Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman
Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman
Painting and the Novel in France and Britain, 1800–1860

Alexandra K. Wettlaufer
Dedicated with the deepest love and admiration
to my mother, Gail Summerfield Ker; my grandmothers,
Jessie Angus Summerfield, Virginia Penn Wettlaufer,
and Emily Warren Wettlaufer; my great-grandmothers,
Isobel Macdonald Angus and Irene Taylor Wettlaufer;
and my great great-aunt, Margaret Macdonald Brown—
women who inspired my love of art, language, literature, and travel,
and without whom this book would never have been written.
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This book is the result of the enormous generosity and support of several institutions and innumerable friends. Initial research was begun on a fellowship at the Clark Art Institute, where conversations with Tamar Garb, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Michael Ann Holly, Mark Ledbury, and the rest of the fellows and staff helped me bring the project into focus and start to wrestle with ways to deal with painting and literature in a single study. A subsequent residency at the National Humanities Center as a Florence Gould Foundation Fellow allowed me to write the bulk of the text in the most glorious and supportive setting I could ever imagine. I extend my heartfelt gratitude and affection to the NHC administration and staff for their tireless help and constant good cheer: Kent Mullikin, Geoffrey Harpham, Lois Whittington, Josiah Drewry, Eliza Robertson, Jean Houston, Karen Carroll, Josh Bond, Joel Elliott, Sarah Payne, and Marie Brubaker made my year in North Carolina as productive as it was enjoyable. My colleagues at the NHC gave new meaning to the word fellowship, and this project benefited in more ways than I can ever repay from the friendships, support, and inspiration they offered. My deepest thanks to Allison Keith, Stephen Rupp, Louise Meintjes, Maud Ellmann, John Wilkinson, Mary Ellis Gibson, Amelie Rorty, Isabel Wünsche, Judith Farquhar, Kate Flint, Beth Helsinger, Ellen Garvey, Terry Smith, Erdag Goknar, Tim Kircher, and
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To my husband, Art, and my children, Walker and Isabelle, who supported me throughout, I offer my endless gratitude and love.
In 1859, the critic and historian Elizabeth Fries Lummis Ellet published *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries* in London and New York. Addressing what she perceived as a lacuna in contemporary intellectual history, Ellet staked her claim as the first to chart women’s contributions to the arts as she observed “I do not know that any work on Female Artists—either grouping them or giving a general history of their productions—has ever been published.”1 The following year, Léon Lagrange’s “On the Rank of Women in the Arts” (“Du rang des femmes dans les arts”) appeared in the prestigious *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and similarly traced the history of women artists, including Marietta Robusti, Lavinia Fontana, Artemisia Gentileschi, Marguerite Van Eyck, and Angelica Kauffman, as well as a number of French painters and sculptors, from the preceding centuries to the present day. This pair of studies cites the careers and production of female visual artists for decidedly different ends: where Ellet seeks to encourage women in their pursuit of an artistic profession, Lagrange offers reassurance to his anxious male cohort that, despite the proliferation of the femme artiste, “male genius has nothing to fear” for “woman is content with the second rank as long as the wages for her inferior labor suffice to procure her the means to pleasure.”2 Taken together, these works by Ellet and Lagrange bear witness to the ongoing reconfiguration of the field of cultural production in nineteenth-century France and Britain, as women artists forged a new collective identity in the public sphere. By 1860, it would

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seem the once anomalous female painter had become a recognized figure in the cultural landscape.

In *Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman* I trace the construction of this identity from the turn of the century, when a female painter was, in Mary Sheriff’s phrase, an “exceptional woman,” to 1860, when the figure was established and “unexceptional” enough to merit both a history and a dismissal, reflecting female pride and male anxiety over her accomplishments. In this comparative and interdisciplinary exploration of the female visual artist in France and Britain, I focus on female painters: Gabrielle Capet, Adrienne Grandpierre-Deverzy, Marie-Amélie Cogniet, Caroline Thévenin, Rolinda Sharples, Mary Ellen Best, Anna Mary Howitt, Hortense Haudebourg-Lescot, and Margaret Gillies, and novels about female painters: Marceline Desbordes-Valmore’s *L’Atelier d’un peintre* (1833), Sydney Owenson’s *The Princess* (1835), Angélique Arnaud’s *Clémence* (1841), Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), Anna Mary Howitt’s *Sisters in Art* (1852), and George Sand’s *Elle et lui* (1858). In approaching this figure from two perspectives, I want to consider the larger questions of female artistic self-fashioning in the nineteenth century and uncover what the particular resonance of the painter may have been within the cultural contexts of Britain and France. To this end I read both paintings and novels in terms of their dialogues with each other, with contemporary male artistic production, and with the politics of gender, nation, and identity in France and Britain during the first half of the century.

My readings of these nineteenth-century women are profoundly shaped by the work of a number of twentieth-century women, who, in the spirit of Elizabeth Ellet, sought to reclaim a place for women in the history of art. Starting with Linda Nochlin’s groundbreaking essay, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (1971), feminist scholars have reconfigured our understanding of the relationship between gender, power, representation, and the artistic canon—who can be trained as an artist, whose paintings will be exhibited, reviewed, purchased, considered “Art,” who will be included in museums and history books—and helped us reconsider the very ideas of “great” and “artist.” Following Nochlin’s lead, a number of feminist scholars have, in the course of the past few decades, established the explicit links between vision, art, representation, and the politics of gender in the nineteenth century. In *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and the Histories of Art* (1988), Griselda Pollock combined feminism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis in a series of essays that reflected the theories of Foucault, Lacan, Williams, and others, asserting that “Art history itself is to be understood as a series of representational practices which actively produce definitions of sexual difference and contribute to the present configuration of sexual politics and power relations.” She later added (following Julia Kristeva) that “Aesthetic practices shift meaning, undo fixities
and can make a difference” and asked us to “read for inscriptions of the feminine—which do not come from a fixed origin, this female painter, that woman artist, but from those working within the predicament of femininity in phallocentric cultures in their diverse formations and varying systems of representation.” In Sisters of the Brush: Women’s Artistic Culture in Late Nineteenth-Century Paris (1994), Tamar Garb set out to “rewrite an old narrative from a new perspective” through the history of the Union des Femmes Peintres et Sculpteurs founded in Paris in 1881. Chronicling the “constructions of subjectivity, sociability, and national identity” in the lives and works of women artists at the fin-de-siècle, Garb demonstrated the role of (often utopian) collectivity and sisterhood in the professionalization of the female artist in France, closely tied to the rise of feminism and the campaigns for women’s education. In a similar vein, Deborah Cherry’s Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists (1993) traces the struggles over female professionalism in Britain, where “Women artists were located in asymmetrical and unequal relations to art education, art administration, and professional status.” In documenting the social conditions of female artistic production, representation, spectatorship, and signification, Cherry strove to “counter prevailing assumptions in the west that individuality as well as artistic creativity are masculine. Writing women artists into the history of art has necessitated a reformulation of the discipline since the old paradigms work to silence or marginalize women artists” (212–13). Cherry’s subsequent study, Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850–1900 (2000), maps “a visual culture in which art collided with politics, visual representation with political representation ( . . . ) Painting and sculpture as much as comic drawings became a battleground for intense debates about the role of women in contemporary society.” At the same time, Cherry notes, “women’s art and feminism were inextricably intertwined: speech on one invariably incited discourse on the other” (9).

Studies of individual women painters, such as Mary Garrard’s Artemisia Gentileschi (1989), Anne Higonnet’s Berthe Morisot’s Images of Women (1992), and Mary Sheriff’s The Exceptional Woman: Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art (1996), as well as those centered upon groups of women painters, including Pamela Gerrish Nunn’s Canvassing (1986), and Nunn and Jan Marsh’s Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists (1988), have also been influential on my own work as they locate individual female artistic production within a cultural context that reveals not only the powerful forces of ideology and the gendering of genius, but also the forms of resistance, subversion, and resilience manifested in women’s art. Finally, Abigail Solomon-Godeau’s Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation (1997) provides a critical model of gender studies, demonstrating that “visual culture is not only gendered, but actively productive of gender ideology,” and thus that “the image of ideal manhood is as much a
product of fantasy, and certainly of ideology, as the more familiar icons of eroti-
cized femininity." These scholars, and numerous others quoted throughout this study, set the stage for my own intervention in the field.

By the same token, literary and cultural critics have also shaped my readings of the visual and verbal texts in Portraits of an Artist as a Young Woman. Most notably, Mary Poovey’s work on gender, ideology, and women’s professions in Uneven Developments, Nancy Armstrong’s political history of the novel, Desire and Domestic Fiction, Dorothy Mermin’s study of Victorian women authors in Godiva’s Ride, and Anne K. Mellor’s extensive work on Romanticism, gender, and nation contributed to my approaches to British cultural production. Margaret Waller’s The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel opened up radical new ways for us to read the Romantic hero, while Christine Planté’s La Petite Soeur de Balzac: Essai sur la femme auteur and Naomi Schor’s body of work on the nineteenth-century novel in France provided both practical and theoretical inspiration for my interpretations. Margaret Cohen’s research on the sentimental, Realist, and transatlantic novels was formative in my own conceptions of these genres, while Janet Wolff’s interdisciplinary work on women and culture was also influential. Pierre Bourdieu’s theories of the field of cultural production and of cultural capital are fundamental to my analyses, as are Jacques Rancière’s formulations of politics and aesthetics (to be discussed below). Finally, Richard Terdiman’s Discourse/Counter-Discourse has provided a paradigmatic point de départ for all of my work.

By expanding the purview of my study of the figure of the woman artist to a doubly comparative praxis and examining both the real and the fictitious female painter—thus, both painting and the novel—in both France and Britain, I hope to continue to push our understandings of nineteenth-century culture, gender, and representation in new directions, much as I believe the authors and painters in Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman hoped to do. As Antonia Losano asserts in The Woman Painter in Victorian Literature (2008), I believe that “these two media of female aesthetic production [i.e., painting and literature] are intimately connected in myriad ways.” Losano’s fine contribution, published just as I was finishing this manuscript, shares many of the concerns of my own work, most specifically in its use of “the figure of the woman painter as a kind of Foucauldian ‘dense transfer point’ of power relations to engage with and intervene in the symbolic economies of gender (in particular those that underpinned the discourses of aesthetics, sexual desire, and professional identity) that were at work during the nineteenth century” (2). However, where Losano focuses exclusively on novels representing women painters and their scenes of ekphrasis in Victorian England, my study encompasses both of the sister arts in France as well as Britain; thus women’s painting is not simply a theme, but an equally important area of inquiry and analysis. By pairing paint-
ing and literature in a single study, my goal is to highlight the dialogic context in which these novels and paintings were produced and consumed, and to map out aesthetic and political intersections in women's history in the arts that are too often elided by the disciplinary boundaries of study (English, French, Art History, etc.). By considering works from both France and Britain, two distinct but closely related cultures, I focus on a pair of nations engaged in ongoing artistic dialogues of rivalry and influence. France and Britain were arguably the dominant cultures of the nineteenth century in art (literary and visual), as well as in politics, and the incipient women's movement developed in multifaceted, multidirectional dialogue across the Channel. In portraying a sister in the sister art of painting, these novelists establish a collective identity for women artists that seeks to transcend the boundaries of the individual genres of expression, and in this sense these “portraits of the artist” are also self-portraits of the female writer. In order to distinguish between the collective sense of artist as artistic creator (poet, novelist, painter, sculptor, composer, etc.) and the more specific meaning of artist as painter, I will use “visual artist” to denote the painter and “artist” to signal both authors and painters together.

The very premise of this study—that we can and should examine women's painting and novels together, rather than separately—raises, of course, questions of “legitimacy” and methodological “moonlighting.”13 In my two previous books I have rehearsed many of the arguments for and against interdisciplinary inquiry, from Jean Hagstrom’s “pictorialist tradition” in The Sister Arts (1958) and Norman Bryson’s structuralist Word and Image (1981) to Murray Kreiger’s Ekphrasis (1992) and James Heffernan’s Museum of Words (1993).14 But here, as in Pen vs. Paintbrush, I am less interested in formal or thematic comparisons between the two disciplines than I am in trying to “connect different aspects and dimensions of cultural experience,” as W. J. T. Mitchell succinctly puts it (1994, 87). Specifically, I am interested in the relations between the genres, with their attendant anxieties, hierarchies, and negotiations for power, and the role played by gender in these relations. Following Mitchell, I believe that “comparison itself is not a necessary procedure in the study of image-text relations. The necessary subject matter is, rather, the whole ensemble of relations between media, and relations can be many other things besides similarity, resemblance, and analogy. Difference is just as important as similarity, antagonism as crucial as collaboration, dissonance and division of labor as interesting as harmony and blending of function” (1994, 89–90; original emphases).

Thus, during a period like the nineteenth century, when the field of cultural production was being actively reconfigured and the “sisterhood of the arts” or “la fraternité des arts” was a widely embraced credo in Britain and France, an interdisciplinary approach enables us to analyze both “the aesthetic norms of the period,”15 according to Wendy Steiner, and the historical valences of the
forms as they were (dialectically) constructed by authors, painters, critics, and the consuming public. As articulated by Romantic artists, the theoretical sorority between the arts allowed for shared inspiration and borrowings between the separate genres of visual, verbal, and musical expression, eliding differences in form for a commonality of content. Yet, as Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger* indicates, this same period was also characterized by an anxious desire to classify, quantify, and purify, eschewing what Douglas terms “pollution” for clear borders and boundaries that assert and maintain difference. Indeed, as I have argued elsewhere, the relationship between the sister arts in the nineteenth century came far closer to sibling rivalry than the idealized images of *fraternité* might imply, as the separate genres struggled for domination rather than parity.16 Of particular interest for this study is the way in which metaphors of artistic sisterhood were appropriated by women painters and authors in the nineteenth century to signal border crossings that both recognized and resisted contemporary ideologies that defined both gender and genre in terms of purity and difference. Using the trope of the “sisterhood of the arts,” women crossed boundaries of gender, genre, and nation to posit new models of artistic and social identity based on equality rather than hierarchy. If male authors portrayed painting as a “feminized” form in its silent materiality, women artists in both media embraced this gendering of genre to claim a place in the field of cultural production, while at the same time destabilizing the very structures of difference.

While Ellet’s *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries* may have been the first comprehensive history of women artists, between 1829 and 1860 no fewer than nine authors in Britain and France had devoted novels to the figure of the female painter.17 Nor was Lagrange alone, for the critics of female visual artists had steadily increased in number and vehemence as well, reaching an apotheosis in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Marble Faun* (1860), a tale positing the dangers of female sculptors in Rome—women whose very gazes are linked with death and destruction.18 It is clear that for Ellet (who published *Women of the American Revolution* a decade earlier), as for Lagrange, Hawthorne, and indeed for all of the authors to be discussed here, the figure of the female artist was politically charged, carrying ideological resonance as a transgressive figure of difference and potential disruption. From the outset of the nineteenth century, women in Britain and France had entered the field of cultural production in small but still significant numbers and gradually begun claiming a place for themselves, however tenuous, in exhibitions, publications, and the public imagination. While their presence contributed to the reconfiguration of the artistic field, the social
ramifications and symbolism of the female painter (real and fictional) reached beyond the art world to contribute to the ideological reconfiguration of women’s representation and subjecthood in the nineteenth century in myriad ways. The six novels examined here appeared between 1830 and 1860, a period that coincides with the rise of French and British feminism, and both the paintings and fiction reflect contemporary ideas of female equality and the struggle for a position for women in the public sphere. At the same time, I will argue, these works of art singularly and collectively helped to shape new conceptions of female subjectivity and professionalism.

Ellet’s and Lagrange’s reflections on the female artist at midcentury provide useful insights into some of the complex issues surrounding this controversial figure. Ellet begins her work in a resolutely political vein, for her goal is not only to trace the careers of women artists of the past, but to shape the lives and reception of women artists of the future as well. She explains, “Should the perusal of my book inspire with courage and resolution any woman who aspires to overcome difficulties in the achievement of honorable independence, or should it lead to a higher general respect for the powers of women and their destined position in the realm of Art, my object will be accomplished” (vi). Invoking “the struggles and trials, the persevering industry and the well-earned triumphs” (vi) of women artists across temporal and national borders, Ellet crafts an image of art as a battleground and proposes a collective identity through gender that is stronger than historical or national ties. In a period of individual and national identity building, this is a significant move. But even more striking is Ellet’s effort to recraft the very history of art itself, demonstrating its constructed nature (via inclusion and exclusion) and expanding the field to include both a gender and genres traditionally situated outside of the boundaries of Art.

From the opening chapter, Ellet validates ornament and craft as forms of artistic expression, thus elevating their practitioners, in a Ruskinian vein, from anonymous artisans to forgotten artists. She maintains:

From the early days of the world, too, spinning and weaving were feminine employments, in which undying germs of art were hidden . . . The ancient sepulchres and buried palaces disclosed by modern discovery display the love of adornment prevailing among the nations of antiquity. Women rendered assistance in works upon wood and metal, as well as, more frequently, in the production of the loom. The fair Egyptians covered their webs with the most delicate patterns; and the draperies of the dead and the ornamented hangings in their dwellings attested the skills of the women of Assyria and Babylon . . .

The shawls and carpets of Eastern manufacture, and other articles of luxury that furnished the palaces of European monarchs, were often the work of
delicate hands, though no tradition has preserved the names of those who excelled in such labors. (23)

In Ellet’s revisionist history, the “germs of art” are found in ancient female production, while the frequently idealized art of antiquity derived its beauty from female adornment. Uncovering these “hidden” roots, buried in sepulchers and forgotten through the ages, Ellet expands the definition of art to encompass shawls, carpets, and draperies, while setting weaving, engraving, and etching on par with sculpture, architecture, and painting. Dismantling the restrictive hierarchies of genre to include what were considered artisanal crafts alongside “high art,” Ellet uses the authority of the past to validate her agenda for the present, opening up ways for the attendant hierarchies of gender, which linked women to craft and men to art, also to be revised. The lengthy study also addresses historical factors for the “Barrenness” of many centuries in female artists, the lack of artistic education for women throughout the ages, and biographies of more than a hundred women painters and sculptors from the medieval Sabina von Steinbach to the contemporary American Harriet Hosmer. Pushed to the margins by history, Ellet’s female artists and their production “in All Ages and Countries” are shown to be a generative or germinating force behind creation, as well as artists in their own right, and thus central to a comprehensive understanding of the art of yesterday and today. It is only, though, in reading the past with new eyes (guided by a female author) that the hidden role of female visual artists becomes once again visible.

Ellet’s rhetorical and political strategies of inclusion present a subversion of what Derrida has identified as the “law of genre.” As he explains, the very concept of genre itself is predicated on the notion of limits, with attendant rules and exclusions. He contends:

As soon as the word ‘genre’ is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind: “Do,’ ‘Do not’ says ‘genre,’ the word ‘genre,’ the figure, the voice or the law of ‘genre.’ And this can be said of genre in all genres, be it a question of a generic or a general determination of what one calls ‘nature’ or physis (for example, a biological genre in the sense of gender, of the human genre, a genre of all that is general), or be it a question of a typology designated as non-natural and depending on laws or orders which were once held to be opposed to physis according to those values associated with technè, thesis, nomos (for example, an artistic, poetic, or literary genre). But the whole enigma of genre springs perhaps most closely from within this limit between the two genres of genre.19
These naturalized laws of human and artistic genre, where “one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly, or monstrosity” (57) effectively serve to organize the world through exclusion and difference, for what is defined as “human,” “male,” or “art” depends on its not being “animal,” “female,” or “artisanal.” The blurring of the boundaries of genre, and by extension gender, is thus experienced as an assault on the very identity of those on either side of the divide. Indeed, Lagrange comments on the perception that the myriad “rapins en jupons” (art students in skirts) would represent “for male artists, a veritable danger” (39) and ends his article with the hope that the existence of the femme artiste will ultimately “provoke among the men of our generation a return to those male virtues which their honor has so readily forsaken” (43). Just as Fredric Jameson has demonstrated that literary and artistic genres are essentially “institutions, or social contracts” between artist and audience, Judith Butler and others have exposed the institutional and performative nature of gender. For the female authors and painters in this study, the disruption of the nineteenth-century institutions of genre, from its taxonomic sense of gender to its macro level (art/not-art) and micro level (novel/poem/play and history painting/portrait/still life, etc.) entailed both social and aesthetic border crossings that sought radically to reconfigure the politics of art and identity.

Indeed, if genres “contribute to the social structuring of meaning” and “actively generate and shape knowledge of the world,” by disrupting and reconfiguring artistic genres—the Romantic novel, the studio scene, the national tale, the Romantic portrait—women proposed new ways of seeing and understanding art, society, and gender, expanding the horizons of expectation for readers and viewers to include the image of a female creator. Following Todorov, Derrida, and Jameson, John Frow explains that genre is “a form of symbolic action . . . that makes things happen” (2); bound up with “the exercise of power, where power is understood as being exercised in discourse,” genres “create effects of reality and truth, authority and plausibility” (2). At the same time, genres necessarily “belong to an economy,” Frow tells us: “a set of interdependent positions that organize the universe of knowledge and value” (4–5), positions that are constantly changing and evolving in relation to one another. Unstable and performative, “genres exist only in relation to other genres” (Frow 4), so our understanding of the dominant genres of nineteenth-century French and British cultural production—painting and literature, Romanticism and Realism—ultimately depends on a more dialectical and dialogic reading of the noncanonical alongside the canonical and including women’s voices and visions within the larger narrative of the period. Yet the questions remains, why did so many women choose to write novels about painters?
Vision, Visuality, and Visibility in the Nineteenth Century:
ART AND POLITICS

The nineteenth century was the era of the visual and what Baudelaire dubbed “le culte des images”:23 in this age of exposition, the French and British publics negotiated their knowledge of the world through panoramas, spectacles, galleries, museums, magic lanterns, stereoscopes, and displays large and small that came to shape ways of conceptualizing self and other as well as the physical universe.24 This “frenzy of the visible,” to borrow Jean-Louis Comolli’s redolent phrase,25 was further stoked by the proliferation of illustrated books and journals, exhibitions, photographs, prints, reproductions, and paintings, all of which were circulated, reproduced, and/or displayed for unprecedented numbers of visual consumers.26 Caricatures, physiologies, and illustrated guidebooks further asserted the power of images to categorize and contain an increasingly mystified and mystifying world. If the period from the French Revolution through the reign of Victoria was dominated by acts and metaphors of active seeing, it was equally a period of “being seen.” From Balzac and Dickens to Foucault, the social imaginary was haunted by the specter of the “unseen seer” gazing upon the unconscious citizenry in anxiety-inducing iterations of panopticism.27 As Walter Benjamin affirmed, this was a century dominated by “the activity of the eye.”28

Yet as David Peters Corbett reminds us, “the visual is not an innocent category,”29 for it is constructed and shaped in and by culture and history. Visuality, like ideology, reflects dominant discourses of subjectivity—who can see and who or what can be seen, invisibly reinforcing ideologies of gender, class, and power. In choosing the figure of the female painter as the focus of their novels, the authors I will examine self-consciously claimed the subject position of the viewer for women, disrupting the gendered structures of the gaze that sought to relegate women to the silent and passive role of bearer rather than maker of meaning. Laura Mulvey’s influential formulation for narrative cinema holds true for the perceived dynamics of vision in the nineteenth century: where men were understood to embody active looking, women were understood to be “simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.”30 Yet as the novels and paintings to be discussed in the following chapters will illustrate, these gendered dynamics were neither as simple nor as absolute as has been asserted. Significant numbers of women artists worked within and against these structures of the gaze to claim a (contested) subject position and the radical image of a female subject representing the world presented an unmistakable challenge to social and aesthetic ideologies with a canny nod to the power of vision. The painters in Owenson’s The Princess, Brontë’s The Tenant of Wildfell
Hall, and Arnaud’s Clémence, for example, are active observers, watching and portraying men who cannot see them, constructing meaning as well as images, while passive and unseeing men are found in nearly every text. The heroine of Desbordes-Valmore’s L’Atelier d’un peintre sees far more than her famous uncle or the male students in the studio, while Sand’s Thérèse in Elle et lui achieves two-fold success as an artist and a mother; her lover, a Romantic genius, is doomed to failure and solitude. Anna Mary Howitt’s trio of painters in Sisters in Art achieve perfect harmony in their collaborative creations and establish a school for future generations of female artists, anticipating Ellet’s gesture to women considering a professional career.

At the same time, vision and visibility function on a larger metaphoric level as ways of defining the very parameters of inclusion, exclusion, and legitimacy within a culture. As Jacques Rancière explains in The Politics of Aesthetics, politics “revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of space and the possibilities of time,” while aesthetics is “the system of a priori forms determining what presents itself to sense experience. It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience.” Following Rancière’s formulations, art can play a political role within a social structure by creating new forms of intelligibility and rendering visible and “sayable” that which had been previously unintelligible, invisible, unsayable. The introduction of a critical mass of artworks by female artists about female artists collectively opened up new spaces in the social sphere of nineteenth-century France and Britain, reframing what could be perceived in the present.

Throughout his works, Rancière links politics and aesthetics in ways that inform my own readings of these nineteenth-century images and texts as social interventions. In particular, his theory of the “distribution of the sensible” (le partage du sensible) provides insights into the ways in which the “visible” functions on both a literal and metaphoric level to represent social and cultural legitimacy. Rancière explains that the “conditions of intelligibility” within a culture are determined by a “system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it” (PA 12). In other words, the distribution of the sensible functions as a system of laws that define what is intelligible—what can be seen, heard, understood—for a culture and what lies beyond the limits of intelligibility or perception. In keeping with the double sense of partager, meaning both to share and to divide, the partage du sensible determines social, aesthetic, and ideological legitimacy through inclusion and exclusion, establishing precisely who or what is “visible.” “Police,” for Rancière, is “a system of coordinates defining modes of being, doing, making,
and communicating that establishes the borders between the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible, the sayable and the unsayable” (PA 89). Where Rancière’s police order functions to maintain consensus and define community through these exclusions, hierarchies, and social roles, la politique, or politics, emerges in the struggle for visibility on the part of those outside the boundaries of the established order. As Eric Méchoulan succinctly states, “What is visible or invisible is a matter of police. How to give visibility or audibility to someone or something invisible or inaudible—that is the stuff of politics.”

Politics, then, consists in the disruption of the distribution of the sensible to expand the realm of the visible within a social community. If the distribution of the sensible necessarily denies equality to some individuals or ideas in its configuration, politics is engaged in the struggle for equality (a central term for Rancière) through a mode of “subjectivization” that “transforms the aesthetic coordinates of the community by implementing the universal presupposition of politics: we are all equal” (PA 3). Art’s role in politics is located in its engagement with perception/sense experience and its potential to modify the distribution of the sensible and thus the intelligible. Kristin Ross explains that art’s function is “that of reframing, and thus expanding, what can be perceived in the present. Both art and politics reconfigure what is thinkable at a given moment.” Specifically, it is the relationship of painting and literature to the “regime of visibility” that endows them with political agency; for Rancière, the “aesthetic act” offers “configurations of experience that create new modes of sense perception and induce novel forms of political subjectivity” (PA 9).

In Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman, I will trace the ways in which “aesthetic acts” by women in France and Britain individually and collectively reconfigured what was intelligible within their closely related cultures, expanding the definitions or images of what a woman could be and what an artist could be in order to render the once “invisible” woman artist “visible.” In choosing to portray the figure of the female painter as heroine, these six novelists self-consciously visualize a woman in the subject position, reflecting on and representing society and the world. Through their use of images of an image-maker, these novelists open up a space within the realm of intelligibility for the professional woman artist (author, painter, poet), for visibility can reside both in words and in images. “The image is not exclusive to the visible,” Rancière tells us, “There is visibility that does not amount to an image; there are images which consist wholly in words.” By a similar token, the women painters to be discussed portrayed women in the studio or at the writing table, highlighting their active engagement in contemporary artistic expression while frequently drawing the parallel between gender and other kinds of “otherness”—class, nation, ethnicity, genre—in order to highlight the political nature of representation and the image while foregrounding the tensions between the center and the margins. Thus, as
the “police order” of 1830s France and Britain distributed roles and positions based on hierarchies and exclusions, only the male artist (author, painter) was constructed as visible within the structures of the social edifice, while women’s identities were constructed primarily in terms of marriage, maternity, and domesticity. As with any theoretical or ideological framework, these structures were neither fixed nor absolute; gender is but one of the many variables that inflected these assignments of positionality. Nonetheless, they tend to evoke the prevailing or dominant ethos of a period and thus become sites of resistance as well as normativity. In the decades following 1830, while ideological resistance to the professional female artist may have continued, she gradually became visible, establishing a place, however contested, within the configuration of the sensible, as demonstrated by Ellet and Lagrange, above. Indeed, the increasing critique of the female artist in novels, criticism, and even painting from the 1850s on provides the most compelling testimony to her established visibility.

The strategies of containment constructed and enforced by Rancière’s police order fix roles and positions of legitimacy and illegitimacy, determining who can speak and be heard as well as who can be seen. These borders between classes, races, and genders create radical inequalities that many of these authors and painters will address in their works in implicit and explicit ways. Much like the nineteenth-century French proletarians in Rancière’s La Nuit des prolétaires who gathered at night to write poetry, journals, and letters, resisting their prescribed roles as manual workers for the realm of intellectual labor, the women in this study and others like them refused to be contained by the confines of what they were supposed to be.35 Both the proletarian poets and the female artists of the 1830s-50s recognized the potential political agency of art to reconfigure the field of experience and allow them to move toward political subjecthood and “equality.”36 In keeping with this political orientation, moreover, all of the women to be discussed were engaged in some way with the early feminist movement and most participated in the parallel struggle for the recognition of workers’ rights in nineteenth-century Britain and France as well.

**Discourse/Counter-Discourse:**

**MYTHS OF THE ARTIST**

The novels and paintings examined in the chapters to follow function in direct dialogue with the discourses of gender, art, power, and visibility in nineteenth-century culture, but also in a dialectical relationship with works by male painters and authors, as well as with contemporary myths of the artist—discourses and myths that contributed directly to Rancière’s distribution of the sensible. Whether engaged in direct critique of the status quo (Owenson, Brontë, Sand,
Gillies, Capet, Cogniet) or a more subtle reworking of the paradigms of art and representation (Desbordes-Valmore, Howitt, Arnaud, Shariples, Best, Lescot), each of these female artists foregrounds the issue of difference, only to destabilize or deconstruct it, subverting the dominant structures of art and intelligibility with images of female subjectivity and artistic creation. In this sense, the novels and paintings, in their struggle to attain visibility within Rancière’s conception of la politique, can also be read as counter-discourses, challenging the hegemonic systems of meaning and signification. As Richard Terrdiman explains, “Counter-discourses function in their form. Their object is to represent the world differently. But their projection of difference goes beyond simply contradicting the dominant, beyond simply negating its assertions. The power of a dominant discourse lies in the codes by which it regulates understanding of the social world. Counter-discourses seek to detect and map such naturalized protocols and to project their subversion. At stake in this discursive struggle are the paradigms of social representation themselves.” Yet as Terrdiman also notes, every counter-discourse is ultimately rooted inescapably in the ideologies that it seeks to subvert.

In France as in Britain, in painting as in prose, the most pervasive discourse within and against which the female artist struggled was the masculinist ideologies of Romanticism. Indeed, Desbordes-Valmore’s Atelier d’un peintre, Gillies’s portraits of Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt, Brontë’s Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Sand’s Elle et lui, and the rest of the works in this study can be fully understood only in terms of their dialogue with Romanticism in general and the Romantic myth of the artist in particular. Although as an artistic movement Romanticism was already being overshadowed by Realist and Victorian aesthetics by 1840, the Romantic image of woman and of the artist continued to hold sway well into the second half of the nineteenth century, and indeed, it may be argued continue to be felt today. Moreover, all of the narratives and paintings to be discussed are set in the 1820s–1830s, allowing their creators to engage more fully with Romanticism and its ideologies of gender and artistic identity. Far more than an artistic movement, Romanticism was a cultural revolution whose effects lingered long after the poetry of Wordsworth, Byron, and Lamartine had gone out of fashion.

The Romantic image of the artist—the sensitive and suffering genius, whose sensibility placed him at odds with the conventional world—was self-consciously generated by painters, poets, playwrights, and their critics in response to an increasingly bourgeois and commercial culture in Britain, France, and much of the rest of Europe. Michael Wilson explains, “artists deliberately cast themselves and their fellow artists as outsiders, bohemians, dandies, visionaries, and martyrs, and in doing so, they contributed to profound shifts in attitude toward the purpose of art and its role in society.” This shift entailed a new
conception of the artist as prophet or seer, while at the same time it erected an enduring opposition between the artist and the very world in which he lived. Essential to this constructed persona, whether conceived as a solitary individual or as a member of one of the artistic brotherhoods that proliferated during the nineteenth century, was an anxious and overdetermined insistence on the masculinity of the Romantic artist. As Abigail Solomon-Godeau reminds us, like femininity, masculinity is “a construction, an image, a fiction, a mask variously inflected by the needs, the desires, the context and the political unconscious of the moment of its making.”40 As constructed and performed by generations of Romantic artists, this image of nineteenth-century artistic manhood represented a response to the perceived “feminization” of the culture of art in the industrial age. With the ascension of the bourgeoisie and the rise of capitalism in France and Britain, masculinity became associated with labor and productivity, while art and intellectual creation were socially marginalized. Moreover, with the popular success of female novelists and an ever-growing female reading public in nineteenth-century Britain and France, male authors felt the loss of cultural capital and an unspoken competition with women for an audience, experiences that were perceived as threatening and even emasculating.41 Eager to establish artistic production as “work,” artists sought to develop forms and styles that, according to Herbert Sussman, “signified their manliness by their difference from feminized forms.”42 Male artists further defined their own activity in terms of aggressively sexual metaphors, likening the pen or paintbrush to a penis and composition to ejaculation, effectively announcing a hyper-masculine identity and distancing themselves from women and the feminine. The Romantic artist was above all a self-proclaimed man. But far from eliminating the feminine, Romanticism’s anxious insistence on masculinity served only to foreground the fact that this “maleness” was a construct, hinting at a reality that was just the opposite.

One of the many paradoxes at the heart of Romanticism lies in the definition of genius, so central to the artist’s identity. The qualities associated with Romantic genius—sensitivity, emotion, intuition, imagination—had long been gendered feminine, yet definitions of genius, based on a rhetoric of difference, were gendered exclusively male. Christine Battersby explains: “This rhetoric praised ‘feminine’ qualities in male creators . . . but claimed females could not—or should not—create. To buttress the man/animal, civilized/savage division, the category of genius had to work by a process of exclusion.”43 Thus, as male artists and critics insisted, a woman was precluded from genius (and thus from being a “real” artist) by her gender, while the exceptional woman of genius was “really” a man. As Balzac famously quipped about his friend and rival, George Sand: “She is a boy, she is an artist, she is great, generous, devoted, chaste, she has all the great characteristics of a man, ergo she is not a woman.”44 Genius was used to
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distinguish art from craft, male “original” production from female imitation or “reproduction,” while establishing the ineffable superiority that set the Romantic artist apart. Even as the male artist increasingly turned to metaphors of pregnancy and childbirth for the creative process (employing images of conception, difficult and painful labor, ecstatic delivery, or aborted/stillborn production), women’s reproductive capacities as potential mothers were central to their theoretical exclusion from the realm of artistic genius. Battersby adds, “On the one hand—even before Freud—the driving force of genius was described in terms of male sexual energies. On the other hand, the genius was supposed to be like a woman: in tune with his emotions, sensitive, inspired—guided by instinctual forces that welled up from beyond the limits of rational consciousness” (103). Thus, because Romantic artistic identity shared much with contemporary constructions of the feminine, men took great pains to assert its “truly” masculine nature. But at the same time, as the feminine was explicitly inscribed within Romanticism, these conventions inadvertently provided an opening as never before for the possibility of a female artist. Indeed the fundamental assertion that Romantic genius is supposed to be “like a woman” privileges the feminine in such a way as to implicitly suggest the very image—that of a woman artist of genius, sensitive, suffering, imaginative, and passionate—that it seeks so anxiously to resist.

Also integral to Romanticism was a renewed interest in the fraternité des arts, which, like the contemporaneous artistic brotherhoods (from the French Barbus and Samuel Palmer’s “Ancients” to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Nabis), sought to establish a collective identity for male artists of every stripe. The nineteenth-century revival of intimate relations between the sister arts thus posited solidarity among painters, poets, and musicians united against a bourgeoisie deemed hostile to artistic creativity and expression. Groups like the Jeunes-France (Young France), led by Théophile Gautier and Petrus Borel, were said to “be born the day that painting allied itself with Romantic literature” and David Scott tells us it was at precisely this moment that the French word artiste “acquired a new breadth of meaning, designating not only painter and sculptor but also writer and composer.” Consciously crossing the borders between artistic genres, poets and authors were also painters (Hugo, Gautier, D. G. Rossetti, Thackeray), painters wrote poetry, essays, and journals (Reynolds, Shee, Delacroix, Turner), and everyone wrote criticism. Novels and memoirs like Thackeray’s Paris Sketch Book (1840), Murger’s Scènes de la vie de Bohème (1851), Zola’s L’Oeuvre (1886), and Du Maurier’s Trilby (1894) present a vivid image of the Romantic bohemian life shared by a “brotherhood” of aspiring painters and poets in Paris, and it is noteworthy that here and in the majority of British Kunstlerromane of the nineteenth century, artistic education took place in the French capital, then considered the capital of bohemia as well.
Murger’s iconic tale, which originally appeared as a series of stories in Le Corsaire-Satan between 1845 and 1849 and then as a play (1849), a novel (1851), and an opera (Puccini’s La Bohème of 1896), highlights “the bonds of brotherly union” (45) between Schaunard, Rodolphe, Marcel, and Colline, painters, poets, and musicians who devote their lives to art and friendship. Set in the 1830s, Murger’s collection of stories paints an ironic portrait of the rebellious young artists whose iconoclastic lives are defined less by genius than by failure and poverty. While paintings and epic poems languish unfinished, the bohemians evade their creditors and romance Mimi and Musette, grissettes more interested in money than love. By the end of the episodic narration, the four artists have left their liminal existence at the edges of society for success and wealth, and like nearly every subsequent novel of artistic youth, the author is more interested in the struggles of his heroes than in their triumphs. Du Maurier’s novel, based on his own experiences in Paris in the 1850s, follows much the same trajectory as Murger’s, with the close-knit band of artistic brothers, “the three musketeers of the brush,” living on the edges of respectability in bohemian Paris until the end where they too achieve success and fortune, abandoning the ways of youth in the studio for the more dignified paths of artistic manhood in London. These tales and others like them, along with broadly disseminated caricatures by Daumier, Gavarni, Gillray, and Rowlandson, reflected and shaped the popular myth of the nineteenth-century artist.

The romantic image of the bohemian artist as independent, impoverished, passionate, and irresponsible, living at the edges of society in unheated garrets and eschewing bourgeois mores, did much to shape the nineteenth-century myth of the artist but left little room for the possibility of a female painter, poet, or musician. The women populating these novels, plays, operas, and illustrations are working girls—grissettes, models, and washerwomen—emerging from a lower class than the artists and whose most important roles are as the artists’ lovers, models, and muses. Jerrold Seigel traces the close relationship between bohemia and bourgeois society, two modes of social existence that emerged side by side in the nineteenth century and served as a mutually defining Other in the construction of these modern identities. He contends that “Like positive and negative magnetic poles, bohemian and bourgeois were—and are—parts of a single field: they imply, require, and attract each other.” Bohemia is understood as a stage of youth from which the male artist emerges and rejoins the ranks of the middle class; the boundaries, while pronounced, remain porous between the two worlds. For a woman, crossing the boundary between bourgeois existence and bohemia could be only a one-way journey; there would be no going back. The carefree and licentious life of the mythic bohemian was yet another path closed to the middle class women in search of an artistic profession. In direct response to these discourses, the novels by Howitt, Brontë, Sand,
Owenson, et alia, propose alternate visions of artistic sisterhoods while offering new images of women in the atelier, paintbrush in hand.

At the same time that the myth of bohemia gained popularity, Thomas Carlyle’s formulation of artistic manhood presented an image of the “Hero as Man of Letters,” positing the artist as “Poet, Priest, Divinity” whose labors could rescue society from its modern degradation (brought about, in no small part, by the corrupting influence of French women authors like George Sand). But where the bohemian artist’s masculinity was established in his sexual encounters with models and grisettes, Carlyle formulates a myth of artistic manliness in the image of monastic celibacy in what Sussman calls “a world of chaste masculine bonding from which the female has been magically eliminated” (5). The figure of the “artist-monk,” also embraced by the German Nazarene brotherhood earlier in the century, continued to relate artistic and sexual potency, simply replacing images of virility with an ideal of “productive repression” of male sexual energy. In both cases, however, artistic identity is defined in terms of male sexuality in homosocial communities. Carol Christ notes, “In order to make the writer heroic, Carlyle constructs a strenuously masculine ideal.” She adds, “In this world of heroic masculinity, women have almost no place.” Yet, I will argue, in its self-conscious expulsion of the feminine this homosocial paradigm implicitly acknowledged the power or threat of women authors, painters, and their audiences, whose presence in the field of cultural production is everywhere felt, if rarely “seen.”

The Romantic myth of the artist, predicated on attendant myths of masculinity and creativity, precluded the possibility of a “real” female poet, painter, novelist, or sculptor of genius or artistry in vastly overdetermined ways. Nonetheless, the myth, with its attendant constructs and discourses, should not be confused with “reality,” though it undoubtedly shaped perceptions and politics. Thus, although it remained a male-dominated movement, women participated in Romanticism in a variety of forms, and while some resisted and/or reversed the gendered paradigms, others exploited them to gain access to a subject position within dominant field of representation. Indeed, it was Mme de Staël who brought the movement to France and proposed the first and best definition of Romantic poetry in De l’Allemagne in 1801, while Corinne and Oswald, as heroes of one of the first Romantic novels in France (Corinne, 1807) represent a female genius and her feminized lover in a positive, if tragic, light. Marceline Desbordes-Valmore claimed her place among the French Romantic poets, introducing themes of motherhood and familial loss to the genre, while the works of Charlotte Smith, Felicia Hemans, Leticia Landon, Mary Shelley, and Joanna Baillie are crucial to a full understanding of British Romanticism.

Romanticism undoubtedly “colonized the feminine,” to quote Alan Richardson, but if we read this blurring of gender boundaries, where a poet or...
hero could be at once male and feminine, as a way of revealing “gender itself as
a fiction,” following Waller (5), then a breach emerges where aspiring women
artists might similarly enact both “masculine” and “feminine” identities as
Romantic artists. Many of the masculinist tropes of Romanticism sought to
reduce woman to a mere sign or projection of male desire, fantasy, anxiety,
or inspiration. From Wordsworth and Keats to Lamartine and Chateaubri-
and, woman is frequently a disembodied symbol: often dead, usually silent,
rarely “visible,” she is an idealized and elevated figure who exists in the poet’s
memory and imagination, but not, it would seem, in the real world. But these
poetic constructions were just that, and the fantasies of the silenced and passive
female (reflecting of course, larger social and cultural mores of the period) were
answered by French and British women artists who worked within and against
Romantic discourses of gender and subjectivity to shape artistic forms—poetry,
painting, novels—that announced “their status as agents who work on the
shape of their culture even as it shapes them.” One of the primary themes
in the novels and paintings I will analyze in the chapters below will be ren-
dering woman visible, giving her a voice and a subject position independent
of (Romantic) male desire or fantasy. These counter-discourses invoke tropes
and conventions of Romanticism only to invert or deny them. While I do not
argue that all, or even most, of the women artists in this study were Romantic
authors or painters per se, I will maintain that they were writing and painting
against these discourses of Romanticism, even as they lingered into the Victo-
rian period.

Gender and Art:
REPRESENTING WOMEN

If women artists were rendered “invisible” or “unintelligible” (in Rancière’s
terms) by the discourses of Romanticism, social discourses of gender and propri-
ety were arguably even more powerful in their proscription of the female artist
in nineteenth-century France and England. Although the gendered separation
of spheres, relegating women to the private realm of domesticity, were neither
as fixed nor as absolute as was previously believed (especially for women of the
working classes), these ideologies nonetheless shaped what Rancière would call
the “police order,” making a career as a professional writer or painter difficult to
conceive for women of the middle and upper classes. Post-1789, the politics of
gender on both sides of the channel suffered a conservative retrenchment against
feminism, linked in both France and Britain to republicanism and revolution.
The institution of France’s Napoleonic Code in 1804 legally enshrined the sub-
ordination of women to men, reflecting the dominant ideologies of maternity
and domesticity that would shape the nineteenth-century politics of gender in both nations.

Thus, where aristocratic women had enjoyed relative freedom and even admiration in the late eighteenth century as Blue-Stockings, salonnieres, philosophers, painters, and intellectuals, the post-revolutionary period’s backlash against women’s rights and freedoms curtailed such possibilities for women. The original Blue-Stocking circle had included both men and women who gathered in the London homes of Elizabeth Montagu and her friends in the 1750s for intellectual conversation, debate, and “a wide range of social and philanthropic activities that promoted, in particular, women’s roles as writers, thinkers, artists, and commentators.” Members of the circle included author and translator Elizabeth Carter, poet Hannah More, and historian Catherine Macaulay, all of whom played a significant role in the cultural landscape of the period. Richard Samuel’s 1778 painting of The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain (figure 1) celebrates the genius of the British Blue-Stockings by portraying Carter, Montagu, More, Macaulay, the painter Angelica Kauffman, Anna Letitia Barbauld (a poet), Elizabeth Sheridan (a singer), Charlotte Lennox (a novelist), and Elizabeth Griffith (novelist and playwright) gathered in a temple of Apollo in classical garb. Their poses are serious and dignified; their demeanors reveal both beauty and intelligence. Although the use of allegorical figures in portraits of women was a popular trope, here the direct reference to the women’s very real accomplishments serves to affirm and elevate their standing. The collective nature of the portrait, where the women appear to engage and inspire one another, reflects their network of learning and support and serves as an inspiration for contemporary women to follow the model of the female pantheon. The French salonnieres, including Julie de Lespinasse, Suzanne Necker (mother of Germaine de Staël), and Marie-Thérèse Geoffrin, were similarly engaged in promoting rational exchange between men and women on contemporary literature, art, philosophy, and politics.

But by 1800, Blue-Stocking and its French equivalent, bas bleu, had become derogatory terms designating an ambitious, unfeminine, and untalented woman whose literary or intellectual aspirations were risible, while the salonnieres were condemned by both republicans and monarchists for the excesses of the Ancien Régime and the revolution. Thomas Rowlandson’s caricature, Breaking Up of the Blue Stocking Club (1815) (figure 2) reflects the rapid decline of the image of the female intellectual in the early nineteenth century. The dignified grouping of Samuel’s scene is replaced by a brawl, as the Blues tear each other’s hair out, knocking over china and furniture in a figuration of the effect of their unseemly aspirations on domestic peace and harmony. Their burly arms and heaving breasts, threatening to pop out of their bodices, signal lower class origins and sexual license, a far cry from the aristocratic and self-consciously
Figure 1
virtuous Blue-Stockings of the previous century. The overturned chamber pot and the “French cream” spilled on the floor reflect the artist’s views on the content of the women’s discussions as well as their inspiration, for in 1815 France continued to be Britain’s enemy and the (imputed) source of all revolutionary ideas. (French cream was also a cosmetic, implying again the women’s immorality.) Most importantly, perhaps, is the implicit concept that women could not work together collectively, for their “catty” behavior (echoed by the bemused felines watching the fray) would eventually turn any discussion into a catfight. Shifting the focus from women’s intellectual potential to their physicality, Rowlandson reasserts the traditional binaries of male/mind and female/body, denying women access to the world of ideas.

Frédéric Soulié’s Physiologie du bas-bleu appeared in 1840 and, like Rowlandson’s caricature, mocks the female intellectual for her pretensions. Closely linked to caricature, physiologies were small and inexpensive pamphlets that portrayed contemporary society in comically exaggerated portraits of Parisian “types” in words and images. Performing the same ideological labor as caricature, the physiologies frequently revealed ambient social anxieties by reducing the troubling or threatening image of the Other to a “knowable” or ridiculous figure. The popular form, meant for mass consumption, reached a peak of popularity from 1840 to 1842 and with its illustrations, descriptions, and references to physiognomy, provided ways of “reading” the visual world. Soulié offers his readers ways of recognizing the bas-bleu by her overly dramatic clothes and hats, rooms full of books, and above all by her ugliness and lack of elegance. Using a grammatical play on the word genre (denoting the gender of a word or a person), Soulié observes that while the phrase “le bas-bleu” does not “mean” anything at all he still finds it fitting, for “it denounces this feminine type with a word of the masculine genre” (i.e., le bas-bleu). Thus, when a woman is a laundress, an actress, or a queen (la Blanchisseuse, l’actrice, la reine), “one can write, grammatically speaking: she is pretty, she is refined, she is adroit, she is shapely, she is graceful, she is a perfect beauty. But, from the moment a woman is bas-bleu, one is obliged to say of her: he is dirty, he is pretentious, he is evil, he is a plague” (6). In other words, the bas-bleu is a woman who is not a woman, she is a man. A woman who is a “she” (elle) merits modifiers that privilege her grace, beauty, and physical attractiveness. A woman who is a “he” (il) is ugly, unpleasant, and dangerous. Violating Derrida’s “law of genre” at every level, the bas-bleu occupies a troubling space of indeterminacy (for she never can attain “true” male status) and must be contained.

Soulié documents the many “types” of this type, in chapters devoted to the “Bas-Bleu aristocrat,” the “Bas-Bleu of the Restoration,” the “Married Bas-Bleu,” the “Bas-Bleu libéré,” the “Virgin Bas-Bleu,” and in a final chapter, “Le Bas-Bleu artistique.” While the literary bas-bleu had historical precedent, the artistic ver-
Figure 2
sion is “a new production that has no analogue in the past” (97). These creatures are no less “pretentious” than their literary counterparts, positing opinions on art and philosophy that Soulié mercilessly mocks. One artistic Blue-Stocking shocks her listener by announcing that a gladiator is not proportionally drawn because “a man isn’t made like that” (102), thus betraying an unseemly knowledge of male anatomy. Another complains that a painting of the sack of Rome isn’t “modern” enough, while still others are too pious and Christian in their tastes and images. In every case, Soulié exposes the ignorance and “vulgarity” of these unwomanly women who mistakenly believe in their intellectual and aesthetic parity with men. He concludes by noting that the artistic “species of bas-bleu fraternizes readily with the bas-bleu littéraire, and they seem to understand each other” (109). Finally, he tells his reader, regardless of social rank or marital status, underneath it all the bas-bleu is always the same: “a creature who is cold, dry, egotistical, selfish, envious, vain, nasty, with very rare exceptions; he may or may not have talent, that is a question entirely independent of his moral qualities” (109–10). Leigh Hunt’s “Blue-Stocking Revels” (1837) takes a more humorous but no less pointed look at the British Blue-Stockings who are too often, he complains, “masculine, vain, and absurd.” Margaret Gillies’s painted response in her portrait of the Romantic poet and publisher (discussed in chapter 7) emblematizes one of the many forms of resistance by women artists of the period as they were summarily dismissed both as women and as artists. From Amélie Cogniet to Sand and Brontë, the women artists in this study respond to these caricatural images with a series of counter-discursive visions of the female painter (and by extension the female author) that highlight her existence as a both a woman and an artist, viable and even successful in both identities. In passages of sweet revenge, the characters who doubt the heroine’s artistic capacities or femininity are in their turn mocked as “masculine, vain, and absurd.”

France and Britain: National and Cultural Identities

The relationship between France and Britain has been historically fraught: from the Norman Conquest, through the Hundred Years War and the Napoleonic Era, the two nations engaged in a seemingly endless battle for dominance. The economic and political rivalries between them were echoed in the constructions of their national identities in which France served as Britain’s Other and vice versa; to be French was to be “not British,” and to be British was to be “not French.” From food to fashion, religion to royalty, the dueling cultures engaged in dialectical self-definition throughout the centuries and these opposi-
tions became reified in ways that overshadow or even obscure the fertile cultural exchange between France and Britain that peaked from 1814 (following the end of the Napoleonic Wars) through 1830, but continued well into the Victorian period. Indeed, as Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever establish, the modern novel “did not develop along two separate, nationally distinct trajectories; it developed through intersections and interactions among texts, readers, writers, and publishing and critical institutions that linked together Britain and France.”

Pierre Daniel Huet, the genre’s first theoretician, identified the novel’s transnational origins and practices as early as 1670, and from the seventeenth century onward, Margaret Doody confirms, “novels rapidly crossed national and other boundaries,” most notably between France and Britain. Joan DeJean adds, “During its formative period the modern novel was most often the result of massive shifts of influence back and forth across the English Channel—from 1660 to 1750, the prose fiction created both in England and in France was massively ‘French’; from 1750 on, it became increasingly English.” In “Eloge de Richardson” (1762), Diderot advised, “Painters, poets, people of taste, people of integrity, read Richardson; read him continuously,” while a century later, Walter Kendrick notes, “In mid-Victorian fiction, a sure sign of sophistication, and of questionable morals, is the presence of a ‘French novel’ on one’s bedside table.” Mary Helen McMurran explains, “Many translators were novelists themselves—from Aphra Behn, Penelope Aubin, Eliza Haywood, Tobias Smollett, Oliver Goldsmith, Frances Brooke, and Elizabeth Griffith to Alain-René Le Sage, Denis Diderot, Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, and abbé Prévost, among others—and they were often conscious of blending the two processes.” Thus, translations of eighteenth-century novels were “marked by the permeability of the two languages and cultures,” according to McMurran, and “the contact between France and Britain cannot be properly described as the simple intersection of two distinct others but was a more fluid interaction based on a history of cultural intimacy” (51). In the nineteenth century, political hostilities and the ever-increasing links between the novel and national identity construction did little to diminish intellectual and cultural exchange. Cohen and Dever explain:

The Napoleonic Wars did not prevent writers and readers on either side of the Channel from enjoying or reworking each other’s fiction; indeed [ . . . ] the historical novel, perhaps the form most closely associated with imagining the origins of the modern nation, was facilitated by the generic fertilization catalyzed by trans-Channel exchange during this time. And even as Victorian disciplinary society was bolstered through invective against French immorality, G. H. Lewes went off to his bookseller after finishing *Jane Eyre* only to find ‘the new volumes of unfinished novels by Alexandre Dumas, enough to have
tasked the energies of the British Museum to catalogue,’ along with ‘volumes by Théophile Gautier, Michel Masson, Madame Reybaud, Jules Sandeau, Badon, Feuillet, Roger de Beauvoir, d’Arlncourt, de Gondrecourt,’ to say nothing of new books by Sand, Balzac, and Hugo. The transnational culture of the Channel zone differs from postmodern transnationalism not only in predating the nation-state and helping to shape its emergence but also by its position squarely at the center of national cultural formations, overdetermined and ambivalent as this position might be. (12–13)

In Crossing the Channel: British and French Painting in the Age of Romanticism, Patrick Noon also establishes “the extraordinary network of cultural exchange that developed between Britain and France in the three or so decades following the end, in 1815, of their long war.” Specifically, a “profound engagement” arose between Romantic painters on both sides of the Channel, and despite political differences Stephen Bann documents “a convergence between British and French visual cultures that was developing from 1800 onwards.”

Although it is important not to ignore the fundamental differences between nineteenth-century French and British art and fiction, their intersections bear further exploration, especially in terms of women’s contributions to the various fields of cultural production. Outside of the mainstream, female authors and painters from both sides of the Channel looked to their sisters in art, frequently finding far more in common with a foreign female writer than with a male author from the same nation. In their efforts to forge new paradigms of artistic identity, women crossed the borders of gender, genre, and nation, while actively embracing horizontal models of inclusion rather than hierarchies of distinction.

The works of art (both verbal and visual) at the center of Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman represent this trans-Channel exchange in deliberate as well as less obvious ways. All privilege travel, foreignness, and difference as a source of inspiration, education, and sister- or brotherhood rather than a reason for animosity, competition, or antagonism. There is evidence that many, if not all, had read or seen each other’s works, and both British and French intertexts and references abound in the novels and paintings from both nations. Whether depicting Scott’s heroines (Lescot and Gillies) or reworking Balzac (Desbordes-Valmore, Arnaud, Howitt, and Sand), the shared desire to represent the active role of the female subject in art, politics, and history transcends the limits of national discourses for these female artists. The complex network of influence, friendship, admiration, and inspiration among and between these authors and artists crosses the boundaries of genre and nation: Anna Mary Howitt studied painting with Margaret Gillies, who was a close friend of her parents; Gillies studied painting in Paris in the studio of Ary Scheffer, where she undoubtedly read Sand’s novels and saw works by the recently deceased Hortense Haudebourt-Lescot.
Marceline Desbordes-Valmore includes frequent reference to Lescot in *L'Atelier d'un peintre*, and her daughter would later study in the painter’s atelier. Sydney Owenson travelled frequently to Paris, where she was often compared to Mme de Staël (a figure who influenced all of the authors here), and described her visit to Lescot’s studio in *France in 1829–30*. Angélique Arnaud, a committed Saint-Simonian and feminist, actively pursued a meeting with Sand and records her great pride at receiving words of encouragement from the *Bonne Dame de Nohant*. Sand herself was painted in the early 1830s by Haudebourt-Lescot, and her novels, translated into English almost immediately upon publication, appear to have influenced or inspired nearly every woman in this study, including Anne Brontë. Yet ultimately, personal connections are less important than the larger picture of resistance and assertion that arises from these works and others like them, as women actively shaped a new image of the female artist and female subjectivity in nineteenth-century France and Britain.

**Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman**

The study is divided into three thematic sections corresponding to three central artistic subjects: “The Studio”; “Cosmopolitan Visions: Gender, Genre, Nation”; and “The Portrait.” Each section considers a number of paintings by a female artist or artists and a pair of novels—one French, one British—in order to analyze the ways in which each reflects on a key series of themes. In chapter 1 of “The Studio,” I examine the figure of the woman in the atelier in paintings by Adélaïde Labille-Guignard, Gabrielle Capet, Adrienne Grandpierre-Deverzy, Amélie Cogniet, Caroline Thévenin, Rolinda Sharples, and Mary Ellen Best, focusing on the issues of artistic education, professionalism, and space (real and metaphorical) for women painters in the nineteenth century. In chapters 2 and 3, I continue discussion of these themes in Marceline Desbordes-Valmore’s *L'Atelier d'un peintre* (1833) and Anna Mary Howitt’s *Sisters in Art* (1852), locating these novels in the context of their own dialogues with Balzac and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The second section, “Cosmopolitan Visions: Gender, Genre, Nation,” begins with Mme de Staël’s *Corinne* (1807) and Sydney Owenson’s *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) and their images of gender and nation, before turning to the work of Hortense Haudebourt-Lescot, an influential painter of the 1810s–1840s credited with inventing the Italian genre scene. Just as Lescot’s images both romanticized and radicalized the representation of nation, class, gender, and otherness, Owenson’s *The Princess* (1835) and Angélique Arnaud’s *Clémence* (1841) take the anodyne and popular genre of the sentimental novel and use it to liberal and feminist ends, enlisting the figure of a female painter to interrogate the naturalized structures of alterity at the heart of ideologies of
gender and nation. Singly and collectively, these paintings and novels reflect links between the female artist and the Other (foreign, political, social) and propose revisions of the hierarchies of subjecthood. The last section is devoted to “The Portrait: Romanticism and the Female Subject.” In chapter 7, “Portraits of Radical Engagement,” I consider Margaret Gillies’s use of the genre in her famous images of Harriet Martineau, William and Mary Wordsworth, William and Mary Howitt, and Leigh Hunt to highlight the role played by women in culture and to critique Romantic masculinity. Finally, chapters 8 and 9 examine the portrait in Anne Brontë’s The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848) and George Sand’s Elle et lui (1858), tracing the ways in which the painted and literary likeness also serves as a way of revealing difference, exposing the distance between the Romantic male gaze and the realities of female existence. Gillies’s paintings, along with Brontë’s and Sand’s novels, reflect on the gendered politics of representation in Romantic art while presenting alternative images of women as subjects, rather than objects of the constitutive gaze. Finally, in a brief conclusion, I examine the “visibility” of the female artist in the decades following 1860 in France and Britain and the ongoing construction of women’s artistic identity in the field of cultural production.
Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.

—Edgar Degas

In late 1856, not long after her image as Boadicea appeared, Barbara Leigh Smith joined forces with several other women to establish the Society of Female Artists, and the organization held its first exhibition the following year. In 1860 the first female student was admitted to the Royal Academy School (albeit amid great controversy),¹ and in 1876 Ellen Clayton published her two-volume compendium of English Female Artists, thus gesturing toward a collective history and identity for British women painters. Emily Osborn’s 1888 portrait of Leigh Smith for Girton College portrayed the college’s founder seated in front of an easel, paintbrush in hand, in a gesture that acknowledged the important links between feminism, education, and women artists in nineteenth-century England. In France, the Académie Julian opened joint classes for men and women in 1868, offering serious training for female artists first in the mixed atelier and later in separate but still rigorous studios. By 1890 Rodolphe Julian was running four ateliers for female painters in Paris, as art instruction for women became, in Gabriel Weisberg’s phrase, “both a business and a cause.”² The Union of Women Painters and Sculptors was established in Paris in 1881, sponsoring the Salon des femmes and the Journal des femmes artistes while at the same time, Tamar Garb explains, serving a political as well as artistic function as “a major campaigning body for women artists.”³ It was not, however, until 1897 that women were finally admitted to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. By
then, photographs, etchings, and paintings of women in the atelier regularly appeared not only at the Salon or RA exhibits, but in newspapers, journals, and the popular press, carving a space for this once anomalous figure in the public imagination.

After 1860 in France as in Britain, women’s professional artistic training thus began to move from the margins to the forefront of the public’s consciousness as a political and social as well as an aesthetic issue. Professional women painters also entered new realms of fame and legitimacy in the second half of the nineteenth century. After winning a gold medal at the Salon of 1848, Rosa Bonheur gained international fame in 1853 for her painting of *The Horse Fair*, a monumental image purchased by the London art dealer Ernest Gambart for 40,000 francs. Gambart, in turn, displayed the painting in London (including a private showing for Queen Victoria), Glasgow, Liverpool, and Manchester, charging a shilling per visit and establishing Bonheur’s reputation, according to the popular press, as a “female Landseer” and “the greatest painter of rural scenes in France, perhaps in the world.”4 In 1857, *The Horse Fair* traveled to New York, where it was eventually bought by Cornelius Vanderbilt for $53,000 and donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. By the 1860s, Rosa Bonheur had become a “household name,” Gretchen van Slyke affirms, “in France, across the English Channel, and even across the Atlantic Ocean.” Van Slyke adds, “By the end of the century engravings of *The Horse Fair* were hanging on schoolroom walls throughout Great Britain and the United States” (xii) and Bonheur served as a “model and mentor” to women on both continents, from American girls playing with their Rosa Bonheur dolls (van Slyke xii) to her “soeurs de pinceau” (sisters of the brush) in France and England (Garb 1994, 3). Bonheur’s studio became a sought-after destination for men and women alike, prompting the Empress Eugénie to pay a visit in 1863; two years later the Empress named Bonheur the first female Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, as she insisted “genius has no sex.” Portraits of the artist at work appeared at the Salon in images by Edouard Dubufe (*Portrait de Rosa Bonheur*, 1857), George Achille-Fould (*Rosa Bonheur dans son Atelier*, 1893), and Anna Klumpke (*Portrait de Rosa Bonheur*, 1898) among others, and each depicts the female painter in terms that reflect her professionalism, success, and artistic authority; in Klumpke’s luminous image of the artist shortly before her death, the rosette of the Légion d’honneur hangs on her chest at the center of the composition, testimony to Bonheur’s achievement in a world once exclusively open to men. The only woman included in Nicaise de Keyser’s *Les Grands Artistes de l’école française du XIXe siècle* (1878), Bonheur was posthumously memorialized by Gaston Leroux-Veunevot in a life-sized statue, palette and brushes in hand, in 1910, in a concrete and symbolic representation of her status as the most renowned female artist of the nineteenth century.
Nor was Bonheur’s artistic acclaim an anomaly. Mary Cassatt, Berthe Morisot, and Eva Gonzalès achieved success in the 1870s not only in the traditional Salon, but perhaps more importantly as members of the avant-garde, exhibiting with the Impressionists at the Salons des Refusés and participating in the stylistic and ideological challenge to the artistic status quo that would ultimately signal the end of the Académie’s hegemony. Manet’s controversial painting of Eva Gonzalès at her easel (*Portrait of Mlle E.G.*, 1870) portrayed his student at work on a still life of flowers that looks more like one of Manet’s canvases than her own; yet if the scene functions more as “a cipher for his own creative identity,” as Tamar Garb claims, than for Gonzalès’s artistic vision, the image is nonetheless notable in its serious depiction of a readily identifiable female artist in the studio, representing contemporary art in material and metaphoric ways. On the other side of the Channel, Antonia Losano has shown, the number of British women identifying themselves as painters doubled between 1851 and 1871 and continued to rise through the end of the century (2), while the second generation of Pre-Raphaelite women artists—Lucy Madox Brown, Emma Sandys, Marie Spartali, Julia Margaret Cameron—achieved a level of acceptance and visibility in the 1860s–1880s that Anna Mary Howitt and her cohort had been unable to attain. The figure of the female painter continued to appear in Victorian literature and served, Losano contends, to demonstrate the ways in which women might “mine the liberatory potential of art as a source of emotional, spiritual, or financial satisfaction and tap the potentially radical transformative power of the woman artist to make significant changes in social, cultural, and political arenas” (3).

Nineteenth-century female artistic identity, negotiated through paintings and novels as well as petitions, campaigns, and pamphlets, continued to be inextricably linked to the feminist cause in their shared battle for the right to work and the right to representation, in every sense of the word. But even as women artists (authors and painters equally) became associated through their labor with feminism—for the very act of writing or painting as a professional was in a sense a militant gesture—it was above all their *art* that played a formative role in transforming the cultural habitus (Rancière’s distribution of the sensible) in such a way as to enable French and British society to imagine, envision, and ultimately even understand or accept a professional female subject entering the field of cultural production and representing the world. Indeed, as Janet Wolff so cogently reminds us, “culture is central to gender formation. Art, literature, and film do not simply represent given gender identities, or reproduce already existing ideologies of femininity. Rather they participate in the very construction of those identities.”

The figure of the female painter remained a powerful image of artistic identity in the novel well into the twentieth century, and perhaps the most
famous of all—Virginia Woolf’s Lily Briscoe—gives voice to many of the same issues as her nineteenth-century predecessors, while at the same time embodying Woolf’s own Modernist concerns and new directions for the female artist. Woolf’s engagement with the sister arts was personal as well as theoretical: her sister Vanessa Bell, often considered a model for Lily, was a successful Modernist painter who illustrated some of Virginia’s works, while the Bloomsbury Group, to which they both belonged, included artists, authors, critics, and intellectuals in its ongoing discussions of aesthetics, politics, and philosophy. In *To the Lighthouse* (1927), appearing nearly seventy years after *Elle et lui*, the female artist remains politically charged, and the image of a woman representing her view of the world, indeed struggling to find and express “her vision,” was perhaps no less radical in 1927 than it was a century earlier. Woolf’s novel foregrounds many of the same questions of gender, art, and identity that Desbordes-Valmore, Howitt, Owenson, Arnaud, Brontë, and Sand wrestled with in their own works, while at the same time offering a critique of the patriarchal structures of society and of representation, much as her predecessors had done. An astute reader of nineteenth-century women’s fiction, Woolf maintained that “a woman writing thinks back through her mothers,” and Lily Briscoe emerges from a collective history of real and fictitious women painters and authors fighting for visibility, reflecting not only Virginia Woolf’s (and perhaps Vanessa Bell’s) aesthetic battles, but also those of generations of women before them. But if Lily is a central character in *To the Lighthouse*, the passage of time is a central theme, and by the end of the novel, as Lily finally finishes her painting, Woolf points to the possibility of new models of female art and identity, and the eventual shift from Mrs Ramsey’s domestic ideal to Lily’s independence as a female artist.

From the outset of *To the Lighthouse*, the tension between gender and artistic expression is articulated through the character of Charles Tansley, whose injunction “Women can’t paint, women can’t write” echoes throughout the narrative in Lily’s consciousness, reflecting the voice of the patriarchy while linking the two genres (painting and literature) as equally inaccessible to women. Although set in the years immediately preceding and following World War I, the values of the nineteenth-century remain dominant, and the subject of Lily’s painting, and by extension Woolf’s novel, is the reinterpretation of the image of Mrs Ramsey and her son James, “mother and child then—objects of universal veneration” (55–56) in both formal and thematic terms. If Lily hopes that they “might be reduced to a shadow without irreverence” (56), so too does Woolf shift her narrative to reflect the formal nature of perception and the stream of human consciousness; yet at the same time, Mrs Ramsey represents traditional subject matter and traditional roles for women, both of which are subverted by author and painter for a new vision/version of what art might be
and what women might be or do. Intimacy is here achieved not through love or physical contact, but in the very act of becoming visible to the other, and in keeping with Rancière’s formulations, when Lily allows William Bankes to examine her painting and “it had been seen” she feels “This man had shared with her something profoundly intimate” (57). For Lily Briscoe, as for Woolf, the importance lies less in the painting as physical artifact than in its manifestation of her personal vision, a way of seeing and representing the world that signals a break with earlier modes and mores.

For Lily, as for Desbordes-Valmore’s Ondine, Howitt’s Alice Law, Owenson’s Marguerite, and Arnaud’s Clémence, identity and meaning come from their artistic production and profession rather than marriage and maternity. Although Mrs Ramsey constantly urges Lily to marry, in the pivotal scene at the dinner table, in the midst of the small talk, domestic negotiations, and social tensions, Lily “remembered all of a sudden as if she had found a treasure, that she had her work. In a flash she saw her picture” (87) and “her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr Tansley was saying” (95). Placing a saltcellar on the table cloth to remind herself of her picture, Lily contemplates her inner landscape while Woolf presents her reader with a series of refracted still lifes and portraits, and both artists reflect the interpenetration of the interior and exterior worlds, giving new resonances to the psychological “truths” of these “feminine” genres. Indeed the domestic and quotidian world of summerhouses, dinner parties, boat trips, and children on the lawn is endowed with new value as Woolf, through Lily’s painting and her own narrative, locates meaning not in the object itself, but in the very act of representing perception and the accurate reflection of experience.

In the final section of the novel, following Mrs Ramsey’s death, Lily returns to the Isle of Skye with the Ramsays and tries to resume the painting she had begun ten years earlier. The canvas serves as a “barrier” to ward off Mr Ramsey’s “neediness,” and in the absence of the original subjects—Mrs Ramsey and James, mother and child—Lily returns to her vision, “that line there, that mass there” (153) resisting, even refuting, the chorus “Can’t paint, can’t write” that continues to echo in her mind. In a scene that establishes the formal and stylistic connections between author and painter, Woolf describes Lily’s act of painting, rather than the painting itself, in rhythmic, lyrical terms that mirror Woolf’s own prose, as each attempts to capture the inner process of perception, “making of the moment something permanent” (165). Woolf’s Lily Briscoe thus departs from earlier female painters in the novel in her commitment to an inner vision outside of the studio or society, and in her personal engagement with expression. In none of the previous novels examined here did the female author privilege the fictitious painter’s style and form in such a way as to draw inevitable parallels between her prose and the visual artist’s painting,
and here the political act of women's artistic creation lies in her presentation of a woman's vision. As Woolf would later contend in *Three Guineas*, although men and women may "see the same world," they nonetheless "see it through different eyes." For Lily Briscoe then, it is less a question of being "seen as an artist" (as it was, one could argue, for the artists in the earlier novels), but rather of finding a way to express her vision, even if it is only she who will see it. Her identity as an artist, denied by Tansley and Mrs Ramsay, ultimately comes not from society but from herself. The passage of time, rendered palpable in the novel, is reflected in Lily's movement toward the successful translation of her vision as she recognizes that "nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint. Yet it would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be rolled up and flung under a sofa; yet even so, even of a picture like that, it was true" (182–83).

In the act of painting, Lily performs artistic identity, at once representing her vision of Mrs Ramsay and moving beyond the limitations imposed by her subject, finding freedom in the absence of her metaphoric mother. As she applies pigment to canvas she reflects: "And one would have to say to [Mrs Ramsay], It has all gone against your wishes. They're happy like that; I'm happy like this. Life has changed completely. At that all her being, even her beauty, became for a moment, dusty and out of date" (178). Thus, Lily Briscoe embodies the next generation of women, moving beyond the seductive beauty of Mrs Ramsay's maternal ideal, turning away from social mandates refusing their expression ("Can't paint, can't write") that reflect the "dusty and out of date" values of a previous century, for new ways of being and seeing. Value and meaning for Woolf's Lily Briscoe come from a painting no one may ever see that nonetheless represents her point of view, a woman's consciousness. In the final lines of the novel, Woolf affirms Lily's success as an artist:

[S]he turned to her canvas. There it was—her picture. Yes, with all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought, it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up the brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at the canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done, it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision. (211)

Tansley's words remain vivid reminders of the continuing social and ideological barriers faced by women artists well into the twentieth century, and the fact that Lily's painting would indeed more than likely end up in an attic or under a couch reminds us of the vast strides that remained to be achieved
before women would hold a place of equality with men in the field of cultural production.12 Yet Woolf’s canonical Modernist novel centering on a female painter and her “vision” stands as testimony to the ongoing struggle for visibility undertaken by her nineteenth-century predecessors and the continuing resonance of these issues of gender, genre, representation, and female subjectivity in fiction and painting.

In *The Future of the Image*, Jacques Rancière affirms that “the images of art are, as such, dissemblances.”13 Whether visual or verbal, the artistic image reflects regimes of representation, giving form to what is sayable or visible; more radically, however, the image can also confer “a new visibility” and “educate a new gaze” (*Future* 14), allowing the reader or viewer to see what had not previously been “seen.” The images of the female painter in the novels and paintings produced in Britain and France during the first half of the nineteenth century served to construct both an identity and even a cultural presence for a formerly invisible and inconceivable figure. From Marceline Desbordes-Valmore and Hortense Lescot to Anne Brontë and Margaret Gillies, the authors and painters in *Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman* offered up images that reflected art and gender identity not simply as they were, but as they might be, opening the door for future generations of women artists to continue the ongoing struggle for voice and visibility in the public sphere.
Notes

Introduction


2. Léon Lagrange, “Du Rang des femmes dans les arts,” 39. All translations throughout this study are my own unless otherwise noted.

3. See Mary Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman*.


13. W. J. T. Mitchell, in condemning prevalent modes of interdisciplinary study, notes “these methods have been mainly associated with the work of literary scholars moonlighting in the visual arts,” although “they have a certain hidden institutional presence in art history as well.” *Picture Theory*, 84.


17. These include Balzac’s *La Vendetta* (1829), Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, *L’Atelier d’un peintre* (1833), Sydney Owenson, *The Princess* (1835), Angélique Arnaud, *Clémence* (1841), Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), Dinah Craik, *Olive* (1850), Anna Mary Howitt, “The Sisters in Art” (1852), William and Mary Howitt, “Margaret von Ehrenberg, The Artist-Wife” (1853), and George Sand, *Elle et lui* (1858). Delphine Gay de Girardin’s 1854 one-act comedy, *La Joie Fait Peur*, also focused on a female painter. Several other female authors penned novels about male painters, including Flora Tristan, *La Joie Fait Peur*, and Andrea Goulet’s *Optiques des Mouches in the City,* and novels of the period that thematize the anxieties of being observed by an invisible force.

18. It is noteworthy that Lagrange’s article was reprised in *The Crayon*, an American art journal that promoted Ruskin’s teachings and Pre-Raphaelite painting and writing. See “Woman’s Position in Art,” *The Crayon* 8 (February 1861): 25–28.


23. Baudelaire reflected in one of the fragments collected in *Mon Coeur mis à nu*, “Glorifier le culte des images (ma grande, mon unique, ma primitive passion).” See Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes* 1: 701.


27. For discussion of the “unseen seer,” see Richard Burton, “The Unseen Seer, or Proteus in the City,” and Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, for discussion of the panopticon. Balzac’s *L’Histoire des Treize* and Dickens’s *Great Expectations* are two of the many novels of the period that thematize the anxieties of being observed by an invisible force.

28. Walter Benjamin, “The Flâneur.” Benjamin notes that the nineteenth century was distinguished “by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear,” while the activity of the flâneur, a “characteristic product of modern life,” was entirely motivated by “the crucial issue of seeing.” See Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, 37–38.


30. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” 19. Mulvey’s categories have been disputed (see, for example, E. Ann Kaplan, “Is the Gaze Male?”), as has her assumption of a heterosexual norm of desire. If these structures are taken to reflect nineteenth-century ideologies of vision and visuality, it is also important to understand that they in no way preclude female viewing subjects.
35. See Rancière’s *La Nuit des prolétaires* (Nights of Labor) for discussion of the workers of the 1830s and ’40s who reclaimed the night for their own intellectual labors, composing journals, poetry, and newspapers, and appropriating access to the world of thought denied to the proletariat.
36. Within Rancière’s thought, “equality” (*l’égalité*) has no *a priori* foundation or content and is not necessarily associated with the distribution of rights; it is instead found in acts of subjectivization. I use it here both in the usual sense of the word and in Rancière’s as well.
38. See Raymond Williams, “The Romantic Artist,” in *Culture and Society*, for a discussion of the construction of an alienated artistic identity as a response to the rise of bourgeois markets and the commodification of art.
47. Murger wrote in his Preface to *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*, “Bohemia neither exists nor can exist anywhere but in Paris,” xxiv. The idea quickly caught on in England and in 1851 Dickens noted in *Household Words*, “The Parisian Bohemians of today are a tribe of unfortunate artists of all kinds—poets, painters, musicians, and dramatists—who haunt obscure cafés in all parts of Paris, but more especially in Quartier Latin.” In *Household Words* 4 (15 November 1851): 190–92.
49. For an overview of other novels focusing on the figure of the artist, see Bo Jeffares, *The Artist in Nineteenth-Century English Fiction*, and Theodore Bowie, *The Painter in French Fiction*.
50. Trilby, the title character in Du Maurier’s novel, becomes a famous singer, but only under the influence of her mesmerizing manager, Svengali. When no longer under his hypnosis, Trilby cannot sing a note, and thus the female artist in this novel of bohemia is a vehicle for male talents and energies which she independently lacks. Trilby’s true role in the novel is that of the love object of the male painters. Du Maurier illustrated his own novels, as did Thackeray, thus providing both visual and verbal portraits of the artists and their mistresses.
52. Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, 152. See Fred Kaplan, “‘Phallus-Worship’
53. Sussman contends, “This community of male artists, a ‘Priesthood’ in Carlyle’s terms, becomes both oppositional to the hegemonic male sphere and yet its very image through the occupation with communicating masculine wisdom, excluding the female, and bonding through shared labor” (141).


55. See “De la poésie classique et de la poésie romantique,” in De l’Allemagne, 1: 211–14.

56. See Alan Richardson, “Romanticism and the Colonization of the Feminine,” 13–25.


58. See, for example, Dorothy Mermin’s reading of Christina Rossetti’s “Song: When I Am Dead, My Dearest,” in “The Damsel, The Knight, and the Victorian Woman Poet.”

59. Although the term “feminism” was not used until much later in the nineteenth century, I will use the term throughout this discussion to denote what would today be considered feminist thought. Early French feminist Olympe de Gouges, author of the Declaration of the Rights of Woman (1791), was guillotined in 1793, and British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, author of Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792), was discredited following her death for her unconventional lifestyle.

60. Elizabeth Eger, Brilliant Women: 18th-Century Bluestockings, 32.

61. For discussion of the French salonnières see Benedetta Craveri, The Age of Conversation, and Evelyn Bodek, “Salonnières and Bluestockings.”

62. Frédéric Soulié, Physiologie du bas-bleu, 6. In French grammar, the pronoun must agree with the antecedent in gender and number. Thus, if the antecedent is a feminine noun such as la blanchisseuse (the laundress), the pronoun would be elle (she), but if the antecedent is a masculine noun such as le bas-bleu, the pronoun must be il (he), even if the referent is female.

63. Leigh Hunt, Blue-Stocking Revels, 56.

64. Thus, for example, nineteenth-century French historian Jules Michelet called Britain “the anti-France” in Le Peuple, 240. See also Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation, and Tombs, That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British.

65. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, “Introduction” to The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel, 2.


68. Diderot, “Elége de Richardson,” 35.


71. Patrick Noon, Crossing the Channel: British and French Painting in the Age of Romanticism, 7.


73. Scheffer’s house and studio are currently home to the Musée de la Vie Romantique in Paris and serve as a museum for Sand’s belongings (paintings, furniture, jewelry) as well.
Chapter 1

5. The Académie Royale admitted fifteen women as members between 1663 and 1783; following the Revolution, no women were admitted to the Académie’s various incarnations until the twentieth century. The British Royal Academy included Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser among its founding members in 1768, but no other women were admitted until 1922. In both cases, the female members of the academies had limited privileges and were never accorded the same status as the male academicians.
7. In this study, “Salon” will refer to the official art exhibition of the French Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture, while “salon” will denote an art critical review of the exhibition. The livret was the booklet distributed at the Salon with the names of the artists and the titles of their paintings.
9. See Thomas Cole and Mary Pardo for discussion of “The Origins of the Studio.”
14. The sole exception is Delécluze’s peculiar discussion of Mme de Noailles at several junctures in *Louis David: Son école et son temps*, in which the female student is portrayed less in terms of her art than in terms of her class, and as a troubling source of desire for the author’s alter ego, Étienne. For discussion see Solomon-Godeau, *Male Trouble*, 46–48. For a memoir of Girodet’s studio, see P. A. Coupin’s Introduction to the *Oeuvres posthumes de Girodet*.
19. In *Nouvelles des arts* an X (1801), critic Charles Landon noted the “essaim de jeunes et charmantes artistes” (swarm of young and charming female artists) displaying their work at the Salon.
22. See Sheriff, 186–89.
23. See Greer, The Obstacle Race, 262–69, for a brief discussion of Labille-Guiard’s career and several of her students.

24. Joachim Lebreton noted in his obituary of Labille-Guiard that the painter “was always tormented by our society’s lack of institutions that could offer resources for earning an honest living to women without fortune.” Notice sur Mme Vincent, née Labille, peintre (Paris: an XI).


26. See, for example, Ripa’s Iconologia and the allegorical representations of Art.

27. Labille-Guiard divorced her first husband, Nicolas Guiard, in 1792 when it became legal to do so. She did not marry Vincent, her partner for more than twenty years, until 1800.

28. See Mulvey, 19.


32. See Francis Haskell, An Italian Patron of French Neo-Classical Art.


34. While Germaine Greer identifies the woman in this scene as a “female student assistant,” a contemporary drawing by Cogniet of his sister in a recent Sotheby’s sale so closely resembles the woman in Amélie’s painting as to leave little doubt that it is a self-portrait. See Germaine Greer, “A tout prix devenir quelqu’un’: The Women of the Académie Julian,” 42.

35. Susan Sidlauskas, Body, Place and Self in Nineteenth-Century Painting, x.

36. In another painting of Cogniet’s atelier, attributed to Amélie, the studio is shown from the reverse angle, looking toward the large windows. In this second composition, the same active/passive dynamic is repeated, with Léon sitting on a ramp and contemplating an unseen work while Amélie is busy painting at an easel.

37. Caroline (Thévenin) Cogniet was also known as Catherine, while Rosalie, born in 1820, was Anne-Marie-Reine Thévenin.

38. For discussion of the legend of Zeuxis selecting models for Helen of Troy and Kauffman’s version of the scene, see Elizabeth Mansfield, Too Beautiful to Picture.

39. Sass’s School of Art in Bloomsbury, where Anna Mary Howitt studied, is a notable, if not unique, exception. Run by Francis Cary after 1842, Sass’s offered artistic training at a fairly high price to British women, including Eliza Fox, Adelaide Claxton, and Henrietta Ward. Fox would later hold classes for women interested in drawing the nude model in her home.

40. See Sir Joshua Reynolds, Discourses on Art.

41. Holger Hoock, The King’s Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture, 78.


43. Quoted from Ellen Sharples’s diary in Katharine McCook Knox, The Sharples, 13. Knox affirms that Ellen’s copies are often indistinguishable from her husband’s original portraits, posing difficulties in attribution for contemporary scholars.

44. Diaries of Ellen and Rolinda Sharples, June 1803.
46. See Greenacre, The Bristol School of Artists.
47. See Metz, 4.
48. Ellen Sharples wrote that she was always “exceedingly agitated when attempting original portraits but not so Rolinda, who conversed with a person sitting for a portrait with as much ease as if unemployed and made her sitters equally at ease.” Quoted in Knox, 25.
49. See Metz, 7–8.
50. Quoted in Metz, 9. Ellen Sharples compiled Rolinda’s notes into her own diary, creating a journal of sorts of her daughter’s life as well.
52. See Caroline Davidson, Women’s Worlds: The Art and Life of Mary Ellen Best, 14–16.
54. The paintings are identified by Simon Howard in Davidson, 36. What were formerly believed to be a pair of Tintorettos are now ascribed to Paulo Fiammingo.
55. Benham’s articles appeared in the Literary Gazette (19 October 1850): 773–76, and Art-Journal (November 1850): 360–61. Howitt’s pieces were published in Athenaeum on 19 October, 2 November, and 7 December 1850; 1 March and 12 April 1851. Anna Mary’s letters from Munich ran in Dickens’s Household Words from November 1850 through May 1851. Edited by her mother, Anna Mary’s narrative appeared unsigned, as did all work in Household Words.
56. Mary Howitt, who played an active role in editing and promoting Anna Mary’s German letters, wrote to her daughter in December 1850: “Mrs. Gaskell is much pleased with your writings. She says you do not make the reader see the things with your eyes, but you present the scene itself to him. She hopes, on your return, you will collect and publish your letters in a volume—a sort of ‘Art Life in Munich.’” Autobiography, 201. In reviews of her paintings, AMH is frequently referred to as “Author of An Art-Student in Munich.” In William Michael Rossetti’s “Art News from London,” in The Crayon, for example, he begins his review of her painting Sensitive Plant by referring to Howitt as “the authoress of a vivid and picturesque book, “The Art Student in Munich.”” The Crayon 1.16 (18 April 1855): 263.
57. Howitt, An Art Student in Munich, vii.
58. In the preface to An Art Student in Munich Howitt wrote: “Should some readers, however, cavil at what they may deem a certain couleur-de-rose medium through which all objects seem to have been viewed, the writer would simply reply, that to her it appears more graceful for a Student of Art to present herself in public as the chronicler of the deep emotions of joy and admiration called forth in her soul by great works of the imagination, than as the chronicler of what in her eyes may have appeared defects and shortcomings” (vii).

Chapter 2

1. A notable exception is Mme Riccoboni’s Histoire d’Ernestine (1765) chronicling the love affair between a young German painter and the French aristocrat who is the subject of the portrait she is finishing.
2. For discussion, see Bowie, *The Painter in French Fiction*, and Newton, “The Atelier Novel: Painters as Fictions.”
3. For discussion of the *paragone* or competition between the arts, see Leonardo, “The Works of the Eye and Ear Compared,” and d’Este, *Le Paragone*.
12. Desbordes-Valmore began acting in Rouen to earn money for the family and was well received in Paris at the Opéra Comique and Odéon. She married fellow actor Prosper Valmore in 1817, published her first book of poetry in 1817, and finally left the stage in the 1820s.
14. As Sainte-Beuve recounts it, Lamartine mistakenly believed that Desbordes-Valmore had dedicated a poem to him in a keepsake album and wrote his own poem to her as thanks for her verse. The inscription “To M. A.D.L.” was actually meant for Aimé de Loy rather than Alphonse de Lamartine. See *Memoirs of Madame Desbordes-Valmore*, 162–68.
18. In a letter to M. Duthilloeul accompanying a copy of Lamartine’s poem, Desbordes-Valmore astutely observes: “I have copied these beautiful verses with tears in my eyes, forgetting that they were addressed to so obscure a person as myself. But no: they were composed for the poet’s own glory,—to show how full his heart is of sublime and gracious pity.” Quoted in Sainte-Beuve, *Memoirs of Madame Desbordes-Valmore*, 167.
19. The most pronounced of these “biographical” readings may be found in Boyer d’Agen’s edited version of *L’Atelier d’un peintre*, published in 1922. Retitling Desbordes-Valmore’s novel *La Jeunesse de Marceline*, he excises nearly a third of her story and recasts the novel as autobiography, thus denying the poet her creation. Subsequent interpretations have focused on the story as a reflection of the Parisian art world during the Napoleonic and Restoration periods. Thus, Stephen Bann reads *L’Atelier d’un peintre* almost entirely in terms of its possible *mise en scène* of the early career of Paul Delaroche. See Stephen Bann, “The Studio as Scene of Emulation: Marceline Desbordes-Valmore’s *L’Atelier d’un peintre*.”
26. For further discussion, see Cohen, The Sentimental Education of the Novel.
27. Balzac, La Vendetta, in La Comédie humaine 1: 1040.
28. In traditional versions of the myth, Diana, goddess of the moon, falls in love with the beautiful shepherd, Endymion, as he tends his flocks on Mt. Latmus. The goddess is so infatuated with the slumbering mortal that she asks Jupiter to let him sleep forever so that he would be ever available for her amorous nocturnal visits. The topos was popular with rococo painters, including Lagrenée, Van Loo, Boucher, and Fragonard. For discussion of Balzac’s interpretation of Girodet’s Endymion, see Wettlaufer, “Girodet/Endymion/Balzac: Representation and Rivalry in Postrevolutionary France,” Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry 17.4 (2001): 401–11.
31. By 1830, popular interest in the hagiography of artists was so great that journals such as L’Artiste and Le Magasin pittoresque regularly included critical accounts of the lives and works of the Old Masters. Studies including Quatremère de Quincy’s Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Raphael (1824) were regularly used as sources. See Francis Haskell, “The Old Masters in Nineteenth-Century French Painting,” for further discussion.
32. Revolutionaries destroyed a large number of churches in 1789. While Constant Desbordes did indeed inhabit a studio in an abandoned Couvent des Capucines, it was during a period where he was estranged from his niece, and Marceline never lived there with him. Thus, though based in fact, it is clear that the author has chosen this locale for its symbolic resonance.
33. Girodet was in fact the friend and neighbor of Constant Desbordes. He opened a studio for women in 1819 and trained a number of professional women painters, including Constance Jaquet and Rosalie Renaudin. Fanny Robert, deaf and mute from birth, was also a pupil and executed a portrait of her teacher now in the collection of Smith College. See Jean Adhémar, “L’Enseignement académique en 1820: Girodet et son atelier,” and F. L. Bruel, “Girodet et les dames Robert.”
34. Desbordes-Valmore’s daughter, Ondine, later took lessons in Haudebourt-Lescot’s studio, probably in 1838.
35. Dibutades is credited with the “invention” of drawing when she traced her lover’s profile on the wall; she was a popular mythic figure in eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century art. See Pliny’s chapter on “Modeling” in Historia naturalis, for the original version of the tale.
36. Castiglione’s The Book of the Courtier (1513–27) is written in dialogue form and gives voice to a range of female characters. In Book II, Giuliano de’ Medici proposes that the female courtier should engage in the same moral training and intellectual pursuits as her male counterpoint. The ensuing debate on female equality resonates throughout the text.
38. Susan Stanford Friedman, “Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor: Gender Difference in Literary Discourse,” 74.
40. Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon*, 35.
41. Abel de Pujol’s story is recounted in the chapter entitled “Un Élève de David,” connecting the fictional atelier with the real, while referring to two historical painters who also trained female students in their studios. The novel is set about ten years before Grandpierre-Deverzy’s 1822 painting was executed.

Chapter 3

7. Anna Mary Howitt was invited to publish in *The Germ* (the PRB journal) in 1850 and participated in the Portfolio Club with Rossetti and Millais in 1854.
8. Jan Marsh has used the term “Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood” to refer to the models and muses of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood—Elizabeth Siddal, Emma Brown, Annie Miller, Fannie Cornforth, Jane Morris, and Georgiana Burne-Jones (Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood). In her very helpful study *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists*, co-edited with Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Marsh argues for the inclusion of women among the Pre-Raphaelites, while Nunn’s essay, “A Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood?” takes up the case, maintaining that, had they kept painting, Anna Mary Howitt, Jane Benham Hay, and Joanna Boyce “would have made a triumvirate to equal that of DG Rossetti, WH Hunt and JE Millais.” *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists*, 66.
9. The *Athenaeum*’s review of Howitt’s *Margaret Returning from the Fountain*, for example, referred to “the Pre-Raphaelite school to which Miss Howitt, perhaps unconsciously, inclines” (19 March 1854): 346.
10. See, for example, Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, which makes no mention of any of the women who participated in the movement.
12. For discussion of Howitt’s life and art, see Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Canvassing*, and Nunn and Jan Marsh, *Women Artists and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement*.
13. Howitt also joined Eliza Fox’s cooperative art classes for women held at Fox’s home in the late 1840s.
15. Linda H. Peterson, “Collaborative Life Writing as Ideology: The Auto/biographies of Mary Howitt and her Family,” 177.
16. See Linda Peterson, “Mother-Daughter Productions: Mary Howitt and Anna Mary Howitt in *Howitt’s Journal, Household Words* and Other Mid-Victorian Publications,” for further discussion of Anna Mary’s professionalization as an illustrator of her parents’ works.
17. 1844 letter from Mary Howitt to her sister Anna Harrison, quoted in Amice Lee,
Notes to Chapter 3

Laurels and Rosemary, 164. Lee, a granddaughter of Anna Harrison, compiled this study primarily from letters between the sisters passed down through the family.

18. Anna Mary's translation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Red Shoes* appeared in the 11 September 1847 issue of *Howitt's Journal* (171–73). Her sister, Margaret, fifteen years her junior, worked as a professional translator before becoming a nun toward the end of her life.

19. Edward Bateman, who proposed before she left for Germany, wanted to marry in 1852. Anna Mary, in love with Bateman though nervous about the impact of marriage on her career, preferred to remain in Munich, and ultimately the engagement was broken. In a letter of 25 October 1850 written to Barbara Leigh Smith from Munich, Anna Mary happily reveals that Bateman "had as great a horror of marriage seemingly as you or I," in Lenore Ann Beaky, "The Letters of Anna Mary Howitt to Barbara Ann Smith Bodichon" 2: 145. By 1854, she is clear in her determination that she prefers to remain unmarried. She writes to Barbara, "I wonder myself how anyone has the energy to think of getting married. To me, in my 'used up' state of mind even the preparations to say nothing of what would probably come after—would be a profound bore and worry! Is this not an unusual state of mind for a woman to be in!!!!!!" (Beaky 2: 175). Following her nervous breakdown in 1856, Anna Mary married Alaric Alfred Watts, the son of close family friends, in 1859.

20. Letter from Anna Mary Howitt to Anne Leigh Smith, dated November 1854, in Beaky 2: 185.


22. For further discussion of Leigh Smith's life and work, see Pam Hirsch, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon*, and Sheila Herstein, *A Mid-Victorian Feminist: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon*. I will use the name Leigh Smith rather than Bodichon here, as Barbara's marriage in 1857 and her removal to Algeria marks an unofficial end to the sisterhood.


24. The Victoria Press, named in honor of the Queen, was run entirely by women compositors. After its successful launch, Parkes wrote to Leigh Smith, “Here are women in the trade at last! One dream of my life!” Quoted in Hirsch, 192.

25. Under British law, any income a woman earned for her work was legally her husband's. Despite Leigh Smith's active campaigning throughout the 1850s and '60s, the Married Woman's Property Act was not passed until 1893.


27. Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants*, 1. She explains that in market society, identities become tied to "whether [individuals] make nails, automobiles, books, contracts, breakfast, hotel beds, music, speeches, or babies" (3).


29. Carolyn Maibor presents these ideas in *Labor Pains* in relation to Emerson, Hawthorne, and Alcott.


32. Leigh Smith and Parkes wore Balmoral boots with colored laces and skirts shortened several inches above the ankle for ease of walking during their European tour in 1850,
when this sketch was probably made. They also refused to wear corsets in the belief “that women should be freed from the fetters of contemporary clothes.” See Hester Burton, Barbara Bodichon, 39. A drawing of Parkes in the boots and shortened skirt, very much in the same mode as “Ye Newe Generation,” is also found in the Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon papers held at Girton College, Cambridge.


34. Mary and Margaret Gillies were veritable “sisters in art,” Mary being an author and Margaret a successful painter who inspired and encouraged Anna Mary. Intimate friends of the Howitt family, the Gillies sisters lived and worked together until their deaths and may have shaped Anna Mary’s conception of a productive sisterhood. Mary wrote frequently about Associated Homes for Howitt’s Journal and elsewhere, and Margaret painted portraits of contemporary intellectuals and radicals, including William and Mary Howitt (see chapter 7).

35. Matthew Rowlinson, “Reading Capital with Little Nell.”

36. Charles Dickens, Master Humphrey’s Clock, 15.

37. The exchange of woman for painting recalls Balzac’s Le Chef-d’oeuvre inconnu (1831), as does the opening scene of the novel, where Wood’s entry into the Silvers’s shop followed by Lizzy echoes Frenhofer’s arrival at Mabuse’s studio followed by the young Poussin. Like her French contemporaries, George Sand and Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, Howitt appears to be writing against the overt misogyny of Balzac’s fiction and reclaiming the subject position for the female character.

38. Here I am thinking specifically of the pair of original illustrations of Nell in chapter 1 of The Old Curiosity Shop (London: Penguin, 2000). The first, by Daniel Maclise, shows the child in the shop with her grandfather and the narrator (10), and the second, by Samuel Williams, corresponds to the narrator’s dream of Nell asleep in a room chock-a-block with curiosities (21). Both highlight the contrast between the old and musty objects and the youthful innocence of Nell, portending her ultimate demise.


40. Griselda Pollock and Deborah Cherry have argued that Siddal functions within Pre-Raphaelitism “as a symbol of the whole movement” and was treated by both the artists and critics as “woman as sign” rather than a signifying subject. See “Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature,” in Pollock, Vision and Difference, 91–116. In Painting Women, Cherry contends that Siddal’s poetry, drawings, and watercolors “addressed the desires of women and for women, women looking and the look of women” (191), issues also central to Howitt’s story. Siddal’s own artistic production began in 1852, the same year Sisters in Art was published.

41. Charles Tennyson writes, “Alfred had many talks with Mary Howitt about the education and social position of women” and planned on “composing a poem on these subjects.” In Alfred Tennyson, 202.

42. Beaky 2: 123.


45. “The woman’s cause is man’s: they rise or sink / Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free” (The Princess VII, 242–43). Donald E. Hall observes, “Even judged by the modest feminist ideals of his period, Tennyson’s poem is clearly reactionary; its sexual politics may
be covert, but *The Princess* dramatizes a harsh and relentless oppression of women,” in “The Anti-Feminist Ideology of Tennyson’s *The Princess*,” 49.


47. Quoted in Woodring 107.

48. AMH to Barbara Leigh Smith c. 1850. Cambridge University Library Association, ms. 7621.


50. Aside from Silver’s fortune, Alice’s school is endowed with Dr Falkland’s “matchless anatomical museum,” Giuseppe’s casts, and Mrs Cohen’s house and gardens in Wimbledon for a country studio. All who encounter the women offer their economic and intellectual support of the project in this utopian tale.

51. In 1855 Howitt exhibited *The Sensitive Plant*, a diptych based on Shelley’s poem of the same name, and her image of *Margaret at the Well*, from Goethe's *Faust*, also engaged a literary theme. *Boadicea*, however, was notably ambitious in its epic historical theme.

52. Joanna Boyce also exhibited an *Elgiva* in 1855 that was praised by Ruskin for its portrayal of the noblewoman’s despair. Like Howitt, Boyce selected a heroic female subject from British history who was a political victim, but her image of gentle sorrow was more palatable to the critics than Howitt’s wrathful Boadicea.


54. Howitt exhibited one final image, *From a Window*, at the Society of Female Artists exhibition in 1858. As described in “The Society of Female Artists,” *The Athenæum* (3 April 1858), the scene is “a poetical autumn sunset seen from a window” (439).

55. The earlier painting, taken from *Faust*, was in fact entitled *Margaret at the Well*. Gretchen, a diminutive form of Margaret, is also used by Goethe in the text.

56. The entire text of the review of *Boadicea* can be found in “Fine Arts,” *The Athenæum* (7 June 1856): 718.


62. In a letter of 1855 in which he hoped to persuade Siddal to accept his offer of support, Ruskin admitted “Perhaps I have said too much of my wish to do this [i.e., buy her artwork] for Rossetti’s sake.” In Ruskin, Rossetti, *PreRaphaelitism*, 63.

63. Ruskin to Siddal, May 1855, in Ruskin, Rossetti, *PreRaphaelitism*, 89.


72. Thornycroft’s wife, Mary Thornycroft, was one of the most successful female sculptors in Britain and the mother of a “dynasty” of children, including three daughters, who also pursued careers in art. See McCracken, “Sculptor Mary Thornycroft and Her Artist Children.”

Chapter 4

2. Peter Sahlins observes that national identity is “contingent and relational: it is defined by the social or territorial boundaries drawn to distinguish the collective self and its implicit negation, the other.” Boundaries, 271.
6. Although she came to be known as Lady Morgan following her marriage in 1812, I will use the name Sydney Owenson here, as I will be primarily discussing her earlier work, published under the name Owenson before her marriage.
10. W. Hepworth Dixon recounts that Owenson was identified with the fictional Princess of Innismore, “and until her marriage she was always known in society by the sobriquet Glorvina.” Lady Morgan’s Memoirs 1: 277.
11. Quoted in Gutwirth, Madame de Staël, Novelist, 259.
13. In a letter of 1808, Owenson recounts that she and Lady Stanley “sat up till two this morning talking of Corinne” (Memoirs 1: 324), and ten years later she identifies Staël as a writer “of genius, governed by principle . . . from whose works I had received infinite pleasure, and (as a woman, I may add) infinite pride” (France 2: 383–84). In turn, Staël was reported to have had Owenson’s The Princess read to her on her deathbed (Campbell, Lady Morgan, 149). Nonetheless, the two women never met.
16. Mme de Staël, Corinne, ou l’Italie (Gallimard, 1985), 28. Translations are my own. For an excellent version of the novel in English, see Corinne, or Italy, translated by Sylvia Raphael.
18. I use the term “hybridity” in terms of Staël’s work to signal a cultural and national mixture that is at once subversive and productive. For discussion of hybridity as “cultural mixture and border crossing,” see Deborah Kapchan and Pauline Turner Strong, “Theorizing the Hybrid.” It is interesting to note that Owenson herself was the daughter of an Irish Catholic father and an English, Protestant mother, echoing Corinne’s divided heritage.
19. For discussion of gender and nation see Anne McClintock, “No Longer in a Future Heaven: Gender, Race and Nationalism.”
24. Landon, Salon de 1810, 104.
27. Blanc, “Appendice: Mme Haudebourg-Lescot” 3: 47. Blanc adds that Haudebourg-Lescot is part of the family of “petits peintres,” a denigration that reflects not only on her gender but also on her status as a genre painter, one of the least prestigious forms within Blanc’s institutional hierarchies.
33. Lettres à David, sur le Salon de 1819 par quelques élèves de son école, 33.
34. See Richard Brettell and Caroline Brettell, Painters and Peasants in the Nineteenth Century; Pierre Gasser, Léopold Robert et les peintres de l’Italie romantique; and Laurence Chesneau-Dupin, Jean-Victor Schnetz, 1787–1870: Couleurs d’Italie, for discussion of these male painters of the Italian genre scene, landscape, and peasants. In all of these studies Haudebourg-Lescot is mentioned in passing, but not analyzed in any depth.
35. In a peculiar twist, this portrait of Haudebourg-Lescot was identified as an image of Aurore Dudevant (George Sand) in an article by Lyndon Orr entitled “Famous Affinities of History: The Story of George Sand,” in Munsey’s Magazine 43.4 (July 1910): 495. Haudebourg-Lescot painted an early portrait of Sand that was in the collection of Antonin Proust. The image, unlocated today, is reproduced in “Lettres familières de George Sand,” Revue encyclopédique (1893), 855.
39. While Greuze spent two years in Italy and produced some Italian scenes, his most influential work was centered on the French domestic genre scene. For discussion, see Richard Wrigley, “Genre Painting with Italy in Mind.”
40. Barker, “Putting the Viewer in the Frame,” 108.
43. The configuration of the French visitors in Lescot’s scene resembles the groups of painters in Capet’s 1808 portrait of Labille-Guiard in intriguing ways.
44. Lescot was rumored to have been the model for Canova’s famous Terpsichore.
45. Peintures pour un Château, 110.
49. For a description of the ball and the costumes worn by the court, see Reiset, 367–72, and Bouchot, *Le Luxe français: La Restauration*, chapter 4, “Les Fêtes de Madame,” 77–104. Eugène Lami executed a series of watercolors of the *Quadrille de Marie Stuart* that were turned into a commemorative lithograph album distributed to the guests (Bouchot 98).
50. Elizabeth I was not recognized as the legitimate heir of Henry VIII by many Catholics, thus making Mary Stuart the legitimate ruler in the minds of some.

Chapter 5

9. In her discussion of contemporary artists in Paris, Owenson makes several mentions of the young women painters working at the Louvre (*France* 2: 21, 27), and in her lengthy note on ateliers she has visited, Mlle Lescot is the only female artist she names. She writes, “Among the female artists (and there are many of considerable talent), Madame Lescot holds a distinguished rank, for her admirable representations of the interior of churches, &c. &c. &c.” (*France* 2: 37).
13. Owenson, *The Princess; or The Beguine* 1: 30. Referred to hereafter in the text as PB.
16. The Princess’s use of costume to perform multiple identities shares much with Théophile Gautier’s *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, which also appeared in 1835.
Chapter 6


2. Unlike Britain, where female Realist authors were not uncommon, there are few, if any, female French Realists. For discussion see Margaret Cohen, *The Sentimental Education of the Novel*. There she posits a definition of the sentimental social novel as a subgenre which developed as an alternative preferred by female authors to the Realist novel.


6. Enfantin’s words, quoted in the *Tribune des femmes* 1: 193, 194, 222. Also see Claire Goldberg Moses and Leslie Rabine, *Feminism, Socialism, and French Romanticism*, 34.

7. The empty chair of the Female Messiah would remain forever unoccupied and signals the real absence of female power within the movement. For further discussion of women’s roles in Saint-Simonianism, see Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*, 41–116.


13. Caroline Simon (1802–53) and her husband Léon Simon were ardent Saint-Simonians who rose to the upper ranks (or “degrees”) of the order and at one point directed a communal Saint-Simonian residence. In 1832 the couple separated, and Caroline’s affair with Charles Duguet, a lawyer who joined the movement in 1829, resulted in an illegitimate son. Duguet left for Egypt in 1833 on Enfantin’s apostolic mission to find the female Messiah. Duguet introduced Arnaud and Simon, who began their correspondence during his absence, and if Caroline was his lover, Angélique cherished a platonic love for him during this period.

14. See Georges Lubin, “Qui fut Angélique Arnaud,” for two letters from Sand to Arnaud praising her work.

15. Arnaud published two more novels in the 1870s: *Une Tendre dévôte* (1874) and *La Cousine Adèle* (1879), as well as numerous political articles and pamphlets. Arnaud’s final book was a collaborative study with her daughter Laure, on the Saint-Simonian musicologist François del Sarte.

16. Souvestre (1806–54) published widely during his short career and was a frequent contributor to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. His more radical socialist/feminist/proletariat novels include *Échelle des femmes* (1835), *Riche et pauvre* (1836), and *Confessions d’un ouvrier* (1851). For further discussion see Glen Shortliffe, “Populism in the Novel before Naturalism.”

17. Émile Souvestre, “Du Roman,” 117. “Du Roman” also served as the preface to Souvestre’s 1836 novel, *Riche et pauvre*. 
19. “In tracing what I conceive as the moralist’s duties here, I have indicated the task of the novelist: for the novelist must show himself to be essentially a moralist if he does not want to descend to the condition of a childish story teller or an unworthy speculator” (7).
20. Married women, for example, were required to take on their husbands’ nationalities and could not sign legal documents or even dispose of their own property without their husbands’ permission. The 1816 prohibition of divorce is a theme in Clémence as well as in many of Sand’s novels. For discussion of the Napoleonic Code and its effect on French women’s rights, see Moses, French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century, 18–20.
23. Variations on the lives of the Old Masters were popular in the periodical press during the Romantic period, as contemporary authors and artists constructed a new image of artistic identity in the age of commercial production. For some of the more enduring myths of the artist, see Margot and Rudolf Wittkower, Born under Saturn.
24. The betrayal of Santa-Cortez to the police by Madame Gervois, a frustrated and flirtatious middle-aged occupant of the Hôtel du Lac, closely echoes Mlle Michonneau’s betrayal of Vautrin to the authorities in Le Père Goriot.
25. Portia, the heroine of The Merchant of Venice, delivers her famous oratory “The quality of mercy is not strained / It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven / Upon the place beneath. / It is twice blest: / It blesseth him that gives and him that takes,” in Act IV, scene i, dressed as a man in court, arguing against the technicalities of the law.

Chapter 7

1. While portraits were certainly included in the Salon and Academy exhibitions, the vast majority were intended exclusively for private consumption.
2. See Angela Rosenthal, “She’s Got the Look,” for the portrait as process. Also see Hans Gadamer, “The Ontology of the Work of Art and Its Hermeneutic,” for discussion of the “occasionality” of the portrait.
5. Lady Lindsay, “Some Recollections of Miss Margaret Gillies,” 265.
6. Gillies was a friend of Anna Mary’s parents, William and Mary Howitt, for many years, and the younger painter refers frequently to Gillies in her letters. Evans came to know Mary and Margaret Gillies in the 1860s when Charles Lewes, son of Evans’s partner, George Henry Lewes, married Gertrude Hill, who lived with the Gillies sisters and her grandfather, Thomas Southwood Smith (Margaret’s partner), from the time she was two until after her marriage. Social reformer Octavia Hill, Gertrude’s sister and another of Southwood Smith’s granddaughters referred to Gillies as “Aunt Margaret” (see Life of Octavia Hill), and Lewes and Eliot called the Gillies sisters “the Aunts.”
7. Obituary for Margaret Gillies, The Times (London [26 July 1887]): 7. William Gillies, father of Margaret and Mary, was a London merchant who met with considerably less success than his brothers. Adam, Lord Gillies, served as Judge of the Court of the Exchequer in Scotland; another brother, John Gillies, was a scholar and historian who
translated Aristotle’s *Ethics, Politics,* and *Rhetoric* and was appointed Historiographer Royal of Scotland. See Roget, *A History of the “Old Water-Colour”* Society 2: 372.

8. The Gillies sisters remained close friends of the Howitt family well into the 1870s. In her *Autobiography,* Mary Howitt described Mary and Margaret Gillies as follows: “the one an embodiment of peace and an admirable writer, but whose talent, like the violet, kept in the shade; the other, the warm hearted painter” (183).

9. Horne edited *Monthly Repository* with Mary Gillies in 1836–37 and went on to edit *A New Spirit of the Age.* He and Mary co-wrote several books for children, though Horne is better known for his long-term correspondence with Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In 1852 he left for Australia with William Howitt and his sons.

10. See Kathryn Gleadle, *The Early Feminists,* 33–70, for an overview of the movement.


13. For discussion of the place of the miniature in English cultural history, see Marcia Pointon, “Surrounded with Brilliants.”


16. Martin Archer Shee lambasted miniature painters in his *Rhymes on Art* (1805), disparaging them as “graphic dunces” who “degrade the pencil” (31–32). In a lengthy note he intoned, “from the prompt means of subsistence which miniature painting affords to every manufacturer of a face, it will always be the refuge of imbecility: a refuge for the poor and disappointed in art; where all who want the vigour that impels to higher game, or the means to support a longer pursuit, will sit down with humbled expectations, consoled by the reflection, that if fame be more confined, their profit is less precarious” (32–33).


19. The sittings began in July 1843 and continued through the fall. In a letter to Margaret Gillies of 23 October 1843, Dickens wrote, “Would you like me to ask Mr. Maclise to look in, during the sitting? He has a mighty knowledge of my face, and expressed himself much struck with the ‘spirit’ of your portrait.” In *The Letters of Charles Dickens* 3: 584–85.


21. Canon Ainger, a friend of Gillies in the final years of her life, noted that by 1839, “It becomes evident that Miss Gillies’s reputation as a miniature painter was growing, and notably in the circles of poets and artists.” In “Margaret Gillies,” 65.

22. Caroline Roberts contends that Martineau “toppled the hierarchy of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ language, initially taken for granted by her contemporaries” through “her imposition of ‘feminine’ discourse on ‘masculine’ preserves and modes.” See *The Woman and the Hour,* 15–16.

23. Gillies painted more portraits of Martineau, but none was after the live model, as Martineau severed ties with Gillies because of her irregular living situation. Martineau would later complain about the unauthorized circulation of her likenesses.

32. Mary Gillies, “Associated Homes for the Middle Class,” *Howitt’s Journal* (1847): 272. These same principles were embraced in Anna Mary Howitt’s *Art Student in Munich* (see chapter 3).
34. Letter from Dora Wordsworth to Isabelle Fenton, quoted in Yeldham, *Margaret Gillies*, 36.
38. For Westall’s engraving, see Hebron, *William Wordsworth*, 107.
42. A letter from Gillies to Hunt indicates that the poet had written to the painter to inquire about the prices of her miniature portraits. She replied that “my prices for miniatures are from ten guineas to twenty according to the size” but offered to paint Hunt for free. Given the constant financial woes of Hunt and his family, this generous act might be taken as an act of charity; by working without a commission, however, Gillies was free to paint the subject as she saw fit.
43. Dickens, *Bleak House*, 117. Dickens wrote of his characterization of Hunt as Skimpole, “I suppose it is the most exact portrait that was ever painted in words! . . . It is an absolute reproduction of a real man.” *Bleak House*, 955.

**Chapter 8**

1. See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, for discussion of the artistic training and production of Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne, along with excellent reproductions of their identified work.
6. In a letter of 31 July 1848 to W. S. Williams, following the publication of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Charlotte wrote, “For my own part I consider the subject unfortunately chosen—it was one the author was not qualified to handle at once vigourously and truthfully—the simple and natural—quiet description and simple pathos are, I think, Acton Bell’s forte. I liked ‘Agnes Grey’ better than the present work.” In *The Brontës*, ed. T. J. Wise and J. A. Symington, 2: 241.

7. George Moore was among the first to call the narrative “clumsy” in his *Conversations in Ebury Street* (1924), and the phrase has resonated ever since.

8. Rachel Carnell, “Feminism and the Public Sphere in Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, 1.

9. N. M. Jacobs, “Gender and Layered Narrative in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*,” 207. Jacobs does not further develop the artistic metaphor.

10. In “The Case of Helen Huntingdon,” Ian Ward presents an excellent overview of a married woman’s legal status in Britain during the period when the novel is set. This “Divine Right of Husbands” (153) over their wives’ lives and property was a focal point of the Victorian feminist movement and central to Barbara Leigh Smith’s reform efforts in the Married Woman’s Property campaign.


12. Edward Chitham contends that “Wildfell Hall is an old mansion which mocks *Wuthering Heights*, even in its initials.” *A Life of Anne Brontë*, 142. Jill Matus traces similar intersections in “‘Strong family likeness’: *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*.”

13. The theme of children and flowers, developed in Helen’s diary as she paints this portrait, is also reflected in one of Anne Brontë’s paintings, *Portrait of a little girl with a posy*, of 1843. Helen’s painting, as described by Gilbert (“It was a little child, seated on the grass with its lap full of flowers. The tiny features and large, blue eyes, smiling through a shock of light brown curls, shaken over the forehead as it bent above its treasure, bore a sufficient resemblance to those of the young gentleman before me to proclaim it a portrait of Arthur Graham in his early infancy” [44]), bears more than a passing resemblance to Brontë’s own work. See *The Art of the Brontës*, plate XX.

14. In “The Voicing of Feminine Desire,” Elizabeth Langland reads *The Tenant* as “a narrative of exchange” (112) that gives voice to repressed feminine desire, the expression of which “depends on transgression and exchange” (122). My reading of the portraits reflects this vision of desire and transgression.

15. Indiana similarly fulfills her domestic duties for her husband while refusing him domain over her body or soul. She tells Delmare, “I know that I am the slave and you are the lord. The law of the land has made you my master. You can tie up my body, bind my hands, control my actions. You have the right of the powerful and society confirms it in you; but you have no power, sir, over my will . . . You can silence me, but you cannot stop me from thinking.” *Indiana*, 232.

16. As Gilbert’s sister Rose complains when Gilbert is late to tea: “if it had been *me* now, I should have had no tea at all—if it had been Fergus, even, he would have had to put up with such as there was, and been told to be thankful, for it was far too good for him; but *you*—we can’t do too much for you.—It’s always so—if there’s anything particularly nice at table, Mamma winks and nods at me to abstain from it, and if I don’t attend to that, she whispers, ‘Don’t eat so much of that, Rose, Gilbert will like it for his supper’—I’m nothing at all—in the parlour it’s ‘Come Rose, put away your things, and
let’s have the room nice and tidy against they come in; and keep up a good fire; Gilbert likes a cheerful fire.’ In the kitchen—‘Make that pie a large one, Rose, I dare say the boys’ll be hungry;—and don’t put too much pepper in, they’ll not like it I’m sure’—or, ‘Rose, don’t put so many spices in the pudding, Gilbert likes it plain,’ or ‘Mind you put plenty of currants in the cake, Fergus likes plenty.’ If I say, ‘Well Mamma, I don’t,’ I’m told I ought not think of myself—‘You know Rose, in all household matters, we have only two things to consider, first, what’s proper to be done, and secondly, what’s most agreeable to the gentlemen of the house—any thing will do for the ladies.”’ Mrs Markham affirms her daughter’s characterization of their household priorities, adding “And a very good doctrine too . . . Gilbert thinks so, I’m sure” (53).

17. Margaret Smith, Introduction to The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, xx.

Chapter 9

2. Anne McCall notes, “dans le cadre de la Correspondance, les envois d’autoportraits et de portraits picturaux de sa personne deviennent un outil puissant non point pour faire valoir sa supposée beauté mais pour sonder son identité troublée.” See “Image furtive, idée fixe,” 56.
3. For discussion of Sand’s relationship to painting and contemporary painters (most notably Delacroix), see Godeau, ed., George Sand, une nature d’artiste.
5. With the vous of direct address, Sand proposes an encounter in the second paragraph between her reader (“vous”) and a berrichon peasant: “Le caractère grave et silencieux du paysan n’est pas un des moindres charmes de cette contrée. Rien ne l’étonne, rien ne l’attire. Votre présence fortuite dans son sentier ne lui fera même pas détourner la tête, et, si vous lui demandez le chemin d’une ville ou d’une ferme, toute sa réponse consistera dans un sourire de complaisance, comme pour vous prouver qu’il n’est pas dupe de votre facétie. Le paysan du Berry ne conçoit pas qu’on marche sans bien savoir où l’on va” (193). Throughout the text she includes italicized words and definitions, such as “pâtoir (c’est le mot de pays)” (194), further emphasizing the “foreignness” of this world of peasants and pastures.
6. See Lukacher, Maternal Fictions, 61–108. Sand was raised by her aristocratic grandmother after her father’s death, and the ambivalent maternal figure will be discussed below.
7. For discussion of Sand’s own artistic skills, see Sophie Martin-Dehaye, George Sand et la peinture.
9. The first preface to Indiana, for example, employs this self-effacing strategy. There she writes, “il faudrait répondre à la critique qu’elle fait beaucoup trop d’honneur à une œuvre sans importance; que pour se prendre aux grandes questions de l’ordre social, il faut se sentir une grande force d’âme ou s’attribuer un grand talent, et que tant de présomption n’entre point dans la donnée d’un récit fort simple où l’écrivain n’a presque rien créé.” See Sand, Indiana, 37.
11. *Elle et lui* is, for example, mentioned only in passing or not at all in Naomi Schor’s *George Sand and Idealism*, Isabelle Hoog Naginski’s *George Sand: Writing for Her Life*, David Powell’s edited collection *George Sand Today*, and Françoise Massardier-Kenney’s *Gender in the Fiction of George Sand*.

12. Henry James, “*She and He,*” 738. For discussion of James’s fascination with Sand’s affair with Musset, see Peter Collister, “Taking Care of Yourself: Henry James and the Life of George Sand.”


15. In an 1833 letter to Sand, Musset called her “mon cher Monsieur George Sand, qui est désormais pour moi, un homme de génie” (Musset, *Correspondance*, 69), while critic Jules Janin observed two years later, “George Sand, chez lui, c’est tour à tour un capricieux jeune homme de dix-huit ans, et une très jolie femme de vingt-cinq à trente ans; c’est un enfant de dix-huit ans qui fume et qui prise avec beaucoup de grace, c’est une grande dame dont l’esprit et l’imprévu vous étonnent et vous humilient,” in *La Mode* (septembre 1835), 181. And as Balzac so famously observed of his friend and rival in 1838, “Elle est garçon, elle est artiste, elle est grande, généreuse, dévouée, chaste, elle a les grands traits de l’homme, ergo elle n’est pas femme.” *Lettres à Madame Hanska* 1: 585.


17. Jeanne Fuchs, “George Sand and Alfred de Musset,” 207. Fuchs points out that when they met, Sand, twenty-nine, and Musset, twenty-three, were already famous for *Indiana* and *Les Caprices de Marianne* and notorious for their unorthodox behavior. They became lovers shortly after they were introduced by Sainte-Beuve at a dinner party given by Buloz in June 1833.

18. For discussion of Troubadour painting, see Tscherny and Stair Sainty, *Romance and Chivalry*. A prime example of this tendency in literature is Balzac’s *Le Chef d’oeuvre inconnu* of 1831/37, which focuses on the artistic initiation of Poussin in the early seventeenth century while rehearsing Balzac’s nascent Realist aesthetic in the nineteenth.


20. Musset complained, “I worked all day long, and in the evening I wrote ten lines and drank a bottle of brandy; she drank a liter of milk and wrote half a volume.” Quoted in Brem, *George Sand: Un Diable de femme*, 38.


23. Massardier-Kenney, 149.


28. Following the death of her father when she was four, Sand was raised by her mother, Sophie Delaborde, a *femme du peuple*, and her wealthy aristocratic paternal grandmother, Mme Aurore Dupin de Francueil, the illegitimate daughter of the Maréchal de Saxe and
Notes to Conclusion

granddaughter of the King of Poland. The two women shared little but their love for the child and competed with one another for her affection; Sand would later observe that they were “as different in their natures as they were in their educations and their habits. They were truly the two extremes of our sex” (Story of My Life, 468). As Maryline Lukacher has shown, “the double structure of the mother-grandmother” was a source of gendered anxiety that was played out both in Sand’s life and in her novels (where female doubles, often from disparate classes, are frequently found), while “the idea of ‘two mothers’ gives a new twist to the Freudian theories of castration anxiety and the uncanny” (11). Ultimately, her mother ceded Aurore to her grandmother in exchange for a financial settlement, and their relationship was fractured, though not entirely severed, by the force of the grandmother’s will and Sophie’s choice of money (for herself and for her daughter) over maternity. Sand in turn played a maternal role with many of her friends and lovers (most notably Musset and Flaubert) and had a famously troubled relationship with her own daughter. For discussion of “the intertwined issues of missing maternal origins, mourning, and a coming to writing” in Sand’s work, see Janet Beizer, “Writing Origins: George Sand and the Story of Our Life,” in Thinking through the Mothers, 57–101.

29. George Sand, Le Château de Pictordu, 41.

30. In the original manuscript, the sentence concluded, “et la rendrait folle ou idiote” (and would make her mad or an idiot), giving an even more powerful sense of the deleterious effect of the father’s lessons on Diane. See Château de Pictordu, 308n32.

Conclusion

1. Laura Herford gained admission to the Royal Academy Schools following a “brilliantly orchestrated campaign” when she submitted a drawing with her initials rather than her full name. See Cherry, “Artists and Militants,” in Beyond the Frame, 9.

2. Gabriel Weisberg, Overcoming All Obstacles, 16.


4. Quoted from the British press reviews of Bonheur’s Horse Fair in Lepelle de Bois-Gallais, Biographie de Rosa Bonheur, 45. The first quotation is from the Illustrated Daily News (21 July 1855), and the second from Daily News (19 July 1855).

5. Gretchen van Slyke, Rosa Bonheur: The Artist’s (Auto)Biography, xii.


7. Wolff, Feminine Sentences, 1.

8. See, for example, Diane Gillespie, The Sisters’ Arts: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell.

9. Woolf, A Room of One’s Own, 93.

10. Woolf, To the Lighthouse, 51. “Women can’t paint, women can’t write” is repeated several more times in the text, including pp. 88, 93, 162, 163, and 200.


12. As the activist Guerrilla Girls remind us, female artists remain today an under-represented, often invisible presence in the world of high art. In an open letter to the Broad Foundation, on the opening of the Broad Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2008, the Guerrilla Girls deplored the fact that 87 percent of the artists shown in the opening exhibit were male, and 97 percent were white. They wrote: “To open such
an important project like BCAM with a show that is so white (97%) and so male (87%) gives the impression that the contemporary art world is not diverse, and that the government of L.A. county and the trustees of the museum don’t care, or are asleep at the wheel . . . Women have been graduating from art schools in the same number or greater than men for decades. Why not work with the Broad Education Foundation to find out what happens to them in the art market?” See http://www.guerrillagirls.com/posters/dearestelibroad.shtml


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