# Challenging 'Custom and Prejudice': The Professional Woman Artist in England, 1860-90

Thesis submitted for the

Doctoral Degree in Literature and Arts

ADRIENNE MCKENNA

KELLOGG COLLEGE

APRIL 2024

WORD COUNT: 82,590

# Abstract:
# Challenging 'Custom and Prejudice':
# The Professional Woman Artist in England, 1860-90

This thesis examines the challenges experienced by Victorian women artists seeking to forge professional careers in the period 1860-90. Of the study's two chapters, Florence Claxton's painting, *"Woman's Work," a Medley* (1861), is the focus of the first, and the archival documents of the Royal Academy of Arts' proceedings, the second. Recurring themes emerge across these chapters: the impact of the Academy on the lives of women artists, a status quo favouring men, and an active bias against women's interests. Drawing on a wide network of resources, an interdisciplinary methodology supplies previously lost context to reinterpret the painting's details, and to supplement and contextualise the economically written documents of the Academy. This approach thus compensates for the relative paucity of recordings of professional Victorian women artist's lives. A significant new interpretation of the painting is offered, capable of explaining its curious organisation and representations, and suggesting how the work might operate as an allegory. Considering the painting in relation to the persona, art, and writing of Barbara Bodichon, the study argues that this painting's representations adopted the same approach and treatment of topical issues as did Bodichon's sponsored publication, *The Englishwoman's Journal*. This chapter is followed by another that examines the evidence of the Academy's conduct towards its women students. Instances of changes to Academy procedures over three decades, specifically relating to women, are marshalled into a coherent pattern. Here the study contends that a dominant theme of sexual discrimination is apparent. Ultimately, this study fills gaps in the current scholarly understanding of the environment in which women artists worked. It provides definitive evidence that the Academy operated a policy of discrimination, and how this was made to work. Further, that the painting may be understood more fully than individual references to topical issues, but comprehensively and coherently as a proto-feminist statement.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## List of Figures

Figure 19. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 20. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 21. John Everett Millais, *Childhood* (1847-48), 8 × 17.6 cm, pen and black ink on cream wove paper, RAA02/223, Royal Academy of Arts, London © Photo: Courtesy Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: John Hammond.

Figure 22. Thomas Nicholl, *Infantia* (1874-5), Gilded bronze on purple Tennessee marble, Font of St Mary's Church, Studley Royal, Yorkshire © Robert Freidus

Figure 23. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 24. George Elgar Hicks, *Woman's Mission: A Companion to Man* (1863), oil on canvas, 76.2 × 64.1 cm, T00397, Tate Britain, London © Tate Britain

Figure 25. Thomas Nicholls, *Virilitas,* Gilded bronze on purple Tennessee marble, Font of St Mary's Church, Studley Royal, Yorkshire © Robert Freidus

Figure 26. Adelaide Claxton, 'The Artist in the London Parks: The "Constitutional"', *London Society*, 4, (1863), between pp. 432-3, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 27. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 28. Detail from Claxton, 'Utopian Christmas', *Illustrated London News*, 35, 1008 (24 December 1859), p. 602, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 29. Detail of Alice Walker, *Wounded Feelings* (1861), oil on canvas, 101.5 × 76.5 cm < https://www.artnet.com/artists/alice-walker/wounded-feelings-AttEm0otPIfL_LImiOw6cw2> [accessed June 2022] © Artnet

Figure 30. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 31. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 32. Héloise Leloir (née Colin), 'Walking and home dress', (1860), hand-coloured etching, line and stipple engraving, 21.5 × 16.4 cm, *The New Monthly Belle Assemblée*, NPG, London © NPG

Figure 33. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 34. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 35. Hablot K. Browne, 'The Smallweed Family', *Bleak House*, (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1853), between pp. 208-209, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figures 36. Frederick Walker, (engraved Joseph Swain), Untitled illustrations from 'The Deadly Affinity', *Once a Week*, 7, 173 (18 October 1862), immediately before p. 449, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 37. Walker, (engraved Swain), 'Deadly', *Once*, 7, 174 (25 October 1862), immediately before p. 477, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 38. John Leech, 'The Parliamentary Female' from the series 'The Ladies of the Creation', *Punch*, 24 (January 1853), *Punch's Almanack for 1853*, unnumbered page, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 39. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 40. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 41. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 42. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 43. Detail from 'Tables: Pastimes and other special functions', *The Pictorial Dictionary of British Nineteenth Century Furniture Design* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors' Club, *c.*1977), p. 535, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 44. John Leech, 'The Chatelaine; a really useful present', *Punch,* 16 (January 1849), p. 16, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure. 45. Richard Doyle, *No 11: Ye Exhybityon at ye Royal Academye* (1849) engraving, 15.2 × 13.4 cm, in *Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1849), Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 46. Florence Claxton, 'Servants Here. Servants There', *Illustrated Times*, 3, 444 (19 September 1863), p. 185, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 47. John Leech, 'We'll serve the Shop', *Punch,* 33 (3 October 1857), p. 141 Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 48. John Leech, 'Who will serve the Country', *Punch,* 33 (3 October 1857), p. 140, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 49. Detail from Claxton, *Art Students, South Kensington* (1861), pen and watercolour, 15.5 × 23.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Victoria and Albert Museum

Figure 50. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Women and Work* (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1857), p. 4, British Library, London © Courtesy of the British Library, digitised by the Google Books Project

Figure 51. 'The Missionary Basket, and how to fill it', in *A Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers*, 43 (October 1866), p. 5, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 52. *Harper's Weekly* (New York), 12, 590, (18 April 1868), uncaptioned headnote vignette for 'The Second Period' <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id =harpersweekly> [accessed January 2021] © <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/ webbin/serial?id=harpersweekly>

Figure 53. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon to Dr Bagshaw, autographed letter 'Dec. 14th', year unspecified, AMS 7031/1, The Keep, Brighton © The Keep

Figure 54. Barbara Bodichon, 'Effects of Tight Lacing' (London: the offices of the English Woman's Journal, undated) <https://victorianweb.org/art/costume/undergarments/3.html> [accessed January 2021] © Marie-France Le Fel

Figure 55. Bodichon, *Ye Newe Generation* (*c.* mid-1850s)*,* GCPP Bodichon 8/6 pt [B505/4], Girton College, Cambridge © by kind permission of Girton College

Figure 56. Bodichon, cartoon of Bessie Rayner Parkes, reproduced from Pam Hirsch, *Barbara Leigh*

Delaware Art Museum

Figure 76. George Cruikshank, *The Bottle and The Drunkard's Children* (1848), British Museum, London © British Museum

Figure 77. Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless* (1857), oil on canvas, 82.5 × 103.8 cm, Tate Britain, London © Tate Britain

Figure 78. Adelaide Claxton, 'The Hours a.m. and p.m. in London. Six O'Clock a.m: The First Up' *Illustrated Times*, 4, 470, (19 March 1864), p. 189, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 79. John Leech, *A Startling Novelty in Shirts*, *Punch*, 25, 31 (23 July 1853), p. 31, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 80. Charles Bennett, *The Ass in a Lion's Skin* (1857) in *The Fables of Aesop and others, translated into human form* (London: W. Kent & Co., *c.*1857), facing p. 3, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 81. Detail from Leech, *Startling Novelty* © Bodleian Library

Figure 82. Detail from Bennett, *The Ass* © Bodleian Library

Figure 83. Detail from Osborn, *N&F* © Tate Britain

Figure 84. Georges Achille-Fould's *Rosa Bonheur in Her Studio* (1893), oil on canvas, 91 × 124 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux, France © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux

Figure 85. Claxton, 'She studies in the galleries abroad, and soon arrive at the top of the Ladder' (1872), facsimile by graphotype engraving in *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights* (London: The Graphotyping Company, Ltd., 1872), p. 10, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 86. Osborn, *N&F* © Tate Britain

Figure 87. Samuel Baldwin, *Sketching from Nature* (1857), oil on canvas, 61 × 45.8 cm, Christie's on-line catalogue <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5732441> [accessed June 2022] © Christie's

Figure 88. 'Sketching from Nature', *Punch*, 29 (29 September 1855), p. 130, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 89. Bodichon, Sketch of Parkes © Girton College

Figure 90. Claxton, 'Where it is about as much as she can do to hold on' (1872), *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights* (1872), p. 10, Facsimile by graphotype engraving, Bodleian Library © Bodleian Library

Figure 91. Ford Maddox Brown, *The Last of England* (1855), oil on panel, 82.5 × 75 cm, Birmingham Museums Trust, Birmingham © Birmingham Museums Trust

Figure 92. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 93. Éduord Dubufe, *Portrait de Marie-Rosalie dite Rosa Bonheur* (1856), oil on canvas, 130.8 × 94

Id=ebeea84b-4358-4bfb-b7cf-9acfa6d85f78&_phsrc=mYT57&_phstart=successSource> [accessed January 2024] © Ancestry.com

Figure 130. Florence Claxton, 'Hastings Railway Station – The Arrival of the Down Train', *Illustrated Times*, 2, 3284 (8 September 1860), p. 151, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 131. 'Hastings Castle', engraving (1861) © Vince Catt <https://www.1066online.co.uk/gallery/engravings/vc-Hastings-Castle> [accessed October 2023]

Figure 132. 'Hastings Castle & 1066 Story' <https://www.visit1066country.com/things-to-do/hastings-castle-and-1066-story-p44433> [accessed October 2021]

**Acknowledgments**

This thesis would not have been completed without the help and encouragement of very many people – from those that generously responded to an email to the continuous and attentive interest of my supervisors during the extended period of this part-time study. My supervisors, Prof Barrie Bullen, Dr Caroline Palmer, and especially Prof Sandie Byrne, have been constant sources of help and guidance. This thesis owes much, indeed more than I can express, to Sandie's generous advice, support, and encouragement.

Thanks are due to staff at the Department of Continuing Education including Alistair Beecher, the late Antony Buxton, Amy Crickmay-Heraty, David Grylls, the late Cathy Oakes, Heather Savage, Yasmin Khan, and Carly Watson. Thanks also to the staff at the Bodleian libraries, particularly Angela Carritt, Susan Wilkin, Isabel Holowaty and Clare Hills-Nova. Of libraries and archives beyond Oxford, a thank you to David Wykes of Dr Williams Library, (London), Andrew Potter, Karine Sarant-Hawkins, Annette Wickham, and particularly Mark Pomeroy of the archives of the Royal Academy of Arts, London. In addition, Matilda Watson, John Wells, and Hannah Westall of the Girton College Library, Cambridge University Library, Simone Vogel-Horridge of the Ross Bay Villa Society (Victoria, Canada), Lindsey Tydeman of The Keep, East Sussex Records Office, Miranda Marraccini for her work on the Victorian Press Circle, and Jim Mussell of the Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition. Thanks too for the help given by several old and new friends: Ann Hurley's information on the Cobden family, Thomas Kittel's patient proof reading, and Murielle Laurent's translations from French. I am greatly indebted to Charlotte Yeldham for her 2020 publication in the *British Art Journal,* "Women's Work' A Medley (1861) by Florence Claxton (1838-1920)'.

Finally, to the four people that are everything to me: Joe, Kate, Patrick, and Elspeth. I am eternally in your debt.

**Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| Add. | Additional |
| *c.* | circa |
| CUL | Cambridge University Library |
| ed. | editor |
| edn. | edition |
| eds. | editors |
| ff | folios |
| Ibid. | Ibidem |
| ll. | lines |
| MLA | MSt in Literature and Arts, Oxford |
| MS | Manuscript |
| MSt | Master of Studies |
| NPG | National Portrait Gallery |
| *OED* | Oxford English Dictionary |
| *ODNB* | Oxford Dictionary of National Biography |
| p. | page |
| pp. | pages |
| RAA | Archive of the Royal Academy of Arts |
| | RAA/AND Anderdon Archive |
| | RAA/GA Minutes of General Assembly |
| | RAA/PC Minutes of Council |
| | RAA/KEE Probationers Register |
| | RAA/SEC Records of the Secretary |
| repr. | Reprinted |
| vols | volumes |

## Chapter 1. Introduction

*A world alas! which one's womanhood debars one from enjoying*[1]

Sometime between 1848 and 1850, Anna Mary Howitt wrote to Barbara Bodichon, fellow aspiring artist and friend, of her experience of attending a lecture at the Royal Academy of Arts. Howitt focused on *the* institution key to establishing a professional career and the impediment perpetuated by 'custom': '[a] world alas! which one's womanhood debars one from enjoying'.[2] Contrasting with Howitt's plaintive resignation, her letter included the more defiant reflections from another member of a tight-knit band of friends and artists.[3] Eliza Fox remarked, 'let us strive to be among those women who shall first open the Academy's doors to their fellow aspirants – that would be a noble mission, would it not?'[4] Since women's paintings were now accepted for the Academy's exhibitions, this 'mission' must have referred to the free tuition offered by the Academy's Schools. The Academy's constitution did not, since its founding in 1768, rule against women's applications. However, 'custom' (that is, a long established, widely practised, and accepted mode of behaviour) held that only men would apply.[5] Fox's articulation of a 'mission' is a hint of the following decade's organised strategy amongst women activists (of whom many were artists) to lobby the Academy in pursuit of this goal.

---

[1] Anna Mary Howitt to Barbara Bodichon (*c.* 1848-50), Girton archive, CUL MS Add.7621/IV/70 ff 807-8.
[2] Ibid., ff 307-8.
[3] Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 11.
[4] Howitt to Bodichon, CUL, ff 308.
[5] *OED*, 'custom': A mode of behaviour or procedure which is widely practised and accepted (and typically long established) in a particular society, community, etc.; a convention; a tradition.

A key element of this 'mission' was the 1859 petition addressed to all forty Academicians requesting that women might be accepted into their Schools (not only a potential source of invaluable career training, but the first step on a defined career ladder). Adopting a professional career could project women into a sphere far removed from contemporary notions of art as a genteel and feminine accomplishment practised by women in a passive personification, and performance, of beauty. Diametrically opposed to these generally accepted notions, aspiring women artists frequently pushed against boundaries that defined conventionality and adopted political strategies (such as the petition) to further their professional ambitions. Four such women were Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891), Florence Claxton (1838-1920), Laura Herford (1831-1870), and Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925). In 1859, Claxton, Osborn, and Herford, in their twenties or early thirties, were forging professional careers and seeking to place works within the acme of artistic approbation, the Summer Exhibition of the Academy. Bodichon, from a significantly more monied, politically connected, and influential background than her younger contemporaries, was an established artist with an exhibition of her landscape watercolours in Gambart's French Gallery in Pall Mall. As Pam Hirsch's biography of Bodichon describes, a dual strand of Bodichon's life, adopted from an early age and influenced by the political dynasty into which she was born, was her activism.[6] Amongst the many initiatives in which she invested both time and money was the monthly magazine, *The English Woman's Journal* (1858-1864) [hereafter *EWJ*]. This journal was at the forefront of various campaigns aiming at improving women's lives and rights. The *EWJ* represented the diverse interests and projects of women contributors, drawn both from members of the Langham Place group (an organised group of women linked through their proto-feminism) and the journal's readers.

Claxton, Osborn, Herford, and Bodichon all recognised the significance of the Academy in establishing an artistic career, as manifested in each signing the 1859 petition. (As Cherry notes, not all professional woman artists chose to make this political statement.)[7] The links between these women

[6] Pam Hirsch, 'The Early Years' and 'The Apprenticeship Years' in *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: Feminist, Artist and Rebel* (Great Britain: Pimlico, 1999), pp. 16-30, pp. 31-52.
[7] Cherry, *Frame*, pp. 16-17.

extend yet further. One of the executors of Herford's will, Margaret Tekusch,[8] had been an early neighbour of Florence Claxton's family and both Tekusch and Claxton had attended Cary's (Art) Academy.[9] Herford and Bodichon were both brought up in Unitarian households connected, as Cherry has asserted, 'by kinship, friendship, religious sympathy and strong interests in civil rights.'[10] 'Kinship' connected Herford to Bodichon's life-long friend Bessie Rayner Parkes; Herford was step-daughter of the second cousin, 1 × removed of Parkes (see Appendix A for the link between the family trees of both women). This is not precisely the 'cousin' connection stated by Cherry.[11] It does appear that these families were closer than this somewhat distant familial relationship suggests, and this closeness may account for the fact that Herford held one share certificate on the creation of the Joint Stock Company of the *EWJ* in which Parkes was a founder, first editor, contributor, and manager.[12] (Maria Rye, prominent proto-feminist activist and contributor to the *EWJ* likewise held one share.) This ownership of a share signals Herford's specific interest and involvement in the Bodichon/Parkes enterprise of the *EWJ*.

Almost certainly, Bodichon played a role in the project of the entry of women into the Academy's Schools. Not only had Bodichon the political education[13] and connections to conceive and execute such a plan but, by 1859, had benefitted from the invaluable experience obtained by campaigning (along with Parkes, Howitt, Fox and others) to reform the laws relating to married women's property.[14] Herford's tactical role in this strategy (yet another strand connecting her to Bodichon)

[8] Probate and Will, Anne Laura Herford, date of Probate 3 January 1871, Registry Principal Registry <www.probatesearch.service.gov.uk> [accessed May 2019].
[9] Marianne Van Remoortel in *Women, Work and the Victorian Periodical* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 95.
[10] Ibid., p. 11.
[11] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 11. See Appendix A.
[12] National Archives, Kew – Board of Trade and successors. BT 41/227/1274. Hirsch, *Bodichon,* p. 187.
[13] Bessie Parkes Belloc, 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon', *Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions,* 22, 210 (15 July 1891), p. 145.
[14] Bodichon campaigned over a wide range of women's issues that included the legal recognition of married women, rights to vote, aspects relating to work, and to access education. See Hirsch, 'The Reform Firm' in *Bodichon*, pp. 184-206, and Hirsch, 'Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith (1827-1891)' online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 23 September 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/2755> [January 2022].

included writing letters for the admission campaign.[15] However, Herford's most significant achievement was to be the first woman admitted to the Academy's Schools. Osborn and Claxton are equally significant within this context of aspiring artistic professionalism and activism. Both are linked to the achievements of Herford and Bodichon in their creation of extraordinary paintings during this period. In the mid-Victorian period the artistic representation of the professional woman artist was problematic, as might be judged by the paucity of artworks taking this subject as their theme. Not only was there no prevailing notion for the representation of such a woman, but this profession was judged (generally speaking) not to fall within the 'morally acceptable' range of vocations for a virtuous middle-class woman. Charles Dickens's description of the life of Angelica Kaufmann – with a double stress on her virtue and down-playing her ambition – exemplifies the anxieties attached to the professional woman artist: 'She lived meekly, was a good woman and went on painting to the last'.[16]

From the period 1857-69 only two extant works (of an original three) offer a commentary on the position of the woman artist and her place within Victorian society.[17] These two are Claxton's painting "*Woman's Work": a Medley* (1861) [hereafter *WW*] and Osborn's painting *Nameless and Friendless* (1857) [hereafter *Nameless*].[18] Claxton's painting, densely peopled with contemporary figures set within complex melding of both outdoor and indoor locations, defies any straightforward interpretation. In contrast, Osborn's work is ostensibly a literal rendering of a mid-Victorian scene. Both include representations of professional women artists, and both can be interpreted as political statements.[19] As such, each reflects the predicament of women striving to assert their professional

[15] Laura Herford, 'The Royal Academy: To the Editor of the Daily News,' *Daily News*, 4003 (14 March 1859), p. 2 also 'Correspondence; The Royal Academy: To the editor of the Examiner', *Examiner,* 2664 (12 March 1859), p. 164 [signing both as 'An art student'] and 'The Royal Academy', *Athenaeum*, 1637 (12 March 1859), pp. 361-2 [signed simply 'A.R']. See also Harriet Martineau to Mr Reeve (9 March 1859), *Harriet Martineau: Selected Letters*, ed. by Valerie Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 174.
[16] A. S., 'Poor Angelica', *Household Words*, 12, 283 (25 August 1855), p. 92.
[17] Charlotte Yeldham, *Women Artists in the Nineteenth century in France and England* 2 vols (London, Garland Publishing, 1984) I, p. 167.
[18] Ibid., p.167: Osborn's *Nameless*, Claxton's, *WW* and Claxton's *Scenes from the Life of a Woman Artist* (1858).
[19] Alison Smith, 'Emily Mary Osborn, Nameless and Friendless. 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc.' – Proverbs, 10, 15 (1857)' <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/osborn-nameless-and-friendless-the-rich-mans-wealth-is-his-strong-city-etc-proverbs-x-15-t12936> [accessed September 2022].

lives amongst a dominant patriarchal system and the generally held expectations that discouraged respectable middle-class women in pursuing professional ambitions. Of especial note, the dates of these two paintings straddle Herford's admission to the Academy's Schools, an event of undoubted importance in the lives of both Osborn and Claxton.

This study addresses the experience of professional women artists – such as Herford, Bodichon, Claxton, and Osborn – through the visual interpretation of *WW* (a cultural product created by a woman artist in the nineteenth-century), and through the historical documents that record the Academy's treatment of its women students. Each of the two chapters of evidence and argument work to mutually reinforce the conclusions of the other. Represented within *WW*, I argue, is the influence on the lives of professional women artists of society, culture, politics, and the Academy. The study of the Academy's documents reveal the cultural history and context from which Claxton's painting emerged and that it sought (in part) to represent. This thesis considers the period 1860-90, highly significant in the lives of such aspiring women artists. The historical starting point is the date of Herford's admission into the Academy's Schools, and close to Claxton's creation of *WW*. The intervening three decades, up to the point that women students had achieved some parity with their male counterparts and the waning significance of the Academy, clearly demonstrate a distinctive pattern in the Academy's treatment of its women students.

---

Since the late 1970s, when the woman artist had 'been studied at virtually no length at all', the contributions of scholars including Pamela Gerrish Nunn and Deborah Cherry have considerably advanced an understanding of the Victorian woman artist.[20] Providing wide surveys of the field their research has explored topics such as women's limited access to training opportunities, familial networks established through the non-Conformist church, their mutual support, links between artistic

[20] Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'The Case History of a Woman Artist: Henrietta Ward' *Art History* 1, 3 (September 1978), p. 293.

endeavour and political activism, and sexual discrimination in coverage of their work in the printed press. Later modern scholarly research has focused in depth on specific areas. For example, Lynne Walker has analysed women and their presence within urban space while Marianne van Remoortel has examined Claxton's career and its engagement with the printing press.[21]

Recent scholarship in Art History commenting on Claxton's highly complex painting has (briefly) focused on its examination of sexual politics, asserting *what* the painting is doing, but not *how*. Catherine King notes '[i]n *Women's Work: A Medley* [*sic*], Florence Claxton pronounces the feminist claim, that women can speak their truths from their experience'.[22] Catherine Flood makes the same point in linking the painting's concern with women's vocation to its political overtones. The painting, she notes, 'forthrightly addressed the lack of professions open to middle-class women and upset [contemporary] critics by its political tone.'[23] Yeldham's doctoral thesis of 1984 offers a panoramic review of the artistic output of women artists in the Victorian period. Here Yeldham notes that the paintings of Claxton and Osborn provide a 'direct social commentary on the condition of the woman artist and her position in society.'[24] A final example positing a relationship between *WW* and sexual politics occurs in Delia Gaze's short biographical profile of Claxton. This profile asserts that *WW* is the 'first consciously feminist allegory'.[25] In effect, Flood, King, and Yeldham each articulated the perception of a political message within *WW,* with ideas (of proto-feminist

[21] Early works include Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *The mid-Victorian Woman Artist*: *1850-1879* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University College London, 1982), and Yeldham, *Women Artists*. Subsequent works include: Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists* (London: Women's Press, 1987), Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Cherry, *Frame*, Antonia Losano, *The Woman Painter in Victorian Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 2008), Alexandra Wettlaufer, *Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi, *Crafting the woman professional in the long nineteenth century: artistry and industry in Britain* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013). Lynne Walker, 'Vistas of pleasure: women consumers of urban space of the west end of London 1850-1900' in *Women in the Victorian Art World,* ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 70-85.
[22] Catherine King, 'Feminist Arts' in *Imagining Women*, ed. by Frances Bonner and others (Great Britain: Polity Press in conjunction with Open University Press, 1982), pp. 173-4.
[23] Catherine Flood, 'Claxton [*married name* Farrington] Florence Ann (1838-1920)', online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 26 May 2016) <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-109622?rskey=B78ZeO&result=1> [January 2022].
[24] Yeldham, *Women Artists*, I, p. 167.
[25] Catherine King, 'Florence (Ann) Claxton' in *Dictionary of Women Artists*, ed. by Delia Gaze, 2 vols (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), I, p. 405.

claim/address/commentary) that might be considered as facets of the complex concept of an allegory. Ultimately, however, no scholarly examination to date has offered a suggestion of *how* Claxton's painting operates as an 'allegory'. The idea of articulating how such an allegory might work, finding evidence to contextualise and relate its representations to the lives of professional women artists, was a significant stimulus to the current research. As Cherry has noted, '[a]llegory offers a subtle way of reading between texts, of catching at elusive, fugitive, indirect connections' but warns that, in the loss of context relevant to decipher signals, allegory is 'treacherous.[26]

Interdisciplinary research, with its wide scope of potential resources and methodologies to retrieve lost allusions, unpick encoded symbolism and previously opaque details, is an ideal approach for catching at such 'elusive, fugitive, indirect connections' and supplying lost context. The first chapter, 'The Work of Women in 1861', focuses on this allegory, to provide a concept to decode the painting's complex representations. For the figures of women artists, it offers an interpretation of her social, political, and cultural construction, and how pursuing a career risked her moral reputation. While the risk to moral reputation has been noted by multiple scholars in examining Obsorn's *Nameless*, no scholar has perceived a similar theme within *WW* or has linked this to the aspirations of women artists.[27]

Contrasting and complementing the first chapter's exploration of the experiences of women artists encoded within the painterly allegory of Claxton's *WW*, the second chapter draws on rare, concrete, documentary evidence. While the general outlines of the progress of woman students at the Academy's Schools are understood, no detailed examination has considered the experiences of this early cohort between 1860-90.[28] Previous scholarship has considered Herford's entry,[29] and incidents

[26] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 7.
[27] See for example, Cherry, *Frame*, p. 30.
[28] See Van Remoortel, *Women*, p. 98.
[29] See Hirsch, 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: artist and activist', in *Women in the Victorian Art World*, ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 179. Nunn, *Mid-Victorian*, pp. 108-9, and Nunn, *Artists*, p. 47.

within the Academy have been examined as part of an emerging proto-feminist narrative,[30] as a general overview of professional artists in that period,[31] or as a cultural study of Victorian attitudes towards nudity.[32] Jo Devereux has noted that the experience of women students at the Academy's Schools is

> tantalizingly obscure: we know that a number of women attended these schools, or other art schools in and around London as well as in other cities and town. But that's about all we know. The dearth of documentary evidence in the form of letters, diaries, and even drawings and paintings means that we are forced to speculate about the nature of that experience.[33]

Various scholars have noted isolated instances of women's protest within the Schools. Helen Valentine notes that '[w]omen students strove to redress the inequality in the provision of training and facilities at the Academy and petitioned the Members for their own life class throughout the 1870s and 1880s.'[34] But the examples (of women's petitions) provided by Valentine (or indeed any other scholar) have never, before this, been linked into a coherent narrative on the treatment of women students. Indeed, Valentine's description of the Academy's Schools does not tackle the bar to women's entry until the mid-point of her article, and her conclusion that 'as a whole the Academy was not responsive to the new demands from the [woman] students' does not consider the operation of discrimination against women.[35] This thesis tackles the questions of how such 'demands' arose, how the Academy proceeded to deal with dissent, and supplies a detailed picture through direct, documentary evidence of the nature of the woman student's experience. No scholarship prior to this has taken as its focus the manner in which, and the mechanisms by which, the Academy discriminated against its own cohort of women students in the period 1860 to 1890.[36]

---

[30] Cherry, 'Artists and Militants, 1850-66', in *Frame*, pp. 17-9, and Cherry, 'An education in difference or an in/different education? Art training for women', in *Painting Women* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 55-7.
[31] Nunn, *Mid-Victorian*, pp. 108-9; Yeldham, *Women artists*, p. 19.
[32] Alison Smith, *The Female Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 42-4.
[33] Jo Devereux, *The Making of Women Artist in Victorian England*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2016), p. 25.
[34] Helen Valentine, 'The Royal Academy Schools in the Victorian Period' in *Art in the Age of Queen Victoria* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1999), p. 46.
[35] Valentine, 'Schools', p. 47.
[36] RAA/PC/10, Annual Report for the year 1881 (1882) p. 15. The scope of this work is restricted to students of painting, except for one (flagged) quotation that relates to students of sculpture.

Contributing to a better understanding of the lives of such women Victorian artists is paradoxically challenging. Factors such as the rise of the novel and journals aimed at the ladies' market have provided the mid to late Victorian period with a rich vein of archival materials on the topic of the professional (chiefly middle-class) woman artist. However, these discourses and their representation of women's experience are distorted, or even suppressed, by contemporary pressures that included Victorian ideologies of femininity. Ellen Clayton's 1876 biographical profile of two sisters famous for their flower paintings, Annie Feray Mutrie and Martha Darley Mutrie, lay bare their self-censorship in justifying their reasons for silence: 'these ladies have invariably declined, from feelings of delicacy, to make any particular of their life public.'[37] Even when women artists wrote directly of their experiences such memoirs 'tended to avoid a linear outline of personal growth in favour of a series of anecdotes, portrait vignettes and reminiscences.'[38] As Cherry observes, researching the lives of Victorian woman artists cannot rely on 'transparent records' detailing the lives of these women.[39]

In the choice of primary materials, and the approach to their examination, the current research acknowledges the limitations introduced by self-censorship and the lack of 'direct' (that is, first-hand) evidence. Each of the thesis' two chapters centres around one artefact (or form of artefact): Claxton's painting *WW* and Academy documents (chiefly Minutes). The first chapter's examination might be described as a visual form of discourse analysis in which an interpretation of *WW* is achieved by decoding the contemporary associations conveyed through the painting's representations. The *EWJ*, and the approach this journal takes to presenting issues, is key in providing a framework for understanding the painting. This approach allows an analysis that both penetrates obfuscating allegory (necessary in the period for a painting that suggested potentially unwelcome political ideas) and illuminates the semiotics of details with now lost significance. The second chapter examines the Academy's archival records of Minutes, Rule Books, and petitions. As Annette Wickham notes these,

[37] Ellen Clayton, *English Woman Artists,* 2 vols (London: Tinsley, 1876), II, p. 186.
[38] Cherry, *Painting*, p. 7. Cherry draws on the scholarship of Valerie Sanders, *The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in Nineteenth-century England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989).
[39] Cherry, *Painting*, p. 7.

'are generally tight knit document(s) that don't give much detail of debate or discussion.'[40] Close reading and an examination of context open up these documents to interpretation and reveal otherwise hidden patterns in the Academy's decision-making processes.

---

**The Work of Women in 1861**

On the same printed page of the *Athenaeum* as the 1859 petition to Academicians was a mention of a publication titled *A Few Words on Woman's Work*. This volume opened by asserting that 'some of the most urgent social questions of the day seem to resolve themselves into that of "Woman's Work"'.[41] By 1861 the phrase 'Woman's Work' had come to encapsulate a particular zeitgeist of this period; the wide-ranging anxieties, hopes, and ambitions associated with the 'hot' topic of '[h]ow ought women to be employed.'[42] Consequently, in its title alone, Claxton's painting was identified in the public's imagination with a political question. While modern scholars have identified this link, arriving at a concept that satisfactorily explains its representations has proved difficult. Questions remain concerning the significance of figures' representations, their groupings, their inter-relationship, and the ancillary details of setting and accessories. Cherry has written of the challenges that this painting, its title, and its catalogue description present for any facile or simplistic reading: the lack of 'rationale for this assembly of diverse personages' in which '[m]any figures remain puzzling', the 'complex relations [that] were engaged between the image and those texts that accompany it (the title, catalogue quotation and/or commentary)', and the 'conflicting and contradictory ways' of reading the representation of one key figure.[43]

---

[40] Annette Wickham, 'Models and Militants: women in the Life Room. A history of women in the RA's Life Room', 5 March 2018, 26:39 <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/event/models-and-militants-women-in-the> [accessed May 2018].
[41] M.A.B., *A Few Words on Woman's Work*: *Shewing the paramount importance of Home Duties* (London: W. Tweedie, 1859), p. 1.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Cherry, *Frame*, pp. 39-41.

This study presents a new interpretation of *WW* capable of addressing the above questions and issues with a concept that acknowledges the significant place the press held in the imagination and lives of the Victorian public.[44] This concept extends the argument made by Jamie Horrocks in examining Claxton's painting from the year before *WW, The Choice of Paris* (1860), [hereafter *Paris*].[45] Horrocks' suggestion, that *Paris* mimicked and reproduced ideas from the periodical press, is developed in the current research to articulate an entirely new approach. The current interpretation emerges in considering the relationship of the painting to Bodichon; her publications, artwork, and persona. Most significantly, in aligning the painting with Bodichon's political projects this study offers an explanation of *how* the painting makes its own political statement.

A central resource in this specific research is the *EWJ,* a journal that Bodichon funded, edited, and supplied with articles. The painting's details are examined and compared with ideas articulated in the *EWJ*, including a consideration of how painting and journal present topics through an 'issue' and corollary 'solution' formula. Through this approach, along with other linking elements, this thesis argues that *WW* can be appreciated and understood within the framework of Bodichon's politics. For example, the first article in the first edition of the *EWJ* focused on the plight of the indigent governess – a topic addressed in *WW* in the inclusion of three women governesses along with their youthful charge. The solution of emigration, an idea forwarded in the *EWJ,* is represented within the painting in a group of hopeful women emigrants adjacent to the grouped figures of governesses. Further close examination reveals another detail linking painting and journal; the idea that governesses had some level of responsibility for their own plight. While contemporary journals, novels, and artistic representations generally held an unquestioningly sympathetic attitude to governesses and blamed their employers for all their woes, Bodichon challenged this in a letter to the *EWJ.*[46] Bodichon

[44] Joanne Shattock and Michael Wolff, eds., *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), p. xv.
[45] Jamie Horrocks, 'Pre-Raphaelite Primitivism and the Periodical Press: Florence Claxton's "The Choice of Paris"', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 18, 2 (2017), pp. 217-46.
[46] See 'Governesses', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 1 (15 September 1860), pp. 305-7. Anne Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, eds., Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (1847; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), Emily Mary Osborn, *The Governess* (1860).

pointed out that, by neglecting to undertake necessary training, 'not ten in a hundred governesses are at all fit for the work which they have undertaken'. She continued to assert that it 'is not quite fair to lay all the blame of the hardships and discomforts under which governesses suffer upon their employers'.[47] Bodichon's contention is paralleled by the detail in *WW* where a book with the title 'LES RUDIMENTS: TOUS LES CHOSES' lies at the feet of a ferocious-looking governess.[48] This apparently discarded and disregarded subject training manual (or book) suggests a cavalier attitude on the governesses' part towards the basic knowledge necessary for their employment.

Decoding other details, such as the significance of costumes, draws on a range of sources and disciplines such as literature, Fine Art, sculpture, architecture, historical documents including diaries, articles in journals and newspapers. For example, an appreciation of the unique nature of one vignette within the composition, a representation of figures considering emigration from England, examines this group in relation to the lyrical imagery of a popular song, its accompanying illustration and wording, and two contemporary paintings also dealing with the same topic of emigration. In this example, the conclusions provided from Nunn's extensive research on the genre of Victorian 'emigration paintings' confirmed that the contextual examples were typical – with the inference that the representations of emigration within *WW* are highly unusual. Various interpretations of the scene emerge from this new understanding of the group. The figures can be seen as emblems of a proto-feminist vision in which a woman could take the lead in directing the ambitions of 'sister-voyagers'.

This exegesis of a visual text, in its consideration of the painting's wide remit of mid-Victorian 'Woman's Work', demonstrates the place of professional art within the limited range of respectable options available to middle-class women. The representations of professional women artists within this painting are a particular focus of the current study. Approaching the painting as an allegory, its encoded details (for example, in the composition's relative placement of artists in relation to other

[47] B. L. S. Bodichon, '*To the Editor of the English Woman's Journal*: Apropos of the Governess Question', *EWJ*, 4, 22 (December 1859), p. 285.
[48] The Basics: All subjects.

women and to the wall of 'custom and prejudice') are probed to consider what they might suggest about the plight of professional women artists. While earlier scholarship has chiefly asserted without equivocation that one of the painting's figures is a portrait of Rosa Bonheur, this research has forensically examined the subject to suggest an alternative interpretation.[49] The equivocal portrait of a woman positioned to suggest her ascendancy within the British Academy, is a chimera. This duality arises since the representation *is*, and yet *is not*, Bonheur; a conceit that a mid-Victorian Englishwoman might occupy such an elevated position within the ranks of the British art establishment. The examination of other previously overlooked details provides yet further insights into the plight of women artists. Surprisingly, even though *WW* and *Nameless* both tackle the subject of the professional woman artist, no previous scholar has made a detailed examination of the multiple correspondences between these works. One such example is the representation of a ladder. In comparing their individual presentations of a ladder, this study suggests how the ladder operates as a symbol of professional exclusion in one work, and professional advance in the other. The current research argues that this detail is highly significant, particularly given the interest of both Osborn and Claxton in the advance of their fellow professionals, reflecting the period before and after Herford's achievement.

## The 'Ancient Wall of Custom and Prejudice', 1860 – 1890

At its first display in the Portland Gallery Claxton's painting was accompanied by a lengthy explication in the exhibition catalogue. This text describes a dominant stone structure within the painting as the 'ancient wall of Custom and Prejudice'. Audiences then immersed in the politics of British art would have understood this to be a thinly veiled reference to the Academy. As such a reference, it may be regarded as describing the impact of dual aspects of the Academy's conduct

[49] Suggestion of the almost unknown Rosa Brett (sister of John) has been made by Susan Casteras, 'The Necessity of a Name: Portrayals and Betrayals of the Victorian Woman Artist', in *Gender and Discourse in Victorian Art and Literature,* eds., Antony H. Harrison and Beverly Taylor (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992), p. 229. Cherry notes in *Frame*, p. 226: 'Rosa Bonheur with her international reputation seems more likely'.

towards women: the 'custom' that had (until 1860) barred women's entry, and the 'prejudice' experienced both before and after this event. The second chapter focuses precisely on the nature of this prejudice in the aftermath of Herford's entry, and the subsequent decades in which women settled into the Academy. This chapter seeks to explain *how* such prejudice was made to operate against the interests of the School's women students, and considers how homosocial bonds (created in particular at the club venue of the all-male Athenaeum) played a role in the outlook of Academy Members. Evidence of the Academy's conduct towards women students – from decisions, proposals, and newly created rules – is garnered from its own contemporary documents. Now held in the Academy's archive, these documents include Minutes from the meetings of the Academy's Council (its ruling body) and its General Assembly (the entire membership), the Academy's Rule Books that define the conduct of student life within the Schools, and petitions for changes to these rules, as made by the School's women students. By marshalling this evidence into themes, presenting it in chronological order, and framing the emerging narrative with explanatory contextual detail, it is possible to arrive at secure interpretations despite (as previously noted) the lack of detailed debate and discussion within these documents.[50] Such evidence removes the necessity to, as Devereux has observed, 'speculate about the nature of that [women's] experience' in the Academy's Schools.

One close reading in this chapter considers the different ways in which rules for both sexes were introduced compared to new regulations applying only to women. A committee, specifically created for the purpose, devoted a year to formulating rules for all students. In contrast, regulations applying solely to women (limiting their participation in the Institution's activities) was made, and immediately passed into their rules, solely by the coterie of Council members. While the asymmetry of different rules applying to men and women is obvious, by framing these approaches with a context of Council versus Assembly operation, more subtle forms of manipulation emerge. This latter proceeding ensured that regulations were introduced solely by the Council, without the opportunity for wider discussion amongst the entire body of Institution members, and the possibility for dissent from more

[50] Wickham, 'Models', 26:39.

liberal quarters.[51] Further, the make-up of the Council offered an opportunity to manipulate its membership's views by drawing from Academicians known to hold conservative views.

This detailed examination of the Academy's conduct toward women in the period 1860 –90 creates the most complete picture to date of the experience of Victorian women within this institution. While the evidence presented does demonstrate rare instances of Academicians advancing women's rights, or mitigating excessive restrictions, nearly all the available evidence suggests the opposite. In reviewing all the gathered evidence, this study argues that a clear pattern emerges of systematic institutional sexism. This was a sustained decades-long campaign that, at points, drew in swathes of the membership to approve steps that would hamper the progress of women students.

Ultimately, this thesis offers new perspectives to our current understanding of the professional woman artist in the Victorian period. In considering the conduct of the Academy in the mid to late Victorian period, based on the evidence from this institution's contemporary documents, this work presents the case for the operation of systematic discrimination against women students. The section on the Academy's conduct sets out the context of social, cultural, and political expectations that created challenges for aspiring women. This interpretation of representations within *WW* places the professional woman artist within this environment to argue how ideas such as risk, aspiration, and distance from the domestic realm are related to these womens' lives. By relating the painting to Bodichon's activism, this study presents an explanation of *how* this painting may been seen to make a political stance on the topic of 'Woman's Work'.

[51] RAA/PC/10, Annual Report from The Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians for the Year 1862 (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1865), p. 6.

## Chapter 1. The Work of Women in 1861

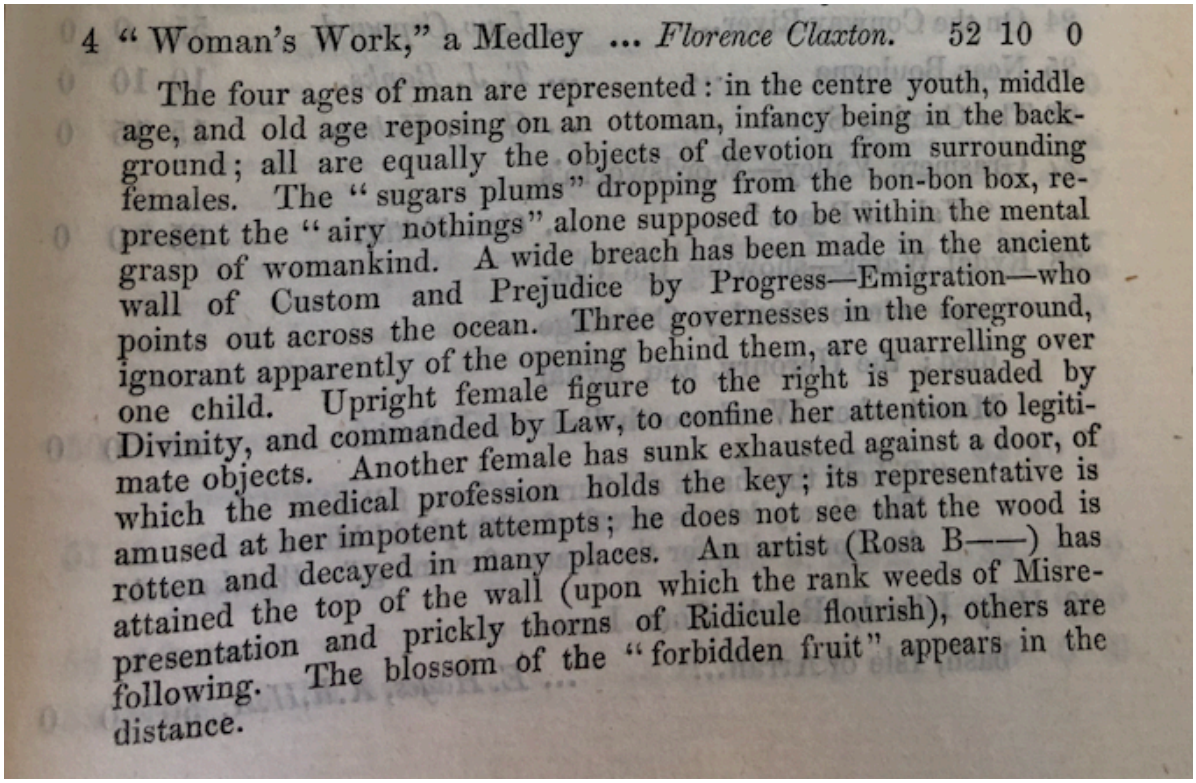
*Claxton and Bodichon: the technique and formula of pairs*

Florence Claxton's painting, a new approach

On the 16 March 1861 the Portland Gallery at 316 Regent Street, London opened its doors to the public. The first room of this new exhibition, for the Institution of Fine Arts, featured a painting by Florence Claxton, "*Woman's Work," a Medley* (1861), [hereafter *WW*].[1] This painting, measuring in its frame 74 × 100.5 cm, and executed in the prestigious medium of oils, was not a typical production by a mid-Victorian woman artist.[2] In this period women's paintings were noted for 'the exceeding smallness of the proportion,'[3] and as such titled the 'little bricks' that were used 'to fill up the [occasional] vacant gap' on exhibition walls.[4] The image (unframed original 48 × 75 cm) invited, and continues to invite, scrutiny: its setting is simultaneously a conventional domestic Victorian interior and pastoral landscape, while thirty-four minutely detailed figures are shown surrounded by tiny intertexts. Unlike contemporary paintings in which the background of a railway or seaside provided context and implied narrative, the curious setting of *WW* – which distinctly frames and defines the enclosed figures – eludes simple interpretation. An unusual and lengthy catalogue explication accompanied the painting at its first exhibition. As Cherry points out, while providing context to encourage specific interpretations, this problematic text (Figure 1) is 'neither a key to the painting nor a total explanation'.[5]

---

[1] 'Fine Arts: Exhibition of the Institution of Fine Arts, Portland Gallery', *London Daily News,* 4633 (18 March 1861), p. 3.
[2] Charlotte Yeldham, ''Woman's Work', A Medley (1861) by Florence Claxton (1838-1920)', *The British Art Journal*, 20, 3 (Winter 2019-20), p. 89. I am indebted to Charlotte Yeldham for her article's description of fine details. With one noted exception, all images of *WW* in this chapter are reproduced from Yeldham's article 'Work' in this edition of *The British Art Journal*.
[3] 'Things in General: by Nobody in Particular', *EWJ*, 3, 17 (July 1859), p. 299.
[4] George Dunlop Leslie, *The inner life of the Royal Academy, with an account of its schools and exhibitions, principally in the reign of Queen Victoria* (London: John Murray, 1914), p. 75.
[5] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 40.



4 "Woman's Work," a Medley ... *Florence Claxton.* 52 10 0

The four ages of man are represented: in the centre youth, middle age, and old age reposing on an ottoman, infancy being in the background; all are equally the objects of devotion from surrounding females. The "sugars plums" dropping from the bon-bon box, represent the "airy nothings" alone supposed to be within the mental grasp of womankind. A wide breach has been made in the ancient wall of Custom and Prejudice by Progress—Emigration—who points out across the ocean. Three governesses in the foreground, ignorant apparently of the opening behind them, are quarrelling over one child. Upright female figure to the right is persuaded by Divinity, and commanded by Law, to confine her attention to legitimate objects. Another female has sunk exhausted against a door, of which the medical profession holds the key; its representative is amused at her impotent attempts; he does not see that the wood is rotten and decayed in many places. An artist (Rosa B——) has attained the top of the wall (upon which the rank weeds of Misrepresentation and prickly thorns of Ridicule flourish), others are following. The blossom of the "forbidden fruit" appears in the distance.

Figure 1. Catalogue of the Portland Gallery (1861), p. 5, 200.B.235, Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Victoria and Albert Museum

Contemporary critics noted their perception of the painting's complexity and theme. The *Spectator* complained that 'allegory and vulgar realism are strangely jumbled together'.[6] The *Athenaeum* noted that the painting 'intended, so says the artist, to illustrate the received opinion that "Woman's Work" should centre in Man.'[7]

[6] 'Fine Arts: The Institution of Fine Arts', *Spectator*, 34, 1709 (30 March 1861), p. 332. See also 'Fine Arts', *London Daily News,* (1861), p. 3.

[7] 'Fine Art Gossip', *Athenaeum*, 1761 (27 July 1861), p. 123. See also: 'Fine Arts: The Pictures of the year. (*Ninth Notice*)', *Examiner,* 2786 (22 June 1861), p. 392. 'Institution of Fine Arts', *Illustrated Times,* 12, 317 (27 April 1861), p. 273. 'Fine Arts', *John Bull,* 40, 2102 (23 March 1861), p. 187.

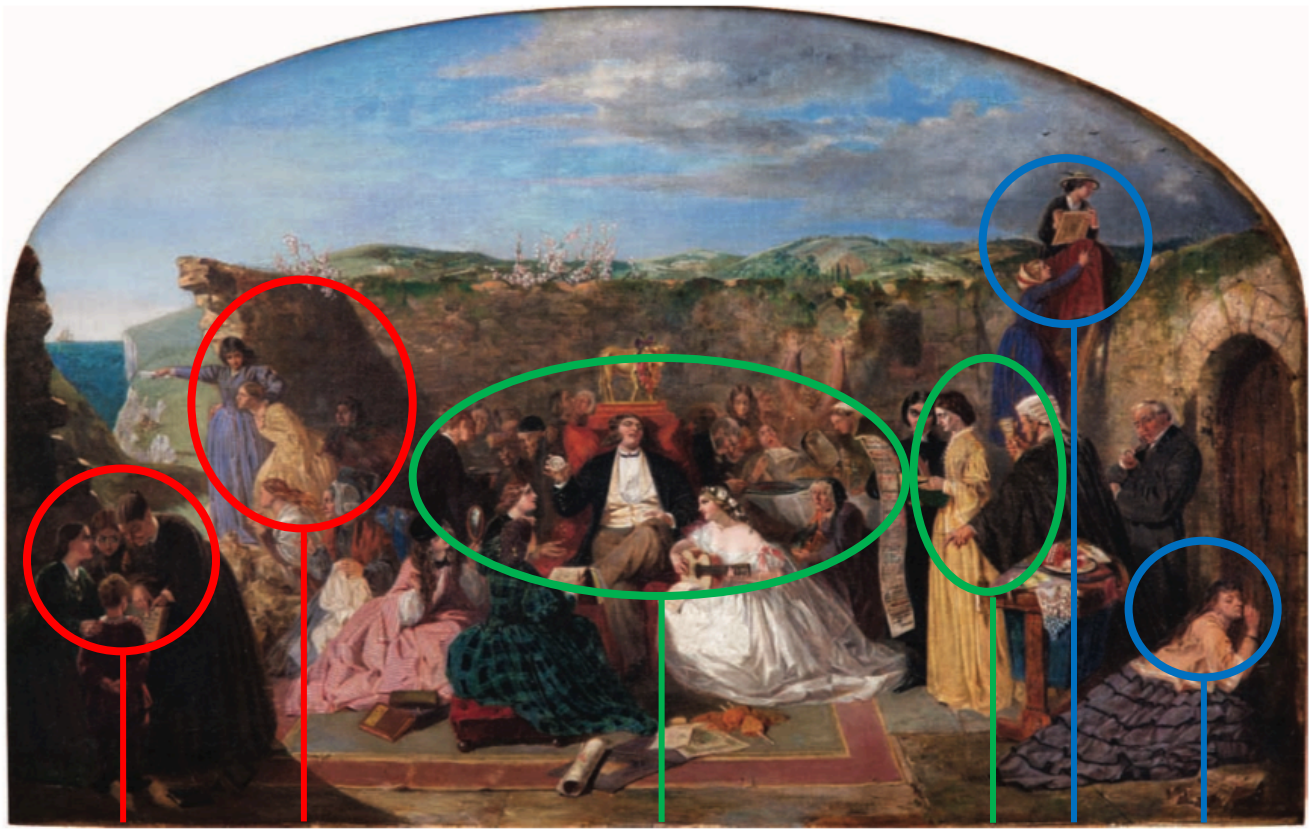



Figure 2. Florence Claxton, "*Woman's Work," a Medley* (1861), oil on panel, 48 × 75 cm (unframed), Private Collection © *The British Art Journal*, 20, 3 (Winter 2019-20)

The majority of the women featured in the painting are shown in its dominant centre, all of whom are attending to the needs of men from infancy to dotage. The four corners of the painting, and the edge of the rug, depict women apparently marginalised from this domestic category. In the bottom left is a crowded group of three governesses, above them five women looking out to sea. Figure 2 shows these two groups respectively circled red (1) and (2). In the bottom right a hopeless woman has sunk to the ground while, towering above her, a woman has mounted a ladder placed against the wall on which another woman ascends; groups circled blue (3) and (4). Visually, and in the catalogue text, the viewer and reader are/the viewer or reader is encouraged to link these groups through their adjacent positions in the composition, almost in a vertical line, and sequential mentions in the text.

The centre's domestic group is linked, through the horizontal plane, to the 'Upright Female' at the edge of the rug; groups circled green (5) and (6).

One half of each pair of these three examples represents a contemporary and topical issue concerning women, the other half a potential solution to that problem. (Here these formulae are referred to as 'pairs' or 'pairings,' and 'issue and solution.') The pairing of 'Governesses and Emigration' represents the issue of the overstocked governess-market and the potential solution(s) offered by emigration. Second, the issue of the curtailed freedoms of women within the conventional domestic sphere and the potential offered by intellectual independence is the pairing of 'The Four Ages' and 'Upright Female'. Finally, the potential risk to a woman's moral character incurred by pursuing a profession, and the solution of disregarding conventional notions, is expressed by the pairing of the 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists.' Although Yeldham has noted that the painting's female figures are related through the contemporary topic of vocation and loosely arranged into four thematic groups, neither she, nor any other scholar, has offered (as this study does) a comprehensive organising principle at work within *WW*.[8]

Bodichon's publications, advocating improved women's rights, are central to the current examination. *WW,* this chapter will argue, is structured by multiple correspondences between Claxton's image and Bodichon's texts. Each adopts a formula of articulating a topical issue (a problem related to women's interests) and supplying practical solutions to improve the same issue.[9] In this approach of 'issue and solution', *WW* might be described as an artistic mimicry of Bodichon's textual formula. Further, that in their respective presentations of an issue and a solution each encourages the same audience interpretation. Through the painting's setting, and in the representation of the challenges faced by aspiring artists such as Bodichon, the chapter will also suggest how the image reflects Bodichon's life and parallel career as a professional artist. The chapter's evidence is arranged

[8] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 89.
[9] See Christine Swiridoff, 'Writing for a Cause: The English Woman's Journal and Women's Work, 1858-1864' (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing: Temple University, 2005), p. 9.

in two sections. The first lays out the concepts and approach crucial to the interpretation of evidence: Claxton's engagement with contemporary discourses, her technique of pairing to encourage audience interpretations generated through contrast and comparison, and an interpretation of *WW* within the context of Claxton's wider *oeuvre*. Ending this section is a consideration of Bodichon's own use of the formula described as 'issue and solution,' and a brief acknowledgment of the significance of her artistic career. Having established these fundamental concepts, the second section employs them in examining *WW* and interpreting evidence of the correspondences between image and text.

Claxton's engagement with contemporary discourses

Claxton's artistic output included wood engraving for magazine illustrations in the *Churchman's Family Magazine, English Woman's Domestic Magazine, Illustrated London News, Illustrated Times, London Society* and the *Queen*, a collaborative effort between publisher, author of text, and illustrator.[10] Flood has focused on the way in which the illustrator was 'circumscribed by the text', a point also made by Cherry.[11] However, Van Remoortel observes that, when Claxton's images are read as 'emphatically satirical,' a different perspective emerges: 'the periodical press opened up new possibilities for female artists such as Florence and [sister] Adelaide Claxton to participate in ongoing discussions on various social issues and offer a satirical twist to the matter.'[12] Participating and commenting on social issues to exploit and criticise, 'rather than simply reproducing stereotypes and the society that created them,' implicitly demands close engagement with contemporary discourses.[13]

In his examination of Claxton's *The Choice of Paris: An Idyll* (1860), [hereafter *Paris*], Jamie Horrocks argues that Claxton's watercolour engaged with contemporary discourses in reproducing ideas

[10] See for example 'Lady Temple gazing round the Scenes of her Youth', *Churchman's Family Magazine,* 3 (January 1864), p. 14 (for Charlotte Yonge's *The Clever Woman of the Family* and which Claxton illustrated from January 1864 to April 1865). 'London Societies: No. 1. Society for the Practice of Part-singing', *London Society*, 1 (1862), p. 209. 'London Societies: No. II. 'The Artists' and Amateurs' Society' A Conversazione at Willis's Rooms', London Society, 1 (1862), p. 378.
[11] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 46.
[12] Van Remoortel, *Women*, p. 101.
[13] See Van Remoortel's readings of ''Miserable Sinners', 'Christchurch Oxford', and 'Utopian Christmas'; *Women*, pp. 101-2.

(relating to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their art) originally articulated in periodical reviews. Horrocks argues further that in *Paris* Claxton 'mimicked' the Pre-Raphaelite primitivist aesthetic.[14] The current argument also depends on ideas of reproduction and mimicry, however, each mediated in a different manner from Horrocks's conceptions in *Paris.* Horrocks is describing ideas expressed in print about artists, their paintings, and approach, reworked by Claxton into a visual medium. The mimicry of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in *Paris* is Claxton's imitation of another painterly technique. This study's contention, argued through the lens of Bodichon's work, is that in *WW* Claxton reworks discourses relating to women's issues. The mimicry found in *WW* is as apposite as that found in *Paris*. Each reflects the techniques of the painter's 'source': for *Paris* a satire on a painterly approach and in *WW* an homage to the journalistic approach taken by Bodichon. However, this chapter's new interpretation advances the boundaries created through the dual ideas of reproduction and mimicry by observing, in details such as the composition's evocation of the south coast, that *WW* reflects Bodichon's publicly projected persona in the spheres of domesticity, art, and politics.

## Claxton's *oeuvre* and the concept of pairs

Claxton's visual strategies in magazine illustrations and exhibitions made frequent use of the technique of pendant drawings, consisting of 'companion-piece' paired images.[15] Between 1862 and 1864 Claxton created works whose interpretation depended on a pair of contrasting images: sixteen engravings for exhibition and, in collaboration with her sister Adelaide, twenty-six for journals.[16]

---

[14] Horrocks, 'Primitivism', pp. 217-46.
[15] *OED*, 'pendant', 10 (a): An object, figure, event, etc., that forms a match, parallel, or companion-piece to another, *spec.* on of a pair of pictures. In this context 'pendant' refers to matched companion pieces.
[16] Florence Claxton series, produced jointly with her sister Adelaide, 'The Hours of A.M and P.M in London', *Illustrated Times,* 4, 462 (23 January 1864), p. 61: 'One o'clock a.m.: Suppertime', signed Adelaide, 'One o'clock p.m.: The Nursery Dinner', signed Adelaide. 4, 463 (30 January 1864), p. 77: 'Two o'clock a.m. Sitting up for the Mistress', unsigned, 'Two o'clock p.m.: The Steam-Boat', signed Florence. 4, 464 (6 February 1864), p. 92: 'Three o'clock a.m.: Burglars', unsigned, 'Three o'clock p.m.: Shopping in Oxford-Street', signed Adelaide. 4, 464 (20 February 1864), p.124: 'Four o'clock a.m.: Up with the Lark, signed Adelaide, 'Four o'clock p.m.: Washerwoman's Tea, signed Florence. 4, 468 (5 March 1864), p.157: 'Five o'clock a.m.: Overworked' signed Adelaide, 'Five o'clock p.m.: Rotten-Row', unsigned. 4, 470 (19 March 1864), p. 189: 'Six o'clock a.m.: The First Up' signed Adelaide, 'Six o'clock p.m.: Home from Business' signed Florence. 4, 477 (7 May 1864), p. 300: 'Seven o'clock a.m.: Morning Toilet', signed Adelaide, 'Seven

Figure 3 shows an example of a 'pair' from a series published in the *Illustrated Times*.[17] Based on the popular Victorian theme of antipodean inversion, 'a common literary and artistic trope in both the colonies and Britain', Claxton's interpretation of this genre played on gender stereotypes and the anxieties created when the 1851 revealed a gender imbalance in which single women vastly outnumbered men. [18]


o'clock p.m.: Inspection', signed Adelaide. 5, 486, (9 July 1864), p. 29: 'Eight o'clock a.m.: Morning Post.', signed Florence, 'Eight o'clock p.m.: Coffee.', signed Adelaide. 5, 489 (30 July 1864), p. 76: 'Nine o'clock a.m.: Going to Business', signed Florence, 'Nine o'clock p.m.: Waiting for the Doctor', signed Adelaide. 5, 491 (13 August 1864), p. 491: Ten o'clock a.m.: Gardening', signed Florence, 'Ten o'clock p.m.: Dancing', signed Florence. 5, 497 (24 September 1864), p. 204: 'Eleven o'clock a.m.: The Gordian Knot', signed Florence, 'Eleven o'clock p.m.: The last Will and Testament', signed Adelaide. 4, 503 (5 November 1864), p. 301: 'Twelve noon.: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', signed Adelaide, 'Twelve p.m.: The Obstinate Juryman.', signed Florence. Fourteen engravings solely by Florence in the series titled, 'England Versus Australia' for the *Illustrated Times*: 'Daughters Here. Sons there', 2, 423 (25 April 1863), p. 297. 'Governesses Here; Want of Governesses There', 2, 429, (6 June 1863), p. 393. 'Needlewomen here. A Modiste There', 3, 430, (13 June 1863), p. 404. 'Servants Here; Servants There, 3, 444 (19 September 1863), p. 185. 'Partners Here. Partners There', 3, 455 (5 December 1863), p. 361. 'Dress Circle Here. Dress Circle There.' *Illustrated Times,* 3, 458 (26 December 1863), p. 411. 'A Spinster Here. A Bachelor There', 4, 461 (16 January 1864), p. 45. Florence and Adelaide Claxton, 'The Young Gentleman's New Year's Dream' and 'The Young Lady's New Year's Dream' *London Society*, 2 (The Christmas Edition 1862, pp. 90-1. Florence Claxton, 'Life of an Old Bachelor' and 'Life of an Old Maid', now lost, reviewed in 'The Third Annual Exhibition of the Society of Female Artists', *EWJ*, 3, 13 (March 1859), p. 54.

[17] Florence Claxton, 'Partners Here. Partners There' *Illustrated Times*, 3, 455 (5 December 1863), p. 361.

[18] 'Florence Claxton b. c. 1838 [*sic*]', Design & Art Australia Online <https://www.daao.org.au/bio/florence-claxton/biography/> [accessed August 2020].

Figure 3. Florence Claxton, 'England versus Australia: Partners Here, Partners There', *Illustrated Times,* 3, 455 (5 December 1863), p. 361 <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000357/18631205/018/0009> [accessed June 2022] © British Newspaper Archive

The technique of 'pairing' depends on the audience linking and interpreting ideas, expressed in each image, across the pair. Framed ekphrastic paintings, on the ballroom walls of 'England' (Figure 3, top image) and 'Australia,' (Figure 3, lower image) are respectively captioned 'We're a Band of Brothers!' and (lisping 'r') 'Wobinson Cwuso'. The intertextual titles of both facetiously purloin literary references to masculine bravery and fortitude, now applied to women engaged in the banal recreation of a ball.[19] Van Remoortel has observed that '[A]stute satire on hot topics become one of the Claxtons' [sisters'] trademarks.'[20] While in this period the use of intertexts is not unique to Claxton, satirical intertextual play is a distinctive and typical characteristic within this subset of Claxton's *oeuvre.*[21] (The encouragement provided to the viewer to read the intertext is particularly evident in Claxton's image 'A Bachelor There' in the *Illustrated Times* of 1864.[22] The text of the title

[19] 'Band of Brothers', a reference to William Shakespeare's *Henry V* (*c.* 1599). 'Wobinson Cwuso', a reference to Jonathan Swift's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).
[20] Van Remoortel, *Women*, p. 101.
[21] Examples of other artists' use of intertexts include the faithful record of a scene in William Scott Bell's painting, *Shelley's Grave* (1873) and to enhance realism/reinforce theme in Rebecca Solomon's illustration, *The Friend in Need* (1859), *Illustrated London News,* 34, 970 (23 April 1859), p. 400. Many of Claxton's illustrations did not include intertexts. See 'The Artist at the Flower-Shows: – No.1 Rival Roses', *London Society*, 2 (July 1862), unnumbered page opposite p. 30. However, when working in a satirical mode Florence Claxton frequently used intertexts. The position and size of the intertext ("Oh Deliver Us") in 'London Societies. No. I.', *London Society,* 1, (April 1862), verso p. 209 suggests, in its content, miniscule proportion, and remote location in the bottom left-hand corner, that the inclusion of such detail was a mischievous and irresistible impulse.
[22] Florence Claxton, 'A Bachelor There', *Illustrated Times*, (16 January 1864), p. 45.

and author, recorded on the cover of a book shown discarded on the ground, has been rotated by 180 degrees. The effect of this alteration – which would make the title and author either upside down on the front cover or, counterintuitively, on the back cover for the 'bachelor' reader shown within the image – is ease of reading for the audience/viewer of the *Illustrated Times.*)

In other graphic illustrations, such as Figures 4, 5, and 6, Claxton adopted a different strategy. In such presentations – comparable with the 'panel' format of modern graphic novels – multiple constituent 'episodes', each contributing towards an overall concept, were contained within one frame.[23] These images demonstrate Claxton's careful presentation of a framing structure appropriate to the image's theme, and her versatility in adapting the organisation of incidents to reflect the subject matter. In *Christmas in Leap Year* (1860), again satirising anxieties over the male 'shortage' revealed by the demographics of the 1851 census, the supports of a romantic bower frame incidents across a century in which men are (ironically) hunted to extinction by rapacious women seeking husbands.

[23] *OED*, 'panel': 12 (e) A (captioned) drawing in a cartoon or comic strip, typically surrounded by a rectangular border, and usually forming part of a sequence.

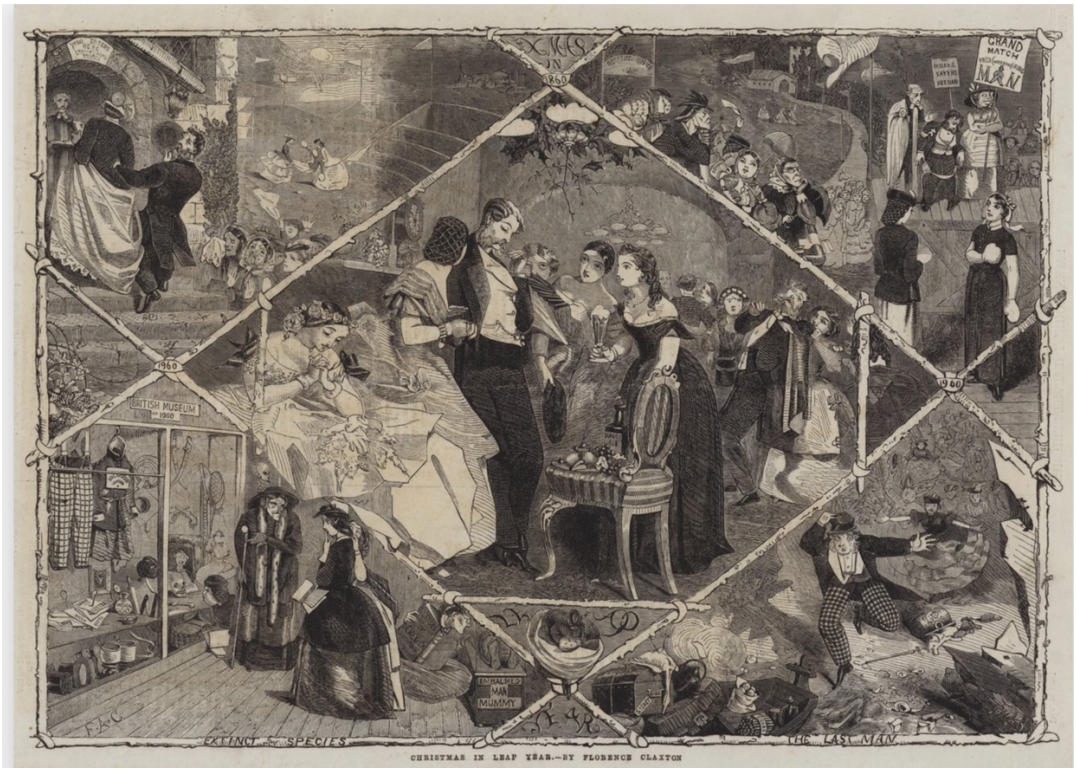



Figure 4. Claxton, 'Christmas in Leap Year', *London Illustrated News*, Christmas Supplement, 37, 1065-66 (22 December 1860), p. 606, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

In 'The Young Gentleman's New Year's Dream', to accompany a poem of the same title, a surreal mélange of incidents conveys the disorientation and conflation of fantasy and horror that can accompany a dream-like state. A final example satirises consumer culture (Figure 6, 'March: Ye Spring Fashions'); an illustration that has been deftly analysed by Van Remoortel. Tumbling crinolined fashion votaries, from the summit of French haute couture, are readied to dispense sartorial wisdom and goods into the hands of eagerly anticipating English customers. Framing curtains and staircase, and the simulation of a journal's frontispiece, all register aspects of public display implicit in fashion and ladies' magazines.[24]

[24] See Van Remoortel, *Women,* pp. 102-6.


Figure 5. Florence Claxton, 'The Young Gentleman's Dream', *London Society*, (Christmas Edition), 2, (1862), pp. 90-91, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library


Figure 6. Florence Claxton, 'March: Ye Spring Fashions', *London Society*, 1 (March 1862), p. 107, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Such calculated and complex interweaving of episodes within a coherent narrative is another typical characteristic of Claxton's wider oeuvre as a graphic artist. This background as an illustrator may, posits Cherry, account for the reworking of *WW* in:

> the composite imagery of contemporary prints and comic drawings which could include a quite extraordinary concatenation of incidents, all in varying ways contributing to a common theme or subject: the subtitle *A Medley* may be indicative in this respect.[25]

The significance of Cherry's observation, and the examples provided in Figures 4, 5, and 6, is that the inclusion of multiple 'episodes' apparent in *WW* conforms with Claxton's wider *oeuvre*, and this genre was characterised by a coherent theme. (In relation to earlier scholarship relating to this painting, Cherry cannot not identify a 'common theme or subject' while the final sentence of

[25] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 43.

Yeldham's, 'Work', concludes: 'Among her 65 exhibited works, *WW* is her most daring and most ambitious. It is also the most ambitious known painting by any artist on the *theme of woman's work* [my emphasis].' Yeldham's article is an exploration of the ideas informing the representations and does not, beyond this one sentence, consider a detailed coherent theme (that links all the representations) or how it might be working in *WW*.)[26]

Bodichon's use of a formula of 'issue and solution'

Crucial to this essay's argument of a coherent theme is the context provided by Bodichon's political activism. Orchestrating and participating in strategies to advance women's issues Bodichon was *the* pivotal figure in the formation of a campaigning group of women known as the 'Langham Place circle.'[27] Bodichon produced her own articles as pamphlets and was central to the creation and running of the *EWJ*, spearheading advocacy of (chiefly middle-class) women's rights. An early review of the *EWJ* noted Bodichon's role and placed her on an equal footing with Parkes, Bodichon's close friend since childhood and one of the journal's first editors: 'Miss Barbara Leigh Smith and Miss Bessie Rayner Parkes publish at the *English Woman's Journal* Office.'[28] In fact, along with Parkes, Bodichon was the journal's founder and, via the latter's sister, chief shareholder and financial backer. Over its short-lived run from 1858 to 1864 Bodichon 'remained a very active presence.'[29]

The *EWJ* was concerned with every aspect of 'woman's work': how to advance opportunities, improve wages, and sway public opinion in favour of women's interests. These ambitions are exemplified in an 1860 article by the second chief editor and writer, Matilda Mary Hays. Hays imagines a visit by Mrs Grundy, a personification of priggishness and excessive concern for

[26] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 43 and Yeldham's, 'Work', p. 96.
[27] Jane Rendall, 'Langham Place group (*act.* 1857–1866)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press); online edition, (January 2005) < https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-93708?rskey=MwzPwC&result=1> [accessed May 2020].
[28] 'The English Woman's Journal', *Saturday Review*, 5, 128 (10 April 1858), p. 369.
[29] Jim Mussell, 'English Woman's Journal (1858-1864)' < https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html> [accessed September 2020].

conventional proprieties, to articulate the prejudice under which the journal perceived itself to be labouring.[30] Starting at the journal's premises in Langham Place the tour's destination was 'the first fruits of our [*EWJ*] labours', the nearby Victoria Press.[31] Hays reveals the journal's concern with the topic of female employment by supplying Mrs Grundy with the following protest:

> "I don't see why it [the Victoria Press] could not have been done just as well without the 'English Woman's Journal' as with it," said the provoking old lady; "it is clearly woman's work." "Clearly woman's work," she kept reiterating in a dogmatic knock-one-down tone that sent the Journal, editors and all, to the right about, as rather standing in the way of legitimate and rational employment for women, than helping by all means in their power to promote it.
> "Clearly woman's work, and if you want me to say more in favor [*sic*] of your pet journal you must show me something very different from this."[32]

Mrs Grundy's grudging epiphany, '*clearly* woman's work [my emphasis],' is that the work of compositors now appears to be considered as suitable employment for women. Her rejection of the role of the *EWJ* in her altered opinion is indicative of the opposite: the *EWJ* was concerned with influencing public perception of what exactly constituted 'woman's work'. The significance of this insight is that it suggests that a deliberate policy was being pursued by the *EWJ*. In order to advance professional opportunities for women the *EWJ* was redefining conventional notions.

When Emily Faithfull, women's rights activist and member of the Langham Place circle, reported on the work of the Victoria Press in the *EWJ* (the content of a speech given at the 1860 Glasgow meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences [hereafter NAPSS]) she pushed back the boundaries of conservative ideas of what constituted 'woman's work': 'if women were properly trained, their physical powers would be singularly adapted to fit them for becoming compositors'.[33] Bodichon's 1857 pamphlet, *Women and Work* [hereafter *Women*], suggested a range of occupations that included watchmakers, lecturers for mechanics' institutions, and accountants.[34] Parkes's report in the

---

[30] See 'Grundy, Mrs.', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ed. by Hugh Chisholm, 12, 11th edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 641.
[31] M. M. H., 'A Ramble with Mrs. Grundy: A Visit to the Victoria Printing Press', *EWJ,* 5, 28 (June 1860), p. 269.
[32] H., 'Ramble', *EWJ*, (June 1860), p. 272.
[33] Emily Faithfull, 'Victoria Press: A Paper read at the Glasgow Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences' to the *EWJ*, 6, 32 (October 1860), p. 122.
[34] Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Women and Work* (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1857), p. 16. Also, Maria S. Rye, 'Emigration of Educated Women: A Paper read at the Social Science Congress in Dublin 1861' (London: Emily Faithfull & Co., Victoria Press, *c.* 1861), pp. 1-15.

*EWJ* of 'A Year's Experience in Woman's Work' (also, like Hays' talk on the Victoria Press, given at the 1860 Meeting of NAPSS) likewise suggested multiple opportunities.[35] For less educated 'working -class' women: working the telegraph, printing, law-copying, and managing sewing machines. For educated middle-class women: the moral superintendence of women confined to charitable, industrial, penal, and reformatory establishments and, as discussed below, the same relationship to women emigrants.[36] Bodichon's radical pamphlet *Women* made the confident assertion:

> we hear cries that the world is going wrong for want of women, that moral progress cannot be made without their help; that Science wants the light of their delicate perceptions; that Moral Philosophy wants the light of their peculiar point of view; Political Economy, their directness of judgement and sympathy with the commonalty; Government, the help of their power of organizing; and Philanthropy, their delicate tact. Hospitals must have them, asserts one; Watches must be made by them, cries another; Workhouse, Prisons, Schools, Reformatories, Penitentiaries, Sanitoriums, are going to rack and ruin for want of them; Medicine needs them, the Church calls for them, the Arts and Manufactures invite them.[37]

The necessity for women to find work to support themselves, and the need for women expressed in certain quarters, was used by Bodichon to justify her argument for the redefinition of 'feminine' professions, thus propelling women into, what Parkes described as, '*woman's work* in the world [my emphasis].'[38]

The journal's efforts in assisting women's search for employment were not simply restricted to advice. Bodichon, along with others, founded an employment agency that ran from the offices of the *EWJ* and 'used its wrappers to advertise vacancies and those looking for work'.[39] The journal's associated venture, the Victoria Press, employed thirteen women compositors and a woman manager.[40] It was, as Mrs Grundy (in actuality editor Hays) observed, '*one* of the *practical* results of your 'English Woman's Journal' [my emphasis].'[41]

---

[35] See also, 'T*he 'Saturday Review' and the 'English Woman's Journal': The Reviewer Reviewed', EWJ,* 1, 3 (May 1858), p. 204.
[36] Bessie Rayner Parkes, 'A Year's Experience in Woman's Work', *EWJ*, 6, 32 (October 1860), pp.112-21.
[37] Bodichon, *Women*, p. 5.
[38] Parkes, 'Experience', *EWJ,* (October 1860), p. 121.
[39] Mussell, '*EWJ*' < https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html> [accessed September 2020].
[40] H., 'Ramble', *EWJ,* (June 1860), p. 269.
[41] Ibid., p. 272.

Days before the launch of the *EWJ* in 1858 an advertisement appeared in the *Leader*:

> March 1st will be issued the First Number of this New Monthly Magazine. The present employments of women, both manual and intellectual, the best mode of judiciously extending the sphere of such employments, and the laws affecting the property and condition of the sex, will form prominent subjects for discussion in its pages.[42]

This document, effectively a manifesto, implicitly articulates the journal's ethos of identifying an issue (e.g., the laws affecting the property and condition of the sex) and its solution (the best mode of judiciously extending the sphere of [woman's] employments). This same formula is explicitly articulated in an *EWJ* article from 1859, 'On the of a Professional Life by Women': 'There yet remain for us to consider the chief obstacles which meet a woman desirous of adopting any professional career, and the best way of helping her to overcome them.'[43] Parkes clearly judged this point to be significant as she reiterated the same idea within the article:

> True to our invariable aim of connecting this Journal with every practical movement arising out of our special interests, we do propose to consider what is being done by young women in various professional departments; what are the chief difficulties which beset them in private and in public life, and in what way help may best be bestowed.[44]

The 'issue and solution' formula was not simply a guiding principle, it was a methodology for articulating and marshalling proto-feminist ideas.

An 1859 *EWJ* article jointly prepared by Bodichon and Parkes titled 'The Market for Educated Female Labour,' [hereafter 'Market'] and later presented by Parkes at NAPSS, tackled multiple topics including the overstocked 'governess market'. An emotional appeal was made by presenting ten very brief and tragic case studies of governesses. (On reading this section George Eliot observed 'I can't help crying over the stories of the superannuated governesses.')[45] However, the greater part of the piece was a rational argument, supported by reams of statistics. Considering the range of factors that propelled former 'gentlewomen' towards becoming governesses, Parkes noted that 'deplorable destitution' arose when 'fathers fail and brothers speculate every day, and the orphan nephews and

---

[42] 'The Englishwoman's Journal', *Leader*, 19, 413 (20 February 1858), p. 192.
[43] 'On the Adoption of Professional Life by Women', *EWJ*, 2, 7 (September 1858), p. 8.
[44] Ibid., p. 1.
[45] George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) to Sara Hennell (2 March 1858) in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954-1978), II, p. 438.

nieces are left to the unmarried as a legacy from the beloved dead.'[46] Parkes then provided a practical solution addressing and analysing the considerations that resulted in women entering into an already oversubscribed profession:

> Surely then in a country where the chances of provisions for women are so frightfully uncertain, parents in the middle classes ought, -
> Firstly, to train their daughter to some useful art, however humble:
> Secondly, to repress all desire of forcing them into tuition, because it is more "genteel:"
> Thirdly, to insure their lives when they cannot lay by money for their female children.[47]

This article's emphasis on the provision of data, and its analysis, hints that the journal (and Bodichon) were sensitive to the generally accepted notion of women as emotional and instinctive as opposed to rational and intellectual.[48] As an edition of the *National Review* in 1858 noted: 'Women indulge their feelings too much. They always were in danger of that; but now they ponder upon them'.[49] The structure of 'issue and solution,' as journalistic template and intellectual approach, may owe a debt to this same sensibility.

In June 1861 Claxton appears to have adopted a marketing strategy to advertise prints of the unsold *WW*. [50] Under the heading, 'Social Science, Illustrated', nine advertisements appeared between June and September in the *London City Press*.[51] In modern terminology Claxton 'rebranded' the painting, widening its appeal through its newly acquired association with NAPSS and, in turn, with Bodichon's enterprises. Founded in 1857, the chiefly male NAPSS was created to advance a wide range of social issues that included penal reform and public health. Its attention to the cause of women's employment led to an affiliation, in December 1860, with the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women

---

[46] B. R. P., 'The Market for Educated Female Labour: A Paper read at the meeting of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Bradford, 1859', *EWJ*, 4, 21 (November 1859), pp. 148-9.
[47] P., 'Market', *EWJ*, (November 1859), p. 149.
[48] See, '*Reviewer Reviewed*', *EWJ*, (May 1858), pp. 201-4.
[49] 'Woman', *National Review*, 7 (October 1858), p. 347.
[50] Catalogue of the Portland Gallery (1861), 200.B.235, Victoria and Albert Museum, London p. 5: 'It is understood that the prices do not include copyright'.
[51] 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press*, 4, 210 (22 June 1861), p. 6. *London City Press,* 4, 211 (6 July 1861), p. 6. *London City Press*, 4, 212, (20 July 1861), p. 6. *London City Press*, 5, 213 (27 July 1861), p. 6. , *London City Press,* 5, 215 (10 August 1861), p. 6. *London City Press*, 6, 216 (17 August 1861), p. 6. *London City Press*, 6, 217 (24 August 1861), p. 6. *London City Press*, 6, 218 (31 August 1861), p. 6. *London City Press*, 6, 220 (14 September 1861), p. 6. Yeldham, 'Work' p. 89 notes how the choice of new title linked the painting to NAPSS and SPEW, and the nature of the inter-relationships. However, Yeldham is not concerned, as the current study is, with how these factors demonstrate an engagement with Bodichon's projects.

[hereafter SPEW].[52] SPEW, the employment agency run from the offices of the *EWJ*, was founded by Bodichon, along with fellow journal contributors, activist Jessie Boucherette and poet Adelaide Anne Proctor. Isa Craig, staff member and contributor to the *EWJ* was, at the same time, the (first woman) secretary of the affiliated NAPSS.[53] This particular choice of title to advertise *WW* in the *London City Press* demonstrates that Claxton had some awareness of the web, appeal, and subject of Bodichon's political projects around 1861.[54]

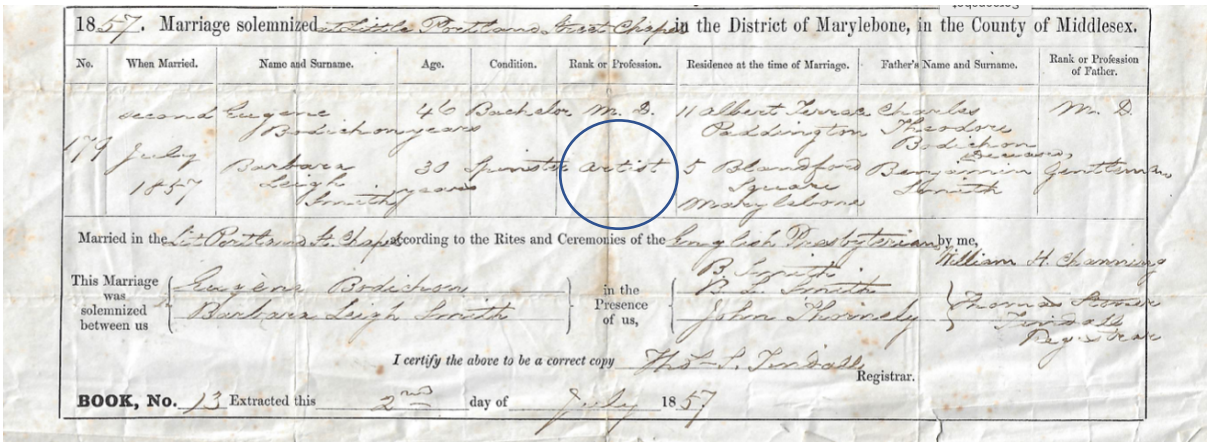
As Jim Mussell notes, the '*English Woman's Journal* became the official organ of the Association [NAPSS], and Parkes used its Annual Conventions as a means of gaining subscribers' for the *EWJ*.[55] The interweaving relationships between journal and Association had wider goals than the former simply advertising upcoming Conventions, reporting NAPSS successes in glowing terms, and swelling the rolls of *EWJ* subscribers.[56] When, in 1859, Parkes published in the *EWJ* the content of the speech titled 'Market', the article's heading included an acknowledgment: 'in the preparation of this paper, I was greatly assisted by my friend Barbara Leigh Smith, (Mrs. Bodichon)'.[57] Claxton's rebranding, consciously linking *WW* to NAPSS and by implication SPEW, effectively harnessed the image to contemporary women's political activism and (implicitly) the figure of Bodichon.[58]

Bodichon: proto-feminist and artist

As Bodichon's great friend Parkes wrote in her obituary, Bodichon 'started with certain great advantages'.[59] The daughter of radical MP Benjamin Smith Bodichon was born into 'a Liberal

[52] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 90. Yeldham does note that Claxton advertised the painting in the *London City Press*, observing that 'the categorization harnessed the image to the cause for middle-class employment'. However, this is dealt with in one sentence and does not draw out the additional detailed links noted above.
[53] Mussell, '*EWJ*' < https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html> [accessed September 2020].
[54] See Figure 66 for further evidence of Claxton's understanding of 'Social Science'.
[55] Mussell, '*EWJ*' < https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html> [accessed September 2020] and 'Social Science', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), pp. 122-5.
[56] 'Social Science', *EWJ*, (October 1858). pp. 122-5.
[57] P., 'Market', *EWJ*, (November 1859), p. 145.
[58] This point, without the reference to Bodichon, is also made by Yeldham, 'Work', p. 89.
[59] Belloc, 'Bodichon', *Review*, (15 July 1891), p. 145.

reforming dynasty, members of the nineteenth-century 'intellectual aristocracy''.[60] This 'birth-right' provided her with an education in politics and, once adult and active in women's issues, a network of ready-made contacts. While much of her philanthropic energy was absorbed in advancing the position of women, Bodichon, and contemporary society, acknowledged the significance of her artistic career. Her marriage certificate from 1857, shown in Figure 7, records 'artist' in the circled field of 'Rank or Profession.'[61]


18 57. Marriage solemnized at Little Portland Street Chapel in the District of Marylebone, in the County of Middlesex.

| No. | When Married. | Name and Surname. | Age. | Condition. | Rank or Profession. | Residence at the time of Marriage. | Father's Name and Surname. | Rank or Profession of Father. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 179 | second July 1857 | Eugene Bodichon | 46 years | Bachelor | M. D. | 11 Albert Terrace Paddington | Theodore Bodichon | M. D. |
| | | Barbara Leigh Smith | 30 years | Spinster | artist | 5 Blandford Square | Benjamin Smith | Gentleman |

Married in the Little Portland St. Chapel according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Eng. Ch. Presbyterian by me, William H. Channing

This Marriage was solemnized between us: Eugène Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith

in the Presence of us: B. Leigh Smith, John Thornely

I certify the above to be a correct copy — Registrar.

BOOK, No. 13 Extracted this 2nd day of July 1857

Figure 7. Copy marriage certificate of Barbara Leigh Smith and Eugene Bodichon, 1857-07-02
GCPP Bodichon 6/1Girton College, Cambridge © by kind permission of Girton College

Bodichon pursued formal studies with Francis Cary and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot to fulfill her youthful ambition to be a professional landscape artist.[62] She was a member of the Society for Female Artists and regularly exhibited for her entire working life, in the Dudley Gallery, Ernest Gambart's French Gallery, and at the prestigious Royal Academy Summer Exhibition.[63] Bodichon's landscapes recorded both the destinations of her extensive travels and her native Sussex, a location with which she retained a life-long connection. Despite a stroke rendering her disabled for fourteen years, her death was widely reported in 1891 noting her artistic, political and philanthropic achievements.[64] An obituary in the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* reflected on the 'originality and imaginativeness' of her works

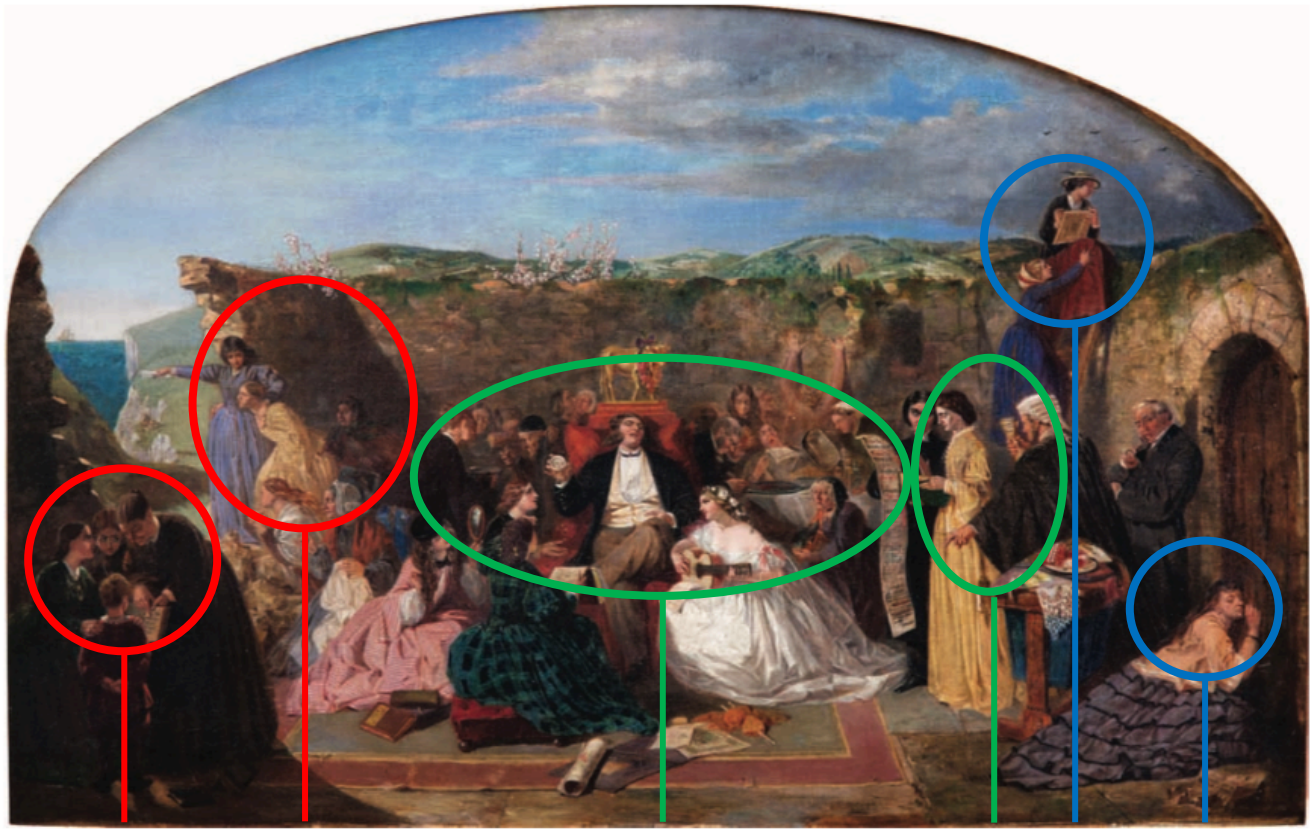
[60] Hirsch, 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press); online edn. (January 2004) < https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2755?rskey=HQRfaK&result=2> [January 2021].
[61] Girton, GCPP Bodichon, GB 271.
[62] See Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. 39 and p. 211; art classes at Bedford College (London) and the Paris studio of Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot.
[63] 'Scraps from Last Night's Papers: From the Pall Mall Gazette', *Bristol Times and Mirror,* 120, 8277 (13 June 1891), p. 3 and 'The Society of Female Artists', *EWJ,* 1, 3 (May 1858), pp. 206-7.
[64] 'Death of Madame Bodichon', *Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer*, 2749 (13 June 1891), p. 7.

and the 'persistent study' that 'procured for her a foremost position amongst women artists'.[65] As Parkes observed, 'except in art [...] she was absolutely devoid of personal ambition.'[66]

*'Governesses' and 'Emigration'*

'Governesses' and 'Emigration': the portrayal of Victorian governesses

Even at first glance the setting of *WW* conveys a sense of its overall complexity. The painting's centre appears to represent a traditional furnished domestic interior from the mid-Victorian period. However, as the viewer's attention ranges to the background, this conception disintegrates as the



(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)

Figure 8. Claxton, "*Woman's Work*" © *The British Art Journal,* 20, 3 (Winter 2019-20)

[65] 'Death of Madame Bodichon', *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 1753, 3rd edn. (13 June 1891), p. 4.
[66] Bessie Rayner Parkes Belloc, *A Passing World* (London: Ward & Downey, 1897), p. 21.

interior is framed by a high ruined wall open to the elements. The wall in turn gives way to sky, while sea and pastoral landscape bound the wall on the left and right respectively.

Minutely detailed characters crowd the entire scene, thirty-four in total, arranged in groupings that appear to reflect a wide range of themes relating to women: domesticity, lost virtue, independence, the plight of governesses, and the hope offered by emigration. Figure 8 shows labels applied to these groups using the descriptions found in the catalogue text. These are examined below as three groupings of pairs: (1) and (2), respectively, the 'Governesses' and 'Emigration'; (3) and (4), respectively, the 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright female'; (5) and (6), respectively the 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists'.

Contemporary critics of *WW* were in no doubt that the painting included representations of governesses and that their portrayal reflected the contemporary perception of an overcrowded 'governess-market'.[67] A review of *WW* in *Illustrated Times* reproduced the catalogue explication that accompanied the painting at exhibition. In multiple places the newspaper added to this its own commentary, as shown here in italics:

> Three governesses in the foreground, ignorant, apparently, of the opening behind them, are quarrelling over one child. *(An excellent idea! There are at present more governesses in England than there are children to be taught by them)*.'[68]

The *EWJ* – reflecting an occasional bias in favour of specifically middle-class concerns – devoted the first article of its first edition (March 1858) to the 'Profession of the Teacher'. This article asserted that teaching was the one profession currently open to educated middle-class women required to earn their own living. The perception of an overcrowded market described by the *EWJ* reflects the level of public debate on the issue and its appreciation by an exclusive and self-selecting audience of journal editors, contributors, and readers. As the *EWJ* commented:

> while *all* our lady readers have received instruction from some class of governess, there is probably not one who has not also some relative or cherished friend either actually engaged in teaching, or having formerly been so engaged.[69]

---

[67] Kathryn Hughes, 'The Victorian Governess' (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), p. 147.
[68] 'Institution', *Illustrated Times,* (April 1861), p. 273.
[69] 'The Profession of the Teacher', *EWJ*, 1,1 (March 1858), p. 1.

The widely circulated iconography of the mid-Victorian period portrayed the governess as an isolated and distressed gentlewoman. Through the elements of isolation, bereavement, inclement weather, and physical beauty combined with frailty, typical images such as those by Adelaide Claxton and Richard Redgrave, shown in Figures 9 and 10 respectively, encouraged a generalised perception of pathos. These distinctive signifiers had become naturalised expectations in a genre that the *Saturday Review* of 1858 noted as 'hackneyed'. The *Review* continued to observe that 'narratives of their miseries and indignities' invariably showed governesses that were 'very pretty, very learned, very interesting,


Figure 9. Adelaide Claxton, 'The Daily Governess', *London Society*, 1 (June 1862), p. 433, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian

Figure 10. Richard Redgrave, *The Governess* (1844), oil, 71.1 x 91.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Victoria and Albert Museum

and very ill-used'.[70] Writing in *Punch* using the nom de plume Jack Easel, the President of the Royal Academy Sir Charles Eastlake reviewed the paintings of that institution's 1860 Summer exhibition. His comments on Emily Mary Osborn's *The Governess* (1860) imply that the thematic treatment of the subject might be overworked, '*The Governess* (405) [the painting's catalogue number] tells its story very

[70] 'The Claims of Governesses', *Saturday Review,* 5, 118 (30 Jan 1858), p. 110.

well – perhaps a little too loudly.'[71] Notwithstanding, from the early Victorian period the subject typically received a sympathetic novelistic treatment in the mass of works taking the governess as their subject.[72] The same positive attitude is apparent in the reports of the *EWJ* on the progress of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, a philanthropic foundation (created in 1841) to relieve the suffering of aged indigent governesses.[73]

In *The Daily Governess* and *The Governess* these same ideas (beauty conflated with suffering, frailty and vulnerability) are central to the images' emotional appeal thereby generating sympathy for a marginalised character.[74] While *WW* does elicit a degree of sympathy in its portrayal of a crowded governess-market, the representations of these women convey their experience of the complex emotions of tension, anxiety, and fear. Figure 11 shows the governess farthest left with both hands placed on either side of the child's shoulders in a gesture simultaneously proprietorial and protective.

Figure 11. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

[71] Jack Easel (Charles Eastlake), 'The Royal Academy', *Punch*, 38 (16 June 1860), p. 247.
[72] See Charlotte Brontë's eponymous protagonist in *Jane Eyre* (1847), and Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* (1847).
[73] See 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), pp. 1-13.
[74] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 92. Yeldham, considering the governesses portrayed in *WW*, observes that such 'realistic, unsentimental, depictions of a middle-aged' governesses 'were new.' In fact, a realistic depiction of a middle-aged governess *had* appeared in Emily Mary Osborn's 1856 oil painting *Home Thoughts.*

Her arms are held gently at right angles, and the boy also appears relaxed – his arms are clasped behind at the small of his back, his shoulders unclenched. The governess' upturned face appears less intent on the lesson than a desire to catch the attention of the woman on the farthest right. These placid postures contrast sharply with the latter figure, a woman entirely absorbed in the lesson. Her stern, almost ferocious, concentration is funnelled into the sharply pointed finger of her right hand. This woman's overall appearance is intense almost to the point of aggression. Bending over the child's book this woman's height would, when fully erect, dwarf the surrounding figures. These aspects, along with her comparative bulk, enhance the impression that her presence is menacing. The composition's arrangement of figures heightens a sense of overcrowding by the inclusion of a third woman, reduced to a face. Although facing the viewer, her prominent eyes are focused on the dominant governess in a gesture that further focuses the viewer's attention on that governess and her looming presence. This foregrounded crowded circle of figures, and the ratio of adults to child, illustrates a well-documented problem acknowledged in the *EWJ* (as the first article of the first edition), 'the overcrowding of the Profession of the Teacher.'[75]

One of Claxton's images for the *Illustrated Times* of 1863 accompanied an article describing the anguish felt by many governesses competing for employment:

> I do not envy the trial of the poor girl who is ushered into this crowd of candidates. They are all so sorely pressed and hopeful, how can they help feeling jealous? They look into each other's faces almost spitefully.

And, when the successful candidate is announced, the rejected governesses:

> rise up as quickly as a class dismissed from lessons, and, and with the anger of disappointment showing savagely on their faces, hurry away to answer the next advertisement, and, most likely, undergo the same sorrow.[76]

The catalogue text of *WW* explicitly describes the governesses' professional rivalry: the women are '*quarrelling* over one child [my emphasis].'[77]

---

[75] 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), pp. 1-13. In this article the terms 'teacher' and governess are synonymous. See also A. M., 'Here and There. Wanted, a Governess', *Illustrated Times*, 2, 429 (6 June 1863) 392-4.
[76] A. M., 'Here and There', *Illustrated Times*, (6 June 1863), p. 394.
[77] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.

When compared to conventional tropes of Christian resignation, found in examples such as Redgrave's *Governess,* the wording on the child's book in *WW* conveys a subtle, yet potentially aggressive concealment of anguish. Victorian children's reading books, such as *The History of an Apple Pie* (1850), shown in Figure 12, used simple wordplay appropriate to a youthful audience: 'B bit it, C cried for it'. [78]


Figure 12. *The History of an Apple Pie* (London: L. J. Marks, 1850), unnumbered page, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

The governesses' four-word lesson in *WW* reads, 'BREAD BROT PANIS PAIN'. (The alliteration, incidentally, encouraging a subliminal recognition of pairs.) As harsh, generally monosyllabic, one-word alliterations, all focused on life's chief necessity, it signals the distress of governesses in a highly competitive market. However, the visual denotation of a lesson of single words is further complicated by sophisticated thematic wordplay. The sequence of an English, German, and Latin version of the same word suggests, in the projection of this pattern, the final iteration as French. For that portion of the audience unwilling to consider the intertext in a wider context, the lesson remains suitably anodyne, appropriate for the pupil to whom it is presented. However, the final word might equally

[78] *The History of an Apple Pie* (London: J. L. Marks, 1850), unnumbered page.

be read in English with meanings for an audience willing to perceive in the lesson's wording an allegory of the invidious position into which some governesses were placed. On one level it registers suffering. Beyond this is an idea suggested by the choice of a word whose English meaning might easily, if necessary, be disavowed by asservating to the French meaning. While wishing their suffering to be acknowledged, the scarcity of employment meant that governesses needed be able to distance themselves from conclusions that might prove unwelcome to their employer. The figure most closely associated with the lesson, her finger placed on the text, is the dominant governess. Her huge presence, dark clothing, height, and threatening gesture map a further layer to the camouflaged emotion: concealed anger. The overall effect of this scene's conflicting passive and aggressive signals, reinforced by aligning the vulnerable child's perspective with viewer's, is to defamiliarise audience expectations.

Rather than relying on the naturalised and instinctive emotional reflex associated with paintings such as Redgrave's *The Governess,* in *WW* the viewer is encouraged to reflect more deeply in order to decode a complex representation. This interpretation has parallels with the acknowledgment in the *EWJ* that resolving the issue of the 'governess market' required intelligence as well as emotion. (This emphasis, that intelligence should be allied to emotion, is a recurring theme within the journal):[79]

> there is perhaps no social reform for which the time is so ripe, or which English men and woman would so eagerly carry out, as any reasonable plan for getting rid of this particular form of destitution, arising in great measure from the overcrowding of the Profession of the Teacher. To the attainment of this end two distinct modes of action are available, with a heavy penalty on the neglect of *either.* We must relieve existing needs, and if possible prevent their recurrence; - the one course demands the best sympathies of the heart, the other the *best exertions of the intellect* [my emphasis].[80]

This focus on an intellectual engagement parallels the demands that *WW* placed on viewers in presenting such unconventional images of governesses.

[79] See L.N., 'Needlewomen', *EWJ*, (June 1860), p. 256.
[80] 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), p. 2.

At the feet of the dominant governess lies a book with the title 'LES RUDIMENTS: TOUS LES CHOSES'.[81] Multiple adverts placed both by employers and by governesses seeking positions in March 1861, the month *WW* was first exhibited, demonstrate that for children under twelve the required knowledge was indeed 'the basics': English, French, Music, and Drawing.[82] Notwithstanding these simple requirements, specific training for governesses was rare.[83] Queen's College (London), founded in 1848 'to provide training to governesses and schoolteachers' was a rare exception.[84] Bodichon took up the subject of governess training, using the 'issue and solution' formula, in a letter '*To the Editor of the English Woman's Journal*: Apropos of the Governess Question':

> Allow me to remark that is not quite fair to lay all the blame of the hardships and discomforts under which governesses suffer upon their employers. A great part of the evil consists in the fact that not ten in a hundred governesses are at all fit for the work which they have undertaken, or rather which they are driven by dire necessity to undertake, and have therefore placed themselves in a false position, and are often treated with something like contempt, because they profess to teach what they do not know. Until women who go out to teach are trained for the work of teaching, and until there are fewer governesses in the market, governesses will be ill paid and ill treated.[85]

The painting's detail of the apparently discarded and disregarded subject training manual/book suggests a cavalier attitude on the governesses' part towards the basic knowledge necessary for their employment. This interpretation accords with Bodichon's own contention, that some governesses professed 'to teach what they do not know'. The painting's representation, and Bodichon's forthright opinions, ran counter to the more typical attitudes of the Victorian public in unquestioning support and sympathy for the exploited governess. Contemporary discourses on the subject of governesses – journals, newspapers, novels, and paintings – were typically highly critical of their employers, perceived as merciless and uncaring. Emily Mary Osborn's painting *The Governess* (1860) portrays, in unsparing terms, an imbalanced relationship between governess and employer. In contrast, both *WW* and Bodichon suggested that the governess had some responsibility and culpability for their plight.

---

[81] 'The Basics: All subjects'.
[82] See 'A Young Person wishes for a Situation', *The Times*, 23885 (20 March 1861), p. 3.
[83] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 92.
[84] Helena Wojtczak, 'The Beginnings of Higher Education for Women', < https://historyofwomen.org/queensbed.html> [accessed October 2020]. Yeldham notes the same training opportunity, 'Work', p. 97.
[85] B. L. S. Bodichon, 'To the Editor of the English Woman's Journal: Apropos of the Governess Question', *EWJ*, 4, 22 (December 1859), p. 285.

The 'Governesses' and 'Emigration': the portrayal of emigration

In a brief note Yeldham has observed, based on the painting's portrayal of crowding, a link between the governesses and the group of women looking out to sea: the 'idea of emigration as a solution to the problem of an overstocked female labour market'.[86] The current work proposes that this is just one element of a pattern of 'issue and solution' groups that encompasses all the composition's figures. In the catalogue, the groups of 'Emigration' and 'Governesses' are linked by their descriptions in sequential sentences, and the idea that the answer to the governesses' predicament lies in the 'breach' created by Emigration:

> A wide breach has been made in the ancient wall of Custom and Prejudice by Progress – Emigration – who points out across the ocean. Three governesses, seen in the foreground, ignorant apparently of the opening behind them, are quarrelling over one child.[87]

The (interchangeable) phrase 'custom and prejudice,' denoting an unquestioning adherence to the status quo interweaved with, and mutually reinforced by, discrimination had been associated with women's rights at least since the eighteenth century.[88] It appeared in an *EWJ* article describing a perception of the source for women's current oppression: 'custom and prejudice are at work to exclude us from earning a living: here we contend, and will not cease to contend, is a great evil.'[89]

In *WW,* this concept has been visually represented as a defensive structure described in the catalogue as the 'ancient wall of Custom and Prejudice.' Depending on context, and the wall's proximate relationship to different elements of the composition, this structure might be interpreted in a variety of ways. As a forbidding, solid, and insurmountable defence, it defines the limits for the women seated on the rug as purely domestic. For the seated artist atop the wall and the sunken woman beside a locked door in the same wall, mastering its height and the withholding of a key defines, respectively, their achievements and the source of their limitations. The composition's visual rendering of the

[86] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 92.
[87] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.
[88] See *Man Superior to Woman*, (London: T. Cooper, 1739), p. 8 and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *Woman not Inferior to Man* (London: John Hawkins, 1739), p. 1.
[89] '*Reviewer Reviewed', EWJ*, (May 1858), p. 204.

breach in the wall links the group of 'Governesses' and 'Emigration,' and their prospects. Symbolising their relatively brighter outlook, the breach admits sunlight to illuminate 'Emigration.' In contrast, the 'Governesses,' placed within the shadow of the wall, seem condemned to a bleak future.

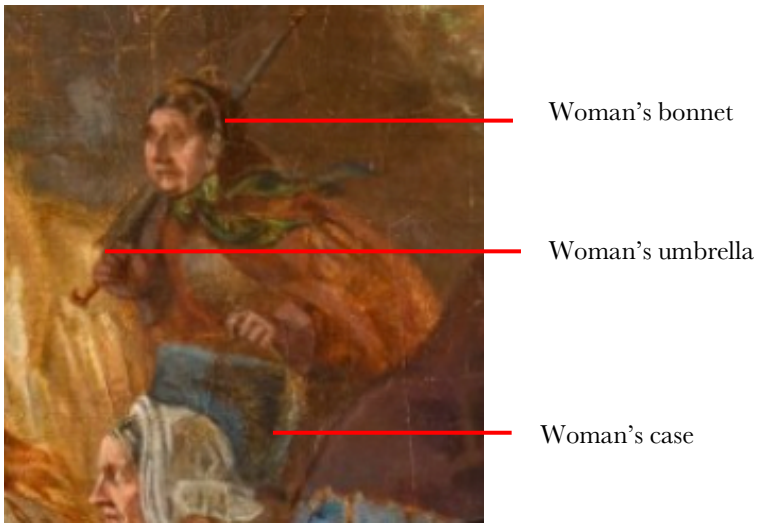



Figure 13. Detail from Claxton, "*Woman's Work*" Sotheby's online sale catalogue <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2023/women-artists/womans-work-a-medley> [accessed January 2024] © Sotheby's

The emigration group includes an older woman in bonnet and mantle, clutching a bag and umbrella as if in preparation for departure (see Figure 13). Yeldham describes this woman as a 'Sairey Gamp' figure, suggesting that her respectable employment as a (putative) nurse is signalled by her proximity to the domestic grouping in the composition's centre.[90] This study suggests an alternative possibility, that this middle-aged woman is an emigrant-ship matron. A lengthy *EWJ* article by Rye, an original shareholder in the *EWJ* with an especial interest in emigration, described the tasks undertaken by ship-matrons for the single women passengers. Overseeing passengers' physical, moral, and religious improvement involved maintaining discipline, domestic training, tuition in literacy, and bible lessons. Repeated emphasis was laid on the necessity for the matron to be an experienced and confident woman.[91]

The British Ladies' Female Emigration Society charitably provided matrons with supplies in 'bags, (so called by courtesy for in reality they were stout deal boxes).'[92] The inventory of 'Bag A', the first

[90] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 92.
[91] M. S. R., 'Emigrant-Ship Matrons', *EWJ*, 5, 25 (March 1860), p. 29.
[92] Ibid., p. 32.

of two bags (hospital and general), and the creation (presumably by Rye) of the template for use in inserting details, shows the degree of detailed planning that emigration was anticipated to demand:

> BRITISH LADIES' FEMALE EMIGRANT SOCIETY.
>
> Box of Materials, placed in charge of the matron, Mrs. —— , for the use of the emigrants, per the ship ——, for ——, from —— . —— 185
>
> Bag A. (Hospital.) Each whole Bag containing the following articles; half Bag, half the quantity. Two cotton shifts. Two short night gowns. One colored wrapped gown, 1 1/4 yards long, 3 1/4 wide. Two night caps. Two white skirts. One dozen diapers. Three infants' shirts. Two ditto bedgowns. Three ditto caps. Two ditto blankets. Two ditto rollers. One square flannel.[93]

(This template reveals the unconscious bias that automatically assumed that an experienced and confident woman would, inevitably, be married.) The composition's representation of a mature woman determinedly clutching a bag, a visual synecdoche for the supplies of a matron, matches this woman's personal and material specifications as defined in the *EWJ*. The idea of this figure as a ship's matron, rather than a nurse, makes sense of her visible straining, in facial expression and posture, towards the gap that offers the prospect of emigration.

The *EWJ* published numerous articles and letters on the subject of emigration. A second article by Rye, 'On Assisted Emigration', exhaustively covered the multiple aspects of planning a successful emigration: costs for travel, choice of destination, clothing and items to pack, addresses for agencies promoting emigration, and prospects of marriage and employment after arrival.[94] (Claxton was aware of Rye's widely debated efforts to encourage the emigration of single educated women. Claxton's illustration for the *Illustrated Times*, 'A Bachelor There', included the representation of a book with the title 'On Female Emigration' and author's name 'Rye' both legible. It does not appear that a book with this title was published by Rye.)[95] In *WW* the representations of a competent

---

[93] Ibid., p. 32.
[94] M. S. R., '34. - On Assisted Emigration: Part 1', *EWJ*, 5, 28 (June 1860), pp. 253-40. Rye's additional contributions to the *EWJ* on the subject include: '48. - On Assisted Emigration', *EWJ*, 5, 29 (July 1860), pp. 326-35, M. S. R., and B. R. P., 'Stray Letters of the Emigration Question', *EWJ*, 8, 46 (December 1861), pp. 237-44, Maria S. Rye, 'Female Middle-Class Emigration: A paper read at a meeting for the Promotion of the Association for Social Sciences, London, 1862', *EWJ*, 10, 55 (September 1862), pp. 20-30. I am indebted to Miranda Marraccini for her work identifying Rye's contributions: 'The Victoria Press Circle' <https://www.victoriapresscircle.org/> [accessed December 2021].
[95] Florence Claxton, 'A Bachelor There', *Illustrated Times*, (16 January 1864), p. 45.

seamstress, an educated woman with scroll, and a woman with suitcase and umbrella, exemplify the range of skills, meticulous planning, and preparedness advocated by the *EWJ*.

The two most prominent figures of the emigration group are young and slim, their postures conveying animation. Another much older woman looks up from her sewing as if the idea of emigration has just occurred to her. Close beside the seamstress yet another woman, her flowing red hair hinting at a lost sexual reputation, strains forward, her hands clasped in prayer. While the respective hair styles of seamstress and supplicant would, for a Victorian audience, have signalled extreme contrasts of respectability and sexual license, other details encourage the viewer to compare the two women. Both are turned towards the opening, their heads at the same height, and each is shown in profile. The clasped fingers and position of the hands of the younger closely resemble the right hand of the older. The 'fallen woman' is thus paralleled with a respectable example of a profession that was, for Victorians, generally synonymous with a loss of virtue.

In 1850 *Punch* published a poem titled 'The Needlewomen's Farewell' [hereafter *Farewell*] that addressed the topical themes of emigration and the indigent seamstress. One stanza refers to the latter's current loneliness and a prayer that, in a new country, marriage would offer respectability and recourse from prostitution to avoid starvation:

> Now speed thee, good ship, over sea, and bear us far away,
> Where food to eat, and friends to greet, and work to do await us –
> Where against hunger's tempting we shall not need to pray –
> Where in wedlock's tie, not harlotry, we shall find men to mate us.[96]

[96] 'The Needlewomen's Farewell', *Punch,* 18, 444 (12 January 1850), ll. 25-28, p. 14.

.

Figure 14. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

The subject of 'fallen women' was a delicate topic in mid-Victorian England, and a sympathetic artistic representation was fraught with problems. Despite Elizabeth Gaskell providing her eponymous protagonist with multiple exculpatory circumstances for her fall from grace (youthful innocence, the loss of parents, and isolation as a seamstress), *Ruth* (1853) was heavily criticised as '[A]n unfit subject for fiction'.[97] Augustus Egg's untitled triptych (1858) portrays the enormous cost to innocent lives set against the 'sin' of a wife and mother's adultery. In novels and paintings, a lonely and pathetic death was frequently the fate for such women. Even the redeemed Emily, in Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849-1850), [hereafter Copperfield], is described as 'drooping and beautiful' while 'trembling' on her uncle's shoulder as she departs England.[98] The absence of judgement in the representation of the supplicant women in *WW* is an atypical portrayal in the 'fallen woman' genre. Presented in profile, the supplicant's beauty is consequently indeterminate. Despite her status, she does not appear to be shunned by her respectable companions. Perhaps most compellingly, enveloped in a symbolically pure white shawl, the light from the breach beatifically illuminates her praying figure.

---

[97] Elizabeth Gaskell to Anne Robson (before 27 January 1853) in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, eds., J. A. V. and Arthur Pollard, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 220.
[98] Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, ed. by Nina Burgis and Andrew Sanders (1849-50; repr. Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2008), p. 792.

Bodichon did regard prostitution as a calamity, but not in the terms typical of the period. Prostitution, for Bodichon, was 'essentially an *economic* matter, and [she] was never interested in quasi-spiritual cant about 'purity'.'[99] In an 1854 article in the *EWJ* Bodichon recorded her perception of factors that resulted in prostitution:

> Women are generally driven to degradation from ignorance and the difficulty of getting respectable employment, compared with the great demand and temporary high wages of this accursed trade.[100]

Bodichon's solution concluded that: '[w]e must apply more energetically to the education of women of the lower classes, to open out the avenues of employments in every possible direction.' This practical, progressive, and non-judgmental attitude in Bodichon has parallels in the treatment of the supplicant woman in *WW*; both rejected the dominant dogma that condemned a fallen woman as virtually irredeemable.

For Victorian audiences, the composition's portrayal of an exclusively female group intent on embracing emigration with hope was as unconventional as a threatening governess and a blessed 'fallen woman'. Nunn observes that the subject of early to mid-Victorian emigration was inspiration for a

> profusion of paintings, prints, novels, plays, poems, essays and letters that speak eloquently about the realities and myths of Victorian Britain and its role in the world, engaging especially with concepts of womanhood and the family.[101]

Nunn's lengthy examination of the genre concludes that 'certain formulae emerged from this diversity'.[102] One such pattern of representation is evident in Thomas Marshall's painting *The Parting Day* (1852) [hereafter *Parting*] and the illustration of the song sheet from *The Illustrated London News* (1852), titled *The Emigrants,* respectively Figures 15 and 16. Both images include men and women, and a distinctive male figure appears to inspire fellow passengers while sheltering and comforting his

[99] Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. 59.
[100] B. B., 'The Domestic Muloch', *Leader*, 5, 230 (19 August 1854), p. 783.
[101] Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'Look homeward, angel!' in *Problem Pictures; Women and Men in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), p. 115.
[102] Nunn, *Pictures*, p. 125.

wife. Once again, the representation of a trope within *WW* defies conventional expectations: here the distinctive 'inspirational' man is supplanted by a woman, while the hat and wife are replaced with a scroll and a 'sister voyager'.

Figure 15. Thomas Falcon Marshall, *Emigration – the Parting Day "Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day etc" Goldsmith* (1852), oil on canvas, 92 × 153.7 cm (unframed), Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide



Figure 16. 'The Emigrants', *Illustrated London News: Musical Supplement,* 20, 464-5 (19 June 1852), p. 481[a]

In 1859 the *EWJ* published an article titled 'What Can Educated Women Do?' exploring potential avenues of respectable remunerative employment for educated women. (Yet another example of the journal's strategy of redefining acceptable work for women and suggesting new professional opportunities.) One proposal, for middle-class women, was a role in creating a new organisation to assist 'working class' female emigrants:[103]

> I am aware that I am suggesting arrangements which have in various instances been well carried out already, but I am sure that there is a need among women of all classes for further assistance towards emigration, and I think it rests with educated women to see how it can be wisely and kindly met.[104]

The scroll held by the personification of emigration in *WW* symbolises this woman's education. Gesturing to the viewer's left, westward, her reach (extended by the scroll) forms a continuous line linking the wall's gap to the coastline (Figure 17). The visual impact of this bold and exaggerated gesture, and its seaward direction, conveys the necessary resolution and confidence required in a woman instigating a venture of emigration, for herself and others. The postures and faces of the women surrounding her, responding to her gesture and gaze, together with her stance atop the rubble of the breached wall claiming it as her own, further emphasise her portrayal as a commanding woman. The inclusion of a 'sister voyager', embracing 'Emigration', a parallel with the wives of the leading men in *Parting* and *Emigrants*, accords with the Victorian concept of 'sisterhood' – an ethos supported by the women-only publication of the *EWJ* and Bodichon herself.

[103] The article makes a short reference to the earlier work on emigration effected by Caroline Chisholm.
[104] 'What Can Educated Women Do?', *EWJ*, 4, 22 (December 1859), p. 225.

Figure 17. Detail from Claxton, *WW © The British Art Journal*

Nunn's wide-ranging study of the emigration genre concluded that, '[i]t is difficult to name a scene of emigrant departure containing no figure or element of distress or sorrow.'[105] The wives portrayed in *Parting* and *Emigrants* are both highly emotional, and the postures of older figures suggest resignation. The same feelings were articulated in contemporary songs and poems. The first stanza of the lyrics accompanying *Emigrants*, in its repetition and permutations on the refrain 'farewell,' illustrates the dominant emotion of regret portrayed in the engraving.

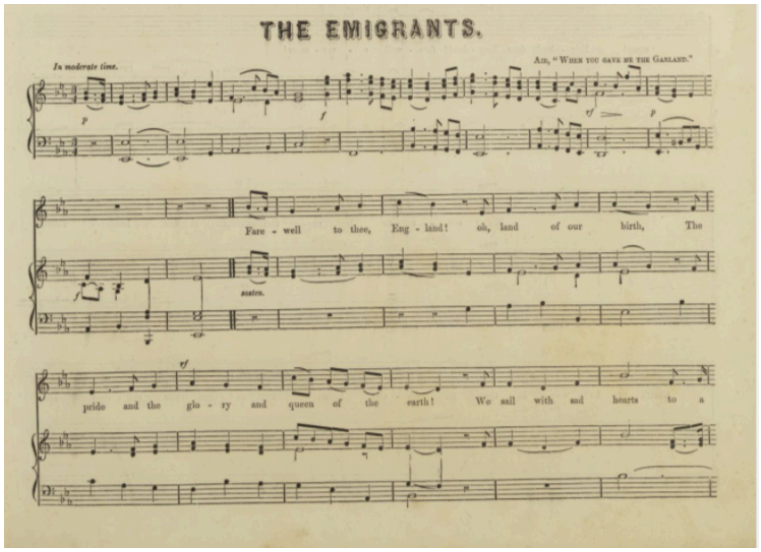



Figure 18. 'The Emigrants', *Illustrated London News: Musical Supplement,* 20, 464-5 (19 June 1852), p. 481[a]

[105] Nunn, *Pictures*, p. 136.

> Farewell to thee, England! oh, land of our birth,
> The pride and the glory and queen of the earth!
> We sail with sad hearts to a land far away,
> In search of the bread that may fail if we stay.
> New faces glow bright in the blaze of our fires,
> The stranger sits down in the halls of our sires.
> Farewell! oh farewell to thy beautiful shore!
> England! dear England! farewell ever more! (ll.1-8)[106]

*Farewell* acknowledges the destitution of English seamstresses and the opportunities offered by emigration: 'The past looms dark behind us, the further rises fair.'[107] However, in separating from the 'home country' the poem maintained a poignant note: 'As to the vessel's side we throng to look our last at thee'.[108]

Contrasting with the typical melancholy portrayed in *Farewell*, *Emigrant*, and *Parting*, the emotions of the women in *WW* range from enthusiastic to intrigued. All faces look forward, no woman's posture is bowed under strain, and none clutches a tear-soaked handkerchief. This positive outlook reflected Bodichon's own attitude. In 1862 Bodichon helped Rye to found the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society.[109] As Hirsch notes Bodichon was 'an enthusiastic supporter of its [*EWJ*] outreach activities – both finding jobs for women within Britain and helping to organise female emigration'.[110]

The same enthusiasm for emigration was evident within the *EWJ*. An 1860 article by Rye titled 'On Assisted Emigration' complains of the 'apathy on the subject of emigration as is shown in England' and laments this attitude as a 'fatal indifference and disgraceful supineness!'[111] Rye continues:

> [s]urely a life like this [colonial life], with everything fresh, bright, and abundant, with plenty of work in hand and the prospect of a good reward for their labor, surely such a life, destitute though it might be of many of the elegancies and refinements of civilization, must be preferable to the lonely care-worn life with its incessant toil and inadequate payment in an over labor-stocked land like this [England].[112]

---

[106] 'The Emigrants.', *ILN: Musical Supplement,* 20, 464-5, 481[a]-84[a] (19 June 1852), ll. 1-8, p. 470a.
[107] 'Needlewomen', *Punch* (January 1850), p. 14.
[108] Ibid., ll. 25-28, p. 14.
[109] Rendall, 'Langham Place group', *ODNB* < https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-93708?rskey=MwzPwC&result=1> [accessed May 2020].
[110] Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. 190.
[111] M. S. R., '34. – On Emigration', *EWJ*, (June 1860), p. 235 and p. 240 respectively.
[112] Ibid., p. 237.

Yeldham carefully asserts that, in *WW*, 'the idea of emigration [is presented] as a solution to the problem of the overstocked female labour market'.[113] This is correct as far as it extends to the generality of Victorian women. However, despite distinctly linking the composition's groups of governesses and emigration, Yeldham does not consider emigration as it *specifically related to governesses*.[114]

For a mid-Victorian governess the realities of emigration were complex. Rye explicitly acknowledged a key consideration in the *EWJ*: 'of course educated women could not go out as passengers.'[115] Indigent governesses seemed to have been caught in an economic trap created by the conventional expectations of ladylike conduct. As Rye firmly pointed out, the only qualification for free passage was as a servant. This was a status that Rye believed, for reasons of pride and propriety, most distressed gentlewomen contemplating emigration would shun.[116] In a move that confirms Rye's belief in this idea, and reflects the journal's particular concern with educated women, the *EWJ* and Rye jointly addressed the issue by proposing that a

> [f]und be raised "for promoting the emigration of educated women." Such money as may be collected to be placed under the control of the Committee for Promoting the Employment of Women, 19 Langham Place.[117]

*WW* presented a solution for destitute governesses that the *EWJ* would have endorsed. It was a solution that would have been more practical and realistic with the support of schemes such as the one proposed, and then implemented, through the offices of the *EWJ*.

---

[113] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 92.
[114] Ibid.
[115] R., 'Assisted Emigration', *EWJ*, (June 1860), p. 238.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid., p. 240.

## The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': mid-Victorian conventions in the portrayal of 'Four Ages of Man'

Placed at the centre of *WW* is a group described in the catalogue text as 'The four ages of man'.[118] This explication continues to list the group's representations: 'in the centre youth, middle age, and old age reposing on an ottoman, infancy being in the background'. Figure 19 shows this group numbering youth '1', middle age '2', old age '3', and infancy '4'. To the viewer's right, just beyond the domestic boundary defined by the rug, stands a woman (numbered '5') in a striking golden dress flanked by two men. As the previous section considered the paired group of 'Governesses' and 'Emigration', this section similarly examines the 'Four Ages' and the 'Upright Female' as a pair of, respectively, issue and solution. Modern scholars (such as King and Susan Casteras) have focused on this composition's unusual representation of femininity but have overlooked the potential significance of the placement of the 'Four Ages' group.[119] Sheltered within the encircling walls this site affords some protection from the vagaries of misfortune as metaphorically represented by the elements. Equally, irrespective of the treatment of the figures, the group's placement at the centre of the composition acknowledges the Victorian perception of the priority of domestic claims within the compass of 'woman's work'.

[118] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.
[119] See Catherine King, 'Feminist Arts' in *Imagining Women*, ed. by Frances Bonner, Lizbeth Goodman, Richard Allen, Linda Janes, and Catherine King, (Great Britain: Polity Press in conjunction with Open University Press, 1982), pp. 173-174. See also, Susan Casteras, 'From safe havens' to a 'wide sea of notoriety'' in *A Struggle for Fame: Victorian Women Artists and Authors*, ed. by Susan Casteras and Linda H. Peterson, (New Haven: Yale Centre for British Art, 1994), pp. 7-34.


Figure 19. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *British Art Journal*

In the mid-Victorian period two versions of the 'Four Ages of Man' were sources of artistic inspiration. The first was a reference to a scheme in Greek mythology of four distinct stages of human existence: Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Iron. Pencil notes by Edward Burne-Jones suggests that this would have been his project's central theme in 'a plan for a series of pictures which deal with the whole history of the world, for they were to represent its Four Ages'.[120] Intertexts and visual allusions within *WW* encourage the interpretation of specific elements within the context of Greek mythology. The female figure atop the wall holds a sketchbook inscribed with the word 'Hera'. Yeldham interprets this reference to the Greek queen of the Gods as 'a counterpoint to the decadent Apollo in the centre'.[121] Yeldham notes that in the seated woman's ekphrastic representation of the central youth (shown in Figure 20) she is gazing up at his figure, her left arm raised as if to shield her eyes

[120] Georgiana Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Burne-Jones* 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1912), I, pp. 308-9.
[121] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.

from the sun. In this portrait, indistinct in the image taken from the *British Art Journal*, but confirmed in Yeldham's article, his figure is framed by 'sun's rays'.[122]

Figure 20. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Certainly, the title and element of the thematic approach in Claxton's painting from the previous year, *Paris*, demonstrated her familiarity with Greek mythology. The satirical treatment of many topics seems, through the process of harnessing *WW* to this concept of 'Four Ages', to hint that modern Victorian life might be perceived as a degraded condition descended from a 'golden age'.

Figure 21. John Everett Millais, 'Childhood' (1847-48), 8 × 17.6 cm, Pen and black ink on cream wove paper, Object no. 02/223, Archive of the Royal Academy, London © Photo: Courtesy Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: John Hammond.

[122] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 91.

Artistic creations from as early as the sixteenth century had also used the second version of the 'Four Ages of Man' as inspiration.[123] In this concept the idea of 'Four Ages' applied not to epochs as described above, but to distinct periods in one lifespan. These four stages – infancy, youth, manhood and old age – were chosen by John Everett Millais as the theme for his first major commission in 1847 to decorate painted lunettes.[124] Millais' sketch for one lunette, 'Childhood', is shown in Figure 21.

Thomas Nicholls' sculptures, dating from 1874-75, for font relief panels in St Mary's Church, Studley Royal, Yorkshire take this same interpretation of the theme of 'Four Ages'.[125]

Figure 22. Thomas Nicholls, 'Infantia', Gilded bronze on purple Tennessee marble, Font of St Mary's Church, Studley Royal, Yorkshire © Robert Freidus

Like Millais, Nicholls produced a benevolent expression of human strength and frailty.[126] Figure 22 shows Nicholls' font panel titled 'Infantia'. Figure 23 shows that in *WW* the nurturing maternal hands

[123] See Raphael Sadeler I, *Amor* (1591), engraving after Maarten de Vos from a series of four plates, British Museum item 1873,0712.72 < https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1873-0712-72> [accessed October 2023].
[124] '*Childhood*, 1847-8 Sir John Everett Millais Bt. PRA (1829 - 1896)', pen and black ink on cream wove paper, 02/223 <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/childhood> [accessed January 2021]. Photo: Courtesy of Royal Academy of Arts, London. Photographer: John Hammond.
[125] Images of courtesy of <http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/nicholls/16.html> [accessed March 2021].
[126] Peter Leach and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Yorkshire West Riding, Leeds, Bradford and the North. The Buildings of England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 724. Image sourced from Jacqueline Banerjee, 'The Font reliefs at St Mary, Studley Royal' <http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/nicholls/16.html> [accessed January 2021].

in the images of Millais and Nicholls are replaced by a scolding finger held to a wailing infant's lips. With its head tilted backwards, closed eyes and open mouth, the representation of 'Infancy' in *WW* is the antithesis of the conventional, generally sentimental, imagery of contended and winsome children preoccupied in play or learning. The proximity of the unpleasant faces of two men, one gaunt and the second a sneering 'swell', together with the relatively similar sizes of woman and child faces, produce a disturbing impression quite at odds with the benevolent and reassuring adult presence in *Childhood* and *Infantia.*

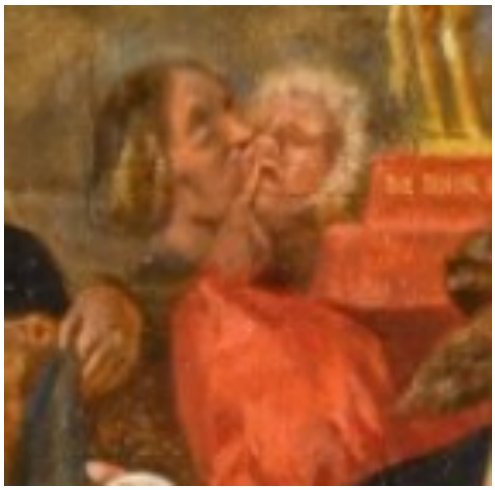


Figure 23. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 24. George Elgar Hicks, *Woman's Mission: A Companion to Man* (1863), oil on canvas, 76.2 × 64.1 cm, Tate Britain, London © Tate Britain


Figure 25. Thomas Nicholls, 'Virilitas', Gilded bronze on purple Tennessee marble, Font of St Mary's Church, Studley Royal, Yorkshire © Robert Freidus

Yet more deviant than the portrayal of an unattractive baby and clearly failing nurse/mother is the representation of manhood in *WW*. Conventional images, such as the representation of manly and stoical grief-stricken restraint in George Elgar Hicks' *Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood* (1863), shown in Figure 24, were flattering portrayals of masculinity. Inscribed on the plaque supporting Nicholl's sculpture of manhood (Figure 25) is the word 'Virilitis'. In stark contrast, details of the central 'swell', with sensually hooded eyes and an unpleasant view of nose and neck created by his upturned face, create a distinctly unflattering portrait of masculinity.[127] The composition's depictions of middle-age and old-age are equally unsympathetic. Unlike novelistic portrayals of hard-won middle-aged wisdom (Roger Carbury) in Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (1874-1875), [hereafter *Live*] or benevolent old-age (Dr Strong) in Dickens's *Copperfield*, *WW* focuses on irritable and cantankerous behaviour. In this interpretation of the 'Four Ages of Man', *WW* consistently subverts normalised expectations to satirise and critique male behaviour.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': the mid-Victorian 'marriage-market'

Ranged beneath the 'swell' are five women: four youthful and one much older woman. The review of *WW* in the *Athenaeum* identified the central male as key to interpreting this vignette: 'In the centre a "Swell" submits to the blandishments of four matrimonially-disposed young ladies, who attempt to captivate him in various ways.'[128] The right hand of the 'swell' is shown tipping bon-bons and sugar plums, the contents of a small bowl, into the upheld hands of a supplicant woman. In this period gifts of bon-bons, from young men to young women, were manifestations of flirtatious interest. The context of such an 'offering' is key to Adelaide Claxton's illustration to accompany a short story titled 'The Artist in the London Parks' for the *London Society* journal.[129] Adelaide's drawing illustrated a specific episode within the story in which a young woman (either of two circled red) is engaged in a

[127] *OED*, 'swell': 8 (b). In this context the term 'swell' denotes stylish dress associated with distinguished social standing.
[128] 'Gossip', *Athenaeum,* (27 July 1861), p. 123.
[129] Adelaide Claxton, 'The Artist in the London Parks: The Constitutional', *London Society*, 4, 5 (November 1863), between pp. 432-3.

flirtation (with either of gentlemen circled blue) and addresses her chaperone (circled green) before retrieving her romantic gift. Figure 26 shows this image with the relevant portion of text from the story placed alongside.

Unlike this gift's strategic placement, devised to elude detection by a chaperone, in *WW* the bon-bons are dropped carelessly. This gesture, combined with the relaxed posture and upturned face of the 'swell', suggest his contempt for the rapt attention of the attendant woman.


Figure 26. Adelaide Claxton, 'The Artist in the London Parks: The "Constitutional"', *London Society*, 4, 5 (November 1863), between pp. 432-33, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 27. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

If this young woman (circled blue in Figure 27) is treated with contempt, her 'mirror image' – with the same outstretched hand and directed gaze (circled red) – receives no attention whatsoever from the 'swell'. Compared to the vibrant costumes and youthful complexions of the adjacent women, this woman appears drab and considerably older. Her inclusion as a 'mirror image' hints that her begging gesture is a symbolic rather than literal portrayal of destitution. This woman's full, rather than pinched, face supports this interpretation. The desperate straits of starvation and raggedness associated with absolute poverty, artistically portrayed by Luke Fildes in *Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward* (1874), Dickens in *Hard Times* (1854), and Gaskell in *North and South* (1854), were evident in Claxton's own work. Her engraving for the Christmas 1859 edition of the *Illustrated London News* satirised the impulse of seasonable charitable concern experienced by the affluent, and her image included representations of deprivation (Figure 28). Twenty-one-year-old Claxton (who had been abroad between the ages of twelve and nineteen) had a clear grasp of the ravages of poverty.

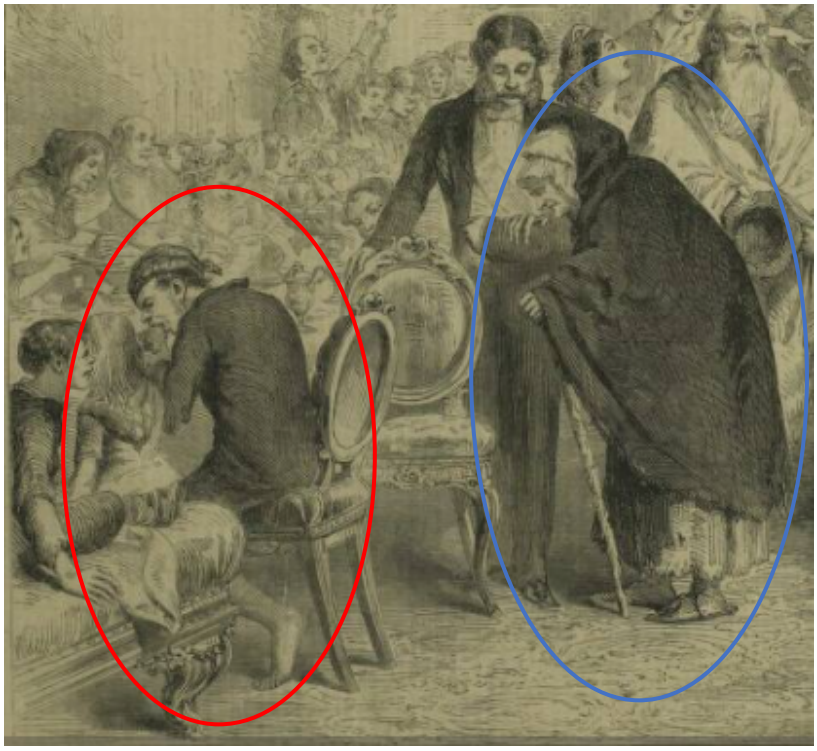


Figure 28. Detail from Claxton, 'Utopian Christmas', *Illustrated London News*, 35, 1008 (24 December 1859), p. 602, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

However, the resigned, plump face and adequate clothing of the begging woman in *WW* contrast starkly with the barefooted, and clearly ravenous, man shown (circled red) in Figure 28. In this context the begging woman in *WW* seems less bent on avoiding starvation than on soliciting male attention. As if to underline the rejection of this woman and confirm his resolution not to be swayed by sentiment, the hand of the 'swell' closest to her, one that might have provided succour, is tucked into his trouser pocket.

The begging woman in *WW* appears within the locus of the four young women but at this group's very margins on the edge of the rug: the limit of the definition of domestic care and concern. Unlike the infirm and aged woman of Figure 28 (circled blue), the recipient of benevolent patronage from a well-to-do young man, this woman is placed outside the sphere of the swell's influence. This peripheral location, combined with the contrast between her appearance and that of several blooming and fashionable young women competing for one man, suggests an interpretation of her plight. This predicament is the consequence of failing to find a provider through marriage while having passed a life within an environment that has not equipped her to provide for herself. The

widely publicised results of the 1851 census and subsequent debates meant that the mid-Victorian public were alert to the problems created by, and anticipated from, the generally acknowledged gender imbalance. As the *EWJ* reported:

> According to the last census of England, there were in this country three quarters of a million more women than men. This immense female multitude must consequently remain single all their lives, and in most instances provide for themselves.[130]

Further, a mid-Victorian perception existed that a panoply of issues were contributing towards fewer (middle-class) men entering into matrimony. The *Saturday Review* devoted an entire article to this theme noting: 'That clubs and the Virginian weed do, as matter of fact, make men less anxious for a home [...] is, we think, highly probable.[131] Trollope's *Live* includes a character committed to his club and its dissolute lifestyle of horse-riding, smoking, drinking, and gambling: 'Marriage of itself, simply as a domestic institution, had not specially recommended itself to Sir Felix Carbury'.[132] In this context, the 'work' of finding a marriage partner was perceived as being increasingly more difficult and the potentially destitute fate of spinsters was yet more feared.

As short stories in *London Society* demonstrate, a 'book of songs' might be, like 'bon-bons', a romantic gift.[133] In *WW* one of the 'matrimonially-disposed' young women at the feet of the 'swell' holds a guitar and a song sheet headed 'fa-la-la'.[134] A very full white gown falls in folds that suggest an expensive silk fabric. This outfit and floral head-wreath are very similar to the dress worn by the central figure of Alice Walker's *Wounded Feelings* (1861) shown in Figure 29.

---

130 'How to Utilize the Powers of Women', *EWJ*, 3, 13 (March 1859), p. 34.
131 'Ladies' Society', *Saturday Review*, 11, 295 (22 June 1861), p. 629. See also, Sheila Herstein, *A Mid-Victorian Feminist, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon* (London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 31.
132 Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now*, ed. by John Sutherland, 2 vols (1874-5; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), I, p. 351. See also the character of Adolphus Crosbie in Anthony Trollope, *The Small House at Allington,* ed. by Dinah Birch (1862; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
133 See Adelaide Claxton, 'The Constitutional', *London Society*, (November 1863), p. 432.
134 Yeldham, 'Work', p. 91 also Cherry, *Frame*, p. 39.

Figure 29. Detail of Alice Walker, *Wounded Feelings* (1861) oil on canvas, 101.5 × 76.5 cm <https://www.artnet.com/artists/alice-walker/wounded-feelings-AttEm0otPIfL_LImiOw6cw2> [accessed June 2022] © Artnet

Figure 30. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

However, the inclusion of a veil (in Figure 30 this is just evident over the figure's left shoulder and falling over the dress) suggests that this costume more closely matches that of the contemporary fashion for weddings than simply a ball. As Susanna Cordner notes:

> the ideal of a well to do young bride in white began to solidify in the mid nineteenth century, the veil and orange blossom wreath were the essential accessories to complete this image. A veil, by delicately covering the face in a demure manner, was a key addition to this growing image of the blushing, pure bride.[135]

Cordner continues to note that, in this period, the white dress and veil was not exclusively worn by the bride: the same costume was also often worn by bridesmaids. Irrespective of whether bride or bridesmaid, the costume of the guitar-playing woman in particular appears to have reinforced the *Athenaeum*'s impression that 'matrimonially-disposed' young women surrounded the swell.[136]

[135] Susanna Corder, 'A Romantic Frame of Mind' <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/here-come-brides/a-romantic-frame-of-mind> [accessed January 2022].
[136] 'Gossip', *Athenaeum,* (27 July 1861), p. 123.

The dress, guitar, and flowers all signal this woman's status as a stereotype of the hyper-femininised ideal of Dora Spenlow described by the eponymous protagonist of *Copperfield*:

> All I know of the rest of the evening is, that I heard the empress of my heart sing enchanted ballads in the French language, generally to the effect that, whatever was the matter, we ought always to dance, Ta ra la, Ta ra la! accompanying herself on a glorified instrument, resembling a guitar.[137]

The similarity between the words on the music sheet in *WW* ('fa-la-la') to Spenlow's refrain ('Ta ra la') reinforce the perception of the former as a stereotype of this period. The pursuit of ladylike accomplishments, as displayed in the central group of *WW,* contrast the personalities of love-interest Sophy and Dora in *Copperfield*:

> 'Does your Sophy play on any instrument, Traddles?' I inquired, in the pride of my heart.
> 'She knows enough of the piano to teach it to her little sisters,' said Traddles.
> 'Does she sing at all?' I asked.
> 'Why, she sings ballads, sometimes, to freshen up the others a little when they're out of spirits,' said Traddles. 'Nothing scientific.'
> 'She doesn't sing to the guitar?' said I.
> 'Oh dear no!' said Traddles.
> 'Paint at all?'
> 'Not at all,' said Traddles.
> I promised Traddles that he should hear Dora sing, and see some of her flower-painting.[138]

David's naivety is made explicit in his failure to appreciate Dora's self-centered vacuity when compared with Sophy's modest pursuit of accomplishments for the value they provide to the well-being of a large family. In particular, Traddles' exclamation, 'Oh dear no!' reflects Victorian attitudes to the guitar's associations. As Christopher Page notes, this instrument was easily associated 'with the most vapid aspects of young female minds raised on restricted mental food or with an art of licensed seduction necessary for making successful marriages.'[139]

---

[137] Dickens, *Copperfield*, p. 382.
[138] Ibid., p. 586.
[139] Christopher Page, 'The Guitar and 'the Fair Sex' <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-guitar-and-the-fair-sex#jWBMa2OMa3Lm4wiD.99> [accessed May 2020].

Figure 31. Detail from Claxton, *WW © The British Art Journal*

For a mid-Victorian audience the daring décolletage of this guitar-playing woman might have been interpreted as a further part of a seductive strategy. Stories in contemporary women's journals conflated scheming behaviour and matrimonial ambition with a specific costume, as in the internal monologue of a chaperoned eighteen-year-old at finishing school:

> Papa once threw a beautiful ball-dress out of the window on a wet night because he said it was cut too low: and how you added (still in a whisper, for Miss Sharp's eye is watching you) for your part, you *will* wear low dresses when you are married and have your own way, and won't marry under ten thousand a year, nor anything less than a nobleman.[140]

[140] 'The Constitutional', *London Society*, (November 1863), pp. 432-3.

The third of the four young women likewise pursues an 'accomplishment' in her sketching of the 'swell'. The final young woman, rapt whilst gazing at her own appearance in a hand-held mirror, epitomises the self-absorption and limited mental resources of this group.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': costume and vanity

The costumes of the 'matrimonially-disposed young ladies' appear particularly stylish for 1861. The fashion plate of Figure 32 shows Parisian costume then considered couture's high watermark. (This plate, published in Great Britain, was first published in *Le Moniteur de la Mode*, France).[141]

Figure 32. Héloise Leloir (née Colin), 'Walking and home dress', *The New Monthly Belle Assemblée* (London: Rogerson & Tuxford, 1860), hand-coloured etching, line and stipple engraving, 21.5 × 16.4 cm, NPG, NPG Reference Collection D47983, London © NPG

In particular, the right-hand model of 'home dress' shows the same striped fabric, accessory at throat, and muslin chemisette with full undersleeves gathered at the wrist, as the woman of *WW* shown in Figure 33. A similar sleeve treatment is described in the 'The Fashions' of the highly popular *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* of June 1862.[142]

[141] 'Walking and Home Dress', NPG D4793 < https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw284121/Walking-and-home-dress-February-1860?search=ap&subj=571%3BFashion+Plates%3A+Influences+-+French+fashions&wPage=11&rNo=221> [accessed October 2023].
[142] 'The Fashions', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 5 (June 1862), p. 94.

Figure 33. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

The similarities between poses, the fact that both women in Figures 32 and 33 hold an object in their right hand (the first a hand-held fire face-screen and the second a mirror), serves to emphasis how this woman's presentation in *WW* resembles a fashion-plate. Lucy Johnstone highlights the artificiality of female pose and costume in the Victorian fashion-plate, noting that 'corset lacing was probably loosened and petticoats left off for more ordinary wear.'[143] This insight, of the gap between the presented and actual reality of costume, suggests that this particular woman is an aspirational (and uncomfortably posed) construct of fashion. Further, the portrayal of self-absorption in *WW*, as opposed to social engagement with companion in Figure 32, suggests a vacuous and narcissistic personality.

An article within the *EWJ* seems to precisely encapsulate these women as represented in *WW*:

> They [girls] are now taught accomplishments, and told that the great object in life is to please; they therefore grow up vain, and often think of little else than how to make themselves attractive by means of smart clothes and an affectation of fine lady manners.[144]

[143] Lucy Johnstone, 'Corsets & Crinolines in Victorian Fashion' <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion> [accessed May 2020].
[144] J. B., 'On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women', *EWJ*, 4, 24, (February 1860), p. 366.

This passage appears in an article titled 'On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women' where the proposed solution to their potential fate – as exemplified by the elderly begging woman – is to find a vocation:

> Set before them that the great object in life is to earn their own living, that many among them will not marry, and must either work or trust to charity for bread; teach that above all, that it is more honourable to depend on their own exertions than to marry for the sake of a maintenance, and then a different spirit will arise among them.[145]

The rhetoric of the *EWJ* not only presented this argument in quasi-religious terms but encouraged those influential in the lives of young women to present aspiration as a more noble alternative than marriage at any price.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': middle-age and old-age

Completing the domestic circle of the 'Four Ages' are 'middle age' and 'old age' positioned at either side of youth as shown in Figure 34. The lack of chronological sequence in these figures (in a clockwise circle 'infancy' would be followed by 'youth' on the right and 'middle age' in the foreground) reflects the significance attached by Victorian society to masculine virility: in *WW* youth is afforded 'centre-stage'. Like 'infancy' and 'youth', 'middle age' and 'old age' are surrounded by attended women, and likewise no man gratefully acknowledges the efforts of these women. While a servant offers a meal on silver plate, 'middle age' (circled red) receives this diffidently, readjusting his glasses while gingerly probing his meal.

[145] Ibid., p. 366.

Figure 34. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Despite the depiction of 'old age' (circled blue) wielding a hammer none of the women conscientiously attending to his needs appears unduly concerned. This dynamic, and the inclusion of a potential weapon without an obvious purpose, seems to hint at his senility. Yeldham's brief suggestion that the 'hammer and skull cap suggest Vulcan, the lame god of fire' might have some justification within the painting's mythological allusions.[146] However, unlike other such examples (the rays emanating from the depiction of the 'swell' as a lion or Hera placed at the painting's most elevated position) the hammer does not achieve the same neat fit within the composition's narrative. This object appears to be purely symbolic and lacking a logic within the overall pattern and exposition of middle-class domesticity. A possible explanation may be found in the myths relating to Vulcan's Greek counterpart Hephaestus. Hephaestus, son of Hera, was lame either congenitally or because of an injury when cast to earth by Zeus.[147] This familial connection may provide an interpretation for the representation of 'old age' with hammer: Hera, author of Fine Art in *WW*, is raised above her progeny whose lesser artistic skills render him a mere artisan blacksmith.

[146] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 91.
[147] Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 51.

Prominent in the depiction of 'old age' is a black skull cap covering much of his head. For a Victorian audience skull caps may have signalled both advanced age and transgressive behaviour.


Figure 35. Hablot K. Browne, 'The Smallweed Family', *Bleak House*, (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1853), between pp. 208-209, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

The deeply unpleasant usurer, Grandfather Smallweed in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-53), is described as 'a mere clothes-bag with a black skull-cap on top'.[148] Hablot K. Browne's illustration for the 1853 edition of *Bleak House* portrays Smallweed (circled red in Figure 35) as a man of advanced age ensconced in a porter's chair. (Skull-caps worn by other characters in Dickens's novels, such as Tony Jobling (Weevle) in *Bleak House*, who wears a cheap tight velvet skull-cap, and unspecified characters in *Sketches by Boz*, demonstrate that this item was not an invariable signifier of old age). A second unpleasant literary character, the description and illustration of whose skull-cap is interwoven with his character delineation, suggests that this accessory may have encouraged the audience to consider the wearer with some suspicion. Old Doctor Walstein, in a short story *The Deadly Affinity* (illustrated in Figures 36 and 37), is described by the youthful and likeable protagonist Tom Haughton:

> The old man seemed quite out of place among the crowd of youthful students around him. His appearance struck me as being very peculiar. He was dressed in a coarse dark blouse, made with tight fitting sleeves and fastened round the waist with a leathern strap. He wore a black velvet skull-cap, from under which his snow white hair appears. But his face impressed me the most strongly. I was both attracted and repulsed by it – attracted by the evident fire

[148] Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, ed. by Stephen Gill (1852-3; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 309.

> of genius which glowed in its every feature, and repulsed by the expressions of his eyes, which produced an indescribable feeling of fear and submission.[149]

At the end of a day spent in Walstein's laboratory, Haughton comments, 'my mind seemed overcome with an unaccountable presentiment of evil'.[150] In this context not only is the elderly man of *WW* dependent on female assistance by virtue of age, but his representation suggests that his treatment of them is unlikely to be loving, or even kind.

Figures 36 and 37. Frederick Walker, (engraved Joseph Swain), Untitled illustrations from 'The Deadly Affinity', *Once a Week*, 7, 173 (18 October 1862), immediately before p. 449, and 7, 174 (25 October 1862), immediately before p. 477, Bodleain Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Despite the helplessness associated with the extremes of infancy and infirm old age these two phases have fewer women attendants as compared with youth and middle age. Five women surround each of the latter two representations, while three attend the elderly man and just one woman cares for the baby. In this allocation of resources combined with a depiction of devoted care the composition satirically reflected upon the contemporary idea that, within such a domestic group, the phase of optimal male virility directly correlated with the greatest attention from women.

## The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': issues and risks

Bodichon's pamphlet *Women* addresses the same issues as those raised by the representation of the domestic group in *WW*. Firstly, in the risks incurred by parents who insisted that their adult children

[149] A. G. G., 'The Deadly Affinity', *Once a Week*, 7, 173 (18 October 1862), p. 450.
[150] Ibid., p. 451.

remain indefinitely 'attendant' on them, and hence effectively constrained to be 'children all their days.'[151]

> Children who spend their lives in ministering to the little fancies and whims of a father or mother, who, from the old habit of childish obedience, cannot break through the slavery of home-life, should remember, that by wasting their lives in such trivial duties they weaken their own intellects and hearts, and will as surely one day or other be dependent upon such attentions themselves. Far be it from us to say that children do not owe deeds of reverence and duty to their parents – they do, most certainly. All that ennobles women will make them discharge these more faithfully. But for two or three daughters to remain at home idle, with the pretence of attending on a father or mother who is not even always old, infirm, or ill, is absurd. The pretence breaks down as soon as a 'good match' offers.[152]

Bodichon's analyses of these issues are paralleled within the composition. The references to 'slavery' and to 'two or three daughters' echo the representation in *WW* of several women attending to the needs of one contemptuous, indifferent, or even threatening man. The effective redundancy of female attendants – one woman in *WW* is caught mid-yawn as a servant delivers a meal (Figure 35, circled red) – parallels Bodichon's assertion of women remaining 'at home idle'. And finally, Bodichon's claim that that many of these unoccupied women are, in fact, merely waiting for a 'good match' is reflected in the numbers of young 'matrimonially-disposed' women crowding one man, and their attention to 'accomplishments' aimed at captivating the male sex.

Bodichon also argues at length about the dangers for young women in making marriage a monomania: 'We do not mean to say work will take the place of love in life, that is impossible; does it with men? But we ardently desire that women should not make *love their profession.*'[153] In promoting professional careers for women Bodichon and the *EWJ* steered a course between Scylla and Charybdis. On one extreme was the risk that they appeared to encourage spinsterhood, a fate generally perceived as undesirable, while the other extreme exposed them to the accusation that they were critical of the institution of marriage. These concerns couch and preface the encouragement, as in the quotation above, not to make 'love their profession'. The journal explicitly acknowledged that letters received by the journal berated the editors from both sides of this argument:

---

[151] Bodichon, *Women*, p. 18.
[152] Ibid., p. 19.
[153] Ibid., p. 9.

> The most opposite objections are sometimes raised to the particular line in which we steer; one letter complaining that we ignore the whole problem, or cluster of problems, relating to domestic life, and to the home, another censuring us for wishing to drive women down into a narrow sphere of household work.[154]

Their implicit acknowledgment of these risks may be perceived in the tactful presentation of the topic of careers, and the stress laid on the significance of domesticity. Hence, in an article addressing the tensions between both, the editors noted:

> As therefore we entitled the first article of our last number, Professions for Women, we will try to touch with a very cautious hand, a subject infinitely more difficult, because of infinitely more importance, that of DOMESTIC LIFE.[155]

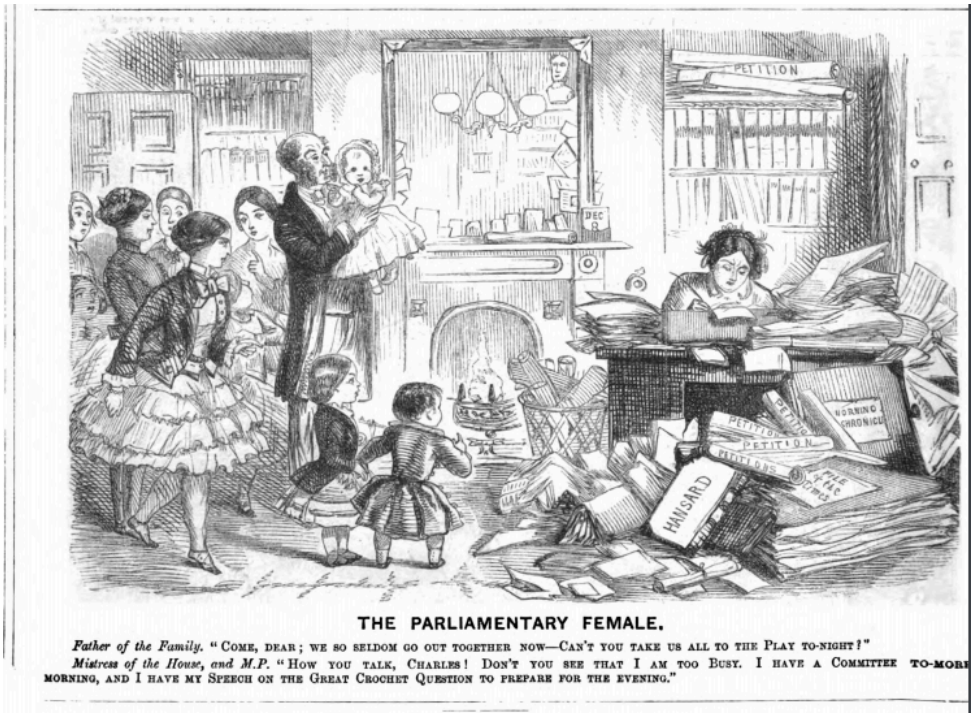
The 'importance' of 'domestic life', as asserted by the *EWJ*, accords with the central placement of the domestic group in *WW* and as the first element described in the catalogue. The journal's relatively restrained affirmation of the privilege of domesticity compared to its enthusiastic encouragement of women to take up professions has a parallel in the painting's satirical treatment of the subject compared to its central placement. (In the thirty-seven editions between the launch of the journal in 1858 and March 1861 - when *WW* was first exhibited – twenty-eight included an autobiographical profile of a woman who had forged and excelled in a professional career. That the journal considered such women to be role models for their readers is implied by the approving coverage of each woman's achievements).[156] Both journal and composition acknowledged the requirement to adhere to the dominant narrative, but each registered reservations through different tactics. This treatment of domesticity in *WW* acknowledged and accorded with Bodichon's own view. According to her biographer Hirsch, Bodichon strongly identified with the proto-feminist politics of Mary Wollstonecraft that critiqued the '*sentimental* idealisation of the family [my emphasis].'[157]

Independent of any private views, as a public offering the *EWJ* appears to have recognised the strategic value of stressing the sanctity of the home. The journal proffered arguments and reassurance to defuse the notion that, by working, women would cease to be interested in marriage. For example,

---

[154] 'Domestic Life', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), p. 74.
[155] Ibid.
[156] See 'Elizabeth Blackwell', *EWJ*, 1, 2 (April 1858), pp. 80-100; M. M. H., 'Harriet Hosmer', *EWJ*, 1, 5 (July 1858), pp. 295-306; 'A Learned Lady, *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), pp. 333-4.
[157] Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. 85.

the lectures of Elizabeth Blackwell included in the *EWJ*, began with the acknowledgement that 'the creation of a true home [is] a woman's especial work, a work demanding distinct preparation.'[158] An article in the *EWJ* asserted that where 'successful professional eminence [was] actually attained,' it could be 'without any sacrifice of happiness'.[159] This final phrase was a coded rejection of the caricatures of domestic disorder and inverted gender roles associated with the homes of professional women (as caricatured in Figure 38).




THE PARLIAMENTARY FEMALE.

*Father of the Family.* "COME, DEAR; WE SO SELDOM GO OUT TOGETHER NOW—CAN'T YOU TAKE US ALL TO THE PLAY TO-NIGHT?"

*Mistress of the House, and M.P.* "HOW YOU TALK, CHARLES! DON'T YOU SEE THAT I AM TOO BUSY. I HAVE A COMMITTEE TO-MORROW MORNING, AND I HAVE MY SPEECH ON THE GREAT CROCHET QUESTION TO PREPARE FOR THE EVENING."

Figure 38. John Leech, 'The Parliamentary Female', *Punch*, 24 (January 1853), unnumbered page in 'Punch's Almanack for 1853' in a series titled 'The Ladies of the Creation', Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

A letter from civil servant and educationist Harry Chester, printed in the *EWJ*, refuted notions promoted in staunchly conservative quarters:

> You may think lightly of the objection taken by the "Saturday Review" that, if you increase woman's powers of gaining her own livelihood, you diminish the number of marriages and so injure society, for you may reply that such a power, making her more valuable, in a pecuniary sense, as a wife, increases her opportunities of marriage, and that is neither for her own good nor for the good of society, that she should marry for hunger instead of for love and esteem.[160]

[158] 'Passing Events', *EWJ*, 3, 14 (April 1859), p. 142.
[159] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 1.
[160] Harry Chester, 'Letters on the Employment of Women', *EWJ*, 4, 22 (December 1859), p. 271.

The journal's advice to women to seek a 'great object in life' was rooted in multiple strands of evidence, analysis, and argument, presented within articles in the publication.[161] The *EWJ* examined, for example, the greater numbers of women of 'marriageable age' as compared to men and the consequent likelihood that many women would remain unmarried and/or without a male provider:[162]

> it is at all events a melancholy anomaly, which has no parallel in the commercial world, that 500,000 persons should be obliged to educate themselves for a profession [marriage] in which it is known beforehand that, whatever their abilities, they cannot possibly succeed![163]

In the inevitable necessity that many would be forced to seek their own livelihood, the journal considered the severely limited options of respectable employment and sought to provide alternatives.[164] The *EWJ* likewise considered the inadequacy of current female education to equip women to embark on a profession.[165] The journal continued this theme to argue that education and employment staved off the ennui of an unfulfilled life and would be beneficial, where marriage did occur, in equipping the wife to aid her husband.[166] The consistent aim of the *EWJ* was to inform and educate women so that they might form their own opinions and enter into the world on their own terms.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': the golden calf

Central to the composition, its domestic group, and directly above the head of the 'swell', is a representation of the sculpture of a golden calf. While King interprets the absence of a reference to the calf in the catalogue text as tact, an alternative view is that this elision more pointedly draws attention to a symbol whose central placement forces itself upon the viewer's attention.[167] Certainly, the catalogue text does not directly reference the calf. However, this text's reference to the 'four ages

[161] See J. B., 'Obstacles', *EWJ*, (February 1860), p. 366.
[162] 'Statistics as to the Employment of the Women of Great Britain', *EWJ,* 51, 25 (March 1860), pp. 1-6. Mussell, '*EWJ*' < https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html> [accessed September 2020] attributes the article to Parkes.
[163] 'Statistics', *EWJ*, (March 1860), p. 4.
[164] See Bodichon, *Women*, p. 19 and 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), p. 9.
[165] J. B., 'Obstacles', *EWJ*, (February 1860), p. 366.
[166] See Bodichon, *Women*, p. 11.
[167] King, 'Feminist Arts', *Imagining Women*, pp. 173-4.

of man' as '*the objects of devotion* from surrounding females [my emphasis]' encourages the audience to connect the 'domestic' women to the calf (positioned directly above them), and to frame the women's attention to men in religious terms.[168]

The web of associations, allusions, and connotations conjured by this phrase, when viewed in relation to the painting's imagery of a calf, links the 'domestic' women's devotion to the biblical Israelites' misguided worship of a false God. Two further details within *WW* encourage this interpretation. The first example is the wreath of hearts, tied with a ribbon and hanging around the neck of the calf. George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-72), Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* (1864-66), and Trollope's *The Small House at Allington* (1862) provide some context to understand the connotations, connections and interpretations Victorian audiences may have drawn from the scene of young women and a ribboned wreath around the neck of a calf. The reference in *Middlemarch* to marriage as 'an occasion for wreaths and bouquets' makes explicit the associations between romance and wreaths.[169] As letters to the *EWJ* demonstrate, mid-Victorian ladies wore wreaths as adornments and these could be purchased as manufactured items.[170] Alternatively, using guides such as *Elegant Arts for Ladies,* women could create home-made versions and a wide range of materials were considered suitable.[171] The coquettish Cynthia from Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* makes a flowered wreath as a hair-piece for the Hollingford ball.[172] In *Allington*, dandy Crosbie's sensations of emasculation on his engagement are compared to those of a beribboned calf: 'a man when so treated does feel himself to look like at calf at the altar, ready for the knife, with blue ribbons round his horns and neck. Crosbie felt that he was such a calf.'[173] And again, in Trollope's *Rachel Ray* (1863) [hereafter *Rachel*], newly engaged Luke Rowan

[168] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.
[169] George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. by David Carroll (1871-2; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 261.
[170] S. E. M., 'To the Editors of the English Woman's Journal', *EWJ*, 7, 42 (August 1861), p. 428.
[171] *Elegant Arts for Ladies* (London: Ward and Lock, 1856), p. 16. See also, pp. 19, 21, 25, 26, 34, 36, 45, 56, 70, 80, 130.
[172] Elizabeth Gaskell, *Wives and Daughters*, ed. by Angus Easson (1864-6; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 291.
[173] Trollope, *Allington*, p. 59.

feels 'himself to be a sacrificial victim, — done up very prettily with blue and white ribbons round his horns, but still an ox prepared for sacrifice.'[174]

Yet more compellingly connecting the calf to female devotion, the (capitalised) inscription on the plinth supporting the calf reads, 'THE PROPER STUDY OF WOMAN IS MAN!" (circled red in Figure 39).[175]

Figure 39. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

This intertext reworks the second line of the opening couplet from Alexander Pope's Epistle II of *An Essay on Man* (1732): 'The proper study of Mankind is Man.'[176] Pope's direction to the reader is facetiously appropriated, yet wittily retains a biblical allusion through its application to a symbolic calf. Pope's original construction now ends with an exclamation mark, undermining the explicit meaning in the hyperbole of a zealot. Yet more pointedly, the golden calf's biblical associations with the Israelites worship of a false God suggests that the parallel female worship of man is equally misplaced. Bodichon's pamphlet *Women* addressed this same issue of 'man worship':

[174] Anthony Trollope, *Rachel Ray*, ed. by P. D. Edwards (1863; repr. Oxford, Oxford World Classics, 2008), p. 392.
[175] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 89.
[176] I am indebted to Yeldham's article for the detail of this intertext and for her identification of the original source of this quotation; a reworking of Alexander Pope's Epistle II of *An Essay on Man* (1732).

> Women must, as children of God, be trained to do some *work* in the world. *Women may not take a man as a god*: they must not hold their first duty to be towards any human being [my emphasis].[177]

(Contemporary women revering brothers and/or lovers as 'gods' occurs frequently in the works of Trollope.)[178] Positioned at the centre of a composition titled *Woman's Work*, and amidst women shown (almost) exclusively attending to the needs of men, the golden calf functions as a visual synecdoche for 'man worship' while the representations of the surrounding women reflect the consequent problems created by this attitude. Bodichon's solution to this problem was 'work in the world'. *WW* reflected the same perception of this contemporary issue and the representation of the 'Upright Female', discussed later, was the proffered solution.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': the failing artist

The portrayal of one final female figure within the domestic group might be interpreted as exemplifying the professional price paid when unable to strike out from domesticity's sphere of influence. It seems possible that this woman might be a representation of a woman aspiring, but failing, in the vocation of a professional artist. Not only is she portrayed beside the structure that defines and upholds the accomplishment of 'Hera', but the catalogue text's wording implies that *WW* portrays more than two professional women artists:

> An artist (Rosa B – –) has attained the top of the wall (upon which the rank weeds of Misrepresentation and prickly thorns of Ridicule flourish), *others* are following [my emphasis].[179]

[177] Bodichon, *Women*, p. 7.
[178] See Anthony Trollope, *He Knew He Was Right,* ed. by John Sutherland (1869; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 488: 'He had already become her god'.
[179] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.

While the sketching woman seated at the foot of the swell *is* an artist, her posture and location define her as an amateur. This seated artist (circle red, Figure 40) is not making any attempt to scale this wall: this position on this structure symbolising professional achievement (circled blue, Figure 40).

Figure 40. Detail from Claxton, "*Woman's Work*" © *The British Art Journal*, 20, 3 (Winter 2019-20)

The catalogue's description that 'others are following' implies that, in addition to the woman mounting the ladder, the composition portrays at least one other woman striving for a professional career. One possibility is that the woman circled red in Figure 41, and described here as the 'failing artist', is a third such aspirant.

Figure 41. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

The failing woman artist is placed within the domestic group, but in the background with

her face turned to the wall. Desperate in her attempt to obtain purchase on this wall, the fingers of both hands appear spread to their full extent. The upper half of this woman is shown pressed against, and almost indistinguishable from, 'the wall of custom and prejudice' as if the effort to climb has almost erased her personality.[180] Despite this, the woman appears to be persevering in her efforts. This representation and interpretation accords with imagery and language used by the *EWJ* to describe overcoming obstacles created by custom (in women's education) and prejudice (against women's powers of reasoning). In arguing for women in the question, 'Are men naturally cleverer than women?', the *EWJ* admonished its readers:

> Let us not despair, but set to work with hearty good-will to break down whatever impediments to the mental improvement of women it may be in our power to remove, while we endeavor [*sic*] to train from the rising generation a body of reasoning, thinking, practical women who will be ready to take advantage of every favourable opening and before whom those barriers of prejudice may disappear which hitherto have seemed insurmountable.[181]

In relation to the pursuit of Fine Art as a profession the *EWJ* observed disparities between the sexes: 'the domestic and academical facilities afforded to the female artist are so very far below those of a male student.'[182] The failure of circled artist of Figure 41 may result from the proximity of 'domesticity', the constraints it places on women, and its ideological dominance by virtue of numbers of conforming individuals. In *Aurora Floyd* (1863) Mary Elizabeth Braddon describes the application of society's strictures to her eponymous protagonist's freedom:

> [Aurora] was sadly in need of some accomplished and watchful person, whose care it would be to train and prune those exuberant branches of her nature which had been suffered to grow as they would from her infancy. The beautiful shrub was no longer to trail its wild stems along the ground, or shoot upward to the blue skies at its own sweet will; it was to be trimmed and clipped and fastened primly to the stone wall of society with cruel nails and galling strips of cloth.[183]

A possible interpretation is that, in *WW*, society's conventional notions of lady-like behaviour have limited this artist's endeavour and doomed it in the absence of a symbolic ladder of education,

---

[180] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.
[181] 'A Question: Are men naturally cleverer than women?', *EWJ,* 2, 11 (January 1859), p. 336.
[182] 'Female Artists', *EWJ*, (May 1858), p. 205.
[183] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Aurora Floyd*, ed. by P. D. Edwards (1863; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 50.

aspiration, and professional support. This coded reference to the nature and panoply of problems encountered by women artists includes, in the allegorical portrayal of her cramped location, the literal lack of study/work-space available to women. With exceptions such as of the schools of Henry Sass (later Cary's), Thomas Heatherley, and the Female School of Art, many art-schools offering tuition did not accept women.[184] The naturalised expectations that women artists had to carve out space to work within the domestic environment are borne out in contemporary novels such as Dinah Craik's *Olive* (1850) and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). Olive makes 'her studio' in a 'corner of their large drawing-room'; the home she shares with her mother.[185] Helen's remark to visitors to Wildfell Hall, 'I must welcome you to my studio', clarifies that her studio is within her home.[186]

The portrayal of the 'Four Ages of Man' in *WW* may be regarded as an articulation of the issues faced by modern Victorian women, and the constraints placed on their prospects. One effect was to produce women like Lucy Floyd from Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* [hereafter *Floyd*] who was 'exactly the sort of woman to make a good wife. She had been educated to that end by a careful mother. Purity and goodness had watched over her and hemmed her in from her cradle'.[187] Standing just beyond the margin defining domesticity is the 'Upright Female' linked to this group by her proximity and concern with household matters. This woman not only supplied a solution to the issues created by domestic confinement but exemplified the journal's conception of an ideal woman equipped to deal with such problems.

[184] Jo Devereux, 'The Evolution of Victorian Women's Art Education, 1858-1900: Access and Legitimacy in Women's Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 50, 4 (Winter 2017), p. 752.
[185] Dinah Craik, *Olive*, ed. by Cora Kaplan (1850; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 134.
[186] Charlotte Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, eds., Herbert Rosengarten and Josephine McDonagh (1848; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 40.
[187] Braddon, *Aurora*, p. 48.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': the portrayal of the 'Upright Female'

In an 1861 *EWJ* article, 'A Year's Experience in Woman's Work', Parkes' description of women struggling to support themselves unconsciously provided a portrait of the journal's idealised woman. These qualities and accomplishments included 'a good and refined education', and the habits, dress, and 'countless moral and material associations' of the rank of lady. In one important respect the *EWJ* departed from the mid-Victorian notion of what constituted a lady and lady-like behaviour, discounting as it did 'false notions of gentility' while instead valourising 'women working bravely at whatever comes nearest to hand.'[188] Multiple details in the representation of the 'Upright Female' accord with the journal's conception of an ideal modern woman: the adjacent furniture, her accessories, dress, deportment, and reading material.[189]

Figure 42. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

[188] Parkes, 'Experience', *EWJ*, (October 1860), p. 115.
[189] See 'Passing Events', *EWJ* (April 1859), p. 142.

Beside the 'Upright Female' is a distinctive piece of furniture circled red in Figure 42. This artefact resembles a Victorian sewing table, as shown in Figure 43.[190]

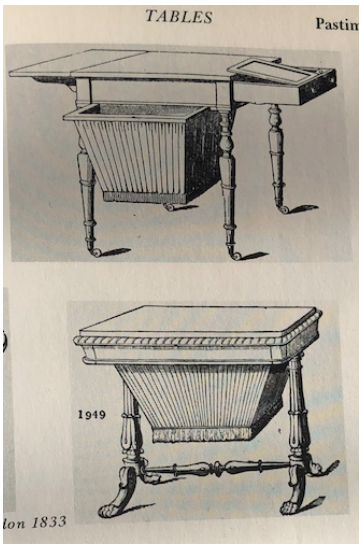



Figure 43. Detail from 'Tables: Pastimes and other special functions', *The Pictorial Dictionary of British Nineteenth Century Furniture Design* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors' Club, *c.*1977), p. 535, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

The coloured 'box' – more a bag – hanging beneath the table was used to hold sewing materials.[191] An 1858 *EWJ* article anticipated the impact the American sewing machine would have in England, 'The introduction of the sewing machine will gradually banish the *chief domestic industry* which yet remains [my emphasis].'[192] Sewing was construed as a domestic activity and, in its ubiquitous representation in literature (for example, in Gaskell's *North and South* and Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (1849)) and visual art, it symbolised devotion to a well-ordered home.[193]

Hanging from a chain (presumably attached to a girdle around her waist) the 'Upright Female' wears a chatelaine, circled blue in Figure 42. Linda Young explains that:

[190] I am indebted to the late Dr Antony Buxton for his help in identifying this piece of furniture.
[191] Antique Collectors' Club, *The Pictorial Dictionary of British Nineteenth Century Furniture Design* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors' Club, *c.*1977), p. 535.
[192] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p.1. See also Bodichon, *Women*, p. 8.
[193] See Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, ed. by Angus Easson (1854-5; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 192. Also, Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley*, eds., Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith (1840; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 70.

> The chatelaine [was] a neo-medieval hooked ornament to hang on the belt or waistband, from which were suspended eight to ten miniature domestic tools and trinkets on individual chains, a mixture of the modern Swiss Army knife and the charm bracelet.[194]

Caricatures and sketches, by John Leech and Richard Doyle respectively (Figures 44 and 45), confirm the chatelaine's popularity and associations with middle-class femininity.[195]


Figure 44. John Leech, 'The Chatelaine; a really useful present', *Punch*, 16 (January 1849), p. 16, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library


Figure. 45. Richard Doyle, *Exhibition at the Royal Academy*, 1849, 15.2 × 13.4cm, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

That the chatelaine was equally considered an important accessory, associated with genuine domestic effort (and not simply a mere emblem) is noted by Eleanor Rose, the:

> chatelaine's popularity as an accessory in the 1860s appears to have been due to a growing Victorian belief in the importance of rational housekeeping in a woman's life. While

[194] Linda Young, *Middle Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 171.
[195] Also, John Leech, 'How to Make a Chatelaine a Real Blessing to Mothers', *Punch*, 16 (24 February 1849), p. 78.

> chatelaines could be beautiful and quite ornate, they told the world that a woman had domestic responsibilities and she took those responsibilities seriously.[196]

That the chatelaine might be a signal of a serious attitude to domesticity, and also a signal of rank, is evident from one of Claxton's own illustrations, 'Servants Here. Servants There.'[197] Relaxing within the basement quarters of an aristocratic household the woman furthest left is distinctly a servant, but her posture and location, slightly displaced from the generality of staff and closest to a warming fire, indicates what the accompanying text confirms: 'she who succeeds in establishing herself in such a kitchen as that represented in our Engraving has attained a great social status'.[198]

Figure 46. Florence Claxton, 'Servants Here. Servants There', *Illustrated Times*, 3, 444 (19 September 1863), p. 185 Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Nestling on her lap, circled in Figure 46, is a chatelaine. While the fine material of the costume of the 'Upright Female' of *WW* seems to place her station above that of a servant, her possession of a chatelaine symbolises her genuine concern and willingness to engage directly with domestic tasks.

---

[196] Eleanor Rose, 'Chatelaines: A Victorian Fashion Statement' <https://civilwartalk.com/threads/chatelaines-a-victorian-fashion-statement.153504/> [accessed January 2021].
[197] 'Servants Here', *Illustrated Times*, (19 September 1863), p. 185.
[198] Ibid., p. 184.

Yeldham suggests that the inclusion of the chatelaine:

> may also have been a deliberate reminder (given Claxton's involvement with the satiric press) of a Leech illustration in *Punch* in which the leader of a demonstration advocating 'WOMEN for WOMEN'S WORK' wears a chatelain also featuring a pair of scissors.[199]

This cartoon by Leech is the second of a pair shown in Figures 47 and 48. The scissors described by Yeldham are shown circled blue, and the proto-feminist banner red, in Figure 48.


Figure 47. John Leech, 'Who will serve the Country', *Punch*, 33 (3 October 1857), p. 141, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian


Figure 48. John Leech, 'We'll serve the Shop', *Punch*, 33 (3 October 1857), p. 140, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian

The captions of both figures play on the concept of 'service' (in either shop or for country), and the accompanying poem 'Drumming for the Drapers' is a rallying cry for men to 'spurn the effeminate shop' and heed the refrain 'sergeants are busy recruiting'.[200] Women's reply, 'We'll serve the shop', indicates their responding willingness to supply the place of men. Evidently, scissors were perceived as metonym reflecting the profession of the wearer, as in Figure 47 where a man in the background has scissors (circled green) on a chain. In Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives Tale* (1908), Constance, daughter of a draper, 'wore the black alpaca apron and the scissors at the end of long black elastic,

[199] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 93.
[200] 'Drumming for the Drapers', *Punch*, 33 (3 October 1857), p. 138.

which indicated her vocation in the shop.'[201] The scissors in Leech's cartoon (of Figure 48) resemble less the multi-tooled accessory of the chatelaine than a single tool-of-the-trade for a draper. Given this context, Yeldham's claim that the chatelaine in *WW* serves as a link to proto-feminism seems unlikely.

An alternative argument is that the metonymic chatelaine is signalling the opposite: a vocation and willingness to embrace domesticity. This item's inclusion within the representation of a female autodidact (the 'Upright Female' holds a book) suggests that her educational progress is not inevitably made at the cost of abandoning domestic concerns. The most pronounced version of the autodidact was the 'strong-minded' woman who sacrificed her looks and her family in the interests of pursuing learning and opinions. The 'Upright Female' conforms to neither extreme: she is young and attractive yet lacks the crinoline worn by the fashionable young woman surrounding the swell. In a parallel with Bodichon's assertion that a professional life and love were not mutually exclusive, the pursuit of knowledge made by the 'Upright Female' does not preclude her concern with domesticity.

[201] Arnold Bennett, *The Old Wives' Tale*, ed. by John Wain (1908; repr. London: Penguin, 1987), p. 101. Page 114 states that this takes place 'in the sixties' while John Wain's introduction to this edition places this section of the novel in 1864.

How far the representation of the 'Upright Female' in *WW* differs from the stereotype of 'strong-mindedness' might be gauged from another of Claxton's own illustrations shown circled red in Figure 49.

Figure 49. Detail from Claxton, *Art Students, South Kensington* (1861), pen and watercolour, 15.5 × 23.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Victoria and Albert Museum

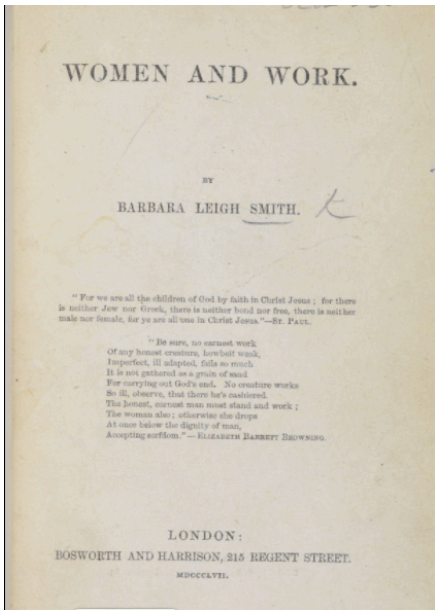
Various attributes typify this caricature, as exemplified in Figure 49: a pinched face and sour expression (a hardened countenance the result of exposure to public life, quite unlike typical notions of blooming femininity as circled blue), a prop such as a book or painting palette, and glasses registering an excessive devotion to some form of study.[202] In Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) Sir Harry Towers describes his wishes for a marriage partner: 'I don't want a strong-minded woman, who writes books and wears green spectacles'.[203] Not only is the 'Upright Female' free of glasses, but her expression is placid and a gentle smile lights her face. Yeldham observes, from her close observation of the original painting, that this woman's age is 'uncertain'.[204] However, she is not distinctly aged and her hair, wound in a plait around her head, appears youthfully luxuriant. This portrait of the 'Upright Female', in conflating elements of the domestic and didactic while avoiding

[202] Stella Mary Newton, *Health, art & reason: dress reformers of the 19th century* (London: John Murray, 1974), p. 60.
[203] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret*, ed. by Lyn Pykett (1862; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) p. 113.
[204] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 93.

the stereotype of either extreme, is a distinctive representation of a modern woman – one that might be said to be modelled both on the ideas of the *EWJ* and the figure of Bodichon.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': Lawyer and Cleric

Adjacent to the 'Upright Female' stands a lawyer whose right hand bears a scroll inscribed, 'MIGHT versus RIGHT'.[205] This, again, is one of a pattern of intertexts linking the composition with contemporary discourses, and particularly Bodichon. The title page of Bodichon's pamphlet *Women*, Figure 50, shows that it included two epigraphs. The first, from St Paul (Galatians) and the second lines from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856):[206]



WOMEN AND WORK.

BY

BARBARA LEIGH SMITH.

"For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—ST. PAUL.

"Be sure, no earnest work
Of any honest creature, howbeit weak,
Imperfect, ill adapted, fails so much
It is not gathered as a grain of sand
For carrying out God's end. No creature works
So ill, observe, that there he's cashiered.
The honest, earnest man must stand and work;
The woman also; otherwise she drops
At once below the dignity of man,
Accepting sufferance."—ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

LONDON:
BOSWORTH AND HARRISON, 215 REGENT STREET.
MDCCCLVII.

Figure 50. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Women and Work* (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1857), p. 4, British Library, London © British Library

Be sure, no honest work
Of any honest creature, howbeit weak,
Imperfect, ill adapted, fails so much

[205] Ibid.
[206] 'For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus – St. Paul' (Galatians 3.26-8).

> It is not gathered as a grain of sand
> For carrying out God's end. No creature works
> So ill, observe, that there he's cashiered.
> The honest, earnest man must stand and work;
> The woman also; otherwise she drops
> At once below the dignity of man,
> Accepting serfdom.[207] (8, ll. 705-15)

Barret Browning's blank verse and Bodichon's prose both engage with the same topic expressed more pithily, but brutally, on the crumpled scroll held by the lawyer. *Aurora Leigh* and *Women* both bolster their arguments for women's rights by harnessing it to a Christian framework. In *WW* the 'anti-woman' rhetoric of the scroll is not provided with a Christian endorsement as it is placed – not in the hands of the adjacent cleric – but those of a secular lawyer. This detail hints that, while the law still bound women in an inferior legal position that might be backed by the threat of violence, this condition was man-made and should not be given the approval of Christian doctrine.

The 'Upright Female' is flanked by two men, both powerful in the sense that each represents an upstanding profession. Despite their close proximity and entreaties, and in particular the threatening posture of the lawyer, the 'Upright Female' appears serene. The lawyer's gestures (one clenched raised hand is brandishing the scroll while his second hand is aggressively pointing downward to the ground) and his full-frontal confrontation of the 'Upright Female', combine to strongly suggest that she has inspired his ire. The subject of one of Bodichon's publications, and a journal review of this work, provide context that could explain the representation of this inter-relationship. The fact that Bodichon identified the law as crucial to any advance of women's interests is evident in her choice of subject for an early publication. Her summary of Wharton's 550-page *Exposition on the Laws Relating to the Women of England* (1853) was a short book titled *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the most important Laws of England concerning Women, together with a few Observations thereon* (1854) [hereafter *Brief Summary*]. An 1869 review of Bodichon's *Brief Summary* in the *Westminster Review* observed:

> She [Bodichon] does what professional lawyers have no mind or heart to do, that is, she "codifies" the part of the English law which specifically concerns women. There are some

[207] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh,* ed. by Kerry McSweeny (1856; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 282.

> cases where the proverb may fairly be reversed, and "angels step in where fools fear to tread."[208]

Bodichon's publication might have inspired irritation, even anger, within a conservative faction of the legal profession. Equally, considering the scroll in the lawyer's hand as a representation of the material object of Bodichon's pamphlet *Women* – a publication engaging with the ideas raised by the proposition of the scroll's intertext – provides a context for the lawyer's treatment of the scroll. In the gesture towards the rug, the lawyer is asserting his patriarchal 'might' to order the 'Upright Female' to concern herself purely with (less elevated) domestic concerns. This ironic inter-text (given the concern of law to deliver justice even in the face of threat) encourages the reader/viewer to consider Bodichon's advocacy: 'RIGHT' a playful allusion to the proto-feminist advocacy in the forum of masculine power represented by 'MIGHT'.

Yeldham's interpretation of this intertext claims that 'MIGHT versus RIGHT' may reference 'a fable by Aesop in which the lion keeps the shares of the other animals, the moral of which is 'Might too often makes itself a right''. [209] Certainly, Aesop and the lion, as metaphor and image, are significant to Claxton's visual and textual treatment of power as a recurring theme in *WW*, and in fact, the painting's reverse is inscribed with a fable relating an exchange between a lion and a man. This fable, in the context of the composition as a material object and its themes, is a pictorial/textual form of 'meta-theatre'. As such, the fable draws attention to the composition's artistic nature, the limitations of representation, and the role of power in shaping that representation (this final point is particularly relevant to *WW* since the painting was created at a point where a predominantly patriarchal society defined 'woman's work'):

> A forester meeting with a lion, a dispute rose as to who was the stronger. They happened to pass by the statue of a man struggling with a lion. 'See there' said the man 'what better proof can you have of our superiority?' 'That' said the lion 'is your story let us be the sculptors and we will make the lion vanquish the man.' *Moral* No one is fair witness in his own cause. – *Aesop's Fables*.[210]

---

[208] 'Contemporary Literature: Politics, Sociology, Voyages and Travels', *The Westminster Review*, n.s. 36, 1 (July 1869), p. 255.
[209] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 93.
[210] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 89 and again, King, 'Feminist Arts', *Imagining Women,* p.174.

In a separate point Yeldham notes that the seated amateur female artist portraying the 'swell':

> has drawn him as a lion[211] – a play on Aesop deriving from Judge Hurlbut (and quoted by Leigh Smith [Bodichon]) in which the lion is not oppressed by man (as in Claxton's quotation on the reverse of her painting) but the oppressor of woman.[212]

The above quotation concludes Yeldham's observation in relation to this point and, beyond this brief mention that Bodichon quotes 'Judge Hurlbut', *The Lawe's Resolutions of Women's Rights* (1632) [hereafter *Lawe*], Yeldham does not link these references back to the representation of the 'Upright Female'.

Teasing out the elements of the densely interwoven strands of intertextuality reveals more clearly the place of Bodichon's ideas within the painting and their relationship to the 'Upright Female'. The first such strand is Bodichon's *Brief Summary* where, to make a point about women's legal status on marriage, Bodichon included a quotation citing *Lawe* as her source. This paragraph used the metaphor of converging rivers to explain how, on marriage, a woman's legal identity is subsumed by the more powerful male party. It concludes, 'The mastership shee is fallen into [through marriage] may be called in a terme which civilians borrow from Esop's Fables, *Leonina societate* [*sic*].'[213]

In defining 'Societas Leonina' Webster's Dictionary elucidates the reference to *Leonina societate* in *Lawe*:

> Among the Roman lawyers this term signified that kind of society or partnership by which the entire profits should belong to some of the partners in exclusion of the rest.
> It was so called in allusion to the fable of the lion and the other animals, who having entered into partnership for the purpose of hunting, the lion appropriated all the prey to himself.[214]

---

[211] *OED*, 'lion' 4.b.: A person of note or celebrity. Also E.R.C. Lorac, *Post after Post-Mortem,* ed. by Martin Edwards (1936; repr. London: The British Library, 2022), p. 40. And also, Redding Ware, *Passing English of the Victorian Era: A Dictionary of Heterodox English, Slang, and Phrase* (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1909), p. 169: 'Lion comique' was 'a way of describing the *leading* comic singer (my emphasis)' in the Music Hall of 1880.

[212] Yeldham, 'Work', n. 55, p. 97: 'Judge Hurlbut, *The Lawe's Resolutions of Women's Rights* (1632). The passage in which he made this identification was quoted by Bodichon in *Brief Summary* in which her main complaint (p. 14) was the 'unjust power' held by husbands over the wives' property and earnings.

[213] Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the most important Laws of England concerning Women, together with a few Observations thereon* (London: John Chapman, 1854), p. 14.

[214] 'Leonina societate' <https://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/Societas%20leonina#:~:text=SOCIETAS%20LEONINA.,in%20exclusion%20of%20the%20rest.> [accessed October 2020].

Considering the current argument, that *WW* reflects Bodichon's social projects, it is possible to expand on Yeldham's brief observation of the connections between 'swell', the Aesop's fable on the composition's back, the scroll's inscription, and Bodichon's quotation. This web of mutually reinforcing intertextuality and visual imagery draws together ideas of power, marriage, resources, injustice, and inequality with precisely the same interpretation as that forwarded by Bodichon's publications. Moreover, these meanings gravitate around the locus and the figure of the 'Upright Female' where the tension between lawyer and woman reflects masculine 'might' versus female 'right(s)'.

Placed on the other side of the 'Upright Female' is a cleric with a scroll listing philanthropic and religious projects considered suitable for middle-class ladies: 'DISTRICT', 'SUNDAY SCHOOL', 'CHARITY' 'MATS IN EVERY VARIETY', 'FLOWER', 'WRITING TRACTS AND READING OF THE SAME'.[215] These words had a specific meaning in the fundraising and evangelical activities of Missionary Societies devoted to creating Victorian 'Missionary-baskets'. Brontë's *Shirley* describes the 'Missionary-basket' as:

> willow repositories, of the capacity of a good-sized family clothes-basket, dedicated to the purpose of conveying from house to house a monster collection of pin-cushions, needle-books, card-racks, workbags, articles of infant wear, etc., etc., etc., made by the willing or reluctant hands of the Christian ladies of a parish, and sold perforce to the heathenish gentlemen thereof, at prices unblushingly exorbitant. The proceeds of such compulsory sales are applied to the conversion of the Jews, the seeking up of the ten missing tribes, or to the regeneration of the interesting coloured population of the globe.[216]

Working parties were convened to work on such projects, as illustrated in Figure 51 from *A Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers: A Gift from the Church Missionary Society*, [hereafter *Quarterly Token*].

[215] Yeldham, Work, p. 93.
[216] Brontë, *Shirley*, p. 96.

Figure 51. Uncaptioned image to illustrate 'The Missionary Basket, and how to fill it', *A Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers*, 43 (October 1866), p. 5, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

While the image above accords with Brontë's description of hand-made items by middle-class ladies in working parties, the *Quarterley Token* did have contributions from poor working-class subscribers. Describing the funds collected by impoverished readers the journal noted money raised from the sale of flowers.[217] The same article noted the collection of detritus such as 'old rags', approvingly endorsing innovative approaches to the re-use and reworking of such otherwise discarded materials. In Trollope's *Rachel* his eponymous protagonist describes the Dorcas meetings of her sister as 'nasty rag meetings'.[218] The description of 'MATS IN *EVERY VARIETY* [my emphasis]' in *WW* may have been a reference to the recycling of rags into a variety of rag-rug mats; an artisan craft widely popular in the nineteenth century.[219]

The record of receipts in the *Quarterly Token*, financial contributions from Missionary boxes in January 1866, demonstrate that the fund raising effort was organised on a regional basis that would accord with the inclusion of the word 'DISTRICT' in the cleric's scroll of *WW*.[220] Newspaper adverts, for talks in church halls, show that the outreach of Missionary societies formed part of the efforts of the

[217] 'Interesting Contributions in the Last Annual Report', *A Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers,* (January 1866), p. 3-4.
[218] Trollope, *Rachel Ray*, (Oxford, Oxford World Classics, 2008), p. 21.
[219] 'Rag rug making' <https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/rag-rugging/> [accessed February 2024].
[220] 'Contributions', *Quarterly* (January 1866), p. 4.

organised church.[221] Indeed, the target audience of the *Quarterly Token* were the children that would attend Sunday School.

In particular, the scroll's heading 'LAWFUL OCCUPATIONS SINGLE WOMEN' and signature 'TRIVIALITY' conveys a specific unconscious bias of many mid-Victorians .[222] This bias is apparent in the portrayal of Godfrey Ablewhite, in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), who perceived his vocation as prescribing and directing women's voluntary efforts with their unquestioning acquiescence to his plans:

> Whenever there was a table with a committee of ladies sitting round it in council there was Mr. Godfrey at the bottom of the board, keeping the temper of the committee, and leading the dear creatures along the thorny ways of business.[223]

Drusilla Clack, Ablewhite's devoted acolyte, justifies her proselytising harassment of the Verinder family – leaving 'tracts' and 'reading' materials secreted within their home – as an act of Christian charity aimed at saving their souls. Figure 52, an illustration from the New York edition of *Moonstone,* shows a pinched and sour-faced Miss Clack hiding a tract titled 'SINNER STOP' within an album titled 'MUSIC'. The distinctive caricature of Miss Clack in *Moonstone* and scathing satire of 'Missionary-baskets' in *Shirley* suggest that contemporary society was receptive to negative portrayals of excessive, overbearing and hypocritical Christian devotion. In her cool detachment from the cleric's suggestions the 'Upright Female' in *WW* is registered not only as rejecting an insensitive (almost hectoring) approach to philanthropy, but also from meekly accepting a male conception of this vocation.

[221] 'Baptist Missions', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph,* 586, 2 (19 September 1863), p. 1.
[222] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 93.
[223] Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (1868; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 53.


Figure 52. Uncaptioned headnote vignette for the Second Period, *Harper's Weekly* (New York), 12, 590 (18 April 1868), p. 245, <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=harpersweekly> [accessed January 2021] © <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=harpersweekly>

In this context the representation of a cleric suggesting philanthropic projects to a woman might be understood as a critique of patriarchal dominance in society. The scroll's conclusion, in the use of the word 'TRIVIALITY', hints that masculine definition and direction of women's work had the power to diminish the meaning that such occupation, if self-directed, might have provided in women's lives.

As Beth Palmer observes, the *EWJ* sought to inform its readers to make their own judgements and supply sources for reader's future research. Further, as Palmer asserts, the editors

> cared deeply and thought carefully about readership. They asked themselves how they would engage and maintain readers and how the seemingly passive act of reading might be converted into, or re-imagined as, a dynamic feminist activity.[224]

In frequently addressing the topic of women's vocation the *EWJ* presented a variety of roles (both remunerative and voluntary) that readers might adopt.[225] Bodichon herself was very active in funding and directing philanthropic projects such as the creation of Girton College, Cambridge and Portman Hall School, London. Bodichon 'donated liberally to local hospitals and charities,' and the

[224] Beth Palmer, 'Reading Langham Place Periodicals at Number 19' in *Reading and the Victorians,* eds., Matthew Bradley and Juliet John (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 48.
[225] See advert for a pamphlet, '*Woman's work: or How she can Help the Sick', EWJ,* 5, 28 (June 1860), p. 280 and Bodichon, *Women*, p. 19.

autographed letter in Figure 53 shows that the direction of her income was under her own control: 'Dear Dr Bagshaw, Will you please give the enclosed £10 to your Hospital building fund'. [226]

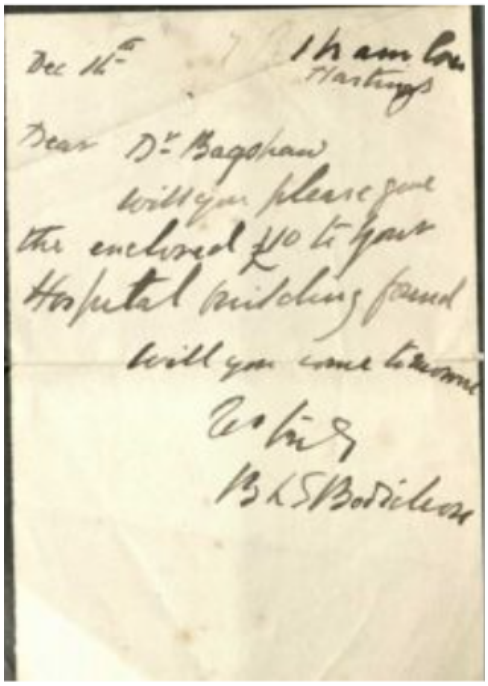



Figure 53. Autographed letter 'Dec. 14th', year unspecified, from Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon to Dr Bagshaw, AMS 7031/1, The Keep, Brighton © The Keep

Like the 'Upright Female' of *WW*, apparently independent of the counsel of two men, Bodichon was capable of defining, identifying, and pursuing her own charitable projects.

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': Costume

The mid-Victorian sensitivity towards women's roles extended to sartorial styling, a delicate topic that could make a political statement. The costume of the 'Upright Female', her skirts lacking the support of a crinoline, distinguishes her from the full-skirted seated women of the central group. The *Saturday Review*'s criticism of the newly founded *EWJ*'s proto-feminism – grouping the creation of the *EWJ*, the zeitgeist articulated in the slogan of 'Women and Work', progressive costume created for

[226] Bodichon to Dr Bagshaw (14 December *c.*1877), AMS 7031/1 in Lyndsey Tydeman, 'Women of Sussex – Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891)' < https://www.thekeep.info/women-of-sussex-barbara-leigh-smith-bodichon-1827-1891/> [accessed March 2021]. The repository of this letter (The Keep, East Sussex Records Office) notes Dr Bagshaw's name with the spelling Dr Bagshawe.

comfort rather than fashion, and women's health – provides an insight into how these issues were linked in contemporary public imagination:

> The facts that such a journal [*EWJ*] has been started – that "Women and Work" is now a cry of the day – that a movement has sprung up for what are called 'Women's Rights" – combined with such phenomena as "Madame Caplin's Anatomical Gallery for ladies only, where illustrative lectures on clothing in accordance with the anatomical construction of the body, and the physiological laws of the human organism, are delivered every Wednesday," and "Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell's Laws of Life, with reference to the physical education of Girls" – at least show that in the judgment of many, and certainly those deeply interested, there is something so wrong in the condition of English women generally, and unmarried ones in particular, that in all the departments of social life a woman's position requires elevating.[227]

A humorous article in the *EWJ* confirms this same link between politics and clothing. The narrator of this article describes a friend's traditional values, and concludes:

> She never adopted a single article of attire having the most remote affinity with any parts of the Bloomer costume, and is indeed as innocent of strong-minded propensities as any lamb![228]

'Bloomer costume' and 'strong-mindedness', both radical in the sense of deviating from conservative expectations of femininity, are linked; the former a sartorial expression of the latter's intellectual stance.

Two images created by Bodichon demonstrate her own rejection of the fashion for corsets and crinolines both of which, as described by Johnstone, were highly restrictive, uncomfortable, and unhygienic.[229] One of Bodichon's earliest published articles in the *Hastings and St Leonard's News* around 1848 illustrated the effects of tight lacing.[230] Figure 54 shows the illustration from this article when later printed by the offices of the *EWJ*. The dedication, 'to Elizabeth Blackwell M.D.,' and the images of crushed internal organs (annotated 'the vital organs compressed by stays' and circled green in Figure 54) links the illustration to a popular idea that corsets could damage a woman's physique. Several crinolined figures also appear, thus linking the negative associations of corsets onto the

---

[227] 'Journal', *Saturday Review* (10 April 1858), p. 369. Madame Caplin advertised in *The Times* between 1854-1861. See for example 'Madame Caplin's Anatomical and Physiological Gallery', *The Time*s, 23874 (7 March 1861), p. 1.
[228] 'Things in General' *EWJ*, 3, 18 (August 1859), p. 362.
[229] Johnstone, 'Corsets' < http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion/> [accessed October 2020].
[230] Tydeman, 'Women of Sussex' <https://www.thekeep.info/women-of-sussex-barbara-leigh-smith-bodichon-1827-1891/> [accessed May 2020].

crinoline. The *EWJ* also highlighted the fire-risk created by crinolines, and its use of the term 'extravagant' hints at a disapproval of the fashion:

> While on the subject of dress we would record here the numerous cases of burning, from the present extravagant use of crinoline, which have occurred within the last few weeks[...] At one ball five young ladies were in flames at once, the fire having spread from one to the other as they attempted to render assistance.[231]

The article's inclusion of the detail that women perished as a result of seeking to aid others, an impulse central to the journal's ethos, likewise suggests the journal's disapproval.

Bodichon's illustration in Figure 54 includes the annotation 'two figures from Giotto's Chapel, Padua', shown circled in red. The general outline of these latter outfits – relaxed and natural waistlines, shoulder detailing, central front seam, and round neckline – accords with the outfit of the 'Upright Female' and place it within a complex nexus of influences. The Pre-Raphaelite movement (with whom Bodichon was linked through her friendship with Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti)[232] favoured such loosely flowing garments for their models.[233] Likewise, 'artistic' and 'aesthetic' dress was popular amongst the creative and intellectual circles in which Bodichon moved.[234] (Bodichon's approach in this sketch, like many works by Claxton, makes use of pairings. As in *WW* one image portrays the problem, as created by stays, the other the solution of natural dress. For example, 'Flora at Naples' is compared to 'Flora at Mayfair', both circled blue in Figure 54).

[231] 'Passing Events', *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), p. 360.
[232] 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891), Artist and women's rights activist; benefactor of Girton College, Cambridge' <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/personExtended/mp00463/barbara-leigh-smith-bodichon?tab=biography> [accessed March 2022].
[233] See Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Lady Lilith* (1866-8), reworked 1872-3.
[234] Grace Victoria Bentley, 'Costume in Art & Artistic Dress' <https://costumesociety.org.uk/blog/post/costume-in-art-artistic-dress> [accessed March 2022].


Figure 54. Barbara Bodichon, 'Effects of Tight Lacing' (London: the offices of the English Woman's Journal, undated) <https://victorianweb.org/art/costume/undergarments/3.html> [accessed January 2021] © Marie-France Le Fel

The National Portrait Gallery attributes the unsigned sketch titled *Ye Newe Generation* (*c.* mid-1850s) in Figure 55 to Bodichon. Four women, thought to represent Parkes, Jane Benham, Howitt, and Bodichon are represented confronting a bull. Taken with a final sketch by Bodichon (Figure 56), all three images share a common concern with what mid-Victorian society would, in general, have perceived as unconventional (and hence politicised, effectively 'strong-minded') dress.

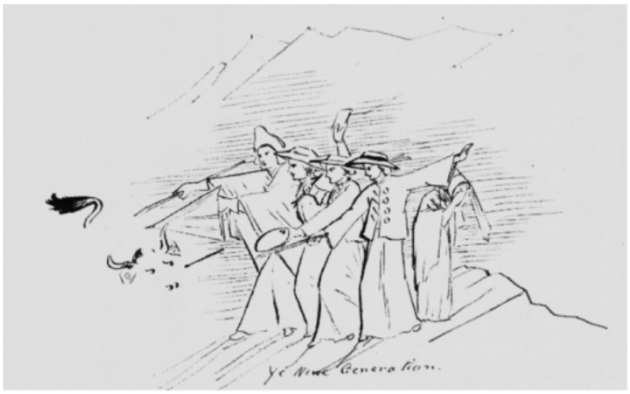



Figure 55. Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *Ye Newe Generation* (*c*. mid-1850s), GCPP Bodichon 8/6 pt [B505/4], Girton College, Cambridge © by kind permission of Girton College


Figure 56. Barbara Bodichon, cartoon of Bessie Rayner Parkes, reproduced from Hirsch, *Bodichon,* illustration 14a between pp. 190-1, GCPP Parkes 10/92 © by kind permission of Girton College

One theme in the representations of these activities (relaxing in society, bull-fighting, and hiking) is a costume appropriate for the task in hand. Stella Mary Newton notes that, though not the exclusive preserve of proto-feminists, such comfortable and 'work-appropriate' clothing was associated with 'strong minded women.'[235] This self-fashioning through costume is particularly significant for *Ye Newe Generation* (Figure 56). In this symbolic challenge to patriarchy (as in *WW,* the bull is again an emblem of masculinity) the women's shared impetus and movement to challenge authority is made possible by their loose dress.

Both the *EWJ* and Bodichon considered this subject sufficiently important to address in print. Issues included whether women should 'dress to please' themselves only, what exactly constituted good taste, and what precisely was 'The most suitable dress for women who are disposed or obliged to be actively useful.'[236] The anticipation of the journal's consensus in one contributor's letter suggests that readers were able to predict the costume approved by proto-feminists:

> The fashions most admired [by society], you will I think agree with me, are precisely those which incapacitate woman from fulfilling any duty, (setting aside that it is her "duty to please") while they endanger health and destroy life.[237]

[235] Newton, *Health*, pp. 59-63.
[236] M., 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 2, 11 (January 1859), p. 353.
[237] Ibid., p. 354.

(This final point is an allusion to the belief that tight corsets could result in miscarriage.) Although Bodichon's pamphlet *Women* was devoted to the various issues connected to the project of women's advancement, her 'Concluding remarks' set aside almost an entire page to discuss clothing:

> One of the practical impediments in the way of women working is the inconvenient modern dress, which is only suited to carpeted rooms, where it appears graceful and proper; in the streets, it is disreputable, dirty, and inconvenient. As long as women will not get out of their "long clothes," they deserve to be treated as babies.[238]

This makes explicit Bodichon's view that clothing was related to advancing 'Women's Work'. While Bodichon is careful to maintain the status quo, agreeing that modern dress could be 'graceful and proper', her blunt admonishment that women might deserve to be 'treated as babies' suggests a degree of impatience with the time and attention devoted to this subject.

Other aspects, in addition to costume, suggest that the 'Upright Female' of *WW* alludes to Bodichon's literal and symbolic figure. Figure 58, Bodichon's photograph in her carte-de-visite *c.* 1860, shows her in profile.[239] As Stephen Burstow notes, the carte-de-visite had 'stock studio settings and stereotyped poses'.[240] With respect to pose, the subject was typically presented straight (that is, full-face) to viewer. Bodichon's photograph is an example of the less usual side view. This perspective is shared by the 'Upright Female', in Figure 57, and both images have the same hair styling: a roll or plait across the crown of the head, although Bodichon's 'golden hair' is now translated into her dress colour.[241] This golden dress singles out the 'Upright Female' such that, while not placed centrally, her figure's impact within the composition hints at Bodichon's own charisma – an aspect of her personality evident from the recollections of close friends.[242] In fact, the position of the 'Upright Female' at the margins of the conventional genteel society, as represented by the domestic group, might be perceived as reflecting both Bodichon's 'deep frustration at the restraints imposed by social convention' and her view of herself not as a member of the landed gentry but on the side of the

---

[238] Bodichon, *Women,* p. 50.
[239] 'Bodichon' < https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw283432> [accessed January 2021].
[240] Stephen Burstow, 'The Carte de Viste and Domestic Digital Photography' <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/212691584.pdf> [accessed March 2021].
[241] Helen Blackman, *Women's Suffrage: A Record of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1902), p. 50.
[242] See Howitt's perception of Bodichon in Hirsch, *Bodichon*, pp. 44-5.

disenfranchised.[243] Holding a book and her own counsel, the 'Upright Female' is an exemplar of the ideal auto-didact that the *EWJ* sought to encourage, and a self-fashioned image of proto-feminist – a conflation of the intellectual and domestic as advocated by the *EWJ*. In all these respects the 'Upright Female' might have been modelled on the figure of Bodichon whose upbringing, marriage, and lifestyle set her apart from the contemporary model of genteel family life.

Figure 57. Detail from Claxton, *WW © The British Art Journal*

Figure 58. Detail of glass plate negative of André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri, sitter: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, *c.* 1860, albumen carte-de-visite, object no. NPG x200062, NPG, London © NPG

The 'Four Ages of Man' and the 'Upright Female': ennui

As a youthful letter records, Bodichon abhorred the idea of a wasted life:

> what is so sad so utterly black as a wasted life, and how common! I believe that there are thousands and tens of thousands who like you and I intend doing, - intend working but live and die, only intending.'[244]

Bodichon, and the *EWJ*, were explicit and direct in stating that dissatisfaction and malaise were the inevitable consequences of a vacuous conventional life that did not include rewarding employment:

[243] Rendall, 'Langham Place group', *ODNB*, and Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. viii.
[244] Bodichon to Parkes, *c.* 1840, quoted by Hirsch, *Bodichon*, pp. 35-6. Papers of Bessie Rayner Parkes, Girton 5/165.

> All the power, all the elastic spring which regular intermittent action [of work] bestow, is lost in the aimless uncertain current of their hours [...] they are defrauded of one of the chief sources of enjoyment included in the organisation of humanity.[245]

This issue, and the solution provided in useful employment, frequently exercised the *EWJ* and 'letters to the Editor'.[246]

Figure 59. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Beyond the edge of the rug, at the feet of the 'Upright Female', is a flagstone with the inscription: 'SACRED' [to the memory of] 'MARY ANN' 'DIED' [of] 'ENNUI' (circled red in Figure 59).[247] This conceit, based on the expression that one 'could die of boredom', is typical of the composition's light touch on a serious topic of concern for middle-class women: women such as Barbara Hare described by Ellen Wood in *East Lynne.* 'She [Barbara] seemed tired, not with fatigue, but with what the French express by the word *ennui*'.[248] Symbolically the gravestone reflects the effective waste of women's lives when robbed of an outlet for their vitality. Resting on this stone is one foot of the sewing table, and the surface of this table appears to be strewn with millinery, embroidery, and bead-

[245] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 9.
[246] See for example, A. Subscriber, 'Open Council: To the Editors of the English Woman's Journal', *EWJ*, 7, 41 (July 1861), p. 356.
[247] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.
[248] Mrs Henry Wood, *East Lynne*, ed. by Elisabeth Jay (1861; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 22.

work, all examples of (artistically low status) handicrafts to occupy the time of bored middle-class women.[249] (The sewing table's ambivalent location, an item relevant to both the 'Upright Female' and the 'Sunken Female', might be regarded as reflecting the duality of sewing as a Victorian middle-class task: utilitarian versus frippery, functional versus decorative).

The *EWJ* did not simply focus on defining ennui as the source of unproductive women's problems but also attempted to supply solutions. It considered in length and depth the range of activities and professional occupations that women might embark upon, marshalling a range of arguments to encourage women, and persuade their parents, that work was an essential component of a fulfilled life.[250] The *EWJ* questioned 'how far domestic duties ought to interfere with the devotion of young women to an art' and held up as an exemplar the attitudes of the lower middle-class that encouraged daughters into paid employment and away from idly indulging their aged parents.[251] Bodichon's earlier publication, *Women*, had laid out the same view but, unlike the secular arguments of the *EWJ*, the pamphlet framed the equality of women, and the necessity for their gainful occupation, as sanctioned by Christian teaching. In the first epigraph of the pamphlet's title page, before the excerpt from Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, Bodichon included a quotation from St Paul: 'For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'[252]

Bodichon's pamphlet's subtitle affirmed its central thesis, 'Women Want Professions.'[253] The text articulated an (ungendered) requirement to improve the status quo as a sacred duty:

> God sent *all human beings* into the world for the purpose of forwarding, to the utmost of their power, the progress of the world. We must each leave the world a little better than we found it [my emphasis].[254]

[249] See *Elegant Arts.*
[250] See Bodichon, *Women*, p. 45.
[251] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 8.
[252] Bodichon, *Women*, front matter.
[253] Ibid., p. 5.
[254] Ibid., p. 6. Bodichon is quoting from the New Testament, St Paul's letters to the Galatians, Galatians 3:28.

The gravitas of the 'Upright Female', bent on defining her own vocation, is a visual corollary of Bodichon's rhetoric. This representation, like the ideas articulated in Bodichon's pamphlet and the *EWJ*, symbolised a route to a useful and productive life. Adopting this approach, in Bodichon's view, avoided the squandering life's opportunities that resulted from a life inappropriately devoted to 'man' and the purely domestic, as portrayed in the group of the 'Four Ages of Man'.[255]

*The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists'*

Figure 60. Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': sexual politics

On the right hand of the painting, circled red in Figure 60, are two groups of women placed at the most elevated and most low-lying positions of any individuals portrayed within Claxton's composition. These two groups, described here as the 'Female Artists' and the 'Sunken Female' (the

[255] The *EWJ* did not oppose the institution of marriage. See 'Domestic Life', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), pp. 73-82 and the book review of H. Stallwood, 'Married Women at Home', *EWJ*, 5, 28 (June 1860), p. 28.

labels of the catalogue text) symbolise extreme notions of Victorian womanhood.[256] If the young women of the central domestic group reflect a general ideal, the 'Sunken Female' represents virtue's nadir while the 'Female Artists' shows an excess of ambition risking hubris.

This study argues that this specific vignette of 'issue' and 'solution' reflected a sexual dynamic rooted in Victorian mores; notions of femininity, and gender-specific attitudes to moral reputation that resulted in a resistance to the entry of women into professions such as medicine. Further, that the painting may be interpreted as portraying the masculine control and framing of women's reputation, and a consideration of how this might be linked to female ambition. In its examination of the highly complex representations of the 'Sunken Female'/'Female Artists' this section considers how these portrayals might relate to the contemporary plight of professional women artists. These conclusions are supported by evidence from Osborn's contemporaneous painting, *Nameless,* and its own depiction of a woman artist's predicament. The appearance of multiple correspondences between these works reinforces the sense of how significant these issues were the lives of aspiring women – reflected likewise in the rhetoric and projects of Bodichon.

In the painting's bottom right-hand corner a relaxed male figure is shown leaning against a door frame, close to and standing over a prostrate woman. The catalogue explication of this scene provides specific details for both figures, and their inter-relationship:

> [a] female has sunk, exhausted against a door, of which the medical profession holds the key; its representative is amused at her impotent attempts, he does not perceive that the wood is rotten and decayed in many places.[257]

By implying that the 'Sunken Female' was a candidate to study medicine, the catalogue implies that this is a virtuous woman. However, her visual representation in the composition contradicts the audience's understanding as mediated through the catalogue. This image accords with a distinct iconography: her tiered flounced skirt, suggestively open paletot or zouave jacket, and disordered

[256] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.
[257] Ibid.

hair, are all signifiers of the 'unrespectable woman or the prostitute'.[258] (The two women within *WW* that might be interpretated as prostitutes appear at the very margins of the composition and each wears yellow clothing. This compositional organisation, and the colour choice of costume, meets in, and links to, the golden dress of the respectable and idealised 'Upright Female'. Achieving such a balanced arrangement encourages the viewer to consider their commonality, underlines their shared humanity, and connects them with Bodichon's own lack of moral judgement on the topic of prostitution).[259]

Creating yet further confusion the 'Sunken Female' has her back turned to a worktable emblematic of the distracting handicrafts that women might seek in the absence of a fulfilling career. Her putative spurning of this traditional outlet might be interpreted as the necessary cost of pursuing a profession such as medicine: a determination that demanded the rejection of conventional distractions and extending as far as a disregard of conventional morality. This complex and contradictory presentation, mediated jointly through image and text, reflects the difficulties in this period of an artistic rendering of immorality. *WW* resolves this by ambiguous and conflicting signals, where an unwelcome interpretation might be disavowed in highlighting evidence of its opposite.

[258] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 41.
[259] See B., 'Muloch', *Leader* (19 August 1854), p. 783.

Figures 61 and 62. Details from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Counterpointing the abject posture of the woman, the 'medical professional' appears relaxed. With his weight braced against the frame of the door, his casual posture does not suggest that imminent assistance will be provided to the woman positioned at his feet. Held almost playfully in his right hand is a key that literally and symbolically bars female entry to the medical profession: an allegory for the wider exclusion of women from many professions. This portrayal of the looming man, combined with the catalogue text's description that he 'does not perceive that the wood is rotten and decayed in many places', is a coded reference for male complacency towards a status quo of masculine superiority.[260] This gendered primacy is emphasised by the inclusion of two further keys hanging on the wall, not referenced within the catalogue, circled blue in Figure 61.[261] The possibility that the door is opened by not one, but two keys, available and under the control of the adjacent man, serves to highlight the sunken woman's lack of agency and disenfranchisement.

[260] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.
[261] See Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.

This vignette captures a scene defining and framing sexual difference and it is significant that it was produced in a period where, in general, society adopted widely different attitudes towards sexual matters for women and for men. This was the (sexual) double standard implicit in the adage coined by Trollope: 'every vice may be forgiven in a man [...] though every virtue was expected from a woman.'[262] In Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853) the relationship of characters towards the eponymous protagonist can be traced back to their willingness to condemn a 'fallen woman' as effectively lost and worthless. In this cultural context the representation in *WW* of a prostitute, over whom stands a man considering and judging her while toying with a key held to his mouth suggests an alternative, sexual, allusion.

This key might be interpreted as an emblem of sexual knowledge in which this object is the active 'male' agent for a 'female' lock.[263] His mouth, a moue resembling the rosebud of a resistant sphincter, becomes the fantasy threshold of female penetration with a phallic key. His potency, mediated by upright position and possession of the key, is contrasted with the woman's 'impotent attempts' and location slumped on the ground. The catalogue's description of this man, 'the medical profession holds the key; its representative *is amused* at her impotent attempts [my emphasis],' further hints that he harbours fantasies of sadomasochism and sexual domination.[264] This image of masculine dominance, resulting in female submission and despondency, might be interpreted as a wider allusion to the contemporary context of a patriarchal order. In this schema men not only bar the advance of women but take sexual pleasure in their power. However, the catalogue did offer the audience a decorous interpretation for each of the elements of key, and male/female postures. This, effectively, was an approach to representation that permitted interpretation according to bias and sexual experience.

Unlike the *EWJ* co-founder Matilda Hays, Bodichon, and the journal itself, did not explicitly blame men or a patriarchal system for the contemporary plight of women. (In April 1862 Hays, in her own

[262] Trollope, *Live*, p. 15.
[263] See John B. Bullen *Rossetti, Painter & Poet* (London: Frances & Lincoln, 2011), p. 74 and his discussion of fabric in Rossetti's *Found* (*c.* 1854).
[264] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.

name, published a letter in *The Times* highly critical of the 'lords of creation' that compared marriage with legalised prostitution.)[265] Janice Schroender's examination of the measured response of the *EWJ* to criticism of its journalism demonstrates how carefully the editors (including Bodichon) worked to form a strategy to deal with criticism related to their gender.[266] Further, Bodichon's published views on the 'accursed trade' of prostitution did not condemn men for the exploitation of women, instead she considered how education and employment could lift women out of extreme poverty.[267] As with this vignette in *WW*, Bodichon's publications detailed the position and literal obstacles limiting women's advance (such as a lack of education), leaving the reader to interpret the broader politics of how and why women were so placed. The journal's ethos focused on progress through inclusion affirming that it: 'advocates nothing so much as the union of the now divided sexes, from the nursery upwards, at every stage and in all the phases of life.'[268]

Bodichon's approach in *Women* stressed the same message, harnessing biblical authority for her assertion that both genders were equal in the eyes of God. While she confronted obstacles and unflinchingly addressed them, she refrained from marginalizing her (chiefly male) critics by censure. However, the journal, and Bodichon, *did* highlight attitudes responsible for, and perpetuating, the unequal treatment of women – as in the differentiated approach to the education of girls and boys.[269] The fact that the image's allusion and critique of a patriarchal power base appears more explicit than Bodichon's cautious and politic text is partly due to the ability of the latter to generalise while an idea must be rendered concrete by an image.

[265] Matilda M. Hays, 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 24232 (29 April 1862), p. 14.
[266] Janice Schroeder, "Better Arguments': The *English Woman's Journal* and the Game of Public Opinion', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35, 3 (Fall 2002), p. 254.
[267] B., 'Muloch', *Leader* (August 1854), p. 783.
[268] 'Passing', *EWJ*, (April 1859), p. 144.
[269] 'Why boys are cleverer than girls', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), p. 116.

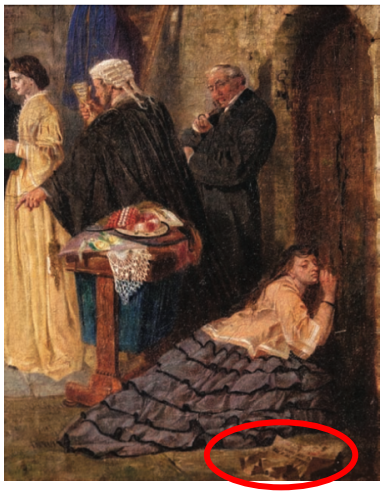


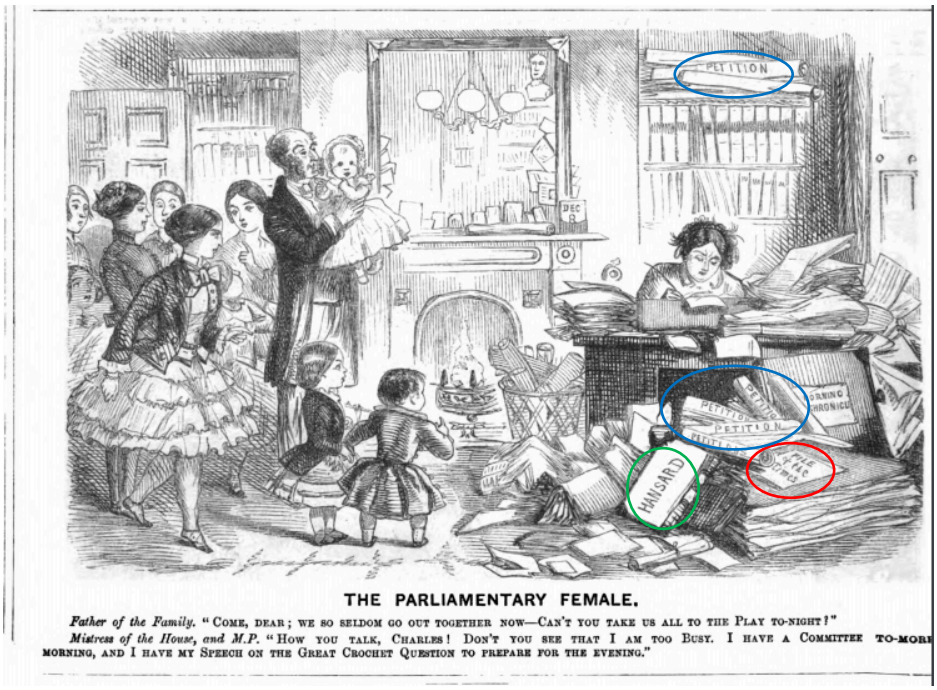
Figure 63. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

On the ground, close by the sunken woman's skirts, is a crumpled document with the heading 'Petition' (circled red in Figure 63).[270] The significance of petitions for women's rights, and the shifting public mood towards such documents, can be guaged by the later reworking of a Leech cartoon originally published in the 1850s. The humour of his 1853 *Punch* cartoon (shown in Figure 64) 'The Parliamentary Female' played on contemporary anxieties: a negative perception of the role of (middle-class) women advancing beyond the boundaries of home.[271] The outlandish and, to some *Punch* readers, comedic nature of the cartoon's title as a reality is reflected by the fact that women did not then have a vote. (The first woman Member of Parliament was not elected for a further fifty years.) In the bottom right-hand corner sits an object similar to a large scrap-book with an intertext (circled red), 'File of the Times'. 'File' appears in capitals, but a different typeface (resembling the gothic script then employed by the newspaper *The Times*) is used for the end of this intertext: 'the Times'. This suggests that the file contains clippings from that newspaper but equally – given the topicality of the cartoon's subject – a near-pun on the humorous alternative, 'Sign of the Times'. As a 'Sign of the Times' the gendered role-reversal reflects the perception of conservative opinion: the

[270] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.
[271] See also, George du Maurier, 'Lady Physicians', *Punch*, 49 (23 December 1865), p. 248 a parody of Jan Steen's *The Lovesick Maiden* (*c.* 1660).

(middle-class) fear that male emasculation was linked to the domestic enfranchisement of women then free to work outside the home.

Alongside a prominent copy of Hansard (circled green) are multiple bound copies of petitions shown stacked on the floor and the bookcase's top shelf (circled blue). While the 'Parliamentary Female' is evidently retaining files of relevant articles from newspapers and Parliamentary proceedings, the comparative number of files containing petitions suggest that petitions are *the* medium to forward her ambitions. The presence of these three types of files highlights the profile of petitions (on women's issues, that is, 'female petitions') within the public discourse, and suggests such petitions are responsible, or at least involved, in creating domestic tension and strife based on gender. Another detail connecting women's activism with Parliament is the speech prefix of man and wife. The husband is titled 'Father of the Family,' however, the wife is not 'Mother of the Family', but rather 'Mistress of the House, and M.P.' The most pointed misogynistic barb is the final line of the mother's dialogue:




THE PARLIAMENTARY FEMALE.

*Father of the Family.* "COME, DEAR; WE SO SELDOM GO OUT TOGETHER NOW—CAN'T YOU TAKE US ALL TO THE PLAY TO-NIGHT?"

*Mistress of the House, and M.P.* "HOW YOU TALK, CHARLES! DON'T YOU SEE THAT I AM TOO BUSY. I HAVE A COMMITTEE TO-MORROW MORNING, AND I HAVE MY SPEECH ON THE GREAT CROCHET QUESTION TO PREPARE FOR THE EVENING."

Figure 64. John Leech, 'The Parliamentary Female', *Punch* (Punch's Almanack), 24 (January 1853), page unnumbered, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

> *Mistress of the House, and M.P.* "How you talk, Charles! Don't you see that I am too busy. I have a Committee tomorrow morning, and I have my speech on the Great Crochet Question to prepare for the evening."[272]

The same image (as shown in Figure 64) was republished in 1868 (after Leech's death in 1864), in *Four Hundred Humourous Illustrations* (Figure 65).[273] In this volume many of Leech's cartoons were faithfully reproduced from an original version, or with a tiny grammatical change. For example, 'The Chatelaine; a really useful present' (1849) became, 'The Chatelaine – a really useful present' (1869) and, 'Something the matter with the kitchen boiler' became, 'A Trifle the Matter with the Kitchen Boiler.'[274] In comparison, the 'Parliamentary Female' cartoon had undergone significant alterations.

The 'Parliamentary Female' title, absurd in 1853, was now replaced with a more reasonable proposition: 'The Female of the Future'. The words 'on the Great Crochet Question' were elided thus removing the earlier imputation that women were incapable of rising to matters of real public concern. Finally, the wife's second sentence, formerly presented as a blunt statement and thus suggesting overbearing intolerance towards her husband, now reads somewhat more gently as a question. Overall, this is a more sympathetic portrayal of the wife in which her hectoring behaviour is toned down:

> *Mistress of the House, and M.P.* "How you talk, Charles! Don't you see that I am too busy? I have a Committee tomorrow morning, and I have my speech to prepare for the evening.[275]

While the illustration retained a degree of mockery at the expense of women, its placement in some future period combined with the elision and question mark, suggested that public feeling in the interim period had shifted in women's favour.

---

[272] John Leech, 'The Parliamentary Female', *Punch*, (Punch's almanack), 24 (January 1853), page unnumbered.
[273] John Leech, 'The Female of the Future', *Four Hundred Humorous Illustrations* (London: Simpkins, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.,1869), p. 179 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/44801/44801-h/44801-h.htm#link179> [accessed October 2021].
[274] John Leech, 'The Chatelaine; a really useful present', *Punch,* 16 (January 1849), p. 16; 'The Chatelaine – a really useful present' in *Four Hundred,* p. 57; 'Something the matter with the kitchen boiler', *Punch,* 26 (January 1854), p. 24; 'A Trifle the Matter with the Kitchen Boiler', *Four Hundred*, p. 157.
[275] Leech, 'The Female of the Future', *Four Hundred*, p. 179.

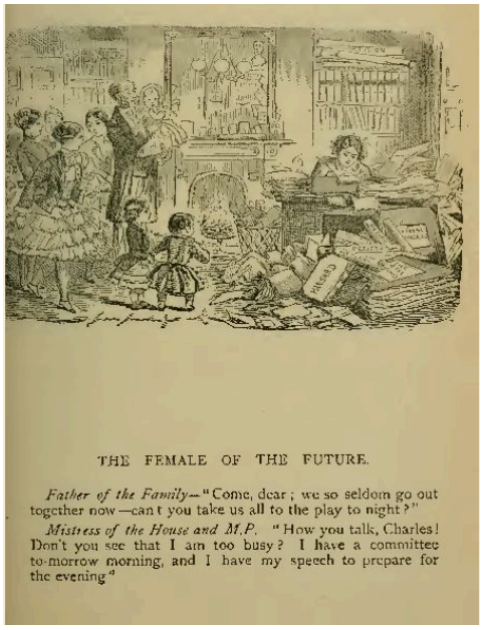



Figure 65. John Leech, 'The Female of the Future' (1868), p. 179 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/44801/44801-h/44801-h.htm#link179> [accessed January 2021] © <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/44801/44801-h/44801-h.htm#link179>

*WW* was created almost exactly half-way into the fifteen-year period defined by the dates of these two cartoons. While the idea of 'female petitions' may (for some) have remained somewhat comic, or even slightly threatening, the idea (not least resulting from Bodichon's own efforts with the 1856 petition in favour of women's rights) appears to have been gaining traction and serious attention.[276] However, the framing vignette to the inclusion of a 'female petition' in *WW* recalls the negative associations of a challenge to patriarchal order. The document's incorporation within a representation of prostitution (by virtue of its proximity to the figure of the 'Sunken Female') suggests that this political tool might be deemed appropriate and relevant to the most desperate of all the 'issues' represented within *WW*.

Claxton and Bodichon both signed the 1859 petition to admit women students to the Schools of the Royal Academy.[277] Pam Hirsch asserts that the 1859 petition was a campaign mounted by Bodichon although no letters or evidence are provided by Hirsch to substantiate this assertation, which is instead based on the fact that 'it had all the hallmarks of a seasoned political campaign.'[278]

[276] Bodichon, *Women*, p. 19 and 'Saturday Evening' *London Evening Standard*, 9856 (15 March 1856), p. 2.
[277] 'Academy', *Athenaeum,* (30 April 1859), p. 581.
[278] Hirsch, *Bodichon,* p. 165.

Certainly, Bodichon *was* a leading figure in the huge effort, instigated in 1856, of the 'chain-letter' strategy that amassed signatures for the petition, 'The Married Women's Property Act'. This project had its roots in Bodichon's 1854 pamphlet summarising the law in relation to women's issues, the point described by Parkes as where: 'she [Bodichon] began *her work* [my emphasis].'[279] Parkes perceived that Bodichon's seminal achievements (of improving the position and opportunities for women) was effected through the law by forms of lobbying. Bodichon's social/political connections and the publication of this pamphlet (relating to the laws concerning married women) brought her into the milieu of 'influential men connected with the Society for the Amendment of the law' such as Lord Brougham.[280] One offshoot of this project was the foundation of the 'Society for the Promotion of Social Sciences', and Parkes implicitly connected this to Bodichon's efforts.[281] Claxton's trademark of 'astute satire on hot topics' took this Society as its subject in 1863.[282] The caption to Claxton's illustration 'Social Science: A New Opening for Female Labour' (shown in Figure 66) playfully reversed gender roles to make fun of the Society's efforts to find new avenues for women's employment.


Figure 66. Claxton, Social Science (1863), *London Society*, 4, (1863), p. 361, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

[279] Belloc, 'Bodichon', *Review*, (15 July 1891), p. 146.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid.
[282] Van Remoortel, *Women*, p. 101.

One body committed to effecting a change to the law was the Married Women's Property Committee. This work of this body was publicly advertised in 1857 in *The Clerkenwell News* noting that the Bill (enabling married women to hold separate property by law, the power of making a will, and responsibility for her own debts) had been referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons in order to consider and produce a report:

> In order to assist its [the Bill] passage a committee has been formed, which meets every Monday, at three o'clock, at 145, New Bond-street, and of which Mary Howitt, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, Bessie Rayner Parkes, Sir Erskine Perry, W.G, Hastings, and J.W. Fox, ex. M.P., are members. This committee earnestly requests the assistance of any person interested in the question; and will feel greatly obliged by their sending in to Miss Rye, secretary, 145 New Bond-street, the particulars of any case which exhibit the hardships of the present law.[283]

The 1856 petition was mentioned in John Chapman's *Westminster Review* linking that effort with 'a lady already known as the author of 'A Brief Summary of the most important Laws concerning Women.''[284] For the contemporary audience aware of the political context, and the central role of petitions within this context, the inclusion of such a document within *WW* would have encouraged viewers to link, and interpret, the vignette in relation to Married Women's Property campaign. Viewed through this prism the 'Sunken Female,' and the adjacent petition, may be considered as an allegory articulating an aim of the proto-feminist movement (of which Bodichon was a key member).

The suggestion in *WW* (created in the juxtaposition of the looming man and 'Sunken Female') of a link between 'female petitions' and the threat of sexual violence is borne out in contemporary discourses. Multiple provincial and London newspapers reported news from the House of Commons on 21 April 1856 that: 'Mr. M. Milnes presented a petition from the married women of England, praying for an alteration in the laws relating to the property of married women.'[285] The same month Douglas Jerrold produced two articles for *Punch* taking this petition as a subject. In his article, 'The Wedding Ring', published five days after Milnes' presentation of the petition, Jerrold's general

---

[283] 'The Property of Married Women' *The Clerkenwell*, 124, 12 September 1857, p. 3.
[284] John Chapman, ed., 'The Property of Married Women', *Westminster Review*, 66, 130 (October 1856), p. 336.
[285] See 'House of Commons: Monday, April 21', *Glasgow Herald*, 597, 5 (23 April 1856), p. 6, and 'Imperial Parliament: House of Lords', *London Evening Standard,* 33, 1704 (26 April 1856), p. 2, and 'House of Commons: Monday April 21', *Newcastle Journal,* 25, 1261 (26 April 1856), p. 6.

agreement with a change to the law (to improve women's rights), and approbation of the women advocating change, was obvious.[286] He noted, for example, that women in Leicester held 'a debate, from which the House of Commons might learn point and brevity'.[287]

Jerrold's earlier article, 'The Cry of the Women', was more complex.[288] (The fact that this article merely alludes to the subject while predating presentation of the married women's property petition provides an indication of that petition's widely-held public appreciation.) Effectively comparing contemporary women's pleas to the biblical lamentations of the enslaved Egyptian Jews, the article acknowledged a segment of the public that did not favour this change to the law: 'the cry of weakness and unjust suffering [from women] – has been rebuked, pooh-poohed, pished and fiddle-de-dee'd'. These remarks are patronising and mild when compared with repeated instances where Jerrold ostensibly agreed with, and approved of, violence to subdue protesting women. Ultimately, Jerrold's repeated encouragement of violence veered into hyperbole, and the suggestion of an overdetermined narrative. In the specificity of violence, and apparent pleasure taken in its description, it is conceivable that in this rhetoric Jerrold aped a segment of the public that did, indeed, advocate the rough treatment of women. A lengthy repetitive conclusion, a crescendo licensing the mistreatment of women, ended with an alternative final clause that, in its contrasting simplicity and reason, appears to forward the alternative argument:

> if women be beaten by savages, and robbed by sots, what of it? It is better that women should be beaten and crouch in the dust – it is better that they should be robbed and sit at home, than go and petition Parliament'. [289]

The ultimate fate of the lamenting Jews, on which Jerrold modelled elements of this satire, was liberation.

[286] Douglas Jerrold, 'The Wedding Ring Question', *Punch*, 30 (26 April 1856), p. 168.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Douglas Jerrold, 'The Cry of the Women', *Punch*, 30 (12 April 1856), p. 149.
[289] Jerrold, 'Cry', *Punch*, (12 April 1856), p. 149.

While violence towards women could inspire repugnance, as in Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864-1865) [hereafter *Forgive*], Jerrold's comic treatment of the subject was not an isolated example.[290] Although *Punch* acknowledged, in relation to the ill-treatment of women, 'the creature who can commit such a crime is simply a brute beast', this did not disbar the journal's ubiquitous casual and jocular treatment of violence against woman.[291] *Punch* occasionally inserted tiny, isolated segments of quip, and one example created punning homonymic comedy in the subject of wife-beating: 'Pretty excuse for a wife beater. – the treasure which we value most we *hide*'.[292] Similarly, the humour of Leech's illustrations, as in Figure 67 and Figure 68, derives from the transgressive idea of a woman perpetrating violence on a man. In both cartoons tension and comedy is generated through physical size and presence, the relatively huge woman in Figure 68 and the ignoble and less attractive male (as compared to his woman companion) in Figure 69. *Punch* also reported on the subject of assault in recording the Parliamentary business of 22 March 1856:

> Mr. Dillwyn, member for Swansea, brought in a Bill enabling Magistrates to flog the ruffians who ill-treat women and children. He was supported by Mr. Miall and Mr. W. Williams and Government did not oppose the introduction, but Mr. Bouverie *intimated future resistance* [my emphasis].[293]

Notwithstanding the inherent humour of the idea of 'resistance' in the context of a Bill on assault, this article was serious and genuine reportage of Parliament. Evidently, Bouverie anticipated arguments against the legal sanction of violence.

---

[290] Anthony Trollope, *Can You Forgive Her?* ed. by Dinah Birch, 2 vols (1864-5; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), II, p. 480.
[291] 'Wednesday: Punch's Essence of Parliament', *Punch*, 30 (22 March 1856), p. 111.
[292] 'Pretty excuse for a wife beater', *Punch*, 32 (16 May 1857), p. 197.
[293] 'Wednesday', *Punch* (22 March 1856), p. 111.

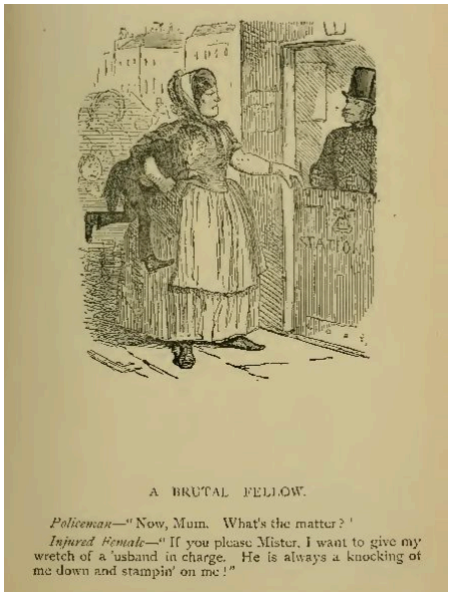



Figure 67. John Leech, 'A Brutal Fellow', *Four Hundred Humorous Illustrations* (London: Simkin, Hamilton, Marsh & Co., 1868), p. 165, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library.
Policeman – "Now, Mum. What's the matter?"
Injured Female – "If you please Mister. I want to give my wretch of a 'usband in charge. He is always a knocking of me down and stampin' on me!"


Figure 68. John Leech, 'The Great Boon', *Punch*, 34 (5 June 1858), p. 232, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library.
*Superior Being (!)* "You'll please to observe, Mum, that a Diworce is a much easier matter than it used to be – so none of your Violence!"

Trollope's description of 'a blow given by the defender to the defenceless' – George Vavasor's mistreatment of his sister Kate in *Forgive* – is an appreciation of violence as serious, in contrast to the comic stance taken by *Punch,* adding an aspect sourced in class. Trollope describes an understanding of civilised behaviour amongst the upper classes, with an onus placed on a 'gentlemen' to protect women (irrespective of the class of the latter), demonstrated in the contrasting behaviour of Vavasor and Burgo Fitzgerald.[294] The identification of the looming man with the medical profession, as encouraged by the catalogue text, parallels this figure with Vavasor and his casual violent abuse of Kate.[295] In this representation *WW* suggests that the Victorian more of gentlemanly behaviour was,

[294] Trollope, *Forgive*, p. 250.
[295] Ibid., p. 474.

on occasion, an insufficient check on the exploitation of vulnerable women who lacked recourse to respectable work.

The material condition of the petition may have prompted within the contemporary audience yet further associations with contemporary rhetoric and images of violence; ideas first conjured by the juxtaposition of postures, and tension between the 'Sunken Female' and looming man. In its crumpled state, the petition is a visual metonym for the adjacent woman, and an allegory of oppressed womanhood in general. The broken phrases contained in the petition, 'I CANNOT', 'BEG' and 'I AM ASHAMED', match, and emphasise, the condition of the sunken woman.[296] This combination of words, alluding to the Christian concept of shame in sinning (especially apposite in the context of prostitution), hints at an interpretation supplied by Luke 16:3, 'Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.'[297] Amongst the various unconventional representations within *WW*, the placing of a Biblical verse in the mouth of a contemporary prostitute, is the most controversial – one verging on transgressive. However, as with the complex representation of the figure of the 'Sunken Female' that permitted nuanced interpretation, sufficient ambiguity was provided (in the fractured presentation of the petition's wording) to disavow an impious and indecorous interpretation in favour of the petition's wording as the ramblings of a 'fallen woman'.

Four months after the first exhibition of *WW* in 1861 a letter appeared in the *EWJ* considering the eventual fate of women whose parents had educated their sons at the expense, and neglect, of their daughters. Many such women, left unmarried as a result of the imbalanced ratio of women to men, were unprepared to support themselves should disaster befall their parental provider. In the words of

[296] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.
[297] *The Royal Family-Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with marginal readings, explanatory notes, and selected parallel references printed at length*, ed. by Rev. John Stoughton (London: The London Printing and Publishing Company, *c.* 1863), p. 68.

this letter, 'For such women there is little hope in life: they may apply themselves to the words of the unjust steward, "I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed."'[298]

The use of this specific bible verse in both the painting and the journal (indeed the general use made of the bible to support an argument in each) is evidence that both drew on the same pool of ideas. The fact that the verse appeared in the journal's July edition, and hence *after* the exhibition of *WW* in March, rules out the idea that Claxton encountered the verse (and a suggestion of its possible application) in the *EWJ*. The appearance of the verse does, however, support the idea that a form of mimicry – an argument forwarded by Horrocks in relation to *Paris* – is evident in *WW*. Where *Paris* is a mimicry of the Pre-Raphaelite primitive aesthetic and is presented as a satire, in *WW* the mimicry reworks the ideas and ethos central to the *EWJ* and Bodichon. The slightly surreal setting of *WW* (an indoor scene that is simultaneously set out-of-doors) hints at a self-conscious metatheatre, an awareness that this is an edited version of reality. In contrast, the realistic representation of all the figures (quite unlike the parodies found in *Paris*) support an interpretation that this is a sincerely flattering approbation of the journal, and Bodichon's, ideals.

The iconography of a fallen women wanting to support herself, unable to find work yet loath to beg parallels Bodichon's perception of the issue of prostitution. As discussed earlier, Bodichon did not attempt to frame prostitution in moral terms but saw the problem as economic and sought practical means, such as education, to supply employment that would obviate the necessity for 'this accursed trade'. Certainly, where and when she felt it appropriate, Bodichon *did* cite the Bible – for example, as authority to assert a fundamental principal: 'Women are God's children as equally with men.'[299]

[298] Subscriber, 'Open Council', *EWJ*, (July 1861), p. 356.
[299] Bodichon, *Women*, p. 6.

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': misdirection

The 'misdirection' in the catalogue description (encouraging the reader towards an interpretion at odds with the iconography of visual representation) in part indicates the contemporary difficulties related to the artistic presentation of sexual deviancy. While Bodichon fearlessly addressed the topic, Joseph Parkes (father of editor Bessie Parkes) was 'anxious with Bessie's use of the word "prostitute" in one article' of the *EWJ*.[300] The degree of concern relating to this topic might be gauged by its habitual treatment in the *EWJ*. Typically, short stories and articles in the *EWJ* resorted to familiar euphemisms or high art to avoid direct references to a 'fallen women'. In the *EWJ*'s short story 'Mrs Robinson's Housemaid' the central protagonist, considering the fate of departed female servants, noted 'Three went to the dressmaking, then to the hospital, then two to the churchyard, and the third to *a far worse fate* [my emphasis].'[301] Likewise, in the journal's coverage of the penitentiary for 'fallen women' they were referred to as 'the most unfortunate of women'[302] while another article alluded to prostitution by using a quotation from Barrett Browning's poetry: 'eighty thousand women in one smile,/ Who only smile at night beneath the gas'.[303] Implying that the 'Sunken Female' of *WW* was a medical student, as in the case of the petition's wording, created an ambiguity that acknowledged contemporary cultural norms and avoided too readily causing offense.

A similar tactic of 'misdirection' occurs in the representation of the woman artist in Osborn's painting *Nameless.* As Jan Marsh and Nunn note, 'virtually all female artists were drawn' from 'middle-class Victorian Britain'.[304] The female signatories of the 1859 and 1883 petitions to the Royal Academy were, for the most part, educated, surrounded by a supportive family,[305] and financially secure.[306] As

[300] Joseph Parkes to Bessie Rayner Parkes, (6 October 1858) Girton, BRP II, 64/1&2. Quoted by Schroeder, 'Arguments', *Victorian Periodicals Review* (Fall 2002), p. 253.
[301] A. X., 'Mrs Robinson's Housemaid', *EWJ*, 3, 14 (April 1859), p. 123.
[302] 'A House of Mercy', *EWJ,* 1, 1 (March 1858), p. 13.
[303] 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), p. 9 quotes Browning, *Aurora Leigh,* 8, ll. 414-5, p. 273.
[304] Jan Marsh and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), p. 11.
[305] See Elizabeth Ellet, *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries* (London: Richard Bentley, 1859), p. 2.
[306] See 'Artist and Militants', in Cherry, *Painting*, pp. 9-58 for an examination of Victorian women artists (their finances, politics, family and ecclesiastical connections).

Lord Howe warns Aurora Leigh 'it is hard to stand for art' without 'some golden tripod', summing this up rather brutally: 'To be plain, dear friend, / You're poor'.[307] Deconstructing the historical reality that the majority of women striving towards Fine Art as a profession had both family and financial backing, *Nameless* portrayed the central woman artist in the opposite situation; as a friendless, distressed gentlewoman. Multiple factors may have contributed towards this artistic choice. Few templates were available for the portrayal of a professional woman artist, and a tension existed between the frequently unwelcome nature of this topic (that is, a respectable, middle-class woman working professionally in the field of Fine Art) and the necessity to produce a commercially appealing offering.

The evocation of the familiar iconography of the distressed gentlewoman, prey to unwelcome and predatory male attention, is here mapped on to the figure of the woman artist who must additionally deal with an unscrupulous art dealer. The critical reception of *Nameless* bears witness that her forlorn figure generated sympathy, and this factor may have contributed to its instant popularity – it was sold when first exhibited at the Summer Exhibition and received positive reviews while the more challenging *WW* remained unsold in London before removal to Liverpool.[308] However, the correspondence in the misrepresentation of the artist atop the wall in *WW* (see later section, 'A portrait of Rosa Bonheur' and specifically p. 184: 'a portrait avowedly Bonheur but simultaneously not Bonheur') and *Nameless* may reflect the necessity of dissembling strategies required for mid-Victorian women artists to advance within a patriarchal art-world generally content with the status quo. Certainly, in biographical profiles Osborn appears to have concealed the familial relationship of her influential early patrons (related through marriage to her sister); a tactic presumably adopted to conceal potential accusations of nepotism that might undermine her credibility as a woman artist (see Appendix B).[309]

---

[307] Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, 5, ll. 939-40 and then 948-9, p. 174.
[308] See 'The International Exhibition: '*Nameless and Friendless*' painted by Miss Osborn', *Illustrated London News*, 43, 1153 (12 July 1862), p. 49.
[309] James Dafforne, 'British Artists; their style and character, no. 75, Emily Mary Osborn', *Art-Journal*, 315 (September 1864), p. 261. Also, 'Lady Artists: Miss E. M. Osborn', *Lady,* 4, 81 (2 September 1886), p. 183. See Appendix B.

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': reputational risk

In 1859 the *EWJ* included a signed letter from Bodichon that encouraged women's professional aspirations and pragmatically set out the potential remunerative rewards of a career in medicine:

> Certainly woman might be clerks, might work telegraphs, might enter into the "immense field of paid social labor," and examine and inspect schools, but after all is not this rather a sorry list for an educated lady to choose from? We must say we think it is, and we should be inclined to extend it, and to take in the healing art as one suited to the capacities of women, and one which has been for ages included in their sphere. There are at present in Paris many very eminent medical women, one of whom has gained at least an income of ten thousand francs for many years. The female doctors have diplomas and in their branch of medicine rank as high as male physicians.[310]

Indeed, the entry of women to the field of medicine was a project that absorbed much of Bodichon's time and energy. In 1862 Emily Davis wrote to Bodichon about their attempts 'to get London University open to women, on general grounds, keeping Medical schemes in the background to avoid doctors' hostility.'[311] The letter continued that Lizzie (surname omitted, but presumably Garrett) would 'apply to be admitted for matriculation exam and will be refused on precedent'. (This strategic planning, recognising the significance of creating a precedent or rallying round a precedent of refusal, is reminiscent of the methodology employed for Herford's entry to the Royal Academy Schools).

The *EWJ*, along with other mid-Victorian publications, articulated the bar to womens' progression using metaphors such as 'doors', 'gates', or the necessity for an 'opening':

> One profession after another responds to the pressure from without, and opens its enclosure to the gentle demand. Sometimes the gates are slowly forced back with an almost imperceptible movement, at other times they burst with a clang, as when a Florence Nightingale or a Rosa Bonheur steps forth before the world, giving to society the result of long hidden labors, to posterity the echo of a hitherto unknown name.[312]

Another *EWJ* article, detailing the workings of a penitentiary for fallen women, 'A House of Mercy,' reveals this period's heavy investment in the significance of such thresholds. The consequences of inappropriately breaching the door to the external world, and the inevitable irreparable damage of

[310] Bodichon, 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), p. 353. In 1859 10,000 francs was roughly equivalent to £400; and in 2021, roughly equivalent (calculated by correlation with the values of gold in France 1865) to £50,000.
[311] Emily Davies to Barbara Bodichon, (1862), GBR/0271/GCPP Bodichon 2/1.
[312] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 3. Also quoted by Yeldham, 'Work', p. 40.

expulsion, were invoked to ensure womens' compliance. The superintendent of the penitentiary describes how:

> I told her [an inmate] that, as she could not or would not master her fearful temper, there was no use in her remaining in the Penitentiary, but if she returned to her old courses she knew well enough what awaited her – *death, death, body and soul!* She replied, "I mean to go. I won't stay." I replied, "You shall have the opportunity of going." I then directed that she should be dressed in her own clothes, and handed over to me.
>
> This was done, and when she re-appeared I desired her to follow me. She dashed about her dress with her hands as though she would have forced it from her body, and followed to the outer gate in a most excited state of feeling. As I applied the key to the lock, and the gate gently opened, I reminded her of God's mercy to her, of the doom awaiting her. I said, "You go to your destruction, but may God still have mercy upon you."[313]

The threshold represented at the right-hand side of *WW* is not only barred by a locked door but, as an added precaution, has a male guard. In the archway above this rotting door an inscription (shown Figure 69) reinforces the penalties associated with women's progress: 'Women's noblest station is retreat'.[314]

Figure 69. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

This line is taken from George Lyttelton's poem *Advice to a Lady* (1733) [hereafter *Advice*] a poem that, more than a hundred years later, continued to be quoted. Arthur Augustus Rees' pamphlet, *Reasons*

[313] 'Mercy', *EWJ*, (March 1858), p. 19.
[314] King, 'Feminist Arts', *Imagining Women*, p.174. Also, Yeldham, Work, p. 94.

*for not Co-operating in the alleged 'Sunderland Revivals'* (1859), used the same line to condemn women for preaching the Bible:

> The sphere of woman, even nature teaches us, is not the platform or the pulpit – which are so opposed to the "shamefacedness and sobriety" that Paul recommends to the weaker sex. Lord Lyttelton's advice to females is quite in keeping with the apostle's.
>
> > "Seek to be good, but aim not to be great:
> > A woman's noblest station is – Retreat;
> > Her fairest virtues fly from public sight,
> > Domestic worth, - that shuns too strong a light." (ll. 51-54) [315]

As Rees' pamphlet demonstrates, in the Victorian period, biblical teaching might be appropriated as authority to dictate the 'proper' place of women. Intriguingly, the use of Lyttelton's poem within this specific pamphlet hints that *Advice* may have been associated with teaching of the bible in the Victorian era.

In *WW*, meanings are created through a form of subversion: an intertext advocates one view while contextual details may be read as undermining that same idea. Appendix C examines the setting of *WW* suggesting that it may have been inspired by the ruined castle of Hastings, situated in a location with which Bodichon maintained a life-long association.[316] This ruin includes a Chancel Arch reminiscent of the arched doorway represented in *WW*. The placement of Lyttelton's poetic line on a door-frame reminiscent of a Chancel Arch within a vignette (and composition) undermining the conventional Victorian reading of the verse is an element of this 'subversive pattern.' In this example, as with the base of the golden calf and the lawyer's scroll, the supporting 'medium' (worshiped statue, irate male professional, and architecture of the established Church) participates and contributes to the deconstructive reading of the intertext. Considered through this alternative reading, these 'media' represented within *WW* mock the arrogant male attitude that seeks to dictate to women through art, law, or religion.

---

[315] Arthur Augustus Rees, *Reasons for not Co-operating in the alleged 'Sunderland Revivals': a message to his Congregation* (Sunderland: Wm. Henry Hills, 1859), p. 5.
[316] See letter of Rossetti quoted in Amice Lee, *Laurels and Rosemary: the life of William and Mary Howitt*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 215-6.

The painting's subversion of the conventional interpretation of the Lyttelton intertext is particularly evident when comparing its import across the paired group of 'Sunken Female' and 'Female Artists'. Applying line 52, 'A woman's noblest station is – Retreat', (inscribed on the stone archway in *WW*) to the 'Sunken Female' as medical student (as opposed to 'fallen woman'), barred from professional progress and maintained in a forced position of 'retreat', her representation seems far from 'noble'. The stanza from which this line is drawn appears to be a warning to the 'Sunken Female' that a worse fate awaits should she advance beyond (rather than 'retreat' from) the threshold. These four lines also appear to apply to the 'Female Artists', one atop, the other on a ladder attempting to scale the wall. Compared to the dark corner in which the 'Sunken Female' is found, the artist seated on the wall *is* experiencing more 'light'. Yet her representation – calm and composed on an overcast day – is hardly Lyttelton's threatened fate of 'too strong a light'. This woman artist is now in 'public sight' having, through the agency of a ladder, made a determined attempt 'to be great'. (Her determination is underlined by the representation of the woman following her, where the latter's physical effort is reflected by her backward-slipping bonnet).

However, the position atop the wall hints at risk, in the visual depiction of height and in the associations encouraged by the inscription taken from Lyttelton. The consequence of ambition, according to Lyttelton, is that 'her fairest virtues fly'. According to mid-Victorian mores this would have suggested the loss of sexual purity to arrive at the status of, in Victorian parlance, a 'fallen woman'.[317] The composition's portrayal of the distance from atop wall to its base, and the women at each extreme, is a visual pun on this concept of falling where risk arises from professional ambition. In its representation of the 'Sunken Female', and the link to the 'Female Artists', the composition acknowledges conventional attitudes towards reputational risk. Yet the secure position of the seated artist, and her gaze to new vistas beyond the framed view, offers a hopeful (if complex) 'solution'.

[317] *OED*, 'fallen' III.ii.33.a.: To give in to temptation; to lapse morally; to sin; *spec.* (esp. of a woman) to have a sexual encounter outside marriage.

In February 1860 the *EWJ* published an open letter by Blackwell (an American doctor who qualified in Paris, and friend of Bodichon) with advice for young women wishing to study medicine. Blackwell's opening remarks concerned the nature of the challenges faced by such women:

> Independently of the difficulties involved in the study itself, there are moral and social difficulties which are far greater. Society has not yet recognized this study as fit woman's work. Gossip and slander may annoy the student.[318]

The impact of such difficulties was reflected in novels such as Trollope's *Forgive* in which the narrator considers Alice Vavasor's ambitions: 'She was not so far advanced as to think that women should be lawyers and doctors'.[319] (Interestingly, in casting around for male professions that Alice would consider too emancipated the narrator names the very two that appear in *WW*. This seems to hint that these specific professions were, at this time, held up as particular examples of careers that only very advanced women would consider.) Conforming to cultural norms, Blackwell remained circumspect concerning the precise nature of these annoyances. This idea of exposure to gossip and slander as a consequence of adopting a professional life provides context to an observation in the *EWJ*: that a life in letters 'demands little or none of that *moral courage*, which *more public avocations* require [my emphases].'[320]

Elucidating one source of 'moral and social difficulties' are George Du Maurier's *Punch* cartoons 'Lady-Physicians' (1865), (a parody of Jan Steen's *The Lovesick Maiden* (*c.* 1660) shown in Figure 71), and 'Our Pretty Doctor' (1870), Figures 70 and 72 respectively. Both images demonstrate that prejudice arose from societal and cultural expectations of gender. 'Lady-physicians' reverses the usual framing of sexual and professional power in the gender of the lovelorn individual and attendant physician. In 'Our Pretty Doctor' the role-reversal is further exaggerated in the humour of unemployed working-class men seeking the help of a woman, and their intention to find work as nurses.

---

[318] Elizabeth Blackwell, 'Letter to Young Ladies Desirous of Studying Medicine', *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), p. 329.
[319] Trollope, *Forgive*, p. 93.
[320] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 4. Also, Florence Fenwick-Miller, 'The Ladies' Column' *Illustrated London News,* 98, 2702 (31 January 1891), p. 160.


Figure 70. George Du Maurier, 'Lady-Physicians', *Punch*, 49 (23 December 1865), p. 248.
Who is this Interesting Invalid! It is young Reginald de Braces, who has succeeded catching a bad cold, in order that he might send for that rising practitioner, Dr. Arabella Bolus!?

Figure 71. Jan Steen, *The Lovesick Maiden,* (*c.* 1660), oil on canvas, 86.4 × 99.1 cm, The Met, New York © The Met


Figure 72. George Du Maurier, 'Our Pretty Doctor', *Punch*, 59 (13 August 1870), p. 68.
*Dr. Arabella.* "Well, my good friends, what can I do for you?"
*Bill.* "Well, Miss, it's all along o' me and my mates bein' out o' work, yer see, and wantin' to turn an honest penny hanyways we can; so, 'avin' 'eard tell as *you* was a risin' young medical practitioner, we thought as p'raps you wouldn't mind just a recommendin' of *hus* as nurses."

Contrasting with the humour of Du Maurier's examples Blackwell's language and the *EWJ* quote above suggest that, from the female perspective, barriers to aspiring women were significant and

personal. *WW* accords with and illustrates this idea of the societal risk to, and judgement made, of a woman's moral (i.e. sexual) reputation in pursuing a medical career. In this interpretation, the representation of the 'Sunken Female' as 'fallen' is an allegory of the societal judgement (made by some) on aspirational women like Blackwell, bent on pursuing professional careers.

This encoded portrayal of vulnerability has a parallel in another detail of *WW*: the bonnet of the woman ascending the ladder that has slipped backwards on her head, a position that may likewise hint at a risk to her reputation. For respectable mid-Victorian women a bonnet was an essential item of costume when out-of-doors. Richard Redgrave's 1866 review of Francis Danby's *Disappointed Love* (1821), shown in Figure 73, demonstrates the mid-Victorian perception of the bonnet and its relation to the woman wearing this item. Redgrave described the scene with a 'woman: 'sobbing out her last sigh ere she plunges into the deep; her bonnet is beside her on the shore, a token for those who shall seek the lost one'.[321] Despite the painting showing multiple items that might identify the woman (her shawl, a wallet of letters and a locket) Redgrave nominated the bonnet as the key to her identity.

Figure 73. Francis Danby, *Disappointed Love* (1821), oil on panel, 62.8 × 81.2 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London © Victoria and Albert Museum

The bonnet as a synecdoche for an entire costume, metonym for the wearer, and a comic emblem of behaviour is evident in James Greenwood's article 'Bonnets in Limbo' (1873).[322] Greenwood

[321] Richard Redgrave and Samuel Redgrave, *A century of painters of the English school*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1866), II, pp. 440-1.
[322] James Greenwood, 'Bonnets in Limbo' in *In Strange Company* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), pp. 123-32.

examined the stored hats of women imprisoned in the Westminster House of Correction. Greenwood's prose comically conflates hat and wearer in descriptions such as the 'drunken and abusive bonnet'.[323] Greenwood acknowledges this conflation in a statement where the bonnet is a metonym for the imprisoned woman: 'I had been accustomed to consider bonnets as meaningless and frivolous things; but that review of *bonnets in prison* converted me [my emphasis].'[324] Greenwood continues to place 'confidence in the dumb statements made by the bonnets and hats' as 'eloquent of the habits and conditions of their wearer.'[325]

The regularity of illustrations for serialised novels in which a falling or fallen bonnet appeared in an image of an enamoured couple, alone in an intimate and isolated location, suggests that this was a trope.[326] Such images conform to what modern critic Carolyn Dever describes as sexuality emerging in 'disguised and coded terms' of 'displacement rather than express representation'.[327] Comparison of different images within this trope shows a spectrum of such encoded sexuality with degrees of proximity to sexual intimacy related to the removal or absence of a bonnet. In Wilkie Collins' *Armadale* (1866) the unacknowledged sexual attraction felt by Lydia Gwilt for Ozias Midwinter is expressed in her confession when meeting him: 'I couldn't bear my bonnet on'.[328] Here the divesting of her hat symbolises the unleashing of her sexual feelings, and a casting aside of respectability.

In this context the position of a bonnet could be a detail, along with others, that signalled a risk to a woman's virtue, or indeed a fall from grace. In Dante Gabriel Rossetti's reworkings (see Figures 74 and 75) of *Found* (1853-1881) the artist repositioned the bonnet in a tactic similar to the additional embellishment of rosebuds on the dress fabric; both emphasising the woman's lost virtue.

---

[323] Greenwood, *Bonnets,* pp. 129-30.
[324] Ibid., p. 128.
[325] Ibid.
[326] See George John Pinwell, 'Seasonable Wooing', *Once a Week,* 8, 194 (14 March 1863), p. 322. Frederick Richard Pickersgill, *The Wishing Well* (1866), wood on paper, 19.2 × 11.7 cm, 1922,0209.47, British Museum, London © British Museum.
[327] Carolyn Dever, 'Everywhere and nowhere; Sexuality in Victorian Fiction' in *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. 157.
[328] Wilkie Collins, *Armadale*, ed. by Catherine Peters (1864-66; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 503.

Figure 74. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Study for *Found* (1853), black and brown ink with white whitening on paper, 20.5 × 18.2 cm, British Museum, London © British Museum

Figure 75. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Found* (*c.* 1854), oil on canvas, 91.4 × 80 cm, Delaware Art Museum, USA © Delaware Art Museum

The representation of the bonnet within a scene of suicide, a consequence of shame, is the most extreme end of the scale in which this accessory signalled lost virtue. George Cruikshank's sequel to *The Drunkard's Children* (1848), shown in Figure 76, depicted the daughter's decline into alcoholism culminating in her suicide.

Figure 76. George Cruikshank, *The Bottle and The Drunkard's Children* (1848), British Museum, London © British Museum

This illustration reworked iconography of female suicide familiar to Victorian audiences where the addition of the bonnet (circled red) imbued the scene with additional pathos. In the sense that the bonnet was conflated with the wearer the distance between these two suggests the mental disintegration and final abandon of the woman. In that a bonnet was a means to identify a specific woman, its separation from the wearer underlined the loss of her identity and, in consequence, a future unmourned burial. Finally, as a metonym for the woman, the separate tumbling bonnet conveys a sense of a species of doubled suicide; the death of the respectable, middle-class woman and equally her morally lost doppelganger.'[329]

The liminal position of the ascending artist's bonnet in *WW* might be interpreted as a signal of the effort demanded by the pursuit of a professional artistic career. Equally, on a figure linked with a 'fallen woman', it might also convey the reputational risk associated with feminine ambition.

Figure 77. Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless* (1857), oil on canvas, 82.5 × 103.8cm, Tate Britain, London © Tate Britain

The significance of the risk to moral reputation experienced by women pursuing a professional artistic career is again evident in a second painting produced in the same period. Of currently known and extant paintings from this period Osborn's *Nameless* (shown in Figure 77) is the only other work apart

[329] McKenna, 'The contemporary artistic representation of the 'Fallen Woman'', MLA, (2014-16). This 719-word section is a quotation from this essay, as submitted for the MLA.

from *WW* that provides a 'direct social commentary on the condition of the woman artist and her position in society'.[330] While in *WW* women artists are only one of several professions, in the realistic representation of *Nameless* the woman artist is the central topic. Despite this difference, the paintings, both created by young women forging professional careers in the same period, share multiple correspondences that includes moral risk.

Lady Carbury, in Trollope's *Live*, reflects on the risks experienced by professional women authors. As her publisher takes amorous liberties while negotiating the remuneration for her literary articles, Carbury uses imagery both literal and metaphoric to describe her situation: 'The lady who uses a street cab must encounter mud and dust which her richer neighbour, who has a private carriage, will escape.'[331] This directly applies to the two women in the scene portrayed by *Nameless*. The wealthy lady art-patron leaving the shop risks no such moral pollution as she has a carriage waiting at the shop door. In contrast, the hem of the impoverished woman artist's skirts appears soiled and wet from her journey that penury demands must be made on foot. Compounding this further, in *Nameless* two men look up from a print of a semi-clad ballerina to unabashedly gaze at the woman artist. This gesture effectively links the ballerina of dubious morality (given her semi-clothed state) with the otherwise unimpeachably respectable woman artist, reducing and objectifying the artist through the male gaze.

The inclusion of such ekphrastic images within Victorian paintings and illustrations worked to encourage meanings that reinforced a specific interpretation of the proffered scene. In a lengthy 1864 series of paired drawings by Adelaide and Florence, 'The Hours A.M. and P.M. in London', Adelaide produced the illustration 'The First Up' showing two images on a children's bedroom wall (Figure 78). The smaller sketch of a jester (circled red) alludes to the mischievous nature of the children playing on the bed. The image of guardian angels watching over a child's bed (circled blue) not merely echoes the infant bed-scene below but invokes a form of wish-fulfilment: that the same heavenly

[330] Yeldham, *France and England*, I, p. 167.
[331] Trollope, *Live*, I, p. 5.

protection might be afforded to the romping children as the one portrayed sleeping in the framed image.

Figure 78. Adelaide Claxton, The Hours A.M. and P.M. in London. Six O'Clock A.M.: The First Up' *Illustrated Times*, 4, 470 (19 March 1864), p. 189, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Compared to the lesser size of the jester image, the angel painting appears more prominent in a distinct, embellished frame encouraging the viewer to consider that Christian virtue and respectability are key in this scene and home. The meanings invested in a print of a ballerina within *Nameless* may be gauged by contemporary illustrations in Figures 79 and 80. In the first, Leech's *Punch* cartoon of 1853, a youth wears a shirt that shocks his respectable landlady. The skeletal emblems of his shirt allude to the starvation wages of, and ultimate cost to, seamstresses creating such garments. The callous and vacuous nature of the fashionable youth is reinforced by his attention to his toilette he holds not one but two hair-brushes. In the background, on the wall above his bed, is an image of a ballerina. Charles Bennett's cartoon *The Ass in a Lion's Skin* (1857) portrays a very similar print, again in the intimate setting of a man's room.


Figure 79. John Leech, *A Startling Novelty in Shirts* (1853), *Punch,* 25 (23 July 1853), p. 31, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library


Figure 80. Charles Bennett, *The Ass in a Lion's Skin* in *The Fables of Aesop* (1857), Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

This pattern suggests that the image of a 'ballerina print' was a recognised trope signalling a particular type of man, and a specific attitude towards women. While the louche attitudes of the men in the compositions of Bennett and Osborn suggest greater wealth and confidence than Leech's youth, all three men belong to a monied class of 'swells' devotedly attentive to their appearance.

Figure 81. Detail of *Startling Novelty* from Figure 79, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 82. Detail of *The Ass* from Figure 80, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Figure 83. Detail of *Nameless* from Figure 77, Tate Britain, London © Tate Britain

Jack Easel provided a literary sketch of such men in his *Punch* description of 'two grinning dandies in mauve-coloured gloves' commenting on Academy's Summer Exhibition.[332] The yellow and orange gloves of the male shop-patrons of *Nameless*, the first holding this print, metonymically reflect this 'dandy' persona.[333] These men's appreciation of the feminine form is mediated through an object they may purchase, possess, and exhibit in spaces ranging from private to public. In *Nameless* the 'dandies' appreciation of this image is not in the intimacy of 'rooms', but in a highly visible venue. Further, the position of the print, within the gloved grasp, reinforces the sense in which a 'swell' of doubtful morality appears to own the ballerina. This detail hints at the parallel risk run by a woman artist who is placing herself in 'public view' to sell her works, and therefore potentially exposing herself to this same speculation.

The significance of this duplicated representation of moral risk within *WW* and *Nameless* is that it suggests and reinforces the sense of the ubiquity and significance of this experience amongst women aiming towards professional careers. An indication of how seriously this issue was taken by those engaged with advancing the position of women is provided in Blackwell's address to young women seeking a career in medicine. Her article, published by the *EWJ*, began with an introduction of her subject but immediately moved to 'A word of Caution'.[334] The study of medicine, wrote Blackwell, 'is still a very arduous one, and should not be lightly undertaken'. After expanding on the risks to one's reputation in the inevitable 'gossip' and 'slander', she concluded:

> There is a noble and useful life to be gained by the conquest of these difficulties, but they must not be overlooked nor underrated by anyone who desires to become a physician; and they require perseverance, courage, and self-reliance to overcome them. [335]

The restraint of Blackwell's prose, devoid of self-pity or railing against a patriarchal order, served to emphasise the impact of such 'difficulties' on aspiring professional women.

---

[332] Jack Easel, (Charles Eastlake), 'The Royal Academy', *Punch*, 38, (2 June 1860), p. 220.
[333] Alison Smith, 'Nameless and Friendless: The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc., Proverbs, x, 15, 1857', <https://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/audio/curator-alison-smith-discusses-nameless-and-friendless-rich-mans-wealth-his> [accessed October 2021].
[334] Elizabeth Blackwell, 'Letter', *EWJ*, (January 1860), p. 329.
[335] Ibid.

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': ladders and walls

The issue of Victorian women's thwarted status, portrayed in *WW* by the prostrate figure of the 'Sunken Female', is supplied with a potential solution in the paired grouping of the 'Female Artists'. A crucial element of this 'solution' is the representation of a ladder: an object with metaphorical and literal associations for the painting's mid-Victorian audience. In an 1860 'Letter to the Editor' of the *EWJ*, Bodichon acknowledged the help women required to progress into professional roles. This letter cited her recent discussion with an Archdeacon of the Church of England and his efforts to aid Blackwell to pursue her medical studies at a London hospital where he held a role as a governor.[336]

The language associated with such sponsorship could invoke the metaphor of a ladder. In the 'chain-letter' strategy of the 1857 petition for the Married Women's Property Act, Marian Lewes (George Eliot) wrote to Sara Hennell 28 January 1856:

> I am glad you have taken up the cause, for I do think that, with proper provisos and safeguards, the proposed law would help to raise the position and character of women. It is one round [rung] of a *long ladder* stretching far beyond our lives [my emphasis].[337]

Equally, ladders denoted a literal tool of the artistic trade. The comedic element of an 1858 *Punch* satire, describing items in its 'Art-Treasury', centred on the necessity for a ladder to cope with the ever-increasing size of canvases. The 'Treasury' included: 'Two rounds from the ladder used by Mr Smudger, in painting his High Art Cartoon (forty feet by six-and-twenty).'[338] In Georges Achille-Fould's *Rosa Bonheur in Her Studio* (1893), shown Figure 84, the furniture item in the bottom left-hand corner (circled red) may be a library ladder, while Bodichon's friend Theodore Stanton confirmed that she did, definitely, use a ladder:

> To Rosa Bonheur masculine dress was simply a convenience, and sometimes, a necessity. When working on one of her large canvases, and perched on a ladder, it certainly was a convenience.[339]

[336] Bodichon, 'Council', *EWJ*, (January 1860), p. 353.
[337] George Eliot to Sara Hennell (28 January 1856), *Letters*, II, pp. 226-7.
[338] 'Unexhibited Art-Treasures', *Punch*, 34 (22 May 1858), p. 209.
[339] Theodore Stanton, *Reminiscences of Rosa Bonheur* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1910), p. 366.

As the *EWJ* remarked, women's paintings of the period were typically modest in scale: 'It is true that many pictures by female artists are admitted [to the Academy], but they are in general small and delicate.'[340] In contrast, Bonheur's iconic work, *The Horse Fair* (1852-55) measured 2.44 m × 5.07 m. Part of the sensational aspect of Bonheur's work was the scale of these 'large canvases' and, during its extensive tour of the British Isles, no viewer could fail to appreciate that a ladder must have been necessary to its creation.

Figure 84. Georges Achille-Fould's *Rosa Bonheur in Her Studio* (1893), oil on canvas, 91 × 124 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux, France © Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux

In 1872 Claxton published a volume, *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights,* illustrating the escapades of a young woman bent on finding her vocation. A section of six drawings imagined a career in Fine Arts. The pinnacle of this career was articulated in relation to a ladder, although Claxton set the accomplishment of this ambition not in London, but abroad. The caption to this illustration (Figure 85) reads: 'She studies in the galleries abroad, and soon arrives at the top of the Ladder.'[341]

[340] 'Female Artists', *EWJ*, (May 1858), p. 206.
[341] Florence Claxton, *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights* ((London: The Graphotyping Co., 1872), p. 10.

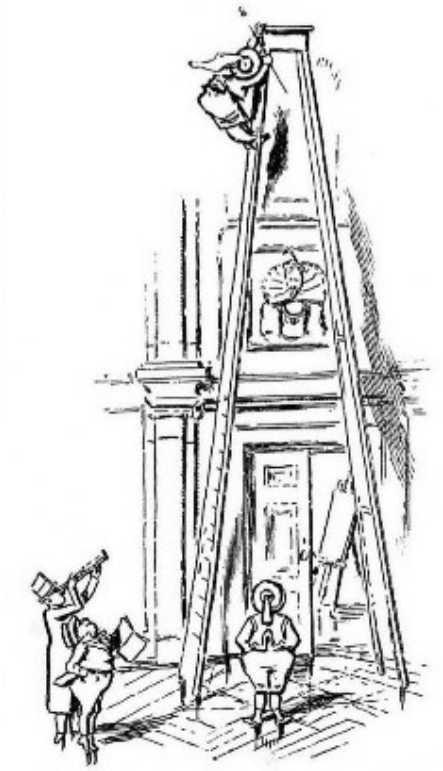



Figure 85. Florence Claxton, 'She studies in the galleries abroad, and soon arrives at the top of the Ladder', *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights* (1872), Facsimile by graphotype engraving, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Within the art-world of Victorian England the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts unequivocally and uniquely represented the top of the ladder. Indeed, the definitive steps of career progression within this institution might be represented by a ladder. Advancement within the Academy (through the ranks of student, Associate and Member), education in the Schools (both as a Probationer and then accepted student, and in a series of progressive classes depending on merit), and the awards of scholarships and medals all contributed towards a recognised incremental career pattern that might symbolised by a ladder. This idea of career progression is evident in an 1852 article from *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*:

> The idea of the establishment [British Institution] was to form a sort of nursing institution for the Royal Academy. Here artists of standing and reputation were to exhibit their sketches and less important works; and here more juvenile aspirants were to try their wings before being subject to the more severe order of Trafalgar Square [then premises of the Academy].

> The idea was good, and flourished apace; so much so, that you unfrequently find in the British Institution no small proportion of works of a calibre hardly below the average of the Great Exhibition; while the A.R.A.'s and even the aristocratic R.A.'s themselves, do not by any means disdain to grace the humble walls of the three rooms in Pall-Mall [British Institution].[342]

Figure 86. Osborn, *Nameless* © Tate Britain

A ladder (circled red) also appears in *Nameless* in the setting of the shop, its masculine interior includes three men behind the counter intent on roles that parallel the activities of the Academy's hanging committee (in the tasks of deliberation, registration, and placement of works). Significantly, between the exhibition of *Nameless* in 1857 and *WW* in 1861 women were finally admitted to the Academy's Schools. The respective representations of ladders in *WW* and *Nameless* reflect these distinct epochs in the lives of professional women artists. In *Nameless* a young man, his face distinctly portrayed, is shown on the ladder located behind the shop counter that separates him from the woman artist.

[342] A.B.R., 'The Art Season', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 18, n.s. 444 (3 July 1852), p. 2.

The general and naturalised Victorian belief in the pseudoscience of physiognomy encouraged audiences to 'read' such faces.[343] Thus, the *Art-Journal* of July 1865, in reviewing Thomas Woolnoth's recently published *The Study of the Human Face* (1865), asserted that:

> Artists often fail in delineating a character, because they are ignorant of the facial attributes which indicate the temper, feeling or disposition they desire to portray. They have not [...] studied physiognomy; hence the failure.[344]

Victorian audiences were thus primed to pay close attention to faces in paintings and would have noted the essential similarities between the young man and woman artist in *Nameless*. Both have pale downcast oval faces, delicate features, dark hair, and slim figures. Further reinforcing these similarities, the composition shows both figures as effectively isolated – the young man by his position on the ladder and the artist in her predicament as a distressed gentlewoman. Considered as the same 'type', their starkly diverging predicaments (his in ascendency, hers in poverty) might be credited to a key differentiator, their gender. His location on the ladder reflects the exclusively male access to professional progress, while the presence of the shop counter underlines the then insurmountable barrier presented to women by the Academy's refusal to admit women students. Reflecting the fact that by 1861 a precedent was created in the admission of the first woman student, the 'Female Artists' in *WW* now have access to a ladder – even if their gendered costume of heavy skirts meant that, in ascending, they expended comparatively greater energy than would men.

The visual representation of the ladder in *WW* (considered as the solution to an 'issue' experienced both by 'moral' and 'immoral' women) might be compared with the treatment in the *EWJ* of women's education as an essential vehicle leading towards employment. Bodichon suggested that the principles of education applied not only to the respectable woman forging a career in Fine Art, but also applied to the issue of prostitution:

> We must apply more energetically to the education of the women of the lower classes, to open out the avenues to employments in every possible direction both to them and to that portion of the middle class, who, from want of subsistence, are constantly dragged into this most miserable and suicidal life.[345]

---

[343] See Charles Dickens, 'A Visit to Newgate' in *Sketches by "Boz" illustrative of everyday people and everyday life* (1836; repr. London: Chapman & Hall, 1850), p. 123.
[344] 'The Study of the Human Face', *Art-Journal*, n.s. 4 (July 1865), p. 228.
[345] B., 'Muloch', *Leader*, (19 August 1854), p. 783.

Another article in the *EWJ* turned its attention specifically to art-education:

> It is infinitely more difficult to draw passably well than to write passably well, and for this simple reason, that our ordinary education furnishes us with the main instruments of literation, while the *méchanique* of art is a study unconnected with any other.[346]

The journal also addressed the issue in more general terms, as in 'On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women' that compared the education of the genders and the impact on their future career prospects. The *EWJ* observed that female instruction was '*invariably general*', and continued: 'Women's great misfortune is that they are given no special training. This is not the case with men. If a boy has to earn his living he is educated for a profession or a trade.'[347]

For the profession of Fine Art this was training in 'perspective and color', 'a whole technical language of lines and hues' undertaken at Schools such as that of the Royal Academy.[348] In particular, the *EWJ* article singled out the lack of access to 'life study':

> We only know of one 'life-class' for ladies [...] public opinion is not yet ready to concede this necessary instruction to ladies. Yet without it they [lady artists] had far better resign all idea of painting the figure.[349]

In *Nameless* the position of an image of a semi-clad ballerina – an image suggestive of life study – in the hands of a man, combined with the inclusion of a young man on the ladder, emphasised both the patriarchal withholding and appropriation of the means of study.

The genre apparently adopted by the seated 'Female Artist' in *WW* is precisely the one recommended by the *EWJ* (albeit with caveats) where women found an issue with access to 'life study':

> Nor is the practice of landscape art much easier to a woman, unless she have a very determined will and very thick boots. Long hours of exposure to sun and wind are inevitable, and free access to nature for months at a time; a large amount of personal freedom; and a courageous exercise of personal independence. Health would certainly be gained in the pursuit, and we do not for a moment believe that feminine beauty would be sacrificed; but how to persuade the world of this, - the world of opinion which clings so obstinately, (and not without truth,) to the old belief that –
>
> "Her face is her fortune."[350]

---

[346] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 5.
[347] B., 'Obstacles', *EWJ*, (February 1860), p. 364.
[348] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 5.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.

This stress on appropriate professional training has a corollary in the interpretation of the ladder as an allegory of coherent, step-wise, and planned upward progression achieved by vocational training. The inclusion of this ladder within *WW* is one that, in the absence of any additional information provided in the catalogue, would have signalled to the viewer the status of the woman artist atop the wall as professional rather than the typical accomplished amateur.[351] Propped at an angle against the wall, the ladder confers a perspective where the 'Female Artists' are distinctly separate from other groups and placed in the distance of the painting's background. Unlike the artists within the 'Four Ages of Man' whose ambitions are limited by conventional notions, for the 'Female Artists' the agency of the ladder has permitted them to distance themselves and rise beyond such pressures. This was precisely the tactic that Bodichon and the journal advocated for women when urging their audience to dismiss societal disapproval. In a letter Bodichon published in the *EWJ* her stance was unambiguous. Stating with brevity and directness Bodichon asserted: 'Public opinion must be changed, and the cowardly opposition of the printers, the watchmakers, and china painters rendered impossible.'[352]

However, within a two-page letter this was a short and isolated acknowledgment that focused instead on the range of other matters; the professions that a woman might enter, a comparison of England with Europe and America, and an economic argument for the employment of women. A more nuanced stance, acknowledging rather than challenging contemporary mores, was adopted by another letter of Bodichon's published in the *EWJ*. Observing the interest in opening professions for educated middle-class women Bodichon noted, 'Now here as you say is the delicate question.'[353] However, in bringing up the 'delicate question', Bodichon, unusually for her, but typical of many commentators including editor Parkes and Blackwell, did not directly tackle the aspect of a risk to

[351] The catalogue's reference to the seated 'Female Artist' as (Rosa B – –), that is Rosa Bonheur, unequivocally registers this woman as a professional artist as opposed to an amateur.
[352] Bodichon, 'Open Council', *EWJ*, (January 1860), p. 354.
[353] Ibid., p. 353.

moral reputation.[354] Bodichon's tactic was to diplomatically word her arguments such that she might further an idea *without* antagonising a constituency holding opposing views, as for example:

> It is certain that on no other subject would there have been so much discussion in private circles, and so little in the public papers. There is floating about a great mass of thought and interest on this subject. Here [in Algeria, from where Bodichon writes] even it is a constant topic of conversation. I was astonished to find that an Archdeacon of the Church of England was so deeply convinced of the necessity of new and honorable work for women, – for ladies, the sisters, wives, or daughters, of doctors, lawyers, etc., – that he had some years ago done all in his power in aiding Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell to pursue her medical studies at a London hospital of which he is governor, thinking not only that woman want women doctors, but that women must enter into new fields of labor.[355]

The reference to 'private' and 'public' forums hints that aspects of the subject of women's employment may have been problematic for more general circulation. In relating the approving opinion of a senior member of the clergy, particularly his convictions and active assistance, Bodichon harnesses the approval of the formal, Christian establishment for her mission and deftly dismisses the charge against women's moral status without direct acknowledgment. Furthering this last idea, by referring to 'honourable work' for the 'ladies', 'sisters', and 'daughters' of professional men, Bodichon firmly emphasised the upright social standing of the women in question.

The first article of the first edition of the *EWJ* addressed the topic with the journal's most explicit acknowledgment of this aspect within general mores; that in pursuing careers outside the home, women, including women artists, risked their reputations and social standing:

> a most insane notion seems to prevail that there are only one or two occupations which a woman can pursue and retain the social status of a gentlewoman. A more baseless chimera never weighed like an incubus upon the energies of human creatures.[356]

The placement and exasperated language of this statement hint that the editors felt bound to acknowledge this crucial topic from the outset despite their intellectual rejection of its grounds. Moreover, they did so with a degree of reluctance and resolution not to return to the topic directly. Certainly, as Schroeder's detailed examination of the correspondence of Parkes and Bodichon has revealed, both carefully considered public opinion and worked to present their arguments within the

[354] Parkes, 'Experience', *EWJ*, (October 1860), p. 115.
[355] Bodichon, 'Open Council', *EWJ*, (January 1860), p. 353.
[356] 'Teacher', *EWJ,* (March 1858), p. 11.

*EWJ* in the most effective manner.[357] It therefore appears that – for their own reasons – the journal preferred not to be drawn into this highly contentious and problematic aspect. Bodichon with an apparent disinclination for conventional domestic life, appears (at least in public) to have preferred not to dwell on conventional 'cant'. This may have been a possible consequence of her illegitimate birth and rejection by many in her father's family.[358] Certainly, Bodichon ceaselessly and imaginatively engaged with ideas of possible employment for women. Indeed, the range of potential opportunities Bodichon suggested – some reflecting serious research while others appear to be spontaneous ideas swiftly communicated – suggest that Bodichon was compelled to take positive action, rather than passively dwelling on deep-seated societal attitudes.[359] The gesture of the seated artist in turning her head from the scene below might be interpreted as adhering to the journal's advice. This advice was to ignore the 'insane' notions attached to respectability, and concluded with an adage that implied she should gird herself with moral courage: 'she who would be free, herself must strike the blow'.[360]

Certainly, in the mid-Victorian period 'courage' would be necessary for any woman to advance within the ranks of the art establishment. The wall in *WW,* atop which a woman artist is placed, can be interpreted as an allegory of the institution of the Royal Academy within a patriarchal art-world, and the (almost impossible) barrier faced by women with professional aspirations. Correspondence between two Victorian Academicians demonstrates that the Academy was viewed as a metaphorical 'wall', where challenges to the institution could be described as 'breaches to that wall'. Thanking John Caldcott Horsley for help with the Royal Academy's Rifle Corps, Frederick Leighton wrote, 'I trust the *breach* this made in the *Academic wall* may widen and that some day the R.A.'s will be the rule, not the exception in this artist Corps [my emphases].[361]

---

[357] Schroeder, 'Better Arguments', *Victorian Periodicals Review* (Fall 2002), pp. 243-71.
[358] Hirsch, 'Bodichon', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press); online edn. (January 2004) < https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2755?rskey=HQRfaK&result=2> [January 2021].
[359] See Bodichon, 'Open Council', *EWJ* (January 1860), p. 429. For the possibility of work as housepainters, B. L. S. B., 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 8, 48 (February 1862), p. 427.
[360] 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), p. 11 and p. 13.
[361] Frederick Leighton to John Caldcott Horsley, (undated, before 1896), Weston Library, MS. ENG C. 226 ff 83-127, pp. 87-88. Leighton died in 1896.

Another reference to the Academy as a walled institution occurs in John Cordy Jeaffreson's description of the Academy's reaction on discovering that a woman student (Herford) had inadvertently been granted a place: 'what the Academy would do with the fair intruder, dissensions and distrust increased the embarrassments of the magnets within the *walls of the Academy* [my emphasis].'[362] And again, later in the same article Jeaffreson writes: 'suggested to her by some traitor within the *walls of the fortress* which she had penetrated [my emphasis].' Jeaffreson's reference to the Academy as a fortress refers to the manner in which outsiders viewed this institution (vital to artist's career progression and the commercial value of their works) as run like an exclusive member's club with highly restricted access. The review of the third exhibition of the Society of Female Artists contained in the *EWJ* noted the value of that institution to 'foster and train up much female talent, which under present disadvantages of instruction could with difficulty aspire to the walls of the Royal Academy.'[363] Added to this was the generally acknowledged link between the place of a painting on the Academy's walls and its appreciation by the public. Elizabeth Butler's emphasis, on discerning the position of her exhibition painting, reveals the significance of a position on the 'line': 'I soon espied my dark battalion in Room II. *on the line* with a knot of artists before it'.[364] Achieving the status of Associate, or even better Academician, literally placed the male artist above his colleagues since, as an Academician, an artist was guaranteed that his work would be exhibited on this highly sought after 'line'; 'a horizontal line exactly eight feet from the floor.'[365]

As an accomplished artist who exhibited watercolours at venues that included the Academy, Bodichon was well aware of the particular challenge of having works properly displayed. Reviewing the third exhibition of The Society of Female Artists, the *EWJ* lamented that paintings by women 'are in general small and delicate, ill fitted to sustain their own amidst a host of highly coloured

[362] John Cordy Jeaffreson, 'Female Artists and Art-Schools of England', *Art Pictorial and Industrial: An Illustrated Magazine*, 1 (1870-71), p. 72.
[363] 'The third exhibition of the Society of Female Artists', *EWJ*, 3, 13 (March 1859), p. 53.
[364] Elizabeth Thompson Butler, *An Autobiography* (1922; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 105.
[365] Leslie, *Life*, p. 75.

pictures'.[366] Clearly Bodichon grasped the idea that women artists needed to make an impact on the (literal) walls of the Academy. The wall within *WW*, an allegory of the resistant Royal Academy, represents the precise challenge that Bodichon understood as a professional artist: as noted earlier, Bodichon's sole arena of 'personal ambition' lay in her art.[367] Ambition, a quality that could hardly be lacking in a seasoned political lobbyist such as Bodichon, was presumably essential to make any impact as a woman within the art establishment of the period.

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': amateur versus professional

The seated 'Female Artist' atop the wall, as a generic image of 'ladylike sketching', both conforms and contrasts with the stereotype of the mid-Victorian woman amateur, 'a well-circulated sign since the eighteenth century for amateur accomplishment'.[368] Samuel Baldwin's *Sketching from Nature* (1857) shown in Figure 87, and the costume for sketching out-of-doors of Gaskell's protagonist Margaret Hale, exemplify a conservative interpretation of a specific sartorial approach from the period. Hale's plaid shawl, befitting the daughter of an impoverished clergyman, is modest compared to the silk gown in Baldwin's image.[369] However, both Baldwin's woman artist and Hale are depicted as genteel, passive, and lady-like in deportment.

[366] 'Female Artists', *EWJ*, (May 1858), p. 206.
[367] Belloc, *Passing*, p. 21.
[368] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 40.
[369] Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 25.

Figure 87. Samuel Baldwin, *Sketching from Nature* (1857), oil on canvas, 61 × 45.8 cm, Christie's on-line catalogue <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5732441> [accessed June 2022] © Christie's

Even in the exaggerated form of *Punch* (shown in Figure 88), lampooning the current vogue for huge hat brims and an infantile approach to 'nature', the woman's figure adopts a sedentary pose.[370]


Figure 88. 'Sketching from Nature', *Punch*, 29 (29 September 1855), p. 130, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

[370] See John Leech 'The Round Hat, laden with novels, in a storm', *Pictures of Life and Character*: *From the Collection of 'Mr. Punch' 1842-1864* <reader.bookfusion.com/books/42871-john-leech-s-pictures-of-life-and-character-volume-1-of-3-from-the-collection-of-mr-punch> [accessed January 2021].

In *WW*, the seated woman's abundant dark hair, slim figure, and plump pale cheek all suggest the same image of youth as in Baldwin's figure and Gaskell's novel. The tranquillity of her seated posture likewise evokes an image of middle-class 'accomplishment'.

In contrast the seated woman's actual location, perched on a high wall after (presumably) ascending a long ladder, portrays a progressive interpretation of outdoor activity that resonates with Bodichon's sketches, of Parkes (Figure 89), and in *Ye Newe Generation* (Figure 56). Unlike the immobile, rather frozen, images of conventional femininity, these examples capture freedom of movement in the flowing clothes and forward movement of individuals. The tension between the conventional, but restrictive costume of femininity, and its opposite, of relaxed informality, played a part in the 'feminist politics of outdoor activity'.[371] Liberation from sartorial convention, and participation in outdoor exercise, reflected the journal's progressive attitudes and desire for metaphorical 'upward mobility': the position of the seated artist in *WW* was the apogee of such ambition.


Figure 89. Bodichon, Sketch of Parkes, Archives of Girton College, Cambridge © reproduced by kind permission of Girton College

[371] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 40.

A week after *WW* was first exhibited in March 1861 one reviewer asserted that the figure atop the wall, 'Rosa B – –' in the catalogue text and anonymised according with the Victorian convention for living figures, was 'Rosa Bonheur'.[372] As Nunn explains, throughout the Victorian period the achievements of Bonheur were held up as 'a paradigm of all sorts of excellence for women [artists] to take note of.'[373] In particular, Bonheur's name 'became a standard indication of female artistic achievement,' and 'a standard of excellence.'[374] For example, Martha Mutrie was described as, '*becoming* the Rosa Bonheur of azaleas [my emphasis].'[375]


Figure 90. Claxton, 'Where it is about as much as she can do to hold on' (1872), *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights* (1872) Facsimile by graphotype engraving, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

This 'Rosa B – –', as represented in the painting, contrasts starkly with one of Claxton's later images from 1872. A series of pen and ink drawings, the humorous escapades of a modern Englishwoman seeking emancipation, included an image of a woman artist perched at the summit of a ladder (Figure 90). The first section of the caption to this illustration, 'Where it is as much as she can do to hold on,' is a commentary on a precarious positioning quite at odds with the composed woman artist effectively

[372] 'Arts', *John Bull* (23 March 1861), p. 187.
[373] Nunn, 'Mid-Victorian Artist', p. 17.
[374] Ibid., p. 65.
[375] 'Royal Academy' *Athenaeum,* 1593 (8 May 1858), p. 598.

placed at the pinnacle of the art establishment, allegorically represented by the wall in *WW*. A profile of Bonheur in the *Belfast Daily Mercury* of 1859 affirms the public perception of Bonheur's status:

> She [Bonheur] is the most distinguished female painter living or dead. No other has won so wide a fame – no other built a reputation on *so broad and firm a basis*. Whenever art is known and talked of, Rosa Bonheur is known and talked of. In France, England, America, Germany, and the smaller kingdoms of Europe, the name of Rosa Bonheur is a household word [my emphasis].[376]

Bonheur was the choice of the *EWJ* as the subject for its first biographical profile of an artist, effectively billing this as a 'biography of a living celebrity'.[377] Thus, in Claxton's textual and visual presentation of this specific woman artist the cognoscenti would have recognised the conflation of various themes and ideas relating to women artists and their aspirations: the precise summit of professional ambition and reputation, a work-ethic and reputation against which they were judged – but equally the figure of a living and real woman that inspired devotion in followers.

Most modern scholars have simply asserted that the seated figure in *WW* is Bonheur.[378] A notable exception is Cherry, who also considers the inherent contradictions in the painting's representation of this artist:

> [t]he portrayal of the artist could have been read in several conflicting or coincident ways: as an image of ladylike sketching, a well-circulated sign since the eighteenth century for amateur accomplishment; in relation to a feminist politics of outdoor activity; as a feminist icon of professional achievement; as a delineation of the respectable working woman.[379]

This section examines these contradictions in fine detail considering issues of nationality, professionalism, the extent of public awareness of Bonheur's works and appearance, her unconventional physical appearance, and moral reputation. Leading on from these ideas, the current study advances other possible interpretations and examines this representation's relationship to the paired figure of the 'Sunken Female'.

---

[376] 'Rosa Bonheur', *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 187, 2 (5 October 1859), p. 4
[377] Anna Blackwell, 'Rosa Bonheur: An Authorised Memoir', *EWJ*, 1, 4 (June 1858), p. 230.
[378] Yeldham, Work, p. 95. 'Florence Claxton, Women's Work: A Medley' < https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2023/women-artists/womans-work-a-medley> [accessed May 2023]. Jan Marsh, 'Florence Claxton' < https://janmarsh.blogspot.com/2020/04/florence-claxton.html> [accessed May 2020].
[379] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 40.

Bonheur's French nationality complicates and contradicts the identification of the seated artist in *WW*. This woman is represented taking her ease within a quintessentially English pastoral landscape. As with Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* (1855) *WW* incorporates white cliffs as an iconic emblem of Victorian England. (Figures 91 and 92 show cliffs circled red.)

Figure 91. Ford Maddox Brown, *The Last of England* (1855), oil on panel, 82.5 × 75 cm, Birmingham Museums Trust, Birmingham © Birmingham Museums Trust

Figure 92. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

In contrast, as the *EWJ* noted, Bonheur's natural habitat was 'among [French] mountains [where] the great artist is completely in her element; out of doors from morning until night'.[380] Similarly, the *Norwich Mercury* reported that, 'in the year 1855, the accomplished artist spent the entire summer and autumn in the Pyrenees'.[381] Occasional remarks suggest that, in the public imagination, Bonheur's genius place her beyond national considerations.[382] However, in general mid-Victorian audiences *were* conscious of national distinctions in Fine Art, both by artist's birth and in professional approach. In 1857 the *EWJ* lamented that, unlike France's claim to Bonheur, no British professional woman

[380] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), p. 242. Also 'Rosa Bonheur', *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, 2, 4 (September 1858), pp. 193-4.
[381] 'Rosa Bonheur', *Norwich Mercury*, 6894, (29 December 1858), p. 3.
[382] 'Bonheur', *Belfast Daily Mercury*, (5 October 1859), p. 4.

artist occupied a 'recognised position'.[383] In relation to a distinctive 'national' approach the *Leeds Times* noted that:

> As most of our artistic readers are aware, there is a marked and striking difference between the English and French schools of art. English painters have for many years – and in fact, since the inauguration of the modern school – been exceedingly strong and effective in colour. The French artists, on the contrary, have devoted themselves to the more strictly technical department of the study.[384]

The nationalism of the *Leeds Time*s is apparent in a review of Bonheur's iconic painting *The Horse Fair* (1853-1855):

> When first we look upon this gigantic, yet harmonious work, we could not divest ourselves of the idea that Landseer had formed the style of this great painter, but on further examination, we found the horses were not Landseer's after all. Our great English painter certainly gives us admirable paintings of the equine species, but they are not faultless. The drawing is frequently open to objection in Sir Edwin's productions; and we have a painful feeling of his concealing his short comings in this respect by laying on the colour.[385]

While unstinting in praise of Bonheur, the immediate assumption that Bonheur must have been influenced by the British School betrays a degree of naivety. In fact, Bonheur came from a family of painters and was originally a pupil of her artist father Raymond Bonheur who founded a School of Design for Women where Rosa taught after his death.[386]

Nationalist bias in favour of English painters recurs in the 'painful feeling' experienced by the critic of the *Leeds Times* – dismay sourced in the failure of an artist with whom the critic identified on the basis of nationality. The *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal* was clear-cut on the point of nationality: 'Rosa Bonheur, our readers are aware, is a French Lady'.[387] This distinction was deeply rooted in the British psyche and was still evident in 1889. Art critic Florence Fenwick-Miller, in 'The Ladies Column' of the *Illustrated London News* 21 December 1889, countered 'the wholesale depreciation of living female artists' by citing the achievements of women like Elizabeth Thompson and Helen Allingham. Considering Bonheur, Fenwick-Miller remarked, 'The fact that Rosa Bonheur's pictures bring higher prices than those of any other living painter may perhaps be ruled out of the argument, as she is not

[383] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), pp. 5-6.
[384] 'French School of Fine Arts', *Leeds Times*, 22, 1192 (19 January 1856), p. 5.
[385] Ibid.
[386] 'Bonheur', *Belfast* (October 1859), p. 4.
[387] 'Rosa Bonheur's Horse Fair', *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal*, 13, 625 (1 January 1858), p. 4.

an Englishwoman.'[388] Bonheur's own sense of patriotism set the price for the sale of *The Horse Fair* as 12,000 francs within France, but 40,000 francs if sold abroad.[389] The symbolically English landscape of *WW* thus seems at odds with the mid-Victorian perception of Bonheur's nationality.

Bonheur's work challenged the general, but pre-dominant, received notions of the day concerning women artists. Contemporary discourses regularly criticised, undermined, and denigrated women's artistic output. For example, a reviewer of the first exhibition of the Society for Female Artists in *The Illustrated London News* commented: 'Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex, we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists.'[390] Bonheur was an acknowledged exception – the scale, ambition, and technical expertise of her works negated simple assumptions of women's inferiority. For a society where many held such gendered expectations of artistic output and remained invested in the pseudoscience of physiognomy, the contradictions created by Bonheur's gender and work must have made her appearance an irresistible subject. As the *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser* of 1859 noted:

> A remarkable feature in this young lady's works is the broad, bold, masculine style in which they are executed, which presents striking contrast to the smooth prettiness which female artists generally aim at.[391]

The minutely detailed descriptions of her appearance and lifestyle, and the approach (presumably originating with her dealer) of hanging her portrait beside her works, suggest that the image of a woman capable of producing such work keenly intrigued the public.[392]

Bonheur's paintings, regarded as international sensations, were promoted by her art-dealer Ernest Gambart. As Jeremy Maas observes, 'it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that Rosa Bonheur and her legend were Gambart's creation.'[393] Key planks of Gambart's marketing strategy were

---

[388] Fenwick-Miller, 'Column', *Illustrated London News* (December 1889), p. 795.
[389] Jeremy Maas, *Gambart: Prince of the Victorian Art World* (Great Britain: Barrie & Jenkins, 1975), p. 73.
[390] 'Society of Female Artists: Oxford-Street', *Illustrated London News,* 30, 862 (6 June 1857), p. 545.
[391] 'Pictures by Rosa Bonheur', *The Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, 303 (23 April 1859), p. 2. Also, 'French School of Art', *Leeds Times*, 26, 1343 (11 December 1858), p. 5.
[392] 'Fine Arts: Portrait of Rosa Bonheur. E. Gambart, Berners-Street', *London Evening Standard*, 10, 676 (2 November 1858), p. 6.
[393] Maas, *Gambart*, p. 75.

country-wide tours of paintings (not necessarily the original) and the sale of engravings 'after' the original. In 1855 the *Athenaeum* reviewed the first appearance in Britain of Bonheur's *The Horse Fair* (1852-55) at the French Exhibition in Pall Mall. This report provides an insight into the draw of Bonheur's exhibited paintings and the effectiveness of provincial advertising. Protest arose on hearing that the painting was to be removed to the Queen's apartments and 'one country dame declared that she had come up by railway to see this new lion of London.'[394]

Between 1857-1859 Bonheur's paintings *The Horse Fair* and *Landais Peasants going to Market* (1851) were taken on an extensive tour of Britain. Advertisements in local newspapers for the exhibition of these works show that, invariably, the paintings were accompanied by Éduord Dubufe's portrait of Bonheur *Portrait de Marie-Rosalie dite Rosa Bonheur* (1856) shown in Figure 93.[395] Gambart commissioned a second version of this painting from Dubufe and it seems logical to consider that Gambart's version was taken on the 1857-59 tour. It is possible that commissioning was a response or anticipation of the public demand for her image.

In May 1858 the *London Evening Standard* described the portrait hanging in the German Gallery, New Bond Street, London:

> Between this pair (we think we may call them so) of charming paintings [Bonheur's *Morning in the Highlands* and *The Landais Peasants Going to Market*] hangs the admirable likeness of Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur, by Ed. Dubufe. This also has been fully described already, but it may be satisfactory to those who have not had an opportunity of seeing the lady herself, or ever enjoyed the pleasure of her society, to be assured that the likeness is excellent.[396]

[394] 'Fine Art Gossip', *Athenaeum*, 1454, (8 September 1855), p. 1034.
[395] Bonheur contributed to Édouard Dubufe's first version of this painting in 1856 by painting the bull.
[396] 'Rosa Bonheur's 'Landais Peasants Going to Market'', *London Evening Standard*, 10539 (26 May 1858), p. 6.

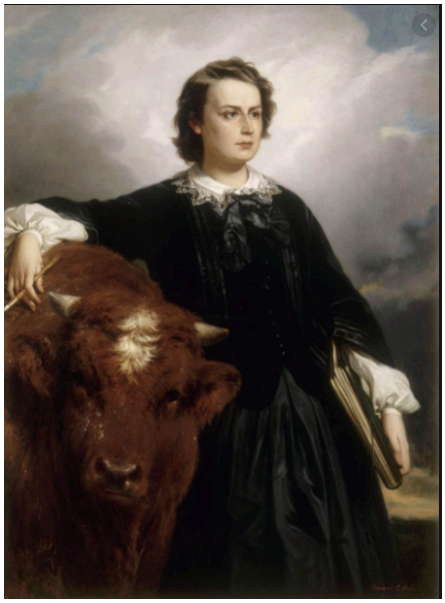


Figure 93. Éduord Dubufe, *Portrait de Marie-Rosalie dite Rosa Bonheur* (1856), oil on canvas, 130.8 x 94 cm, Musée National du Château, Versailles © Musée National du Château

This strategic position ensured that the audience could not fail to absorb the gender of the artist and to associate her image with her works. Near the end of the same year the *Standard* returned to the subject of this portrait in describing its country-wide 'tour': 'The original picture has been exhibited at nearly all the galleries in London, as well as in almost every part of the country.'[397] By this point interest in the artist was such that Bonheur's portrait *alone* was considered a sufficient draw for its sole exhibition. The *Morning Post* records that, following the sale of the painting 'to a wealthy banker' but 'previous to its being placed in the hands of Mr. Cousins for the purposes of engraving' (and by reckoning of dates before the national tour to stimulate interest in prints) the painting was available to view in January 1857 at 'Messrs. Leggatt's, Cornhill'.[398] Similarly, the *Morning Post* devoted an entire column to describing, in minute detail, this portrait of Bonheur. The article considered how, for example, Bonheur's expression reflected her philosophical approach to art.[399]

[397] 'Fine Arts: Bonheur', *London Evening Standard* 10676 (2 November 1858), p. 6.
[398] 'Madlle. Rosa Bonheur', *Morning Post*, 25915 (21 January 1857), p. 3.
[399] Ibid.

Gambart also exploited the commercial opportunity arising from the market for prints. Created from an engraving of the original work, prints were advertised for placement in 'folio or room'.[400] As Maas notes:

> It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this [print] trade in the Victorian art world. If the Royal Academy symbolized the social standing of the artist and provided an arena in which he achieved fame with its attendant financial rewards, it was the printsellers who were the unacknowledged legislators of the art world. It was they who carried an artist's reputation into every home in the country [...] When a single picture was bought by an individual and cherished in the privacy of his own home, replicas of it in the form of prints, rendered cheaper when the more durable steel plate was introduced after 1820, often sold in their thousands, reached a public the size of which now seems scarcely credible.[401]

The level of this exposure provides a context for the observation in the *Morning Post* that Bonheur was 'well known and equally admired.'[402] Novels reflected this popularity and the dissemination of prints, as in Braddon's description of the eponymous protagonist of *Floyd,* 'making a pencil copy of a proof engraving of one of Rosa Bonheur's pictures'.[403] This has logic in the fictional character's love of animals matching Bonheur's own enthusiasm, and confirms Bonheur's place in the British imagination.[404]

Gambart appears to have increased the value of these prints not only by commissioning the first Academician-Engraver[405] to execute the engraving, but also ensuring the destruction of the plate.[406] By limiting the number of prints, and preventing the circulation of poor-quality copies, Gambart ensured the exclusivity of high-quality images. The British Museum holds a copy of what must have been the final print from the subsequently cancelled plate of Cousin's engraving (Figure 94). Inscribed on the verso, dated 11 December 1858, Gambart's inscription evokes his entrepreneurial flair and sense of drama:

---

[400] 'Landais', *London Evening Standard* (26 May 1858), p. 6.
[401] Maas, *Gambart*, p. 28. Also, Paula Gillett, "Progress and Obstacles: Women Painters from Mid-Century to the Close of the Victorian Era', in *Worlds of Art* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 221.
[402] 'Fine Arts', *Morning Post*, (21 January 1857), p. 3.
[403] Braddon, *Aurora*, p. 90.
[404] P. D. Edwards, ed., explanatory note accompanying Braddon, *Aurora*, p. 465, observes that Bonheur was 'noted for her animal paintings – which would have appealed to Aurora'.
[405] 'After Éduoard-Louis Dubufe' <http://www.maasgallery.co.uk/women-2018/women-2018/women-2018-12-2245> [accessed July 2021].
[406] 'Rosa Bonheur', British Museum, 'Object: Rosa Bonheur', 2010,7081.4119 <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2010-7081-4119> [accessed January 2021].

> The Printing of the announced Edition of the Portrait of M^lle^ Rosa Bonheur, Engraved by Samuel / Cousins, R.A. after the Picture by E. Dubufe having this day been completed in the most efficient / way by Mess^rs^ Dixzon & Ross, to the entire satisfaction of the Artists and Publishers, and / considering it to be the interest of the Painter Engraver and Publishers that no bad impression / should be taken from the plate so that the Subscribers Copies [*sic*] should not be / hereafter diminished in Value we have this day ordered the Plate to be / defaced and destroyed. // E Gambart & Cy // Witness // Dixon & Ross / Printers, / 4 St James' Place / Hampstead Road, London.[407]

Figure 94. Samuel Cousins after Édouard Louis Dubufe, '*Portrait de Marie-Rosalie dite Rosa Bonheur*', (1858), cancelled plate, mixed method mezzotint, 56 × 42 cm, British Museum, London © British Museum

A by-product of Gambart's commercial tactics in ubiquitous exhibition, newspaper coverage, reviews in art-journals, and sale of prints, was that Bonheur's face, figure, her oeuvre as an animalier, and her affinity for bulls, became well known in Britain. The *London Evening Standard* noted, in relation to the Dubufe portrait, that: 'The young bull by her side is finely painted by herself, and has been studied so often as to have become a kind of domestic pet.'[408] The *EWJ* made a similar observation of Bonheur's preference for painting animals, and particularly bulls, with an acerbity hinting at a degree of incredulity. The article, considering the exhibition of the Society of Female Artists, began with an approving review of Tekusch's *The Wife* (1858):

> A singular sweetness and humour presided over the conception; yet there are many French male artists who paint with equal delicacy just such *scènes de la vie privée,* while Rosa Bonheur chooses bulls and horses.[409]

[407] 'Rosa Bonheur', British Museum, 2010,7081.4119.
[408] 'Landais', *London Evening Standard*, p. 6. Also 'Fine Arts', *Morning Post*, (21 January 1857), p. 3.
[409] 'Female Artists', *EWJ*, (May 1858), pp. 207-8.

The *Durham Country Advertiser* of 28 January 1859 noted that in 'Dubufe's portrait of Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur [is] leaning on her favourite short-horn – the animal being Painted by Herself.'[410] Elaine Sciolino confirms this significant detail in relation to the Dubufe portrait 'with the permission of Édouard Dubufe, the artist, she [Bonheur] painted in a bull where he had painted a table.'[411] In this act of self-fashioning Bonheur reworked the iconography of conventional polite society, as compared to the visual organisation of her own carte-de-visite from around 1861 (shown in Figure 95). Significantly, in this alteration to Dubufe's portrait she afforded a pet bull equal privilege, in terms of space and detail, as her own figure.

Figure 95. Rosa Bonheur by Disdéri, albumen carte-de-visite, *c.* 1860s, NPG, London © NPG

Biographical profiles in journals and comments from friends attested to Bonheur's genuine attachment to animals, and particular bulls. Writing for the *EWJ* Anna Blackwell describes encountering Bonheur:

> fast asleep, under the long table at the upper end of the studio, on her favorite [animal] skin, that of a magnificent ox, with stuffed head and spreading horns, her head resting lovingly on that of the animal.[412]

[410] 'Rosa Bonheur', *Durham County Advertiser*, 2317 (28 January 1859), p. 5. Also, 'Rosa Bonheur's Pictures', *Belfast Morning News*, 4, 690 (26 May 1859), p. 3 and 'Fine Arts', *Illustrated London News*, 33, 945 (13 November 1858), p. 460.
[411] Elaine Sciolino, 'The Redemption of Rosa Bonheur' < https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/redemption-rosa-bonheur-french-artist-180976027/> [accessed January 2021].
[412] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ,* (June 1858), p. 229.

Stanton's *Rosa Bonheur Reminiscences* (1910) reports Bonheur joking with her artist friend Joseph Verdier, 'The fact is, in the way of males, I like only the bulls that I paint.'[413] Not only did Bonheur's playfulness reduce the status of men, but her rejection ranked men below the status of an animal.

Figure 96. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

A reflection of Bonheur's particular love of bulls in particular is reflected in details within *WW*. The word 'Hera', evoking the Greek mythological godess, appears on the back of the canvas held by the putative Bonheur of *WW* (as shown in Figure 96).[414] An aspect of the historical convention of anonymising published names, one that in the eighteenth century saw men provide women poets with names from Greek mythology, appears to have translated in the subsequent century to women (on occasion) providing themselves with mythological pseudonyms.[415] Bodichon's own first youthful published work, in the *Hastings and St Leonard News*, used the pen-name Esculapius.[416] Another example, this time from the *EWJ*, occurs in a letter on the subject of women pursuing medical careers with the signature 'Medicus'.[417] The significance of the name Hera lies in its association with bulls. One popular edition of Greek Classical compendiums, published multiple times throughout the

[413] Stanton, *Reminiscences*, p. 366.
[414] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.
[415] Carly Watson, 'Mary Jones (1707-1778), Female Authorship, and the Eighteenth-century Song Culture', presentation to Graduate School (Oxford University, 25 February 2021). I am indebted to Dr Carly Watson for bringing to my attention the fact that, in the eighteenth-century, men provided female authors with mythological pseudonyms.
[416] Esculapius, 'The education of women' *Hastings & St Leonard's News*, 28 July 1848, <http://www.hastingspress.co.uk/history/blsb1848.html> [accessed March 2023].
[417] Medicus, 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 2, 9 (November 1858), p. 210.

nineteenth century, describes the festivals of 'Heraea'. Celebrated throughout ancient Greece, a hundred oxen were first paraded and then sacrificed to honour Hera.[418]

For Yeldham this reference to the Greek queen of the gods, reflecting Bonheur's status in the art-world, is a 'counterpoint to the deacdent Apollo in the centre'.[419] Yeldham does note both that Hera was 'was usually portrayed with animals' and later that Bonheur was a 'French animal painter' – but does not suggest a link between these two facts.[420] This study would argue that the evocation of associations linked to the name Hera can be interpreted as part of a wider visual pun. This includes the representation of the golden calf (offspring of a bull) as a humorous reference and reflection of multiple sources: the bible (as described earlier), Dubufe's portrait of Bonheur, Bonheur's own rejection of men, and Greek mythology. In the painting's depiction of (a putative) Bonheur in the aspect of Hera, the bull is no longer the beloved pet of the former. Instead, if read deconstructively, this animal mocks masculinity when the male sex – ostensibly an object of worship – is now at the mercy of the female gaze.

The conventional appearance of the seated artist in *WW* (conforming to norms in dress, hairstyle, and posture) is another aspect that complicates the catalogue's hint towards Bonheur. Not only did Bonheur's works challenge generalised preconceptions of femininity but, potentially more transgressively, so did multiple aspects of her appearance: her tanned complexion, her hair cropped at the neck and worn with a (masculine) side rather than (feminine) middle parting and, most especially, her costume. The *Belfast Morning News* noted Bonheur's: 'pretty face of boyish cast, made more so by the shading [parting] of the hair from right to left, instead of in the middle.'[421] Anna Blackwell, in her profile of Bonheur in the *EWJ*, described Bonheur's working costume, 'when at her easel, she wears a sort of round pinafore or *blouse* of grey linen, which envelopes her from the neck to

[418] William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1873), p. 593.
[419] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 94.
[420] Ibid.
[421] 'Bonheur's Pictures', *Belfast Morning News* (26 May 1859), p. 3. Also 'Rosa Bonheur', *Belfast Mercury*, 2187 (5 October 1859), p. 4.

the feet.'[422] Figure 97, a self-portrait sketched by Bonheur (then aged 42), illustrates this 'blouse' while a portrait from three decades later, (shown Figure 98), shows that Bonheur wearing trousers beneath her smock.

Figure 97. Detail (this section initialled 'R.B.') from Rosa Bonheur and Paul Chardin's 'handkerchief' parody 'Foulard de Passy' (1864) pencil, watercolour ink and gouache on canvas, Musée d'Orsay, Paris © Musée d'Orsay

Figure 98. Georges Achille-Fould, *Rosa Bonheur in Her Studio* (1893), oil on canvas, 91 × 124 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux © Musée des Beaux-Arts

The perception of this costume is conveyed by the *EWJ* in a review of the first exhibition by the Society of Female Artists. The article reflected on the difficulties experienced by professional women artists:

> by the customs of society as at present imposed. For instance, how many of the painters who compose the Society of Female Artists would dare to imitate Rosa Bonheur in her convenient, we had almost said her *inevitable,* blouse? [423]

The implication is not only that Bonheur's working costume defied custom, but equally that the 'blouse' outfit was both infamous and well known. In fact, the most striking aspect of Bonheur's dress was her adoption of trousers (as evident in Figure 98). This 'cross-dressing' stretched as far back as

[422] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), p. 229.
[423] Female Artists', *EWJ*, (May 1858), p. 205.

(at least) 1857 when she was granted a permit to wear men's clothing to blend into the background when sketching in an abattoir (see Figure 99).

PRÉFECTURE DE POLICE.

SECRÉTARIAT GÉNÉRAL.
2e BUREAU.
N° 212.
Signalement.

**PERMISSION**
**DE TRAVESTISSEMENT.**

Paris, le 12 Mai 1857.

NOUS, PRÉFET DE POLICE,

Vu l'ordonnance du 16 brumaire an IX (7 novembre 1800);

Vu le Certificat du Sr Cazalis, Docteur demeurant rue Neuve de la Faculté de Paris,

Vu en outre l'attestation du Commissaire de Police de la section du Luxembourg,

AUTORISONS la Demoiselle Rosa Bonheur demeurant à Paris, rue d'Assas, n° 32, à s'habiller en homme, pour raison de santé, sans qu'elle puisse, sous ce travestissement, paraître *aux Spectacles, Bals et autres lieux de réunion ouverts au public.*

La présente autorisation n'est valable que pour *six* mois, à compter de ce jour.

*Pour le Préfet de Police,*
*et par son ordre,*
LE SECRÉTAIRE-GÉNÉRAL,

LE CHEF DU 2e BUREAU DU SECRÉTARIAT-GÉNÉRAL.

Taille 1 m. 70 c.
Age de 35 ans.
Cheveux châtains.
Sourcils id.
Front ordinaire.
Yeux bruns.
Nez ordinaire.
Bouche moyenne.
Menton rond.
Visage ovale.
Teint ordinaire.
Signes particuliers:

Signature du porteur.

POLICE PERMIT FOR MALE ATTIRE.

Figure 99. Prefecture du Police, Police Permit for Male Attire, Paris, 11 October 1857, Theodore Stanton, *Reminiscences of Rosa Bonheur* (London, Andrew Melrose, 1910), p. 362, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Theodore Stanton

As Gretchen van Slyke notes, 'Rosa Bonheur was one of the few nineteenth-century women who managed to obtain office police permission to wear men's clothing'.[424] The only official sanction was for 'certified medical necessity' and certain restrictions still applied. Clearly printed on the official form was the reminder that a woman in men's clothes could not appear 'aux Spectacles, Bals et autres lieux de reunion ouverts au public'.[425]

In the certificate of Figure 98, Bonheur was granted permission 'pur raison de santé'.[426] Van Slyke's continues to assert that Bonheur's wearing of trousers was both 'notorious' and well known.[427]

[424] Gretchen van Slyke, The Sexual and Textual Politics of Dress: Rosa Bonheur and Her Cross-Dressing Permits, *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 26, 3/4 (Spring-Summer 1998), p. 321.
[425] 'shows, balls and other meeting places open to the public'.
[426] 'for considerations of health'.
[427] van Slyke, 'Politics', p. 328.

While Anna Blackwell's profile of Bonheur seems to have been politic about Bonheur's unconventionality, in particular the idea of her transgressive cross-dressing, alternative contemporary descriptions were more pointed. The reference in more than one review on Bonheur's (artistic) work in abattoirs (a locale that friends used to defend and justify her wearing of trousers) hints that this fact was very well known. One review of Dubufe's portrait noted, 'the lineaments of [Bonheur's] face and partially disordered hair as highly suggestive of the stern realities of the *abattoir*'[428] while another reported that Bonheur worked 'regardless of trouble or the cramping conventionalisms of sex. Dressed as a youth, she attends the Abattoirs.'[429]

A memoir of Bonheur written by Stanton, *Rosa Bonheur Reminiscences* (1910), directly addressed the topic of Rosa Bonheur's costume: 'An external and material thing contributed largely to the notoriety of Rosa Bonheur. I refer to her assuming masculine attire.'[430] Stanton's chapter on Bonheur's 'mental and personal traits' tackles first this question of her donning male attire, reinforcing the impression that the commonly held notion of Bonheur was indeed as a cross-dressing woman. Stanton includes in this chapter (undated) excerpts from various friends of Bonheur that attest to her dressing in the costume of both genders.[431] What emerges from the multiple descriptions of Bonheur's attire is summed up by Paul Chardin and Verdier: 'when Rosa Bonheur went to Paris or out in society she always put on woman's clothes' while she 'dressed as a man almost continuously at home and when she went out on horseback'.[432]

Certainly, the repeated emphasis in flattering newspaper and journal articles of Bonheur's feminine attributes hints at an overdetermined narrative attempting to 'normalise' Bonheur within the acceptable (general) definitions of Victorian femininity and beauty. Compared to Hays' article on

[428] 'Fine Arts', *Morning Post* (21 January 1857), p. 3.
[429] 'Horse Fair', *Derby Advertiser and Journal* (1 January 1858), p. 4.
[430] Stanton, *Reminiscences*, p. 362.
[431] Ibid., pp. 362-7.
[432] Ibid., p. 363; see also remarks of Louis Passy p. 363 and Henri Cain and Verdier, p. 365.

American sculptor Harriet Hosmer who, like Bonheur, 'set conventionality at defiance'[433], the profile of Bonheur in the *EWJ* repeatedly stressed those qualities and attributes of Bonheur that conformed with conventional Victorian expections of femininity: 'kindness', 'unassuming' 'self-sacrificing','shapely figure' and 'small, delicate' hands and feet.[434] While the Hosmer and Bonheur articles were written by different authors, parallels suggest a journal 'house style'. Both begin by providing of sense of place in the artist's locale that leads to their front door and hence into the studio to face the artist. In the description of these women both authors acknowledge that each artist is mistaken for a man. Hays devotes a paragraph to the description of Hosmer's appearance.[435] In contrast, Bonheur's appearance takes almost an entire page in Anna Blackwell's article.[436] Her talent is described in quasi religious terms that refute the idea of Bonheur's egotism: 'committed to her keeping' rather 'than a quality personal to herself'.[437] Where Anna Blackwell recorded transgressions from custom she carefully justified Bonheur's conduct and harnessed associations from contemporary discourses, either with reasons that conformed to contemporary notions of feminine, or underlining that Bonheur was not rejecting her feminitity:

> She wears none of the usual articles of feminine adornment; not from contempt of them, but simply because the elegant trifles so dear to womankind are so utterly foreign to her thoughts and occupations, that even to put them on, would be, to her, a forced and unnatural proceeding.[438]

Simiarly, Bonheur's ambition is couched in the language of religious devotion and buffered by other expressions of conventionally feminine attitudes: 'how upright and truthful she is, how single-minded in her devotion to her art, how simple and unassuming she is.'[439]

---

[433] H., 'Hosmer', *EWJ*, (July 1858), p. 301.
[434] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), p. 229.
[435] H., 'Hosmer', *EWJ*, (July 1858), pp. 297-8.
[436] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), pp. 229.
[437] Ibid., p. 230.
[438] Ibid., p. 229.
[439] Ibid.

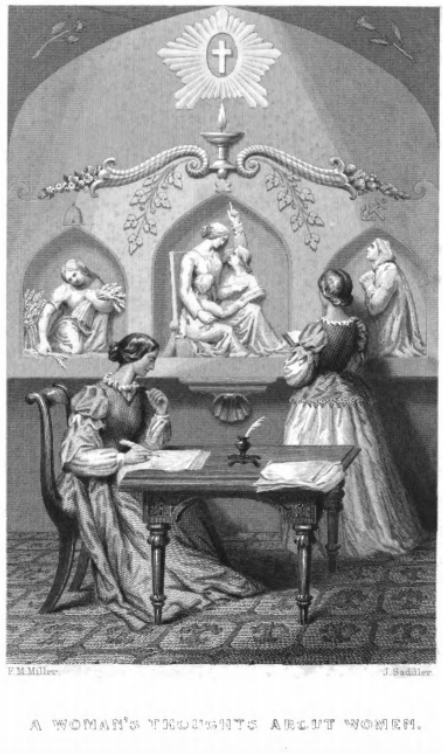



Figure 100. F. M. Miller, *A Woman's Thoughts about Women*, Frontispiece illustration in Dinah Craik, *A Woman's Thoughts about Women* (London: Hurst and Plackett, 1859), Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

For mid-Victorian audiences Anna Blackwell's reference to 'devotion' would have conjured a host of associations within further contemporary discourses that linked femininity and domesticity to religious worship (see Figure 100) creating an image of Bonheur entrenched within conventional mores.

When Anna Blackwell does introduce occasional unconvention details of Bonheur's appearance these are diminished by the counter-weight of a mass of flattering observations:

> She is small in person, rather under middle height, with a finely-formed head, and broad rather than high forehead, small, well defined, regular features, and good teeth; hazel eyes, very clear and bright; dark-brown hair, slightly wavy, parted on one side, and *cut short in the neck*; a compact, shapely figure; true artist's hands; small, delicate, and nervous; and extremely pretty little feet [my emphasis].[440]

While Hosmer also wears a blouse to work and her hair is also short, the comparative efforts of each profile suggest that Anna Blackwell's article is working to counteract prejudice. This idea, of itself,

[440] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), p. 229.

suggests that Bonheur's idiosyncratic appearance was already well known; a suggestion supported by an observation in the *Belfast Mercury*: 'there are many anecdotes about the little painter.'[441] Bonheur's biographer Dore Ashton confirms this view in his observation that around 1854 'numerious visitors came to marvel at her collection of animals and to get a glimpse of the artist herself, *already much discussed for her unconventional dress* [my emphasis].'[442]

Although Anna Blackwell's observation that Bonheur was 'so browned by the sun' suggests that Bonheur may often have been outdoors without a hat, Anna Blackwell also observes that Bonheur wore 'a wide-awake or a sun-bonnet'.[443] As Joan Nunn notes of the former: 'The wide-awake, a broad-brimmed felt hat with a lowish crown, was a countryman's hat'.[444] Figure 101, a self-portrait of Bonheur, presumably shows such a 'broad-brimmed hat'. This and Anna Blackwell's more general impression that Bonheur wore 'a bonnet and shawl of the most unfashionable appearance' suggests that Bonheur's hat did not conform with the fashionable flat brimmed hat (ribbon trimmed both round the crown and the brim, the ribbon can be seen fluttering in Figure 102) worn by the seated artist in *WW*.[445]

Figure 101. Bonheur, *The Return to the Fold*, (1870), Feather, ink, and ink wash on vellum, Musée D'Orsay, Paris © Musée D'Orsay

[441] 'Bonheur', *Belfast Mercury* (5 October 1859, p. 4.
[442] Dore Ashton, *Rosa Bonheur: a life and a legend,* (New York: Viking, 1981), pp. 96-7.
[443] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), p. 231 and p. 228.
[444] Joan Nunn, *Fashion in Costume, 1200-2000*, (London: Herbert Press, 2000), p.143.
[445] Anna Blackwell, 'Bonheur', *EWJ*, (June 1858), p. 242. Also David D'Angers quoted in Ashton, *Bonheur,* p. 99.

The mid-Victorian cognoscenti primed by the catalogue to compare the seated figure in *WW* with Dubufe's portrait (or their conception of the latter) would have noted both similarities and contrasts (see Figures 102 and 103).

Figure 102. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

Figure 103. Éduord Dubufe, *Portrait de Marie-Rosalie dite Rosa Bonheur* (1856), oil on canvas, 130.8 × 94 cm, Musée National du Château, Versailles © Musée National du Château

The Bonheur of Dubufe's portrait and of *WW* are both shown clasping material objects synonymous with professional artists. Dubufe's Bonheur is portrayed holding in her left hand a portfolio and in her right a brush of some kind. The right hand of the putative Bonheur in *WW* appears similarly poised with an object between her fingers. The *Norfolk Chronicle* described the object in her left hand as 'a sketchbook' and in the right 'a crayon',[446] while the *Morning Post* noted these items as a 'portfolio' and 'a crayon or brush'.[447] However, apart from this resemblance the comparison begins to break down.

Countering the anticipated focus of the putative Bonheur of *WW*, her gaze is instead directed away from the composition's one animal (Bonheur's favourite) apparantly toward a landscape beyond the composition's purview. (In this choice – landscape – the seated artist appears focused on Bodichon's

[446] Rosa Bonheur', *Norfolk Chronicle*, 97, 4553 (2 January 1858), p. 5.
[447] 'Fine Arts', *Morning Post*, (21 Jan 1857), p. 3.

preferred genre. Further, Parkes and Ellen Clayton each described Bodichon as 'the Rosa Bonheur of landscape painting'.[448] Such associations may have encouraged the viewer to conceive an idealised professional woman sourced in ideas suggested by both the golden woman and the woman atop the wall.) This contradiction – Bonheur's view away from her 'favourite' – is one of several examples, amounting to a pattern, between the 'assertion' of the catalogue text and the public's received notion of Bonheur's image. Not only does the seated artist of *WW* appear in an English setting, but she looks (by virtue of her abundant hair and plump cheek) to be young. Bonheur was aged thirty-nine in 1861: no longer what a mid-Victorian audience would have considered young. Easel's review of the Academy Summer Exhibition of 1860 described a range of fictional visitors including: 'Miss Frumpington, who is thirty-nine, and who not only never danced a coranto with a 'cracksman' but finds it difficult even to procure a partner for a quadrille.'[449]

Added to this Victorian appreciation of women's aging is the review of the Dubufe portrait contained in the *London Evening Standard*:

> The likeness is excellent, with this exception, that the painter [Dubufe], in enthusiastic admiration at the rare talents of Rosa Bonheur, has endeavoured rather to express on the canvas the effect produced in his imagination than to copy the unpretending reality before him; consequently, the portrait is slightly more heroic in its general appearance than the ingenious and unassuming manners of the original in private life would seem to warrant.[450]

This diplomatic wording hints that the portrait rather flattered its middle-aged subject. Given the reports that Bonheur spent a great deal of time out-of-doors she must have resembled what in fact she was, a middle-aged woman. Perhaps the most distinctive difference between the image in the painting and the mid-Victorian conception of Bonheur occurs in the conventional and feminine costume of the seated figure. Thus, a form of misdirection is at work; while the figure in *WW* is an allegorical representation of Bonheur in gender and status, the representation is not a portrait.

[448] Belloc, 'Bodichon', *Review*, p. 148 and Clayton, *English Female*, 2, p. 176.
[449] Jack Easel (Charles Eastlake), 'The Royal Academy', *Punch*, 38 (19 May 1860), p. 199.
[450] 'Landais', *London Evening Standard* (26 May 1858), p. 6.

The contradictions created by the depiction and description of the seated woman (that is, between compositional image and catalogue text) have a parallel in the depiction/description of the 'Sunken Female' with which, this work argues, the putative Bonheur is paired: identification of each is unstable. The ambiguity surrounding the 'Sunken Female', one that permitted disavowal in a decorous interpretation, widened the potential audience of purchasers for a commercial offering but equally highlighted the contemporary plight of (some) women. The instability of the 'Bonheur' figure, a portrait avowedly Bonheur but simultaneously not Bonheur, conveyed the chimera-like nature of such a pre-eminent and vaulted position for a British woman. In *Search* Claxton caricatured an Englishwoman at the top of the artistic profession as precariously 'holding on' to her position, but, significantly, placed her abroad. The reality for British women artists within the United Kingdom is supported by the history of women's achievement in this country's Fine Art establishment.

The genuinely exceptional achievements of Bonheur were not soon paralleled by a British woman. The first woman *Associate* Member of the Royal Academy (an A.R.A, and not the more prestigious R.A.) was not elected for a further sixty-one years. Dame Laura Knight (1877-1970) noted 'Any woman reaching the heights in the fine arts had been almost unknown until Mrs Swynnerton came and broke down the barriers of prejudice.'[451] In 1858 the verdict of the *EWJ* on the current standard of professional women artists was clear. 'Our female painters' they opine, are 'full of sparkling incorrectness, tender, misty imagination'.[452] This condemnation was followed by an entire paragraph of encouragement, 'To half a dozen names we look with anxious and hopeful expectation that the next ten years will lift them into *recognised position* [my emphasis].' The location atop the wall in *WW* is just such a 'recognised position' and this, for British women artists, was precisely the ambition of the *EWJ*.

[451] Laura Knight, *Oil Paint and Grease Paint*: *autobiography of Laura Knight* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936), p. 311.
[452] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 6.

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': unsisterly conduct

Figure 104. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

In *WW* the outstretched right hand of the ascending artist (circled red in Figure 104) appears to grasp at the skirts of the putative Bonheur: a gesture that might be interpreted as an appeal for help, moreover an appeal from a woman whose reputation could be at risk. Victorian writers such as Sarah Stickney Ellis, Dinah Craik, and Trollope emphasised the importance of sisterly solidarity.[453] In *Forgive* Trollope articulates the concept of a 'feminine faith' of sisterhood 'against which treason on the part of one woman is always unpardonable in the eyes of other women'.[454]

However, the repeated stress in so many sources appears to suggest overdetermination, a narrative straining to rectify a perceived evil. Certainly, evidence of 'unsisterly discord' does exist. Florence Nightingale (Bodichon's first cousin) 'vehemently refused to join John Stuart Mill's suffrage

[453] See Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1845), p. 338. Also, Dinah Craik, 'Female Friendships' in *A Woman's Thoughts about Women* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1859), pp. 165-88.
[454] Trollope, *Forgive*, p. 113.

committee'.[455] That Nightingale had 'only an incomplete and easily exhausted sympathy with the organised women's movement' is confirmed by Nightingale's written comment to Harriet Martineau: 'I am brutally indifferent to the wrongs or rights of my sex.'[456] Agnes Strickland, historian, author, and poet refused her participation in the 1847 petition on the grounds that 'the disabilities of woman were part of the condemnation of Eve'.[457] Unsisterly conduct might equally be acts of neglect. There were, as Cherry observes, several women artists who did not sign the 1859 petition to the Academy:

> That much was at risk in signing may be deduced from the absence of well-known artists such as Margaret Carpenter, Fanny McIan, Maria Harrison and Mary Ann Criddle (member of the Old Watercolour Society) as well as up-coming painters like Joanna Mary Bouce and Mary Severn Newton.[458]

The journal's own attitude to 'unsisterly conduct' may be judged by its inclusion of a condemnatory letter: 'it seems high time that something should be said of the vexatious, unfriendly spirit in which women deal with women'.[459] The correspondent describes the nature of this behaviour as:

> mischievous [since] reputation and self-respect being of such importance in a position anomalous and unascertained as that of women always must be to some extent, and where the injuries are to the mind rather than the body.

On this subject the author concludes that 'it ill becomes women deliberately to vex and hinder one another'.

In 1857 Bodichon joined forces with Harriet Grote and Mrs Robertson Blaine 'to establish the Society of Female Artists'[460] [hereafter SFA] contributing sixty-three art-works for their exhibitions in the period between 1857 and 1886.[461] Yet even within an institution that might be expected to be a model of sisterly behaviour the *Art-Journal* found grounds to gently rebuke 'unsisterly conduct.' Its

---

[455] Elaine Showalter, 'Florence Nightingale's Feminist Complaint: Women, Religion, and "Suggestions for Thought"', *Signs* 6, 3 (Spring, 1981), p. 395. Also Evelyn L. Pugh, 'Florence Nightingale and J. S. Mill Debate Women's Rights', *Journal of British Studies* 21, 2 (Spring 1982), p. 118-38.
[456] Ray Strachey, *The Cause: A short history of the women's movement in Great Britain* (London: Virago, Ltd., 1978), p. 24. Florence Nightingale to Harriet Martineau (30 November 1861), quoted by Edward T. Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1919), I, p. 385.
[457] Lee, *Laurels*, p. 215.
[458] Cherry, *Frame*, pp. 16-17. Also, Losano, *Woman Painter,* p. 39.
[459] A. S., 'A Few Words for Poor Girls: Open Council', *EWJ,* 3, 16 (June 1859), p. 285.
[460] Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. 148.
[461] Charles Baile de Laperrière, *The Society of Women Artists Exhibitors 1855-1996*, 4 vols (Chippenham: Hilmarton Manor Press, 1996), I, p. 117.

charge was that established professional women artists failed to support the Society, 'the younger sister of all the exhibitions':

> Why, we would inquire, do not the leaders in the ranks of lady-artist come to help their sisters? Some few, it is true, have done so. Rosa Bonheur and Henrietta Browne have sent contributions which, if small, are invaluable. A mere sketch for the portfolios of ladies who obtain laurel crowns elsewhere, would give to these walls the attraction they want. Why these supporters have fallen away it is not our province to conjecture. This, however, we may assert, that if lady-artists would all join hands, they could gather strength which must command success.[462]

This review (of a Society linked to Bodichon) has distinct parallels with the vignette of the seated and aspiring artist in *WW*. The references to 'laurels', 'walls', and 'hands' evokes elements of the composition's drama: the accomplished artist in a position of authority who fails to 'join hands' with her beseeching sister-artist to 'gather strength' in solidarity.

Like the *Art-Journal*, the *EWJ* criticised the SFA and articulated its own concept of unsisterly conduct amongst artists. Praising Susan Durant, Howitt, and Bodichon for sending works, it singled out, and implicitly criticised, non-participants and ended with a specific image:

> we do not see the names of either of the Misses Mutrie; a blank much to be regretted. Will not these admirable artists send in next year a few floral groups, whose native home might be searched for, not in the conservatory, but under the wild hedgerow? The Society should be gallantly supported by those very painters in whose behalf it was *not* instituted, and who might gracefully quit "the line" in Trafalgar Square, to adorn these walls. There is a triple virtue in
>
> "A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together"[463]

(This final phrase circulated within mid-Victorian media including novels and religious addresses: Mr Omer in *Copperfield* and the narrator in Trollope's *Live*.)[464]

The image of 'a pull all together' is central to the *EWJ* article's exhortation and consequent shaming of successful professional artists to render sisterly support to less fortunate and struggling colleagues. In *WW* the 'pulling' action of the isolated and ignored second artist on the ladder illustrates an ineffective action at odds with this popular conception of co-operative effort. This artist's gesture

---

[462] 'Society of Female Artists: Eleventh Season', *Art-Journal*, 29 (March 1867), p.88. Also, 'The Society of Lady Artists', *Art-Journal*, 14 (June 1875), pp. 186-7.
[463] 'Female Artists', *EWJ*, (May 1858), p. 207.
[464] See Trollope, *Live,* 2, p. 31. Also Dickens, *Copperfield*, p. 427.

might also be understood as another allusion to Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. (The first putative allusion to this work, discussed above, is the inscription on the lawyer's scroll). Romney, confessing his prior arrogance to Aurora, shamefully acknowledges his previous failures of obligation: 'I, who felt/The whole world tugging at my skirts for help'.[465] Yeldham's interpretation of this scene is that 'progress was being made, and this is represented [in *WW*] by the woman in blue climbing the ladder'.[466] This study argues instead that *WW* seems to hint that the viewer is witness to a successful professional ignoring not merely the plea of a sister-artist, but a potential 'world tugging at my skirts for help'. In this detail the painting reflects the reality for some professional women artists, even within the very Society that Bodichon helped to found.

In a repeating pattern of correspondences between *WW* and *Nameless*, the latter also features an example of feminine rejection. 'The understanding that female solidarity should be expressed in direct acts of generosity, such as refraining from exploiting servants, demonstrably informed the critical appreciation of the departure of the matron shown in Figure 105. The *Illustrated London News* of 12 July 1862 addressed the matron: 'What ho! "my lady," also! Could you not have kept your carriage a few minutes longer to interest yourself in one of your own sex, and a sister too, evidently in distress?'[467] The emphasis on gender, 'my lady', 'your own sex' and 'sister', underlines a recurring condemnation grounded in expectations of feminine behaviour and the cultural belief in sisterly bonds between women. This impression is enhanced by the implicit sarcasm in the punctuation of the address "my lady".

[465] Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, 8, ll. 370-1, p. 272.
[466] Yeldham, 'Work', p. 95.
[467] 'The International Exhibition: "Nameless and Friendless". Miss E. M. Osborn', *Illustrated London News*, 10, 1153 (12 July 1862), p. 49.

Figure 105. Detail from Osborn, *Nameless* © Tate Britain

The act of rejection is made yet more specific by a particular detail apparent in Figure 105. The departing woman is a consumer having purchased a print, shown under the arm of the accompanying boy. Comparing Figures 106 and 107, a preparatory study and the final version of *Nameless* respectively, reveals that between these stages Osborn altered a detail of the artist's portfolio. The study showed it open, the prints within clearly visible. In the final version, the portfolio is sealed by a ribbon tied in a bow. Since this portfolio is resolutely closed it is less likely that the matron's purchase could have been one of the woman artist's prints.'[468]

[468] McKenna, 'Fallen Woman', MLA. This 257-word section is a quotation from this essay, as submitted for the MLA.

Figure 106. Detail of Osborn, *Study for Nameless* (*c.* 1857), black and red chalk heightened with white on buff paper, 80 × 72 cm, Ashmolean, Oxford © Ashmolean

Figure 107. Detail from Osborn, *Nameless* © Tate Britain

Modern scholarship has emphasised the significance of women's networks and friendships in the mutual support of fellow professional artists.[469] The repetition of a theme of female rejection in *WW* and *Nameless* and the reference to this conduct within the *EWJ* suggests that 'unsisterly behaviour' was a recognised and significant feature amongst artists. An example dating after the creation of *WW* demonstrates that, if circumstances demanded it, Bodichon would pragmatically abandon a key 'sisterly' project. As her biographer Hirsch notes, when Bodichon was 'irritated that the Journal seemed to be self-destructing amid a welter of internal quarrels and external scandal [she] refused to give it more financial support and the Journal ceased in 1864'.[470] In the detail of the seated artist's averted gaze the 'solution' of a successful professional career is rendered ambiguous and complex. Unlike the solutions to the issues of an oversupplied governess market or limited options for women

[469] See Cherry, 'Women Painting: Spinsters and Friends' in *Painting*, pp. 49-52.
[470] Pam Hirsch, 'Passions ran high on 'Woman's Journal'', *The Independent*, (1 July 1999) < https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/passions-ran-high-on-woman-s-journal-1103696.html> [accessed October 2021].

within the domestic sphere, the representation of the solution of aspiration appears hedged with difficulties: difficulties such as the risk to reputation flagged by the *EWJ*.

The 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists': pathetic fallacy

The idea that both *WW* and *Nameless* registered the challenges faced by professional artists is allegorically represented in each by the pathetic fallacy of inclement and threatening weather. Clouds appear outside the shop in *Nameless.* The presence of an umbrella and the besmirched hem of the artist's skirts suggest a recent downpour. In *WW* this feature is yet more pointed: dark storm clouds converging above the artist are dispersed in the vista out to sea. The localised nature of bad weather suggests that the poor outlook applied specifically to the 'Female Artists'. The *EWJ* was alive to the literal source(s) and nature of these problems. In an article titled 'On the Adoption of a Professional Life' the *EWJ* enumerated the multiple challenges experienced specifically by women artists.

One such obstacle provides a context in which to interpret the range of representations of the women artists included within *WW*. Assuming that women might acquire the necessary training and skills, the *EWJ* notes that then 'she demands space, freedom, quietness, and unbroken hours' adding that 'it is not possible to paint without a studio, or some sort of separation from the noise and bustle of the external world'.[471] This section concludes by summarising what it takes to 'become a good artist', a vocation that involves sweeping 'aside, with deliberate calmness, the petty temptations, the accumulated distractions of domestic life.[472]

This idea of the constraints placed on women artists was not a new idea within the journal as it had, in very similar terms, been addressed in one of its earliest editions:

> none but a working woman herself can estimate the thousand hindrances placed in her path by domestic life as at present constituted, and by the customs of society at present imposed.[473]

[471] 'Adoption', *EWJ*, (September 1858), p. 5.
[472] Ibid.
[473] 'Female Artists', *EWJ,* (June 1858), p. 205.

The scattered detritus of discarded songbooks and novels, mirror, guitar and amateur sketch book that surround the young women of the central domestic group are emblems of such 'temptations' and 'distractions.' The fate of the seated, sketching, woman and the forlorn woman with her back to this group – both within the centrifugal force of 'domestic life' – is determined by their proximity to, and failure to, sweep aside domestic cares. The contrasting positions of the aspiring and seated professional reflects their fate in their decision to 'dedicate' their lives to the 'one end of art'; eschewing the domestic sphere, daring to distance themselves from the warning inscription, providing themselves with the essential education (the ladder) necessary to succeed, and positioning themselves close to the institution associated with excellence in art. Even so, as both the composition and the journal (respectively, allegorically and literally) warned of professional vocation, 'Society has not yet recognised this study as fit woman's work'.[474]

A detail at the conclusion of the catalogue text suggests that the aspirations of these 'Female Artists' would be best met outwith the confines of this patriarchally defined institution.

Figure 108. Detail from Claxton, *WW* © *The British Art Journal*

The catalogue text concluded with a botanical analogy:

> An artist (Rosa B – –) has attained the top of the wall (upon which the rank weeds of Misrepresentation and prickly thorns of Ridicule flourish), others are following. The blossom of the "forbidden fruit" appears in the distance.[475]

The Victorian perception of weeds is demonstrated in an article in the *EWJ* examining 'truth', 'facts' and 'ideas' (again demonstrating an overlap of ideas in the painting and the journal):

[474] Blackwell, 'Letter', *EWJ*, (February 1860), p. 329.
[475] Catalogue, Portland Gallery, p. 5.

> As weeds, if left unheeded, stifle and choke up the fairest and most beautiful flowers, so in like manner do errors, in process of time, overspread the face of truth. A few hours' hard work will speedily rid our favorite [*sic*] flower-bed of these unwelcome annuals, whereas the roots of false opinion are somewhat difficult to find, and when found, a vast amount of digging and tugging is requisite before they will let go their hold.[476]

In *WW* (see Figure 108) the 'rank weeds' flourish 'upon' the 'top of the wall': an environment argued earlier in this study to be a metaphor for the Royal Academy. In the interpretation provided by the *EWJ* these 'weeds' resemble the deeply rooted notions of 'custom' prejudicial to women, and this statement appears to be a veiled critique of this patriarchal institution. The catalogue's reference to 'forbidden fruit' hints at a biblical allusion to Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden, and another example of irreligious humour inverting traditional notions. The walled enclosure is not a paradise for the women enclosed within this structure. The 'blossom' and 'fruit' flourish beneath blue skies beyond the wall, suggesting that women's best opportunities lie beyond man-made definitions.

Of the three pairings in *WW*, that of the 'Sunken Female' and the 'Female Artists' is the most complex. The vignettes of 'issue' and 'solution' when compared with the catalogue text must challenge any audience's expectations: a prostitute described as a medical student and an artist who was, and yet was not, Bonheur. This approach serves to link this pair and equally highlight the 'reputational risk' faced by mid-Victorian women seeking public careers. Significantly, in the current interpretation of the composition as a pairing the seated woman artist is to be understood as a 'solution' to the complex range of issues represented in the figure of the 'Sunken Female': albeit a solution with reservations implicit in the averted gaze, disregard of the ascending artist, and inclement weather.

The *EWJ* considered the 'issue' represented within *WW* in multiple forms – in the aspiration to study medicine, to study Fine Art, and the plight of 'fallen women'. For each, the journal advocated education as a route out of these difficulties. Bodichon's journals, like the composition, acknowledged the complexity of the 'solution' but encouraged their readers to advance, like the seated artist,

[476] A. R. L., 'Facts *versus* Ideas' *EWJ*, 7, 38 (April 1861), p. 73.

focusing instead on the rewards offered by a career rather than the opprobrium of conventional public opinion. The exasperated opinion of the *EWJ* in its one acknowledgment of 'reputational risk' (an 'insane notion' and 'baseless chimera') suggests that, had the journal's editors been advocating a policy rather than simply railing, it would have encouraged readers to adopt the pose of the seated artist: turning the proverbial cheek to slander.[477]

---

The *EWJ* was certainly not the sole contemporary discourse that tackled the subjects represented in Claxton's painting of 1861. However, the evidence presented in this chapter argues that the composition may be interpreted through the lens of this specific journal. Firstly, a pattern of correspondences exists between the journal and the composition; the journal not only addresses all the topics within *WW*, but encourages the same interpretation as does the composition. Secondly, the formula of representing an 'issue' and forwarding a 'solution' was a familiar approach for Bodichon and her publications. And finally, the figures of the golden woman and the seated woman are symbolic of Bodichon's own persona, her aspirations for women, and her proposed attitudes towards conventional 'cant'. This relationship between Bodichon's projects and the painting also provides a rationale to the disparate groupings of figures and subjects and their arrangement within *WW*: an organisational principle that, until now, has eluded scholars.[478]

The ambitions of Bodichon and the *EWJ* were, however, evidently greater than simply informing its readership. The Hayes article on the Victorian Printing Press from June 1860 apostrophises its audience: 'Come and see the first fruits of our labors and *help us to accomplish more* [my emphasis].'[479] The year following the creation of *WW*, the new editor of the *EWJ*, Davis, wrote to Bodichon: 'An inspiriting thought, once printed, may kindle somewhere, + produce greater results than twenty

[477] 'Teacher', *EWJ*, (March 1858), p. 11.
[478] Cherry, *Frame,* p. 39.
[479] H., 'Ramble', p. 269.

printing presses'.[480] As Palmer observes, the editors asked themselves 'how the seemingly passive act of reading might be converted into, or re-imagined as, a dynamic feminist activity.'[481] Living just three miles from the *EWJ* offices and library (stocked with the journal's issues) at 19 Langham Place, the youthful and politically engaged Claxton may have reimagined her own 'dynamic feminist activity' in the form of Fine Art.[482]

[480] Girton, GCPP Bodichon 2/3, quoted by Palmer, 'Reading', p. 51.
[481] Palmer, 'Reading', p. 48.
[482] RA-SEC-vol91-1859, 'List of Exhibitors, With their Places of Abode'. Miss F. Claxton's address given in Summer Exhibition Catalogues: p. 54, 4 Campden Hill Villas (1859), p. 54, 2 Havistock Terrace (1863), and p. 54, 4 Burlington Gardens (1866).

**Conclusion**

This study opened with Anna Mary Howitt's lament on surveying her future: 'A world alas! which one's womanhood debars one from enjoying'.[1] The current examination of Claxton's painting, and the Academy's archival documents, provides a context for her dismay, suggesting that her use of 'enjoy' related to the word's less common meaning of 'participation'. More modest than real pleasure in her career, her ambition might simply have been to hold a place within the Victorian art establishment. This study's approach, in setting out contextual evidence, has focused on a phrase from the 1861 exhibition catalogue explication that accompanied *WW*. 'The ancient wall of Custom and Prejudice' pithily articulates some major factors frustrating the advance of professional women artists; the 'ancient wall' (representing the patriarchal Academy), 'custom' (an adherence to a status quo then favouring men), and 'prejudice' (the active operation of systematic institutional discrimination against women).

Each of the above elements is represented within *WW*: a literal wall symbolising the Academy as a near insurmountable barrier, and various customs and prejudices that limited women's agency and progress. In part, the exclusivity of an all-male art establishment was maintained through the continuity of custom, and the application of prejudicial views. While earlier scholarship has identified the topical issues referenced in the painting and suggested that the work harnessed itself to individual political messages, the current study is the first to comprehensively explain all the groupings and their inter-relationships and representations, and to relate the significance of all these ideas within the overarching political movement of contemporary proto-feminism. The current interpretation presents *WW* as political 'feminist activity', inspired by the ideas of Bodichon and the Langham Place group.[2]

[1] Howitt to Barbara Bodichon, CUL MS Add.7621/IV/70.
[2] Palmer, 'Reading', p. 48.

One such project was to forward women's entry into the Academy's Schools. The scope of the current study precluded the inclusion of a chapter (with research based on a newly unearthed obituary letter from a private archive) examining and correcting the history of events around Herford's entry as a student. Written by close friends, this obituary letter makes several assertions including one already familiar to scholars; that the then president of the Academy played a role in assisting Herford's entry. This letter moves that idea from merely contemporaneous speculation to a fact issued by an authoritative source, one that personally knew Herford and her version of the facts.

This letter would have added to the current study's contention that there was indeed some support for the advance of professional women artists within the ranks of Academicians. However, the degree of any positive assistance pales in comparison with the overwhelming evidence of discrimination in the period 1860-90. While earlier scholarship has noted individual occurrences of sexual discrimination, this study has woven these into a coherent narrative, thus demonstrating a dominant theme and explicit pattern. Considering the women artists represented within *WW* through the lens of this specific evidence suggests that similar attitudes permeated society. The allusion to the Academy as 'the ancient wall' within the painting's catalogue explication, and its representation within that work as a metaphor, is an acknowledgement of the barrier that this institution created for women artists. Further, that the barriers (to women) created by the Academy cast a shadow over their lives and that scaling the heights of a professional career represented real risks to a woman's moral reputation. Despite this, in touches of humour, irreverence, and satire, the painting's playfulness lifts an otherwise rather gloomy prognosis to hint at a resilient, hopeful future for the work of women.

The complex and nuanced reality of the professional careers of Bodichon, Claxton, Herford and Osborn reflected their own optimism, and efforts to overcome prejudice. Backed by a substantial private income, stellar connections, and formative experiences that acquainted her with societal prejudice, it is not surprising that Bodichon went on to exhibit her paintings in prestigious locations

such as the Dudley Gallery and Gambart's French Gallery.[3] She was not, however, immune to the judgements that classed the artistic output of women as 'feminine'; one obituary noted 'her *charming* work [my emphasis]'.[4] Claxton, noted one obituary, was remembered as a, 'well-known fashion plate artist', rather than in the revered field of Fine Art.[5] Up to the point of professional retirement on marriage, her often clever and amusing illustrations did appear regularly within periodical publications. However, by 1920, aged eighty-two and living narrowly on a small annuity, she appears to have been overwhelmed and made careful plans to successfully end her life.[6] Hereford's standing within the art establishment may be gauged by the fact that she was, apparently, the only woman whose opinion was solicited at the foundation of the Slade School of Fine Art.[7] However, a letter to her sister-in-law (relating two recent sales of paintings) makes clear the extent of her anxieties: 'if my health makes me give up painting they can't say it was because I was discouraged!'[8] Aged thirty-nine she died of an apparently accidental overdose of chloroform. Osborn did exhibit over her own long life and achieved a degree of recognition not accorded to Bodichon, Claxton, or Herford. In 1864 James Dafforne provided a profile of Osborn, for the prestigious *Art-Journal*, acknowledging that Osborn had 'produced pictures which the highest names in the rolls of the Royal Academy would not be ashamed to own'.[9] This 'compliment' to Osborn simultaneously underlines her exclusion from the art establishment. At this point, irrespective of how talented, women were not on the Academy's 'rolls'.

---

[3] 'Pall Mall Gazette Office', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 52, 8183, (12 June 1891), p. 6 and Pamela Fletcher, 'Creating the French Gallery: Ernest Gambart and the Rise of the Commercial Art Gallery in Mid-Victorian London', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 6, 1 (Spring 2007) <https://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/46-spring07/spring07article/143-creating-the-french-gallery-ernest-gambart-and-the-rise-of-the-commercial-art-gallery-in-mid-victorian-london> [accessed October 2023].
[4] 'Pall Mall', *Pall Mall Gazette*, (12 June 1891), p. 6.
[5] 'A Veronal Victim', *Leicester Daily Post*, 6327 (5 May 1920), p. 1.
[6] 'A Veronal Tragedy. Aged Artist's death from overdose', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 13068 (5 May 1920), p. 1. Also 'Aged Artist's Suicide; Old Lady's Concern at Rising Cost of Living', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 13069 (6 May 1920), p. 4.
[7] Laura Herford to E.W. Field (22 May 1870), quoted by Martin Postle, 'The Foundation of the Slade School of Fine Art', *The Volume of the Walpole Society,* 58 (1995/1996), p. 210. Also, section VI of the same article, 'VI Female Students at the Slade Schools', pp. 146-8.
[8] Laura Herford to Annie Herford (Xmas Eve., 1869), private archive J. Jones.
[9] Dafforne, 'British Artists', *Art-Journal,* (September 1864), p. 261.

A small, as yet unexamined, cache of Herford's family correspondence still exists in a private archive. One letter describes Herford's life within a house at Fitzroy Square (on the same street as the then Academy's President). Here a lonely Herford, dogged by continual ill-health, occupied just one room that had 'no sun'.[10] This was a much sadder alternative to Woolf's concept of an inspirational 'room of one's own'. And yet, despite her literal and metaphorical confinement Herford – backed by a proto-feminist movement that included Bodichon, Claxton, and Osborn – challenged and then overturned a significant custom at the Academy's Schools, and then faced down its formidable prejudice.[11]

[10] Laura Herford to Laura (14 July 1870), private archive of J. Jones.
[11] 'Royal Academy', *Athenaeum* (30 April 1859), p. 581.

## Appendix A.

*The family tree of (Anne) Laura Herford and Bessie Rayner Parkes*

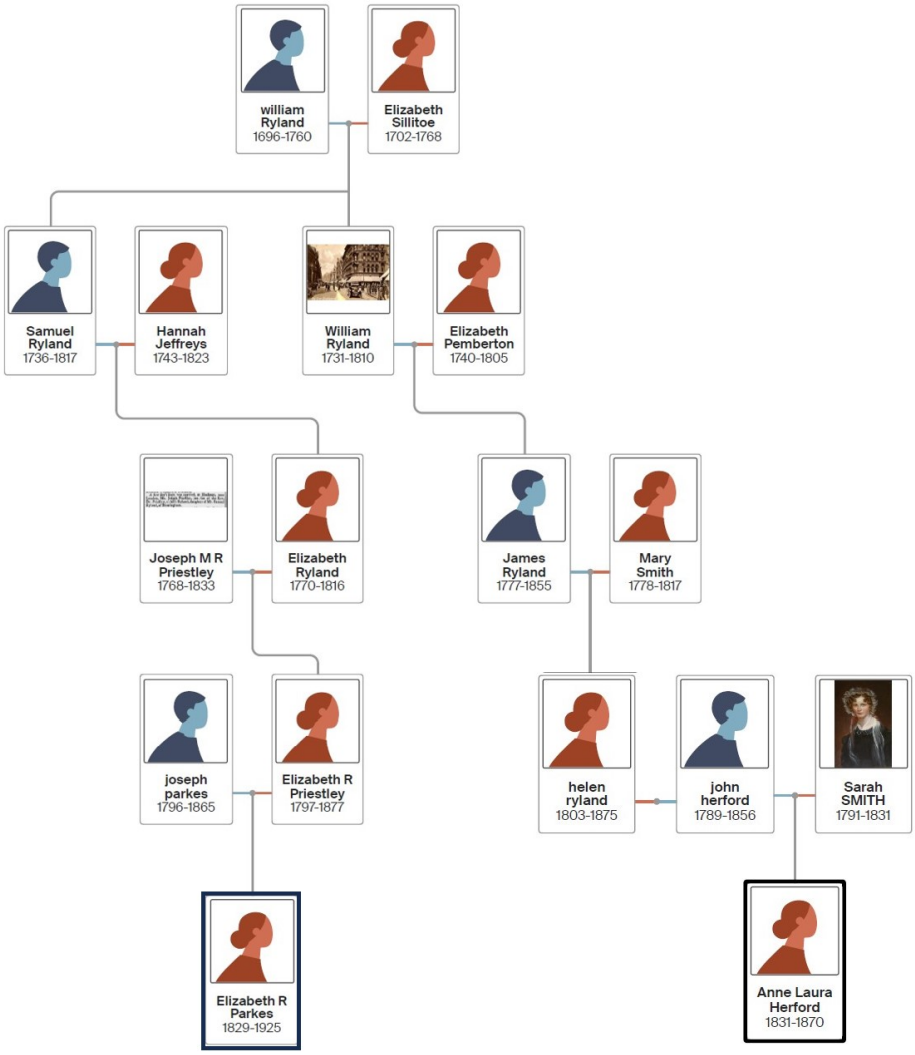



Figure 128. The family tree of Laura Herford and Elizabeth Parkes

The family tree above only includes the individuals that explain the direct family relationship between (Anne) Laura Herford and Bessie Rayner Parkes. This tree demonstrates that it was not the case, as asserted by Cherry, that 'Laura Herford was the cousin of Bessie Rayner Parkes'.[1] This specific tree was created in Ancestry.com to record this study's research and, as yet, is not in the public domain.

[1] Cherry, *Frame*, p. 11.

Herford's stepmother, Helen Ryland, and Parkes's mother, Elizabeth R. Priestley, were the great-grandchildren of William Ryland and Elizabeth Sillitoe. This connection made Herford the step daughter of the second cousin, 1 × removed of Parkes.

## Appendix B.

*Influential patrons of Emily Mary Osborn; familial relationship*

In 1864, writing for the *Art-Journal*, James Dafforne produced a profile of Emily Mary Osborn that mentioned an early and very important patron of the artist:

> A small picture entitled 'Pickles and Preserves,' exhibited at the Academy in 1854, was shown, after it came out of the gallery, by some friend to a gentleman, Mr. C. J. Mitchell, who purchased it, 'as an encouragement for the artist to go on.' Soon after Miss Osborn was introduced to him and his brother, Mr. William Mitchell, to whose unceasing kindness and generous help she ever expresses the deepest obligation. The latter gentleman, hearing she was desirous to produce something of greater importance than anything she had yet attempted, gave her a commission for a group of life-sized portraits of a lady and her three children; it was exhibited at the Academy in 1855 [...] With the two hundred guineas received for the portrait-picture, which Mr. Mitchell presented to the husband of the lady, the artist added a studio to her residence.[2]

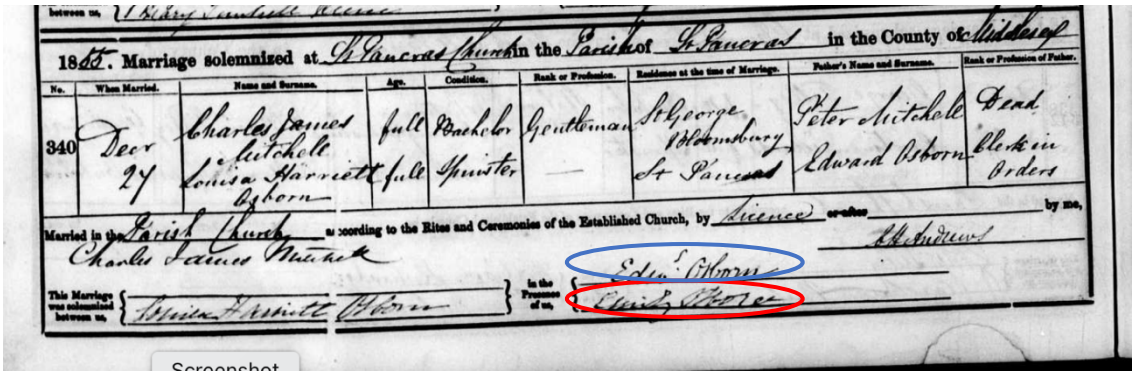



Figure 129. Marriage Certificate for Louisa Harriett Osborn and Charles James Mitchell, 'London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1938 for Louisa Harriet Osborn, Camden>St Pancras Parish Church: Euston Road>1855-56' <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/discoveryui-content/view/5857571:1623?tid=&pid=&queryId=ebeea84b-4358-4bfb-b7cf-9acfa6d85f78&_phsrc=mYT57&_phstart=successSource> [accessed January 2024] © Ancestry.com

Figure 129 shows the marriage certificate of Charles James Mitchell to Louisa Harriett Osborn on 27 December 1855. Witnesses to this marriage were Louisa's sister, Emily Mary Osborn (circled red), and father Edward Osborn (circled blue). This confirms that the Mitchell brothers, Emily Mary Obsorn's significant patrons, were in fact related to her since 'Mr C. J. Mitchell' was her brother-in-law.

[2] James Dafforne, 'British Artists; their style and character, no. 75, Emily Mary Osborn', *Art-Journal*, 26 (September 1864), p. 261.

**Appendix C.**

*The setting of "Woman's Work", a Medley (1861): Hastings Castle*

The setting of *WW*, with a coastline bordered by white cliffs and ruins, is reminiscent of the locale of Hastings where Bodichon was born and raised. While travelling widely, she retained a life-long association with the area and returned there following her stroke. Bodichon was eventually buried in nearby Brightling Church, Robertsbridge.[3] As Pam Hirsch notes:

> Hastings attracted many painters, both amateur and professional, who appreciated its beach scenes and craggy Castle Hill with its romantic ruins at the top. Cox, Linnell, Prout, Turner and Hunt had all painted there.[4]

One artist who visited Hastings was Claxton. The *Illustrated Times* of 8 September 1860 (months before the exhibition of *WW* in March of the following year) published an engraving of Claxton's drawing 'Hastings Railway Station – The Arrival of the Down Train' (shown in Figure 130).[5]


Figure 130. Florence Claxton, 'Hastings Railway Station – The Arrival of the Down Train', *Illustrated Times*, 2, 284 (8 September 1860), p. 151, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

[3] 'Death of Madame Bodichon', *Hastings and St. Leonards Observer*, (13 June 1891), p. 7. Bodichon was born in Whatlington, Battle, and spent some of her youth in Hastings. She built Scalands Gate, Sussex in 1863.
[4] Pam Hirsch, *Bodichon*, p. 19.
[5] 'Hastings Railway Station – The Arrival of the Down Train', *Illustrated Times* (8 September 1860), 11, 284, pp. 151-2.

The Victorian project of industrialisation included the advent of railways from London to Hastings that opened the latter to tourism. In *Osborne's Stranger's Guide to Hastings* (1854) 'The Castle' came immediately after the introductory 'History of Hastings'.[6]

Figure 131. 'Hastings Castle', engraving (1861) © Vince Catt <https://www.1066online.co.uk/gallery/engravings/vc-Hastings-Castle> [accessed October 2023]

This guide described how: 'The visitor will be much delighted with the ancient architecture, and the splendid view from the upper terrace, of the sea and surrounding country.'[7] Amongst these architectural details described in the guide was the 'handsome chancel arch' circled red in Figure 131.[8]

[6] C. Osborne, *Osborne's Stranger's Guide to Hastings* (1848; repr. Sussex: Osborne, 1854), p. 21. This guide, first printed in 1848, was reprinted in 1854 and 1864.
[7] Osborne, *Guide*, p. 26.
[8] Osborne, *Guide*, p. 23.

Figure 132. 'Hastings Castle & 1066 Story' <https://www.visit1066country.com/things-to-do/hastings-castle-and-1066-story-p44433> [accessed October 2021]

The fact that Victorian artists modified views is exemplified in the oeuvre of Bodichon in her own landscape *Ventnor, Isle of Wight* (1856), 'perhaps most important work she created during her career.'[9] Art dealer Rupert Maas quotes geologist Professor Robin McInnes, who lives on the Isle of Wight, as identifying the viewpoint of Bodichon's work:

> to near Luccombe, just to the east of Ventnor, looking northeast across Shanklin Bay to Culver Cliff in the far distance, and suggested that the headland in the middle distance (which has been placed where it should not be) is Woody Point to the west of Ventnor, *transposed for artistic effect* [my emphasis].[10]

It seems possible that in creating a setting for *WW* Claxton incorporated elements of the ruined castle at Hastings (including the chancel arch), and the nearby Seven Sisters white cliffs to achieve an imagined, artistic view. This imagined view, inspired by a locality dear to Bodichon and associated with her, may have been another homage to Bodichon akin to the figure of the golden woman in *WW*.

[9] 'Margaretta Frederick' <https://www.maasgallery.co.uk/60th-anniversary/60-years-60-pictures/60-years-60-pictures-81-2873> [accessed 2021].
[10] Robin McInnes quoted by Rupert Maas <http://www.maasgallery.co.uk/british-pictures-2016/british-pictures-2016/british-pictures-2016-37-1796> [accessed January 2021].

**Appendix D.**

*Academicians holding Membership of the Athenaeum, London, in the Year 1862*

The information below reads from left, the date of member's election as Academician, 'Y'/'N' membership of the Athenaeum in 1862 as either 'Y' (yes) or 'N' (no), page reference with relevant Academician's name in the *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Athenaeum, with an alphabetical list of members* [*etc*.,] (London: Savill and Edwards, 1862). Information of Academician's date of election and inferred continuing Academy membership (calculated from the date a member died), is taken from Sidney Hutchinson, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768 – 1986* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1986).

| Election Year | Name | Member-ship | Page Rule Book |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1821 | Baily, Edward Hodges | N | |
| 1836 | Cockerell, Charles Robert, | Y | p. 35 |
| 1820 | Cooper, Abraham, | N | |
| 1857 | Doo, George Thomas | N | |
| 1848 | Cope, Charles West | Y | p. 36 |
| 1855 | Cousins, Samuel | Y | p. 36 |
| 1851 | Creswick, Thomas | Y | p. 36 |
| 1848 | Dyce, William | Y | p. 40 |
| 1830 | Eastlake, Charles Lock | Y | p.41 |
| 1860 | Egg, Augustus Leopold | Y | p. 41 |
| 1857 | Elmore, Alfred | Y | p. 42 |
| 1858 | Foley, John Henry | Y | p. 44 |
| 1853 | Frith, William Powell | Y | p. 45 |
| 1836 | Gibson, John | N | |
| 1851 | Gordon, John Watson | N | |
| 1851 | Grant, Francis | Y | p. 47 |
| 1841 | Hardwick, Philip | Y | p. 50 |

| Election Year | Name | Member-ship | Page Rule Book |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1840 | Hart, Solomon Alexander | Y | p. 51 |
| 1846 | Herbert, John Rogers | Y | p. 53 |
| 1860 | Hook, James Clarke | N | |
| 1860 | Jones, George | Y | p. 58 |
| 1844 | Knight, John Prescott | Y | p. 59 |
| 1845 | Landseer, Charles | Y | p. 60 |
| 1831 | Landseer, Edwin | Y | p. 60 |
| 1838 | Lee, Frederick Richard | Y | p. 61 |
| 1846 | Macdowell, Patrick | N | |
| 1840 | Maclise, Daniel | Y | p. 64 |
| 1852 | Marshall, William Calder | N | |
| 1816 | Mulready, William | Y | p. 68 |
| 1859 | Phillip, John | Y | p. 74 |
| 1826 | Pickersgill, Henry William | Y | p. 74 |
| 1857 | Pickersgill, Frederick Richard | N | |
| 1861 | Poole, Paul Falconer | N | |
| 1851 | Redgrave, Richard | Y | p. 76 |
| 1841 | Roberts, David | Y | p. 77 |
| 1851 | Scott, George Gilbert | Y | p. 79 |
| 1859 | Smirke, Sidney | Y | p. 80 |
| 1835 | Stanfield, William Clarkson | Y | p. 82 |
| 1855 | Ward, Edward Matthew | Y | p. 89 |
| 1846 | Webster, Edward Thomas | Y | p. 90 |
| 1849 | Westmacott, Richard | Y | p. 90 |

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

### Paintings and visual art

Osborn, Emily Mary, *The Governess* (1860), oil on canvas, 34.9 × 29.2 cm, B1987.2, Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut © Yale Centre for British Art

Pickersgill, Frederick Richard, *The Wishing Well* (1866), wood on paper, 19.2 × 11.7 cm, 1922,0209.47, British Museum, London © British Museum

Pinwell, George John, 'Seasonable Wooing', *Once a Week*, 8, 194 (14 March 1863), p. 322, Bodleian Library, Oxford © Bodleian Library

Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, *Lady Lilith* (1866-8, reworked 1872-3), oil on canvas, 96.5 × 85.1 cm, Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Delaware © Delaware Art Museum

### Manuscripts and Archives

Manchester, John Rylands University Library

Ryl. Eng. MS 1293/41

Oxford, Bodleian Library

MS. ENG C. 226 fols. 83-127

Cambridge, Girton College

BRP II, 64/1&2

CUL MS Add.7621/IV/70 ff 807-8

GBR/0271/GCPP Bodichon 2/1

GCPP Bodichon, GB 271

GCPP Bodichon 2/1

GCPP Bodichon 2/3

GCPP Bodichon 6/X

Papers of Bessie Rayner Parkes, Girton College, Cambridge 5/165

Kew, The National Archives

Board of Trade and successors. BT 41/227/1274

London, Royal Academy of Arts

RAA, 11/2622

RAA/AND/26/405

RAA/GA/1/6

RAA, /GA/1/7

RAA/GA/1/8

RAA/GA/5/1

RAA/GA/11/1

RAA/GA/11/2

RAA/GA/11/2/1

RAA/KEE/1/1/2

RAA/KEE/1/2

RAA/PC/10

RAA/PC/1/11

RAA/PC/1/12

RAA/PC/1/16

RAA/PC/1/18

RAA, SA/43/1

RAA/SEC/8/19/3

RA-SEC-vol91-1859

West Sussex, The Keep

AMS 7031/1

**Articles in Newspapers or Journals**

'A House of Mercy', *EWJ*, 1, 1 (March 1858), pp. 13-27

'A Learned Lady, *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), pp. 333-4

'A Question: Are men naturally cleverer than women?', *EWJ*, 2, 11 (January 1859), pp. 333-6

'A Veronal Tragedy. Aged Artist's death from overdose', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 13068 (5 May 1920), p. 1

'A Veronal Victim', *Leicester Daily Post*, 6327 (5 May 1920), p. 1

'A Young Person wishes for a Situation', *The Times*, 23885 (20 March 1861), p. 3

'Aged Artist's Suicide; Old Lady's Concern at Rising Cost of Living', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 13069 (6 May 1920), p. 4

'Art in August: The New Rules at the Royal Academy Schools', *Magazine of Art*, (1890), pp. 41-4

'Art in February: Women at the Royal Academy Schools.' *Magazine of Art*, (1889), pp. 17-20

'Art in March. Reform of the Royal Academy Schools', *Magazine of Art*, (1890), pp. 21-4

'Art Notes', *Magazine of Art*, 5 (1882), pp. 17-20

'Art. VI. 2. Report from the Council of the Royal Academy to the General Assembly of Academicians. 1860' *Edinburgh Review*, 118, 242 (1 October 1863), pp. 483-506

'Art. VI. 3. Report of the Royal Commission appointed to enquire into the Present Position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts; together with Minutes of Evidence. &c. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty. 1863.' in *Edinburgh Review*, 118, 242 (October 1863), pp. 483-506

B., J., 'On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women', *EWJ*, 4, 24, (February 1860), pp. 361-75

'Baptist Missions', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 586, 2 (19 September 1863), p. 1

Belloc, Bessie Parkes, 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon', *Englishwoman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions,* 22, 210, (15 July 1891), pp. 145-9

Blackwell, Anna, 'Rosa Bonheur: An Authorised Memoir', *EWJ*, 1, 4 (June 1858), pp. 227-43

Blackwell, Elizabeth, 'Letter to Young Ladies Desirous of Studying Medicine', *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), pp. 320-32

Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith to Dr Bagshaw (14 December *c.*1877), The Keep, West Sussex, AMS 7031/1

—— 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), pp. 353-4

—— 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 8, 48 (February 1862), p. 427

—— 'The Domestic Muloch', *Leader*, 5, 230 (19 August 1854), p. 783

—— 'To the Editor of the English Woman's Journal: Apropos of the Governess Question', *EWJ*, 4, 22 (December 1859), p. 285

Chapman, John, 'The Property of Married Women', *Westminster Review*, 66, 130 (October 1856), pp. 331-60

Chester, Harry, 'Letters on the Employment of Women', *EWJ,* 4, 22 (December 1859), pp. 270-2

Claxton, Adelaide, 'Eight o'clock p.m.: Coffee', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 486, (9 July 1864), p. 29

—— 'Eleven o'clock p.m.: The last Will and Testament', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 497 (24 September 1864), p. 204

—— 'Five o'clock a.m.: Overworked', *Illustrated Times,* 4, 468 (5 March 1864), p.157

—— 'Four o'clock a.m.: Up with the Lark', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 464 (20 February 1864), p.124

—— 'Nine o'clock p.m.: Waiting for the Doctor', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 489 (30 July 1864), p. 76

—— 'One o'clock a.m.: Suppertime', *Illustrated Times,* 4, 462 (23 January 1864), p. 61

—— 'One o'clock p.m.: The Nursery Dinner', *Illustrated Times,* 4, 462 (23 January 1864), p. 61

—— 'Seven o'clock a.m.: Morning Toilet', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 477 (7 May 1864), p. 300

—— 'Seven o'clock p.m.: Inspection', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 477 (7 May 1864), p. 300

—— 'Six o'clock a.m.: The First Up', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 470 (19 March 1864), p. 189

—— 'The Artist in the London Parks: The Constitutional', *London Society*, 4, 3 (November 1863), between pp. 432-33

—— 'Three o'clock p.m.: Shopping in Oxford-Street', Illustrated Times, 4, 464 (6 February 1864), p. 92

—— 'Twelve Noon: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 503 (5 November 1864), p. 301

Claxton, Adelaide and Florence Claxton, 'Five o'clock p.m.: Rotten-Row', *Illustrated Times,* 4, 468 (5 March 1864), p. 157

—— 'The Young Gentleman's New Year's Dream' and 'The Young Lady's New Year's Dream' *London Society*, 2 (The Christmas Edition 1862), pp. 90-1

—— 'Three o'clock a.m.: Burglars', Illustrated Times, 4, 464 (6 February 1864), p. 92

—— 'Two o'clock a.m. Sitting up for the Mistress', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 463 (30 January 1864), p. 77

Claxton, Florence, 'A Spinster Here. A Bachelor There', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 461 (16 January 1864), p. 45

—— 'Daughters Here. Sons there', *Illustrated Times*, 2, 423 (25 April 1863), p. 297

—— 'Dress Circle Here. Dress Circle There.' *Illustrated Times,* 3, 458 (26 December 1863), p. 411

—— 'Eight o'clock a.m.: Morning Post' *Illustrated Times*, 5, 486, (9 July 1864), p. 29

—— 'Eleven o'clock a.m.: The Gordian Knot', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 497 (24 September 1864), p. 204

—— 'Four o'clock p.m.: Washerwoman's Tea', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 464 (20 February 1864), p.124

—— 'Governesses Here; Want of Governesses There', *Illustrated Times*, 2, 429, (6 June 1863), p. 393

—— 'Hastings Railway Station – The Arrival of the Down Train', *Illustrated Times,* 11, 284, (8 September 1860), pp. 151-2

—— 'Lady Temple gazing round the Scenes of her Youth', *Churchman's Family Magazine,* 3 (January 1864), p. 14

—— 'Life of an Old Bachelor' and 'Life of an Old Maid', 'The Third Annual Exhibition of the Society of Female Artists', *EWJ*, 3, 13 (March 1859), p. 54

—— 'London Societies: No. I. Society for the Practice of Part-Singing', *London Society,* 1, (1862), p. 209

—— 'London Societies: No. II. 'The Artists' and Amateurs' Society' A Conversazione at Willis's Rooms', *London Society*, 1 (1862), p. 378

—— 'Needlewomen here. A Modiste There', *Illustrated Times*, 3, 430, (13 June 1863), p. 404

—— 'Nine o'clock a.m.: Going to Business', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 489 (30 July 1864), p. 76

—— 'Partners Here. Partners There', *Illustrated Times*, 3, 455 (5 December 1863), p. 361

—— 'Servants Here; Servants There, *Illustrated Times*, 3, 444 (19 September 1863), p. 185

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press*, 4, 210 (22 June 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press,* 4, 211 (6 July 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press*, 4, 212, (20 July 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press,* 5, 213 (27 July 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press,* 5, 215 (10 August 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press,* 6, 216 (17 August 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press*, 6, 217 (24 August 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press*, 6, 218 (31 August 1861), p. 6

—— 'Social Science Illustrated', *London City Press*, 6, 220 (14 September 1861), p. 6

—— 'Six o'clock p.m.: Home from Business', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 470 (19 March 1864), p. 189

—— 'Ten o'clock a.m.: Gardening', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 491 (13 August 1864), p. 491

—— 'Ten o'clock p.m.: Dancing', *Illustrated Times*, 5, 491 (13 August 1864), p. 491

—— 'The Artist at the Flower-Shows: – No.1 Rival Roses', *London Society*, 2 (July 1862), opposite p. 30

—— 'Twelve p.m.: The Obstinate Juryman', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 503 (5 November 1864), p. 301

—— 'Two o'clock p.m.: The Steam-Boat', *Illustrated Times*, 4, 463 (30 January 1864), p. 77

'Contemporary Literature: Politics, Sociology, Voyages and Travels', *The Westminster Review*, n.s. 36, 1 (July 1869), pp. 253-75

'Correspondence', *Examiner*, 2667 (12 March 1859), p. 164

Dafforne, James, 'British Artists; their style and character, no. 75, Emily Mary Osborn', *Art-Journal*, 26 (September 1864), pp. 261-3

Davies, Emily to Bodichon, (1862), letter in Girton archive, GBR/0271/GCPP Bodichon 2/1

'Death of Madame Bodichon', *Hastings and St. Leonard's Observer*, 2749 (13 June 1891), unnumbered page

'Death of Madame Bodichon' *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 1753, 3rd edn. (13 June 1891), p. 4

'Domestic Life', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), pp. 73-82

'Drumming for the Drapers', *Punch*, 33 (3 October 1857), p. 138

Easel, Jack, (Charles Eastlake), 'The Royal Academy', *Punch*, 38 (19 May 1860), pp. 199-200

—— 'The Royal Academy', *Punch*, 38 (2 June 1860), pp. 220

—— 'The Royal Academy', *Punch*, 38 (16 June 1860), pp. 246-7

'Elizabeth Blackwell', *EWJ*, 1, 2 (April 1858), pp. 80-100

Esculapius, 'The education of women' *Hastings & St Leonard's News*, 28 July 1848, <http://www.hastingspress.co.uk/history/blsb1848.html> [accessed March 2023]

Faithfull, Emily, 'Victoria Press: A Paper read at the Glasgow Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences', *EWJ*, 6, 32 (October 1860), pp. 121-6

'Female Students', *Art-Journal*, 25 (September 1863), p. 191

Fenwick-Miller, Florence, 'The Ladies' Column' *Illustrated London News,* 98, 2702 (31 January 1891), p. 160

'Fine Arts', *Athenaeum,* 1901 (2 April 1864), pp. 477-8

'Fine Arts', *Illustrated London News*, 33, 945 (13 November 1858), p. 460

'Fine Arts', *John Bull,* 40, 2102 (23 March 1861), p. 187

'Fine Arts: Exhibition of the Institution of Fine Arts, Portland Gallery', *London Daily News,* 4633 (18 March 1861), p. 3

'Fine Art Gossip', *Athenaeum*, 1454 (8 September 1855), pp. 1033-4

'Fine Art Gossip', *Athenaeum,* 1693 (7 April 1860), pp. 480-1

'Fine Art Gossip', *Athenaeum*, 1761 (27 July 1861), p. 123

'Fine Arts: Madlle. Rosa Bonheur', *Morning Post*, 25915 (21 January 1857), p. 3

'Fine Arts: Portrait of Rosa Bonheur. E. Gambart, Berners-Street' *London Evening Standard*, 10676 (2 November 1858), p. 6

'Fine Arts: The Institution of Fine Arts', *Spectator*, 34, 1709 (30 March 1861), p. 332

'Fine Arts: The Pictures of the year. (*Ninth Notice*)', *Examiner,* 2786 (22 June 1861), p. 392

'French School of Art', *Leeds Times*, 26, 1343 (11 December 1858), p. 5

'French School of Fine Arts', *Leeds Times*, 22, 1192 (19 January 1856), p. 5

G., A. G., 'The Deadly Affinity', *Once a Week*, 7, 172 (18 October 1862), pp. 449-53

Gaskell, Elizabeth to Anne Robson, (before 27 January 1853) quoted in eds., Chapple, J. A. V., and Arthur Pollard, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 220-22

'Governesses', *Eliza Cook's Journal*, 1 (15 September 1860), pp. 305-30

H., K., 'Women-Artists', *Examiner*, 3292 (4 March 1871), p. 229

H., M. M., 'Harriet Hosmer', *EWJ*, 1, 5 (July 1858), pp. 295-306

—— 'A Ramble with Mrs. Grundy: A Visit to the Victoria Printing Press', *EWJ,* 5, 28 (June 1860), pp. 269-72

Hays, Matilda M., 'To the Editor of the Times', *The Times*, 24232 (29 April 1862), p. 14

Herford, Laura to Annie Herford (Xmas Eve., 1869), private archive of J. Jones

—— to E. W. Field (22 May 1870), quoted by Martin Postle, 'The Foundation of the Slade School of Fine Art', *The Volume of the Walpole Society,* 58 (1995/1996), pp. 146-8, and p. 210

—— to Laura (14 July 1870), private archive of J. Jones

Herkomer, Hubert to Marion H. Spielmann (1 January 1893), Ryl. Eng. MS 1293/41, quoted in Codell, 'Artist's Cause' *Ryland* (1989), p. 139

Hood, Thomas, 'The Royal Academy and the Female Students', *Fun*, 6 (9 April 1864), p. 33

'House of Commons: Monday, April 21', *Glasgow Herald*, 597, 5 (23 April 1856), p. 6

'House of Commons: Monday April 21', *Newcastle Journal,* 25, 1261 (26 April 1856), p. 6

'How to Utilize the Powers of Women', *EWJ,* 3, 13 (March 1859), pp. 34-47

Howitt, Anna Mary to Barbara Bodichon (*c.* 1848-50), CUL Add. MS 7621/IV/70 ff 307-8

'Imperial Parliament: House of Lords', *London Evening Standard,* 33, 1704 (26 April 1856), p. 2

'In the Upper Painting School – the Ladies' Class,' *Graphic,* (4 May 1889), p. 475

'Institution of Fine Arts', *Illustrated Times,* 12, 317 (27 April 1861), p. 273

'Interesting Contributions in the Last Annual Report', *A Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers,* (January 1866), pp. 1-4

Jeaffreson, John Cordy, 'Female Artists and Art-Schools of England', *Art Pictorial and Industrial*: *An Illustrated Magazine*, 1 (1870-71), pp. 70-3

Jerrold, Douglas, 'The Cry of the Women', *Punch*, 30 (12 April 1856), p. 149

—— 'The Wedding Ring Question', *Punch*, 30 (26 April 1856), p. 168

L., A. R., 'Facts *versus* Ideas' *EWJ*, 7, 38 (April 1861), pp. 73-84

'Ladies' Society', *Saturday Review*, 11, 295 (22 June 1861), pp. 628-9

'Lady Artists: Miss E. M. Osborn', *Lady,* 4, 81 (2 September 1886), p. 183

Leech, John, 'A Trifle the Matter with the Kitchen Boiler', *Four Hundred Humorous Illustrations* (London: Simpkins, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1868), p. 157

—— 'How to Make a Chatelaine a Real Blessing to Mothers', *Punch*, 16 (24 February 1849), p. 78.

—— 'Something the matter with the kitchen boiler', *Punch,* 26 (January 1854), p. 24

—— 'The Chatelaine – a really useful present', *Four Hundred Humorous Illustrations* (London: Simpkins, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1868), p. 57

—— 'The Chatelaine; a really useful present', *Punch,* 16 (January 1849), p. 16

—— 'The Female of the Future', *Four Hundred Humorous Illustrations* (London: Simpkins, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.,1868), p. 179

—— 'The Parliamentary Female', *Punch*, (Punch's almanack), 24 (January 1853), page unnumbered

Leighton, Frederick to John Caldcott Horsley, (undated, before 1896), Bodleian (Weston) Library, MS. ENG C. 226 ff 83-127, pp. 87-8

M., 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 2, 11 (January 1859), pp. 350-3

M., A., 'Here and There. Wanted, a Governess', *Illustrated Times,* 2, 429 (6 June 1863), pp. 392-4

M., S. E., 'To the Editors of the English Woman's Journal', *EWJ*, 7, 42 (August 1861), p. 428

'Madame Caplin's Anatomical and Physiological Gallery', *The Time*s, 23874 (7 March 1861), p. 1.

'Madlle. Rosa Bonheur', *Morning Post*, 25915 (21 January 1857), p. 3

Medicus, 'Open Council', *EWJ*, 2, 9 (November 1858), pp. 209-10

'Minor Topics: Lady Royal Academicians', *Art-Journal*, 19 (February 1880), p. 62

'Minor Topics of the Month', *Art-Journal*, 9 (March 1870), pp. 93-5

'Minor Topics of the Month: The Schools of the Royal Academy', *Art-Journal*, 69 (1 September 1860), pp. 286

'Mr. S. A. Hart R.A.', *Athenaeum,* 2799 (18 June 1881), p. 821

N., L., 'Institution for the Employment of Needlewomen', *EWJ*, 5, 28 (June 1860), pp. 255-9

'New Society of Female Artists', *The Times*, 22689 (25 May 1857), p. 12

Nightingale, Florence to Harriet Martineau (30 November 1861), quoted by Edward T. Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1919), I, p. 385

'On the Adoption of Professional Life by Women', *EWJ*, 2, 7 (September 1858), pp. 1-10

Osborne, C., *Osborne's Stranger's Guide to Hastings* (1848; repr. Sussex: Osborne, 1854)

P., B. R., 'The Market for Educated Female Labour: A Paper read at the meeting of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Bradford, 1859', *EWJ*, 4, 21 (November 1859), pp. 145-52

'Pall Mall Gazette Office', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 52, 8183, (12 June 1891), p. 6

Parkes, Bessie Rayner, 'A Year's Experience in Woman's Work: A Paper read at the meeting of the Association for the Promotion of Social Science, Glasgow, 1860', *EWJ*, 6, 32 (October 1860), pp. 112-21

Parkes, Joseph to Bessie Rayner Parkes, (6 October 1858), Girton Archives, BRP II, 64/1&2

'Passing Events', *EWJ*, 3, 14 (April 1859), pp. 142-4

Passing Events', *EWJ*, 4, 23 (January 1860), pp. 359-60

'Personal', *Illustrated London News,* 89, 2723 (27 June 1891), p. 839

'Pictures by Rosa Bonheur', *The Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, 303 (23 April 1859), p. 2

'Pretty excuse for a wife beater', *Punch*, 32 (16 May 1857), p. 197

R., A. B., 'The Art Season', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 18, n.s. 444 (3 July 1852), pp. 1-4

R., M. S., 'Emigrant-Ship Matrons', *EWJ*, 5, 25 (March 1860), pp. 24-36

—— '34. – On Assisted Emigration', *EWJ*, 5, 28, (June 1860), pp. 235-40

—— '48. – On Assisted Emigration', *EWJ*, 5, 29 (July 1860), pp. 326-35

—— 'Female Middle-Class Emigration: A paper read at a meeting for the Promotion of the Association for Social Sciences, London, 1862', *EWJ*, 10, 55 (September 1862), pp. 20-30

R., M. S., and B. R. P., 'Stray Letters of the Emigration Question', *EWJ*, 8, 46 (December 1861), pp. 237-44

Rye, Maria S., 'Emigration of Educated Women: A Paper read at the Social Science Congress in Dublin 1861' (London: Emily Faithfull & Co., Victoria Press, *c.* 1861), pp. 1-15

'Rosa Bonheur', *Belfast Daily Mercury*, 187, 2 (5 October 1859), p. 4

'Rosa Bonheur', *Cosmopolitan Art Journal*, 2, 4 (September 1858), pp. 193-4

'Rosa Bonheur', *Durham County Advertiser*, 2317 (28 January 1859), p. 5

'Rosa Bonheur', *Norfolk Chronicle*, 97, 4553 (2 January 1858), p. 5

'Rosa Bonheur', *Norwich Mercury*, 6894, (29 December 1858), p. 3

'Rosa Bonheur's Horse Fair', *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal*, 13, 625 (1 January 1858), p. 4

'Rosa Bonheur's 'Landais Peasants Going to Market'', *London Evening Standard*, 10, 539 (26 May 1858), p. 6

'Rosa Bonheur's Pictures', *Belfast Morning News*, 4, 690 (26 May 1859), p. 3

S., 'Schools of the Royal Academy', *Graphic*, 39, 1014 (4 May 1889), pp. 473-6

S., A., 'A Few Words for Poor Girls: Open Council', *EWJ*, 3, 16 (June 1859), pp. 284-6

—— 'Poor Angelica', *Household Words*, 12, 283 (25 August 1855), pp. 87-93

'Saturday Evening' *London Evening Standard*, 9856, 15 March 1856, p. 2

'Scraps from Last Night's Papers: From the Pall Mall Gazette', *Bristol Times and Mirror,* 120, 8277 (13 June 1891), p. 3

'Social Science', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), pp. 122-5

'Society of Female Artists: Eleventh Season', *Art-Journal*, 29 (March 1867), p.88

'Society of Female Artists: Oxford-Street', *Illustrated London News,* 30, 862 (6 June 1857), p. 545

Spielmann, M. H., 'Glimpses of Artist-Life: The Royal Academy Banquet', *Magazine of Art*, (May 1887), pp. 228-33

—— 'Glimpses of Artist-Life: The Royal Academy Schools', *Magazine of Art*, (December 1888), pp. 55-62

Stallwood, H., 'Married Women at Home', *EWJ*, 5, 28 (June 1860), p. 28

'Statistics as to the Employment of the Women of Great Britain', *EWJ,* 51, 25 (March 1860), pp. 1-6

Subscriber, A., 'Open Council: To the Editors of the English Woman's Journal', *EWJ*, 7, 41 (July 1861), pp. 355-6

'The Claims of Governesses', *Saturday Review,* 5, 118 (30 Jan 1858), pp. 110-11

'The Constitutional', *London Society*, 4, 5, (November 1863), pp. 432-3

'The Emigrants.', *Illustrated London News: Musical Supplement,* 20, 464-5, 481[a]-84[a] (19 June 1852), ll. 1-

8, p. 470a

'The English Woman's Journal', *Leader*, 19, 413 (20 February 1858), p. 192

'The English Woman's Journal', *Saturday Review*, 5, 128 (10 April 1858), pp. 369-70

'The Fashions', *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 5 (June 1862), pp. 92-5

'The International Exhibition: "Nameless and Friendless" painted by Miss Osborn', *Illustrated London News*, 10, 1153 (12 July1862), pp. 48-9

'The Missionary Basket, and how to fill it', *A Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers,* (October 1866), pp. 4-6

'The Needlewoman's Farewell', *Punch,* 18, 444 (12 January 1850), ll. 25-28, p. 14

'The Profession of the Teacher', *EWJ*, 1, 1 (March 1858), pp. 1-13

'The Property of Married Women' *The Clerkenwell*, 124, 12 September 1857, p. 3

'The Royal Academy', *Art-Journal*, 52 (April 1859), p. 124

'The Royal Academy', *Art-Journal*, 25 (September 1863), pp. 185-6

'The Royal Academy', *Athenaeum,* 1593 (8 May 1858), pp. 596-8

'The Royal Academy', *Athenaeum,* 1637 (12 March 1859), pp. 361-2

'The Royal Academy', *Athenaeum*, 1640 (2 April 1859), pp. 452-4

'The Royal Academy', *Athenaeum*, 1641 (9 April 1859), pp. 486-8

'The Royal Academy', *Athenaeum*, 1644 (30 April 1859), p. 581

*The Royal Family-Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with marginal readings, explanatory notes, and selected parallel references printed at length*, ed. by Rev. John Stoughton (London: The London Printing and Publishing Company, *c*. 1863)

'*The 'Saturday Review' and the 'English Woman's Journal': The Reviewer Reviewed', EWJ,* 1, 3 (May 1858), pp. 201-4

'The Society of Female Artists', *EWJ,* 1, 3 (May 1858), pp. 205-8

'The Society of Lady Artists', *Art-Journal*, 14 (June 1875), pp. 186-7

'The Society of "Art-Quibblers". On Female Artists', *Art Student,* (1 August 1864), pp. 136-7

'The Study of the Human Face', *Art-Journal*, 4 (July 1865), p. 228

'The Third Annual Exhibition of the Society for Female Artists', *EWJ,* 3, 13 (March 1859), pp. 53-5

'Things in General' *EWJ*, 3, 18 (August 1859), pp. 361-8

'Things in General: by Nobody in Particular', *EWJ*, 3, 17 (July 1859), pp. 299-301

'Unexhibited Art-Treasures', *Punch*, 34 (22 May 1858), p. 209

'Wednesday: Punch's Essence of Parliament', *Punch*, 30 (22 March 1856), pp. 111-2

'What Can Educated Women Do?', *EWJ*, 4, 22 (December 1859), pp. 217-27

'Why boys are cleverer than girls', *EWJ*, 2, 8 (October 1858), pp. 116-8

'*Woman's work: or How she can Help the Sick', EWJ,* 5, 28 (June 1860), p. 280

'Woman', *National Review*, 7 (October 1858), pp. 333-61

'Wiping Out Academy Arrears', *Punch*, 58 (21 February 1870), p. 61

X. A., 'Mrs Robinson's Housemaid', *EWJ*, 3, 14 (April 1859), pp. 123-5

**Books and printed materials**


B., M. A., *A Few Words on Woman's Work*: *Shewing the paramount importance of Home Duties* (London: W. Tweedie, 1859)

Belloc, Bessie Rayner Parkes, *A Passing World* (London: Ward & Downey, 1897)

Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith, *A Brief Summary in Plain Language of the most important Laws of England concerning Women, together with a few Observations thereon* (London: John Chapman, 1854)

—— *Women and Work* (London: Bosworth and Harrison, 1857)

Barrett Browning, Elizabeth, *Aurora Leigh,* ed. by Kerry McSweeny (1856; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Bennett, Arnold, *The Old Wives' Tale,* ed. by John Wain (1908; repr. London: Penguin, 1987)

Blackman, Helen, *Women's Suffrage: A Record of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1902)

Braddon, Mary Elizabeth, *Aurora Floyd*, ed. by P. D. Edwards (1863; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

—— *Lady Audley's Secret*, ed. by Lyn Pykett (1862; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Brontë, Anne, *Agnes Grey*, eds., Robert Inglesfield and Hilda Marsden (1847; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Brontë, Charlotte, *Shirley*, eds., Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith (1840; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

——*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, eds., Herbert Rosengarten and Josephine McDonagh (1848; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Burne-Jones, Georgiana, *Memorials of Burne-Jones* 2 vols (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912)

Butler, Elizabeth Thompson *An Autobiography* (1922; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Catalogue of the Portland Gallery (1861), 200.B.235, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Chapple, J. A. V., and Arthur Pollard, eds., *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967)

Claxton, Florence, *The Adventures of a Woman in Search of Her Rights* ((London: The Graphotyping Co., 1872)

Clayton, Ellen, *English female artists*, 2 vols (London: Tinsley, 1876)

Collins, Wilkie, *Armadale*, ed. by Catherine Peters (1864-66; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Collins, Wilkie, *The Moonstone*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (1868; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Craik, Dinah, *Olive*, ed. by Cora Kaplan (1850; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

—— 'Female Friendships' in *A Woman's Thoughts about Women* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1859), pp. 165-88

Dickens, Charles 'A Visit to Newgate' in *Sketches by "Boz" illustrative of everyday people and everyday life* (1836; repr. London: Chapman & Hall, 1850), pp. 122-30

—— *Bleak House*, ed. by Stephen Gill (1852-3; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

—— *David Copperfield*, eds., Nina Burgis and Andrew Sanders (1849-50; repr. Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2008)

—— *Hard Times,* ed. by Paul Schlike (1854; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

E., A., (John Edward Soden), *A Rap at the R.A. a satire* (London: J. A. Brook & Co., 1875)

*Elegant Arts for Ladies* (London: Ward and Lock, 1856)

Eliot, George, *Middlemarch*, ed. by David Carroll (1871-2; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Ellet, Elizabeth, *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries* (London: Richard Bentley, 1859)

Ellis, Sarah Stickney, *The Daughters of England* (London: Fisher, Son, & Co., 1845), p. 338

Furniss, Harry, *Royal Academy Antics* (London: Cassell & Company, 1890)

—— *Some Victorian Women, good, bad, and indifferent* (London: J. Lane the Bodley Head, 1923)

Gaskell, Elizabeth, *North and South,* ed. by Angus Easson (1854-5; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

—— *Wives and Daughters*, ed. by Angus Easson (1864-6; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

Greenwood, James, 'Bonnets in Limbo' in *In Strange Company* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), pp.123-32

Haight, Gordon S., ed., *The George Eliot Letters*, 9 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954-1978)

Jameson, Anna, *Sisters of Charity and The Communion of Labour* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1859)

Jeaffreson, John Cordy, *A book about doctors* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1860)

—— *A book about lawyers* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1867)

—— *Isabel, The young Wife and the old Love*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1856)

Jopling, Louise, *Twenty Years of my life* 1867-1887 (London: John Lane at Botley Head, 1925)

Knight, Laura, *Oil Paint and Grease Paint*: *autobiography of Laura Knight* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1936)

Layard, George Somes, *Shirley Brooks of Punch; his life, letters, and diaries* (London: Pitman and Sons, 1907)

Leslie, George Dunlop, *The inner life of the Royal Academy, with an account of its schools and exhibitions, principally in the reign of Queen Victoria* (London: John Murray, 1914)

*Man Superior to Woman*, (London: T. Cooper, 1739)

Marks, J. L., ed.,

Martineau, Harriet to Mr Reeve (9 March 1859), *Harriet Martineau: Selected Letters*, ed. by Valerie Sanders (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 174

Pye, John, *A Glance and the Rise and Constitution of the Royal Academy of Arts in London* (London: John Van Voorst, 1859)

Rees, Arthur Augustus, *Reasons for not Co-operating in the alleged 'Sunderland Revivals': a message to his Congregation* (Sunderland: Wm. Henry Hills, 1859)

Redgrave, Richard, and Samuel Redgrave, *A century of painters of the English school*, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1866)

*Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Athenaeum, with an alphabetical list of members* [*etc.*,] (London: Savill and Edwards, 1862)

Sanby, William, *The History of the Royal Academy of Arts from its foundation in 1768 to the present time* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1862)

Smith, William, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1873)

Stanhope, Phillip Henry, *Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the fine arts; together with minutes of evidence* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1863), 19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers (1863), 27 <https://ezproxyprd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:3008/parlipapers/result/pqpdocumentview?accountid=13042&groupid=99494&pgId=f47dd30b-541b-493d-83e4-4f73c4087fd6> [accessed June 2018]

Stanton, Theodore, *Reminiscences of Rosa Bonheur* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1910)

Storey, G. A., *Sketches from Memory* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1899)

Thackeray, William Makepeace, *Book of Snobs* (London: Punch Office, 1848)

'The History of the Royal Academy of Arts from its Foundation in 1768 to the Present Time, with Biographical Notices of all its Members', *Edinburgh Review*, 118, 242 (October 1863), pp. 483-507

Trollope, Anthony, *Can You Forgive Her?* ed. by Dinah Birch, 2 vols (1864-5; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), II, p. 480

—— *He Knew He Was Right,* ed. by John Sutherland (1869; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

—— *Rachel Ray*, ed. by P. D. Edwards (1863; repr. Oxford, Oxford World Classics, 2008)

—— *The Small House at Allington,* ed. by Dinah Birch (1862; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

—— *The Way We Live Now*, ed. by John Sutherland, 2 vols (1874-5; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Ware, J. Redding, *Passing English of the Victorian Era: A Dictionary of Heterodox English, Slang, and Phrase* (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1909)

Wood, Mrs Henry, *East Lynne*, ed. by Elisabeth Jay (1861; repr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

**Secondary works**

Antique Collectors' Club, *The Pictorial Dictionary of British Nineteenth Century Furniture Design* (Woodbridge, England: Antique Collectors' Club, c.1977)

Ashton, Dore, *Rosa Bonheur: a life and a legend,* (New York: Viking, 1981)

Baile de Laperrière, Charles, *The Society of Women Artists Exhibitors 1855-1996*, 4 vols (Chippenham: Hilmarton Manor Press, 1996)

Bullen, John B., *Rossetti, Painter & Poet* (London: Frances & Lincoln, 2011)

Casteras, Susan, 'From 'safe havens' to a 'wide sea of notoriety'' in *A Struggle for Fame: Victorian Women Artists and Authors*, eds., Susan Casteras and Linda H. Peterson, (New Haven: Yale Centre for British Art, 1994), pp. 7-34

—— 'The Necessity of a Name: Portrayals and Betrayals of the Victorian Woman Artist', in *Gender and Discourse in Victorian Art and Literature,* eds. Antony H. Harrison and Beverly Taylor (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992), pp. 207-33

Cherry, Deborah, *Beyond the Frame* (London: Routledge, 2000)

—— *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Chisholm, Hugh, ed. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12, 11th edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911)

Codell, Julie, 'The Artist's Cause at Heart: Marion Harry Spielmann and the late Victorian Art World', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library Library of Manchester*, 71, 1 (1989), pp. 139-63

—— 'Marion Harry Spielmann and the Role of the Press in the Professionalization of Artists', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 22, 1 (Spring 1989), pp. 7-15

Cook, Edward T., *The Life of Florence Nightingale*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan & Co., 1919)

Cruise, Colin, 'St John's Wood Clique', online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 4 October 2007) < https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-96393?rskey=CPRsfJ&result=1> [accessed March 2018]

Dever, Carolyn, 'Everywhere and nowhere; Sexuality in Victorian Fiction' in *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 156-79

Devereux, Jo, 'The Evolution of Victorian Women's Art Education, 1858–1900: Access and Legitimacy in Women's Periodicals', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 50, 4 (Winter 2017), pp. 752-68

—— *The Making of Women Artist in Victorian England* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2016)

Dodd, Sara M., 'Art education for women in the 1860s: a decade of debate' in *Women in the Victorian Art World,* ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 187-200

Fenton, James, *School of Genius: a history of the Royal Academy of Arts* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006)

Fletcher, Pamela, 'Creating the French Gallery: Ernest Gambart and the Rise of the Commercial Art Gallery in Mid-Victorian London', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, 6, 1 (Spring 2007) <https://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/46-spring07/spring07article/143-creating-the-french-gallery-ernest-gambart-and-the-rise-of-the-commercial-art-gallery-in-mid-victorian-london> [accessed October 2023]

Flood, Catherine, 'Claxton [*married name* Farrington] Florence Ann (1838-1920)', online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 26 May 2016) <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-109622?rskey=B78ZeO&result=1> [January 2022]

—— 'Contrary to the Habits of Their Sex? Women Drawing on Wood and the Careers of Florence and Adelaide Claxton' in *Crafting the Woman Professional in the Long Nineteenth Century. Artistry and Industry in Britain*, eds., K. Hadjiafxendi and P. Zakreski, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 107-122

Gillett, Paula, 'Progress and Obstacles: Women Painters from Mid-Century to the Close of the Victorian Era', in *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 158-91

Graves, Robert, *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955)

Grey, Sara, *Dictionary of British Women Artists* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2009)

Hadjiafxendi, Kyriaki and P. Zakreski, eds., *Crafting the woman professional in the long nineteenth century: Artistry and Industry in Britain* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013)

Harris, Elree, I., and Shirley R. Scott, 'Criticism, Art Schools, and Reviews. Integration and Commitment', in *A gallery of her own: An annotated bibliography of women in Victorian painting* (London: Garland, 1997), pp. 287-332

Herstein, Sheila R., *A Mid-Victorian Feminist, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon* (London: Yale University Press, 1985)

—— 'The *English Woman's Journal* and the Langham Place Circle: A Feminist Forum and Its Women Editors' in *Innovators and Preachers: The Role of the Editor in Victorian England*, ed. by Joel Wiener (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 61-76

Hirsch, Pam, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon, 1827-1891: Feminist, Artist and Rebel* (Great Britain: Pimlico, 1999)

—— 'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: artist and activist', in *Women in the Victorian Art World*, ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 167-86

—— 'Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith (1827-1891)' online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 23 September 2004) <https://doi-org.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/2755> [January 2022]

Horrocks, Jamie, 'Pre-Raphaelite Primitivism and the Periodical Press: Florence Claxton's 'The Choice of Paris'', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 18, 2 (2017), pp. 217-46

Hughes, Kathryn, *The Victorian Governess* (London: Bloomsbury, 1993)

Hutchinson, Sidney, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1986* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1986)

*Royal Academy of Arts Directory of Membership from the Foundation in 1768 to 1995 including Honorary Members* (Wiltshire: Antony Rowe, 1996)

Johnston, Judith, *Anna Jameson*: *Victorian, feminist, woman of letters* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997)

—— 'Jameson [née Murphy], Anna Branwell (1794-1860), online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 23 September 2004) <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14631?rskey=8k4wRU&result=2> [accessed January 2023]

King, Catherine, 'Feminist Arts' in *Imagining Women*, ed. by Frances Bonner and others (Great Britain: Polity Press in conjunction with Open University Press, 1982), pp. 173-89

—— 'Florence (Anne) Claxton' in *Dictionary of Women Artists,* ed. by Delia Gaze, 2 vols (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), I, pp. 404-6

Leach, Peter, and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Yorkshire West Riding: Leeds, Bradford and the North. The Buildings of England* New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009)

Lee, Amice, *Laurels and Rosemary: the life of William and Mary Howitt*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1955)

Lorac, E. R. C., *Post after Post-Mortem,* ed. by Martin Edwards (1936; repr. London: The British Library, 2022)

Losano, Antonia, *The Woman Painter in Victorian Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 2008)

Maas, Jeremy, *Gambart: Prince of the Victorian Art World* (Great Britain: Barrie & Jenkins, 1975)

McKenna, Adrienne, 'The contemporary artistic representation of the 'Fallen Woman'', MLA, Oxford 2014-16)

—— 'The lot of the mid-Victorian female artist: Emily Mary Osborn's *Nameless and Friendless* (1857)', MLA, Oxford (2014-16)

Marsh, Jan, and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998)

Morgan, H. Cliff., 'The Schools of the Royal Academy' in *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 21, 1 (February 1973), pp. 88-103

Newton, Stella Mary, *Health, art & reason: dress reformers of the 19th century* (London: John Murray, 1974)

Nochlin, Linda, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 145-78

Nunn, Joan, *Fashion in Costume, 1200-2000*, (London: Herbert Press, 2000)

Nunn, Pamela Gerrish, 'Look homeward, angel!' in *Problem Pictures; Women and Men in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995), pp. 115-138

—— *The Mid-Victorian Female Artist 1850-1879* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University College London, 1982) <http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1348998/1/438297.pdf> [accessed June 2018]

—— *Victorian Women Artists* (London: Women's Press, 1987)

Nestor, Pauline A., 'A New Departure in Women's Publishing: 'The English Woman's Journal' and 'The Victoria Magazine'', *Victorian Periodicals Review,* 15, 3 (Fall, 1982), pp. 93-106

Palmer, Beth, 'Reading Langham Place Periodicals at Number 19' in *Reading and the Victorians*, eds., Matthew Bradley and Juliet John (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 47-61

Postle, Martin, 'From Academy to Art School,' in *The Artist's Model from Etty to Spencer*, eds., Martin Postle and William Vaughan, *The Artist's Model from Etty to Spencer* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999)

—— 'The Foundation of the Slade School of Fine Art', *The Volume of the Walpole Society,* 58 (1995/1996), pp. 9-19 and pp. 127-230

Pugh, Evelyn L., 'Florence Nightingale and J. S. Mill Debate Women's Rights', *Journal of British Studies* 21, 2 (Spring 1982), p. 118-38

Rendall, Jane, 'Langham Place group (*act.* 1857–1866)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press); online edition, (January 2005) < https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-93708?rskey=MwzPwC&result=1> [accessed May 2020]

Sanders, Valerie, *The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in Nineteenth-century England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989)

Schroeder, Janice, "Better Arguments': The *English Woman's Journal* and the Game of Public Opinion', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35, 3 (Fall 2002), pp. 243-72

Shattock, Joanne, 'Parkes [married name Belloc], Elizabeth Rayner [Bessie], in *ODNB* <https://ezproxy prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2648/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-41193> [accessed October 2020]

Shattock, Joanne and Michael Wolff, eds., *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019)

Showalter, Elaine, 'Florence Nightingale's Feminist Complaint: Women, Religion, and "Suggestions for Thought"', *Signs* 6, 3 (Spring, 1981), pp. 395-412

Smith, Alison, *The Female Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996)

Strachey, Ray, *The Cause: A short history of the women's movement in Great Britain* (London: Virago, Ltd., 1978)

Van Remoortel, Marianne, 'The Fine Art of Satire: Florence and Adelaide Claxton and the Magazines' in *Women, work and living by the Victorian periodical: living by the press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 92-114

van Slyke, Gretchen, The Sexual and Textual Politics of Dress: Rosa Bonheur and Her Cross-Dressing Permits, *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 26, 3/4 (Spring-Summer 1998), pp. 321-35

Valentine, Helen, 'The Royal Academy Schools in the Victorian Period' in *Art in the Age of Queen Victoria* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1999), pp. 40-7

Walker, Lynne, 'Vistas of pleasure: women consumers of urban space of the west end of London 1850-1900' in *Women in the Victorian Art World,* ed. by Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 70-85

Wettlaufer, Alexandra, *Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011)

—— 'The Politics and Poetics of Sisterhood. Anna Mary Howitt's *The Sisters in Art*', *Victorian Review*, 36, 1 (Spring 2010), pp. 129-46

Yeldham, Charlotte, 'Anne Laura Herford', in *ODNB* <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-69105?rskey=OdLK8s&result=1> [accessed May 2018]
http://www.avictorian.com/alma-tadema_lawrence.html

—— *Women Artists in the Nineteenth century in France and England* 2 vols (London, Garland Publishing, 1984)

—— ''Woman's Work', A Medley (1861) by Florence Claxton (1838-1920)', *The British Art Journal*, 20, 3 (Winter 2019-20), pp. 88-97

Young, Linda, *Middle Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Watson, Carly 'Mary Jones (1707-1778), Female Authorship, and the Eighteenth-century Song Culture', presentation to Graduate School (Oxford University, 25 February 2021)

**Websites, online resources, and databases**

'After Eduoard-Louis Dubufe' <http://www.maasgallery.co.uk/women-2018/women2018/women-2018-12-2245> [accessed July 2021]

Banerjee, Jacqueline, 'The Font reliefs at St Mary, Studley Royal' <http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/nicholls/16.html> [accessed January 2021]

'Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891), Artist and women's rights activist; benefactor of Girton College, Cambridge', NPG <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/personExtended/mp00463/barbara-leigh-smith-bodichon?tab=biography> [accessed March 2021]

Bentley, Grace Victoria, 'Costume in Art & Artistic Dress' <https://costumesociety.org.uk/blog/post/costume-in-art-artistic-dress> [accessed March 2022]

Bluett, Amy, 'Victorian Woman and the fight for art's training: International Women's Day series' <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/striving-after-excellence-victorian> [accessed July 2016]

Burstow, Stephen, 'The Carte de Viste and Domestic Digital Photography'

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/212691584.pdf> [accessed March 2021]

Catt, Vince, 'Hastings & St Leonards' <https://www.1066online.co.uk/gallery/engravings/vc-Hastings-Castle> [accessed October 2023]

Corder, Susanna, 'A Romantic Frame of Mind' <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/here-come-brides/a-romantic-frame-of-mind> [accessed January 2022]

'Florence Claxton', Design & Art Australia Online <https://www.daao.org.au/bio/florence-claxton/biography/> [accessed August 2020]

*Harper's Weekly* (New York), 12, 590 (18 April 1868), p. 245 © <https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=harpersweekly>[accessed January 2021]

'Hastings Castle & 1066 Story' <https://www.visit1066country.com/things-to-do/hastings-castle-and-1066-story-p44433> [accessed October 2021]

'Herford, Anne Laura', Probate and Will, date of Probate 3 January 1871, Registry Principal Registry <www.probatesearch.service.gov.uk> [accessed May 2019]

Hirsch, Pamela, 'Passions ran high on 'Woman's Journal'', *The Independent*, (1 July 1999) < https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/passions-ran-high-on-woman-s-journal-1103696.html> [accessed October 2021]

'How to read it: Annie Swinnerton's The Letter' <www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/how-to-read-it-annie-swynnerton-letter> [accessed June 2018]

Hughes, Kathryn, 'The Figure of the Governess' <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-figure-of-the-governess> [accessed November 2021]

Johnstone, Lucy, 'Corsets & Crinolines in Victorian Fashion' <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/corsets-and-crinolines-in-victorian-fashion> [accessed May 2020]

Leech, John, 'The Round Hat, laden with novels, in a storm', *Pictures of Life and Character*: *From the Collection off 'Mr.Punch' 1842-1864* <reader.bookfusion.com/books/42871-john-leech-s-pictures-of-life-and-character-volume-1-of-3-from-the-collection-of-mr-punch> [accessed January 2021]

'Leonina societate' <https://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/Societas%20leonina#:~:text=SOCIETAS%20LEONINA.,in%20exclusion%20of%20the%20rest.>[accessed October 2020]

Maas, Rupert, '12. After Edouard-Louis Dubufe, 1820-1883, *Rosa Bonheur at Thirty-Four*' <http://www.maasgallery.co.uk/women-2018/women-2018/women-2018-12-2245> [accessed July 2021]

'Margaretta Frederick' <https://www.maasgallery.co.uk/60th-anniversary/60-years-60-pictures/60-years- 60-pictures-81-2873> [accessed 2021]

'Marriage Certificate for Louisa Harriet Osborn and Charles James Mitchell, London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1938 for Louisa Harriet Osborn, Camden> St Pancras Parish Church: EustonRoad>1855-56' <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/discoveryuicontent/view/5857571:1623?tid=&pid=&queryId=ebeea84b-4358-4bfb-b7cf-9acfa6d85f78&_phsrc=mYT57&_phstart=successSource> [accessed January 2024]

Marraccini, Miranda, 'The Victoria Press Circle' <https://www.victoriapresscircle.org/> [accessed December 2021]

Marsh, Jan, 'Florence Claxton' < https://janmarsh.blogspot.com/2020/04/florence-claxton.html> [accessed May 2020]

McInnes, Robin, (quoted by Rupert Maas) <http://www.maasgallery.co.uk/british-pictures-2016/british-pictures-2016/british-pictures-2016-37-1796> [accessed January 2021]

Millais, John Everett, '*Childhood,* 1847-8 Sir John Everett Millais Bt. PRA (1829 - 1896)', pen and black ink on cream wove paper, 02/223, <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/childhood> [accessed January 2021]

Mullaly, Terrance, 'Sidney Hutchinson', *Guardian,* 13 May 2000 <https://www.theguardian.com /news/2000/may/13/guardianobituaries2> [accessed June 2018]

Mussell, Jim, 'English Woman's Journal (1858-1864)' <https://ncse.ac.uk/headnotes/ewj.html> [accessed May 2020]

National Archives Currency Converter <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/> [accessed June 2017]

Nicholl, Thomas, 'Four Ages', (1874-5) <http://www.victorianweb.org/sculpture/nicholls/16 .html> [accessed March 2021]

Nochlin, Linda, 'From 1971: why have there been no great women artists' <https://www.artnews.com/art-<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/retrospective/why-have-there-been-no-great-women-artists-4201/> [accessed June 2020]

Nunn, Pamela Gerrish, 'Mirror, mirror' <https://www.npg.org.uk/whatson /exhibitions/2001/mirror-mirror-self-portraits-by-women-artists/ conference/paper-4> [accessed June 2019]

—— *The mid-Victorian Woman Artist*: *1850-1879* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University College London, 1982)

Page, Christopher, 'The Guitar and 'the Fair Sex' <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/the-guitar-and-the-fair-sex#jWBMa2OMa3Lm4wiD.99> [accessed May 2020]

Palmer, Beth, 'Reading Langham Place Periodicals at Number 19' in eds., Matthew Bradley and Juliet John, *Reading and the Victorians* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 44-64 <http://ezproxyprd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2243/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfX zg0MTcxNF9fQU41?sid=100e73ba-e7a1-4b27-b119-9b6a56d156a3@sdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=0&format=EB&lpid=lp_vii&rid=0> [accessed May 2020]

Robertson, David, 'Eastlake, Sir Charles Lock (1793-1865)', online edn., *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 23 May 2004) <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8414?rskey=b3vgwH&result=1> [accessed May 2020]

'Rosa Bonheur', British Museum, 'Object: Rosa Bonheur', 2010,7081.4119' <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_2010-7081-4119> [accessed January 2021]

Rose, Eleanor, 'Chatelaines: A Victorian Fashion Statement' <https://civilwartalk.com/threads/chatelaines-a-victorian-fashion-statement.153504/> [accessed January 2021]

Rosenthal, Tim, 'School of Genius by James Fenton', *Independent*, 13 May 2006 <www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/school-of-genius-by-james-fenton-478190.html> [accessed May 2018]

'Rag rug making' <https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/rag-rugging/> [accessed February 2024]

Sim, Andrew, *Gertrude and Henry Massey: A Life Class at Heatherley's* <http://www.simfineart.com/pdf_bin/Massey%20Collection.pdf> [accessed May 2018]

'Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema', <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/may/13/guardianobituaries2> [accessed

June 2020]

Tydeman, Lyndsey, 'Women of Sussex – Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891)' <https://www.thekeep.info/women-of-sussex-barbara-leigh-smith-bodichon-1827-1891/> [accessed March 2021]

Sadeler, Raphael, I, *Amor* (1591), British Museum item 1873,0712.72 < https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1873-0712-72> [accessed October 2023]

Schroeder, Janice, 'On the English Woman's Journal, 1858-62' <http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=janice-schroeder-on-the-english-womans-journal-1858-62> [accessed October 2020]

Sciolino, Elaine, 'The Redemption of Rosa Bonheur' <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/redemption-rosa-bonheur-french-artist-180976027/> [accessed January 2021]

Smith, Alison, 'Emily Mary Osborn, Nameless and Friendless: The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc. – Proverbs, x, 15, 1857' <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/osborn-nameless-and-friendless-the-rich-mans-wealth-is-his-strong-city-etc-proverbs-x-15-t12936> [accessed September 2022]

'Strike a pose: 200 years of life drawing at the RA' (6 February 2018) <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/from-life-history-of-life-drawing-annette-wickham> [accessed June 2018]

Summerwill, Kathryn, 'The Royal Academy of Arts: the Royal Academy Schools', (4 May 2009) <https://eyrecrowe.com/biography/royalacademy/> [accessed 20 July 2016]

Sutherland, John, 'Power in *Can You Forgive Her?*' <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/power-in-can-you-forgive-her> [accessed January 2023]

Swiridoff, Christine, 'Writing for a Cause: The English Woman's Journal and Women's Work, 1858-1864' (Doctoral thesis: Temple University, 2005) <https://search.proquest.com/openview/ef2c36245aeb151a105219f6861cbd04/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y> [accessed October 2020]

'The Fashions. Walking dress, November 1861', NPG, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw283995> [accessed May 2020]

Tydeman, Lyndsey, 'Women of Sussex: Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827 – 1891)' <https://www.thekeep.info/women-of-sussex-barbara-leigh-smith-bodichon-1827-1891/> [accessed May 2020]

'Victoria Women and the fight for Arts Training' <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk /article/striving-after-excellence-victorian> [accessed June 2018]

Wickham, Annette,'A "female invasion" 250 years in the making' (13 May 2018) <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/magazine-ra250-female-invasion-women-at-the-ra> [accessed June 2018]

—— 'Models and Militants: women in the Life Room. A history of women in the RA's Life Room' (5 March 2018) <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/event/models-and-militants-women-in-the> [accessed May 2018]

Wojtczak, Helena, 'The Beginnings of Higher Education for Women', < https://historyofwomen.org/queensbed.html> [accessed October 2020]

'Walking and Home Dress', NPG, NPG D4793 <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw284121/Walking-and-home-dress-February-1860?search=ap&subj=571%3BFashion+Plates%3A+Influences+-+French+fashions&wPage=11&rNo=221> [accessed October 2023]