself, proves the point, (see plate 20). I believe it is not a question of these images "reflecting" (thus portraying a Marxist ideology) or corresponding to social places defined by their gender, rather is

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[172] Cherry, Op. Cit. No. 59, p. 161

[173] Gillett, Op. Cit. No. 20, p. 184

[174] Morisot's work is further discussed in chapter 3. Regarding *The Mother and the Sister of the Artist,* Manet took the liberty of changing the design all together; see chapter 1. Stuckey and Scott write that when the painting was exhibited in the Salon, the art critics and journalists paid it no heed in their reviews. This for them suggests that they were aware of Manet's contribution to Morisot's painting, and thus avoided a sensitive issue. From Stuckey and Scott, Op. Cit. No. 141, p. 36

[175] Louise Jopling studied art in Paris, under Charles Chaplin; she became a central figure in social and artistic circles, supporting self and family from her own work from 1871 when her husband left her. For more see Jopling, Op. Cit. No. 79

about showing the space in society, which equals to class and not to gender (see plates). Whether is executed indoors and not outdoors does not mean anything. Similar examples of male depictions engaged in intellectual activity are numerous. We find portrayals of men from prosperous surroundings in Gustave Caillebote's art, (1848-1894) with paintings such as *Portrait of Eugène Daufresne Reading,* 1878, and *Interior, or Interior, woman reading,* 1880, (see plate 21). In the latter a very interesting interplay takes place, between a female figure depicted in a bourgeois interior, reading a paper, with her male companion at the background, lying on a couch, reading a paper. Both figures are shown in profile. What we have here is an example of a domestic space, categorized as a feminine space, lived by both a man and a woman. They share similar experiences in the same surrounding. What unites the different sexual experiences is the space they both occupy and live in. And this is a prosperous space. The issue lies I believe, not so much on the fact that women occupied different spheres to those of men, rather the construction of their identities in them, their role in working and producing from these identifies, and how much their sex and class facilitated or disabled their production and contribution in the market activity.

For Fox-Genovese,

> "The concept of separate spheres has deep roots in the gender differentiation at the core of all world views and social formations. Bourgeois society cannot, in this respect, be credited with inventing separate spheres, but it can be credited with promoting and generalizing the ideology of separate spheres as the custodian of displaced notions of hierarchy."[176]

Hartmann believes that "Marxists, were aware of the hardships women's labour force participation meant for women and families, which resulted in women having two

[176] Fox-Genovese, Op. Cit. No. 99, p. 24

jobs, housework and wage work."[177] The relationship of powers between the sexes – "the relation of the officially power less (female) to the success of the powerful (male)"[178] - and its significance in shaping women's history-sexual politics, has been examined by many scholars, Marxist or non. The role of patriarchy (indoors and outdoors) which rests in men's control over women's labour power, has been thoroughly discussed by Hartmann, in *The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a more progressive union,* (1979).[179] Hartmann when analyzing patriarchy and capitalism, defines patriarchy "as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women."[180] Although Hartmann dismisses both Marxism (for being 'sex-blind'), and Feminism, for being blind to history and insufficiently materialist, however she concludes that the social organization under which the people live are "determined by the economic production and the production of people in the sex/gender sphere."[181]

6. Problems in Bourgeois Ideology – A Marxist approach

The second historical trend which shaped women's history, identified by Bridenthal, Koonz and Stuart[182], is "the attempt to justify women's loss of power and authority by simplifying gender difference into a system of appositions labeled male and female.

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[177] Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120
[178] Fox-Genovese, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 28
[179] Hartmann follows here Kate Milllett's definition: "our society ...is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political offices, finances – in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands"; from Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics,* NY, 1971, p. 25
[180] Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 11
[181] Ibid., p. 11
[182] R. Bridenthal, C. Koonz, S. Stuard, eds., *Becoming Visible – Women in European History,* USA, second edition, 1987, p. 2

'Feminine' qualities are counterposed to 'masculine': women are labeled passive, men active; women are defined as emotional, men described as intellectual; women are assumed to be 'naturally' nurturant, men 'naturally' ambitious".[183] (The notion of women as beings 'naturally' inferior has been discussed in chapter I).

Again these writers tend to homogenize women treating them as an undifferentiated whole. This is confirmed when they discuss women's role in the 19th century. They write, "...the message was clear. The bourgeois lady was too pure for sexual pleasure and too inferior for emancipation. Meanwhile, poverty drove thousands of poor women into brothels that made a mockery of bourgeois men's pious attempts to keep womanhood on the proverbial pedestal".[184] Although, it is true that the outcome of the industrial revolution with its differentiated social structures was for women a reverse step indeed a falling toward the bottom, as new divisions of labour continued to widen the gender gap, however what I want to question here, is whether this can apply to any women of the period? Can this apply to women artists?

Doy in her most recent publication, attempts to show to what extent we can say that representations of women by male and female artists are explicable in terms of their relation to bourgeois ideology, and states that the only possible way to discuss "different sorts of women – different in terms of class, different in terms of their historical situation, different in all kinds of ways",[185] is achieved through Marxism which "does not and should not ignore gender issues by attending to the economic."[186]

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[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid., p. 6
[185] Doy, 1995, Op. Cit. No. 121, p. 22
[186] Doy, 1998, Op. Cit. No. 119, p. 5

For the actual problems "were less to do with traditional Marxist thought than with later deformations of earlier methods by centrists or revisionists who had very little indeed to do with Marxism. As an example of 'traditional' Marxist thought we could hardly criticize Trotsky's words of 1924: "In order to change the conditions of life, we must learn to see them through the eyes of women."[187]

Doy, in order to defend her Marxist position, goes into an analysis of Marxist perspective, and argues that Marx and Engel's methods were not only materialist but also dialectical, thus world and human history are seen as a process in motion. Therefore "for the dialectician, a thing can contain opposing elements at the same time: it can be progressive and reactionary, or dead or alive at the same time...these do not occur in isolation from human activity and intervention."[188] She argues for a Marxist approach in need of development and refinement with advances in knowledge that earlier Marxist scholars did not have. Thus she argues convincingly for the complexities, contradictions in societies · · images both contradictory and dialectical. Hence the creative process of art is not only complex but never a homogenous production reflecting images (in the specific case in early nineteenth century France) that comply within the general rules of the patriarchal modes of society; that is the woman being viewed according to these terms, becomes reduced to signals of either the mother or the spectacle.[189]

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[187] Doy, 1995, Op. Cit. No. 121, p. 21
[188] Doy, 1998, Op. Cit. No. 119, p. 9
[189] Here Doy refers to Pollock's work, whose views of these paintings "represent one thing or the other – artist or woman- active conscious subject representing *himself* or the woman artist presenting *herself* as beautiful spectacle mother. The 'feminine' (pleasurable sight) cannot coexist with the 'masculine' self-absorbed artistic creator". From Doy, 1998, p. 10

Therefore Doy embarks on deconstructing key feminist and social texts such as T.J.Clark's *The Spectacle of Nature, Landscape and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth Century France* (1990) and Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference*. She dismisses Clark for making us believe that Marxism is economistic, reductionist and methodologically stultified. She writes, "thus we are led to believe that a Marxist art historian is one who concentrates solely on the proletariat, strikes and the economic, and thus cannot genuinely conceptualize the complex interrelations between the economic, the cultural and the individual."[190] This is an argument that Hartmann believes, as she wrote:

" The focus of marxist analysis has been class relations; the object of marxist analysis has been understanding the laws of motion of capitalist societies. While we believe marxist methodology *can* be used to formulate feminist strategy, these marxist feminist approaches...clearly do not do so; their marxism clearly dominates their feminism".[191]

Doy is a classic example of the above argument - her being a Marxist defends the view that class predates sex. It is this belief that makes Doy challenge Pollock due to her dismissal of Marxism in her influential body of work,[192] and which offers an alternative reading of bourgeois femininity.

Doy considers Pollock's readings on Mme. E. Viggée-Lebrun's *Self Portrait* of 1783 and the same artist's self portraits with her daughter. Pollock gives a different reading to that of Doy, each fighting for gender over class and visa versa. Pollock argues that the bourgeois revolution of 1789 was a defeat for women, and that thereafter

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[190] Ibid., p. 4
[191] Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 7
[192] Pollock, in *Vision and Difference*, although she tries to unite Marxism and Feminism, she fails her task as we shall see in chapter three. Op. Cit. No. 31

'femininity was exclusively domestic and maternal"[193]. She thus writes, when describing the painting that it shows

"what was to become in bourgeois society an insuperable distance between the notion of the artist and the notion of woman... The bourgeois notion that women's place is in the home and that woman's only genuine fulfillment lies in child-bearing – the "You won't be an artist, you'll just have babies" – is anticipated in this maternal rather then professional presentation of the artist. The compositional device of the mother's arms encircling her daughter 'inscribes in to the painting the closing circle of women's lives in the bourgeois society that was to be established after the revolution. Femininity was exclusively domestic and maternal."[194]

Doy offers a different reading, based on her Marxist belief that is more historically plausible. First she concentrates on the fact that this time Viggée-Lebrun was a famous artist, thus easily recognizable by the Salon visitors. Therefore it could be read as an attempt on behalf of the artist to portray the idea that a combination of a woman being an artist and a mother is possible. Doy writes "...the painting could be read as a shrewd professional self-advertisement of her skills both as an artist and as a mother."[195] Secondly the sensual exposure of the upper part of the body combined with the fact that mother and child look out at the spectator, "...who is thus welcomed into an intimate relationship with them",[196] leads to the non-possibility of the spectator being only male or the absent father of the child. Doy by bringing an analogy between Pollock's argument and the view of history primarily as a gender struggle, deconstructs convincingly any myths that reassert women's art to that of the clearly domestic - maternal thus second - rate art. By using Marxism as weapon, she raises questions such as:

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[193] Ibid., p. 48

[194] The 'myth' of 'femininity being exclusively maternal and domestic' is being discussed in Harris and Scott, Op. Cit. No. 72, along with other myths such as that women had to give up painting when they married. It will be discussed again in chapter four.

"Why ...did the number of women artists showing at the Salon exhibitions increase dramatically after the Revolution if the patriarchal bourgeois order was so determinedly against them? Can motherhood and the family be seen as in such a clear-cut way as an oppressive prison constructed by bourgeois men for women?...How can a theory based on society as patriarchy grasp the contradictions within the bourgeois social order and the French post-revolutionary period? Further if we accept such familiar arguments that portray woman as the object of the look and woman as the signifier of nature to man's culture, does this mean that we can identify such traits in the art of the early nineteenth century in France as clear manifestations of the newly ensconced bourgeoisie and its ideology, or is the reality far more complex?"[197]

Doy's method, although refreshing in approaching women's studies from another perspective, fails however to consider the importance of psychoanalysis and its impact on assessing cultural images. Instead she dismisses it.[198] Susan L. Siegfried, in a recent review of Doy's *Seeing and Consciousness,* persuasively points out that Doy's work although "curiously refreshing", however fails to show that "people today seem to be ...interested in the projection of fantasies, the construction of identities, and aesthetics (pleasure)."[199] For Siegfried there are "concerns that a class based analysis either neglects or discourages".[200] Unfortunately Siegrfied herself falls to the same category of approaches which I have been examining. Class over sex and visa versa. One must fight with the other, for a harmonious relationship cannot exist.

It is of no doubt, given all the above information on various different ways of thinking, that most scholars, if not all, recognize the complexities in reading cultural images. However what I want to question is why feminists must work from either one

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[195] Doy, 1998, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 7
[196] Ibid., p. 7
[197] Ibid., p. 8
[198] Doy attacks Laura Mulvay for employing psychoanalytic concepts and failing to offer a "theoretical conceptualization...of how the female subject achieves any consciousness and critical awareness". From *Seeing and Consciousness,* Op. Cit. No. 121, p. 178
[199] Suzan L. Siegfried, 'Seeing and Consciousness. Women, class and representation', book review, in *Journal of Gender Studies,* November 1997, Vol. 6, No. 3, UK, p. 351

point of view of the other? Must it be just gender or just class? Can they ever be successful on their own? If not, can they be successful together? Can they ever be united and try to give answers as to the ongoing problem of feminist art history – integrated in the conventional art history or separated as a different approach? How is one supposed to know the most attainable method of connecting class with sex? Is it because Marx and his successors did not give sufficient answers as to the emancipation of women? Or is it because of relationships of power that feminists are still struggling for? Does one follow the pessimistic conclusion of Carol Ehrlich? That is

" **the critical difference lies in the emphasis on power.** If power relationships are the key to class and sex inequality alike, and to all the other forms of inequality as well, then a marxist analysis can take us only so far and no farther. **And the marriage of marxism and feminism might as well begin divorce proceedings. Of course one would hope that they might remain friends"!**[201]

Or does one follow Doy's belief that **Marx's method is fundamentally correct** in attempting to understand women's oppression and that race is defined "as a social and cultural construct ultimately based on an economic relationship of domination";[202] a belief which is obviously opposed to most current feminist literature, based on sexual economy. For Doy when attacking Pollock's method (which she calls sexual economy), there is a "knowable reality which ultimately explains the complexity of motivation, concepts, illusions, unconscious motives etc. is different forms of property and different social conditions of existence".[203] For Pollock there is no reality from which representations of femininity or masculinity develop. Rather it is the

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[200] Ibid.
[201] Carol Ehrlich, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 130
[202] Doy, Op. Cit. No. 119, p. 13
[203] Doy, Op. Cit. No. 121, p. 16

constructions we see and experience in culture which define our notions of ourselves, our individuality, our sexuality and our understanding of the world.

For me it is not a question of Feminism and Marxism trying to remain friends, neither is a question of dismissing one another. For they both contribute to the complex historical analysis of gender issues within societies. If we keep following only the correct notion that knowledge is a man - made construction and women have been subordinate to men, sexually and economically (and still are in many cases at various places in the world), then I believe that women's studies and feminist art history have a long way to go, before they can challenge their existence within the traditional history and art history. However a model in which class, feminism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, semiotics and other current trends in contemporary society coexist, certainly feels needed and is yet to come.

III

AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE OF GRISELDA POLLOCK'S METHODOLOGY

"The historical recovery of data about women producers of art coexists with and is only critically possible through a concomitant deconstruction of the discourses and practices of art history itself. But alone historical recovery is insufficient. What sense are we to make of information without a theorized framework through which to discern the particularity of women's work? ... Yet we have to recognize what women share – as a result of nurture not nature, i.e. the historically variable social systems which produce sexual differentiation. This leads to a major aspect of the feminist project, the theorization and historical analysis of sexual difference. Difference is not essential but understood as a social structure which positions people asymmetrically in relation to language, to social and economic power and to meaning. Sexuality, modernism or modernity cannot function as given categories to which we add women. Sexuality, modernism or modernity are organized by and organizations of sexual differences"[204].

Having dedicated two general chapters on the historical facts of female artistic production, feminism and intellectual development of feminist art history, I am narrowing my research now and providing an insight into Griselda Pollock's work, who is internationally known as the British spokesperson of feminist art history and cultural theorist[205]. I have chosen to look at Pollock's work, because she has devoted her research to the promotion of a united Feminist and Marxist art history despite their unhappy 'marriage'. We have already seen this in Marxist works by writers such as Hartmann, Ehrlich, and Sargent. I want to show however, that although she claims a unification of Marxism and Feminism, what she establishes in effect is a feminist methodology that privileges gender at the expense of class. I am doing this not in order to dismiss her unquestionable contribution in art historical, sociological, and

[204] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, pp. 55-6
[205] Griselda Pollock is professor of Social and Critical Histories at the University of Leeds.

and cultural studies but rather to show that her method of analysis often provides the reader with a problematic oversimplification of gendered and class art history. Also her argument's logic, represented at best in *Vision and Difference*, of 1988 and in the recent publication of 1998, *Mary Cassatt, Painter of Modern Woman,* often confuse the reader, as she herself employs the methods of analysis that she argues against.

This chapter aims to show the relationship of marxist-feminist politics in her work; issues concerning the division between theory and practice and how she applies them often show contradictions in her own arguments. She connects spatial arrangement within the paintings – spaces read as confined – with social spaces - lived in - predominantly by females. I want to show that she employs a reflection theory, which at the same she dismisses in the beginning of her publication of *Vision and Difference*. She also uses philosophical approaches such as phenomenology, falling into the trap of subjectivity, thus neglecting objectivity.

The notion of the construction of art history as a masculinized academic discipline has been the underlying idea behind her work. Her concern with definitions of art, through social and ideological formations and the repetitive and systematic suppression of women's art works, has led to the discovery of new methodological approaches, which according to her, provide the answers as to a new art history free from formulations such as "art *and* society", "art *and* its social context", "art *and* its

historical background", "art *and* class formation", "art *and* gender relations". For "the real difficulty which is not being confronted resides in those *ands*"[206].

In *Vision and Difference*, Pollock, in assessing the production of sexual differentiation, claims that social systems produce sexual differentiation. Sexual difference is understood as a social structure and sexuality is organized by organizations of sexual differences. This is an argument, which was not first appeared in Pollock's work but as we have already seen in chapter two, it emerged from Kelly's and Fox-Genovese's works. However, this consistent argument through feminist texts, leads one naturally to the search of the production and structure of these systems, and through them to the production of the feminine and masculine. It is unquestionable that it was within the class structures of capitalism that women's work was produced and defined. This is a project which although it was one of the causes for the beginning of a Marxist Feminist Art History, was abandoned later on for centering their research on the oppression of women through sex, and the particularities of the gendering of the image. We have seen this in works such as Ehrilich's in chapter two, that suggested the divorce proceedings between marxism and feminism. According to Marxist Feminists such as Barrett however, "the precise ways in which gender division became built into capitalism were determined by the history of struggles between men and women, within the working class and within the bourgeoisie."[207]

[206] Ibid., p. 30. Here Pollock inserts a footnote on the most developed discussion of the issues of how to think through the social totality as a complex of many relations and determinations – Karl Marx 'Introduction' to *Grundrisse (1857-8)*, trans. By Martin Nicolaus, Harmondsworth, 1973.

1. A Critique of Marxism

Pollock in her famous essay "*Modernity and the spaces of femininity*", attempts to reassert a need for social history of art against the traditional norms of art history; it supports historical matters having been replaced by chronology with "connections never drawn between art and the conditions of the moment"[208]. She addresses T.J.Clark, not only for his blindness to the different experiences between women and men under the same capitalist society as we have seen in chapter two, but also for his call on a critical alternative, on the writing of history of art. She writes that Clark although calling for a Marxist analysis of society, dismisses disciplines such as "literary formalism, Freudianism, film theory and Feminism"[209]. It is natural for one to expect Pollock to argue against the later opinion supported by Clark, purely (if nothing else) from her feminist perspective. She dismisses Clark for being blind to the patriarchal and sexist nature of the societies, writing as he does from a masculine point of view.

Although Pollock follows Jean Gardiner's point of view (that is believing that Marxism on its own cannot give sufficient answers as to the shaping of women's consciousness or class[210]), she emphasizes however that it would be wrong to see sexual politics as an "additional element".[211] Rather she takes Kunh's readings and definition of culture, that is "culture as production of sense or making orders of

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[207] Anne Philips reviewing Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis, by Michelle Barrett, in *Capital and Class,* Summer, 1981, vol. 14, p. 135

[208] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 19. She presents as an example Alfred H. Barr's book on his exhibition Cubism and Abstract Art, 1936, Museum of Modern Art, NY

[209] Ibid., p. 19

[210] Jean Gardiner, 'Women in the Labour process', in *Class and Class Structures,* London, 1977, ed. Alan Hunt

[211] Pollock, Op, Cit. No. 31, p. 20

"sense" for the world we live in".[212] From this she draws the conclusion that the discipline of art history itself is also a crucial component of the cultural hegemony by the dominant class, race and gender. She concludes therefore that the "development of art historical practices which analyze cultural production in the visual arts and related media by attending to the imperatives of both Marxism and recent feminism art history"[213], is the main project before us.

Pollock looks at the constitution of sexual difference, the construction of genius as a male characteristic, the emphasis of the bourgeois ideology from which art and artists have been created, and the biological differences according to which the notion of the "natural" has been associated with women's occupations. This recalls Nochlin's work, as stated in chapter one, who in "*Why There Have Been no Great Women Artists*", mentions all these problems that have been constructed and accepted as natural. This, according to many writers that we have seen, such as Bridenthal, Koonz, Stuart, Spencer, Fox-Genovese, lies in the exclusion of women from knowledge, which has been codified by men for men[214].The paradox here is that Pollock, as we shall see in the end of this chapter, dismisses Noclin's along with other feminist art historians' work..

Pollock criticizes Marxism first for not addressing the "sexual divisions embedded in concepts of art and the artist are part of the cultural myths and ideologies peculiar to art history. But they contribute to the wider context of social definitions of masculinity and femininity and thus participate at the ideological level in reproducing

[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.

the hierarchy between the sexes."[215]. Secondly, she lists a number of problems arisen from the Marxist tradition, that should be avoided from the practice of Feminist art history: "treating art as a reflection of the society that produced it, or as an image of its class divisions; treating an artist representative of his/her class (she does the same in Morisot's case, as we shall see); economic reductionism, that is, reducing all arguments about the forms and functions of cultural objects back to economic or material causes; and ideological generalization, placing a picture because of its obvious content into a category of ideas, beliefs or social theories of a given society or period"[216]. These are the problems which make Pollock's work seem contradictory, (she often uses these parameters when looking at female artistic production herself,) and which are going to be discussed in detail further down.

At the same time Pollock places Marxism next to Feminism, as critiques opposed to bourgeois art history. She dismisses feminists who have inserted women's names in the chronologies of art history, which has been created by men, an argument which as we have seen comes Spencer's *Mens Studies Modified*, without addressing any specific individuals. She stresses the importance of looking at the history of art as a masculinized discipline, from which female achievement has been excluded.

Pollock attacks feminists for the way they have responded, by writing: "Feminists are easily tempted to respond by trying to assert that women's art is just as good as men's; it has merely to be judged by yet another set of criteria. But this only creates

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[214] The best study of this remains Spencer's *Mens Studies Modified,* Op. Cit. No. 6
[215] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 22
[216] Ibid., pp. 27-28

an alternative method of appreciation – another way of consuming art"[217]. Instead she argues correctly for a concentration on "historical forms of explanation of women's artistic production"[218].

Pollock dismisses the reflection theory for two reasons. First because she finds it "mechanistic", representing society as a static entity. Secondly, although she accepts the "need to recognize the point of view and position in class society as a determination of the production of art"[219], she finds that it often involves a considerable generalization. This is due to two factors; First, because of the Marxist attempt to place upon a group of art works labels implying sociological representations of specific class, thus generalizing the visual ideologies the works carry. This makes the works, as she writes, "unitary examples of the singular outlook of a social group via the service of the artist"[220]. Secondly, the outcome of the above is the tendency "to reinstate the artist as a special kind of spokesperson – visionary or seer - or 'ad-man'-with privileged access to and means of expression of the perspective and concerns of a class. [221]

The paradox in this is that she brings, as examples, women often treated as representative of a whole sex. One could easily see from her argument on "Modernity and the spaces of femininity" (chapter 3 of the same book) that this is a trap into which Pollock unfortunately falls herself. She connects the visual ideology (which she dismisses in Hadjinicolaou's case, with his book *Art History and Class Struggle*,

[217] Ibid., p. 27
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid., p. 28
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.

1973[222]), of the feminine social spaces in the society, with the spatial arrangement within the paintings. She brings social and pictorial spaces together, at the expense of missing out on the dangerousness of following the very same theory of reflection and economic reductionism - an argument which becomes clear when addressing T. J. Clark, defending a "necessitated deconstruction of the masculine myths of modernism"[223]. She attacks Clark, and his *The Paintings of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, for the "peculiar closures on the issues of sexuality in bourgeoisie Paris"[224] referring to Manet's paintings *Olympia and A bar at the Folies-Bergère*, (see plate 8). She writes

"How can a woman relate to the viewing positions proposed by either of these paintings? Can a woman be offered, in order to be denied imaginary possession of Olympia or the barmaid? Would a woman of Manet's class have a familiarity with either of these spaces and its exchange's which could be evoked so that the painting's modernist job of negation and disruption could be effective? Could Berthe Morisot have gone to such a location to canvas the subject? Would it enter her head as a site of modernity as she expressed it? Could she as a woman experience modernity as Clark defines it at all? "[225]

As I have argued in chapter two, looking at Berthe Morisot as an example, it was her class that facilitated her gaining access, first in becoming a painter, and secondly in achieving the status of a good painter greatly admired, even by men. George Moore wrote in his *Sex in Art*

"Madame Lebrun painted well, but she invented nothing, she failed to make her own of any special manner of seeing and rendering things; she failed to create a style. Only one woman did this, and that woman is Madame Morisot, and her pictures are the only pictures painted by a woman that could not be destroyed without creating a blank, a hiatus in the history of art."[226]

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[222] Nikos Hadjinicolau, *Art History and Class Struggle*, , 1973, translated by Louise Asmal, London, Pluto Press, 1978, chs 2-4
[223] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31., p. 50
[224] Ibid., pp.52-3
[225] Ibid., p. 53
[226] George Moore, *Sex in Art*, London, 1890, pp. 228-9

Berthe Morisot came from a wealthy haut bourgeois background. Her father was a government administrator, and her mother came from the same class. Morisot received her education in the home, from an English governess, and when she was sixteen she took drawing lessons along with her sisters, from Geofrrey Alphonse Chocarne, an academic painter, followed by Joseph-Benoît Guichard, a follower of both Ingres and Delacroix. It was he who was very keen in the education of the Morisot sisters and who has been recorded saying to Berthe's mother:

"Considering the character of your daughters, my teaching will now endow them with minor drawing-room accomplishments; they will become painters. Do you realize what this means? In the upper-class milieu to which you belong, this will be revolutionary, I might almost say catastrophic. Are you sure that you will not come to curse the day when art, having gained admission to your home, now so respectful and peaceful, will become the sole arbiter of the fate of two of your children?"[227]

It is obvious from the above that the fear is reflected of the respectable female falling into the male domain of the artistic professional, as discussed in chapter one. However, Morisot's professional career showed that Guichard's fears were unjustified.

It was Morisot's class that enabled her to become the first woman founder of Impressionism. (Morisot's commercial involvement and success has been discussed in chapter two).

As Harris and Scott put it "then, as now, choice and success was a class issue, with the privileged accorded to the best education and the most opportunities for recognition."[228]

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[227] Adler and Garb, Op. Cit. No. 37, p. 14. Also A. Morgan, *Berthe Morisot*, 1961, p. 12; Parker and Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 37, p. 43

[228] Harris and Scott, Op. Cit. No. 72, p. 6.

2. Spatial arrangement within the paintings – relationship of pictorial confinement of space with spaces in the society

Pollock in looking at Morisot's art, stresses the avoidance of what is known as the feminine stereotype which "homogenizes women's art work."[229] It is through her work that she tries to connect the arrangement of space within the painting, with her own lived in – domestic spaces. Pollock uses the same argument for Mary Cassatt's work. She writes, "the hallmark of Mary Cassatt's painting is the way in which the represented space within the painting is the same as the space from which the painting was made. This space included the artist looking, painting, thinking, organizing, and interacting with her models."[230]

If we follow closely her argument we see where the reflection theory (to remind one that she dismisses it, as mentioned above), takes place; it follows a historiographical approach which is sprinkled with information such as how Morisot has been patronized, dismissed etc. Pollock's approach to Morisot's *The Harbour at Lorient,* 1869, and *On the terrace,* 1874, (see plates 22 and 23), is representative. In the first picture, a female figure (Morisot's sister, Edma) is placed to the right of the canvas, sitting at the boundary of an embankment, leaving the view of the harbour open to the viewer, using a traditional perspective. The sitter is situated compositionally on top of a triangle, the top of which meets the horizon line. In the latter painting, the cropped form of a female figure is depicted seated to the right of the canvas, giving way to the solid form of a wall, which cuts the picture into two parts. Beyond this wall the scene of a beach is represented which, as in *The Harbour at Lorient,* is drawn in a triangular

[229] Pollock, Op. Cit No. 31, p. 55
[230] Griselda Pollock, *Mary Cassatt, Painter of Modern Women,* London, 1998, p. 126

shape meeting the shoulder of the sitter. Pollock compares these paintings with Monet's *The Garden of the Princess*, 1867, (see plate 24), where the position from which the painting has been executed cannot be easily imagined, (the painting in fact has been executed from a balcony). She therefore concludes, "it is all about masculinity and femininity, secondly the kind of spaces that are open to men and women and finally the relation to that space and its occupants."[231]

Yet one might wonder why Pollock compared *The Harbour at Lorient* by Morisot to Monet's picture, instead of the *View of Paris from the Trocadero*, (see plate 25) 1871-72. In this, two female figures are depicted, one of them in profile with hands on a balustrade which dissects the picture, isolating the figures in the foreground, leaving the background (Trocadero) open to the eye of the spectator to wander. Morisot here employs an equally contrived technique dealing with the space depicted, as Monet did. This is a picture where there are no figures compressed within a box of space, as they do in *On the terrace.*

To claim that the handling of the space within the painting shows the territories in society occupied by women artists, is an argument Pollock has followed for more than twenty years. She writes "Morisot's balustrades demarcate the boundary between the spaces of masculinity and of femininity inscribed both the level of both what spaces are open to men and women and what relation a man or woman has to that space and its occupants"[232]. One can think of numerous examples where male artists dealt with the arrangement of space in an equally "feminine way", if one follows Pollock's

[231] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 62
[232] Ibid.

argument. A random example is that of Edouard Manet in *Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1872, (see plate 26), depicts a woman seated in front of an iron railing accompanied by a small girl with her back facing the viewer, watching the arrival or departure of a train at the Saint Lazare station. The viewpoint is close, the two figures are compressed within a box of space, and the depiction of the train is obstructed by the two figures shown in the foreground. One can easily imagine the point from which the painting has been made.

Gen Doy in *Seeing and Consciousness*[233], makes a similar point with me, in suggesting that Pollock's "examples are, not surprisingly, chosen to present her case in the best possible light"[234]. Instead Doy, presents as a comparable example the work of Gustave Caillebote (1848-94), a member of an haute bourgeois family, who never had a job in the actual male world of banking, business etc. Doy supports convincingly, that Cailebotte, although he painted a large amount of outdoor scenes, he also depicted many domestic interiors and depictions of intimate scenes. Caillebote was recognized by contemporary critics, (such as J. K. Husymans, G. Riviè re, Burty and Lora), as a painter of the bourgeoisie.[235] Furthermore, Doy discusses the bourgeois femininity and "the smell of a household in an easy-money situation ...exuded by this interior", as J. K. Husymans put it,[236] in Caillebote's *Interior, Woman at the Window,* (1880), (see plate 27). Instead she argues that for wealthy men who did not have to work for a living, life "was much closer to women of their own

[233] Doy, Op. Cit. No. 121, chapter three
[234] Ibid., p. 61
[235] Ibid.; *Gustave Caillebote, The Unknown Impressionist,* Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1996, p. 22
[236] Cited in Doy, 1995, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 61

class such as Morisot and Cassatt than to working class men"[237]. Therefore Pollock's belief that the 'spaces of modernity' were simply not available to women, and that women were forced by their social position to paint the subjects they did, should be reconsidered, for "a simple male/public and private, women/private does not adequately account for the representations of the private and the domestic by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois male artists."[238]

A similar method of investigation in Pollock's writings, takes place in Cassatt's themes. Pollock constantly reads them as filled with gender concerns. In her recent monogram on Cassatt, she is dealing with the 'gaze', as she did in previous monograph on Cassatt, and in Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergére*. I would like to suggest that her analysis although heavily based on historiography, **reflects** the spaces women had in the society, and homogenizes women's work, despite her warnings to feminists not to do so.

Pollock maintains that the overlooking of Cassatt in Impressionist history was due equally to three facts: that she was a woman, a painter, and an American in France. She correctly reinterprets Cassatt's painting as a comment on what it is depicting, the life of the bourgeois women. However she carefully chooses words such as "represent" or "correspond" instead of "reflect".

For Pollock, the issue of the women's self-absorption and the depiction of these women in these activities at all, is considered a statement in itself. She claims that her sitters- often women with their babies - do not look at the viewers directly but are pre-

[237] Ibid., p. 62
[238] Ibid.

occupied in their activities, in domestic spaces, linking this to her role as unmarried woman, who was concerned in depicting feminist issues. To link this with Doy's argument, one can think of at least one interior scene by Caillebote to prove her wrong. In Caillebote's *Portrait of Mme Martial Caillebote,* (his mother), (1877), (see plate 28), the image of a fifty-eight-year-old matriarch patiently "absorbed in her embroidery" as Léon de Lora put it[239], the 'self-absorption' cannot be considered a statement itself. Caillebote's mother, dressed in a mourning gown and bonnet, is engaged in the act of needlework, seated on an armchair behind which a part of a mantle piece is depicted. On top of it, bronze quilt candle holders are shown reflected on a heavy gold quilt mirror. To the right of the canvas, beside the sitter, an expensive piece of furniture is depicted, on top of which a sewing basket and a pair of scissors are portrayed. Everything in this painting testifies as to the class of the sitter and the intrusion of the artist in this scene. The subject has been handled with great care to show a space, which although usually defined by its feminine character, however cannot justify the gendering of the artist.

Pollock, when comparing paintings like John Singer Sargent's, *Lady Agnew,* with Elizabeth Gardner's *Two Mothers,* 1888, (see plates 29 and 30), she falls again into the trap of following an argument which she warned feminists against doing. That is, trying to prove that women artists depicted the real woman rather than the decorative object (to be), as depicted by her male contemporaries, looked at and admired by its masculine clients. Pollock writes:

If the "lady" could be the jewel in the rich man's collection, at the other end of the social and ideological spectrum women of the working classes... were represented in most Salons, and by women as much as men."

[239] *Gustave Caillebote,* P. Cit. No. 235, p. 120

The above shows not only the constant contradiction in Pollock's work, and the gap between her theory and practice, but as we shall see further on, her misinterpretation of Nochlin's, along with other feminist's work. To go back to Pollock's reading of Cassatt's work, a similar gap between theory and practice takes place. When looking at Cassatt's *Five O'Clock Tea,* (1880), (see plate 4), she compares it with William Merrit Chase's *A Friendly Call,* 1895, (see plate 31), in order to evoke spaces of femininity, spaces in painting (repression of deep space in favour of shallow space, and spaces from which the painting was being made[240]. They are both bourgeois scenes only for Pollock in Cassatt's picture, the way of dealing with the above issues of space shows the spaces "occupied by a self-consciously *woman* artist, renders the viewing position we are offered a historically and psychologically *feminine* one... To see these paintings historically, the viewer needs to recognize the position from which the artists produced them."[241]

In Cassatt's painting two women are depicted, taking tea. They both sit on a floral sofa, occupying the left of the canvas, with the rest being used as the ground for the depiction of a table (in the foreground), on which a silver tray with a tea set is placed. One of them is wearing a hat, drinking a cup of tea with her hand being gloved up to the elbow, hiding in this way half of her face. The woman next to her, to the far left of the picture, is shown with her face being rested on her left hand, which is not gloved. To the right of the canvas, only a part of the mantelpiece is shown (it looks as if it is made out of marble), on top of which a mirror with a Chinese vase is depicted. The

[240] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 230, p. 126
[241] Ibid.

tea set with its highly polished silver surface, the heavy gold gilt frame of the mirror, the mantelpiece and the fashionable character of the sitters, all portray the significant status of the household. What we clearly have here is a visiting scene taking place in the interior of a wealthy family home. As for the sitters themselves they look as if they do not communicate.

What seems to be problematic for Pollock for the above picture is the sex of the producer, the way the viewer is placed across the table from the pair, thus close enough to observe details of the painting, in contrast with the Merrit Chase, where the distance is being maintained [242].Pollock reads in the painting not just a bourgeois scene, as she does in Sargent and Chase's cases, but she interprets "each fabric or space delivered to us by a different kind of brushstroke so that we do not loose ourselves before of the illusion of femininity as in the Sargent, but confront the work of the woman"[243] . In Chase's case she reads the female sitters as being part of a harmonious decoration.

One has to remember Pollock's own words here, when criticizing Nochlin's work for encouraging feminists to "dig up many women artists from the basements of galleries and argue that, for instance Berthe Morisot was a better artist and not quite as dependent on Manet as we have been told. They fall into the trap of providing alternative criteria."[244] I hope that it is clear from the above, that the friction in Pollock's writings when it comes to theory and practice is clear.

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[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid.

The argument becomes even clearer when Pollock, in a previous monograph on Cassatt, attributes Cassatt's few representations of men, to the restrictions societally placed on unmarried women of their class, and the lack of respectability inherent in the situation of contact with men alone necessary to paint them. She links Cassatt's lack of success in this endeavour (this is questionable as Cassatt enriched her family's wealth by the sale of her paintings), to Virginia Woolf's comment that if Tolstoy had had to live like George Sand (i.e. shut up in the Priory) he would never have been able to produce *War and Peace* for lack of experience.[245] Pollock turns this situation on its head to interpret it as a special opportunity for Cassatt to observe the underrepresented world of femininity and female experience. Pollock writes:

"But despite these very real and too often unrecognized limitations on a woman's experience of the world in which men passed so freely, there is a positive side to this particular coin, for Cassatt knew the world of women, the drawing room... although she was restricted by social conventions to models form the life of bourgeois women and children around her, she nonetheless used the everyday happenings of family life to forge her most significant achievement, a new image of women."[246]

3. Phenomenology – Application of philosophical methods in art history

A similar approach she deploys in the analysis of the spaces, where she applies philosophical methods such as Phenomenology and its use in Art History, [which she] unquestionably accepts. In trying to bring an analogy yet again between compositional and structural pictorial elements and spaces in the society, she employs a method, which according to what she accepts is defined by what she dismisses. Thus it is a method which is purely subjective. She gives as an example phenomenological

[244] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 34
[245] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 76, p. 12

studies such as on Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*, (1887), while trying to give a comparative analysis on Cassatt's works, for instance *Young girl in a blue armchair*, (1878),(see plate 32). Pollock writes:

"Instead of a pictorial space functioning as a notional box into which objects are placed in a rational and abstract relationship, space is represented according to the way it is experienced by a combination of touch, texture s well as sight. Thus objects are patterned according to subjective hierarchies of value for the producer. Phemonelogical space is not orchestrated for sight alone but by means of visual cues refers to other sensations and relations of bodies and objects in al lived world. As experienced space this kind of representation becomes susceptible to different ideological, historical as well as purely contingent, subjective inflections"[247].

When Heidegger wrote on the *Pair of Shoes*, he argued that the works of art reveal the worlds of the artists. Thus on the specific work, the shoes reveal the world of the peasant. "The work erects a world which in turn opens a space for man and things; but this distinctive openness rests on something more stable and enduring than any world, for example the all sheltering earth"[248]. For him, a painting, as everything else, is a thing. In defining the 'thingness' of the thing, Heidegger goes through three different modes of thingness which "conceive of the thing (painting) as a bearer of traits, as the unity of a manifold of sensations, as formed matter. Heidegger writes on Van Gogh's painting:

"The equipmental quality of equipment was discovered...only by bringing ourselves before Van Gogh's painting. This painting spoke. In the nearness of the work we were suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be..."[249]

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[246] Ibid.
[247] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 65
[248] D. F. Krell, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, 1978, find location of publication, p. 145.*The Origin of the Work of Art* was first delivered as a public lecture in Freiburg under the title Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in November 13, 1935. In *The Basic Writings* only two thirds of the original are included
[249] Ibid.

Although Heidegger discussed the "workly character of the work in the sense of the work of art"[250], and the "equipmental quality of equipment"[251], however he was concerned with the pictorial "truth". He writes

"Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, is in truth. This being emerges into the unconcealedness of its Being... If there occurs in the work a disclosure of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work"[252]

Before one brings analogies between Heidegger's and Pollock's approaches, it is important to say few things about his theory in order to comprehend his method of analysis. Heidegger talked about constructions regarding physical objects, space and time within a comprehensive phenomenological account. He described his philosophy as the "Quest for Being". In "Being and Time", first published in 1927, he gives his analysis of human existence, based on the theory of phenomenology (first established by Edmund Husserl, Heidegger's teacher). In this he points out that from the phenomenological point of view, the world is the condition we engage with and inhabit. He argues further in that we are not to see the world as an object being faced by it, but rather we 'beings-in-the-world' and *Dasein,* (our human mode of existence is that multitude of ways, in which we inhabit life). He writes this is happening by "having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something up and letting go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining..."[253]. (Similar way of putting, as footnote 91, on what she says about Cassatt). All these are qualities which take place in the process of what one can call creative. That is

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[250] Ibid., p. 164
[251] Ibid.
[252] Ibid.
[253] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford, 1962, p. 83 (part one, division I,II)

thinking, producing, determining. If one wishes to follow Heidegger's views on the how the world and the mind-human being are interdependent[254], then neither can be understood without the other. Finally if one chooses to believe his method of 'Intentionality', then one cannot be said simply to believe, desire and think, but must logically, believe etc.-intent-something or other; so mind and object imply each other. This is where it follows that phenomena can have no underlying reality.

When Pollock writes "the space is represented according to the way it is experienced and by a combination of touch, texture as well as sight"[255], she forgets that she correctly stated that a single method of analysis is never adequate to explain the ideological, cultural, economic, constructions of a specific epoch. Especially, as mentioned above, she has warned art historians to avoid to "place the artist as a representative of a class outlook... or reinstate the artists as a special kind of spokesperson..."[256]. One needs to remind here the exact words of Heidegger on Van Gogh's painting:

"This painting spoke"[257] and "From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth...On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil...In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth...This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the worldess joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death...this equipment belongs to the earth, and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman"[258].

Heidegger connects obviously social spaces and pictorial spaces for different purposes than those of Pollock. Whereas he is concerned with the equipments,

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[254] Heidegger believes that world and mind are distinct but denies their independence. He argues that in seeing "I do not see my eyes", for example a hammer is transparent in use, and I do not consider it as an object unless it fails in its function, that is if it breaks and needs repair. From *Being and Time*, Ibid.
[255] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 65
[256] Ibid., p. 28
[257] Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, p. 164

things, and thingly substructures, Pollock is concerned with defining the representation of social spaces through the depiction of space within the paintings.

In Cassatt's picture, a small child is shown, seated on an big armchair (for her size), which is placed right in the foreground next to another armchair of which only a part is shown. The low view point emphasizes the small scale of the two more armchairs shown in the background and according to Pollock, it "evokes that child's sense of the space of the room. It is from this conception that she moves on, in relating space and social processes. "For a third approach lies in considering not only the spaces represented, or the spaces of the representation, but the social spaces from which the representation is made and its reciprocal positionalities. The producer is herself shaped within a spatially orchestrated social structure which is lived at both psychic and social levels. The space of the look at the point of production will to some extent determine the viewing position of the spectator at the point of consumption. This point of view is neither abstract exclusively personal, but ideologically and historically construed. It is the art historian's job to re-create it since it cannot ensure its recognition outside its historical moment. "[259] What Pollock does not inform one is the 'how' of this research. How is the point of view ideologically and historical construed when the space of the look at the point of the production will determine the viewing point position of the spectator at the point of consumption.

It is difficult to follow Pollock's methodology as elements from both Marxist and Feminist ideologies are always crossing each other's boundaries. Where one ends and

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[258] Ibid., p. 163
[259] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 66

one begins is hard to define. For instance when she talks on "points of view ideologically construed", does she carry a Marxist ideology? If that's what she follows, then one is faced with the well known "naturalization", "historicization" and "eternalization" characters of the Marxist ideological structures. As we have seen already she clearly dismisses naturalization and historicization for neglecting gender specifics, thus providing a *masculinist* interpretation of historical processes. For which spectator does Pollock talks is not clear (from which era), neither is the role of experiencing these realities, both of behalf of the producer and consumer. After all they both play an equal role in evaluating viewing point positions or spaces – pictorial or lived in. According to phenomenology "The act of the experience can be revealed by a reflection; and a reflection can be practiced on every experience"[260]. In both cases one could believe that society plays a crucial role in manipulating these appearances by which viewer is being confronted by. Chisholm writes "When one makes a statement about an object in front of him, the "description of what then appears (noema in noesis), can be performed upon the life of another self, which we represent to ourselves, the reductive method can be extended from one's own self experience to one's experience of other selves."[261]"

Husserl separates the experience of being related to an object (in the precise case a painting), as that of the "noetic" (Greek term from νοεω) or experiencing and description of the noematic (νοημα) or the experienced. This type of experience, Husserl maintains, is the same for everyone. Husserl cared about one's relations to

[260] Roderick M. Chisholm, ed., "*Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*", USA, 1960, p. 119
[261] Ibid. p. 121. The phenomenological reduction to phenomena advances by two steps: 1) systematic and radical *εποχη* of everything objectifying position in an experience, practiced both upon the regard of particular objects and upon the entire attitude of mind, and 2) expert recognition, comprehension and description of the manifold appearances of what are no longer objects but unities of sense.

objects, omitting the world of social, economic and political behaviour. He believed that the experiences one has when one is faced by an object are infinite and that one could never fully experience an object. What happens to objects within the objects, in the precise case, a painting, was not discussed in his theories.

The third Marxist approach Pollock dismisses is economic reductionism for acknowledging a material basis in history, "that is history is what real people do in concrete relations, shaped by factors outside their individual control, is not the same thing as saying that knowing how factories are organized helps you to know why such an art is being produced"[262]. Pollock writes,

"To know that society has been patriarchal and sexist means that you reject the idea that the oppression of women is divinely ordained, or biologically, psychologically inevitable. To know that society is capitalist means that you reject the inevitability of wage labour and capitalists' profits. **In studying art we want refined understanding of relation to and positions on that knowledge or social experience.** The danger is always of simply shifting your analysis from one set of causes to another, i.e. art is the way it is because of economic arrangements. Art is inevitably shaped and limited by the kind of society which produces it; but its particular features are not caused by economic structures or organization. In application to women the poverty of the argument is obvious since women's position in the basic economic organization of the workplace is easily shown to be mere complement to the kind of exploitation they experience in the home, in sexual relationships, child care, on the streets, as a result of sexual domination that is dispersed across a wide range of social practices".[263]

However this argument when applied to female artists –of which the biggest percentage were bourgeois – fails again to convince, for showing yet again a contradiction in Pollock's writings. I am referring to her argument of spaces – showing the socially defined and constrained lived-in spaces by females. In the case of Morisot and Cassatt, the art they produced reflected indeed the spaces they occupied in the society, the spaces of the drawing room, verandah, etc., spaces

[262] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 29
[263] Ibid., p. 27

predominantly female. However as argued above, in Cassatt's case, this can not be shown through the arrangement of space within the paintings, rather from the spaces depicted through their work, for portraying a reflection method which she dismisses. To take the argument further on, I would like to suggest that the objects depicted in their work, are shaped by economic arrangements (commodity values). The ways female artists have depicted these objects, have been shaped by economic and ideological arrangements (despite the gender implications one may find, if one wishes, in their work). When Morisot was painting the *Reading*, (1873), (see plate 33) shown at the first Impressionist exhibition, all elements of bourgeois modern life were depicted, shaped both by material and ideological forces. A bourgeois woman painter depicts a bourgeois young lady, seated on a grass, reading a book, dressed fashionably, (wearing a ribbon hat, and floral print dress), surrounded by fashionable accessories such as an umbrella, fan, showing not only the essentials of femininity but also the wealth of the sitter. As Jean Prouvaire, put it on a review of this painting:

"...This is one of the tendencies of this emerging school [of artists], to mix Worth [the haute-couture fashion designer, 1825-1895] with the Good Lord"[264]

The ideological generalization for Pollock is a response to the reductionism of the third[265]. For Pollock, "Ideology is a process of masking contradictions; it is itself fractured and contradictory. Referring art to ideology does not sort out anything at all; it merely displaces the necessary study of what specific ideological works of art are doing, and for whom. The parallel in the study of women and art is the way in which what women produce is placed in the category *women's art*"[266]. Pollock in her texts

[264] Jean Prouvaire, "L'Exposition du Boulevard des Capucines", *Le Rappel*, Paris, (20th April 1874), p. 3
[265] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 29
[266] Ibid., p. 29

might not refer to women's art as such, however, as we have seen she reinforces the notion that women's art is different and that when looking at a painting by a woman in the 19th century we can read the sex of the producer. It is worth mentioning here her comments on Cassatt's portrait of her sister-in-law *Lois Cassatt at a Tapestry Frame,* 1888, when compared to James McNeill Whistler's *Arrangement in Black No. 8: Mrs Alexander Cassatt,* 1883-5, (see plates 34 and 35). Pollock writes:

"In the pale but plump face, the strong eyes are not limpid, expressionless pools, as in the Whistler portrait. They are sharp, self-aware, and create a sense either of the sitter's character or of the painter's still equivocal view of her sister-in-law. Note the hands, the way her left hand rests on the frame...Instead of the vacant fixity of gaze that takes the sitter out of time and place, allowing the allegorical frame to recast this woman as Woman. Cassatt's details create on the pictorial and fabricated plane of her drawing or painting, the sense of class identity and socially defined femininity"[267].

It is makes one wonder why Pollock consistently uses paraphrases such as "create" instead of "reflect". If that were the case, then the paradox in her argument would become clearer, as reflection and ideological generalization coincide. The language of art history and the way it has been used by various art historians often confuses the reader, making it easier to fall into linguistic traps, thus obscuring the obvious.

Pollock closes her text on lessons and pitfalls of Marxism concluding:

"Whether it be class, race or gender, any argument that generalizes, reduces, typifies or suggests a reflection is refusing to deal with specificity of individual texts, artistic practitioners, historical moments. Art history – Marxist or feminist- must be primarily a historiographical exercise. Society is a historical process; is not a static entity"[268]

By writing "Art History – Marxist or feminist" Pollock not only avoids uniting the two disciplines but she also extends the existing difference between them. As we have seen in chapter two, Hartmann has presented a similarly confusing argument, when attacking Marxists for "...their marxism clearly dominates their feminism." At the

[267] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 230, p. 128
[268] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 30

same time she has written "the social organization under which the people live are determined by the economic production and the production of people in the sex/gender sphere."[269] What Pollock also does in *Vision and Difference,* is to dismiss other feminist art historians for lacking of historicism (such a Sutherland Harris when discussing Dutch 17th century art), for providing illustrated biographies without "any assessment of the pictures as images or as cultural products"[270] (such as Karen Wilson and J.J. Petersen), for encouraging other feminists to dig up many women artists and insist that their art is better to that of their fellow men artists and for not providing explanations such as what art is (for instance Linda Nochlin's work) and for reinforcing the patriarchal definition of man as the norm of humanity, and finally for employing the standard formalist type of art history "combined with a well educated 'connoisseurship' (such as Germaine Greer's *The Obstacle Race).* Although Pollock has many persuasive points in her argument, which will be discussed further on, what she manages to achieve however is to reinforce the fused notion of sisterhood – claiming that one's theory is better than other's - in the academic field of art historical debate. Pollock, although appearing to provide an alternative type of art history, what she follows, as we have seen, comes in effect from a traditional feminist perspective.

4. Dismissal of Feminist texts

Pollock, on *Feminist Art Histories,* constantly misinterprets feminist texts. She dismisses Nochlin's work, (although admitting that her argument was fruitful in opening the road for social explanations of women's art), because she finds in it "a

[269] For more see page 64
[270] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 38

residual idealism in that the social is presented only in terms of obstacles, placed around the individual's freedom of action..."[271]. Pollock writes:

"Yet for her art is still a category to be discussed in terms of greatness, risks, leaps into the unknown...issues of sexual identity and social gender evaporate before the dream of **bourgeois humanism**...Individualism, humanism and voluntarism prescribe the limits of this **liberal bourgeois argument**, which as such, is unhistorical. For what is evacuated, notably in the conclusion I have quoted, is history, i.e. the social processes, the concrete struggles within real social relations"[272].

Pollock constantly promotes historicism as we have seen, but apparently only her method according to her, seems to provide the best methodological approach. She fails to see that Nochlin's work, did start to promote a sociological alternative in looking at art history. It helps remind one Nochlin's words:

"Thus the question of women's equality – in art...-devolves not upon the relative benevolence or ill-will of individual men, nor the self-confidence or abjectness of individual women, but rather on the very nature of our institutional structures themselves and the view of reality which they impose on the human beings who are part of them"[273]

This is one of the strongest points of Nochlin's argument, which Pollock tends to take for granted, rather embarks in deconstructing feminist texts. Nochlin equally discourages dispassionate approaches which end up glorifying the individual thus the inevitable production of monograph upon which art history is based. When Pollock attacks Nochlin for encouraging feminists to dig up many women artists, she misinterprets again Nochlin's words. Instead Nochlin writes that there are various attempts on behalf of feminists to react to the fact that there have been no great women artists. "The first one is to rediscover forgotten women artists, dig up old

[271] Ibid., p. 35
[272] Ibid., p. 35
[273] Nochlin, Op. Cit. No. 8, p. 152

material and defend cases such as for example that Morisot was less dependent on Manet than what has already been stated"[274].

Although Nochlin states the importance of their project, (which is a project that Pollock herself has followed when producing monographs on Cassatt), she does claim that they "reinforce the question's negative implications"[275]. Furthermore Nochlin writes that wherever important female work has been produced in both artistic and literary fields, the individual works seem to have nothing to do with each other's work, rather they were closer to other artists and writers of their own period. So the promotion of a group consciousness when it comes to female works, although remaining in the realm of possibilities, not only has not occurred, but it is recognized that this homogenization cannot be applied. Nochlin was discussing these issues in 1971, nearly twenty years before Pollock's *Vision and Difference*. This refusal of homogenization Pollock herself dismisses[276], however giving no acknowledgment to Nochlin's writings. The paradox lies, as we have seen, in that Pollock applies this unconsciously in her methodologies, when reflecting social bourgeois spaces, depicted from a feminine perspective, thus homogenizing all female producers, under the 'woman experience'.

Nochlin correctly states that women did turn to domestic subjects in the past, for instance Cassatt and Morisot, but men did too, such as Chardin, Renoir and. For the promotion of a feminine character, which Pollock does constantly in her work, despite the sophisticated analysis of her argument, only manages to homogenize and

[274] Ibid., p. 147-8
[275] Ibid.

bring down women's work at a lower level, always portraying a style which can be equated the 'essential feminine'.

One finds it difficult to understand why feminist art historians, instead of trying to bring together their sources, discoveries, methodologies, and fight for a common purpose, one tries to deconstruct the other, and provide individual ways of looking at art history – Feminist or Marxist or both. I would like to agree here with Nochlin's comment on feminists. Nochlin writes

"The problem lies not so much with some feminists' concept of what femininity is, but rather with their misconception – shared with the public at large- of what art is: with the naïve idea that art is the direct, personal expression of individual emotional experience, a translation of personal life in to visual terms. Art is almost never that, great art never is."[277]

Pollock equally, dismisses Karen Wilson and J.J. Petersen, *In Women artists, recognition and reappraisal from the early middle ages to the twentieth century,* for offering an "illustrated biography without any assessment of the pictures as images or as cultural products. She writes,

"I am not convinced that the alternative should be a total refusal of any kind of art historical analysis and a rejection of every king of examination of the meanings of paintings and the contexts of their production. ... Yet the same sentimental celebration of heroic individual women who have struggled and overcome the odds against them in fact reproduces one of the central myths of art history - the artist"[278].

One has to remind oneself here, not only Pollock's two monographs on Cassatt and the contradiction they present, but also Pollock's own words when promoting

[276] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 55
[277] Nochlin, Op. Cit. No. 8, p. 149
[278] Pollock, Op. Cit. No. 31, p. 39

individual producers: "We must stress the heterogeneity of women's art work, the specificity of individual producers and products"[279]

For similar reasons Pollock calls Walter Sparrow's *Women Painters of the World*, (1905) chivalrous for neglecting "to acknowledge the existence and indeed special characteristics of women artists... managed none the less to consign women's art to a radically separate sphere.19th century distinction between the art produced by men and by women was based on bourgeois concepts of domestic and maternal femininity"[280]. However, Pollock does not take into account that when Sparrow was writing his text, feminist art history as such had not developed, and neither the social, political, economic etc. background had the sophistication it has achieved nearly one hundred years later. Also texts like Sparrow's, although they fail to assess the images as cultural products, however, have helped in providing basic information about female artists, (purely as a historiographical exercise), which was then to become available to scholars for a deeper analysis.

Finally, when addressing to Germaine Greer's *The Obstacle Race*, 1979, she openly scrutinizes it, describing it as "not so different from other feminist texts....She unquestionably employs the standard formalist type of art history combined with a well educated 'connoisseurship'. Like Petersen and Wilson, Greer treats woman as a transitional and unitary category"[281].

[279] Ibid., p. 55
[280] Ibid., p. 39
[281] Ibid., p. 39

Pollock makes the persuasive point that Greer instead of treating the study of images in order to gain knowledge about the history of culture, treats women painters in such a way as to show women's oppression. Pollock writes:

"The danger is that without a developed theory of ideology and the careful adaptation of psychoanalytic theory which feminists have recently used to help to explain the social production of a sexed subjectivity, Greer's book merely inverts Nochlin's stress on external constraints such as discrimination and places the emphasis on the internal restrictions of damaged egos"[282].

If Greer discards ideology at the expense of "internal restrictions of damaged egos", then one could argue that Pollock discards ideology at the expense of her feminist goal which has been the centre of her work. Pollock writes:

"...the relationship of Marxism and feminism art history is not a marriage (Hartman), not a cobbling together. It must be the fruitful raiding of Marxism for its explanatory instruments, for its analysis of the operations of bourgeois society and of bourgeois femininity and the forms of bourgeois mystification which mask the reality of social and sexual antagonisms and, denying us vision and voice, deprive us of power"

With this statement Pollock closes her text. But her method has failed her message. Even though she claims a social historical basis, her argument is heavily based on her (twentieth-century feminist) interpretations of the moods of the paintings. She also leaves open the question of the contemporary legibility of these statements, even if one accepts that Morisot and Cassatt intended them. As for the marriage of Marxism and Feminism, ideological disciplines that she has been trying to unite together, it is definitely an unhappy one. Pollock dismisses Marxism, throughout her work, although she employs its methods occasionally, such as reflection theory, without acknowledging it. Her heavily sophisticated analysis of the definition of art or women's art, or female producer's artwork, manages only to add to women's history, as most of the theories she applies had appeared before hand. However, Pollock tries to give her own explanation about the role of her work:

"My own work on feminism and art history was initially undertaken in a collective of women artists, craftswomen, writers, and historians. With Rozsika Parker I have written a book entitled *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (1981). The position from which we worked was in conflict with much existing feminist literature and art history. We do not think that the major issues for feminists in this discipline are the Jansons and Gombrichs. Nor do we think that recording the obstacles such as discrimination against women as explanation of their absence form the history books provides the answers we want. As Rozsika Parker commented in a review of Germaine Greer's *The Obstacle Race,* (1979): "It is not the obstacles that Germaine Greer that really count, but the rules of the game which demand scrutiny"[283]

[282] Ibid., p. 40
[283] Ibid., p. 23

CONCLUSION

I have tried to give an insight into the current conflicting literature of feminist art history. In agreeing that there women have been left out of knowledge, their position in society legally and socially depended upon men, and that women under capitalism have occupied particular positions in relation both to the labour market and the family, the female artist's role in the labour process has become an almost impossible task to achieve. Whether it was due to their exclusion from public spaces and their consequent lack of self image as pioneering bohemians, that women artists in the 19th century failed to develop the experimental drive of such artists such as Manet, or whether it was their identification of their art with that of the domestic spaces, thus producing second rate works of art, I believe we have to take the conflicting current feminist ideologies a step ahead, for the danger lies in homogenizing all kinds of women, thus providing a monodimensional way of looking and assessing history.

My research has led me to believe that neither gender or class on their own, can provide answers as to a successful examination of female modes of production. There is no doubt however that women's experience has been marked by the dominant ideological structure, which was unquestionably masculine. For the spectator has to take into account not only the social conditions of the production of artists, art critics, dealers, patrons etc., but also the social conditions of the production of a set of objects socially constituted as works of art (for instance the conditions of production of social agents such as museums, galleries, academies, which help to define and produce the value of works of art); it is these conditions that differentiate female and

male artistic production. The association of female artistic production with the term "accomplishments", as we have seen, the exclusion of women from entering life-drawing classes, the lack of training hence the choice of medium – that of watercolor instead of oil, hence the production of a lower status genre paintings, with subsequent limitations on exhibiting and represented by dealers who would not be able to find the right market for them, are all social conditions of production of female artists, imposed on them and created by men, over the course of thousand of years.

There is no doubt that it was women's sex that made them unsuccessful in even gaining access (at times) to means of production that would be unquestionably available to men. For example the 1850s saw a vast increase in the number of paintings about the issues that pre-occupied the middle classes, such as marriage, the role of women, emigration, domestic tragedy; these genres became popular because these classes were coming into being. It was fashionable to acquire culture and bring oneself up to the standard of aristocracy, in both Britain and France. Art and literature were the means for achieving that. However, when women tried to depict such subjects they would be patronized on most occasions or even dismissed, because of their position in society. The fact that people are much more familiar with *The Last of England,* by Ford Madox Brown, instead of Laura Herford's *The Littler Emigrant,* involves sets of social conditions that contribute to and form the final artistic product. When female artists tried to break away from the norm of domestic subjects the situation would become even more difficult for them. When Henrietta Ward, exhibited a historical genre picture called *Madame Jerichau's "Italy"*, (RA, 1860), it could even be preconceived by a contemporary critic based on the gender of the artist:

"Painted by a lady, it must be a nymph with bright and flowing hair, beset with all the sunny sweets of that luscious land?"[284]

It is unheard off that such an entry would take place in the case of a male artist. No critic would even start his critique by writing "Painted by a man".

Even in the construction of modernity, especially in France with the decline of the École des Beaux Arts (a monopolistic group with its own professional interest) and the Academy, which opened up art as a new sphere of collective insecurity as painters struggled to earn recognition as artists, women found themselves struggling even more than ever before. The new concept of genius in France equated artistic commitment with non-economic goals.

So when we are faced by a female product-work of art, this commitment would never be an issue, as the most successful women artists came usually from privileged backgrounds. It is their class in most cases that enabled them to become productive. Consequently, one could hardly agree here with the Marxist belief that private property and capital is the cause of women's oppression. Although, I have argued that it is their class that enabled them to get out of the house – with its familial and household character if we are to follow Barrett's view on the construction of the family. This is why I have tried to give another view on the subject of female production, through the existing feminist literature. I believe that if we are to analyze questions of art and power, female and male production, then we have to examine not only gender divisions but also class origin and family position, in relation to any field of art production.

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[284] *Art Journal*, London, 1869, p. 168

It is fruitless to exercise only one view or the other. For example if we are to take as model the role of family in the reproduction of capitalism in Gardiner's analysis, then we are going to be faced with the family serving as: the economic unit for the reproduction of classes from generation to generation; as a way of reproduction of the class structure socially and culturally; as one of the major area for socialization of children, and as playing a key role which has distinct implications for men and for women in the daily maintenance of the working class through both redistribution of wages in domestic labour[285]. However, according to Marxist ideals we have to add when talking of female artistic production, the artist's position within the family, the trajectory of the family within the class which they come from, and the position of the artists in terms of class or class fraction, and the artists's position in the area of cultural production. For Marxism helps us to understand, according to Hartmann, the structure of production, the generation of a particular occupational structure and the nature of a dominant ideology[286]. I hope that it is obvious that gender issues alone cannot give adequate answers to the above.

It is of no question that the involvement artists such Cassatt and Morisot had in the art market, and their obvious understanding of art as not just an aesthetic process but also as an economic one, puts them on an equal level professionally to that of their male colleagues. However this project has not been an attempt to provide an argument which will equate women's artistic production to men. Rather it has been a way of pointing out the difficulties in comprehending gender, Feminism and Feminist

[285] Gardiner, Op. Cit. No. 210, p. 156
[286] Hartmann, Op. Cit. No. 120, p. 8

Art history. I believe a combination of Marxist and radical approaches when looking at woman's changing position in the labour process and class structure through her role in the family, her position in it and her dependence on men, as well as her direct involvement in the labour process, (artistic) is a necessity and this fusion has yet to come.

While acknowledging our debt for their ground-breaking and their insights, the art history critiques of Marxism and radical feminism are necessarily self-limiting. They by definition impose their own intellectual structures upon a subject, which cannot be made to conform to a dogmatic polemical approach. Their contributions have been revolutionary. They have formed our acceptance of a feminist art history as an entity at all, but a multifaceted approach is the intellectually creative stage for fresh synthesis and perhaps more relevant multi - layered and accurate insights into this ever-shifting area of female creative activity.

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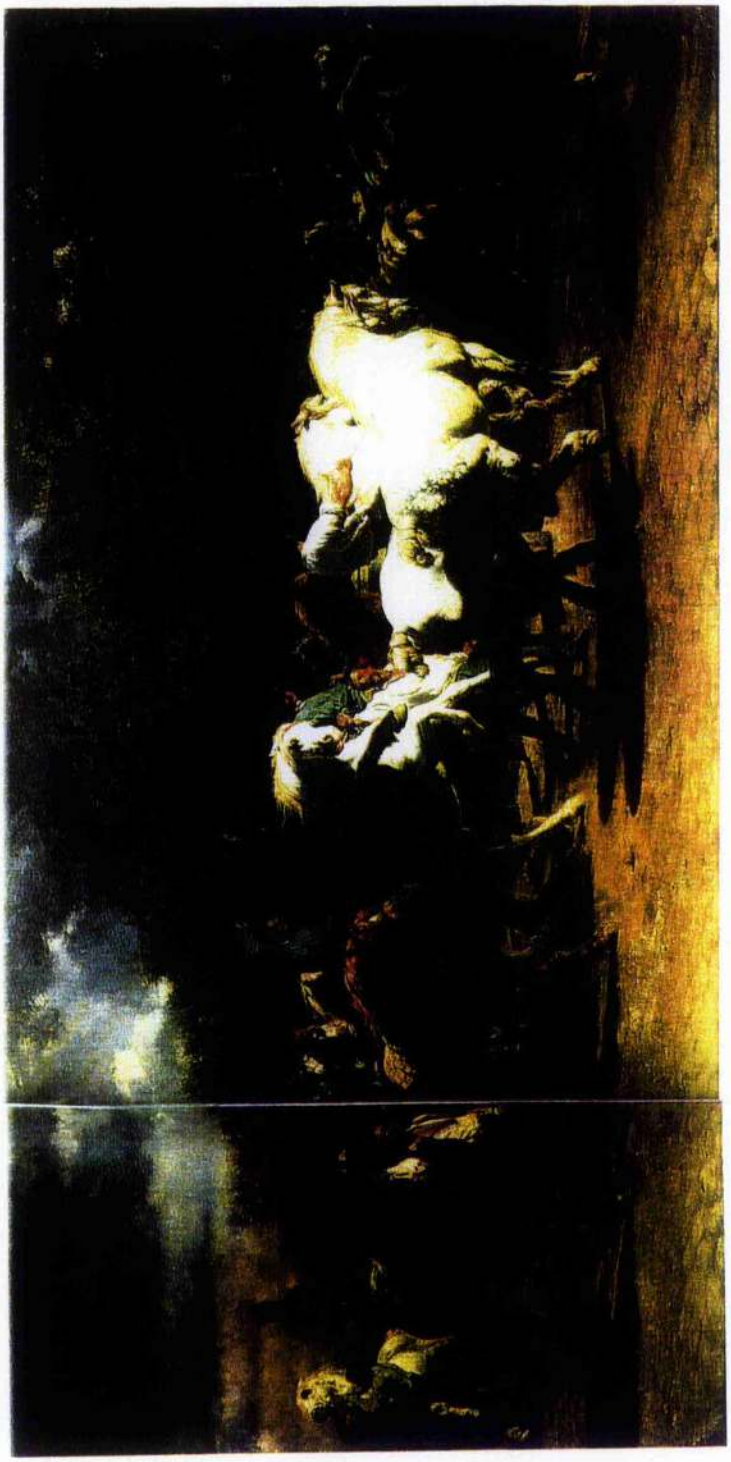
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

21. Gustave Caillebote, *Intérieur, or Intérieur, femme lisant, (Interior or Interior, woman reading),* 1880; oil on canvas; 65 × 80 cm.; Private Collection
22. Berthe Morisot, *The Harbour at Lorient*, 1869; oil on canvas; 43 × 72 cm.; National Gallery of Art, Washington (Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection)
23. Berthe Morisot, *On the Terrace*, 1874; oil on canvas; 45 ×54 cm.; Paris, Private Collection
24. Claude Monet, *The Garden of the Princess*, 1867; oil on canvas; 91.8 × 61.9 cm.; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio (R.T. Miller Jr. Fund, 48.296)
25. Berthe Morisot, *View of Paris from the Trocadero*, c. 1871-71; oil on canvas; 46.1 × 81.5 cm.; Collection of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California (Gift of Mrs Hugh N. Kirkland)
26. Édouard Manet, *Gare Saint-Lazare*, 1872-73; oil on canvas; 93 × 114 cm; National Gallery of Art, Washington (Gift of Horace Havemeyer in memory of his mother, Louise W. Havemeyer, 1956)
27. Gustave Caillebotte, *Woman at the window*, 1880; oil on canvas; 116 × 89 cm.; Private Collection
28. Gustave Caillebote, *Portrait of Mme Martial Caillebotte*, 1877; oil on canvas; Private Collection
29. John Singer Sargent, *Lady Agnew*, 1892-3; oil on canvas; 125.7 × 100.3 cm.; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh
30. Elizabeth Gardner, *Two Mothers*, Whereabouts unknown
31. William Merrit Chase, *A Friendly Call*, 1895; oil on canvas; 76.5 × 122.5 cm.; National Gallery of Art, Washington (Chester Dale Collection)
32. Mary Cassatt, *Young girl in a blue armchair*, 1878; oil on canvas; 89 ×130 cm.; National Gallery of Art, Washington (collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon)
33. Berthe Morisot, *Reading*, 1873; oil on canvas; 45.1 × 72.4 cm.; The Cleveland Museum of Art (Gift of the Hanna Fund)
34. Mary Cassatt, *Lois Cassatt at a Tapestry Frame*, c. 1888; pastel; 81.3 × 63.5 cm.; Private Collection
35. James McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Black No. 8: Mrs Alexander Cassatt*, 1883-5; oil on canvas; 191 × 90.8; Private Collection

PLATES

1.

A PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF A DAUGHTER OF THIRTEEN.



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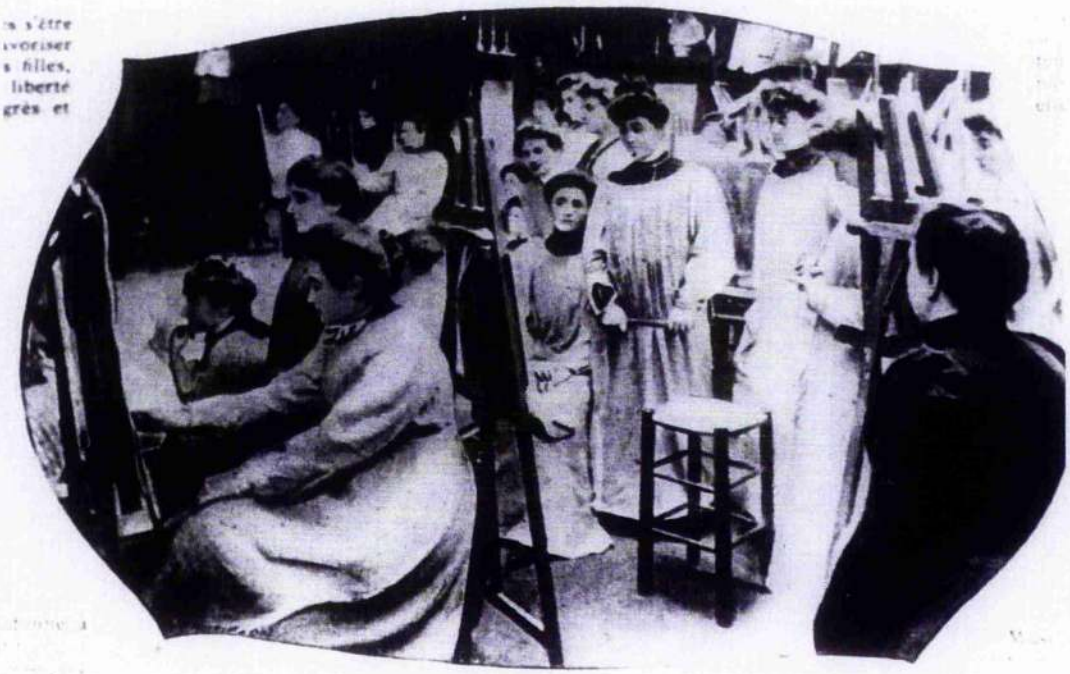

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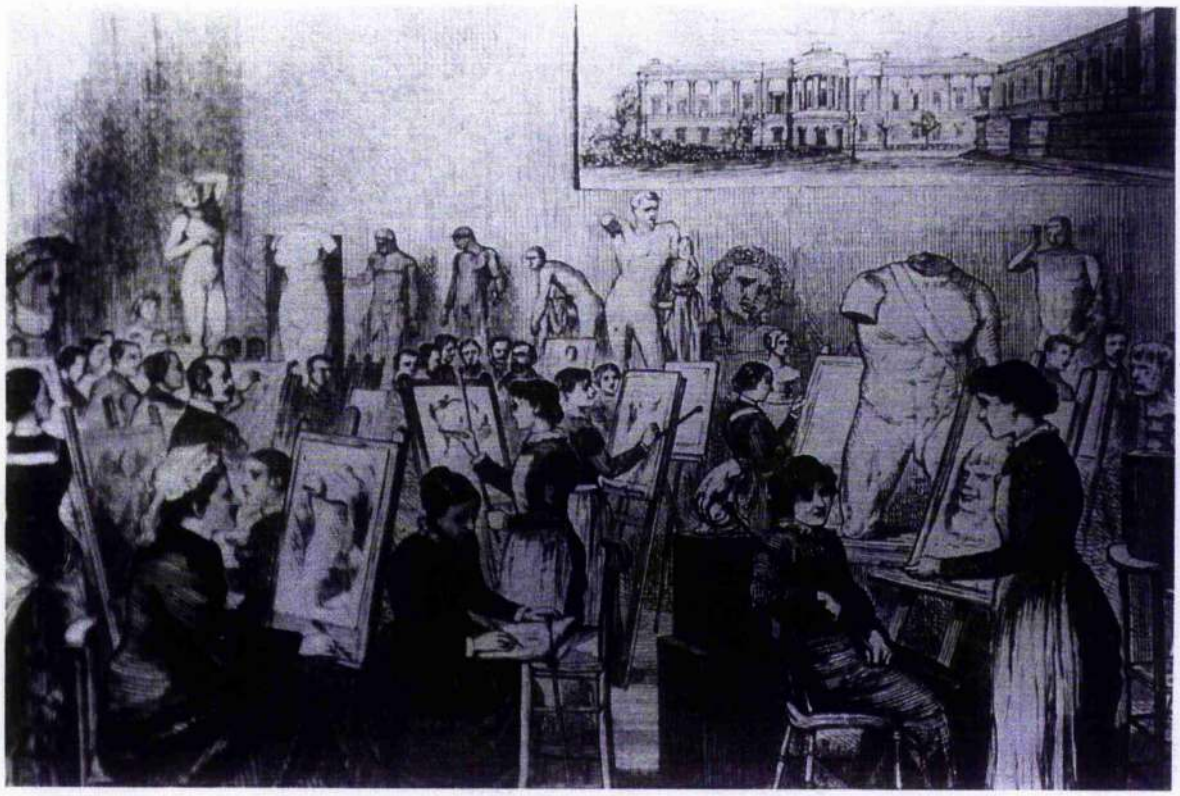

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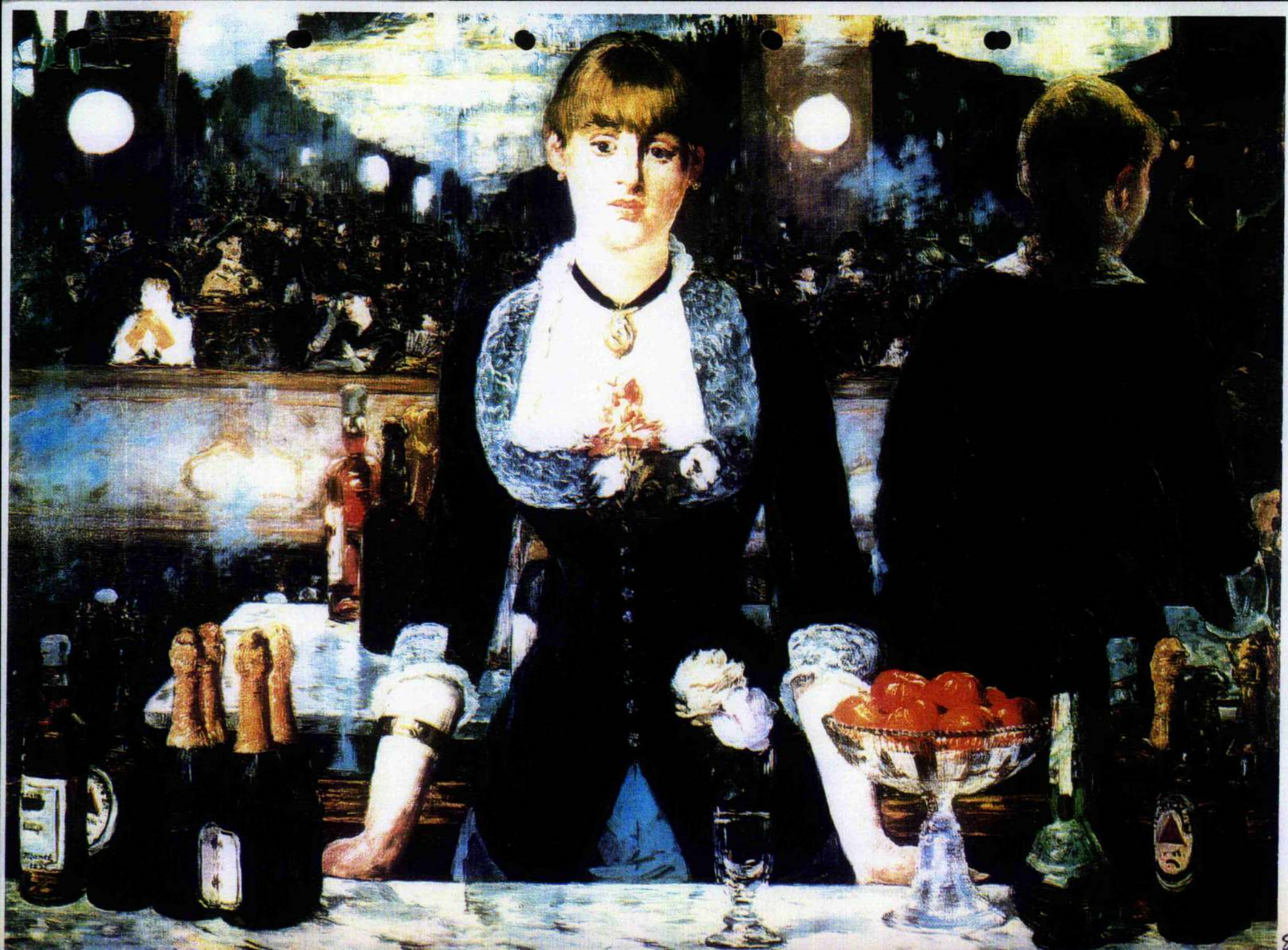

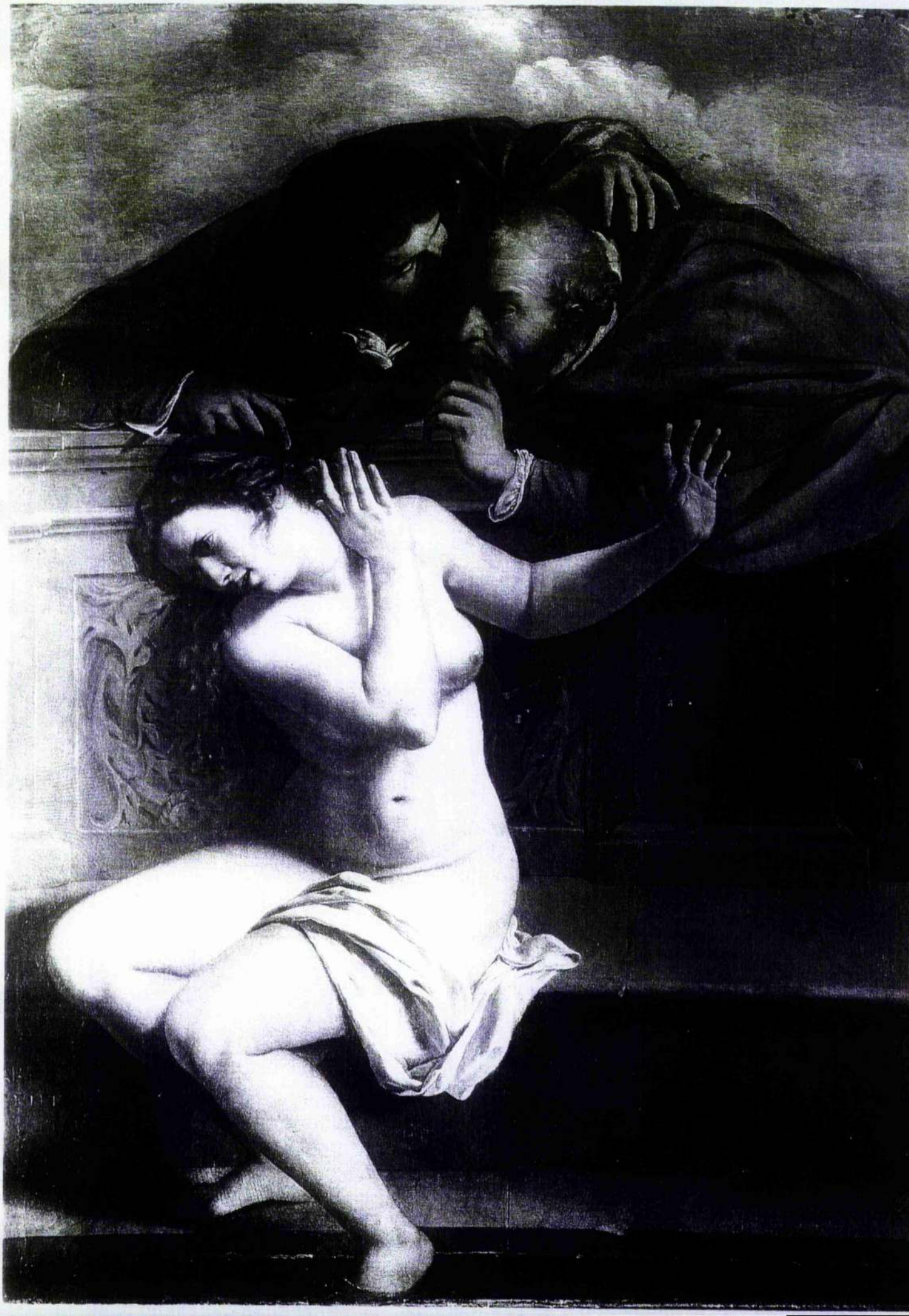

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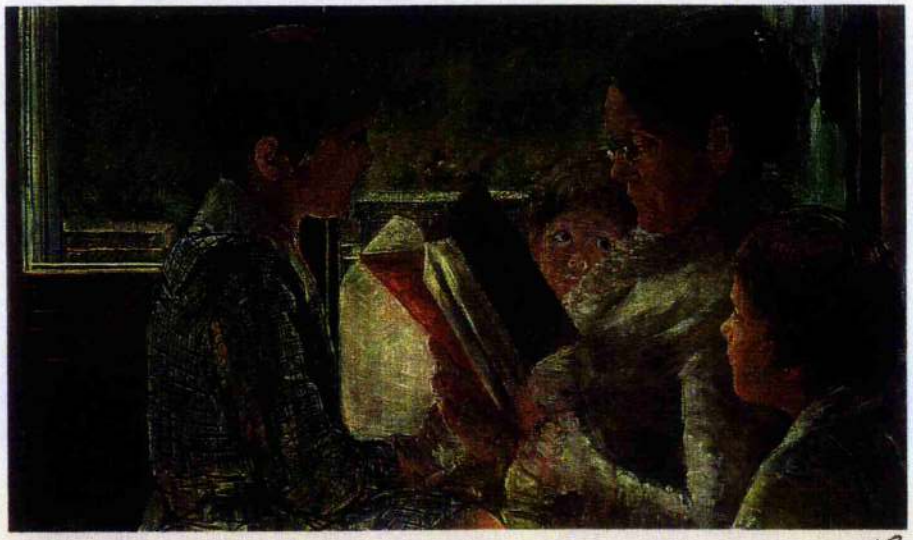

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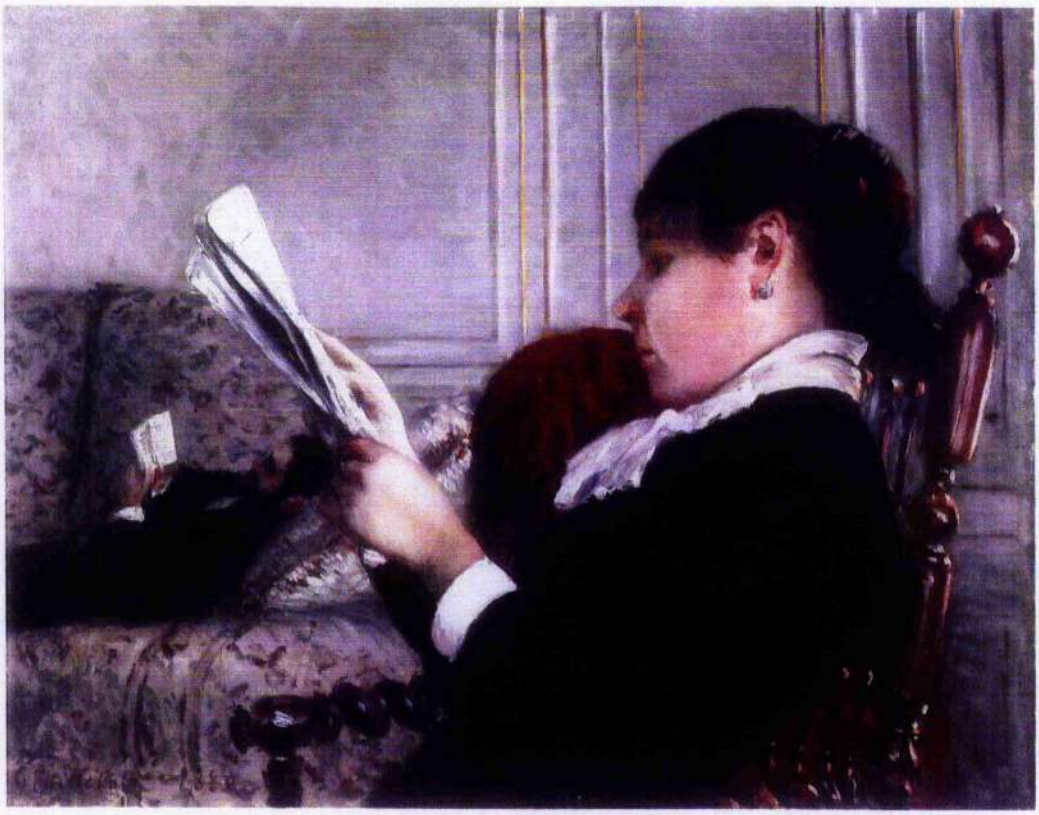

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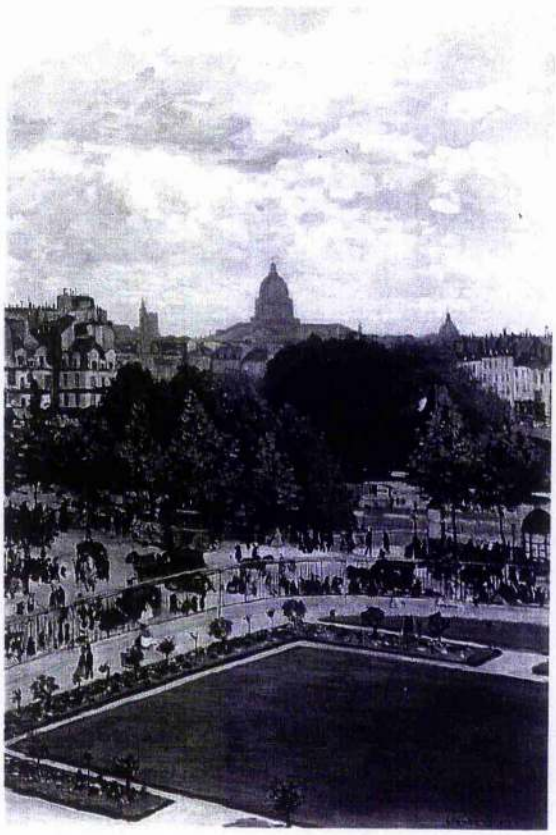

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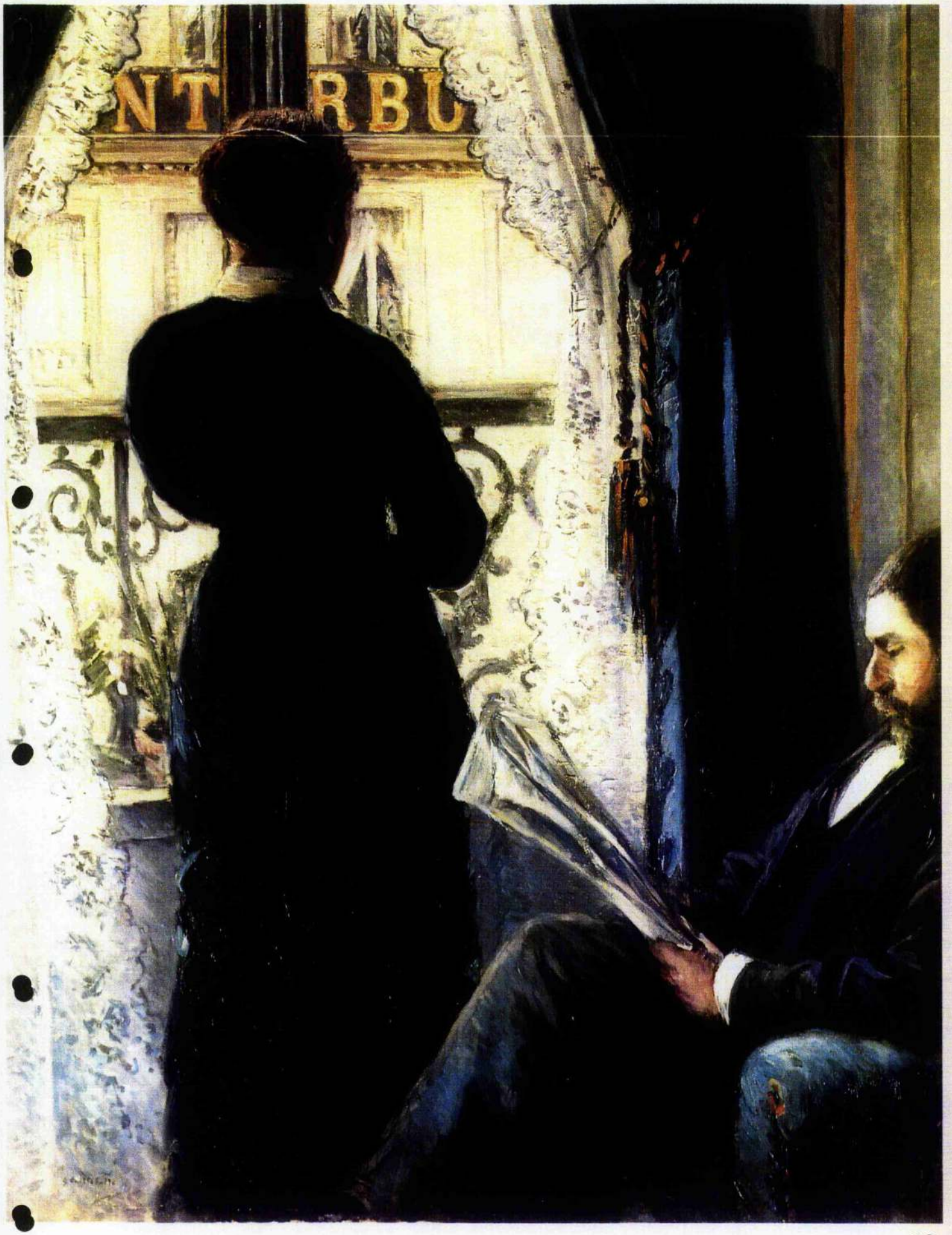
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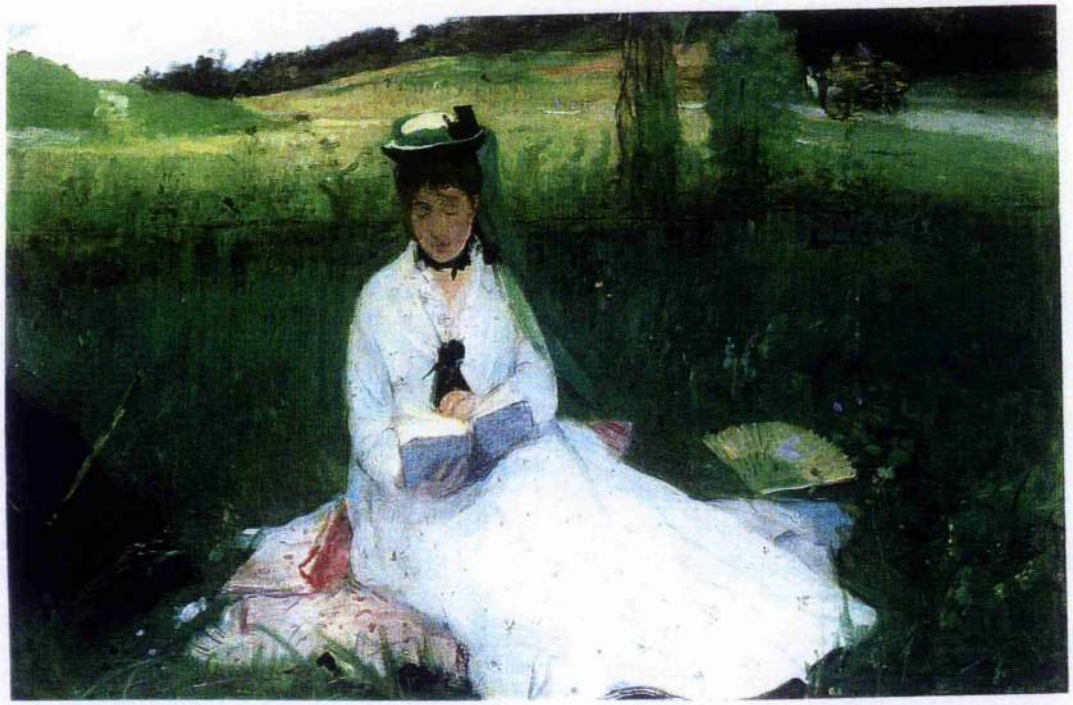

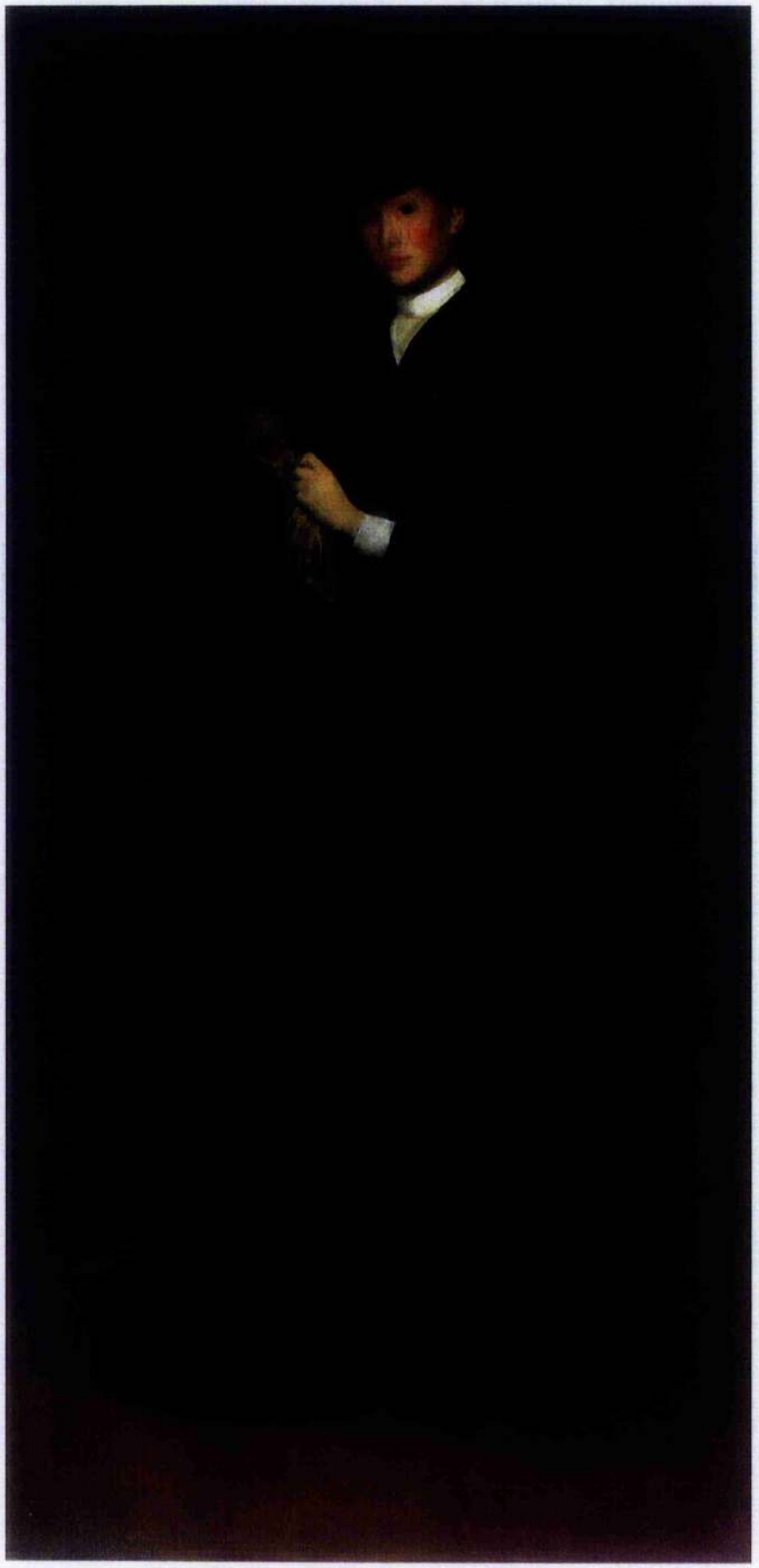

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