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 indistinguishably 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 Gauguin-Bruno, 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”).

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, 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 Magazin 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?”)

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 Lechmer), 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. 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, rewrites an essential and thus unmodern 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.”)

Sexual Difference

The second—and contested—term I want to address is sexual difference. In a very useful résumé of the arguments, Michele Barrett identifies three concepts of sexual difference: experiential difference, positional difference in discourse, and sexual difference as psychoanalysis accounts for it. 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.” 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.’ 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.” Cultural practices come to be seen as producing femininities—“woman” becomes a relational term in a system of differences—rather than as reflecting biological or social femininities produced elsewhere.

In what Peter Wollen describes illuminatingly as “a cascade of antinomies”—functional/orrimental, 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. 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 exoticism, 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; 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 encoiled." Which brings us back to the "rough and masculine role" 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. 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. Combative artists (like Whistler) made good copy. The kunsttterroman 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. 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. 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." 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, prepotent, 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.

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. 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 bewn out her individual path to well-deserved fame—as an admired Genius." (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. 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”). 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 refined 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 50 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. Much of the debate was couched in the terms of social Darwinism. 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. Eugenics, who embraced 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 antifeminist 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. 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.” 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.

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. 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. 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 snottiness of the arrière garde; and from the 1890s dandysm of Beardsley or Whistler. 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. The exquisite pose and rapier wit of the "Butterfly" 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.)

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 menace" (fig. 1), and later that "John will end by building a city, and being worshipped as the sole man therein—the deity of Masculinity." 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. 1906). 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;[26] Henri Gaudier-Brezka 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 Celts!" and then as "the savage messiah."[27]

John, as the "image of Jove turned gypsy,"[28] adopted a carelessly lyrical style, an expressive brushstroke, and Italianate allusions in the

1. Augustus John and family with gypsy caravan, c. 1909.

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 Cannelletto opposes is both "feminine" and "blind"—and by

the use of a vocabulary of geometric (that is, as for Worringer, “masculine”)
forms to invoke both the structure of the industrial city and the alternating
tension of modern urban life. The “square bluntness” so
valued in Gaudier’s work by Ezra Pound is modern by virtue of its dis-
tance both from the smooth transitions of classical carving and from the
expressive modeling of the Rodin-esque. But it is also constructed 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 emanci-
pated 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. 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 them-
selves 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. Carrington felt she was “not strong enough to live in this world

of people and paint.” 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. 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 masquer-
ade,” not in any sense that would directly complement Joan Riviere’s
analysis of “Womanliness as Masquerade” (1929) but in three related

3. Wyndham Lewis, Self Portrait as a Tyro, 1920–
1921. Kingston upon Hull, courtesy Ferens Art
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." 10 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 capitalist 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." 11 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. 12

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." 13 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 1856, a character in Mary Jackson's novel Maud Skelton'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." 14 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 artsy. 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
and romanticized. Their nomadic and acquisitive 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.”

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 1912, along with short stories by Wyndham Lewis and detailed instructions for caravans and tents), 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?” 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 sunset scene, in Gypsy Encampment (1905).

Two years earlier, soon after John had met Dorelia and at a critical stage in their relationship, his sister Gwen John had suggested that
Rome—they returned to Paris, where both earned a living by modeling and Gwen returned to work.**

Gwen John's painting of Dorelia as The Student was finally exhibited at the New English Art Club in 1909 (fig. 5).** In 1908 Augustus painted Dorelia as The Smiling Woman—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."** 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,"** as well as a shift of femininity 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."** 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 Hass; 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 singleness 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,"** 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.” 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 point, 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), and that their 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 16,250 men in the census of 1901), 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.” Reviewers condescended to women and called, at the same time, for a specifically feminine art, one that would reproduce the values inscribed in women in the dominant discourses on femininity. Women, in flight from the newly invariant but inferior category of the female artist, conceded the wisdom that “Art has no sex.”

The 1910 “Post-Impressionist” exhibition 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, Vu-

nens, Dufy, 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 Bergère 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-
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.” 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 strained and dissenting aesthetics” 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 pin-cushion factory in Fitzroy Square” as effeminacy-by-association while preserving 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.”) 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.”) 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. Gaugier reviewed its “great strength and manliness in decoration” in the Egoist at the expense of Omega’s “prettiness,” but it seems likely that the main 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. 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.” 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-
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. The gruffer they were the more they asserted an identity. Hulme carried a set of knuckle-dusters (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.

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. 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 Ferguson, Samuel Peploe, and Anne Estelle Rice. Dismorr’s Rhythm drawing of Isadora Duncan (1911) is already more angular than the other illustrations in the magazine (particularly Ferguson’s silly curvaceous Eve on its cover). Saunders (spelled “Sanders” in Blast in deference to her respectable home background) 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). 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 co everything for him.”

Golding recalled Dismorr leaping up to make the tea when hidden at the inaugural Blast tea party. 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.

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 Huves, which should have proved more congenial?
Men’s Work? Masculinity and Modernism

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 nudies for ten years.” They 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.” Pornographic sadism 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.” In Blast he asserted that “the actual human body becomes of less importance every day.”

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.” 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.”

Blast blasted effeminacy, in women or men. It damned the Britannic aesthetic, but it blessed the suffragettes. (More specifically, it blessed Lilian Lenton, a convicted arsonist, and Freda Graham, who slashed five paintings in the National Gallery.) It blasted Oscar Windinger, whose 1905 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 “costumes for women,” whose “snake-like coils” had ever “choked the noblest ideals of manhood.”

The play of sexual difference across the rhetoric of British modernism suggests that the rising Turks consolidated their position by identifying their opponents as dilletante or effeminate. But it also, if surprisingly, offered opportunities for a feminist repudiation of femininity, if at the cost of swapping one kind of content for geometric form. (Helen Saunders’ Female Figures Imprisoned of 1913 for Abstract Composition of 1913 (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. Nevertheless, witty and ironic female 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-
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* (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 Éluard, "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?" One of the most modern things about Western modernism is that the answer to this question—the question of *The Magic Flute,* 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.""12

**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 incomprehensible." *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1953: reprint, London, 1970), 18. I want to extend his description to the period between 1905 and 1915; that is, the years between the outbreak of feminist militancy and the publication of *Blast*.
6. See *Rhythm*, 2 vols., nos. 7–14 (1911–1913), prospectus for June 1912, bound in with vol. 1: "Rhythm will aim at securing its position as the Organ of..."


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


15. I discuss this in The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1914 (Chicago, 1980).


17. The impact of the Slade (opened 1861), 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 195, no. 985 (September/October 1976) (special issue on art magazines), particularly John Tagg, "Movements and Periodicals: The Magazines of Art," The Studio, founded in 1898, 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 recognized vehicle of modern art knowledge."

19. The genre of the artist-novel stretches from the late eighteenth century and Goethe's Werther and William Makepeace, to Joyce's Stephen Daedalus and beyond. It embraces a host of minor and forgotten authors (Ouida, Gertrude Jewsbury, Gilbert Canavan), 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 1889 and reappeared with different titles in 1901, 1908 and 1920. George du Maurier's Trilby was published in 1894, reportedly selling 100,000 copies in the first three months. Directly and through stage adaptations (including Puccini's La Bohème, cinematic versions of Trilby, and a whole host of Trilbys), 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 mushroomwoman is Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1914), but Wyndham Lewis's Tarr (1918; rev. ed. 1928) is comparably innovatory.

On the mushroomwoman see Bo Jeffers, The Artist in Nineteenth-Century English Fiction (Gerrards Cross, 1979); Maurice Bevin, Ivory Towers and Sacred Fountains: The Artist as Hero in Fiction from Goethe to Joyce (New York, 1966); 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 1872-1977 (St. Alban's, VT, 1979). (Bevee adds further references on p. 5, note 41; there is, however, more to be said about the mushroomwoman, women artists, and sexual differentiation.)


22. Ezra Pound recalled Gaudier-Brezka's conversation as a flow of remarks jabbing the air: "it might be exorcisms, or the habits of movement tribes, or the training of African warriors, or Chinese ideographs, or the disgusting 'eddies' of metropolitan civilization . . ." (Ezra Pound, Gaudier-Brezka: A Memoir (1916; reprint, Harv, Harvard, 1968), 33-40. The identification of the "vivie" with the "primitivie," the laudatory use of "phallicie," and the appeal to a mythical potent masculinity—one unfeebled by urban life—recurs in writings by Lewis, Pound, Gaudier-Brezka, and others. "The artist of the modern movement is a savage," proclaimed the Blitz Manifesto II (25 June 1914). These claims reverse, if they do not improve, the common, casual, and racist evaluation of tribal cultures as either primitives or degenerate.

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


15. See Rudolph and Margot Winkworth, Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution (London, 1965). The Winkworths 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 conglomeration of popular beliefs, philosophical thought, and literary convention. The Winkworths conclude (p. 504) that, while psychology failed to solve the enigmas of the creative personality, it nevertheless helped shape "the generic personality and character of modern artists."


17. 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 1901, 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 Hyman, who discusses these and related sources in The Decline and Fall of Tory England, chap. 5 of The Edwardian Tum 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 characteristic 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 1902 and by oppositions of socialism, witticism, and other manifestations of pre-war modernism.

18. "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 1866. 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, 1987), 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).

19. On pre- and medial vaudeville imagery, see Tickner, The Spectacle of Women. Feminism, femininity, and evolutionary theory are discussed on pp. 181-92.
where various resurrectionary forces strived to outwit each other in the game of artistic power politics." (Lewis left Rugby School by December 1877 and the Slade in 1901.) See Ros, Letters of Whistler Lewis, 2, n. 38, on Lewis’s years in Paris c. 1902-1909.

40. Lewis’s Nietzschean manifesto is The Code of a Herdman; first published in The Little Review 4, no. 3 (July 1917) as “Imaginary Letters, III.” “Above all this commerce with the herd, let something verytostayremain ‘un peu sur la montagne’ ” The Crowd Master appears in Blas z 1913 68. Tyros (satire, “subtind and bores”) first appeared in Lewis’s 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 twoissues of The Tyro, a Review of the Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Design (Egip Press). The first section of the Blas “Manifesto” (12 June 1914) announces, “We are Primitive Mercenaries in the Modern World.” Two of Lewis’s biographers borrow these titles from his self-characterization as the Enemy: Geoffrey Wagner, Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy (London, 1937), 222f.; and Jeffrey Meyers, The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis (London, 1986), 100-7.

41. See Pound’s monograph on Gaudier-Brezka, 47, n. 22: “He accepted himself as ‘a sort of modern Cézanne.’ He did not claim it, but when it was put to him one day, he accepted it, quite simply, after mature deliberation.” And H. S. Ede, Savage Messiah (1913; reprint, London, 1972), 136. In Brodsky’s preface Gaudier-Brezka “seemed to be thrown into a vivid energy… Brodsky… called him ‘Savage’ and ‘Redskin.’ It pleased Pich [Gaudier] to be thought elemental, and Brodsky and Zozak [Sophie] would call him ‘Savage Messiah,’ a name deliciously apropos.” Horace Brodsky himself recalled that Gaudier-Brezka was “continually talking ‘savage, and ‘barbaric’ and gloated over the free and erotic life of the South Seas” (Henri Gaudier-Brezka 1891-1915 [London, 1935]), 15.

42. Lawrence Houseman (alluding to John’s presence in William Orpen’s painting of The Café Royal, Manchester Guardian, 25 May 1911.

43. See “Clandestine Spring-Mate,” Blas z 20 June 1914) 94. Lewis’s interest in Worthington is described by Geoffrey Wagner, Wyndham Lewis, 110, 155-55.

44. Pound (Gaudier-Brezka) cites a phrase by Lewis’ description of the “peculiar soft bluntness” in works such as Gaudier-Brzezka’s Stags and Boy and a Coney (p. 156) and holds out for the “squishy and blunted work” including (Birds Erect) as examples of the artist’s “personal combinations of forms” pp. 76-77. Brodsky (Henri Gaudier-Brezka) quotes Pound: “Yes, Brezka is immaterialising 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 “Eera in the form of a marble phallos” (quoted by Cork, Vertumnus and Abstrait Art, 18).

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 (Lewis, The Enemy). Kate Lechmere (for Blas) and then, in the 1920s, Anne Louise Rice and Jessica Dismoor, among others, lent him money. In the case of Lechmere and Dismoor, this soured their relations. The diary of Gaudier’s mistress Sophie Brezka, whose name he used, 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-Brezka, we should recall Sophie’s dwindling savings and the washing, cleaning, cooking, and mending at which Gaudier steered 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 sound any nonsense from your men friends and lovers. Keep them tranquilly to their settled hours—like a detective—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 bit tettey to any dog’s tail, however long.” Walter Sickert to Nina Hammet, 1918, quoted by Denise Hook, Nina Hammett: Queen of Bohemia (London, 1986), 114.


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 marginalised by rival avant-garde circles. See Richard Shone, “The Friday Club,” Burlington Magazine 117 (May 1975); and Frances Spalding, Vanessa Bell (London, 1967).


50. Jacques speaks the lines of William Shakespeare’s As You Like It, but “Tatia mandus facit hierosomen” was a commonplace written on the wall of Shakespeare’s theater, The Globe.
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."


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 Unaida Tywhit (Gwen John papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth). The quotation is from a letter to Tywhit (1905), quoted by Langdale, p. 24. In Paris in 1905, both women modeled for artists, Dorelia to John’s fancy 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.
65. Holroyd and Easton, Art of Augustus John, 15.

There is the maudlin, flatterate gait in her radiantely 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 hoard-walk of the pennygaff, and on the promiscuities of the music-tall 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 ex-
hibits. Worthless patrons want a well-knit figure, sparkling eyes, more sex than looks, and an easy, outsum manner her well. She knows her business, and the trick of the trade, which is naughty enough to please "bunks" and real swells alike...but she holds aloof from men who attempt to chuck her under the chin for a "booboo" or bacit.


69. The 1924 Post-Impressionist Exhibition included work by Meme, Meme, Hassenberg, Meme, Lewtiska, Meme, Jooskova, and Milia. Natasha Goncharova's paintings arrived late, at the beginning of 1925, 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 III) gives 4,302 females and 7,417 males in the category "Painters, Sculptors, Artists."


72. Women gained entry to the academic curricula as their 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, pp. 56-57.) Walter Sickert welcomed Ethel Sands and Naoi Hudson into the Fiftynight Society in 1907 because he wanted to "create a Salon d'Automne minera in London and you could both help me very much" (and in Nan's case, pour the tea). But when Fiftynight transformed itself into the Camden Town Group in 1907, 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), p. 76.) Women signed as signatories to the wortstock manifesto and contributors to Blast, but their position was marginal. Nita Hammett's talent was swallowed by bohemianism, she ended up the ravaged referent of Gaudier's Torso: "You know me," she would remonstrate to acquaintances, "I'm in the V&A (Victoria and Albert Museum) with me left trick knocked off." (quoted from Bethune Todd by Denise Hooker, Nita Hammett: Queen of Bohemian (London, 1986), p. 213.)


75. Tillyard, ibid., p. 103.

76. Ibid., p. 99.

77. "On the fashionability of the avant-garde, see also Nevinson, Paint and Propaganda, p. 83. As a young but well-publicized feminist acolyte, he heard Frank Rutter lecture on modern art in the evenings at the Dore Gallery and there met Lady Muriel Paget, Lady Grosvenor, Lady Lavery, and through them the Pre-War Society and at Lady Cedar's, "Eddie Marsh, Lady Diana Manners, and one hundred and one Guardians and Guinneases."


81. Lewis' dismissive phrase from Blast 1 (July 1912).

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


84. Gaudier-Brezka's review of the Egoist, 15 June 1914, is reprinted in Ezra Pound's A Memoir, p. 34.

85. See Cork, Vorticism and Abstract Art, p. 106, 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. Vidal English Art is reproduced in Nevinson, Paint and Prejudice, 68-60. 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 steady virtues of the English race." (p. 99).

87. The first three quotations are from Manifesto y, 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 1913), 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 wander 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 (1885-1959) and Helen Saunders (1885-1936). They have been described in contribution to Vorticism (pp 248ff.). He was helped by Helen Pepin, a long-standing friend of Helen Saunders. Her daughter Biddy Pepin has now completed an MA thesis on Saunders and Dismorr for Birkbeck College, University of London. I am very grateful to both Helen and Biddy Pepin 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," Cahiers d'Art 198 (1988) of the International Centre d'Etudes Structurist-lyne en Constructivisme, Belgium.

91. On the Rhythm circle see note 9; also Malcolm Easton, Anne Estelle Rice (1879-1953): Paintings (Hull, 1969).

92. Dismorr's Isadora and Ferguson's Rhythm cover are reproduced in Colour, Rhythm and Dance, 13, 15. The Rhythm image is a stylized version of Ferguson's painting with the same title (1911), University of Salford.

93. Letter from Helen Saunders to William Wees, 1 September 1963, quoted in Wees, Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde (Manchester, 1974). Or the name may have been misspelled mistakenly, from its family pronunciation as "Saunders."

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 Lehmann, interviewed by Richard Cork, in Cork, Vorticism and Abstract Art, 190.

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

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97. In Dismorr's "Jane 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' poem "Mud" or Dismorr's "Monologue":

My niche in nonentity still grins—
I lay terrors, elbows pinioned, my sleep mutterings blunted against a wall.

Pushing my hard head through the hole of birth

I squeezed out with innate body . . .

Details of equipment delight me.

I admire your arrogant spilled tresses, the disposition of my perpetually

foreshortened limbs,

Also the new machinery that yields the chains of muscles fitted beneath

my close coat of skin.


100. See W. Lewis, "History of the Largest Independent Society in England," quoted in Walter Michell and C. J. Fox, Weymouth Lewis on Art, Collected Writ- ings 1913-1956 (London, 1966), 96 (on Sickert) and 92 (on John's "tribes of archaic and romantic Britons and Graeco-Roman"), "I regret Mr John's stage-
goppins empying their properties over his severe and often splendid painter's gift."


103. "Our Vortex," Blast 1 (20 June 1914). Vortices and Notes. The echoes of Tenison 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 rode them down!" (Lord Alfred Tenison, The Princess: A Medley, 1871).

104. Blast 3 (20 June 1914): 51-52. "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 Wensing's influential Sex and Character (1905) tried to dis-
The Discontinuous City: Picturing and the Discursive Field

This essay is concerned with orders of sense, regimes 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 capitalistic 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 fictitious 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 rearranging 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 Azul, 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.

The City of Spectacle

In an essay on "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity", in the collection Vision and Difference, Griselda Pollock has argued that we cannot...