

CONSIDERING IDEOLOGIES OF FEMININITY  
IN THE BOURGEOIS INTERIORS AND COMMERCIAL SPACES  
OF THE FIN-DE-SIÈCLE PRINTS OF FÉLIX VALLOTTON

by

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Considering Ideologies of Femininity in the Bourgeois Interiors and Commercial Spaces of the Fin-de-Siècle Prints of Félix Vallotton

Thesis directed by Professor Marilyn R. Brown

In this thesis I attempt to contextualize the fin-de-siècle printwork of Félix Vallotton (1865-1925) in terms of nineteenth-century ideologies of femininity. As a socially stabilizing factor of the French nation, the role of the feminine was frequently invoked in visual and literary sources. I analyze Vallotton's print depictions of women in the bourgeois interior as well as the commercial spaces of the Third Republic as they reveal conceptual ties to ideas such as the spatial construction of the separate spheres, the femme fatale and frigidity, as well as the use of pathological rhetoric to describe feminine agency in relation to themes of health and degeneration. In addition, I argue that Vallotton's role as an illustrator reveals the relationship between gendered subject matter and media—as his more titillating print depictions found critical praise, while his painted versions of identical scenes were met with censure.

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## Introduction: Critical Approaches to the Separate Spheres

### I. Vallotton the Artist and Fin-de-siècle Women: Identifying Approaches to Both

Swiss artist Félix Vallotton (1865-1925) is associated by art historians with the fin-de-siècle artist group the Nabis, though not as a principle member. A painter and printmaker, Vallotton's print practice was prolific during fin-de-siècle, though his paintings of strange women are perhaps better known. Vallotton's *Trois femmes et une petite fille jouantes dans l'eau* (Three Women and a Young Girl Playing by the Water, 1907) (Figure 1), perhaps his best known painting, represents many of the gender ambiguities present in his prints and painted works. Here, in the absence of men, the women appear peculiar and off-putting as they ford thigh-deep water. In Vallotton's depictions of more contemporary spaces, women are frequently staged as characters who pose a subtle or not-so subtle threat to their male lovers and counterparts. Vallotton's female figures in his prints, as opposed to his paintings, tend to be neither estranged from realistic depiction, nor unmoored in a symbolic sea, but Vallotton's graphic representations of women frequently engage gendered friction and discontent. These concerns are epitomized in the 1898 woodcut series, *Intimités* (Intimacies), which showcases the feminine protagonist of the bourgeois interior as dishonest and materialistic, though alluring. Vallotton's depictions of women in his printwork chase social and national preoccupations of fin-de-siècle France. He depicts women in the private and in public, with men, within a crowd, amongst only women, alone. The diversity of his printwork speaks to the artist's concerns, his publisher's, and the diverse arena for print exhibition and dissemination in fin-de-siècle. Many of Vallotton's prints were intended for books and journals, as well as for exhibition at sites such as Siegfried Bing's

*L'Art Nouveau* exhibitions.<sup>1</sup> Vallotton contributed woodcuts to various subscription journals in Paris including *La Revue blanche*. He contributed to political discourse with such prints as *L'Anarchiste* (The Anarchist, 1892) and *La Manifestation* (The Demonstration, 1893) (Figure 2), as well as to fin-de-siècle aesthetics of the decorative with the textile-heavy *La Paresse* (Laziness, 1896). In addition to illustrating books and theater programs, he completed a set of portraits of notable nineteenth-century persons such as Paul Verlaine.<sup>2</sup> Recognized as an anarchist, Vallotton's subject matter ranged from intimate interior scenes to images of Parisian urban disorder and contestation.

From the perspective of social history, Vallotton's work can be accessed through his politics and through dominant gender constructions at play in his works. There is a profound gap in scholarly literature regarding Vallotton's prints, especially beyond his formal innovation and method, or inquiry regarding how his touted biography as anarchistic misogynist might relate to the prints' subject matter.<sup>3</sup> Vallotton's broken affair with a working-class woman, Hélène Chatenay upon his entry into a bourgeois marriage in 1899 inspired scholarly reflection upon his print series titled *Intimités* (1898) and the many painted depictions of his wife, Gabrielle

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<sup>1</sup> Colleen Denney approaches in detail Vallotton's relationship with Siegfried Bing and Maison de l'Art Nouveau. Denney introduces Vallotton's print work exhibited at *L'Art Nouveau* in support of her argument regarding the differences in style between the English and the French and possibilities for stylistic consideration and exchange. In the midst of her discussion she provides an extremely useful summary of Vallotton's exhibition history at *L'Art Nouveau* and professional relationship between Samuel Bing and Vallotton as well as other Nabi artists Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard (Colleen Denney, "English Book Designers and the Role of the Modern Book at L'Art Nouveau," *Arts Magazine* 61 (1987): 49-57).

In addition, a comprehensive look at Bing's appreciation for Vallotton and inclusion in *L'Art Nouveau* exhibitions is: Gabriel P. Weisberg, "Félix Vallotton, Siegfried Bing and L'Art Nouveau," *Arts Magazine*, 61 (February 1986): 33-37.

<sup>2</sup> Vallotton worked as the primary portrait artist for *La Revue blanche*, with his woodcuts appearing in almost every edition.

<sup>3</sup> One of few freestanding analyses of Vallotton's prints is Eugene Glynn's 1970s psychoanalytical look at Vallotton's graphic work. Glynn privileges the tempestuous visuals of Vallotton's graphic work, and considers it as an extension of Vallotton's personality (Eugene Glynn, "The Violence Within: The Woodcuts of Félix Vallotton," *Art News* 74, no. 3 (1975): 36-39). This quotation from Glynn's first page helps to summarize his methodology: "[Vallotton's] Intelligence, lucidity, melancholy inform his work as they did his person. In both a severe, controlling order provided the surface design that contained a remarkable violence within. His greatest need was to go unnoticed, a friend remarked, not to afflict others with his incurable *tristesse*" (36).

Bernheim in the context of his biography.<sup>4</sup> Karen Stock most recently contributed to part of this discussion in her dissertation project at NYU in which she considered the role of certain women, including Vallotton's wife Gabrielle, in the paintings of Édouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard and Vallotton. In her study, which focuses on masculinity, Stock relies on Vallotton's affiliation with *Les Nabis* to make connections regarding the artist and his muse, and to explore the relationship between images of women, their worldly inspiration, and the social circles which inspire and reinforce methods of depiction.<sup>5</sup> Vallotton's painting oeuvre has been the subject of monographs printed in German, French, and English, but his printwork, and in particular, its depiction of femininity, has not been the subject of comprehensive study beyond its brief illustrative purposes in scholarly works focusing on broader themes.

Though others have explored Vallotton's innovative woodcut practice and his personal ideologies and sentiments, including his relationship with the other Nabi painters and his personal ambivalence toward women, his employment of gender in his prints, and the relationship between women depicted and the spaces they occupy is unexplored. Considering women in interior domesticity and in more public, social spaces such as the department store and the boulevard has been a fruitful method for scholars such as Ruth Iskin and Lisa Tiersten, yet Vallotton's work presents a current gap in this literature, with the exception of brief, interpretive

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Thomson mentions this change in Vallotton's life in his project *The Troubled Republic*. From a letter he wrote to his brother Paul, in anticipation of his marriage, Vallotton, "expected to live without either needing to change their habits: 'me at my work, she in her interior, it will be very reasonable.' Vallotton's self-interested new arrangement necessitated ditching Chatenay. In this same letter he explained to his brother that both he and Hélène would be hurt by this, but that he had always told her he would one day marry. In another letter he added that she would not be surprised, as he had prepared her for the eventuality. Vallotton's use of the word *prepare* suggests that he expected to be able to manipulate his less advantaged mistress." (Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France, 1889-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 64).

<sup>5</sup> Karen Stock. *Bonnard, Vuillard, and Vallotton: Masculinity in Question*. Diss., New York University, 2006. Stock relies on biographical details of Bonnard, Vuillard, and Vallotton in order to access many of their depictions which feature women they knew. In addition, Stock contextualizes the images and their real-life model counterparts with contemporaneous views on and understandings regarding marriage and intimate relationships.

illustrations as seen in the Aruna D'Souza's exploration of images of department stores in her anthology *The Invisible Flâneuse*.<sup>6</sup>

This project is primarily an answer to the scholarly gap regarding Vallotton's printwork and an evaluation of these artworks as they portray and contribute to contested spaces and ideas of gender in fin-de-siècle Paris. I will use a social historical approach to explore Vallotton's printwork in consideration of recent scholarship regarding gender and space and their historical interplay.

## II. Fin-de-siècle Femininity in Context

Before addressing images of women present in the prints which proliferated in Paris during the 1890s it is necessary to consider how a viewer experienced print images, the dichotomies between art and information in public and private, and how these relationships related to visual culture. In addition, changing technologies and the introduction of the commercial marketplace increased the role of images in public and private life, for artistic and commercial intent, as the birth of modern advertising began to subsume both into one combined material result: the print-posters of urban Paris. From foregrounding the function and viewing of print-media in the 1890's, to considering gender and space, it is necessary to examine how social conceptions can be represented explicitly and more implicitly in print images. To assess the "documentary" value of prints, however mediated by social construction, one must examine and

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<sup>6</sup> Aruna D'Souza, and Tom McDonough. *The Invisible Flâneuse: Gender, Public Space and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-century Paris*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.

Ruth Iskin. *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; Lisa Tiersten. *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-siècle France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

D'Souza does discuss Vallotton's prints directly in the context of Impressionist depictions of the modern department store in the last pages of her chapter, (Aruna D'Souza, "Why the Impressionists Never Painted the Department Store," in *The Invisible Flâneuse: Gender, Public Space and Visual Culture in Nineteenth-century Paris*, ed. Tom McDonough and Aruna D'Souza (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 146-147.) .



deconstruct concepts contemporary to the fin-de-siècle as well as the continuing life of such concepts in social histories of culture, visual and otherwise. The figure of the *flâneur* and the notion of the “separate spheres” are two social constructions which survived their origin in the second half of the nineteenth-century and continue to inform cultural histories of Paris and the nineteenth-century modern experience.<sup>7</sup> An uncritical binary gender-model did not itself survive the twentieth century, but from a twenty-first-century view the male-female dichotomy remains useful in its contemporaneity for this study. Though transgressions of this model can be argued in moments of gendered acting out and subversion found in the concept of the *flâneuse* and the perceived and real actions of the New Woman, the social identity and self-definition supported by the male/female dynamic contributed to ideas of the nation and the modern experience of Paris.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In French, the phrase “separate spheres” is known figuratively as *la femme au foyer*, woman at the hearth, but I will conform to the common English phrase for this project (Charles Sowerwine, “Revising the Sexual Contract: Women's Citizenship and Republicanism in France, 1789-1944,” in *Confronting Modernity in Fin-de-Siècle France: Bodies, Minds and Gender*, ed. Christopher E. Forth and Elinor Accampo (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 25).

<sup>8</sup> As a component of this natural, binary gendered order, pathological rhetoric was a common trope for discussion of the ‘degeneration’ and ‘health’ of the French nation. Discussion of feminine agency and acting out comprises a large fraction of this fin-de-siècle dialogue: “Historians have emphasized contemporaries’ understanding of the crises of the fin-de-siècle in terms of a crisis of gender relations. Contemporary commentators made frequent reference to biological models in explaining evidence of ‘degeneration’. Pathologies (neurasthenia, suicide, prostitution, and a worryingly low birth rate) were believed to be upsetting the balance of the social organism and undermining the “virility” of the French nation. The concomitant efforts of women to move beyond bourgeois models of domestic femininity and to claim social and political rights thus became a major source of conflict” (David M. Pomfret, “‘A Muse for the Masses’: Gender, Age, and Nation in France, Fin-de-siècle,” *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 5 (2004): 1442.). An outspoken voice regarding topics of sex and society during the second half of the nineteenth-century was Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. Bram Dijkstra notes, “It is clear that in Proudhon’s mind there were only two possible social developments: evolution or degeneration... ‘A nation, after having risen with virile energy, can become *effeminate* and even collapse’ (emphasis in original)... There were, then, only two viable choices in the real world, ‘either the subordination or women, guaranteed by the modesty of their position in life, or the degradation of men: we must choose’” (Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 211). For a history of some of these topics of femininity, especially in consideration of the historical entrenchment of many of the gendered concepts of French fin-de-siècle culture, see Patricia Mainardi’s analysis of the practical and symbolic conditions of marriage during the nineteenth-century: Patricia Mainardi, *Husbands, Wives, and Lovers: Marriage and Its Discontents in Nineteenth-century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). For a classic overview of themes of femininity through the lens of the British Victorian era, see: Martha Vicinus, *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

Nineteenth-century Paris was a site of iterative conflict, and the stability found in socially defining its spaces is well-documented. Dividing and linking the denizens of Paris into male and female constituencies, and anchoring the French mother-wife to the interior achieved a type of stability for a nation consumed by a century of political tension and bloody conflict. Maintaining social order was pertinent to the survival of the Third Republic, and the separate spheres was an extremely useful concept for ordering the psyche of France. Just as the spaces of nineteenth-century Paris were sites of memory, its citizens were also repositories for past-conflicts, a condition which destabilized French society at times due to a citizenry accustomed to rapid mobilization. Scholars recognize Hausmannization and the creation of the French boulevards as a mapping of modern order onto a formerly Medieval Paris, and the separate spheres promoted a similar, stabilizing order.<sup>9</sup>

### **III. Wilson, Adler, and Wolff: Considering Methodologies for Interpreting Femininity at Fin-de-siècle**

Many scholars have worked through concepts of gender and social history using a variety of tactics; while early efforts, such as taking Baudelaire at his word, or according the separate spheres practical hegemony, have long been improved upon, there is still work to be done in considering how men and women interacted together and separately in the nineteenth-century spaces of Paris, and how the representation of those interactions and spaces may relate to historical reality. The methodologies of Janet Wolff, Elizabeth Wilson, and Kathleen Adler in the late eighties and early nineties incorporated feminism to their sociological and art historical

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<sup>9</sup> At fin-de-siècle the most recent of these destabilized, bloody events was the Paris Commune of 1870 following the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), see: Collette E. Wilson, *Paris and the Commune, 1871-78 The Politics of Forgetting*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); David A. Shafer, *The Paris Commune: French Politics, Culture, and Society at the Crossroads of the Revolutionary Tradition and Revolutionary Socialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Wilson focuses on the interplay between images and social themes of the Paris Commune, while Shafer's text is a comprehensive political history.

approaches. The contributions by Wolff, Wilson, and Adler are cited by scholars such as Aruna D'Souza as vital to the discourse regarding the role of women in late nineteenth-century Paris. Gender and modernity in this scope of inquiry frequently becomes a twin-discussion in contemporary scholarship, but prior to the 1980s this was not so. Before I begin my discussion of Vallotton's prints, I will review these three scholarly approaches (as they were published chronologically), because they have come to inform later scholarship and form a baseline for methods of inquiry on this topic. I will briefly summarize their contributions to this discussion and then discuss the challenges presented by their chosen methodologies.

Janet Wolff's sociological approach in "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," considers nineteenth century history and sociology from a lens of gender divisions. Through Baudelaire she characterizes modernity as, "consist[ing] in the transient and 'fugitive' nature of encounters and impressions made in the city."<sup>10</sup> For her project Wolff analyzes Baudelaire's "Painter of Modern Life" and she critiques historians and sociologists' exclusion, and flawed inclusion, of women as urban participants in interpretations of Baudelaire's text and other nineteenth-century sources. Wolff notes that there is a type of transference between Baudelaire's making note of peripheral women such as, "the prostitute, the widow, the old lady, the lesbian, the murder victim, and the passing unknown woman," and the histories which are written about real women, suggesting that these types have inhibited scholarly approaches.<sup>11</sup> Wolff cites Walter Benjamin's claim that, "the lesbian, for Baudelaire, was the heroine of modernity," and notes that scholars, in the same vein, bestow women who transcend understood gender roles with mannish characteristics: "Perhaps," Wolff notes, "this perception of the 'masculine' in women who were visible in a man's world is only displaced

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<sup>10</sup> Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse. Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 3 (1985): 38.

<sup>11</sup> Wolff, 42.

recognition of women's overall exclusion from that world."<sup>12</sup> Wolff proposes a combined origin for this exclusion in the invisibility of women which she identifies in qualities of the discipline of sociology, the changing understanding of modernity, and the historical realities of women's participation. Wolff begins by considering disciplinary aspects of sociology in order to account for the absence of women apart from the variety Baudelaire includes: "women as idealized-but-vapid/real-and-sensual-but-detested"—a set which Wolff claims is, "clearly related to the particular parade of women we observe in this literature of modernity."<sup>13</sup> In addition, Wolff notes that sociology as a discipline has fostered much scholarship and inquiry from concepts of public and private. Considering urbanization and concepts of labor contributed to a conceptual separation: anything apart from work qualified as home. In addition to this conceptual division, Wolff introduces the historical concept without challenging it, that, "gradual confinement to the domestic world of the home and suburb was strongly reinforced by an ideology of separate spheres."<sup>14</sup> Wolff's assessment is that the discipline reinforced historical concepts of a real phenomenon, which was in turn historically reinforced by an ideology of separate spheres; she identifies a layering process of histories which, while not false, seems to overstate, or assume the ideology without critical distance.

Kathleen Adler's, "The Suburban, the Modern and 'une Dame de Passy'," expands the scope of inquiry Wolff introduces to the Parisian suburb of Passy. Adler frames her discussion of Berthe Morisot institutionally, noting that the binaries supported by much of the scholarship of urbanism, including, "city-suburb, city-country, urban-rural, public-private, and so on," reinforce the masculine dominant, and this, "enables the 'feminine' ('less interesting') aspect to be ignored

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<sup>12</sup> Wolff, 42.

<sup>13</sup> Wolff, 43.

<sup>14</sup> Wolff, 43.

or used only to reinscribe the value of the dominant term.”<sup>15</sup> Adler notes that Passy has a special *not quite* status as a suburb: “A place like Passy could be defined in a positive way, not as neither country nor city, but specifically as a Paris suburb. It could be regarded as a village, but it was also irrevocably Parisian.”<sup>16</sup> Adler geographically links her discussion and is able to access statistics from which to measure Morisot’s experience of the suburb. Using one case study accords her project factual credibility as well as gives Adler the opportunity to suggest that Morisot’s experience, for women of a similar demographic, may be representative. Adler points out that a lack of the mixing classes which was characteristic of the Parisian urban experience of the time existed in Passy. She notes that the conditions of the more industrialized suburb of Argenteuil was not to be found in Passy: “Indeed, its prime function for men was to provide the structure and sense of order and regulation which was represented by the private, domestic sphere.”<sup>17</sup> In Adler’s use of Morisot’s biographical experience as a case study she is able to consider elements of Morisot’s particular class status and frame the experience of bourgeois women in the setting of Passy. In removing the focus from Paris to the suburbs, Adler is able to talk about Paris and not-Paris. Though this creates another binary, Adler’s methodology produces an interesting lens for studying the actions of women. If the relative solitude of Passy resulted in a higher degree of public autonomy for bourgeois women there, were the women of Paris truly cloistered? What about the women living and working in Passy who were not-*bourgeoise*, such as the wet nurse Morisot depicts with her daughter, Julie Manet? Adler includes space in her project as essential to the social experience of men and women and argues that Morisot’s keeping her distance from urban Paris, both in many of her paintings and as part of her personal history, was a type of self-enforced exclusion, one woman’s intentional absence, a

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<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Adler, "The Suburban, the Modern and 'une Dame de Passy'" *Oxford Art Journal* 12, no. 1 (1989): 3.

<sup>16</sup> Adler, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Adler, 7.

purposeful rejection of urban interaction. Though Morisot does participate in acceptable habits of the *bougeoise* of Passy, Adler uses her abstinence as a point of departure, then evaluates the extent and condition of Morisot's spatial distance from the urban melee to be beheld and explored in Paris. This case study achieves a counter-model for history as Adler constrains her discussion to a micro-level. Though focusing on a canonized, "major", figure, Adler analyzes the experience of one to parse the experience of a particular whole, or as a counter to the work of other scholars and their brand of evidence.

While Janet Wolff notes that histories of modernity presented as histories of public space is a half-approach, her query of the "separate spheres" ends, perhaps, in her contribution to a sociology complacent with this binary, in the argument that both spheres should be visible in nineteenth-century scholarship. Elizabeth Wilson's text, "The Invisible Flâneur," published in 1992 as an answer to Janet Wolff, instead takes on the city and the *flâneur* as a mythical manifestation of male anxiety regarding urbanization. Wilson concludes that the *flâneur* is comprised of male anxiety structured as the concept of the *flâneur* as he surveys and endures the labyrinth of the metropolis as an impotent. Her method is to deconstruct a historical term, frequently taken on by historians as a practical reality, and psychoanalyze what remains. To achieve this, Wilson introduces the *flâneur*, describes his typical day, then locates him in commerce and commodified spaces, which Wilson notes are "neither quite public nor quite private."<sup>18</sup> Wilson, after historicizing the term *flâneur*, places it within feminist discourse: he is the, "embodiment of the 'male gaze'. He represents men's visual and voyeuristic mastery over women."<sup>19</sup> From this symbolic function of the *flâneur* as it may appear in contemporary scholarship, Wilson notes that other historians such as Griselda Pollock and Janet Wolff

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<sup>18</sup>Elizabeth Wilson, "The Invisible Flâneur," *New Left Review* 1, no. 191 (1992): 96.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, 98.

frequently claim sites and statuses as off-limits to women and focus their projects on other spaces in the attempt to get a truer reading of feminine history.<sup>20</sup> Wilson poses the question: “Just how did women experience nineteenth-century urban space?” In response, she then problematizes the domestic interior as a site of work, for the pleasure and convenience, “rest and recreation of men,” and as the, “‘ideal location’ for sexual attacks across class boundaries.”<sup>21</sup> While Wilson critiques Wolff, she incorporates fin-de-siècle concepts of fashionable dress, both fact-checking Wolff’s cited scholarship and contextually grounding the conversation of the *flâneur*. She then argues that Wolff’s claims about the ideology of the separate spheres present the concept as static and monolithic and that this point of view does not allow the relationship between proposed or understood ideologies and historical activity the complexity it deserves. Wilson scrutinizes Wolff’s projection of ideology then attempts to historicize it. Wilson notes that beliefs according women distinctions of virtue and vice based on their public and private activities were so broad that:

Ideological discourse, ranging from Hegel right through to Mrs. Beeton’s *Book of Household Management*, constantly reworked this ideology, so that philosophy itself must be described as gendered; yet in attaching so much weight to these constructions we may lose sight of women’s own resistance to, and reworkings of, these systems of thought.<sup>22</sup>

Wilson’s method thus problematizes terminology such as the *flâneur*, and the work of other scholars as they consider accepted themes, and then she rewinds her discussion as far back as Hegel to question all of philosophic discourse. Wilson connects linked ideologies through time and finds that, in accordance with the contemporary trope, this ideology goes all the way to the top. Wilson’s act of questioning every part of the discussion, from the site of interaction, the

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<sup>20</sup> The Wolff is cited in this paper, also see: Griselda Pollock, “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity,” in *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, 98.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson, 105.

city, to the contributions of historical thinkers, to the social initiatives of historical thinkers, achieves a layered, methodological unpeeling of the issues.

The theoretical tradition which these works represent is an answer, according to Aruna D'Souza, to the, "moment of great restructuring in Western Europe and North America, a shift...from modernity to post-modernity".<sup>23</sup> D'Souza argues that the scholarship was compelled from contemporary interest in "nineteenth-century Paris as a crucible for modernity" and the role the time period played as a mirror of the urban restructuring taking place in the 1970s and 1980s. D'Souza describes the advent of Post-Modernity as an "echo [of] an earlier moment of fundamental transformation."<sup>24</sup> One problem of overlaying feminist and other methodologies of the twentieth century onto preceding historical moments is the assumption that threads of contemporary thought will be present in history in some form. Employing history as a mirror or echo to draw insights about current times is a useful way to give critical consideration to a changing contemporary moment, but a historical mirror is never that; despite resemblance, concluding a perfect match is always spurious. While Wolff, Wilson, and Adler do not conclude such, the risk when following their methodologies is that a scholarly response to perceived similarities will always be tempered by that similar perception. If wave has followed wave of feminism in the twentieth century, and the historical moments are understood as similar, it is understood that similar feminist energy must be present in the nineteenth century, in some historical incarnation, without ever allowing for the possibility that the variable could actually be zero.

To avoid this paradox of approaching images of women, in this project I resist making arguments about possible agency for actual women in the *fin-de-siècle*, and rely instead on

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<sup>23</sup> D'Souza and McDonough, 2.

<sup>24</sup> D'Souza and McDonough, 2.



questioning implications of agency as constructed in the prints of Félix Vallotton. In this way visual expression of agency might correspond to actual women but does not function as a concrete marker of their presence; more likely, the ideologies present reveal patterns of thought regarding women and through this consideration it is possible to measure these images as they comprise a pattern of social response, or argument against their historical counterparts.

I will first examine how Vallotton presents women in private and analyze possible meanings beyond his biography, which has been relied upon in previous scholarly examinations. The question I ask: How do Vallotton's private spaces, such as those seen in his well-known 1898 woodblock print series, *Intimités*, represent fin-de-siècle conceptions of space and gender, including the useful social construct of the separate spheres? In my second chapter I will examine Vallotton's print depictions of public and semi-public spaces to consider women as Vallotton presents them as modern agents participating in the marketplace.<sup>25</sup> I will present depictions featuring mostly women, as well as a few images of larger crowds in some of Vallotton's more politically-minded prints, in exploration of how women appear as both cultural agents and as contributors to Vallotton's imaging of the Parisian urban landscape. In addition I will consider how Vallotton mediates his presentation of said spaces with signs of spatial strangeness, in order to portray modern women with a tinge of pathology. Finally, in my third chapter I will consider the role of art prints and mass print culture in relation to themes of gender and gendered subject matter during the fin-de-siècle; this includes the role of the artist versus illustrator and the critical reception of Vallotton's gendered subject matter in his prints and paintings of fin-de-siècle.

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<sup>25</sup> Ruth Iskin and Lisa Tiersten have made strong contributions to this conversation in their analysis of advertising posters, and I will ask some of the same questions regarding feminine presence and purchasing agency as Vallotton's prints depict these themes.

## 2. An “atmosphere full of doubt and sensuality”<sup>26</sup>: Vallotton’s Bourgeois Interiors

Vallotton’s remarkable feat is to have infiltrated so much gloom and bitterness into a series of simple scenes, at least half of which resist definitive narrative interpretation.<sup>27</sup>

-Richard S. Field, 1991

### I. Fin-de-siècle Ideologies of the Interior and Feminine Belonging

Vallotton’s primary subject matter in his printwork is the social landscape of Paris.<sup>28</sup> His depictions of the public life of the Third Republic comment on the urban and political experience of Parisians and at times castigate the government authorities as ineffectual, brutish, and prone to excessive force. Vallotton created very few print images of private or interior life.<sup>29</sup> The exception to this is two print series Vallotton created which exclusively feature scenes of the

<sup>26</sup> Félix Vallotton, in a letter to an unknown person from 1914, from Stock, 173.

<sup>27</sup> Richard S. Field, "Exteriors and Interiors: Vallotton's Printed Oeuvre," in *Félix Vallotton*, by Sasha M. Newman, Félix Vallotton, and Marina Ducrey, ed. Lesley K. Baier (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1991), 91.

<sup>28</sup> I use the term printwork semi-loosely. In addition to the works I discuss which are “true” prints, mostly woodblock prints, there are some images Vallotton produced in the late 1890s which are photomechanical reproductions of his drawings. These images are printed in political journals such as *Le cri de Paris*, as well as a book project I will discuss in my second chapter called *Les Rassemblements*. Though not intended for exhibition as a fine art print and not included in Vallotton’s catalogue raisonné of graphic work, because the works on paper were viewed as a print, I consider them as they were ‘printed’, a de facto print in a specific social viewing experience. I will discuss this more in my third chapter. Vallotton’s catalogue raisonné of graphic work: Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie* (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972).

<sup>29</sup> A few monographs and catalogues considering the work of Félix Vallotton include some reference to his printwork in varying degrees. The most comprehensive is Sasha M. Newman’s catalogue *Félix Vallotton*, published in 1991, from a Yale University Art Gallery exhibition of Vallotton’s paintings and prints, specifically the chapter by Richard S. Field, “Exteriors and Interiors: Vallotton’s Printed Oeuvre” which is cited above. Field considers Vallotton’s prints in biographical and stylistic context. Field’s contribution occurs just as the current dialogue of gender regarding fin-de-siècle and new challenges to and discussion of the separate spheres took off (as illustrated in the discussion in my introduction of Wolff, Wilson, and Adler). Field uses formal analysis, some psychoanalysis, and Vallotton’s revision process to ground his arguments regarding Vallotton’s interior spaces. He also introduces the unpublished Master’s thesis at Oberlin College by Lise Marie Holst, *Félix Vallotton’s Intimités: Un Cauchmar d’un Erudite* (1979). Field draws on Holst’s visual analysis, as her project employed visual analysis and chronology to link Vallotton’s *Intimités* to a painting, *The Conjugal Life* (1894) by Édouard Vuillard. Holst considers the *Intimités* as, as Fields puts it, “unusual joining of the obsessions and ominous psychological themes of Gauguin, Munch, and other Symbolists, with the stuffy interiors of the Nabis” (78-9). In addition to the Yale catalogue, though not in discussion of any of Vallotton’s prints, an exhibition catalogue, *Félix Vallotton: Idyll on the Edge* for the Kunsthau Zurich exhibition of Vallotton’s paintings the same title (2008), edited by Linda Schädler, does go into some analysis of Vallotton’s painted interiors of the late 1890s of which several formally and titularly correspond to his prints of the same topic.

bourgeois interior: *Les Instruments de musique* (Musical Instruments, 1896-1897), and *Intimités* (Intimacies, 1898). The musical instruments series presents men playing instruments alone in the bourgeois interior, and *Intimités* depicts men and women in moments Vallotton introduces to the viewer from romantic relationships: an embrace, a fight, estrangement, passion, etc. To consider Vallotton's prints of the interior and his depiction of women and fin-de-siècle themes of femininity I will start with a brief discussion of the significations of the interior as a symbolic space of women and as the determined opposite of the masculine coded, public spaces of Paris.

Within the opposition between private/interior and public/exterior, as urban social space is constructed and divided and people relate to the resulting divisions and each other, the historical and symbolic room for gendered significance is vast. Historically women have been associated with the interior, and, sociologically, conceptions of the division of labor have defined the interior as a site of women's work.<sup>30</sup> Claiming the binary division of the separate spheres of public and private life—linking women, though child rearing and the biological ability to breast feed, to the home, and connecting men to the public as “cultural, political, and economic beings”—rather than demonstrating natural affinities, is a constructed opposition. According to sociologists Linda Imray and Audrey Middleton, this construction is, “not seen as opposed activity, but rather, in terms of power relationships which are thrown into sharp relief by rituals that mark these boundaries.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Meg Stacey, "Social Sciences and the State: Fighting like a Woman," ed. Eva Gamarnikow, in *The Public and the Private* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 7. In the early 1980s, Stacey and other scholars challenged the disciplinary risk of sociology to reinforce gendered institutions through wording and scholarly point of view. Stacy argues that, “male domination of sociological terms and concepts and the partial nature of the associated theories actively contributes to the continual re-creation of the male dominated gender order and thus the continual oppression of women” (8). The disciplinary mandate Stacey describes is to, “refurbish...sociological concepts, terms and theories, in such a way that they are more capable of the task of analyzing society than they are at present” (8). This self-critical initiative illustrated in the anthology *The Public and the Private* yields important insights regarding the divisions of space and gendered social expectations and ideologies as they apply to old and new histories.

<sup>31</sup> Linda Imray and Audrey Middleton, "Public and Private: Marking the Boundaries," ed. Eva Gamarnikow, in *The Public and the Private* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 13-14.

The social implications of the interior specific to fin-de-siècle Paris include themes of nurturing motherhood and the nation. The disastrous Franco-Prussian War, 1870-71, and the brutal resolution of the Paris Commune, 1871, bore the Third Republic and the French male psyche decades of anxiety.<sup>32</sup> A declining birth rate and increasing dialogue regarding women's rights kept the woman question as a topic of constant social conversation.<sup>33</sup> Rooted in the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the naturalization of women as belonging to the interior performed a stabilizing role in France as part of a democratic model supported by ideologies of complementary difference.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Karen Offen, "Feminism, Antifeminism, and National Family Politics in Early Third Republic France," in *Connecting Spheres: Women in the Western World, 1500 to the Present*, ed. Marilyn J. Boxer and Jean H. Quataert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 180. Offen states: "The conflict between monarchy and republic immediately provoked questioning of male/female relationships and family structure, with the result that women's subordination to men within or outside the family became a very sensitive issue"(180).

<sup>33</sup> Robert A. Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Nye considers the social consequence of the French birthrate during the nineteenth century: "Since they constituted the major part of the political elite in post-revolutionary France, the bourgeoisie came to identify its destiny as a class with the fate of the nation. Bourgeois scientists and intellectuals extended their ruminations on reproduction to the whole population in the form of principles of heredity they believed held the key to understanding France's place in the world" (72). The birthrate, as a symbol for the progress of France, was a threat to France's success as it faltered militarily in the second half of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, degeneration theory informed political rhetoric, and the low birthrate was expressed as a pathology harming the nation of France which was in turn conflated with other social ills such as alcoholism, prostitution, theft, and illnesses such as tuberculosis and venereal disease (76-77).

In addition, as a component of the question of women's activity in relation to social health, Karen Offen situates the birth of French feminism during the last decades of the nineteenth century as a product of the "controversy over women's economic activity" and as a process which also incorporated concepts and rhetoric of the symbolic health of the French nation (Offen, "Feminism, Antifeminism," 178). Offen claims, "French feminist demands...were characterized by a distinctive and quite conscious familial orientation, by an overt concern about maternity and womanliness, and by an expressed acknowledgment of the national interest and of women's particular contribution to the nation" (178). So despite much anti-feminist vitriol permeating social dialogue, fin-de-siècle feminists in fact used traditional gender roles as an empowering strategy—using the household and the appropriate roles of women within as nurturing mothers, as a platform for their feminism rather than a debilitating difference. Offen discusses more of the institutional aspects of French feminism at fin-de-siècle in her contribution to *Confronting Modernity in Fin-de-siècle France* (2010), "Is the 'Woman Question' Really the 'Man Problem'" (43-62).

<sup>34</sup> Nye, *Masculinity*, 48. Nye describes the invocation of the metaphorical relationship between the body and the state: "The dialectical nature of the relation between the body and political order has meant that political readings of human desire, the family, or the relations between the sexes are as legion in the history of biology as organic metaphors are frequent in the history of politics" (48). Using medical practices and rhetoric Nye discusses the naturalizing of conceptions of male/female and public/private difference for the purpose of maintaining social and political order. He notes, "We are thus reminded that the doctrine of the 'separate spheres' was an ideological construct designed to conceal the weakness of male claims to a monopoly of power, and that it was impossible in practice to either permanently or entirely separate the public from the private sphere" (49).

## II. Vallotton's *Intimités*: The Interior as a Site of Feminine Threat

The association between women and the household in Vallotton's series *Intimités* (Intimacies, 1898) appears not as a consigned and limited locale for women, but rather as the woman's zone of power and the site of male psychic ruination.<sup>35</sup> Despite the limiting notion of complementary difference, which claims women are suited to the interior by nature, Vallotton creates the interior as woman's threatening domain; thus the woman depicted subverts one understood aspect of her nature in order to reclaim a baser sensuality.<sup>36</sup> Sasha M. Newman describes the inevitability of feminine deceit Vallotton builds in *Intimités*:

The woodcuts..., albeit episodic, are nonetheless cumulatively more explicit in proposing that deceitful, adulterous behavior is an inevitably and predetermined aspect of woman once her sensual nature has been awakened.<sup>37</sup>

Vallotton's titles of the *Intimités* series present a negative impression of femininity.<sup>38</sup> The women depicted appear greedy, manipulative, cold-hearted, and detrimental to the equilibrium of

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<sup>35</sup> Vallotton's images present the interior in the context of male and female binary relationships. There is some scholarship on women together and alone in interior spaces, especially in regard to the work of women painters such as Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, however in a recent work Hollis Clayson goes into more detail regarding some of the symbolic meanings present between solitary women and the interior spaces they inhabit. See: S. Hollis Clayson, "Looking Within the Cell of Privacy" in *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy, 1850-1900*. Edited by Peter W. Parshall (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2009), 43-79.

<sup>36</sup> According to Offen in "Feminism, Antifeminism, and National Family Politics": "one cannot overestimate the importance throughout Europe of French Enlightenment debate on women, the family, and education, exemplified by Rousseau's controversial antifeminist arguments for democracy among men coupled with the subordination of women" (178). In the same volume, *Connecting Spheres*, Barbara Corrado Pope's text, "The Influence of Rousseau's Ideology of Domesticity" outlines the social breadth during the nineteenth century of the claim for women's moral superiority and the important role of "educative motherhood" as touted by Rousseau (144). Also, a note on my use of the singular form of "woman" in this phrase: Vallotton never depicts two women together in the space of the bourgeois interior in his printwork.

<sup>37</sup> Sasha M. Newman, "'Stages of Sentimental Life': The Nudes and Interiors," in *Félix Vallotton*, by Sasha M. Newman, Félix Vallotton, and Marina Ducrey, ed. Lesley K. Baier (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1991), 141.

<sup>38</sup> The titles of the prints from the 1898 series are *Le Mensonge* (The Lie, *Intimités I*, 1897), *Le Triomphe* (The Triumph, *Intimités II*, 1898), *La Belle épingle* (The Fine Pin, *Intimités III*, 1898), *La Raison probante* (The Cogent Reason, *Intimités IV*, 1898), *L'Argent* (Money, *Intimités V*, 1898), *Le Grand moyen* (Extreme Measure, *Intimités VI*, 1898), *Cinq heures* (Five O'Clock, *Intimités VII*, 1898), *Apprêts de visite* (Getting Ready for a Visit, *Intimités VIII*, 1898), *La Santé de l'autre* (The Other's Health, *Intimités IX*, 1898), *L'Irréparable* (The Irreparable, *Intimités X*, 1898), *L'Émotion* (Emotion, 1898), *l'Éclat* (The Outburst, 1898) (all translations are from Vallotton's catalogue raisonné of graphic work). According to Sasha Newman, *Intimités* was cut from ten to eight prints, though the catalogue raisonné includes the ten listed above in addition to "extras" *l'Éclat* and the alternate 1897 version of *La Belle Épingle*. To articulate the difference in effect of Vallotton's editing Newman claims that, "From their order of

their male counterparts. Vallotton manipulates the appearance of the bourgeois interiors of the series to construct a narrative of harmful and oppressive femininity in several ways: he uses textiles and decorative elements to create a condensed and suffocating space, he opposes signs of masculinity and femininity to create tension, and through the use of swathes of black, he absorbs the figures into the shadow of the interior, as if the interior, through active, symbolic connection to the female, is in the process of devouring the male figures.<sup>39</sup> In addition to Vallotton's formal strategies which present women as dangerous to men, the *Intimités* represent gender ideologies of fin-de-siècle which include unnatural sexuality, material excess and significance, as well as the absence of the important positive trope of woman as nurturing mother, which is replaced with signs of the *femme fatale*. Beyond the *Intimités*, Vallotton's very few prints of women in the bourgeois interior present a more ambiguous picture of women, as I will explore at the conclusion of this chapter.

Vallotton produced *Intimités* on commission for the *La Revue blanche*, a journal whose contemporary coverage of women, despite its liberal pedigree in its coverage of art and politics, included texts supporting concepts of Rousseauian gender difference such as August Strindberg's misogynistic, *On the Inferiority of Women: and the justification for their subordination based on recent scientific contributions* (1895).<sup>40</sup> In addition, in over ten years of production, the few images of women which appeared in the journal were either allegorical or

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execution...it would appear that Vallotton was groping for a specific, understated tone, one whose balance would not be perturbed by anything as obvious as the open strife of *The Outburst* [*l'Éclat*]" (78). From the prints produced for the set and the prints which were later excluded for the purposes of this chapter, and Vallotton's treatment of the bourgeois interior, I am treating the overlapping and extra prints of *Intimités* as part of Vallotton's larger creative project of the ultimately published set, *Intimités*.

<sup>39</sup> Sasha Newman describes this as if the separate narratives become a text, "Each of Vallotton's woodcuts suggest a staged event, a vignette, a short story... Yet *Intimités* is not a tale of 'a marriage,' for the characters are significantly varied to avoid any hint of a continuous text" (78). In this consideration, the print set appears as an anthology of narratives which form a visual approach to Vallotton's theme of "intimacies".

<sup>40</sup> Strindberg, August. "De l'infériorité de la femme [et comme corollaire de la justification de sa situation subordonnée selon des données dernières de la science]." Fr.trans. George Loiseau, In *La Revue blanche* (Tome VIII, 1895). 1-20. Microform.

constructed as a replicated pagebreak, with the exception of a few portraits by Vallotton depicting a variety of public figures such as Communard Louise Michel, author Jane Austen, Queen Victoria, and courtesan Liane de Pougy. The *Intimités* series is a departure from this pattern of representation.

The *Intimités* are recognized as the stylistic crescendo of Vallotton's print oeuvre.<sup>41</sup> Vallotton's signature style is defined by white figure forms amidst consuming fields of black, with emotive figures bodily subsumed into interiors peppered with textiles, potted plants, and household items frequently styled after trends of art nouveau. *Le Mensonge* (Figure 3) illustrates several strategies Vallotton employs (in combination with his pointed titles) to structure his depictions of bourgeois space as confining and harmful to men. A woman of bounteous curving form whispers into the ear of a man in a furniture-crowded interior space. The man sits on a sofa under the weight of the woman's bodily largesse, and his expression appears intent, listening; the pose of the woman seems almost vampiric, as she leans into the man's neck in resonance with concepts of the *femme fatale*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Vallotton's mastery of asymmetry and his printed works' recollection of Japanese ukiyo-e prints methods and form was highly praised, though he would actively break from this style and assume a more sketchy, coarser line and approach in the 1901 series *Crimes et châtements*. A book written by art critic and dealer Julius Meier-Graefe in 1898 presents an early critical response to Vallotton's style in *Intimités*, as well as a biography and early record of Vallotton's prints to date at the time of its publication (Julius Meier-Graefe, *Félix Vallotton: Biographie De Cet Artiste Avec La Partie La plus Importante De Son Oeuvre...* (Paris: E. Sagot, 1898)). A more recent look at Vallotton's technique and changing style, and especially his drafting process among his prints and paintings can be found in the essay by Christian Rümelin, "La complémentarité en ligne de mire. La relation entre les techniques chez Félix Vallotton" from *Félix Vallotton: de la Gravure et la Peinture* (2010), a catalogue from a recent exhibition of the same title at Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva.

<sup>42</sup> The female vampire, a feminine being able to suck the life from men, is an enduring creative trope which has origins in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Bram Dijkstra cites Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's novel *Carmilla* (1872), as one of the first literary appearances of a female vampire (341), then notes that, "The cultural preoccupation around 1900 with the struggle of evolutionary progress against the forces of bestiality and degeneration was dramatized most coherently...in what is certainly the masterpiece of vampire literature, the every-popular *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker. In Stoker's novel virtually...all aspects of the period's suspicions about the degenerative tendencies in women have been brought together" (342). Though the vampire metaphor did not have the cultural prominence it would attain in the twentieth century regarding themes of threatening women, Vallotton's image of a woman lingering at the neck of her male counterpart conforms to views of a woman thirsting unhealthily for sexual satiation. "It was considered a scientific fact by many turn-of-the-century intellectuals that for woman to taste blood was to taste the milk of desire and that such a taste may turn an innocent, inexperienced woman into an

Spatially, Vallotton crowds the far end of the couch with a loveseat and tea table and minimizes the space of the room. The slight diagonal of the frame hanging in the upper right corner pushes the viewer's eye down into the tea table which meets the corners of the couch and chair, and together they seem flattened against the almost dizzying striped wallpaper. Moving left from the right side of the image to the couple, the space opens up to display the interaction taking place between the man and women. Vallotton introduces a type of symmetry here: the crowded, impossible space of the tea table is matched and countered by the S-curve of the woman. Furthermore, the striped material of her dress resembles the imprisoning stripes of the wall paper. In Vallotton's india ink sketch of the work we see that he initially drew the walls without the striped paper, and included a corner in the room. In the print version, Vallotton has removed this nod to perspectival space and instead, by including the striped paper, he flattens and renders the space impossible through this distortion.<sup>43</sup> The flattened, striped wall thus contains the man in the interior, and it seems that the woman simultaneously achieves this in her deceit.

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insatiable nymphomaniac" (Dijkstra, 347). Dijkstra continues, "By 1900 the vampire had come to represent woman as the personification of everything negative that linked sex, ownership, and money. She symbolized the sterile hunger for seed of the brainless, instinctually polyandrous—even if still virginal—child-woman. She also came to represent the equally sterile lust for gold of woman as the eternal polyandrous prostitute" (351). Noted for his depictions of the vampiric and frightening *femmes fatales*, Edvard Munch was a contemporary of Vallotton's, and both attended the Tuesday dinners hosted by Stéphane Mallarmé called *Les Mardis*, during this time. In addition, *La Revue blanche* was one of the first (if not first) French periodical to review Munch's work, as Thadée Natanson and his wife Misia traveled to Norway and viewed Munch's work in 1895. Natanson notes in *La Revue blanche* that Munch's 1893 painting "Ce Vampire c'est un baiser de femme qui l'évoque" (This Vampire is a kiss of the woman it evokes) (Thadée Natanson, "M. Edvard Munch", *La Revue blanche*, 9 No. 59 (15 November 1895), 478.). Though Vallotton's depictions of strange women are never quite as threatening or unearthly as Munch's, Vallotton would have been aware of Edvard Munch and his work. Jack Spector makes a comparison between Munch and Vallotton's use of women which threaten men: Spector describes a theater program Vallotton produced for August Strindberg's play, *Père*: "Vallotton deviates from straight illustration in the direction of symbolist suggestion by placing the wife—not unlike one of Munch's man haters—in the hair of her victim: she lurks in the insidiously soft shadows above the head of the tormented father, who turns away from his daughter" (Jack Spector, "Between Nature and Symbol: French Prints and Illustrations at the Turn of the Century," in *The Graphic Arts and French Society: 1871-1914*, by Phillip D. Cates (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1988), 90).

<sup>43</sup> Through Vallotton's drafting process he frequently removed and included stripes and changing textiles for both wall décor and the dress of his figural components; changing a dress to stripes and back and walls from patterned to not as well.



In addition to compression of this type, Vallotton used fields of black to swallow his figures into the bourgeois interior.<sup>44</sup> Editor of *La Revue blanche*, Thadée Natanson, noted of Vallotton's use of black in *L'Intimités*:

‘[Vallotton uses] the tragic violence of a black patch’ to convey, ‘the naïveté and the ridicule, the hypocrisy and deceit, the cruelty, and even that taste for oblivion that is in our conception of love.’<sup>45</sup>

Of the 1898 series, *L'Irréparable* (Figure 4), *Apprêts de visite* (Figure 5), *L'Argent* (Figure 6), *Le Triomphe* (Figure 7) and *Le Grand moyen* (Figure 8), achieve this effect to the detriment of the male figure. Within the prints of this series which display a decided ambivalence to romance such as *L'Émotion* (Figure 9) and *La Santé de l'autre* (Figure 10), Vallotton tempers this approach—his generous use of black throughout (they are woodcuts after all) is tempered by white lines and the hint of form, as if the autonomy of the man is sustained in his discrete representation within the bourgeois interior.

*L'Émotion* presents the man and woman in the midst of a romantic interlude-interrupted, in what looks like a bourgeois foyer. Both figures look to the opening door, and woman's arm is raised in a gesture which signals the desire to flee. The male is crouching into the woman's skirts, perhaps rectifying a moment of dishabille. Here the couple is mutually bound in the possibility of discovery. The man and woman are connected in a dark spread of black, but the pattern of his trousers, as he crouches to help her dress, keeps his figure from bleeding into the darkness of the room. In *La Santé de l'autre*, Vallotton similarly sustains the form of the male figure, and the viewer is not certain of his victimization. Though the viewer can see the outline

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<sup>44</sup> Newman argues that Vallotton's use of “threatening, obliterating blacks” create an “inaccessibility”, and as, “a vehicle for the author's own opacity...the blacks both set a mood and are a metaphor for restrained interpretation” (78). In contrast to this interpretation, I would argue that the black spaces of *Intimités* achieve a sustained ambiguity, as the spaces of the interior are obscured and possible meanings proliferate in the darkness. More so, as I have described, the swaths of black increase the potential for symbolic readings of the darkness which swallows the figures in an abyss of the bourgeois interior. The blackness could house a symbolic erasure or dark possession but do not seem to be a limiting factor of interpretation, rather a space of interpretive ambiguity.

<sup>45</sup> Thomson includes this quotation in *The Troubled Republic* (70).

of the man's legs as he sits on the edge of the bed, the thematic ambivalence and questionable motives of the woman are still present. We do not know if the woman of *La Santé de l'autre* is sincere in her attention, and from the atmosphere of the other prints, for all the viewer knows she may be feeding him rat poison. One component of this print which supports a more positive, intimate reading is Vallotton's semi-comical inclusion of a bearskin rug which seems to be peering uncomfortably out at the viewer. The bear looks outward to the viewer, and, in sharing eye-contact, the viewer and the bear may be in acknowledgment that this is a personal moment, which is not meant for either set of eyes.

The ambiguity seen above is absent in *L'Argent* and *Le Triomphe*. In *L'Argent*, Vallotton presents a woman and a man at a window; the woman wears a revealing gown, and he makes a gesture of appeal to her as she faces the outside world. The man's face, collar, hand, and the end of his sleeve are differentiated from the room, but the rest of him is part of the black void. The title, *L'Argent*, informs the viewer's response: the woman wants money, the man has it and owes it to her for some kind of service, or he has not given her enough to satisfy her in a form of a gift-giving. Or, alternatively, she has the money and withholds it from him as a form of domination. What is clear is that the woman has levied her powerful feminine charms with venal intent. Vallotton's placement of the man's figure in the darkness loses his form in the women's space.

*Le Triomphe* presents an even more dramatic scene. The woman sits, looking unencouragingly at the man who has fallen over the table in emotion. Vallotton includes a stack of books and papers on the table in front of the man, and then, aside from a handkerchief pressed to his face, he is obscured by the black space. In this case the woman is not offset by the dark interior as in *L'Argent*; rather, she is a part of the darkness as it overcomes him. It appears that Vallotton's use of black to swallowing and suffocating effect was very deliberate, as in print

after print, the male figures are slumped, scowling, pleading, in tears—and the women seem immune.

In addition to spatial compression and liberal use of black, Vallotton juxtaposes material signs of masculinity and femininity to create gender-oriented tension; this includes the fine attire of the women, as it is a sign of masculine purchase. Vallotton perhaps uses material to argue that the women are well adorned and represent the material worth of their lovers. The feminine accoutrements Vallotton depicts in *Intimités* can be argued to be a reflection of the husband or lover. The man pays for the adornment, and from Vallotton's presentation, this can be construed as treating a wife or lover well, further supporting the male as protagonist versus his mercenary, well-heeled female companion. In Vallotton's depictions the woman's material luxury is intact, but he presents the interior as stifling to the man via the machinations of the woman. The husband meets society's expectations and dresses his wife in splendid textiles, and she is ever needling and deceitful. Vallotton uses the relationship between female attire and the representative husband to indicate the husband's propriety, and perhaps to underscore her lack of gratitude. The women have an upright posture and elaborate coiffures, but they do not support and fulfill their lover as they should—rather, the strict carriage of *Le Triomphe* isolates the broken husband. In *La Raison Probante* (Figure 11), the woman in an elaborate dove shaped hat leans to her husband to receive a kiss on the cheek, even while her voluminous sleeve or muff above his desk compromises his work or perhaps asserts dominion.

In addition to the woman's bodily adornment, Vallotton juxtaposes signs of masculinity and femininity, which include, as mentioned above, the man's desk materials and books of *La Raison probante*, versus the frivolous, feminine dove-shaped hat in order to code portions of space as masculine and feminine. In *Apprêts de visite*, Vallotton places measured space and a

man sitting in rumination in contrast to the draping fabric and small bottles and items of a woman's toilette. This juxtaposition is atmospheric in *La Belle épingle* (Figure 12): floral carpeting, a curving chair backing which mirrors the hourglass shape of a woman, a vase of flowers—Vallotton flattens these items into a coded feminine space, with even the woman's eyelashes contributing to the *mise en scene*.<sup>46</sup> The woman's male lover greets this femininity in giving a concerned and comforting embrace, and yet, aside from being subsumed by the blackness, he is at odds with his environment, as she reaches for his jeweled pin.

Vallotton combines these strategies of spatial compression, including persuasive use of black, and juxtaposed gendered signs in the *Intimités* series to varying degrees of effect, all which point to masculine alienation in the bourgeois interior. While Vallotton's views regarding women may have informed his practice of representing them, in addition to the remnants of his personal history his depictions of women reveal trends and conceptions regarding gender and the sexual nature of women at play in fin-de-siècle Paris.<sup>47</sup> There is a tension regarding conceptions of the sexual nature of women. Rousseau, as noted above, was an important contributor to Parisian conceptions of womanhood in the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond, and he accorded women the mythical position in primordial history of "creator of romance".<sup>48</sup> According to Rousseau's ideology, women created romantic love as a lure for keeping men interested. The primitive man—of moderate but not excessive sexual appetites—succumbed to the "exclusive attachments" fostered by the birth of female-inspired romantic love and, thus, the primitive world with, "no great passion, no jealousy, no scheming or bloody quarreling" was lost

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<sup>46</sup> Field, 28-29. Field describes the theatricality of Vallotton's compositions in both his prints and paintings: "The are not only fixed in the sinister banality of their recorded activity—whether it is eating dinner or exchanging a duplicitous kiss—but paralyzed by the merciless observation of the viewer" (28).

<sup>47</sup> Authors today concede that Vallotton probably did transition to more painting as he entered a more bourgeois lifestyle with his wife Gabrielle Rodrigues-Bernheim, the daughter of an affluent bourgeois art dealer. Vallotton's dismissal of his working class mistress who died in an accident in the late 1890s is not considered the origin of his antipathy toward women but perhaps a factor in its maintenance.

<sup>48</sup> Corrado Pope, 138.

forever.<sup>49</sup> In accordance with this pattern of thought Vallotton creates a universe of passion and discontent in *Intimités*, attributing the initiation of struggle and deceit to the women present.

The women of the *Intimités* are emotionally dominant, and evoke gender reversals found in the press of the New Woman and the *femme fatale*. They may not conform to the *bas-bleu*, bluestocking image of the New Woman as she appeared in men's clothing and spectacles, but they do contradict the established structural power relationship coded in the ideologies of the separate spheres.<sup>50</sup> The man responds to the movement and desires of the woman; she acts and he reacts, which is ideologically at odds with Rousseauian ideals of the woman responding to the needs of the household. In addition, in *Intimités* we see the total absence of woman as nurturing mother.<sup>51</sup> Rousseau creates a space for feminine redemption in the instructive and nurturing mother which Vallotton abandons in absentia. The roles Vallotton creates for women in *Intimités* are sexual and avaricious, however, they are disconnected from female fecundity, the byproduct of sexual congress deemed socially constructive, and are thus even more harmful.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Corrado Pope, 138.

<sup>50</sup> Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts: the New Woman in Fin-de-siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 25.

<sup>51</sup> Corrado Pope summarizes the impact of Rousseau on this theme: "Good mothering then, was the key to family love, revitalized morality, and male citizenship" (141). Rousseau's argument that social fulfillment was to be found in good mothering had longevity, and was especially popular with women, in its legitimating of a role for women in highly disenfranchised straits: "The ideology of domesticity elevated women by taking seriously the emotional concerns that defined their wifely and maternal roles, but it acted to bind them more tightly to their homes and to an increasingly narrow definition of 'womanhood'" (144).

<sup>52</sup> Alison Moore and Peter Croyle, "Frigidity at Fin-de-Siècle in France: A Slippery and Capacious Concept," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 19, no. 2 (May 2010): 245. Moore and Croyle describe the complication of early codification of ideology regarding frigidity and female sexuality. Vallotton in addition to removing the women of *Intimités* from the biological consequences of their femininity, layers signs of lovemaking such as an embrace, revealing clothing, and alone-time, with signs of female frigidity. Just as the nature of woman as she is meant to participate in a republic was of contemporaneous concern, the nature of woman's sexuality was a topic of discussion—and the naming of concepts of female frigidity had just begun. Moore and Croyle point out that, "Contemporary critics of the notion of frigidity in earlier literary and medical texts have often fallen into the trap of assuming that there really was one simple kind of feminine sexual behavior that became the object of study for those who formulated the concept of 'frigidity' and that those who wrote about it all agreed about what 'it' was" (245). They point out that it was considered the job of the male partner to inspire some desire in his female counterpart, but not so much that she become hysterical with desire (254). As Vallotton presents the couples in *Intimités*, the women are collectively serene and manipulative—by feminine agency the men are emasculated while engaging in intimacies, thus they are not empowered and capable enough to overcome the natural coolness of the women. This is

In the few prints of domestic interiors which were not at one point part of or series predecessors to the *Intimités* series, Vallotton departs from the brooding psychological tension at play in *Intimités* in his depiction of domestic violence for the *Assiette au beurre* series, *Crimes et châtements* (1901). Historically, the threat of violence between a married couple was not an uncommon occurrence in French fin-de-siècle.<sup>53</sup> Incidents of violence and murder between married couples were sensationalized in newspapers; records of the courts indicate that reasons such as money, jealousy, and even lovers' ennui spurred crimes between the sexes as a violent consequence of male and female relations, a consequence of romantic love which found life in sensational reportage.<sup>54</sup> Through this press attention, private domestic concerns entered the public arena, and in Vallotton's representation, his trend of sustained ambiguity remains intact. Domestic violence, though not called such, was a phenomena that was ascribed upon the lower classes as a symptom of social disorder. Titled *Ta Mère n'aurait pas pu*, (1901) (Figure 13) the print presents a male and female couple in a modest apartment space; the walls are wallpapered in yellow stripes with the exception of two portraits which resemble the couple as they may have looked in the past or perhaps a set of their parents, including the mother in question.<sup>55</sup>

Vallotton's naming process for this depiction is informative. In a trial proof Vallotton noted two alternate titles in graphite and erased them: *Crime familial* (Family Crime) and *Entre soi* (Between Themselves). Though it is part of the *Crimes et châtements* series, the violence and

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complicated by the sexual hunger implied by connotations of the femme fatale and references to female vampires, but the two themes coexist in *Intimités* as signs of unhealthy feminine sexuality.

<sup>53</sup> And not uncommon in other societies as well; sociologists Linda Imray and Audrey Middleton point out:

"although material bases may change from society to society, male violence against women is constant" (14).

<sup>54</sup> Eliza Earle Ferguson, "Domestic Violence by Another Name: Crimes of Passion in Fin-de-siècle Paris," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 4 (2007): 12-34

<sup>55</sup> The full caption reads: *Ta mère n'aurait pas pu te faire passer ça?* (Couldn't your mother have...gotten rid of that for you?). Though the couple at first glance can be assumed to be a romantic couple, Vallotton does not explicitly determine the relationship between the two for the viewer. For this project I do not go into this ambiguity and the possibility that this scene could be between a father and daughter whether that includes darker, incestual connotations, or a less troubling scene of filial disobedience. In acknowledgement of this ambiguity, I will keep my consideration to the possible meanings at play as if Vallotton's depiction is of a romantic couple.

order of events is more ambiguous than other prints of the series which depict violent moments as they happen or the vivid aftermath, as is seen in the image of a man who has just been shot to death by a thief. The ambiguity which is present in the naming which Vallotton explored is found in that the image becomes less and more certainly domestic violence according to the title: if it is *Entre Soi*, perhaps Vallotton is arguing that the appropriate action is being taken by a frustrated husband against his wife. Violence is unrealized in the image that Vallotton presents, but the ham-sized fists and inflated upper body of the man imply its possibility. Vallotton's preparatory sketch includes a few interesting formal differences: the wallpaper is absent, the man is wearing a more formal shirt, the floor is more explicitly made of wood panels. As Vallotton explored in *Intimités*, the vertical wall paper through the drafting process comes to echo the vertical bed frame, containing the couple in a rigid space of emotion. While the floorboards slant outwards in the earlier drawing, indicating a space for respite outside the argument, the verticality Vallotton finally chose renders the possibility of flight null. The bed resembles a cage for the caged. Their earlier selves or familial predecessors watch them, trapped in domesticity, from the wall.

Another of Vallotton's exceptions, *En Famille* (Figure 14), is an 1898 cover of the Natanson brothers' journal *Le cri de Paris*.<sup>56</sup> A photomechanical reproduction of a drawing by Vallotton, in its purpose as a commentary on the Dreyfus Affair, this illustration abandons the

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<sup>56</sup> *Le cri de Paris* was a corollary publication of *La Revue blanche*, created to specifically comment on the Dreyfus Affair. *En Famille*, by being published in the paper would be viewed in an explicit political context regarding themes of the Dreyfus Affair at the turn of the century. Another notable print by Vallotton which was published as a cover of *Le cri de Paris* is his drawing, *L'Age du Papier* (The Age of Paper, 1898). Frequently referenced as a woodcut, this print presents interesting themes of printmedia which are corollary to this project. Though it does not regard the feminine enough to warrant full inclusion in this paper, *L'Age du Papier* presents many of the topics that I discuss in my third chapter, as Vallotton proclaims the age of printed newspapers in correlation with the political turmoil of *l'Affaire Dreyfus*. Zola's *J'Accuse* appears in the Dreyfusard journal *L'Aurore* at the front and center position of the image. The age of paper and the political schism of French society during the Dreyfus Affair, according to Vallotton, are thus intertwined and the social role of printmaking becomes an "age" which is mandated by the divisive and encompassing social dialogue of Dreyfus.

image of woman as dangerous and deceitful and instead presents a family together at a mundane, yet politically tense breakfast table. The characters Vallotton depicts are presumably a husband and wife and their son; the mother and son read the Dreyfusard journals *L'Aurore* and *Le Libertaire*, while the father reads the anti-Dreyfusard *L'intransigeant*.<sup>57</sup> In the service of Vallotton's political ideology, he creates a scene of a cropped interior and presents femininity as part of the political community of the home. Vallotton depicts the woman's eyelashes and delicate fringe as signs of her visible femininity while simultaneously presenting her as literate and politically-minded, and on the side of the progressive left, as she and her son read *Dreyfusard* newspapers in opposition to the right-leaning, anti-Dreyfusard patriarch. This domestic interior is complementary, yet the woman transcends the nurturing mother of romantic primitivism as she enters the political realm through engaging the national and social issues at play at the time. *En Famille* is a unique image in Vallotton's printed oeuvre, and his depiction of femininity is never again as socially constructive.

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<sup>57</sup> Paul-Henri Bourrelier, *1894-1905...de Montmartre à la Madeleine... "La Revue blanche" et "Le Cri de Paris": Vallotton, Hermann-Paul, Cippiello*. Catalogue from Exhibition Salles Royales, Église de la Madeleine, Paris 8ème, (October 2007), 19. Bourrelier interprets the child of the couple depicted as a son, perhaps due to the visual characteristics of his or her hands. Though the child's identity is not known for certain, I follow Bourrelier's interpretation that this is the image of a husband, wife, and son.



## 2. Shopping for Anarchy: Women in Vallotton's Public Urban Spaces

The strength of the ideology of complementary difference is attested to in the dominance of the separate spheres in political and social venues during the nineteenth century in France.<sup>58</sup> The natural affinity between women and the home thus, in opposition, designated public sites of commerce as a masculine territory.<sup>59</sup> The challenge of contextualizing images depicting public spaces of Paris is in bridging the symbolic and practical experience of public and private space. Vallotton's depictions of women entering the public territory of the boulevard and engaging in commercial activities resonate with concepts of female vulnerability and hysteria of fin-de-siècle. Vallotton depicts women as they enter the masculine-coded public spaces of Paris as witnesses to dangers of the public. In addition, he presents them as participants in the commercial marketplace via shopping, in accordance with contemporaneous themes of hysterical

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<sup>58</sup> In addition to playing an important role in nineteenth-century Parisian concepts of space, ideologies of complementary difference live on in the contemporary discipline of sociology, where this dichotomy remains a prominent scholarly lens despite reflexive scholarship arguing that it can be an obfuscating construction. See: Shannon N. Davis and Theodore N. Greenstein, "Gender Ideology: Components, Predictors, and Consequences," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35, no. 1 (2009).

<sup>59</sup> Historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese summarizes this perceived affinity within societies following a democratic model of governance such as the Third Republic: "Such societies...tended to equate the distinction between public and private with the distinction between male and female, assigning a congeries of human attributes to each. They especially tended to associate public men with the harsh virtues of competition, struggle, and justice, while associating private women with the gentler virtues of compassion, piety, and selfless service. As a result, and at the risk of crude oversimplification, they tended to attribute production and politics to men, while attributing reproduction and morality to women. The metaphor of public and private thus merged with the metaphor of a sexual division of labor, encouraging the view that it derived from nature" (Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "From Separate Spheres to Dangerous Streets: Postmodernist Feminism and the Problem of Order," *Social Research*, v. 60, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 238). Fox-Genovese's project in this case is to analyze the impact of the life of this ideology on postmodern feminist inquiry and the challenge and paradox of challenging something while rejecting its credible existence; her text describes the indelibility of the metaphor of the separate spheres, even while the social fabric of the world changed in the twentieth century to move far beyond earlier conceptions of public and private: "The comprehensiveness of the metaphor endowed it with the prestige of a natural order and thus ensured its hegemony, which in turn ensured that the metaphor would outlive the world it had been devised to explain. For the progress of capitalism has been steadily eroding the distinction between public and private in social, economic, and political life" (238-239).

female shoppers.<sup>60</sup> Through parallels to some of the pathological rhetoric applied to female shoppers at fin-de-siècle, Vallotton seems to depict feminine shoppers as unnatural interlopers within the masculine sphere.<sup>61</sup>

## I. Considering Parisian Types and Crowds

Vallotton's depictions of the bourgeois interior render the concept of the interior as a hermetic space complicated by the foibles of human emotion and the machinations of feminine energy.<sup>62</sup> Vallotton's depictions of public spaces are complicated by their spatial possibilities even as he formally constrains those possibilities. The boulevard's potential to foster physical chaos is a persistent theme in Vallotton's woodcuts, especially those in which he comments on the authorities of the Third Republic.<sup>63</sup> Scenes outside of the bourgeois interior which Vallotton portrays range from all-out riots to semi-private interstices of calm seen in boutiques and tax

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<sup>60</sup> The exact nature of the measurable potential for feminine agency present in women's social participation through shopping is up for debate. Hollis Clayson notes in her book *Painted Love* (1991): "Shopping and following fashion were in large measure compensatory activities. Because women had less social and political power than men, they sought avenues of expression that at least felt and appeared powerful...self-adornment could be a form of economic empowerment, because women were the principal consumers in the new shops and stores lining the boulevards. Even though the economic role of the nonworking woman was restricted largely to shopping, and activity that does not generate exchange value, the financial impact of consumption was enormous" (S. Hollis Clayson, *Painted Love: Prostitution in French Art of the Impressionist Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 58). As Clayson indicates, despite the fantasy of power, or restriction on feminine agency, the consumer power of women was immense. Though, a social caveat of fashionable attire which Clayson notes: "To be in fashion then, was to exercise an exclusively female form of power that had considerable force. By breaking the boundaries of their assigned roles through the activity of self-adornment, women were crossing over into the established codings of prostitution" (59). Thus fashion and feminine shopping carried duelling symbolic functions: it was at once a public activity, perhaps a vessel for publically visible feminine agency, and, simultaneously, the fashionable attire risked the wearer the stigma of public signs of fashionably attired prostitutes.

<sup>61</sup> A trope frequently employed in consideration of activities in the Paris boulevards is that of the *flâneur* and its feminine foil the *flâneuse*. The anthology *The Invisible Flâneuse*, approaches the concept of female participation in the public spaces of Paris as a feminine incarnation of Baudelaire's masculine stroller, "in and out of visibility across a variety of visual media" (2). While concepts of the *flâneur* as a model for consuming public space are certainly useful, I selectively introduce this theme, as the scholarship regarding the *flâneur* (as seen in my introduction) informs much of the historical analysis of urban sociality of the nineteenth century.

<sup>62</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, Vallotton's formal tactics for this include shrinking and flattening spaces through the use of pattern, crowded interior furnishings, and sweeping zones of black. In addition, Vallotton excludes windows in most of his interiors and never gives the viewer the respite of a view in which to visually venture.

<sup>63</sup> Vallotton's depictions of energetic collisions and fisticuffs can be seen collectively in the projects *Paris intense* (1894), *Crimes et châtements* (1901), *Les Rassemblements* (1896) and in many other single print editions.

offices. More frequently, Vallotton's representations of public Parisian life present commotion and disorder, and Vallotton's inclusion of women as witness to these moments, if not necessarily participants, seems to be an argument regarding the leveling qualities of the concept of public space.

In contrast to the open spaces of the boulevard, the public interior—which includes the department stores, courthouses, and the theater—according to Vallotton's portrayals, is not exempt from signs of chaos and disorder.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the public spaces Vallotton represents in which he frequently depicts women as participating through involuntary witness, the public interior offers a site in which female participation is the product of a set of choices—a degree of experience a step further than merely leaving the home. Vallotton's scenes of cafés and the department store thus represent a site for the illustration of particular types of participation in Parisian society which is not accidental. Rather, through these sites Vallotton makes pointed reference to feminine engagement in prostitution and materialistic consumption.

A mode of print representation in Paris during the nineteenth-century was the Parisian types, a semi-metonymic way of conceiving modern life in Paris.<sup>65</sup> Many of Vallotton's prints of city spaces conformed to this model in his depictions of the people of Paris. Ségolène Le Men describes Vallotton's set of lithographs called *Paris Intense* (1894) as, “une sorte de physiologie

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<sup>64</sup> The public interior can be considered as semi-public or semi-private, but for the purposes of this project, a public interior functions as a site of commercial and/or social interaction which is enclosed, thus the figures Vallotton presents are part of a self-selected community pursuing a set of social and commercial ends.

<sup>65</sup> James Cuno, "Charles Philipon, La Maison Aubert and The Business of Caricature in Paris 1829-41," *Art Journal* 43, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 347-350. This tradition began in the 1830s, introduced by printers and printmakers such as Charles Philipon. The types was an enduring model which presented conceptions of life in Paris through the appearance of Parisians. Appearance thus served to designate the class, occupation, and habits of the persons depicted. This model achieves a way of considering Paris as a sum of its parts and corresponds to the ambiguities at play between dress and behavior in the nineteenth-century. For more on the Parisian types of the July Monarchy and beyond as they informed French society and mass culture trends, see: Jillian Taylor Lerner, "The French Profiled by Themselves: Social Typologies, Advertising Posters, and the Illustration of Consumer Lifestyles," *Grey Room* 27 (2007) and James Cuno, "Violence, Satire, and Social Types in the Graphic Art of the July Monarchy," in *The Popularization of Images: Visual Culture under the July Monarchy*, by Petra Ten-Doesschate Chu and Gabriel P. Weisberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 10-36.

de la rue”.<sup>66</sup> A similar endeavor to *Paris Intense*, completed in 1896, is Vallotton’s collaboration with Octave Uzanne, *Les Rassemblements*. Vallotton completed thirty drawings to be reproduced in *Les Rassemblements*, accompanied by the text of fifteen contributing authors. Richard Field describes the array of persons Vallotton presents:

Virtually all of Vallotton’s scenes concern the events of the streets of Paris, witnessed alike by the *flâneurs*—connoisseurs of Parisian life—and the *badauds*—the gawkers and idlers who gather to watch any kind of event, or non-event: the jugglers and acrobats, the dentists, the poster-hangers, the anglers, the accidents, the arguments, funerals, drownings, marriages, parades, the actions and dress of women, the hawkers and speakers, the roadworkers, the drunkards, arrests, fires, and, of course, the crowds themselves.<sup>67</sup>

Vallotton’s scenes can be read as alluding in some respect to notions of collectivity propounded by late nineteenth-century crowd theorists while maintaining the individualistic ideology of his anarchist leanings.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ségolène Le Men, “Peints par eux-mêmes.” In *Les Français Peints Par Eux-mêmes: Panorama Social Du XIXe Siècle*, Edited by Ségolène Le Men, Luce Abéles, and Nathalie Preiss. Paris: Reunion Des Musees Nationaux, 1993, 75. The concept of physiology is claimed by Vallotton in the collaborative book project with Octave Uzanne titled *Les Rassemblements: Physiologies de la Rue* (1896). Considering the street as a medical specimen has ideological resonance during fin-de-siècle Paris, and is another example of framing social problems as a matter of health and pathology. This topic is comprehensively illustrated by Robert A. Nye in his book, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (1993).

<sup>67</sup> Field, 68.

<sup>68</sup> Vallotton’s anarchist leanings were known through his correspondences and his participation in the journal *L’Assiette au beurre* (For information about turn of the century anarchism see: Richard David Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin De Siècle France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); for more background on anarchist artists working in Paris contemporaneously to Vallotton: Ralph E. Shikes, “Five Artists in the Service of Politics in the Pages of *L’Assiette Au Beurre*,” in *Art and Architecture in the Service of Politics*, by Henry A. Millon and Linda Nochlin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978)).

Field considers Vallotton’s crowd scenes in the context of theories of urban socializing, such as Gustave Le Bon’s *La Psychologie des foules* (The Psychology of Crowds) (1895). He notes: “For Le Bon and his sympathizers, the crowd was an embodiment of the ‘other,’ sociologically as well as psychologically. Hence it represented what was alien to the order of both the state and the self. Vallotton’s crowds may be viewed as social and personal explorations, if not reflections of those same sentiments” (69). Though Vallotton’s crowds are certainly alien to order, it may be helpful in another project to consider them more thoroughly within the context of anarchist politics during fin-de-siècle. Many of Vallotton’s prints do not reflect a desired governmental order (at least not under the status quo of the Third Republic)—especially his scenes of government brutality. Rather, they depict a thematic ambiguity, which, though stylistically not apparent in the detailed reproductions of his drawings in projects such as *Les Rassemblements*, in his woodcuts resonates, in that the melees he presents seemingly without a pattern of overt judgment with the exception of scenes of government brutality. Field notes that Le Bon’s theory of the crowd attaining collective unconscious seems to inform Vallotton’s crowds: “How often his crowds seem swept along by single ideas or preoccupations; even the shoppers at *Le Bon Marché* are rendered as if caught in some irresistible flow”. It is precisely this point which solidifies Vallotton’s adhered to ambiguity. While his Parisian crowds are

## II. Excessive Feathers Make the Woman: Feminine Witness, Attire, and Propriety

At times the actions and dress of women in Vallotton's prints of public scenes conform to the concerns present in his print interiors: women play the role of a materialistic, sensual lure for men. However, many of Vallotton's prints present feminine participation as conforming to the sphere of visible class ambiguity which the public spaces of Paris embodied.<sup>69</sup> The distinction between a woman's appearance and her place in public and private society is a question which Vallotton raises again and again. In the ambiguous space of the crowded public interior, he seems to discern the difference in modes of appropriate behavior in correlation with the materials of feminine attire.

I will start with a sign of *Intimités* found in the book project *Les Rassemblements*. The series, produced two years prior to *Intimités*, in 1896, introduces the dove-shaped hat of *La Raison Probante* in the lower right corner of *La Musique militaire* (Military Music, Figure 15).<sup>70</sup>

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consistently amassed in an "irresistible flow" (or at times chaotic disarray) he depicts the crowds of the Third Republic soldiers and police officers as similarly unconscious. *A Vingt Un* (At Twenty-One, 1894) and *Le Jour de Boire* (The Day to Get Drunk, *Crimes et châtements XI*, 1901) illustrate his attention to the collective and sometimes unruly nature of the forces of the Third Republic. Field notes of Vallotton's images of crowds, "their detachment conveys a greater interest in what comprises and informs the crowd than in identification with the causes of their existence" (72).

Though Vallotton's interest in the diverse human content of the crowd can be seen in the rich variety of his depictions, the causal order between poorly administered authority is consistently present. The contradiction inherent in considering the work of crowd theorists in relation to Vallotton's prints is that, from the closest reading of his politics possible from the available primary record, Vallotton did identify with anarchism, and thus he would have been in support of some degree of individualism and at odds with the philosophy of the crowd theorists from the outset. For more about the layered symbolism at play in late nineteenth-century depictions of crowds see "Picturing and Policing the Crowd" in Richard Thomson's book, *The Troubled Republic* (2004). Though Vallotton does not focus on images of labor in his prints relating to his anarchistic ideologies many of his contemporaries did. See: Allan Antliff, "Wandering: Neo-Impressionists and Depictions of the Dispossessed," in *Anarchy and Art: from the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007), 37-47.

<sup>69</sup> Jillian Taylor Lerner approaches some of the visible ambiguity of a woman's appearance in public in the nineteenth-century, stemming from images such as the Parisian types and contemporary literature: "Balzac insists the lady's manner of wearing and animating her wardrobe is what differentiates her from the common bourgeoisie. She could in fact hail from any class or region; what constitutes her type is the dignified self-awareness and artful manipulation of the visible signs of taste. These ensure that when the *femme comme il faut* is out walking and shopping (on streets precisely specified by the narrator) both men and women turn to get a second glance at her. In other words, she is not just the object of male desire but of female envy, inventory, and estimation." (23). Lerner notes that feminine deportment is vital to the community of urban viewers' perception of her identity.

<sup>70</sup> This hat appears again in the frontispiece of Julius Meier-Graefe's biography *Félix Vallotton*. It is an example of the stable of motifs and figures that Vallotton plays with in his print oeuvre. These include the dove-shaped hat, a

Of Vallotton's printed works, *La Musique Militaire* perhaps best demonstrates an argument by Vallotton reinforcing the separate spheres in his urban depictions: it illustrates a woman being uninterested in and out-of-place in a Parisian public space. The image depicts a seemingly bourgeois woman being escorted by a top-hatted bourgeois man.<sup>71</sup> Her male companion turns to look at the parade as he walks, but she demures and does not participate in the viewing experience of her companion and the crowd. Avoiding the visuals of the scene, she does not resemble a *flâneur*. Rather, she, in her material display, becomes something to look at, and Vallotton's placement of her at the far lower right corner creates a tension with the moving horizontal energy of the musicians. In her complete dismissal of the crowd, the woman becomes a spatial and ideological counter to it.

From a depiction such as *La Musique militaire*, which presents a woman in public as an unobservant material presence, some of Vallotton's street scenes depict feminine visual participation, especially in scenes of chaos, as women taking on the role of the witness. While the *La Musique militaire* presents a busy and chaotic scene, it remains regimented. A print from *Paris Intense* (1893-4) depicting a carriage accident, as well as the 1892 woodcut depicting a brawl taking place in a café, *La Rixe* (The Brawl, or Café Scene, Figure 16), in contrast to *La*

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large woman in a polka-dotted blouse who pushes a cart, a smaller woman in a polka-dot dress, and a characteristic sprawled position for minors and women who have been run over by crowds, carriages and police-cars.

Though the dove in the mid-twentieth-century did later become a symbol of the Communist Party following the 1949 World Peace Conference in Paris, I have not found evidence that Vallotton's use of the dove hat may have had some underlying political symbolism in any specificity ("Pablo Picasso, Dove, 1949," Tate Collection, May 2004, <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?workid=20858&searchid=17036>).

<sup>71</sup> Though the woman appears in bourgeois attire, she may be a kept woman rather than a wife. This image conforms to the visual ambiguity of class as explored by Lerner regarding the Parisian types. There is the possibility that she is a *cocotte*, and, without some visible action on her part, in the public square her role is indiscernible. To attest to these ambiguities, in contradiction to the possible legibility of a woman's social role based on her behaviors, Ann Ilan-Alter notes that Edmond de Goncourt in his journal entry from May 13, 1890, cited, "a conversation with a married woman of his acquaintance who agreed with him that women of good society had lost their renowned elegance—only the *cocottes* really understood how to dress in the elegant simplicity that made a woman truly beautiful" (Ann Ilan-Alter, "Paris as Mecca of Pleasure" in *The Graphic Arts and French Society*, 75, 82). In this case, through action the *cocotte* might carry the appearance of a proper bourgeois woman, and through her dress and panache even take over the visuals of her social role, thus complicating the position of bourgeois women who may wish to follow fashion while not wishing to share the resemblance.

*Musique militaire*, as we shall see, take a less conservative view of women in public as they participate in moments of collective reaction and emoting.<sup>72</sup> *L'Accident* (Figure 17), the sixth print Vallotton made for *Paris Intense*, shows a working-class flower seller who has been, or is in the process of being trampled by a horse pulling a carriage. The woman is (in addition to being under the hooves of a horse) in disarray. Her basket is flung to the side, and her lower legs are exposed as three men attempt to stop the horse from killing her. In this image Vallotton sublimates the *badauds* and onlookers of his typical depiction of the Parisian crowd into one middle-class mother and child and a small boy. The mother raises a hand to her cheek in horror, and, though her right arm is obscured by the boy, she seems to be pulling him. From the weighted s-curve of her form, she seems to be trying to pull her child's view away from the scene. Vallotton's depiction of the woman observer present on the scene proposes several readings. She could be a nurturing mother, or perhaps her unnatural presence on the boulevard has led to her consequently witnessing sights of horror. In opposition to the male figures who are disaffected and turned away from the accident, she could represent the display of a sort of cross-class female sympathy, as she herself could have become a victim to the risks of presence in the street. By culling the two women and two small boys from Vallotton's typical boisterous depictions of the street, his intended emphasis may be that public life is dangerous and unsympathetic. In this way, Vallotton's scene could reference the leveling qualities of the public spaces of Paris; the flailing hooves do not privilege women as the weaker sex. If women participate in public life, they may be run over by a carriage (or have to witness it), and though there is assistance in the form of the men attempting to stop the horses, there is none from the male bystanders. Vallotton's message could also have been much more mundane, as the print could also function as a chronicle of a small tragedy as it occurs in the public sphere. Art

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<sup>72</sup> *La Rixe* translates to *The Brawl*, but it is also known in Vallotton's Catalogue Raisonné as *Scène au Café*.

historians such as Richard Field argue that Vallotton in many of his prints acts as a chronicler of modern life through depicting urban vignettes.<sup>73</sup> If this print is an example of the artist taking on the role of witness to modernity, it could, much more simply, record a woman taking a walk with her son as they see a strange event. Yet it is significant in terms of the gendering of public space that the woman, whether mother or nanny, has taken her “mothering,” in her urge to protect the child, to the public arena, and is in a sense dissociating this practice from the hearth.<sup>74</sup>

In a print of a year earlier, Vallotton depicts a woman of almost identical form to the witness in *L'Accident*, yet one who cannot be argued to be a nurturing mother. Rather, *La Rixe* (1892) depicts a chaotic moment witnessed by a woman who is a participant in Parisian café culture. She wears a near identical polka-dotted dress and hat to the woman of *L'Accident*, but her social role is as a gentleman's feminine companion. Instead of an image of urban happenstance, the café scenery imbues the picture with the aura of nighttime entertainments. There are cards on the table and a fight has started. This scene is of adult bourgeois pleasures; the woman is rising in shock on the left side of the scene. She appears to have been watching the card game, and now she witnesses the consequences of participating in such events. Her form is heart-shaped as her shoulders rise to her ears; her fisted hands partially cover her face in a fearful mirror of a pugilistic stance. Vallotton's emphasis of the woman's form in the upper corner is a

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<sup>73</sup> Field, 47.

<sup>74</sup> Nearly ten years later in his *Crimes et châtements* series, Vallotton depicts a similar scene of a girl being run over by a police car—he depicts the girl lying on her stomach off the curb with a car tire on her back. The caption reveals the print to be politically satirical, “Salut d’abord, c’est l’auto de la Préfecture” (Salute first, it’s the car from police headquarters) (translation from Catalogue Raisonné). A trial print, which was not printed with *Crimes et châtements* in *Assiette au beurre*, has a similar composition to *L'Accident*. It shows the girl in the path of the police car which approaches from the left like the horse carriage. It also depicts a mother and child in the background, making similar gestures of horror, though not in the same pose. In addition to these two prints, Vallotton presents scenes of people being run over throughout his print oeuvre and presents his victims in similar splayed positions. The youngster of *Le Jour de Boire* in the same series takes on a similar position, as he is trampled under the feet of the policemen. In comparing *Le Jour de Boire* and *Salut d’abord*, there is a sort of equanimity which Vallotton proposes for both genders as they are trampled. The children are delineated as victims, and Vallotton pictures them as equal in victimization, and, though the gender of the young girl may be intended by Vallotton to inspire some sympathy, versus the comical picture of the boy in *Le Jour de Boire* – the age of the victim and politics here seem like a catalyst for Vallotton's provision of a less gendered reading of urban activities.



feminine, symmetrical, curving response to the masculine, grasping, akimbo fray at the center of the image. The woman seems to belong to the image even as she is incongruous to the manly episode. In addition, Vallotton places a foil to the polka-dotted woman on the right side of the image, where a plumed ostrich of a woman watches the fight in appreciation. As opposed to the woman in polka-dots, the feathered woman seems to be enjoying the scene as an onlooker, rather than witnessing it in dismay.<sup>75</sup>

The images of the two women compared in this way, seem to present an image of women displaying different measures of decency in their observation of the fight and in their attire. The public interior space is embedded with class ambiguity, but in their dress Vallotton introduces the viewer to a criterion for discerning the different natures of the women. The woman on the left reacts with horror—as we have seen, Vallotton uses an identically formed woman in *L'Accident* a year later, as she becomes a mother walking her child in the urban space of Paris. In contrast, the woman to the right, in her enthusiasm and expression, bears resemblance to two women from Vallotton's woodblock print *L'Étranger* (The Stranger, 1894) (Figure 18). The women of *L'Étranger* proffer their affections to a bourgeois gentleman.<sup>76</sup> Their faces and forms are doughy

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<sup>75</sup>Elizabeth Menon describes some of the symbolism of feathers in fin-de-siècle in her contribution to Gabriel Weisberg's *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*. Her essay, "Images of Pleasure and Vice" introduces the anxiety which the boa inspired in its resemblance to a serpent and through the resulting alliance to conceptions of Eve (Elizabeth Menon, "Images of Pleasure and Vice," in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture*, by Gabriel P. Weisberg (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 61-62.). Vallotton's employment of excessive feathers upon the dress of the woman on the right may indicate that she is dangerous while simultaneously being consumed by the fad of modern consumer fashions she has followed.

<sup>76</sup>Prostitution was a highly contentious occupation and concept during the fin-de-siècle and correlated with social health; "The prostitute...symbolizes disorder, excess, and improvidence—in other words, a rejection of order and economy" (Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 7). Nevertheless, the regulation of prostitution in France was an imperative, as containing the sex trade and the women who participated in it became essential: "The growth of anxiety over prostitution reflected the deep unease aroused in those who believed in the 'moral order' by the social and political transformations then taking place" (18).

The identity of the women of *L'Étranger* is ambiguous, though, as Julius Meier-Graefe notes, they are "des ces jeunes dames qu'un homme ayant une famille ne peut pas se vanter de connaître" (young women that a man with a family could not claim to know) (55). Within the realm of prostitution there may be an element of titillating lesbianism between the women, or perhaps a mother acting as agent for her daughter. Meier-Graefe claims that the

and shapeless, much like the feathered woman of *La Rixe*, and their expressions are of blasé invitation. In the lower left corner of *L'Étranger*, Vallotton employs another diagonal counterpoint to the image of the two women, where a finely dressed woman is in a violently persuasive moment with a myopic gentleman. With her curving neck, plumed hat, and pointy nose she looks like a bird of prey.<sup>77</sup> Vallotton heightens this resemblance by matching her pale dress with black gloves which give the appearance of talons. It is clear, as she glares and screeches, that Vallotton is not depicting a woman of great charity or dignity. Through the behavior of the hawk-like woman, in combination with the crass, sensual invitation of the women offering sexual services to the gentleman before them (and from the queue of men, perhaps to all of the men in the room) Vallotton creates a picture of nighttime entertainment completely adrift from propriety.<sup>78</sup>

To return to *La Rixe*: the polka-dotted woman, despite the setting, now seems redeemed by her expression of horror, in comparison to the feathered jade who watches the violence in appreciation. Their material figures are in similar contrast. The polka-dotted woman has an elaborate hat, but the feathered woman is drowning in frippery. The polka-dotted woman, who

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site of this image is, “Dans le couloir des Folies-Bergères,” (In the hallway of the Folies-Bergères) which locates Vallotton’s scene at the apex of the fin-de-siècle pleasure-seeking demimonde.

<sup>77</sup> In correspondence to the resemblance between the woman and a carnivorous bird, Robert Nye in *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France*, notes the novel, *Physiologie de L’amour moderne* (1891), by Paul Bourget: “Bourget’s book purported to be the memoirs of the dying Claude Larcher, a hapless cuckold slowly drinking himself to death. One night Larcher dines with a second generation Parisian and his son, the former robust and flushed with health, the son pasty, frail, and ‘devirilized.’ Larcher muses to himself that the causes of his decline may be found in the cerebral exhaustion brought on by fast-paced modern life, and the sexual exhaustion brought on by the segregated boarding school, encouraging young men in masturbation and in visits to the ‘beasts of prey’ who crouch in wait in brothels” (95). Nye’s project considers the rhetoric of male virility, but his introduction of Bourget’s characterization of prostitutes is telling in reference to Vallotton’s *L’Étranger*. In the novel (yet another *physiologie*) we see that the beastly female prostitutes have emasculated the men through providing excessive sexual outlet. In this case, the beastly female prostitutes devitalize the son as if they have sucked the masculine energy from the boy (this mirrors the threat of the vampiress). This enervated male protagonist is seen in *Le Triomphe* and *L’Irreparable of Intimités*, and in the semi-public space of *L’Étranger* the women appear to be even stranger creatures than women themselves, appearing as taloned birds and in the case of the two women on the right as smiling, lumping toads.

<sup>78</sup> In addition to the expression of the hawk-like woman, her resemblance to something beastly seems to correspond to the material and presentation of the feathered woman in *La Rixe*. Many of the women resemble unnatural creatures and act in strange-looking, and in the case of the hawk-like woman, frightening ways.

displays a stronger measure of emotive propriety, though still attendant to fashion, seems to have been less allured by the consumer delights than the woman in the feathers who apparently has shown no restraint whatsoever. Similarly, Vallotton's scenes of commerce and female shopping range between depicting the activity as an appropriate, purposeful endeavor for women and envisioning the modern commercial experience for women as a universe of unnatural and hysterical consumerism.

### III. Strange Spaces of Shoppers

The Creation of these grand bazaars has given birth to new passions in the moral order as in the pathological... There's no doubt about it, it is a new style of neurosis!

-*Le Figaro*, March 1881<sup>79</sup>

Vallotton's images of shopping move between quiet small group settings and the crowded energy of the modern department store. In fin-de-siècle, the practice of shopping had an ideological foil in the transference of pathological rhetoric upon the practice of women shopping for commercial items (women who shop thus risk becoming hysterical shoppers).<sup>80</sup> Vallotton

<sup>79</sup> Hollis Clayson cites this in *Painted Love*, 63, and footnotes it on 166.

<sup>80</sup> Clayson describes this sentiment, "An ordinary woman's lively interest in shopping and clothing provoked worries of another sort. It was believed that women were vulnerable to a form of psychological distress known as the delirium of consumption, an exclusively female affliction" (63). There was some transference between shopping hysteria and incidences of kleptomania (Elaine S. Abelson, *When Ladies Go A-thieving: Middle-class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)). Abelson's study examines cases of middle-class feminine shoplifters. Though in many of the cases Abelson considers, the woman was not truly mentally ill, and kleptomania became a compromise of sorts for the authorities. She notes, in the case of an American, Mrs. Castle, "The diagnosis of kleptomania was part of the ongoing discussion of insanity and the female reproductive system. Shoplifting was perceived as an insane act... Identifying her as a kleptomaniac was a way of resolving the problem" (179). Abelson continues, "What historical meaning ought we to give to this drama, at once intensely personal and broadly social? That Mrs. Castle was playing a culturally sanctioned role after the arrest seems obvious. Her exaggerated symptoms of hysteria, accompanied by the appropriate props in the form of concealing black veils, smelling salts, and uniformed medical attendants... conform to an appropriate behavioral norm for a certain class of woman in the late nineteenth century" (179). In the case Abelson describes, the woman used the ideologies of hysteria and consumer passions to her advantage in a criminal trial for her theft.

Vallotton produces a print about feminine shoplifting for *Crimes et châtements*, though it does not appear as an example of the bourgeois affliction of kleptomania. From Vallotton's catalogue raisonné, *Au Secours! On me vole...* (Help! My Cutlet's Being Stolen, *Crimes et châtements* XX, 1901) instead shows a young woman in an apron being secured against a meat-lined wall of a butchershop, with the hand of the butcher around her neck. She wears

walks both paths in his varied depictions. His lithographs, *Dernière nouveauté* (The Latest Fashion, 1893) (Figure 19) and *Le Chapeau vert* (The Green Hat, 1896) (Figure 20), depict quiet, dignified shopping. In *Dernière nouveauté*, Vallotton depicts a woman looking at bolts of dark cloth, as a man caters to her selection. A little boy is at her side, camouflaged into her dark skirts. The activity is subdued and a caption with the image as it is reproduced in the magazine *L'Escarmouche*, indicates that the woman is shopping for mourning attire.<sup>81</sup> The practice, as Vallotton depicts it, is intimate and personal. She examines the bolts of fabric and makes her choice. She quietly imagines the product to result.

Vallotton's, *Le Chapeau vert* (The Green Hat, 1896) uncovers a similar process in a hat shop. The lithograph pictures the hat shop as a site of intent feminine attention to the task at hand.<sup>82</sup> Vallotton depicts the saleswoman fitting the ornamental green hat to the woman's head in a slow static gesture. The moment he achieves is serious and silent despite the visual noise of the many hatboxes which have been rejected which lie around the room. In this image Vallotton, rather than emphasizing the chaos of fulsome commerce of a modern milliner's shop, stills time and renders the practice of shopping with gravity. Vallotton's depiction of the hat shop, for an 1897 *L'Estampe originale* set called *Etudes de femmes*, is in contrast with the strange land of

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an apron which would indicate that she is employed. Here Vallotton seems to present the incident as a moment of inequality: the figure of the butcher draws the young girl, and in the version which appeared in *L'Assiette au beurre* the man's leg is raised in a strong diagonal and is off the ground, as if he is on the verge of leaning his body weight into the girl. The image is cropped to the edge of the girl's neck in the grip of the butcher, and the scene seems sympathetic to the shoplifter, who is not thieving bourgeois gewgaws, rather a cutlet of meat; something necessary for survival (90-91).

<sup>81</sup> Vallotton's Catalogue Raisonné of prints notes of this lithograph, "Contrary to what Godefroy says, the plate published in *L'Escarmouche*, No. 8, 31 December, 1893, with the caption, 'The latest fashion in mourning clothes, Madam, in broad daylight it looks purple' is not an original print" (48). This description and the caption is extremely instructive in considering the meaning of the image. While the image is more helpful for the scope of this project as a depiction of a "less modern" way of shopping, in terms of social meaning, the *L'Escarmouche* caption reveals a cynicism at play regarding women in many of Vallotton's other prints. Here we see a reflection of some form of propriety, but the salesman's pitch to the widow reveals the fashion to be in service of a woman keeping appearances without sincerity or familial respect.

<sup>82</sup> *Etudes de femmes* was a collaborative project published by André Marty for *L'Estampe originale*. For more information about *L'Estampe originale* and Vallotton's participation in it, see Patricia Eckert. Boyer and Phillip Dennis. Cate, *L'Estampe Originale: Artistic Printmaking in France, 1893-1895* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1991).

shopping he cultivates in prints such as *La Modiste* (1894) and *Le Bon Marché* (1893). For *Le Chapeau vert*, Vallotton constructs a moment between women rather than an exaggerated site of commerce. Even so, the women themselves are second to the possibilities for the hat. The hat seems to resemble a spiny bird of paradise or an orchid. Vallotton colors the centrally located hat a vivid green, which is the brightest color in the image. In deference to the process of hat-fitting, the salesgirl's dress seems to evaporate into the space under the table, and even the skirts of the *bourgeoise* become hazy under the communion occurring between the hat and her head.<sup>83</sup> While this print seems to escape some of Vallotton's censure regarding the nature of the feminine, it is in contradiction with itself in terms of female activity. A woman engages her feminine agency to shop in a dignified manner, and yet she appears to be held hostage to the ostentatious headgear, perhaps to her own feminine nature.

Completed two years prior to the steady communion of *Le Chapeau Vert*, Vallotton's woodcut *La Modiste* (1894) (Figure 21) illustrates the pathological strangeness sometimes applied to representations of feminine shoppers in both image and text.<sup>84</sup> The scene takes place at another hat shop.<sup>85</sup> The preparatory sketches for the final woodblock print illustrate that

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<sup>83</sup> Ruth Iskin interprets a similar effect of Degas' painting *At the Milliner* (1882-85), "the woman's consumer individuality is radically erased...nothing about her is specified in detail; all we see is a vague, corseted silhouette...The woman is looking at herself in the mirror...Yet her reflection in the mirror is a blank shape, her face literally erased. We are confronted with a mirror image of a non-person...If the consumer has lost her individuality in the process of commodification, Degas portrays this with striking literalness" (113). In comparison to Vallotton's *Le Chapeau vert* and Degas' *At the Milliner*, in which the viewer is given a hazy, depersonalized view of a feminine shopper, Vuillard's *Femme de profil au chapeau vert* (Woman in Profile in a Green Hat, oil on board, 1891) balances the woman's bold hat with a bold, slightly malevolent look outwards toward the viewer. The oyster-shaped hat, pallid skin, and curving neck of the woman contribute to a sense of peculiarity, and the woman's outward gaze maintains her individuality at the price of the viewer's comfort. While *At the Milliner* and *Le Chapeau Vert*, invite the viewer's gaze into the feminine space of hats, Vuillard's woman in a green hat arrests the viewer's look. These works illustrate the variety present in depictions of feminine shoppers, who in the Vallotton and Degas examples become materially subsumed into faceless reveries and misty forms, or, in contrast, in the Vuillard example, are made strange and intense, as shown in the woman's slightly feral gaze.

<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth Menon notes that the obsession with material goods and fashion is an ideology associated with themes of moral degeneration (61). Although Rousseauian ideology leaves a space for female activity in the nurturing mother in the household, this space is again and again eradicated through public, crowded consumption of objects.

<sup>85</sup> *La Modiste* translates to the milliner, the hat-shop—a site of commerce which has a layered art historical significance. Ruth Iskin notes in her book, *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist*

Vallotton stretched and flattened both the women and the space depicted in the image to render the scene more strange. The two studies, titled *Les Modistes*, reveal Vallotton's process in achieving such a space (Figure 22, 23). Vallotton presents the women in the first rendering in a variety of spotted and striped textiles, and in the final version all but two of the women are in matte black; the exception is the woman approaching the scene in an ornamented coat, and a skirt of polka-dot fabric in the central top area of the composition.<sup>86</sup> In their dress and leaning forms, Vallotton unifies the women as shoppers and workers, participating in a lilted admiration of hats through buying and selling. The center woman, a saleswoman first seen in the second drawing (Figure 22), greets the viewer; her hair and face are colored white and draw the viewer's eye; a hat perches upon her hand as if she is carrying an exotic creature, or perhaps a tray of drinks at a café. Her head is sunken into her body, and her left arm is bent and cramped.

Vallotton's use of black in this case makes the figure appear deformed; she resembles a

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*Painting* that, "millinery works have a major significance in the oeuvre of Degas and the Impressionists in explicitly representing Parisian fashion consumption" (61). Hollis Clayson introduces one example of some of the cultural overlapping between images and text, and the symbol of the hat-shop: she notes, "'Une Modiste,' a story published in a journal of naturalist writings in 1880, as a particularly chatty version of the cliché of the alluring milliner" (118). The hat-shop can be understood as a symbol for all commerce. In accordance with this argument, Iskin qualifies her own look at Degas's millinery theme as a departure from, the, "primary focus of art historical analyses of Degas's millinery works...on the modistes in the context of clandestine prostitution," and in her project she, rather, presents, "Degas's work on the millinery theme represents fashion displays and bourgeois consumers as well as modistes and links the millinery theme primarily to the Parisian fashion industry" (61). She continues, "This of course, did not necessarily eliminate the possibility that some contemporary critics were influenced by the erotic connotations of modistes in the cultural imaginary of the time" (61). For Iskin's project of exploring the social ideology at play in this subject matter, she notes the importance of removing the topic from the traditional interpretation of sexuality-oriented commerce versus commerce which has corollary gendered notions of participation.

Alain Corbin goes into some detail regarding the actual '*Pretext-Shops*' in *Women for Hire* and notes that *la modiste* was not by any means the only type of commercial purveyor associated with selling sex: "glove shops, collar and tie shops, and tobacconists in particular specialized in this activity in the 1870s. By the end of the century many more kinds of shops had gone the same way. The glove shops...were now 'out of fashion'...The practice had now spread to the center of the capital to shops selling engravings and photographs, to wine merchants, perfume shops, bookshops, and above all 'novelty' shops, which had either a back room or a room on the entresol or in the basement where the salesgirls prostituted themselves" (143).

<sup>86</sup> Richard Field describes this process as, "A rectilinear, centralized space gives way to one that gradually attenuates along a diagonal, playing the concentrated patterns of the crowd against the more individualized figures in the foreground" (59). Though the four figures in the foreground do have some distinction, Vallotton keeps the faces of the women covered, giving the viewer just a side profile and the hint of a full-face of the central woman; this depersonalizes the women, and leaves the viewer to rely on the woman in the center to characterize the personality of the entire image.

hunchback, perhaps an oddity presented as part of the visual attractions available in Paris.<sup>87</sup> In her depicted deformity, the central saleswoman situates the hat shop as a site of curiosity and visual consumption of strangeness. In the final print version, Vallotton multiplies the hat stanchions and populates the room like a proliferating garden. The trumpeted bases of the hat stands create a visual cadence, drawing the viewer's eye up and back, into the interminable land of hats and women.<sup>88</sup> In one of the initial drawings, Vallotton left the windows of the storefront intact. By removing this connection to the visuals of the urban marketplace, Vallotton, not only removes the possibility of a visual spatial endpoint, but he also removes signs of a world beyond the shop. Resemblance to practical reality is replaced with a heightened, experiential space, in which the viewer's eye attempts to access its corners and is unable to make sense of the space of feminine commerce. Vallotton thus achieves an irrational space, and his depiction is in transitive association with irrational women shoppers, who lose any rational identity onsite and upon entrance become commercial participants in a grove of strange and gestural consumption.<sup>89</sup>

Vallotton creates a similar diagonal space in his 1893 woodblock print, *Le Bon Marché* (Figure 24). Vallotton achieves a similar space of irrational consumerism in signs of chaos and gender transference. In this print Vallotton depicts the men catering to the needs of women

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<sup>87</sup> The concept of spectacle as applied to fin-de-siècle Paris is not a contemporaneous one. As illustrated by TJ Clark, it was conceived as a model of consumer attention and display by Meyer Schapiro and theoretically codified in 1967 by Guy Debord (T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1985), 9; Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994)).

<sup>88</sup> Richard Field describes the verticality of the stanchions and the appearance of the hats as exotic objects with a Freudian lean: "But as he worked this print, Vallotton uncovered in this veritable forest of narcissism a far more devastating outlet for his wit: the slavish solicitude toward hats—birds tethered to lone, phallic stanchions—such other, more sardonic or fetishistic meanings" (59). His assessment, in considering the birds as feathered creatures perched on phallic racks, fetishizes the consumer process as a sexual engagement, much as conceptions of female hysteria are rooted in sexual dysfunction. The flock of women, through their rapt attention as consumers, is unnatural and gendered in itself, oriented around the feathers and material flocking of the hats on their vertical supports.

<sup>89</sup> Vallotton's preparatory drawings are titled *Les Modistes*, while the final print is titled *La Modiste*, emphasizing that his concern is the site of shopping rather than creating a picture of the actual women selling hats.

shoppers. Aruna D'Souza notes in her essay, "Impressionism and the Department Store" for the *Invisible Flâneuse* anthology that:

before the turn of the twentieth century it was rare to find a depiction of the commercial realm, whether in the popular press or in the exhibition hall, that did not elide the desiring (male) consumer's gaze with the desiring (male) sexual gaze, and therefore image the salesperson as a woman.<sup>90</sup>

D'Souza further argues that *Le Bon Marché*, functions as a liminal space of the separate spheres where buying and selling becomes an avenue for interaction outside the home. D'Souza argues that this image by Vallotton of the department store could have sexual connotations in the rhythms of male and female interaction. The coy expressions and fluttering eyelashes of the women and the conciliatory gestures of the salesmen attest to this possibility. The image thus functions as a space of modern negotiation. In consideration of the department store as a site latent with sexual *frisson*, Vallotton's possible narrative of hysterical female shoppers becomes more convincing.<sup>91</sup>

The hysteria of Vallotton's print depictions of crowds which I have briefly touched on provides an interesting foil to the crowds of feminine shoppers in *La Modiste* and *Le Bon*

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<sup>90</sup> D'Souza (142). D'Souza notes that the print reveals that Vallotton was, "No longer interested in maintaining the fiction of the *flâneur*'s masculine authority," and, "more invested in the world of anxious battles between the sexes, Vallotton could depict the department store, finally, for what it represented in the bourgeois, masculine imagination: a site where the separation of separate spheres was revealed to be a sham, where the careful, exclusive boundaries that had been drawn around public life were consistently and insistently transgressed" (143). It should be noted that D'Souza's claim implies Vallotton's print viewer is masculine while situating the department store as a space of masculine viewership of the symbolic order which is embodied by the modern marketplace in contrast to the domestic interior. Vallotton may be tapping into some masculine anxiety regarding the separate spheres, but perhaps the complication of this binary does not indicate its modern dissolution, rather that there are certain parallel ideologies which become useful in combatting a threat to the status quo, such as Vallotton's invocation of pathology and strangeness.

<sup>91</sup> Jean-Martin Charcot is known for his psychological study of hysteria in which he connected the physical and visual signs of the body with mental health. "In an article published with his pupil and colleague Paul Richer in *La Nouvelle Iconographie de la Salpêtrière* (The New Iconography of Salpêtrière) during 1888 Charcot stated his view that the body was as interesting to the medical as to the artistic gaze" (Thomson, 38). Also see: Elaine Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," in *Hysteria beyond Freud*, by Sander L. Gilman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 286-344.



*Marché*.<sup>92</sup> His depictions of Third Republic demonstrations of power engage themes of his own anarchist beliefs. Richard Thomson notes that Vallotton's prints on the subject of authority and crowd management were an exercise in, "exposing the practicalities of controlling the crowd by command or force," in opposition to theories, as propagated by Gustave LeBon, claiming that, "crowds are servile and need to be mastered."<sup>93</sup> In the 1893 woodcut *La Manifestation* (The Demonstration) (Figure 2) Vallotton introduces a variety of personas from the street in and produces a *physiologie* of those vulnerable to Third Republic attempts at control. Richard Thomson describes the print:

The crowd manifests only one expression – terror – and one action – flight. However, the range of types – elderly bourgeois, chic young women, *prolos*, pastry-cook and nursemaid – militates against unanimity of motive on the part of the crowd, and thus against the justice of the unseen but implicitly repressive police.<sup>94</sup>

Thomson introduces the crowd as united in fear and in avoidance of the gendarmes, and it is from the gendarme's point of view that we see the people fleeing.

In addition, Vallotton's depictions of crowds appear at times like a form of "documentation", as seen in *La foule à Paris* (The Crowd in Paris, 1892) (Figure 25). In this scene of crowd management, the faces of the primarily working-class crowd appear worn, resigned, angry, distraught; there is more than one baby crying in its mother's arms. But despite these nods toward realism, Thomson describes Vallotton as primarily,

employing those typically twinned elements: the solid structure of the city and the gendarme, his commanding arm parallel to the emphatic perspective of the pavement, form and instruction combining pictorially in an image of controlling order.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> The hysteria of crowds, unlike that of "feminine crowds", wouldn't be seen as originating in the feminine reproductive organs; for the purpose of this comparison consider this "lower-case" hysteria.

<sup>93</sup> Thomson, 110.

<sup>94</sup> Thomson, 110.

<sup>95</sup> Thomson, 109.

Vallotton's use of space in *La foule à Paris* renders urban public space as an element of the Third Republic's controlling arm. In contrast, in *La Manifestation*, Vallotton employs the urban street as a space of escape, with a distant horizon which he removes from the point of view of the gendarmes in pursuit. These two prints illustrate Vallotton's use of diagonal composition and urban space to portray the Third Republic's attempts at keeping order. The images function as a cruel equalizer, in the case of *La foule à Paris* through the rough depictions of men, women, and mothers and babies, and, similarly, in *La Manifestation*, as the class status of the fleeing people becomes less evident the further they run into the distance of urban Paris.

*La Modiste* and *Le Bon Marché* appear as strange spaces, made even more so by Vallotton's formal strategies of containment. The women of *La Modiste* as they retreat into the distance appear more alike as in *La Manifestation*, but whereas Vallotton introduces the frantic crowd as protagonist, the women of *La Modiste* are bound to their vertically stretched site of shopping, and the forces of order which contain them are, as Vallotton depicts them, a pathological delight rather than governmental forces.

Vallotton's prints depicting women in public spaces do not relinquish his criticisms of women, nor his cynicism; what they achieve is the creation of a sustained picture of ambiguity as women venture out of the interior. Vallotton tweaks his depictions of women in public spaces in reference to themes of femininity, including the separate spheres and female shopping hysteria in *La Musique militaire* and *Le Bon Marché*. In addition, he depicts women in public in images such as *Le Chapeau vert* and *L'Accident*, which seem to chronicle female participation, both in shopping and experiencing the city at the street level, like they are any other Parisian. Vallotton's depictions of women witnessing danger and in danger themselves underscore the artist's portrayals of the modern city as a threat to those [women] who venture into the public—the role,

as seen in the *Intimités*, which women themselves consistently play in Vallotton's depictions of the interior.

### 3. Art Prints, Mass Visual Culture & Gender

#### I. *Le Mensonge* (1898) & *Le Mensonge* (1898): Printmedia's Privileged Subject Matter

In 1898, Vallotton produced six small paintings of the *Intimités* which were critically panned:

This series of *Interiors* must represent the story of a mundane love affair. It is not too blue, it is red that dominates here. It dominates with a strange fury, spreading countless eye infections... One forgets that the painful impression one is meant to receive is moral and not physical... In his painting he is not himself.<sup>96</sup>

One question to ask is why Vallotton was so critically successful in his printmaking of the subject matter of *Intimités* and less so in his paintings which depicted the same images rendered in color in oil paint.<sup>97</sup> One reason why Vallotton's painted excerpts from *Intimités* were such catastrophic failures in the eyes of the critics could be because their subject matter was acceptable in print, but too socially risky in oil paint.<sup>98</sup> Ann Ilan-Alter notes that "Under the Third Republic... bourgeois morality was one of the weapons... that was used to consolidate the Republican regime and forge Republican class unity."<sup>99</sup> A comparison of *Le Mensonge* (The Lie, oil on cardstock, 1898) (Figure 26), to the woodcut *Le Mensonge* produces some interesting

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<sup>96</sup> Stock, 220. Stock translates Ivanhoé Rambosson's review of the Durand-Ruel Gallery in *La Plume*, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1899. Stock translates *distribuent sans compter ophtalmies purulentes* as "countless eye purulences" which I have modified to "countless eye infections." *Ophtalmies purulentes* seems to be closer to the French term for ophthalmia, which is an inflammation of the conjunctiva stemming from a variety of causes, and colloquially known in English as pink eye or conjunctivitis. Rambosson's use of a disorder of the eye to describe the experience of viewing Vallotton's *Intimités* paintings conforms to themes of applying a pathological lens to images or concepts which are not in accordance with ideals of bourgeois order. It also adds an uncomfortable aspect of contagion to the viewing of Vallotton's paintings which Rambosson critiques, as if they are uncomfortable to look at and that this condition may be taken home with the viewer; in a vivid, sensory effect of viewership (*Reverso French-English Collaborative Dictionary*, s.v. "Ophtalmies," February 11, 2011, <http://dictionary.reverso.net/french-english/collaborative/569471/ophtalmie>; *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "Ophthalmia," accessed March 1, 2011, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ophthalmia>).

<sup>97</sup> This question, in consideration of Vallotton's entire painting oeuvre is far beyond the scope of this study, but a few direct correlates to the *Intimités* are useful in considering how printmedia and the works' subject matter and form may have related in regard to the viewer.

<sup>98</sup> Stock, 220. Stock underscores that, "the woodcut is a medium that the contemporary audience would associate with magazines and newspapers, where salacious material was more readily accepted" (220).

<sup>99</sup> Ann Ilan-Alter, "Paris as Mecca of Pleasure: Women in Fin-de-Siècle France," in *The Graphic Arts and French Society: 1871-1914*, by Phillip Dennis Cate (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1988), 65.

differences in Vallotton's visual tactics. In the oil painting, Vallotton allows the impression of perspectival space by manipulating the wallpaper as it retreats into the corner of the room, and, while in the woodcut the couple became the focal point of the image, in the painting the red of the chair seems to balance the composition and the woman and chair seem to vie for the viewer's eye in parallel.<sup>100</sup> The woman in red leans sensually into the man's neck, but rather than appear as vampiric temptress, her power seems diffused by the matching red hues of the room, and as her face is absorbed into the man's neck, she seems to be an extension of the man rather than a force with the power to unnerve him. In addition, her rounded stomach evokes signs of pregnancy, introducing an impression of female fecundity as a constructive, feminine enabling of household gender roles. This further conforms to the difference of the painting in relation to the print: the woman seems more like an extension of the man's agency. In accordance with the title she may still lie, but she is still visually constrained as a member of his household.<sup>101</sup>

There is tension between the critics' unfavorable view of Vallotton's *Intimités* paintings, which conform to some of the same ideologies as the prints, and his subject matter, which, as we have seen in the painted version of *Le Mensonge*, if anything, is more redemptive in terms of bourgeois male agency in the painting suite's flat colors and lit spaces of the interior. In addition to the visual ambiguity that Vallotton's black coverage renders in the prints, the suitability of the

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<sup>100</sup> Stock reads this image as more of the same: "the woman is a vermilion serpent as she winds her way around the darkly clad man" but, in regard to Vallotton's treatment of space, "two walls meet in a corner, where the sofa and the chair intersect, but the unevenly spaced stripes create a vertiginous effect. *These elements combine to create a grating sense of unease and dissonance that detracts from the primary narrative*" (222) [my emphasis]. Rather than reducing the impact of Vallotton's narrative, I would suggest that the visual parallel between the woman and the chair perhaps indicates that Vallotton is presenting the material presence of the chair and table and the feminine presence of the woman within the interior as two items which belong in the interior as a site of male collection and ownership, as Peter Parshall indicates in *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy*. In addition, Stock quotes Sasha Newman, "Nothing is potentially more sordid or more expressive in these interiors than the furniture" (221, from Newman, *Félix Vallotton*, 148).

<sup>101</sup> The possibilities for "the lie" expand if the woman is pregnant to include themes of infidelity. This type of deceit recollects feminine threat in that if the woman is pregnant, and the baby is not the offspring of the man depicted, the woman may be deceitfully attempting to secure a future for herself and a child who does not "belong" to the household. This still reinforces the site of the interior as the man's domain, but introduces the woman yet again as a threat to masculine order.

subject matter to printmedia and publication in *La Revue Blanche* may be the telling difference in the critical reception of Vallotton's painted versions of *Intimités*.

## II. Art and Mass-Culture: Distinctions in the Role of the Artist/Illustrator

To consider meanings of Vallotton's printwork, it is important to discuss the difference between an art print published for André Marty in *L'Estampe originale* or by Ambroise Vollard, and the prints which appeared in journals such as *La Revue blanche* or more political periodicals such as *Le cri de Paris* and the 1903 *Le canard sauvage*.<sup>102</sup> Vallotton successfully seemed to inhabit both the world of artists and illustrators as an emerging artist in the 1890s. He contributed a lithograph to the 1896 *L'Estampe originale* project *Etudes de femmes*, with Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Hermann-Paul, and others, as well as designing the cover, though he received more acclaim for his woodblock prints, as seen in Julius Meier-Graefe's effusive praise.<sup>103</sup> Vallotton exhibited with Siegfried Bing within the *L'Art Nouveau* exhibitions. Along with a few paintings, the prints on display, in addition to some of his portraits and the political works *L'Anarchiste* and *Le Manifestation*, were excerpts from his book project *Les Rassemblements*.<sup>104</sup> According to Gabriel Weisberg, Bing privileged Vallotton's work as an artist because he was able to bridge divisions of the arts, "employing the artist as a talisman for the unification of the arts."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The name taken from the 1884 Ibsen play of the same title, Vallotton contributed many images to *Le canard sauvage* in 1903 which ranged from highly political to extremely disturbing, for example, Vallotton depicts a baby being held aloft on a bayonet over the dead body of his mother, in an image captioned: *Il faut avant tous, peupler les colonies* (Before all else, we must populate the colonies, *Le Canard sauvage*, July 11, 1903, gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b69518202>).

<sup>103</sup> The front and back of Vallotton's cover design for *Etudes de Femmes* are listed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France as prints in their own right, a categorization which introduces topics of the role of books of prints, as well as the capacity for components of books meant to protect and cover prints to later exist as prints themselves (Listed as Félix Vallotton, "Couverture pour 'Etudes de Femmes'" and "Quatrième Couverture pour 'Etude de Femmes'" (There were four volumes), BnF permalink: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b69517496>, back cover: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b69517496>).

<sup>104</sup> Weisberg, "Vallotton, Bing, and *L'Art Nouveau*," 35-36.

<sup>105</sup> Weisberg, "Vallotton, Bing, and *L'Art Nouveau*," 33.

Though the division between illustrators and artists had social resonance in the last decade of the nineteenth-century, in the eyes of Bing and others, Vallotton seemed to acquire a specific, artistic cachet for his contributions to printmedia.<sup>106</sup> Vallotton exhibited with and was associated with the Nabis and their communal appreciation for graphic work and caricature. Patricia Eckert Boyer notes that the easing of official censorship had fostered the development of a relationship between avant-garde artists and publishers who, “encouraged bold contributions from their artists.” She further suggests that “The Nabis’ art reveals their awareness of these developments in the popular vanguard and at times their activities coincided directly with those of popular illustrators.”<sup>107</sup> Though Vallotton’s role as an artist-then-printmaker is historically intact on the side of “art,” his participation in a visual dialogue with the community of illustrators is evident.<sup>108</sup>

Vallotton’s print audience was overwhelmingly gendered male as designated by his participation in subscription journals, and it became increasingly politically-minded as Vallotton’s content bridging art prints and political activism leaned sharply to the latter during

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<sup>106</sup> In addition, Vallotton, according to Marina Ducrey, exhibited eight paintings at the 1903 Vienna Secession exhibition *Entwicklung des Impressionismus in der Malerei und Plastik*, selling half of them; this would speak to Bing’s estimation of the universal resonance of Vallotton’s work of the 1890s (Marina Ducrey and Félix Vallotton, *Vallotton* (Milan: 5 Continents, 2007), 25).

<sup>107</sup> Patricia Eckert Boyer, “The Nabis, Parisian Humorous Illustrators, and the Chat Noir” in *The Nabis and the Parisian Avant-Garde* ed. Patricia Eckert Boyer, Rutgers University Press, 1988, 14. Eckert Boyer describes the different groups of practitioners: “Roques published drawings in *Le Courrier français* by his regular team of illustrators Willette, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Uzès, Henri Pille, and others and also by young painters in need of both money and a forum for gaining artistic exposure... Similarly, Darien published work by artist from both camps in *L’Escarmouche*. André Marty, publisher of *L’Estampe originale*, invited Nabis Bonnard, Vuillard, Vallotton, Ibels, Denis, Ranson, Roussel and Sérusier to create original lithographs for his albums, together with *Chat noir* artists and illustrators Rivière, Georges Auriol, Chéret, Hermann-Paul, Henry Somm, and Willette (15). The distinction may be as simple as that the illustrators were employed full time as illustrators and the “artists” supplemented their incomes through printmaking but aspired to have their primary creative role in the arena of painting.

<sup>108</sup> It is clear that Vallotton’s printwork has some transference and inspiration in the work of Hermann-Paul, which can be especially seen in Hermann-Paul’s *Trois femmes nues se baignant* (Three Nudes Bathing 1894) which has strong resonance with Vallotton’s painting, *Trois femmes et une petite fille jouantes dans l’eau* (Three Women and a Young Girl Playing by the Water, 1907) (Figure 1). In addition, Hermann-Paul’s *Quelques sirènes* (A Few Sirens, 1895) has a strong correspondence in the form of the woman swimming with her head at the level of the water, in the woodcut *Les Trois baigneuses* (The Three Bathers, 1897) which Vallotton produced for *La Revue blanche*.

and just following the turn of the century.<sup>109</sup> Vallotton worked with subscription journals which were disseminated weekly and monthly and in special print and other topical editions. The Natanson brothers, editors of *La Revue blanche*, and especially Thadée Natanson, cultivated a circle of artists which contributed to the avant-garde image of the journal.<sup>110</sup> Known as an eclectic, liberal publication, the span of *La Revue blanche* temporally matched Vallotton's printmaking practice of fin-de-siècle before he began almost exclusively to paint for the last two decades of his life. As the principle portrait artist for *La Revue blanche* his woodcuts appeared in almost every issue, and through his print portrait practice Vallotton portrayed contemporary figures and envisioned politicians and authors for the community of *La Revue blanche* subscribers.

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<sup>109</sup> In addition the majority bourgeois male audience of subscription journals, Vallotton does visually gender his own portrayal of arts appreciation in the woodcut print he made of Edmund Sagot's shop *Les amateurs d'estampes* (Print Fanciers, 1892), which presents the print collectors as male. In contrast, a woodcut print he made for the suite Exposition Universelle, *La Vitrine de Lalique* (The Window of Lalique, *Exposition Universelle III*, 1901) presented the admirers of the art nouveau baubles as overwhelmingly female.

<sup>110</sup> In addition to being known as avant-garde, *La Revue blanche* was known as "Jewish." Janice Bergman-Carton describes the adversity of some of Vallotton's patrons Siegfried Bing and the Natansons: "Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau, an internationalist craft project, became a target of anti-Semitic slurs as well. The Paris based enterprise undertaken by a German-Jew to regenerate the decorative arts in an international vernacular using American and Belgian prototypes fed paranoia about France's declining position in the industrial arts. Bing's gallery was attacked on the front page of *Le Figaro* as 'confused, incoherent, almost unhealthy,' a space that 'smacks of the vicious Englishman, the Jewess addicted to morphine ... the cunning Belgian, or a good mixture of those three poisons' (Janice Bergman-Carton, "*La Revue Blanche*: Art, Commerce, and Culture in the French fin-de-siècle," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, Vol. 30, No. 2, June 2008, 173). Here again critics introduce language of pathology in criticism of *L'Art Nouveau* as well identifying the foreign "Other" as a contributing factor. Vallotton himself was known as the "Foreign Nabi" by his counterparts and bridging his domicile in Paris and his outsider origins perhaps gave him the ability to remain unscathed in his associations, though not quite "belonging" either. Bergman-Carton continues: "Collaborations between *La Revue Blanche* and Bing continued during the attacks on Maison de l'Art Nouveau, feeding associations between the Natanson enterprise and foreign threats to the integrity of France's economic and cultural borders. Those perceptions intensified after 1898, when *La Revue Blanche* assumed a leading role in the movement to exonerate Alfred Dreyfus, and continued well after the journal ceased publishing in 1903. Early-twentieth-century narratives on the judaisation of French culture expanded the sphere of the Natansons' nefarious influence to include the visual arts, specifically its commercialization. They saw in *La Revue Blanche's* 'Jewishness' a convenient shorthand for the substantial growth in the speculative market for French contemporary art and the symbiotic ties between the concept of avant-gardism and the dealer-gallery system it served, despite strategic claims to the contrary" (Bergman-Carton 173-174). Tied to commercialization of art is its mechanical reproduction, and the accessibility of art which grew monumentally during the nineteenth century, so much so that poster art, a sign of visible commerce, was co-opted by people as artworks for their homes, just as posters are sourced as a cheap alternative to original artworks today. *La Revue blanche* took on both roles as throughout its run the editors remained proponents of artmaking and exhibition and fostered artistic works through commitment to publishing artworks in its pages.



While Vuillard, Bonnard, and Toulouse-Lautrec (most notably) contributed to elements of the popular press such as *La Revue blanche*, Vallotton's contributions to contemporary political dialogue surpassed the role played in mass-culture by the other Nabis. Toulouse-Lautrec's exception to this decree of course is the impact made by his posters which have come to represent mass culture at the turn of the century.<sup>111</sup> However Vallotton's commitment to visual political dialogue during the late 1890s and first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century place him in a category of practitioner which is not as simple as an artist dabbling in printwork for artistic exposure. Though his subject matter becomes for the vast majority political toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a part of mass-media publications Vallotton's prints, as they were featured alongside advertisements, become subsumed into topics of mass-culture at play during fin-de-siècle which include concepts of commercialization and reproduction.

### III. Considering Vallotton's Print Images of Women in a Mass-Culture Context

Advertising artists tantalized and titillated, so that while the censors came to see and examine, they withdrew, understanding that what tantalized and titillated would also calm and assuage. It is no accident that as class conflict, the Dreyfus Affair, and the building momentum of a feminist movement challenged the forces of the Third Republic, posters that relied on sameness, whether to sell le Moulin Rouge, le Moulin de la Galette, or Dubonnet, undermined the uniqueness of each person's perception of self.<sup>112</sup>

Gabriel Weisberg summarizes the presence of prints during fin-de-siècle: "print culture was thriving in the Paris art world...this commitment was visible in books, on the walls of

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<sup>111</sup> Gabriel P. Weisberg describes Toulouse-Lautrec's impact: "His posters exemplify Parisian life, transforming the performers who populated the cabarets and dance halls into icons of the capital. His design genius, encapsulating the essence of an entertainer through a distinctive pose, a type of dress, or hairstyle, makes them immediately recognizable. Often attacked during the 1890s for creating posters that failed to meet the demands of informing the public clearly, and for valuing aesthetic effects over clarity of design, Toulouse-Lautrec today represents the highest creative perfection of the poster revolution" (Gabriel P. Weisberg, "The Print Culture of Paris 1900" in *Paris 1900*, Oklahoma Museum of Art, Cat., 2007, 77.).

<sup>112</sup> Ilan-Alter, 79.

buildings, in newspapers, and in print shops...print culture reached everyone”.<sup>113</sup> The physicality of the print-world, as Weisberg has described it, becomes embodied within the form of Paris. It marks everything with signs of print technology and mass culture, layering to form a commercial backdrop for the *physiologie de la rue* which played out in the eyes of fin-de-siècle urban viewers.<sup>114</sup> In addition, this view of Paris at the ground-level, as it can be argued to be documented by Vuillard, Bonnard, and Vallotton is in direct correspondence with modern trends of commercialization, and the role that the image of women played in commercial visual culture.

Ann Ilan-Alter argues that the symbolic function of the feminine as presented in prints contributed to concepts of bourgeois stability:

Class distinctions among women become increasingly irrelevant as advertising posters, designed and executed by the foremost artists of the day, tried to erase these differences of dress and style and create a fantasy world that played on sexual desire as part of the package of goods to be sold. Sexual innuendo and pleasure were used to legitimize desire and to neutralize the tension between the male bourgeois moral order and those groups at odds with the male bourgeoisie.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Weisberg, “Print Culture of Paris”, 64.

<sup>114</sup> This viewing process, through constant exposure to modern commerce and entertainments via the barrage of print images, nullifies the remote viewer of the *flâneur* idea, as the viewers are implicated in a world filled with images of commerce that cannot be denied.

<sup>115</sup> Ilan-Alter, 175. In addition, Weisberg introduces an interesting point in regard to the symbolic role of women and Parisian poster culture in discussion of Georges de Feure’s *Paris-Almanach* (1894): “...de Feure created an emblematic icon of the new woman who had become a metaphor for the new Paris, just as *Paris-Almanach*, the publication, was calling attention to the temptations, sites, and performers that one could see throughout the city. Paris was embodied in the new woman, and *Paris-Almanach* was her tool, the vehicle for the seduction of the people in the city” (Weisberg, “Print Culture of Paris”, 77). While the New Woman in practice represented an overt threat to bourgeois order and is criticized roundly in printmedia, de Feure’s “new woman” is an inert vehicle for conceptions for modern Paris. Her form as de Feure depicts her is beautiful and as Weisberg describes her, she becomes a mirror of the modern Parisian experiencing the city, while simultaneously acting as a seductress in the service of marketing the sights of Paris to the viewer. She is a consumer/product hybrid, and her embodiment in the form of a fashionable Parisian is, according to Weisberg, not in contradiction to her status as an icon of the Parisian tourism industry.

Elizabeth Menon notes in *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture* that, “The Revolution of the popular press centered around these images of women who were seen as containers of virtue and vice. They were collectively vessels of the seductive dualities that encompassed the very spirit of Montmartrian women on the fringe of respectability or desire” (67). Ilan-Alter and Menon have a slightly different approach to these seductive images of women. Menon asserts there were actual women in correspondence with the concepts present in print poster advertisements, though the bodily counterparts which must be acknowledged, such as Jane Avril and Loïe Fuller, were performers: a caricature or creation of ‘self’ which may not correspond to anything ‘real’. In these exceptions, there was a link to a tangible person, though one who was implicated in the artificial nature of performance, and her form became, as Menon notes, a vessel, for ideological play. Catherine Pedley-Hindson discusses this topic in the context of theatrical performance in “Jane Avril and the Entertainment Lithograph: The Female Celebrity and *fin-de-*

According to Ilan-Alter, the publicized images of idealized, sexy women in correlation with printmedia became a hinge for ordering society based on tenets of bourgeois moral order, just as the role of women in the household was simultaneously maintained as the ideological anchor of the French nation.<sup>116</sup>

Vallotton slips into this paradox of representation in *Intimités*, in which he presents women as belonging to the bourgeois interior as feminine anchor, while simultaneously presenting a threat to the bourgeois male psyche. As we have seen, in the eyes of the critics Vallotton could not sustain this subject matter as he transferred it to paint.<sup>117</sup> The commercial connotations of printmedia—despite the social elevation of the elite *La Revue blanche* readership—which may have topically given the image of women the ability to fornicate and kiss and make lies in the bourgeois interior without threatening society—were de-emphasized, in a still bold, still avant-garde style, in oil paint.

Furthermore, in his depictions of feminine shopping, Vallotton takes the image of female participation in public (a potential threat to bourgeois order) and estranges her from visual

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*siècle*: Questions of Corporeality and Performance,” *International Federation for Theatre Research*, 2005 v. 30 no. 2, 107–123.

<sup>116</sup> Richard Thomson articulates the connection between degeneracy and moral and civic order in fin-de-siècle France: “The Third Republic laid positive emphasis on progress and science. To achieve its goals of social progress, economic stability and improved international status, it needed to encourage a fit and dynamic France...Degeneration was a concept which involved more than bodily decline; morality was integral to it too...The Third Republic had to ameliorate this situation by promoting uplifting civic values: the importance of the family, the duty of military service, the responsibility for collective labour for the national good” (19).

<sup>117</sup> There are of course formal considerations to take into account: the black and white of the woodblock prints have a dramatic and visually pleasing presentation which does not correspond to the flat, matte looking canvases of the *Intimités* paintings. The visually jarring effect is the same, but the prints seem to maintain a sort of compositional elegance while, according to the critics, the paintings were just too bright, too flat, too Swiss. The “measuring” of Vallotton’s nationality in terms of art criticism is an interesting component of his reception. When his success with *Intimités* was acknowledged by Thadée Natanson, the *La Revue blanche* editor claimed, “His thorough study of the French Masters, of Ingres in particular, nationalizes him a Frenchman” (Newman 142). Furthermore, as his paintings of the interiors strayed from critical appreciation, Newman characterizes the criticisms: “Artificial and inhuman, Vallotton’s world is stripped of the refinement, the nuanced harmony, and the tenderness of the French spirit, so apparent and so beloved in interiors by Vuillard and Bonnard” (149). Thus “French”-ness seems to have played a role in the criteria for judgment of Vallotton’s critics: when his work was beloved, he was in line with the French style, when his work was criticized, it was not “French” enough.

reality, while coloring her social practice as pathological. The women of his printed works are not beautiful, even (and especially) when their intent is to engage their bodies in sexual commerce, as indicated by the appearance of the women of *L'Étranger*. In comparison to *La Modiste* (1896), and *Le Bon Marché* (1893), Vallotton's painted depiction of Le Bon Marché department store does not hint at the strangeness present in the print. *Le Bon Marché* triptych (1898) (Figure 27) presents le Bon Marché as a crowded site of commerce in the center panel, but sustains the male and female figures as participants in an ordered chaos.<sup>118</sup> Ruth Iskin claims that *Le Bon Marché* triptych is focused less on gendered participation and is more concerned with issues of mass-production: "Vallotton's painting retains a stark legibility and presents the impersonal polish of a fin-de-siècle advertising poster. Even as it partly crosses over to a mass-media style, Vallotton's triptych reveals the spirit of 1890s disillusionment with commodification."<sup>119</sup> The disillusionment with commodification which Iskin interprets in the painted triptych is compounded and linked to the feminine in Vallotton's prints of the same subject matter. Reasons for this affiliation, as noted by Ilan-Alter, may link to the connection between images of women and the exploding visual culture of fin-de-siècle. As fantasies of women became the visual form for advertisers and a subject matter linked to commodification and consumption, in Vallotton's prints we see the echo of this association: women are thus the form which seems to satisfactorily comprise his disillusionment.

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<sup>118</sup> The left panel does introduce some interesting questions in the physical intimacy implied between the woman and the man who appears to be an employee. Their eyes are downcast as she appears to take one of the bars of soap on display nearby from his hands, but they seem to be standing very close together in consideration of the constraints of their relationship. Yet, the central panel, especially in relation to the heightened spaces of *La Modiste*, is much more centered and symmetrical than the prints of shopping. The painting achieves a spatial verisimilitude which is lacking in the shopping prints in service of their strangeness.

<sup>119</sup> Iskin, 112.

#### IV. Considering Vallotton's Print Participation through the lens of Benjamin's Aura

Vallotton worked in prints at a time when prints were literally and virtually inscribed over the city of Paris. He worked in woodcuts and, through the photomechanical reproduction of his drawings, mediated the role between artist and illustrator to his advantage. Most of his politically-minded prints at the turn-of-the-century which appeared in *Le cri de Paris* were photomechanical reproductions of his drawings and did not carry the same aesthetic value in terms of the market or criticism; instead, Vallotton was known as being politically-minded, and his photomechanically reproduced drawings were excluded from his catalogue raisonné of graphic work.<sup>120</sup> It is odd then, that though his photomechanically reproduced drawings could not attest to the process of woodcutting along the grain, a Japanese process which Vallotton had taken on in his woodcuts, with the exception of special portfolios, many of the woodcuts and prints which were included in journals were actually photomechanically reproduced themselves, despite being listed as originals.<sup>121</sup> There are two concepts at play in looking at the reproducibility of Vallotton's prints: the two layers of reproduction for the images of his woodcuts which have been photomechanically reproduced, and the presentation of his drawings as prints, even though they never were.

Walter Benjamin's concept of aura and the potential for a historical, temporal connection to artworks which have been removed from their process applies here in examining the theoretical resonances of Vallotton's print and "print" oeuvre. Benjamin states the problem in the

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<sup>120</sup> Bourrelier, 18-19. Bourrelier discusses the drawings in *Le cri de Paris* which supported some of the satirical, socially constructive aims of the editors of *La Revue blanche*, while the main journal itself did not feature such overt political illustrations.

<sup>121</sup> As noted on page 39, a similar theme played out with *La Dernière nouveauté*, which was presented as an original lithograph when it was printed in *L'Escarmouche*, but was a photomechanical printing of an original lithograph. Since the print was initially a lithograph, it appears in the Catalogue Raisonné, but special mention is made that it was originally a lithograph, and its life in *L'Escarmouche* was the re-print.

second version of his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility*: “In even the most perfect reproduction, *one* thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art—its unique existence in a particular place.”<sup>122</sup> Benjamin describes the desire of the viewer to get closer to an image, and thus view it in facsimile form through a reproduction, though the image, “as offered by illustrated magazines and newsreels, differs unmistakably from the image. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely entwined in the latter as are transitoriness and repeatability in the former.”<sup>123</sup> Vallotton’s prints and his audiences can be considered in many ways: the high-brow print audience of *La Revue blanche* versus the affluent *amateurs d’estampes* who might purchase an art print à la carte versus the politicized viewer of *Le cri de Paris* or *Le canard sauvage*. His high-brow print-enthusiast audience might agree that the reproducibility of media which privileges moderately numbered editions entails much meaning in viewing the image, as rarity was privileged by print connoisseurs. However, for the political audience, the value was present in the dissemination of political information and criticism, which was a visual corollary the viewer’s political engagement.

In addition, the link between prints and portrayals of the feminine form as well as the possibilities for dissemination seem to contribute to the suitability to prints of racier, titillating content. It can be argued that Vallotton perhaps received such critical opprobrium of his painting *Le Mensonge*, because through its medium, it was too connected to the historical aura conceived of in some form by its viewers. Perhaps the visuals of mass prints are distanced from high culture through reproduction, and thus their content escapes some of the conventions mandated by other media.

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<sup>122</sup> Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility” in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media* ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Rodney Livinstone, Howard Eiland and Others, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2008, (19-55), 21.

<sup>123</sup> Benjamin, 23.

Despite any arguments that the aura of prints is severed via their reproduction, fin-de-siècle prints, beyond the images they depict, prompted diverse and historically specific viewing experiences. In addition to the high-brow, low-brow dichotomy of Vallotton's varied print audiences which I mentioned above, a 1904 painting of his wife Gabrielle Bernheim illustrates a feminine viewership of art prints which is inextricably linked to the interior. *Interior, Bedroom with Two Women* (1904) (Figure 28), shows two women in a private bedroom, with a set of prints reflected from an armoire mirror from a wall behind the viewer. In terms of Benjamin's aura, the prints have been re-implicated as part of the aura of the painting, which maintains its historical specificity. As we see them in the painting, the prints are part of the feminine, interior landscape Vallotton depicts; their inclusion demonstrates the presence of women in the life of prints and vice versa. As an object, the prints belong to the painting, and perhaps to the room depicted and the bourgeois woman present. While the reproducibility of prints can be linked to themes of consumer alienation and distrust embodied in the form of women, the idea that women owned prints and viewed them daily, so much so that they became ubiquitous to the interior as well as the exterior urban walls of Paris, illustrates the inherently transgressive possibilities that reproducibility entails prints through their replication.

## Conclusion

I have examined Vallotton's prints in consideration of the changing scholarly view of the existence and dominance of the separate spheres as explored by Wolff, Adler, and Wilson, as well as in the separate spheres' perceived historical context as a socially stabilizing construction. Though it should not be understood as a historical "fact," the concept of the separate spheres should be acknowledged as a leading ideology of space at the end of the nineteenth-century. It should not be denied historically as a simple scholarly construction despite its life as such. Visual culture prompts useful methods for exploring the ideology of the separate spheres, and for using the ideology itself as a scholarly lens for examining the images which comprise the scholarly database of resources.

As Vallotton's fin-de-siècle prints attest, concepts of the separate spheres are complicated by competing ideologies of dangerous femininity in addition to signs of feminine agency in the public sphere. Vallotton artfully engages these ideologies in his printwork to striking effect, and his printwork functions as an anthology regarding the contested spaces of gender in fin-de-siècle Paris. The complexities at play in the narratives and captured moments Vallotton presents are realized in both his subject matter and tactical approach. The enthusiasm of his viewers in fin-de-siècle would suggest that the ideological entanglement of gender and space so apparent in his prints was a theme familiar to his audience.

The exception to every other print Vallotton created of women, the 1898 cover of *Le cri de Paris, En Famille* (Figure 14) reveals Vallotton rejecting women defined by avarice or fabulous accoutrements; rather, he transfers political ideology into a woman he forms after a pattern of normalcy. Though her face is downcast to her paper, Vallotton excises materialism and strangeness in exchange for the political efficacy of his image. Whether one argues that



Vallotton's sustained ambivalence toward women or dedicated use of their form to argue formal and social conditions at fin-de-siècle is based on his biography or not, it seems in this case that Vallotton's intent as illustrator is to present the concept and visual image of a normal woman behaving in a socially constructive way to political end. In addition, the life of *En Famille* as a print image would have transgressed the public arena of political dialogue, entering private homes perhaps like the one it depicts. The existence of, and possibilities for, feminine viewership, which Vallotton suggests in this print, may have been reinforced by images such as *En Famille*, even as print periodicals bridged the public, political forum of Paris and the private domestic interior.

Historian Christopher Forth nonetheless describes the feminine participation in the Dreyfus Affair as more symbolic than activist:

Women also played more symbolic and allegorical roles in the Affair. Some were featured as tools of espionage..., as emotional figures like despairing wives...and grieving widows..., or as symbols of wantonness...Others imagined that women played a more nefarious role, and one anti-Dreyfusard even claimed that they had been employed to use their seductive powers to convert men to the Dreyfusard cause. In one case, it was alleged, an adulterous wife was threatened with having her infidelity made public if she failed to persuade her husband to sign a petition in defense of Zola. Finally other women were wrapped in mystery and thus served almost exclusively symbolic purposes...Women such as these captured the public's imagination and helped to frame the deeds of male actors during the Dreyfus Affair.<sup>124</sup>

The Dreyfusard woman of *En Famille* does not correspond to any of these symbolic roles as Forth describes them, and thus, though she does not seem to have as much agency as to be a participant in the feminist journal *La Fronde*, Vallotton depicts her participation as separate from the overt symbolic functions Forth illustrates. This is in contradiction with Forth's argument in his chapter "Adventures of the Naked Truth: Women and the Dreyfusard Imagination" that,

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<sup>124</sup> Christopher Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*, Baltimore University Press, 137-138. It should be noted that all of Forth's roles for women are passive, symbolic ones per his designation, he does list a few notable female participants who demonstrate some agency (such as Gyp) prior to this passage, though they do not conform to standards of "normal" women, rather "notorious" ones.

“Dreyfusard artists sought a restoration of the gender order through the female allegory Truth, a weak female figure who could only be brought to light through the intervention of heroic Dreyfusards”.<sup>125</sup> Vallotton did produce an image of *Verité* (1899) (Figure 29), though, in accordance with his usual cynicism, Truth lies dead, hanging over a well, impaled with a sword.<sup>126</sup> In contrast to the allegorical pictures of women which Forth describes Dreyfusard artists employing in altruism, true-to-form, Vallotton kills Truth outright. Instead, Vallotton offers *En Famille*, perhaps as a sign of practical hope for what can be done, beyond presenting a romantic allegory hanging dead in an imaginary space.

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<sup>125</sup> The allegory of “Truth” and “Truth at the bottom of a well” appeared frequently in Dreyfus Affair discourse. Forth claims that, “Truth was by far the most popular element of Dreyfusard iconography” (155). The figure of Emile Zola become implicated in this iconography as part of anti-Dreyfusard attacks, as Caran D’ache employed the allegory to show Zola over a toilet in an image titled, *Coucou, le voilà!* (Cuckoo, there he is!, 1899). Norman Kleeblatt describes the caricature for the *Art Journal* “Scatological Art” issue of 1993: “In his effort to make Zola a laughing stock, Caran d’Ache cleverly turns the classic image of Truth emerging from a well—an iconographic mainstay in the visual struggle on both sides of the Dreyfus Affair—into a reference to a baser recent invention. The image shows the technological heir of the chamber pot, the rather new and then still rare appliance, the indoor toilet” (Norman L. Kleeblatt, “MERDE! The Caricatural Attack against Emile Zola,” *Art Journal* v.52, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 58). For more Dreyfus Affair imagery, Kleeblatt’s catalogue from the 1987 exhibition *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth, Justice* at the Jewish Museum; Vallotton’s *l’Age du Papier* (1898) is printed on the cover of the catalogue: Norman L. Kleeblatt, *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth, and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>126</sup> Forth notes that, “During the Dreyfus Affair, the ‘other-speaking’ quality of allegorical Truth was manifested not only in the desire to prevent real women from taking active roles in Dreyfusard politics, but in the discrepancy between the allegory’s female form and the fact that Truth was widely considered a distinctly *masculine* virtue. One thus discerns an ambiguity at the heart of this symbol, whose form was female but whose essence was generally perceived as masculine. In short the ideal of truth was safely represented by an abstract woman because, according to the logic of allegorical representation, it was assumed that real women could not be relied on to tell the truth” (156). Figures 3 and 26 of this paper attest to Vallotton’s willingness to depict women as dishonest, but from Forth’s point that the allegory of Truth is masculine, and should not even be seen as a more than a feminine vessel of the masculine value of Truth, Vallotton’s *En Famille* becomes even more convincing. Vallotton’s *Verité* reveals cynicism and frustration couched in the form of allegory, whether it be essentially masculine or feminine. *En Famille* depicts the family as a site of political tension. The figures are at odds as they are modeled with elements of fin-de-siècle masculinity and femininity in their compositional complementarity. However, the woman takes an active role in Dreyfus Affair politics, and in this case (and for once) Vallotton pictures a woman as his protagonist.

**Figures:**

**Figure 1.** Felix Vallotton, *Trois femmes et une petite fille jouant dans l'eau* (Three Women and a Young Girl Playing by the Water), 1907. Oil on Canvas. 51 x 76 7/8 inches. Collection Kunstmuseum Basel. Reproduced in Newman, *Félix Vallotton*, (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1991), 36.



**Figure 2.** Félix Vallotton, *La Manifestation* (The Demonstration), 1893, woodcut, 8 x 12 9/16 inches. Catalogue Raisoné 110. Reproduced in [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr/) / Bibliothèque nationale de France (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6951664j>).



**Figure 3.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Mensonge*, 1897, woodcut, 7 1/8 x 8 7/8 inches. *Intimités I*, Catalogue Raisonné 188. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 205.



**Figure 4.** Félix Vallotton, *L'Irréparable*, 1898 , woodcut, 7 x 8 13/16 inches. *Intimités X*, Catalogue Raisonné 197. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 218.



**Figure 5.** Félix Vallotton, *Apprêts de visite* (Getting Ready for a Visit), 1898, woodcut, 7 x 8 13/16 inches. *Intimités VIII*, Catalogue Raisonné 195. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 216.





**Figure 6.** Félix Vallotton, *L'Argent* (Money), 1898, woodcut, 7 1/16 x 8 7/8 inches. *Intimités V*, Catalogue Raisonné 192. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 212.

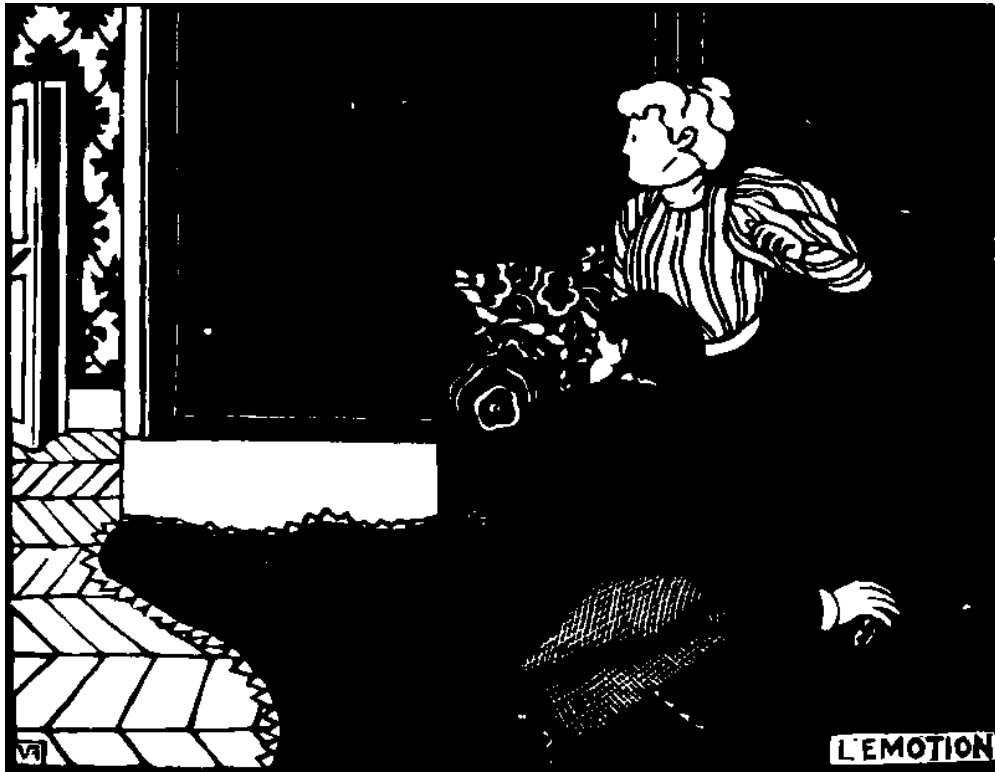




**Figure 7.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Triomphe* (The Triumph), 1898, woodcut, 7 x 8 7/8 inches. *Intimités II*, Catalogue Raisonné 189. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 207.



**Figure 8.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Grand moyen* (Extreme Measure), 1898 woodcut, 7 x 8 13/16 inches. *Intimités VI*, Catalogue Raisonné 193. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 214.



**Figure 9.** Félix Vallotton, *L'Émotion* (Emotion), 1898, woodcut, 7 1/16 x 8 7/8 inches. Catalogue Raisonné 198. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 219.



**Figure 10.** Félix Vallotton, *La Sante de l'autre* (The Other's Health), 1898, woodcut, 7 x 8 13/16 inches. *Intimités IX*, Catalogue Raisonné 196. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 217.



**Figure 11.** Félix Vallotton, *La Raison Probante* (The Cogent Reason), 1898, woodcut, 7 x 8 4/5 inches. *Intimités IV*, Catalogue Raisonné 191. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 211.

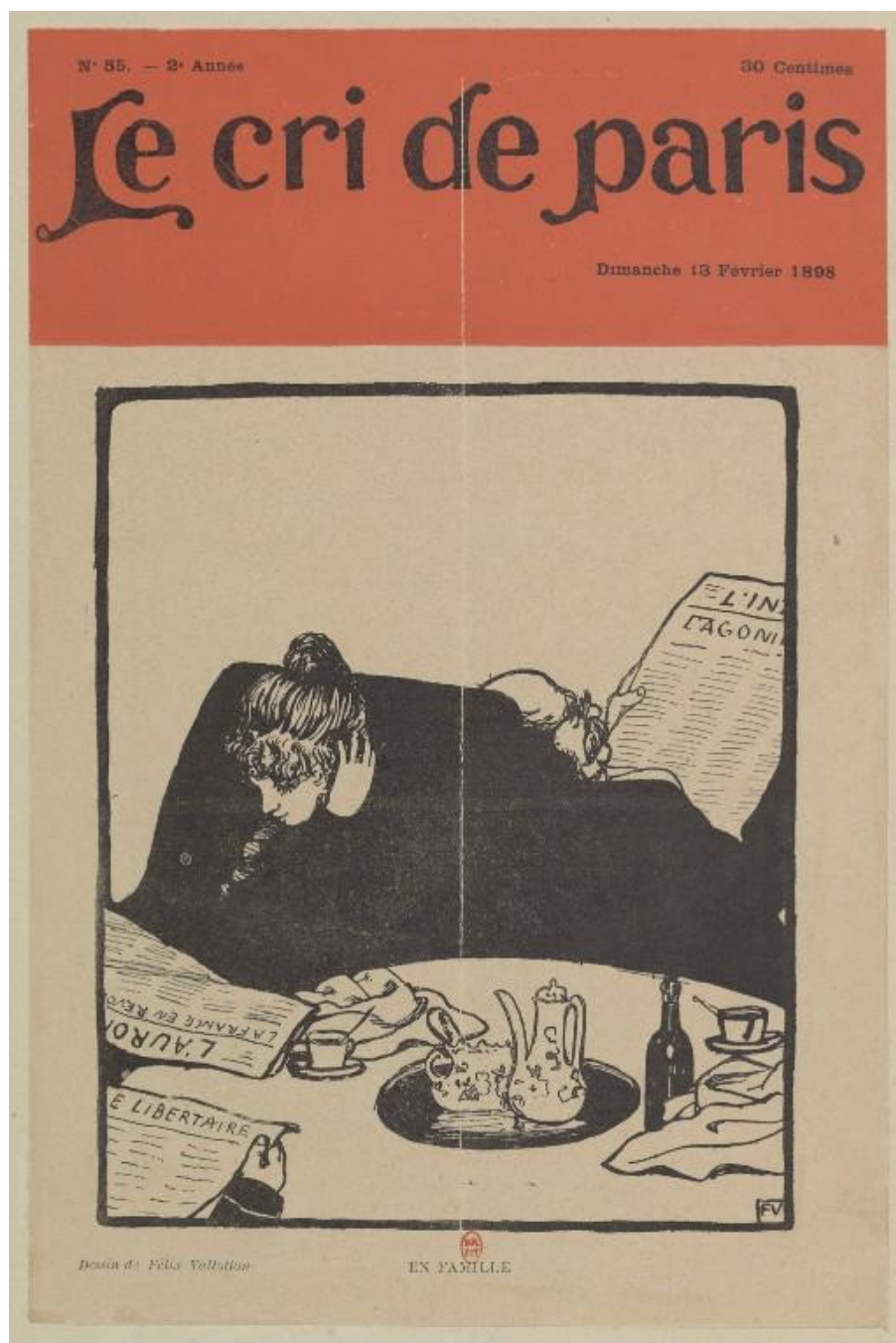


**Figure 12.** Félix Vallotton, *La Belle épingle* (The Fine Pin), 1898, woodcut, 7 1/16 x 8 7/8 inches. *Intimités III*, Catalogue Raisonné 190. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 209.



**Figure 13.** Félix Vallotton, *Ta mère n'aurait pas pu*, 1901, lithograph. Series, *Crimes et Châtiments*, *Assiette au Beurre*. 10 2/3 x 7 7/8 inches. *Crimes et châtiments IX*, Catalogue Raisonné 64. Reproduced in [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr) / Bibliothèque nationale de France (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6951626v>).





**Figure 14.** Félix Vallotton, *En Famille* (At Home), 1898, photomechanical reproduction of a drawing. Published in *Le cri de Paris*, February 13, 1898. Reproduced in [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr/) / Bibliothèque nationale de France (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6951769z>).





**Figure 15.** Félix Vallotton, *La Musique militaire* (Military Music), 1896, from *Rassemblements*. Reproduced in Newman, *Félix Vallotton*, (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1991), 70.



**Figure 16.** Félix Vallotton, *La Rixe* or *Scène au café* (The Brawl or Café Scene), 1892, woodcut, 6 5/8 x 9 7/8 inches. Catalogue Raisoné 101. Reproduced in [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr) / Bibliothèque nationale de France (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b69516560>).



**Figure 17.** Félix Vallotton, *L'Accident* (The Accident), 1893, zincograph, 8 13/16 x 12 15/16 inches. *Paris Intense VI*, Catalogue Raisonné 50. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 56.



**Figure 18.** Félix Vallotton, *L'Étranger* (The Stranger), 1894, woodcut, 8 13/16 x 7 1/16 inches. Catalogue Raisonné 137. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 145.



**Figure 19.** Félix Vallotton, *Dernière Nouveauté*, (The Latest Fashion), 1893, lithograph, 8 7/16 x 8 9/16 inches. Catalogue Raisonné 44. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 48.





**Figure 20.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Chapeau Vert* (The Green Hat), 1896, lithograph, 15  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 10  $\frac{5}{8}$  inches, Produced for *L'Estampe originale*, album, *Etude de femmes*, Catalogue Raisonné 54. Reproduced in Visipix Museum (<http://visipix.dynalias.com/newsgroup/DOWN%20ART00002/Artpics/Resize%20of%20vallotton%201893%20le%20chapeau%20vert%20fb.jpg>).



**Figure 21.** Félix Vallotton, *La Modiste* (The Milliner), 1894, woodcut, 7 1/16 x 8 7/8 inches. Catalogue Raisonné 138. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 147.



**Figure 22.** Félix Vallotton, *Les Modistes* (The Milliners), 1894, India ink, charcoal and lead pencil on glazed cream wove paper, 7 1/8 x 8 7/8 inches. Study for *La Modiste*. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 146.





**Figure 23.** Félix Vallotton, *Les Modistes*, 1894, India ink, charcoal and scraping on glazed cream wove paper. Study for *La Modiste*. Reproduced in Félix Edouard Vallotton, Maxime Vallotton, and Charles Goerg, *Félix Vallotton: Catalogue Raisonné de L'Oeuvre Grave et Lithographie*. (Geneve: Editions De Bonvent, 1972), 146.



**Figure 24.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Bon Marché* (The “Bon Marché” Department Store), 1893, woodcut, 7 15/16 x 10 1/4 inches. Catalogue Raisonné 116. Reproduced in [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr) / Bibliothèque nationale de France (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b69516708>).



**Figure 25.** Félix Vallotton, *La Foule à Paris* (The Paris Crowd), 1892, woodcut, 5 7/16 x 7 5/8 inches. Catalogue Raisoné 91. Reproduced in [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr) / Bibliothèque nationale de France (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6951652b>).



**Figure 26.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Mensonge* (The Lie), 1898, oil on board, 9 1/4 x 12 15/16 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art, The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland, BMA. Reproduced in Newman, *Félix Vallotton*, (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1991), 142.





**Figure 27.** Félix Vallotton, *Le Bon Marché* (triptych), 1898, oil on canvas. Fondation Félix Vallotton. Reproduced in BnF Virtual Exhibition, *Emile Zola* (<http://expositions.bnf.fr/zola/index.htm>; <http://expositions.bnf.fr/zola/grand/293.htm>; <http://expositions.bnf.fr/zola/grand/294.htm>; <http://expositions.bnf.fr/zola/grand/295.htm>).



**Figure 28.** Félix Vallotton, *Interior: Bedroom with two women*, 1904, oil on board, 24 1/4 x 22 inches. Reproduced in Newman, *Félix Vallotton*, (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1991), 153.



**Figure 29.** Félix Vallotton, *Verité*, 1899, photomechanical reproduction of a drawing. Published in *Le cri de Paris*, May 14, 1899. Reproduced in Deligne, Alain. "Tester La Théorie Sémiotique De L'image." Equipe Interdisciplinaire De Recherche Sur L'Image Satirique (EIRIS). March 27, 2008

([http://www.eiris.eu/eiris/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=136&Itemid=125](http://www.eiris.eu/eiris/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=136&Itemid=125)).

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