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THE VIEWER VIEWED: ART'S PUBLIC IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

by

JAMIE W. JOHNSON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2003

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

THE VIEWER VIEWED: ART'S PUBLIC IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

by

Jamie W. Johnson

Adviser: Professor Patricia Mainardi

During the nineteenth century, England witnessed a proliferation of new museums and exhibiting societies. These new venues included the foundation of the National Gallery in 1824 and the great public exhibitions of mid-century such as the Crystal Palace of 1851 as well as the creation of numerous municipal museums in the 1870s and 1880s, in addition to the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy, which had been founded in 1768. This dissertation examines the representation of the art public, in paintings, prints, periodical illustrations, and cartoons during this period of art mania. Such images provide information not only about the public's experience of visiting art exhibitions in the Victorian era but also about the issues surrounding the formation of public art institutions.

Chapter One examines the origins of exhibition culture in England and its earliest representation in prints and cartoons. These images, derived from seventeenth-century Flemish gallery pictures and eighteenth-century conversation pieces, are considered in light of eighteenth-century aesthetics and the changing identity of the public. The foundation of the National Gallery and the attendant exploration of its audience in contemporary imagery, parliament, and the press forms the basis for Chapter Two.

Chapter Three focuses upon the iconography of education in the representations of the art public. Images of women with children, the frequent inclusion of exhibition catalogues, and the mixing of the classes are discussed within the context of the rhetoric of self-improvement and contemporary cultural theories. After the democratization of the art public at mid-century, the end of the nineteenth century witnesses the separation of the art public by class. Chapter Four contrasts the rarified art public of the Grosvenor Gallery and the Private View with the working-class art audiences of the East End.

The representations of the art public in the Victorian era constitute a coherent discourse on the role of both the museum and art in society. This convergence of ideas—education, leisure, nationalism, class, aesthetics—within the discourse of the museum ensures that an examination of the discourse sheds much light on society and culture in England in the nineteenth century.

Acknowledgements

An email entitled “You Know You Are a Graduate Student If” circulated several times during my graduate career, listing signs such as “you have more copy cards than credit cards” and “you read the bibliography of a book first.” I always thought one of the signs should be “you read the acknowledgements second,” trying to glean information about the life and career of the author. And so, after perusing many such sections, I attempt to write my own, remembering to include the obligatory, and correct, statements that any errors are my own and more than one person should be credited with the writing of this tome.

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Introduction:

Looking at the Art Public in Victorian Society

In the center of George Bernard O'Neill's painting, *Public Opinion* of 1863 (figure 1; Leeds City Art Gallery), a white-whiskered gentleman with a fur-lined overcoat and a shiny top hat smiles as he gazes ahead at a painting. The painting-within-the-painting is barely visible to the viewer of O'Neill's canvas but is the object of focus of more than twenty people. Men and women, little boys and girls, point at, discuss, read about, and look at the painting protected by a red rail in this representation of an art exhibition in Victorian England. While not focusing on the art on the walls, O'Neill has taken as his subject the people in the crowd. In addition to the top-hatted gentleman, there is his bespectacled wife, a young woman and her son, a young girl in a red cape, and a critic with his note pad. Diversity of age, gender, class, and activity assume primary importance in O'Neill's painting.

O'Neill's painting appears at a time when England saw a proliferation of new museums and exhibition societies. In addition to the Royal Academy, which had been holding regular exhibitions since its foundation in 1768, there were exhibitions sponsored by the British Institution, the Society of Artists, and both the Old and the New Water-Colour Societies. Special one-time exhibitions included the display of fresco cartoons at Westminster in 1843, the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851, and the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. In the last decades of the century,

numerous galleries such as the Birmingham City Art Gallery, Leeds City Art Gallery, and the Manchester City Art Gallery, were established.

My dissertation will examine the representation of the art public during this period of “museum mania” in nineteenth-century England. Such images provide information not only about the public’s experience of visiting art exhibitions in the Victorian era but also about the issues surrounding the formation of public art institutions.

Numerous scholars have examined this growth of and interest in art exhibitions in the nineteenth century, exploring the history, politics, and theories of public art institutions in England.¹ Early studies focused upon governmental involvement in the arts. Janet Minihan, in her detailed account *The Nationalization of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain*, traced the governmental motivations to encourage public culture and the political maneuvers necessary to create and support art institutions such as the British Museum and National Gallery, as well as

¹ A full survey of the bibliography of museology is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Several prominent theorists have sought to define the museum. Similarly, valuable studies of art institutions in other countries provide methodological models for my study. Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1979); Germain Bazin, *The Museum Age* (New York: Universal Press, 1967); Nathaniel Burt, *Palaces for the People: A Social History of the American Museum* (Boston: Little Brown, 1977); Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993); Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995); Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1992); Kenneth Hudson, *A Social History of Museums* (London: MacMillan Press, 1975); Oliver Impey and Arthur Macgregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Ibid., “The Musée du Louvre as Revolutionary Metaphor During the Terror,” *Art Bulletin* 120 (June 1988): 300-313; Patricia Mainardi, *Art and the Politics of the Second Empire: The Universal Expositions of 1855 and 1867* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Ibid., *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Daniel Sherman, *Worthy Monuments: Art Museums and the Politics of Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989); Stephen Weil, *Rethinking the Museum* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Press, 1990).

the purchase of the Elgin Marbles, the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament, and the Crystal Palace.²

Likewise, Nicholas Pearson, in his *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760-1981*, identified a “Quasi-Autonomous-Non-Governmental-Organization” (“quango”) for the arts in nineteenth-century England, in which the government funded but did not directly control the arts, as with the foundation of the Royal Academy and the National Gallery.³ Such a model recognizes the power of the state in the formation of national culture for the public benefit while also acknowledging its indirect means of accomplishing such hegemony. Following Antonio Gramsci’s ideas of the educative function of the state,⁴ Pearson posits a theory of a “hard” and “soft” approach to the art education of the public, from the direct schooling offered by the state-funded School of Design to the more subtle influence of the collections of the South Kensington Museum.⁵

At the same time, Richard Altick, in his socio-historical study *Shows of London*, considered art institutions within the broader context of exhibitions available to the London public, including Miss Linwood’s gallery of needlework paintings, William

² Janet Miniham, *The Nationalization of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain* (New York: New York University Press, 1977).

³ Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760-1981* (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1982).

⁴ Pearson relies on Gramsci’s *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

⁵ Originating in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, the South Kensington Museum was organized by the Department of Practical Art headed by art educator and activist Henry Cole. Founded in 1852, the museum, which was renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899, will be referred to by its original name throughout my dissertation.

Bullock's Egyptian Hall, and, of course, the presentation of artist Benjamin Robert Haydon's nemesis, Gen. Tom Thumb.⁶ Altick's study describes the hunger of the London crowd for spectacle and entertainment, of which public art institutions were only one variety. Significantly, Altick indicates that printsellers' windows, "the poor man's art gallery," with their comic broadsides, book illustrations, and engravings of famous paintings, were the most popular and accessible way for the London masses to see art.⁷ Despite Altick's recognition of the diversity of exhibitions in Victorian England, many scholars continued to focus on the major ones: the Royal Academy, the National Gallery, and the South Kensington Museum.

Later scholars, basing much of their work on Michel Foucault's ideas of power, examined the nineteenth-century museum as a locus of social control of the classes.⁸ Tony Bennett, in part one of his theory-driven book of case-studies on the museum, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, relies on both Foucault and Gramsci to explore the production of national public culture within the "exhibitionary complex" of the museum in nineteenth-century England.⁹ Bennett posits the museum as a civilizing force on the masses, who would acquire an education by their exposure both to the

⁶ As Altick describes, the history painter and art theorist Haydon, attempting to secure one more success in order to alleviate his financial burdens, exhibited his history paintings *The Banishment of Aristides* and *The Burning of Rome* in the Egyptian Hall, an eclectic mix of miscellanea and amusements, in 1848. However, General Tom Thumb, the dwarf represented by P.T. Barnum, drew a crowd of 12,000, to Haydon's 133 ½, according to his own advertisement on the "Exquisite Feeling of the English People for High Art." Two weeks later, his exhibition closed, a financial failure. Haydon committed suicide not long after. Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press, 1978), 413-14.

⁷ Ibid., 109-110, 413. For an in-depth discussion of the market for prints in the Victorian era, Martha P. Tedeschi, "How Prints Work: Reproductions, Originals, and Their Markets in England, 1840-1900," Northwestern University, 1994. For general information on English prints, see Sheila O'Connell, *The Popular Print in England, 1550-1850* (London: British Museum Press, 1999).

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Allen Lane, 1977).

⁹ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995).

objects on exhibition and to each other. Such Foucauldian transformation of visitors into proper citizens is, for Bennett, the primary mission of the English museum.

Carol Duncan suggests a similar political function for the National Gallery in Chapter Two of her *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*.¹⁰ Having demonstrated that the museum functions as a civil ritual “to improve its visitors morally, socially, and politically,” Duncan contrasts the foundation of the National Gallery with the Louvre, demonstrating the ambivalence of the British government in creating a national public art institution.¹¹ Eventually, as Duncan suggests, the nationalistic desire to display British cultural power to the people overcame aristocratic definitions of art.

In his historical study, *Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public, 1747-2001*, Brandon Taylor similarly examines the nationalist purpose of public art museums, focusing specifically on how exhibition culture in England defined and addressed its public audience.¹² In case studies detailing the foundation of the National Gallery and the South Kensington Museum, Taylor demonstrates how both museums were conceived to educate the public, contextualizing this evangelical interest in “rational recreation” within the broader political context of the expansion of the influence of the middle classes.

¹⁰ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995). The ideas presented in this book were first suggested in an article Duncan wrote with Alan Wallach, entitled “The Universal Survey Museum.” Wallach has also expanded upon the ideas expressed in the article in his own writings. See also Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, “The Universal Survey Museum” *Art History* 3 (December 1980): 448-69; Alan Wallach, *Exhibiting Contradiction: Essays on the Art Museum in the United States* (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

¹¹ Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 16.

¹² Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nation: Exhibitions and the London Public, 1747-2001* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

Giles Waterfield has frequently written on the burgeoning interest in museums during the nineteenth century. In *Art for the People: Culture in the Slums of Late Victorian Britain*, Waterfield edits a series of essays reconstructing the history of the South London Art Gallery, which was “intended to provide opportunities for the enjoyment of the arts for a deprived urban public which otherwise enjoyed few such opportunities.”¹³ In the exhibition catalogue *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain, 1790-1900*, Waterfield explores the history of several museums through primary source materials, including plans, presentation drawings, and depictions of crowds within the galleries.¹⁴ Such a compilation of material permits an in-depth understanding of the case studies he explores, including the National Gallery, Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, and smaller municipal museums such as the New Piccadilly Gallery of Art.

More recently, in *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, several scholars, including Alison Smith, Colin Trodd, Nicholas Tromans, and Shelagh Wilson, have examined the diversity of art publics addressed by the variety of exhibitions in London.¹⁵ In their introduction to the collection of essays, “Constituting the Public: Art and Its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century London,” Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd acknowledge the diversity of the art public in the art institutions of London, seeking to problematize the identification of one art public in the Foucauldian studies of Bennett, Taylor, and Duncan. This notion of several art publics is appropriate, particularly given

¹³ Giles Waterfield, ed., *Art for the People: Culture and Slums in Late Victorian Britain* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1994), 9.

¹⁴ Giles Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain, 1790-1900* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1991).

¹⁵ *Governing Cultures: Art Institutions in Victorian London*, ed. Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd, (Aldershot, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2000).

the class structure of Victorian society. An aristocratic gentleman at the Grosvenor Gallery, a banker's wife at the Royal Academy, and a worker and his family at the Crystal Palace hardly form a coherent art public. Indeed, it was the attempt to identify the art public of such institutions as the National Gallery that obsessed Parliament and the press.

Despite this attention to the development of museums in nineteenth-century England and to their audiences, few of these scholars have thoroughly examined the representations of those audiences. While both Bennett and Duncan focus on the relationship of the public to the museum, neither examines the representation of that public within the museum. Though he includes numerous illustrations, Altick does not seek to define the audience of the exhibitions of London; his aim is to illuminate the sight not the sightseer. Taylor includes contemporary images in his study, examining the depictions as reflections of the political and social context of the museum, but does not systematically analyze these representations as active participants in the formation of the museum or its public. Similarly, Waterfield includes several representations of the art public as catalogue entries but does not explore the relationships between the images. While Barlow and Trodd introduce the notion of the active participation of the visitor in the construction of the identity of art institutions in society, none of the essays contained in the collection study the representation of that audience. Though scholars acknowledge the importance of the public within art institutions, a study of the depiction of this art public has not occurred.

My dissertation will examine representations of the art public in London between the years 1838 and 1896 in order to reveal contemporary attitudes towards the

intersection of the state, the public, and art within public art institutions. These representations are part of a national public discourse on the role of art and art institutions, arising at a time when the definition of such institutions and their appropriate function in society were new and unfixed. Despite the burgeoning enthusiasm for art, discussions about the function of museums and exhibitions permeated the press and parliament: did museums and exhibitions serve to educate or entertain the public? Were they intended as a domain for the affluent or as a meeting place for all of society? Almost from the beginning of exhibition culture in England, art institutions were the locus for discussions of class. While much of the discussion enumerated the benefits of exhibitions and museums for the improvement of all classes, there was an underlying nervousness about the “masses” and a desire to maintain art as the exclusive realm of the propertied classes. Audience, therefore, was a much-contested factor in the definition of museums and other art institutions. By analyzing the shifting representation of the art public, I hope to illuminate the audience’s importance in the formation of the identity of art institutions.

By focusing on London in the years between 1838 and 1896, my dissertation analyzes the beginning of public art institutions. London, as the capital of the nation and also its largest city, reigned as the cultural focal point of the country. Indeed, many Britons would have direct experience of London culture, either through visiting the city or through the periodical press that usually focused on metropolitan life. Finally, though municipal museums were encouraged with the Museums Act of 1845, London remained the focal point of the art world in the nineteenth century. While founded in 1824, the National Gallery opened its doors in Trafalgar Square during the second year of Queen

Victoria's reign, in 1838. However, it was not until 1896 that those doors would open on Sundays, a key issue for the access of the working classes to art institutions. Having just attained the franchise in 1832, the prosperous middle classes would dominate British politics by century's end, affecting Victorian culture with their evangelical and reformist beliefs. By examining the representation of the art public at the "birth of the museum" in London, I hope to demonstrate what the Victorians understood the function of art to be.

Following Altick's lead in acknowledging the breadth of exhibitions available in the nineteenth century, I will not focus exclusively on museums. The art public had available to them institutions ranging from permanent museums to annual exhibitions and temporary "blockbusters," in addition to sale-rooms, printsellers, artists' studios, and one-artist shows. While there are certainly significant differences between a permanent national collection of objects and temporary exhibitions, whether for the sale of objects or not, it is particularly significant that the codes in the representation of the art public do not vary from exhibition to museum to sale room. By examining the similarities in the imagery, I hope to clarify the understanding of the art public and its relationship to art institutions in order to illuminate the societal view of the art on exhibit throughout the city.

My discussion of the art public is not based on actual visitor information, which is either unreliable or unavailable, but on the perception of the identity of the art public by the dominant classes. Indeed my discussion of the art public in such terms as "middle class" and "working classes" is relative and general at best. It is nearly impossible to identify these as historical groups of people, within a set of economic circumstances or specific political beliefs. The English themselves generally divided society into three

main categories: the upper, wealthy, and aristocratic classes; the middle classes; the working classes, which include the “deserving poor” and the “dangerous classes.” Indeed, Henry Cole, art educator and founder of the South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert Museum), in a speech in 1875, similarly found difficulty in

dividing them into the few rich, the numerous middle-classes, and the overpowering millions of poorer classes. I hate this imperfect nomenclature of classes, and use it only as an expression commonly understood. . . . The rich, relieved of their weekly work, go to church (often in their carriages) in the morning, and send their wives and daughters in the afternoon or evening. They frequent their clubs, read the “Saturday Review” or “Economist,” admire and examine the pictures they possess in their gilded homes. They go to the Zoological Gardens, &c. The middle-classes also go to church or chapel, have a good early dinner, with a cozy nap afterwards; take a walk if it be fine, and spend the rest of the day in looking at the pictures in the illustrated newspapers. Both classes give their servants a holiday to go to church or chapel, if they are so minded, or to walk with cousins. I regret to say that all I can see and learn, proves to me that the millions of the poorer classes do not go to church or chapel. They spend the forenoon in their only one room if they live in towns, and generally in bed. They read a penny newspapers, which, as a parish missionary told me, is “church, chapel, and Bible to them,” and they pass the evening in the public-house.¹⁶

¹⁶ Henry Cole, “National Culture and Recreation: Antidotes to Vice,” *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole, KCB*, 2 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), 2:367-8.

His division of the classes into general categories follows a standard utilized by other luminaries, including Mathew Arnold and John Ruskin. While many scholars would object to such generalizations, particularly in light of the debate concerning the rise and even the very existence of the middle class(es), my dissertation deals in representations, in the signs Victorians exchanged among themselves in their discussion of Victorian society. One of these signs was the general categorization of society into a tripartite hierarchy of easily identifiable and stereotyped classes.

Similarly, it must be acknowledged that the historical record is biased towards the preservation of the opinions of the middle and upper classes. The articles, illustrations, and paintings that depict the art public are both created by and addressed to these affluent classes. The opinions and activities of the working classes only appear when they are translated by writers and artists of these more prosperous classes. Thus, my dissertation will examine not the reality or actuality of the relations among the classes within art institutions, but the public discourse on those relations by the different segments of the dominant classes. My model for this discussion is Gareth Stedman Jones's analysis of class conflict and its relationship to culture, which appears in his book *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* and in his article "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London, 1870-1900."¹⁷ In these, Jones establishes a framework for understanding the subtly changing perception of the

¹⁷ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Ibid., "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," *Journal of Social History* 7 (Summer 1974): 460-508. See also Ibid., *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

working classes by the reforming middle classes, which is central to my analysis of the conflicts of class within Victorian art institutions.

I will begin my discussion of the representation of the art public by examining paintings and illustrations of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century art publics in Chapter One. An analysis of works such as the cartoons of Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray and the gallery pictures of John Scarlett Davis, as well as their origins in seventeenth-century Flemish cabinet paintings and aristocratic portraiture, will indicate the early treatment of viewers of art. These early images frequently focus upon the aristocratic identity of the sitter, who is often seen in stately portraits detailing his, or more rarely, her, collections or in cartoons ridiculing social customs or connoisseurship. That the aristocrat existed at the center of eighteenth-century representations of art collections is no surprise. Eighteenth-century aesthetics, including the writings of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, first President of the Royal Academy, defined the art public as one consisting only of aristocratic men of means who could appreciate the moral messages of public virtue contained in the ideal art of history painting, a civic humanism of the arts.¹⁸

Central to my examination of the art public in the nineteenth century is the very notion of the public. In the eighteenth century, the notion of “the public” was filled with paternalistic ideas of the aristocratic “public man” acting for the good of a society that could not act for itself. Only in the mid-nineteenth century did the idea of the public expand to include everyone, or the “masses.” As Richard Sennett recognizes in *The Fall*

¹⁸ The use of the male gender when discussing art in the eighteenth century is conscious. According to the precepts of civic humanism, the very definition of the public for art was restricted to public men with financial independence. Philosophically relegated to the realm of the private, women had no identity within the publicly defined realm of art.

of *Public Man*, society became increasingly privatized in the nineteenth century and the public sphere, where the masses were, was juxtaposed with that of the private sphere of home and family.¹⁹ This dialectic between public and private is central to the representation of the art public and will be introduced here.

My discussion of aesthetics in England in the eighteenth century and its subsequent influence on the nineteenth century draws upon the work of several scholars, most notably John Barrell and Linda Dowling. Barrell, in his *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, examines the theoretical writings of Reynolds, William Blake, Benjamin Robert Haydon, and William Hazlitt as different variations on the theme of civic humanism in the arts, explored most fully in the eighteenth century by Shaftesbury.²⁰ Dowling's exploration of "aesthetic democracy" in *The Vulgarization of Art*—the notion of allowing access to art for all the public in order to improve society—also begins with Shaftesbury.²¹ Thus, the ideas of Shaftesbury and his contemporaries will be of particular importance in understanding the depiction of the art public in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Having established the origins of gallery pictures in England, I will examine the foundation of the National Gallery in 1824 and the attendant discussion in both the parliament and the press in Chapter Two. Such discussion focused on the importance of a national collection as "essential to aid the great work of refinement, to benefit our

¹⁹ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1976). See also Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

²⁰ John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

²¹ Linda Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1996).

manufactures, and establish that true taste and feeling in the public from which alone great things can arise.”²² Most scholars studying the nineteenth-century English art world acknowledge the importance of the nationalistic impulse in the creation of art institutions. Responding to the “national reproach” of the Louvre, in one Member of Parliament’s words, and in order to secure the dominance of British industry which would be improved by the acquisition of public taste, Parliament agreed to the foundation of the National Gallery in 1824.²³ Almost as soon as it was opened to the public, the museum became an object of scrutiny by several successive parliamentary Select Committees. Seven such committees met between 1835 and 1853 to consider aspects of the National Gallery and other national monuments, including hours, location, and admission fees, and the cleanliness and orderliness of the crowds. Images of the National Gallery, both exterior and interior, will be analyzed as participants in this national discourse.²⁴ To understand the context of the uneasiness of the parliamentary committees, I will also examine the relationship between the upper and working classes in light of the Reform and Chartist movements.

Having appeared in the discussions of the National Gallery, education emerges as a primary theme in the representation of the art public at mid-century. In Chapter Three, I will examine education as part of the social ritual, to borrow Duncan’s term, to insure

²² “The National Museum, And Its Effects,” *New Monthly Magazine* 11 (Nov. 1824): 400.

²³ Alexander Baring, a Tory M. P., stated in Parliament, “And really, for a country of such inordinate wealth and power as this to be without a gallery of art, was a national reproach.” United Kingdom, 1823. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 2d series, vol. 9, col 1360.

²⁴ My interest in the exterior of the National Gallery derives from Charlotte Klonk’s investigation of the new visuality of Charles Eastlake and its effects on the National Gallery in the 1840s when he was Keeper and Director. Charlotte Klonk, “Mounting Vision: Charles Eastlake and the National Gallery of London,” *Art Bulletin* 82 (June 2000): 331-347.

the health of the nation. It is significant that although the settings of the representations vary from the National Gallery to the Royal Academy, from the Crystal Palace to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, the iconography of education remains the same. Images of women with children, the frequent inclusion of exhibition catalogues, and the mixing of the classes appear regularly in the images in my study. Gained by exposure to both the works of art and the other classes, education was broadly defined as the improvement of personal habits and hygiene, in addition to the acquisition of taste, and was generally understood as the education of the working classes by the upper classes. A history of education reform in the nineteenth century, including the working class movement of self improvement, will help contextualize education within art institutions.

The educational codes of several paintings will be examined, including O'Neill's *Public Opinion*, Thomas P. Hall's *One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin* (1867, Private Collection), William MacDuff's *Shaftesbury, or Lost and Found* (1862, Private Collection), Aeron Hoven's *A Room Hanging with British Pictures* (after 1856, National Gallery, London), and Charles Compton's *A Study in the National Gallery* (1855, National Gallery, London), as well as illustrations from such periodicals as the *Illustrated London News*. In order to deconstruct these images of the art public, it is necessary to understand them in the way contemporary audiences would have, within the context of the genre of crowd scenes popular in the mid-nineteenth century. Mary Cowling's important work, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art*, has revived the study of physiognomy in connection with the

arts of Victorian England.²⁵ The pseudo-science of physiognomy, which dates back to Aristotle and was accepted by such eminent Victorians as Charles Darwin, is the study of facial characteristics as direct evidence of moral character. As morality was also often directly linked to class, a person's class could also be determined by his or her facial features. These physical clues to class and morality, understood by artists, writers, and audiences, allowed the viewer to "read" any face in a crowd, be it in the London masses encountered every day or the faces in a work of art, thereby allowing urban dwellers to understand, organize, and control their environment. Artists frequently utilized physiognomic details to augment the narrative of their representations. Understanding these details allows the modern viewer to begin to reconstruct the original meaning of genre paintings.

Having examined the "rational" aspect of "rational recreation," I will also consider art institutions as sites of leisure. The Foucauldian model of historical museology which posits art institutions as sites of social control does not easily permit a conception of the viewer as active participant. Borrowing from the sociology of tourism, I hope to provide a more nuanced understanding of the active role of the audience in determining the function of art and art institutions. Both Dean MacCannell and John Urry have theorized on the "tourist gaze," which is identifiable both in the representations of the art public and in the audiences for those images, and which provides a methodology for considering how a visitor produces and participates in the site on view.²⁶ While much discussion of tourism focuses upon the contemporary tourist industry and its

²⁵ Mary Cowling, *The Artist as Anthropologist: The Representation of Type and Character in Victorian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²⁶ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (NY: Schocken Books, 1976); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).

advertisements, the nineteenth century, with the birth of the leisure class, is fertile ground for applying this approach.

Finally, I see depictions of the art public as prescriptive rather than descriptive representations. Representations of the art public inform and educate their audiences about the experience of visiting art institutions, describing what it should be rather than what it necessarily was. Thus, I will also consider how these images present an idealized view of the experience of the museum and what instructions these images contain regarding morals and behavior.

While the democratization of culture continues with the foundation of numerous municipal museums motivated by the rhetoric of the moral force of art, imagery and rhetoric attesting to the aristocratic identity of the art public reappears towards the latter half of the nineteenth century. This focus on aristocratic viewing and the “aesthetic museum” will be the focus of Chapter Four. The Grosvenor Gallery was founded in 1877 by Sir Coutts Lindsay and Lady Lindsay to reinstate aristocratic modes of viewing to be shared with other refined and educated individuals in a domestic setting.²⁷ At the same time, William Powell Frith’s depiction of *The Private View of the Royal Academy in 1881* (A. Pope Family Trust, 1881-82) celebrates the luminaries of London society, including Lord Frederick Leighton, Anthony Trollope, and Thomas Huxley, at the highlight of the social season, the private viewing of the Royal Academy exhibition before its opening to the public. In addition to Frith’s attention to such exclusive art viewing, a series of paintings by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema positions famous members

²⁷ For an in-depth discussion of the foundation of the Grosvenor Gallery, see *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England*, ed. Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

of the London art world within a classical fantasy world, eliminating the problem of the public completely. Such privatization of a portion of the art public is clearly an act of distinction, to borrow from Pierre Bourdieu's theories of cultural consumption as an act of class separation.²⁸ Similarly, the aesthetics of Oscar Wilde strongly reject public opinion, further excluding the lower classes.²⁹

Having examined the representation of the art public throughout the nineteenth century in order to gain a better understanding of the Victorian perception of art and art institutions, I will conclude my dissertation with a brief analysis of the year 1896 and the divergent definition of art institutions. In 1896, museums finally opened their doors on Sundays and the Tate Gallery of modern British art was established. By the close of the nineteenth century, the strain between public and private, aesthetic and educational, democratic and aristocratic had not yet been resolved and would continue to be visible both in art institutions and in the depiction of the art public in the twentieth century.

Literary Representations of the Art Public

It has been noted since the nineteenth century that, while Britain in the nineteenth century produced numerous great writers, it did not produce as many great artists. Though deemed superior to their artist-colleagues, writers approached many of the same topics as painters, including the viewing of art. Beginning in the eighteenth century, with the continued debate on the relationship of poetry and painting, or *ut pictura poesis*, the

²⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

²⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York: Random House, 1968).

interconnection between the “sister arts” has been explored.³⁰ Artists frequently painted scenes from literature, the best-known project of this being Boydell’s Shakespeare gallery, as well as the lives of authors such as Dante (Dante Gabriel Rossetti) and Wycliffe (Ford Madox Brown). Similarly, poets and authors from Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats to William Thackeray and Oscar Wilde, have examined the cultural significance of the act of looking at art.

With my exploration of the visual representations of the art public, I will also survey its contemporary textual manifestations in both novels and poems in order to illuminate further the identity of the art public, the role of art institutions, and the benefits of art. Beginning with the Romantic era, I will explore the early description of the act of looking in such ekphrastic poems as Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” “To Haydon,” and “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles;” Shelley’s “Ozymandias;” and Byron’s *Curse of Minerva*.³¹ Each of these poems explores the very personal relationship of the viewer to the artwork, in keeping with the connoisseurial definition of the art public that persisted into the early nineteenth century. Next I will examine Thackeray’s long exploration of

³⁰ Beginning with Aristotle and Horace, the debate about the superiority of the sister arts continued through the Renaissance and into the nineteenth century. For an overview of the discussion of *ut pictura poesis*—as is painting so is poetry—see Rensselaer W. Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1967).

³¹ The bibliography on ekphrasis is extensive, including a division between scholars on the precise definition of the word and formation of the genre, into which I will not delve here. For literature particularly related to my study, see *Articulate Images: The Sister Arts from Hogarth to Tennyson*, ed. Richard Wendorf (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983); Barbara J. Black, “The works on the wall must take their chance”: A Poetics of Acquisition,” *Victorian Poetry* 32 (Spring 1994): 1-20; James A. W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); John Hollander, “The Gazer’s Spirit: Romantic and Later Poetry on Painting and Sculpture,” *The Romantics and Us: Essays on Literature and Culture*, ed. Gene W. Ruoff (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 130-167; Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1992); *Ibid.*, “The Ekphrastic Principle and the Still Movement of Poetry; or *Laokoon* Revisited,” *The Play and the Place of Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 105-128; and Grant F. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994).

the Victorian art world in *The Newcomes*, focusing on his treatment of exhibitions and their publics. Finally, I will conclude with the very different portrayals of the role of art in society found in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Ideal Husband*.

In this introduction, I bemoaned scholars who utilized visual representations to illustrate textual arguments. As an art historian reading literary texts, I am in danger of committing the reverse error, of reading poems purely as the vocal narrative for Victorian visual culture. My introductory readings of the works of this “who’s who” of British literature—Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Charlotte Brontë, Thackeray, Rossetti, Eliot, and Wilde—in no way encompasses the multivalence of the writings I discuss, or even surveys all of the instances of art-viewing in these works. Entire articles and books have been written on every example that I introduce. I bring these texts together with the visual imagery mainly to assert the omnipresence of the issues discussed in this dissertation—public and private, aristocratic and democratic, collector and crowd. The visual representations that comprise the bulk of my study cannot be considered outside of the framework of contemporary British literature, for just as the British public enjoyed visiting exhibitions and purchasing prints, they consumed vast quantities of literature in books and serialized periodicals. Taken together, the visual and textual representations of the art public provide a more well-rounded view of the public experience of art in the nineteenth century.

Punch: The Periodical of the People

Central to my dissertation are the cartoons of *Punch*.³² As a prescient journalist prophesized in the *Athenaeum* in 1875,

the future historian of the nineteenth century will, we imagine, reckon the volumes of *Punch* as not the least useful among the materials of his [sic] work, not as much as a record of events . . . but rather as testifying to the temper in which they were at any time viewed by the English middle class.³³

As the thermometer to the temperature of the English middle classes, the comic journal *Punch, or the London Charivari*, provides intriguing insight into the discourse on art institutions and the art public in the Victorian era, not only through its articles but specifically in its cartoons. Premiering on July 17, 1841, the paper soon established its place as a mild-mannered comic weekly which could even be consumed by women and young people. Writes one contemporary, quoted in the advertisements for the new paper: “it may safely be introduced into the family circle, where it will provoke many a hearty laugh, but never can call a blush to the most delicate cheek.”³⁴ It was this sense of propriety that set *Punch* apart from the rest and accounted for both its popularity and

³² It will not be necessary to repeat the documented history of *Punch* here as several studies exist: Richard Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1841-1851* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997); Arthur Prager, *The Mahogany Tree: An Informal History of Punch* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1979); M.H. Spielmann, *The History of Punch* (London: Cassell, 1895). My examination of the art-public cartoons of *Punch* which appears in several chapters in this dissertation was first presented at the annual conference of the Research Society of Victorian Periodicals in 2001 and has been published as a single study. Jamie W. Johnson, “The Changing Representation of the Art Public in *Punch*, 1841-1896,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 35 (Fall 2002): 272-294.

³³ It continues, “*Punch*, in short, does that for the moderately cultivated Philistine when he is inclined to laugh which the *Times* does when he is, or thinks himself, earnest and reflective.” “Wit and Humor by Shirley Brooks,” [review] *Athenaeum* 17 July 1875, 79.

³⁴ Advertisement, *Bentley's Miscellany* (May 1842): n.p.; quoted in Altick, *Punch*, 10.

longevity.³⁵ While desiring not to align itself with a political party—"party *must* destroy patriotism"—*Punch* was usually understood as a liberal, often Whig, voice.³⁶ Compared to many papers in the 1840s, a time of economic depression and civil unrest, *Punch's* support of the repeal of such conservative legislation as the Poor Law, the Corn Laws, and the Game Laws, for example, firmly aligned it with the left.³⁷

At threepence, *Punch* was not a cheap paper.³⁸ There were several working-class papers that sold for a penny, including, of course, *The Penny Magazine*. *Punch* reached an estimated 165,000 people in 1850.³⁹ But this does not begin to encompass *Punch's* reach. Coffee houses and gentleman's clubs both maintained collections of the current periodicals, so that a single issue there would likely reach dozens of other readers. Features from *Punch* also reappeared in other periodicals, both with and without permission, including the *Times*, which often used bits from *Punch* as filler for its

³⁵ *Punch* was published continuously from 1841 to 1992. However, in 1996, it was revived by Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrod's, and is once again the liberal gadfly of British society. During the completion of this dissertation, in the summer of 2002, publication of *Punch* ceased again due to financial difficulties. The library and archives, however, remain open and accessible.

³⁶ [Mark Lemon], "The Moral of *Punch*" *Punch* 1 (July 17, 1841): 1.

³⁷ The Poor Law of 1834 attempted to eliminate poverty by making workhouse relief more oppressive than the lowest-paying job. There were constant calls for the repeal of the legislation. The Corn Laws were a series of laws that regulated the trade of grains and were designed to protect the price of British grain, thereby securing the income of the landowning aristocracy. Robert Peel repealed the laws in 1845, losing his position as Prime Minister in the process, which were then phased out over three years. The Game Laws protected the gentry's hunting by demanding strict punishments for poachers, including transportation to Australia, at a time when much of the rural poor were starving.

³⁸ In comparison, the *Times* also cost threepence but the *Illustrate London News* sold for one shilling. There exists much debate about the value of the British pound compared to currency now—some value the pound at \$100 today, others at \$200. Taking the \$200 estimate, which considers the lack of income tax, the cost of *Punch* in today's market is \$2.50, roughly the cost of *Time* or *Newsweek*. To contextualize the price of the magazine, it is known that female servants earned roughly £10 a year (200 shillings or 2,400 pence) while a senior clerk could receive roughly £150.

³⁹ Victorian periodical authorities estimate that for every copy of a periodical printer there are five readers. Therefore, *Punch's* run of 33,180 copies in 1850 results in a conservatively estimated readership of 165,000.

columns. Finally, the cartoons of *Punch* would routinely hang in the windows of the *Punch* office for passersby to enjoy. Thus, it is nearly impossible to estimate fully the audience of *Punch*. *Punch*'s content, ranging from sophisticated artistic and literary allusions to juvenile puns and caricatures, could be understood by its audience on numerous levels, appealing to the both the barely literate servants in the middle-class houses to the foremost writers of the day, including Elizabeth Barrett, Charlotte Brontë, Robert Browning, and Thomas Carlyle.⁴⁰

However, it was mostly an urban, middle class audience to whom the humor of the paper was directed. Few references to rural life, or even to life in cities outside of London, exist. When non-Londoners do appear, they are clearly outsiders—confused old gentlemen from Scotland, unknowing country bumpkins, vulgar Americans. The working classes appear in *Punch* only in relationship to the dominant classes. Servants rarely appear as subjects in their own right, except to demonstrate the ridiculousness of their natures—numerous cartoons illustrate the attitude that “good help is hard to find.” Other members of the working classes seem to exist only as a philanthropic cause for the middle classes. Seamstresses appear in both text and illustration—the cause célébré after the publication of Thomas Hood’s poem “Song of the Shirt” in 1843—but only in order to induce *Punch*'s readership to charity and humanitarianism.⁴¹ This is not to downplay

⁴⁰ Altick, *Punch*, xvii. Altick also lists *Punch*'s American readers as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, and Emily Dickinson.

⁴¹ Hood's “Song of the Shirt” appeared in 1843, having been refused by several other periodicals before being published by *Punch*. Addressing the pitiable conditions of the life of the seamstress, Hood writes:

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread--
Stitch! stitch! stitch!

Punch's liberal attitudes; nonetheless, *Punch*'s acknowledgement of the working classes was not as part of its audience but as a cause for that audience. Indeed, *Punch* can be read as a guidebook on how to be middle class—what ideas to support, what places to visit, what fashions to follow, what humor is funny. Originating eight years after the middle classes received the franchise, *Punch* instructed its readers in their new-found position in society, contributing to and constructing that position in the process. Throughout the nineteenth century, it continued in its role as the arbiter of middle class culture, all the while poking fun at it.

Conceiving *Punch* as a publication to “destroy the principle of evil by increasing the means of cultivating the good,” the editor, authors, and artists repeatedly addressed the issue of art and its audiences, perceiving art to be essentially beneficial to the common good.⁴² Such a stance, demonstrated in features from John Leech's cartoon “Substance and Shadow” (figure 31) of 1843 to satirical diatribes against the Sabbatarian closings of museums, appealed to the reform-minded conscience of the middle classes who devoured *Punch* weekly. However, a survey of the magazine between its foundation in 1841 and 1896 reveals a shift in the depiction of the art public. While early *Punch* cartoons and features optimistically depict the working classes within exhibitions, thereby promoting the reformist notion of the societal benefits of public art institutions, later cartoons portray the art public as exclusively middle class and the exhibition as a site for socializing. The democratic crowd becomes the middle class conversational

In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt."
Thomas Hood, “Song of the Shirt,” *Punch* 5 (Dec. 16, 1843): 260.

⁴² “The Moral of Punch,” *Punch* 1 (July 17, 1841): 1.

group. The nationalist notion of art exhibitions functioning for the benefit of society is privatized into art exhibitions as a site for the personal act of social distinction. While repeatedly foregrounding the discussion of the art public, the cartoons of *Punch* provide insight into the changing values and beliefs of its own audience by transcending mere reflection and indeed participating in the construction of the art public through repeated visual representation.

While the representations of the art public that are the focus of my dissertation are not unique to nineteenth-century England, they constitute a coherent discourse on the role of both the museum and art in society, a discourse that permeated English society in the nineteenth century.⁴³ This convergence of ideas—education, leisure, nationalism, class, aesthetics—within the discourse of the museum ensures that an examination of the discourse will shed much light on society and culture in England in the nineteenth century.

⁴³ In France, eighteenth-century artists such as Gabriel de Saint-Aubin and Hubert Robert created images of art galleries. Saint-Aubin sketched representations of the annual salon in his catalogues, basing later engravings on these drawings. Robert, influenced by Gian Paolo Pannini's fantastic galleries in such works as *Antique Rome* and *Modern Rome*, explored possibilities for the architectural design of the Louvre. In the nineteenth century, Honoré Daumier's caricatures best capture the Salon experience. In the United States, both Charles Willson Peale and Samuel F. B. Morse produced gallery pictures in the Flemish tradition, including Peale's *The Artist in His Museum* and Morse's *The Gallery of the Louvre*. For the work of Saint-Aubin, see *Catalogues de ventes et livrets de salons illustrés par Gabriel de Saint-Aubin*, 12 vols. (Paris: Société de Reproduction des Dessins de Maîtres, 1909). For a discussion of the influence of Pannini on Robert, see Hubert Burda, *Die Ruine in den Bildern Hubert Roberts* (Munich: Wilhelm Firk Verlag, 1967); Marie-Catherine Sahut, *Le Louvre d'Hubert Robert* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1979), 42-4. See also Jane Mayo Roos, *Picture This! Daumier's Caricatures on Art and Artists*, exh. cat. (New York: Hunter College, 1990); Paul Staiti, *Samuel F. B. Morse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 175-206; Roger B. Stein, "Charles Willson Peale's Expressive Design: *The Artist in His Museum*," in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale, A 250th Anniversary Celebration*, ed. Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 167-218; and David Tatham, "Samuel F. B. Morse's *Gallery of the Louvre*: The Figures in the Foreground," *The American Art Journal* 13 (Autumn 1981): 38-48.

Chapter One

From Connoisseur to Crowd: The Rise of the Art Public in England, 1768-1824

ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΑΜΟΥΣΟΣ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ¹

With the emergence of public art exhibitions and museums in the second half of the eighteenth century, there appeared concurrently a new entity: the art public. Taste, particularly the appreciation of the fine arts, had traditionally been the preserve of the aristocratic elite, but with economic expansion among the middle classes came an attendant desire to possess the advantages of the aristocracy. Writers such as Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, and John Gwynn described for their readers how best to assume the role of connoisseur. Artists, eager to establish a native British tradition, sought the attention of this new class of patrons through exhibitions and the sale of inexpensive prints. However, public exhibitions and their audience induced much concern in cultural critics, who feared the deleterious effect of the marketplace and public opinion on the rarefied realm of art.

These growing pains appear most clearly in the representation and discussion of the new audience for art. A description of the visitors to the 1760 exhibition of the Society of Arts notes, “the Exhibition of last year was crowded and incommoded by the intrusion of great Numbers whose stations and education made them no proper Judges of Statuary and Painting, and who were made idle and tumultuous by the opportunity of a

¹ Generally translated “Let no Stranger to the Muses Enter,” this statement appears over the entrance to the galleries in Somerset House, where the Royal Academy held its annual exhibition from 1780 to 1836.

shew.”² Similar concerns contributed to the introduction of an admission fee of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1769, so as to “prevent the Room from being fill’d by improper Persons, to the entire exclusion of those for whom the Exhibition is apparently intended.”³ This injunction elicited much concern in the press. “Academicus,” writing for the *London Courant*, complains:

for whom is the exhibition *apparently intended*? Certainly an object of sight is meant for all that can see. None therefore but the blind can be deemed improper persons. But to take it even in the sense, in which the gentlemen mean it, is a want of taste?—If judgement or genius ebbs and flows with fortune, the pimps and prostitutes of quality have doubtless the finest feeling , and a contracting Alderman may in time possess the truest taste in the kingdom.⁴

Such an idealistic definition of the art public as comprised of the general population continues in its visualization. The first extant image of the new art public appeared in 1771, in Richard Earlom’s mezzotint after Charles Brandoin’s watercolor, *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1771* (figure 2; Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection). In the print, a variety of types are visible: flirting women, studious connoisseurs, a bored child, a poor-sighted clergyman. Thus, in both images and text, the

² A letter to the Society of Arts, December 1760; quoted in David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 178. Founded in 1754, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, generally known as the Society of Arts, possessed rooms in the Strand where free exhibitions were held.

³ ‘Advertisement’ preface, *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy*, 1769, Press Clippings, vol. 1, Royal Academy Archives.

⁴ Academicus, “Observations on the Royal Academy,” *London Courant*. n.d., Press Clippings, vol 1, Royal Academy Archives.

art public encompasses a diverse group of people. David Solkin, however, in *Painting for Money*, describes Brando's image:

This unfocused gathering of particularized physical types could hardly be described as a 'public,' in any meaningful sense of the word . . . What we see instead is a crowd of people pursuing their own disparate interests in a modern urban place of entertainment, surrounded by a host of cultural commodities produced for sale on the open marketplace.⁵

Brandon Taylor agrees: "as a reflection on the motley social world . . . the print also suggests that the 'public' for the Academy's shows in the early 1770s was in practice not unified but highly diverse."⁶ The refusal to acknowledge this varied crowd as a coherent public speaks to the very crisis of identity of the art public in the late eighteenth century: an economically diverse crowd claiming the status conferred by art which had previously been the domain of the elite upper classes. The new art public was, by its very nature, different.

This chapter will examine the emergence of the art public and the construction of its identity in visual representations, from the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 to the establishment of the National Gallery in 1824, when the fully democratic definition of the art public begins to emerge. First, I will consider the emergence of the English art world following the Glorious Revolution, focusing upon the philosophical origins of the art public in the discussion of taste and the connections between the widening political sphere and broadening art public. Though the original audience for art was the

⁵ Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 275-276.

⁶ Brandon Taylor, *Art for the Nations: Exhibitions and the London Public, 1747-2001* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 26-7.

connoisseur, the art public emerged as a separate entity. I will trace the visual representation of the art public to the depiction of crowds in prints. I will conclude with a discussion of the report of Select Committee of 1816, on the Elgin Marbles, as it affected the understanding of the connoisseur and the English art public. Through this exploration, the significance of the identity of the art public in the previously cited discussion of art in the eighteenth century will become clear.

The Emergence of an English Art World

At the end of the seventeenth century, a convergence of events paved the way for the “discovery of painting” in England.⁷ Before the Glorious Revolution, as Iain Pears describes,

there were few collectors, and the most distinguished of the painters were foreign. Not only was there no ‘English School’ of painting, there was little sign that anyone particularly wanted one. Only a small number of people wrote about the arts and there were no exhibitions. It was illegal to import paintings for sale, auctions were forbidden in London . . . and painters were tied into the essentially artisanal guild of the Painter Stainers’ company . . . Moreover, painting came under a degree of theological disapproval.⁸

In 1688, with the rejection of James II and the presentation of the English throne to William III of Orange and his wife Mary (the eldest daughter of James II), the

⁷ Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1660-1768* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

landowning classes wrested power away from the monarchy and gave it to Parliament, which redefined royal powers and outlined citizens' rights in 1689 with the Bill of Rights. Within a hundred years, a coherent art world had developed in England, culminating in the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768. While numerous scholars, including John Brewer, Neil McKendrick, Iain Pears, J. H. Plumb, and David Solkin, have discussed the economic, political, and social changes contributing to and resulting from the Glorious Revolution and their impact on the development of the arts in the eighteenth century, it is necessary to consider how specific changes produced and affected the emergence of the art public.⁹

The Bill of Rights, with its free parliamentary elections and citizens' rights, in conjunction with the financial revolution of the 1690s and the establishment of the free press, effectively laid the groundwork for a new public sphere, no longer limited to titled men, but embracing "private people"—bankers, manufacturers, and merchants—who possessed increased financial resources and political influence.¹⁰ As Richard Sennett

⁹ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa, 1982); John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1997); Pears; Solkin, *Painting for Money*. See also *Art on the Line*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting*; Sidney C. Hutchinson, *The History of the Royal Academy* (London: Robert Royce Limited, 1986); Janet Miniham, *The Nationalization of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain* (New York: New York University Press, 1977); Nicholas Pearson, *The State and the Visual Arts: A Discussion of State Intervention in the Visual Arts in Britain, 1760-1981* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1982); Taylor.

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 27. This public sphere in no way comprises a coherent class, as scholars have only traced active class consciousness to the nineteenth century. As Dror Wahrman has theorized, the social "middle" of the eighteenth century was deeply divided between country and city orientations, along Whig and Tory affiliations. Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). See also Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1974); Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 1-26; E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: New Press, 1993).

declares, “by the time the word ‘public’ had taken on its modern meaning, therefore, it meant not only a social life located apart from the realm of family and close friends, but also that this public realm of acquaintances and strangers included a relatively wide diversity of people.”¹¹ Such diversity resulted in a crisis of identity because status no longer derived from birth alone. With this democratization of the public sphere, wealthy but not titled men, ruled by private virtues and the marketplace, had access to the identities of gentlemen. Contemporary philosophers such as David Hume, John Locke, and Lord Shaftesbury redefined the concept of a gentleman by rejecting courtly aristocratic values and focusing on politeness and taste. In his *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, published in 1711, Shaftesbury asserts, “one who aspires to the Character of a Man of Breeding and Politeness, is careful to form his Judgment of Arts and Science upon right Models of Perfection.”¹² However Shaftesbury establishes that “if a natural *good* Taste be not already form’d in us; why shou’d not we endeavour to form it and become natural?”¹³ The result of such efforts, according to Shaftesbury, is “the Science of the *Virtuoso*’s, and that of *Virtue* it-self, become, in a manner, one and the same.”¹⁴ This doctrine, known as civic humanism, primarily drawn from the arguments of Aristotle, equates politics, virtue, and the arts as belonging to one “republic of taste,” modeled on the achievements of Periclean Athens.¹⁵ Once acquired, such taste

¹¹ Sennett, 16.

¹² Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times; in Three Volumes* (1714; reprint, Farnborough, Eng.: Gregg International 1969;), 338.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 339.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 338.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the evolution of the discourse of civic humanism in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Barrell; Linda Dowling, *Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1996).

and virtue allowed men to act for the good of the public; they are members of the new public sphere. Although Shaftesbury does not argue that all people are capable of acquiring taste and virtue, and of participating in the public sphere—all women as well as any men engaged in the “mechanical arts” are excluded—he does assert that a man can learn how to be a gentleman. Despite the exclusions of women and the lowest classes, the definition of the public sphere had enlarged. And as the public sphere expanded, so did the audience for art.

Connoisseurship increasingly became the hallmark of a gentleman, with the possession of taste as well as the collection of art becoming a certain sign of status. Jonathan Richardson, in *An Argument in Behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur* of 1719, repeatedly describes the benefit of the fine arts for a gentleman:

Men of easy and Plentiful Fortunes have commonly a great part of their time at their Own Disposal, and the want of knowing how to pass those Hours away in Virtuous Amusements contributes perhaps as much to the Mischevious Effects of Vice, as Covetousness, Pride, Lust, Love of Wine, or any other Passion whatsoever. If Gentlemen therefore found pleasure in Pictures, Drawings, Prints, Statues, *Intaglias*, and the like Curious Works of Art; in discovering the Beauties and Defects; in Making proper Observations thereupon; and in all the other parts of the business of a *Connoisseur*, how many Hours of Leisure would Here be profitably employ'd instead of what is Criminal, Scandalous, and Mischevious!¹⁶

¹⁶ Jonathan Richardson “An Argument in Behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur,” *Two Discourses* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1725), 45.

Richardson instructs readers in the behavior of the connoisseur, requiring the avoidance of prejudice and false reasoning while listing seven qualities to look for in a work of art.¹⁷ Later, John Gwynn, in his *Essay on Design Including Proposals for Erecting a Public Academy*, of 1749, similarly defines a connoisseur: “A perfect Connoisseur, tho’ no Artist himself, is not only pleased with a fine Piece of Painting or Sculpture, but he knows from whence his Pleasure arises, and perhaps can see, what escaped the Artist, how it might have been excited to a higher Degree.”¹⁸ Educated and encouraged by such manuals on how to acquire taste and become a connoisseur, gentlemen traveled abroad on the Grand Tour and utilized their disposable wealth to accumulate collections of paintings and sculptures.¹⁹ Returning to England, gentlemen such as Horace Walpole, Charles Towneley, and Sir John Soane opened their “museum rooms” to other connoisseurs, as well as to artists.²⁰ Philosophers soon heralded such expenditure on art, which had long been demonized by Protestants as blasphemous, arguing that material wealth furthered the aims of civil society by not only pleasing its owner but by pleasing others, thereby

¹⁷ The seven characteristics include: a finely-imagined subject, proper expression, one principal light, good drawing, natural colors, well-laid colors, and representation of Nature. Jonathan Richardson, “An Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism, as it Relates to Painting,” *Two Discourses* (London: A. Bettesworth, 1725), 27-30.

¹⁸ John Gwynn, *An Essay on Design Including Proposals for Erecting a Public Academy* (London: Brindley, 1749), 19.

¹⁹ See also Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters, Who Have Resided or Been Born in England, with Critical Remarks on their Productions* (London: Leigh and Sotheby, 1808); Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England with Some Account of the Principal Artists* (Twickenham: Thomas Kirgate, 1765); Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks: with Instructions for the Connoisseur, and an Essay on Grace in Works of Art*, trans. Henry Fuseli (London: A. Millar, 1765). For biographical studies of connoisseurs, see *The Arrogant Connoisseur: Richard Payne Knight, 1751-1824* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982); Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London: The Rise of Arthur Pond* (New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 1983).

²⁰ Ruth Guilding, *Marble Mania: Sculpture Galleries in England, 1640-1840* (London: The Soane Gallery, 2001), 10.

drawing society together.²¹ Gwynn declares “a Love of the polite Arts is not irreconcilable with the Pursuit of Commerce and Riches.”²² Indeed, the fine arts would foster economic advantage by bringing revenue, previously spent abroad, to the country:

If we consider the great Number of foreign Statues, Paintings, and Prints, that are brought into this Kingdom, the prodigious Price that is given for some, and the more than equitable Price that is given for all . . . whatever is paid for one of these extravagant Articles of Luxury . . . is so much loss to the common national Stock.²³

Gwynn views such a deficit in strongly nationalist terms, frequently comparing Britain to France, to Britain’s detriment.²⁴ Indeed, Richardson had advocated the importance of the arts for the economy in 1719, declaring that England should strive to share with Italy “profits arising from the Concourse of Foreigners for Pleasure.”²⁵ Connoisseurship evolves as a virtuous, even patriotic, pursuit.

As the collecting of art gained in popularity, depictions of connoisseurs with their collections appeared. Such portraits defined the viewing of art as an act of status, or, to

²¹ Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 82-83.

²² Gwynn, 26.

²³ Ibid., 44.

²⁴ Gwynn begins by noting that Britain is far beyond France in most learning—“Our Royal Society is more ancient than the Academy of Sciences in Paris”—but lags behind in the arts, particularly France’s Academy of Painting and Sculpture, “which we are ambitious to see imitated and improved upon in England.” Gwynn, 27-30. Linda Colley postulates this interest in creating a specifically English art through such societies as a patriotic response to years of war with France. Indeed, the connection of art to nationalism is a strong and multilayered one, which will be further explored in Chapter Two. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). See also Linda Colley, “Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain, 1750-1830,” *Past and Present* 113 (Nov. 1986): 97-117.

²⁵ Of course, Richardson refers to the popularity of the Grand Tour. Richardson, 49. For information on the Grand Tour, see *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini (London: Tate Gallery, 1996).

borrow Pierre Bourdieu's term, *distinction*.²⁶ Johann Zoffany's *Charles Towneley's Library in Park Street* (figure 3; 1781-83, Towneley Hall Art Gallery, Burnley) epitomizes the tradition of the portrait of the connoisseur amid his collection.²⁷

Towneley, with his dog at his feet, sits amid his renowned collection of ancient statues, including *Discobolus*, *Venus*, *Clytie*, *Drunken Faun*, *Nymph and Satyr*, and busts of Athena and Homer. With him congregate three friends: the seated Baron d'Hancarville, a writer on ancient art; the Honorable Charles Greville, a collector of antiquities and nephew of Sir William Hamilton, on the left; and Thomas Astle, on the right.²⁸ The figures perform various intellectual activities—the study of books, the contemplation of artworks, and the discussion of ideas. As a painting of a discussion, Zoffany's work participates in the tradition of the conversation piece, an eighteenth-century genre of portraits.²⁹ This painting, however, is as much concerned with material objects as scholarly discourse. Zoffany imaginatively assembles all of the statues within one room

²⁶ While Bourdieu's theories are based on the results of a French questionnaire of the 1960s, many of his conclusions concerning the sociology of art are applicable to nineteenth-century English audiences. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

²⁷ Charles Towneley had reverted to the medieval spelling of the name, "Townley," and it appears interchangeably in scholarship on the family. Gerard Vaughan, "The Townley Zoffany: Reflections on *Charles Townley and his Friends*," *Apollo* 144 (Nov. 1996): 35. By the end of the eighteenth century, Townley opened his collection to the public, with 600-700 people applying yearly to visit. Indeed, two images by William Chambers, who designed the Royal Academy at Somerset House, depict visitors exploring Townley's house on Park Street in 1794. However, these are clearly no longer portraits of the connoisseur, yet not quite images of an art public. They are portraits of collections. Guilding, 42-43. For a discussion of Zoffany, see Mary Webster, *Johann Zoffany, 1733-1810* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1976).

²⁸ Greville, an early protector of Lady Hamilton, introduced her to his uncle, who later married her. Gerard Vaughan theorizes that this painting was commissioned by d'Hancarville, who worked with Zoffany to produce a painting celebrating their friend Towneley as well as alluding to the Baron's own theories on the meanings of ancient art. Vaughan, 34.

²⁹ For a discussion of conversation pieces, see Sacheverell Sitwell, *Conversation Pieces: A Survey of English Domestic Portraits and their Painters* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1936); Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 27-77.

to emphasize the breadth and depth of Towneley's collection in one canvas.³⁰ The conglomeration of antiquities stresses Towneley's success as a collector as well as his affluence. As depicted by Zoffany, the act of connoisseurship entails wealthy men looking, talking, and exchanging ideas in a private setting.

As a depiction of a connoisseur with his collection, Zoffany's portrait continues the tradition of gallery pictures begun in Flanders in the seventeenth century.³¹ Artists from Jan Brueghel the Elder to David Teniers the Younger produced paintings of collectors with their collections.³² Teniers glorified the collection of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in at least twelve gallery pictures, including *The Gallery of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in Brussels* (figure 4; 1651, Petworth House, National Trust) which appeared in the sale of John de Peeters collection in London in 1756, where it was

³⁰ Webster, *Zoffany*, 72.

³¹ I borrow the term "gallery picture" from F. M. Kelly. It is more evocative and inclusive than "cabinet picture," the term preferred by Simone Speth-Holterhoff in her invaluable *Les Peintres Flamands de cabinets d'amateurs au XVIIe siècle*. "Cabinet picture," while appropriate for seventeenth-century images of private royal cabinets, is less relevant for depictions of public collections in the nineteenth century. F. M. Kelly, "A 'Gallery' Picture by Cornelius de Baellieur," *Burlington Magazine* 36 (June 1920): 293-99; Simone Speth-Holterhoff, *Les Peintres Flamands de cabinets d'amateurs au XVIIe siècle* (Brussels: Elsevier, 1957). For discussions of Flemish gallery pictures, see also Zirka Zaremba Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp, 1550-1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); M. Díaz Padrón and M. Royo-Villanova, *David Teniers, Jan Brueghel y los gabinetes de pinturas* (Madrid: Prado, 1992) and Annalisa Scarpa Sonino, *Cabinet d'amateur: Le grandi collezioni d'arte nei dipinti dal XVII al XIX secolo* (Milan: Berenice, 1992). For a more general discussion of the depiction of art in art, see Hermann Ulrich Asemussen and Gunter Schweikhart, *Malerei als Thema der Malerei* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994); Francis Haskell, "The Old Masters in Nineteenth-Century French Painting," *Art Quarterly* 34 (Spring 1971): 55-85; Pierre Georgel and Anne-Marie Lecoq, *La Peinture dans la Peinture* (Paris: Editions Adam Biro, 1987); Michael Levey, *The Painter Depicted: Painters as a Subject in Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981); *Pictures Within Pictures*, exh. cat. (Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1949); Robert Rosenblum, "The Origin of Painting: A Problem in the Iconography of Romantic Classicism," *Art Bulletin* 39 (Dec. 1957): 279-90; and Victor I. Stoichita, *L'instauration du tableau: Métapeinture à l'aube des temps modernes* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1993).

³² Other artists producing gallery pictures include Cornelis de Baellieur the Elder, Bartholomeus van Bassen, Gonzales Coques, Frans Francken II, Hieronymous Francken, Willem van Haecht II, Hieronymous Janssen, Hans Jordaens III, Rembrandt van Rijn, Adriaen Stalbeemt, Hendrick van Steenwyck the Younger, and Gillis van Tilborch.

purchased by the Earl of Egremont, himself a notable collector.³³ The foreground is occupied by the archduke; Teniers, who acted as keeper of the duke's collection; and numerous attendants and amateurs. They are surrounded by several identifiable Italian paintings in the duke's collection, including works by Correggio, Giorgione, Raphael, Rubens, and Titian.³⁴ As in many Flemish gallery pictures, Teniers includes a table spread with statues and works on paper as well as a pair of dogs playing in the foreground. Teniers's painting establishes the value of studying art, the status inherent upon owning art, and the importance of the fine arts within the realm of human thought.

Eighteenth-century gallery pictures draw upon this tradition. Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, a French painter and illustrator, routinely sketched paintings and even entire walls from the annual Salon exhibition, which aided his production of drawing and watercolors of actual exhibitions.³⁵ In the engraving *Vue du Salon du Louvre en l'année 1753* (figure 5; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), visitors climb the palace's staircase to view the works on exhibit. While delineating neither specific figures nor paintings, he communicates a sense of the grand space and the genteel crowds. In contrast to Saint-Aubin's many representations of actual exhibitions, Gian Paolo Panini created fantastic, imaginary depictions of art galleries. In his *Picture Gallery of Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga in Rome* (figure 6; Wadsworth Atheneum), commissioned by the cardinal in 1749, Panini

³³ Margaret Klinge, *David Teniers de Jonge: Schilderijen, Tekeningen* (Antwerp: Koninklijk Museum vor Schone Kunsten, 1991), 222. Iain Pears notes that the painting was purchased for £41.10. Pears, 168.

³⁴ For a diagram identifying the works, see *Ibid.*, 221.

³⁵ Many of his livrets, the catalogue to the annual Salon, and catalogues from other exhibitions, complete with his sketches and marginalia, have been preserved. In addition to sketches of the works on view, Saint-Aubin also included title corrections, comparisons, and personal notes in the margins. *Catalogues de ventes et livrets de salons illustrés par Gabriel de Saint-Aubin*, 12 vols. (Paris: Société de Reproduction des Dessins de Maîtres, 1909).

depicts the art collection of the cardinal, who is featured underneath the great arch admiring a copy of Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair*; Panini stands by the cardinal's side.³⁶ Such a grand architectural interior confers status on Gonzaga and his collection.

Drawing upon these precedents, Zoffany himself produced perhaps the best known gallery picture in Britain, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* (figure 7; The Royal Collection Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II).³⁷ Commissioned by Queen Charlotte in 1772 and completed by 1780, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* represents one of the most famous galleries of the day, the Grand Duke of Tuscany's collection in Florence. Famous pieces of the Uffizi's collection appear, though in a different arrangement than they existed at the time, including Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia*, and Rubens's *Horrors of War*, as well as the classical *Venus de' Medici* and *Cupid and Psyche*.³⁸ Around these works cluster such English notables as Sir Horace Mann, George, the third Earl Cowper, and Zoffany himself.³⁹ The gentlemen, bedecked in fine

³⁶ *Pictures within Pictures*, 22. The influence of Panini can be felt in the work of Hubert Robert, who repeatedly painted the Louvre in an attempt to perfect ideas for its renovation as a national public art collection at the end of the eighteenth century. Upon his death in 1809, twenty paintings after Panini were found among Robert's belongings, including copies of *Antique Rome* and *Modern Rome*. Resonances of *Antique Rome* can be felt in Robert's own *View of Antique Rome*, which also positions paintings of classical monuments and antique statuary within a modern picture gallery. The architecture of Robert's painting originates, not in the grand arched spaces of St. Peter's and the Baths of Caracalla which influenced Panini, but in the vaulted space of the Grand Gallery of the Louvre, of which he created numerous depictions between 1789 and 1799. Though Robert's works postdate many of those under discussion in this chapter, he is an important figure in the representation of museums at the end of the eighteenth century. For a discussion of the influence of Panini on Robert, see Hubert Burda, *Die Ruine in den Bildern Hubert Roberts* (Munich: Wilhelm Firk Verlag, 1967); Marie-Catherine Sahut, *Le Louvre d'Hubert Robert* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1979), 42-4.

³⁷ For a discussion of the *Tribuna*, see Oliver Millar, *Zoffany and his Tribuna* (London: Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967); Webster, *Zoffany*. Other depictions of a collection of learned men include Reynolds's portraits of the Society of Dilettanti of 1779.

³⁸ Indeed, several of the pictures were transported from the Pitti Palace to be included in the composition. Webster, *Zoffany*, 59.

³⁹ Lord Cowper later purchased the "Niccolini-Cowper" *Madonna* by Raphael which the group of connoisseurs on the left margin admire. For a complete diagram identifying people and works of art, see Millar, endpaper.

clothes, admire and discuss the works on display, and are themselves on display.

Zoffany's works present a conservative view of the appropriate audience for art—titled men engaged in “a *social* experience, mediated by one's place within a ‘company’ or party,” as Solkin explains.⁴⁰ In addition to defining the act of connoisseurship, Zoffany also presents the appropriate objects of the connoisseur's gaze. Classical sculptures and Italian paintings, history paintings and portraits, by the most popular and collected artists—Annibale Carracci, Il Guercino, Guido Reni, Raphael, and Titian—dominate the collection, and receive the attention of the assembled gentlemen, who would have been familiar with Reynolds's annual *Discourses* defining the academic principles of art as well as Winckelmann's *History of Art*. Zoffany's painting, though commissioned by the Queen to record the famous gallery, defines, even celebrates, the act of connoisseurship.

The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition of 1780, the inaugural year of the exhibition at Somerset House. The *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* declared: “the concourse of people of fashion who attended the opening of the Royal Academy exhibition yesterday was incredible.”⁴¹ While the *Public Advertiser* celebrated the “happy Arrangement of the Pictures, and Magnificence of the Apartments, [that] render it a very grand *Spectacle* and not to be equaled in any Part of Europe,” the *London Courant* lamented that “the ground exhibition room was so crowded, that it was scarcely possible to move, and intensely hot besides.”⁴² This crowded, hot spectacle is

⁴⁰ David Solkin, “‘This Great Mart of Genius’: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836,” *Art on the Line*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 4.

⁴¹ “The Painter's Mirror: Royal Academy Exhibition for 1780,” *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, May 2, 1780, n.p.

⁴² “Exhibition 1780,” *Public Advertiser*, May 2, 1780, n.p. Zoffany's painting was hailed as “a most elaborate Performance, and a Work of great Merit, in which he has imitated the different Stiles of the

far removed from the sparsely populated audience in the *Tribuna* and is clearly at odds with the ritual of looking at art. The ideal art public exists only in paint.

The depiction of the connoisseur as a type, and not as a specific individual, entered the vocabulary of artists and printmakers in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Gentlemanly identity, indicated by clothing and pose, and active looking constitute the connoisseurial type, which is always male.⁴³ Joseph Wright of Derby's *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight* (figure 8; c. 1765, Private Collection), portrays three connoisseurs engaged in the examination of a copy of an ancient statue, the *Borghese Gladiator*.⁴⁴ Wright emphasizes the act of looking: the connoisseurs' faces, all illuminated by a bright candlelight, come within inches of the sculpture and, even though one figure is viewed from behind, the eyes of each are visible. The night setting of this scene alludes to the prevalent belief that sculpture revealed its strengths and weaknesses more clearly by candlelight.⁴⁵ The disparate ages of the three

great Italian Masters to Admiration." "Exhibition of the Royal Academy," *London Courant* (May 2, 1780), n.p.

⁴³ For a discussion of women as connoisseurs, see Ann Bermingham, "The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship," *Oxford Art Journal* 16 (1993): 3-20.

⁴⁴ For an in-depth discussion of this painting as an embodiment of contemporary aesthetics, see Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 214-225. For a discussion of this statue, see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 221-24. The original is life size. However, by the early eighteenth century, small casts could be purchased from both Righetti and Zoffoli in Rome. For a discussion of Wright, see Stephen Daniels, *Joseph Wright* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1999); Solkin, *Painting for Money*, 214-46.

⁴⁵ The power of viewing sculpture at night appears as early as Pliny's *Natural History*, which recalls, "there is a story that a man once fell in love with it [Praxiteles' *Cnidian Aphrodite*] and hiding by night embraced it, and that a stain betrays this lustful act." Wright removes the overtly sexual connotations by changing the statue from a woman to a man. Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. D.E. Eichholz, vol. 10 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 17. This nocturnal viewing of art appears frequently in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century paintings, often of the myth of Pygmalion, including Godfried Schlacken, *Portrait of the Artist and His Wife Contemplating a Sculpture* (c. 1680-85, location unknown); Schlacken, *Pygmalion* (c. 1675-80, Florence, Uffizi Galleries); Joachim von Sandrart, *Pygmalion* (1662, Schloss Harburg, Fürstlich Oettingen-Wallersteinsche Bibliothek und Kunstsammlungen).

figures—an older, bespectacled man and his two younger companions—produces a cycle of viewing. And of course, the viewer of Wright's painting is the fourth connoisseur, looking closely at both his painting and the gladiator that is the focus of attention. The discussion of the work of art is also important to the depiction of the connoisseur. Here, the men compare the statue to a sketch of it; their intellectual conversation is implied. Significantly, the connoisseurs reside in a clearly private environment—this setting is not a public exhibition but a personal home. Though establishing the act of connoisseurship as a private realm, Wright acknowledged the art public as his audience by exhibiting this painting at the Society of Artists exhibition of 1765 in order to attract attention to his work. Such a move evinces the importance of the new art public, as opposed to private patrons, for an artist's career. With the emergence of regular public art exhibitions, such as the Society of Artists and later the Royal Academy, the act of connoisseurship entered the public realm.

Connoisseurs became transformed into recognizable public types, and, by extension, became the objects of satire.⁴⁶ In *The Connoisseurs* (figure 9; Metropolitan Museum of Art), c. 1800, Thomas Rowlandson satirizes three gentlemen staring intently at an artist's painting of *Susanna and the Elders*.⁴⁷ Like the elders who leer at the naked body of the woman, Rowlandson's connoisseurs admire her form, one with the use of a

⁴⁶ Caricatures of connoisseurs originated as souvenirs of the Grand Tour, as English gentlemen commissioned such images of their friends. Thomas Patch repeatedly caricatures connoisseurs in Italy in such paintings as *Golden Asses*, *A Gathering of Dilettanti in a Sculpture Hall*, and *a Group in the Artist's Studio*. Indeed, gentlemen returning from the Grand Tour, where they had been introduced to caricature by Italian artists such as Ghezzi and Anibale Carracci, popularized caricature in England.

⁴⁷ Rowlandson produced several caricatures of connoisseurs, including *Antiquarian* (1789, The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and *Connoisseurs* (1799, The Metropolitan Museum of Art). For a discussion of Rowlandson, see Ronald Paulson, *Rowlandson, A New Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

monocle. As in most depictions of connoisseurs, women exist here only as objects of the male gaze and not as viewers in their own right. This appears again in James Gillray's cartoon *A Cognocenti Contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique* (figure 10; British Museum), c. 1801, which ridicules the "low, pretended *Connoisseurs*" who had existed as long as the connoisseur had.⁴⁸ Here, a hunchbacked, older man, surrounded by fragmented antiquities, peers closely at the sculptural bust of a woman. The humor resides not only in the dubious nature of the works he studies, but in the fact that he gazes at the woman through the wrong end of the glasses he holds. Upon closer inspection, Gillray's connoisseur wears wrinkled clothing and carries a dirty handkerchief in his pocket, clear signs of his exclusion from the title of gentleman. Indeed, the concept of the connoisseur becomes something of a joke as the position is co-opted by those who seek the status ascribed to it instead of the knowledge.⁴⁹ Similarly, having emerged into the public realm, art becomes viewed as something belonging to that public; the private viewing of art by connoisseurs devolves into an activity devoid of virtue.

The Art Public

The appearance of such images attests to the burgeoning popularity of art among the public. Connoisseurs, artists, auctioneers, critics, and printsellers existed largely within an urban culture centered in London, which was available to the growing public.

⁴⁸ Richardson, 40.

⁴⁹ William Hazlitt bemoans connoisseurs in 1814: "But does not every ignorant connoisseur pretend the same veneration, and talk with the same vapid assurance of Michael Angelo, though he has never seen even a copy of any of his pictures, as if he had studied them accurately,--merely because Sir Joshua Reynolds has praised him?" William Hazlitt, "Fine Arts. Whether They are Promoted by Academies and Public Institutions," *Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe (1814; New York: AMS Press, Inc.), 48.

In turn, this public became more interested in the visual arts. No less a personage than Sir Joshua Reynolds, delivering Discourse IX in 1780, celebrated this:

[art's] effects may extend themselves imperceptibly into publick benefits, and be among the means of bestowing on whole nations refinement of taste: which, if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest depravation, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue.⁵⁰

Handbooks teaching people how to look at and appreciate works of art were published with increasing frequency. Magazines devoted more columns to the coverage of exhibitions and the discussion of the state of art in England as art critics attempted to educate their audiences. The *Artist's Repository*, first published in 1784, became one of the earliest periodicals in England devoted exclusively to art and the British art world. Auction houses, including Christie's and Sotheby's, arose to meet the increased demands of buyers and sellers and opened their sales to the people.⁵¹ Printsellers produced sheets and volumes not only of famous works of art but of famous collections, and these in turn were collected by those who could not afford works in oil or marble. No longer dictated by educated connoisseurs, taste was defined by public opinion. Artists courted such public opinion, often in opposition to the principles of connoisseurs and the Academy, in

⁵⁰ Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Robert R. Wark (London and New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre and Yale University Press, 1959), 171.

⁵¹ James Christie established his auction house in Pall Mall in 1766, while Sam Baker's book business evolved into Sotheby's. See Robert Lacey, *Sotheby's: Bidding for Class* (London: Little, Brown, 1998); H.C. Marillier, *'Christie's' 1766-1925* (London, Constable & Company, Ltd.; Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926).

order to establish a career and make a living. The expansion of the public sphere, and the subsequent broadening of the access to art, directly resulted in the commodification of art, something to be bought, sold, and exchanged as a sign of status.

Critics proclaimed public opinion, and, by extension, the art public itself, detrimental to art. The preface to the catalogue of the Society of Arts' 1761 exhibition notes "what every one knows, that all cannot be judges of purchases of works of art. Yet we have already found by experience, that all are desirous to see an exhibition."⁵² But who belonged to this new art public, so "desirous to see an exhibition"? While certainly the audience for art had grown along with the definition of the public, it in no way encompassed the majority of the population. In theory, the arts benefited all. Richardson had advocated a trickle-down theory of taste, whereby "if Gentlemen were Lovers of Painting, and *Connoisseurs*, this would help to Reform Them, as their Example, and Influence would have the like Effect upon the Common People."⁵³ And if children of the "common people" were exposed to art, they "would thus become Better Mechanicks of all kinds."⁵⁴ John Gwynn believed that two types of people, in addition to the "Gentlemen of Estate," benefited from the arts, those in the liberal Arts and Sciences and "the whole body of Artisans and Mechanics."⁵⁵ While these theories propose an inclusive audience, the Society of Arts catalogue describes its actual public: "When the

⁵² Royal Academy Archives.

⁵³ Richardson, 44.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁵ Gwynn, 65. Iain Pears has a different reading of this passage, believing that Gwynn did not advocate art for the whole public. Indeed, Gwynn does state that "the most servile and labouring Order of People; to whom no other Knowledge is necessary but their Duty to God, their Superiors, and one another" (Gwynn 66). While Gwynn does not admit the lowest order to his art public, his inclusion of "Merchants and Tradesmen, Farmers, Gardeners, Stewards" (65) is expanded from the usual definition of those who should study the fine arts. Pears, 37.

terms of admission were low, our room was throng'd with such multitudes, as made access dangerous, and frightened away those, whose approbation was most desired.”⁵⁶

This tension between “multitudes” and “those whose approbation was most desired,” the crowd and the connoisseur, the real and ideal, informs the representation of the art public in the eighteenth century.

The behavior of the art public, however, and that of the connoisseur differ in the depictions in my study. In the images of Zoffany and Wright, and in the descriptions of Richardson and Gwynn, the performance of connoisseurship involves a private conversation of educated men studying works of art. In contrast, the art public, in its very definition, incorporates men and women, educated and not. The social ritual of the public art exhibition involves not only the viewing and discussion of art but socializing, people-watching, and flirting. The very multivalence of the ritual of the art public invoked the concern of various critics who believed the art public did not engage art appropriately, as connoisseurs.⁵⁷ As noted in the epigraph to this chapter, over the entrance to the Royal Academy rooms in Somerset appeared the words “ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΑΜΟΥΣΟΣ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ,” which can be translated as “let no stranger to the muses enter.” The Royal Academy thus sought to exclude those not conversant with the arts. Nonetheless, as a humorous poem of 1788, “Impromptu on the Motto over the Door of the Exhibition Room, at Somerset Place,” indicates,

⁵⁶ Edwards, xxviii.

⁵⁷ An example from the *Morning Chronicle*: “Public exhibitions, which are usually the subject of public conversations, become matters of interest to every man who lives in the world, and wishes not to appear ignorant of what passes in it. But among the number of those who are desirous of being able to say something upon every general topic of discourse, there are some, who from their inexperience and consequent inability of judging, can never have any opinion of their own; and others, who from natural indolence, or dissipation, will not give themselves the trouble to acquire one.” “Letter to the Printer,” *Morning Chronicle*, 1780, Press Clippings, vol. 1, Royal Academy Archives.

The Painters in Somerset –place would no doubt
 Have us think that they wish to shut the mob out,
 For lo! it is written in Greek o'er the door
 'Let none who want taste this mansion explore.'
 But 'tis written in Greek, for a reason most plain
 As in English 'twould rob them of half their gain;
 Now the motto unread, they daily seem willing,
 To dispense with all taste if you bring but a shilling.⁵⁸

This very multitude and variety—the identity of the crowd—becomes the distinguishing characteristic of the art public.

William Hogarth first popularized satiric depictions of crowds in the mid-eighteenth century, in such prints as *A Representation of the March of the Guards towards Scotland in the Year 1745* (or, “The March to Finchley”; figure 11; 1750, British Museum).⁵⁹ His interest in different physical character types is explained in *The Analysis of Beauty* of 1753, where he explores the correlation between character and appearance:

With regard to character and expression; we have daily many instances which confirm the common relieved opinion, that the face is the index of the mind. . . . and how are our eyes riveted to the aspects of kings and heroes, murderers and saints; and as we contemplate their deeds, seldom

⁵⁸ “Impromptu on the Motto over the Door of the Exhibition Room, at Somerset Place,” 1788, Press Clippings, vol. 1, Royal Academy Archives. Alternately, it can be translated: “Let none but men of taste presume to enter” and “Let no one without the Muses enter.” Thanks to Dr. Joan Burton, Professor of Ancient Greek in the Department of Classical Studies at Trinity University for the translations.

⁵⁹ For a discussion of Hogarth, see Ronald Paulson, *The Art of Hogarth* (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1975).

fail making application to their looks. It is reasonable to believe that aspect to be a true and legible representation of the mind.⁶⁰

Such interest in expressions and types blossomed in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Appearance became scrutinized as never before, as a guide to character and identity. Fashion, once indicative of wealth and position, could be donned by anyone with money and was therefore not a reliable indication of class. Great faith was placed in physiognomy, the study of the human face, as well as phrenology and pathognomy—the study of the shape of the head and facial expressions, respectively—to categorize and recognize different types of people, a Linnean system of classifying humans.⁶¹ Johann Caspar Lavater explored the connection of physical features to morality, publishing *Essays on Physiognomy* in 1774-78, establishing him as the father of modern physiognomy. As Lavater explained, “the moral life of man particularly reveals itself in the lines, marks, and transitions of the countenance.”⁶² For Lavater and his followers, a face resembling the serene smoothness and symmetry of ancient Greek statues indicated the most moral and upright of individuals, while faces which resembled animals such as the chimpanzee clearly belonged to immoral and inferior people. In addition to being morally superior, individuals in possession of a classical face were also believed to be

⁶⁰ William Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty* (1753; reprint, Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1971), 125.

⁶¹ Charles Le Brun’s study of the passions had long influenced British artists, including Sir Joshua Reynolds, by detailing the appropriate facial expression to convey particular emotions, a science known as pathognomy. See Charles Le Brun, *A Method to Learn to Design the Passions*, ed. Alan T. McKenzie (Los Angeles: University of California, 1980).

⁶² Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, trans. Holfcrofts (London: Robinson, c. 1800), 26.

more intelligent.⁶³ Artists and caricaturists like Hogarth could then utilize such schemas to communicate with their audiences, who were familiar with such theories from popular publications.

Repeatedly, prints illustrate crowds taking their leisure within an urban environment. Vauxhall Gardens, a site of entertainment situated on the outskirts of London and thus easily accessible to the upper classes, was a popular place to see and be seen. While descriptions of the pleasure park appeared almost as soon as the grounds were opened during the Restoration (1660-1688), and images record the wooded walks and entertainment from the mid-eighteenth century, Thomas Rowlandson's *Vauxhall Gardens* of 1785 epitomizes the playground of the *beau monde* (figure 12; British Museum).⁶⁴ The print, from a watercolor exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1784, includes the attractions of the park. Prostitutes, their customers, and "cits," or citizens, flirt, listen to the music, and view the parade of fashionable men and women. The combination of famous, infamous, and anonymous provides a satiric thrust to the cartoon, which practically served as an advertisement for the gardens. However, it is a related topos of print, the depiction of the printseller's window, that bears the closest affinity to that of the art public. The genre of the printseller's window emerges along with the popularity of prints, which were sold by the thousands from shops in the Strand and Fleet Street. As one writer in the early eighteenth century notes, he "observ'd there were more People gazing at these loose Fancies of some Leacherous Graver, than I could see reading

⁶³ There is a clear racial bias prevalent in these theories, with Caucasian features valued above all others.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of this print, see M. Dorothy George, *Hogarth to Cruikshank: Social Change in Graphic Satire* (London: Viking, 1987), 77.

of Sermons at the Stalls of all the Neighbouring Booksellers.”⁶⁵ In these prints, crowds of men and women gather on the street to view the wares of the printseller, an early, popular version of the public art exhibition.⁶⁶

Edward Topham’s engraving of *Darby’s Macaroni Print Shop* (figure 13; British Museum) of 1772, illustrating the actual shop of Matthew and Mary Darby at no. 39 on the Strand, typifies the genre.⁶⁷ The Darbys popularized the “Macaroni” print, a satire of British types with continental airs often identifiable by their outrageous hairdos.⁶⁸ In this print, seven figures stand before the windows of the Darbys’ shop, replete with examples of the wares they sold. Among the seven Londoners stands, on the far left, Topham’s own version of a Macaroni, complete with elaborate wig and sword, who does not seem to take as much pleasure in the prints as his companions. As in Brandoin’s depiction of the Royal Academy visitors, Topham’s figures look—at the prints, at each other. The viewing of printshops’ windows was just one of a series of activities, “part of the daily round of the man of fashion, a place to meet friends and exchange gossip as well as to inspect the newest prints.”⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *The London Spy Compleat*, ed. Ralph Straus (London, 1924); quoted in Richard Altick, *Shows of London* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1978), 109.

⁶⁶ Indeed, Matthew and Mary Darby, proprietors of the Darby Macaroni Print Shop, began exhibiting the original drawings of the prints they sold in 1763, complete with catalogue. See Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 3.

⁶⁷ Other printseller shop prints include *Real Scene in St. Paul’s Churchyard on a Windy Day* (1783); P. Roberts, *Caricature Shop* (1801); Gillray, *Very Slippery Weather* (1801); and T. Lane, *Honi soi mal y pense* (1821).

⁶⁸ This, of course, is the famous “macaroni”—“stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni”—from *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

⁶⁹ Altick, *Shows of London*, 110. However, “men of fashion” are not the only members of the printsellers’ public. In *Miss Macaroni and Her Gallant at a Print Shop*, c. 1773, by John Raphael Smith, a woman, “Miss Macaroni,” hides behind her fan as her companion points to a print in the window of a shop, likely belonging to John Bowles, who published the image. Next to them, two men similarly examine the shop’s wares, while a dog urinates on one of the men’s shoes. While Miss Macaroni averts her gaze from

This is the new London seen repeatedly in prints produced to be consumed by those depicted—fashionable, social, urban, leisurely, well-behaved, well-to-do. Diana Donald, in *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III*, clearly establishes the depiction of the crowd in popular prints as a “picture of England.”⁷⁰ From streets to gardens, elections to exhibitions, crowds in English popular prints demonstrate the English devotion to concepts of liberty and equality beyond concerns of rank which are best manifested in the depiction of the multitude.⁷¹ Such generally calm, happy, even contented crowds belied the real crowds that gathered in the countryside to protest rising food prices and in the city to rally in support of imprisoned outlaw and parliamentary candidate John Wilkes (the Wilkite Riots of 1768) and against Catholics (the Gordon Riots of 1780). The London crowd as visualized in these images in no way represents the entire population of the city; the working classes do not appear here. These prints depict the new public sphere—“the rise of the leisure class”—at play, and, as prints, were produced for consumption by that public.

Though the Society of Arts catalogue verbally describes the art public in 1760, the earliest extant image of the art public in England is Richard Earlom’s print of Brandoi’s

the window, she is clearly a member of the audience of print shop windows. In an image remarkably similar to Smith’s, entitled *Spectators at a Print Shop in St. Paul’s Church Yard*, published by Carrington Bowles in 1774, another couple stands before a print shop window. But this time, it is the woman who directs her companion’s gaze to the prints in the window, while two other men look on and a dog stands below. Repeatedly, women appear in images of the printseller’s window as well as in depictions of the art public, often introducing sexual tensions into the image. Women do not however appear as connoisseurs of art and only appear as objects of the connoisseur’s gaze. In Brandoi’s image, women participate in all the rituals of the exhibition, though their viewing is often mediated by the catalogue or another companion. The position of women in the art public will be more fully discussed in Chapter Three.

⁷⁰ Donald, *Age of Caricature*, 109.

⁷¹ For a discussion of crowds in England in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see George Rude, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1840* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964). Rude, however, limits his discussion of the crowd to

watercolor, *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1771* (figure 2).⁷² Brandoin's watercolor, filled with paintings and people, echoes the sentiments of a writer for the *Gazeteer and New Daily Advertizer*, who declared, "at present the whole town is running helter-skelter after Exhibitions . . . staring *all day* at Paintings, Sculptures, and Drawings."⁷³ The walls of the room—a gallery in the Academy's quarters in Pall Mall—are filled with paintings hung frame-to-frame. Brandoin clearly delineates history paintings, landscapes, and portraits, including Reynolds's *Venus Chiding Cupid for Learning to Cast Accompts* and James Barry's *Temptation of Adam*, which occupies the central position above the line on the wall.⁷⁴ The prominence of this painting with its pair of figures, establishes the rhythm of the print, with its parade of pairs, from the two connoisseurs on the left, the woman looking through her fan at the man with the monocle, the short woman escorted by the tall man with the catalogue, a young boy and girl, and the two women on the right margin. Complementing the Adam and Eve on the wall, the theme of flirtation permeates the work—the humorous coupling of the woman with the fan and the man with his looking glass, of the thin man and short woman, and even of the kissing little boy and girl who resemble a living statue of Cupid and Psyche. Also present are a clergyman, standing directly under Barry's painting but turned away from it, a boy and an older woman, possibly his nurse, seated on the bench in the center, and a mother

political demonstrations, excluding "'audience' crowds," as those who come together to view performances or events (4).

⁷² Another early depiction of the art public is Daniel Dodd's *Representation of the Exhibition, of Paintings, at Somerset House* (1784; Huntington Library).

⁷³ *Gazeteer and Daily Advertizer*, May 6, 1771, n.p.

⁷⁴ Intriguingly, West's *Death of Wolfe*, which was one of the more popular works of this exhibition, is not visible in the print. See Diana Donald, "'Characters and Caricatures': The Satirical View," *Reynolds*, ed. Nicholas Penny (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1986), 365.

with her babe.⁷⁵ The crowd, while diverse in its particularities, maintains a general appearance of affluence and taste.

In her essay analyzing the social control of Royal Academy catalogues and art public prints, C. S. Matheson theorizes that Brandoin attempts to differentiate “between the authority of the different spectators, specifically between those who possess a connoisseurial background and others who do not.”⁷⁶ The catalogue is a key component of this, as reliance on it suggests that the viewer is “a relative newcomer to the world of art and connoisseurship.”⁷⁷ Here, only four people consult a catalogue: the older woman on the bench who wears glasses and does not look at the paintings, the two women on the right who are fashionably dressed and engaged in conversation and not viewing the art, the thin man who escorts the short woman, and the large middle-class gentleman, whom Matheson equates with “John Bull,” the quintessential Englishman.⁷⁸ This dependence on instruments for viewing—eyeglasses or looking glasses—also indicates poor vision, or the need for aid in seeing. Finally, the very direction of the gazes of the figures suggests the varying levels of engagement in the works of art. Having eliminated all of these figures—those with catalogues, glasses, or a distracted gaze—few could be described as actual connoisseurs, and these are marginalized along the wall and not in the center of the print. Creating a concentric composition with connoisseurs occupying the margins, Brandoin’s reversed hierarchy of spectators produces the humor of the image.

⁷⁵ C.S. Matheson, “‘A Shilling Well Laid Out’: The Royal Academy’s Early Public,” *Art on the Line*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 42.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

While he does differentiate between the spectators, as Matheson suggests, his interest in the social ritual of the exhibition takes precedence over the performance of connoisseurship, which has become secondary to the social aspect of visiting an exhibition.

While Brandoin has carefully depicted the exhibited paintings, the crowd receives the majority of attention. He gently caricatures many of his figures, producing humorous types recognizable to a London viewer familiar with contemporary prints. The paintings function mainly as commentary on the figures or as thematic points of reference. *The Temptation of Adam* establishes the sexual tension within the work, while the portraits of aristocratic gentlemen serve as points of comparison with the more exaggerated figures below. Indeed, as a print, Brandoin's image functions as an advertisement for the Royal Academy, as well as a record of the actual exhibition. Publically consumed by a mass audience, the print establishes the Royal Academy as a place to see and be seen and to participate in a social ritual which is only marginally concerned with art. For the audience of the print is the audience *in* the print.

But while the depiction of the art public included many aspects of the representation of the crowd, it still referenced the connoisseur. Johann Heinrich Ramberg's depiction of *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1787* (figure 14; British Museum), engraved by Pietro Martini, while delineating the different types in the crowd foregrounds several identifiable personages. In the middle of the concentric circle of connoisseurs and socializers stands the Prince of Wales accompanied by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Viewing is on the margins, while social activity, as well as status, wealth, and power are central. For it is central to Ramberg's image that the identities and importance

of both the Prince of Wales and Reynolds are recognized, for the portraits of these figures are as important as those on the walls.⁷⁹ Stressing the importance of these figures, a man and a woman seemingly stand on a bench in the background pointing out the royal personage. The print, with its inclusion of the Prince, not only records a specific visit to the exhibition but elevates the status of that exhibition, as well as the art public. Just as the prince examines the art on the walls, the print's audience examines the print, mirroring the prince's own activity and behavior.

The importance of the figures in the foreground is even more apparent in Ramberg's depiction the following year, *Portraits of their Majesty's [sic] and the Royal Family Viewing the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1788* (figure 15; British Museum). The composition is the same as the previous year's, though the people are fewer in number, as this is likely a private view before the public opening of the show. Across the foreground again stand royal personages, this time the King, Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the other royal children, as well as their courtiers and attendants.⁸⁰ The arrangement of these figures is significant. The King stands with the Queen and the princesses, many of whom hold open catalogues. The Princes who have reached adulthood stand opposite this grouping, led by the Prince of Wales, their catalogues rolled up in their hands. The

⁷⁹ Ironically, Reynolds and the Prince stand below Reynolds's own portrait *HRH George, Prince of Wales with a Black Servant*. Another possible portrait is that of Mrs. Fitzherbert, the Prince's mistress, seen opposite him in the foreground.

⁸⁰ The children depicted left to right include: Prince Ernest, Prince Augustus Frederick, Prince Adolphus Frederick, Princess Mary, Princess Elizabeth, Princess Augusta, The Princess Royal, Princess Sophia, Princess Amelia, The Prince of Wales (later George IV), Prince Frederick (The Duke of York), Prince William Henry, and Prince Edward. George III and Queen Charlotte had fifteen children, the thirteen of who survived into adulthood depicted here. The princes Octavius and Alfred had both died in childhood, in 1782 and 1783 respectively, and are not pictured here. Matheson incorrectly identifies the figure of the tutor and his charges in symbolic terms "of the educational mandate of the Academy itself or as a reference to the relative youth of a national audience for British art." Ramberg's pen and ink study for the depiction identifies the tutor as Benjamin West, accompanied by Prince Ernest, Prince Augustus Frederick and Prince Adolphus Frederick. See Matheson, 48.

younger princes are behind the women but separate from them, receiving their instruction directly from Benjamin West. Despite such allusions to instruction, the royals are positioned as portraits, posing before the viewer, and not as viewers themselves engaged in the works of art.⁸¹ It is not George III's taste but his status as king and head of the royal family that is stressed here. Even more importantly, George III is positioned as the center of the exhibition. Indeed, he was the patron of the Royal Academy. The original announcement of the foundation of the Academy stressed the King's patronage:

His majesty, ever ready to encourage useful improvements, and always promoting every branch of polite knowledge, hath been graciously pleased to institute in this metropolis a royal academy of the arts, to be under his majesty's own immediate patronage, and under the direction of forty artists of the first rank in their several professions.⁸²

In the rhetoric, the public exhibition of art in England at this time exists as such by the instigation of the King, through the body of the Royal Academy. Such a connection of the Academy to royalty also elevates the status of artists, which was a primary aim of the institution. Besides celebrating the King's patronage of the arts as well as the importance of the young Royal Academy, Ramberg's image removes the public from view and reinstates aristocratic viewing. The crowd and the connoisseur have not yet been reconciled.

⁸¹ This is compounded by the fact that the princesses are arranged in much the same way as their portrait by ex-patriate American artist John Singleton Copley, which appeared in the exhibition of 1787. Matheson, 258n.

⁸² "Announcement of the foundation of the Royal Academy," *London Chronicle*, Dec. 20, 1768, n.p. Press Clippings, vol. 1, Royal Academy Archives.

While many of these images have been situated within the Royal Academy, the premier exhibition space in eighteenth-century Britain, there are depictions of the art public in other exhibitions and institutions. Despite the different locations, the images follow the same conventions as seen in the depiction of the Royal Academy. Though scholars today generally segregate the discussion of the public within various institutions, it is significant to observe that in the eighteenth century the representation of the art public did not particularly alter in response to location. Alderman John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery is just one of the exhibitionary schemes started to capitalize on the attention produced by the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy. A printmaker, Boydell commissioned several of the noted artists of the day, including Henri Fuseli, to create original oil paintings of scenes from Shakespearean plays. These paintings would be exhibited at the gallery and then engraved to support the endeavour. Extremely popular for a time, the gallery appears in Francis Wheatley's *Interior of the Shakespeare Gallery* (figure 16; Victoria & Albert Museum), in 1790, the second year of its existence.⁸³ In composition, Wheatley's image resembles the depictions of the Royal Academy by Ramberg, with the focus on fashionable people in the foreground. The Dukes of York and Clarence, the Duchess of Devonshire, the Countess of Jersey, Boydell, his nephew Josiah, and Reynolds are identifiable, while on the walls are visible paintings by William Peters and Reynolds.⁸⁴ Like other depictions of people in

⁸³ Wheatley, a longtime acquaintance of Alderman Boydell, produced 13 paintings for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery. See *Francis Wheatley, RA, 1747-1801: Paintings, Drawings, and Engravings* (London: Paul Mellon Center for British Art, 1965); Mary Webster, *Francis Wheatley* (London: Paul Mellon Foundation for British Art, 1970).

⁸⁴ Only the bottom of Reynolds's *Macbeth and the Witches* is visible, while Peters works depicting scenes from *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, flank the doorway. See Winifred H. Friedman, *Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), 80.

exhibitions, the visitors in Wheatley's work are of primary importance, the art secondary. And, as in Ramberg's depiction of the King, these works focus on the aristocratic audience almost to the exclusion of the general public who were known to frequent both institutions.

Recognizing the existence of the art public as a coherent sub-stratum of English society, cartoons satirizing the art public emerge. Thomas Rowlandson, who had studied at the Royal Academy, produced several quintessential caricatures of the art public at the turn of the nineteenth century. *The Exhibition Stare Case* first appears as a pen and wash drawing, around 1800, but emerges as a hand-coloured etching approximately eleven years later (figure 17; College Art Collections, University College, London and figure 18; British Museum). These two conceptions of the perilous staircase to the Royal Academy exhibitions in Somerset House focus upon the riotous behavior of the crowd, eliminating completely the galleries that they are venturing to see. The staircase, as Baretti described it in 1781, "affords a constant-moving Picture of every gay and brilliant Object which graces the Beau-Monde of this vast Capital, pleasantly contrasted with wise Connoisseurs and sprightly Dilettantes of every size and denomination."⁸⁵ In the original drawing, Rowlandson's conception emerges: men and women, both thick and thin, climb up and tumble down the curving and steep staircase. A cascade of male and female bodies ends up as a puddle at the bottom of the stairs, with the buttocks of several women revealed. Indeed, the pairings at the bottom of the staircase are more sexual than accidental, as a bare-backed woman falls upon a man and another woman thrusts her nude legs up and apart and a man almost crawls between them in assisting her. A little higher up the

⁸⁵ Joseph Baretti, *A Guide Through the Royal Academy* (London: T. Cadell, 1781), 9.

staircase, a man's face is positioned against the rising hemline of the woman before him. The final etching makes more vivid this joviality. Under a frieze of Venus attended by her followers, the same waterfall of bodies tumbles down the stairs. However, here the sexual interplay is emphasized—in a niche previously filled by a vase stands a statue of the Callipygian Venus revealing her own behind as she glances towards the visitors on the staircase. Furthermore, the woman whose legs fly apart in the air is no longer assisted by the man who crawls towards her, as in the drawing, but is embraced by him. The title “stare case” reinforces the scene of three connoisseurs at the base of the stairs: they stare, one through his monocle even, at the exposed breasts and buttocks before them. Art is indeed secondary in Rowlandson's conception of the exhibition—the “catalogue descriptive” has been dropped by one of the descending visitors—but his focus upon the sexual tension of its viewers is not uncommon. Earlom had included the theme of flirting in the exhibition with his pairs of viewers and Barry's *Temptation of Adam*. Similarly, as Andrew Hemingway and Dian Kris have reviewed, critics had long commented on the sexual tensions of the audiences: the critic of the *World* commented: “besides the exhibition of pictures living and inanimate, there is the *raree*-show of neat ancles up the stair-case.”⁸⁶

In 1808, Rowlandson collaborated with architectural draughtsman Augustus Pugin to produce *The Microcosm of London*, a collection of images and descriptions of

⁸⁶ Andrew Hemingway, “Art Exhibitions as Leisure-Class Rituals in Early Nineteenth-Century London,” *Towards a Modern Art World*, ed. Brian Allen (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 95-108; K. Dian Kris, “Stare Cases”: Engendering the Public's Two Bodies at the Royal Academy of Arts,” *Art on the Line*, ed. David H. Solkin (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 57-58. *World, Fashionable Advertiser*, May 8, 1787; quoted in Kris, 58. In France in the nineteenth century, and perhaps even in London, prostitutes visited exhibitions to attract customers. The art institution as sexualized space is later controlled by images of women as maternal teachers, discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

the sights of London. The publisher Ronald Ackerman addressed the three-volume tome to the “numerous inhabitants of this great city” in order “to rouse dominant curiosity and induce them to notice and contemplate objects so worthy of their attention,” thereby creating an illustrated tourist’s guide to the sights of the city.⁸⁷ Among these sights were several images of the art public, including the Royal Academy exhibition in Somerset House, an auction at Christie’s, the British Museum, the British Institution, and an exhibition of the Old Water-Colour Society on Old Bond Street. In *Exhibition Room, Somerset House* (figure 19), Rowlandson’s “stare case” climbers have reached the top. However, here in the Great Room, the impropriety of that raucous crowd has disappeared. These visitors to the exhibition room behave with all appropriate decorum. As in other depictions of the art public, there are a variety of types: in the foreground there are several red-coated naval men, a spectacled clergyman, several fashionable women, a pair of lovers, and a connoisseur peering closely at a painting. The paintings around them do not, however, indicate a specific exhibition as in Earlom and Ramberg’s images. Instead, the indistinct history paintings, portraits, landscapes, and still lifes also speak of types, but here types of art. While the space overwhelms the figures, it is Rowlandson’s figures that are the focus of his image. They are engaged in a variety of appropriate activities—looking, discussing, gesturing, reading. Women rarely appear alone and are often accompanied by men, or other women, as if to suggest that they cannot appreciate works of art without some mediation. Similarly, many of the catalogues in the image are held by women. On the whole, despite different types, the crowd is uniformly well-behaved and well-dressed. Indeed, it is hardly crowded, with

⁸⁷ Pugin, Augustus and Thomas Rowlandson, *Microcosm of London* (1808; Reprint, London: Methuen and Co., 1904), ix.

plenty of space for movement and viewing, in direct contradiction to frequent descriptions of the annual exhibition. “Apelles Symbolicus,” describing the annual exhibition of 1800 for the *St. James Chronicle*, reports:

The case was, that on my visit one forenoon, I found the place so crowded that it was utterly impossible to view any of the works hung upon the walls, and therefore, not to be quite idle, I sat down upon one of the benches, and took a view of the pictures *moving before me*, and fell into a *John-Bunyan-like* train of meditation upon these *works of art*. Among them I certainly saw some original *designs*, but miserably marred in the finishing, the *colours* laid on with so little taste, that I protest I have seen as good in a perfumer’s window.⁸⁸

Treating the people he sees as works of art, Apelles, whose name references the famous Greek painter, continues to chronicle the types he spies: Venuses, “fancy pieces” from Pall Mall and Bond Street, “historical characters,” and many members of the beau-monde, some with bad coloring and others poorly hung. This treatment of the viewers as objects of sight in their own right, appears repeatedly. In 1828, a writer for the *Observer*, notes: “The late fine weather has caused the Society’s Room at Somerset-house to be crowded every morning with the *elite* of the fashionable world; so that, independently of the intellectual treat displayed upon the walls, the visitants themselves have afforded an exhibition of no common interest.”⁸⁹ Similar crowds appear in *Christie’s Auction Room*,

⁸⁸ Apelles Symbolicus, “Royal Academy,” *St James Chronicle*, 1800, n.p., Press Clippings, vol. 1. Royal Academy Archives.

⁸⁹ *Observer*, May 25, 1828, Press Clippings, vol. 2, Royal Academy Archives.

Exhibition of Watercoloured Drawings by the Society of Painters in Watercolor (Old Bond Street), the British Institution, and the British Museum.

Ackerman's introduction had noted "a strict attention has been paid, not only to the country of the figures introduced in the different buildings, but to the general air and peculiar carriage, habits, and customs of such characters as are likely to make up the majority in particular places."⁹⁰ In mapping the leisure spaces of London, Rowlandson has constructed the art public as a gentrified crowd, in marked contrast to the crowds of Covent Garden and St. Bartholemew's Fair, which include dozens of working-class men and women. While he does include different types in his art public—"the great variety of character . . . have the happiest effect imaginable"—Rowlandson specifically identifies the majority of the population of the art public as genteel.⁹¹

While this chapter has discussed the expansion of the art public from connoisseur to crowd, this in no way implies a democratic group. As conceived at the turn of the nineteenth century, the art public included the so-called rising middle classes who attempted to copy the manners of their social superiors. *Microcosm of London*, with Rowlandson's images, identifies where they go and how they behave, but always the "*tout-ensemble* . . . is marked with propriety."⁹²

Rowlandson's inclusion of public art institutions in the itinerary of the fashionable London crowd contrasts sharply with other contemporary voices who sought to reserve art for an even more elite group. While Reynolds advocated a publically-minded art world, cultural critic William Hazlitt decried the "ignorance and vulgarity" of

⁹⁰ Pugin and Rowlandson, xi.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

the “herd of spectators” who crowded the annual Royal Academy.⁹³ Indeed, such exposure to the public only spoiled the artist, who has “to bow, to flatter, to smile, to submit to the caprice of taste, to adjust his dress, to think of nothing but his own person and his own interest, to talk of the antique, and furnish designs for the lids of snuff-boxes, and ladies’ fans!”⁹⁴ For Hazlitt, then, “the diffusion of taste is not, then, the same thing as the improvement of taste.”⁹⁵ Indeed, “the principles of universal suffrage, however applicable to matters of government, which concern the common feelings and common interests of society, is by no means so to matters of taste, which can only be decided upon by the most refined understandings.”⁹⁶ Hazlitt recognizes the connection between the political public sphere and the art public yet believes these should be separate, in direct contrast to the civic humanism supported by Shaftesbury, Reynolds, and others. George Gordon, Lord Byron, in a rant against Lord Elgin and his marbles currently on view, states the same feeling more poetically:

⁹² Ibid., 33.

⁹³ Hazlitt, 46-47. He declares: “It is probably that in all that stream of idleness and curiosity which flows in, hour after hour, and day after day, to the richly hung apartments of Somerset-house, there are not fifty persons to be found who can really distinguish ‘a Guido from a Daub,’ or who could recognize a work of the most refined genius from the most common and everyday performance . . . We remember having been formerly a good deal amused with seeing a smart, handsome-looking Quaker lad, standing before a picture of Christ as the saviour of the world, with a circle of young female friends around him, and a newspaper in his hand, out of which he read to his admiring auditors a criticism on the picture ascribing to its every perfection, human and divine.” (47).

⁹⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 45.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 46. He continues: “the public taste is, therefore, necessarily vitiated, in proportion as it is public; it is lowered with every infusion it receives of common opinion. The greater the number of judges, the less capable must they be of judging, for the addition to the number of good ones will always be small, while the multitude of bad ones is endless, and thus the decay of art may be said to be the necessary consequence of its progress” (46).

Be all the bruisers cull'd from all St. Giles'
 That art and nature may compare their styles;
 While brawny brutes in stupid wonder stare,
 And marvel at his Lordship's 'stone shop' there.
 Round the throng'd gate shall sauntering coxcombs creep,
 To lunge and lucubrate, to prate and peep.⁹⁷

The art public comprised of the lower and middle classes, while a reality, was in no way fully accepted.

The controversy surrounding the Elgin Marbles, however, solidified once and for all the art public as the intended audience for art, above and beyond the connoisseurs who dominated the eighteenth century.⁹⁸ In 1816, Parliament established a Select Committee to investigate the purchase of Lord Elgin's marbles for the state. Elgin, who had procured the statues as a private person and then exhibited them at his own expense between 1807 and 1812, sought remuneration for bringing this treasure to the nation, having been unable to sell them for a fair price to any private parties. Witnesses before the committee, including connoisseur Richard Payne Knight, dealer Alexander Day, architect William Wilkins, and artists John Flaxman, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Joseph Nollekens, and Benjamin West, testified as to the attainment of the statues, their attribution, their market value, and their worth to the British school of art. The artists overwhelmingly supported the purchase of the marbles for the nation. West explained: "I think them of the highest importance of art that ever presented itself in this Country, not

⁹⁷ George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Curse of Minerva*, 79-84.

only for instruction in professional studies, but also to inform the public mind in what is dignified in art.”⁹⁹ The connoisseurs, however, questioned the attribution of the works to Phidias and deemed the works of little value to private collectors. However, the committee declared the works “admirably adapted to form a school for study, to improve our national taste for Fine Arts, and to diffuse a more perfect knowledge of them throughout this kingdom” and voted 35,000 for their purchase.¹⁰⁰ Such a decision, as John Brewer explains in *The Pleasure of the Imagination*, “did not mean the demise of the connoisseur . . . but it did underscore the problem of how to recast or erase the connoisseur’s ‘way of looking,’ the erotic, sensual gaze, that had been safe enough in the privacy of a gentleman’s cabinet or study.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, the committee’s decision to purchase the marbles for the nation declared that the purpose of art was national improvement and the appropriate audience was the public.

Romantic Poets and the Elgin Marbles

No other event at the turn of the nineteenth century induced such an effect as the transportation, sale, and public exhibition of the Elgin Marbles. Contemporary poets,

⁹⁸ The debate on the repatriation of the Elgin Marbles, which has become more vociferous at the beginning of the twenty-first century with the approaching Olympics in Athens in 2004, is almost two centuries old.

⁹⁹ United Kingdom. *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection of Sculpture, Marbles, etc.* 1816. 151.

¹⁰⁰ *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Earl of Elgin’s Collection of Sculpture, Marbles, etc.* 1816. 8.

¹⁰¹ Brewer, 287.

concerned with the “romantic belief in the timelessness of visual art,” explored the origins and existence of antiquities as well as the relationship between the sister arts.¹⁰²

The installment of the marbles in the national museum, however, did not please everyone. George Gordon, Lord Byron, repeatedly raged against Elgin’s theft in several poems. Even before the marbles had been purchased for the nation and were only being exhibited privately, Byron released his antipathy for Elgin in the *Curse of Minerva* (1812). In the poem, the patron goddess of Athens discusses the theft of the marbles with the poet: “‘Mortal!’—twas thus she spake—‘that blush of shame/Proclaims thee Briton, once a noble name;/First of all the mighty, foremost of the free,/now honor’d *less* by all, and *least* by me; Chief of thy foes shall Pallas still be found.”¹⁰³ Trying to defend his country’s honor, the poet asserts:

‘Daughter of Jove! in Britain's injured name,
A true-born Briton may the deed disclaim.
Frown not on England; England owns him not:
Athena, no! thy plunderer was a Scot.
Ask'st thou the difference? From fair Phyle's towers
Survey Boeotia;--Caledonia's ours.
And well I know within that bastard land
Hath Wisdom's goddess never held command;
A barren soil, where Nature's germs, confined
To stern sterility, can stint the mind;

¹⁰² James A. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 93.

¹⁰³ Byron, *Curse of Minerva*, 89-93.

Whose thistle well betrays the niggard earth,
 Emblem of all to whom the land gives birth;
 Each genial influence nurtured to resist;
 A land of meanness, sophistry, and mist.
 Each breeze from foggy mount and marshy plain
 Dilutes with drivel every drizzly brain,
 Till, burst at length, each wat'ry head o'erflows.
 Foul as their soil, and frigid as their snows.
 Then thousands schemes of petulance and pride
 Despatch her scheming children far and wide:
 Some east, some west, some everywhere but north,
 In quest of lawless gain they issue forth.
 And thus--accursed be the day and year!
 She sent a Pict to play the felon here.¹⁰⁴

Byron's vehemence concerns neither the political nor aesthetic questions that plagued the Select Committee but the identity of Elgin himself, as mean, proud, and petulant. Elgin is not a sensitive Romantic connoisseur of the arts but a "scheming" opportunist. Byron continues, decrying the general British spectators—the "bruisers cull'd from St. Giles"—who lounge, prate, and peep. Indeed, in a tone reminiscent of the humor in Rowlandson's *Exhibition Stare-Case*, Byron posits "modern maids," viewing the nude sculpture, "envies Lais all her Attic beaux/ . . . Alas! Sir Harry is no Hercules." But there is one "calm spectator," perhaps Byron himself, who "takes his view,/In silent

¹⁰⁴ Byron, *Curse of Minerva*, 125-148.

indignation mixed with grief,/Admires the plunder, but abhors the thief.”¹⁰⁵ The cultural imperialism of the British will not reward them.

Such a concern with the audience of the monuments reappears in Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. Published in four parts between 1812 and 1818, the travelogue of Childe Harold’s journey through Europe records his visits to famous sites and monuments, demonstrating the appropriate melancholic sentiment in the face of art. In Canto Two, Byron again attacks Elgin: “Cold as the crags upon his native coast,/His mind as barren and his heart as hard,/Is he whose head conceived, whose hand prepared,/Aught to displace Athena’s poor remains.”¹⁰⁶ Byron expands his target to include the British public—“Dull is the eye that will not weep to see/Thy walls defaced,/they mouldering shrines removed/By British hands.”¹⁰⁷ British spectators do not possess the ability to appreciate the marbles.

In Canto 4, Childe Harold visits Italy, demonstrating the proper, Romantic appreciation for works of art. Visiting Venice, Rome, and other Italian cities, Childe Harold contemplates sights and monuments, inspired to consider broader questions of the passage of time and his own existence. Halfway through the canto, Childe Harold records the experience of viewing the remains of such a glorious past:

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 192-194.

¹⁰⁶ Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, 2:102-105.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 2:129-131. Though, earlier, Childe Harold notes that “these proud pillars claim no passing sign;/Unmoved the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by,” an argument reminiscent of the twentieth-century British defense that the marbles were not being protected.

Reels with its fulness; there—for ever there—
 Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
 We stand as captives, and would not depart.
 Away!—there needs no words nor terms precise,
 The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
 Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes:
 Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan shepherd's prize.¹⁰⁸

Unlike Elgin, Childe Harold is not invested in the materiality of works—in the “marble mart”—of art but in the feelings and associations, whether historical, literary, or artistic, that they inspire. In this, Childe Harold embodies the ideal Romantic, in direct opposition to Lord Elgin.

But Byron's vehemence against Elgin and the public was tempered by the more enthusiastic response of John Keats, who recorded his visit to the marbles in two sonnets. Keats first saw the Elgin Marbles in 1817, on a visit to the British Museum with his friend, the history painter Benjamin Robert Haydon. Haydon, who had also escorted painter Henry Fuseli to see the marbles, was, along with Hazlitt and the sculptor Antonio Canova, firmly in support of their purchase by the nation and installation in the British Museum. In “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time,” of 1817, Keats neither describes the condition of the marbles nor considers Elgin's role in their acquisition, the two main questions surrounding the works. Instead he indulges in personal reflection, aware suddenly of his own mortality and the “rude Wasting of old Time” in the face of

¹⁰⁸ Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 4.442-450. He continues, “I leave to learned fingers and wise hands,/The artist and his ape, to teach and tell/How well his connoisseurship understands/The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell:/Let these describe the undescribable.” 4:469-473.

such “Grecian grandeur.” The marbles, the debated spoils of cultural imperialism, remind him of the possibility of his own culture’s demise:

Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time—with a billowy main,
A sun, a shadow of magnitude.¹⁰⁹

As Barbara J. Black asserts in “The Works on the wall must take their chance”: A Poetics of Acquisition,” Keats’s “museum-poems” examine contemporary British culture.¹¹⁰ For Black, “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles” presents the museum as a site of “cultural death.”¹¹¹ While this is perhaps extreme, the tone of the first sonnet is in marked contrast to the more assured tone of the second. In “To Haydon,” Keats addresses himself directly to his companion, acknowledging his superior taste: “For, when men stared at what was most divine/With brainless idiotism and o’erwise phlegm,/Thou hadst beheld the full Hesperian shine/Of their star in the east, and gone to worship them!”¹¹² In opposition, Keats himself “cannot speak/Definitively of these mighty things.” Haydon’s relationship to the marbles is one of power and dominance, or, for Black, hegemony.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ John Keats, “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles for the First Time,” 9-14.

¹¹⁰ Barbara J. Black, “The works on the wall must take their chance”: A Poetics of Acquisition,” *Victorian Poetry* 32 (Spring 1994): 9.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹² Keats, “On Haydon,” 11-14.

¹¹³ Black, 9.

Haydon possesses the marbles through his understanding of their artistic and national importance, just as Elgin possessed them as a collector—"Think, too, that all these numbers should be thine;/Whose else?"¹¹⁴ It is the connoisseur's relationship to the marbles, and not the marbles themselves, that inspires Keats. Grant F. Scott, in *The Sculpted Word*, contrasts the sonnets on the Elgin Marbles, set within a public museum, with Keats's first ekphrastic poem, "On a Leander Which Miss Reynolds, My Kind Friend, Gave Me."¹¹⁵ This poem gives voice to the pictorial narrative on a gemstone, of the type often studied and admired in a private, drawing room setting. Though he has moved from the private to the public, Keats's sonnets on the Elgin Marbles do not address the public ritual of looking at art but instead explore the internal, personal response to works of art, which in this case, just happen to be on public view.

Keats demonstrates the internalized dialogue of the museum-visitor in his ekphrastic poem, "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Inspired by a vase in the British Museum, Keats contemplated:

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme¹¹⁶

Keats's verses continue with his attentive catalogue of the pictures on the vase. Viewing the various scenes of maidens and trees of the vase, Keats concludes famously that

¹¹⁴ Keats, "On Haydon," 9-10.

¹¹⁵ Grant F. Scott, *The Sculpted Word: Keats, Ekphrasis, and the Visual Arts* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1994), 45.

¹¹⁶ Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," 1-4.

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty.”¹¹⁷ But while he provides a narrative voice for the illustrations on the vase, Keats’s poem focuses on his internal reflections and Romantic associations.

Such poetic ruminations were not limited to the British Museum. Percy Bysshe Shelley utilized the trope of looking at a statue in “Ozymandias of Egypt” of 1817. A “traveller from an antique land” shares his discovery of the shattered pieces of a statue in the desert: “Nothing beside remains: round the decay/Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,/The lone and level sands stretch far away.”¹¹⁸ While not specifically a museum-poem, the implications of cultural death, similar to those found in Keats, comment upon nationalism and pride, specifically those found in national monuments such as the British Museum—“Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!”¹¹⁹ Shelley acknowledges the vanity of such imperialism.

With the proliferation of museums and popularization of art in the nineteenth century, such “museum-poems” and gallery pictures seek to define the new entity of the art public. The tensions of crowd and connoisseur, public and patron define these early representations of the art public, which seek to maintain the aristocratic definition of what was increasingly becoming a democratic public. It is this dichotomy, produced by the changing socio-political climate of England that codified the identity of the art public, as, in Taylor’s words, “a motley social world.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹¹⁸ Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ozymandias,” 1, 12-14.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹²⁰ Taylor, 27.

Chapter Two:

The Publics of the National Gallery

“To be of use, [a National Gallery] must be situated in the very gangway of London, where it is alike accessible, and conveniently accessible, to all ranks and degrees of men.”¹

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Londoners had broad access to works of art, as Richard Altick has painstakingly demonstrated in *Shows of London*.² Such access included exhibitions at the Royal Academy, British Museum, British Institution, Orleans Gallery, Boydell’s Shakespeare Gallery, and the Society of Painters in Water-Colours. Artists such as Thomas Gainsborough, Benjamin West, George Morland, and John Singleton Copley hosted independent exhibitions of their work. Auctions by Mistery Christie and Sotheby, coffeehouses, and printsellers’ windows made art more widely available to the middle and lower classes, while connoisseurs could visit the private collections of the Duke of Bridgewater, Sir John Leicester, the Marquess of Stafford, and Earl Grosvenor.

Despite this accessibility, the foundation of the National Gallery as a public art institution occasioned much excitement among the press, Parliament, and the public, primarily because of the museum’s identity as a national institution. In 1824, an

¹ [George Agar-Ellis], “Catalogue of the Celebrated Collection of Pictures of the Late John Julius Angerstein,” *Quarterly Review* 31 (1824): 214.

² Altick, *The Shows of London*.

anonymous writer for the *New Monthly Magazine* celebrated the foundation of the National Gallery:

A grand national gallery in this country is essential to aid the great work of refinement, to benefit our manufactures, and establish that true taste and feeling in the public from which alone great things can arise³

The article continues:

That a feeling for the elegant and beautiful in art should be infused into the mass of the people, in order to promote a pure taste, even in the most humble of our manufactures, will be admitted as highly desirable.⁴

George Agar-Ellis, MP, writing under a pseudonym in the *Quarterly Review*, established that the most important effect of a national museum would be:

the improvement which will take place *in the general taste of the public*, by seeing constantly before them these models of excellence in painting. Our artists might, possibly, have a better taste; but the great body of the people, the middling classes, as well as very many of the higher orders, could not, from their various avocations, have done this; and therefore, their only chance of becoming acquainted with what is really fine in art, was in the establishment of a National Gallery.⁵

Even Alfred, Lord Tennyson weighed in upon the importance of a national public collection in his *Palace of Art* of 1832. In the beginning of the epic, the poet “built my

³ “The National Museum, And Its Effects,” in *New Monthly Magazine* 11 (Nov. 1824): 400.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁵ [Agar-Ellis], 211. The other two advantages of a national museum, according to Agar-Ellis, are the improvement of the British school of art and the increased visitation of foreigners to London.

soul a lordly pleasure-house,/wherein at ease for aye to dwell.”⁶ Here the Soul dwells, alone, “while the world runs round and round.”⁷ The description of the dwelling resembles a great country house: “full of great rooms and small the palace stood,/All various, each a perfect whole/From living Nature, fit for every mood/And change of my still soul.”⁸ A variety of architecture, landscape, and art surrounds the Soul, that dwells in bliss, “singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth . . . ‘let the world have peace or wars,’Tis one to me.”⁹ After three years, such rich and varied habitation combines to make the Soul despair, “deep dread and loathing of her solitude/fell on her.”¹⁰ Cut off from the world, the Soul “threw her royal robes away” and went to rejoin the world from which she had been separated, concluding:

Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are

So lightly, beautifully built:

Perchance I may return *with others* there

When I have purged my guilt. [*italics mine*]¹¹

As both Barbara Black and D. J. Palmer discuss, Tennyson’s poem progresses from the private world of the aesthete to the public world of the community, from private collection to public museum, from “connoisseur to crowd.”¹² In the final verses, the Soul

⁶ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Palace of Art*, 1-2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-60.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 177-183.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 229-230.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 293-296.

¹² Black, “The Works on the Walls,” 1; D. J. Palmer, “Tennyson’s Romantic Heritage,” *Tennyson*, ed. D. J. Palmer (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1973), 43-45.

determines that the palace of art should not be destroyed, for the fault was the solitary enjoyment of art not the art itself. Palaces of art should be enjoyed “with others,” as public collections, for the nation.

Numerous scholars have discussed the National Gallery in relationship to rising nationalism following the Napoleonic wars. Linda Colley, in her groundbreaking *Britons: Forging the Nation*, establishes that the series of wars with France had a significant economic, political, and cultural impact on Britain.¹³ Among the effects of the wars, Colley asserts, was increased agitation for political reform that eventually resulted in the Reform Bill of 1832, as well as the beginnings of class-consciousness. George Martin, Janet Minihan, Nicholas Pearson, Carol Duncan, Tony Bennett, Brandon Taylor, Paul Barlow, and Colin Trodd specifically relate nationalist issues to the foundation of the National Gallery.¹⁴ While Martin, Minihan, and Pearson detail the intervention of the state in the arts with national pride as a key motivation, Bennett explores Foucauldian issues of the government’s assertion of its power over its citizens. Taylor views the foundation of the National Gallery as both a cleansing and civilizing influence on the nation and focuses specifically on the discourse of health and public sanitation which informed the discussion of both the location of the new galleries and the public itself. For Taylor, then, the National Gallery is also a Foucauldian site of control and improvement in the pursuit of nationalist aims. Duncan, Barlow, and Trodd reconsider the efficacy of viewing the National Gallery in nationalist terms. Duncan argues that

¹³ Colley, *Britons*, 1.

¹⁴ Barlow and Trodd, *Governing Cultures*, 4-12; Bennett, 1-13; Duncan, 34-47; Martin; Minihan; Pearson; Taylor, 33-66.

only a symbolic shift in political structure occurred, while Barlow and Trodd suggest that such positivism undermines the existence of different audiences.

In *Governing Cultures*, Barlow and Trodd's introductory essay "Constituting the Public: Art and Its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century London" raises the debate about the existence of only one public. Trodd continues this thread in his later essay, "The Paths of the National Gallery," posing the question of how "it was possible to possess this thing, the NG, in the multiple registers of 'Nation,' 'State,' 'People,' and 'Culture.'"¹⁵

Following upon Barlow and Trodd's interest in the identities of the publics whom the National Gallery addressed, this chapter will examine three different groups whom representations of the National Gallery, both visual and textual, posited as the publics for whom the museum was founded. Before examining the representation of the National Gallery, I will briefly survey the visual conception of the art public in such spaces at the British Institution in the first years of the nineteenth century, in order to trace the continuation of eighteenth-century themes as well as to contrast these with the depiction of the new museum. Then, I will examine the three publics of the National Gallery: artists, the nation, and, specifically, the working classes.

The Art Public Elsewhere

In several representations, the portrayal of public art institutions as the private realm of gentlemen and connoisseurs continued from the eighteenth century. John Scarlett Davis's *The 1829 Exhibition at the British Institution* (figure 20; 1830, Yale Center for British Art) illustrates the sparsely-populated galleries of the British Institution

¹⁵ Colin Trodd, "The Paths of the National Gallery," *Governing Cultures*, ed. Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), 29-30.

during its annual exhibition of Old Masters.¹⁶ The British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom, founded in 1805, aimed

to encourage and reward the talents of the Artists of the United Kingdom; so as to improve and extend our manufactures, by that degree of taste and excellence which are to be exclusively derived from the cultivation of the Fine Arts; and thereby to increase the general prosperity and resources of the empire.¹⁷

While the institution did host exhibitions of modern artists, it also sponsored an annual exhibition of Old Master works from private collections. In his image of this exhibition, Davis includes various men and women in a situation resembling Zoffany's conversation pieces. According to M. H. Spielmann, artist James Northcote contemplates the portrait of Reynolds, while in conversation with Benjamin West.¹⁸ But as Spielmann notes, West had been dead nine years and Northcote would have been over eighty years old at the time of the production of the painting.¹⁹ Thus, with the inclusion of the two men, Davis's painting becomes not only a nostalgic rendering of the British Institution but also an homage to West and Northcote.²⁰ The positive reception of this painting was actually the

¹⁶ For an in-depth discussion of Davis, see M. H. Spielmann, "Pictures of Picture Galleries," *Connoisseur* 33 (Aug. 1912): 222. For a similar depiction of the British Institution, see James Stephanoff and F.P. Stephanoff, *The British Institution in 1816*, David Wilkie's *An Exhibition of Old Masters at the British Institution*, and Alfred Joseph Woolner's *Interior of the British Institution*.

¹⁷ *Minutes of the British Institution* (11 June 1805); quoted in Peter Fullerton, "Patronage and Pedagogy: The British Institution in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Art History* 5 (March 1982): 61.

¹⁸ Spielmann, 222.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 222.

²⁰ Davis, in the tradition of the Flemish gallery pictures, also includes detailed representations of the paintings which were on display at the British Institution in 1829, though the hanging arrangement differs from the original one. *Ibid.*, 220.

catalyst for Davis's producing images of gallery interiors full-time. Other paintings include *The Grand Gallery of the Louvre* and *Picture Gallery, with a Group of Artists*.

Davis was not alone in his treatment of galleries and art collections. Indeed, W. F. Witherington, with whom Davis studied, also produced a gallery picture entitled *Interior of a Picture Gallery* (figure 21; n.d., Leicester Galleries, London).²¹ This painting, with its walls of paintings, art-loving figures, globe, and pet cat, resembles the Flemish gallery picture tradition, in addition to prefiguring Davis's own interest in art gallery interiors. Similarly, George Scharf, father of Sir George Scharf, the first Secretary and Keeper of the Gallery of National Portraits in South Kensington, frequently painted watercolors of various art institutions, including the National Gallery and British Museum. His *Royal Academy Exhibition of 1828* (figure 22; Museum of London) portrays stylish men and women perusing the paintings, catalogues in hand. John Pasmore's depiction of *Benjamin West's Picture Gallery* (figure 23; Wadsworth Atheneum) similarly represents a popular exhibition space, this one established posthumously by West's sons in 1821.²² Several of West's paintings, including *Moses Receiving the Law*, *Christ Rejected*, and *Death on a Pale Horse*, line the walls. They are admired by a rather illustrious crowd, including the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, her sister the Duchess of Devonshire, Sir Frances Burdett, and Pasmore himself.²³ Such

²¹ *An Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by J. Scarlett Davis (1804-1845/6)*, exh. cat (London: Cotswold Gallery, 1933), n.p.

²² The gallery, which exhibited unsold works owned by the family, was not as popular as hoped and closed in 1826. Charles C. Cunningham, "Benjamin West's Picture Gallery," *Art Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1956): 210-11; Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

²³ See also G.F. Sargent's painting, engraved by W. Radcliffe, entitled *Exhibition of the Royal Academy—Private View*, which includes a small group of individuals within the galleries of the annual exhibition.

images capture the rising middle classes, fashionably dressed and decorously behaved and even accompanying minor royalty, participating in the increasingly nationalistic ritual of art-viewing.

Artists as Public

As early as 1777, John Wilkes, radical MP, proposed the foundation of a national gallery with the purchase of Horace Walpole's collection in order to improve the art of Britain. Speaking before the House of Commons on April 28, 1777, Wilkes declared:

The British Museum, Sir, possesses few valuable paintings, yet we are anxious to have an English school of painters. If we expect to rival the Italian, the Flemish, or even the French schools, our artists must have before their eyes the finished works of the greatest masters. Such an opportunity, if I am rightly informed, will soon present itself. . . . A noble gallery ought to be built in the spacious garden of the British Museum for the reception of that invaluable treasure.²⁴

From the beginning, a national gallery was conceived as fundamental to the success of British artists. At the end of the eighteenth century, with the establishment of the Musée de la République at the Louvre in 1793, the British were keenly aware of their artistic and cultural inferiority. Though the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1763 had made strides in improving British art, the productions of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and West did not surpass those of Jacques-Louis David and other continental artists. Referring to the achievements of Periclean Athens, Wilkes continued, "the treasures of a state are well

²⁴ United Kingdom. 1777. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 1st series, vol. 19, col. 190.

employed in works of national magnificence.”²⁵ However, the motion did not carry. In 1799, 1803, and 1823, pressure was again brought to bear on Parliament to purchase paintings for the formation of a national collection, without results.²⁶ In 1824, the question of founding a national public art institution was again discussed in Parliament, when the Angerstein collection of pictures became available. As George Agar-Ellis asserted during the debates, reported in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*:

If there were any gentlemen in that House who disapproved of the expense to which these pictures were putting the country, he would ask them, whether they might not be productive of emolument to the nation, even in a pecuniary point of view? What was it that attracted so many travelers to Italy, but the numerous works of genius which were contained in it? And, if a similar collection were made in London, was it not likely that a similar cause would produce a similar resort of strangers to it? . . . By such means (purchasing the Angerstein collection) they would obtain the best specimens of the best masters, and would so erect a gallery which would be no less beneficial to the taste, than it would be conducive to the glory of the country.²⁷

On March 23, 1824, the nation made the first concrete steps towards establishing its national art museum:

²⁵ United Kingdom. 1777. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 1st series, vol. 19, col. 191

²⁶ The Desenfans, Buchanan and Truchsess, and Leicester collections, respectively.

²⁷ United Kingdom. 1824. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 2d series, vol. 10, col 102.

“The Earl of Liverpool acquaints the Board that, His Majesty’s Government having deemed it to be highly expedient that an opportunity which presented itself of purchasing the choice collection of pictures belonging to the late Mr. Angerstein for the use of the public should not be lost . . .”²⁸

A vote in the House of Commons occurred on April 2, 1824, apportioning £60,000 for the purchase, and in May thirty-eight paintings went on display at Angerstein’s house at No. 100 Pall Mall. By November, 24,000 people had visited the gallery.²⁹

Despite such enthusiasm for the new museum, there was little direct governmental involvement in its actual functioning. No official mission exists for the National Gallery in these early years. Indeed, the only instructions to the newly appointed Keeper, William Seguer, a well-connected and respected art dealer who would remain in this position until his death in 1843, were enumerated in a letter of April 8, 1824 from the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty’s Treasury:

Regulations for the Exhibition of the Collection of Pictures purchased for the use of the Public from the Executors of the late Mr. Angerstein.

1st. The Gallery to be open for Exhibition on Four Days in the Week, from 10 o’clock in the Morning, till 5 in the Evening.

2 All Persons to be admitted a gratis upon Application at the Door.

²⁸ National Gallery Archives NG5/3/1824 United Kingdom. 1824. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 2d series, vol. 10

²⁹ [Agar-Ellis], 214.

3 Not more than 200 to be admitted at the same time.

4th The Porters at the Door to inform Persons applying for admission when the Room is full.

5th Sticks and Umbrellas to be left with the Porter at the Door.

6th Artists to have admission on the other two days of the Week by Tickets, to be furnished by the Keeper of the Gallery under the general Instructions of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.³⁰

These regulations make clear the primacy of artists as the public for the new museum. Two days out of six were set aside for the use of artists and copyists studying at the National Gallery. Significantly, Friday and Saturday were the selected days until 1859; only then were Thursday and Friday chosen so that the general public, who often had Saturday afternoons off from work, could attend the museum. Otherwise, only foreign visitors with special permission could obtain admission on student days so that the artists would be undisturbed in their work.

A lithograph, printed by Charles Joseph Hullmandel, entitled *The Louvre or the National Gallery of France . . . No. 100 Pall Mall or the National Gallery of England* (figure 24; National Gallery Archives), is one of the earliest extant visualizations of the National Gallery. Dated approximately 1825, the print contains two images arranged

³⁰ National Gallery Archives.

vertically, displaying the Louvre and the National Gallery, accompanied by several elegant inscriptions. The dignified architecture of the Louvre—"the National Gallery of France"—dominates the cityscape, declaring the cultural significance of its collections. Below it appears an image of a typical London townhouse, this one shored up by braces and next to a vacant lot, with a man and a woman in the foreground who look at the gallery but do not enter. The legend between the two declares "Look here upon this picture, and on this, the counterfeit presentment of two brothers!"³¹ Clearly, "the National Gallery of England" does not compare to that of France. Contemporary reports indeed indicated the depravity of the site: Agar-Ellis described it as "dark and cavern-like," while Gustav Waagen, Director of the Royal Museum in Berlin, decried its "dirty appearance, with great depth, so little light that most of the pictures are but imperfectly seen."³² Indeed, Agar-Ellis writes at length about the differences between the French and the "Bulls," declaring finally, that the treatment of the national collection affords "the best practical illustration possible of '*how to make the least of a thing*'; while our Gallic neighbours are proving their claim to the talent of '*how to make the most of a thing*,' of

³¹ From Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 4:
 Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
 The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
 See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
 Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
 An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
 A station like the herald Mercury
 New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill,—
 A combination and a form indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,
 To give the world assurance of a man.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3: 4: 63-72.

³² [Agar-Ellis], "Catalogue of the Celebrated Collection of Pictures of the Late John Julius Angerstein," *Quarterly Review* 31 (1824): 213. Gustav Waagen, *Works of Art and Artists in England*, 1, 1838, 183ff; quoted in Martin, part 7, 113.

the Louvre, the most central and convenient point of all Paris.”³³ The museum, as it existed on Pall Mall, did not easily fulfill its mandate to provide an adequate place of study for British artists, without which they would never be able to compete against their French counterparts.

Another depiction of the National Gallery, this time from the interior, captures the importance of the institution for artists. Providing a rare view inside the Pall Mall galleries, Frederick MacKenzie’s watercolor, *The Angerstein Gallery in Pall Mall* (figure 25; Victoria and Albert Museum), which was exhibited with the Old Water-Colour Society in 1834, depicts copyists scattered across two rooms. Each room is hung with identifiable gilt-framed paintings, most likely on one of the student days.³⁴ This is a rarified realm of study, evidenced by the copies of the Old Masters on the walls. The purpose of the National Gallery, in Mackenzie’s watercolor, is clear—it was founded expressly for the education of British artists, so “that the advantage which was now given to our own school of painting, by placing before it first-rate models, would tend to advance its character and renown.”³⁵ Of course, the improvement of British art was a main goal of the National Gallery, as art students previously had little access to the Old Masters. Such concerns about artistic achievement also speak to the national pride that

³³ [Agar-Ellis], 214.

³⁴ These paintings include a bastion of standard Old Masters, such as Sebastiano del Piombo’s *The Raising of Lazarus*, Rubens’ *Holy Family*, Titian’s *Bacchus and Ariadne* and a partial view of van Dyck’s *The Emperor Thodosius is Forbidden by Saint Ambrose to Enter Milan Cathedral*. Taylor notes in his short discussion of the picture that, unlike Mackenzie’s representation, the gallery must have been crowded for the average hourly attendance neared fifty people. He overlooks the possibility that Mackenzie depicts student day, when the artist himself would have been able to paint undisturbed.

³⁵ United Kingdom. 1824. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 2d series, vol. 10, col. 101-02.

concerned Hullmandel. The identity of the National Gallery as a collection for artists and connoisseurs, not the general public, persisted for several decades.

Despite this focus on artists as the public of the National Gallery, on those other four days, attendance was steady, if not crowded. The *Reports* of the National Gallery indicate a general rise in attendance each year, with the largest jump occurring between 1834 and 1835 when the gallery moved to larger quarters at No. 105 Pall Mall.³⁶ Almost 40,000 more people visited the new space in its first full year. To put it in perspective with other contemporary exhibitions, 1822 marked the peak of Royal Academy attendance figures, with 91,827 people visiting, drawn mainly by David Wilkie's *Chelsea Pensioners*. However, the Royal Academy exhibition was open only five weeks. Attendance at the National Gallery continued to increase, with a dramatic rise in 1838, when the collection moved permanently to its present quarters in Trafalgar Square. In 1837, 113,000 visitors attended but in 1838 the number rose to almost 400,000.

³⁶ Attendance figures as reported in the *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art*, 1841.

1826:	110,051
1827	69,461
1828	57,925
1829	50,963
1830	60,321
1831	71,978
1832	76,820
1833	79,440
1834	89,374
1835	127,268
1836	125,747
1837	113,937
1838	397,649
1839	466,850
1840	503,011

The Nation as Public

The National Gallery can only be truly conceived of as national after its move to Trafalgar Square. As if in answer to Hullmandel's print, the public art institution finally received grand quarters in the center of the city, making it more accessible to the public. Once the location of the King's Mews, or stables, Trafalgar Square, was originally conceived by John Nash, who in 1813 received parliamentary support to widen Pall Mall and connect it to St. Martin's Lane thereby forming a new Square at Charing Cross.³⁷ He later suggested making this the site of the new national museum. In 1833, William Wilkins's revised version of Nash's plan for the National Gallery was approved, despite controversies about its cost, orientation, and scale, and completed by 1838.³⁸ The majority of the early extant images of the National Gallery were produced in 1838, in anticipation and celebration of its opening.

Even before the so-called "new" National Gallery was complete, images appeared heralding its architecture and declaring a new understanding of the national collection. *Cross-Readings at Charing Cross* (figure 26; National Gallery Archives), published by W. Soffee, depicts the National Gallery under construction, with its signature dome visible behind the protective fence erected around the construction site. On this fence hang numerous broadsides, including an advertisement for the Jim Crow, a song and

³⁷ Previously, the stables had held the King's aviary, including hawks who would mew, or moult, hence the name.

³⁸ Wilkins's projected budget was underestimated, concerns arose that the museum's portico would block the view of St. Martin's from Pall Mall, and the building was thought too short to be impressive. A review in the *Spectator* declared: "What with the meanness of the building, the motley and ill-assorted collection, and the shabby lining of the walls—strips of board licked over with paint of a dull green hue—the place has more the look of an auction sale-room than a public gallery." *Spectator*, 14 April 1838: n.p.

dance performed at the Adelphi Theater in 1836.³⁹ In front of the fence, several unsavory types appear—pickpockets and fighting signboardmen—causing a woman in the foreground to throw up her hands in surprise. The current state of the area of Charing Cross contrasts sharply with the grand white marble dome of the impressive new national monument. Similarly, the “low” culture advertised on the signboards and fence—vegetable pills, patent brandy, the Gallery of Practical Science—contrasts with what will become the center of “high” culture in the background. And, no doubt, with this change would arrive a commiserate alteration in the behavior of the people.

The engraving “National Gallery, Charing Cross” (figure 27) published in the *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* in 1837, shows rubble in the foreground of the National Gallery construction site, with a man in smock standing next to a makeshift workers’ hut looking on to upper classes in carriages parading in front of the square. Robert Peel had hoped the implied class tensions would be relieved by the new museum:

In the present times of political excitement, the exacerbation of angry and unsocial feelings might be much softened by the effects which the fine arts had ever produced on the minds of men. Of all expenditure, that like the present, was the most adequate to confer advantage on those classes which had but little leisure to enjoy the most refined species of pleasure. The rich might have their own pictures, but those who had to obtain their bread by their labour, could not hope for much enjoyment. . . . The erection of the edifice would not only contribute to the cultivation of the arts, but also

³⁹ Visual Files, National Gallery Archives.

the cementing of the bonds of union between the richer and poorer orders of the state.⁴⁰

Speaking in 1832, at the time of his collusion in the passage of the Reform Bill, Peel recognized both the dangers of class conflict and the ameliorating powers of the arts. Through the National Gallery, the country would be unified.

Indeed, such national improvement had long been the focus of the rhetoric surrounding the National Gallery, an intersection of issues of nation, class, and culture. But as E. J. Hobsbawm reminds us in *Nations and Nationalism*, it is important not to confuse nationalistic propaganda with the public's own opinion.⁴¹ Indeed, many modern scholars understand the origins of the National Gallery only in the nationalist agenda of Parliament, without considering how this ideology of "improvement" and "taste" was received by or even addressed to the public. In numerous prints intended for public consumption, the National Gallery, the center of art in Britain, is flanked by symbols of church and government and surrounded by a diverse yet orderly public, of the kind imagined by Agar-Ellis:

all ranks and degrees of men—to the merchant as he goes to his counting-house—to peers and commons, in their way to their respective houses of Parliament—to the men of literature and science . . . to the king and court . . . to the stranger and the foreigner . . . to the frequenters of clubs of all denominations—to the hunters of exhibitions (a numerous class in the

⁴⁰ *Hansard's Reports of Parliamentary Debates*; quoted in Martin, part 7, 113.

⁴¹ Hobsbawm, 11.

metropolis)—to the indolent as well as the busy—to the idle as well as the industrious.⁴²

While politicians and cultural critics elucidated the function of art in society, these visual representations located the National Gallery as a new symbol of the nation.

One such image by Thomas Allom depicts *The National Gallery—Charing Cross from the Design of S. Wilkins Esqre Architect* (figure 28; National Gallery Archives)

While incorrectly identifying the architect William Wilkins, the print produced in 1837 foreshadows the appearance of the museum when completed in 1838. In the background the grand completed buildings dominate the square, which contains much human activity: advertisers, beggars, flower girls, women and children, even a parade of soldiers on horseback. A cross-section of the British populace has gathered here, at the cross-roads of London, with the gallery dominating all such interaction. Also clearly visible in the background, St. Martin's-in-the-Field's spire, designed by James Gibbs in 1721, dominates the skyline. To complete the scene, Allom includes John Goldicutt's proposed design for the Nelson Memorial, with its four columns supporting a domed roof; however, Nelson's Column as designed by William Railton would only be constructed in 1843. Though Allom has only projected the design of the naval monument, his composition of an oblique view of the square containing the museum, the naval monument, and the church, becomes the standard for the depiction of both the National Gallery and Trafalgar Square. Such a view of Trafalgar Square recalls both Bennett and Taylor's discussions of the National Gallery as a Foucauldian instrument for the control of the citizenry. Here, the state, in conjunction with culture and religion, produce a civilized and safe urban public.

⁴² [Agar-Ellis], 213.

Henry Gritten, in his *View of the National Gallery and the Royal Academy* (figure 29; National Gallery Archives), of 1838, focuses exclusively on the museum building. The naval monument, which only existed in blueprints at this point, is omitted, while only the Corinthian porch of the church is included. However, the staffage remains the same—people waiting in line to board an omnibus (a scene not unfamiliar to twenty-first century visitors to the National Gallery), sandwichboardmen, members of an army band, a woman and child. But like Allom's, Gritten's painting celebrates the new national monument which dominates the urban scene populated again by diverse and behaved Londoners.

Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, a draughtsman of London cityscapes, produced numerous similar images of the National Gallery.⁴³ The first, entitled *The New National Gallery* (figure 30; National Gallery, London), accompanied a series of engravings from the museum's pictures published by Jones and Company in 1838. Like Allom, Shepherd includes Goldicutt's naval monument, St. Martin's, and the domed galleries of the National Gallery, complete with two monumental statues of chariots which were never completed. The staffage resembles those of the other prints, though it is not as diverse, focusing on soldiers, people in carriages, and well-dressed men and women strolling leisurely.

Shepherd completed another representation of the National Gallery in 1843, at the time of the erection of the new naval monument to Admiral Horatio Nelson. Entitled *Trafalgar Square*, this print celebrates the new grand public space of the square. In the background, William Wilkin's museum stands proudly under a cloudy sky, its columned

⁴³ Shepherd was the son of architectural draughtsman George Shepherd and the brother of draughtsman George Sidney Hosmer.

portico dominating the center of the image. The National Gallery is flanked by the spire and porch of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church. In the foreground, the space is dominated by the looming monument to Nelson. Around these recognizable sights—military, ecclesiastic, and artistic symbols of London’s past and present—swirl the general populace. Dwarfed by the buildings, people ride in closed and open carriages, on horseback, in the omnipresent omnibuses. On foot, couples, families, children, women, parade through the square, past the bubbling fountains, in this grand new public space. With the column and church, the National Gallery creates a triumvirate of famous recognizable monuments symbolizing the nation. The independent identity of the museum as an art institution has become subsumed under the rubric of Trafalgar Square, the symbol of the nation. The print, produced for mass consumption, establishes the space as central to the identity of the nation; participation in patriotism, religion, and culture is a civic duty.

Together these exterior images of the National Gallery by Allom, Gritten, Shepherd, and other, often unidentified, artists present a new cultural icon. These images document the new face of the capital, which had undergone major revisions in the prior decades, culminating in the creation of Trafalgar Square.⁴⁴ With the two preeminent art institutions, as well as historic St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields church and the proposed naval monument to Admiral Nelson, Trafalgar Square became the psychic center of the nation.

⁴⁴ This location was commonly known as Charing Cross until the modern appellation Trafalgar Square gained currency in the early 1840s after the erection of Nelson’s Column. The Underground stop is still known as Charing Cross. See also: George Henry Anderson’s *A View of Trafalgar Square, with Nelson’s Column, looking towards the National Gallery and St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields* (1841); *National Gallery with Proposed Improvements in Front* (*Penny Magazine*, 1836); Edward Pritchett’s *Trafalgar Square*; W. Scott’s *Trafalgar Square* (c. 1843); and numerous anonymous images in the collections of the Guildhall Library and National Gallery archives.

Excepting Gritten's painting, the representation of the National Gallery appears in prints produced for mass consumption. The prints produced before construction of the museum finished would have created anticipation for the museum, as well as informed the public of the architectural plans. Indeed, Allom's engraving proclaims its origins "from the plans" of the architect. This is significant because of the debate regarding Wilkins's plans for the museum, which were immediately derided as not grand enough for the purpose. Additionally, the prints begin the process of establishing the site as a place to see. The intended public—Londoners or tourists—are even included in the print, consuming the sights of Trafalgar Square. As Dean MacCannell theorizes in *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, tourists make the tourist attraction by "ceremonial ratification of authentic attractions as objects of ultimate value, a ratification at once caused by and resulting in a gathering of tourists around an attraction."⁴⁵ More specifically, "the actual act of communion between tourist and attraction is less important than the *image* or the *idea* of society that the collective act generates."⁴⁶ The "idea of society" that these images of the National Gallery produce is orderly, prosperous, and accultured.

The repetition of the standard composition produces an instantly recognizable site. In the years preceding the foundation of the National Gallery, Londoners had witnessed a remarkable transformation of their urban space.⁴⁷ John Nash, with the support of the Prince Regent, restructured Regent's Park (previously Marylebone Park),

⁴⁵ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁷ Donald, J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 12-34.

created Regent Street, planned Trafalgar Square, and made numerous substantive changes to the face of London.⁴⁸ In response to these changes, prints celebrating the new city began to circulate, mapping the important sites, creating a new identity for the capital city. The National Gallery, as part of Trafalgar Square, becomes central to the city's image. Numerous prints of various groups meeting and marching in Trafalgar Square establish it as the heart of the city and of the nation.⁴⁹ Brandon Taylor believes that images such as Gritten's painting and prints of Chartist demonstrations in Trafalgar Square are "contradictory."⁵⁰ However, both images attest to the importance of Trafalgar Square, and thus the National Gallery, as a symbol of the city and the nation.

Working Classes as Public

In 1835, the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures convened "to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts and of the Principles of Design among the People (especially the Manufacturing Population) of the Country."⁵¹ Chaired by William Ewart, M. P. and advocate of the working classes, the committee included

⁴⁸ Olsen argues that the monumental impulse driving architecture in London in the 1810s and 1820s dissipates in the Victorian era, which valued efficiency and economy over grandeur. The downscaling of Nash's plan for the National Gallery by Wilkins, to make it less expensive, is certainly indicative of the new trends. Olsen, 24. See also John Newenham Summerson, *Georgian London, An Architectural Study by John Summerson* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

⁴⁹ These include prints of Queen Victoria's coronation procession in 1838, the Metropolitan Temperance Society procession of 1840, income tax protests in 1848, and Princess Alexandra's first drive through London in 1863, to name a few. All are in the Visual Files of the National Gallery.

⁵⁰ Taylor, 54. It should be noted that I examine many of the images Taylor includes, as they comprise the majority of the visual files of the National Gallery. However, while my reading of the images parallels Taylor's, I examine how the images function within the discourse on art institutions, not as illustrations of that discourse. For example, Taylor's discussion of Compton and Hoven is limited to a sentence about how the "Gallery could be and perhaps was, for some, a familial setting of safe calm and attention" (55), while I more fully explore gender and educational codes embedded in the paintings.

such pro-museum figures as Joseph Hume and Peel, who was also a trustee of the National Gallery. They heard testimony from a variety of witnesses, most selected for their wholehearted support of public art institutions and museum education: James Morrison, Esq., an M. P. and committee member who operated a large commercial house; Joseph Clinton Robertson, the editor of *Mechanics' Magazine*; James Skene, Secretary to the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Manufactures in Scotland and Secretary to the Royal Institution for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts in Scotland; James Harriott Smith, a sculptor of architectural ornaments; and Dr. Gustav Waagen, the Director of the Royal Museum at Berlin who was renowned for his educational practices. Each of these witnesses posited an art public, often comprised of workers, dedicated to rational recreation and self-improvement through art. As Morrison asserted, "there is not doubt that, admitting the public at large, especially the working classes, to see fine collections of works of art, has been eminently useful, and that it gives them a taste for the high character of art."⁵² Smith concurred, stating "I have always considered that the best means of serving the industrious classes, is to increase their means of serving themselves."⁵³

The introduction of the working classes into the rhetoric surrounding public art institutions differs from eighteenth-century aesthetics of improvement, which generally referred to the "people" or the "public." Both of these words generally connoted the rising middle classes but did not include labourers, as seen in Gwynn's discussion of the

⁵¹ *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures: Together with the Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix*, 1835, i.

⁵² *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, 1835, 15.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 45.

audience for art in 1749. With the political changes altering British society—emerging class consciousness and the movement for suffrage reform—in addition to the growing self-help movement among the working classes, the concern for the working classes is understandable. Parliamentary members, declaring their liberal attitudes, supported reform that would benefit the working classes, including increased access to art.

However, witnesses before Parliament saw impediments to the working classes' full enjoyment of public art institutions. Smith reported:

I have frequently heard them complain . . . that the museums and exhibitions are not opened after their working hours, and that they have not opportunity of going to them, without not only having to pay for admission, but to lose their time, and of course it thus costs them much more than it does persons in easier circumstances.⁵⁴

Though admittance to the National Gallery was free, the lack of evening hours or even weekend hours (for at this time, artists' days were Friday and Saturday, and there were no Sunday hours) was a great hindrance. Waagen agreed:

I should consider it advantageous if those collections were open on Sunday for a few hours; and I take the more interest upon this subject, because I am convinced that the days when the Museum is closed, namely the Sundays and holidays are the only periods when it is accessible to working people.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, 1835, 45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

Speaking on museum experiences at large, Waagen testified that “It is not enough however merely to form these collections; there must also be instructors to teach the people on what principles those models have been formed.” Indeed, he provided a list of techniques for cultivating an audience—labels, lectures, catalogues, evening and weekend hours—that Seguer himself later admitted would be useful at the National Gallery. These questions—evening hours, Sunday hours, educational resources—would continue to emerge as primary factors in the formation of the art public, and will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Though the committee’s interest resided mainly in the attendance of the “manufacturing populations,” the ideal audience for public art institutions, no coherent definition of the actual art public emerges. The witnesses even contradict one another: one witness states that the “public at large” and even the working classes attend while another believes that working-men’s access is hindered. In its final report, the Committees concluded:

the Arts have received little encouragement in this country. The want of instruction in design among our industrious population, the absence of public and freely open galleries containing approved specimens of art, the fact that only recently a National Gallery has even been commenced among us, have all combined strongly to impress this conviction on the minds of the Members of the Committee.⁵⁶

The museum, though more than ten years old, had not yet accomplished the goal of reaching the masses. But despite Waagen’s suggestions to cultivate the working classes,

⁵⁶ *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, 1835, iii.

no discernible changes were made in the regulation of the National Gallery, which still very much functioned as a private collection, despite yearly attendance increases.

In 1841, the Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art, investigated the state of public institutions of the arts, including the British Museum, National Gallery, Hampton Court, and Tower of London (which contained, as it does still, the Crown Jewels), and concluded:

The beneficial influence of art upon the character of the People may, it is hoped, be inferred from the gradually increasing numbers of late years who take an interest in our national collections.⁵⁷

Having received returns as to the number of visitors, operating hours, admissions fees, and other regulations, the committee had questioned the staff of these institutions about the art public. Seguier's testimony provides little information of the public in the museum beyond the statements that they behave, the police are only needed when the Royal Family are in attendance, and the greatest attendance was 10,000 in one day. The Assistant Keeper and Secretary of the National Gallery, Lt.-Col. Twaites, formerly a Bow Street police officer, added that "their conduct has been, as far as relates to the safety of the pictures, quite unexceptionable, and in other respects it has been quite as satisfactory as we could have wished and expected."⁵⁸

Such concern about the working classes in the museum is addressed in an early *Punch* cartoon, John Leech's "Substance and Shadow" (figure 31).⁵⁹ Labeled "Cartoon

⁵⁷ *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art*, 1841 iv.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁵⁹ John Leech, "Substance and Shadow," *Punch* 5 (July 15, 1843): 22.

No. 1,” Leech’s image draws upon its audience’s awareness of the major art event of the time—the exhibition of the fresco cartoons in competition to decorate the new Houses of Parliament held at the Palace of Westminster.⁶⁰ Though “Substance and Shadow” is frequently utilized to illustrate discussions of art, nationalism, and public culture, few scholars look closely at the actual representation, which will form the basis for this discussion.⁶¹

Appearing on July 14, 1843, this image displays a group of poor and downtrodden men, women, and children within the halls of an art exhibition, including an elderly man with a crutch, an old woman with a cane, and a woman with no legs. They stare at the walls, hung frame to frame with still lifes of rich foods and portraits of wealthy individuals. Each figure possesses a smudged face and soiled clothing, in clear contrast to the clean faces and clothes of the painted figures. Cleanliness, or the lack of it, is a sign of class. Similarly, the physical disabilities exhibited by a number of the figures, as well as their general malnourished and weak appearance, indicate their unhealthiness and status as members of the lower orders. Leech intensifies the contrasts in this cartoon by placing a young ragamuffin boy in front of the portrait of a wealthy child on a hobby horse, the man with a crutch near a military portrait of the Duke of Cumberland, and the

⁶⁰ The Houses of Parliament had burned in 1834, a catastrophic event captured by many artists, including Turner. Using the fashionable Gothic Revival Style, Barry redesigned the buildings and suggested that they house the best of contemporary British art. A competition was held to select artists to paint frescoes for the new buildings. This cartoon is one of six images *Punch*’s artists created to commemorate the exhibition of fresco cartoons, each critical of contemporary politics. Significantly, this is the first use of the word “cartoon” to indicate a satirical or humorous image; the title actually refers to the fresco cartoons that hung in the exhibition. Interestingly, Leech cartoon does not portray the fresco cartoon exhibition but the annual Royal Academy exhibition, identifiable by the frame-to-frame hanging of contemporary works. For information on the fresco exhibition, see T. S. R. Boase, “The Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster, 1841-1863,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 319-358.

⁶¹ Altick, *Shows of London*, 418; Altick, *Punch*, 191; Barlow and Trodd, 2000, 7; Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, 57.

barefoot young woman in a pose similar to that of a young lady with her dog in the portrait above.⁶² Each figure is painfully compared to what he or she is not. The wealthy individuals in the portraits are people of “substance” while the poverty-stricken people are mere shadows of these luminaries.

An article opposite Leech’s cartoon, probably penned by editor Mark Lemon, describes the contemporary political climate and is worth quoting in its entirety:

There are many silly, dissatisfied people in this country, who are continually urging upon Ministers the propriety of considering the wants of the pauper population, under the impression that it is as laudable to feed men as to shelter horses.

To meet the views of such unreasonable people, the Government would have to put its hand into the Treasury money-box. We would ask how the Chancellor of the Exchequer can be required to commit such an act of folly, knowing, as we do, that the balance of the budget was triflingly against him, and that he has such righteous and paramount claims upon him as the Duke of Cumberland’s income, the Duchess of Mecklenburg Strelitz’s pin-money, and the builder’s little account for the Royal stables.

We conceive that Ministers have adopted the very best means to silence this unwarrantable outcry. They have considerably determined

⁶² See Taylor, *Art for the Nation*, 57, for identification of the portrait as a caricature of the Duke of Cumberland.

that as they cannot afford to give hungry nakedness the *substance* which it covets, at least it shall have the *shadow*.

The poor ask for bread, and the philanthropy of the State accords—
an exhibition.⁶³

With its stinging references to the recent controversial parliamentary budget debates about stables, pin money, and royal income, this harsh satire ironically situates *Punch* and its readers among the “silly, dissatisfied people” agitating for humanitarian relief for the poor. Such a liberal stance was certainly common for *Punch* in the 1840s, as the magazine repeatedly railed against such conservative legislation as the Poor Law, the Corn Laws, and the Game Laws. Continuing this agitation for the rights of the oppressed, Lemon’s article lampoons government spending and the lack of organized humanitarian relief, while Leech’s cartoon criticizes the notion that art could help the masses.

Contemporary aesthetics dictated that exposure to art necessarily improved the taste of the public who would in turn ensure the health of the nation by producing better manufactures. But the poor and disabled are not aided in any way by the art on the walls—painted food does not feed the hungry. Leech’s figures are outsiders in this realm of culture, marginal members of the nation. As the art public is so intimately connected to the health of the nation, Leech’s “pauper population” indicates that the nation is weak, ill, and injured. Indeed, a nation that ignores its poor is not healthy, and as Leech and Lemon indicate, is deserving of ridicule. The aristocrats on the wall, most notably the Duke of Cumberland, are caricatured. The poor, whom Leech sympathetically portrays, are not. Though demonstrating the incongruity of the poor in the realm of culture, Leech

⁶³ “Substance and Shadow,” *Punch* 5 (July 14, 1843): 21.

does not argue that the lower orders should be denied access. Instead, ideally, the gap between rich and poor would be narrowed, so that the poor are no longer left out of public culture and the nation, just as Peel had urged a decade earlier.

In 1850, Angelo Collen Hayter completed his painting *The Portico of the National Gallery* (figure 32; Christie's, London), which was exhibited at the British Institution later that year.⁶⁴ A review in the *Art Journal* contrasted Hayter's painting with earlier depictions of the National Gallery: "We should never have expected to see this delineated otherwise than as an architectural elevation; it is however here invested with much pictorial interest."⁶⁵ On the porch of the National Gallery, familiar from numerous cityscape prints, stand and sit several Londoners—two street urchins, a woman with a baby and a basket of apples, a man in a straw hat, and an old man with a cane. Far in the background, leaving the museum are a middle-class couple—a man in a top hat escorting a woman in a bonnet and shawl, who are flanked by a soldier. The appearance of the working classes on the porch of the museum elicits the debate about the visitors to the National Gallery. While these individuals have only progressed as far as the porch with no obvious intention of proceeding inside, their mere presence at the museum elicited much concern and debate.

The same year, a parliamentary commission convened to discuss the state of the paintings in the National Gallery. A clear picture emerges from the testimony that the "manufacturing populations" were not appropriately utilizing the museum, perhaps even damaging the paintings with their "miasma and vapours," so that the museum therefore

⁶⁴ This painting appeared at Christie's London Sale on May 24, 2002, lot number 78.

⁶⁵ "British Institution Exhibition," *Art Journal* 2 (April 1, 1850): 90.

needed to be relocated to South Kensington.⁶⁶ Thomas Uwins, the Keeper of the National Gallery after 1847, testified to the undesirable behavior of the masses in the galleries:

Scarcely a day passes that I do not visit the Gallery myself, and I have observed a great many things which show that many persons who come, do not come really to see the pictures. On one occasion, I saw a school of boys, imagine 20, taking their satchels from their backs with their bread and cheese, sitting down and making themselves very comfortable, and eating their luncheon. . . . On another occasion, I saw some people, who seemed to be country people, who had a basket of provisions, and who drew their chairs round and sat down, and seemed to make themselves very comfortable; they had meat and drink; and when I suggested to them the impropriety of such a proceeding in such a place, they were very good-humoured, and a lady offered me a glass of gin, and wished me to partake of what they had provided; I represented to them that those things could not be tolerated. And on frequent occasions, I have perceived a quantity of orange-peel in different corners of the place, which proved that oranges, among other things, are eaten; and eating, no doubt, goes forward sometimes. On another occasion, I witnessed what appeared to me to evidence anything but a desire to see the pictures: a man and woman had

⁶⁶ Noted scientist Michael Faraday described the situation: "The National Gallery as it now stands, is in a part thoroughly exposed to all that can exist in the atmosphere of a great city like London, both from the inorganic fumes from the chimneys and the organic miasma from the crowds that are in the town." *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery; together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Plans, and Index*, 1850, 44. Taylor links such concerns with "vapours" to the contemporary fears of disease and contagion and attendant obsession with cleanliness. Taylor, 46-51.

got their child, teaching it its first steps; they were making it run from one place to another, backwards and forwards; on receiving it on one side, they made it run to the other side; it seemed to be just the place that was sought for such an amusement.⁶⁷

Uwins continues with more information about the behavior and identity of the art public:

Mondays, for instance, are days when a large number of the lower class of people assemble there, and men and women bring their families of children, children in arms, and a train of children around them and following them, and they are subject to all the little accidents that happen with children, and which are constantly visible upon the floors of the place; and on the days especially that the regiment which is quartered behind the National Gallery is mounting guard at Saint James's; the music attracts the multitude; an immense crowd follows the soldiers, and then they come into the National Gallery; as soon as the procession is over, the multitude come in, who certainly do not seem to be interested at all about the pictures.⁶⁸

He concludes that the collection should be relocated

far from the centre of London as would make it an object for the public to go there when they really desired to see pictures, and wished to enjoy

⁶⁷ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery; together with the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Plans, and Index*, 1850, 5-6

⁶⁸ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1850, 6. Mondays are repeatedly discussed in reference to working-class museum visitors because it was a traditional day of absenteeism from work known as "Saint Monday."

intellectual gratification; and far enough to prevent its being a mere resort for idle, indifferent and lounging persons.⁶⁹

Uwins is not alone in his disapprobation of the current audience of the museum. Sir Charles Eastlake, former Keeper of the National Gallery, testified:

that many persons who are in the habit of visiting collections of pictures, especially ladies, avoid the National Gallery on account of the crowds that go there; and all that class of visitor would certainly be more numerous in the event of there being greater facilities for them to see the pictures.⁷⁰

From this testimony, an entirely different understanding, a particularly hostile one, emerges of the public in attendance at the National Gallery.⁷¹ However, it must be understood within the light of what was being attempted—numerous parties wished the National Gallery to be relocated to South Kensington in order that the Royal Academy might occupy the entire building at Trafalgar Square. Such advocates sought to achieve this goal by discrediting the visitors of the museum while asserting damage to the national collection.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁷⁰ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1850, 27. Eastlake's tenure as Keeper had encompassed the picture-cleaning controversy of 1847, as well as the purchase of works with questionable attributions, during which time many of his opponents denounced his standing as an artist and scholar. He was supported by current President of the Royal Academy Martin Archer Shee, a position he would acquire upon Shee's death in 1850, as well as by Thomas Uwins, who succeeded him as Keeper of the National Gallery. For a discussion of Eastlake's tenure at the National Gallery, see David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 78-99.

⁷¹ Lt.-Col. Thwaites, who had reported no incidents in 1840, testified that "if the public are not watched very carefully, if part of a picture looks very dull, they wet their finger, and try to bring it out." It should, though be noted that at least one witness, William Conningham, Esq., had a different explanation: "I think that the amount of injury which they have sustained by time and by atmosphere is almost inappreciable; but I consider that the amount of injury which has been done by the picture-cleaners from having put on oil varnish has been very great." It should come as no surprise that Conningham was a great opponent of Eastlake's during the picture-cleaning controversy. *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1850, 23 and 48.

In its report, the Committee concluded:

The position, therefore, of the building, possessing as it does, from its central nature, the very great advantage of making the pictures accessible to the whole of the public who desire to see them, would seem also to lead to its being frequented by great numbers of persons who come with other objects, and add largely to those results which may be supposed to affect the atmosphere of the rooms and the surface of the pictures.

It does not appear to be any part of our duty to consider whether any and what limitations ought to be adopted in the admissions of persons to the Gallery, we merely notice the facts which seem to bear upon the question of evil for which we are directed to consider a proposed remedy.⁷²

The National Gallery was not relocated to South Kensington, despite concerns about the paintings and, more importantly, the crowds. And the representation of it as a monument for the nation continued in prints by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd and others. They did not, however, focus too closely on the public within the museum.⁷³

⁷² *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1850, 68.

⁷³ These include George Hawkins, 1850; E. Walker and T. Picken, 1852; and other anonymous prints.

Chapter Three:

Education for the Masses

*Adde quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.*¹

In 1851, the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations opened in the “Crystal Palace” in South Kensington, attracting unprecedented crowds from around the country and the world to witness the achievements of Victorian Britain. The Crystal Palace, open six days a week, witnessed six million visitors in the six months during which a diversity of inventions, machines, and other exhibits were on view in the glass and iron structure. Newspapers and cultural critics hailed the exhibition, which had been organized by Prince Albert. Within the galleries, the diversity of the British public mingled in its pursuit of education and progress. Though the exhibition did not focus on the fine arts, except as they related to industrial design, it fulfilled more than a half-century of entreaty for an exhibition designed to educate the public in order to improve taste and, by extension, manufactures. Such public crowds, unlike their counterparts during the Chartist riots just a few years earlier, were perfectly behaved. Indeed, the extra police called out to monitor the less-expensive “shilling days,” were not needed. The upper, middle, and working classes, indeed, a cross-section of the public—the very sign of the British nation, as discussed in Chapter One—mingled undisturbed.

This chapter will examine the representation of the art public as a diverse crowd intent on education in the wake of the Crystal Palace exhibition. While the Crystal Palace will not be thoroughly examined because of its identity outside the perimeters of

¹ “Note too that the faithful study of the liberal arts humanizes character and permits it not be cruel.” Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, II.ix.47-48 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

art museums and art exhibitions, its effects appear in the focus on education and the celebration of the crowd after the 1851 exhibition. Paintings by Charles Compton, Aeron Hoven, George Bernard O'Neill, William MacDuff, Thomas P. Hall, and others, as well as periodical illustrations, reveal a growing interest in the activities and behavior of the art public to the exclusion of the art. Such images participate in the growing popularity of genre scenes, as well as the environment of self-improvement. An examination of George Bernard O'Neill's painting of the crowd at the annual Royal Academy exhibition in *Public Opinion*, of 1867, will form the center of this chapter. O'Neill's painting is often discussed by Victorianists as a typical crowd scene of the type favored by English audiences for their depictions of contemporary urban life.² Certainly, O'Neill focuses on the members of the crowd to the exclusion of the art that is the focus of that crowd's attention. However, O'Neill's painting functions as more than a genre scene cataloguing types in the London urban crowd; it also comments on the role of art in society. Thus, this chapter examines how O'Neill's *Public Opinion* and other mid-century paintings define the art public and address the issues of education, leisure, and class central to the discourse on the role of public art institutions in Victorian society.

Education and Leisure: The Value of Art at Mid-Century

The examination of the representation of the National Gallery in Chapter Two revealed the absence of the depiction of the art public that had occupied artists in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Instead, images of the grand architecture of the

² Graham Reynolds, *Victorian Painting* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987), 59; Julian Treuherz, *Victorian Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993, 125; Giles Waterfield, *Palaces of*

new gallery in Trafalgar Square established art at the center of a new national culture, which concurrent parliamentary debates defined as uplifting and edifying to the lower classes. Despite the rhetoric surrounding the importance of art for the public, the public did not appear in the representation of the National Gallery until almost 25 years after its foundation, after the success of the Crystal Palace. By mid-century, however, the depiction of urban leisure occupied numerous British artists, encouraged by the success of William Powell Frith's crowd scenes including *Derby Day*. Once the subject of prints and cartoons, the art public appeared in paintings and periodical illustrations. In keeping with the Victorian preference for genre scenes depicting various types, the representation of the art public focused exclusively on the people in the galleries, detailing who visited art institutions and how they behaved, and not the art. While eighteenth-century depictions of the art public had touted the social aspect of art viewing and early nineteenth-century images focused on questions of nationalism, these gallery pictures center upon the education and leisure of the nation, particularly but not exclusively the middle classes.

The decades of the mid-nineteenth century witnessed an increase in concern for the social and political state of England, known as the "Condition of England" debate. Epidemics of cholera, the Luddite riots of 1811-16, the "Peterloo" massacre of 1819, the famine in Ireland and the resultant Irish immigration, the widespread economic troubles of the "hungry forties," and the fear of possible political and social upheaval such as other European nations experienced in 1848 encouraged the seeking of solutions for the problems facing the nation. Benthamite Utilitarianism and Christian evangelicalism

Art, 128-29; Christopher Wood, *Victorian Panorama: Paintings of Victorian Life* (London: Faber and Faber, Limited, 1976), 202.

dominated the approaches to alleviating the poverty, crime, and drunkenness believed to be at the basis of political agitation. Organizations such as the Society for the Suppression of Vice, founded in 1803, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, founded in 1824, attempted to curtail the recreation of the working-classes, such as fairs and blood sports. As Robert W. Malcolmson notes in his history of English leisure, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850*:

The RSPCA, despite disclaimers to the contrary, discreetly disregarded the pleasure of the fashionable world and almost always prosecuted only plebian sportsmen. The Act of 1835 against cruelty to animals conveniently confined its attention to cattle and domestic animals; it was at pains to exclude from its frame of reference such “wildlife” as rabbits, deer, and foxes.³

Such paternalistic controls of lower-class behavior were balanced by positivist encouragement for more appropriate activities. First founded in 1823 by the editors of the *Mechanics' Magazine*, the London Mechanics Institute provided scientific instruction through classes, lectures, and libraries. By 1850, more than six hundred institutes had enrolled more than 100,000 members in England.⁴ At the same time, free lending libraries, provided by the Public Libraries Act of 1850 increased in popularity, allowing better access to the written word by the lower middle classes. As Richard Altick discusses in *The English Common Reader*, such libraries, however, provided reading

³ Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 152.

⁴ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 190.

material deemed morally and spiritually advantageous, to the exclusion of novels.⁵ At the same time, the Religious Tract Society established thousands of lending libraries in churches containing appropriately edifying volumes, while Lord Brougham's Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) published the *Penny Magazine* to provide uplifting reading material at inexpensive prices. Advocates for public walks and parks insisted that nature could cure the ailments of urban living, a view supported by the Committee on Public Walks of 1833.⁶ More formal educational opportunities received encouragement in 1833, when public monies were first dedicated to education and the Factory Act provided two hours of daily schooling to child laborers. Thousands of children received education at a variety of day, dame, and Sunday schools. Indeed, as Altick records, almost a third of all children in England and Wales received some elementary education by 1850. Secondary school did not become compulsory until the twentieth century.⁷ The author Samuel Smiles has become synonymous with such efforts towards personal improvement, celebrating the individual's ability to help himself in his *Self-Help* of 1859, which begins with a discussion of the proverb, "Heaven helps those who help themselves."⁸

Public art institutions existed in a triad of self-improvement sites, with parks and libraries, as indicated by the rhetoric surrounding the foundation of the National Gallery

⁵ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 195.

⁶ For a discussion of the "parks for the people" movement, see S. Martin Gaskell, "Gardens for the Working Class: Victorian Practical Pleasure" *Victorian Studies* 23 (Summer 1980): 479-502 and H.L. Malchow, "Public Gardens and Social Action in Late Victorian London," *Victorian Studies* 29 (Autumn 1985): 97-124.

⁷ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 147.

⁸ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (London: John Murray, 1859), 1.

and later the Crystal Palace and the South Kensington Museum.⁹ While the Crystal Palace was not primarily a fine art institution, it was the pinnacle of national public instruction and improvement by exhibitions.¹⁰ Numerous scholars have examined the Crystal Palace from disparate points of view: as architectural innovation, Foucauldian social control, celebration of imperialism, and site of middle-class consumption.¹¹ While such themes are visible in the depiction of the Crystal Palace, the representation of these crowds celebrate “rational recreation” and the mixing of the classes; the face of the art public had altered since its last appearance at the turn of the century.

The majority of representations of the Crystal Palace were published for the consumption of visitors, and therefore they focused upon the unique architecture of the Crystal Palace and the exhibits within. These images include the expected diversity of urban types, particularly couples and families strolling the halls and grounds or closely examining the wonders to behold; a body of cartoons in *Punch* animate such reportage images. Though *Punch* had repeatedly derided Prince Albert, as both a foreigner and a man often engaged in frivolous pursuits, it wholeheartedly supported his plans for the exhibition. From fundraising to building plans, *Punch* followed the development of the

⁹The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 certainly stands out as another example, though it is beyond the borders of my examination of London institutions. See the recent dissertation of Elizabeth Pergam, “Waking the Soul: The Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857 and the State of the Arts in Victorian Britain,” Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2001.

¹⁰ Fine arts were included in the exhibition as long as they demonstrated some aspect of design or technique useful for manufacturing and industry. It was the Crystal Palace, in fact, that endeared Prince Albert, who had long been the butt of jokes, to *Punch*, who loudly sang his praises for the exhibition. For a discussion of the history of the Crystal Palace, see Charles Ryle Fay, *Palace of Industry, 1851: A Study of the Great Exhibition and its Fruits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951); Yvonne Ffrench, *The Great Exhibition, 1851* (London: Havrill Press, 1950); Louise Purbrick, ed, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001);

¹¹ For a review of the literature on the Crystal Palace, see *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Issues*, ed. Louise Purbrick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001): 6-19.

Great Exhibition with cartoons and articles for more than a year.¹² But it is the visitors to the exhibition, and not the exhibits, who receive the attention of *Punch*'s cartoonists.

Even before the exhibition opened, articles and cartoons in *Punch* focused on its visitors. The short article "The Year of Expectations" predicts the different reactions of the public to the exhibition, from the lodging-housekeeper's expectation of visitors paying quintuple her normal rate to the provincial young lady's expectations of a trip to the city.¹³ On a more somber note, the cartoon, "Specimens from Mr. Punch's Industrial Exhibition of 1850 (to be improved in 1851)" (figure 33) depicts Mr. Punch and Prince Albert examining specimens of industry, namely poor workers: "an industrious needlewoman" sits in a low chair, her haggard face bent to her sewing; "a labourer, aged 75" stoops with his axe in hand; a "distressed shoemaker" is too tired to acknowledge the poor, thin child at his knee; and "a sweater," who sits barefoot on the floor to iron a piece of cloth.¹⁴ *Punch*'s liberal message of support for oppressed workers is a continuation of the sentiment expressed in Leech's earlier cartoons. In the poem "Mr. Molony's Account of the Crystal Palace," the author catalogues the different peoples to be seen:

Her subjects pour
From distant shores
Her Injians and Canajians;
And also we,

¹² The first reference to the exhibition appears in February 1850, with a note about a cloak which will be for sale at the "Great Exhibition of 1851." Altick, *Punch*, 619. Indeed, *Punch* has been credited with coining the term "Crystal Palace" to refer to the iron-and-glass construction of Joseph Paxton. "A Cosmopolite Motto for the Exhibition of 1851," *Punch* 19 (November 2, 1850): 183.

¹³ "The Year of Expectations." *Punch* 20 (March 15, 1851): 104.

¹⁴ "Specimens from Mr. Punch's Industrial Exhibition of 1850 (to be improved in 1851)" *Punch* 18 (April 13, 1850): 145.

Her kindgoms three,
 Attind with our allagiance.
 Here comes likewise
 Her bould allies
 Both Asian and European;
 From East and West
 They send their best
 To fill her Coornucopean.¹⁵

Later, *Punch* published the lessons learned at the exhibition by its visitors, from the free trader to the debutante, the artisan to the manufacturer.¹⁶ Mr. Punch declared his lesson learned: “that the different nations of the world, and the different classes of society, might meet oftener, with much advantage to each other.”¹⁷ Despite the protectionist’s concerns of being flooded by foreigners and their goods, such interest in and concern for the “other” is a hallmark of the coverage of the Crystal Palace.

Images of the crowds appear repeatedly in *Punch*. In John Leech’s “Dinner-Time at the Crystal Palace” (figure 34), a group of men, women, and children gather at the base of a statue of Shakespeare to eat and imbibe.¹⁸ Visible are two military men and several women and children, including one nursing working-class mother and several top-hatted gentlemen. The statue, which was not actually at the Crystal Palace, bears the inscription, “One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin.” From Ulysses’s speech to Achilles

¹⁵ “Mr. Molony’s Account of the Crystal Palace.” *Punch* 20 (April 25, 1851): 171.

¹⁶ “The Morals of the Great Exhibition.” *Punch* 20 (June 7, 1851): 233.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ John Leech, “Dinner-Time at the Crystal Palace,” *Punch* 20 (May 10, 1851): 16.

in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, this title evokes themes of unity commiserate with the appearance of the diverse public in the Crystal Palace.¹⁹ The public, brought together under one roof, recognizes their common humanity.

Several images and articles outline the various experiences and activities of the visitors. In the three-page "Front Row of the Shilling Gallery," the sights of the cheap days are examined.²⁰ Several illustrative vignettes depict the visitors crowding to see the Koh-I-noor jewel, a family agreeing to meet back at the fountain at the end of the day, smock-clad men eating lunch, farmers dipping their handkerchiefs in the perfume fountains, a possible criminal learning how to use an American revolver, and middle-class visitors overcome by the smell of snuff at the Portuguese exhibit (figure 35). The article describes the scene:

The great mob keeps playing about the floor like an immense sea of Jack-o'-lanterns . . . It is a Quadrille of colours—a Reel of prismatic rays . . .

Fancy these all moving, surging, tossing together, whilst countless sets are wildly rushing up and down the middle, and *balancez*-ing, like summer lightning, from one side to the other, and you will have but a poor notion, after all, how *l'Ete* is danced through, with a gaiety it has never known before, at this year's Exhibition.²¹

This diversity of people engaged in such edifying activity was celebrated by *Punch*.

¹⁹ William Shakespeare. *Troilus and Cressida*. 3: 3: 169.

²⁰ "The Front Row of the Shilling Gallery." *Punch* 21 (July 5, 1851): 10-12.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

The most famous depiction of the diverse crowd of the Crystal Palace is John Leech's cartoon, "The Pound and the Shilling: Whoever Thought of Meeting You Here?" (figure 36).²² Here in the nave of the Crystal Palace, a party of well-dressed women and decorated military men confront a group of workers within the great hall, observing one another tentatively. The children come together, with a little working boy about to present a bouquet of flowers to the girl with the parasol, while the boy in the sailor suit next to her takes the hands of the little working-class girl into his own. About them mill other bystanders, while from the balcony, the figure of Mr. Punch looks on approvingly. This picture not-so-subtly references many of the debates attendant upon the mixing of the classes at the Crystal Palace. Despite the foundation of a particular committee to promote the exhibition to the working classes, there was some fear concerning their appearance in the exhibition. One committee member even "feared that the prince should put himself at the head of a democratic movement! . . . and would sooner there should be a debt of 50,000 than there should be a great agitation of the 'working classes.'"²³ The monetary title of Leech's cartoon alludes to this fear and the fiscal controls instituted to alleviate it. Admission fees restricted the appearance of the lowest classes and served to separate the classes. On Saturdays, admission to the Crystal Palace was a prohibitively expensive one pound, while "shilling days" occurred during the work-week when the lower classes could not attend. On the first shilling day, May 26, 1851, "at the opening of the doors, there were hundreds of extra police to receive the great crowds which Mr. Mayne had expected. The public dawdled in by ones and twos,

²² John Leech. "The Pound and the Shilling. 'Whoever Thought of Meeting You Here?' *Punch* 20 (June 14, 1851): 247.

²³ Cole, 2 :192.

and there was no string of people at the east entrance . . . The public were *kept away by the apprehension that the crowds would be enormous.*"²⁴ Much to the surprise of the propriertied classes, the extra police called in to monitor the "shilling days" were not required—the working classes were not ill-behaved or violent. For the first time in the depiction of the art public, the lower classes are included.

While the class composition of the art public has altered, the existence of women within the art public continues. Though originally emblematic of the frivolous social function of eighteenth-century art-viewing, by mid-century women personified education. Tennyson's famous poetic duality "man for the field and woman for the hearth" and Coventry Patmore's 1854 poem *Angel in the House* advocated the pervasive theory that women's role was at home, creating a safe harbor for their husbands, who journeyed out into the dangerous public world every day.²⁵ From Frederick Goodall's *A Letter from Papa* (1855, Tunbridge Wells Museum), in which a mother reads to her children a letter from their father on the Crimean front, to George Elgar Hicks's *New Hopes* (1870, location unknown), of a new mother admiring her sleeping babe, numerous Victorian genre paintings celebrate the joys of domestic life. On the contrary, scenes of danger to women and children, including Sir Joseph Noel Paton's *In Memoriam* (1858, Private Collection), of women and children caught during the massacre at Cawnpore, evoked strong emotional responses.²⁶ The image of a mother and her children became

²⁴ Cole, 2 :196.

²⁵ Tennyson's *The Princess* continues: "Man for the Sword, and for the needle she;/Man with the head, and woman with the heart;/Man to command, and woman to obey/All else confusion." Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Princess," 5:437-441. Also see Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1856).

²⁶ Indeed, so upsetting was Paton's painting of Sepoy mutineers advancing on a helpless group of women and children that he ahistorically replaced the Sepoys with Highland soldiers to the rescue.

commonplace in Victorian genre scenes, where they are stock types in the urban scenes of Frith and his colleagues. Indeed, the presence of children in such images identifies the woman as “mother,” thereby defining her role in Victorian society. That domestic role included the education of young children. In such paintings as Charles West Cope’s *A Life Well Spent* (1862, Private Collection), depicting a mother providing lessons to her children, and Jane Maria Bowkett’s *Preparing Tea* (fl. 1860-1885, painting destroyed), in which a mother and her two daughters busily prepare their home for the arrival of the father, the mother’s role in instructing her children is emphasized.

In 1855, Charles Compton painted his small *Study in the National Gallery* (figure 37; National Gallery Archives), a depiction of a woman and two children examining Francesco Francia’s *Pieta*, which had been purchased in 1841. The woman and girl attend to the painting itself, staring intently at the representation of Mary and Christ, who is only partially visible, an ode to maternal love and devotion.²⁷ The young boy, who seems to be looking at another painting not visible in Compton’s work, holds the catalogue, with its title only partly visible. The appearance of a young woman with children reiterates these themes of instruction and education. Her identity as their mother, however, is questionable, as she is perhaps too young and also wears her hair down in ringlets, not up in the traditional sign of adulthood and marriage. However, if she were an older sister, her role as educator would be the same as her mother’s. Indeed, she stands before a painting of the *Pieta*, learning the same lessons in the role of women

²⁷ The identification of the woman as the mother of the two children is emphasized by the appearance of the Francia painting and its themes of maternal devotion. Though the young woman seems perhaps too young to be the mother of these children, such young mothers appear repeatedly in genre paintings of this period. She is clearly not the governess, evidenced by both her clothing as well as her strong physical resemblance to both children. Similarly scholars often debate the relationship of the woman and boy in Emily Mary Osborne’s *Nameless and Friendless* (1857, Private Collection).

as mothers as the little girl beside her. Significantly, the boy glances up at a different, unseen picture, as the lessons of motherhood do not apply to him. He also holds the catalogue, the official tool of learning in the museum containing dates and historical information, while the woman and girl utilize no such tools but their emotions in examining the works of art. Together, the attention to looking, the inclusion of children, and the appearance of the catalogue establish one of the themes of this painting as education.

At approximately the same time, Aeron Hoven painted *A Room Hanging with British Pictures* (figure 38; National Gallery Archives). Because of the inclusion of Turner's *Dido Building Carthage* and *Ulysses Deriding Polyphemos*, both part of Turner Bequest, the group of paintings given to the nation upon the artist's death, this painting is dated after 1856. The activities of the visitors are carefully delineated: a seated woman gestures to another as if she was reading from the catalogue she holds; the child beside her plays with the fringe on her shawl, identifying the woman as her mother; another woman studies the details of Turner's paintings through an eyeglass; a gentleman turns from the paintings to read his catalogue; a woman looks up from her catalogue and out at the viewer. From looking to reading to discussing, a path of educational activity is drawn across the canvas.

The prevalence of the catalogue in both Compton's and Hoven's paintings emphasizes the growing importance of the learning process within art institutions. Originally, eighteenth-century exhibitions at the Royal Academy merely had a list of artists and titles keyed to numbers on the paintings which were arranged frame-to-frame to best utilize space. These lists contained little information about the artist or the subject

of the painting, though sometimes short literary quotes were included as epigraphs. However, following the ideas of Dr. Gustav Waagen, the director of the Berlin Museum, who testified in front of Parliament and also authored three books on art in English collections, catalogues soon began to contain more explanatory information. Seeing the importance of such catalogues, not only did museums publish guides to their exhibitions but private publishers issued unofficial catalogues in competition for the visitor's shilling. Thus, by mid-century, a variety of catalogues, from short lists to illustrated, explanatory tomes could be purchased for the Royal Academy and National Gallery. The daily diary of R. N. Wornum, Keeper of the National Gallery between 1854-1877, indicates his dedication to authorizing new and more complete catalogues, including penny, fourpenny, and shilling versions. Indeed, his obituary in the *St. James Gazette* lauded his achievements:

During the lifetime of the late Mr. Wornum the English National Gallery distanced all its rivals in one minor but most important particular: it issued a more complete, a more readable, and comparatively a cheaper catalogue than any similar institution in Europe. For a shilling the visitor could obtain a beautifully printed and conveniently arranged pamphlet, which combined what in effect an abridged history of all the foreign schools of painting with an exhaustive account of all the works contained in the Gallery and their antecedents.²⁸

Anecdotal evidence indicates that the lower classes tended to purchase the more expensive catalogues, perhaps to receive the most educational benefit in keeping with the

²⁸ R. N. Wornum diaries, National Gallery Archives.

rhetoric of self-improvement and rational recreation. Indeed, it was commonly believed that catalogues would benefit the visitors even after the exhibition by reminding them of what they had seen, and, it was to be hoped, learned.²⁹ Not only did catalogues increase in importance, the hanging of the paintings, previously guided by size and complementary subject matter, came under scrutiny for its educational efficacy. After much debate in the early 1850s, the hangings at the National Gallery were arranged by national school to create a chronological survey of the history of art which would help educate the audience in the progression of art and the traits of the various national schools. However, educational offerings such as tours and lectures did not become accepted techniques until well after the turn of the twentieth century. Even explanatory labels were slow in appearing.

Of course, art and education in nineteenth-century England cannot be discussed together without reference to that "eminent Victorian," John Ruskin. While art education, the means by which both artists and artisans received training in the elements of design, occupied much of Ruskin's writings and lectures, he also spoke about general education, particularly the benefits of art for the public. In his appendix to *Stones of Venice*, Ruskin defined education as "leading human souls to what is best and making what is best out of them," while contrasting moral with intellectual education, or education with erudition.³⁰ Continuing, Ruskin asserts that "in the education of either the lower or upper classes, it matters not the least how much or how little they know,

²⁹ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1852, 561.

³⁰ John Ruskin, "Modern Education," *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols., ed. Alexander Wedderburn and E.T. Cook (London: G. Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903-12), 11:261.

provided they know just what will fit them to do their work, and to be happy in it.”³¹

Therefore, all classes were worthy of receiving instruction, as Ruskin himself embodied through his teaching at the Working Men’s College in London. It is in the three-volume *Stones of Venice* (1851-53) that Ruskin explicates his theories regarding the importance of art in society. Contrasting the Greek to the Gothic, Ruskin asserts the moral influence of the arts—both in their creation and consumption—on society. Art which is true to nature embodies the divine. By viewing or creating such art, people connect with divine, moral truths. Therefore, art is a moral obligation necessary for the health of society. Gothic art, then, with its asymmetrical and imaginative artistic designs, attests to the freedom and creativity of its creators while also constructing a society more in touch with the divine, Ruskin’s own goal for Victorian society.³² Ruskin’s theories on the nature of art dominated Victorian cultural criticism and colored the layperson’s understanding of art. Compton’s and Hoven’s paintings make visible Ruskin’s beliefs of the importance of looking at art; it is no coincidence that Hoven places his figures before a painting by Turner, whom Ruskin championed above all others.

Both Compton’s and Hoven’s paintings also point to the rising middle-class dedication to the cult of leisure. With the rise in prosperity associated with the 1850s and 1860s, in stark contrast to the “hungry forties,” the middle classes could participate in a widening variety of recreational activities, from visits to art museums to the proverbial seaside holiday. The ability to participate in such leisure activities became a sign of the

³¹ Ibid., 11:262. He concludes “the main thing to be understood is, that a man is not educated, in any sense whatsoever, because he can read Latin, or write English, or can behave well in a drawing-room; but that he is only educated if he is happy, busy, beneficent, and effective in the world; that millions of peasants are therefore at this moment better educated than most of those who call themselves gentlemen; and that the means taken to ‘educate’ the lower classes in any other sense may very often be productive of a precisely opposite result (263).”

³² John Ruskin, “Stones of Venice,” *Works of John Ruskin*, 10:189-90.

middle classes, differentiating them from the lower classes, who still worked a six-day week. Women constituted a significant portion of this leisured audience who consumed the sights of the city. Stores, parks, the theater, and the museum were acceptable sites of female leisure. Both Compton and Hoven's paintings present the National Gallery as a safe, comfortable, and appropriate place for women to visit, either alone or accompanied. The National Gallery, the annual Royal Academy exhibition, and other art institutions became sites of leisure, part of the ritual of the middle classes at play, and were repeatedly represented in periodicals.

In his *Punch* cartoon, "Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe in 1849: Ye Exhybityon at Ye Royal Academy" (figure 39), Richard Doyle focuses upon the rational recreation of Londoners.³³ A room dominated by portraits and a large painting of a lion is filled with people. At first glance, the crowd seems undifferentiated. However, closer inspection, encouraged by the intimate hand-held nature of the magazine, reveals numerous different types identifiable by their costume and physiognomy. In the foreground alone, from left to right, there are three sophisticated swells recognizable by their cravats, facial hair, and long faces; two bourgeois men, one with a noticeable paunch; a sturdy woman of the lower middle classes, judging by her unsophisticated dress and bonnet, seated on a bench next to a long-legged gentleman; an aristocratic-looking couple; two middle class women, one of whom as mistress of her own house wears a chatelaine; and finally a short and round man with a tall, thin friend. Similar figures—young, middle-aged, elderly, round, thin, bourgeois, "swells," maybe even an

³³ Richard Doyle, "Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe in 1849: Ye Exhybityon at Ye Royal Academy," *Punch* 16 (May 26, 1849): 216.

aristocrat or two—progress through the galleries, conversing, studying their catalogues, and looking at the paintings.

Doyle's aim here, as in other cartoons in the series "Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe," of which this is number eleven, is to portray the English people at play. The accompanying article, "Mr. Pips His Diary," recounts the visit to the Royal Academy, and describes the different pictures he and his wife saw in much the same way that contemporary reviews, appearing in *Punch* and other periodicals, outlined exhibitions for their readers.³⁴ Doyle positions the Royal Academy as just one stop on the Pips' tour of national sites in London, which also included the changing of the Grenadier Guards, Westminster Cathedral, and the Zoological Gardens. Doyle's series illustrates the new leisure class at play, embodied by the perfectly middle class Mr. and Mrs. Pips, who, like their compatriots, participate in the increasingly popular recreation of tourism.

Because Doyle clearly locates the Royal Academy as a tourist site, it is useful to consider the theories of the sociology of tourism in relationship to the representation of the art public. As John Urry postulates in *The Tourist Gaze*, tourism requires modes of behavior different from ordinary life, similar to the travels of religious pilgrims.³⁵ As such, tourists must learn how to behave, for which they usually turn to the media for constructions of appropriate behavior. In other words, tourists learn how to be tourists by examining representations of tourism. Doyle's cartoon certainly functions in this capacity, not only describing which sites tourists must visit as a marker of their status but

³⁴ "Mr. Pips" makes the usual comment that there are many works of art but none of any special genius, as artists are not encouraged by either the Royal Academy or the government

³⁵ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990), 5. Bourdieu also touches upon the relationship of museums and religious institutions: "behind the obligatory exaltation of the austere severity of the museum and the 'meditation' it encourages, there are sometimes glimpses of the true nature of the visit". Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 273.

also how to behave at the site. At the Royal Academy, and other art institutions, this behavior includes purchasing and perusing a catalogue, discussing the works of art, and looking closely at them. This function of the cartoon is especially important given the newness of the public art institution in English society and the general public's unfamiliarity with the mode of behavior expected.

Acknowledging that such taste as the Pips' is generally acquired and not inherited by the rising middle classes, *Punch* repeatedly includes features to educate them.³⁶ The annual serial reviews of the Royal Academy exhibition and other important shows provide readers with proper, insightful observations that they can repeat to their companions, who will then recognize such astute remarks as tasteful because they themselves have been taught the code. Though Bourdieu asserts that "a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded," the articles of *Punch* demonstrate that one can acquire the code in order to feign cultural capital, a strategy which ensured the popularity and importance of the magazine.³⁷

Similarly, hundreds of wood engravings, often accompanying reviews of exhibitions in such periodicals as the *Illustrated London News* and the *Art Journal*, depict the art public taking its leisure in galleries and exhibition halls. These images not only describe the art public but also prescribe such rational recreation as the appropriate pursuit of the middle classes who read the papers. In an image from the *Illustrated London News* of 1858, Queen Victoria explores the recent Royal Academy exhibition,

³⁶ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 80.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

accompanied by Prince Albert (figure 40). Here, they both admire Frith's *Derby Day*, protected by its impressive rail, a painting she would later purchase. Though this illustration depicts the newsworthy activities of the Queen, it resembles many of the general reportage images of the period. The people in "The Xanthian Room Just Opened at the British Museum," a wood engraving from 1848, soberly contemplate the antiquities before them (figure 41). Among their numbers is a soldier and his family. Such images portray stock characters—the mother and child, young couples, single clerks—engaged in diverse gallery activities. Unlike eighteenth-century depictions which focused on socializing and the upper classes, these images encourage looking and discussing—the process of learning—in the galleries, while advocating art-viewing as one of the required leisure activities of the genteel classes.

At mid-century, as the middle classes increased in wealth and influence and the lower middle classes established themselves as separate from the working classes, such depictions defined the identity of the middle classes. Education, often of the pulled-up-by-your-bootstraps variety advocated by Samuel Smiles, existed as one of the hallmarks of the middle classes, who sent their children to school in an effort to attest to their status. Likewise, the possession of leisure demarcated the genteel classes from those who worked six-day weeks. Participation in art-viewing, then, a combination of education and leisure, distinguished the haves from the have nots. The inclusion of women within the art public—women fulfilling the prescribed role of mother and pursuing rational recreation—not only identified the visitors as genteel but located the museum within acceptable middle-class society. Even the mixing of the classes, meaning the inclusion of the lower middle classes, indicates the middle-class perception of philanthropy and its

dedication to Utilitarian and Evangelical goals. Thus, the representation of the art public in periodical illustrations, as well as in other media such as paintings and cartoons, exists not primarily as descriptions of the actual art public, but as prescriptions to the middle classes on how to establish their class identity through the consumption of culture and the performance of leisure.

Public Opinion³⁸

George Bernard O'Neill's painting *Public Opinion* (figure 1) displays the kinds of crowds who would have admired this work when it was on view at the annual Royal Academy exhibition of 1863. At least twenty people stand before the "picture of the year," identifiable by the red rail which protects the painting from the crush of the crowd. In the crowd are men and women, the young and the elderly, the upper, middle, and lower classes, engaged in a variety of activities. *Public Opinion* captures a sense of this art-viewing mania. A diverse group of at least twenty members directs its attention towards this favored picture. The group is not only diverse because of the variety of activities occurring—reading, writing, talking, contemplating, and, of course, looking—but its members also differ in age and social class. Both the young and the elderly are present in this audience, as are the upper and lower classes. In the center of the composition appears a respectable elderly couple, standing directly in front of the work and studying it without the aid of a catalogue. His fur-collared coat and top hat and her lace-covered bonnet attest to their comfortably affluent status, while their highlighted position in both the center of the canvas and directly in front of the painting reinforces

³⁸ An early version of this section was given at the 2002 Frick Symposium under the title of "*Public Opinion: Art, Museums and the Public in Victorian England.*"

their importance. That neither holds a catalogue hints at their ability to understand the subject of a painting and perhaps even recognize the hand of the artist without aid, indicating their familiarity with art. They are surrounded by a ring of similarly though not as well-dressed people, who consult their catalogues and admire the painting. On the outer ring of this group, visibly peeking over the shoulders of the other visitors, are four men in bowler hats, one of the signifiers of the working classes. While they are present in the museum, they are clearly excluded from the inner circle of visitors; they are marginalized members if not quite outsiders in this realm of culture. This concentric arrangement of the classes of the art public graphically serves to define for whom the museum functioned.

Victorians viewing O'Neill's painting would have recognized these class details. Hundreds of illustrated treatises aimed at a lay audience appeared in the nineteenth-century expounding the details of physiognomic theories, which equated physical features with character. Indeed, each class had its generic facial features: the protruding features of the lower classes, the round faces of the bourgeoisie, the overly angular features of the aesthete, and the refined features of the aristocracy. The upper class—considered superior to all other classes—possessed the most perfect features. These ideas persisted throughout the nineteenth century so that even as late as 1875, illustrations contrasting middle class and lower class families based on facial features can be found. Physiognomic theory allowed individuals to type or assign a person to a generalized category, thereby allowing urban dwellers to understand, organize, and control their environment. Indeed, reading faces in a crowd was not only a popular pastime on London streets but in art galleries as well. Beginning with William Hogarth, artists

frequently used these facial codes to augment the narrative of their representations. Their audiences utilized their knowledge of physiognomy to decode the narrative of the image.³⁹ The identification of the different types was part of the pleasure of the viewing. In O'Neill's diverse crowd, they would have seen themselves reflected, reaffirming the importance and benefits of their art-viewing activity.

In O'Neill's painting, the crowd attends closely to the painting before it. The presence of children, the future of the nation, emphasizes this idea of education. Similarly, the ubiquitous catalogue references the discussion of education in the galleries. A young man directs his widowed mother's attention to the picture of the year, while a young mother bends down to help her son examine the contents of the catalogue. Couples read, look, converse. In addition to the theme of education, the museum as a site of middle-class leisure is assured. All of the members of the art public enact this ritual of rational recreation, some with more cultural capital than others. On the margins stand the members of the lower classes, though not of the lowest. The Royal Academy was not open on Sundays and, while it was open in the evening—when six-day-per-week workers could visit—this is not a gaslit scene. The young men in bowler hats are therefore most likely clerks or other members of the lower middle classes who could afford the shilling entrance fee and thereby enjoy their half-holidays on Saturday afternoons in imitating the leisure activities of their social superiors.

As O'Neill's title suggests, the painting addresses the public opinion on art. With the prevalence of guides and reviews, members of the art public often merely followed what critics declared popular, as seen in Keene's *Punch* cartoon, "Unprejudiced!" (figure

³⁹ For a discussion of physiognomy and the reading of pictorial narrative, see Cowling.

42) of 1871.⁴⁰ Within the annual Royal Academy exhibition crowded with well-dressed men and women holding the ubiquitous catalogues, a swell, fashionably attired in plaid pants, long coat, and even longer mustache, his prince-nez held up to his eye, catalogue in hand, asks, “Haw! ‘ve you any idea-w what fellow’s pictu’ars we’re to admi-are this ye-ar!!!?” His exaggerated upper-class dialect, in addition to his extravagant attire, mark him as a man concerned with fashion and public opinion. Though attempting to perform the part of art connoisseur, the swell only pretends to appreciate the year’s crop of paintings and relies on others to tell him what he should admire. Indeed, audiences often relied on the critics of the art press to inform them of the notable pictures and suggest talking points for discussing particular works. The power of these critics who directed public opinion was much derided at the time. *Punch*, of course, caricatured the art critic. In Keene’s “Here Be Truths!” (figure 43) of 1872, an art critic stands before a framed image, declaring, “ ‘Great want ‘taste in the choice ‘f Shubject!—Fit only for a place in Tap-Room of Public-‘Ouse!!’”⁴¹ The bewhiskered and smiling gentleman stands before a mirror, which reflects his drunk and hiccupping self. Though O’Neill includes a critic in *Public Opinion*, the hatless, gray-haired gentleman with pad and pencil standing beside the picture of the year, his treatment of the man’s physiognomy does not indicate ridicule. The *Times*, recognizing his Hogarthian interest in urban types, criticized O’Neill for his

⁴⁰ Charles Keene, “Unprejudiced!” *Punch* 60 (May 13, 1871): 188.

⁴¹ This scene takes place in an art gallery, as the legend notes that the critic stands in the “lobby of the Sale-Room.” The mirror retains a tag from its previous sale, just as works of art in galleries and the R. A. were often tagged for identification in the accompanying catalogue. Though this is not the Royal Academy exhibition, the cartoon appears at the time of the R. A. show and clearly demonstrates *Punch*’s opinion of the reliability and judgment of art critics. Of course, this is also a jibe at the R. A., which was seen as little more than a sale room itself. Charles Keene, “Here Be Truths,” *Punch* 62 (May 18, 1872): 201.

unwillingness to “look down upon the weaknesses he is satirizing.”⁴² The conservative critic could not understand O’Neill’s acceptance of popular opinion, which many viewed as ruining British art. But O’Neill is painting for his audience, the market of the Royal Academy and popular opinion, and his painting is exactly the kind of crowd scene that audiences preferred—contemporary urban images of recreation complete with several types. His painting recognizes, celebrates, even vies for public opinion, instead of condemning it.

The value of public opinion, and by extension, the idea of democracy itself, was much debated in mid-century, most famously in Mathew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*, published in 1869. Arnold defined the public opinion of the middle classes as “philistine,” while describing the lower classes as “barbarians.”⁴³ Written in response to the Hyde Park Riots for voting rights in 1866, the series of essays comprising the book delineates what he identifies as the three classes—barbarians, philistines, and populace—and analyzes their faults in relationship to culture: “the Barbarian likes honours and consideration; his more relaxed self, field-sports and pleasure. The graver self of one kind of Philistine likes fanaticism, business, and money-making; his more relaxed self, comfort and tea-meetings. . . . The sterner self of the Populace likes bawling, hustling, and smashing; the lighter self, beer.”⁴⁴ Such preferences, however, are not in keeping

⁴² *Times*, May 21, 1863, 13.

⁴³ Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*. In several writings, from “Democracy” to *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold examined the middle class as the future of British society, despite the derogatory appellation “Philistine.” Before they could transform society, Arnold argued the middle class itself had to be changed; his theories postulate how criticism of art can lead to the transformation of culture. For a discussion of Arnold’s educational theories, see Peter Smith and Geoffrey Summerfield, *Mathew Arnold and the Education of the New Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

⁴⁴ Arnold, 107.

with culture—"the disinterested and active use of reading, reflection, and observation, in the endeavour to know the best that can be known"—which is vital to society's keeping anarchy at bay.⁴⁵ Victorian society, for Arnold, is treading a dangerous path to destruction.

Even John Stuart Mill, an advocate of women and the working classes, detected difficulties within the conformist culture of the middle classes. In *On Liberty*, in 1859, Mill writes "at present, individuals are lost in the crowd."⁴⁶ Such a crowd endeavored "to make everyone conform to the approved standard."⁴⁷ But as Mill argued, "to conform to custom, merely as custom, does not educate or develop in him any of the qualities which are the distinctive endowment of a human being."⁴⁸ Only through the repeated exercise of the mental and moral muscles can a person's own reason, feelings, and character be strengthened. Like Arnold, though for opposite reasons, Mill objects to the blind following of public opinion. Indeed, Mill celebrates the resistance of the "tyranny of opinion," stating "it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric."⁴⁹

The most intriguing vignette of O'Neill's painting exists in the right background: a man in a bowler hat scowls menacingly at the top-hatted gentleman next to him. No clue is given as to the origin of this frown, except perhaps the working-class man's position wedged into the corner. It is a curious element of tension between two men of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 164.

⁴⁶ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, In Focus*, eds. John Gray and G.W. Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 81.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 85.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 74.

obviously different class. Indeed, the depiction of the working-class man is suspicious—could he have come to the exhibition with goals more mercenary than self-improvement? Unlike others in the painting, he turns away from the art. While the painting shows a congenial group brought together in the appreciation of art, the precise goal of the rhetoric expounded on the use of the art museum, this small scene alludes to the conflicts about the museum and its intended audience.

Like O'Neill, several writers explored the identities and activities of the art public at mid-century. William Makepeace Thackeray explores the more practical aspects of art viewing, while exploring the larger questions of morality and manner among the middle-classes. Like the genre painting of O'Neill and *Punch* cartoons, Thackeray, who wrote for *Punch* and himself had early desired a career as a painter, explores the machinations of the art world and its audiences in *The Newcomes*, the serialization of which began in 1853. Young Clive Newcome, the protagonist of this generational epic, also desires to be a painter, taking classes at the fictional Gandish's Academy and touring the Continent for exposure to the history of art. Artistic processes, exhibitions, and discussions of art permeate the novel, providing a setting familiar to mid-Victorians. Indeed, though writing in the 1850s, Thackeray has set his novel in the 1830s and 1840s and assumes his audience's familiarity with the history and issues of recent British art, without which parts of the novel would be incomprehensible. Indeed, Clive's Uncle, the Colonel, whose taste centers on the Old Masters, finds

In the midst of the artists and their talk [he] was equally in the dark. They assaulted this academician and that; laughed at Mr. Haydon, or sneered at Mr. Eastlake, or the contrary—deified Mr. Turner on one side of the table,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 83.

and on the other scorned him as a madman—nor could Newcome comprehend a word of their jargon. . . . What was all this rapture about a snuffy brown picture called Titian; this delight in three flabby nymphs by Rubens, and so forth? As for the vaunted Antique, and the Elgin marbles—it might be that that battered torso was a miracle, and that broken-nosed bust a perfect beauty. He tried and tried to see that they were. He went privily and worked at the National Gallery with a catalogue; and passed hours in the [British] Museum before the ancient statues, desperately praying to comprehend them and puzzled before them, as he remembered he was puzzled before the Greek rudiments, as a child, when he cried over *ὁ καὶ ἡ ἀληθὴς καὶ τὸ ἀληθές*.⁵⁰

A reader of Thackeray unfamiliar with these references to Haydon and Turner would be as lost as the Colonel. Thackeray's description of the Colonel wandering the museums, catalogue in hand, draws an immediate visual image, helped by the prevalence of cartoons and paintings of similar events, as well as the commonality of the exhibition-viewing experience.

In its serialized form, *The Newcomes* was illustrated by Richard Doyle, Thackeray's *Punch* colleague. Among other vignettes of Clive Newcombe's art studies, the Colonel's visit to the National Gallery is represented in "A Student of the Old Masters" (figure 44). The Colonel, respectable in his top hat, sits calmly in a chair facing a painting outside of the illustration. Doyle focuses on the contemplative pose of the figure. Around him, less clearly delineated, swarm the usual and familiar crowds of the

⁵⁰ William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Newcomes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 262.

museum—men lean forwards to discuss a painting, two women with a catalogue in hand stare around them, while a woman leans towards a child. Other figures include a pudgy bowler-hatted man, a military figure, and other top-hatted gentlemen. Doyle's image draws upon the visual tradition of the art public that clearly informs Thackeray's own descriptions.

Thackeray presents another view of an exhibition, "when of course everybody went to visit the Water-colour Exhibitions."⁵¹ Ethel Newcome attends with her grandmother and together they discuss several works—"What splendid colour; what a romantic gloom; what a flowing pencil and dexterous hand!"⁵² Revealing the conversation of Ethel and her grandmother, Thackeray captures a common experience in art exhibitions, the discussions between visitors, so commonly depicted in cartoons and paintings. Such conversation was central to the art-viewing experience and Thackeray indicates that "Ethel talked about pictures the whole evening, and would talk of nothing else."⁵³

As early as the turn of the nineteenth century, in the autobiographical *Prelude*, written between 1799 and 1805, William Wordsworth poeticized the museum experience:

Carelessly I roamed
As through a wide museum from whose stores
A casual rarity is singled out
And has its brief perusal, then gives way

⁵¹ Thackeray, 361.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 362.

To others, all supplanted in their turn;
 Till'mid this crowded neighborhood of things
 That are by nature most unneighborly,
 The head turns round and cannot right itself;
 And though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.⁵⁴

Though a simile for his own nostalgic recollections, Wordsworth's characterization of the museum captures the relatively new experience of visiting a public exhibition—the dense collection of unrelated things, the unfocused meandering from object to object, the “museum fatigue” produced by seeing too much at once, and the lingering effect of the visit long after departure.⁵⁵

The art museum as a setting appears not only in Wordsworth and Thackeray. Charlotte Brontë in *Villette* and Wilkie Collins in *Heart and Science*, among numerous other writers, utilize art museums as settings for narrative and thematic development. Based on Brontë's experiences as a student in Brussels, *Villette*, first published in 1853, traces the career of Lucy Snowe, who progresses from governess to schoolteacher and finally to proprietor of her own establishment. A procession of instructional moments

⁵⁴ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind, An Autobiographical Poem*, 3.651-668.

⁵⁵ Richard Altick credits Wordsworth with the first description of “museum fatigue.” Altick, *Shows of London*, 33. Wordsworth also penned several ekphrastic poems not situated in public museums, including “Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont” (1806) and “Upon the Sight of a Beautiful Picture, Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont” (1811).

occurs throughout the novel, including Lucy's visitation to the art gallery in Villette in the chapter entitled "Cleopatra."⁵⁶ In contrast to Thackeray's Ethel Newcome, Lucy prefers visiting art museums alone, stating "In company, a wretched idiosyncrasy forbade me to see much or to feel anything."⁵⁷ She was happier "not always in admiring, but in examining, questioning, and forming conclusions," reporting, like Wordsworth, "a wonderful sense of fatigue resulted from these conscientious efforts."⁵⁸ Lucy continues to report her art-visiting habits, unafraid to criticize the works before her, even those "certain *chef-d'oeuvres* bearing great names."⁵⁹ Studying a painting of a large woman, who despite an "abundance of material—seven-and-twenty yards, I should say, of drapery . . . managed to make inefficient raiment," Lucy consults the omnipresent catalogue to discover the woman was Cleopatra. Approached by an acquaintance, Lucy is chastised for her viewing choice—"how dare you, a young person, sit coolly down, with the self-possession of a *garçon*, and look at *that* picture?"—and directed to more chaste views of a girl coming out of church, the Virgin Mary, a young mother, and a view with two women, which she believes are "as bad in their way as the indolent gypsy-giantess, the Cleopatra, in hers."⁶⁰ Her companion believes the Cleopatra is superb, "but

⁵⁶ Joseph Litvak. "Charlotte Brontë and the Scene of Instruction: Authority and Subversion in *Villette*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 42 (March 1988): 482.

⁵⁷ Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*, in *The Complete Works of Charlotte Brontë and Her Sisters*, 6 vols. (London: Gresham Publishing Co., n.d.), 181

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

someone whom I wouldn't want, either for a wife or for a daughter or for a sister."⁶¹ The opposition of Cleopatra and "the pictures of a woman's life" at either end of the continuum of subjects fit for the female gaze references contemporary concerns with such sculptures as Hiram Powers's nude *Greek Slave*, on view at the Crystal Palace of 1851 with accompanying explanatory, Christian text on purity.

In Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science*, published in 1883, two Italian women consider visiting various sites in London. Reading in the omnipresent catalogue—found on a table in a waiting room at the train station!—the women decide that the fifteen hundred paintings will lead to aching heads and feet, the recurrent Wordsworthian museum fatigue. Looking through an almanac, they discuss

Bethnal Green; Indian Museum; College of Surgeons; Practical Geology; South Kensington; Patent Museum—all unknown to Teresa. 'The saints preserve us! What headaches and footaches in all these, if they are as big as that other one!'⁶²

Instead they decide to visit the eccentric but small museum of Sir John Soane. However, they never arrive at the Soane, witnessing the horrible death of a dog, and deciding they "hardly feel equal to looking at curiosities."⁶³ Collins finishes the chapter by acknowledging that the female protagonist, in never arriving at the museum, had missed

⁶¹ "mais une personne dont je ne voudrais ni pour femme, ni pour fille, ni pour soeur." Ibid., 187. Thanks to Patricia Mainardi for the translation from the French.

⁶² Wilkie Collins, *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time*, ed. Steve Farmer (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1996), 56.

⁶³ Ibid., 57.

meeting her future husband there, turning a common trope of visiting the museum on its head.⁶⁴

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet, repeatedly explored the intersection of art and text in his works. He wrote poetry inspired by works of art, both others and his own, including Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks*, and his own *Astarte Syriaca*, *Lilith*, *Sibylla Palmifera*, and *Blessed Damozel*. While most of these poems follow traditional ekphrastic principles, the "Burden of Nineveh" revives themes first explored by Keats and Shelley while also considering the modern museum visitor. The poem, revised over several years between 1856 and 1870, records the arrival of two sculptures of winged bulls at the British Museum in 1852.⁶⁵ Excavated from Nineveh by

⁶⁴ Of course, they meet and, after a variety of challenging circumstances, marry. Socializing in the museum often involved maneuvers for marriage. Ethel, in *The Newcomes*, while attending the Water-Colour Exhibition where sold paintings were demarcated with stickers, notes: "We young ladies in the world, when we are exhibiting, ought to have little green tickets pinned on our backs, with 'Sold' written on them; it would prevent trouble and any future haggling, you know. Then at the end of the season the owner would come to carry us home (Thackeray, 361)." While Thackeray is more interested in the commodification of art and women, not the societal definition of the exhibition, his humor about the marriage market is prescient. Repeatedly in the cartoons of *Punch*, particularly in the last quarter of the century, the connection of art and marriage arises. The humor often derives from the difficulty of the marriage market in Victorian Britain and the redundancy of women. It was proverbial that mothers were always trying to force their unmarried daughters on unsuspecting young men. In "An Enthusiastic Patron of Art" by George du Maurier, a young swell, complete with prince-nez, meets a woman accompanied by three young, presumably unmarried, women. "Captain Ragge," who has a "couple of hundred pounds to spend," accepts the lady's offer to choose a painting for him. Instead of accompanying them inside, however, he retreats, noting "it's hardly necessary for me to go up." Not only does the swell's retreat testify to his complete indifference to art, which he valued by the pound and not by the picture, it indicates his reluctance to become socially or romantically involved with the three young women. In "Polite Fictions," a woman with three adult daughters greets a woman with an adult son, as they both maliciously declare how young they were when they were married. Similarly, another woman with three "interesting" daughters greets a gentleman "who likes all interesting Daughters" and exchanges pleasantries within a gallery, in "A Fix." See George du Maurier, "An Enthusiastic Patron of Art," *Punch* 58 (May 14, 1870): 192; "Polite Fictions," *Punch* 74 (May 18, 1878): 222; "A Fix," *Punch* 64 (June 21, 1873): 253. See also "Caution," *Punch* 42 (May 31, 1862): 220; and "More Lost Illusions," *Punch* 83 (Nov. 11, 1882): 222.

⁶⁵ For a discussion of the poem, see Black, "Works on the Walls," 14-17; Eric Gidal, *Poetic Exhibitions: Romantic Aesthetics and the Pleasures of the British Museum* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001), 213-222.

Sir Austen Henry Layard, the Assyrian antiquities caused a stir when they were installed in the museum. Rossetti begins by describing his own activities at the museum:

In our Museum galleries
 To-day I lingered o'er the prize
 Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes—
 Her Art for ever in fresh wise
 From hour to hour rejoicing me.
 Sighing I turned at last to win
 Once more the London dirt and din;
 And as I made the swing-door spin
 And issued, they were hoisting in
 A winged beast from Nineveh.⁶⁶

Recalling Byron's *Curse of Minerva*, Rossetti's verses on the arrival of the winged bull in London focus on the appropriation of one culture by another. In a land where "brown maidens sing" and rites and prayers are preformed, the bull "stood interr'd/For ages, till an English word/Broke silence first at Nineveh."⁶⁷ Transported from sculptured courts where "cymbals clashed, chariots shook" and "Sennacherib has knelt," the bull would now be housed "within this hall/Where the blank windows blind the wall/From pedestal to pedestal,/The kind of light shall on thee fall/Which London takes the day to be."⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Burden of Nineveh," 1-10.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 28-30.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 70-74.

Rossetti bemoans this new location, which eschews the origins and the context of the sculpture, now housed with other antiquities—

but were not some
 of these thine own ‘antiquity?’
 And now,--they and their gods and thou
 all relics here together,--now
 Whose profit? whether bull or cow,
 Isis or Ibis, who or how,
 whether of Thebes or Nineveh?⁶⁹

As Rossetti notes, school groups will take field trips and will learn to memorize facts about the art on view—“Rome,--Babylon and Nineveh”—without truly understanding. In the end, however, Rossetti imagines that the winged god will fly again, worshipped by a new culture, concluding “O Nineveh, was this thy God--/*Thine also*, mighty Nineveh? [*italics mine*].”⁷⁰

In lines excised from the final, 1870 version of the poem, Rossetti describes at greater length the British audience that arrives to admire the statues:

Here cold-pinch’d clerks on yellow days
 Shall stop and peer; and in sun-haze
 Small clergy crimp their eyes to gaze;
 And misses titter in their stays,
 Just fresh from “Layard’s Nineveh.”

⁶⁹ Ibid., 104-110.

⁷⁰ Rossetti, 199-200.

Here, while Antique-students lunch,
 Shall Art be slang'd o'er cheese and hunch,
 Whether the great R. A.'s a bunch
 Of gods or dogs, and whether the Punch
 Is right about the P. R. B.⁷¹

Such a catalogue of the visitors to the British Museum recalls both the cartoons and paintings of diverse crowds at mid-century, while Rossetti's superior tone recalls O'Neill's working-class men shoved into a corner. "Cold-pinch'd clerks" and crimping clergy, as well as students lunching in the galleries and debating the qualities of their teachers read like testimony before the Select Committees of the late 1840s and early 1850s, which catalogued the poor behavior of the art public. In the absence of this passage, originally located between the discussion of the London light and the school groups, the focus on the audience of the museum decreases in favor of more nostalgic ruminations, in keeping with the decreased interest in the diversity of the art public in 1870.

Looking In From the Outside: The Sunday Question, Class, and the Art Museum

While much of the official rhetoric surrounding public art institutions favored the presence of the working classes in the galleries, there was much opposition to the idea and several tactics to limit access. While the National Gallery offered free admission, as befitted a public institution, its hours of operation limited its audience to those possessed

⁷¹ As quoted in Gidal, 222. "Layard's Nineveh" refers to the popular text published by Layard on his excavations, while the "Antique-students" are the young artists studying at the Royal Academy. The "P. R. B." is, of course, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which Rossetti was a founding member in 1848, an organization much derided in the press at its outset.

of leisure. The museum only opened its doors between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. (7 p.m. in the summer). Until 1859, Saturday—the only day many members of the working classes could attend—was also designated as a student day. Furthermore, for many years, the British Museum required potential visitors to present themselves to a clerk and then sign for admission tickets in advance of entry, an intimidating prospect. And the Royal Academy, much as it had done in the eighteenth century, required admission fees in order to keep the lower orders at bay. Only the South Kensington Museum embraced a lower middle- and working-class audience, opening its doors until 10 p.m., offering lectures, and holding Sunday hours.⁷²

In the cartoon “Façade for the British Museum” (figure 45) which appeared a few months after “Substance and Shadow” in 1843, *Punch* took issue with the restrictive admissions policies of the British Museum.⁷³ Following the Select Committee hearings of 1835-36, in which it was alleged that the British Museum existed as a public institution in name only, the museum extended its limited operating hours to include holidays so more of the public could visit. In addition to holidays such as Whitmonday and Easter Monday, the galleries were open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (until 7 p.m. in summer), with Thursdays reserved for private viewings. However, after the Select Committee hearings of 1841, the museum again considered restricting access by requiring people to sign in for admissions, despite the fact that not a single security problem had occurred in the intervening years.

⁷² Henry Cole’s dedication to museums as education institutions for the working classes, who would most benefit from instruction in design which was the focal point of South Kensington’s collections, demanded accessible hours.

⁷³ “Façade for the British Museum,” *Punch* 5 (November 11, 1843): 122.

Referencing Augustus W. N. Pugin's assertion that the plan of a building should "be characterised by an appropriate expression," Mr. Punch explains the illustration of the suggested design for the British Museum.⁷⁴ This "grand architectural allegory" presents the museum as a forbidding, walled, prison-like structure guarded by an immense figure. There is no art public visible; the four men approaching are officers of justice who seek to remove the public notice on the wall, which declares " 'the Museum is always shut when any wishes particularly to enter it'."⁷⁵ Mr. Punch declares that this notice has been exhibited by a libeller, "the malignity of whose offence is aggravated by the truth of his assertion."⁷⁶ *Punch* clearly sees the restrictive admissions of a museum belonging to the public as a crime.

The article itself comments that the wings of the new design resemble Newgate, the infamous prison in London. As the article states, this comparison is appropriate because lower class visitors, who can visit on "high-days and holydays," will be instantly reminded of the Old Bailey, the court from which many prisoners were sent to Newgate, and will remember not to "steal any of the curiosities which it contains, or to misemploy their time, when let in, by picking pockets."⁷⁷ *Punch* ironically reveals the assumption that the working classes are criminals-in-waiting who do not know how to behave in a museum, as well as viciously implicates the British Museum's admissions policies as complicit in this belief. But in its agitation to secure access for the working classes in the museum, *Punch* tacitly agrees that the working classes, while not necessarily criminal,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

are in need of the controlling discipline of culture, to borrow Foucauldian terms, which the museum offers. If anything, *Punch* does agree with the underlying motivation behind the museum's policies—that the working classes are in need of discipline—but finds that this is best served by opening the museum, not limiting access.

In an 1856 article entitled “The Working Man’s Guide to the British Museum,” *Punch* would again attack the policies of the British Museum.⁷⁸ The article begins by declaring that only people with money, i.e. those who do not work, can see the museum which is open only during the week, though it is free of charge then. When the museum is open for holidays, including Easter Monday and Whitmonday, the working classes still cannot see the works on view because of the crowds. Satirizing fears of crowds of the working classes, *Punch* continues that it is the crowds of the aristocracy, with their stifling scents of patchouli, who are to be feared. Continuing the long-held discussion of cleanliness and class, the article states: “the skin does not exhale any products the less for being washed with Rowland’s Kalydor.”

But it is the Sabbatarian closings of the museum that draw the fiercest attacks:

You might, to be sure, see it on Sundays, if you had a different sort of superior classes to legislate for you. . . . if the inspection of such objects on a Sunday were not a heinous sin, and if you were not blessed with pious and holy betters, who prevent you from committing that sin. . . . How tender your superiors are for your souls! . . . It is their determination that the working man shall never see the British Museum but on a working day . . . Therefore, again, put money in your purse, in order that you may

⁷⁸ “The Working Man’s Guide to the British Museum,” *Punch* 29 (August 18, 1856): 64.

see the British Museum before you die on a working day, or you will never see it.⁷⁹

This so-called “Sunday Question”—opening of museums on Sundays so that the working classes, who worked a six-day week, could visit cultural institutions on their one day off—existed as a debate more about class differences than one about religion or art. In “Mr. Punch on the Fine Arts,” a clerk, “who never leaves business until dark,” having inquired in the *Times* about Sunday openings of the Royal Academy, received a reply from “one of the people called Christians,” that viewing art on Sundays is immoral and something that only happens in France.⁸⁰ Mr. Punch addresses the clerk’s letter, ostensibly agreeing with the Christian:

Remember that the rational and beneficent law of the land is that you are NEVER TO ENJOY YOURSELF; that when the Saturday ends your hard week’s labours and the day of rest comes, you have no right to interpret your ideas of rest in your own way. . . . Remember your lot in life, and be resigned thereunto; no more aspiring to see pictures on Sunday, than to enjoy pine-apples and champagne on the other days of the week.⁸¹

Mr. Punch’s letter sarcastically derides the Sabbatarian objection to the opening of art institutions, declaring that they want to deny the working classes such middle class pleasures as “pine-apples and champagne.” However, this characterization belies the motivations of the Lord’s Day Rest Association and Lord’s Day Observance Society, two

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Such faux letters are generally utilized in *Punch*. There is little proof that any of the correspondence or personals included in the paper is genuine. “Mr. Punch on the Fine Arts,” *Punch* 8 (May 31, 1845): 224.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Sabbatarian organizations which ultimately objected to Sunday openings on the grounds of the unfair labor practices of a seven-day work week.⁸² Anti-Sabbatarians stressed the benefits of museum Sundays over any disadvantages, believing it would keep the people out of pubs, which were open on Sundays. As *Punch* sarcastically declared in a later article, “The Gin Palace, then rather than the Crystal Palace for the people on a Sunday!”⁸³ *Punch*’s alignment with the anti-Sabbatarians is in keeping with liberal paternalism towards the working classes popular among its middle-class readership. Clearly, the Sunday closings of art institutions are as much, if not more, about class differences than religion. While there were working-class members in both camps, the dominant tone of their arguments is a middle-class paternalistic concern for the working classes. Arguments between the two groups persisted to the end of the century. Similarly, *Punch*’s support of Sunday openings for art institutions speaks of another class difference, the liberal middle class interest in reform and philanthropy.

Questions of working class behavior are addressed in another faux letter about museum access, “Patron Saints for the Working Classes,” in which “John Adams,” a carpenter, writes to complain about the holiday crowds at the National Gallery and British Museum.⁸⁴ Though much of the letter is devoted to creating holidays for different occupations based on their traditional patron saints in order to redistribute the crowds, there is an enlightening discussion about why he wants to visit the museum:

⁸² Diana Maltz, *Lessons in Sensuous Discontent: The Aesthetic Mission to the British Working Classes, 1869-1914*. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1997. 57-66.

⁸³ “The Gin Palace,” *Punch* 23 (July 3, 1852): 11.

⁸⁴ “Patron Saints for the Working Classes.” *Punch* 18 (April 13, 1850): 147.

If it be asked what there is to interest me at either of those places, I answer, the Pictures in one, and the Statues, and Antiquities, and Stuffed Animals in the other. I spend a part of my leisure time reading, and know a little about such matters, though not so much as I could wish. When I go to look at a picture or a statue, I like to sit or stand before it in quiet and comfort, give my mind to it, and enjoy the thoughts which it conjures up.⁸⁵

Punch's rationalization of the carpenter's desire to see the museum responds directly to both Sabbatarian concerns about the behaviors of the working classes and recent Select Committee testimony that the working classes did not go to museums for the right reasons.⁸⁶ Again, *Punch* supports working class access to art institutions, arguing that they do and will benefit from such exposure. Under these pretenses, *Punch* outlines precisely the middle classes' utopian ideal of the working class—educated, quietly behaved, thoughtful. Indeed, this representation of the working classes reveals more about middle-class ideology than about any actual visitors to the museums.⁸⁷ “John Adams” is the proscribed result of the self-improvement movement engineered by Samuel Smiles. Exposure to art, as stated in the aesthetics of improvement, ideally results in this kind of working-class member. This is the art public that will improve the nation.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ *Report from Select Committee on National Monuments and Works of Art, 1841*

⁸⁷ Indeed, as Gareth Stedman Jones theorizes, the majority of the working classes resisted such middle-class philanthropy. Gareth Stedman Jones, “Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class.” *Journal of Social History* 7 (Summer 1974): 460-508.

Two mid-century paintings establish the importance of art-viewing even if the viewer's position is from the outside. Two young street urchins—a shoe-shine boy and a chimney sweep—point to an engraving of the current Lord Shaftesbury in the window of the famous printsellers Messrs. Graves in William MacDuff's *Shaftesbury, or Lost and Found* (figure 46; Museum of London), of 1862. While the painting primarily references Shaftesbury's position as a philanthropist advocating social reforms, the representation of two urchins viewing, admiring, and perhaps even learning from the engraving coincides with the aims of art for the poor.⁸⁸ Elsewhere in the window are similarly edifying images, including Millais's *Order of Release*. Because the benefit of art was defined in primarily educational terms, such sentimental and edifying images as MacDuff's achieved great popularity in the Victorian period. Thomas P. Hall's *One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin* (figure 47; Private Collection), of 1867, catalogues the different people who have stopped their daily routines to examine a painting in the window of a gallery, including a young crossing-sweeper, a drayman, a top-hatted connoisseur, a domestic servant, a young woman and her chaperone, and a middle-class businessman. Though viewers of Hall's painting are denied a glimpse of the attraction in the gallery window, they fully examine the crowd who admires it, just as they themselves are looking at a work.

Unlike the paintings by Compton, Hoven, and O'Neill, these works portray the lower-middle and working classes engaged in the act of viewing. The street urchin, crossing sweeper, and domestic servant do not belong to the traditional art public within

⁸⁸ Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, founded the Shoe Black Brigade, the red and black uniform of which the taller boy wears. Shaftesbury also presided over the Ragged School Union, a flier for which lies crumpled next to the bootblack's tools.

the Royal Academy or National Gallery but instead consume art from the outside. While cultural philanthropy had always advocated the benefits of art for the working classes, the actuality of their inclusion in the art public had blurred the class lines important in the game of “keeping up with the Joneses, keeping away from the Smiths.”⁸⁹ Because participation in the art public helped to define middle-class gentility, resistance to the participation of the lower classes was virulent, going all the way to Parliament.

In 1852-53, the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Management of the National Gallery considered “in what mode the collective Monuments of Antiquity and Fine Art possessed by the Nation may be most securely preserved, judiciously augmented, and advantageously exhibited to the Public.”⁹⁰ That class was of central importance in the discussion, just a few years after the riots of 1848 and the successful gathering of the classes at the Crystal Palace, is acknowledged by the questioners, who attempt to clarify the different class categories by occupation, appearance, and behavior: “what do you define the ‘public’ to be; do you mean the working classes?”; “by the middle class I mean shopkeepers, and persons actively engaged in business;” and “for what class of persons do you consider it most convenient, the wealthy, the middle, or the lower classes?—For all classes.” Such class terms, as well as signifiers such as “fustian jackets” for the lower classes, appear in the questioning of every witness. In the end, the Committee’s concerns center upon the “working,” “lower,” and “fustian jacket”-wearing classes.

⁸⁹ Peter Bailey, “White Collars, Gray Lives? The Lower Middle Class Revisited,” *Journal of British Studies* 38 (July 1999): 275.

⁹⁰ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery, 1852*, iii.

Because the pictures within the National Gallery were believed to be deteriorating—whether due to the crowds or to urban pollution was debated—numerous witnesses advocated the relocation of the gallery to South Kensington. Renowned scientist Michael Faraday had testified in 1850 to the “organic miasma” which arose from the working-class crowds and dulled the paintings. Another witness declared:

More copious emanations and exhalations would arise from [the workers’] clothing than from that of other persons who went decently dressed, and for the real purpose of seeing the pictures.⁹¹

The idling loungers of the working class in their fustian jackets were repeatedly blamed for the damage to the paintings. In addition to relocating the museum, witnesses at the committee’s inquiry considered charging fees, requiring sign in, and hiring more police to limit the crowds. Many witnesses, however, rejected the proposed move because of diminished accessibility of the site to a broad audience. Frederick Hurlstone, Esq., President of the Incorporated Society of Artists, argued, “I think to remove the gallery from its present site, to a site further off, would defeat the object for which the National Gallery was founded, and I think it would be altogether a serious evil, both to the public and to the institution itself.”⁹²

Significantly, it was not only the damage to the paintings that concerned the Committee, but the comfort of the respectable visitors within the museums. The chairman of the committee asked:

⁹¹ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1852, 582.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 505.

If they go in such crowds as to render it offensive to the upper classes, and to ladies particularly, who ought to have their share in the advantage derived from the contemplation of pictures--if large masses of the lower orders crowd in, many of them perhaps only from idle curiosity, do you not think that an objection?

The answer from William Conningham:

I do not think that is found to be the case; for instance, during the Great Exhibition, I used to see ladies frequenting the building on the cheap days just as much as on the dear days.⁹³

George Foggo, Esq., also testified, "Positive information tells me that it is not 20 days in the year that crowds occur; that is, in Easter and Whitsun week . . . now, ladies and others, who complain that they cannot visit the National Gallery on account of the crowds, have therefore a very large portion of the time pretty well to themselves."⁹⁴ Such testimony indicates not only the complaint that some ladies were uncomfortable at the National Gallery—an opinion Eastlake testified to in 1850—but that such an opinion was generally unfounded, as the galleries, according to the testimony of several witnesses at this 1852-53 hearing, were only crowded on holidays.⁹⁵ However, the vulnerability of women to the (sexual) power of the working-class man epitomized the fears of the upper

⁹³ *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1852, 408.

⁹⁴ He continues: "and that will account for the statement of witnesses, artists, and others, that they are never inconvenienced by the crowd. Although the average may be 3,000 a day, I apprehend that on most days in the year the number does not amount to 1,000, or anything like it." *Ibid.*, 524.

⁹⁵ Eastlake stated: "many persons who are in the habit of visiting collections of pictures, especially ladies, avoid the National Gallery on account of the crowds that go there." *Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, 1850, 27

classes for the lower. Though the museum was not relocated, there continued to be a concern about the presence of the working classes.

John Ruskin wrote, just a few years after O'Neill's painting,

Such [public educational] institutions as they should be distinct from places of public amusement on the one hand, so they should be distinct from national museums on the other. . . . A national museum is one thing, a national place of education another; and the more sternly and unequivocally they are separated the better will each perform its office—the one of treasuring and the other of teaching. I heartily wish that there were already, as one day there must be, large education museums in every district of London freely open every day, and well lighted and warmed at night, with furniture of comfort, and full aids for the use of their contents by all classes. But you might just as rationally send the British public to the Tower to study mineralogy upon the Crown jewels as make the unique pieces of a worthy national collection . . . the means of elementary public instruction. After men have learnt their science or their art, at least so far as to know a common and a rare example in either, a national museum is useful, and ought to be accessible to them; but until then unique or selected specimens in natural history are without interest to them, and the best art is useless as a blank wall.⁹⁶

In a painting strongly reminiscent of O'Neill's *Public Opinion*, and at times attributed to both him and his followers, entitled *Private View at the Royal Academy* (figure 48; n.d.,

⁹⁶ Ruskin, "Modern Art at the British Institution, 1867—On the Present State of Modern Art, with Reference to the Advisable Arrangements of a National Gallery," *The Works of John Ruskin*, 19:219.

location unknown), well-to-do museum visitors look towards a work of art off the right margin of the picture.⁹⁷ The gentleman wears a shiny top-hat while his young female companions are adorned by fine lace, frilly bonnets, and brightly-colored gowns. The three look towards the painting, protected by a rail, consulting the catalogue that the gentleman holds before him. Elsewhere in the painting, other well-to-do visitors examine and discuss the paintings on view. Three top-hatted men in the background gesture in conversation while a woman looks on. A young woman sits to consult her catalogue as a man looks on. Throughout the painting, the rituals of the Victorian art museum are preformed.

However, it should be noted that the crowd on display in this painting is in no way diverse. No military men, no working-class people, not even children, comprise the audience of this exhibit. Unlike O'Neill's painting, the prescribed audience here is limited to people who are educated, conversant with art, and well-off. For this unidentified artist, as well as Ruskin and O'Neill, the mixing of the classes within the art museum posed questions not answered. While education through art was an agreed upon theory, its actual application was debated, and despite their own prior exclusion from art public, the middle classes acted to distinguish themselves. O'Neill's painting captures the crush of the crowd, the popularity of art, the diversity of the public. It also establishes art-viewing as a primary component of middle-class leisure and identity. But while establishing the value of art institutions as rational recreation, *Public Opinion* indicates

⁹⁷ The painting, previously owned by the John Noote Galleries but now location unknown, has been attributed variously to O'Neill and to his followers. The John Noote Galleries and Bridgeman Art Library attribute it to a follower. Discussions with Mark Pomeroy, Archivist of the Royal Academy, confirm that the image is likely an exhibition of the Royal Academy. The identification of this as a "private view" cannot be verified. John Noote, email, Feb. 28, 2002; Edward Whitley, Bridgeman Art Library, email, Feb. 25, 2002; Mark Pomeroy, Archivist, Royal Academy, conversation, January 2002.

that part of that middle-class ideology, however accepting of a democratic art public as part of cultural philanthropy, included concerns for the proximity of the working classes within their own sites of leisure.

Chapter Four: Mapping the Segregation of the Art Publics

“ ‘You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too vulgar. Whenever I have gone there, there have been either so many people that I have not been able to see the pictures, which was dreadful, or so many pictures that I have not been able to see the people, which was worse. The Grosvenor really is the only place.’ ” Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890.

While celebrating the diverse group of people engaged in looking at art, George Bernard O'Neill's painting *Public Opinion* (figure 1) hints at the tensions among the classes of the art public. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the representation of the art public bifurcates into two distinct bodies—the elite and the working classes. For instance, William Powell Frith, famous for his genre paintings, depicts the Private View of the Royal Academy in 1881 (figure 50; Private Collection), while images of the working classes at the British Museum repeatedly appeared in such periodicals as the *Graphic*. This split in the representation of the art public coincides with the concurrent movement to create actual separate “slum museums” for the working classes in the East End, while the upper classes privatized their art consumption with Studio Sundays and Private Views. As Patricia Anderson notes in her *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture, 1790-1860*:

As it had done before, and would continue to do in the latter part of the century and beyond, art would withdraw further and further from common

experience, returning to expensively appointed homes, costly books and magazines, and galleries and museums that would continue to remain firmly closed on Sundays.¹

While this chapter will establish that art did not entirely withdraw from the sphere of the working classes, as Anderson contends, such separation of the art public nullified the civic humanist ideals of the late eighteenth century that posited one art public, one nation.

This chapter traces the segmentation of the art public at the end of the nineteenth century. While class differences had always been noted in descriptions and depictions of the art public in the nineteenth century, distinctions arise in the types of places the different classes view art—Private Views and Picture Sundays versus “Palaces for the People.” And, more than ever before, the distinction between east and west in London acquires connotations of class. This cultural geography, with the upper classes taking their leisure in the galleries on New Bond Street and the West End while the working classes visit their own exhibitions in the East End, permeates the discussion of art at the end of the century. This chapter seeks to map the cultural geography of London, from East and West, to Private View, Picture Sunday, and “slum museums,” in order to illuminate the motivations behind and processes of segregation of the classes in art institutions.

First, I will examine the representations of the art public as a gentrified body. In paintings by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, William Powell Frith, Henry Jamyn Brooks, and Guiseppe Gabrielli, the focus rests on the socialization of the propertied classes within art institutions. Particular attention will be paid to the Aesthetic Movement, which

¹ Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture, 1790-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 197.

rejected education as the fundamental purpose for art and stressed an inherent appreciation of art above a learned one. This exploration will be followed by a survey of the representation of the lower classes in art institutions, particularly those created specifically for them such as the Whitechapel Exhibition. While comparing these divergent images, I will consider the social and political context for the segregation of the art public.

Such segmentation of the representation of the art public into two distinct groups occurs at a time of political and social upheaval in England. With the Reform Act of 1867, working-class men finally received the vote. Such new political power, however, did not stem the tide of extreme poverty that engulfed industrial cities, despite the attempts of Socialist factions and trade unions to politicize the working class. Cholera, smallpox, and scarlet fever epidemics threatened the East End periodically, as did Jack the Ripper's rampage in 1888. Charles Booth's *Life and Labour* of 1889 recorded the misery of the inhabitants of London. Amid all this, the working classes had developed a vibrant culture of their own, comprised of dance halls, pubs, and gambling on racehorses. In the face of such poverty and in reaction to the perceived immoral and unhealthy culture of the working classes, organizations such as the Fabian Society, which advocated social reform through intellectual debate of public issues, and the Charity Organization Society, which provided aid to the "deserving poor," tried to staunch the crisis. Such Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism were the backbone of middle-class life. The rise in fortune of the middle classes produced a concomitant embrace of leisured activity such as seaside vacations, art exhibitions, and charitable organizations, as well as the imitation of the propertied classes above them. Families on the margins sought to adapt middle-

class gentility through severe domestic economy. Meanwhile, the fortunes of the landed aristocracy collapsed, forcing them to intermarry with “inferiors,” including merchants, bankers, and Americans. Class-consciousness was now ingrained; the myth of a united nation fostered at the Crystal Palace deteriorated in the dark 1880s.

Privatization of the Art World

As shown in previous chapters, the lower classes had long been encouraged to join the art public. In the eighteenth century, rhetoric emphasized the inclusion of the non-traditional middle-class audience within the art public, though the Royal Academy's identity still focused on aristocratic viewing practices. The National Gallery, though considered a national art institution for the entire public, maintained an aloof, exclusive reputation, supported by its restricted hours of admission. Only towards mid-century, with the development and popularity of reproductive prints, the Art-Union of London's subscription lottery, and multiplicity of exhibitions, did art really infuse the life of the general middle class. Finally, then, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the “art for the people” movement to introduce art to the lowest working classes proliferated among the philanthropic-minded propertied classes, including the middle classes who themselves had only recently been part of the art public. This cultural philanthropy, however, produced a concomitant concern among certain members of the propertied classes about the appearance of the working classes within the art public, as their alleged unhealthy appearance and inappropriate behavior were considered a threat to the previously exclusive domain and art itself. Despite all the rhetoric regarding the beneficial acquisition of taste among workers, art still functioned as a sign of status in

nineteenth-century England. With the growing availability of art to the lower classes as well as their increased political power granted by the Reform Act of 1867, the propertied classes' need to assert distinction through the possession of cultural capital became more pronounced. Pierre Bourdieu's theories of class distinction and cultural capital are nowhere more applicable than at the end of the nineteenth century when several elite viewing rituals arose to produce a clear class distinction between the leisure and working classes. The representation of these rituals, which focused on the wealth, fame, and influence of their participants, established the importance of art-viewing not as an educational experience but as a social achievement for the middle-class art public who consumed these images in *Punch* and at the Royal Academy.

The ritual of the Private View of the Royal Academy began as early as 1811 and functioned throughout the century as the demarcation between the insiders of the Victorian art world and the outsiders. Generally held on the first day of the exhibition, the number of people in attendance was restricted by invitation only.² Sir John Everett Millais penned these lines describing the Private View in 1870:

First Monday in May
Is the opening day
Of the great R.A.,
When the public go.
But the thing to do
Is the private view,
Select and few--

² Sidney C. Hutchinson, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1986* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1968), 67.

For the Swells, you know.³

Traditionally, the Private View of the annual Royal Academy show launched the London “season” and included all the men and women of fashionable society. Not to receive an invitation from a member of the Academy was a great social failure. Despite the importance of the Private View for artists to attract the attention of the press and to sell their works, its main function centered upon seeing and being seen. A letter to the *Times* in 1883 complained of the “absurdity which is fast ripening into a nuisance—I mean the abominable overcrowding at the so-called ‘private views’ at picture exhibitions”:

The private view is now the only really public view at an exhibition. On the private-view day you can see nothing, especially in the afternoon, owing to an apparently limitless crowd. . . . Many persons have already abandoned the idea of seeing pictures at a private view, but they say, ‘Oh, we go there to see our friends.’ This latter object is now unthinkable because the crowd is so great that a visitor can speak to no friend and is hopelessly wedged in, with scarcely standing room, in a dense mass of struggling humanity. Unless a change be effected, it will be a mark of distinction to avoid a private view.⁴

This letter, penned by H. Schutz Wilson of Great Russell Street, enumerates many important points: the goal of seeing and being seen, the importance of socializing above picture-viewing, and finally the distinction of attending. Charles Keene’s cartoon,

³ John Guille Millais, *The Life and Letters of Sir John Everett Millais*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen and Co, 1899), 2:239. Millais liked writing nonsense verse. This particularly poem, in the style of Robert Burns, describes the Private View c. 1870.

⁴ H. Schutz Wilson, Letter to the *Times*, December 20, 1883.

“Hypercritical” (figure 49) which appeared in *Punch* in 1870, embraces similar themes.⁵ Two swells attend the Private View at the Royal Academy, alongside a crowd of other well-dressed individuals. When asked by his artist-friend what he thinks of the show, the swell replies, “The people you mean? Well, I was thinking they look an uncommon seedy lot, for the *first day*—” (my italics).⁶ The first day is distinguished from the run of the exhibition and, clearly, the “public” is an unwelcome visitor in this exclusive realm. Ironically, the title’s similarity to “hypocritical” draws attention to the less than impressive pair: the artist is described as “stumpy” while his friend has an excessively superior air, both certainly qualifying as “seedy.” Wilson, in his letter, suggests a solution to the problem of the first day, suggesting “unless so many tickets only be issued as the gallery will comfortably hold, private view tickets will cease to be a compliment, a distinction, or an advantage.” Wilson’s use of the term “distinction” illuminates the contemporary understanding of attendance at the Private View, of membership in the art public, as a sign of class status. As Wilson argues, this elite viewing ritual has meaning as an indicator of class status only if its participants are limited.

William Powell Frith meticulously recorded *The Private View of the Royal Academy of 1881* (figure 50; 1881-82, Private Collection) with its famous figures from the world of art, letters, politics, the Church, and society, including Robert Browning, Thomas Huxley, Henry Irving, Lily Langtry, Anthony Trollope, and Oscar Wilde, who wears a lily and is surrounded by a group of attentive women including actress Ellen Terry. The crowd of people, reminiscent of depictions of the Royal Academy in the

⁵ Charles Keene, “Hypercritical,” *Punch* 58 (May 21, 1870): 195.

⁶ Ibid.

eighteenth century, spans the entire foreground of what is primarily a social gathering. Indeed, only two men on the right margin seem actually to pay attention to the canvases on the wall, as Frith noted in his memoirs, “pure aesthetes absorbed in affected study of pictures.”⁷ As Frith contends, no one attends the Private View for the art. And, indeed, it is the people, not the paintings, which receive Frith’s attention. In his focus on the recognizable celebrities of his day, Frith acknowledges the people-watching which pervaded the socializing of the event, providing a voyeuristic view for those not included: “Pictures composed of groups of well-known people are always very popular at the Academy, and ‘The Private View’ was no exception to that rule, a guard being again found necessary to control the crowds of visitors.”⁸

Frith is not the only artist to focus upon the Private View as a theme. Henry Jamyn Brooks’s *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition, 1888* (figure 51; 1888, National Portrait Gallery, London) clearly inspired by Frith’s own painting, includes 58 famous individuals. The work, completed with the help of individual sittings and photography, even includes three Presidents of the Royal Academy and a portrait of Frith, sixteenth from the left. Unlike Frith’s painting, Brooks’s canvas takes as its subject not the annual exhibition of contemporary art but the winter exhibition of Old Masters. Like Frith, Brooks utilizes a long, horizontal framework which distances the viewer from those in the painting. This composition excludes the viewer from this social world, allowing only a view inside. Both paintings then are a catalogue of notables for the

⁷ W. P. Frith, *My Autobiography and Reminiscences* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888), 445.

⁸ Ibid. Frith goes on to say: “I may perhaps be pardoned for recording the fact of this picture being the sixth painted by me that has received this special compliment.” The other five were: *Derby Day*, *The Railway Station*, *The Marriage of the Prince of Wales*, *Salon d’Or*, *The Road to Ruin*.

perusal of the outsider, not unlike the popular cartes-de-visites of famous people, a kind of photographic trading card that people collected into albums. Indeed, both Frith's and Brooks's paintings were reproduced as individual prints, with keys listing the individuals included, and sold to the general public. Appearing in the Royal Academy exhibition and reproduced for mass-consumption, such representations of the art public, including celebrities to the exclusion of anonymous general viewers, elevate the importance of the Private View, just as eighteenth-century prints depicting the King and royal family elevated the importance of the art public. Additionally, they normalize such exclusive social rituals as the goal of the middle class, in contrast to the educational and moral role of art-viewing celebrated at mid-century.

The Private View was just one of the elite art rituals in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. On Studio Sundays, visitors would attend contemporary artists in their studios on a designated day before the opening of the Royal Academy to admire works-in-progress and those just completed. As Paula Gillett establishes in *The Victorian Painter's World*, several artists hosted such gatherings by the early 1870s; by the 1880s, these events were held on both Saturdays and Sundays.⁹ Not only was this ritual limited to those with social connections, but art viewing was removed from institutional spaces completely, in favor of artists' studios often in private houses, a return to eighteenth-century art practices. Studio Sunday further reinforced the distinction between wealthy and working class, as the former could view art privately on Sundays while the latter could not because the museums were closed. A poem appearing in *Punch* in 1884, subtitled "Art at Home," captures the experience of the Studio Sunday:

⁹ Gillett, 194. For a complete discussion of Studio Sundays as part of the continued effort by artists to attract attention to their work, see Gillett, 192-214.

Where'er Society's parrots flock and chatter
 Resound artistic slang and studio patter.
 Show Sunday's come and gone. The bores and bored
 Have changed their hunting-ground; the Studio now
 With adjectives prolonged, shrill, double-scored,
 The ecstatic "*Per-fect!*" the astonished "How!"
 Echoes no longer.¹⁰

Such open houses attracted large crowds who desired to see both the artworks and the artist. As Gillett notes, almost seven hundred people visited Luke Fildes's home on one Sunday in 1883.¹¹ Artists homes, including those of Leighton and Alma-Tadema, became showpieces described for readers of the popular press; the artists themselves were well-known and respected celebrities. However, Studio Sundays were not only a sign of status for the artist, but for the members of the crowd as well.

The crowds who attended Studio Sundays distinguished themselves socially from those who visited only the exhibition of art at the Royal Academy. The ability to "call" on an artist at home established a relationship, however superficial, between the visitor and the artist, in addition to establishing the visitor as an art-world insider. Numerous *Punch* cartoons reiterate the social function of the Studio Sunday. George Du Maurier explores the theme of the social cachet of visiting an artist's studio in his cartoon "The Round of the Studios" (figure 52) of 1874.¹² A round-faced man presents his overdressed

¹⁰ "The Town. Kensington. Art at Home," *Punch* 86 (June 21, 1884): 289.

¹¹ Gillett, 195.

¹² George Du Maurier, "The Round of the Studios," *Punch* 66 (April 18, 1874): 162.

elderly wife to the bowing artist whose studio they have entered. Behind the couple, in the doorway, stand a crowd of similarly dour women and men. As the cartoon's legend relates, the man is a stranger to the artist but the stranger's brother had met the artist years before at a garden party and so now he has decided to call, bringing along some cousins of his wife. The humor of Du Maurier's cartoon assumes the audience's understanding of the social importance of knowing an artist and participating in the ritual of visiting an artist's studio. This clearly lower middle-class family, identifiable by both their clothes and physiognomy, is relying on highly tenuous connections to this artist in order to impress the gaggle of cousins. And with irony, *Punch* relays that the artist "bows low, to dissemble the too exuberant rapture that beams all over his tell-tale countenance."¹³ Similarly, in Du Maurier's "The 'Round of the Studios'" (figure 53) of 1871, wealthy men and women crowd around works of art in the artist's private studio, fashionably arrayed in clothes that Du Maurier takes care to delineate.¹⁴ Their conversation is unintelligible:

Male Dilettante, No. 1 (making a telescope of his hand). "What I like so much is that—er—that"

Ditto No. 2 (with his nose almost touching the canvass). "I know what you mean—that broad—er—"

Female Dilettante, No. 1 (waving her hand gently from right to left).

"Precisely. That sort of—er—of—er—of—er—"¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ George Du Maurier, "The 'Round of the Studios'," *Punch* 60 (April 8, 1871): 144.

¹⁵ Ibid.

These dilettantes, who fashion dictates should appreciate art, possess no vocabulary to express themselves about the work they purport to admire. Like the elaborate costume of the central woman with frilled coat, long train, and large bustle, the appreciation of art is a fashion they wear to distinguish themselves from others. *Punch* makes fun of its audience's pretensions while at the same time recognizing their dedication to the elitist concept of distinction.

Though not all representations of the art public in the last quarter of the nineteenth century depict Private Views or Studio Sundays, Guiseppe Gabrielli produces two canvases of the National Gallery that similarly capture exclusivist, or insider, modes of viewing. The first, *The Interior of the Dome, with Copyists* illustrates a view not available to the average visitor of the National Gallery. It is student day, when Royal Academy students copied in the galleries. Here, Gabrielli himself accompanies Leighton, the current President of the Royal Academy, on a walk among the students under the dome.¹⁶ As such, Gabrielli's painting is reminiscent of MacKenzie's watercolor of the Angerstein galleries, with the students copying in the aristocratic setting that was the early National Gallery. His other painting, *National Gallery, Room VII* (figure 54; National Gallery, London) depicts the Barry Rooms completed in 1876 and filled with Venetian paintings. In the foregrounds stands an older gentleman accompanied by two women, perhaps his daughters, with whom he shares his catalogue. Fashionable dress clothes them, as well as the ladies and gentlemen around them. No working class visitors

¹⁶ According to the National Gallery Visual Files, the painting depicts the view from Room 40 towards the northwest part of dome. Room 40 contains Spanish paintings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

are visible. The fashionable visitors and luxurious interior combine to present an elegant atmosphere of leisure. While both people and paintings are present, Gabrielli does not focus on people looking at art. Instead, he concentrates on people arranged decorously throughout the room; indeed, most of the visitors look out of the canvas and not towards the art on the walls. The National Gallery, which had been represented in the early half of the century as a national institution, is here considered more exclusive.

Even when themes of education appear in images of the art public at the end of the nineteenth century, the aristocratic overtones are unmistakable. George Goodwin Kilburne, Sr.'s watercolor *Demeter in the British Museum* (figure 55; Christopher Wood Galleries) continues the thematics of education found in earlier imagery. A woman well-dressed in the day's fashions escorts a child through the British Museum, where they encounter a sculpture of the ancient Greek goddess Demeter. As the mother of Persephone who was kidnapped by Hades and taken to the underworld, Demeter was protectress of mothers. In view of this context, it is probable to read the couple as mother and child. The mother, wearing a fashionable dress, directs the attention of the little girl towards the statue, instructing her not only in the history of art but more particularly in women's roles in Victorian society. Compounding this reading, the woman and child have been identified by Christopher Wood as the wife and child of the artist.¹⁷ In addition to this watercolor of the subject, Kilburne also completed another watercolor with a similar composition (figure 56; Christopher Wood Gallery). However, in this

¹⁷ Christopher Wood, email, April 30, 2002. Wood identifies the woman as Kilburne's first wife, Janet Dalziel, with whom he bore two daughters, Florence Amy (b. 1864) and Mary Maud (b. 1867). Because Janet Dalziel died in 1882, this work, along with the second watercolor on this subject, if painted from life, dates to the 1870s when either of the daughters would have been of the age of the girl in the image. Finally, it is intriguing to note that Wood himself, soon after our correspondence, was to marry a descendant of Kilburne.

watercolor, more antiquities appear on the right margin, diluting the strength of the connection of mother and child to Demeter and concepts of motherhood and women's roles.

James Hayllar's *The Picture Gallery* (figure 57; n.d., location unknown) displays a clear differentiation between the classes in the art public. Here, a working-class family—mother in bonnet and shawl, father in worker's smock with his straw hat in hand, and young son held firmly by the hand—directed towards a wall of paintings by a young girl in a pristine white dress with blue satin sash. The little girl points towards the painting, as if to explain the subject. Behind them all stands another worker, this time in a brown smocked overshirt, who has seemingly accompanied the family inside. This painting clearly takes place, not in a public institution, but within a private home. The contrast between the little girl and the family is strong: she is pure in white and they are in drab clothes; she commands their gazes to the works of art while they look on as directed; she has mastered the ritual of examining works of art but they must be guided.

Such images present the art world as a closed, aristocratic, social environment largely irrespective of the general population and goals of education. Though of course art had always been a sign of status, as seen clearly in eighteenth-century portraits of connoisseurs, the prevailing perception of art for most of the nineteenth century had accorded it a very public role of national munificence. But at the end of the nineteenth century, the notion of a unified national art public has disappeared because, with the general public engaged in the museum ritual, the upper classes redraw the art-viewing boundaries and withdraw from the public realm to preserve their distinction.

Classy Rome, or The Art World of Alma-Tadema

Nowhere is the privatization of the art public at the end of the nineteenth-century more visible than in the ancient art world paintings of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema.¹⁸

Between 1867 and 1875, Alma-Tadema produced more than a dozen paintings of art lovers and collectors in the ancient world, including *A Dealer in Statues*, *A Roman Lover of Art*, *A Picture Gallery*, and *A Sculpture Gallery*, in addition to several paintings of ancient artists at work.¹⁹ These paintings all show several individuals, sometimes identifiable as Alma-Tadema, his family, and his dealer Ernst Gambart, in sumptuous ancient Roman surroundings admiring works of art that survive from antiquity.²⁰

Commissioned by Gambart, these paintings achieved much public acclaim and were

¹⁸ Having been schooled in the Antwerp by Charles Wappers, who was intrigued by the detail-oriented Dutch and Flemish masters and encouraged his students to adopt their techniques. Alma-Tadema demonstrated early an appreciation of detailed archaeological renderings. He soon moved to Hendrik Leys's studio, where the focus centered on scenes from Belgian history, and also became acquainted with Egyptologist Georg Ebers. Alma-Tadema travelled extensively through Italy on his honeymoon in 1863 and spent much time at the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum, where he could witness firsthand how the ancient Pompeiians had lived. He also began collecting photographs of ancient sites and, upon his death in 1912, he possessed 161 portfolios of photographs of ancient Greek and Roman artifacts and sites, which he had used throughout his career to provide realistic details to his genre paintings. The portfolios also contain both original and copied sketches and paintings of architectural and other details. The portfolios were acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum and later transferred to the University of Birmingham. Alma-Tadema purchased as well as commissioned the photographs in his collection. Tomlinson, 4-6.

¹⁹ The depictions of the artists at work, including *The Sculptor's Model* (1877, location unknown), *Sculpture* (1877, George Wildenstein), *Architecture in Ancient Rome* (1877, George Wildenstein), and *The Roman Potters in Britain* (1884-86, cut into three pieces in 1886, one section at s'Gravenhage in Holland), are related to Alma-Tadema's interest in art dealers but are beyond the scope of this chapter. For discussions of Alma-Tadema, see *Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema*, ed. Edwin Becker et al (New York: Rizzoli, 1997); Josephy Rishel, "Baltimore and Cincinnati: Alma-Tadema," *Burlington Magazine* 134 (May 1992): 332; C.F. Sayre, "Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's *A Roman Amateur*," *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin* 24 (June 1973): 12-17; Vern Swanson, *Alma-Tadema: The Painter of the Victorian Vision of the Ancient World* (New York: Scribner, 1977); Richard Tomlinson, *The Athens of Alma-Tadema* (Wolfeboro Falls, NH: Alan Sutton Publishing Inc., 1991); Helen Zimmern, *The Life and Work of Alma-Tadema* (London: Art Journal, 1886).

²⁰ Alma-Tadema possessed a vast collection of photographs of both ancient artifacts and sites, which he utilized in the production of his paintings.

often engraved by Auguste Blanchard and others.²¹ As a critic for the *Art Journal* noted of Alma-Tadema's *Phidias and the Frieze of the Parthenon*, in which Pericles, Asphasia, and Phidias admire the marble reliefs of the temple, "the subject—Phidias holding a 'private view' of the friezes of the Parthenon—is singularly fascinating."²² Such exclusivist modes of viewing figure prominently in all of Alma-Tadema's paintings of the ancient art world.

Classical subject matter greatly appealed to late Victorian audiences, who often saw themselves as heirs to the great civilizations of the past. Middle and upper class Victorians were obsessed with the ancient world. Tutors instructed children in ancient Greek and Latin as well as ancient history and mythology, both by ancient writers such as Homer and Ovid and by modern scholars such as George Grote and Edward Gibbon. Edward Bulwer-Lytton's fictional account of *The Last Days of Pompeii* thrilled modern readers, who made Greece and Italy popular tourist destinations. Those not traveling abroad could, of course, visit the Elgin Marbles in the newly installed Duveen Galleries at the British Museum. Finally, Victorians surrounded themselves with visions of the ancient world, including Wedgwood pottery, Greek Revival architecture, classically-inspired theater, fancy dress toga parties, and classically-inspired paintings by Frederick Lord Leighton, Edward Burne-Jones, Albert Moore, and Alma-Tadema.²³

²¹ Gambart commissioned *A Sculpture Gallery* (1874, Dartmouth) and probably *A Picture Gallery* (1874, Towneley Hall Art Gallery) for use in his salon at Les Palmiers in Nice. For a discussion of Gambart, see Jeremy Maas, *Gambart: Prince of the Victorian Art World* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1975).

²² "The Works of Laurence Alma-Tadema, R.A." *Art Journal* 35 (March 1883): 67.

²³ While Alma-Tadema and later his followers including J. W. Waterhouse relied on archaeological detail, Leighton, Burne-Jones, and Moore pursued less-specific, more ideal, even Symbolist approaches to ancient history and myth. At the same time, in France and Germany, artists such as Jean Leon Gerome and Anselm Feuerbach produced archaeologically-detailed reconstructions of the ancient

Painted in 1874 upon Gambart's commission and exhibited separately at the Royal Academy and the Salon, the pendants *The Sculpture Gallery* and *The Picture Gallery* (figure 58; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College and figure 59; Towneley Hall Art Gallery & Museums, Burnley) epitomize Alma-Tadema's ancient gallery pictures, "which have generally been acknowledged as the painter's chief masterpieces."²⁴ Describing those two works, the *Art Journal* noted: "Alma-Tadema takes us into the daily life of Rome. He shows us the visit of a group of *dilettanti* to the sculptor's studio"—*dilettanti* and not the general public.²⁵ In *The Sculpture Gallery*, viewers in a dealer's shop gather to evaluate a bronze table positioned before them by a slave, while in *The Picture Gallery*, patrons study a variety of paintings within a gallery. J. B. Atkinson noted of *The Picture Gallery*: "the walls are hung like a modern picture-gallery, from the ceiling downwards, as if, in ancient as in present days, artists painted pot-boilers for dealers."²⁶ This connection of the ancient art world to the modern is strengthened by the recognizable portraits: Alma-Tadema, his wife Laura, his two daughters Anna and Laurence, his sister-in-law Ellen Gosse, and his brother-in-law Dr. Washington Epps appear in *The Sculpture Gallery*, while Gambart, his mistress Mme.

world. Indeed, anecdotal information suggests that Alma-Tadema met Gerome when he traveled to Paris for the annual Salon in 1863, the so-called "Salon of Venuses." Supposedly, Gerome taught Alma-Tadema his painting techniques, which Alma-Tadema then utilized for the rest of his career. Almost without exception, Alma-Tadema would paint classical subjects for the remainder of his career. Sayre, 17.

²⁴ *The Sculpture Gallery* appeared at the Salon in 1874 and the Royal Academy in 1875, while *The Picture Gallery* appeared in the same shows, in reverse. "The Works of Laurence Alma-Tadema, R. A." *Art Journal* 35 (March 1883): 66 (65-68). *A Dealer in Statues*, of 1867, was Alma-Tadema's first excursion into the subject matter of the ancient gallery picture. Painted on commission from Gambart, the painting portrays several individuals, including himself and his friends all dressed in togas, admiring a statue of Sophocles, now in the San Giovanni Lateran Museum.

²⁵ "The Works of Laurence Alma-Tadema, R. A.," *Art Journal* 35 (March 1883): 66 (65-68).

²⁶ J.B. Atkinson, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 133 (March 1883): 404; quoted in Becker et al, 186.

Angelee, his business partners P. J. Pilgeram and Leon Lefevre, his nephew Charles Deschamps, Henry Wallis, and dealer Paul Durand-Ruel have been identified in *The Picture Gallery*.²⁷ At the least, the artist and the two dealers were recognizable to London audiences familiar with photographs of them. But if Alma-Tadema seeks to connect the ancient art world to the modern, what point does he stress? In each painting, small audiences gather within commercial locations to examine and purchase works of art. From his study of the ancient world, Alma-Tadema would probably have been familiar with the plan for a public art gallery in the Propylaea of the Acropolis. However, he chooses to depict Roman art dealers and collectors and not the Acropolis. Art here does not fulfill Greek goals of democracy but Roman materialism, which for Alma-Tadema is an acceptable and legitimate goal. The viewers are not a diversified art public of the kind that would have admired Alma-Tadema's paintings at the Royal Academy in 1874 and 1875 but a select group of connoisseurs in a restricted setting.

Indeed, in the majority of Alma-Tadema's ancient art world paintings, the figures are not merely connoisseurs but customers. The repetition of the dealer and his customers in Alma-Tadema's paintings signifies the artist's personal relationship to dealers as well as the reputation of dealers in Victorian society at a time of increased middle-class patronage. As the *Art Journal* noted in August 1849, "it is the middle classes chiefly by whom our school is patronized: many of these are gathering round them galleries of Art which, at some future day, will rank as high as any of past times,

²⁷ Becker et al, 186.

and in monetary value will be as marketable.”²⁸ Dealers had become particularly important in the mid-nineteenth century, when the mania for collecting among the middle classes created a need for suppliers.²⁹ Dealers like Gambart, Louis Victor Flatow, and William Agnew dominated the London art world by raising the price of contemporary paintings, commissioning works from artists, arranging reproductive prints, and even hosting exhibitions. Despite such pervasiveness, reticence about art dealers persisted. The *Art Journal* published several articles warning about the fraudulent practices of dealers “to warn the uninstructed in Art against the knavery of a host of dealers and their willing agents, if not their accomplices, the auctioneers”³⁰ while noting that “we make the widest possible distinction between the honest and the dishonest dealer in pictures: desiring to uphold the one class as very serviceable to artists and greatly beneficial to Art.”³¹ Despite the journal’s assertions of the honesty of Gambart, the taint of trade affected Gambart and art dealers in general, who were perceived as encouraging mediocre art painted for the market.³² By depicting Gambart as an ancient Roman connoisseur, Alma-Tadema elevates the position of the dealer, which had not always been respected. Frederick Leighton refused to have anything to do with dealers and galleries in his later life, believing the association with art dealing to be demeaning.

²⁸ “Picture Sales,” *Art Journal* 2 (August 1, 1849): 251. The article continues: “The buyers may not be of the same class, for we missed from the sale-rooms, on the occasions referred to, the noble collector or his agent, whom fashion, or taste, yet keeps from paying homage to the genius of his fellow-countrymen, and from showing his appreciation of it by giving the works of English artists a place in his aristocratic mansion.”

²⁹ For a discussion of middle class art patronage, see Macleod.

³⁰ “Frauds in Picture-Dealing,” *Art Journal* 6 (Jan 1, 1854): 8.

³¹ “The Picture Dealers,” *Art Journal* 7 (Sept 1 1855): 264-5.

³² “The sharp votaries of commerce dedicate their gains to daubed-up rubbish and tawdry copies.” “The Picture Dealers,” *Art Journal* 7 (September 1, 1855): 264-5.

Even the struggling John Everett Millais shied away from Gambart lest the knowledge that he had engaged in commercial enterprises injuriously affect his election to the Royal Academy.³³ By associating Gambart and his friends with the well-respected classical world, Alma-Tadema glorifies the British art world, which had often been considered inferior to the continental one. Indeed, Alma-Tadema himself usually exhibited in both the annual Royal Academy and Salon shows in Paris.

But Alma-Tadema does not depict such public shows, as is clearly evident in *The Sculpture Gallery* where a few figures admire a chosen work in the foreground while the crowded public in the background is kept at bay by the counter. His works resemble the more exclusive realm of the art gallery, the Private View, and the Studio Sunday. Such a private world became institutionalized with the establishment of the exclusive Grosvenor Gallery, where Alma-Tadema exhibited eight works in the inaugural exhibition.

The Grosvenor Gallery and the Aesthetic Movement

Founded in 1877 by Sir Coutts and his wife Lady Lindsay, the Grosvenor Gallery became the premiere exhibition space and home of the Aesthetic Movement at the end of the nineteenth century. The Lindsays, through the Grosvenor Gallery, sought to provide artists who did not receive recognition through the Royal Academy, whose juries often only recognized more traditional, Academic artists, with a place to show their works and attract patrons, as Sir Coutts explained:

there are several thoughtful men in London whose ideas and method of embodying them are strange to us; but as I do not think strangeness, or

³³ Maas, 59, 172.

even eccentricity of method, sufficient excuse for ignoring the works of men otherwise notable, I have built the Grosvenor Gallery that their pictures, and those of every other man I think worthy, may be fairly and honestly seen and judged.³⁴

Coutts rejects the “public opinion” of the Royal Academy crowds in favor of his own aesthetic principles. In numerous ways, the Grosvenor Gallery existed in direct opposition to the Royal Academy, especially in the visitors it attracted.

Established on New Bond Street, the gallery lodged in two shopfronts, unlike the single front of its art dealer neighbors. Such a palatial space allowed the Lindsays to adopt a novel hanging of works in their galleries. Paintings were hung not frame-to-frame from floor to ceiling but side by side with adequate space, at least six inches but sometimes twelve, in between. The walls were covered in rich silk damask, while “pottery and china, and groups of plants [were] disposed about the rooms, some to heighten the impression that this is not a public picture exhibition, but rather a partician’s private gallery shown by courtesy of its owner.”³⁵ Contributing to this ambience of the private home were the billiard room, smoking room, and dining room. Far removed from the obvious marketplace of the Royal Academy, the Grosvenor Gallery dressed its economic aims in the trappings of the aristocracy for its wealthy audiences, who at the

³⁴ As quoted in “The Grosvenor Gallery,” *Art Journal* 29 (August 1, 1877): 244.

³⁵ Agnes Atkins, “The Grosvenor Gallery,” *Portfolio* 8 (1877): 98. The sentence continues: “indeed, so studiously are the business arrangements kept out of sight, that but for the inevitable turnstiles and catalogue-keepers the illusion would be complete.”

time felt the encroachment of the lower classes, and here separated themselves from them.³⁶

The kinds of paintings the gallery hung were opposed to the sentimental genre scenes that attracted popular attention at the crowded Royal Academy shows. Instead, the Lindsays preferred artists who explored the formalistic concerns of “art for art’s sake” and therefore rarely received the attention of the Royal Academy selection committee. A term first used in England by Aesthetic poet Algernon Charles Swinburne in 1867, “art for art’s sake” denoted the kind of art that “addresses itself directly to the sense of sight; to the emotions and the intellect only indirectly, through the medium of the sense of sight,” in complete rejection of the prevailing theory that art served moral ends.³⁷ Indeed, the art of the Aesthetic Movement undermined the belief, epitomized by the Crystal Palace, that “that Art was not a matter of instinct, but, to a great extent, of education.”³⁸ To understand Whistler’s nocturnes or Burne-Jones’s androgynous waifs required the “love of beauty,” which was, according to Wilde in the “Critic as Artist” of 1891, the “true aim of education” and the result of “the development of temperament, the cultivation of taste, and the creation of the critical spirit.”³⁹ Working- and lower middle-class audiences accustomed to the didactic narratives of the annual academy exhibitions and reliant upon the catalogues explaining them did not have access to the cultural code

³⁶ For a discussion of politics and the “aristocracy of art” in France, see Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 20-22

³⁷ Sidney Colvin, “English Painters and Painting in 1867” *Fortnightly Review* 8 (October 1867): 465.

³⁸ “Primary Art Education on the Continent,” *Art Journal* 30 (July 1, 1868): 138.

³⁹ Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist,” *The Soul of Man Under Socialism and Other Essays by Oscar Wilde*, intro. Philip Rieff (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 172.

necessary to understand easily the art of the Grosvenor Gallery, schooled as they were in the Ruskinian moral code of art.

Of course, it is Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* shown in the inaugural exhibition and attracting Ruskin's wrath that most clearly embodied for the public the kinds of works on show at the Grosvenor Gallery. While the libel trial of 1878, stemming from Ruskin's accusing Whistler of "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face," has been well-documented by Linda Merrill in *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin*, it is important to consider it within the context of the change in aesthetics at the end of the nineteenth century. Whistler's painting captures the light of fireworks shown nightly at Cremorne Gardens, though Whistler testified that his painting "wouldn't give the public a good idea of Cremorne It is simply an arrangement of color."⁴⁰ Ruskin, who had begun to exhibit the mental instability that would plague his later years, railed against the work and particularly Whistler in his series of letters, *Fors Clavigera*, referring to him as a "coxcomb" full of "Cockney impudence."⁴¹ As Merrill argues, however, Ruskin's main concern revolved around Whistler's asking price of 200 guineas for a painting that he deemed unworthy.⁴² The libel suit followed, with Whistler awarded a single farthing in damages, a narrow victory.

During the trial, the aesthetic mania epitomized by the Grosvenor Gallery was repeatedly ridiculed. Sir John Holker, Ruskin's chief counsel, led the jurymen on an imaginary visit to the Grosvenor Gallery, where "we would find 'nocturnes,'

⁴⁰ Transcript of the trial, as quoted in Merrill, 145.

⁴¹ John Ruskin, "Fors Clavigera," *The Works of John Ruskin*, 29:160.

⁴² Merrill, 50.

‘arrangements,’ and ‘symphonies,’ surrounded by groups of artistic ladies . . . [who] would admire and adore, and . . . [pour] incense on the altar of Mr. Whistler.”⁴³ Holker continues:

There is at present a mania for what is called Art. It has become a kind of fashion among some people to admire the incomprehensible and to say something that cannot be understood. . . . This is not a mania that should be encouraged.⁴⁴

This mania garnered the most attention in the comic opera *Patience, or Bunthorne's Bride* by Gilbert and Sullivan, which opened in London in 1881. The opera centers upon two rival poets, Bunthorne and Grosvenor, who embrace Aestheticism to win the love of women, including Patience (who does *not* become Bunthorne's bride). The character of Reginald Bunthorne has been likened to both Wilde and Whistler, whom the actor imitated by adopting a tuft of white hair and a monocle, while the character of Grosvenor has been said to ridicule either Swinburne or Wilde.⁴⁵ Numerous lyrics reference, and ridicule, the demeanor and behavior of the Aesthetes:

If that's not good enough for him which is good enough for me,
Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this kind of youth must be! . . .
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high
aesthetic band,

⁴³ Transcript of the trial, as quoted in Merrill, 166.

⁴⁴ Transcript of the trial, as quoted in Merrill, 168.

⁴⁵ There seems to be much discussion about whom Gilbert intended to parody in which character. Thomas F. Dunhill, *Sullivan's Comic Operas: A Critical Appreciation* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1981), 85.

If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your medieaval
hand.”⁴⁶

And

If this is not exactly right, we hope you won’t upbraid;

You can’t get high Aesthetic tastes, like trousers, ready made.⁴⁷

However, the Grosvenor Gallery and its Wildean patrons are even condemned by name:

A pallid and thin young man,

A haggard and lank young man,

A greenery-yallery, Grosvenor Gallery,

Foot-in-the-grave young man!⁴⁸

Such hilarity continued in the pages of *Punch*. In Du Maurier’s cartoon “Distinguished Amateurs.—The Art Critic” (figure 60) an elegant swell named “Prigsby,” with his hand raised to emphasize his words and his head encircled halo-like by a painting behind him, stands amid an adoring group of women discussing a painting by his friend Maudle that possesses a head to rival the head of a famous Greek sculpture, *Ilyssus*.⁴⁹ Below the cartoon, is another view—a drawing of the headless *Ilyssus*! The character Prigsby appears repeatedly in the cartoons of du Maurier, as does Prigsby’s friend, the painter Maudle, who is a thinly disguised caricature of Oscar Wilde, a friend

⁴⁶ Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience*, in *Martyn Green’s Treasury of Gilbert and Sullivan*, ed. Martyn Green (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 225.

⁴⁷ Gilbert and Sullivan, *Patience*, 240.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁴⁹ “Distinguished Amateurs.—The Art Critic,” *Punch* 78 (March 13, 1880): 114.

of Du Maurier's.⁵⁰ Even Frith ridiculed Wilde, however subtly, in his *Private View*, recounting in his autobiography

Beyond the desire of recording for posterity the aesthetic craze as regards dress, I wished to hit the folly of listening to self-elected critics in manners of taste . . . I therefore planned a group, consisting of a well-known apostle of the beautiful with a herd of eager worshippers surrounding him. He is supposed to be explaining his theories to willing ears, taking some pictures on the Academy walls as his texts. A group of well-known artists are watching the scene. On the left of the picture are a family of pure aesthetes absorbed in affected study of pictures. Near to them stands Anthony Trollope, whose homely figure affords a striking contrast to the eccentric forms near him.⁵¹

Of course, the "apostle of the beautiful" is none other than Oscar Wilde.

Repeatedly associated with the Aesthetic Movement and, by extension, the aristocratic and exclusive modes of viewing, Wilde in his own writings, including "The Soul of Man under Socialism" in 1891, raged against the middle-class art public:

The public has always, and in every age, been badly brought up. They are continually asking Art to be popular, to please their want of taste, to flatter their absurd vanity, to tell them what they have been told before, to show them what they ought to be tired of seeing, to amuse them when they feel

⁵⁰ Intriguingly, the group of the critic and his followers resembles a group in Frith's painting of the *Private View of the Royal Academy of 1880*, which refers to Oscar Wilde and his female followers.

⁵¹ W. P. Frith, *My Autobiography and Reminiscences* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888), 445.

heavy after eating too much, and to distract their thoughts when they are wearied of their own stupidity. *Now Art should never try to be popular. The public should try to make itself artistic.* [his italics]⁵²

As Linda Dowling discusses in *The Vulgarization of Art*, Wilde embodied the eighteenth-century understanding of civic humanism and focused upon an aristocratic understanding of art beyond middle-class popularity.⁵³ At the same time that Walter Besant describes art for the lower classes in his *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, as discussed below, Oscar Wilde maintains art in the realm of the upper classes.⁵⁴ Not content merely to utilize art and galleries as a setting for his characters, Wilde seeks to convey an entire philosophy of art. Indeed, so prevalent are themes of art-viewing in his plays and novels that it would be impossible to survey his entire oeuvre here.

In *Ideal Husband* of 1895, the world of Lord Goring and the Chilterns is decorated with art. Mrs. Cheveley asks to see Lady Chiltern's collection, remarking that she has some wonderful Corots; Mabel Chiltern declares, "You can come and sit down if you like, and talk about anything in the world, except The Royal Academy, Mrs. Cheveley, or novels in Scotch dialect. They are not improving subjects."⁵⁵ Lord Chiltern

⁵² Oscar Wilde, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," *The Soul of Man Under Socialism and Other Essays by Oscar Wilde*, intro. Philip Rieff (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 247. For a discussion of Wilde's criticism, see Julia Prewitt Brown, *Cosmopolitan Criticism: Oscar Wilde's Philosophy of Art* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997).

⁵³ Dowling, 97.

⁵⁴ Similarly, Henry James, in his novels chronicling Americans in Europe, including *The American*, *Portrait of a Lady*, and *Wings of the Dove*, repeatedly creates an upper-class realm filled with art and art galleries. See Adeline Tintner, *The Museum World of Henry James* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986).

⁵⁵ Oscar Wilde, *Ideal Husband*, 1:2.

jokes that the House of Commons ruins art. But Wilde's philosophy on the ownership of art comes through when Robert Chiltern recounts his crime, committed for a Baron:

He led me through his wonderful picture gallery, showed me his tapestries, his enamels, his jewels, his carved ivories, made me wonder at the strange loveliness of the luxury in which he lived; and then told me that luxury was nothing but a background, a painted scene in a play, and that power, power over other men, power over the world was the one thing worth having, the one supreme pleasure worth nothing.⁵⁶

The Baron dominates his possessions, indeed his world, in opposition to Wilde's notion that art should not be dominated by the spectator. Such an imbalance attests to the Baron's immorality, which has corrupted Lord Chiltern.

But while aesthetics merely add flavor to *Ideal Husband*, it is at the core of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1889. "It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors," as Wilde notes in the preface, and Dorian Gray is the ultimate spectator, watching the effects of his immoral life unfold on canvas.⁵⁷ The epitome of the double life of the Victorian gentleman, similar to *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, with which Wilde was familiar, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* explores the hypocrisy of Victorian society, for as Gray notes, "they are in the native land of the hypocrite."⁵⁸ And with that hypocrisy comes the loss of soul. For Wilde, spiritual well-being is reflected in a person's relationship to art; humanity and art are interconnected. When Gray, at the

⁵⁶ Wilde, *Ideal Husband*, 2:1.

⁵⁷ Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 22; Brown, 79.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 184.

end of the novel, destroys his portrait, he destroys himself.⁵⁹ Likewise, in a world where aristocrats had themselves painted and idealized, Dorian Gray is also a comment on the function and practice of portraiture—the “public” portrait versus the private reality.

Such a relationship between art and humanity also interested George Eliot in *Middlemarch*. Hugh Witemeyer, in *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, enumerates George Eliot’s predilection for and knowledge of art, detailing the exhibitions she saw, artists she knew, and books she read.⁶⁰ Familiar with and influenced by the works of Ruskin, Eliot frequented the Royal Academy and Water-Colour Society exhibitions as well as visited the studios of such famous artists as Lord Frederic Leighton, William Holman Hunt, George Watts, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Edward Burne-Jones. She also befriended Sir George Scharf, first Keeper of the National Portrait Gallery, and Gustav Waagen.⁶¹ The influence of the visual arts on Eliot’s writing appears more in her pictorialism, her description of the world her characters inhabit, than in any ekphrasis. As Witemeyer indicates, Eliot’s chapters are structured like a picture—the chapters begin with a visual description of scene that frames the dramatic presentation within. Eliot’s dedication to Ruskinian naturalism and her preference for representational art, such as Dutch seventeenth-century genre paintings and British portraiture, are embodied in the realism of her novels. In this, Eliot embodies the concept of *ut pictura poesis*, as is painting so is poetry.⁶² In *Middlemarch*, published in 1871-72, Eliot presents a series of genre scenes

⁵⁹ Brown, 80.

⁶⁰ Hugh Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 7-15.

⁶¹ Ibid., 10-11.

⁶² Ibid., 46.

detailing the development of Dorothea Brooke, who marries Mr. Casaubon, a scholar of antiquity, but falls in love with his nephew, the artist Will Ladislaw.

Dorothea, who is repeatedly described as practical, rejects the importance of art upon first meeting Ladislaw:

"I am no judge of these things," said Dorothea, not coldly, but with an eager deprecation of the appeal to her. "You know, uncle, I never see the beauty of those pictures which you say are so much praised. They are a language I do not understand. I suppose there is some relation between pictures and nature which I am too ignorant to feel—just as you see what a Greek sentence stands for which means nothing to me."⁶³

For Dorothea, art is too far removed from the concerns of daily life. She is more interested in people, preferring "her plans" of improved housing to Will's landscape sketches, for her personal motto is "what do we live for, if it is to make life less difficult for others?"⁶⁴

Her serious nature and desire to contribute, Saint Theresa-like, to the good of the world, first attracts Dorothea to the somber Mr. Casaubon. Dorothea first describes him as resembling "the inscription on the door of a museum which might open on the treasures of past ages."⁶⁵ However, this is not necessarily a positive description, for later in the novel it is revealed that Dorothea cares little for art or museums. Casaubon, an

⁶³ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 65.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 601.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

aging scholarly busily at work on the “key to all mythologies,” lacks passion or normal human emotions:

For in truth, as the day fixed for his marriage came nearer, Mr. Casaubon did not find his spirits rising; nor did the contemplation of that matrimonial garden scene, where, as all experience showed, the path was to be bordered with flowers, prove persistently more enchanting to him than the accustomed vaults where he walked taper in hand. He did not confess to himself, still less could he have breathed to another, his surprise that though he had won a lovely and noble-hearted girl he had not won delight,--which he had also regarded as an object to be found by search. It is true that he knew all the classical passages implying the contrary; but knowing classical passages, we find, is a mode of motion, which explains why they leave so little extra force for their personal application.⁶⁶

Like the Soul in Tennyson’s poem, Mr. Casaubon has become cold in his isolation from the world.

On her honeymoon with Casaubon in Rome, Dorothea visits all the museums and is soon tired of the galleries. Continuing the metaphor of Casaubon as museum, Dorothea tires of museums as she tires of Casaubon:

she drove with Mr. Casaubon to the Vatican, walked with him through the stony avenue of inscriptions, and when she parted with him at the entrance

⁶⁶ Ibid., 69.

to the Library, went on through the Museum out of mere listlessness as to what was around her.⁶⁷

When explaining her museum visit later, she declares:

I never could see any beauty in the pictures which my uncle told me all judges thought very fine. And I have gone about with just the same ignorance in Rome. There are comparatively few paintings that I can really enjoy. At first when I enter a room where the walls are covered with frescos, or with rare pictures, I feel a kind of awe—like a child present at great ceremonies where there are grand robes and processions; I feel myself in the presence of some higher life than my own. But when I begin to examine the pictures one by one the life goes out of them, or else is something violent and strange to me. It must be my own dullness. I am seeing so much all at once, and not understanding half of it. That always makes one feel stupid. It is painful to be told that anything is very fine and not be able to feel that it is fine—something like being blind, while people talk of the sky."⁶⁸

Dorothea, though not isolated from the world, is a Tennyson Soul alone in a palace unable to appreciate the art around her. Indeed, she questions art's very purpose, as well as the function of museums, "all this immense expense of art, that seems somehow to lie outside of life and make it no better for the world, pains one. It spoils my enjoyment of

⁶⁷ Ibid., 166.

⁶⁸ Eliot, 169.

anything when I am made to think that most people are shut out from it.”⁶⁹ In this, Eliot exposes her Ruskinian nature, advocating a social role for art.

Like Eliot, Wilde also recognized the teachings of Ruskin, prescribing a moral function for art, though not a puritanical Christian one. Through characters from Lord Henry Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, to Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband* and, most particularly, in the persona he crafted for himself, Wilde celebrated “apostles of the beautiful.” So connected to aristocratic rituals was Wilde, that spectators at his trial for gross indecency in 1895 shouted at his supporters, “Here are some more aristocrats!”⁷⁰ Despite such associations between Wilde and the aristocracy, his writings indicate that his notion of aristocracy involves not richness of belongings but spirit. In “The Soul of Man under Socialism,” appearing in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1891, Wilde embraces the ability of all classes, once freed of the pressure of the accumulation of material wealth, to develop Individualism—“Private property has crushed true individualism . . . it has debarred one part of the community from being individual by starving them.”⁷¹ The elimination of private property aids not only the starving but those coerced into providing them charity instead of pursuing their own leisure.⁷² Under such socialist conditions, true art can flourish, freed from the demands to be profitable and popular. These subtleties were lost, however, on Wilde’s audience who collected his witticisms and celebrated his downfall.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 179-180.

⁷⁰ Dowling, 98.

⁷¹ Oscar Wilde, “The Soul of Man Under Socialism,” 234.

⁷² “And when scientific men are no longer called upon to go down to a depressing East-End and distribute bad cocoa and worse blankets to starving people, they will have delightful leisure in which to devise wonderful and marvelous things for their own joy and the joy of everyone else.” Ibid., 245-6.

Wilde, however, is not the only figure to bear the brunt of ridicule. Repeatedly in the pages of *Punch*, pretentious members of the art public come under gentle criticism. In William Ralston's "At the Academy" (figure 61) of 1871, an elegantly dressed young woman escorted by her father and another woman cries indignantly, "Now, I told you, Papa, this wasn't the fashionable hour. We'll have nothing but these horrid pictures to look at until the people come!"⁷³ The art is antithetical to the young lady's purpose in visiting. The composition of the cartoon reinforces the young lady's disdain for art. The woman on the man's left studies her catalogue and the painting she faces while the gentleman holds his catalogue but does not directly face the wall of paintings. The young lady's catalogue is rolled up in her hands, while her face turns away from both the paintings and her companions, as she surveys the gallery. This image is devoid of figures, with only two lone gentleman positioned far in the background, in direct contrast to the crowds of other cartoons and of the Royal Academy exhibition itself; the focus is on the lady and her companions. This cartoon, as the lady herself indicates, is better understood within the realm of fashion than of art—her stylish dress is carefully delineated in a profile often seen in fashion plates so as to better show more of the dress, including the fashionably large bustle.

Art is clearly antagonistic to socializing. In "Happy Thought—Division of Labour" (figure 62) a fashionable man and woman standing with their backs to an art-filled wall decide to split up the duties of visiting the exhibition: "S'pose *you* look at the pictures, while *I* confine my attention to the catalogue! Get through the job in half the

⁷³ William Ralston, "At the Academy," *Punch* 60 (June 10, 1871): 241.

time, you know!”⁷⁴ Equally beguiling as a statement of *Punch*’s opinion of its audience’s appreciation of art, there is an article below the cartoon entitled, “Fine Arts.”⁷⁵ Declaring that every member of society “must have at his tongue’s tip a smatter of Art-jargon, and pretend to know a something about poetry of handling, middle, distances, and high lights,” the article lists the fine arts that society really cares about: the art of young men to dance, the art of securing good theater seats, the art of keeping poor relations at a distance, the art of going hunting without paying the expenses, and the art of “exchanging” an umbrella at the Club for a better one.⁷⁶

This change of tone from the earlier cartoons evinces a paradigm shift in the understanding of art and art institutions. For more than fifty years, the nationalization of culture—with Parliament’s formation of the National Gallery, passage of the Museums Act of 1845, and foundation of the South Kensington Museum, to name a few—had expanded the audience of art from the wealthy to the working classes on the principle that art was morally uplifting and also economically advantageous. However, as the ideal of “art for the people” became a reality, the middle and upper classes reasserted the traditional function of art as a sign of status by separating themselves from the working classes within the art world. Fashion and flirting have replaced education as the motivation for visiting an art institution. Where once the poor had been invited, now they are excluded, along with others not in possession of the cultural code.

⁷⁴ “Happy Thought—Division of Labor.” *Punch* 62 (June 22, 1872): 253.

⁷⁵ “Fine Arts,” *Punch* 62 (June 22, 1872): 253.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Art for the People

The “art for the people” movement which dominated the last quarter of the nineteenth century originated with the Crystal Palace. Funded by the receipts of the Crystal Palace, the South Kensington Museum, under the direction of Henry Cole and the Department of Science and Art, existed to introduce art to the lower classes. At this point, “art” for the people was limited to instruction in design and not the “high art” of oil paintings. The museum’s collection of decorative arts opened to the public in 1857 and was lit by gaslight, allowing evening hours until 10 p.m. in the summers to attract working men and women. In an address of 1857, Cole celebrated the museum:

The working man comes to this Museum from his one or two dimly lighted, cheerless dwelling-rooms, in his fustian jacket, with his shirt collars a little trimmed up, accompanied by his threes, and fours, and fives of little fustian jackets, a wife, in her best bonnet, and a baby, of course, under her shawls. The looks of surprise and pleasure of the whole party when they first observe the brilliant lighting inside the Museum show what a new, acceptable, and wholesome excitement this evening entertainment affords to all of them. Perhaps the evening opening of Public Museums may furnish a powerful antidote to the gin palace.⁷⁷

Art as the antidote to the disease of alcoholism was an idea that persisted in the rhetoric surrounding public art institutions, an indication of the museum’s paternalistic role as savior of the working classes. In Sir John Tenniel’s diptych, “The Sunday Question”

⁷⁷ Henry Cole, *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole, KCB*, 2 vols (London: George Bell and Sons, 1884), 2:293.

(figure 63), which appeared in *Punch* in 1869, two vignettes contrast alcohol and art.⁷⁸ In “The Public House,” a woman in a checkered shawl pulls on the arm of a man as to encourage him to leave the pub. His disheveled appearance betrays that he has been drinking there too long. In contrast, in the “The House for the Public,” a woman with the same checkered shawl stands beside a more elegantly dressed man who gestures towards a museum display case. Clearly, *Punch* believed, as Cole again advocated in a later speech:

The fine arts are the handmaidens of religion and gentle culture. You young students recollect the “emollit mores” sentence! . . . If you wish to vanquish Drunkenness and the Devil, make God’s day of rest elevating and refining for the working man; don’t leave him to find his recreation in bed first, and in the public-house afterwards . . . open all museums of Science and Art after the hours of Divine service; let the working man get his refreshment there in company with his wife and children, rather than leave him to booze away from them in the public-house and Gin Palace. The museum will certainly lead him to wisdom and gentleness, and to Heaven, whilst the latter will lead him to brutality and perdition.⁷⁹

In opposition to the value of elite viewing rituals and spaces such as the Grosvenor Gallery for “people making any pretensions to Art culture,” the value of art for the working classes was moral and spiritual, even physical, improvement.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Sir John Tenniel, “The Sunday Question,” *Punch* 56 (April 17, 1869): 157-58.

⁷⁹ Cole, 2:368.

⁸⁰ *Art Journal* “The Grosvenor Gallery,” 16 (August 1, 1877): 244.

The very inclusion of the lower classes within the art public in the wake of the Crystal Palace could be touted as the main achievement of public art institutions at mid-century. The *Art Journal* could celebrate, upon its twentieth volume in 1857:

Art has largely progressed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, during the past twenty years. There are now no privileged classes to whom it is an enjoyment from which others are debarred; its advantages may be obtained by all who desire them. It is a Teacher of the many, and not of the few. Its lessons have been so widely disseminated, that the Artisan and the Villager may command all, or nearly all, the resources which, until recently, were regarded as appertaining to the high-born or the rich.⁸¹

Despite such celebrations, however, the working classes, and even the lower middle classes, began to be excluded from the general art public. As Bourdieu describes, the taste of one class can only be defined in contrast to another.⁸² In images of the art public, outsiders are established as a foil to people of taste, namely the readers of *Punch*. By ridiculing the “other,” *Punch* establishes its readers as insiders. Thus, by reading *Punch*, aspirants to refinement would learn the code needed to participate in the realm of culture; those who already belonged reinforced their cultural superiority. In Charles Keene’s “Mrs. Brown at the Academy” (figure 64), of 1864, an exhausted woman describes her experience of the exhibition: “Well, in all my born days, I never see such a many pictures; and Lor! the gold frames was beautiful—but I got that squeegee I did, and

⁸¹ [no title], *Art Journal* 19 (Dec. 1, 1857): 361.

⁸² Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 32-60. See also Pierre Bourdieu, “Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception.” *The Field of Cultural Production*. Ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 215-237.

the place were that stuffy.”⁸³ Mrs. Brown’s outsider status is marked in several ways. In the text, her ungrammatical speech coupled with her unsophisticated critique of the exhibition demonstrate her unfamiliarity with the exhibition, while visually she is awkward, as her hoop skirts rise to reveal her petticoat and feet that, though stretched out, do not reach the ground.⁸⁴ Her face expresses her bewilderment, as lines crease her brow and her eyebrows are raised in surprise. Packed around her are other visitors to the exhibition, but these more serenely examine the works of art, the ubiquitous catalog in hand.⁸⁵

This trope of the outsider continues in “A Note and Query” (figure 65), of 1873.⁸⁶ Here “Farmer Drennidg” meets his rector at the Royal Academy exhibition and asks about a painting of the biblical swine crashing into the sea. The rector is more than happy to encourage his parishioner’s interest in both the Bible and art. But Farmer Drennidg wants to know, “ ‘Whew paid for they drowned pigs, Sir!’ ” His attention to economic concerns, the business end of the biblical story, so far removed from the painting of it, marks him as a tradesman and not a proper member of the art public. In case this point is missed, he is the only bowler-hatted man and also the shortest figure in

⁸³ Charles Keene, “Mrs. Brown at the Academy,” *Punch* 47 (July 9, 1864): 20. Charles Keene (1823-1891) began contributing to *Punch* in 1851, joining the staff permanently 1860. He is known for his daily scenes of middle class culture, which were collected in *Our People* in 1881.

⁸⁴ *Punch* artists cannot resist a jab at the ridiculous crinoline fashions of the period.

⁸⁵ Another Keene cartoon focusing on the experiences of an individual in an exhibition, “Oil and Water,” of 1870, similarly satirizes “an old gentleman from the country.” The man, facing away from a painting, stares perplexed at his catalogue—“his friends have carelessly sent him to the Royal Academy Exhibition with a ‘Water-Color’ Catalogue!” Not only does the water-color catalogue not mix with the catalogue describing the oil paintings of the R. A., this country bumpkin does not fit into the crowd of urban swells around him. His inexperience and identity as an outsider of the art world are also evident in the fact that he has borrowed the catalogue instead of purchased one of his own. Charles Keene, “Oil and Water,” *Punch* 58 (May 7, 1870): 179.

⁸⁶ “A Note and a Query,” *Punch* 64 (June 21, 1873): 261. This cartoon is unsigned.

the cartoon, despite the presence of three women. He is clearly an outsider here. A similar cartoon dismissing the bourgeois interest in art as an economic commodity is Keene's "Unto This Last" (figure 66), of 1868.⁸⁷ Two men, dressed in top hats and ill-fitting coats and trousers, stand before a painting discussing its merits: "I've heeard as the paint on some o' these yere 'Picters' comes to a matter fir' pounds sometimes, let alone the man's time a layin' of it on, yer know!"⁸⁸ Their interest in art is limited to the cost of the materials and the time of the labor, as they calculate the worth of the painting in economic terms.⁸⁹ This kind of vulgarization of art, the appeal to the marketplace, was much derided in the second half of the nineteenth century as the mark of the unrefined middle classes, as seen in Arnold's criticism of the middle class's lack of "sweetness and light"—the signs of a cultured mind educated by the humanist tradition—and their *laissez faire* attitude of "doing what one likes," often in pursuit of material gain.

In the decade in which he lived in England, J. J. J. Tissot painted numerous canvases detailing this focus on materiality by the upper classes in London, including *The Ball on Shipboard* (c. 1873, Tate Gallery), *On the Thames* (c. 1875, Wakefield Museums

⁸⁷ Charles Keene, "Unto This Last," *Punch* 55 (July 18, 1868): 23.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ W. Ralston's cartoon "Academy Pencillings" of 1873, a reference to John Ruskin's famous "Academy Notes," also reveals middle-class assumptions about the work behind a work of art. A bowler-hatted man boasts that his work has been "'ung on the line again." A fashionable gentleman, cum top hat, declares that he thought Millais painted the work. "Pooh! 'e may have painted it, but I made the frame!" replies the stranger. While the gentleman exhibits his learning by recognizing Millais' hand and the fact that the stranger is not Millais, the stranger proudly declares his own work. But work, as well as working-men are antithetical to the art exhibition. W. Ralston, "Academy Pencillings," *Punch* 65 (July 12, 1873): 11.

and Arts), and *London Visitors* (figure 67; 1874, Toledo Museum of Art).⁹⁰ Reminiscent of the painting by Angelo Collen Hayter discussed in Chapter Two, this painting depicts the porch of the National Gallery, with the façade of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields visible behind. On the porch, in contrast to Hayter's painting, are several respectable individuals. In the center, pointing towards Trafalgar Square, off the right margin of the painting, is an unkempt man with a striking red beard—perhaps a Scot?—accompanying a fashionably dressed woman. He consults his book, likely a travel guide to London that identifies the various national monuments of which the museum and Trafalgar Square were two of the most important, while she stares out of the canvas at the viewer. Behind them, another fashionably dressed female tourist speaks to a young man in a long, “bluecoat”, a visual twin of the boy in the foreground.⁹¹ These boys wear the uniform of the school of Christ's Hospital, a boarding school for boys from lower-class families. The students often guided tourists around the sights of London, as seen here. Intriguingly, Tissot offers not a view of the inside of the National Gallery, but the visitors entering and leaving. It is the identities of the visitors, their places in society, which interest the artist, not the museum ritual or viewing of art. Indeed, the visit to the National Gallery is very much presented as a “thing to do,” a fashionable activity, part of the tourist ritual, complete with guides to accommodate out-of-towners; however, this

⁹⁰ Tissot also produced a drypoint entitled *La Portique de la Galerie Nationale a Londres*, c. 1878, which depicted a young woman—Tissot's beloved Kathleen Newton—on the steps with copybook under her arm, and older man and young woman in the background. Warner, 152.

⁹¹ The “bluecoat” identifies the boys as pupils at one of London's charitable schools, as blue was one of the cheapest dyes available. The wearing of the bluecoat dates back to the mid-16th century and has long been a recognizable sign of young scholars.

distinction is not presented without a note of sarcasm.⁹² In the background, the clock of the church indicates that it is 10:35. At the time, the museum opened at 10. The tourists have seen the entire national collection in less than thirty minutes and are looking for their next stop. Also ironic, the lower-class boys serve as guides for the upper classes. Tissot has painted a companion to *Punch*'s cartoons of art-world outsiders, literally outside the museum.

While such cartoons suggested the middle-class desire for distinction from those who did not possess cultural capital, the solution to outsiders within the art public even more clearly codified the genteel identity of the middle classes. In the 1870s and 1880s, middle-class reformers, following Ruskinian ideas of the moral benefits of art, established separate art institutions in the East End, the location of the worst poverty and crime in London. In creating separate art institutions for the working classes, these cultural philanthropists followed another Ruskinian concept—different museums for different types of people. Repeatedly, Ruskin asserted this segregation of the art public. In his testimony before Parliament in 1857 regarding the location of the National Gallery, he asserted:

pictures not of great value, but of sufficient value to interest the public, and of merit enough to form the basis of early education, and to give examples of all art, should be collected in the popular Gallery, but that all

⁹² Malcolm Warner, "London Visitors," *The Victorians: British Painting 1837-1901* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1997), 151.

the precious things should be removed and put into the great Gallery,
where they would be safest, irrespectively altogether of accessibility.⁹³

Writing in 1880, Ruskin again contrasted museums for insiders and outsiders: "A Museum, primarily, is to be for *simple* persons . . . For your student, your antiquary, or your scientific gentleman, there must be separate accommodation."⁹⁴ While Ruskin himself had long taught at the Working Men's College in London, he strongly believed that the separation of the classes was vital to the health of the nation. Education "should be clearly understood to be no means of getting on in the world, but a means of staying pleasantly in your place there."⁹⁵ In creating separate institutions for the working classes, cultural philanthropists confirmed their own class identity through their charity.

In his novel, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, Walter Besant describes just such a cultural philanthropist, heiress Angela Messenger, who has relocated to London's East End in order to help the working classes:

the great Joyless City. It is, in fact, the heart of the East End. Its streets are mean and without individuality or beauty; at no season and under no conditions can they ever be picturesque; one can tell without inquiring that

⁹³ Ruskin, "Picture Galleries—Their Functions and Formation," *The Works of John Ruskin*, 13:547.

⁹⁴ Ruskin, "A Museum or Picture Gallery: Its Functions and Its Formation," *The Works of John Ruskin*, 13:251.

⁹⁵ The whole quote reads: "There is a strange notion in the mob's mind now-a-days (including all our popular economists and educators, as we must justly may, under the brief term, 'mob'), that *everybody* can be uppermost; or at least, that a state of general scramble, in which everybody in his turn should come to the top, is a proper Utopian constitution; and that, once give every lad a good education, and he cannot but come to ride in his carriage (the methods of supply of coachmen and footmen not being contemplated). And very sternly I say to you—and say from sure knowledge—that a man had better not know how to read and write, than receive education on such terms. The first condition under which it can be given usefully is, that it should be clearly understood to be no means of getting on in the world, but a means of staying pleasantly in your place there." John Ruskin, "Of Public Education Irrespective of Class-distinction," *The Works of John Ruskin*, 17:396-7

the lives led in those houses are all after the same model, and that the inhabitants have no pleasures. . . . Now the really sad thing about this district is that the residents are not the starving class, or the vicious class, or the drinking class; they are a well-to-do and thriving people, yet they desire no happiness, they do not feel the lack of joy, they live in meanness and are contented.⁹⁶

Witnessing this, “Angela resolved, therefore, that on this spot the Palace of Joy should stand. There should be, for all who chose to accept it, a general and standing invitation to accept happiness and create new forms of delight.”⁹⁷ Besant’s novel contrasts two worlds—the west London and the East End—while exploring current philosophies about alleviating the poverty of the working classes. Indeed, the novel even inspired the foundation of the People’s Palace in 1884.⁹⁸ In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, art seemed the answer to the ills of the poor. Cultural philanthropists established institutions specifically addressed to the needs of the working classes, including free admission, evening and weekend hours, and explanatory lectures and texts.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Walter Besant, *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882), 164.

⁹⁷ Besant, 166.

⁹⁸ Part of the “Polytechnic craze,” the People’s Palace had been “brought into existence by a novelist, nourished by generous endowments, warmed by the sunlight of Royal patronage, managed and supervised by a knightly philanthropist.” “The People’s Palace: A True Story with a Warning,” *Pall Mall Gazette* (February 28, 1891): 1.

⁹⁹ See Shelagh Wilson, “‘The Highest Art for the Lowest People’: The Whitechapel and Other Philanthropic Art Galleries, 1877-1901,” *Governing Cultures*, ed. Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), 172-86.

Preeminent among these “palaces for the people” was Reverend Samuel Barnett’s Whitechapel Art Exhibition, established in 1881.¹⁰⁰ Barnett, with his wife Henrietta, had moved to the neighborhood in order to oversee the parish. A visiting Survey Committee, reporting on its finds a few years later, noted that it “had this morning seen spectacles of the way in which human beings lived which could not be mentioned to ears polite, and which far exceeded anything that realistic novelists had ever invented.”¹⁰¹ Of course, Whitechapel is best known as the location of the Jack the Ripper murders in 1888. It was the perfect neighborhood for the Barnetts to test their “belief that the sight of such things will not only give rare pleasure, but will do something to create a taste which in finding its gratification will work many needed reforms.”¹⁰²

The Whitechapel Exhibition embodied Barnett’s belief that pictures could teach the people better than sermons.¹⁰³ The first exhibit presented embroidery, pottery, scientific instruments and paintings by such renowned artists as Leighton and George Frederick Watts to an estimated audience of 10,000 visitors in just ten days. By 1896, more than 63,000 people would visit the Whitechapel Exhibition, purchasing more than

¹⁰⁰ The Whitechapel Exhibition became the Whitechapel Gallery in 1901. The Barnetts were not, however, the only or the earliest advocates of “Art for the People.” T. C. Horsfall, founder of the Manchester Art Museum, believed that studying nature would benefit the urban poor who would appreciate some beauty in the ugliness of their world. William Rossiter in August 1879 opened a loan exhibition in South London Working Men’s College, open in the evenings and Sunday afternoons, attracting almost 4000 people.

¹⁰¹ “The Condition of Whitechapel,” *Times*, June 22, 1888, 7.

¹⁰² Rev. Samuel A. Barnett, Letter to the *Times*, April 4, 1881, 7.

¹⁰³ As he once stated, “If Christ were among us in this age of picture galleries, he would exhort the people to look at the painted lessons in pictures.” As quoted in Frances Borzello, *Civilizing Caliban: The Misuse of Art, 1875-1980* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 84. Similarly, the Rev. Thomas Hooper based his sermons on actual paintings on display in the Royal Academy. Borzello, 84.

22,000 catalogues.¹⁰⁴ “Who are the visitors, it may be asked?” *The Pall Mall Gazette* explains:

They are very literally all sorts and conditions of men, from the West-ender who goes down to see how the common people behave, to the factory girls who couldn’t tell you why they go, but for whom the pictures have a strange fascination, and who wander in, evening after evening, when their day’s work is done.¹⁰⁵

Popular accounts of the exhibition reinforce the good behavior, if poor dress, of the vast crowds who attended.¹⁰⁶

Each year at the opening of the exhibition, famous speakers, including Henry Irving and William Morris, would address the crowd, celebrating the importance of art for the working classes. In his examination of arts for the working classes entitled *Civilizing Caliban*, Frances Borzello focuses upon the content of these speeches at Whitechapel, revealing much about attitudes of and the relationship among the classes, from the upper class standpoint. Repeatedly, speakers acknowledged the difficulties of their listeners, from hard labor to extreme boredom; such misery, however, was eased by art. As the Marquess of Ripon described in 1886, “he sincerely trusted that many would come there not only to study the pictures with advantage, but to obtain the pure light

¹⁰⁴ Borzello, 69.

¹⁰⁵ “At the East-End ‘Academy’,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 2, 1886: 2.

¹⁰⁶ “Art Criticism at the East-End,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 13, 1891, 3; “Holiday—And Hard Work,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, March 30, 1891, 2; “Sunday Evening at a South London Picture Gallery,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 14, 1889, 6.

which only true art could shed on man's monotonous existence."¹⁰⁷ The speakers' patronizing attitudes towards the working classes is clear in the identification of their audience as "low in life," "rough fellows," and, more objectively, "the less favored classes," utilized by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Roseberry, and the Marquess of Ripon respectively.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, as Borzello explains, it was the mission of the privileged upper classes to provide aid to the poor. Philanthropy, like the possession of cultural capital, is a form of class distinction. Providing art for the lower classes enabled the upper classes to stress both their possession of that cultural capital as well as their social difference from the classes below. The motivation behind such exhibitions, however, was not merely social, as Lord Roseberry reveals:

Such an exhibition was the outcome of the movement now going on for the raising and bettering of the working classes, an unselfish object because it was connected with the idea that those to whom we have entrusted the great mass of political power of this country should be fitted, so far as lays within our means, to enjoy and exercise that power.¹⁰⁹

Fifteen years later, Lord Ripon recognized that such exhibitions did more than educate those possessing political power, they ensured even the "safety of the country for the next few years."¹¹⁰ Art and culture remained a form of social, class, and political control by

¹⁰⁷ *East London Advertiser*, April 17, 1886: 3; quoted in Borzello, 77. Despite every attempt to locate these papers in the United States, I have had to draw upon Borzello's study extensively.

¹⁰⁸ *East London Advertiser*, March 16, 1901: 8; quoted in Borzello, 76. *East London Observer*, April 9, 1892: 6; quoted in Borzello, 77. *East London Advertiser*, April 17, 1886: 7; quoted in Borzello, 78.

¹⁰⁹ *Tower Hamlets Independent*, April 23, 1881: 3; quoted in Borzello, 78.

¹¹⁰ *East London Advertiser*, April 4, 1896: 7; quoted in Borzello, 78.

the upper classes over the lower classes. The gap between the classes, optimistically ignored at mid-century, has widened.

Such social, cultural, and political differences symbolically appear as a geographical opposition. As Besant described:

Two millions of people, or thereabouts, live in the East End of London. That seems a good-sized population for an utterly unknown town. They have no institutions of their own to speak of, no public buildings of any importance, no municipality, no gentry, no carriages, no soldiers, no picture-galleries, no theatres, no opera—they have nothing. . . . the rich London merchants go north and south and west; but they go not east. Nobody goes east; no one wants to see the place; no one is curious about the way or life in the east . . . If anything happens in the east, people at the other end have to stop and think before they can remember where the place may be.¹¹¹

Besant's duality of East and West appears frequently in the commentary on the East End.

Characterizing East Enders, an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

“What chiefly surprises most visitors is probably the *respectability* of their more easterly brethren. Here and there are to be seen, indeed, the faces of the ‘aimless, helpless, hopeless,’ ne-er-do-wells, whose existence is misery to themselves and despair to the social reformer. But on the whole the aspect of the crowd is pre-eminently cheering. The men look sober

¹¹¹ Besant, 23.

and industrious, the women neat and modest, and here and there are to be found strikingly fine types.”¹¹²

The author, however, is clearly not a member of the “motley assemblage,” as he described how he became “alarmed for his personal safety.”¹¹³ However, the ogling of East Enders by their westerly brethren seems to have been a common pastime. A “lady correspondent” describes for the *Pall Mall Gazette* her trip to see Camberwell Fine Art Free Collection and the crowd who attended. Immediately, she asks the attendant, “Do these people appreciate the pictures?”¹¹⁴ Such paternal attitudes toward the East Enders is symptomatic of the motivation behind the exhibitions themselves. But as Lord Rosebery noted in his opening-day speech in 1881, the roads ran both ways:

What I like to see here is that some of the things that are best in our palaces have been brought here among the poor, and I trust that the effect on the many thousands who visit these schools in the next ten days will be such as to encourage those who come here to visit the treasures of art in her own dwellings in the West of London.¹¹⁵

While West-enders might travel east to stare at “all sorts and conditions of men,” the “poor” can also travel west to visit art in its appropriate location.

For twelve hours a day, for free, the public could visit the galleries of the Whitechapel Exhibition and hear lectures by Barnett and the staff. He began by lecturing amid the crowds, but “as many hot breaths and unclean clothes were not helpful, he was

¹¹² “Art Criticism at the East-End,” *Pall Mall Gazette* (March 31, 1891): 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ “Sunday Evening at a South London Picture Gallery,” *Pall Mall Gazette* (October 14, 1889): 6.

¹¹⁵ *Tower Hamlets Independent*, April 23, 1881: 3; quoted in Borzello, 74.

persuaded to stand on school forms, or on chairs placed in appropriate places.”¹¹⁶ Such lectures informed the audience of the subject of the painting, while also stressing the positive values of work and family. As Barnett noted in 1886, “Talking is as popular as ever and a crowd is always ready to go around when I will.”¹¹⁷ For Barnett, such lectures were crucial to his mission of bringing art to the people, for he believed that words bridged the gap between paintings and people.

In addition to the spoken word, visitors to the Whitechapel Exhibition could receive instruction through comprehensible, didactic catalogues by 1882. The catalogues contained lessons in the proper value of hard work, earnestness, family—especially maternal—devotion. Catalogue entries, like the lectures, explained the literary allusions of Shakespeare and Sophocles, but possess little biographical narrative except in support of values of hard work and improvement.¹¹⁸ Regarding the use of the catalogues, Barnett had written to a friend in 1885,

The spectators have learnt wonderfully. They study their catalogues, remember the pictures of past years, and compare their lessons. More and more am I convinced of the education which such an effort has accomplished.¹¹⁹

Both catalogues and lectures figure prominently in depictions of the Whitechapel exhibitions. In the illustration “Sunday Afternoon in the Whitechapel Picture Gallery”

¹¹⁶ Henrietta Octavia Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1918), 2:155.

¹¹⁷ Barnett, 154.

¹¹⁸ Borzello, 66.

¹¹⁹ Barnett, 2:156.

(figure 68) included in Henrietta Barnett's two-volume biography of her husband, *Canon Barnett, His Life, Work, and Friends*, a mass of the working class men and women, in bowler hats and bonnets, swirl around the galleries. Clearly visible in the right foreground, one bowler-hatted man reads his catalogue, just as Barnett intended. Interestingly, the most prominent figure in the image, marked by both his height and his shiny black top hat, is not a member of the working classes but of the "cultural philanthropists" who loaned their pictures to the exhibition, in what Henrietta Barnett termed "a daring social blending of East and West."¹²⁰ Even participation in the Whitechapel exhibition set apart the haves who owned art from the have nots who could only look. And of course, the image reminds the viewer that such looking is safely mediated by the upper classes. In the inset, Reverend Barnett, no doubt standing on a "school form" or chair, lectures with pointed finger to the masses—of various ages, genders, and classes—who gather around him.

Barnett likewise appears in an illustration for the article, "At the East-End 'Academy'" (figure 69). Written for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the article provides "A 'Private View' at St. Jude's Schools, Whitechapel." This article and the attendant illustrations have been analyzed in Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd's introduction to *Governing Cultures*, in which they focus on "the connection between social class and aesthetic experience, the independent gazes of the visitors."¹²¹ Focusing on the three illustrations of viewers looking at works of art, Barlow and Trodd reveal the distance

¹²⁰ Ibid., 2:153.

¹²¹ Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd, "Constituting the Public: Art and Its Institutions in Nineteenth-Century London," *Governing Cultures*, ed. Paul Barlow and Colin Trodd (Aldershot, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2000), 5.

between the audience and the art they examine. In both “The Symbol” and “Consulting the Oracle” the viewers are below the paintings and separated from them by a rail, just as they are outside the institutions that make aesthetic judgements—museums and parliamentary Select Committees. What Barlow and Trodd’s discussion omits is the patronizing tone of the article towards the visitors to the East End exhibition. Indeed, the very subtitle a “Private View” pokes fun at the financial difference between the Private View of the Royal Academy and a visit to this “East-End ‘Academy’.” The article repeatedly contrasts the East and West End, noting the superiority of the eastern exhibitions, as “they are not overpowered by a confusing multitude of pictures—good, bad, and indifferent.” The audiences’ experiences are different too, as the writer mentions the weariness “most of us” experience at the Royal Academy, in contrast to the “frank enjoyment and evident interest” at the “Burlington House of Whitechapel.” The catalogue of Whitechapel spares them “the technical criticism, to the infinite boredom of which West-enders submit so patiently . . . [providing] instead intelligible accounts of what each picture means or might mean,” with the implication that they would otherwise not know. Finally, should the reader of the paper be impressed with the good work of the exhibition, they are informed: “any one who cares—just as the three months’ picture season is beginning in the West—to subscribe towards the £150 that are wanted to pay for the three weeks’ season now closing in the East may at any rate be assured that his charity will do no harm.” The article and illustrations clearly continue to make the distinction between East and West, receiving and giving charity, the working and the leisured classes.

Representations of the working classes appear repeatedly in such periodicals as the *Graphic* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, both of which advocated culture for the working classes. As early as 1872, the *Graphic* depicted the appearance of the working classes in the National Gallery. E. J. Brewtnall's "A Party of Working Men at the National Gallery" (figure 70) portrays a man in a fustian jacket and bowler hat leaning towards a painting pointed out by a swell in top hat and jacket.¹²² This illustration turns the traditional representation of the art public inside out; where the upper classes had once existed in the center with the lesser classes circling them, here a working class man, in the company of his fellows, is the focus of attention. Of course, his appreciation of art is mediated by the instruction of the gentleman but his appearance in the center of the illustration redefines visually the purpose of the National Gallery, which, while espousing the cause of the working class, had always been depicted as a haven of the other classes. Around them stand the more traditional inhabitants of the galleries, including top-hatted gentlemen and a woman with a child. Such an image, however, is not necessarily a descriptive image of the appearance of the working classes at the National Gallery. The National Gallery, though free to the public, had severely restricted hours, closing as early as 7 p.m. in the summers. Indeed, as Barnett had noted regarding Cole's South Kensington Museum, which even had later hours:

they certainly cannot afford time after work to clean themselves and travel to the west, spend an hour in the gallery, return, and get enough sleep before next morning's early rising. Few too could afford a railway fare

¹²² E.J. Brewtnall, "A Party of Working Men at the National Gallery," *The Graphic Supplement* (6 August 1870), 214. See also, "Art Connoisseurs at the East End: A Study at Sir Richard Wallace's Loan Collection in the Bethnal Green Museum," *The Graphic Supplement* 5 (19 April 1873), 368-9.

which, though it might be small, often bears a large proportion to the weekly wage.¹²³

As many had noted, the trip from east to west was prohibitive.

One of the only days that the working classes were ever seen in the National Gallery or even the British Museum, were on the traditional working-class holiday of Whitmonday and other Bank Holidays. “The South Kensington Museum on a Whitmonday” (figure 71) from the *Graphic* stresses the abundance of the crowds filling the galleries. In the foreground, a diversity of types are visible—young and old, male and female, bowler hats and top hats. In the *Illustrated London News*’s layout “Bank Holiday at the British Museum” (figure 72) seven vignettes poke fun at the working classes in these national institutions: a mother soothes a crying child, visitors climb over and eat around a statue, a man and his family mistakenly look for Madame Tussaud’s “Chamber of Horrors,” children become separated from their parents.¹²⁴ The *Illustrated London News*, a paper geared to the upper classes, overturns the positive approach of the *Graphic* and ridicules the appearance of the working classes in the museum.

While the majority of images thus discussed have appeared as illustrations or cartoons in periodicals, there are also paintings of the working classes looking at art. Edward Richard Taylor’s “’Twas a Famous Victory” (figure 73; Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery) of 1883, depicts two young sailors talking to a wizened old pensioner before Turner’s *The Battle of Trafalgar as Seen from the Mizen Starboard*

¹²³ Barnett, 161.

¹²⁴ “Bank Holiday at the British Museum,” *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1887: 412.

Shrouds of the Victory.¹²⁵ In the background, another man examines Gainsborough's portrait of Mrs. Siddons. Otherwise, the galleries are empty. Eleven years earlier, a similar depiction appeared in the *Graphic*. In "Holiday Folks at the National Gallery" (figure 74), two old sailors stand before and clearly discuss Turner's painting, while around them mill members of the working classes. Specifically, a man in worn boots and an ill-fitting coat has entered the room with his wife and children, awed as he looks up at the paintings around him, hat in hand out of respect.¹²⁶

Thus, even though many of these representations of the working classes celebrate their appearance in art galleries and are published in periodicals for their own consumption, such images and periodicals are still motivated by the upper classes and not by the working classes themselves. The appalling poverty at the end of the nineteenth century in London could not be ignored. Numerous studies called attention to it.¹²⁷ The popular notion to combat such poverty was not to throw money at the problem but to change the lives of the working classes. It was believed that the culture of the fine arts as found in Whitechapel and other exhibitions would ameliorate this problem. In the process, the upper classes could feel as if they were doing something constructive to help. But this advocacy of high-art culture for the working classes, as discussed by Gareth Stedman Jones, ignored, or even more particularly tried to replace, the vibrant popular culture of music halls, half-holidays, and pubs that the working classes had created for

¹²⁵ Thirty years earlier, in 1851, Turner had bequested almost 300 paintings and thousands of drawings to the National Gallery. First displayed in Marlborough House and then in the South Kensington Museum, the paintings returned to Trafalgar Square with the completion of the Barry Rooms in 1876.

¹²⁶ "Holiday Folks at the National Gallery," *The Graphic Supplement* 6 (3 August 1872): 125.

¹²⁷ Most famous of these was Charles Booth's *Labour and Life of the People*, of 1889, which revealed that 35% of the population was living in abject poverty. Charles Booth, *Labour and Life of the People* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891).

themselves.¹²⁸ However, these latter were not seen as “healthy” pursuits. As Walter Besant writes,

It is that would-be philanthropists and benefactors and improvers of things have all along been working on a false assumption. They have taught and believed that the people look up to the ‘better class’—phrase invented by the well-to-do in order to show how riches and virtue go together—for guidance and advice. My dear, it is the greatest mistake: they do not look up to us at all; they do not want to copy our ways; they are perfectly satisfied with their own ways; they will naturally take as much money as we choose to give them, and as many presents; and they consider the exhortations, teachings, preachings, admonitions, words of guidance, and advice as uncomfortable but unavoidable accompaniments of this gift. But we ourselves are neither respected nor copied. Nor do they want our culture.¹²⁹

The images themselves acknowledge this patronizing attitude towards the working classes, as they are shown as different from the middle and upper classes within the realm of culture, which was still dominated and controlled by the figures of Barnett and gentlemen in top hats. For in the end, such institutions as the Whitechapel Exhibition and the *Pall Mall Gazette* still presented an image of the working classes to those above them in order to assure their supporters that the working classes could and would be civilized.

¹²⁸ Gareth Stedman Jones, “Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900; Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class,” *Journal of Social History* 7 (Summer 1974): 478-79

¹²⁹ Besant, 128.

The working classes, despite the concern for their appearance in the art public, remain invisible.

The social geography of the art world at the end of the nineteenth century was clearly demarcated between west and east, wealthy and working classes. While East met West in the Whitechapel Exhibitions and at the National Gallery on holidays, the art public no longer existed either in actuality or representation as a unified body. The collapse of this ideal in the late Victorian era ended more than a hundred years of dedication to the idea that art would improve the nation. Art became a form of entertainment—to give the poor a break from their miserable lives and to provide the rich with social distinction. The real and symbolic power of art to create a nation had collapsed.

Conclusion

“In the Metropolis, thousands of young men are kept closely to daily occupations, many are strangers, from distant parts of the country, and without the true resources of home, to them London affords many temptations to spend their leisure time in establishments that allure by facilities of access and promises of ready pleasures but leading to extravagance and ruinous proceedings.”¹

In a *Punch* cartoon of 1877 entitled “Culture for the Working Classes,” the theory of the benefits of art for the under classes is ridiculed.² Inside an office, a middle class gentleman faces his apron-wearing working class employee, who has just returned from an exhibition of fine arts to which he and his fellow workers were sent to “pick up an idea or two.”³ But the foreman describes their experiences:

When us got there, we was a considerin’ what was best to be done, so we app’inted a deppertation o’three on us to see what it were like; an’when they come out an’ said it were only picturs an’ such, we thought it a pity to spend our shillins on ‘em. So we went to the tea-gardens, and wery pleasant it were, too.⁴

¹ A letter of 1859 from the London Mechanics’ Institution addressing the accessibility of art museums. National Gallery Archives.

² “Culture for the Working Classes,” *Punch* 73 (August 25, 1877): 75.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

The working class employees' inability to comprehend the relevance of pictures to their work contradicts the general stance of *Punch*, as seen in several cartoons and features, specifically in "Patron Saints of the Working Class," that the working classes knowingly sought out and then benefited from exposure to works of art. In addition to ridiculing the workmans' ignorance, the cartoon also satirizes the "philanthropic employer's" belief that an art exhibition could improve their production. Within the pages of *Punch*, this was the final blow to an idea that had held sway for the first two decades—that the education of the working classes by means of the art institution would improve their work and themselves, for the betterment of the nation. The gentrification of the art public within the pages of *Punch* is complete and the distinction of the dominant classes assured.

This abandonment of support for cultural philanthropy in the pages of *Punch* in no way reflects a similar societal phenomenon. While the South Kensington Museum offered both evening and Sunday hours, the national museum did not. The archives of the National Gallery are filled with letters from workers' societies and trade organizations urging the passage of evening and Sunday hours. In 1859, Lord Shaftesbury wrote on behalf of the Young Men's Christian Association; his letter is worth quoting at length as it epitomizing the pleas written for four decades:

"I beg, as President of the Young Men's Christian Association, very earnestly to support this appeal for an act of consideration to the multitudes of Clerks, Shopmen, Traders, Artisans, and others engaged in the active business of life, which will be deeply and gratefully appreciated by them, and which will, apart from its Educational value and importance,

tend to produce the most valuable moral results. The experience acquired in the various labours of this Association, justifies the assertion that a large proportion of the follies and vices of Young Men arise not so much from a mere propensity to indolence and irregularity of conduct as from the very general privation of social and domestic comforts, and the absence of opportunities for safe and suitable recreations and enjoyments. To secure to them therefore the advantages of free access, in their leisure hours, to our National Museums and Galleries, will be to provide a most salutary check to the influence of Evil habits, and, in improving the moral tone and character of this large class of the community, to elevate the manners and increase the comforts of Society at large.⁵

In 1859 alone, in an organized letter campaign, the National Gallery received correspondence from such groups as the Boston Institution, Wrexham Institution, Bradford Chamber of Commerce, St. Saviour Gate York Institute, Cripplegate Institution, London and South Western Literary and Scientific Institution, Middlesbrough on Tees Mechanics' Institution, Eastern Counties Railway and Stratford Mechanics' Institution, Battersea Literary and Scientific Institution, and the London Mechanics' Institution. Their letters resemble Lord Shaftesbury's in pleas for education, improvement, socialization, and moral edification for workers through their exposure to art.

⁵ National Gallery Archives.

In 1864, the *Times* reported that sixty delegates from trade organizations gathered in London to urge Prime Minister Palmerston to instigate Sunday hours.⁶ Letters continued to arrive requesting extended hours.

In the spring of 1896, a letter from the Treasury dated March 3 inquired into the cost efficiency of Sunday hours. After years of agitation, this governmental consideration of Sunday hours merited little attention, only two letters from the Sunday Society and the National Sunday League exist in the archives. Employees of the National Gallery expressed their opposition to the measure in a letter dated to March 7: “we, the undersigned, humbly ask your Honourable Board to oppose the Measure considering that the time with our families during the summer months is very limited when the Gallery is open from 9 to 10 hours daily; and for our health’s sake we require relaxation after a week’s confinement.”⁷ But a month later, on April 8, the Treasury wrote to the Trustees of the National Gallery regarding a resolution passed in the House of Commons:

in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the National Museums and Art Galleries in London should be open for a limited number of hours on Sundays after 2 p.m., upon condition that no officer shall be required to attend on more than 6 days a week and that any who may have conscientious objections shall be exempt from Sunday duty.⁸

The Treasury budgeted an additional £135 for Sunday openings during the summer months. Two letters exist in the archives after the experiment with Sunday hours: the

⁶ “Museums on Sundays,” *Times*, February, 25, 1864, 16.

⁷ National Gallery Archives.

⁸ National Gallery Archives.

Third National Congress of Sunday Societies wrote their approval, while the Lord's Day Observance Society wrote of their continued opposition.⁹

Punch, which had repeatedly agitated for increased public access to art institutions, took little notice of the change. One article appeared in the spring, a Q&A on the subject of Sunday hours:

Q: If the London museums come to be opened as proposed, what will be the probable result?

A: That for several weeks those places of instruction, if not amusement, will be crowded on the day added to the list.

Q: And afterwards?

A: Then, judging from provincial precedents, the novelty will wear off, and the number of Sunday visitors will fall to the level of the average week-day attendance, or even lower.¹⁰

With that, Sunday hours became official, more than seventy years after the foundation of the National Gallery and after years of discussion of the value of art to the working classes. But, by the time the hours are established, the art museum no longer offered distinction and the measure passed uneventfully. What had so fully occupied artists, cartoonists, politicians, and the public, was achieved with little notice and the debate that had raged for more than a century, between aristocratic and democratic, public and private, education and pleasure, ended with the opening of Sunday hours.

⁹ October 31, 1896 and October 1, 1896, respectively. National Gallery Archives.

¹⁰ "The Sunday Pleasure-Seeker's Vade Mecum," *Punch* 110 (March 21, 1896): 138.

Epilogue

In 1999, the National Gallery in London ran an ad campaign touting “More Hours. For Free.” After years of shortened operation hours and expensive admission fees, the National Gallery, along with the British Museum and other state-funded art institutions, received government funding to offer free admission and evening hours. More than one hundred years after the resolution of the “Sunday Question” debate, similar issues of admissions and accessibility continued in England’s public art institutions.

During the nineteenth century, the discourse on public art institutions included thematics of aesthetics, class, nationalism, leisure, education, and concepts of the public. Throughout the century, the intersection of these issues colored the representation of the art public that existed more as a prescriptive than descriptive portrayal of dominant ideologies. In the eighteenth century, when art first became accessible to a public wider than wealthy, aristocratic collectors through exhibitions at the Royal Academy, such exhibitions conveyed status to their visitors, who cooperated in the production of such distinction by focusing on the socializing aspects of art viewing. In the early nineteenth century, despite rhetoric touting the importance of art for the nation, the art public had little identity, subsumed behind the façade of the monumental architecture of the new National Gallery. But with the increased political influence of the middle classes, art became a tool to produce a new identity, that of the educated, leisure genteel classes. The faces of this new art public become the focus of artists such as George Bernard O’Neill and Thomas P. Hall. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did the art public include the lower classes. However, separate museums were established for them, while

the elite art public distinguished themselves from them through such gentrified art spaces as Private Views, Studio Sundays, and the Grosvenor Gallery.

The dialectic of education and amusement, democratic and elite, lower and upper classes, public and private persist unresolved throughout the nineteenth century, despite numerous Parliamentary debates addressing such questions. At the start of World War I, the end of the long nineteenth century and only twenty years after the establishment of Sunday hours in 1896, the classes were still separate, museums still segregated. However, this analysis of the representation of the art public indicates how, at different points in the nineteenth century, the public attempted to define itself in relationship to art museums. As noted, the public record of experiences in art institutions only preserves the opinions of the propertied classes, with their paternalistic approach to the lower classes. Indeed, the prints, periodicals, and paintings exhibited to the public address the middle classes whose story of control over the identity of the art public this dissertation seeks to tell, from their collection of eighteenth-century prints of the King and royal family visiting the Royal Academy to their obsession with images of themselves looking at art, to the humor for and about their elitist habits during the Aesthetic Movement.

While numerous histories have studied the rise of public art museums and their position in Victorian society, by looking at how that art public consumed images of itself—from print to painting, cityscape to genre painting—I hope to have illuminated not only a view of art institutions from a non-official but dominant position, including the motivations of those who visited museums, but also to have shown how the image of the art public reflected the kinds of art they themselves went to see in art exhibitions. This mapping of the cultural geography and philanthropy of the nineteenth century, amid

political and social changes, provides a new understanding of art institutions and art in the Victorian era as multivalent sites in the ritual of class distinction and nationalism.

Such issues, of course, exist even now in museums. As a professional museum educator, I have myself developed diverse programming to reach non-traditional audiences, with hopefully more sensitivity and understanding of the visitors' needs than the Victorian philanthropists' paternalistic attempts to educate the working classes. However, when such programming conflicts with fundraising and development events, education frequently takes the proverbial back seat, just as the need for social distinction overwhelmed edification at the end of the nineteenth century. The conflict between the purpose of the museum as entertainment and education continues as cash-strapped museums vie for visitors in a post-September 11th world. Indeed, the anniversary of the attacks was recognized by numerous institutions in New York City and around the country in programs and exhibitions that sought to reexamine and redefine national identity. As this dissertation went to defense, a new organization, the Association of Museum History, met in New York to consider new critical approaches to understanding museum history. At the same time, on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, a retrospective exhibition of German photographer Thomas Struth's images of museum visitors prove that such the art public persists as the intersection of cultural and national ideas, assumptions, and identities.

In 2002, a new vision of the art public was contrasted to one of the earliest. In the exhibition, *Art On the Line*, featuring Pietro Martini's representation of the eighteenth-century art public, a closed circuit camera recorded the movements of the new millennial audience through the recreated eighteenth-century hanging. In a small gallery off the

Grand Room, a small monitor relayed the images simultaneously so that viewers could compare a reproduction of Martini's image on a didactic label with the digital image of contemporary Londoners. Gone were the catalogues, replaced by Acousti-guides, but looking, conversing, socializing among a diversity of ages, classes, genders, and now ethnicities, paralleled the art public that had first trod the floors of Somerset House more than two hundred years earlier.



Figure 1: George Bernard O'Neill, *Public Opinion*, 1863, Leeds City Art Gallery.

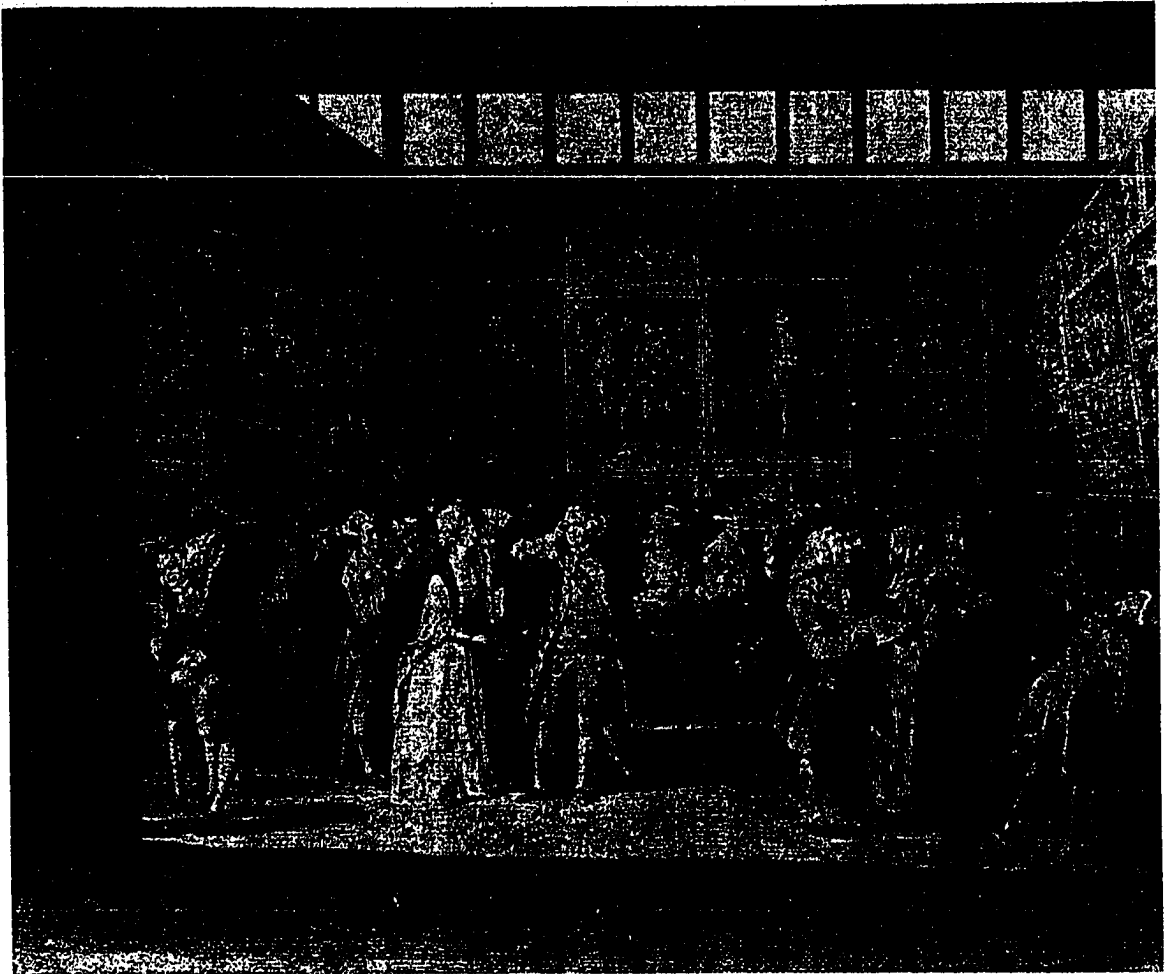


Figure 2: Richard Earlom after Charles Brandoin, *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Painting in the Year 1771*, c. 1771, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

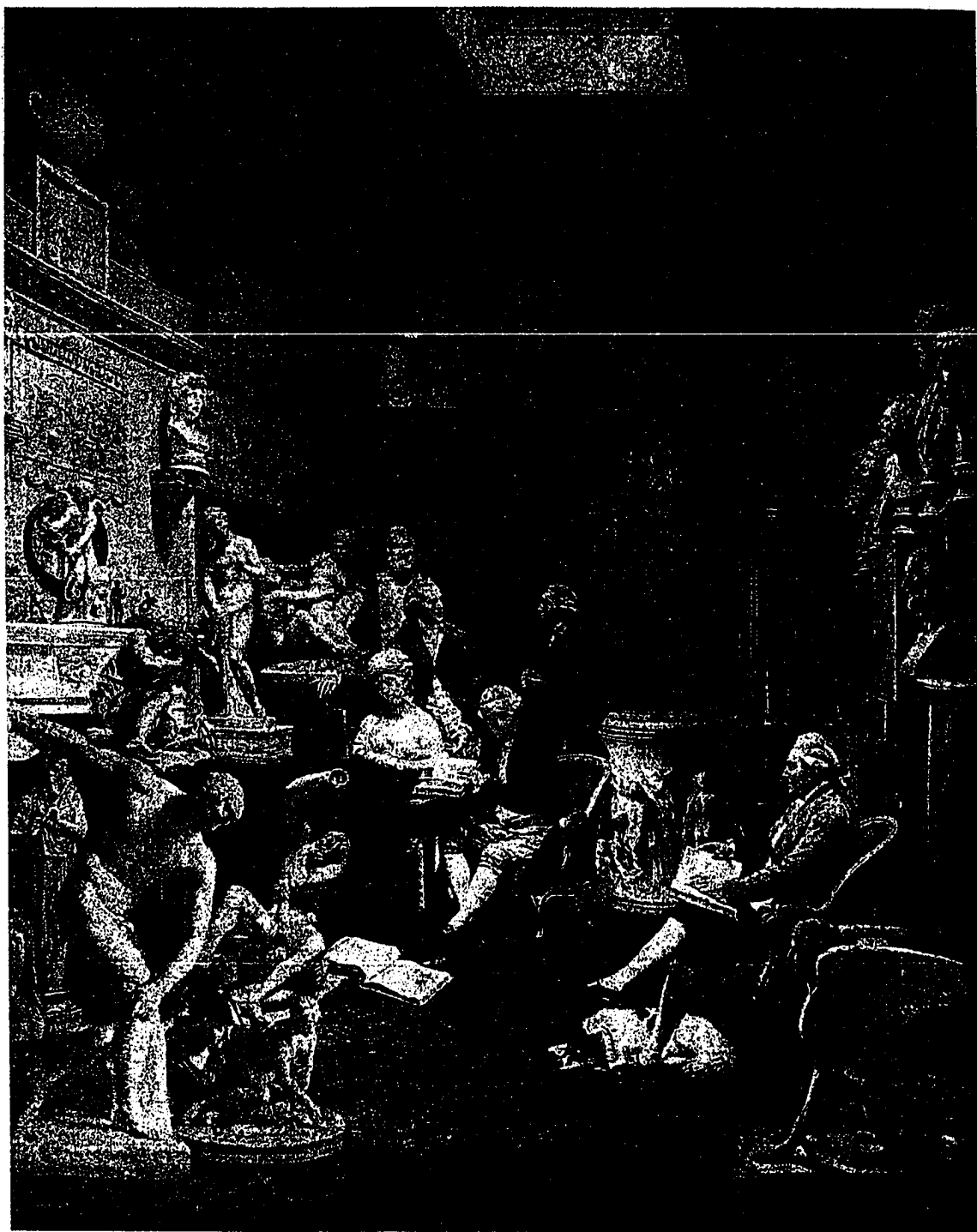


Figure 3: Johann Zoffany, *Charles Towneley's Library at Park Street, 1781-3*, Towneley Hall Art Gallery, Burnley.

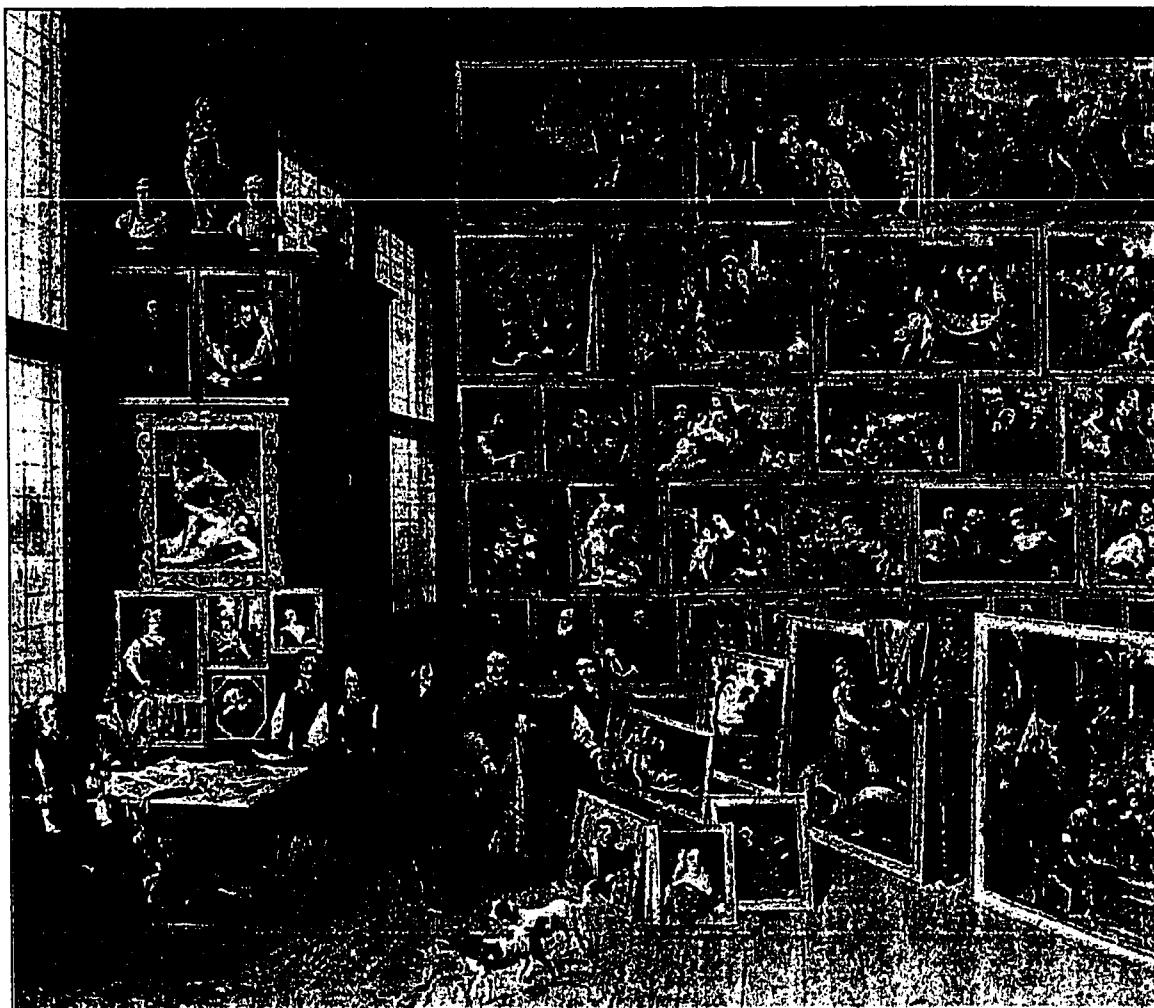


Figure 4: David Teniers, *The Gallery of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in Brussels*, 1651, Petworth House, National Trust, Sussex, UK.



Figure 5: Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, *Vue du Salon du Louvre en l'année, 1753*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

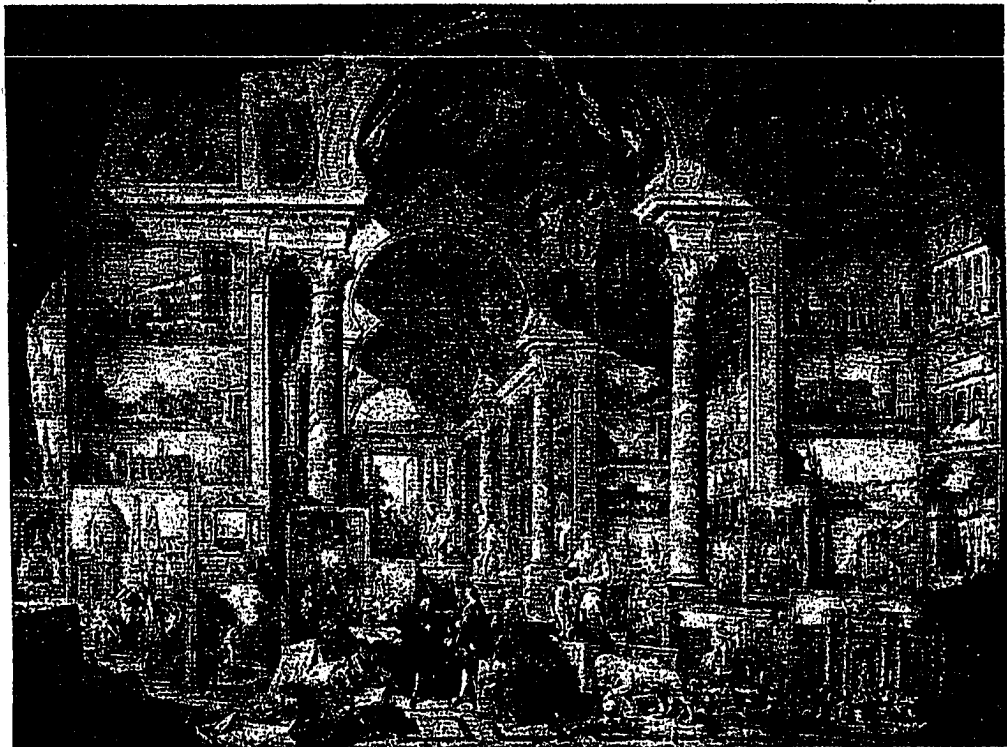


Figure 6: Gian Paolo Panini, *Picture Gallery of Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga in Rome*, 1749, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford.



Figure 7: Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1780, The Royal Collection Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



Figure 8: Joseph Wright of Derby, *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight*, c. 1765, Private Collection.



Figure 9: Thomas Rowlandson, *The Connoisseurs*, c.1800, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



A COGNOCENTI contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique.

Figure 10: James Gillray, *A Cognocenti Contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique*, c. 1801, British Museum.



Figure 11: William Hogarth, *March to Finchley*, 1750, British Museum.



Figure 12: Rowlandson, *Vauxhall Gardens*, 1785, British Museum.



Figure 13: Edward Topham, *Darby's Macaroni Print Shop*, 1772, British Museum.



Figure 14: Pietro Martini after Johann Heinrich Ramberg, *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1787*, c. 1787, British Museum.



PORTRAITS OF THEIR MAJESTY'S AND THE ROYAL FAMILY

Viewing the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1788.

Figure 15: Ramberg, *Portraits of their Majesty's [sic] and the Royal Family Viewing the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1788*, c. 1788, British Museum.

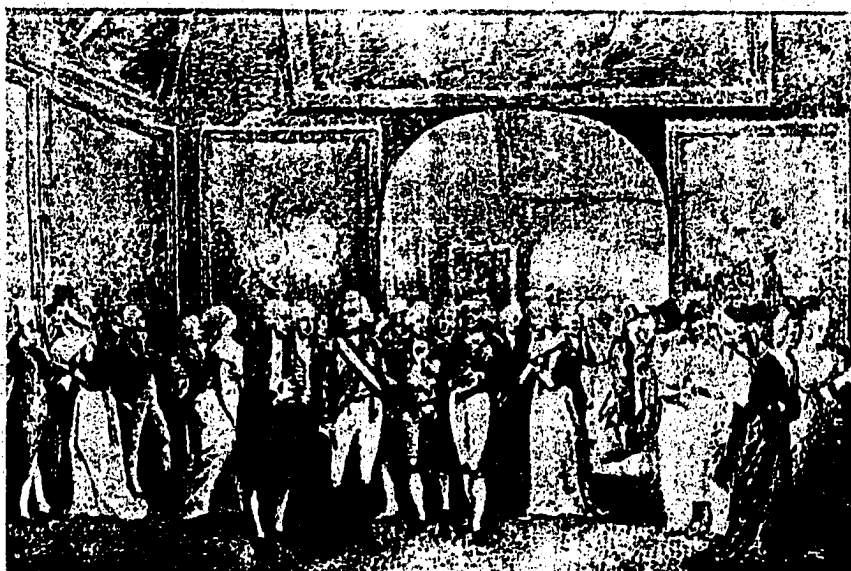


Figure 16: Francis Wheatley, *Interior of the Shakespeare Gallery*, 1790, Victoria & Albert Museum.



Figure 17: Rowlandson, *The Academy Stare-case*, c. 1800, College Art Collections, University College, London.



Figure 18: Rowlandson, *Exhibition Stare-Case*, c. 1811, British Museum.

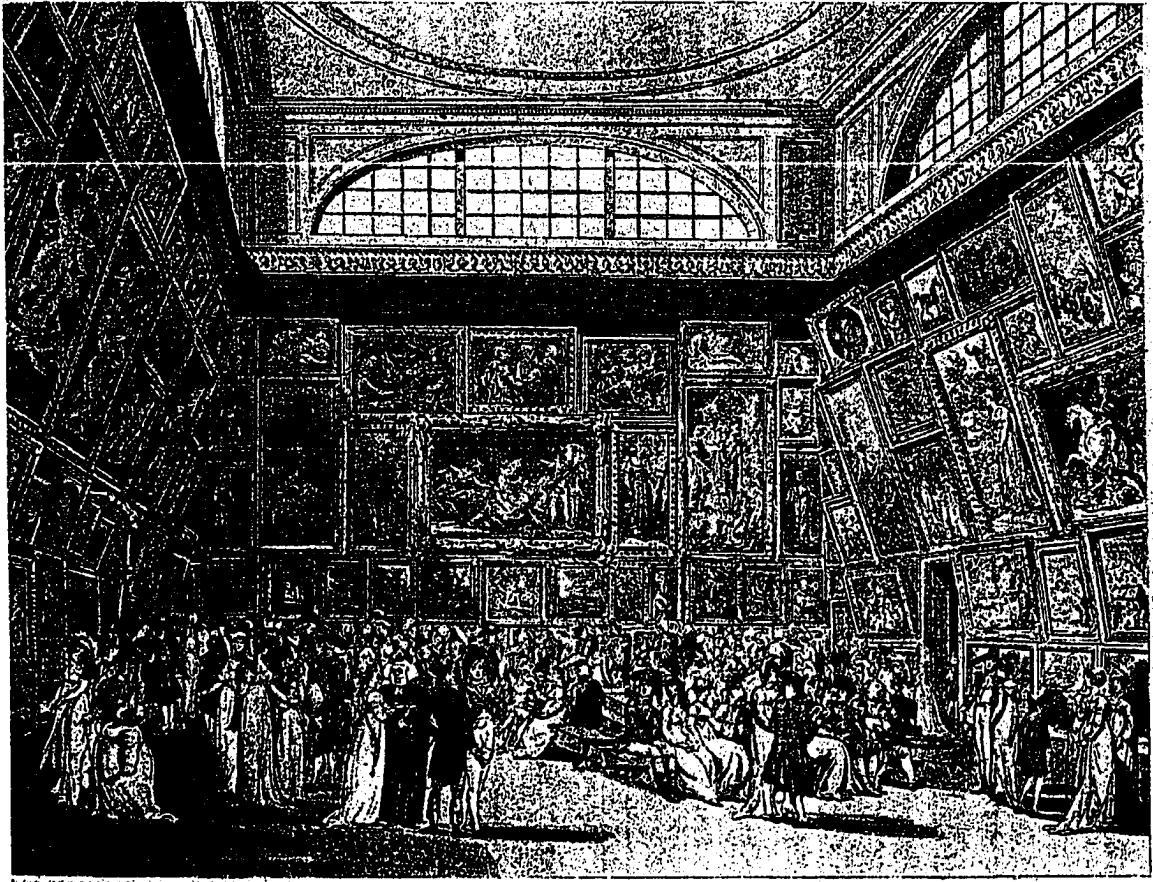


Figure 19: Rowlandson, "Exhibition Room, Somerset House" from *The Microcosm of London*, 1808.



Figure 20: John Scarlett Davis, *The 1829 Exhibition at the British Institution*, 1830, Yale Center for British Art.



Figure 21: W. F. Witherington, *Interior of a Picture Gallery*, n.d., Leicester Galleries, London.

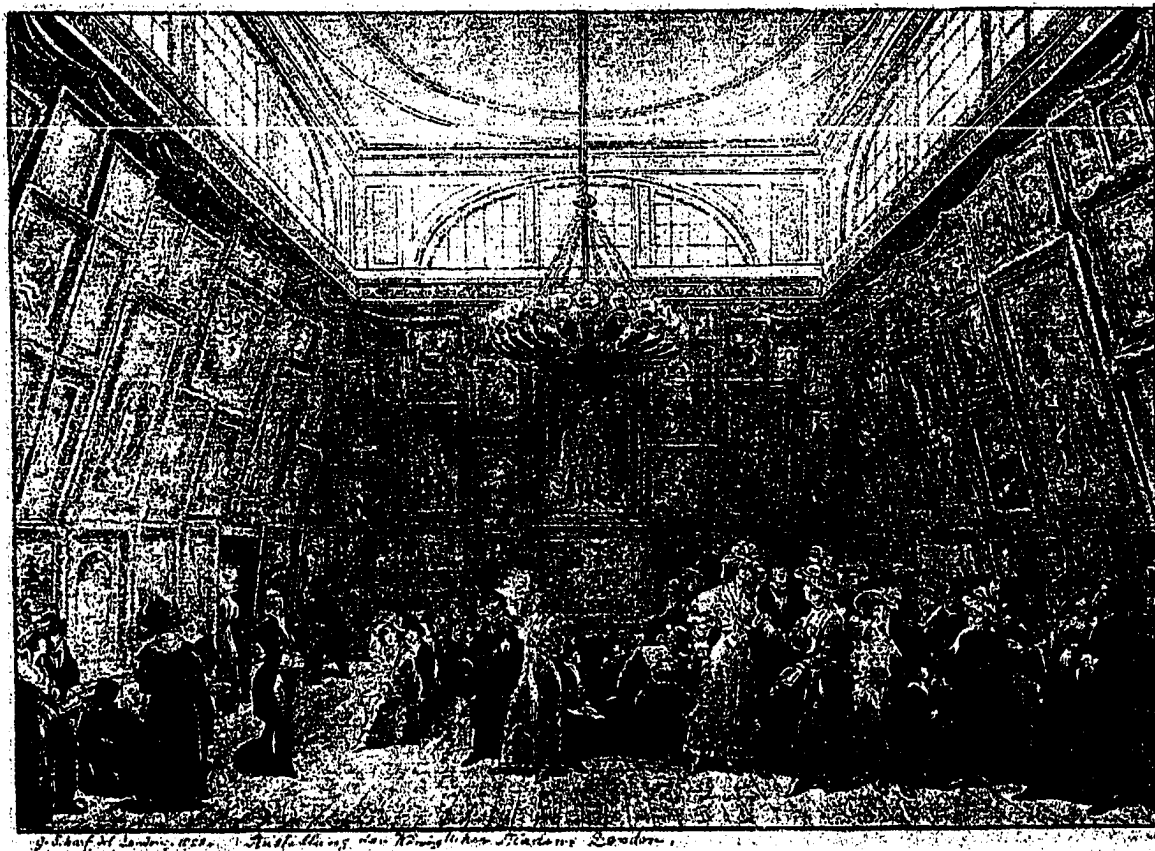


Figure 22: George Scharf, *Royal Academy Exhibition of 1828*, c. 1828, Museum of London.

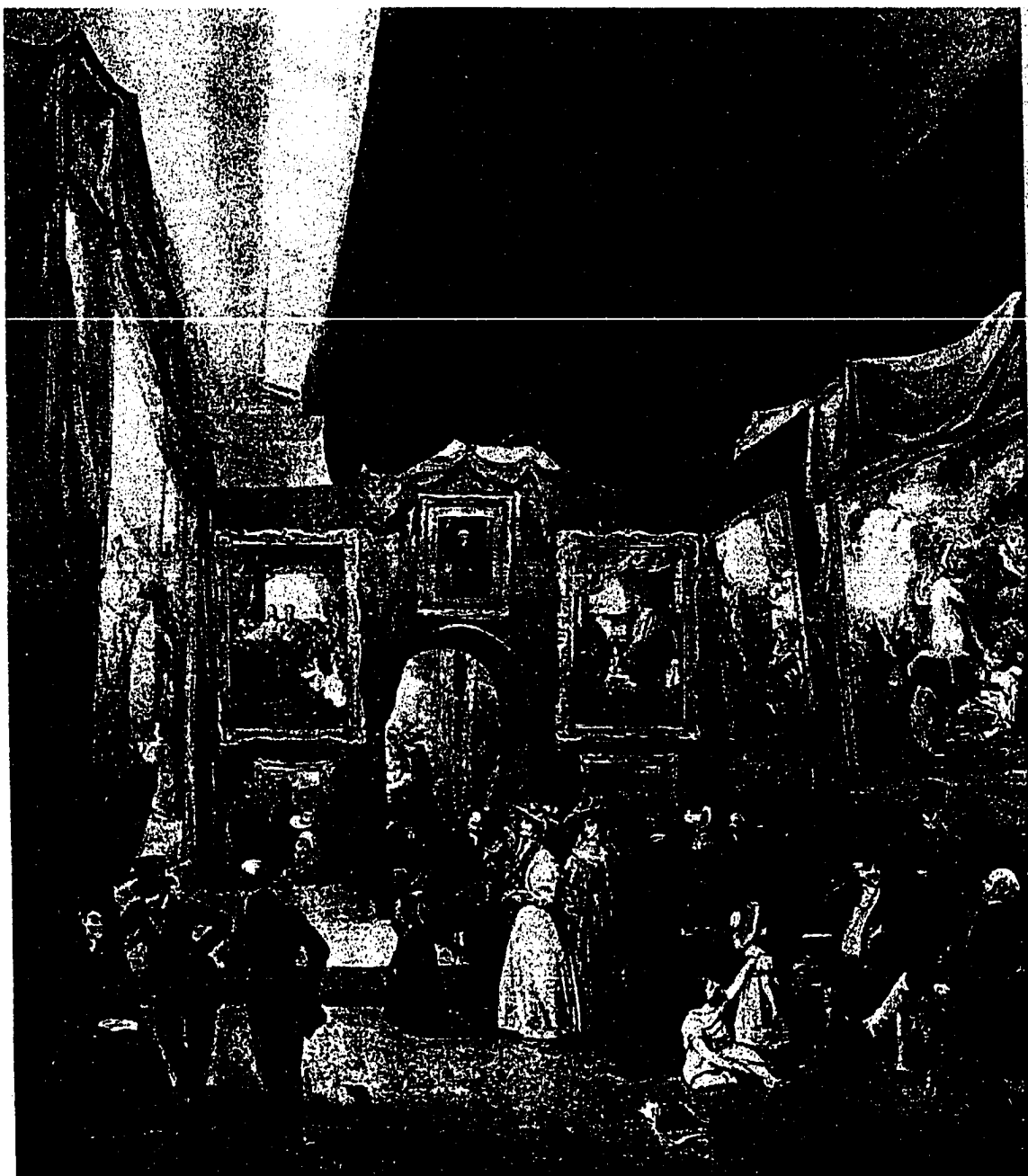
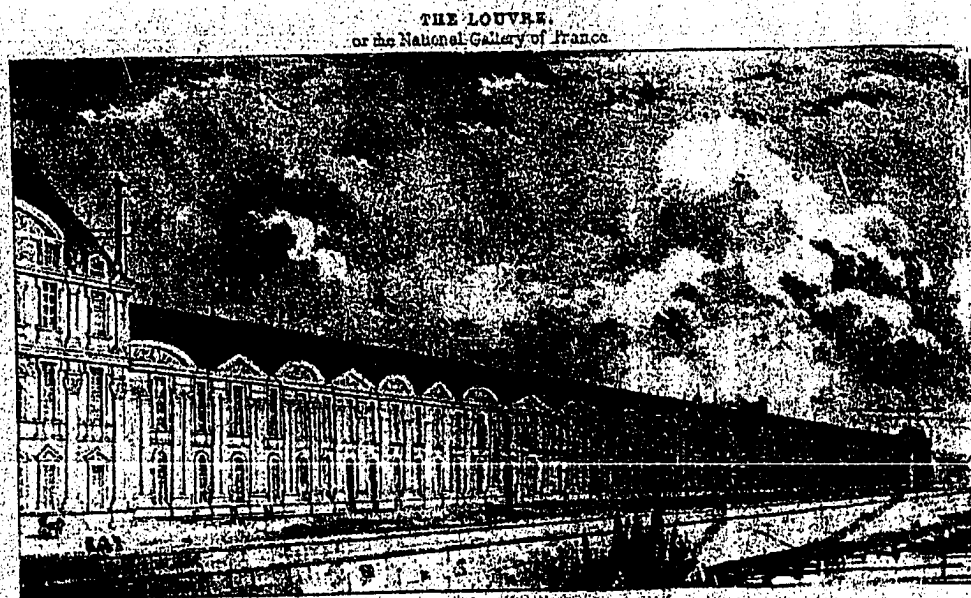


Figure 23: John Pasmore, *Benjamin West's Picture Gallery*, c. 1820, Wadsworth Atheneum.



*'Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfed presentment of his brothers!'*



NO 100, PALL MALL,
or the National Gallery of England.

By the
Right Hon^{ble} Charles, Earl Grey.

PRESENTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE
Duke of Devonshire.

This building is respectfully dedicated to
the use of the National Gallery.

Engraved by J. Smith, from a drawing by W. P. Smith, Esq.
Printed by W. P. Smith, Esq.

Figure 24: Charles Joseph Hullmandel, *The Louvre or the National Gallery of France . . .
No. 100 Pall Mall or the National Gallery of England*, 1825, photo courtesy National
Gallery Archives.

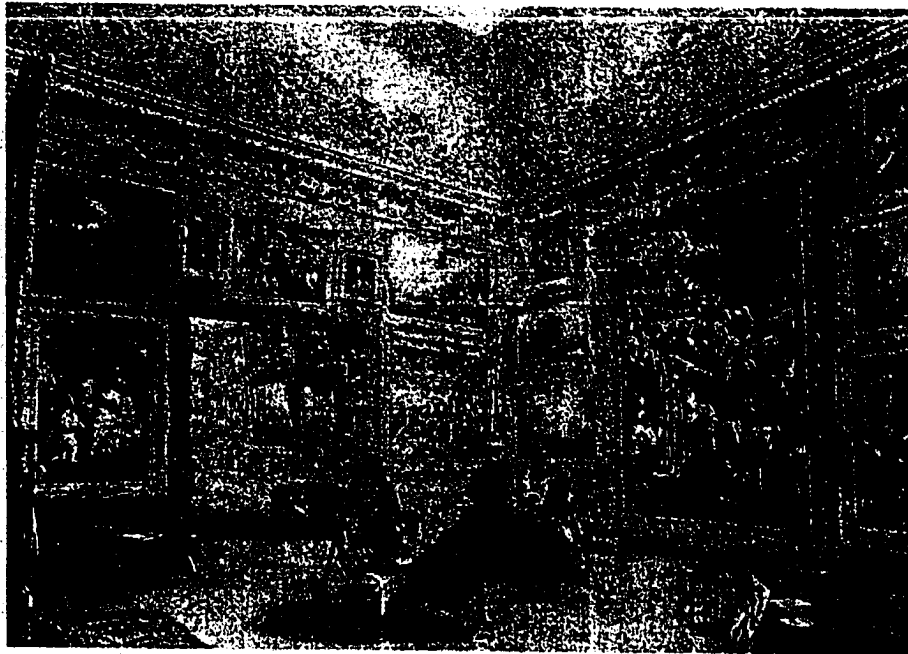
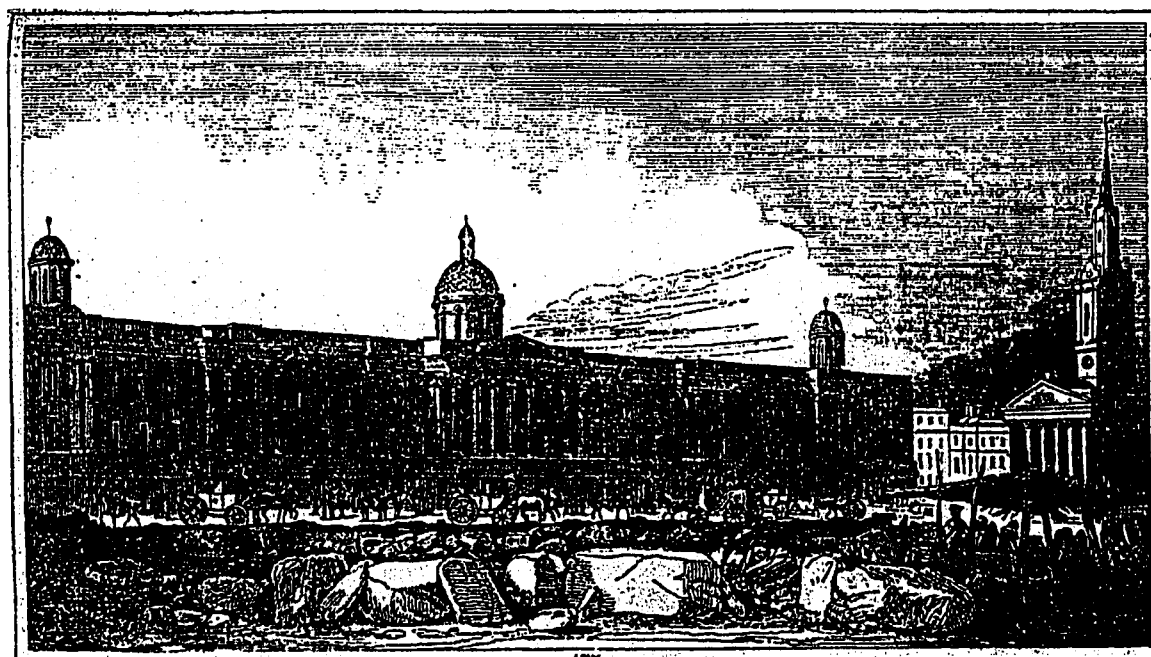


Figure 25: Frederick Mackenzie, *The Angerstein Gallery in Pall Mall*, 1834, Victoria and Albert Museum.



Figure 26: *Cross Readings at Charing Cross*, 1836, photo courtesy National Gallery Archives.



NATIONAL GALLERY, CHARING CROSS.

Figure 27: "National Gallery, Charing Cross," 1837, *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*.



Figure 28: Thomas Allom, *The National Gallery—Charing Cross from the Design of S. Wilkins Esqre Architect*, 1837, photo courtesy National Gallery Archives.



Figure 29: Henry Gritten, *View of the National Gallery and the Royal Academy*, 1838, photo courtesy National Gallery Archives.

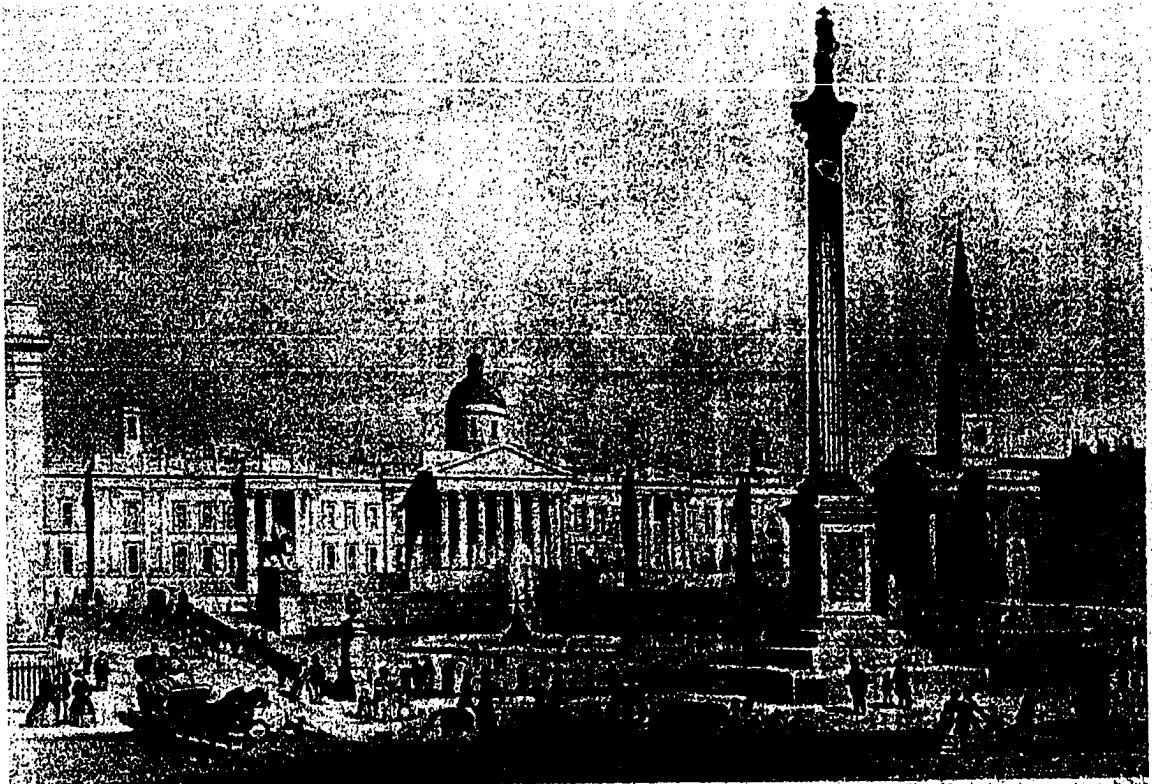


Figure 30: Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, *The New National Gallery*, 1838, National Gallery, London.



SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW.

Figure 31: John Leech, "Substance and Shadow," *Punch*, July 15, 1843.



Figure 32: Angelo Collen Hayter, *The Portico of the National Gallery*, 1850, Christie's, London.



SPECIMENS FROM MR. PUNCH'S INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION OF 1850.

(TO BE IMPROVED IN 1851).

Figure 33: "Specimens from Mr. Punch's Industrial Exhibition of 1850 (to be improved in 1851)", *Punch*, April 13, 1850.

THE LAST DAYS OF SMITHFIELD.

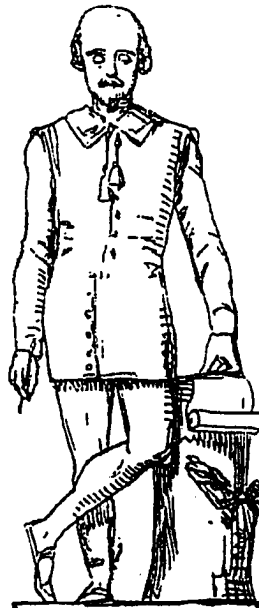
SMITHFIELD is going, is going, is going,
Smithfield is going, and soon will be gone;
No more will the lowing, the lowing, the lowing
Of ring-droves in agony startle the dawn.

No longer the squeaking, the squeaking, the
squeaking
Of pigs, with lambs' bleating, will tunelessly blend;
Nor females with shrieking, with shrieking, with
shrieking,
As they fly from the mad ox, our ear-drums will
ring.

The drovers, by swearing, by swearing, by swearing,
No longer will heighten the sheep-dog's fierce bark;
While the hounds are flaring, are flaring, are flaring,
On each market morning, so early, by dark.

Those cruel brutes' oak sticks, their oak sticks,
their oak sticks,
No more on the horns of the oxen will ring;
They'll soon cease to poke sticks, to poke sticks,
to poke sticks,
Armed with goads, in the flank the poor creatures
to sting.

The Market's Committee, Committee, Committee,
Let us hope, will not make the Lords throw out
the bill;
So, preserving the City, the City, the City
In its old vested rights, and its nastiness still.



TRIFLES (NOT SO) LIGHT AS AIR.

We understand that the Commissioners of Police are about to issue orders for the regulation of the now inconveniently crowded balloon traffic of the Metropolis. So long as the intrepid voyagers were likely to confine their collisions to each other, it was not thought necessary for the authorities to interfere, as the evil was likely to correct itself to a certain extent, and so mitigate the mischief. There was not so much objection to the inconvenience falling upon the heads of the aeronauts, but now that the aeronauts seem likely to fall on to the heads of the public, something should be done to put a stop to the nuisance. We believe it is in contemplation to give directions, that no balloon be allowed to set down, or tumble down, within a mile of the Crystal Palace. Had that volatile daughter of air, MRS. GRAHAM, let out her grappling-irons, the other day, upon the Exhibition, they would have proved the most serious difficulties it has yet had to grapple with.

An Error Corrected.

At the War Medal dinner, LORD SALTOUN, the Chairman, said—

"When he alluded to woman—he begged pardon, he meant ladies."

Ergo, a lady is not a woman.



DINNER-TIME AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Figure 34: Leech "Dinner-time at the Crystal Palace," *Punch*, May 10, 1851.



Figure 35: "Front Row at the Shilling Gallery," *Punch*, July 5, 1851.



THE POUND AND THE SHILLING.

"Whoever Thought of Meeting You Here?"

Figure 36: Leech, "The Pound and the Shilling: Whoever Thought of Meeting You Here?," *Punch*, June 14, 1851.



Figure 37: Charles Compton, *Study in the National Gallery*, 1855, photo courtesy National Gallery Archives.

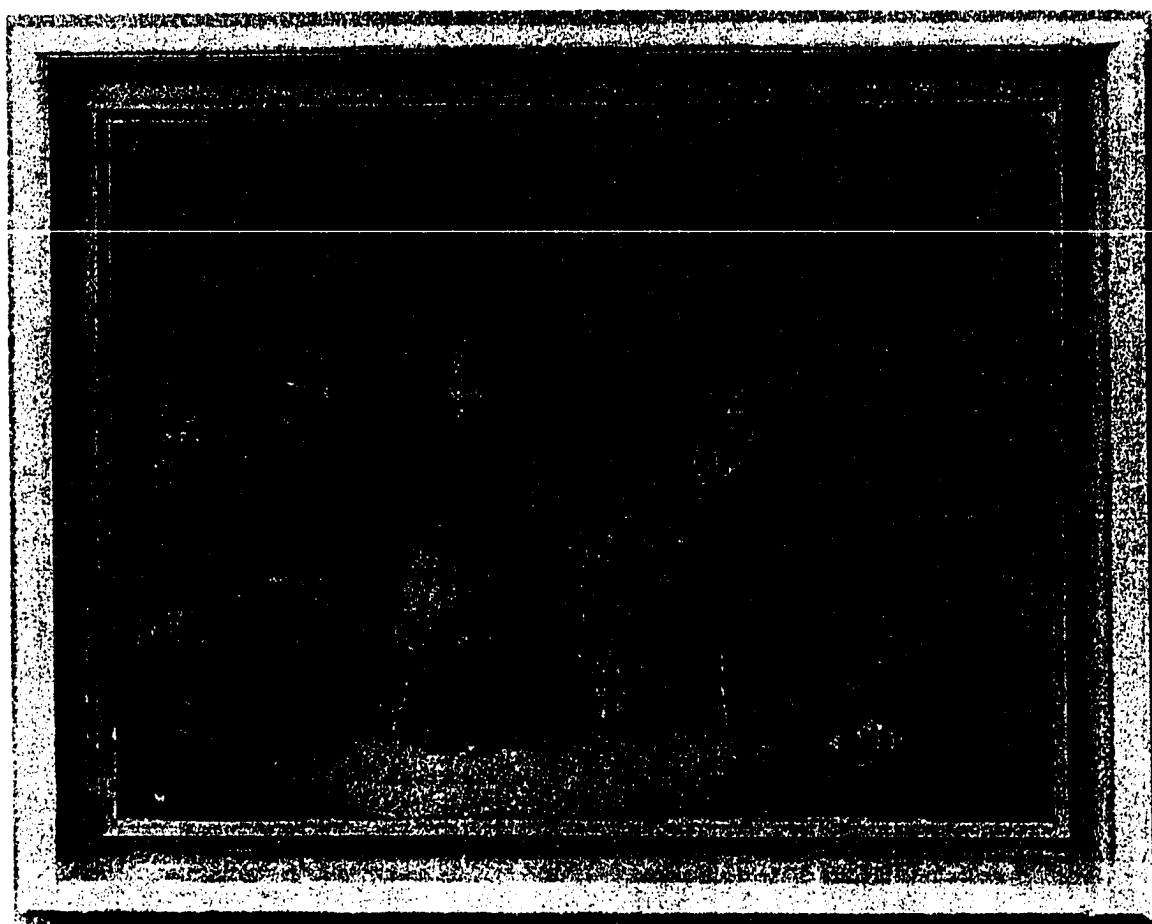


Figure 38: Aeron Hoven, *A Room Hanging with British Pictures*, c. 1856, photo courtesy National Gallery Archives.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF YE ENGLYSHE IN 1849 . N^o 11.



YE EXHYBITYON AT YE ROYAL ACADEMYE

Figure 39: Richard Doyle, "Manners and Customs of ye Englyshe in 1849: Ye Exhybityon at ye Royal Academye," *Punch*, May 26, 1849.



Figure 40: "The Queen, Prince Albert, and the Queen of Portugal viewing Frith's Derby Day at the Royal Academy," *Illustrated London News*, May 22, 1858.

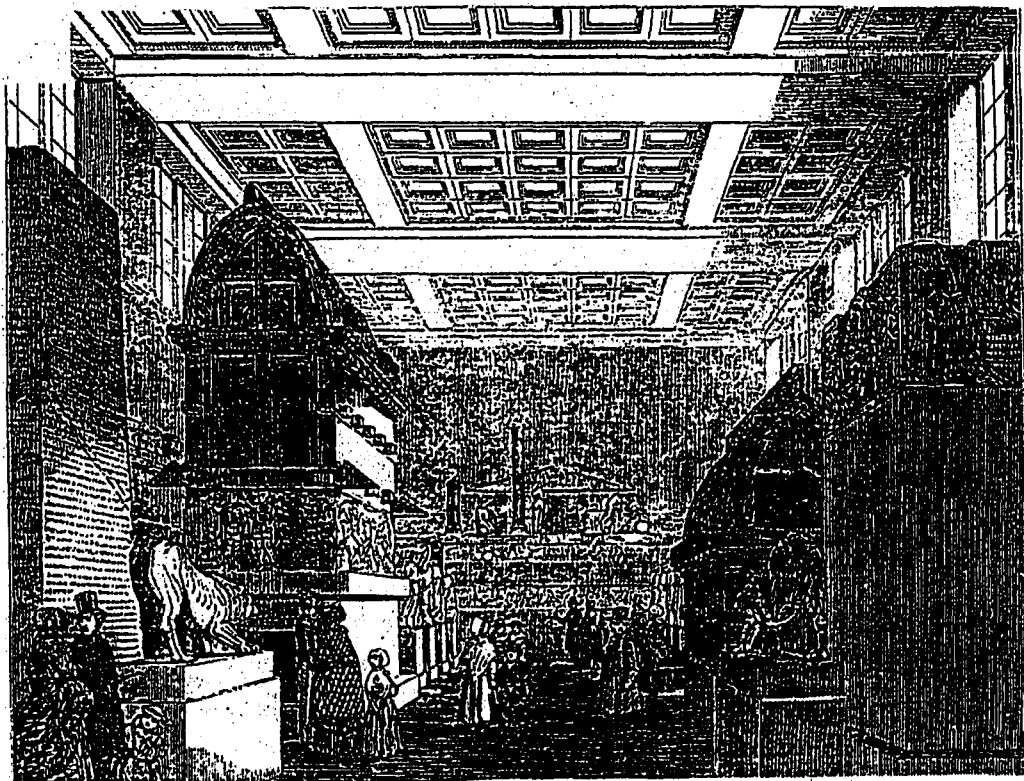


Figure 41: "The Xanthian Room Just Opened at the British Museum," *Illustrated London News*, 1848.



Figure 42: Charles Keene, "Unprejudiced!" *Punch*, May 13, 1871.



"HERE BE TRUTHS!"

Art Critic (who, having "liquored up" considerably, fails to observe that as yet he is only in the Lobby of the Sale-Room, and is standing before a Mirror which, purchased at a previous Sale, still retains its Ticker). "Ah! PORTRAIT 'Y GEN'LEMAN, I SH'POSE—(hic!—writes)—DRAWING EXSE'OR'BLE—GREAT WANT 'TASTE IN THE CHOICE 'Y SUBJECT!—FIT ONLY FOR A PLACE IN 'TAP-ROOM OF 'PUBLIC- 'OUSE!!!"

Figure 43: Keene, "Here Be Truths!," *Punch*, May 18, 1872.



Figure 44: Richard Doyle, "A Student of the Old Masters," W. M. Thackeray, *The Newcomes*, 1853.

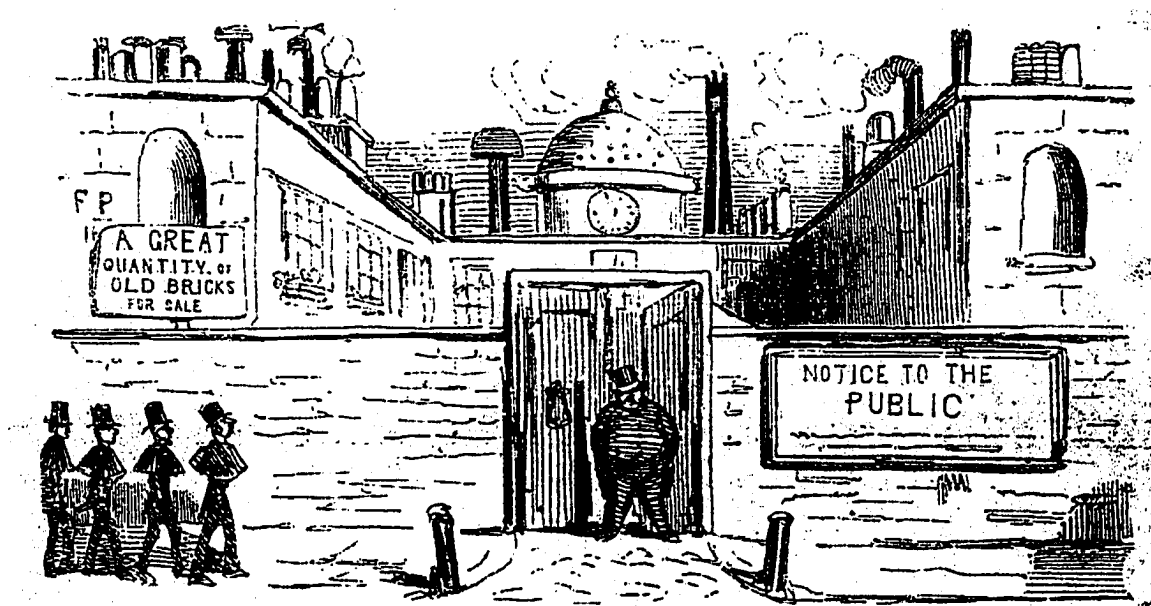


Figure 45: "Façade for the British Museum," *Punch*, November 11, 1843.



Figure 46: William Macduff, *Shaftesbury, or Lost and Found*, 1862, Museum of London.



Figure 47: Thomas P. Hall, *One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin*, 1867, Private Collection.

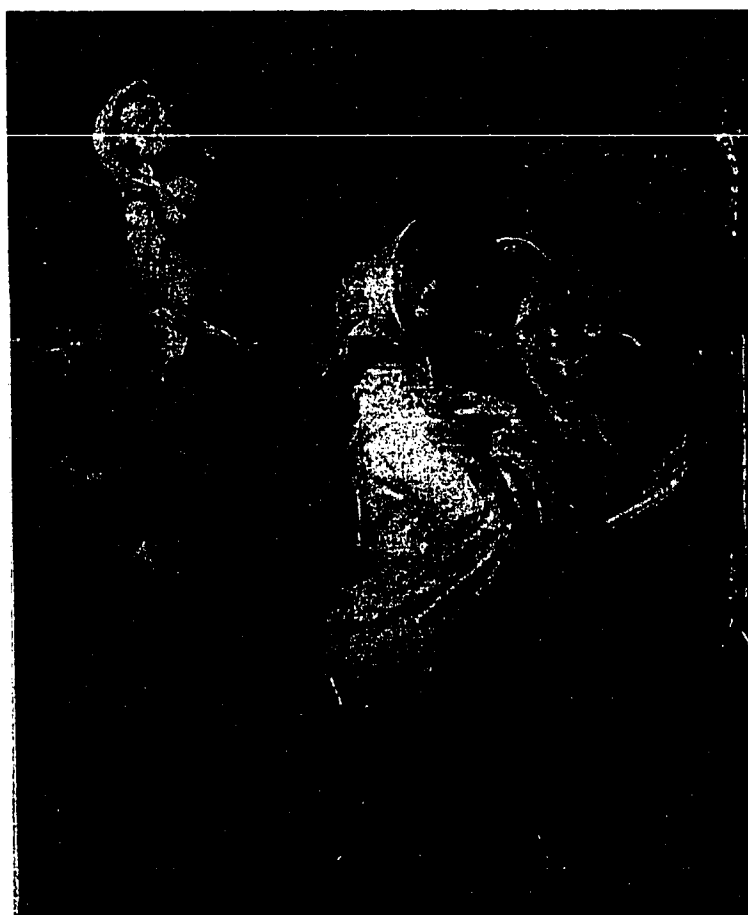


Figure 48: Artist Unknown, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, n.d., location unknown (photo courtesy Bridgeman Art Library).



HYPERCRITICAL.

Stumpy Artist. "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE SHOW?"

Long Ditto ('forte'). "THE PEOPLE YOU MEAN! WELL, I WAS THINKING THEY LOOK AN UNCOMMON SEEDY LOT, FOR THE FIRST DAY——"

["Marry come up!" thought the old lady on the left, with the two beautiful ginger-haired daughters.

Figure 49: Keene, "Hypercritical," *Punch*, May 21, 1870.



Figure 50: Willian Powell Frith, *The Private View of the Royal Academy of 1881*, 1881-82, Private Collection.

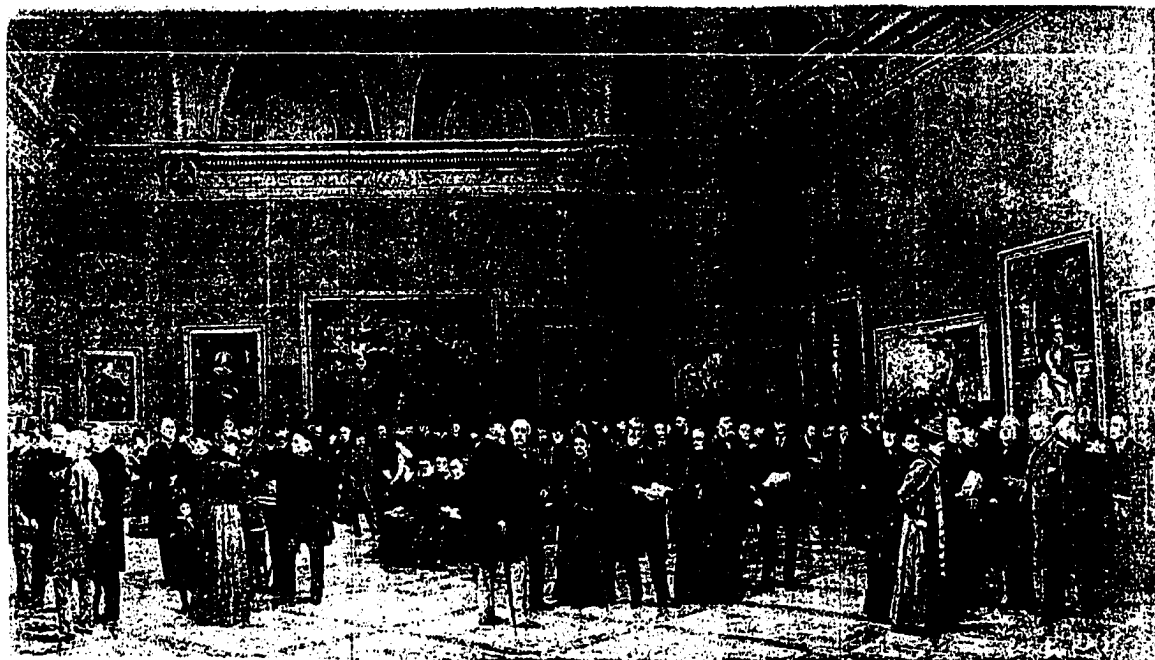


Figure 51: Henry Jamyn Brooks, *Private View of the Old Masters Exhibition, 1888*, c.1888, National Portrait Gallery, London.

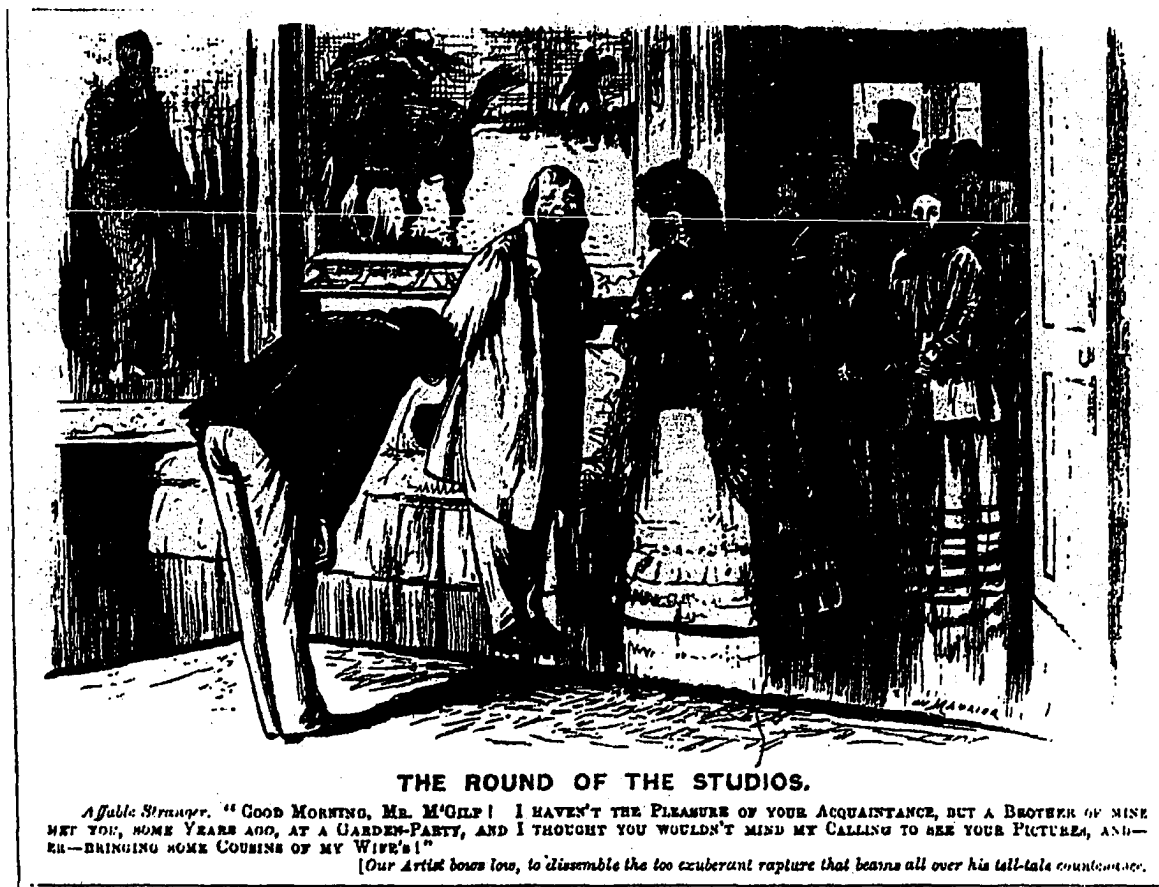


Figure 52: George Du Maurier, "The Round of the Studios," *Punch*, April 18, 1874.



THE "ROUND OF THE STUDIOS."

Male Dilettante, No. 1 (making a telescope of his hand). "WHAT I LIKE SO MUCH IS THAT—ER—THAT—"

Ditto No. 2 (with his nose almost touching the canvas). "I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN—THAT BROAD—ER—"

Female Dilettante, No. 1 (waving her hand gently from right to left). "PRECISELY, THAT SORT OF—ER—OF—ER—OF—ER—"

Ditto No. 2. "JUST SO, THAT GENERAL SORT OF—ER—O!—ER—"

Ditto No. 3. "O YES—QUITE TOO LOVELY—THAT PARTICULAR KIND OF—ER—OF—ER—"

[And so forth.]

Figure 53: Du Maurier, "The 'Round of the Studios'," *Punch*, April 8, 1871.

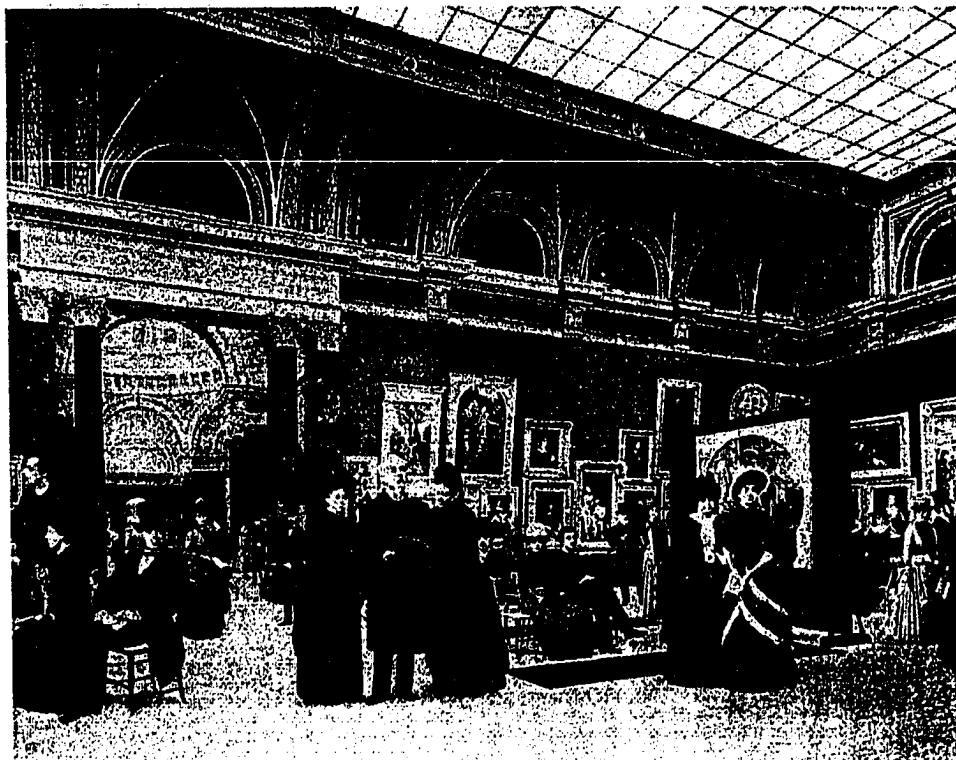


Figure 54: Giuseppe Gabrielli, *National Gallery, Room VII*, 1886, National Gallery, London.

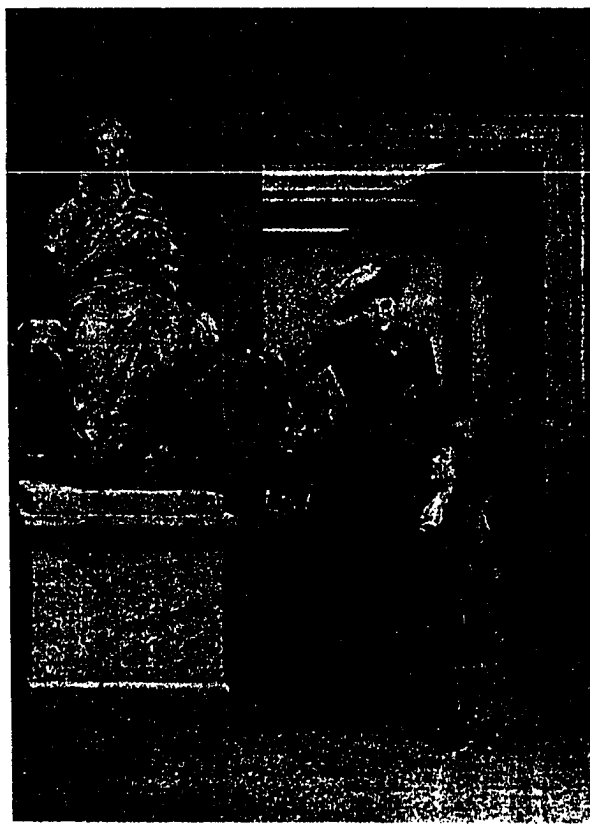


Figure 55: George Goodwin Kilburne, Sr., *Demeter in the British Museum*, before 1882, Christopher Wood Gallery.



Figure 56: Kilburne, Sr., *Demeter in the British Museum*, before 1882, Christopher Wood Gallery.



Figure 57: James Hayllar, *The Picture Gallery*, n.d., location unknown (photo courtesy Witt Library, Courtauld Institute).



Figure 58: Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *A Sculpture Gallery*, 1874, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover.

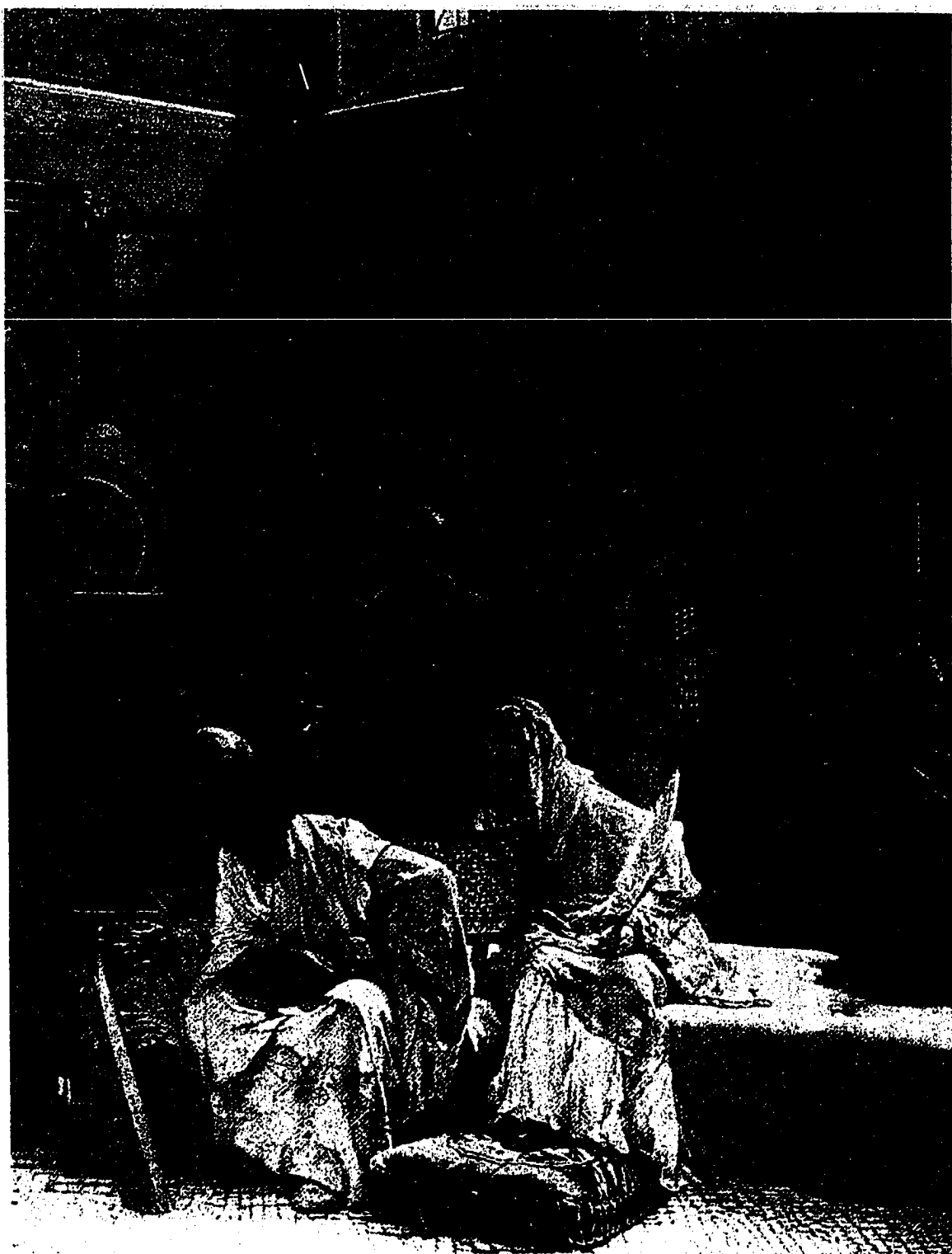


Figure 59: Alma-Tadema, *The Picture Gallery*, 1874, Towneley Hall Art Gallery & Museums, Burnley.



Figure 60: Du Maurier, "Distinguished Amateurs.—The Art Critic," *Punch*, March 13, 1880.



AT THE ACADEMY.

Young Lady (indignant). "NOW, I TOLD YOU, PAPA, THIS WASN'T THE FASHIONABLE HOUR. WE'LL HAVE NOTHING BUT THESE HORRID PICTURES TO LOOK AT UNTIL THE PEOPLE COME!"

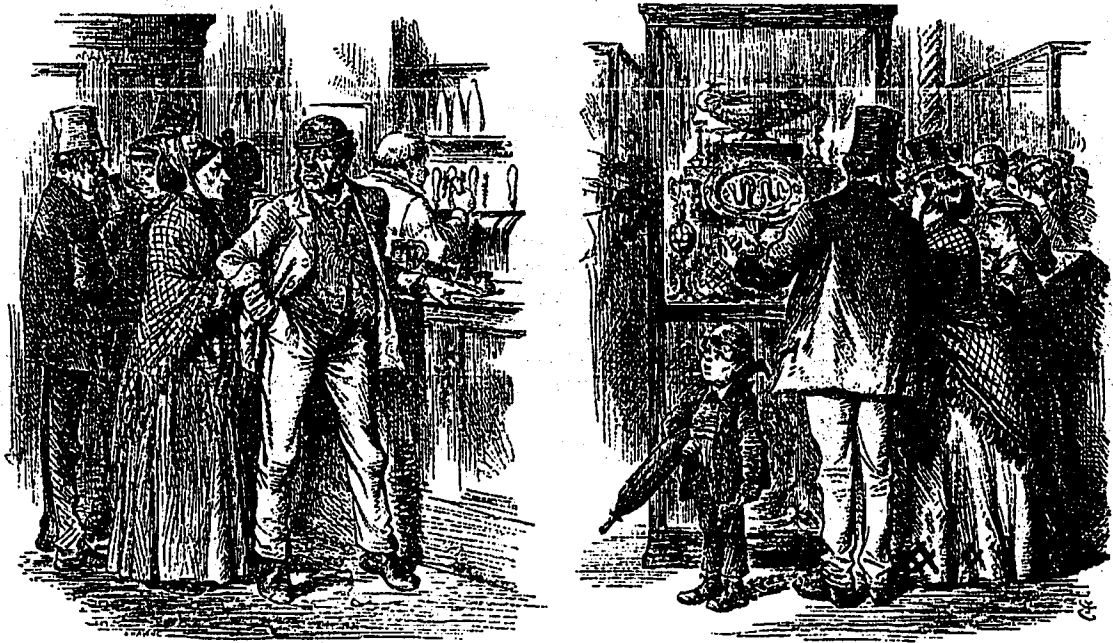
Figure 61: William Ralston, "At the Academy," *Punch*, June 10, 1871.



HAPPY THOUGHT—DIVISION OF LABOUR.

"A—LOOK HERE, MISS BONAMY! S'POSE YOU LOOK AT THE PICTURES, WHILE I CONFINE MY ATTENTION TO THE CATALOGUE! GET THROUGH THE JOB IN HALF THE TIME, YOU KNOW!"

Figure 62: "Happy Thought—Division of Labour," *Punch*, June 22, 1872.



THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

THE PUBLIC-HOUSE.

OR,

THE HOUSE FOR THE PUBLIC?

Figure 63: John Tenniel, "The Sunday Question," *Punch*, April 17, 1869.



MRS. BROWN AT THE ACADEMY.

"WELL, IN ALL MY BORN DAYS, I NEVER SEE SUCH A MANY PICTERS; AND LOR! THE GOLD FRAMES WAS BEAUTIFUL—BUT I GOT THAT SQUEEGED I DID, AND THE PLACE WERE THAT STUFFY." &C., &C.

Figure 64: Keene, "Mrs. Brown at the Academy," *Punch*, July 9, 1864.



A NOTE AND QUERY.

Farmer Drennidge (meeting his Rector at the Royal Academy Exhibition). "HAVE YOU NOTICED THIS BEAUTIFUL PICTUR', SIR, NO. 988, BY MR. WEE PRINSEP, O' THE EVIL SPIRITS THAT ENTERED THE HEED O' SWINE, AND THEY RUSHED WIOLENTLY DOWN THE PRECIPICE, AND PERISHED IN THE SEA! THEA'S THE PICTUR' I'D LIKE TO HEV, SIR. BUT THERE'S ONE PINT ABOUT THAT 'STRODINARY EWENT, SIR, AS HAS ALLUS WEIGHED ON MY MIND, AND I'VE OFTEN THOUGHT O' ASTIN' O' YOU——"

Rector. "O, I SHALL BE MOST HAPPY, MR. DRENNIDGE, AT ANY TIME TO EXPLAIN——"

Farmer Drennidge. "WELL, IT'S THIS 'ERE, SIR." (*In a serious whisper.*) "WHIEW PAID FOR THEY DROWNED PIGS, SIR!!!!"

Figure 65: "A Note and a Query," *Punch*, June 21, 1873.



"UNTO THIS LAST."

Provincial (at the Leeds Exhibition). "I'VE HEARD AS THE PAINT ON SOME O' THESE YER 'PICTERS' COMES T' A MATTER. 'T' FOUNDS SOMETIME, LET ALONG THE MAN'S TIME A LAYIN' OF IT ON, YER KNOW!"

Figure 66: Keene, "Unto This Last," *Punch*, July 18, 1868.



Figure 67: J. J. J. Tissot, *London Visitors*, 1874, Toledo Museum of Art.

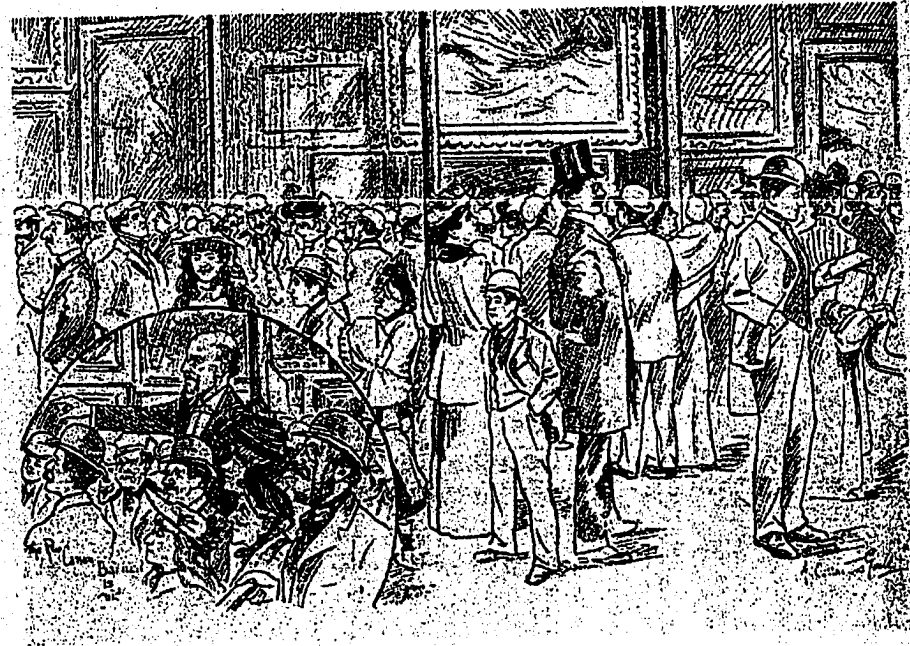


Figure 68: Henrietta Barnett, "Sunday Afternoon in the Whitechapel Picture Gallery,"
from *Cannon Barnett, His Life, Work and Friends*, 1918.

Oracle" is about. Sometimes the tables are turned, and there is no prettier sight in the exhibition than that of some sharp lad—who has stolen half an hour in the morning to go round with his catalogue—bringing his father and mother with him in the evening, and showing them the points in his favourite pictures. Mr. Ruskin, in his evidence before one



"CONSULTING THE ORACLE."

of the National Gallery Select Committee, said that what the common people wanted were good modern pictures of domestic pathos. "Nothing assists them so much," he said, "as having the moral disposition developed rather than the intellectual after their work; anything that touches their feelings is good, and puts new life into them." That is exactly the principle on which the promoters of this Whitechapel exhibition have acted. Here in our next sketch is "a couple" looking at



"THE SYMBOL."

Mr. Frank Dicksee's "Symbol," which is thus explained to them in the catalogue:—

A wedding party has broken up, and the revellers pass merrily down the stairs. "Smiling they live and call life pleasure!" but in the shadow below is one to whom "the cup of life has been dealt in another measure." The old man sits for a moment, and holds in his hands a crucifix—the symbol of self-sacrifice. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" he asks. The plaintive question catches the bridegroom's ear; and he is startled in a moment into the consciousness that sacrifice is nobler than pleasure.

Closer to this picture hangs Mr. Britton Riviere's "Enraptured Child,"

What proportion, we wonder, of those who saw it in the Academy 1884 would not have been glad enough—if they had dared to rob it—of such a help to its enjoyment as the following little entry in the catalogue:—

In all nations there is a legend of an enchanted castle, where rich treasures are to be found, but which is left untouched by the fear of men, and is guarded by beasts. Men cannot reach their hopes, such legends tell us, because of their passions and their fears—symbolized in this picture by the figure that sits "burning bright" between the palace, and the secret and poisonous hazards that crawl about the poisoned floor. At last up man—like the Knight in Tennyson's "Sleeping Beauty"—strong in the strength of faith and inspired by the love of a woman, whose scarf he wears, is brave enough to face the dangers: before love and faith the enchantment is broken, and by one man's sacrifice the hopes of many are realized. The Sleeping Beauty is awakened, and "evermore a costly gift" becomes "the picture in some brighter world."

All precious things, discovered late,
To those that seek them, time hath;
For Love in angel words with life,
And drives the red from hidden earth.

The catalogue does not, however, exhaust Mr. Barnett's "recourses to civilization" for adding to the attractiveness of his show. Many of the visitors are "no scholars"; others do not care to spend their penny on the catalogue. For their sake it is that oral explanations are occasionally given. On the Select Committee referred to above, one of the members remarked how, "upon one occasion, a friend of his stopped in one of the galleries and explained some of the objects, and at once a very numerous crowd was attracted round him, until the officials ordered him to move on." There are no such restrictions at Whitechapel. This sketch, for instance, shows one of the crowds that assemble



THE CROWD OF ART.

from time to time, and follow Mr. Barnett as he makes the circuit of the rooms and tells his visitors "all about it." Who are the visitors, it may be asked? They are very literally all sorts and conditions of men, from the West-enders who go down to see how the common people behave, to the factory girls who couldn't tell you why they go, but for whom the pictures have a strange fascination, and who "sadder in, evening after evening, when their day's work is done. Mr. Barnett and his friends do not expect to regenerate the world by their pictures shown, nor do they affect to believe—as the dignitaries at St. Stephen's sometimes do—that a general Sunday opening of museums would inaugurate the millennium. They only say—in the mottoes printed on their catalogue—that as "life without industry is guilt," so "industry without art is brutality," and that even the smallest service "is true service while it lasts." Any one who cares—just as the three months' picture season is beginning in the West—to subscribe towards the £150 that are wanted to pay for the three weeks' season now closing in the East may at any rate be assured that his charity will do no harm—which to judge from the recent correspondence in our columns, is about as much as in this tangled world anybody has a right to expect.

A Paris correspondent telegraphing yesterday says:—"The weather is intensely hot and oppressive, and there have been some cases of sunstroke to-day and yesterday. Paris is crowded with tourists. The trees in the parks, boulevards and gardens are as leafy as at midsummer. I never saw the flower markets so well supplied. This morning I bought an armful of convolvulus and other field flowers, including violets, with lilac, tulips, wallflower, and pink hawthorn, for a franc. I had enough to brighten up a couple of rooms."

Figure 69: "At the East-End 'Academy,'" Pall Mall Gazette, April 2, 1886.

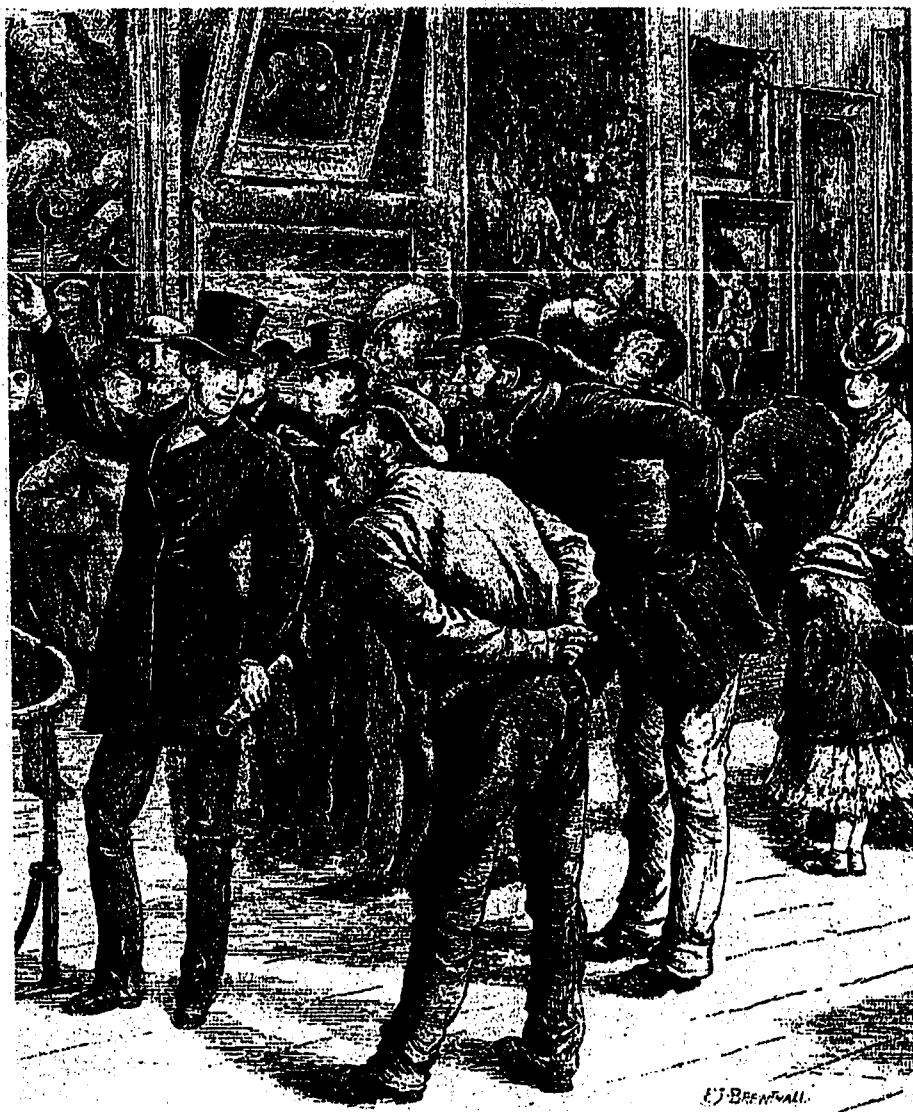


Figure 70: E.J. Brewtnall, "A Party of Working Men at the National Gallery," *The Graphic Supplement*, August 6, 1870.



Figure 71: "The South Kensington Museum on a Whitmonday," *Graphic*, June 3, 1871.



Closing Time: The Lost Tribe waiting to be recognised.

Figure 72: "Bank Holiday at the British Museum," *Illustrated London News*, April 9, 1887.

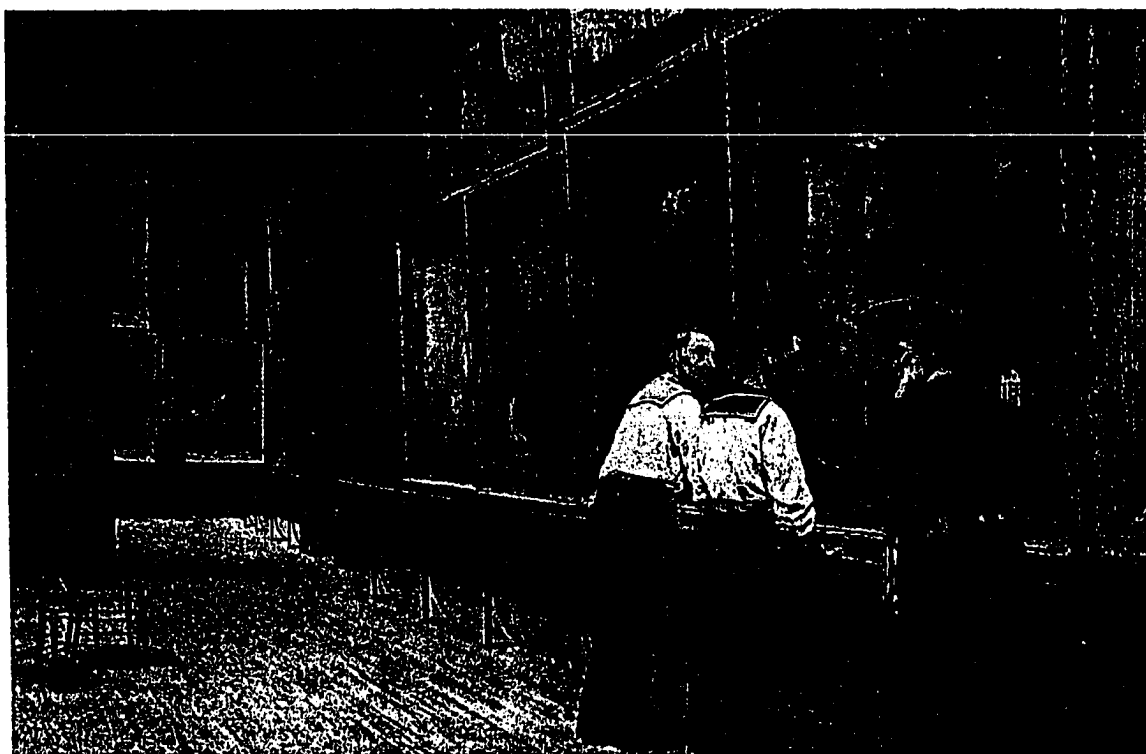


Figure 73: Edward Richard Taylor, *'Twas a Famous Victory*, 1883, Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery



Figure 74: "Holiday Folks at the National Gallery," *The Graphic Supplement*, August 3, 1872.

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Autobiographical Statement

Born a sixth-generation Texan, Jamie W. Johnson attended Trinity University in San Antonio, where she pursued a double major in Classical Studies and Art History. After a summer on an archaeological dig in Tunisia, an internship at the San Antonio Museum of Art, and eight semesters of ancient Greek, she graduated summa cum laude. She received her M.A. in Art History from Columbia University but returned to Houston to teach special education in the Klein Independent School District. Returning to New York City, she entered the Ph.D. program in art history at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. In the process of completing her degree, she has pursued a career in museum education at The Art Institute of Chicago, the Morgan Library, and the National Academy of Design. She is currently the Education Coordinator of the Dahesh Museum of Art and lives in Connecticut with her partner, Virginia Lee Tantral, and their cat, Morgan.