

The Natural Woman:
Science and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America

Sheila Liming

Dissertation for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

EXAMINERS

Dr. Kathy Newman, Chair

Dr. Kristina Straub

Dr. David Shumway

Carnegie Mellon University
DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH

Contents

Acknowledgements

<i>Introduction</i>	6
1. Romancing the Interstitial: Julia Ward Howe and the Demarcation of Rights and Sentiments	23
2. “An Impossible Woman”: The Strange Case of Anne Moncure Crane	68
3. Sentimental Science: Fact, Fiction, and the Stakes of Female Intelligence	112
4. Exceptional Sex: Evolutionary Logic in Edith Wharton’s Early Fiction	161
5. Suffer the Little Vixens: Sex, Jazz, and Realist Terror in the New Century	210
<i>Notes</i>	244
<i>Works Cited</i>	254

Acknowledgements

“There are no new truths, much as we have prided ourselves on finding some,” Nathaniel Hawthorne proclaims, via the blustering and grandiose Hollingsworth, in *The Blithedale Romance*. This project, which seeks to expose the redundant character of “newness” so far as truth may be in and of itself concerned, has been likewise formed through the accumulation and inspection of old truths. Many of these came to me from other people, and so require a few words of sincere acknowledgement.

I'd like to begin by first thanking the members of my dissertation committee, including Kristina Straub and David Shumway, and especially my adviser Kathy Newman, for the dedication, attention, and insight they offered at various stages of this project. I also want to thank Richard Purcell for offering additional feedback, and for helping me to refine my thinking on jazz and realism. Next, a thank you to all the very many librarians and archivists who helped to point me in the right direction, or else in intriguingly wrong, or different, directions, throughout the course of this project: Ethan Pullman, Library Instruction Coordinator and Humanities Liaison at Carnegie Mellon University, for helping me assemble a more organized bibliographic record; Mary Kay Johnsen, Posner Collection Coordinator at Carnegie Mellon University, for prodding me and constantly inquiring as to my progress; Tal Naden, Reference Archivist for the Brooke Russell Astor Reading Room at the New York Public Library, for helping to coordinate and organize my inspection of the William Conant Church papers; and Nynke Dorhout, Librarian and Lecture Series Coordinator at The Mount estate in Lenox, Massachusetts, for smilingly supplying me with way more materials than I likely had any right to ask for. I also want to thank Susan Wissler, Nicole Knapp, and the rest of the staff at The Mount for being so accommodating; the month I spent at Edith Wharton's home represented a turning point in my research and my thinking, and I appreciate

their willingness to include me in the estate's summer events and operations, and their ability to oversee such a resplendent monument to Wharton's legacy. Thank you, also, to the Edith Wharton Society, especially Meredith Goldsmith, for supporting my research at The Mount, and to the members of the EWS who I met and had memorable conversations with while there, including Irene Goldman-Price and Alan Price.

My homegrown "dissertation writing group," which included David Haeselin, Dan Markowicz, and Matt Lambert, was also extremely helpful, if perhaps primarily for therapeutic reasons. I also want to thank my parents, Jim and Sandra Liming, for weathering the comments and criticisms "Oh, your daughter's getting a PhD in English?" with poise and grace. Finally, a very big and very warm thank you to David Haeselin, for doing all the innumerable things that cannot be appropriately articulated in a venue such as this, and for the unending empathy.

Introduction

“We know nature as we think it.”

James Mark Baldwin, *Fragments in Philosophy and Science* (1902)

“As men’s prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (1841)

underlined by Edith Wharton in her copy of Emerson’s *Essays*

“[T]raditions that have lost their meanings are the hardest of all to destroy.”

Edith Wharton, “Autre Temps ...” (1911)

My argument here is, in some ways, not new – indeed, the mendacity of the issue lies in the very fact of its familiarity. For we are all well-acquainted with the idea of the *natural woman*, the notion that woman is in and of herself *nature*, that she carries that nature with her wherever she goes, and that she is thereby shaped, animated, and limited by the dictates of her natural condition. And, what’s more, we are likewise well-acquainted with the fact that it has always been so: religion teaches us this; biology teaches us this; social science and psychology rediscover and recapitulate the idea almost annually, feeding a pop culture frenzy that never seems to tire of headlines that proclaim the *new truth about sex* via well-worn and exhaustingly common vocabulary.

But, I want to argue, it is imperative that we understand our social interest in the *new truth about sex* – particularly insofar as that truth concerns the *female* sex – as anything but new. A centuries-long habit of equating femininity with a rotating set of natural mandates has helped to deflect sincere inquiry into the social origins of our understandings and interpretations of nature more generally. Philosopher and historian Thomas S. Kuhn, in his touchstone work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, previously showed us that historical research is direly needed in order to unravel and expose the paradigmatic social imperatives that oversee and color the acknowledgement of supposed scientific fact in any given age and period. Yet some paradigms, it seems, die hard, or otherwise *never die at all*. Kuhn’s work influentially established, in mid-century America, the notion that science, though essentially developmental, is not in itself wholly “cumulative” (3), which is to

say that it doesn't always neatly add up. Paradigmatic shifts, Kuhn explains, are slow in coming, and it often takes an entire generation before a supposed "anomaly" poses such a challenge to existing doctrine that it is permitted, in effect, to take that doctrine's place. This process is, Kuhn says, both endemic to and definitive of science. But what do we make of the perpetual inculcation of a given scientific paradigm, or rule of nature? If a strain of scientific research fails to account for, or notice, a whole array of anomalous "challenges," if it continues to recycle and rephrase the same paradigmatic truths not just for generations but for *centuries*, can it still be called science?

When Lawrence H. Summers, then-president of Harvard University, announced to a room of economists in 2005 that women's underrepresentation in scientific departments at elite universities was in part thanks to an "innate" lack of aptitude on their part, his comments drew a respectable amount of ire (Hemel). Not enough ire, though, to thwart his larger political aspirations, or to prevent him from being, eight years later, shortlisted for the position of Chairman of the Federal Reserve under President Obama. (Ezra Klein, reporting for the *Washington Post* in September 2013, confidently proclaimed "If Summers doesn't get the job, it won't be because the White House doesn't want to choose him") (Klein). And if that's the case, Summers owes a debt of gratitude to the persistency of a decidedly *un*revolutionary brand of science, one that has resorted, over the course of more than two-hundred years, to a kind of instant-replay protocol on the science of female cognition, evolutionary biology, and feminine "nature" in general. For while Summers, in his 2005 speech, included the caveat, "I'd like to be proven wrong on this one" (Hemel), it is unlikely that he ever will be, at least definitively speaking. Summers' now-infamous comments, though extemporaneous, had research on their side: in particular, he cited the research of Yu Xie and Kimberlee A. Schaumann, whose respective studies map women's achievement with respect to test scores and find, according to Richard Freeman, a "higher degree of variance in scores among men

than among women,” leading to the conclusion that “there are more men who are at the top and more men who are utter failures” (qtd. in Hemel).

This idea – that men are more capable of both genius and imbecility, whereas women tend to fall unromantically into a middling, no-man’s-land of cognitive facility – is sacred to this centuries-long cycle of paradigmatic replay that defines the so-called science of sex difference. It is eerily comparable, in fact, to Herbert Spencer’s 1872 observations that female intelligence is “receptive” while male intelligence is, by comparison, “originative.” For while “the receptivity may, and frequently does, exist in high degree” in women, Spencer explains a century-and-a-half before Xie and Schaumann, there is “but a low degree of originality, or entire absence of it” (31). That tendency towards “receptive” rather than “originative” intelligence, in Spencer’s view, lands women right there in the middle, between the categories of “genius” and “imbecile.” It furthermore, however, stymies their chances for intellectual progress, since they can only observe and “receive” knowledge: they cannot, biologically speaking, invent knowledge for themselves, only consume it, and to a nevertheless modest degree.

W.K. Brooks, in the 1880s, saw fit to coin and formalize this idea, which was as much accepted doctrine in the late nineteenth century as it is now. Brooks, with his “variability thesis,” refined the thinking of Spencer and others by pinpointing the origins of this theory, which were to be found, he thought, in men and women’s reproductive organs. “[T]he male element is the originating and the female is the perpetuating factor,” Brooks explains: “the ovum is conservative, the male cell progressive. Heredity or adherence to type is brought about by the ovum; variation and adaptation through the male element” (84). These conclusions helped to spawn an array of social prognostications, which helped some in their puzzlement over the “woman question,” as it was called. Men discovered the new, women preserved the old. Men were the innovators, the geniuses,

the inventors, the social leaders; women were the keepers of tradition, repositories of both custom and cultural memory. They did not *invent*, they merely held on to, or contained, knowledge.

Larry Summers' 2005 comments, buffered as they were by what he himself calls "careful, honest, and rigorous research" (qtd. in Hemel), would have been equally at home in the late nineteenth century. So, too, would the criticisms of MIT biologist Nancy Hopkins, who was present and heard Summers' speech, and who reportedly left the room feeling "physically ill" (Hemel) as a result of the gross assaults to what she felt to be (apparently anomalous) scientific principle. Author and social scientist Chris Kanyane, commenting on *The Crimson's* website in response to the story, accused Hopkins of "gotcha feminism" and of letting herself "be controlled by feelings instead of rationality," suggesting that Hopkins' behavior furthermore revealed another "innate" truth about women, "that they are more tuned [sic] to feelings and emotions rather than hard truths" (Kanyane). Science and medical historian Cynthia Eagle Russett explains that mid-nineteenth century audiences were similarly accustomed to viewing things in this way, and saw emotion as characteristically female and thought as characteristically male (42-43). That viewpoint, however, was not born from science (though a now much-maligned branch of pseudo-science, phrenology, argued in the 1830s that this was indeed the case) but from social expectations that were themselves descendent from preconceived ideas about gendered modes of cultural consumption. Or, in other words, *genre* – especially literary genre – began, in the early nineteenth century, to furnish a logic of separation between the kinds of culture that men and women consumed.

Women were, by and large during this time, disallowed formal channels of education; the result was that they tended to gravitate towards comparably less sophisticated and less complex forms of culture and entertainment. The nascent culture industry in nineteenth century America, observing this trend, gave them what they wanted, most notably in the form of sentimental novels. These "heart-histories," as the popular American author T.S. Arthur called them, satisfied women's

desires for emotional gratification in lieu of intellectual gratification. But what's crucial to keep in mind is that they were first, foremost, and most often written, overseen, and marketed by *men*: women's writing has become synonymous with the sentimental mode that flourished in what Fred Lewis Pattee calls "the feminine fifties," but that mode itself was both developed and perfected by male authors, editors and publishers in previous decades. *Godey's Lady's Book*, for instance – the publication often most associated with the tide towards sentimental women's culture – began publishing in 1830 under the auspices of Louis A. Godey, and primarily featured male authors. Later, though it featured women's writing as well, many male writers enjoyed an auspicious start there, including Edgar Allan Poe (whose very first published story appeared in an 1834 issue of *Godey's*) and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Genre thus became a handy stand-in for *gender*, and when science sought answers to questions of innate sexual disparity, it likewise looked both to culture and to generic categories to rationalize any apparent markers of difference. Women were thus less intelligent than men not because they lacked education, but because they "felt" too much. They were less creative than men not because they were fed an unstimulating diet of formulaic, generically devised entertainment, but because their brains could only function "receptively." And they were less energetic than men not through a lack of physical conditioning but because they needed to "conserve" their energies for specifically female tasks (like bearing children). Here, again, we can make a connection to Larry Summers, who buttressed his 2005 remarks about women's "innate" inability to succeed in science with the observation that "many women with young children are unwilling or unable to put in the 80-hour work-weeks needed to succeed in those fields" (ctd. in Hemel).

I bring up the (now eight year-old) Summers debacle not as a case-in-point, but rather as a reminder of the cyclicity of such rhetoric, and of that cycle's futility in distempering our socially dominant generic codes. Hence why, in 2007, when a British tabloid announced that a team of

researchers at the University of Edinburgh had “discovered” that “only men can be geniuses,” no one seemed surprised, or even the slightest bit miffed (Wilson). (This seems to be one of *The Daily Mail*’s favorite topics, in fact: it was happy to announce the same findings again, albeit via different researchers, in 2010 [Lynn].) We are, it seems, just a little too accustomed to the idea. But all of this begs a very important question: if it is women who are supposed to be the “keepers of tradition,” who serve as the conservative, preserving force that remains gleefully static in light of men’s social progress, why is it men who appear insistent upon re-emphasizing and re-stating their claims to intellectual dominance? Who is the chief custodian of “tradition” here? The answer is: both, especially to the degree that any of these theories of male/female differentiation and cognition may be, even for a second, regarded as true. When Larry Summers inflamed feminist wrath in 2005, he had men on his side, but he also had science – in this case, science written and produced by *women*. Because the truth is that our reliance on generic codes is itself non-gendered; we produce and consume ideologies of natural sex without a thought for how the personal conditions of our own sexual experience might protest. We are our own best exceptions to the rules we so delight in perpetuating. Hawthorne, even, observes as much in *The Blithedale Romance* when the strong, Fuller-esque Zenobia, after decrying the sad state of women’s inequality, is suddenly swayed by the conservative reformer Hollingsworth’s conviction that “The heart of true womanhood knows where its own sphere is, and never seeks to stray beyond it” (86). Coverdale, wondering at Zenobia’s change of heart, muses “Women almost invariably behave thus,” which is to say, in contradiction to own their stated interests and opinions. “What does the fact mean?” he asks. “Is it their nature? Or is it, at last, the result of ages of compelled degradation?” (87).

The Natural Woman is my attempt to imagine answers to these questions. It is my attempt to rupture the automaticity with which we endorse generic distinction and, by extension, mythologies of sex and gender. It is rooted in discussions of nineteenth century American literature and culture –

particularly American women writers' interactions with, and oppositions to, science during that era – because I am able to locate a generous basis for our modern compulsions toward instant-replay science on the topic of natural sex within that period and setting. Our familiarity with such scientific arguments, and their near-ubiquitous influence in our daily lives, helps to make them feel familiar to us. But it also, I think, helps to make the nineteenth century legible to the twenty-first. There is a compelling tendency in scholarship of this kind – by which I mean scholarship targeting the historical development of scientific thought – to frame science within narratives of progress that, eventually, add up to or else eventually resemble a modern standard. The problem is that our continued preoccupations with the forward march of science tend to blind us to its intrinsic obeisance to mechanisms of tradition and preservation. The same, I would argue, is true of literature, and our presentist insistence upon narratives of innovation prevent us from seeing and making sense of historical precedent (in spite of Frederic Jameson's oft-cited demand that we do precisely the opposite).

For this reason, questions of sex and gender function in *The Natural Woman* not as principal foci but, collectively, as a theoretical venue of sorts, a setting within which science and literature, genes and genres, are permitted to interact, and do. The historical machinations of both femaleness and femininity, in particular, ground my thinking in this study because they unite what might otherwise be a bewilderingly broad selection of nineteenth century thinkers, writers, and cultural producers. For every figure featured in this discussion – whether an author, a scientist, or neither of these things – connects to every other in being fixated on or, often, made uneasy by gender roles, behaviors, and expectations in contradistinction to nineteenth century generic social categories. Many of the writers discussed here (like Julia Ward Howe and Edith Wharton) work explicitly with and from science, but still others (like Fanny Fern, Henry James, and Anne Moncure Crane) do not, or at least do not immediately understand themselves and their work in relation to scientific

principles. They do, however, knowingly interact with and confront both suppositions of sex and instantiations of gender, and that interaction, I argue, links them to an ongoing discourse of scientific discovery which is, throughout this era, continually reborn, reformatted, and reinvented not just in scientific and scholarly arenas, but in the idea of *genre* and in the generic oversight of all spheres of American literary, cultural, and social life. For the kinds of links which once bound gender to genre in the nineteenth century are still pervasive and, it would appear, still seemingly necessary today. Lauren Berlant, for example, points to the role women play in maintaining the connection between gender and genre at all costs:

Indeed, ‘women’s culture’ survives as a recognizable thing in the United States not just because markets revitalize it constantly in all media; not just because the US social field is so saturated by normative heterofemininity; and not just because the intimate sphere provides a convenient register in which to debate and obscure larger knots of social attachment and antagonism; it survives also because its central fantasy ... is the constantly emplotted desire of a complex person to rework the details of her history to become a vague or simpler version of herself. (Berlant 7).

There is a quest, Berlant suggests, for answers embedded within a habitual adherence to those categories, *gender* and *genre*. There is a hope that generic culture, “women’s culture,” will provide answers about what it is to be woman, and the repeated, nearly compulsive (as Jennifer Fleissner categorizes it) search for verification and “truth” via such channels amounts to a series of confused, performative gestures that become in and of themselves constitutive of gender, of femininity. A woman’s search for her simpler, innately sexual self through generic modes of feminine consumption (or, in some cases, production) begets a complex choreography of gender habits and rituals that serve to further disfigure notions of “truth” more generally.

But unlike Berlant, and unlike other scholars of her ilk, I focus in *The Natural Woman* not on the exception that proves the rule, but rather on the exception that no one recognizes as an exception – the novelty that masquerades, at least on the surface (and often as the result of sincere ideological self-delusion) as consistency. For, as Kuhn explains, this is true to our collective social experiences of the anomalous. “Novelty,” Kuhn says, “emerges only for the man who, knowing *with precision* what he should expect, is able to recognize that something has gone wrong. Anomaly appears only against the background provided by the paradigm” (65, emphasis original). We must, in other words, set our sights and our expectations on the anomalous: my project in this dissertation is to show the extent to which science and literature alike in the nineteenth century *refused* to prepare itself for novelty and, in so doing, failed to recognize it and more often than not condemned it to obscurity, social banishment, and death. The fact that women were often the agents of both literary and scientific novelty during this era speaks to the entrenchment of symbiotic systems of gender and genre which, working hand-in-hand, sought to prevent the development of scientific standards and literary forms alike, and the social progress of women, too. For, as Nina Baym points out in her crucial work *American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth-Century Sciences* (2002), it is not that women in 1800s America were entirely disallowed a scientific education. Indeed, many women studied, and *produced*, science, but they were not recognized as doing so with any degree of seriousness or expertise. Baym surveys an impressive array of women who, during this era, made longstanding contributions to scientific thought, but explains that “None of these women claimed expertise as an original scientist, but each promised to convey findings of scientific men accurately” (7). The ideology of *conveyance* that thus colored women’s interactions with knowledge production at this time compares, of course, to Spencer’s and Brook’s theories of “receptive” female intelligence. It also, however, informs a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy that means women resist interpreting themselves through the lens of expertise and that men, in turn, can hardly be expected to question such a

supposition. Even Margaret Fuller, who elsewhere championed the causes of equality and rights for women, told a group of students in 1837 that it must not “be expected that women would be good Astronomers or Geologists or Metaphysicians,” but that “they could and are expected to be good historians” (qtd. in Capper 235): she, too, was convinced of the conservative/receptive aspects of female intelligence, and hence her assurance that, though they fail as innovators, women make good “historians.”

Critic Susan Wells attempts to correct the record in demonstrating the surprising preponderance of scientific educational training for women in nineteenth century America that existed through a variety of formal and informal channels. Baym, though, once again reminds us that “Students and teachers wanted authoritative textbooks, and the authority of science was male” (8). This led to an informal system by which women during this era were encouraged to participate in science but at the same time neglected, dismissed, and unofficially discouraged from assuming, or pursuing, scientific expertise. But it is not my objective in this project to explore the systems of injustice that kept women *out* of science in the nineteenth century, or even those that sought to limit, mock, or delegitimize their work therein; indeed, neither is that my goal with literature, or with my analysis of it. Rather, I want, in this project, to demonstrate the very great extent to which two primary fields of *expertise* in nineteenth century America – on the one hand, literary expertise (writing, editing, publishing, and marketing) and, on the other, scientific expertise (education, institutional inculcation, publishing, research) – crafted a symbiotic existence bent upon a shared obsession with female “nature” and, at the same time, a sworn repudiation of any such obsession. I do so in critically juxtaposing American women’s growing interests in their social selves, including their rights, status, and claims to political enfranchisement, with the birth and cultural dissemination of “popular science.” For, I argue, it is in studying the simultaneity of these movements, and in studying their joint fascination with a single, common issue – the nature of woman – that we may

better understand the social and ultimately *sentimental* standards that lent both organization and rationale to the political workings of nineteenth century America.

Too, it stands to reason that any scholar of history must be prepared to make a case for the contemporaneity of *that* history, and of its significance to modern society, scholarship, education, and inquiry. The vast majority of figures named in this dissertation have been dead for over a hundred years, yet it is my belief that the conflicts in which they participated – the ideological skirmishes which structured their lives and compelled their work – are as fresh as ever. Accordingly, my efforts here are in large part born from modern circumstance and contemporary debate: in particular, they are born from a fascination with “the rift,” as David Hollinger calls it in a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. In viewing scientific and literary knowledge work in nineteenth century America as symbiotic, twin enterprises devoted to the instantiation of expertise, I enter into and likewise reject a line of contemporary rhetoric that would drive these two spheres ever further apart. The humanities and the natural sciences – what Hollinger calls “the two great academic families” (B6) – have been unwittingly forced, in our current era, into the most superficial of antagonistic arrangements, wherein the humanities are often characterized as being overly political, while the STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) fields in comparison appear gaily *apolitical*. A central objective of my work in *The Natural Woman* is to demonstrate the very great extent to which these cosmetically “opposed” fields of human creativity, research, and production were once (a little over a hundred years ago, and for better or worse) interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent. The systems of expertise which, in nineteenth century America, labeled women’s writing as “sentimental” and their brains as “conservative” helped to forge communal – though, it must be said, problematic – links between the “prodigious expanse of inquiries” (Hollinger B6) known as the humanities and an ever-expanding yet ever-more-specific range of scientific disciplines. And these jointly operational systems of expertise were nothing if not *political*:

that is why we see them emerge simultaneously in the 1840s in connection to sincere and protracted political upheaval in the form of the women's suffrage movement.

The Question of Difference

It is not my intention, in this dissertation, to promote or bolster theories of supreme, unyielding, or limitless similarity between the sexes. There are, of course, grave biological dissimilarities between men and women, and too, the contention that we must not overlook such similarities, or discount their relevance to the social processes which in themselves contribute to gender, already has its champions.¹ At the same time, though, I take great pains to avoid gross determinations of social constructionism in the form of an overreliance on *gender*. For, as Toril Moi argues, if I distinguish a woman by virtue of either natural or socially constructed characteristics, “I reduce her to her sexual difference. Such reductionism is the antithesis of everything feminism ought to stand for ... All forms of sexual reductionism implicitly deny that a woman is a concrete, embodied human being” (35). Privileging either side of the sex/gender dialectic, Moi explains, results in the annihilation of the dialectic itself, and it is at this point that dichotomous arrangements of sex and gender cease to be useful to our critical understandings. “The narrow parameters of sex and gender will never adequately explain the experience and meaning of sexual difference in human beings” (36) Moi says – but sex *and* gender, insistently placed in proximity to each other, and coerced into permanent confrontation, may yet yield fruitful critical results, if not wholly *synthetic* ones.

Thus, in *The Natural Woman*, I prioritize the kinds of categorical play that occur between sex and gender as a means of accessing what I see as a historical ideology that is furthermore present and embedded in contemporary social paradigms. My treatment of the sex/gender duality compares to the way that I regard and handle other categorical binaries – true/false, realist/sentimental,

anecdotal/empirical – arrangements that, I want to demonstrate, depend upon each other for definition and existence. The result of that dependence is an interdependence of other categorical arrangements: for instance, in the nineteenth century, women’s writing was largely branded as “sentimental,” a label which relegates such literature to realms of emotional gratification, domestic plotting, and the popular literary marketplace. Yet it was men, for the most part – literary producers, editors, and publishers – who created this brand, who named and marketed it, who often developed standards for its success, and who *produced* it before women even had the chance to. It is therefore not unrealistic to say that nineteenth century literary heavyweights, figures like Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and James, might not have been able to envision or appeal to mechanisms of “literariness” if they had not already had a hand in establishing the lesser, more frivolous modes of writing against which their “serious” works might be, in turn, defined.

Thus, I want to make it clear that categorical distinctions function best and most usefully when kept in close proximity. Indeed, one of my objectives in this dissertation is to showcase instances in nineteenth century culture when such categories of difference lost sight of each other, with the result of becoming, over time, ideologically entrenched to the point of meaninglessness. And, as Mrs. Lidcote, in Edith Wharton’s story “Autre Temps ...”, reminds us, “traditions that have lost their meanings are the hardest of all to destroy.” I strive, in this dissertation, to chronicle women writers’ attempts – and, often, to rationalize their failures – to “destroy” the meaningless and sometimes incoherent traditions of expertise passed down through the fields of science and literature in the nineteenth century America. I do so by exposing select American women writer’s interactions with these institutions, and in assessing the results of those interactions, which quite often were, as we shall see, to the detriment of a woman’s career, reputation, or social standing.

In Chapter One, “Romancing the Interstitial: Julia Ward Howe and the Demarcation of Rights and Sentiments,” I focus on questions of biological sex as they bear upon legal, political, and

social practices in American culture throughout the 1830s and 40s. I survey the development of scientific thought in America during the early half of the nineteenth century in order to demonstrate how, evolutionarily speaking, we arrive at an ideological standstill in the 1840s in which we see women divested of their rights and citizenship in the American republic but, at the same time, likewise divested of their natural sex and branded “hermaphrodites” if they seek to contest, or to contradict, that negative status. Cases of “amorphous sex” – that is to say, intersexed persons – in particular during this time pose crucial philosophical challenges to the doctrines of democratic participation, and are perceived by some as having the potential to undermine the operations of the republic. But, in fact, “amorphous sex,” also necessitates the framing of hard-lined definitions of “sex” – definitions that, in turn, affect our social negotiations of sex in the form of gender. Howe’s secretly written and almost-forgotten novel, *The Hermaphrodite* (1847-8?), usefully positions questions of amorphous sex against ideological suppositions of gender, and in doing so, courageously challenges the institutions of science (biological classification) and literature (literary genre) alike. In my reading of *The Hermaphrodite*, I contribute to a significant body of recent criticism surrounding this novel in connecting it to a better known work which has not been heretofore discussed in connection with Howe’s novel, but which also functions via considerations of hermaphroditic or interstitial sex: *Sarrasine*. Honore de Balzac’s notorious novella, and the special place it has earned in the post-structuralist canon (thanks to Roland Barthes), grants us a more powerful contextual lens through which we might view Howe’s secret manuscript, and speaks to a network of transatlantic affiliation surrounding the questions of biology, science, and amorphous/defined sex that furthermore places Howe’s work within a matrix of nineteenth century thought that transcends the immediacy of her book’s American origins.

In Chapter Two, “An Impossible Woman: The Strange Case of Anne Moncure Crane,” I shift the focus of the discussion to literary genre and, in particular, its deployment in American

systems of literary production, marketing, and consumption. I highlight the story of Crane, and of her little-known but hugely popular first novel, *Emily Chester* (1864), and use both to structure a debate over literary genre, the true roots of which lie in assumptions of biological sex and “nature.” I compare Crane’s novel to another, similar work which, unlike *Emily Chester*, is still widely read and regarded today: Henry James’ *The Portrait of a Lady*. I mine the annals of literary criticism penned by James in the 1860s and 70s through engines like *The Nation*, *The Galaxy*, and *The Atlantic* in order to show that, in spite of his professed hatred for it, Crane’s *Emily Chester* was likely a major, if not *the* major, influence on James’ most famous and most highly praised novel. I analyze James’ impressively vociferous objections to Crane’s novel with an eye for the stakes of such objection, demonstrating, with a degree of suspicion, the extent to which he “doth protest too much.” I contextualize the entirety of this discussion, however, within the story of Crane’s short life and tragically young death, in an attempt to repair the otherwise paltry record associated with her name, and to attach it forever to that of Henry James.

In Chapter Three, “Sentimental Science: Fact, Fiction, and the Stakes of Female Intelligence,” I survey the field of scientific work associated with female cognition, neuroscience, and psychology beginning in the 1870s. To this overview, I add the fictional works of two women writers – Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Sarah Orne Jewett – published in the 1880s. These novels, which appear on the very heels of debates over female cognitive inferiority, political participation, and coeducation, document the rise of a new figure in nineteenth century America, the female physician. I analyze Phelps’ and Jewett’s novels, and place them alongside the story of Helen Bradford Thompson, a trained scientific and psychological researcher who, in the 1890s, sought to crucially deflate the logic of female cognitive inferiority through empirical research. Thompson’s story, in many ways, completes the narratives begun by Phelps and Jewett, narratives that, by dint of real-world example, offer unsatisfactory, harshly generic conclusions for their female heroines.

In Chapter Four, “Exceptional Sex: Evolutionary Logic in Edith Wharton’s Early Fiction,” I work from hand-written annotations made by Wharton during the 1880s and 90s in French and English language editions of scientific texts. Wharton’s careful underlinings, in her personal copies of works by Darwin, Haeckel, Spencer, Huxley, and others, reveal a fervid interest in the logic of evolutionary biology. I construct a system of links between Wharton’s consumption of scientific ideas and her efforts to distemper generic modes of cultural production, specifically as those modes relate to gender and to an expected or “traditional” range of female behaviors. I furthermore connect those scientific works contained in Wharton’s library to her earliest fiction, including stories from *The Greater Inclination* (1898) (Wharton took the title for this collection from a line from Edmund Kelly’s 1898 text *Evolution and Effort*), *Crucial Instances* (1899), and *The Descent of Man* (1904), the last of which advertises an obvious link to Charles Darwin.

In Chapter Five, “Suffer the Little Vixens: Sex, Jazz, and Realist Terror,” I make what no doubt looks, at first glance, like a topical detour. In fact, though, my discussion of jazz – by which I mean jazz *culture* in general and not jazz *music* in specific – and my attempts to style its popularity as the product of nineteenth century “sentimental” science continues a line of thematic reasoning begun in Chapter One, and carries it into the twentieth century. I demonstrate that, in spite of its protestations to be both “new” and “modern,” jazz culture – and in particular *flappers* – simultaneously inhabits and extolls standards of femininity set forth by nineteenth century estimations of biological science, and by that era’s devotion to generic cultural archetypes. I continue my analysis of Edith Wharton here, transitioning to a discussion of her so-called “jazz” novels – works which are, in general, critically eschewed by some of even the most devoted Wharton scholars. I analyze these works, in particular *The Children* (1928), in correspondence to three veins of critical thinking: “jazz” culture, as criticized and deplored by theorist Theodor Adorno; “the flapper” as archetype of childish, un-grow-up-able idealized woman (a notion which is entirely descendant

from the “child angels” of nineteenth century / Victorian culture); and *The Flapper*, the 1920 silent film that first popularized the term, and which stars the so-called “first flapper,” Olive Thomas, in her last film. I argue that Wharton, much like Adorno, takes issue with jazz and with “flappers” not, as other critics suggest, on the grounds of racism, prudishness, or conservative unease, but rather because “jazz” repackages and solidifies regressive, nineteenth century ideologies of sex and gender which threaten, in the twentieth century, to become both a “new” and permanent *normal*.

It is my overall project, to recall Hawthorne, to solve the riddle of our quasi-slavish devotion to standards – be they scientific or social, and may they regard gender or genre – that repeatedly fail to corroborate the lived realities of human existence. These are standards which, in Hawthorne’s words, amount to “outrageous affirmation of ... the intensity of masculine egotism” which “center [] everything in itself, and deprive [] woman of her very soul, her inexpressible and unfathomable all, to make it a mere incident in the great sum of man” (86-87), and yet we endorse and uphold them with the help of every tool and aid in our arsenal. Science, literature, culture – they all contribute, hand-in-hand, to the continued protection and fortification of the expectations that bind, limit, and thwart the progress of science, literature, and culture. And the only explanation, the only excuse we can offer to soothe the conflict between irrationality and the rational, to make ourselves make sense, is *tradition*. To recall Wharton, it is *tradition* that, in the end, defies both logic and truth for the precise reason that it is accountable to neither: hence, “traditions that have lost their meanings are the hardest of all to destroy.”

I would argue that is not my aim in this project to *destroy* tradition, but to make solid sense of it – but that, in turn, may very well amount to the same thing.

Chapter One

Romancing the Interstitial: Julia Ward Howe and the Demarcation of Rights and Sentiments

“For their breasts contain curdled milk”

It was the middle of the nineteenth century, and hermaphrodites were everywhere. The term “hermaphrodite,” at least, certainly proliferated in print, though most often as a detached epithet. The anonymous “Gossip Aloft” column, for example, which debuted in the *New York Times* in April 1852 and ran in another thirteen subsequent issues, sought to provide “an agreeable relief to [the *Times*] vigorous politics in a series of fanciful papers,” in the words of another contemporary publication (*The Literary World* 137). Its “fanciful” diatribes were purportedly penned by someone calling himself “The City Hall Bell-Ringer,” “a reviewer ... not a reviewer of books, but of men’s actions and lives, of an internal and external nature” (“Gossip Aloft,” 20 April 1853). Yet the subject of its review and censure during this volatile era – the Seneca Falls convention had taken place just four years before, and introduced the women’s rights controversy to polite American society – was more commonly the “actions and lives” of women, not men.

The “Gossip Aloft” column, in creating fictional conversations between mythical figures (the “King of Devils,” Asmodeus, and the Roman poet-muse “Lesbia,” for example), offered stern estimations of contemporary American politics and culture, albeit under the guise of whimsy. Operating via such methods, the series voiced support for subjects like religion and traditional morals while sounding off on abolitionism and women’s rights. In a December 1852 issue, for example, it reported on events relating to an imaginary ball at Tammany Hall, in which democratic politicians hobnobbed with the column’s mythical “regulars”. The “Bell-Ringer,” in conversing with the fictional Maria de Gloria on the subject of women, provokes her to assert that “A woman should remain man’s chiefest treasure ... let her beware of the hermaphrodites, the Female

Politicians, Woman's Rights' Lecturers, who (for their breasts contain curdled milk), belong rather to woman than to man, but are a most unnatural and unsexual blending of the two" (no. xvii, 11 December 1852). It is here – in this jesting, casual deployment of the term "hermaphrodite" – that we may locate and diagnose a fascinating strain of nineteenth-century American thought. For as the anonymous author applies the term to the women's rights movement and its advocates, so too does he seek to divest such people – such *women* – of their sexual and sexed identities. These women, "unnatural and unsexual," can no more nourish the world with their ideas than they can their children with the "curdled milk" of their breasts. It is a harsh, if hasty, appraisal, and it was a rhetorically popular one at the time.

Gary Williams, for example, points to another way in which the term "hermaphrodite" gained in currency and appropriation in the 1840s and 50s. Women who expressed an interest in becoming educated or intelligent – women who thought, wrote, spoke, or produced creatively and intellectually, especially if that production was in any way *public* – were similarly plagued by "psychological androgyny" ("Introduction" xxvii). Nathaniel Hawthorne, for instance, in *The Blithedale Romance* (which, like the "Gossip Aloft" articles, appears in 1852) touches on this subject through Hollingsworth, his conservative reformer character, who tells the other Blithedale residents that women who desire education are nothing but "poor, miserable, abortive creatures, who only dream of such things because they have missed woman's peculiar happiness, or because Nature made them neither man nor woman" (86). And while such androgyny might be, as in this example, cause for social offense and insult, earning for a woman the label of "hermaphrodite" ("neither man nor woman"), so too though might "the idea of the hermaphrodite" be "arguably also useful as a screen on which to project certain other aspects of [a woman's] situation" (Williams "Introduction" xxviii). One poignant example of such willfully androgynous "screening," and the subject of Williams' remarks on the subject, is the writer Julia Ward Howe. Best known for her poetry, and

most of all for penning the lines that became “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” Howe enjoyed a successful, though secret, literary life. Her two poetry collections – *Passion-Flowers* (1854) and *Words for the Hour* (1857) – were clandestinely published, without her husband’s knowledge, and garnered praise for their (initially anonymous) author. The extent to which Howe shielded her identity and literary efforts in these two volumes is symptomatic of her anxieties about being an intelligent, thoughtful, and productive woman who had nevertheless been consigned to a career as a housewife and mother. Howe suffered intensely from both depression and anxiety with regards to her writing, yet all the while observed that “it was borne in upon me ... that I had much to say to my day and generation which could not and should not be communicated in rhyme, or even in rhythm” (*Reminiscences* 305). Hence, even years before her poetic success, her literary talents had been otherwise, experimentally employed; she wrote letters, kept journals, read avidly and in multiple languages and, at some point in the winter of 1846-1847, wrote a novel. That novel – somewhat strange in tone, ambiguous in form, and frankly outlandish in subject matter – is now known as *The Hermaphrodite*. It was the only novel she would ever write, and it would be 157 years before it was ever published.

Unearthed by Gary Williams in the early 2000s, and published for the first time in 2004, *The Hermaphrodite* tells the story of Laurence, a deeply contemplative, intelligent individual whose “conspicuous characteristic is that he is a hermaphrodite” (“Introduction” x). The fact of Laurence’s hermaphroditism, however “conspicuous” in Williams’ words, is repeatedly mentioned in Howe’s novel, but barely explained. To our collective scholarly knowledge (pieces of the manuscript remain missing, and thus the novel remains somewhat incomplete), Laurence never uses the term “hermaphrodite” to describe himself, nor does the omniscient narrator employ it. Likewise, the material and biological circumstances that might render Laurence as such are similarly neglected in

Howe's narrative, leaving us to judge Laurence, first and foremost, on the basis of his behavior and actions in the novel.

This is, however, entirely consistent with the way the term "hermaphrodite" would have been both used and understood by mid-nineteenth century Americans, for a number of reasons. First, because history offers only vague records of existing intersexed persons during this time, which in turn is reason to believe that such individuals were made largely invisible – by choice or by social requirement – and so few people would have ever seen, met, or encountered an actual hermaphroditic person. Second, as the 1853 "Gossip Aloft" column suggests, the idea of the hermaphrodite enjoyed rhetorical popularity rather without material corroboration, meaning that Americans felt somewhat comfortable with the word and the concept even if they'd never seen (and couldn't identify if they did see) a living hermaphrodite. Third, though, and most importantly, biology and material life sciences, still fledgling fields of study at this time, had simply not developed to the point of offering physical or scientific explanation of *what* a hermaphrodite might, exactly, be, or even what a hermaphroditic person might certifiably *look like*. Alice Dreger points out that, even forty years later, in 1888, members of the British Gynaecological Society, upon being presented with a "living specimen of a hermaphrodite" displayed on an examination table, could not agree on any required or confirmed attributes of sexual identity, forcing them to "divide on the question of sex" (Dreger 335; qtd. in Dreger 338). This indicates that, even as late as the 1880s, the medical establishment had no empirical biological or physical criteria that might certifiably *define* hermaphroditic individuals as such. And the plot thickens, for well into the twentieth century (1937), the renowned medical researcher and urologist Hugh Hampton Young was still referring to "practicing hermaphrodites" with reference to individuals who had sexual interactions with both men and women (Fausto-Sterling 42). Even modern science, it seems, could not come to definitive

terms on the subject of the hermaphrodite; Julia Ward Howe, writing her novel almost century before in the 1840s, could hardly hope to do better.

This is not to say that hermaphrodites were heretofore invisible, though; scholars like Julia Epstein and Anne Fausto-Sterling isolate several distinct “moments” in history in which prominent cases of hermaphroditism were paraded before the public eye.² Rather, the point is that a real or scientific understanding of these individuals – and the biological truths that informed their supposed hermaphroditism – was, to put it lightly, vastly uninformed, even by the dawn of the twentieth century, to the extent that myth and hearsay defined public discourse on the topic. In short, the hermaphrodite proliferated as an ideological construct while the “true” or scientifically valid hermaphrodite continued to languish, tainted by centuries-old stigma. The *idea* of the hermaphrodite was, however, significant to Americans, and to advanced western societies more generally (the French, in particular, reveled in the idea, as we shall see), in the mid-nineteenth century in that it served as both the source and the repository of ideas regarding sex and biological difference. Certainly this was the case for Howe, who, as Williams and others illustrate, may have latched onto the notion as a means of easing her own anxieties about being an intelligent, productive woman, as well as to explain the behaviors of her homosocial (possibly homosexual), emotionally distant husband. The term “hermaphrodite” served to bracket and blur, rather than to sharpen, a variety of gender-deviant or gender-aberrant behaviors for Howe, and for the rest of American society, too. But how does the loose, facile deployment of a rhetorical idea correspond to the dictates of a growing body of “science” in this period? *Who*, exactly, counts as a hermaphrodite when nothing and everything might qualify as such? And, most intriguingly, who *doesn't* qualify – that is to say, what is a “real” man, or a “real” woman, in light of such abstruseness and variability?

It is this last category of individuals – those who don't qualify, as either male or female, whether by virtue of science or stigma – that most interests me here. It is my contention that, more

often than not, labels like “male” and “female” functioned in nineteenth-century America as generic devices rather than as informed descriptors, and that men and women were differentiated first on the basis of behavioral standards born from *cultural and aesthetic systems of categorization* – that is, genres, comprised, like literary genres, of expectations about technique, tone, and content – and second on the basis of nature and biology. In the end, though, nature takes the rap, and in the middle of the nineteenth century, while study in the physical sciences grew and subsumed earlier forms of inquiry, biology and nature offered default excuses for human “truths” that, in reality, were anything but biological or natural. Julia Ward Howe’s fabulous lost text, *The Hermaphrodite*, stunningly illustrates nineteenth-century America’s obsession with biological truth and its subsequent influence on social regulations. In this chapter, I foreground Howe’s arguments in *The Hermaphrodite* relative to the social machinery of gender, and contextualize those claims in light of processes of retelling and rewriting – specifically, Howe’s retelling of the story of the tragic hermaphrodite, and her purposive rewriting of Honore de Balzac’s now infamous novelette *Sarrasine*. In doing so, I work first from a body of early and mid-nineteenth-century scientific writing on sexual difference, and then analyze Howe’s novel with an eye for the stakes of gender, lending that debate greater depth in investigating the larger cultural applications of the term “hermaphrodite”. For, in the nineteenth century, “hermaphrodites” were not just intersexed persons – that is, persons whose *bodies* “exhibit sexual ambiguity” (Fausto-Sterling 45). “Hermaphrodites” were also homosexual people, or heterosexual people who violated standards of sexual behavior, or men who acted like women, or women who acted like men; “hermaphrodites” were suffragettes and female authors and Quaker women who dared to speak in public. Questions of how, exactly, such behaviors divested these kinds of men and women from their naturally inherited sexual identities – and what kind of valid comparisons existed between them and biologically intersexed persons – form the foundation of this discussion.

Demarcation and Difference: The Evolution of Nineteenth-Century Science

Prior to 1800, scientific inquiry was grandly – if abstractly – amalgamated under the heading of *physiology*. Medical and scientific research in the eighteenth century descended from widespread ideologies of interconnectedness; human bodies were seen, conceptually, in terms of *systems* or *networks*, and “scientists” sought to locate the origins of human existence in the interplay of bodily forms and functions. Physiological thinking posited that any and all “truths” of human existence might be discovered in one of two interdependent arenas: first, in the ways in which the human body functioned as a set of integrated systems and forces; second, in the ways in which human bodies compared, generically speaking, to other human bodies. Accordingly, Nina Baym observes that, around 1800, science was largely divided into “a few catchall categories (natural history, natural philosophy). The word *scientist* had yet to come into general use; ‘men of science’ were independent savants” without formal education, training, or disciplinary distinction (1). Such philosophies of integration, according to Cynthia Eagle Russett, likewise dominated spheres of social thought, for “It had been characteristic of social theory in the late eighteenth century to stress the commonalities shared by all human beings. Humanity was one in essence, however varied its particular manifestations might be” (6). Medical images from this period similarly illustrate an effective *obsession* with the body’s interconnectedness. The Italian anatomist Antonio Scarpa (1752-1832), for instance, produced a monolithic atlas – the first of its kind – in 1794 with the help of engraver Faustino Anderloni. Rather than isolating individual organs as might be expected, the *Tabulae Neurologicae*³ supremely depicts the human body’s vital *systems* (see Fig. 1); thus, in one of its seven full-sized engravings, the heart appears nestled inside the larger context of the circulatory system, attaching and extending, even, through the chest, into the throat, and subtending the expressiveness of the human face. Likewise, an exposed portion of upper body musculature reveals blood vessels and interior structures like the trachea and the esophagus alongside layers of muscle and tendon. The

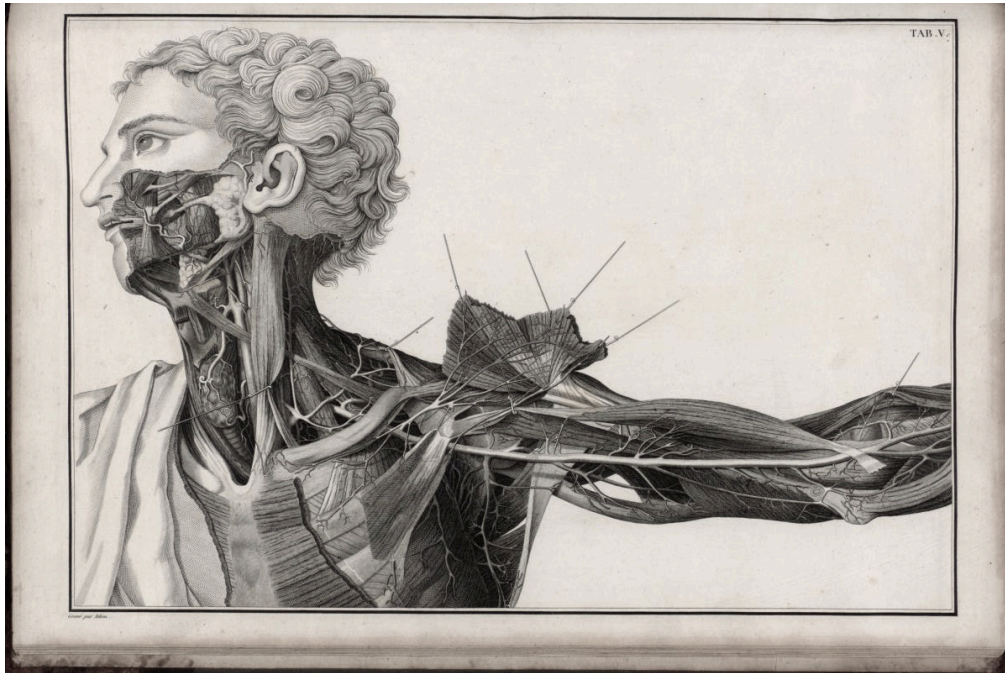


Fig. 1: Engraving (Tab. V) from Scarpa's *Tabulae Neurologicae*, showing exposed upper torso, chest, arm, neck, and face: c. 1794.⁴

illustration, in fact, offers a wholesale fusion of the body's circulatory, respiratory, and digestive systems, all while retaining the body's aesthetic humanity via the inclusion of the face and hair. It is a perspective that would have been consistent with the priorities of eighteenth-century physiological inquiry, which particularly emphasized instances of “overlap” in bodily systems, and means of “communication” occurring between said systems.

The rhetoric of integration also suffused social interpretations of biological difference during this time, including sexual difference. As many scholars – descending from Thomas Laqueur – have repeatedly noted, Western, Christian society had since the seventeenth century been dominated by the “one-sex” model described by Laqueur. This model decreed that men and women were effectively the same, biologically speaking, save that men's reproductive organs were external whereas women's reproductive organs – functionally identical – were arranged internally.⁵ Laqueur observes, famously, that, “prior to 1700,” “the vagina is imagined as an interior penis, the labia as

foreskin, the uterus as scrotum, and the ovaries as testicles” (Laqueur 4). And while precise dates are, on Laqueur’s timeline, somewhat difficult to pinpoint, he subsequently argues that the eighteenth century – “scientific revolution” be damned – did little to revise this idea, and that “sexual difference no more followed from anatomy after the scientific revolution than it did in the world of one-sex” (163). Rather, eighteenth-century science was more interested in offering legitimate qualifications to “one-sex” notions of complementarity and comparison, even while, as many other scholars note,⁶ eighteenth century society began to earnestly probe the boundaries of sexual difference.

The past two decades have yielded a rich and multivariate debate along these lines. The assessment of that debate is, however, ultimately tangential to my goals here. It is additionally interesting to note, though, that in spite of eighteenth-century science’s abiding interest in interconnectivity, “physiology, largely confined to the human body, was still the preserve of the medical profession and natural history remained classificatory and descriptive” (Russett 4), meaning that the human and natural worlds remained largely separate during this time. It took, in fact, the dawning of a new century before these two spheres of scientific investigation might unite and become one. The term *biology*, which first appeared, according to Russett, in 1800, brought physiology and natural science together, and demonstrated a desire, on the part of science, to “move beyond narrowness and taxonomy to create a comprehensive study of the living organism, whether vegetable, animal, or mineral” (4). For, indeed, Linnaeus’ “three kingdom” model – and its attendant ideological tyranny – had reigned for long enough; yet science, in search for specificity after 1800, moved not *away* from narrowness and taxonomy, but rather toward these mechanisms of distinction, and toward difference more generally.

This move marked, on the one hand, a shift from “universality” to “differentiation,” in the words of Frank Manuel.⁷ It also, however, signaled a shift from *networks* to *nodes* in biological thinking – from systems to individual pieces of the human biological puzzle. Matthias Schleiden and

Theodor Schwann’s groundbreaking cellular theory, which debuted in 1838,⁸ capped off decades of progressive scientific thought concerned with ever-smaller, not larger, pictures of human beings (“Theodor Schwann”). The discovery that we are all essentially cellular concurrently appeared with a revised system of biological taxonomy; Linnaeus’ three kingdoms suddenly transformed into multiple zoological ranks, and what had begun with Erasmus Darwin’s *Zoonomia* in 1796 climaxed with Robert Chambers’ *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* in 1844, a work which popularized a system of biological differentiation that precludes our more familiar, modern structure of taxonomic rank (life-domain-kingdom-phylum, etc.) By the midpoint of the nineteenth century, science had become the science of difference. This fact becomes all the more clear if we compare, for instance, Scarpa and Anderloni’s 1794 “systems” engravings to Henry Gray’s notorious *Anatomy, Descriptive and Surgical* a half-century later. Gray’s *Anatomy*, first published in 1858, and still revered as a touchstone of medical reference, contains a succession of illustrated figures featuring isolated, atomized pieces of human anatomy, representationally divorced from their larger “systems” and floating mysteriously in de-contextualized space (see Fig. 2). Even before scientific interest in

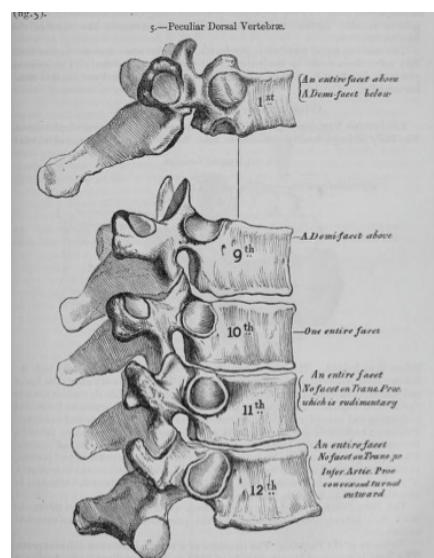


Fig. 2: Illustration of Dorsal Vertebrae from Gray’s *Anatomy*, detailing individual vertebrae and shown as separate from even the spine itself. Henry Gray, *Anatomy, Descriptive and Surgical* (1858).

specificity and difference would reach its mid-century zenith, however, another brand of rudimentary biology was gaining in both popularity and appeal.

Starting in the 1820s, *phrenology* – that is, the study of the “anatomy of the brain,” which combined both “physiological” and “philosophical” methods of analysis and interpretation – gathered steam as a strand of biological science (Spurzheim vi). Though destined for subsequent ignominy, phrenology nevertheless offered an early challenge to “the orthodox religious explanation of the nature of the human constitution” (Russett 17), the sort of orthodoxy which had, heretofore, emphasized notions of universality and natural integration. Where physiology used systems to find interconnectedness, phrenology exposed deep-seated difference and variation. And one of the main determinants of difference, according to the father of phrenology, Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, was sex: “There is a natural difference in the mental dispositions of men and women, not in essence but in quantity and quality, which no education can remove” (97). Spurzheim’s particular qualification here – the idea that such difference may *not* be rectified via education, or presumably any other kind of enculturation or training – exposes a rampant ideology of embeddedness: a belief in the supersession of *given* biological traits over *acquired* social traits defined scientific thought during this period, as it would throughout the remainder of the century. Moreover, though, a belief in the supersession of given biological *difference* over all forms of social intervention – be they educative, legal, or economic – reigned. In other words, it was widely understood that one couldn’t alter or augment one’s biology, even if biology itself might have the power to alter and augment.

This sustained obsession with specificity and difference gave way, in nineteenth-century America, to sincere anxieties surrounding non-specificity and in-betweenness. Science itself, invested as it was in ruthless programs of taxonomy and categorization, could not conceptually accommodate indeterminacy. But why might this have been the case? Consider, for a moment, other turn-of-the-century, paradigmatic shifts dating back to this era. At the close of the eighteenth century, human

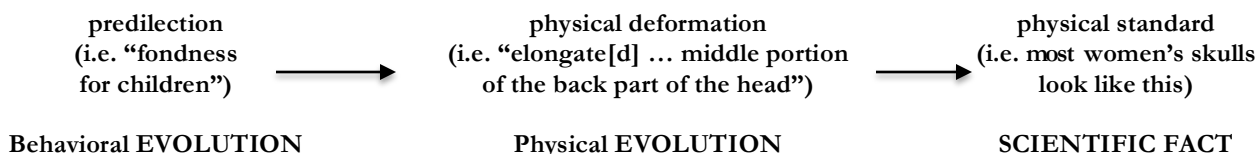
beings had begun to radically redesign their systems of social organization; by the start of the nineteenth, they were *living* within and under those systems. In the United States of America – a striking and obvious example, in this case – divine/inherited rule and monarchy had, in the space of a generation, been swapped for democracy. A democratic society did not only invoke the participation of its citizens, it systemically depended upon it. But who got to participate? Who, furthermore, was a citizen? Certainly not everyone could – or should – be, and thus the science of difference grew out of a need to differentiate the human population for the sake of a functioning democracy. Nina Baym points out that Alexis de Toqueville, even, establishes the necessity of science to democracy in Chapter 10 of his *Democracy in America*, arguing that “the more democratic, enlightened, and free a nation is, the grater will be the number of these interested promoters of scientific genius” (qtd. in Baym, 3). Except that “science,” in this case, was largely concerned with difference, demarcation, and separation – not with inclusion. Women, children, racial minorities, and less developed persons (including “savages,” or those deemed to be lacking in mental functions) were, at the hands of science, proven to be inherently and naturally different so that the democratic process itself might be protected.

Those persons who failed, in one way or another, to physically express their inclusion in one or more of those categories – including “half-breeds,” “half-wits,” and, yes, intersexed persons or “hermaphrodites” – proved especially troublesome to the new, democratic society. How black did you have to be before you weren’t allowed to vote? How female did you have to be before you weren’t allowed to own property? (Charles Meymott Tidy, even, articulates, with abject plainness, the stakes of such questions: “what degree of monstrosity or unshapeliness must exist to prevent legal rights?” [Tidy 275]). Phrenology offered a scientific means by which natural difference – on the basis of sex or race – may be determined *apart* from obvious physical features (skin color or genitalia) in order to solve such crises of indeterminacy and non-obviousness. The variously sized

lobes and sections of a person's brain indicated a kind of predetermined difference that expressed itself in thoughts and behaviors; thus, according to Spurzheim, women were naturally proven to be "more timid and careful" (199), more inclined to "religious sentiments, love of approbation, adhesiveness, and philoprogenitiveness" (182), less likely to be "quarrelsome and fond of fighting" (185) and less inclined to possess "self-esteem," resulting in "a greater number of men than of women who are alienated by pride" (208). Likewise, O.S. and L.N. Fowler, famous for visualizing the science of phrenology with their famous "phrenology head" sculptures, concur with Spurzheim, and go so far as to suggest that mental differences account for *physical deformations* in the female skull, which should be apparent to any trained phrenologist.

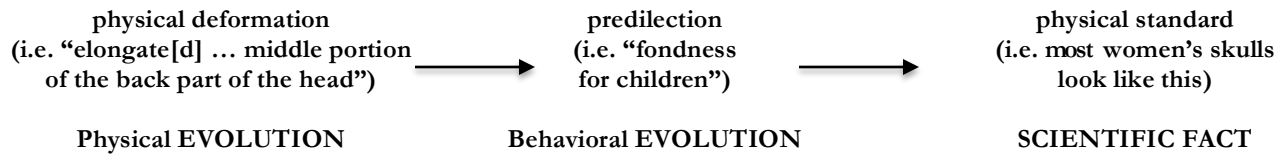
In the female character, fondness for children, and general attachment, are undoubtedly predominating and controlling passions, much stronger, indeed, than the same passions in the male sex; and accordingly, we find the organs of adhesiveness, and, particularly, philoprogenitiveness, so strongly developed in the female head as to elongate, and even deform, the middle portion of the back part of the head, affording a sure sign by which to enable the phrenologist to distinguish the female from the male head. (33)

The Fowlers' logic here states that a predilection, or "fondness," in woman precedes an accompanying physical "deformation" which in turn, over time, becomes standard to the point where men's and women's skulls may be clearly distinguished from each other. If we represent this chain of reason visually, it should look something like this:



But it begs the question: where is that "fondness" itself first born? If it is itself natural – and compelled by the body's natural material forces, either chemical or kinetic – then the appropriately

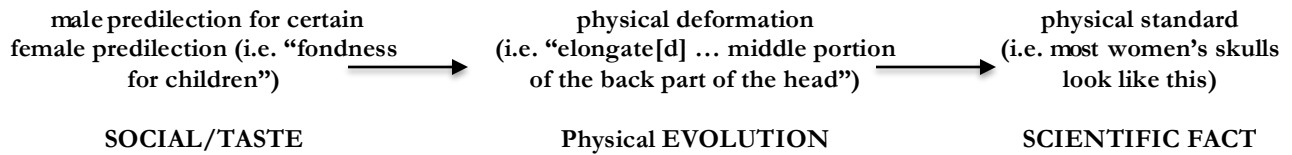
linked skull formation should have, likewise, been there all along, naturally. In fact, the chain should look rather more like this:



If, however, that characteristic is not natural, but perhaps instead the product of ongoing social development, then it would seem that nature had permitted herself to be influenced by non-natural evolutionary processes, to the dismay of Spurzheim’s original point.

This very set of provocations, in fact, all of which revolved around chicken/egg speculations about the origin of human behavior, became the focal point of not just phrenology, but biological science in general in the 1830s and 1840s. For, even more than answers, scientists were trying to rationalize and make sense of their own methodology: on the one hand, it seemed that science should explain mental and behavioral truths with the help of physical and material evidence; on the other hand, though, science sought to justify physical, evolutionary processes on the basis of expressed mental and behavioral trends. This debate would, at the middle point of the century, mutate into discussions of species evolution and the rhetoric of “survival of the fittest.” And these discussions, importantly, *began* with the issue of sex difference: George John Romanes, William Hammond, Herbert Spencer, and G. Stanley Hall would continue to debate the significance of sexual demarcation with relevance to psychology into the 1880s and 90s (Russett 47). Charles Darwin devotes a great majority of his 1871 *The Descent of Man* to the topic of sexual difference, often combining the processes of sexual selection with natural selection, and repeating the (by now very familiar) aphorism that women exhibit “greater tenderness and less selfishness” because “such differences of this nature between man and woman” are themselves the result of “sexual selection” (575). Thus, according to Darwin’s logic, men’s preference for less intelligent women – like men’s

preference for women who exhibit “greater tenderness” – eventually, over many generations, led to women’s brains being both smaller and less developed. As such, Darwin rewrites the equation like this:



The actual order is, in some ways, arbitrary, since in any case during this time, the components stayed the same. What is most important to note is the *evolution* of the science of evolution itself throughout this era: between roughly the 1790s and the 1890s, science had progressed from the belief that men and women were the same, to a belief in their physical differentiation, to a belief in their cognitive and psychological differentiation, to an edict decreeing that they *must always be so*, for the sake of evolutionary stability and the future of the race. What began as intellectual curiosity in the eighteenth century became social mandate in the nineteenth, and what was an intersexed person, a homosexual, or a gender deviant to do?

This ideology of embeddedness, as I have called it, thus both established and legitimized a rigid framework of social standards for sexed behavior. It also kept women and men *physically* separate, on the basis of pre-existing, natural separations. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg explains, “American society [between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries] was characterized in large part by rigid gender-role differentiation within the family and within society as a whole, leading to the emotional segregation of women and men” (155). This “emotional segregation” meant, on the one hand, that men and women were emotionally unavailable to each other, the result of which was that “[same-sex] romantic friendships were frequently supported and paralleled by severe social restrictions on intimacy between young men and young women” (155).⁹ Julia Ward Howe suffered firsthand from the effects of such “emotional segregation” after her 1843 marriage to Samuel

Gridley Howe, for Williams explains that this union was “plagued by a sharp misalignment in their expectations of each other and by Howe’s reluctance or inability to transfer his deepest emotional commitment from his best friend, Charles Sumner, to his wife” (“Introduction” xxi). Rather than with her husband, then, Howe cultivated intense relationships with other women, most of all her sister Louisa. Julia Ward Howe’s dejected feelings towards marriage, confided to Louisa in 1846, communicate her low opinion of the institution itself: “Marriage, like death, is a debt we owe to nature, and though it costs us something to pay it, yet are we more content, and better established in peace when we have paid it” (qtd. in Williams *Hungry Heart*, 74).

Such intimations show Howe’s clear opposition to the state of such all-or-nothing gendered relations; she devised Laurence, and his story in *The Hermaphrodite*, to serve as a fictional conduit between the worlds of male and female. As such, Howe’s Laurence succeeds in distempering both social and scientific boundaries, and transcends Spurzheim’s so-called theory of “natural differences in the mental dispositions of men and women” by simultaneously fusing – via literal embodiment – those incongruent “dispositions” within one person.

The Aesthetic Androgyne

In 1843 – the year that Julia Ward married Samuel Gridley Howe; the year that she compared marriage to *death* in a letter to her sister; the year, likewise, in which she probably began work on *The Hermaphrodite* – Levi Suydam, a resident of Salisbury, Connecticut, was recruited to vote for the Whigs in an upcoming, hotly contested local election. The opposing party, in an instance which is now well-known amongst feminist scholars, challenged Suydam’s eligibility to vote on the grounds that he was reportedly “more female than male.” Two doctors’ examinations – by Drs. Barry and Ticknor – confirmed Suydam’s identity: he was male. Effectively male, at least, for after the election (in which the Whigs won by a single vote), Suydam confessed to those same doctors

that he “regularly menstruated” (qtd. in Epstein 119). A second medical examination resulted in the discovery of a vaginal opening, previously overlooked.

Suydam was a hermaphrodite – a real, living person whose intersexed genitalia baffled his medical examiners. In the end, however, his gender was pronounced as *female*, due not to his having a vaginal opening or regular menstrual periods, but rather because of his

decidedly sanguineous temperament ... he had amorous desires and, at such times, his inclination was for the male sex: his feminine propensities, such as a fondness for gay colors, for pieces of calico, comparing and placing them together, and an aversion for bodily labor, and an inability to perform the same, were remarked by many. (qtd. in Epstein 119)

Suydam was, in short, a hermaphrodite on the basis of his body, and a woman on the basis of his behaviors (romantic preference for men; fashion; disinclination to hard labor). For American medical – and legal – practice in the mid-nineteenth century could not comprehend, let alone allow for, such sexual indeterminacy. In fact, as Anne Fausto-Sterling points out, neither of those institutions (medicine or the law) succeeded in affecting radical progress away from this standpoint, since, as her book *Sexing the Body* (2001) explains, instances of compulsory and often superficial sexual assignment are common even in our contemporary era.¹⁰ Today, these instances are more often accompanied by surgical intervention, hormone therapy, or similar physical treatments, but compel us to conclude that, overall, American society has a long history of attempting to correct natural conditions of sexual indeterminacy on the very basis that such conditions are themselves *unnatural*.

Yet it is highly unlikely that Howe would have herself ever knowingly met an intersexed person, or that she would have even caught wind of the Levi Suydam incident, in spite of that event’s uncanny contemporaneity to her work on the Laurence manuscript. Howe’s “hermaphrodite” – according to a growing body of scholarship on the topic – might descend from a

number of other sources, then. He is, in the eyes of Gary Williams, a natural outgrowth of Howe's anxieties about gendered behavior on the part of both her and her husband; he also points to Howe's early, illuminating experiences with French literature; he inculcates and expresses ancient and classical ideals of beauty and aesthetic perfection; and, I would argue, he responds to a culture of difference and demarcation, upsetting nineteenth-century notions of embeddedness by turning nature and science against one another. For there is no doubt that Laurence is a product of nature: "I am as God made me" is his stern retort to the first person (outside of his family) who discovers his secret, Emma Von P. Overall, though, there is one more attribute that defines Laurence, and sets him apart from the likes of Levi Suydam: he is fictional, and in being fictional, he is permitted to be what he is – a hermaphrodite. Such could not have been the case otherwise.

Of all her sources of inspiration for *The Hermaphrodite* – real and imagined – there are probably two that mattered most to Julia Ward Howe, and therefore two that we should focus on here: first, aesthetic representations of androgyny, most notably the *Borghese Hermaphroditus* ("The Sleeping Hermaphrodite" statue in Rome's Villa Borghese); second, French literature of 1830s and 40s, in which authors like George Sand and Honore de Balzac probed the possibilities of fictional and aesthetic androgyny. With regards to the first of these two points of stimuli, Howe had, during her wedding journey in 1843-44, visited Rome. That city left an indelible mark upon both her artistic career and her personal life; both of her poetry collections feature it, in Williams' words, as a "site of liberation and insight" ("Introduction" xxvii), and she likewise named her first child, Julia Romana Howe, in its honor. During that momentous trip, Howe also visited the famed "Salla dell' Ermaphrodito" – the "Hermaphrodite Room," named for its chief inhabitant, a Roman copy of the Greek *Sleeping Hermaphrodite* sculpture that Howe directly invokes in her novel via a reference to "the lovely Hermaphrodite in the Villa Borghese" (16). This is the *only* scene in the whole of Howe's *The Hermaphrodite* that employs the "h-word" outright, and it is significant that the word originates

neither from Laurence himself nor from an omniscient narrative force, but rather from an anonymous character known only in context as “the Italian.” Trust, the scene suggests, to the aesthetic sensibilities of old-world Europe to recognize Laurence for what he is. “The Italian” additionally describes Laurence as having “beauty of a more vague and undecided character—it is a face and form of strange contradictions—the eye and brow command while the mouth persuades” (16). This last observation, in which a “command[ing] brow” meets with a “persua[sive] mouth,” subtly fuses, in precisely the terms of vulgar anatomy and the nineteenth-century “science of difference,” a latent sexual ambiguity in Laurence’s face, even. This description, for all its reference to the classical sculpture in the Villa Borghese, rejects classical aestheticism and, rather, dissociates the two organs in question – eye and the mouth – in a manner that recalls Gray’s *Anatomy* and its reluctance to see the spine for the individual vertebrae, so to speak. The result is that, with Laurence, individual organs are individually sexed; the eye which “commands” is male, while the mouth that persuades is “female”.¹¹ This is the work of a popular, scientific consciousness acting upon classical



Fig. 3: Left: close-up of a Roman copy of the *Borghese Hermaphroditus* (discovered 1880), in the Museo Palazzo Massimo Alle Terme, Rome. Right: the first *Borghese Hermaphroditus* (discovered 1608), originally part of the “Salla dell’ Emaphrodito,” and now ensconced in the Louvre. The later Roman version of the statue exhibits the “blended features” similar to those described in Howe’s novel, including a stronger, aquiline nose, and a diminished, rounded (read: “feminine”) mouth.¹²

standards of beauty. For it's clear that the *Borghese Hermaphroditus* statue (see Fig. 3) is an attempt, first and foremost, to unify and blend such features in a manner which, instead of highlighting and atomizing difference, rather seeks a higher, more ideal aesthetic standard.

This attempt to realize harmonious, ideal beauty in representational form – however fictional that representation might likewise be – intrigued Howe. She saw her Laurence as a thing of essential and natural beauty; this much is obvious in Laurence's first-person thoughts on the subject, for instance when he remarks that "Strange to say, nature had endowed me with rare beauty. I grew tall and slender, my limbs were finely moulded [sic], and my head might have been cited as a perfect model of classic grace" (4). Laurence is, in many ways, a statue, though naturally hewn, and like a statue, he proceeds through the pages of *The Hermaphrodite* with what strikes us as both immortal and superhuman agency. He does not, for example, age in any obvious ways, but remains essentially "beautiful" at each stage of his life. After entering into willful confinement in a secluded woodland hermitage (in which, coincidentally, there is a chapel containing a sculpture "describing the head and bust of a female figure ... delicately chiseled" [38]), he devotes himself to prayer and meditation. He awakes from a stupor some several months later, spread prostrate on the chapel's marble floor and "incapable of speech or motion" – the unwitting subject of a young man's (Roland) voyeuristic gaze (49). And even as Laurence lies dying at the conclusion of the novel, he is simultaneously alive and alert, able to sense and report upon his death, as though imbued with supernatural powers: "I was ... laid in my coffin, with my passive hands crossed on my bosom" (198). The effect of his death is, in the end, likewise statuesque and aesthetic. As the *Borghese Hermaphroditus* reclines splendidly on a buttoned cushion, so too does Laurence lie "passive[ly]" in his coffin, an object destined to be looked at.

Rajeshwari S. Vallury, drawing from the work of A.J.L. Busst and his iconic "The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century" (1967), explains the degree to which the androgyne /

hermaphrodite is “a symbol of the Romantic aesthetic, s/he embodies the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, the ideal and the real. The androgyne represents the duality of the artist caught between opposing tendencies that he has to resolve.” Even more compellingly, though, Vallury argues that the hermaphrodite “is a reminder of the fall from androgynous unity *into the world of sexual division*, it is a figure that evokes the nostalgia for lost perfection” (158, emphasis added). Or, in other words, the hermaphrodite – the *fictional* and *aesthetic* hermaphrodite, that is – recuperates visions of an idealized genealogy of harmonious artistry. In the early part of the nineteenth century (especially in Europe, where society was more sincerely caught in the throes of Romanticism), the aesthetic androgyne was a weapon to be used against science and its crude fascination with anatomical division and biological difference. Howe’s novel suggests, at least cursorily, that this may have likewise been the case in the United States, except Americans lacked an accessible legacy of androgyny in art. Any latent strains of “nostalgia,” then, had to be satisfied via encounters with European artistic traditions.

It must be emphasized, though, that such was only the case with fictional hermaphrodites; *real*, living hermaphrodites were, during this exact same period, subject to intense social scrutiny, ostracism, and effective banishment. Daniel E. Williams, for example, points to the example of Christopher Plummer who, in 1818, publicly declared to the American public that he was “no hermaphrodite” via a self-published pamphlet. That publication, called *A Looking Glass for Lovers of Strong Drink & Another Looking Glass for a Persecuted Saint: or, Jonathan Plummer, No Hermaphrodite* (1818), is, as Williams notes, “as strange as its title” (“Reckoned” 149), as was its author. Plummer was an itinerant traveler who likewise styled himself as a poet, lecturer, and preacher, and his broadside publications, like the *Looking Glass* pamphlet, blended original poetry with sermons decrying the evils of alcohol and other brands of sin. His itinerancy, though, combined with his strange attitudes, and strong opinions, earned him a castigatory label: “hermaphrodite.” Plummer

argues against this unjust title, however, and devotes a sizeable portion of his *Looking Glass* pamphlet to defying rumors on the subject. “In regard to one point,” he writes, “that of being called an Hermaphrodite, as I am an old bachelor, endeavoring to lead an honest life, and never proved my manhood, by being forced to marry, or pay for a bastard, it seems proper to say a few words” (qtd. Williams “Reckoned,” 150). Plummer then continues to explain that (in a move that seems to recall the Levi Suydam case) he opted to be examined by a medical professional, which he deemed “the most decent, easy, and proper way” of confirming his “manhood” (short of exposing himself, which he apparently also considered doing) (150). The result of this examination by Dr. Israel Gale of Newtown, New Hampshire is that medical practitioner’s report, excerpted in Plummer’s *Looking Glass*:

A lie having got into circulation, concerning Jonathan Plummer, the pedlar, and poet, much like the following one, viz. “He’s an Hermaphrodite:” this may certify, that I being a physician, have inspected the said Plummer, and found him to be truly and properly, a man. (Gale qtd. in Williams “Reckoned,” 150)

Of course, a variety of aforementioned examples of existing hermaphroditism, and their attendant medical “diagnoses,” serve to show that we can hardly take Dr. Gale at his word on the issue. Again, we must remember that the medical profession could not always be certain that it was looking at a hermaphrodite, even as late as the 1930s. Dr. Gale’s “certification” of Jonathan Plummer in 1818 was, therefore, most likely reached with the help of guesswork and extrapolation. For, as Russett additionally explains, this was par for the course in nineteenth-century medical work, and “scientists rel[ie]d] for the most part not on clinical results or laboratory evidence but on common knowledge and the obiter dicta of their predecessors ... some scientists became masters of extrapolation” (11). But was Jonathan Plummer himself intersexed? Perhaps; it’s impossible now to say. It is crucial, however, to consider the grounds by which he was suspected of being so: his itinerancy and

homelessness;¹³ his lack of obvious offspring, let alone his lack of a spouse; his apparent disinterest in the opposite sex; and, finally, his “rail[ing] against pleasure that he can’t enjoy” (qtd. Williams “Reckoned,” 150). The criteria is about as sound as that used to certify Levi Suydam as a woman a few decades later.

Having been thus rejected by the social world around him, Plummer devoted himself to living the life of a “persecuted saint,” and following a “blessed way” that included poverty, solitude, and celibacy. “The great contempt with which I have been treated,” he writes, “is ... altogether sufficient to make me relish a single rather than a married life” (qtd. in Williams “Reckoned,” 150-151). Here, we find no trace of the aesthetic androgyne; Plummer’s society was not moved to nostalgia for a more perfect, idealized past in the living figure of a hermaphrodite. Rather, they saw Plummer as a strange and objectionable creature who was – regardless of biological circumstance – detestable for his indeterminacy. What’s particularly intriguing about Julia Ward Howe’s hermaphrodite, Laurence, is, by contrast, his ability to function as both the aesthetic androgyne *and* indeterminate outcast, the ideal *and* the real. Throughout *The Hermaphrodite*, Laurence interacts with a variety of characters who, for the most part, may be uniformly grouped according to those polar extremes – that is, according to their interpretations of Laurence as either real or ideal. There are, on the one hand, those who are repelled by Laurence, regardless of their access the “truth” about his body: Laurence’s father, Gigia, Laurence’s collegiate peers, the scholars and clerics at Ronald’s family home, and later, Ronald’s collegiate peers. On the other hand, there are those characters who are drawn unwittingly, often irrationally, towards Laurence, those who are in love with his beauty, and entranced by his appearance and aestheticism: this group includes, chiefly, Ronald and Emma, but also includes Berto, Nina, and Briseida (who remarks that Laurence’s “arms, neck & shoulders are the most beautiful in the world” [194]). These groups together become the source of narrative opposition in *The Hermaphrodite*. Over the course of the novel, they fight to “certify” Laurence – as

Dr. Gale certified Jonathan Plummer, and as Drs. Barry and Ticknor certified Levi Suydam – *not* as male or female, but rather as demonstrably ideal or real, as a perfect, aesthetic object or as a monstrous, unnerving reality.

That is not to say that Laurence's sex is not likewise the subject of debate in *The Hermaphrodite*. For it is; the Italian "Medicus," at the conclusion of the novel, states that he "cannot pronounce Lauren[ce] either man or woman ... but I shall speak most justly if I say he is rather both than neither" (195). Yet the ease with which this fictional medical professional arrives at a satisfactory certification of indeterminacy – and the unfettered *acceptance* with which Berto, Briseida, and Nina greet such indeterminacy – suggests that this matter is, for Howe, neither that important nor that interesting. Indeed, Gary Williams notes that he "found nothing to indicate that Howe was interested in hermaphroditism as a physiological phenomenon ... her response seems to have been to the metaphorical suggestiveness of two sexes joined in a single body" ("Introduction" xl). And though Laurence's fate as a fictional hermaphrodite differs sharply from that of Plummer, Suydam, and countless others, the criteria by which he is judged, in general, does not. Berto remarks that Laurence has "stern notions of duty which bend and fashion his life, instead of living fashioned by it, as it the case with women" (194), but Briseida argues in favor of Laurence's femininity, stating that "her modesty, her purity, her tenderness of heart belong only to woman" (195). Thus duty and responsibility render him male, while "modesty," "purity," and "tenderness" render him simultaneously female – again, this criteria stems from behavioral expectation, not biology. And Howe, it seems, was content that this should be the case since she – like the French writers who so deeply influenced her – was primarily interested in improving upon what she saw as a social wrong, gender inequality. That inequality, Howe believed, was born not from innate biological difference between men and women, but from a dogged social piety that granted unthinking adherence to such beliefs.

Rewriting the Romantic Hermaphrodite: Laurence and “La Zambinella”

In 1833, Julia Ward Howe’s brother, Sam Ward, sat down to catalogue and index his personal library. Sam Ward had spent the last several years traveling extensively throughout Europe; he had, as Gary Williams notes, “drastically overspent his expense account and repeatedly delayed his return, meanwhile enjoying the charms of numerous demimondaines” (“Introduction” xii). After his travels – of which Paris was the crown jewel – Ward returned to New York, to his family, and to his book collection, now greatly expanded as the result of his European experiences. Some of the volumes he had purchased and shipped from France; others he bought later in New York. And while the 1833 catalogue (now housed in the Manuscripts and Rare Books division of the New York Public Library) itself only includes the names of scientific texts, it is a telling document in its omissions. For we now know additionally that, along with science and math books, Sam Ward also brought from Paris a slew of French novels.

Sam and Julia Ward thus alike enjoyed avid educations in French literature, Sam firsthand, and Julia with the help (and advice, it seems) of her brother after his homecoming. They were both irrevocably changed by that exposure, and, much later, Julia Ward wistfully recalled her earliest interactions with French literature, describing how “the very world seemed not the same world after as before” (“Sand” 514). Part of the allure Sam and Julia Ward found in such literature was, to be sure, the result of a broad, vituperative American feeling for it. The *New York Times*, in an 1836 column, proclaimed that “Modern French literature is so atrociously corrupt that, whether its pictures be directly and openly subversive of moral rectitude or only descriptive of abominations which have or have not occurred, it is alike vicious and revolting” (qtd. Williams “Cruellest Enemy” 120). The *Times*’ editor at the time, Horace Greeley, would later distinguish himself in denouncing the Seneca Falls convention and the campaign for women’s suffrage. But while charges of

“corruption” and “moral rectitude” might have steered much of the American public away from French novelists in the 1830s, they only deepened the Ward siblings’ interests in it.

In particular, Sam Ward – and thus Julia as well – was drawn to the novels of two French writers: Georges Sand and Honoré de Balzac. Aware of most Americans’ feelings on the subject, Julia Ward admitted that “We knew our parents would not have us read [Sand], *if they knew*. We knew they were right. Yet we read her at stolen hours, with waning and still entreated light,” and she credited Sand with introducing her young mind to “the world’s great struggle between conservative discipline and revolutionary inspiration” (“Sand” 514). But while much has already been made of the intertextual relationship between George Sand and Howe’s *The Hermaphrodite*, comparably less critical attention has been directed towards Balzac, though it is likewise clear from Howe’s journals and correspondence that he, too, greatly influenced her work on the Laurence manuscript. Balzac, like his other French contemporaries, including Sand, was transfixed by the image of the aesthetic androgyne, even while he styled himself less as an artist than as a “historian.” Busst mines the substance of this transfixion in his reading of Balzac’s *Séraphita* (1834), in which we find a so-called “perfect androgyne,” who embodies bodily harmony and aesthetic ideals. And Marianne Noble furthermore asserts that Howe “most likely read several of the most influential romantic representations of hermaphrodites,” among which she includes *Séraphita*, alongside Gautier’s *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (Noble “Self Erasure” 49). Yet for a more complex rendering of the androgynous nineteenth-century figure – and one less colored by aestheticism and romance – we ought not to look to *Séraphita*, I would argue, but to *Sarrasine*. For *Sarrasine*, written by Balzac four years before *Séraphita*, more closely resembles Howe’s story of Laurence, and thereby draws a more convincing line between *The Hermaphrodite* and French literature of the 1830s.

Sarrasine is a short novella forming part of Balzac’s epic *Comédie Humaine*, and in particular the “Scenes de la Vie Parisienne.” As explained in his 1842 introduction to the overall work, Balzac

was both inspired and informed by the work of prominent scientists of his day, figures like the French naturalist Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, who were devoted to the scientific analysis of natural species. Similarly, Balzac candidly explains in his “Avant-Propos” that he, in turn, understands himself best as an analyst of the “species of man,” “For,” he asks, “does not society modify Man, according to the conditions in which he lives and acts, into men as manifold as the species in Zoology?” (“Author’s Introduction”). This query, of course, recalls our earlier discussion of the “science of difference”; Balzac, certainly, saw himself as likewise invested in the work of scientific differentiation, albeit here between “species” of men. And the most basic source of such differentiation – Balzac’s effective starting place, in fact, in the *Comédie Humaine* – is the sexes, for Balzac’s jests “There may be two perfectly dissimilar beings in one household” (“Author’s Introduction”). In fact, he purports to separate and classify his individual “studies” in the *Comédie Humaine* into three categories: “men, women, and things; that is to say, persons and the material expression of their minds; man, in short, and life,” (“Author’s Introduction”), which suggests that Balzac sees women as distinct from men as they may likewise be from mandolins or spatulas.

It is, of course, crucial, and therefore necessary, that we acknowledge a central difference between Howe’s *The Hermaphrodite* and Balzac’s *Sarrasine*: the first concerns a born hermaphrodite, while the second features a *created* one. Balzac’s “La Zambinella,” who becomes an object of both love and fascination for the young French sculptor Sarrasine, is a castrato. At first taking her for a woman, Sarrasine declares that La Zambinella “does not know the sort of domination to which she is about to become subject” (*Sarrasine*) – that is, he *presumes* a scenario consistent with expectations of gendered behavior. He, the male, will forcefully pursue La Zambinella; she, the female, will meekly assume her role as the “subject” of such pursuit. Within moments of first meeting her face-to-face, Sarrasine likewise “abandon[s] himself to blissful anticipations of marriage with her” (*Sarrasine*). When, however, he discovers the truth, and realizes “what sort of creatures play female

parts within the domains of the Pope,” he recoils in horror and disbelief, obstinately maintaining “It’s a woman ... There’s some secret intrigue beneath all this” (*Sarrasine*).

The comparison between Howe’s hermaphrodite and Balzac’s castrato may appear, at first, as somewhat hasty, but I submit that compelling similarities lie in the authorial fabrication of these two characters. To start, it’s important to note that Balzac’s *La Zambinella* is drawn from life, and thus differs significantly from the long line of “aesthetic androgynes” before him.¹⁴ For as Yvonne Noble explains, in the 1830s, “castrati were still being made and could still be heard performing” (“Castrati” 34). In fact, when Balzac’s narrator, at the end of *Sarrasine*, extolls “the progress made by the civilization of the present day” in assuring Madame de Rochefide that “there are none of those wretched creatures now” (*Sarrasine*), he is irrefutably wrong in doing so. “[I]n 1830, the very year of Balzac’s piece ... Mendelssohn went to the Sistine Chapel particularly to hear its choir’s castrati. It was not until 1870, at the disappearance of the Papal States, that the castration of boys for singing ceased” (Noble “Castrati” 34). The timeliness of Balzac’s castrato thereby marks it as a signifier of real, not imagined, conditions and circumstances, and while *La Zambinella* is certainly an aesthetic figure – he strikes Sarrasine as “the ideal beauty whose perfections he had hitherto sought here and there in nature ... display[ing] ... all those exquisite proportions of the female form” (*Sarrasine*) – he is first, foremost, and finally a *pathetic* one, inspiring pity more than admiration. Though Balzac initially describes him (in jesting tones) as “a vampire, a ghoul, a fictitious man, a sort of Faust or Robin des Bois,” he repeatedly asserts that he “was simply *an old man*” (*Sarrasine*, emphasis original). Balzac insists, in short, on his existence as a *real*, rather than an ideal, figure.

Considerations of the real and ideal are important here, for they likewise establish Julia Ward Howe’s experience with, and investment in, the legacy of the aesthetic androgyne. For we know that Howe saw the statue of the *The Sleeping Hermaphrodite* in the Villa Borghese; likewise, it is entirely probable that, on that same trip to Rome, she encountered real, living castrati, in one way or

another. The chances of her having done so are, at least, far greater than her having encountered the likes of Levi Suydam or Jonathan Plummer. We must therefore consider the possibility that, for Howe, *ideal* androgyny may have come in the form of classical sculpture, and *real* hermaphroditism in the form of Roman castrati. But even more importantly, since the biological conditions of Laurence's hermaphroditism are unknown to us, and unexplained by Howe in *The Hermaphrodite*, he is effectively, and substantially, equal to Balzac's La Zambinella. And our readerly assumptions about these two characters are likewise comparable: we assume, for instance, that castration provides the backstory for La Zambinella, yet we know that, in rare cases, so-called "natural" or "endocrinological castrati" also appeared on the nineteenth-century Roman stage, young men affected by strains of hypogonadism (such as with conditions now known as congenital adrenal hyperplasia [CAH], Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Klinefelter Syndrome, Turner Syndrome, or Kallmann Syndrome). In such cases, congenital variations of bodily hormone levels affect gonadal development; thus, castration wouldn't have been additionally necessary.¹⁵ With La Zambinella and Laurence – both fictional androgynes – we may plausibly suggest that nature might be as likely a culprit as human manipulation. At the very least, we must establish such a spectrum of possibility in considering Howe's intentions in crafting *The Hermaphrodite*, since we cannot now, a hundred and fifty years later, apprehend those intentions with any kind of precision or accuracy.

What's more, we must consider the setting of both of these works of fiction. At the beginning of *The Hermaphrodite*, we are beset, as readers, with both atemporality and non-specificity. We do not, in short, know the date or the place of narrative actions, though references to "lords" and "castles" suggest that the place is not, at any rate, the United States; the setting is, in fact, hazily analogous to that of Balzac's *Séraphita*.¹⁶ Less than half-way through *The Hermaphrodite*, however, the setting changes, and becomes all at once very specific: Rome. In Rome, Laurence's companion is Berto, a Roman nobleman who directs Laurence's education in philosophy and religious thought.

The relationship is, in fact, not unlike the system of noble patronage and protection enjoyed by castrati in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Rome. In *Sarrasine*, La Zambinella is under the “protection” (the conditions of that protection, it is revealed, are both exploitative and restrictive) of Cardinal Cicognara, who at first watches Sarrasine “out of the corner of his eye” and “regard[s] him with great attention” (*Sarrasine*). He later orders three assassins to Sarrasine’s house, and engineers his eventual, violent death – all for the sake of La Zambinella, who is his personal property. The relationship between Berto and Laurence in *The Hermaphrodite* is not, certainly, so harsh in its prohibitions or dictates, yet Berto nonetheless functions as Laurence’s protector and mentor. He is the only character who, up until the final few pages of the novel, has access to the “truth” about Laurence; armed with this information, he directs the course of Laurence’s life, and even compels him to dress as a woman and live in the company of his three sisters while he is himself away from Rome, though purportedly for Laurence’s own benefit and safety. Laurence is an intellectually able figure, yet he takes Berto’s guidance and directives easily, and without opposition, seeing his plan to dress him as a woman as “the best that offered itself, and moreover the easiest of execution,” even while complaining, “oh God! thou hast made me battle my kind” (135). For Laurence’s quarrel is ever with nature and with God, and not with the society that shuns him, or the individuals (like Berto, and like his father) who direct and dictate his movements.

Setting and material qualifications of sex are, therefore, on our side in comparing *Sarrasine* and *The Hermaphrodite*. And if these conditions help to make the case, then a single, pivotal scene in Howe’s novel is itself enough to close it. In Balzac’s novella, Sarrasine learns the truth about La Zambinella while the latter figure is in the midst of singing. At a select, post-performance gathering, Sarrasine first sees La Zambinella “dressed as a man.” In the instant that this “ghastly truth ... f[inds] its way into [Sarrasine’s] mind,” La Zambinella’s “divine voiced faltered. He trembled! ... he stopped in the middle of the aria he was singing and sat down” (*Sarrasine*). La Zambinella “dies” as

the object of Sarrasine's romantic lust in the same instant that Sarrasine's own death is both concocted and assured. Afterwards, though he recovers his composure and finishes the aria, La Zambinella again sits down and refuses to sing anything else, despite the group's entreaties. In *The Hermaphrodite*, Howe replays this general scenario, with marked allusion to Balzac's novella. During a private gathering of the sisters in the Roman "Casa S—", Laurence agrees to sing, choosing "an air from a popular opera," which is followed by a variety of other songs (from the likes of Malibran and Beethoven). The performance, however, culminates in a rendition of a song that Laurence claims to have heard "that very morning, from a mass in the famous side chapel at St. Peter's" (150) – the Sistine Chapel, that is, though Howe is most likely conflating St. Peter's Basilica with the Apostolic Palace, which sits beside it, and to which the Sistine Chapel is attached. We already know that, during this time, castrati were featured amongst the choir in the Sistine Chapel. After Laurence finishes his performance, an anonymous voice exclaims, "It is precisely the voice of Uberto" (150) and this, likewise, is the moment in which Laurence *ceases to exist as a woman* for the group gathered there, including Berto's sisters.

Uberto, it is explained, is "the famous Contraltiste, distinguished by the Pope's especial favor, and the best singer in the choir of the Sistine chapel" (150). Here Howe employs the French word for *contralto*, which designates the low range of female operatic singing. The contralto range is, however, markedly above that of a tenor, and Howe's application of this term to the fictional Uberto identifies him as a castrato. In being so compared, Laurence (who in the guise of a woman is called "Cecilia") is suddenly taken ill. "I could not listen to these words without a discomposure which must have manifested itself by a sudden change of colour and expression," he confesses. He then adds, dramatically, "From that night, I sang no more in Rome" (150). He, like Zambinella, is broken by the truth of his sex; the performance falters, and he resigns himself to sing no more. (Zambinella, for his own part, never "sings" again in the context of Balzac's story, and henceforth reassumes his

role as the “old man” of the narrative’s introductory action; we can assume, from his presence in Paris, that he escaped from Rome and his jealous protector, so the moment of Sarrasine’s revelation is likewise effectively Zambinella’s “last” performance as well).

Throughout this scene, though, Howe shuns the word “castrato” – the more apt term, certainly – with what can only be seen as purposeful avoidance. The question, of course, is why: why would Howe deliberately circumvent a plausible, and historically intelligible, context for our understandings of Laurence? I would like to suggest that the answer might lie in keeping that “spectrum of possibility,” as I previously called it, at play. In comparing Laurence outright to a living castrato, Howe would radically narrow the material conditions of possibility, and plausibility, for her own, fictional hermaphrodite. And what’s more, this scene establishes, I believe, Howe’s having read *Sarrasine*, and Balzac likewise avoids the term “castrato,” or any direct substitute for it, throughout the whole of his novella. The closest we ever come to a direct, categorical (*taxonomical*, even) labeling of La Zambinella is at the close of *Sarrasine*, when the narrator tells Madame de Rochefide “You can conceive now Madame de Lanty’s interest in concealing the source of a fortune which comes –”. He is cut short in the very act of naming; Madame de Rochefide interrupts him, telling him that he has “disgusted [her] with life and passion for a long time to come,” a sentiment which echoes Sarrasine’s earlier avowal to Zambinella that she has shown him “An end of love!” (*Sarrasine*).

The similarities are thus apparent, though there are many characteristics that yet distinguish Howe’s novel from Balzac’s. Both are, in general, tragic stories, and both La Zambinella and Laurence meet with effectively tragic ends, despite living long, essentially full lives. La Zambinella is reduced to the personage of the “old man” who vaguely disgusts all those who come near him; Laurence wanders without love, without family, and without a home, spurned on all sides by the world around him except when shielded by lies and artifice. Like Zambinella, an air of violence haunts his person, and before he dies, he imagines that he is “seized,” and that his “bowels [are]

utterly torn asunder” by an imaginary woman and an imaginary man (196). His body is, in short, a battleground, within which social assumptions of male and femaleness endlessly spar. Yet Balzac and Howe foresaw different ends in their devising of these characters. Balzac sought in *Sarrasine*, as in the rest of the *Comédie Humaine*, to expose the realities – vicious, absurd, and indulgent as they may be – of life during the Bourbon Restoration. Throughout this era (1814-1830), the reinstated Bourbon monarchy became increasingly unpopular with the French citizenry, and Balzac’s *Comédie Humaine* detailed a wave of sustained complaint against France’s ruling class, which would culminate in 1830 with revolution and the instatement of the so-called “July Monarchy.” Julia Ward Howe, on the other hand, did not take issue with her United States government, nor even, it might be said, with her society in general, but rather with a firmly instantiated, though vaguely legitimized, system of social differentiation which established men and women in America as entirely separate beings.

In particular, Howe protested American systems of education that further enacted the rhetoric of difference between boys and girls by insisting upon their separate – and distinctly *unequal* – education. In *The Hermaphrodite*, Laurence, having been reared as male, receives a generous and extensive education; in Rome, however, he encounters Berto’s sisters, who are intelligent despite their lack of formal training and education. This provokes a conversation between Berto and Laurence, in which Berto asserts that women

are educated rather to triviality and routine than to strength and virtue – they are taught to appeal to our indulgence, not to command our esteem. All things run easily to extremes, in their excitable natures, and as one sees their piety become superstition, and their learning, pedantry, so in society their love of approbation becomes outrageous vanity, and their coquetry something for which I can scarce find a name which would be at once true and decent. (99)

Berto's point – that estimable, learned qualities in men are transformed into excess and incoherence in women – is a crucial one for Howe. For Howe suffered in being an intelligent woman who, nonetheless, and was barred from formal channels of both education and intellectual production. Berto's contention that laudable talents in men translate to objectionable qualities in women registers some of her bitterness in being thus thwarted intellectually; while her comparably less talented brother Sam gallivanted about Europe, Julia consigned herself to marriage and a life of housewifery that hardly suited her. As Berto illustrates, in women, "piety" translates to superstition; "learning" translates to pedantry; and "love of approbation" becomes vanity. And it is furthermore no accident that the language used by Berto here precisely recalls that used by leading phrenologists in the 1830s, just prior to Howe's writing of *The Hermaphrodite*. If we recall Spurzheim's 1828 observation that women are more prone to "religious sentiments, love of approbation, adhesiveness, and philoprogenitiveness" (182), we may, perhaps, glimpse the antecedents of Howe's thinking on this topic.

Except that Berto, while he may mimic the logic of phrenology, does not attribute these stalwart characteristics of femininity to *biological* processes and anatomical evolution, but rather to *education*, and to a myopic social governance of women's schooling. Berto tells Laurence that he must study women in order to assess "their high capacities, and to appreciate the wrong done them by education and position" (99).¹⁷ Here, Howe is responding to the anxieties of her time, and anticipating those that are still to come. For thirty years after *The Hermaphrodite*, in the 1870s, American social critics and champions would erupt over the issue of separate education for men and women. In particular, Edward H. Clarke's 1873 work *Sex in Education* helped to establish a popular rhetorical legitimacy for the maintenance of single-sex education in the United States. In *Sex and Education*, Clarke states that education is, in fact, unhealthy for women, and that concentrated study and mental effort diverts "force to the brain" which is otherwise necessary in the "manufacture of

blood, muscle, and nerve, that is, in growth.” He hypothesizes a number of physical results, including women with “monstrous brains and puny bodies . . . weak digestion . . . and constipated bowels” (Clarke 71). Clarke furthermore establishes feminine education *in general* – in “home-life and social life, as well as in school-life” as universally unnatural, and argues (in his notes to the fifth edition of that same work) that “none can doubt which will interfere the most with Nature’s laws – four hours’ dancing or four hours’ studying” (Clarke 2). Clarke additionally warns that “to make boys half-girls, and girls-half boys, can never be the legitimate function of any college” (40), but that such hybridizing will necessarily be the result of coeducational practices in America. Julia Ward Howe was, predictably enough, incensed by such claims, and by the science that purported to justify them. In 1874, she penned a detailed, informative response to Clarke’s *Sex in Education*, in which she defended the practices of both educating women and educating them *alongside* men. This work, playfully called *Sex and Education*, appeared almost thirty years after she had begun work on *The Hermaphrodite*, yet clearly exhibits the development and fruition of her thinking on the topic.

In the end, too, it is education and intellect that prevents Laurence from being otherwise categorized as a woman in *The Hermaphrodite*. Nina tells Berto that Laurence cannot be female, for “no woman can reason as she reasons” (189), and Berto likewise says that he sees “nothing distinctly feminine in the intellectual nature of Lauren[ce] . . . he reasons severely and logically, even as a man” (194). Yet the suggestion is that such abilities are not the result of nature or predilection, but rather of training and cultivation. Had Laurence not been forcibly consigned to maleness at birth, and brought up accordingly, with all a high-born man’s opportunities for education, he might have more closely resembled Berto’s sisters, who, androgynous in their own right, “are of natures at once too enlightened and too expansive to doom themselves to the narrow ropewalk of Conventual life” (136). And thus the Medicus’ eventual pronouncement – that Laurence is “rather both than neither”

(195) – grants Laurence the possibility of a large, manifold sexual identity, rather than stripping him of any sexual identity whatsoever.

It is, in many ways, remarkable that Howe should have read any Balzac at all, considering that his *Comédie Humaine* was not translated into English until the 1880s, by which point Howe was in her sixties. And similarly, within our modern critical purview, *Sarrasine* in particular was a seldom-read, seldom-cited piece of Balzac's oeuvre until 1970, when Roland Barthes selected it as the focal point of his now notorious *S/Z*. It is thus in many ways mandatory that I additionally, and finally, engage *that* text in my analysis of Howe's novel. For it seems that, for Barthes, *antithesis* is key; antithesis has, Barthes argues, the ability to "consecrate (and domesticate)," and also to "separate[] for eternity; it thus refers to a nature of opposites, and this nature is untamed" (27). In particular, Barthes is drawn to Balzac's *Sarrasine* because it uses antithesis not only as a rhetorical device but as a *venue* for its narrative – as an effective starting place for human enterprise and action. As he puts it, "antithesis is the battle between two plenitudes set ritually face to face like two fully armed warriors; the Antithesis is the figure of the *given* opposition, eternal, eternally recurrent: the figure of the inexpiable," and Barthes provides a list of examples of such antithesis apparent even in the first few paragraphs of *Sarrasine*. There is, for example, the antithesis between the frozen, winter garden outside and the warm, cheery salon within; there is likewise the old, decrepit man (La Zambinella) and the young, lovely Madame de Rochefide. And in both of these cases, there are forces of mediation at play, for the narrator sits in an alcove between the outer elements and the inner salon, and likewise sits between La Zambinella and Madame de Rochefide. Such "[m]ediation," Barthes says, "upsets the rhetorical – or paradigmatic – harmony of the Antithesis" (28).

Barthes has, at first, very little to say about other, glaringly apparent forces of "antithesis" in *Sarrasine*; he does not mention the fact that La Zambinella is herself a venue for antithetical conflict, in appearing at once as both male and female to the world around her. But I would argue that this is

precisely the way in which Julia Ward Howe likely viewed the statue of *The Sleeping Hermaphrodite*, the androgynous figures peopling the literature of Balzac and Sand, and yes, her own Laurence as well. It is evident that, like Balzac, she was interested in probing both the boundaries and possibilities of antithesis, and that she constructed a central figure who might mediate between, and thereby transgress, the poles of both real and imagined antithesis. Here, though, Howe and Barthes diverge, for Barthes stubbornly refuses to entertain instances of paradigmatic mediation, even after having introduced the very possibility of such rhetorical negotiation. “At first glance,” Barthes claims, “*Sarrasine* sets forth a complete structure of the sexes (two opposing terms, a mixed and a neuter)” (28), thus establishing even androgyny as a sexually antithetical force, rather than a mediating one. Along these lines, Barthes constructs an absurd matrix of desire / power relations in *Sarrasine*, all of which revolve (not surprisingly given the critical currents of 1970s scholarship) around the *phallus*. According to Barthes, access to and desire for the phallus creates four distinct groups in Balzac’s novel: there are men (who want “to be it [the phallus]”), women (who want “to have it”), androgynous characters (who want “to have it but do not want “to be it”), and there is the castrated figure, La Zambinella (who neither desires to “have it” nor to “be it”) (35).

This schema does not, however, get us very far, and Barthes further simplifies the forces of “antithesis” in *Sarrasine* thus: “the symbolic field is not that of the biological sexes; it is that of castration: of *castrating/castrated*, *active/passive*. It is in this field, and not in that of the biological sexes, that the characters in the story are pertinently distributed” (36). Turns out, we weren’t talking about sex at all, but about phallogentric power relations, which Barthes then disingenuously labels as warring “camps” – *camps* belonging to men and women, that is. In the end, *sex* for Barthes, which was not biological sex at all but actually a system of symbolic antithesis related to phallic power, becomes *gender*, as reconstructed through the purview of biological sex. This seemingly bewildering system of circular logic lands us, finally, with a “women’s camp” and a “men’s camp” (37) in

Sarrasine, antithetical entities which Barthes sees, to recall his earlier thoughts on antithesis, as “two plenitudes set ritually face to face like two fully armed warriors,” as “eternal, eternally recurrent” (27). Characterizing gender differentiation in this way – as “antithetical,” as “war[ring],” and as “eternal” – returns us to the logic of phrenology and the science of difference: it’s the 1830s all over again, it seems (even though it’s actually 1970).

Barthes attempts, at first, to problematize the position of La Zambinella, the castrato. “The old man is a castrato and the castrato is outside the sexes” (46) Barthes says, and this deduction seems to establish Balzac’s desire to determine such a figure as the focal point of his narrative in *Sarrasine*. Except Barthes, in being wedded to an ideology of eternity, antithesis, and differentiation, cannot stomach such indeterminacy. In discussing Balzac’s rhetorical use of “lies” in *Sarrasine*, Barthes offers this blunt and simplistic reading of the text: “(29) *It was a man*. * The old man, in fact, is not a man; here, the discourse is misleading the reader” (41). To emphatically argue that La Zambinella is, in fact, “not a man” on account of his castration – and to otherwise refuse to qualify or complicate this statement – is to privilege a gross, vulgarly biological rendering of sexual opposition, one that lamentably recalls the logic of nineteenth-century science and natural differentiation. It has, on the whole, the effect of making La Zambinella appear additionally devoid – additionally castrated, even. La Zambinella is not a man, yet he may never be a woman, either. Yvonne Noble observes Barthes’ efforts to this end, and states that “[Barthes] intensifies the force of the gendered polarities,” which is certainly true enough. Noble furthermore asserts, however, that Barthes “draws attention further by applying a Freudian grid that discounts entirely the sexes Balzac assigns to his characters” (29), which is in itself certainly not true. Rather, I argue, Barthes appears to dispense with such categories only to later turn and rely on them, and on a kind of defeatist, essentialist logic of gender and biological difference. La Zambinella is “not a man” for one reason, and one reason alone: he lacks a penis. In the first part of the nineteenth century, such base logic, it

turned out, was not enough to definitively account for people like Levi Suydam or Jonathan Plummer; a hundred fifty years later, it likewise does not, and should not (to recall Fausto-Sterling), suffice.

Barthes sees La Zambinella as living “outside the sexes,” yet this does not prevent him from reaching for the familiar yard stick of sexual difference in his reading of *Sarrasine*. In fact, it is my opinion that Balzac’s La Zambinella exists too entirely within the sexes; he functions as ostensibly female until the moment of Sarrasine’s revelation, after which he function as *thoroughly* male. He is from that point on simply “the old man,” and never again assumes his feminine identity. He goes on, in fact, to occupy an inarguably male role, that of supreme patriarch: it is his fortune which establishes the Lanty family; it is he who compels their care and concern, for they owe him everything. What is then most interesting, and most important, about Julia Ward Howe’s *The Hermaphrodite* is, perhaps, not to be found in what it borrows from Balzac, but in what it chooses to dispense with or ignore. Laurence, in contrast to La Zambinella, lives neither “inside” nor “outside” the sexes, but as a constant and committed conduit between them. He is, in fact, not unlike Virginia Woolf’s Orlando, who in her novel of the same name moves effortlessly back and forth between the sexes – effortless, that is, save for when social restrictions limit and problematize such hypothetical movement, as when Orlando loses his ancestral estate after becoming a woman. Laurence, similarly, does not *occupy* sexual categories so much as don or trade them: when he dresses and acts as a man, few question that he is one; when he dresses and acts like a woman, the same is likewise true. It is when he willingly expresses or exposes the facts of his sexual indeterminacy that problems arise.

Women, Education, and the Threat of Hermaphroditism

Julia Ward Howe’s husband, Samuel Gridley Howe, was a medical doctor. In *The Hermaphrodite*, she channeled her frustration and anger for a loveless, joyless marriage, and ensconced

these feelings in the rhetoric of indeterminacy and sexual ambiguity. Through her main character, Laurence, she worked to probe and scrutinize human understandings of gender and natural differentiation between the sexes. In doing so, she also sought to place herself beyond the marriage contract that was to define her life and person, and simultaneously, beyond the decrees of science and medicine. As Williams and Bergland explain, ““The manuscript resists the medicalization of sex, just as it refuses any authoritative singular interpretation ... the manuscript that survived is unfinished in every way. Like its narrator, it resists categorization and even pushes back against coherence” (Williams and Bergland “Introduction,” 10). The remnants of Howe’s lost Laurence manuscript invite more questions than answers. To begin, for instance, we have to wonder what she might have intended to call it, for *The Hermaphrodite*, Williams explains, was the title lent to it by its first publisher, The University of Nebraska Press, and was likely designed to attract attention and incite critical curiosity. To this end, that effort has been successful.

But Howe’s manuscript also precludes an era of American female literary production, and anticipates an array of social challenges that sought to prevent women from becoming authors and, later on, citizens as well. “Howe grew to repudiate an other-oriented state of womanly existence such as her friend and mentor [Margaret] Fuller had deplored,” notes Marianne Noble. “[Howe’s] early writings, such as the poem ‘Woman’ and *The Hermaphrodite*, reveal an effort to articulate a woman-centered consciousness such as would be typical of the ‘female’ phase of women’s literary development” (49). Insofar as Howe was a woman, and a woman who dared to write, this is certainly the case, and *The Hermaphrodite* antedates a decade of thriving female authorship, later dubbed (dismissively, as it happens, by Fred Lewis Pattee) “The Feminine Fifties.” Yet Howe’s novel is, to a great extent, poignantly different from most of the work produced during this notorious period; it does not employ the kind of cut-and-dried sentiment – rife with implausibility,

emotional decadence, and lower-case ‘r’ romance – which established writers like E.D.E.N Southworth.

Indeed, *another* brand of female literary production better exemplifies the sort of “woman-centered consciousness” which would take root (though hardly to the degree of becoming “typical”) in the so-called “Feminine Fifties.” In 1854, Fanny Fern – this was the self-consciously demonstrative pseudonym used by the author Sara Payton Willis – published her first novel, *Ruth Hall*, offering a veiled memoir of her slow but eventual success as a female author and popular newspaper columnist. Fern was, as Joyce W. Warren explains, “out of place in nineteenth-century America,” and in an era in which “the ‘cult of the lady’ urged women to be gentle, feminine, and submissive” (ix). She was, then, in no way “typical,” but part of a emergent tide of female assertiveness that grew out of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and the formal “start” of women’s suffrage, and was furthermore fueled by female authors like Howe, whose first collection of poetry appeared in the same year as *Ruth Hall*. And it is no wonder that Howe opted to conceal her identity and her writing, for Fanny Fern was notoriously lampooned by the popular press for which she herself wrote: as she satirizes in her 1852 article “A Practical Blue-Stocking,” woman writers were collectively regarded in terms of “inky fingers, frowzled hair, rumpled dress, and slipshod heels” (“Practical” 232).¹⁸

Accordingly, Fern, and the additional few who might have been like her, fell prey to the same charges of “hermaphroditism” previously discussed here in connection to *The New York Times*’ “Gossip Aloft” column. They were unnatural; they wanted to be like men, and the logic of science (to recall Spurzheim) suggested that they may in fact *become* biologically more like men if they continued to think and to learn. Two years after *The New York Times* warned its readers to “beware the hermaphrodites, the Female Politicians, Woman’s Rights’ Lecturers, who (for their breasts contain curdled milk), belong rather to woman than to man, but are a most unnatural and unsexual

blending of the two,” it reviewed Fanny Fern’s *Ruth Hall*, intoning an analogous sense of fear for the sanctity of natural sex roles.

If Fanny Fern were a man, –a man who believed that the gratification of revenge were a proper occupation for one who has been abused, and that those who have injured us are fair game, *Ruth Hall* would be a natural and excusable book. But we confess that we cannot understand how a delicate, suffering woman can ... [be] so remorseless[.]. We cannot think so highly of an author’s womanly gentleness ... Herein the book *is not true to nature*.

(“Notices”, emphasis added)

It is a bizarre charge: if Fanny Fern (the real, living author) were a man, than Ruth Hall (the fictional character based on that real, living author) would be “excusable”. But because Fanny Fern is a woman, Ruth Hall is not a “natural” or believable character; she is “not true to nature”; she is, well, not convincingly female, and more closely resembles the product of a *male* imagination. This line of thinking is stamped with the logic and anxiety of hermaphroditism. The reviewer is uncomfortable with Ruth Hall’s inability to appear real to him, and with Fanny Fern’s unwillingness to make her real. He thus concludes that neither is, in effect, *real*, and that both the character Ruth Hall and the writer Fanny Fern must be incompletely female, marked and tainted by unnatural “maleness” in one way or another.

During this time, however, there was ample corroboration for the “hermaphrodite” theory of educated and/or productive women, and it was coming from all sides. Various brands of Christianity objected to educating women (the *New York Times* reviewer responding to Fern’s novel additionally complains that it “stabs the Church, and is likewise calculated to bring its institutions into disrepute” [“Notices”]). And widely esteemed men of science, like Dr. S. Weir Mitchell in America and Charles Darwin in England, theorized both the causes and results of such hermaphroditism. In the 1860s, Russett explains, Darwin was at work on a provisional theory called

“pangenesis”; he hypothesized that “gemmules,” particles rejected by certain cells and left floating throughout the body, might come to rest in the sexual organs. This process might explain, among other things, animals born with both female and male characteristics, be those characteristics *behavioral* or *physical*, since these ideas were closely, if spuriously, linked for Darwin at this time (Russett 64-65). Via such logic, Fanny Fern’s desire to write and work for newspapers, or Howe’s desire to write and publish poetry, might be explained naturally: these behaviors might be the result of misplaced gemmules. And this, certainly, was a problem, since those behavioral traits might be furthermore passed on to a woman’s offspring, and over time might become more common. Dr. Weir Mitchell, quoted in Clarke’s *Sex in Education*, similarly maintains that educating girls during their “sexual epoch” – that is, between the ages of fifteen and twenty – interferes with natural processes of bodily development. “To-day the American woman is ... physically unfit for her duties as woman, and is, perhaps, of all civilized females ... not fairly up to what Nature asks of her as wife and mother” (Clarke 31). And Clarke, for his own part, studied women suffering from dysmenorrhea or amenorrhea and believed that such conditions were linked to overstimulation of the brain. That overstimulation would in turn actually *reroute* supplies of blood otherwise used to fuel sexual organs, and women thus afflicted could die or become hermaphrodites (“amenes” as he call them, meaning “non-menstruating”) (Clarke 97). As such, society ought to discourage such behavior, and ought to divert women’s interests in education and intellectual equality: the future of the race might depend on it.

Fanny Fern, over the course of her career, weathered the effects of such systematic discouragement with courage and obstinacy. And she was not alone in doing so; Julia Ward Howe’s *Passion-Flowers* received its own measure of critical rebuke, and as with Fern, such criticisms were largely directed towards the author, less than the work itself. Nathaniel Hawthorne admired the book, but remarked to his publisher, William D. Ticknor, that “the devil must be in the woman,”

since her poetry shamelessly showcased “a whole history of domestic unhappiness” (qtd. in Williams *Hungry Heart*, 2). Both Fern and Howe, it seems, were guilty of challenging hegemonic forces that rather preferred that women remain uneducated, unproductive, and bound in both mind and body to their primary role as “wife and mother”. What’s more, though, the institutions of science and medicine furthermore decreed that any failure to do so on a woman’s part might spell the eventual downfall of the human race; this crisis of feminine evolution gained strength, speed, and severity throughout the latter portion of the century. It would culminate, in the 1890s, with the medical profession’s obsessive interest in female hysteria, and works by female authors like Charlotte Perkins-Gilman’s, whose notorious 1892 short story, “The Yellow Wall-Paper,” fixes doctors like S. Weir Mitchell in its fictional and rhetorical crosshairs.

Interestingly, the 1890s also saw phrenology – the popularity of which was now waning among the scientific community – secure a new ally: women. Jessie Fowler, daughter of Lorenzo (the “L.N.” of the Fowler brand), rare for being a female physician long before most medical schools had opened their doors to women, was a committed phrenologist, and in the early 1890s, self-published a book on the topic. *Men and Women Compared; Or, Their Mental and Physical Differences Considered* sought to lend a feminine gloss to the science and logic of phrenological difference, bolstered by the cause of women’s suffrage which, after a decades-long lapse surrounding the civil war, had regained its momentum by the end of the century. Russett explains that phrenology, in the midst of its “last gasp” efforts of the 1890s, became a science of progressivism, and was linked to social reform movements, for it did not advocate “separate spheres” – of work, of culture, of economy – for men and women, despite espousing the belief that they were nonetheless inherently different (Russett 21).

Indeed, the “separate sphere” theory had become, in the course of roughly fifty years, a kind of firmly instantiated social fallout stemming from the early nineteenth-century fixation on the

“science of difference”. In the 1840s, there were relatively few active female literary producers; it is entirely understandable that Howe might have felt thus discouraged, and abandoned her Laurence manuscript to feelings of hopelessness. *The Hermaphrodite* logs this frustration, and survives today as a relic of Howe’s thwarted intellectual efforts. But Howe and Fanny Fern, branded “hermaphrodites” by a critical establishment who failed to account for the possibility of female literary production, and furthermore legitimized as such by the spurious working of a puerile “science of difference,” opened the floodgates. By the mid-1850s, the market was engulfed in a tide of female authorship, and the sale of sentimental novels dominated American literary culture, if not critical opinion. A decade later, though – as I shall henceforth discuss in Chapter Two – American literary critics had devised a means of both dismissing and dispensing with female literary production altogether: they would brand it, label it, and denounce it as sentimental trash,¹⁹ for that was all women were capable of producing anyway. For while phrenology may have been losing steam and institutional weight by the 1870s, it left in its wake a massively inculcated logic of mental difference that, in Russett’s words, saw emotion “as women’s element. If men characteristically thought, women characteristically felt” (42-43). Thus expectations of gender, in the 1860s, became expectations of genre. The result of this interplay of taxonomical definition (gender/genre) is a subtenant ideology of difference – a residue of rudimentary scientific thinking and suppositions about sex and nature, guiding and defining the machinations of literature and culture, and extending from the nineteenth into the twentieth century.

Chapter Two

An Impossible Woman: the Strange Case of Anne Moncure Crane

“Isn’t there a theory that women forgive injuries, but never ignominies?”

“That’s what the novelists teach, and we bachelors get most of our doctrine about women from them ... We don’t go to nature for our impressions; but neither do the novelists, for that matter.”

William Dean Howells, *A Modern Instance*

On January 30th, 1873, *The Nation* ran a modest, one-paragraph obituary marking the death of a “Mrs. A.M.C. Seemuller,” likely “better known by her maiden name, Anne Moncure Crane, and still better by her title of ‘Author of “Emily Chester”” (“Notes” 75). Haphazardly placed alongside publication announcements, corrections, and similar errata, the entry might be too easily disregarded as marginalia. Its significance, however, lies in the inspection of both text and context: though written on the occasion of Crane’s tragic death at the age of thirty-four, the obituary says very little about the author herself, except through a series of strange and indecorous castigations of her novel, *Emily Chester*, by this point almost a decade old. Statements referring to the “crudity of [Crane’s] book,” demeaned as an “ephemeral success” and, in reality, a matter of “no significance,” suggest that the writer rather seized the moment of Crane’s unfortunate death as an excuse for the kind of public remonstrance that can, in truth, only stem from personal complaint (“Notes” 75). The entry seems, in other words, largely inappropriate given the circumstances of its publication. And though it is unsigned, it is in the larger profile of its author – Henry James, assuredly – that such impropriety may perhaps be best understood.

James’ culpability is a likely conclusion here for a few reasons: first, because he was, during this time a regular contributor to *The Nation*, having had one of his first short stories featured in that magazine’s 1865 inaugural issue; second, because he was, in 1873, its chief literary critic and reviewer, thanks in part to his close relationship with its editor; third, because he had, eight years earlier, written a scathing review of Crane’s *Emily Chester* for the *North American Review*, the theme

and vehemence of which palpably match this anonymous 1873 obituary. Eight years, it seems, had not sufficiently tempered the young James' feelings for Crane's first novel. James himself, it must be understood, was still years away from destined literary prominence (his first "major" novel, *Roderick Hudson*, would not appear until 1875), though he had, by this point, written enough stories, essays, and articles to grant him critical, if not yet creative, notoriety. Yet upon Crane's death, James' obituary – and critic Alfred Habegger additionally supports this attribution²⁰ – smacks too distinctly of sour grapes. Habegger notes that, in the obituary, James writes as though to "publicly drive a stake through her heart," seeing it as "essential that this novelist never rise again" (124). Rather than commenting on the broader scope of Crane's writing career and mentioning her two additional novels, and rather than surveying the many short stories and essays she published over the years through the likes of *The Galaxy* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, James chooses to attack her very popular first novel, *Emily Chester*, seemingly for the very sake of its popularity. The obituary levies repeated insults along these lines, admitting first that "Miss Crane's book was ... widely read," but then dismisses the novel's readership in contending that "It will not now be recollected very well by many people, as its success was in reality an ephemeral success, and the reputation it procured for its author fleeting" ("Notes" 75). Henry James' assertions here are correct from a contemporary viewpoint, now that time and critical intervention have all but wiped Crane from the canonical map. They were, however, emphatically wrong when he wrote them in 1873, and he of all people must have known it.

Anne Moncure Crane's *Emily Chester* appeared in 1864, the product of a whim: the author, along with two other female friends, was believed to have entered, three years earlier, into a competition to see who could write the best novel. All three succeeded in having their work published, though Crane's *Emily Chester* far outshined her colleagues' efforts. *Emily Chester* sold extremely well, and was printed in ten subsequent editions before 1880. It was additionally published

in Europe through agreements with its American publisher, Ticknor and Fields, which maintained connections with international publishing houses through its association with James R. Osgood of Houghton, Osgood, and Company (later, Houghton, Mifflin and Company) (Winship). Sheldon Novick, in his *Henry James: The Young Master* (1996), refers to *Emily Chester* as “one of the first widely popular novels by an American author,” (100) a fact which might be evident in its imprint alone, since “the Ticknor & Fields imprint appeared on the title page of every book of importance written by an American” during this period, in James’ own opinion (James, ctd. in Novick, 101). Stage versions, even, of *Emily Chester* appeared throughout the 1860s and 1870s.

Given such evidence, the extent of Crane’s literary popularity, even at the time of her death, is assured; James’ comments to the contrary, therefore, far from *reminding* readers of this “ephemeral” text and its “fleeting[ly]” famous author, appear intent upon dismantling that popularity. The question, of course, is why: why did Henry James, assigned to craft an obituary for Crane, opt to resuscitate a decade’s worth of bitterness and annoyance instead? In this chapter, I investigate the fantastic, and little-known, controversy between Crane and James with an eye for the stakes of the conflict: James’ writings on Crane reveal a desire to denounce the popular. More importantly, though, they deploy a form of generic critique that seeks to eviscerate Crane’s popularity in particular, and the work of female, proto-realist writers more generally. In James, such denunciation materializes as both horror and idolatry: James abhors popular fiction, yet yearns himself for popularity; James rejects Crane’s novel *Emily Chester*, yet goes on to write a novel which might be its cousin, if not its sister; James denounces sentimentality and “heart-histories,” yet critiques Crane and other female writers of the time for their *failure* to replicate such generic devices in their fiction. It is for this reason that I contend that Henry James – as not only representative, but as arguably *the* representative of late nineteenth-century American literary achievement – must be historically situated in light of conflicts relative to both *gender* and *genre* from this period. James’

success, and Crane's failure, is dialectically bound to such considerations. In the discussion that follows, I locate James' literary legacy within the framework of repudiated, failed female writers from the late nineteenth century, with Crane chief among them, whose radical attempts to revise form and generic expectation might have cost them their canonicity, but significantly directed the tide towards American realism. It is in this same way that the history of realism as a genre is irrefutably bound to the history of women's attempts to *be real*, and to men's desires to see them as anything but.

For What It's Worth

Even more compelling than Henry James' hatred of Crane's *Emily Chester* is, perhaps, his apparent inability to *stop* hating Crane's *Emily Chester*. His 1867 review of her second novel, *Opportunity* (again, the piece is unsigned, but the tone, style, and allusory nature of it all solidly point to James) primarily centers not on this book but, once again, on Crane's earlier novel. The review begins by reminding us that the reviewer found *Emily Chester* "mortally dull," and then proceeds to discuss Crane's newer work only in terms of its being "of the same calibre [sic] of its predecessor." "We are inclined even to place it a degree higher, for the excellent reason that it is not more than half as long," the reviewer adds ("Opportunity" 449). James then attempts to reinforce the "accidental," rather than intrinsic, nature of Crane's literary success, in a manner thoroughly echoed by his 1873 obituary. "An author's first book," he writes, "may easily owe its popularity to some accidental circumstance ... to a coincidence with the public humor or taste at the moment, or to a certain *faux air* of originality and novelty" ("Opportunity" 450). The "faux air" in question here is itself the spirit of fashion, and James famously prided himself on living a resolutely anti-fashionable life (critic Jennifer Fleissner, among others, develops this facet of James' personality in her *Women, Compulsion, and Modernity* [2004]). But, fashion, thankfully, is ever fickle, and James consoles himself here with the belief that public opinion alone can't be counted on to sustain an author's undeserving

success beyond an “accidental” first best-seller; the public is clever, and it will, given a second chance, discover the fraud.

Here again, though, Henry James is wrong, for while *Opportunity* might not have achieved success commensurate with Crane’s first novel, it nevertheless sold well, and was similarly praised. The poet Paul H. Hayne called it “a profound study of character in some of its most unique spiritual and mental manifestations” of which “no tale [that] has recently appeared, North or South ... is so full of rich evidences of genuine psychological power” (Hayne 937). Indeed, Crane, for her own part, likewise enjoyed sustained literary prominence into the 1870s, producing yet another novel *Reginald Archer* (1871), and a regular stream of stories, poems, and travel essays in the meantime. Letters written to her editor William Conant Church at *The Galaxy* (which was only months away from becoming *The Atlantic*) reveal that, by 1869, Crane was paid an average of \$60 for full-length contributions to the magazine – the same price, in fact, as Walt Whitman (Crane letter 13 June 1869; Whitman letter 7 September 1867). And it is here, in the midst of money, value, and exchange, the vulgar trappings of capitalist “worth,” that we may additionally seek out the sources of Henry James’ seemingly irrational hatred of Crane’s work.

In his 1865 review of *Emily Chester*, James devotes both ample space and energy to the idea of “worth”. He labels Crane’s novel “a worthless book; and yet it is decidedly a serious one. Its composition has evidently been a great matter for the author” (“Emily Chester” 37). James’ discussion of “worth” here pursues three lines of thinking: first, it argues that the book is worth~~less~~ – that is, of no great or “true” value – to its readers; second, it argues this in light of the fact that the book has sold extremely well, and is therefore worth a lot to both its publishers and its author; and third, it mockingly critiques the notion that, in writing it, Crane may have labored in what she saw as a worth~~while~~ task. Hence, in this comment, James manages to debunk the book’s use-value, scoff at its exchange-value, and deride its author’s wasted labor, all in one fell swoop. James’ complaint is, in

effect, a charge of *ultimate* worthlessness, since in his eyes, *Emily Chester* fails to legitimize its own worth through each and every mechanism by which, according to Marx, worth may be ascertained. James critique is, in essence, an economic critique, and his ire for Crane's book is economic insofar as it is likewise "social". What's more, though, is that James' inability to drop this line of critique over the course of eight years indicates a kind of awe, if not horror, of the commodity form. Walter Benn Michaels, in his *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism*, famously investigates the ways in which late nineteenth-century naturalist writers wrestled with a similar kind of awe. "The commodity," he explains, is "an example of a thing whose identity involves something more than its physical qualities" (21). Commodities force, according to Michaels, a sense of helpless fascination; as consumers of them, we experience their use and witness their exchangeability. Their "value," however, is nevertheless a mystery to us, alluring in its very ephemerality. The necessity of that mystery is important to consider in connection with James' feelings for Crane's novel *Emily Chester*, because his review of it reveals inasmuch: James experiences the book as "worthless;" he sees that it is exchanged in a way that makes it valuable; this leaves him at a loss for how to logically construct a connection between these two "qualities," to recall Michaels. James is unable, in essence, to understand the book's *identity* as a commodity, and this angers and frustrates him, as we have seen, to the point of near obsession.

It is an obsession which looks, from the outside, something very like a critique of capitalism, for James' narrow-minded frustration seems to make sense once contextualized as a complaint against a system that creates ineffable, "faux" value which is, in fact, *fake* insofar as it remains unattached to solid, material "wealth". This critique recalls, once again, Michaels' jest "What else, for instance, is money, which (as opposed to, say, gold) cannot be reduced to the thing it is made of and still remain the thing it is?" (21). In this way, we glimpse in James a longing for materially ascertained value, a desire for a return to "true" wealth in a way that echoes Michaels' investigations of gold

standard nostalgia during this time. But such frustration, importantly, also compels James to discount Anne Moncure Crane's labor, and this erases much of the anti-capitalist tenor of his critique. When a book is "bad" but nevertheless "clever," James says, there is some consolation in the fact that the author's efforts were not wasted in the pursuit, at least, of cleverness. However, "when a book is destitute of even the excellence of a pleasant style, it is surrounded by an atmosphere of innocence and innocuousness which inspires the justly indignant reviewer with compassion for the hapless adventurer who has nothing to fall back upon" ("Emily Chester" 38). The "innocence and innocuousness" of *Emily Chester* suggests to James failure – the failure to interest, to entertain (with cleverness), even the failure to incite. The result of such failure is not just worthlessness, as previously lamented, but actual *negative* worth. The author's labor has been entirely wasted in the process of production; her work is very simply unjustified by the worth of her product, and as such the product itself represents a kind of *negative value*, a vacuous hole that drains from the value of use, exchange, and labor simultaneously. What may have seemed, then, to at first resemble an interesting, though uncharacteristic, complaint against capitalism (for Henry James would have never ventured thus), reveals itself to be a complaint against a product which fails in its worth to legitimize the capitalist mode of production. James' central grievance here is for the damage wrought *to* capitalism, not by capitalism. (To give James some credit, though, this is one of the craftier critiques one might levy against any product born from the capitalist system, and James' supposed "compassion" for Crane's wasted labor does nothing to alleviate the bitterness of such a rebuke.)

Insofar as James sees Crane as a laborer, though, he does not seem to distinguish her as a female laborer. Her novels, it seems, would be "dull" and "worthless" whether the author were a man or a woman. This is consistent with Gayle Rubin's observation that workers' gendered identities mean little to economic classifications, and that "[i]n Marx's map of the social world,

human beings are workers, peasants, or capitalists; that they are also men and women is not seen as very significant” (83) – probably because there were, at this time, neither the vocabularies nor formal social systems through which to structure conceptualizations of gender within the framework of class. Women, if they worked outside of the domestic sphere in formally remunerative capacities, were hastily branded as “laborers” in the same way as men, if only because social categorizations had not yet caught up to the processes of industrialization. As such, when Henry James refers to Anne Moncure Crane as “the author of ‘Emily Chester,’” it is likely that he thoroughly believes in his own ability to see her in this way, as though free from the ideological forces of gender. It is additionally interesting to note – with deference, perhaps, to what might not be a concrete connection, but which may be seen, in Raymond William’s words, as a “structure of feeling” – that Crane’s second novel *Opportunity*, James’ review of that novel, and Karl Marx’s *Capital: Volume I*, all appear within three months of each other.

Henry James’ feelings for Crane, then, might be more logical than we first thought; at the very least, they fit cozily into a larger context of concern for both value and worth, and a general mistrust of anything that might be deemed “popular”. In denigrating Crane’s *Emily Chester* on the grounds of its falsely inflated “worth,” James may be seen as not only as concurrent with the 1860s critical establishment, but even, perhaps, ahead of his time. Jane P. Tompkins has famously argued the extent to which the “male-dominated scholarly tradition” responsible for “controlling” the nineteenth-century American canon (figures like F.O Matthiessen, Richard Chase, R.W.B. Lewis, and Henry Nash Smith) “prevented even committed feminists from recognizing and asserting the *value* of a powerful and specifically female novelistic tradition” (82, emphasis Tompkins). More than a hundred years after Crane’s death, female scholars would, because of this critical blockade, be faced with the task of reconstructing a lost canon of American women writers. A significant portion of those resurrected would be nineteenth-century women authors “whose names were household

words” during that time, but whose work would continue to be dismissed because of that very quality, because they were marked with the telltale stigmata of popularity (82). James is simply ahead of the game in 1865 when he labels Crane’s *Emily Chester* thus, though it’s interesting to observe, in his review of the novel, how he gropes for the words with which to express this position.

For Tompkins is right, and “everybody know[s that] the classics of American fiction were, with a few exceptions, all *succès d’estime*” (81), especially those born from the great and singular period known by F.O. Matthiessen’s labeling of it as the “American Renaissance”. Yet Henry James, as his biographers point out, was a man terrorized by his own desire to *be popular*. Pierre de Chaignon la Rose, in the preface to his 1921 collection of James’ literary criticism, sensitively admits that “James, despite his present post-humous eminence, was never a ‘popular’ author; and even the most devout Jacobite must admit, albeit with serene tranquility, that he was not a ‘great’ one ...” (vii). Edith Wharton provides further proof of James’ covetous yearnings for popularity, and in her autobiography chronicles his late-life attempts at popular success through playwriting. “James’ interest in the theatre was sustained by the conviction (which it took so many bitter disappointments to eradicate) that he would one day achieve popular success as a playwright.” In spite of those “many disappointments,” Wharton notes that James “was persuaded to the end that his constructive instinct ought to have served in play-building as well as in story-telling” (309). Yet the reality of the situation was decidedly not so, and Wharton touchingly relates more than one anecdote wherein she and James would attend the premier of one of his plays and instantly realize that it was to be both a first and last performance. Wharton’s personal library at her Massachusetts estate, The Mount, contains two first-edition copies of James’ failed *Theatricals* (both the first and second series of these works, published 1894-5): both volumes are still in their dust jackets, their pages uncut and unopened. The fact that these works traveled with her from The Mount in Lenox to her Pavillon Colombe estate outside Paris, and into the hands of a British book-collector for the remainder of the

twentieth century, and were for the most part never opened – by Wharton, or by anyone else – is furthermore indicative of their importance to his oeuvre.²¹ As Wharton explains, “[H]e longed intensely, incurably, for the shouting and the garlands so persistently refused to his great novels” (366) – for the very same popular attention, it seems, enjoyed by authors like Crane, and works like *Emily Chester*.

Seen in this light, the story of James’ rancor for *Emily Chester* and its author is a familiar one: it’s a story of jealousy. The issue itself is much deeper, though, and has to do not only with James’ overestimation of his own faculties, but also with his devotion to genre, and to his fears of a rapidly changing modern world. Today, we read James because his novels embody some of our expectations about era, style, and genre. They do so, however, at the expense of other writers’ efforts to distemper form and generic mandates. Anne Moncure Crane – one of the many female writers in this camp – therefore deserves a little more of our attention. Too, James’ particular arguments with Crane’s text, more than his vague and somewhat categorical objections to its success, warrant additional scrutiny.

That Which is Not Love

In *Emily Chester*, the scene is Baltimore and the year is 1849; the chosen time and place might seem inconsequential to the book’s narrative action, but they are crucial to our wider understandings of Crane, James, and the stylistic currents of literary production in nineteenth-century America. Crane opts to locate her story, interestingly, “between two wars,” as Fred Lewis Pattee contentiously describes the period in his *The Feminine Fifties*, though this refers not, as one might first assume, to the era stretching tenuously between the end of the Mexican-American War and the onset of the Civil War. Those two conflicts, certainly, bracket this period from a more purely historical standpoint, yet Pattee’s “wars” include, more significantly, the one being fought for women’s

suffrage and, alongside it, the one being fought against slavery. It is these “social” wars that, according to Pattee, dominate and define American apprehensions leading up to the Civil War, particularly throughout the 1850s. That Crane should situate her novel in 1849, then – just after the women’s suffrage movement’s “public debut” at Seneca Falls in 1848, and just prior to the period bemoaned by Pattee as corroded by feminine logic and “feeling ... rather than thinking” (4) – sheds light upon some of her motivations in writing *Emily Chester*. The fact that she writes it *in the midst* of the Civil War, and does so from Baltimore, a city precariously perched in the very middle of both Union and Confederate geopolitical skirmishes, intensifies such feelings of liminality and “in-betweenness” in her writing.

Crane understood herself, clearly, as positioned between parameters – geographic parameters, between north and south; historical parameters, between two devastating border-wars; and social parameters, between a progressive push for female power and a surge of female cultural production that championed the traditional virtues of feminine complacency. Accordingly, then, Crane produced a novel beset with anxieties of in-betweenness, descended from a male literary tradition but courting female readership. What’s more is that Crane’s novel additionally rests between generic parameters – somewhere between Hawthorne’s “damned mob of scribbling women,” on the one hand, who peddled sentiment and narcissism in the 1850s, and a nascent spirit of psychological inquiry and literary realism on the other, destined to bear fruit in the 1870s and 1880s.²² The result is that Crane’s novel feels uniformly out of both *place* and *time*, with regards to both its 1849 setting and its 1864 creation. This, however, has long since been a hallmark of the sentimentalist literary tradition, which often relies on mechanisms of displacement, temporal and local, in order to enforce what Lauren Berlant refers to as “universalist rhetoric” (34) – that is, the suggestion that narrative events may be universally real though particularly impossible, achieved largely through the imposition of shared sensation and feeling. Emotional response to sentimentalist

entertainment constitutes *group* response (Berlant even links such indulgence to a concept of mass, nationalized “group therapy” [154]), and the massiveness of that response is therefore able to trump the more particular logics of place and time. The difference with *Emily Chester*, though, is that here, Crane generally eschews such emotional manipulation, and though her novel might feel out of place and time in specific, it adheres entirely to a sense of *era*. The story of Emily Chester would not make sense to us if it took place in another time period, because its narrative anchors on indecision and the experience of in-betweenness – on the allure of dubious, doomed romance, on one hand, and the reality of immutable marital bonds, on the other.

In fact, Crane’s story wholly follows Nina Baym’s “formula” for nineteenth-century women’s fiction,²³ which goes something like this: a young girl, or woman, believes she is taken care of in life; a catastrophe occurs, the result of which is that she learns that she is *not* taken care of; alone, she is forced to make her own way, but remains generous, kind, and helpful to the core, and eventually “wins”. Baym, however, notes that, particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the last stage of this formula changes, and female characters increasingly “lose” where they previously succeeded, and more than often wind up dead. The year 1860, in fact, according to Russel Nye, serves as a turning point in women’s literary production, after which this old “formula” is largely supplanted by a new theme: “the loveless marriage” (Nye 9). Such is the case with Crane’s *Emily Chester*, and likewise with Louisa May Alcott’s *Moods* (published one year after Crane’s novel, in 1865). Mark Twain, even, once noted the similarity between these two works in particular, to the point where he jested that a kind of “mental telepathy” must have been at play between Crane and Alcott (ctd. in Habegger, 21). Whereas Alcott’s heroine in *Moods* makes the wrong choice in marrying, however, Crane’s Emily Chester sees marriage as socially engineered trap, and has no interest in it whatsoever. *Her* mistake is in succumbing to the social pressure to marry anyone at all,

since marriage arrangements in general are, according to Crane, fated for disaster thanks to society's obstinacy in interpreting and maintaining parameters of sexual difference.

Gender categorizations do not function as the hard, material truths of *sex* in *Emily Chester*, though Crane enjoys constructing false binaries along these lines. In the opening scene of the book, for instance, she establishes her two protagonists according to such binary logic. "The two had been sitting there for perhaps an hour, without speaking," Crane writes in her introductory sentence, but then dismantles the plurality implied by such a description: "A man and a woman" (Crane, *Emily Chester*, 1). Crane thus singularly introduces the characters of Emily Chester and Max Crampton in terms of gendered differentiation. Emily is "so essentially and distinctively a woman that no other word seem[s] to express her" (1) and Max is "a small man ... with nothing very striking about him at first sight" – nothing, that is, aside from his maleness (2). So both of our heroes are, from the start, reduced to the mere specifications of their sex; yet they gain greater complexity in comparison, and specifically where comparison fails to meet gendered clichés. Emily is "a full and magnificently developed figure," "soft, white" despite "strong muscles" in her hands, a "powerfully moulded" face, a "clearly defined" brow and a "chin like rounded marble, whose sweep told unmistakably of strength, perhaps of endurance" (1-2).²⁴ She is, in essence, not beautiful, but "powerful" in appearance, possessing a beauty "so little appreciated in women, but adored of gods and men" (1). In contrast, Max has an "unpleasant general affect" though "he ha[s] several fine features," physical characteristics which "in any one else would have been beauty" (2-3). He is, similarly, then, not handsome but "austere," and our protagonists – each the opposite of what they ought to be – thus end up having more in common than it first seemed. Neither are to be easily reduced to physical attributes alone; this is important for, if this were a sentimental novel in the tradition of the "feminine fifties," Emily as our tragic heroine would be beautiful, and Max as our villain would be

repulsive, and that would be that. Instead, though, Emily is stubborn, intelligent, and willful, and Max is simpering, and in spite of all his assets (handsomeness, wealth), rather pathetic.

Crane purports a clear and discernible distance, then, between herself and the sentimentalist tradition. She uses assumptions of gender and sex as scaffolding in her novel, upon which she constructs characters designed as though for the very purpose of destabilizing those categorizations. Yet Henry James, in his review of *Emily Chester*, describes the protagonist dismissively as “the wife” – explaining that, in the hackneyed and familiar love triangle set-up employed by Crane (wife-husband-lover), Emily Chester functions most essentially in this all-too-accustomed role (38). While Emily may be fated for this role in Crane’s story, though, James’ facile reference to her is unabashedly reductionist, especially considering it takes nearly 200 pages of narrative action to *make* Emily “the wife,” and the roughly 160 pages of remaining text are devoted to her struggle *against* that identity. The bulk of narrative conflict in *Emily Chester*, in fact, surrounds that protagonist’s efforts to avoid marriage, at all costs, and not just to the vaguely repulsive Max Crampton, but to the more dashing Frederick Hastings as well. The simple reason for this is that Emily Chester *does not want to marry*; she asserts that to marry would be “die” and to “suffocate” (44). She declares, instead, her desire to “become a self-contained, self-sufficing woman, depending on myself for my happiness, and capable of living any life ... no matter how lonely” (45). This, it must be understood, is a flagrant and bold contention for a woman of this time, and while it might ring with a hint of feminist rhetoric, it does not echo the feminist rhetoric of *this era*. Rather, it would be more at home among second-wave feminists of the 1970s, who championed education, work, and “self-sufficiency” in a way their Victorian predecessors would have surely deemed aberrant and unnatural to women’s essentially ordained roles and tasks.

Emily’s insistence on self-sufficiency, then, offers a consistent, and firmly repeated, argument against her marriage; far firmer, in fact, than Isabel Archer’s watery reply to Lord

Warburton, “I’m not sure I wish to marry anyone,” in James’ *The Portrait of a Lady* (127). As with Emily, Isabel compels both conflict and intrigue in *The Portrait* through her repeated refusals to marry, even when the terms of those marriages – specifically, the material terms – may be distinctly tempting. Yet unlike Emily, Isabel does not desire self-sufficiency; she does not desire, in fact, anything at all, and the novel hinges upon her inability to understand why her actions, or else inactions, fail to attach themselves to any clear yearnings or aspirations. If anything, Isabel Archer’s desires are negative, in that she, at times, arrives at a vague sense of what she does *not* want; such negative desires, however, nonetheless offer little clarification of her actions. After inexplicably choosing to marry Gilbert Osmond, Isabel reflects, in one of James’ most famous written passages, that “It was impossible to pretend that she had not acted with her eyes open; if ever a girl was a free agent she had been” (435). Yet Isabel nevertheless finds herself, not in a “high place[] of happiness,” but among “realms of restriction and depression where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above, and where it served to deepen the feeling of failure” (456). Isabel is mystified by her failure, because she senses that it was compelled by neither logic nor desire. Emily, however, sticks by her resolutions of independence for a good two-thirds of Crane’s novel; after the death of her father, though, she struggles to further secure the conditions of that avowed “self-sufficiency”. She labors – in all the ways in which a woman of her class may be permitted to formally labor – and uses her skills as a musician first as a private music instructor, and then as a paid accompanist. Like Lily Bart in *The House of Mirth*, she seeks the kinds of employment that may correspond, in appearance though never in pay-scale, to her class position. She suffers under the stress of such labor, though, having been previously unused to any whatsoever, and soon grows ill; when Max returns, a few years later, and once again asks for her hand, he does so with an ethos of “saving” her from the requirement of her labor. She marries him, against her stated will and with no appearance of relief or joy, only to then wither and die as though from the *labor* of marriage itself.

Henry James, though, willfully overlooks (or else naively misses) this entire narrative arc in his reading of *Emily Chester*. He says nothing about Crane's efforts to psychologically fortify her character's refusal to marry, and her subsequent "tragic" marriage. It is a bizarre oversight – particularly bizarre when one considers that James would, twenty years later, write a novel entirely devoted to the topic of one woman's refusal to marry, and her resulting "tragic" marriage. Why might James purposefully ignore – for his ignorance, in this case, strikes us as decidedly purposeful – this narrative theme of Crane's, only to then recreate it? The likely answer is that James, in 1864, had neither familiarity nor experience with such themes; he lacked, in essence, a generic viewpoint from which to formulate his critique of Crane, and so defaulted instead to a *gendered* critique of her novel which, in order to make sense, had to altogether avoid the acknowledgment of unfamiliarity. Thus, James opts to dismiss Crane's novel on the grounds of its popularity and its collusion in the fashion of sentiment, even though the novel blatantly balks at the conventions of sentimentalism. Instead of seeing her as complex prototype of his own beloved Isabel Archer, then, James interprets Emily Chester according to simpler conventions, as "a beautiful and accomplished woman. When we have said this, we have said as much about her as we venture positively to assert; for any further acquaintance with her is the result of mere guess-work. Her person is minutely described" ("Emily Chester" 38-39). Such statements are not only wrong but, also, emphatically contradictory. (James elsewhere whines that the book is too long, too "ponderous" – to think of James calling anyone *else* ponderous! – and too detailed, in general.) James' main complaint, though, hinges on the opinion that Crane fails to make Emily real to us, and that where we might have had a real character "such as is employed by Mr. Trollope or Miss Austen," we have instead something "exceptional," both opposed to and opposing the "every-day" (38) – a hero, in other words.

James objects to the characters of Max Crampton ("the husband") and Frederick Hastings ("the lover") on similar grounds, stating that they are "equally incomplete and intangible" (40). The

idea that we cannot *touch* these people, that we are barred from doing so on account of their anti-realness, recalls the sort of distrust for ephemeral “worth” James felt in connection to *Emily Chester*’s popularity and monetary worth. But suppose, for an instant, that James is sincere here, and that his concern for the real and authentic in Crane’s novel is a kind of foreshadowing to his career as a devoted literary realist. Such priorities would seem to justify James’ complaint that “Max Crampton is ... anything but a living, moving person. He is essentially a woman’s man, one of those impossible heroes, whom lady novelists create half out of their own erratic fancies, and half out of the fancies of other lady novelists” (40-41). While James’ conception of this hero is imprecise here – why might women’s fancies dream up such an austere, unfeeling, and ambiguously unlikeable hero? What, indeed, might be indulged or entertained in their doing so? – he notes that “We have a strong impression of having met [Max Crampton] before. He is the repetition of a type” (40). That is to say, Max Crampton, like Crane’s other main characters in *Emily Chester*, is guilty of correlating to a recurrent literary “type,” even while he is simultaneously a “hero” that is solitarily the product of women’s “erratic fancies” and therefore anything but a “living, moving person”. In other words, he’s a type of character that does not correspond to a type of actual person. In particular, though, Max is a “type” that corresponds to a stated tradition – the “fancies” of “lady novelists” – and James’ fear that he has met this “type” elsewhere is a statement of the dread he feels for sentimentalism as a genre.

If we take James at his word, then, it would seem that the success of a literary work might be evaluated in its ability to avoid “literary types” while adhering to “realistic types”. This is, in effect, a variation on a theme of *generic* expectation. James might as well say that he prefers literary characters to be recognizable to us via our real-world encounters; yet literature – not just in the nineteenth century, but likewise before and beyond – descends from the story of the singular, super-human hero. That such a hero might be recognizable to us and still singularly *heroic* (unknown, unfamiliar,

and *unexpected*) has been the author's somewhat oxymoronic prerogative for generations hence. Take, for instance, the characters we encounter in James' own *The Portrait of a Lady*, and their comparative correspondences to, or variations from, "literary type" and "realistic type". Mrs. Touchett is described as a "person of many oddities ... She had her own way of doing all that she did ... This way of her own, of which she was so fond, was not intrinsically offensive – it was just unmistakably distinguished from the ways of others" (37). Mrs. Touchett is, in other words, unique, and recognizably so, just as Mr. Osmond is described as being "original without being eccentric." When Isabel first encounters him, she thinks that he "resemble[s] no one she has ever seen; ... her mind contained no class offering a natural place to Mr. Osmond—he was a specimen apart" (285). Here, James' characters' thoughts refract an image of what ought to be, according to James, the very opposite of his readers' thoughts. Isabel sees Osmond as fascinatingly singular and unique – indeed, in justifying her decision to marry him, she touts these qualities where she can find no others – but we are supposed to see him as familiar and true-to-type. Except, of course, if we do, if unlike Isabel we refuse to be duped and instead see Osmond for what he "really" is, the story is as good as over. There can be no drama, no narrative climax, in such easy truth and, instead, James rather counts on his readers' naïveté to deliver intrigue, excitement, and an eventual narrative pay-off when we discover, surprisingly, that we (like Isabel) were wrong. It is our acceptance of literary type, though, that makes this at all possible.

James, then, favors the inscrutable, singular, "original" hero – "vivid individual[s]" as he calls them in his preface to the novel (9) – but perhaps only so as long as they inspire our similarly inscrutable sympathies. Neither Mrs. Touchett nor Mr. Osmond, admittedly, strikes us as entirely deserving of our sympathies, nor are they wholly detestable, though. Rather, James' *The Portrait of a Lady* offers a landscape peopled with characters *about whom one never knows exactly how to feel*: indeed, that is the whole point, and such ambiguous, indefinable emotion forms the basis of the novel's

attraction and literary interest. We like *The Portrait of a Lady* because of – not in spite of – our insecurity of feeling for it and its characters. This insecurity of feeling tantalizes us, because it corresponds to the complex ways in which we emotionally interact with one another as human beings. In life, we seldom experience pure emotion, or encounter individuals who elicit such singular and unfettered emotion from us. In *Emily Chester*, Crane goes to great lengths avoid the kinds of facile, sentimental manipulation that might thus render the parts of her “love triangle” emotionally simplistic. James, likewise, forces similar complications to the marriage plot in *The Portrait of a Lady*, in making vaguely likeable characters (Lord Warburton, Caspar Goodwood) irrationally unlikeable to his protagonist, Isabel Archer, and making otherwise unlikeable characters (Gilbert Osmond) not just likeable but *desirable*, and for little discernible reason. Yet watching James, in his review of *Emily Chester*, struggle with his own feelings for Crane’s characters is revelatory; it indicates, on James’ part, not a lack of feeling (he professes to “deny Crane the tribute of” of sympathizing with her protagonist), but rather an orthodoxy of feeling (“Emily Chester” 41). James comes to *Emily Chester* expecting to encounter a familiar spectrum of emotional response. This expectation itself – indicated by his discussion of literary “types” in Crane’s novel – is the product of generic convention, and James anticipates the kind of heavy-handed emotional response usually demanded by sentimentalist fiction. James’ aforementioned dread of sentimentalism prepares him for a certain kind of emotional experience in *Emily Chester* – that is, he expects to *feel* hatred for it on these very generic terms. Crane’s manipulation of such gendered expectations, and her refusal to grant James that emotional experience, defer James’ feelings, and force him to locate those feelings elsewhere. Having been denied what he expected, James feels unfulfilled and cheated, and so translates the antipathy he had prepared for Crane’s novel into, rather, antipathy for its author.

It is, in some ways, a childish response; because James can't love Emily Chester, he decides to hate Anne Moncure Crane. But this, too, points to a brand of hypocrisy in James that compels further investigation. For James consoles himself with the thought that "As the case stands, we complain bitterly, not so much of Emily as of the author; for we are satisfied that an Emily is impossible" ("Emily Chester" 44). The real problem, it seems, is not that Emily Chester is incompletely real, but that Anne Moncure Crane exists, that she is actual and true and materially manifest in the world. This, then, is the true source of James' horror – that a woman, real, made of flesh and blood, could produce anything like *Emily Chester*. But why would James "bitterly" criticize Emily Chester for being fake and, the next instant, criticize her creator for being real? Because, in James' words, "we infinitely prefer the old-fashioned love-stories, in which no love but heart-love was recognized, to these modern teachings of a vagrant passion which has neither a name nor a habitation" (44). Because, in other words, though sentimental heart histories might be "weary" to James, they are nonetheless familiar, and *so far as women are concerned*, James prefers familiar falseness to radical truth. He fears the real existence of the woman Anne Moncure Crane more than the false character of her protagonist because Crane signifies a departure from generic expectation, whereas Emily Chester might be only an incomplete or failed realization of it. Too, it is additionally clear that Crane is playing with forms of love which James – alongside his contemporaries, if only the editorial staff of *The Nation* – may not be prepared to confront.

In this way, we can see that it is fear that inspires James' harsh castigations of Crane upon the occasion of her death. For in spite of admissions to the contrary (James repeatedly questions what he calls a suspicious "certain moral tendency" in Crane's writing, and in his obituary, labels Crane an "immoral" influence in literature), it is nonetheless evident that morals were not to blame for James' esteem, or the lack thereof, for Crane. Compare, for instance, James' feelings towards *Madame Bovary* (1856), a work with a decidedly "immoral" subject matter in the very spirit of Crane's

Emily Chester. In *Madame Bovary*, Emma Bovary does not just *desire* a man who is not her husband, she physically enacts such desire, transferring her feelings to “real,” tangible action, action which wreaks “real,” tangible havoc upon the lives of those around her. Yet James expresses little ambiguity for Flaubert’s novel, in spite of – or perhaps due to – its salient themes, themes which “proved a shock to the high propriety of the guardians of public morals under the second empire” (“Style and Morality” 346). Yet, in spite of such themes, or maybe because of them, “‘Madame Bovary’ has a perfection that not only stamps it, but that makes it stand almost alone; it holds itself with such a supreme unapproachable assurance as both excites and defies judgment” (“Style and Morality” 347). James, then, is unperturbed by Flaubert’s foregrounded “vagrant passions,” though it was precisely such passions – indistinct, unmoored, lacking a singular, legitimate object of affection (though repeatedly attached to a certain *type* of object) – that upset him in his reading of *Emily Chester*. In concluding his review of Crane, James suggests that all assaults to genre and style may have been forgiven if Emily had actually “lov[ed] Frederick Hastings, as struggling with her love, and finally reducing it from a disorderly to an orderly passion” (“Emily Chester” 45, emphasis James). That it so say, if Emily had “truly” loved Frederick Hastings – or anyone for that matter – and in so loving transformed her vagrant passions (“disorderly”) into more acceptable, sanctioned feelings of love (“orderly”), James might have been moved to sympathy and pity for Crane, rather than outright hatred. Such moralistic tyranny, though, severely undermines James’ review of Flaubert’s novel, in the first paragraph of which he uses the words “masterpiece” and “genius” with embarrassing liberality (“Style and Morality” 344-345). And while James waxes poetic on the merits of Flaubert’s style and form, he argues that such characteristics bolster, rather than compensate for, a host of perfect characters who people an equally perfect narrative.

Emma Bovary is for James a “dignified” creature, “a vessel of experience ... one of the most living and discriminated figures of women in all literature” who commands a “romantic spirit that

leaves nothing to be desired” (346-347). She represents a kind of literary “perfection ... scarce leaving one much warrant for wishing anything other” (348). But let us examine the conditions of such perfection: Emma Bovary is victimized by her own indistinct desires, and by her inability to rationalize them. After her marriage to Charles, she openly wonders “Why, for Heaven’s sake, did I marry?” (Flaubert 31), and laments her life to the point of nervous distress. Except she does not know what she wants, or what might save her from such distress: “She longed to travel or to go back to her convent. She wanted to die, but she also wanted to live in Paris” (43). Flaubert’s deliberate combination of such antithetical desires – travel, or imprisonment in a convent; death, or life in Paris – strikes us as evidence of Emma’s haphazard cognitive efforts to understand her own desires. She, like Isabel Archer, is essentially transfixed by her own inscrutability; she revels in her failure to make informed decisions, and in the results of such failure, and lives in a perpetual suspension of “what will happen next?” Emma resembles, in fact, a child in her helplessness and incompetence, in her inability to connect cause to consequence. For such is the reality of a child, who acts without intelligence or inhibition; it is not, however, the reality of an adult, and even less the reality of a grown woman. Flaubert’s almost absurd emphasis on Emma’s childishness – and James’ interpretations of such a character as “perfect” – point to these authors’ mutual disinclinations to realistically render the adult female as such. Thus, we see that the “realism” of James and Flaubert is quite different from that of Crane: James and Flaubert’s realism flaunts the idea of the real in form and in the details of representation, but contributes all the same to the instantiation of a *genre* of realistic narrative that, in eschewing meaningful confrontations with gender, becomes itself determined *by* gender.

If James prefers the naïve, impetuous Emma Bovary to the intelligent, rational Emily Chester, it is because (to recall his own theories on literary representation) he believes Emma Bovary better corresponds to an actual “type” of living person in his mind. But who is that woman, in

reality? Who might furnish James with such an image, drawn from his experience? No one, and everyone, it seems. Emma Bovary, in failing to understand both the sources and directions of her desires, locates them everywhere. She delights, for instance, in shopping, to her husband's initial consternation but eventual appreciation:

At Rouen she saw some ladies who wore a bundle of charms hanging from their watch-chains; she bought some. She wanted for her mantelpiece two large blue glass vases, and some time after an ivory nécessaire with a silver-gilt thimble. The less Charles understood these refinements the more they seduced him. They added something to the pleasure of the senses and to the comfort of his fireside. (Flaubert 43)

Like a child, Emma buys whatever she wants, grasping little of its cost (“consequence”). Her husband is charmed by this behavior at first, because it is confusing to him (as someone who logically understands cost and consequence) and because it is reassuringly *feminine*. It corresponds to a genre of available understandings of femininity, now as in Second Empire France. Such understandings, though, are not the products of *reality*, though, but of categorical stereotype. Because women don't traditionally make money, they spend money, and are purported to excel in the process of doing so. This is one of the oldest and most well-known stereotypes about femininity, yet it is one that seems to console both Flaubert and James in its very familiarity. James accepts this stereotype as the “truth” about women through either ignorance or stubbornness – perhaps both – but not through actual experience and knowledge.

James' impressions of the shopaholic female, though, may likewise be the product of *literary* and cultural invention (in spite of his protestations to the contrary). Emile Zola, in his novel *An Bonheur des Dames* (translated as *The Ladies' Delight* or *The Ladies' Paradise*, 1883) centers on the exploration of a mid-nineteenth-century phenomenon, the development of the department store in France. Zola's novel largely focuses on the changes to labor arrangements and producer

relationships wrought by the introduction of the department store, as smaller merchants specializing in small ranges of goods are quickly subsumed by the Bonheur des Dames, The Ladies' Paradise. Yet Zola's novel also establishes the centrality of women as consumers, and does so from a historical perspective; it's set in the 1860s, the point at which such stores began to take off in Europe (and the era just proceeding Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.) The novel's title, even, is an allusion to the way that female consumers, heedless of the fact that such stores might only offer lower cost goods on account of inequitable labor and production practices, become blithely loyal to them as dazzled, duped consumers: "Get the women," one character explains, "and you'll sell the world!" (Zola 77). Zola points out that these uneducated, simpleton women consumers are even more tempted when they think they smell a bargain, even if that bargain is for goods they do not need or want. In this way, they are prone, like Emma Bovary, to acting as though unaware of their own desires. "The idea of getting goods below cost price aroused in them the ruthlessness of Woman, whose enjoyment as buyer is doubled when she thinks she's robbing the shopkeeper. He knew they were incapable of resisting a real bargain" (81). The suggestion is that "Woman," the ultimate consumer, seizes a false moment of "winning" with childlike delight, and with similarly childlike ignorance. She is, in spite of the supposed bargain, still "losing" the game of capitalism, and it is only her obliviousness to that game that convinces her of otherwise. James would not have read Zola's novel at the time of his review of Flaubert's, obviously, but the stereotype of the childish, stupid female consumer definitively predates *An Bonheur* by decades at least. It's safe to say, therefore, that James would have had greater acquaintance with that stereotype than he (a lifelong bachelor) might have had with real women.

Of course, when Emma Bovary's desires are (unsurprisingly) unfulfilled by such rampant and unintelligent consumerism, she is forced to look elsewhere. She transfers her desire for a different life to the desire for a different lover, though with about as much intelligence as informed

her shopping previously. She is ultimately unselective in the objects of her desire, and chooses them on account of convenience, more than quality. This is because, as Flaubert indelicately explains, “A woman is always hampered. Being inert as well as pliable, she has against her the weakness of the flesh and the inequity of the law. Like the veil held to her hat by a ribbon, her will flutters in every breeze; she is always drawn by some desire” (Flaubert 63), whatever that desire might be, and there are too many to enumerate. I would wish this kind of rationale – supported by Henry James in his testament to Emma’s being “as valid in one light as in another” (“Style and Morality” 349) – to ring with absurdity in our ears today. It was, however, entirely representative of the subtenant rationale of gender in the 1850s and 1860s, and it is, to a regrettable degree, still solidly present in our current era.

James was not alone, though, in his feelings for Emma Bovary, and nineteenth-century audiences around the world responded to Flaubert’s style and unabashed realism in *Madame Bovary*. James Woods charges Flaubert with “establish[ing] for good or ill, what most readers think of as modern realist narration” (Woods 39) and Eric Auerbach similarly extolls Flaubert’s ability to collapse “what [Emma] feels” with the moment of feeling itself, “as she feels it,” therein establishing a technique sacred to modern realism (Auerbach 385). At the same time, however, Flaubert maintains, according to Auerbach, a kind of authorial distance that enforces for his readers a reminder of *representation*. Emma has “neither the intelligence nor the cold candor of self-accounting necessary for such ... formulation[s]” of her feelings; thus, while her feelings may be represented realistically, they are not realistic to her experience of them, for Flaubert’s authorial interventions improve upon and extemporize that experience for sake of the sympathetic, superior reader (385-386). As such, Auerbach commends Flaubert for elevating what is mundane and otherwise hollow-seeming to the level of the intellect and establishing the primacy of the reader’s – not the character’s – intelligence. For Emma’s hollowness is programmatic, and a means by which

Flaubert might similarly expose “the problematic nature and the hollowness of nineteenth-century bourgeois culture,” of which Emma Bovary herself is an emblem, a “personage ... completely submerged in in that false reality, in human stupidity” (391; 390). Flaubert, then, far less than wanting to make Emma appear real, desires instead that his readers be more real – and more intelligent – than her so as to make the connection between her representative realness and the real illusions of bourgeois French culture.

And while Emma Bovary herself might strike us in some ways as a hollow caricature of feminine stereotype today, in 1856, the reality of her character was bolstered by both social expectation and biological supposition alike. Toril Moi points out that, in the 1850s and 1860s, scientific research directed towards sex and gender obsessed over the questions of variability and will, or “inert[ia]” and “pliability,” to recall Flaubert. The “variability hypothesis” – the result of findings later presented by Charles Darwin in his 1871 *The Descent of Man* – maintained a particular hold over such discussions, and was “widely accepted at the time” (16). The result of “numerous measurements ... carefully made of the stature, the circumference of the neck and chest, the length of the back-bone and of the arms [of male bodies] of various races,” Darwin concluded from such studies that “it is the male which has been chiefly modified” by nature – that is to say, by natural evolutionary processes (Darwin, qtd. in Moi, 16). Moi notes that this logic thus additionally contributed to the idea that “males were simply ‘higher’ on the evolutionary ladder than females” (16). What’s more, though, is that such “proof” of male evolutionary variability points to, paradoxically enough, female cognitive variability. In essence, while men differ over time and from each other, and are improved by the processes of evolution, women are by comparison “static,” “inert” and are thus *unimproved* by such processes to the point of being representationally *regressive*. This stasis bears upon their abilities to reason and to interpret the world around them, for as W.K. Brooks, an American biologist, writes later in 1883, women’s brains are incapable of

abstract thought, being in essence only able to process “rational action without reflection” (Brooks 258). It is this line of thinking that informed the nineteenth-century maxim that woman is “always drawn by some desire”: “her will flutters in every breeze” because she cannot, biologically speaking, apprehend or anticipate *consequence* as the necessary result of action. W.K. Brooks, for his in part, attempted to cement such logic within society’s hazy knowledge of molecular biology, and states that “the ovum is conservative, the male cell progressive” as a means of reducing such proclamations to the level of biological fact (258).

If designating half the population as both “regressive” and “unevolved” sounds bad for society, though, it didn’t strike nineteenth-century Americans in this way. W.K. Brooks, a faculty member at Johns Hopkins University during this time, *defends* such evolutionary division, and warns against any social attempts to circumvent nature’s decree. “The positions which women already occupy in society and the duties which they perform are ... what they should be ... and any attempt to improve the condition of women by ignoring or obliterating the intellectual differences between them and men must result in disaster to the race” (263), Brooks contends. That is to say, women are, thanks not to society but to nature, *less cognitively capable* than men, and any attempts to improve such stupidity will assuredly yield the downfall of humankind more generally. Brooks’ arguments here are monumental, not with regards to innovation but, rather, with regards to *inculcation*: they crystallize decades’ worth of ideological supposition, and establish such supposition as fact via the language of science. Moreover, they do this, Moi says, “precisely at the time that modern feminism is born” (12), as an antidote to that scourge upon traditional gender operations.

Henry James’ interpretations, then, of Emma Bovary as real, and of Emily Chester as comparatively false, resonate with W.K. Brooks’ argument that the “traditional” female, the one seen blithely assuming her subordinate social position, is natural and real; it is the suffragette, with her falsely formed opinions and notions about independence, who is false. Emma Bovary likely

strikes us as being a far cry from the domesticated, docile housewife, yet the realities of her character – her childishness, her amorphous desires, her inexplicable compulsions – are the realities of Brooks’ “traditional” female sure enough. The naïveté which governs Emma’s choices likewise results in repetitive, almost meaningless actions; this points to a kind of “stuckness in repetitive motion,” to quote Jennifer Fleissner (9). While Fleissner’s study targets the “moment of American naturalism,” though, characters like Emma Bovary, thirty years before that “moment” and imported from Europe for the American public, delineate a longer history of such repetitive compulsion and female ineptitude. That is why they appear real to Henry James, because they embody a *real*, though unnamed, tendency in American women – a real “type” which, as yet, has not acquired the stain of expressive exploitation and dependence, which is not yet a full-blown literary “type”. This is why, in his preface to *The Portrait of a Lady*, James is proud to assert Isabel Archer’s correspondence to a “‘personality,’ the mere slim shade of an intelligent but presumptuous girl” and his struggle in converting such a “typical” figure, a mere representative “of a class,” to a “centre [sic] of interest,” or a full-fledged narrative subject (10). If Isabel is to be real to us she must be unremarkable, but if she is to be unremarkable, she is likewise to be a poor narrative subject: this is James’ central obstacle in *The Portrait*, the solution to which is an initial heightening, and then gradual undoing, of Isabel’s “remarkability” over the course of the novel. Isabel strikes us, as she strikes most of the characters she meets, as a strangely remarkable girl, as an aforementioned “vivid individual”. The conditions of this remarkability are slowly worn away, though, by inevitability and by the monotonous likelihood of her fate as an unhappily married woman. Like Emma Bovary and like Emily Chester, she seeks only happiness and is doomed to discover its very opposite, everywhere she turns.

Yet Isabel Archer, it must be said, is not Emma Bovary – not by a long shot. “She took, it will be observed, not the sentimental, but the political, view of matrimony – a view which has always

had much to recommend it” (*The Portrait of a Lady* 299). She accepts neither an idealistic, hyper-romantic notion of marriage, nor the vulgar, coldly material expectation of it. Her outlook is rather, as James describes here, “political,” and her choice is judicious, underscored by the conviction that it is *her choice*. Emma Bovary, by contrast, is not allowed to wrestle with indecision and choice; she enters into marriage automatically, as bidden, and deploys similar scruples in each and every subsequent love affair. But Isabel, even after she has makes up her mind to marry Osmond, relishes “a keen[] sense of freedom, of the absolute boldness and wantonness of liberty ... She was very observant, as we know, of what was good for her” and yet “The world lay before her – she could do whatever she chose” (348). Yet here, in James’ Miltonian echoing of the fate of Adam and Eve, who perceive that “the world [is] all before them” as they prepare to leave Eden, there is an assured sense of doom, and of incongruous imprisonment. Isabel spends most of *The Portrait* unable to make any firm decision, or else unable to explain the decisions she does make; when Caspar Goodwood confronts her after her engagement, she secretly wishes that he would “denounce her a little” (358) so as to incite her to self-defense and righteous anger. He does not, however, and when he asks her to explain her having “change[d] her mind” about marrying, she counters “Do you think I could explain it if I would?” (359). Isabel is, then, conscious of the act of *choice* (“rational action,” according to Brooks) but all the same incapable of scrutinizing or understanding her choices (“reflection”). She is, in essence, a moderately evolved Emma Bovary – adolescent, perhaps, as opposed to childlike – still acting by force of compulsion, though dimly aware of the fact that she doesn’t really have to.

With Isabel Archer, James shows his hand entirely. He reveals, in his preface to *The Portrait*, his struggles with his Isabel, and his persistent, overarching, desire to render her as “genuine,” in “the highest terms of that formula,” as “whol[e]” in order to affect “really ‘doing’ her” (13). This last phrase is both compelling and unnerving; it speaks to James’ delight in manipulating his characters, in *authoring* them in a pure and megalomaniacal sense of the term. It also uncovers, though – in

quasi-sexual tones – James’ smug self-satisfaction, his immense pleasure in “erecting on such a plot of ground the neat careful and proportioned pile of bricks ... that was to form, constructionally speaking, a literary monument” (13). James’ monument *is* Isabel Archer. She is his great authorial achievement, but her character is structurally supported by the efforts of *real women*, and real women authors especially, without whom she would surely be unable to stand. James arrogantly links his own literary prowess and “architectural competence” with Ivan Turgenev’s, yet he might better have offered thanks and gratitude to Anne Moncure Crane, without whom the construction of Isabel Archer may have proved an impossible feat. For James’ *The Portrait of a Lady* rests on (in fact, wholly *depends upon*) one crucially omitted consideration: that for Isabel Archer – who initially has neither money, nor property, nor title, nor inheritance – not marrying is, for some reason, *not strange*.

That Isabel’s not marrying should strike other characters in *The Portrait* as markedly *unstrange*, and therefore not just permissible but perhaps reasonable, is one matter. Lord Warburton tells Isabel, after she informs him of her convictions on the subject, that her response is “very likely,” and that “no doubt a great many women begin that way” (127). He seems content to assume that Isabel’s convictions will fade, and that she will marry; here, of course, he is right, though Isabel clings to her not-marrying stance, with dubious faith, through much of the novel. She tells her Uncle, Mr. Touchett, that she “doesn’t care if she meets anyone else [better than Lord Warburton]” and that she “supposes” Warburton’s offer struck her as ultimately unattractive. “But I don’t know why,” she adds (134), adding little further contemplation to the subject. Mr. Touchett, like Lord Warburton, seems similarly content to assume that her mind will change. Perhaps that assumption stems from the fact that Isabel has little option in the matter; that, as an unmonied woman, with no living parents, living abroad, she will of course have to marry somebody since she has no other point of access to security and livelihood. Yet, for some reason, Isabel fails to grasp such obvious and inevitable indications of her situation. Fails, that is, or else refuses.

Jerome Loving offers an assertion with which he believes “most readers will agree ... Warburton is Isabel’s ‘best catch’” (106). This “best catch” is, however, a “boring” one, despite all his “titles and properties” (107; 106). This, Loving suggests, is why Isabel refuses him – because, in spite of his wealth and similarly estimable qualities, he is unexciting, akin in many ways to Percy Gryce, Lily Bart’s “best catch” in Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth*. The difference, though, between the two is that Lily never has the opportunity to refuse Percy Gryce; she sabotages (willingly, as we know) her own chances of said opportunity, and only attempts to rectify the damage done when it is far too late. This is not Isabel’s situation, though, and Loving’s reading of her refusal of Lord Warburton as driven by a dimly perceived dread of the mundane is ludicrously facile. The fact is that *no woman during this period* – especially if she was upper class, and especially if unmarried in spite of that class status – might have had the luxury of rejecting a marriage on such comparatively trivial grounds. Wharton’s own biography, here, would furnish one such example. The simple fact is that women, in a period that saw them as devoid of property, wealth, and even citizenship, did not operate with an ethos of choice, in marriage as in any other arena of life. A woman might “choose” a more interesting marital partner as she might “choose” to study and practice law – that is, to no avail.

The notion of choice is irrelevant if there is a limited array from which to choose. Friedrich Engels, in his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, points out that under the auspices of capitalist production, and all attendant paradigmatic beliefs in private property, the “*form* of marriage by purchase” becomes complete, insofar as “not only the woman but also the man acquires a price – not according to his personal qualities but to his property” (70). In a world, then, where marital partners not only can but *must* be bought and sold to ease class anxieties about property and ownership, “the mutual affection of the people concerned ... was and always had been absolutely unheard of in the practice of the ruling classes; that sort of thing only happened in romance, or

among the oppressed classes, who did not count” (Engels 70). In essence, then, “love” in its most ideal (anti-real, anti-vulgar) instantiations, might only be *possible* amongst “the oppressed classes,” who having nothing to sell but their labor, might likewise not grieve for any property lost in transactions of marriage. For marriage, “according to the bourgeois conception, was a contract, a legal transaction, and the most important one of all, because it disposed of two human beings, body and mind, for life” (71). And Isabel Archer, being upper class but also being a woman, is able to enter into such “contract” negotiations only thanks to the modest fortune she has inherited from her uncle, yet as Engels observes, “a contract requires people who can dispose freely of their persons, actions, and possessions, and meet each other on the footing of equal rights” (70). Such equal footing is, of course, impossible given the social and legal restraints against women’s ownership of either wealth or property, and no matter who Isabel chooses to marry, he will become the owner of her fortune, and she will serve as his dutiful wife if she wants any piece of it. Boring or not, then, Warburton is likely not just Isabel’s “best catch,” but better than she might otherwise dream of achieving. She rejects him, though, not on account of his boringness, but on account of her own *boredom*. Her pale, and increasingly waning, insistence on not marrying anyone masks her secret understanding of an inevitable fate – a fate which she wishes to waylay for as long as possible, so as to stave off its likely, resultant boredom. In the meantime, though, she arms herself with a creed of preference – she does not *wish* to marry anyone – that becomes all the easier to repeat thanks to that lucky inheritance.

Engels published his *The Origin of the Family* in 1884, two years after *The Portrait of a Lady* first appeared in book form, and one year after Brooks’ *The Law of Heredity*. Thus we see a social fascination with the marriage question culminating in three works that, in the span of three years, attempt to account for the status of marital and domestic relations, and the evolution of such relations heretofore. Engels, in particular, opts for a historical outlook, and traces a long history of

the family unit through the research of the American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan, noting that the deplorable state of “marriage by purchase” is, in fact, rather new, having only been established as fact since the 1860s. In light of those two decades of social instantiation though, we have to ask, again, why Henry James might have nevertheless been able to construct a female character whose mind is all the while untroubled by the strangeness of her situation. Plainly put, why does Isabel Archer not shrink from the vast systems of social expectation and restraint that had, even by the 1860s, developed to force both strangeness and social admonition upon the unmarried woman? In fact, the only means by which Henry James might render such an outlook as *fact* in Isabel Archer – as an unquestioned creed, built upon faith and not upon logic – is with the help of figures like Anne Moncure Crane. Crane (and, one year later, Louisa May Alcott, and still later others like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps – both of whom I will explore elsewhere) helped to normalize the literary female’s disinclinations to marry. These women, in the 1860s in the 1870s, interrogated the *compulsive* quality of the marriage arrangement, and questioned the sources of women’s unwitting participations in such arrangements. Emily Chester, for instance, brashly challenges her suitor’s contention that marriage is “not a state of bondage ... but of perfect freedom, as all our weaknesses are strengthened and our deficiencies supplied by a corresponding nature” (*Emily Chester* 44). To this charge – and to Frederick Hastings, the “ideal” suitor in Crane’s novel, rather than to the austere Max Crampton – Emily asks “did you ever see this true and perfect marriage of which you talk? I never did ... If I were to marry, I should pray that death might part us then, on the spot, before I woke up from my delusion” (45). Far from Isabel Archer’s amorphously “political” outlook on the subject, Emily Chester unflinchingly labels marriage as “delusion,” as an engineered dream of impossible “perfection,” which is in itself not only “untrue” but effectively non-existent. She dismisses Frederick’s faith in “corresponding natures” by instead audaciously suggesting that a woman, like a man, may be complete in and of herself, and not wanting for such correspondence.

Where would the tepid, incognizant Isabel Archer be without such an assertion? Where, in fact, would she be without Emily Chester?

The truth is that Isabel Archer likely only exists today because of Emily Chester, and because of Anne Moncure Crane. Carl Degler, for instance, offers the fascinating example that “The highest proportion of [American] women who never married for any period between 1835 and 1980 were those born between 1860 and 1880” (152). Crane’s *Emily Chester*, of course, appears in 1864, and combined with Degler’s evidence helps to characterize an era in American history defined by women’s suspicions of marriage. Alfred Habegger, in fact, sees Isabel Archer as descending from a line of independent female characters crafted first by female authors. James, Habegger argues, takes from women’s fiction a number of gender-based narrative conflicts, but instead of treating them as such, as *problems*, he resolves them (often illogically) as *dead issues*.²⁵ Yet the 1860s – and the women whose critical inspections of the marriage contract helped to direct its literary tide – precedes the formal rise of American realism, and in so doing necessarily informs the anxieties present in that body of work, especially as born from the pens of male realist writers. So while Henry James might owe Anne Moncure Crane a debt of gratitude, it was his avowed hatred of her person – more, I think, than his interactions with her writing – that stoked his incendiary anxieties about women into such “complete” and “vivid” instantiation in the form of Isabel Archer. With this in mind, Isabel Archer’s story in *The Portrait of a Lady* assumes a new aspect; it mutates, in fact, from a position of disinterest (as suggested by James’ title – a “portrait” is a picture, artistically rendered, but necessarily distant and objective) to a position of interest. Isabel Archer is the product of male anxieties about women’s waning adherence to the old rules of conduct, most especially marriage. Her story, therefore, is not objective, but rather *cautionary*: women are to learn the errors of their ways from the charming, though self-deceived, Isabel Archer, who questions marriage as though for the sake of questioning it, as though in keeping with fashion and social tendency. She believes, of course, to

hold herself to expectations of a higher fate, and to proceed always “with her eyes open” in order to apprehend it. That awareness, however, is false, and she is punished for such earnest self-delusion with an unhappy, hopeless, escapeless marriage that was, in the end, *the result of her own choosing*. Thus, Henry James constructs from his anxieties not a “vivid individual,” not a “true” character, but an admonishment to the modern woman, and to the man who would permit her such caprice and meddling. For, as Habegger puts it, “By the mid-seventies the lesson of Crane’s career was plain: your voice would be silenced if you wrote too recklessly about women and marriage” (105). Silenced, or else appropriated and rewritten.

James’ Isabel Archer is, in fact, conceived in the same spirit as Brooks’ warning that attempts to improve the (static, inert, and unintelligent) character of woman will result in “disaster to the race” (263). Isabel Archer is similarly “disastrous” in her unthinking rejections of natural order and social expectation, though ultimately weak enough to be overcome by those forces. Her most sincere transgressions, though, lie not in resisting marriage (like Emily Chester), or even in happening upon the wrong marital partner (like Emma Bovary), but in effecting a faddish and unintelligent challenge to what is – as everyone, even *she*, knows – her destiny. For James despised the insipidly assumed “fashions” of modernity, and scented, in Anne Moncure Crane and others like her, a similarly faddish fascination, “a certain tendency,” the product of “modern teachings” (“Emily Chester” 37; 48). It is the abhorrence of such “fashions,” Fleissner argues, that underscore his novel *The Bostonians*: even more than feminism, or the more sinister and crude associations of lesbianism, the term “Bostonian” to James signified newness, modernity, and the unthinking, unintelligent aping of “fashion”. In the conclusion of *The Bostonians*, Verena Tarrant permits Basil to sweep her up and whisk her away from the podium, away from the spotlight and her obligations to it, as though *in spite of herself*. The “in spite of herself” moment is, indeed, sacred to James, and he employs it similarly, repeatedly, in *The Portrait*; Isabel, it seems, is always acting in spite of herself, in a manner which

contradicts her expectations of herself. Except, of course, that in the repeated exercise of acting in this way, one's actions usurp one's expectations. The irony of Isabel's choices, then – refusing Warburton, marrying Osmond, leaving Osmond, returning to Osmond – lies in the way that “in spite of herself” becomes, over time, reconfigured as “entirely characteristic”. By the end of *The Portrait*, we expect Isabel, in direct contradiction of her feelings, to return to Osmond, because we know her to so reliably act in this way – in spite of herself.

James' stylistic dependence upon this motif further corresponds to his profound antipathy toward fashion. For James, “fashion” constitutes anti-intellectualism, a kind of farce that, in its performative falseness, desecrates the hallowed human attributes of thought and free will. This is why his female characters so predictably act in spite of themselves, because such moments of action expose the insipidity of fashion, and the universally shallow motives of fashion's foremost devotees – women. In a sense, then, James' feelings for Crane are likely established via such antipathy, since in Crane he sees more than a few correspondences to faddish trends of the time. “The book was, in short, fashionably materialist,” to James' mind, Novick explains, reliant upon “the flimsy cleverness of scientific materialism” (Novick 101). Hence James' rejections of Crane's characters, who he complains are wooden, “anti-real,” and too entirely reminiscent of “literary type”; he locates this type, of course, in the work of similar “lady novelists” who, as feeble slaves to literary fashion, can't help but replicate the trends which they are fed. James' feelings on the subject come close, in fact, to Nathaniel Hawthorne's regard for that aforementioned “damnable mob of scribbling women”. How, James paranoically speculates, will audiences ever appreciate a taste of true genius if they are kept on a meager diet of fashion?

James' solution, then, to the insufferable “feminine fifties,” the legacy of which he fears extends into the 1860s when reviewing Crane's *Emily Chester*, is to right, and rewrite, the wrongs of fashion by exposing them. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, twenty years after Crane, James gives us the

Emily Chester that should have been, correcting, as he sees it, the faults of Crane's protagonist and the entire tradition of female authorship alongside it. And, to a large extent, he is successful in doing so, since no one reads *Emily Chester* today and almost every student of English literature is forced to encounter, and reckon with, *The Portrait of a Lady*. James' *Portrait*, however, in imbibing Crane's main character, succeeds in rewriting more than just the figure of Emily Chester; it also serves to amend our cultural memory of women during this period, and not just women writers, but readers, too, in its obeisance to a greater project. For as Emily Chester becomes inscribed in the form of Isabel Archer, so too does her creator, Anne Moncure Crane, become falsely inscribed in the tradition of sentimentalism, the very constraints of sought to shatter and revise. *Emily Chester* is, ultimately, a novel of refusal. Emily, unlike Isabel, *refuses* to act in spite of herself, all the while clinging to firm convictions of independence and individuality. In so doing, Crane likewise *refuses* Henry James – and many a critic like him – the flippancy of critical classification. Crane, in essence, refuses to satisfy James' expectations of the female literary form, preferring instead to toy with a nascent, as yet unrecognizable, new way of writing and seeing the world: realism. In his ability to comprehend not just real stories about women, *but real women* like Anne Moncure Crane, James dismisses both, preferring, instead, generic expectation, a limited scope of literary possibility, and the “in spite of herself” tepidity of Isabel Archer.

But we know Isabel Archer. Her story doesn't need to be retold, and re-digested, here. It is for this reason that I would like to return, at last, to *Emily Chester*, to Anne Moncure Crane, and to her forgotten, formative contributions to the tide of American literary realism.

“We are satisfied that an Emily is impossible.”

My overall intention here is not to make a case for the reading of *Emily Chester*, nor for Anne Moncure Crane's insertion within a modern, historicized canon of American literature. Such was the

aim of an earlier generation of feminist scholars, women like Nina Baym, Jane P. Tompkins, and Elaine Showalter who, in the 1970s and 1980s, commendably made the case for similarly “overlooked” works of American women’s fiction, and fought to see such works dutifully ensconced in literary syllabi. Engines of that movement, like Florence Howe’s The Feminist Press, without whom the literary world might still not know names like Zora Neale Hurston, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Rebecca Harding Davis (or, for that matter, Tillie Olsen), have been indispensable not just to feminist scholarship, but to *literary* scholarship more generally, which has since permitted a begrudging extension of its canonical walls and made room for those writers on its proverbial bookshelves. We scholars are indisputably better off now because of it.

My argument, though, is not that we should read Anne Moncure Crane in the way that we, eventually, got around to reading Hurston and Perkins and Davis (though I, of course, would rejoice if this were nonetheless the result). For Crane is, in many ways, too far lost to us; her work is too distant, too dislocated from critical conversation, and from the larger tides of scholarship which have, in the 150 years since she wrote *Emily Chester*, eroded much of what she may have been able to contribute in terms of close readings and formalist inspection. Rather than read *Emily Chester*, though, I want to make a case for *knowing* Anne Moncure Crane, for recognizing the real woman behind the “impossible Emily Chester,” and for contextualizing her creative efforts within constructed narratives of nineteenth-century literature and literary history. For in many ways, *Emily Chester* is unremarkable book; its plot is familiar to us, because we view it from a twenty-first, and not a nineteenth, century expectation of narrative development; its characters are likewise recognizable; its ending is predictably tragic, the very predictability of which ought to be interesting to us, but probably isn’t. Anne Moncure Crane, however, is a remarkable figure, crucial to our understanding of both nineteenth-century developments of gender and genre, and to our abilities to frame the stakes of such debates today. And it is through her correspondence to *known* figures – not

to the obscure Emily Chester, but to the more familiar Isabel Archer – that we may best construct the material of such understanding. James’ *The Portrait of a Lady* will, assuredly, continue to be read, having achieved a kind of unshakeable canonicity, which is why I concentrate my efforts in attaching Crane’s name to that work. If I were, in fact, to hazard any kind of proclamation with relevance to reading *Emily Chester*, it would be this: read *Emily Chester* in order to understand *The Portrait of a Lady*, and wider schemes of nineteenth-century American genre politics as well. For it is clear from my reading of these two novels in concert that, as Howells notes in his novel *A Modern Instance* (reflected in this chapter’s epigraphic quotation), people rarely consult nature while in the process forming of “natural” assumptions: men don’t go to nature to surmise the “nature” of women, they get it from novels, and novelists in turn take their impressions from other novelists. Without Crane – but, even more importantly, without her generation of women writers, those committed to testing the bounds of “women’s writing” and to distempering the restraints of genre *as well* as the restraints of gender – we would not have Isabel Archer.

Crane, for her own part, anticipated a market ready for realistic representations of women. In her letters to William Connant Church at *The Galaxy*, Crane is polite, though at the same time tender and almost awkwardly intimate. She praises Church for establishing *The Galaxy*, which she says, with high-quality writing and a realist ethic, might prove able to occupy a “vacant place in the magazine world” (Crane, “Letter 22 February 1866”). In later correspondence, after a few of her poems and stories were accepted by *The Galaxy*, she tells Church that she is eager to “assume at once the place that I might occupy in American literature” (Crane, “Letter 11 March 1866”), a note of touching optimism coloring her communications with Church. Crane had, at this point, already enjoyed long-standing success with *Emily Chester*, and was hard at work on her second novel, to be likewise published by Ticknor and Fields. While her “place in American literature” seemed certain, then, less certain is the place which Crane may have wished to occupy: it’s clear from her

correspondence that she desired to distance herself from the sentimentalist camp, (female) writers whose moralist imperatives resulted in reassuring, though unintelligent, literature of inferior quality. On two separate occasions, she emphasizes in her letters the push for “honesty” in American literature; these letters speak to programmatic realism, and to a conscious departure from the popular heart-histories of the day. Likewise, she praises Church, and magazines like *The Galaxy* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, who purport to hold themselves to higher standards (Howells’ tenure at *The Atlantic* had begun in January of this same year, and a month later he had written to Crane requesting that she contribute to that magazine as well). At the same time, though, Crane is visibly wary of the critical establishment, (male) publishers and editors, who in themselves have so contributed to “an uninterrupted course of ‘fretting’” that she does not know “how to estimate or encounter the smallest annoyance of ordinary literary life” (Crane, “Letter 7 September 1866”). She does not, in fact, seem to glimpse the machinations of “ordinary literary life,” or to imagine them in detail.

Crane’s stories in *The Galaxy* are, like *Emily Chester*, awkwardly wedded to positions of in-betweenness. Sometimes, however, this is for the benefit of destabilizing generic categories, as previously discussed with her complicating of Max Crampton and Emily Chester’s gendered identities. In “My Courtship,” an 1866 story whose title would style it as a sentimental romance, Crane enjoys submitting her male protagonist, General Raleigh, to such inversions of social expectation, as in describing his care of a wounded comrade as being “like a woman” (“My Courtship” 511). This is in the midst of a romantic tale which, set during the heyday of the Mexican-American War, assumes a distinct air of *protest* against that – and any – armed conflict. “To deliberately prepare a man to skillfully kill his human beings [i]s the very worst use to which you could put human minds and bodies” proclaims the female narrator and love-interest in the story (504). This same heroine then succeeds in winning Raleigh, an avowed “man of war” (501), over to the cause of peace and rational alternatives to violence, before eventually consenting to marry him in

the most uncharacteristic, and generically ironic, of manners. Hortense, the heroine in question, sardonically describes her romantic ideal as “the incarnation of an archangel with a steam-engine combined; of some highest ethereal essence conjoined to lowest material force,” a figure who she might deign to serve “as slave and queen” at the same time (504). This story – appearing in an issue that additionally includes material from Anthony Trollope, William Dean Howells, and vivid essays recalling Civil War battles – is hardly to be confused with the literary tradition that its title may so mistakenly imbue.

Crane’s creative output, though, was significantly hampered by ill health; she suffered, for much of her adult life, from the effects of chronic hepatitis. This impeded her writing (she apologizes, in several letters to Church, for her failure to produce material at a faster rate) and often forced her relocation to treatment centers for months at a time. Such was the cause of an 1871 trip to Germany; she was fluent in German, and deeply educated in German romantic philosophy, and enjoyed traveling there most of all. In the first published version of *Appleton’s Cyclopedia of American Biography*, Anne Moncure Crane is the lead entry in the second volume, and the cyclopedia there details the circumstances of her death in 1872 at the age of thirty-four. “In 1871, went to Germany, hoping to derive benefit from the medicinal waters there, but did not live to return” (Fiske 1). It was about five weeks later that Henry James’ obituary – with which I both begin and end this story – appeared in *The Nation*.

Henry James, though, does not mourn for Crane. No tiny, infinitesimal note of sorrow, or of pity, may be found in the two-page article meant to serve as her memorial to the reading public. Instead, he mourns for convention, for a recognizable and familiar landscape of literary creation, which Crane’s *Emily Chester* dared to subvert. He is, in fact, stirred to greater emotion in being denied the familiar terrain of sentimentality in Crane’s novel than he is by Crane’s *actual* death in real life. “‘Nature is to be studied in her monstrosities,’ was its motto,” James cynically jokes, botching

the German of Crane's original epigraphic quotation in *Emily Chester*, taken from Goethe. For Crane, the "monstrosities" of nature likewise yielded the secrets of natural order, the most damning of all might be the revelation of nature's indifference. In Crane's novel, Emily constantly invokes her "nature" as a means of explaining her opinions and desires, and too late realizes the inconsequence of such desires in relation to larger, inevitable, and wholly *unnatural* processes. Emily's "natural" inclinations towards independence and an intelligent, productive livelihood are eroded by social expectations of what she must be to the world she lives in. These expectations are not *natural* in any sense except an ideological one, and are enforced by characters – men – who take it upon themselves to uphold the lies we tell *about* nature. Hence why Max Crampton, while observing Emily as she serves dinner for her father, imagines her as his wife, musing "Yes, wild eaglet as you are, with your flashing eyes and curving neck ... little as you think it, you are already bound ... the chain is already around you; your master has come, and in his own time will draw you back to his side, to bind you there forever" (*Emily Chester* 39). In a less ominous – but only mildly so – manner, Frederick Hastings, though he is the preferred "lover" to Max's role as the domineering "husband," similarly arrives at his decision to forcibly love, and thereby control, Emily. "As soon as she was entirely beyond his reach, he instantly considered her the only prize worth striving for ... To win this girl seemed the only thing which, at present, made life worth living" (*Emily Chester* 56). It's clear from this comparison that Crane delights in "revealing," more than nature's monstrosities, *society's* monstrosities, such as might not be naturally ordained, but ascribed to false conceptualizations of nature for the lack of deeper, or more informed, rationale. All the men in *Emily Chester* view Emily in terms of Engels' scheme of modern marriage – as something to be purchased. It is for this reason that she, like Isabel Archer, cannot hope for a harmonious or equal partnership, a "natural" partnership as Frederick Hastings characterizes it, because the marriage contract itself is wholly unnatural, a social device, created so as to restrain and control women's natural capacities. And like

Isabel Archer, the more she resists this inevitable arrangement, the more her value seems to increase in the eyes of those looking to own her.

Instead of championing *Emily Chester* as a novel to be read, then, it has rather been my objective to foster a better collective understanding of two real-life figures, Anne Moncure Crane and Henry James. James' work, and *The Portrait of a Lady* most particularly, must be henceforth understood in the context of hard-won social and generic transgressions on the part of women like Crane.²⁶ For while James, as Elaine Showalter explains, was revered as the literary "master" of his era, "play[ing] a significant role for American women writers" (207), the reverse is likewise evidently true. Because Crane dared to reach beyond the confines of sentimentalism and "female" literary production, she cleared the way for James' epic inculcation of the realist female heroine in the figure of Isabel Archer. And since James' *Portrait* is, unlike *Emily Chester*, both imminently read and still readable, our attachment of Crane to its canonical positioning may serve to deepen and inform our perspectives of literary creation in the grandest age of American literature. That production, in fact, depends upon figures like Crane, who in spite of their success with readers, were mischaracterized and beaten down by the male critical establishment who sought to install them in narrowly defined, anti-real conditions of both genre and gender. Women writers in the nineteenth century forged the trend of literary realism out of their *particular* needs to appear real to the world; men like James, in turn, initially dismissed such efforts, then strove to supercede them, preferring their women to be "ideal" in literature, and non-existent otherwise. That is why James may smugly assure himself of the fact that "an Emily is impossible" – because she *is* impossible, and he, contrary to the goals of an artistic movement that might seem to argue otherwise, infinitely prefers it that way. Anne Moncure Crane, however, *was* real, and her efforts to see women realistically through the medium of fiction, though largely invisible to our modern eyes, persist, like the appearance of a watermark when the

printed page is held up to the light. So is the figure of the nineteenth-century, Victorian female a palimpsest upon which the story of the modern woman has been written.

Chapter Three

Sentimental Science: Fact, Fiction, and the Stakes of Female Intelligence

Accidental Nature

Anne Moncure Crane, though perhaps among the first, was far from the last woman of her kind. Throughout the 1870s and 80s, other women of her era and generation similarly sought to test American society's loyalty to the ideologies of gender via generic transgression. Following Crane's death in 1872, and much to Henry James' chagrin, the field of female literary production continued to widen, and such production in turn coincided with a wholesale revival of interest in "the woman question". For while the Civil War had reduced the voices of American suffragettes to a lowly murmur, the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1866 granting voting rights to African American males reshaped and heightened the rhetoric of women's suffrage. In fact, as Eleanor Flexner points out, the Fourteenth Amendment not only served to remind American women of what they were missing, it stripped of them any preexisting claims to political enfranchisement, however meager: the architects of the Amendment, in an effort to avert any legal ambiguity, used the term "male" where previously "citizen" had appeared. The result was that American women, in addition to being certifiably denied their right to vote, were additionally denied formal citizenship under the US Constitution (137).

Things were, it seemed, perhaps worse than before. A new wave of women's rights advocacy followed, this time centering on issues of education, economic opportunity, and the democratic requirement of female citizenship. The antecedents of this newer, more modern brand of programmatic feminism are clearly visible in Crane's novels of late 1860s and early 1870s, but, strangely enough, it was Henry James who once again, almost a decade later, succeeded in defining (and cashing in on) this new brand of social fascination: by the late 1880s, the "New Woman," as

James deigned to call it, was both a legible and familiar archetype, in America and in Europe.²⁷ In the meantime, though, as sex seemed once again poised to insert itself in all spheres of political and legal debate, science was preparing to meet, and eradicate, social questions of gender.

Popular Science Monthly, which (as previously mentioned) first appeared in 1872, just months prior to Crane's death, helped lead the charge against gender equality in 1870s America. As Russett points out, its editors routinely admonished women's rights advocates for their apparent *refusal* to be guided by science: "And yet the fundamental questions of this [suffrage] movement belong solely to scientific investigators" (qtd. in Russett 13), it proclaimed. As the editors of this extremely popular publication saw it, any belief in equality between the sexes necessarily depended upon the disavowal of science, biological knowledge, and rational thinking. An 1873 article in *Popular Science Monthly*, written by the esteemed biologist (and self-proclaimed "sociologist" – sociology was a new, fledgling field of research at the time) Herbert Spencer, provides a particularly stunning example of such thinking. For Spencer, like many of his ilk, including Charles Darwin, located his oppositions to gender equality in the scientific hypothesis that men and women were crucially, irrevocably different, particularly with regards to cognition and mental faculties. Women simply weren't *smart* enough to stand next to men as students, voters, workers, or citizens, and, of course, no amount of social training or education could ever help to account for such a deep-seated, natural deficit.

Spencer's *PSM* article, called "Psychology of the Sexes," appeared in November of 1873, and sought to reiterate – in this case, to a rather histrionic degree – such well-worn arguments about sexual difference and the insufficiencies of the female intellect. In it, Spencer admits to rare cases of intelligent women, but dismisses such examples on account of their rarity through the use of a rather fascinating analogy. A woman, he says, may appear, occasionally, to act as intelligently as a man, however one must also consider that

the mammae [sic] of men will, under special excitation, yield milk ... but this ability to yield milk, which, when exercised, must be at the cost of masculine strength, we do not count among masculine attributes. Similarly, under special discipline, the feminine intellect will yield products higher than the intellects of most men ... But we are not to count this as truly feminine. (“Psychology” 31)²⁸

What strikes me most about this analogy – gross simplifications aside – is its familiar tone. Spencer is arguing that accidents of biology, like a man lactating, are no more indicative of *natural* capacity than accidents of “psychology,” cognition, or mental training, like a woman thinking. They are, rather, flukes, mere (and thankfully rare) deviations from the norm which, in and of themselves, do not imply commonalities between men and women, but rather help to further instantiate *difference* between the sexes. Such statements compare to, and thus become subject to the rubric of, Spencer’s theory of so-called “purposeless action,” outlined in his *The Principles of Ethics*.²⁹ “Such actions as those of an epileptic in a fit, are not included in our conception of conduct,” he explains, for “the conception excludes *purposeless actions*” (*Principles* 5, emphasis mine). Thus, the man who lactates does so without purpose: lactating does not make him a woman (for whom the action retains purpose), yet he is additionally not like most men, an anomalous accident of nature. The same, apparently, goes for intelligent women, and here we might include the likes of Julia Ward Howe, Fanny Fern, and Anne Moncure Crane. But this line of thinking is both reminiscent of, and *contemporaneous* to, Henry James’ dismissal of Crane. For recall that James equates the success of Crane’s *Emily Chester* with “some accidental circumstance,” and sees its chance popularity as stemming from coincidences of “public humor or taste at the moment” (“Opportunity” 450). What is important, James reminds us, is that the book itself, and its author, are *innately* inferior, and while both may have enjoyed “accidental” success, the truth remains necessarily otherwise. The fact that James and Spencer were professing the “truth” about female inferiority in spite of evidence to the contrary, and that they

were doing so within two years of each other (1871 and 1873, respectively), deepens the significance of claims to “accidental” or “unnatural” nature in men and women. Most importantly, this comparison expands our considerations of the rhetoric of the *natural woman* in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and shows that “nature” was therein used as a tool to combat the social progress of women on *all* fronts, in science as well as in art, in body as well as in mind.

That some women managed, in spite of such massively systemic impediments, to nevertheless assert the truth of their “nature” through social or intellectual achievement during this time must be henceforth stressed. It is therefore my project in this chapter to focus on a few women who, in the final decades of the nineteenth century, bravely waged a two-front war, against the male literary establishment on one side, and the male scientific establishment on the other. These women sensed the collusion between figures like James and Spencer, men who, though perhaps unwittingly, proffered and prospered from ideological certainty and their faith in the myth of the natural woman. In particular, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Sarah Orne Jewett sought to dismantle suppositions about female inferiority in charting the rise of a new figure – the female physician. Phelps’ 1882 novel *Dr. Zay* and Jewett’s 1884 novel *A Country Doctor* alike target literary and scientific assumptions about female productivity, education, and intelligence, and they do so in the midst of a decade which witnessed the slow but indomitable appearance of women in American universities, colleges, and, yes, medical schools. For while Jewett’s name might still hold a place (however small) on our canonical radar, Phelps’ name is by comparison much more obscure, and less still is our knowledge of the *real* women who, in the 1880s and 1890s, dared to penetrate the ranks of American science and medical practice. It is for this reason that I situate Jewett and Phelps’ fiction alongside the work of Helen Bradford Thompson (Woolley), a real-life “Dr. Zay,” one of the first female recipients of a PhD degree in the United States, and one of the last names likely to be remembered today.

Thompson’s dissertation project, *Psychological Norms in and Men and Women* (1900) later

published as *Mental Traits of Sex* (1905), sought to radically disrupt the popular logic of female mental inferiority, which was itself alive and well, even into the twentieth century. Thompson's biography, however, reveals that she, much like Crane, was similarly vilified for her efforts, and punished for her transgressions against both gender codes and generic female production, and henceforth also banished to effective obscurity. Thompson's true story completes those fictional narratives begun by Phelps and Jewett in the 1880s, and reframes the stakes of the debate over gender and genre.

Science, the Popular, and *Popular Science*

The success of *Popular Science Monthly* grew throughout the 1870s, as heavy-hitters from every branch of science began to appear in its pages. Throughout its first two decades of publication, names like Charles Darwin, Thomas Henry Huxley, Louis Pasteur, Henry Ward Beecher, Thomas Edison, Herbert Spencer, and John Dewey helped *PSM* court an ever-expanding readership. In return, these esteemed men of science gained a ready and respectable venue for their latest theories and postulations; Spencer's aforementioned "Psychology of the Sexes" was, in fact, an excerpt from a chapter on "Mental Sciences and Psychology," planned for inclusion in the second volume of his *Principles of Psychology*. That text was published in two separate volumes, one in 1870 and one in 1880, and Spencer's 1873 article in *PSM* – seven years before the publication of the second volume – chronicles an effort to "serialize" scientific publications prior to their release in book form, similar to the way new novels by popular authors were, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, commonly serialized in popular magazines like *The Atlantic* and *Scribner's*. Similarly, W.K. Brooks, whose 1883 *The Law of Heredity* became a touchstone for the anti-progressive, anti-feminist scientific community, likewise published the most flagrantly contentious chapter of that text in *PSM* in 1879.

Brooks' research, Toril Moi explains, was "at the forefront of discussions of biology and women's rights in the last two decades of the nineteenth century," stemming from his observation

that “among the higher animals ... the males are more variable than the females” (Moi 15; Brooks qtd. in Moi 15). Thus was born the so-called “variability thesis,” in which, according to Brooks, all human behavior and traits, including psychological and cognitive functions, were descendent from, or “transmitted” by, one’s gonads. “[T]he male element is the originating and the female is the perpetuating factor,” Brooks argues, which additionally translates as “the ovum is conservative, the male cell progressive. Heredity or adherence to type is brought about by the ovum; variation and adaptation through the male element” (Brooks 84). In other words, Brooks saw female biology as traditional, unchanging, and static, and male biology as “progressive,” advanced, and ever-evolving. This followed up on Darwin’s assertions in *The Descent of Man*, by now almost a decade old, that women were less evolved than men, and that they might furthermore never be able to “catch up” to male biology on account of their regressive gonadal configurations.

Brooks’ findings were, in some ways, old news. A year before Brooks published *The Law of Heredity*, Charles Meymott Tidy had declared in his book *Legal Medicine* (1882) that, when faced with a corpse with missing or mutilated genitalia, or a body of otherwise indistinct sex, a medical examiner might safely recall that “The average male head is larger, and the brain heavier” and that “The blood of males is said to be richer in red corpuscles than that of females” (274). The idea of rich, male blood and weak (or “thin”) female blood subtended a great deal of scientific thought into sexual difference during this time. Blood was seen as the chief determinant of a person’s “energy,” or overall capabilities; weak, female blood lent the body less overall energy, and as blood was the single, unifying life force – the link between all those disparate, otherwise divorced organs – this meant less energy for the brain as well as the uterus. Hence Spencer’s point (previously espoused by many others) that “Only that mental energy is normally feminine which can coexist with the production and nursing of the due number of healthy children” (31). Since energy was dependent upon blood supply, and blood was itself regarded as a finite, non-regenerative substance in the

human body, weak, thin female blood had to be *saved* for the labor-intensive functions of the female reproductive system, rather than “wasted” on the brain. This idea lead Spencer – writing a decade before Brooks – to conclude that female intelligence, due to a lack of available blood and energy, was largely “receptive,” while male intelligence was, on the other hand, “originative,” or creative. And, Spencer adds, while “the receptivity may, and frequently does, exist in high degree” in women, likewise there is likely to be “but a low degree of originality, or entire absence of it” (31). Thus we see Brooks’ “variability thesis” applied to intelligence and psychology as early as 1873: men create with their intelligence; women use their brains merely to receive, or to ingest, the knowledge which men already created.

Brooks’ primary innovation in *The Law of Heredity*, then, was not to introduce the idea of male-active/female-passive biology or cognition, but to locate these processes *specifically* in the reproductive organs. As Moi puts it, Brooks’ contribution to medical discourse in 1883 was not so much the dictum that “[w]omen preserve the old, men discover the new” (17) – already well-accepted knowledge by this point – but rather that the *rationale* for such mental behavior itself lie in one’s genitalia. Six years later, in 1889, Scottish researchers Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson provided an update to Brooks’ variability thesis in furthermore arguing that men and women possess different “metabolisms”. Where women are “anabolic” creatures, according to Geddes and Thomson, men are “katabolic”: women conserve energy, while men expend it. The result, which is in effect a wholesale reinvention of the sexual-biological wheel, may be located and gauged in the human “protozoa”. Geddes and Thomson additionally offer the idea that “It is among the Protozoa that we must presently look” (89), and the protozoa in question (unicellular organisms) chiefly include the male sperm and the female egg. Here, however, Geddes and Thomson mistakenly interpret sperm and egg as *the* protozoa, the original human cells, from which all human evolution descends. Their eventual conclusion that “Just as the ovum, large, well nourished, and passive, is a

cellular expression of female characteristics” so is the “active” male sperm indicative of male biology *in toto* (109). Or, in other words, men are active, creative, and “originative” because sperm are likewise so; women, on the other hand, like the eggs that define their cellular biology, tend to be passive – sitting and waiting for the active sperm/man to come along and do something.

	<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1873: Herbert Spencer	brain (intelligence)	“originative”	“receptive”
1879: W. K. Brooks	gamete (sperm/egg)	“progressive”	“conservative”
1882: Charles Meymott Tidy	blood	“rich”	“thin”
1889: Patrick Geddes & J. Arthur Thomson	“Protozoa” (sperm/egg)	“active”	“passive”

Fig. 1: Table demonstrating the scientific logic behind sexual differentiation, 1873-1889. Notice the repetition of language, regardless of the physical attribute in question. The suggestion is that a natural condition of *sex* – a genre of expectation – pervades the human body and governs both its material and immaterial functions or forces.

Geddes and Thomson in Britain, like Brooks before them in America, argue that science must inform and direct policy, and that any other arguments either against (but especially *for*) women’s rights – be they political, philosophical, or economic – are misguided attempts to rewire biological truths and smite all that is natural in human evolution. In a quotation that is now well-cited among feminist scholars, the researchers contend that “What was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament” (267). In other words, as it was, so it shall ever be, a statement that likely strikes our modern ears as *contrary to*, rather than built upon, theories of evolution. But such contentions exemplify the ways in which science and medicine during this time progressed at the behest, and in the service, of social, cultural, and political

ideologies about sex and gender, ideologies which had been established decades before through the development of literary and artistic genres. For even before men and women were psychologically, biologically, or essentially, *gonadally* different, they liked different things, held differing expectations, and read (and wrote!) different kinds of books.

I have already discussed the ways in which the “feminine fifties” promoted a genre of female behavior, expectation, and production via sentimentality. Likewise, we saw, with Crane, what happened to women who tried to, in Edith Wharton’s words, “think[] away the flowers” and escape from a predetermined course of female literary production.³⁰ But in the 1870s and 1880s, as female authors were becoming less romantic, and male authors in turn less Romantic, realism provided a space in which expectations of both gender and genre might be simultaneously renegotiated. This process of renegotiation is, I want to argue, the reason why we see men and women not only writing more *like* each other under the auspices of realism, but, importantly, why we likewise see them writing *about the same things*. In realist literature, we see authors, regardless of their gender, foregrounding the same issues, themes, topics, and plot devices. The first novel by William Dean Howells (more or less the father of American literary realism), the *first* book he wrote apart from travelogues and stories or journalism, is *Their Wedding Journey* (1872). This book, published on the heels of Crane’s *Reginald Archer* (1871) and just months prior to her death, chronicles the fictional travels of a pair of newlyweds, whose honeymoon proves, significantly, both unromantic and unRomantic. It is, in fact, a clever hybrid of a novel, combining elements of the male Romantic journey – the kind that dominated male literary fiction of the 1850s and 60s through the likes of Fennimore Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville, but now seemingly tamed at the hands of modern transportation – with a courtship narrative, the kind we would have expected from female authors in those two previous decades.

In fusing these two, formerly more incongruent spheres, Howells removes himself from the “homosocial high culture” of male literary production, as Lora Romero calls it. Through realism, itself “nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material” in Howells’ words (“Editor’s Study” 966), American men and women were similarly discovering common ground. They were, in fact, forging communal terrain at the expense of traditional genre divisions, and pursuing, in Frederic Jameson’s words, “the expression of some commonplace experience of a recognizably real world” (120). That they should have privileged such “commonplace experience” *at the same time* that American scientists were fixated on the demarcation of “true” differences between men and women is crucial to our understandings of sex and gender during this era. For, it seems, the war over sexual “truth” might look very different depending on your view of the battlefield. And, fortunately for American women, figures like Henry James were not wholly representative of forces occupying the literary front at this time.

Howells, for his own part, no doubt also had Anne Moncure Crane on his radar in the 1860s and 70s; both contributed to *The Galaxy*’s inaugural issue in the spring of 1866, and their names appear alongside each other in subsequent issues of that publication as well. Likewise, Crane was later published in *The Atlantic* under Howells’ editorial supervision, a fact which suffices to say that he did not respond to her work with Jamesian ire, whatever his true feelings were for it. Howells’ early novels, in fact, commonly feature complicated, multi-dimensional female protagonists, and characters like Isabel March in *Their Wedding Journey* and Lydia Blood in *The Lady of the Aroostock* (1879) suggest lines of direct descent from Crane and Alcott’s leading ladies (Isabel March even gets her last name from Alcott’s most famous group of sisters). Howells was, of course, a prolific writer, and in the early part of the 1880s, completed nine novels, the majority of which reflect or respond to pertinent social issues of the time, like the growing rate of divorce in America³¹. Among these, *Dr.*

Breen's Practice (1881) highlights, and narratively chronicles, another nascent American trend: the appearance of the woman doctor.

The archetype of the female physician was in part also born in the 1860s, for during the Civil War, American women volunteered by the thousands to serve as nurses, despite the fact that there was little formal medical training or education offered to them at the time. Louisa May Alcott, for instance, served as a nurse, and nearly died of typhoid fever during the war, yet still remarked in her journals that she was “glad” for the experience, “... it will do me good whether I come out alive or dead” (141). American women had, as historian Paul Starr explains, carried much of the burden of home medical care for centuries, especially in rural communities: “Lay practitioners, using native herbs and folk remedies, flourished in the countryside and the towns ... claiming the right to practice medicine as an inalienable liberty comparable to religious freedom” (31). Trained female doctors, though, were extremely rare: in 1852, Elizabeth Blackwell had earned both notoriety and derision for being the first woman to open a medical practice in New York City.³² And following the war, American women’s experiences in nursing fueled their heightened interests in medical education and training, though medical schools – like most American colleges and universities – refused to admit females at this time.

This was during the 1870s, a decade which saw fierce opposition to the expansion of educational opportunities for women, and that opposition more often than not relied upon science to furnish its arguments against educating girls. Recall, for instance, Edward H. Clarke’s *Sex in Education*, as previously discussed in Chapter One, which argued that concerted study diverted “force” to women’s brains, itself necessary in the “manufacture of blood, muscle, and nerve, that is, in growth” (41). According to Clarke, educating women actually prevented, and stunted, their growth and development. A posthumously published work also by Clarke, *Visions: A Study of False Sight* includes an introduction written by the noted physician, researcher, poet, and author Oliver

Wendell Holmes, Sr. Holmes had, while serving as dean of the Harvard Medical School decades earlier in 1847, first championed, and then refused, admission to first-ever female applicant to that program, Harriot Kezia Hunt. Louis Menand recounts this story in his work *The Metaphysical Club*, but fails to mention that, under pressure from the all-male student population as well as the faculty, Holmes persuaded Hunt to withdraw her application and avoid conflict. It would be another century – until 1945 – before Harvard admitted its first female medical student (Menand 8-9). As a result, American women often sought medical education in Europe, though they were often not permitted to enroll as regular students, but rather forced to train as midwives or as mere adjuncts to male medical practitioners. In fact, Nina Baym teases out the particularities of this conundrum, in which the M.D. was “available to women at this time only in the United States,” but that such availability was itself “theoretical” as “few medical schools accepted women” (228).

Questions of educational logistics, then, haunt those authors who, in the 1880s, began to confront the possibility of female physicians or scientists practicing in the United States. In fact, in *Dr. Breen's practice*, Howells, in a move that negates much of the realist credo (which usually stipulates adherence to narrative detail and specificity), glosses over the topic altogether, no doubt out of necessity: Dr. Grace Breen, we are vaguely told, is a “graduate of the New York homeopathic school” (7) which, it turns out, is an actual school, albeit one that cannot find “common ground” with what another character, Dr. Mulbridge, calls “regular practice” (43). Through such ambiguities, Howells is able to circumvent the question of Dr. Breen's training in his novel. In fact, circumvention itself serves as a key narrative device in *Dr. Breen's Practice*, for in it Dr. Breen herself likewise avoids any kind of real “doctoring”. Her first and last patient, Mrs. Maynard, proves too serious a case for her, and is henceforth nobly given up to another, more qualified (male) doctor. Indeed, Grace Breen's reasons for wanting to practice medicine are similarly nebulous; we learn that she once suffered “an unhappy love affair,” and that she turned to medicine “in the spirit in which

other women enter convents” (7). Author Elizabeth Stuart Phelps subsequently critiqued Howells’ novel along these very lines, as did feminist critic Alice Stone Blackwell in the pages of the *Woman’s Journal* (ctd. in Kessler 69).³³ Phelps would, a year later, counter Howells’ deficient, though well-intentioned, portrayal of a woman doctor with her own, similarly themed novel: *Dr. Zay*.

“How terrible is the need”

William Dean Howells may or may not have known any practicing female physicians; his attention to detail in *Dr. Breen’s Practice* suggests he had little, if any, familiarity with them. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, however, did. Her close friend, Dr. Mary Briggs Harris – with whom Phelps once lived – graduated from the Boston University School of Medicine, one of the earliest American institutions to adopt coeducational policies.³⁴ Phelps used such firsthand knowledge, in fact, to school Howells on his naïveté in *Dr. Breen’s Practice*, telling him in an 1881 letter that she had known such professional women “thoroughly from long personal observation under unusual circumstances” (qtd. in Kessler 67). Her assumption, clearly, was that Howells had not. Later, during the 1880s and 90s, Phelps corresponded with a very famous male physician who sternly objected to women practicing medicine: Dr. S. Weir Mitchell believed that “women could not be effective physicians because they were by nature too weak and submissive to master the patient’s will” (Tuttle 87). In her letters to him, though, Phelps sought to revise this eminent doctor’s position on the topic, remarking that “[your opinion] doesn’t seem to me quite fair; or else you don’t really know any [female doctors]! and most men-Doctors do not” (qtd. in Tuttle 88).

Such was, in part, the inspiration behind her 1882 novel *Dr. Zay*, which had previously appeared serialized in the *Atlantic*, under Howells’ editorship. Phelps wanted to acquaint, and confront, the American public with the figure of the female physician, a figure she had personally known (albeit through “unusual circumstances”). In the novel, we first meet Dr. Zay – whose real

name, we learn, is Dr. Zaidée Atalanta Lloyd, shortened to “Dr. Z.A. Lloyd,” and then furthermore to “Dr. Zay” – through the eyes of Mr. Waldo Yorke, a coddled, bourgeois Bostonian who visits the rustic community of Sherman, Maine to settle some family business. Phelps’ rural setting strikes the reader at first as bucolic; Yorke remarks that Sherman and its vicinity remind him of fictional settings he’s read about in novels – novels which he subsequently abandoned reading (31). And when Yorke first encounters Dr. Zay, before he grasps her character or realizes profession, he mistakenly sees her as a “society girl,” furthermore describing her as “dainty,” “erect, slender, and blue ... motionless as a caryatid out of employment” (24). The classical, still-life resonance of this description recalls, in fact, our first impressions of Emily Chester, who Crane similarly describes as “statuesque”; the implication seems to be that such women, seemingly destined to entertain the male gaze and not for human activity, are drawn from art and antiquity, yet in both *Dr. Zay* and *Emily Chester*, this proves to be a ruse. For Dr. Zay spends the rest of the novel in constant motion, compelled by a burdensome workload since she serves as the only physician treating women and children in this isolated, far-flung community.

It is, in fact, Waldo Yorke who is henceforth characterized by indolence and indulgence, reposing (after he breaks his ankle, which is to incur a legibly “feminine” injury) in quasi-classical lassitude while Dr. Zay feverishly rushes about in a self-driven carriage, going from patient to patient. The dainty “society girl” of Yorke’s first impressions turns out to be an energetic, passionate professional, just as the picturesque countryside, with its “sudden reserves and allurements of horizon” which are in and of themselves “like the moods of a woman as strong as she is sweet” (9) proves to be a savage and brutal setting. Yorke is, in time, witness to the hardships of rural life, including debilitating accidents, sickness, disease, and the dangers of childbirth. Zay tells him that “There is refinement and suffering and waste of delicate life enough in these desolate places to fill a circle of the Inferno,” and that it was furthermore these very conditions that compelled her to

practice in Sherman. “I had learned how terrible is the need of a woman by women, in country towns,” she tells Yorke (75). There is a strong consciousness of female requirement in this statement, and it is a consciousness that thematically motivates Phelps’ writing in *Dr. Zay*. Phelps was, in fact, an outspoken supporter of feminist causes, chief among them education; a decade earlier, she had contributed to Julia Ward Howe’s *Sex and Education* book (1874), countering E.H. Clarke’s claims against female education via personal experience. In Phelps’ essay, she contends that it is not education, but rather the lack of ready application and use for such education – that is, labor – that most harms women. “The sense of perplexed disappointment, of baffled intelligence, of unoccupied powers, of blunted aspirations ... is enough to create any illness which nervous wear and misery can create” (*Sex* 137) she resolves, sounding very much like Betty Friedan who would, almost a century later in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), arrive at similar conclusions regarding the waste of female intellect.

Phelps likewise understood that the institution of marriage was meant to supplant formal avenues of female labor. It is for this reason that *Dr. Zay* necessarily takes up the question of marriage in connection with a woman’s career, and the novel thus revolves around Yorke’s desire for Zay, and Zay’s subsequent resistance. Allusions to Greek mythology help to further establish, and foreshadow, Phelps’ goals: Atalanta (Zay’s namesake) was the virgin huntress who refused to marry, but eventually did so after challenging all of her suitors to a footrace, and being at last outsmarted (though not outran) by Hippomenes, who had the goddess of Aphrodite on his side. The myth, in fact, indicates a plea for equality, since Atalanta believed she was better than most men, and would only deign to marry one willing to prove himself as her equal. Similarly, Dr. Zay’s attitude towards Yorke is at first condescending; she (rightly) judges him to be a pampered member of the upper classes, devoid of use and function and dependent upon others for his wellbeing. In time, however, Yorke additionally comes to see himself in this light, and vows to change, to approach Dr.

Zay as an equal. This is, in fact, a willful rewriting of the way that Phelps viewed gender relations and marriage in the latter part of the nineteenth century. As Kessler explains, “Phelps suggests in novel after novel that the ‘natural’ way for a woman to love is through self-effacement, for a man through domination; consequently, her women fear heterosexual love” (68). And it is only by reversing this equation, by making Yorke first play the role of self-effacing “female,” that the ideological folly of such ideas may be exposed and then plainly dealt with. Yorke recognizes as much when he reflects that “It was apt ... to be the woman whom nature or fate, God, or at least man (the same thing, doubtless, to her), had relegated to the minor note. It occurred to him that in this case he seemed to have struck it himself” (97). And it is furthermore significant that Phelps here collapses the natural, inevitable forces of life (“nature or fate”) with both superhuman (“God”) and human (“man”) forces. The point is that women’s relegation to the “minor note” in life seems to come from all three sources, yet such generic subordination, with Dr. Zay serving as testament, is in essence manmade and therefore negotiable.

Everything, it seems, is ultimately negotiable, for Dr. Zay eventually succumbs to her (feebly established) desire for Waldo Yorke. Their marriage, however, is not to come at the cost of her career, as she sternly tells him. Yorke’s well articulated retort is “I don’t care who has the reins ... as long as I have the driver!” (257) and, in spite of Dr. Zay’s warnings that such a relationship cannot survive on “caprice,” and is therefore nevertheless likely to fail, the novel ends with her in his arms. Carol Farley Kessler, lauds this somewhat unlikely narrative result, arguing that Phelps “creates a new woman whom marriage would be less able to subordinate because of her already well-established commitment to a career” and that, “in Yorke, she attempts a ‘new type of man’ who by supporting a woman’s career eliminated her having to choose” between work and marriage (68). Yet the issue as I see it is not so much the notion of marriage itself, but rather its function as a device of narrative closure; Phelps ends her novel with the suggestion of marriage, if not the actual event

itself, on the grounds that such an arrangement will nevertheless resist historical and generic precedent. She does so, however, by couching the marriage agreement in terms of uncertainty and failure. Dr. Zay – Atalanta, as she is finally called in the last few pages of the novel – warns Yorke of as much, proclaiming “If we fail, we shall be the most miserable people that ever mistook a little attraction for a great love” (258). Yorke responds by hazarding “And if we succeed –” but does not finish his statement, nor does he receive a reply from Zay. Phelps stops short, in fact, of her expected endpoint, and leaves the subject open for debate, necessarily, I would argue, since readers at the time would have likely struggled to comprehend what such a marriage arrangement might even look like.

Such is not the case, however, with Nan Prince. In *A Country Doctor*, published only two years after Phelps’ *Dr. Zay*, Sarah Orne Jewett similarly devises a female protagonist who senses the intrinsic enmity between her career as a doctor and her status as a wife. Abandoned at birth, and subsequently raised as the adopted ward of Dr. Leslie, a rural country physician, Nan is well seasoned in the art of unconventionality. It is, in fact, not until she encounters her paternal aunt, Miss Prince, who lives in a civilized small town community outside of Boston, that she is forced to defend her intellectual and professional goals. Unlike Dr. Zay, however, Nan holds her ground, and does not wed, though it might be said that the temptation to do so is markedly less compelling in *A Country Doctor*. Rather than the sympathetic, if still *pathetic*, Waldo Yorke of Phelps’ imagination, Jewett gives us Mr. George Gerry, who courts Nan not for her intelligence, prowess, or ideals, but rather in spite of these characteristics. George is attracted to Nan’s beauty, and furthermore believes that he can tame her ambition, having himself “a great prejudice against the usurpation of men’s duties and prerogatives by women,” and having previously “spoken of all such assumptions with contempt” (335). That is to say, Nan’s physical charms are enough to quell the “contempt” that a man like George Gerry might otherwise feel for her person, but only on terms of alteration. George

senses that he cannot assume power, and cannot therefore command respect, in light of Nan's ambitions and independence, and therefore sets out to quash her professional aspirations and in turn make her dependent upon him. "It is in human nature to respect power, but all his manliness was at stake, and his natural rights would be degraded and lost, if he could not show his power to be greater than her own" (336). The suggestion is that there aren't enough "natural rights" to go around, and that any woman's presumptuous seizure of such rights comes at the cost of natural male entitlement.

This savvy line of social critique is, in fact, in keeping with the spirit of the times; Jewett's allusion to finite stores of "natural rights" in a given society – in this case, in American democracy – closely parallels, on the one hand, the kind of rationale espoused by opponents of women's suffrage. Following the Civil War and the resuscitation of the women's rights debate, a popular argument for denying women voting rights purported that the functions of a democratic government depended on limited, controlled participation from its citizens. Voices from the anti-suffrage vanguard, which included both men and women, argued that women's political participation would force them to compete alongside men on the grounds that the American democracy simply was not large or complete enough to account for the enfranchisement of all its citizens. Madeleine Dahlgren, writing in 1871, stipulated as much in her treatise *Thoughts on Female Suffrage*, in which she argues that to "deprive women of their protection [under democracy], and place them on a sheer equality with men, to struggle for their rights ... and they cannot but suffer by a competition, *which would create an antagonism*" (5, emphasis original).³⁵ In other words, a democracy ensures not rights for all, but rather a finite reserve of available rights; force women to compete against men for such rights, and they will undoubtedly fail on account of natural deficit, and be the worse socially for the effort. And, as Herbert Spencer was quick to point out in his 1873 *Popular Science Monthly*, article, women already had rights, and lots of them. "Directly, they take a large, if not the larger share, in that ceremonial

government which supplements the political and ecclesiastical governments ... Indirectly, they act by modifying the opinions and sentiments of men.” To otherwise add to these established rights via female suffrage would then only “increase” “the share already taken by women in determining social arrangements and actions,” to the extent that men would necessarily suffer in having their rights usurped (Spencer 38).

Such rationale is, in addition, entirely similar to scientific presumptions regarding finite reserves of energy, or blood, or intelligence, in the human body, and the social imperative to save and direct such forces toward generic sexual behavior. Given these fixed, natural parameters, “reason” and the exercise of trained human intelligence is required to both discipline the body and assure its adherence to a path of natural destiny, or so goes E.H. Clarke’s thinking in *Sex in Education*.³⁶ And here, too, there is a blurring of the rhetoric of “reason,” for just as the editors of *Popular Science Monthly* chastised women’s rights advocates as being immune to both science and “reason,” so too does Miss Prince, Nan’s aunt, who in Jewett’s novel implores her to marry on similar grounds. “I hope you will be guided by me,” she tells Nan. “it seems as if [marrying George] would be so reasonable” (351). Two decades previously, Nan would have married George, or else not married him, for the sake of “love,” and bowed under the weight of innate emotional response to the opposite sex. Now, however, Miss Prince styles marriage as the “reasonable” choice for Nan, though reason was once itself seen to be the enemy of love and sentiment. But since Nan believes that she has both a natural disposition and talent for medical practice, she will not be dissuaded. She boldly compares herself to a man in this instance, and tells her aunt “it seems to me that it would be as sensible to ask Mr. Gerry to be a minister since he has just finished his law studies, as to ask me to be a wife instead of a physician” (349). Jewett thus styles marriage not as a natural state, or even as a social inevitability, but rather as a chosen career path, alongside which other, competing choices appear pragmatically impossible.

Nan's devotion to the medical profession, in fact, is a likely outgrowth of Jewett's own anxieties about professional authorship. Over time, Nan comes to see her professional aspirations in the terms of a political "cause"; like Dr. Zay, who chooses to practice in Sherman in order to best help the women and children of that rural community, Dr. Leslie reflects upon a "weak little creature [who] seemed to be pleading in the name of a great army of sick children, that Nan would not desert their cause" (362). The connection between women practicing medicine and the "cause" of the children is not explicit, nor is it an extremely logical one, but it helps, in *A Country Doctor*, to normalize Nan's ambitions, and to make her appear less like a man-spurning, love-hating egotist, fueled only by raw, self-serving ambition. Jewett, like women authors before and after her, similarly wrestled with a disquieting fear of the stigma of the female professional. For as Anne E. Boyd points out, following Thomas Wentworth Higginson,

To become a creator of literary art meant dedicating one's life to such a pursuit. Women in nineteenth-century America were not supposed to dedicate their lives to anything but their homes and families. For a woman to adopt the aim of creating high literature would require a radical transformation in cultural expectations for female behavior and in her self-perception. (13)

Female professionals and artists were often branded as "selfish" insofar as they chafed against cultural expectations of domesticity. Though it must be noted that both Jewett and Phelps had similarly defied such expectations in their personal lives: Jewett never married, though she engaged in a long-standing companionship with Annie Fields, wife of her publisher James Fields, whose death in 1881 brought she and Mrs. Fields even closer;³⁷ Phelps, on the other hand, eventually married, though at the age of forty-four to John Ward, an invalid who was seventeen years her junior, yielding a marriage of "uncertain reward" (Kessler 82). Perhaps this is why Jewett and Phelps, who saw themselves as professionals, and who were economically, if not formally, placed outside the

auspices of the average marriage contract at this time, were so fascinated by the figure of the female physician. For, on the one hand, such a figure might enjoy financial independence, but it also served to gratify the possibilities of the female intellect, in direct contrast to popular opinion, and nineteenth-century popular science.

Neither *Dr. Zay* nor *A Country Doctor* were particularly successful books. Judith Bryant Wittenberg explains that Jewett's novel was, for example, "assailed" by its contemporary reviewers, who criticized for having "little or no plot" (125), and that Jewett herself likely sensed these deficiencies. Phelps, for her own part, though she often enjoyed high sales and popularity, was outright despised in certain critical circles. She was, on the one hand, often dismissed as a moralistic women's writer, due to her longstanding associations with venues like *Heart and Home* and *The Ladies' Home Journal*; reviewing her earlier novel *The Story of Avis* in 1879, *The Nation* describes Phelps as "more frequently eccentric and provincial than successful" ("Recent Novels" 202), and furthermore accuses her of having inherited a kind of stylistic flippancy which must have been born from her mother, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps the elder (also a writer), and that woman's love of colorful dress.

If we remember quite rightly ... [Elizabeth Stuart Phelps the elder] had a passion for high colors in dress goods, and this seems to have passed over into the daughter's style of writing, which has many passages corresponding to the red broadcloth and canary yellow in which the mother arrayed her little boy and girl. ("Books Reviews" 426)

The line of critical thought that links Phelps' mother's fashion sense and her own writing style shows a decisively male contempt for expressive femininity, wherever and however it might be identified. At the same time, though, Phelps was often critiqued for failing to appear feminine enough (much like Crane ten years before, and through the same critical venues); *The Story of Avis* was condemned by *Atlantic* critic Harriet Preston, who objected to the novel's "wholly erroneous theory of womanhood ... that marriage is not a woman's best and highest destiny" (qtd. in Boyd

217). Preston's colleagues at the *Atlantic* similarly viewed Phelps as an "overwrought" figure, who was consequently "unworthy of a serious reputation" as a writer (217). And *Dr. Zay*, which, like *The Story of Avis*, mounts a compelling argument against matrimony, was not likely to strike such critics as an improvement to Phelps' oeuvre.

Phelps and Jewett, in fact, have alike garnered more notice in the twentieth century than they did in the nineteenth. Over the past few decades, for instance, several scholars have likewise contemplated the link between *Dr. Zay* and *A Country Doctor*, and Wittenberg even goes so far as to connect these fictional works to real-life biographies of female physicians, namely, those of Harriot K. Hunt and Elizabeth Blackwell (both aforementioned here), and also Marie Zakrzewska, the first woman faculty member of the first American women's medical college. This kind of critical historical reframing of Phelps and Jewett's novels is, I want to argue, wholly necessary, since both novels avoid representing the female physician *in action*, proof of the fact that such action itself was either invisible or impossible during the time in which they were written. It seems that neither Phelps nor Jewett had any indication of the realities of a female physician's work or existence, though their fictional narratives helped to introduce and subsequently familiarize American readers with associated representative figures. It is for this reason that I want to redirect the discussion and highlight Helen Thompson Woolley, whose real-life experiences as a pioneering female scientist and medical researcher additionally contextualize the efforts of Phelps and Jewett in the 1880s to breathe life and reality into such a previously amorphous figure.

Sentimental Science, and the Life of Helen Bradford Thompson (Woolley)

In the 1880s, science and literature, as we have seen, had rather a lot in common. Both fields purported having access to the "truth" about the world at this time, given a particular range of both means and methods. Indeed, science and literature alike clung to old, inherited "truths" about the

world: on the one hand, science had “sex,” and the immutable, biological differences between men and women; on the other, literature had “genre,” and the immutable, cultural differences between gendered modes of consumption and production. And in both science and art during this time, key individuals sought to eradicate such systems of inherited truth: these individuals – most often women – were, however, commonly greeted with coteriean dismissal. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, for example, campaigned for truth in art with the same vigor that inspired her fight for truth in science. In an essay called “Art for Truth’s Sake,” Phelps professes “the province of the artist is to portray life as it is, and life is moral responsibility” (“Art” 263), yet we know that she was critically denounced despite the popular appeal of her works, and via tendentious critical conclusions to boot. And women like Phelps and Jewett were not alone in linking science and art, as Thomas Wentworth Higginson, best known for his associations with the poet Emily Dickinson, argues in an 1874 essay that “under one of these two heads all literature must fall; it may be either a contribution to science through its matter, or to art through its form” (Higginson), but that both types of “literature” are nevertheless equally crucial to the development of an American republic.

Following Phelps, Jewett, and Howells in the early 1880s, then, American writers became increasingly interested in representing science and medicine, and in developing the fictional figure of the scientist or physician in response to a growing body of mass appeal publications like *Popular Science Monthly*. A quick summary of “Books Received” by the *New York Times* for review in the spring of 1893 demonstrates the depth and breadth of that fascination: the list reveals, for example, new literary works touching on science and medicine, including John Cardy’s collection “Stories About Doctors” and Clara Louise Burnham’s novel “Dr. Latimer,” a “story of Casco Bay,” which, with its southern Maine setting, could pass for fanfiction in homage to Phelps or Jewett. Alongside these “contributions to art,” however, there are far more purported “contributions to science,” including one titled *Mental Life and Culture: Essays and Sketches* (“Books Received”). Its author, Julia

Duhring, had died the year before, and her book was published and edited by her brother, the well-known physician and leading dermatologist Dr. Louis Duhring of the University of Pennsylvania. In it, Julia Duhring expounds, in a series of essays, on topics ranging from primary education to women's labor, yet does so through repeated thematic employment of the idea of the "mental life" – that is, a cognizant, rational, thoughtful existence which must be cultivated through education, in both men and women alike. Duhring picks up on Phelps' complaints as stated in her 1874 essay in Ward's *Sex and Education* volume, and Duhring similarly contends that "Education, whether in public or private schools or in homes, should first of all inculcate the idea and point to the child the power and the means of self-support" (227). Women's inability to serve as wage-earners or to establish careers, Duhring says, has less to do with intelligence than with ignorance; women are simply not trained or educated to support themselves financially. She offers a caricature of the educated woman who views housework as "a great drudgery, a weary routine" and instead "should like to study medicine" (228), and pities the fate of such a person, on the grounds that "The fault, however, is not in you, but in the kind of education that you have had" (229). And while Duhring's conclusions might be substantially tinged with a brand of moralistic conservatism, its existence nonetheless helps us to gauge the development of the debate over female education in the United States at this time, and the relevance of scientific research to that discussion.

For also in the spring of 1893, just as Duhring's *Mental Life and Culture* appeared, pleading for a woman's right to an education, eighteen year-old Helen Bradford Thompson was graduating from Englewood High School, on Chicago's South Side. Thompson was elected as one of four valedictorians for her graduating class, and in her commencement speech, she praised the nineteenth century's achievements in science. "Glorious as has been the work accomplished it has only been enough to disclose the immensity of the field of science. Let the future trust to its boundless possibilities" (qtd. in Morse 124). For Thompson, science was the driving force behind a progressive

new world, in which humans were free from the requirements of exhausting manual labor, having harnessed “even the fleeting breath of water to perform their hardest tasks” (qtd. in Morse 124). Scientific research, and technologies derived from it, helped to free humans from the encumbrances of base corporeality, and a livelihood orchestrated by the possibilities of intelligence, as opposed to the demands of body, fueled her interest in and passion for scientific study.

Thompson’s sister, Jane, had entered college at the “newly coeducational” University of Michigan some years before, but had to return home for financial reasons. In Midwestern America, according to Andrea G. Radke-Moss, land-grant universities, having sprung to life in the wake of the Civil War, were often more friendly to policies of coeducation. Radke-Moss explains that in Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, and other Midwestern states, separated as they were from the instantiated sociopolitical traditions of New England, “women succeeded in negotiating new spaces of gendered inclusion and equality” (2), and female students at public state universities “practiced an active microcosm of democracy that showed the realistic possibility of an inclusive political culture supported by a vocal and intelligent female electorate” (288). What’s more, though, is that unlike private women’s colleges in the eastern United States – and unlike even those few eastern colleges with coeducational admittance policies – female college students in the Midwest were less restricted in their educational pursuits, and permitted to take courses biology, botany, chemistry, English, and business (150-151), subjects previously closed to female registrants. Helen Bradford Thompson was an early beneficiary of the Midwestern American interest in secondary education for women, and entered the University of Chicago in the fall 1893 as part of that institution’s second ever freshman class. Originally intending to be a teacher, Thompson was nevertheless drawn to experimental psychology; she eventually majored in philosophy,³⁸ which at that time mandated classes in both neurology and psychology as well. Jane Fowler-Morse, who provides a sympathetic biographic record of Thompson (her grandmother) in her article “Ignored But Not Forgotten,” additionally

explains that “psychology and philosophy went their separate ways at the turn of the century” (125). This compares to Virginia Staudt Sexton’s contentions that, in the late nineteenth century, “psychology in America was essentially a psychology of human conduct that had been successfully nurtured in theology, moral philosophy, and mental philosophy (3), and that those who taught it at the university level were typically trained as theologians. However, what Sexton calls a “subsequent wave in enthusiasm for science and science education” – aforementioned in this chapter in connection to both fiction and nonfiction writing from this era – resulted in a more empirical brand of psychological study, and “[s]teadily thereafter in the 20th century American psychology made rapid strides as a science” (4). Leading the charge against “soft psychology” and advocating that discipline’s shift toward laboratory science and empirical method was William James, the so-called “father of American psychology,” and the brother of Henry James.

It is, I want to argue, crucial that we not make light of the sibling connection that yielded a methodological adherence to empirical, “fact-based” psychological science on the one hand, and a dogged devotion to the “natural” facts of literary genre and tradition on the other. For there is a link here, and an essential one at that: Sexton explains William James’ insistence on material psychological inquiry as relying upon “the data of immediately lived experience,” including an emphasis on “sensory qualities” and the raw facts of “knowing, feeling, willing” with respect to physical experience (4). William James himself states in his 1892 essay “A Plea for Psychology as a Natural Science” that he “wished by treating psychology like a natural science” that he might furthermore “help her to become one” (William James 146). James’ objectives here connect – in an astoundingly linear fashion – to his brother Henry James’ assertions about the “facts” of genre three decades earlier in connection to the female sex. For Henry James’ similarly critiques Emily Chester for appearing “inhuman” and failing to adhere to natural “type,” significantly reproaching Crane for her “want of science in executi[ng]” such a character (“Emily Chester” 39-40). And “science,” it is

now clear, is in this context a direct stand-in for “type,” for *genre*. The facts of nature, bequeathed to us with the apparent authority of scientific inquiry, prove themselves to be in essence suppositions of genre. Hence why those writers (especially women) who seek transgress the laws of genre and write outside the expectations of their sex – like the advocates for women’s suffrage denounced in the pages of *Popular Science Monthly* – are judged guilty of neglecting *science* when, in truth, their crimes are first and fundamentally against *genre*.

Helen Bradford Thompson, writing not fictional stories but factual science, would be similarly judged over the course of her intellectual career. Thompson graduated from the University of Chicago *summa cum laude* in 1897, by which time she was engaged to a young medical student, Paul Gerhardt Woolley. Thompson was offered a graduate fellowship at Chicago and remained there while her fiancée went to study medicine at Johns Hopkins University (Morse 126) – under W.K. Brooks, among others. Recall that Brooks authored *The Law of Heredity* in 1883, and was generally responsible for furthering the variable/invariable theory of male/female embryological evolution. By the 1890s, Brooks’ studies in embryology had shifted to focus specifically on zoology, without direct reference to differences to human males and females. But that does not mean that his findings in evolutionary zoology failed to continually interest, or apply to, the “woman question”. For in the midst of late-nineteenth century appeals for the expansion of women’s education, Brooks nevertheless asserts – with the likes of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer on his side – the futility of “nurture” in light of biological truths. “When our bodies are used in what is popularly called the way they were intended to be used, use is beneficial; but injudicious or excessive training may be as pernicious as neglect” (Brooks *Foundations* 67). Those opposed to women’s education and intellectual development took this to mean that intelligent women would abuse their bodies and warp the biological conditions of their femininity through education.

This was the cultural and scholarly climate against which Thompson, in the late 1890s, began her graduate work into the cognitive differences between men and women. The rancor of such rhetoric touched her personally, since female academics, especially those concerned with science, were extremely rare during this period, and also since her fiancée was so intimately connected to the engines of old guard scientific truth in the academy. Thompson's graduate studies in psychology yielded, in the first case, two articles in *The Journal of Comparative Neurology*.³⁹ But Morse describes how Thompson's dissertation project in particular "concerned an issue that affected all women who were then struggling to gain admittance to college, graduate school, and professional life" (126); that dissertation, titled *Psychological Norms in Men and Women*, centered on "women's psychological functioning, the subject of much unscientific speculation in the nineteenth century" (Morse 126) (an observation which I have heretofore painstakingly emphasized). In short, Thompson was interested in testing the theory that women's intelligence was both lesser (in quantity) and different (in quality) than men's. Thompson's methods for this project were descendant from Jamesian dogma, and relied on laboratory experiments and live subjects to produce assessable material results that might get at the truth of discrepancies in male and female cognition. And in keeping with the Jamesian trend toward the so-called "data of immediately lived experience," this meant measuring cognitive response in relation to physical stimuli (such as light, sound, taste, and pressure) while also observing motor skills (response time, coordination, ingenuity) as well as cognitive skills (visual and auditory memory, associations, and informational knowledge). Her tests, which took over a year to complete, yielded the conclusion that women were, in fact, better at some cognitive tasks than men. But even more important than this conclusion are the qualifications which resulted from her experiments: first, she found differences in cognitive response between men and women to be so minimal as to be effectively inconclusive; second, she found that such differences were not, on the whole, consistent with contemporary scientific knowledge on the subject; and third, she reasoned that many

differences in cognitive ability between men and women could reasonably be attributed to differences in education or upbringing.

In sum, Thompson concluded that existing scientific assumptions about female intellectual inferiority lacked, in fact, any empirical basis or truth. She duly expected the scientific and scholarly community – enthralled as it was at this time by the allure of empiricism – to respond sympathetically to her findings, for the sake of science. For overall, Thompson’s graphed results established that women were undoubtedly more equipped in some areas of intelligence, since they “showed finer sensory discrimination” and “performed slightly better at memory and association tasks” (Milar 26). And while Thompson’s conclusions are cagily articulated – she cautiously acknowledges the “derision” which has greeted the idea of differences in environment or rearing in relation to male/female intelligence, but nevertheless suggests that such a theory “seems at least worthy of unbiased consideration” (*Mental Traits* 177) – her research fired an arrow straight into the heart of scientific inquiry, at least so far as sex difference was concerned. At the same time, it tested scientists’ loyalty to their newly adopted programs of empiricism, challenging the old guard to produce material evidence to support their established theories. In particular, Thompson “pointed out the illogic in [Thomson and Geddes’] biological analogies, which assigned the opposite intellectual characteristics of excitability and incapacity for sustained attention to women, and impartial reason and calm concentration to men” (Milar 26). And, as Thomson and Geddes’ research was itself largely speculative and lacking in empirical proof, her research shined light on the unscientific character of nineteenth-century popular science. “In fact,” Thompson argues in the published, 1905 version of her dissertation, called *The Mental Traits of Sex*, “after reading several expositions of this theory, one is left with a strong impression that, if the authors’ views as to the mental differences of sex had been different, they might as easily have derived a very different set of

characteristics” (173-74). Here, she not only accuses of Thomson and Geddes of sloppy scientific thinking, but of unexamined, *a priori* intellectual biases as well.

Thompson completed her doctoral degree in psychology in 1900, again with *summa cum laude* honors. According to the authors Smith and Smith, John Dewey, who at the time oversaw the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy at the University of Chicago, told a young John Watson (later the famed behaviorist) that Thompson’s dissertation was more intellectually sophisticated than his (ctd. in Morse 129). But in 1900, Thompson’s work was still unknown outside the University of Chicago (where it had influenced at least one researcher, William I. Thomas, to abandon his belief in the “complementarity theory” of female intelligence espoused by Clarke, Brooks, Thomson and Geddes, and others) (Morse 129). And, in the meantime, nineteenth-century theories advertising the dangers of education and intelligence to the female physiognomy still reigned; James McKeen Cattell, a professor of psychology at Columbia University and the editor of *Science* (then a popular magazine; now an academic journal) was one of many scientific experts who, around 1900, assisted in keeping the “complementarity” thesis alive and well in America. Cattell additionally served as editor for both *Popular Science Monthly* and *The American Naturalist* during this time, and his influence on these three leading publications is itself testament to the homogeneity of the American scientific community at the start of the twentieth century. In 1909, Cattell published an article in *PSM* called “The School and the Family,” in which he vituperatively denounced the high incidence of female schoolteachers in the United States on the grounds that such instruction “tends to subvert both the school and the family.” Echoing Edward H. Clarke’s worst fears, he describes the female educator as a “spinster, devitalized and unsexed,” under whose influence “Boys get but little good from their schooling and leave it when they can” (93). Cattell fears for the “feminization” of American primary education, but also rails against working women in general, women who, in

seeking employment outside the home, “break up the family” and additionally sponsor “conditions unfavorable to marriage and the family” (92).

Cattell elsewhere went on to argue that women were likewise unfit to be scientists, though he also oversaw publication of *American Men of Science: A Biographical Directory* which, in its 1910 edition, includes Helen Bradford Thompson’s name, with a thorough description of her work and publications (*American Men* 525). And while Thompson’s dissertation research sought to dismantle regnant views against women as both educators and educated, her personal struggles in balancing academic research, job responsibilities, and family life additionally indicate the climate of support – or lack thereof – experienced by professional academic women at the turn of the century. For after graduating from Chicago, Thompson was hired to teach at Mount Holyoke College for Women, and remained there for five years. In 1905, though, the same year that saw her dissertation finally published (under a new title: *Mental Traits of Sex*), she left Mount Holyoke to join her fiancée in Japan, where the two were married. The couple then moved several times in two years, to Japan, to the Philippines, and to Siam; Paul Woolley worked during this time on several public health initiatives while Helen concerned herself with projects relating to education and child psychology. Helen Thompson Woolley then returned alone to the United States while pregnant with her first child, in 1907, and once again tried to resume her work there.

Her book *Mental Traits of Sex* appeared, however, to have affected little change in American psychological research. In a 1910 article reviewing recent publications into the psychology of sex difference, Thompson comments that “the past few years have witnessed the appearance of a number of comprehensive and even encyclopedic works on various aspects of the problem of sex,” but notes that, in spite of this growth in interest in the topic, “there has been comparatively little advance in knowledge of the mental characteristics of sex” (Woolley “Review”). Thompson furthermore accuses the scientific community of falling prey to ancient prejudices, and overlooking

empirical insight, where sex difference is concerned. “There is perhaps no field aspiring to be scientific where flagrant personal bias, logic martyred in the cause of supporting a prejudice, unfounded assertions, and even sentimental rot and drivel, have run riot to such an extent as here” (Woolley “Review”). She charges psychological research with allowing “sentimental rot” – born from an ideology of embeddedness, itself a relic of nineteenth-century, conservative discourse surrounding sex difference – to take the place of concerted scientific inquiry. In fact, she accuses scientists (male scientists, in particular) of clinging to outdated, emotionally based suppositions of scientific truth. For over the course of Thompson’s educational and professional development – indeed, from the time of Phelps and Jewett’s fictional portrayals of female doctors thirty years before – the rate of American women working in science and medicine had sharply *declined*. By 1909, the proportion of female physicians alone had decreased 35% from its early 1880s “heyday” (Rossiter 290).

The tone and language of Thompson’s 1910 complaints are additionally significant; in calling scientific research into sexual difference “sentimental” in its adherence to an outdated orthodoxy of thought, she is leveling the same complaint against the male scientific establishment that was heretofore used against women writing successfully for popular audiences. Thompson furthermore scolds men of science for “martyr[ing] logic,” and sacrificing the true methods of science to personal discomfort and social unease. American society was as yet still apprehensive about female physicians, scientists, educators, and so science found a means of legitimizing such social fears via suspect technical inquiry. In this case, as in others, it is clear that science was even in 1910 responding to the dictates of mass ideology, and not the other way around, and attempting to assuage popular opinion in deference to sociopolitical conflict. As such, Thompson additionally congratulates those researchers who, in “feel[ing] opposed to allowing women full opportunity of mental development” have at the very least “accordingly shifted the stress of their argument from

the personal to the social standpoint” (Woolley “Review”) – proof of scientific progress, however begrudgingly won.

Parents were, however, still being warned of the perils of schooling their daughters, especially in the kind of mixed company offered by coeducation. A 1909 article in *The Nation*, picking up on a debate that was (by this point) more than forty years old, warns yet still of the perils of coeducation and its effects on young women. “Lacking the guidance of their homes, some girls grow indulgent towards lapses, which, in the openness of [school] life, they cannot fail to perceive,” and the article furthermore argues that, if girls *must* be educated, it ought to at least take place at a safe distance from boys, so as not to “constrain” men’s efforts to “climb to their highest levels” (“Present” 405).⁴⁰ The new century, it seemed, had failed to temper this debate, though Thompson additionally noted in her 1910 review that the tone and tenor of those warnings had altered slightly. “The cry is no longer that woman will injure herself ... [in pursuing] higher intellectual training, but that she will injure society by reducing her own reproductive activity” (Woolley “Review”). Indeed, American science – undoubtedly responding to the heightened rhetoric of women’s rights at this time – now feared less for individual women in particular, and instead transferred that concern to the future of the race more generally. But while Thompson styles this as an alteration in the discourse of popular science, it is, I want to argue, rather a revival; approximately sixty years earlier, mid-century anxieties about “hermaphrodites” had similarly structured scientific discourse, and likewise strengthened public opinion on the topic of educating girls (as discussed in Chapter One). That moment of rabid scientific assuagement – much like this one in 1910 – coincided with intensified campaigns for women’s rights, indicating the cyclical nature of scientific research concerning gender and sexual differentiation. Taken together, these arguments might comprise points on a map charting the growth of scientific thinking and rhetoric which, over the course of more than half a decade, visually spell not linear progression, but rather conservatively cyclical

repetition, so far as gender, sex, and biological difference are concerned (see Fig. 2). Scientific rationale concerning sex difference, then, may then itself be understood as cyclically derived from increases in the social or political stakes of such difference. What is interesting, though, is that such thinking tends, in either case, to yield a similar set of answers: for whether intelligent, politically participative women function as a greater threat to their biological selves or their evolutionary race and society, the solution seems, in either case, to lie in nature, and in reminding men and women alike of the “natural” functions of their bodies, brains, and evolutionary selves.

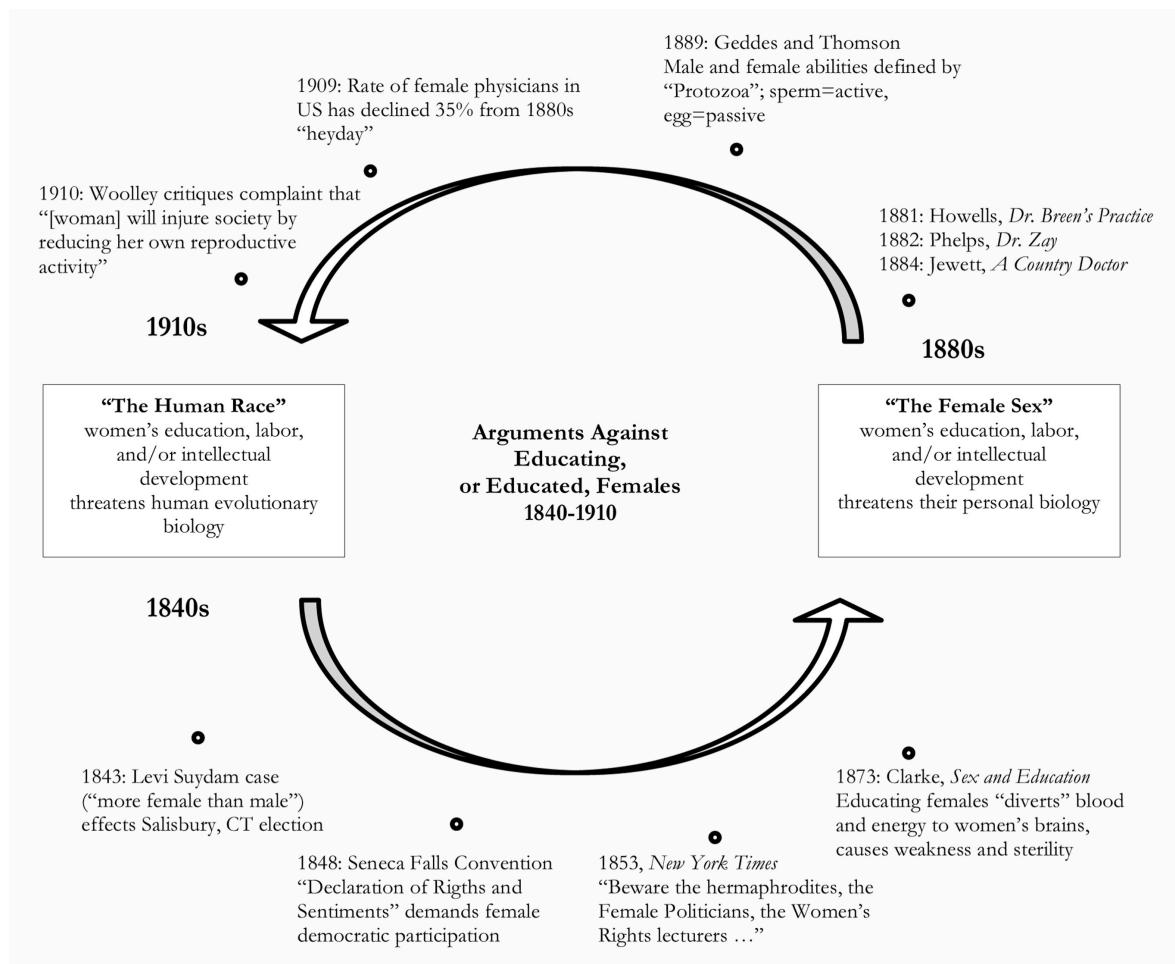


Fig. 2: Chart demonstrating cyclical nature of arguments against female education, 1840-1910. The figure shows the ways in which female education or intellectual labor appears to pose a large-scale threat (to either “the human race,” biologically speaking, or to “the society,” democratically speaking) whenever arguments over gender become political or legislative in nature.

Thompson was understandably incensed, from both a professional and personal standpoint, by the American scientific vanguard who in 1910 still failed, on the one hand, to account for supposed standards of empiricism, and on the other still refused to entertain new scientific knowledge or findings on the subject of sex difference. She increasingly grew to see scientific institutions as opposed to – indeed, as the major obstacles to – scientific inquiry, engaged as they were in a closed system of thought while at the same time dangerously armed with *a priori* conclusions derived from a history of speculative non-science. In a subsequent 1914 review of recent scientific work into the psychology of sex difference, Thompson dismally concludes – now four years later – that “the general discussions of the psychology of sex ... show such a wide diversity of points of view that one feels that the truest thing to be said at present is that *scientific evidence plays very little part in producing convictions*” (Woolley “Psychology of Sex” 372, emphasis added). That review, called simply “The Psychology of Sex” appeared in the 1914 edition of *The Psychological Bulletin* – alongside an article by Princeton Professor H.C. McComas entitled “The Heredity of Mental Abilities”. Thus while Thompson – who was working for the Cincinnati Vocation Bureau, and hence lacking university affiliation – sought to critique male psychologists who were “convinced that the [psychological characteristics of sex] are inherent” (375) her work appeared alongside that of her intellectual opponents (and furthermore without the help of university credentials, or university-backed research funding).

Yet Thompson’s bleak pronouncements are in part explained by Thomas S. Kuhn who, almost four decades hence, arrives at the conclusion that

Observation and experience can and must drastically restrict the range of admissible scientific belief ... An apparently arbitrary element compounded of personal and historical accident is always a formative ingredient in the beliefs espoused by a given scientific community at a given time. (Kuhn 4)

Kuhn's classic work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, lends credence to Thompson's feelings of frustration, and furthermore exposes the truth that scientific study is in no way immune to the influence of "received beliefs" – that is, of hegemonic ideology (4). "Effective research scarcely begins before a scientific community thinks it has acquired firm answers to questions," Kuhn argues, and points out that the "questions" *in question* most often stem from "competition between a number of distinct views of nature, each partially derived from, and all roughly compatible with, the dictates of scientific observation and method" (4). In fact, as Kuhn explains, the scientific community's commitment to a set of shared "paradigms" is at once the engine behind, and the greatest obstacle to, its developmental progress. So while Kuhn notes that the "acquisition of a paradigm and of the more type of esoteric research it permits is a sign of maturity in the development of any given scientific field" (11), we can similarly appraise empirical science as being, at this point in time, still trapped in a kind of sustained, effective infancy.

Where she had, more than twenty years before, extolled the virtues of scientific research in aiding the engines of process and in "freeing" humans from conservative assumptions of their own physicality, science now seemed to Thompson complicit in the project of imprisoning women within both narrow and preconceived conditions of biological existence. And it did so, quite significantly, at a time when women *needed* science – during an era, in fact, in which the American population placed increasing faith in the espoused "truths" of science and trusted it to guide legislative and social agendas. Thompson additionally sensed women's "need" for science in accomplishing their social and political goals (a "need" that finds its echo in Dr. Zay's comments to Waldo Yorke about the necessity of female doctors in rural settings, thirty years earlier), and became increasingly active in the suffrage movement herself. At suffrage rallies in the Cincinnati area, Thompson served as the "voice of science," the authority of which seemed to "calm[] people down after the other speakers had stirred them up" (Morse 134; Fowler qtd. in Morse 134). After moving to Cincinnati with her

husband in 1911, Thompson had been unable to attain an academic position, though her husband had been hired as Professor of Pathology at the Medical School of the University of Cincinnati and also served as dean there. Paul Woolley thereafter took a job as head of a medical testing laboratory in Detroit but, but after the couple's relocation there in 1921, he left the family – there are differing explanations as to why – forcing Helen to raise her three children by herself while still searching for stable employment as a researcher and scientist.

As both a single mother and a committed empiricist, Thompson became, from this point on, increasingly attracted to topics of child psychology and cognition, and to related research in educational policy and pedagogy. In particular, she was interested in observing working-class children, and in mapping systems of inheritance (in cognition, for example) against environmental pressures and conditions. In this way, her later work, such as in *An Experimental Study of Children at Work and In School* (1926), compares to her earlier work in *Mental Traits of Sex*. For Thompson, heredity was still the central issue, and the bedrock to which scientists of every ilk – in direct contradiction to empirical evidence – still clung. Likewise, it was still at the heart of civic discourse, driving both legislation and public opinion in the United States: Thompson advocated progressive educational reform, and an end to the long-held belief that poor children “benefitted from working as much as they would have from staying in school” (Morse 131). And here, too, Thompson believed that “psychological measurement could provide a scientific basis for addressing social problems” (Morse 132). Katharine S. Milar argues that Thompson's laboratory research in charting child psychological development offered “a remarkably balanced view of what [psychological testing] could and could not offer in ... the determination of an individual's abilities” (26). Hindsight thus shows us that Thompson contributed to early twentieth-century science not just in her research and its products, but also in championing (and demonstrating) objective empiricism in the scientific

method in the midst of her colleagues' shallower, more ideologically constrained efforts to do the same.

Thompson's efforts to inject pure science into rational public debate may, in the end, have helped direct the tide of social opinion: American women won the right to vote via the passage of the nineteenth amendment on August 18, 1920. Even more radically, a year later the so-called Sheppard-Towner Act secured federal funds for "promotion of the welfare of hygiene for maternity and infancy". The Sheppard-Towner Act, in effect, made both maternity and childcare public issues, and thus directed associated governmental funds to aid young mothers. The American Medical Association (AMA), however, opposed the bill, and in 1929, at the time of its second renewal, succeeded in defeating it, despite evidence collected by the government indicating that the US had a higher rate of infant mortality than most industrialized nations (Lemons 776). Thus, science – at least the kind espoused by Thompson at Cincinnati suffrage rallies – may have helped to boost and strengthen arguments for women's rights, but it likewise also engineered the curtailment of such rights (the AMA boasted in 1921 of having "one of the strongest lobbies that has ever been seen in Washington" [qtd. in Lemons 779], which it used to help defeat the Sheppard-Towner Act eight years later). Either way, Thompson's name ought to be intrinsically attached to our collective memories of feminist achievement from this time period; it is, however, not readily remembered today, and it is therefore important for us to examine the circumstances of that posthumous obscurity.

Throughout the early 1920s, Thompson continued to struggle in locating stable work, though this was often of her own accord, as she turned down several job offers which she deemed unsuitable. In 1925, she was offered a post at Teachers' College, Columbia University, wherein she would serve as director of the new Institute of Child Welfare Research. She accepted the position, though only on grounds of job security, explaining that her husband's absence put her in a difficult

financial position, in which she could “afford to take no financial chances” (Woolley qtd. in Morse 135). Thompson was accordingly assured of a “salary for life” by the dean of Columbia University, James Russell, and immediately started work, establishing two experimental nursery schools at Columbia in the first year of her tenure there (Morse 135). Two years later, in 1927, Paul Woolley – having already secured a Mexican divorce several years earlier – officially divorced Helen Bradford Thompson under U.S. divorce law, as he planned to marry another woman. The divorce “took [Thompson’s] respectability away from her,” and Thompson subsequently suffered a nervous breakdown, the result of which was a year’s leave from Columbia. At first, she spent that leave in sequestered despondency at a sanatorium in upstate New York, but in 1928, resumed working to boost her career and her international reputation as a scholar and scientist, conducting research among nursery schools in Europe (she was fluent in French and German), and returning to the US to present at the International Congress of Psychology Conference in the fall of 1929. Six months later, in February of 1930, she was forced to resign from Columbia, having been told that the Rockefeller Foundation had eliminated funding for the Institute of Child Welfare Research.

It is especially important to assess the wider sociopolitical context surrounding children’s research initiatives at this time, though. A 1912 act of congress had created the US Children’s Bureau, a division of the federal government which, staffed entirely by women, sought to oversee issues of child health, mortality, and treatment in America. The Children’s Bureau became, in 1921, the driving force behind the Sheppard-Towner Act, but shortly after became popularly connected to programs of Bolshevism and communism. The AMA – which had originally broken from its (rather modest) adherence to progressive politics in 1920 over the issue of compulsory health insurance – styled the Sheppard-Towner Act an “imported socialistic scheme” (Lemons 781), and launched a colorful public campaign against it in the pages, no less, of publications like *Popular Science Monthly*. At the time, many conservatives likewise sensed a link between feminism and Bolshevism, and the

AMA additionally viewed the Children's Bureau, as the bill's chief sponsor, as an engine of socialist extremism, set to destroy American democracy. Interestingly, while the AMA spoke out against the Sheppard-Towner Act, though, The Medical Woman's National Association supported it, and female physicians testified over and over again throughout the 1920s in defense of the measure. In reality, though, the provisions offered by the bill were quite meager, offering \$5,000 a year directly to each state, but only if "matching funds" were provided (Lemons 781). Those "matching funds" came from institutions such as The Rockefeller Foundation. When the Sheppard-Towner Act was defeated in 1929 – largely the result of the AMA's smear campaigns which repeatedly touted the Children's Bureau's "socialist" involvement to an America that was growingly increasingly anxious about fascism – the Rockefeller Foundation ceased to offer "matching funds," and children's and maternity initiatives in the United States were immediately halted.

For Thompson, this meant that she no longer had a job at Columbia, despite her former employer, James Russell, having assured her that, should the Institute be dissolved, she would be "transferred to [Columbia College]" and subsequently employed as a teacher there. She did not, however, have written proof of this agreement, and in 1929, James Russell was dead, and his son William Russell now served as dean. Thompson forlornly reflects upon these events in her (unpublished) autobiography, explaining that "when one party in a gentleman's agreement is a woman ... it counts for very little" (qtd. in Morse 137). Morse describes Thompson's disillusionment in being fired from Columbia, and sympathetically points to her mistreatment by that institution; she misses, however, the wider systems of bias and mistreatment (and those responsible for authoring them) that are more generally responsible for stemming the short-lived tide of progressive female enfranchisement in American politics, scholarship, and professionalism at the end of the 1920s. To a great extent, the reason more people today are not more familiar with Thompson's name and scientific work is *because of science* – that is to say, not science as a discipline,

but science as an institution in early twentieth-century America. The tenacity and vigor that fueled organizations like the AMA to work *against* progressive medical and scientific legislation, and to defund such initiatives, points to a conundrum in considering science as a field of progressively inclined research and knowledge.

For Thompson, however, the essentially conservative, cyclical nature of established scientific study had become a very old story by 1930. Inculcated science, operating collectively with both coterie exclusivity and authoritative influence, had, between 1890 and 1930, neglected the standards of empiricism, disregarded informed challenges to its dogmatic beliefs, and halted the progress and expansion of philanthropic scientific initiatives in the United States. Science was, in effect, science's own worst enemy, and Thompson had come to understand this through heartbreaking personal experience. For though funding was certainly at the root of her dismissal from Columbia, a notice of termination from Dean Russell additionally accused her of being "a poor teacher and an incompetent administrator," despite the fact that her teaching evaluations reflected high levels of student satisfaction, and that her work with the Institute for Child Welfare and Development had garnered international renown (Morse 137). Morse additionally suggests that the puritanically conservative Dean William Russell was famously intolerant of divorce, and that Thompson's marital woes may have furthermore prompted her dismissal (Morse 138). It is however also likely that Russell and other administrators at Columbia looked askance at Thompson's leave of absence, and begrudged her domestic responsibilities in addition to her professional duties.

Thompson began, once again, to look for academic work, but learned that reference letters from Columbia stated that she had been "dismissed from Teachers' College because of mental and physical illness" (Morse 138). As a result, she underwent psychiatric evaluations, providing documentation of her healthy mental state alongside submitted job applications. However, she was 56 at the time of her dismissal from Teachers' College, and the onset of the Depression offered the

excuse – if not necessarily the reality – that jobs were scarce for women when they were so badly needed for men. She searched for over a decade, but was unable to find employment, eventually moving in with her (now grown) daughter Eleanor after Columbia cut off the meager pension that had been guaranteed at the time of her forced resignation. Morse describes how Thompson's desire to be self-sufficient and intellectually vital lead her to write a beseeching letter to Mrs. Edsel Ford, wife of Henry Ford, Jr., stating that she “had never done any kind of factory work but that she was willing to try” (139), to which she received no reply. Helen Thompson was still living with her daughter and daughter's family in 1947 when she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died at the age of seventy-two.

Fact Meets Fiction

Helen Bradford Thompson's story furnishes one plausible ending to the narratives that Phelps and Jewett, writing in the 1880s, weren't able to complete. For Thompson was a young girl and just coming of age in the 1880s, and likely informed by a spirit of social progressivism, brought to life in the pages of popular fiction, that imagined American women as doctors, scientists, and educated professionals. Both Phelps and Jewett wrestle in their novels with the question of marriage as it pertained to educated women at the close of the nineteenth century; Dr. Zay consents to marry, and Nan refuses, indicating that these stories – had they continued – might have ended very differently, in spite of all their similarities. It is clear, however, from Thompson's story that Phelps and Jewett were correctly anticipating a crucial obstacle in the life of professional women in their narrational negotiations of the marriage question with relation to their respective fictional characters. For it is likewise clear that, for Thompson, marriage proved personally difficult, and perhaps even professionally disastrous, if we are additionally willing to entertain the idea that she may have been dismissed from Columbia on account of her status as a divorcée.

In addition to the hazards of marriage, though, Phelps and Jewett's novels also presuppose and comment upon the lonely life of the female professional during this period. From Thompson's biography, we get the impression that her intellectual progress – like her professional research – happened largely without the support of a university community, without scholarly fellowship or encouragement, and without professional acknowledgment. In fact, communities of psychologists and scientific researchers in America did more to inhibit her research than to foster or sustain it. This is why she, by the end of her life, expressed such bitterness towards both institutions of higher education and scientific research, which itself might have been mistaken for proof of Edward H. Clarke's theories that intellectual training provokes only misery in women since they are not biologically disposed to it. Rather, though, it should remind us of Phelps' claims that, in a society which refuses to entertain and permit the intellectual activities of women, the result is often a "sense of perplexed disappointment, of baffled intelligence, of unoccupied powers, of blunted aspirations ... enough to create any illness which nervous wear and misery can create" (*Sex* 137). Thompson, as we have seen, suffered from this very same "nervousness" described by Phelps; in fact, Jennifer Fleissner suggests that many women, victims of the late nineteenth-century hysteria *over* female hysteria, similarly suffered in having their anguish over thwarted educational or professional careers dismissed as mere "nervousness". "Women's modernity in the 1890s ... include[d] at its core a burgeoning skepticism about marriage and bearing children – a skepticism often viewed as 'neurotic' – and a concomitant interest in earning money on one's own" (20). The dishonorable, and vague, circumstances of Thompson's dismissal from Columbia, and the perceived stigma attached to her name throughout her later attempts to reenter academia, seem to indicate that this was likewise the case for her.

The question that we are left to consider is, of course, *why*. Why during this period – one in which America saw the long-awaited advancement of women via the passage of a federal suffrage

amendment, and one in which the country likewise witnessed the expansion of both career and educational opportunities for women – why would this be Helen Bradford Thompson’s story? Why would the age of empirical science, in wresting itself from the comparatively embarrassing legacies of nineteenth-century thought (phrenology was now irrevocably dead; evolution was now irrevocably alive), fail to entertain the possibilities of empiricism? The answer lies, in part, in the comparison of two figures: Henry James and William James. For as previously discussed in Chapter Two, Henry James was both intolerant of and resolutely attached to expectations of genre in literary production, especially so far as those expectations were synonymous with assumptions of gender. If Anne Moncure Crane had written a sentimental novel, portraying a simple romance, with either a blissful or purely disastrous denouement, he would have dismissed the book as mere women’s writing, as “sentimental rot,” and as unworthy of serious criticism. Since Crane did not produce such a book, though, he was required to consider it as a genuine literary artifact, and use genre instead as a tool for critiquing its author’s gender. For in writing *Emily Chester*, Crane fails to act as a woman should, in James’ eyes. And the same can be said of Thompson, whose *Mental Traits of Sex*, produced, like Crane, at the start of her career, ended up derailing – rather than boosting – her prospects as an intellectual, on account of crimes against genre.

William James, in his 1892 “Plea for Psychology as a Natural Science,” admits to the rather unscientific history of psychology as a discipline. He describes it as “a mass of phenomenal description, gossip, myth” (146) – that is, as speculation, hearsay, and the work of ensconced tradition and lore. If we map this initial description of the field of psychology onto a brand of human perception, it very nearly matches the conditions previously ascribed to *female*, or feminine, intelligence. It compares, for instance, to Spencer’s contention that female intelligence is “receptive” rather than “originative,” and thus more prone to disseminating gossip and hearsay than to originating thoughtful statements. Likewise, it also compares to Brooks’ assertions that the human

female is, at the cellular level, disposed to a kind of “conservative” biology that makes her the keeper of “traditions,” rather than the author of “innovations” (which Moi interprets as meaning “Women’s brains can deal with known, the ordinary, and the everyday ... Women preserve the old, men discover the new” [17]). Thus we can see that William James, when he complains of the “softness” of psychology as a field of research in 1893, is likewise lamenting its appearance as “feminine” alongside the “harder,” more fact-based methodologies of natural science. If, in James’ opinion, psychology is ever to be taken seriously as a natural science, it must bolster its adherence to methods of “prediction and control,” and to a finite range of “practical rules,” for which, James says, “every educator, every jail-warden, every doctor, every clergyman, every asylum-superintendent, asks of psychology” (148). James’ vision of psychological research is, then, for it to function as a means of authoritative control, as a set of rules which might be handed down to the petty gatekeepers of society in order to placate anxieties and inform – indeed, stipulate – public opinion. *This* is the reason psychology must attend to the imperatives of empiricism: not because those methods in themselves point to the truth, or because they are in any way scientifically *better* than the old strategies of “phenomenal description, gossip, and myth”. Rather, psychology must, according to James, become more empirical in order to offer and enforce the kinds of vulgar, universal rules that society and its wardens so crave.

To put it another way, James wanted to see psychology become less womanly – stripped of sentiment and wishy-washy speculation – and more authoritative. This, to some psychologists at the turn of the century, meant collecting material and empirical evidence to support theories of human cognition. To others, it meant simply creating rules and sticking by them. Thompson, in conducting trials and amassing data for *Mental Traits of Sex*, assumed that her discipline was interested in the former, to only later discover that its adherents were in fact far more invested in the latter: Thompson’s colleagues wanted, at all costs, to appear empirical in order to lay claim to authority.

James characterizes such pseudo-empiricists as an “enormous body of persons who are most definitely interested in the control of states of mind” (148). In her research, though, Thompson sought not to offer rules and methods of control, but rather evidence capable of destroying the old rules. In this way, and in others, she was guilty of transgressing laws of genre, both those that sought to define the functions of psychological research, and those that limited female intellectual production to certain prescribed spheres. Or, in other words, Thompson had two choices: she could play by the old rules and use her research to bolster preexisting theories of “the natural woman,” or she could be a housewife and mother. As a woman, capable only of imitative, “receptive” intelligence, and incapable of original intellectual production, she was only expected (and permitted) to recapitulate knowledge. She was not expected to author it.

This line of analysis ought to reveal a number of similarities between the scientist Helen Bradford Thompson and the novelist Anne Moncure Crane, invested though they were in separate spheres of “contribution” – “to science through its matter” on the one hand and “to art through its form” on the other, to recall Higginson. And it is additionally interesting, of course, to note the significance of the James’ brothers upon both women’s intellectual careers. But their stories, taken together, also shed light on the ideological structures that underpin authorial prowess, critical regard, and canonicity. For in spite of Thompson’s findings and research, her name has not garnered the same kind of posthumous fame given to many of her male contemporaries: William Isaac Thomas, for example, her colleague at the University of Chicago whose dissertation *On a Difference in Metabolism in the Sexes* echoed the research of Thomson and Geddes, went onto become a famed sociologist, known now for the “Thomas theorem,” a fundamental principle of sociology. Thomas’ 1907 work *Sex and Society: Studies in the Psychology of Sex* has long been touted as touchstone in the history of the psychology of sex difference. In that work, Thomas mentions that “[Women] are not readily admitted to the intellectual world of men,” but that there is “not only a reluctance on the part

of men to admit them, but a reluctance – or rather a real inability – on their part to enter” (302), an inability which, in Thomas’ eyes, relates not to cognitive inferiority, but rather to the mechanisms of “tradition” and polite behavior communicated through custom. This work, like Thompson’s *The Mental Traits of Sex*, came out of Thomas’ dissertation, which was itself finished a year before Thompson’s *Sex and Society* was, however, published *two years after* Thompson’s book, yet does not mention that work (though Thomas elsewhere admitted to having been swayed by Thompson’s research). Essays taken directly from Thomas’ earlier dissertation research, which bear such incendiary titles as “The Mind of Woman and the Lower Races,” and in which he often agrees with anthropological theories regarding “wom[a]n as intermediate between the child and the man” (18), are now often omitted from collections of his work. Thomas went on to become editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* and president of the American Sociological Society, and in hindsight, he is now popularly hailed as imminently “progressive” in his views.

It is not, then, entirely the case that American psychological and scientific scholars were deaf to new research concerning sex difference at the turn of the century; it is more the case that they were unwilling to accept such research when it came from women. For it is likewise essential to note that Helen Bradford Thompson, though she might have appeared so, was not entirely alone in working as a female scientist at this time. Another of her colleagues at Chicago, Jessie Taft, earned her degree in biology before switching to graduate work in psychology. Her dissertation, finished in 1913 and published in 1916, was entitled “The Woman Movement from the Point of View of Social Consciousness,” and her research inspired many feminists working in pursuit of a federal suffrage amendment, even while it was largely ignored among psychologists and other academics. Taft, like Thompson, also struggled to gain academic employment, and eventually resigned herself to a career outside of academia, though she continued to work and publish – again, like Thompson – without university support or funding. She finally landed an academic job in 1934 – at the age of fifty-two –

teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, where she worked until her retirement in 1950.⁴¹ The bulk of her publications, however, appeared prior to this, and thus without direct institutional encouragement.

The bulk of scientific research and advancement deriving from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries is now attributed to male researchers, in the same way that canonical status was handed down to James' *The Portrait of a Lady* in the wake of Crane's critical dismissal and physical death. It is therefore important to emphasize, once again, that the point is not necessarily to resurrect such overlooked or forgotten works; *Mental Traits of Sex*, a pioneering text for its era, has since been rewritten many times over by modern scholars, armed with more nuanced understandings of psychological response and neuroscientific processes. Because, of course, science, just like literature, inevitably progresses – except when it doesn't. Take, for instance, a May 2010 article appearing in the British tabloid *The Daily Mail* (which, incidentally, boasts a majority female readership) with the following headline: "Sorry, men ARE more brainy than women (and more stupid, too!) It's a simple scientific fact says one of Britain's top dons." The "top don" in question, it turns out, is a woman, and though the article is written by British psychologist Richard Lynn, it relies on studies conducted by that woman – Baroness Susan Greenfield, professor of neurophysiology at Oxford – to make its point. Lynn, however, bases his opinion on "a lifetime of academic research" when he nonetheless proclaims that "the main reasons why there are not more female science professors or chief executives or Cabinet ministers is that, on average, men are more intelligent than women." Lynn's condescending attempt to quell the "howls of feminist outrage" is that this fact is the product of "statistics, not sexism" – as though the two were somehow mutually exclusive (Lynn). Helen Bradford Thompson would likely be unsurprised, however, to see such this brand of nineteenth-century pseudo-science washing up once again, the detritus of ideological obstinacy and methodological laziness.

The cycle of instant-replay science here described in this chapter helps us, I hope, to view the slow march of scientific progress, and the extent to which much apparent scientific progress operates *sub specie boni* without empirical, or material, qualification. It is in this way, once again, that we ought to be impelled to consider science and literature as side-by-side, dual functioning systems, in their reliance on (and exploitation of) ideologies of embeddedness, and the slow encroachment of new theories, modes, methods and genres upon those ideologies, as exhibited here in the work of Helen Bradford Thompson. My point has not been to direct attention to *Mental Traits of Sex* per se – nor even to the novels of Phelps and Jewett – but rather to use all three of these works in the service of a larger project, one which contextualizes literary and scientific advancement while likewise shedding light on the both accepted knowledge and canonical supremacy. It is my contention that science and literature alike are all too eager to dismiss authorial innovation when it comes in the form of a woman, and that in this correspondence there is likewise room for analysis of the ways the rules of each – science *and* literature – work in tandem with each other, often with the result of mandating our collective thinking about sex and gender, and “nature” more generally.

Chapter Four

Exceptional Sex: Evolutionary Logic in Edith Wharton's Early Fiction

"Biology is not yet come to that stage in its development where it can offer many solidly founded generalisations on which other sciences can build."

Vernon L. Kellogg, *Darwinism Today* (1907),
underlined twice by Wharton in her copy of Kellogg's text

"How little, as the years go on, theories, ideas, abstract conceptions of life, weigh against the actual, against the particular way in which life presents itself – to women, especially."

Edith Wharton, "The Quicksand,"
from *The Descent of Man* (1904)

Despite its crimes against them, many women at the close of the nineteenth century still believed that science would free them from the confines of a "natural" femininity. These women, likely flushed with the same kind of optimism that had inspired Helen Bradford Thompson's entry into both academia and scientific study, looked to empiricism to prove, in fact, that there was in reality *nothing empirical* about regnant theories of difference regarding men and women's cognitive abilities. For, of course, if men and women's intelligence turned out to be quantifiably commensurate, then only social mechanisms and ideological supposition might be held accountable for any remaining differences in their rights or treatment.

Thompson's story, however, and its unfortunate denouement, indicates the extent to which science and empiricism served to hinder, rather than help, American women, and the suffragist cause as well. Yet it is important that we take stock of women's interest and participation in scientific discourse during this era: so much of that participation has been, like Helen Bradford Thompson's name, neglected, forgotten, or willfully obscured – as it was in the 1850s, and ever after – at the hands of *genre*. For while Thompson was, in the early part of the 1890s, hard at work on her undergraduate degree in Chicago, and laboring for the right to claim her identity as both a woman and a scientist, other women like her were reading and consuming scientific knowledge on their own. This, in fact, was in keeping with a larger trend; Richard Hofstadter, for instance, documents

the “overwhelming interest in scientific development and the new rationalism” (24) which gripped the American public during this time, indicating that women as well as men were looking to science with new interest and fresh expectations. A young and newly married Edith Wharton, for instance, was doing just that, and the careful notes, marks, and annotations that Wharton made to her voluminous library of scientific texts speak to her depth of interest in the subject. They also, however, expose her views on the obsolescence of theories of natural femininity – a decade before Wharton’s most infamous protagonist, Lily Bart, would be able to do so.

Edith Wharton’s love affair with science was likely inspired by an *actual* love affair, or the lack thereof. Wharton met Walter Van Rensselaer Berry in the summer of 1883, and in him discovered not only her first profoundly romantic attachment, but more importantly a “fleeting hint of what the communion of kindred intelligences might be,” as she puts it (*Backward Glance* 107). Much has been critically made of Wharton’s life-long attachment to Berry, yet Wharton’s own words for her friend defy many biographers’ overly romantic accounts of their relationship. Wharton describes Berry as “born with an exceptionally sensitive literary instinct” and a “critical sense far outweighing his creative gift” (*Backward Glance* 108); as such, I prefer to read their early encounters, as Hermione Lee does, in the terms of an “opening of a door to intellectual intimacy, a glimpse of the sort of relationship she would enjoy with the men in her life” (Lee 64) – all the men, that is, except for her husband. For Walter Berry did not want to marry anyone (he remained a bachelor until his death), and his momentary disappearance from her life in 1885 corresponded with the young Edith Jones’ engagement to Edward Wharton. “Teddy” was “utterly unliterary” (Lee 74); his paltry contributions to Wharton’s library included a few unread classics, like Bret Harte’s *Poetical Works*, and adventure narratives like Captain Mahan’s *From Sail to Steam: Recollections of a Naval Life*. He was an unconvincing replacement for the rabidly intellectual Berry, and Wharton soon secured a better one in the form of a close intellectual friend, Egerton Winthrop who, in being twenty-three

years her senior, also became a kind of literary adviser, overseeing her studies and her reading. All of the scientific volumes in Wharton's personal library, collected and held today at her Berkshires estate, The Mount, date from the year of her first meeting with Winthrop, 1893.

Recall that 1893 was also the year that Helen Bradford Thompson entered the University of Chicago as part of its second freshman class. Wharton's consuming interest in scientific literature, especially evolutionary biology, is alluringly concurrent with Thompson's intellectual and professional progress during this same time. For also during that year, psychologist and researcher James Mark Baldwin, chair of the University of Toronto's department of Logic and Metaphysics, was experimenting with an investigational brand of empirical testing on live human subjects. He published his findings from this series of experiments two years later, in 1895, in *The Psychological Review*, and thereafter received a letter from James R. Angell at the University of Chicago, who informed Baldwin that he had "ready a considerable body of experiments remarkably similar to your own, from which I had drawn conclusions absurdly like your own" (Baldwin 318-319). The "findings" in question – relating to the so-called "type" theory of reaction with respect to such empirical testing – were subsequently published by Angell in the 1896 edition of the *Psychological Review*, and were aided by Angell's interactions with a bright young undergraduate: Helen Bradford Thompson. Baldwin went on to include his own article on the subject, "Types of Reaction," in his 1902 work *Fragments in Philosophy and Science*. Wharton's first-edition copy of that text, and her markings in it, show that she was keeping step with contemporary scientific discovery to a similar degree – and at the same time – as Thompson.

It was because of Winthrop that Wharton likely purchased Baldwin's *Fragments*, not to mention the works of Darwin, Haeckel, Spencer, Huxley, and those of other scientific researchers now less commonly remembered today (like Vernon L. Kellogg, H. Drinkwater, and William Kingdon Clifford). She approached this reading with the utmost attention and seriousness, in part

because she had been instructed to do so. Wharton, having never received formal education in her life, was used to taking her cues from men when it came to learning; as a child, she had often appealed to her older, private school-trained brothers for advice on the subject. And, in 1893, Wharton's literary reputation and skill alike were fledgling – she had published a smattering of poems throughout the 1880s and, in 1891, had landed her first short story, “Mrs. Manstey's View,” in *Scribner's*. But the older Winthrop saw fit to indulge Wharton's propensity for letters and learning, in spite of the fact that his class position – like hers – otherwise discouraged and prevented such training for a woman. Winthrop issued a stern and fascinating list of directives for the young Edith, designed to, in her words, “systematize[] my reading and fill[] some of the worse gaps in my education” (qtd. in Lee, 70). A lone surviving communiqué from Winthrop serves as an example of that “systematizing” influence:

Darwinism, etc. Suggestions.

Read slowly, marking important parts in the margins with pencil.

Re-read marked parts after finishing a chapter, and all back marked parts before beginning a new chapter.

If a passage is not understood after two readings, mark an X in the margin, and wait till book is finished before trying again ...

Learn *each definition* of as many scientific words & terms as possible and write them in the book, as indicated. Most people's idea of what a word means is “à peu près”!

... Learn a few definitions, like that of evolution for instance, “by heart,” – while your hair is being done!

...Don't forget that this sort of thing will make you able to do everything better ... (qtd. in Benstock 483, emphasis original)

Yet the question that we must ask is why, aside from her attachment to and respect for Winthrop, was Wharton so interested in contemporary scientific inquiry? What stakes underscore her reading of these works (reading which Winthrop's aforementioned guide makes easier to decode)?

For while it is true that many American women endowed science with the optimism of progress and change for their sex, Edith Wharton was not among them. This is not to say, however, that Wharton did not intellectually grapple with questions of sex and gender: indeed, the opposite is evident in almost every novel and story she ever wrote. But, rather, Wharton opted to struggle with these questions personally, rather than categorically, and to work them out on her own, much like her characters are often forced to do. Later in life, she denigrated "the cause" for women's rights in private letters to friends like Mary Berenson, letters which, having since been made public in various collected forms, now arouse the ire and consternation of feminist critics. Yet we can hardly take Wharton at her word when she tells Berenson (with whom she had a somewhat tortured friendship, and whose state of mind she viewed as additionally suspect) that she believes "women were made for pleasure & procreation" (qtd. in Lewis 486). These words – written pejoratively at the age of sixty-five – do not serve to erase a literary career dedicated to the careful exposure of "[t]he politics of sexual injustice and inequality," as Lee calls them (187-88). Nor, I think, ought we to assume that the "making" in this instance comes from nature alone; Wharton, to be sure, was ever aware of society's propensity to make and mutilate the human subject according to its own codes, standards, and desires. And we must furthermore keep in mind that Wharton understood herself to be a *satirist*.⁴² critics Avril Horner and Janet Beer argue that it was satire that allowed Wharton to examine "the roles of women in the social world" – an examination which, over the course of her writing career, "becomes even sharper" (9).

Indeed, I want to argue that sex and gender *did* lie at the heart of Wharton's desire to educate herself in both science and evolutionary biology – that they were, in fact, the inspiration for that

learning, though in an indirect way. For Wharton's consumption of scientific ideas, much like her earliest published fiction, conveys a longing for transcendence by design: her adherence to Winthrop's directives for reading and scientific study demonstrate her belief that gender, as a socially negotiated horizon of generic expectation, may be transcended and furthermore renounced via action and, most importantly, education. Wharton wasn't interested in the suffragist cause, or in nascent programs of feminism, because she simply ceased, at a certain point in time, to see herself *as* categorically female. A few critics have, over the years, pursued this line of analysis in their study of Wharton; Gloria C. Erlich, for instance, insists that Wharton formulated her "conceptions of power, gender, and sexuality" from a mishmash of impressions gleaned from family and domestic politics (25), yet Erlich offers an explanation of this tendency that is, for my taste, too neatly Freudian. According to Erlich, Wharton's strained relationship with her mother resulted in a logical enough hero-worship for her father, which itself translated to a kind of sympathy for and identification with men and tropes of masculinity. This interpretation, however, fails to consider the overwhelming prominence of Wharton's female protagonists, though, and her alluringly harsh treatment of them. Wharton's somewhat dogged belief that other women may furthermore choose to similarly subvert the limitations of their gendered status prompted her to acerbically judge their efforts and, often, dismiss them as well.

In this chapter, I argue for a progressively nuanced – as opposed to a generically one-dimensional – understanding of Wharton's commitment to questions of sex, gender, and science at the close of the nineteenth century. I do so first in working from a collection of heretofore understudied primary materials – that is, her notes, markings, and annotations made in her personal copies of turn-of-the-century editions of scientific texts. I continue, however, by applying insight gleaned from those materials to the earliest of her fiction, in particular stories taken from her first two published collections, *The Greater Inclination* (1899) and *Crucial Instances* (1900). Wharton takes both of

her titles for these collections from scientific (or scientifically situated) works that she read in the 1890s and here, too, we glimpse a connection between her consumption of scientific ideas, her literary agenda, and her simultaneously pitiless and sympathetic response to the social evolution and advancement of women.

Intuition, Inclination, and the Science of Reality

The younger Edith Wharton – the one who assiduously read, and marked up, her copies of Darwin, Spencer, and Haeckel in the last decades of the twentieth century – looks very different from the old Edith Wharton. This is in part thanks to the work of her biographers, who for a long time favored the image of an aging, snobbish member of the cultural elite, and styled her as a woman recalcitrantly wedded to outdated social standards, regressive politics, and her Catholic faith. Deboarah Hecht points out that Percy Lubbock, first and most notorious among Wharton’s biographers, helped to perpetuate just such an image as a means of “sink[ing] the reputation of an enemy” (255). Similarly, R.W.B. Lewis observes that Lubbock’s biography was colored by “subtly distributed malice towards its subject” (qtd. in Hecht 258). Indeed, Lubbock’s simplified and perhaps malicious portrait of Wharton (which, in turn, went on to inform future biographers’ efforts therein) furthermore fails to appropriately reckon with the image of a woman who, in her thirties and forties, eschewed restrictions imposed by both her class and gender, and who styled herself as an autodidact, an iconoclast, and an agnostic. It is, I want to argue, important that we synthesize these two versions of Wharton in order to more securely locate the motivating forces behind each.

For decades, scholars have mulled Wharton’s relationship to, and interest in, evolutionary biology and Darwinism. Marilyn Jones Lyde, writing more than half a century ago, identified Darwin as one of Wharton’s “four awakeners” (39),⁴³ or major sources of theoretical influence. R.W.B. Lewis additionally develops the story of Winthrop’s role in leading Wharton to Darwin, to some

extent overemphasizing the link between that intellectual camaraderie and a resulting Darwinian fixation on Wharton's part. "It was to Winthrop that she owed such understanding [of evolution and naturalism] ... Those fictional figures of hers who struggle pathetically and unsuccessfully against their stifling surroundings are belated offsprings of the tutelage of Egerton Winthrop" (56-57). And while evolutionary biology – particularly as that theory is made manifest through social interactions and cutthroat interpersonal politics – is certainly a hallmark of Wharton's fiction, it is yet important that we not overstate that relationship, or mischaracterize it. To begin, Lewis' condescending insistence on attributing "those fictional figures" wholly to Winthrop compares to critics' efforts to avowedly style Wharton as the "heiress" to Henry James' literary legacy.⁴⁴ This search for the Great-Man-behind-every-Wharton-novel contributes to a rather exhausting line of surviving scholarship.⁴⁵ Furthermore, simply attributing Wharton's interests in evolutionary biology to Darwin *per se* – as opposed to Darwinism – additionally simplifies the issue and greatly reduces the scope of Wharton's self-education in theories of evolution. For Wharton certainly read Darwin (she had two copies of *The Origin of Species*, so as not to be without a copy while residing at either of her later-life residences), but so, too, did she read his adherents, colleagues, disciples, and his antagonists. Darwin's individual influence on her writing therefore ought be viewed as similar to Winthrop's influence on her reading – that is, as the beginning, not the end, of the story.

More recently, Wharton scholars have attempted more nuanced, complex analyses of this kind, linking Wharton's fatalistic plot turns and seemingly helpless protagonists to theories of natural selection, or else diagnosing a survival-of-the-fittest mentality in her fiction. Judith P. Saunders, for instance, in *Reading Edith Wharton Through a Darwinian Lens* (2009) targets individual works and places them in the context of scientific and psychological theories of evolution, which Saunders calls "biopoetic investigation[s] of literary text" (3). Saunders' study, however, programmatically eschews any consideration of Wharton's interest in or reading of evolutionary theory. Rather, in lieu of

historically materialist accounts – Saunders suggests that these accounts are available elsewhere, chiefly through Wharton’s biographers though, as I have already pointed out, this is largely and regrettably not the case – she relies on “theory and research now current in the field of evolutionary biology” (2), a decision which makes for an array of critically unwieldy readings, wherein concepts taken from pop evolutionary psychology (like David M. Buss’s *The Evolution of Desire*) are haphazardly grafted onto close readings of Wharton’s novels, with varying success. Saunders defends this method in stating that,

If there is indeed a ‘universal human nature,’ as research in evolutionary psychology strongly indicates – that is, if ‘our thoughts, feelings, and behavior are the product of psychological adaptations’ that have evolved over a period of millions of years – then that human nature will prove susceptible to examination in literary representations with or without an author’s conscious design. (2)

Saunders’ neo-Foucauldian undermining of authorial experience, however, functions at the behest of a rather hefty assumption: “universal human nature.” And this is one instance in which a research agenda situated within and by the objectives of historical materialism might have come in handy. For Charles Darwin, at least, did not see the world in this way.

In the 1860s, for example, Darwin had struggled to bridge a universal theory of evolutionary progress – that is, his concept of *natural selection* – with his stated observation that women were, as a whole, less intelligent than men. Cynthia Eagle Russett explains that this led to his formulation of a very tenuous, and ultimately insupportable, theory of *sexual selection* (83). The problem was, however, that Darwin’s notion of sexual selection debased his previously published theory of natural selection, for if natural selection is itself supposed to be both totalizing and universal, certain traits – like intelligence – which are seen as evolutionarily advantageous (and therefore *preferred*) ought likewise to enter into sexual selection. As such, intelligence should be *as beneficial* for females of the species as

for men, yet Darwin's experiences told him that this was decidedly not so. This led Darwin to conclude that men and women must be kept separate, that they must be reared in separate environments (the workplace or school on the one hand, and the home on the other) in order to legitimize this conundrum and avoid resulting social conflict (Russett 84-85). These ideas, and the very possibility of resulting social conflicts, became the basis of Darwin's 1871 work, *The Descent of Man* – and also of Edith Wharton's 1903 short-story collection of the same name. The brand of psychological and biological evolutionary theory that Wharton was reading in the 1890s was not orchestrated by but, rather, positioned *against* conceptions of “universal human nature.” So while contemporary evolutionary psychology might “strongly indicate” and emphasize such an idea today, its inverse – arguments born from varying conceptions of innate human difference – informed the vast majority scientific thought at the turn of the century. To ignore this fact is to ignore the scientific doctrine of the period itself, and to deny Wharton's texts historically assimilative scientific meaning or connection, but also to deny Wharton meaningful participation in the intellectual climate of her era.

What, then, did Wharton seek in her reading of Darwin and Darwinism? Answers, no doubt – to very big questions. Wharton had been raised in accordance with an uninspired but familial Christian faith, dispensed by her stern and intellectually uncurious mother, Lucretia Rhineland Jones. Wharton was, in the late 1880s, in her twenties, married, and likely seeking adult answers to the questions that most human beings eventually ask themselves – answers she had been previously disallowed under the influence of her mother. We glimpse both the inspiration and ends for Wharton's stern program of self-education in her reading of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, her edition of which, like with her copy of *The Descent of Man*, dates from 1895. Two bookplates, affixed to the front cover pastedown (see Fig. 1), indicate that this book was in her library at Land's End – the first

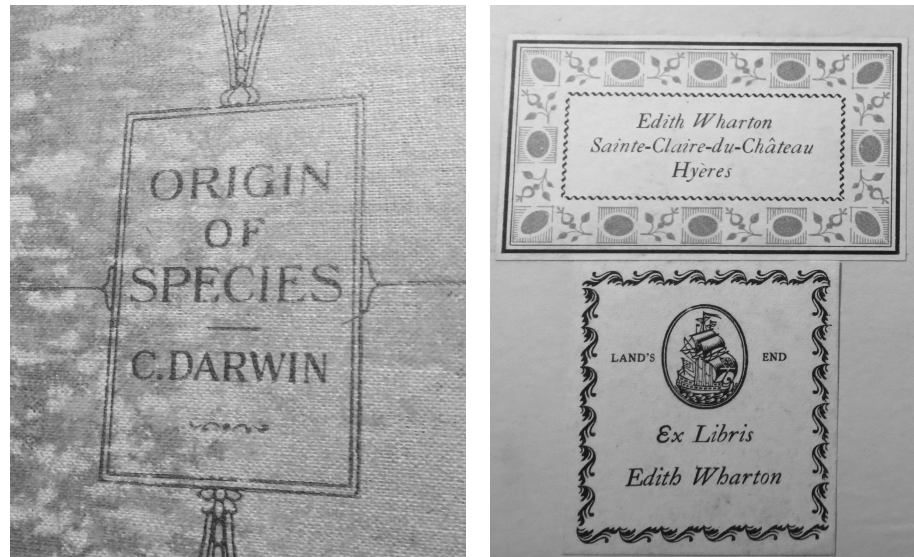


Figure 1: Author's photographs showing cover and front pastedown / bookplates included in Wharton's copy of *The Origin of Species*.

house she shared with Teddy, located in Newport, Rhode Island – and, later, also at her chateau in Hyères, France. Lee notes that Wharton was reading *The Origin of Species* in 1895 (70), and we know from Wharton's autobiography that it was at Winthrop's behest (he had given her this very copy) (*Backward Glance* 94). From her markings in the Darwin text, we can observe her efforts to digest the key points of his theory of natural selection: on page 111, Wharton underlines a description of two divergent species of wolves found in the Catskill Mountains, and places an "x" next to this example; similarly, on page 113 she underlines a section detailing individual modifications in a given species, and systems of inheritance: "if the varying individual did not actually transmit to its offspring its newly acquired character, it would undoubtedly transmit to them ... a still stronger tendency to vary in the same manner" (Darwin 113). Wharton is tracking Darwin's comments on how an aberrant trait becomes characteristic of a species over time. She follows this line of thought to page 135, where she again highlights a passage detailing the culmination of this process: "... according to my view, varieties are species in the process of formation, or are, as I have called them, incipient species" (Darwin 135).

Wharton's markings in this edition of *The Origin of Species* indicate both the intellectual capacity and willingness to follow Darwin's argument through a subsequent series of twists and turns. Taken aggregately, her annotations outline Darwin's theory of natural selection in whole, including the following key concepts: adaptation (the assumption of advantageous behavioral characteristics); variation; heredity; filiation, or transmutation; selection; and species. What's more is that she strives to contextualize her reading through intertextual annotations and cross-references: her copy of Vernon L. Kellogg's *Darwinism To-Day* (1907), for example, features underlined sections which correspond to those she marked more than a decade previously in Darwin's text. She scores, for example, a passage in which Kellogg asserts "There is a fundamental difference between the idea that fluctuating variations become specific characters through accumulation by selection, and the idea that new species arise as definite variations which, with their appearance, characterize the new form as a new species" (*Darwinism* 95-96), a point which links to and complicates Darwin's notion of *incipient species* (and permits Wharton to continue to ponder this issue).

In particular, though, the "origin story" outlined by Darwin in *The Origin of Species* is a conceptual sticking point for Wharton; in her books, she underlines passages relating to this idea time and again. In Kellogg's text, for instance, she does so with passages occurring on pages 18, 22, 28, 35, 40, 96, 194-195, and 227. Claire Preston argues that Wharton's reading of Darwin was "the most important intellectual experience of her life. It was a 'new vision' which replaced any religious belief she had held" (55), which corroborates Wharton's own comment that such reading made "The world ... more wonderful, the problem more interesting, the moral obligation more stern and ennobling" (qtd. in Preston). As such, it is clear that Wharton was, even a decade after having first encountered Darwin's most infamous founding text, still grappling with this particular piece of the puzzle (as, indeed, Darwin himself, and many Darwinists after, continued to do). If Preston is right – and I believe she is – that grappling was in itself a replacement, though perhaps not an entirely

permanent one, for the murkiness of religion, this idea partially explains Wharton's repeated attempts to get at the *origins* of human existence in her scientific reading. At any rate, such questions stimulated Wharton's intellectual cravings, and likewise kindled an abiding interest in topics of species adaptation and progressive evolution. On page 387 of *Darwinism To-Day*, next to Kellogg's injunction that "to question life by new methods, from new angles, on closer terms, under more precise conditions of control" is the "requirement and the opportunity of the biologist of to-day" (*Darwinism* 387), Wharton writes "See p. 377," and in that location she additionally underlines Kellogg's comment that "natural selection persists by saying No" (*Darwinism* 377) – that is, by eliminating the weakest representatives of the species in the name of progress. This would, in time, become a hallmark of her writing style; her novel *The House of Mirth*, for instance, was published in the same year as Kellogg's text, and her willingness to "say No" to certain protagonists like Lily Bart may, as these notes suggest, have helped Wharton to understand herself as on par with the contemporary biologist who, in Kellogg's words, "hear[s] some whisper from the Sphinx" (*Darwinism* 387) in attempting to rationalize and understand the biological machinations of all life, but particularly human life.

It seems, therefore, that Wharton immersed herself in, and empathized with, scientific inquiry to the point where she may have understood her writing (particularly her brand of literary realism) as functioning, to some extent, as *science*. For as Thomas S. Kuhn points out, Darwin's *The Origin of Species* proffered nineteenth-century audiences more questions than answers: where, previously, evolutionary theorists envisioned "each new stage of evolutionary development" as a "more perfect realization of that plan that had been present from the start," Darwin's major achievement was in distempering the designs of that plan. "*The Origin of Species* recognized no set goal either by God or nature ... What could 'evolution,' 'development,' and 'progress' mean in the absence of a specified goal?" (Kuhn 171-172). That "absence," I maintain, provided Wharton an

entrée to both scientific discourse and meaningful artistic creation: in Darwin's questions, she glimpsed opportunity, and the chance to posit answers to some of the most essential human conundrums via literary realism.

What's even more interesting, though, is the evidence of a kind of cognitive cross-pollination between realism and science in the early part of the twentieth century. Wharton's ability to interpret political programs of realism in the terms of scientific inquiry was likely helped by some scientists' corroborative interests in the quantitative representation of reality. Here, Kellogg serves as a prime example: in a later, 1922 article appearing in *The North American Review*, Kellogg opens brashly with the contention that "The scientist tries to be a realist" ("World Trouble" 765). His argument here stems from his experiences during World War I, for it was therein that Kellogg personally witnessed a kind of vulgar adaptation of the paradigmatic work of evolutionary biology and Darwinism to social, cultural, and political agendas designed to manipulate and invalidate the efforts of democratic citizenries. A former Stanford University lecturer, Kellogg had relocated to Brussels in 1916 to serve as Director of American Commission for Relief in Belgium, a position that he gained through appointment by Herbert Hoover (his former student at Stanford). It was in this context that he learned that the "German War Machine" was, in fact, intellectually driven by crude interpretations of Darwinian logic, in particular the "creed ... of a natural selection based on violent and competitive struggle" (Kellogg *Headquarters* 28). Kellogg was furthermore dismayed to discover that a leading faction of German intellectuals lending scholarly credence to the war were, in fact, biologists. "In talking it out biologically, we agreed that the human race is subject to the influence of the fundamental biologic laws of variation, heredity, selection, and so forth ... But," Kellogg maintains, "[man] does not owe all of his progress to these factors, or, least of all, to any one of them, as natural selection, a thesis [the German biologist] Professor von Flussen seemed ready to maintain" (*Headquarters* 24).

Having observed this kind of vulgar scientific determinacy lurking at the heart of the German war campaign, Kellogg, a former pacifist and humanitarian, was ideologically transformed. The result was that, after the war had ended, he devoted his intellectual and scholarly energies to exposing fraudulent evolutionary biological thinking, as well as to rallying for increased philosophical and psychological “realism” in the sciences. Here, Kellogg’s use of the term “realism” primarily refers to method:

[The scientist] may be temporarily idealist in his outlook ... He may be a man of vision – if he is not he will never be a great scientist ... But in this striving for ideals he will be realist in method. He will test the methods and measures suggested by other men – and by himself – by his understanding of realities. (“World Trouble” 765)

In this passage, what looks at first like an appeal to empiricism and quantitative reasoning proves to be, in fact, an insistence upon human intervention, qualitative analysis, and the kind of assurance that comes from an interdisciplinary community of responsible scholars. Kellogg is asking, in fact, for “nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material,” to recall Howells’ famous words – but he is asking it of scientists, not writers, where supposition would have previously held that science itself was incapable of doing anything else. As such, Kellogg’s 1922 plea for “scientific realism” points to both paradigmatic inconsistencies and ideological abuses within the fields of scientific study. It is not enough to *do* science, his article suggests; one must comprehend and assume social responsibility *for* doing science.

Thus, to the same extent that Wharton, reading and taking notes on Kellogg in 1907 just as her first major novel, *The House of Mirth*, was appearing in print, saw herself *doing* science through realism, Kellogg himself eventually came to grasp the necessity of *doing* realism through science. It is in this way that we continue to see science and literature, in the early part of the twentieth century, finishing each other’s sentences – that is to say, providing intellectual support and recourse to the

other, to the varying benefit or detriment of each, given the specific scenario. It therefore strikes me as furthermore absurd that any scholar might choose to ignore the relationship between the two at this time in favor of a historically detached, designified set of connections to contemporary thinking on evolutionary biology (as though that field of work, too, existed without precedent, progress, or historical context). Kellogg's most crucial insight in "World Trouble and Realism" is the point that "the world, facing a sea of industrial, economic, and political trouble" seems to forget that "the trouble is obviously man-made trouble – unless we accept the fatalistic conception of our being the mere plaything of cosmic forces" (766). If, Kellogg argues, we can recall that human suffering at the hands of human cruelty is not, as the Germans see it, biologically destined, we may remember that "there ought to be possible man-contrived remedies," though "to devise these it will be necessary to know the real elements of the trouble" (766). Kellogg is instructing people – and scientists most of all – to give up their delusions of biological supremacy which he sees as having, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, developed less as challenges *to* religious dogma than as a wholesale ideological replacements for it.

Which brings us back to Wharton. It seems that her life-long, consuming interest in "reading [] science, philosophy, and anthropology – and a lifetime of translating social history into fiction" (23), as Lee calls it, was itself endemic to a desire to see the human species realistically, stripped of the trappings of its intellectual subservience to fate, God, and other mechanisms of social irresponsibility. In the 1890s and early 1900s, particularly, she believed that science would help her to do this; Lee furthermore sees Wharton as "read[ing] herself out of 'old New York' via Herbert Spencer, Darwin, Nietzsche, [and] Ernst von Haeckel" (23). But, I want to argue, insofar as she was reading herself "out" of this milieu, Wharton was likewise getting closer to it, becoming more intimate with it, placing it under the microscope and observing its every movement with the detached, realistic objectivity of a laboratory scientist. This method – realistic, scientific – became

her *modus operandi*, as she came to recognize the subtending social processes of her New York surroundings as, in truth, a set of socially complex rules meant to meaningfully complicate other, biologically mundane ones.

Haeckel, for instance, helped Wharton to discern the unmiraculousness of life, and the social systems set up so that people might better cope with the knowledge of their own unmiraculousness. In her copy of Haeckel's *The History of Creation* (ed. 1893), Wharton begins by underlining his course contention that ““Perhaps nothing will make the full meaning of the theory of descent [sic] clearer than calling it, ‘the *non-miraculous history of creation*’” (7, emphasis original). This, indeed, was a paradigmatically novel idea which the stolid young Wharton would later deploy in her writing. Elsewhere in *The History of Creation*, Wharton likewise underlines Haeckel's explanation of scientific materialism as “affirm[ing] in reality no more than that everything in the world goes on naturally – that every effect has its cause, and every cause its effect. It merely assigns to causal law – that is, the law of a necessary connection between cause and effect – its place over the entire series of phenomena that can be known” (36). One might, for a moment, pause to marvel at Wharton's seemingly cool transition from a Christian upbringing to an evolutionary biological outlook by the age of thirty; in order to rationalize this move, it helps to look elsewhere in her library. Wharton cherished the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and revered him, giving his books – like those of Whitman's – pride of place in all of her libraries. And with Emerson, too, she was assiduous and diligent in her reading, annotating, from a comparatively young age, her 1884 copies of his *Essays* and *Poems*. In the former work, she notes on page 288 (with dramatic flourish – underlining and multiple sets of brackets – see Fig. 2) Emerson's proclamation that “valor” is to be found in a person's ability to “*prefer[] his truth to his past apprehension of truth*, and in his alert acceptance of it from whatever quarter; the intrepid conviction that his laws, his relations to society, his Christianity, may be at any time superceded and deacease” (Emerson “Circles” 288, emphasis mine, reflecting

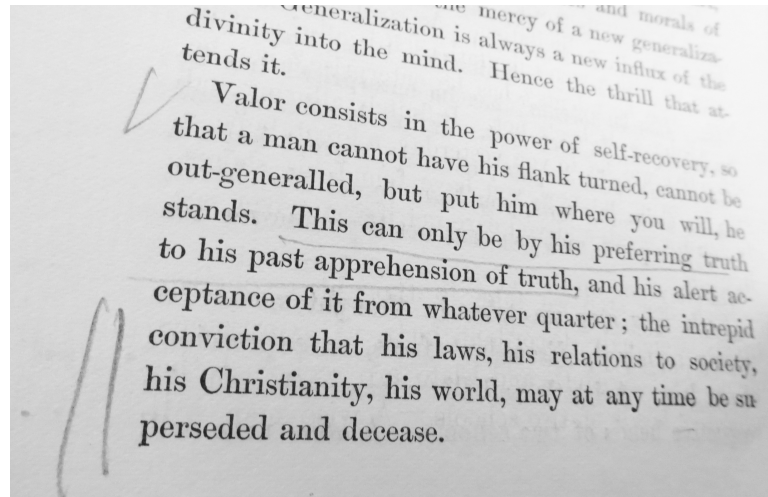


Figure 2: Author's photographs showing markings in Wharton's 1884 copy of Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Essays*.

Wharton's underlining). From this, we may furthermore gauge Wharton's intellectual readiness to consider new truths and dispense with "past apprehensions of truth". And insofar as "truth" itself connects to *reality*, we may additionally see these efforts as programmatic, as parts of a larger quest for *truthful* representation.

But truth, it must be said, is not a given for Wharton; it is not descended from *a priori* logic, or from a single original source. She underlines another line from Haeckel's *The History of Creation* which refers to Goethe – another of her primary "awakeners" – who maintains that truth does not and cannot exist without perception, and vice versa. "This unity of all nature, the animating of all matter, the inseparability of mental power and corporeal substance, Goethe has asserted in the words, 'Matter can never exist and be active without mind, nor can mind without matter'" (Goethe qtd. in Haeckel, 22). Wharton, at least, perceives that truth is in itself perception, and that it is therefore made and dispensed by human beings. This is similarly evident in her markings in a 1912 copy of the work *Le Bergonisme, ou une Philosophie de la Mobilité* by the French philosopher Julien Benda. Benda famously disagreed with Henri Bergson's contention that science was superior to literature in getting at the "truth" of human existence, and in this text, which centers on ruminations of Henri Bergson's work, Wharton underlines key points of that argument. On page 65, for instance,

she marks Benda's comments on scientists' insistence upon styling concrete and abstract knowledge (science on the one hand, and literature on the other) as necessarily *opposed* to each other, a position which neglects the fact that science and literature are both commonly interested in the project of apprehending human truths: ““Et remarquons leur manie d’opposer la connaissance *vive* à la connaissance *de l’abstrait*. Comme si la connaissance *vive* d’une chose *abstraite*, ça n’existait pas” [“And let us note their [scientists’] obsession with opposing concrete, sharp knowledge to abstract knowledge. As if concrete knowledge of the abstract itself did not even exist”] (65, my translation, emphasis original). We might interpret Wharton’s interactions with this text as evidence furthermore of her sympathy for its arguments, for while she also owned copies of Bergson’s works, his 1907 *L’Évolution Créatrice* is, unlike the Benda text, wholly unmarked, and for the most part even uncut, suggesting that she never got around to reading it.

Wharton saw the constant revision of one’s own truths and realities – that is, the continued renewal and reassessment of the forces of personal ideology – as necessary to mental evolution and to progress, and therefore to human life in general. She feared, as with the Emerson example outlined above, mental inertia, particularly insofar as the inertia might become unquestioned doctrine. In a 1901 copy of the mathematician and philosopher William Kingdon Clifford’s *Lectures and Essays*, she suggests as much in underlining the following passage:

A mind that would grow must let no ideas become permanent except such as lead to action. Towards all others it must maintain an attitude of absolute receptivity; admitting all, being modified by all, but permanently biased by none. To become crystallised, fixed in opinion and mode of thought, is to lose the great characteristic of life, by which it is distinguished from inanimate nature: the power of adapting itself to circumstances. (116)

The implication is that change itself is the one natural mandate governing all life, and that cognitive or perceptual change must likewise keep step with biological progress. Elsewhere on the same page,

Wharton underlines Clifford's statement that "No amount of erudition or technical skill or critical power can absolve the mind from the necessity of creating, if it would grow. And the power of creation is not a matter of static ability ... it is a matter of habits and desires" (116). I want to argue that her reading of works like this was entirely linked to the willful cultivation of habits and desires which, during the same era in which Clifford's text was published, bore fruit in the form of her literary career. For it was only two years earlier that her first collection of short stories, *The Greater Inclination*, had appeared. Wharton took her title for that work from another volume published a year before her own collection, Edmond Kelly's *Evolution and Effort* (1898), in which we find an even greater body of evidence supporting the links between her interests in science and self-education, and her commitment to the eradication of sentimental mythologies surrounding femininity.

Kelly's *Evolution and Effort* begins with a straightforward premise (underlined by Wharton in the Introduction): "The main purpose of the book is to advocate the moral and therefore the imperative character of a citizen's duty to this State" (iv). Kelly, in fact, presupposes Kellogg's and others' fears that a widespread cultural fascination with Darwinian logic has led, in some cases, to reduced or else relinquished "effort" on the part of citizens to act communally, and on the part of the State to oversee and foster such commonality through democracy. For Kelly asserts (and Wharton underlines this, too) that nature is, in fact, wholly insouciant, and that it is people, in being capable of empathy, who must construct and maintain the social mechanisms necessary to assuage the very worst effects of that insouciance. "Nothing can exceed the injustice of evolution, its cruelty, its wastefulness. Our attention has been directed too much to survival of the fit, not enough to the sacrifice of the unfit" (xiii), Kelly argues, and criticizes those thinkers who would, like Herbert Spencer, champion a harsh brand of *laissez-faire* evolutionary biology that would write off society's sacrifice of the "unfit" as an unfortunate but unavoidable byproduct of such natural processes. Similarly, Kelly contends, we must recognize that the "State, to which we have confided the solution

of our problems, is the instrumentality through which these problems may be best solved, and that the State can be rendered fit for this gigantic task through the practice of the gospel of effort and not through that of *laissez faire*” (xxi). That is to say, humans must take responsibility for those forces which *are* amenable to their control, like government, rather than wallowing in the abject determinism offered to them by nature. For, as Kelly states much later in this text, “man is capable of counteracting Nature in two ways; First, by his intelligence, and second, by his faculty of choice” (272). Next to this statement, Wharton has placed a checkmark in the margin – significantly for, as we shall see, that second means of “counteracting Nature” becomes the underlying mantra of Wharton’s first published work of fiction.

Edmond Kelly, in the later part of the nineteenth century, was a lawyer and also a lecturer at Columbia University, specializing in topics relating to municipal government – or so explains the title page of one of his three surviving works, *Government, or Human Evolution* (1901). Very little, it appears, is known about him, and his last work appeared post-humously in 1911. His 1898 *Evolution and Effort* appears to have been an attempt to expose, on one hand, the link between Darwinian zeal and Gilded Age social callousness and, on the other, to suggest a political answer to the conundrum posed by that particular combination of circumstances. The answer for Kelly was, at least in part, socialism, and Edith Wharton, who would much later (at the age of sixty) complain to her friend Mildred Bliss that it was a “pity” that it seemed the “whole of Western Europe may be Sovietized!” (qtd. in Lee, 740) was, at the age of thirty, apparently much less appalled – perhaps even *intrigued* – by this argument. Yet her notes in Kelly’s text suggest that intrigue does not itself spell agreement: for instance, on page 193, she places a checkmark next to Kelly’s rambling lamentations about the state of the traditional family, which, as “the basis of our civilization,” is apparently in danger of “gradually breaking up. Marriage, which by the breaking down of religion, by the laxity of divorce legislation, and by the disappearance of the public condemnation of divorce, becomes too often a

time contract” (192). Here, however, Kelly’s complaints stem from the observation that it is *capitalism* which is actually driving this change, and that industrial factory work is likewise to blame, since it “separate[s] men from women” (193); he is apparently unaware of capitalism’s role in *inventing* monogamous marriage, as previously espoused by the likes of Friedrich Engels more than a decade before (in 1884). But Wharton’s evident interest in this idea inspires our own: though still a decade away from her own divorce from Teddy Wharton, it seems unlikely that she would have taken Kelly’s comments to heart. Perhaps instead, then, we must see her as simply collecting material, from a range of sources and relative to a range of opinions, in preparation for her own work in crafting studies of human foibles.

For there is much, clearly, in Kelly’s work that Wharton *did* take seriously. First, for example, there is the concept of science as indicative of, but not essentially comprised of, social and intellectual progress. Wharton underlines Kelly’s comment on page 13 that “science itself teaches that perfect development lies along the line of emotional as well as intellectual progress” (13), which consequently relates to his aforementioned point about personal, conscious effort meeting nature and biological prerogatives halfway. We must furthermore, Kelly argues (and Wharton takes note), “be able to distinguish between science that is true and science that is false, between theories that are sound and those that are unsound” (27). Wharton, too, for all of her fascination with it, feared that science and scientific theories might be taken for granted, or otherwise normalized to the point where progress would fail to impinge upon science’s prevailing doctrines. And these fears are legitimized, for instance, in the work of Thomas S. Kuhn. Kuhn begins by telling us that paradigmatic scientific truths might, on the one hand, constitute “prerequisites to perception itself” (113) which “prove to be constitutive of research activity” (109). Yet he also explains that science, in being necessarily structured by such paradigms, is *therefore* obstinately intolerant of anomalies, even

while those anomalies might indicate the futility of existing paradigms given its “stubborn refusal to be assimilated by existing paradigms” (97).

Such an inculcation of scientific paradigms, such a taming of its revolutionary principles, might furthermore prevent or stymie intellectual interest in it and, as such, progress as well. That would be tantamount to reducing science to the level of supposition, faith, and tradition – that is, it would void the possibilities of future scientific discovery and sentimentalize its previous achievements, as though for the sake of posterity. Interestingly, Kelly hits on this precise point with regards to women (previously discussed in both chapters 2 and 3 as, generically speaking, the “keepers of tradition”), and Wharton takes note. Kelly argues that it is *sentiment*, for example, that maintains and perfects our bonds with religion, even in light of scientific discovery:

For although we may intellectually assent to the propositions laid down by science, emotionally we cling to the ritual hallowed by memories of childhood, to music we have grown through long familiarity to love, and to the baptismal font and the altar step, which somehow we associate with pure women and as yet untainted youth. (13)

Wharton scores and marks this section of her text heavily (and it is one of the *only* times, in the whole of her personal library, that she explicitly makes note of a text’s discussion of sex, gender, or gendered behavior). Kelly speaks here to our collective inability to dispense with old truths in light of new ones, to recall Emerson; the result is that both are alike unthinkingly maintained, and science, like religion, operates via unquestioned and uncomprehending “faith” rather than via intelligence. The trappings of religion are too emotionally laden, too connected with our most prized and sentimentalized lived experiences (the baptismal font, the altar step) for us to abandon them. And because they speak to a kind of purity – a purity which, by necessity, not only precedes but negates intelligence (to know is to sin, the Bible teaches us) – we likewise locate these traditions in our ideal, rather than our real, conceptions of what life ought to be but very seldom is.

This is precisely what Wharton had in mind when she wrote the words included in the epigraph at the start of this chapter: “How little, as the years go on,” muses Mrs. Quentin in “The Quicksand,” “theories, ideas, abstract conceptions of life, weigh against the actual, against the particular way in which life presents itself – to women, especially.” That is to say, because women are generally discouraged from the pursuit of it, *knowledge* almost always strikes them as abstract, as separate from both reality and “the actual.” The result is that tradition, habit, and myth assume increasingly more realistic guises, and women, “the keepers of tradition,” mutely take up their role as such out of exasperation for their socially sanctioned and seemingly irreparable distance *from* discourses of knowledge-production. In connection to this idea, Wharton places a checkmark on page 45 of Kelly’s text, next to the following comment: “... for every woman who has suffered in patience to keep her soul unspotted from the world, has contributed to render possible that sentiment which has lifted woman from a convenience to an inspiration, from a houri to a wife” (45). That “suffering patience” – which both engineers and preserves the systems of sentimentality which necessitated women’s suffering in the first place – is one of the precise qualities which Wharton delights in exposing, to comic and ironic ends alike, in her fiction. Characters like Mrs. Quentin “suffer” endlessly, gracefully (but most often *uselessly*) suggesting that which they cannot, for fear of tradition, actually say: when Mrs. Quentin tells Hope Fenno that she has “heard” all that Hope says “so often before!” (Wharton “The Quicksand”), and from herself no less, that “hearing” is in fact euphemistic, for Mrs. Quentin admits never having had the courage to actually *say* anything. Rather, she has silently registered feelings of disgust and criticism towards her husband’s line of work. The result of her silence is that, when her son inherits the family business, she finally recognizes him as “the creature of my concession, my connivances, my evasions” – the product, that is, of silence, and of her unwillingness to speak up for herself, and of the atrocities of unexamined traditions (Wharton “The Quicksand”). Mrs. Quentin’s seemingly unproductive silence eventually

serves to reproduce and augment the circumstances of her own misery when she realizes her son Alan professes “the most monstrous convictions” (Wharton “The Quicksand”). As a service to her, Mrs. Quentin asks Hope Fenno to intuit what she cannot say: she cannot *tell* her outright not to marry her son, since doing so would force the articulation of too many unsaid things. She asks Hope instead for an answer to a question she has not asked her, inquiring “What shall I tell Alan?” She quickly leaves the room, though, before the girl has a chance to answer, additionally forcing *her* silence on the subject (Wharton “The Quicksand”).

Meaningful omission furthermore acts, in Wharton’s writing, as a means of encoding standards of female communication. Prolonged silences and pregnant pauses surround certain subjects that are not only common to female experience but, moreover, definitive of such gendered experience in the first place. Sex, for instance, and acts of reproduction exist only through allusion, or else through well-placed, meaningful ellipses: for women of Wharton’s class and Wharton’s era, this was axiomatically the case (though her era is by no means exceptional in this regard). In her other autobiography, *Life and I*, Wharton recounts her own mother’s curt refusal to discuss the topic with her even as the days leading up to her marriage left her “with such a dread of the whole dark mystery, that I summoned up courage to appeal to [her].” The young Edith recounts asking her mother “what being married was like,” to which Lucretia Jones responds, “You can’t be as stupid as you pretend!” – and that, according to Wharton, was the end of the conversation. “I was convicted of stupidity for not knowing what I had been expressly forbidden to ask about, or even think of!” (*Life and I* 1087-88).

The particular way in which human life was made mysterious to women, I would argue, fueled Wharton’s interest in scientific study. She simply refused to accept the idea that she might be barred from accessing any arena of knowledge, whatever its contents and to whatever extent it might resist her intrusion. Education and study were, for Wharton, a means of satisfying a “greater

inclination,” a phrase Kelly uses which refers to man’s ability to dictate and define the meaning of life for himself and by virtue of his cognitive efforts. “Because,” Kelly explains, “if man can create his greater inclination, then he is not the slave but the master of it” (34). Kelly theorizes that man possesses two types of “inclination,” the “lesser,” which is drawn from nature and concurrent with a will to survive, and the “greater” faculties of logic, empathy, and free will. Wharton underlines and scores this in her copy of his text, and in doing so digests Kelly’s assertion that man’s “greater inclination” is his answer to the prophetic dictates of nature and fate, and his challenge to them. Kelly develops this idea elsewhere in *Evolution and Effort*, and Wharton follows his thinking with her pencil. She brackets a section on page 49 wherein Kelly states that “now we are able intelligently to discuss the meaning of the expression, greater inclination. To the determinist, the expression means whichever inclination ends by prevailing; to the advocate of free will, it means the inclination which has *naturally* the greatest hold upon us” (49, emphasis original). There is a sense, I think, in which Wharton interprets Kelly’s point as indicating that the greatest achievements of our will might thereby be considered “natural” since nature furnished our abilities to pursue them. Or, to put it more plainly, as Kelly does, “A brain to know, a heart to love, and a soul to choose – these constitute the equipment of a man; and with this equipment he need not fear to go out to battle with the world” (98). Next to this list of human attributes which contribute to the realization of free will and any given “inclinations,” Wharton adds another: “Exact reasoning,” she writes.

There is little mention in the scholarly record, however, of the link between Kelly’s text and Wharton’s first collection of stories – indeed, little mention, even, of the fact that it is from Kelly that Wharton derives her title.⁴⁶ Even the indomitably thorough Hermione Lee spends too much time in Wharton’s library with the comparably more weighty names of Haeckel and Darwin to even *cite* Kelly (though she recounts the story of Wharton’s publishers requesting that she change the title of her short story collection) (165). Critic Paul J. Ohler, who devotes the whole of his book to

mining the links between Wharton and Darwinism in *Edith Wharton's 'Evolutionary Conception'* (2006), fails to mention Kelly at all, and refers to Wharton's *The Greater Inclination* only once in a footnote. Judith P. Saunders' aforementioned *Reading Edith Wharton through a Darwinian Lens* similarly refrains from discussing either Kelly or Wharton's first story collection, though that may be the product of Saunders' unwillingness to treat "Wharton's understanding and interpretation of evolutionary theory" (2). These scholars, and most others like them,⁴⁷ somehow fail to grasp the very immediate and, I would argue, very salient connection between Wharton's earliest, most earnest projects of literary realism and the American public's consuming interest in the theories, developments, and purported biological truths of evolutionary science, an interest that is exemplified in and by Wharton's references to Kelly's work. There are two factors, I think, that contribute to this oversight: the first is that Wharton did not advertise or proclaim the link between her book and Kelly's, likely because she may have thought such a proclamation to be itself *unnecessary*. If, as Hofstadter argues, the American reading public's interest in Darwinian theory was so truly "overwhelming," emphasizing the connection between *The Greater Inclination* and Kelly's "the greater inclination" would have surely belabored the point. Wharton, who prided herself in knowing what she wasn't supposed to know (but what everyone else – every man, at least – *was* supposed to know), had little patience or sympathy for those on whom allusions are lost. And, what's more, there's no real discussion to be found on the topic in Wharton's letters, essays, or memoirs – only in her library.

The second reason that scholars likely overlooked the link to Edmond Kelly lies in the obscurity of *that* name to contemporary discourses of evolutionary biology or evolutionary theory. As previously mentioned, the parsimony of existing references to Kelly's work furthermore compound the issue whereas, of course, our scholarly record on the likes of Haeckel and Darwin is more than ample. Wharton's interactions with Kelly's ideas around 1897, though, bind her earliest efforts at writing fiction to a social program of evolutionary truth which furthermore points a finger

not only at science but at human society in all its lesser and greater instantiations, including customs, manners, economics, politics, laws, and government. Her annotations and underlinings in Kelly's *Evolution and Effort* are far more extensive than those included in any of the Darwin volumes, which is evidence at least of the attention, be it good or bad, that she paid to the text. And the plot thickens for, to a certain degree, it makes sense to additionally understand Wharton and Kelly as *contemporaries*: they were writing and thinking at the same time, and once appeared, even, in the same publication. A July 1908 issue of *The Century Magazine* includes a poem by Wharton: "Moonrise over Tyringham," with its elegiac language and classical motifs ("What victory is imaged there? What means/ thy tarrying smile? Oh, veil thy lips and pass!") ("Moonrise") is listed on that issue's contents page alongside Kelly's more sobering article "Employment for the Unemployed" – and the contemporaneity of these two thinkers, in spite of contrasts in form and subject, is therein all the more obvious. It is one thing to view Wharton as a consuming bystander in the midst of an "overwhelming" turn-of-the-century interest in science and evolutionary theory; it is another thing, though, to consider her a contemporary of, and contributor to, that trend in America.

For *The Greater Inclination* is a contribution to the clamoring discourses of science, nature, gender, genre, and *the real* that comes on the very cusp of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, bridging the former's "inclinations" towards both naturalized and socially institutionalized generic expectation with that of a new, purportedly more modern century's take on the same questions. It is thus that I want to turn to *The Greater Inclination* in specific, and to Wharton's subsequent volume of stories, *Crucial Instances*. In particular, I focus on two stories from these collection, "The Pelican" and "The Angel at the Grave," in order to better establish this line of extrapolative thought. For it is my contention that, with these collections of stories, Wharton offers crucial and landmark challenges to ideologies of evolution while also contributing to nascent programs of American literary realism. The effect of both of these efforts is a commentary – an anomalous one, *à la* Kuhn – on the legacies

of nineteenth-century femininity and femaleness designed by Wharton to rupture paradigmatic thinking in the fields of science and literature alike.

“It’s Painful to See Them Think”

None of the stories in Wharton’s *The Greater Inclination* deal directly with science. Most of them, however, deal interrogatively with the kinds of assumptions and ideologies relied upon *by* science at the turn of the century, and by its professional practitioners and its public consumers alike. This, I think, is an important qualification, for it ought to be said that many works devoted to discussions of evolutionary biology around this time – and Edmond Kelly’s *Evolution and Effort* is here, again, a prime example – similarly avoid, or else do not require, direct discussions of scientific hypotheses, experiments, or results. It is, rather, the organizing principle, the paradigm (as Kuhn would call it) *of* science which unites and thematizes this widespread cultural fascination with topics relating to evolution. As such, we see Wharton responding to science without talking about science, in precisely the same way that she responds to contemporary trends of literary production without directly talking about literature.

Wharton was thirty-seven years old when her first book of short stories was accepted for publication by Scribner’s. This period of her life, though an intensely productive one, was also marked by illness, malaise, anxiety, depression and perhaps – depending on who you consult – a mental “breakdown,” even. In letters written between 1898 and 1899, she complains of having been “seriously ill,” and of a permanent, “unget-at-able” feeling of “almost continuous ill-health and mental lassitude,” as she would later describe it to Bernard Berenson (qtd. in Lee, 79; qtd. in Lewis 39). One result of this was a course of psychological treatment overseen, Lewis reports, by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, famous for his “rest cure” (and for its deleterious effects on other famous female authors of this time, including, most notably, Charlotte Perkins Gilman). But Shari Benstock points

out an inconsistency in this now too-accepted story of Wharton's mental collapse; Mitchell was travelling and thus not at his clinic in Philadelphia in the winter of 1898-99, when Wharton was supposed to have been under his care. Wharton's letters furthermore explain that, while she sought respite, she spent the winter at a hotel and not at a sanatorium or treatment facility (95). It seems additionally unlikely that she was ever actually seen by Mitchell, though she may have been seen by one of his colleagues, a Dr. McClellan. Lewis' version of the story, which tells of a dramatic, paralyzing "mental collapse" followed by treatment by a well-known celebrity physician romanticize and disfigure the reality behind what was, in truth, a very trying period for Wharton. Wharton herself explains that her symptoms, however, ceased in connection with two events: the publication of *The Greater Inclination* in 1899, and her and Teddy's relocation from Newport, Rhode Island to Lenox, Massachusetts in 1901. If that information is to be understood as at all true, it seems most likely that her anxiety, nervousness, and depression were the result, on the one hand, of a loveless, uninspired and mutually miserable marriage, and on the other, of her proximity during that time to the highly disapproving Lucretia Jones (Wharton and her husband lived first in the cottage on her mother's estate in Newport, and then down the road from it). Wharton's relationship with her mother, strained even from the point of childhood, likely made the circumstances of her martial disillusionment even more painful.

The Greater Inclination, then, is both a product of and a testament to the ubiquity of female disillusionment and domestic misery. There is a sense, in this collection of stories, of a need to face reality, bravely and without the futile recourses of romance, sentiment, or blithe morality – the precise tools, in fact, most commonly used to combat trying situations in nineteenth-century domestic fiction. For the majority of situations described in *The Greater Inclination* are domestic in one way or another, even while a preponderance of male narrators (all the stories, save for Wharton's short play, "The Twilight of the God," and one story, "A Journey," are told primarily by men, even

when the narrative focus is *on* a female character) severs most, if not all, associations with the cozy kind of domestic fiction that Wharton herself so despised. Women in *The Greater Inclination* suffer uniformly in silence: they think – interrogatively, and intensely – but strive to appear nevertheless incapable of both thought and meaningful introspection. The silence of these women is their commonality, it is the link that binds the female of the species: Mary Anerton, in “The Muse’s Tragedy,” silently assents to being used as the inspiration for a faux scandal that launches the career of a famous poet, though the affair – which in truth, never occurred at all – destroys her social standing at the cost of *his* fame; a nameless, newlywed woman in “The Journey” silently endures the final leg of a train ride in a private car with the concealed corpse of her dead husband; in “A Cup of Cold Water,” Ruby Glenn considers suicide after years of silently enduring the leering, menacing presence of her mother-in-law and her corrosive influence on Ruby’s marriage to her husband, Joe. And, in “The Pelican,” Mrs. Amyot’s career as a lecturer and speaker forces her collusion in a conspiracy of silence and lies engineered for sentimental effect.

“The Pelican,” in particular, applies to our considerations of Wharton’s interests in science and evolutionary theory because it at once highlights and satirizes notions of female intelligence during this era. The story begins with a description of Mrs. Amyot, who our male narrator tells us is not destined by nature to be “intellectual,” but nevertheless possesses “two fatal gifts: a capacious but inaccurate memory, and an extraordinary fluency of speech. There was nothing she did not remember – wrongly” (77). Mrs. Amyot is a lecturer by trade but only, we are told, by dint of necessity: as a young girl, she married an irresponsible man who subsequently squandered the family’s meager income. In the wake of this disaster, and her husband’s eventual death, Mrs. Amyot reasoned that “the only way of paying her husband’s debts and keeping the baby clothed was to be intellectual” (76), and so established for herself a career as a lecturer which, our narrator tells us, has succeeded not by the virtue of Mrs. Amyot’s wit, but rather by her appeal to sentimental, feminine

prerogatives (her audience members repeatedly remark that she's just "doing it for the baby" [76]). Mrs. Amyot furthermore establishes herself on the lecture-circuit through the stereotypical but tactical deployment of feminine wiles: after escorting her home one night, the narrator describes her in terms of a "ravishing mixture of shyness and self-abandonment, of sham erudition and real hair and teeth" (77). The materiality of Mrs. Amyot's *real* beauty ("hair" and "teeth," coupled with a beguiling dimple) contrasts to the immateriality and essential *falseness* of her intelligence. She botches a line from Emerson during the walk home (a subject which is, as we know, close to Wharton's heart), and our narrator doesn't have the heart to correct her.

Mrs. Amyot, though she travels widely, is particularly popular in Boston, wherein her lecture halls are filled to capacity, "every corner crowded" with "strenuous females in ulsters," some of whom fail in attaining admission to the sold-out events (79). Wharton's flat portrayal of the ranks of "austere sisters" who flock to Mrs. Amyot's Boston lectures instantly recalls James' novel on the same subject, and tempts us to compare Mrs. Amyot to the similarly gifted (and perhaps similarly false) Varena Tarrant. But while Varena is a recruit, albeit an unwillingly insincere recruit, to the cause of women's rights, Mrs. Amyot is an equally insincere recruit to the cause of sentimentality. When the narrator – who sees immediately through the disguise of sentimental appeal – asks his hostess (a few years later) if Mrs. Amyot is "as pretty as ever?", he is summarily told that "[Mrs. Amyot] is excessively modest and retiring. She says it is actual suffering for her to speak in public. You know she only does it for the baby" (79).

Our story-teller is eventually persuaded to visit Mrs. Amyot's home, where he meets "the baby" in question: Lancelot is the product of romance and his mother's overly indulgent "Tennyson-worship." He is clad in "black velvet dress," sports "exasperating ... yellow curls" and has been taught to recite Browning to visitors (81). He is a device meant to repulse the realistic reader, who must at once recognize the trappings of Mrs. Amyot's sentimentality in Lancelot's

ridiculous person, but there is an indication that he furthermore functions as a device for his mother, too. The narrator calls Lancelot “another outlet for Mrs. Amyot’s irrepressible coquetry” (81) – in other words, he completes the disguise, and serves to additionally convince Mrs. Amyot’s paying public of her sincerity and authenticity. The notion, in this story, that Mrs. Amyot is actually *using* her son in the service of a manipulative scheme which depends upon the exploitation of feminine generic standards is Wharton’s way of undermining *the* central component of nineteenth-century domestic fiction: the hallowedly irreproachable institution of motherhood. Lancelot, furthermore, ends up contributing to the a wholesale dismantlement of that sentimental motif: Mrs. Amyot’s grown, adult son, upon encountering our storyteller many years hence, forces him to bear witness to his mother’s falseness. Mrs. Amyot is, at this point, still making the rounds on lecture tours, and still bleeding sympathetic audiences dry “for the sake of the baby.” In a dramatic, final scene, we learn, however, that “doing it for the baby” translated, all the while, to pure greed; that Lancelot’s childhood was lavishly provided for in a way that he grew to resent; that he, furthermore, resents his mother’s egotism and lies, and that he succeeded, years before, in paying back the money she spent on his college tuition, out of disgust. Here, Wharton juxtaposes motherhood – an institution heretofore characterized by notions of *selflessness* and, often, martyrdom – with female intellectualism. Lancelot’s confrontation with his mother serves to reveal that both are, in effect, false. Mrs. Amyot’s sentimental appeals to the institution of motherhood are engineered to elicit sympathetic response in the form of financial support; her insistence upon sentimental objectives sanctions her decidedly un-feminine behavior (being educated, speaking in public). Meanwhile, though, her intelligence and learnedness furthermore mask a sentimental agenda in an age when women’s increased interests in education were linked to optimism for their social advancement, progress, and legal rights. Mrs. Amyot succeeds in being everything to everyone, and in satisfying

multiple, conflicting social projects – until, that is, her son opts to betray her, and to expose the falseness of her maternalism and intellectualism alike.

There are a number of lessons to be learned from “The Pelican.” The first lies in Wharton’s argument that we cannot hide from the real, that we can only, out of a sympathy for or adherence to sentimental motives, disguise it – a move which makes it, of course, no less existent. Our efforts to mask real ugliness and clothe it in the colors of romance allow such ugliness to gain a deeper hold on reality, and on the real circumstances of our lives. Edmund Kelly observes in his *Evolution and Effort* (and Wharton underlines this, too) that “science itself teaches that perfect development lies along the line of emotional as well as intellectual progress” (15). There is a sense, in “The Pelican,” of emotional and intellectual stagnancy; our narrator who, it seems, is authentically educated and intelligent (and male, of course), is thereby able to immediately ascertain the insipidity of Mrs. Amyot’s “sham” intellectualism. What’s more, though, he clearly objects to her performance, and on a variety of levels. To begin, he dismisses Mrs. Amyot’s intellectualism as sloppy and undiscerning:

From a large assortment of stock adjectives she chose, with unerring deftness and rapidity, the one that taste and discrimination would most surely have rejected, fitting out her subject with a whole wardrobe of slop-shop epithets irrelevant in cut and size. (80)

Wharton’s words here (for Wharton *is* our narrator, as personally relevant allusions to Emerson, for instance, make quite clear) do more than simply expose Mrs. Amyot. They additionally debase the idea of female intelligence more broadly, and prompt us to ask why: *why* would Wharton, an intelligent woman, a woman who self-identified as an intellectual to the point of rudeness and, some would say, social detriment, appear to so despise the very idea of women thinking? The answer is because most women, simply stated, were not. Mrs. Amyot is a token of Wharton’s frustration over turn-of-the-century women’s willingness to *appear* thoughtful in contrast to an entrenched unwillingness to *be* thoughtful. Insofar, to recall Kelly, as true social development “lies along the line

of emotional as well as intellectual progress,” we may view women like Mrs. Amyot as *anti*-progressive figures, women who, in effecting a show of their modernity, intelligence, and claims to equality, undermine the very possibility of all three for the rest of their ilk. Wharton’s anonymous male narrator in “The Pelican,” who we learn essentially nothing about, and whose motives and history remain entirely obscure, is a mechanism by which Wharton seeks to make legible her critique of the faux modern woman.

We can furthermore locate, I would argue, the workings of satire in Wharton’s story. She repeatedly styles Mrs. Amyot’s intelligence as parodic: “It was her art of transposing second-hand ideas into first-hand emotions that so endeared her to her feminine listeners” (80). Here, two veins of satire run adjacent to each other, en route to a common terminus. On the one hand, Wharton portrays Mrs. Amyot’s intellectualism as “second-hand” – that is, as non-innovative, handed down from other intellectuals (men, presumably) before her. This, of course, begs immediate comparison to the kinds of scientific discourse which, in the decade before Wharton’s *The Greater Inclination*, saw women as only capable of “receptive” intelligence (to recall Spenser), as naturally disinclined to invention and instead suited for “conservation” (to recall Brooks), and as limited by “passive” protozoic processes (to recall Thomson/Geddes). Wharton, however, nevertheless makes it clear that Mrs. Amyot’s second-hand intelligence, which is shamelessly purloined from the books she has skimmed, is not the secret of her “irrational success” (80). Rather, it is her ability to reach her audience, to offer them that second-hand knowledge and to induce them to take it – a kind of chicanery that is achieved through the oxymoronic resources of her intelligence, and through her knowledge of a generic feminine “type.” “Her fluent generalizations about Goethe,” Wharton writes (Goethe, too, indicates Wharton’s own sympathy for and identification with her narrator), “had the flavor of personal experience, of views sympathetically exchanged with her audience on the best way of knitting children’s socks, or of putting up preserves for the winter” (80). Mrs. Amyot’s

ability to appeal to women's sentimental priorities but, at the same time, to their nagging, seemingly reluctant self-interest in equality and education is, in its own way, intelligent. "I was sure," the narrator says, "that [Mrs. Amyot] had reached the point of measuring and enjoying her effects, of deliberately manipulating her public" (80). And it is that essential misuse of intelligence which repulses the narrator – as it repulses Wharton, clearly – and destroys Mrs. Amyot's claims to our sympathy as readers, too. Wharton satirizes for the sake of engineered repugnance, but her satire focuses not on the real, but on that which, in appearing to be nearly real, threatens to become so.

"The greater inclination" in *The Greater Inclination* is not just intelligence but, rather, the notion and possibility of *intelligently choosing* the factors which contribute to one's fate. "For man is capable of counteracting Nature in two ways," we must remember, "First, by his intelligence, and second, by his faculty of choice" (Kelly 272, marked by Wharton). Wharton's chief complaint in "The Pelican," and elsewhere in this collection, is that women do not choose, or else choose poorly and blame fate. It is here that Wharton enacts a protest against the most vulgar facets of Darwinian logic: she demonstrates, in effect, that nature and the callous processes of "natural selection" are, in truth, largely concomitant with humans' "greater inclination," and the choices they make. The fact that humans choose *foolishly* or wrongly so often exacerbates what many take to be the cruelty of nature, but this is not, Wharton wants to show us, in effect "natural". We have much to blame ourselves for, and the less we are willing acknowledge that, the more we add to and furnish ideologies of "nature" that separate us, in turn, from resulting acknowledgement and understanding.

Our collusion, via choice, in the larger mechanisms of fate is likewise a motivating factor in another Wharton story from this era, "The Angel at the Grave." This story, from Wharton's subsequent *Crucial Instances* (published a year after *The Greater Inclination*), retains a palpable residue of Wharton's literary and educational heritage. There is science here – specifically, Darwin, Huxley, and Haeckel – but there is also the marked stamp of an American literary tradition. The story opens

with a detailed description of “The House,” as it is called, which is itself immediately suggestive of Hawthorne’s most notorious “house” (that is, *The House of the Seven Gables*). The “House” of Wharton’s imagination is, like Hawthorne’s, old, “elm-shaded” (“Angel” 254), and positioned so as to afford “semi-publicity” (“Angel” 254) in a manner that suggests a monument that is both publicly available and privately significant to its inhabitants. Hawthorne’s narrator’s description of *his* respective “House” as “weather-beaten” and “bearing the traces not merely of outward storm and sunshine, but expressive, also, of the long lapse of mortal life, and accompanying vicissitudes that have passed within” (13) might apply, and with an equal degree of hybridity, to Wharton’s house, the home of the Ansons.

The Ansons, we are told, like the Pyncheon’s in Hawthorne’s *The House of the Seven Gables*, are a family with a long and bitterly relevant past. Hawthorne warns us that, were the Pyncheon house’s aforementioned “lapse[s] of mortal life, and accompanying vicissitudes . . . to be worthily recounted,” it would take enough time so as to thoroughly detract from his primary objective in *The House of the Seven Gables* (13). And, like Hepzibah dwelling alone in that domicile, Wharton gives us Paulina Anson, “the only granddaughter of the great Orestes Anson,” who in this capacity has been charged with tending and maintaining her familial legacy, in particular that of her grandfather, who was in his day a great and well-regarded American philosopher. So great, in fact, was Orestes Anson’s reputation that “the village street on which Paulina Anson’s youth looked out led to all the capitals of Europe” (254-55) – enough so that Paulina, who herself will never live to see any capital of Europe, is able as a young girl to enjoy a steady stream of foreign visitors who arrive to praise her grandfather’s name and provide a testament to her patrilineal worth. And Paulina, in particular, appears destined for occupation of the house, as “Fate seemed to have taken a direct share in fitting Paulina for her part as the custodian of this historic dwelling” (255).

In “The Angel at the Grave,” as in “The Pelican,” feminine intelligence proves to be a central and catalytically organizing force in Wharton’s narrative. Orestes Anson decries the fact that his offspring – all girls – are uniformly unintelligent; the girls, in turn, “lament their deficiency, to own that nature had denied them the gift of making the most of their opportunities” (255). Paulina, the lone progeny of that former group, becomes for the Anson family a kind of “great white hope” since she is “the only person in the family who [can] read her grandfather’s works” (257). Her mother and aunts are variously described in terms that are entirely consistent with the kinds of scientific enquiry that, in the 1880s and 90s, styled women as only capable of “conserving” and deploying, rather than *inventing*, intelligent thought. They are “recorders” of their father’s intelligence, “scavengers” of his legacy (256); they may “recite” ideas without understanding them, and “ke[ep] an album filled with ‘selections’”; they are immobilized by ignorance, but excel at “pos[ing] gracefully and point[ing] upward” and of “worship[ping]” their father (255). Yet, I want to emphasize the fact that even Paulina, who is deemed to be different and, somehow, capable of lending enough intelligence to her readings of Orestes Anson’s works to make some sense of them, is, on the whole, portrayed in precisely the same manner. Wharton describes Paulina as a mute “guardian of the family temple,” who oversees the “ritual” of its care (256); her outlook is “compressed” and conservative; she acts on “intuition” and is a slave to the forces of “habit”; she gives to the “pressure of example” and sees herself essentially as an “interpreter” of her grandfather’s words (257). Her intellect is, overall, categorically defined as *similar to*, rather than distinct from, her aunts’. The great tragedy of “The Angel at the Grave” is that it is ever mistaken for anything else.

For the key factor linking apparently “anomalous” individuals like Paulina to her aunts (Laura and Phoebe: the latter’s name is another nod to Hawthorne) is not, as it would initially appear, nature. These women are not the same because they are naturally destined to be so, and the

aunts' collective complaint (previously mentioned) that "nature had denied them the gift" of intelligence is Wharton's way of satirizing that same, very popular line of thought and its resulting contributions to widespread social malaise. No: the key factor linking Paulina to her aunts, and binding them all in a tragic state of ignorance and non-inclusion is *education* – namely, it is the fact that none of these women are educated, and so blame "nature" for their inability to participate in or (perish the thought!) add *to* their grandfather's legacy. It is, therefore, all the more significant to note that Orestes Anson's published theories are said to largely target topics of "free-will and intuition," the very topics that, under further scrutiny, might speak to or otherwise explain these women's intellectual insufficiencies, and the very topics which Wharton, for the past decade, had immersed herself in through scientific and philosophic reading.

The essential point here is that the fictional Paulina Anson could never have done what the real Edith Wharton succeeded in doing, may it be reading and understanding science or authoring novels and stories, and it is important that we ask why. Why would Wharton intentionally establish female characters that speak to feminine weakness and inability when she so clearly understood herself to be precisely otherwise? For, in "The Angel at the Grave," Paulina succumbs to the pressures of inability and failure. She devotes her life to the writing of her grandfather's biography, at the cost of both social interaction and emotional gratification (she turns away her only suitor because he asks her to move out of her grandfather's house). At forty, she succeeds in finishing the biography, but is summarily told by its intended publisher – the grandson of the man who had originally agreed to publish her manuscript – that she "ought to have had [it done] ten years sooner," that there is no longer a market for it (261). The suggestion is that Paulina is out-of-step with her generation, if not necessarily with her gender; the young publisher, no doubt close to her in age, describes literature as "a big railway station now ... there's a train starting every minute" (261). Paulina's work (like her training and intelligence), which is essentially cumulative, imitative, and, in essence, tragically un-

new, cannot compete in a marketplace that demands innovation of its authors, and that seeks newness with the expediency of passengers waiting for a train in a busy terminal. Yet, in spite of these sobering realizations, Paulina finds “herself incapable of any immediate effort” (262), and dismisses the thought of abandoning “the House”: “to leave the House now would have seemed like deserting her post” (262), even if that post itself has proved useless, and lacking the explicit requirements of her maintenance.

Paulina’s brand of intelligence is, unfortunately, unintelligent – that is to say, it does not invent, but merely stores, maintains, and recapitulates. “The Angel at the Grave” proceeds to end on what appears, in some lights, like an optimistic note, but which I would like to argue is in truth a condemnation, and a stated protest, on Wharton’s part, against the ideologies of natural femininity that erect barriers between women and arenas of education, intelligence, and social progress. Paulina, alone one day in “the House,” and mired in a depression which is the result of delayed realizations of her own ineffectiveness, meets Mr. George Carby, a visitor to the house who rekindles Paulina’s memories of the enthusiastic visitors and admirers of yore. Carby explains that he is a great admirer of Orestes Anson, and that he is working to track down one of his rarer, heretofore largely unknown works, a pamphlet giving an account of “the *amphioxus*” (267). It is through Carby that we learn that there was, in fact, a lasting legitimacy to be found in the name of Orestes Anson, but one that Paulina has missed all these years, and for one important reason: she does not understand science. Paulina, in fact, is so lacking in this area of knowledge that, having come across the pamphlet – which, we learn, is an early treatise on theories of anatomical evolution, responding to Saint Hilaire’s “theory of universal type,” and preceding other researchers in the field in describing “a cartilaginous vertebral column” in the *amphioxus*, a marine chordate (267) – she first intended to burn it, then neglectfully shoved it in a drawer. She, her grandfather’s chief biographer, had forgotten that Anson had “studied medicine in his youth,” and so disregarded the

pamphlet which, George Carby explains, is in fact the key to resuscitating Anson's legacy and Paulina's family name. The subject of science is, however, "alien" to Paulina: its phraseology, even, is "unconnected with her conception of the great man's genius" (268), and thus she overlooked it, missing, by dint of education, what would have likely been her greatest opportunity to prove not only her grandfather's worth to the world, but hers too by extension.

At the end of "The Angel at the Grave," Paulina pledges to help George Carby with his research. After explaining to Carby that, in writing Anson's biography, she "gave up everything" and "sacrificed herself" (269), however, she seems to take little consolation from Carby's telling her it was her "love that has kept him alive" (269). Instead, we see Paulina "turn[] away and s[i]nk into a chair" (269), as though in utter despondency. There is a sense of deep sadness, and also of tragic resignation in her final words to Carby. In response to his request to come back and begin his research, Paulina gives a series of automatic-seeming, emotionally void responses. "I'll help you"; "As early as you please"; "I'll have everything ready" (270). The suggestion is that she understands herself as having been now conscripted into service as Carby's aid, when she had, at another point in time, desired so much more – desired, in fact, the distinction of authorship, and of *creating* a knowledge-product that would have spoken for her grandfather but also lent meaning to her own, comparably meaningless existence. This is why, earlier in the story, she decries her "wasted labor" and "unprofitable sacrifice" (264); this is why she takes the publisher's rejection of her manuscript so personally, reflecting that it "was not so much her grandfather's life as her own that she had written" (260). In a final and, I will argue, heartbreaking line, she tells Carby that, upon his return in the morning to continue his research, "the fire shall be lit for you" (270), and the sense is that, against her will, Paulina has resumed her old position again. She is "tending the fire" in that familial temple; she is serving *others* in their quests for truth, for knowledge, for meaning. But she is no closer to achieving these things for herself. Wharton says that Paulina delivers this last line "with a half-

playful hesitancy” (270) that strikes me as almost hysterical, as verging on both madness and delusion. She is half-laughing at the tragedy of her life.

Lee, and many other critics like her, reads this ending in terms of romantic optimism. “Miss Anson is rescued from desolation by a bright young man who comes in quest of her grandfather’s one scientific discovery ... Wharton, unusually, allows for a consolatory comic ending here” (189). Lee’s reading, though, is hasty if consolation is its chief pronouncement. For it is, assuredly, an air of sadness, of grief over the acknowledgement of *waste* – wasted labor, wasted life, wasted opportunities – and valuelessness that pervades “The Angel at the Grave.” Even the image invoked by the title, that of a sculpted, lifeless female figure presiding needlessly over a space of hallowed ground; in Wharton’s story, this refers both to Orestes Anson’s memory and his figurative “grave,” but also to “the House” which, also like Hawthorne’s “House,” is a mausoleum – a monument to an irreclamable past. Susan M. Stabile, interestingly, puts Paulina’s actions in the context of “curating” or “curation” (“from Latin *curare* – ‘to care’”) (396).⁴⁸ She, unlike Lee, observes the tragedy of Paulina’s circumstances, and sees Wharton as “warn[ing] against the ossification of female curators, arguing for self-preservation over object conservation at home” (396). Paulina’s resulting “stultification” is, according to Stabile, meant as a cautionary tale. This is clearly the case, though I would argue that the thrust of that warning points not only to women as potentially limited and entombed “curators” of the past, but also to our social reluctance to offer them the kinds of cultural, social, or educational experiences that would permit them to become anything else. In Wharton’s story, Paulina is on a course to greatness – or at least anomalousness and notoriety, so far as her sex is concerned – until she is forced to confront the conditions of her own ignorance. The fact that she furthermore views these facts as insurmountable, that she slinks into despondency, finding herself, again, “incapable of any immediate effort” (262), recalls her aunts’ castigations of “nature” as the source of their ignorance and inabilities. The message – a satirical one, as ever, for

Wharton – is that women might have recourse to education, intelligence, and social equality if they might ever stop blaming *nature* for the facts of their mistreatment.

Wharton's satirical treatment of the thinking woman does not subside with the publication of *The Greater Inclination* and *Crucial Instances*. Which brings me back to the question posed previously in connection with the impulse to satirize: why? Why do Wharton's female characters, over and over again, seem to stand for feminine weakness and inability? What does the repetition of this trope accomplish for Wharton? The answer lies, I think, in the very *fact* of repetition. The kinds of preoccupations first established in stories like "The Pelican" and "The Angel at the Grave," I would argue, grow and expand as the result of repetition, up until the point that they are recognizable *as* tropes, as literary devices engineered to signal a form of protest and disagreement. Kuhn explains that science operates via the slow inculcation of paradigmatic acceptance, but that such acceptance requires repeated challenges on the part of "anomalous" scientific theories or, in some cases, evidentiary results. Resistance to newer, at first anomalous-seeming scientific theories is, Kuhn points out, natural, because it suggests wider disciplinary adherence to standards of belief in the form of older paradigms. "The source of resistance," Kuhn tells us, "is the assurance that the older paradigm will ultimately solve all its problems, that nature can be shoved into the box the paradigm provides" (151-152) – it is, in other words, a kind of faith in the older paradigm, and in particular a kind of faith in that paradigm's supremacy which continues to hold out believing that it will, in the end, *win*, that it will vanquish evidence to the contrary and prove itself necessarily and perennially true. I see Wharton's unthinkingly "thinking" women as relative to a similar design: Wharton's earliest short stories provide repeated confrontations with a "type" of a woman who is at once tragically recognizable and at the same time difficult to pinpoint. And this is her stubborn way of offering a challenge – by way of dogged repetition – to those reigning ideologies of "type" in the first place. Every time we encounter and recognize the failures of women like Mrs. Amyot and Paulina Anson

in the pages of Wharton story, we acknowledge the familiarity of such women, and gauge the futility of their situation in light of a society *which refuses to change*, or to acknowledge its contributions to the establishment of that familiarity and that “type”. This obstinacy is comparable to Kuhn’s comment that “at times of revolution, that assurance [of belief in the old paradigm] seems stubborn and pig-headed as indeed it sometimes becomes. But it is also something more. [It] ... is what makes normal or puzzle-solving science possible” (152) which, Kuhn claims, is likewise what makes the emergence of *new* paradigms possible. Wharton’s repetition of a familiar and satirical “type” in the form of the thinking woman is an exposure of the entrenched systems of “pig-headed” logic: it is a repeated (and, in being repeated, increasingly noisome) acknowledgment of flawed ideological thinking, laziness, and falseness. And it is extremely effective.

When Mrs. Quentin’s son, to again recall “The Quicksand,” tells his mother, “I’m so glad you’re a nice old-fashioned intuitive woman. It’s painful to see them think” (Wharton “The Quicksand”), his comments are meant to expose ideological flippancy, not to bolster it. This is why we must continue to see Edith Wharton in the terms of both scientific inquiry, realist politics, and gendered protest – to do otherwise is to misappropriate her work and legacy. It is, in fact, to substitute intellectual curiosity for gross, celebrity appeal and faux intimacy. “A great man,” Wharton says in “The Angel at the Grave,” “never draws so near his public as when it has become unnecessary to read his books and is still interesting to know what he eats for breakfast” (255). The same, clearly, is true of a great woman.

“A Misrepresented Woman”

Wharton, as is now quite obvious, was onto something in the 1890s. Her earliest and most sincere attempts to brand a kind of literary social satire – the very attempts catalogued here and evidenced by stories from *The Greater Inclination* and *Crucial Instances* – that simultaneously accounted

for and entertained suppositions of scientific or natural fact grant us a window into the later, more established phases of her career as an author. Too, her firsthand engagements with science, through reading and study, in and of themselves comprise a plea for advanced educational training for women, and for the enrichment of women's lives beyond spheres of domestic production and ornamental insipidity. Wharton scholars have, increasingly, turned to science to aid in the interpretation of her novels and stories, though that attention, regrettably, has been for the most part directed towards the era of Wharton's post-*Mirth* popular success. Neither Judith P. Saunders, in *Reading Edith Wharton Through a Darwinian Lens*, or Paul J. Ohler, in *Edith Wharton's 'Evolutionary Conception'*, for example, touch on any of the stories mentioned here, let alone the collections they appear in.⁴⁹ This is, I think, a crucial oversight, since it dismisses Wharton's willing assumption of a course of scientific study in the 1890s in neglecting the works which are, among Wharton's oeuvre, the most salient and closely linked products of that study. Science, too, has largely ignored Wharton's interactions with its disciplinary investigations, though not, it must be said, completely: researchers M. Dale Stokes and Nicholas D. Holland, in a 1998 issue of *American Scientist*, observe Wharton's cunning (and scientifically accurate) references to the amphioxus – now known as the lancelet – in “The Angel at the Grave.” The researchers cite Wharton as an early source contributing to a popular awareness of this marine chordate around the turn of the century (Stokes and Holland 553).

Wharton's insistence, however, in viewing the “thinking” woman as essentially false (or at the very least as ironically shaped by social circumstance to the point that she ends up looking like the reverse of her moniker) exposes a variety of political motivations in her writing. Wharton seems bent upon eviscerating the term “female,” and of mining it with regards to a long history of derision and derogatory use. This, actually, invites comparison to another a woman writer, Simone de Beauvoir. In her touchstone work *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir establishes her view that “the term

‘female’ [*femelle*] is derogatory not because it grounds woman in nature, but because it imprisons her in sex; and if this sex seems to man to be contemptible and inimical ... it is because of the uneasy hostility stirred up in him by woman. Nevertheless he wishes to find in biology a justification for this sentiment” (qtd. in Moi, 60).⁵⁰ De Beauvoir’s claim that man seeks to locate in biology that which may confirm previously held *sentiments*, or paradigmatic beliefs, rests on a distinction between the words *nature* and *sex*. For de Beauvoir (and for Moi is well), flawed scholarship lacking in both attention to detail and nuance has contributed to a conflation of these two terms: there is much, of course, that is natural about a woman, but couching one’s social anxieties in biological supposition, descendent from older and outdated paradigms, does little to confront or acknowledge that which is “natural”. It serves, rather, to assuage, and to silence. Wharton sets up idea of woman as “derogatory” in her early writing in order, once again, to call attention to those mechanisms of silence.

My point here is not simply to reclaim Edith Wharton and recruit her to the banner of feminism, though there is ample evidence here for those who might want to do so. Rather, I want to complicate our cultural and historical understandings of her work, and of the political motivations which may have underscored her earliest entries into the world of literary publishing. The theme of female intelligence, as developed in *The Greater Inclination* and *Crucial Instances*, has, in some ways, less to do with intelligence per se than with women’s capacities for intelligent *production*. I have already discussed the possibility of Wharton’s first short stories collections having been preceded by what was, according to some, a complete “mental breakdown” and what more likely is, according to others, a kind of intellectual and creative despondency. There is a sense, I think, that Wharton in the 1890s had come to understand herself in terms not unlike Paulina Anson in “The Angel at the Grave,” as tending to a patrilineal legacy, as brooded over by systems of inheritance and the looming aspect of “family name”. Her marital relations with Teddy were, in any case, unsatisfactory, and it is

clear from her writing that she longed for more than a simply curatorial, as Stabile would say, or custodial role in the keeping of his – and her family’s – house, the ordering of his possessions, the overseeing of his daily routines. We know from other examples of Wharton’s fiction (*The House of Mirth*, *The Fruit of the Tree*, and *The Reef* all immediately come to mind) that marriage often not only proves an act of maintainance or “keeping” but also, in some cases, of “being kept”. Wharton’s description of the newly born Paulina Anson having been “born, as it were, into a museum, and cradled in a glass case with a label” (254) is not wholly dissimilar to the experience of many wives (or husbands, that matter, as we see in *Ethan Frome*).⁵¹

Yet Wharton is often seen as being “hard” on her female characters, and with good reason: she sees women as conspiratorial colluders in schemes of feminine ignorance, and opts to satirize women’s unwitting participation in establishing the social standards and more which act against them. Wharton, clearly, sees being “hard” on her female characters as a mothering impulse, the kind that might be justified by the phrase “doing it for their own good” (a notion which suggests she might have more in common with the imposing Lucretia Jones than one might at first readily admit). Wharton’s knowledge of evolutionary biologies likewise must have also contributed to the outlook that intelligence is an essential evolutionary advantage, in all cases and in all settings, and that women are furthermore deluding themselves if they pretend it is not.

The Goncourt brothers are famous for having once observed (and many Wharton scholars have likewise applied the idea to her) that there are no “women of genius – women of genius are men.” Wharton’s library includes several works by the Goncourts, in editions dating from the 1860s through the 1880s, most of which feature heavy marking and annotation. It is fair, I think, to say that the idea at least was not foreign to her. Yet Wharton, in pursuing the accolades of “genius,” and a career as an intelligent and productive woman, did not adopt a male pseudonym, as many of her influences (George Sand) and contemporaries (Vernon Lee / Violet Paget) did. There is no real

desire, on Wharton's part, to *shirk* natural sex, but merely to escape its harshest and most illogical limitations.

Henry James, like Lubbock and Lewis after Wharton's death, had a hand in perpetuating gross caricatures of her most unfeminine behaviors. Lee explains that, around the time of Wharton's divorce in 1911, "James' most exaggerated caricatures of her develop, as she hurtled (it seemed to him) from place to place, ruthlessly sweeping up anyone she had a claim on, never at rest, spending money grandiosely, and compulsively making and changing rapid plans" (394). Yet James, too, knew Wharton's tendencies to make a poor – or else intimidating – impression on her friends and public. He had previously made a joking reference to such tendencies in the form of a gift: a copy of the book *Misrepresentative Women* (1906). With this book, a comical piece of light reading by the author Harry Graham, James sought to acknowledge and satirize the way in which much of the world viewed Wharton – that is, as primarily *not* a woman. In his inscription (see Fig. 3), James pokes fun

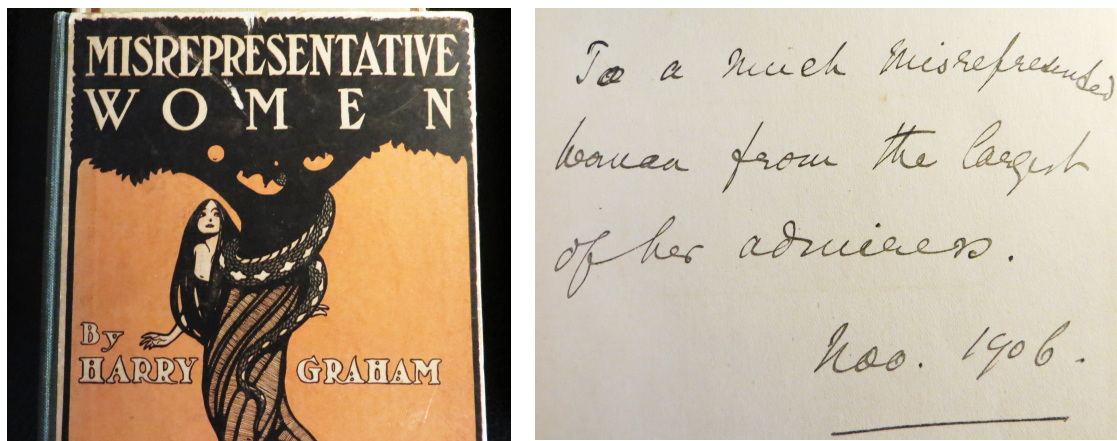


Figure 3: Author's photographs showing Wharton's copy of the book *Misrepresentative Women*, by Harry Graham (left), and showing Henry James' inscription to Wharton on the flyleaf (right).

both at the popular malignment of Wharton's character and at himself (in being, at this point in time, quite overweight): "To a much misrepresented woman from the largest of her admirers, November 1906," it reads. This demonstrates that, even as early as 1906, and following the publication of her first successful novel, *The House of Mirth*, Wharton had already earned for herself a

reputation as an “anomalous” figure, to the point of eliciting a joke on that score from James. The cover of Graham’s book – poignantly, in this case – shows an art nouveau Eve leaning out from behind a tree on which a serpent is additionally draped. The three central images – Eve’s body, the tree trunk, and the serpent – are visually intertwined and almost indistinguishable from each other, suggesting a kind of symbiosis between ideologies of femaleness, sin, and nature that, I think, speaks to my project here. James’ joking inscription to Wharton, however, suggests that he sees her, at least, as distinct from this tradition, as an “anomalous” representative of what may in fact be a new paradigm. We more often than not fail to recognize, or else to give credit to, that which is anomalous, for as Kuhn reminds us, “novelty emerges only with difficulty, manifested by resistance, against a background provided by expectation. Initially, only the anticipated and usual are experienced even under circumstances where anomaly is later to be observed” (65). It is this very logic which underscores Wharton’s repetitive use of unthinking “thinking” females in her early short stories, and which also underscores her vested fascinations with scientific thought and evolutionary theory in the 1890s. These efforts herald a desire on Wharton’s part to be understood *not* as an anomaly, but as perhaps representative of a new paradigm, as a challenge to inculcated traditions and ideologies of femininity, and as a harbinger of things to come not just for women, but for all of society.

Chapter Five

Suffer the Little Vixens: Sex, Jazz, and Realist Terror in the New Century

“A turgid welter of pornography”: these are the unsympathetic terms by which Edith Wharton, in a 1923 letter, sums up her reading of James Joyce’s then-recent *Ulysses* (Lee 2008 610). Wharton goes on to characterize Joyce’s writing as “unformed and unimportant driv[ing],” then broadens her ire and directs it towards modernism – and modernity, by extension.

[U]ntil the raw ingredients of a pudding *make* a pudding, I shall never believe that the raw material of sensation & thought can make a work of art without the cook’s intervening. The same applies to Eliot. I *know* it’s not because I’m getting old that I’m unresponsive. The trouble with all this new stuff is that its *à* these: the theory comes first, & dominates it (Lee 610, emphasis original).

Wharton’s complaints here merit both specification and enumeration, since this passage – oft quoted, and oft criticized, among literary scholars – provides a distillation of Wharton’s feelings towards the post-war era. First and chief among these feelings is her disdain for sexual immaturity: she criticizes James Joyce for behaving like a sexually naïve “schoolboy,” and for indulging sophomoric social fascinations with sex (“pornography”). Second, though, comes Wharton’s critique of Joyce’s flagrant lack of literary manners, and the resulting sacrifice to form. The horrors of World War I had forced a kind of dramatic unification of western cultures and nations, but in 1923, the world looked to Wharton like a disaggregated, degenerate mess, a place where “sensation” and “thought” had become compartmentalized processes, and the human experience had been reduced to its “raw material”. “Theory,” more than just “com[ing] first” where art might be concerned, now appeared to come *independent of* artistic consideration (hence Wharton’s labeling of *Ulysses* as “unformed”), and the result was that neither seemed to have anything to do with each other. Art had

lost sight of political significance, and praxis had become unimaginable for the political project of realism.

Throughout the 1920s, Wharton would struggle to locate and better define the sources of the mass social degeneracy described above in this famous letter. By 1927, though, it appears that she had found it. *Jazz* became for Wharton an all-encompassing “term of abuse ... The word epitomised [sic] for her the unpleasantness of modernity: trends, instant gratification, ‘pseudo culture,’ slang, noise, impermanence, fast living and standardization” (Lee 607). As Lee here notes, the broad conceptual nature of the term permitted Wharton varied grammatical use of it: in Wharton’s writing, we see “jazz” as a verb (“jazz all day and drink all night” [*Twilight Sleep* 43]), as rather expansively imagined noun (tied to sex, drink, and drug use [Lee 608]), as an epithetic adjective and, even, as genre (“I do not write any jazz-books” [606]). In any case, it seems that, when Wharton uses the term “jazz,” music is often the furthest thing from her mind. Her 1927 novel *Twilight Sleep*, for instance, provides a sweeping assessment of the so-called “jazz age,” wherein people appear to only care about “Getting away from things: ... perpetual evasion, moral, mental, physical” (*Twilight Sleep* 52), and “regar[d] golf as a universal panacea, in a world which believe[s] in panaceas” (51). For Wharton, jazz is a stand-in for the totalizing effects of modernity, and her lampooning of social “panaceas” in this passage from *Twilight Sleep* refracts her own opinion on the topic – that jazz is a social *pandemic*.

Despite, however, Wharton’s self-conscious claim that age alone cannot be held responsible for her feelings in the matter, many literary critics (Percy Lubbock chief among them) favor this view of her, dismissing her position on jazz – as well the novels she devotes to the subject – as outdated, or out of touch. Insults along this line highlight grievances ranging from Wharton’s discomfort with sex, to accusations of inherent racism. The result is that Wharton’s perspicacious and daring critique of modernism and modern culture becomes disfigured, and her political priorities

either neglected or voided altogether. For Wharton's distaste comes less from a position of conservative unease than realist terror: as novels like *The Children* and *Twilight Sleep* attempt to show, modern culture – and jazz most of all – advertises radical experimentation, but delivers solipsistic regression and concealed sentimentalism.

Another figure to offer such a critique (and far exceeding Wharton in the fame of his feelings on the subject) is Theodor Adorno, who in his 1935 essay “*Perennial Fashion – Jazz*,” locates the beginning of the jazz pandemic in Wharton's era. Adorno laments jazz's insolubility as “mass phenomenon,” “ever since 1914 when the contagious enthusiasm for it broke out in America” (“*Perennial Fashion*” 199). And, like Wharton, Adorno's vehemence for jazz often gets written off as mere crankiness. Wharton and Adorno were both intimidating critical voices in their respective moments, but jazz appears to provoke miserly complaints from each, complaints that are simultaneously seen as out-of-character for their authors, and out-of-step with popular opinion. It is perhaps strange, then, that their views are not more often considered in concert. The discussion which follows is my attempt to do just that: to first contextualize Wharton's response to jazz and jazz culture in light of her realist agendas, and then to broaden and develop them with the help of Adorno's theoretical investigations of the issue. “Jazz” here refers not only to a certain style of music – jazz music itself, even according to committed jazz scholars, resists strict stylistic characterization – but to modern culture *in general* during this period. It is for this reason that I extend my analysis beyond music to literature, to film, and to jazz's purest embodiment, the flapper, in particular the so-called “first flapper,” Olive Thomas. With this range of analysis, I chronicle jazz's contributions to a cultural abandonment of – followed by a return to – conservative, nineteenth-century aesthetic priorities.

Wharton had, by the 1920s, enjoyed two decades of critical success with what Elizabeth Ammons calls “the sophisticated, realist novel of social debate on the woman question” (Ammons

1980 156). Hence why Wharton's feared that jazz culture (and related aesthetic programs, both modern and modernist) might correspond less to Ezra Pound's injunction to "Make it new!", and more to a regressive politics of distraction via aestheticization. Or, to put it another way, Wharton sees jazz as threatening our ability to be real, and to produce culture realistically.

Hearing – and Not Hearing – Jazz

It is difficult to judge whether or not Wharton's standpoint comes more from her perceived experience with jazz and jazz culture, or from her lack of experience. While it is likely that Wharton had both occasional and incidental interactions with jazz music, it seems at the same time unlikely that this interaction may have been in any case extensive. As early as 1905, Wharton refers, in her better-known *The House of Mirth*, to a social gathering which features "plantation music in the studio after dinner" (111). Wharton's mention of this rudimentary, nineteenth-century style of jazz entertainment is coupled with the fact that the hosts, the Wellington-Brys, are styled as gauche social climbers, unaware of what to do with their new fortune, or how to properly entertain. Later, though, even after Wharton's permanent relocation to Paris in 1919, Hermione Lee explains that she "had nothing to do with the expatriate American writers in the Paris cafes after the war, like Hemingway or Dos Passos or Cummings, or with gay Parisian life in the 1920s" (607), examples of which range from Montmartre and the Moulin Rouge to Josephine Baker and Cole Porter (the latter had settled in Paris in 1917, and his music was first enjoyed by the social elite there before its late 1920s heyday [Lewis and Lewis 1988 493-494]).

Wharton had a certain flair for aloofness, though: in 1923, only two months after the aforementioned letter to Bernard Berenson, a silent film version of her 1922 novel *The Glimpses of the Moon*, starring Bebe Daniels, premiered. *The Glimpses of the Moon*, like most films at the time, played alongside live jazz accompaniment, and is still regarded as a film of the "jazz age," a moniker which

belies a few important facts: that Wharton began the novel in 1916, deep in the midst of the war, and that the novel contains no concrete references to jazz, jazz music, or jazz culture. It is likely more the subject matter of the book – the story of a young couple who pursue an unorthodox, for-profit marriage arrangement which proves to be the test of their respective scruples – than its cultural context that compels the connection to jazz. There is, unsurprisingly, no historical evidence to suggest that Wharton ever saw the film version of this novel;⁵² but, then again, there is likewise no evidence to suggest that she ever entered a movie theater in her lifetime (Lewis 1975 7).

Wharton scholars, however, have for years opted to circumvent this period of her writing, deeming its products “trash” (Viola Hopkins Winner points to such castigatory critical discussion in her introduction to Wharton’s “lost” early novelette, *Fast and Loose* [1998]), and dismissing it altogether via facile categorizations. Avril Horner and Janet Beer, for instance, note the existence of still-persistent “critical consensus” that styles these novels as “a falling-off” from Wharton’s earlier, better works – a consensus which they attribute to Edmund Wilson’s comment (made right after Wharton’s death) that such works comprise a “feeblar second boiling from the tea-leaves” (1; qtd. in Horner and Beer, 1). *The Glimpses of the Moon* (1922), *The Mother’s Recompense* (1925), *Twilight Sleep* (1927), and *The Children* (1928) are, likewise, collectively referred to as Wharton’s “jazz novels,” but this is often with reference to their era less than to their subject matter; the irony is that this is a label which, as previously mentioned, Wharton herself sought to avoid at all costs. Devoted Wharton scholars like Ammons, though, describe these novels as “not sophisticated,” as plagued by “poor imitation,” “diffuse plotting,” and “gimmicky capitalizations” (173). Yet such disdain overlooks some very pressing, larger considerations: that Wharton devised all of these “jazz novels” along similar lines, telling and re-telling similarly themed stories – a fact which indicates a certain fascination, if not outright obsession; that such generic fascination belies focused, narrow readings, and instead requires broad, historical investigation; that, “sophisticated” or not, these works’

aggregation points to a foundational piece of Wharton's politics, and permits us a more contextualized, intelligent rendering of her character. Rejecting ten years of Wharton's career and labeling its products "trash" does not help to furnish an answer as to why, indeed, she spent more than a decade of her life writing material of this kind.

Wharton's experiences with jazz were probably limited to two types of contact: first, hearing – or not hearing – jazz as the ambient and omnipresent background soundtrack of the modern, post-war age; second, reading jazz, and understanding it in terms of literary invention and intervention (most of us simply label this modernism, but Wharton seemed to purposefully ignore such formal categorizations). Wharton heard jazz music as "noise," but not in the Jacques Attali sense of the term, not as aural "violence," the effect of which might be the interruption of social processes and an effective seizure of mass attention.⁵³ Rather, Wharton's attempts to recreate jazz noise in her 1920s novels establish it as a homogenizing force that has the power to stifle and suppress the details of life, the "realities" of human existence. In *The Children* (1928) – a work which is, Lee notes, "little read" today (595), and this fact is reflected in the current scholarly record on the subject – Wharton describes a busy hotel restaurant on the Italian Riviera. It is a scene of "mechanical terror – endless and meaningless as the repetitions of a nightmare" wherein "[e]very one of the women in the vast crowded restaurant appeared to be of the same age, to be dressed by the same dressmakers, loved by the same lovers, adorned by the same jewelers, massaged and manipulated by the same Beauty doctors" (154). Above the observed sameness of the place, "A double jazz-band drowned their conversation, but from the movement of their lips, and the accompanying gestures, Boyne surmised that they were all saying the same things ..." (136). Here jazz not only smothers difference and enforces standardization, it creates a backdrop by which such dehumanization becomes unnoticeable and, thereby, unimportant.

The scene of happy homogeneity here described by Wharton finds its echo in Theodor Adorno, whose first complaint on the topic is that jazz has, in its fifty years of mainstream popularity, “remained essentially unchanged” (“Perennial Fashion” 199). Adorno criticizes jazz for taming even those elements endemic to its form that were designed to provoke and to disrupt.

The syncopation principle, which at first had to call attention to itself by exaggeration, has in the meantime become so self-evident that it no longer needs to accentuate the weak beats as was formally required ... Contrariness has changed into second-rate ‘smoothness,’ and the jazz-form of reaction has become so entrenched that an entire generation of youth hears only syncopations without being aware of the original conflict between it and the basic meter (199).

That is to say, jazz’s power to standardize is so comprehensive that it succeeds in nullifying even its own “wild antics” (199), and the result is that such antics become generic expectation – the original “conflict” is lost. The “conflict” in question here concerns meter and beat, to which the syncopated musical pulses pose an initial challenge. Consider this, for example, as historical testament to the syncopation mandate in jazz music: in 1927, Arthur Briggs’ Savoy Syncopators Orchestra took Berlin by storm, becoming among the first to produce popular jazz recordings in Europe. The band derived its name from two well-known jazz institutions: the Savoy Hotel in Chicago, and jazz’s most ubiquitous characteristic, syncopation. Even the Greek root of the word, *syncope*, denotes a kind of violence or drama, and translates as “to beat, strike, [or] cut off” with early English language uses of the term referring to “Failure of the heart’s action, resulting in loss of consciousness, and sometimes death” (“Syncope”). But such violence, when elevated to the level of decree, becomes innate and largely unnoticeable. Action translates to inactive tendency, and, as Adorno puts it, “[jazz’s] rebellious gestures are accompanied by the tendency to blind obeisance” (“Perennial Fashion” 200) – the very sort of “blind obeisance” that Wharton, in 1928, critiques in the scene in the Riviera

hotel. Wharton's "double jazz-band" in this scene is a leveling device; background and foreground become one, indistinguishable from each other, with human subjects – the patrons and the jazz musicians – reduced to bland objectivity on account of their sameness. Wharton's inclusion of this scene in *The Children* is proof of the sort of "blind obeisance" already wielded by jazz in this period, and proof of Wharton's own likely, though unwitting, interactions with jazz on this level.

Adorno and Wharton, then, similarly regard jazz as the original "white noise" of modernity, an expected and non-spontaneous aural background which decentralizes the very idea of live performance, and of living reality (hence the references, on both of their parts, to mechanization and machinery). But what is chiefly necessary to decentralization, in this case, is cliché: a narrow range of expectation revises our awareness of our own expectations, and thus we see, in Wharton, that all the women in the restaurant appear the same, indicative of a "type". Similarly, Adorno sees jazz as "impoverish[ing]" music by the imposition of genre and "type," by a privileging of "certain well-defined tricks, formulas, and clichés to the exclusion of everything else" ("Perennial Fashion" 201). Adorno cites from Winthrop Sargeant, who in his 1938 *Jazz: Hot and Hybrid*, provides an early assessment of jazz not as generic revolution, but as "a very elementary matter of incessantly repeated formulae" (qtd. in Adorno "Perennial Fashion" 200). Sargeant's indictment takes particular issue with jazz's naïve understanding of itself as "new," as idiomatically untried when (to quote Adorno) "the most striking traits in jazz were all independently produced, developed, and surpassed by serious music since Brahms" (201). Adorno credits Sargeant for authoring "the best, most reliable and most sensible" opinions on the topic, and for managing to do so *in the midst* of the jazz age. But Sargeant, we can now see, was not alone, for his complaints of "incessantly repeated formula" concur with Wharton's even earlier observations. In a line from *Twilight Sleep* which sounds like it could have been written by Walter Benjamin,⁵⁴ Wharton notes the ways in which modernity confuses art with efficiency, and favors reproduction over production: "Mrs. Manford [made]

loveliness and poetry sound like the attributes of an advanced industrialism, and babies something to be turned out in a series like Fords” (18).

Though Adorno and Wharton might locate their mutual dislike of jazz in different objects of study – Adorno, an accomplished classical pianist and veteran music critic, singularly devotes his attention to music – they share a common, and quite obvious, concern for form. For Wharton, form is, at its best, grounds for both invention and intervention, much more than “a mere framework on which more interesting things might be hung” (Sargeant 1975 24): it’s the cook’s role in the process of making the pudding, and it’s the foundation required by the raw ingredients of artistry in an effort to impart both meaning and beauty. Wharton’s first words against Joyce concern form, not sex, for “pornography” alone could not explain the extent of her ire when one considers that she was an avid fan of writers like Collette (Lee 2008 616), and went to bat for Upton Sinclair when *Oi!* faced criminal trial for obscenity charges (Lewis and Lewis 1980 445). It is enough, therefore, to say that Edith Wharton, who explored sexual taboos like incest elsewhere in her writing, did not shy away from conversations about sex, only from *certain*, tastelessly formulated conversations about sex. Frederick Wegener supports this revision of Wharton’s miserliness, and similarly argues that “For Wharton, the chief mistake of her younger contemporaries lies ... in the new methods that they employ”. It is only later, according to Wegener, that Wharton beings to “object[] not only to the form but also to the focus of the newer fiction” (Wegener 1999 125).

Adorno’s complaints against jazz music, similarly, hinge on what he sees as a formal reliance upon the essentially disingenuous deployment of sexual stereotype. Like Wharton, Adorno criticizes jazz not for its provocativeness, but for its insincerity: jazz seeks to rouse and to titillate, but does so with a kind of uniformity that empties sexual response of both its authenticity and meaning. In being, therefore, always scandalous, always provocative, jazz reveals its contrarian objective – “the mechanical reproduction of a regressive moment, a castration symbolism. ‘Give up your masculinity;

let yourself be castrated,' the eunuch-like sound of the jazz band both mocks and proclaims" ("Perennial Fashion" 207). Here Adorno, with characteristic hyperbole, charges jazz with selling sex but, instead, delivering a "regressive," experience, *desexualized* to the point of being, in fact, *asexual* ("eunuch-like"). As such, we see that jazz, more than a style or aesthetic program, is a form of advertising, armed with a slogan that is both exotic and reassuringly familiar, "always new and always the same" ("Perennial Fashion" 204).

While Wharton laments the loss of disciplined form, then, Adorno criticizes jazz music for its tendency to inculcate and solidify form. This critique, however, achieves deeper meaning in light of jazz music's professed commitment to *experimentation*: the entrenchment of binding, inculcated formalism might be more forgivable if it recognized itself as such. In styling itself as both new and *avant*, however, jazz strikes Adorno as solipsistic, and hopelessly wedded to ideological self-delusion. Both Wharton and Adorno want to expose ideology, and not just ideology itself, but where it lives, its home and all its hiding places. As a result, both desire that art should maintain a *requirement* of thought, a loyalty to intellectual activity and critical introspection, as a means of combatting ideology anywhere it can be found.

Hybrids and Hyphens: *The Children* (1928)

Following the war, Wharton discerned in her surrounding French society (and in the American society she caught wind of through literature and jazz music) a certain distillation of human essence, a return to the "raw materials," so to speak, of humanity.⁵⁵ She described the faces of returning soldiers as seeming "strangely purified, matured," as though what they had undergone had 'burned them down to the bare bones of character'" (qtd. in Ammons 1980 374). To Wharton, these "bare bones" ought to have forced necessary confrontations with reality, and impatience with engineered hyperbole. That was not, however, what happened, and Wharton was horrified by what

she saw as a flight *from* reality, and a return to childish sentimentalism. She rebuked the modern novelist who, concurrent with the period's lazy aestheticism, "exchanged his creative faculty for a Kodak" (qtd. in in Boswell 2007 143). As such, she deemed it the realist writer's duty to "plung[e] both hands into the motley welter" and represent the real conditions of living, that which "the new order of things ha[d] wiped out" (Wharton 1927 655). In jazz, part and parcel of that "new order" of culture, she saw indulgence, an emphasis on immediate gratification, often in the form of sex and other bodily pleasures. In modernism, similarly, she demonstrated what Ammons calls "scorn for intellectual independence or disciplined art" (173). And, finally, in that pre-eminent jazz-age figure, the flapper, she found her most engrossing and deep-seated dissatisfaction. For the flapper is a child in a woman's body, irresponsible, uncaring, and unabashedly selfish; she is, in essence, the personification of jazz, and our social obsession with her accounts to the sentimental indulgence of childish impossibility. Wharton developed a number of reprehensible flapper characters in her later work, the whole group of which is probably best represented by Judith Wheeler, the fifteen year-old "jazzy baby" in *The Children* who repeatedly becomes the object of adult male obsession and fantasy. Wharton describes Judith in terms of this idealized male gaze:

[Judith] was, to him, an imponderable and elusive creature ... a young Daphne half emerging into reality, half caught in the foliage of fairyland ... A strange little creature who changes every hour, who hardly seems to have any personality of her own ... As for her very self, you grope for her identity and find an instrument the wind plays on, a looking-glass that reflects the clouds, a queer little sensitive plate, very little and very sensitive (*The Children* 36-37).

Here we see that Judith's chief attributes – the characteristics that most define her – lie in her ability to be defined *by* others, particularly men. Any attempts to "grobe" for her identity reveal a static, aesthetic surface animated by, and reflective of, forces outside herself (the wind, the clouds). What

is, in essence, attractive about Judith is not personal or specific to her; it is, rather, her ability, not to incite, but to placidly *permit* the actions of others, to serve as both the smiling host and venue to their desires, more than the subject or object of them.

Judith Wheater's charm amounts to her ability to be distinctly charm~~less~~, to be unremarkable so as to make way for the desirous, male subject's indulgence of his own remarkability. That desire itself, even, becomes thus remarkable, luxurious, and increasingly addictive. In Wharton's novel, her protagonist, the forty-six year-old Martin Boyne, wrestles with his feelings for the fourteen year-old Judith, refusing to see them as they are, even when others (including his fiancée) implore him to. At a picnic near a waterfall in the Italian Alps, however, Boyne has the opportunity to observe Judith in slumber, and his relishing of the occasion at last brings him within reach of an unsettling admission. "She looks almost grown up – she looks kissable. Why should she, all of a sudden?" (179). Boyne inwardly observes, and is immediately "disturbed" by the realization. His inward disturbance, however, has nothing to do with the more obvious facts of the case (that Judith is old enough to be his daughter; that she is, in fact, the daughter of his former university colleague; that his obsessive observation has brought him to the point of fantasized physical contact). His uneasiness comes, in fact, from the realization that Mr. Dobree, his male adversary, appears to observe Judith in the same way, and that Dobree's thoughts are "the same thoughts as his own" (179). Boyne's crisis is, therefore, not one of scruples but one of identity, a crisis of the self. Judith fails, in this scene, to be what he needs her to be, an inert reflection of himself, a venue for his unabashed, extended solipsism. Her failure comes, however, through no action of her own, but through being acted upon as the object of not one but *multiple*, simultaneously occurring, active (male) gazes.

There is something peculiarly sinister about Judith Wheater, and this quality is first apparent in her simultaneous designation as both child and sex object. Her sinister appeal precedes a more familiar, twentieth-century take on this brand of male fantasy; Judith Wheater may be, in fact, the

materfamilias to a long line of modern literary child-whores, specifically Nabokov's *Lolita*.⁵⁶ Boyne, like Humbert in *Lolita*, situates his desire for the young, off-limits girl within his feigned affections for her older, too-easily-available mother, a mechanism which strengthens the stakes of his project: if he fails in securing the fantastic Judith/Lolita, he may be consigned to the very real, and very terrible, adult Joyce/Charlotte. In *The Children*, Boyne's past relationship with Judith's mother Joyce occasions his initial contact with the object of his fantasy, yet simultaneously threatens to unravel it at every turn. Here, at least, the emblematic modern male fantasy is undone by Wharton's recurrent project of reality. Such interruption is Wharton's way of calling attention to the *absurdity* of such fantasies, whereas Nabokov simply kills *Lolita*'s mother, Charlotte, in order to further suspend Humbert's fantasy, and our voyeuristic collusion in it.

Yet the far most unsettling aspect of Judith's character, though, lies in her failure to occupy either identity – child or sex object – completely. Throughout *The Children*, Judith disappoints in this regard, failing time and again to fulfill the expectations of those (mostly men) around her. When Boyne wants to savor the image of her as a beautiful, though impossible, child, she defies him with sudden bouts of precocious insight, disarming him completely and deferring his desire. When he seizes that desire, however, and chooses to see her as an adult, willfully sensuous and seemingly within his reach, she is revealed once again as a child, incapable of manufacturing serious consideration for his serious desires. When Boyne proposes the idea of marriage to Judith, seemingly for the sake of keeping the great troupe of “the children” together, she laughs like a child, her laugh “bubbl[ing] up, fresh and limpid, from the very depths of her girlhood” and replies “Well, that would be funny!” (*The Children* 271). Judith's ability to appear like a girl when Boyne needs her to appear most like a woman has the effect of deflating his desires. Scenes like this one leave him looking limp and flaccid, suddenly both visible and vulnerable, and left face-to-face with a horrific vision of his own failed masculinity there in the placid, reflective surface that is Judith Wheeler.

Consequently, Judith appears, at first, to provoke sexual response. As her “true” childishness is repeatedly *exposed*, though, she instead ends up suggesting *castration*, desexualizing Boyne in her very refusal to react to his advances in a sexually mature manner. This recalls Adorno’s arguments against jazz, and his belief that jazz seeks in truth to impart “the mechanical reproduction of a regressive moment, a castration” (“Perennial Fashion” 207). Jazz castrates in advertising sex but selling asexuality; Judith, similarly, emasculates and disarms in appearing sexual but remaining “truly” an asexual child. With reference to Adorno’s understanding of castration – in this case, not just as a diminishment of sexual power, but a larger, symbolic *regression* that voids sexual maturity – Judith eradicates Boyne’s mature sexual feelings, and his adult maleness in the process. Wharton, in this same way, reduces nearly all of her novel’s characters, adult and child alike, to mere “children,” and the book’s title becomes a kind of admonishment against the dreamy, immature solipsism of the 1920s.

Judith Wheeler first, foremost, and lastly appears to Boyne as a mere “slip of a girl” with a “slender frame,” a “small, pale face,” “anxious” and “tragic” brown eyes, and “round, red lips” (*The Children* 11-13). She combines sensuality with a sense of permanent youth (as opposed to his fiancée, Mrs. Sellars, of whom Boyne can “never think of as having been really young” [41]). A range of hybrid designations, including “child-mother,” “little-girl-mother,” and “child-bride,” serve to label her. It’s important to note, however, that Judith is repeatedly revealed to be, in essence, a child; time and again, Boyne allows himself to extrapolate upon what he recognizes as adult qualities in Judith, only to once again “realize” that she is a child. Where these repeated realizations have the effect of deflating his desires, though, they also compel them, baiting them with the promise of *future* and kind of impossible, juvenile optimism. In spite of such optimism, however, there is never a moment in *The Children* which permits us to see Judith Wheeler as anything but tragic, fated for a tragedy far worse than Boyne’s self-realization and supposed heartbreak. The tragic child-mother is, in fact, an

already well-wrought and familiar trope: Judith is little Eva from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* brought back to life with sequins and gin; she is the effective resuscitation of that hallmark of nineteenth-century sentimental literature, the beautiful and wise little girl, doomed to perpetual youth, encased in aesthetic impossibility, and fated to die. The child-mother or child-bride functioned for sentimentalism in this way even prior to Stowe's exploitation of this figure, and continued, in the wake of Stowe's little Eva, to "exalt[] ... the average, which is the trademark of mass culture" explains Ann Douglas in her *The Feminization of American Culture* (1998 4). Douglas points to a few of the figures who follow thus, including the "Miss Americas" and "Teen Angels" which so fascinated mid-century American audiences. These tragic girl figures, Douglas says, "flatter[] the possibilities of [their] audiences" (4) through the combination of mundane existence with noble, superhuman radiance. For writers like Stowe, the tragic child-bride, and her subsequent, mandatory "beautiful death," served to indulge emotion and make sentimental response both permissible and enjoyable. The inevitable deaths of such characters are, in fact, anything but tragic – rather, they are highly anticipated, predictable outcomes, narrative *pay-offs* which flatter the reader and reward their anticipation. For writers like Wharton, however, the child-bride figure serves as a point of mindful antithesis; since she, and her story, are already *expected* parts of the narrative landscape, both become catalysts for realist intervention. Wharton saw such figures as absurd but necessary narrative foils, and along with other realist writers, sought to revise such immature, anti-modern, idealism and replace it with brash, twentieth-century reality. At the dawn of the 1920s, however, the flapper became an obvious, and unavoidable, obstacle to realist objectives. For, with the flapper, the nineteenth century haunts the twentieth, and post-war progress and "newness" reveals itself as pre-modern anachronism.

Judith Wheeler is a flapper, but only by accident. Her ability to appear like a girl-child in a woman's body is largely the result of work done by the male gaze acting *upon* her. She does not

willingly assume this identity – or, at least, not willingly with reference to *The Children's* narrative course. When the novel closes, however, and Boyne observes Judith with “passionate attentiveness” for one last time through the windows of a resort hotel ballroom, she is slightly older, but still appears to him fresh “like the bloom on a nectarine,” and with hands that “float like birds on little sunlit waves” (*The Children* 298). Her fate seems sealed, and Judith seems destined to actively pursue a tragic career of hyphenated positioning: child-bride, ingénue-temptress, virgin-whore.

Judith seems, in fact, destined to follow her mother, Joyce, who in the novel spells out the tragedy in store for the younger Judith (and it cannot be coincidence alone that links this reprehensible character to that aforementioned, hated peddler of modernist “drive”). Judith P. Saunders, in her reading of *The Children*, designates Joyce as representative of “a generation of adults whose parental investment in their offspring is unnaturally low” (2005 85); Saunders’ reading, in fact, leans heavily upon ideas of the “unnatural” in Wharton’s writing, and argues that her characters’ behaviors must, “from a Darwinian point of view, ... be considered maladaptive” (84). Here, though, Saunders oversimplifies the case, for Wharton’s characters are nothing if *not* adaptive, especially so given the exceptional circumstances of their social environment. Dramatic conflict in *The Children* is the very result of discrepancies between nature and social expectation, and comes from characters’ failures to fully adapt to a shifting and ambiguous spectrum of social prerogatives. This is not “maladaptive” behavior but the evolutionary imperative in all of its glory, and for those characters who refuse to adapt (like Boyne), Wharton doles out Darwinian-style punishment: Boyne ends up alone, unloved, abandoned by “the children” who never belonged to him, biologically speaking, in the first place. His legacy, and name, will die with him. Wharton, though perhaps appalled by the “unnatural” actions of her characters, and the real-life figures who may have inspired them, is moreover fearful that such behaviors may become, over time, instantiated and natural. Critic Ellen Pifer offers an absurd reading of Wharton’s characters as “sylvan,” “untamed image[s]”

of a “new world,” and labels Wharton’s outlook as “optimistic” in its deference to “shimmering freedom and possibility” (Pifer 1999 223). In fact, though, Wharton’s perspective is anything but optimistic: she fears a future in which adult men’s rejections of the adult female body may be logically assuaged through desires for the child female body. Even more, though, she fears a modern world in which such grotesque behaviors may be placidly accepted via the rhetoric of “nature”.

In *The Children*, Wharton points to the consequences of indulging such fantasies, and through Joyce, broadcasts the inherent conceptual tragedy of the flapper, a figure who, for all her hyphens and hybrid designations, cannot exist naturally. Joyce tries with all her heart to affect the child-trapped-in-a-woman’s-body archetype that her daughter embodies, and this impossible task meets with increasing failure and disappointment. The only *successful* end to the flapper narrative is, in fact, death; the only way the flapper may succeed in fulfilling her *raison d’être*, eternal youth, is through death. Lolita, too, we know is fated to die young, for in this familiar story, life signals failure, and promises disappointment. Perhaps this is why the foundations of the flapper are to be found in tragedy, and in death itself.

The Flapper, and *The Flapper* (1920)

The origins of the flapper are probably best understood in light of dialectical positioning, though: the flapper is, in essence, a perceived negation of the Victorian woman. Such is clear, for instance, in the transition from the tightly corseted, long-hemmed garments that defined Victorian female fashion to the loose, amorphous, frocks worn by women in the 1920s. The post-war years saw the banishment of the Victorian hourglass archetype – a move that, on the surface, appears consistent with the logic of female emancipation, and with multi-national fights for women’s suffrage during this period. But the less form-fitting styles of the 1920s also gave way to exposed arms, legs, and necklines. Flappers sported boyishly cropped hair, but did so alongside dramatic

“vamp” makeup. In fact, flapper style is less representative of a move *toward* androgyny than a move *away* from the adult female body – that is to say, away from the realities of such bodies, and towards a distant and hazy ideal which is not womanly only insofar as it is not recognizably human.

An ideal case study for consideration here is the early film starlet Olive Thomas, the so-called “first flapper,” who defined and immortalized that label in spite of the fact that she didn’t live to witness its golden age. Olive Thomas (originally Oliveretta R. Duffy) was born in the working class steel town of Charleroi, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh, in 1894. Though her name would become synonymous with the term “flapper,” Thomas owes much of her success to Victorian-era sensibilities and culture. Thomas married young, at sixteen, but the marriage lasted only two years; her subsequent divorce in 1913 may appear somewhat unusual given her class and background, but it was decidedly less unusual for her time period. 1913 is, after all, also the year that Edith Wharton’s most inflammatory novel, *The Custom of the Country*, appeared in print, with its featured heroine a serial divorcee who pursues marriage for increasingly ambitious financial gains.⁵⁷ Thomas was uncommonly pretty and, following her divorce, she left her industrial Mon Valley surroundings for New York City, convinced that her beauty would assure her success there. Such proved to be the case: within a year of her relocation to New York, Thomas won a magazine sponsored “Most Beautiful Girl in New York City” contest, and was subsequently painted by the well-known artist Howard Chandler Christy. *The Saturday Evening Post*, a mainstay of Victorian print culture and famous for developing and promoting that Victorian female ideal, the “Gibson Girl,” would feature Thomas on its cover a year later, in 1915.

As such, Thomas made her first mark on the world as an instantiation of youthful Victorian beauty. Photographs of Thomas from this period show her with long ringlet pin curls, large straw hats, and high-necked, girlish shirtwaists, despite the fact she was sympathetically describing her as having “had no girlhood” (“Young Selznick” 1925). She is often seen posing with animals,

looking very much like a Norman Rockwell creation.⁵⁸ A 1925 *Photoplay* memorial to Thomas further describes, with similarly histrionic flair, Thomas' incandescent, childlike beauty:

Strong men drew dizzy under her eyes. She was overwhelmed with admiration, gifts of treasure, diamond necklaces, pendant, rings, parties, orchids, everything that the dreaming little shop girl might fancy on the screen of her imagination. It was even whispered about that the great Bernstorff, the German ambassador, had sent Miss Thomas a ten thousand dollar string of pearls. ("The Rise of Olive Thomas" 1925)

Here, references to the "little shop girl's fancy" assist in reinforcing historical understandings of Thomas' youthfulness. Thomas' stardom grew out of her beauty, certainly, but it was simultaneously nurtured by widespread perceptions of her *youth*, and her ability to appear like an aestheticized child. In 1915, though, Thomas joined the cast of the notorious Ziegfeld Follies (Baker 2005), and her much-discussed youth and beauty took on darker, more provocative dimensions. Her stint with the Follies was Thomas' first step in crossing over, in evolving from Victorian beauty icon to 1920s jazz vamp. Her film career was quick to follow, and Thomas lent a flair and exoticism to her "little girl" roles, despite now being in her 20s.

Many of Thomas' films exploit her ability to simultaneously embody Victorian aesthetic qualities and modern tastes, but *The Flapper* (1920), in particular, is wholly dependent upon Thomas in this regard. The film portrays the evolution of its main character, Genevieve, from a naïve, flighty, boarding school girl in curls and bows, to the transformed "Ginger" in black silk and sequins in a New York City café, and back again. The narrative, in fact, takes more than a few cues from Thomas' biography, except that the fictional Genevieve ends up back where she started, albeit with a gained sense of appreciation for the Victorian parlor, family, and conservative southern surroundings that she formerly abandoned. In *The Flapper*, fifteen year-old Genevieve (played by twenty-three year-old Thomas), along with her female classmates, begins by ogling a mysterious man

who rides daily past her boarding school gates, speculating from his daunting personage that he must be a “Greek god” or an “English lord”. This same man later saves Genevieve from a catastrophic sleigh ride with a young, inexperienced beaux, and subsequently invites her to an evening dance at his country club, assuming her to be a grown woman of twenty. In preparation for the dance, director Alan Crosland engineers a stunningly metaphorical on-screen transition: not having a dress suitable for the dance, Genevieve borrows one from a giddy schoolmate. The dress itself befits a Victorian schoolgirl, and features a wide circle skirt, a high lace neck, and a wide sash tied in a bow at the waist. Genevieve stands at the center of a gaggle of schoolgirls, and speaks to the camera while they – not her – remove the excess bows and trimmings, and slice the Victorian lace neck off the top of the dress with a pair of scissors. The resulting creation is a low-necked dress which slides clear off of Genevieve’s shoulders, revealing womanly décolletage.

The ball gown scene is the first of three transformations for Genevieve in *The Flapper*. Later, in New York City, Genevieve is persuaded to meet with a thieving classmate and her lover at an upscale hotel. By the time she arrives “alone in the wicked city” (as the interstitial titles describe New York), Genevieve is wearing her hair up to affect a short, modish haircut, and has replaced her floppy Victorian bow with a wide, glittery headband, and her cinch-waist skirts with a loose shift dress. At the hotel café, Genevieve again runs into “The English Lord,” Mr. Channing. Having been previously slighted by him and labeled a girl of “sap-headed, pin-feathered age,” Genevieve, who now adopts the name Ginger, affects a modern, vampish appearance, smoking cigarettes and staring absently into the distance. Channing confronts her and mentions that he’s on his way to her hometown – Orange Springs, Florida – for a yachting holiday. But Channing dismisses her once again as a little girl, and Ginger determines that, when she next meets Channing, she will be dressed in an “outfit of experience” – that is, clothing of a more mature and provocative style – in order to prove her adult-ness and win him. “Experience” here is a stand-in for many things: for modernity,

for urbanity and city life, but most of all for sex. Ginger wants to appear *sexually* experienced to Channing, because she equates this condition with adulthood and maturity. It is interesting, however, that she does not (even for a moment) consider *gaining* such experience. She does not, in other words, want to have sex, she merely wants to *embody* and wear sex. True sexual experience would brand Ginger as a real-life tramp, whereas merely dressing the part might allow her to appear as an idealized, aesthetically rendered version of such real-world disgrace. Ginger wants, in essence, to be made a living image, as film does to real people, and to appear as something which she cannot, in reality, ever consider becoming for fear of impinging upon social codes.

Ginger is then serendipitously left with a set of suitcases containing stolen clothing and jewelry; upon realizing the contents, she exclaims she “might vamp it and win Channing!” The self-conscious use of the term “vamp” here reveals this plot as an already accepted formulaic device – in film, and in culture more generally. “Vamping,” even from this early standpoint (the film began production in 1919, even before the dawn of the roaring twenties) is culturally legible practice whereby one may act or appear seductively under the guise of mere *performance*. In other words, “vamping” suggests illusion; it points to a temporary state of suspended reality, and therein voids real-world consequence. In her efforts to “vamp” herself with the help of the stolen clothing, though, Ginger looks like a little girl playing dress up: she drapes long chains of pearls haphazardly about her neck; she inexpertly applies lipstick, smearing it across her mouth; and she dons an ill-fitting, overly large dark dress. By the time the scene changes, however, and we see Ginger arriving at her stately family home in Orange Springs, all traces of the novice vamp have been removed from the picture. Ginger struts confidently, though comically, into a graciously decorated Victorian parlor, wearing a tight-fitting and provocative black get-up, high heels, long satin gloves, and carrying a regal sort of mace in her hand. Channing, when he eventually sees her in this garb, immediately *reads* sex on her person, and equates her “vamp” style with real sexual experience. He laments her fall

from innocence, and inquires of the young man responsible for her shame. Ginger won't give it (because she can't think of a fictional name fast enough), but instead laughably sighs that she will "probably become a dope fiend – to forget." Here, the fictional Ginger lampoons the real-world fate of many a flapper – Olive Thomas included, for it was widely rumored that Thomas and her husband, Jack Pickford, abused cocaine. Thomas even was once implicated (under a pseudonym) in a smuggler's arrest (most likely her husband, also using a pseudonym) when French authorities discovered such a man attempting to bring the drug across the French-German border ("American Imprisoned" 1920). As such, Genevieve's melodramatic allusions to her future as a "dope fiend" – engineered, in this case, for comic affect – reflect the *real* story of Olive Thomas, and foretell its untimely ending.

The Flapper was one of Olive Thomas' last films. It debuted in May of 1920, and four months later, Thomas was discovered dead in a Paris hotel room. In the film, Ginger learns the error of her ways and reassumes the persona of the lovely and innocent Victorian child in curls and bows. The real Olive Thomas, however, met a fate much closer to the one aped by the fictional Ginger for the sake of comedic effect: Thomas died of a drug overdose in September of 1920, though whether it was suicide, poisoning (by her husband, Jack Pickford), or accidental overdose is still the subject of speculation and debate. The real Olive Thomas haunts *The Flapper* in this way, and makes the flapper figure appear similarly, and ironically, doomed – ironic considering that F. Scott Fitzgerald⁵⁹ once called flappers "girls with a splendid talent for life" (qtd. in Bruccoli 1971 280). It seems that the flapper's talent for *death* far surpasses her talent for life, and this too returns us to the nineteenth century and to Victorian sentimentality.⁶⁰ Olive Thomas, in particular, seems to have had a talent for death, far exceeding any talent she may have had for living. The *New York Times*, for instance, reports that Thomas' New York City funeral, at which Irving Berlin and other jazz dignitaries served as ushers and pallbearers, required substantial police intervention:

Before policemen could be called from the street the crowd had surged in among the pallbearers and was swirling about the coffin. Several close-pressed women fainted, men who struggled either to free themselves or to check the inrush of others had their hats broken and for a moment there was great excitement. Then big policemen came shouldering their way into the press, order was restored, the women who had succumbed were carried into the side aisles and the coffin was borne out. (“Women Faint” 1920 24)

The scene was, apparently, thronged with mourners, theatrically enacting their grief for the young, dead starlet; today, Thomas’ ghost is rumored to haunt not just one but *many* New York City theaters (the New Amsterdam, most particularly); likewise, her tomb, in the Bronx’s famed Woodlawn Cemetery, is one of the most popularly visited gravesites in that city, testament to the cult-like quality of Thomas’ post-humous celebrity. It would seem, in fact, that Olive Thomas proved much more valuable and interesting to the world in death than she ever did in life, and she earns her title of “the first flapper” in epitomizing that figure’s life and in mandating the conditions of its death.

In *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, little Eva’s brief life and subsequent death are the substance of what feels, at first, like a hundred-page detour in Stowe’s central narrative. But the emotional response which Little Eva demands from her readers is sympathy – it is, in fact, identical to the demands of Stowe’s larger narrative, which extracts sympathy from readers for the sake of the abolitionist cause. Douglas tells us that Little Eva’s “greatest act is dying” (1998 4), but I would argue that dying is only part of the story here. In fact it is Little Eva’s *talent for death* that makes her so significant to Stowe’s agenda in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. It is, in short, our ability to read Eva as a tragic and doomed character – a character who is too good to be real, and therefore comforts us through her inability to be real – that draws us. Like Judith Wheater, Eva’s ability to reflect and “flatter the possibilities of her

audience,” makes us love her insofar as we may indulge and love ourselves. Even at the moment of her death, Eva appears indefinable, wearing a “high and almost sublime expression,” her face filled with “the overshadowing presence of spiritual natures”. And as with the scene of Judith Wheeler beside the waterfall, joy is to be found in uninterrupted looking: “They stood so still, gazing upon her, that even the ticking of the watch seemed too loud” (Stowe 269). Olive Thomas seems to intuit the extent of her abilities to be similarly, and simply, looked at; Thomas’ almost arrogant faith in her goods looks translated to an arresting on-screen demeanor. In front of the camera, she succeeds in communicating both self-consciousness and self-confidence, vacillating between scared child and poised temptress, qualities which would, in spite of their conflicts, come to define the flapper in the 1920s.

There is an understandable temptation to, at first glance, draw a straight line between the women’s suffrage movement in the 1910s and the flapper of the 1920s. Susan Faludi, for instance, promotes this facile correlation in her 2010 *Harper’s* article “American Electra: Feminism’s Ritual Matricide”. In it she argues that young feminists today compare to 1920s flappers who rejected the image of the Victorian matriarchal suffragette, even while it was those same dowdy matriarchs who had won women the vote and the freedom to “flap” in the first place. As Heather Addison counters, “the new figure foregrounded by Hollywood films – the slim, youthful flapper, a modern girl of the jazz age ... – was, in her boyish immaturity and transient rebellion, distinctly nonthreatening to the continued operation of patriarchal norms” (Addison 2006 8). Indeed, to older generations of women who could still remember the suffrage movement – even those women, like Wharton, who may have affected a kind of distance from it – the flapper looked like (and jazz sounded like) not modernity and progress, but the very opposite of each.

My point here has not been to demonize jazz, or modernism, or modernity. While I acknowledge that it may sound like as much, my aim here has been, rather, to expose the compelling rationale behind many critics' "unresponsiveness" to jazz and jazz culture, and to reassess our memory of Edith Wharton's political objectives in light of larger, more programmatic responses to modern jazz culture. Adorno helps me to do this, because many of Wharton's criticisms receive further, more in-depth treatment in his work, and because Adorno has greater hindsight in his favor. Likewise, Olive Thomas helps me to do this, because her story is an authentic, real-world corroboration of the Judith Wheeler's story, and of Wharton's fictional "flapper" narratives. Additionally, though, Toril Moi's more recent attempts to reinterpret modernism in the context of what she calls "idealism" (and what I here continue to specify as sentimentalism) reinvigorate such debates about genre and form. Sentimentalism is an infuriatingly stubborn mode of both thought and imagination which, in Lauren Berlant's opinion, maintains a special primacy in women's culture today.⁶¹ Wharton, in her own time, perceived sentimentalism as a profound threat; in a 1922 letter to Sinclair Lewis, she praises him for his "steady-balancing on [a] tight-rope over the sloppy abyss of sentimentality" (Lewis and Lewis 1975 455). Similarly, the previous year, she assures Upton Sinclair that "Some sort of standard *is* emerging from the welter and the cant & sentimentality, & if two or three of us are gathered together, I believe we can still save fiction in America" (Lewis and Lewis 445) – in America, or in the world, for that matter, since Wharton hadn't lived in America for nearly a decade by this point. Moi deserves credit for reviving the debate over genre and authenticity, but it is an old conflict, one that maintained steady prominence throughout the twentieth century (as the works of Wharton and Adorno attest). The familiarity of this debate, in fact, is in many ways the greatest argument for its importance since, like the syncopation principle in jazz music, its ubiquity serves to obscure its very objectives and, to recall Adorno, "contrariness ... become[s] so

entrenched that an entire generation hears” that contrariness as the rule itself, and loses sight “of the original conflict” (“Perennial Fashion” 199).

Moi develops the significance of the loss of “conflict” in her discussion of idealism, particularly insofar as idealism extends to “women, sexuality, and self-sacrifice” (2008 77). Moi explains that, from a philosophical standpoint, “idealism” may be understood as a generic opposition to materialism, or “idealism is to materialism as Hegel is to Marx” (71). It is from idealism that we get Marxism’s most cherished epithet – *vulgar* – and the celebration not just of the anti-real but of the self-consciously and explicitly *non*-real. (Moi additionally notes that the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes idealism as “opposed to realism,” a simplistic definition which permits some glibness here with terms like “anti-real”). Friedrich Schiller provides, for Moi, a full explanation of the term “vulgar,” and he does so with particular reference, not to material in the philosophic sense, but to *sex* and profane corporeality. The “vulgar,” for Schiller, is that which lacks “poetic significance” and fails to “complete nature through the idea, in a word, to make something infinite out of a limited object by a sentimental operation” (78). In other words, nature is vulgar; materiality is vulgar; *the real* is vulgar, except insofar as it can be made more “complete” and grandiose by means of the ideal.

Given such rationale, it makes sense that *sex* (real, actual, and material) should be the enemy of idealism while “love” (ideal, sentimental, and wholly immaterial) should be its primary focus. Such, certainly, is the case with realist and sentimentalist literature: sentimentalism spends the majority of the nineteenth century bent on the negation of sex, and realism surfaces at the dawn of the twentieth to emancipate sex, to put it out in the open where it might be scrutinized and, at last, understood. The flipside of this, though, is realism’s dogged negation of love. As I have discussed elsewhere, “love” becomes a handy site for realism to stage its fight against sentimentality. “Love” is a very legible means through which one might reject the “welter and cant” of Wharton’s fears in

favor of “contrariness,” since as Laura Kipnis playfully asks in her famous *Against Love*, “Who would dream of being against love? No one. Love as ... everyone knows ... demands our loyalty” (2003 3). This is why *female* realist writers, from Edith Wharton to Anne Moncure Crane to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, return to love as both subject and site over and over again – because to do so signifies the deepest *disloyalty*, and a betrayal of femininity as a genre.

To abandon love is to declare a preference for the real, not the ideal; it is, for all intents and purposes, a willing declaration of *vulgarity*. Realist writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reveled in such vulgarity, offering, with sadistic pleasure each time, the increasingly generic story of the woman who refuses love. What began with Crane’s 1864 *Emily Chester* gained speed and momentum with other mid-century marriage avengers like Louisa May Alcott and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps,⁶² to later culminate in works like Henry James’ *The Portrait of a Lady* in 1881 and Wharton’s *The House of Mirth* in 1905. In 1913, with the war looming, only months away, Wharton unleashed her most unabashedly vulgar novel (so far as Schiller’s sensibilities may be concerned), *The Custom of the Country*. In this novel, the last of its kind to come from the pre-war realist camp, vulgarity achieves new extremes through Wharton’s heroine, Undine, who not only refuses love, but openly exploits its conceptual possibilities in an effort to climb higher and higher on the social (and financial) ladder.

The war changed things, though; to begin, it forced Wharton to retreat from writing and from the project of vulgarity, and her novel-writing gave way to philanthropy. The bulk of the writing she produced during the war, in fact, came in the form of reports, journalism, and her 1916 *The Book of the Homeless*, published with only charity and “duty” in mind. Wharton edited the collection, and with it managed to combine voices as disparate as Sarah Bernhardt, Jean Cocteau, and Theodore Roosevelt. The last of these, in his introduction to the volume, beseeches the American reader-public to “picture to themselves the plight of these poor creatures” (Roosevelt

1916 x) – evidence of the fact that, for Wharton, the written word now more than ever ought to *represent* real conditions of human tragedy, rather than flee from such material truths.

By 1917, the world had had enough vulgarity, though, and writers committed to its exposure, like Wharton, suddenly appeared out-of-step and decidedly un-modern. In the aftermath of World War I, Wharton observed a world looking for love, albeit in unlikely locations. Jazz culture permitted a popular fascination with *sex*, and sex, in turn, became the new love. Moi states that, “in order to become properly poetic, sex must be sublimated, ennobled, and beautified, that is to say that it must be turned into highly idealized love” (Moi 2008 78). This had certainly been the case throughout the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth, as realism came to rely on generic mandates built on the strict, programmatic reversal of this standard. Beginning in the post-war period, though, jazz culture helped to make sex “mainstream” and public, primarily by attaching it to notions of the sentimental. Jazz culture, in fact, proliferated through its simultaneous loyalties to both sex and love, even while those concepts, a few decades previous, might have seemed hopelessly antipathetic. This, however, was modernity, and the sudden camaraderie of sex and love was to be, in part, proof that the post-war world really was shiny, new, and blessedly detached from tradition.

Recall, for instance, Olive Thomas. Thomas’ rise to stardom was preceded by a stint with the Ziegfeld Follies, which began in 1915. In particular, Thomas performed in the ultra-risqué *Midnight Frolic*, in which chosen Ziegfeld Girls, donning only strategically placed balloons, would dance for an audience of all-male patrons whose lit cigars would burst the balloons and leave the dancers naked (Pitz 2010). Yet Thomas’ iconicity grew from her ability to be two things at once – the child crossed with the woman, for instance, and the seduced crossed with the seductress. Thomas’ “baby vamp” persona continued, throughout her film career, to promote the quintessential flapper image of the sexualized child. Yet she was also – ironically or logically enough, depending on your outlook – branded as “Everybody’s Sweetheart” by the popular press, and her final starring role was in a

movie of that exact name. She appears, for example, in a promotional picture (see Figure 1), in 1916, in a large, white, lace sunhat, with a somewhat affected look of childish innocence, her large eyes



Figure 1: autographed portrait of Olive Thomas, c. 1916. From the private collection of Dr. Gary Brucato, Jr.

drawn upward as though in prayer. She could be, in this picture, Little Eva appealing to God for the strength of her evangelism. *The very same year*, though, Thomas posed nude for pin-up artist Alberto Vargas, and appears in his finished 1920 painting (see Figure 2) as a dark-eyed vamp whose head is thrown back as though in ecstasy, and whose hand clutches her own naked breast.

(In a strange twist of modern irony, *this* image of Thomas proliferates today, though in a still more sordid context: tattoo parlors, American rockabilly culture, and “pin-up” fashion. Those who know Olive Thomas’ image in this way – or, even, have it tattooed on their body – likely don’t even know her name: again, see Figure 2.) Thomas’ ability to embody idealized, childlike beauty, the kind attached to sentimental love, and her willingness to be portrayed as real and living sex, together speak to the contrarian aims of jazz culture and the “jazz age” more generally. Bruce Long calls Thomas’ death “the movie industry’s first real scandal,” and Leonard J. Leff goes so far, even, as to link the demise of “Everybody’s Sweetheart” to an increasing push for Hollywood censorship



Figure 2: Left, Vargas' portrait of Olive Thomas, c. 1916. Later called "Memories of Olive Thomas" when he completed it, following her death, 1922. Right, Vargas' version of Thomas used in promotional materials for Gypsy Tattoo Parlor, Pittsburgh, PA (author's photograph).⁶³

around 1920, the result of which would eventually be the Hays Code (Long 1995; Leff 1991 432). As Leff puts it, "the Roaring Twenties ... were more conservative than popular history suggests" (433); indeed, beneath the neon veneer of sex and modernity, old-fashioned morality and social squeamishness festered. And, as Rita Felski argues, the result of fostering such dualistic fascinations was itself a kind of widespread epidemic of nostalgia, "a formative theme of the modern age: the age of progress was also the age of yearning for an imaginary edenic condition that had been lost" (Felski 1995 40). Lost from sight, perhaps, in terms of cultural priorities, but hardly given up.

A major way in which love and sex, mutually exclusive extremes, achieved peaceful coexistence during the 1920s was through the division of human sensory experience. Silent film, since its debut in the 1890s, had necessitated a kind of strict and often uncomfortable bifurcation between hearing and seeing: synchronized dialogue was impossible, from a technological standpoint, prior to the late 1920s, yet the act of *watching* a film needed *listening* as supplement. As such, live music became the standard accompaniment to silent film viewing, and even the Lumiere Brothers'

first Paris film showing on December 28, 1895 included live piano music (Cook 1990 86). The music which most often accompanied silent films, however, could not often boast direct correspondence to the visual material projected on screen. In the 1910s and 1920s, by which time jazz – jazz piano, in humble locales, or full-scale jazz bands at more popular, urban theaters – had become the ubiquitous “soundtrack” to silent film projection, musical accompaniment developed so as to provide a consistent, if not topically *appropriate*, compliment to the moving image. Musicians might vary the tone or mood of their music to match the action on screen, but this was as far as visual content might be made aural under the circumstances.

Audiences’ frequent encounters with jazz music as “background” to the moving image likely helped to render jazz itself as additionally inobvious and banal. The necessity of such musical accompaniment to silent film, however, is quite clear: if the film itself could not supply noise, the audience might be prompted to, and the illusion would be ruined. Fantasy and disbelief would be trumped by aural realities. In effect, musical accompaniment to silent film likely developed not as one might initially presume – in order to enhance on-screen visual material – but to drown out the audience, and to eradicate reality’s chances of challenging or interrupting the ideal. With this in mind, it is understandable how the bifurcation of human senses, hearing and seeing, and the entertainment of each with disparate sensory experience, while it might seem *unnatural* at first, might overtime become naturalized to the point of being unnoticeable. To recall Adorno once more, “conflict” – in this case, natural and physical conflict – was made so acceptable and normal as to become, in the end, non-conflictive. One interesting discrepancy here, though, is Adorno’s failure to see any such compromises of conflict in modernist *literature*. Wharton dismissed jazz wholesale, yet criticized modernist literature only in particular. She enjoyed Collette, for instance, yet wasn’t moved to proclaim her feelings either way for the likes of Gertrude Stein, who was in her neighbor in St. Germaine. Such a marked *lack* of concern might be proof of a general disinterest for the form, in

spite of her particular objection to its agents. Adorno, on the other hand, dismissed jazz in all its forms, yet praised modernist writers – yes, even Joyce, who alongside Marcel Proust, he claims is responsible for “the last great novels” in English (“Schema of Mass Culture” 75). Wharton, for her own part, adored Proust, and cherished the hope that he would furnish the first French-language translation of her novel *The Custom of the Country* (Lewis and Lewis 1975 372); she surely would have balked, in turn, at Adorno’s hasty lumping together of Proust with Joyce. Yet here, again, we must recall Wharton’s and Adorno’s disagreements, as well as their agreements, concerning form. They both observe, in their criticisms of jazz and jazz culture, that form is certainly at the heart of the issue, but Wharton identifies the symptom as a *sacrifice of form* while Adorno instead sees an *over-reliance on form*. For Adorno, “obeisance” to form must be avoided in order that conflict may be suitably enacted, and mass culture is ahistorical and intolerant of conflict. And so here, again, the two unwittingly agree, for Wharton believes that, in dispensing with form, culture defaults to idealization, and eradicates the possibility of conflicting realities. That is to say, in Wharton’s eyes, if we do not thoughtfully engage the rules and techniques of production, neither may we thoughtfully interact with the products of such processes.

Such is precisely the case with Olive Thomas. The reason she can look like one thing (a sexy vamp) and yet be *seen*, not literally but rather collectively, as another (“Everybody’s Sweetheart”) harkens back to the division of sensory information that became standard practice in jazz culture. Thanks to new technologies, including film but also photography, radio, audio recordings, etc., human audiences in the modern, post-war world could process sex with their eyes and sentiment with their ears, *and think nothing of conflict* – not be struck by any inharmoniousness in the process. Jazz makes sex *sound* like love, even while it still looks like what it is: sex.

Reprise: Hearing What’s Been Heard

The marriage of sex and sentiment in jazz may well sound like a wholesale reversal of Moi's original point about the idealization of sex as love. It is not, however. Jazz culture succeeded in making sex both permissible and popular in mainstream culture by styling it as love, but that is not to say that sentimentality and idealization did not continue to pervade and oversee such processes. One thing motion picture technology achieved in the post-war era, and continues to perfect today with special effects and all manner of computer-generated imagery (CGI), is the idealization of the real, human form. This, too, is sentiment at work, since motion pictures take as their raw material real human beings and transform them into prettier, more acceptable, more ideal, images. Through literature, realism raised a mighty protest against such practices at the dawn of the century; realist film, though, much like the movement towards "real" jazz in the 1950s and 60s, remained several decades away.

The stakes of this investigation lie in concerns for *genre* and *form*, words which, at face-value, do not communicate dire immediacy and struggle. In fact, though, genre is a primary organizational mode by which humans attempt to understand the world they live in. When such generic understanding is revealed to be *false*, or in itself misunderstood, that collective worldview is instantly and often painfully reorganized. In the course of this discussion, it has been my project to reveal the ways in which jazz, as a generic mode and organizational device, was widely and crucially misunderstood by some early twentieth-century audiences, so much so that it became itself a genre built upon the manufacture of misunderstanding. Both Edith Wharton and Theodor Adorno strive, in their criticisms of the prevailing culture of jazz, to appraise jazz's corrosion of artistic form, be that form literary, musical, or otherwise. Widespread, initial misapprehensions of the jazz's relationship to form becomes, over the course an additional hundred years, a deeply entrenched and dogmatic acceptance *of* form; jazz is not only best understood as form, but, in fact, may only be definitively understood as such, following Paul Whiteman's famous statement that jazz is "not the

thing said, but the manner of saying it” (qtd. in Sargeant 1975 27). With the jazz form, we get a set of rules, in essence, which are themselves born from a hidden set of entirely contradictory mandates. Or, to put it plainly: jazz is not jazz except when it is self-consciously the opposite of jazz. Wharton and Adorno alike, in the 1920s and 1930s, intuited this troubling contradiction, and suspected that such false suppositions of form might indicate a wider tendency toward ideological supplianace in Western, but particularly American, culture. Olive Thomas, likewise, embodied the jazz aesthetic in her public character and in her personal life, yet did so best upon the occasion of her death. Thomas was “the first flapper,” but far from the last, becoming an ultimately *replaceable* figure conscripted for use in the programs of both jazz and modernity.

“Jazz,” then, is neither the beginning nor the end of this story, but it is a particularly illustrative vignette to be read amidst the larger narrative. To offer an analogy, consider the “tag” in a jazz song, which is “usually a 2-bar phrase added to the end of a chorus” that repeats the main melodic theme and emphasizes it. “The last 8 bars of *I’ve got rhythm* are prolonged by a tag” (Pannassié and Gautier 1956 264). Jazz is to the narrative of ascendant ideological culture as the tag is to a jazz song – an instance of emphasis, a conspicuous reminder. The tag is a repeat of something you’ve already heard which permits the realization that you’ve already heard it.

Notes

¹ Evolutionary psychologists like Anne Campbell for instance, take up this position, and admirably so. Yet Campbell's study, in focusing on psychological differences between the sexes, and in drawing all of its evidence from similarly inclined studies, walls itself off to a variety of extra-disciplinary challenges to such insight. As men and women, we are left, in Campbell's work, with just our brains, and with fetishized, disconnected brains that do not interact with our bodies, that do not relate or respond to each other, and with a "Darwinian algorithm" that fails to account for the vast majority of mental processes, products, and interactions. See Campbell, *A Mind of Her Own* (Oxford, 2002).

² Among such "moments" in history, Epstein points to certain "prominent cases of hermaphroditism [which were] publicly contested at the turn of the seventeenth century" (108), including that of Marie/Marin le Macis (1601). Likewise, 1770s Germany was taken with the image of the hermaphrodite, as evidenced by artistic and anatomical drawings dating from that period. See Julia Epstein, "Either/Or—Neither/Both: Sexual Ambiguity and the Ideology of Gender." *Genders* 7.1 (Spring 1990): 100-142.

³ Full title, *Tabulae neurologicae ad illustrandam historiam cardiacorum nervorum, noni nervorum cerebri, glossopharyngei et pharyngei* (1794).

⁴ Faustino Anderloni, "Tab. V". From Antonio Scarpa, *Tabulae Neurologicae* (1794) 1813. Web. 29 February 2012 thethingdetectives.com. 13 February 2013. < <http://thingdetectives.blogspot.com/2012/02/they-asked-for-what-strange-cases-iii.html>>

⁵ See Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990). For subsequent discussion, and reiteration, of this point, see Toril Moi, *What is a Woman?* (Yale, 2002), Helen Leftkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex* (Knopf, 2002), among others. For complication, including a refutation of the regnant "one-sex" model described by Lacquer, see Joan Cadden, *The Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995) and Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Rutgers, 2004).

⁶ See, for instance, Karen Harvey, "The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* (2002). Harvey complicates Lacquer's dismissal of eighteenth century revisions to the "one-sex" model, and furthermore locates "the eighteenth century as the century of change in the ways in which bodies were understood, sexuality constructed, and sexual activity carried out" (899).

⁷ See Frank Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (1979). Manuel emphasizes first the decline, then the redirection, of utopian thought around 1800, wherein "universal" man is replaced by "specific" man in a variety of differentiated ways.

⁸ Schleiden's and Schwann's theories were first publicly presented in 1838. They were subsequently published in 1839 as *Microscopical Researches into the Accordance in the Structure and Growth of Animals and Plants*. This work is described in the 1881 *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* as "marking an era in biological science" from a "physiological point of view," though the proceedings note that "[Schwann and Schleiden's] views in regard to the origin of cells have been entirely supplanted by those of more recent investigators," proof that, with fifty more years, science had

advanced even far beyond the “era of biological science” defined by Schleiden and Schwann’s groundbreaking research. See “Theodor Schwann,” *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, v. 17 (June 1881 – June 1882): 460-461. Philip C. Ritterbush additionally observes that, though Schleiden and Schwann were likely unaware of the aesthetic ramifications of their cellular theory, that theory nonetheless might be applied to literature of the same period, including Coleridge’s sense of “organic” form in his poetry. See Ritterbush, “Aesthetics and Objectivity in the Study of Form in the Life Sciences.” G.S. Rousseau, ed. *Organic Form: The Life of an Idea*. Boston: Routledge (1972): 25-59.

⁹ For in-depth discussions of same-sex romantic friendship in nineteenth-century America – particularly among women – see Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men* (Harper, 1998).

¹⁰ Indeed, the medical field’s insistence upon determined sex in such ambiguous cases is *precisely* the same today, with perhaps even graver effects. Take, for instance, Mark and Pam Crawford, a South Carolina couple who, in 2013, sued the doctors who insisted upon genital correction procedures for their child, who was born a “true hermaphrodite”. The Crawford’s son – by age eight, he was identifying as male – had been designated as a female and, as a toddler, underwent accompanying genital constructive surgery to remove his penis. See news article by Katie McDonough, “Couple files groundbreaking lawsuit over child’s sexual reassignment surgery,” Salon.com (15 May 2013).

¹¹ Interestingly, such discrepancies and “conflict” in facial features precisely echo Anne Moncure Crane’s descriptions of her eponymous heroine in *Emily Chester*. See Chapter 2, “An Impossible Woman.”

¹² Left image: “Sleeping Hermaphroditus from Palazzo Altemps, Roma (Museo Nazionale).” Wikimedia Commons, 22 August 2012 (Creative Commons). Right image: “Sleeping Hermaphroditus, Louvre Museum.” Wikimedia Commons, 2004. 1 March 2013 (public domain). Both images recolored by the author to demonstrate contrast in facial features.

¹³ Laurence, it should be mentioned, is similarly “homeless”. He leaves his father’s estate at a young age, vowing never to return, and spends the rest of his life wandering. Even in Rome, where he settles at long last, he owns no property, has no house, etc., and drifts among friends his friends and relations there until his death.

¹⁴ I use the male pronoun here for two reasons. First, because La Zambinella is, as far as we know, born male; he functions throughout the majority of *Sarrasine* as male, and he shows no direct identification with (or preference for) the female gender *aside* from his on-stage portrayal of it. Second, my use of the male pronoun is intended to serve as a willful counterpoint to Roland Barthes’ overly simplistic, essentialist rendering of this character as belonging to the “female camp” in *Sarrasine*. Barthes, for instance, challenges Balzac’s initial description of the elderly La Zambinella as male thus in saying that such description is “misleading” (41). See pp. 37-38 of this discussion.

¹⁵ We must additionally consider the statistical probability of “natural castrati” living in Papal Rome. Anne Fausto-Sterling asserts that we may reliably fix the probability of intersex birth at 1.7 percent of babies born in a given year. “At the rate of 1.7 percent,” furthermore, “a city of 300,000 would have 5,100 people with varying degrees of intersexual development. Compare this with albinism,

another relatively uncommon human trait but one that most readers can probably recall having seen” (51). This statistical likelihood would have been more or less the same in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, though social mechanisms for recognizing it – or understanding it – would certainly have been diminished during that era. In 1870, when the city of Rome was annexed by the Kingdom of Italy, its population was approximately 200,000 – that would be mean a hypothetical “intersexed” population of roughly 3,400 people.

¹⁶ *Séraphita* purports to take place in Norway, but does not resemble that country (during this period) in any specific way. Rather, it uses Norway as a fantastical backdrop, through which we get castles and dramatic landscapes. Similarly, *The Hermaphrodite* is supposed to initially take place in Germany, though that country is likewise not specified; there are no references to German cities or landmarks, to German geography, or even to the German language. Both *Sarrasine* and the second half of *The Hermaphrodite*, however, take place in Rome – and could not have any other city as their narrative setting.

¹⁷ This contention is, interestingly, corroborated by Edith Wharton in *The Fruit of the Tree* (1907). In that novel, Mrs. Ansell tells Langhope that Bessy is “one of the most harrowing victims of the plan of bringing up our girls in the double bondage of expediency and unreality, *corrupting their bodies with luxury and their brains with sentiment*, and leaving them reconcile the two as best they can, or lose their souls in the attempt” (281, emphasis mine). Thus, we see that this issue is still at play another half-century later, and that women are still being educated to “triviality,” in Berto’s words, in the modern, twentieth century.

¹⁸ Fern’s article appears – like Hawthorne’s *The Blithedale Romance* – in 1852, making it contemporaneous with the *New York Times*’ “Gossip Aloft” series. It is possible that the “Gossip Aloft” author had women like Fern specifically in mind. At the least, Fern’s critical satirizing of the “blue stocking” stereotype in this article proves that, by 1852, there already *was* a well-established stereotype attached to such a figure.

¹⁹¹⁹ Here, I am specifically aping Hawthorne’s use of the term “trash” in his now infamous 1855 letter to William Ticknor. See John T. Frederick, “Hawthorne’s ‘Scribbling Women,’” *The New England Quarterly* 48.2 (June 1975): 231-240.

²⁰ Habegger is as assured of this attribution as I am. He explains that, throughout the 1860s, James contributed to, and edited, *The Nation*, and remained loyal to its founder and chief editor E.L. Godkin during this time, “when [*The Nation*’s] liberalism, particularly regarding women, was fading” (9). James and Godkin, in fact, rather saw eye-to-eye on “the woman question,” and Godkin similarly lamented the rise of women’s “literary culture, if we may apply that term to the wild race after popular periodicals which unhappy women are now forced to keep up in order to be able to make a decent figure in polite society” (qtd. in Habegger, 9). And since James had previously reviewed *all* of Crane’s previous novels, either for *The Nation* or for Norton, when Godkin needed someone to write her obituary, he would have indisputably been the best man for the job.

²¹ I am grateful to The Mount and to the Edith Wharton Society for permitting me the opportunity to handle these texts first-hand. George Ramsden, in his definitive (but scarcely available) catalog of

Wharton's book collection, also notes the unopened status of these books. See Ramsden, *Edith Wharton's Library* (Stone Trough, 1999): 61.

²² Hawthorne's infamous comments here came from an 1855 letter to his publisher, William Ticknor, of Ticknor and Fields. That same publishing firm went on to publish Crane's *Emily Chester*, as well as many of the renowned works by women characterizing the "feminine fifties". The ire of Hawthorne's complaint, then, may be equally directed to both the "scribbling women" in question and men like Ticknor, part of the print establishment that saw fit to publish them. In this, Hawthorne's objections on the topic are comparable to James'. For a more in-depth discussion of those objections, see John T. Frederick, "Hawthorne's Scribbling Women" in *The New England Quarterly* (1975).

²³ Baym articulates this formula in many places in her work, but in particular in *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and About Women in America, 1820-70* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1993; originally Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

²⁴ James complains bitterly of Crane's tendency to describe her protagonist thus, and likewise of Emily's habit of appearing rapidly "statuesque". Critic Mary Loeffelholz, however, establishes a tradition of such metaphorical "posing" in connection to both women writers of the mid-nineteenth century, and to suffragettes who dare to speak publicly. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, according to Loeffelholz, saw and described herself as a "stone goddess" as a means of "claim[ing] dignity for women as embodied citizens" and "defend[ing] ... activist women against the kinds of attacks mounted on the female body" from the popular press. Likewise, Loeffelholz explains that the suffragette Frances Wright had been described "in the same sculptural vocabulary" and compared to a "Grecian statue" (94-95). See Loeffelholz, "Posing the Woman Citizen: The Contradictions of Stanton's Feminism," *Genders* (7, 1990): 87-98.

²⁶ In fact Alfred Habegger, the *only* critic who has to heretofore even mentioned the controversy, or connection, between James and Crane, argues that, after Hawthorne, Crane was likely James' greatest influence. He likewise points out that James even re-used character names from Crane in his fiction, such as the surname "Archer" in *The Portrait of a Lady*. Crane's third, and final novel, was called *Reginald Archer*. See Habegger, *Henry James and the Woman Business*, 102.

²⁷ For more on James' labeling of the New Woman, see Hugh Stevens, *Henry James and Sexuality* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 2008), 27.

²⁸ This analogy rather reminds us of the allusions to hermaphroditic suffragettes, with their "breasts contain[ing] curdled milk," anonymously discussed in the *New York Times*' "Gossip Aloft" column two decades earlier. But while Spencer concludes that men may still be men even if they lactate, we are not to judge intelligent women, by extension, as "natural" examples of their sex. This, too, approaches the rhetoric of hermaphroditism discussed in connection to figures like Julia Ward Howe and Fanny Fern: see Chapter 1, "Romancing the Hermaphrodite."

²⁹ Spencer called ethics the "science of right living," and argued furthermore that science itself was necessarily prone to ethical considerations and evaluations: "... by as much as it ignores any class of consequences, by so much does it fail to be science" he states in his *Principles of Ethics*. This line is,

significantly, underlined by Edith Wharton in her 1897 copy of Spencer's text. See Spencer, *Principles of Ethics*, volume I, p. 98.

³⁰ Wharton's comments here, from her 1904 *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, are meant literally – that is, she is actually referring to flowers. Yet Wharton, who published books on home design and horticultural taste even prior to writing her first novel, used this kind of language both in reference to poor design (she railed against English rose gardens, calling them “sentimental”) and poor taste in art, literature, or culture in general. Her desire to see *formal logic* trump emotion applies uniformly to horticultural aesthetic and literary production alike. See Edith Wharton and Maxfield Parish, *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (Century: 1907), 7-8. For a discussion of “sentimentality” in garden design, and more analysis of this quotation, see Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (Vintage, 2008) 115.

³¹ Howell's *A Modern Instance* (1882), for instance, makes a sympathetic case for divorce, which itself was on the rise in the 1860s and 70s. It is important to note that, at this time, it was nearly impossible for a woman to divorce her husband, but significantly easier for a man to divorce his wife. In *A Modern Instance*, Howells focuses on Marcia (Gaylord) Hubbard, who is abandoned by her scoundrel husband, but then subsequently divorced *by him* on the very grounds of abandonment, a device which serves to highlight inequity in American divorce law.

³² Blackwell wrote a comprehensive – though commercially unsuccessful – memoir and manifesto detailing her experiences as the first female medical student in the United States and, after, as the first practicing female physician. See Elizabeth Blackwell, *Pioneer Work in Opening the Medical Profession to Women* (JM Dent and Sons, 1914).

³³ Alice Stone Blackwell had a personal investment in popular depictions of female physicians – her father's sister was Elizabeth Blackwell.

³⁴ Boston University's merger with the New England Female Medical College – “essentially a midwifery school,” though among the first to train women in medicine – in 1873 made it somewhat anomalous, and progressive, for its time period. And Boston University, in addition to being the first American university to grant women admission to all of its courses of study, was also the first to award a PhD to an American woman (1877) and the first to grant a woman a law degree (1881). See Frederick C. Waite, *History of the New England Female Medical College* (Boston University Press, 1950).

³⁵ Dahlgren's treatise, interestingly enough, additionally argues that women's suffrage is furthermore necessary because women already *have* rights – too many of them. After stating that “At present the professions,” including “[d]ivinity, law, medicine, shop-keeping, brokerage, musical and literary composition, painting and sculpture” are “open to women” (albeit at this time without any kind of formal training or education), Dahlgren laments this situation. She observes that a woman's decreased natural capabilities make her less apt to perform in any such profession, and that as a result, “men are preferred. Do we women prefer female physicians? Decidedly not.” What is even more interesting, though, is that this line of thinking – and Dahlgren's text along with it – has been revived in contemporary debate by conservative political figures. In 2007, Ann Coulter conjectured that “[taking] away a woman's right to vote” might be necessary since women “vote so stupidly”. And in 2010, the libertarian blog The-Spearhead.com also took up the issue (and Dahlgren's treatise), claiming that “[i]f Madeline Dahlgren were alive today ... she would have

understood the connection between female suffrage in the West and the decline of civilization ... But very few people (even conservatives) fail to realize that the inception of this cancer can be found in the passage of the 19th amendment.” See Dahlgren, *Thoughts on Female Suffrage* (Blanchard and Mohun, 1871) for original text. For Ann Coulter’s comments (from her interview with George Gurley), see “Coulter Culture,” *The New York Observer* (2 October 2007). For The-Spearhead.com’s discussion, and use, of Dahlgren, see “How Female Suffrage Destroyed Civilization,” the-spearhead.com (15 September 2010).

³⁶ See, for instance, Clarke’s epigraphic quotations included in *Sex in Education*. A quotation from the conservative orator François Guizot, for example, proclaims that “We trust that the time now approaches when man’s condition shall be progressively improved by the force of reason and truth, when the brute part of nature shall be crushed, that the god-like spirit may unfold.” Thus it’s clear that Clarke, like the editors of *Popular Science Monthly*, and many others in the scientific community, strongly believed in the ability of “reason” to trump the truths of nature and the body, so long as that reason was in essence male. Female intelligence, of course, is by nature a slave to the requirements of the body, and therefore incapable of such an outcome. See Clarke, *Sex in Education* (Osgood and Company, 1873), pp. 1-3, and 118-124.

³⁷ Many, many scholars are happy to apply the term “Boston marriage” to this arrangement, in which “two women lived together in committed relationships,” to quote Anne E. Boyd. I, however, would like resist this term, not only because it flippantly demeans the quality of such relationships, but also because its inventor – again, Henry James – intended the term to ring with a measure of derision. For discussion of these marriage arrangements, though, see Lillian Faderman, *Suprassing the Love of Men* (Morrow, 1981). For Henry James’ coining of the term, see *Henry James and Homo-Erotic Desire* by John Bradley (Macmillan, 1998). For discussion of Sarah Orne Jewett and Annie Field’s relationship, in particular, see *Sarah Orne Jewett: A Writer’s Life* by Elizabeth Silverthorne (Overlook, 1993); *Annie Adams Fields, Woman of Letters* by Rita K. Gollin (Amherst, 2002) pp. 221-229; “Archives of Female Friendship and the ‘Way’ Jewett Wrote,” by Marjorie Pryse, *The New England Quarterly* (March 1993) pp. 47-66.

³⁸ Philosophy was, at this time, included in the Department of Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy at the University of Chicago, which itself an indication of how these fields of study – all concerned with the training and development of the human brain – were thematically linked at the end of the nineteenth century, having not yet acquired the specificities of method that would later divide them. For John Dewey’s – who served then as head of this departments – thoughts on the relation of philosophy and psychology to educational practices, see the text of his 1898 lectures “The School and Society,” in *John Dewey on Education*, ed. Archambault (Chicago, 1974): 295-310.

³⁹ See Helen Bradford Thompson, “The Total Number of Functional Cells in the Cerebral Cortex of Man ...” *Journal of Comparative Neurology* ix.2 (1899): 113-140; and “A Brief Summary of the Researches of Theodor Kaes ...” *Journal of Comparative Neurology* x.3 (1900): 358-373.

⁴⁰ The *Nation* article in question, interestingly, compares two fictional “examples” of the unfortunate female products of coeducation. William Dean Howells, on the one hand, is quoted in his portrayal of a well-adjusted young woman who, having tended a coeducational college, “couldn’t have a better basis than knowing [a gentleman suitor] through three or four years of hard work” (405). On the

other hand, though, Henry James is likewise quoted, who for his own part offers a portrayal of the spinster-like female who has been ravaged by her brainy exploits in a coeducational college setting. James' educated female is a "poor girl – a perfect little decorative person, who ought to have iridescent gray plumage and pink-shod feet to match the rest of her" who should be accordingly "kept for the dovecote and the garden, kept where we may still hear her coo" rather than be taught "to roar and snarl with other animals" at college (405). Both of these quotations are taken from the same source, a massive, collaborative novel "by twelve authors" entitled *The Whole Family*, published just previous to this article (in 1908) and combining a disparate range of authors including James and Howells alongside Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman. It is interesting to see how, given a single issue, like that of coeducation, this volume undoes itself along "party lines," generically speaking, neatly separating the likes of Phelps and Howells from the likes of James. See "The Present and Future State of Coeducation," *The Nation* v. 88 (April 1909); see also Howells, James, et al., *The Whole Family* (Harper and Brothers, 1909).

⁴¹ Taft is a fascinating figure in her own right, and her life has been dutifully recorded by Virginia P. Robinson, though she is little mentioned in the academic discourse of the last 40 years. See Robinson, *Jessie Taft, Therapist and Social Work Educator, A Professional Biography* (U Penn Press, 1962). See also Charlene Haddock Seigfried, "An Introduction to Jessie Taft, 'The Woman Movement from the Point of View of Social Consciousness,'" *Hypatia*, 8.2 (Spring 1993): 215-218.

⁴² Wharton describes herself thus, and delights in a 1921 review by critic Edmund Wilson: "Mr. Ed. Wilson, Jr., speaks words that are as balm to me, for it has dawned upon him that perhaps satire is my weapon" (qtd. in Horner and Beer, 9). TS Eliot, too, recognized this predominant inclination in her writing, referring to Wharton as the "satirist's satirist". See James W. Tuttleton, Kristin O. Lauer, and Margaret P. Murray (eds.), *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 263.

⁴³ Wharton herself coins this phrase, though not with reference to Darwin. Rather, she calls the poet Robert Browning "one of the great Awakeners of my childhood" in her autobiography, *A Backward Glance*, p. 66.

⁴⁴ Here I'm thinking, in particular, of Q.D. Leavis and his commemorative tribute to Wharton, "Henry James' Heiress: The Importance of Edith Wharton" See *Edith Wharton: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Howe (Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 73-89. There are many other such instances, though: Lewis himself, even, is guilty of popularizing the story of "inheritance" linking James and Wharton, and of misrepresenting the actual circumstances of that pair's intellectual friendship. He suggests, for instance, that it was James who inspired in Wharton the kind of "focused ambition that fulfilled itself eventually in *The House of Mirth*." See *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (Harper and Row, 1975), p. 127.

⁴⁵ Elsa Nettels, for instance, both exposes the repetition of this kind of scholarship, and contributes to it in insisting instead on William Dean Howells' – rather than James' – influence on Wharton. See Nettels, "Howells and Wharton," *American Literary Realism* (Winter, 2006), pp. 160-173.

⁴⁶ Sharon Kim is, commendably, one of the few to comprehend, and note that Kelly is responsible for Wharton's title. Kim's *Literary Epiphany*, however, does little to develop this connection, aside from noting (in a footnote) its mere existence. See Kim, *Literary Epiphany in the Novel, 1850-1950* (Palgrave, 2012) and also "Lamarckism and the Construction of Transcendence in *The House of Mirth*," *Studies in the Novel* (2006), pp. 187-210.

⁴⁷ Here I'm referring to an estimable body of work that, since roughly 2000, has tried to tackle the relationship between Wharton's fiction and her Darwinian interests or studies. That list also includes: Donal Pizer, "American Naturalism in its 'Perfected State': *The Age of Innocence* and *An American Tragedy*" in *The Age of Innocence*, ed. Singley (Houghton-Mifflin, 2000); Richard A. Kaye, *The Flirt's Tragedy: Desire Without End in Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (University of Virginia, 2002); and Tricia M. Farwell, *Love and Death in Edith Wharton's Fiction* (Peter Lang, 2006).

⁴⁸ There is an obvious, but no less crucial, connection between the processes of "care" or "curation" chronicled in Wharton's "The Angel at the Grave" and Virginia Woolf's notorious satirization of the "Angel in the House." Yet Woolf, who began her writing career only slightly after Wharton began hers, doesn't get around to killing her "Angel in the House" until 1931. Meanwhile, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in an 1891 essay called "The Extinct Angel," takes up the project of assassinating that pervasive barrier to female creativity. Gilman's essay is a more likely influence on Wharton's outlook in "The Angel at the Grave," though her library does not seem to include any surviving books by Perkins Gilman.

⁴⁹ This is true saving one notable exception: Saunders, in her book, offers a three-sentence synopsis of Wharton's story "The Duchess at Prayer," from *Crucial Instances* – a story which precedes "The Angel at the Grave". Saunders' reading is, however, unsatisfying, and once again, divorced from the kind of historical context that might have linked it larger Wharton's larger fascinations with scientific inquiry at this time. See Saunders, *Reading Edith Wharton Through a Darwinian Lens*, 196-7.

⁵⁰ I rely on Moi's translation of de Beauvoir in deference to her arguments in *What is a Woman?*, but also in order to avoid other translations of de Beauvoir's text, which are, in general, famously rife with errors, false cognates, and misrepresented logic.

⁵¹ David Holbrook's discussion of *Ethan Frome*, for example, directly links Wharton's marital experiences to that of her protagonist in that novel. See Holbrook, *Edith Wharton and the Unsatisfactory Man* (St. Martins, 1991), pp. 95, 113.

⁵² This is in spite of the fact that Wharton's books were repeatedly adapted for the cinema, and with great popular success. For along with *Glimpses of the Moon*, a silent film version of *The House of Mirth*, produced by Metro, had appeared in 1918, with *The Age of Innocence* 1924 (one wonders what kinds of soundtracks may have accompanied these works ...) *The Children*, elsewhere the subject of this chapter, was likewise made into a talking film, called *The Marriage Playground*, during this same era. And, after Wharton's death, a film production of her novelette *The Old Maid*, from her *Old New York* collection, debuted in 1939. These popular film adaptations of her work earned Wharton popular appeal and a decent amount of money (film rights to *The Children* alone sold for \$25,000), but she seems to have been nevertheless resolutely uninterested in the finished products. See Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (Vintage, 2007) p. 595.

⁵³ Attali argues that modern music makes the listener unwittingly complicit in acts of aural violence, and that such acts are "no longer limited to the battlefield or the concert hall, but pervade all of society" (36). See Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (1980).

⁵⁴ In addition to the sheer fact of mechanical reproducibility, I'm thinking in particular of Benjamin's comment that "technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself" (220). In the same way that "beauty and poetry" might be otherwise available only to the upper classes," so these ideas – like Fords – are distributed

universally via mechanical reproducibility. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations* (1968).

⁵⁵ Alan Price offers an in-depth analysis of this period of Wharton's life, and of a collective social emphasis on the "raw materials" referred to here. See Price, *The End of the Age of Innocence: Edith Wharton and the First World War* (Palgrave, 1997).

⁵⁶ To reinforce the connection between modernism and the "nymphet" epidemic, Nabokov's novel is famously littered with allusions to Joyce's *Ulysses*, which Nabokov reveres as a kind of stylistic touchstone. In his "Foreword," Nabokov additionally alludes to the "decision rendered December 6th, 1933, by the Hon. John M. Woolsey, in regard to another, considerably more outspoken book" (4), in order to contextualize his work within larger, apparently universal literary currents. See Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* ([1955] 1997). For more discussion of Nabokov's stylistic homages to Joyce, see, among many sources, Alfred Appel, Jr., "An Interview with Vladimir Nabokov," *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* (1967) and, more recently, Elizabeth Ladenson, *Dirt for Art's Sake: Books on Trial from Madame Bovary to Lolita* (2011).

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Ammons unflinchingly sizes up the political economy of divorce in her essay on Wharton's *The Custom of the Country*. See Ammons, "The Business of Marriage in Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country*," *Criticism* (Fall 1974); also, Katherine Joslin's discussion of the "fashion" of divorce in *Edith Wharton and the Making of Fashion* (2011).

⁵⁸ Rockwell's career with *The Saturday Evening Post* was, throughout the "roaring twenties," built upon his penchant for creating idealized, anachronistic scenes which resembled portraits of a bygone nineteenth century. For a very interesting discussion of Rockwell's ability to "assuage" the anxieties of tumultuous eras in representing "simpler," more romantic ones, see Clarissa J. Ceglio, "Complicating Simplicity," *American Quarterly* (June 2002).

⁵⁹ Fitzgerald, oddly enough, was hired to write the captions for the silent film version of Wharton's *The Glimpses of the Moon*, though the finished film failed to credit him for his (largely unused) work. He was, however, paid \$500 for the job. See Lee, p. 595.

⁶⁰ Lea Jacobs, in her masterful work *The Decline of Sentiment*, concertedly probes the connections between the flapper's ubiquitous presence in 1920s film and the Victorian cult of sentimentality. She does not, however, lend much of her attention to Olive Thomas, who is mentioned only in an off-hand way in Jacobs' book, and reduced, overall, to the substance of mere footnotes. See Jacobs, *The Decline of Sentiment: American Film in the 1920s* (University of California UP, 2008), pp. 80, 193.

⁶¹ See Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint* (2008).

⁶² Anne Moncure Crane, taking a page from Gustave Flaubert, assumed an early role in the debate over modern marriage. See Chapter Two, for a discussion of Crane's *Emily Chester* (1864), and also Louisa May Alcott's *Moods* (1864). Likewise, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in both *The Story of Avis* (1877) and *Doctor Zay* (1882), further adds to the canon of complaint and anxiety surrounding marriage during this era. See Chapter Three for further discussion of Phelps.

⁶³ Here the addition of a tattoo on her left arm inserts Thomas' image within the stylistic trappings of American tattoo, rockabilly, and "pin-up" subculture. Thomas, though, died long before the "pin-up" girl's 1940s heyday, the more salient cultural referent for members of this subculture. When I asked the owner of Gypsy Tattoo Parlor why she chose this image to represent her business, she said it was personal to her, being one of the first tattoos she had herself added to her body. She had never heard of Olive Thomas, and was likewise unaware that Thomas hailed from the Pittsburgh area.

Works Cited

- Addison, Heather. "“Must the Players Keep Young?’ Early Hollywood’s Cult of Youth.” *Cinema Journal*, 45.4 (2006): 3-25. Print.
- Adorno, Theodor. "The Schema of Mass Culture." *The Culture Industry*, ed. Bernstein. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.
- . "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." *The Culture Industry: Essays on Mass Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.
- . "Perennial Fashion – Jazz". *Critical Theory and Society Reader*, ed. Kellner. New York: Routledge, 1989. Print.
- Alcott, Louisa May. *Louisa May Alcott: Her Life, Letters, and Journals*, ed. Cheney. Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 1889 (facsimile). Print.
- "American Imprisoned for Smuggling Cocaine." *The New York Herald – Paris Edition*, 6 September 1920. Web. 1 October 2012 < <http://www.public.asu.edu/~ialong/Taylor33.txt>>
- Ammons, Elizabeth. *Edith Wharton’s Argument with America*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980. Print.
- Auerbach, Erich. "The Realism of Flaubert," in Flaubert, Gustave, *Madame Bovary*. New York, Norton (1965): 383-392.
- Baker, Sarah, dir. *Olive Thomas: Everybody’s Sweetheart*. Milestone Pictures (2005). DVD.
- Baldwin, James Baldwin. *Fragments in Philosophy and Science, Being Collected Essays and Addresses*. New York: Scribner’s, 1902. Print.
- Balzac, Honoré de. "Author’s Introduction," *The Human Comedy* (1842). Web. Project Gutenberg, 1 March 2013.
- . *Sarrasine. The Human Comedy* (1830). Web. Project Gutenberg, 8 January 2013.
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z: An Essay*. Miller, tr. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974. Print.
- Baym, Nina. "Review of *Science Has No Sex: the Life of Maria Zakrzewska, MD* by Arleen Marcia Tuchman." *The American Historical Review*, 112.1 (February 2007). Web. JSTOR.org, 2 June 2013.
- . *American Women of Letters and the Nineteenth-Century Sciences*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2002. Print.

- Benda, Julien. *Le Bergonismse, ou un Philosophie de la Mobilité*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1912. Print.
- Benstock, Shari. *No Gifts from Chance: a Biography of Edith Wharton*. New York: Penguin, 1995. Print.
- Berlant, Lauren. *The Female Complaint*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.
- “Book Reviews.” *The Nation*, 63.1640 (3 December 1896): 425-428. Web. Ebscohost.com, 20 June 2013.
- “Books Received.” *New York Times*, 8 May 1893. Web. ProQuest.com, 20 June 2013.
- Boswell, Parley Ann. *Edith Wharton on Film*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2007. Print.
- Boyd, Anne E. *Writing for Immortality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. Print.
- Brooks, William Keith (W.K.). *The Law of Heredity: A study of the cause of variation, and of the origin of living species*. J. Murphy, 1883. Web. GoogleBooks, 20 April 2013.
- . *Foundations of Zoology*. New York: MacMillan, 1899. Web. Archive.org, 24 June 2013.
- Brucoli, Matthew Joseph, and Bryer, Jackson R., eds. *F. Scott Fitzgerald in His Own Time*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press (1971): 280. Print.
- Busst, A.J.L. “The Image of the Androgyne in the Nineteenth Century.” *Romantic Mythologies*, ed. Fletcher. London: Routledge (1967): 1-95.
- Capper, Charles. *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992. Print.
- Cattell, James McKeen. “The School and the Family.” *The Popular Science Monthly*, v. lxxiv (January 1909): 84-95. Web. Archive.org, 24 June 2013.
- Cattell, James, ed. *American Men of Science: A Biographical Directory*, Second Edition. New York: Science Press, 1910. Web. GoogleBooks.com, 1 July 2013.
- Clarke, Edward H. *Sex in Education: or, A Fair Chance for Girls*. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1873. Web. Project Gutenberg, 1 March 2013.
- Clifford, William Kingdon. *Lectures and Essays*. London: MacMillan, 1901. Print.
- Cook, David A. *A History of Narrative Film*. New York: Norton, 1990. Print.
- Crane, Anne Moncure [Seemuller]. *Emily Chester*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864.
- . “My Courtship.” *The Galaxy*, 1.1 (May – August 1866). Web. GoogleBooks.com, 1 May 2012.

- . Letter to William Conant Church, 22 February 1866. William Conant Church Papers; New York Public Library Archives.
 - . Letter to William Conant Church, 11 March 1866. William Conant Church Papers; New York Public Library Archives.
 - . Letter to William Conant Church, 7 September 1866. William Conant Church Papers; New York Public Library Archives.
 - . Letter to William Conant Church, 13 June 1869. William Conant Church Papers; New York Public Library Archives.
- Crosland, Alan, dir. *The Flapper*. Selznick Pictures (1920). DVD.
- Dahlgren, Madeleine Vinton. *Thoughts on Female Suffrage and in Vindication of Women's True Rights*. Washington, D.C.: Blanchard and Mohun, 1871. Web. Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image (sceti.org), 1 May 2013.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 2nd ed. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1909. Web. GoogleBooks 20 February 2013.
- . *The Origin of Species*. New York: Appleton, 1895. Print.
- de Chaignon la Rose, Pierre. "Preface." In James, Henry, *Notes and Reviews by Henry James: A Series of Twenty-Five Papers Hitherto Unpublished in Book Form*. Cambridge, MA: Dunster House Press, 1921.
- Degler, Carl. *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present*. New York: Oxford UP, 1980.
- Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1998. Print.
- Dreger, Alice. "Doubtful Sex: The Fate of the Hermaphrodite in Victorian Medicine." *Victorian Studies*, 38.3 (Spring 1995): 335-370. Print.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays, Volume I*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1884. Print.
- Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the State, the Family, and Private Property*. New York: International Publishers, 1963.
- Epstein, Julia. "Either/Or – Neither/Both: Sexual Ambiguity and the Ideology of Gender." *Genders* 7.1 (Spring 1990): 99-142. Print.
- Erlich, Gloria C. *The Sexual Education of Edith Wharton*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1992. Print.

- Faludi, Susan. "American Electra: Feminism's Ritual Matricide." *Harper's*, October 2010. Web. 2 January 2012.
- Farwell, Tricia M. *Love and Death in Edith Wharton's Fiction*. New York: Peter Lang, 2006. Print.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Print.
- Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995. Print.
- Fern, Fanny. "A Practical Blue Stocking." *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press (1989): 232-234. Print.
- Fiske, John and Wilson, James Grant, eds. *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography: Volume II, Crane to Grimshaw*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1887.
- Flaubert, Gustave. *Madame Bovary*. New York: Norton, 1965.
- Fleissner, Jennifer. *Women, Compulsion, Modernity: The Moment of American Naturalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Print.
- Flexner, Eleanor. *The Century of Struggle*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996. Print.
- Fowler, O.S. and L.N. *Phrenology: Proved, Illustrated, and Applied*. New York: W.H. Colyer, 1836. Web. GoogleBooks 17 February 2013.
- Geddes, Patrick and Thomson, John Arthur. *The Evolution of Sex*. 1889. Web. GoogleBooks, 1 May 2013.
- Goffin, Robert. *Jazz: from the Congo to the Metropolitan*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948.
- "Gossip Aloft." *The New York Times*, 11 December 1852. Web. ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The New York Times. 1 February 2013.
- . *The New York Times*, 20 April 1853. Web. ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The New York Times. 1 February 2013.
- Habegger, Alfred. *Henry James and the Woman Business*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989.
- Haeckel, Ernst von. *The History of Creation*. New York: Appleton, 1893. Print.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Blithedale Romance*. New York: Norton, 2011. Print.
- . Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The House of the Seven Gables*. New York: The World's Popular Classics, 1960. Print.

- Hayne, Paul H. "Opportunity." In Tardy, Mary T., ed. *Southland Writers: Biographical and Critical Sketches of the Living Female Writers of the South*. Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1870.
- Hecht, Deborah. "Literary Biography: The Poisoned Well: Percy Lubbock and Edith Wharton." *The American Scholar*, 62.2 (Spring 1993): 255-259. Web. JStor.org, 20 August 2013.
- Hemel, Daniel J. "Summers' Comments on Women and Science Draw Ire." *The Crimson*, 14 January 2005. Web. TheCrimson.com, 20 August 2013.
- Higginson, Thomas Wentworth. "Literature as an Art." *Atlantic* (1874). Web. Perseus Digital Library, perseus.tufts.edu, 14 June 2013.
- Hollinger, David A. "The Rift." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 18 October 2013: B6-B8. Print.
- Hofstadter, Richard. *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. Boston: Beacon, 1955. Print.
- Holbrook, David. *Edith Wharton and the Unsatisfactory Man*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Hooper, Ruth. "Flapping Not Repented Of." *The New York Times*, 16 July 1922. Web. ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 2 January 2012.
- Horner, Avril, and Beer, Janet. *Edith Wharton: Sex, Satire, and the Older Woman*. New York: Palgrave, 2011. Print.
- Howe, Irving, ed. *Edith Wharton: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Inglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1960. Print.
- Howe, Julia Ward. *The Hermaphrodite*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004. Print.
- . *Reminiscences 1819-1899*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1899. Web. GoogleBooks 12 February 2013.
- . "George Sand." *The Atlantic Monthly* (November 1861): 513-34. Web. ProQuest, 3 March 2013.
- . *Sex and Education: A Reply to Dr. E.H. Clarke's 'Sex in Education'*. Ed. Julia Ward Howe. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1874. Web. ProQuest, 28 February 2013.
- Howells, William Dean. "Editor's Study." *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 79.474 (November 1889): 962-967. Web. Cornell Digital Library, 1 May 2013.
- . *Their Wedding Journey*. Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press. (1872) 1894. Print.
- . *Dr. Breen's Practice*. The Echo Library, (1881) 2009. Web. GoogleBooks, 4 May 2013.

- Jacobs, Lea. *The Decline of Sentiment: American Film in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. Print.
- James, Henry. "Opportunity: A Novel." *The Nation*, 5 December 1867: 449-450. Web. TheNation.com, 2 February 2013.
- . "Emily Chester: A Novel." In *Notes on Novelists*. New York: Scribner's (1914). Web. OpenArchive.org, 3 February 2013.
- . *The Portrait of a Lady*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 (1882). Print.
- . "Style and Morality in *Madame Bovary*," in *Madame Bovary*, ed. de Man. New York: Norton, 1965: 344-349. Print.
- James, William. "A Plea for Psychology as a Natural Science." *The Philosophical Review*, 1.2 (March 1892): 146-153. Web. Taylor and Francis, tandfonline.com, 23 June 2013.
- Jameson, Frederic. *A Singular Modernity*. New York: Verso, 2002. Print.
- Jewett, Sarah Orne. *A Country Doctor*, in *Novels and Stories*, ed. Bell. New York: Library of America, (1884) 1996. Print.
- Kaye, Richard A. *The Flirt's Tragedy: Desire Without End in Victorian and Edwardian Fiction*. Richmond: University of Virginia Press, 2002. Print.
- Kanyane, Chris. Comments on Hemel, Daniel J, "Summers' Comments on Women and Science Draw Ire," 30 April 2012. Web. TheCrimson.com, 29 August 2013.
- Kellogg, Vernon L. *Darwinism To-Day*. Holt: New York, 1907. Print.
- . *Headquarters Nights: A Record of Conversations and Experiences at the Headquarters of the German Army in France and Belgium*. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1917. Web. Archive.org, 1 September 2013.
- . "World Trouble and Realism." *The North American Review*, 216.805 (December 1922): 765-772. Web. Jstor.org, 11 August 2013.
- Kelly, Edmond. *Evolution and Effort*. New York: Appleton, 1898. Print.
- . *Government, or Human Evolution*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1901. Web. Archive.org, 1 September 2013.
- . "Employment for the Unemployed." *The Century Magazine* (July 1908): 470-473. Web. Unz.org, 1 September 2013.
- Kessler, Carol Farley. *Elizabeth Stuart Phelps*. State College: Penn State UP, 1982. Print.

- Kilgore, Kathleen. *Transformations: A History of Boston University*. Boston: Boston University Press, 1991. Print.
- Kim, Sharon. *Literary Epiphany in the Novel, 1850-1950*. New York: Palgrave, 2012. Print.
- . "Lamarckism and the Construction of Transcendence in *The House of Mirth*." *Studies in the Novel* (2006): 187-210. Web. Jstor, 2 September 2013.
- Kipnis, Laura. *Against Love: A Polemic*. New York: Vintage, 2003. Print.
- Klein, Ezra. "Another day, another sign that Larry Summers will get the Fed job." *The Washington Post*, 27 August 2013. Web. WashingtonPost.com, 27 August 2013.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. Print.
- Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990. Print.
- Lee, Hermione. *Edith Wharton*. New York: Vintage, 2008. Print.
- Leff, Leonard J. "The Breening of America." *PMLA* 106.3 (1991): 432-445. Web. Jstor, 2 May 2012.
- Lemons, J. Stanley. "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in the 1920s." *The Journal of American History*, 55.4 (March 1969): 776-786. Web. JStor.org, 14 June 2013.
- Lewis, R.W.B., and Lewis, Nancy, ed. *The Letters of Edith Wharton*. New York: Scribner's, 1988. Print.
- Lewis, R.W.B. *Edith Wharton: A Biography*. New York: Harper and Row, 1975. Print.
- Long, Bruce, ed. "The Life and Death of Olive Thomas." *Taylorology*, 33 (September 1995). Web. ASU.edu, 12 September 2011.
- The Literary World*, vol. XI: July – December, 1852. New York: E.A. and G.I. Duykinck, 1852. Web. GoogleBooks 15 February 2013.
- Loving, Jerome. "The Death of Romance: *The Portrait of a Lady* in the Age of Lily Bart." *A Forward Glance: New Essays on Edith Wharton*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press (1999): 100-115.
- Lyde, Marilyn Jones. *Edith Wharton: Convention and Morality in the Work of a Novelist*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959. Print.

Lynn, Richard. "Sorry, men ARE more brainy than women (and more stupid, too!) It's a simple scientific fact says one of Britain's top dons." *The Daily Mail*, 8 May 2010. Web. MailOnline.co.uk, 3 May 2013.

Menand, Louis. *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001. Print.

Michaels, Walter Benn. *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988.

Milar, Katharine S. "Overcoming 'Sentimental Rot'". *Monitor on Psychology*, 41.2 (February 2010): 26. Web. APA.org, 1 June 2013.

Moi, Toril. *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. Print.

--. *What is a Woman?* New York: Oxford UP, 2001. Print.

Morse, Jane Fowler. "Ignored But Not Forgotten: the Work of Helen Bradford Thompson Woolley." *NWSA Journal*, 14.2 (Summer 2002): 121-147. Web. Jstor.org, 2 October 2012.

Nettels, Elsa. "Howells and Wharton," *American Literary Realism* (Winter 2006): 160-173. Web. Jstor, 2 September 2013.

Noble, Marianne. "From Self-Erasure to Self-Possession: The Development of Julia Ward Howe's Feminist Consciousness." *Philosophies of Sex: Critical Essays on The Hermaphrodite*, Bergland and Williams, eds. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press (2012): 47-71. Print.

Noble, Yvonne. "Castrati, Balzac, and Barthes/Z." *Comparative Drama*, 31.1 (Spring 1997): 28-41. Web. JSTOR, 4 March 2013.

"Notes." *The Nation*, 30 January 1873: 73-76.

"Notices of New Books." *New York Daily Times*, 20 December 1854. Web. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 3 March 2013.

Novick, Sheldon. *Henry James: The Young Master*. New York: Random House, 1996.

Nye, Russel. "The Novel as Dream and Weapon: Women's Popular Novels in the Nineteenth Century." *Historical Society of Michigan Chronicle*, 11.4 (1975): 2-18. Web. GoogleBooks, 2 February 2013.

Ohler, Paul J. *Edith Wharton's 'Evolutionary Conception'*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

"Opportunity." In "Notes," *The Nation*, 5 December 1867: 449-450.

- Pannasié, Hugues, and Gautier, Madeleine. *Guide to Jazz*. Flower, tr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956. Print.
- Pattee, Fred Lewis. *The Feminine Fifties*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1940. Print.
- Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart. "Art for Truth's Sake." *Chapters from a Life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1896. Web. GoogleBooks.com, 14 June 2013.
- . *Dr. Zay*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883. Print.
- . In *Sex and Education: A Reply to Dr. E.H. Clarke's "Sex in Education"*, ed. Howe. Boston, Roberts Bros (1874): 126-38. Web. Archive.org, 2 June 2013.
- Pifer, Ellen. "The Children: Wharton's Creative Ambivalence to Self, Society, and the 'New World'." *A Foreword Glance: New Essays on Edith Wharton*, ed Colquitt, et al. Newark: University of Delaware Press (1999): 221-235.
- Pizer, Donal. "American Naturalism in its 'Perfected State': *The Age of Innocence* and *An American Tragedy*". In Singley, ed., *The Age of Innocence*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 2000: 434-441. Print.
- Pitz, Marylynne. "Olive Thomas, the original flapper and mon valley native, still fascinates." *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 26 September 2010. Web. Post-Gazette.com, 4 January 2012.
- "The Present and Future of Collegiate Education." *The Nation*, 88.2286 (22 April 1909): 406- 407. Web. TheNation.com, 14 June 2013.
- Preston, Claire. *Edith Wharton's Social Register*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. Print.
- Radke-Moss, Andrea G. *Bright Epoch: Women and Coeducation in the American West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008. Print.
- "Recent Novels." *The Nation*, 26.664 (March 1878): 202-204. Web. Ebscohost.com, 20 June 2013.
- "The Rise of Olive Thomas." *Photoplay*, January 1925. Web. Archive.org, 1 October 2012
- Romero, Lora. *Home Fronts*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1997. Print.
- Roosevelt, Theodore. "Introduction," *The Book of the Homeless*. New York: Scribner, 1916. Web. 2 September 2012 < <http://archive.org/details/bookofhomeless00wharuoft>>
- Rossiter, Margaret W. *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940*. Baltimore; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982. Print.
- Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women." *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*, ed. Lewin. New York: Blackwell, 2006.

- Russett, Cynthia Eagle. *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991. Print.
- Sargeant, Winthrop. *Jaꝛꝛ: Hot and Hybrid*. New York: Da Capo, 1975. Print.
- Saunders, Judith P. *Reading Edith Wharton Through a Darwinian Lens*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland. 2009. Print.
- . "Evolutionary Biological Issues in Edith Wharton's *The Children*." *College Literature*, 32.2 (Spring 2005): 83-102. Print.
- Sexton, Virginia Staudt. "American Psychology and Philosophy, 1876-1976: Alienation and Reconciliation." *Journal of General Psychology*, 99.1 (1978): 3-18. Web. JSTOR.com, 24 June 2013.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." *The Girls' History and Culture Reader: The Nineteenth Century*, eds. Forman-Brunell and Paris. Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press (2011): 149-178. Print.
- Spencer, Herbert. "Psychology of the Sexes." *Popular Science Monthly*, v. 4 (November 1873): 30-38. Web. GoogleBooks, 2 May 2013.
- . *The Principles of Ethics*, volume I. New York: Appleton, 1897. Print.
- Spurzheim, J.G. *Phrenology: or, The Doctrine of the Mental Phenomena*. New York: Harper and Brothers, (1828) 1846. Web. GoogleBooks 14 February 2013.
- Stabile, Susan M. "Still(ed) Lives." *American Literary History*, 22.2 (2010): 390-412. Web. Project Muse, 1 October 2013.
- Starr, Paul. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, 1982. Print.
- Stokes, M. Dale and Holland, Nicholas D. "The Lancelet: Also Known as "amphioxus," this curious creature has returned to the limelight as a player in the phylogenetic history of the vertebrates." *American Scientist*, 86.6 (November 1998): 552-560. Web. JStor, 1 October 2013.
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, ed. Ammons. New York: Norton, 2010. Print.
- "Syncope." *Oxford English Dictionary*, December 2011. Web. Oed.com, 6 March 2012.
- "Theodor Schwann." *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, v. 17 (June 1881 – June 1882): 460-461. Web. JSTOR, 1 February 2013.
- Thomas, William Isaac. *Sex and Society: Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1907) 1913. Web. Project Gutenberg, Gutenberg.org, 1 July 2013.

- Thompson, Helen Bradford. *The Mental Traits of Sex: An Experimental Investigation of the Normal Mind of Men and Women*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1905. Web. Archive.org, 24 June 2013.
- Tidy, Charles Meymott. *Legal Medicine*. New York: Wood Publishers, 1882. Web. Internet Archive 1 May 2013, <http://archive.org/details/legalmedicine01tidyuoft>
- Tompkins, Jane P. "Sentimental Power: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Politics of Literary History." *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, Gilbert and Gubar, eds. New York: Pantheon, 1985.
- Tuttle, Jennifer S. "Letters from Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (Ward) to S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., 1884-1897." *Legacy* 17 (2000): 83-94. Web. Jstor.org, 6 June 2013.
- Tuttleton, James, Lauer, Kristin O., and Murray, Margaret P. (eds.), *Edith Wharton: The Contemporary Reviews*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. Print.
- Vallury, Rajeshwari. *'Surfacing' the Politics of Desire: Literature, Feminism, and Myth*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Print.
- Warren, Joyce W. "Introduction." Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986. Print.
- Wegener, Frederick. "Form, 'Selection,' and Ideology in Edith Wharton's Anti-Modernist Aesthetic" *A Foreword Glance: New Essays on Edith Wharton*, ed. Colquitt, et al. Newark: University of Delaware Press (1999): 116-138. Print.
- Wells, Susan. "Women Write Science: The Case of Hannah Longshore." *College English* 58.2 (1996): 176-191. Web. Jstor.org, 4 September 2013.
- Wharton, Edith. "The Angel at the Grave." In *Edith Wharton: Collected Stories, 1891-1910*. New York: Library of America (2001): 254-270. Print.
- . *A Backward Glance*. New York: Touchstone, 1998. Print.
- . *The Children*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1928. Print.
- . *The Custom of the Country*. Norton: New York, (1913) 1999. Print.
- . "The Great American Novel," *Yale Review* 16 (July 1927): 646-656. Web. Yale.edu, 12 October 2012.
- . *The House of Mirth*. Ammons, ed. New York: Norton, (1905) 1989. Print.

- . *Life and I*. In *Edith Wharton: Novellas and Other Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1990. Print.
- . "Moonrise over Tyingham." *The Century Magazine* (July 1908): 356-357. Web. Unz.org, 1 September 2013.
- . "The Pelican." In *Edith Wharton: Collected Stories, 1891-1910*. New York: Library of America (2001): 76-94. Print.
- . "The Quicksand." *The Descent of Man and Other Stories* (1904). Web. Project Gutenberg, 2009. 30 August 2013.
- . *Twilight Sleep*. New York: Scribner, 1997. Print.
- Whitman, Walt. Letter to William Conant Church, 7 September 1867. William Conant Church Papers: New York Public Library Archives.
- Williams, Daniel E. "Reckoned to be Almost a Natural Fool: Textual Self-Construction in the Autobiographical Writings of Jonathan Plummer – No Hermaphrodite". *American Literature* 33.2 (1998): 149-172. Web. JSTOR, 4 February 2013.
- Williams, Gary. "The Cruellest Enemy of Beauty: Sand's Gabriel and Howe's Laurence." *Philosophies of Sex: Critical Essays on The Hermaphrodite*, Bergland and Williams, eds. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press (2012): 120-137. Print.
- . Introduction to *The Hermaphrodite*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press (2004): iv- xlv. Print.
- . *Hungry Heart: The Literary Emergence of Julia Ward Howe*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999. Print.
- Williams, Gary, and Bergland, Renée. "Introduction." *Philosophies of Sex: Critical Essays on The Hermaphrodite*, Bergland and Williams, eds. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press (2012): 1-15. Print.
- Wilson, A.N. "Only Men Can Be Geniuses." *Daily Mail*, 25 September 2007. Web. MailOnline.co.uk, 27 August 2013.
- Winner, Viola Hopkins, ed. *Fast and Loose and The Buccaneers*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1998. Print.
- Winship, Michael. *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Business of Ticknor and Fields*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.
- Wittenberg, Judith Bryant. "Challenge and Compliance: Textual Strategies in *A Country Doctor* and Nineteenth-Century American Women's Medical Biographies." *Jewett and Her Contemporaries*:

Reshaping the Canon, eds. Karen L. Kilcup and Thomas S. Edwards. Gainesville: University Press of Florida (1999): 123-136. Print.

“Women Faint at Olive Thomas Rite.” *The New York Times*, 29 September 1920: 24. Web. ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 1 October 2012.

Woods, James. *How Fiction Works*. New York: Picador, 2008. Print.

Woolley, Helen Bradford Thompson. “The Psychology of Sex.” *The Psychological Bulletin*, 11.10 (1914): 353-79. Web. DeepDyve.com, 22 June 2013.

---. “A Review of the Recent Literature on the Psychology of Sex.” *The Psychological Bulletin*, vol. vii (1910): 335-42. Web. Psychclassics.yorku.ca, 24 June 2013.

“Young Selznick Takes a Decisive Step,” *Photoplay*, January 1925. Web. Archive.org, 1 October 2012.

Zola, Émile. *The Ladies' Paradise*. New York: Oxford World Classics, 1995. Print.