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Proposal Title: Gender, Space, and the Gaze in Post-Haussmann Visual Culture: Beyond the
Flaneur

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Project Narrative

Gender, Space, and the Gaze in Post-Haussmann Visual Culture: Beyond the Flâneur

It is tantamount to scripture that men of the upper classes dominated the public spaces of Paris in the latter half of the nineteenth century while women were relegated to the domestic sphere. This understanding of gender and its relation to public space and the gaze is based largely on Charles Baudelaire's 1863 description of the flâneur in his essay entitled "The Painter of Modern Life." In this essay Baudelaire conceives of the flâneur as a male artist—a dominant yet dispassionate boulevard presence who observes the passing parade of people and fashions with an eye towards reproducing them later with pen or brush. It is difficult to overestimate the incredible influence this figure has had on scholarly understandings of gender. Under its impact, masculinity, public space, and the gaze have been seen as all but mutually defining well into the twentieth century across the breadth of the humanities, leaving little place for women in theorizations of public space or the gaze. It is my contention that the dominance of the flâneur in theories of gender is wildly out of proportion with the figure's actual significance in late nineteenth-century Paris. In paintings of the period, for example, portraits of men on the boulevard or in other public spaces of the city are rare while images of men in the domestic sphere are quite common. Relying on the evidence of visual and written culture, my project focuses on how gender was actually understood in relation to both space and the gaze during this critical period in the development of modernity.

There is no book-length study that uses visual culture as a means of contesting the influence of Baudelaire's flâneur on theorizations of gender in the late nineteenth century. The few texts that address in a substantive manner how Parisian masculinity was constructed through visual culture rely almost exclusively on representations of men by Gustave Caillebotte. His works are seen as an authoritative source for thinking about masculinity in this period because of the large number of male figures in his work. Two chapters in Tamar Garb's *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France* (London, 1998) focus on images of men by Caillebotte in terms of class, but do not address the issues of public masculinity, the male gaze, or the flâneur. The exhibition catalogue, *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, edited by Anne Distel (New York, 1995), includes an essay by Gloria Groom that considers Caillebotte's portraits of men in interior spaces. While she questions the presumed interdependence of public space and masculinity in important ways, the range of artists she discusses within this framework is narrow. The recent exhibition catalogue *Impressionist Interiors* (Dublin, 2008) considers men in relation to domestic spaces, but generally reinforces longstanding ideas about the interior as a feminine space. The essays gathered in *Interior Portraiture and Masculine Identity in France, 1789-1914*, edited by Temma Balducci, Heather Belnap Jensen, and Pamela J. Warner (Aldershot, 2011), offers new ways of considering bourgeois men's relation to the interior, but the essays included there focus primarily on portraits of men in the studio or in the study, while my book moves beyond this limited range.

The presence of well-to-do women in public remains inadequately researched and theorized by art historians. While there are several publications outside the field of art history that focus on bourgeois women's increasing role in public, art historians have focused instead on the presence of lower-class women in public in publications such as S. Hollis Clayson, *Painted Love: Prostitution in*

French Art (New Haven, 1991). Exceptions to this dearth include Ruth Iskin's *Modern Women and Parisian Consumer Culture in Impressionist Painting* (Cambridge, 2007) that considers women in the context of new forms of commerce, but does not attend to the multiple images of women on the boulevards. The recent exhibition catalogue *Women in Impressionism: From Mythical Feminine to Modern Woman* (Milan, 2006) has an essay by John House that opens the possibility that bourgeois women were present on the streets of Paris, but little space is devoted to the topic. The recent volume, *Women, Femininity, and Public Space in European Visual Culture, 1789-1914*, ed. Temma Balducci and Heather Belnap Jensen (Ashgate, 2014) goes some way towards opening the discussion. There are, however, no publications on this period that theorize a female gaze, bourgeois or otherwise.

Though written from a feminist and cultural studies perspective, my book nevertheless wrestles with more than three decades of feminist scholarship that has almost unanimously upheld the notion of a dominant and predominately public masculinity while sidelining women to the domestic sphere. Innumerable images from the period, many well-known and here re-contextualized, dispute the exclusive association of men with the public sphere by proposing men's rightful place in the home as well as women's active participation in the public spaces of Paris. The book asks why, despite much evidence to the contrary, many art historians and other scholars continue to rely on limiting paradigms that are grounded in the shopworn dichotomies of male/female and public/private. My book thus fills a considerable lacuna as it seeks to open new avenues for considering how gender and its relation to space and the gaze were actually understood during the period.

Chapter One considers the much-theorized boulevard -- the prime locus of bourgeois men's alleged dominance in theorizations of masculinity based on Baudelaire's *flâneur*. This space is ripe for reappraisal in terms of both gender and class as it has been associated almost exclusively with bourgeois men. In looking at how women and men of various classes peopled the streets, the chapter complicates not only the literal and conventionally understood "makeup" of the boulevard, but also how it has been constructed or "made up" by scholars. In framing the boulevard differently, the chapter all but ignores the *flâneur* as a marginal personage and in the process breaks down a tangle of mutually reinforcing dichotomies that have defined scholarship on the period: male/female, public/private, wealthy/poor. The first half of the chapter "tramps" the boulevard by looking at the ubiquitous presence of the male beggar on the streets of Paris. Reactions to beggars in public discourse along with images of beggars by artists such as Jean Béraud, Edouard Manet, and Edgar Chahine belie the presumed mutually defining relationship between Parisian public space and bourgeois masculinity. The second half of the chapter looks at some of the many ways that bourgeois women were active on the boulevard, particularly through their locomotion. Images of well-to-do women who are active on the streets of Paris by artists that include Manet, Mary Cassatt, and Maurice Delondre suggest that scholarly understandings of the boulevard that rely on the framework of Baudelaire's *flâneur* to exclude genteel women from such spaces need to be revisited.

The second chapter questions the notion that bourgeois Parisian men were in sole possession of the gaze. This assumption comes in large part from film theorists who rely on Freudian accounts of subject formation and has been reinforced in art historical scholarship by Baudelairean constructions of bourgeois masculinity. As is well documented, however, post-

Hausmann Paris was defined by a renewed emphasis on spectacle and display occasioned by broad boulevards and the shops that lined them where, as I will argue, both men and women were subject to various gazes. Indeed, the assumption of a uniquely male gaze is belied in popular culture imagery as well in works by artists such as Manet, James Tissot, and Giuseppe de Nittis that depict women as active lookers at a time when the lorgnette was considered an indispensable fashion accessory for bourgeois women. Manet's works, in particular, are highlighted as many of his best-known paintings present the presumed male viewer of the canvas as the object of a female gaze. In various ways, the images in this chapter propose the male viewer (and men in general) as objects to be examined, subject to a gaze that is sometimes female, challenging longstanding notions about men's dominance as lookers and about women's status as passive objects of the male gaze.

Chapter Three literally and figuratively looks at the boulevard from a different angle. While the boulevards reconstructed under Hausmann have been given priority in studies of modernity and gender that rely on Baudelaire, domestic architecture was just as significant in determining how Parisians related to each other and to the urban outdoors. Windows and balconies were common elements in the Hausmannized apartments that lined the boulevards, determining the size and layout of rooms and affecting the dynamics of viewing and people watching. Works by artists such as Caillebotte, Pierre Bonnard, and Berthe Morisot posit the vantage points offered by windows/balconies as an integral component of modern urban experience, one that was available equally to men and women of all classes. Artists embraced such views as indicative of a modern sensibility, thus also challenging the Baudelairean assumption that the boulevard was the primary creative fuel for artists of the period.

Theorizations of masculinity based on Baudelaire's essay conventionally assume that domestic spaces were anathema to masculinity; my fourth chapter, however, examines instead the ways in which masculinity and domesticity inflected each other. There are countless images of men depicted in spaces typically read as feminine, including the drawing room, the garden, and suburbia. Rather than explaining away such images, my chapter uses them in conjunction with period writings by interior designers and architectural theorists such as César Daly and Charles Blanc to propose the domestic environment as vital to masculine self-realization and self-fashioning. As this chapter will argue, the numerous images of men in the home -- often in the context of all-male gatherings -- posit the domestic interior as a space that was as significant as the café, the boulevard, or the billiard room in constructing a modern, urban masculinity, thus challenging narrow interpretations of domestic spaces as exclusively feminine. Almost without exception, male artists during this period, including Manet, Caillebotte, Claude Monet, and Edgar Degas, represent themselves, their fellow artists, and other men in interior and/or studio spaces rather than on the boulevard. In a period when the family and domesticity were seen as crucial to the prosperity of France, these images, along with period writings, reinforce the importance of family and domesticity to men and to the nation.

While my project relies in large part on the evidence of visual culture, I employ a wide variety of source material as well as interdisciplinary methods to interpret late nineteenth-century constructions of gender and its relation to space and the gaze. In addition to images drawn from high art as well as from popular journals, my primary sources include architectural practices and interior design conventions. My book also mines art criticism, newspapers, novels, plays, and

prescriptive literature for valuable contextual information regarding contemporary ideals for men and women in both the public and the private realms. Bringing together the fields of art history, cultural studies, social history, feminist theory, and urban studies allows for a fuller understanding of just how narrow constructions of gender and its relation to space and the gaze have been and how crucial their rethinking is to a fuller understanding of the gender dynamics in the late nineteenth century. Because I rely on a range of evidence and interpretive models, *Gender, Space, and the Gaze* will appeal to scholars in a wide variety of fields, strengthening its contribution to the humanities.

My book has been accepted for publication; an award from the Faculty Research Fund would provide the subvention required by Ashgate Publishing to publish the book as well as the funds to obtain permissions and reproductions for the images to be reproduced in the book. Once I have my subvention and image permissions in hand, the book will go to press, with an estimated publication date of December 2016. The publication of this book is a significant personal and professional goal; it is central to my continuing success at Arkansas State University. Publication of the book will also boost my reputation as a nationally recognized scholar known for a research emphasis on nineteenth-century constructions of gender, leading to speaking engagements, conference participation, and future publication projects.

Timetable for completion of project

April 30, 2016	completed manuscript to Ashgate
April 30, 2016	image permissions to Ashgate
July 1, 2016	subvention to Ashgate
December 2016	estimated publication date of book