MA Major Research Paper

**Modernist Salon Culture:
The Contributions of the Stettheimer Sisters in 1920s New York**

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Introductory Chapter

During the 1920s, the Stettheimer sisters Ettie, Florine and Carrie opened the doors of their home in the Alwyn Court on West 58th Street, New York, to numerous guests, celebrities, poets and artists including Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Gaston Lachaise, Elie Nadelman, and Paul Thevenaz, dancer Adolph Bolm, playwright Avery Hopwood, writer Sherwood Anderson, as well as critics Carl Van Vechten, Henry McBride and Paul Rosenfeld. Rivaling the era's famous salons of Gertrude Stein and Nathalie Barney in Paris, collectively the sisters created a literary and artistic salon in which art making flourished. The distinctly feminine decor served as a backdrop for Florine's paintings on display in the salon; Ettie would describe the vibrant salon culture in her autobiographical and fictional writings; and Carrie's role as sartorial experimenter would be inscribed in the sisters' paintings and writings.

The experience of the Jewish salonière, with specific focus on the influence of the Stettheimer sisters—Florine, Carrie and Ettie—is of particular interest because of the power that the salon gave women in 1920s New York. The Stettheimer salon, presided over by three Jewish women, serves as a lens through which this Major Research Paper will explore the collaborative nature of modernist salon culture. The Stettheimer sisters' respective roles with regard to their salon were different; Florine was the painter and adorned the walls of the salon, Carrie embodied the traditional role of the hostess, and Ettie governed the conversation. However, each of the Stettheimer sisters provided important individual as well as collective contributions to the artistic representation and shaping of modernist salon culture in 1920s New York.

In fact, as I shall argue, the Stettheimer salon became the thematic focus of the sisters' artistic endeavors, such as Florine's impressive paintings showcasing whimsical experimentation and featuring many of her famous salon friends, like Marcel Duchamp; or Carrie's role as the fashion maiden, donning the costumes, as well as her central role as salon organizer, all of which would inspire Ettie's and Florine's art. Meanwhile, Ettie contributed to the ideas and intellectual rigor that are the hallmark of salon culture. It was the interfacing of these cultural and artistic endeavors and expressions that contributed to the success and vibrancy of the Stettheimer salon, creating a unique space that operated at the intersection of private and public realms in which important issues such as sexuality, race, gender and class could be questioned and reexamined. This project will explore the diverse ways in which the Stettheimer sisters used their vibrant salon space as a springboard for conversation about such alternative issues, specifically by drawing on their respective artistic, literary, and cultural talents. Ultimately, their exuberant self-portraits and group portraits can also be read as forum for questioning and redefining identity.

In their book, *Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation*, based on an exhibition of the same name and at The Jewish Museum in New York, Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun provide a taxonomy and history of the influence of the salon on the lives of Jewish women in 1920's New York and Paris; in fact, they historicize the salon as a literary and cultural institution with a longstanding tradition.

Since early-seventeenth-century France, salons, as institutions of modern culture, were also known as "at homes," because they were held on a weekly basis, on the same day and time. Salon invitations were typically sent out via personal messenger, word of

mouth, or, after the mid-eighteenth century, through postal services. As the tradition developed, a phone call became an acceptable practice when inviting guests to the salon. Meanwhile, the salonière, or hostess, was responsible for providing for her guests “the model of rational, exhilarating, discursive style” (Bilski and Braun 2). The salonière opened her home to her guests, offering fine foods, stimulating conversation and elegant dress; “bound to be the mistress of the house, the salonière excelled as a master of ceremonies,” while simultaneously also adhering to the salon tradition of egalitarian sociability (Bilski and Braun 3).

This tradition of egalitarian sociability enabled all salon guests the unique opportunity to converse and share their opinions. In this way, historically, the power or “political politesse” of the salon was the ability to bring together, in conversation, those who would normally not meet (Bilski and Braun 2). In fact, the salon was an institution wherein educated Jewish women flourished by exerting their public influence from inside the home. The emergence of the salon in 1920’s New York contributed to Jewish women’s emancipation by bringing the public sphere into the realm of the private. The salon aided Jewish salonières with an entrance into mainstream culture by relying on a tradition of egalitarian sociability, enabling them to overcome religious, ethnic and gender difference (Bilski and Braun 2).

One of the most salient points that Bilski and Braun use to characterize the salon is the importance of salon conversation for women in 1920’s New York. Bilski and Braun explain that the salon facilitated meaningful discussion, among men and women, about art, politics and marginalized groups, topics that were considered to be taboo in the public sphere. In this way, by blurring the boundaries between public and private, Jewish

salonières were able to shape perceptions of critical contemporary issues of 1920s New York. As an institution that helped alter social conceptions of gender and sexuality, the salon provided the Stettheimer sisters with the opportunity to express, for example, subversive ideas regarding sexuality. These alternative beliefs regarding identity become apparent through an examination of the Stettheimer salon as a sexually neutral space, similar to the original salons of early-seventeenth-century France (Bilski & Braun 4). The Stettheimer salon was a place where both women and men “could be ladies,” contributing to the beginnings of a gay community in 1920’s New York (Bilski and Braun 134).

Another important characteristic of the salon, according to Bilski and Braun, is the way that it enabled Jewish women to confront the marginalization facing them within society. Many Jewish women in 1920’s New York underwent a unique experience, feeling pressure to assimilate and absorb the new culture that surrounded them: “I saw people who looked better and dressed better and I wanted to be like that kind” (Weinberg 107). The stresses related to assimilation were compounded by the anti-Semitism and social segregation that still existed in many sectors of 1920’s New York. For Jewish salonières, who faced the double marginalization of being female in a patriarchal society, as well as Jews in a gentile environment, the salon served as the forum through which they might enter into mainstream society and yet also preserve Jewish cultural traditions.

My methodology draws on historical and cultural theory, as well as literary and art historical theory, to explore the salon as an institution at the interface of visual, literary, and cultural expressions. Exploring a rare and relatively unexamined fictionalized memoir (such as Ettie’s 1923 novel, *Love Days*), alongside visual art (such as Florine’s 1923 oil paintings *Portrait of Myself* (fig. 1), *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp*

(fig. 2), *Portrait of My Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer* (fig. 3), *Soirée* (fig. 4), and others), and fashion (Carrie's costumes), I will explore salon culture's ability to generate new artistic forms and ideas, in which the salon itself is being centrally thematized and in which the salonières explore themselves, each other, and their guests in artistic work. Thus theories of self-representation will also be important to consider.

This Major Research Project is organized around three major chapters, with each chapter focusing on the respective and complementary roles of the three Stettheimer sisters, Florine, Carrie and Ettie. The organization of my paper will follow the artistic and cultural expressions of each of the three sisters, exploring and theorizing their respective roles and contributions to the vibrancy of their salon. The structure will allow me to highlight both the individual contributions of each sister, as well as centrally exploring in each chapter the interactions and interfacing of various artistic forms. Ultimately, I hope to be able to show how the Stettheimer sisters contributed in innovative and experimental ways to the shaping of modernist salon culture of 1920s New York.

Chapter 1 is devoted to exploring the artistic work and influence of Florine Stettheimer. By drawing on theories of salon culture and art history, I propose to document the ways in which Florine's artwork provides a rich commentary on the salon culture of 1920s New York, revealing also how whimsical art can be subversive rather than revolutionary, and appealing to a broader viewership. Florine's artwork, with its focus on self-portraits and portraits of the salon, highlights several important themes relating to salon culture, such as expressions of alternative sexuality and critical considerations of the female role within society.

Chapter 2 will explore the influence of Carrie, whose art was intensely focused on style, on presenting herself as a work of art through experimental fashion. Using theories of fashion, gender, and salon culture, this chapter will explore the self-construction of Carrie for the eyes of her guests, as well as exploring Carrie's role as the model for her sisters' art. The chapter will document the interrelationship between her sartorial experiments and her sisters' artistic expressions. In the 1923 *Portrait of my Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer* (fig. 3), Florine, for example, depicted Carrie as a social butterfly, "with lacy wings and antennae topped by a beaded cloche" (Bilski and Braun 153). It was a playful tribute to both her sister's artistic style and to the salon culture in which that style could inspire the invited viewers. Carrie was also responsible for managing the chef and maids as well as attending to the salon guests, thus playing a crucial role of the traditional salonière.

Chapter 3 will be devoted to Ettie's role as the literary salonière of the Jewish family. An academic with a doctorate from the University of Freiburg, she governed the conversational rules of the Stettheimer salon. Furthermore, Ettie wrote a novel *Love Days* under the playful and gender-bending pseudonym Henrie Waste; in writing a work of fiction about her salon, she was inspired by avant-garde artist and gender-bender Marcel Duchamp, who was often the guest of honor in the Stettheimer salon and who appears as the character Pierre Delaire in the book, as well as appearing in Florine's paintings. Using theories of self-representation and salon culture, I will explore the relationship between writing the self and writing the salon. Ultimately the art of all three sisters was interrelated and made the salon itself a privileged topic.

Chapter One

Florine Stettheimer:

The Salon within Self-Portraiture

Florine Stettheimer lived during a time when women were not considered capable of creating significant art. Caught by familial duties and her nineteenth-century upbringing, with no husband or father to offer alternate outlets or opportunities, Stettheimer had to inventively piece together her formal art training. Throughout her life, the artist maintained a running battle to find the time to work on her art and be taken seriously as an artist.

(Bloemink X).

Carl Van Vechten said of the Jewish salonière, Florine Stettheimer: "Florine did not inspire love ... she did elicit interest, respect, admiration, and enthusiasm for her work in art" (quoted in Tyler xiii). An American painter, Florine Stettheimer used her salon to push the boundaries of female liberation, as she created a comfortable space where alternative ideas could be expressed regardless of gender. With the salon, Jewish women of 1920's New York brought the public into their private residences, creating an opportunity for individual accomplishment and social power. Florine's artwork provides ample evidence for the centrality of the salon in her life and career, as well as a rich commentary on the salon culture of 1920s New York. Ultimately, the salon was a forum that provided Florine with the opportunity to display her artwork. Thus, Florine's artwork, with its focus on self-portraits and portraits of the salon, underlines several important themes pertaining to salon culture, such as expressions of alternative sexuality, critical considerations of the female role within society and the importance of salon conversation.

Before delving into specific examples of Florine Stettheimer's artistic influence on modernist salon culture of 1920s New York, it is important to contextualize her contributions by examining the origins of the Stettheimer family, the vibrancy of New York during the 1920s, and the history of the salon as a site of female empowerment and social mobility.

Florine Stettheimer was born in 1871 to Rosetta Walter Stettheimer and Joseph Stettheimer, the second youngest of five children. According to the few existing photographs of Florine Stettheimer, she was an attractive woman with brown eyes and even features. Barbara J Bloemink, author of the biography, "The Life and Art of Florine Stettheimer," explains that Florine's friends described her as, "small, dark, exceedingly slender, exceedingly modest, fanciful, and...of singular charm" (Bloemink 5). Characterized as shy, Florine's style of dress was more tailored than her sisters' and she often kept to herself; "her diaries and letters from friends indicate that she was quick, ironic, caustic, and highly judgmental in her opinions and observations" (Bloemink 5).

The Stettheimers were wealthy German Jews living in Rochester, New York. Rosetta had several brothers and sisters who lived in New York City and had married into respectable German-Jewish families. When the Stettheimer children were young, and living in Europe, Joseph Stettheimer left his family. Stella and Walter Stettheimer, the two oldest children, eventually married and moved to California. Rosetta and her three youngest children, Florine, Carrie and Ettie, traveled and lived on and off in Europe, eventually settling in New York in 1914.

At the turn of the century, Middle-class German Jews prospered and many became extremely successful. In Berlin, wealthy German Jews constituted five percent of

the population but paid more than thirty percent of the city's taxes. Throughout the early 1900s, Germany boasted an unrivaled educational system, excellent scientific and research facilities, and a rich cultural life (Elon 273). With a combination of material strength and cultural wealth, Germany was prospering. For example, by 1913, more books were published in Germany annually – 31,051 new titles – than in any other country in the world.

German Jews contributed to Germany's success in many fields, such as the arts and sciences, thereby improving their social status and gaining recognition: "Within a relatively short time, families once on the margins of established society, outside the general culture and language, produced a surprisingly high number of outstanding men and women in the arts and sciences" (Elon 274). By the early 1900s, some people believed that certain fields were actually dominated by Jews, such as journalism: "it was as though a dam had given way to release a flood of talent" (Elon 275).

After Joseph Stettheimer deserted his family, Rosetta lived in Europe with her young children. Berlin was the context in which Florine spent the majority of her childhood, benefiting from the success Germany was undergoing at that time. During these years in Berlin, Florine, in her early teens, began to develop her artistic skills through formal art training. Beginning in 1906, Rosetta and her three youngest children spent long periods of time traveling in Europe, before they permanently settled in New York in 1914. Over the next eight years, the Stettheimers traveled and resided in Germany and France, as well as in Italy and Switzerland. At this time, Florine studied art in Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart, and Ettie received a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Freiburg. From 1910 to 1913, Florine kept a studio in Berlin and spent

some of her time visiting galleries in Munich and Paris. However, the outbreak of World War I forced the Stettheimer's to return to New York; they resided in a house on the Upper West Side, which eventually turned into the space for their influential salon.

When the Stettheimer's returned to New York in 1914, their first American address was a brownstone on West 76th Street. In the mid-twenties, the family moved into a larger apartment in the Alwyn Court building on West 58th Street, where they lived grandly and continued to hold regular salons. Florine's art hung on the walls of the apartment, often serving as a source of conversation and debate amongst many of the guests that frequented the Stettheimer salon. As Sussman notes: "Although the fashionable, intelligent Stettheimer sisters were dedicated and sympathetic to the new, their style was formal, aristocratic, and ladylike—and they were passionate about art" (Sussman 45).

In accordance with historical French tradition, the Stettheimers paid tribute to the original salons by re-creating an alcove bed in the salon in the Alwyn Court on West 58th Street in 1926 (Bilski and Braun 128). Photographs, such as *Interior of Florine Stettheimer's Studio* (fig. 5), reveal that the furniture and décor has a feminine design, including: "an ensemble of cellophane and lace curtains, gilt fringe, crystal flowers, and rococo commodes" (Bilski and Braun 128). Florine decorated the Stettheimer apartment with a scheme of red taffeta draperies, red velvet upholstery, gray walls, and gold moldings (Whiting 35). The salon was a feminized and fantastical space that contained details such as lace curtains and crystal flowers, serving as a backdrop for Florine's paintings on display: "Stettheimer indulged in interior decoration taken to its fantastical, whimsical, and feminine extreme" (Whiting 37).

Throughout the 1920s, New York was a bohemian hotbed of culture, art and intellectual energy: "It was the apotheosis of the new, a flashpoint of artistic and intellectual energy. There was an improvident, risk-taking spirit in the air, a celebration of spontaneity, experiment, creativity, and spectacle" (Barnet 1). In New York, Greenwich Village was home to the avant-garde and their creative dissent. With the advent of birth control, sexual relations between men and women were casual, "In bars and crowded basement restaurants, literary salons and former stables turned into ateliers; the talk was of Freud, free love, feminism, homosexuality, modern art, birth control, personal fulfillment, and radical politics" (Barnet 1). Harlem was also a popular after-hours scene where the rebellious rich and the bohemian poor partied together.

For women, the revolutionary years in Greenwich Village began in the early teens and continued into the 1920s. New York flourished with the happenings of women, as it was an era, "congenial for the development of women's talents as writers and artists or as sponsors for the talented" (Wheeler & Lussier 39). Women began exerting their newfound influence by hosting salons, early feminist groups and contributing to magazines and newspapers with literary pieces such as poetry and pictures: "They lived impecuniously and informally, often cooperatively, eating together, criticizing one another's work, gathering with their lovers and male cohorts in the tearooms and inexpensive restaurants that filled the neighborhood" (Barnet 5). Women of 1920s New York could experiment with subverting the notions of femininity that existed at that time, "Some were lesbian, some bisexual; some promiscuous, some seemingly asexual" (Barnet 6). Consequently, Florine benefited from this revolutionary era for women; she

remained unmarried and pursued an identity as a professional artist rather than the traditional role of woman as wife, helpmate and mother.

It is also important to examine the history of the salon as a site of female emancipation and social mobility in order to appreciate the unique opportunity it gave Florine to express her alternative ideas through her artwork. The history of the salon, from the seventeenth to early twentieth century, contributed to the decline of aristocratic castes and the rise of new egalitarian elites. Ethics of salon reciprocity prohibited aggressive behavior in favor of mutual tolerance, and women, “perceived as having greater equanimity than men—were expected to take the lead” (Bilski and Braun 1). Bilski and Braun explain that even though the word *salonière* evokes a stereotype of seductive femininity combined with class snobbery, in fact, the social elitism of the salon actually served a progressive function for women: “Precisely because the salon was private, it enabled people of different economic standing, religion, rank, and nationality to exchange ideas and be recognized both as individuals and as part of humanity” (Bilski and Braun 2).

The salon also provided a space for exposing the world of high culture by showcasing individual talent, such as artwork, and operated as an opportunity for female empowerment by bringing the public sphere into the private domain of the home. “The salon granted women a singular means for education, professional identity, and personal empowerment” (Bilski and Braun 2). As *salonières*, women had the opportunity to influence the topics of conversations, shape ideas, consensus and erode stereotypes of class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity; such power was previously unknown to women (Lemons 181). However, it is important to mention that the equality maintained within

the confines of the salon was relatively temporary, operating as a type of theatre, diminishing difference and instigating the beginning of a feminist fight for gender equality.

In fact, the salon was an institution wherein educated Jewish women flourished by exerting their public influence from inside the home. The first salons conducted by Jewish women began in 1780s Berlin, as the ideas of the French Enlightenment reached Germany. The salon offered Jews facing ethnic persecution, similar to women facing gender inequalities, an opportunity to transgress social boundaries and subvert social perceptions of inferiority: "Education and dialogue were the means to self-betterment and social parity" (Bilski and Braun 15).

The first Jewish salonières, such as Rahel Levin and Fanny Von Arnstein, were from wealthy families; they owed female power to economic privilege. In this regard, these Jewish salonières operated as ambassadors for other Jews, achieving new status for women and Jews in Berlin society as well as personal emancipation from the strict religious customs that governed their often Orthodox lifestyles. Jewish salonières living in Germany were among the first literary women to publish, they are credited with importing the French ideals of sociability and change into Germany. Even for wealthy Jews, the salon represented a ticket into mainstream culture, previously prohibited by their ethnicity and rampant anti-Semitism: "personal association with the upper class and intelligentsia was the swiftest means of arriving, of mastering Western European high culture, and the finest form for achievement" (Bilski and Braun 16).

By the late nineteenth century, Jewish salonières began to adopt a new role, motivated by their status as the *Other* or outsider. With the establishment of Reform

Judaism permitting greater freedom within the religion, Jewish salonières were able to act as artists, writers and impresarios of modernism and the avant-garde. For example, American salonières Gertrude Stein in Paris and Florine Stettheimer in New York influenced modernist salon culture through their respective production of innovative portraiture, motivated by radical ideas regarding gender norms within society.

The emergence of the salon in 1920's New York contributed to the beginnings of female Jewish emancipation by bringing the public sphere into the realm of the private. Assimilating Jewish women embraced the role of the salonière, eager to adopt the responsibilities of social arbiter and cultural catalyst. However, Jewish women also experienced tension between social power and accomplishment and the prejudice that accompanied anti-Semitic sentiments (Weinberg 107). Thus, the salon provided Jewish women with the opportunity to enter mainstream social circles regardless of their public perception as the *Other* or outsider. The salon aided Jewish salonières with an entrance into mainstream culture by relying on a tradition of egalitarian sociability, enabling them to overcome religious, ethnic and gender difference: "they were exceptional women and exceptional Jews, and could have been neither without the salon" (Bilski and Braun 2, 4).

One of the most important themes revealed within Florine Stettheimer's artwork, as well as the salon space itself, is her expressions of alternative sexuality. Florine's radical beliefs regarding sexuality and sexual identity are apparent in examining her salon as a sexually neutral space, similar to the original salons of early-seventeenth-century France (Bilski & Braun 4). Distinctively "an uptown affair," many of Stettheimer's personally invited guests led private homosexual lives, some secretly and others publicly, in addition to having spouses (Bilski & Braun 128/134). While she did share several

guests with Gertrude Stein, such as French artists Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, Florine welcomed the differences and irregularities of celebrities, artists and poets alike: "The struggles and victories of these artists remained moot matters within the confines of the Stettheimer studio-salon, where the lucky artists discovered, magically enough, that they could relax" (Tyler 5). For example, writer Carl Van Vechten was a close friend and frequent guest of the Stettheimer salon. Moreover, while Van Vechten had a wife, he also maintained a separate homosexual life which he could explore within the accepting space of the salon (Sussman 56). Thus, the salon space enabled Florine to explore her own ideas regarding sexuality, as she welcomed alternative sexual identities among her guests and within her own life.

According to author and curator Elisabeth Sussman, Florine's artwork appealed to New York's budding gay community, particularly because of her alternative expressions and representations of ambiguous sexual identification on canvass: "Stettheimer's paintings reveal a sexually ambiguous fantasy of the human body...the female body in certain paintings is chically androgynous and the male body is subtly feminized" (Sussman 56). The most prominent example of one of these paintings is the 1923 portrait of her close friend and frequent salon guest, Marcel Duchamp, which illustrates her depiction of his gender-bending alter ego, "Rose Selavy" (Bilski and Braun 133). Duchamp's feminine persona, Rose Selavy, first appeared in a photograph taken by Man Ray in 1920-21.

In the painting she created for Duchamp, *Portrait of Marcel Duchamp* (1923) (fig. 2), Florine depicts Duchamp cranking up his alter ego on a corkscrew, testifying to the "imaginative reciprocity of the salon circle," and alluding to his sexually ambiguous

identity (Bilski and Braun 133). Florine reinforces the multiplicity of Duchamp's character by positioning him across from his feminine alter-ego and emphasizing the physical differences. The figure of Duchamp, at the left, is wearing a conventional jacket, pants and boots in muted, neutral tones of brown and grey. However, Rose Selavy, perched atop a zigzag platform, wears a rose colored, shoulder-padded jumpsuit. This painting serves as a representation of the ephemeral, intangible nature of Duchamp's personality: "In her portrait of Duchamp, Stettheimer chose to make the artist's provocation of sexual identity the subject of the painting" (Sussman 57).

Similar to Duchamp, Florine's identity as a single woman and professional artist also characterizes her as engaging in gender doubling, as women at that time were categorized primarily as wives and mothers (Bilski and Braun 134). For example, in a self-portrait painted between 1912-1914 *Self-Portrait in front of Chinese Screen* (fig. 6), Florine depicts herself with the attributes of a professional painter and appears to be in the act of working, wearing a white coverall and turban and holding her paintbrushes and a palette of color. Florine did not portray herself in the traditional female role of the time, but rather adopted a more conventionally male, professional self-representation in her artwork.

In addition to her expression of alternative sexuality, the salon also provided Florine with the context to develop her subversive ideas about the female role in society. As a single woman, Florine identified primarily as a professional artist and poet, shirking mainstream expectations of women fulfilling domestic duties and rearing children. Even though Florine did not sell her work, she still considered her painting as a career and not simply an idle pastime. For example, as Bloemink notes, in the majority of her paintings

she does not portray herself in the fashionable dress for women of the time, but rather in suits, symbolically representative of her desire to gain equality with men in the public sphere (Bloemink 15). According to author Estelle B. Freedman, the concept of the “New Woman,” which emerged during the 1920’s, demonstrates the newfound independence and power women experienced at that time. The “New Woman,” began to explore social and cultural emancipation in order to, individually, “become a person and not just another woman” (Britt quoted in Freedman 367).

Furthermore, in accordance with the image of the New Woman as unconventionally beautiful, Florine’s physical attributes resemble that of a boy, and illustrate the expression of a firm character based on her self-presentation. Similarly, alternative concepts about marriage also began to spread during the 1920’s, criticizing the stereotypical belief that marriage was a women’s ultimate goal and highest reward. Publicly, the New Woman did not marry, and she justified her decision based on identifying marriage as being barely better than slavery. Florine identified with this new ideology because she did not support the convention of marriage, evident throughout her work, as well as in several correspondences such as a cynical diary notation about a recently married friend: “It seems strange that she lost her nationality on account of a proceeding that took five minutes” (Stettheimer as in Bloemink 14).

In *Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue* (1931) (fig. 7), Florine satirizes marriage. According to her biographer, throughout her life, she regarded marriage as, “a suffocating, conventional, commercial undertaking that benefited the man but not the woman” (Bloemink 180). Aesthetically, Florine’s depiction of the wedding ceremony

demonstrates her disapproval of it, specifically in her presentation of the components involved for a well-to-do New York couple.

Florine represents the engagement period with red roses, buckets of champagne, the word Tiffany's, and boxes of Maillard chocolates floating at the top of the painting. Below this engagement imagery, Florine spells out the name of Altman's Department Store, where the quintessential wealthy New York couple would purchase the necessities for their new home. Contrastingly, in comparison to all the other elements of this painting, the bride and groom are treated superficially. Portrayed as conventionally tall, dark and handsome, the groom stands passively beside his bride, characterless, with facial features that are diffused and difficult to define. The imagery of material excess portrayed in this wedding, as well as the superficial treatment of the bride and groom, suggest Florine's disagreement with the societal expectation of the female role primarily as mother and wife.

Furthermore, in the left corner of *Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue* (fig. 7), Florine painted a vignette displaying Charles Lindbergh's ticker-tape parade throughout New York. The figure of Lindbergh, considering his historic flight across the Atlantic, symbolizes ideals of creativity and innovation of Modernism, and the 1920's trend towards personal individuality and freedoms. By juxtaposing the Stettheimer sisters with Lindbergh, Florine provides an ironic commentary on the importance of maintaining one's individuality despite societal pressures to conform to marriage.

Florine also expresses her aversion to the stereotypical female role via her depictions of her sisters. Ettie, the younger sister, was an outspoken feminist, with a doctorate from the University of Freiburg. Carrie was a "fashion plate," and while she did

not pursue a career, she had full time status as the family party planner (Bilski and Braun 133). Carrie, the eldest sister, managed the family's activities, enabling both Florine and Ettie the opportunity to pursue higher education. In painting herself, as well as her sisters, Florine captures a theme of transformation, illustrated through insect imagery. Florine's usage of insect imagery is also apparent in her painting, *Portrait of My Sister, Carrie W. Stettheimer* (fig. 3). Florine symbolically represents Carrie as a central figure in this painting, similar to the image of a butterfly. In this regard, as the social organizer of the family, this painting can be interpreted as a being a tribute to Carrie as the figurative social butterfly of the three sisters.

Similarly, in her 1923 *Portrait of Myself* (fig. 1), Florine converts her own image into that of an androgynous dragonfly. In this self-representation, Florine positions herself atop several flowers, with a curved body position and red wings; she rests under the sun. With her body nude under clear cellophane covering, as Bloemink has suggested, Florine portrays herself as sexless and without breasts (Bloemink 133-34). This androgynous body can be interpreted as an expression of Florine's changing persona, demonstrating her alternative notions of femininity, as Bilski and Braun note: "Here Florine captured her own shifting persona with the dandy's attributes of androgynous body and black artist's beret" (Bilski and Braun 133). Furthermore, with this painting, Florine also emphasizes her role as artist, further demonstrating her rejection of the traditional female role as wife and mother at that time: "The artist is dramatically made up with scarlet-outlined eyes and wears a beret to designate her status as an artist" (Sussman 57).

According to art critic Marsha Meskimmon, self-portraiture can be read as autobiography. The analogies that exist between autobiography and self-portraiture enable a greater understanding in reading self-portraits, especially those pertaining to female artists. Meskimmon explains that the subject of the work is the most prominent link between these two forms and it is often read autobiographically as a statement about the nature of the artist: "This concept of the mimetic truth of the self-portrait is linked to western traditions of thought which link seeing with knowing. In order to ascertain the truth of the representation, we should be able to perceive its accuracy, its likeness, its verisimilitude" (Meskimmon 68).

Over the course of last century, Meskimmon suggests, women's encounters with autobiography and self-portraiture have been influenced by their lack of fixed subject positions. As a result, women have used self-portraiture as a vehicle for negotiating alternative methods for representing and interpreting their experiences. Thus, women have had the opportunity to challenge social constructs and definitions of femininity by relying on the relationship between autobiography and self-portraiture, presenting their evolving selves through artistic avenues (Meskimmon 69).

In this way, self-portraits are often subject to psychobiological readings, which are intended to explain the psychology of the creative individual. However, in order to shed light on the unique challenges pertaining to women's interventions into self-portraiture, it is essential to consider the psychobiography of the female artist. Meskimmon notes that artists who often depict themselves in their art are usually subject to attention being paid to their personal lives: "Artists who frequently represented themselves in their art have often been subject to having their complex self-portraits

‘explained’ with simplistic reference to anecdotal details of their personal lives” (Meskimmon 79). This type of psychobiographical approach is especially common for female artists as their work is often linked to the personal sphere. Therefore, Meskimmon’s analysis can be applied to Florine’s artwork, specifically her 1923 *Portrait of Myself* (fig. 1), as critics often analyze her ambiguous sexuality and androgynous representation based on her self presentation.

Finally, Florine’s artwork as well as the salon space enabled her to express her ideas regarding the importance of salon conversation, specifically in facilitating discussion on topics of art and marginalized groups. Florine effectively demonstrates the positive impact that salon culture had on the development of art via her painting, *Soirée* (1917-19) (fig. 4). This painting illustrates the moments in a salon, among guests, directly after a painting has been unveiled. Thus, the subject of *Soirée* (fig. 4) highlights the act of looking at and examining art. As an expression of Florine’s alternative and liberal notions of sexuality, the nude self-portrait of Florine Stettheimer, hanging at the back of the salon, likely sparked conversation among her guests. In this scene, the majority of Florine’s guests are pensive and locked in the act of looking at the various artwork displayed in the salon. Overall, *Soirée* (fig. 4) underlines Florine’s beliefs regarding the importance of displaying, exploring and conversing about art within the context of the salon.

In addition to the display of art in the Stettheimer salon, it is also important to acknowledge the influence that Gertrude Stein’s salon had on modernist women’s salon culture. An American living abroad, Stein was one of the most well-known salonières of the 1910s and 1920s. Stein had converted her private space into a public one, creating a

subculture that eventually became part of mainstream culture (Bilski and Braun 1).

However, in contrast to the Stettheimer salon, Stein welcomed strangers into her salon, and admired the glare of publicity (Bilski and Braun 126). Even when Stein and her brother Leo were living in Paris, hardly living the wealthy life they eventually would, many influential and talented people visited their early salon, such as the Matisse and Picasso (Hobhouse 48). Due to Leo Stein's interest in modern art, he frequently pushed his ideas onto his guests, many of whom did not share his passion for modern art: "In those early days everyone laughed, and went to the Steins, for the fun of it, and half angrily, half jestingly, giggled and scoffed after they left" (Mabel Dodge as in Hobhouse 48). From inside the domestic sphere, Stein was successful in facilitating discussion about modern art. While the Stettheimer and Stein salons were different, they both stressed the importance of art by displaying it for the pleasure of their guests.

Furthermore, the salon was also a space wherein conversation concerning marginalization of minority groups could be addressed. During the summer of 1920, Florine went on a trip with Carl Van Vechten and other friends to the public beaches along the New Jersey coast, often segregated for both African Americans and Jews. Florine's painting, *Ashbury Park South* (fig. 8), is a critical reflection of her experience visiting this beach. The imagery in this painting suggests that Florine did not agree with segregation and she relied on salon culture to expose her beliefs. The main focus of this painting is of African American beachgoers spending their day relaxing in the sun. While there are a few Caucasian people illustrated in this work, Florine aligns them in a straight line running from the work's front center to the right middle ground. Moreover, compared to the African Americans presented in this painting, the Caucasians appear to

be stiff and angular in form. Using bright yellow and orange colors, overall, Florine's painting exudes a wealth of activity, enjoyment and a general atmosphere of positive fun. In this regard, this painting symbolizes Florine's admiration for the 1920's African American community: "Miss Florine herself thought this scene and these people very beautiful and the picture becomes a statement of her affection" (Bloemink 111). In presenting this painting to her guests, Florine likely stimulated the spread of conversation that positively reflected the African American community of 1920's New York.

In her article, "Recent Orthodoxies: Review of Women, Art and Power and Other Essays," Maureen Mullarkey rejects Linda Nochlin's claim regarding the feminist contributions of both Florine's salon and paintings: "Stettheimer's life was an exaggerated cakewalk to the influence and attentions of men" (Mullarkey 3). Mullarkey challenges Nochlin's claim that the Stettheimer salon was a space that enabled social equality, specifically in considering "black causes": "Nochlin rationalizes the flamboyant artifice of wealth by interpreting Florine's cupcakes as 'social investigations' and hers a voice for social equality" (Mullarkey 4). Mullarkey argues that despite Florine's close friendship with writer Carl Van Vechten, her support of his work as well as her own portrayal of African Americans in her paintings, were merely indicative of a social trend: "Blacks appear in her work because they were sensational and in vogue" (Mullarkey 4).

Moreover, Mullarkey continues to question the validity of Florine's artistic contributions by attributing success solely to her high profile friendships with influential artists, such as Marcel Duchamp: "The only thing Stettheimer's work proves is that it pays to have friends" (Mullarkey 4). While not entirely without merit, given the exoticizing of African American life at the time, Mullarkey overstates the case. In fact,

Florine did not intend to provide social commentary with this painting, but rather illustrate African Americans enjoying themselves and reveling in their own context, similar to any group of beachgoers at that time. Regardless of Florine's connections, her artwork on display in her 1920s New York salon made valuable contributions to modernist salon culture at that time, presenting a subtly subversive and witty, rather than an overly radical, critique of the era's prominent social inequalities.

Florine Stettheimer's artwork provides an extensive commentary on modernist salon culture of 1920s New York, revealing the subversive nature of her art. An examination of Florine's self-portraits and group portraits reveals several important themes pertaining to salon culture, such as expressions of alternative sexuality, critical considerations of the female role within society and the importance of salon life and interaction. Thus, Florine's artistic work reveals her unique contributions to her own salon and the overall success of modernist salon culture, thematizing and celebrating the salon as a source of female empowerment during 1920s New York.

In their book, *Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation*, Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun provide a taxonomy of the influence and importance of the salonière's role to the development of salon culture. The figure of the salonière emerged alongside the first salons in seventeenth-century France. The first Jewish salonnières emerged in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century, as ideas of universality and tolerance enabled them to experience newfound independence and freedom as marginalized women. It was the private space of the salon that provided

Chapter Two

Carrie Stettheimer:

Performing the Traditional Role of the Salonière

She was the sister most firmly entrenched in nineteenth-century behaviour and appearance. Her clothing tended toward the romantic, with bustle skirts and feathered hats, and engaged in numerous charitable, social, and domestic activities benefiting a proper nineteenth-century lady.

(Bloemink 5).

In the 1923 painting, *Portrait of my Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer* (fig. 3), Florine depicted Carrie as a social butterfly, “with lacy wings and antennae topped by a beaded cloche” (Bilski and Braun 153). It was a playful tribute to both her sister’s artistic style and to the salon culture in which that style could inspire the invited viewers. For Carrie’s art was intensely focused on style, on presenting herself as a work of art through experimental fashion. Carrie was also responsible for managing the chef and maids as well as attending to the salon guests, thus playing a crucial role of the traditional salonière. Between the three Stettheimer sisters, Carrie most classically embodied the role of the Jewish salonière.

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women with the opportunity to access unprecedented social power through the role of the salonière.

According to Bilski and Braun, the salonière possessed the ability to address challenging political issues of the day with non-threatening language, both giving and receiving advice amongst her guests. While displaying elegant dress and impressive presentation were essential qualities of the salonière, charisma, wit and intellect were equally important. Consequently, salonières were typically skilled at listening, able to anticipate the natural flow of conversation and effortlessly engage with their guests.

The art of conversation was an extremely important aspect of salon culture, specifically in its ability to shape opinions and bring together in dialogue persons who would normally never meet. For salonières, the art of conversation became a powerful tool with which they were able to participate in the salon tradition of egalitarian sociability. Salonières interacted with guests and explored topics, such as politics and art, which were previously restricted subjects for women within the public sphere.

Bilski and Braun explain that the term salonière often conjures up an image of class snobbery combined with seductive femininity. However, despite any elitist impressions of the salon, it actually served a progressive function. Since the salon was a private space, it provided the unique opportunity for people of various social and economic standing, religion, rank, sexuality and gender to mingle and interact equally, both socially and intellectually. Similarly, salonières benefited from the equalizing power of the salon, as it provided them with a means of education, professional identity and personal empowerment. Thus, the salonière was an integral part of the elusive appeal of the salon, as she represented the very beginnings of the struggle for gender equality.

“Bound to be mistress of the house, the salonière excelled as master of ceremonies” (Bilski and Braun 3). One of the salonière’s skills was to unite a group of people who despite their economic differences, could complement each other and exchange ideas harmoniously. Responsibilities of the salonière included preparations such as practicing and scripting, as well as organizing rehearsals for music, a theatrical performance, or a literary reading. However, despite the planning involved, it was also important for a salonière to appear spontaneous in her role as the hostess.

Each of the three Stettheimer sisters played a different, and yet equally important role, in the makeup and success of their New York salon. As wealthy German-Jews, the Stettheimer sisters were able to pursue artistic and academic endeavors and remained unmarried throughout their lives. Florine learned to paint, eventually adorning the walls of the Stettheimer salon with many vibrant paintings, many of which characterized modernist salon culture. Ettie submersed herself into the realm of academia, ultimately earning a doctorate degree from the University of Freiburg and establishing herself as a published author. Ettie adopted the role of the conversationalist in the family. Both Florine and Ettie obtained intellectual and professional training far beyond what was expected of women at that time.

Contrastingly, Carrie, the eldest of the three daughters, did not pursue a career like her sisters. She filled her days organizing and planning salon gatherings on behalf of her family, serving as the traditional figure of the salonière. By managing the family’s activities and organizing the Stettheimer household, Carrie gave her younger sisters the freedom to pursue the vocations of their choice.

Carrie's role as the classical figure of the salonière is apparent through an examination of her contributions to the Stettheimer salon surrounding meal preparation and serving, planning salon gatherings, the overall ambiance of the salon as well as her sartorial style and fashion. Like an actress, Carrie appropriated and performed the role of the salonière well, playing the part as the traditional hostess of the salon: "Carrie (1869-1944), the fashion plate and doyenne of hospitality, did not pursue a career but held a full-time post as party planner" (Bilski and Braun 133).

Several of Carrie's central duties as the family salonière involved planning the *menus* (fig. 9), organizing the meal preparation and overseeing the tasks of the family staff. Carrie was responsible for the elaborate meals served at the Stettheimer's New York apartment as well as at weekend country houses: "The dishes Carrie prepared varied from mushroom timbale soup to halibut and shrimp in mayonnaise aspic; meals often ended with meringue filled with fresh strawberries" (Bloemink 166). In an article written by friend and critic Carl Van Vechten, "The World of Florine Stettheimer," for *Harper's Bazaar* in October of 1946, he describes some of the meals that were often served at the Stettheimer salon, such as: feather soup, smelt stuffed with mushrooms, lobster in aspic mayonnaise, chicken chaud-froid, oyster salad and numerous other examples of dishes and delicacies. For dinners and parties, food was always served with heavy silverware, "and the table was set with red damask, a centerpiece of Venetian lace or Italian antique lace altar cloths, and Worchester, Rockingham, or Crown Derby porcelain (Bloemink 263).

Carrie supervised a series of several different German cooks and maids, ensuring that the proper foods were made and that salon guests were adequately tended to during

parties. Even during Prohibition, gatherings at the Stettheimer salon began with cocktails or champagne served in the drawing room. Moreover, when dinner was presented in the family's large dining room, it was often served by a live-in chef, supervised by Carrie.

Additional examples of Carrie's role as the classical figure of the salonière of the family include her responsibilities in planning and organizing salon gatherings. While living in their Alwyn Court apartment, Carrie was responsible for choosing and sending out invitations to guests of the Stettheimer salon. Occasionally, in addition to their large salon gatherings, the Stettheimer sisters often entertained smaller groups, which typically included serving dinners for various, eclectic guests. Some of the more intimate group gatherings at the Stettheimer residence included: the Van Vechtens, composers Virgil Thomson and Aaron Copland, playwrights Eugene O'Neil, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Moeller, Muriel Draper, critics H. L. Mencken, Marie Sterner, Paul Reimers, Carl Sprinchorn, Cecil Beaton, Robert Morse Lovett, Mr. and Mrs. Lachaise, McBride, painters Demuth, Stieglitz, and O'Keeffe (Bloemink 166).

Furthermore, Carrie's role as the family salonière also involved contributing to the décor and overall ambiance of the Stettheimer salon. During 1926, the Stettheimer family moved from Seventy-sixth Street to Alwyn Court, on the corner of Fifty-eighth Street and Seventh Avenue. This apartment served as the backdrop for the majority of the family's entertaining. Carrie oversaw the decorating of the new apartment, specifically contributing to the placement and organization of Florine's paintings. For example, after decorating her own bedroom, Florine offered to continue to outfit the entire single-floor apartment. Carrie strongly protested her offer, stressing that Florine's suggestion would

usurp her rights within the home. Ultimately, Florine's decorating power was limited to the confines of her own bedroom.

Carrie's role as the family salonière is especially evident through her sartorial style and attention to new fashion trends of the time. Throughout the 1920s in New York, the bohemian, subversive spirit of the times produced a desire for the new as well as a flouting of social norms and values. The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, which granted the franchise to women, began to influence the makeup of women's fashion in New York. In this way, the transcendent quality of the 1920s and the subsequent, gradual increase in women's independence encouraged changes in women's fashions and increased attention paid to the beauty industry, as women entered the public sphere. For example, the previous styles of rigid silhouettes of high-necked and ankle-length dresses were transformed into curve hugging, low-cut, high-hemmed, unstructured sheaths, accentuating the natural contours of the female body (Bloemink 113). Additionally, at this time, women of all ages began to openly apply cosmetics, cut their hair into bobs, and abandon the restriction of the corset.

While all three of the Stettheimer sisters participated in the new fashion trends prominent among 1920s New York women, it was Carrie who paid the most attention to fashion, embodying the image of the flapper: "Friends remember Carrie in hobble skirts or Callot Soeurs gowns of the 'utmost chic' with trailing satin or taffeta or velvet gowns adorned with lace" (Bloemink 113).

An essential aspect of Carrie's position as the traditional figure of the salonière was her attention to fashion trends for women of 1920s New York. According to Bilski and Braun's taxonomy of the characteristics of the salonière, she acted as a model of style

for her guests. Not only did the salonière present the latest fashion trends of the time, but she also displayed style of intellect and charisma. Consequently, while Carrie did possess the appropriate display of elegant dress and fine food, she also demonstrated attention to the importance of conversation – listening and exchanging ideas with guests pertaining to topics such as art and politics. However, while Carrie's role as the classical salonière was vital to the structure of her family's salon, it was the coming together of all three Stettheimer sisters, united in their respective talents and roles that contributed to the success of their influential New York salon.

Even though Carrie was the most classical figure of the salonière, she can not be fully credited with the success and influence of the Stettheimer salon throughout the 1920s. Although the primary role of the salonière is traditionally as the hostess of a salon, it is important to underline the equally essential contributions of Florine and Ettie to their salon as well as to modernist salon culture in 1920s New York. The Stettheimer salon was a partnership between the three sisters, as they shared the duties of the salonière depending on their varied strengths and skills. Florine and Ettie adopted many of the responsibilities of the salonière and helped Carrie run the salon.

The collaboration of the Stettheimer sisters is apparent in the way that Ettie and Florine aided Carrie, spreading out the responsibilities of the salonière. For example, Ettie typically occupied the role of the conversationalist within the Stettheimer salon. Ettie was a philosopher and academic, having earned her doctorate in Germany. Additionally, Ettie later turned to fiction and wrote two successful novels, *Philosophy* and *Love Days*, using the pseudonym "Henrie Waste" to publish her work. Ettie's literary work, specifically *Love Days*, was subversive and somewhat radical for the time, as we

shall see in chapter three. *Love Days* can be read as a feminist text even by today's standards, as Ettie explores radical themes pertaining to the female role, namely the possibility of divorce.

As a feminist, Ettie's contribution to the duties of the salonière focused on setting the tone for the conversation of their salon gatherings. Ettie ensured that guests were being intellectually challenged, sparking conversation pertaining to radical and often taboo issues of the day, such as women's rights and alternative sexuality. According to the early biographer and friend to the sisters, Henry McBride, the Stettheimer salon had a reputation for its excellent conversation among the salons of 1920s New York: "the Stettheimer salon was more *convenable* than most!...the conversation was far from routine,' ranging from political and religious issues to a discussion led by Ettie on the actress May West's recent arrest, 'to the great enhancement of the [West's] reputation" (McBride as quoted in Bloemink 95-96).

Therefore, Ettie's intellectual contributions fulfill the salonière's duty to maintain the flow of conversation within the salon. Conversation was an essential aspect of modernist salon culture, specifically because it characterized the subversive role of the salon at that time. The salon space brought the public realm into the private, enabling both men and women to engage in conversation that would otherwise be deemed inappropriate. Within the salon space, men and women, as well as people of varying social and economic standing could exchange ideas pertaining to the most controversial issues of the day. Ettie's role as the salon conversationalist assisted Carrie with the intellectual aspect of the traditional salonière role.

Additionally, Florine also collaborated with her sisters, helping with Carrie's role as the salonière primarily via her artistic contributions. When the Stettheimer's held social gatherings at their apartment, they often used the salon as an opportunity to display or 'unveil' many of Florine's new paintings. Several of Florine's paintings contain subversive subjects, such as her androgynous 1923 self-portrait, *Portrait of Myself* (fig 1), often sparking interesting topics of discussion among the guests of the Stettheimer salon. Moreover, while she often assumed the role of silent observer, leaving the responsibilities of the hostess to her sister Carrie, Florine's artwork served as an aesthetically pleasing backdrop to the New York apartment for regular visitors of the salon. For example, many of the artists who frequented the salon, such as Gaston Lachaise, Charles Demuth and Pavel Tchelitchew, came because of Florine; they were eager to view and discuss her paintings. Overall, regardless of whether the guests were artists, dancers, singers, or simply New York bohemians, they were always entertained by Florine's artwork.

Another way that Florine helped her sisters and divided the role of the salonière was through her personal depiction of the salon. The salon was represented through the figure of the salonière. Florine fulfilled this component of the role with her dedication to her artwork. The most prominent example of Florine's artistic portrayal of the salon is her 1917-1919 painting titled, *Soirée* (fig. 4). This painting is a direct reflection of Florine's conception of the salon gatherings held in her New York apartment. *Soirée* (fig. 4) features and emphasizes the act of looking, and is one of Florine's early, "conversation pieces," as each person in the painting can be identified (Bloemink 96). In the painting, Ettie, Isabelle Lachaise, and Maurice Sterne stand at the top left, all gathering in front of

a copy of Florine's *Family Portrait Number 1*. Additionally, on the lower left of the painting, artists Gaston Lachaise and Albert Gleizes stand together facing a canvas that is not visible. Avery Hopwood and Leo Stein are presented sitting in the salon's central area. Behind them and beside Florine's large nude self-portrait sits Hindu poet Sankar. Finally, at the right of the painting are Mme. Gleizes, Florine and the illustration of a partial figure outfitted in a Harlequin costume. Like many other paintings of this era, Florine includes several references to a number of different prominent artists of the day, with a particular focus on the proto-modern artists, Velásquez and Watteau. The two artists are famous, in part, for their ironic ambiguity and skepticism surrounding the nature of representation in art. Florine intentionally portrays these artists in this painting, drawing on their respective contributions to the value of artistic freedom in interpretation.

Watteau is most famous for his invention of the genre of the *fête gallante*, which at the time asserted freedom for the artist from specificity in subject matter. Florine's *Soirée* (fig. 4) captures the moment after a painting has been revealed in her salon, focusing on the initial moment of reflection of a new work among her guests. *Soirée* (fig. 4) can be interpreted as the modern version of Watteau's *fête gallante*, occurring indoors. Florine's inclusion of the Harlequin in this painting may be a reference to Watteau's painting, *Gilles*, in which the figure of a man in a similar costume stands alone in the center of a canvas. The Harlequin was a popular way for modern artists to represent the figure of an artist. The Harlequin in *Soirée* (fig. 4) may be a stand-in for Marcel Duchamp, artist and friend to the Stettheimer sisters who had left the country at that time.

In the lower left corner of this painting the image of the mounted canvas refers to a similar device used by artist Velásquez in his painting, *Las Meninas*, one of Florine's

favorites, according to her biographer Barbara J. Bloemink. In *Soirée* (fig. 4), the placement of the canvas makes its content impossible to see, rendering the subject conspicuous. However, regardless of whether the image of this painting can be seen, its inclusion in this work highlights this painting as an intentional examination of the theme of art making. Similar to Velásquez's work, the guests portrayed in this painting are a close group of friends, artists and bohemians that makeup the Stettheimer salon on a regular basis. Moreover, like Velásquez, Florine included a self-portrait in this painting, along the far wall of the salon being depicted.

It is through Florine's artwork that Carrie, the incarnation of the salonière, is turned into a work of art. The most classical example of Florine's portrayal of her eldest sister in that role is evident in her 1923 painting, *Portrait of my Sister, Carrie W. Stettheimer* (fig. 3). In this painting, Florine paid tribute to Carrie's role as the family salonière, emphasizing her core responsibilities as the hostess. Considered the most formal and fashionable dresser of the family, Carrie is depicted wearing a pale gown with a dark train and shawl around her waist. Carrie is also attired in a pale hat with thin, black antenna protruding from the top. Florine's illustration of Carrie in this painting resembles the image of a butterfly, symbolizing her status as the social butterfly of the family.

This painting also highlights Carrie's accomplishments in constructing dollhouses, as she recreated a miniature version of the salon space. The dollhouse on the left hand side of this painting, serves as a metaphor for Carrie's identity as the traditional salonière of the family. When she was not entertaining as a hostess and tending to the guests of the salon, Carrie spent a great deal of time constructing and perfecting dollhouses, a pastime that she enjoyed for the majority of her life. After Carrie's death,

Ettie preserved her dollhouses by donating them to the Museum of the City of New York. Consequently, Florine's inclusion of the dollhouse in this painting can be interpreted as a commentary on Carrie's role as the iconic salonière of the family. Just as the contents of a dollhouse are constantly on display and their primary function is the entertainment of their viewers, so too was Carrie's role. This painting emphasizes the way in which Carrie's duties as the salonière centered on the performative aspect of the role, always acting as the attentive hostess of the Stettheimer salon. Therefore, Florine transforms Carrie into an artwork in her classical embodiment of hostess role, simultaneously representing the salon through the figure of the salonière.

Another one of Florine's paintings that showcases Carrie in the role of the salonière is her 1917 work, *Sunday Afternoon in the Country* (fig. 10). The scene that Florine presents in this painting is situated in the back gardens of Andre Brook. The painting contains a small stream that runs through the center of the canvas, and the Hudson River is visible in the background of the scene. The arrangement of the painting resembles a theatre stage, with images of nature, such as trees and flowers, serving as a backdrop for the action taking place at the front of the piece. The focus of this painting is on the twenty figures depicted, each of which can be identified as family members or friends of the Stettheimers. The ease of placement and presentation of such a scene suggests that Florine created this painting based on her actual experience.

In *Sunday Afternoon in the Country* (fig. 10), Florine's representation of her sister Carrie highlights several of her duties as the traditional figure of the salonière. Carrie's role is initially apparent because of her attire and placement at a serving table under a red scalloped canopy. In this painting, Carrie is situated behind her mother

Rosetta, wearing a white dress with a scalloped hem. By dressing Carrie in elegant and fashionable attire, Florine is commenting on the importance of sartorial style as a feature of the role of the salonière.

Additionally, by situating Carrie at the refreshment table, Florine is drawing attention to Carrie's typical placement at a typical family function. In this image, Carrie is standing in front of a food dish as well as beverages and several drinking glasses. Carrie is depicted as being responsible for ensuring that the guests of this party are served refreshments. Moreover, Carrie is also engaging in conversation with several men standing opposite the table, further reinforcing her duty to entertain her family's guests. By illustrating Carrie's enactment of the salonière role, Florine is transforming that role into artwork, exemplifying her artistic contributions to modernist salon culture of 1920s New York by paying tribute to a cultural form that was feminized.

Another painting that represents Carrie in the classical role of the family salonière is Florine's 1918, *Picnic at Bedford Hills* (fig. 11). In 1918 when the Andre Brook estate was unavailable for the summer, the Stettheimers rented the Rupert Hills estate in Bedford Hills, New York. This painting is set in the Hughes estate, depicting an image of urban dwellers escaping to the country for leisure and relaxation. Florine juxtaposes her illustration of herself, family and friends as the vacationing urbanites, with rural workers who rely on the land for their livelihood. In order to highlight these differences, Florine separated the painting into two unique zones which differ in style, color and content. The background of this painting follows an impressionist technique, creating a hazy effect to highlight the repetitive, mundane nature of rural working life. Contrastingly, the front

section of the canvas contains bright, primary colors and figures that appear relaxed and content.

The composition of this painting focuses on the placement, action and attitudes of the three Stettheimer sisters. Florine used this painting as a vehicle through which she expresses the various personalities and roles of herself and her sisters. Thus, Carrie is presented in this painting in her role as the hostess or salonière of the family. Carrie is situated opposite Marcel Duchamp and they both sit half-kneeling across from a large pot. In order to stress the varying personas of the sisters, Florine depicts them, herself included, engaging in enjoyment of a distinct activity. Carrie sits over a floral blanket, organizing a complicated meal of lobster, soup and dessert for the group. Carrie is so focused on preparing the meal that she fails to notice that her parasol has drifted away, lying upside-down a few steps from her. Florine is emphasizing Carrie's dedication to her duties as the hostess of the family, regardless of whether she is entertaining within the salon space or not. In this painting, Carrie represents the tradition of salon sociability through her duties as the hostess.

Similarly, Ettie also represents Carrie in her role as the traditional salonière in her 1923 fictionalized autobiography, *Love Days*. *Love Days* is a valuable text because it provides a glimpse into the consciousness of women living at that time, highlighting the onset of feminist ideals pertaining to female independence and a rejection of the female role as wife and mother.

At the beginning of *Love Days*, Ettie portrays Carrie through the character Penelope, the best friend and cousin of the novel's protagonist, Susanna Moore. As readers, we are introduced to Penelope through Susanna's distress over her cousin's

recent engagement and ensuing marriage. It is this news that alerts us to Susanna's extreme distaste for marriage, as she expresses anger and disappointment that her friend has succumbed to marriage.

In fact, in *Love Days*, to be examined in greater detail in chapter three, Ettie represents Carrie as a character that follows the traditional path of social obligation. Although Carrie, like her two sisters, never marries in real life, Ettie is using marriage as a way to comment on her sister's role as the traditional salonière. Ettie employs marriage as a metaphor for the responsibilities that Carrie must fulfill in her role as the classical salonière of the Stettheimer family. Ettie's literary representation of Carrie's dedication to her duties transforms the figure of the salonière into art within this text.

Carrie, the eldest, was an incarnation of the traditional figure of the salonière, fulfilling obligations such as inviting and attending to salon guests. Carrie's responsibilities also included the planning and organizing of salon gatherings, including the preparation of menus (fig. 9) and food.

Additionally, Florine and Ettie contributed to Carrie's role in their own, respective ways.

This chapter will be devoted to Ettie's role as the literary salonière of the Jewish family. An academic, with a doctorate from the University of Freiburg, she governed the conversational rules of the Stettheimer salon, stimulating discussion surrounding contemporary academic and social topics of the day. Furthermore, Ettie wrote a novel *Love Days* under the partial and gender-bending pseudonym Henriette Wasté; in writing a work of fiction about her salon, she was inspired by avant-garde artist Marcel Duchamp, who was often the guest of honor in the Stettheimer salon and who appears as the character Pierre Delaire in the book, as well as in Florine's paintings.

Chapter Three

Ettie Stettheimer:

The Intellectual Governor of the Stettheimer Salon

Ettie (1875-1955), the femme savante, with her doctorate from the University of Freiburg and her learned coquetry, governed the conversational rules. In Florine's portraits of herself and her sisters, which she conceived as a triptych, she places Ettie on the divan, as the figurehead of salon sociability and the firefly who lights up at night.

(Bilski and Braun 131).

The success of their New York salon was, in part, due to the collaborative efforts of all three of the Stettheimer sisters, as each played an important role. Carrie, the eldest, was an incarnation of the traditional figure of the salonière, fulfilling obligations such as inviting and attending to salon guests. Carrie's responsibilities also included the planning and organizing of salon gatherings, including the preparation of *menus* (fig. 9) and food. Additionally, Florine and Ettie contributed to Carrie's role in their own, respective ways.

This chapter will be devoted to Ettie's role as the literary salonière of the Jewish family. An academic with a doctorate from the University of Freiburg, she governed the conversational rules of the Stettheimer salon, stimulating discussion surrounding contemporary academic and social topics of the day. Furthermore, Ettie wrote a novel *Love Days* under the playful and gender-bending pseudonym Henrie Waste; in writing a work of fiction about her salon, she was inspired by avant-garde artist Marcel Duchamp, who was often the guest of honor in the Stettheimer salon and who appears as the character Pierre Delaire in the book, as well as in Florine's paintings.

Ettie used the salon as a catalyst for her artistic and self-explorations in her 1923 fictionalized autobiography, *Love Days*. In this novel, Ettie brings to life some of the guests of her infamous New York salon, such as artist and friend, Marcel Duchamp. In this way, Ettie's literary art making intersected with the artistic outpourings of her sisters, emphasizing the collaborative aspect of the Stettheimer salon. Thus, the salon served as a shared experience for the Stettheimer sisters, motivating their respective artistic ideas and personal projects.

In addition, it is also important to acknowledge the influence that Gertrude Stein's salon had on salon culture, specifically in regards to the collaborative focus of the salon. Stein's style was also radically different from that of the Stettheimer sisters with regard to the makeup of their respective salons. The Stettheimer salon was a public realm existing within the private space of the home, and guests of their gatherings were always carefully selected and invited to join the party, a task usually completed by Carrie. Contrastingly, Stein graciously allowed anybody to enter into her salon, as she "casually opened her doors to dozens of people whom she had never met and many of whom would never return" (Bilski and Braun 128). This central difference in entertaining style is represented in one of Florine's poems: "The world is full of strangers / They are very strange / I am never going to know them / Which I find easy to arrange" (Bilski and Braun 128). In this poem, Florine, who wrote this poem to herself without an audience in mind, reveals her disinterest in meeting and socializing with new people. Consequently, guests of the Stettheimer salon were mostly friends or acquaintances of the family. In fact, Stettheimer salon gatherings were typically organized by invitation only.

As an American living in Paris, Gertrude Stein initially lived with her brother, Leo, in his home at 27, rue de Fleurus. Between 1897-1907 Gertrude and Leo developed a working relationship based on openness regarding their personal lives. However, as their time living together progressed, the siblings drifted. Leo Stein was extremely critical of his sisters' writings, forcing Stein to write during the night when her brother was asleep.

As a result, Stein yearned for an intelligent, sympathetic friend with whom she could discuss her theories regarding art as well as literature. Stein found this companionship in Picasso, with whom she could discuss topics she could not with Leo. Picasso took Stein's writings seriously, and they could discuss artistic method in terms of their respective work. However, Leo resented Picasso's presence, "seeing him as a dilettante rather than a serious painter" (Benstock 153). In this regard, visitors of Stein's salon in Paris often felt the tension that existed between Leo and Gertrude. Moreover, Leo often openly expressed his distaste for Picasso's art, as well as artistic movements of that era.

Due to Leo Stein's extreme interest in modern art, he frequently pushed his ideas onto his guests, many of whom did not share his passion for modern art: "In those early days [when] everyone laughed, and went to the Steins, for the fun of it, and half angrily, half jestingly, giggled and scoffed after they left" (Mabel Dodge as in Hobhouse 48). From inside the domestic sphere, Stein was successful in facilitating discussion about modern art. While the Stettheimer and Stein salons were different, they both stressed the importance of art by conversing about it and displaying it for the pleasure of their guests, maintaining a collaborative focus within their respective salons.

Similarly, the themes of conversation, ideas and collaborative art-making were also being explored in New York throughout the 1920s via the relationship between Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap. Anderson was responsible for the creation, construction and publication of one of New York's most wild and controversial arts magazine of the time, *The Little Review*. Some of the most influential thinkers, philosophers, writers and poets of that era were featured in the magazine, such as William Butler Yeats, Sherwood Anderson, Emma Goldman, T.S. Elliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and other European modernists. The *Little Review* was a magazine that sought to highlight new ideas and celebrate art simply for the sake of art: "The Little Review would make no compromises with public taste: this was Margaret's foremost commitment. It would be a magazine of Art and Revolution, a forum for fresh opinion, ideas that were 'intelligent from the artist's point of view' " (Barnet 63).

With her passionate focus on providing a forum for new ideas, Anderson stubbornly continued to publish the *Little Review* despite extreme economic and financial struggles. When her rent became increasingly difficult to pay, she eventually moved to the beach, where she and her two staff members of the time resided in wooden tents opposite the waterfront of Lake Michigan. In life and within writing, Anderson continued to push new ideas by challenging societal norms with her public and controversial relationship with writer, Jane Heap. Heap defied gender categories by wearing her hair short like a man's, and dressing in men's suits and bow ties. In 1916, when the magazine was two years old, Anderson and Heap united as partners and lovers, living together and producing the *Little Review* side by side: " 'Jane was the earth to Margaret's fire...the butch to her femme, the depressive to her hysteric' " (Watson as in Barnet 68). The

relationship between Anderson and Heap symbolized the beginnings of a public expression of lesbian love and courtship in New York. Similar to the case of Gertrude Stein and her partner Alice B. Toklas, Anderson and Heap's romantic relationship fueled the fire of artistic creation, influencing some great modernist works throughout the 1920s. Moreover, it was the spirit of expressing new ideas about alternative sexuality and rejecting the traditional norms of heterosexuality, specifically the woman's role as wife and mother that was echoed within the private space of modernist salons. In this way, the Stettheimer salon was safe space wherein male and female guests could openly express their homosexual identities and socialize freely with one another.

Throughout the 1920s, modernist salon culture was also influenced by a surge of feminist ideas and ideals, specifically surrounding a resurgence of the New Woman phenomenon. According to author Estelle B. Freedman, the concept of the "New Woman," which re-emerged during the 1920's, demonstrates the newfound independence and power women experienced at that time. The "New Woman," began to explore social and cultural emancipation in order to, individually, "become a person and not just another woman" (Britt quoted in Freedman 367).

The Stettheimer sisters actively participated in the New Woman trend, celebrating the intensification of feminist ideas of the time: "Since they came from a highly assimilated background, the additional freedom from Jewish patriarchal domination only encouraged the Stettheimers' emancipated 'New Woman' style, with its distinct echoes of aristocratic feminism" (Bilski and Braun 131). It was within the confines of their salon that the Stettheimer sisters could embrace the ideas and style of the New Woman, entertaining male intellectuals and artists and pursuing professional careers in the arts.

The resurgence of the New Woman instigated an intensification of feminist activities throughout the 1920s. Historically, under the first wave of American feminism, developments surrounding the women's movement drew public attention in 1923. The Equal Rights Amendment was first proposed to Congress in 1923, stating that, " 'Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction' " (Humm as in Mason 6). Even though this initial attempt at instituting equal rights was unsuccessful at that time, the action did establish a solid foundation for the second wave of American feminism in the 1960s.

While obtaining the female vote was a goal for the women's rights campaign, this was not their sole political objective. The intentions behind the Equal Rights Amendment were to abolish all legal distinctions set up between men and women; however, legislative change takes time. After 1923, minor changes included the reform of property laws and minor educational opportunities extended to women resulting in increased job opportunities, restricting women to fields such as teaching and nursing. In this way, while women were beginning to enter the job market, they were limited by professions that included responsibilities pertaining to stereotypical definitions of the female role within society, namely as the nurturing wife and mother. The Equal Rights Amendment was finally adopted by Congress in 1972, but Civil Rights, affirmative action and abortion rights were not introduced until the 1960s and 70s under the second wave of American feminism.

Ettie Stettheimer contributed to the spread of feminist ideas via her literary criticism of the female role within society, examining themes such as female independence and education in her 1923 novel, *Love Days*. Ettie was the intellectual

force behind the family's salon gatherings and projects the intellectualism of the salon in *Love Days*. Ettie, the youngest, "was known for her piercing dark gaze, sharp tongue, intelligence, and inability to suffer fools. She was the most flirtatious, dramatic, and outspoken of the three sisters" (Bloemink 5).

Ettie, like her older sister Florine, was encouraged to pursue intellectual and professional training to an extent that exceeded the expectations for women at that time. In 1895, Ettie enrolled in Barnard College of Columbia University, following the path of her aunt Jo and Uncle William Walter, and she was one of the first women to complete a bachelor's degree from the university. She also earned a Masters degree in psychology in 1898. According to biographer Barbara J. Bloemink, Ettie also entertained the attention of numerous male suitors throughout her time spent as a student, earning an additional 'degree' in flirtation in addition to her academic accomplishments. Ettie continued with her academic career and eventually earned a Ph.D. at the Albert-Ludwig University in Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, where she worked with philosopher and teacher Heinrich Rickert. Her dissertation explored the philosophy of William James. Ettie eventually described this period of her life in *Philosophy*, her first published novel, in which she highlights the female experience, and the consciousness of women during the 1920s, through the use of a female protagonist. In this way, Ettie is able to explore a woman's perspective and develop new ideas regarding the literary centrality of a female character with her writings.

The importance of new ideas and education is a theme that appears several times within Ettie's second book, her 1923 fictionalized autobiography, *Love Days*. Susanna Moore, the protagonist of this novel, can be interpreted as a fictional stand in for Ettie.

Moore guides readers through the trials and tribulations of her romantic experiences with men and her development as a woman. This text provides a window into the consciousness of women living at that time.

In this novel, Susanna Moore is depicted as a woman who appreciates the importance of education and relishes her independence. Susanna Moore, Ettie's protagonist, embodies the way in which education is prioritized in this novel on several different occasions. At the onset of this novel, Susanna is presented to readers as a serious, motivated and successful student. Immediately before her character is explored, Susanna's high opinions regarding the importance of education are outlined for readers: "the Professor Taylor who, following up his convictions, had publicly installed her as a star by reading the evidence of her qualifications to the class, and himself attesting to its conclusiveness in fits of laughter and prolonged chortles" (Waste 14).

Susanna's high regard for herself, particularly her intellect and academic performance, is also emphasized at the onset of this novel. Susanna clearly expresses her love of education, new ideas, and the way in which she feels different, if not superior, to the strangers she encounters. For example, on her way to college in the first chapter of this novel, Susanna provides a detailed description of her opinions, judgments and subsequent analysis of the men and women riding the street car with her. According to Susanna, the passengers surrounding her are absent, expressionless and dull: "Yes, that is it, that is the solution of these dumb and deadish human beings and their lack of expression: they are at present, when in isolation and unoccupied, not so much abstracted as really absent" (Waste 10). Not only does Susanna underline the importance of education in her life, but she clearly exudes a pompous attitude, differentiating herself

from others. Susanna's opinions can be attributed to the role of education in her [Ettie's] daily life, specifically her intellectual achievements, which were not the norm for women of that era.

Ettie's ideas about female independence were encouraged by the societal factors occurring in New York at that time. Throughout the 1920s, bohemian New York embodied artistic and intellectual energy: "Creative dissent, whether expressed as artistic innovation or as liberating lifestyle, was the revolutionary *cri de coeur*; sparkling talk and racy innuendo were in fashion" (Barnet 1). Moreover, New York women embraced the social subversion of the time; they discarded their corsets and jived to the sexually charged rhythms of the era.

Consequently, Ettie benefited from, and contributed to, this revolutionary era for women; most notably through her making the world of the salon her home instead of the traditional family. She remained unmarried and pursued an identity as a professional author rather than the traditional role of woman as wife, helpmate and mother. Along with her sisters she prefers the world of the intellectual home, based on ideas and art making. Ettie reflects these opinions via her protagonist's divorce, as Susanna Moore ends up single at the end of the novel. Susanna openly describes her feelings regarding her unhappiness in her marriage as well as her increasing desire to entertain the possibility of divorce:

The word divorce had shot into her dimmed consciousness as a stream of water shoots into a heavy smoke, -- combating, overpowering, extinguishing; bringing swift coolness, condensation, clearness. The densities surrounding Susanna's mind, which had obfuscated almost everything beyond the tiny one-dimensional consciousness devoted to immediate sensation, were suddenly pierced; -- layers of misty thickness were penetrated, evaporated, and rolled away, and Susanna was again

mentally keen, sentient being, aware of herself, and her hurt; -- sensitive to her past, her future and her present.

(Waste 213).

This passage demonstrates Susanna's internal struggle surrounding the crumbling condition of her marriage. At this point in the novel, Susanna begins to acknowledge her dissatisfaction with her relationship; realizing that she and her husband are incompatible. In this way, Susanna's desire to leave her marriage and regain her independence is characteristic of the majority of female characters in Ettie's novels, "who struggle against the confines of marriage, often choosing the 'life of the mind' over romantic attachments" (Bloemink 182). For Ettie, the world of the mind was the world of the salon.

Ettie's self-presentation in this novel is contingent upon the way in which the autobiographical genre reaffirms identity: "The autobiographer, attesting his existence by the fact of his writing, lives through his explanations, tacit or explicit, of how he came to be the person he is" (Spacks 1). Ettie relies on the reflective quality of the autobiography as she describes her desire to maintain her individuality within her marriage.

Ettie channels her support of female independence through Susanna, as she explains how her marriage is based on a submission conception of love, one that she would not tolerate anymore: "This was his idea of companionship, as his idea of love was (for her) submissive passion...if she were a marionette, electrified and operated by his vitality, that would suit him still better...No, he wanted nothing of her as an individual,-- he wanted her as one of the sex complementary to his own" (Waste 215). This quotation demonstrates Ettie's point regarding "the devastating results of the wrong sort of amorous

attachment” (Nochlin 97). Thus, Ettie is attempting to demonstrate, through Susanna’s emotions, that her self-realization is not compatible with romantic love.

Furthermore, Ettie also expresses her radical social and political opinions in her novel by engaging in a crossing of gender boundaries. In *Love Days*, Duchamp appears as the character Pierre Delaire, “a pointed reference not only to one of his Dada readymades, the glass ampoule, *50cc of Paris Air* (1919), but also to his ethereal manner, his insubstantial romantic attachments, and his refusal to be pinned down by any fixed identity” (Bilski and Braun 132). Thus, just like Duchamp became the object of art for Florine in several of her paintings, so too did he become for Ettie in her novel.

Similarly, like Florine, Ettie also experimented with distancing herself from traditional notions of female sexuality of the day in her novel. Ettie’s brief career as a novelist included the use of the pseudonym, Henrie Waste, an acronym based on her own name, *Henrietta Walter Stettheimer*. Apparently, it was Duchamp that created the clever acronym, Henrie Waste, a result of his knack for word games. Duchamp was a key figure at the Stettheimer salon from 1916-1923, a friend to all three of the Stettheimer sisters. Ettie had a reputation for being flirtatious with men, and she often engaged in flirtatious dialogue with Duchamp. Duchamp and Ettie challenged one another with quick wordplay, demonstrating the linguistic superiority of both parties. Furthermore, this quality of verbal exchange was also characteristic of the witty dialogue often audible within the walls of the Stettheimer salon. Following the salon tradition of seventeenth-century France, salon gatherings hosted by the Stettheimer family were always peppered by an impressive quality of verbal exchanges.

Moreover, Florine's artistic representation of her sister aligns Ettie with her own self-representation, channeled through her protagonist Susanna Moore. In Florine's 1923 painting *Portrait of my Sister, Ettie Stettheimer* (fig. 12), Ettie is depicted sprawled atop of a red shawl, lying against a red cushion, within a backdrop of a purple-black evening sky surrounded by stars and a full moon. Ettie is clothed in a revealing, low cut black gown, complete with a black lace train. The subject's arms are stretched out around her face and upper body, giving the impression that she has recently awakened, giving her face an aura of deep reflection and focus. Moreover, critic and friend Carl Van Vechten solidifies this contemplative interpretation of Ettie's personality, by commenting on this painting as presenting her as, "'wide-eyed for the mystery of life...as happy as a blend of her worldliness and spirituality as any psychiatrist could ask for'" (Van Vechten quoted in Bloemink 132).

Outer space serves as the backdrop of this painting, enveloping Ettie, who appears to be floating with her eyes wide open. The image of the intensity of the eyes is one that reoccurs several times within different paintings and photographs of Ettie. For example, on the flip side of the first page of Ettie's 1951, *Memorial Volume of and by Ettie Stettheimer*, the publisher included an image of her, a photograph taken by Arnold Genthe (date unknown). Ettie is staring directly at the camera with a straight face; her eyes are fixed forward, practically glaring at the photographer standing in front of her. Both of these images showcase the intensity of Ettie's eyes, fixed in an outward glare. Consequently, by examining such depictions, we recognize Ettie's introspective, analytical personality and her identification as an intellectual force becomes apparent.

In this way, Ettie's portrayal in her 1923 portrait as well as the Genthe photograph, suggests a thoughtfulness and perplexity that is also included as a central characteristic of Susanna Moore. Although *Love Days* is commonly identified as a long novel and Ettie's second book, it is more so a sparsely disguised autobiography, Ettie uses Susanna as a vehicle through which she can explore her developing identity and express her opinions regarding the female role within society, specifically pertaining to education and marriage. Ettie's exploration of her identity as a young woman in this novel is most accurately exemplified at the onset of this novel. Throughout the first half of this text, Susanna grapples with understanding her role and place in the world, providing readers with ample evidence of her process of self-exploration through the act of writing her self.

As an active feminist, Ettie identified as a single woman, academic and professional author. She highlights this self-representation, touching on her androgynous identification and the importance of education in her life at the beginning of the second chapter of this novel. In this scene, Susanna is described as entering into a study room, reserved specifically for female students. Susanna's outfit is emphasized at this point, with specific emphasis on the quality of her garments as compares herself to a New York Minerva: "She emerged therefrom in a tan cloth gown, straight and close, revealing herself to anyone without a blind spot for such matters as a New York Minerva—a Minerva, not only because of her learning but also, and chiefly, because of her costly clothes" (Waste 46).

This reference to Minerva, a Roman Goddess, is an effective example of how Susanna characterizes herself for readers. By aligning herself with this ancient figure, the

Roman name for Athena, the Goddess of wisdom and virginity, Susanna is adopting these traits as a way to define her character. In this way, Susanna simultaneously praises herself for her achievements in education as well as refraining from 'promiscuous adventure.' In this way, through the act of writing herself, Ettie explores multiple identities through her semi-autobiographical protagonist. Thus, she mirrors her own status as a single, educated woman by comparing her character to that of a New York Minerva.

When an author makes him or herself the protagonist in an autobiographical or semi-autobiographical narrative, there is a certain responsibility that develops between the author and the narrative. Ettie's process of self-presentation in this novel is contingent upon the way in which the autobiographical genre reaffirms identity: "The autobiographer, attesting his existence by the fact of his writing, lives through his explanations, tacit or explicit, of how he came to be the person he is" (Spacks 1). Ettie relies on the reflective quality of the autobiography as she writes herself and the salon through this text.

Ultimately, the Stettheimer salon became the catalyst for the various artistic explorations and self-explorations of the three sisters. Specifically, in examining Ettie's contributions as the literary and philosophical salonière, salon culture influenced the act of writing and sharing intimate details about oneself with others. Bilski and Braun explain that salon culture is conducive to this kind of autobiographical writing. Moreover, they trace a tradition of autobiography as central within salon culture. For example, Bilski and Braun highlight that in the eighteenth century it was customary for the salonière and her guests to read letters aloud, encouraging the art of autobiographical writing: "Though addressed to one person, letters were commonly read aloud to others,

even collected and published in journals or volumes” (Bilski and Braun 7). Moreover, the letter was also extremely important to the organization and structure of the salon. Salons, or “at homes,” occurred weekly, on the same day and at the same time. Typically, a successful salon depended on a core group of “habitués,” a mix of close friends, public figures and or celebrities of the day. However, in order to invite new recruits and temporary visitors to a salon, salonières depended on the letter as a means of communication. In this way, the letter of invitation insured a variety of perspectives and a stimulating degree of verbal exchange between salon guests with a range of experiences, backgrounds and opinions. One of the salonières most coveted talents rested in knowing how to construct and manage a group of guests who were different in personality, intellect and social background, and enabling them to openly express their true selves within the salon. Thus, the autobiographical thrust of the salon began with the letter inviting guests to attend.

Additionally, as Bilski and Braun explain, depending on the era, once a guest was invited to participate in the happenings of a particular salon, it was a letter of introduction that typically served as the ticket required to gain entrance into the salon. Furthermore, throughout the 18th century, there was a shaping of information that occurred, out loud, within salon culture.

The salon was already a space wherein the power of conversation, intellectual exchange and education reigned as central components. Consequently, the salon began to form the center of an information network, existing through letters and newsletters that distilled new ideas. As a result, the benefits of personal correspondence and salon conversation intertwined. Letters served an important communicative function, similar to

verbal exchange, but were also a creative outlet. In this way, reading and writing began to develop the subjective self, either real or fictional, through the interactive process of addressing and responding in conversation. At this time, the psychology of character developed into literary portraiture, autobiography and the novel. Thus, the art of autobiographical writing was encouraged and developed out of the tradition of textual and oral communication within salon culture.

Furthermore, letter writing also blurred the boundaries between the public and private, just like the salon itself, because it served as a formal representation of the individual self in relation to the outside world when read out loud at a salon event. Salon culture often involved the practice of reading letters aloud, even though they were typically addressed to a single person.

Eventually, the scope of exchanging letters expanded what was at first a small public, resulting in the spread of new ideas, perspectives and public opinion beyond national borders. In this way, different aspects of salon conversation, dialogue and argument could be spread, and incoming letters were analyzed and read aloud within the salon. Moreover, it was also during this time, within early 18th century salons, that group members wrote, edited and had transcribed literary newsletters, a network that eventually grew through early periodicals. The shaping of information and infusion of new perspectives that occurred within the salon, primarily through letters, was an intrinsic aspect of salon culture and operated as a way of encouraging the art of autobiographical writing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the collaborative aspect of the salon was at the core of the Stettheimer gatherings in New York during the 1920s. The Stettheimer sisters each played an important role in the success of their salon, emphasizing the collaborative component of their gatherings. However, while each of their roles was equally essential to the artistic representation and shaping of modernist salon culture, their respective responsibilities were quite diverse. Specifically, Florine's artistic contributions, exemplified via her artwork which adorned the walls of the Stettheimer salon, both characterize and provide valuable commentary on salon culture of 1920s New York. Additionally, Carrie, as the classical incarnation of the figure of the salonière, provided the invaluable tasks of planning and organizing the family's salon gatherings and managing their social activities. Lastly, Ettie's role as the governor of salon conversation enabled her to vocalize many of her radical opinions about the female role within society, which she also expresses in her autobiographical novel, *Love Days*, and ameliorate the quality of debate within the Stettheimer salon. Thus, by working together, Florine, Carrie and Ettie hosted their salon collectively, contributing to the intersections of their respective art-making. Therefore, the salon became the vehicle through which the artistic self-explorations of the Stettheimer sisters flourished in 1920s New York, while also presenting a catalyst for the socializing and art making of other modernists and avantgardists.

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Appendix: List of Illustrations, Archival Documents and Photographs

Carrie Stettheimer. Menus. 1929 & 1934. (5 pages). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven. (fig. 9).

Florine Stettheimer. Ashbury Park South. 1920. Fisk University Collection, Nashville. (fig. 8).

Florine Stettheimer. Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue. 1931. Metropolitan Museum of Art. (fig. 7).

Florine Stettheimer. Picnic at Bedford Hills. 1918. Gift of Ettie Stettheimer. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. (fig. 11).

Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of Marcel Duchamp. 1923. William Simpson Collection. (fig. 2).

Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of Myself. 1923. Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer. Columbia University, New York. (fig. 1).

Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of My Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer. 1923. Columbia University, New York, Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer. (fig. 3).

Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of My Sister Ettie Stettheimer. 1923. Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer. Columbia University, New York. (fig. 12).

Florine Stettheimer. Self-Portrait in front of Chinese Screen. 1912-1914. Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer. Columbia University, New York. (fig. 6).

Florine Stettheimer. Soiree. 1917-19. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven. (fig. 4).

Florine Stettheimer. Sunday Afternoon in the Country. 1917. Gift of Ettie Stettheimer. The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1995. (fig 10).

Juley, Peter. Interior of Stettheimer's Beaux Arts Building Duplex Apartment. Florine

Stettheimer Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

(fig. 5).

1. Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of Myself 1923 Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer.

Columbia University, New York.

1. Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of Myself. 1923. Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer.

Columbia University, New York,

2. Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of Marcel Duchamp. 1923. William Simpson Collection.

3. Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of My Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer. 1923. Columbia University, New York, Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer.

4. Floor

Rare Book

4. Florine Stettheimer. Soirée. 1917-19. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.

5. Juley, Peter. Interior of Stettheimer's Beaux Arts Building Duplex Apartment. Florine Stettheimer Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

6. Florine Stettheimer. Self-Portrait in front of Chinese Screen. 1912-1914. Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer. Columbia University, New York,

7. Florine Stettheimer. Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue. 1931. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

8. Florine Stettheimer. Ashbury Park South. 1920. Fisk University Collection, Nashville.

9. Carrie Stettheimer. Manuscript. 1920. Fisk University Collection, Nashville.

Some Menus in the
Stettheimer menage

run by

Miss Carrie W. Stettheimer

9. Carrie Stettheimer. Menus. 1929 & 1934. (5 pages). Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven.

February, 1929

Dinner

Appetizer Mushroom Timbal

Soup

Halibut and Shrimps in Mayonnaise Aspic with

Mixed Green Salad

Poussins, with orange and jelly trimming

String beans Bermuda potatoes

Meringue filled with fresh strawberries

and whipped cream

Coffee

Guests

Van Vechtens, Virgil Thomson, Aron Copland, Henry McBride,
Georgia O'Keeffe, Joe Brewer, Phillip Moeller.

March, 1929

Dinner

Mousse of Ham

Soup

Smelts Farcie with Mushroom Sauce

Chicken, Bermuda potatoes, gooseberry preserves

Asparagus Salad

Strawberry Ice Cream, Brodtorte

Coffee

Wine Cup

Guests

Paul Reimers, William Humbert, Archipenkos, Richard Ordynski,

Lewis Calentiere

HVALBERT

April, 1929

Dinner

Soup

Lobster and Halibut in Tomato Aspic

Mixed Salad

Boiled Beef, Potatoes, Horseradish Sauce

Preiselbeeren - Asparagus

Strawberry Ice Cream Brabanter Torte

Wine Cup

Coffee

May, 1929

Dinner

Canteloupe

Soup

Lobster and Halibut in Mayonnaise Aspic

Mixed Green Salad

Potted Chicken Jardiniere

Strawberry Ice Cream Brod Torte

Wine Cup

Coffee

Guests

Luisse Goepfert, Margot Gilmore, Galentiere, Glenn Anders,
Stieglitz, Nikol Schattenstein, R. O'Neill, Dwight McDonald.

Family Dinner.

May, 1929

Dinner

Hors d'Oeuvres

Feather Soup

Duck with Jelly - Bermuda Potatoes

Asparagus - Hollandaise Sauce

Fresh Strawberry Ice Cream - Brabanter Torte

Guests

Gaston and Isabel LaChaise

Philip Moeller

Henry Furst

Henry McBride

October, 1929

Dinner

Grape Fruit

Soup

Herring Salad

Turkey - Cranberries

Sweet Potatoes - String Beans

Vanilla Ice Cream - Chocolate Sauce

Doberstorte Coffee

Family Dinner.

Mrs. Kirk Askev, Cecil Beaton, Peter Watkins, Bouteffe Monvel,

McBride, Ralph Flint, Virgil Thomson, Philip Moeller.

November, 1929

Dinner

Honey Dew Melon

Soup

Halibut and Crabmeat in Mayonnaise Aspic
with Mixed Salad

Turkey Cranberries Chestnuts

Petit Pois

Vanilla Ice Cream Strawberries

Brod Torte Wine Cup Coffee

Guests

Marie Sterner, Muriel Draper, Toby, Barney Lintott,
Henry McBride, Charles Demuth, Carl Sprinchorn, Paul Reimers.

June, 1934

Dinner

Cocktails Mixed Cheese Canapes

Feather Soup

Halibut and Lobster in Mayonnaise Aspic
with Salad: Cold Slaw, Cucumbers

and Peppers

Squabs Bermuda Potatoes Gooseberry Preserve

Asparagus Butter Sauce

Strawberry Mousse Orange Torte

Guests

Mrs. Kirk Askew, Cecil Beaton, Peter Watkins, Boute^fde Monvel,
McBride, Ralph Flint, Virgil Thomson, Philip Moeller.

November, 1934

Dinner

Cocktails Cheese and Olive Canapes

Oyster Salad

Soup

Pot Roast Jardiniere

Meringue - Strawberry Filling

Coffee

Guests

Bernard and Marie Steiner, Lintott, Martin Birnbaum,
Ralph Flint, McBride, T. R. Smith

After Dinner

Kirk Askews, Prof. Robert Morse Lovett

Supper

Chicken Salad

Brabanter Torte

White Wine Cup

July 5 (?) (In Country)

Dinner

Vegetable Soup

Lemon & Egg Fish

Spinach Souffle - Tiny Sausages

Coupe Jacques

Coffee

Guests (?)

10. Florine Stettheimer. Sunday Afternoon in the Country. 1917. Gift of Ettie Stettheimer.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1995.

11. Florine Stettheimer. Picnic at Bedford Hills. 1918. Gift of Ettie Stettheimer.

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

12. Florine Stettheimer. Portrait of My Sister Ettie Stettheimer. 1923. Gift of the Estate of Ettie Stettheimer. Columbia University, New York.