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**THE ISSUE OF WORKING WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION: THE SOCIAL
AND CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF WORKING WOMEN IN
AMERICAN ART AND FICTION**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The meaning and the definition of work and labor change over the course of history, because in certain periods of history, certain knowledge about work and labor develops depending on the structure of economic production of the given society. Along with the historical and economic progress the equivalents of the word enter into the language system with new meanings and after the linguistic development of the related words, *work* and *labor* enter into the culture with certain cultural values. As Valerie Mainz and Griselda Pollock writes, in French, *travailler* means “to work” whose origin lies in a Latin word for “torture”. *Labourer* means “to plough” whose origin lies in a Latin word for “toil”. *Ouvrier* means “worker” originally from the Latin word for a man of pain or affliction. *Gagner*, which means “to earn” derives originally from a Frankish word for pillaging. Capitalist definition of work intentionally excludes the traditional meanings of torture, toil, or pain from the word. With the development of industrialization the meaning of work/labor becomes specialized referring to “paid employment”. Therefore, the definition of “work” that will be employed in this thesis is “the exchange of human labor in return for money or profit”.

In addition to the word’s historical development, the political economist Karl Marx points out the relation between work and ideology in the nineteenth century. For him, work is a means of creating wealth and therefore it ceases to operate as a determination in practical reality and operates as a cultural entity in which ideology functions to exploit the workers. In other words, working makes the worker poor while the employer gets rich without doing the physical task, and in democratic countries this is only possible with functioning of ideology, which is defined by Marx as the set of false beliefs and ideas of the working people that is used by the capitalists to exploit their labor. Moving from the fact that in the capitalist societies, people are identified socially and culturally by the kind of work they do, definition of work involves being aware of the concept of “power” because work does not only define the character of modern capitalist society but it also determines individuals’ sense of

identity and certain jobs have certain cultural values. In other words, some jobs are more prestigious than the others.

Making a clear definition of work and labor becomes even more complicated when women's activities are taken into consideration. Women's labor is discussed by the feminist thinkers in two categories: the unpaid domestic labor and the gender-based works outside home. Mainz and Pollock argue that if work has a generic meaning as a collective noun that incorporated all kinds of labor and productive activity, this definition must include women's domestic work, too. However, in the capitalist definition of work, women are not classified as workers even though they worked and produced full time at home. Valerie Mainz and Griselda Pollock write,

Work in a world reshaped by industrial capitalism signifies being in waged labour. It is on the basis of this historical revaluation that modern relations of both class and of gender emerge. Thus while 'working' unpaid for unregulated hours in home and family, women not engaged in waged employment outside the home are not considered to be working (5).

Mainz and Pollock argue that the capitalist system intentionally exploits women's labor by confining their productive activities into unpaid household tasks. Their labor is defined, estimated, exploited, and carried out within the patriarchal social relations, and their place is at the bottom of the economic stratification.

Susan Strasser argues that women's domestic labor should not be separated from the United States economic history. She writes, "the history of American housework is, in essence, the history of American industrialization". For this very reason, the feminist writers Wendy Edmond and Suzie Fleming write in *All Work and No Pay*, "Housewives keep their families in the cheapest way. . . and all the toiling of thousands of housewives enables the possessing classes to increase their riches, and to get the labor-power of men and children in the most profitable way (8). It must be underlined that the capitalist meaning of work creates gender categories and turns women into free laborers while strengthening men's power and prestige in the society.

The above-mentioned gender categories are created by classifying the value of the work done by women and men. Anne Phillips and Barbara Taylor write

in “Sex and Skill: Notes towards a Feminist Economics,” that the modes of production determine the society’s perception of “skill” which is an ideological category imposed on certain types of work by virtue of gender. They argue that women’s both paid and unpaid work is identified with “unskilled” tasks by the patriarchal society. They write,

The classification of women’s job as unskilled and men’s jobs as skilled or semi-skilled frequently bears little relation to the actual amount of training or ability required for them. Skill definitions are saturated with sexual bias. The work of women is often deemed inferior simply because it is women who do it. Women workers carry into the work-place their status as subordinate individuals, and this status comes to define the value of the work they do (318).

Philips and Taylor point out the gender bias in terms of evaluating women’s labor. By linking capitalism to patriarchy, they explain the reason why women’s labor is socially considered as unskilled. Accordingly, capital is interested only in labor power and selects its labor power on the purely quantitative basis of how much it can contribute to profits. In such a system, employers benefit from the existence of a pool of cheap and “unskilled” labor of women which can be used to undercut men workers. Moreover, women’s family responsibilities and economic dependence on men’s wage ensure her being pushed back into her primary sphere, the home. The link between capitalism and patriarchy comes to the fore when women’s family role makes them particularly vulnerable as workers and their vulnerability is the capital’s strength. In Phillips and Taylor’s words, “They are the super-exploitable” (319).

As we elaborated in Part II, nineteenth century reformist feminists fought to alter this gender-based structure that exploited women’s labor in and outside home. To give an example, the nineteenth century radical feminist, Susan B. Anthony argued in “Woman: The Great Unpaid Laborer of the World” (1848), that women were unpaid not according to the value of the work done, but according to their gender. Classifying women’s labor as useless and worthless men turned women into slaves of the age. Moreover, she argues that this economic structure reflects in the cultural politics concerning women’s behaviors and capacities.

Women are culturally restricted from speaking loud, running, jumping, climbing, and having muscles. The feminine traits that are attributed to women ideologically serve to emasculate them to remain the weaker gender, and obey the fathers, husbands, or brothers. By searching out and exposing the prejudiced nineteenth century patriarchal points of view which attempt to disenfranchise women socially and economically, Susan B. Anthony claimed that women must, along with men, enjoy the paid employment and responsibility of making themselves. She writes in "Woman: The Great Unpaid Laborer of the World":

Although woman has performed much of the labor of the world, her industry and economy have been the very means of increasing her degradation. Not being free, the results of her labor have gone to build up and sustain the very class that has perpetuated this injustice. Even in the family, where we should naturally look for the truest conditions, woman has always been robbed of the fruits of her own toil...Taught that the fruits of her industry belong to others, she has seen man enter into every avocation most suitable for her, while she, the uncomplaining drudge of the household, condemned to the severest labor, has been systematically robbed of her earnings, which have gone to build up her master's power, and she has found herself in the condition of the slave, deprived of the results of her own labor. . . . Woman has been the great unpaid laborer of the world, and although within the last two decades a vast number of new employments have been opened to her, statistics prove that in the great majority of these, she is not paid according to the value of the work done, but according to sex. The opening of all industries to woman, and the wage question as connected with her, are most subtle and profound questions of political economy, closely interwoven with the rights of self-government (42-43).

Anthony wrote that the degradation of the household tasks was determined by the patriarchal structure to shake women's social prestige. Even the paid jobs that women held were seen as insignificant and wasted women's skill and capacity. She

argued that the process of the nineteenth century professionalism proceeded in such a way as to institutionalize an exclusion of women from the industrial economy. Women were driven to the margins of the society.

The marginalization of women, argues Pauline Johnson in *Feminism a Radical Humanism*, stems from the society's imposing on women a life of self-sacrificing duty to others especially in the family and marriage. The nineteenth century relations of domination and subordination in the family, she asserts, produce a tyrannical masculinity and a self-abnegating femininity (72). This relation of domination and subordination in the family, as Margaret L. Andersen writes in *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender*, glorified women's ideal place as the home in order to guarantee male dominance over female labor (105). Such a social organization generated a socioeconomic inequality, because it made women's work either invisible or devalued.

Nineteenth century representations of the working women point to the fact that wage work gives women new kinds of power in their personal and political relations with men. None of the heroines of the selected novels and short stories of this thesis is a self-abnegating woman, and their creators demonstrate an evolving re-definition of womanhood that cannot be marginalized any more. As Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett argue in *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in Nineteenth Century American Fiction*, the nineteenth century women writers who represented autonomous working women in their fiction participated in the battle over women's access to power (6). They took their positions on the intersection between the nineteenth century women's assigned roles in the private sphere and women's action and self-expression in the public sphere. We argue that through creating representations of the independent working women these women writers took an activist role within the nineteenth century debate over women's power and prestige.

Another important thing at issue in the construction of our thesis is the relation of representation, realism and feminism. Alison Byerly argues in her book *Realism, Representation, and the Arts in the Nineteenth Century Literature* that the "coherence" and "unity" of the fictional worlds operate similar to the way in which we make sense

of the world around us. She argues that the process of constructing reality is the process of “taking as true” or “taking as natural” (6). Therefore, the readers’ ability to extract the real-seeming world from a fiction and art work depends on the casual assumptions the readers make. She writes, “The novelist is exempted from the impossible task of describing the real world in all its complexity; instead, s/he describes representations that are judged accurate or inadequate *as representations* of a reality that is implied by their reference to it” (6). In other words, these fictions create possible or plausible worlds.

Feminist literary criticism seeks to uncover and to change the oppressive structural inequalities in these representations. Hence, it is considered as one of the tools for discovery and transformation, because reading, thinking, criticizing, writing are all forms of action that uncover the oppression and might serve the undoing of it. Although there is not one unified theory concerning feminist literary criticism as praxis, Ruth Robbins writes that there are three criteria on which feminist literary theory and practice base itself. They are:

1. The feminist literary theory assumes some relationships between texts and the reality. Literature is part of reality. It reflects the real, it creates the real, and it offers alternatives to the real.
2. The relationships between texts and reality are necessarily political, having to do with power. Feminist texts can be subversive, attacking dominant modes of understanding, and representing alternative ways of living and thinking. Texts can change the world.
3. All feminist theories focus on women, and identify social deprivations specific to women: physiological, cultural, psychological, educational, economic oppression.

Artistic representations of working women constitute a form of knowledge that can offer access to and understandings of the female experience which is unavailable through purely cognitive means. These representations of working women make assertions about women’s nature and abilities by telling unique stories of female world. As women sought political representation in the nineteenth century, conflicts

over the status of motherhood, wifhood, and the role of women as domestic laborers, experiences of working women outside home became the subject of intense debate.

Feminist representations should point out the possibility of analogous occurrences; they should suggest a feminist world view, raise feminist issues, and encourage women to urge a political organization for women's rights. Literary and artistic representations operate as a feminist praxis in two ways. First, they represent the reaction of people to events which evokes the readers' emotional respond. Toril Moi writes in *Textual/Sexual Politics* that literature has a power to change social expectations by presenting alternative social models for the readers. This is how the representations of working women function as a feminist praxis. Second, fictions and works of art have a potential to tease out the pre-existed knowledge of the readers. The representations of strong heroines, who refuse marriage to work outside home and become successful in the public world, showed the nineteenth century women the possibility of being autonomous, self-determined, and economically independent women in life.

Feminist representations undermine cultural ideologies by refusing literary conventions which denigrate women's capacities and restrict their access to power in the world beyond home. They refuse to rationalize women's inferiority and restrictions when the heroines become successful doctors, writers, businesswoman, etc. They function as feminist praxis by presenting a feminist ideology antithetical to the present male-dominated ideologies. They offer women's adventures beyond home; they advocate the need of increased social and worldly experience; they challenge the hierarchical structure of traditional marriage; they enter the political realm by placing women in the forefront of social reform; and they foster social and economic reform for the women by associating women's restrictions with gender.

One of the main things at issue, in recognizing women's fiction as interpreter and the critique of the nineteenth century culture, is the necessity to acknowledge that women writers that we have selected to study in this thesis intentionally constructed positive and creative representations of capable and successful working women. To this end, we have selected what seems to us to be the representative of the nineteenth century feminist thought concerning the belief in women's being successful in the

working world, and we have not attempted to hide our sympathy with the standpoints of the selected writers in the thesis. We argue that through their constructions of the successful heroines, women writers aimed to turn the feminist theory into praxis by presenting alternative standpoints to the male-dominated nineteenth century female life, because these representations let us look at women as unique individuals, potentially autonomous beings, creating their own destiny, making themselves, struggling with the limitations externally imposed by the nineteenth century male-dominated institutions, norms and practices. Therefore, we argue that the women's fictions that we have selected to analyze in this thesis serve to feminist praxis by offering satisfactory formulations of humanist ideals and female success in the same time.

Dorothy E. Smith writes, "Texts are the primary medium of power" (17). She argues that "women have been largely excluded from the work of producing the forms of thought" but they produced their own knowledge, experience, and interests in the fictional and artistic representations of working women. We interpreted the nineteenth century women's texts through our vision of female competence. Arguing that the nineteenth century radical and reformist women writers portrayed female competence, we read the nineteenth century novels as the means for undermining male hegemony.

Likewise the paintings that are selected to be interpreted in this thesis are selected on the basis of trying to produce positive images of femininity through representing women's working. Through the nineteenth century realist movement, we argue that the female and male artists recognized themselves as the major interpreters of the actual life. It must be underlined that the paintings do not attempt to show the "individuality" of the woman they represented, but her common existence as a worker. The paintings carry crucial importance different from the fiction for they point more directly to the nineteenth century institutionalized sexual division of labor in American society. Since there were not many women who managed to enter into the working world and women's working was not accepted as a common existence in the nineteenth century, it has been very difficult for us to find nineteenth century paintings that represented working women. The lack of working women's representations in the

nineteenth century painting is the proof of working women's exclusion as a subject in American painting as well as in the working world.

It should be noted that all these paintings were produced in the Realist tradition which supported a democratic way of seeing the common people in their everyday tasks. Linda Nochlin argues in *Realism and Tradition in Art*, that realist artists have dreamed of an *epic art* of the ordinary, too. She writes:

Like the artists and the writers who had preceded them, the Realist tried to find some equivalent for their sense of the heroic; yet, unlike artists of the past, they had to embody it in an imagery which would at once be convincingly truthful and unembellished, yet at the same time, create when appropriate, a sense of long-range value and importance (179).

Realists intended to portray the ordinary contemporary life in all its prosaicness. They tended to see an epic side in the modern times just like the heroism of the antiquity. The heroes of the nineteenth century Realism were the modern men and women in the city and in the rural areas in general. They were the "individuals who most seemed to embody the major values of their time and culture" (181).

In Part IV, we are going to exemplify all these ideas by the nineteenth century representations of the working women. Part IV is organized in four sections. The first section examines the relationship between women's role in the marriage and their desire to work outside home. Nineteenth century feminist writers emphasize women's mobility beyond home and advocate worldly experience rather than acceptance of a traditional marriage and female domestic slavery. These writers also attempted to show the readers that marriage is not the only avenue to economic security for the young women. On the contrary, as Susan Strasser writes in *Never Done: A History of American Housework*, "In a society increasingly dominated by money and profit, their [women's] arena—the household—stood apart: full-time housewives earned only their subsistence in food, clothing and shelter, laboring to maintain their families while their menfolk worked for wages to produce profits for business" (180-181). Likewise, Nancy Folbre writes in her essay "The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth Century Economic Thought," that in the nineteenth century there was a

new emphasis on domestic *virtue* rather than domestic *work* (45). She argues that this emphasis on the moral duty of the housewife to provide domestic service to her family “was rooted in genuine fears about the impact of a new emphasis on profits and personal gain” (45). In other words, marriage turned into self-sacrificing domestic labor and exclusion from the nineteenth century market economy for the women.

Rejecting marriage in order to maintain their control over their life, the heroines of the nineteenth century feminist writers pursue women’s careers outside home and claim stronger roles in the society. As Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett write, “these novelists all recognize that wage work will give women new kinds of power in their personal and political relations” (14). In sum, for the nineteenth century feminist writers being a housewife meant economic dependency and the incomplete identity in the industrial order, and as Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon write in “A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Key Word of the U.S. Welfare State,” “those women who aspired to full membership in society would have to distinguish themselves from the housewives in order to construct their independence” (285). Nineteenth century feminist women’s fiction provide evidence that failing to find fulfillment in marriage, American women are unhappy and frustrated. These fictions attempt to show that traditional marriage is a false and dehumanizing ideal to which nineteenth century women were pressed to conform. Thus, remaining single and demanding a divorce to construct one’s independence and autonomy are the two important themes of the nineteenth century feminist fiction that will be explored in the first section of Part IV of the thesis.

The second section of Part IV deals with the jobs for women in the cities. This section consists of the nineteenth century experiences of the female factory workers, domestic servants, teachers, nurses, doctors, journalists, and artists. As Claudia Goldin writes in *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of American Women*, factory work provided freedoms and economic independence to the young women although it consumed nearly their entire day and week (51). Believing that it is their last chance to attain personal and economic independence, the daughters of the farmers go the industrial cities to work in the factories in order to support themselves and at times their families. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps represents a young and poor

factory worker Sip Garth in her novel, *The Silent Partner*, and through her socialist point of view she fosters a reform movement to protect the working-class women from the excesses of factory work. The novel reaches out into the political realm by representing women's restrictions with wage slavery and placing the heroine, Perley Kelso, the partner of the Kelso & Hayles textile factory in the forefront of social reform. Likewise, the nineteenth century painting of American artist Charles Arthur Fries, depicted in *Too Late* (1896), the poor life and vulnerability of a working-class woman who cries for her dead child in order to ferment a political reform movement to ameliorate these working-class people's life.

Professionalization of domestic service in the nineteenth century cities created new social and economic opportunities for the nineteenth century women. Many unskilled poor women could work as domestic servants in the post-bellum era. Louisa May Alcott's novel *Work: A Story of Experience* argued that although domestic service paid very low wages and the tasks lacked dignity and sense of autonomy, it provided young American women with freedom and economic independence. The American women artists, Cecilia Beaux and Lily Martin Spencer, on the other hand, focus on the relationship between domestic service and the issue of class in their pictorial representations of the female domestic servants.

Teaching and nursing are represented as two of the most respectable occupations for the American women in the nineteenth century fiction and art. Louisa May Alcott's novel and Alice Barber Stephens' painting depict socially prestigious teachers. Likewise Samuel Richards' painting of a nineteenth century hospital with nurses thematically goes parallel with Louisa May Alcott's representation of Christie Devon as an ideal dedicated nurse during the American Civil War. In *The Country Doctor*, Sarah Orne Jewett represents a young woman with an unorthodox project of becoming a doctor in the nineteenth century. The debate over female doctors' professional recognition is the main theme of the novel.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' novel, *The Story of Avis*, questions the conventions of the nineteenth century society that intends to confine women to the domestic sphere regardless of their talents or tendencies. The novel explores the psychological conflicts of a talented female artist and her response to her family's demands on her

time and energy. Alice Barber Stephens's painting, *Female Life Class*, represents female art students in their studio studying from the nude to indicate female artistic talent. The painting attempts to challenge the public definition of women's artistic capacity and illustrates the possibilities for female artistic creation through education.

While the third section of Part IV deals with the debate over upper-class women's reluctance to involve in the nineteenth century feminist movements that attempt to legitimize women's work, the fourth and the last section of Part IV illustrates the rural women's contribution to the nineteenth century labor force in the United States. Sarah Orne Jewett's fictions, *Dunnet Landing Stories*, and *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, depict strong and self-supporting female characters. Likewise, Emma Lampert Cooper's painting, *The Breadwinner*, which depicts a spinning woman, stands as a proof that rural women can compete for the breadwinner status in the family. The paintings of Henry Ossawa Tanner, Olof Krans, Carolina Lord, and Dawson Dawson-Watson show that women's contribution to the rural economy should not be underestimated or suppressed.

The novels and the paintings that are interpreted in the thesis, we suggest, recognize themselves as the major interpreters of the cultural, political, and intellectual ideas of the nineteenth century. They emphasize the vitality of emancipator humanist ideals within the western thought. The nineteenth century radical and reformist ideals of equality, female independence, and autonomous self-constituted personality are the targeted goals of these representations.

Nineteenth century was a period in which contradictions between the ideals of femininity and new and emergent representations of working women came to the fore. The nineteenth century women writers offer successful heroines who manage to alter the male-dominated public world with their talents to prove the reader that women are capable and intelligent. Through their literary and artistic representations women show that society has the false belief that women are by nature intellectually and physically less capable than men. They aim to show that division of labor is a policy of exclusion; it excludes women from the academy, politics, and business. The representations that will be analyzed in this thesis give the direct message that because

of the division of labor and the policy of exclusion women's true potential is wasted and goes unfulfilled.

II. GENDERED SPHERES AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FEMALE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

One of the objectives of this thesis is to show that through the literary and artistic representations of the working women, the selected writers and the artists recognized themselves as the major interpreters of the cultural, intellectual and political ideals of the nineteenth century. Therefore, we saw it necessary to explore the roots of the nineteenth century female culture in the theories of the western sociology, philosophy, and psychology. We aimed to search out and expose the prejudiced ideas of the eminent western thinkers on women and their place in the society, because we believe that the selected writers and the artists emphasized the vitality of emancipating feminist ideas against them. We suggest that the nineteenth century feminist ideas of freedom, equality and autonomous self-constituted personality are the goals of these writers. Literary and artistic representations of the working women aimed to destroy the nineteenth century separate spheres doctrine and they wanted to produce positive images of autonomous, self-determined femininity.

The doctrine of the separate spheres, as particularized and clarified in literature, law, medicine, religion, and sociology prescribed that women's personal lives be centered on home, husband, and children. The separation between the male public sphere and the female private sphere deprived women of their economic independence; thus women could find very limited jobs to be performed except the housework. As Freedman and Hellerstein write, "Women at home became, ideally, specialists in emotional and spiritual life, protecting tradition and providing a stable refuge from the harsh, impersonal public sphere that men now entered in increasing numbers" (118). Women gradually became "the angel in the house" and formed a female domestic culture. Patriarchal family structure, religious ideologies, community norms, and political policies all interacted in the formation of the nineteenth century ideal woman image as the domestic angel and servant. The formation of the ideal woman image and economically restricted female culture is a political and institutionally supported phenomenon. The social oppression over women was

reinforced in the written texts of the western thought, and supported by the cultural values. The eighteenth and the nineteenth century intellectual disciplines such as sociology, philosophy and psychology produced knowledge that disempowered women and separated the spheres of men and women. The sociologists Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, and Herbert Spencer; the philosophers Jean Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer, and the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud are some well known examples whose ideas on women will be studied in the following section.

A. Women's Separate Place in the Eighteenth and the Nineteenth Century

Sociology

Male sociologists formulated theories that showed women inferior to men. The eighteenth and the nineteenth century sociology had its power from the patriarchal ideals that supported the separation of the spheres between women and men. The positivist sociologists asserted that the male dominance was the “natural” order of humanity. One of the positivist sociologists whose ideas on women were considerably effective was Auguste Comte. Auguste Comte is known as the founder of sociology and positivism. He was a French philosopher who formed a system offering a basis for political and social organization in modern capitalist society. Auguste Comte envisioned a society in which women remained limited and incapable. As Martha Lee Osborne writes, Comte was convinced that women were biologically and naturally different from men especially in terms of brain capacity. Comte added to sociology the concept of morality (or social psychology), which he regarded as the culmination of his philosophy. According to Osborne,

Of the three main parts of the human brain postulated in Comte's theory—the affective, the active, and the speculative—only the affective portion of woman's brain is superior to that of man. And of the affective part of the brain, the altruistic component is superior in woman, while in man the egoistic component is dominant. Altruism Comte deemed necessary for the salvation of society. Only through the

charms of women and the numbers of the proletariat was there any hope of abating the selfishness of the leaders of capitalist society (252). In his *The Catechism of Positive Religion*, Comte wrote that “deep-seated mental anarchy” of the modern society justified the “appeal of the Positive religion to the affective sex” (253). In this new religion woman was the “representative of the true Great Being” of daily life, and dedicated herself to the wellbeing of society (255). Women were “the true servants of Humanity” and thus “*Man ought to maintain woman*, in order that she may be able to discharge properly her holy function” (256). He believed that “without the due intervention of women, the discipline of Positivism would not succeed” (254).

As a result of his insistence on the necessity of the patriarchal authority, Comte strongly stressed the difference between women and men. Auguste Comte addressed women within their familial role. His positivism was a kind of philosophy of stability based on the family. Comte believed that women became subordinated to men when they married and joined the constitutional family. Their role was to maintain the stability and permanence of the “true” family unit. The scientific reason for women’s inferiority to men after marriage was that her maturation ended in childhood. For him, women were simply the “pampered slaves” (Ollenburger and Moore 2). Thus divorce was denied to them for the same reason. Auguste Comte believed that women could be the guardians of the society with their affective nature which guaranteed the honesty, integrity and morals of the society. The affective mothers and wives could prevent the inhuman excessive applications of industrial capitalism with the new “Positive Religion”. So their duty was to get married and maintain the stability of the family unit for the wellbeing of the society. They were fit for the home not for the social life since they were naturally and scientifically different from men.

Emile Durkheim was another French social scientist of the nineteenth century who is known as the founder of the methodology combining empirical research with sociological theory. Durkheim discussed women in the contexts of marriage and family supporting the necessity of division of labor and the patriarchal authority. In his book of review essays *L'Année Sociologique* he writes that the nature of women and men are different and while men are “social animals,” women are “natural

animals”. He believes that women are fundamentally, inherently, and intrinsically asocial. For him, women are created as mothers and should stay at home to reproduce rather than contradicting with their own nature and working outside home. Besides, for Durkheim providing social stability can be provided by the authority of the patriarchy which confines women to home. Durkheim believes that women have to be subordinated for the sake of society’s permanence and have to be under male authority which includes control over economic resources. Therefore, he clearly opposes women's commitment to working along with men, and he finds it unnecessary to struggle with the sexual division of labor which is imposed by patriarchy.

Herbert Spencer is another important positivist sociologist who was influenced by the nineteenth century scientific data, and fused sociology with evolution theory to form his *positivist organicism*. According to Spencer, individuals within societies, social institutions, and societies themselves evolved from the simple to the complex, “just as a single-cell amoeba evolved into an animal, or a more complex organism” (Ollenburger and Moore 4). In his *organicist* model, all parts function to the benefit of the whole organism and only if all parts work to benefit the whole, does society maintain the equilibrium. Spencer takes women as one part in the society, and theorizes their function first in the family. Women can function to the benefit of the whole society only if they work to integrate the family unit as wives and mothers. Any social action or feminist movement that attempts to eliminate the female oppression in the economic and political arenas will cause disequilibrium and cannot be accepted within his positivist organicism and equilibrium model.

Herbert Spencer was influenced by Social Darwinism in his later writings, and he argues that women should be denied the right to compete for occupations with men. Moreover, he asserts that it is foolish to educate women to compete for business and political careers, because they have smaller brains and weaker bodies than men. For him, women must remain as housewives and mothers all their lives. He even states that, quotes Ollenburger and Moore, “If women comprehended all that is contained in the domestic sphere they would ask no other” (5).

Herbert Spencer’s views prevent women from acting as socially self-determined humans. Women are denied their rights to work and gain economic

independence in the society. Therefore, working has a crucial meaning for the nineteenth century women under the social and cultural effects of these male sociologists.

Sociology inevitably leaked into the general currents of thinking about women's roles and capacities in the nineteenth century American society. We argue that the positivist sociology is a part of the tyrannical history of the patriarchal attempts to confine women into the domestic sphere and exploit their labor at home. The women fiction writers and the artists selected to be analyzed in this thesis aim to destroy the sociology's dominance over American culture and institutions to be treated equally in the law, business, education, family and society.

B. Women's Place in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Philosophical Thought

Eighteenth and nineteenth century philosophy are characterized by *rationality* and the use of *reasoning* in order to clarify the facts of the world. However, the "rational discourse" the philosophers used provided them with the authority of "the rational" and functioned to make the inferior nature of women credible in the eyes of the society through the formulations of knowledge about women's character. Rational discourse rejected emotions when it systematized the nineteenth century political and social issues and the philosophers attributed "emotionality" to women to reject their presence in the political and social issues. Like the nineteenth century sociologists, the eighteenth and the nineteenth century philosophers explained the reasons for the sexual division of labor and the separate spheres doctrine. The ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Arthur Schopenhauer will be discussed in this section.

Jean Jacques Rousseau claims that men and women are basically unlike in physique, in temperament, in behavior, in understanding, and in intellect. He believes that the traits which are characteristic of women are traits that would be considered defects in men. As Martha Lee Osborne writes, he argues that women are weaker than men in character and their weakness leads to irrational temperamental and behavioral differences that are called "feminine." Therefore, Rousseau believes that women and men are created for different functions in life. For him, women are

designed merely to serve as man's helpmate, and men would be the directors of women in the family and society.

Rosemary Agonito calls Jean Jacques Rousseau a "misogynist" and finds his ideas that see women inferior and subordinate beings who should be nurtured for the sole purpose of serving men and providing them with pleasure very cruel. Rousseau argues that women should be restricted to domestic chores and trained to bear their burden as men's helpmate at a very young age so that they will not feel it when they grow up. He writes in *Emilius; or A New System of Education*, "When women complain, however, of this partiality [of the duties between men and women] as unjust, they are in the wrong: this inequality is not of human institution; at least, it is not the effect of prejudice, but of reason" (109). Rousseau argues that women lack the intelligence to have a "liberal education" as men do. For him, women's limited rational capacity is adequate only for her domestic duties such as child bearing and rearing, household tasks, and acting as a helpmate to her husband.

Although Rousseau argued that women's capacity is adequate for her domestic roles, he still insisted on the necessity of the ultimate authority of the father in the home. In *A Discourse on Political Economy* (1755), Rousseau states that the primary function of the family is to "preserve and increase the patrimony of the father" (118). He wrote that there were two reasons why father ought to command in the family. He wrote,

In the first place, the authority ought not to be equally divided between father and mother; the government must be single, and in every division of opinion there must be one preponderant voice to decide. Secondly, however lightly we may regard the disadvantages peculiar to women, yet, as they necessarily occasion intervals of inaction, this is a sufficient reason for excluding them from this supreme authority: for when the balance is perfectly even, a straw is enough to turn the scale (119).

The excerpt suggests that woman's natural role is to preserve and maintain the higher status of the husband in the family. They should be taught to be docile and subservient for the benefit of society.

Another influential thinker is Immanuel Kant who stresses the difference between men and women. For Kant, men are sublime while women are beautiful, and the sublime men contribute rationality and learning whereas the beautiful women contribute taste and pleasantries. This division makes all the efforts of women in life futile in the eyes of society since women's contribution to society is of no use in actual life. Kant argues that "vanity" of women cannot be condemned for it enhances her charm which is the best criterion for a woman. He asserts that women have no sense of duty because they live by feeling, while men live by reason. Therefore, Kant believes that all the education and instruction given a woman should serve to enhance the beauty within her. This view attempts to exclude women from liberal education.

The third western thinker to be studied in this section is Arthur Schopenhauer. Like Rousseau, Schopenhauer also thinks that women are weak, less intelligent than men, and designed solely to bear children. For Schopenhauer women are domestic creatures and they are not designed to work because of their mental and physical incompetence. He argues in "On Women" in *Parerga and Paralipomena*, "you need only look at the way in which she is formed to see that woman is not meant to undergo great labour, whether of the mind or of the body" (212). Schopenhauer designated the very limited works that fit a woman's abilities as follows:

Women are directly fitted for acting as the nurses and teachers of our early childhood by the fact that they are themselves childish, frivolous and short-sighted; in a word, they are big children all their life long—a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the full-grown man, who is man in the strict sense of the word (212).

Schopenhauer believed that women were not rational since they could never become adults in mind. That is why he believed they were short-sighted and childish in their actions. For the same reason, he thought that women cannot work outside home. Schopenhauer believes that the most suitable role for women is motherhood and they are not destined for anything else.

In conclusion, in the western philosophy, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women's abilities in the society were considered to be less than men's abilities. We believe that, through their representations of the successful and strong

working women, the selected writers and the artists of this thesis strived to establish a female self-identity in terms other than the binding norms of the nineteenth century western thought which intervened into the cultural institutions and governed the lives of American women.

C. Psychology and Woman: Sigmund Freud and Women's Penis Envy

In the nineteenth century, psychoanalysis was a very important scientific development which aimed to analyze human psyche in order to define and cure the psychological disorders. The founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, believes that humans are unaware of the reasons for their behaviors and emotions since their motivations are hidden in their subconscious. Human's subconscious factors determine their behaviors, and women's penis envy shapes their behavior in such a way that they eventually become unhappy and dissatisfied individuals in the society.

Lucy Komisar argues that Sigmund Freud is the most dangerous and destructive misogynist of the nineteenth century, because Freud's theory of women's penis envy, Komisar writes, aimed to prevent women's intervening in professional life to become economically independent and politically active. She writes,

Freud's theory of women's inferiority centers around the concept of "penis envy." Freud believed that women were jealous of men because they did not have penises. When a woman said she was unhappy staying at home and doing housework, or frustrated because she could not get a good job, Freud blamed it all on penis envy. Any woman who wanted a career and independence, he explained, was really trying to be a man (66).

Freud explains almost all women's attempts to become powerful and active in the society with this formulation of penis envy and masculinity complex of women. Women's pursuing intellectual and professional goals are explained as women's desire to be men. For Freud, the only true role for women is motherhood, even though due to their masculinity complex, women abuse their son, too. He writes in "Femininity,"

A mother is only brought unlimited satisfaction by her relation to a son.
... A mother can transfer to her son the ambition which she has been obliged to suppress in herself, and she can expect from him the satisfaction of all that has been left over in her of her masculinity complex (80).

Freud asserts that a woman needs a son to whom she can transfer all the ambition she has to suppress in herself. He argues in the same article that women have little sense of justice because of the envy in their mental life, so their demand for justice is the modification of this envy.

Under the light of our study of the nineteenth century sociological, philosophical and psychological thought of the male intellectuals who produced knowledge on women's inferiority, we argue that the representations of the successful working women show a fundamental break from the eighteenth and nineteenth century western positivist thoughts on women. Such representations aimed to reveal that the concepts of "reason" and "truth" were nothing more than a distorted and disguised will-to-power, and the western constructions of the power of reason systematically embodied the priorities of a male-dominated culture in the United States. The power of reason was so oppressive that American women had to revolt against them and started the nineteenth century women's movements. In the next section we will explore the nineteenth century women's endeavors to organize a movement that would guarantee their economic and political independence in the country.

D. Nineteenth Century Women's Movements of Liberation from the Patriarchal Intellectual Disciplines and the Roots of the Liberal Feminist Ideology

All history attests that man has subjected woman to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish gratification, to minister to his sensual pleasures, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort; but never has he desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could to debase and enslave her mind; and now he looks triumphantly on the ruin he has wrought, and says, the being he has thus deeply injured is his inferior.

SARAH MOORE GRIMKE*

It is generally accepted that there were three main feminist reformer movements in the United States in the nineteenth century:

- The Suffragists who struggled for the right of the women to vote.
- The Social Feminists who struggled to free women and men from slavery and from oppressive working conditions.
- The Radical Feminists who demanded dignity, respect, political and economic power for women.

The suffragists argued that women, as the citizens of the United States, had a natural right to vote along with men. They suggested that granting women the right to vote would help purify political corruption. Social Feminists agreed with the suffragists that women should vote but they added to their argument the need for a social reform concerning the economic inequality in the society. The argument of the Radical feminists was based on the concept of equality. Equality in marriage, work place, politics and social life was their main concern. For them, women could make a significant human contribution to the society if they were released from home and allowed to enter the social life, and consequently they could gain respect and dignity they deserved in the society.

* From "Letters on the equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman" which was addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slave Society in 1838. (qtd. in *Voices from Women's Liberation*. p.16).

We argue that the selected writers and the artists that will be studied in this thesis attempt to interpret reformist feminist movements' objectives by adding their unique critique of the gender prejudices in the professional world of nineteenth century America. Accordingly, we believe that the suffragists showed the women writers that women had to struggle for their individual and citizenship rights. The socialist movements showed the women writers the patterns of the systematic discrimination encountered by the nineteenth century women who wanted to have a career outside home. Lastly, the radical feminists urged the women writers to create a successful and strong heroine who is an equal, autonomous, rational, and sociable individual.

We believe that the nineteenth century feminist movements, which stemmed from the reactions against the western thoughts on women's inferiority, and the selected nineteenth century fiction and art works functioned together to fight against women's exclusion from formal education and economic as well as political life, and they aimed to show women ways to break the repressive tyranny of the ideology of the nineteenth century femininity. Since the ideas of the nineteenth century feminist organizations affected the writers and the artists of the time, it is worthwhile to study the ideas of these three reformist groups in the following section.

1. Women's Suffrage Movement and Women's Organizations

Women's suffrage movements started as a consequence of the anti-slavery organizations which were supported by the nineteenth century women activists. Women formed a political organization for women's right to vote after anti-slavery movements, because while continuing working within anti-slavery organizations, some controversies over gender issues arouse and that soon led women to develop an organization for their own cause, and women started to use whatever experience they gained in making a place for themselves for creating their own organizations and specific agendas. Ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment excluded women from vote and made them decide to organize for their own cause. The American Equal Rights Association (AERA) had been formed to further the interests of both blacks and women, but it also supported the Fourteenth Amendment. The abolitionist

activists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone were stunned to see that the male abolitionists, who were their allies of twenty years, had deserted them. The radical Republicans were interested in black male votes but they did not want to bother with female issues. They supported black freedman's right to vote and brought in the Fifteenth Amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State, on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (Salper 8). The word "sex" was missing in the Fifteenth Amendment. As a consequence, Stanton, Anthony, and their supporters left AERA, and in 1869 they formed The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).

NWSA was led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and it accepted only women and opposed the Fifteenth Amendment since it only enfranchised African-American men. The NWSA began to criticize American society with a special focus on the family as the real source of women's inequality in society. Stanton and Anthony argued that marriage, as it existed, was set up to gratify men and disempowered women. They believed that the institution of marriage needed structural reforms regarding women's role and abilities. NWSA acknowledged that the women's rights movement was a complicated and integrated issue which was composed of many separate problems. The right to vote was very important, but the importance of the other matters such as family, marriage, property laws, equality in education, and working opportunities for women were also the important concerns of NWSA.

The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) was a nineteenth century women's organization which accepted men into the organization. Leaders of the AWSA included Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. They gathered together in order to gain civil rights for women and saw the Fifteenth Amendment a positive step in the right direction toward their civil rights. Ellen Carol DuBois writes in *Feminism and Suffrage* that AWSA believed in the importance of activating woman's suffrage within a frame-work of support for the Fifteenth Amendment. They aimed to receive support from Republican and

abolitionist men. Therefore, to strengthen their woman suffrage agenda, they had to sacrifice and avoid all the other issues concerning women.

NWSA and AWSA merged into NAWSA (The National American Woman Suffrage Association) under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. NAWSA fought for the rights of women as workers which soon led to the workers' involvement in socialism within the organization. In conclusion, the suffragists centered their aspirations for equality and power on the demand for the vote. The demand for suffrage represented a much more advanced plan for improving women's position in the society. It meant social power and the clearest possible vision of equality with men. The suffragists knew that women's emancipation was possible only if they moved into the public realm. They believed that if women could work along with men in the public realm, men would be forced to face women as equals.

2. The Social Feminists and Their Struggle to Free Women from the Oppressive Working Conditions

Woman has been the great unpaid laborer of the world, and although within the last two decades a vast number of new employments have been opened to her, statistics prove that in the great majority of these, she is not paid according to the value of the work done, but according to sex.

SUSAN B. ANTHONY *

Social feminists devoted themselves to social reforms for women. Ella Reeve Bloor, who helped to organize a socialist party in Connecticut believed that a socialist party should have tried to make middle-class ladies see "the really vital importance of suffrage to the working women, as a weapon against economic inequality. . . for not the vote alone was important, but its proper use in building a better society" (142). Social feminists were involved in three important issues concerning women's labor. First, they argued that women were segregated into unimportant and low-paying jobs;

* from "Woman: The Great Unpaid Laborer of the World" in *Voices from Women's Liberation*, Comp. and Ed. Leslie B. Tanner. New York: Signet, Mentor & Plume Books, 1971: 42-43.

second, they were paid less than men; and third, their domestic labor was underestimated.

One of the leading social feminists, Florence Kelley, argued that women were segregated into the petty and low-paying jobs even if they had higher education and the talent. Like many women graduates of her time, after her graduation from Cornell University, she could not find a job that was worth her talents in the United States. At last, she started to serve as the head of the National Consumers' League (NCL), which was a lobbying group working for the rights of working American women. She believed that if women won the right to vote, they would win access to the prestigious jobs that required higher education and talent. In "Working Woman's Need of the Ballot" (1900), Kelly wrote, "No one needs all the powers of the fullest citizenship more urgently than the wage-earning woman, and from two different points of view—that of actual money wages and that of her wider needs as a human being and a member of the community" (97). Referring to their extra burdens as mothers and wives, Kelly argued that women worked more and had wider needs than men to possess a well-paying job and right to vote.

Sarah Moore Grimké who was also a social feminist argued that one of the main problems women workers had to face was that women were paid less than men even though they did the same job. She wrote in "On the Condition of Women in the United States" (1837):

A man who is engaged in teaching, can always, I believe, command a higher price for tuition than a woman—even when he teaches the same branches, and is not in any respect superior to the woman. . . . As for example, in tailoring, a man has twice, or three times as much for making a waistcoat or pantaloons as a woman, although the work done by each may be equally good. A woman who goes out to wash, works as hard in proportion as a wood sawyer, or a coal heaver, but she is not generally able to make more than half as much by a day's work (39).

Grimke emphasized the productive labor that women performed in the society and the unjust male-dominated working pattern that paid women less.

Susan B. Anthony wrote in “Woman: The Great Unpaid Laborer of the World” that women were hard workers in the home as well. However, their labor was underestimated and they were not paid for their fulltime job as housewives who cleaned, cooked, baby sat, and fixed the meals for the family. She wrote:

Although woman has performed much of the labor of the world, her industry and economy have been the very means of increasing her degradation. . . . Taught that the fruits of her industry belonged to others, she has seen man enter into every avocation most suitable to her, while she, the uncomplaining drudge of the household, condemned to the severest labor, has been systematically robbed of her earnings, which have gone to build up her master’s power, and she has found herself in the condition of the slave, deprived of the results of her own labor (42).

Anthony believed that domestic labor was women’s contribution to family economy, which was necessary for the existence of the family. She emphasized the importance of women’s domestic role and criticized the social view that saw women’s responsibility for the care of the household and children as the source of women’s professional inadequacy.

3. The Radical Feminists and Their Demand for Dignity

Radical feminists offered a much stronger critique of American society arguing that the female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints blocking women’s entrance to the public world. Radical feminists tried to subvert the present thought on women and women’s role in the social institutions. They opposed the sociological, philosophical, and psychological arguments on women’s inferiority to men. They fought not only for equal civil rights but also for respect and dignity both in the family and in the society.

Radical feminists spoke to people about their views on the laws concerning marriage. The radical feminist Lucretia Mott, for instance, went to the weddings and repeated: “In the true marriage relationship, the independence of the husband and wife is equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal” (Bacon 112).

Marriage was Lucretia Mott's main concern. She wrote in "A Demand for the Political Rights of Women" (1849), that "In marriage there is assumed superiority on the part of the husband, and admitted inferiority with a promise of obedience on the part of the wife" (51). She rejected this inequality within marriage and demonstrated the need for a legal regulation, and she knew that a legal regulation could be achieved only by women's power in the government. She wrote that a woman "asks nothing as favor, but as right; she wants to be acknowledged a moral, responsible being. She is seeking not to be governed by laws in the making of which she has no voice" (51).

The other radical feminists also believed that women's social status was determined by the patriarchal institution of marriage. Marriage was giving superiority to the husband who for the most cases treated his wife brutally. The radical feminist Sarah Moore Grimké wrote in "Relation of Husband and Wife;:"

Man has exercised the most unlimited and brutal power over women, in the peculiar character of husband—a word in most countries synonymous with tyrant. . . . Woman, instead of being elevated by her union with man, which might be expected from an alliance with a superior being, is in reality lowered. She generally loses her individuality, her independent character, her moral being. She becomes absorbed into him, and henceforth is looked at, and acts through the medium of her husband (40).

Jane Elizabeth Jones, similarly addressed to the audience in her "Address to the Women of Ohio" in 1850. She said, "In the relation of marriage she has been ideally annihilated and actually enslaved in all that concerns her personal and pecuniary rights" (55). Likewise, Mary Upton Ferrin said in her "Address to the Judiciary Committee of the Massachusetts Legislature" (1850), "But, says one, 'Women are free.' So likewise are slaves free to submit to the laws and to their masters. 'A married woman is as much the property of her husband, likewise her goods and chattels, as is his horse' says an eminent judge, and he might have added, many of them are treated much worse" (56).

Radical feminists fought for the equality of the sexes. Susan B. Anthony, repeated in her speeches that no special claim should be made for women, but all the barriers to

their advancement should be removed. She said at a Cleveland Woman's Rights Convention in 1853: "But we ought, I think, to claim no more for woman than for man, we ought to put woman on a par with man, not invest her with power, or claim her superiority over her brother. . . . 'Call no man master'—that is a true doctrine" (Bacon 116). This view was also radical because it was implying the superiority and unselfish nature of women.

The most prominent radical feminist was Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935), a sociologist, author, lecturer, and a socialist. She was a leading feminist theoretician in the United States. In 1898, Gilman achieved an international fame with her book, *Women and Economics: The Economic Factor between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*. In this book she condemned the cult of true womanhood. She rejected the notion of the happy housewife as an ideal woman figure. She rejected the idea that domesticity was the essence of female bliss. She argued that childcare, cooking, and cleaning was a waste of energy, talent, and time for women. She argued that the basis of women's independence is economic. Women had to earn money to have voice and power in the society. She said that women's economic independence must be provided within marriage and motherhood. She argued that common humanity shared by men and women was far more important than sexual differences, that the roles of men and women were determined by social environment, not by biology. Therefore, in such an industrial society women would be released from the home, and would be enabled to make a broad human contribution to society. Gilman's chief arguments in this book were rational but very radical to be accepted by all the members of the society.

The feminist writers' ideas on women's liberation and winning the equal social and economic rights with men fostered a practical action of urging young women to get formal education along with men. In order to have the equal social power with men women knew that they had to hold equally prestigious jobs. The need for women's education was accepted by the women and they tried to enter into the colleges, however they were not welcomed immediately. The next section informs us about women's educational endeavors in the post-bellum era.

E. The Need for Women's Education and Their Entrance into the Nineteenth Century Workforce

Nancy Thornborrow and Marrienne Sheldon argue in "Women in the Labor Force," that women had the time and energy for working outside home in the nineteenth century although they had very limited range of professions to choose due to their lack of proper education (7). The limited educational opportunities of nineteenth century women concentrated them in the unskilled "female" labor. Therefore, they expected that a good formal education would soon lead to occupational rewards. Those women who expressed rising aspirations toward nontraditional pursuits, attempted to attend colleges to compete with men in the more prestigious and serious professional world.

The Committee on the College Students write in *The Educated Women: Prospects and Problems* that the fight for women's education progressed very slowly in American history. It was first in the nineteenth century that some women were admitted to the colleges. Nineteenth century seminary schools, then, started to provide an education approaching in quality that of men's colleges. Mount Holyoke which was founded as a seminary, for example, turned into a very successful college for women in the nineteenth century. After this development, some men's colleges started to admit women. Oberlin College, for example, admitted women in 1837. After the middle of the nineteenth century women colleges started to be opened. Elmira, Vassar, Smith, Wellesley, and Brun Mawr were the first women colleges of the United States.

Although women could attain good education in the colleges, they were not admitted to the prestigious professions. As Thornborrow and Sheldon write, "The increasing access of women to secondary and higher education facilitated their entry into teaching, nursing, and clerical work" (199). As Salper writes:

. . . Women who had been to college did not want to return to the economic, intellectual, and social subjugation their mothers had known. So they looked around the country that was "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" for ways to use their talents and to develop potential capacities. A doctor? No, women were not fit for medical school. A Lawyer? Well,

that's not so ladylike, either. A *businessman*? No man would do business with her, so that was out. A Scholar? Women's biological destiny prohibits her from thinking rationally and creatively, so why bother? A politician? A *woman* in Washington? What will happen to our families and children? (9).

Nineteenth century American society identified "two seemingly contradictory visions of women's relation to society: the ideology of domesticity, which gave a woman a sex-specific role to play, primarily in the home; and feminism, which attempted to remove sex-specific limits on women's opportunities and capacities" (Hewitt 21).

In 1851, Harriet Taylor summarized the principal demands of American women who held conventions in the United States in her essay "On the Enfranchisement of Women". The principal demands of women activists in the United States and all over the world, in Harriet Taylor's words, were as follow:

1. *Education* in primary and high schools, universities, medical, legal, and theological institutions.
2. *Partnership* in the labours and gains, risks and remunerations, of productive industry.
3. *A coequal share* in the formation and administration of laws—municipal, state, and national—through legislative assemblies, courts, and executive offices. (Taylor 35).

As conclusion, the binding characteristic of the three nineteenth century reformist feminist movements is their emphasis on women's "otherness." They all reacted against the women's economic and political subordinate position. In a society where men represented the standard, the norm, and the ideal, women would always remain the other/ inferior sex. Nineteenth century feminists and the women writers aimed to change this male-dominant pattern by engaging in the women's entering in economically valuable professions. They wanted to show that women of the nineteenth century wanted to use their energies and talents fully to become active and useful members of their community. The nineteenth century American reformist

feminists believed that the answer to equality was in the economic arrangement, and women's contribution to the decision-making process correlated directly with their value as measured by the outside world. If women could receive the proper education and a valuable profession outside the home and contribute to the family income, they argued, women would have equal authority in the family and society.

This part of the thesis concern to provide background information to gauge the reach of the post-bellum literary and artistic representations' critique of the nineteenth century male-dominated character of the intellectual, economic, and public domains which supported only male experience and aimed to exclude women from the working world. Upon the governing thesis that nineteenth century feminism is the interpreter and the critique of the ideas of the Enlightenment that functioned to emasculate women in the public domains, the next part of the thesis builds a second, related theme. Literary and artistic representations, we suggest, need to be recognized as the major interpreter of the cultural ideas of the nineteenth century. Such an argument has a powerful impact on the ways in which we might understand the character, role and limits of representations of working women in the post-bellum America and their interpretation.

III. REPRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND REALISM

Kendall L. Walton argues that in order to understand the nature of representation we must first understand the role representations have in people's lives, the purposes representations serve, and the nature of the responses of appreciators. Representations produce their own knowledge with an underlying message or a sub-text. Meanings are produced when artists/authors express themselves through representations in art and literature. The readers/audiences incorporate the meanings produced through representations by weaving narratives. This argument takes us to a further question of the nature and the limits of **interpretation** of the literary and artistic texts.

Interpretation of a representation involves finding the relation between a work of art and the artist's intention of representing it. The meanings within a representation can be interpreted in differing ways depending on the purpose of the interpreter. Critical interpretation has a purpose and ideology. The feminist interpretation of the representations, for example, serves to unearth the patriarchal structures within the representations. Our feminist interpretation of the selected works of art and fiction in this thesis attempts to show how the nineteenth century women writers criticized the nineteenth century male-dominated cult of domesticity that restricted women from working outside home, and to show what the nineteenth century American artists thought about working women and to unearth the nineteenth century popular beliefs hidden in the visual images. Moreover, artistic and literary representations of working women in the post bellum era produce images and definitions of what it meant to work in the nineteenth century. Women artists and authors who produced representations of working women helped to give a particular meaning to the idea of women's liberation, too.

A. The Definition of Representation

Making a definition of representation is not simple because representing is not a straightforward process which involves meaning, language, and culture. In his essay “The Work of Representation,” Stuart Hall makes a possible definition of representation. He writes, “Representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people” (15). He argues that meaning is produced and exchanged between the members of a culture through representations. Therefore, representation involves the use of language and images that stand for the objects, events, and the abstract concepts. Representation is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer to* either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events (Hall 17).

Robert A. Sharpe, on the other hand, defines representation in his essay “Representation and Epistemology” as the “translation of *mimesis*” (59). According to his definition, representation involves imitating something existent in the actual life. His mimetic approach to representation offers a direct and transparent relationship of reflection between words and objects. Likewise, Kendall L. Walton writes in *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, that a work of art corresponds with the representation of the real objects and events that are existent in the actual life. Kendall L. Walton believes that representational works of art are generally props in games of make-believe. Although these props are common and similarly used by the artist/author, the differences among these various props need to be seen. They all prescribe their own imaginings, and generate their own fictional truths. Artist/authors direct people’s imaginings by designing props appropriately. Representational arts work like this:

The experience of being “caught up in a story,” emotionally involved in the world of a novel or play or painting, is central to the appreciation of much fiction, and explaining the nature of this experience is an important task for the aesthetician. . . when one is caught up in a story,

one loses touch with reality, temporarily, and actually believes in the fiction (6).

Accordingly, appreciation of paintings and novels is a matter of playing games of make-believe within representations. Representations serve to create fictional truths.

In addition to mimetic approach to representation, some writers argue that representations do not necessarily reflect or imitate. F.R. Ankersmit, for example, argues that a representation is not the imitation of something, but the replacement of something which is absent in the actual world. In his essay, "Political and Historical Representation" he writes, "Representation is a making present (again) of what is absent; or more formally, A is a representation of B when it can take B's place, can function as B's *substitute* or as B's *replacement* in its absence" (70). For him, works of art can represent something that does not exist in the actual life or nature and therefore, a representation does not have to resemble what it represents.

Likewise, T. R. Quigley argues that resemblance is not necessary for representation. In "A Casual Theory of Pictorial Representation", T. R. Quigley argues that "no degree of resemblance is sufficient to establish the requisite relationship of reference" (149). He justifies his argument in three steps. Firstly, resemblance is reflexive whereas representation is irreflexive. (An object resembles itself more than any other thing, but an object does not represent itself, because representation is in a way distinguishable from its object). Second, resemblance is symmetric whereas representation is asymmetric. (Napoleon resembles his portrait as much as the portrait resembles Napoleon. We can say that the portrait represents Napoleon but we cannot say that Napoleon represents the portrait). Third, identical pairs of objects resemble each other whereas one object cannot represent the other. (Twins resemble each other but neither of them represents the other). In this case, Quigley argues that resemblance is not sufficient enough for representation; he says *denotation* "forms the central notion around which an analysis of the relation between a picture and what is depicted is conducted in a way analogous to that of a predicate and what the predicate applies to" (149). Accordingly, in order to represent an object a picture must be a symbol for it, stand for it, and refer to it, or denote it according to

Quigley. For him, the object or event does not have to exist even if it is represented in a work of art.

In his book *Art and Illusion*, the art historian E. H. Gombrich offers a possible strategy for the insufficiency of resemblance that Quigley refers to, and formulates a theory of pictorial representation exploring the relation between the pictorial representations and human perception. He believes that pictorial representations function to create illusions in the eyes of the spectators. He argues that neither observation nor representation actually imitates the real. So what one sees in a painting is not what is out there, but one had already learned to expect. He calls it the “adapted stereotype.” Gombrich writes that,

What a painter inquires into is not the nature of the physical world but the nature of our reactions to it. He is not concerned with causes but with the mechanisms of certain effects. His is a psychological problem—that of conjuring up a convincing image despite the fact that not one individual shade corresponds to what we call “reality” (49).

The artist tries to make the spectator “see” the object s/he expected. In other words, he tries to create an illusion. Thus, the artist cannot transcribe what he sees, as Gombrich writes, “he can only translate it into the terms of his medium” (36).

B. The Limits of Interpretation

Interpretation is structured by both conscious and unconscious preconceptions that determine the way in which an object is seen. There are two sides of interpretation: the writer/artist and the reader/audience. Stuart Hall says that “we give things meaning by how we *represent* them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them” (3). This process of giving meaning to the world we live in is associated with our culture and its shared codes. We may produce the meaning that we intend in various ways within the borders of our culture. Walton calls this “locality of representation” (53), emphasizing the fact that representations function in a more local context; they

function only with reference to a given social context. In other words, a representation may have a make-believe function for one social group but not for another. It needs to be underlined that nineteenth-century representations of working American women function in their own social contexts; because nineteenth-century American women can easily constitute a temporary society in their minds relative to the convincing elements of these representations.

On the other hand, the meaning of a work of art is not in the object itself but is established in the one who receives it. In this case, every act of interpretation is limited by the preconceptions already present in the viewer's mind and therefore there is not necessarily any *correct* interpretation. Meaning is not an objective property of the representations but is relative to the stand point of the interpreter. Therefore, one representation can be interpreted in many differing and even contradicting ways. We argue that an interpreter should have the consciousness of the local context and historical reception of the representations.

According to Robert A. Sharp, the intellectual and cultural capacity of the interpreter to find out the meanings in a representation is the central issue. Representations carry meanings and represent our concepts, ideas and feelings in such a way as to enable others to 'read', decode or interpret their meaning. Sharp argues that we learn from representations, because representations give information and affect our lives in unpredictable ways. He writes, "In interpretation we elicit general themes; the work of art may prove a basis from which we draw wisdom" (62). Accordingly, there is an idea that lies in a representation to be drawn out and interpreted by the reader.

The representations offer people a world which is close to their lives but distant enough to offer an indirect comment. Readers learn the reactions of possible individuals whom they may never actually meet and never existed in the actual life.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress argue that interpretation of a work of art requires a good knowledge of semiotics to reach the *message* and the meanings. In his essay, "The Birth of the Reader," R. S. White defines semiotics as the science of signs and as "an attempt to 'decipher' works of art and literature, to find underlying structures" (244). In this case, any text conveys meaning, and instead of accepting a

text as a written artifact it is more suitable to see a text as a carrier of meanings. There may be infinite numbers of signifiers within a text which speaks to the society through representations. Robert Hodge and Gunher Kress argue that semiotics cannot arrive at a single agreed set of terms and concepts because certain social contexts change the meanings within the representations. Through representations we are forced to access knowledge, and their interpretation requires an awareness of the importance these works have in the lives of people in a certain culture. Kendall L. Walton argues that an interpreter must try to understand the purposes they serve and the means by which they do so.

One of the limits of interpretation is that a text has plural meanings but a reader may be focusing on a particular structure while ignoring the others. R.S. White argues in his article “The Birth of the Reader” that a fictional representation validates certain proposals and the reader is requested by the text to exercise a certain type of cooperation, and it is the reader’s job to find out the meanings and ideas hidden in the representations.

There are simply infinite numbers of readers, and each reader creates a unique text. Readers create meaning from the text by finding what they want to find. Therefore, the meaning of a text depends mostly on the reader’s ability to understand and interpret a representation. Accordingly, each reader places his/her own meanings in the text and that makes them as authoritative as the writer/artist, and this takes the argument to the function of interpretation which will be explored in the following title.

C. The Function of Interpretation

The meanings within a text are unstable. Readers read a text from a need, so while reading their needs and desires operate in their perceiving and interpreting the text. Therefore, interpretation can focus on three fields for R. S. White:

1. The field of availability
2. The field of desiring
3. The field of usefulness.

The field of availability refers to the need for the education and the preconceptions of the reader to understand the meanings and messages. A good education can set the reader's availability of understanding the meanings within the text, whereas some preconceptions can delimit their seeing. The field of desiring helps the readers find the meanings they want to find which can surprise the author or the other readers. The field of usefulness gives a specific momentum to the reader's activity. R. S. White gives the example of an electrician reading a manual for a specific advice about how to solve a technical problem. Moving from this example, it can be said that a woman reader of the nineteenth century may read a novel representing the lives of working women for enjoyment, for escape from her present condition, or for finding future possibilities and role models for her. Interpretation comes from a need and can be transformed into an ideological criticism that examines the oppressive social and political implications of traditions. Through interpretation of the literary and artistic works, one can establish his own meaning.

One of the most important functions of the representations is that it can teach a moral lesson. In his essay, "Moral Tales," R. A. Sharpe writes, "A real human being learns from a representation what he has done wrong" (155). The readers are moved by the fate of fictional characters, and they ask themselves about the significance of this upon their understandings of ethics. Knowing that these characters never existed, it should have been irrational for the readers to react to these characters' fate. However, we all react to the fictional stories. Sharpe explains it as the "passage from the imagined to the actual". He explores three realms in explaining the way readers pass from the actual to the fictional. They are the actual, imagined, and the fictional realms.

The readers are in the actual realm. Everything is actual in the life. However, people often imagine the possibilities within representations. Imagining the possibilities teaches people moral lessons. For instance, they may not drink too much in a party imagining the consequences of walking around drunk. Similarly, they may not drive fast in the neighborhood imagining the possibility of having an accident and killing the neighbor's boy riding on his bicycle. The readers move from the reactions to the actual, to reactions to the imagined, and then they move to reactions to the

fictional. People's reactions to the possibilities imagined in the actual life take them closer to the fictional case. This is how a representation functions in teaching moral lessons for R. A. Sharpe.

There are no limits upon interpretation. Thus, R.A. Sharpe argues in his article "Where Interpretation Stops" that "texts are unreadable" (182). Sharpe emphasizes the "indeterminacy" of a work of art. He says, interpretation of a representation is the eliciting of themes in a work. In other words, we supplement what we see in a representation and what we see sets our function and limits of interpretations.

D. Realist Movements and Realism as a Mode of Representation

It goes without saying that you will not write a good novel unless you possess the sense of reality; but it will be difficult to give you a recipe for calling that sense into being.

Henry James, "The Art of Fiction" (1884)

As a reaction to the idealism of Romanticism, Realism is a mode of representation promising to reveal the objects in an accurate manner. Realism in literature and art, broadly speaking, involves a depiction of the objects which is loyal to their actual appearance without expressive interpretation or idealization. In this section we argue that realism is a mode of representation which can be effectual in conveying knowledge, inducing understanding, cultivating wisdom, and spurring action. Realism as a mode of representation has such an advantage that they become successful in the games of make-believe and the reader may think for a moment that what s/he imagines is true. The writers intentionally enjoy realism's assertion of revealing *the actual* and *the common* within works of art. They even do not avoid using factual figures and events in the fictitious works. Kendall L. Walton writes that realist representations aim to reveal the facts of life. The enormous efforts novelists sometimes expend in researching the settings of their fictions and the historical figures

they use as characters can be explained by their desire to enhance ‘realism’. *Enhancing realism* is a way to strengthen the plausibility of the representations. By blurring the difference between the fact and the fiction, enhancing realism makes the readers believe in the knowledge presented in the representation. Therefore, everything is rational and explainable in the realist works. The realist representations make the readers and the audiences recall the actual figures or events in their own lives. The realist writer/artist borrows from the actual to use in the fictional, and representation, then, becomes a vehicle of evoking existing meanings and values within a culture in which the work is produced.

It needs to be underlined that the works of the many nineteenth century women writers were not accepted as the good examples of literary realism by the male critics who set the parameters of the ideal realist fiction as unity, rationally, and logical motivation for the characters. Since the women writers that we selected to analyze in this thesis aimed to foster the nineteenth century reformist feminist movements, they attempted to criticize the cult of domesticity, female economic dependency, submissiveness and the wife-mother role of the traditional marriage in their fiction. All these themes were considered as deviant, and therefore, the heroines who articulated such reformist thoughts were seen as irrational ill-motivated and bad examples of realist characterization. These novels were labeled as “the fiction with a purpose,” for they had feminist purposes rather than becoming the best examples of the realist tradition. Therefore, we see it necessary to explore the development of the artistic and the literary realism before we discuss realism as a mode of representation in the following title.

1. The Nineteenth Century Realist Movement

a. Realism in Art

The Realist art movement flourished in France in about 1840. The realist artists sought to convey a truthful and objective vision of contemporary life, and therefore they rejected the imaginative and idealized representations. Through direct

observation of the objects and figures of the nineteenth century, the realist artists portrayed scenes from everyday life to foster a real and democratic art.

Gustave Courbet was the name father of the movement, and he was the first artist to self-consciously proclaim and practice the realist aesthetics. Gustave Courbet strongly maintains that painting is an essentially *concrete* art and can only consist of the representation of *real and existing* things. He writes, "It is a completely physical language, the words of which consist of all visible objects; an object which is *abstract*, not visible, non-existent, is not within the realm of painting" (Courbet 35). Imagination in art, for Courbet, consists in knowing how to find the most complete expression of an existing thing, but never in inventing or creating that thing itself.

In "The Realist Manifesto," Courbet sets the principles of realism. Courbet strongly opposed the *idealization* in paintings. Therefore, the realist artists must make the commonplace and contemporary life the focus of their art. For him, "beauty" did not reside in the idealized subject, but in truthfulness to appearances. Any ugly object will be beautiful if it is depicted in a realist manner. For Courbet, Realist artists must have a democratic aesthetic concern, and they should view real scenes from everyday life of "the oppressed" and the commonplace in a frank manner. (Such paintings of Courbet as *Burial at Ornans* (1849) and the *Stone Breakers* (1849) shocked the public and critics with its frank, unadorned factuality with which he depicted humble peasants and laborers in their mundane activities). Realist artists must take their subjects from the contemporary life in which they live. Courbet argues that an *epoch* can only be produced by the artist who lived in it, and only by depicting the contemporary subjects and objects can a realist artist capture the customs, ideas, and appearances of his epoch truly. How to see a realist epoch cannot be taught to the realist artist. It is something to do with the talent of the artist issuing from his own inspiration. Realist artists should abandon allegorical subjects and myth in paintings which are idealized fantastic representations. Realist art should not try to teach a moral lesson, because such paintings are not representations of the actual but the ideal.

In conclusion, Courbet believes in the artist's recording the actual in accordance with his ability to see and represent. He writes, "One must never start out from foregone conclusions, proceeding from synthesis to synthesis, from conclusion

to conclusion. The real artists are those who pick up their age exactly at the point to which it has been carried by preceding times” (35). Courbet’s realism insinuates social realism, for he glorified working men and women in his paintings.

Many artists and writers of the nineteenth century approved the realist manifesto of Courbet, the writer Champfleury (Jules François Félix Husson) for example, praised Courbet’s realist ideals of democratic aspiration and depiction of the common. Champfleury wrote in his letter to George Sand in 1887,

M. Courbet is seditious for having represented in good faith bourgeois, peasants, village women, in natural size. This was the first point against him. No one wants to admit that a stone-breaker is worth a prince: the aristocracy is infuriated to see so many feet of canvas devoted to common people; only sovereigns have the right to be painted full size, with their decorations, their embroideries, and their official faces (Champfleury 39).

Like the nineteenth century writer, Champfleury, the nineteenth century anarchist philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon praised realist aesthetics for it disregarded class hierarchy. He argued in “The Aim of Art” that realism was the revelation of democratic thought which was an inevitable development of the modern age. He believed that realist artists are more successful than the social realist artists in terms of representation methods. He wrote in his article,

Others before Courbet have attempted socialist painting and have not succeeded. This is because it is not enough to desire to do so: one must be an artist. To produce realities once again is nothing: one must make people think; one must touch them, illuminate their consciousness with an ideal that becomes all the more forceful as it disappears from sight (Proudhon 51).

Proudhon appreciated realist technique of close observation of the actual. He believed that only talented realist artists could see and show the complicated nature of modern life. Realist artists could portray not only the appearances but also the problems, customs, and mores of the middle and lower class people. They could portray the humble, the ordinary, the unexceptional, and the unadorned. They could represent the

ignored aspects of modern life and society through scientific observation of material conditions and the mental attitudes of human beings. Moreover, he wrote, “Art has the objective of leading us to the knowledge of ourselves by the revelation of all our thoughts, even the most secret ones, of all our tendencies, of our virtues, of our vices, of our ridiculousness, and in this way it contributes to the development of our dignity, to the perfecting of our being” (51).

b. Realism in Literature

Realism as a literary movement flourished in the 1850s in Europe. It was inspired by the French artist Gustave Courbet and his “Realist Manifesto.” Courbet’s painting style, theory, and philosophy were transferred to the fiction by Champfleury in “Le Réalisme” in 1857. Gustave Flaubert, the Concourt Brothers, Emile Zola, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy were the forerunners of realist fiction in Europe, as were W. D. Howells and Henry James in America.

Howells urged American novelists to confront the new and uncomfortable realities of the modern age. He believed that literature played a major role in encouraging the social and political progress that characterized nineteenth-century life. Progress was achieved by the unification of scientific inquiry and political democracy. Henry James’s “The Art of Fiction” is described by the critics as a realist manifesto since it says that the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it attempts to represent life. Unlike Howells, James emphasizes the author’s function in representing the realities in the realist fiction and asserts that in fiction reality depends not on the truth of the writer’s material but on the strength of his/her sensibility or imagination to represent it realistically. James equates art with life and the realist writer with a historian. Accordingly, among the characteristics of nineteenth-century Realism are,

1. Realists believed that literature must reflect rather than constitute reality.
2. Realism rejected the outworn values of the past in favor of the present.

3. Realist writer depicted the commonplace like a scientist with democratic values. S/he made accurate observation and emphasized detachment and objectivity.
4. Realism reflected tensions that marked Victorian American society in a serious tone. The Realist writer frankly described social relations among both the upper and the lower classes. S/he criticized the social environment and mores.

Literary realism also accepts the principles of *mimesis*, which is a Greek word translated as “imitation” and stands for the method by which a writer imitates the real world around him and conveys a sense of that world to the reader. Erich Auerbach argues that the technical function of the realist representation is to construct the narrative that transmits the sensory environment in which the action takes place. He sets the laws of realist literary representations in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* arguing that imitation of reality is imitation of the sensory experience of life on earth. He says, among the most essential characteristics of this life are its possessing a history, its changing and its developing. Whatever degree of freedom the imitating writer may be granted in his work, s/he cannot be allowed to deprive reality of these characteristics. Erich Auerbach’s principles that a realist writer must fulfill can be summarized as follows:

1. S/he must represent “everyday life,” and while presenting sensory experience he must also deal with the commonplace and common people rather than dealing with upper classes exclusively, which means ignoring the multitudes whose lives form the milieu in which the actions of great men and women take place.
2. S/he must discover ways in which life is treated *seriously* in terms of human and social problems. An accurate representation of reality must involve the writer in dealing with the social, economic, and political issues of her/his day.
3. S/he must convey the tragic complications of life without any moral judgment. S/he should not stress a moral dicta or an “eternal truth” at the expense of exploring the commonplace. A realist novel should neither carry a moral purpose nor emphasize idealism.

It needs to be underlined that Realism flourished as a reaction to sentimentalism and romanticism. Realist writers believed that sentimental and romantic novels did not reflect the modern industrial age.

2. Realism as a Mode of Representation

Verisimilitude is an important struggle in realist writing. Realist writer's quest for verisimilitude while attempting to describe an imaginary place whose contours are artfully shaped serves to maximize representability. In other words, the writer tries to create a fictional world which is like the actual world of experience by reason of verisimilitude.

Plausibility is a related important concept for the realist fiction which involves the reader's recognition of the events, people, and the objects as "true to world". Colin Lyas argues in his essay "Representation in Literature" that there is a structured world prior to the work of the artist, and the artist's job is to make his/her picture resemble the structured world. However, a collection of words in a literary work does not visually resemble any world. Realistic literary works in some ways *match* the world. This notion of matching the world in literary texts has a meaning analogous to the pictorial representation's mirroring the world.

In literary realism there is a correspondence and this makes the work plausible or true to life. Lyas writes that explaining a literary work's relation to the facts can be available only when "it is alleged that what is said in the work corresponds to the facts of the world in the way in which an assertion made in nonliterary contexts is thought to be true if it corresponds to the facts as they really are" (176). However, in the literary work, there is always an implication that there can be no actual persons, events, and things in the world that actually correspond to the persons, events, and things depicted in fiction. So what prevents a realist fiction from being implausible?

According to Lyas, there are three things that create distrust or implausibility in the realist novels: One of them is the fact that readers generally do not suspend their knowledge (176). He maintains that people believe in the laws of probabilities that govern the events in their world. So if they read something that does not correspond to

their belief, they usually do not suspend their knowledge but suspend the reliability of the novel. Second, readers do not like *deus ex machine* solutions to the problems in fiction. If a character is rescued from a misfortune by winning a lottery, for example, the reader may find it too improbable and dislike the novel. Coincidences are difficult to handle in the realist novels for that reason. Third, inconsistency causes implausibility for Lyas. Lack of truth to life can cause inconsistency in fiction. All the events and knowledge must correspond to the laws of logic, physics and human psychology. For example, a mistake in the time sequence in the course of events causes implausibility, or if an ugly woman in one part of the work becomes a thin and beautiful woman in another without there being some connecting story of how this transition was made between the two stages causes implausibility in the fiction.

Lyas's correspondence theory is interested in the match between how things really are in the world and how they are said to be in the literary works. As a result, while everything is explained by the ratio, the coincidences and last minute rescues must be avoided, and sequence of events must conform to what the readers know about the laws of logic, physics, and human behavior in a realist fiction to be plausible.

But why did American people produce realist fiction? It is an important question in order to track the ideology of the realist writing. In his book, *American Literary Realism, Critical Theory and Intellectual Prestige, 1880-1995*, Phillip Barrish points out realism's correlation with a wide range of professional discourses—social-scientific, reformist, juridical, managerial, and others—that were all closely associated with the new middle classes' rise to hegemony in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America. He argues that there is a convergence between literary realism and other emergent discourses and disciplines such as social work, city planning, and anthropology of the nineteenth century (3). Barrish also argues that through such strong discourses literary realism produces forms of power operating within arenas that are not explicitly political. He believes that nineteenth century literary realism tried to produce “an expert observation” which gives the observer mastery over cultural territory (3). This can explain how the relation between literary realism and power works. He writes,

Literary realist works elaborate new forms of intellectual prestige, which are, in various cases, identified with an authorial persona, personified through a fictional character, instantiated in a text's narrating voice, and/or implicitly proffered to readers. Claims to what we might call "realist prestige" exhibit at their center the assertion of a paradoxical relationship—comprising a unique degree of emotional and cognitive intimacy with, yet also controllable distance from—whatever category of experience a given literary work posits as the most recalcitrantly *real*, most intransigently *material*, that life has to offer (Barrish 3).

Accordingly, literary realism is a cultural vehicle of exerting power by using the pre-existing discourse of social sciences and its prestige to create "the most real" in fiction. For instance, realist works position physical suffering, life in the slums, issues of money and gender, people's need for social converse, and the class hierarchies of the nineteenth century American society. They also position linguistic events as regionally marked speech and position aspects of the actual scene as the "most real" in the implicit hierarchies of realness that they set up, which Lyas calls "the realist reality" (3).

Michael Davitt Bell also argues in *The Problem of American Realism: Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea* that nineteenth century realist writers were thought to declare a fact of the material world as a scientist does. Realist writers had the same kind of dignity as the scientists of the day due to their social and psychological inquiry. This prestige gave the realist artist a social power, because what he wrote as corresponding to the actual was accepted by the reader as the reality that the writer inquired for themselves.

However, the prestige of realism is a controversial subject in the nineteenth century literary world for the feminist writers argued that the "prestige" of the realist fiction was but a masculine concept in the nineteenth century. Therefore, as Michael Davitt Bell also writes, nineteenth century male realist writers strove to construct their own writing different from the nineteenth century female writing. Realist writers such as Henry James and W. D. Howells thought women's novels were sentimental and

feminine writings. As Bell argues, they even attempted to link artistic activity (as the opposite of scientific activity) with femininity and created the fiction of “masculine realism” which consisted scientific inquiry and prestige (11). As a result, high realism of late nineteenth-century America created discourses of civilized “manliness” and they were fascinated with “masculinity.”

In the novels that will be examined in this thesis, women writers described the association between women’s work and female power, and they asserted that culture consumes female domestic labor, female work and female power. Therefore, their characters are represented in constant struggle against invisibility and erasure. They wrote female plots in favor of female social and cultural concerns, and they proposed female role models in the novels. This is one of the reasons why women’s writings were despised by the male critics.

Karen Tracey argues that women writers used literature as a means for communicating with each other and as a terrain where women would meet to consolidate. The important thing to be noticed here is that men were aware of the relationship between novel conventions and real life, between fictional characters and real people, and they feared these strong heroines could reflect or inspire a change in female behavior.

We agree that representations of working women has the power to change the nineteenth century people’s social expectations although their works were criticized as being bad examples of the nineteenth century realist fiction by the male writers and the literary critics. The fiction of the women writers offered nineteenth century women radical options and the nineteenth century readers were capable of realizing the messages of these texts. The heroines that the selected writers construct in their fiction learn to value their independence through working outside home and as Susan K. Harris writes in *Nineteenth Century American Women’s Novels*, the nineteenth century women’s fiction emphasized necessity of the female self-reliance to the female readers.

IV. REPRESENTATIONS OF WORKING WOMEN IN AMERICAN ART AND FICTION

Feminist historians argue that women have been left out of history because history is considered only in male-centered terms. Women and their activities have been unrecorded because history asked the questions which focused on the experiences of men. In order to illuminate the areas of historical darkness concerning women's presence, history must include an account of female experience over time, and the concept of the labor history of the nineteenth century as well as the representations of the working American women should be considered under these circumstances. What would working women's history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by the values they define? One way to achieve such a vision and to define the historical roles of working women is to reevaluate history through a feminist perspective.

Gerda Lerner argues in her book, *Creation of Patriarchy*, that recognizing women's historical agency will ultimately radically unsettle historical narratives as they had been written. To recognize women as historical actors, writes Alice K. Harris in *U.S. History as Women's History*, is to introduce into historical work the analysis of gender relations. The work of women's history expands to include the experiences particular to women and experiences that encompass the complex relations between men and women in the domestic and public world. Asking the right questions about how men and women construct meaning for their historical experience, historians now understand that gender itself is socially constructed, a culturally specific system of meanings that "orders the behavior and expectations of work and family, influences the policies adopted by government and industry, and shapes perceptions of equity and justice" (Harris 6).

Traditional interpretations of industry also require refinement according to Linda K. Kerber. Traditional historical accounts are likely to ignore the dependence of early factories on piecework done by women in their homes or on women for their actual labor force. Thus, viewed through women's lenses, the post-bellum era would

be seen very differently in terms of labor history, and if certain roles of women in historical action are excluded in formal history books, this requires an examination of the underpinning ideology of this exclusion, which might be partly possible with a study of women's literary and artistic representations of the working women.

Nineteenth century American women's novels and paintings about working women will be analyzed in this thesis to investigate such themes as (1) the division of labor in the family and in the society, (2) the separate spheres between men and women, and (3) women's marginalization through the post bellum male-dominated cultural values. Through our analysis of the representations of the working women in American women's fiction, we concluded that the women writers that are selected to be studied in this thesis opposed the traditional view that motherhood, wifedom, and housekeeping were all women's destiny. They pointed out that, in the nineteenth century, women who had other ambitions other than to devote themselves to their home and family should be permitted to hold a career outside home. We have categorized three domains in which representations of working women carried out the themes we counted above; they are marriage, the city and its reflection on the representations of the working women, and finally the role of women's labor in the contribution of the rural economy of nineteenth century United States.

A. Marriage and the Nineteenth Century Women's Struggle to Work

"Damn it!" cried Beverly, "this steak is as thin as a plate and burnt to a cinder. Patience, I do wish you'd give some of your attention to housekeeping and less to books. It is your place to see that things are properly cooked"

From Patience Sparhawk and Her Times

Her father, who had also been a manufacturer, had often said it had been a mistake that she was a girl instead of a boy. Such executive ability of hers is often wasted in a more contracted

sphere of women, and is apt to be more a disadvantage than a help.

From "Tom's Husband"

The mighty business of female life is to please, and [she is] restrained from entering into more important concerns by political and civil oppression.

From *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

The nineteenth century feminist women's fiction that will be studied in this section implies that being a housewife cannot be a good career for the women who desire to find a useful role for themselves outside the domestic circle. Therefore, the post-bellum nineteenth century feminist fictions placed most emphasis on the feminine desire to find a useful career outside the home and they attempted to show the nineteenth century readers that it was necessary to provide additional and useful outlets for feminine energies within marriage.

Judith Rowbotham writes in *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*, that nineteenth century women's fiction aimed to show that marriage creates division of spheres of competence between the sexes. She argues that feminine competence was equated with shouldering the burdens of sustaining the domestic sphere before anything else (222). In other words, the nineteenth century notion of "feminine competence" indicates feminine self-sacrifice and is a masculine-inspired attempt to limit the scope of feminine ambition of having a career other than marriage.

We are going to explore three feminist attitudes that the nineteenth century post-bellum women's fiction reflected as a challenge to the nineteenth century marriage institution. The first feminist attitude is showing that gender roles within the traditional marriages are determined by the vocational statuses of the parts. Accordingly, in the traditional marriages, wives are isolated and confined into the home by working as a housewife while the husbands worked for a paid job in the public sphere. The nineteenth century feminist writers believed that this division of

labor created the nineteenth century separation of the spheres and the gender roles. Therefore, they attempted to convince their readers that if the traditional roles of the wife and the husband were changed, the male-dominated ideology of the separate spheres and division of labor would then disfavor the husbands in the marriage. Sarah Orne Jewett's short story "Tom's Husband" can be given as an example to this type of fiction which explains the housewife's frustration in a humorous way by changing the roles of the husband and the wife in the story. The story reveals the nineteenth century demand that women should, along with men, enjoy the human task and responsibility of making themselves. The story is a protest on behalf of the denied rights of housewives. According to the story the women who are confined into the home during the day get tired and bored with the household burdens. They need to get socialized with their husbands. However, working outside during the day, the husbands also get tired and all they want is to relax in a quiet atmosphere when they arrive home. Moreover, they are not interested in the *female subjects*. As a consequence, when women cannot communicate with their husbands they develop neurasthenic symptoms and show emotional instability due to their confinement into the home. Whether such emotional instabilities are originated in the *feminine nature* or in the fact that women are isolated at home was the most crucial question in Sarah Orne Jewett's story.

Sarah Orne Jewett's short story, "Tom's Husband" answers this question in a humorous way by changing the roles of the wife and the husband in the family to prove that if the husband did the domestic chores and the wife worked outside home the husband would be the one who is frustrated. In the story the reader is reminded that the talented women are wasted in marriages. Mary Dunn is a talented young woman. In the story Mary Dunn marries Tom Wilson. However, as the title suggests, Mary is "too independent and self-reliant for a wife; it would seem at first thought that she needed a wife herself more than she did a husband" (614). Jewett writes,

Someone once said that it was a great pity that she had not been obliged to work for her living, for she had inherited a most common business talent, and, without being disreputably keen at a bargain, her insight into the practical working of affairs was very clear and far-reaching. Her father, who had also been a manufacturer, like Tom's,

had often said it had been a mistake that she was a girl instead of a boy. Such executive ability of hers is often wasted in a more contracted sphere of women, and is apt to be more a disadvantage than a help (614).

From the very beginning, the story states that Mary is more talented than her husband Tom in business. Tom Wilson, on the other hand, is not a typical man for he appreciates and likes his wife's virility. "Most men like best the women whose natures cling and appeal to theirs for protection. But, Tom Wilson, while he did not wished to be protected himself, liked these very qualities in his wife which would have displeased some other men" (614).

One day, Mary confesses that she hates her role as a housekeeper. She says "I hate keeping house,—I always did; and I never did so much of it in all my life put together as I have since I have been married. . . I don't believe I keep this house half so well as you did before I came here" (616). Tom answers heartily, "I've a great mind to take it off from your hands. I always rather liked it, to tell the truth, and I ought to be a better housekeeper,—I have been at it for five years; though housekeeping for one is different from what it is for two, and one of them a woman" (617). Upon this sincere confession, Mary cannot wait to say,

'Tom! I'm going to propose something to you. I wish you would really do as you said, and take all the home affairs under your care, and let me start the mill. I am certain I could manage it. Of course I should get people who understood the thing to teach me. I believe I was made for it; I should like it above all things. And this is what I will do: I will bear the cost of starting it, myself,—I think I have money enough, or can get it; and if I have not put affairs in the right trim at the end of a year I will stop, and you may make some other arrangement. If I have, you and your mother and sister can pay me back' (617).

Mary proposes the deal, knowing that Tom does not like running the factory, and he confesses that he lacks the business skills that his wife possesses. Besides, "He was a good deal of an idler in the world" (614). Although Mary's proposal seems to be the most convenient one because Tom was thinking to close the factory, he hesitates about

his new role and he indignantly says, “So I am going to be the wife, and you the husband, at least, that is what people will say” (617). The conversation between the wife and the husband gets nervous as Tom says,

‘You think you can do more work in a day than I can do in three. Do you know that you must go to town to buy cotton? And do you know there are a thousand things about it that you don’t know?’

‘And never will?’ said Mary with perfect good humor. ‘Why, Tom, I can learn as well as you, and a good deal better, for I like business, and you don’t. You forget that I was always father’s right-hand man after I was a dozen years old, and that you have to let me invest my money and some of your own, and I haven’t made a blunder yet’ (618).

Tom is in love with Mary and he likes her being so self-confident. He thinks his wife has never looked so beautiful and so happy after this argument. He says, “Women think they can do everything better than men in these days, but I’m the first man, apparently, who has wished he were a woman” (618).

The story gives the message to the readers that the female culture and the male culture are not natural; they are artificial creations of the male-dominated nineteenth century life. This artificial split between the defined female and male nature has nothing to do with the true potential of both sexes. The story accurately argues that the male culture and the female culture are social definitions; they are abstractions that split the human personality into masculine and feminine. The man is born to be a male and he is taught to repress his “female” self, and the woman is born to be a female and she is taught to repress her “male” self and develop only those parts of herself that will make her a “true woman” to fit into the submissive domestic female culture.

Mary works very hard for the next two years in the factory. She looks pale and thin, but she is very happy. She proves her talent and success, and soon gains the respect of the other businessmen. At the end of the second year she even declares a small dividend with great pride and triumph. She makes money faster than the other people in business and has a good fortune at the end of the third year.

As for Tom, at first he enjoys his leisure time and starts to collect coins and medals and often goes to the city in pursuit of such treasures. He gains “much renown

in certain quarters as a numismatologist of great skill and experience” (622). But at last, his house suddenly becomes a great care to him. When his old helper Catherine and his niece Susan cannot help him in housekeeping, he feels exhausted and desperate. The role of an idle man changes into the negligent housewife in the end as Jewett writes,

His wife would not have liked to say so, but it seemed to her that Tom was growing fussy about the house affairs, and took more notice of those minor details than he used. She wished more than once, when she was tired, that he would not talk so much about the housekeeping; he seemed sometimes to have no other thought (622).

In the early days of her business life, Mary consults her husband on every subject of importance, but later “it had speedily proved to be a formality” (622). Tom shows interest in her business although he is not interested, and little by little, Mary ceases to talk about her affairs. As Jewett writes, “She said that she liked to drop business when she came home in the evening; and at last she fell into the habit of taking a nap on the library sofa, while Tom, who could not use his eyes much by lamp-light, sat smoking or in utter idleness before the fire” (622). In time, Mary’s behavior makes Tom feel like a sort of pensioner and dependent. Sarah Orne Jewett aims to show the reader with Tom’s turning into a stereotypical housewife image, that the nature of housework turns a woman or a man into an unhappy creature at the end, while working outside home makes one self-confident and ignorant of unimportant details of household tasks. At the end of the story Mary meets her old school mate and her husband; she first takes them to the factory and then invites them to dinner without asking Tom. One of the most ironic and humorous parts of the story is Tom’s reaction, as Jewett writes,

Tom greeted them cordially, and manifested his usual graceful hospitality; but the minute he saw his wife alone he said in a plaintive tone of rebuke, ‘I should think you might have remembered that the servants are unusually busy to-day. I do wish you would take a little interest in things at home. The women have been washing, and I’m sure I don’t know what sort of a dinner we can give your friends. I wish

you had thought to bring home some steak. I have been busy myself, and couldn't go down to the village. I thought we would only have a lunch.'

Mary was hungry, but she said nothing, except that it would be alright,—she didn't mind; and perhaps they could have some canned soup (624).

In its sub-text, Sarah Orne Jewett's story shows that men, having less interest in household management, find that marriage relieves them of domestic responsibilities while supplying them with a respectable family life. By exchanging the familial roles in the story, Jewett reveals a very radical message arguing that the patterns of dependency, love and duty to family within marriage are not the real source of women's oppression, but the sexual division of labor. Sexual division of labor is institutionalized in the nineteenth century family structure. Jewett's exchange of the roles of the husband and the wife introduces a new family project in which each partner provides skills and interests that the other may lack. Such a family project is very radical, for it preserves the equality of the relationship.

At last Tom feels that he has made a fool of himself by accepting to become the housewife of the relation while Mary ignores his domestic labor and enjoys her social life and economic independence. Although Mary buys presents to Tom whenever she goes to the city, Tom still feels uncomfortable, and like other nineteenth century housewives, he also shows neurasthenic symptoms due to his depressive role. Jewett describes his condition as follows,

Somehow he had an uneasy suspicion that she could get along pretty well without him when it came to the deeper wishes and hopes of her life, and that her most important concerns were all matters in which he had no share. He seemed to himself to have merged his life in his wife's; he lost his interests in things outside the house and grounds; he felt himself fast growing rusty and behind the times, and to have somehow missed a good deal in life; he had a suspicion that he was a failure. One day the thought rushed over him that his had been almost exactly the experience of most women, and he wondered if it really

was any more disappointing and ignominious to him than it was to women themselves. 'Some of them may be contended with it,' he said to himself, soberly. 'People think women are designed for such careers by nature, but I don't know why I ever made such a fool of myself' (624).

The story proves that household tasks' repetitive and routine nature makes the person who is responsible for housekeeping exhausted. The domestic commitment turns people into asocial "rusty" individuals who lose contact with the actual life outside home. Jewett humorously shows in this story that regardless of gender, housekeeping as full time work suffocates any person. The story does not assert that the family is the source of all oppression of women, but it aims to show that it perpetuates unequal patterns for women and men. Thus, the story ends with Tom's leaving home to spend the winter with his mother in Europe. He leaves home for six months to escape from the stifling life with his husband, Mary.

The second type of fiction that aims to challenge the female readers' expectations about marriage represents heroines who refuse the prosperous and luxurious life by refusing a rich man and prefer to remain unmarried and independent to have a career. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, to give an example, creates a young female character in her short story "My Poor Aunt" who has to struggle against her family to convince them that she has to work to lead a respectful life rather than to get married. In the story Gilman questions, in our view, the basis of nineteenth century traditional view that marriage is the best career for a young woman, in the economic, cultural and political facts of the nineteenth century society.

The story begins with the discussion between Mrs. Bennet and her daughter Miss Bennet on the necessity of getting married. Mrs. Bennet has invested almost all her life and money in her daughter's future which was equated with a good marriage with a rich man. She believes preparing her daughter for a marriage is the duty of the mothers. Therefore, she is stunned to hear that her daughter does not even care if she is never married, for she wants to earn her own living to win her freedom. The story offers a new struggle to its readers when Mrs. Bennet brings Mr. James home as a candidate for a husband to Miss Bennet.

In the story, Mr. James is represented as a good speaker, and as soon as he is introduced to Miss Bennet, he starts to explain his formulation of marriage which, he believes, has “three sides” that makes marriage *a must*, not an option, for a young woman. The story develops as follows:

‘Miss Bennet,’ said he, ‘as I understand this question, it has three sides: first, the economic; second, the dutiful; third, the affectionate. On the economic side the case is invincible. You are at present—if you will pardon me—of limited means, and show no special talents or capacity for adding to them. I do not mean that you are not possessed of feminine qualities and personal charms attractive in the last degree; but, for fighting the cold and cruel world, you have no better equipment than the majority of your sex. Here is a position offered you in which you can obtain all the necessities, most of the comforts and some of the luxuries of life, by no exertion save of those feminine qualities and charms above mentioned. The position is lucrative, and, in every sense of the word, honorable!’ (162).

Mr. James reminds the young woman that she does not have the same opportunities as a young man does in the society. She has “feminine qualities,” which confines her to home and makes her economically dependent on a husband, and he has “masculine qualities,” which provides him with a social life of economic independence and the honor to donate to a wife. The excerpt also signifies women’s lack of educational opportunities in the nineteenth century. She is reminded that she has “limited means” and “no special talents or capacity for adding to them”. She cannot receive the right education to improve her capacities and talents to compete with the male members of the society. She is in a hopeless situation in the eyes of Mr. James, who believes that she is convicted to get married by nature of her gender. Miss Bennet listens to Mr. James’s formulations with aversion and wishes to have a brother “who would throw this man out of the house” (162), which, she soon realizes, indicates her physical weakness as a woman and doubles her displeasure. Meanwhile, Mr. James calmly passes to the second “side” of his projected marriage, which is the need of an ultimate male authority in the marriage. The husband’s role as the breadwinner and the

protector of his family, in Mr. James's view, makes it necessary that the wife submissively adopts her domestic role to contribute to the unity of the family. While Miss Bennet starts getting tired of Mr. James's speech, Mr. James attempts to strengthen his ideas:

‘At best it is an uncertain and precarious life for a woman to face the world alone—especially a young and handsome woman; but in the holy estate of matrimony you are sheltered, protected, provided for, made happy. Marriage, of course, is woman's true career. I understand the gentleman who asks your hand to be possessed of ample means, and therefore fully qualified to fulfill his share of the engagement’ (162).

Mr. James reminds Miss Bennet of the nineteenth century popular view on the necessity of marriage. The story shows that many nineteenth century women are denied access to the more satisfying careers outside home and find the economic security of marriage the logical choice. However, they are not aware of the fact that women become the property of their husbands and possess no economic rights of their own. Mr. James's assertion that marriage is a woman's true career reflects the nineteenth century institutionalized sexual division of labor which turns women into slaves of free labor under marriage.

Miss Bennet looks at her mother to see if she is also offended with Mr. James's explanations on the nature of women's dependence on the husbands in the marriage. She is astonished to see that her mother agrees with Mr. James and nods her head to her aunt in a happy assent. Moreover, her mother glances triumphantly at Miss Bennet “as much as to say, ‘You never can withstand this!’” (162).

Miss Bennet rises to her feet with anger, because “this man's insulting eyes and tones and manner, his evident assurance of overruling in this easy way, his complacent air of success” are all enough to make her restless. She says she is a reasonable being and legally of age. She says she will never accept a loveless marriage and claim her right as an individual, leave the house tomorrow to earn her own living. The story continues with a burst of applause coming from the open hall door. This is her Aunt Kate whom she never saw before. She learns that Aunt Kate is the owner and editor of *Nebraska Morning Star*. She congratulates Miss Bennet for

her decisiveness and offers her assistant editorship in the newspaper with a very reasonable salary for an inexperienced young woman. Miss Bennet accepts her offer with pleasure and gratitude and soon learns that Mr. James also works for Aunt Kate and was sent to fool Mrs. Bennet and to test Miss Bennet's strength to withstand marrying a rich man for the sake of an independent life. The story aims to produce a positive image of autonomous and self-determining femininity. The story emphasizes, by Aunt Kate's conferring on Miss Bennet a good career in her newspaper, the value of the autonomous and self-constituted personality arguing that nineteenth century young women should begin to establish their self-identity in terms other than the binding norms of the nineteenth century male-dominated culture. If they manage to struggle against this cultural structure they can become successful in life, they will be rewarded by the numerous alternatives in life to govern their own lives.

The last type of fiction that aims to challenge the readers' expectations on the necessity of marriage involves the married women's rebellion against the domestic burdens and their demand for divorce for the sake of having a career outside home. In Gertrude Atherton's novel, *Patience Sparhawk and Her Times*, for example, a young and intelligent woman is presented as one of those young women who struggles for her individual success and independence within marriage, and decides to get divorced for she finds out that her husband never permits her to work outside home.

Gertrude Arherton's novel stresses the themes of women's isolation within marriage, the tyranny of men in the society in relation to women's familial roles, and the husbands' abuse of power over their wives. Upon realizing that her life as a married woman prevents her from exploring the world and from determining the shape her own life, Patience Sparhawk seeks a broader definition of herself than her marriage offers her. Becoming a newspaper compositor is her dream since childhood, and she decides to fulfill her desire to become an individual successful working woman.

In the novel Patience can never become the ideal wife to her husband because of her craving to work as a newspaper compositor. When her husband overtly forbids her to work outside home, Patience's life becomes more and more unpleasant every day. The novel suggests that a woman's freedom to choose among alternative life

styles is an important predictor of happiness in marriage. Marriages can be happier for the wives if they participate in the labor force (from choice not out of economic necessity). The novel examines the inevitable intersection of the domestic sphere with the public realm through representing a heroine who is moved to contest the limits of her domestic sphere within her marriage. The novel clearly illustrates that the nineteenth century married women, who felt isolated and useless in their domestic life and who felt the need to take action to work outside home, faced severe limits on acceptable behavior for married women.

Patience's move into professionalism can be achieved only when she leaves her husband and home in the novel, at the expense of losing her chance to have a family. In fact, the novel does not actively and consciously preach the female readers on the necessity of reaching beyond marriage for self definition, but the novel overtly questions the restrictions of the conventional marriages and the male-dominated culture that disapproves of married women's work.

Patience understands that the only way to escape from her debilitating domestic life with meaninglessly routine household duties is to get divorced. Making such a radical decision to end her marriage, Patience feels strong and independent again. However, as it is seen in the novel, getting divorced is an option only offered to men in the nineteenth century. She contemplates in the novel as follows,

Why does a woman hesitate long before she leaves the man who has made life shocking to her? Indolence, abhorrence of scandal, shame to confess that she has made a failure of her life, above all, lack private fortune and the uncertainty of self-support. For whatever the so-called advanced woman may preach, woman has in her the instinct of dependence on man, transmitted through the ages, and a sexual horror of the arena (239).

It is seen in the excerpt that, Patience hesitates before making her final decision to get divorced. One of her fears stems from the probability of the society's disapproval of her desire to divorce, which is seen immoral in the codes of the nineteenth century culture. Her hesitation in the novel shows us that Gertrude Atherton supports the radical feminist argument that the nineteenth century agreement on the female moral

superiority and obligations is but a social contract which is part of the strategy to confine women into the domestic life of marriage. The novel shows that in addition to the moral restrictions, the economic dependence of the wife on the husband also prevents married women from thinking of getting a divorce.

In Gertrude Atherton's novel, the married heroine learns to value independence while marriage terminates the adventures of many nineteenth century married women in actual life. The novel puts emphasis on the importance of female self-reliance to guide the female readers. By permitting her heroine to triumph over her husband, Atherton advocates independence over dependence suggesting that it is better to get divorced than to accept subordination. Patience says to her husband,

‘Give me my freedom, and look about you for a doll—’

‘Do you mean to say that you want a divorce?’

‘I think you know just how much I do.’

‘Well, you won't get it—by God! Do you understand that? You've no cause, and you'll not get any’ (292-93).

Gertrude fosters a political action in the novel through her representation of Patience, a young married woman who wants to get divorced. Patience points out the need of a legal regulation that will provide recourse with the wife in the novel saying: “There should be a law made for women who—who—well, like myself” (293). The novel is important for it both shows divorce as an alternative way to female emancipation and fosters a political action concerning women's rights.

Although getting divorced is a radical action for nineteenth century society, nineteenth century radical feminists emphasized the necessity of divorce for the emancipation of women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example, was a very influential nineteenth century feminist figure who lectured middle-class women on the benefits and necessities of divorce for several times. It needs to be underlined that many nineteenth century “career women” actually got divorced before they became individually independent and successful female figures in American history. The woman doctor Clemence Lozier, the woman journalist Eleanor Kirk and Sarah Norton, the business woman Ellen Louise Demorest were all pioneering career women

who got divorced in the actual life and set examples for the women's novels. Gertrude Atherton's novel is one of them.

The novel shows that getting divorced is a shameful event for a woman in the nineteenth century, because women's virtue consists of passivity, obedience to the husband a legitimate external authority, and self-abnegation. By being resolute to get divorced, Patience questions the society's power structures. The novel, therefore, attempts to undermine the nineteenth century cultural ideology to show that the desire to get divorce is an acceptable female behavior. We argue that the novel posits an alternative to the nineteenth century conventional female roles. The novel is a revolutionary female scripture for it valorizes divorce as the goal of a self-reliant woman's life.

In sum, in the post-bellum feminist fiction dealing with the concept of marriage we observe three themes concerning women's working outside home. One of them is the theme that woman's housewife role confines her into the home while man's breadwinner husband role makes him a social individual. The second important theme is the necessity of staying single in order to have a career rather than becoming a housewife. The third feminist theme that the post-bellum women's fiction reveals to the readers is the advice that women should get divorced if their husbands do not allow them to have a career outside home. All these female fictions aim to challenge the female readers' expectations about the gender roles and marriage.

The nineteenth century paintings that deal with American married women's life, on the other hand, consist of only two themes: the isolation of women within marriage and the unpaid domestic labor of the wives. The post-bellum nineteenth century paintings that represented married women usually displayed the housewife as a lonely and isolated woman. The representations of the housewife in the realist painting stressed the themes of quietness in the atmosphere and the depressed mood of the domestic woman.

The nineteenth century social values that dictated the absence of paid work for the married women enforced the idleness at home. Kathleen Gerson writes in *Hard Choices: How Women Decide about Work, Career, and Motherhood* that even the women with traditional baselines would not expect a life defined exclusively by

housework or motherhood in marriage. Women's confinement into the domestic sphere and the routine household drudgery causes her to feel herself useless. Kathleen Gerson writes that "Boredom, a sense of isolation and exclusion, and a lack of direction or purpose were common reactions [of these women] to domesticity" (77). Such women often developed *neurasthenic symptoms* including chronic fatigue, sleep disturbances, and persistent aches, often linked with depression in the nineteenth century. They lay abed daily, depressed and tearful, refusing to cope with household tasks. The nineteenth century American female artist Cora Parker represents a young woman who seems to be frustrated in *Candle Light*.



Painting 1:

Cora Parker, *Candlelight*, 1899.*

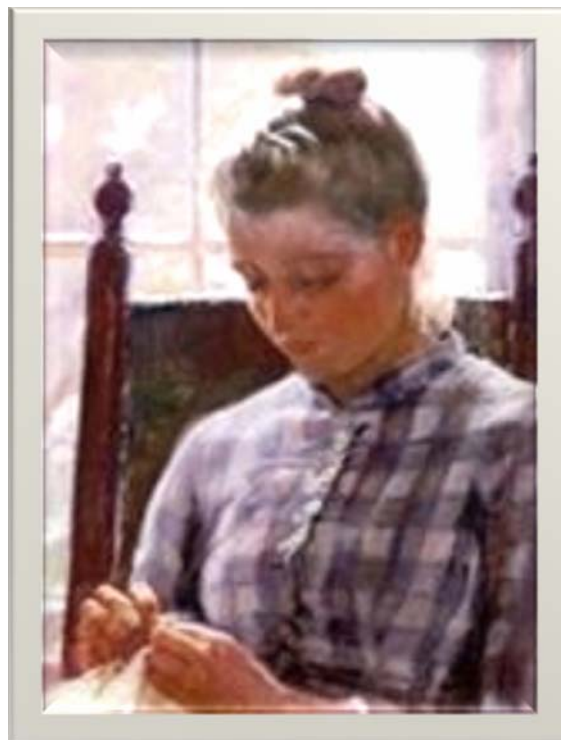
* Larger copies of the paintings are provided in The Appendix: The Color Plates, p.170.

The woman in the painting looks weary and disappointed; she sits in the dark alone watching the candle light with a desperate face. She looks as if she is imprisoned into her domestic sphere, which is not what she has expected. The painting reminds us of Simone de Beauvoir's ideas on the nature of marriage she reveals in *The Second Sex*; "The tragedy of marriage is not that it fails to assure woman the promised happiness—there is no such thing as assurance in regard to happiness—but that it mutilates her; it dooms her to repetition and routine" (478). Deborah L. Madsen argues that organization of the women's life in the patriarchal system of capitalism oppresses, exploits, and destructs female members of the society, but especially the organization of motherhood which confines women into the house with the children deprives her of communal activity and causes women's loss of self, because lack of communal activity prevents women's building a relational self definition and their sense of individuality.

Thus, Charlotte Perkins Gilman was one of the most prominent nineteenth century feminist writers who argued in her political and literary writings that single or married, young or middle-aged, all women needed to work outside home. For her, middle class women's emancipation could be achieved only if the domestic work was professionalized. She believed that the traditional household works had to be reorganized in accordance with the needs of working women with professional services such as catering, cleaning, and nursery. Gilman argued that women who stayed at home were unproductive; their labor was not paid and what they did was therefore invaluable, inefficient and useless in the economic sense. She also accepted working outside the home an act of social interchange because working was not an individual process but a collective one. For her, economic independence was not simply a matter of income-producing labor or autonomy, but it was having one's place in the collective effort of social economics. Accordingly, women's domestic labor could not be accepted as "work," and it could not alter her state of dependence on the husband. So women needed wage-work for the achievement of a free, encouraging, mutually helpful relationship in which women could help the society without denying or sacrificing themselves. For Gilman and many other nineteenth century middle-class

feminists, men and women should be humanly related and work together for the common good of all.

However, although they believed in the necessity of working outside home, many middle-class women could not work outside home. As Margaret L. Andersen puts it, in the post bellum era the idle housewife became a symbol of middle-class prosperity. If a woman worked, it was thought that she needed the money to support her family and this would risk her social prestige. The nineteenth-century middle-class family was based on a clearly defined division of labor between husband and wife. The gendered division of labor was guaranteed by the cultural concepts of “masculinity” and “femininity”. Barbara Epstein writes, “A man’s ability to support his wife and children adequately was central to the nineteenth-century middle-class notion of masculinity, and the corresponding notion of femininity revolved around a woman’s



Painting 2:

Ellen Day Hale, *June*, 1893.

reliance on her husband’s support” (119). The husband was the head of the household and responsible for the economic support of the family whereas the wife was

responsible for the housekeeping and reproduction. However, women's domestic role as a housewife/mother meant desperate dullness and restraint, utter paralysis, and mere nullity as it is illustrated in Cora Parker's painting.

In the next painting by Ellen Day Hale, we see a young housewife who seems to sit alone in her house. The quiet atmosphere of the painting attempts to show that the woman is isolated and occupied with sewing in front of the window.

The painting illustrates that almost all the household tasks require woman's isolation. Sewing is a routine task of patience, and the woman's head bends down to the cloth and the needle with concentration. This woman is represented as submissive, forbearing, quiet, and serene; she is represented as an ideal nineteenth century housewife. The asocial nature of household drudgery is stressed in the tranquil atmosphere of the painting.

Nineteenth century housewife's isolation is the theme of Edward Lamson Henry's painting, *Afternoon Quiet*, too. Like the woman figure of Ellen Day Hay, this woman is embroidering in front of the window. She continues her domestic work while the baby sleeps next to her. The woman seems comfortable and satisfied for her facial gesture does not give any clue of her feeling frustrated or depressed as the female figure of Cora Parker's painting. Instead, this woman just tries to keep quiet not to awaken the baby while doing her domestic work. The painting has the same manner with the nineteenth century sentimental novels that end happily when the heroine marries and gives up any idea of autonomy. However, as Cora Parker's painting asserts, the implications of the nineteenth century ideal womanhood are painfully repressive for the individual. The housewife/mother is isolated, kept in silence and dependency. The painting depicts female oppression with an image of ideal womanhood.



Painting 3:

Edward Lamson Henry, *Afternoon Quiet*, n.d.

The title of the painting suggests the stagnancy of the afternoon hours and the emotional and physical isolation of the woman who is pictured alone next to the sleeping baby. It is a quiet life free from any social activity. The woman is a submissive and mentally peaceful housewife who is free from disturbing thoughts such as the nineteenth century reformist feminist thought and the “women’s question”. The painting shows us that through self-sacrifice and self-abnegation women contributed to their family and they accepted their traditional responsibility of child rearing with silence and subordination.

This painting displays the oppressed humanity of the nineteenth century married women who are confined into home. The painting does not aim to show the “individuality” of the woman, but it depicts her common existence as a mother and a housewife who dedicates her life to her husband, child and domestic burdens. The

term “quiet” in the title of the painting can also be interpreted as the woman’s being left in silence her being made quiet in a restraining way. She is not supposed to complain about her life.

Being a male artist, Edward Lamson Henry reflects his nineteenth century patriarchal point of view which attempts to formulate and to implement the ideals of a typical housewife and mother through his representation. In his painting the mother/housewife is represented satisfied with their domestic responsibilities. The painting emphasizes the nineteenth century view that in maternity women can fulfill their physiological destiny. From their infancy, women are told that they are made for child bearing, and are consoled by the “joys of motherhood and childrearing” within marriage. Moreover, the boredom of household drudgery is justified by women’s privilege of maternity by the male-dominated culture.

As a conclusion, the nineteenth century post bellum fiction and art aimed to create a dissonance with their unusual interpretations of marriage. In the fiction, young women are represented feeling the discomfort at the discrepancy between what they perceived of their role in marriage and what the elders dictated about the role of the women as the housewife. This section of the thesis attempts to show that the nineteenth century female fiction accommodated the new ideas and interpretations on marriage that would lead women’s emancipation. The fictions written by the nineteenth century female writers that are studied in this section, show that the division of labor within marriage is a social construction; gender roles can change if the wife worked outside home; it suggested the female readers to reject even a rich husband in order to work outside home to gain self-respect; and it pictured fictive female lives that proved to be good after a divorce. The paintings that depicted the scenes from the life of the nineteenth century housewife reflected the fact that the housewife is doomed to be isolated at home. In our view, the goal of the paintings depicting the housewife’s burden and isolated lives could be absorbed into the wider project of humanity’s cause, because they point to the tyrannical history of patriarchal attempts to confine women into the domestic sphere.

B. The City and the Nineteenth Century Women's Struggle to Work

I must go where I can take care of myself. I can't be happy till I do, for there is nothing here for me.

From *Work: A Story of Experience* (2)

After the Civil War, the developing urban centers and the rapid industrialization welcomed women's labor in the cities. Great waves of women from the rural parts of the country decided to take their parts in the factory work force. Since the technological developments in the industrial production reduced the skill-requiring jobs, unskilled women's labor was needed by the factories. Rural women were tempted by the promises that there was work for them in the cities and both American people who left their towns and the immigrants from all over the world flowed to the cities in the post-bellum era.

The city and the dynamics of urbanization are very important elements in the nineteenth century fiction and paintings that attempt to depict working-women's urban possibilities and limits. In Louisa May Alcott's novel, *Work: A Story of Experience*, for example, Christie Devon leaves her small town to find a job to earn her autonomy and economic independence in the city. Through Christie Devon's experiences, the novel displays the materialism and destructiveness of the city life. The city is represented as crowded, complex, and filthy, however, Christie grows up into maturity in the city and her social, political, and religious views take form. At the end of her urban experience of working life she gains a philosophy of life and chooses to become a reformist feminist activist at the end of the novel.

Since the nineteenth century industrial cities brought American women out of their home into the world of work, the city became a very important element in the nineteenth century feminist fiction. The nineteenth century feminist reformist women writers revealed the working women's experiences in the cities of the industrial America in their fiction. They introduced various urban jobs to the nineteenth century readers. The urban jobs represented in the nineteenth century fiction and art are the

factory work, domestic service, teaching, nursing, journalism, and artistry all of which will be explored in the following sections.

Nineteenth century women writers' representations of the heroines who endeavor to work in the cities document a radical turnabout in the nineteenth century male-dominated attitudes toward women's duties and possibilities. These representations of working women attempt to change social expectations of the readers, and they help the female readers alter their social horizons. Such representations intend to teach that only self-reliance can bring self-respect, independence, and success in the society. The heroines that will be interpreted in this section are aware of their status in the nineteenth century patriarchal society, and their self-creation and approval of female selfhood and originality give them the social power to access the male-dominated professional world in the cities.

1. The Factory Workers in the Fiction and Art

Alice Kessler Harris argues in *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* that the nineteenth century female factory workers did not see themselves as functioning in limited spheres although they knew that they were not so important in the eyes of their employers or the society. Moreover, their attempt to ameliorate their working and living conditions led to their sophisticated awareness that wage-earning set them apart from the conventional middle-class portrait. Alice K. Harris writes that average middle-class people believed that women's job holding in the factories was a result of ill luck or paternal improvidence and incompetence. Accordingly, they aimed to help "the family" rather than helping the working women to save the nation from the threat of poverty. Therefore, they tried to save women from the coarse impact of industrial labor and put them back into their homes.

The nineteenth century reformist feminist women writers, on the other hand, represented hardworking and autonomous female factory workers in their fiction. Through their representations of the female factory workers reformist writers urged female satisfaction on the grounds of women's special status in the industrial world.

Female factory workers gained very limited benefits or security in their jobs. Therefore, the nineteenth century feminist reformist writers saw a link between women's poverty and the paternalistic dominance in the industrial world. They argued in their fiction that the capitalistic economic system intentionally wants women to remain poor in order to provide cheap labor.

Laura Hapke writes in *Labor's Text: The Worker in American Fiction* that, by the end of the nineteenth century women's factory work was synonymous with economic hardship, monotony, subservience, and health problems. Thus, being influenced by the historical facts, the feminist writers, she points out, created representations of poor female factory workers. The post-bellum middle class women's fiction reflected the unsavory conditions of the tenements, dangerous streets, unhealthy work place, and women's relation with their employers and the male workers.

In *Work: A Study of Experience*, Louisa May Alcott writes about a working class young woman, Rachel, who has learnt to live on her own. She writes, "Among the girls was one quiet, skilful creature, whose black dress, peculiar face, and silent face attracted Christie" (130). The hard working conditions over the shoulders of this woman make her look older and sad in the novel. Alcott emphasizes the vulnerability of the working-class women through her representation of Rachel in the novel. She writes,

Though evidently younger than she looked, Rachel's face was that of one who had known some great sorrow, some deep experience; for there were lines on the forehead that contrasted strongly with the bright, abundant hair above it; in repose, the youthful red, soft lips had a mournful droop, and the eyes were old with that indescribable expression which comes to those who count their lives by emotions, not by years (130).

In *The Country Doctor*, Sarah Orne Jewett creates a similar working class woman, Adeline Prince, who leaves the country and goes to the city to work in one of the factories. Adeline is represented as a self-reliant and self-determining woman for she manages to oppose the traditions and manages to lead an autonomous and independent

life in the city. Adeline goes to her town at nights for she feels relieved when there is nobody around to interfere in her life. As Jewett writes, “The whole country side seemed asleep in the darkness, but the lonely woman felt no lack of companionship; it was well suited to her own mood that the world slept and said nothing to her,—it seemed as if she were the only creature alive” (3). The story argues that women should isolate themselves from the society that attempts to confine them into domestic sphere and through self-reliance they should work outside home to be emancipated.

It should be underlined that nineteenth century feminist reformist writers admired factory workers for they believed that these women freed themselves from the constraints of domesticity and entered into the paying work as hard as any man’s. For most of the reformist feminist women writers, women’s emancipation meant having a paying job next to men. As Mari Jo Buhle writes in *Women and American Socialism: 1870-1920* that the nineteenth century reformist feminist women asserted “that women’s emancipation was tied to their advancement into wage labor, that women’s autonomy rose in proportion to their economic independence” (180).

Some of the middle-class women writers, on the other hand, showed socialistic tendencies and demonstrated the nineteenth century poverty of the working people in the factories. In *The Silent Partner*, for example, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps represents Sip Garth, the cotton-mill worker in the Hayles & Kelso. In the novel, Sip has to work hard to take care of herself and her dumb and deaf sister, Catty who is the only person left from her family. The other members of the family, as we learn later, have died in the inhuman conditions as she tells her story to Perley Kelso:

“We’re the last of us, she and I. Father got smashed up three weeks ago last Friday; caught in the gearing by the arm. They wouldn’t let Catty and me look at him, he was smashed so. But I looked when there wasn’t anybody round. I wanted to see the last of him. I never thought much of father, but I wanted to see last of him” (45).

That Sip does not sympathize with her father and seems not to mourn after his death stands as a reaction against the cruelty of the father the symbol of patriarchy in the novel. That Sip’s mother dies after giving birth to the fourth child indicates the double burden of female factory workers. The novel agrees with the reformist idea of its time

that women provided cheap labor in the nineteenth century industrial world and they were threatened to be replaced easily. The novel aims to show that the factory system favored the male workers, and women were the most exploitable workforce who worked for long hours in the factory and then at home to maintain the family. Thus, Ann R. Shapiro argues in *Unlikely Heroines: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and the Woman Question* that Sip's dumb sister Catty symbolizes the hopeless female mill hands who cannot perceive or express their misery. In Phelps' novel the nineteenth century female factory workers are represented as "deaf, dumb, blind, doomed, stepping confidently to its own destruction before our eyes" (Phelps 277-78).



Painting 4:
Charles Arthur Fries, *Too Late*, 1896.

The themes of the nineteenth century paintings representing working-class women go parallel with the female fictions as they aim to show the poverty and vulnerability of the working-class women. Charles Arthur Fries' 1896 painting, *Too Late*, for example, depicts a working-class mother who cannot save her child from dying because of her poverty and helplessness.

The poor life represented in this painting reminds the audience of the hard life of the working-class heroine of *The Silent Partner*, Sip Garth, who loses her parents

and sister because of the poor conditions. Phelps describes the tenement house that Sip has to live in through the lenses of Miss Kelso one of the partners of the factory she works for:

It is a damp house, and she rents the dampest room in it; a tenement boasting of the width of the house, and a closet bedroom with a little cupboard window in it; a low room with cellar smells and river smells about it, and with gutter smells and drain smells and with unclassified smells of years settled and settling in its walls and ceiling. Never a cheerful room; never by any means a cheerful room, when she come home from work at night (79).

Likewise, Fries depicts the poor woman's house with the worn out furniture: a bed which is put close to the stove, a table and a chair. A piece of white cloth is used as a curtain and there is not a rug on the floor. The stove signals the winter, the season in which most working-class children got sick and died in the nineteenth century. In the front, there is an iron bowl with water and a piece of cloth in it. The audience understands that the mother has tried to reduce the fever of the child. Calling a doctor is almost impossible for she cannot afford it, and in the case of this painting, it is "too late" when the doctor comes. The doctor stands at a certain distance from the mother and the child in the painting which symbolically shows his distance in terms of social class. That he stands still whereas the mother is crying on her knees, is also an indicator of the ignorance of the middle-class professional people who prefer not to interfere in the working-class people's problems. Therefore, it can be said that both Elizabeth Stuart Phelps' novel and Arthur Fries' painting attempt to criticize middle and upper class people's ignorance towards the poverty of the working-class people and they assert in their work that working class women and children are the most vulnerable and the most exploited members of their social class.

Likewise, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps writes in *The Silent Partner* about the unhealthy nature of working in the cramped mills which provided no space even to breathe with the weavers. In the novel, the stifling atmosphere creates a hellish workplace:

If you chance to be a cotton-weaver, you are presently warm enough. It is quite warm enough in the weaving-room. The engines respire into the weaving-room; with every throb of their huge lungs you swallow their breath. The weaving-room stifles with steam. The window-sills of this room are guttered to prevent the condensed steam from running in streams along the floor; sometimes they overflow, and water stands under the looms; the walls perspire profusely; on a damp day drops will fall from the roof. . . The windows of the weaving-room are closed; the windows must be closed; a stir in the air will break your threads. There is no air to stir, you inhale for a substitute motionless, hot moisture. If you chance to be a cotton-weaver, it is not in March that you think most about your coffin (73-4).

She represents cotton-weavers as “women with peculiar bleached yellow faces. . . They had bright eyes. They looked like beautiful moving corpses; as if they might be skeletons among the statues that were dug against the face of day. . . you can tell a weaver by the skin” (119-20). The working hours of the women and men workers in the textile mills are another “inhuman” side of working in the textile industry. She writes,

If you are one of ‘the hands’ in the Hayle and Kelso Mills, you go to your work, as is well known, from the hour of half past six to seven, according to the turn of the season. Time has been when you went at half past four. . . Mr. Hayle can tell you of mills he saw in New Hampshire last vacation, where they ring them up, if you’ll believe it, winter and summer, in and out at half past four in the morning. O no, never let out before six, of course (70).

The meaning underlying under the label of “the hands” refers to the worthlessness of these workers. Accordingly, any textile worker can do the tasks done in the factory and thus he/she can easily be replaced by another one if they revolt against the inhuman applications for their labor is cheap and the demand for their job is constantly growing with the growing immigrant population. Phelps argues that they are “the hands” but not “the head” or “the heart” of the system. She writes,

If you are one of ‘the hands’ in the Hayle and Kelso Mills—and again, in Hayle and Kelso,—you are so dully used to this classification, ‘the hands,’ that you were never known to cultivate an objection to it, are scarcely found to notice its use or disuse. Being surely neither head nor heart, what else remains? Conscious scarcely, from bell to bell, from sleep to sleep, from day to dark, of either head or heart, there seems even a singular appropriateness in the chance of the word with which you are dimly struck. Hayle and Kelso label you. There you are. The world thinks, aspires, creates, enjoys. There you are. You are the fingers of the world (71).

As the excerpt suggests, textile workers produced for all the members of the society. The politicians, writers, artists, men, women, and children of the country wear what they produce, although they ignore or underestimate their place in the textile industry. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps shows that textile industry exploits especially the female workers. Through the representation of a female factory worker, Sip Garth, Phelps shows the readers all the horrid sides of working in the textile industry.

In Robert Koehler’s 1886 painting, *The Strike*, we see an inflamed crowd of male and female workers. On the steps of the management building (on the left of the painting), we see the manager representing the owner of the factory. There is a middle-class woman standing among the workers who seems to try to soothe one of the strikers. The man on the right who bends to pick a stone from the ground aims to start the physical fight. Some of the workers are depicted running towards the crowd to support their friends. The cheaply and flimsily built mill houses (which are depicted in a way to constitute a contrast with the management building) and the mill buildings with tall chimneys are in the far back of the scene.



Painting 5:

Robert Koehler. *The Strike*, 1886.

A working-class mother with her baby in her arms and the poor little girl standing next to them are depicted to show the vulnerability of working class women as mothers. Thus, in the painting she avoids the dangerous crowd and listens to the conversation between the strikers and the employer in subservience.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps writes a similar story of a strike in her novel *The Silent Partner*. In the novel, Hayles and Kelso, the textile factory, reduces the worker's wages, and responding to the change in their wages the workers start a riot. Consequently, a workers' strike breaks out. The spokesman of the strikers, Reubel Mell, says,

I don't understand about these things. It's very perplexing to me it doesn't mean a dollar's worth less of horses and carriages, and grand parties to the Company, such a trouble as this don't seem to. And it means as we go without our breakfast so's the children sha'n't be hungry; and it means as when our shoes are wore out, we know no

more than a baby in its cradle where the next pair is to come from.

That's what reduction o' wages means to *us*. (252-53).

The strike is soothed by the triumphs of the young female partner of the company Perley Kelso. Through her forceful personality flourished in a combative atmosphere of the nineteenth century, Perley Kelso struggles for the social justice and promises to make her way to ameliorate the working conditions and to raise the wages for the working people. She represents the nineteenth century middle class female reformers who fight for the rights of the needy. By soothing the strike, she achieves what men and male-dominated organizations cannot do in the novel.

Robert Kohler's painting and Phelps' novel have common themes concerning the working-class people's problems and women's special position in the factory system. For example, in Koehler's painting, a working-class woman stands apart from the crowd of striking men which attempts to show the vulnerability of female workers in the nineteenth century male-dominated factory system. Motherhood is the most important reason for working-class women's vulnerability in the novel and the painting. That she is isolated with her children in the painting shows that her domestic and maternal duties come before her work in the factory. The painting emphasizes the women's responsibility of nursing children and caring for the husband within the family. Isolation of the woman in the painting can be interpreted as the exclusion of women from the nineteenth century trade unions and the strikes which were accepted as male activities. Women's isolation in the painting can also signal the segregation of factory work by sex: in the nineteenth century women attended the spinning and weaving machinery while men were supervisors and skilled mechanics in the textile factories. Likewise, women's wages were nearly one-third that of men, and the highest-paid women earned less than the lowest-paid men. Therefore, the painting depicts the gender discrimination and the sexual division of labor within the industrial world.

Kathleen Gerson argues that the nineteenth century sexual division of labor in the industrial world was an extension of women's traditional domestic burdens. For instance, the textile industry demanded women workers especially in the garment

sector for women traditionally span, weaved, and sewed. She writes, “As the traditional weavers of cloth in the home before the advent of factories, many women initially followed the shift from production in the home to production in a communal workplace” (18). These women accumulated in the cities and they provided a great amount of the labor force needed in the garment industry.

As Mari Jo Buhle writes, the expansion of women’s work in the nineteenth century garment industry was dramatic. She writes, “New York City’s shirt waist trade had grown from a handful of shops in the mid-1890s to more than 500 by 1900 employing nearly 18,000 women” (184). Likewise, Buhle writes, in Chicago over half of the women aged sixteen and over were employed in the nineteenth century garment industry.



Painting 6:

Robert Frederick Blum
Venetian Lace Makers, 1885.

The nineteenth century male artist, Robert Frederick Blum, depicted aesthetically beautiful representations of the female workers of the nineteenth century garment industry in *Venetian Lace Makers*. In the painting, we see seamstresses. Working as a seamstress was very common among nineteenth century American working-class women. Paid by a piece, seamstresses worked up to sixteen hours a day but their income never exceeded bare subsistence. The seamstresses, milliners, framework knitters, lace makers were working together in single room ateliers. In Louisa May Alcott's *Work: A Story of Experience*, Christie informs the reader about her first day as a seamstress as follows, "...she went to her seat in the workroom where a dozen other young women sat sewing busily on gay garments, with as much lively gossip to beguile the time as Miss Cotton, the forewoman, would allow" (129). For a while, Christie enjoys working as a seamstress for she has "a feminine love for pretty things" (129). She is fascinated by the silks, expensive lace, and the fantasies of nineteenth century fashion. However, the routine of the job that confines her into a small room with the other women in a boring atmosphere stifles Christie after a while. While she keeps her eyes fixed on her work she starts imagining herself in her town again, "with cows and flowers, clothes bleaching on green grass, bob-o'-links making rapturous music by the river, and the smell of new-mown hay, all lending their charms to the picture she painted for herself" (129).



Painting 7:

Robert Frederick Blum, *Venetian Lace Makers*, 1887.

The American artist, Robert Frederick Blum, chooses his scene from one of the nineteenth century lace makers' ateliers in Painting 7. He depicts the young beautiful seamstresses working in crowds. In the painting we see young and healthy women working in sanitary conditions. The atmosphere is peaceful and they are depicted happy, sitting on the chairs and concentrating on the lace making which requires a careful study. Robert Frederick Blum's 1887 painting that depicts the Venetian young lace makers also consists of a spacious peaceful working room with windows wide open to let fresh air in. Women form small working groups in the room to foster teamwork and a harmonious competitive working tempo.

In the painting, the artist is not interested in the actual problems of the nineteenth century female workers. Moreover, he prefers to focus on the beauty, youthfulness and energy of the lace makers in his painting. The women are aesthetic objects of beauty in this painting and in the sub-text the painting takes the audience to the debate over "female promiscuity" in the urban centers. On the other hand, unlike the atmosphere depicted in Robert Frederick Blum's paintings, the nineteenth century garment industry required great dedication and sacrifices. As Mari Jo Buhle writes, the long hours, low wages, unsanitary conditions and the competitive speed-up process made the workday intolerable for the female workers in the actual life (184).

In Edwin Romanzo Elmer's 1892 painting, *A Lady of Baptist Corner, Ashfield, Massachusetts* the young woman on the sewing machine is also idealized. The painting shows Mary Jane Ware, the artist's own wife in a dignified gesture. The painting is important for it depicts the nineteenth century advance of textile machinery which led to women's manufacture at home.



Painting 8:
Edwin Romanzo Elmer
A Lady of Baptist Corner,
Ashfield, Massachusetts ,1892.

The scene is taken from the artist's own wife's everyday life. She is using the *whipsnap machine*, which is designed for silk and cotton braiding, and operated by a hand crank. The painting shows that women can work at home by producing piece work of embroideries. Thus this woman turns her home into her workplace. There are bobbins scattered on the floor indicating the intensity of her production. At the same time she wears a white apron indicating her domestic role as a housewife. In a time when the American mainstream literature and politics exposed urban corruption and the sexual exploitation of poor working women in the textile factories, Edwin Romanzo Elmer's painting depicts the young woman in a genteel and safe place: her home. Since the woman is married and is not allowed to work outside home in accordance with the nineteenth century norms and conventions, Elmer explores a solution to the married women's restriction to work outside home by violating the cult of domesticity. His painting aims to give the message that married women can

produce at home and satisfy their need to earn a living without being entailing with the corruption of the factories in the cities. However, while arguing to reveal a true resolve to save the young women from the ravages of industrial urban labor, the painting serves the male-dominant ideology that confines women into home and makes women domestic laborers.

Apart from the painting depicting the lace makers and garment producers, in the painting of Alice Barber Stephens, we see a scene from the nineteenth century department stores. Although working in a department store looks better than working in a textile factory, as Laura Hapke writes in *Tales of the Working Girl*, the counter was considered more genteel than the work room, but long hours, low wages, and little provision for sitting and resting made sales work burdensome in the nineteenth century.



Painting 9:
Alice Barber Stephens
from *The Women in Business*
Series, 1897.

As Laura Hapke writes in *Tales of the Working Girl: Wage-Earning Women in American Literature, 1890-1925*, the popular idea that working in a department store provided women with a refuge from the nineteenth century industrial excesses was proved to be wrong. When the nineteenth century female investigators wrote that a woman who had to work 87 hours a week in a department store could not sit down, take a sick day or get overtime pay. Her wages, they calculated, amounted to six cents an hour (14).

In the painting the young saleswomen show the clothes to the middle-class customers. In the center of the painting a good looking middle-class woman is pictured as a reluctant customer who is hard to please. Class structures and child labor are two important political issues to be noticed within this painting and the nineteenth century actual life. The middle-class customer is seated comfortably while the saleswomen have to stand, the customer is depicted well-dressed while the saleswomen are dressed simply in black, the customer looks healthy while the faces of the sales women are depicted pale, depressed and unhappy. By involving in such political issues as child labor and social class stratification in her painting, Alice Barber Stephens proves that her artistic career is not formed by the nineteenth century traditional art world but by her own aesthetic approach and political world view.

In conclusion, nineteenth century reformist feminist writers' fiction aimed to describe the rough road awaiting the women who wish to work in the factory. Through her socialist point of view, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps showed in *The Silent Partner* the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy and she represented insecure working class women who suffered at the hands of the male-dominated factory system. The nineteenth century reformist writers emphasized that although factory work was rough and the female workers received too little protection for their working conditions, wage work provided the possibility to make a living to become independent. While the male artist Robert Frederick Blum represented the female lace makers as the objects of beauty in his paintings, the reformist writers and artists depicted the health hazards, exceeding hours of work, sanitation problems, and poor

living standards of the female factory workers in the nineteenth century textile and garment industries to foster nationwide political reform movements.

2. The Domestic Servants in the Fiction and Art

Most of the middle-class feminists argued that capitalist production and patriarchy contributed to perpetuating the nineteenth-century domestic codes that made domestic labor the natural duty of the female members of the family. In the nineteenth century domestic codes household drudgery was seen as dignified tasks that proved a woman's success as a good wife. Feminist activists argued that capitalist production required supportive roles such as household maintenance and emotional sustenance from women in order to maximize men's working capacity and confine women into the home. They defined household labor as a job which must pay wages to the laborer. Charlotte Perkins Gilman was one of these feminist critics who suggest in *Women and Economics* that the concept of "women's work" which is created to turn women into free laborers must be abolished. She argues that women's economic dependence on her husband in marriage, and the unpaid and devalued work she performs in the home determine her subordinate social status. Women must be allowed to access the capitalist economy, and household labor must be for wages. She argues that household tasks must be professionalized because, if domestic labor such as cooking, cleaning, child rearing were professionalized and socialized, women could improve their status and become more productive as active members of society. According to this plan, trained professionals should do the domestic work done by women so that women can take up the jobs they choose in the public sphere.

The professionalization of domestic work meant new social opportunities for the nineteenth century women. Many unskilled poor women could not find any job other than domestic service in the nineteenth century. As Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo writes in his essay "Immigrant Women and Paid Domestic Work: Research, Theory, and Activism", domestic service was seen as "invisible occupation" just like the minority groups who performed it. He writes,

Many commentators refer to paid domestic work as the ‘invisible occupation’. The work occurs in private households; it is generally performed in isolation, without the company of co-workers or managers. It has historically been the province of marginalized women, of women of color and immigrant women (105).

The “invisible occupation” is defined as “a lost art” in Louisa May Alcott’s novel *Work: A Story of Experience*. In the novel Louisa May writes “A lost art, for in those days foreign help had not driven farmers’ daughters out of the field, and made domestic comfort a lost art” (17). This definition shows that Alcott wishes to change the negative stereotypes that the society held about the servants, and open up a new opportunity to white rural women to work outside home in the cities. Although her perception of the domestic service seems quite positive, in the following chapters she displays the problems of working as a servant. Moreover, there is an apparent problem between Christie and her employer in the novel. Christie is disappointed with her employer’s rude and negligent attitudes.

In *Americans and Their Servants: Domestic Service in the United States from 1800 to 1920* Daniel E. Sutherland writes that the nineteenth century domestic servants lived with employers and depended upon them for food, shelter, and sometimes clothing. Sutherland argues that, it evoked the feudal connections and made many Americans believe that their servants were descended from serfs, indentured servants, and slaves. Therefore, many women found domestic service a humiliating work. In Louisa May Alcott’s novel, *Work: A Story of Experience*, for example the domestic servant heroine is depicted disappointed when her employer Mr. Stuart wants her to clean his muddy boots and umbrella. She believes that this should not be included in her job, and she says it is very rude to ask a woman to clean a man’s boots. After plenty of similar experiences, Christie finds domestic service a humiliating job which is not suitable for a white woman.

Due to these factors concerning the nineteenth century domestic service, Christie cannot please her employers, and in return Mr. and Mrs. Stuart always disparage her. The “mistress” is never helpful and the “maid” can never satisfy her employer in the novel. As Alcott writes:

[Christie] did not learn to love her mistress, because Mrs. Stuart evidently considered herself as one belonging to a superior race of beings, and had no desire to establish any of the friendly relations that may become so helpful and pleasant to both mistress and maid. She made a royal progress through her dominions every morning, issued orders, found fault liberally, bestowed praise sparingly, and took no more personal interests in her servants than if they were clocks, to be wound up once a day, and sent away the moment they got out of repair (25).

Christie's service ends when she is dismissed because of the fire she accidentally causes in her room which is in the attic of the Stuarts.



Painting 10:

Lily Martin Spencer, *The War Spirit at Home*, 1866.

Domestic service was one of the nation's slowest changing, least attractive occupations both in the novels and in the paintings. In Lily Martin Spencer's painting of 1866, the contrast between the mistress and the domestic servant is obvious. In the painting, while the mistress seems very healthy with pink cheeks and healthy skin, the servant seems skinny and unhealthy. The domestic servant's dark skin also emphasizes her racial status as inferior to her master. Symbolically, in the painting the domestic servant is depicted as a background detail. She is a symbol of her master's wealth. A similar attitude can be observed in Cecilia Beaux's painting *Ernesta with a Nurse*. Domestic servants could take care of the children and like Lily Martin Spencer's painting, in this painting the servant is depicted as a background detail. Moreover, the artist intentionally cuts the figure within the frame of the composition in order to focus solely on the child. Besides, while the child has a name (Ernesta) the servant is named by her task (nurse). Both paintings are important for they recorded the hierarchical social statuses based on class. Accordingly, the painting points to the fact that even if they are white, the servants are at the very bottom of the line and they did not possess an individual identity and do not deserve respect in the eyes of their employers.



Painting 11:

Cecilia Beaux.

Ernesta with Nurse, 1894.

The paintings that depict the female domestic workers as the symbols of bourgeois refinement show that the vocation does very little to lighten the oppressions of sex or class. As Christie Stansell writes in *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860*, it was not genteel for the bourgeois mothers to wash and dress their own children, or make their clothing in the nineteenth century. Being a lady, she argues, meant not doing certain kinds of household work (159).

Moreover, because domestic service is seen as the extension of women's household work, these paintings support the domestic workers' very existence as impoverished female workers within the precept of women's domestic nature and place. Therefore, even if they are employed wage earning workers, domestic servants lacked autonomy and freedom. Christie Stansell writes that young women who immigrated to the United States went to domestic service to be independent; however, "the supervision of their employers' households limited whatever independence they might have gained in immigration" (84).

In sum, domestic service was represented as a difficult and humiliating job in the nineteenth century fiction and art. The domestic servants are depicted as unhappy and unimportant and therefore both the writers and the artists depicting domestic servants do not assert that it is a suitable job for the women who seek power in the society. Nineteenth century representations of female domestic servants in fiction and art show that domestic service did not fulfill the feminine desire to find a useful career outside the home. In a time when the contrast between men and women melted into a contrast between working place and home, the domestic service, asserted these representations, perpetuated the nineteenth century feminine stereotype.

3. The Teachers, Nurses and the Doctors in Fiction and Art

According to the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry writes in *The Educated Woman: Prospects and Problems*, that in the nineteenth century there were two professions into which significantly more women than men were admitted: teaching and nursing. They write that especially nursing was considered a woman's profession because nursing was seen as one of the characteristics of motherhood. In

fact, as Jeanne Boydston writes, glorification of motherhood was at the heart of the widely shared belief system of the nineteenth century: the ideology of gender spheres. According to this nineteenth century male-dominated ideology, women are created as mothers, and only the jobs that fit into the definition of motherhood can be performed properly by them.

Likewise, Kathryn Kish Sklar argues in “Catherine Beecher: Transforming the Teaching Profession” that in the nineteenth century teaching was considered as one of the most proper careers for women. Therefore, she argues, many women facilitated the entry of women into the profession, for it provided possibilities of traveling, speaking in public and even publishing books. Sklar argues that by making use of the familiar ideology that stressed women’s docile and nurturing qualities women soon claimed to be the best teachers because their natural role as mothers suited them to the care of young children. Therefore, as Sklar writes, “Within a single generation women replaced men in the ranks of teachers and were entrusted with classes that included boys as well as girls” (159).

In the post-bellum women’s fiction teaching is represented a dignified career for the middle-class women. In Louisa May Alcott’s novel, *Work: A Story of Experience*, for example, the heroine Christie Devon teaches the children of a widowed middle-aged middle-class woman in her summer house by the sea. Christie is represented as a sympathetic teacher who is confident and happy to teach children useful things. Being a teacher, she fulfills her protestant background by sacrificing herself to the improvement of these children. For the same reason, she increases her knowledge of music, and learns French “enough to venture teaching it to very young pupils” (59). She soon becomes friends with the children, and as the author writes, “she devised amusements for herself as well as for them; walked, bathed, drove, and romped with the little people till her own eyes shone like theirs, her cheek grew rosy, and her thin figure rounded with the promise of vigorous health again” (67). She is represented as an ideal mother and teacher to the children in the novel:

The frank eyes had a softer shadow in their depths, the firm lips smiled less often, but when it came the smile was the sweeter for the gravity that went before, and in her voice there was a new undertone of that

subtle music, called sympathy, which steals into the heart and nestles there. . . she was unconscious of this gracious change, but others saw and felt it, and to some a face bright with health, intelligence and modesty was more attractive than mere beauty. Thanks to this and her quiet, cordial manners, she found friends here and there to add charms to that summer by the sea (67).

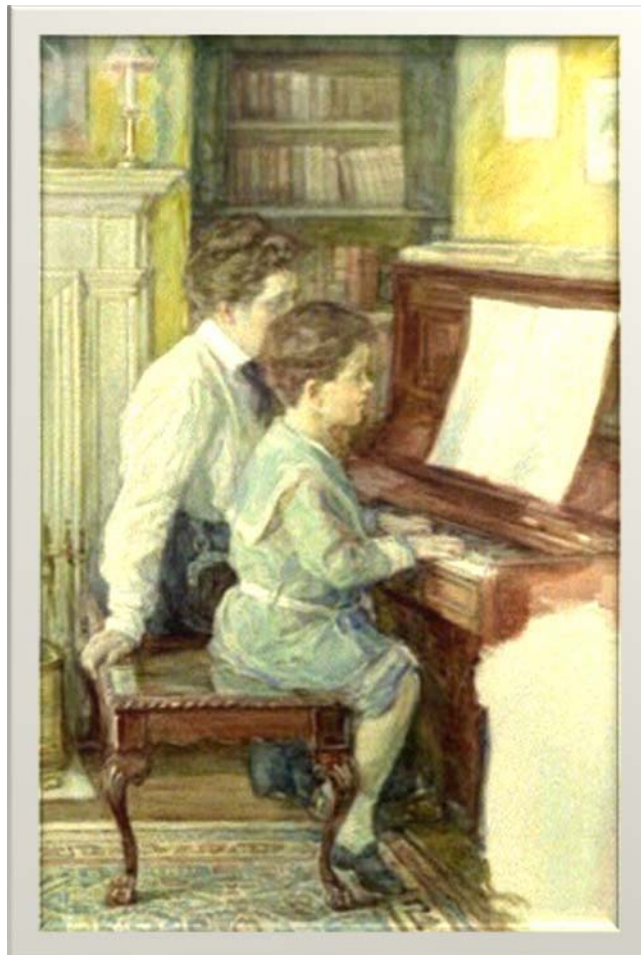
In the excerpt, the job is represented so socially prestigious for women that it makes women more attractive. Women who worked as teachers in the nineteenth century, argues the novel, had the new social role of fostering the nation's social conscience. They were responsible from teaching children of the nation the principles of morality, habits of neatness, and discipline.

In Winslow Homer's painting, *The Country School*, we see a bright room with a cosy atmosphere, student desks, a teacher's table, a blackboard, and curtained-windows all constitute the ideal classroom.



Painting 12:
Winslow Homer
The Country School, 1871.

There are fifteen or more students at differing ages in the classroom. The young and beautiful teacher seems contented; she stands up with dynamism while all the students are seated in obedience. The students are divided into small peer groups and study in harmony in accordance with the task they are assigned by their teacher. Winslow Homer's painting overtly idealizes the female teacher. The painting aims to elevate and dignify women in their social ameliorative effort of teaching the children and of creating a more consolidated society.



Painting 13:
Alice Barber Stephens
Woman Giving Little Boy Piano Lesson, 1870.

Likewise, Alice Barber Stephens' painting, *Woman Giving Little Boy Piano Lesson*, depicts a middle aged music teacher. Teaching is represented as a means of self improvement in this painting. Like Christie Devon, the heroine of Louisa May Alcott's novel, this woman also improves her capabilities and learns to play the piano in order to become a better teacher.

In the painting, the teacher and a boy are at the piano. The boy tries to read and play the notes carefully meanwhile the teacher's right arm seems to posit a shelter to the little boy on his back indicating the protective nature of teaching. The locale is an interior of a rich house. The painting indicates the teacher's transcending class-lines for the teachers are obliged to teach the children of the poor and the rich. The novels and the paintings that represented female teachers in this section, in our view, urged the nineteenth century women to donate their services to the cause of education, for they represented teaching as a true, noble and special profession of a woman.

Along with teaching, nursing was another profession that the nineteenth century society saw proper for the female members. Mari Jo Buhle argues in *Women and Socialism 1870-1920* that the American Civil War contributed American white middle-class women's awakening. She argues that women's wartime dedication to nursing forced a wholly new conception of womanhood. She writes, hundreds of thousands of middle class women had taken up volunteer work in hospitals or relief agencies, and consequently, "women learned the techniques of organization and mobilization; they gained a sense of self-reliance and spiritual depth through their common triumphs and sorrows" (50). Mari Jo Buhle argues that nursing during the Civil War radically changed women's attitudes toward themselves and their personal and political capabilities. She writes, "As the horrors and tragedy of war receded, such women determined to preserve the feeling of independence they had gained during the emergency" (51).

In the nineteenth century female fiction, through nursing in the Civil War, women realize their talent and capabilities. In Louisa May Alcott's novel, *Work: A Study of Experience*, for example, Christie Devon is represented as a successful nurse

who works in the battlefields during the Civil War in the novel. Christie Devon has all these qualifications of a good nurse; she thinks more of “the boys” than of herself. She is a quick-worker, “for one hand [she] bore a pitcher of gruel, the other a bag of oranges, clean shirts hung over the right arm, a rubber cushion under the left, and every pocket in the big apron was full of bottles and bandages, papers and letters” (385). She directs all her effort to the wellbeing of the soldiers, and all the soldiers like her very much. As Dr. Harvey says, “It’s your firm yet pitiful way the men like so well. I can’t describe it better than in big Ben’s words: ‘Mis Sterlin’ is the nuss for me, marm. She takes care of me as ef she was my own mother, and it’s a comfort jest to see her round’” (Alcott 385). Being a nurse is not represented as an easy task in the novel. On the contrary people die in the arms of Christie. She travels to serve the wounded soldiers risking her life in the battle fields. She has to work in many hospitals and cope with the administrators, she has been “seen on crowded transports, among the ambulances at the front, invalid cars, relief tents, and food depots up and down the land, and many men went out of life like tired children holding the hand that did its work so well” (386).



Painting 14:
Samuel Richards,
*Evangeline Discovering Her
Affianced in the Hospital*, n.d.

In Samuel Richard's painting which depicts the interior of a hospital, we see almost the same imagery of the "ideal nurse". In the painting there are two young and one old nurse taking care of the male patients. The white sheets symbolize the sanitary conditions provided by the nurses in the hospital. The flowers on the window sills and on the small tables of each patient indicate the feminine affection and female domesticity. The semi-sacred atmosphere which is created by the dramatic backlighting and the glare through translucent white curtains gives this hospital room a heavenly aura. In the eyes of the nineteenth century conventional society nursing was respectable female vocation, and in the painting it is established as the acceptable Protestant equivalent to a nun's self-effacement and self-dedication.

Judith Rowbotham argues that the advances in medicine and a consequent demand for trained nursing staff led to widespread approval of nursing as a vocation for women. However, entry of so many women into the field, writes Rowbotham, meant that fewer men were willing to take posts at a similar level with women. Equal employment opportunities for both sexes in a job were seen as reducing the professional status of that job. "The compromise reached was to continue the idea of separate spheres, via the creation of new professions, such as nursing, which were to all intents and purposes, exclusively feminine in personnel and relationship to the 'traditional' womanly duties" (233). Therefore, in the nineteenth century male-dominated medicine, women could work as nurses in the hospitals whereas all the doctors were men.

Barbara Bards and Suzanne Gossett write in *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in the Nineteenth-Century American Fiction*, that the nineteenth century women's demand for access to traditionally male positions was viewed by the dominant culture as an egotistical desire for independence. While, teaching and nursing were considered as the most proper professions for the nineteenth century women, the female doctors were despised by the society for being boastful. Therefore, although becoming a doctor was a good career for women, the

society did not approve of female doctors. They argue that once women entered the medical schools to become doctors, women would claim professional status and a social recognition that not all of the society was willing to yield (15). Therefore, “the women who aspired to such a profession as doctor were usually assumed to have given up their claim to domestic life” (15).

In *The Country Doctor*, Sarah Orne Jewett represents a young girl, Nan Prince, who has an unorthodox project to become a doctor. Nan Prince has an unconventional childhood and girlhood in the novel. She is represented as curious, unmanageable, and fearless. When her grandmother dies, Dr. Leslie takes her in and he starts teaching some of his practical medical knowledge for Nan is very ambitious to become a doctor in the future. “She was a strange character,” says Dr. Leslie, “a handsome creature, with a touch of foolish ambition, and soon grew impatient with the routine of home life” (98). Jewett intentionally shows the terms of judgment in Dr. Leslie’s speeches. Seeing her ambition and the talent, Later Dr. Leslie starts supporting Nan’s project saying:

‘I see plainly that Nan is not the sort of girl who will be likely to marry. . . and if I make sure by and by, the law of her nature is that she must live alone and work alone, I shall help her to keep it instead of break it, by providing something else than the business of housekeeping and what is called a woman’s natural work, for her activity and capacity to spend itself upon’ (137).

With Dr. Leslie’s help Nan goes to one of the most prestigious medical school and becomes a successful student then a doctor. In the novel, society sees Nan’s desire to work as a doctor as the violation of the ideological “cult of true womanhood,” because young women are known by their talents of keeping the house and pleasing their husbands. However, Nan Prince sees the domestic burdens put on the shoulders of the wife in the marriage as an unfair application which is dictated by the elderly women of the society. She has to dispute with the elderly women on the nineteenth century conventional belief that getting married and housekeeping is a respectful career for the young women. Nan argues that young American women should receive good education to explore their capacities in the professional world outside home which

will provide the respect and the prestige with them. In Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country Doctor*, for example, the heroine Nan Prince fights against the traditional idea about young women's duties concerning housekeeping. A friend of Nan's aunt, old Mrs. Fraley insists on the necessity of the young women's learning the household affairs instead of attending a medical school which is something deviant for her. Jewett writes;

‘In my time,’ Mrs. Fraley continued, ‘it was thought proper for young women to show an interest in household affairs. When I was married it was not asked whether I was acquainted with dissecting-rooms.’

‘But I don't think there is any need of that,’ replied Nan. ‘I think such things are the duty of professional men and women only’ (Jewett 279).

The old women are astonished with Nan's self-confident attitude, because as Jewett writes, “It was evidently not expected that young guest should venture to discuss the question, but rather have accepted her rebuke meekly, and acknowledge herself in the wrong. But she had the courage of her opinions, and the eagerness of youth, and could hardly bear to be so easily defeated” (279). The novel is important, because it shows that by insisting on the socially prestigious and skill-based professions women experienced sting of social ostracism as they violated the nineteenth century norms of femininity.

Middle-class women, who were involved in prestigious occupations that required a good education and intellectual capacity, were called “career women” in the nineteenth century. The label “career women” indicated both their middle-class status and the fact that they were middle-aged working women who had not ceased work to dedicate their lives to home and husband through marriage.

Middle-class career women were distinguished from the other women in the labor force, because, as Ellen Carol Dubois writes, they were “self-employed people or entrepreneurs, free-lance authors, independent business women, and female professionals” (1995: 148). Such occupations that involved intellectual rather than manual labor and conditions gave middle-class women considerable control over their work. Career women chose to work instead of striving for true womanhood. They knew that if they had a good career outside home, they would become socially

respectable women. Moreover, working would provide them with a sense of autonomy, individual achievement and economic independence. Accordingly, middle-class women worked out of choice as much as out of necessity. In the nineteenth century women's fiction, the woman question and the concept of "the career woman" were explored with great care and such career women were represented as the symbol of female success and the social development.

In the novel Sarah Orne Jewett enacts woman's departure from her traditional feminine role and Nan's entrance into the professional world of men. She has, indeed, masculine abilities, too. One of the central episodes of the novel, for example, is Nan's setting a farmer's dislocated shoulder while her suitor, George, stands helplessly by feeling "weak and womanish" (Jewett 264). The scene starts with the arrival of mistress of the farmer who has broken his shoulder and waits for the doctor in dreadful pain. When Nan and George go into the house of these farmers, they see the patient who is a strong young fellow. The patient sits "on the edge of the bed in the little kitchen-bedroom, pale as ashes, and holding one elbow with a look of complete misery, though he stopped his groans as the strangers came in" (264). The patient mistakenly thinks that George is the doctor, but when Nan starts examining the man he obeys her in surprise:

Nan had taken a pair of scissors from the high mantelpiece and was making a cut in the coarse, white shirt, which was already torn and stained by its contact with the ground, and with quick fingers and a look of deep interest made herself sure what had happened, when she stood still for a minute and seemed a little anxious, and all at once entirely determinant (265).

She wins her patient's trust with her manner. She then tells him to lie down on the floor a minute. The patient obeys. Then Nan completes her treatment;

Nan pushed the spectators into the doorway of the kitchen, and quickly stooped and unbuttoned her right boot, and then planted her foot on the damaged shoulder and caught up the hand and gave a quick pull, the secret of which nobody understood; but there was an unpleasant cluck

as the bone went back into its socket; and a yell from the sufferer, who scrambled to his feet (265).

The patient is grateful and says he would rather die than stand the pain of his dislocated shoulder. He says that she is the smartest woman he has ever seen. Nan fastens her boot again with a rare self-controlled serene manner. Her suitor, George cannot say a word but listens to Nan's directions as if they are meant for him. When they leave the farmer's house, Nan is very happy "to be of use", but George "felt weak and womanish, and somehow wished it had been he who could play the doctor" (266).

The novel shows that women were allowed only a small portion of men's occupational opportunities, feared as competitors, and they drew men's anger instead of sympathy. George wants Nan to quit her job if she wishes to marry him. The heroine of the novel cannot get married to have her own family in return for her decision to become a female doctor.

4. The Female Journalists in the Fiction

Ellen Carol DuBois writes in *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America*, that women have worked as newspaper printers since the eighteenth century, when they assisted their husbands and fathers in the family companies. However, as she writes, when the newspaper printing changes from family business to an industrial enterprise, although women still remain important elements in newspaper printing, they are not the wage earners but the wives and daughters in the business.

Historically, as Dubois writes, in 1850 there were approximately 1,400 women employed as newspaper compositors, which was the 17 percent of the total work force in the newspaper and magazine industry. In the labor force, the newspaper women's labor conditions were superior to the working women in other industries. A compositor could earn between \$15 and \$20 a week for about eight hours' work a day (while sewing women and domestic servants worked for longer for much less). Moreover, working in a newspaper had a strong attraction for the nineteenth century

middle-class women who saw newspaper a more honorable field of labor. DuBois writes, the newspaper and magazine jobs were all skill-based, and compositors, typesetters, and reporters knew that newspaper would permit them a certain degree of craft-pride which was the nineteenth century male worker's primary source of dignity.

Newspapers were very valuable for the nineteenth century intelligentsia, too. The transcendentalist philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once wrote about the newspapers in his journal, as Michael Schudson writes in *The Power of News*;

The immense amount of valuable knowledge now afloat in society enriches the newspapers, so that one cannot snatch an old newspaper to wrap his shoes in, without his eye being caught by some paragraph of precious science out of London or Paris which he hesitates to lose forever. My wife grows nervous when I give her waste paper lest she is burning holy writ, and wishes to read it before she puts it under her pies (Schudson 37).

Ralph Waldo Emerson indicates the value of the newspapers in the nineteenth century. He sees the newspaper as the paragraphs of precious science, and his wife inclines to see them as holy writ. Being a newspaper compositor in such an age is, of course, a privileged condition for the women, and newspaper women took from their work a sense of dignity and autonomy even in a society that praised women's dependence to the husband.

In *Patience Sparhawk*, the heroine, Patience, wishes to become a newspaper compositor since her childhood. After her disappointment in her marriage she decides to leave her luxurious life and her husband who does not let her have a career as a newspaper woman. In the novel Patience meets a female newspaper compositor and she asks, "Tell me exactly how does a woman begin on a newspaper?" (298). Miss Merrien is a successful newspaper compositor and she explains;

Sometimes you have letters, and are put on as fashion or society reporter, or to get interviews with famous women, or to go and ask prominent people their opinion on a certain subject—for a symposium, you know; like 'What Would You do if You Knew that the World was to End in Three Days?' or, 'Is Society Society?' I have written dozens

of symposiums. Sometimes you do freelance work, just pick up what you can and trust to luck to catch on. But of course you must have the nose for news (298).

Miss Merrien tries to remind Patience that newspaper business is a skill-based work. The newspaper compositor needs to compose an idea for an article or a symposium and moreover a good newspaper researcher and a compositor must have, “a good nose” to foresee the events. She explains,

I was at a matinee one day and sat in front of two society women. Between the acts they talked about a prominent woman of their set who was getting a divorce from her husband so quietly that no newspaper had suspected it. They also joked about the fact that her lawyer was an old lover. I knew this was a tip, and a big one. I wrote all the names on my cuff, and before the matinee was over I was down at the ‘Day’ and had turned in my tip to the City editor. He sent a reporter to the lawyer to bluff him into admitting the truth. The next day we had a big story, and after that the editor gave me work regularly (298).

In newspaper business a compositor and the freelance reporter need to satisfy not only the general curiosity about the world but also the currency in social relations. In the novel, a female journalist is described as an unconventional woman with some “bad” qualifications in terms of nineteenth century moral codes of being a woman. Being *bad* is indeed being suitable for the job. Therefore, Mr. James, the editor-in chief of *The Day*, says to Patience,

Your experience and the bad blood in you, taken in connection with your bright and essentially modern mind, will make a sort of intellectual anarchist of you. . . I doubt if you take kindly to the domestic life. You will probably go in for the social problems, and write some polemical hobby for eight or ten years, at the end of which time you will be inclined to look upon your sex as the soubrettes of history (86).

Accordingly, it is asserted in the novel that a newspaper woman must be an individualist. Mr. James believes that Patience’s common sense will aid her in the

perception of “eternal truths” about the nineteenth century women’s underestimated social value; moreover, he argues that “there is one thing more fascinating than beauty, and that is a strong individuality” (Atherton 87).

The representations of Miss Merrien and Patience Sparhawk are attempted to become a potent symbol of social change within the radical and reformist feminist struggles of the nineteenth century. These representations of the journalist women, we argue, offer a new perspective to the readers to transform some of the traditional definitions and values of womanhood into modern social forms and relations in which women’s paid work will become a defining cultural feature. Judith Rowbotham argues that in the nineteenth century occupations such as teaching, nursing, sewing, and domestic service, women are enabled to act still within their “natural” essentially private domestic sphere (223). She asserts that through such traditionally acceptable jobs, “women retained their title to respectability and womanliness even if they were no longer considered as forming an active part of the social circle” (223). Accordingly, many nineteenth century women who desired to work outside the home took socially-approved jobs in order to be considered a part of the nineteenth century social circle, to be eligible for marriage and motherhood. Rowbotham argues that behind the insistence on these “respectable” jobs were the nineteenth century social rules. The vocations for women needed to concentrate on areas which would conform to the nineteenth century female stereotype. Therefore, “there was no wish to destabilize employment patterns by introducing female labour into important male professions” (232) except in the nineteenth century feminist fiction. Journalism is an unconventional masculine profession which required an unconventional life style. Moreover, women who wished to work in a newspaper had to face the gender discrimination. As it is written in the novel, women’s position is worse than the men working in the same trade and their wages are also far lower than men’s. Moreover, women can show limited skill in the profession of newspaper industry because of the barriers based on gender. As Ellen Carol Dubois writes, for example, “They never learned the whole range of printing skills because the union barred them from its apprenticeship program, through which men learned the entire trade” (129). Whereas the male printers and newspaper workers were under protection of the National

Typographical Union, the union excluded women and worked to drive them out of the industry. As a result, writes DuBois, the journalist “women were hired and fired with great frequency” in the nineteenth century (130). Besides, as Miss Merrien says in the novel, women have to get retired much earlier than men.

In sum, Americans closed off options to women by restricting, constraining, manipulating and discouraging them from taking part in the prestigious professions of the nineteenth century such as journalism. However, the representations of female journalists attempted to prove that women’s place is not the home but the working world and next to men. Through focusing on the successive jobs such as newspaper business, the nineteenth century radical and reformist feminist writers advocated nonconformity to the external authority and women’s freedom to explore the world and determine their own place in a society based on competition.

5. Women Artists in Fiction and Art

The radical feminist art critic Lucy Lippard writes in *From the Center*, “Much women’s art, forged in isolation, is deprived not only of a historical context, but also of that dialogue with other recent art that makes it possible to categorize or discuss in regard to public interrelationships, esthetic or professional” (5). In her view, the restrictions against women in the nineteenth century art world consisted of three elements: isolation of women artists, waste of talent and energy of women through the mundane domestic factors, and public discrimination against female artists.

The isolation of women artists in the nineteenth century art world consisted of disregarding women’s creative talent and the stripping them of self-confidence in the male-dominated art schools (Lippard 5). The disadvantages of being a woman in the nineteenth century art schools, argues Nancy G. Heller in *Women Artists: An Illustrated History*, stemmed from the social pressure on women to live traditional domestic lives. The nineteenth century art world was a male domain, and the male artists, gallery owners as well as the patrons considered refused to consider women serious artists no matter how hard they worked or what they produced. Moreover,

most of the galleries turned women artists' works done without even seeing them. Lucy Lippard writes, "The roots of this discrimination can probably be traced to the fact that making art is considered a primary function, like running a business, or a government, and women are conventionally relegated to the secondary, housekeeping activities" (31). Nineteenth century radical feminist writers attempted to show that the nineteenth century art world isolated women and disregarded their talent by virtue of their gender not their capabilities. Charlotte Perkins Gilman shows in her short story that art making is considered as a particularly virile tradition.

In the short story, "The Unexpected," Charlotte Perkins Gilman represents a very successful woman artist who hides her name and her gender to be accepted into the male-dominated art world. Using an androgynous pseudo name, the heroine of the story aims to leak into the most prestigious art galleries of the nineteenth century. "Androgyny," writes Lucy Lippard, "was only attractive because it was too hard to be a woman" in the male-oriented art world. (4). The story valorizes women's artistic talents and emphasizes female self-reliance, as well as the nineteenth century traditional bias against women's creative capacity.

The story starts with a young male artist's, Edouard Charpentier's, flirting with a beautiful American woman whom he meets when he comes to visit his uncle in America. Eduard is attracted to this young woman and wants to marry her not knowing that she is also an emerging artist. One day Edouard says to her fiancée that he is in need of a master to follow his instructions to develop his artistic talent and inspiration. While he talks about his desires the readers learn that he adores the art works of the famous artist, M Dushesne. However, he is unaware of the fact that M. Dushesne is, in fact, nobody but his own fiancée when he says,

My school is the 'pleine-air,' and my master, could I but find him, is M. Duchesne has had pictures in the Salon for three years, and pictures elsewhere, eagerly bought, and yet Paris knows not M. Duchesne. We know his house, his horse, his carriage, his servants and his garden-wall, but he sees no one; indeed, he has left Paris for a time, and we worship afar off (149).

In the passage masculine images are used to describe the successful artist. He has paintings exhibited in the famous French Salon, which is a male-dominated annual academic event; and his art work is eagerly bought by the art dealers. He has a horse, carriage, servants and a big house; therefore, everybody thinks that he is a male artist. Moreover, nobody questions the gender of that mysterious M. Duchesne, because according to the nineteenth century rigid ideas on human creativity, only male artists can have such a great talent.

However, in the end of the story, both Edouard and the readers are shocked upon learning that M. Duchesne is a young and beautiful American woman who draws directly from the male models in her secret studio and exhibits her art work in the most prestigious salons of the world.

Through this story Charlotte Perkins Gilman attempts to argue that women's talent is wasted by the patriarchal institutions of art world, and the society denigrates women's artistic capabilities and restricts their access to prestigious salons. In such a society that intends to rationalize women's restrictions, the story shows that a woman can become a respected artist only if she can manage to hide her female identity. We see in the story that one's artistic career is determined by one's gender rather than talent and capacity in the nineteenth century.

The second theme concerning nineteenth century women artists' restrictions is the destructive effects of marriage and women's exploitation through mundane domestic duties. In the novels *The Awakening* (1899) and *The Story of Avis* (1877), for example, the husbands and the children of the artist heroines are represented as the domestic factors that keep them from artistic creation.

The Awakening tells the story of Edna Pontellier, a married woman who was seen as a property by her husband, Leonce Pontellier. Edna's husband is represented as a despot, dull, and ignorant man who pulls Edna down. Therefore, she is torn between her artistic spirit and her traditional role of a wife/mother. In the novel, Monsieur Pontellier rejects to acknowledge her desire to become an artist. He says,

‘It seems to me the utmost folly for a woman at head of a household, and the mother of children, to spend in an atelier days which would be better employed contriving for the comfort of her family.’

‘I feel like painting,” answered Edna. “Perhaps shan’t always feel like it.’

‘Then in God’s name paint! But don’t let the family go to the devil. There’s Madame Ratignolle; because she keeps up her music, she doesn’t let everything else go to chaos. And she is more of a musician than you are a painter.’

‘She isn’t a musician, and I’m not a painter. It isn’t on account of painting that I let things go.’

‘On account of what, then?’

‘Oh! I don’t know. Let me alone; you bother me’ (Chopin 95-96).

In the novel, Edna sees becoming an artist as an alternative to her restrictions within marriage. Rebelling against her limitations in the marriage, she searches for a way to gratify herself rather than accepting motherhood as the ultimate feminine goal. Moreover, “the children appeared before her like antagonists who had overcome her; who had overpowered and sought to drag her into the soul’s slavery for the rest of her days” (Chopin 42). For Edna, art is a way of searching one’s self-identity, a vehicle for representing one’s self. Art gives Edna a chance to know her own nature and identity freed from the restrictions of the society, but nobody understands her. Even Doctor Mandalet, an important psychologist of his society, interprets Edna Pontellier’s desire to become an artist as “misbehavior”. He explains to Monsieur Pontellier, “Women, my dear friend, is a very peculiar and delicate organism—a sensitive and highly organized woman, such as I know Mrs. Pontellier to be, is especially peculiar. It would require an inspired psychologist to deal successfully with them... Most women are moody and whimsical” (110).

Edna does not want to define herself as a wife and mother but as an artist in the novel. Since she sees her future only a further slavery, she commits suicide. She recalls the conversation she had with Mademoiselle Reisz just before she drowns herself:

‘But you have told me nothing of yourself what are you doing?’

‘Painting!’ laughed Edna. “I am becoming an artist. Think of it!’

‘Ah! an artist! You have pretensions, Madame.’

‘Why pretensions? Do you think I could not become an artist?’

‘I don’t know you well enough to say. I don’t know your talent or your temperament. To be an artist includes much; one must possess many gifts—absolute gifts—which have not been acquired by one’s own effort. And, moreover, to succeed, the artist must possess the courageous soul.’

‘What do you mean by the courageous soul?’

‘Courageous, *ma foi* ! The brave soul. The soul that dares and defies’
(105-106).

This excerpt is important for it shows that social disapproval of Edna’s fulfilling her desire to identify herself as a creative artist takes her reason to live. Edna is not approved by the other characters in the novel; her society believes that she is a selfish woman who endeavors to develop her creative talent rather than to fulfill her husband’s and children’s domestic comfort.

In the post-bellum women’s fiction marriage is seen as the foremost barrier to women’s creativity and artistic success. The existence of a husband and children take the woman artist’s freedom to harvest her talents, because in these novels being a female artist means not to carry the burden of domestic responsibilities.

In Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’ novel *The Story of Avis*, the heroine fails to fulfill her promise as a painter because of the drudgery in marriage and motherhood. The novel raises the question why many talented women seem to have produced so little. The novel gives a clear answer to this question suggesting that it is not due to the lack of talent but the absence of time, energy and emotional support within marriage. The novel should be noticed as an expression of the nineteenth century radical feminist view which aims to picture how the institutions of marriage and motherhood undermine a woman’s developing her creative potential.

In the novel, Avis is represented as a young and successful art student whose teachers find a brilliant aesthetic capacity in her works. However, instead of dedicating her life to her art, Avis believes in her suitor’s promises that marriage will not destroy her career for he will let her work as usual after marriage. However, because of the monetary problems, they cannot afford an atelier for Avis in the early

years of their marriage and then Avis has two children; meanwhile her husband gets ill and she has to nurse him finding herself in the everyday chores of the household instead of in her studio. As Phelps writes in the novel:

That one day wore itself to an end at last, or course, like others of its kind. It was what Avis had already learned to call a day well wasted. She was so exhausted, what with the heat of the weather and the jar of the household machinery, that she scarcely noticed her husband, when, after their guests had gone, he came into the cool darkness of the parlor, and threw himself in the chair beside her to say easily, 'Tired, Avis?'

Everybody knows moments when to be asked if one is tired seems in itself a kind of insult, and to be asked in that tone, an unendurable thing (140).

Avis is frustrated for she is confined into the house and household drudgery. She frequently questions a woman's nature and wishes to solve the nineteenth century "woman question" by planning to make a painting of a Sphinx. Sphinx stands for an emblem of women in the novel which symbolizes the power, mystery, and destructive energy of women as associated with Eastern mysticism and pagan mythology. She knows that women and men are thought to be opposing creatures in capacity and nature. In the Western thought, men were believed to be the rational humans whereas women were their irrational opposites. Avis wishes to explain this patriarchal view through her sphinx to show the enigma of womanhood. For her, irrational nature of women is the interpreted natural "mystery" of women. If only she could complete her painting of sphinx on time, she would explain the facts about women and would become a very successful woman artist of her time. However, she can never manage to finish her painting for years because of her role as a wife and mother. When she finishes it in order to buy winter clothes for her children, she sees that her art becomes rusty and worthless. As Phelps writes,

'It is of no use,' said Avis wearily, 'my pictures come back upon my hands. Nobody wants them—now. They tell that my style is gone. Goupil says I work as if I had a rheumatic hand—as if my fingers were

stiff. It is true my hand has been a little clumsy since—Van—But the stiffness runs deeper than the fingers’ (244)

Avis understands that her marriage has killed her artistic talent at last. She gives up trying to become an artist at the end of the novel and accepts the fact that the only product of a married woman can be her children. She then “turns with a supple motion, and snatches her little daughter saying ‘I have my child!’” (245). She says to herself with agony, “My child shall not repeat my blunders” (245).

The theme that being a woman artist in the male-dominated art world is a disadvantage is challenged in the painting of the nineteenth century American artist, Alice Barber Stephens. *The Female Life Class* represents female art students in a life class.



Painting 15:
Alice Barber Stephens
Female Life Class, 1879.

As Nancy G. Heller writes, female students were not allowed to study from the nude by virtue of gender in the male-dominated art schools. She argues that women artist “careers were hampered by lack of access to first-rate education, especially study of

the nude model—the cornerstone of western art training” (4). However, in the painting “Female Life Class” by Alice Barber Stephens we see a productive female art class with women artists studying from the female nude. The restrictive attitude toward female art students are challenged in the painting.

This painting testifies to the presence and identity of women as producers of culture. As Linda Nochlin and Joelle Bolloch write, studying from the nude proved the artist’s skill and achievement. Therefore, nude paintings were very prestigious forms of art and certified the artist’s talent and creativity. There are two important issues to be discussed upon this painting in terms of women’s place in the nineteenth century art world. One of them is that the painting shows that it is possible for female students to study from the nudes.



Painting 16:
Alexander Pope, Jr.
Women's Studio at the Boston Atheneum (n.d.)

The second thing to be noticed in this painting is that studying the female body was not considered a merit-based activity in the art world, because nineteenth century marked a good deal of masculinity in the prestigious sites. By depicting female art

students studying from a *female* nude, Alice Barber Stephens intends to show that female body is valuable and equally worthy to be studied by the art students.

In the painting of American artist Alexander Pope, Jr., on the other hand, women artists are depicted more realistically for they study from the ancient Greek torsos. There are two different groups of female art students who work in dignity for there is nothing to violate the morality of these young women. The only chance these female students are given to learn anatomy is to draw the plaster casts of antique sculptures arranged on the shelf at right which is a nude male torso, modestly turned toward the wall in the painting.

While the painting of Alexander Pope, Jr. depicts the female students' restriction from studying from the nude, Alice Barber Stephen's painting asserts that despite the nineteenth century restrictions and sexual discrimination, women artists continue to grow in both number and stature. The painting makes a strong statement about the necessity of a female art school to turn public attention to women's art and capacity. The fictions and the paintings that represented female artists show that the nineteenth century individualism, self-reliance, and artistic creativity are the nineteenth century myths fit for the male members of the society which offer hope to only male Americans that they can gain prestige, power, and wealth through their own efforts. Representations of the women artists show that women are not seen as individuals and artists by the male-dominated society and they are systematically isolated and excluded from the art world.

To sum up this section, the city is represented as a male domain in both the fiction and painting in the nineteenth century. Through the representations of working women who endeavor to work in the cities, the nineteenth century feminist writers attempted to teach the female readers how to defend themselves against the society which denigrates women's capabilities and restricts their access to power in the public world. As Susan K. Harris writes in *Nineteenth Century American Women's Novels: Interpretative Strategies*, these novels "expose the biases that rationalize women's restrictions: as the protagonists become successful. . . they prove to themselves—and most importantly to their readers—that in fact they are capable of achievement beyond home" (200).

C. Upper-Class Women and Work

Helen Waite Papashvily writes in *All the Happy Endings* that the nineteenth century industrial developments created a new economy and a different kind of upper-class in the United States. In the new economy, increased surplus value was invested in stocks and bonds by the capitalists while “women lacked the training and experience to share in the management of these possessions” (18). The new industrial economy not only excluded women’s management over the profits but it also turned women into idle wives who became men’s new symbol of possession and wealth. As Papasvily writes,

When wealth no longer took the form of castles and granaries, sweeping fields and wide timberlands, flocks and herds, men needed other symbols to indicate their prosperity. The first and most important sign of success came to be the idle woman in the household. She, like the ornaments which adorned and surrounded her, offered proof that some man had achieved so great a surplus he could afford objects not only for use but for waste (18).

Upper-class women believed that it was men’s lot to work outside home and women stood outside of this curse, because they were divinely designed for a state of repose, ease, and leisure. Therefore, upper class women are also called as “leisured women” by the historians. According to Daniel Rodgers, the model of “leisured woman” took its roots from two historical cultural structures which are the traditions of the European manor house and the Southern plantation system. Rodgers argues that the demand of wealthy men for a domestic oasis from business, and the women’s desire to put their burden of domestic toil onto someone else’s shoulder created such a class of idle leisured people in the nineteenth century.

Leisure class people tried to form a kind of aristocracy in the United States. As Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards write, since American culture lacked a true aristocratic tradition this newly rich class of people saw wealth and leisure as the inescapable prerequisites to social advancement in the nineteenth century American

culture. Accordingly this newly rich people (most of whom were real estate speculators) formed the “leisure class” in the country with a unique attitude. As Horton and Edwards write, “By setting itself up as the supreme arbiter of culture, dress, and manners, the entrenched leisure class attempted at once to justify its existence and to deny that existence to others” (190). Moreover, for the leisured class people who never worked in their life, working was accepted lowbred and ugly. Forgetting that “their own prosperity had its origin in such ungente occupations as shopkeeping, fur trading, or real estate speculation” (193), they insisted that leisured life was the only way to tolerate life.

In the women’s fiction there are two themes concerning upper-class women: the ennui of the leisure life and the working taboo of the upper-class women. Middle class feminist writers criticized upper-class women for their reluctance to contribute to the nineteenth century reformist movements. The feminist writers argued that rather than refinement and wealth, education and professional achievement fitted the upper class woman for female autonomy and happiness.

Gertrude Atherton, for example, developed a critical view of the idleness of the upper-class women in her novel, *Patience Sparhawk*. She represents the ennui of the leisured life of the nineteenth century upper class women who have nothing to do other than to “talk so much about nothing but gowns and young men and balls and the opera” (119). Atherton describes the mundane activities of the upper class women through the critical view point of her middle class character as follows: “We sit in the library every evening. In the morning we sit in the Tea House on the slope and. . . May *talks*, and Hal reads her yellow books and tells May ‘let up’. . . In the afternoon we drive, and I do think it such a waste of time to be going, going nowhere for two hours” (121). Catherina Cucinella writes that there are two major themes that emerge in Gertrude Atherton’s novel. They are Patience’s quest for happiness in the upper class marriage, and her confrontation with the nineteenth century upper class social conventions. She writes:

As Patience rises through the social classes, she finds the expectations of the elite just as limiting and confining as the poverty of her childhood. Within her upper-class marriage, Atherton’s heroine

discovers the alienation of women from mainstream America because of their relegation to the 'woman's sphere'. Patience exposes the ennui that exists for upper-class women, and although it portrays various types of marriages, none emerge as fulfilling options for women (7).

Atherton's novel stresses on the themes of the tyranny of men, and the husband's abuse of power over the wife. This upper class life prevents the heroine from exploring the world and to determine the shape of her own life. Therefore, the heroine seeks a broader definition of herself other than her upper class environment offers. Upon understanding that she cannot be free in the upper class society, she decides to end her marriage. The novel does not actively and consciously preach the female readers on the necessity of reaching beyond marriage for self-definition, but it overtly questions the restrictions of the upper class marriage and culture by glorifying female spiritual independence.

The second theme concerning the upper class women's working in the nineteenth century women's fiction is the middle class opinion that upper class women must work in the reformist movements to help the poor. In Louisa May Alcott's novel, for example, while working as a domestic servant for the Stuart Family, Christie Devon emphasizes the necessity and the duty of the upper-class women to build a bridge between the rich and the poor in the society. She says,

Good heavens! why don't they do or say something new and interesting, and not keep twaddling on about art, and music, and poetry, and cosmos? The papers are full of appeals for help for the poor, reforms of all sorts, and splendid work that others are doing; but these people seem to think it isn't genteel enough to be spoken of here (28).

In the novel, Louisa May Alcott asserts that, if the upper-class people helped the reform movements to ameliorate working people's conditions, there would not be much antagonism between the upper and the lower classes, likewise between the employer and the employees. However, upper class people seem to avoid such subjects of social reform and feminist activities in the society. As Rod W. Horton and Herbert W. Edwards write in *Backgrounds of American Thought*, upper-class people saw the nineteenth century political subjects as unpleasant and annoying. They write,

The mention of such realities as death, disease, insanity, deformity, moral irregularity, money-making, crime, or such controversial matters as religion, politics, or divorce were avoided as much as possible, with the idea that such things were disturbing and therefore undesirable as topics of polite conversation (Horton and Edwards 195).

Such kind of politeness is interpreted as hypocrisy and moral inactivity by the nineteenth century middle class women writers. Alcott's novel strongly criticized upper class people's ignorance towards the misfortunes of the poor.

In the paintings representing upper-class women, almost the same themes are observed by the male artists. John Singer Sargent, who was the artist of the nineteenth century high society, represented the beauty of the women in his paintings as the commodities of upper class.



Painting 17:
John Singer Sargent
*The Wyndham Sisters: Lady Elcho,
Mrs. Adeane, and Mrs. Tennant, 1899.*

The architectural symbols of prosperity, the handsomely framed paintings in the background, the generous show of the fashionable dresses, and the idle postures of the young women work to equate them with preciousness and refinement in the painting. The artist seeks to reveal the women's external appearance as a "beauty", thus his image is meant to be seductive. Trevor Fairbrother writes in *John Singer Sargent* that the nineteenth century prominent art critic Roger Fry praised this painting when it was first exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1900, he said,

It is most marvelous tour de force he has yet accomplished. Since Sir Thomas Lawrence's time, no one has been able thus to seize the exact cachet of fashionable life, or to render it in paint with a smartness and piquancy which so exactly correspond to the social atmosphere itself. Such works must have an enduring interest to posterity simply as perfect records of the style and manners of a particular period (Fairbrother 97).

John Singer Sargent was a very successful artist who managed to record the life style of the upper class women by drawing attention to these women's precise social task of projecting "a fastidious superiority by virtue of being ornate, exclusive, and prohibitively expensive" (Fairbrother 97).

The nineteenth century reformist Jennie June Croly (she was the founder of Sorosis, an active working women's association) once said "the working women is to be congratulated; that it is the idle women who are more truly objects of sympathy" (DuBois 150) emphasizing that upper class women's unproductive life styles was a barrier to their emancipation.

In sum, upper class men's accumulation of property, their aesthetic development and their snobbish impulses acted in harmony to create an idle image of a desirable woman in the nineteenth century. For the upper class men, the idle wife was an ornamentally wrought weapon used against the other men in their society. In other words, upper-class women were the measure of upper class men's power to waste, therefore upper-class women did not produce but consumed. They are the consumers and the consumed at the same time.

D. Rural Images of the Nineteenth Century Women's Work

Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the periods of family-based economy and production. In the family-based form of production the household was the basic unit of the economy. This form of economic structure did not change much in the nineteenth century rural areas due to the rural women's considerable contribution to agricultural production. However, most women living in the rural areas did not participate in the wage work in the nineteenth century, because there was little distinction between economic and domestic life. Since all the members of the family were responsible for production, women's labor remained invisible and unimportant in the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth century Swedish-American artist, Olof Krans, attempts to show the patriarchal structure that exploits women's labor in the rural areas of Illinois in his painting. The painting reflects the harmonious work of the farmer women.



Painting 18:
Olof Krans
Corn Planting, 1896.

Olof Krans' depiction of the corn field shows endlessly repeated female figures stressing the breadth of the prairie and the communal working life of these women. The line of the women farmers connotes the male discipline and the female obedience. The man standing on the right seems to supervise the women workers. The painting documents the patriarchal division of labor in the rural areas of Illinois. Women are represented as masses rather than being individuals. Moreover, women have to follow the pattern that is constituted for them and cannot act individually to plan their own daily schedule.

In the nineteenth century, there was a great demand for labor on family farms and this demand made women's work quite visible during planting and harvesting. Men and women worked side by side on the farms. Some of the artists depicted women in their labor as the agricultural workers. Dawson Dawson-Watson makes the farmer woman's labor quite visible in *Harvest Time*.



Painting 19:
Dawson Dawson-Watson. *Harvest Time*, n.d.

In the painting the middle-aged woman is depicted in the foreground while the male workers are depicted in the background. The focus of the painting is on the woman's

work as she binds the crop while men are apparently reaping it. This painting shows women's economic role as the heavy laborers in the agricultural areas and it represents the woman as a worker who contributes to the agricultural production as much as a man. The painting is politically important for it aims to display the working woman as a working person rather than stressing her femaleness or her inferiority to men. On the other hand, the painting does not suggest that women are exploited by the patriarchal structure for it displays both men and women working at the same time in the same task. Such an egalitarian attitude shows that some American artists accepted realist tradition as a democratic and egalitarian way of representing working people.

Louisa May Alcott criticizes the division of labor in the rural areas arguing that it turns women into slaves. She displays the patriarchal structure of the country life in her novel, *Work: A Story of Experience*, through Christie's experiences. In the novel, county means rustic chores, hard work on the farm and in the farm house, as well as dependence to the husband or the father economically and culturally. Christie prefers staying in the urban boarding houses where the conditions are quite poor and sometimes unpleasant. She prefers working in the least wanted jobs in the city instead of staying in the county. In the novel the life in the rural America is despised from the view point of the young heroine:

A little room far up in the tall house was at the girl's disposal for a reasonable sum, and she took possession, feeling very rich with the hundred dollars Uncle Enos gave her, and delightfully independent, with no milk pans to scald; no heavy lover to elude; no humdrum district school to imprison her day after day (16).

Christie knows that staying in the farm house of Uncle Enos means submission to the male authority, getting married and then dependency to a husband, a pattern drawn for her by the patriarchal rural system. She knows that if she stays in this farming town, she cannot create an autonomous self. She is after the possibilities of female action rather than becoming a farmer's wife.

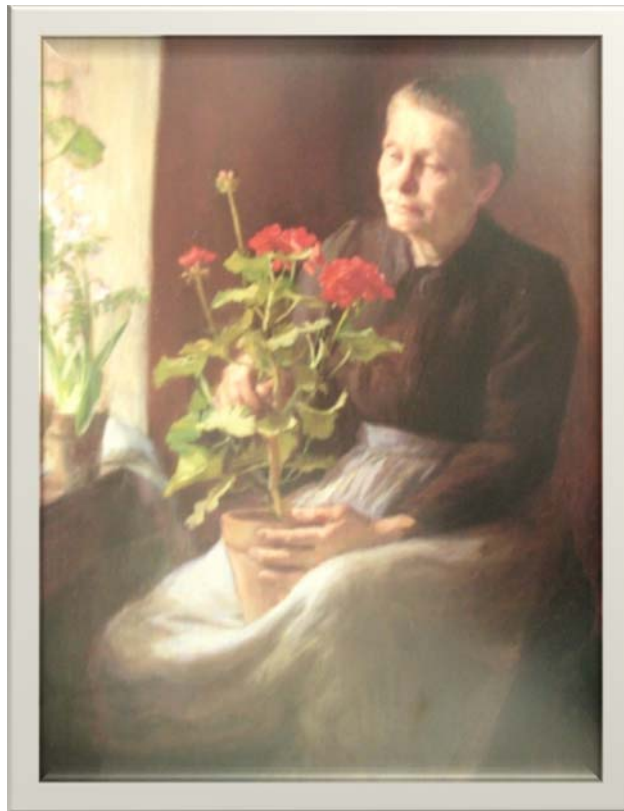
Unlike Louisa May Alcott, Sarah Orne Jewett has a very radical view on the value of the rural women in her fictions. Her representations of the rural women display women as being superior to men, especially in terms of ability to accord with

nature. In Sarah Orne Jewett's short stories, rural life does not mean subordination or dependence on the male rules for the strong female characters, because Sarah Orne Jewett sees country life through dignified nostalgic lenses. In her fiction, women are represented as smarter than men. Moreover, her female characters have special powers that no men can possess in her fictions. In *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, for example, Miss Todd is one of the central characters who is the master of plants and herbs that have healing powers. She speaks to her flowers and plants, and manages to have a unique way of communicating with them. She gains respect of her community with her curative recipes based on her own experiences in the nature. She is a unique autonomous and strong woman. Elizabeth Ammons argues in *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century*, that Sarah Orne Jewett's heroine, Mrs. Todd symbolizes feminine support and maternity through use of herbal images. She argues that Mrs. Todd's favorite herb is *pennyroyal*, a special herb of women, specifically of the womb. Ammons argues that by use of pennyroyal as an important symbol of maternity, Sarah Orne Jewett attempted to emphasize female power of giving birth. She writes,

The herb is used in childbirth to promote the explosion of the placenta and thus to facilitate a successful birth. Or it can be used as an emmenagogue, an agent that induces or increases menstrual flow, and therefore it is useful for abortion. Pennyroyal, in other words, is associated with both the beginning and the end of new human life, with a woman's power to create or kill (56).

Ammons sees pennyroyal as the archetypal image of maternal power which is intentionally used by Jewett in the novel. Mrs. Todd's growing pennyroyal in her garden also shows that she sees abortion as a woman's right.

Caroline Lord's painting, *Woman with a Geranium*, also reflects an old woman's intimate relationship with plants. In the painting the old woman picks the dried leaves off her flowers with a motherly affection.



Painting 20:
Caroline Lord
Woman with a Geranium, n.d.

The woman in the painting has big and masculine hands which are the symbol of rural labor. She is represented as hard worker and sober. However, she differs from Jewett's representation of Mrs. Todd for she is depicted as a simple old woman with a simple black dress, a symbol of religious purity and traditional female submissiveness. She also wears an apron, a symbol of domestic work. Away from being a unique woman who has a special power that makes her superior to men of her society, this simple hard-working woman is the idealized figure of the nineteenth century rural woman in terms of traditional social values. The common theme that associates the two women figures is that they seem to understand the language of the plants and show great harmony with nature.

In Junius R. Sloan's painting the audience sees a young shepherdess who is in peace with the nature. The young shepherdess reminds the audience Sarah Orne Jewett's short story "The Dunnet Shepherdess" which takes place in New England.



Painting 21:

Junius R. Sloan, *Cool Morning on the Prairie*, 1866.

The narrator of Jewett's story, "The Dunnet Shepherdess" is a young school teacher who comes to Dunnet to teach. Through her observations the reader learns about the dynamics of the New England rustic life. One day, while she is walking in the pasture with the fisherman, she suddenly sees a flock of sheep all walking in harmony. She is astonished with the greatness of the flock, and wants to be sure whether it is possible that a single person is responsible for these animals' harmonious movement. The fisherman tells the story of the shepherdess then, "You see most folks about here gave up sheep-raisin' years ago 'count o' the dogs. So she gave up school-teachin' and went out to tend her flock, and has shepherded ever since, an' done well" (521). Sarah Orne Jewett describes the shepherdess as a "tall figure of a woman came following the flock and stood still on the ridge, looking toward us as if her eyes had been quick to see a strange object in the familiar emptiness of the field" (521). She is intentionally represented with superhuman qualities of quick eyes and animal instinct

of a sheep dog in the story. Sarah Orne Jewett idealizes the shepherdess figure as a powerful and nature-friendly creature. The story tells that the shepherdess had refused to follow the traditional pattern that was drawn for her because she felt beyond obeying the patriarchal rules of the rural society and becoming a school teacher. Her life is not described as a pleasant one; the shepherdess is alone and she knows what tiredness is, but she is independent and strong as Jewett writes,

We could hear the neglected sheep bleating on the hill in the next moment's silence. Then she smiled at me, a smile of noble patience, of uncomprehended sacrifice, which I can never forget. There was all the remembrance of disappointed hopes, the hardships of winter, the loneliness of single-handedness in her look, but I understood, and I love to remember her worn face and her young blue eyes (528).

Jewett's female characters reject to obey the male-dominated rules of the conventional rural society. Her female characters, on the other hand, create alternative definitions for themselves. Moreover, the rural women of Jewett's fiction are depicted as being stronger and more decisive than men.

Representing rural women as the breadwinners in the nineteenth century art is another important theme to be explored in this section. Patricia E. Johnson argues that during the first half of the nineteenth century, the increasing dominance of men in the working-class movements constructed the ideal of "the male breadwinner" which meant that to be fully a member of the working class was to be male. However, this premise was wrong, because rural women were also fully working-class and they were the breadwinners, too. In her 1893 painting, *The Breadwinner*, the American artist Emma Lampert Cooper represented a spinning woman as the breadwinner of the household.



Painting 22:
Emma Lampert Cooper
The Breadwinner, 1893.

In the painting a middle-aged woman works in her one-room atelier of the farm house. Thomas Dublin writes in *Women at Work*, that in the nineteenth century the spinning of yarn and the weaving of cloth remained primarily domestic industries performed by women in the home. Dublin writes that spinning “constituted a major element of women’s contribution to the family economy in this period and filled a good portion of women’s domestic activity” (4). He argues that spinning and weaving at home integrated within the rural economy in the nineteenth century and women were the breadwinners of their home through working all day.

Kathleen Gerson writes in *No Man’s Land*, that the social and cultural belief that men are naturally and traditionally breadwinners becomes a myth today thanks to such radical representations. Kathleen Gerson argues that the association between

manhood and the breadwinner is a historical development which emerged with capitalism and which has to change by the course of history. Gerson writes,

In fact, men's behavior and our wider cultural ideals about manhood have not consistently conformed to this model throughout American history. To the contrary, the idea that men should provide sole or primary economic support for their households in lieu of participating in domestic work did not develop until the emergence of industrial capitalism and only gradually came to describe the behavior of most men (17).

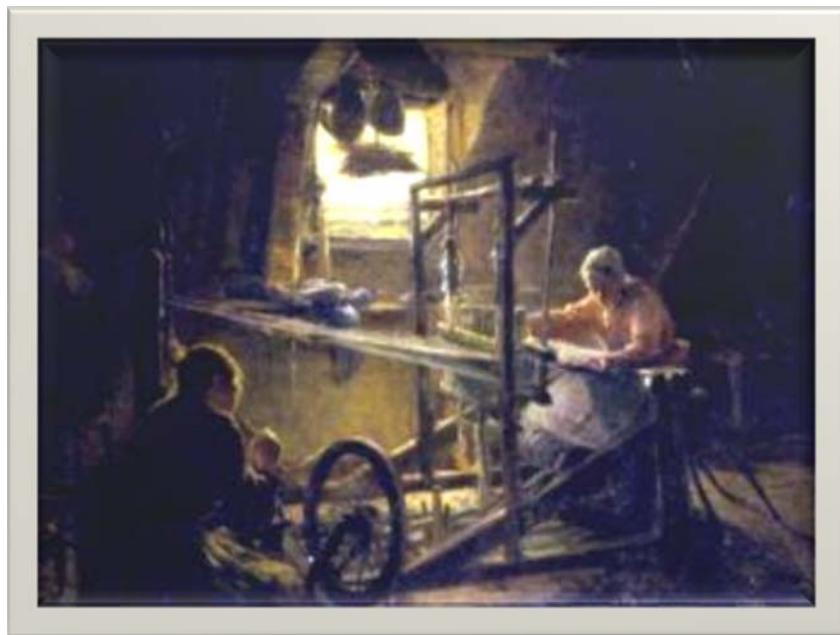
Cooper's painting attempts to show that historically men were not the breadwinner of their household especially in the rural parts of the country where capitalism did not arrive yet. The painting also shows that rural women worked for long hours to contribute to the agricultural economy, therefore their labor cannot be underestimated.



Painting 23:
Henry Ossawa Tanner
Interior with Woman Spinning, 1893.

In Henry Ossawa Tanner's painting, *Interior with Woman Spinning*, we see a similar message. In the painting there is a woman represented at the spinning loom in her rustic house. The little boy is interested in the fireplace while the old man watches the working woman. That the man is interested in the woman's movements indicates the importance of the task. The woman continues to weave with a confident manner while the other members of the family are represented as unproductive.

Tanner's painting depicts the spinning woman as being more productive than the man in this painting in terms of contributing to the family income, and we do not get the slightest clue whether the man is the breadwinner of this household in the painting, moreover, we cannot say whether this woman produces only for the family members or for trading.



Painting 24:
Emma Lampert Cooper
Weaving Homespun, Canada, n.d.

Emma Lampert Cooper's *Weaving Homespun* is another example for women's weaving in the nineteenth century. In the painting, two women are depicted as

confined to this gloomy room to weave all day to contribute to their family income. All three paintings we have seen so far show that weaving is accepted as a female job and women of the rural America weaved both for their family members and for the exchange value.

In sum, in the rural areas, contribution to the farm work and the household labor was considered as the natural tasks of women. The representations that show rural women's economic contribution to the family income carry a political view that urges self-estimation of these women who are depicted as the breadwinners of their home. Breadwinning meant status-determination, decision making, and authority. Since the division of labor was posited to be necessary for the functioning of the social equilibrium and the economic system, the paintings depicting women weavers stand as a proof that women can compete for status in the family without necessarily disrupting the solidarity of the economic system. The message is a radical one for the nineteenth century for it argues that women should be allowed to compete on an equal basis with men and their talents and capacities (of becoming a breadwinner in many areas other than solely by spinning and weaving) should not be underestimated or suppressed. Such representations aim to give the rural women the self-respect they deserve for their labor and success. We argue that these representations supported the nineteenth century feminist movement to broaden women's rights and women's special qualities as women in the rural contexts, too.

In conclusion, this study concerning the interpretation of the representations of the working American women in fiction and art required historical study and feminist criticism in order to discern the differing importance of the meaning of work for the nineteenth century women in the shifting configuration of social and economic life. Through their representations of the working women the selected women writers and the artists, in our view, challenged the public definition of women's place in the society. These writers and the artists attempted to persuade the nineteenth century women that they can re-create themselves by working outside home. Susan K. Harris writes in her essay, "Evaluating Women's Fiction," that "If a heroine creates an autonomous self and succeeds in impressing it on her society and her reader for six hundred pages, she has left convincing evidence that it can be done" (268). Therefore,

we evaluated the novels and the art works in terms of their contribution to the expansion of the nineteenth century women's possibilities for female action and self-definition. The representations of working women, we argue, show the nineteenth century radical and the reformist feminist women writers' struggle to embody emerging new ideas about women's capabilities. Such representations pursue their careers outside home and claim stronger roles in the society.

V. CONCLUSION

Writing this thesis, we aimed to restore historical consciousness about female exclusion from the male-dominated working world of the United States, a capitalist Western society. Through looking at the works of specific women writers in relation to the way in which their work differed from the dominant culture, we conclude that the nineteenth century women's writing not only diverged from American male-dominated culture, but also criticized it. These nineteenth century radical and reformist feminist writers questioned the assumptions of the dominant culture in respect to the relationship between men and women, and instead of accepting the nineteenth century idealization of domestic and submissive womanhood, these writers (and the artists such as Cora Parker, Arthur Fries, Alice Barber Stephens, Robert Koehler, Olof Krans, Ellen Day Hale, and E. L. Henry) showed the pettiness and the selfishness in the male attitude toward women.

The thesis aims to point to the exclusion of women not only from the working world but also from the nineteenth century cultural production. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock write in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, that the nineteenth century male-dominated social system isolated women from the participation in the mainstream of artistic production. They write,

Women artists were treated, as were all women, collectively as a homogenous group by virtue of their shared gender, and separately from artists of a different gender, women were effectively placed in an absolutely different sphere from men... Art by women was subsumed into male-dominated nineteenth century notions of femininity, and women's art was relegated to a special category as distinct from public professionalism (44).

Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock points to the fact that women artists who professionally worked were treated as different, less creative, and separate on account of gender alone. Therefore, another objective of this thesis is to alter male-dominated American art history which made many women artists invisible and forgotten. We hope our thesis assisted the feminist art history, because after tiresome researches we

managed to unearth the least known yet very important and successful women artists whose works we interpreted in relation to women's power in the thesis.

The second platform that women are excluded from is the nineteenth century political sphere. In this thesis, we wanted to show that nineteenth century women could work together for a change within this male-dominant world. Through integration, we see that nineteenth century American women's political strength could lessen their weaknesses in the cultural world, too. The women's integration was supported by the women writers and the artists who sustained women's participation in both working place and the social reform through political activism with their representations. We hope that the achievements of these writers and the artists as well as the nineteenth century radical and reformist feminist movements can pave the way for the world women who still struggle to gain access to the male domains of politics and the professions. Female communities which have been self consciously disintegrated in the twentieth century are reminded the past with this study. A young generation of women can formulate and work for a strong women's political bloc which might be considered as the expansion of the nineteenth century women's movements.

We do not attempt to hide the fact that there is always great diversity of meanings embedded in the literary and artistic representations that we studied in this thesis, and thus more than one way of interpreting them. Instead, we prefer to stress another equally important fact that our critical interpretation aims to select certain feelings and meaning from the works and to reproduce them through our interaction. In other words, we take part in the communication process of each work written and drawn by the nineteenth century writers and the artists through our feminist interpretations that seek to show that these representations encouraged nineteenth century women to work outside the home to gain power in the society. We agree with Barbara Bardes and Suzanne Gossett who write in *Declarations of Independence: Women and Political Power in Nineteenth Century American Fiction* that "Novels are an extremely potent source for interpreting the struggle for women's rights"; that the nineteenth century women's novels overtly attempted to influence their readers to demand modifications in political and legal structures affecting women (6). The post-

bellum women writers, in our view, wanted to educate their female readers. In Bardes and Gossett's words, "Through structure, character, and comment, authors could take positions on power relationships between men and women without directly addressing the publicly sanctioned hierarchy of the sexes in the political sphere" (6). In this thesis we aim to prove that the post-bellum representations of the working women managed to bring the political sphere into the homes of the women through novels. Therefore, the representations of independent power seeker heroines are inconsistent with the ideals of male-dominated nineteenth century culture which denied equality of women, and therefore the power seeking working women's representations are accepted as threatening by the nineteenth century critics. Moreover, as Joyce W. Warren writes, "the most threatening of these writers give to the central female character all of the self-assertiveness and self-dependence that the male writers portrayed in the male individualist" (15). Writing this thesis, we intend to form a work which would help us see the history of American women's labor in a new way: a constant struggle to have a career equally important with that of men. We aimed to make the nineteenth century women's endeavors to work outside home remarkable through our study.

The nineteenth century artists highly valued art's mimetic capacity. Under the influence of French artist Gustave Courbet, many nineteenth century American artists began to portray working class subjects with unvarnished realism. Women artists brought new ways of presenting daily realities in their works representing female experience. Allison Byerly argues in *Realism, Representation and the Arts in Nineteenth Century Literature*, that art has a potential to recreate reality. She writes that the nineteenth century female artists and writers knew that "art could be turned from a reflection of reality into a substitute for reality; it could act as either a powerful diagnostic tool or as a placebo" (1). Thus, recognizing the potentially subversive nature of the painting and novel, many nineteenth century female artists and writers revealed the subjects appropriate for their feminist views. Susan K. Harris writes in *Nineteenth Century American Women's Novels*, that women's fiction "illustrate a genuinely radical change in women's attitudes toward themselves, and their personal and political capabilities" (201).

Nineteenth century women's writings were criticized by male-dominated literary world not only for their feminist ideals but also for their unique narrative style. Male critics accused the nineteenth century women's fiction of being "feminine" and their narrative style as weak and nontraditional. Nancy A. Walker argues in *The Disobedient Writer: Women and Narrative Tradition* that male and female writers have not participated in the narrative process in the same ways or for the same reasons, and therefore, female narrative differs from the traditional narrative. She writes,

Because of the way in which Western literary traditions have been formulated, most male writers who have appropriated and revised previous texts have worked within a tradition that included them and their experience, whereas women writers have more commonly addressed such texts from the position of outsider, altering them either to point up the biases they encode or to make them into narratives that women can more comfortably inhabit (3).

Nancy A. Walker argues that women have been excluded from language and its authority and therefore from writing itself. She argues that women's relation to literature and intellectual traditions has been made problematic by unequal access to power and agency within these realms. As a result of their exclusion from language and literature women, she argues; reconstitute a genre that accords with women's experience and vision apart from the models of the tradition. In other words, women writers "reorient" the dominant stories of their culture by "emphasizing conventionally marginal characters and themes" (5). Likewise, Susan K. Harris writes in her essay "'But is it any Good?': Evaluating Nineteenth-Century American Women's Fiction" that feminist scholars need to "learn how to describe noncanonical American women's literature in term of *process*—that is, to see it within the shifting currents of nineteenth-century American ideologies" (263). She argues, "Acknowledging that imaginative literature is both reactive and creative, we can examine the ways that it springs from, reacts against, or respond to the plots, themes, languages in the discursive arena that engendered it at the same time that arena by reshaping old worlds into new ones" (263-64). Since we agree that the novels and

paintings reflect the concern of the authors and the artists with the social realities, we believe that, literary and artistic representations can be accepted as social actions that suggest possibilities of cultural and social transformation. The nineteenth century reformist feminist women's fiction, thus, attempts to invalidate the restraints imposed by the traditional male-dominated American visions of women's nature. In other words, women's texts embody a battle for self-definition and illustrate the possibilities for female action. The nineteenth century women's texts show women's struggle to embody emerging new ideas about women's capabilities. Their representations of the working women show their attempt to claim stronger roles in the society.

Finally, we argue that the nineteenth century women writers attempted to envision an equal political society through their representations of the working women, but it needs to be underlined that even in the twenty first century the political culture is not ready to accept women in the highest vocational positions or political offices in the United States.

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VII. APPENDIX

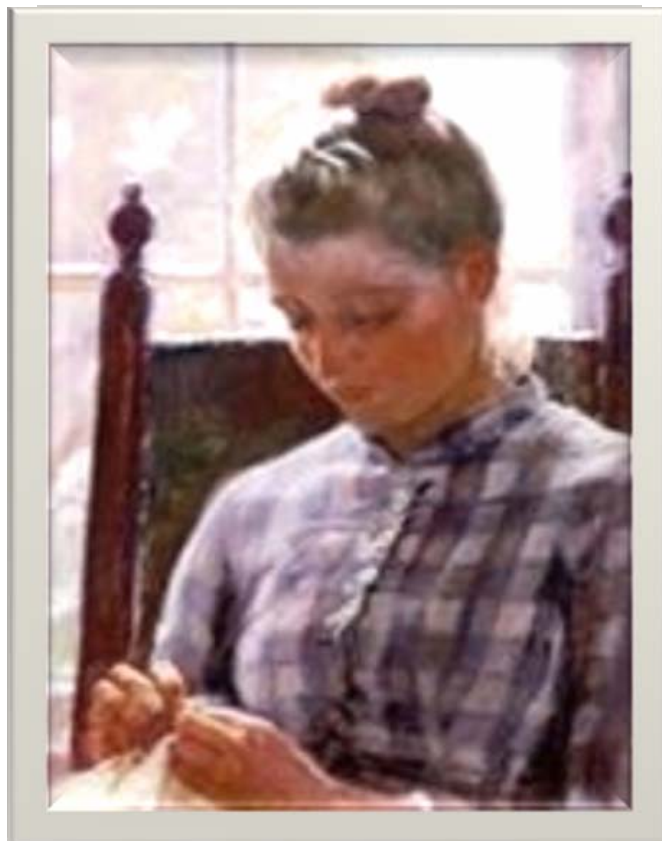
The Color Plates

Painting 1:

Cora Parker, *Candlelight*, 1899.



Painting 2:
Ellen Day Hale, *June*, 1893.



Painting 3:

Edward Lamson Henry, *Afternoon Quiet*, n.d.



Painting 4:

Charles Arthur Fries, *Too Late*, 1896.



Painting 5:

Robert Koehler. *The Strike*, 1886.



Painting 6:

Robert Frederick Blum

Venetian Lace Makers, 1885.



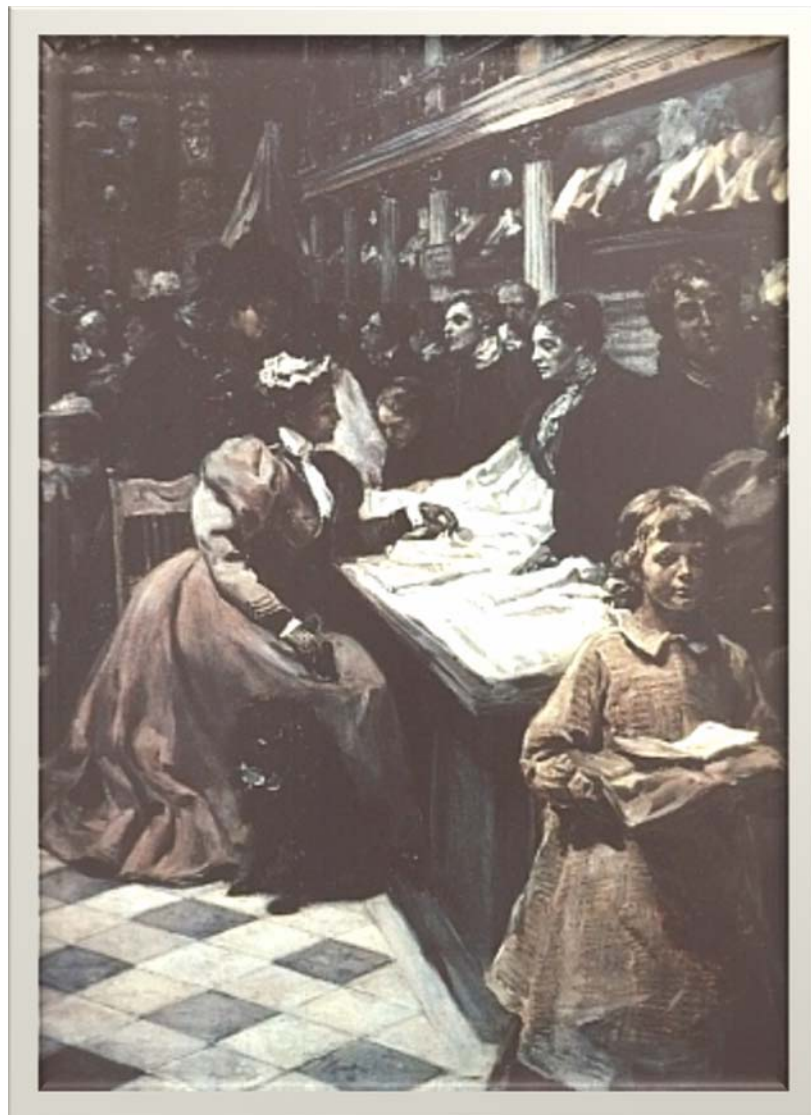
Painting 7:
Robert Frederick Blum,
Venetian Lace Makers, 1887.



Painting 8:
Edwin Romanzo Elmer
A Lady of Baptist Corner,
Ashfield, Massachusetts ,1892.



Painting 9:
Alice Barber Stephens
from *The Women in Business Series*, 1897.



Painting 10:
Lily Martin Spencer,
The War Spirit at Home, 1866.



Painting 11:
Cecilia Beaux
Ernesta with Nurse, 1894.



Painting 12:
Winslow Homer
The Country School, 1871.



Painting 13:

Alice Barber Stephens

Woman Giving Little Boy Piano Lesson, 1870.



Painting 14:

Samuel Richards,

Evangeline Discovering Her Affianced in the Hospital, n.d.



Painting 15:

Alice Barber Stephens

Female Life Class, 1879.



Painting 16:
Alexander Pope, Jr.
Women's Studio at the Boston Atheneum (n.d.)



Painting 17:
Olof Krans
Corn Planting, 1896.



Painting 18:

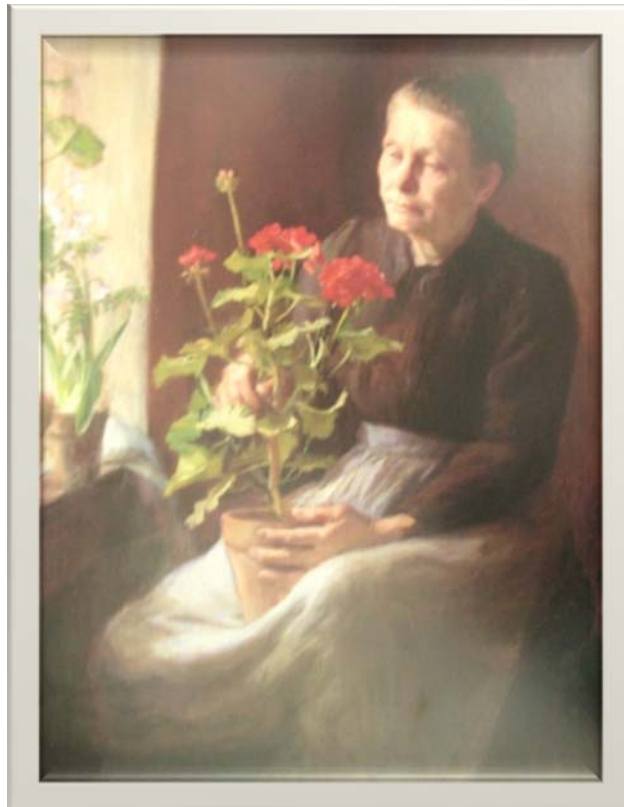
Dawson Dawson-Watson. *Harvest Time*, n.d.



Painting 19:

Caroline Lord

Woman with a Geranium, n.d.



Painting 20:

Junius R. Sloan, *Cool Morning on the Prairie*, 1866.



Painting 21:

Emma Lampert Cooper

The Breadwinner, 1893.



Painting 22:

Henry Ossawa Tanner

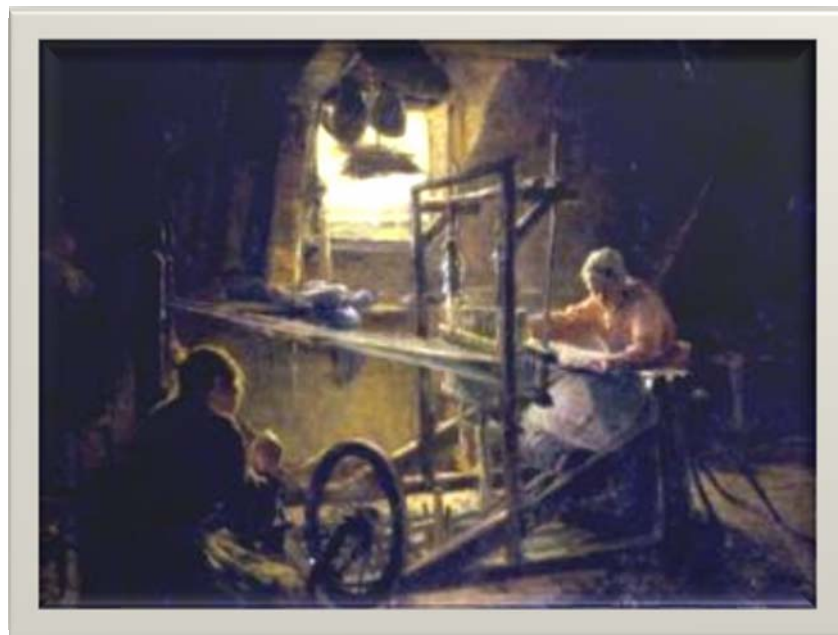
Interior with Woman Spinning, 1893.



Painting 23:

Emma Lampert Cooper

Weaving Homespun, Canada, n.d.



ÖZGEÇMİŞ

1998 yılında Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı bölümünden birincilikle mezun olmuştur. 1998 yılında aynı bölümde Araştırma Görevlisi olarak çalışmaya başlamış, yine aynı yıl Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalında yüksek lisans programına başlamış, 2001 yılında yüksek lisansını “1900-1940 Yılları Arasında Amerikan Resim Sanatı ile Şiir Sanatının Şehirleşme Çerçevesinde Etkileşimi” başlıklı tez ile tamamlamıştır.

BÖLÜMDE VERDİĞİ DERSLER

117 Introduction to Literary Studies, 1999’dan itibaren

125 Textual Analysis, 1999’dan itibaren

310 American Art I 1999’dan itibaren

318 American Art II 1999’dan itibaren

223 Aspects of American Culture I 2002/ Bahar yarıyılı.

YABANCI DİLLER

İngilizce

Fransızca

ALDIĞI BURSLAR

Fund For American Studies / IIPES : International Institute for Political and Economic Studies Gergetown University Washington, DC and The Greek Association For Atlantic and European Cooperation, Certificate Program in Crete, 14 Temmuz- 6 Agustos, 2002.

ULUSLAR ARASI SEMPOZYUMLARDA VERİLEN BİLDİRİLER :

Dreams of the Future and the Politics of Nostalgia: A Way of Understanding Recent U.S. Presidential Elections. Ayca Yıldız & David Bradt, Professor Emeritus at

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Popüler Kültür Eleştirisi Olarak Amerikan Pop Sanatı. Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü “Toplumsal Cinsiyet Roller: Uzlaşma ve Çatışma” Seminerleri, Haziran 2001.

Amerikan “The Expatriates” Ressamlarının Portrelerinde Kadının Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rollerinin Belirlenmesi. Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü “Toplumsal Cinsiyet Roller: Uzlaşma ve Çatışma” Seminerleri, Haziran 2001.

Historical and Ideological Narratives : Tillie Olsen as a Woman Writer of the 1930s. American Studies Association of Turkey, 25th Annual American Studies Seminar in Turkey, Kuşadası, İzmir. Kasım 2000.

ULUSLARARASI HAKEMLİ DERGİLERDE BASILAN MAKALELER

“Testimonial Literature’s Uniting the Center and the Margin: A Study on Hiromi Goto’s *Chorus of Mushrooms* and Joy Kogawa’s *Obasan*”. *Interactions*, Bahar Sayısı: 15.01. İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 2006. ISSN 1300-574-X.

“Testimonial Stories of Dorothy Allison’s White Trash Queer Identity”. *Interactions*, Bahar Sayısı: 14.01. İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 2005. ISSN 1300-574-X.

KATILDIĞI AKADEMİK PROJELER

Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi öğretim üyeleri tarafından yürütülen *Popüler Kültürden Edebiyata Amerikan Kimliği* başlıklı ve Yardımcı Doç. Dr. Seçil Saraçlı yönetimindeki üç yazarlı kitap projesinde yazar olarak çalışmaktadır, 2007.

T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı desteği ile Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi öğretim üyeleri tarafından yürütülen İzmir İli Kültür Envanteri Araştırma Projesinde görevlendirilmiştir, 2004.

Ege Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Radyo Sinema Televizyon Bölümü ve Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü ortak çalışması ile gerçekleştirilen *Benim Symrna'm, Benim İzmir'im* konu başlıklı Uluslararası Kısa Film Yarışması Projesi'nde görevlendirilmiştir, 2004.

Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Bölümü ile İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü öğretim üyelerinin ortak çalışmasıyla yürütülen Öğretim Üyelerini Geliştirme Projesi'nde KPDS ve ÜDS sınavlarına yönelik İngilizce ders vermek üzere görevlendirilmiştir, 2003.

KATILDIĞI ORGANİZASYONLAR

Ege Üniversitesi Yayınlarından yılda iki defa çıkarılan uluslararası hakemli dergi *Interactions* dergisinde yardımcı editörlük yapmaktadır.

1999 yılından bu yana *Ege University International Cultural Studies Symposium* organizasyon komitesinde görevlidir.

Edebiyat Fakültesi Öğrencileri Şiir Topluluğu tarafından gerçekleştirilen *21 Mart Dünya Şiir Günü: Edebiyat Fakültesi Öğrencileri Müzikli Şiir Dinletisi* etkinliğinde, sorumlu öğretim elemanı olarak görevlendirilmiştir. 2001-2007.

ABSTRACT

The nineteenth century doctrine of the separate spheres, as particularized and clarified in literature, law, medicine, religion, and sociology prescribed that women's personal lives be centered on home, husband, and children. The separation between the male public sphere and the female private sphere deprived women of their economic independence and women could find very limited jobs to be performed except the housework. Patriarchal family structure, religious ideologies, community norms, and political policies all interacted in formation of the nineteenth century ideal woman image as the domestic angels and servants. Moreover, the social oppression of women was reinforced in the written texts of the western thought, and supported by the cultural values. The eighteenth and the nineteenth century intellectual disciplines such as sociology, philosophy and psychology produced discourse that disempowered women and separated the spheres of men and women.

Our feminist interpretation of the selected works of art and fiction attempts to show how the nineteenth century women writers criticized the nineteenth century male-dominated cult of domesticity that restricted women from working outside home, and to show that artistic and literary representations of working women in the post bellum era produced images and definitions of what it meant to work in the nineteenth century. Women artists and authors who produced representations of working women helped to give a particular meaning to the idea of women's liberation.

Nineteenth century American women's novels and paintings about working women are analyzed in this thesis to investigate such themes as the sexual division of labor in the family and in the society, the separate spheres doctrine between men and women, and women's marginalization through the post bellum male-dominated cultural values. Through our analysis of the representations of the working women in American women's fiction, we concluded that the women writers that are selected to be studied in this thesis opposed the traditional view that motherhood, wifehood, and housekeeping were all women's nature and destiny.

ÖZET

Ondokuzuncu yüzyıldaki edebiyat, hukuk, tıp, din, felsefe ve sosyoloji gibi alanlarda belirgin bir biçimde gözlemlenen ayrı dünyalar öğretisi, kadının yaşamının evi, kocası ve çocukları merkezinde toplanması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Erkeğin toplumsal alanı ve kadının özel alanı olması gerektiğini irdeleyen bu ayırım, kadınların ekonomik bağımsızlıklarını elinden almış ve onlara ev işi dışında çok sınırlı alanlarda iş olanakları bırakmıştır. Ataerkil aile yapısı, dini ideolojiler, toplumsal normlar ve siyasal davranış biçimleri ondokuzuncu yüzyıldaki ideal kadın imgesini evcimen melekler ve ücretsiz hizmetkarlar biçiminde kurgulamışlardır. Dahası, kadınların üzerindeki toplumsal baskı batı düşüncesinin ürettiği yazılı metinlerle güçlendirilmiş ve kültürel değerler ile desteklenmiştir. Onsekizinci ve ondokuzuncu yüzyılda sosyoloji, felsefe ve psikoloji gibi disiplinler kadın ve erkek dünyalarını ayıran ve kadını güçten düşüren *söylemi* üretmişlerdir.

Tezde incelenen resim ve romanlar üzerine yaptığımız feminist yorumlarımız ondokuzuncu yüzyıl kadın yazarların, erkek hakimiyetindeki evcimenlik öğretisinin kadınların ev dışında kariyer sahibi olmalarını engellediği gerekçesi ile eleştirildiğini göstermektedir. Iç savaş sonrasını ele aldığımız bu tezin amacı, sanat ve edebiyattaki çalışan kadın temsillerinin bir kadın için ondokuzuncu yüzyılda evi dışında çalışmanın ne anlama geldiğini anlatan özel imgeler ve tanımlamalar ürettiğini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışan kadın temsilleri üreten kadın yazarlar ve ressamlar kadının özgürleşmesi düşüncesine de özel bir anlam kazandırmaktadırlar.

Ondokuzuncu yüzyıl çalışan Amerikalı kadınları konu alan romanların ve resimlerin çözümlendiği bu tezde, aile ve toplumsal yaşamdaki cinsel kimliğe bağlı iş gücü ayırımı, kadın ve erkeğin ayrı dünyalara ait olduğu öğretisi, ve kadınların erkek hakimiyetindeki kültürel değerler aracılığı ile marjine itilmeleri konu alınmaktadır. Çalışan kadınların sanat ve edebiyattaki temsillerinin çözümlendiği bu tezde, incelenen yazar ve ressamların anne ve eş olma kimliği ve ev yönetiminin bütün kadınların doğası ve kaderi olduğunu savunan geleneksel görüşü değiştirmeye çalıştıkları ortaya konmaktadır.