Resistance to the Norms:

The Careers and Lives of Mary Cassatt and Kate Chopin

by

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the careers and lives of two remarkable women during the late nineteenth century who followed their creative ambitions: Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), an artist, and Kate Chopin (1850-1904), a writer. Cassatt and Chopin worked hard to establish themselves as artists and followed similar paths: first, to gain recognition and establish themselves as professionals and later to develop their own styles. Cassatt and Chopin helped to alter what was and is expected and acceptable for women artists through their resistance to the norms.

The main emphasize is on the parallel choices Cassatt and Chopin made about their careers, their feelings toward society, and the development of their women subjects and characters. At the beginning of Cassatt and Chopin's careers, they went along with the norms. The section "Establishing a Name" explains why they originally went along with the art forms that were the most acceptable for artists. The section "Encountering New Possibilities" discusses the middle part of their careers when they began to resist the norms. Their resistance came with the help of their new mentors and their growing confidence in their ability as artists. Their final development as artists is discussed in "Finding One's Niche." At this point in their careers, they had found a balance between what society expected of them and what they wanted as artists.

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And I cannot forget to thank my wonderful husband, Kevin, who has been very supportive and a good listener. I believe he knows as much about Cassatt and Chopin as I do. Thanks for being so patient and loving.

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Introduction

Women in the nineteenth century who wanted a career often had to struggle against societal norms to achieve their goals. As the century progressed, it became slightly easier for women to become professionals even though it still went against tradition. Women had limited options; it was assumed that when girls grew up, they would get married and have children. According to a specialist in nineteenth-century American women's literature, Ann R. Shapiro, "Marriage was expected to be a woman's whole life, and while many women willfully accepted their lot, women's rights advocates [and professional women during the middle and late nineteenth century] argued that women's growth was being stultified" (6) because a married woman's life, especially for upper/middle class women, was almost completely domestic.

The "true woman" and the "ideal mother" was a woman who married, had a family, and took care of the domestic duties. According to historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg:

> The True Woman was emotional, dependent, and gentle—a born follower. The Ideal Mother, then and now, was expected to be strong, self-reliant, protective, an efficient caretaker in relation to children and home. She was to manage the family's day-to-day finances, prepare foods, make clothes, compound drugs, [and] serve as family nurse. (199)

These concepts ignored the dreams and desires of women who did not want to be only mothers and wives and restricted to domestic duties but wanted to be professionals.

If a woman desired her own career or not to marry, her options were minimal: she could become a domestic servant, a teacher, a seamstress, a nanny, or a nurse to

support her family and self. Writing was an option for a woman who had a family to support, but a woman writer was limited to certain genres that were considered acceptable. Balancing both domestic and professional roles was not the norm for upper/middle class women because men were supposed to support their families as a sign of status and pride. Depending on class status and how desperately a woman needed money the pressure an upper/middle class woman received to be a lady and confirm to societal norms was extreme. Some women, despite these options and pressures, decided they wanted to follow their desires and have a career.

Two such remarkable women during the late nineteenth century who followed their creative ambitions were Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), an artist, and Kate Chopin (1850-1904), a writer. Both Americans, these women lived what appears to be different lives. Chopin remained in America her whole life and did not pursue a career as a writer until the age of 48, in 1888, after she had become a widow and had six children to provide for, while Cassatt set off for Europe to become a professional artist at the age of 21 in 1865.[i] Despite their differing circumstances both these women worked hard to establish themselves as artists and followed similar paths: first, to gain recognition and establish themselves as professionals and later to develop their own styles. Their resistance to what a woman could and could not do professionally and socially strengthened as they advanced in their careers. As their reputations grew as well as their confidence, they made more daring choices on what to draw and write. Through their resistance of tradition, Cassatt and Chopin helped to alter what was and is expected and acceptable for women artists. Their works are part of a larger body of women's creative works and voices from the nineteenth century and form part of a collective effort toward

gaining women's freedom to be professionals and artists. All women who participated in changing traditions consciously or unconsciously helped to change women's situation throughout the nineteenth century and now.

I chose to focus on Cassatt and Chopin because their careers and the parallels between them are fascinating. Both forged ahead as artists at a time when many believed it was not acceptable for women to be artists, and they were courageous enough to experiment and develop their own styles, which went against the normal styles and genres. Cassatt's artwork, for example, compared to the traditional French Salon style, looked spontaneous and incomplete, while Chopin's stories were considered amoral by Victorian society. It was a rare enough phenomenon that they were women artists, let alone experimenting with themes and styles that even few men were daring to touch.

Cassatt and Chopin's career decisions took place before and after the "New Woman" movement during the late-nineteenth century. Historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg feels that the women who represented the New Women were born in the late 1850s-1900s (176). Smith-Rosenberg writes:

> The New Woman originated as a literary phrase popularized by Henry James [...] Young and unmarried, they rejected social conventions, especially those imposed on women [...] They acted on their own [...] In short, the New Women, rejecting conventional female roles and asserting their right to a career, to a public voice, to visible power, laid claim to the rights and privileges usually accorded to bourgeois men. (176)

Cassatt and Chopin represented the "New Woman" because they decided to become professionals, altered social conventions to better suit their lifestyles as professionals, and

their voices were heard through their works. Cassatt and Chopin's works that I'm discussing here represent "New Women" by how they depicted women in their art. Also, they took on the position of bourgeois men by entering the public domain and competing with other professional male artists.

They were pioneers. Cassatt's innovative style, like Chopin's themes, changed, became bolder, and more original as they became more confident in their ability and willingness to take risks; this development is very intriguing. Although many biographies have been written about both Cassatt and Chopin that look at their development as artists, none have compared these two women's career choices as I will do here. Nancy Hale, Nancy Mowll Mathews, and Griselda Pollock, to name a few, have written biographies about Cassatt; Per Seyersted, Emily Toth, and Nancy Walker, to name a few, have written biographies about Chopin. Nancy Hale in her biography, *A Biography of the Great American Painter,* for example, explores the life of Cassatt through each phase in her life, while Nancy Mowll Mathews focuses more in detail on Cassatt's development as an artist. One of her main focuses is on Cassatt's prints created in 1890-1891. Griselda Pollock places Cassatt within the nineteenth-century feminist art theory. Pollock argues that Cassatt's artwork, such as her women and children images, were not sentimental and that Cassatt brought a new perspective to such familiar places as the theater, the drawing room, garden, and studio.

Similar to Cassatt's biographies, Per Seyersted's biography, 1969, on Chopin is important because he is the first person (after Rankin) to promote Chopin's work. His book is the foundation for works of Chopin since 1969. Emily Toth's biographies follow in the tradition of Seyersted and look at the life of Chopin and to this day are the

most complete and accurate biographies done on Chopin. They are based on historical context and are full of speculations about the life of Chopin. *Kate Chopin: A Literary Life,* by Nancy Walker, explores the life of Chopin as a professional, her works, the marketplace, and the social context in which Chopin lived. These biographies look at Cassatt and Chopin's lives extensively, but rarely have these two women's lives been compared in a sustained way with an eye to how they developed their professional identities.[ii] I am interested in how their career choices are parallel; as mentioned earlier, their lives seem to be very different, but the decisions they made about their careers are similar.

As I read about Cassatt and Chopin, I saw a link between the developments in their works. As they became established as artists, they gradually began to resist the societal norms for ladies and the traditional art styles and themes. To understand these shifts, I read historians who focused on nineteenth-century women, such as Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Ann R. Shapiro, and Laura R. Prieto. The traditions in society for upper/middle class women in America, as well as England, were the main elements that consumed women's time and limited their choices. As the end of the nineteenth century neared, some of these customs began to change and became more flexible, especially with the new woman movement. But throughout the nineteenth century, a professional woman competing with men was seen as a deviation from women's "true" nature as domestic beings and followers; as more women at the end of the nineteenth century began to resist this tradition, the "New Woman" was formed. As women struggled to become professionals, they had to find means to alter traditions in society to be more compatible to what they needed and wanted. These traditions are what women artists,

such as Cassatt and Chopin, had to struggle against as they formed a compromise between societal traditions and their careers.

Cassatt and Chopin resisted against societal norms because what society expected of them interfered with their work schedules and creativity as artists. The rituals were too stifling and did not permit them the time they needed to work on their art. They also had similar problems with the traditional forms and styles that were deemed acceptable for them to portray. These appropriate forms and styles did not allow them enough space or room to experiment and explore new methods and themes. The traditional forms and styles limited their creative ability.

Throughout Cassatt and Chopin's careers, they resisted and altered what was expected from women artists. Cassatt and Chopin's artwork gradually changed and developed as they moved through different stages in their careers: early, middle, and later. In their earlier works both women followed what was expected of them to draw and write to get accepted by the French Salon or get published. It was safest to do what was acceptable at first; this way they could begin the process of establishing themselves as artists. Cassatt submitted her works to the French Salon, a prestigious place for an artist's work to be exhibited, and followed the style accepted by the Salon, while Chopin wrote stories that were considered children's and local color, works that were easiest for women to publish.

While Cassatt and Chopin's works were conforming to what was expected of them in their early careers, they only expressed their negative opinions on how society functioned to their friends. During their early careers, their art followed traditional styles and genres even though they had problems with some of these traditions. However, when

some of these early works are carefully analyzed, there are some subtle signs that neither artist was satisfied with the traditional styles and both longed for something different. These signs in Cassatt's early works, 1866-1877, and Chopin's, 1888-1891, when fully developed become the core of their later works.

In the middle part of their careers, for Cassatt, 1877-1886, and Chopin, 1892-1897, they began to outwardly resist the norms. As they began to resist, they altered their works to fit their lifestyles and feelings. Their role models changed and they made personal decisions about what they wanted to represent in their works that deviated from or challenged the norm. Cassatt joined the Impressionists, which were an avant-garde group of artists, and Chopin followed the writing style of Guy de Maupassant, best known for his innovative stories like, "Ball of Fat" and "The Necklace," which revolutionized the short story form.

During their later careers, Cassatt, 1887-1900, and Chopin, 1898-1902, after they had found a place for themselves, their feelings toward society became more obvious in their works: Cassatt through her choice of medium, style, and themes; and Chopin through her strong women characters and themes. Their later works represent their most mature development as artists and mark their most radical departure from the "acceptable." These works represent them as individuals and independents; this is the point where they had developed the themes and styles that we associate them with.

The changes in their works were gradual; their careers were not completely linear. The appearance of backsliding is more evident in Chopin's works than in Cassatt's mostly because Chopin's career as a writer was short, from 1888-1902, while Cassatt's was long from 1865 until she started to have eye problems in 1915, and even then she

continues to work on her art. A fourteen-year career compared to career over fifty-years is bound to have some differences; most notably Cassatt had more time to mature as an artist. But these women during similar time periods made important decisions about resisting against the norms that felt it was inappropriate for women to be professionals and limited what form of art women could participate in. Cassatt's changes are more clearly defined because almost every time Cassatt changed her medium her style changed. Chopin's style changes as her themes became more daring. Yet Chopin did return regularly to the genres acceptable for women—children's and local color stories throughout her career because as a widowed mother with six children to support, she knew these stories would sell and were very profitable for her. These women had to live and function in society; as much as they resisted the norms of their society, they were still a product of it. They were attempting to compromise between what they wanted and what society expected of them.

This thesis will focus on the parallel choices of Cassatt and Chopin's careers, their feelings toward society, and the development of their women subjects and characters. First, we will look at the beginning of Cassatt and Chopin's careers and how they started out as artists. This explains why they originally went along with the art forms that were the most acceptable for artists. Secondly, we'll look at their middle careers and how they began to resist against the traditional. Their resistance came with the help of their new mentors and their growing confidence in their ability as artists. Lastly, we will look at their final development as artists. At this point in their careers they had found a balance between what society expected of them and what they wanted as artists. Finally, they created what they wanted as artists.

Part I
Establishing a Name

Cassatt's Early Career:

Cassatt and Chopin made similar decisions at the beginning of their careers. At first, Cassatt and Chopin seemed willing to follow the traditional styles and genres of the time so that they could create a name for themselves. It was more difficult for women to establish themselves as professionals since it was a deviation from the "True Woman," so it was better for Cassatt and Chopin as they began their careers as artists to create works that were within the popular styles and genres of the late nineteenth century. Living in Europe and submitting her artwork to the French Salon, Cassatt had to follow the traditional French style to guarantee her acceptance into the Salon, while Chopin had to write the traditional stories acceptable for women authors if she wanted to get published: children's and local color.

Many women had difficulty becoming professional artists during the mid/late nineteenth century because it put them at the same level as male artists: competing to promote and sell their works. Also, if a woman was a professional, she was not acting like a true woman whose traits were according to Barbara Welter, "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity," discussed in her article "The Cult of True Womenhood: 1820-1860." The true woman was the ideal in Victorian society, but as the century progressed the "New Woman" was becoming difficult to ignore. Since Cassatt and Chopin could not remain within the four walls of their homes, but had to promote and sell their works, they were not following the cultural rules and roles; instead, they were acting like "New Women." They were no longer submissive to men because they were placing themselves at the same level as men. Cassatt and Chopin as professionals had to sell their

works and since they had to sell their works, they were competing directly with male artists.

These women had business sense, which is seen in their ability to sell and promote their works, especially in their later careers. It is important, though, to note Cassatt's social status because it allowed her to go to Europe. Her parents helped her the first time she went to Europe. When she returned to America during the Franco-Prussian war, she had to earn her own money to return to Europe. Even though Cassatt's parents and later her brother provided her with the essentials until she was able to support herself, her parents expected her to financially support her art. According to Cassatt's biographer Nancy Mowell Mathews, "They [her parents] might have been happy to support their daughter in their own comfortable home but were unwilling to commit funds for studios, models, supplies, or trips to Europe" (75). To afford art supplies, a studio, and models, Cassatt had to make a profit through selling her art; otherwise, she would not have been able to continue her artwork. Cassatt's early struggles to establish a name for her self, to study, and produce art paid off in the end because, "Cassatt's sales in these years [the 1890s] were certainly significant not only to support her but also to allow her to buy a country house" (Mathews 232). Cassatt finally made enough money to be independent from the support of her family; a remarkable feat for a nineteenth-century woman.

Also as a single woman, Cassatt found it easier to relocate. A married woman with ties to her husband and family's community would have had more difficulty. By choosing art over marriage, Cassatt had already made some decisions that were outside the norm for most women in the mid/late nineteenth-century, especially upper-class women. If Cassatt had married, she would have been dependent upon her husband and

restricted to wifely duties. As a single woman, she was freer to make decisions for her self.

Chopin, on the other hand, did not pursue her career as an artist until after her husband passed away and she had six children to support. When Chopin's husband, Oscar Chopin, passed away in 1882, he left Chopin with a large debt. Chopin ran her husband's failing general store for two years to pay back his numerous debts. Then in 1884, Chopin returned to her hometown, St. Louis; Chopin lived on the income she received from the land and rental properties under her name (Toth *Kate Chopin* 215). Chopin, unlike Cassatt, never could live off of her writing. Yet Chopin, like Cassatt, also asserted her independence. Chopin was able to pay off the debts that her husband could not even do and support six children. Cassatt and Chopin were driven and determined women, which helped them persevere as professional women artists.

In addition they realized early on in their careers that it was hard enough for a woman to establish herself as an artist, let alone go against what was considered the acceptable style and themes for women. Working within the popular traditional style gave Cassatt and Chopin a chance to establish themselves as professional artists because even though they were overstepping the boundaries for what was considered "women's place," they were not yet overstepping the boundaries of the traditional style of the time. From 1866-1877, when Cassatt was establishing herself as an artist, she was working toward getting accepted by the French Salon, which promoted the traditional French style. Training for this style required studying from the Old Masters and copying them. The types of artwork accepted by the French Salon were history and genre paintings, portraits, and landscapes. A prime example of the traditional style and pose can be seen

in Cassatt's *Portrait of a Woman* (Fig. I), 1872. The subject's face is turned at an angle, so she is not directly looking at the audience, and her face shows no expression. The background is dark, drawing the focus and defining the subject of the painting. The brushstrokes are very tight and show a finished image. The light used is natural and is portrayed as it would have fallen on the subject.

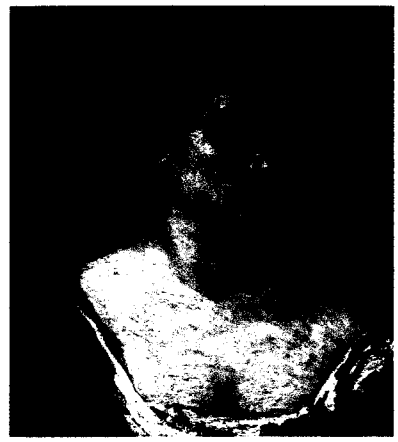

Figure I *Portrait of a Woman,* 1872. Oil on canvas, 59x50 (23 ¼ x 19 5/8). The Dayton Art Institute.

For an artist to be recognized, his/her art had to be chosen by the Salon to be displayed. Cassatt desired to be accepted by the Salon, even though she, like many other artists, such as the Impressionist circle, felt it was corrupt. Her first acceptance into the Salon was in 1868, and for ten years Cassatt continued to submit her work to the Salon. Despite her success with the Salon, the longer Cassatt submitted to the Salon the more bitter she became toward the system. According to Mathews,

> Each year her [Cassatt's] cynicism deepened: in 1875 one of her two pictures was rejected; in 1876 she was bitterly amused to see her previously rejected painting accepted after she had darkened the background; in 1877, to her ultimate horror and humiliation, both entries were refused and she was unrepresented in this celebrated forum for the first time in seven years. (*A Life* 100)

Mathews discusses the function of the Salon and Cassatt's feeling toward it. Mathews also explains that a majority of the pictures chosen for the Salon were selected because the art students' teachers had helped them with their artwork and used their influence to

get the pictures accepted (38). Choices made by the Salon jury were based on outside pressures, politics, and who was actually on the jury: "At first Cassatt accepted this process of behind-the-scene influence without comment and was as successful in winning the favor of her teachers—and thus the influence at the Salon—as anyone" (Mathews *A Life* 38). Cassatt, though, did not want to only be accepted because of her teacher's influence, nor did she allow others to work on her art. She preferred to work alone; there is only one known painting, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair* (Fig. VI), 1878, that she ever received help on and that was from her good friend, Edgar Degas, later in her career (Mathews *A Life* 126).

As Cassatt's bitterness grew toward the Salon, she no longer had qualms about stating her opinions concerning the Salon and artists' works selected by the Salon. She daringly admitted her dislike for some of the pictures submitted to the Salon. In 1873, a friend of Cassatt's, before they both went different directions because of artistic differences, Emily Sartian tells her father in a letter that:

> she [Cassatt] is entirely too slashing,--snubs all modern Art, -- disdains the salon pictures of Cabanel Bonnat and all the names we are used to revere [...] Her own style of painting and the Spanish school which she has been studying all winter is so realistic, so solid, -- that the French school in comparison seems washy, unfreshlike and grey.
>
> (Mathews *Letters* 117-118)

Even though Sartain felt that Cassatt was "too slashing," she admits that the traditional French school style looked "washy, unfreshlike and grey" compared to Cassatt's style. Since Cassatt was experimenting with color and different brushstrokes, her paintings

looked "realistic and solid" compared to the Salon style. Cassatt's disdain for some of the Salon's pictures was based on her opinion that they lacked originality since they were based on the Old Masters works.

As Cassatt became disillusioned with the Salon she began to voice her opinion about it, and she realized that as long as she remained with the Salon, she would not be able to experiment. It was hard for some artists, who exhibited in the Salon, to understand Cassatt's boldness and daringness with her opinions, especially when they relied on the Salon for success, such as her previous friend Sartain—for them to be chosen by the Salon was the best chance they had at recognition. Cassatt, like most artists in general, wanted to experiment and find her own style. She did not want to be limited to a specific style.

During this time Cassatt also was influenced by other schools; while in Europe she studied art in other places besides France, such as Italy and Spain. An example of her Spanish influence is seen in *On the Balcony* (Fig. II), 1873. Mathews explains that, "balcony scenes were popular in contemporary art [...] and many of them, like Cassatt's depicted colorful local customs, such as the carnival" (*Mary Cassatt* 23). Both Cassatt and Chopin at the beginning of their careers were working with local color genres. *On the Balcony* portrays two women and a man. The woman to the right is flirting with the man behind her. Her neck is twisted at an angle as she looks up at the man and smiles at him. The angle her head is turned was not

Figure II *On the Balcony*, 1873. Oil on canvas, 101x82.6 (39 ¾ x 32 ½). Philadelphia Museum of Art. W.P. Wilstach Collection.

typically depicted in genre or portrait paintings because it makes the neck appear "ugly" and would be difficult to hold for a long length of time while posing. The woman's dress is very ornate and detailed with little flowers and leaves drawn all over it. This shows that Cassatt was capable of doing very detailed work and using tight brushstrokes, which is not seen in her later works because Impressionists used looser brushstrokes and their works did not look as finished. The Impressionist style, unlike the Salon style, did not emphasize a finished look as much as they emphasized the use of light. The other woman in the painting is leaning on the balcony looking down probably at the crowd of people gathering for the carnival.

On the Balcony and Cassatt's first painting to be accepted in the Salon, *The Mandolin Player* (Fig. III), in 1868[iii], are similar in style and theme; both are genre paintings. Also, the backgrounds are very similar in their darkness. In *On the Balcony* the background is charcoal, and the man's features can barely be distinguished because of the shadow caused by his hat, while in *The Mandolin Player* the background is all brown. The only brightness in *The Mandolin Player* is the girl's red sash and her chemise; the rest of the tones are brown. *On the Balcony* is only slightly brighter because of the clothing depicted, but both paintings are focusing on traditional clothing and using natural light. The shadows are depicted realistically.

Even though both of these paintings follow the traditional style of the Salon and *The Mandolin Player* was accepted by the Salon, Griselda Pollock observes that the painting

> is not a straightforward piece of genre painting for it is not a scene of peasant music-making, and the viewer is required to engage with two

demands whose tension produces the painting's allure. The uncluttered directness of the figure's presentation draws the eyes toward the paint itself, the broadly blocked paint of the white chemise as the light falls upon it, the carefully modulated muted reds of the sash that provides the only local colour, and the finely brushed, shaded face from which expressive eyes emerge to arrest the viewer's appraisal of painterly finesse. (*Painter of Modern Women* 83-84)

Since this piece of art chosen by the Salon was not a typical genre piece, nor is the painting style typical, this shows that already in Cassatt's early career, her work did not stay totally within the boundaries, but instead, she was experimenting with different styles. Yet her work was still close enough to the norm that the Salon accepted most of her work. For example, in *The Mandolin Player* the pose the girl is in is very classical with the girl positioned to form a triangle and the head positioned so not to be directly looking at the audience. Also, she is very somber as she holds her mandolin. This painting is very static, while Cassatt's later works become more active and feel more alive, not like a still life.

Figure III *The Mandolin Player*, 1868. Oil on canvas, 92x73.6 (36 ¼ x 29). Private Collection.

One characteristic of Cassatt's later works in these paintings is the women's expressions. The mandolin player is very somber, almost sad, as she looks off to the side, while the woman on the balcony is smiling as she flirts with the man and the other woman is very content and dreamy like as she looks down at the crowd, her lips slightly

turned up. She looks like she wants to join the carnival. Cassatt's women subjects usually have expressive faces and eyes that tell a lot about her subjects. The most intriguing aspect of Cassatt's works is her women subjects' facial expressions. These expressions define who the women are and how they feel, depending on what situation they are in. This is the key to Cassatt's work and portrayal of her women subjects; it becomes prevalent in her later works.

These paintings from the Salon period are dark and use tight brushstrokes, which are uncharacteristic of Cassatt's later style. Most people would not even know these were Cassatt's paintings unless they were told or were scholars of Cassatt. Her early art shows her classical training, but as she traveled and developed as an artist, her brushstrokes became looser and she began to experiment more. Her need to try different styles led her to engage in a new form of art: Impressionism, 1877-1886. Once her name was established, she was ready to move on. This can already be seen in her 1874 painting, *Ida* (Fig. IV), even before she became an Impressionist, on display at the Salon. In *Ida* the subject looks boldly out at the audience with intense dark eyes and the painting has loose brushstrokes, and according to Mathews, Cassatt's brushstrokes were "not always controlled enough for their [the Salon's] taste" (*Mary Cassatt* 30). The same is seen in the painting *Head of a Young Girl* (Fig. V), 1876. The brushstrokes are loose and the painting takes on the look of the "unfinished" characteristic of the Impressionists' artwork. Mathews feels this

Figure IV *Ida*, 1874. Oil on canvas, 57.5x45 (22 5/8 x 17 ¾). Private Collection.

Figure V *Head of a Young Girl*, c. 1876. Oil on panel, 12 ¾ x9". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

painting is "original and exuberant" (*Mary Cassatt* 30), even though the pose is still traditional. These works are right before she leaves the Salon to join the Impressionists.

Chopin's Early Career:

Similar to Cassatt, Chopin started working within the popular genre for women when she first became an artist. There are differences, though, in when their careers began and the time they spent as artists. Since Chopin did not start her career until she was 48 in 1888, compared to Cassatt, who had worked on her art since she was a youth, it is harder to define the divisions in Chopin's works. Her earlier works could even be seen as the journals she wrote in as a child and an adult. Chopin's first biographer, Daniel Rankin believes Chopin's writing in her journals even before she attempted to become a writer prepared her to be a writer:

> During the ten years of her married life in New Orleans, Kate Chopin never attempted to write or take notes. Entries in her diary are fragmentary jottings—mere plans or descriptions of adventures through the parts of the city and its environs appealed to her fancy. [...] Without literary intentions, she was, however, gathering impressions for the materials of her stories in future years. (Rankin 92)

For example, these impressions were useful in her local color stories at the beginning of her career. Also, in her journals she was not afraid to express her opinions about society. Only later in her career was she confident enough to try to publish these opinions. Even though Chopin did not start her career as early as Cassatt, in a sense she was always gathering material for her future career as a writer because she was always taking "notes" and writing down her impressions.

When Chopin first tried to publish her stories, she had to make decisions about what she was going to write, and these decisions were influenced by her evaluation of what was acceptable for her to write and what she could get published. To become an established published author, Chopin wrote within the boundaries of what was considered acceptable for women to write: stories mothers could read to their children, stories families could read together, and/or stories that were classified as local color, such as her collection of short stories, *Bayou Folk,* published in 1894. Her stories during this time were published in family magazines such as *Century, The Atlantic, Youth's Companions,* and *Harper's Young People*, which offered stories the whole family could read and enjoy together. These magazines upheld the morals of the Victorian family. In these stories Chopin could not write about women's sexual awakenings or raise questions about social norms like she does in her later works.

Chopin's first stories were based mainly in Louisiana and were local-color stories or stories with morals. In *Kate Chopin: A Literary Life*, Barbara Walker discusses where the name "local color" came from and why local color stories were considered women authors' forte:

> First called 'local color' literature because of its representations of the language, customs, geography, and manners of specific regions, this genre consisted primarily of short stories and sketches that captured the flavor of ordinary lives in New England, the West, the South, and to a lesser extent the Midwest. [...] this popular genre made use of the very talents that had been identified with women writers: observation of everyday life, faithful

> delineation of real human experience, and sympathy for ordinary individuals. (17-18)

This genre was seen as fitting for women to write because of their compassion and eyes for detail. Also, stories with morals were appropriate because they upheld the morals of Victorian society.

Chopin chose to write these stories at first as a means to getting published. According to Walker, "Whether consciously or not, she [Chopin] thus took advantage of two of the most widely sanctioned modes for women writers of her era: using the powers of observation to create 'local color', and teaching young people moral lessons through fiction" (60). Chopin eventually found these boundaries too limiting; like Cassatt, she needed to be independent from the traditional. Even though her writing at the beginning of her career was quite conventional, she still portrayed some very unusually strong women characters, and these women characters become stronger throughout her career, as in *The Awakening.*

At the beginning of her career, her stories had happy endings. In her later works Chopin broke from this tradition and created stories with ambiguous endings, which I will discuss in more detail later. Some stories that Chopin wrote at the beginning of her career, around 1888-1891, express the desire for freedom and escape from what was traditionally considered women's place, but the works Chopin was getting published at this time were stories acceptable for women to write, such as "A Turkey Hunt," 1892, about a missing turkey on Christmas day published in *Harper's Young People.*

Chopin, at the beginning of her career, knew the best places for a writer to gain attention: New York and Boston. According to Chopin's biographer Emily Toth, "In the

1890s, writers outside the literary centers of New York and Boston always had trouble getting national notice. The most ambitious writers—most of them men—moved to New York if they could" (*Unveiling* 133), but with six children still living at home it would have been difficult for Chopin to relocate from St. Louis. Despite Chopin's inability to uproot her family from St. Louis, Chopin did travel to find and meet publishers. In May 1893, for example, Chopin set off for two weeks to visit publishers in New York and Boston. As a mother of six children, she made the best of her situation, and as a determined writer she ventured forth to make connections, such as having "a face-to-face meeting with the *Century* editor Richard Watson Gilder" (Toth *Unveiling* 134). This shows Chopin's determination to become a writer and how ingenious she was as an entrepreneur because even though she was unable to be in the literary center, she found means to make sure her works were known and published.

Chopin's analysis of the marketplace made her realize that starting with juvenile magazines was the best place for her to launch her career. According to Bonnie Shaker, in *Coloring Locals: Racial Formation in Kate Chopin's Youth's Companion Stories*:

> One standard strategy women used to break into periodical writing was to begin with juvenile periodicals, the least-threatening and least-questioned venue of publishing for women because childcare was Victorian women's quintessential concern. [...]Whether Chopin was doing so consciously or simply following an established career path for women, she relied on juvenile periodicals to serve as her stepping-stone to broader literary claim. (Shaker 7)

Chopin used juvenile periodicals to launch her career because these family stories were safe for women to write, and women writers who wrote stories for young people had a better chance at getting published. Family periodicals in general were a safe bet for women because as long as women were writing children stories, they were writing about morals, not writing about issues women should not discuss. Also, this type of writing was seen as a hobby that did not interfere with a woman's domestic duty. She could dabble a little bit here and there and create a short family story while still performing her domestic duties without competing completely with professional male writers, whose main genre was seen as novel writing.

Publishing in juvenile magazines was very lucrative for Chopin and explains why she relied so heavily on them at first. For example, Shaker discusses that, "she [Chopin] earned $787 from these [family] magazines ($750 from the *Youth Companion* alone), a sum that made up over one-third of her lifetime's literary income" (7). This demonstrates that even while Chopin was evolving as a writer and progressively moving away from children themes, she was tempted to return to children's stories throughout her career. It was very profitable for her, and magazines such as *Youth Companion* that were very popular and widely circulated were a great way for an author to establish his/her name. By the mid-1890s the circulation for the *Youth Companion* alone was 500,000 (Shaker 12). This market established Chopin as a writer because of its wide circulation and popularity.

Two stories that Chopin worked on during 1889-1891 were "Boulôt and Boulotte," published in *Harper's Young People*, December 1891, and "A Rude Awakening," published in *Youth's Companion*, February 1893. "Boulôt and Boulotte" is

a funny local color story written for its humor value, while "A Rude Awakening" is a story with a strong moral. Both stories were suitable for family magazines because they were stories the entire Victorian family could read together and enjoy. "Boulôt and Boulotte" written in 1891 is a short two-page story about twins at the age of twelve who went into town to buy their first pair of shoes. They return home barefoot because they did not want to get their new shoes dirty. "Boulôt and Boulotte" is a good example of local color that explores the life of Cajuns in Natchitoches parish in Louisiana.

In Chopin's local color stories she observed the lives of the Creoles, Cajuns, African Americans, and Native Americans of the South. These stories were produced from the observations Chopin made while living in New Orleans and Cloutierville with her husband Oscar between 1870-1884, before she begun to write stories, and through subsequent visits to Louisiana as a writer. Chopin also received a note of praise from her mentor at the time, William Dean Howells, an editor for *Atlantic Monthly* and later a critic for *Harper's Monthly* and a writer, on her story "Boulôt and Boulotte," which no longer exists (Toth *Kate Chopin* 192). Chopin would have been pleased to receive a note of praise from Howells, a famous writer and critic.

In "A Rude Awakening," written in 1891, which has a more serious tone than "Boulôt and Boulotte," the main character, Lolotte takes the initiative and does her father's work while he is off fishing. Lolotte is very strong and determined: she performs her father's work because she does not want to let her younger siblings starve. Chopin writes, "Lolotte had evidently determined to undertake her father's work. Nothing could dissuade her; neither the children's astonishment or Aunt Minty's scathing disapproval"(139). Since her father would not work, Lolotte is determined to take care of

her family herself. Lolotte is an example of Chopin's strong female characters because she does what has to be done, no matter what other people feel about her decision.

Lolotte has an accident while taking three bales of cotton to the landing; the mules become scared and the wagon tips over. When her father, Sylveste, realizes Lolotte is missing, he is so saddened that the only thing that makes him feel better is working; this is his rude awakening. In the end everything works out fine. Lolotte is found; she had been taken to the hospital suffering from amnesia, which she recovers from. When she returns home, her father is working and taking care of his family. This is a nice family story because there is a moral and everything works out. But in this children's story, there is a strong female character, even though it is the father who has learned his lesson.

Interestingly enough this story was not published until two years after it was written, while "Boulôt and Boulotte," which has no serious plot, was published the same year it was written. "Boulôt and Boulotte," a funny short story, is harmless, while Lolotte in "A Rude Awakening" goes against traditional women's roles by taking on a man's job. Like Lolotte, many of Chopin's women characters are struggling between what is expected of them and what they want to do. Even though Lolotte's siblings were starving, as a woman Lolotte should not have performed her father's job to put food on the table but should have performed the jobs more suitable for a woman.

Another of Chopin's strong female characters, Paula, struggles between choosing a career as a musician over marriage in "Wiser Than a God," written in June, 1889, and published in *Philadelphia Musical Journal*, in December, 1889.[iv] Paula does pursue her career, but the end of the story suggests Paula will marry Professor Max Kuntzlar because he is waiting for her answer with "the dogged patience that so often wins out in

the end" (47). Even though Paula will probably end up choosing marriage over being a musician, which leads to the traditional happy ending with a marriage for Chopin's audience, in this early work, Chopin is not ending the story with a marriage, and there is a slight possibility that Paula will chose not to marry and remain a musician, depending on how the story is read. This hints at the stories to come in Chopin's later career when the women characters rebel even more against the tradition of marriage.

These examples illustrate how Chopin, at the beginning of her career, is already developing the main themes seen throughout her later works. Ever aware of the marketplace, Chopin allows her women characters to overstep their boundaries a little, but she always reels them back to their places by the end of the story. Later in her career, as we will see, she lets her women characters do as they chose; Chopin no longer reels them in but leaves them to their own demise like she does with Edna, in *The Awakening.*[v]

Both Cassatt and Chopin at the beginning of their careers were working in the medium and traditions that were most acceptable for women artists. This helped them to create a name for themselves, but the limited genres and styles were not enough for Cassatt or Chopin. Instead during the middle of their careers, they turned to new mentors and styles, which offered them more freedom to experiment. The middle part of their careers helped them find their own style as artists.

Part II
Encountering New Possibilities

Cassatt's Middle Career:

In their middle careers, both Cassatt and Chopin encountered works by Frenchmen whose avant-garde works opened their eyes to new styles and helped them pursue their creative ambitions. Cassatt met Edgar Degas in 1877, when he asked her to join the Impressionists circle, while Chopin became acquainted with Guy de Maupassant's works in the '90s. These role models helped Cassatt and Chopin escape the traditional styles of the period and encounter someone they could relate to. This is the turning point in their careers. They began to work on forming their own styles outside the traditional boundaries.

For some people it was difficult for them understand while these women decided to go outside the norm and take such a huge risk. For example, John Rewald, in *The History of Impressionism*, feels it was out of character for Cassatt to take the risk of joining the Impressionist artists. He states:

> Except for her strong urge toward independence, nothing appears to have predestined Miss Cassatt to abandon the quiet life of a lady painter exhibiting at the Salon for the ungrateful role of a woman adhering to the most ridiculed band of artists. (320-322).

However, it was in character for Cassatt to abandon a system she felt was corrupt and look for a creative outlet where she would be independent and free to experiment. Her work was no longer acceptable for the Salon; she was not working within the "boundaries."

For example, in 1874, when Degas for the first time saw a painting by Cassatt, *Ida* (Fig. IV), at the French Salon, he is quoted as saying "Volia quelqu'un qui sent comme moi [There is someone who feels as I do]" (Ségard 35). Degas recognized in this painting a style similar to his and that is why he was drawn to Cassatt and felt that she "feels like I do." For this reason Degas asked Cassatt to join the Impressionists when he finally met her in 1877. Even though she was abandoning the traditional style and joining the "most ridiculed band of artists," she was not alone, but was joining a group whose members felt as she did. That is why she is recorded as saying, "I began to live" (Hale 56) when she became part of the Impressionists and was finally independent from the Salon. She found with Degas and the Impressionists, artists who felt similar to her; she had a new group to participate in that allowed room for experimentation.

From 1877-1886, Cassatt worked within the Impressionist style until she became acquainted with Japanese prints and started to become independent from the Impressionists. Cassat was continuously looking for innovative ways to create art and find her niche. She was willing to try different styles and media until she found the best way to express herself as an artist. Even though Cassatt began to move away from the group as she found new ways of expressing herself, the time spent with the Impressionists was a very important time in her life. She developed enormously as an artist, especially with the help of her good friend Degas. Cassatt felt such close artistic ties and respect for Degas that while she worked, he would often come to her studio and make suggestions on her artwork.[vi]

While Cassatt was working on, *A Little Girl in a Blue Armchair* (Fig. VI), 1878, Degas made some suggestions on the background and was even permitted to work on the

background, which was very much out of character for Cassatt, who preferred to work alone and was very independent. Since it was so out of the norm for Cassatt to permit someone to work on her paintings, according to Mathews, "Cassatt underlined it when she wrote about it years later: '[he] advised me on the background, *he even worked on the background--*'" (*A Life* 126). Because she and Degas did have such a close working relationship during this time, it helped them both develop as artists and find their niche because they found in each other a person that understood what they were trying to create.

A Little Girl in a Blue Armchair is so intriguing because the little girl in the picture is so active. She is not sitting in a typical pose. Instead, she is crouched down on the big fluffy armchair with her legs sprawled open, her skirt around her waist, and her left hand behind her head. Pollock feels "this painting is one of the most radical images of childhood painted at this period [...because] there is nothing cute, nothing of the miniature 'lady' in this portrayal of the awkwardness of a childish body maladjusted to adult comportment" (*Painter of Modern Women* 129-131). Also, the girl does not have a pleasant facial expression; "it is slightly sour, a touch of discontent shapes the mouth in a face whose features are still being formed beneath a childish freshiness" (Pollock *Painter of Modern Women* 131). It seems unnatural in a painting from this period for a little girl to be sprawled out on an oversized chair because it was customary for everyone to be properly posed, sitting straight up and behaving like a lady or gentleman. This painting looks more

Figure VI *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878. Oil on canvas, 89.5x129.8 (35 ¼ x 19 3/8). Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon.

natural, though, because it seems realistic to see a little girl sinking farther and farther down on a chair the longer she has to sit and pose and she looks truly bored. Cassatt later in her career focuses more on children and mothers, and she creates in these artworks real feelings and expressions, such as in *A Little Girl in a Blue Armchair.*

Once Cassatt became part of the Impressionists, she began to deviate from the traditional academic style or Salon, which can be seen in most of her paintings during this time period, and also started commenting on societal norms for women more blatantly. For example, in *The Cup of Tea* (Fig. VII), 1880-81, Cassatt depicts an upper-class woman drinking tea, and according to Richard Love, "she departed from the traditional academic portrait formula to present her sitter in a candid pose implying concentration on something or conversation with someone outside the picture plane" (Love 25). We can only see the profile of the subject, Cassatt's sister Lydia, in this painting, enjoying a cup of tea. We cannot engage her or know what she is thinking or looking at. All we see is Lydia dressed softly in pink with a fluffy white collar delicately holding a cup of tea in her white, gloved hands. The lines Cassatt used in this painting are unbroken and continue to flow, adding a softness to this painting absent in Cassatt's earlier Salon paintings. Also, the lines are loose adding a light soft touch to the painting; it is not tight like in the traditional style. Even though her painting may appear on the surface to look unfinished compared to her Salon paintings, according to Mathews, "on the contrary, her prints and paintings show constant, painstaking

Figure VII *The Cup of Tea,* 1880-81. Oil on canvas, 36 3/8 x 25 ¾". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. From the collection of James Stillman.

revisions that underline the 'spontaneous' finished product" (*A Life* 142). Also light is used differently than in the traditional Salon style. For the Impressionist the light was part of the painting, like another subject. In the traditional style everything was darkened, and the only brightness was where the light hit the actual subject. Here the painting is bright, using the light to accent the subject.

In another painting, *Five O'clock Tea* (Fig. VIII), 1880, we are once again unable to see to whom the two women subjects are talking or observing, like in *The Cup of Tea.* The guest's face is almost completely obscured by her tea cup and according to Love this was a daring move on Cassatt's part because it goes against academic tradition (*37*); the other woman subject, the hostess, has her hand under her chin looking pensive as she concentrates on something. We observers can only see the profile of the hostess and are unable to see what has caught her attention, or the guest's. We cannot engage their thoughts.

Figure VIII *Five O'Clock Tea*, 1880. Oil on canvas, 64.8x92.1 (25 ½ x 36 ¼). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. M. Theresa Hopkins Fund.

In many of Cassatt's paintings it is difficult to decipher what the women subjects are thinking, but the women usually appear pensive. There is something there, more than the ritual they are participating in, such as in the tea paintings, but we cannot quite grasp it. Pollock in her interpretation of the *Five O'clock Tea* states:

> We, the viewers, cannot master the scene, for the women pictured are also looking, engaged by an unseen interlocutor from whose conversation we are excluded. Because we cannot spin a narrative within which to contain these figures, and because the painted space does not put them entirely

> within our visual grasp, we become observers of detail—the wallpaper, the fireplace, the gilt mirror, the tea set, the differences between the two women in style, age, character. (*Painter of Modern Women* 126)

Since these subjects are not the main focal points, we are drawn to the surroundings. The fireplace, mirror, and tea set balance the two subjects, who are deep in their own thoughts. In this painting the surroundings are just as important as the subjects. In other words, the surroundings are as important to the whole scenario as the women. Who the women are does not really matter as long as they are acting out the societal duties expected of them. What mattered was that women followed what society denoted as proper. This is important because even though the women are participating in the societal rituals expected of them, it does not mean they like it. Both women in this painting are looking off and are deep in their own thoughts. They do not necessarily have to be there mentally, but physically the ritual has to be performed.

Cassatt also had to participate in societal duties to keep her status as a lady. Yet Cassatt decided to socialize with Impressionist male artists, who were not all considered proper gentlemen for a lady to interact with because they drew nudes and working-class pictures and some of them were from the lower class. Degas is known for his paintings of dancers during rehearsals, sitting, and getting ready. It was not what was normally seen or where "ladies" should or could go. Cassatt was also commenting on these rituals in her works, but only in the areas she could penetrate. For her these traditions interfered with her lifestyle as an artist. Cassatt was limited to what she could paint and where she could go and meet these artists. Her paintings and interactions with these male artists were limited to certain spaces because of this she had to have dinner parties or visit her friends'

homes to be included in debates, gossip, and conversations on art, since she, like the other women artists, could not frequent the cafés that the men artists went to. This was an area as a lady Cassatt could not penetrate.

According to Nancy Mowell Mathews, the women of the group did miss out on some important conversations, but they caught up the best they could (*A Life* 124). Cassatt and Chopin knew that they were excluded from some public arenas, yet they did what they could to keep up with their male contemporaries and be part of their intellectual world. Instead of trying to infiltrate the male's world, Cassatt worked within the woman's realm and depicted women in their "natural settings" such as having tea, reading, and sewing or such simple things as a woman doing her hair.

Cassatt actually created *Girl Arranging Her Hair* (Fig. IX), 1886, to prove to Degas that some women do have style after a quarrel.[vii] Cassatt wanted to prove to her friend that she was an equal. He was so impressed by this painting that according to Mathews, "Degas had graciously apologized and offered to trade one of his famous nudes from the [1886 Impressionist] exhibition [where *Girl Arranging Her Hair* was also displayed] for the painting" (*Mary Cassatt* 313). When Degas passed away, the painting was found in his studio among his collection.

The painting demonstrated that the model chosen by the artist is not important, but the artist's skill and style and also, it did not matter if the artist is male or female. In this painting the girl has her mouth open showing her teeth, which is not a typical expression seen in paintings. It does make the girl look "weary and stupid" according to Ségard. She is also in an awkward position as her right hand pulls her hair over her right shoulder as she looks at herself. Her pose is very rigid. One elbow pointed up in the air,

Figure IX *Girl Arranging Her Hair*, 1886. Oil on canvas, 75.1x62.5 (29 ½ x 24 5/8). Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Chester Dale Collection.

the other elbow pointed down, creating a focal point between her elbows and head that causes the painting to flow. The painting is also much brighter than the Salon paintings. The shadows become more realistic using for example cool blues in the subject's gown and neck, instead of black and brown shadows, which Cassatt used in her Salon paintings. Also, the background has a "spontaneous" unfinished look.

The painting is portraying a woman getting ready for bed. Cassatt has entered a domain that was not often portrayed in art. Cassatt is looking into women's private lives, which is an important theme in almost all of Cassatt's works from now on. Since Cassatt could not enter every area, she created art out of the areas she could penetrate. In *Vision and Difference*, Griselda Pollock concentrates on the spaces females and males could enter, especially in the chapter "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity." Pollock discusses how Cassatt used the spaces she was allowed in to portray women and their lives. She portrayed women in their homes or outside their homes in acceptable places for women, such as the balcony, opera, or theatre.

An example of this is in Cassatt's theatre painting, a *Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge* (Fig. X), 1879, which portrays a woman outside of her home. Cassatt uses a mirror to reflect the back of the subject and some of the theatergoers in their boxes. Interestingly, the reflection of one of the males in his box appears to be peering at the lady through binoculars. Once a woman left her home, she was subjected to male gaze.

The subject in this painting sits on a red cushion and is leaning on her left elbow at a slight angle. She is bedecked in all her finery for the theatre: a pearl necklace, flowers in her hair and on her right shoulder, dress off the shoulder, and holding a fan on her lap. The woman is not looking at the audience, but off to the side. Her teeth are showing, and she looks like she is about to smile.

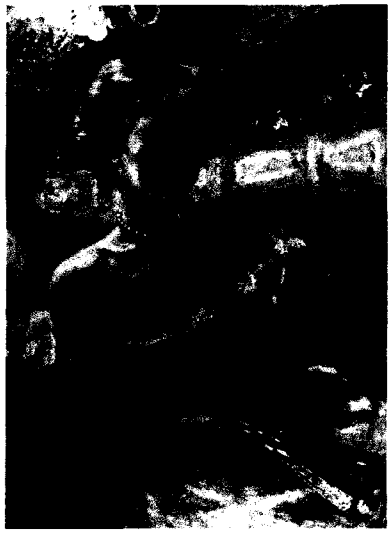

Figure X *Woman with a Pearl Necklace in a Loge*, 1879. Oil on canvas, 80.3x58.4 (31 5/8 x 23). Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Even though ladies were excluded from some public arenas, Cassatt and Chopin both wanted to portray women as they were and how some of societal norms were too demanding. For example, Cassatt and Chopin had to actively be a part of the world around them to promote their works, and Cassatt helped to sell hers and other Impressionist artists' works as a means of introducing Impressionist art throughout America. As "New Women," Cassatt and Chopin entered into the public sphere usually associated with men by choosing to become professionals. As professionals their names and lives were in the spotlight. Their actions were public, no longer private; they could not remain solely within the domestic sphere. Within the domestic sphere it would have been impossible to promote their works because no one would have ever been aware of them. They had to get in touch with art dealers and publishers; they were not going to come to them. As ladies and professional artists, they had to figure out where to position themselves in these two worlds.

Chopin's Middle Career:

Like Cassatt, Chopin could have continued to follow the easier path for a woman artist. It was safe to write children's and local color stories because she could get them published and make a profit. Instead, Chopin opted to write stories that dealt with some themes that were improper for Victorian society, such as sexual awakening and issues concerning what some women really want in life, like the freedom to not marry. During the middle part of Chopin's career, roughly from 1892-1897, Chopin, similar to Cassatt, was beginning to overstep the boundaries.

To escape the traditional genre expectations for women in nineteenth century American Literature, Chopin turned to Guy de Maupassant a French writer whose short stories were considered too "amoral" to be stocked by libraries in the United Sates (Toth *Unveiling* 123). When Chopin became acquainted with the works of Guy de Maupassant, in the early nineties, she changed her mentor. According to Toth, Chopin's previous role model, William Dean Howells, a popular magazine editor whose writing did not offer strong women characters, was not a very good role model for Chopin because "he was not interested in the character and conflicts of women [...] and his books have little or no sexual tension" (*Unveiling* 123), while Maupassant's works had more sexual tension. Maupassant's themes dealt with sexuality, madness, class issues, and injustice. They also had ambiguous endings similar to Chopin's works from her middle career on.

Maupassant offered Chopin a style of writing for her adult stories where she could explore and experiment with themes that were rarely discussed in America, let alone written about. In 1896, Chopin expresses her feelings toward Maupassant in her journal:

> I read his stories and marveled at them. Here was life, not fiction; for where were the plots, the old fashioned mechanism and stage trapping that in a vague, unthinking way I had fancied were essential to the art of story making. Here was a man who had escaped from tradition and authority, who had entered into himself and looked out upon life through his own being and with his own eyes; and who, in a direct and simple way, told us what he saw. When a man does this, he gives the best that he can.
>
> (qtd. in Seyersted *Chopin* 51)

This realization changed how she thought about writing. Slowly she began to turn away from the traditional story she knew she could publish and started to look for a marketplace for her "new" stories. She started to drift away from happy endings and overly developed plots.

Chopin was intrigued by Maupassant because he was changing the short story form. For this reason she translated some of his stories, "'A Divorce Case,' 'Mad,' and 'For Sale,'[viii] which "deal with obsessive love that leads to madness or bizarre behavior" (Walker 87). Also, Chopin's first story influenced by Maupassant "Mrs. Mobry's Reason," written in 1891, was "her most rejected story:" fourteen times (Toth *Kate Chopin* 198); it dealt with the syphilis and madness. Since Mrs. Mobry knows she is the carrier of the disease, she does not want her daughter to marry, but by the end of the story it has already begun to affect her daughter. Syphilis and madness were huge themes in Maupassant's works. This topic was a bit more acceptable to broach in Europe. In America, in 1891, it was a hushed subject. According to Toth, Chopin's story was not published until after the publishing of *The Heavenly Twins* about "a husband's syphilis

and its tragic consequences to the innocent bride" by Sarah Grand, an English author in 1893 (Toth *Unveiling* 124). Once Grand's book became popular, it was more acceptable to broach the subject.[ix]

What Chopin was seeking, she found in Maupassant because he offered a new style and different lenses to see the world through. As we have seen earlier, the need to fit in at first was very important; Cassatt first sent her artwork to the Salon to gain recognition because it was safe. Then she met Degas and the other Impressionist artists, and she found a means to escape and explore her own style. The artistic freedom Cassatt and Chopin were looking for they encountered in their new role models' styles and themes. During the middle part of her career, Chopin was still developing as an artist and was influenced by other people's works and styles, which is common for most artists. What is interesting, though, is that she chose as a mentor a writer who was experimental and was not even considered acceptable for women to read. Cassatt did the same thing by joining the Impressionists, who were seen as rebels.

Finally, Chopin was willing to take more risks. In her middle career her characters resisted the norms more than in her first stories. For example, in Chopin's first stories her characters learned their lessons and there would be a happy ending. From 1892 on, however, Chopin's stories began to lose the typical happy ending and started to become more ambiguous. This ambiguity allowed Chopin to comment on society and women's position without losing all of her audience; of course, her audience focus had shifted along with her magazine of choice, from family magazines to women magazines, such as *Vogue,* because she was now mostly writing adult-centered stories.

Chopin's awareness of the marketplace paid off as her themes became more daring and innovative because she was still able to publish most of her works since she knew where to send her stories. *Vogue* and *Two Tales* were two magazines that were willing to publish stories that were considered avant-garde, and such magazines as *Vogue* were willing to publish stories that dealt with "New Woman" issues because its audience was women, not children; it had a different focus, including feminism. According to Shaker,

> *Vogue* and Chopin were indeed "at one" in their nineteenth-century feminist politics for white, middle-to-upper-class women.[...] Between 1892-1895 *Vogue* was either Chopin's first- or second-choice periodical for publishing much of her fiction, indicating the author was both tracking and targeting the markets in which she would be most successful. (10-11)

Vogue was important to Chopin during this time period because it published stories that focused on women's issues and was willing to publish her adult centered, experimental works. These were the stories Chopin could not publish in family magazines. *Vogue* was essential for the publication of Chopin's experimental works. For example, Chopin's first story published in *Vogue* was "Ripe Figs" in August 1893, a year and an half after it had been written. "Ripe Figs," a one page story with no moral, had been written in February 1892, while "Loka," a story about an Indian girl and her differences from the upstanding Victorian family she lives with, written two months later was quickly published in *Youth's Companion* in December 1892, only nine months after it had been written.

Some of her other stories written during the middle of her career are "Miss McEnders," written in 1892, "A Story of an Hour," 1894 and "Athénaïse," 1895. These

stories were all controversial in their own ways: "Miss McEnders" attacked society women, while "The Story of an Hour" and "Athénaïse" both defied the sacred union of marriage. Five years after "Miss McEnders" was written, the St. Louis' *Criterion,* in March 1897, accepted it for publication. In "Miss McEnders," Miss Georgie McEnders, a society woman who "possessed ample wealth and time to squander, and a burning desire to do good—to elevate the human race, and start the world over again on a comfortable footing for everyone" (205), set off to help the poor and needy only to turn out to be a hypocrite. Georgie would not help Mlle. Salambre because she had a child without being "married." Since Mlle. Salambre has a child and is still called Mademoiselle, all Georgie sees is sin. Because of this Georgie writes a letter stating: "Please withdraw from Mademoiselle Salambre all work of mine, and return same to me at once—finished or unfinished" (207). When Mlle. Salambre realizes Georgie will no longer help her, she goes to Miss McEnders' house to confront her, and Mlle. Salambre "drew her skirts up ever so carefully and daintily, as though she feared contamination to her petticoats from the touch of the rich rug from which she stood" (209) because she knows the truth of where Georgie's father's money came from like everyone else but Georgie. Mlle. Salambre dares Georgie to "Go, yourself, Mees McEndairs, and stand for a while on the street, and ask people passing by how your dear papa has made his money, and see what they will say" (209). Gerogie is devastated to learn her father's money is not honest, but "he made the biggest pile of it in the Whiskey Ring" (209), and Georgie learns she is not any better than Mlle. Salambre. This was a dig on society women, on the part of Chopin.

Actually, "Miss McEnders" was not only controversial for its theme but also because it was believed Miss McEnders was based on "Ellen McKee, a well-known

philanthropist and daughter of William McKee, who had been convicted in the 1870s for stealing tax money from illegally brewed whiskey" (Walker 73). Because of this Chopin published this story under her pseudonym "La Tour." Also, since Chopin did not like clubs or society women, Chopin decided to take this jab at society women. She wrote "Miss McEnders" at the time she resigned from the Wednesday Club, a club that was "to create and maintain an organized center of thought and action among the women of St. Louis, and to aid in the promotion of their mutual interests, in the advancement of science, education, philanthropy, literature and art, and to provide a place of meeting for the comfort and convenience of its members" (qtd. in Toth *Kate Chopin* 208). Even though the club's intentions sounded good, Chopin found them too time consuming and the women not all sincere.

On May 4, 1896, Chopin wrote in her surviving journal from her adult life, "Impressions," her feelings toward society people and her drive to promote her books.

> Have missed the euchre club again because Mrs. Whitmore insisted upon having me go to her house to meet Mrs. Ames and her daughter Mrs. Turner, who was anxious to know me and hear me read my stories. I fear it was the commercial instinct which decided me. I want the book to succeed. But how immensely uninteresting some "society" people are! That class which we know as Philistines. Their refined voices, and refined speech which says nothing—or worse, says something which offends me. Why am I so sensitive to manner [?] (Toth *Private Papers* 179-180)

Chopin realized that as a professional, she was obligated to talk to some very uninteresting people. It was her "duty" as a professional to promote her works and to

make sure they succeeded. As much as Chopin fought to be her self and create her own style of writing, her own goals made it impossible for her to not be a part of society. There seemed to be no escaping the social world in her writing or social life, similar to Cassatt. Both women were raised to be ladies, and it was difficult to balance between what was expected of them as ladies and who they wanted to be as artists.

Another story during this time period, "The Story of an Hour" was published in *Vogue*, December 1894. Like "Miss McEnders" it was also daring, but this story was quickly accepted by *Vogue*. "The Story of an Hour" leaves a real impact for a three-page story. When Mrs. Mallard finds out her husband is dead, she goes alone to her room and she keeps whispering "Free! Body and soul free" (354)! Mrs. Mallard is so relieved and happy to finally be free and no longer a wife that when she finds out her husband is alive, her weak heart gives out. "When the doctors came they said she had died of a heart disease—of joy that kills" (354), which is how the story ends. The doctors did not realize that she did not die of happiness at seeing her husband, but at the realization that she was no longer "Free! Body and soul free." The story ending is ambiguous, though, because it does not definitely state the reason she died was because she was unhappy to see her husband. It is for the reader to draw that conclusion.[x]

This short story says so much about women's situation in the mid/late nineteenth century and how some women desired to be free, not to only be someone's wife. Without her husband, Mrs. Mallard would have been more free to make her own decisions. Once Chopin's husband, Oscar, passed away, she began to pursue a career as a writer. She was actually "Free! Body and soul free." Being a widow and a mother of six children made it more acceptable for Chopin to pursue a career as a writer because she now needed to

make money to support her family. Cassatt, as mentioned earlier, from the beginning, decided to pursue a career as a professional artist and for this reason she did not marry. Being single permitted her more freedom to move to Europe and not having to be concerned for a husband and a family gave her more time to work on her art.

Atlantic Monthly published another of Chopin's experimental stories, "Athénaïse" in two parts in August and September 1896. The magazine also added a subtitle to the title: "A Story of Temperament." The added subtitle was *Atlantic Monthly's* way of explaining Athénaïse's behavior because it was not acceptable for a woman not to want to remain married to her husband. In "Athénaïse" a woman runs away from her husband because she is not happy with him. Marriage is not what she expected it to be. When Athénaïse's brother, Montéclin, asks her why she does not like her husband, she responds:

> "No, I don't hate him," she returned reflectively [...] "It's jus' being married that I detes' an' despise. I hate being Mrs. Cazeau, an' would want to be Athénaïse Miche again. I can't stand to live with a man; to have him always there; his coats an' pantaloons hanging in my room; his ugly bare feet—washing them in my tub, before my very eyes, ugh!" (431)

Athénaïse is not quite able to explain why she hates marriage, but to her it is a life she cannot stand; every small thing about it annoys her. She even comments that she wished she had gone to the convent instead.

Since "Athénaïse was not one to accept the inevitable with patient resignation, a talent born in the soul of many women" (433), Athénaïse, with the help of her brother, leaves her husband. This is the story of a woman who leaves her husband to find herself

and figure out what she really wants, but when she realizes she is pregnant and thinks of her husband, "the first sensuous tremor of her life swept over her [... and] she was impatient to be with him" (451). Finally, she knows what she wants and gladly returns to her husband. Once she knows she is pregnant, she is now willing to accept marriage for what it is. This story has a happy ending because Athénaïse does not leave her husband forever but in the end returns to him. The story, though, does not look at marriage as only ideal and destroys the fairy tale image of marriage.

Chopin is beginning to explore women's inner turmoil and the choices they face. Chopin comments on marriage and discusses how some women are not meant to be married and have children. Athénaïse decides she wants to be married and have a family, while later in *The Awakening*, Edna rebels against this customary role for women completely. The decisions and choices Cassatt and Chopin made during this period in their career helped prepare them for the development of their later works. The middle period in their careers was a place where they began to test the boundaries and explore new options. They learned that there were other people interested in innovative styles like them and this helped them to forge ahead and begin to create what they wanted, not what was deemed proper and acceptable by society. Finally, they were developing confidence in their own style and gaining courage to explore new themes and styles, which is seen most clearly in their later works.

Part III
Finding One's Niche

Cassatt's Later Career:

After both Cassatt and Chopin had become comfortable as artists, confident in their abilities, and successful at gaining public recognition, they began to expand beyond their role models' styles and to focus on their own styles and themes. Their later works are what most people recognize them for; these are the works that distinguish them as independent, avant-garde artists. The works from Cassatt's early career that were accepted by the Salon have no real mark of Cassatt's mature style. In her middle career while influenced by Degas she blossomed and gained courage to pursue her own style. Cassatt once she found her niche, between 1887-1900, worked with women subjects and depicting women's lives. From 1900 until she became blind, Cassatt continued to work on the mother child theme. In 1926, at the age of 82, Cassatt passed away.

Cassatt's rebellion in the latter part of her career comes from the medium she employs along with what she is depicting. For example, her ten prints from 1890-91 are influenced by Japanese ukiyo-e prints,[xi] including *Afternoon Tea Party*, *The Fitting,* and *Woman Bathing*. In "The Color Prints in Context of Mary Cassatt's Art," Mathews discusses why the Japanese prints in America were considered amoral to Victorian society:

> Since many of the ukiyo-e prints were frankly pornographic, and most were understood to represent the nether world of courtesans and actors, Japanese prints as a whole were questionable. While the Parisian art world could take eroticism in stride, Anglo-American Victorian society, of which Cassatt was also still somewhat a part, had another view. (42)

Even though Cassatt left America to go to Europe where she felt she had a better chance of becoming an artist, her American Victorian upbringing still followed her, and she as well as Chopin always had to struggle at finding a balance between what was expected of them in society and what they wanted as artists. Their feeling about sexuality was different than the normal Victorian woman. As artists depicting women, Cassatt and Chopin chose what they felt was the most important aspects to focus on in women's lives.

Even though, Victorian society found the Japanese prints amoral, Cassatt fell in love with them. When Cassatt first saw the Japanese color prints at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in 1890, she wrote to Berthe Morisot, a fellow Impressionist artist:

> You could come and dine here with us and afterwards we could go see the Japanese prints at the Beaux-Arts. Seriously, *you must* not miss that. You who want to make color prints you couldn't dream of anything more beautiful. I dream of it and don't think of anything but color on copper.
>
> (Mathews *Letters* 214)

Cassatt had a similar obsession with colors and expressing womanhood the same as the ukiyo-e prints: "scenes from a woman's day, including bathing, dressing, writing letters, and caring for children" (Mancoff 20). This style embodied what Cassatt wished to portray in her art.

The decision to work with prints in the drypoint and aquatint style was interesting because it was not widely done in Paris and it was also difficult.[xii] The drypoints demonstrate how Cassatt rebelled against the customary form of her time. She worked with media and styles not displayed at the academic Salon, nor very many other artists pursued, including the Impressionists. In an *Afternoon Tea Party* (Fig. XI), a color

drypoint and aquatint, 1890-1891, Cassatt's subjects do not rebel against the tea party tradition completely, like Chopin's character, Edna, will in *The Awakening*. This image is different then her previously mentioned tea images during the middle of her career because *Afternoon Tea Party* casts a more negative light on tea parties or receptions, which were the norm for upper/middle class women during the nineteenth century.[xiii]

Figure XI *Afternoon Tea Party*, 5th state, 1890-91. Drypoint and aquatint, 42.5 x31.1 (16 ¾ x 12 ¼). Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Chester Dale Collection.

The focal point in this drypoint and aquatint is two women having tea; we are drawn to the circular movement between the women's eyes and what they hold in their hands. Even though we, as observers, can see that these women are participating in the ritual that Chopin's character, Edna, refutes, we sense that these women are stiffly going through the motions. The subjects in the drypoint appear stiff because of the broken contour lines Cassatt used throughout the drypoint. There are no soft flowing lines. Both women have stiff posture, and neither of the women appears content or comfortable. For example, the fact that the guest is sitting on the edge of her seat makes her appear uncomfortable and ready to leave.

The guest also looks uncomfortable and ready to leave because she still has on her cloak and hat. During tea parties the guest was supposed to leave her hat and cloak on to ensure her hostess that she was not going to over stay her fifteen to thirty minute visit. But it still creates the illusion of a person who cannot wait to leave, especially now, when it is customary for us to tell our guests as soon as they arrive to take off their coats and

stay awhile. Wearing the correct fashion was as important as the event itself.[xiv] The hostess, in contrast, looks more comfortable in her tea gown,[xv] a loose-fitting garment, which was more comfortable than her guest's outfit because she was not restricted to a corset, street clothes, cloak, and hat.

Another sign of the women's discomfort, in *The Afternoon Tea Party,* is their expressions and body language; there is no emotion between them, but perhaps disdain. The guest's face reveals disdain because of her "snobbish" expression as she looks down at her food or the whole situation. The expression appears snobbish because the women's head is tilted down; her eyes are closed; and her lips are almost in a frown or a dissatisfied expression. It is impossible to know for sure why the woman looks so dissatisfied, but because of her rigidity, we can tell she longs to leave and not participate in the ritual any longer, while the other woman simply goes along with what is expected of her and serves her guest. The hostess is very obliging as she serves her guest, but her face is devoid of emotion. She is very solemn as she does her "duty." She also appears a bit anxious to please because of how she is sitting; she is leaning towards the guest as she serves her. Their only point of contact is through the dishes; otherwise, they are separate from each other with no other points linking them.

Cassatt also decided to give the guest an unsatisfied expression after she had originally given her a more content expression. This is an interesting choice, especially since drypoint is a painstaking medium.[xvi] Cassatt's choice to change the guest's expression demonstrates that Cassatt did not want to acknowledge tea parties as being an enjoyable event and this is done through portraying the subjects very rigidly and without any signs of pleasure. It is as if the women were just going through the motions; the

drypoint portrays the tea party as a façade. The guest seems to only be there to perform her societal duty, and as soon as the appropriate time has elapsed, she will be ready to leave and not linger any longer than necessary. These women would probably have been happier if they just forfeited the ritual and went out like Edna, who escapes the façade by doing as she pleases; it is a means for her to liberate her self from societal restrictions, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section. Even though Cassatt's subjects are not liberated from these restrictions, Cassatt portrayed them as uncomfortable and shows how limiting and stifling tea parties can be.

Figure XII *The Fitting*, 7th state, 1890-91. Drypont and aquatint, 42.1 x 30.6 (16 ½ x 12 1/8). Worcester Art Museum.

Another drypoint, titled *The Fitting* (Fig. XII), 1891, explores the world between two classes: the wealthy and working class. In *The Fitting,* Cassatt was commenting on the need to conform and fit in. Wealthy women needed to constantly keep their wardrobes up to date and get their clothing fitted. Ladies had to be properly dressed for every occasion.[xvii] In *Mary Cassatt*, Pollock when discussing the print, *The Fitting*, notices that, "her [Cassatt's] standing woman displays a certain boredom. She escapes being a merely fashionable clothes-horse, for some private thought seems to have been captured even in the slightly treated features in her face" (70). This is an important detail. Most of Cassatt's women are deep in thought, pensive. They are actively thinking, even as they behave properly in society and go through the motions. We want to know what they are thinking and feeling. The observer becomes attached to these women and sees there is more to their lives than the action portrayed;

there is something underneath the ritual that we cannot grasp.

In *The Fitting* we cannot see the working woman's face, so we cannot read her facial expression to discover how she feels. Pollock feels:

> The radical moment of Cassatt's print is the crouching working woman, the dressmaker. Her pose conveys the concentration of her skillful work without exposing her face [...] In Cassatt's print, the social relations of class became the opportunity for figuring the working women as a subject, rather than, as in masculine fantasy, an almost animal body on the margins of humanity and bestiality. Cassatt's use of profil perdu grants to the working woman dignity of her own consciousness, which excludes the viewer. (*Painter of Modern Women* 173)

Even though the working woman's face cannot be seen, she is still in the print. Cassatt has chosen to use her as a subject and not to ignore her existence. She is very obscure as she squats in what has to be a very painful position to pin up the dress. Yet her existence is very important, and she is in her own world as she works. This is someone Cassatt can respect as a working woman herself; the only difference is their status and type of profession. Cassatt, though, does not debase the working woman or make her look beast like similar to some of her contemporaries, for example Degas. The working woman is another side of woman and Cassatt does not ignore this side or debase it.

In another print, *Woman Bathing* (Fig. XIII), 1890-91, the subject is partially nude as she bends over to dip her hands in the washing bowl. According to Mathews,

> Eroticism, albeit veiled, is acknowledged by Cassatt in her choice of seminude poses for her adult models (which was unusual in her art) and

even of the intimacy of mother and nude child [seen in the prints *The Bath* and *Maternal* Caress, and the painting *Sleepy Baby*, 1910]. The Japanese prints in her own collection appear to Western eyes to cast this relationship in a sensual light and provide a revealing context for Cassatt's interpretation. (*Color Prints* 42)[xviii]

Cassatt is exposing the life of women, but this is done in an ordinary way and setting. For example in this print, it is a normal scene of a woman bathing herself; it is similar to the intimate moments when a mother or a nanny is bathing a child or holding the baby seen in some of Cassatt's other paintings.

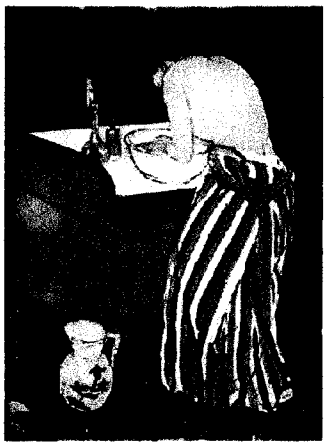

Figure XIII *Woman Bathing*, 4th state, 1890-91. Drypoint and aquatint, 43.5x29.9 (17 1/8 x 11 ¾). Worcester Museum of Art.

In *Coiffure* (Fig. XIV), similar to *Woman Bathing*, the same redheaded model is arranging her hair. Both these images are glimpses into a private arena. This time the model is pulling her hair up, her side to us, and her back curved with her head tilted down. What part of her face we can see is reflected in the mirror. In this image the woman has on only a skirt similar to the woman bathing and her breasts uncovered. Not very many of Cassatt's women subjects are nude, but Cassatt chose to portray women seminude in her prints because she is depicting women getting ready for the day or bed. The *Coiffure* is also very similar to the *Girl Arranging Her Hair* done five years previously to prove to Degas that women have style.[xix]

Figure XIV *The Coiffure*, 5th state, 1890-91. Drypoint and aquatint, 43.2 x30.5 (17 x 12). Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Rosenwald Collection.

Another image of a person arranging hair is a mother combing her child's hair in *Mother Combing Her Child's Hair* (Fig. XV), 1898. Even though this is an intimate moment shared between mother and child, it is not a happy moment. The child has to sit still as her mother brushes through her hair. These are small glimpses into the woman's world. It shows women preparing themselves and their children for a new day, performing their daily activities, and then getting ready for bed. These images do not portray only happy moments. In *Sleepy Baby* (Fig. VXI), 1910, as a mother holds her sleeping baby, the woman does not have a happy, serene expression as she holds her baby close. This image is not to be read solely as a sweet, sentimental image. The mother is deep in thought. She almost looks sad as she leans her cheek on her baby's head. Her eyes look down, not at the baby. Her thoughts are elsewhere. The artwork portrays all aspects of women's lives, not just the glamorous or sentimental aspects. Cassatt's artwork focuses on the reality of women's lives.

Figure XV *Mother Combing Her Child's Hair*, 1898. Pastel and gouache on tan paper. The Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Figure XVI *Sleepy Baby*, c. 1910. Pastel, 25 ½ x 20 ½". Dallas Museum of Fine Arts.

Once Cassatt had established her own style and became independent from even the Impressionists, she began to develop the theme she is most known for: mother and children. Throughout her career, she worked with children, but she needed to find her self as an artist before she focused on only one theme. This is very similar to Degas, who worked and reworked the same images, such as horses and dancers, over and over again, trying to perfect and capture it at every angle. Of course by focusing on one theme more

than others, Cassatt mistakenly got labeled as the woman who drew mothers and babies or as the term coined by Edgar Richardson "tea, clothes and nursery; nursery, clothes and tea" (qtd. in Mathews *Mary Cassatt* 328). There is much more to Cassatt's art, even though these are her main themes, because Cassatt represents the life of women, not an ideal image. Her choice of theme demonstrates who women are and their situation.

Chopin's Later Career:

The woman theme runs throughout both Chopin and Cassatt's works. They demonstrated who and what women were in the nineteenth century and what they wanted to be as people, not just as women. In Chopin's later works from 1898 on, Chopin's characters openly rebelled against the system. Two prime examples are Edna in *The Awakening*, 1899, and Calixta in "The Storm," 1898. *The Awakening* demonstrated that not all women could follow the norms, such as being mothers, loyal and loving to their husbands, not having a career, or wanting to be married. *The Awakening* and "The Storm" are the most extreme instances of sexuality and rebellion in Chopin's works. These stories are the strongest illustrations of Chopin's development of women and what some women wanted outside tradition.

One way Chopin demonstrated women's situation is through fashion. In *The Awakening* fashion is an important way of depicting woman's role in society. Chopin's description of clothing in *The Awakening* represents the difference between the amateur and professional woman artist and the difference between the mother woman or the Madonna and the "New Woman." For example the betrayal of Mlle. Reisz, the

professional pianist, is very negative. When the reader is first introduced to her, she is described as being a

> disagreeable little woman, no longer young, who has quarreled with almost every one, owing to a temper which was self-assertive and a disposition to trample upon the rights of others[...]She was a homely woman, with a small weazened face and body and eyes that glowed. She had absolutely no taste in dress, and wore a batch of rusty black lace with a bunch of artificial violets pinned to the side of her hair. (905)

Mlle. Reisz is a woman with no fashion sense, which stems from the fact that she cares more about performing her art than she does about her physical appearance. By choosing the life of an artist, she has chosen to go against societal traditions and to not care about how the public views her, which in turn makes her appear "disagreeable and assertive." Nancy Walker sees this description of Mlle. Reisz as a representation of "the many unflattering portraits of the nineteenth century 'bluestocking[xx],' so devoted to her writing [or art] that she neglects both her femininity and her proper female role" (2). Women's independence from the norm was interpreted as masculine. Mlle. Reisz could not both be independent and feminine; women were either submissive and feminine or independent and masculine. Chopin and Cassatt choose the life of the artist, so like Mlle. Reisz they were outside the norm. Chopin acknowledges the artists' situation and how society felt toward artists, especially women artists.

Madame Ratignolle, on the other hand, in *The Awakening* is portrayed as the ideal woman. She is described as a "faultless Madonna" and "sensuous Madonna," (890 -891) who is usually dressed in white, representing pureness. She completely embodies the

word "feminine" because Mme. Ratignolle is the representation of the mother-women and is seen as the ideal: Madonna. In the 1893 Chicago fair, according to Toth "Mary Cassatt had produced 'Modern Woman,' a gorgeous mural with madonalike female figures—much like the form of Mme. Ratignolle in *The Awakening*" (Toth *Unveiling* 138) and Toth feels Chopin may have based Mme. Ratignolle on Cassatt's madonnalike figures. In truth, it is irrelevant whether Chopin based her figure on Cassatt's images, but what is important is the concept that women were supposed to fit the "true woman" or Madonna type—pure, motherly, and that both Cassatt and Chopin would have known how to depict the perfect Madonna figure. They knew this image because women were supposed to embody it.

Not all women could fit into that role. For Chopin's character Edna, it was impossible:

> In short, Mrs. Pontellier was not a mother-woman. The mother-women seemed to prevail that summer at Grand Isle. It was easy to know them, fluttering about with extended, protecting wings when any harm, real or imaginary, threatened their precious brood. They were women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels. (888)

The mother-woman was what Mme. Ratignolle embodied. But it was not Edna. Edna throughout the novel struggles to find herself. She knows she cannot fit the image of Mme. Ratignolle, nor does she fit the image of Mlle. Reisz.[xxi]

There is a lot of tension in Chopin's *The Awakening* between the reality of how society expected women to behave and how, Edna, as a person, wants to be. These two realities conflict. Edna struggles to be free from societal pressures, to find her true self, and to become an artist. An example of this is how Chopin's main character, Edna, handles her reception days. As an upper-class woman, Edna should have a reception day, but Edna is torn between her duty and freedom. She opts to rebel against the rules. Edna needs freedom to be herself; she attempts to rebel against all traditions and norms in society and strip herself of them like she stripped herself of her clothing at the end of the novel.

At supper on a Tuesday evening, Edna's assigned reception day, Edna's husband, Mr. Léonce Pontellier, realizes Edna is not properly dressed in her reception gown, so he asks Edna how her reception day went. She replies that she did not know because she was out, and her reasoning was that, "I simply felt like going out" (Seyersted CWC 932). To make the situation worse, Edna leaves no excuse for her callers. To this Léonce responds:

> "Why, my dear, I should think you'd understand by this time that people don't do such things; we've got to observe *les convenances* if we ever expect to get on and keep up with the procession. If you felt you had to leave home this afternoon, you should have left some suitable explanation for your absence." (Seyersted CWC 932).

There is a lot of dynamics at work in this section of the novel. To Léonce, Edna not being there to receive her callers amounts to a loss of reputation because Edna has failed to play her proper role as a hostess and take part in the procession. After Léonce realizes Edna has broken the rules of decorum, he wants to look over the cards that the callers have left

behind for Edna to let her know they had called. When Léonce realizes that a wife of a man whose business was worth a lot to him has left a card, he is outraged that Edna has mistreated this important business man's wife by the mere fact that she has not left an explanation.[xxii] He is not as concerned with why and where Edna decided to go as with the fact that since she rebelled against her duty, they are both losing face. Since Edna was not playing by the rules and not acting out her proper role in polite society, her actions could destroy her husband's career. Part of her duty as a wife was to be responsible for her husband's social life as well as her own.

The traditions Edna rebels against were actual traditions women were supposed to follow during the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. People living during the late nineteenth century were aware of the duties of an upper/middle class woman.[xxiii] It is easy to feel that Edna's refusal to participate in the custom was unjustified when all she tells her husband is "I simply felt like going out," but there is more to her rebellion. Edna has come to the realization that not every tradition or "norm" in society is suitable for every woman or every situation. As she begins to find herself throughout *The Awakening*, she realizes that she wants to make her own decisions and no longer wants to conform to the conventions. If she wants to go out, she wants to be free to do so, even if it is during her reception day. Or if she wants to paint instead of having tea, should she not have the right to tell her callers that she is busy painting and does not want to be disturbed? The need to comply with duty interfered with a woman's desire to do what she wanted with her life.

For Edna to find freedom, she feels she has to escape from the restrictive traditions in society, and throughout the book she continues to push the limits of decorum

and does as she pleases.

> She began to do as she liked and to feel as she liked. She completely abandoned her Tuesdays at home, and did not return the visits of those who called upon her. She made no ineffectual efforts to conduct her household en bonne ménagère [as a good housewife], going and coming as it suited her fancy, and, so far as she was able, lending herself to any passing caprice. (938-939)

She even goes as far as to move out of her husband's house because as she is becoming "awake" and finding herself, she no longer can remain in her husband's house and be his property. She tells Mlle. Reisz, " I have a little money from my mother's estate [...] and I'm beginning to sell my sketches.[...] I can live in the tiny little house for little or nothing [...] I know I shall like it, the feeling of freedom and independence" (963). She takes her nest egg and the money she has been making from her art, and rents her own place around the corner, so she can feel free and independent. Chopin, like Cassatt, realized that women artists needed their own space and to be independent.

As Edna begins to find herself no one understands her but Mlle. Reisz and her doctor. Her rebellion against the norms were confusing to the people who followed the rules because they could not understand why she did not want to do what everyone else was doing. It was all determined for her; all she had to do was follow along, but Edna realized that following along did not work for her; marriage and society rules hampered her growth and her art. To only be the wife of Léonce was too confining.

Edna's husband Léonce is bewildered by his wife's actions and does not know what to do or who his wife is becoming. But "He [Léonce] could not see that she was

becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world" (939). In the end Edna strips herself of all garments and enters the ocean. The stripping of her garments represents her complete rejection of tradition. She is stripping herself of all facades.[xxiv] Like all traditions in society, clothing also represents tradition. Edna rebels against all these traditions and strips herself from them literally and figuratively. She returns to her original state.

Another part of Edna's awakening, besides rebelling against what is expected of her as a wife, is her sexual awakening; she begins by exploring her body, discovering her own sexuality, and later having an affair. The first hint of Edna's sexual awareness occurs when she and Robert, the man she becomes infatuated with, sail over to Chênière Caminada for the day. During the service she has a "feeling of oppression and drowsiness" (916). Robert takes Edna to a place where she can rest. While laying down,

> She stretched her long strong limbs that ached a little. She ran her fingers through her loosen hair for a while. She looked at her round arms as she held them straight up and rubbed them one after the other, observing closely, as it were something she saw for the first time, the fine, firm quality and texture of her flesh. She clasped her hands easily above her head, and it was thus she fell asleep. (917-918)

This sexual awareness continues to grow throughout the book as she continues to find her true self and explore her desires.

After Robert leaves for Mexico to save Edna and his reputation so that they are not tempted to have an affair, Edna encounters Alcée Arobin. He is willing to kiss Edna and awaking her, unlike Robert, who is afraid of ruining Edna's reputation. Alcée's

attention works like a "narcotic upon her" (961). This newfound sexual desire, leads Edna to wanting to be satisfied more and more. When Alcée kisses her "it was the first kiss of her life to which her nature really responded. It was a flaming torch that kindled desire" (967). Edna continues the affair, but even while Edna is with Alcée, she realizes he is not who she wants; he is not Robert. She is aware that there will come a day when Robert will not be enough. "To-day its Arobin; to-morrow it will be someone else. It makes no difference to me" (999). She needs to find herself outside the world of men.

The same sexual tension is in "The Storm" written a year before *The Awakening*, which also pertains to an affair. This story is charged with more sexual tension than the storm raging outside, that Chopin did not even attempt to publish this story which is a sequel to "At the 'Cadian Ball," 1892, published in *Two Tales*. Calixta and Alcée, the main characters, did not act upon their sexual desires in the first story, but after they are both married and run into each other during a storm six years later, they cannot resist their sexual attraction to each other. Calixta and Alcée in "At the 'Cadian Ball" even though they were attracted to each other end up marrying different people. Calixta and Alcée during the 'Cadian Ball talk about their time in Assumption hinting about what they did, but not discussing what they did there until in "The Storm," nor did they fully act out their desires until "The Storm."

During the storm, Alcée asks Calixta about Assumption:

> "Do you remember—in Assumption, Calixta?" he asked in a low voice broken by passion. Oh! she remembered; for in Assumption he had kissed and kissed and kissed her; until his senses would nigh fail, and to save her he would resort to desperate flight. (594)

This is similar to Robert's desperate flight to Mexico to save Edna. But Alcée and Calixta during the storm finally act upon their desire as the storm raged on:

> When he touched her breasts they gave themselves up in quivering ecstasy, inviting his lips. Her mouth was a fountain of delight. And when he possessed her, they seemed to swoon together at the very borderland of life's mystery. (595)

And this is how they remained until the storm is over.

When Calxita's husband and son arrive home after the storm, Calixta is cooking supper as if nothing happened. The family spends a pleasant evening together; at dinner, "they laughed much and so loud that anyone might have heard them as far way as Laballiere's" (596). And Alcée writes to his wife, Clarisse:

> It was a loving letter, full of tender solicitude. He told her not to hurry back, but if she and the babies liked it at Biloxi, to stay a month longer. He was getting on nicely; and though he missed them, he was willing to bear the separation, a while longer—realizing their health and pleasure were the first things to be considered. (596)

Clarisse is very happy to receive the letter because as "devoted as she was to her husband, their intimate conjugal life was something which she was more than willing to forego for a while" (596). Clarisse actually wants a break from her husband. She is happy to get away from him for a while. The affair appears to have not hurt anyone's relationship, but actually seems to make everyone happy; like the end states, "So the storm passed and every one was happy" (596).

"The Storm," is especially daring in the language used and the fact Calixta and Alcée had an affair and feel no guilt about it. The language and theme were so strong that Chopin knew better than attempt to publish it. She learned her lesson previously from "Mrs. Mobry's Reason." The world was not quite ready for "The Storm," nor was it ready for *The Awakening*. Yet Chopin chose to publish *The Awakening*, which received many negative reviews. *The Awakening*, actually, did not even become popular until the sexual revolution and the feminist movement in the 1970s. The world was not ready for the novel until seventy years after it was written! *The Awakening* was an amazing delve into the feminine psyche that the world was not quite prepared for.

Chopin understood women's sexuality, and she wrote about it during a time when women were not seen as sexual beings. Chopin in *The Awakening* and "The Storm" illustrated that women were more than wives and mothers, but beings with desires and needs that needed to be expressed and acted upon. Both Cassatt and Chopin were aware of women's desires outside the norms, and they both chose to depict women in the manner they felt best suited women and their situation. Cassatt and Chopin were able to do this because they knew what it was like to desire something that was not acceptable. For they both desired to be artists and struggled to be artists, during a time when this was not acceptable for women, but in the end they were able to achieve their goals. Cassatt and Chopin were able to create their own art in a man's world and find their own place and style. Their works represent the needs and desires of women and who women are. It broke from the "true woman" mold and instead, focuses on real women.

Conclusion:

Cassatt and Chopin struggled to find a place for themselves in a world where it was not acceptable for women to be professional artists. The majority of nineteenth century upper/middle-class women were mothers and wives. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the term "New Woman" came about and women started fighting for their right to have careers outside of the home. Cassatt and Chopin could have easily chosen not to become artists and to live the typical lifestyle of a lady because by following the norms they would not have had to struggle to find a balance between their careers and their lives as ladies. Instead, they decided to fight against tradition and become professionals, and they took that a step further. They could not be satisfied with the acceptable styles of the time but had to find their own styles that expressed their and other women's situation.

Cassatt and Chopin chose the lifestyle that was best suited for their career ambitions and situation. Chopin at first married, but once she became a widow she pursued her career, while Cassatt from the beginning pursued a career as an artist. For Cassatt the best choice she made was moving to France. After she lived in France for almost thirty years, in1894 a curator for international art exhibits, Sara Hallowell, received a letter from Cassatt that stated, "After all give me France-- women do not have to fight for recognition here, if they do serious work" (Mathews *Letters* 254). In Europe, Cassatt felt she had a better chance at recognition. If she was serious and worked hard, she could become a professional artist working side by side with male artists. She would not be purely singled out because she was a woman, like she felt she would be in America. Chopin, as a widowed mother, remained in America and her birthplace, St.

Louis, but this decision did not permit Chopin from establishing herself as a writer. Chopin, like Cassatt, worked hard to establish herself and create her own style. They worked hard to find their place in a man's profession and world.

These women once they decided to pursue careers as artists could not be happy working within the traditional styles and themes, but they pushed beyond the boundaries further and further from the norms. They would not create art that was only acceptable for women or was deemed acceptable for artists to draw or write. Neither woman chose to take the easier path and follow the traditional styles and genres. Throughout their careers, their works became more daring. It was definitely not an easy task for either woman, but they forged ahead. And we should be thankful that they did because by being willing to try new things, they have opened doors for women artists by portraying women as they really are and showing what women artists are capable of.

They are not the only women artists who struggled to find their place, but together with other women artists, they form a larger collection of works that has helped to change how women artists are seen. Any woman who has struggled to become a professional artist and has forged ahead no matter the circumstances has helped all women who have chosen a similar path. Many women artists during the nineteenth century faced the same difficulties as Cassatt and Chopin. The life decisions for other professional women artists who took risks undoubtedly look similar to the decisions Cassatt and Chopin made about their careers and lives. For an upper/middle-class woman to be a professional artist during the nineteenth century, she had to find a balance between societal norms and her work, and to do this meant a woman had to decide what was more important: her art or her status in society. Any woman artist, similar to Cassatt and Chopin, who took the more

difficult path has helped to ease the way for future artists. Other women artists who decided to resist the norms most likely when analyzed made strikingly similar decisions as Cassatt and Chopin throughout their careers.

Cassatt and Chopin are an example of women's struggles and how women can persevere under these struggles and still make conscious decisions about their art. These women knew what they were creating, and they created their art even though it was not the acceptable norm because they believed in what they were creating. Cassatt and Chopin are not the only ones to do this; many women before and after them have taken "the less traveled road," so as to open more paths for the next generation of woman. This is a small glimpse into the struggles and decisions of two strong, determined, and courageous women during the late nineteenth and the turn of the twentieth century, but there are many other women who have faced the same struggles and decisions and have decided to pursue the "less traveled path."

It is important to look at how Cassatt and Chopin's work progressed because it shows their struggles as women artists trying to define themselves in the late nineteenth century and find a place for their work, where it could be appreciated for its value as a work of art and not based on the fact that it was created by a woman. As Cassatt developed as an artist, her style became more innovative and her women subjects developed more of an edge, became sharper, and more distinct. Even though Cassatt was depicting societal rituals and images of mothers and children, she was portraying women's reality and not "sugar coating" the reality to make it ideal. Similar to Cassatt, as Chopin developed and refused to completely conform to societal norms, so did her women characters. Throughout Chopin's career her women characters became stronger

and more rebellious. In one of her final works, Chopin's central character, Edna, in *The Awakening*, rebels against the system entirely, and because of this she no longer can function in society; there was no place for her and, in the end, she walks into the ocean. Similarly Cassatt's subjects, like Chopin's most developed characters, were also women. Cassatt and Chopin were both focusing on the lives of women and representing them the way they were. They were not trying to simply represent women as some ideal image or Madonna, but representing women as they were, simply human beings with desires, flaws, strengths, and weaknesses. They helped to destroy the ideal image of women and show what women are capable of.

They were unable to conquer every obstacle, especially when today women artists are often still referred to as "women artists," not solely as artists, but their struggles helped to ease the path for the women artists following in their footsteps and to show what women are capable of; woman, too, can also be artists. Cassatt and Chopin's works, though, are finally being looked at for what they are worth and how they show the many different sides of women as people. Cassatt's work is no longer seen as purely sentimental because her work contains mothers and children, but her work is valued now for her ability as an artist. For example, there are many exhibits on Cassatt's works, and her works bring in high prices similar to her male contemporaries. Also, Chopin's *The Awakening*, which was considered unacceptable reading and was rumored to have been banned for its content is now part of most universities curriculum. Both Cassatt and Chopin are now receiving the recognition they deserved based on the value of their work. The world is finally ready for these women and this is why it is important that women artists from the nineteenth century are studied.

Their struggles to develop their own identity and creative works helped to demonstrate what was/is possible for women to achieve. They paved the way for other struggling women artists and writers by forging ahead and daring to do what they wanted. They are role models for future women artists along with other women who have/are willing to make decisions outside the norm and pursue what they believe is the right path. Cassatt and Chopin's decision to take risks in the end has paid off for it shows the talent and determination of two incredible women. They embody what real women are, not based on the concept of true, ideal, or new women, but what women really are and are capable of.

Endnotes

[i] For chronological information on the life of Kate Chopin refer to the "Chronology of Kate Chopin" in Emily Toth's *Kate Chopin*; for Mary Cassatt refer to the chronology in Nancy Mowll Mathews' *Cassatt and Her Circle.*

[ii] The only comparisons that I came across concerning Cassatt and Chopin is when Emily Toth attempts to link Chopin and Cassatt through Chopin's character Madame Ratignolle, the Madonna/ Mother-figure, in Chopin's *The Awakening.* Toth feels that Madame Ratignolle may have been based on Cassatt's mother images. Also in *Aesthetics and Gender in American Literature: Portraits of the Woman Artist,* Deborah Barker discusses Chopin's character Edna as an artist; in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman: The Writer as Heroine in American Literature,* Linda Huff also focuses on the importance of art in *The Awakening.* Art is the link that binds Chopin and Cassatt in these studies.

[iii] When Cassatt first exhibited in the Salon, she exhibited under Mary Stevenson, her mother's maiden name.

[iv] This was Chopin's first short story published.

[v] After *The Awakening* received bad reviews, Chopin in *Book News* made this humorously brusque statement:

> Having a group of people at my disposal, I thought it might be entertaining (to myself) to throw them together and see what would happen. I never dreamed of Mrs. Pontieller [Edna] making such a mess of things and working out her own damnation as she did. If I had the slightest intimation of such a thing I would have excluded her from the company. But when I found out what she was up to, the play was half over and it was then too late.
> (Toth *Unveiling Chopin* 223-224)

[vi] It was potentially harmful to Cassatt as a lady to have a male alone in her studio because female and male friends were not supposed to be alone together without a chaperon. Until Cassatt's sister, Lydia, passed away in 1882, she was usually at the studio because she was Cassatt's favorite model. As long as someone else was in the studio with Cassatt and Dagas, it was acceptable.

[vii] The first biographer of Cassatt, Achilles Ségard tells the story:

> In front of Degas, Miss Cassatt in assessing a well known painter of their acquaintance dared to say: "He lacks style." At which Degas began to laugh, shrugging his shoulders as if to say: These meddling women who set themselves up as judges! What do they know about style?
> This made Miss Cassatt angry. She went out and engaged a model who was extremely ugly, a servant-type of the most vulgar kind. She had her pose in a robe next to her dressing table, with her left hand at the nape of her neck holding her meager tresses while she combed them with her right, in the manner of a woman preparing for bed. The model is seen almost entirely in profile. Her mouth hangs open. Her expression is weary and stupid.
> When Degas saw the painting, he wrote to Miss Cassatt: What drawing! What style!
> (qtd. in Mathews *Mary Cassatt* 63-66)

[viii] The translations can be found in Thomas Bonner's *The Kate Chopin Companion.*

[ix] After *The Heavenly Twins* was published, the New Orleans *Times*-Democrat, in April 1893, published Chopin's story whose "character's names are suddenly very similar to those in Grand's novel. Grand wrote of Edith, while Chopin writes of Editha; Grand's infected husband was Morley, while Chopin's in Mobry. Kate Chopin has discovered, evidently on her own, what is now called copycat publishing" (Toth Unveiling 125). I do not feel Chopin was copying Grand, since she had written her story before Grand's book was published. Chopin knew, though, by changing the names the story would look similar to Grand's and more people would read it. Chopin from this learned as a writer which topics were safe to broach and not to

broach and what people wanted. Of course, it is a good thing that Chopin in her later work went ahead and wrote *The Awakening* without waiting for the appropriate time to broach the subject.

[x] In Maupassant's work this ending was referred to negatively as a "trick ending." For example, in "The Necklace," a Mme. Loisel borrows a diamond necklace from a friend and she loses it. She and her husband spend years working to pay off the debt they encumbered by replacing the necklace. In the end, the woman finds out the necklace was not real but a fake. This is similar to "A Story of an Hour," in the fact that Mr. Mallard was actually alive and because he was his wife died. These endings are surprising and shocking, but this does not mean they should be labeled as trick endings.

[xi] For more information on how the ukiyo-e prints influenced Chopin refer to *Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints* by Nancy Mowll Mathews and Barbara Stern Shapiro.

[xii] Drypoint etching is when the artist uses a silver needle to draw on a copper plate, which creates what is called a burr. The burr is the part that holds the ink. Aquatint is a technique used to create tone and is used with other intaglio methods, like drypoint. The artist first covers the plate in resin where he/she wants it. Then the plate is heated, so that the resin melts to it. Next an acid bath is given to the plate. The ink can be held in the areas where the acid bit into the plate. The process is repeated until the right tone is created. Varnish is applied to the lighter areas to prevent them from darken throughout the process. This type of print has a feeling similar to watercolors. It is a tedious process, but allows the artist to create many prints to sell at a more affordable price. (Pollock 159)

[xiii] For more information on tea parties and receptions refer to Mrs. Charles Harcourt's etiquette book, *Good Form for Women, A Guide to Conduct and Dress on all Occasions,* and Constance Harrison's *The Well-bred Girl in Society.*

[xiv] Even Chopin focuses on this in *The Awakening* when Léonce notices his wife, Edna, is not wearing the proper garment to entertain guests.

[xv] According to Penelope Byrde, in *Nineteenth Century Fashion*, the tea gown became fashionable in 1878 and was finally a more comfortable garment that could be worn in the afternoon without a corset and "by 1889 the tea gown was considered dressy enough for the mistress of the house to dine en famille" (74).

[xvi] To see the change refer to the fifth plate or state in Mathews and Shapiro's *Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints* page 148.

[xvii] For more information on fashion refer to Penelope Byrde's *Nineteenth Century Fashion.*

[xviii] To look at Cassatt's Japanese's print collection refer to Mathews and Shapiro pages 66-67.

[xix] According to Mathews and Shapiro, in their catalog on Cassatt's prints:

> The connection to the earlier painting, *Girl Arranging Her Hair*, is strongly established by the use of a similar red-haired model and similar intimate interior with reddish floral design wallpaper. One is tempted to assume that both are set in the same room in Cassatt's apartment; however the fact that Cassatt changed apartments in 1887 suggests the possibility that she was doing the print as a reprise of the painting—which she had given to her friend Degas—rather than entirely from nature. (151)

[xx] As explained in Boswell's ``Life of Dr. Johnson", this term is derived from the name given to certain meetings held by ladies, in Johnson's time, for conversation with distinguished literary men. An eminent attendant of these assemblies was a Mr. Stillingfleet, who always wore blue stockings. He was so much distinguished for his conversational powers that his absence at any time was felt to be a great loss, so that the remark became common, "We can do nothing without the blue stockings." Hence these meetings were

sportively called bluestocking clubs, and the ladies who attended them, bluestockings. (http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=bluestocking)

[xxi] Yet Edna has a strong desire to draw Mme. Ratignolle:

> She had long wished to try herself on Madame Ratignolle. Never had that lady seemed a more tempting subject than at that moment, seated there like some sensuous Madonna, with the gleam of the fading day enriching her splendid color. (891)

Edna failed in her portrayal of Ratignolle. Edna, not being a "Madonna" type, was unable to accomplish this feat.

[xxii] If Edna would have only informed her guests that she was busy working on her art that would have been more acceptable than not leaving an excuse. Some excuse, even if it is not the most appropriate explanation, was better than none for it did not snub the tradition completely and was not plain rude. As part of a woman's duty, Edna was supposed to stay home and greet guests or go to other women's homes as a form of mingling with the correct crowd. Chopin, through her character Edna, was showing that this was not acceptable for every woman.

[xxiii] For example, Mrs. Charles Harcourt in her etiquette book, *Good Form for Women, a Guide to Conduct and Dress on all Occasions,* discusses a wife's duty to her husband and family: "The woman who has a husband with business ambition to be served, daughters and sons to convey to success, and an established position in society to maintain, must resign herself to the exacting routine of social life with its regrettable artificiality and sacrifice of so much that is worth the most" (46). Chopin's character, Edna, had definitely not fulfilled this duty by skipping out on her reception day. Yet Harcourt in 1907 feels these traditions were artificial and women had to sacrifice more than it was worth to keep up theirs and their family's reputation. The façade was a regrettable part of society for a married woman during this time period, and Edna chose to snub this tradition and others because they were too limiting.

[xxiv] "Clothing in modern time," was, as Théophile Gautier called it, "A kind of second skin." With the horror of nudity, the gendered body was signified by its fashionable carapace. Feminism was bound to challenge the garments that were almost synonymous with existing gender identities if it was going to change the definitions of Woman." (Pollock *Painter of Modern Women* 58)

Mary Cassatt's Illustrations:

Afternoon Tea Party, 5th state. ©1998 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Chester Dale Collection. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. New York: Thames and Hudson Inc., 1998. 71.

Five O'Cock Tea. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 130.

Girl Arranging Her Hair. ©1997 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 22.

Head of a Young Girl. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Mary Cassatt.* By Nancy Mowll Mathews. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987. 31.

Ida. Private Collection. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 111.

Little Girl in a Blue Armchair. ©1997 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art. Washington D.C. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 131.

Mother Combing Her Child's Hair. The Brooklyn Museum, New York. *Mary Cassatt.* By Nancy Mowll Mathews. 126.

On the Balcony. Philadelphia Museum of Art. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 103.

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Sleepy Baby. Dallas Museum of Fine Arts. *Mary Cassatt.* By Nancy Mowll Mathews. 144.

The Coiffure. ©1997 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 178.

The Cup of Tea. The Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts, New York. *Mary Cassatt.* By Nancy Mowll Mathews. 153.

The Fitting, 7th state. Worcester Art Museum. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 175.

The Mandolin Player. Private Collection. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women.* By Griselda Pollock. 83.

Woman Bathing, 4th state. Worcester Museum of Art. *Mary Cassatt: Painter of Modern Women*. By Griselda Pollock. 179.

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--------. "A Turkey Hunt." Ed. Per Seyersted. 191-192.

--------. "A Rude Awakening." Ed. Per Seyersted. 137-144.

--------. "Boulôt and Boulotte." Ed. Per Seyersted. 151-152.

--------. "Loka." Ed. Per Seyersted. 212-218.

--------. "Miss McEnders." Ed. Per Seyersted. 204-211.

--------. "Mrs. Mobry's Reason." Ed. Per Seyersted. 71-79.

--------. "Ripe Figs." Ed. Per Seyersted. 199.

--------. *The Awakening.* Ed. Per Seyersted. 881-1002.

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