

## Men's Work? Masculinity and Modernism

I WANT here to sketch some of the tangled relations between modernism and sexual difference in the decade between 1905 and 1915.<sup>1</sup> In art history, these were the formative years of the British avant-garde: in 1905 Augustus John was establishing his reputation, in 1910 Roger Fry organized the first "Post-Impressionist Exhibition," in 1915 Wyndham Lewis brought out the second issue of *Blast*. In broader terms, these were "some of the most immoderate years in English history,"<sup>2</sup> marked by political tension, industrial unrest, and feminist militancy. Consider the following quotations:

1. Frank Rutter's dedication to *Revolution in Art*, a defense of post-impressionism published in 1910: "To Rebels of either sex all the world over who in any way are fighting for freedom of any kind I dedicate this study of their painter-comrades."<sup>3</sup> Rutter was an art critic, founder and secretary of the Allied Artists' Association, director of Leeds City Art Gallery, and honorary treasurer of the Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement.

2. The notorious open letter signed by Wyndham Lewis and others who broke with the Omega Workshops in 1913, which dismissed Roger Fry and his associates as a "family party of strayed and dissenting Aesthetes . . . compelled to call in as much modern talent as they could find to do the rough and masculine work." ("The Idol is still Prettiness, with its mid-Victorian languish of the neck . . . despite the Post-What-Not fashionableness of its draperies.")<sup>4</sup>

3. The *New York Evening Sun*, 13 February 1917 (a quotation I borrow from Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *No Man's Land*): "Some people think that women are the cause of modernism, whatever that is."<sup>5</sup>

Either rebels and painter-comrades, men and women, fight for a new social order and a correspondingly modern, emancipated culture, or the trouble in modernism is women. The artist is a Primitive Mercenary (*Blast*). Modernism is "rough and masculine work," and the enemy is effeminacy—perhaps effeminacy in women or men.

I make certain assumptions about modernism and about its relation to categories of sexual difference, which I will now summarize.

### Modernism

I assume first of all a set of intimate and mutually determining relations between modernity, modernism, and modernist criticism.

Modernism as a set of cultural practices derives from, and promises expression to, the characteristic beliefs and experiences of modernity, of life in modernized, industrial, urban societies (societies marked by rapid population increase, concentration of manufacture, rapid transport systems and suburbanization, new forms of leisure, commodification, and urban spectacle). Modernism is glossed and evaluated according to the chiefly formalist protocols of modernist art history. One of the consequences of this is that much that was politically challenging, aesthetically contradictory, emancipatory, and interdisciplinary in the culture of modernity has been leached out of our concept of modernism as a collection of objects and a sequence of styles. For its pre-war protagonists, the world was a new place, and modernism was a utopian project. It involved modern painting, modern interiors, modern literature, modern music, modern dancing, modern life, and modern sex: topics embraced indiscriminately and with gusto in the new periodicals like *Rhythm*, which considered itself "a unique attempt . . . to unite within one magazine all the parallel manifestations of modernism in every province of art, education and philosophy." *Rhythm* published Rollo Myers on Debussy, poetry and short stories by Katherine Mansfield, drawings by artists from Picasso to Gaudier-Brzeska, D. H. Lawrence's review of *The Georgian Poets* ("we are awake again, our lungs are full of new air, our eyes of morning"), and Gilbert Cannan on modern marriage ("the majority of marriages are ruined by the absurd masculine theories concerning women, theories to which women, being ill-educated and economically dependent, subscribe").<sup>6</sup>

Each of these terms—modernity, modernism, modernist art history—has particular implications for women. Between, say, 1880 and 1920, significant changes took place in women's professional, sexual, and economic autonomy. You could say that women laid claim to the fruits of modernity—to educational and professional opportunity, social mobility, and democratic citizenship (in spite of Darwinian counterarguments that modernization could not apply to women, that evolution

favored a high degree of specialization between the sexes, and that social progress depended on “womanliness” staying safe and unimpaired). But modernity also laid claim to women who came to embody—for Gordon Selfridge or Le Corbusier—the image and reach of modernity itself.

For a notable artistic engagement with these themes, see Mary Cassatt’s mural for the Woman’s Building at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893), “Young Women Plucking the Fruits of Knowledge and Science.” For its mobilization in propaganda, see the work of the Artists’ Suffrage League (1907) and the Suffrage Atelier (1909). For its use as subject matter, as part of a movement to modernize literature through the exploration of sexual conflict, see the “New Woman” novels of Thomas Hardy, George Gissing, George Meredith, George Moore, Sarah Grand, and Mona Caird. For its commercial exploitation, see the proliferating advertising and department store imagery of the period, which had its own investments in a new kind of female consumer. (Some of Gwen John’s drawings are on notepaper from the Grand Magasin du Louvre. As Rachel Bowlby points out, it wasn’t only Freud at this moment who was moved to ask the question, “What do women want?”)<sup>7</sup>

The question of women’s contribution to modernism as a cultural enterprise has to include all of the patrons, editors, and enablers (Sylvia Beach, Dora Marsden, Harriet Shaw Weaver, Kate Lechmere), as well as the artists and writers. It has *also* to be addressed to the difficulties of feminism and sexuality at the troubled heart of modernist endeavor. The point has been made by Griselda Pollock for late nineteenth-century France (“Why the nude, the brothel, the bar?”), and by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar for Anglo-Saxon literary modernism.<sup>8</sup> It holds, I will claim, for the pictorial modernisms of 1905–1915.

The battle of the sexes (for pro- and antifeminists, especially men) and the exploration of a modern, self-determined identity (particularly by women) is *the* modern subject matter, even where talk of speed, electricity, cars, planes, and war dominates the manifest content of a work. These issues cannot be addressed by a modernist art history which, at its crudest, leaves the women out or which, alternatively, retraces an essential and thus *un*modern femininity in the work. (Even Richard Cork, who pays early and sympathetic attention to the women Vorticists, slips into an account of Helen Saunders that has her “tempering the harsh contours of her abstraction with female waywardness.”)<sup>9</sup>

### *Sexual Difference*

The second—and contested—term I want to address is sexual difference. In a very useful résumé of the arguments, Michèle Barrett identifies three concepts of sexual difference: experiential difference, positional difference in discourse, and sexual difference as psychoanalysis accounts for it.<sup>10</sup> Any attempt to combine all three would amount to “a very ambitious theoretical construct indeed”—in Stuart Hall’s sceptical phrase—a theory that aimed to account at the same time “for how biological individuals become social subjects, *and* for how those subjects are fixed in positions of knowledge in relation to language and representation, *and* for how they are interpellated in specific historical discourses.”<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, as components of subjectivity, they are only hypothetically distinct.

*Experiential difference* assumes that the ‘definitive assignment of sex roles in history has created fundamental differences between the sexes in their perception, experience, and expectations of the world, differences that cannot help but have been carried over into the creative process’.<sup>12</sup>

If experiential difference emphasizes men and women as distinct sociological categories, *Positional difference* assumes that gender is fixed in part by representations; that gender “is, among other things, a semiotic category.”<sup>13</sup> Cultural practices come to be seen as *producing* femininities—“woman” becomes a relational term in a system of difference—rather than as reflecting biological or social femininities produced elsewhere.

In what Peter Wollen describes illuminatingly as “a cascade of antinomies”—functional/ornamental, pictorial/decorative, engineer/leisure class, production/consumption, reality principle/pleasure principle, machine/body, west/east, active/passive, masculine/feminine, “each of which suggests another, step by step”—modernism at a pivotal moment defined itself in each case by disavowing the second term.<sup>14</sup> One way of conceiving modernist theory and practice is thus as a cluster of components that must be constantly defended against encroachment by their “Others.” The masculine is threatened by the feminine, the machine by the body, reality by pleasure, abstraction by decoration. Implicit here is the suggestion that there is another trajectory for feminism to investigate, never developed but never entirely repressed, in what Wollen terms “modernism’s myth of its own origins”: a liminal art of eroticism, exoticism, decoration, and the body.

Barrett locates the origins of her third concept of sexual difference—sexual difference as psychoanalysis understands it—in the impact of Juliet Mitchell’s recuperation of Freud in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974). She acknowledges that it is a fraught and difficult category, overlapping awkwardly with differences one and two, but, at the same time, an indispensable one.

Psychoanalysis brings back the question of sexual difference, not as a story of everyday institutions and discourse (experiential or positional difference), but as a matter of a *fantasy* relation to the body through the Oedipal channeling of desire. With all its difficulties, only the insights of psychoanalysis can answer, in my view, to something like the passionate peculiarities of the Edwardian debates on militant or hysterical femininity;<sup>15</sup> or, on the other hand, the transitions through which Epstein resolved his obsessions with pregnancy and copulation in “The Rock Drill” (1913–1915)—a totem of parthenogenetic *phallic* potency—in his own words, “a machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself its progeny, protectively ensconced.”<sup>16</sup> Which brings us back to the “rough and masculine work” of British modernism; to the interplay of “experiential” and “positional” difference that marks its treatment of women artists and the explicitly sexual charge that runs through its squabbles and manifestos; in short, to the historical question of subjectivity.

### *Artistic Subjectivities: “Masculinity as Masquerade”*

During the nineteenth century, “art” and “artist” acquired new resonances. The economic basis for artistic practice shifted decisively from church, state, or private commission to commodity production, and by the early years of the twentieth century (late, in Britain), we find the small coterie of a self-consciously “modernist” avant-garde, if no general agreement on subject or style. The hold of the Royal Academy as the principal educational and exhibiting institution was broken well before 1900.<sup>17</sup> The established art press, with new titles and the appointment of newspaper critics, had begun catering to a general and amateur interest among the cultivated bourgeoisie as well as to specialists and professionals.<sup>18</sup> Combative artists (like Whistler) made good copy. The *kunstlerroman* or artist-novel reached the zenith of its popularity between about 1885 and the First World War, and large numbers of fictional and semi-documentary accounts of the artist and artistic life

were avidly consumed by an expanding public.<sup>19</sup> In the same period, a concern with sexuality and sexual identity emerged as the mark of the modern in art, literature, and social behavior. Feminism and the social and literary phenomenon of the “new woman” helped throw femininity into crisis.<sup>20</sup> The influx of women artists trained in the new public art schools of the Victorian period and in ateliers abroad led to anxieties about the “feminization” of art, that it would be swamped by “a flood of mediocrity.”<sup>21</sup> These fears were compounded by the social and economic insecurity of the avant-garde and by a sense of British impotence in the face of European, and specifically Parisian, creativity. Artistic masculinity—at least in some quarters—was also in crisis, and new kinds of harsh, procreative, and virile masculinities were appropriated in response to what was perceived as the depleted and effeminate influence of women, the Royal Academy, and what Gaudier-Brzeska called the disgusting softness of modern life.<sup>22</sup>

If we are to account for the formation and effects of gendered artistic subjects—which is different from tracing the work back to gender, insistently and unproblematically, and only in the case of women—we have to find a place for historical agency.<sup>23</sup> We need a concept of the active subject as both structured and structuring, neither the dupe of history nor the “possessor of her own soul who has hewn out her individual path to well-deserved fame—as an admitted Genius.”<sup>24</sup> (Thus Ethel Ducat’s praise of Anne Estelle Rice in *Votes for Women*: an unconscious parody of the language of avant-garde heroism as it was informed by the discourse of possessive individualism.) This research is not biography, but it needs the biographer’s materials—letters, diaries, memoirs, notebooks—if we are to glimpse something of how men and women aspired to new and modern artistic identities that left their traces on the work.

To become an artist at the turn of the century was not only a social matter of training and opportunity, it was also a question of aspiration, of *imagining* oneself an artist. Fact and fiction, history and biography, psychology and journalism, merged and overlapped in the mapping of an artistic “type” and, hence, in the provision of raw material for new identities.<sup>25</sup> There is little to be gained by insisting on the common sense distinction between “real people” and discursive fictions. Identification, the founding process of subjectivity, assimilates aspects, attributes, or properties of “others” who may just as well be fictional as not. Mythological components inhabit and determine biographical narratives, which in turn effect not only how artists are perceived (the “additional configurations of responses” linked with them as a socially

delimited group) but also how artists understand and produce their *own* identities (in what Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz refer to as the psychology of “enacted biography”).<sup>26</sup> The enormous popularity of the artist as a character in fiction, biography, and journalism at the turn of the century meant that no one setting out on an artistic career did so as innocently as they might have taken up bookkeeping or architecture or medicine. The artist was a special kind of being with a special kind of life rather than an ordinary being with particular kinds of skills.

Such questions are increasingly discussed as a problem for women, who could have the skills but not the specialness and were doomed to the category of “lady artist.” But I want to suggest that masculinity was also in crisis in the years after 1900 or, to put it more locally, that a combination of factors made the assertion of a virile and creative masculinity both imperative and problematic. Some of these originated in the art world itself and other pressed upon it from outside.

The humiliations of the Boer War (1899–1902), the *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* of 1904 (though it refuted rumors that 60 percent of Englishmen were unfit for active service), an apparent increase in the number of mentally defective persons discussed in the *Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded* of 1908, a drop in the birthrate of almost 30 percent between the mid-1870s and 1910, a concern for the well-being of the empire in the face of German economic strength and military preparedness: all this led to talk of moral, physical, and intellectual decline.<sup>27</sup> Much of the debate was couched in the terms of social Darwinism.<sup>28</sup> Darwin had proposed that nations as well as individuals were subject to the law of the “survival of the fittest” and had himself appeared to lend credence to the Victorian ideology of “separate spheres” by claiming that sexual divergence was part of the evolutionary process: the higher the order of civilization, the more refined and distinct the attributes of masculinity and femininity. Eugenicists, who formed the principal strand within social Darwinism, used this argument to claim that national decline could only be reversed by “manly” men and “womanly” women regenerating the population. Social Darwinism crossed the political spectrum. In the hands of eugenicists, it helped promote widespread anxieties about the “masculinization” of modern women and the “effeminacy” of the men they would mate with and breed.

Many men (and also women) *were* disturbed by the impact of modern life on traditional definitions of sexual identity and by the impact

of feminism. The measure of this concern is popular antisuffrage propaganda, which can only be called hysterical. It depicts, graphically, the oppression of men by domineering viragoes or, more frequently, the preemptive strike: the symbolic rape or “castration” of presumptuous women.<sup>29</sup> It has its gentler modes, but what recurs insistently is the fear of what women’s emancipation will do to men. It is as though masculinity and femininity are mutually exclusive and mutually damaging. The bottom line is castration or—and it amounts to the same thing perhaps—the feminizing of the virile institutions of civic life: “everywhere,” as Almroth Wright put it, “one epicene institution, one cock-and-hen show.”<sup>30</sup> It was not clear in 1910 that women would win the vote, but they had several times come close to it. What was clear was that, with the vote or without it, the processes of modernization were irreversible, and they brought women more fully into the fabric of daily public life.<sup>31</sup>

The impact of these changes on men’s sense of their masculinity is harder to gauge and impossible to generalize. We might speculate, however, that the encroachment by women on hitherto masculine arenas (clerical work, local politics, medicine, the universities, certain kinds of sport)—however tentative—together with the spectacle of ferocious industrial muscle made for some uncertainty as to the nature of a *modern* masculinity.<sup>32</sup> A womanly woman was a woman with all the maternal and domestic virtues, but manliness was more obviously complicated by class and by the unresolved question of how the defining drives of masculinity (such as lust and aggression) were properly sublimated in civilized life.

Such issues had their local and “artistic” application. The social standing and economic security of the artist had declined since the middle of the nineteenth century. Women were becoming artists with a new sense of organization and self-consciousness, perceiving themselves as a group that suffered from certain difficulties but to which new possibilities were opening. Societies of women artists were becoming less defensive and more vocal. The Women’s International Art Club, open to all women who had studied in Paris and did “strong work,” had more than one hundred members from seventeen different countries by 1900, when its first London exhibition was held in the Grafton Galleries.<sup>33</sup> In 1910 the exhibition included work by women artists of the past. There is a real sense of women exploring their capacities and their heritage at this moment, in the face of those critical discourses that secured their work as “feminine” and hence deficient. The numbers of

women artists, their invasion of the art schools, their raised profile in the periodicals (first as “surplus” women needing a discreet alternative to governessing, but then as “new” women determined on independence and a career), their role as consumers of the new “art” furnishings, “art” needlework, “art” everything: All this contributed to an uneasy sense that art as a predominantly masculine activity was being feminized and domesticated.

The note of self-conscious virility in the rebellion of an Augustus John or a Wyndham Lewis was intended to distance them from any of this bourgeois “artiness”; from the senility of the *arrière garde*; and from the 1890s dandyism of Beardsley or Whistler.<sup>34</sup> As an aesthetic stance, dandyism was compromised by the backlash from the Oscar Wilde trial of 1895 and by what Wyndham Lewis almost called the bourgeoisification of bohemia.<sup>35</sup> The exquisite pose and rapier wit of the “Butterfly”<sup>36</sup> would no longer serve. A new, blunter, more modern, more brutal (more *masculine*) combatant was required to do battle against twentieth-century philistinism and the dead weight of tradition. (Ezra Pound complained that he was always having to tell young men to square their shoulders, wipe their feet, and *remember the date on the calendar*.)<sup>37</sup>

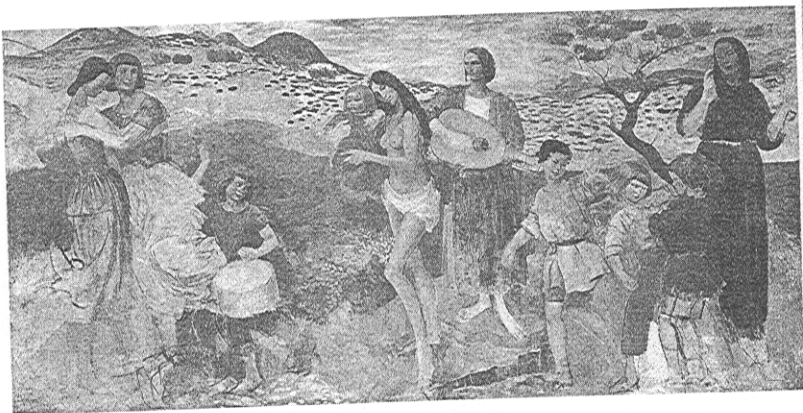
John became a gypsy patriarch complete with Romany caravan to the outspoken envy of Wyndham Lewis, who wrote to his mother that John was “going to camp on Dartmoor, with a numerous retinue, or a formidable staff, . . . or any polite phrase that occurs to you that might include his patriarchal menage” (fig. 1), and later that “John will end by building a city, and being worshipped as the sole man therein—the deity of Masculinity.”<sup>38</sup> John’s two portraits of Lewis invite us to mark the transition from the Rugby schoolboy and Slade art student (c. 1903) to the bohemian aesthete and “incarnate loki” of Montparnasse (c. 1905).<sup>39</sup> Cloaked and hatted like a Spanish grandee, the silk bookmarks fluttering from slender, leather-bound volumes of poetry, Lewis prowled the streets of Paris before 1909, harrassing the seamstresses. But he outgrew his apprenticeship to John’s persona and adopted something more Nietzschean: the herdsman, the crowdmaster, the Tyro, the primitive mercenary, the Enemy.<sup>40</sup> Henri Gaudier-Brzeska found his sculptural inspiration in the preclassical and tribal collections of the British museum, as well as his creative, sexual, antibourgeois identity, first as “the modern Cellini” and then as “the savage messiah.”<sup>41</sup>

John, as the “image of Jove turned gypsy,”<sup>42</sup> adopted a carelessly lyrical style, an expressive brushstroke, and Italianate allusions in the



1. Augustus John and family with gypsy caravan, c. 1909. London, courtesy National Portrait Gallery.

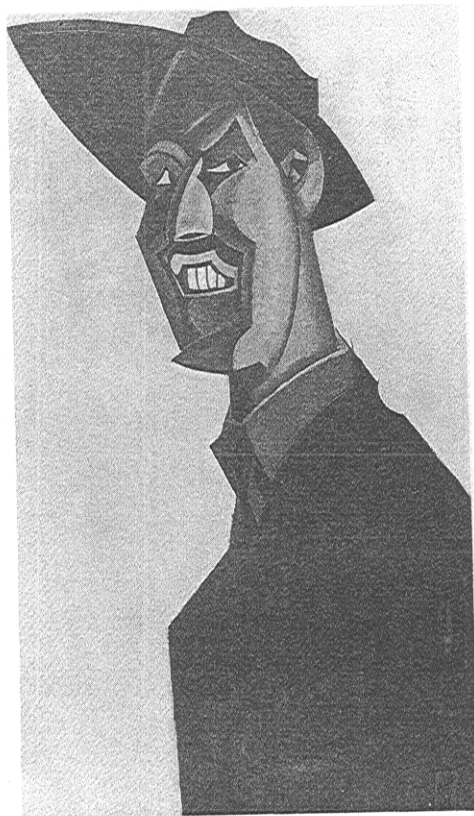
struggle to find a visual medium for the essentially conservative and inchoate myth of a fecund Arcadia in the present. (*Lyric Fantasy*, 1910–1911, one of the only large works, was never completed (fig. 2). Neither his painting conditions nor his pastoral figure subjects were appropriate to modernism as that was conceived after 1910, and certainly after 1914.) Lewis sketched out his overlapping personae in the *Blast* manifestoes, in his autobiographical novel *Tarr* (1918, revised 1928), and in short stories and self-portraits such as *Self Portrait as a Tyro* (1920–1921) (fig. 3). His pre-war work is marked by an obsession with the crowd—the crowd his hero Cantleman opposes is both “feminine” and “blind”—and by



2. Augustus John, *Lyric Fantasy*, 1910–1911. London, courtesy Tate Gallery.

the use of a vocabulary of geometric (that is, as for Worringer, “masculine”)<sup>43</sup> forms to invoke both the structure of the industrial city and the alienating tenor of modern urban life. The “square bluntness”<sup>44</sup> so valued in Gaudier’s work by Ezra Pound is modern by virtue of its distance both from the smooth transitions of classical carving and from the expressive modeling of the Rodinesque. But it is also construed as modern—by Pound and others—because it is phallic, most phallic, in fact, in the “hieratic head” of Pound himself (fig. 4). There is an easy traffic between this idea of the modern necessity for a “virile art” and Gaudier’s role as the savage messiah.

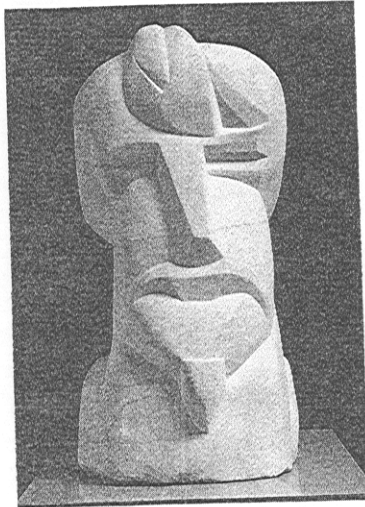
The irony is that this free-ranging masculinity required emancipated women to support it. John, Lewis, and Gaudier-Brzeska *expected* women to be emancipated enough to sleep with them, to forgo fidelity, in the case of John and Lewis to bear their children out of wedlock, and in the case of Lewis and Gaudier to help support their art financially.<sup>45</sup> None of these men was wedded to traditional ideas of womanliness. All of them believed women could be talented and independent. But an imperious and often promiscuous, heterosexual masculine egoism ran through their relations with women nevertheless. And the women themselves were often divided or insecure. Few had Gwen John’s presence of mind and passionate selfishness. Nina Hamnett was distracted by *la vie de bohème* and ignored Sickert’s advice to keep callers to their settled hours.<sup>46</sup> Carrington felt she was “not strong enough to live in this world



3. Wyndham Lewis, *Self Portrait as a Tyro*, 1920–1921. Kingston upon Hull, courtesy Ferens Art Gallery.

of people and paint.”<sup>47</sup> Sophie Brzeska’s trilogy failed to emerge from her several hundred pages of autobiographical notes. Life drained talent, often enough in the interests of men and with women’s blessing. Bloomsbury was an exception, at least for Vanessa Bell.<sup>48</sup> Its homosexual component ironized hearty masculinity, and, for all the intricacies of its sexual relationships, sexual conquest and a sense of virility did not permeate its work (which was, of course, precisely Lewis’ complaint).

I think there is evident here such a thing as “masculinity as masquerade,” not in any sense that would directly complement Joan Riviere’s analysis of “Womanliness as Masquerade” (1929)<sup>49</sup> but in three related



4. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Head of Ezra Pound*, 1914. London, Private Collection, Photograph courtesy Tate Gallery.

ones. First, we can speak generally of identification as the means by which the personality is constituted and specified: “All the world’s a stage / and all the men and women merely players.”<sup>50</sup> There is a powerful sense of charades about John’s imagery and behavior, but the point is that he chose to produce himself as an artistic subject through a series of identifications with the attributes of a nomadic, liminal, and acapitalist group. The process is particularly vivid with John because it is relatively transparent and impinges so directly on his work. But it illuminates the ways in which younger artists played with the appropriation of other, more mythic, and—mythically—more potent masculinities, out of context, as part of their opposition to the conventional codes of middle class masculinity.

Second, we might deepen this first sense of masquerade as a kind of fantasy identification by exploring the operations of masquerade as a form of defense. This notion of defense is the crux of Riviere’s case study. She opens with a reference to Sandor Ferenczi’s claim that homosexual men may exaggerate their heterosexuality as a defense. She proceeds by stating that “women who wish for masculinity” (her case study is of an intellectual woman who usurps the masculine position of public speaker) “may put on a mask of womanliness to avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men.”<sup>51</sup> We can adapt the structure of her

(and Ferenczi’s) argument metaphorically. Men moving into art—an area identified with “feminine” sensibility and increasingly occupied by women art students—might feel the need with Nevinson and Marinetti to distinguish *Vital English Art* from the pastimes of women and schoolgirls and to adopt the mask of a heightened and aggressively heterosexual masculinity.<sup>52</sup>

Riviere oscillates in her paper between seeing the masquerade as a travesty—a defense and disguise—and as womanliness itself (womanliness *is* the masquerade). This latter position is the one taken by later commentators, including Stephen Heath who goes on to suggest that there is a corresponding male term for the woman’s masquerade—male display or, in Lacan’s term, *parade*. He quotes from Virginia Woolf’s *Three Guineas*, observing that “all the trappings of authority, hierarchy, order, position make the man, his phallic identity,” and then from Eugenie Lemoine Luccione: “If the penis was the phallus, men would have no need of feathers or ties or medals. . . . Just like the masquerade, [parade] betrays a flaw: no one has the phallus.”<sup>53</sup> The difficulty here—apart from that of theorizing the asymmetry of “masquerade” to “parade”—is that once we generalize either concept to illuminate a whole gendered identity, we lose its usefulness as a term for a particular symptom and strategy. I want to retain as a backdrop the general association between femininity and masquerade, on the one hand, and masculinity and parade, on the other. But I also argue that the concept of masquerade as a negotiated strategy for gendered survival offers some purchase on the specific, contradictory, and idiosyncratic masculinities of my artist-protagonists.

Augustus John and Wyndham Lewis (who partly learned it from John) were very good at parade: not the civic display of “feathers or ties or medals,” but its bohemian antidote. Bohemian parade conjured a masculinity even more phallic in its flamboyance, its sexuality, and its studied neglect of the sartorial niceties that connoted in turn the constraints of duty, decency, and social decorum. As early as 1858, a character in Mary Jackson’s novel *Maud Skillicorne’s Penance* complains that young artists are “gross in their habits and tastes, snobbish in their appearance aping foreigners in wearing dirty moustaches and antediluvian cloaks.”<sup>54</sup> This was not a bad description of Wyndham Lewis in Paris almost half a century later. Bohemian clothing had become a cliché, the garb of minor artists and the merely arty. John retreated further into gypsydom. Lewis made the knight’s move and adopted an ironic black suit. Nevinson and the rest of the “Slade coster gang” went for “black

jerseys, scarlet mufflers and black caps or hats.” (“We were the terror of Soho and violent participants, for the mere love of a row, at such places as the anti-vivisectionist demonstrations at the ‘Little Brown Dog’ at Battersea.”)<sup>55</sup>

The appropriation of bits of working class clothing into a rougher masculinity than their families had fitted them for is characteristic of the attempt to modernize the tired particularities of artistic identity. It is also, paradoxically, characteristic of parade. The infusion of virility, which is the staple metaphor distinguishing modernity from 1890s aestheticism, comes not from the hierarchical trappings of the desk-bound bourgeoisie but from an invocation of what are perceived as the uncultivated and, hence, unfettered masculinities of the manual and the marginal: costers, navvies, gypsies, “savages.”<sup>56</sup> My point is that this is of more than incidental or biographical interest. The proper study of womankind is not always or necessarily woman: masculinity is a problem for feminism (as well as for women and, arguably, men), and both feminism and art history, in focusing on these emergent and provisional masculinities, can illuminate something of modernism’s “myth of its own origins” and interests.

I want now to touch on some work of Augustus John’s from 1905 and 1909, on what Roger Fry first termed “post-impressionism” in the context of the 1910 and 1912 exhibitions, and on Vorticism, particularly as exemplified in *Blast*. What interests me is the assumption of masculinity, the inscription of sexual difference, and the opportunities afforded by particular groups and practices for women’s participation.

### *Augustus John*

John’s love of the open road had first been stimulated by Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. But as professor of painting at Liverpool between 1901 and 1904, he came into contact with the Romany cult through John Sampson, a noted Rai (or non-blood brother), folklorist, and librarian of Liverpool University College. From this point, John aimed to inhabit as far as possible the gypsy life while making it—and here was the rub—compatible with the needs of his family and his subject matter as an artist. In 1905 he acquired a gypsy caravan on the “never-never” from Michel Salaman, taking it to Dartmoor in the early summer and on a more extended trip north in 1909.

The gypsy travelers of the nineteenth century were both oppressed

and romanticized. Their nomadic and acapitalist way of life was increasingly at odds with the structures and values of an industrializing, sedentary, labor-market economy. Various attempts were made by evangelical missionaries and local authorities to educate their children and restrict their movements. At the same time, ethnographers and enthusiasts were studying the Romany dialects, developing the subject of gypsy lore, and compiling the profile of a distinct community within the category of vagrants and casual laborers. (This profile—of a community with its own language, social codes, and transnational European identity—has been strongly challenged by modern scholars.)

The romantic and ethnographic interest in gypsies overlapped with two other concerns: with the advocacy of outdoor leisure pursuits for jaded businessmen, on the one hand, and with a literary fascination for the “open road” exemplified by writers like George Borrow and W. H. Hudson, on the other. Both assumed that the undoubted virtues of modern civilization were inseparable from its debilitating effect upon masculinity, its customs “so polite and graceful as to be at times a positive tax upon a man’s time and person.”<sup>57</sup> The cult of the open road seemed to offer a last resistance to timetables, frontiers, passports, by-laws, and bourgeois domesticity. It joined with artistic and literary concerns in the pastoralism of the Georgian poets, in magazines like Douglas Goldring’s *Tramp* (the first to publish the Futurist Manifesto in English in 1910, along with short stories by Wyndham Lewis and detailed instructions for caravans and tents),<sup>58</sup> and in the pre-war paintings of Augustus John, upon which his reputation chiefly rests.

John’s gypsy paintings (unlike Laura Knight’s) work his wife and mistress into Romany muses. (“How would you like yourself as a Romany lady?”<sup>59</sup> he asked Dorelia in 1903, and he sent her love letters in the Romany dialect with word lists to learn.) The actual inhabiting of this exotic mythology left Dorelia giving birth in the caravan on a bleak stretch of Dartmoor in the early summer of 1905, and Ida, John’s wife, who came to help, washing the family linen in the stream. *Caravan at Dusk* (1905) depicts a gypsy tent of traditional hazel rod construction (instructions were later available in *Tramp*) and clothing drying on the grass. The striped tent appears again, framing the sunlit scene, in *Gypsy Encampment* (1905).<sup>60</sup> John, bearded, leans over the half-door smoking a clay pipe. Ida nurses Robin. Dorelia appears twice, standing in a hat and on the extreme left in the tent with the new baby, Pyramus.

Two years earlier, soon after John had met Dorelia and at a critical stage in their relationship, his sister Gwen John had suggested that





5. Gwen John, *The Student*, 1903–1904. Manchester, courtesy City Art Gallery.



6. Augustus John, *The Smiling Woman*, 1908–1909. London, courtesy Tate Gallery.

Dorelia and she should walk to Rome. Augustus was incensed. He was concerned for their safety but also, perhaps, because vagabonding was to be done under his wing and on his terms. In the autumn of 1903, Gwen and Dorelia took a steamer down the Thames, landed at Bordeaux, and began working their way up the Garonne Valley from village to village. They slept mostly under haystacks or in stables, lived on grapes, bread, lemonade, and a little beer, and earned a few francs from singing or drawing portraits in local inns. The going was hard, not least because their appearance was sometimes misconstrued and the village men would “want to know where we are going to sleep and follow us.” At the end of November, they paused in Toulouse, where Gwen painted several portraits of Dorelia. In February 1904—abandoning the idea of

Rome—they returned to Paris, where both earned a living by modeling and Gwen returned to work.<sup>61</sup>

Gwen John's painting of Dorelia as *The Student* was finally exhibited at the New English Art Club in 1909 (fig. 5).<sup>62</sup> In 1908 Augustus painted Dorelia as *The Smiling Woman*<sup>63</sup>—a painting that made his name—and the portrait was included in the International Society's exhibition of “Fair Women” at the New Gallery in 1909 (fig. 6). The comparison is instructive. Reviewing the exhibition for the *Burlington Magazine*, Roger Fry noted that the “vitality of this gypsy Gioconda is fierce, disquieting, emphatic,” and enhanced by “the summary strokes with which the swift play of the features and the defiant poise of the hands are suggested.”<sup>64</sup> Michael Holroyd and Malcolm Easton suggest that he could be forgiven for failing to recognize in the model “a Miss Dorothy McNeill of respectable urban origins.” Between them, John and Dorelia had effected “an ethnic change of the most startling order,”<sup>65</sup> as well as a shift of femininities from the almost demure and concentrated pose of *The Student* to something exotic, extravagant, and seductive. (*The Smiling Woman* prefigures the gypsy heroines of *Tramp* short stories: “a black-eyed Egyptian minx; a rinkeno, ruzlo lass with black hair parted down the middle, . . . gold ear-rings, . . . [and] the mafada, flirtatious glint in her radiantly dark eyes.”<sup>66</sup> We cannot measure the paintings against the “truth” of Dorelia; that is not in the nature of picture-making, and Dorelia was in any case adept in a variety of picturesque roles. Augustus goes for bravura and Hals; Gwen for something more *intimiste* with hints of Ingres. There is nothing in *The Student* to tell us that this woman and the artist had just walked from Bordeaux to Toulouse, and much in *The Smiling Woman* to invoke the myth of an exotic vagabond. Both figures are “staged,” and staged in relation to concerns shared intimately with the artist; but the staginess of *The Smiling Woman*, its summary vivacity and complicit grin, hint at the role it plays in the artist's sense of his own identity. (We are reminded of Virginia Woolf's comment that a man needs a woman to reflect himself back to himself at twice his normal size.)

#### Roger Fry, *Post-Impressionism and “Omega”*

“On or about December 1910, human character changed,”<sup>67</sup> as Virginia Woolf famously put it, meaning life in general but significantly

choosing as her benchmark the public impact of “Manet and the Post-Impressionists.” In the two exhibitions of 1910 and 1912, Fry introduced the British public to avant-garde French painting of the previous thirty-five years, enjoyed an enormous *succès de scandale*, and provided the impetus for new forms of modernism before World War I.

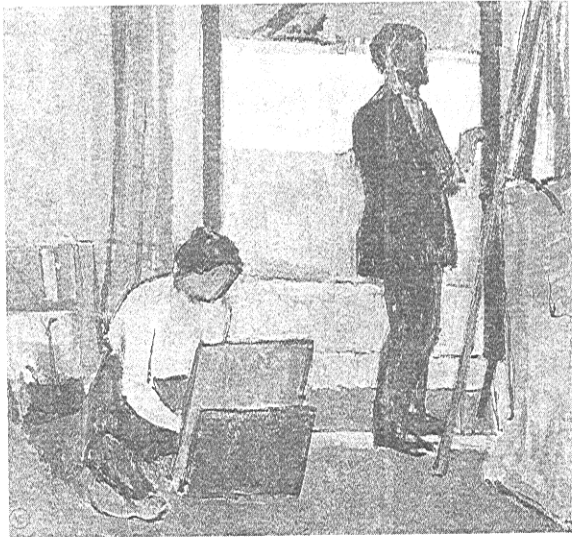
This was emancipation for Vanessa Bell, who said of the 1910 exhibition that “it was as if one might say things one had always felt instead of trying to say things that other people told one to feel.”<sup>68</sup> The liberation she responded to as an artist was that of strong color, rhythmic line, and a spirited rejection of narrative and naturalistic subject matter. That this was *the* way to paint, and to respond to paintings, was a fundamental tenet of Fry and Clive Bell’s modernist aesthetic. That there were no women artists in the 1910 exhibition (Vanessa Bell and six others contributed in 1912),<sup>69</sup> and that its representations of femininity were conventional in all but a strictly pictorial sense, would have been considered a philistine observation not only by Fry and Bell but probably by Vanessa Bell as well.

A measure of institutional opportunity and social emancipation had produced a contradictory situation for women artists in the Edwardian period. Thousands of women were trying to make a living as artists by the turn of the century (3,699 as against 10,250 men in the census of 1901),<sup>70</sup> but the *idea* of the woman artist, if more familiar, was still contested and uncomfortable: They threatened “to become a veritable plague, a fearful confusion, and a terrifying stream of mediocrity.”<sup>71</sup> Reviewers condescended to women and called, at the same time, for a specifically feminine art, one that would reproduce the values inscribed to women in the dominant discourses on femininity. Women, in flight from the newly insistent but inferior category of the female artist, conceded the wisdom that “Art has no sex.”<sup>72</sup>

The 1910 “Post-Impressionist” exhibition<sup>73</sup> concentrated on work by Cézanne, Gauguin, and van Gogh, with Manet posited as a point of origin, together with work by younger artists including Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain, and pre-cubist Picasso. Some were very well known works, and others cannot now be identified. It is nevertheless possible to hazard from the titles that, in a show containing a large number of landscapes and still lifes, between a quarter and a third of the paintings were paintings of women and almost all the sculptures were of women. They ranged from Manet’s *Bar at the Folies Béguère* to nudes by Matisse, Picasso, Vallotton, and Maillol. They included Cézanne’s *Les Ondines* and *La Toilette*; Redon’s *Femme d’Orient*; Gauguin’s *Mater-*

*nité*, *Negrèsses*, and *Tahitiennes*; and van Gogh’s *Madone* and *Jeune Fille* (the mad girl from Zola’s *Germinal*). For the British public, these were not conventional paintings, and not until 1912 would Fry find—having promoted—British work to hang in their company. What limited the radicalism of Fry’s choice—however outrageous it seemed at the time—was not just the exclusion of cubism or futurism but the extent to which French modernism was premised on the modernizing—the pictorial fragmentation, intensification, or primitivizing—of humanist themes.

The 1910 exhibition attracted adverse publicity, but its extent has been greatly exaggerated; what needs explaining is not so much a scandal (that seductive trope of the embattled avant-garde), but a success. Stella Tillyard (*The Impact of Modernism*) points out that several newspapers implied that the majority of visitors were women. This was partly a way of “striking a triple blow” against women, fads, and modern art—the wife in the *Westminster Gazette*’s fictional dialogue sandwiches the post-impressionists between a suffrage meeting and a Bernard Shaw play.<sup>74</sup> But Tillyard suggests it is likely there *were* more women present than critics expected at exhibitions of modern art, partly as a result of the modicum of social independence but partly because Fry’s and Bell’s defense of post-impressionism drew on the language and aesthetic of the arts and crafts movement. When Fry—and Desmond MacCarthy, who wrote the catalogue essay from Fry’s notes while well fortified with champagne—used words like harmony and rhythm, decoration and design, women “were put in a position to participate in the reception of the new art in a way that they had never been before.”<sup>75</sup> The collapse of the arts and crafts movement “left two important groups of consumers without an aesthetic cause consonant with their beliefs”: wealthy upper middle and upper class patrons who bought expensive objects and commissioned decorative schemes, and the liberal educated classes who went to exhibitions, bought reproductions, and provided the intellectual backup for the new painting.<sup>76</sup> The critics who wrote about post-impressionism were men (there were no regular women art critics in the national press in 1910). The consumers who bought it, at least as it was translated into applied arts ventures such as the Omega Workshops or, subsequently, Lewis’ Rebel Art Centre, were principally (upper class) women. By 1914, Fry and Lewis numbered among their patrons Lady Ottoline Morrell, Countess Drogheda, Lady Tree, the Duchess of Rutland, Lady Cunard, Lady Diana, Lady Margery Manners, and the wives of the Belgian and German ambassadors.<sup>77</sup>



7. Vanessa Bell, *Frederick and Jessie Etchells Painting in the Studio at Asheham*, 1912. London, courtesy Tate Gallery.

Fry founded the Omega Workshops in May 1913.<sup>78</sup> “Omega” was a shop and workshop in Fitzroy Square that sold pottery, rugs, hand-painted furniture, clothes, bags, necklaces, and fabrics (including brightly patterned cloth printed in Manchester for the African market). Omega was intended not only to introduce post-impressionism and “the spirit of fun” into modern interiors but to help support artists who couldn’t make a living without a market for modern art. (The artists were paid five shillings per half day for a maximum of thirty shillings per week.) The division of labor favored the men as independent creators (and Vanessa Bell as a co-director) and a bevy of “Cropheads,” including Nina Hamnett, Gladys Hynes, Jessie Etchells, and Winifred Gill, as interpretants (fig. 7). Some of the artists seem, like Frederick Etchells, to have been “emancipated” into abstraction by the experience of working on abstract designs for rugs and textiles. Much of the tedious work such as stringing beads and translating rug designs onto graph paper fell to the women. Winifred Gill remembered a lot of time spent painting table legs, trays, “and endless candlesticks for electric lights.”<sup>79</sup>

### Wyndham Lewis, Vorticism, and Blast

Wyndham Lewis walked out of Omega in October 1913, less than six months after it opened, after a bitter but obscure quarrel now known as the “Ideal Home Rumpus.”<sup>80</sup> He and his fellow secessionists accused Fry of manipulating the *Daily Mail*’s commission of a room for the Ideal Home Exhibition, and in an open letter to the *Observer*, they distanced themselves from Fry’s “party of strayed and dissenting aesthetes” as the boys who would do “the rough masculine work” of British modernism. To do this they had to make their double rebellion clear—against academic conservatism and, simultaneously, against post-impressionism, which occupied the high ground of the avant-garde. They damned Fry’s “curtain and pincushion factory in Fitzroy Square”<sup>81</sup> as effeminacy-by-association while reserving the right, as it transpired, to set up in business for themselves.

Kate Lechmere was the inspiration and backer for the Rebel Art Centre, set up in 1914. (William Roberts later recalled the Lewis/Fry debacle not as a debate over aesthetics but as “a clash between rivals for profits of the English interior-decorating market.”)<sup>82</sup> She was prepared to pay the rent, make the curtains, and hand around the tea on Saturday afternoons (fig. 8). (Lewis insisted that “organising tea-parties was a job for women, not artists.”)<sup>83</sup> The Rebel Art Centre was something of a disappointment. Plans for an art school and concerts by Schoenberg and Scriabin failed to materialize. Its only group project was its stand at the Allied Artists’ Exhibition in June 1914. Gaudier reviewed its “great strength and manliness in decoration” in the *Egoist* at the expense of Omega “prettiness”;<sup>84</sup> but it seems likely that the manly decoration was dependent on a subaltern role for the women, just as in the Omega Workshops.

Eventually the rent came due, and the artists failed to chip in. Lewis was disorganized and distracted by *Blast*. Kate Lechmere’s affections strayed to T. E. Hulme, who later proposed to her in an ABC teashop.<sup>85</sup> The Rebel Art Centre closed. Kate Lechmere was blessed in *Blast* but her one hundred pound printing loan was never repaid.

Marinetti and Nevinson in their manifesto of *Vital English Art* (which scooped *Blast* by a month in 1914) damned “the effeminacy of [English] art” and the “English notion that Art is a useless pastime, only fit for women and schoolgirls.”<sup>86</sup> The Vorticists argued that “the artist of the modern movement is a savage” and declared themselves “Primitive Mercenaries” in the “iron Jungle [of] the great modern city.” Lewis de-



8. Kate Lechmere sewing curtains at the Rebel Art Centre, 1914. Norwich, courtesy University of East Anglia Archives.

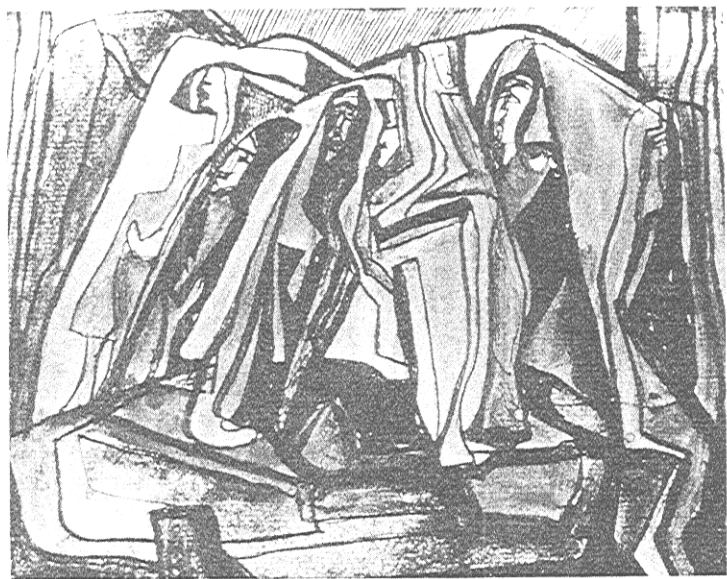
spised Romantic “Marinetteism”—“We don’t want to go about making a hullo-bulloo about motor cars”—but he envied the electric crane (“It is a pity that there are not men so strong that they can lift a house up, and fling it across a river.”)<sup>87</sup>

This cult of rough masculinity and Nietzschean egoism has a lot to do with women, with the fear of effeminacy, feminism, and the changing world of art. Lewis loathed artiness and amateurs and probably associated women with both. He hated “taste” and was one of the first modernists to speak of the invigorating influence of the cheap and the tawdry. But there is a class inflection, too, that is easily missed. The

vorticists were scholars, not gentlemen. Many had been to grammar schools, Bomberg and Roberts had commenced apprenticeships; they were the children of working men, shopkeepers, foreigners, or the nouveau riche.<sup>88</sup> The gruffer they were the more they asserted an identity. Hulme carried a set of knuckledusters (by Gaudier). Etchells—who liked Lewis—called him “a tremendous bully who wanted to be top dog all the time.” He also repeats a nasty little anecdote about Lewis intimidating seamstresses in the Paris streets, which Lewis called “doing a Stendhal” but that we would call sexual harassment.<sup>89</sup>

These attitudes seem very unpromising, but it is worth noting that there were two women who signed the vorticist manifesto: Jessica Dismorr and Helen Saunders.<sup>90</sup> Both had studied at the Slade, and Dismorr had also studied in Paris, where she had been absorbed into the British Fauve circle associated with *Rhythm* magazine—John Fergusson, Samuel Peploe, and Anne Estelle Rice.<sup>91</sup> Dismorr’s *Rhythm* drawing of Isadora Duncan (1911) is already more angular than the other illustrations in the magazine (particularly Fergusson’s silly curvaceous Eve on its cover).<sup>92</sup> Saunders (spelled “Sanders” in *Blast* in deference to her respectable home background)<sup>93</sup> moved from a Cezannesque post-impressionism c. 1912 towards something more awkward and harshly expressive in gouaches like *The Rock Driller* and *Female Figures Imprisoned* (c. 1913) (fig. 9).<sup>94</sup> Their position in Vorticism is clearly ambivalent. William Roberts’ much later painting of *The Vorticists at the Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel: Spring 1915* suggests they were eager but marginal. Lechmere remembered them (spitefully?) as “little lap-dogs who wanted to be Lewis’s slaves and do everything for him.”<sup>95</sup> Goldring recalled Dismorr leaping up to make the tea when bidden at the inaugural *Blast* tea party.<sup>96</sup> Making the tea seems to have been a regular rite of feminine subservience. But it is worth noting two things. First, that in a work like *Female Figures Imprisoned* Saunders probably comes closer than anyone else in the pre-war avant-garde to producing an overtly feminist painting; and second, that Dismorr and Saunders’ literary contributions to *Blast 2* in 1915—stranger and more vivid than their competent abstractions—are remarkable for the attempt to harness elements of vorticist enthusiasm and vocabulary to “feminine” themes.<sup>97</sup>

What might have encouraged Saunders and Dismorr to identify their interests with those of vorticism and its apparent contempt for femininity, particularly since Dismorr had moved from the orbit of *Rhythm* magazine and the British fauves, which should have proved more congenial?



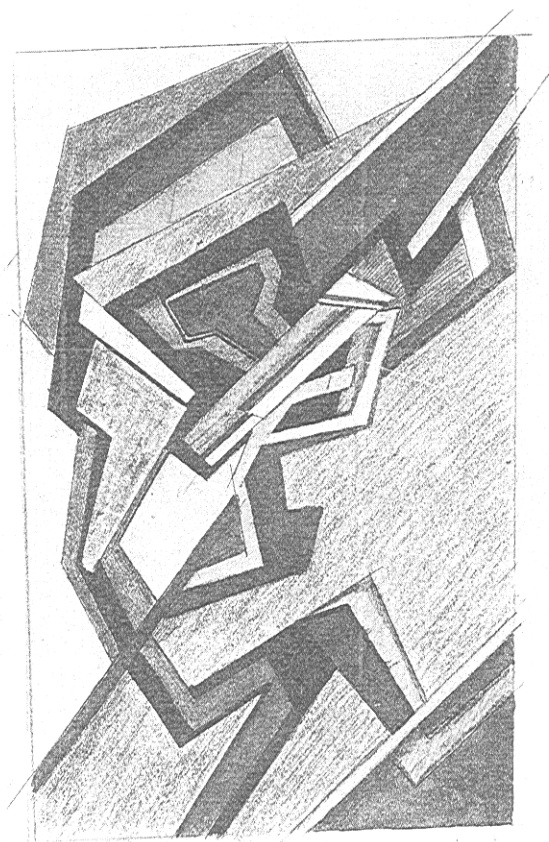
9. Helen Saunders, *Untitled (Female Figures Imprisoned)*, c. 1913. Courtesy of Private Collection.

Although vorticism is notorious now for the bully-boy style of its polemics, this should not blind us to the fact that, in its rejection of sentiment, narrative, moralizing, and passivity, it also rejected much that was feeble and titillating in images of women. The futurists ordered “no nudes for ten years.”<sup>98</sup> Fry drew the wrath of the art establishment on his head in 1913 for asking how long it would take “to disinfect the Order of Merit of Tadema’s scented soap.”<sup>99</sup> Pornographic sudsiness was anathema to Lewis, too. So were John’s endless gypsies and Sickert’s Camden Town “low-life” art, “with its cheap washing-stands and immodest artist’s models squatting blankly and listlessly on beds.”<sup>100</sup> In *Blast* he asserted that “the actual human body becomes of less importance every day.”<sup>101</sup> Hulme, discussing Lewis’ work, said that “the artist’s only interest in the human body was in a few abstract mechanical relations perceived in it, the arm as lever and so on. The interest in living flesh . . . is entirely absent.”<sup>102</sup> Women are displaced by machines in *Blast* as the proper subject and inspiration of modern art: “We hunt

machines they are our favourite game. / We invent them and then hunt them down.”<sup>103</sup>

*Blast* blasted effeminacy, in women or men. It damned the Britannic aesthete, but it blessed the suffragettes.<sup>104</sup> (More specifically, it blessed Lilian Lenton, a convicted arsonist, and Freda Graham, who slashed five paintings in the National Gallery.) It blasted Oscar Weininger,<sup>105</sup> whose 1903 book on *Sex and Character* identified masculinity with genius and women with childbearing and the unconscious life. It departed from futurism on the question of women—though even Marinetti extolled the suffragette in an address to the Lyceum Club in 1910, exempting her from the futurist “contempt for woman,” whose “snake-like coils” had ever “choked the noblest ideals of manhood.”<sup>106</sup> The play of sexual difference across the rhetoric of British modernism suggests that the rising Turks consolidated their position by identifying their opponents as dilettante or effete. But it also, if surprisingly, offered opportunities for a feminist repudiation of femininity, if at the cost of swapping feminist content for geometric form (Helen Saunders’ *Female Figures Imprisoned* of 1913 for *Abstract Composition* of 1915 (fig. 10). Perhaps, though, the opportunities for women in this aesthetically radical milieu were actually less than they had been for Mary Cassatt, Suzanne Valadon, or Paula Modersohn-Becker. Women, too, wanted out of effeminacy. If the suffrage campaign shifted from arguments based on equality to those based on difference around the turn of the century (from “justice” to “expediency”), women artists did the reverse. They needed to escape the debilitating attributes of femininity and chose “art has no sex.” The opportunity for a contribution to “the painting of modern life” that was *at the same time* womanly, implicitly feminist, and stylistically avant-garde had probably passed. The contributions of artists as different as Valadon and Gwen John lay in the *refusal* of the radical modernisms of the 1910s and 1920s. We have to look outside Britain and not to Helen Saunders for something that smacks of a *feminist modernism*, to the work of Natalia Goncharova, for instance, more concerned in establishing her identity as a Russian and a modernist than as a woman.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, witty and ironic feminine references intrude into such vigorously avant-garde imagery as the Tate Gallery’s *Linen* of 1912.

Vorticism ended with the war, cut down in its prime like Gaudier and Hulme. Most of the Bloomsburyites were pacifists and conscientious objectors. Most of the vorticists were volunteers or willing conscripts. Those that survived did not resume where they left off. The experi-



10. Helen Saunders, *Abstract Composition in Blue and Yellow*, c. 1915. London, courtesy Tate Gallery.

ments of what Lewis called “that little segment of time on the far side of world war I”<sup>108</sup> had lost their relevance. Women had gained the vote and the removal of the Sex Disqualification Act. Well over 600,000 men had been killed, about 9 percent of the male population under fifty-five. The vocabulary of *Blast* had been blasted by the war. But the desire

for, and fear of, femininity remained at the heart of the transformed modernisms of the 1920s and 1930s. In one corner stood Henry Moore, champion of humanist abstraction, whose sculptures of the interwar years are almost exclusively of the maternal or reclining female figure: the Primeval Mother, as the analyst Erich Neumann discusses them in *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore*<sup>109</sup> (a book Moore found too uncomfortable to finish). In the other corner stood André Breton, author of the 1924 “Manifesto of Surrealism,” in which he describes his dream of a castle “in a rustic setting, not far from Paris.” He would live there and work with a few of his friends as permanent guests: Louis Aragon, Robert Desnos, Artaud and Paul Eluard, “and so many others besides, and gorgeous women I might add. . . . Isn’t what matters that we be the masters of ourselves, the masters of women, and of love too?”<sup>110</sup>

One of the *unmodern* things about Western modernism is that the answer to this question—the question of *The Magic Flute*,<sup>111</sup> one of the oldest questions in the world—is, despite the modernizing impact of feminism and of women’s entry into public life, still invoked as a resounding “Yes.”<sup>112</sup>

#### NOTES

1. I say “sketch” advisedly; my paper consists of a series of exploratory forays onto the territory of pre-war British modernism. It forms part of a larger work-in-progress.
2. George Dangerfield refers to the years between 1910 and 1914 as “four of the most immoderate years in English history . . . hysterical, violent and inconclusive” (*The Strange Death of Liberal England* [1935; reprint, London, 1970], 18). I want to extend his description to the period between 1905 and 1915; that is, to the years between the outbreak of feminist militancy and the publication of *Blast* 2.
3. Frank Rutter, *Revolution in Art* (London, 1910).
4. The “round-robin” letter is quoted in full in W. K. Rose, ed., *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis* (London, 1963), 47–50.
5. *New York Evening Sun*, 13 February 1917. Quoted in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The War of the Words*, vol. 1 of *No Man’s Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 1988), vii.
6. See *Rhythm*, 2 vols., nos. 1–14 (1911–1913), prospectus for June 1912, bound in with vol. 1: “*Rhythm* will aim at securing its position as the *Organ* of

*Living Art and Living Thought*." D. H. Lawrence, "The Georgian Renaissance," *Rhythm*, Literary Supplement (March 1913); Gilbert Cannan, "Observations and Opinions IV: Marriage," *Rhythm* 2, no. 10 (November 1912). See also Sheila McGregor, "J. D. Fergusson and the Periodical 'Rhythm,'" in *Colour Rhythm and Dance: Paintings & Drawings by J. D. Fergusson and His Circle in Paris* (Scottish Arts Council, 1985).

7. Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing and Zola* (New York and London, 1985). See particularly chap. 2, "Commerce and Femininity."

8. Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," in her *Vision and Difference* (London, 1988), 54. Gilbert and Gubar, *War of the Words*.

9. Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age*, 2 vols. (London, 1976), 424.

10. Michèle Barrett, "The Concept of Difference," *Feminist Review* 26 (Summer 1987). I discuss this article and its implications for art history in "Feminism, Art History, and Sexual Difference," *Genders* 3 (Fall 1988).

11. Stuart Hall, "Theories of Language and Ideology," in *Culture, Media, Language* (London, 1980), 159.

12. Mary Garrard, "Artemisia and Susanna," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York, 1982), 161.

13. I borrow this formulation from Norman Bryson's introduction to the College Art Association panel on "What Use Is Deconstruction, Anyway?" (Houston, 1988).

14. Peter Wollen, "Fashion/orientalism/the body," *New Formations* 1 (Spring 1987), 29.

15. I discuss this in *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914* (Chicago, 1988).

16. Jacob Epstein, *Let There Be Sculpture: The Autobiography of Jacob Epstein* (London, 1942), 56. See also Richard Cork's discussion of Epstein in *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 456ff.

17. The impact of the Slade (opened 1871), the New English Art Club (from 1886), and the Academy Reform Movement (1886-1887) all took their toll.

18. See *The Art Press: Two Centuries of Art Magazines* (London, 1976; *Studio International* 193, no. 983 (September/October 1976) (special issue on art magazines), particularly John Tagg, "Movements and Periodicals: The Magazines of Art." *The Studio*, founded in 1893, offered feature articles, art criticism, and instruction in various arts and crafts techniques; its readership included professionals, students, amateurs, and the cultivated middle class in general, to which *The Studio* offered itself as "the recognised vehicle of modern art knowledge."

19. The genre of the artist-novel stretches from the late eighteenth century and Goethe's *Werther and Wilhelm Meister*, to Joyce's *Stephen Dadelus* and

beyond. It embraces a host of minor and forgotten authors (Ouida, Gertrude Jewsbury, Gilbert Cannan), and some of the canonical fiction of the period (Balzac, James, Proust, Joyce). Henri Murger's immensely influential *Scenes de la vie de bohème* (1845) was first translated as *The Bohemians of the Latin Quarter* in 1887 and reappeared with different titles in 1901, 1908 and 1920. George du Maurier's *Trilby* was published in 1894, reputedly selling 100,000 copies in the first three months. Directly and through stage adaptations (including Puccini's *La Bohème*, dramatic versions of *Trilby*, and a whole host of *Trilbyana*), Murger and du Maurier represent the furthest reach of the artist-novel in terms of sales, public popularity, and innumerable citations in memoirs and other works of fiction. But scores of artist-novels were published between about 1885 and 1920, many of them, like *Trilby*, which first appeared in *Harper's Bazaar*, reaching an expanding public in serial form. The best-known avant-garde *kunstlerroman* is Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914), but Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* (1918; rev. ed. 1928) is comparably innovative.

On the *kunstlerroman* see Bo Jeffares, *The Artist in Nineteenth Century English Fiction* (Gerrards Cross, 1979); Maurice Beebe, *Ivory Towers and Sacred Founts: The Artist as Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce* (New York, 1964); Lee T. Lemon, *Portraits of the Artist in Contemporary Fiction* (Lincoln and London, 1985); Grace Stewart, *A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine 1877-1977* (St. Alban's, VT., 1979). (Beebe adds further references on p. 5, note 4; there is, however, more to be said about the *kunstlerroman*, women artists, and sexual difference.)

20. On the "new woman," see A. R. Cunningham, "The 'New Woman' Fiction of the 1890s," *Victorian Studies* (December 1973); Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977; reprint, London, 1978), chapter 7; Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London, 1978); and Rosalind Rosenberg, *Beyond Separate Spheres: The Intellectual Roots of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, 1982), chapter 3, all of which cite further sources.

21. Octave Uzanne, *The Modern Parisienne* (London, 1907), 129-30.

22. Ezra Pound recalled Gaudier-Brzeska's conversation as a flow of remarks jabbing the air: "it might be exogamy, or the habits of primitive tribes, or the training of African warriors, or Chinese ideographs, or the disgusting 'mollesse' of metropolitan civilization . . ." (Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* [1916; reprint, Hessle, Yorkshire, 1960], 39-40). The identification of the "virile" with the "primitive," the laudatory use of "phallic," and the appeal to a mythically potent masculinity—one unenfeebled by urban life—recur in writings by Lewis, Pound, Gaudier-Brzeska, and others. "The artist of the modern movement is a savage," proclaimed the *Blast* "Manifesto II" (20 June 1914). These claims reverse, if they do not improve, the common, casual, and racist evaluation of tribal cultures as either primitive or degenerate.

23. Two recent articles illuminate the problems of subjectivity and author-

ship in art historical analysis: J. R. R. Christie and Fred Orton, "Writing on a Text of the Life," *Art History* 11 (December 1988); and Griselda Pollock, "Agency and the Avant-Garde," *Block* 15 (Spring 1989).

24. Ethel Ducat, *Votes for Women*, 26 May 1911.

25. See Rudolph and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (London, 1963). The Wittkowers dismiss the idea of a specifically artistic "type" but point to the efficacy of nineteenth-century psychologists such as Cesare Lombroso in helping to produce one. Lombroso and others lent scientific authority to a loose conglomerate of popular beliefs, philosophical thought, and literary convention. The Wittkowers conclude (p. 294) that, while psychology failed to solve the enigma of the creative personality, it nevertheless helped *shape* "the generic personality and character of modern artists."

26. Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven, 1979), 2 n. 1 (citing R. Linton [1943] on "additional configurations of responses"), and 132 ("enacted biography").

27. The analogy with Roman decadence was made in *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, published anonymously by the Tory pamphleteer Elliott Mills in 1905, and was subsequently taken up in Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* (1908), Balfour's 1908 address on "Decadence," and elsewhere. I am indebted to Samuel Hynes, who discusses these and related sources in "The Decline and Fall of Tory England," chap. 2 of *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (Princeton, 1968). The concern with *moral* decline was enhanced by the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895 and by the publication in the same year of the English translation of Max Nordau's *Degeneration*. Nordau argued that all characteristically modern art showed evidence of the decadence threatening the human race. He was widely cited or echoed in conservative criticism of the post-impressionists in 1910 and by opponents of futurism, vorticism, and other manifestations of pre-war modernism.

28. "Social Darwinism" is a convenient term for a variety of applications of evolutionary theory to social theory between the 1870s and 1914. Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, coined the term "eugenics" in 1883, but eugenic theories were also influenced by the social philosopher Herbert Spencer, who had first used the expression "the survival of the fittest" in 1864. There is an extensive literature, but see Raymond Williams' chapter, "Social Darwinism," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London, 1980); Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1900* (London and New York, 1981), chapter 7; Jane Lewis, *Women in England 1870–1920*, (Oxford, 1984); David Green, "Veins of Resemblance: Photography and Eugenics," *Oxford Art Journal* 7, no. 2 (1984).

29. On pro- and antisuffrage imagery, see Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*. Feminism, femininity, and evolutionary theory are discussed on pp. 185–92.

30. Sir Almroth Wright, *The Unexpurgated Case Against Women's Suffrage* (London, 1913), 60.

31. See among others Patricia Hollis, ed., *Women in Public 1850–1900* (London, 1979); and Lee Holcombe, *Victorian Ladies at Work: Middle Class Working Women in England and Wales 1850–1914* (Newton Abbot, 1973).

32. As Elsie Clews Parsons commented in 1916: "Womanliness must never be out of mind, if masculine rule is to be kept intact" (*Social Rule: A Study of the Will to Power* [New York, 1916], 54). On the argument that fears of women's "masculinization" (by work, higher education, or the vote) masked fears of men's concomitant feminization, see Peter Gabriel Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (1974; reprint, New York, 1976), 72–77.

33. See Charlotte Yeldham, *Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century England and France* (London, 1984), chapter 2, part 3 ("Societies of Women Artists"). Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (London, 1979), also lists women's exhibitions at this period (pp. 321–23).

34. *Rhythm*, invoking Watts and (indirectly) Burne Jones, painted a picture of the Victorian idealist as "an artist such as the *Girl's Own Paper* would be charmed with"; a "slim man of gentle manners . . . [who] paints the soul." Dan Phaër, "Types of Artists 1. The Victorian Idealist," *Rhythm* 2, no. 5 (June 1912).

35. Part 3 of Wyndham Lewis' *Tarr* is devoted to the "Bourgeois-Bohemians". Lewis at one point considered this as a title for the whole novel. The essential edition is now *Tarr. The 1918 Version*, ed. Paul O'Keeffe (Santa Rosa, 1990); scrupulous and illuminating.

36. Whistler's monogram was the butterfly (with a sting in its tail).

37. See for example Pound's letter to Margaret Anderson (September 1917) in which he referred to writing articles that can be reduced to "Joyce is a writer, GODDAMN your eyes, Joyce is a writer, I tell you Joyce etc etc. Lewis can paint, Gaudier knows a stone from a milk-pudding. WIPE your feet!!!!!!" *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London, 1951), 179. Note also his letter (*ibid.*, 80) to Harriet Monroe, 30 September 1914, regarding T. S. Eliot: "He has actually trained himself and modernised himself on *his own*. The rest of the *promising* young have done one or the other but never both (most of the swine have done neither). It is such a comfort to meet a man and not have to tell him to wash his face, wipe his feet, and remember the date (1914) on the calendar."

38. Wyndham Lewis (in Paris, having seen Gwen John) to his mother, c. 1904, and again, c. 1907: *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. W. K. Rose (London, 1963), 11–12, 31.

39. See Augustus John on Lewis as "our new Machiavelli" in *Chiaroscuro: Fragments of Autobiography* (London, 1952), 73: "In the cosmopolitan world of Montparnasse, P. Wyndham Lewis played the part of an incarnate loki, bearing the news and sowing discord with it. He conceived the world as an arena,



where various insurrectionary forces struggled to outwit each other in the game of artistic power politics." (Lewis left Rugby School by December 1897 and the Slade in 1901.) See Rose, *Letters of Windham Lewis*, 2, n. 38, on Lewis' years in Paris c. 1902–1909.

40. Lewis' Nietzschean manifesto is "The Code of a Herdsman," first published in *The Little Review* 4, no. 3 (July 1917) as "Imaginary Letters, III": "Above all this sad commerce with the herd, let something veritably remain 'un peu sur la montagne.' "The Crowd Master" appears in *Blast* 2 (1915) 98. Tyros (satires, "forbidding and harsh") first appeared in Lewis' *Tyros and Portraits* exhibition at the Leicester Galleries, April 1921, which included his *Self-Portrait as a Tyro* (1920–1921). In 1921 and 1922, Lewis edited two issues of *The Tyro*, a *Review of the Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Design* (Egoist Press). The first section of the *Blast* "Manifesto" (20 June 1914) announces, "We are Primitive Mercenaries in the Modern World." Two of Lewis' biographers borrow their titles from his self-characterization as the Enemy: Geoffrey Wagner, *Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy* (London, 1957), 22ff.; and Jeffrey Meyers, *The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis* (London, 1980), 107–8.

41. See Pound's monograph on Gaudier-Brzeska, 47, n. 22: "He accepted himself as 'a sort of modern Cellini.' He did not claim it, but when it was put to him one day, he accepted it mildly, quite simply, after mature deliberation." And H. S. Ede, *Savage Messiah* (1931; reprint, London, 1972), 136: In Brodzky's presence Gaudier-Brzeska "seemed to be thrown into a vivid energy. . . . Brodzky . . . [called him] 'Savage' and 'Redskin.' It pleased Pik [Gaudier] to be thought elemental, and Brodzky and Zosik [Sophie] would call him 'Savage Messiah,' a name deliciously apropos." Horace Brodzky himself recalled that Gaudier-Brzeska was "continually talking 'savage,' and 'barbaric' and gloated over the free and erotic life of the South Seas" (*Henri Gaudier-Brzeska 1891–1915* [London, 1933], 56).

42. Laurence Housman (alluding to John's presence in William Orpen's painting of *The Café Royal*), *Manchester Guardian*, 25 May 1912.

43. See "Cantleman's Spring-Mate," *Blast* 1 (20 June 1914): 94. Lewis' interest in Worringer is discussed by Geoffrey Wagner, *Wyndham Lewis*, 110, 153–55.

44. Pound (*Gaudier-Brzeska*) cites with approval Lewis' description of the "peculiar soft bluntness" in works such as Gaudier-Brzeska's *Stags* and *Boy with a Coney* (p. 26); and holds out for the "squarish and bluntish work" (including *Birds Erect*) as examples of the artist's "personal combinations of forms" (pp. 78–79). Brodzky (*Henri Gaudier-Brzeska*) quotes Pound—"Yes, Brzeska is immortalising me in a phallic column"—and stresses the phallic qualities of the head as intended from the beginning by sculptor and sitter (p. 62). Lewis described the finished work as "Ezra in the form of a marble phallus" (quoted by Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 182).

45. John's numerous and complex liaisons and their progeny are dealt with

by Michael Holroyd, *Augustus John: A Biography*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, 1976). Lewis had three illegitimate children and conducted a range of concurrent relationships before, and during, his marriage (see Meyers, *The Enemy*). Kate Lechmere (for *Blast*) and then, in the 1920s, Anne Estelle Rice and Jessica Dismorr, among others, lent him money. In the case of Lechmere and Dismorr, this soured their relations. The diary of Gaudier's mistress Sophie Brzeska, whose name he took, is in Cambridge University Library. It is fraught with arguments about money and sex. Before we thank John Quinn and Ezra Pound as enlightened patrons of Gaudier-Brzeska, we should recall Sophie's dwindling savings and the washing, cleaning, cooking, and mending at which Gaudier sneered but of which he was the beneficiary. ("At least," Sophie remarked sarcastically, "I have saved a genius for humanity.")

46. "You are young and can stand a lot but you won't always be. Save your precious nerves. You must not be perpetually in a state of purposeless excitement. The grounds must be allowed to settle and the coffee to clear. . . . Don't stand any nonsense from your men friends and lovers. Keep them *tyrannically* to their settled hours—like a dentist—the hours that suit you—and them so far as possible. Don't give anyone any rights. Exact an absolute obedience to time as *the price of any intercourse at all*. Don't be a tin kettle to any dog's tail, however long." Walter Sickert to Nina Hamnett, 1918, quoted by Denise Hooker, *Nina Hamnett: Queen of Bohemia* (London, 1986), 114.

47. Quoted by Paul Levy, "The Colours of Carrington," *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 February 1978, p. 200. (Dora Carrington used only her second—ungendered—name.) There is a new biography: Gretchen Gerzina, *Carrington: A Biography* (London, 1989).

48. Vanessa Bell was tied into Bloomsbury aesthetics by an intricate network of kinship and love, as sister of Virginia Woolf, wife to Clive Bell, and lover first of Roger Fry and subsequently Duncan Grant. Curiously, both Bell and Carrington devoted their lives to men who were chiefly homosexual. But Grant, as a painter himself, was, unlike Lytton Strachey, able to demonstrate an active interest in his partner's work. And Bell took the practical step of founding her own exhibition society in the Friday Club. She was thus in a better position than the women excluded or marginalized by rival avant-garde coteries. See Richard Shone, "The Friday Club," *The Burlington Magazine* 117 (May 1975); and Frances Spalding, *Vanessa Bell* (London, 1983).

49. Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10 (1929); reprinted with an article by Stephen Heath, "Joan Riviere and the Masquerade," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald, and Cora Kaplan (London, 1986). I am grateful to Whitney Davis and Claire Pajczkowska for comments on the "masquerade," though I have no space to develop them here.

50. Jacques speaks the lines of William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, but "Totus mundus facit histrionem" was a commonplace written on the wall of Shakespeare's theater, The Globe.

51. Riviere, from Burgin, Donald, and Kaplan, eds., *Formations of Fantasy*, 35.
52. Nevinson and Marinetti's futurist manifesto *Vital English Art* (1914), which damned effeminacy and called for an art that was "strong, virile and anti-sentimental," was published in full in the *Observer* (7 June 1914). It is reproduced in C. R. W. Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice* (London, 1937), 58–60. Masculinity and femininity are asymmetrically placed, of course, in relation to the masquerade as symptom or strategy. The defense of an aggressively heterosexual masculinity would be a defense against narcissism and the fantasized retribution of more virile men, there being no symmetrical economy of masculinity in which women would be the source of retribution.
53. Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (1938; reprint, Harmondsworth, 1977), 23; Eugenie Lemoine-Luccioni, *La Robe* (Paris, 1983), 34; both quoted by Stephen Heath in *Formations of Fantasy*, 56.
54. Mary Jackson, *Maud Skillicorne's Penance*, vol. 1 (1858), 89, quoted in Bo Jeffares, *Artist in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 67.
55. C. R. W. Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice*, 26. He lists Wadsworth, Allinson, Claus, Ihlee, Lightfoot, Curry, and Spencer as fellow members of the "gang." There is no space here to go into the fascinating question of women's bohemian dress, but, Dorelia's gypsy finery aside, there is some suggestion (particularly with Nina Hamnett and Dora Carrington) that it veered towards bobbed hair, colored stockings or socks, and children's shoes: a carefully cultivated modern artist-ness that combined the New Womanly with the pre-pubertal. Like another of Riviere's patients, they treated the whole thing with levity and parody. Perhaps that was the form of their masquerade.
56. Augustus John's biographer speaks of his "inverted dandyism." He had, as Wyndham Lewis recalled, "a carriage of the utmost arrogance"; and Edward Thomas reported that "with his long red beard, ear-rings, jersey, check-suit and standing six feet high, . . . a cabman was once too nervous to drive him" (quoted in Holroyd, *Augustus John: A Biography*, 359. On John and gypsies, see *ibid.*, especially pp. 45, 356–60, 397, 401, 408–9); Malcolm Easton and Michael Holroyd, *The Art of Augustus John* (London, 1974), 12–13; and Malcolm Easton, *Augustus John: Portraits of the Artist's Family* (Hull, 1970). The 1909 caravan trip was photographed by Charles Slade, whose brother Loben married Dorelia's sister Jessie. There are prints in the National Portrait Gallery archives.
57. Henry Taunt, *A New Map of the River Thames . . . combined with guides giving every information required by the tourist, the oarsman, and the angler* (Oxford [undated but c. 1890]), 207–8:

To labour for hours in a foul atmosphere, as many mercantile men in London do, is an excess that damages many of them. . . . To strain every nerve of the brain in getting off orders and merchandise in the shortest space of time possible, and without the omission of the slightest detail; or to be perched at a desk wading through accounts day after day, with scarcely

the slightest change of posture—all these are excesses that every City man more or less meets with, and which make the health of the body more delicate. . . . Gentlemen too, who have no business, still find excesses growing on their time and selves.

Camping out is the corrective for those who would leave behind "those cares of business, those endless accounts, those toils of pleasure that turn night into day."

58. *The Tramp: An Open Air Magazine*, designed to appeal "to the open-air man, the artist, the literary man, and the general reader." Edited by Douglas Goldring, vol. 1 (1910); vol. 2 (1910–1911). Contents include Harry Roberts, "The Art of Vagabondage"; L. C. Cameron, "A New Kind of Caravan"; Scudamore Jarvis, "The Caravan" ("how the gipsy life can be indulged in for the least possible outlay"); translations from Chekov; short stories by Wyndham Lewis, W. H. Davies, and Jack London; a review of the 1910 post-impressionist exhibition and extracts from the futurist manifesto; T. W. Thompson, "Gipsies. An Account of Their Character, Mode of Life, Folk-lore, and Language"; and William Kirby, "Francesca Furens," a mockingly antifeminist novella in six parts.

59. Quoted in Holroyd, *Augustus John: A Biography*, 186.

60. These paintings are reproduced in Holroyd and Easton, *Art of Augustus John*.

61. On the trip to Toulouse, see Holroyd, *Augustus John: A Biography*, 191–93; Cecily Langdale, *Gwen John* (New Haven, 1987), 24–25; and letters from Gwen John to Ursula Tyrwhitt (Gwen John papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth). The quotation is from a letter to Tyrwhitt (1903), quoted by Langdale, p. 24. In Paris in 1904, both women modeled for artists, Dorelia to John's fury and jealousy. Gwen John posed chiefly for English women but also for Rodin, with whom she began an affair. (Rodin's *The Muse*, commissioned as a monument to Whistler but rejected in 1919, is a curiously coarse, disturbing, and amputated treatment of what Rodin called her "corps admirable.")

62. See Langdale, *ibid.*, which includes a catalogue raisonné. She illustrates all four paintings for which Dorelia posed in Toulouse.

63. *The Smiling Woman* was the first picture purchased by the Contemporary Art Society and is now in the Tate Gallery.

64. Roger Fry, "The Exhibition of Fair Women," *Burlington Magazine* 15 (1909): 17.

65. Holroyd and Easton, *Art of Augustus John*, 15.

66. Harwood Brierley, "At the Shooting Gallery. The Gypsy Girl and Her Patrons," *The Tramp* 1 (August 1910): 460–62.

There is the mafada, flirtatious glint in her radiantly dark eyes, and on all counts she is a likely girl to draw custom. Alike at the beer bar, at the shooting saloon or gallery, at the board-walk of the pennygaff, and on the proscenium of the music-hall it is not so much a question as to what actual

value is given for money as to what kind of a girl serves, attends, or exhibits. Worl'dling patrons want a well-knit figure, sparkling eyes, more *chic* than cheek, and an easy chatsome manner. . . . A superficial familiarity, jaunty airs, and saucy manner suit her well. She knows her business, and the trick of the trade, which is naughty enough to please "buskins" and real swells alike. . . . [but] she holds aloof from men who attempt to chuck her under the chin for a "loobni" or harlot.

67. Virginia Woolf, "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown," in *Collected Essays by Virginia Woolf*, vol. 1 (London, 1975), 320.

68. Quoted in Frances Spalding, *Vanessa Bell* (London, 1983), 92.

69. The 1912 Post-Impressionist Exhibition included work by Mme. Marval, Mme. Hassenberg, Mlle. Lewitzka, Mlle. Joukova, and Mlle. Natalia Goncharova (her paintings arrived late, at the beginning of 1913), and in the British section, Jessie Etchells as well as Vanessa Bell.

70. *The Census of England and Wales for 1911* (vol. 10, Occupations and Industries, Part II) gives 4,202 females and 7,417 males in the category "Painters, Sculptors, Artists."

71. Octave Uzanne, *The Modern Parisienne* (London, 1907), 129–30.

72. Women gained entry to the academic curriculum as its influence waned and were often no better placed in the new avant-garde coteries than in the academy itself. Vanessa Bell complained of the New English Art Club that its members "seemed somehow to have the secret of the art universe within their grasp, a secret one was not worthy to learn, especially if one was that terrible low creature, a female painter" (Frances Spalding, *Vanessa Bell*, 36–37). Walter Sickert welcomed Ethel Sands and Nan Hudson into the Fitzroy Society in 1907 because he wanted "to create a Salon d'Automne milieu in London and you could both help me very much" (and in Nan's case, pour the tea). But when Fitzroy transformed itself into the Camden Town Group in 1911, women were excluded: "The Camden Town Group is a male club, and women are not eligible. There are lots of two sex clubs and several one sex clubs, and this is one of them" (Wendy Baron, *Ethel Sands and Her Circle* [London, 1977], 65 and 81). Women figured as signatories to the vorticist manifesto and contributors to *Blast*, but their position was marginal. Nina Hammett's talent was swallowed by bohemia; she ended up the ravaged referent of Gaudier's *Torso*: "You know me," she would remark to acquaintances, "I'm in the V & A [Victoria and Albert Museum] with me left tit knocked off" (quoted from Ruthven Todd by Denise Hooker, *Nina Hammett: Queen of Bohemia* [London, 1986], 213).

73. "Manet and the Post-Impressionists" took place at the Grafton Galleries, 8 November 1910–15 January 1911, and the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, also at the Grafton Galleries, was 5 October 1912 to (with a rearrangement at the beginning of January) 31 January 1913. See J. B. Bullen, ed., *Post-Impressionists in England* (London, 1988); also Benedict Nicolson, "Roger Fry and Post-Impressionism," *Burlington Magazine* 93 (January 1951).

74. S. K. Tillyard, *The Impact of Modernism 1900–1920: Early Modernism and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Edwardian England* (London, 1988). I am indebted to her account. Tillyard cites the *Westminster Gazette* ("E.S.," "Post-Impressionism," 21 November 1910, p. 3) on p. 102.

75. Tillyard, *ibid.*, 103.

76. *Ibid.*, 39.

77. On the fashionability of the avant-garde, see also Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice*, 58. As a young but well-publicized futurist acolyte, he heard Frank Rutter lecture on modern art in the evenings at the Doré Gallery and there met "Lady Muriel Paget, Lady Grosvenor, Lady Lavery, and through them pre-War Society," and at Lady Cunard's, "Eddie Marsh, Lady Diana Manners, and one hundred and one Guardees and Guinnesses."

78. On the Omega Workshops see Judith Collins, *The Omega Workshops* (London, 1984); Isabelle Anscombe, *Omega and After: Bloomsbury and the Decorative Arts* (London, 1981); Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, chap. 4; Richard Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery in Early 20th Century England* (New Haven, 1985), chap. 3. Roger Fry's comment about "the spirit of fun" is quoted in these sources from Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography* (London, 1940), 194.

79. Winifred Gill, from an unpublished letter to Duncan Grant (4 July 1966, Victoria and Albert Museum Library); quoted in Hooker, *Nina Hammett*, 63.

80. See Quentin Bell and Stephen Chaplin, "The Ideal Home Rumpus," *Apollo* 80 (October 1964); William C. Lipke, "The Omega Workshops and Vorticism," *Apollo* 91 (March 1970); W. Michel, *Wyndham Lewis: Paintings and Drawings* (London, 1971); Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, chap. 4; Jeffrey Meyers, *The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis* (London, 1980), 41 ff. Bell and Chaplin give the full text of the "strayed and dissenting aesthetes" letter, as does Rose in *Letters of Wyndham Lewis*.

81. Lewis' dismissive phrase from *Blast* 2 (July 1915).

82. On the Rebel Art Centre, see Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 146ff; Cork, *Art Beyond the Gallery*, chap. 4. The decor was startling, with pale lemon walls and doors "of lawless scarlet [which] amicably agreed to differ with decorous carpets of dreamy blue." Lechmere lived in a flat above the centre, celebrated in a *Vanity Fair* article on "The Futurist Note in Interior Decoration" (25 June 1914). See also William Roberts' later pamphlet, *Some Early Abstract and Cubist Work 1913–1920* (London, 1957): "This was not a dispute of two erudites over a subtle point of aesthetics, but a clash between rivals for the profits of the English interior-decorating market."

83. Kate Lechmere, interviewed by Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 148.

84. Gaudier-Brzeska's review (the *Egoist*, 15 June 1914), is reprinted in Ezra Pound's *A Memoir*, 34.

85. See Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 160f., on Lechmere's relations with Hulme (who proposed to her in an ABC teashop). Lewis tried unsuccess-

fully to revenge himself on Hulme, who hung him upside down by his trouser cuffs on the railings of Soho Square for his pains.

86. *Vital English Art* is reproduced in Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice*, 58–60. It demands: “That English artists strengthen their Art by a recuperative optimism, a fearless desire of adventure, a heroic instinct of discovery, a worship of strength and a physical and moral courage, all sturdy virtues of the English race” (p. 59).

87. The first three quotations are from Manifesto 2, *Blast* 1 (20 June 1914). “It is a pity that there are not men so strong” is from Lewis’ “A Review of Contemporary Art,” in *Blast* 2 (July 1915), section C, statement 31.

88. This is Charles Harrison’s point, *English Art and Modernism 1900–1939* (London and Bloomington, 1981), 89.

89. According to Frederick Etchells (interviewed by Richard Cork), Lewis would walk alongside a woman in the street, then move ahead of her, swinging round to block her path and pushing against her with his body. See Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 111.

90. Cork, *ibid.*, reproduces work by Jessica Dismorr (1885–1939) and Helen Saunders (1885–1963) and discusses their contribution to Vorticism (pp 148ff.). He was helped by Helen Peppin, a long-standing friend of Helen Saunders’. Her daughter Bidy Peppin has now completed an MA thesis on Saunders and Dismorr for Birkbeck College, University of London. I am very grateful to both Helen and Bidy Peppin for discussing the paintings with me. Saunders reverted to figurative painting after World War I. Dismorr exhibited abstract works with the Seven and Five Society in the 1920s. Since writing this essay my attention has been drawn to Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry’s article “Women under the Banner of Vorticism,” *Cahier* 8/9 (1988) of the International Centrum voor Structuuranalyse en Constructivisme, Belgium.

91. On the *Rhythm* circle see note 6; also Malcolm Easton, *Anne Estelle Rice (1879–1959): Paintings* (Hull, 1969).

92. Dismorr’s *Izidora* and Fergusson’s *Rhythm* cover are reproduced in *Colour, Rhythm and Dance*, 14, 15. The *Rhythm* image is a stylized version of Fergusson’s painting with the same title (1911), University of Stirling.

93. Letter from Helen Saunders to William Wees, 1 September 1962, quoted in Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde* (Manchester, 1972). Or the name may have been misspelled mistakenly, from its family pronunciation as “Sanders.”

94. All these paintings are actually untitled, but I have kept the titles given them by their owner—as Cork does—partly to distinguish them and partly because the titles do reference something strained, intense, and disturbing in the work.

95. Kate Lechmere, interviewed by Richard Cork, in Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 150.

96. Douglas Goldring, *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford*

*Madox Ford and the English Review Circle* (London, 1943), 68. Quoted in Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art*, 414.

97. In Dismorr’s arch “June Night,” the narrator speeds with her Latin lover through the interminable suburbs to the red glare of the city; once there, she leaves him on the 43 bus (“I have lost my taste for your period”). Even more extraordinary is Saunders’ war poem “Mud,” or Dismorr’s “Monologue”:

My niche in nonentity still grins—  
I lay knees, elbows pinioned, my sleep mutterings blunted against a wall.  
Pushing my hard head through the hole of birth  
I squeezed out with intact body . . .  
Details of equipment delight me.  
I admire my arrogant spiked tresses, the disposition of my perpetually  
forshortened limbs,  
Also the new machinery that wields the chains of muscles fitted beneath  
my close coat of skin.

98. See *The Technical Manifesto*, published as a leaflet by *Poesia* (Milan), 11 April 1910, and in English from the catalogue to the Sackville Gallery “Exhibition of Works by the Italian Futurist Painters,” March 1912. “We demand, for ten years, the total suppression of the nude in painting.” Reprinted in Umbro Apollonio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, trans. from the Italian by Robert Brain and others (London, 1973), 31.

99. Roger Fry, *Nation* (18 January 1913).

100. See W. Lewis, “History of the Largest Independent Society in England,” quoted in Walter Michel and C. J. Fox, *Wyndham Lewis on Art: Collected Writings 1913–1956* (London, 1969), 90 (on Sickert) and 92 (on John’s “tribes after tribes of archaic and romantic Gitanos and Gitanas”). “I resent Mr John’s stage-gypsies emptying their properties over his severe and often splendid painter’s gift.”

101. “The New Egos,” *Blast* 1 (20 June 1914): Vortices and Notes.

102. T. E. Hulme, “Modern Art and Its Philosophy,” reprinted in *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London, 1924), 106; also quoted in Wees, *Vorticism and English Avant-Garde*, 83.

103. “Our Vortex,” *Blast* 1 (20 June 1914): Vortices and Notes. The echoes of Tennyson are presumably intended: “Man is the hunter; woman is his game. / The sleek and shining creatures of the chase, / We hunt them for the beauty of their skins; / They love us for it, and we ride them down” (Lord Alfred Tennyson, *The Princess: A Medley*, 1851).

104. *Blast* 1 (20 June 1914): 151–52. “You and Artists are the only things (you don’t mind being called things?) left in England with a little life in them. . . . We make you a present of our votes, so long as you leave works of art alone.”

105. Oscar Weininger’s influential *Sex and Character* (1903) tried to dis-

tinguish male and female characteristics by according to men the capacities for domination, thought, and self-control, and to women those for intercourse and childbearing. The poles of "male" and "female" were identified with those of subject and object, the conscious and the unconscious, God and Matter. Weininger committed suicide in 1903. Helen Saunders read Weininger (apparently on Lewis' recommendation), but persisted in the belief that as a woman she had a soul.

106. See Margaret Nevinson, "Futurism and Woman," *Vote* (31 December 1910). The suffragist Margaret Nevinson was Christopher Nevinson's mother.

107. In Clive Bell's "The Debt to Cezanne" (1914), Goncharova's is the only woman's name among the more than twenty modernists he recognizes. We can only speculate on the interest and influence that paintings like *Linen* and *The Electric Lamp* might have inspired had they been available to Boris Anrep, who was responsible for the Russian section at the second post-impressionist exhibition of 1912. Linda Nochlin comments on these works in *Women Artists 1550–1950*, ed. Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin (New York, 1976), 63.

108. Lewis quoted in Wees, *Vorticism and English Avant-Garde*, 6.

109. Erich Neumann, *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore*, trans. from the German by R. C. F. Hull (London, 1959).

110. André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924), reprinted in *Manifestos of Surrealism*, trans. from the French by Richard Seaver and Helen Lane (Ann Arbor, 1969), 17.

111. The libretto for Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791) is generally attributed to Emanuel Schikaneder. (It has a number of eighteenth-century sources including the novel *Sethos, Histoire ou Vie Tirée des Monumens, Anecdotes de l'ancienne Egypte* by the Abbé Jean Terrasson [1731]; "On the Mysteries of the Egyptians," by Ignaz von Born, an essay published in the first volume of the *Journal für Freymaurer* [1784]; and the collection of fairy stories, *Dschinnistan*, edited and published in three volumes by Wieland between 1786 and 1789.) It has been argued that Pamina's trials and priestly initiation with her lover, Tamino, elevate her to a level of equality and enlightenment without precedent in the opera's sources or in the masonic rituals to which it refers. But the structure of the narrative follows a (feminine) Oedipal trajectory by which Pamina must break from her mother, the tyrannical Queen of the Night, and find her place in the symbolic order: in Sarastro's realm of Nature, Reason, and Wisdom, and in a new family with Tamino, "united in wisdom and selfless love."

112. Russian modernism is an exception here. Jo-Anna Isaak has pointed out that we, too, often generalize from what is in fact "Western European or MOMA's modernism." See her "Representation and Its (Dis)contents," a review of Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference* (London, 1988), in *Art History* 12, no. 3 (September 1989).

## The Discontinuous City: Picturing and the Discursive Field

THIS essay is concerned with orders of sense, régimes of visual meaning, and the discursive formations and practices of power in which they are constituted. It operates, therefore, at a particular level of specificity and does so with some point. It sets out to map an analysis of one type of formation—the formation of disciplinary knowledge and representations, as it emerges in mid-nineteenth-century Europe and North America—into a wider field; engaging not only recent accounts of representation as bound up with the processes of spectacle and commodification, but also questions of the structures and relations of capitalist cultural production. In placing its emphasis on the effects of the institutionalization of certain systems of discursive constraints, it is relatively silent on the issue of resistance. But, as I make clear, this is not at all to suggest that the fixities of meaning, whose general effects I trace, are ever coherent, accomplished, stable or secured.

Insistence on the return of the openness and indeterminacy of discourse also has consequences for more general questions of theory and methodology in the social history of art that remain implicit, rather than explicit, here. In rehearsing some of the themes that have interested me in my recent work, I shall, however, begin by addressing an important area of exchange between social histories and feminist histories of art. And in conclusion, I shall try to draw out more pointedly what I see as a central theoretical difficulty for such social histories, whether dependent on the expressive model of Marx's *German Ideology*, as with Antal, or developing out of the theories of ideology of Althusser and Macherey, as with the approaches that emerged most particularly in Britain in the 1970s.<sup>1</sup>

### *The City of Spectacle*

In an essay on "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity", in the collection *Vision and Difference*,<sup>2</sup> Griselda Pollock has argued that we cannot